Westmorland & Furness Council

To: **the Leader and Members of the Cabinet**

Agenda

Dear Cabinet Member

CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held as follows:

Date: Tuesday, 30 April 2024
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Barrow Town Hall, Duke Street Barrow in Furness,

Linda Jones
Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer
Westmorland and Furness Council

Enquiries and requests for supporting papers to: Jackie Currie
Direct Line: 07919 056193
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MEMBERSHIP

Cllr G Archibald	Cllr A Jarvis
Cllr P Bell	Cllr D Jones
Cllr J Brook (Chair)	Cllr S Sanderson
Cllr J Derbyshire	Cllr V Taylor
Cllr N Hughes	Cllr P Thornton

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Agenda and Reports

Copies of the agenda and Part I reports are available for members of the public to inspect prior to the meeting. Copies will also be available at the meeting.

The agenda and Part I reports are also available on the Westmorland and Furness website

https://westmorlandandfurness.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=223

A G E N D A

1.   Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2.   Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

To receive declarations of interest by Members of interests in respect of items on this Agenda, and to consider any dispensations.

Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.

3.   Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items of business on the agenda.

4.   Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 March 2024 (copy enclosed)

(Pages 7 - 30)

5.   Public Participation

To receive any questions or statement which have been received from members of the public and to receive any petitions.
(note questions or statement must be received in writing (including email) by the Council at least 3 clear working days before the day of the meeting (not including the day of the meeting). So, for example, if the meeting is on Tuesday requests must be received by 11.59 pm on the previous Wednesday by the person named on the front of the agenda. Petitions must have been presented to the Monitoring Officer 9 working days before the date of this meeting to be valid).

6.   Statements from the Leader and Cabinet Members

To receive statements by the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members.

7.   Questions to Cabinet Members

This item gives Councillors an opportunity to put questions to Cabinet Members.

Questions must relate to the powers, duties or responsibilities of the Cabinet and must relate to their portfolio responsibilities. Questions should be brief, clear and focussed.

This item will last for a maximum of 20 minutes.

8.   Referrals from Council or Overview and Scrutiny Committees

For Cabinet to consider any referrals from Council or any of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

9.   Westmorland and Furness Council - Council Plan Delivery Framework 2024/25 Update and Westmorland and Furness Performance Management Framework

To consider a report from the Leader of the Council (copy enclosed)

(Pages 31 - 138)

10.   Commissioning Strategy for Westmorland and Furness

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Finance (copy enclosed)

(Pages 139 - 168)

11.   Procurement Strategy for Westmorland and Furness

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Finance (copy enclosed)

(Pages 169 - 196)

12.   Social Value Statement

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Finance (copy enclosed)

(Pages 197 - 218)

13.   ICT Strategy

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Waste (copy enclosed)

(Pages 219 - 268)

14.   Customer Strategy 2024-27

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Waste (copy enclosed)

(Pages 269 - 314)

15.   People Plan (Workforce Strategy) 2024 - 2027

To consider a report from the Leader of the Council (copy enclosed)

(Pages 315 - 372)

16.   Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Climate and Biodiversity (copy enclosed)

(Pages 373 - 410)

17.   Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan ('making' (adoption) of the Plan)

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities and Localities (copy enclosed)

(Pages 411 - 614)

18.   Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness (copy enclosed)

(Pages 615 - 672)

19.   Cared for and Care Experienced

To consider a report from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills (copy enclosed)

(Pages 673 - 696)

20.   Urgent Items

To consider any urgent items of business.

PART II - ITEMS CONSIDERED NOT IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

None for this meeting.

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WESTMORLAND AND FURNESS COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held on Tuesday, 26 March 2024 at 10.00 am at Council Chamber, County Hall, Kendal LA9 4RQ

PRESENT:

Cllr P Bell
Cllr J Brook (Chair)
Cllr J Derbyshire
Cllr N Hughes
Cllr A Jarvis
Cllr D Jones
Cllr S Sanderson
Cllr V Taylor

Officers in attendance:

Ms S Cordon	Director of Thriving Communities
Mrs J Currie	Democratic Services
Ms P Duke	Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)
Mrs K Edmondson	Democratic Services Manager
Ms A Hatcher	Assistant Chief Executive
Ms A Jones	Director of Thriving Places
Ms L Jones	Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer
Ms S Plum	Chief Executive, Westmorland & Furness Council
Mr P Robinson	Director of Enabler Services
Ms S Turnbull	Senior Manager - Communications
Mr M Vasic	Director of Children's Services

PART I ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

130.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Thornton.

131.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/DISPENSATIONS

Cllr J Brook declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No 13 – Transfer of the Local Economic Partnership Functions, Joint Committee and related agreements, as he is currently a member of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership.

132.   EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED,   that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of Appendix 4 of Agenda Item No 20 – Proposal to Expand Beaconside Church of England Primary School, if required and Appendix 1 of Agenda Item No 22 - Urgent Items – Marina

Village – Grant Funding Agreement Update as both of these appendices were not for publication by virtue of Section 100B (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12 Paragraph 5 - information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

133. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 February 2024 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

134. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public questions, statements or petitions at this meeting.

135. STATEMENTS FROM THE LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS

The Leader made a statement about the announcement by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of more than £200 million over the next decade to ensure Barrow thrived as the home of UK nuclear submarine-building. This was a momentous day for Barrow, for its communities, and indeed for the wider Westmorland and Furness area.

He announced the creation of a Barrow Transformation Fund, with the Government committing an immediate £20 million and a further minimum of £20 million a year over the next 10 years to make Barrow an even more attractive place to live, work, and build a nuclear career.

The initial projects planned to begin in Barrow this financial year are:

- a £5m Social Impact Fund to provide grants to local organisations and charities, putting Barrow's thriving community sector on a surer footing;
- a £5m Barrow Work and Health fund, to help tackle economic inactivity and improve health outcomes;
- £10.59m for the completion of the A595 Grizebeck Bypass upgrade scheme.

The Leader thanked everyone that had been involved in this.

The Leader also thanked all staff in Westmorland and Furness for their hard work and dedication in making the first year of the Council a successful one.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult, Health and Care made a statement on how proud she was of the work being undertaken in Adult Social Care to improve cooperation between social care and hospitals to ensure social care providers and local hospitals were working hand-in-hand and people were discharged from hospital into care and with the right level of support, as soon as possible. The delays in hospital discharges needed to be resolved and reviewed by all agencies involved in this. The work was only beginning but the outcomes had already proved to be positive.

Cllr Jarvis made a statement about the certification of the Statement of Accounts and associated documents, representing the legacy authorities that formed the new unitary authority. He updated Cabinet on the progress to date on the preparation and audit of the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 for the four legacy authorities – Cumbria County Council including the accounts of Cumbria Local Government Pension Scheme (CLGPS), Eden District Council, South Lakeland District Council and Barrow Borough Council along with the Value for Money conclusions for those authorities.

He thanked the Finance Team for all the hard work to get the account certified.

Cllr Archibald made a statement about the repeated and alarming reports on Climate Change. He updated Cabinet on an event he had attended recently on Zero Carbon Cumbria, where it had become clear that some of the targets would be difficult to achieve.

Cllr Hughes made a statement about the announcement made by Northern rail that the disruption to services on the Furness Line should be expected until April 8 after the train derailment near Grange. He felt that the date of the planned re-opening may be a bit optimistic especially given the fact that further closures were planned to take place over the Easter weekend.

Cllr Hughes also made a statement about the agreement last week by Transport for the North that they had agreed to invite youngsters in Cumbria to join the Citizen's Consultative Panel.

136. QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

There were no questions to Cabinet Members.

137. REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL OR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no referrals from Council or the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

138. 2023/24 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented a report which set out the Council's forecast year-end financial position as at 31 December 2023, Quarter 3 (Q3); covering the 2023/24 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2023-2028.

The forecast outturn position as at 31 December 2023 (Q3) was a net £261.872m. Compared to the revised net budget of £263.478m this was an underspend position of (£1.606m).

The (£1.606m) was a net underspend position. Excluding treasury management, there were gross budget pressures of £4.947m within Directorates (see Table 3) and this was offset by (£6.553m) one-off additional income from treasury management due to the higher interest rates and continued internal borrowing.

The Cabinet Member referred members to Table 2 of the report which contained details of the Revenue Budget Monitoring as at 31 December 2023.

The forecast outturn position included pressures and underspends across the various directorates which resulted in the forecast underspend position.

The total approved savings built into 2023/24 was £7.301m and it was assumed at Q3 that £7.225m of these would be delivered by 31 March 2024. The savings would continue to be monitored and reported.

The Cabinet Member took members though the financial risks highlighted in the report, and updated them on the forecast outturn position of the revenue budget, and individual directorate forecasts.

With reference to Locality Boards the forecast was for a net overspend of £0.501m.

The Highways overspend was caused in part by responding to storms including clearing debris and dealing with flooding and as well as undertaking tree maintenance/dealing with ash die back. A review of spend allocated to Locality Boards and that allocated to the central highways revenue budget was being undertaken ahead of year end and may result in a change to this position.

The Cabinet Member informed members that there were no further changes proposed to the Capital Programme since the last meeting.

He moved the recommendations, which were seconded by the Leader and put to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED,   that Cabinet

(1)   notes that the forecast Net Revenue Budget outturn as at Q3 is a projected underspend of (£1.606m); (see Table 2 of the report);

(2)   notes the use of £0.450m of the £1.1m contingency budget for 2023/24 (see Paragraph 3.13 of the report);

(3)   notes that the earmarked reserves continue to be held for the purposes established by the legacy authorities and have been reviewed as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process;

(4)   approves the creation of a Change Programme Reserve from the £7m one off dividend received from Cumbria County Holdings Ltd;

(5)   approves the transfer to earmarked reserves requested as set out in Paragraph 3.8 of the report;

(6)   delegates to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder, confirmation of the sum total to be capitalised under the Exceptional Financial Support direction for 2023/24;

(7)   notes that there are no changes to the Capital Programme 2023-2029 approved by Council in February 2024. The forecast spend for 2023/24 is £75.653m within a £499.946m 6 Year Capital Programme.

139.   INTERIM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 3 2023/24

The Leader of the Council presented a report which provided Cabinet with oversight of performance for Westmorland and Furness Council for Quarter 3 2023/24 (1 October to 31 December 2023).

The report suggested an overall positive position of performance at Quarter 3 2023/24 in the context of significant organisational change, transition and stabilisation into the new Westmorland and Furness Council.

For 2045/25, the Corporate Performance Report would be developed to include metrics aligned with the missions in the Council Plan Delivery Framework; enabling more effective oversight and scrutiny of delivery of the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan priorities.

This report contained 67 interim performance metrics; a subset of the core metrics that previously supported corporate performance reporting across the four sovereign authorities. The metrics include both qualitative and quantitative performance information and provide a narrative update against progress.

The overall position by the end of Quarter 3 2023/24 was that the majority, 35 of the 67 (52%), of Westmorland and Furness Council Plan metrics were performing well, met or were on track to meet the planned milestone and rated green.

A further 3 indicators (5%) were in progress and at risk of missing the milestone and rated amber. Finally, 12 indicators (18%) were expected to miss a key milestone or not fully deliver as intended and therefore rated red.

The Leader made specific reference to the achievements made in home energy efficiency, social housing decarbonisation, the increase in the number of children attending outstanding schools, the number of affordable homes completed, the drop in the number of 16-17 year olds not in employment, education and training which was well below the national average.

The recommendation was moved and seconded and put to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED,   that Cabinet notes overall performance relating to delivery of the six Council Plan priorities against the Quarter 3 interim performance metrics.

140.   EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Cabinet had before it a reports from the Assistant Chief Executive, presented by the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities and Localities, which sought

approval of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) position statement for Westmorland and Furness Council (W&F) attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

The statement incorporated the statutory equality objectives, annual progress report and a summary of our organisational action plan.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council was under a general duty to do all that it could do to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, and foster good relations between different groups.

Following its establishment in April 2023, Westmorland and Furness Council identified a need to review the council's current position on EDI and identify the steps required to make further progress on this.

In order to do this the Council utilised external capacity temporarily seconded from the LGA to the central policy and performance team to undertake an initial piece of work to identify a corporate approach and action plan on EDI.

The initial phase of the work on EDI was now complete, and a series of recommendations and proposals had been developed for Cabinet to approve. The objectives, action plan and approach were summarised in a position statement intended to be a simple and honest outline of the council's position on EDI.

Based on the findings so far, it was proposed that the next phase of the EDI work programme should focus up to Spring 2026 on getting basic foundations in place that would enable the council in future to set more ambitious objectives based on a deeper understanding and knowledge of EDI issues, its customers, workforce/councillors and communities.

Cllr Hughes commented that with the diminishing of support given to Ukranian families whether any feedback had been received from the communities on this.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities and Localities responded to say that she attended may housing and refugee support groups and was not aware of any feedback on this. However, she agreed that a written response would be provided on this.

The recommendations were then moved, seconded and out to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED,   that Cabinet

(1)   approves the EDI position statement at Appendix 1 of the report, and

(2)   notes the supporting resources and action plan at Appendix 2, which will assist the council to meet its equality objectives.

141.   EARLY HELP SERVICE AND OFFER - REVIEW OF CURRENT DELIVERY MODEL

Members had before them a report which informed them that the contract for the delivery of Early Help services in Westmorland and Furness would cease on 31 March 2025 and could not be extended, therefore it was essential to determine the future approach to and model for service delivery.

This report summarised the national expectations and responsibilities for the delivery of Early Help services by local authorities, described the current delivery model in Westmorland and Furness and presented a proposal for future delivery as part of a remodelled Early Help offer in the context of the new requirements.

The proposal placed an emphasis on ensuring management oversight and safe management of risk, increased support for those undertaking early help assessments and the implementation of lead practitioners to provide targeted early help. Services would continue to be provided within localities, supported by targeted outreach and a strong digital offer, which aligned with the Family Hub model recently established in Barrow.

In the development of a new service offer, the establishment of an in-house service for Early Help was proposed; this does not preclude the commissioning of services from other providers, particularly where they were better placed to deliver these as part of a broader local community offer.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) was the statutory guidance for multi-agency working to protect and promote the welfare of children.

The requirements of the Children Act 1989 remained unchanged in relation to the duties on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need.

A review of the current Early Help offer against the Ofsted Joint Area Targeted Inspection framework (JTAI) made clear that the current model of delivery was not as effective as required.   .

The recent operating context had also seen the emergence of increased need post-pandemic and changes in family pressures due to the cost of living which, alongside the new requirements, necessitate urgent system reform.

Effective Early Help support relied on a strong partnership with local organisations and agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help
- undertake an assessment of the need for Early Help
- provide targeted Early Help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the chid.

Local authorities receiving a good or outstanding judgement following inspection of services were able to evidence: a strong 'team around school' offer providing robust support for schools and supervision/consultation with Early Help Social Workers; investment in and roll out of Family Hubs to provide local delivery and accessible services for families; clear pathways of support from the 'Front Door' to Early Help

services. This was in alignment with the expectations on local authorities set out in the new statutory guidelines.

Work had been taking place to strengthen the Early Help offer ahead of the transformative change required on the cessation of the current contract, with a focus on these key priorities. Internal services had been realigned and re-focused to secure capacity for the delivery of an improved Early Help offer within the current resource; any further transformation would require release of resource currently used to commission services externally. This would include provision of:

- Targeted Youth Support (TYS)
- Focus Families (FF)
- Early Help Officers (EHO)
- Family Hubs Programme Implementation Team

The Cabinet Member moved the recommendations which were seconded by Cllr Taylor and out to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet

(1) notes the recently published statutory guidance and inspection requirements regarding the delivery of early help services and the cessation of the current 0-19 Child and Family Support Services contract delivering these services;

(2) establishes an in-house Early Help Service which meets national standards and enables the council to deliver the statutory requirements, including management oversight with the ability to meet changing need;

(3) develops an implementation plan to ensure the Early Help Service is operational on the cessation of the contract in March 2025;

(4) delegates to the Director of Children Services (in consultation with Monitoring Officer and AD for HR/OD), all staffing/employment matters relating to the insourcing of the Early Help service including but not limited to, compliance with any applicable TUPE implications that arise (including information and consultation obligations with affected staff/trade unions and providing any measures information), which ensures business continuity and manages risk.

142. TRANSFER OF THE LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP FUNCTIONS, JOINT COMMITTEE AND RELATED AGREEMENTS

Cllr J Brook left the meeting at this point and the Deputy Leader took he Chair.

Members considered a report from the Director of Thriving Places which provided an update following the Government announcement that it would cease to provide core funding for the Local Economic Partnership (LEP's) from 1 April 2024 and instead would support local authorities to take on the functions currently delivered by LEPs.

This report provided an overview of the plans and activity to integrate Cumbria LEP functions into the Local Authorities, following the latest Government guidance.

Cabinet was being asked to approve proposals as developed by the LEP Integration Programme and set out in the Integration Plan for Cumberland Council to act as the Delivery Authority and Accountable Body in respect of current Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP) functions and programmes, and enter into an Agreement with Cumberland Council in respect of this, with Westmorland and Furness Council providing monitoring and assurance pertaining to existing CLEP programmes and funds for which LEPs were responsible.

Cabinet was also asked to agree that the Joint Executive Committee provided the basis of joint working and collaboration on strategic economic growth across the Cumbria geography.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) were the bodies across England tasked with leading economic growth activities in their local areas. The Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP) operated across the whole of the Cumbria footprint and had been in existence since 2014.

Following a ministerial review of LEPs, the Government published the 'Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships' Report in July 2018. The report set out a number of recommendations around governance and operation including the need for LEPs to have a legal personality and a single accountable body.

CLEP became a company limited by guarantee in December 2018, and shortly after all of Cumbria's then Local Authorities became Directors of the company and were entitled to appoint directors to CLEP Local Enterprise Partnership Board. Following LGR, both Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland had acceded to the Board with the Leader of Westmorland and Furness now holding the position of Vice Chair, reflecting the financial assurance responsibilities that the authority had assumed in its accountable body role.

CLEP had an extensive governance structure reflecting its responsibilities for strategy, investment, delivery, co-ordination and advocacy.

CLEP's role as the strategic lead for economic growth had resulted in the production of a number of key policies and plans, all of which had been consulted on widely and ensured input and ownership from business, the third sector and public sector partners. Most recently, it developed Restart, Reboot, Rethink in response to the need to deliver post-pandemic economic recovery.

CLEP also led on specialist economic intelligence and modelling work, partnering with Local Authority officers. Activity included the purchase, management and analysis of key datasets including Experian forecasts and the DfE Data Cube.

Separate to LEP functions, each unitary authority had its own responsibilities for economic development and would continue to lead and deliver economic development within their own geographies. The decision making, scrutiny and reporting of these functions would remain within the Local Authorities existing governance arrangements.

LEPs were originally established to facilitate the management of major capital funding programmes in local areas. In total, almost £80m of Government funding was delivered in Cumbria by CLEP between 2015 and 2021.

Cumbria County Council acted as Accountable Body for CLEP from its inception. This wide-ranging role incorporated significant support to CLEP in terms of assessment, assurance, programme financial management, contracting, monitoring and reporting. After Local Government Reorganisation, Westmorland and Furness Council had taken over the role of providing monitoring and assurance. Whilst the majority of the capital programmes were financially complete, the Council continued to provide support ongoing monitoring, reporting and compliance support.

More recently, Government has elected to channel larger economic growth programmes such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) through Local Authorities and LEPs have transitioned to deliver revenue-based, specialist skills and business programmes. Westmorland and Furness Council, through its Assurance and Economic Programmes Team, currently acts as Accountable Body for a number of these and provides ongoing support for their compliant management.

Cllr Archibald thanked officers for the report and felt this decision was being dealt with in a very pragmatic way. He thanked the Chairman of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP) and also the Chief Executive for their leadership of the CLEP since it inception.

Cabinet asked that a letter be sent on behalf of Cabinet to thank them both for their hard work.

Cllr Archibald, whilst accepting this would generate more work for the local authority it would also present opportunities to work with businesses, especially around climate and biodiversity deprivation.
Cllr Hughes asked for clarification on how the current CLEP would work with the Council and the Economic Growth Board until it was finally dissolved.

The Director of Thriving Places confirmed that all the current staff would TUPE across to Cumberland Council on 1 April. She also confirmed that there were plans in place during the transition phase to ensure a seamless transfer. She also confirmed that the Council would take the appropriate time to reflect on the structures needed going forward.

The recommendations were move, seconded and put to a vote, which was unanimous.

RESOLVED,   that Cabinet

(1)   agrees to the transfer of the LEP functions as required by government guidance and for the Joint Committee between Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council to oversee these functions; and

(2)   delegates the drafting of proposals for Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee to the Director of Thriving Places in consultation with the Lead Cabinet member and Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer; and

(3)   delegates the process of determining the arrangements for the nomination of (non-voting) co-opted members to the Joint Committee to the Lead Cabinet member in consultation with the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer; and

(4)   agrees that Cumberland Council is the Delivery Authority and Accountable Body and responsible for the integration of LEP functions in line with the government guidance; and

(5)   agrees that Westmorland and Furness Council is providing the assurance support to Cumberland Council's S151 Officer; and

(6)   delegates authority to the enter into a Agreement between Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council to the Director of Thriving Places in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member and the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer ; and

(7)   agrees to the LEP continuing to undertake some activities as part of the transition and to delegate the finalisation and entering into of agreement with the LEP which specifies the nature and duration of those activities to the Director of Thriving Places in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member the Director of Resources (S151 Officer) and the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer; and

(8)   agrees with Cumberland Council to develop an assurance framework that will provide the governance for the decision making and transparency of funding and investment (this will be done after 1st April) and be brought back to the Joint Committee; and

(9)   agrees to a delegation to the Director of Resources (S151 Officer) in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member to approve the budget for expenditure on county-wide economic functions for 2024/ 2025; and

(10   delegates the establishment of an appointment panel to the Joint Committee to enable the selection and appointment of members to join the Cumbria Economic Growth Board; and

(11) delegates decisions regarding the novation of all contracts required to give effect to the transfer of functions and services to the Director of Thriving Places in consultation with the Director of Resources (S151 Officer) and Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer.

Cllr J Brook returned to the meeting at this point.

143.   AMENDMENTS TO THE INTER AUTHORITY AGREEMENT

Cabinet considered a report from Assistant Chief Executive and presented by the Leader, which sought approval of a number of changes and asked Cabinet to agree

to enter a Deed of Variation to enable the changes to be made to the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA).

The report also Sought approval to extend, for a further 12 months, and update the Service Level Agreement between Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council under s.113 of the Local Government Act 1972 which governs the arrangements between the two Authorities in respect of a number of shared roles.

Westmorland and Furness Shadow Cabinet and Cumberland Shadow Executive separately agreed to enter into an Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) on 31 March 2023.

