CUMBRIA LOCAL DEMOCRACY COMMISSION

REPORT

Cumbria County Council
FOREWORD

This document presents the report of the Cumbria Local Democracy Commission which conducted a programme of inquiries during the second half of 2005.

We were commissioned by Cumbria County Council (CCC) and assisted by a Secretariat which they provided. However, we were independent both in determining our programme of work and in our findings, conclusions and recommendations. We came to our task from a wide range of backgrounds and we approached many of the issues we considered from very different standpoints, but this is the report of us all.

During the course of our inquiries we took a broad overview of the operation of local democracy in Cumbria. Our main focus was on CCC’s activities but we also considered other bodies with important roles in our area of interest. Additionally, we needed to ask some wider questions and to consider aspects of central government policies and their implications. We sought to ask questions which would help us unravel the public service systems and the central government to local government relationships. Our report reflects our voyage of discovery, and our conclusions from it.

By the end of our inquiries we had a full understanding that local democracy is a complex process. We had also formed a view that the very complexity of all local government organizations and the systems of provision of public services is challenging for citizens to understand. This we think has its democratic disadvantages - not least that voters may feel unconvinced their vote has any direct impact on the local services they receive.

Most serious of our findings, and one about which we have deep concern, is that a range of recent, and in many cases apparently unrelated, developments seem to be acting against Cumbria’s best interests. As a consequence, it is not only facing a slowly growing economy by national standards but also an increasing risk of becoming more remote and marginalised than its geographic location necessitates.

We believe that this calls for concerted action on the part of all those living and working in Cumbria, and we hope this report will provide a stimulus to that process.

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Members of the Cumbria Local Democracy Commission
January 2006
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

1. This is the report of the Cumbria Local Democracy Commission, which was established by Cumbria County Council (CCC) to undertake an independent programme of inquiries in Cumbria from late-May to December 2005.

2. Our remit was: To make recommendations on the most effective means of the County Council engaging with and responding to the needs of local communities. However, we were also asked to consider 9 ‘key issues’ relating to local democracy, service provision and the development of local government in Cumbria.

3. Our report is structured in 6 Chapters. These deal with: background to the Commission’s work and remit (Chapter 1); Cumbria’s governance, and socio-economic characteristics (Chapter 2); national policies for local government (Chapter 3); provision of services in Cumbria (Chapter 4); public opinion on service provision and local democracy (Chapter 5); and findings, conclusions, recommendations and responses on ‘key issues’ (Chapter 6).

Overview of Cumbria

4. Cumbria is one of the most environmentally rich areas of England. It has a national and international reputation as a tourism destination and offers a very attractive place to live. Economic and social indicators and survey studies suggest that it is not a county which considers itself overly beset with overwhelming problems. In much of the county wages are low but in most districts there is a high level of employment and the average social indicators for deprivation, health, crime, and so on compare reasonably favourably with national or regional averages.

5. But Cumbria also has another side: there are localise pockets of very significant deprivation; about 40% of the population is in the ‘moderate means’ and ‘hard pressed’ socio-economic categories; there are areas with very poor health records and high levels of criminal damage and violent crime. Overall, there has been a recent decline in the economy, which can only add to the social and economic problems which already can be identified.

6. In addition to tourism, the county has substantial economic reliance on the manufacturing sector and on rural industries, and these are under pressure as a result of global trade policies and the need to maintain international cost competitiveness. The county also has some significant challenges to economic development: poor transport infrastructure; no coherent local university education structure; and development constraints arising from large areas of environmentally designated land, including two areas of national park.

7. Local government functions in Cumbria are provided mainly by CCC, but specified services are provided by ‘district’ level councils: Allerdale Borough Council, Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Copeland Borough Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council. Additionally, most of the county is divided into 269 Civil Parishes; these have town or parish
councils or parish meetings which provide for local community representation and community action.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

8. We have structured our findings, conclusions and 33 recommendations within 7 cross-cutting themes, before addressing the 9 ‘key issues’ which we were asked to consider. The themes, are: Voter Engagement, Accountability and Governance; Structure of Local Government; Structure of CCC; Locality Working; Service Delivery and Business Processes; Community Engagement; and Cumbria Leadership

Voter Engagement, Accountability and Governance (paragraphs 6.11 - 6.46)

9. Voter engagement in Cumbria compares well with national levels. In the 2005 General Election voter turnout averaged 61.3% in England, and 63.9% in Cumbria; the lowest constituency turnout in Cumbria’s 6 constituencies (59%) was much higher than the lowest nationally (41.4%). Turnout levels for county council elections also averaged 62% and survey evidence suggests that 85% of those who vote in county council elections also vote in district council elections, and 46% in parish council elections.

10. These figures are consistent with a comparatively strong level of voter engagement with electoral processes and suggest turnout for a given type of election is probably in line with perceptions of the importance of the electoral event. This carries the implication that voters will become more democratically engaged if there is a clear link between elections and the elected body’s responsibilities for delivery of services. During our inquiries we found that in many cases the link between CCC and the services which it provides is not always apparent.

11. **Recommendation 1**: We recommend that, as a means of promoting voter engagement, CCC should adopt a comprehensive policy of ensuring that all its activities and contributions are made clearly apparent to the electorate of Cumbria (paragraph 6.17).

12. We found that central government policy initiatives or schemes, partnership working and outsourcing arrangements can sometimes put at risk the important links of public understanding and service-provider accountability. We concluded that the public has a right to clear information on the service provider(s) and on the services being provided.

13. **Recommendation 2**: We recommend that for all services in which it is involved, through partnership or otherwise, CCC should indicate clearly who is responsible for service delivery and the nature of their relationship with the Council (paragraph 6.24).

14. **Recommendation 3**: We recommend that CCC provides, or ensures the provision of, information on the mechanisms for requesting service and for appeal/complaint to the service provider or the Council or the relevant public ombudsman (paragraph 6.25).
15. We examined a range of organisations in receipt of substantial public funding, testing each against the criteria of openness and public access to information. Most bodies offered a high level of openness and access to information, mainly through their websites; some organisations also provided public access to meetings. However, there were a number of specific instances where issues related to information access were raised with us, or where we noted shortcomings in the application of best practice, this led to three recommendations.

16. **Recommendation 4:** We recommend that CCC not only adopts best practice in openness and public information provision itself but encourages, and uses its leverage to secure, such practice to be adopted by other organisations with which it has close associations (paragraph 6.43).

17. **Recommendation 5:** We recommend that where CCC has a statutory presence on external bodies, such as the Lake District National Park Authority, it automatically rotates its representative members after two periods of office (for example, 6 - 8 years) and adopts succession planning to ensure that its representatives consist of a mixture of experienced members and ‘new blood’ (paragraph 6.44).

18. **Recommendation 6:** We recommend that County Councillors with membership of statutory bodies, such as the Lake District National Park Authority, should provide regular reports to the Cabinet on the operation of the external body and on any attendant issues that relate to CCC (paragraph 6.45).

**Structure of Local Government** (paragraphs 6.47 - 6.76)

19. The Government’s policy is to implement regional government structures. However, during the course of our inquiries we were struck by the low level of awareness of the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) amongst Cumbria’s citizens, despite its significant role in determining regional spatial strategy and influencing matters such as housing development, roads programmes and economic development.

20. **Recommendation 7:** We recommend that CCC undertakes an awareness and information campaign to communicate the NWRA’s structures and functions to the communities of Cumbria (paragraph 6.57).

21. We found that between the county and district levels of local government there are sometimes tensions which do not serve the interests of local citizens; also that Government is now ‘actively considering the case’ for local government reorganisation in the 34 two-tier English counties. We came to the view that citizens in Cumbria would be best served by central government making an early and clear statement of its intentions.

22. Considering future structures, we concluded that maintaining the size and integrity of Cumbria within the North West Regional structure is crucial; Cumbria should be accorded similar priority to the ‘city-regions’ further south, even though it is not dominated by a single conurbation. We also concluded that a variety of local government structures could be implemented in Cumbria but that the important Government decision – and decision for Cumbria – is not about the detail of the
local structures but about the division of responsibility between the strategic ‘unitary’ authority and whatever local structures – districts, towns, parishes or ‘neighbourhoods’ - might be created. To achieve effective and efficient services the strategic ‘unitary’ authority requires overall responsibility for main service provision, with concordats or contracts to devolve those responsibilities to a local level within an overall county-wide framework.

23. Notwithstanding the uncertainties about the future structure of local government, much Government policy seems written with unitary authorities in mind, and is more difficult to deliver in a two-tier structure. However, in Cumbria the scale and dispersed population requires CCC to have both a county-wide strategic focus and a focus on local service delivery.

24. **Recommendation 8:** We recommend that CCC seeks to persuade central government to ‘proof’ all its policies, so that two-tier counties are not disadvantaged (paragraph 6.75).

25. **Recommendation 9:** We recommend CCC should continue to adopt and, where possible, strengthen its policies for local targeting of service delivery (paragraph 6.76).

**Structure of Cumbria County Council** (paragraphs 6.77 – 6.112)

26. We found the present CCC committee systems are not working to the complete satisfaction of members and we have commented on aspects of the operation of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Panels system which we think can be improved. We identified a number of problems with the Local Committee system, and concluded that it does not fit well within the present CCC structures.

27. We considered the underlying objectives and various ways of strengthening the local dynamic, which we regard as essential (recommendation 9). Our proposals are for the introduction of Area Boards with a wider remit and role than the present Local Committees.

28. We envisage Area Boards will report directly to the Cabinet; their function will be formal, and that their reports will require consideration and formal written response from the appropriate Cabinet member(s). Thus, the Boards will not replace the executive functions of Cabinet decision-making, but they will have a clear and transparent role in the decision-making process. To undertake the type and level of non-executive role that we envisage, Area Boards must be provided with clear management accounts on the budgets and expenditures on services in their areas, along with meaningful information about service delivery standards and project delivery.

29. We envisage that Area Boards will include all County Councillors who have divisions within the relevant area and will have the option to co-opt members of the district councils and representatives from the parish councils in the Board’s area.
30. **Recommendation 10:** We recommend that CCC replaces its Local Committee structures with a system based on Area Boards and in parallel introduces budget and management accounting procedures and activity reporting/outcome systems which will allow the Area Boards properly to assess the services and the effectiveness and efficiency of use of resources in their local area (paragraph 6.106).

31. **Recommendation 11:** We recommend that Area Boards are constituted in a way that permits co-option of a limited number of external members, including representatives from the district council sector and the parish council sector, preferably with some consistency in approach to Area Board composition between different areas (paragraph 6.109).

**Locality Working** (paragraphs 6.113 – 6.137)

32. From the standpoint of integrated locality working and democratic accountability, service areas should be consistent across CCC’s Corporate Directorates and compatible with the Area Board geography. However, whilst Local Committees have been based on the 6 district areas, we found that present CCC services are structured on 9 area, 7 area, 6 area, 5 area, 4 area and 3 area geographies, depending on the service.

33. Initial analysis suggests that complete commonality of service areas between Corporate Directorates may be difficult to achieve in the short-term, although closer alignment should be considered in conjunction with a review of CCC’s property holdings. Since some services may need to continue within different service areas, this will need to be accommodated in the systems of financial and management reporting to Area Boards.

34. We believe that at this time it is possible to make a case for 3-Area Board or 4-Area Board models, with the first being stronger in terms of its metrics and the second being stronger in terms of its policy relevance, which in our view is a very important strategic consideration.

35. **Recommendation 12:** We recommend that CCC establishes locality working in a way that allows its internal management and reporting systems and the proposed Area Boards to become better aligned (paragraph 6.121).

36. Internally CCC is structured in six ‘service’ Directorates, which align more or less with the corporate plan themes and one Directorate which is focused on the internal operation of the Council. They are linked in the Corporate Management Team but we found comparatively few ‘bridges’ at lower organisational levels.

37. Professional-specialism line management is essential for the consistency and quality of services to meet national performance targets and Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). However, more integrated working at the local level is a key consideration in ‘putting the public first’, and needs co-location of services, one-door access and a seam-free operation between services. At present, the management drivers that would take CCC in this direction are weak.
38. We therefore propose there should be a senior appointment of Area Manager in each of the Area Board locations, charged with pro-actively seeking to identify and act on opportunities to develop more integrated local service systems. It is essential that both the Area Managers and the Corporate Directors have full access to the same area-based cost and performance data.

39. **Recommendation 13:** We recommend that as part of its local service improvement strategy CCC implements an area management approach through the appointment of dedicated posts of Area Managers (paragraph 6.130).

40. We have concluded that responsibilities for developing the service areas and Area Boards would best be located with a single Portfolio Holder under Theme A (Improving Council Services). We envisage that there will be significant development over the coming period, and the integration of service systems will need to be actively managed.

41. **Recommendation 14:** We recommend that responsibility for the development of service area and Area Board approaches in Cumbria be given to a clearly identified Portfolio Holder who will receive, and as appropriate respond to, reports and papers from the Area Boards (paragraph 6.136).

**Service Delivery and Business Processes** (paragraphs 6.138 – 6.158)

42. On the basis of a telephone survey and a written consultation we established that there was a good level of satisfaction with many services in Cumbria, but there were also services that fell well short of public expectations. Across the spectrum of all service sectors, the poorest services identified were: dental services, where there was a widespread dissatisfaction; youth services, which are going through a process of improvement; road maintenance, which has been subject to ‘best value’ outsourcing; and public airport services, which in Cumbria are virtually non-existent.

43. Because of the changes in the system of assessment it is not possible readily to compare CPA scores published in December 2005\(^1\) with those in previous years. CCC’s ‘direction of travel’ was assessed as ‘improving well’; but its score relative to other English county councils remained low. We are aware that in the past year CCC has introduced a largely new senior management team and has initiated a series of measures designed to improve its CPA position. However, other councils are also improving and if Cumbria is to ‘move up the league’ it will need to undertake an accelerated programme of change management.

44. **Recommendation 15:** We strongly recommend that CCC adopts management policies and strategies that will allow it to address improved CPA as its number one priority, seeking to consider additional targets only where they reflect overriding community needs and priorities (paragraph 6.144).

45. CCC has made extensive use of the Best Value regime for outsourcing services, and this is reported to have led to significant cost savings. Some of the business-

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partnership arrangements have, with modifications, been extended for a further period; we therefore concluded that CCC has been convinced of the operating benefits and business case for single-supplier, best-value-partnership arrangements.

46. From our findings we concluded three things. Firstly, that retaining a core of highly skilled personnel within CCC has become a business-critical consideration for it to act as an ‘intelligent customer’; we identify core skills in ICT and contract management as generic needs. Secondly, in outsourcing its ‘back office’ services, particularly human resource management, CCC may not have retained sufficient internal capacity at a time when it is actively engaging in a major programme of change management, staff development and elected member development. Thirdly, there is apparent public unease created by the prominence of Capita Symonds as a service provider rather than CCC.

47. **Recommendation 16:** We recommend that on all funded road works CCC’s logo should be prominently displayed so that there is public understanding of its continuing role in respect of roads and related infrastructure (paragraph 6.150).

48. We did not encounter any widespread demand for neighbourhood management of CCC services – but specific proposals may arise and we believe that each should be seriously examined on its merits. However, in outsourcing of this type, CCC must robustly ensure that its CPA is not put at risk and that the costs and benefits of outsourcing are properly evaluated. This must take account both of the outsourced service and that which remains to be provided by CCC.

49. **Recommendation 17:** We recommend that due consideration be given to requests from town or parish councils who wish locally to manage an element of CCC’s service provision, provided that the service can be offered at equivalent or lower cost and at the same or higher service quality (paragraph 6.154).

50. We were impressed by the motivation and initiative showed by the voluntary and community sector and the scale of the programmes of work being undertaken. However, we had concerns about the potential costs of their organisational structures. Through ‘The Compact’ CCC has a special relationship with the sector, and is in a well-informed position to provide it with advice on benchmark costs.

51. **Recommendation 18:** We recommend that CCC alerts the local voluntary sector organisations to relevant cost comparators, so that they can adjust to the market and retain an appropriate level of local capacity (paragraph 6.156).

52. At many points during our inquiries we were favourably impressed by the dedication and commitment of CCC’s personnel, but we also noted and have listed areas where we think there are issues to address.

53. **Recommendation 19:** We recommend that CCC undertakes a substantial enhancement of its staff training and development programmes to facilitate the implementation of its ‘putting the public first’ strategy (paragraph 6.158).
Community Engagement (paragraph 6.159 – 6.185)

54. Our consultations indicated that the Neighbourhood Forum system is meeting an identifiable community engagement role. Events are reported as worthwhile points of contact between local communities and County Councillors and as a route of information provision to the community. They are also seen as a source of funding for small local projects.

55. Public awareness of Neighbourhood Forums was reasonably high (62%), but there was much less evidence that they were seen as an effective route for the public to express views about services. Our own inquiries found that the Neighbourhood Forum system lacks effective ways of channelling information back into CCC’s policy development and decision-making processes, so that even where public opinion is gathered the impact is likely to be small.

56. Whilst successful in attracting both young and old, the events provide a relatively narrow window for exchange of views between CCC and Cumbria’s citizens. Looked at from the standpoint of outward communication, attendees are a small group, 1-2% of the population, but envisaged as a focus group of ‘engaged citizens’ they could represent a useful aid in assessing public views on key issues. We have listed a number of measures through which the value of the Neighbourhood Forums can be improved.

57. **Recommendation 20:** We recommend that the Neighbourhood Forum system be internally reviewed and the concept, system and activities revised and ‘refreshed’ (paragraph 6.163).

58. We have some reservations about the present arrangements for neighbourhood development work undertaken by CCC’s Community Unit. We have no doubt that the unit consists of able, well motivated and hard-working personnel and that their programmes of work deliver some well-appreciated benefits to local groups and communities in Cumbria. However, we could detect little strategic targeting or prioritisation in support of policy objectives or properly evaluated prioritisation of local needs. This problem appears to have been recognised internally, and the Community Unit’s recent publication *Local Matters: A Framework for Community Engagement* sets out a robust framework within which community engagement projects should be initiated and undertaken.

59. **Recommendation 21:** We recommend that the framework for community engagement set out in *Local Matters: A Framework for Community Engagement* is fully implemented and that a formal system is introduced whereby community engagement initiatives and projects are reported to and approved by the proposed Area Managers (paragraph 6.166).

60. For the proposed Area Boards to fulfil their roles they will require officer support to establish and evaluate the needs and requirements of communities in their areas, and to assess the impact of proposed Government and CCC policies on local communities. Relevant policy analysis and community engagement skills are

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present in the Community Unit, although additional staff development may be required.

61. **Recommendation 22:** We recommend that in developing the Community Unit’s programme of work new emphasis is given to qualitative and quantitative assessment of community needs and to local impact analysis of policy change; in this, engagement with parish councils would assist in local capacity building (paragraph 6.167).

62. Grants, awarded via the Neighbourhood Forums and through other routes, are valued both by local County Councillors and communities as a means of funding small community programmes and local initiatives. The system for their distribution was therefore investigated as part of our programme of work. It became apparent that in total there was a significant sum being distributed, in excess of £6M per annum, but this information was not apparently readily available to CCC officers, elected members or members of the public.

63. There was no sign that accounting rules were not being adhered to but there was evidence that compliance reporting by grant recipients was not always taking place. Additionally, the systems for determining, advertising and distributing grants were many and various and this raised questions about whether best use was being made of public money. In theory, the grants budget is linked with the Corporate Strategy. In practice the distribution of grants is far removed from any such link, and we have listed measures whereby that link and other objectives can be met.

64. **Recommendation 23:** We strongly recommend that the process of allocating CCC grants be reviewed and a method of establishing a link between all grants programmes and the Corporate Strategy be created (paragraph 6.172).

65. From a standpoint of community engagement CCC’s capacity to communicate what it is doing on behalf of citizens, what services are being offered, what developments are being undertaking and so on, is fundamental. Based on what we have found there is insufficient strategic planning underpinning the communication programme overall and there is a need for technical improvements in the communication processes. During the last few months there have been personnel changes in CCC’s communications team, and there is ongoing work to refresh and develop the communication strategy.

66. **Recommendation 24:** We recommend that CCC comprehensively reviews its communication strategy covering publications, information leaflets, advertisements, web-based information, telephone helplines and broadcast and news media (paragraph 6.176).

67. We identified a number of activities which we considered could be enhanced to create better community engagement. These included: information and communication technology systems; website improvements; use of e-petitions; and webcasting of CCC meetings. We have commented on these and made two specific recommendations.

68. **Recommendation 25:** We recommend that CCC develops an e-petition system that is integrated into its decision-making processes (paragraph 6.182).
69. **Recommendation 26:** We recommend that CCC investigates webcasting to allow a wider range of people to gain access to its meetings (paragraph 6.185).

Cumbria Leadership (paragraph 6.186 – 6.222)

70. The Government’s policies for local government development place emphasis on Councillors providing ‘strong leadership’ - characterised as being: enablers of the community; champions of their area; challengers and scrutineers; shapers of services around the citizen; and decision-makers. We suspect that many County Councillors will already identify with these characteristics and activities, but also accept that professional development is relevant to everyone.

71. Through the Achieving Cumbrian Excellence (ACE) programme and new CCC training initiatives, elected members have been assessed for personal development plans to gain additional skills and expertise. Also, CCC has instituted a system of weekly information bulletins on ongoing local developments and changes in Government policies and legislation. These are excellent initiatives and we have made some suggestions for their further development.

72. **Recommendation 27:** We recommended that CCC builds on, but substantially develops, the systems for continuous professional development and information support of elected members that recently have been put in place (paragraph 6.190).

73. During the course of evidence gathering we have encountered a clear community view that CCC has a central role in safeguarding democracy for Cumbria and in looking after the county’s interests. However, it was also said that the county seems to have lost confidence and that ‘leadership’ has declined from that which characterised the county’s early years.

74. We do not subscribe to the view that the leadership of Cumbria rests solely with CCC. Rather it is a responsibility to be shared between council representatives and Cumbria’s cadre of business and community leaders. All have their part to play in ‘raising Cumbria’s game’ and advancing the interests of its communities. For CCC, the Leader and Cabinet Members, and the Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Directors, have clearly identifiable leadership roles. However, more widely, local leadership throughout the county implies the involvement of elected members of all parties, as well as the commitment of CCC’s local personnel.

75. During our inquiries we encountered a number of areas in which we concluded CCC should more actively engage in setting the agenda, ensuring standards are being met, or being involved in a way that would reflect its leadership position. We have given are 4 examples, which we consider important and have made 6 related recommendations concerning: Cumbria’s economy (recommendations 28 and 29); strategic partnerships (recommendation 30); university education and rural knowledge transfer (recommendations 31 and 32); and transport infrastructure (recommendation 33).
76. Recommendation 28: We recommend that CCC should engage fully with its leadership role in respect of the Cumbria economy and make every effort to work with both NWDA and business and community leaders to address the county’s low rate of economic growth (paragraph 6.206).

77. Recommendation 29: We recommend that CCC formally explores with the NWDA the basis on which joint-initiative Boards are established so as to safeguard fully the position of both organisations (paragraph 6.207).

78. Recommendation 30: We recommend that CCC promotes and ensures a rigorous approach to governance and accountability in all the strategic partnerships in which it engages (paragraph 6.213).

79. Recommendation 31: We recommend that CCC should urgently re-engage with the discussions of university development in Cumbria to ensure that the institutional structures and models of provision that are put in place fully meet the county’s need for technological and vocational education (paragraph 6.217).

80. Recommendation 32: We recommend that, as part of its dialogue with the university sector, CCC specifically discusses knowledge transfer to the rural industries with the UCLAN (Newton Rigg) (paragraph 6.219).

81. Recommendation 33: We recommend that CCC, working with others, engages vigorously and creatively in seeking to address the deficits in Cumbria’s road, rail and air service infrastructure (paragraph 6.222).

**Key Issues** (paragraph 6.186 – 6.259)

82. The ‘key issues’ we were asked to consider are summarised in the Table on the following page. Our detailed considerations are given in the paragraph references shown, and our recommendations that relate to each key area are indicated.

83. On key issue 9 - the arrangements for the local council areas - we consider it a largely second-stage issue, which would follow the all important decision to establish a strategic authority with comprehensive oversight of main service provisions. In our view, local structures based on districts or on city, town and ‘parish-area’ councils (i.e. ‘neighbourhoods’), or on a combination of all, could be viable. However, it is clear that any expansion of the role of towns and parishes in a district area would require a contraction of the corresponding district council responsibilities.

84. In considering the way forward we have identified four main points of concern. Firstly, the cost of local government reform will be enormous, and may be a distraction from the pressing problems facing Cumbria. Secondly, the White Paper proposed for 2006 might set out a prescriptive set of ‘neighbourhood’ models, whereas we feel the need is for flexible. Thirdly, it might not fully address the issue that strategic authorities must be given responsibility for all the main local government services, even though they may devolve selected services to be managed and delivered by more local ‘neighbourhood’ councils. This provides flexibility but it also ensures a structured and disciplined approach, and the opportunity for some economies of scale. Finally, for a pyramidal local government
structure of this type to work fully and effectively, central-government must exert discipline in directing its local engagement, and the engagement of its agencies, through the strategic authority, further developing the approach it has established as the basis for Local Area Agreements.

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<td>improved customer care, making people’s contact with the Council easier.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The role of elected members as community leaders, especially in public</td>
<td>6.247 – 6.249 5 – 7, 30, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engagement with non-Council organisations’ decision-making and delivery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>related policy documents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

DEMOCRACY

1.1 Democracy is important. It is the system that underpins the national governance of almost every leading country in the world; and it is fundamental to the British way of life. Most British citizens would simply regard democracy as ‘the way we do things’. But democracy is a concept rather than a tightly specified system. Different countries have different systems of democracy, each with particular strengths and weaknesses. Each system seeks to meet the demands of its citizens and communities, and often operates at several different levels - national, state or region, and local.

1.2 The Oxford English Dictionary offers two relevant definitions of democracy: (1) a system of government by the whole population usually through elected representatives; (2) an egalitarian and tolerant form of society. The first definition is clear and unequivocal, and it fits well with the long-standing British democratic tradition; the second definition is broader and more open to interpretation.

1.3 Egalitarian, implying equal rights for all, and tolerant, implying an acceptance of other people’s rights of freedom of opinion and action - are features of many democracies. However, they are essentially characteristics of liberalism rather than of democracy itself. In liberal democracies, such as we have in Britain, we accept that the will of majority may need to be curbed to safeguard the interests of minorities. However, we also seek to safeguard the interests of the majority by ensuring that overly assertive minorities do not exert disproportionate influence.

1.4 In contemporary Britain there is also a very practical expression of egalitarianism which is focused on the rights of all citizens to have good access to high-quality public services - good education, good health care, a safe and protected environment, and a social and economic framework which provides opportunities for the many rather than the few. Citizens justifiably expect these rights to be supported by systems that provide:

- services meeting public expectation and community needs;
- good accessibility to public information;
- strong public engagement, with mechanisms for complaint or appeal;
- evidence-based policy making and public consultation;
- efficient decision making and implementation in the interests of the people; and
- a rigorous approach to probity and the efficient and effective use of public resources.

1.5 But for such systems to thrive citizen’s rights must be accompanied by citizen’s responsibilities, not least of which is engagement with the democratic process. A strong democracy relies on public participation in decision making. If citizens cannot, or do not, participate democracy is weakened and its legitimacy tested.
BACKGROUND TO THIS REPORT

1.6 In March 2005, the Cabinet of the Cumbria County Council (CCC) decided to establish an independent Cumbria Local Democracy Commission (‘the Commission’) as a short-term working party to consider issues pertinent to democracy and the provision of services to the citizens of Cumbria.

1.7 The Cabinet’s decision took account of a number of factors. Firstly, there have been national concerns about the nature and health of democracy, including concerns about:

- voter apathy and disengagement from the representative political process;
- the increased growth of single issue campaigns and pressure-group politics;
- low levels of engagement in conventional consultation mechanisms, particularly amongst the young and ‘hard-to-reach’ groups;
- a perceived decline in public attendance at consultation meetings; and
- the non-representative age and gender profile of many elected-member organisations.

1.8 Secondly, there have been recent significant changes in approaches to local government including:

- the introduction of more ‘customer focus’, responding to the needs of community leadership and service delivery;
- a drive continually to improve services and ensure their delivery is based on user needs;
- a move towards multi-service and multi-agency methods of working;
- the emergence of new forms of local representation, such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs); and
- an emphasis on ‘new localism’, and devolution of powers and responsibilities to local community bodies.

1.9 Thirdly, whilst central government has been supportive of the principle of devolving power and responsibility to the most local level, it has also pursued countervailing policies, including:

- a move towards larger and more integrated government structures and government agencies;
- a development of regional governmental structures; and
- an increased use of centrally-funded schemes, which serve to determine the use of resources at local level.
1.10 Against this background the Commission was tasked with reviewing matters relevant to local democracy in Cumbria and considering ways in which CCC might best respond to the needs of local communities.

REMIT AND KEY ISSUES

1.11 The Commission’s remit was:

To make recommendations on the most effective means of the County Council engaging with and responding to the needs of local communities.

1.12 However, within that remit the Commission was asked to consider a series of key issues.

- Levels of engagement and participation in democracy in Cumbria on which to develop an evidence-based approach to work.

- Identification of meaningful local areas that reflect how people live and with which they identify, through which CCC can engage with communities; including identification of the means to engage with communities of interest and meaningful ways of engagement.

- Ways of improving involvement and participation in decision making, including hard-to-reach groups.

- Ways to enable the overall work of CCC to ‘put the public first’, by ensuring that services are genuinely built around the needs of local people and the communities in which they live.

- The type of council functions and services that exist and the extent to which decision making and delivery is best undertaken at local, area or county levels.

- How best to achieve coordination across services and between organisations operating at a local level, including the involvement of the voluntary and community sectors.

- How good practice in locality working can help form part of an approach to improved customer care, making people’s contact with the Council easier.

- The role of elected members as community leaders, especially in public engagement with non-Council organisations’ decision-making and delivery.

- The implications of the Government’s 10-year vision for local government and related policy documents.

COMMISSION AND PROGRAMME OF WORK

1.13 Following the Cabinet’s decisions on terms of reference, the Commission (see Appendix 1) was appointed and began a programme of work, which has resulted in this report. Over the period we, the members, determined and conducted a wholly
independent programme of inquiries and held 8 plenary meetings to consider our findings and develop our conclusions and recommendations.

1.14 Our programme of work consisted of four main components:

- desk-based research to review a range of policy and other documents;
- face to face interviews and meetings with people who were able to provide insights into the matters under consideration;
- a written consultation to obtain inputs from groups or individuals, selected on the basis of their interests and locations, and through a public website; and
- a telephone survey to obtain citizens’ responses to some specific questions about services in Cumbria and about local democracy and decision-making.

The References and Bibliography section of the report summarises the main documents to which we made reference and Appendix 2 lists people to whom we owe a special gratitude for providing information, evidence and comment.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

1.15 Our inquiries were focused mainly on CCC’s areas of responsibility, but it was accepted that this should not preclude consideration of the work of other relevant bodies. We concluded that our main task was to address local democracy in Cumbria in relation to improvements which would be of benefit to local citizens and communities. However, in practice we found it necessary to consider wider questions, both to put our findings into context and to provide an understanding of the underlying issues. This led us to consider aspects of central government policies and their implications in Cumbria; interactions between CCC and other key organisations; and organisational and operational features of CCC itself.

1.16 Our report is structured in 6 Chapters. This first Chapter provides the background and summarises our remit and programme of work. Chapter 2 presents a synopsis of relevant facts and figures about Cumbria, as a necessary background to understanding the later parts of the report. Chapter 3 provides a selective overview of recent Government policy developments and comments on policies which have influenced developments in Cumbria. Chapter 4 considers the provision of services and some key service providers in Cumbria. Chapter 5 presents the findings of our survey and written consultations. Finally, Chapter 6 presents our deliberations on local democracy and addresses the remit and the related key issues highlighted in our terms of reference.

1.17 Whilst some of our findings might have relevance to other areas of England we have not sought to generalise. Rather our purpose has been to maintain a focus on Cumbria, and on the specific matters we were asked to consider. Where we have identified issues or problems we have sought to outline practical solutions or to make specific recommendations. In some cases we have presented alternative options for CCC to consider.

1.18 We have tried to make the report reasonably self-contained and comprehensive to meet the needs of those who may not be familiar with the detail of the subjects under
consideration. This has inevitably resulted, in parts, in a rather technical document. However, we have plans to produce a brief synopsis highlighting our main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.19 We commend the report to CCC as a basis for future policy formulation. We also hope that it will interest organisations and citizens in Cumbria, many of whom have been extremely generous in providing us with information and in giving us their views. We offer them all our very sincere appreciation and thanks.
CHAPTER 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF CUMBRIA

INTRODUCTION

2.1 To gain a fuller understanding of the main characteristics of Cumbria we began our inquiries by bringing together a brief summary of information about the county. This was designed to provide a picture of the county’s natural resources and infrastructure; its governance structures and political representation; and its main socio-economic features. This information, supported by relevant statistics, forms the basis of this chapter.

NATURAL FEATURES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

2.2 Cumbria is in the North West Region of England. It is the second largest English county, and covers an area of some 676,800 hectares. It is bounded on the west by the Irish Sea, from the Solway Firth to Morecambe Bay, whilst to the north, east and south it is delineated by the Scottish border and the county borders with Northumberland, Durham, North Yorkshire and Lancashire (Appendix 3).

2.3 Cumbria is one of the most diverse and environmentally rich areas of England\(^3\). Substantial parts of the county are subject to national and international designations which recognise and serve to protect its landscape and other environmental assets. There are designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: in the east along the Pennines; in the western coastal zone from Maryport running north; and in the south along the Kent estuary. The Lake District National Park forms the central third of the county; a large area in the south east is part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park (Appendix 4); and there are current proposals to extend both national parks bringing an even greater area of the county under designations\(^4\).

2.4 The county is transected from north to south by the M6 Motorway, whilst east to west the primary trunk roadways are the A69/A595/A596 in the north, the A66 centrally and the A65/A591/A590 in the south. The A595 also provides a vital west-coast link between the major conurbation of Workington/Whitehaven and Barrow-in-Furness (Appendix 5a).

2.5 The main rail links run north to south in the east of the county, but there is also a rail loop following the south and west coast, and an important branch line between Windermere and Oxenholme (Appendix 5b). The county has no public airport, but there are airport facilities on Walney Island in the south west and at Brampton, near Carlisle, in the north.

CUMBRIA COUNCILS AND NATIONAL PARKS

2.6 Cumbria was established more than 30 years ago following the 1974 reorganisation of local government. It incorporated, the historic counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, a small part of the former West Riding of Yorkshire and the ‘Furness’ area, formerly part of Lancashire (Table 2.1).

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\(^3\) Pion (2005) *State of the Rural North West*.

\(^4\) Countryside Agency (2005) *National parks boundary review – Countryside Agency gives the go ahead*. 

24
Table 2.1. A summary of the local authority changes made at the time of the 1974 local government reorganisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-1974</th>
<th>Pre-1974</th>
<th>Post-1974</th>
<th>Post-1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle C.B. Council</td>
<td>Carlisle City Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workington M.B. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockermouth U.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keswick U.D. Council</td>
<td>Allerdale Borough Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryport U.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockermouth R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigton R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitehaven M.B. Council</td>
<td>Copeland Borough Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ennerdale R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millom R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith U.D. Council</td>
<td>Eden District Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alston &amp; Garrigill R.D Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Westmorland R.D Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleby M.B. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes U.D. Council (Patterdale Parish)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmorland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendal M.B. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes U.D. Council (excluding Patterdale Parish)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windermere U.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Westmorland R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Riding of Yorkshire</td>
<td>South Lakeland District Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedbergh R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulverston U.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grange U.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lonsdale R.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness C.B. Council</td>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalton-in-Furness U.D. Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source: CCC (1994) *Submission to the Local Government Commission.*

b) Abbreviations: CB – City Borough; MB – Municipal Borough; RD – Rural District; UD – Urban District.

2.7 Prior to 1974 the constituent parts of ‘Cumbria’ had local authority structures based on the 4 county councils and 27 rural district, urban district, municipal borough or city borough councils (Table 2.1). Reorganisation established a much simpler structure consisting of CCC and 6 sub-county councils⁵, namely Allerdale Borough Council, Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Copeland Borough Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council (Appendix 4).

2.8 However, except for the centres of Carlisle, Penrith, Whitehaven and Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria is also divided into Civil Parishes, the councils of which form another level of local government. The Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) in fact

⁵ Henceforth in the report for simplicity we have used the term ‘district councils’ to refer generically to the councils with responsibilities in the 6 sub-county areas.
lists 269 towns and parishes with local councils or with arrangements for town or parish meetings.

2.9 It is conventional to refer to areas which have both county councils and district councils as ‘two-tier’, but in many respects Cumbria could be regarded as ‘three-tier’ since that more reflects the presence and role of the town and parish councils.

2.10 The two National Parks provide an additional local government dimension. Created under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and operating under the Environment Act 1995, they are under the oversight and control of the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA). In the park areas, these bodies have planning and certain other responsibilities similar to those of a local council, but with more specific responsibilities for environmental protection.

POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

Parliamentary Elections

2.11 Since 1999, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have been elected on a regional basis using a party list system. In 2004 the election in the North West Region was by an all-postal ballot and voter turnout was 41.1%. The region returned 9 MEPs: 3 members of the Labour Party; 3 members of the Conservative Party; 2 members of the Liberal Democrat Party; and 1 member of the UK Independence Party.

2.12 Cumbria has 6 UK parliamentary constituencies. These at the 2005 General Election returned 4 Labour MPs in the west of the county, and 1 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat MP in the east. In each constituency voter turnout was comparatively high (Table 2.2), and in 5 of the 6 constituencies the successful candidate was elected with a substantial majority. The Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency was the exception. There the Liberal Democrat victory was by a narrow majority over the Conservatives.

Councils and Parishes

SPATIAL RELATIONSHIP

2.13 For district council elections Cumbria is divided into 168 wards. Most of these incorporate several civil parishes and many although not all are co-terminus with a group of parishes. County council elections are based on 84 electoral divisions; these when arranged in 6 groups are co-terminus with the 6 district boundaries but individual divisions are not necessarily co-terminus with groups of district council wards.

2.14 Likewise the 6 UK parliamentary constituencies are also not co-terminus with the 6 district council areas (Table 2.2); and although there is a recommendation for the

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6 The 2001 Census lists 284 Civil Parishes. However, there have been alterations in the parish structure, and amalgamations and the CALC list represents the parish structure in practice.
7 Where candidates for the list are chosen by their political parties.
9 This was increased from 83 after a review in 1999 (see Local Government Commission for England (1999) Final Recommendations on the Electoral Arrangements for Cumbria County Council.)
present parliamentary constituency boundaries to be revised before the 2009/2010 General Election co-terminosity with the local authority areas will not be established\(^\text{10}\).

Table 2.2 An outline of the results of the 2005 General Election in Cumbria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentary constituency</th>
<th>Main local authority areas with parts within constituency</th>
<th>Party elected</th>
<th>Election turnout (%)</th>
<th>Majority (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrow and Furness</td>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>Carlisle (part)</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith and the Border</td>
<td>Carlisle (part) and Eden</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmorland and Lonsdale</td>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>Liberal Democrat</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workington</td>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source BBC, news.bbc.co.uk

COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL TURNOUT

2.15 Elections for CCC take place on an all-in, all-out basis every 4 years and the elections can coincide with the UK parliamentary elections. In contrast, most district council elections are based on a system in which one third of seats is subject to election in 3 years within a 4-year cycle. Copeland Borough Council has adopted an alternative all-in, all-out system and has introduced full postal voting.

2.16 CCC is elected on the basis of a single member per division; and at the 2005 election the turnout of voters was comparatively high. It averaged almost 62% for the county as a whole, and ranged from a little over 56% to almost 70% between districts (Table 2.3). Highest turnouts were in South Lakeland (possibly reflecting the close contest in the parliamentary election), whilst lowest turnouts were in Barrow-in-Furness.

2.17 The figures for electoral turnouts at district elections are more difficult to summarise, since they vary significantly between election areas and between main elections and by-elections. Additionally, in Eden for example, a significant number of councillors are elected unopposed. The turnout figures given in Table 2.3 should therefore be treated as indicative ranges rather than averages. It appears that typically there is a 30-40% turnout for a district council election, although figures as low as 20% and as high as 60% have been recorded. The figure for Copeland appears exceptional and could reflect the electoral model that has been adopted there.

POLITICAL BALANCE

2.18 At the last CCC election in 2005, the Labour Party held the largest number of seats for a single party, but this was outweighed by the combined seats held by Conservatives and Liberal Democrats (Table 2.3), the parties which have led CCC in coalition since the 2001.

2.19 At the district level the political representation is more complex. Each ward has one or more members and the mix of members elected is politically more diverse, with a greater proportion of independent members in some district areas. Eden stands out as a

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\(^{10}\) The Boundary Committee for England (2001) *Final Recommendations for Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries in the County of Cumbria.*
special case since Eden District Council consists predominately of independent members (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3. Selected electoral statistics for Cumbria County Council for the 6 district councils and for town and parish councils.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of election/statistic</th>
<th>Allerdale</th>
<th>Barrow</th>
<th>Carlisle</th>
<th>Copeland</th>
<th>Eden</th>
<th>South Lakeland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Council</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Divisions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Councillors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political affiliation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democrat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout at election (%)</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘District’ Council</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Wards</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘District’ Councillors</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political affiliation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democrat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacancies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative turnout at elections (%)</td>
<td>36 - 41</td>
<td>19 -54</td>
<td>31 - 43</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22 - 51</td>
<td>42 - 66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total parishes/towns</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With councils</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With parish meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Indicative turnout figures for district councils supplied by the authorities or taken from their web-sites.
c) Eden District Council has 4 co-opted members not shown.
d) Parish information from CALC. Many parish councillors are co-opted or appointed without a public election.

2.20 At first sight, the political representation of Cumbria as reflected by the composition of the district councils appears different from that reflected by the composition of CCC (Figure 2.1). However, this is simply a consequence of the number of independent members at the district council level. When this is allowed for the balance between the Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Democrat Party at district and county levels is remarkable similar (Figure 2.1).

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

2.21 There are 84 county councillors and 287 district councillors in Cumbria; and making reasonable assumptions it can be estimated that there are in the region of 2,340
town and parish councillors\textsuperscript{11} (Table 2.3). Thus, taking all categories into account, there are \textit{ca} 2,700 councillors representing the community at the different levels, or approximately 1 councillor for every 180 people.

**Figure 2.1.** The comparative political composition (%) of the aggregate Cumbria district councils (CDC) and of Cumbria County Council (CCC); and the comparative composition (%) taking account only of the three main political parties.

\begin{figure}[!h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2.1.png}
\caption{The comparative political composition (%) of the aggregate Cumbria district councils (CDC) and of Cumbria County Council (CCC); and the comparative composition (%) taking account only of the three main political parties.}
\end{figure}

**Socio-Economics**

**Population and Population Distribution**

2.22 In 2004 the population of Cumbria was approximately 495,000; it was home for \textit{ca} 7.2\% of the population of the North West Region, although accounting for some 48\% of the region’s land area. Consistent with this, Cumbria – which is the third most sparsely populated area in the England – has an average population density of 0.7 persons per hectare, compared with 4.5 persons per hectare for the remainder of the North West Region.

2.23 The distribution of the population between the districts of Cumbria is shown in Table 2.4. There are significant urban population centres, for example, in the city of Carlisle (\textit{ca} 70,000 people), and in the coastal industrial towns of Barrow-in-Furness (\textit{ca} 60,000), Whitehaven (\textit{ca} 25,000) and Workington (\textit{ca} 25,000). There are also some significant town settlements, such as Kendal (\textit{ca} 27,500), Penrith (\textit{ca} 15,000), Ulverston (\textit{ca} 12,000), Maryport (\textit{ca} 11,500) and Dalton-in-Furness (\textit{ca} 11,500). However, most of Cumbria is characterised by its rurality and around 70\% of its settlements contain 200

\textsuperscript{11} There are 234 parishes/towns with councils (34 parishes hold parish meetings). According to CALC, a parish council will typically have an average \textit{ca} 10 councillors, suggesting approximately 2,340 parish councillors overall.
people or less. Population density varies between districts but, except for Barrow-in-Furness, averages 1.0 person per hectare or less. Eden district is an exceptionally sparsely populated area (Table 2.4).

