

# Council Plan

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2011-2014

## Inside front cover

[a short summary will be provided for each highlight/award in the published version of the Council Plan]

8/12/2010 - [Children's Services improves and performs well](#)

25/11/2010 - [County council continues 'fantastic journey of improvement' in Adult Social Care](#)

18/11/2010 - [Cumbria leads national league table in fixing pot holes](#)

10/11/2010 - [Maryport student wins Volunteer Award praise](#)

10/11/2010 - [Volunteer Abz praised for fire safety work](#)

10/11/2010 - [Award for young volunteers who have made South Lakes Blooming Lovely](#)

10/11/2010 - [Josh impresses the judges in Young Volunteer Award](#)

10/11/2010 - [Penrith youngsters praised for volunteer work](#)

10/11/2010 - [Brave Ross wins Volunteer Award](#)

18/11/2010 - [Workington Health and Social Care team win brace of national awards](#)

2/11/2010 - [Enterprising Cumbrian schools given government seal of approval](#)

20/10/2010 - [Second top gong for Workington temporary bridge](#)

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## Foreword

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### **If you don't know where you are going any road will get you there!**

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The need for reform to produce a more focused, efficient and productive public sector is unarguable. Faced with unprecedented cuts in funding but increased and increasing demand for services, my colleagues and I have had to take a long, hard look at what the county council currently does and what it should be doing in the future. That, in turn, has led to determining our priorities and the planning to achieve those priorities... and that is what this Council Plan is all about.

I suspect the Plan may not please everyone but we have truly listened to and talked with many thousands of Cumbrian people. We cannot do everything we would wish. There is always competition for scarce resources in any economy but revitalising the Cumbrian economy, and caring for people less fortunate, must rank high in our list of priorities.

**There is a growing political consensus that the answer to public service reform lies in involving communities far more in the provision of services.** However, a shift to services produced in relationship with citizens will not just require communities to take on more responsibility, it will also require the county council to change the way it works.

On a similar note, if a Formula One team wants its car to go faster the first person to talk to is the driver. So we also need to draw on the knowledge and experience of our staff about what works best for the families and communities they work with. That, in turn, requires a workplace culture that frees up and encourages people to look for new solutions and better ways of doing things. Most importantly of all, such an approach should not be used as a cover for the council leaving people to fend for themselves, or putting them in situations for which they are unprepared. Rather, it should be about the council supporting communities to play more of a role and work in partnership with them.

This is a demanding concept – requiring a new relationship between citizens, the council and service providers – and Councillors and communities need to understand how to overcome the inevitable barriers. I have no doubt that, together, we shall.

*Eddie Martin*  
*Leader of the Council*

## Introduction

Welcome to our Council Plan 2011-2014.

It is a challenging time for Cumbria County Council. As the Government takes steps to reduce and repay the national deficit, the level of funding that we receive from the Government is reduced significantly. It is therefore more important than ever that we are clear about our priorities and what we need to do in order to meet them so that we can support people across Cumbria. This will help us prioritise the resources we have available over the next three years.

Undoubtedly, this will mean that some very difficult decisions have to be made – it will not be possible to simply go on doing exactly what we do at the moment. There are some services which we have a duty to provide, and there are services which we provide on a discretionary basis. We have looked carefully at what we need to provide and at how we provide it; at what could be more efficiently and effectively provided by others; at where we can work more closely with a range of partners across Cumbria; and at how we can support and empower local people and local communities.

In coming to a decision about these things we have listened to what you told us during the consultation on our priorities and the budget, and this in turn has shaped the final Council Plan and Budget.

The council believes these challenging times are also an opportunity – an opportunity to go back to the drawing board and consider with you what the role of the County Council is; what our priorities should be; and what the most important services we provide are.

Our commitment to the customer and doing things in the most efficient way might mean that you find services are delivered in new innovative ways, which in many cases have been designed with the people who use those services. Where appropriate, we have re-engineered Council services entirely to ensure that we are delivering services in the most efficient and effective ways. It may also mean that we have stopped providing some discretionary services in order to protect those that you have told us are the most important.

Over the next three years the Council will focus on:

- **Challenging poverty in all its forms;**
- **Ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need; and,**
- **Improving the chances in life of the most disadvantaged in Cumbria**

These are our priorities and we will target our resources to deliver activity that we are confident will address these issues. We remain enormously ambitious for Cumbria and committed to helping Cumbria achieve its full potential as a first-class place to live and work.

