

Council Plan 2018-23



Our approach to equality

The Council is committed to ensuring it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty in order to provide equality of opportunity through access to services for all and delivering services which meet the needs of the Council's customers; foster good relations by understanding the communities the Council serves and deliver meaningful engagement; eliminate discrimination through the Council's operational and work place policies and procedures.

To support the delivery of this Council Plan, the Council will build on its existing approach and publish an Equality Action Plan which will set out the objectives and related activities which will be undertaken to meet our commitments. The Action Plan will be informed by the Council's annual Equality Needs Analysis.

This approach will enhance the visibility and accountability for ensuring we meet our commitments.

If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone **01228 226514**.

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01228 226514 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

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Introduction

The County Council is committed to improving the lives of the people of Cumbria.

If we are to deliver on this commitment then the Council will need to do things differently over the next 4 years. This will mean making the most of new opportunities, working with local communities and residents, making the most of new technology and maximising the talent of our workforce.

This Council Plan describes the Council's vision and the outcomes we aspire to for the county and the overall approach we will take to make the changes we need to achieve those aspirations. The Council cannot achieve our aspirations for the people and places of Cumbria on our own so we are committed to working in partnership with other organisations and with communities to achieve the objectives we share.

Our vision is to be:

“A Council that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources.”



Cumbria is a wonderful county which offers a unique quality of life to the people who live and work within the county and for those who visit the area and want to do business here. Cumbria offers:

- Communities which are strong and diverse;
- A world class environment and great quality of life;
- An unparalleled experience for visitors;
- A business environment which promotes enterprise and innovation; and,
- The capability to provide the UK with a significant supply of energy and water.

We also face high levels of uncertainty and some significant challenges:

- A lack of clarity on the future of public service funding with the central government funding to local government continuing to decline;
- Increasing demand for services, particularly in adult social care, and concerns about how this will be funded in the future;
- Considerable economic inequalities within the county with some pockets of deprivation, high house prices creating affordability issues for local people, and parts of the economy characterised by low wages;
- Unsatisfactory transport infrastructure, poor high speed broadband and poor mobile coverage;
- A fragile health and care system struggling to manage the demands of the ageing population and tackle the health inequalities across the county;

- A high number of looked after children who need a family or greater permanence and stability in their lives;
- A complex map of different public services in the area;
- Demands on the workforce are rising with staff increasingly feeling under pressure;
- The needs and expectations of our customers are changing;
- The impact of extreme weather events and finding ways to reduce the risk of flooding and helping protect people and property.

Nationally we are also in a time of increased uncertainty and change. The impact of Brexit on the economy, of national political events, and of wider societal and world events all bring uncertainty which impacts on planning for the future for public services.

Cumbria faces particular challenges in attracting investment for infrastructure and economic growth. In part, this is due to the rural nature of the county and the need to compete for national investment with large, urban areas.

However, Cumbria has unique potential for economic growth and we, with our partners, are clear about the improvements needed to infrastructure, housing, skills, and the support available to businesses to maximise growth. Securing the investment required will be the big challenge for the future.

Our funding

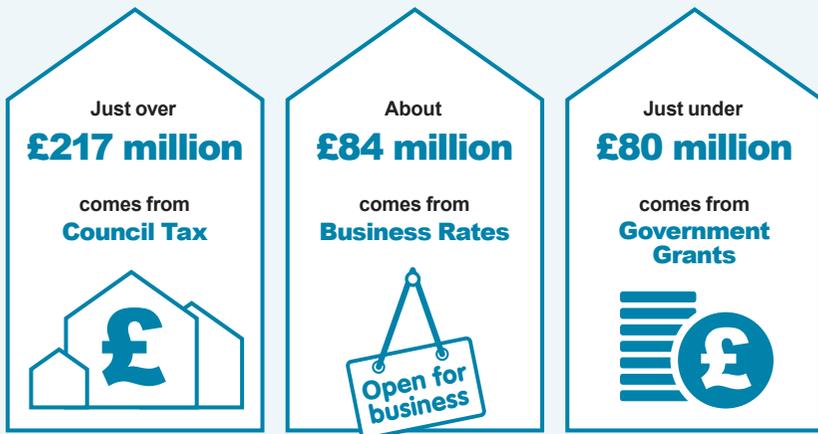
Local government has faced unprecedented levels of budget reductions over the past few years. This has resulted in the Council having to make extensive savings amounting to £214 million since 2011, and we still need to save another approximately £70 million by 2022. Despite the uncertainty and reduced budgets the Council continues to balance the budget year on year and maintain vital services for the public.