### Table 2.4. Population of Cumbria and of its 6 districts in 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population (% of total)</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Area (% of total)</th>
<th>Population (persons/ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>494,800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>676,780</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>95,300</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>124,166</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness</td>
<td>70,500</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>7,796</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>103,500</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>103,997</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>70,600</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>73,176</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>214,241</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>102,900</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>153,404</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.24 The settlement pattern is also reflected in Cumbria’s small town and parish populations. The average number of people per parish is approximately 1,200 but the figures range from 27,500 for Kendal, the largest town parish, to 55 for Docker the smallest rural parish. Taken overall, parish populations are small, the 2004 electoral register, indicates almost 59% of parishes had less than 400 electors and 80% of parishes had less than 1000 (Table 2.5). Thus whilst there are many cohesive town and parish communities, their size, resources and local capacity vary enormously and in many cases is very limited. As an illustration, figures from CALC show that the town and parish precepts in 2004/2005 varied between councils from zero to £213,000.

### Table 2.5. A categorisation of parishes based on a banding of their electoral numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electors per parish</th>
<th>Total parishes (%)</th>
<th>Parishes (cumulative %) less than:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 or less</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 400</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401 - 600</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601 - 1,000</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,001 - 2,000</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,001 - 5,000</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,001 - 10,000</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 10,000</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures, based on 276 parishes. Source: CCC based on ONS statistics.

### Population Trends

2.25 The population of Cumbria has grown steadily over the past thirty years. The growth has been somewhat lower than the average for the UK as a whole but higher than the average for the North West Region, which has been in decline. Recent analysis suggests inward migration to Cumbria is more than offsetting the natural population
decline resulting from the difference between births and deaths, so that population increase will continue (Table 2.6). In the period 2003 to 2004 the population increased by 5,000 (1%), which was the result of a natural population decline of 700 and an inward migration of 5,700. In this period all areas showed a population growth, with the exception of Barrow-in-Furness where population was unchanged.

Table 2.6. Population trends for the UK, North West Region and Cumbria. (Increases are indexed against 1971 = 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>55,928</td>
<td>56,357</td>
<td>57,439</td>
<td>59,113</td>
<td>61,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (%)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.8</td>
<td>102.7</td>
<td>105.7</td>
<td>109.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North West Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>7,108</td>
<td>6,940</td>
<td>6,843</td>
<td>6,773</td>
<td>6,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (%)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumbria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (%)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td>102.5</td>
<td>102.9</td>
<td>104.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source: Phillpotts and Cohen (2005) Regional in Figures North West No 9, ONS 2004/05.

2.26 There is no indication that Cumbria’s increasing population is related to immigration from outwith the UK or Europe. Compared with the UK as a whole or with the North West Region, Cumbria has a low proportion of black and ethnic minorities (Table 2.7). However, Cumbria does have a high proportion of people of pension age and correspondingly lower proportions of people in all younger age groups. This population pattern is particularly pronounced in South Lakeland and to a lesser extent Eden, and anecdotally both are recognised as ‘immigration settlement zones’ for residents from other parts of England who are moving into retirement (Table 2.7).

**Economic Change**

2.27 Cumbria has a heritage of diverse and highly successful industry based on the exploitation of its natural resources and its innovation and creativity in manufacturing. Historically, its land, particularly in the more fertile east and north of the county, sustained robust agriculture and forestry sectors. Its mineral resources - lead, copper, coal, iron and slate - allowed mining, quarrying and heavy manufacturing industries to flourish. Barrow and the western coastal ports provided for a full panoply of maritime and shipping industries. Abundant access to fast flowing rivers and streams furnished the power for manufacturing mills dedicated to the production of textiles, paper and a wide range of specialist products. In more modern times new sectors of industry have also emerged, most notably through the development of the nuclear industry at Sellafield.
Table 2.7. Some population characteristics for the UK, North West Region and Cumbria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Black and Ethnic Minorities (%)</th>
<th>% of Population Aged:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Region</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 2.2. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and Gross Added Value (GVA) per capita as a proportion of the figure for the UK (UK=100)\(^\text{12}\).

Although subject to periods of dramatic evolution, as well as a more progressive pattern of continuing change, the industrial base of Cumbria’s economy was quite well maintained until relatively recent times. In the 1980s Cumbria’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was averaging some 9% above the UK average, and even in the early 1990s above national average performance was being achieved. However, whilst in the period 1995-2002 absolute productivity per capita rose by ca 13%, there was a relative decline in Cumbria’s economic output per capita\(^{13}\) compared with the UK and the rest of the North West Region (Figure 2.2); and this was evident in West and East Cumbria.

In a regional context, over a 10-year period, Cumbria went from being a relative high performing sub-region to one of the poorest performing economic areas in the North West. In 2002, the GVA per capita for west Cumbria, had declined to the point where it ranked joint 15 out of the 18 sub-areas of economic analysis in the North West Region; only Sefton and Wirral in Merseyside had lower GVA figures\(^{14}\).

Table 2.8. Proportion (%) of Gross Added Value (GVA) accounted for by different industry and business sectors in Cumbria, the North West Region, the UK and the South East Region of England.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectors of Economy</th>
<th>Cumbria (%)</th>
<th>North West (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
<th>South East (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas and water supply</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage and communication</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial intermediation</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate and business activities</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and defence</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social work</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\text{a)}\] Data Sources: Figures based on ONS statistics for 2002.

**Sectors of Economy**

**GENERAL ECONOMY**

The characteristics of Cumbria’s industry and business activities are indicated by the proportions of its GVA in the main industrial sectors. In comparison with the North West Region as a whole or with the UK, Cumbria has a higher proportion of its economic activity in manufacturing, agriculture and hotels and restaurants, and a lower proportion in all categories of business and other services, and in public administration (Table 2.8). The distinctiveness of this pattern of industry and business activity is dramatically highlighted if Cumbria is compared with the South East Region of England - the area of England with the highest level of GVA per capita, outside London (Table 2.8).

\[\text{13)}\] By then GDP per capita was termed Gross Added Value (GVA) per capita for sub-regions. See Vincent (2003) *Sub-regional Gross Value Added: Methods and Background*.

2.31 Manufacturing remains by far the largest sector of the Cumbria economy and is very varied in its product categories - food manufacturing, paper products, chemicals, rubber, fabricated metal and textiles, and wood products all feature significantly. Nonetheless total GVA from manufacturing and also from agriculture declined in absolute terms between 1995 and 2002, indicating the scale of changes in both rural and urban based industrial activity. Even the nuclear industry, which is one of Cumbria’s advanced technology strengths, is facing a projected retrenchment.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

2.32 Agriculture is only one of many business activities that contribute to the rural economy. However, it remains the major form of land use and is significant in considerations of rural development. In common with the rest of Britain, Cumbria’s agricultural industry is undergoing a major period of transition resulting in part from changes in EU and domestic agricultural policies and in part from a general globalisation of food supply chains.

Table 2.9. Agricultural land use in East Cumbria, West Cumbria and Cumbria as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>East Cumbria Hectares (x 1000)</th>
<th>East Cumbria %</th>
<th>West Cumbria Hectares (x 1000)</th>
<th>West Cumbria %</th>
<th>Cumbria Hectares (x 1000)</th>
<th>Cumbria %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent grazing</td>
<td>172.7</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>251.2</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary grazing</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough Grazing</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>114.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crops and fallow</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>141.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>455.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) East Cumbria comprises Carlisle and Eden districts; West Cumbria comprises Allerdale, Copeland and Barrow-in-Furness districts.
b) Figures have been rounded for presentation.
c) Source: Calculated from CRED (2005).

2.33 Based on an analysis\textsuperscript{15} of the agricultural census data, the total area of farmed land in Cumbria is 455,682 hectares or ca 67.3\% of the total area of the county. The farmed area in the east is greater than in the west (Table 2.9), but throughout the county land use is dominated by permanent grassland, temporary grassland and rough grazing; these together account for more than 90\% of total land use.

2.34 There are 7,936 registered land holdings in Cumbria. About 38\% of these fall into the <5 hectare category and are likely to be of little productive value or to be an incidental part of a larger holding. Above that, there are ca 27\% of holdings of 5-49 hectares, ca 17.0\% of holdings of 50-99 hectares and ca 18\% of holdings of > 100 hectares. Thus land use is characterised by small- to medium-sized holdings typical of family-run farms.

2.35 Analysis of the holdings by farm type (Table 2.10) shows that upland and lowland cattle and sheep farming predominate and that there is a substantial dairy sector. All other farm enterprises are a small proportion of business activity; they may

\textsuperscript{15} CRED (2005) \textit{The Economy of Cumbria: The Structure of Agriculture in Cumbria}. 
reflect some significant individual businesses, but they are unlikely to provide a coherent sector for development.

2.36 This implies that the targeting of business development activity within the agricultural and food sector will be substantially focused on adding value locally to livestock and dairy products. Likewise business diversification and skills development will need to be compatible with farm businesses having a continued engagement in livestock or dairy farming, since these activities will continue to form the primary forms of agriculture. Moreover, for a large part of Cumbria the characteristics of the managed landscape – and thus its appeal as a tourist attraction - may depend significantly on the sustainability of livestock farming.

Table 2.10. Farm types in East Cumbria, West Cumbria and Cumbria as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm type</th>
<th>East Cumbria</th>
<th>West Cumbria</th>
<th>Cumbria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock (LFA)</td>
<td>1,426</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock (Lowland)</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed farming</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General cropping</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (unclassified)</td>
<td>1,893</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>2,748</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) East Cumbria comprises Carlisle and Eden districts; West Cumbria comprises Allerdale, Copeland and Barrow-in-Furness districts.
b) LFA is Less Favoured Area.
c) Figures have been rounded for presentation.
d) Source: Calculated from CRED (2005).

Labour Force

AGE DISTRIBUTION AND EMPLOYMENT

2.37 Cumbria has a similar proportion of its population of working age and a similar proportion of economically active people as the North West Region or Great Britain. However, rather more of its population are engaged in work, so the unemployment rate at ca 3.6% of economically active people is lower than the national average or that for the North West Region (Table 2.11). Cumbria has a high proportion of self-employment and of part-time employment, especially amongst women (Table 2.12). The labour force is also characterised by a higher than average proportion of people aged 35 and above (Table 2.12).

2.38 However, Cumbria also shows significant differences in employment pattern between districts (Table 2.13). Both Eden and South Lakeland have a particularly high proportion of economically active people, people in employment and self-employed people. Together with Carlisle, they have unemployment rates of 3.0% or less, whilst unemployment in Allerdale, Barrow and Copeland ranges from 4.1-5.6%. Moreover, because of localised business failures unemployment in these latter areas tends to be concentrated in particular neighbourhoods, forming unemployment ‘black spots’.
Table 2.11. Employment statistics for Cumbria, North West Region and Great Britain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cumbria</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>GB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People of working age (% of population)</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically active (% of working age people)</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in employment (% of working age people)</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees (% of working age people)</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (% of working age people)</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (% of working age people)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (% of economically active people)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.12. Nature of employment and age structure of labour force in Cumbria, North West Region and UK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cumbria</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature of employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males full-time (%)</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males part-time %</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females full-time (%)</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females part-time (%)</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Age structure of labour force</strong></th>
<th>16-24 (%)</th>
<th>25-34 (%)</th>
<th>35-49 (%)</th>
<th>Males 50-64/females 50-59 (%)</th>
<th>Males 65 and over/females 60 and over (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Data are for 2004 from Philippets and Cohen (2005) Region in Figures North West No 9, ONS.

2.39 The district figures for labour demand are also distinctive. For the measure of ‘job density’ (a statistic representing the ratio of jobs available to working age population), Carlisle, Eden and South Lakeland have a figure of 1.0, implying that there is an unsatisfied labour demand. By contrast the figures for Allerdale, Barrow and Copeland are 0.7, which is below the UK and regional averages of 0.816.

2.40 Broadly speaking, across the county, the employment profile by sector reflects the GVA of the industry and business activity, taking account of the different levels of GVA per employee in each sector. However, the differential distribution of different types of economic activity between the 6 county districts is very clear and is strongly reflected in the employment figures (Table 2.14).

2.41 The importance of hotels and restaurants (tourism) and agriculture is apparent in the Eden and South Lakeland profiles, whilst the importance of manufacturing is particularly evident in Copeland, Barrow and Allerdale.

### Table 2.13. Employment pattern and labour force age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Allerdale</th>
<th>Barrow</th>
<th>Carlisle</th>
<th>Copeland</th>
<th>Eden</th>
<th>South Lakeland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People of working age (% of population)</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically active (% of working age people)</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>83.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in employment (% of working age people)</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees (% of working age people)</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (% of working age people)</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (% of working age people)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (% of economically active people)</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source: NOMIS, ONS annual population survey 2004.

### Table 2.14. Employment profile in Cumbria and for the districts of Cumbria by sector of employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed in (%)</th>
<th>Allerdale</th>
<th>Barrow</th>
<th>Carlisle</th>
<th>Copeland</th>
<th>Eden</th>
<th>South Lakeland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture etc</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining &amp; quarrying</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas &amp; water</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale, retail &amp; repair</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; restaurants</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; distribution</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial intermediation</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate, renting &amp; business</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public admin. &amp; defence</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; social work</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Agriculture etc includes hunting, forestry and fishing; other services include community and personal services.
c) Employment data are based on 2002 figures and are expressed as a % of total numbers employed, excluding self-employed.
2.42 This in part explains the figures for self-employment (see paragraph 2.38), since both agriculture and tourism are characterised by a high level of self-employment. However, from data on 406 new self-employment registrations in 2003-2004, Roe and Cuerden\(^\text{17}\) calculated that new business registrations in South Lakeland were about 30-50% higher than in Allerdale, Carlisle and Eden, and about 66-76% higher than in Copeland and Barrow, and they were spread across several economic sectors.

2.43 ‘Hotels’ (18%) was the largest sector but agriculture, construction, retail, business and other services were each 10-12%. These figures suggest that the district differences are not just related to tourism and agriculture. Rather, there are significant underlying differences in entrepreneurial activity between districts, with relatively low levels particularly in Copeland and Barrow.

2.44 This is important since Cumbria is characterised by a high proportion of small businesses. Nearly 83% of Cumbria businesses employ less than 10 people and over 97% employ less than 50 people\(^\text{18}\). Consistent with this Cumbria has a comparatively high proportion of businesses with a small turnover. Some 51% of VAT registered businesses in Cumbria have a turnover of less than £100,000 per annum, compared with an average of 45% for the UK and 43% for the North West Region\(^\text{19}\). Distinctively, there are only 1.3% of Cumbria companies with a >£5M per annum turnover; whereas corresponding figures for the North West Region and the UK are almost twice as great.

**EARNINGS**

2.45 On average gross weekly earnings for both men and women in Cumbria are below the North West Region and England averages, but data on gross weekly earnings and hourly pay rates by district show very substantial differences between different parts of the county (Table 2.15). At the extremes there is a 36% difference in average weekly earnings between the best paid area (Copeland) and poorest paid area (Eden). This may appear counter-intuitive given Copeland’s relatively high unemployment figure, but the implication is that those in employment in Copeland, e.g. in the nuclear industry, are in relatively well paid jobs, whilst in Eden jobs are available but are in lower-paid types of employment.

2.46 Table 2.15 shows earnings figures collated both on the basis of ‘area of residence’, indicating how much people in a given district earn, and also ‘area of workplace’, indicating the wage rates for the jobs present in any given area. The comparison between these two figures provides a proxy indicator of the degree to which people work outside the area in which they live. Thus, for example, the fact that the two figures for Barrow are very similar implies that most people who live in Barrow also work in Barrow.

2.47 The implication from the two sets of data is that this local working pattern is generally the case throughout Cumbria, except that for Allerdale and South Lakeland a proportion of residents appear to work in a higher wage area. For Allerdale it would be...

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\(^{17}\) Roe and Cuerden (2004) *An Economic Assessment of Cumbria.*


\(^{19}\) Figures from the ONS for 2003.
reasonable to assume that this high wage area is Copeland but, for South Lakeland, it may reflect employment outside Cumbria.

Table 2.15. Median gross weekly earnings from employment for workers in different workplace areas and different areas of residence in Cumbria and comparative figures for the North West Region and for Great Britain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Median Weekly Pay (£)</th>
<th>Median Hourly Pay (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By residence area</td>
<td>By workplace area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>10.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Region</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>7.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>7.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>10.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>By residence area</th>
<th>By workplace area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Region</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>9.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>7.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>12.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>9.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source: NOMIS, ONS Labour Profiles for mid year population 2004. Weekly figures are rounded to the nearest £.

2.48 Gross weekly earnings data are based on people in employment and do not take account of the self-employed. To gain a broader picture of the differences in income levels between districts the Cumbria Economic Bulletin 200520 has adopted the market research technique of A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods (ACORN) profiling21. This technique, which is based on the idea that people in similar areas have the same lifestyles, categorizes all UK postcodes using 125 demographic variables. It is designed to provide information on the typical demographic population that the postcode represents, and in this way to build up area data.

2.49 The ACORN analysis suggests that the average household income for Cumbria is ca £25,000 per annum. The figures differ between districts, with South Lakeland (ca £27,600) > Eden (ca £26,900) > Copeland (ca £25,600) > Allerdale (ca £24,600) > Carlisle (ca £23,300) > Barrow-in-Furness (ca £22,400). On these figures 58% of the Cumbria population fall into ACORN categories of ‘comfortably off’ or more wealthy, whilst 42% are in the ‘moderate means’ and ‘hard pressed’ categories. Comparable figures for the UK as a whole are 63% and 37%, respectively.

EDUCATION

2.50 The educational achievements of school leavers in Cumbria are good by national standards. For example, 50.6% of school leavers gain 5 GCSE passes at Grade A* to C compared with the national figure of 49.2%; and a smaller percentage (4.3% v 5.6%) leave school with no passes22. However, participation of Cumbria’s school leavers in higher education is only ca 83% of the UK average.

2.51 Figures from the Labour Force Survey (Table 2.16) indicate that Cumbria has a rather low proportion of people with no educational qualifications but, other than that,
the qualifications profile is broadly comparable with that for the North West Region or GB, as a whole. However, at district level a much more divergent picture emerges, showing a poor educational profile in the high-unemployment district of Copeland, and below average levels of higher education qualifications (i.e. NVQ Level 4 and above) in all districts other than Eden and South Lakeland (Table 2.16).

Table 2.16. Qualification and levels of qualifications the workforce (%) for Cumbria and the districts of Cumbria in comparison with North West Region or GB.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>With NVQ Qualifications at or above the level shown (%)</th>
<th>Other Qualifications (%)</th>
<th>None (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NVQ4  NVQ3   NVQ2   NVQ1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>23.1  41.7   62.4  78.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>23.1  41.4   61.3  75.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>25.2  43.1   61.5  76.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>20.6  37.7   59.1  73.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness</td>
<td>19.9  41.7   62.5  81.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>19.0  41.3   62.1  77.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>15.9  29.9   51.9  74.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>26.7  45.9   66.8  79.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>35.2  52.2   71.1  85.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source: NOMIS, ONS local Labour Force Survey for March 2003-Feb 2004. Figures for Cumbria have been calculated as weighted averages from the data for the districts.

2.52 In many circumstances it could be argued that low educational qualifications would be associated with low wage rates because of limited career progression. However, it is clear from the district analysis that in large areas of Cumbria wage rates are limited by the nature of the jobs available and/or the failure of the workforce’s types of skills in attracting higher-paid industries.

Deprivation

2.53 The Government has historically published indices of deprivation for local areas throughout England. However, since 1998 the approach has been developed and become more systematic. Following the publication of the strategy paper ‘New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy’ the deprivation indices have become a crucial input into the Government’s neighbourhood renewal policies.

2.54 The most recent Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) was published by the Government’s Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in 2004. Its methodology is based on an analysis of 37 deprivation indicators in 7 separate categories or ‘domains’ related to: income deprivation; employment deprivation; health deprivation and disability; education, skills and training deprivation; barriers to housing and services; living environment deprivation; and crime. In each ‘domain’ several sets of ‘indicator statistics’

23 The IMD improved the earlier Index of Local Conditions (ILC) and was published as the Index of Local Deprivation (ILD) in 1998, the Indices of Deprivation (ID) in 2000 and most recently as an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004.

are taken into account and used to estimate an overall ‘domain’ figure. The 7 domain figures are then used to calculate a weighted average\textsuperscript{25} figure to provide a single overall index of multiple deprivation score.

2.55 The geographic areas that are used for the deprivation analysis are based on dividing England into 32,482 Super Output Areas (SOAs) comprising data collection areas which have a minimum of 1,000 people and an average 1,500 people. These SOAs are not the same as civil parishes or electoral wards but they can be aggregated, to provide information at the ward, district and county levels\textsuperscript{26}. The district level data allows the figures to be ranked for the 354 local authority areas of England so that a rank score of 1 reflects the relatively most deprived district and 354 the relatively least deprived district.

2.56 Deprivation statistics are expressed in different ways but for the present purposes we have focused on four ‘ranking’ values, which are shown in Table 2.17 for Cumbria and its 6 districts. The two measures ‘rank of average deprivation score’ and ‘rank of average deprivation rank’ represent the overall multiple deprivation score from the SOA analysis calculated using two different averaging approaches. The ‘extent rank’ is a figure based on the proportion of a district’s population living in the most deprived SOAs in England\textsuperscript{27}, and ‘local concentration rank’ refers to a ranking of the most deprived SOAs that contain 10\% of a district’s population\textsuperscript{28}.

Table 2.17. Measures of deprivation for the districts of Cumbria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rank of average deprivation scores</th>
<th>Rank of average deprivation ranks</th>
<th>Extent rank</th>
<th>Local Concentration rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a) Source: ODPM (2004a) The English Indices of Deprivation 2004 (revised).}
\textsuperscript{b) Ranking for Counties is on a scale of 1 to 159. Ranking for districts is on a scale of 1 to 354.}
\textsuperscript{c) Some English districts do not have an overall score for extent rank and these are given a joint figure of 298.}

2.57 On these measures Cumbria ranks in the mid range of English counties in terms of its multiple deprivation, whilst Allerdale, Barrow, Carlisle and Copeland fall in the third of local authority areas with the greatest multiple deprivation. However, this should be put into context since there are very much more deprived areas elsewhere in

\textsuperscript{25} The weightings used are 22.5\% for the income and employment domains; 13.5\% for the health deprivation and disability domain and the education, skills and training domain; and 9.3\% for barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime domains.

\textsuperscript{26} SOA data is potentially very powerful since it provides insights into the degree and nature of deprivation in specific local communities.

\textsuperscript{27} The ‘most deprived SOAs’ are defined as 100\% of the people in the 10\% most deprived SOAs plus a sliding proportion of those in less deprived categories of deprivation. The ‘extent rank’ portrays how widespread high levels of deprivation are within a district.

\textsuperscript{28} This helps to define deprivation ‘hot spots’.
the North West Region. Local authority areas such as Manchester (rank average = 2) and Salford (rank average = 12) are cases in point.

2.58 It should also be noted that since the IMD reflect concentrations of deprivation, it is claimed that they fail properly to capture the nature of rural deprivation, and therefore may not be a good way of determining the true deprivation of communities in areas such as Eden and South Lakeland.

Health

2.59 Whilst the North West Region has the worst health record in England and Wales, Cumbria on the whole is one of the healthier places within the region. Some indicators nonetheless show that parts of the county have poorer health than they should have. Mortality rates in South Lakeland and Eden are lower than the national averages for England and Wales but for Allerdale, Barrow, Copeland and Carlisle the opposite is the case; and for males in Barrow rates are higher than the regional averages (Table 2.18). This pattern of health is also reflected in the variation of expectation of life. For example, life expectancy of men in Barrow is ranked at 330 out of the 354 local authority areas in England and Wales.

2.60 Underlying the mortality and life expectancy figures, the most affected districts of Cumbria show notably high incidences of coronary heart disease, which is the largest single cause of death (Table 2.19). Long-term limiting illness and persistent poor health are also problems, particularly in the western districts (Table 2.19). There is a significant correlation between poor health and degree of deprivation, and the disparity of health between the most deprived and least deprived communities is marked.

Table 2.18. Mortality rates and life expectancy at birth for districts of Cumbria, North West Region and England and Wales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/Area</th>
<th>Standardised Mortality (per 100,000)</th>
<th>Life Expectancy (Ranking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Region</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base (www.nchod.nhs.uk)
b) Life expectancy is number of years of life expected at birth.
c) Ranking figure in parenthesis is the life expectancy figure compared with that in the 352 local authority areas in England and Wales.
Table 2.19. Coronary heart disease rates (per 100,000), long-term limiting illness (% of population) and standard national health reporting figures for the previous 12 months for the districts of Cumbria, North West Region and England and Wales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/Area</th>
<th>Coronary Heart Disease (per 100,000)</th>
<th>Long-term illness (%)</th>
<th>Health (Good/ Fairly Good/ Not good)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>All persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Region</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base (www.nchod.nhs.uk)

Crime

2.61 Crime rates overall, and in almost all crime categories, are lower in Cumbria than in the North West Region or England & Wales generally (Table 2.20). However, underlying the county-level figures there are very large differences in total crime and in selected categories of crime between the districts of Cumbria (Table 2.21). Thus, at the extremes Eden and South Lakeland have half the ‘all crime’ rates of Carlisle; and they have lower rates of burglary, criminal damage, theft, vehicle theft and violent crime than most other districts of Cumbria.

2.62 In some categories of crime, some districts of Cumbria show notably high levels even by national standards. For example, for violent crime against the person and criminal damage, the figures for the Barrow district are particularly high and the same applies for ‘criminal damage’ rates in the Carlisle district.

Table 2.20. An outline of the crime statistics (offences per 1,000 population) for Cumbria, the North West Region and England & Wales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Crime</th>
<th>Cumbria</th>
<th>North West Region</th>
<th>England &amp; Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All crimes</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal damage</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug offences</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud and forgery</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual offences</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle theft and other theft</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against the person</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other offences</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


29 www.crimestatistics.org.uk
Table 2.21. An outline of selected crime statistics (offences per 1000 population) for the districts of Cumbria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Crime</th>
<th>Allerdale</th>
<th>Barrow</th>
<th>Carlisle</th>
<th>Copeland</th>
<th>Eden</th>
<th>South Lakeland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All crimes</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal damage</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug offences</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud and forgery</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle theft and other theft</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against the person</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


b) Robbery crimes in all districts were 0 - 0.1; sexual offences were 0.1 - 0.2; other offences were 0.1 -0.4.

**SUMMARY**

2.63 The preceding sections emphasise Cumbria as a county of contrasts. It is characterised by a widespread and, in some areas, sparsely distributed rural population, but at the same time it has significant industry-based urban conurbations, which provide the core of its economy. The county has very substantial strengths but it also faces significant challenges and problems, the nature and extent of which vary from one part of the county to another.

Cumbria has:

- a spectacularly rich physical environment, and related to that, a world class brand identity on which to build its successful tourism industry;

- hugely attractive areas in which to live and work, with relatively little unemployment except in a ‘hot-spots’ where there has been significant industrial decline;

- better than national average ‘quality of life’ demographics, but also localised areas of significant deprivation, with evidence of poor health and above average levels of violence-related crimes;

- a growing population and workforce, but an aging population;

- coherent local communities in its rural and urban areas, fostering a strong sense of local identity, but also problems arising from the county’s spatial characteristics, topography and poor transport infrastructure, which present challenges for community mobility and business development;

- significant constrains on infrastructure development in areas that are environmentally designated, such as the Lake District National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park;

- a sluggish economic growth, running at less than one third of the UK’s growth rate, and problems of a low-wage employment in most areas;
- challenges arising from the long-term decline in manufacturing industries, particularly on the west coast and in Furness, and from the continuing decline in the profitability of agriculture in the county’s rural areas;

- a continuing reliance on manufacturing industries, in which there is strong global cost competition;

- a limited development of high-income service industries;

- a high proportion of small businesses and an above average level of self-employment in some parts of the county, but counterbalanced by a limited entrepreneurship in others;

- weaknesses in its higher-level education and skills base, and a relatively low participation in university level education.

2.64 In local government Cumbria has a ‘two-tier’ or ‘three-tier’ local authority structure, depending on the way that the town and parish council structures are regarded. CCC and the 6 district councils provide the main elements of local government but there is a very extensive network of town and parish councils covering most, although not all, of the county. Population numbers and the resources of the town and parish councils vary very widely from location to location.

2.65 As judged from UK parliamentary and county council election turnouts voter engagement in Cumbria is good by national standards, with average election turnout figures of ca 62-64%. However, comparable figures for the European parliament elections are low at ca 41%30, and figures in the range of 30-56%, are typically recorded Cumbria district council elections.

2.66 At UK parliament, county council and district council levels Cumbria expresses a political preference divided between the three main political parties. Excepting independent members, who have a significant level of support at district council level, both CCC and the aggregate membership of the district councils shows a present balance of Labour: Conservative: Liberal Democrat members of ca 47:39:14.

30 Figure is for the North West Region.
CHAPTER 3: NATIONAL POLICIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

3.1 It was not our task to provide a critique of present or earlier central government policies for local government. However, in the course of our inquiries we were struck by how local government has been shaped as a direct result of central government policies, and by how many new policies have been implemented since 1997. We therefore sought to gain an overview of central government policies, and particularly to consider selective policies that appeared particularly relevant to our remit. Here we have summarised our considerations, making reference to the situation in Cumbria where appropriate.

POLICIES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.2 Central government ‘reform of local government’ is a long-standing and, we are tempted to think, always-ongoing process. In modern times, it arguably began with the introduction of ‘market and deregulation initiatives’ by the 1979 Conservative government, but ‘reform’ has continued, and in some cases accelerated, under successive Conservative and Labour administrations. Many ‘new policies’, from both Conservative and Labour Governments, have been designed to encourage more responsive and efficient market-style service delivery at local level. These policies have often been presented as ‘freeing up’ local-flexibility in the anticipation of local innovation in the way that councils work.

3.3 The changing policy framework has unquestionably led to a greater flexibility of thinking in local government – it has made both elected members and council officers more receptive to new ideas and approaches. However, somewhat counter-intuitively, under both Conservative and Labour administrations, it has also led to an increase in central government’s involvement with local service delivery, mainly through specification of service targets and through various forms of performance assessment. Thus, over a 30-year period, local government has increasingly been transformed into a system for the local administration of specified public services. Some would portray this change as an erosion of democracy, but more objectively it represents a shift in the balance of democratic influence from more local to more central.

3.4 Such a shift is perhaps inevitable in a media age in which Government Ministers seem expected to take personal responsibility for almost every aspect of public service provision. However, the approach runs an identifiable risk of local providers becoming focused on central government’s performance criteria rather than on the priorities of local clients. Put another way, it could result in central government being perceived as the customer, rather than the local recipients of the service.

3.5 This problem clearly does not arise where the Government and the recipients of services have complete accord about service needs and priorities. However, in a highly diverse country such as Britain, it seems inevitable that local factors and local preferences will come into play. Recognising this, Government has increasingly begun to articulate policies for local diversity within the overall framework of national standards.
3.6 This ‘loose-tight’\textsuperscript{31} approach has been articulated through recent policies on ‘new localism’ - embodying concepts of citizen engagement, citizen empowerment and more responsive public services - and also through some specific policy initiatives. The underlying principle of these new approaches is that governance and decision-making on services should be ‘brought closer to the citizens that are affected’, a concept which can be interpreted to be closely in harmony with strong local democracy.

POLICY CHANGE

3.7 Many of the changes in regional and local policy that have been made under successive Labour Governments since 1997 were first set out in the White Papers\textsuperscript{32} ‘Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People’\textsuperscript{33}, ‘Building Partnerships for Prosperity: Sustainable Growth, Competitiveness and Employment in the English Regions’\textsuperscript{34}, and Modernising Government\textsuperscript{35} which were published within months of Labour’s replacement of the previous Conservative administration.

3.8 However, policy implementation is a progressive process. The initial stages of implementation have been followed by evolution and refinement, the whole forming part of an extended ‘better government’ programme, some elements of which are still being carried forward. In the sections which follow we have therefore dealt with policy change on a topic basis rather than on a chronological basis, and we have made reference to the main legislative or other events which represented a significant step in the process. In some cases, the detailed provisions of primary legislation have been subsequently modified by Statutory Instruments and, where appropriate, we have taken these into account.

BEST VALUE

Best Value Authorities

3.9 One of the most far reaching shifts in policy to be introduced by the Labour Government was the suspension and subsequent rescinding of the use Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) by public bodies, and the introduce the Best Value regime. This was incorporated in statute through the Local Government Act 1999 and came into operation from the 1 April 2000\textsuperscript{36}. Under the legislation local authorities and a range of other bodies including national parks, were designated ‘best value authorities’ and charged with a statutory duty to ‘make arrangements to secure continuous improvements in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness’.

\textsuperscript{31} The ‘loose-tight’ term is borrowed from other areas of business management e.g. knowledge management. It is applied to management systems which accept re-interpretation of the best practice under the local conditions, leading to local innovation and a re-cycling of local experience into the best practice model.

\textsuperscript{32} Technically these are Command Papers (Cm papers). Colloquially Green papers are discussion papers at the formative stage of policy development; White Papers are statements of Government’s policy and intent.

\textsuperscript{33} ODPM (1997) Modern Local Government: in Touch with the People.


\textsuperscript{36} Some of the detailed provisions of the Act have been subsequently modified by Statutory Instrument, see for example ODPM (2003) Changes to Best Value Performance Plans, Summaries and Revisions, Circular 09/2003.
3.10 The Act made provisions for:

- the Secretary of State to specify the standards and performance indicators against which the authorities should be measured;
- the preparation of annual best value performance plans;
- the conduct of performance reviews of the authorities; and
- external audit by the Audit Commission.

3.11 Alongside this, the Act gave the Secretary of State powers to specify the criteria against which the budgets set by county councils and district councils would be accepted as a basis for their operations. Thus, the combination of arrangements where both resource inputs and performance outputs could be set by central government created a clear challenge for local authorities to increase performance and provide better value for money.

**Performance Management**

3.12 The *best value* policies have brought a fundamental change to the way that local government operates and to the delivery of public services, in every area of Britain. The underlying the policy objectives were clearly set out as:

- ensuring that public services are responsive to the needs of citizens, not the convenience of service providers;
- ensuring that public services are efficient and of high quality;
- ensuring that policy making is more joined-up and strategic, forward looking and not reactive to short-term pressures;
- using information technology to tailor services to the needs of users; and
- valuing public service and tackling the under-representation of minority groups.

3.13 In practice the application of the policy is characterised by three key features. Firstly, central government has annually published or updated a comprehensive set of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) setting the national performance standards for almost every area of public service provision. The 2005-2006 version of this document[^37] runs to 300 pages, specifying in detail 210 Best Value (BV) descriptors, and outlining national targets where these apply.

3.14 Secondly, local authorities have been required to prepare and publish annually a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). This is a detailed document that forms a ‘counterpart document’ to the annual BVPI. It sets out:

- the local authority’s strategic aims and main objectives;
- a summary of past and current performance against national and local standards and targets[^38];
- future priorities;
- targets for improvements for all services – not just those that have been subject to formal best value review (BVR); and
- the outcome of BVRs carried out in the year just completed and the programme of BVRs planned for the next year.

[^38]: Where national standards and targets are not set, local standards and targets are required.
3.15 The BVPP is independently audited by the Audit Commission to ensure the standards of the performance information it contains, and it provides a detailed insight into the service provision and service performance of the local authority. In some respects, the BVPP overlaps with what might be anticipated from the combination of a corporate plan and a business plan in a private sector business. Some local authorities in fact prepare combined corporate plans and BVPP. In the case of CCC the approach has been to publish a Corporate Strategy\textsuperscript{39} but to cross reference it to the BVPP\textsuperscript{40}. Thus the 6 themes in the Corporate Strategy and in the BVPP have been aligned (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. The themes in the Cumbria County Council Corporate Strategy and in its Best Value Performance Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Theme Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Improving council services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Enhancing economic well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Improving the quality of life of vulnerable adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Improving the life chances and well-being of children and young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Improving the safety of people’s lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Protecting and enhancing the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.16 Thirdly, best value policies require local authorities to undertake BVRs of their service provision\textsuperscript{41}. These must be undertaken according to the ‘4Cs principles’, namely:

- challenge why, how and by whom a service is provided;
- compare performance with others, including private and voluntary sectors;
- consult with local taxpayers, service users, partners, the business community and the voluntary sector; and
- use fair and open competition wherever practical to secure efficient and effective services.

The BVPPs report annually on performance reviews which have led to market testing and contracting out of services.

Market Testing and Contracting Out

3.17 Early in the introduction of best value policies the Government put forward its 12 guiding principles in market testing and contracting out (Table 3.2)\textsuperscript{42}. These set out a detailed prescription for the contracting out process and for Public Private Partnerships (PPP) which should be used, on a case by case basis, where they offered best value for money. There was also a clear expression that, where appropriate, the policy was for the work and the related council staff to be transferred to the private sector supplier. (These arrangements could be regarded as part of the more general Private Finance Initiative (PFI) policies.)

\begin{itemize}
  \item [40] CCC (2005) Aiming for Excellence.
  \item [41] There was an original requirement for all local authority services to be reviewed every five years but this requirement was subsequently revoked.
\end{itemize}
Table 3.2. The Government’s 12 guiding principles in using market testing and contracting out as issued by the Duchy of Lancaster (Cabinet Office, 1998⁴³).

Guiding Principles

1. Our aim is to develop modernised, high quality, efficient, responsive, customer-focused central Government services. Our approach to this is pragmatic not dogmatic.

2. We will work in partnership with the private sector, extending the circle of those involved in public service.

3. We will use market testing and contracting out when in individual cases these can be shown to offer better value for money, that is: better quality services at optimal cost. Our approach to this is pragmatic not dogmatic.

4. Existing plans for market tests and contracting out, therefore, should proceed unless the Minister is satisfied that in the circumstances of an individual case, better value for money can be achieved by other means, which will enable a Department to live within its running costs ceilings. This judgement should be based on a robust and objective comparison of the particular market test or contracting out exercise and the alternative means available.

5. Ministers remain accountable for services contracted out to the private sector. (That is the Carltona principle is replicated.)

6. The energy, skill and commitment of staff are our best assets in modernising public services. They should be properly trained to carry out market testing, contracting out, benchmarking, restructuring and other means for achieving better value for money that is: better quality services at optimal cost.

7. The concerns of those affected by change should be fully taken into account and properly addressed.

8. Where the relevant circumstances apply when the work transfers, staff will be protected by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) and the consultation and information requirements of those regulations should be followed scrupulously. To avoid a successful claim for constructive unfair dismissal when staff transfer from Crown employment in circumstances to which TUPE applies, Departments should ensure that the new employers offer broadly comparable occupational pension provision or suitable compensation.

9. Full effective and continuous communication is a key to successful improvement and change. It should begin as soon as a review which might lead to change is mooted and it should continue afterwards to share what has been achieved. It should happen even when there is very little to report. That way, staff and their recognised trade union representatives, can be engaged throughout and rumours can be avoided.

10. There should also be full and open information and communication with Departments’ customers and stakeholders.

11. Relations with the private sector need to rest on two-way openness and trust. Until Government’s new arrangements on freedom of information are in place, Departments’ should apply a liberal interpretation to the existing Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and its Guidance on Interpretation. Unsuccessful bidders need to know why they were unsuccessful and how they could succeed next time. For the public, it is important to know how much central Government Services cost, no matter who provides them. Commercial confidentiality must not be used as a cloak to deny the public’s right to know.

12. Senior management in Departments must give leadership in all these areas and should encourage innovation and continuous improvement.

a) The Carltona principle relates to Ministerial responsibility for delegated actions as established by the case of Carltona Ltd v Commissioners of Works in 1943.

3.18 Local authorities have responded to this initiative with a substantial degree of innovation; and a range of contracting out and partnership models has been introduced (see Tarry, 2005)\(^44\).

3.19 Some have simply involved contracting out what traditionally would have been core services, so that they are delivered by a private sector or voluntary sector partner. In these instances the contract is usually managed by specification of service standards and an appropriate system of performance monitoring. However, other arrangements have been much more radical, and have involved the transfer of local authority staff and functions to a private sector company and the establishment of a long-term broadly-specified service contract.

3.20 In these latter cases the management of the business relationship between the local authority and the company is generally through a ‘Partnership Board’ or ‘Partnership Committee’, which jointly oversees the contract and seeks to ensure its smooth and seamless operation. This approach, in principle, offers a degree of flexibility for the local authority to adjust its requirements over time, without the need for each specific element of service provision to be re-contracted on an item by item basis.

3.21 CCC has undertaken a substantial programme of market testing and contracting out using the partnership approach. This has encompassed contracts with Capita Symonds\(^45\) for a range of functions, including: most of the personnel management functions; internal support services (e.g. printing and reprographics); and highways planning, design and professional services. Also highways maintenance work has been contracted to Amey Infrastructure Services; IT services contracted to Agilisys; and the management of the Birdoswald Heritage Site contracted to English Heritage.

3.22 In many cases these changes would be invisible to the public, although the highways partnership with Capita Symonds has been branded and promoted as *Cumbria Highways*.

**Gershon Review**

3.23 The Government’s value for money objective was further underlined by the publication of the review of public sector efficiency undertaken by Sir Peter Gershon\(^46\). This gave a focus to the Government’s objective of releasing public sector resources so that more resources could be ‘transferred to the front line’. Gershon addressed all parts of government, both central and local, and highlighted potential efficiency savings across the board. As a specific consequence of the review, local authorities have been tasked with making efficiency savings of 2.5% per annum beginning in 2005/2006.

3.24 The contracting out exercises undertaken by CCC have contributed to it being amongst the top ten counties nationally for efficiency savings under the Government’s financial policy regime\(^47\) based on the Gershon Review.

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\(^45\) The partnership relationship with Capita was extended in November 2005 until 2011, although with some modifications in the service arrangements were agreed.


\(^47\) CCC was ranked in fifth nationally in a Local Government Chronicle survey (published 26 May 2005).
3.25 The Gershon review made a systematic efficiency evaluation of business process in government, breaking the process down into elements: back office functions; procurement: transactional services; public sector policy, funding and regulation; private sector policy, funding and regulation; and productive time of front-line staff. Much of the subsequent discussion by public bodies has focused on specific areas of the review – such as e-government, operational rationalisation; staff rationalisation; and facilities relocation.

Figure 3.1. Conceptual model of public sector service delivery as a delivery chain (Treasury 2004).

3.26 Nonetheless, Gershon also made the very important observation that ‘a significant majority of public services are delivered by devolved, autonomous or independent bodies’, and that public sector policy, funding and regulation could conceptually be regarded as a highly complex ‘delivery chain’ (see Figure 3.1), the objective of which is to deliver Government’s policy and key targets as ‘outcomes’ in the provision of public services.

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Background and Methodology

3.27 There is a long tradition of public services and local authorities being subject to audit and assessments. For example, the Office for Standards in Education (England) (OFSTED) is responsible for assessing children’s and young people’s services; the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is responsible for adult services; the

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48 See www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government
49 For example major changes have been made in the provision of rural services following review: see Haskins, (2003) Rural Delivery Review: A Report on the Delivery of Government Policies in Rural England.
50 This has in part been prompted by the Independent Review of Public Sector Relocation (the ‘Lyons Review’), (see HM Treasury, 2004).
Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) is responsible for benefits services; and the Audit Commission is responsible for financial matters.

3.28 In 2002 the Government introduced a new approach designed to assist councils in achieving continuous improvements in their services. This Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is undertaken by the Audit Commission and, within the scope of the assessment scheme, it provides an independent overall view on how well councils are performing. Unitary authorities and county councils have been subject to CPA annually since 2002.