## About Cumbria – did you know?

- Cumbria is the second largest county in England
- More than half of the county's population live in rural areas
- All the land in England that is over 3,000 feet in height is in Cumbria
- Cumbria is home to England's largest National Park, the Lake District National Park
- The World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall runs across the northern most reaches of the county
- Over recent years the county's population has been growing at a faster rate than the North West region, but more slowly than the England average
- Population forecasts show a decline in the number of working age people and the fastest decline in the number of children of any county in England
- Within the county South Lakeland is forecast to see the biggest decline in the number of young people for any district in England, while Eden is forecast to experience the biggest increase in older people
- The proportion of residents from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups is much lower in Cumbria than it is nationally; 4% in Cumbria compared to 16.4% nationally
- In recent years, however, the proportion of BME residents has been increasing much more rapidly in Cumbria than it has been nationally so that over time the ethnic profile of Cumbria is changing to become more representative of the rest of the UK.

### Economy

- After a period of relative decline in economic performance between the 1990s and early 2000, Cumbria's Gross Value Added has been the fastest growing in the North West region of England for the last six years
- Earnings are relatively high in areas of the county that have production industries, however earnings are much lower in rural areas
- For Cumbria as a whole, unemployment levels are lower than the national average, however there are high levels of worklessness in some pockets of the county
- Specialist manufacturing jobs in West Cumbria and Barrow provide high paid employment, however these industries are very dependent upon decisions affecting the nuclear and defence sectors
- The Tourism sector supports over 32,000 jobs in Cumbria and the sector has remained robust during the economic downturn
- Cumbria has a lower proportion of its working age population with no qualifications and a lower proportion of its working age population with degree-level qualifications than the national average
- Cumbria's economy does not function as one single labour market but rather a set of overlapping local economies with distinct local characteristics

### Environment and transport

- North-south communication links in East Cumbria are good, however despite recent improvements east-west road and rail links are relatively poor
- The proportion of people who walk to work is higher than the average for the north-west, and public transport usage levels in Cumbria are relatively low
- Levels of traffic congestion across the county are relatively low. Almost half of Cumbria's residents say that roads and pavements need to be improved
- Around a third of Cumbria's residents say access to decent affordable housing needs improving. Nationally the average house price is approximately 5.9x average income. In Barrow and Copeland average house prices are 4.1x average income, however in areas

such as Eden and South Lakeland this figure rises to 7.1x and 7.4x respectively. At more local levels, this figure can rise as 8.2x in Keswick, 9x in Ambleside and as high as 10.6x in Grasmere

- Cumbria boasts some of the most spectacular landscapes in the world and is regularly voted as one of the most popular tourist destinations

### Children and young people

- Public satisfaction with facilities for young children is higher than nationally, however almost half of Cumbria's residents say activities for teenagers need improving
- GCSE attainment levels are higher than the England average; however there is a huge range in attainment depending on where pupils live
- Many outcomes for children and young people are good and improving in Cumbria
- Children's Services in Cumbria has been judged to be performing well in 2009/10

### Healthier, safer and stronger

- Life expectancy in Cumbria is higher than the national average. The population is ageing fastest in the most rural parts of the county
- Satisfaction with the Police and Fire and Rescue Service is amongst the highest in the country
- A high proportion of the population agree that older people are able to get the services and support they need to continue to live at home for as long as they want to

### Involvement and engagement

- Levels of volunteering in the county are higher than the national average
- Perceived levels of influence are slightly lower than the national figure, and levels of satisfaction with the way the Council runs things are very low

## What we are seeking to achieve for Cumbria

It is important not to lose sight of the long-term aspirations we share with partners for Cumbria and its communities. We remain clear about what is important for Cumbria in the longer term – which can only be achieved with everyone playing their part and working together.

**We want Cumbria to be a place with a thriving economy where we challenge poverty in all its forms.**

**A place where you can live in a high quality and sustainable environment and you can move safely and easily around the county.**

**More than that, we want Cumbria to be a great place to be a child and grow up in; a place of opportunity where young people are able to live happy and productive lives; a place where young people will want to live and work in the future.**

**We want you to enjoy an independent and healthy life and to be safe from harm, with more control over your life and a say in the decisions which affect you.**

Through successful delivery of the above, people in Cumbria will have the best chances in life, and will be able to fulfil their potential.

It is not within the gift of Cumbria County Council alone to successfully deliver on all of the above. These aspirations can only and will only be achieved if partners across the public sector, the voluntary and charitable sector and the private sector all work together.

It is important for all partners to be clear about what their role is in achieving these outcomes – what their contribution could and should be.

We are clear that our role should be to:

**Create the conditions for Cumbria's communities to thrive by putting people at the heart of everything we do, and work with others to deliver excellent services for those who need us most.**

Given the financial challenges Cumbria faces, our role in stimulating the economy is something we will particularly focus on over the coming three years. We will focus our efforts on supporting Cumbria to maximise its strengths and capitalise on what is unique about the area. We will work with our partners to bring investment and opportunity in to the county to help our economy grow. In this way we hope to provide the conditions that will address many forms of poverty in the county.