The Council has continued to invest in maintaining school buildings, roads and in improving technology to support delivery of services. We have plans to invest £345 million of capital funding over the next 5 years which will include building 2 new residential care homes, a continuing maintenance programme for our schools, and investment in roads and infrastructure.

Our budget and the services we provide

Where our budget comes from

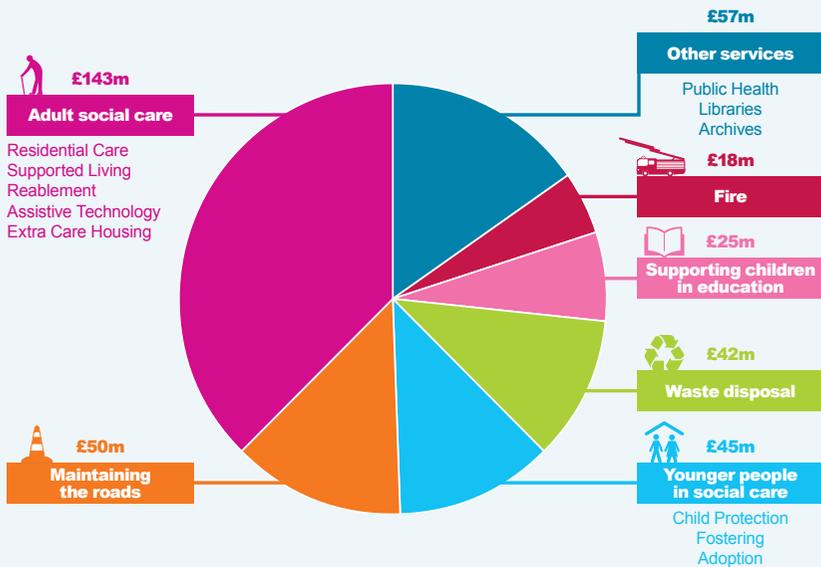
The council's budget currently stands at just over **£380 million**



The savings we have to make by 2022 will be made in increasingly challenging circumstances, as the Government grant provided to councils is reduced and funding for local government becomes more reliant on local Council Tax and Business Rates.

Government grants will reduce significantly over the next 4 years. This Council Plan and our Medium Term Financial Plan set out the approach we will take to reduce costs, work in different ways and generate income to reduce the impact of these reductions and ensure we can continue to deliver services to the people of Cumbria in the future.

What we spend our budget on (millions)



How we will achieve our vision - improving outcomes for the people of Cumbria

Our vision is to be:

“A Council that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources.”

Our outcomes describe what we want to achieve for the people of Cumbria. These provide a clear focus for everything we do.

People in Cumbria are healthy and safe

Being healthy and safe is the foundation for wellbeing and pursuing aspirations. We want people to have access to the information and the tools to help keep themselves safe and as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

We want our children, young people and vulnerable adults to be protected from harm and be given the support they need to achieve their ambitions.

When people do need specialist or emergency help they should receive it. So, for example, when someone needs extra help at home, or to move to supported housing, or emergency help in case of flooding.



Places in Cumbria are well-connected and thriving

Connecting people and places is important to wellbeing and thriving communities. In the 21st century, social and digital connections are as important as physical connections. Maintaining and improving our road and rail infrastructure and transport services is important to enable people to access work, learning and business opportunities to fulfil their ambitions. Better digital connections via online and mobile channels across the county are needed now and will be even more vital in the future.