The authorities agreed that for varying periods of time the exercise of their duties would be served by certain functions and services being discharged and delivered as a number of shared services. The IAA sets out the arrangements for the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) to undertake responsibility for the governance of those functions and services, and the arrangements and general terms on which the authorities administer and exercise responsibility.

Following the initial year of operation through the Joint Disaggregation Programme and amendments to functions and services, Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council were seeking to agree a Deed of Variation relating to the IAA.

The disaggregation of services had been implemented in accordance with the terms set out in the IAA. The JEC had also approved recommendations to bring disaggregation dates forward, postpone the date of disaggregation, implement revised delivery arrangements, and move to long-term hosting.

Changes in hosting arrangements must be reflected in the Inter Authority Agreement. This included the payments for services hosted between the two authorities, as set out in the Service Strategies. The Joint Disaggregation Programme had identified that there was a risk that the financial costs of disaggregation impacted negatively on the financial plans of the two councils and the fire service.

Approval of the Variation to the Inter Authority Agreement, including revision of budget costs and updating finance information would act to mitigate the risk outlined above.

It was proposed that delegated authority to agree final terms of the Deed of Variation be given to the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Finance Portfolio Holder.

The recommendations were then moved, seconded and put to a vote, which was unanimous.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet

(1) agrees to enter a Deed of Variation relating to the Inter Authority Agreement between Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council to agree the following changes to:

- Note Service Strategies for hosted services that will have disaggregated by 31 March 2024.
- Update Service Strategies for hosted services in accordance with changes agreed by the Joint Executive Committee.
- Revise the Hosted Services budget for 2024/25 and update finance information within Service Strategies.

(2) agrees to extend and update the existing Agreement between Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council under s.113 of the Local Government Act 1972 for a further 12 months;

(3) delegates authority to agree final terms of the Deed of Variations for both the Inter Authority Agreement and the s.113 Agreement to the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Finance Portfolio Holder.

144. A595 GRIZEBECK IMPROVEMENT SCHEME - AUTHORISATION TO ACCEPT DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT GRANT FUNDING AND AWARD A STAGE 2 CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR THE A595 GRIZEBECK IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Members considered a report, which was presented by the Leader which informed them that a decision on the award of the Department for Transport (DfT) grant funding for construction of the A595 Grizebeck Improvement Scheme was due and expected by May 2024.

This report sought approval, in principle, to accept the DfT grant funding and to delegate authority to accept the grant and award the Stage 2 construction contract to Story Contracting Limited of Burgh Road Industrial Estate, Carlisle CA2 7NA, with that authority delegated to the Director of Resources and Director of Thriving Places, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Highways and Assets.

The A595 Grizebeck Improvement Scheme was needed to support economic growth by facilitating the movement of goods and people between West and South Cumbria and by providing strategic improvement to the major road network, whilst also addressing local transport issues arising from the impact of the A595 in Grizebeck. The approval of the grant funding and award of the construction contract were key milestones required to continue progress towards the delivery of the A595 Grizebeck Improvement Scheme.

The Leader referenced the announcement made yesterday by the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of more than £200 million over the next decade to ensure Barrow thrived as the home of UK nuclear submarine-building. The initial projects planned to begin in Barrow this financial year were:

- a £5m Social Impact Fund to provide grants to local organisations and charities, putting Barrow's thriving community sector on a surer footing;

- a £5m Barrow Work and Health fund, to help tackle economic inactivity and improve health outcomes;
- £10.59m for the completion of the A595 Grizebeck Bypass upgrade scheme.

This news was extremely positive for the Grizebeck Scheme. The Leader then moved the recommendations, which were seconded and put to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED,   that Cabinet

(1)   agrees to accept in principle the Department for Transport ('DfT') grant funding award for delivery of the A595 Grizebeck Improvement Scheme, and delegate authority to the Director of Resources and Director of Thriving Places, in consultation with the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer, Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Highways and Assets, to approve the acceptance of the expected, but not confirmed, £23.311m grant award and enter into any related agreements;

(2)   subject to receipt of the full DfT grant funding, as outlined at Recommendation 2.1, agree to delegate authority to the Director of Thriving Places in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Highways and Assets to award stage 2 of a two-stage design and build contract to Story Contracting Limited. The contract is to undertake and deliver the works relating to the A595 Grizebeck Improvement Scheme as set out in this report, commencing on a programmed date of 10 September 2024 with a contractual completion date of May 2028 for a total estimated value of £16.145m plus a change mechanism which may result in an additional sum of up to £2.400m;

(3)   agrees to inclusion of the additional £23.311m cost (and associated funding) to the Grizebeck scheme within the 2024-2029 capital programme using the profile agreed within the contract.

145.   AWARD OF CONTRACT - HIGHWAYS CORE SURFACING WORKS 2024-2030

Cabinet considered a report which requested approval to award a new term service contract for the provision of highway core surfacing works for a maximum value of £60m over a period of up to 5 years 11 months.

The works were capital highway maintenance to extend the life of worn carriageway. The primary works included maintenance and repair of existing highways including, inlay, overlay and partial or full reconstruction. The services would generally not consist of patching or small-scale resurfacing schemes although patching may form part of wider surfacing schemes. Associated works included all road marking replacements and temporary traffic management.

Cumbria County Council previously procured three Cumbria wide core surfacing contracts which commenced in April 2018. The contracts were awarded for an initial period of three years with three possible one-year extensions which had now all been exhausted.

Following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cumbria, from 1 April 2023 the contracts were divided between the two new authorities with the Allerdale and Copeland contract (DSD) transferring to Cumberland Council, the Barrow and South Lakeland contract (Aggregate Industries) transferring to Westmorland and Furness Council and the Eden and Carlisle contract (Hanson's) being split with respective new contracts for Eden and Carlisle entered by the new authorities for the final year of the term.

The new contract would be a single Council area wide contract, and although the contract would have an overall value of up to £60m over the six-year term, there was no obligation for the Council to achieve this or any level of spend through the term service contract. The contract would be a term service contract with all works to be instructed through task orders.

The recommendation was moved and seconded and put to a vote, which was unanimous.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet award the contract for Core Surfacing Works to Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd T/A Heidelberg Materials UK for an initial term of two years and 11 months years from 01 May 2024 to 31 March 2027 (to align with financial years) with three possible one year extensions to 31 March 2030. The anticipated value of the work procured through the framework is c. £8m, per annum, with a maximum value of £60m over the period of up to 5 years 11 months.

146. AWARD OF CONTRACT - HIGHWAYS SURFACE TREATMENT WORKS 2024-2030

Members had before them a report from the Director of Thriving Places, which requested approval to award a new term contract for the provision of highway surface treatment works for a maximum value of £40m over a period of up to 5 years 11 months.

The works were capital highway maintenance to extend the life of worn carriageway. The primary works included surface dressing, micro asphalt surfacing and high friction surfacing. Associated works include all road marking replacements and temporary traffic management. The contractor may also carry out pre-surface treatment patching work if required to support the Council's in-house teams.

The contract will be a term contract with all works to be instructed through task orders. The design of surface treatment works would be carried out by the contractor.

Cumbria County Council procured the current Surface Treatment term service contract that commenced in July 2018 to deliver the capital programme for highway maintenance surface dressing, micro asphalt surfacing and high friction surfacing.

Following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cumbria, from 1 April 2023 the countywide contract was split into two new separate contracts. One covering the Cumberland Council area and the other for the Westmorland and Furness Council area on identical terms and conditions as the original contract. The Westmorland and Furness Council contract would end on 15 July 2024, and there was no further provision for any extension to the contract and a new contract is required.

The new contract was for both design and construction, with the Contractor having responsibility for all on-site testing and the design of the surface treatments.

The new contract would be a single Council wide contract. There were limited advantages to smaller area-based, or multi lot contracts as these works were specialist in nature and could only be delivered by a small number of accredited national contractors.

The work to be delivered under this contract was a capital activity and there was funding in the Capital Programme 2023-2028 approved by Council in March 2023 that would support expenditure on this contract.

The recommendation was moved, seconded and vote upon, the outcome of which was unanimous.

RESOLVED,   that Cabinet award the term services contract for Surface Treatment works to Kiely Bros Ltd for an initial term of two years and 11 months from 1 May 2024 to 31 March 2027 (to align with financial years) with three possible one year to 31 March 2030. The anticipated value of the work procured through the contract is c. £5m, per annum, with a maximum value of £40m over the period of up to 5 years 11 months.

147.   AWARD AND APPOINT SUPPLIERS TO CAPITAL WORKS FRAMEWORK 2024-2028

Cabinet considered a report which sought approval to award a new framework agreement and to appoint the selected contractors to the Capital Works Framework Agreement 2024-2028. The framework agreement provided access to a range of construction suppliers to support the delivery of the Council's capital programme.

The resulting works were expected to include highway and improvement schemes, schools and corporate property maintenance and improvement works, new build highways & property schemes and economic development or regeneration schemes.

The framework agreement would run from June 2024 to May 2028. The anticipated value of the work procured through the framework agreement would be £25m-£50m per annum depending on use by Westmorland and Furness Council and other framework users.

Westmorland and Furness Council was currently responsible for the strategic local services of the former County and District Councils that previously covered the administrative areas of Eden, South Lakeland and Barrow-in-Furness within Cumbria.

The Council delivered a capital programme each year between £60-80m through delivery of major programmes and projects. In addition to its extensive highways network, the Council owned a large portfolio of corporate property including primary and secondary schools, care homes, offices, depots, libraries, and household waste recycling sites. The improvement and upkeep of these assets as well as the delivery of place making, flood defence and decarbonisation schemes form the core of the delivery activity each year.

The current capital works framework agreement commenced on 1 January 2020 for a period of 4 years. The framework had been successful with a range of projects undertaken from school and care home construction and refurbishment to highway and flood defence infrastructure.

In order to continue to support the delivery of the capital programme, a framework agreement was required to replace the current framework agreement which would expire on 1 June 2024 following a four-month extension.

Cllr Taylor asked if new companies could ask to join the framework once it was agreed today by Cabinet.

It was agreed that a written answer would be provided.

The recommendation was then moved, seconded and put to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED,   that Cabinet

(1)   approves the Council entering into the Capital Works Framework Agreement with selected suppliers; and

(2)   appoints the selected suppliers onto the Capital Works Framework Agreement as listed within the Regulation 84 Report (see appendix 1 of the report).

148.   **PROPOSAL TO CLOSE NORTH WALNEY NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills presented a report which informed Cabinet of the increasing pressure upon both leadership and staff at North Walney Nursery and Primary School to continue to provide a quality educational offer given the ongoing decline in the number of pupils at the school and the resulting impact on the school's financial position.

With the approval of the Director of Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Education and Skills, a public consultation exercise on a

proposal to close the school was undertaken between 1 November 2023 and 12 December 2023.

Following the completion of the consultation process Cabinet considered the consultation responses on 23 January 2024 and resolved to approve the publication of a statutory notice and statutory proposal for the proposed closure of North Walney Nursery and Primary School from 31 August 2024.

The statutory representation period ran from 5 February to 3 March 2024. This report set out the responses that had been received by the Council in response to the publication of the statutory notice.

Having considered the responses received during the consultation period, the representation period and having considered the Equality Impact Assessment. Cabinet approval was now sought to proceed with the closure proposal.

Cabinet noted that although the school had a capacity of 161 based upon its published admission number there had been a sharp decline in the number of pupils on roll at the school since 2019/20 when the school provided education for 84 children.

The number of children on roll in the school at the beginning of the academic year 2023/24 was 27. The Local Authority's advice to parents was for their children to remain on roll at North Walney school until a final decision was made about the closure proposal.

However, as 28 February 2024 there were no children remaining on roll at the school as parents/carers had opted to apply for new school places in the local area.

The Cabinet Member said the Local Authority recognised the work undertaken by the school's leadership and staff to continue to provide a quality educational offer in challenging circumstances.

However, the governing body had found it extremely difficult to recruit and retain staff in the current climate and the Local Authority considered that this had increased the workload on existing school staff to levels that were now unsustainable.

The Cabinet Member reassured Cabinet that officers were clear that all considerations had been taken into account and had been addressed in developing this proposal.

Cabinet asked that it be put on record that they did not take this decision lightly, however, in this instance it was appropriate to take this decision.

The Cabinet Members then moved the recommendations, which were seconded and put to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED,   that Cabinet

(1) considers the responses that has been received by the Council in response to the publication of the statutory proposal and during the pre-statutory consultation period;

(2) approves the proposal to close North Walney Nursery and Primary School on 31 August 2024;

(3) delegates to the Director of Children's Services the notification of the decision to the governing body and all relevant parties as set out in the relevant statutory guidance.

149. PROPOSAL TO EXPAND BEACONSIDE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Members had before them a report from the Director of Children's Services which informed then that the Council was in receipt of Section 106 (s106) funding from several housing developments that had been constructed in the Penrith area.

This funding had to be used to support the creation of additional primary school places and could be delivered by making improvements or extensions to existing schools in Penrith.

Discussions around the most effective way to utilise these s106 funding contributions had been ongoing for a number of years, pre-dating the creation of Westmorland and Furness Council.

Between 3 October 2023 and 31 October 2023, the Council consulted on a proposal to utilise these s.106 contributions by expanding Beaconside Church of England Primary School ('Beaconside') in Penrith, to facilitate an increase in mainstream primary places and establish new key stage 2 resource provision at the school.

Cabinet approval was now sought to proceed with the expansion proposal.

The funding relating to housing developments in Penrith that the Council was in receipt of (via s106 agreements) totalled £3,540,012. This included £1,979,303 which must be committed by 24 April 2024. The remaining allocations had expiry dates ranging from 2026 to 2033. The different s106 agreements specified how the funding could be used, all relating to the creation of additional primary school places and the Council was satisfied that the S 106 monies were being used to address the need which arose directly from the relevant developments.

The profiled allocation provisionally allocated through the Capital Programme to this project aligned with the indicative costing (including contingency) was £2.67m. The remaining funding (£0.87m) would be the subject of further review and consideration regarding any   future developments in Penrith schools that would meet the s106 requirements.

While historically there was some expectation locally that the housing developments would result in a new school being created; the funding contributions arising from the section 106 agreements and the associated pupil yields were not sufficient to justify the establishment of a new school.

Currently primary phase resource provision in Penrith was split between Beaconside Primary School and North Lakes Primary School and required pupils to transfer schools between KS1 and KS2. The creation of a new Key Stage 2 resource provision at Beaconside would allow children attending the Key Stage 1 provision the opportunity to continue their primary education at Beaconside and stay with their peer group without the need for transition to another school.

Cabinet noted that this proposal related only to Beaconside and was not proposing any amendments to the existing resource provision at North Lakes Primary School.

This proposal was intended to ensure that the town had sufficient school places for local children. A proportion of the parents of children who lived in Penrith chose to travel to attend rural schools in the locality. If the pattern for school choice of parents was not to flow outwards from Penrith but to reverse and stay within Penrith, then Penrith would have had a deficit of places within a 'reasonable distance of a child's home' at primary school level.

Beaconside was projected to be close to PAN for the 2025/26 Reception intake and above PAN for the 2026/27 Reception intake. (For 2025/26, the school was predicted to have an intake of 71 pupils, and for 2026/27, the school was predicted to enrol 75 children).

Beaconside had been the significant recipient of in year admissions in the area and there had been double figure numbers of children added to cohorts since the construction of the relevant housing developments had begun.

Beaconside was the closest school to most of the new housing developments in Penrith and had a site with significant open space that was amenable to expansion. This concentration of the housing developments meant that Beaconside was most likely to be the preferred destination for new families.

Cabinet noted that Beaconside was in a financially sustainable position and if the proposal was approved the school's leadership had capacity to work with the Council to implement the proposal. The Governing Body and the Council would work together to ensure that the mainstream expansion and the establishment of the resourced provision was phased in appropriately.

Cllr Bell was aware that at the time that planning applications were granted for the new developments it was expected that a new school would be built. However, due to the fall in the birth rate the number of children being born in the Penrith area was not as big as expected. Beaconside was an excellent school and she supported the proposals.

Cllr Jarvis proposed that in recommendation 2.4 the lead Cabinet Members be stipulated. Cabinet agreed with this proposal.

Cllr Hughes referred to the second bullet point in paragraph 5.6 which referred to 39% of the consultees expressing concern about the effect this decision would have on neighbouring local schools. He asked that any publicity done about this decision

would have due regard to this. The Leader asked the Senior Manager Communications to action this.

The Cabinet Member moved the recommendations which were seconded and put to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet

(1) approves establishment of key stage two resource provision at Beaconside Primary Church of England School, creating 14 new places designated for children with physical or medical needs from 1 September 2026;

(2) approves the decision to proceed with the capital project, funded entirely by relevant s.106 contributions and project managed by the Local Authority, to expand Beaconside Church of England Primary School as outlined in the report;

(3) delegates to the Director of Children's Services the authority to agree and finalise the terms of the Collaboration Agreement with the Diocese of Carlisle in consultation with the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer;

(4) delegates the decision to award the Design and Build Contract to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Assets, subject to the Director being assured that the Council has entered into a Collaboration Agreement with the Diocese of Carlisle as outlined in this report at paragraph 3.13.2;

(5) delegates to the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer authority to enter into all associated legal agreements.

150. TEAM BARROW DELIVERY BOARD

The Leader presented a report which sought agreement to accept funding that would support activities of the Barrow Delivery Board.

The 2023 Autumn Statement announcement included up to £5 million of revenue for the establishment of a Delivery Board for Barrow with associated programme management and governance over the next three years (2024-27) and early (year one) masterplanning activity.

The revenue funding would enable the Council to bring in additional capacity to resource activity for each of the five workstreams reporting to the Delivery Board.

This resource would sit within a Programme Management Office (PMO) for Team Barrow, hosted in the Assistant Chief Executive service. Although a grant offer had not yet been received, Appendix A provided confirmation of the intent from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to fund Team Barrow.

The Leader informed Cabinet that the report also sought agreement for the Council to be represented on the Delivery Board by the Chief Executive.

Establishing a Delivery Board for Barrow was a stated Government requirement. The Team Barrow PMO and the funding received to resource it would support the Delivery Board and its aims.

It was important that the Council was represented on the Delivery Board to provide place leadership as a Team Barrow partner. Appendix B provided further information on the proposed governance structure and programme management. Appendix C sets out a first draft of the proposed Terms of Reference for the Delivery Board.

The Leader briefed Cabinet and officers on discussions which had taken place yesterday with Government that there was a need to have political representation on the Team Barrow Delivery Board, and that proposals on this would come forward to a future meeting for Cabinet approval.

The Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed this and supported the recommendations in the report. He felt that although the situation was rapidly moving the governance arrangements for the Delivery Board would be important.

The Chief Executive said there was an urgent need to get the Team Barrow Delivery Board established and that things were moving quickly. There were already strong governance arrangements in Barrow with the Brilliant Barrow Board, so they may also be involved in some form but these arrangements had not yet been finalised. The Chair of the Team Barrow Delivery Board was still to be appointed and Cabinet noted this would be a Government appointed Minister.

There was a proposal that Cabinet could indicate a preference for the Leader, and Cabinet Member for Finance to be appointed to the Board. However, the Leader was reluctant to agree to this as both he and the Cabinet Member for Finance we already members of the Brilliant Barrow Board.

The Chief Executive suggested giving officers another couple of weeks to consider the governance of this and an update report would come to a future Cabinet meeting,

The Cabinet Member for Finance asked officers to look at the frequency of meetings once the Board was established as the view of the Brilliant Barrow Board was that they did not meet often enough to enable efficient decision making with the current schedule of meetings.

Cllr Hughes wondered what, if any, the role of the portfolio holders would be in the decision making. He would prefer to be involved or consulted about any transport decisions which would fall under his portfolio.

The Cabinet Member for Finance said he hoped that all Cabinet Members would be kept informed but that procedures for how this would be done were still being

considered. However, some of the decisions would be reserved for the Cabinet to take.

The recommendations were then moved, seconded and put to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet

(1) agrees to accept up to £5 million of funding to support Barrow Delivery Board activities and delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance, Director of Resources (S151), and Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer to enter into related contracts and funding agreements in line with the letter of comfort at Appendix Av of the report;

(2) appoints the Chief Executive onto the Barrow Delivery Board; and

(3) delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance, Director of Resources (S151), and Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer to agree the final Terms of Reference for the Barrow Delivery Board in line with Appendix C of the report.

151. URGENT ITEMS - MARINA VILLAGE - GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENT UPDATE

It was proposed and seconded that the meeting move into Part II at this point in order for the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer to discuss the proposed amendments to the terms of the negotiated (Brownfield Infrastructure Land Fund (BIL) agreement. This was confidential by virtue of Section 100B (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12 Paragraph 5 - information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. This was **AGREED**.

Upon conclusion of the discussions the meeting moved back into Part I and the press and public returned to the meeting.

The Leader presented a report which reminded Cabinet that in January 2024 members approved the principal of entering into a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) with Homes England for £24.840m under their Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund. This funding was for site remediation and infrastructure costs on the Marina Village allocated housing site in Barrow in Furness.

The Marina Village Site was owned by Westmorland and Furness Council and could accommodate 800 homes to support the regeneration of Barrow in Furness and in furtherance of the objectives of the wider "Team Barrow" programme.

The Leader also reminded Cabinet of the delegations agreed as part of this report.

Through negotiations with Homes England subsequent to the January 2024 Cabinet report to finalise the GFA the terms of the grant had subtly changed from the position previously reported to Cabinet.

Officers of the Council felt that for transparency it was important that members were informed of a change to the approach in managing the potential capital receipt from the sale of the land once the remediation and infrastructure work that the grant was being provide for was completed.

The main risk to the Council was the funding available to recover its own costs of relocating the depot, gaining outline planning permission and it's sunk costs.

There was a low risk that the capital receipt received for the land was less than £4.350m. Given the wider Team Barrow activities and interest in the development opportunity this risk was unlikely. It was also likely that the Council would incur the costs prior to the capital receipt being received and would therefore need to fund those from its own sources before it recouped the capital receipt at a later stage.

If the capital receipt was higher than £8.650m the additional receipts would be paid to Homes England. Given the downside risk to the Council this upside risk was appropriate in respect of the Homes England investment in the site.

The amended recommendation was moved, seconded and put to a unanimous vote.

RESOLVED,   that having considered this report, the updated Appendix 1, plus the removal of the £3.2m cap, delegate authority to the Director of Thriving Places in consultation with the Director of Resources and Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer finalise and enter into the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) with Homes England for the value of £24.840m.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

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Cabinet

Report Title	Westmorland and Furness Council - Council Plan Delivery Framework 2024/25 Update and Westmorland and Furness Performance Management Framework
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Kieran Barr
Director	Alison Hatcher - Assistant Chief Executive
Lead Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **NO** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Identify exempt information and exemption category	N/A
Reasons for urgency (<u>only</u> where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1: Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework Appendix 2: Westmorland and Furness Council Performance Management Framework Appendix 3: Equality Impact Screening Assessment Appendix 4: Feedback from informal Scrutiny & Locality Board

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report seeks Cabinet recommendation to Full Council for approval of two related documents:

- the 2024/25 update of the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework including a review of 2023/24 delivery activity (Appendix 1);
- a new Westmorland and Furness Council Performance Management Framework and associated set of corporate performance indicators for reporting in 2024/25. (Appendix 2).