As a Council we will be as **effective and efficient** as possible. We will **prioritise services**, targeting our resources where they are most needed to ensure that the more vulnerable are protected. We will **re-engineer services**, changing our services to make them more efficient and more effective, and finding new and innovative ways to do things. We will **focus on our customers**, putting people at the heart of everything we do.

## Our focus for 2011-2014

The Council is committed to doing everything it can to tackle poverty in all of its forms: not just financial poverty but also the poverty of ambition and aspiration, and the poverty of opportunity.

We want everyone to have the best start in life – the opportunity to be whatever they want to be, and the ambition and aspiration to be as good as they can be. A person's background is one of the biggest determinants of what kind of life they will have, of the type of employment they will get in the future, of how much money they will earn and of how healthy they will be. It is important therefore that we focus on the most vulnerable people in our communities to ensure that they receive the support they need when they need it, and that we focus on improving the chances in life of the most disadvantaged in Cumbria.

This is why our key priorities are to:

- **Challenge poverty in all its forms;**
- **Ensure that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need; and,**
- **Improve the chances in life of the most disadvantaged in Cumbria**

Over the last few years we have put in place a number of critical projects to help tackle poverty. These are described in our Anti-Poverty Strategy which aims to take positive actions to prevent families and individuals entering into poverty by providing opportunities for work, minimising the harm caused by poverty for people living on low incomes, and supporting families and individuals to get out of and stay out of poverty. Our Anti-Poverty Strategy and Child Poverty Strategy were both agreed at Cabinet in early January and will be key in further directing and influencing Council activity to tackle the above priorities.

The Anti-Poverty Strategy is based around four 'pillars' – to reduce the number of fuel poor households in Cumbria; to ensure that children in poverty have the best start in life and that the Council and key partners take necessary steps to reduce poverty and address the impacts of poverty; to ensure everyone in Cumbria has access to financial services and information at a level appropriate to their needs; and, for Cumbria to have one of the fastest growing economies in the UK, in a healthy environment with clarity on economic priorities for skills and employment support. The Child Poverty Strategy is focussed on delivery of two outcomes: to reduce the number of children and young people in poverty through work and skills; and, to reduce the impacts of poverty by encouraging children and young people to be more economically independent.

Within Cumbria there is a vast difference between communities and their experience of poverty which is often hidden if one only considers the general picture of the county. Parts of the county boast towns where average household incomes and life expectancy far exceed the national average while some other parts of the county experience levels of deprivation that register on a Europe-wide scale. The range of challenges facing the county are described below:

- There is a significant difference in average household incomes across the county. In some wards, average household income is £17,000, while in others the average household income is £4,000.
- Of the 225,000 households in Cumbria, approximately 30,000 have an annual household income of less than £10,000 – that is just over £192 per week before tax.
- While the highest levels of child poverty are found in the more urban parts of the county, over 6,000 children are living in poverty in rural Cumbria.

- Of all pupils attending Cumbria's schools 11.7% are eligible to receive free school meals. National figures show that a child who receives free school meals is less likely to do well at school or go on to university.
- Pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including Maths and English ranges from 94% in the best performing ward to 11% in the worst.
- Figures for people claiming incapacity or disability benefits ranges from 1% to 17% across the county's wards.
- Over 35,000 people in Cumbria, 11.5% of the working age population, are in receipt of out of work benefits.
- Of Cumbria's six districts, two – Barrow and Copeland – are in the top 25% most deprived wards in the entire country.
- Life expectancy across the county sees a 20 year range between the best and the worst wards.

It is hugely important, therefore, that across all of the services we deliver, and those we support, that we work with partners to ensure we are as responsive as possible to local needs. This will be taken forward by focussing on how we work within, and engage with, local communities and local areas. We will develop the role of Local Committees to ensure that they are more able to inform the Council's overall strategic thinking, making sure that local issues are recognised and influence our key priorities and objectives. We will also ensure that Local Committees are empowered to work more closely with individuals within their localities with more autonomy over local affairs.

## How much have we got to spend?

[This section will be populated once the Budget has been finalised at Full Council on 17 February 2010.

Section on how consultation has influenced the Council Plan / Budget will be provided following Full Council on 17 February].

## What we are seeking to achieve for Cumbria

### Our key priorities

Challenge poverty in all its forms

Ensure that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need

Improve the chances in life of the more disadvantaged in Cumbria

### Our underpinning aim

We will be as **effective and efficient** as possible: we will prioritise services, targeting our resources where they are most needed; we will re-engineer services to find new, different and more effective and efficient ways to do things; and, we will focus on our customers, putting people at the heart of everything we do

### Our aspirations for Cumbria

#### For the economy.

We want Cumbria to be a place with **a thriving economy** where we challenge poverty in all its forms

#### For the environment.

We want Cumbria to be a place where you can live in **a high quality and sustainable environment** and you can move easily and safely around the county

#### For children and young people:

We want Cumbria to be **a great place to be a child and grow up** in; a place of opportunity where young people are able to live happy and productive lives; a place where young people will want to live and work in the future

#### For independent, safe and healthy lives:

We want you to enjoy an **independent and healthy life** and to be safe from harm, with more control over your life and a say in the decisions which affect you

What we will do to ensure Cumbria has...