Social connections between people in communities and between communities are maybe even more important today. As the demands on existing public services increase and budgets reduce, the ability of communities to design and deliver their own solutions on their own or jointly with organisations to meet their own particular needs will be increasingly vital to creating thriving communities.



The economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone

A growing and productive economy is important for the county to thrive; however, just as important is that everyone in Cumbria has the opportunity to benefit from economic growth. This means that good quality education and learning opportunities are open to all and people have access to the support they need to maximise their potential.

It also means that everybody should have the opportunity to secure a good job and businesses across Cumbria can be successful. To achieve these things, the county needs to attract investment to create new and good quality business and employment opportunities, as well as new homes.



Our approach

With 6 years of reductions in local government funding already behind us since 2011 and with approximately £70 million more to be saved by 2022, we will use new approaches to ensure the Council is financially sustainable for the future and able to maximise our contribution to improving the everyday experiences of people in Cumbria. This will mean:

Putting customers at the heart of everything we do

We will focus on delivering a consistent, high quality customer experience across all services. We will involve customers in the design of services and encourage customers who can to self-serve.

Supporting communities to thrive

We will work with partner organisations and communities to improve public services, to help manage the challenges of budget reductions and rising demand for services. We will build on well-established locality working arrangements to develop services and solutions with communities and

help them to help themselves where they can; as well as recognising the unique community leadership role fulfilled by Elected Members.

Focusing on the most vulnerable

We will focus our reduced resources where they are most needed and where we can make the biggest difference. We will target most of our professional and financial resources at the most vulnerable in our communities who need the most specialist and complex support from the Council and its partners.

Managing demand

We will take proactive steps to reduce the demand for our services and support our customers to help avoid or delay the need for specialist services as far as possible. We will support and empower communities and individuals to increase control of their own futures.

Our ways of working

Over the next 4 years we will embed new ways of working:

Working Together



Working with partner organisations and communities to achieve shared aspirations

We will be a Council that provides leadership, working effectively with communities and partners, to reform and integrate public services so that services are designed around the customer; and organisational and structural barriers are removed where possible.

How we will get there

We will explore opportunities to collaborate with others where it will benefit our customers and improve the quality and efficiency of public services in Cumbria. We will co-design services with communities and make the most of the local knowledge of our Elected Members and our staff.

The co-ordinating and delivery roles the Council has fulfilled in the past are often not now needed as technology and social change means communities have new ways of developing and implementing their own solutions; so we will adapt to these changes in a positive way and promote and support self-help within communities. In the past the Council's role may have been coordinating and delivering services but this may not now be needed in many circumstances.

We will play an active role in integrating health and care services and pursue opportunities for blue light collaboration across emergency services in Cumbria.

Enterprise & Efficiency



Exploring new ways to deliver services and maximise our resources

We will be a Council that is enterprising and innovative, finding new ways to generate income to support priority services and exploring new ways of doing things. We will invest wisely on a commercial basis and take advantage of commercial opportunities where appropriate.

We will play a role in driving economic growth to help secure the future funding of public services through our role as an employer, a commissioner of services, and a provider of services.

How we will get there

We will consider the potential for delivering services differently accelerating the promotion of an enterprising and commercially-aware approach across the whole organisation. This will mean supporting the workforce to ensure they have the right skills to work in this way. We will take time to think creatively and listen to the ideas that staff, Elected Members and local residents have. It will also mean being more willing to take risks, to test things out, and to invest in the short-term to secure benefit for the longer-term.

We will also use our role as a commissioner of services and as an employer to secure the greatest benefits possible for Cumbria's economy. We will work with partners to secure investment into the county.

Digital Transformation



Giving our customers choice and easy access to services online

We will be a Council that offers high quality digital services which meet the needs and expectations of our customers so that most of our customers choose to access our services online. Staff will be freed up to focus on the activity where they can most add value rather than on tasks which can be automated by greater use of technology.

How we will get there

We will accelerate our plans to expand and improve our digital offer to customers, ensuring our website and other digital formats are fit for purpose. To enable this to happen the Council's IT systems and infrastructure will be enhanced.