1.2   The Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework (the Framework) builds on the Council Plan that was approved by Shadow Authority Councillors in December 2022. The first edition of the framework was agreed by Full Council in September 2023, with agreement that it be updated annually. The Framework is intended to set the strategic direction for the organisation and help explain how the Council will facilitate improved outcomes for residents, communities and businesses, identifying specific activities and deliverables each year, and setting out how the Council will use its convening powers through collaborative partnership working to facilitate the delivery of these outcomes.

1.3   The Westmorland and Furness Council Performance Management Framework (PMF) provides the overarching framework for how performance will be monitored and managed by the council to ensure progress is being made towards achievement of the council's priority outcomes. The associated set of corporate performance indicators provide the specific measures that will be used to help assess performance and will be reported publicly on a quarterly basis.

2.   Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1   agree and recommend to Full Council, the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework 2024/25 edition, attached at Appendix 1.

2.2   agree and recommend to Full Council the Westmorland and Furness Council Performance Management Framework and corporate performance indicators, attached at Appendix 2.

3.   Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

Council Plan Delivery Framework

3.1   The Westmorland and Furness Council Plan (the Plan) was approved by Shadow Authority Councillors in December 2022 and covers a period of five years (2023-28), setting out the council's vision for Westmorland and Furness to be a great place to live, work and thrive. The Plan also articulates the Council's values, priorities and areas of focus.

3.2   To support the delivery of the plan, the Council developed a more detailed delivery framework that builds on the content of the Council Plan. It sets out the strategic direction for the organisation and helps to explain how the council will facilitate improved outcomes for residents, communities and businesses, helping make Westmorland and Furness a great place to live, work and thrive.

3.3   The first edition of the Framework was agreed by Full Council in September 2023, with the intention that it was then updated annually following agreement of the council's budget. The Framework attached at Appendix 1 provides the update for 2024/25.

3.4   The Framework identifies 10 strategic themes and explains the related ambition for these themes as mission statements. These elements are unchanged from 2023/24.

Strategic Theme	Mission Statement
Communities	Communities are welcoming, inclusive and provide a good quality of life. They are proud of and care for their local areas. They are able to make the right choices for them. They are resilient, and their voices and choices are heard through local participation.
Environment	Our environment positively impacts on health, well-being and economy and together we build our resilience to climate change and take action to reverse biodiversity loss and to achieve carbon net zero.
Growth	Our economy is growing and providing people with access to a diverse range of good employment opportunities for them to be economically secure, across our rural and urban areas. Our businesses are more diverse and thriving, our large businesses continue to grow, and new investment is further increasing the contribution made to national growth and prosperity.
Connections	Transport and infrastructure enables people and businesses to reliably and easily access the places and services that meet their needs, including online, in an environmentally sustainable way.
Homes	Everyone can live in a place they call home, one which is affordable, clean, safe and warm, where they can build stable, independent, fulfilling lives and have access to schools, work and cultural activities.
Learning	Everyone has access to high quality education, where children, young people and adults are equipped with relevant tools, skills and aspiration to pursue the life they want to live and to access a rich and varied choice of local employment opportunities that contribute to a fulfilled and happy life.
Care	Children, young people and adults are supported to achieve a good life, safeguarded from harm, in the place they call home, with the people and things that matter most to them.
Health & Wellbeing	No matter where you are born or where you live, there is equal opportunity for everyone to live an active, happy, healthy life, and to be able to and confident to choose the best ways in which this is achieved for each individual and for every community.
Culture	Culture is central to our place shaping, the development of creative people and places, our economy and visitor offer, the health and wellbeing of our communities and the promotion of both our unique natural and world heritage cultural landscape. In parallel, everyone has access to a diverse and distinctive range of opportunities to be creative and enjoy high quality cultural experiences across our area.

Effective services	The council listens and takes pride in delivering services that make a difference. It is a modern, innovative and inclusive council with communities and customers at the heart of everything we do.

3.5   For each strategic theme and mission statement there is set of success measures, which outline the outcomes that the Council is seeking to achieve.

3.6   There is also a list of key deliverables associated with each theme. This provides a clear picture of the council's priority focus and the practical action that will happen to drive progress each year. It is these lists that provide the substantive update to the Framework each year and are included in Appendix 1.

3.7   The updated Framework also provides an overview of the activity delivered in the preceding year, illustrating the progress that has been made under each strategic theme.

3.8   Approval of the Framework will support the continued delivery of the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan, its vision, values and strategic objectives. It also restates the council's commitment to the three principles of sustainable development that cut across all 10 themes, relating to equity, environment and economy.

Performance Management Framework

3.9   The Performance Management Framework (PMF) provides an overarching framework for how performance will be monitored and managed by the council to ensure progress is being made towards achievement of the council's priority outcomes as set out in the Delivery Framework. The PMF is attached at Appendix 2.

3.10   The PMF explains the process of performance management, roles and responsibilities of officers and Members, governance and the relationship between the Council Plan and individual performance, as well as how we will use data, information and analysis to inform our decision making and performance management.

3.11   The PMF also provides a description of how the council's performance will be publicly reported upon. A corporate performance report will be submitted quarterly to Cabinet and will be structured around the 10 delivery framework themes. The report will include an overall theme narrative highlighting areas of success and challenge in the quarter, a progress tracker monitoring key deliverables identified in the Delivery Framework, and a set of 70 corporate performance indicators that provide the specific measures that will be used to help assess performance.

3.12   These corporate performance indicators have been selected to align with the 10 Delivery Framework themes and are a subset of the much larger number of performance indicators used by council services to monitor day to day service delivery. In this way, a direct connection will be made between the Delivery Framework and our performance monitoring and management.

ID	Strategic Theme	Performance indicator
101	Communities	Number of Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) groups supported/started up
102	Communities	Rank of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) as a concern reported by residents
103	Communities	Rate of all recorded offences (excluding fraud)
104	Communities	Number of Social Enterprise start-ups
105	Communities	Number of Social Enterprises assisted
201	Environment	Numbers of trees and hedgerows planted over 5 years
202	Environment	Number of hectares of peat restored through the Peat Partnership (from Local Authority grant)
203	Environment	Carbon emissions (of Local Authority operations)
204	Environment	Number of private homes improved through energy efficiency initiatives (housing retrofit)
205	Environment	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting
206	Environment	Kilograms of residual waste (including grey bins, litter bins street sweepings and other)
301	Growth	Total Gross Value Added (GVA)
302	Growth	Percentage of the workforce with qualifications
303	Growth	Claimant Rate of Universal Credit by those looking for employment
304	Growth	Percentage of Full Plan applications given a decision within 5 weeks or maximum 2 months (if extension of time agreed) from plans submission/validation
305	Growth	Percentage of Major Planning Applications determined within 13 weeks
306	Growth	Percentage of Minor Planning Applications determined within 8 weeks
307	Growth	Number of businesses supported through business support programmes
401	Connections	Percentage of all Highways Defects completed within agreed response time
402	Connections	Percentage of A roads in need of maintenance treatment (Grade 4/5)
403	Connections	Number of passengers using bus services supported by the Council
404	Connections	Number of open highways defects (including those waiting for assessment/categorisation)
501	Homes	Percentage of council tenant satisfaction with overall service provided by the council
502	Homes	Percentage of social housing properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS)
503	Homes	Percentage of successful homelessness prevention outcomes
504	Homes	Percentage of successful homelessness relief outcomes
505	Homes	Number of people on the waiting list for social housing
506	Homes	Number of households in temporary accommodation
507	Homes	Number of completed dwellings
508	Homes	Number of affordable homes completed
601	Learning	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within timescales (including exceptions)

602	Learning	Percentage of 16-17 year olds looked after in care in Education Employment or Training (EET)
603	Learning	Percentage of 16-17 year olds with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Education Employment or Training (EET)
604	Learning	Percentage of 16-17 year olds in Education Employment or Training (EET)
605	Learning	Percentage of pupils receiving a Permanent Exclusion
606	Learning	Percentage of sessions missed by all pupils (overall absence rate)
607	Learning	Percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
608	Learning	Percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined at Key Stage 2
609	Learning	Percentage of pupils attaining GCSE levels 4-9 in English and Mathematics at Key Stage 4
610	Learning	Average Point Score (APS) per level 3 qualification entry (includes A level, Academic, Applied and Technical)
611	Learning	Adult Education enrolments on the digital curriculum from vulnerable and older adult residents in isolated areas
701	Care	Rate of Cared For children
702	Care	Rate of children subject of a Child Protection (CP) Plan
703	Care	Percentage of Children in Need (CIN) referrals that take place within 12 months of a previous referral for the same child
704	Care	Percentage of Cared for Children living in the in same placement for 2 + years
705	Care	Percentage of Care leavers in suitable accommodation (any age)
706	Care	Number of people currently waiting for a Social Work Assessment & Occupational Therapy Assessment
707	Care	Rate of adults aged 18-64 whose long-term care needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes
708	Care	Rate of adults aged 65 and over whose long-term care needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes
709	Care	Number of people who have reduced or no ongoing support needs following a period of reablement (including reablement at home or within an intermediate care setting)
710	Care	Percentage of Section 42 Safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and the reported outcome was that this risk was reduced or removed
711	Care	Percentage of Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings that remain Good as a minimum across all registered services
801	Health and well-being	Percentage of adults who are current smokers
802	Health and well-being	Rate of Suicide (persons)
803	Health and well-being	Rate of deaths from drug misuse (persons)
804	Health and well-being	Percentage of people receiving coaching support reporting an improvement in their mental health
805	Health and well-being	Percentage of mandated health visitor visits completed within timescales
806	Health and well-being	Percentage of opiate users that completed drug treatment successfully

807	Health and well-being	Number of active leisure centre memberships
901	Culture	Rate of physical visits to library sites
902	Culture	Number of recorded visitors into Local Authority museums
903	Culture	Number of attendances at shows cultural events/activities/shows within Local Authority venues
904	Culture	Number of grants issued annually by the Local Authority to support cultural & heritage projects
1001	Effective services	Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests processed within statutory timescales
1002	Effective services	Percentage of complaints responded to within timeframe
1003	Effective services	Number of days on average to process new claims for Housing Benefit (HB) / Council Tax Refund (CTR) claims
1004	Effective services	Percentage of return per annum over 10 years on Local Government Pension Scheme Investment
1005	Effective services	Number of working days forecast in the year to be lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) due to sickness absence
1006	Effective services	Number of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) Reportable Health and Safety Incidents
1007	Effective services	Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance received

3.13   As with the Delivery Framework, approval of the PMF will support the continued delivery of the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan, its vision, values and strategic objectives.

4.   Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1   All documents referenced here relate to all Council Plan priorities, providing the framework for how they will be delivered and the method by which progress will be assessed.

5.   Consultation Outcomes

5.1   Neither the Delivery Framework or Performance Management Framework have been the subject of formal consultation, however, both have been shared informally with a range of internal and external stakeholders for feedback.

5.2   Scrutiny Members and Locality Board Chairs and Vice Chairs all had opportunity to comment on draft versions of the documents via two discussion sessions. A detailed breakdown of the feedback provided, and the action taken to revise and update the documents, is included separately in Appendix 4.

6.   Alternative Options Considered

6.1   The 2024/25 Delivery Framework update and Performance Management Framework build on the direction and principles agreed in the Council Plan,

providing more information about how desired outcomes will be achieve and progress measured.

6.2   As an extension of the approved Council Plan, an alternative option was to progress the Framework without formal recommendation to Full Council. However, both the Delivery Framework and Performance Management Framework are key corporate documents which set direction and provide public accountability for our performance, therefore it is considered appropriate that both should be recommended to Full Council.

7.   Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1   The Delivery Framework and Performance Management Framework are foundational documents for the work of Westmorland and Furness Council and reflect engagement with officers and Members. They set direction for the organisation and provide an approach for assessing progress towards goals. In addition, they provide a public statement of our priorities, the activity we are focused on in the coming year (2024/25) and provide means by which we make the organisation accountable. Therefore, it is recommended that both documents be recommended to Full Council for approval.

8.   Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1   There are no climate change or biodiversity implications arising directly from these recommendations. However, both documents explicitly relate to the achievement of the council's stated goals of delivering carbon net zero, addressing biodiversity loss and mitigating the impacts of climate change by providing descriptions of priority activity and the methods by which progress will be measured.

9.   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   The Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework (the Framework) builds on the Council Plan that was approved by Shadow Authority Councillors in December 2022. The first edition of the framework was agreed by Full Council in September 2023, with agreement that it be updated annually.

10.   Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1   The Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework supports delivery of the Council Plan, its vision, values and strategic objectives. This provides clarity and purpose for the workforce on how they contribute to achieving the council's priorities

11.   Financial Implications

11.1   The Westmorland & Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework will support the Council's strategic planning linking corporate priorities with the Medium Term Financial Plan. Budget monitoring reported to Cabinet will inform the annual review of the Framework and help the Council to be financially sustainable and pivot the budget.

12.   Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)

12.1   The Delivery Framework and Performance Management Framework have been subject to Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Screening and it has been determined that a full EqIA is not required for these documents. See Appendix 3.

12.2   Full EqIA will be required against the more detailed strategies, plans, policies, programmes and projects that are identified in the Delivery Framework.

13.   Background Documents

13.1   Westmorland and Furness Council Plan: Council plan | Westmorland and Furness Council

13.2   Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework 2023/24: Council plan delivery framework | Westmorland and Furness Council
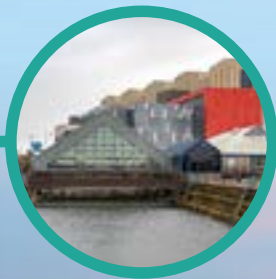
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Westmorland & Furness Council

DRAFT

Council Plan Delivery Framework

2024/25 Update

> **"Our aim continues to be to deliver the best possible outcomes for residents, communities, and businesses."**

Foreword

Welcome to the 2024/25 Council Plan Delivery Framework, our annual update on how we are working to achieve the priorities we set out in the Westmorland & Furness Council Plan 2023-28.

It's hard to believe that Westmorland & Furness Council has now been up and running for a full year, the time has certainly flown by. What I think that really reflects is the huge amount of activity that has been undertaken across our service areas since vesting day.

In our first Delivery Framework we set out over 100 different actions that we would deliver, across 10 strategic themes. Barely a week has gone by without a new development or announcement that's making a difference for our area. We have big ambitions for our area and I'm extremely proud of what we have achieved so far.

Through the course of the year, we've also come to understand more about the complexity and challenges we face in truly integrating the four legacy councils into one new organisation. Whether it's our ICT, our organisational culture or our ways working and delivering services in different areas, we know that the road ahead of us is a long one. In our first year we started our journey along that road, and as we look to the year ahead, I know that we are set to start moving through the gears and increasing the pace of change.

This can be seen in the ambitious change programmes that we will be focusing on in waste and environmental services, planning, children's services and adult social care. These are big and complex tasks that we are rightly prioritising in this year's Delivery Framework, alongside other smaller scale but no less important pieces of work.

Integral to all this activity is ensuring that in the face of ongoing budget challenges, we can have a financially sustainable future. Becoming a unitary council gave us the opportunity to do things differently, more efficiently and reduce costs. Realising these benefits is a necessity and an overarching theme in this document.

Our aim continues to be to deliver the best possible outcomes for residents, communities, and businesses and we know our success depends on being able to develop meaningful and collaborative relationships with our partners and communities. By working together, we are confident that we can get things done.

I hope this document give you an insight into what's been happening, our plans for this year, and how you can work with us to make a difference.

Cllr Jonathan Brook
Leader
Westmorland and Furness Council

Contents

Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council came into being on 1 April 2023, setting out its vision, values and priorities for the next five years in the Council Plan 2023-28.

Our Delivery Framework builds on the Council Plan and works within the parameters set out in our Medium-Term Financial Plan. We published our first edition of the Delivery Framework in September 2023, and each year we review, update and publish a new edition of the framework in April. This is the first of those updates for the financial year 2024/25.

The framework provides more information about what we plan to deliver and how we will work with you, making the most of our unique and distinctive area.

We want to get the foundations right and are working hard to make sure we can deliver efficient and effective services. We are ambitious and want to seize the opportunity we have as a new unitary authority to deliver improved services.

Collaboration underpins everything we want to do. We recognise our leadership role for Westmorland and Furness and that we have to listen, engage and support our partners and communities if we are to succeed.

We need to do this together to make a difference, so please, join us on our continuing journey!

Purpose of the delivery framework

This document explains what we will focus on in the coming year to ensure Westmorland and Furness is a great place to live, work and thrive. We will work with our partners and communities to make that happen.

The council's range of functions and responsibilities is wide. The Delivery Framework is not a complete list of everything we will do. Rather it provides an overarching framework for our work and highlights those areas of priority focus for the coming year. The framework is intended to illustrate the journey we are on as a new council and to act as an invitation to communities, public, private and third sector partners to work with us as we develop and evolve.

We will update this second edition in Spring 2025, and thereafter annually. Each iteration will grow in focus and impact, drawing on engagement with partners and communities to report on progress and next steps on the journey together.

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Roanhead Beach

We cannot make an effective difference on our own. It is through developing a shared purpose, honest relationships and strong partnerships that new ways of working can evolve delivering against mutually agreed priorities, reducing inequalities, increasing prosperity and improving outcomes for the people across the whole of Westmorland and Furness.

The delivery framework is:

- descriptive of the outcomes we want to deliver
- focused on the distinctive qualities and opportunities we have
- something to describe our strategic direction but leave space for new ideas
- something to inspire purpose and to encourage collaboration.

The delivery framework is not:

- a strategy for how our vision will be realised
- an instruction manual or blueprint
- complete or perfect
- a routemap for delivering our priorities.

Penrith

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Our values

Our values underpin everything we do and guide us in delivering our vision. We care and believe everyone matters. We will empower and inspire communities to thrive.

Ambitious
We are ambitious for everyone. We will focus on identifying and delivering the outcomes that our communities want to see. We will support our workforce to innovatively transform services for the better, enabling residents and visitors to have healthy, happy lives.

Inclusive
We will be an inclusive council and will work collectively with partners to challenge each other to improve diversity and eliminate all forms of discrimination in our organisations and through local leadership increase participation in local decision making within under represented communities.

Collaborative
We will work with partners, communities, and residents to deliver the best outcomes for all.

Outcome focused
We are outcome focused and we will focus on identifying and leading the delivery of the changes that our communities want to see.

Responsible
We are responsible, socially, environmentally, and financially. Providing leadership in the drive to become carbon neutral and delivering value for money in everything we do. We will make the best and most efficient use of our resources, while making sustainable decisions and striving to deliver on our promises to you.

Needs-led
We will intervene early to prevent harm, act in an equitable way leaving no-one behind, and enable all to ask for help in order to gain access to the right service, in the right place at the right time.

Ecologically aware
We will provide leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero and sustainable.

Our context

Together we are **Westmorland and Furness.**

We are ambitious and proud of our places and communities. We are aiming high for everyone and will celebrate our successes along the way. Westmorland and Furness Council cares and believes everyone matters. We will engage and work with communities on how we can best help, recognising this will differ to reflect different needs.

Delivery of this ambition will be influenced by our context:

We are the third largest unitary local authority area in England and the most sparsely populated.

We are home to both some of the country's most stunning landscapes and its most hi-tech businesses.

We have thousands of new long-term jobs, transformative regeneration and nationally significant infrastructure projects in the pipeline.

We have a huge opportunity to work inclusively with partners and communities to identify and deliver outcomes we all want to see.

We must always be responsible, socially, environmentally and financially. It may take time to deliver our ambition and we will have difficult choices to make.

We have extra pressures as a new local authority in updating and aligning legacy systems, policies and practices.

We can make a difference by working with partners, communities and residents to deliver the best outcomes for all, intervening early and in an equitable way to leave no-one behind and provide leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero and sustainable.

Sedbergh

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Westmorland and Furness | *in numbers*

227,600 people
32,800 in National Parks

55%
live in rural areas

55,500
in the largest town of Barrow

59,300
65+ years old
(75,800 in 2040)

134,200
working aged people

10,070 businesses
providing 115,000 jobs

122
primary schools

20
secondary schools

3
special schools

134
parish councils

10
town councils

Alston

NORTH PENNINES AONB

Penrith

A66

Appleby-in-Westmorland

A66

LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

A591

Grasmere

Ambleside

A6

Kirkby Stephen

A685

Windermere

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

Hawkshead

Kendal

A684

Sedbergh

M6

A5092

Grange-over-Sands

A595

Ulverston

A590

Milnthorpe

A65

Kirkby Lonsdale

Dalton

Grange-over-Sands

ARNSIDE AND SILVERDALE AONB

Barrow-in-Furness

Martindale

A sustainable Westmorland and Furness

Westmorland and Furness is a fantastic place, with a world-renowned natural landscape, internationally recognised businesses, diverse sector expertise and knowledge, and distinctive communities.

However, these strengths can also present challenges and we are clear that sustainable development is the critical underpinning concept that must help us navigate these challenges. Putting sustainability at the centre of our decision-making and service delivery means balancing the demands of environmental protection and recovery, economic development and growth, and addressing inequality and creating a fairer Westmorland and Furness.

Addressing these to make our vision a reality for everyone requires an approach underpinned by three sustainability principles of equity, economy, and environment.

Equity

We know that there is a need to address any inequalities, especially those resulting from poverty and rural sparsity. We will focus on the wider determinants that drive those inequalities in a way that is fair and equitable.

Economy

We know that we need to increase our productivity and improve educational outcomes, broaden and grow our workforce. We will support sustainable and inclusive growth which benefits our diverse population whilst protecting the environment.

Environment

We recognise our environmental responsibilities, including taking action on climate change and biodiversity loss. We will seek to redress damage and protect our environment for the long term.

Bringing it all together

Building on our vision, six Council Plan priorities and the sustainability principles, this Delivery Framework breaks down across 10 service delivery themes:

1 Communities

2 Environment

3 Growth

4 Connections

5 Homes

6 Learning

7 Care

8 Health and wellbeing

9 Culture

10 Effective services

These themes help us to focus on the actions we need to take and guide our partnerships to make the vision a reality for everyone.

Like the sustainability principles, these ten themes do not stand alone. They are closely linked and often overlap; overlaps that helpfully encourage cross-sector working, multi-disciplinary approaches and opportunities for all of us to work together to do the right things in the right places.

Taking a missions led approach to achieving our vision

Each delivery theme has a bold mission. As a council we cannot achieve these missions alone, they require a collective effort to make Westmorland and Furness a place everyone is proud to call home.