Table 3.3. The assessment matrix for Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council ability to improve</th>
<th>Overall service score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.29 Up to 2005, the CPA has been based on a range of assessment components. It has included performance scores for 8 main categories of operations: education; social care for children; social care for adults; housing; libraries and leisure; environmental services; benefits services; and use of resources. It has also embodied a corporate evaluation score giving the audit team’s assessment of the council’s management capabilities and thus ‘ability to improve’. In each case the score has been from 1 to 4, where 1 is the poorest score and 4 the best.

3.30 The CPA has then been made taking both the services score and the management scores into account. The 8 services scores have been used to derive an overall service score figure, weighted to give greater emphasis to the individual scores for education and social care. The overall service score has then been applied in a matrix with the management score to derive an overall rating – poor, weak, fair, good or excellent (see Table 3.3).

Cumbria County Council

3.31 CPAs were made for county councils in 2002, 2003 and 2004; and in these years CCC was successively rated as Fair, Weak and Weak. A more detailed examination of the assessment data (Table 3.4) indicates that performance was reasonably good, improving to strong for education, and consistently reasonable good for libraries and leisure and use of resources. However, social care – for both children and adults - and also environmental services were consistently assessed as under performing (see Table 3.4). In 2004 the CPA ‘progress statement’ the Audit Commission commented as follows.

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51 The performance indices used in the scheme are set by Government and there is a recognised issue about the degree to which they reflect an appropriate balance between central and local priorities. See Audit Commission (2005) Comprehensive Performance Assessment: Scores and Analysis of Performance for District Councils in England.
'Results have been mixed across council services during the last year. Education services have continued to make strong progress and standards have improved. Social care remains a zero star rated service, although the judgement on the capacity to improve children’s services has been upgraded from ‘poor’ to ‘uncertain’. Positive action is being taken to address significant problems in waste management, which currently is an area of poor performance. The council has made recent progress in addressing problems with the quality of its performance information. It has started to focus on key improvement areas and has directed resources to those areas. The way the council is run has also improved through establishing clearer objectives and better working with partner organisations. The council still faces a challenging improvement agenda which will require more effective implementation of its improvement plans than has been achieved in the past.'

3.32 However, it should be noted from Table 3.4 that the council has consistently scored only moderately on ‘ability to improve’, which in the assessment matrix has a substantial influence on the overall classification. Thus, to gain a marked improvement in its CPA, CCC requires a combination of better performing social and environmental services and a substantially better management capacity, as defined by the ‘ability to change’ assessment52.

Table 3.4. Comprehensive Performance Assessment data for Cumbria County Council for the years 2002 to 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall CPA category</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Council ability to improve</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall service score</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s social care</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult’s social care</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Libraries and leisure</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of resources</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Source: Comprehensive Performance Assessment: Scores and Analysis for Single Tier and County Councils (see Audit Commission, 2002; Audit Commission 2003; Audit Commission, 2004).
b) n/a– these categories of services are not undertaken by CCC.
c) In 2004 a system of 3-star classification was introduced for a category of ‘overall social care’. CCC was not awarded any stars.

3.33 The CPA framework for unitary councils and county councils has been substantially revised for 2005, taking account of some of the lessons that have been learned since its first introduction. This new framework (Audit Commission 200553) retains separate categories for service assessment, but with modifications in the assessment and scoring systems. It also introduces a more detailed ‘corporate assessment’, as well as a new overall rating based on the award of 0 to 4 stars and ‘directions of travel’ statements based on standard ‘labels’. Of these changes, the new

52 It should be noted that since these CPAs were undertaken CCC has undertaken a major restructuring of its social services. Also there have been a number of changes in senior staffing, including the Chief Executive Officer.
corporate assessment might be regarded as challenging. However, as we will outline in Chapter 6, CCC has made clear progress in this category\textsuperscript{54}.

Cumbria District Councils

3.34 A CPA system for district councils was developed and applied to all 238 district councils in England in 2003-2004. The methodology is different from that for county councils and is constructed around 10 themes based on corporate assessment and some elements of diagnostic assessment of services related to public space, housing markets, benefits services and financial management (see Audit Commission, 2003\textsuperscript{55}). These are scored from 1 to 4, based on a scale of: 1 = weak; 2 = weaknesses outweigh strengths; 3 = strengths outweigh weaknesses; and 4 = strong. These scores were then used to determine an overall rating – poor, weak, fair, good or excellent.

Table 3.5. Comprehensive Performance Assessment results for district councils in Cumbria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall CPA Category</th>
<th>Allerdale</th>
<th>Barrow</th>
<th>Carlisle</th>
<th>Copeland</th>
<th>Eden</th>
<th>South Lakeland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Assessment Themes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritisation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement in quality of service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement of improvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Plans</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.35 The district councils in Cumbria have all been assessed through the CPA process. The results for the overall assessments and for individual corporate assessment themes are shown in Table 3.5. Four of the six councils were classified as fair, the exceptions being Carlisle which was classified as good and South Lakeland which was classified as weak.

3.36 Not unexpectedly, there were differences between councils, in the various corporate theme scores reflecting their relative areas of strength and weakness. However, none of the councils achieved a ‘strong’ rating in any theme, and for all councils there were individual themes where ‘weaknesses outweighed strengths’. All of the councils in West Cumbria were in this latter category for the ‘achievement of quality service’ theme. Also all the councils, except Barrow-in-Furness, were assessed as having weaknesses in respect to their future plans.

\textsuperscript{54} The CPA scores under the new system became available in mid December 2005 and are referred to in Chapter 6, paragraph 6.141.

The Audit Commission has recently consulted on a new CPA framework for district councils which it plans to introduce from 2006. The consultation document (Audit Commission, 2005) sets out 5 options to modify the previous CPA framework. Amongst the new elements of assessment are: a greater emphasis on diagnostic assessment of service performance; a possible focus on area-based assessments and achievements of local priorities; and the inclusion of assessments of the councils’ success in working with other organisations, including work under Local Area Agreements (LAA, see below).

**PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

Multi-agency working, broadly described as a ‘partnership approach’, has been a key policy strand of successive Labour Governments in seeking to achieve more ‘joined up government’. Some partnership initiatives, such as those under the Children’s Fund Partnerships or the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP), have been specific and relatively narrowly focused. They have been designed to bring particular agencies into closer local contact and to generate a shared vision of integrated service delivery. Other partnerships such as the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have been more broadly framed and their memberships and agendas have been potentially wide and locally distinctive.

LSPs were a key element in the policy document *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Action Strategy Plan* which articulated the Government’s proposals for renewal policies and underpinned the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. However, they also became a focus for local cooperation, outside neighbourhood renewal areas, after local authorities were given the duty of preparing community strategies under the provisions of the Local Government Act.

LSPs are non-statutory, multi-agency bodies, which operate in areas co-terminus with local authority boundaries. They aim to bring together representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to develop collaborative plans of action to address local needs. In Cumbria 4 LSPs were initially formed at the district level: one to cover each of South Lakeland and Barrow-in-Furness, and joint LSPs to cover Carlisle & Eden and Allerdale & Copeland. The Allerdale & Copeland partnership was named the West Cumbria Partnership and the Barrow-in-Furness partnership was named the Furness Partnership.

In 2003, a county-wide Cumbria Strategic Partnership (CSP) embracing 70 organisations was also initiated. Its strategy *Sustainable Cumbria 2004-2024: a Strategy for Growth and Progress for Cumbria* was published in the later months of 2004, and included, as electronic enclosures, the strategies for the Carlisle & Eden, Furness, West Cumbria and South Lakeland partnerships. This brought together under one cover the community strategies for all districts of the county.

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LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENTS AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

3.42 Both Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) and LAAs are designed to improve local service delivery by strengthening the links between central and local government. LPSAs have been in place since 2001 and involve the local authority gaining central government approval for a 3-year LPSA plan. This specifies 12 areas in which the council will create a priority of action based either on national or local priorities. These are subject to performance reward grants from central government if the planned targets are achieved. The LPSA plans for CCC spanning the periods 2001-2003 and 2003-2006 are available on the council’s website.

3.43 LAAs are a relative recent development, which has emerged in 2004-2005 as part of the Government’s 10-year strategy to build a better relationship between central and local government. The LAAs are in their pilot stage. The initial 20 pilot projects agreed in 2004 have been followed by a further 40 in 2005. It is intended that the full scheme should be rolled out by 2007. CCC submitted a proposal for a pilot in the 2005 application round but was unsuccessful.

3.44 The LAAs are focused on the Government’s sustainable communities strategy, and are part of the wider sustainability agenda. As an underlying principle they create a framework whereby there is greater flexibility for public sector funding streams to be brought together in a local area so they can be used to address ‘area-based issues’.

3.45 The funding streams that may be considered for this cut across a very wide range of existing government funding programmes, and potentially could be widened in response to suggestions from the local applicants. Some of the funding will be mainstream, but the funding steam will also include selective funding, such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Safer, Stronger Communities Fund. It is planned that LPSAs will merge with the LAAs so that the reward grants can be included in the overall resource pool.

3.46 In areas with two-tier local authority structures, such as Cumbria, it is proposed that the county councils will lead in the discussions with central government and that Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and the ‘cleaner, safer, greener elements’ of the Safer, Stronger Communities Fund will be directed from the county council to the relevant districts, who must use the funding to help tackle deprivation in their most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

3.47 The policy guidance is that the development of LAAs should be taken forward by the county councils working with the districts and local partners. The latter should include the county’s Local Strategic Partnership (i.e. CSP), which is expected to link with the district level LSPs.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

3.48 The White Paper Modern Government: in Touch with the People first raised the prospect of change in the way that local councils were organised and conducted their

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60 www.cumbria.gov.uk
62 See www.sustainable-development.gov.uk
business. Traditionally, most councils had operated through a system of committees and sub-committees: the Government considered that this system was outdated and led to ‘inefficient and opaque decision making’. Thus the Local Government Act 2000 provided for a radical change in the constitution of local government with three optional models of constitution being introduced as alternatives.

- **A directly elected mayor with a cabinet.** (Where the local community elects a mayor who selects a cabinet from amongst the councillors.)
- **A cabinet with a leader.** (Where a leader is appointed from amongst the elected councillors and a cabinet (or executive) of councillors is either appointed by the leader or elected by the council.)
- **A directly elected mayor and council manager.** (Where a mayor is directly elected to provide a political lead to a manager to whom both strategic policy-making and day to day decision-making is delegated.)

3.49 Alongside these options, the Act made it a requirement for the arrangements to encompass the appointment of one or more ‘overview and scrutiny committees’. These were designed to have powers to review and scrutinize the cabinet’s decisions or the actions taken as a result, and to provide reports and recommendations to the cabinet or to the full council on matters affecting the local authority’s area.

3.50 CCC opted for the leader and cabinet style of constitution, with its overview and scrutiny committees\(^\text{64}\); and the constitutional changes were implemented in 2001. In CCC’s arrangements there are 6 overview and scrutiny committees (Scrutiny Panels), together with a Scrutiny Management Committee, which rules on issues related to which Scrutiny Panel should deal with a particular issue. As shown in Table 3.6, the Scrutiny Panels parallel the themes A to F in the council’s Corporate Strategy. There is also a Cumbria Health and Well-being Committee, which helps to fulfil CCC’s statutory responsibility for county-wide oversight of health and well-being issues.

3.51 In additional to these committees, there are also has 6 County Council Local Committees one for each for the district areas in the county, which were establish in 1996 under the previous constitution. At that time, the Local Government Commission had published a report recommending ‘devolution’ of county council systems as a way of improving the operation of the three-tier local authority system and providing greater engagement with and empowerment of local communities. Following a review and report by the (then) Select Committee E of CCC\(^\text{65}\) the decision was taken to establish the 6 Local Committees and a very extensive system of Neighbourhood Forums\(^\text{66}\), and these structures were maintained after the 2001 revision of the constitution.

3.52 We will discuss these arrangements more fully later. But for completeness at this stage, it should be noted that the Local Committees are executive committees of CCC, with devolved powers for decision making in respect of specifically defined geographical areas and subject areas. The latter encompass: highways maintenance and improvements, including road safety, street lighting and traffic management; school

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\(^{64}\) This model was also favoured by the 6 district level councils in Cumbria.  
\(^{66}\) There are presently 62 Neighbourhood Forums operating across the county.
crossing patrols; appointment of school governors; public rights of way; and local economic and community development, including Neighbourhood Forums.

3.53 As shown in Table 3.6 the composition of the Local Committees reflects the party political affiliation of the members in the district, as distinct from that of the council, or of the Scrutiny Panels, which largely reflect CCC’s party political make-up.

REGIONAL POLICIES

Regional Bodies

3.54 There is a long modern-history of development of English regionalisation under both Conservative and Labour Governments: it began in the mid 1960s and was articulated in the Green Paper *Devolution: The English Dimension*[^67] which was published in 1976. However, post 1997 and following the devolution of powers to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK government has pursued a programme of English regionalisation, as set out in the White Papers ‘*Building Partnerships for Prosperity: Sustainable Growth, Competitiveness and Employment in the English Regions*’[^68] and in ‘*Your Region, Your Choice*’[^69].

3.55 This programme has led to three important developments. The first has been the expansion of the roles and functions of the 9 Government Offices, one each in London and the 8 designated English Regions. The second has been the development of the Regional Development Agencies (RDA). The third has been the establishment of ‘regional assemblies’, as the shadow structures for the proposed directly-elected regional assemblies, should they be approved by referendum.

3.56 Under the regional arrangements Cumbria is classified as a ‘sub-region’ within the North West Region of England, and is brigaded with 4 other sub-regions - Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire. The region is administered through the Government Office North West (GONW), which undertakes functions for 10 central government departments; economic development is the responsibility of the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA); and there is a North West Regional Assembly (NWRA).

Northwest Regional Development Agency

3.57 The NWDA was established under the Regional Development Agencies Act[^70] as a non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). However, since 2002, it has been financed through a ‘single pot’ budget mechanism which draws on funding from the DTI, Office of Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Department of Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Department for Education and Skills (DfES), UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

Table 3.6. Cumbria County Council committees and panels showing the total number of county councilors and the political composition by affiliation of members to Conservative, Independent, Labour, and Liberal Democrat Parties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee or Panel</th>
<th>County Councillors</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Liberal Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Council</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny Management Committee</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Committee</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Council Services Scrutiny Panel (Theme A)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Economic Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel (Theme B)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Adults Scrutiny Panel (Theme C)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel (Theme D)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety Scrutiny Panel (Theme E)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Scrutiny Panel (Theme F)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Committees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Council Local Committee for Allerdale</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Council Local Committee for Barrow</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Council Local Committee for Carlisle</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Council Local Committee for Copeland</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Council Local Committee for Eden</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Council Local Committee for South Lakeland</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Committees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Control and Regulation Committee</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria Branch of the Local Government Association</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards Committee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria Pensions Committee</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) The Council also has a seat on the Workington Harbour Board with 1 County Councillor in attendance.
b) Development Control and Regulation is responsible for planning applications.
c) Local Government Association comprises members of the County Council and the District Councils. Its purpose is to ensure that local councils work together for the people of Cumbria.
The Agency’s strategic direction is set by a Board of 15 members appointed by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry from amongst the regions business, public and voluntary sectors. Nolan principles apply to appointment procedures.

The Agency’s role is:

- to co-ordinate delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy in conjunction with the NWRA and GONW; and
- to use the Agency’s budgets directly to tackle regional economic strategy priorities, lever in resources from elsewhere for the same purpose and provide funding for partners in pursuit of regional economic strategy objectives.

In budget terms, the NWDA is the largest of the 9 English RDA’s. The Agency has a staff of ca 365 and in 2005 had a projected budget of £1,500M for the next 3 years, allowing it to deploy ca £420M per annum in projects spanning its range of responsibilities. These are in business development, regeneration, skills and employment, infrastructure and image development for the North West Region.

In undertaking its role the Agency employs a variety of delivery mechanisms but, as discussed in Chapter 4 a substantial part of its programme is delivered through grants to other agencies, such as regeneration companies and various businesses support organisations.

North West Regional Assembly

The decision to establish the voluntary North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 created a wholly new dimension in the political and administrative arrangements affecting Cumbria. The NWRA was seen as a necessary forerunner to an elected regional assembly. However, although the prospect of elected regional assemblies in England has receded after the referendum vote against an elected regional assembly in the North East Region in November 2004, the role of regional assemblies has in no way diminished. In fact, over time, their importance has increased, and this pattern seems set to continue.

The NWRA is formally constituted as a voluntary association. The St Helens Local Authority (one of the Assembly members) acts as the Accountable Body to the ODPM, giving the body a legal and accountable status. The body, which consists of a ‘regional chamber’ and a complement of executive personnel, is funded mainly through central government funding, local authority subscriptions and a sponsorship income of ca £45,000 per annum. It employs ca 75 people and had a budget of £2.33M in 2005. Its executive organisation operates through a Chief Executive and 3 Directorates which cover its main areas of responsibility and programmes of work: Planning, Transport and Sustainability; Policy and Development; and Corporate Affairs.

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3.64 The NWRA, which describes itself as ‘an indirectly elected and appointed assembly’, has a ‘regional chamber’ constitution providing for a membership by local authorities\textsuperscript{74} and ‘economic and social partners’. The list of economic and social partners in July 2005 is shown in Table 3.7, but membership is subject to change.

3.65 Voting in the chamber is weighted so that different members have a different number of votes. The various local authorities, which have between 1 and 4 members depending on the size of authority\textsuperscript{75}, have between 1 and 7 votes; CCC has 6 votes and each of the Cumbria district councils and the LDNPA have one vote. Co-opted local authority members have 0.5 votes, and economic and social partners each have 3 votes.

Table 3.7. The Economic and Social Partners of the North West Regional Assembly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic and Social Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Association of Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business in the Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches of the North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Business Leadership Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Environmental Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Trade Union Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Universities Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Public Health Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Sector North West</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.66 In October 2005 the NWRA established an 18-strong Board, to provide focus to its direction and activities. This Board is constituted with 3 representatives from each of the 5 sub-regional areas of the North West, including Cumbria. There are also three representatives from the economic and social partners group and it seems planned that the Regional Director of GONW and the Chief Executive of the NWDA will attend\textsuperscript{76}. The agreed arrangement for Cumbria’s representation is that 2 members will be from CCC and 1 will represent the 6 district councils.

3.67 The NWRA (and potentially the Regional Board acting on its behalf) has substantial responsibilities which will influence the medium and long-term development of the North West, including development in Cumbria. It has statutory responsibilities under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchasing Act 2004 to scrutinise the work of the NWDA and to implement spatial planning policies for the region. Also, it has a formal concordat with GONW and NWDA that provides it with significant policy influence in other policy areas. In overview its roles include:

- preparing the draft Regional Spatial Strategy, which influences all major planning decisions;

- scrutinising the use of the NWDA’s £382M\textsuperscript{77} budget, to ensure that it delivers economic development benefits for the whole of the region;

\textsuperscript{74} All the local authorities in the North West Region are members, and recently there have also been 7 for co-opted local authority members.

\textsuperscript{75} Members are from different political parties and representation does not necessarily reflect the political party in overall control in the local council.

\textsuperscript{76} NWRA (2005) \textit{New Board Will Influence £745M Regional Spending}.

\textsuperscript{77} All financial figures are for the current year; figure is the budget that NWDA reported to have allocated to work coming under the NWRA scrutiny, \textit{cf} paragraph 3.59.
- working with regional housing partners to recommend to central government how to distribute the £250M regional public expenditure on housing;

- informing central government on the region’s priorities for the £113M transport funding for major road and infrastructure schemes;

- taking forward regional policy development in key areas such as sustainability, land use planning, coastal planning and management, waste management, renewable energy, transport and housing; and

- being responsible for the region’s European policy, and holding a seat on the European Union Committee of the Regions.

### Regional Dimension and Cumbria Local Government

3.68 The Government has argued that adopting a regional approach to government would help to move away from the ‘one size fits all’ features of national policy, and at the same time provide a framework for local authorities and other bodies to engage in decisions which affect them but which take place outside their boundaries. Its policy documents make it plain that establishing a regional tier of government in England is a constitutional reform to be ranked alongside the devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

3.69 Nonetheless, the model of regional government envisaged for England is very different from that introduced elsewhere in the UK. It seems largely designed to establish an intermediate administrative tier between central government and the local authorities - as distinct from devolving down policy making, as is the case elsewhere.

3.70 Significantly, the Government has also moved away from the usual Boundary Committee principle of establishing boundaries within which there is ‘community identity’. Rather on regional policy the Government has said:

> ‘It could be argued that there is an important difference between public recognition of a region and public acceptance or allegiance. The Government accepts this distinction, which is one reason why our policy is to establish elected regional assemblies only where there has been a positive vote for one in a referendum. But in terms of deciding boundaries of the regions within which people will be able to vote, international evidence indicates it is not necessary for a region to have a strong historic identity in order to create a modern political one.’

3.71 In terms of scale, elected Regional Assemblies were envisaged to require 25-35 elected members who would be supported by around 200 staff. It was envisaged that they ‘would not generally remove responsibilities from local authorities’ since ‘local government will remain the community champion and more involved in service delivery, while regional government leads in the development of the strategic vision for the region.’ However, it was also indicated that in any region where an elected regional assembly was established,

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78 ODPM (2002) *Your Region, Your Choice*.
79 This and associate Government statements in this sections are taken from ODPM (2002) *Your Region, Your Choice*. 
‘two-tier’ local authority structures would to be replaced by unitary structures; this clearly raised questions for Cumbria.

3.72 In preparation for the potential development of elected regional assemblies and a move to unitary local authority status, the Boundary Committee undertook a review in Cumbria and reported in May 200480. This was almost 10 years after the Local Government Commission for England81, had undertaken a review and recommended that: ‘There should be no change to the existing local government structure of 6 district councils and one county council in Cumbria’.

3.73 In contrast to the earlier Boundary Commission the remit of the Boundary Committee 2004 did not allow a recommendation for the status quo. Rather the Committee was specifically required to come up with two outline proposals for change which the ODPM could consider.

3.74 In the course of its review the Committee received five representations from Cumbria in favour of different options: CCC favoured unitary status for Cumbria as a whole; Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council favoured unitary status for North East Cumbria; Allerdale Borough Council and Copeland Borough Council favoured unitary status for West Cumbria; South Lakeland Council favoured unitary status for a combination of the 3 eastern districts; and Barrow-in-Furness Council favoured the formation of a South Cumbria and Lancaster City unitary authority.

3.75 In the event, taking all matters into consideration, the Boundary Committee came to the conclusion that there were two possible options for unitary status. The first was a straightforward proposal for the present Cumbria County to have unitary status, giving a moderate size authority of ca 490,000 people. The second was for a division of Cumbria and a revision of the border between Cumbria and Lancashire, so allowing the creation of a new unitary authority from Barrow-in-Furness, South Lakeland and Lancaster City authorities and a second unitary authority from Copeland, Allerdale, Carlisle and Eden.

3.76 In this latter case both the unitary authorities formed would have been relatively small, with ca 308,000 and ca 313,000 population, respectively. According to the Boundary Committee these authorities would ‘lie between the size of a unitary authority and other proposed sub-county structures’ i.e. they would be small by comparison with most unitary authorities elsewhere in England.

NEW LOCALISM, LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND THE 10-YEAR VISION

Policy Overview

3.77 The ideas underlying the Government’s emerging policies for local government are set out in a series of policy papers produced over the past two years. These include:

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3.78 The Government’s overall vision is of a relationship between national and local government that provides for:

- *national standards* for the delivery of high-quality services to citizens, wherever they live;
- *devolution and delegation* giving local leaders responsibility and accountability and an opportunity to design services around the needs of local people;
- *flexibility* for public organisations to meet the aspirations of service users; and
- *more choice* for service users.

3.79 Underlying this vision are the Government’s policies for sustainable communities – described as places where people want to live and which promote opportunity and a better quality of life for all. The policies embrace the recognition that such communities require a flourishing local economy; good quality public services; a diverse, vibrant and creative local culture; community cohesion; and an environment of good governance, public participation, partnership working and civic pride of place.

3.80 Local government, working with others, is seen as being vital in helping to achieve these objectives, but it is also acknowledged that changes in the ways that central government works will be required. In particular, there is need for a better shared understanding of central government’s and local government’s roles and responsibilities.

3.81 In the proposals for the delivery of the vision there is an emphasis on strengthening the role of the regional structures of government – the regional Government Office, the RDAs and the regional assemblies. Sub-regional, local government is thus conceived as developing its future role within this strengthened regional framework; with providing a strong and accountable relationship with local communities; and with providing community leadership.

3.82 This emphasis on leadership and community visibility reflects the Government’s view that there is a need for the role of local councillors to change and evolve, in a way that will require different skills from those which many current councillors possess, and also a much better level of professional support from council officials. Training and professional development of councillors is therefore seen as a priority, as is the provision of the resources needed to support councillors in their enhanced role as a local community champions.

3.83 Part of the Government’s policy argument for this greater leadership role for councillors is that the public should come to recognise their councillors as people who are able to ‘get things done’ within their local community. The Government reasoned

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83 ODPM (2005) *Vibrant Local Leadership*.

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that changing local council constitutions in 2001 would raise the visibility of council leaders and give greater public clarity about council decision making, and it is using similar reasoning now in seeking to enhance the leadership role of local councillors.

3.84 Nonetheless, the policy is that there should remain a clear and accountable separation between a council’s leadership and executive roles, on the one hand, and the local representation and scrutiny roles of councillors on the other. The community leadership role of individual councillors is thus focused on strong representation and cogent persuasion, rather than on a personal control of policies or resources. There is an overt recognition that in delivering a desired community outcome, councillors will need to exert their influence and skills on a range of agencies and partners not only on the council.

3.85 In developing its thinking about the roles of local councillors the Government’s emerging policy also has a strong focus on increasing citizen engagement and empowerment. Quotations from three selected paragraphs of *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter* (Table 3.8) succinctly capture the focus of the Government’s intent, and it is one that we anticipate will be widely shared in CCC both by elected members and council officers.

3.86 It is suggested that there are five key principles in establishing community engagement of the type Government policy is expecting local authorities to achieve (Table 3.9). Again, in the context of present approaches to local government in Cumbria this guidance seems unlikely to raise any concerns in principle.

3.87 The interpretation of the word ‘neighbourhood’ has been a point of some debate, since it raises considerations of the scale on which ‘neighbourhood initiatives’ might be considered. Our conclusion is that ‘neighbourhood’ is best interpreted by reference to the dictionary as ‘a district, especially one forming a community’. Thus ‘neighbourhood’ (in the sense of district) and ‘community’ (in the sense of a community of people) can be equated, and could be of almost any size.

3.88 In a recent radio interview, the Rt Hon David Miliband, Minister of Communities and Local Government stated:

‘The community can be a town or a city or it can be a neighbourhood, and I think one thing that is noticeable about the Government’s third term in comparison to its first term is the emphasis it places on the neighbourhood level. But that neighbourhood level is not to the exclusion of the town or the city level; it’s in addition to it. We don’t have a single transferable policy here, still less a single transferable menu that must be applied in every circumstance. Diverse communities, different local authorities are developing this neighbourhood empowerment in different ways. That seems to be a good thing not a bad thing.’

3.89 We have considered aspects of CCC’s community policies later in our report, but at this point it is important to underline the fact that the Government’s present policies on ‘new localism’ seem flexible, leaving considerable scope for local interpretation and innovation within the broad intention of the policy framework.

Table 3.8. Selected quotations from *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation: Paragraph 12, Paragraph 13 and Paragraph 14 (Part)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph 12.</strong> In particular people are interested in specific, often local, and very practical issues - they feel strongly about the places where they live, work and play. They are especially interested in things that are close to home - e.g. how safe their streets are, how clean the environment is, whether they can physically access local services, how good local schools are, and what opportunities there are for young people. There is a natural sense of pride in a well-planned, well-managed and attractive locality to which people feel they belong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph 13.</strong> Not only do people want to be involved, but they need to be able to influence decisions if public services are to meet their needs and their communities are to flourish. Inclusive approaches to governance encompassing, where necessary, new forms of involvement can support and reinforce traditional institutions. The empowerment of all people and communities, including minority groups, to improve their quality of life is crucial to the achievement of a wide range of Government objectives and to the commitment of local government to devolve power to local people, communities and other organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph 14.</strong> The national Audit Office's value for money study of the ODPM's Single Community Programme stated that: “Community participation is vital in ensuring value for money in public services. Services designed and delivered without community input risk wasting public money because they will be unused or underused if they are not what people need. Local people must have the opportunities to identify their needs and contribute to finding solutions, rather than feel powerless in the face of public authorities that deliver services on their behalf.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.9. The five principles for neighbourhood arrangements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. All councils, in partnership with other service providers, should provide opportunities and support for neighbourhood engagement through appropriate arrangements so that they can respond to the needs and priorities of neighbourhood communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Neighbourhood arrangements must be capable of making a real difference to the everyday life of citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The nature of the neighbourhood arrangements must be appropriate to local circumstances, be flexible to changing circumstances over time and be responsive to the needs and diversity of its community and its organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Neighbourhood arrangements must be consistent with local representative democracy which gives legitimacy to governmental institutions, and places elected councillors as the leading advocates for their communities, and with the requirements of democratic accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Neighbourhood arrangements must be balanced with the demands of efficiency and proportionality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.90 As has been pointed out by Anna Randle in her monograph *Councils Embracing Localism*\(^87\), initiatives in the devolution of local authority power are not new in concept. Radical devolution was pioneered by some local authorities 10-20 years ago, but these initiatives generally did not survive. What is different now is that the ‘new localism’ policies emerging from current Government thinking are being framed within a regime of rigorous performance and inspection of local authorities, and are linked with ideas on the future development of local government and the leadership role of local councillors.

**Quality Parishes and Towns**

3.91 Arguably the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme\(^88\) is a specific example of ‘new localism’, although it originates from a different policy source. The Rural White Paper *Our Countryside: the Future – A Fair Deal for All*\(^89\) set out the Government’s view that parish and town councils, being the tier of government that is closest to local communities, had a central role to play in improving the quality of local life. With this in view the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme was introduced in 2003 to provide a framework and a stimulus for these bodies to ‘raise their game’ by increasing their capacity and improving their systems of operation.

3.92 The Scheme makes provision for all parish and town councils to establish a *Model Charter* with the county or district council, setting out the arrangements by which the two councils will work to common objectives. Additionally, parish or town councils which achieve the quality status may play an enhanced role in their communities in partnership with the county and/or district councils. This can allow them a more integral role in influencing the delivery of services in their local area and, where agreed, to manage services on behalf of a county or district council. It also provides for joint arrangements for working with partners on the provision of local access points for information or services.

3.93 In order to achieve Quality Town or Parish status, a council must demonstrate that it has the ability to take on the enhanced role and responsibility that such status may bring. To do this the council must meet required criteria in regard to:

- electoral mandate;
- qualifications of the Clerk of the Council;
- conduct of council meetings;
- communications;
- annual reports;
- accounts; and
- code of conduct.

3.94 In Cumbria CALC is promoting and supporting the Quality Town and Parish Scheme. At the time of this report’s preparation there are ongoing discussions about the development of charters with CCC and the district councils – but the principle has been agreed. Four town/parish councils – Keswick, Arnside, Ravensdale and Lamplugh – have achieved quality status; and Orton (Eden) is at an advanced stage of the application

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\(^{87}\) Randle (2005) *Councils Embracing Localism.*


and approval process. Some dozen further councils are engaged in developing their bid and more than 30 further councils have expressed a firm interest in the scheme.\footnote{Information supplied by CALC.}

**CHANGEUP PROGRAMME**


3.96 Underlying the *ChangeUp* programme is the Treasury’s proposal to build on *The Compact* system of agreements launched in 1998,\footnote{MAFF (2000) *Our Countryside: The Future – a Fair Deal for Rural England.*} but to further develop the relationships between national and local government and the voluntary and community sector by seeking to:

- involve the voluntary and community sector in planning as well as delivery;
- forge long-term strategic partnerships with the sector;
- build the capacity of the sector; and
- factor in to the cost estimates the relevant element of overheading for services delivered under *The Compact*.

3.97 In Cumbria both CCC and the district councils have *Compacts* with the voluntary and community sector,\footnote{DEFRA (2003) *Community Capacity Building and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Rural England.*} but under the emerging policies these relationships can be expected to be developed further.

**RURAL STRATEGY**

3.98 The Government first set out its broad agenda for rural policy development in the MAFF Rural White Paper *Our Countryside: The Future – a Fair Deal for Rural England* in November 2000.\footnote{Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food (2002) *Farming and Food a Sustainable Future.*} However, since then major developments have taken place. MAFF has been superseded by DEFRA. A massive outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease has ravaged large areas of the England, including Cumbria. Agricultural policy has been reshaped by the Curry report\footnote{Haskins (2003) *Rural Delivery Review: A Report on the Delivery of Government Policies in Rural England.*} and by fundamental reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The recommendations of Lord Haskin’s report on the
delivery of rural policies and services in England have been largely accepted and, last but not least, DEFRA has begun to implement *Rural Strategy 2004*\(^{102}\), a policy document rooted in the 2000 White Paper, but updated to reflect the scale of the intervening changes.


- **Economic and Social Regeneration** – supporting enterprise across rural England, but targeting greater resources at areas of greatest need.

- **Social Justice for All** – tackling rural social exclusion wherever it occurs and providing fair access to services and opportunities for all rural people.

- **Enhancing the Value of our Countryside** – protecting the natural environment for this and future generations.

3.100 Beneath these broad objectives the main ‘headlines’ of the strategy were that DEFRA would:

- rationalise its rural funding from around 100 schemes to three main programmes covering Rural Regeneration\(^{103}\); Agriculture and Food Industry Regeneration; and Natural Resource Protection;

- focus on its policy and strategic remit, allowing service delivery to be undertaken through other bodies, including delivery of socio-economic programmes, such as the successor to the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), via the RDAs, working in partnership with local authorities and others;

- create a new integrated agency, *Natural England*, to champion integrated resource management, nature conservation, biodiversity, landscape access and countryside recreation (this will be derived from the whole of *English Nature* and parts of the *Countryside Agency* and the DEFRA Rural Development Service);

- create from part of the *Countryside Agency* a new independent body, the *Commission for Rural Communities*, to act as a rural advocate, expert adviser and independent watchdog with a particular focus on the disadvantaged in the countryside;

- streamline support for rural businesses by working with DTI and through the RDAs;

- accept that there may be regional variation in rural development reflecting local initiatives and approaches, but require regional solutions to be held to account against national standards; and

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\(^{103}\) Underpinning this policy DEFRA has adopted a new definition of ‘rural’ based on settlement morphology (density of towns, villages, and scattered dwellings) and sparsity of population.
strengthen the links with the regions through a closer Ministerial relationship with the Regional Rural Affairs Forums104.

3.101 Funding and associated responsibilities for socio-economic work began to be redirected from DEFRA and the Countryside Agency to the Regional Government Offices and RDAs as of 1 April 2005. From the same date the Commission for Rural Communities was established as an operating division of the Countryside Agency105. The landscape, access and recreation teams of the Countryside Agency, English Nature and the Rural Development Service106 have already begun to coordinate their work and it is envisaged that Natural England will be established by October 2006. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill, which will allow the legal establishment of the two new agencies, passed from the House of Commons to the House of Lords on the 14 October 2004107.

3.102 These changes will have a significant impact on rural policies and particularly on the involvement of local authorities in delivering more integrated rural services. It will have important implications for CCC. We have noted that Lancashire County Council has already established108 a DEFRA approved pathfinder project in the North West Region:

- to develop a model that will ensure consistent and robust rural proofing of service delivery, linked to DEFRA’s Public Service Agreement objective ‘to enhance opportunity and tackle social exclusion in rural areas’;

- to identify and test the adaptability of rural programmes to address local needs and opportunities; and

- to explore how customers engage with rural support mechanisms and test ways of simplifying access.

SUMMARY

3.103 In last 7 years there has been a major transformation in central government policies for local government and, as a consequence, there have been fundamental alterations in the way that local government works.

3.104 In the policy areas we have considered several policies have already had a major impact on CCC. In this category we would include:

- the introduction of best value policies and the related contracting out of services through ‘partnership arrangements’ with the service supplier;

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104 Regional Rural Affairs Forums have been established as a recommendation of the Rural White Paper 2000. The GONW provides the Secretariat for the North West Rural Affairs Forum (see www.gonw.gov.uk/nwraf.
105 See Commission for Rural Communities, www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk
107 See Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill, www.DEFRA.gov.uk/rural/ruraldelivery/bill/
- the introduction of CPA and related performance management;

- the comprehensive introduction of partnership working and the establishment of the LSPs and CSP;

- the constitutional reform of local government and the introduction of the ‘Cabinet and Scrutiny Panel’ system; and

- the emergence of a regional tier of government through the combined impact of GONW, NWDA and NWRA.

3.105 Amongst the policy changes which will have significant impact in the next period we would include:

- the development and introduction of the LAA system, incorporating the present LPSA arrangements;

- the ChangeUp programme and the new rural strategy; and

- the emergence of the practical expression of the Government’s ‘new localism’ agenda.

3.106 Of these policy initiatives the last is the least developed, and therefore the most difficult to assess. However, we have provided a contemporary analysis of our interpretation of the policy and its implications for Cumbria in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 4: PROVISION OF SERVICES IN CUMBRIA

INTRODUCTION

4.1 As in all areas of Britain, people in Cumbria benefit from the combined activities of a wide range of service providers. Some of these are in public sector, some are in the private sector and some are intermediate, reflecting voluntary and community organisations or ‘third-sector’ businesses established on not-for-profit principles\(^{109}\). In recent times, the lines between these different types of providers have become blurred so that ‘core public services’ may now be contracted out and delivered through the private or voluntary sectors, whilst private sector services may be subsidised by public funding to avoid ‘market failure’ and the resultant disadvantage to local communities\(^{110}\).

4.2 In this chapter we have considered the organisational framework of service provision in Cumbria, briefly examining the relevant structures and the ways that they interrelate. We have focused on matters that relate mainly to public-funded services and are relevant to CCC. However, some independent service providers have important interfaces with CCC and condition its external operating environment; where appropriate, we have considered those organisations also.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

County, District and Parish Councils

4.3 Within the complexity of the general service environment, local authorities play a key role both in providing services directly and in ensuring that services are provided by others. County councils and district councils are regulated under Local Government Acts\(^{111}\) so that often they not only have the legal powers to allow them to provide a service but also they have a statutory duty to ensure the service is provided. In unitary authority areas one council undertakes all the relevant duties but in shire county areas, like Cumbria, responsibilities are divided between the county council and the district councils.

4.4 Additionally, under various laws, town and parish councils may undertake a variety of duties on behalf of the community. In practice these may be provided by district councils or the county council on an agreed basis, but there is also scope for reciprocal arrangements whereby town or parish councils could potentially to take on selected duties through agreement with the district councils or county council.

4.5 There is a close relationship between the three tiers of councils in the collection of Council Tax. This is undertaken by the district councils, which act as the ‘taxation

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\(^{109}\) Whilst the ‘not-for-profit’ description is commonly used such businesses cannot operate at financial loss and remain sustainable. Therefore, whilst maximising profit is not their main motivation, they are driven by similar business considerations as apply to the private sector.

\(^{110}\) In Cumbria an example of a contracted-out services is road maintenance. Subsidised rural bus services are an example of public subsidy in a situation of ‘market failure’.

\(^{111}\) The Local Government Acts define ‘local authorities’ as (1) a county council, (2) a district council, (3) a London borough council, (4) the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority, (5) the Council of the Isles of Scilly. Note that these do not include the parish and town councils.
authority’ for the council system as a whole. The level of Council Tax levied reflects the sum of the precept set by each council tier to meet its budgetary needs.

**Funding and Scale of Services**

**4.6** Total expenditures by town and parish councils in Cumbria are generally very small, varying between councils from zero to £200,000; although, somewhat surprisingly, this precept does not appear to be under central government regulation. The main council tax charges are made by CCC and the 6 Cumbria district councils and, in conjunction with the support grants from central government, they provide the primary sources of funding for council services.

**Table 4.1. Budgets, central government support grant and call on council tax by Cumbria’s district councils and by Cumbria County Council in 2005-06**[^112].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Net Budget (£M)</th>
<th>Support Grant (£M)</th>
<th>Council Tax (£M)</th>
<th>Support Grant (% budget)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>13.170</td>
<td>8.459</td>
<td>4.690</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness</td>
<td>11.161</td>
<td>7.217</td>
<td>3.922</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>14.409</td>
<td>8.636</td>
<td>5.707</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>9.662</td>
<td>5.897</td>
<td>3.719</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>6.925</td>
<td>3.808</td>
<td>3.105</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>13.426</td>
<td>5.880</td>
<td>7.459</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total district councils</strong></td>
<td><strong>68.753</strong></td>
<td><strong>39.897</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.602</strong></td>
<td><strong>58.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria County Council</td>
<td>503.239</td>
<td>334.474</td>
<td>167.385</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Cumbria</strong></td>
<td><strong>571.992</strong></td>
<td><strong>374.371</strong></td>
<td><strong>195.987</strong></td>
<td><strong>65.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.7** The budgets, central government support grants and council tax charges for the 6 district councils and CCC for 2005-2006 are summarised in Table 4.1. In total the 6 district councils will expend *ca* £68M and CCC will expend *ca* £503M. Thus assuming services are approximately pro-rata with funding, the district councils account for *ca* 12% and CCC accounts for *ca* 88% of the county’s services. Across the whole of the expenditure 65.4% is funded through central government support grant and 24.6% by council tax payments. The proportion of district council expenditure provided by support grant is notably lower in the more rural council areas of Eden and South Lakeland, and the proportion of expenditure accounted for by council tax payments is correspondingly higher.

**Division of Responsibilities: County and District Councils**

**4.8** The division of service responsibilities between county councils and district councils is indicated in Table 4.2. Broadly speaking county councils are responsible for the more strategic county-wide duties, such as strategic planning and infrastructure development, and for ‘national services’ underpinning education and the well-being and social support of children and adults. District councils focus on localised services -

[^112]: The Cumbria Police Authority budget also includes funding from Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant. The 2005-2006 budget for the Authority is £89.115M of which *ca* 41% is Police Grant, *ca* 20% is Revenue Support Grant, *ca* 30% is Council Tax and *ca* 9% is Non-Domestic Rates.
planning control and building regulations, housing management, local leisure and recreation services, etc.

4.9 In some areas of activity the duties of the district councils and county councils are complementary, and there is a need for mechanisms to allow them to interface effectively. Our inquiries in Cumbria suggested that these mechanisms are well-developed in some instances, but are less so in others.

4.10 For example, we learned that there are routine mechanisms to allow district councils to consult with CCC over local planning applications which might have strategic plan or road infrastructure implications. However, we also found that the district councils had favoured distinctive local approaches to waste collection and recycling, although it seemed to us that there would have been major advantages from a county-wide initiative between the district councils and CCC, allowing for the development of an integrated waste collection and disposal strategy for Cumbria.

Table 4.2. Main areas of responsibilities of local authorities in ‘two-tier’ areas of England.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Councils lead on:</th>
<th>District Councils lead on:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Strategic planning</td>
<td>- Local planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Traffic, transport and highways</td>
<td>- Building regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Education</td>
<td>- Leisure and recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social services</td>
<td>- Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fire service and emergency</td>
<td>- Cemeteries and crematoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consumer protection</td>
<td>- Environmental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Refuse disposal</td>
<td>- Refuse collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Smallholdings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Libraries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.11 We should also note that the activities of both district councils and county councils in the categories of activities shown in Table 4.2 are subject to change. For example, district councils’ responsibilities in housing have reduced as a result of ‘right to buy’ policies and because of the transfer housing stock to housing associations. Likewise, county councils’ responsibilities for school management have reduced, and there are proposals for changes to go further, and include direct central government funding of local schools\textsuperscript{113,114}.