Staff will have the skills to use technology to its best effect and act as digital champions across all areas of business helping customers improve their digital skills so they can benefit from our improved digital offer.

Prevention & Early Intervention



Acting early to achieve better outcomes

We will be a Council which focuses on preventing problems by providing services which support people to remain as healthy, safe and independent as they can, for as long as they can. This will reduce the number of people who need specialist services.

This will mean the Council can use its resources more effectively to provide specialist and complex services to those who need them the most, and provide a single integrated offer of support to individuals and families across age groups.

How we will get there

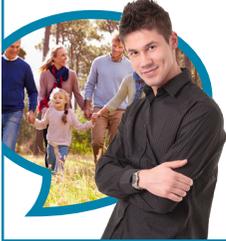
Over time we will shift the use of our resources towards preventative and early intervention approaches. The focus of our activity will be on tackling issues which influence demand for services such as social isolation, education and skills, employment opportunities, housing and the local environment.

We will work with partners to provide advice, information, and services to help individuals and families deal with these types of issues and remain as healthy, safe and independent as they can.

Working across the whole Council and with partners we will adopt an 'all age' preventative approach building on existing practices and projects.

Outcomes for the people of Cumbria

People in Cumbria are healthy and safe



Places in Cumbria are well-connected and thriving



The economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone



New ways of working

Working together



Working with partner organisations and communities to achieve shared aspirations



Enterprise and efficiency

Exploring new ways to deliver services and maximise our resources

Putting our customers at the heart of everything we do

Acting early to achieve better outcomes

Prevention and early intervention



Giving our customers choice and easy access to online services

Digital transformation



Core principles

Focusing on the most vulnerable

Managing demand

Supporting communities to thrive

Our framework

Our vision is to be:
“A Council that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources”

Outcomes

People in Cumbria are healthy and safe

Places in Cumbria are well-connected and thriving

The economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone

Supporting Outcomes

Cumbria’s environment and society will support people to be healthy and safe, and manage their own physical and mental wellbeing

Children, young people and the most vulnerable will be protected from harm

Those who need specialist or emergency services will receive them when they need them

People will be able to access advice and support to help keep themselves safe

The physical and digital infrastructure that people need to access services, learning, employment, business and leisure will be in place

Locally responsive services will be in place to meet the different needs of different communities across Cumbria

Communities will be confident and have access to the support they need to design and deliver the services they need

Children and young people will receive the best education possible

Everybody will have access to learning opportunities throughout their life and career

Everybody will have access to good quality employment opportunities

The county will be an attractive place for businesses to invest; and local businesses will thrive

Everybody will be supported to achieve their aspirations

Our focus for activity over the next 4 years

To achieve the outcomes, and with fewer resources available, it is vital that we concentrate our activities on areas of particular focus and improvement where we can make the biggest difference to the lives of people in Cumbria.

These will be reflected in our service and operational plans so that everyone is focused on what they need to deliver and their contribution to the Council's outcomes.

These are:

Implementing **a new approach to providing effective, consistent and efficient customer-focused services** which are designed and informed by insight and feedback from our customers and delivered at reduced cost.

Developing **more comprehensive and robust area plans**, which will help to co-ordinate the Council's activities in local areas; whilst examining ways of devolving more powers to local committees, and finding ways in which the local committees can help shape policy development.

Focus our **partnership working with other organisations on areas which will have the biggest impact on improving outcomes** for people in Cumbria, and exploring how we can do more at locality level to support communities to help themselves. We will explore options for delivery of services by community organisations and others.



Focusing on commercial opportunities to improve outcomes for our customers and generate income for the Council to ensure that we are a financially sustainable organisation for the future and continue to deliver the services people need.

Transforming and expanding our 'digital offer' to our customers and encouraging self-service where possible to ensure that people can access the information and services they need easily and quickly. This will also enable us to ensure our professional resources are focused on those who need them the most.