The missions are framed with the voice of our communities in mind, but they are also a call to action for our businesses, voluntary sector, government bodies and other stakeholders to join us on this journey.

Our delivery themes

1 Communities

Are welcoming, inclusive and provide a good quality of life. They are proud of and care for their local areas. They are able to make the right choices for them. They are resilient, and their voices and choices are heard through local participation.

2 Environment

Our environment positively impacts on health, well-being and economy and together we build our resilience to climate change and take action to reverse biodiversity loss and to achieve carbon net zero.

3 Growth

Our economy is growing and providing people with access to a diverse range of good employment opportunities for them to be economically secure, across our rural and urban areas. Our businesses are more diverse and thriving, our large businesses continue to grow, and new investment is further increasing the contribution made to national growth and prosperity.

4 Connections

Transport and infrastructure enables people and businesses to reliably and easily access the places and services that meet their needs, including online, in an environmentally sustainable way.

5 Homes

Everyone can live in a place they call home, one which is affordable, clean, safe and warm, where they can build stable, independent, fulfilling lives and have access to schools, work and cultural activities.

6 Learning

Everyone has access to high quality education, where children, young people and adults are equipped with relevant tools, skills and aspiration to pursue the life they want to live and to access a rich and varied choice of local employment opportunities that contribute to a fulfilled and happy life.

7 Care

Children, young people and adults are supported to achieve a good life, safeguarded from harm, in the place they call home, with the people and things that matter most to them.

8 Health and wellbeing

No matter where you are born or where you live, there is equal opportunity for everyone to live an active, happy, healthy life, and to be able to and confident to choose the best ways in which this is achieved for each individual and for every community.

9 Culture

Culture is central to our place shaping, the development of creative people and places, our economy and visitor offer, the health and wellbeing of our communities and the promotion of both our unique natural and world heritage cultural landscape. In parallel, everyone has access to a diverse and distinctive range of opportunities to be creative and enjoy high quality cultural experiences across our area.

10 Effective Services

The council listens and takes pride in delivering services that make a difference. It is a modern, innovative and inclusive council with communities and customers at the heart of everything we do.

Our operating model

This Delivery Framework describes **what** we are going to do. It sits alongside our target organisational operating model which describes **how** we are going to work, with five focus areas. The delivery framework and operating model work hand in hand to guide us on our journey.

Delivery Framework

Operating Model Framework

Community focus

We will focus on early intervention and prevention, working with individuals, community groups, parish and town councils, the voluntary sector and partners to reduce need for our services and improve health and wellbeing.

Easy access

Services will be user friendly, caring and accessible through multiple channels. Wherever possible services will be available and delivered digitally, reducing demand for phone and in-person interaction so those resources and be focused to those most in need.

Effective services

Services are outcome focused and maximise use of technology to drive efficiency and effectiveness. Service delivery is citizen centred and seamless between services and partner organisations

Enabling processes

Internal processes and functions are supported by key enabling functions including Human Resources, Project Management Office, Legal, Commissioning and Procurement etc working closely with service delivery teams.

Supporting technology

'Fit for purpose' technology across the council that supports the delivery of services, promotes digital ways of working, and enables organisational efficiency.

Our first year in focus

From our creation on 1 April 2023 we have been ambitious about what we could achieve. Across the year there has been so much that we are proud of. Working alongside our communities and our partners we have improved our services, improved our places, managed our finances well to deliver a balanced budget and set ourselves up for more success in the future.

And we've done that while progressing the complex transition from four councils into one.

In the first edition of our delivery framework, over 100 different actions were set out across our 10 delivery themes, covering a broad range of issues and initiatives. They were the things we said we would do in our first year of operation.

Exciting progress has been made across the overwhelming majority of those actions. In some cases, we've been reviewing and planning for more future change, in others we've already been delivering real service improvements.

These case studies, covering each of our themes, show what we mean and in **Appendix 1** we give a full breakdown of our progress against the things we said we would deliver in 2023/24.

Communities

Earnse Bay Community Hub set to launch

Community Hubs are big focus for us. Following development work over the last year, one of the first to open its doors to the public in summer 2024 will be the Earnse Bay outdoor community hub and beach school. The hub will provide people of all ages with the opportunity to access the outdoors in a range of ways offering long term benefits for their health and wellbeing as well as for sustainability and the environment.

It will be delivered and operated by Westmorland and Furness Council in partnership with Natural England, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Art Gene.

Community Safety Partnership established

With our partners, we established a new Community Safety Partnership for the area, bringing focus and action to priority community safety issues. The partnership is developing well with established sub groups, and has been further strengthening its ability to make a difference by recruiting a dedicated staff team.

Environment

Climate Action plans agreed

The council took significant steps towards a more sustainable future with the agreement of Parts One and Two of its new Climate Change Action Plans. The plans outline the direction and intention of the council to address climate change and create a greener, healthier, more resilient Westmorland and Furness. The Climate Action Plan is a five-year plan and includes steps to reduce the council's carbon footprint, encourage active travel and invest in nature.

Solar farm

Following significant development work over the last 12 months, a new 2MegaWatt solar farm will begin construction in April 2024 on council-owned land at Sandscale Park in Barrow. The site will bring about reductions in carbon emissions for the council and is expected to result in savings of around 607 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per annum. This would provide enough electricity to power the council's five leisure centres or approximately 730 homes per year, based upon average UK households.

Tree planting success – micro woodlands

As part of celebrations to mark the King's Coronation, Westmorland and Furness Council was allocated a further £50,000 of funding from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund, a local tree planting initiative supported by Defra. The council also received £50,000 last year from the fund to support the establishment of community orchards across Westmorland and Furness. As a result of this funding the council has facilitated the planting of over 30,000 trees in the last year.

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Growth

Team Barrow

The past year has been an exciting one for Barrow, with big plans now being developed as part of the Team Barrow programme. The programme brings us together with BAE Systems and a cross-departmental central government team to ensure that Barrow, its communities and the wider area, benefit fully from the huge investment being made at BAE Systems over the next 15 years to develop new nuclear submarines, including creating 6000 new jobs. £200m has now been committed by Government over the next 10 years, so there's lots of work to do this year to agree how that money can have most impact.

Levelling up funding success

We were successful in securing nearly £13.5m of Levelling Up funding for the Heart of Kendal project, which includes town centre regeneration schemes and active travel improvements along the River Kent, as well as a new campus for Kendal College and market hall improvements. Work will begin this year on delivering the new schemes. Funding was also secured for development of a new rural enterprise hub in Eden and improvements to Barrow market hall.

AE, Barrow-in-Furness

Connections

Transport help for children and young people

Westmorland and Furness is a large, sparsely populated local authority area, where transport plays a vital role in providing access to health services, education, culture, social participation, wellbeing and employment. Personal car access is less prevalent amongst young people, those with health related mobility impairments, those who are unemployed and those with low income.

The introduction of the Youth Education and Travel Bursary for 16-19 year olds, which supports young people in accessing education and training, is helping to reduce inequalities, boost the use of sustainable transport and ensure that travel costs are not a barrier to young people achieving their full potential.

Windermere Ferry 5G

The Windermere Ferry has benefited from funding for new 5G innovation schemes through the Borderlands Partnership.

The dedicated high-speed digital connections are being used to support ferry operations for improvements such as faster and more reliable ticketing and payment systems, providing faster service updates for ferry users and information about local attractions. The ferry 5G technology will also be used to support environmental work on the lake, including water and air quality monitoring.

Making our roads safer

The iconic Kirkstone Pass in the heart of the Lake District has been the location for a multi-million pound road safety scheme this year. Work delivered has included building new drainage and culverts, resurfacing, new lay-bys and signage and installing 'catchpits' to collect scree washed off the fells, all designed to ensure the pass will be safer, in better condition and be better protected from flooding and other weather-related impacts, so will be less prone to winter closures in the future.

The scheme includes the installation of wooden-clad environment sensitive crash barriers - the first of their type on a major road in Cumbria - to ensure the safety improvements includes infrastructure that complements the Lake District UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Homes

Delivering new homes

Major progress has been made on making a significant brownfield site in Barrow available for much-needed housing. The 25-hectare council-owned site, which has the working title of Marina Village, will provide 808 new homes, a nature conservation area and new public open spaces – a vital part of Barrow's wider regeneration agenda.

Phase one of the project cleared and remediated the first six hectares of the Marina Village site, thanks to funding of £5.5 million provided by Cumbria LEP from the Government's Getting Building Fund.

In March Homes England and Westmorland and Furness entered into a funding agreement for £24.8m to deliver remediation and site infrastructure for the remainder of the Marina Village site. This will unlock the full potential of the site to be developed for new high quality homes for Barrow.

Tackling homelessness

We aligned our out-of-hours homelessness response services to ensure that households facing crisis can access emergency support whenever it is needed. Specialist staff are available to respond to crisis situations and where appropriate, arrange emergency accommodation at short notice. This ensure that vulnerable people can be housed in temporary accommodation safely and quickly.

To ensure support is delivered to people who are street homeless we developed a Rough Sleeper Charter. This set out how we work with partners to engage with and support people who are not owed a statutory duty but find themselves with nowhere to live. In addition, we produced a new Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. This proactive approach means we have been better able ensure the safety of rough sleepers during extreme weather events.

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Learning

Investing in our young people

Supporting young people to access education, training and employment is a priority. Through our 16 to 19 Education Travel Bursary Fund 385 16-19 year olds have had help to pay for travel to access education and training, whether that be bus, train, taxis, fuel costs for private transport or even students who travel by bicycle. A total of £269,647 has been awarded, supporting completion of A levels, degrees, BTECs and more.

Investing in our schools

Major construction projects totalling more than £11.6 million are underway to expand Sandgate School, Kendal, for children with Special Educational Needs, Beaconside School in Penrith, and to build a new Alternative Provision School in Barrow. Sandgate improvements will include four extra classrooms, new sports hall, changing rooms and additional facilities and will offer huge benefits by bringing pupils with SEND onto one site alongside their peers. Construction works are anticipated to be completed by Autumn 2024.

The much-anticipated new education facility in Barrow will provide an alternative provision school at Channelside, to support up to 40 young people. This will enable children and young people to be educated within their communities in an adaptable building. Works are anticipated to be completed by Winter 2024.

Supporting adult literacy and numeracy

Businesses were invited to find out more about how they can upskill their workforce with "Multiply" at a launch event at Kendal College last year.

Local businesses learned more about how the "Multiply" programme, delivered by our Adult Learning service, can help them boost their productivity, increase profits, and improve employee retention through workforce development. The "Multiply" programme is designed to help adults improve their numeracy skills and is delivered in partnership with Kendal College.

Care (Children)

Family Hubs making a difference

We launched the new Family Hub for Barrow and Furness in December with a festive launch event for children and families. Based out of Barrow Library the hub is a place for local people to find out about all the services, advice and activities available for their family in the heart of their community.

Barrow's hub was quickly followed by our 'spoke' hub in Dalton opening in February. Both are proving a hit with families, and we have plans for more in the coming year to ensure as many families as possible can benefit from the support on offer.

Youth Justice Plan Launched

We want everyone to have the opportunity to thrive whatever their circumstances, so we're proud to have agreed our plan to reduce the number of children and young people entering the youth justice system.

Our Youth Justice Plan sets out how the council intends to reduce First Time Entrants (FTE) into the justice system, as well as reoffending rates. The plan also puts children and young people at the heart of the service, with their experiences helping drive improvement and develop further understanding of the causes of offending to prevent children entering the criminal justice system in the first place.

Celebrating our care experienced children and young people

As corporate parents we know it is important to celebrate the achievements of children and young people in our care and we did just that at the Children in Care Council Awards event in October.

Jointly hosted with Cumberland Council, over 200 children and the people who care for them attended the event, where they enjoyed afternoon tea, as well as fun activities.

Care (Adults)

Investment into intermediate care beds trial

Helping people take the step from hospital back to home is vitally important for their wellbeing and for local hospitals. As part of a trial programme we invested over £100,000 providing eight new fully staffed intermediate care beds for the area. The beds provide short-term, temporary care to help those who've recently been in hospital or had an illness or fall, get back to normal and stay independent. We're monitoring the trial and so far, the results are promising.

Virtual care programme success

Our Virtual Care pilot has seen new technology used to support people's care needs virtually. Originally launched in Furness and Ulverston, it has expanded to the South Lakeland area and is now in the process of rolling out to the Eden area. The Virtual Care pilot has supported people maintain independence in their daily living such as prompting medication. In the first 6 weeks of the pilot, there were a total of 376 miles per week saved on travel and 18 hours per week of travel time saved to and from calls. As well as the mileage and travel time saved, this enabled the reablement team to take on more people who were being discharged from hospital who required face to face reablement support.

Tackling Occupational Therapy waiting times

In 2023 over 700 people were waiting for Occupational Therapy support. Through targeted investment in staffing, new ways of delivering services, drop-in clinics and one-stop-shop events the number waiting had reduced to 352 by March 2024. The programme has also supported a better understanding of the needs of those still waiting and a follow up project will now ensure all those remaining on waiting lists are assessed over the next 4-6 months.

Health and Wellbeing

Taking steps for a 'smoke free' Westmorland and Furness

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of ill health and premature death, so helping people to quit is something we are passionate about. That's why over the last year we have been trialling a new drug-free stop-smoking method as part of an ambition to make the entire council area 'smoke-free' by 2030. The trial has taken place in Barrow, but if successful we will be looking at how we can roll it out across the area.

Establishing the Health and Wellbeing Board

As a new council, Westmorland and Furness also has a new Health and Wellbeing Board, which has been developing a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy. During the last year residents have been asked about their views on what makes and keeps them healthy, with 701 people responding to our consultation. Residents have told us that their priorities are support to have a healthy and active lifestyle, support to maintain good mental health and emotional wellbeing, and support with the cost of living and financial insecurity. The results of the survey are informing the development of the strategy which will be published in July 2024.

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Health and Wellbeing team making a difference

Our Health and Wellbeing team worked with 691 people in the last year, supporting them with depression, anxiety, relationships and social isolation. The team takes a person centred approach to really understand people's issues and aspirations, working with them to build on their strengths. The support makes a difference, with the large majority of people they worked with reporting real improvements in their well-being in terms of reduced anxiety, improvements in depression or less isolation.

New community parks, playgrounds and sports facilities

Improvements to parks, playgrounds and sports facilities have all been delivered in the first year of the new council. A popular play park in Grange received a facelift as one of the first stages of a multi-million pound project to rejuvenate the promenade area and now boasts modern and inclusive play equipment, including a new train engine and carriage, and a wheelchair accessible roundabout.

In Barrow a new-look 'pocket park' opened at Argyle Place, featuring new trees, plants and seating, with the play equipment designs including ideas put forward by local school pupils. A new park was also complete in Milnthorpe and £400,000 invested in new tennis facilities at Penrith's Castle Park.

Culture

Grange Lido and Promenade

Grange's £6.8million Lido and Promenade restoration project is on track to be completed this summer following extensive work over the last year. It will see the lido site open again with a temporary infill to the pool to create a new multi-use public space, protecting the derelict Grade II-listed site's immense social and cultural heritage. Together with the major repairs and rejuvenation of the prom, the whole project represents significant investment and a commitment to a unique asset which will bring many benefits for many years to come.

Transformation and enhanced adult learning provision at Kendal and Penrith Libraries

Kendal Library has been completely redesigned to provide a dedicated local studies section and adult learning services alongside library facilities. The works included modifying the layout, with new seating areas and new signage, a new pram park, additional worktop space, digital microfilm readers and digital touch screens in the local studies area, more USB/USBC points throughout and more digital display screens. Adult learning services are also being incorporated into Penrith Library.

The work in both libraries will help to embed the service to give adults in the community even easier access to a wide range of courses for people at all levels and interests, both qualification and non-qualification, in a broad range of subjects.

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Commitment to The Coro in Ulverston

We took on management of the Coro in Ulverston after the venue's previous operators passed responsibility for day-to-day operation back to us at the end of 2023. We have committed to maintain, protect and enhance the Coro's role in the local arts and cultural scene and to develop it as a place in Ulverston for everyone in the community to use, with the council's Cabinet agreeing a budget initially until March 2025.

This will allow time to prepare a detailed plan for the Coro, including what capital investment would be required to enhance the visitor experience at the Coro and to improve the long-term sustainability of the venue.

Award recognitions for Dock Museum

The Dock Museum in Barrow was awarded the title of 'Highly Recommended Attraction 2023' by Going Places UK and also achieved an 89% score rating and two nominations in the Hidden Gem and Welcome categories in the 2023 Visit England awards. The nominations recognise businesses that provide an excellent experience, whether it be for quality attraction, an overall experience, friendliness of welcome, cleanliness, attention to detail and children's facilities.

Effective Services

Apprentice recruitment

Apprenticeships are something we take seriously. We're currently recruiting to roles from highways and business support to social care and project management. Recruitment to 'earn while you learn' positions help fulfil the council's mission to ensure young people and adults are equipped with relevant tools and skills to pursue the life they want to live and have access to a rich and varied choice of local employment opportunities.

Taking a stance on equality, diversity inclusion

Inclusion is one of our core values, so getting our approach to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) right was a priority in our first year. We engaged with our workforce and with our partners to develop our first EDI statement, setting our commitment to this agenda, and our first set of Equality Objectives that will guide or work over the next two years. A comprehensive action plan has been developed to continue the positive progress made so far in ensuring that Westmorland and Furness is a place where everyone really can live, work and thrive.

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What we are focused on in 2024/25

This year we want to continue the fantastic progress we have made, but we are sharpening our focus to really zero-in on the things that will drive improvements to services, and to Westmorland and Furness as a place to live, work and thrive, that will really make a difference for local people and communities.

Across our 10 delivery themes we are committing to delivering a range of exciting and important service developments and improvements. Taken together it is a significant programme of work and reflects our continued high ambitions.

Delivering change

Our plans include starting in earnest on major change programmes that will see fundamental shifts to how some services are organised and delivered. They are big and complex tasks that require careful planning and implementation, and will take time. These programmes seek to improve key services and unlock the benefits of becoming a single unitary council. Our aim is make our services more efficient, more effective and simpler for residents, businesses, communities and visitors.

Gooseholme Bridge, Kendal

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Oxenholme and Natland

Our 10 change programmes split into two groups:

Priority service improvement	Cross-organisational foundations
• **Planning** – developing our new Local Plan and creating of a single planning policy and development service.	• **Resource optimisation** - assets, commissioning, procurement, productivity improvement, income optimisation.
• **Waste** - creating a single waste service for our whole area.	• **Culture and organisational development** – creating the culture we want to help achieve our vision.
• **Promoting independence and wellbeing (Adult Social Care)** – supporting people live their best lives.	• **Community Power** – Working differently with communities and building on their strengths.
• **Ambition for every child (Children's Services)** – ensuring children all children get the best start and opportunity to thrive.	• **Customer and digital** – improving the experience for our customers, making it quicker and easier get what you need
	• **Technology** – developing the right technology and systems to support our services.
	• **Data and intelligence** – making best use of data to inform and guide our decisions.

Work included in all these programmes during 2024/25 features in the delivery activity described under each strategic theme on the following pages.

Financial sustainability

Critically, given the significant and growing pressures on Local Government budgets, from reducing funding, inflation, and growing demand, across our services we will be focused on ensuring we continue to be a financially sound and sustainable council that can balance its budget. This is the fundamental underpinning of all our work.

This means we must reduce our costs without retreating from our ambitions to improve services. Our resource optimisation programme is specifically intended to help us achieve this, but across all our change programmes there is a consistent focus on improving efficiency, eliminating waste and changing how we work to prioritise early intervention and demand prevention.

As councils around the country warn of the risk of bankruptcy, we know financial sustainability is a real challenge but one we are confident we can rise to.

Our focus in 24/25

Set out on the following pages, we explain what we are focusing on in each of our 10 delivery themes, including our transformation programmes and where we are working collaboratively with partners.

Checking our progress

Last year, for each of the 10 delivery themes we created a mission - a statement of what we wanted to achieve over the long term. Alongside, we described how we would know if we were achieving those missions, we called these measures of success.

This year we are developing this further by explicitly linking our public performance reporting to our delivery framework missions. For each mission we have agreed a set of aligned performance indicators which we will publicly report on quarterly, against clear and published targets. We have included the selected performance indicators on the following pages. We expect these indicators to evolve in future years as we become better able to measure the things that are most important.

Performance indicators on their own cannot provide a complete picture of our progress. In addition, we will publicly track progress against the actions set out in this document. In this way we will make ourselves accountable.

1 Communities

Our mission

Communities are welcoming, inclusive and provide a good quality of life. They are proud of and care for their local areas and the people who live in them. They are able to make the right choices for them. They are resilient, and their voices and choices are heard through local participation.

Our context

Thriving communities are central to people's happiness and quality of life, but not all our communities are thriving yet. Across our area there are large differences in opportunities and outcomes in health, education, income and employment, housing, transport, services and facilities.

We want to work with communities to address these issues, devolving power and responsibility where it makes sense. Our third sector and voluntary organisations are integral to our communities and have a critical role. We want to work in partnership with them to achieve even more. We know that when communities take action it can have more impact and be more sustainable because it is rooted in local experience.

Where communities don't yet have the skills or capacity to act, we want to support them. This community level action is essential to meeting people's needs and can reduce or delay their need for outside support. Democratic engagement and participation are central and we will work closely with parish and town councils, alongside the diverse range of community organisations we have here.

What success looks like

Our three Locality Boards play a key role in animating and supporting local community action, working with parish and town councils to achieve positive change.

Local areas and facilities are clean, well maintained, provide a focus for communities and contribute positively to people's quality of life.

People feel connected in their communities and the range of activity available is widened making a positive difference to people's lives.

The views and aspirations of communities are sought and influence the work of the council, and other key service delivery organisations.

A growing social enterprise sector is supported to identify and address unmet needs in communities.

People are increasingly able to access help and support when they need it through their communities, reducing the need for them to access formal support.

We have a huge opportunity to work inclusively with partners and communities to identify and deliver outcomes we all want to see.