## ...a thriving economy

We will support the development of a thriving and competitive business sector that provides high quality employment opportunities. Whilst building on our existing strengths, we will concentrate efforts on areas and neighbourhoods in greatest need and on creating opportunities that will reduce the pressure on young people to leave the county. We will seek to diversify the economic base of Cumbria in order to reduce the over-reliance on the nuclear sector in parts of Cumbria while at the same time exploiting our world-class advantage. We will support the tourism sector, which generates over £2 billion per year for the Cumbrian economy. We are committed to promoting thriving communities by championing local economies, creating the right opportunities and environment for investment and lobbying for Cumbria's interests. We will work closely with partners to encourage business development, strengthen our workforces' skills, stimulate job creation and improve our infrastructure in order to ensure that Cumbria's economic position is strengthened.

### Name/type of activity:

- Support the county's Local Enterprise Partnership
- Maintain and support economic development and regeneration activities which tackle poverty, develop skills and drive the development of a thriving economy
- Support the development of high-tech industries. Support renewable initiatives such as anaerobic and hydro projects and nuclear generation, and capitalise on the low-carbon economy to ensure we become a leader in this area of work
- Support the Rural Development Programme and encourage social enterprise
- Support the delivery of superfast broadband across the county
- Support the England Coastal Trail in Cumbria
- Support the tourism sector

### Rationale:

The Local Enterprise Partnership's aim is to encourage and drive sustainable private sector growth throughout Cumbria. Through focussing on those areas in the greatest need, we will be able to create sustainable communities and develop regeneration projects which support more people in to good quality employment. We will use our assets where appropriate to enable development, i.e. Canal Head will facilitate the upgrade of major infrastructure such as the National Grid, Broadband, mobile communications and rail lines. While the upgrade to the National Grid will enable a step change in renewable activities, including new nuclear to be developed, access to superfast broadband across the county will open up new ways for customers and businesses to access services more easily, particularly those who are more vulnerable or disadvantaged or live in more isolated areas. The Rural Development Programme for England will support the creation and safeguarding of jobs; proactively supporting social enterprise will give individuals and communities real influence to design and deliver services themselves. The England Coast Trail in Cumbria is a national project which has the potential to bring about significant social, health, economic and recreational benefits, particularly in the west of the county.

### Where are we now:

Levels of unemployment in Cumbria are on average lower than the rest of the country and are falling but at a slightly slower pace than the national average. There are high levels of worklessness in Barrow, with further pockets in Carlisle and West Cumbria. Since 1995, the economy has grown by 60%, significantly lower than the national figure of 98%, however there have been positive recent signs with Cumbria being the fastest growing sub-region in the North West of England for the last

six years. Tourism is a key industry in Cumbria, generating over £2 billion annually and supporting over 30,000 jobs, particularly in the South Lakes. Copeland has the highest public sector job rate in the country, however on average Cumbria is only slightly more reliant on the public sector for employment than the national average. Over the last year we have seen significant change following the abolition of the North West Regional Development Agency and related funding streams. The Local Enterprise Partnership bid for Cumbria was approved by Government (one of only 24 out of the 62 submitted to be accepted). The Local Economic Assessment was completed which outlined the key needs of the county across three broad themes: people and communities; business and enterprise; and, infrastructure and environment. This will be used to inform the activity of the Local Enterprise Partnership and to target those areas most in need and where the greatest difference can be made. Recovery work has continued following the floods of November 2009. The Return to Work and Future Jobs Fund have helped nearly 500 long-term unemployed back in to employment. 400 long-term unemployed have received vocational training to help them obtain the right skills to get back to work and an Intensive Start-up Support programme has resulted in approximately 250 business start-ups in 2010 despite challenging financial circumstances.

### What will success look like:

- Fewer people live in poverty. Those who need to are accessing the benefits to which they are entitled
- We will have helped new businesses to start up, generating new employment opportunities, and encouraged inward investment
- We will have completed Carlisle Northern Development Route ensuring that transport links are improved between West Cumbria, Scotland and the North East
- Additional investment in Cumbria and increased employment opportunities are created through support for high-tech industries and renewable initiatives, and from capitalising on the low-carbon economy. Cumbria is recognised as a leader in this area of work
- Cumbria's people and the economy benefit from the nuclear sector with a NUGEN nuclear power station being agreed by Government for the Sellafield site, and the supporting infrastructure committed and reprocessing continuing on the site
- More people have improved skill levels leading to better productivity and increased wage levels
- A range of serviced employment sites are provided, leading to an increase in the number of businesses investing in the region and jobs created
- Key economic development projects will be on track for delivery
- Cumbria will have secured external investment to support economic activity including successful bids to the £1.4bn Regional Growth Fund
- We will have secured superfast broadband across Cumbria

What we will do to ensure Cumbria has...