Maintaining the Council's roads to the best possible standard within the available resources. We will continue to pursue all the opportunities we can **to secure additional funding** for the maintenance and improvement of our highways and transport infrastructure.

Continuing to work closely with health partners to deliver a resilient health and care system including development of integrated commissioning, maximising capacity across the system and making best use of resources to improve outcomes for the people of Cumbria.

Using our purchasing power to influence the private sector care market to improve the quality and choice of care provision in all parts of the county. **Continuing to invest in Cumbria Care** in order to retain their position as a key provider within a mixed economy of care.



Supporting the county's schools to work together through the Cumbria Association of System Leaders (CASL) to help them meet the funding and other challenges they face and improve standards in Cumbria's schools.

Proactively **identifying individuals and families in need of early intervention** to prevent problems from escalating by developing a **joined up approach** with partners across the county, including providing information, advice and support to help people stay healthy and safe.

Continuing to **protect Sure Start Children's Centres** and services **focusing on families in greatest need** as part of an anti poverty strategy that tackles the cycle of disadvantage; and **retaining school clothing grants** for children eligible for free school meals.

Continuing to **improve and develop the quality and timeliness of our interventions from Early Help to statutory child protection** so that children and families receive the help they need at the right time.

Focusing on providing services to those who are **vulnerable throughout all stages of their lives** and **strengthening safeguarding arrangements**, and improving support to **those transitioning from services for children and young people to those for adults**.

Improving **services for children and adults with disabilities** to support them to achieve their aspirations.

Developing the role and responsibilities of Corporate Parents ensuring our children looked after are provided with the opportunities and life chances they deserve.

Delivering a **better joined up prevention and response role** to protect our community and pursuing appropriate **opportunities for blue light collaboration**.

Working with **the LEP and others to promote sustainable growth with more and better paid jobs** in the county to deliver Cumbria's Strategic Economic Plan priorities. Encouraging other employers in the county to **pay their staff the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage** and **delivering our sustainable procurement strategy** so that we maximise the benefits for Cumbria from the Council's significant role as a commissioner of services.

Lobbying to **secure improvements to those parts of the county's infrastructure which are the responsibility of others**, including the Strategic Road Network, the Rail Network and Digital Infrastructure.

Working in support of District Councils to ensure that the physical and social infrastructure required to support their local plans, particularly additional school places and highways improvements, is funded and delivered.

Working with partners, providers and local businesses to improve the support available to **help people develop the skills** they need to secure good jobs and meet the needs of the county's economy now and in the future and tackle the county's current workforce and recruitment challenges. This includes **expanding our Social Work Academy** to grow our own future workforce so that we can reduce the impact of the severe recruitment challenges in the local social care sector.

To deliver our aspirations for the people of Cumbria we will work in partnership with a range of partners. The key partnerships we will work with include the Children's Trust Board, the Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Cumbria Health & Wellbeing Board, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and Cumbria Community Safety Partnership. Partners include third sector and community groups, private sector groups and businesses, other public sector organisations and public service providers, and our regulators.

How will we know if we are succeeding?

We will develop a Council Plan Delivery Plan which will set out a package of measures against which we will assess our progress towards each outcome and our progress on making the changes to our ways of working. The Delivery Plan will also set out the key activities we will undertake and will be refreshed annually.

We will report progress against each outcome quarterly through our Cabinet, and will publish an annual report each year.



How you can get involved



Residents

by having your say and keeping us informed of what matters most to you, sharing your thoughts and ideas about what we could be doing differently and by telling us about the things we do that make the most difference to you.

Members

by keeping the conversation going and listening to communities and residents, connecting people and places by providing community leadership, helping shape services based on your understanding of local communities and opportunities, championing the needs of the most vulnerable.

Staff

by putting forward your ideas for how we can innovate and be more enterprising, focusing on improvements you think are needed, putting the customer at the heart of everything you do, making best use of your local knowledge and experience, focusing your time and skills where you can most add value.

Partners

by talking to us about opportunities where we can shape things together and save the public purse, sharing learning and skills, providing challenge and insight from another perspective.



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