

Council Plan 2014-17

our area,
our future.



Introduction

We know that getting good county council services is very important to thousands of people in Cumbria who depend and rely upon them.

Meeting the needs of Cumbria's 500,000 residents - at a time of reduced funding and rising demand for services - will be the challenge facing the county council over the next three years.

The government is taking a big bite out of our budget as part of its efforts to balance the nation's books. The county council has already made savings of £88 million over the last three years (2010-13) - and another round of reductions in government grants over the next three years (2014-2017) means further savings of £89 million are needed.

This adds up to around one in every four pounds which the council used to receive to pay for services.

At the same time, Cumbria's rapidly ageing population, high levels of poverty in

parts of the county and other factors mean demand for services is growing.

To meet the scale of the challenge, Cumbria County Council will undergo significant change over the coming years. By 2017, the council will look, act, and feel like a different organisation.

To achieve this change, the county council will focus on the needs of the people of Cumbria.

This focus will steer the decisions of the county council as it becomes a smaller organisation – one able to live within its reduced means, which does less but does it better.

A more business-like approach will be part and parcel of the way the council goes about deploying its human and financial resources to deliver the best outcomes for people.

As a smaller organisation, the county council will have a clear set of priorities developed and agreed by its members.

This approach will enable communities to hold the council to account for progress;



and enable the council to challenge itself to make sure its activities over the next three years are contributing to the successful delivery of these priorities.

This council plan sets out how Cumbria County Council intends to build on this approach to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Read alongside the organisation's workforce plan and medium term financial plan, the three documents together describe the priorities which the council will pursue, the resources that will be available to achieve these, and the shape, culture and processes which the council's workforce will adopt to meet the challenges of the future.



◀ Together these plans set out how the council will tackle the changes ahead.

The role of Cumbria County Council

We are responsible for many of the key services that are important to local communities such as - education (schools, both primary and secondary), libraries and youth services, social services, highways maintenance, waste disposal, emergency planning, consumer protection and the Fire and Rescue Service. Cumbria County Council:

- Supports over 300 schools
- Arranges and delivers home care for more than 5,600 older people
- Provides access to almost 730,000 library books
- Looks after more than 600 children
- Funds 28 Children's Centres
- Carries out more than 16,200 fire and home safety checks
- Maintains approximately 5,000 miles of road, 4,000 miles of public rights of way and 44,368 streetlights
- Registers almost 4,700 births
- Recycles 50 per cent of the 230,000 tonnes of household waste generated in Cumbria





Using our limited resources

The county council will ensure that its financial resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible to deliver the priorities set out in this Plan over the next three years.

The council receives around two-thirds of its overall funding (through its gross budget) from government, with the remaining amount made up from council tax and charges to service users.

◀ Around two thirds of overall funding comes from government.

500,000 reasons to change

Cumbria's 500,000 residents live in a county of contrasts. The popular national perception is synonymous with the Lake District and rural idyll. The truth is a much more complex mix of communities, lifestyles and priorities.

There are significant levels of deprivation in Barrow (which is the second most deprived shire district in England), West Cumbria and Carlisle, as well as pockets of deprivation in rural areas.

These problems have associated lifestyle issues including higher than average levels of alcohol misuse, obesity and smoking, all leading to lower levels of life expectancy in deprived areas.

For example, life expectancy is 2.8 years lower in Barrow (75 years) than in South Lakeland (78.7 years). This contrast can be even starker at community level, with life expectancy in Mossbay in Workington almost 20 years lower than Greystoke in Eden.

As of 2014, one in six Cumbrian households has an annual income of less than £10,000, over 42,000 people of working age claim benefits, and 16 per cent of children live in poverty.

For those in work, wages and salaries in Cumbria are relatively low with earnings in some parts of the county significantly lower than national and regional averages.

The population of Cumbria as a whole is older than the national average and the gap is projected to increase. By 2035 it is estimated that a third of the population of Cumbria will be aged over 60 years, compared with a quarter across England.