## ...a high quality and sustainable environment

We want everyone to be able to enjoy living in our truly world class environment .We want people to benefit fully from the opportunities our environment offers in terms of public health and well-being. We will work with partners to protect and enhance the environment and take whatever steps we can to mitigate the potential effects of climate change on the landscape around us, whether this is through reducing CO2 emissions in our homes and businesses or through travelling in more sustainable ways. We will work with partners to capitalise on the natural opportunities our environment has for renewable energy and the low-carbon economy and be recognised as a leader in this area. It is important that we have effective transport to enable individuals, communities and businesses to easily and safely access the jobs and services they need. We want to work more effectively with communities and businesses to reduce the levels of waste produced and reduce the impact of the waste produced by increasing levels of recycling across Cumbria.

### Name/type of activity:

- Reduce risks to people, businesses, heritage and the landscape of Cumbria
- Protect and enhance Cumbria's environment through our planning and natural environment functions
- Drive down CO2 emissions and work with partners to ensure we reduce the impact of, and adapt to, climate change
- Within diminished resources, provide passenger transport services which help local communities access key services and focus on transport measures that support improved public health
- Deliver highways maintenance improvements to protect our critical infrastructure assets
- Produce our Local Transport Plan 3
- Continue the rebuilding of Cumbria's infrastructure affected by the floods in November 2009
- Work with partners to capitalise on the natural opportunities our environment provides for renewable energy and sustainable, low-carbon development and be recognised as a leader in this area
- Enable the County Council to respond effectively to its new Flood and Water Management responsibilities

### Rationale:

Most of us rely on the transport network to enable us to access employment and other services. Many people throughout Cumbria, particularly the most vulnerable or disadvantaged, rely on passenger transport to access these services. In April 2011, we will assume the role of Transport Concessionary Authority with responsibility for running schemes such as concessionary bus travel but with less funding.

Work to reduce the impact of climate change is a critical activity that affects the whole country in terms of its impact on operations, assets, communities and the natural environment. It is important that we work with our partners and communities to help protect those vulnerable to the impact of weather changes and other outcomes of climate change. Reducing CO2 emissions and levels of waste are just some of the ways in which we can work to combat climate change and protect our natural environment. It is clear that we need to take every step possible to reduce our own carbon emissions and waste if we are to provide leadership on this issue for individuals and organisations throughout Cumbria.

### Where are we now:

We have developed Cumbria's draft Local Transport Plan 3 which, if approved, sets out how roads, footpaths, cycle ways, rights of way and bus and train services will be managed and improved, and how investment in transport supports the wider Council priorities. As a predominantly rural county, many of our communities face challenges in accessing services – Eden is one of the most deprived districts in England regarding barriers to accessing services. Almost half of Cumbria's residents say that roads and pavements need to be improved. Bus passenger numbers remain static compared to last year; over the period of the next 3 years we will need to ensure that any subsidised bus routes provided are best placed to support those communities most in need of support whilst ensuring that they provide value for money. The number of people killed or seriously injured on Cumbria's roads is falling. During 2010 work continued to help Cumbria's infrastructure and environment recover from the floods in November 2009.

Significant progress has been made to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and increase the amount being recycled, reused or composted. Work is still ongoing to reduce our own levels of CO2 emissions, but more effort is needed in this area to ensure we are able to reduce emissions at a faster pace.

### What will success look like:

- Cumbria will have reduced CO2 emissions
- Cumbria will be better planned for extreme weather events, with the risks to vulnerable communities better understood and the Council and partners will be better placed to respond quickly and effectively
- Levels of household waste will be reduced, and more people will reuse, recycle or compost their waste. Minimum waste will be being sent to landfill
- The environment will play a key role in improving levels of public health and well-being
- Local biodiversity and geological sites will be positively managed, enabling important species, habitats and geological features to be conserved and the public able to enjoy nature conservation
- People in Cumbria will benefit from the opportunities the environment provides for renewable energy and sustainable, low-carbon development
- People will travel in a more sustainable way, and those communities most in need can access key services
- Those bridges and rights of way which were damaged or demolished during the floods in November 2009 will have been re-instated
- Cumbria will have a well maintained highway network, with more road faults fixed permanently first time

What we will do to ensure Cumbria is...