What we will deliver this year

Community power	Develop a Community Power strategy and action plan with our communities and partners. The strategy will explain how we will work differently with communities building on their strengths to help make Westmorland and Furness a great place to live. This will include developing training and starting pilot projects to test our approach.
Locality boards	Work with our Councillors on our three Locality Boards to support them to implement their Locality Plans, bringing together the public, private and voluntary sectors to work in partnership, maximise their potential to make a difference locally and contribute to our Community Power agenda.
Community hubs	Develop our plan for setting up Community Hubs across Westmorland and Furness agreeing a minimum of four new hubs, at least one per locality area.
Town and parish councils	Build on our newly agreed Community Compact with Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC), to strengthen our relationship with town and parishes councils, identifying opportunities for them to increase their role through the Community Power approach. Communication and engagement are being strengthened through mechanisms such as regular briefing sessions, and newsletters.
Community safety	Help make our area even safer by working through the Community Safety Partnership with communities, further developing Local Focus Hubs and agreeing our community safety action plan, including working with the Police to target 'hot spot' crime areas.
Anti-poverty	Continue our work to tackle poverty in Westmorland and Furness, working with local people through Poverty Truth Commissions to develop our understanding and approach, including distributing £1.5m of Household Support Fund monies to support the most vulnerable and £200k of UKSPF funding to support the Green Doctor energy efficiency and finance support service.
Asylum and resettlement	Welcome and support people coming into our area via resettlement schemes and seeking asylum, including developing a new support programme and community cohesion plan.
Social enterprise	Work with Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership to support the sector through professional business advice to 12 social enterprises at various stages of their entrepreneurial journey with matters such as finance and funding, business planning and marketing through to sustainability and measuring impact. In addition, a further 40 Social Enterprises will be supported through grants awards totalling £275,000 in 2024/25.
Community Resilience / Emergency Planning	Through the Stronger Local Resilience Forum pilot programme, carry out an increased programme of work with communities to support capacity building and preparedness for responding to emergency events.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
101	Number of Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) groups supported/started up.
102	Rank of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) as a concern reported by residents.
103	Rate of all recorded offences (excluding fraud).
104	Number of Social Enterprise start-ups.
105	Number of Social Enterprises assisted.

2   Environment

Our mission

Our environment positively impacts on health, well being and economy and together we build our resilience to climate change and take action to reverse biodiversity loss and to achieve carbon net zero.

Our context

Climate change and biodiversity loss are two of the biggest global challenges of our time. Like the rest of the world, we have experienced the impact over recent years, with Storm Desmond in 2015 and Storm Arwen in 2021 bringing severe weather and devastating damage to the area.

Last year, Westmorland and Furness Council declared a climate and biodiversity emergency, committing to prioritise net zero targets, reduce our carbon footprint, build resilience for our communities, prioritising areas of inequality for our most deprived populations where impacts are most keenly felt, and protect our extensive natural capital and landscape.

However, we recognise that we have limited direct control over the majority of carbon emissions in our area. Where we do have direct control, we are committed to reducing emissions to zero as soon as possible. For those areas outside of our direct control, we will work proactively with partners to support Westmorland and Furness to become net zero by 2037.

What success looks like

As a place, Westmorland and Furness will have achieved carbon net zero by 2037 and the council will be an exemplar organisation.

We have a thorough understanding of local habitats and biodiversity in our area and the proportion of biodiverse land increases over time, underpinning nature recovery. We are successful in securing investment to achieve this aim and enhance our natural environment.

There is a coherent and effective approach to waste management, reduction and recycling, an increasing proportion of resources and materials are continuously reused or repurposed.

Our communities are engaged in decisions about how we respond to climate change and biodiversity challenges, with increasing levels of locally led action in support of these aims.

What we will deliver this year

Climate Action Plan: 24/25 projects	Building on the Climate Action Plan we agreed in our first year, develop the delivery programme for the wide range of projects and initiatives identified in the plan.
Tree planting	Continue our programme of tree and hedgerow planting, planting 1 tree or 1 metre of hedging for every Westmorland and Furness resident, using available funding such as Community Forest and Coronation Living Heritage, working with landowners and partners.
Unified waste service	Develop and assess options for a single unified waste service covering Westmorland and Furness, for implementation over the next 5 years.
Electric vehicles	Develop our Electric Vehicle Strategy Part Two, informed by engagement with stakeholders and the public, which will include a detailed plan for how £4.25m of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Capability Fund grant will be spent.
Decarbonisation	Deliver a £2m programme of capital projects to support the decarbonisation of the council's estate, supporting our goal to achieve Net Zero.
Westmorland and Furness Net Zero Business Hub	Working with Cumbria Action for Sustainability, deliver a one-stop net zero business support hub and distribute grants to businesses to undertake carbon reduction measures, supporting 300 businesses to decarbonise.
Nature recovery	Develop the Cumbria wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy, identifying sites for nature recovery and prepare our own nature action plan to deliver the strategy. Work with the Borderlands Partnership to support nature recovery projects including research into a place based natural capital brokerage, incentivising the transition to healthier grasslands and a landscape scale case study in the Ullswater catchment.
Climate adaptation	Commission research, data and forecasting scenarios into the long term risks associated with climate change. Develop Climate Change Risk Assessments on the impacts of climate change to people, communities, business and the environment and prepare action plans to mitigate or adapt to the change needed.
Biodiversity net gain	Ensure the council is ready for Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality opportunities, working with partners on Cumbria wide biodiversity net gain offer.
Flood resilience	Deliver flood mitigation and resilience in Grasmere, Warcop, Stockdalewath, Bitter Beck and Tow Rudd Beck through the DEFRA funded Cumbria Innovation Flood Resilience (CIFR) programme, and continue working with risk management authorities to reduce the impacts of flood and coastal risk.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
201	Numbers of trees and hedgerows planted over 5 years.
202	Number of hectares of peat restored through the Peat Partnership (from Local Authority grant).
203	Carbon emissions (of Local Authority operations).
204	Number of private homes improved through energy efficiency initiatives (housing retrofit).
205	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.
206	Kilograms of residual waste (including grey bins, litter bins street sweepings and other).

3   Growth

Our mission

Our economy is growing and providing people with access to a diverse range of good employment opportunities for them to be economically secure. Our businesses are more diverse and thriving, our large businesses continue to grow, and investment is further increasing the contribution made to national growth and prosperity.

Our context

Westmorland and Furness is host to a world class visitor destination with a developed tourism industry and a wealth of visitor attractions. The majority of our geography is rural; agriculture and the rural economy play an important economic and cultural role. Belying this rural image, we are also a recognised leader in advanced manufacturing and energy excellence supported by a highly skilled workforce.

However, industries and their benefits aren't evenly distributed across the geography. Productivity varies and even in those areas where productivity is higher than the national average, long standing pockets of deprivation remain.

Growth in the energy and defence sector in Barrow and Furness will bring significant opportunity. We will work closely with large businesses and investors to maximise local benefits in a way that is inclusive and sustainable, recognising the additional demands this will place on our services and infrastructure.

Our vibrant market towns are centres of economic activity across Westmorland and Furness and provide opportunities for further development and growth.

Importantly, we want to work with our partners and communities to build greater resilience within the rural economy supporting diversification, social enterprise and the development of new opportunities around our cultural and natural capital assets. Strengthening what we see as vital elements of our effort to attract new people to, and retain them in, Westmorland and Furness.

What success looks like

Productivity increases across our rural and urban areas and business sectors, with the productivity gap between Westmorland and Furness and the national average closing.

The decline in the local working age population is reversed.

There is an environment that supports and facilitates private sector investment in our high growth advanced manufacturing businesses.

Westmorland and Furness is nationally recognised as a leader in clean energy and decarbonisation with increasing levels of investment in the clean growth sector and with a growing number of decarbonised businesses.

There are strong connections between educational institutions and local employers to attract and grow local talent into local employment and develop the future workforce for our employers

Local businesses and social enterprises have access to high quality advice and support to improve their productivity and consequently their ability to create local wealth and good jobs

Our rural areas are thriving with businesses supported to diversify, invest and grow, providing more good employment opportunities.

What we will deliver this year

Local Economic Partnership	Work with Cumberland Council and the LEP to ensure the successful integration of the Local Economic Partnership and continue discussions on future options for devolution.
Economic Strategy	Commission a new Economic Development strategy for Westmorland and Furness, providing a strategic plan for how we can improve the skills systems, grow our economy, and contribute to the development of a new pan Cumbria Economic Growth Strategy.
Team Barrow	Building on the work of the Brilliant Barrow Town Deal, set up Team Barrow Delivery Board in partnership with HM Government and BAE Systems to provide additional capacity to support the growth, prosperity and health of the town following long term funding commitment from Government.
Local Plan	Begin the formal process for the development of a new Westmorland and Furness Local Plan, including engagement with local communities.
Planning integration	To progress plans to create a single unified planning and development control service, bringing together the four legacy services, offering customers a more effective service and realising the benefits of becoming a unitary council.
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Invest £5.3m of UKSPF funding, as well as £1.6m of Rural England Prosperity Funding, to boost the local economy through improvements to town centres, support for businesses and community, cultural and heritage organisations and support to help people into employment and access skills training.
Levelling Up Fund	Further development of plans for £20.5m of Levelling Up Fund Round 3 investment, including £13.5m for the Heart of Kendal town centre regeneration scheme and £7m for a new rural enterprise hub in Eden. Delivery of the Barrow Market Hall regeneration will also continue, through £16m of funding secured in Levelling Up Fund Round 1.
Borderlands Place Programme	Working with communities to develop priority projects identified in the three Place Plans for Penrith, Ulverston and Dalton. The production of Borderlands Town Investment Plans and development of business cases for the various projects will realise £9m of investment into these towns to support their growth and prosperity and deliver towards their visions.
Destination Management Plan	Work with partners to deliver actions in the Cumbria Destination Management Plan, including improving accessible facilities and sustainable travel routes throughout the area, as well as increasing the spread of visitors and the responsible management of tourism and ensuring its positive impact for our communities.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
301	Total Gross Value Added (GVA).
302	Percentage of the workforce with qualifications.
303	Claimant Rate of Universal Credit by those looking for employment.
304	Percentage of Full Plan applications given a decision within 5 weeks or maximum 2 months (if extension of time agreed) from plans submission/validation.
305	Percentage of Major Planning Applications determined within 13 weeks.
306	Percentage of Minor Planning Applications determined within 8 weeks.
307	Number of businesses supported through business support programmes.

4   Connections

Our mission

Transport and infrastructure enables people and businesses to reliably and easily access the places and services that meet their needs, including online, in an environmentally sustainable way.

Our context

Good connectivity is central to successful places, and this is particularly relevant in Westmorland and Furness. The considerable size, sparsity of population and rural nature of much of the area means there is an inherent need for people to travel further for employment opportunities, to meet with family and friends and to access services.

Although well connected into the rest of the country from north to south by the M6 and West Coast Mainline, and with good digital connection across most of the Westmorland and Furness geography, there is variability. Some of our dispersed communities rely upon networks that lack resilience and vary in reliability, safety and quality and connections from east to west are of a lower quality.

We want to improve transport choice and digital infrastructure so that people can make more sustainable choices without having to make unrealistic or unhealthy compromises. This is essential if we are to provide consistent and sustainable connectivity that makes us an attractive place to live, work and thrive.

What success looks like

Our road network is maintained to a good standard and investment is secured for key strategic transport routes to improve safety, protect journey times and ensure resilience from climate change that will hamper our future prosperity.

The environmental impacts of transport developments are understood and mitigated in line with our ambition to be a net zero area.

A new model of public transport is in place that is functional and accessible, as well as financially and environmentally sustainable, in our rural, sparsely populated area. Over time it provides a credible alternative to travel by car for an increasing number of journeys.

There are safe walking and cycling routes between key locations in all main towns, and people increasingly choose to travel this way.

The right infrastructure is in place to support the transition to electric and other non oil based vehicles.

Our digital connectivity is at least as good as the rest of the country with all households having access to at least 4G or fibre broadband by 2030.

What we will deliver this year

Highways Asset Management Strategy	Develop a Westmorland and Furness Highways Asset Management Strategy, setting out how we will maintain our highways to the best possible standard within the resources available to us over the long term.
A66	Work with National Highways to deliver the upgrading of the A66 and M6 bridge renewal scheme through the Lune Gorge, improving these nationally significant parts of our road network, ensuring National Highways place the well-being and interests of residents, visitors and road users at the forefront of delivering the schemes and minimise impacts of diversions.
Highways infrastructure	Deliver our major highways infrastructure programme, including completion of the A595 Grizebeck improvements, securing commitment to improving the A590 corridor, and completing our £30m highways resurfacing programme.
Rights of way	Develop a new 5 year rights of way improvement plan, which sets out how the council will improve rights of way and provide a better experience for walkers, cyclist, horse riders and people with mobility problems.
20mph zones	Implement our 20mph policy working with Locality Boards and town and parish councils, in areas where there is community support.
Bus support	Improve local bus services by allocating £1.7m of Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus funding to local bus operators, supporting them to reinstate and maintain routes lost over the past five years and improve services for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors.
Network North funding	Agree how we will prioritise projects for delivery through the Local Transport Fund (Network North funding) from 2025/26.
Windermere Ferry	Investigate the feasibility and options for a new car ferry service.
Active Travel	Progress delivery of active travel infrastructure, including use of Active Travel and Town Deal funding in Barrow and £6m of Borderlands funding for cycle infrastructure through the heart of the Lake District on the A591 corridor, contributing to our efforts to decarbonise our area..
Parking review	Undertake a parking review, to help create one unified and consistent parking service and develop an improvement plan.
Digital connectivity	Delivery of the Connecting Cumbria Digital Infrastructure Strategy to maximise gigabit capable broadband across the country, improve mobile connectivity and capacity and drive the Borderlands 5G Innovation Region programme, including to support the Windermere Ferry.
Rail	Work with stakeholders to secure rail improvements, including station improvements.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
401	Percentage of all Highways Defects completed within agreed response time.
402	Percentage of A roads in need of maintenance treatment (Grade 4/5).
403	Number of passengers using bus services supported by the council.
404	Number of open highways defects (including those waiting for assessment/categorisation).

5   Homes

Our mission
Everyone can live in a place they call home, one which is affordable, clean, safe and warm, where they can build stable, independent, fulfilling lives and have access to schools, work and cultural activities.

Our context

A decent home is the cornerstone of a good life. But in our area, people face challenges in find in and affording available homes to meet their needs, whether to buy, rent or share.

Supply, availability and affordability of housing needs to be addressed to help create thriving places and drive economic growth where needed. It is both new forms of housing and renewal of existing stock that is required to address our local challenges.

There are large variations in housing affordability across the area, from an affordability ratio of 3.74 in Barrow, 8.39 in Eden and 10.12 South Lakeland (Source: ONS 2022).

In addition, housing availability is impacted by second home ownership, empty properties and insufficient social housing stock over 6,655 households were on our waiting lists.

The forecast growth in jobs in the Furness area, including at least 6,000 new jobs at BAE, will place pressures on the housing market. Supporting the growth in Furness will require an acceleration in the pace and scale of housing development.

What success looks like

Increased high quality housing supply of the right type, at the right price, in the right places, to meet demand, both from local people and those moving into the area.

Where housing growth is planned, the right supporting infrastructure is in place to meet local needs.

Improved quality of both new and existing homes to increase environmental and energy efficiency, and decrease health inequalities and fuel poverty.

A range of specialist housing solutions are available for families and people who need them because of homelessness and/or disability.

The environmental impact of housing growth is mitigated and opportunities for environmental gain are maximised.

What we will deliver this year

Housing Strategy	Agree how we will support building new homes through development of a new Housing Strategy for Westmorland and Furness based on the findings of our Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, including targets for new housing development and how we will meet the housing needs of vulnerable people.
Affordable homes	Allocate affordable homes grant funding to support housing developers provide more affordable homes in our communities, including utilising national and local planning reforms, housing policy and external funding to identify local solutions for rural affordable housing, working with both National Parks, developers and registered providers of social housing.
Housing development	Enable the creation of over 800 new homes by completing preparatory works at the Marina Village housing development site in Barrow, and use our strategic role in planning and economic regeneration to facilitate house building across Westmorland and Furness.
Empty homes	Increase the number of homes available for local people by developing a new Empty Homes Strategy, to tackle the problem of empty homes in our area.
Housing renewal	Support people in housing need to improve or maintain their homes through development of a new Housing Renewal and Assistance Policy and increase our work to improve housing standards in the private rented sector, including a new damp and mould standard.
Energy efficiency	Support people to improve the energy efficiency of their homes by continuing to bid and deliver national energy efficiency and retrofit schemes to support access to advice on house retrofitting and energy efficiency.
Council housing	Based on a comprehensive stock condition survey, agree how we will maintain our own council housing stock to ensure our tenants have good homes, through development of an Asset Management Strategy and 5 Year Investment Plan.
Homelessness	Ensure people experiencing homelessness get a consistent level of service and support by implementing a single area-wide approach to homelessness prevention and relief activities, including a new Rough Sleeper Strategy and Charter and Rough Sleep Move On and Prevention Pilot project in South Lakeland.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
501	Percentage of council tenant satisfaction with overall service provided by the council.
502	Percentage of social housing properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS).
503	Percentage of successful homelessness prevention outcomes.
504	Percentage of successful homelessness relief outcomes.
505	Number of people on the waiting list for social housing.
506	Number of households in temporary accommodation.
507	Number of completed dwellings.
508	Number of affordable homes completed.

6 Learning

Our mission

Everyone has access to high quality education, where children, young people and adults are equipped with relevant tools, skills and aspiration to pursue the life they want to live and to access a rich and varied choice of local employment opportunities that contribute to a fulfilled and happy life.

Our context

Education is fundamental to people's life chances and to the prosperity and growth of our area.

It is positive that we have a high proportion of good quality schools and many of children and young people have a positive learning experience achieving their goals and progressing on to further education and work. There are, however, a significant minority, whose learning outcomes do not reflect their full potential for a variety of reasons and when compared with their peers locally and nationally their future opportunities will be limited. We want to tackle these differences to ensure all young people are equipped to thrive as they enter adulthood, and that both academic and wider achievements are not limited by poverty, disability nor social status.

We believe by working with all our learning establishments from early years through to higher and further education and adult education we can ensure that Westmorland and Furness provides the opportunity for learning and skills that enables local people to access the variety of local employment opportunities helping the economy to grow and creation of apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

As a new council we have an opportunity to look afresh at how we meet people's needs, with a focus on promoting and supporting people's independence for longer.

What success looks like

High quality early years provision leading to school readiness and good levels of development in our young children.

We achieve our reading ambition that all children leaving primary school are competent and confident readers able to access the secondary curriculum.

Levels of education and skills attainment are improving across all communities and ages and comparable to national figures and trends.

Educators and employers work together to provide pathways into education, employment and training opportunities for all and particularly vulnerable learners.

Access to learning is available for all and not limited by disadvantage, additional needs, sparsity of population or transport.

Increasing numbers of people access adult education opportunities, gaining new skills and knowledge to support future employment or contributing to their wider individual well being.

What we will deliver this year

Education improvement	Work to improve outcomes for all pupils from the Early Years to KS5 and beyond, including development of a strategy to support disadvantaged pupils, improve use of data, priority focus on Early Years and new Secondary School improvement clusters.
Reading	Deliver a Westmorland and Furness Reading Ambition to help all children to be competent and confident readers, through development and embedding of a strategy to support reading in schools across all age ranges and supported by officers in all Children's Service roles, including providing new quality reading texts to maintained schools, appointing a specialist reading Learning Adviser
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	Improve how we support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, including a implementing a revised EHCP process, creation of a new SEND strategy and improvement plan, co-production with families and implementing our Delivering Better Value plan.
Education sufficiency	Ensure all children have access to appropriate local provision through the implementation of the Education Sufficiency Plan, a review of Alternative Provision in Westmorland and Furness, and creating additional Resource Provision places.
Inclusion	Launch our Inclusion Strategy to reduce school exclusions and increase school attendance for all.
Capital projects	Complete expansion of resourced provision at Beaconside School in Penrith, development of Channelside alternative provision school in Barrow, and expansion of Sandgate School in Kendal.
School transport	Deliver our Home to School Transport Transformation Plan to ensure a financially sustainable service that can meet pupils' needs, including developing a new SEND School Transport Policy in readiness for the 2025/26 academic year
Post 16 school transport	Distribute £500,000 of travel bursaries to young people to access education and training and review and strengthen Post 16 school transport for the 2024/25 academic year for mainstream and SEND pupils.
Adult learning	Deliver our Adult Learning programme to increase the skills of the adult community working alongside communities, third sector organisations, local employers and sector representatives.
Post 16 skills	Through process of LEP integration, work with Cumberland Council to continue delivery of Skills Bootcamps and the Careers Hub, as well as exploring opportunities to better align skills programmes to ensure appropriate pathways exist for all our post-16 learners, including supported internships and apprenticeships, making best use of available facilities and resources.
Land and Nature Skills Service	Launch the new Land and Nature Skills Service in partnership with Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, providing a simpler way into sector jobs and offering training and development opportunities, helping boost our rural and green economy.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
601	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within timescales (including exceptions).
602	Percentage of 16-17 year olds looked after in care in Education Employment or Training (EET).
603	Percentage of 16-17 year olds with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Education Employment or Training (EET).
604	Percentage of 16-17 year olds in Education Employment or Training (EET).
605	Percentage of pupils receiving a Permanent Exclusion.
606	Percentage of sessions missed by all pupils (overall absence rate).
607	Percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
608	Percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined at Key Stage 2.
609	Percentage of pupils attaining GCSE levels 4-9 in English and Mathematics at Key Stage 4.
610	Average Point Score (APS) per level 3 qualification entry (includes A level, Academic, Applied and Technical).
611	Adult Education enrolments on the digital curriculum from vulnerable and older adult residents in isolated areas.

7   Care

Our mission
Children, young people and adults are supported to achieve a good life, safeguarded from harm, in the place they call home, with the people and things that matter most to them.

Our context

We have a statutory requirement to ensure that people of all ages are safe and receive the care and support they need.

Over 1,100 older people live in residential care homes we operate, a further 1,700 receive support at home. We are the corporate parent for 261 children in our care, we are engaged in statutory work with nearly 500 more to keep them safe and well in their own homes. We receive around 320 safeguarding referrals every month that must be investigated and acted upon.

In adult social care, demand for the services we provide has increased steadily, at the same time we have experienced serious workforce and funding challenges, creating real pressures and difficulties that can be seen in growing waiting times for assessment and services.

Across adult's and children's services we have seen the complexity of our work increase and growing challenges finding appropriate care and support close to their own communities. We also have a growing need for a stronger and more coherent approach to early intervention and prevention across the whole children's social care system, exacerbated by the continuing legacy of the pandemic.

As a new council we have an opportunity to look afresh at how we meet people's needs, with a focus on promoting and supporting people's independence for longer.

What success looks like (children)

Children and families in need are supported at the earliest opportunity and that support prevents escalation of need and unnecessary involvement with statutory services.

When statutory intervention is necessary, support is effective, of consistently good quality and has a positive long term impact on the lives of children and young people.

Children are effectively safeguarded and across our partnership there is a commitment to working together and safeguarding being everyone's business.

More children and young people are able to stay safely within their families and communities.

Where it is necessary to bring children into local authority care, those children are effectively supported to overcome their past experiences and achieve good outcomes that are meaningful for them.

For young people who leave the local authority care, their outcomes (in terms of education, employment, health and well being) are at least as good as their peers in the general population.