The number of older people will be significantly higher in those areas of the county such as Eden and South Lakeland, which already enjoy a longer life expectancy and attract a high number of retirees. The less affluent areas of the county are also expected to see an increased proportion of older people, exacerbated by the continued migration of younger people out of the county.

Since 2001, the number of young people in Cumbria aged under-16 has declined by almost 9 per cent, compared with a much smaller decline of 1.4 per cent in England as a whole.

There are indications, however, that the number of births in the county has begun to increase in recent years. There are now 1,000 more 0-4 year old children in the county than there were in 2003, with a large part of this increase occurring in Carlisle.

Serving a population of such marked social and economic contrasts requires a county council that is flexible and able to innovate beyond a one-size-fits-all approach; while at the same time maximising economies of scale and developing a more business-like approach to the way resources are matched to the complex range of needs that exist now and in the future.





Cumbria County Council in the future

Our vision for Cumbria:
For the people of Cumbria, to benefit from sustainable economic growth and an enhanced quality of life.

Our vision for Cumbria County Council:

To be an effective and efficient organisation that delivers the best possible services for the people of Cumbria within its available resources, protects the vulnerable, and works with others in the community to shape services and help find solutions for the future.

To achieve this vision, the county council has to change. Our financial challenges and the growing demands for our services drive us to think about the future and what sort of a council we will be in the years ahead.

There is no doubt we will be a smaller council with fewer staff: one that focuses on the

delivery of a clear set of priorities determined by the council's members.

We will review all our services and decide whether we should stop doing them, deliver them ourselves, buy them from the independent or voluntary sector, or support communities to do more themselves.

We will change the way we operate as a council and become more business-like. We will:

- Use ICT and modern technology to improve our services.
- Simplify our policies, systems and processes.
- Simplify our staffing structures having lean management layers, empowering our staff to make decisions.
- Communicate in a clear and consistent way.
- Work agilely across the county from modern fit-for-purpose buildings.

We will change the culture of the council to make sure that all of our staff are focussed on delivering the priorities set by elected members. Staff will be supported to be adaptable in tackling the challenges ahead; to be risk aware rather than risk averse; and demonstrate and encourage a positive set of behaviours that they have helped to develop.

To make this change happen we will:

- Utilise and develop the skills and talents of all elected members.
- Develop our leaders and managers.
- Invest in our employees to make them more flexible and adaptable.
- Build the workforce of the future.
- Develop our young people through our apprenticeship scheme.
- Celebrate our success.
- Be more innovative: balancing risks and opportunities.

This three year journey to change Cumbria County Council to reflect the times we live in now and the needs of tomorrow will be driven by a clear focus on what we do, how we do it and the tools we use. We will begin this journey by getting the basics right and growing our capacity to deliver the changes that are needed within a smaller organisation, with fewer staff. This will provide the building blocks for change that is built to last and



ensure a reshaped county council is achieved at the end of the three years.

Cumbria County Council's priorities

The council has developed these priorities through a combination of public engagement, careful analysis of the limited resources which the council will have available over the next three years, and evidence of need across Cumbria.



To safeguard children, and ensure that Cumbria is a great place to be a child and grow up we will:

- Improve our safeguarding practice and services to ensure all children and young people in Cumbria are safe.
- Work with our partners focusing on early intervention and developing the role of children's centres in delivering early help.
- Maximise capital investment opportunities for our schools, focusing on those in greatest need.
- Support schools to improve where necessary as identified by Ofsted.



To enable communities to live safely and shape services locally we will:

- Ensure an effective fire and rescue service, targeted at vulnerable people and areas of highest risk.
- Develop locality based service hubs in key service centres, to enable access to a range of core council services such as library services, local links and community development centres.
- Work with communities and the third sector to enable them to create local solutions and shape local services for the future.