## ...a great place to be a child and to grow up

We want the best for every child, every young person and every family in Cumbria. All children and young people should have bright prospects and diverse opportunities which allow them to reach their full potential. Early years education should enable all of our children to get off to the very best start in life. Our schools should be good schools, in the right places, offering our children a high quality education. Vulnerable or disadvantaged children should be enabled and empowered to benefit from a full and rewarding life. We have high aspirations for every child and young person in Cumbria, and we want them to have aspirations and expectations for themselves and the opportunity to fulfil them.

### Name/type of activity:

- Make sure every school is a good school, and that we have the right number of school places where they are needed by supporting the continued improvement in outcomes for learners (especially Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils entitled to free school meals and post-16 education); and, through delivery of our Transforming Learning Strategy
- Make sure vulnerable children and young people, and those with a disability, have every opportunity to achieve in and out of school through supporting the delivery of improved services which are informed by the views of vulnerable children, young people and their families; and, further improving and broadening the range of short break provision for children with a disability
- Make sure that services work together at a local level to support those children and young people who most need additional help through working in partnership to make sure we provide services that are child focused, accessible and responsive to need; and, focus on prevention to support families to help themselves, reducing the need for the Council to become more formally involved in their lives, but where we act as a Corporate Parent improve their living environment

### Rationale:

Cumbria already has many schools rated as good and outstanding, however we want every child to have access to the highest quality opportunities – this can only be achieved by working to ensure that every school in Cumbria is a good or outstanding school.

Every child and young person should be able to receive the support and services they need. To do this as effectively as possible, it is important that children and young people are actively engaged in the design and development of these services. We will work with young people to explore new ways of engaging with them, for example through Youth Councils or a Youth Parliament.

Working effectively in partnership at a local level minimises waste and drives out duplication. This reduces the need for families to undergo multiple assessments and means they can get easier access to the services they need.

### Where are we now:

Compared to national figures, Cumbria has a very high proportion of good and outstanding schools and we have amongst the lowest number of schools rated as inadequate by inspectors. Although there are still inequality gaps between our best performing and worst performing schools, and between the attainment of those children receiving free schools meals and those who do not, educational outcomes are improving, particularly within our secondary schools. We have improved a range of outcomes for our Children Looked After. We have developed and delivered the 'Aiming High' project along with our partners and parents of children with a disability. We are moving towards a more integrated working agenda helping to ensure that all agencies working with children

are working more effectively and efficiently with one another and are identifying and addressing needs earlier.

**What will success look like:**

- Children and young people of all ages across Cumbria will receive a good level of education
- All of our young people aged 16-18 will either be in education, training or employment
- Cumbria will have an increased proportion of good and outstanding schools, with no schools below the recently introduced new floor target
- Inequalities between vulnerable children and other young people and their peers will be reducing
- Families of children with a disability will be better supported in their care, and children have access to new experiences
- Demand for acute services will be falling – fewer children will be subject to a Child Protection Plan and we will have fewer Children Looked After

## What we will do to ensure people in Cumbria enjoy... ...an independent and healthy life

We want people to live healthy lives and to enjoy high quality support when they need it. We want people to be more involved in the decisions affecting them and their communities and to feel able to influence the services that we provide. We want Cumbria to be a place where everyone is able to enjoy an active, healthy and fulfilling life in a safe environment. We want to focus on empowering Cumbria's population to live independently, working with partners to optimise the control individuals have over their lives and the decisions that affect them, and to be supported where needed. We will work with partners in health to reduce inequalities by targeting the individuals and neighbourhoods with the greatest need.

### Name/type of activity:

- Protect children and vulnerable adults from harm through improved safeguarding services
- Make sure that children and young people are supported to make healthy choices
- Help people have independent lives by supporting them to regain their independent living skills following illness; by working with the Third Sector to promote an active and healthy lifestyle; by giving people more direct control over the services they need; and, by developing community based services, help people remain in their own homes rather than having to move in to residential care. And where we have a role in their residential care, improve the standard of accommodation
- Work closely with partners to ensure people get the care they need through improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our systems and procedures, particularly for individuals with complex needs
- Use new technology, such as assistive technology and individual service funds, to help people feel safer and more in control of their own care and enable carers to feel that they have the support they need
- Protect people, particularly the more vulnerable in our communities, from fire, crime, road accidents and other emergencies
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Cumbria's roads
- Improve working at a local level
- Make sure the Council puts customers first, improves access to services and keeps people informed, through the delivery of our Customer Service Strategy
- Work with communities to make sure their voice is heard and that services meet their needs

### Rationale:

Every child and young person in Cumbria should be safe whether they are at home, at school, at work or in their communities. We have a statutory duty to make sure children are safe from harm, including our child protection and corporate parenting role for vulnerable children. We also want our children and young people to recognise their own self worth, and make positive and healthy choices.