What we will deliver this year

Children and Young People Plan	With our partners, develop and deliver the shared Ambition for Children and Young People Plan, setting out how we will work together to help all children and young people thrive.
Family Hubs	Help families, young people and children get the right help, from the right person, at the earliest opportunity, by rolling out the new Family Hub model across the area, as part of our work to improve the Early Help system.
Social care improvement	Ensure consistently good social work practice for Cared For and Care Experienced children and young people by implementing our Children and Families Social Care improvement plan.
Stable homes	Ensure that all our cared for children have stable homes, by developing a residential care strategy, developing our response to unaccompanied asylum seeking children, reviewing our Short Breaks offer and establishing a Regional Adoption Agency with Cumberland Council.
Safeguarding	Undertake a review of the current Cumbria safeguarding partnership arrangements, implement an agreed future model that drives strong safeguarding arrangements across our local partnership.
Participation	Implement our new Children's Participation Framework and support our Youth Council to help strengthen participation and engagement of children and young people across Westmorland and Furness, including running elections for the national Youth Parliament.
Care	Begin implementation of our new Cared For and Care Experienced Children Strategy ensuring the children in our care are given every opportunity to thrive, including working with the Local Government Association to develop our Corporate Parenting Board.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
701	Rate of Cared For children.
702	Rate of children subject of a Child Protection (CP) Plan.
703	Percentage of Children in Need (CIN) referrals that take place within 12 months of a previous referral for the same child.
704	Percentage of Cared for Children living in the in same placement for 2 + years.
705	Percentage of Care leavers in suitable accommodation (any age).

Care (Adults)

What success looks like (Adults)

Waiting lists for assessments and services are eliminated.

A 'good' CQC rating is achieved within three years, 'excellent' within five years.

We have a sustainable workforce, people want to work here and dependence on agency staff is significantly reduced.

Our care market is sustainable, vibrant and provides choice to people with support needs across Westmorland and Furness.

There is a strong intermediate care offer that ensures no one goes to residential care who does not need to.

The experience of young people transitioning from children's services to adult social care is consistently positive and well managed.

People in receipt of Direct Payments are well supported to ensure they can access the services they need.

The vital role and contribution of unpaid carers is understood and valued, and they are able to access support they need when they need it.

The role of the wider community and third sector is recognised, valued and supported to deliver local initiatives.

What we will deliver this year

Promoting Independence and Wellbeing programme	Implement our Promoting Independence and Wellbeing transformation programme, focused on ensuring that adult social care services are meeting people's needs making best use of available resources and including staffing, commissioning, performance, data, digital improvements.
Staff recruitment	Develop a staff recruitment and retention strategy for adult social care, including a "grow your own" programme, to enable us to have a confident and well performing adult social care workforce.
CQC readiness	Deliver a programme of work to ensure readiness for CQC Assurance across Westmorland and Furness Council and our partners
Response times	Develop and deliver our plan to improve our response times to people in need of support and their journey through our services, ensuring we have the right structures, skills and capacity for our workforce
Waiting lists reduction	Develop and deliver a plan to reduce assessment waiting lists and waiting times in both Social Work and Occupational Therapy to below 50.
Deprivation of Liberty	Address Deprivation of Liberty Standards assessment backlog, including creation of a dedicated team to ensure we can help people promptly.
Service user engagement	Develop and embed new approaches to ensure involvement and engagement with people who receive care and support, and their families and carers, to help shape and improve our services.
Support for carers	Work with partners to develop and deliver a whole system approach to improving outcomes for carers, putting them at the heart of our thinking, recognising the vital role they play in supporting their loved ones.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
706	Number of people currently waiting for a Social Work Assessment and Occupational Therapy Assessment.
707	Rate of adults aged 18-64 whose long-term care needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes.
708	Rate of adults aged 65 and over whose long-term care needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes.
709	Number of people who have reduced or no ongoing support needs following a period of reablement (including reablement at home or within an intermediate care setting).
710	Percentage of Section 42 Safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and the reported outcome was that this risk was reduced or removed.
711	Percentage of Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings that remain Good as a minimum across all registered services.

8   Health and wellbeing

Our mission

No matter where you are born or where you live, there is equal opportunity for everyone to live an active, happy, healthy life, and to feel empowered and confident to choose the best ways in which this is achieved for each individual and for every community.

Our context

Health inequalities across our populations are a key challenge. Although people are living longer, an ageing population together with a declining work force puts significant pressures on our healthcare system, with workforce challenges being a key feature across the whole health and care system.

We have a higher than national average rate of people with a lifelong limiting condition. The rate is greatest in areas that have the highest rate of deprivation and child poverty such as Barrow. This points to the impact of health inequality.

We are unusual in being a member of two integrated care systems Lancashire and South Cumbria and North East and North Cumbria but are working with both to support and empower everyone to live independent and fulfilling lives.

We know that tackling the wider determinants of health such as economic and social deprivation and actively tackling discrimination are key to improving health outcomes. Our unique natural environment and outdoor spaces offer an opportunity to support good mental and physical health and wellbeing.

We recognise the cost of living crisis is placing increased levels of hardship on communities. Our plans will need to recognise the impact it is having.

What success looks like

Health inequalities within Westmorland and Furness, and compared to national averages, decline steadily over time with the fastest improvements in the most deprived and vulnerable communities.

There is effective integration with the NHS, with an Integrated Care System that is recognised by regulators as a high performing system.

People's quality of life, well being and happiness improves, and life expectancy increases over time, with people living independently for longer.

There is a reduction in the number of deaths by suicide, and in the number of drug related deaths in our area.

The proportion of the population, children and adults, who are obese declines over time.

Economic inactivity as a result of poor physical or mental health reduces over time.

What we will deliver this year

Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Coordinate the delivery of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy with our partners on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board, working with our communities to develop Community Health and Wellbeing Partnerships.
Sexual health	Commission new services to support good sexual health in the population.
Drug misuse and suicide prevention	Develop action plans to reduce suicides and drug related deaths.
Healthy weight	Work with partners to develop and promote the support available to enable people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
Smoking	Increase access to support to reduce smoking, building on our local experience and the success of programmes trialled in Barrow.
Vaping	Work with partners to increase awareness of the risks vaping can pose to children and young people, and take action to reduce children and young people's access to vapes.
Wider determinants of health	Take a 'health in all policies' approach, maximising the opportunities to improve and protect health throughout the council's work, including, for example, through the development of the new Local Plan, Housing Strategy and Community Power.
Sport and leisure	Produce a sport, physical activity and leisure strategy to ensure we are supporting active, healthy lives for young and old, and to inform our future operating model.
Sport and leisure capital funding	Continue to seek capital funding to improve and diversify our leisure and sport assets, with a focus around decarbonisation, including the Sport England swimming pool fund and the Football Foundation.
Parks and playgrounds	Work with local communities and stakeholders to produce our parks and open spaces strategy to ensure our parks, green spaces and playgrounds are places and spaces that people of all ages can enjoy, including investing in our key parks, playground and open space assets, establishing robust management plans and supporting friend's groups, including Castle Park in Penrith and refurbishing playgrounds at School Knott and Mill Beck.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
801	Percentage of adults who are current smokers.
802	Rate of Suicide (persons).
803	Rate of deaths from drug misuse (persons).
804	Percentage of people receiving coaching support reporting an improvement in their mental health.
805	Percentage of mandated health visitor visits completed within timescales.
806	Percentage of opiate users that completed drug treatment successfully.
807	Number of active leisure centre memberships.

9 Culture

Our mission

Culture is embedded in all we do and contributes to improved health, well being and quality of life. Everyone has access to a diverse and distinctive range of opportunities to be creative and enjoy high quality cultural experiences across our area.

Our context

We have an outstanding unique cultural landscape which inspires creative people and visitors, past and present.

Our cultural potential is significant, and our goal is for a dynamic and growing, vital and diverse cultural eco system that underpins the creative economy, and the development and growth of our area and development of our reputation, nationally and internationally.

Collectively we can develop a distinctive vision for culture's role that aligns with our broader priorities and ambitions and creates the right platform for future creativity, innovation, learning and growth, connecting communities across Westmorland and Furness.

We have an exceptional cluster of cultural and creative organisations. We have a wealth of cultural assets, a strong cultural and creative offer, distinctive heritage and identity, and creative potential to deliver long lasting benefits for the whole area. We want to build on our strengths and utilise our assets.

We want to work in partnership with the creative and cultural sectors, and with wider stakeholders, to develop a coherent, cohesive and creative shared ambition and develop new opportunities around our outstanding cultural and natural assets and our creative people, places and cultural communities.

We want culture to be a driver for the health and wellbeing of all our residents, enabling and providing early prevention pathways through participation and engagement opportunities in cultural initiatives and programmes.

What success looks like

Westmorland and Furness is a distinctive, outward facing, attractive place with a strong cultural identity that helps the area achieve its potential, catalysing growth and change.

A new cultural framework and narrative is clearly articulated, endorsed and promoted.

The new Cultural Compact becomes the new, united, single voice and vision for culture in our area.

Our cultural offer is distinctive, diverse, and a key driver of local economic growth, renewal, and community well being, delivering a tangible return on investment.

Everyone has access to a range of opportunities to be creative and enjoy high quality cultural experiences.

That there are connected partnerships across our area working collaboratively to build scale, presence and impact.

The cultural and creative industries are stabilised and supported, and the cultural economy is thriving and growing.

Our resources are used to invest in supporting our cultural ecology, heritage, and physical infrastructure, bringing creative energy to communities to help make them great places to live, work, and thrive.

Council owned venues, libraries, museums, archives and other community and heritage assets support and contribute to cultural development.

The role and value of culture to the visitor economy is recognised as an integral part of the visitor offer and as a driver to visitors.

Culture as a driver contributing to the health and wellbeing of our residents is embedded in our work investment in culture, the cultural and creative economy is realised.

What we will deliver this year

Cultural Compact	Working with Arts Council England and DCMS develop a Cultural Compact to establish a cross sector strategic partnership, rooted in and of the place, driven by common ambition of asserting Westmorland and Furness as a cultural and creative powerhouse with culture as a catalyst for transformation and change.
Funding	Seek external funding to support the ongoing development of our museums and collections.
Library improvement	Deliver a library strategy for Westmorland and Furness to ensure they continue to support cultural development and communities within the area, and work with communities to develop a comprehensive and improved library service in Ulverston and Roose, following the unforeseen closure of these vital libraries.
Events	Use our council parks and venues in prime locations to pilot the delivery of arts, music and cultural events, providing easy access to great cultural experiences to as many people as possible.
Markets	Start work on site for the refurbishment of Barrow Market using £16m of Levelling Up funding to create a vibrant destination in the heart of the town centre and progress plans for the £4m renovation of Kendal indoor market, creating new destinations and community facilities in the heart of these town centres.
Lido	Complete the Grange Lido project to bring the site back into use as a new multi-use public space, protecting the site's social and cultural heritage for the future.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
901	Rate of physical visits to library sites.
902	Number of recorded visitors into Local Authority museums.
903	Number of attendances at shows cultural events/activities/shows within Local Authority venues.
904	Number of grants issued annually by the Local Authority to support cultural and heritage projects.

10 Effective services

Our mission

The council listens and takes pride in delivering services that make a difference. It is a modern, innovative and inclusive council with communities and customers at the heart of everything we do.

Our context

We are an ambitious new council with high aspirations for Westmorland and Furness. We have worked hard over the last few months to ensure a smooth transition from our previous councils to give us strong foundations to build upon. Our staff have worked hard to deliver continuity of service to our communities and partners and we can now look to the future.

We are a caring council our seven values describe the beliefs and principles that guide how we work and the decisions we make. We will help our workforce bring these values to life every day, we will invest in their personal growth, fostering a learning culture that attracts and retains talent.

It is important that in defining the future we work together with communities and partners to understand how we make best use of all of the resources available to us. Financial sustainability and organisational health is important for us to deliver on our vision. We can't do everything all at the same time, so we need to spend more time getting to know what really matters in all of the parts of Westmorland and Furness so we make good decisions.

We will design and deliver a more joined up experience for our customers our communities, businesses, visitors and partners. We will explore and adopt modern and innovative technologies and practices in the workplace that our staff enjoy using and that help them spend as much time as possible on the valued services we provide.

What success looks like

Communities and customers are at the heart of everything we do and can access modern and efficient services.

We are efficient, effective and well run, making every pound count locally to deliver value for money and social value.

We have a planned approach to utilising our resources (finance, assets and staff) to deliver our Council Plan priorities within our means.

Our customers are satisfied with their experience of the council.

We have a motivated workforce who are happy with their work and feel fulfilled.

Data and insight is readily available to make needs led and informed decisions based on local and national evidence.

There is a successful shift to an organisation that can focus on prevention and early intervention, rather than responding reactively to acute needs.

Modern technologies and practices are embedded into the council with a culture of innovation and continuous improvement that is always seeking to make a difference.

What we will deliver this year

Change programmes	Drive forward with our change agenda to achieve the benefits of becoming a unitary council and support our financial sustainability and begin implementation of key change programmes, including our Promoting Independence and Wellbeing programme in adult social care, the Ambition for Every Child programme in children's services, and creating unified waste and planning services to provide a consistent service across Westmorland and Furness.
People Plan	Agree and begin implementation of our new People Plan, setting out how we will recruit, retain, develop and support our workforce. Creating a healthy working environment and developing a strong organisational culture driven by our core values.
Customer	Improve and simplify the experience for people accessing council services, by developing a new Customer Strategy and Customer Charter, setting out the changes we will make and what the public can expect when they contact us to access council services.
Reception areas	Improve our customer reception areas at Kendal and Barrow Town Halls, and open the new Voreda House in Penrith, providing improved public access and service provision in our three key anchor buildings.
Phones and website	Improve how customers can access our services by implementing a single customer telephone contact system, making it quicker and easier to contact the council and creating a unified Westmorland and Furness website offering increased capacity for transactions with the council.
ICT and data	Agree and implement new ICT and data strategies, working towards a unified, future-ready Westmorland & Furness Council ICT system and making best use of our data to inform our decisions and be a needs-led organisation.
Information governance	Develop an Information Governance Framework to capture the council's strategic and operational approach to complying with minimum Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Subject Access Requests and Records Management requirements, including a single complaints, compliments and FOI policy and process
Commissioning and procurement	Adopt the commissioning and procurement strategies - thereby maximising opportunities associated with the procurement and recommissioning of goods, works, utilities and services, including ensuring social value is a key consideration in our decision making.
Asset optimisation and investment	Develop an asset optimisation and investment programme to support the changing needs of our services, including engaging with stakeholders as part of the agreed strategies (Disposal Policy and Community Asset Transfer Policy) to determine plans for the sale or repurposing of council property and continued prioritised maintenance and investment in our assets for the future.
Inclusion	Deliver our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion action plan ensuring we have the right culture in our organisation and can support and contribute to making Westmorland and Furness an inclusive and welcoming place for everyone.
Boundary review	Engage with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in the electoral review, to ensure the identities and interests of our communities are well reflected in the final arrangements, providing ongoing effective and convenient local government, whilst also delivering electoral equality across the local authority area.

Measuring our performance

ID	Indicator
1001	Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests processed within statutory timescales.
1002	Percentage of complaints responded to within timeframe.
1003	Number of days on average to process new claims for Housing Benefit (HB) / Council Tax Refund (CTR) claims.
1004	Percentage of return per annum over 10 years on Local Government Pension Scheme Investment.
1005	Number of working days forecast in the year to be lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) due to sickness absence.
1006	Number of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) Reportable Health and Safety Incidents.
1007	Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance received.

Next steps

Each year we will update this delivery framework using the ten themes as the basis for discussions with our partners and communities about where best to focus in helping to make Westmorland and Furness a great place to live, work and thrive.

The framework also provides the starting point for our budget setting for 2025/26, helping identify where investment is needed and where savings can be achieved through more efficient service delivery or doing things differently.

We will be using the ten strategic delivery themes, underpinned by the sustainability principles of equity, economy, and environment, to inform delivery priorities up to 2028.

How to stay in touch

If you want to feedback and stay in touch with the delivery framework you can:

Look **here** on our website

Visit or write to us, we have three offices:

- **Barrow:** Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria, LA14 2LD
- **Kendal (registered office):** South Lakeland House, Lowther Street, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4QD
- **Penrith:** Town Hall, Corney Place, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7QF

Follow us on social media:

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Appleby-in-Westmorland

Appendix 1

What we delivered in 2023/24

In the first edition of the delivery framework, we set out all the activity we said we would deliver in 2023/24. This appendix provides an update on what has been done on all those activities across our 10 strategic themes.

Communities

What we said	What we have done
Develop an Equalities Impact Assessment policy for our work with communities of interest.	EIA guidance and template have been agreed, work is progressing to ensure routine use and quality.
Using Barrow Town Deal funding invest in community hubs that provide places for people to meet and interact.	The Town deal Hubs Programme is progressing and is on target to complete in March 2026. A range of engagement and taster activities will take place this calendar year along with capital works at Bram Longstaff.
Develop a community strategy to embed new approaches to working with communities that establishes an approach that empowers local communities to come together to plan and deliver community-led projects.	New Local commissioned and engagement activity underway, which will develop, with colleagues, partners and VCFSE sector, a clear strategy and delivery plan which will be ready for approval in June / July 2024. Event held and activity starting to review a VCFSE Compact.
Establish three Locality Boards, embed ways of working with local parish and town councils, and work with communities to develop a place plans for each Locality that deliver improvements on local priorities.	3 Locality Boards up and running; local priority setting completed and Locality Plans approved. CALC Compact agreed.
Continue our commitment to the Poverty Truth Commissions, bringing people in poverty into the decision-making process and maintaining our support for those struggling due to cost-of-living crisis.	Each pf the 3 areas now has a PTC or similar approach in place; Internal Muli-disciplinary Poverty Working Group established to support those who are struggling due to cost of living, to help people out of poverty and to ultimately take a more strategic approach to addressing the root causes; 3 Community Resilience Groups continuing to meet with partners to support communities and to reach individuals who are affected by poverty and/or the cost of living crisis. Household Support Fund allocation confirmed and programme of activity and spend in place.
Work with Groundwork to support the delivery of community led activity in Barrow using £1m of Know your Neighbourhood funding.	Supporting partnership with activities and identifying further funding for Furness for You website and costs. Identified through Furness Locality Board Community Working Group.
Continue work with Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership to build capacity in the sector.	Ongoing - through two contracts we are working with 16 pre-start, 12 start-ups and 1 existing SE. There is an increased demand for support for start-ups and so we have reprofiled budget to meet this. UKSPF/ REPF - Currently developing a pipeline of projects.

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Work through the Community Safety Partnership to make communities feel safer.	Community Safety Partnership and Prevent Delivery Partnership established, and activity underway through thematic partnerships. Review of Local Focus Hubs to take place.
Develop a compact with voluntary organisations and local communities to agree principles for collaboration.	Compact review event held with VCSFE sector in March. Outputs from this being pulled together by a small working group to develop next steps. Wider Community Pledge is a key deliverable within the Community Power work package.
Work with Business Improvement Districts to enhance our streets and community spaces.	BIDs exist in Barrow, Ulverston, Kendal and Penrith, the council will work closely to support the BIDS to deliver their business plans where appropriate and aligned with Council Plan objectives.

Environment

What we said	What we have done
Start the greening of the council estate with the development of a solar farm in Barrow, producing an initial saving of 649 tonnes Carbon saving / annum co_2e.	Solar Farm development progressing with preparatory site works commenced w.c. 1 April 2024. Cabinet approval for first W&F Carbon Management Strategy allowing a strategic approach to the delivery of multiple workstreams and leveraging an annual investment of £2m per annum.
Develop plans for the implementation of an integrated and harmonised waste service for Westmorland and Furness.	A programme board has been established to develop a 5 year Waste Programme, utilising external expertise and advice develop options for future delivery models. An options papers is expected to available in April/May 2024, which will include a communications and engagement programme and a projected timeline for delivery.
Develop part one and part two of our Climate Action Plan, setting out a series of actions that council will take forward to address the impacts of climate change.	Part 1 and Part 2 of the Climate Action Plan approved at Cabinet. A programme of work to deliver the actions is being developed.
Invest £440,000 of council funding to address biodiversity loss through enhancing natural habitats, encouraging sustainable land-use and land management and improving open and green spaces,	900k of grant funding has been allocated to environmental improvement projects across Westmorland and Furness ranging from large projects valued at 99k to smaller community projects valued at 15k.
Support local organisations to invest in nature recovery activity, with £500k committed to a Climate and Environment Fund 23/24	510k committed to boosting biodiversity across Westmorland and Furness. This includes ecology and project support for partnerships.

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Support development of a Cumbria wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy and work with the Borderlands Partnership to develop a programme of activity to support nature recovery.	As the Responsibly Authority for the development of the LNRS a team has been appointed, including Project Manager, Engagement Lead and Technical officer. A communications and engagement plan has been developed with over 600 stakeholders identified, either organisations or individuals. Workshops have taken place to get views and a questionnaire has been published on the newly developed website.
Work with United Utilities and Environment Agency on the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan for period 2025-2050 to secure investment to improve our water quality.	Continuing to engage with United Utilities to shape and influence their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan 2025 - 2050. Draft business plan submitted to OFWAT.
Continue to lead the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience (CiFR) project to deliver flood mitigation and resilience measures.	Continuing to make progress on the 4 workstreams and meet key milestones, as part of the 6 year delivery programme.
Undertake Carbon Literacy training for all staff and elected members.	Carbon Literacy roll out has begun with 261 staff having completed the training, including 41 members and 55 SLT. (6% of staff) aim to train 25% of staff and members in 24/25
Enable an increase in tree planting using Community Forest and Treescape funding.	Defined as 1 tree or 1 meter of hedgerow containing 5 small trees. £50k Community Orchard Grant Funding and £50k Micro-woodlands grant funding has been received. Working with Community Forest to plant 7000+ trees at off site locations. 19,434 trees planted since 1 April 2023.

Growth

What we said	What we have done
Work with Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP) and their sector panels to support business growth. Provide accountable body support for CLEP's Growth Hub business support activity and for their Innovating for Success grant programme that supports businesses to decarbonise and to boost productivity through innovation.	Cumbria LEP continue to provide business support activity through the Growth Hub. Westmorland and Furness Council will provide accountable body assurance for the CLEP until 31 March 2024.
Manage the UKSPF programme to invest in activity that supports local business growth, particularly for our smaller and rural businesses.	UKSPF launched - 22 projects will share £8.1 million from the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), allocated by Westmorland and Furness Council.