Promotion of Well-being

4.12 There is one area in which the councils appear to have overlapping powers and duties. Under Part 1, Paragraph 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 both types of council have sweeping powers to undertake actions for ‘promotion of well-being’ in their area. We were interested in gaining a better understanding of the practical implications of this so we could explore areas in which the different councils might interrelate or might take joint initiatives with others.

4.13 According to the wording of the Act (Table 4.3) it provides powers for councils to do almost anything that is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or

\textsuperscript{113} There are proposals for direct funding of schools: see ODPM (2005) Local Government Finance: Formula Grant Distribution, A Consultation Paper.

\textsuperscript{114} DfES (2005) Higher Standards Better Schools for All.
environmental well-being of their area. This is wholly consistent with various Government policies and, in particular, with the White Paper Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity\textsuperscript{115}, but it raises a question about how the provision applies in practice to both the 6 Cumbria district councils and CCC.

Table 4.3. Key sections of the ‘promotion of well-being provision’ of the Local Government Act 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion of Well-being: Part 1, Paragraph 2 states:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Every local authority are to have power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve any one or more of the following objectives -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) the promotion of the environmental well-being of their area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) The power under subsection (1) may be exercised in relation to or for the benefit of -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) the whole or any part of a local authority’s area, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) all or any persons resident or present in a local authority’s area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) In determining whether or how to exercise the power under subsection (1), a local authority must have regard to their strategy under section (4) [NB This section refers to the preparation of a community strategy]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) The power under subsection (1) includes the power for the local authority to -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) incur expenditure,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) give financial assistance to any person,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) enter into arrangements or agreements with any person,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) co-operate with, or facilitate or co-ordinate the activities of, any person,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) exercise on behalf of any person any functions of that person, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) provide staff goods, services, or accommodation to any person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) The power under subsection (1) includes power for a local authority to do anything in relation to, or for the benefit of, any person or area situated outside their area if they consider that it is likely to achieve any one or more of the objects in that subsection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Nothing in subsection (4) or (5) affects the generality of the power under subsection (1).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.14 On that, the key points seem to be that the powers under the Act apply to actions that councils consider will lead to improvements in their area (see (1)) or to actions supporting any activity in any other area that will lead to improvements in their area (see paragraph (5) Table 4.3). For the district councils the area concerned is the district council’s electoral area, whilst for CCC the area concerned is the County of Cumbria.

4.15 Our interpretation of this is that CCC is empowered under the Act to undertake or support any activity that will lead to any economic, social or environmental improvement anywhere in Cumbria and can also support activities outside Cumbria that have a benefit to the county or to any area within it. By contrast, the district councils can undertake or support any activity that will lead to economic, social or environmental improvement in their district but they cannot undertake or support any activity elsewhere in Cumbria or beyond unless it has benefit to their district.

4.16 This seems to us to be an important distinction, since it means that any district council is statutorily required to be quite narrowly focused on its own district priorities. It also seems to imply that a district council might be acting ultra vires if it gave active

\textsuperscript{115} ODPM (2005) Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity.
support to any initiative or development in Cumbria or elsewhere that was not going to give benefit to its own local district.

**Figure 4.1. Schematic representation of the directorate structure and the areas of responsibility of directorates of Cumbria County Council.**

**STRUCTURE OF CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL**

4.17 Internally CCC is structured into 7 directorates, each with a number of sub-units dealing with specific areas of the Council’s work, and some with additional ‘project group’ structures set up to deal with specific grant-funded central government initiatives.

4.18 This structure is shown schematically in Figure 4.1 which indicates the directorates and also their *main areas of responsibility*\(^{116}\). This structure was introduced in the summer of 2005 and the arrangements within the Children’s Services Directorate and the Adult Social Care Directorate have yet to be finalised. (Prior to the recent restructuring, CCC had separate Directorates of *Education* and of *Social Services*.)

\(^{116}\) In some cases the areas of responsibility reflect the underlying departmental and unit structures but this is not necessarily the case.
4.19 The new Directorates of Children’s Services and of Adult Social Care do not map directly on what existed previously. The roles and structures are different; and the new structures have also been tasked with new areas of work and new agendas. The responsibilities of the posts of Director of Children’s Services and Director of Adult Social Services are in fact defined by statute and statutory guidance, which places specific responsibilities both on the post holders and on county councils117.

4.20 Under the Children Act 2004, every children’s authority in England is required to appoint a Director of Children’s Services and a designated Cabinet member as Lead Member for Children’s Services. The Act also made an amendment to the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970118 requiring a Director of Adult Social Services to be appointed once the required change in children’s services had been put into effect.

ROLES OF DIRECTORATES

4.21 In most cases the functions of the different directorates and the main roles they undertake will be self-evident from Figure 4.1. However, the following paragraphs provide some brief comments that will assist readers’ understanding.

Children’s Services Directorate

4.22 Under Children Act 2004 the Director of Children’s Services has responsibility for coordinating and managing the provision of local children’s services across education, health and social services, and the directorate thus covers that range of responsibilities. It has a leading role in addressing the Every Child Matters: Change for Children (CfC) programme, which has been introduced in response to the green paper Every Child Matters (2003) and the Children Act 2004119. CfC has five children-focused elements:

- enjoying and achieving;
- making a positive contribution;
- being healthy;
- economic well-being; and
- staying safe.

The aims, targets and indicators, and inspection criteria for each of these elements has been specified by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES); there are 26 related Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and 13 other key indicator measures.

4.23 The CfC policies are driving a major programme of change. This extends across the Children’s Services Directorate, and other areas of CCC’s work, as well as the work of a range of external organisations. The latter include: the NHS Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities; the district councils; the schools; the police force; the Youth Offenders Team (YOT); the community and voluntary sector; the Learning and Skills

117 The posts are politically restricted under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended) and may not be a Member of the local authority. The appointments are a responsibility of the whole council unless delegated under the terms of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000.

118 The Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 formerly placed on local authorities a duty to appoint a Director of Social Services.

119 See www.everychildmatters.gov.uk
Council (LSC Cumbria); the Children’s Fund; Cumbria SureStart; and Connexions Cumbria.

4.24 The governance arrangements for the programme are provided through a partnership, linking the CSP Children’s and Young People’s Board and the County Council’s internal governance structures (Figure 4.2). There are 13 separate workstreams each designed to achieve an objective in the implementation process, and together reflecting the scope and scale of the project.

Figure 4.2. The governance structure and workstreams of the Change for Children programme.

4.25 The Children’s Services Directorate also has a leading involvement in three national partnership initiatives, each reflecting a major central government programme.

4.26 Cumbria SureStart is a programme targeted at helping the development of services for children and parents in disadvantaged areas and providing financial help for parents to afford childcare and re-enter employment. The main initiatives are: increasing the availability of childcare for all children; improving health and emotional development for young children; and supporting parents in parenting and also in their aspirations towards employment.

4.27 Connexions Cumbria is part of a national young people’s service designed to provide 13-19 year olds with personal advice and support covering education, training, career and development planning, health, lifestyle, housing etc. The service has centres in Barrow, Carlisle, Kendal, Maryport, Millom, Penrith, Ulverston, Whitehaven and Workington.
The Children’s Fund is a programme initiated in November 2000. It is designed to identify young people at risk; to put in place measures to address their social exclusion; and to support the achievement of their full potential. It adopts a partnership approach covering statutory agencies, community and voluntary groups, faith groups and others. The emphasis of the Fund is on preventative services, partnership working and the participation of young people in the design, operation and evaluation of the programme; it has a particular emphasis on the 5-13 age group.

The Children’s Fund is planned to continue operating until 2008 but ultimately it and other Government initiatives will be embraced by Children’s Trusts. These are presently being piloted in 37 local authority areas. The Children’s Trusts are more all-embracing than the partnership systems and are intended to create a comprehensive integration of all services for children, which will be responsive to children’s needs.

The trusts will be led by the local authorities, and the Children Act 2004 places a ‘duty to cooperate’ on the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Strategic Health Authorities. It is also envisaged that the Children’s Trusts will provide an opportunity for extended schools to widen their remit and provide additional children’s services; and that the voluntary and community sector will have a key role. There is a requirement for every local authority area to have a children and young people’s plan by 2006, and Children’s Trust arrangements are expected to be in place in all relevant local authorities by 2008.

Adult Social Care Directorate

The Adult Social Care Directorate is in some respects complementary to the Children’s Services Directorate. Its Director is charged with ensuring that the social care needs of local communities and ‘adult users’ of social services are addressed and managed in a coordinated way. ‘Adult users’ are defined as persons of 18 years or older with assessed social care needs. These may include people with:

- physical disabilities or frailty due to aging;
- sensory impairment;
- learning disabilities;
- mental health needs (including mental frailty due to advanced age);
- long-term medical conditions requiring social care in addition to health care;
- problems arising from substance abuse; and
- asylum seekers with adult social care needs.

At present adult social care is undergoing a major strategic change, based on the policies set out in the Department of Health (DH) Green Paper Independence, Well-being and Choice: Our Vision for the Future of Social Care for Adults in England. These derive from corresponding thinking to that underlying the changes in children’s services. They place an emphasis on: building services around people’s needs and choices; risk management, prevention and early intervention; streamlined assessment systems with agency sharing of information; multi-agency working between the local authorities,

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120 A useful outline of good practice for the active involvement of children and young people is provided in NYA (2005) Hear by Right.
121 Cumbria is not a pilot area.
122 See www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/
health sector, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), voluntary and community sector, and independent organizations.

4.33 In these activities local authorities are expected to provide the strategic and leadership role. However, it is envisaged that they will work closely with other key players, particularly the health sector, and will act to support and help build the range and quality of services that are provided by the voluntary and community sector. The underpinning objectives of the new policies are to:

- promote choice and independence;
- provide or arrange practical care and support;
- support the use of mainstream services and provide opportunities for accessing services;
- offer protection to the most disadvantaged groups;
- prevent deterioration in physical or mental health; and
- support and promote social inclusion and well-being in the community, reducing inequalities and building and enabling community capacity.

4.34 These policy strands emphasize ‘independence, well-being and choice’. Supporting the new approach are a variety of measures involving multi-disciplinary single assessments, a ‘care programme’ approach and a greater flexibility in the use of direct payments to allow people greater choice and control over the services they need.

Finance and Central Services Directorate

4.35 This directorate covers a large proportion of CCC’s internal and ‘corporate’ functions such as finance, audit, legal services, property, scrutiny and corporate governance. Additionally it has responsibility for services provided in support of elected members. Information technology (IT) services and elements of Cumbria Information Systems (CIS) have been outsourced to Agilisys, but there is a continuing internal responsibility for managing that contract.

Strategy and Performance Directorate

4.36 This directorate undertakes the central collection and analysis of CCCs performance data, for CPA and other purposes. It is also responsible for CCC’s communication programmes and for those parts of HR management that have not been outsourced to Capita Symonds.

4.37 Under its Community functions it has a role in CCC’s devolved activities, including the area support systems which underpin the operation of the 6 County Council Local Committees. It also contains the Community Unit which is responsible, amongst other things, for the Neighbourhood Forum system and the local community development programmes. Because of this locality focus the directorate has a close engagement with the LSPs and other community partnerships, with the voluntary and community sectors, and with independent community groups operating at district or parish levels.
Public Protection Directorate

4.38 Emergency Planning, Trading Standards and Fire and Rescue Service are functions that will be generally well-recognised and understood. However, in Cumbria, they have several distinctive features. Firstly, emergency planning in Cumbria has a particular focus because of the county’s major nuclear energy facilities and because of the relatively recent experiences of the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak.

4.39 Secondly, the Trading Standards Department has recently been successful in a bid to establish a Regional Centre for Trading Standards Advice, located at Barrow. This will attract 40 new posts and give the department a significant regional and national role.

4.40 Thirdly, in recent years, in accord with ODPM policies on risk management, the Fire and Rescue Service has developed a strategy based on three strands of preventing, protecting and responding to risk. This has seen the service introduce a range of new community initiatives as well as risk assessment and risk management strategies based on Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This allows the identification of high risk locations and high risk members of the population. The community initiatives have included the launch of schemes for home risk assessment, and for the engagement and training of young people through the imaginative Young Firefighters scheme and Road Accident Training scheme.

4.41 Fire and rescue services in England are administered through 46 ‘fire authorities’. These are differently constituted in different parts of the country; in Cumbria, CCC is the relevant ‘fire authority’. Each of the 46 individual Fire and Rescue Services has a Control Centre at a local station, so that the responses across the whole of its area can be properly directed and coordinated. The Cumbria Control Centre is in Cockermouth.

4.42 Since April 2000, a series of reviews and government policy documents have made a case for the rationalisation of Control Centres either through a vertical integration within the Fire and Rescue Services or through a horizontal integration embracing the fire services, police and ambulance services.

4.43 The underlying arguments have been based on two main considerations. Firstly, it has been said there is a need to create larger Control Centres to allow the efficient implementation of Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP) and new communications technologies, such as the Firelink national wide-area radio network. Secondly, it has been argued that the management and organisation of the services needs to be reconsidered in the light of the growing threat of international terrorism.

4.44 In the event, vertical integration has been preferred and it is now proposed to replace the 46 existing Control Centres with 9 Regional Control Centres. Under this plan the Regional Control Centre for the North West Region will be located in Warrington.

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125 In two-tier local government areas like Cumbria the environmental health services are located with the district councils. In many single-tier authorities’ environmental services and trading standards services work in close cooperation often in one department.

Economy, Culture and Environment Directorate

4.45 CCC has a major role in strategic planning and the implementation of strategic programmes and this directorate has key functions in that strategic process. In scope it covers the three facets of sustainable development - economic, environmental and social (in planning and culture).

4.46 The directorate also provides important points of CCC linkage with other agencies in Cumbria - particularly in regard to economic development, environmental management and the county’s economic research. For example, the directorate provides a link with the Cumbria Economic Intelligence Partnership (CEIP), which produces regular reports on the Cumbria economy and on employment; also with the Centre for Regional Economic Development (CRRED) which, jointly with CEIP, publishes the Cumbria Economic Bulletin.

4.47 Until recently, CCC and the district councils have jointly sponsored the Cumbria Inward Investment Agency, as an independent body. However, in parallel with the establishment of Cumbria Vision (see below), the district councils have withdrawn their support for the Agency, and it is now proposed that inward investment functions will be brought more directly within the responsibilities of the Economy, Culture and Environment Directorate.

4.48 Many project grants provided by the UK Government, EU and other governmental bodies have a statutory requirement for an Accountable Body to provide the financial framework and rigorous accountability that is needed for public audit. CCC has a major role in acting as Accountable Body for a range of publicly funded projects, including NWDA and EU funded projects. To assist in this process the Economy, Culture and Environment Directorate has a separate Regeneration Support Team which undertakes project evaluation work prior to CCC agreeing to act as the Accountable Body for any specific project.

Client Services Directorate

4.49 In comparison with other directorates the title Client Services may not be immediately enlightening. In practice, however, the directorate brings together some key areas of CCC’s service provision. It is responsible for five main areas of work:

- highways infrastructure, which involves managing CCC’s road-related programmes, which are contracted through partnership arrangements with Capita Symonds (for professional and design work) and Amey Infrastructure Services (for construction) and badged as Cumbria Highways;

- CCC’s programme of waste disposal, which operates ‘back to back’ with the district councils’ programmes for waste collection;

- strategic and commercial procurement, which provides procurement services not only for CCC but also for a range of other, mainly public sector, bodies;

- premises services for schools and other premises in Cumbria, including supply of support staff, such as cleaners, catering staff and facilities managers, etc;
- *Cumbria Care*, which is the designated not-for-profit service business through which CCC provides residential care, support for people living in their own homes, and day services for the aged and for people with disabilities.

**Cumbria County Council Locations**

4.50 That CCC provides services throughout Cumbria is reflected in its organisational structures and widely dispersed presence ‘on the ground’. Almost as a principle, it seems to have maintained a dispersed network of offices and other ‘service points’. In some cases there are readily identifiable reasons for this - such as might be the case for local libraries and local emergency services. In other cases, a county council presence seems to have been judged as important in maintaining local communities. CCC has major office locations in each of the 6 district council areas – in Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle, Kendal, Penrith, Whitehaven and Workington, but its various services at any particular location are not always co-located in the same building(s).

4.51 Formal meetings of CCC are held at the County Hall Building in Kendal, whilst the Cumbria Health and Well-being Committee and Scrutiny Panels meet at various locations but mainly in Carlisle or Kendal. County Council Local Committee meetings are held in their district areas, the arrangements varying between the 6 Local Committees.

4.52 CCC’s Chief Executive Officer and 5 Directorates have their central offices in Carlisle, whilst the central offices for the Public Protection Directorate and the Client Services Directorate are in Cockermouth and Dalston, respectively. However, departments within directorates may have their main offices located elsewhere in the county, so that there is no ‘set pattern’ in the arrangements.

4.53 The various departments which provide the main ‘direct to client’ services operate on a variety of area-based structures (sometimes referred to as location geographies). In some cases these reflect the 6 district areas or aggregates of the district areas. However, this is by no means always the case and there is no standardised approach across CCC departments.

4.54 As examples, the services provided by the Community Development Unit operate on a structure of 6 areas co-terminus with the 6 district areas, whilst those provided by the Social Services Learning Disabilities Team operate on a 6 area structure not co-terminus with the district boundaries. The services provided by the education department use a 5 area model in which Allerdale and parts of Copeland are combined and a ‘Furness’ area is formed through a combination of Barrow-in-Furness district and the southern section of Copeland. The Trading Standards Officers operate from four main offices in Carlisle, Cockermouth, Kendal and Barrow. Fire Services use a 3 area model based on Allerdale & Copeland, Carlisle & Eden, and South Lakeland & Barrow-in-Furness.

**OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**Health: NHS Structures**

4.55 Health services in England are organised through a tiered arrangement from the Secretary of State and Department of Health via 28 Strategic Health Authorities to a
range of more local NHS Trusts which are focused on different aspects of health service provision. The trusts variously cover:

- acute services;
- mental health and learning disability services;
- primary care; and
- ambulance services.

4.56 Acute services are mainly hospital-based provision – in Cumbria there are main hospitals with accident and emergency departments at Carlisle, Whitehaven, Kendal and Barrow, as well as a wider county network of cottage hospitals and clinics. Mental health and learning disability covers a range of specialist services, some but not all of which are located at specialist facilities. Primary care covers the management of services from general practitioners, dentists, opticians and pharmacists. Finally, ambulance services embrace not only patient transport services (which may involve non-NHS Trust providers) but also paramedical ‘non-planned care’ and community care provision. For many of these services, there is ongoing practice and an increased expectation of the NHS working in collaboration with local authority service providers.

Table 4.4. An outline of the NHS health service structures in Cumbria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Service/Organization(s)</th>
<th>Area/Districts Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Organisation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority</td>
<td>Cumbria and Lancashire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acute Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cumbria Acute NHS Trust</td>
<td>Allerdale, Carlisle, Copeland and Eden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morecambe Bay Acute NHS Trust</td>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness and South Lakeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health and Learning Disability (MHLD)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cumbria MHLD NHS Trust</td>
<td>Allerdale, Carlisle, Copeland and Eden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morecambe Bay MHLD NHS Trust</td>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness and South Lakeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Care</strong></td>
<td><strong>Areas not co-terminus with all district boundaries</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle and District Primary Care Trust</td>
<td>Carlisle/Allerdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden Valley Primary Care Trust</td>
<td>Carlisle/Eden/Allerdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cumbria Primary Care Trust</td>
<td>Allerdale/Copeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust</td>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness/South Lakeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ambulance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria Ambulance Service</td>
<td>Cumbria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.57 Cumbria comes under the control of a single Strategic Health Authority, but it is served by 2 Acute NHS trusts, 2 Mental and Learning Disability NHS Trusts, 4 Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and 1 Ambulance Service NHS Trust (Table 4.4). All the NHS Trusts have Boards formed by a combination of executive personnel and non-executive Chairs and Directors, who are appointed under statutory terms and conditions.\(^{127}\)

4.58 Information on the performance of the Trusts is provided through the NHS audit system\(^{128}\) and the Trusts publish information, including Board papers, on their websites.

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\(^{127}\) Appointments take place under the terms of the National Health Service Act 1977.

\(^{128}\) See for example www.nhs.uk/England/AuthoritiesTrusts/PCT
In September 2004 the three PCTs in North Cumbria – Carlisle and District, Eden Valley and West Cumbria - agreed to establish a single main Board meeting, and they have since operated on the basis of a ‘North Cumbria Trust’.

4.59 At the time of writing, there is ongoing consideration of some major changes in health service provision in Cumbria. At service level, there is discussion about the replacement of the West Cumberland Hospital at Whitehaven with a new hospital in West Cumbria, whilst at the strategic level there is active consideration of re-alignment of the boundaries of the NHS Trusts so that there is co-terminosity between the Trust boundaries and the Cumbria County boundary. From our own observations of the need for close working relationships between the NHS Trusts and CCC departments this proposition appears wholly sensible and would be to the advantage of local people and NHS staff.

Police

4.60 The 43 police forces in England and Wales are controlled through a tripartite structure involving the Home Secretary, the Chief Constables and the Police Authorities. The Home Secretary has overall responsibility for the police forces but as a ‘supervisor and coordinator’; the ‘direction and control’ of each force is the responsibility of its Chief Constable; and for each force there is a Police Authority overseeing the work of the Chief Constable and ensuring ‘adequate and efficient’ work is carried out by the force. In Cumbria, Cumbria Constabulary is the police force and the Cumbria Police Authority is the overseeing body.

4.61 Under the relevant statutory provisions, police authorities must comprise of local councillors, magistrates and independent members. In the case of the Cumbria Police Authority there are 9 members appointed by CCC, 3 members appointed by the Magistrates’ Courts Committee and 5 Independent members. The CCC members are drawn from the three main political parties: 4 Conservative; 4 Labour; and 1 Liberal Democrat. Also with the present membership of the Authority all 6 areas of Cumbria are represented; there are 2 members from each of Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle and Copeland districts and 1 member from each of Allerdale, Eden and South Lakeland districts.

4.62 Operationally the Cumbria Constabulary is structured on the basis of 3 areas: North Cumbria, covering Carlisle and Eden districts; West Cumbria, covering Allerdale and Copeland districts; and South Cumbria, covering South Lakeland and Barrow-in-Furness districts. The Police Headquarters is in Penrith, which is also the location of the Cumbria Police Authority. The Constabulary and the Authority have similarly designed web-sites for public information – in each case these could be taken as examples of good practice in information access.

4.63 In policy terms the police are implementing a Citizen Focused Policing (CFP) project. This is based on the National Neighbourhood Policing Programme pilot trials, which have been shown to reduce crime figures significantly. The objective of the Cumbria CFP project is to work with other agencies to engage with and build cohesive

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129 Access to information on these Trusts is through a single portal at www.ncumbria.nhs.uk
131 See www.cumbria.police.uk and www.cumbriapoliceauthority.org.uk
communities, which can then help themselves through collaborative partnerships. Across the county there are 19 Local Policing Teams covering the 168 electoral wards. The intention is for each ward to have ‘its own’ police officer and to date this has been achieved in approximately 68% of locations.

4.64 Backing up this approach there is a major effort to develop and use Ward Profiling\textsuperscript{132}, based on bringing together demographic, social and economic indicators and information held by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP\textsuperscript{133}), the police Performance Management Unit and the Cumbria Partnership Support (CUPS) team. The intention is to use this data, together with locally conducted surveys to help pinpoint ‘communities of identity’ and to quantify the community needs and aspirations. This will allow the development of local management strategies based on sound statistical information and community views.

4.65 There was clear evidence of innovative neighbourhood level schemes involving joint working between the police, CCC, the district councils and others. These are being supported by police Local Authority Community Orientated Problem Solvers – the so-called LA COPs. A good practice example is the StreetSafe scheme which has been implemented in Barrow (and is being considered for Eden). This scheme has used a range of approaches, based on home visits and neighbourhood engagement, to identify and begin to address local concerns and needs. This has provided an integrated approach to crime prevention, youth disorder, fire prevention, drugs and health, home safety, fly tipping, graffiti and other matters of community concern.

4.66 CCC engages with the Cumbria Police through the CDRPs, through directly-organised joint initiatives, and through the involvement of community policing officers and others in the Neighbourhood Forum system. Our overall impression of the level and type of engagement is very favourable. However, we received evidence that there is an absence of co-operative working between the 6 CDRPs, and that good practice is not being shared sufficiently. It is unclear to us whether this problem will be adequately addressed by the creation of the CSP, but our interpretation is that future funding for the CDRPs will be routed through LAA, and that this will provide the opportunity for the CSP to provide a coordinating function.

4.67 During the period we were undertaking our work Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary published a report on the future protective capability of the existing police force structure. This set out the view that the present arrangements were not well suited to deal with terrorism, serious organised crime, cross border crime, etc; and that five options for change might be considered. Subsequently it has emerged that the most favoured option is for the amalgamation of police forces within the regional boundaries to create forces with more than 4,000 officers (or 6,000 total staff). This will mean that the existing 43 police forces would reduce to (probably) 12.

4.68 Cumbria Constabulary has 1,260 police officers and it has been proposed that it should be amalgamated to provide part of a strategic force in the North West Region.

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\textsuperscript{132} The approach to ward profiling was established by the Audit Commission and is planned to be further developed in 2006 (For information see www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk).

\textsuperscript{133} CDRPs were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. There are 6 CDRP in Cumbria one for each district area. They are very widely constituted groups; some have ca 45 members covering the full range of community bodies and also some private sector partners.
4.69 Two amalgamation options have been proposed for consideration:

- **Option 1: three strategic regional forces**
  Cumbria and Lancashire
  Cheshire and Merseyside
  Greater Manchester Police

- **Option 2: two strategic regional forces**
  Cumbria, Lancashire and Merseyside
  Cheshire and Greater Manchester Police

The Cumbria Constabulary was asked to submit its business case in support of either of these proposals by 23 December 2005\(^\text{134}\).

### National Parks

4.70 CCC has interfaces with both the YDNPA and particularly the LDNPA at a variety of levels. However, most significant in the present context is through membership of each National Park Authority. This provides tangible routes through which County Councillors can make an input to the National Parks’ policies and procedures.

4.71 Under statute each National Park Authority has 26 members, a substantial number of who are appointed from the county councils, district councils and parish councils. In the case of the YDNPA there are 14 county and district council members and 7 representatives from parishes within the park. In the case of the LDNPA there are 14 county council and district council members and 5 representatives of parishes within the park. Under the system that applies, CCC provides 1 member for the YDNPA\(^\text{135}\) and 7 members for the LDNPA.

4.72 The statutory purposes of the National Park Authorities are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and

- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

However, in pursuing these purposes they also have a duty:

- to seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Park.

Where there is any conflict between the purposes or purposes and duties, the first purpose of conservation and enhancement overrides other considerations\(^\text{136}\).

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\(^{134}\) For further information see [www.cumbria.police.uk](http://www.cumbria.police.uk) and [www.cumbriapoliceauthority.org.uk](http://www.cumbriapoliceauthority.org.uk)

\(^{135}\) There are 7 County Council members of the Park Authority: these are 6 from North Yorkshire and 1 from Cumbria.

\(^{136}\) This is known as the ‘Sandford Principle’.
4.73 Although Cumbria has two national park areas, the overwhelming majority of comments we received during our inquiries related to the Lake District National Park, which dominates the west-central area of Cumbria. Almost without exception comments were mixed. There is enormous pride and appreciation amongst Cumbrian’s for the uniqueness of the landscape and the quality of the environment of the Lake District, and there is full recognition of the strength and value of the brand as a tourism destination. However, there were strongly articulated reservations about some of the development constraints incurred as a result of National Park status, and we found these views both within the park itself and in west coast areas, where better road access across the county was highlighted as a priority.

4.74 Within the National Park there were clear tensions over planning regulation - but there were divergent views about which planning constraints should be eased and which should be maintained. However, there did seem to be common acceptance that the availability of affordable housing was a genuine issue. The situation was made worse by the juxtaposition of council tenants’ right to buy their houses and the LDNPA’s reluctance to provide planning consent for new developments.

4.75 Several people expressed their concern that, under new policy arrangements, parish councils were being excluded from planning site visits made by the LDNPA. On investigation we found that as a result of an Audit Commission report the LDNPA had felt it necessary to alter its previous site visit policies. It had extended the period for written consultation in an effort to compensate.

4.76 We also received public representation about vehicle damage to ‘green paths’ in the National Park, and about related ‘inaction’ on the part of the LDNPA. Our inquiries found that this type of damage was acknowledged to be a limited problem, which was said by the LDNPA to have affected 4 roads in particular. However, it was pointed out that there were a good number of roads which permitted access. Vehicle use on these could only be prevented or managed by one of three options: declassification; traffic regulation; or voluntary agreement. The LDNPA had experimented with all three approaches, but recognised that there were some conflicts of use which were difficult to address.

4.77 We were frequently told that the LDNPA’s systems were ‘not easy to deal with’ and that there was a ‘lack of understanding of local needs’. So far as we could assess these comments were in part rooted in the administrative procedures and committee arrangements, which inadvertently serve to restrict opportunities for public representation at meetings of the LDNPA. Also, until very recently, the LDNPA did not provide internet access to papers and minutes of meetings137.

4.78 We are not in a position to gauge the scale of dissatisfaction over the LDNPA’s procedures and we noted in the recent Performance Assessment Report for the National Park Authority (NPA)138 the comment that:

- ‘Environmental organisations were critical of what they had perceived as the NPA’s over-emphasis on social and economic initiatives whilst those partners whose own priorities lie more in the area of social and economic generation tended to view the NPA as a body

137 This has been addressed in 2006.
whose efforts are devoted more towards the preservation of the existing landscape – “moth-
balling” being a term used by a number. It was clear to the (assessment) team that the
reality lies somewhere between these extremes with NPA managing a difficult balancing
act.’

4.79 However, we believe that the LDNPA could make significant improvements in its
systems to increase local citizens’ access to its deliberations and could provide better
opportunities for their contributions to its meetings.

4.80 We also observed from the Performance Assessment Report that there had been
problems between the LDNPA and CCC over economic development issues and aspects
of spatial planning; and also between the LDNPA and NWDA/local businesses over
development issues, such as farm diversification. Alongside this, the Performance
Assessment Report outlines a significant degree of internal tension between the senior
managers and LDNPA members. These matters are clearly for the LDNPA to address
but we believed they also have some implications for CCC and we have considered
these in Chapter 6.

Northwest Development Agency

4.81 It is difficult to overstate the potential influence of the NWDA on the
development of the North West Region. Because of its ‘single pot’ mechanisms of
funding, it can engage with virtually all sectors of the economy, it can bring about a
progressive transformation in the region’s infrastructure, and through creating greater
life-chances for individuals and communities - better training, better jobs, higher salaries
and an enhanced physical environment – it offers the prospect of fundamental socio-
economic change.

4.82 NWDA’s underlying strategy and overall plans are probably best reflected in its
recent draft *England’s North West: Regional Economic Strategy*[^139]. This sets the agency’s
programmes of work in the context of the Government’s wider sustainable development
policy, and within its five themes:

- living within environmental limits;
- achieving a sustainable economy;
- using sound science responsibly;
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; and
- promoting good governance.

4.83 The NWDA’s vision is to ‘transform England’s North West through sustainable
economic development into a competitive, high added value, knowledge-based economy’. It seeks
to achieve that objective through a programme of themed activities based on:

- Business;
- Skills and Employment;
- Regeneration;
- Infrastructure; and
- Quality of Life.

4.84 In each of these areas it has a number of main activities and has also particular ‘transformational activities’, which it considers crucial in achieving its vision and where it will place its priorities. We have therefore examined the main activities and ‘transformational activities’ from a Cumbria perspective to identify where CCC might best target its efforts to ensure they are complementary to the NWDA’s.

**BUSINESS THEME**

4.85 The main activities in the *Business* theme are:

- encouraging higher value-added activity through innovation and the application of science;
- encouraging higher added value through internationalisation;
- developing an enterprise culture and job growth especially in underperforming areas;
- developing specific industry sectors.

4.86 These activities reflect broadly-based development objectives but it is apparent from the detail of the work programmes and the ‘crucial transformational activities’ (Table 4.5) that some of the initiatives have a clear relevance to Cumbria, whilst others will be much more peripheral.

4.87 For example, the ‘crucial transformation’ emphasis on added value and skills development is a key Cumbria issue, as are some of the identified priority growth sectors. The emphasis on food and drink (Table 4.5) is important in gaining added value from Cumbria’s primary production industries and related food manufacturing, whilst that on advanced engineering reflects aspects of the economy in Barrow, Carlisle and elsewhere. Similarly nuclear energy and environmental technologies have strong links with the expertise and resources of West Cumbria, including the facilities at Sellafield, the recently established Nuclear Decommission Agency and the environmental expertise at West Lakes Research Institute.

**Table 4.5. ‘Transformational activities’ in the Business theme which the NWDA considers as crucial in achieving its vision**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crucial Transformational Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increase the value added by companies by driving innovation, internationalisation, skills development, resource efficiency and corporate responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Raise the level of enterprise and entrepreneurship to increase start-ups particularly in underperforming areas and communities, including female entrepreneurship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Seek to link new job opportunities (whether from expansion, new inward investment or new firm formation) with disadvantaged communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Focus support in sectors that have growth potential and are internationally competitive e.g. biotechnology/healthcare, food and drink, energy (including nuclear), environmental technologies, advanced engineering, materials digital/media and business and professional services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Supply leading edge business support services through efficient highly skilled support organisations to increase the value added to companies and tackle market failure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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140 Information has been taken from the draft NWDA *England’s Northwest: Regional Economic Strategy* but has been précised and condensed for presentation, where necessary.
However, it is also apparent that the NWDA’s programme for developing advanced technology and knowledge based businesses has a strong focus on creating a critical mass of these industries around Liverpool, Manchester and Preston, and in Cheshire and Warrington. These are areas where there has been recent growth in the regional economy, where there is clear scope to establish knowledge transfer partnerships with local higher education institutions (HEI), and where the agency can justifiably anticipate a high economic and social return on the investment of development funding.

The approach is also fully consistent with the city-region strategy which has been agreed between the NWDA, One NorthEast and Yorkshire Forward as a means of closing the economic gap between the North and South of England. This strategy focuses on the development of the city regions in which 90% of the population of the North of England live, viz:

- Liverpool City Region;
- Central Lancashire City Region;
- Manchester City Region;
- Sheffield City Region;
- Leeds City Region;
- Hull and Humber Ports City Region;
- Tees Valley City Region; and
- Tyne and Wear City Region.

The strategy acknowledges that across the North the ‘quality and extent of the countryside are real strengths’ and that they may be of value in promoting economic growth through the relationship of rural areas with core urban centres and market towns. However, objectively, much of Cumbria is quite distant from any of the city-region areas.

SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT THEME

Under Skills and Employment the main focus of the NWDA programme is on:

- increasing the proportion of the workforce with the basic skills to work;
- ensuring appropriate NVQ Level 2 and Level 3 provision for sectoral needs;
- increasing the proportion of young people with the skills and qualifications for business;
- increasing the proportion of the workforce with NVQ Level 4 skills;
- encouraging workforce development;
- improving leadership and management skills;
- developing enterprise skills in the population; and
- maintaining the size of the workforce to counteract the effects due to an aging population.

This approach conforms to well-established principles of linking economic development with the availability of an appropriately skilled workforce possessing good technical and business capabilities at the relevant level. Also, the specific identification

of the graduate level skills (i.e. Level 4) is wholly compatible with the emphasis on advanced-technology and knowledge-based industries highlighted under the Business theme (Table 4.6). The broad strategy includes getting more people into work and upgrading the quality of jobs for those who are already employed, and both of these objectives, and particularly the latter, are important to Cumbria.

Table 4.6. ‘Transformational activities’ in the Skills and Employment theme which the NWDA considers as crucial in achieving its vision143.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crucial Transformational Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ensure skills issues are driven forward under an effective Regional Skills Partnership (Business Skills Northwest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tackle the concentrations of lack of qualifications in Liverpool, Manchester, Knowsley, Oldham, Tameside, St Helens, Salford, Halton and Blackpool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Deliver Level 4 qualifications to support high value added growth (especially in the city regions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Upskill the existing workforce to take higher level jobs and thereby create vacancies at lower levels. Link workless people and those with lower skills to vacancies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Improve leadership and management skills, including corporate social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Substantially improve enterprise skills in the current workforce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Attract and retain skilled individuals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.93 In the workplan, NWDA highlights the need for improved Level 2/3 skills in West Cumbria, where the contraction of existing industries has created a significant need for re-training. It also pinpoints a more general need for improved business and ICT skills, and our own inquiries are in accord with this analysis. However, we have also formed the view that ICT training must be properly-targeted taking account of Cumbria’s distinctive industrial profile, with its large component of small manufacturing businesses, tourism businesses and rural businesses, including farming.

Learning and Skills Council

4.94 This type of focus is an important element of the development strategy supported by the LSC Cumbria, which works with industry locally to quantify training needs144. However, in September 2005 the LSC nationally announced a programme to save £40M costs and reduce its staffing from 4,700 to 3,400145; this was subsequently confirmed in its Annual Statement146. It is now clear that this will substantially reduce the scale of the LSC’s local office in Cumbria, and it suggests that LSC programmes of work may in future have a more regional and less local focus.

University of Cumbria

4.95 The NWDA’s work plan also indicates the agency’s commitment to strategic investment in the creation of a University of Cumbria. This is a key consideration in increasing Level 4 skills, where Cumbria is relatively weak, and also is important in facilitating knowledge partnerships between industry and local HEI to achieve the value added/advanced-business objectives set out in the Business theme147,148.

143 Information has been extracted from the draft NWDA England’s Northwest: Regional Economic Strategy but has been précised and condensed for presentation, where necessary.
147 Goddard (2000) The Role of a University in its Region.
4.96 In 2002 the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) commissioned Sir Brian Fender to review higher education provision in Cumbria. His report came to the conclusion that there was ‘an overwhelming case on social and economic grounds to continue to invest and develop higher education in Cumbria’, but also that ‘the dispersed population means that innovative solutions will be required’.

4.97 The report recommended that a Project Board should be set up to supervise the production of a strategic plan and accompanying business case for a University of Cumbria. Subsequently, the project was initiated with funding from LSC Cumbria, NWDA, HEFCE and CCC. Sir Martin Harris was appointed as Chair, and an HEFCE officer was assigned to work with partners. These included, in particular, the education institutions with a presence in Cumbria:

- Carlisle College;
- Cumbria Institute of the Arts;
- Furness College;
- Kendal College;
- Lakes College;
- Lancaster University;
- Open University;
- St Martin’s College; and
- University of Central Lancashire.

4.98 The project has had a period of intensive work during the summer of 2005 and, whilst it final outcome has yet to be published, we have learned that the initial proposal of the project is for a University of Cumbria to be established either from the 1 August 2007 or 2008.

REGENERATION THEME

4.99 Work under the NWDA Regeneration theme is designed to create conditions for investment and for community sustainability in targeted areas of identifiable need, i.e. where there are issues of poor employment, deprivation or other challenges to community sustainability.

4.100 The work covers physical and socio-economic projects, addressing areas with particularly acute needs or where there are no economic drivers for change. Much of the emphasis of the programme is on the three city regions of Manchester, Liverpool and Central Lancashire. However, parts of the programme specifically relate to Barrow and West Cumbria; and one strand addresses the problems rural areas, and is relevant to Cumbria.

4.101 The main activities under the theme are:

- realising the urban renaissance potential of the city regions of Manchester, Liverpool and Central Lancashire;

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- tackling worklessness and unemployment in deprived areas within and close to areas of economic growth (i.e. city regions) by linking people, jobs and training;

- creating the conditions for sustainable growth in urban areas with few economic drivers (which include west Cumbria);

- creating the conditions for sustainable growth in rural areas; and

- joining up responses and increasing capacity to deliver sustainable economic growth (amongst other initiatives this includes funding for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors).

4.102 Of the NWDA’s ‘crucial transformational activities’ for this theme, two are particularly relevant to Cumbria. The first is the need for stimulation of sustainable growth in Barrow and West Cumbria. The second is for investment targeted at ‘increasing business diversity, growing competitive rural areas; supporting key services in rural communities; and developing a skilful rural workforce’.

INFRASTRUCTURE THEME

4.103 The Infrastructure theme is focused around:

- the development of road and rail infrastructure within the North West Region;
- improving the road, rail, port and airport connectivity with other areas;
- providing appropriate sites for development across the region;
- creating a high quality physical environment;
- creating the quantity and quality of housing to support economic growth;
- developing the use of ICT infrastructure throughout the region; and
- ensuring a supportive framework for linking planning and economic development.

4.104 Though several of these programmes might apply obliquely to Cumbria, NWDA regards ICT development as a priority for maximising the opportunity in the county, and that is where it has placed its emphasis.

QUALITY OF LIFE THEME

4.105 The objectives under Quality of Life predominantly concentrate on promoting and making the most of what the North West Region has to offer. The main strands of activity are:

- improving the image of the region;
- building on the impact of hosting major events;
- developing the uniqueness of the region’s cultural offer;
- capitalising on the regions natural heritage and built heritage; and
- increasing the quality range and value of the business-visitor and leisure-visitor economy.

4.106 Since these objectives have a strong tourism theme they reflect several general and specific programmes of relevance to Cumbria. These include a commitment to
promote skills development in the tourism workforce and specific initiatives to promote
the Lake District and Hadrian’s Wall as tourism destinations.

4.107 Tourism makes a very substantial contribution to the economy of Cumbria, but its
scale and character also raises some challenges. Figures from the Cumbria Tourist Board
(CTB) indicate that in 2004 Cumbria received some 15.77M visitors who contributed
29.49M visitor days to the local economy. However, the same figures also imply that, on
an annualised basis, visitors effectively increase the population of Cumbria by ca 16%.
Moreover, in the main tourist season the actual impact may be several times that level,
creating a substantial need for increased local infrastructure and supporting services.

4.108 Additionally, it is apparent from the CTB’s list of Top 50 visitor attractions (Table
4.7) that tourism is unevenly distributed, emphasising the potential challenges of a very
heavy concentration of tourism in South Lakeland and Eden, and the need to develop
attractions and related infrastructure to support greater visitor access to the west of the
Lake District National Park.

Table 4.7. Distribution of the top fifty visitor attractions in Cumbria by district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regeneration and Economic Development Agencies

4.109 We have been told that there are over 70 public and private sector bodies in
Cumbria with a strand of regeneration, enterprise, business development, or business
support services. However, here we have focused particularly on the organisations and
initiatives relevant to our considerations of local democracy. These fall into two groups;
those concerned with regeneration/enterprise which have developed from public sector
initiatives; and those focusing on enterprise/business services which have developed
from business sector initiatives.

PUBLIC SECTOR INITIATIVES

4.110 The organisational landscape of this category of regeneration and enterprise
activity in Cumbria is relatively complex for three reasons. Firstly, NWDA, CCC and the
district councils all have some direct involvement in regeneration, mainly through
physical projects, including land reclamation, building renewal and infrastructure
development projects.

4.111 Secondly, specific regeneration projects funded through major government grants,
through local authority investment or in other ways have been established as branded
partnerships, with organisational structures. Examples of these are: the Heart of Barrow
project, which was funded through NWDA and EU grants; the Carlisle Renaissance
partnership which has attracted initial funding from Carlisle City Council and CCC; and
the West Cumbria Strategic Forum, which is chaired by Alan Johnston MP, Secretary of
State at the DTI, and has been established to deal with the implications of projected job losses at the Sellafield.

4.112 Thirdly, during the period of the Local Democracy Commission’s work, the organisational structures of the established regeneration and enterprise companies in Cumbria has been undergoing a protracted process of change.

4.113 To provide an understanding this last matter we should note that in mid-2005 there were two main regeneration and enterprise companies operating in Cumbria, each established for different reasons and under different strands of Government policy. The first company, West Lakes Renaissance (WLR), was established as one of the 21 national urban regeneration companies, developed as a result of the Urban Task Force Report of 1999 and the Urban White Paper of 2000. It had a remit for work in Allerdale, Copeland and Barrow districts, parts of which fall within a regeneration zone.

