



Cumberland Council Plan

2023-2027

This Council Plan

This is our first Cumberland Council Plan and outlines what we want to focus on in our first four years. It also describes how we want our new Council to work and what residents can expect from us.

We are excited by the opportunity we have. As a unitary authority we can join-up services and deliver at a scale that has not been available to us before. We will use these opportunities to create a council that engages with and empowers residents whilst using our strengths, influence and willingness to do things differently to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Cumberland.

We are also aware that the scale of some of the challenges we face is significant. This plan has been developed as the economy recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 and the country faces the worst cost of living crisis for a generation.

This Plan is a way forward. It can't detail everything that the Council will do over the next few years, but it does provide a sense of the direction we are heading in and the positive impact we will make together.



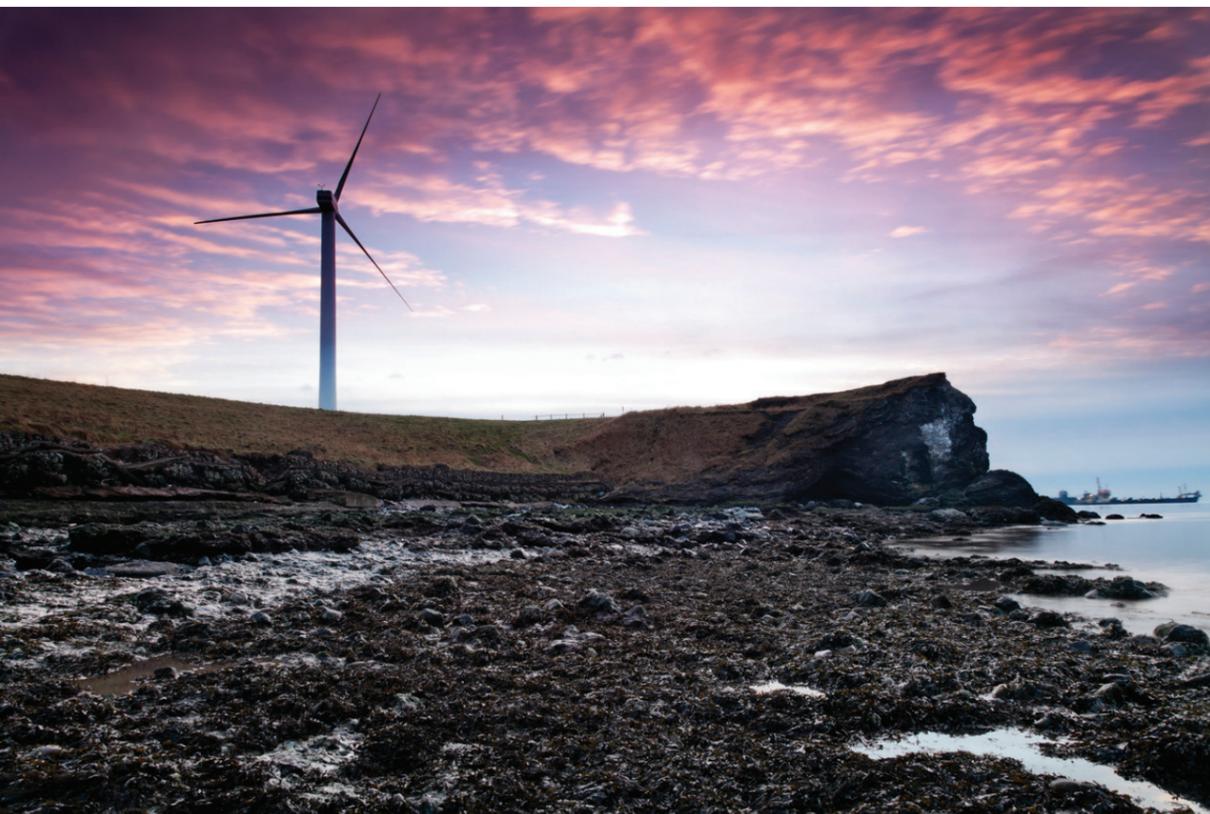
Foreword

I've said from day one if you do what you've always done then you'll get what you've always got. There is a thirst, a drive, a passion from the newly elected Members and from our fantastic staff to embrace what Cumberland can be – what it will be. We don't have all the answers yet, we might get things wrong, but I can promise you that we are going into this with our eyes wide open. We **WILL** deliver better services, we **WILL** address the income gap and we **WILL** improve life for all.

Our people are our priority. That's it. It's that simple. We have this opportunity to change everything, to fix what isn't working, to look for new ways of delivering our services so they are the best they can be. We aren't afraid of a challenge. Local Government Reform is hard, it won't be easy, but it is also a gift, the chance to bring equality to the lives of those living in Cumberland. We plan to grab that chance and run with it.