Our service users tell us that they want to remain in their own homes, living independently for as long as possible. Many of our service users have also told us that we can do more to increase individual choice and control in relation to the support they receive.

The ability to influence your own life, and to have a say in those decisions that affect you, is important in all aspects of life. As a Council, in order to be as effective as we can we need to engage with individuals and communities as efficiently as possible, making it easy for people to tell us what they think and what is important to them, and for us to use this information to shape the services we provide.

As well as having greater control and influence over their lives and the decisions that affect them, it is important for people to be, and to feel, safe. Protecting people from crime, fire and road accidents is an important part of our role as a Council and Fire & Rescue Service. As the flooding in November 2009 exemplified, we also have a key role in working with communities to ensure that they are prepared to deal with emergencies and are fully able to recover from them.

### Where are we now:

We are recognised nationally as performing well in terms of protecting vulnerable children and adults. Much progress has been made towards focussing our services on prevention, and various activity is underway across the county. We have increased the availability of personal budgets; however these are not universally applied with the full participation of service users as yet. The demand for residential care is reducing, and the majority of people with complex needs are receiving support. We are using assistive technology to reduce risk and support people to be safer within their own homes, however take up is lower than we expected.

We have put in place a range of activities to provide protection for vulnerable people from doorstep crime and other types of fraud, and work closely with a range of partners to combat crime. We provide advice and assistance to vulnerable members of communities, and work with communities in general so they are better prepared to cope with emergencies. We carry out a wide range of activity aimed at raising awareness and reducing injuries and deaths from road accidents and fires.

We have a long history of working with and engaging with members of the public, however levels of satisfaction with the way the Council runs things and that it provides value for money are low.

### What will success look like:

- There will be fewer children looked after and children are not subject to a child protection plan for a second time
- People will receive quick and appropriate responses to their needs. There will be less demand for long term, more formalised packages of support and fewer people will require residential care. More people are able to continue living independently in their own homes with greater individual control over the care they need and receive
- Carers will feel more supported, and more people are taking advantage of assistive technology. There will be less reliance on the more traditional forms of care, with closer relationships between the users and providers of care
- There will be fewer people who fall victim to doorstep crime, and there will be lower levels of under-age crime and drinking
- Communities will have confident, informed and active members of the community who can protect themselves and the more vulnerable members of the community from the effects of incidents and events like flooding and abuse in all its forms
- There will be fewer fires, with a consequential reduction in the number of deaths and injuries. Fewer people will be killed or seriously injured on our roads
- Opportunities for individuals and communities to engage with the Council will be strengthened and people will be more satisfied with the Council

What we will do to make sure we are...

## ...as effective and efficient as possible

We will prioritise our services to ensure that we are able to offer the support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities need, when they need it. We will re-engineer our services to look for new, different and more effective ways of delivering services, and will ensure that we have the right staff with the right skills to deliver them. And we will put individuals, our customers, at the very heart of everything we do.

### Name/type of activity:

- Deliver the Better for People programme
- Deliver the Better Highways programme
- Deliver the Better Transport programme
- Deliver the Better for Children programme
- Deliver the Better Places for Work programme
- Procure delivery of a new ICT contract
- Provide new community fire stations
- Use Information, Business Improvement and Technology to drive efficiencies and service improvement across the organisation
- Have the right people working in modern and efficient ways through implementation of the Workforce Plan
- Improve Value For Money through better procurement and contract management and through closer working with external partners, including working with the Third Sector
- Reduce the number of buildings we own and use
- Keep on top of national policy, knowing what it means for Cumbria and our services

### Rationale:

The various “Better” programmes are aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council, ensuring that resources are used as effectively as possible and that all waste and duplication is eradicated. This will free up resources so that they can be focussed on supporting service delivery where it is most needed.

New fire stations in Carlisle, Workington, Penrith and Patterdale will replace the existing unfit premises, providing better facilities for enhanced community engagement.

It is a key aim of the Council to be as effective and efficient as possible and to make challenging poverty, protecting the vulnerable and protecting the disadvantaged a priority. Making sure that our internal systems and processes are as effective as possible, that we get as much value for money as possible out of our procurement, commissioning and contracts, and that we are able to accurately assess the implications for Cumbria of national and regional policy and plan accordingly, are all an important part of this.

### Where are we now:

A lot of the groundwork has been completed for the various “Better” programmes, and many have already made significant progress. A new ICT Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2010, and various work has been carried out around the more effective use of existing and new technology to improve efficiency and reduce levels of waste and duplication across the organisation. Work is also underway on a new Information Strategy and Customer Service Strategy which will be implemented in 2011.

Staff increasingly have the right skills and attitudes to provide excellent services. Through the Single Status process, historic equal pay claims have largely been dealt with.