4.114 The second company, Rural Regeneration Cumbria (RRC), was established in response to the Rural Action Zone: Next Steps Strategy\(^ {150} \) developed following the Cumbria Foot and Mouth Disease epidemic in 2001. RRC had a remit for rural areas throughout Cumbria, excluding the city and town areas which are classified as urban. Some areas of the West Cumbria thus potentially came within the remit of both companies, whilst other areas, such as Carlisle City and the Kendal conurbation are within the remit of neither.

4.115 On the 2 April 2004, NWDA announced the establishment of Cumbria Vision a ‘new Board’ intended to provide the strategic leadership to address the economy of Cumbria and work in parallel with the CSP in its role of coordinating economic, social and environmental regeneration in the county. The concept, as initially set out, was for a body with a largely coordinating function.

4.116 However, over the following year the concept evolved and by the beginning of June 2005 it was proposed that Cumbria Vision, WLR, RRC and the NWDA (Cumbria) area office would be merged into a single organisation. This proposal has apparently encountered subsequent objections and, as indicated by the Cumbria Vision Strategic Plan released on the 31 October, the arrangements put in place reflect an intermediate structure.

4.117 It now appears that the Cumbria Vision will oversee, monitor and evaluate the delivery of publicly funded projects, including those falling under the NWDA’s Strategic Investment Plan, the rural regeneration programme and the urban regeneration programme in Barrow and West Cumbria. However, as one of its short-term objectives Cumbria Vision will seek to achieve integration with WLR, RRC and NWDA (Cumbria) in a company structure ‘that satisfies all legal and accountability requirements and separates strategic activity from delivery’.

4.118 In practice, the proposal now appears to be that RRC and the NWDA (Cumbria) will merge into Cumbria Vision by 1 April 2006 but that WLR will be maintained as a separate company with its own Board of Directors. WLR will ‘provide reports’ to the Cumbria Vision Board but will not be subsidiary to it; rather the WLR business plan will be approved directly by NWDA, the main funder of the business.

4.119 In its key priorities, Cumbria Vision has established a matrix of 3 locational priorities – West Cumbria, Carlisle and rural Cumbria – and 6 sectoral priorities:

- knowledge industries and enterprise support;
- nuclear opportunities;
- infrastructure, transport and housing;
- land, agriculture and food;
- tourism, image and the environment; and
- cultural and creative industries.

4.120 It will be apparent that these priorities nest within the overall NWDA development strategy outlined earlier, but there is also evidence of a distinctive and more prioritised Cumbria agenda. This is a positive and constructive development and one that will find local support.

BUSINESS SECTOR INITIATIVES

CLEAN Network

4.121 Cumbria has a well-developed and active group of four organisations which collectively form the Cumbria Local Enterprise Agency Network (CLEAN). Three of these agencies are of long-standing. Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency (CREA), which covers Eden and South Lakeland districts, was established in 1986; West Cumbria Development Agency (WCDA) which has a remit for Allerdale and Copeland districts was established in 1988; and Furness Enterprise, which is focused on the Barrow-in-Furness district, was established in 1991. Until recently, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Industry, delivered the enterprise agency functions in the Carlisle district, but in April 2005 a new Carlisle Enterprise Agency was established.

4.122 Each of these agencies offers a significant programme of business development support covering business start-up advice, financial advice, property services and access to Business Link services. CREA, through its Cumbria Farm Link (CFL), also operates Farming Connect Cumbria, which provides county-wide business services for farmers. Each agency also offers a forum for local business to share and address common problems, and to articulate the views and needs of local businesses to the public sector agencies and government.

Cumbria Tourist Board

4.123 In addition to the CLEAN Network, CTB offers a range of business advice and support services designed for tourism operators. These services cover skills and management development, business development services, focused research and information provision, and targeted promotional and marketing campaigns.

4.124 CTB’s activities are frequently undertaken in collaboration with, or with the support of, NWDA and/or the local authorities, including both CCC and the district councils. Overall the system of funding support does not appear to be very coordinated, but CTB acts effectively as a broker between the industry and the public sector and this ensures the targeting of services and related research.
Voluntary Sector and Related Bodies

VOLUNTARY SERVICES

4.125 Cumbria has a heritage of local community help\(^{151}\) and a diverse and locally active range of voluntary and community bodies. Many of these are members of one of the 5 Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) - Barrow CVS, Carlisle CVS, Eden CVS, South Lakeland CVS, and West Cumbria CVS - or Voluntary Action Cumbria (VAC) which has a remit for rural areas throughout the county. These 6 organisations are members of an umbrella body the Cumbria Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (CACVS)\(^{152}\). This allows them to collaborate on issues of common interest. However, each organisation is independent and has a separate business structure and Board.

Councils for Voluntary Service

4.126 The 5 Cumbria CVSs are part of a national network of some 350 corresponding bodies, which provide membership services to promote and support voluntary and community action and undertake projects to address specific local community needs. They are grant and contract funded from a range of (mainly public) funding sources and from member subscriptions. They play a substantial role in the delivery of some local authority services and central government initiatives. Additionally, they act as a voice for the voluntary and community sector both locally and at the national level, through the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)\(^{153}\).

Voluntary Action Cumbria

4.127 VAC has a different origin and is part of a national network of Rural Community Councils established in England some 50 years ago and nationally represented by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)\(^{154}\). VAC is therefore the Rural Community Council for Cumbria. Constitutionally VAC is established as a limited liability company of charitable status.

4.128 Until recently VAC received a component of funding from the Countryside Agency. However, as part of the implementation of DEFRA’s rural strategy\(^{155}\), funding for rural social and community services has been transferred from the Countryside Agency to DEFRA. In future it will be channelled though the Regional Government Offices and the RDAs and this will affect VAC’s funding route\(^{156}\).

4.129 Consultations on the proposed new Rural Social and Community Programme and the related Regional Rural Delivery Framework were taking place during the

\(^{151}\) The Cumbria Community Foundation, a local charitable body, awarded a total of over £1.7M in community grants in 2004-2005. See www.cumbriafoundation.org

\(^{152}\) See www.cacvs.org.uk

\(^{153}\) See www.nacvs.org.uk

\(^{154}\) See www.acre.org.uk


\(^{156}\) The Rural Strategy makes changes affecting The Countryside Agency, English Nature and the Rural Development Service. They result in the formation of an integrated agency (Natural England) responsible for the conservation, management and enhancement of the countryside, and an advocacy and advisory body (Commission for Rural Communities) with a remit to act as an independent watchdog and voice for rural communities.
summer of 2005\textsuperscript{157}, with the prospect that the new programme will begin to run from 1 April 2006. It is not envisaged that the new approach will lead to new governance structures, rather the existing partnerships involving local agencies and parish councils will probably be regarded as sufficient.

\textit{ChangeUp Programme}

4.130 Whilst, the CVS’s and VAC both cover large areas of rural Cumbria their focus is different. VAC mainly works with community groups engaged in social enterprise and with small businesses, whilst CVS work is more directed towards social issues, and the care and well-being of individuals in the community. However, both networks could potentially benefit from the establishment of the Government’s ChangeUp programme\textsuperscript{158,159}, which is designed to build capacity in the voluntary and community sector, to involve it in the planning of public service delivery, and to engage it in long-term economically viable service delivery.

\textbf{CUMBRIA YOUTH ALLIANCE}

4.131 The Cumbria Youth Alliance consists of 92 organisations from the voluntary and youth sectors working across Cumbria. It is estimated that via its member organisations it represents some 37,500 young people between the ages of 5 and 25. It has close working relationships with CCC and with Connexions Cumbria and a coordinating role in Training Routes Across Cumbria (TRAC), which is designed to develop and implement Youth Work Training in the county.

4.132 In 2001, in parallel with the establishment of Connexions Cumbria, CCC disbanded its centrally managed youth service and divided the work between Connexions and a grant-awarding role for local youth work operated through the 6 County Council Local Committees. Subsequently, in 2003 and again at the beginning of 2005, youth work in Cumbria received strongly critical reports from OFSTED.

4.133 In response to the need for changes in the youth work system, CCC has established at county level a Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership with a subsidiary \textit{Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership Board}. Membership is drawn from CCC (as the statutory lead body), Connexions Cumbria and the voluntary sector, with Cumbria Youth Alliance taking a lead role.

4.134 Operating below the Youth Work Partnership Board are 6 local Youth Work Partnerships one in each district of the county and both the Partnership Board and the local partnerships are supported by a team of CCC youth work officers and coordinators, tasked with achieving appropriate improvement in service performance.

\textbf{CUMBRIA SPORT}

4.135 The sports sector in Cumbria is organised and promoted through Cumbria Sport, a partnership between CCC, the 6 district councils and Sport England. The partnership’s mission is “to promote a spirit of understanding amongst all organisations for the benefit of

\textsuperscript{157} GONW (2005) DEFRA’s Rural Social and Community Programme.


\textsuperscript{159} See www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_ccr/spend_ccr_voluntary/ccr
sports development’. Within its remit it seeks to ensure that sports development in Cumbria is properly represented in the wider context and there is active promotion and development of sport. On-the-ground activities include securing or providing services and grant-aid for sports development and for schools, clubs, coaches, volunteers and others.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICES

4.136 Mountain rescue is a key service in Cumbria, and is significant both in respect of the public use of the Lake District National Park and of the outdoor recreation and tourism industry.

4.137 The service operates under the umbrella of Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association and consists of 13 individual mountain rescue teams. The latter are largely autonomous, but the umbrella body coordinates the development of operational matters such as radio communications and insurance, as well as the day to day running of an efficient, voluntary rescue service. It also distributes to the local teams any donations or legacies and makes special allowances for major projects. The area coverage of each team has evolved over time, and follows geological/physical boundaries.

4.138 Each rescue team is a registered charity, with trustees tending to be members; some teams are limited liability companies in which directors are trustees - again usually members or past members. The teams tend to work through the police, in that a call from the public for their assistance is handled by the police. However, calls can also be received via the CCC Fire and Rescue Service or, in some instances, the Royal Air Force (RAF).

4.139 The Association meets quarterly, and there is usually a police representative present - many rescue team members are also police officers. This close liaison appears to work well, and the complementary skills are reinforced through joint training exercises with the police, as well as with the Fire and Rescue Service. Likewise, although the rescue teams are autonomous and operate in their areas, they regularly work and train together and share good practice in rescue techniques. In addition to mountain search and rescue they assist the police in urban searches and carry out mine rescues.

4.140 Running costs for the service are provided almost entirely through individual or corporate donations, gifts and small grants. Small grants from CCC for winter clothing have been provided via the Neighbourhood Forum system, but we were told that a recent application for a Voluntary Sector Grant from CCC had not been approved.

SUMMARY

4.141 Within the complexity of the general service environment, local authorities play a key role both in the provision of services and in ensuring that services are provided. In shire counties, responsibility for service provision is divided between the county council, district councils and parish councils but, in Cumbria, CCC is overwhelmingly the largest service provider.

4.142 The division of service responsibilities between CCC and the district councils is clearly set out; in some areas of activity the differences in responsibility are distinctive.
but in other areas, e.g. waste collection and waste disposal and local planning and strategic planning, the functions are interconnected. In activities related to the ‘promotion of well-being’ both CCC and the district councils have a similar responsibility except that the role of the district councils is narrowly defined as relating to their district areas, whereas that of CCC can be within any area of the county or county-wide.

4.143 The organisational structure of CCC reflects the range and scope of the services it provides. Within the structure of directorates there is a wide geographical distribution of staff across all districts of Cumbria, with service delivery reflecting historical arrangements and individual service needs, but with little overall pattern in respect to co-location of staff or to common service areas.

4.144 In its operations, CCC relates closely to other public service organisations e.g. the NHS, police, National Park Authorities and NWDA, with the details of the relationships being distinctive in each case. Additionally, CCC works in association with the regeneration and economic development agencies, with the CTB and with the voluntary and community sector, which themselves are significant service providers.

4.145 The organisational landscape underpinning service provision to communities is thus multi-dimensional and complex. It varies between sectors and, to some degree, from one part of the county to another. However, in all areas and in most sectors CCC is a key player, in providing services directly or in resourcing or facilitating service provision.
CHAPTER 5: SURVEY AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

5.1 As part of our inquiries, we wished to explore the opinions of Cumbria’s residents on a number of specific issues. In particular we were keen to gain people’s views on the range and quality of services available to them, so we could identify any areas where there were major gaps or deficiencies, or where there were good practice models.

5.2 We also wished to gauge public opinion on the question of ‘democracy’ – and to learn if people thought they were sufficiently engaged with the democratic processes. Additionally, we considered we needed an insight into local views on the ‘new localism’ and the local management of public services, particularly from groups such as parish councils, who under emerging policies might be expected to accept increased duties and responsibilities.

5.3 With these objectives in view a telephone survey of 604 people was conducted across the 6 districts of Cumbria and a written consultation was undertaken with selected organisations and through the County Council’s website. Methodological details of the survey and a copy of the consultation letter are given in Appendix 6 and Appendix 7.

5.4 The combined work undertaken gave rise to three elements of information. Firstly in most sections of the telephone survey responses were scale-rated, and this provided statistical evidence. Secondly, some parts of the survey contained more open questions, and those gave rise to a ‘literal report’ of what people had actually said. Thirdly, the responses to the consultation letter were analysed and these provided another insight into local views and points of concern, both those within the framework of the consultation letter and more broadly.

5.5 In this chapter we have brought these three components of information together to provide an integrated overview. In some cases we have re-ordered the sections of the survey for presentation purposes, and because it had originally been designed to avoid its structure leading to a predetermined pattern of responses to questions.

SURVEY RESULTS: STATISTICAL INFORMATION

5.6 In the analysis of the survey all the data was broken down on a district basis so that significant differences between districts could be identified. However, for most questions the pattern of response was broadly similar across the district areas. In the following sections we have therefore presented the aggregate findings for Cumbria as a whole, but we have drawn attention to district-level results where differences appeared to be significant.

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160 The telephone survey was undertaken by Lynn Wild of Cumbria News, using a survey group selected as a balance sample from the Cumbria Voice survey panel, a listing held by CCC.

161 Full tabular data is available from CCC.
General Service Provision

5.7 The first section of the survey asked residents to rate 26 specific types of services available to them under five categories from ‘Very good’ to ‘Very poor’. The service types selected were a mixture of normally public sector and normally private sector services. The intention was to identify any types of services for which there were perceived shortcomings in provision. Here, for presentation, we have grouped the types of services under headings. Some respondents felt they could not answer specific questions on the basis of their current knowledge. In these cases analysis was carried out on the number of response to the question obtained and this base number is reported in the tables.

Table 5.1. The public ratings (% of respondents) for retail and travel services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food shops (600)</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other shops (594)</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus services (426)</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail services (375)</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport services (262)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol stations (527)</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.

RETAIL AND TRAVEL

5.8 Making the assumption that a satisfactory rating implies that a service is broadly meeting people’s needs, most of the retail and travel services in Cumbria were reasonably well regarded (Table 5.1). For food shops 85.6% of respondents thought they were satisfactory or better, and 78.1% thought similarly about other types of retail outlets. However, it was notable that other types of shops tended to be slightly lower rated than food shops, and that all shops tended to be rated lower in Allerdale than elsewhere.

5.9 Amongst the travel-related services (Table 5.1) bus services and rail services were on average rated as satisfactory or better by slightly over 70% of respondents, although they were more poorly rated by respondents in Allerdale and Copeland than elsewhere. The corresponding rating for petrol stations was uniformly high averaging 87.1%. However, by comparison airport services were poorly rated on average; almost 60% of the sample rating the services poor or very poor. A high level of dissatisfaction was evident in Allerdale (57.4%), Carlisle (82.8%), Copeland (58.2%), and Eden (58.9%) but less so South Lakeland (50%) and particularly Barrow (35.1%). The latter presumably reflects the greater ease of access to Manchester airport.

MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING OF ROADS AND PUBLIC AREAS

5.10 In this group of services household waste collection and the maintenance of public areas was highly rated across districts with satisfactory or better scores of 92.1% and 81.8% respectively (Table 5.2). However, opinions on road cleaning, street lighting and road maintenance were poorer and more mixed. Road cleaning (73.4% satisfactory or above), and street lighting (77.5% satisfactory or above) were good on average but
were notably poorer in Barrow, where approximately 42% of respondents thought the
services were poor or very poor. Likewise, county-wide approximately 45% of the
sample thought road maintenance was poor or very poor, and this poor rating was more
pronounced in the eastern areas of the county.

Table 5.2. The public ratings (% of respondents) for the maintenance and cleaning of roads
and public areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Road maintenance (588)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road cleaning (597)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street lighting (587)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household waste collection (597)</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public areas (578)</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.
b) Waste collection refers to household waste collection.
c) Public areas refer to maintenance of public areas e.g. grass cutting, litter removal.

NURSERY CARE, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.11 Nursery care, education and training services (Table 5.3), were uniformly highly
regarded across services and across districts of the county. The average satisfactory or
better ratings were: nursery care, 96.2%; primary schools, 97.2%; secondary schools,
93.9%; further education, 91.9% and in-career training, 89.1%. However, it should be
recorded that, particularly for secondary schools, further education and in-career
training services, only a small percentage of respondents regarded them as ‘very good’.

Table 5.3. The public ratings (% of respondents) for nursery care, education and training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursery care (321)</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools (386)</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools (361)</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education (356)</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-career training (276)</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.
b) Further education refers to Further Education Colleges.
c) In-career training refers to in-career training courses.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

5.12 This section of the survey included categories of health services and also social
services (Table 5.4). Generally, the levels of satisfaction with these services were high.
On a rating of satisfactory or above local doctors (92.7%), hospital treatment (87.1%),
other health services (92.2%) and social care (84.2%) were all well regarded. The one
exception was dental services, where on average over 41% of the sample rated the
services as poor or very poor. This poor/very poor rating was particularly pronounced
in Allerdale (50.5%), Copeland (47.2%) and South Lakeland (51.6%).
Table 5.4. The public ratings (% of respondents) for health and social services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local doctors (600)</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local dentists (367)</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital treatment (559)</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health care (435)</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services (253)</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.
b) *Other health care* refers to other types of local health care.

LEISURE, AMENITY SERVICES AND YOUTH SERVICES

5.13 The services brought together under this grouping (Table 5.5) represent a mixture of public and private services, since it is difficult adequately to separate the activities under ‘leisure and entertainment’, for example. Similarly, ‘sport’ covers a wide spectrum of activities many of which are mainly in the private sector. In the light of the OFSTED report on CCC’s Youth Services, we should note that we could have equally included youth services as part of the earlier education section.

5.14 For this group of services the picture was rather mixed. Library services were rated very highly with 84.5% of people rating them as good or very good, and 97.6% rating them as satisfactory or better. Leisure and entertainment, sports facilities and swimming baths were rated less well, but 80-82% of respondents put them in the satisfactory or better categories. Finally, youth services were rated rather poorly, with just over 20% rating them as very good or good, 33% rating them as satisfactory and 45% rating them as poor or very poor. For both the leisure and entertainment services and youth services, Copeland district received the poorest ratings.

Table 5.5. The public ratings (% of respondents) for leisure, amenity and youth services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library services (496)</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure &amp; entertainment (492)</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports facilities (471)</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming baths (476)</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth services (338)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.
b) *Youth services* refer to youth clubs and organised youth activities.

Overall Satisfaction, Efficiency and Choice

5.15 In this section of the survey, interviewees were asked a series of questions about *public services*, covering their overall opinion on whether the service provision was meeting the needs of their community, and then a series of questions about different aspects of service provision. The latter included; how well coordinated they felt service provision was between providers; their opinions on the efficiency of public bodies, and of public bodies compared with the private sector bodies; whether the delivery of some public sector services by private sector organisations had any effect on the service; and whether it was importance to have a choice between service providers.
5.16 In general satisfaction with services meeting the needs of the community was high. On average across the county the rating for ‘satisfactorily’ or higher scores was 92%, and this was also reflected across the 6 districts (Table 5.6). However, the pattern of assessment varied between districts. Eden had a notably high percentage of responses in the ‘very well’ category despite the fact that its sparsity of population must present challenges to service delivery. It should therefore be noted that the responses obtained may reflect peoples’ expectation of services, as well as the reality of the service provision.

Table 5.6. Overall public rating (% of respondents) of how well public services meet the needs of their community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very well</th>
<th>Fairly well</th>
<th>Satisfactorily</th>
<th>Poorly</th>
<th>Very poorly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria (591)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale (99)</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow (100)</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle (100)</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland (97)</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden (95)</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland (100)</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.

5.17 Views on the effectiveness of coordination and communication between public bodies in providing services and about the efficiency of public bodies in providing services were indeterminate. About a quarter of respondents acknowledged that they didn’t know and around a third expressed the view that the position was ‘satisfactory’ (Table 5.7). However, in comparing public bodies with the private sector, respondents expressed a clear an evenly balanced opinion: 57.7% thought there was no difference between public bodies and the private sector, 19.5% considered the public bodies were more efficient and 22.8% considered the private sector more efficient.

Table 5.7. The public ratings (% of respondents) of coordination and communication between public bodies and of the efficiency of public bodies in service provision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination &amp; communication (590)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of public bodies (591)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.

5.18 There were indeterminate results on whether delivery of public services through the private sector had any effect on the service. Approximately 30% of respondents said they didn’t know; approximately 37% said services were ‘about the same’; approximately 23% considered they were worse; and slightly less than 10% considered them better.
5.19 By contrast, there was a clear response on the importance of choice between service providers. For the 601 responses gathered across Cumbria as a whole:

- 59.4% considered choice as ‘important’ or ‘very important’;
- 14.5% considered choice as ‘neither important nor unimportant’;
- 13.4% considered choice as ‘not very important’ or ‘not important at all’; and
- 12.8% recorded a ‘don’t know’ response.

Thus, of those who expressed a view, 68% saw a choice of service provider as an important element of service provision.

**Voting Behaviour**

5.20 One set of survey questions was designed to establish whether those taking part in the survey were or had been active in voting in different types of elections or other polls, in which they had voted to express a view. This question was phrased in terms of ‘Have you ever voted in any of the following elections or polls?’ and responses to specific types of elections or polls were prompted. Answers to these questions are shown in Table 5.8; a small proportion of people declined to provide the information and these are recorded as ‘refused’.

**Table 5.8. Responses (% of respondents) to the question Have you ever voted in any of the following elections or polls?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Election or Poll</th>
<th>Response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Election (594)</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK General Election (603)</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC Election (600)</td>
<td>83.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City/Borough/District Council Election (596)</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Parish Council Election (593)</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local newspaper poll (599)</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television poll/contest (598)</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any type of organisation or club election (592)</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.

5.21 A high proportion of those surveyed had in fact engaged in the democratic process by casting their vote in an election. This is perhaps not surprising given that the survey group had been drawn from the Cumbria Voice panel. However, it was also apparent that the proportion of respondents who had voted varied with the type of election. The percentage reduced in order from UK General Elections to CCC elections to district council elections to EU elections to parish council elections.

5.22 The figures recorded for parish council elections are likely to be an underestimate of the true figure, since within the survey there was no means of distinguishing between respondents who had chosen not to vote in parish elections and those in unparished areas. Likewise, there seems to be general acceptance that turnouts for district councils tend to be lower because of the 3-4 year election cycle. However, with these reservations the figures in Table 5.8 might be taken as indicative of the relative engagement of the electorate with the election process for the different types of government.
5.23 It was also apparent that most of those surveyed were not greatly involved in polling systems other than those which related to the process of democratic government. In all instances their involvement with newspaper, television or other types of polls was low.

Local Involvement in Decision-making and Community Life

5.24 Two questions were addressed at providing information on the local involvement of the individuals and on their impression of the local involvement of their community, more generally. When asked ‘How involved would you say you are in local decision-making particularly in regard to the provision of public services and in matters affecting local community life?’:

- 11.8% said they were ‘very involved’ or ‘involved’;
- 27.6% said they were ‘not very involved’; and
- 60.6% said they were ‘not involved at all’.

5.25 By comparison, when asked ‘How involved would you say your community is in local decision-making, particularly in regard to the provision of public services and in matters affecting community life?’:

- 27.0% thought the community was ‘very involved’ or ‘involved’;
- 23.3% thought the community was ‘not very involved’;
- 28.5% thought the community was ‘not involved at all’; and
- 21.2% responded ‘don’t know’.

5.26 Taken in combination these two responses tend to indicate that individuals themselves are not greatly motivated to become involved in local decision-making and are content to leave things to someone else in the community. This might broadly be taken as an indicator of general disinterest in local community affairs, but that would be a substantial oversimplification of the position. For example, when asked the question ‘Do you think there should be a greater level of engagement in local decision-making by ---- ?’, there was strong support for a greater involvement of individual citizens, communities and local bodies, such as schools and local organizations (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9. Responses (% of respondents) to the question Do you think there should be a greater level of engagement in local decision-making by ---- ? for ‘individual citizens’, ‘communities’ and ‘local bodies e.g. schools, local organizations etc’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question on:</th>
<th>Response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual citizens (600)</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities (599)</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local bodies (601)</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.
Routes of Communication and Influence on Services

5.27 To examine the routes of communication and influence citizens find most useful in regard to local services the survey asked three separate questions, the first and third of which were complementary.

- Firstly, to gauge awareness of the mechanisms used by CCC to communicate and gather public views, interviewees were asked ‘Which of the following are you aware of?’ and they were prompted with a list of 7 communication/consultation systems.

- Secondly, they were separately asked the specific question ‘Are you aware of the Cumbria County Council’s Local Committee for your area?’.

- Thirdly, they were asked ‘How effective are the following ways to express your views about public services?’, and they were prompted with the list of 7 communication/information gathering systems tested in the earlier awareness question.

5.28 Of the 7 communication routes prompted, Neighbourhood Forums, public meetings (which may include Neighbourhood Forums), questionnaires and councillors’ surgeries all had a high level of awareness (Table 5.10). Awareness of helplines and websites was intermediate; and awareness of Citizens Panels and of the County Council’s Local Committees was low.

Table 5.10 Awareness (% respondents) of communication and information gathering routes and of CCC Local Committees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Posed</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following are you aware of?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Forums</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Meetings</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires such as these</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors’ surgeries</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Panels</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helplines</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of the CCC’s Local Committee for your area?</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Base number of respondents for the first question was 507.
b) Base number of respondents for the second question was 600.

5.29 In judging effectiveness the 7 systems as a way to ‘express your views’ responses were rated on a scale from ‘Very effective’ through ‘Fairly effective’, ‘Satisfactory’, ‘Fairly ineffective’, ‘Very ineffective’, ‘Don’t know how effective’ to ‘System unknown’. In Table 5.11 the data for has been simplified by aggregation into four main categories for presentation. The implications of the figures are that the level of awareness of how effective any of the systems are was low. However, against that background Neighbourhood Forums, public meetings, councillors’ surgeries and questionnaires attracted the greatest levels of confidence.
Table 5.11. Responses (% of respondents) to the question *How effective are the following ways to express your views about public services?* for 7 specific communication and information gathering systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Responses (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very effective/ Fairly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Forums (587)</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public meetings (591)</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires such as these (589)</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors’ surgeries (584)</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Panels (566)</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helplines (576)</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites (577)</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Figures in parenthesis are the base numbers of respondents.

**Roles of Elected Councillors**

5.30 To evaluate opinions about the role of elected councillors\(^{162}\) interviewees were asked to provide a graded response to the statement ‘*Do you agree or disagree that the following roles should be the responsibility of locally elected councillors?*’. In each case responses were rated from ‘Strongly agree’ through ‘Agree’, ‘Neither agree or disagree’, ‘Disagree’, ‘Strongly disagree’ to ‘No opinion/Don’t know’. A summary of the results is given in Table 5.12, with the responses for *Strongly agree/Agree* and *Disagree/Strongly disagree* combined for presentation.

Table 5.12. Responses (% of respondents) to the question *Do you agree or disagree that the following roles should be the responsibility of locally elected councillors?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Elected Councillors</th>
<th>Response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree/ Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing political leadership</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing their electoral area in seeking fair local allocation of resources</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting priorities for the expenditure of public money</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing and ensuring good management of local services</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing a route of complaint about local services</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Base number of respondents was 604.

\(^{162}\) Elected *County* Councillors were not specified in the question, but the survey contributors were aware that the study was being conducted on behalf of a Commission established by CCC.
5.31 For 4 of the 5 roles asked about there was a high degree of similarity in the responses. However, for the role of ‘providing political leadership’ there was a significant level of disagreement and a relatively high percentage of responses in the No opinion/Don’t know category. In this there were marked differences between districts; agreement with the statement was as high as 70% (in Barrow) and as low as 44% (in Carlisle). Acknowledging that some 12-14% of people responded in the No opinion/don’t know category, the overwhelming view was that elected councillors had both a role in representing their communities and in ensuring the prioritisation and proper management of local services.

State of Local Democracy

5.32 To provide further insights into the perceived state of local democracy interviewees were asked ‘Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Cumbria’s local democratic arrangements?’ and prompted with five specific assertive statements. The statements were:

- local democracy is working well;
- there are too many local structures and organisations to be effective;
- local government is remote from neighbourhood communities;
- elected councillors safeguard local services; and
- community leadership is strong.

5.33 In each case responses were rated from ‘Strongly agree’ through ‘Agree’, ‘Neither agree or disagree’, ‘Disagree’, ‘Strongly disagree’ to ‘No opinion/Don’t know’. A summary of the results is given in Table 5.13, with the responses for Strongly agree/Agree and Disagree/Strongly disagree combined for presentation.

Table 5.13. Responses (% of respondents) to the question Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Cumbria’s local democratic arrangements? followed by 5 prompted statements reflecting different aspects of local democracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree/Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree/Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No opinion/Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local democracy is working well.</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are too many local structures and organisations to be effective.</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government is remote from neighbourhood communities.</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Councillors safeguard local services.</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community leadership is strong.</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Base number of respondents was 604.

5.34 For each statement approximately a fifth to a quarter of those responding were in the ‘No opinion/Don’t know’ category, and amongst the remainder there were quite divided views. For each statement average responses tended to be polarised with a larger group tending to agree with the statements but a substantial (but smaller) group tending to disagree. Only for the question on community leadership were these two
groups of similar size, indicating quite equally divided views for and against the proposition.

5.35 When examined at the district level some differences in response were apparent, although they did not to form a wholly consistent pattern. On the statements that ‘local democracy is working well’ and ‘community leadership is strong’ Carlisle district was least strongly in agreement, whilst on the statement ‘elected councillors safeguard local services the agreement was 45-47% in Copeland, Eden and South Lakeland but only 34-35% in Allerdale, Barrow and Carlisle.

SURVEY RESULTS: LITERAL INFORMATION

Quality of Services

5.36 Four questions in the survey invited participants to make broader comments. The first two questions related to quality of services and asked:

- Can you suggest any services in particular that do a good job in meeting the communities needs?; and

- Can you suggest any services in particular that could be improved or provided in a more effective way?

5.37 To the first of these questions there were 450 suggestions of services which were good, and a minority of 35 comments which thought no services were particularly good. Favourable comments covered 19 different service sectors. The most frequently mentioned ‘good services’ were healthcare and waste collection, but libraries, schools, fire, police and leisure/sports facilities also featured. There were no comments on services which were not already covered elsewhere in the survey.

5.38 The literal statements contain numerous examples of strong endorsements of service quality, for example:

‘The Council is providing a good service to senior citizens in residential care.’

‘Cumbria Care provides a very good service.’

‘Furness Hospital is excellent.’

‘Healthcare, I think – I’ve just had a baby and the care I received was fantastic’

‘Cleaning and tidying up in Windermere is ‘five star’.

‘Swimming baths in the area are a very high standard.’

‘The school my daughter goes to is excellent. It has a breakfast club, an after school club and also a summer holiday club.’

But in other quotations the endorsements were more measured, for example:

‘I don’t think any service provided is particularly good’.
‘I don’t think any of them is outstanding’.

5.39 To the question of which services might be improved or provided in a more effective way, there were 561 references to 22 different services, some of which overlapped with areas which received positive comments in the previous section. However, the distinctive highlights focused on items that had been identified as problematic in the statistical parts of the survey – particularly better dental care, improved road maintenance, improved facilities/activities for young people and children.

Local Management of Services

5.40 The third open question was ‘Are there any services that you think should be managed at a Parish or Neighbourhood level?’. This produced a total of 144 responses (ca 24% of panel) and 63 of those responses (44%) said ‘No’ or ‘Don’t Know’ or Can’t think of any’. Of the remaining (81) responses suggestions for services that might be managed locally covered a wide range and include: youth activities (26 responses); elderly care (17); road maintenance (11); street cleaning (5); community halls (5); planning permission (4); recycling (4); street lighting (4) and community policing (3).

Improvements in Community Involvement and Participation

5.41 The final open question was ‘Do you have any comments on ways of improving community involvement and participation in decision making? This brought a substantial response with more than 300 points covering a wide and divergent range of views. It was apparent from this information:

- that a very large proportion of respondents were not apathetic about local community matters, but they felt they had little influence over them;

- poor communication from the council(s) to the citizens was identified as a problem, and often official jargon was a barrier to citizen’s understanding;

- a significant proportion of citizens considered that there were not good opportunities to get their opinions heard and that the systems are complex;

- it was felt that even where citizens expressed their views the council(s) did not listen.

5.42 Some example quotations illustrate the tone of these responses.

On communication:

‘Not enough communication from local councils about what is going on and happening in the local area.’

‘The public should be informed more about what goes on. There should be exchanges between the Council and the community more.’

‘The only comment I have is, there needs to be more awareness and communication between the Council and the community.’
‘There should be more communication between the Councils and the community. You never hear anything from them, until they want your vote.’

‘Improvements would be made if the Council communicated better with the general public. Members of the public should be able to subscribe to a monthly newsletter/e-mail to keep them up to date with council plans and objectives.’

On jargon:

‘I think people don’t care about these sorts of things because they don’t understand them, why do you have to use all these big words and phrases – community involvement, democratic decision making, participation, engagement. Who comes up with all this stuff?’

‘As a local businessman, I’m glad to see the council doing something to consult local people, but I think it could and should be implemented in a much more meaningful manner. As it is, it sounds like council jargon to me.’

On opportunities to comment:

‘We the community get no chance to speak. I think a poll in the paper with a text response or door to door questions would be good.’

‘This questionnaire has given me an opportunity to say what I think. However, there is no mention of Council Tax – which is much too high for the standards of service we get back for our money.’

I like this way of asking me questions. It’s one to one and effective.’

On the complexity of the system:

‘We need fewer but more effective structures in local government, and more effective ways of making complaints. When you have a problem it always seems to be someone else’s department.’

‘The ways we are supposed to make our views known cannot be very effective as services do not generally improve.’

‘The Borough, Parish and County councils should amalgamate or communicate more with each other.’

‘All these different bodies and organisations need to get together and communicate better with each other and individuals like myself.’

On Council responsiveness:

‘It makes no difference if you voice your opinion as the council will do as it likes.’

‘Local councillors appear to listen, but in fact do not act upon the comments made by the local community.’

‘Most people I know won’t get involved in this sort of thing because they don’t see any changes or results at the end of it. I’m of the opinion that a lot of public consultation is symbolic, to show that they’ve asked people’s opinion, but (they) then go on and do what they want anyway.’
‘The County Council does not listen to the community. We are saddled with things no one wants: objections have been raised in the local paper and phone calls made to the relevant people but decisions are made regardless.’

‘Whilst the Neighbourhood Forums, surgeries, questionnaires etc may offer the opportunity to at least express your views, it doesn’t mean to say that the Council will bother taking any notice of them.’

‘Overall the Council services are good. A lot of negativity stems from people’s perception that everything is cut and dried before discussions take place and red tape takes over. Also language used can be confusing and the meaning is not understood.’

‘In theory, although there are plenty of ways that people can voice their views, I sometimes wonder whether or not it makes any difference. I bet lots of people feel the same way, which is probably why you are carrying out this questionnaire.’

WRITTEN CONSULTATION

Consultation Approach

5.43 Written consultation was undertaken by writing directly to parish councils; by writing to key voluntary and community organisations in the county and requesting that they tier-down the letter to organisations within their network; and by placing the consultation letter on CCC’s website. This approach produced some 80 responses in total. Some of these were a short e-mail response or a single response on a specific item, whilst others formally addressed the matters which were mentioned in the letter and the specific questions asked. The following paragraphs provide an outline of the overall response, and also some statistical information based on the more comprehensive and structured responses163.

General Summary of Responses

OVERVIEW

5.44 A range of opinions, both positive and negative, were expressed in response to the matters raised by the consultation and by the specific questions asked. Whilst some specific comments were made about particular local issues, a series of common themes emerged.

- Many respondents expressed the view that CCC is a relatively remote and confusing organisation, and needs to engage locally to give clarity about its organisation and identity. Where it engages with communities of geography and interest, it presently has mixed results.

- There was a difference of opinion about whether the problem was related to CCC’s methods and approaches or to a general sense of apathy and disengagement amongst the population at large.

- Several comments indicate that people do not feel listened to. The relatively short timescale for responses for the Commission’s own consultation exercise are seen

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163 We are grateful to Joanna Pugh of CCC for analysis of the response letters.
as an example of a lack of understanding of the challenges facing community organizations. Consultation is often seen as ‘just ticking the boxes’ rather than a valuable contribution to policy making. Respondents believed that in many cases a decision has already been made, and CCC is asking for views only because it is required to.

- Communication links were regarded as vital – respondents highlighted the need for information and comment to flow from local level to county level and vice versa.

- In this respect the role of County Councillors was seen as critical. Their knowledge, commitment and engagement are regarded as key factors in a local community’s satisfaction with CCC.

- There was wide support for Neighbourhood Forums. Whilst there were some concerns about how representative they are of the community and its views, they were generally regarded as a base from which to build further local engagement/empowerment.

- The concept of giving more influence and responsibility to town and parish councils was largely welcomed amongst those who expressed a view. Services that could potentially be delivered at a local level were identified as mainly small scale activities e.g. hedge cutting, maintenance of footpaths and lighting. They tended to be services where respondents express dissatisfaction with current performance.

REQUESTS FOR IMPROVEMENT

5.45 There were a number of requests for improvements in the way that CCC works. The main themes here were:

- improved coordination with district councils and other agencies, such as the police, for example through joint forums and one stop shops;

- more clearly identified points of contact – some respondents wanted to be able to speak directly to the responsible officers, others wanted a one stop shop approach;

- more systematic and earlier engagement with local people when making decisions that would affect them;

- direct feedback from consultations and clearer evidence of local opinions having influenced decisions;

- better publicity for Neighbourhood Forums and more influence/responsibility given to them.
Responses to Specific Questions\textsuperscript{164}

METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

Questions: Are the County Council’s present methods of engagement with local communities and communities of interest appropriate? Could they be improved and if so how?

5.46 Approximately 75\% of respondents addressed this question: 26\% were broadly satisfied with the present arrangements, 18\% were neutral and 31\% were broadly dissatisfied. Those who were \textit{satisfied} commonly cited reasons as:

- regular attendance by their local councillor creating a communication link;
- Neighbourhood Forums being seen as effective and creating a communication link between local people and the council (in Carlisle the joint Forums with the City Council are seen as very effective and people attend the Forums because they know that they have some funds\textsuperscript{165});
- CCC is doing its best compared with general public apathy;
- engagement with young people is improving as a result of the work in this area.

5.47 Those who were \textit{dissatisfied} commonly cited reasons as:

- short deadlines for responses to over-complex consultations;
- inaccessible meetings and events, including those held during daytime;
- worries about the Neighbourhood Forums being undemocratic - they are taken over by a small number of vocal people, they do not represent the diversity of people in the local area and they are poorly promoted;
- difficulty in contacting the right person - CCC seems complex, remote and unapproachable;
- lack of feedback from consultations in which local people/organizations have taken part, giving a feeling that they had not been listened to, or that the consultation was a paper exercise.

5.48 Several of the respondents felt that they could not comment because they were not aware of CCC’s policies for community engagement; and some commented that, in practice, the level of engagement depended on the personal commitment of the County Councillor, so that when the member changed contact might be increased or lost.

\textsuperscript{164} The statistical analysis given in these sections is based on the 61 responses that addressed most or all of the specific questions that were posed in the consultation.

\textsuperscript{165} We received one contrary comment from Carlisle South Community Association that both CCC and Carlisle City Council tended to exclude it from most joint activities and discussions in Petteril Bank.
5.49 There were a range of suggestions for improving the situation. These included:

- summarising large consultation documents;
- holding Forums close to the residents, publicising them better and possibly focusing on an issue that is locally important;
- having a council officer linked to the Neighbourhood Forums/parish councils to aid communication;
- having a website, electronic point of contact or one stop shop for service information;
- making a requirement for County Councillors to attend some parish council meetings;
- bringing ‘on board’ the organisations that work with the ‘hard to reach’ groups.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING

Question: Is the present level of community involvement and participation in local decision making satisfactory and, if not, how could it be improved?

5.50 On this question a minority of respondents (18%) were broadly satisfied with the present arrangements, whilst a substantial proportion (30%) was broadly dissatisfied. However, 13% of responses were neutral and a large number of respondents (39%) did not choose to comment. Those who were satisfied generally felt that good local councillors provided information and a route of communication, which was assisted by the Neighbourhood Forum system. By contrast, those who were dissatisfied considered that there was a lack of interest from the community; that there was a feeling of not being listened to; there was little feedback from consultations; and that it was difficult to access meetings or find the correct person to contact.

5.51 Suggestions for improving the situation included:

- involving the community at an earlier stage of policy development, before things have been decided;
- County Councillors leading communication and consultation with their communities;
- development of parish plans to identify local needs and priorities;
- the County Council actively promoting itself and listening to people in return.

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166 The comments here reflect the content of the submissions. In several cases the provisions outlined already exist. For example, Neighbourhood Forums already take place all over Cumbria and they have ‘attached’ County Council personnel.

167 Some of the measures highlighted in these comments are already in place in some wards/parishes.
SERVICES MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Questions: Do the services available to the public address the needs of local people and communities? If not, what methods might be introduced to ensure that they do?

5.52 Only a minority of respondents (46%) addressed this question and of those about half (23%) were not satisfied with at least one service, whilst the remainder were broadly satisfied (13%) or neutral (10%) in their comments on service provision.

5.53 A variety of concerns was expressed but the most commonly mentioned services in need of local improvement were: highways (mentioned 7 times); public transport (4); youth services (2); health and social services (2); waste and fly tipping (2) and rights of way (2). There were also points about confusion in knowing who is delivering/responsible for services e.g. where Capita Symonds is carrying out CCC road repairs, and about problems in getting responses to address service problems.

5.54 There were several comments about the difficulty of balancing resources and with needs i.e. there will never be enough money to deal with all of the demands. Several comments also highlighted the issues of accessibility of services in rural areas.

LOCAL SERVICE DECISION MAKING AND DELIVERY

Questions: To what extent should decision making and delivery be undertaken at the local level? Are there any areas of decision-making and service provision or service management that would be better done locally, for example at area, parish or neighbourhood level? Please give specific examples if possible.

5.55 Some 49% of respondents chose not to express a view on this area. The remainder divided between those thought decision-making on services should be more local (38%) and those who thought that local decisions should be tempered by some central input (10%) or that there should not be local decision making (3%).

5.56 Where community engagement in decision making was felt to be important, some respondents also referred to local service delivery, identifying small-scale tasks that could be arranged by the parish council. The main services mentioned included lighting, maintenance of footpaths and roads/verges (including hedge trimming, clearing road signs, blocked drains), policing car parking. Several referred to the ‘lengthsmen’ system which could be used.

5.57 It was noticeable that the services mentioned also tended to be those that respondents complained about in terms of poor council performance. A common comment was that adequate funding would have to be delegated for this work, implying that local management might be viewed as a way of securing more resources168.

5.58 The advantages of local control of service delivery were thought to be: more responsiveness to local needs; more local accountability; quicker response; empowerment of the local community; and an opportunity to generate more local interest in democracy. Concerns about local control were: the limited capacity of smaller

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168 It should be noted here that the Parish Councils themselves have the capacity to raise precept.
councils; loss of economies of scale and efficiency; and the high-jacking of local decision making by small number of people.