Cllr Mark Fryer
Leader of the Shadow Authority
for Cumberland Council





About Cumberland

Cumberland inspires pride of place, but it is also area of stark contrast. We are home to some of the world's most stunning rural and coastal landscapes, but we also have areas in our city and towns in need of renewal.

Our economy contains strong agricultural and tourism sectors, but we are also a manufacturing economy that boasts some of the most famous brands in the world. We are an economy of small businesses, but we also host the largest nuclear site in Europe.

Household earnings in some areas are amongst the highest in the north west but we have pockets of real deprivation and have more households living in fuel poverty than the national average.

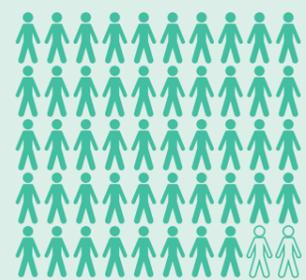
We are one of the best places to visit, boasting two world heritage sites, an area of outstanding natural beauty and world class attractions that draw in millions of visitors. We are one of the safest places to live but our population is aging and declining. We have some of the lowest cost housing in the country, but we have issues with affordability and the availability of houses built for social rent.

Some of our residents can expect to live some of the longest lives in the country, but other parts of Cumberland are below the national average for life expectancy. Inequalities can be extreme, and they have real day to day impacts on people's lives and livelihoods.

We have already faced the significant challenge of climate change, responding and recovering from the devastating effects on our communities from severe weather and unprecedented flooding. The cost-of-living crisis and the COVID-19 recovery is affecting everyone, but there are opportunities created by our people, our environment and our businesses to make our area work to the benefit of everyone.



Cumberland in Numbers



We know our population is 274,000. But we also know that this is due to fall by 0.3% by 2028.



Children looked after rate of 88 per 10,000 is significantly above the national average of 67 per 10,000.



Total crime rate per 1,000 population is 68.3 which is below the national average.



The median house price is below the national average at £155,630.



The working age population with no qualifications is better than the national average at 4.7%.

Our population is getting older. The number of people over 65 is due to increase from 64,000 to 82,100 by 2040.



We are home to 11,565 businesses. 90% of those businesses are micro businesses.



20% of people in Cumberland report that their daily activities are limited because of an illness or disability. This is higher than the national average.



Our vision

Cumberland Council takes a fresh approach to the delivery of inclusive services that are shaped by our residents and communities.

By enabling positive outcomes for health and wellbeing, prosperity and the environment we will fulfil the potential of our people and our area.

Our focus

We want to improve the lives of our residents; it is at the heart of everything we do. We believe that we can do this by providing excellent public services. The health and wellbeing of our residents is hugely important if we are to achieve this.

We can only bring about change if we listen and work alongside our residents to provide the services that they need, when they need them. We know we can't do it alone and so the partnerships and relationships we have will be crucial in making this happen.

There will be many challenges during the four years covered by this plan, but we know that if we maintain our focus on the things that are important to us all and if we keep listening, then Cumberland will be a better place for everyone.

To do this we will prioritise:

Listening, responding and empowering our residents to shape our services.

- We want to give our residents a big say in the things we do. This means creating spaces for honest and open conversations with our residents, service users and service providers to create and deliver services designed around local needs.

Putting health and wellbeing at the forefront of everything we do.

- We want our residents to be happy, healthy, and safe throughout long and full lives. We will promote independence, but also make sure we provide help early when it is needed. When people are vulnerable, our services will support them to live well.
- We will also take action on the wider social, economic and environmental factors that impact on our wellbeing, such as climate change.

Local economies that work for local people.

- We want to enable the move to an economy that builds wealth locally and offers opportunities for everyone and people have the skills to take them. We want to achieve greater social value in public sector procurements, exploring more ways of retaining wealth within the community. We will seek to utilise our assets as a catalyst for economic activity, generating opportunities for residents, businesses, social enterprises and the community and voluntary sector alike.

Delivering excellent public services.

- We want Cumberland to be a high performing council. We want our residents to benefit from excellent, efficient and enterprising public services. Services will deliver what they need, when they need it with a focus on collaboration, dialogue and delivering strategic impact at a local level.



The Cumberland Approach

Accessible and trusted services

We aim to deliver excellent services for our residents. Key to this is enabling residents to access what they need, when they need it, in a way that works for them. We recognise that not everyone is the same and will have different requirements from the council. We will think about accessibility right at the start of everything we do to ensure that no one is excluded. Once accessed, our services will be easy to use and easy to navigate.