**To promote health and wellbeing,
and tackle poverty we will:**

- Integrate public health into all aspects of the council's business, and put health and wellbeing at the heart of our work with communities.
- Drive forward joint work on health and wellbeing through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Introduce a 'living wage' within the council and encourage other employers to do the same through our procurement.
- Keep council tax increases as low as possible but, in any event, at no more than the rate of inflation.
- Support people facing financial challenges through a range of services, such as money advice, credit unions, our ways to welfare service and school uniform grants and support the work of an independent commission on welfare reform.





To protect and enhance Cumbria's world class environment we will:

- Develop further opportunities from our waste services and facilities for households, communities and commercial operators to participate more fully in waste minimisation and recycling.
- Develop opportunities to use resources more efficiently and effectively and to lessen the impact of our activities on communities and the environment.
- As Lead Local Flood Authority, work with partners and others in the community to ensure that Cumbria is as prepared as possible to deal with flooding.



To provide safe and well maintained roads and an effective transport network we will:

- Provide a well maintained highway and transport network and maximise new investment.
- Work with communities and the third sector to develop sustainable community transport solutions.
- Work to ensure that we retain and improve Cumbria's rail services, infrastructure and connectivity, through active engagement in the national refranchising and investment programmes.





To promote sustainable economic growth, and create jobs we will:

- Play an active role in the Local Enterprise Partnership to create a growth strategy for Cumbria that will secure investment and create more and better jobs by making Cumbria a place where businesses can thrive.
- Create a positive working relationship with government and the nuclear industry to ensure the best outcomes for Cumbria, particularly in the areas of safety, waste management, investment and employment.
- Work, as strategic planning authority, with our partners to ensure that we are more effective in delivering sustainable development to meet the needs of our communities and ensure we maintain the quality of Cumbria's world class environment.
- Work with partners to help people acquire the skills and qualifications they need to meet the future needs of the economy.
- Seek to ensure that broadband is rolled out across the county in a timely manner.



To support older and vulnerable people to live independent and healthy lives we will:

- Invest in extra care housing to enable people to live independently for as long as possible.
- Work with our partners in the health sector to bring services, particularly for adults with combined health and social care needs, together.
- Explore the creation of a single commissioning body - in order to improve services and reduce costs.
- Focus on prevention and proactive support for excluded and vulnerable adults, through the coordination of a range of key services including our Neighbourhood Care Independence programme and investment in support for carers.
- Ensure adults at risk are free from harm and abuse in their home and community.



To be a modern and efficient council we will:

- Reshape the organisation by reviewing management structures and reducing management costs.
- Make our internal support services much more efficient.
- Commission and procure services in a more efficient way, reducing duplication, improving services and meeting the wider aims of the council.
- Rationalise our property and improve our office accommodation.
- Change the culture of the organisation and support our members and employees as we go through change.
- Pursue opportunities for more efficient service delivery by closer working with the other tiers of local government.



Reporting on progress



This Council Plan is a three year document, setting out the key priorities and areas of activity for the county council up to 2017. We will review the plan annually.

A delivery plan will ensure the effective implementation of the Council Plan. This will be used to measure progress against the things we have said we will do.

We will continually review performance against Council Plan priorities and every six months we will publish a report on our achievements which will be available on our website **cumbria.gov.uk**

The Council Plan sets the context for Service Plans and Area Plans, each ensuring the delivery of the council's priorities. Each of our 16 Service Plans will set out how services will contribute to the delivery of council priorities, together with other statutory responsibilities.

Each of our six Area Plans will focus on the Council Plan priorities that are most relevant in each area, reflecting local need, circumstance and assets that exist in local communities throughout Cumbria.

In developing the Council Plan, consideration has been given to the potential impact of the priorities, aspirations and activity described within the Plan on people protected under the Equality Act.

Cumbria County Council
The Courts, Carlisle, CA3 8NA
cumbria.gov.uk