COORDINATION ACROSS SERVICES

Questions: Is there good coordination across services and between organisations at the local level and, if not, in what ways could coordination be improved?

5.59 Only 38% of respondents addressed this question and views were quite divided. Some 15% were satisfied with the level of coordination, 5% felt that things were not good but improving and 18% were unhappy because of a lack of coordination.

5.60 Some of the positive comments included: that there had been support for the community workers or the Neighbourhood Forum to coordinate services; and that there were examples of good practice e.g. in waste management, the Children’s Trust/Change for Children Partnership and the Children and Young People’s Board, and in joint CCC and Carlisle City Council engagement in Neighbourhood Forums.

5.61 Concerns tended to centre around: there being too many routes to go through and a confusing number of departments and agencies with similar responsibilities; demarcation lines – linked to budget responsibilities - being too strong; and too much complexity in terms of ‘who does what’. Some respondents felt that the establishment of LSPs had improved service coordination, whilst others commented they had made little difference.

5.62 Suggested improvements included: service liaison officers to coordinate the balance of services with needs; establishing key contacts for each organisation; and one stop shops or well-publicised help desks providing a coordinated service point.

EXAMPLES GOOD PRACTICE

Question: Can you identify any examples of particularly good practice in local working arrangements and in customer care, which meet local community needs?

5.63 A wide range of specific local examples were cited. Those that came up more than once were: Neighbourhood Forums (particularly the joint forums in Carlisle); one stop shops including in Copeland and Kirkby Stephen; the Highways Hotline (including the emergency out of hours cover by the Fire Service).

ELECTED COUNCILLORS

Questions: What are your views on how elected Councillors engage with communities: (a) as part of the process of decision making; and (b) in ensuring that service delivery meets the needs of local communities?

5.64 Most respondents (51%) chose not to comment on this question but of those that did about two-thirds made positive comments and one third made negative comments, with no one being neutral on the matter. Positive comments referred to regular attendance by the Councillors at local meetings, good communication links and Councillors’ high levels of knowledge about the community. Negative comments identified a lack of contact from their Councillor.
GOVERNMENT FUNDED AGENCIES

Questions: What are your views on how Government funded agencies and organisations engage with communities: (a) as part of the process of decision making; and (b) in ensuring that service delivery meets the needs of local communities?

5.65 This question was not widely addressed but comments were generally negative. There was a feeling that government agencies either don’t engage at all, or if they do, their efforts are ineffective. Consultations that respondents had received were seen as overly complex and unlikely to communicate well with the users of local services. Several respondents regarded the agencies as rather faceless or remote and this made them appear less accountable.

SUMMARY

5.66 The telephone survey results reported here provide some insight into public attitudes on service provision and democratic engagement in Cumbria. Overall, services were regarded with a degree of satisfaction, although there were very few cases where they were universally regarded as good or very good. In four instances services were poorly rated; these were dental services, road maintenance, youth services and airport services.

5.67 Overall the services available were broadly regarded as satisfactory in meeting community needs. Views were equally divided on whether services were more efficient when provided by the public sector or the private sector but there was a clear indication that the public thought choice in service providers was important.

5.68 Most of those surveyed had voted in a General Election, county council election or district council election, but they were not very involved in local decision-making on the provision of services or on matters affecting their communities; they thought others locally were more involved than they were personally. However they were strongly of the view that local communities should have a greater say in local matters.

5.69 There was a good level of recognition of some of the methods used by CCC for communication and gathering information e.g. Neighbourhood Forums. However, there was little conviction that the views of the public were taken into account in CCC’s decision-making, despite there being strong recognition of the leadership roles of local councillors. Views on local democracy fell well short of a ringing endorsement of the present arrangements.

5.70 Written consultation, which involved a substantial input from parish councils, provided a range of views but with a number of consistent themes. The ‘headline messages’ were that CCC is regarded as a relatively remote organisation lacking clear identity and providing insufficient community communication and feedback. There was support for the Neighbourhood Forum system and for a much stronger and effective CCC local engagement. There was not a high level of demand for local management of services, but there was an indication that communities wished to have a greater say about their services and this was consistent with the results of the telephone survey.
CHAPTER 6: LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND SERVICE PROVISION

INTRODUCTION

6.1 At the beginning of this report we set out the conceptual framework within which we intended to consider local democracy and service provision in Cumbria, and subsequently we have presented the information which, together with the evidence we have gathered, has shaped the views and recommendations which we will present in this chapter. Doubtless, given the almost limitless scope of the subject, we have not covered everything, but we think we have examined the main issues and what follows reflects our analysis of what we have found.

Overview of Cumbria

6.2 We should start by saying that very many people to whom we have spoken have expressed the view that Cumbria is a very good place to live. The combination of access to a wonderful natural environment and the numerous examples of strong local communities is clearly greatly valued and appreciated.

6.3 Likewise the economic and social indicators and the responses obtained in our telephone survey suggest that Cumbria is not a county which considers itself overly beset with overwhelming problems. In much of the county wages are low but in most districts there is a high level of employment and, with some notable exceptions, the social indicators for deprivation, health, crime, and so on compare reasonably favourably with national or regional averages.

6.4 But Cumbria also has another side: there are localise pockets of very significant deprivation; about 40% of the population is in the ‘moderate means’ and ‘hard pressed’ socio-economic categories; there are areas with very poor health records; and there are some areas with disturbingly high levels of criminal damage and violent crime. Most worryingly, there is a sharp decline in the general economy of Cumbria, which can only add to the social and economic problems which already can be identified.

6.5 We believe that it is this economic problem which presents Cumbria with its single greatest challenge. The potent combination of contracting urban manufacturing industries and retrenchment of agriculture and related rural industries threatens an economic future which will be bleak, compared with the increasing prosperity of other, more buoyant areas of England. If a substantial turn-around in the economy can be achieved the localise social and environmental problems linked with deprivation will be more easily addressed. Without an economic upturn the impact of the already evident local challenges will become increasingly debilitating.

6.6 History tends to show Cumbrians are self-reliant and given to ‘getting on with the job’ rather than engaging in the luxury of complaining. The physical geography of the county and its poor road and rail infrastructure has naturally fostered a strong focus on local communities, and this is often reinforced by a characteristic independence of mind. However, our assessment is that the county is facing serious economic difficulties and that the challenges posed would be more successfully addressed - possibly can only be addressed - if local independence is subsumed beneath a much stronger recognition of the need for that all parts of the county to work together with a clear unity of purpose.
Service Provision

6.7 In regard to the provision of services, we have come across some notable examples of good practice and also of community initiative and energy in addressing local needs. We have encountered very many dedicated, conscientious and hard working people - in councils, in other agencies, serving as elected council members, and working in the community. Since 1997, council officers have faced a whirlwind of Government policy initiatives but, whilst perhaps a little ‘punch drunk’, they have maintained a strong sense of motivation and public commitment. Cumbria has much about which it can be proud.

6.8 However, we have also found areas where things could be improved: where we believe there are democratic shortcomings or where there could be greater opportunities for local communities to have their say. We have identified some areas where there could be improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of services or potential savings in cost. As is the nature of this type of report, we have tended to focus on the things that could be improved. However, that should not be taken to imply a failure to recognise what is already being achieved, or the efforts that are being directed towards further achievement.

Focus and Structure of Chapter

6.9 In the sections which follow we have covered a range of issues that fall within our remit and in some instances we have made specific recommendations. The latter have been directed towards CCC, since it was they who commissioned our report. However, some recommendations have wider implications, and where that is the case we commend our findings and recommendations to others in the hope that they will support and assist CCC in achieving its goals.

6.10 In the first part of the Chapter we have structured our findings and recommendations within 7 cross-cutting themes:

- Voter Engagement, Accountability and Governance;
- Structure of Local Government;
- Structure of Cumbria County Council;
- Locality Working;
- Service Delivery and Business Processes;
- Community Engagement; and
- Cumbria Leadership

Subsequently we have specifically addressed the list of 9 key issues which CCC asked us to consider, but we have cross-referenced our comments on these to the preceding themed sections.
VOTER ENGAGEMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

Voter Engagement

6.11 The *Power Inquiry* (an independent inquiry into Britain’s democracy due to publish its report in 2006\(^{169}\)) has charted the fact that General Election turnouts in Britain have declined almost continuously for the last 50 years, and have fallen quite dramatically since 1992\(^{170}\). It has also considered some of the potential causes of this decline\(^ {171}\) and examined innovative measures taken in other countries to move beyond the traditional balloting system favoured in Britain\(^ {172}\).

6.12 Although we await its final report with interest, the focus of the *Power Inquiry* is different from our own interest in local democracy. However, it prompts us to make the point that, on the basis of General Election results, voter engagement in all constituencies in Cumbria compares well with national levels. In 2005, voter turnout across the UK was 61.5\% (up 2.1\% from 2001) and the average for England was 61.3\%.\(^ {173}\) In comparison, the average for Cumbria was 63.9\%, and the lowest turnout in any Cumbria constituency was 59\%, whereas the lowest turnout nationally was 41.4\% for Liverpool, Riverside.

6.13 Looked at from another standpoint, turnout figures for the EU Parliamentary elections in 2004 were universally low in all parts of Britain, the average figure was 38.2\% and the figures across the 9 regions of England, including London, ranged from 43.7\% in the East Midlands to 36.6\% in the South West. The North West Region, including Cumbria, had the third highest turnout, 41.1\%.\(^ {174}\).

6.14 It is not possible to make exact comparisons between General Elections and CCC elections because of boundary differences between the parliamentary constituencies and electoral divisions, but to a reasonable approximation turnout levels for county elections are in accord with those for parliamentary constituencies. Indicative figures for turnouts for district council elections are lower and for parish councils they are not available. However, our telephone survey suggested that 85\% of those who had voted in a county council election had also voted in a district council election and 46\% had also voted in a parish council election.

6.15 These figures are subject to interpretation, and as we have pointed out in Chapter 2 they are not directly comparable. However, accepting that overall voter turnout has reduced over time, the figures seem to imply that there is still a comparatively strong level of voter engagement with the electoral processes in Cumbria and that electoral turnout for a given type of election is probably in line with voters’ perceptions of the importance of the electoral event.

6.16 Accepting this as a reasonable premise, carries the significant implication that voters will become more democratically engaged if they have a clear understanding of the link between the elected body and what it does for them and their community. In

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\(^{169}\) See www.powerinquiry.org

\(^{170}\) Power Inquiry (2005) *The decline in political participation and involvement in Britain: an introduction.*

\(^{171}\) Power Inquiry (2005) *The causes of the decline in ‘electoral activity’ in Britain: a literature review.*


other words, there needs to be a clear and transparent link between elections and the accountability of the elected body for delivery of services.

6.17 During our inquiries we found that in many areas of activity the link between CCC and the services it provides is not always apparent. With that in view, we recommend that, as a means of promoting voter engagement, CCC should adopt a comprehensive policy of ensuring that all its activities and contributions are made clearly apparent to the electorate of Cumbria (recommendation 1).

6.18 More generally, the impression we have formed is that the complexity of public service systems that now exists may serve to confuse the public, and by implication act to the detriment of local democracy. The national implications of this are outside our remit, and indeed are a matter for central government rather than CCC. However, we would be remiss if we did not express our feeling that the present public service systems may be contributing to the decline in democratic engagement about which the Government has expressed its own concerns.

6.19 We have no detailed analysis on the level of democratic engagement of young people in Cumbria but national figures indicate that only 37% of 18-24 year olds voted in the May 2005 General Election. However, contrary to what that might seem to imply, recent research\(^\text{175}\) shows that a large proportion of young people are ‘politically’ or ‘community’ active in various ways and that most have intentions of voting in some future election. When asked their future intentions, 72% indicated that they would vote in a General Election, 69% in a local election and 48% in an EU election. Moreover, there was clear evidence that a high proportion of young people do engage with environmental, social and community agendas, and this suggests that they also would respond to a clearer understanding of the link between the electoral process and the work undertaken by CCC.

Accountability for Service Delivery

6.20 Streamlined decision-making with clear and transparent lines of public accountability were underlying principles of the Government’s reform of local government, which led to the introduction of the ‘Cabinet and Scrutiny’ system on which the operation of CCC is now based.

6.21 However, during our inquiries we learned that central government policy initiatives or schemes, can sometimes lead to problems of public understanding and sometimes confusion at the local level. We are certain that this is not a distinctive feature of Cumbria; rather it appears to be an unintended consequence of the national approach. Nonetheless, it puts at risk the important links of public understanding and service-provider accountability, and we think it is a significant issue.

6.22 We have encountered a variety of examples of the problem. It arises in different ways as a consequence of the outsourcing of services under the Best Value contracting arrangements, the widespread introduction of partnership working, the promotion of integrated services, and the introduction of ‘badged’ services under central government schemes or project funds.

6.23 For example, citizens concerned about road maintenance are confronted by a situation where CCC is the democratically accountable body, but where the public face of the ‘system on the ground’ is provided by Capita Symonds or Amey, and the marketing presentation is through the Cumbria Highways partnership. Similarly, those seeking children’s or young people’s services are presented with what appears to be an array of providers: CCC; the Cumbria Early Years Development Partnership; SureStart; Connexions Cumbria; and a range of voluntary and community bodies, many of which may be in receipt of CCC funding.

6.24 We have no argument against multiple providers - indeed our survey work suggests the public appreciates choice. However, in the context of provision of publicly funded services we consider the public has a right to clear information on the service provider(s) and on the service being provided. Therefore we recommend that for all services in which it is involved, through partnership or otherwise, CCC should indicate clearly who is responsible for service delivery and the nature of their relationship with the Council (recommendation 2).

6.25 Additionally, we recommend that CCC provides, or ensures the provision of, information on the mechanisms for requesting service and for appeal/complaint to the service provider or the Council or the relevant public ombudsman (recommendation 3).

Local Democracy and Governance of Public Services

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND AGENCY SYSTEMS

6.26 The democratic governance of public services in Britain is underpinned by two main systems. These rely on a single approach to national policy development but two distinctive approaches to national policy implementation and service provision. Developing national policy is a primary role of central government, and there are clear lines of democratic accountability from the electorate, through elected members of parliament and the Government, to the agreed policies. Policy delivery, on the other hand, can be either through democratically elected local authorities (the local government system) or alternatively through executive non-elected organisations (the agency system). The second system may involve executive agencies; quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations; government-established companies; independent voluntary bodies; social enterprise companies; contracted private sector businesses; or a combination of these.

6.27 As implied by the Gershon delivery-chain model (see Figure 3.1) the priority for central government is to identify efficient ways of delivering democratically determined national policies at local level, rather than being tied to a particular delivery system. However, from a local community perspective, the local government system provides a clear element of local democratic accountability which is additional to the national democratic accountability provided by the agency system.

176 Our detailed comments actually relate to England since, particularly following devolution, there are some detailed differences in the operation of the systems in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
177 Arguably this is too parochial a vision since 80% of UK legislation now originates from decisions made by the European Parliament, European Commission or European Council of Ministers.
178 A quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation (quango) can be defined as any body that have a role in the processes of national government but is not a government department or part of one, and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arm’s length from government Ministers.
6.28 In practice, some agencies have statutory requirements for local authority representation on their Boards e.g. Police Authorities and National Park Authorities. In these cases the elected members serve to ensure that the interests of local citizens are taken into account. In other cases, public accountability is provided by the appointment of independent non-executive members to agency Boards or to their regional committees, appointments being made through public advertisement and Nolan appointment procedures179, e.g. NHS Trusts and NWDA.

6.29 These types of appointments are often favoured where there is need to attract people with professional, technical or business qualifications that may not so readily be found amongst the ranks of elected local politicians. The appointments are clearly different from an electoral process, but they do provide a degree of public accountability, particularly where the organisations concerned are open and accessible in providing information to the public. Typically, this includes providing information about the organisation’s work and performance, and also public access to Board papers and minutes of meetings. Useful benchmarks are the provision of information on the organisation’s website and public access to meetings.

PUBLICLY-FUNDED SERVICES AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN CUMBRIA

6.30 During our evidence gathering we examined a range of organisations in receipt of substantial public funding, testing each against the criteria of openness and public access to information. We recognised that there might be practical difficulties in arranging public access to meetings in all cases, and that because of the Data Protection Act some types of information would not be in the public domain. But we took the general view that there should be a presumption of public access to information unless there were overriding reasons why this should not be the case.

6.31 We found that most bodies we considered offered a high level of openness and access to information, mainly through their websites; some organisations also provided public access to meetings. In cases, such as the Cumbria Police Authority, the website access was excellent, whilst in other cases the website was less easy to negotiate or its contents were less informative. (We have commented on CCC’s website in a later section.) There were a number of specific instances where issues related to information access were raised with us, or where we noted shortcomings in the application of best practice, these together with our overall recommendations are as follows.

North West Regional Assembly

6.32 We were surprised to find that after 2003 the NWRA had ceased to make its agendas, minutes and business papers freely available on its website, and it now operates a pass-word protected members-only domain. We think this is incompatible with a democratic organisation acting on behalf of citizens and funded through taxpayers’ money.

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6.33 We received a single complaint that CCC was not sufficiently transparent about decisions relating to items included on the Cabinet’s open and reserved agendas. However, this complaint - which concerned the development of Carlisle Airport – seemed to relate to a specific issue rather than a generic problem. Nonetheless we note that the classification of Cabinet agenda items is a sensitive decision-point in CCC’s procedures and one on which judgements need particular care.

Development Companies

6.34 The NWDA itself is a public body and appointments to its Board and provision of information via its website are fully compliant with public sector requirements and practices. However, in its delivery of services and developments in Cumbria it operates through a number of development companies in which CCC and the district councils also have an involvement i.e. WLR, RRC and Cumbria Vision.

6.35 For these companies, it was less clear to us that best practice in openness and information provision was always being adopted. For example, although from the websites it appears that some Board members are independent non-executive directors, the appointment status of directors or the systems whereby directors are appointed are not indicated. Also, in the case of RRC, Board papers are not available through its website.

6.36 Our general view is that even where such development companies are independent, industry-led bodies they should recognised that they are funded almost wholly from the public purse and they have a responsibility to provide a higher level of openness and public access to information than would be the case for a normal private sector business.

Voluntary and Community Sector

6.37 By their nature the main voluntary and community bodies, CACVS, the 5 CVS organisations and VAC are membership bodies and it can be argued that their only requirement for openness and transparency is to their members. However, as the ChangeUp programme is implemented it appears that they will take a more mainstream role in the provision of services, receive increased public funding and be brought closer into the planning phases of local service provision.

6.38 If they accept that change, we believe there is a significant need for them to be more transparent and adopt information policies much closer to those of the public sector. Again, our concerns focus on two main areas – openness in systems for appointing Board members and openness in public accessibility to Board papers; at present on both these counts their procedures fall short of public sector best practice.

Lakes District National Park Authority

6.39 We received a substantial number of adverse comments about the operation of the LDNPA, although most tended to focus around four main issues. The first was that the LDNPA was not sufficiently open and accessible in its information provision; the second was that its procedures and systems were not sensitive and responsive to local
needs; the third was that its consultation documents were of a size that overwhelmed the capacity of local communities to respond; and the fourth was that the presence of a substantial proportion of elected local councillors on the body had failed to achieve any significant impact in addressing the first three issues.

6.40 It is certainly true that until very recently the LDNPA did not publish its agendas, papers and minutes on the internet, although such publication has been effected in 2006. We can also confirm that the LDNPA procedures for public contributions to its open meetings are less than ideal. We believe this problem could be solved by appropriate procedural change and we hope the LDNPA will give such change urgent attention.

6.41 There is no question that the LDNPA consultation documents are often substantial and technically detailed documents, but that is unavoidable. However, there is scope for better processes of public consultation with local communities through joint initiatives on the part of the LDNPA, CCC and CALC. The need is for short briefing documents to highlight the main points of the consultation, and for these to act as a basis for interactive consultation meetings of the Neighbourhood Forum type. We hope that this issue will be addressed through the recently introduced ‘visioning and partnership’ meetings for the Park.

Recommendations

6.42 In this area we make three overlapping recommendations to CCC, which together are designed to address the points we have highlighted above.

6.43 First, we recommend that CCC not only adopts best practice in openness and public information provision itself but encourages, and uses its leverage to secure, such practice to be adopted by other organisations with which it has close associations (recommendation 4). We include in this the NWRA, the development companies, and voluntary and community organisations.

6.44 Second, we recommend that where CCC has a statutory presence on external bodies, such as the LDNPA, it automatically rotates its representative members after two periods of office (for example, 6 - 8 years) and adopts succession planning to ensure that its representatives consist of a mixture of experienced members and ‘new blood’ (recommendation 5).

6.45 Third, cognizant of the very real powers that members of governing bodies can exert, we urge all council members on external bodies to make full use of the powers available to them, and we recommend that County Councillors with membership of statutory bodies, such as the LDNPA, should provide regular reports to the Cabinet on the operation of the external body and on any attendant issues that relate to CCC (recommendation 6).

6.46 It has been put to us that councillors often need time to develop expertise in the spheres of activity of specialist external bodies. This, in our view, argues the need for CCC to provide such elected members with appropriate professional development training to allow them to take on new roles, and we have commented on that below.
STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Central or Local Accountability

6.47 For anyone with an interest in local government, the Consultation Paper and Interim Report of the Lyons Inquiry¹⁸⁰ published in mid-December 2005 provides keen insights into the main issues underlying the relationships between central and local government in Britain. The authors point out that the 1976 Layfield report¹⁸¹ on local government funding set out two clear choices in the way that the relationship between central and local government could develop, either:

- an approach based on ‘central’ accountability, whereby central government takes a more interventionist approach to local government, specifying spending levels on services; or

- an approach based on ‘local’ accountability, whereby authorities are given a far greater degree of discretion over local services, funded by a new form of local taxation, with little interference from the centre.

6.48 The Lyons report comments that the Government of the day did not follow either of these proposals explicitly - and it might have added that the issue remains fundamental to the way the present relationship between central government and local government works.

6.49 Asked to look at local government funding systems in contemporary terms the Lyons Inquiry, after its initial phase of work, has gained agreement for its remit to be extended because ‘one of the strongest conclusions emerging from my work to date is that well founded recommendations on possible reforms to the funding of local government need to be based on a clear understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of local government, which continue to change’. Additionally, it makes the point that ‘to be successful, the public must be able to understand any package of funding reforms in the context of what local government does.’

6.50 We find complete accord with both these views – which underlie our comments earlier in this chapter. However, we would add that from the standpoint of both national and local democracy it is essential that the democratic structures and accountabilities are sufficiently clear for citizens fully to understand the points of democratic control and democratic influence.

6.51 We have formed the view that in Cumbria regionalisation and the proposed regional rationalisations of the police forces, fire services and the LSC are being interpreted as an indicator of an increasing isolation of the county; and that this will serve to reinforce its geographic remoteness from the centre. It may be inevitable that government and public service structures in England must change to meet ‘new challenges’. However, lack of political consensus on change nationally, and uncertainties created by the piecemeal and apparently uncoordinated nature of the change process, are potentially corrosive both to public opinion and to local democracy in Cumbria.

6.52 It must also be recalled that Cumbria has the recent and hugely traumatic experience of ‘remote emergency management’ during the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak, and the resilience and capacity of the county to respond locally to emergencies is an issue about which there will be significant public concern.

**North West Regional Assembly**

6.53 Within the national democratic system, the Government’s strategy is to implement regional structures in line with the continental European model; although after the North East Region referendum, elected assemblies do not appear to be regarded as a Government priority in the regionalisation process. Rather, the emphasis appears to be on continuing to develop the role of the present NWRA.

6.54 During the course of our inquiries we have been struck by the low level of awareness of the NWRA amongst Cumbria’s citizens. Many people seem to have concluded that the whole of the regionalisation agenda was aborted as a result of the North East Region referendum, although this is clearly not the case.

6.55 The NWRA has been established as a partnership. However, as it moves ever closer to being a body making decisions that affect people’s lives and livelihoods its democratic authority could be called into question. Many citizens may be unconvinced by the presentation of the NWRA as ‘an indirectly elected and appointed assembly’ acting on their behalf.

6.56 From our perception, the democratic authority of the Assembly can only derive from the fact that a substantial proportion of its members are elected councillors representing local authorities. However, accepting that argument, there is a case that voting rights within the NWRA should be restricted to that elected group. We note some shift in democratic balance has been made through the establishment of the Regional Board but we wonder if this has gone far enough.

6.57 Given the now significant role of the NWRA in determining regional spatial strategy and influencing matters such as housing development, roads programmes and economic development, we recommend that CCC undertakes an awareness and information campaign to communicate the NWRA’s structures and functions to the communities of Cumbria (recommendation 7).

**Organisation of Local Government**

**TIERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

6.58 During the course of our work we became aware that sometimes there have been unhelpful tensions between the county and district tiers of local government in Cumbria, at both elected member and, in some instances, officer level. As far as we can determine, Cumbria is not at all unique in this regard; we have noted that similar tensions were described by the Northumberland Democracy Commission182, which reported early in 2005.

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6.59 We do not seek to apportion blame for the problems where they exist in Cumbria – inevitably the ‘rights and wrongs’ of the situation will be seen differently by CCC and the district council representatives. However, we have no doubt that such tensions do not serve the best interests of the citizens of Cumbria.

6.60 We understand that there is recent agreement for a new joint committee designed to provide a forum for the Leaders and Chief Executive Officers of the 7 Cumbria councils to achieve a better coordination of policy and action. We greatly welcome this development and regard it as a positive move in the right direction.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

6.61 Tensions between county and district councils in England are said to have intensified during the Banham review on local Government reorganisation in the 1990s, and they were intensified again by the more recent national debate about elected regional assemblies, and the linked proposals for local government restructuring.

6.62 As far as we could determine in mid-summer 2005 local government reform was not being seen as an urgent Government priority. However, the Government’s comments on ‘community leadership’ could be read as suggesting an underlying preference for unitary local authorities. This was confirmed in early December 2005 in an article by the Right Honourable David Miliband\textsuperscript{183} which indicated the Government was ‘actively considering the case’ for reorganisation in the 34 two-tier English counties, as part of its 10-year vision. Subsequently the views underlying this article and their potential implications have become a little clearer.

6.63 In brief, the Minister’s main reasons for considering local government reorganisation are reported to be as follows.

- There is public confusion over responsibilities – citizens don’t know which tier is responsible for what.

- The present system creates fragmented and sometimes competing leadership, which complicates the emergence of strong leadership for an area.

- Splitting responsibilities for functions such as Waste leads to duplication, inefficiency and co-ordination failure.

- Many districts are too small to be strategic and yet too big to be local; and the large number (273 in England) complicates partnership working.

- The 70 district councils with budgets of less than £10M suffer disproportionately high administration costs because of their small size, and their general overhead costs (claimed to be 30%) are greater than for unitary authorities (claimed to be 4%).

- With the present system it is harder to secure economies of scale.

\textsuperscript{183} Miliband, D. (2005) \textit{I Want to Hear People’s Views.}
- The 10-year vision is for a strong strategic tier of local government and increasingly empowered neighbourhoods and this might require the two-tier system of local government to be reconfigured to fit the model.

- it is intellectually difficult to justify why two-tier counties like Hertfordshire or Devon have a much greater number of (county plus district) councillors than unitary authorities of similar population size like Birmingham or Leeds.

- Able and capable people might be discouraged from standing for election because the fragmented responsibilities between counties and districts mean that they do not have all the powers they need to make a real difference.

RELEVANCE TO CUMBRIA

6.64 Mr Miliband’s analysis of two-tier areas became available at a late stage of our deliberations but, excepting the final point in his list, most of the matters he highlights are consistent with our findings in Cumbria. We have earlier indicated the relevant numbers of councillors and the financial figures for Cumbria councils (see paragraph 2.21 and paragraph 4.6), we have commented on the divisions of responsibilities (see paragraph 4.8), and our consultations with town and parish councils have indicated that where there is ambition to take on additional responsibilities, it is usually for tasks which are mainly undertaken by the district councils (see paragraph 5.44).

6.65 For completeness we should add that whilst the average budget of the 6 districts councils in Cumbria is £11.4M, only Copeland and Eden fall below the £10M figure cited by Mr Miliband in his comparison\(^{184}\). Also, updating his figures on numbers of councillors, we should note that Cumbria falls very much in line with the rural two-tier counties of Hertfordshire and Devon which he cites (Table 6.1). However, it covers a much larger geographic area than either and not everyone would agree with Mr Miliband’s inference that rural areas may have too many local councillors\(^{185}\).

Table 6.1. The population and number of county and district councillors in Birmingham City, Leeds as examples of unitary council areas and Hertfordshire, Devon and Cumbria as examples of two-tier council areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
<th>Population per Councillor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham City</td>
<td>Unitary</td>
<td>716,000</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>5,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>Unitary</td>
<td>533,400</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>5,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire</td>
<td>Two-tier</td>
<td>776,000</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>1,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devon</td>
<td>Two-tier</td>
<td>564,000</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>1,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>Two-tier</td>
<td>495,000</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>1,334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.66 Mr Miliband has indicated that the Government has yet to come to a decision on local government reorganisation. However, it seems likely to do so before the publication of the White Paper on the future of local government, due in mid-2006. From our own vantage of having undertaken inquiries in Cumbria, we believe that the most damaging outcome would be unduly to delay a decision either for or against local

\(^{184}\) We are also unsure whether his comments on relative overheads can be widely generalised.

\(^{185}\) Curry, D. (2005) *One size doesn’t fit all.*

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government reorganisation. Our view is that Cumbria would best be served by central government making an early and clear statement about its intentions – either that it intends to press forward with some urgency or alternatively that it intends to take the subject off the agenda for a period of years.

6.67 However, from a Cumbria perspective any proposed local government reorganisation process will require careful evaluation. Our understanding is that if Government decides to move ahead, the process will involve each county council or district council making a case for the Government to approve the formation of a unitary authority within that council’s existing boundaries. Thus the process will not involve a reconsideration of the 2004 Boundary Committee report.

6.68 The case for reorganisation would need to demonstrate that the new arrangements would provide stronger leadership, deliver better and more cost-effective services and offer more ability for neighbourhoods to influence decisions that affect them (i.e. meet the requirements of the ‘new localism’ agenda). Once the case was accepted, it seems that all the existing county and/or district councils would be disbanded to make way for a wholly new unitary authority structure. Thus the transition process could be relatively protracted and would involve a significant degree of disturbance, disruption and cost.

NEW LOCALISM

6.69 Later in this Chapter we discuss measures which would help CCC to address locality working and the ‘new localism’ agenda. However, ‘new localism’ also warrants mention in the context of local government reorganisation. In thinking about council structures in Cumbria we have come to the view that, if there was agreement between CCC and the 6 district councils it would be possible to develop a county-wide ‘new localism’ agenda based on a strategic county council and a county-wide network of city, town and parish councils. This would be wholly compatible with the Government’s 10-year vision and could allow some local services to be transferred to neighbourhood management and delivery.

6.70 However, the process of establishing such structures would require a carefully planned and structured programme of transformation, and it would be subject to almost all the risks and drawbacks highlighted in the lessons learned analysis in Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter (Table 6.2).

6.71 In the Cumbria context of a small widely dispersed population, cost increases would be a significant source of concern. In some parts of the county there might be scope for developing smaller-scale services for functions, such as waste collection, by creating collection zones around ‘neighbourhood towns’. In practice this would result in ‘mini-districts’, smaller in scale but otherwise similar to the existing district structures, and with significantly less scope to achieve economies of scale.

6.72 We have also noted that, although a small number of towns and parishes had an ambition to manage more activities locally, the main demand appears to be for a greater local say on services and a greater responsiveness on the part of service providers, rather than for greater local management (see paragraph 5.24). Also, for the two services that are frequently mentioned as potential candidates for ‘neighbourhood management’, the level of client satisfaction with district council managed waste collection services was
very high (see paragraph 5.10) as was the level of client satisfaction with CCC managed library services (see paragraph 5.13).

Table 6.2. Lessons learnt from past initiatives in councils devolving decision making and decentralisation (Adapted from Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter, 2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons Learnt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- A higher number of access points can potentially be costly and staffing costs can be high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Remoteness from the centre can lead to a lack of specialist advice being available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To ensure reliability and cover for staff in smaller units, it may be necessary to have broader generic skills and lose specialisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reinventing the wheel and loss of economies of scale can be issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inexperienced staff may have a high level of authority without the expertise necessary for decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Services can become too demand led and fragmented, neglecting the need for strategic planning, and time for reflection on service issues and service details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relations between different services or different neighbourhoods can lead to rivalries with some areas loosing out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There are issues of budget allocation and the funding of services across neighbourhood boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There are difficulties in ensuring that there is always full compliance with legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accountability can be difficult to monitor and enforce.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.73 Taking all these points into account, we are convinced that a variety of local government structures could be implemented in Cumbria but our view is that the important Government decision – and important decision for Cumbria – is not about the detail of the local structures but about the division of statutory responsibility between the strategic ‘unitary authority’ and whatever structures – districts, towns, parishes or ‘neighbourhoods’ that might be created. To achieve efficient and effective service provision and local engagement, the ultimate need is for a strategic ‘unitary’ authority that has overall statutory responsibility for service provision, but which can establish binding concords or contracts to devolve those responsibilities to a local level within an overall county-wide framework.

NEEDS OF CUMBRIA

6.74 This leads us to make three related points. Firstly, we have come to the very firm conclusion that maintaining the size and integrity of Cumbria within the North West Regional structure is crucial to the future of the people of Cumbria. Based on the evidence we have gathered and reviewed, Cumbria is a distinctive and coherent policy area within the North West Region; it should be accorded similar priority and status to the ‘city-regions’ further south, even though it is not dominated by a single city or conurbation.
6.75 Secondly, and notwithstanding the uncertainties about the future of two-tier local government areas, much of the emerging Government policy seems to be written with unitary authorities in mind, and in some instances it is much more complex to deliver within a two-tier structure. Therefore, we recommend that CCC seeks to persuade central government to ‘proof’ all its policies, so that two-tier counties are not disadvantaged (recommendation 8). In this we have in mind a corresponding approach to the ‘rural proofing’ of central government policies that already exists.

6.76 Finally, we wish to underline the fact that irrespective of any future ‘unitary’ local government structure in Cumbria, the scale and dispersed population will require both a county-wide strategic focus and a focus on local service delivery. Therefore, we recommend CCC should continue to adopt and, where possible, strengthen its policies for local targeting of service delivery (recommendation 9).

STRUCTURE OF CUMRIA COUNTY COUNCIL

Present Committee Structures

6.77 The present CCC committee structures have been shaped by two major developments. First was the implementation of the Select Committee E report in the mid 1990’s and second was the constitutional reform of local government following the Local Government Act 2000. The first of these developments led to the establishment of County Council’s 6 Local Committees, with devolved powers and selected elements of devolved budgets (and also Neighbourhood Forums chaired by County Councillors). The second led to the ‘Cabinet and Scrutiny’ system, which replaced the former (more inclusive) committee structure.

6.78 During the course of our inquiries we have had the opportunity to gain an understanding of the present roles of County Councillors and the wider framework in which they work. From what we have learned, a good proportion, whilst wholly committed to working for their local communities, are concerned about limited resources and other constraints which they regard as restricting the speed at which they can ‘make things happen’.

6.79 Several to whom we spoke had initially welcomed the introduction of the ‘Cabinet and Scrutiny’ system. But, they now have an increasing feeling that it has made it more difficult for ordinary elected members to engage fully and effectively in the council’s work; this is particularly true amongst members who are not involved in either the Cabinet or the Scrutiny Panels.

6.80 We have detected some nostalgia for the old council committee systems. However, from our reading of the Local Government Act 2000 the only allowable alternatives to the present system are (a) the election of a mayor with a cabinet or (b) the election of a mayor with a council manager. Neither of these models seems particularly relevant or appropriate to Cumbria. We have therefore examined the present committee system of Cabinet, Scrutiny Panels and Local Committees to better understand its operation and shortcomings.
Cabinet

6.81 Because of the political balance within the county, CCC is always likely to comprise a mixture of elected members drawn from the three main political parties and a small proportion of independent members. Under the Local Government Act 2000, there is a legally allowed option for the Cabinet to be formed either through selection of members by a formally elected Leader, or through election of members by the Full Council. In either of these cases the Cabinet could be formed from the political group(s) holding overall majority, as at present, or by adopting a wholly cross-party approach, which might lead to the Cabinet comprising of all parties, including independents.

6.82 In this second scenario ordinary elected members of each party might feel more engaged with the Cabinet process because they would have a party political representation on it. However, where the Cabinet is formed solely from the political group(s) with overall majority, there are bound to be political divisions between those within the Cabinet and those who are not, and their relationship requires mature systems of political and democratic management.

6.83 One of the main complaints we received about the operation of present system, was that ordinary elected members, particularly of opposition groups, were unconvinced that their views were properly taken into account by the Cabinet in its decision making. This was particularly the case when the Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder gave a ‘point noted’ response, but otherwise did not appear to address the issue that had been raised.

6.84 We would not wish to stray into areas of party politics, which are certainly outside our remit. However, we concluded that some of the current tensions might be reduced by the Cabinet or Portfolio Holders making greater use of written responses to substantive points raised by elected members. Even if the response was in the negative or simply indicated that the opposition line of reasoning had not been accepted, a written response would increase the proper and desirable engagement of ordinary CCC members with the Cabinet process.

Scrutiny Panels

6.85 The Scrutiny Panels are focused along the lines of the 6 corporate themes and together with the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Committee they have a county-wide perspective. Their remit and terms of reference (Table 6.3) offer scope for them to take an interest in almost any aspects of CCC’s activities within their theme, but in practice they tend to focus on their corporate remit, reflecting the work being carried forward by the Cabinet and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

6.86 The present Scrutiny Panels are arranged along party political lines reflecting the balance of members on the Council (see Table 3.6). We believe this potentially creates an issue, since it is perfectly possible for a Scrutiny Panel not to have representation from a particular district of Cumbria; indeed that situation presently exists (Table 6.4). We are uneasy about this because it could be argued that the interests of a particular locality are not being taken into account in the scrutiny process. In a large and diverse county like Cumbria this seems democratically unsatisfactory, notwithstanding CCC’s Local Committee arrangements.
Local Committees

6.87 When CCC introduced its system of devolved local government operating through 6 area-based County Council Local Committees in the mid 1990s, it was seen as a leading national innovator in the county council sector. The system was designed to address the problems posed by the dispersed communities of Cumbria, by providing local responsiveness within a coherent county-wide policy framework.

Table 6.3. Terms of reference and remit of the six County Council Scrutiny Panels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny Panels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terms of reference:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To consider existing policies and the effectiveness of the delivery relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel’s specific Corporate Strategy theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To review decisions of the Executive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To review proposed decisions of the Executive, including key decisions only made by officers on behalf of the Executive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To consider matters referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel by the Scrutiny Management Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To consider a programme of additional matters which, in the opinion of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, it is in the interests of the County Council for them to review, and to recommend such a programme to the Scrutiny Management Committee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Remit- within the overall terms of reference a Panel can:**

- Undertake policy reviews and make recommendations to cabinet.
- Review and scrutinise any area of the Council’s performance or its policy objectives.
- ‘Call-in’ a decision of the Cabinet (and Local Committees) for review before implementation and refer the decision back to the Cabinet for further consideration.
- Make observations and comments on matters coming before the Cabinet (pre-scrutiny)

6.88 The Local Committees have now been established for more than 10 years. They have operated with devolved powers and budgets for selected areas of work - although they have never achieved as significant a role as originally envisaged. More recently youth services have been restructured with greater central involvement to meet OFSTED quality control and performance criteria, and there has been a commensurate reduction in the Local Committees’ responsibilities.

6.89 The Local Committees have substantially achieved their objectives of bringing a locality dimension into the County Council’s operations. However, their public profile is low, (see Table 5.10) and as pointed out in the 2004 Boundary Committee’s report ‘the challenge of providing locally-honed services for Cumbria’s widely dispersed populations largely remains’.
Table 6.4. Cumbria County Council Committees and Scrutiny panels showing the total number of County Councillors and the distribution by district area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee or Panel</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Allerdale</th>
<th>Barrow</th>
<th>Carlisle</th>
<th>Copeland</th>
<th>Eden</th>
<th>South Lakeland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Council</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Committees and Scrutiny Panels</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny Management Committee</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Council Services Scrutiny Panel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Economic Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Adults Scrutiny Panel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety Scrutiny Panel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Scrutiny Panel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.90 We have examined the present arrangements, including having two meetings with the Local Committee Chairs; and we have identified a number of problems with the present system, arising from different but interacting factors. Most significant is that the Local Committees do not fit well into the present Cabinet and Scrutiny Panel structure. We have illustrated this in Figure 6.1, which schematically represents the present system as we see it.

Figure 6.1. Schematic representation of the structure of CCC, also showing the Cumbria Strategic Partnership and Local Strategic Partnerships (LC represents Local Committee; ‘Scrutiny’ represents Scrutiny Panels).

6.91 As a result of this structural problem the Local Committees do not always have effective ways of channelling their efforts into the wider CCC system, other than through the Full Council. They do not have good structural routes of interaction with the Cabinet or Scrutiny Panels and their activities are not properly integrated with the corporate strategy and performance management framework. Additionally, they do not have the resources and/or the information support to allow them properly to undertake the roles for which they were originally established.

6.92 The members of the Local Committees are frustrated that they cannot achieve as much as they wish, whilst elsewhere in CCC’s systems there are concerns about the proper corporate integration and the corporate accountability for the programmes of work for which the Local Committees are responsible, and about meeting CPA targets. This situation, we should add, is a problem arising from CCC’s present structures, rather than any lack of conscientiousness, diligence or capability on the part of the Local Committee members. Indeed, we have been impressed both by the dedication of the members and their high level of understanding of local problems and issues.

6.93 We have later considered ways of addressing the structural problems we have identified. However, for the avoidance of any doubt, we should stress that we believe it essential that CCC has effective structures and systems that allow it simultaneously to
tackle the pressing need to improve its CPA performance and also respond to local agendas. This argues the case for more fundamental and far reaching reforms of CCC’s approach, than would be accommodated by a minor tinkering with the Local Committee structures and remits.

**Strengthening the Local Dynamic**

**UNDERLYING OBJECTIVES**

6.94 We have concluded that in considering future structures CCC needs to take account of 7 main objectives. These are:

- improved service performance as reflected in CPA;

- engagement with local communities in the different areas of Cumbria as part of the policy development, design and local implementation of CCC’s services;

- robust and accessible area-based monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems which will provide insight into local service delivery and local outcomes;

- more integrated management of local service provision, making local operations more efficient and more easily accessible to the public, i.e. greater ‘locality working’;

- clear lines of responsibility and accountability between Cabinet/Portfolio Holders for service policy and local area service delivery;

- appropriate separation of the lines of management responsibility between elected members\(^{186}\) and employed executive officers; and

- a level of resource allocation sufficient to allow the establishment and effective operation of the new approach;

6.95 We have considered a variety of structural models that might act as a basis for CCC achieving these objectives, including committee approaches that have been used elsewhere. However, after careful evaluation we have decided that, rather ‘transplanting’ other models, it would be better for CCC to set out an approach that best meets the 7 objectives and also Cumbria’s distinctive geo-social characteristics. It is important to say that our recommendations will require changes both in elected member roles and committee structures and in CCC’s internal management structures and operating systems, and they will introduce the concept of area management.

**AREA BOARDS**

6.96 Against our list of objectives we have considered how best to address the question of providing CCC with systems that will most fully combine the need for strong and effective strategic leadership, efficient high-quality services meeting the best of CPA standards, and the challenge of providing locally-honed services for the county’s widely

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\(^{186}\) We use the terms executive and non-executive in the way that they would apply in a business environment, namely a non-executive Director of a company and an executive manager of a company. This should not be confused with the Cabinet as the executive body of the Council.
dispersed population. Our evaluations suggest that the optimum approach would be through the establishment of ‘Area Boards’, which would supersede the present Local Committee structure. We have adopted the ‘Area Board’ terminology to avoid confusion with Local Committees and Scrutiny Panels\textsuperscript{187}, but it is important to stress that the functions and methods of operation of the Area Boards will be new and distinctive from what has gone before.