Much of the preparatory work for sharing services has been completed which should enable the Council to move forward quickly and effectively with shared services over the next 3 years. New arrangements are in place for commercial strategic partners – the transition to new arrangements for service delivery, as a result of the end of our contract with Capita, has been finalised and will be implemented throughout 2011. A reshaping of the Corporate Procurement function is currently underway. This will offer the best possible focus on the key procurement issues for the council and will help the organisation to be more cost-effective.

The Council currently works closely with the Third Sector in many aspects of its work, and the implications of national and regional policy are assessed and used to inform Council policy and strategy.

#### What will success look like:

- Through the Better for People programme, our Adults & Local Services teams will no longer be structured around function but focused on locality teams bringing together a variety of roles with a common purpose, centred around the needs of vulnerable people
- As a result of the Better Highways programme, we will continue to ensure that road faults are fixed permanently first time
- Through the Better Transport programme, those most in need will be able to access the services they need by the most suitable transport and children and young people will receive reliable home to school/college transport
- Through the Better for Children programme, Children's Services will have streamlined central functions that are more aligned with key partners for shared service delivery, and will be able to maintain targeted frontline services focussed on the most vulnerable
- We will have modern, fit for purpose fire stations based in more appropriate locations. Communities will be better engaged and will have increased opportunities to be involved with community safety. There will be a resulting reduction in the number of fires and a consequential fall in the number of deaths and injuries
- We will be providing better services with fewer resources. Customers will increasingly be able to participate in service design and delivery, and will be satisfied with better access to services. Services will be doing more with less, generating savings and achieving efficiency targets
- Single Status will have been fully implemented and we will have the right staff working in modern and effective ways
- We will have increasingly effective procurement of goods and services
- We will have modern, accessible customer-focussed service delivery arrangements in place
- Through the Better Places for Work programme we will have high quality, fit for purpose premises. We will have lower property costs and lower levels of carbon emissions from Council property
- The Third Sector will be more closely engaged in service design and delivery
- The Council will be fully aware of the potential implications of national and regional policy and this will be used to inform and influence corporate policy

## Reporting on progress

This Council Plan is a three year document, setting out the key priorities and areas of activity for the Council up to 2014. We will review the plan annually and update it if appropriate and necessary.

A set of key performance indicators will be published alongside the Council Plan. These will be used to measure progress against the things we have said we will do.

We will review performance against the Council Plan and these key performance indicators every 6 months and make these reports available on our website [www.cumbria.gov.uk](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk).

The Council addresses Value for Money in a range of ways and has embedded it in the approach to decision making and planning. Cabinet and Council reports include specific detail about Value for Money implications; the 'Better' programmes are tackling efficiency and effectiveness in a range of areas; use of benchmarking material is a key component of the strategic planning cycle; and, regular review activity takes place on the Council Plan, Budget and service plans in order to ensure delivery is against time and budget.

In developing the Council Plan, consideration has been given to the potential impact the priorities, aspirations and activity described within the Plan may have on people protected under the Equality Act and upon those people living in rural areas. Implementation of the Council Plan will be described within Directorate Service Plans which will need to have regard to the issues arising from the thematic Equality Impact Assessments being undertaken and issues identified through the Equalities screening of budget proposals.

You can get copies of the Council Plan 2011-14 from our website:

[www.cumbria.gov.uk/council-democracy/councillors-democracy-elections/strategies/corporate.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/council-democracy/councillors-democracy-elections/strategies/corporate.asp).

Alternatively, you can contact the Policy, Planning & Communities team on **(01228) 226686** or email [policy@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:policy@cumbriacc.gov.uk). We will provide all documents in alternative formats and languages if you ask us.

## Back cover

[a short summary will be provided for each highlight/award in the published version of the Council Plan]

- 13/10/2010 - [Top award for temporary bridge team](#)
- 5/10/2010 - [Praise for Cumbria's Fire Service](#)
- 24/9/2010 - [Toasting the best school catering staff in the country](#)
- 23/9/2010 - [The art of celebrating Cumbria's young people](#)
- 17/9/2010 - [Fire figures show Cumbria as one of the best](#)
- 2/9/2010 - [Ulverston dementia unit awarded national gold standard](#)
- 23/7/2010 - [St Patrick's scoops recycling award](#)
- 5/7/2010 - [Cumbria County Council achieves triple awards for skills](#)
- 7/6/2010 - [Downing Street visit for fire awards nominees](#)
- 28/5/2010 - [Top award for Barker Crossing](#)
- 26/5/2010 - [Mark Clifford honoured by Cumbria Constabulary](#)
- 22/4/2010 - [National acclaim for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service](#)
- 14/4/2010 - [Cumbria Outdoors takes gold](#)