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Provide support for clean growth investment, including the Spirit Energy proposals for carbon storage and capture in the Morecambe Bay gas fields, for Morgan Mona round 4 offshore wind investment, and the Carlton Power hydrogen facility at Kimberley Clark in Barrow.	Ongoing support provided to both Spirit Energy and Carlton Power. The Morecambe Net Zero (MNZ) Cluster, a planned carbon dioxide storage facility off the coast of Barrow-in-Furness has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore storage opportunities for carbon dioxide (CO_2). Carlton Power, one of the UK's leading independent energy infrastructure development companies, has been successful in Round One of UK Government's Hydrogen Allocation Round (HAR1).
Work with Cumbria Tourism on their Destination Management Plan to create a vision and action plan to manage our destination and support the visitor economy.	Newly-accredited with a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), Cumbria Tourism is leading the development of the new county-wide plan – working closely with Westmorland and Furness Council and a wide range of stakeholders. The Plan is a shared statement of intent to manage the destination over the period up to 2030, expected to be launched in March 2024.
Begin the development of a Local Plan for Westmorland and Furness to create the planning policy framework to enable inclusive and sustainable growth.	Development of a new Westmorland and Furness Local Plan has commenced. Aim is to deliver against the hard timetable of plan delivery within 30-months from Autumn 2024 when the Government is expected to have in place the regulations, policy and guidance.
Progress the delivery of the £40m investment programme of Town Deal and Levelling Up Funding in Barrow to enable completion by March 2026.	Progress continues to be made on delivery of projects through Town Deal and Levelling Up Investment, with regular meetings established with project leads and governance being provided through the Brilliant Barrow Board. Ongoing monitoring is taking place to ensure they can be delivered to time and budget, which can be challenging given the nature of increased costs for the capital projects - some value engineering is required. A Programme Director for Major Projects and Regeneration in Barrow and Furness is also now in place to support delivery.
Continue to engage in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal to enable investment in activities to support the local economy.	Westmorland and Furness is a key partner in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal Partnership, with both Member and senior officer involvement.
Work with BAE, as Westmorland and Furness's largest single employer, through a Planning Performance Agreement to support the development of Barrow as an international centre of excellence in submarine manufacturing and defence.	Continuing to work with BAE through a PPA to support the development and ensure a robust and timely response to planning applications.
Work with CLEP to deliver careers advice and skills training to help enable local people to access good jobs and to support business growth.	Work has progressed with CLEP on delivery.

Connections

What we said	What we have done
Locality Boards will decide how to invest £0.9m of funding to improve sustainable transport and will invest £0.3m to implement 20mph zones in locations identified by local communities.	Eden and South Lakeland Locality Boards have committed funding to identified travel and transport schemes and a programme of 20mph schemes is being developed with the support of colleagues in Highways. Furness Locality Board has committed half of its funding and has identified schemes to take forward for feasibility for 24/25. A programme of 20mph schemes is being developed.
Continue to support the delivery of the government's UK Gigabit Programme; investing £108.5m to deliver gigabit capable services to 60,000 properties across Cumbria.	BDUK has awarded Northern Ireland-based broadband provider Fibrus a Project Gigabit contract to provide around 60,000 premises in Cumbria with access to gigabit-capable broadband. Anticipated Project Gigabit delivery is very good, but we will continue to work with Cumberland Council to monitor commercial plans closely as there is a risk that these won't be fully realised. BDUK are reluctant to share Project Gigabit data (or allow Fibrus to do so) e.g. premises by phase. This could limit the support both authorities can provide. The latest thinkbroadband statistics show gigabit connectivity across the county at 43.4% with Cumberland at 33.5% and W&F at 54.7%.
Work with Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited on the Government's Shared Rural Network programme that seeks to deliver 95% 4G coverage from the four major mobile operators.	The UK Government Shared Rural Network mobile infrastructure programme is seeking to deliver 95 per cent geographical 4G coverage in the UK from at least one Mobile Network Operator by 2025. We are awaiting data for the Westmorland and Furness area.
Secure investment in the strategic road network, including final approval for dualling the A66 by National Highways, Final Business Case approval for the Grizebeck improvement scheme on the A595 and a commitment to improving the A590 corridor.	Final Business Case submitted for Grizebeck, Government announced additional £10.5m for scheme. Now awaiting outcome of final business case.
Encourage people to travel sustainably, through provision of free bus travel for people over 60 and provision of the A2B travel card to reduce travel costs for young people.	A2B card extended across W&F in 23/24.
Begin delivery of active travel infrastructure, including use of Active Travel and Town Deal funding in Barrow and £6m of Borderlands funding for cycle infrastructure through the heart of the Lake District on the A591 corridor.	Active Travel funded schemes are progressing towards delivery, with preliminary designs completed for North Walney and Abbey Road in Barrow, with tendering to appoint a contractor for detailed design and build underway and construction planned to commence in Summer 2024. Borderlands Schemes delayed due to inflationary cost increase and match funding being withdrawn, reprioritisation of the schemes and alternative funding sources are being sought.

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Develop a prioritised plan for maintenance and improvements of roads, using sustainable practices to reduce environmental impact.	23/24 road maintenance schemes are on track for delivery and the future works programme for 2024/25 was approved by Highways and Transport Strategic Board in March. On going consideration is being given to the use of sustainable materials and carbon reducing processes. All Highways contracts, relating to road maintenance, now include the NEC 4, X29 climate collaboration clause to focus our approach to the climate, to establish materials and processes that achieve carbon reductions and to realise bio-diversity benefits.
Finish the Rural Mobility Pilot and start the development of a Bus Service Improvement Plan focused on increasing accessibility to public transport.	Rural Mobility Project progessing and first tranche of BSIP plus funding schemes has been agreed by Strategic Highways and Transport Board and new routes are now operational.
Engage with Network Rail and government to secure investment to improve our railway infrastructure and services, including seeking approvals to the Lakes Line and the Cumbria Coast Line business cases.	Upgrade of the Energy Coast Line between Carlisle, Workington and Barrow was announced as part of the £36bn infrastructure investment through Network North. This will enable a half-hourly service between Carlisle, Workington and Whitehaven and accommodate major new freight demands. Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland Council are working with Department for Transport and Network Rail to support this investment. Ongoing lobbying for investment in Lakes Line.
Complete the A592/A684 Safer Roads Programme with an investment of £5.05m	In December we started to install the landscape sensitive vehicle restraints (crash barriers) on sections of the Pass where there are currently metal railings. Resurfacing due to start in March 2023, however due to the adverse weather the complete progamme may not now be complete until 2024/25.
Use £3.5m of Levelling Up Funding to improve the road surface on the A595 and A590 as part of the Cumbria Energy Coast Highway Route Upgrades programme.	All Levelling Up funding will be committed or spent by 31 March 2025 on resurfacing and maintenance.
Progress a review of options for the future of the Windermere Ferry.	Alternative options are being considered which require specialist legal advice. Options paper expected to be shared in April 2024
Continue to engage with the CKP Railways plc and stakeholders on the potential development of a Penrith to Keswick railway line.	Westmorland and Furness Council has given its support. Next step is for CKP to submit the application to Department for Transport.

Homes

What we said	What we have done
Develop a Strategic Housing Needs Assessment to inform the development of a new Housing Strategy setting out a long-term plan to deliver our mission.	The SHENA has been procured - Housing will feed into this project which will inform the development of a new Housing Strategy.
Agree how to invest £6m of ring-fenced funding to increase affordable housing supply and work with partners to take forward suitable schemes.	Affordable Housing Policy agreed by Cabinet and governance in place for funding allocation. New Strategic Lead for Development and Enabling appointed to work with partners to take forward suitable schemes.
Develop a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy to help combat homelessness.	On target for Cabinet in April, the Strategy has been through Scrutiny and full consultation with all stakeholders.
Utilise the Home Up-Grade Grant to improve the energy efficiency of homes that are low income and/or are off the gas grid.	In mobilisation phase - 361 properties signed up to the Project. Delivery Assurance Check (DAC) successfully passed Dec 2023.
Invest £2.15m Disabled Facility Grants to adapt homes to meet the needs of older adults and people with a disability.	Statutory Function - Home Improvement Agency in place to deliver DFG's to adapt homes to meet the needs of older adults and people with a disability working across directorates.
Begin work on an Empty Homes Policy to get more properties back into use.	Work has began on an Empty Homes Policy to bring more properties back into use. A new strategic lead has been appointed to take this work forward and ascertain levels of funding available for grants and new resources to deliver this project.
Work with developers to enable land to be brought forward for housing development. This will include working with Homes England to select residential developers for sites at Barrow Waterside and at Cross-a-Moor.	Recruitment to a Housing Delivery Programme Lead will support the council with the capacity and capability to deliver, support and encourage with the development of a mixed housing officer to meet to needs of current and future residents. Working in partnership with developers, Registered Providers and Land Owners we will encourage and seek to unblock development to increase the pace of housing delivery.

Learning

What we said	What we have done
Deliver our statutory responsibilities for Home to School Transport, Early Years and Child Care Sufficiency Strategy and School Organisation.	Workstream and Board in place to improve Home to School Transport. Comprehensive School Organisation Sufficiency underway, due for completion Dec 2023. Early Years duty is delivered.
Define and commit to a Westmorland and Furness reading ambition to help all children to be competent and confident readers.	This will be part of 2024/2025 academic priority.

Work with learning establishments and partners to define our educational priorities and support improved attendance and educational outcomes.	Established Strategic Learning Alliance. Identified SEN, Attendance and AP provision as priority for most schools. Curriculum workstreams are being developed.
Develop a new Alternative Provision facility in Barrow and assess High Needs Provision across Westmorland and Furness.	Timeline and site for delivery agreed by Jan 2025.
Work with partners and government to secure investment to improve educational facilities in Westmorland and Furness, including delivery of the new Learning Quarter in Barrow and improvements at Ullswater Community College.	For the UCC, DfE have confirmed the re-build will go ahead as planned in phase 2, with a project officer from the DfE to be allocated and a visit in the summer term. This is all on track based on these external timescales.
Work with partners, schools, children, young people, families and communities to develop the Children and Young People Plan for Westmorland and Furness.	Ambition for Every Child: Making a Difference to Every Child in W&F based on CYP feedback and priorities of W&F. This has been drafted and is being consulted on.
Work with partners to increase the number of apprentice opportunities across Westmorland and Furness including recruitment of 16 new apprentices within the council.	The Apprenticeships Service is hosted by W&F and has exceeding targets agreed for both Unitary Councils. For W&F, the 2023/24 target was 16 apprentices and we achieved 36 posts advertised with 20 W&F appointed by end Q3, 4 of the 20 (20%) from Care Experienced cohort. Nb. W&F hosted service with similar additional apprenticeships achieved for Cumberland.
Lead our SEND partnership that supports children and young people with SEND, learning difficulty or disability, and deliver the DfE sponsored Delivering Better Value programme.	W&F inaugural SEND Partnership meeting held in March 2024 following - disaggregation of the pan-Cumbria Board. W&F Accountable Officers Exec in place. As part of DBV work a DSG management plan has been submitted to the DFE prior to the deadline with positive feedback received. First-Planner commissioned to identify SEND need, growth and provision gaps along with potential opportunities which has informed first draft of the Education Sufficiency Strategy. EHCP 20 week compliance has increased to 81% (from 41%) following revisions to the process which has been completed.
Deliver Community Learning activity, including the provision of numeracy skills training adults through the UKSPF funded Multiply programme.	On target to deliver 100% of Adult Education Budget (£2.4m) by the end of the academic year (31 July 2024). Delivery of Multiply budget is expected to be at 97% at the end of Financial Year 2 of the programme (31 March 2024).

| Recognise the impact of sparsity by providing a £500,000 travel bursary scheme for 16-19 year olds to support them to access education. | Grant scheme launched in August 2023. |

Care (children)

What we said	What we have done
Deliver our Neglect Action Plan as part of the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership multi-agency neglect strategy.	Neglect Strategy and toolkit was launched across the partnership in October.
Develop our Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy by April 2024.	On track for delivery.
Continue the Foster Family campaign working with Cumberland Council to ensure there are sufficient places for young people in need of care.	In place. Further work underway to consider improvements in Fostering.
Deliver the Children and Families (Social Care) Improvement and Development Plan.	Completed and being reviewed by extensive diagnostic work across the service.
Redesign our Early Help system wide offer, strategy and implementation plan and an increase in the number of Early Help Assessments for families.	Considerable work underway in redesign of what is a complex set of services, which include internal and commissioned services. Agreed to bring commissioned services in-house to provide resource and flexibility to change the way we work. Family Hub opened 21 Dec 2023, with further Dalton satellite open in Feb 2024. Secured permanent Senior Service Manager and Service Manager.
Establish a regional adoption agency in partnership with Cumberland.	RAA proposal is being put through both council governance processes.

Care (adults)

What we said	What we have done
Launch Promoting Independence and Wellbeing Programme, beginning delivery of service improvement activity.	Programme has launched and we now have programme board in place and reporting into Integration and Improvement Board.
Ensure Care Quality Commission Assurance Framework readiness through establishing performance baselines and robust evidence base, documented systems and processes, and engagement with key partners.	CQC Lead now in place aafter a delay. Reassessment of current position has been made and accelerated actions to bring a plan together. Governance and working groups being set up currently to extend the number of people involved in the preparation.
Develop a Workforce Strategy to start our journey to sustainable workforce.	Will not deliver by 31 March, but on track for spring/summer 24.

Review approach to use of the Better Care Fund, identifying areas for improvement in how this budget is spent.	The review of the schemes supported by the Better Care Fund is well underway and is being carried jointly between Westmorland and Furness Council, Lancashire and South ICN and North East and North Cumbria ICB. Initial details regarding outputs related to the Community Equipment Services and The Common Platform have been reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The review remains ongoing with the sequencing being agreed amongst partners.
Produce service-user engagement strategy to inform future service development.	Co-production strategy which was signed off at DMT. Updates since then are that we have started a piece of work with colleagues from the 3 locally based Carers' Organisations to develop a Carers' Strategy. The APL Team are also working with Digital to develop public-facing resources on the council website around social care, early help/ prevention, information and contacts to help people make early and informed decisions about meeting their care and support needs.
Deliver occupational therapy aids improvement programme to ensure no one is waiting too long for help.	Although workforce recruitment challenges have impacted on progress , the assessment waiting list has been reduced by almost 50% and the longest wait time by almost 40%.
Deliver assistive technology pilot project in our home care service.	Pilot is progressing well and is being expanded to other geographical areas before full evaluation occurs.
Agree strategic commissioning priorities.	Commissioning Strategy for the council due to be approved at Cabinet in April 2024. Adults Services is providing an update on their vision and priorities – we can then develop commissioning intentions for 2024 – 2027.

Health and wellbeing

What we said	What we have done
Launch the Family Hub as a new model for bringing together provision of advice and support services for families under one roof to improve their health and well-being.	Physical Family Hub launched at Barrow Library 21/12/23 - spokes will have a soft launch over the next 2 months. Full model still being developed. Website now up and running.
Undertake the joint Strategic Needs Assessment of health and well-being to inform the development of a Health and Well-being strategy for Westmorland and Furness.	A new summary Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has been developed and is being used to inform the development of a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy. A public consultation has also been undertaken to inform the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and both the JSNA and public consultation are now informing a series of workshops to shape the Strategy content. The final strategy is due to be agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2024.

Active Cumbria will help get people more active by encouraging more people to walk and cycle.	Active Cumbria have been delivering a range of programmes and services across the footprint, these have included activating our communities through the Together Fund, supporting older adults to be more active through Live Longer Better, encouraging more people in Barrow to Travel Actively, as well as moving the whole community through their Street Tag programme. Active Cumbria have also been working with School Games Organisers to deliver a number of School Games events specifically for less active children. The most recent Active Lives Survey data for both children and adults shows physical activity levels as being on the right side of national averages. More detailed information and infographics can be found via **activecumbria. org/about-us/resources/**
Healthy Habits for Life programme will continue, offering families 1:1 support to help children and their families develop positive behaviours to maintain a healthier weight.	Service continues to be delivered with positive uptake and feedback. A service review is being undertaken to look at impact and effectiveness and inform future commissioning of 0-19 public health services.
We will train our staff to better understand the effects of trauma on people's lives which allow us to better support them and meet their needs.	Birchall Trust have been commissioned to support the council in undertaking a self-assessment of current practice and develop and action plan by August 24. Birchall Trust will also be provide training to key staffing groups including Childrens, Adults, HWACs and others from April onwards.
Increase the availability of specialist support for people who want to quit smoking and vaping, and the range of products available to support people to quit successfully, working towards our target of Westmorland and Furness being smoke free by 2030 (smoking prevalence 5% or less).	Additional support provided via Allen Carr Easyway programme. Pharmacy provision has been expanded in new year 2024. 2 Smoking Health and Wellbeing Behaviour Officers have been appointed. An Addictions Public Health Project Officer role has gone out for advert with a focus on Smokefree Westmorland and Furness.
Work to maximise the use of community pathways and assets to improve health, wellbeing and resilience will commence, focusing on early prevention activity to reduce pressures on our health and care systems.	The Health and Wellbeing Team have received 675 referrals in quarters 1-3 23/24. There is effective integration with partners across the health system a total 226 referrals have been received by health partners. The team are part of MDT meetings within social care and community mental health teams, offering health and wellbeing coaching. The team work with people in areas of deprivation and support people that experience health inequalities. Q1-Q3 outcome data shows that on average 77% people supported said that their anxiety levels had improved, 70% reported decrease in depression, 80% reported improved happiness and 78% reported improved personal resilience.
Deliver the Holiday Activity and Food Programme supporting vulnerable children to be active, build resilience, improve wellbeing and have access to healthy food during school holidays.	HAF continues to be provided and healthy food access is promoted as part of the programme.

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Culture

What we said	What we have done
Start development of a new rural model of a Cultural Compact to create a new strategic cross- sector partnership that is driven by a shared ambition for culture and place, to co-design and consult upon a vision for the role of culture and deliver against shared priorities.	Approach to Cultural compact work supported by the Arts Council. Work on the cultural framework will commence in 24/25 with significant engagement with NPO's and wider cultural sector partners.
Develop a new cultural framework to enable cultural and creative growth.	Work has commenced on the development of a cultural framework. The aim of the Cultural Framework is to clearly set a vision for W&F for the next 5/10 years. To focus the work of all those involved in the delivery and development of' culture' and seek to influence other areas of work that culture impacts upon including health, regeneration, education, communities, environment, transport and the economy.
Start development of a new Heritage Strategy.	Officers within the heritage and historic environment team have started to scope out the key aims and objectives of a Council Heritage Strategy. Regular engagement with National Heritage Lottery and Historic England to discuss priorities for W&F.
Work with key strategic cultural partners and National Portfolio Organisations of Arts Council England that contribute to the delivery of key priorities around culture, creative and visitor economy, healthy communities and the environment.	Officers are continuing to meet and engage with our NPO's and strategic cultural partners both on an individual level and through LEP sector panels and Cumbria Arts and Culture Network. Officers also engage with the sector to monitor and evaluate the outputs and outcomes secured through the grant funding provided by the council.
Work to enable local communities to access and participate in a variety of quality and diverse cultural experiences.	Officers are working with a range of events organisers across W&F to ensure that communities get access to a range of free and chargeable events. Recent partnership with Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra is enabling communities to have unique cultural experiences. The event space at the Barrow Dock Museum Amphitheatre is expected to be completed in March 2024, and this is complemented by a free summer events programme.
Enable investment in opportunities and ideas that will boost local pride in place, including through use of UKSPF and other funding sources.	The council has secured funding through UKSPF to enhance the events and festivals offer in W&F (£100k) and also provide small capital and revenue grants to cultural and heritage organisations (£200k). The grant criteria are currently being developed. £50k of grants has been awarded for small scale heritage projects in the Barrow area through the Micro to Mighty Grants scheme.
Continue to improve and promote the use of our libraries as centres for culture and learning, including £874,000 of improvements to be made at Kendal library.	Works completed at Kendal library and enhanced adult learning provision provided at Penrith library.

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Support the on-going development of our museums, including the creation of a new heritage gallery "Shipyard Town" at Barrow's Dock Museum utilising £0.8m of funding from the Lottery Heritage Fund.	Procurement of the works for the shipyard town gallery is currently underway with works expected to be completed in advance of the 2024 Summer Holidays.
Invest £250,000 into a Culture Recovery support fund, to support the cultural sector and to help venues and organisations manage the impacts of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis.	Culture Recovery Fund ODR approved. Grant criteria have been developed. Legal agreements with NPOs currently being drafted. Grants to be issued before end of March 2024.
Look to utilise our prime outdoor spaces as venues to pilot the delivery of some commissioned services and events, to make our cultural offer more accessible for both residents and visitors.	New and upgraded event spaces are being developed through Barrow Town Deal Place Programme. Service are exploring opportunities to hold events in some of our parks, leisure centres and open spaces within W&F.
Progress the Borderlands Place Plans in Dalton, Penrith and Ulverston identifying the priority cultural and creative projects for investment of £3m that will help to boost town vibrancy, vitality, community and visitor offer.	Within the place plans in Dalton, Ulverston and Penrith, a number of the PIDs have a focus around enhancing the cultural and leisure offer and to provide communities with better access to services through the creation of key community hubs. Penrith is set to be the first town to submit its Town Investment Plan for approval out of 22 towns receiving funding.
Progress the development of the Grange Lido project to bring the site back into use as a facility for the local community and visitor destination.	Grange Lido project is currently on programme for complete in Summer 2024 and will be a significant cultural and economic asset for the town and wider area.
Start the redevelopment of the Barrow Indoor Market using £16m of Levelling Up Funding to act as a catalyst for the regeneration of Barrow town centre.	Enabling works at Barrow Market will commence in February 2024.

Effective Services

What we said	What we have done
Begin harmonisation of legacy council services, ensuring a consistent offer to residents across the area. Priorities for year 1 are waste and planning services and improvement in Adult and Children Services.	A Change Programme has been established to provide governance and assurance on delivery, work is now underway across all workstreams to develop full project plans including in relation to adult social care, children's services, waste, planning, customer services, ICT, data, community power, organisational culture and financial sustainability.
Develop our operating model, with a particular focus around early prevention and improving the customer experience.	Target Operating Model designed and agreed. Operating Model Programme Board in place.