6.97 The Area Boards, which we envisage will comprise of all County Councillors in a Board’s area. They will have four main functions which will provide the framework for the Board members’ duties.

- \textit{Representation}. The Boards will act as the collective ‘voice’ for citizens in their areas, providing both a forum to evolve collective views on the area’s needs and a mechanism for ensuring service delivery. This will include:

  a) fully engaging with communities across the Board’s area, including communities of location and communities of interest;

  b) developing integrated area visions, setting out what local communities see as their priorities;

  c) working with others to establish how area priorities can be met both through the use of CCC resources and by other means.

- \textit{Advice and advocacy to the centre}. The Boards will play a key role in providing area-based advice and advocacy to CCC’s central development of policy. This will specifically involve:

  a) area based research and intelligence designed to build an evidence-based profile for the Board’s area and to prioritise local CCC service objectives and needs;

  b) policy and operational analysis of local service requirements, within an overall CCC policy framework, covering the full range of CCC services;

  c) direct input to the Cabinet’s policy formulation for CCC as a whole.

- \textit{Integrated planning}. There is a pressing need for CCC to achieve a higher level of integrated planning and service delivery, taking local conditions into account. The Area Boards will thus:

  a) develop plans and evaluate options for integrated service operations in their areas;

  b) review and advise on use of resources in their areas, covering physical resources of buildings and land, manpower deployment plans, financial resources and project design and implementation;

\textsuperscript{187} If there is a more suitable title within CCC’s constitutional terminology we would raise no objections but it is important that the terminology recognises the structural and constitutional importance of the Boards.
c) work in liaison with district councils, town/parish councils and others, and through the LSPs, to ensure that all projects and programmes in their area are coordinated and integrated.

- Providing the operational interface. Whereas, Scrutiny Panels are tasked with scrutinising Cabinet policy development, decision-making and overall CCC performance, Area Boards will have a main focus on matters relating to council service delivery, CCC operations and client management in their area. This will include:

  a) evaluation of client requirements as part of the ‘putting the public first’ policy;

  b) client satisfaction analysis for all services provided by CCC or with CCC funding;

  c) area evaluation of responsiveness to clients, both for CCC provided services and for those for which CCC provides funding;

  d) output evaluations of service provision, to establish that the service is actually addressing local problems and leading to genuine improvements in quality of life and other sustainability measures.

6.98 Structurally we envisage a system in which Area Boards will interface directly with the Cabinet (Figure 6.2). We see their function as formal, and that their reports will require consideration and formal written response from the appropriate Cabinet member(s). Thus, although the Boards will not replace the executive functions of Cabinet decision-making, they will have a clear and transparent role in the Cabinet decision-making process. This will be supported by the proposals we have made below, which relate to the financial arrangements and management reporting.

6.99 Under these arrangements the challenge of ‘honoring the local service provisions’ in Cumbria will be fully addressed, and the executive power of the Cabinet will be accountable for ensuring that local issues and problems can be tackled quickly. Also, if a Scrutiny Panel wished to consider a matter raised by an Area Board within a corporate policy context, or if the Cabinet wished to direct the attention of a Scrutiny Panel to a matter an Area Board had brought forward, there would be opportunity to do so.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING

6.100 We are aware from our discussions that some members of the present Local Committees would favour the development of a council system which would create additional financial autonomy and the allocation of a wider range of devolved budgets to Local Committees. This stems largely from their view that a devolved budget under local control would allow them more quickly or more flexibly to address pressing local needs.

6.101 However, whilst we understand their point of view, we believe there are wider considerations that they must take into account. Firstly, the role and distinctive capability of CCC is its ability to provide major strategic and professional functions and services that could not readily be provided by others on an equivalent and cost effective...
basis. Indeed if this were not the role of county councils there would be very little logic in establishing local government structures above the level of the town or district.

Figure 6.2. Schematic representation of the proposed structure of CCC also showing the Cumbria Strategic Partnership and Local Strategic Partnerships (LC represents Local Committee; ‘Scrutiny’ represents Scrutiny Panels).

6.102 Secondly, given CCC’s urgent need to achieve the highest standards of efficiency and performance demanded by the CPA, there will be an inevitable and justified tendency to strive for better budget control and economies of scale; and these requirements are poorly served by a plethora of divided budgets. Thus over time, the tendency will be for an aggregation of budgets that will leave the Local Committees dealing with smaller and smaller sums, which will marginalise their inputs to CCC’s activities.

6.103 Thirdly, from our analysis of the situation, ‘devolved budgets’ even on a larger scale will not provide the best way forward to improving local services. Rather, the true challenge that the Local Committees – and in future the Area Boards – need to address is how, more quickly and more effectively, can they bring the full skills and very significant resources CCC to bear on local needs188.

6.104 However, this last consideration highlights a problem we have identified in the present Local Committee system, and one that must be addressed if Area Boards are introduced. Local Committees have historically not received full and informative financial information and management reports even for the areas of activity in which they have had responsibility.

6.105 In our view this must change: if Area Boards are to undertake the type and level of non-executive role that we envisage, they must be provided with clear management

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188 There is a particular consideration in respect of the disbursement of small grants for community activities, which we consider later in the report.
accounts on the budgets and expenditures on services in their area, along with meaningful information on service delivery standards and project delivery. Only in that way will they be able to make a full and useful contribution to the task that is being allocated to them.

6.106 Against this background, we recommend that CCC replaces its Local Committee structures with a system based on Area Boards and in parallel introduces budget and management accounting procedures and activity reporting/outcome systems which will allow the Area Boards properly to assess the services and the effectiveness and efficiency of use of resources in their local area (recommendation 10).

MEMBERSHIP OF AREA BOARDS

6.107 We envisage that the membership of the Area Boards will include all County Councillors who have divisions within the relevant area, and that this would include the Cabinet Portfolio Holders, although we think possibly not in the capacity of Chairmen. Additionally, we believe that it might be useful for the Area Boards to have the option to co-opt members of the district councils and representatives from the parish councils in their area (we interpret this as wider than simply a representative from CALC).

6.108 We make this suggestion with some hesitation, since there is a history of a previous abortive attempt to establish Joint Planning Advisory Committees (JPAC) under the Local Committee structures. However, we noted that some Local Committees do have district council and parish council representatives and we believe that this offers a positive route to create better understanding between the tiers of local government. Additionally, we think that, in some areas the National Park Officer of the LDNPA or his representative might usefully be co-opted.

6.109 It is not appropriate for us to specify in detail how the Area Boards should be constituted, that is a matter for CCC. However, we recommend that Area Boards are constituted in a way that permits co-option of a limited number of external members, including representatives from the district council sector and the parish council sector, preferably with some consistency in approach to Area Board composition between different areas (recommendation 11).

AREA BOARDS WITHIN REGIONAL AND COUNTY STRUCTURES

6.110 At various stages of our inquiries County Councillors and members of the public expressed their unease about the apparent complexity of ‘local government’ and ‘public service provision’ since the introduction of the regional structures, the widespread adoption of partnership working and the increased reliance on ‘intermediary service providers’. As a result we attempted to map schematically the relationships so that we might place the Area Boards in the wider framework (Figure 6.3).

6.111 This served to underline the genuine complexity of the framework in place and also raised a number of questions. These related to the operations of the Area Boards and are points CCC will need to consider. Firstly, there is a structural symmetry in the concept that the Area Boards will interface with the LSPs, the Council itself will interface with CSP, and CSP and the LSPs will directly relate to each other (we are less than sure that is the case at present). With the introduction of LAA funding there will be direct contractual and accountability links between the district councils and CCC, which will ‘operate through’ or run in parallel with the CSP/LSPs structure. We believe that these
LAA programmes will require close monitoring at a local level, and thus will fall within the overview of the proposed Area Boards. However, their role may be difficult to achieve unless the Area Boards are represented on or have a close awareness of CSP activities.

Figure 6.3. Schematic representation of ‘local government’ within the wider framework of the regional and NWDA structures, Cumbria Strategic Partnership (CSP), Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). (Solid lines represent statutory or direct organisational relationships, broken lines represent organisational links.)

6.112 Secondly, Area Boards will unquestionably wish to take an interest in economic development projects such as those undertaken through NWDA funding routes. Consideration will therefore need to be given to the way Area Boards will interact with NWDA (Cumbria)/Cumbria Vision.

LOCALITY WORKING

6.113 From the standpoint of integrated locality working and democratic accountability, there is a strong case for the service delivery areas being consistent across CCC’s directorates and compatible with the Area Board geography. However, whilst Local Committees have historically been based on the 6 district areas of Cumbria, the ‘service areas’ of the Council Council’s directorates have developed (apparently without coordination) on a different pattern. At present, depending on the service activity, CCC services are structured on 9 area, 7 area, 6 area, 5 area, 4 area and 3 area geographies.

6.114 An initial exploratory analysis suggests that complete commonality of service areas between directorates may be difficult to achieve in the short-term, although the scope for closer alignment should be considered in detail by CCC’s Corporate Management Team (CMT) and in conjunction with a CCC review of its extensive property holdings. Thus, whilst common service areas should remain a firm objective,
some services may need to continue to be provided within different service areas, at least for the next period. This will have to be accommodated in the systems for financial and management reporting to Area Boards (see above). However, given that most of the present service areas map on district areas we do not believe accounting and reporting to Area Boards will provide insurmountable difficulties.

Number of Board Areas

6.115 Technically, all that we have said about Areas Boards (and also our comments on the management of locality working below) could be applied to Cumbria as 6 district areas, in line with the present arrangements for Local Committees. However, we have not been able to find any clear underlying logic for such an approach and we believe the cost and resource implications are extremely difficult to justify. If more integrated service area working is implemented, the demands of a 6 area system on senior CCC officers and elected members could prove overwhelming.

6.116 Therefore we have concluded that fewer service areas and fewer Area Boards should be considered. For a range of statistical and other reasons, there is a contemporary case for a service area geography based on aggregations of district areas. However, should Cumbria move to unitary authority status, the detail of the service area geography would warrant further review, since there is logic for considering service areas mapping on the 10 major travel-to-work areas of Cumbria.

6.117 Some County Council services e.g. Fire and Rescue Services, already use service areas based on three pairs of districts: Carlisle + Eden; Allerdale + Copeland; and Barrow + South Lakeland. If this approach were adopted generally it would provide three areas of different geographic size but with comparable populations and numbers of divisions (Table 6.5). Thus, on a population basis, there is a logical present case for three Area Boards configured in that way.

Table 6.5. Population numbers, areas and county council electoral divisions in aggregated areas of Cumbria that could form the basis for three-area or four-area locality working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population (%)</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Area (%)</th>
<th>County Council Divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three locality structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle + Eden</td>
<td>155,500</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>318,238</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale + Copeland</td>
<td>165,900</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>197,342</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow + South Lakeland</td>
<td>173,400</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>161,200</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four locality structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>103,500</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>103,997</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>70,500</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>7,796</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale + Copeland</td>
<td>165,900</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>197,342</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden + South Lakes</td>
<td>154,900</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>367,645</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.118 However, given that accounting and reporting on services will need to be customised to allow for the lack of commonality of service areas between directorates, other Area Board configurations are also possible, provided that they map on the 6 district area geography.
6.119 For example, based on the underlying socio-economics and economic development strategies a logical arrangement would be that adopted by the CLEAN Network. This considers Cumbria as 4 main areas: Carlisle; Barrow-in-Furness; Allerdale + Copeland; and Eden + South Lakeland. Each of these areas is different in socio-economic characteristics, but each within itself forms a coherent locality area in policy terms. This model provides a less even distribution of population and electoral divisions than the three area model (Table 6.5). However, from an Area Board standpoint, the policy benefits of having areas with coherent social and economic challenges would be very considerable.

6.120 It is for CCC is to decide on the number and configuration it will adopt as a framework for its service delivery, and on the number of Area Boards that it will establish. However, we believe that at this time it is possible to make a case for the 3-Area Board or 4-Area Board models, with the first being stronger in terms of its metrics and the second being stronger in terms of its policy relevance, which in our view is a very important strategic consideration. In Figure 6.4 we have shown both these models for illustration.

6.121 However, irrespective of the detail of the number of service areas and number of Area Boards that are finally agreed, we recommend that CCC establishes locality working in a way that allows its internal management and reporting systems and the proposed Area Boards to become better aligned (recommendation 12).

6.122 For completeness, we should mention that both the 3-area and 4-area structures (Table 6.5) may need to be tested legally against the ‘two fifths rule’ contained in the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, because both include an area greater than two-fifths of the area of Cumbria. However, our lay interpretation is that there is sufficient flexibility under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 for CCC to seek approval for almost any Area Board arrangements that it wishes to introduce.

**Management Structures**

6.123 We were not tasked with, nor did we attempt to undertake, a systematic evaluation of CCC’s management structures - some of which were in fact changing during the period in which we were undertaking our work. However, certain issues of structure became apparent to us and we should briefly comment on these since they are fundamental to locality working and the service area approach we have outlined above.

6.124 Internally CCC is structured into 7 directorates. These reflect 6 ‘service’ directorates, which align more or less with the corporate plan themes and 1 directorate which is focused on the internal operation of the Council. Each of the directorates contains a number of divisions or other operating units. In many cases these are distributed between different areas of Cumbria, providing the locational framework for the local delivery of council services. In some cases the operational units reflect replicated ‘front-line groups’, providing a similar range of services in different parts of the county.

6.125 CCC’s Chief Executive and the 7 Corporate Directors form the CMT, the executive management team. At CMT level the directorates have a close and, as far as we could judge, effective management interaction. However, as we gathered evidence, it became
apparent that there were comparatively few ‘bridges’ between the different directorates at a lower organisational level. There seemed to be no specific reasons for this, and we were told that CCC was actively addressing the issue. However the physical separation of office locations, different management pyramids, focus of staff on their specific areas of work, and possibly corporate culture could all act to create barriers to across-directorate systems of working.

Figure 6.4. Schematic representation of the proposed structure of CCC: (a) on a 3 area model and (b) on a 4 area model, also showing Cumbria Strategic Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnerships. (AB represents Area Boards; ‘Scrutiny’ represents Scrutiny Panels).

(a)

(b)

6.126 This is by no means a unique situation since it occurs in many large public sector bodies and corporate businesses. However, if CCC is to develop further the accessibility and quality of its services, the challenge of more integrated working at the local level must be addressed. It is a key consideration in the policy of ‘putting the public first’.
6.127 Substantial parts of CCC’s operational management structure consist of relatively autonomous units delivering local services on the one hand, and service-wide management within directorates on the other. The service wide management strands are an essential requirement to achieve the consistency and quality of services that national performance targets and CPA require. By contrast local clients are likely to be served best where services can adopt an integrated approach offering co-location of services, one-door access and a seam-free operation with other county council services and with non-county council service providers. At present, the management drivers that would take CCC in this second direction are weak, and that raises an important operational management issue.

6.128 We understand that in the relatively recent past CCC experimented with a system where Corporate Directors were allocated one to each Local Committee, which they attended so that they could bring together the corporate and local dimensions. This approach was subsequently abandoned, but its underlying concept of a matrix of directorate-wide management and local area management was sound.

6.129 A variety of arrangements could be adopted in an effort to bring area management into operation. In all cases they represent ways of effecting a balance between the professional management within the discipline-driven directorates and the local management drive for integrated local delivery. However, we believe that the statutory or quasi-statutory responsibilities of several of the Corporate Directors must be kept clearly in view, and this argues against any management structure that would cut across their professional line-management roles.

6.130 We also would not favour a return to the system that has already been tried; the area management role cannot be encompassed in the margins of the Corporate Directors’ main responsibilities. Rather, we consider that in each of the proposed Area Board areas, there should be an Area Manager charged with pro-actively seeking to identify and act on opportunities to develop more integrated local service systems. This would bring improvements in service provision; cost savings through better use of physical, financial and personnel resources; and better local liaison with other service providers. Therefore, we recommend that as part of its local service improvement strategy CCC implements an area management approach through the appointment of dedicated posts of Area Managers (recommendation 13).

6.131 We envisage the Area Managers as more authoritative and senior positions than the Area Support Manager posts that have supported the County Council’s Local Committee structures, and that they will report to the CMT via the Corporate Director for Strategy and Performance. Figure 6.5 schematically illustrates the structure we envisage. Five directorates provide the bulk of the County Council’s locally-based services and we have used this representation along with the optional 4 service area model discussed earlier to indicate the overall approach (the 3 service area model would be identical but with one fewer area).

6.132 Area Managers should be tasked with quickly developing local strategies and proposals for better integration of service resources and service delivery, as well as setting out milestones and an overall time-scale for the implementation of change. The implementation process should be progress-indexed against the starting position and also against internal and external comparators of cost and service performance, where the latter exist.
6.133 In the first phase of development the Area Managers should be able to achieve improved service delivery and better integration by a process of identification of opportunity and quantification of the benefits of change. However, it will be apparent that the system lends itself to modulation of the drivers of change, and that the distribution of budgets between the Corporate Directorates and the Area Managers could, if necessary, be a change-management tool. As for the operation of Area Boards, the management accounting and performance reporting systems underlying area management are a key consideration, and it is essential that both the Area Managers and the Corporate Directors have full access to the same area-based cost and performance data.

Cabinet and Portfolio Holder Responsibilities

6.134 The Cabinet of the County Council presently consists of 10 members. Other than the Leader and Deputy Leader, each of the other members of the Cabinet has a specific responsibility for one of the 6 themes in the Corporate Plan; Theme A (Improving Council Services) is an exception in that the work is divided between three Portfolio Holders.

6.135 We have considered where responsibilities for developing the service areas and Area Boards would best be located, since they could equally be regarded as a matter of improving council services under Theme A or a divided responsibility for individual services across themes. On balance we believe that the first option would be best, since we envisage that there will be significant development of area working over the coming
period, and we believe that the integration of service systems needs to be actively managed.

6.136 Ultimately, the detailed arrangements for portfolio responsibility must be for the Cabinet to decide. However, in keeping with the principles of Cabinet government, we recommend that responsibility for the development of service area and Area Board approaches in Cumbria be given to a clearly identified Portfolio Holder who will receive, and as appropriate respond to, reports and papers from the Area Boards (recommendation 14).

6.137 There may be instances where specific issues raised by Area Boards or arising from considerations of area service provision have wider implications and will need to be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel for strategic consideration. However, we think that the ‘democratic deficit’ we earlier identified in the Scrutiny Panel membership will be greatly reduced, or eliminated, by moving to the Area Board system.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND BUSINESS PROCESSES

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

6.138 During the course of our inquiries we have become familiar with the intricacies of local government performance management and the system of CPA scores. This has served to underline the scale and nature of recent changes in local government systems of working. We believe that the Government’s efforts in developing performance criteria and national comparators for benchmarking have been helpful in raising local government performance; and the publication of community data at SOA level is a truly excellent development. Local authorities now have the tools they need to set local targets and monitor results in a way that was not previously possible.

6.139 The introduction of centrally set targets and CPA has, to a degree, led to a system of top down management of local authorities, with central government being perceived as the client that local authorities must address. Indeed, in schemes such as the LPSA and the LAA this is more than just a perception since Government approval is an essential pre-requisite for funding.

6.140 At the same time, local authorities have a primary duty to address the needs of local citizens, and it has been put to us that these may not necessarily be identical to those of central government. Whilst we accept this, many of the performance criteria set by central government represent baseline standards which would anyway be incorporated into most local target setting and criteria of performance. Likewise, many of the elements of CPA are based on principles of good management which would be difficult for any business to argue against.

6.141 Because of the changes in the system of assessment it is not possible readily to compare the CPA scores published in December 2005\(^\text{189}\) with those published in previous years. Nonetheless, accepting this complication, there were clear signs of improvement in CCC’s overall assessment between 2005 and the previous year, although relative to other English county councils its overall assessment ranking was unaltered.

6.142 On the positive side, CCC’s ‘direction of travel’ was assessed as ‘improving well’ and, accepting that there were differences in methodology, there were improved assessment scores for ‘Leisure services’ and ‘Adult social care’. However, these were offset by reduced scores for ‘Use of resources’ and ‘Environment’; and the new category of ‘Children and young people’ was assessed at a level less than might have been expected on the basis of the 2004 assessment of the (separate) ‘Education’ and ‘Children’s social care’ categories.

6.143 Thus, whilst the figures indicate that it is ‘improving well’ CCC still has a considerable way to go to achieve a peer-competitive CPA. This must be the short- and medium-term priority, not only to provide public assurance of CCC’s performance but also to raise staff confidence and their feeling of competitiveness when bidding in government funding schemes.

6.144 We are acutely aware that in the past year CCC has introduced a largely new senior management team and has initiated a series of measures intended substantially to improve its CPA position. However, other local authorities are also improving and if Cumbria is to ‘move up the league’ it will need to undertake an accelerated programme of change management. With this in view, we strongly recommend that CCC adopts management policies and strategies that will allow it to address improved CPA as its number one priority, seeking to consider additional targets only where they reflect overriding community needs and priorities (recommendation 15).

6.145 We were not tasked with undertaking an operational analysis of CCC. However, we have unavoidably needed to consider the survey results and comments we received on the high quality of many of CCC’s services in juxtaposition with the overall appraisal provided by the CPA. Our conclusion is that there is not necessarily a precise correlation between public satisfaction and CPA scores, since they evaluate different things. However, the two may be linked in aspects of performance with which the public are not wholly satisfied, particularly in situations where there are complaints or where things start to go wrong. Our impression is that there is scope for upgrading some of CCC’s businesses processes in a way that would lead to benefits in CPA, in the performance capacity of the organisation and in clients’ satisfaction.

Outsourcing to the Business Sector

6.146 As indicated in Chapter 4, CCC has made extensive use of the Best Value regime for outsourcing services, and this is reported to have led to significant cost savings. Some of the business-partnership arrangements which have been established have now been through their first review, and the contracts have been extended, with modifications, for a further period. We therefore conclude that CCC has been convinced of the operating benefits and business case for single-supplier, best-value-partnership arrangements; although we recognise that they may initially have been introduced in response to central government policies.

6.147 From our findings we have three observations on the present system. Firstly, as a general principle, outsourcing arrangements are high risk unless the outsourcing organisation has the ability to act as an ‘intelligent customer’. Thus retaining a core of highly skilled and experienced personnel within CCC has become a business-critical strategic consideration. We would identify a core of skills in ICT and in contract management as key generic needs.
6.148 Secondly, in outsourcing its ‘back office’ services, particularly human resource management, we consider CCC may not have retained sufficient internal capacity at a time when it is actively engaging in a major change management programme, including staff development and professional development programmes for elected members.

6.149 Thirdly, as highlighted in our survey and from the evidence we have received there is public expression of concern about roads in Cumbria (see paragraphs 5.10 and 5.53). We have noted that CCC is presently undertaking a specific public survey of roads and transport, and this no doubt will lead to a better appreciation of the basis of the problem. For our own part, we have been struck by the apparent public unease created through the prominence of Capita Symonds as a service provider rather than the County Council.

6.150 We recommend that on all funded road works CCC’s logo should be prominently displayed so that there is public understanding of its continuing role in respect of roads and related infrastructure (recommendation 16).

**Outsourcing to Other Local Authorities**

6.151 In our telephone survey and consultation with parishes we did not encounter a widespread demand for neighbourhood management of CCC services – but specific proposals may arise, particularly from the Quality Parishes and Towns (see paragraph 3.91) and we believe that each should be seriously examined on its merits.

6.152 However, where it undertakes any outsourcing of this type CCC must robustly ensure that its CPA is not put at risk and that the costs and benefits of outsourcing are properly evaluated so that the outsourcing is proved to be worthwhile. We also consider that, if the recommendations we have made earlier are accepted, Area Managers have a key role in assessing outsourcing proposals, since they should be in the best position to know whether there are alternative and more cost-efficient arrangements within CCC’s structures.

6.153 As a matter of principle, ‘neighbourhood outsourcing’ should be avoided where it would lead to losses in comparative cost-efficiency or service quality, or if it would erode the cost-efficiency or service quality or the proportion of the service that remains to be provided by CCC.

6.154 On the basis of the above, we recommend that due consideration be given to requests from town or parish councils who wish locally to manage an element of CCC’s service provision, provided that the service can be offered at equivalent or lower cost and at the same or higher service quality (recommendation 17).

**Outsourcing to the Voluntary Sector**

6.155 In Chapter 4 (see paragraph 4.125 *et seq.*) we commented on the outsourcing of services to the voluntary sector, including to the CVSs. In our discussions with 2 of the CVS organisations we were impressed by the motivation and initiative they showed, and by the scale of the programmes of work being undertaken. However, we did have concerns that the structure of 5 independent CVS bodies plus CACVS was likely to lead to high overhead costs. Subsequently we have learned that, when Cumbria costs are compared against national benchmarks, our suspicion seems to be supported.
6.156 We recognise that CCC occupies a sensitive position when dealing with outside contractors, and it must be careful to treat all contractors equally and fairly. Nonetheless, through the operation of ‘The Compact’ it has a special relationship with the voluntary sector, which in turn plays a key role in some areas of Cumbria. Since it is in a well-informed position in regard to generic information on benchmark costs, **we recommend that CCC alerts the local voluntary sector organisations to relevant cost comparators, so that they can adjust to the market and retain an appropriate level of local capacity (recommendation 18).**

**Personnel**

6.157 At many points during our inquiries we have been favourably impressed by the dedication and commitment of CCC’s personnel, but we have also noted the following areas where we think there are issues to address.

- Whilst there is an understandable focus on CPA improvement amongst the senior management, the sense of urgency that substantial improvement is needed quickly has not yet dispersed fully throughout the staff structure.

- Whilst there is a drive throughout the organisation to respond to the need for performance management data, these appear to be seen narrowly as a requirement for CPA, rather than as an internal aid to achieving better performance. In some cases this is due to incompatibilities between the CPA data format and the data format which staff would find most useful in their programmes of work, and where this is the issue it should be resolved.

- There is a need for further personal and professional development of staff to meet the challenges that CCC faces. To achieve its strategic objective of ‘putting the public first’, many personnel will need additional training in business management, project management, personal performance management, and customer care, to enhance their existing professional skills.

- In several areas personnel do not have access to sufficient information for local decision-making to be based on objective prioritisation, and overall CCC’s locally focused research and intelligence functions need to be significantly improved. This is part of a more generic problem of its knowledge management and ICT systems, and probably results in a less than optimum deployment of effort and resources.

- There is need for wider use of policy briefings for middle managers so that they are sensitive both to internal and external policy change and are more informed about the impact on their local programmes of work.

6.158 Against this background **we recommend that CCC undertakes a substantial enhancement of its staff training and development programmes to facilitate the implementation of its ‘putting the public first’ strategy (recommendation 19).**
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Neighbourhood Forum System

6.159 The present Neighbourhood Forum system was introduced alongside the Local Committees in the mid-1990s and has been expanded and modified in several ways over the years since. Our consultations with the parish councils, and the range of personal testimonies we have received have indicated that the system is meeting an identifiable community engagement role (see paragraph 5.46). The forum events are reported as worthwhile points of contact between local communities and County Councillors and as a route of information provision to the community. They are seen as a source of funding for small local projects, since they disperse county council grants190 and in some cases district council funding191.

6.160 Telephone survey data indicated that public awareness of Neighbourhood Forums was reasonably high at 62%, but there was much less evidence that they were seen as acting as an effective route for the public to express its views about public services. In fact our own inquiries found that the Neighbourhood Forum system has lacked effective ways of channelling information back into CCC’s policy development and decision-making processes, so that even where public opinion is gathered the impact is likely to be small. This, in effect, parallels the situation we have described for the Local Committee system.

6.161 Finally, whilst successful in attracting a balanced age range of attendees, including both young and old, Neighbourhood Forums provide a relatively narrow window for exchange of views between CCC and Cumbria’s citizens. Figures for the period May 2005 to September 2005 supplied by the Community Unit showed that the 125 Neighbourhood Forum events held attracted 3,198 people – an average of 26 per meeting.

6.162 This implies that on an annualised basis the system might attract 9,000 – 10,000 people, some of whom would be repeat attendees. Looked at from the standpoint of outward communication this group is small, 1-2% of the population, but envisaged as a well informed focus group of ‘engaged citizens’ it could represent a very useful aid in assessing public views on key issues.

6.163 We recommend that the Neighbourhood Forum system be internally reviewed and the concept, system and activities revised and ‘refreshed’ (recommendation 20). Specifically we would highlight the following points which we think should be addressed to improve the public visibility of Neighbourhood Forums and their democratic value-for-money.

- At present there is no uniform branding of Neighbourhood Forums; each area determines its own approach to advertising, promotion, presentational material, and style of meeting. This should be changed to establish a clear single ‘brand’

190 We understand that technically it is the County Council’s Officer who attends the Neighbourhood Forum who approves the award of grant although to common perception it is ‘Neighbourhood Forum’ money that is being dispensed.
191 This is the case in Carlisle, where there is an active Neighbourhood Forum system, with which the City Council has actively engaged.
identity and to introduce best practice approaches in the ways that the meetings are conducted.

- Meetings should be planned and undertaken according to a structured programme, across service areas and/or the county. This should focus on key issues and developments or emerging policies, and give opportunity for presentation, debate and the emergence of a view or views. The programme and format of meetings should be designed not only to inform citizens but to gather their responses.

- Formal written reports, based on the analyses of sets of forum meetings, should be submitted via the Area Boards to the Cabinet and elsewhere in CCC’s system, as appropriate. They should be written in a way that will inform policy development and decision making.

- Present meetings often focus heavily on the award of grants. Whilst this raises local awareness of the activities of local clubs and other groups, and provides a basis for community engagement, it offers a low-value return for CCC’s investment of staff and other resources. This element of the meetings requires to be radically reconsidered, with the presumption that there will be a change in approach (see below).

- Forum meetings, as presently conceived, do not make best use of the parish council structures for dissemination of information and for gaining an understanding of the needs of local areas: parish councillors do attend Forum meetings but ‘Briefing Forums’ for groups of parish council representatives would be a much more cost-effective method of disseminating policy and community development information and of consulting on policy and service proposals.

Community Development and Needs

6.164 Overall, we have some reservations about the present arrangements for neighbourhood development work undertaken by CCC’s Community Unit. We have no doubt that the unit consists of able, well motivated and hard-working personnel and that their programmes of work deliver some well-appreciated benefits to local groups and communities in Cumbria.

6.165 Nonetheless, we could detect little evidence of strategic targeting or prioritisation in the projects being supported and we have a concern that that the programme is being determined by officer self-selection rather than CCC policy objectives or properly evaluated prioritisation of local needs.

6.166 This problem appears to have been recognised internally, and the Community Unit’s recent publication Local Matters: A Framework for Community Engagement¹⁹² sets out a robust framework within which community engagement projects should be initiated and undertaken. We recommend that the framework for community engagement set out in Local Matters: A Framework for Community Engagement is fully implemented and that a formal system is introduced whereby community engagement initiatives

and projects are reported to and approved by the proposed Area Managers (Recommendation 21).

6.167 For the proposed Area Boards to fulfil their envisaged roles they will require officer support to establish and evaluate the needs and requirements of communities in their areas, and to evaluate the impact of proposed Government and CCC policies on local communities. This work will require policy analysis skills and community engagement skills which are present in the Community Unit, although additional staff training and development may be required. **We recommend that in developing the Community Unit’s programme of work new emphasis is given to qualitative and quantitative assessment of community needs and to local impact analysis of policy change; in this, engagement with parish councils would assist in local capacity building (Recommendation 22).**

6.168 This will also allow a more focused approach to ‘hard-to-reach’ groups through a better identification of their needs. It will increase the opportunities for across-directorate working and for the introduction of targeted ‘risk management’ and value-added approaches to the investment of CCC’s resources in community development, including the work carried out by the voluntary and community sectors.

**County Council Grant Programmes**

6.169 It was apparent that the grants, which are awarded via the Neighbourhood Forums and through other routes, are valued both by local County Councillors and communities as a means of funding small community programmes and local initiatives. The system for the distribution of grants was therefore investigated as part of our programme of work.

6.170 It quite quickly became apparent that in total there was a significant sum being distributed, in excess of £6M per annum but that this information was not apparently readily available to CCC officers, elected members or members of the public. The investigations into where the information about grants resided were not exhaustive, but were nonetheless sufficiently thorough to allow some conclusions to be reached, and some recommendations to be made.

6.171 Firstly, there was no sign that accounting rules were not being adhered to, that is there was no evidence of financial rules being broken. But, there was evidence that compliance reporting by grant recipients was not always taking place. Additionally, the systems for determining, advertising and distributing grants were many and various and this in itself raised questions about whether best use was being made of public money.

6.172 In theory, the grants budget is set alongside CCC’s Corporate Strategy so that everything the budget contains is linked back to the Corporate Strategy. In practice the distribution of grants is so far removed from this budget to corporate strategy linkage that it is difficult to establish any such link. **We strongly recommend that the process of allocating CCC grants be reviewed and a method of establishing a link between all grants programmes and the Corporate Strategy be created (Recommendation 23).**
6.173 We further suggest that within the scope of the review the following points should be considered.

- That at the point grants are distributed, the link to the relevant part of the Corporate Strategy should be explained to the recipient by adopting a common badging strategy e.g. *Cumbria County Council Grants Programme*.

- That grants programmes are “themed” by the Council/Cabinet/Area Boards so that council members are involved in the decisions; and that, on an annual basis, emphasis is given to a particular part of the Corporate Strategy and this linkage used in publicity.

- That a common-standard set of application processes and procedures should be establish and followed when determining and distributing grants, thus ensuring proper accountability; and that these should be established by the CMT before the start of the next financial year.

- That grants county-wide should be recorded publicly on CCC’s website as an integral part of a transparent grant-giving process; so that it would be impossible to award a grant without this being recorded on the website, or for grants to be duplicated in one location and in other areas.

- That the website should provide a single point of access where the public can find out about, and apply for, all grants available from CCC and that libraries staff should be used to assist members of the public gain access to the website, if this is requested.

**Communication Strategy**

6.174 From a standpoint of community engagement CCC’s capacity to communicate what it is doing on behalf of citizens, what services are being offered, what developments are being undertaking and so on, is fundamental. Our impression, based on what we have found (e.g. paragraph 5.41 *et seq.*) is that there is not sufficient strategic planning underpinning the communication programme overall, and that there is some need for technical improvements in aspects of the communication processes.

6.175 Although the quality of CCC’s *‘Your Cumbria’* magazine for residents has been recognised nationally by an award from the Institute of Public Relations, during our discussions, both within the Council and externally, we noted that there were comments about the relationship between CCC and the Press. Internally, there was a view that CCC was often given a ‘hard time’ by the local media, even when it had ‘good news’ to report. Externally there was a view that CCC was often rather defensive and sometimes suffered communication problems of its own making. Also, from the findings we have reported in Chapter 5, it would be difficult not to conclude that public communication is an area to which CCC should give increased attention.

6.176 During the last few months there have been personnel changes within CCC’s communications team, and we have learned that there is ongoing work to refresh and develop the communication strategy. From our own observations, we recommend that CCC comprehensively reviews its communication strategy covering publications,
information leaflets, advertisements, web-based information, telephone helplines and broadcast and news media (recommendation 24).

Other Areas of Community Engagement

6.177 During the course of our inquiries we identified a number of activities which we considered could be enhanced to create better community engagement. These may already have been recognised by CCC members and officers but we have included them as a prompt, and to assist in the prioritisation of use of resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

6.178 CCC has relatively recently entered into a 7-year Strategic ICT Partnership with Agilisys and during the preferred bidder stage Agilisys addressed a range of CCC’s priority projects\(^\text{193}\). These included its customer access strategy, performance management system, e-payments system, Local Education Authority (LEA) database and portal, Freedom of Information management, Social Services business processes, and some aspects of website operation. Whilst this reflects significant progress we would highlight the following areas we think are priorities.

ICT Systems

6.179 We have been told by staff that CCC has a past history of under-investment in ICT but the problem is now being addressed. Our own impression is that fully updating and standardising the ICT systems presents a significant ongoing challenge. We would, nonetheless, encourage CCC to maintain progress so that it can gain the full rewards of modern ICT systems. For example, there would be benefits if client-facing staff were able to access corporate information which would facilitate them acting as ‘client managers’, when dealing with individuals and communities; this should include mobile staff, such as those in the Community Unit.

Website

6.180 We identified a number of issues relating to CCC’s website.

- There is a pressing need to update the website - structure, content and search engine – all of which now compare unfavourably with many other equivalent organisations.

- In contemporary terms the website is the first and preferred point of access for many people seeking information about CCC or local services; it should be designed with ease of access and good search facilities in mind, and should provide good access to CCC’s past publications, documents and papers.

- CCC should also assist those who do not have easy access to a computer or who need some initial introduction by providing supported free access to the website via its library network.

- It might also address the problems of Cumbria’s geographically dispersed population through ICT e.g. by facilitating websites which forge links between

\(^{193}\) See [www.agilisys.co.uk/localgov.htm](http://www.agilisys.co.uk/localgov.htm)
people who share a Cumbria identity and form a community of interest, yet find it difficult to meet.

E-Petitions

6.181 The use of e-petitions is now well developed in the UK at both the national government level (e.g. the Scottish Parliament) and at local government level (e.g. Royal Borough Kingston upon Thames and Bristol City Council). They can provide an easily accessible means of assessing strengths of feeling about local issues, and help to promote greater openness in access to government.

6.182 With this in view, we recommend that CCC develops an e-petition system that is integrated into its decision-making processes (Recommendation 25). Once petitions have been submitted, Councillors should be able to present the petition at a Full Council meeting. It should also be possible to present petitions at Neighbourhood Forum meetings, Area Boards, or to send them to an appropriate council department.

Webcasting Council Meetings

6.183 Cumbria faces a significant problem arising from its geography and the distance of County Council meetings from many parts of the county. One approach to this would be to deliberately make the Full Council and/or Cabinet meetings peripatetic, and accessible from time to time to citizen’s in different parts of the county. However, we accept that this may pose logistical problems and would still only provide occasional opportunities for local community engagement in any given area of the county.

6.184 The alternative, which we would favour, would be to webcast Council and/or Cabinet meetings and record them on a central computer server. This would allow a very wide level of community engagement with Council meetings. Anyone who wished to view them over the internet could do so either as the meeting progressed or later from the recording. Meetings could be accessed by citizens e.g. from home or CCC libraries; by students e.g. from schools and colleges; and by community groups, local businesses and local agencies.

6.185 Webcasting has been used by a number of councils including North Lincolnshire Council, Devon County Council and Lancashire County Council and it is used by the Food Standards Agency for its Board meetings so as to provide national access to considerations of food policy. We recommend that CCC investigates webcasting to allow a wider range of people to gain access to its meetings (Recommendation 26). Initially webcasting of full-council meetings should be piloted, with consideration being given to other meetings in due course.

CUMBRIA LEADERSHIP

Government Policy and Needs of Elected Members

6.186 The Government’s policy documents Vibrant Local Leadership\textsuperscript{194} and The Future of Local Government: Developing a 10-year Vision\textsuperscript{195} place considerable emphasis on

\textsuperscript{194} ODPM (2005) Vibrant Local Leadership

Councillors providing ‘strong leadership’. This embraces a range of activities and is summarised as being:

- *enablers of the community* – standing up for, learning from and empowering local people, including the most vulnerable members of the community;

- *champions of the area* – building a vision, setting a clear direction, and ensuring this is delivered;

- *challengers and scrutineers* – of public services more generally;

- *shapers of services around the citizen* – forging local partnerships to marshal resources in a way that best meets the community’s needs;

- *decision-makers* – setting priorities and being accountable for tough choices in balancing competing demands and interests.

6.187 We suspect that many County Councillors will already identify themselves with these characteristics and activities but, in the view of central government, there is a need for councillors everywhere to seek further professional development as part of a long-term national strategy for improving local government.

6.188 In the past, Cumbria has done rather little to train and develop its County Councillors, although many are elected with skills gained during their personal and professional lives, and all develop additional skills and experience through their CCC roles. More recently, through the Achieving Cumbria Excellence (ACE) programme and the new training systems introduced by CCC, each elected member has been assessed for a personal development programme designed to address their needs for additional skills and expertise.

6.189 Additionally, CCC has established a system of weekly bulletins, briefing elected members on ongoing developments and alerting them to developments in CCC or to Government policies or legislation. This can be received by e-mail or in hard copy and provides not only brief notes on specific developments but website references, for example for new policy documents or legislation.

6.190 In these areas we recommended that CCC builds on, but substantially develops, the systems for continuous professional development and information support of elected members that recently have been put in place (recommendation 27).

6.191 Within this we believe that there is specific need for three additional measures. Firstly we consider elected members would benefit from the introduction of short (1-2 pages) briefing documents on significant Government, NWRA or other policy developments.

6.192 Secondly, where elected members are appointed to serve on an outside body on behalf of CCC they should be offered appropriate induction training or induction briefing in respect of the role of the organisation they are joining and its key links with the Council.
6.193 Finally, we think that as a matter of priority elected members should request and officers should supply fuller information on key areas of CCC’s operations. As we have indicated earlier, we believe that such information will be essential for the effective working of the proposed Area Boards, but more generally we believe that elected members need the information to fulfil their democratic roles.

Leadership Responsibility

6.194 During the course of our evidence gathering we have encountered a clear community view that CCC has a central role in safeguarding democracy for Cumbria and in looking after the county’s interests. Indeed under the ‘promotion of well-being’ provisions of the Local Government Act CCC has a county wide role that cannot be provided by any other council or agency. However, it has also been said that Cumbria seems to have lost confidence, and that ‘leadership’ has declined from the high point which characterised the county’s early years (see also paragraph 5.32 et seq.). This latter comment possibly reflects some nostalgia, but there is no question that visible strategic leadership will be important in Cumbria addressing the challenges that it now faces.

6.195 Some County Councillors clearly feel that the widespread development of partnership working, the best value outsourcing of services, and the impact of Cabinet-style local government has eroded their direct influence on services to the community and their community leadership role. However, our genuinely held view is that the present complex and multi-dimensional service systems require greater local leadership rather than less.

6.196 We do not subscribe to the view that the leadership of Cumbria rests solely with CCC. Rather it is a responsibility to be shared between CCC’s representatives and Cumbria’s cadre of business and community leaders. All have their part to play in ‘raising Cumbria’s game’ and advancing the interests of its communities. For CCC, the Leader and Cabinet Members, and the Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Directors, have clearly identifiable leadership roles. However, more widely, local leadership throughout the county implies the involvement of elected members of all parties, as well as the commitment of CCC’s local personnel.

6.197 At the present time CCC faces a significant organisational challenge in improving its CPA performance, so that citizens can have full confidence in its effectiveness and cost efficiency. But beyond that it faces a major task in advancing the cause of Cumbria against the background of a national policy framework that is tending to centralised decision-making and to regionally rationalise public bodies in a way that will leave Cumbria feeling increasingly remote. These twin challenges are in practice connected: as long as CCC needs to focus inwardly on its operation and performance it will have less time and energy to look outwards to address wider issues within the county and beyond.

6.198 During the course of our inquiries we encountered a number of areas in which we concluded CCC should have a more active engagement in setting the agenda, ensuring standards are being met or being involved in a way that would reflect its acknowledged leadership position. We have not provided an exhaustive list of these but the following are four examples.
6.199 As we indicated earlier, we consider the poor performance of the economy of Cumbria to be a key issue. We recognise that it is not a matter for CCC alone and that there is a substantial engagement by the NWDA, and the private sector. Nonetheless, there are distinctive characteristics of the Cumbria economy, which set it apart from most of the North West Region and most other parts of England, and we believe there is an onus on CCC to take a lead in making Cumbria’s case for economic investment and support for economic and social development. CCC has a county-wide democratic role that cannot be provided by any other Cumbria council (see paragraph 4.12 et seq.) or agency; that gives it the authority and places it under a burden of responsibility to act in the county’s interest.