So, whilst we will utilise technology to its full potential, our services will remain seamless, focused and respectful of the needs of the individual. We want to deliver services that are trusted by users. This happens when people get what they need, as easily as possible. Interactions with the council should be positive and give people the confidence to contact us again in the future. It is also important that we are honest in what we can do and what we can't.

Involving and engaging

Local people are best placed to determine their needs and aspirations. For us engagement isn't just listening it is doing things together. We value their views and ideas and so we will work alongside residents to jointly create and design services that impact on their lives. We want our residents to be involved and feel understood at every opportunity.

We will work hard to remove as many barriers, differences and inequalities as possible to ensure that all sections of our community can engage with us. We also recognise that when we do ask people to engage with us it has to be meaningful.

Learning and improving

We strive to make everything we do the best it can be. This means that we will proactively learn from others to develop an understanding of what works best for us and what doesn't. We are prepared to be broad in our thinking and try new ways of working where we think it is appropriate. We accept, that in doing this, we won't get everything right all the time and there may be complaints and criticism, but we will learn our lessons quickly and effectively.



Prevention and early intervention

Many factors shape our wellbeing: our health and wealth, education and work, the places we live, the environment and our social connections. We recognise that not everyone has equal access to the resources that can help them to maximise their potential and as a result, people can face challenges. The most effective way to improve outcomes for our local people is to work with them to prevent poor health and intervene early to stop issues from reaching crisis-point. In many cases this will mean putting people before processes and providing people with the right information and advice, but in other cases it will mean providing direct support for longer. Other issues, such as climate change, will require long-term strategic action.

Collaborative working (One council approach)

Our approach to delivering outstanding services will be collaborative. We will work with residents, communities and local and national partners to ensure that they can play a part in meeting our common objectives for the area. We know that many of the issues we need to address cannot be tackled in isolation and require a joined-up approach. We will be an active partner and seek to create effective partnerships with others.

We will also ensure that the council does not operate in siloes, either internally or externally. Our operating model will drive a whole council approach to delivering against our priorities for the benefit of residents. We will continually seek to understand and refine the contribution that all services and departments can make in improving outcomes for our residents.

Leadership

We will be a passionate advocate for Cumberland. We will provide strategic leadership where it is needed and work collaboratively to ensure that the area has a national profile that can unlock additional investment to strengthen our communities.

Our approach to leadership is to empower others both internally and externally. We want to create a culture where challenge is seen as healthy and where we are not afraid to do things differently. To do this we need to remove barriers to empowerment and ensure that we provide the right training and support.

Local first

We want to meet local needs and have services shaped by local people. To do this effectively we need to work closely with our communities. We want to be a council with a presence throughout the district. Where services can be delivered locally that will be our default. We will use our assets to act as bases for a range of council and partner services. We will seek to devolve decision making to the appropriate level.

Driving Change

We want to drive change in our area by utilising the strengths that a move to a unitary authority unlocks. Utilising assets and resources the council can stimulate the local economy to create additional community wealth. This will mean developing local supply chains for example.

By using a more entrepreneurial and commercially-minded approach to planning and delivering services the council can maximise resources retained in the local area.

Addressing inequality

The Council is committed to tackling inequality and making Cumberland a fairer place. We want our residents to have access to the opportunities that will empower them to achieve their goals. Inequality continues to hold people back from reaching their true potential and the council will work with residents and partners to challenge entrenched issues in areas such as health, life expectancy and deprivation.

Sustainability

The Council faces many sustainability challenges whether in terms of the financial sustainability of the council or the sustainability of our biodiversity. We will always approach challenges with a long term approach in mind. We will not make short term decisions or undertake short term activity that impacts on the ability of the council or the area to meet its future needs.



Our values

In everything we do we aim to:

- Be compassionate
- Be innovative
- Be empowering
- Be ambitious
- Be collaborative

We believe passionately in the delivery of excellent public services. To do that we need to be clear about the values and behaviours that we need to drive change and achieve our high standards.



Looking Ahead

This plan is just the starting point for the new Council. Over the next year we will be engaging with residents to understand the opportunities and challenges they face and working out how we can work together to bring about change.

We will review this document at regular intervals and we will amend or replace it if necessary. We will also use it as the basis to start a wider conversation on the development of a community strategy for Cumberland. That document will create a long term vision for our area in partnership with residents, businesses and the community sector.

We will use this plan:

- As a starting point for more detailed service planning and strategy development
- To start a much broader and deeper conversation with our residents about what you want from the council and how you would like to be involved
- To enable our potential partners to understand our vision and priorities to enable further dialogue about areas of common interest
- As a guide when we are making decisions about services or things that impact on our residents to ensure that we maintain our focus.



**Your Council
Your Voice**

If you have any comments please write to:

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