6.200 The NWDA has a high level of national democratic authority through its direct lines of responsibility to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry; and NWDA Board members are appointed under Nolan rules and Ministerial oversight. Additionally, it has a regional democratic authority because its strategies, plans and broad programmes are under the oversight of the NWRA, of which CCC is a member. However, notwithstanding these arrangements and its local presence in Penrith, the agency seems to be regarded as relatively remote by the citizens of Cumbria, and there is a need to reinforce local understanding of its role and accountability.

6.201 It is possible that NWDA might subsume its ‘public presence’ in Cumbria into Cumbria Vision. However, an alternative and possibly better approach could be for NWDA to reinforce its local presence, even to the point of absorbing the Cumbria Vision activities into an NWDA (Cumbria) operation. On balance we would tend to favour this second approach, based on three arguments.

6.202 Firstly, the evidence we have gathered leads us to conclude that the economic problems of Cumbria would best be addressed by an agency with a strong knowledge and understanding of the local economy, society and business environment, i.e. a body with a strong local base within the county. There is also a recognised need for a single agency which can provide a coherent county-wide programme of economic development on the scale needed to achieve substantial improvement in Cumbria’s economy.

6.203 Secondly, the Cumbria-wide agency must have genuine authority to act with widespread support. As judged from its strategic plan, the present arrangements for Cumbria Vision seem to rely on the NWDA’s intervention to resolve any differences in view between Cumbria Vision and WLR. If this is the case, it would be democratically preferable for NWDA to be clearly visible, rather than it being perceived as some kind of shadow Director. Also multiple badging adds to public confusion about the NWDA’s role and we believe it is important for NWDA to establish itself as a ‘local agency’ in Cumbria.

6.204 Thirdly, whilst ‘funding chains’ are a well-established feature of government programmes (see Figure 3.1), we consider they should be as short as possible, i.e. with the minimum number of links between the NWDA and the project deliverer. To illustrate, until the early-1980s farm business services in Cumbria were provided by the
Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS)\textsuperscript{196}, whilst at the present they are provided by \textit{Farming Connect}. However, whereas ADAS was directly funded by MAFF, the funding route for \textit{Farming Connect} appears to be from DEFRA\textsuperscript{197} to NWDA, from NWDA to RRC, from RRC to CREA, and form CREA to \textit{Farming Connect}. We have not discovered any Public Accounts Committee or Audit Commission evaluations of ‘chain funding’ but we are concerned that where the chain is long the transaction costs are likely to be high.

6.205 NWDA and CCC have existing links in a number of economic development activities, which involve CCC acting as the Accountable Body for the funding, as well as having representation on the Board of the relevant local development company. The Accountable Body function potentially exposes CCC to significant business risk, should a project go awry and under private sector conditions this would normally be reflected in a strong numerical presence of the risk-taker on the company Board. However, we have noted that in the NWDA/CCC initiatives that is not always the case.

6.206 Against this background, we make two recommendations. Firstly, reflecting our concern about the extended time it is taking to resolve the development company structures in Cumbria and our unease about what seems to be emerging, we recommend that CCC should engage fully with its leadership role in respect of the Cumbria economy and make every effort to work with both NWDA and business and community leaders to address the county’s low rate of economic growth (recommendation 28).

6.207 Secondly, we recommend that CCC formally explores with the NWDA the basis on which joint-initiative Boards are established so as to safeguard fully the position of both organisations (recommendation 29). This discussion should be given some priority since the proposals for direct funding of schools contained in the consultation on \textit{Local Government Finance: Formula Grant Distribution 2005}\textsuperscript{198} could increase CCC’s need to reduce any business risks to which it is exposed.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

6.208 Strategic partnership working, particularly LSPs, has been an important development in recent central government and local government policy. It has been widely implemented in Cumbria, both in Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas and elsewhere. Partnership working supports the objectives of ‘joined-up’ government and is almost essential in a system based on multi-agency delivery of local services. In some activities (e.g. public health sector) we have been told that it would be very difficult to source the funding and ensure the delivery of local services without the benefit of the LSP arrangements.

6.209 Closer working links and more effective interfaces between different government agencies is clearly desirable. However, we have concerns that there is some underlying risk to democracy in the partnership approach. This we should add is not a distinctive problem of Cumbria since the issues we have identified will also apply to many strategic partnerships elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{196} ADAS was privatised in the 1990s under Conservative Government policy.

\textsuperscript{197} DEFRA replaced MAFF in 2001.

\textsuperscript{198} ODPM (2005) \textit{Local Government Finance: Formula Grant Distribution 2005}.
6.210 At the core of our unease is that unless partnerships are properly constituted and operate to formal and well-constructed procedures they raise issues of transparency and public accountability. It has been put to us that the accountability of partnerships is sufficiently ensured by the accountability that each of the public sector partners brings to the partnership table. However, we do not consider that is sufficient since partnerships also involve voluntary-sector and business-sector members who are not subject to specific public accountability requirements.

6.211 Moreover, because some LSPs may be less formalised in decision making, we think decisions with significant public implications could be made without proper democratic public accountability. The risk may be lessened where an LSP is acting as an accredited body under the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, but our general point of concern remains.

6.212 We have particular unease about situations where strategic partnership members represent voluntary or community bodies or private businesses that could benefit from commercial contracts arranged through the strategic partnerships or through public agencies acting on the advice of the strategic partnership. These situations potentially raise conflicts of interest, and in such cases we consider that the well-documented local government practices of declarations of interests and non-involvement in discussion/decision-making should be rigorously observed. Whilst LSPs do not work under the same regulatory framework as local government, their underlying need for transparency and public accountability is a key consideration, and it is essential that their practices and systems of operation fully meet the test of ‘ensuring public confidence’.

6.213 We have noted the Audit Commission’s recent comments in Governing Partnership: Bridging the Accountability Gap199; and that CCC has issued management notes to its staff providing advice on partnership working200. It has also gone to considerable lengths to develop a comprehensive written constitution for the CSP, an approach which we welcome. This is an area where, through their knowledge and experience, elected members and council officers could play a significant leadership role and we recommend that CCC promotes and ensures a rigorous approach to governance and accountability in all the strategic partnerships in which it engages (recommendation 30).

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

6.214 We have discussed the level of education and training in Cumbria (paragraph 2.50 et seq.) and the need for a coherent system of local university education (paragraph 4.95 et seq.). We have been pleased to find that there has been some progress through the Harris report and related initiatives and that there are proposals for a University of Cumbria to be established either from the 1 August 2007 or by 2008.

6.215 Our understanding is that the proposal is based on a core of resources drawn from St Martins College and the Cumbria Institute of Arts, but with multiple-campus arrangements across Cumbria. This is envisaged to provide a distributed learning

system based on the principles of a Life-Long Learning Network and would operate through the four Cumbria FE colleges.

6.216 At present, discussions are in progress with the various educational institutions in order to agree the final detail of the proposal and to develop the plan for implementation. Thus, until the final details emerge, the suggested development is difficult fully to assess.

6.217 There is no doubt that a more developed university education system for Cumbria will be widely welcomed. However, we wonder whether the proposed development will meet the underlying needs of Cumbria for university provision in the technological and vocational disciplines on which the economy depends. CCC was involved in promoting a University of Cumbria as part of its Foot and Mouth Disease recovery plan, but more recently it has stepped back as HEFCE has become involved. At this stage, we recommend that CCC should urgently re-engage with the discussions of university development in Cumbria to ensure that the institutional structures and models of provision that are put in place fully meet the county’s need for technological and vocational education (recommendation 31).

6.218 In some sectors of study, including economics, science and technology Cumbria has in fact achieve recent significant expansion in higher education. This has occurred most notably by provision from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) through its Newton Rigg campus, Carlisle Campus, and ‘partner colleges’: Carlisle College; Cumbria Institute of Arts; Furness College; Kendal College; and Lakes College, West Cumbria. Also, under a separate initiative, CCC and NWDA have funded an International Centre for the Uplands led by Lancaster University, but including UCLAN and other organisations as partners201.

6.219 However, whilst there is clear evidence, through activities such as Cumbria Rural Forum202 and Pentalk203,204 that rural industries and communities in Cumbria are engaging with rural development and personal skills development, there is little evidence of an active programme of rural knowledge transfer from the university sector in Cumbria. This is of crucial concern since the rural industries, farming in particular, are in a period of major change205 in which knowledge transfer and professional development will be essential for them to thrive. We recommend that, as part of its dialogue with the university sector, CCC specifically discusses knowledge transfer to the rural industries with the UCLAN (Newton Rigg) (recommendation 32).

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

6.220 It is clear from the survey work we have undertaken and the evidence we have gathered that poor road, rail and air services provide major hurdles to the economic and social development of Cumbria. We believe this is an issue of democracy since it reduces the life opportunities and acts to the disadvantage of citizens in the communities affected. Better access from the west coast to the M6 is a particular priority: it would not

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201 International Centre for the Uplands – Cumbria: Business Plan. www.cumbria.gov.uk/ruralmatters
202 For Cumbria Rural Forum see www.ruralcumbria.org.uk
203 See www.pentalk.org
204 Ann Risman declares a personal involvement in the Pentalk Network.
205 The agricultural sector in particular is faced with further CAP review in 2008 and the removal of EU export subsidies by 2013.
only serve to spread tourism more evenly in the national park and reduce overuse of its eastern areas but it would also allow freer movement of labour across the county, helping to balance job needs and employment opportunities.

6.221 These are not matters that CCC can address alone, since in many cases they involve strategic considerations of infrastructure development at the level of the North West Region or nationally. However, we have formed the impression that, in the face of long disappointment, there is a risk of acceptance of the status quo.

6.222 We strongly believe that this cannot be allowed to be the case; that improved transport infrastructure in Cumbria should be regarded as a national priority; and that CCC must seek innovative and determined approaches to address these issues. As with the economy, CCC has a special position of county-wide leadership that cannot be provided by any other body. Therefore, we recommend that CCC, working with others, engages vigorously and creatively in seeking to address the deficits in Cumbria’s road, rail and air service infrastructure (recommendation 33).

LIST OF KEY ISSUES

6.223 Alongside our overall remit we were asked to consider a series of key issues (see paragraph 1.12), aspects of which have been commented on in various parts of the preceding cross-cutting themes. However, in this final part of the report we have sought to address each key issue in turn, briefly setting out our views and drawing attention to earlier sections of the report, as appropriate.

Key issue 1: Levels of engagement and participation in democracy in Cumbria on which to develop an evidence-based approach to work.

6.224 Our findings are that, judged from voter turnout in General Elections and CCC elections, the levels of engagement and participation in democracy in Cumbria are well up to national standards, and are relatively uniform across the county (see paragraph 6.11 et seq.). Our survey findings indicate that a high proportion of those surveyed had voted in parliamentary and county council elections, with relatively fewer voting in district council or parish council elections (see paragraph 6.14).

6.225 In contrast to this most people considered they are not very involved or not involved at all, in local decision-making or community life, although they believed their community is more involved than they are personally. However, the vast majority of people consider that individual citizens, communities and local bodies should have a greater involvement in local decision-making, and in that sense they considered local democracy to be important (see paragraph 5.24 et seq.).

6.226 All indications are that there would be a greater engagement, allowing an evidence-based approach to work, if CCC was more proactive in consulting with citizens and provided them with greater communication and feedback on the outcomes of that engagement process. There is also very good statistical output data at the SOA level and this should be brought fully into consideration in policy making and decision making. The envisaged role of the Community Unit is central in the process of evidence gathering and interpretation (recommendations 20, 21 and 22); and the revision of CCC’s communication strategy (recommendation 24) and systems of electronic communication (recommendations 25 and 26) are also key considerations.
Key issue 2: Identification of meaningful local areas that reflect how people live and with which they identify, through which Cumbria County Council can engage with communities; also including identification of the means to engage with communities of interest and meaningful ways of engagement.

6.227 With the exceptions of Carlisle, Penrith, Whitehaven and Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria is structured on a town and parish basis and, related to that, there is a logical geography of areas for systematic community engagement, and also a framework of town and parish councils (see paragraph 2.13 et seq.) that can be engaged as part of the process. Similarly, in unparished areas, the electoral wards or electoral divisions or the Neighbourhood Forum areas (such as used in Carlisle) offer partly self-defining community areas. A key consideration is to ensure that the ‘local areas’ will map on the SOA structures and databases, so that modern GIS approaches and ‘risk-management’ and ‘needs-management’ techniques can be applied throughout all areas of CCC’s work. These approaches have already been pioneered by the Fire and Emergency Services (see paragraph 4.38) and the Police Force (see paragraph 4.60).

6.228 These latter approaches provide the closest to a ‘local area’ or ‘community area’ model which will apply uniformly throughout Cumbria. However, the main challenge for CCC is to work within existing structures (for example towns and parishes), aggregating them in a way that allows effective communication on an ‘area of interest’ basis. This will reflect geography, travel patterns and local associations, as well as other factors; these are already taken into account in most of the Neighbourhood Forum areas but these may need to be adjusted in the light of the SOA geography. In the context of the responsibilities of CCC, the Government’s concept of ‘neighbourhoods’ is difficult to distinguish from that of ‘communities’ and, given the population distribution, the focus in the county should be on ‘community areas’.

6.229 Because of the geography and strong local communities of Cumbria the distinctions between ‘communities of interest’ and ‘communities of location’ tends to be blurred. However, free-standing local ‘interest groups’ often have links through county-level umbrella organisations e.g. the CVSs (see paragraph 4.126), VAC (see paragraph 4.127), Cumbria Youth Alliance (see paragraph 4.131), Cumbria Sport (see paragraph 4.135) and the mountain rescue services (see paragraph 4.136).

6.230 County-wide umbrella bodies should be encouraged by CCC as a means of enhancing co-ordination and capacity building within communities of interest, and of increasing the efficiency of operation both of the community bodies and of the Council. But in its dealings with such bodies, it should have due regard to our recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4 and recommendations 18 and 23.

6.231 In some areas of activity the introduction of local partnership working can potentially act to the disadvantage of communities of interest which have county-wide organisational structures, e.g. as in the introduction of 6 district–level Youth Work Partnerships (see paragraph 4.131). In its efforts to increase locality working and local decision making CCC should seek to guard against such effects.

6.232 We consider that CCC should engage more fully with the business and industry community of interest in Cumbria (recommendations 28, 29 and 30), with the higher education sector (recommendation 31) and rural knowledge sector (recommendation
32), and with issues of infrastructure provision in Cumbria (recommendation 33). The means for this engagement already exist but require to be activated. Additionally, the changes in the Government’s rural policies (paragraph 3.98 et seq.) raise new issues for CCC’s engagement with rural communities and the means for this should be informed by the development project being undertaken by Lancashire County Council (see paragraph 3.102).

**Key issue 3: Ways of improving involvement and participation in decision making, including hard-to-reach groups.**

6.233 Our inquiries indicated that most people thought that individuals, communities and local bodies should have a greater level of engagement in local decision-making but there was a poor opinion and some scepticism about the present arrangements for such groups to get their views taken into account by CCC (see paragraph 5.24 et seq.). In practice we also found that there was a need for greater information linkage between routes for community information gathering and the process of policy formulation and decision-making (see paragraph 6.159 et seq.).

6.234 Our analysis of the situation is that CCC needs to increase its network of community involvement, to gather views and opinions more effectively, to take them into account in policy formulation and decision-making and to communicate back the outcome of communities having given their views. Within this framework we have made specific recommendations and comments: on the operation of Neighbourhood Forums and of the Community Unit (see paragraphs 6.159 et seq. and recommendations 20, 21 and 22); on CCC’s communication strategy (recommendation 24); and on ICT methods for bringing the Council’s processes closer to citizens and making it easier for citizen’s to present their views to the County Council (recommendations 25 and 26).

6.235 Our recommendation 21 will allow greater prioritisation of the work of the Community Unit to improve engagement with ‘hard to reach’ groups. This will also be addressed by the greater local focus, local prioritisation and evaluation that will result from the introduction of the Area Boards and an area management approach (recommendations 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14).

**Key issue 4: Ways to enable the overall work of CCC to ‘put the public first’, by ensuring that services are genuinely built around the needs of local people and the communities in which they live.**

6.236 The objective of ensuring that services to the public are built around the needs of local people and communities will need coordination of initiatives and actions on several fronts.

- First, there is a need for greater information on and analysis of the needs of communities and individuals; in general CCC presently has poor research and intelligence at the local level (see Key issue 4 and recommendation 22).

- Second, this information needs to be taken into account in the design and planning of services along with the inputs and local knowledge of the Area Boards and Area Managers (recommendations 10, 11 and 13).
- Third, integrated area services need to be introduced providing easier access for local residents (see paragraph 6.123 et seq. and recommendation 13). The operation of services needs to be overviewed at local level by the Area Managers and Area Boards to ensure it is meeting local needs, and adjustments made, as necessary, by action initiated through the CMT or Cabinet (recommendations 13 and 14).

- Fourth, there is a requirement for personal and professional training and development programmes to support and facilitate the implementation of the ‘putting the public first’ strategy (recommendation 19); and for professional development of elected members in relevant key-skill areas (recommendation 27).

- Finally, there needs to be a systematic implementation of our recommendations on service provision, performance management and communication programmes (recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 15, 16 and 24).

**Key issue 5: The type of council functions and services that exist and the extent to which decision making and delivery is best undertaken at local, area or county levels.**

6.237 We have outlined the broad division of service functions between CCC and the 6 Cumbria district councils (see paragraph 4.8 et seq.) and also the range of services provided through the 7 CCC Corporate Directorates (see paragraph 4.21 et seq.). The latter cover a wide range of services, but with a heavy emphasis on strategic and professional services, as main components.

6.238 For most CCC services the ‘best approach’ will involve a combination of county, area and local decision-making. The professional design of services, their requirements to meet national standards and their strategic coordination and corporate performance management will always involve a significant degree of county-level responsibility. Likewise, the planning and execution of efficient service delivery will almost always involve coordination and across-service integration at the area level. Finally, at the point of the service delivery, client-management and case by case decision making will generally be local. The crucial requirement is for these three levels of decision making and service management to be closely attuned, with a clear understanding from design to delivery of what the service is intended to deliver, and some flexibility at each stage to ensure that the service can be fined tuned to meet circumstances and clients’ needs.

6.239 Under this issue we have also considered outsourcing of services for local management at town or parish level. In general we did not find a high level of demand for this, although there was very clear evidence that communities would like a greater say in determining local services. Where there were specific suggestions as to services that could be managed locally they tended to be for the smaller, less specialist services and in many cases these may fall within the remit of the district councils. We have recommended that CCC gives due consideration to any requests from town or parish councils to manage specific services locally (recommendation 17). However, we believe that such requests should be evaluated on the basis of both their performance and cost criteria, also taking account of the impact that a move to local management might have on the cost and effectiveness of the elements of the service that remain in CCC’s control.

6.240 In these areas we have made specific comments and recommendations on the Area Board structures and locality working (recommendations 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14), on the Neighbourhood Forums, on related matters concerning the work of the Community
Unit (recommendation 20, 21 and 22) and on the operation of CCC’s grants systems (recommendation 23).

**Key issue 6: How best to achieve coordination across services and between organisations operating at a local level, including the involvement of the voluntary and community sectors.**

6.241 We have set out our views on how improved coordination between CCC services could be achieved by the adoption of area-based systems, with a much sharper focus on integrated area management and the co-location of staff to provide more convenient and accessible services for clients (recommendations 12 and 13).

6.242 More generally we have recognised that CCC now works within an extended network of partnership arrangements running across almost all aspects of service provision. Through these partnerships or as a result of best value outsourcing, it has a close involvement with the voluntary and community sectors, and with many other public sector and private sector organisations. This has created a new operating environment for CCC and one which potentially raises issues for Councillors and council officers.

6.243 There is no question that cross-organisation working is essential for ‘joined-up’ service delivery and for the delivery of the Government’s Best Value, ChangeUp and other agendas. However, within partnerships it is important that there are clearly defined responsibilities and procedures, and systems of accountability, which allow the partnerships to work effectively. There is also a need to ensure the partnership identity does not create confusion for clients and conveys a clear understanding of the lines of responsibility, systems for appeal and systems for complaint. Essentially, we believe that partnership working should conform to the same public standards that would apply to a service provided by CCC itself. We have made specific recommendations on these areas, including on the involvement of the voluntary and community sectors (recommendations 5, 6, 18 and 30).

**Key issue 7: How good practice in locality working can help form part of an approach to improved customer care, making people’s contact with the Council easier.**

6.244 Good practice in locality working would be achieved from a system in which areas for the management of services provided by all CCC’s Corporate Directorates were structured on one basic area geography, to which the structures of CCC’s elected democracy was also aligned. This geography should also be compatible with the national SOA and related databases.

6.245 Operation of this type of system would allow better integration of service provision, greater creation of single-location points of access and a more effective and coordinated approach to client-management.

6.246 We are of the view that introduction of good practice in locality working would greatly benefit both the service operation and democratic operation of CCC’s systems. However, the transition from what exists to what would be required provides major challenges. It is also presently constrained by the practical need for CCC’s areas and district council boundaries to ‘map’ for the purposes of linked-service provision. However, a transition to good practice in locality working must be CCC’s objective, and we have set out our views and recommendations as to how that transition process can
Key issue 8: The role of elected members as community leaders, especially in public engagement with non-Council organisations’ decision-making and delivery.

6.247 Recent developments in local government and the provision of public services have substantially increased the already challenging role of County Councillors. In many cases they are no longer in a position where their responsibilities and duties to their communities link directly with their powers to address community issues. Rather they are in the position of ‘broker’, making the case for community needs to be met and negotiating through the, sometimes complex, network of providers to ensure that the required service is provided.

6.248 As part of this change, elected members need new and different skills and a much higher level of information provision and policy awareness than would have previously been the case. County Councillors must engage with this new role, and the evidence is that many are doing so, albeit with some reservations. However, there is a need for them to be very fully supported both in terms of information provision and in respect of professional development, and we have made specific comments and a recommendation on this (see paragraph 6.186 et seq. and recommendation 27).

6.249 The role of County Councillors in public engagement with non-Council organisations’ decision-making and service delivery is a crucial area. We have discussed this in the context of the governance of public services (recommendations 5, 6 and 7) and in respect of LSPs (recommendation 30). Additionally, the objectives we have outlined in Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4 apply and could be regarded by elected members as a checklist for all non-Council organisations in which they have an involvement.

Key issue 9: The implications of the Government’s 10-year vision for local government and the related policy documents.

6.250 We have selectively reviewed recent Government policy documents which have had implications for local government in Cumbria (Chapter 3). These have been implemented with some significant developments in local service provision. The overall effect has generally been good, but we have identified some points about which we have concerns (see paragraph 6.146 et seq. and recommendations 1 and 7).

6.251 We are less clear about the implications of the Government’s 10-year vision for local government not least because recent pronouncements suggest it is still subject to uncertainties which are unlikely to be resolved before the publication of the White Paper on the future of local government in mid-2006 (see paragraph 6.61 et seq.). However, from our own evaluation in Cumbria - taking account of our interpretation of the Government’s 10-year vision and accepting that some decisions on regional structures have already been made - we draw the following conclusions.

6.252 It is crucially important for Cumbria to be treated as a distinctive area of the North West Region equivalent to but different from the ‘city-regions’ to the south. This leads logically to the conclusion that there should be a strategic level of local government operating at the county level (or using alternative terminology, sub-regional level) (see paragraph 6.74). In keeping with the Government’s 10-year vision this
strategic government would be ‘unitary’ in that it should have strategic responsibility for all the main local government services in the county.

6.253 Because of the size and population distribution of Cumbria, the unitary authority would, in our view, require elected member structures both centrally and locally to provide a policy and delivery overview of services, ensuring that they are appropriate for area needs and local service requirements. This is in line with our comments and recommendations for CCC Area Boards (see paragraph 6.94 et seq. and recommendations 10 and 11).

6.254 Additionally, following the Government’s 10-year vision, we believe that selected, non-strategic services could be, and should be, devolved from the strategic authority to the management of local communities (neighbourhoods in terms of the Government’s 10-year vision). In regard to the latter we believe that a variety of models might be applied, based either on a combination of present district council structures, with the addition that some services could be managed at town or parish level, or based on the creation of a wholly new structure consisting of a city council, town councils and ‘aggregated-parish’ councils. In each case these would operate below the level of the strategic authority and have responsibility for local services requiring less strategic or professional input.

6.255 We have questioned whether such local councils might also provide the local structure corresponding to the Area Board function’s of the strategic authority, but our conclusion is that the roles and functions would be different, and the service delivery areas would be on a different scale; thus the two systems would not be easy to combine. Similarly, we have consider whether it would be possible to bring the two systems closer together through an arrangement in which elected members of strategic authorities were also members of the ‘neighbourhood’ councils - so that strategically-managed services and locally-managed services had an elected member interface within a single forum. This, in effect, would be a development of our proposal for Area Boards with a constitution allowing representation from district and parish councils.

6.256 In practice, all the structural models that might be considered lead to a focus on three practical issues: the need to have a democratic electoral system that would accommodate a more integrated local government structure; the need for the strategic authority to rise above the challenge of simply being an aggregation of local parochial interests; and the need to avoid elected members with dual responsibilities becoming completely overburdened.

6.257 We think that structures based on: an elected strategic authority with overall statutory responsibility for all services; elected local councils with the constitutional capacity to accept devolved responsibility for selected services from the strategic authority; and an active and constructive working interface between the two (i.e. an Area Board arrangement) are probably the most feasible arrangements. They would deliver a high level of local democracy at both the strategic and local level and would allow the emergence of effective and efficient service delivery within a framework in which standards could be set by the strategic authority and the delivery could be fine tuned to local needs. This would also allow for economies of scale where they could be achieved.
6.258 The detailed arrangements for the local council areas (the ‘neighbourhoods’ in the Government’s 10-year vision) are in some respects a second-stage consideration which would follow the all important decision to establish a strategic authority with comprehensive oversight of the main service provisions. In our view, local structures based on districts or on city, town and ‘parish-area’ councils (i.e. ‘neighbourhoods’), or on a combination of both, could be viable. However, it is clear that any expansion of the role of towns and parishes in a district area would require a contraction in the role of the corresponding district council.

6.259 In considering the way forward we have identified four main points of concern. Firstly, the cost of a wholesale reform of local government on a ‘big bang’ basis will be enormous, and it may be a distraction from the pressing problems facing Cumbria. Secondly, the Government’s White Paper might set out a prescriptive set of ‘neighbourhood’ models, whereas we feel the need is for flexible. Thirdly, it might not fully address the issue that strategic authorities must be given responsibility for all the main local government services, even though they may devolve selected services to be managed and delivered by more local ‘neighbourhood’ councils. This provides flexibility but it also ensures a structured and disciplined approach, and the opportunity for some economies of scale. Finally, for a pyramidal local government structure of this type to work fully and effectively, central-government must exert discipline in directing its local engagement, and the engagement of its agencies, through the strategic authority, further developing the approach it has established as the basis for Local Area Agreements.

SUMMARY

6.260 In this chapter we have set out our main findings, and the conclusions and recommendations that have flowed from them. We have cast a fairly wide net in our considerations. However, it will be apparent that both our general remit and the key issues we were asked to consider have focused our attention on a limited number of themes. We have attempted to set these out clearly and to indicate their implications for CCC.

6.261 We have identified a range of issues which we consider CCC should address as a matter of priority. We believe that almost all our recommendations, and most of our broader suggestions, can be implemented on a relatively short time scale. We would suggest that a structured and phased implementation plan should be prepared, with appropriate outcomes and milestones against which progress can be evaluated.

6.262 We have not included a summary of the details of the chapter here, but there is an Executive Summary containing the key information and recommendations at the beginning of the report.
APPENDIX 1. Cumbria Local Democracy Commission

Members:

Roy Madison, St Bees, Cumbria (To 13 July)

Roy Maddison was a retired journalist well-known in Cumbria as the former Editor of the Cumberland News. Born in West Hartlepool, he began his career there with the Northern Daily Mail. Subsequently he worked with The Journal and with the Evening Chronicle in Newcastle before going to Fleet Street. After five years with national press titles he returned to the North to work for the Evening Gazette, Northumberland Gazette, Morpeth Gazette and Berwick and Borders Leader. In 1987 he joined Cumbrian Newspapers and was appointed Editor of the Whitehaven News. He was President of the Guild of British Newspaper Editors in 1989 and was an Honorary Member of the Society of Editors. He was a past President of the Whitehaven Rotary Club and taught journalism at the Cumbria College of Art and Design. Roy was a much valued member of the Commission and a much appreciated colleague. Sadly, during July Roy was taken ill and died.

Georgina Perkins, Shap, Cumbria

After an earlier career in the Magistrates Courts, Georgina Perkins joined Thames Valley Police and gained a place on the national Accelerated Promotion Scheme. In addition to operational policing, including working on the Major Crime Unit as Detective Inspector she was involved in a number of reviews of policing activities and worked at a strategic level as Staff Officer to the Chief Constable. She moved to Cumbria in 2001 where she was proprietor of the Old Smokehouse at Brougham Hall for three years. Georgina now runs “Stepping Off”, which offers training to individuals and companies focusing on improving efficiency through time management, improving the work life balance, downshifting and customer service.

Ann Risman, Penrith, Cumbria.

Ann is a Member of the Audit Committee of the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, Chair of the English Cathedrals Advisory group for Lifelong Learning, Founder and organiser of the Pentalk Network. She is former Principal of Richmond upon Thames Adult and Community College. Also Chair of the South East Regional Sports Board, Member of the Cultural Consortium of the South East Region, and of the Health Forum of the South East Regional Assembly, Member of the National Advisory Committee for the BBC and IBA, Elected member of Berkshire County Council and Chair of the Council and its Education and Finance Committees and member of its European Network.

Peter Tiplady, Carlisle, Cumbria (From 1 August)

Peter Tiplady has spent almost the whole of his medical career in Cumbria. After junior hospital posts in Newcastle he entered general practice in Stockton and moved to Carlisle in 1971. A career in Public Health started with Carlisle City council in 1973, followed by specialist training with the Northern Regional Health Authority. He was appointed Consultant in Public Health with Cumbria Area Health Authority in 1979,
and Director of Public Health to North Cumbria Health Authority in 1986. He retired in 2003.

Peter has held national office with the BMA as Chairman of the UK Public Health Committee and is currently chair of the Public Health Consultative Committee. He has been a non-executive member of the Board of Westlakes Research Institute and continues there as a research fellow. He is Chair of Trustees of The Centre for Complementary Care, West Cumbria, a trustee of Carlisle Crossroads and also of The Kingmoor Park Properties Charitable Trust. Since retirement he has been appointed Chair of Governors of Austin Friars St Monica’s school.

Phil Thomas, Edinburgh. (Chairman)

Phil Thomas is the Director of Artilus Ltd an independent consultancy he established in 1999. He is an Emeritus Professor, Scottish Agricultural College and an Honorary Professor, University of Edinburgh. He is presently: Chairman of the Central Scotland Forest Trust (CSFT), the Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA), and the Scottish Quality Salmon Products Standards Committee. He is a Board member of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) Initiative; a member of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee, the British Pig Health and Welfare Council, and the Scottish Advisory Council of Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF). In 2001 he Chaired the Cumbria Foot and Mouth Disease Inquiry. His interests are in: sustainable rural development; public policy and business development; and research and knowledge management.

Geoff Wilson, Lazonby, Cumbria.

Geoff practiced electrical engineering and was Chief Executive of a national sport governing body. He has previously been Chairman of the Motoring Organisations Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA). He is currently Chairman of the Hierarchy of Trail Routes in the Lake District Group and a member of the Lake District National Park Authority's Trail Management Advisory Group. He is also a Parish Councillor, Chairman of the Cumbria Rights of Way Liaison Group, and a member of the Countryside Agency’s Discovering Lost Ways Advisory Group. Geoff is also a member of the Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum.

Secretariat:

Commission Secretary: Nick Dangerfield, CCC

Administrative Assistants: Ruth Kremer, Katie Watson.
APPENDIX 2. Contributors of evidence and information.

We are grateful to many people who gave us their views or contributed oral or written evidence or information during the course of our inquiries, including the following people and organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation or Sector of Interest</th>
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Fair, M. South Lakes Society for the Blind
Farley, M. Learning and Skills Council, Cumbria
Ferneley, S. A. Ainstable Parish Council
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Unattributed Ousby Parish Council
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Willard, K. Rural Regeneration Cumbria
Willetts, D. Cumbria Constabulary
Wilson, P. Citizens Advice Bureau, Barrow-in- Furness
Winter, L. Preston Patrick Parish Council
Wood, C. Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust
Woodburn, M. Egremont Town Council
Young, S. Cumbria County Councillor
APPENDIX 3. Map of North West England, showing the location of Cumbria.
APPENDIX 4. Map of Cumbria showing the district boundaries and the National Parks.
APPENDIX 5. Maps of Cumbria showing road and rail networks.

Maps the six district boundaries and (a) the Motorways, Primary roads and A roads and (b) the railway network and stations.

(a)
APPENDIX 6. An outline of the details of the telephone survey.

Methodology

A telephone survey was carried out with a random sample of Cumbria’s respondents. Quotas were set to ensure that at least 100 interviews were conducted in each district. In all, 604 telephone interviews were carried out with residents during August to September 2005. This equated to a plus or minus error of 4% at the 95% confidence level and 5.25% at the 99% confidence level.

Some respondents felt they could not answer some of the questions on public transport, nursery care, education or in-career training, as they did not have current knowledge on these issues. They chose to miss out these questions. Analysis was carried out on those that responded to these questions.

Demographics

The survey sample was 45% male and 55% female. It was designed to be equally divided across the 6 district areas of Cumbria; the outturn figures were that Allerdale, Copeland and Eden each provided 16.6% of the sample, Barrow and South Lakeland each provided 16.7% and Carlisle provided 16.9%. The age range was from 18 to 65+ (see Figure A6.1). The lower age for participation was fixed at 18 because the sample group was designed to consist of voters or potential voters; the upper age limit was not constrained.

Figure A6.1. The age distribution (% of each age group) for participants in the telephone survey.
We are calling on behalf of Cumbria’s Local Democracy Commission, which was established to find out the best ways that the County Council can engage with and respond to the needs of local communities. As part of the Commission’s inquiry they are seeking the views of individuals in Cumbria. Please could you take a few minutes to answer some questions on local democracy. All your responses will remain anonymous.

### General Provision of Services

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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol stations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Road maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road cleaning</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery care</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education colleges</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-career training courses</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local doctors</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local dentists</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of local health care</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household waste collection</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library services</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and entertainment services</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming baths</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of public areas e.g. grass cutting, litter removal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth services e.g. youth clubs, organised youth activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Q2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall, how well do these services meet your community's needs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactorily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poorly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3 Can you suggest any services in particular that do a good job of meeting the community's needs? (Get respondent to name the services - enter up to 4 services)

Q4 Can you suggest any services in particular that could be improved or provided in a more effective way? (Get respondent to name the services - enter up to 4 services)

PUBLIC SECTOR PROVISION OF SERVICES

Q5 How well do services provided by public bodies, such as local government, health authorities, police and fire services meet the needs of your community?

- Very well ........................................................................................................................................ 1
- Fairly well ......................................................................................................................................... 2
- Satisfactorily .................................................................................................................................... 3
- Poorly .................................................................................................................................................. 4
- Very poorly ......................................................................................................................................... 5

Q6 Which of the following are you aware of? (Read out each one)

- Neighbourhood Forums ..................................................................................................................... 1
- Public Meetings ................................................................................................................................. 2
- Questionnaires such as these ............................................................................................................. 3
- Councillors surgeries ......................................................................................................................... 4
- Citizens Panels ................................................................................................................................. 5
- Helplines ........................................................................................................................................... 6
- Websites ............................................................................................................................................ 7

Q7 How effective are the following ways to express your views about public services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>Fairly effective</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Fairly ineffective</th>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Don’t know how effective they are</th>
<th>Never heard of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Forums</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires such as these</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors surgeries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Panels</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helplines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Q8
In your view, how good is the coordination and communication between public bodies in providing services to your community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q9
In your view, how good is the efficiency of public bodies in providing services to your community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q10
How efficient do you think public bodies are compared with the private sector...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public bodies are substantially more efficient.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public bodies are slightly more efficient.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public bodies and private sector are equally efficient.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public bodies are slightly less efficient.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public bodies are substantially less efficient.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q11
In the provision of public services, how important is it to have a choice between different service providers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly important</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither important or unimportant</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very important</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q12
Some public sector services are now being provided by private sector organisations; what effect do you think this has had on services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The services are better now</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The services are worse now</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The services are about the same</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q13
Are there any services that you think should be managed at the Parish or Neighbourhood level?

---

**189**
**FRAMEWORK OF DEMOCRACY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q14</th>
<th>How involved would you say you are in local decision-making, particularly in regard to the provision of public services and in matters affecting local community life?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very involved .................................................................................................................................................. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairly involved .......................................................................................................................................... 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very involved ................................................................................................................................. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not involved at all ................................................................................................................................. 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q15</th>
<th>How involved would you say your community is in local decision-making, particularly in regard to the provision of public services and in matters affecting local community life?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very involved .................................................................................................................................................. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairly involved .......................................................................................................................................... 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very involved ................................................................................................................................. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not involved at all .................................................................................................................................. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t Know ............................................................................................................................................... 5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q16</th>
<th>Do you think there should be a greater level of engagement in local decision-making, particularly in regard to the provision of public services and in matters affecting local community life by...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes ......................................................................................................................................................... 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No ......................................................................................................................................................... 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t Know ........................................................................................................................................... 3</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q17</th>
<th>Are you aware of the Cumbria County Council’s Local Committee for your area?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes ............................................................................................................... 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No ............................................................................................................. 2</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q18</th>
<th>Have you ever voted in any of the following elections or polls?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes ......................................................................................... 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No ....................................................................................... 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refused .................................................................................. 3</td>
</tr>
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Television Poll/contest .................................................................................................................. 1
Local newspaper poll, etc .............................................................................................................. 2
European Parliament Election ........................................................................................................ 2
UK General Election ....................................................................................................................... 2
Cumbria County Council Election .................................................................................................. 2
A City, Borough or District Council Election .................................................................................. 2
A Local Parish Council Election ..................................................................................................... 2
Any other type of organisation or club election ................................................................................ 2
**Q19** Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Cumbria’s local democratic arrangements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No opinion/don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Democracy is working well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are too many local structures and organisations to be effective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government is remote from neighbourhood communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Councillors safeguard local services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community leadership is strong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q20** Do you agree or disagree that the following roles should be the responsibility of locally elected Councillors?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No opinion/don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing political leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing their electoral area in seeking fair local allocation of public resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting priorities for the expenditure of public money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing and ensuring the good management of local services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing a route of complaint about local services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Q21** Do you have any other comments on ways of improving community involvement and participation in democratic decision making?

**Q22** Which age group are you in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Q23 What is your Local Authority District?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allerdale</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lakeland</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q24 Interviewer, what sex is respondent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO DO THIS SURVEY
APPENDIX 7. The consultation letter.

Cumbria Local Democracy Commission
Area Support Office
Penrith Library
St Andrew’s Churchyard
Penrith
Cumbria CA11 7YA
E-MAIL: ruth.kremer@cumbriacc.gov.uk
Phone: 01768 242 368

9 August 2005

Dear Sir/Madam

CUMBRIA LOCAL DEMOCRACY COMMISSION

CCC has established an independent Local Democracy Commission, as a short-term working party, with a remit:

‘to consider and make recommendations on the most effective means of the County Council engaging with and responding to the needs of local communities’.

As part of the Commission’s inquiry we are seeking information and views from organisations and individuals across Cumbria. We should therefore be very grateful for any relevant information or evidence that you would like to contribute to the Commission’s deliberations or for any views you would like to offer in regard to the subjects under consideration.

We would particularly welcome responses to any or all of the following questions.

1. Are the County Council’s present methods of engagement with local communities and communities of interest appropriate? Could they be improved and if so how?

2. Is the present level of community involvement and participation in local decision making satisfactory and, if not, how could it be improved?

3. Do the services available to the public in Cumbria address the needs of local people and communities? If not, what methods might be introduced to ensure that they do?

4. To what extent should decision making and delivery be undertaken at the local level? Are there any areas of decision-making and service provision or service
management that would be better done locally, for example at the area, parish or neighbourhood level? (Please give specific examples, if possible.)

5. Is there good coordination across services and between organisations at the local level and, if not, in what ways could coordination be improved?

6. Can you identify any examples of particularly good practice in local working arrangements and in customer care, which meet local community needs?

7. What are your views on how elected Councillors engage with communities: (a) as part of the process of decision making; and (b) in ensuring that service delivery meets the needs of local communities?

8. What are your views on how Government funded agencies and organisations engage with communities: (a) as part of the process of decision making; and (b) in ensuring that service delivery meets the needs of local communities?

We would welcome any comments or information you may have on these issues or related matters. Please send your contribution by mail or e-mail by the 12 September to:

Cumbria Local Democracy Commission
Area Support Office
Penrith Library
St Andrew’s Churchyard
Penrith
Cumbria CA11 7YA

E- MAIL: ruth.kremer@cumbriacc.gov.uk
Phone: 01768 242 368

We thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Professor Phil Thomas
(Chairman of the Cumbria Local Democracy Commission)
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Achieving Cumbrian Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACORN</td>
<td>A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACRE</td>
<td>Action with Communities in Rural England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFI</td>
<td>Benefit Fraud Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BV</td>
<td>Best Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVPI</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Best Value Performance Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVR</td>
<td>Best Value Review</td>
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<td>Cumbria Association of Councils for Voluntary Service</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cumbria Association of Local Authorities</td>
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<td>Cumbria County Council</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cumbria Economic Intelligence Partnership</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Cumbria Local Enterprise Agency Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>Corporate Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Performance Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>CREA</td>
<td>Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRED</td>
<td>Centre for Regional Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSP</td>
<td>Cumbria Strategic Partnership</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CSCI  Commission for Social Care Inspection
CTB  Cumbria Tourist Board
CUPS  Cumbria Partnership Support
CVS  Council for Voluntary Service
DCMS  Department of Culture, Media and Sport
DEFRA  Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfES  Department of Education and Skills
DH  Department of Health
DTI  Department of Trade and Industry
DWP  Department of Work and Pensions
EU  European Union
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
GIS  Geographic Information System
GONW  Government Office North West
GNVQ  General National Vocational Qualification
GVA  Gross Value Added
HEI  Higher Education Institutions
HND  Higher National Diploma
ICT  Information and Communication Technology
IMD  Index of Multiple Deprivation
IRMP  Integrated Risk Management Plans
LAA  Local Area Agreement
LDNPA  Lakes District National Park Authority
LEA  Local Education Authority
LFA  Less Favoured Area
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPSA</td>
<td>Local Public Service Agreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSC</td>
<td>Learning and Skills Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSP</td>
<td>Local Strategic Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEP</td>
<td>Member of European Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>NACVS</td>
<td>National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDPB</td>
<td>Non-Departmental Public Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOMIS</td>
<td>National Office of Manpower Information Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>NVQ</td>
<td>National Vocational Qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWDA</td>
<td>Northwest (Regional) Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWRA</td>
<td>North West Regional Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODPM</td>
<td>Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</td>
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<td>OFSTED</td>
<td>Office for Standards in Education</td>
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<td>ONS</td>
<td>Office of National Statistics</td>
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<td>PCT</td>
<td>Primary Care Trust</td>
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<td>PFI</td>
<td>Public Finance Initiative</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public Private Partnership</td>
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<td>PSA</td>
<td>Public Service Agreement</td>
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<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
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<td>RDA</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency</td>
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<td>RRC</td>
<td>Rural Regeneration Cumbria</td>
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<td>SOA</td>
<td>Super Output Area</td>
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<td>TRAC</td>
<td>Training Routes Across Cumbria</td>
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<td>UKTI</td>
<td>UK Trade and Investment</td>
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<td>VAC</td>
<td>Voluntary Action Cumbria</td>
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<td>WCDA</td>
<td>West Cumbria Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLR</td>
<td>West Lakes Renaissance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>YDNPA</td>
<td>Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOT</td>
<td>Youth Offenders Team</td>
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