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Create the data strategy and build the foundations for an improved integrated customer experience, using meaningful data and insight for evidence based decision making and impact reporting.	Work is underway to progress development of a W&F Data Strategy and a working draft is expected by May 2024. Further development work will be required through 2024.
Produce our Performance Management Framework, based around this delivery framework, to establish metrics and governance for ensuring success.	Work is on track for agreement by April 2024.
Baseline existing customer channels (physical and digital), experiences, datasets and ICT, engaging with users to agree the core principles for an improved customer experience.	Customer Baseline work completed and has informed Customer Strategy co-production and scrutiny process. On track for Cabinet consideration 30 April 2024 with Year 1 Delivery Plan outlining 2024/25 commitments.
Improve the 'front doors' to the council's anchor buildings in Penrith, Kendal and Barrow to create a welcoming environment.	Work to establish W&F Customer Service principles and standards is progressing well with funding secured to progress Anchor building customer design options ahead of Capital works. Dedicated Customer Experience Manager recruited and in place. Commitments included in Customer Strategy delivery plan for Cabinet consideration 30 April 2024. Architect options received for Barrow Town Hall and being considered. Voreda House customer offer being finalised and Kendal Town Hall programmed and on track.
Assess the opportunities for the application of new and emerging technologies and how they can deliver improved and more effective services.	W&F ICT infrastructure, systems and applications baseline work completed and informing ICT Strategy co-production and scrutiny process. ICT Strategy on track for Cabinet consideration 30 April 2024 with 2024/25 Delivery Plan outlining action plan commitments.
Baseline our physical asset base and explore opportunities for making best use of these as buildings for co-location and community hubs.	Work ongoing to determine baseline data and formulate an accommodation strategy. Planned activity to complete in Q1 2024/25.
Agree our community wealth building approach and the role we can play through our commissioning and procurement practices and delivery of environmental and social value through how and where we spend.	CMT considered a review of current CWB activity in January. Further work is required to develop an agreed position statement and approach.

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Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

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আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে **0300 373 3300** নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

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Westmorland & Furness Council

DRAFT

Performance Management Framework

2024/25

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Introduction

What is the purpose of this document?

Performance management is fundamental to our values of being outcome focused, ambitious and needs led, and it is the responsibility of everyone in the Council.

It is also a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to ensure that arrangements are in place to secure continuous improvement in the provision of our services.

This document supports those two drivers and provides a framework explaining the roles and responsibilities of every staff and elected member in delivering effective performance management, alongside providing guidance and tools on how to achieve this.

It sits alongside the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework, providing the method by which we will manage and monitor our progress towards the achievement of the 10 missions set out in the Delivery Framework.

What is performance management?

Performance management is often misconstrued as having to achieve objectives or hit targets. In fact, good performance management is understanding...

- **why** objectives are (or are not) achieved
- **what** changes would have the most positive impact
- **how** to best implement these changes.

Good performance management focuses on progress and change, not on 'being above average' on every measure or hitting targets.

What is a Performance Management Framework?

A Performance Management Framework is essential to ensure effective governance, transparency, and accountability. The framework aligns performance management practice with the strategic goals of Westmorland and Furness Council as set out in our Council Plan and our Delivery Framework, with a clear objective of improving services, responsiveness, and overall community well-being.

A Performance Management Framework is a set of practice and principles which staff and elected members are required to implement.

Their role in delivering effective performance management covers five key areas, detailed in this document:

1 **Process of Performance Management**

2 **Roles and Responsibilities**

3 **Governance and 'the golden thread'**

4 **Data, Information and Analysis**

5 **Service Delivery**

For further information:

Performance Management Guide for local authority officers

Performance Management Guide for councillors

Why do we need performance management?

Robust performance management is essential to help the council deliver the most effective and efficient services to its residents, who include the most vulnerable individuals in need of support.

Our Performance Management Framework aims to ensure staff understand the changing needs of our residents, and how effectively our services are meeting that need, in order to support on-going development of services.

Performance management is also how we take responsibility for our performance and how we enable the public and national government to hold us to account.

Who needs performance management information?

| **Elected Members need...** timely and relevant intelligence to make sound strategic and policy decisions; to be assured that decisions are being implemented effectively; and that performance and outcomes are improving. | **Council employees need...** timely and relevant intelligence in order to deliver effective services and manage their own performance. | **Managers need...** timely and relevant intelligence to make operational decisions and to make best use of resources in order to meet customer needs and improve outcomes. | **Customers need...** open, relevant and accurate information to be informed and hold the Council's services and performance to account. |

1 Process of performance management

Good performance management is not achieving objectives, but understanding why objectives are, or are not, achieved and acting appropriately to optimise success.

Figure 1: Performance Management Cycle

Plan

Everyone needs to manage their performance to a clear set of objectives. *The strategic planning process* cascades **down** Council Plan priorities from the organisational level – to directorate – to team – to individual. So even at the individual level, everyone should be working towards clear objectives with understanding of how their objectives support the Council Plan.

Do

Carrying out the actions in the plan to achieve the objectives. This phase includes the gathering and collecting of robust data to allow effective monitoring of progress towards the plan's objectives.

Review

Data is compared to expected outcomes, often using Key Performance Indicators and reported via scorecards and dashboards. This needs to be done at regular intervals however, data, information and insights should be at the fingertips of everyone to ensure on-going awareness. Reviewing, and understanding how to improve the plan, also needs to include the wider context eg. national policy, internal audit recommendations, public priorities, resident and community feedback, learning from complaints, and feedback from staff.

Improve

Adjusting the plan to better support achievement of objectives. Positive progress must be acted on to build success, whereas problematic progress must be acted upon to correct it. Each insight will require a decision on what action to take. Actions can include changes to systems, process, resources, policies and procedures. Making changes to improve the chances of successfully meeting the plan's objectives. Effective performance management cascades up understanding through the organisation identifying what has and hasn't worked well - and what we can learn from this to revise the plan.

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2 Roles and responsibilities

Performance management is the responsibility of everyone in the Council. A summary of the key roles and responsibilities of Officers and Elected Members is set out below.

Roles	Responsibilities
Full Council	• Approve the Council Plan & Delivery Framework, key strategies and Medium Term Financial Plan
Cabinet	• Approve the Performance Management Framework. • Ensure strategic delivery of Council Plan, Delivery Framework and Medium Term Financial Plan. • Evidence progress against corporate priorities. • Provoke debate about what should happen next. • Challenge financial and non financial performance of all services.
Portfolio Holders	• Regularly monitor, review and challenge performance to ensure delivery in relation to their portfolio.
Scrutiny Members	• Hold Cabinet to account. • Scrutinise the Council's performance. • Undertake specific reviews of any identified performance issues which can be undertaken through the Council's arrangements for Scrutiny.

Table 1: Roles and Responsibilities of Elected Members

Roles	Responsibilities
Corporate Management Team	• Support implementation of the Performance Management Framework. • Take strategic responsibility for the delivery of the Council Plan & Delivery Framework • Review performance against the Council Plan & Delivery Framework on at least a quarterly basis • Ensure commitment to the delivery of Council Plan & Delivery Framework through the allocation of responsibilities and resources.
Senior Leadership Team	• Ensure services are working in line with requirements of the Performance Management Framework • Lead service planning within their service areas, identifying annual priorities, KPIs and delivery activity • Review relevant performance at Directorate Management Team meetings on a quarterly basis. • Support integration of performance with key service areas, including risk, finance and policy. • Support performance management process - plan, do, review • Facilitate learning.
Service Managers	• Contribute to and produce relevant plans and objectives which contribute to the Council Plan & Delivery Framework. • Seek support to improve performance and review systems and processes. • Inform workforce development and continuing professional development • Provide data in accordance with performance reporting requirements.

Team Managers	• Inform planning, resourcing, quality management and service delivery. • Provide data in accordance with performance reporting requirements. • Seek support to improve performance and manage risks. • Manage staff performance and undertake appraisals. • Inform workforce development and continuing professional development. • Encourage staff to seek support when needed to improve performance and provide support when requested.
Individuals	• Responsible for personal development and performance. • Participate in annual appraisal. • Understand how work contributes to the Council Plan. • Seeking support to improve performance and manage risks. • Raise specific issues regarding risk and performance with Managers. • Ensure that activity listed within individual appraisals is implemented on schedule.

Table 2: Roles and Responsibilities of Officers

3 Governance and 'the golden thread'

Governance defines the controls in place to govern decision-making and manage risks, including council-based compliance and regulatory obligations. We are responsible for ensuring that our business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and this includes alignment with other frameworks set out in the constitution in order to achieve council objectives, including the budget and policy framework and the risk management framework.

Budget and Policy Framework	Performance Management Framework	Risk Management Framework
We are responsible for ensuring that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.	We have a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continous improvement in the way in which our functions are exercised.	We are responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions and which includes arrangements for the identification and management of risks.

Figure 2: Key Local Authority Frameworks

Accountability

Each of these areas need clear accountability from the organisational level down to the individual level. Accountability for performance follows the 'golden thread' of the Council Plan shown in the table below.

Objectives	Strategic Documentation	Performance Tools	Accountable	Meeting
Council Vision	Council Plan	Corporate Performance Report	Cabinet & Members	Cabinet Council
Corporate Objectives	Council Plan Delivery Framework	Corporate Performance Report, Dashboards, Scorecards	Cabinet & CMT	Cabinet CMT
Directorate Objectives	Directorate Service Plans	Dashboards, Scorecards	Directors	Directorate meetings
Service Objectives	Service-Level Plans	Dashboards, Scorecards, Reports	Heads of Service	Service meeting
Team Objectives	Team Plans	Dashboards, Scorecards, Reports	Team Managers	Team meetings
Individual Objectives	Appraisals	Appraisal documentation	Individuals	Appraisals

Table 3: Golden Thread of Performance Management Accountability

Corporate performance reporting

Public corporate performance reporting ensures transparency and enhances accountability. Corporate performance reports are published quarterly and considered by Cabinet and the council's Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report provides an overview of the council's performance and allows monitoring of progress towards the council's goals.

The report is structured around the 10 themes set out in our **Council Plan Delivery Framework**.

Related to each theme, the report includes:

- A commentary highlighting successes, challenges, and action being taken to ensure performance improvement
- Selected key performance indicators – related to wider community outcomes in which the council plays an important role, often alongside partner organisations
- Selected key performance indicators – related to direct council service provision
- A progress tracker to monitor delivery of priority activity included in the Council Plan Delivery Framework etc.

Corporate performance indicators have been selected to align with the 10 Delivery Framework themes and are a subset of the much larger number of performance indicators used by council services to monitor day to day service delivery.

In these ways, a direct connection is made between the Delivery Framework and our performance monitoring and management.

ID	Strategic Theme	Corporate Performance Indicators
101	Communities	Number of Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) groups supported/started up.
102	Communities	Rank of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) as a concern reported by residents.
103	Communities	Rate of all recorded offences (excluding fraud).
104	Communities	Number of Social Enterprise start-ups.
105	Communities	Number of Social Enterprises assisted.
201	Environment	Numbers of trees and hedgerows planted over 5 years.
202	Environment	Number of hectares of peat restored through the Peat Partnership (from Local Authority grant).
203	Environment	Carbon emissions (of Local Authority operations).

204	Environment	Number of private homes improved through energy efficiency initiatives (housing retrofit).
205	Environment	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.
206	Environment	Kilograms of residual waste (including grey bins, litter bins street sweepings and other).
301	Growth	Total Gross Value Added (GVA).
302	Growth	Percentage of the workforce with qualifications.
303	Growth	Claimant Rate of Universal Credit by those looking for employment.
304	Growth	Percentage of Full Plan applications given a decision within 5 weeks or maximum 2 months (if extension of time agreed) from plans submission/validation.
305	Growth	Percentage of Major Planning Applications determined within 13 weeks.
306	Growth	Percentage of Minor Planning Applications determined within 8 weeks.
307	Growth	Number of businesses supported through business support programmes.
401	Connections	Percentage of all Highways Defects completed within agreed response time
402	Connections	Percentage of A roads in need of maintenance treatment (Grade 4/5).
403	Connections	Number of passengers using bus services supported by the Council.
404	Growth	Number of open highways defects (including those waiting for assessment/categorisation)
501	Homes	Percentage of council tenant satisfaction with overall service provided by the council.
502	Homes	Percentage of social housing properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS).
503	Homes	Percentage of successful homelessness prevention outcomes.
504	Homes	Percentage of successful homelessness relief outcomes.
505	Homes	Number of people on the waiting list for social housing.
506	Homes	Number of households in temporary accommodation.
507	Homes	Number of completed dwellings.
508	Homes	Number of affordable homes completed.
601	Learning	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within timescales (including exceptions).
602	Learning	Percentage of 16-17 year olds looked after in care in Education Employment or Training (EET).
603	Learning	Percentage of 16-17 year olds with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Education Employment or Training (EET).
604	Learning	Percentage of 16-17 year olds in Education Employment or Training (EET)
605	Learning	Percentage of pupils receiving a Permanent Exclusion.

606	Learning	Percentage of sessions missed by all pupils (overall absence rate).
607	Learning	Percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS.
608	Learning	Percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined at Key Stage 2.
609	Learning	Percentage of pupils attaining GCSE levels 4-9 in English and Mathematics at Key Stage 4.
610	Learning	Average Point Score (APS) per level 3 qualification entry (includes A level, Academic, Applied and Technical)
611	Learning	Adult Education enrolments on the digital curriculum from vulnerable and older adult residents in isolated areas
701	Care	Rate of Cared For children.
702	Care	Rate of children subject of a Child Protection (CP) Plan.
703	Care	Percentage of Children in Need (CIN) referrals that take place within 12 months of a previous referral for the same child.
704	Care	Percentage of Cared for Children living in the in same placement for 2 + years.
705	Care	Percentage of Care leavers in suitable accommodation (any age).
706	Care	Number of people currently waiting for a Social Work Assessment & Occupational Therapy Assessment.
707	Care	Rate of adults aged 18-64 whose long-term care needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes.
708	Care	Rate of adults aged 65 and over whose long-term care needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes.
709	Care	Number of people who have reduced or no ongoing support needs following a period of reablement (including reablement at home or within an intermediate care setting).
710	Care	Percentage of Section 42 Safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and the reported outcome was that this risk was reduced or removed.
711	Care	Percentage of Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings that remain Good as a minimum across all registered services
801	Health and well-being	Percentage of adults who are current smokers.
802	Health and well-being	Rate of Suicide (persons).
803	Health and well-being	Rate of deaths from drug misuse (persons).
804	Health and well-being	Percentage of people receiving coaching support reporting an improvement in their mental health
805	Health and well-being	Percentage of mandated health visitor visits completed within timescales
806	Health and well-being	Percentage of opiate users that completed drug treatment successfully

807	**Health and well-being**	Number of active leisure centre memberships.
901	**Culture**	Rate of physical visits to library sites.
902	**Culture**	Number of recorded visitors into Local Authority museums.
903	**Culture**	Number of attendances at shows cultural events/activities/shows within Local Authority venues.
904	**Culture**	Number of grants issued annually by the Local Authority to support cultural & heritage projects.
1001	**Effective services**	Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests processed within statutory timescales
1002	**Effective services**	Percentage of complaints responded to within timeframe.
1003	**Effective services**	Number of days on average to process new claims for Housing Benefit (HB) / Council Tax Refund (CTR) claims.
1004	**Effective services**	Percentage of return per annum over 10 years on Local Government Pension Scheme Investment.
1005	**Effective services**	Number of working days forecast in the year to be lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) due to sickness absence.
1006	**Effective services**	Number of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) Reportable Health and Safety Incidents.
1007	**Effective services**	Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance received.

Table 4: Agreed Corporate Performance Indicators by Council Plan Delivery Framework Theme

4 Data, information and analysis

Good quality data and information is the foundation of performance management. It is a key enabler to delivering our organisational objectives and one of the Council's most valuable assets. We aspire to use data to power our processes and support our digital transformation, facilitate better and more robust decision making, and to build trust with our residents.

Managing data is a complex business, from data gathering to data reporting. There are a number of policies and procedures that support effective data management.

- **Data Quality** - Good quality data is data that is fit for purpose. That means the data needs to be good enough to support the outcomes it is being used for. Public sector organisations need the right data in order to run good services, make the right decisions, and create effective policies. National guidance on best practice should be applied across the Westmorland and Furness Council data management.
- **Data maturity** – This can be described as the extent to which an organisation utilises the data they create. It attempts to ask "how much value are you getting out of your data?" Good performance management leads to greater data maturity.
- **Data Protection** – All data must be managed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). This enforces the standards that apply to the management of personal data.
- **Single Data List** - National government produces a Single Data List which is a list of all the datasets that local government must submit to central government. If a data requirement is not on the list, councils will not have to collect and provide it without receiving extra funding.
- **Data Ethics** - The Data Ethics Framework is a set of principles to guide the design of appropriate data use in the public sector. It is aimed at anyone working with data in the public sector.

The W&F Data Strategy (currently under development) will outline the organisational approach and operating model to ensure effective data management in more details.

5 Service delivery

A centralised team oversee the strategic direction of performance management across Westmorland and Furness Council. This team of centralised performance experts creates a 'hub', who support service-based champions and business experts who lead on performance within that team or directorate.

The overarching ambition of the performance team is to support directorates and service areas in embedding effective performance management, with service area managers using performance in a systemic way to support learning and development to achieve objectives, from service plans to individual appraisals.

Due the volume and complexity of performance management in complex service areas (such as social care, public health, economic analysis), individuals with business area expertise are essential to work collaboratively with the performance team.

The centralised performance team responsibilities include:

- Supporting service areas in embedding the principles, skills and tools to support an effective Performance Management Framework
- Providing training and communications to support effective development of Performance Reporting across the organisation
- Helping to embed a strong performance management and service user orientated culture in the new organisation.
- Supporting implementation of the Data Strategy and Framework.

The centralised team also have key performance and intelligence reporting responsibilities, including:

- Corporate Reporting
- Statutory Reporting
- Statutory Assessments
- External partnership collaboration (such as Public Health and Local Enterprise Partnerships)

Services have responsibilities for effective performance management within their service, and application of information and analysis to support the successful achievement of objectives as outlined in service plans from directorate level to individual appraisals.

For further information or support with Performance Management please contact:
lindsey.pickard@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال **0300 373 3300**

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Westmorland & Furness Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)   Appendix 3
Proforma

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and the **armed forces community.**

The EqIA process has two stages:

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.

- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EIA covers the nine protected characteristics as   well as rurality, socio-economic status, care experience and armed forces personnel/ veterans. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework 2024/25 and Westmorland and Furness Council Performance Management Framework

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

The Delivery Framework provides the overarching framework for the delivery of council services during 2024/25. It identifies 10 strategic themes, related missions and lists of service delivery activity for the coming year that will support achievement of those missions. The framework also identifies equity as one of the three underpinning sustainability principles that the council has adopted (alongside economy and environment), and as such sets the overall context for the council's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Performance Management Framework provides the overarching framework for how council performance will be monitored and managed, including a set of corporate performance indicators that will be used to help assessment of progress towards achieving goals set out in the delivery framework and the mechanism by which that will be publicly reported.

Neither document relate to specific service decisions, and as such in themselves do not have equality impacts. However, within the Delivery Framework are identified many projects, programmes, strategies and activities that will require their own Equality Impact Assessments. The Delivery Framework also specifically identifies delivery of the recently agreed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action plan as one of the council's priorities for 2024/25 and a set of performance indicators related to that are intended to be included in corporate performance reporting.

3) Consultation

Neither the Delivery Framework or Performance Management Framework have been the subject of formal consultation, however, both have been shared informally with a range of internal and external stakeholders for feedback. Scrutiny Members and Locality Board Chairs and Vice Chairs have all had opportunity to comment on draft versions of the documents and their feedback has been taken into consideration.

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	N			
Disability	N			
Gender reassignment	N			
Marriage or civil partnership	N			
Pregnancy or maternity	N			
Race	N			
Religion or belief	N			
Sex	N			
Sexual orientation	N			
Care Experience	N			
People in rural areas	N			
Socio-economic status	N			
Armed-forces personnel/veterans	N			
General (other considerations)	N			

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5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?   Yes ☐   No x

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Full Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/ Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	
Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/ function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

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Section 2: Information Gathering

What *relevant* information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

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Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic status					
Armed-forces personnel/veterans					

Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

Add rows as necessary.

Section 5. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	☐
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	☐
Complete the action plan.	☐
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	☐

Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?

Feedback from informal Scrutiny & Locality Board Chairs/Vice Chairs sessions in relation to Council Plan Delivery Framework 2024/25 & Performance Management Framework and action taken

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Overview

During March, all Scrutiny Members, along with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Locality Boards, were invited to informal Scrutiny sessions to consider:

1. The draft council performance management framework, including key performance indicators for 2024/25 (5 March).
2. The draft council plan delivery framework 2024/25 (27 March).

The first session was attended by 9 Members and the second by 12. Members provided a range of feedback on both documents. This feedback is summarised below alongside the action taken as a result to revise the two documents.

Performance Management Framework

The overall response to the new Performance Management Framework was broadly positive.

Issues and actions taken are summarised below.

Feedback	Action taken
In the quarterly report, performance indicators should continue to be RAG rated and any 'red' indicators have an explanation of remedial action underway.	Agreed and will be included in the reports.
Performance indicators should include baselines.	Agreed and will be included in the reports.
Suggestion performance indicators should include additional information such as sex or age in relation to library visits for example.	Would not be included as standard metric. Expectation that service would monitor this through customer sampling or similar.
Request to be clear about which indicators are 'council' (ie within direct control) and which are 'outcome' (not under direct control).	Will be included in indicator descriptor.
Request to see list of all metrics that have to be reported nationally.	Action taken to supply this to Members.
Request that relevant proposed performance indicators also be reported at Locality Board level.	Agreement to review indicators and determine which could be reported at Locality Board level.
Request for future review of indicators and reporting approach.	Agreed to bring through scrutiny before at end of 24/25 reporting cycle for review.

Council Plan Delivery Framework

The feedback is summarised below under the relevant delivery framework strategic theme, alongside the action taken to change the delivery framework as a result.

Community

Feedback	Action taken
Strengthen reference to role of Locality Boards and connection to Community Power agenda.	Text strengthened to highlight importance of Locality Board function.
Widen description of Community Hubs to be less Furness specific.	Removed reference to Furness, described programme as area wide.
Highlight and strengthen reference to CALC and Town and Parish Councils.	Included strengthened deliverable around working with these bodies.

Environment

Feedback	Action taken
Reference engagement with Locality Boards in relation to Electric Vehicle strategy	Reference added to engagement with stakeholders.
Highlight role of other bodies in tree planting and need to engage with them.	Reference added to working with partners and landowners.

Growth

Feedback	Action taken
All acceptable.	No action.

Connections

Feedback	Action taken
No reference to improving the A590. This is critical infrastructure issue.	Now included.
No reference to M6 viaducts works and impacts in Lune Valley.	Now included.

Homes

Feedback	Action taken
Affordable homes is the key issue.	Highlighted with specific priority deliverable.
Suggestion to build more council housing.	Included in purpose of Housing Strategy.
Highlight importance of new housing in rural areas.	Broader reference made to ensuring housing development across W&F area.
Include targets for housing development.	Will be considered in in development of Housing Strategy.

Learning

Feedback	Action taken
Importance of Alternative Provision.	Reference made to Alternative Provision review and creation of additional resourced provision places.

Care (Children)

Feedback	Action taken
Support inclusion of Children in Care Council and youth Council.	No action, already strong commitment in document

Care (Adults)

Feedback	Action taken
Include reference to ensuring council run care homes are kept in good state of repair.	Not included as specific reference. Included in Asset Optimisation & Investment action under Effective Services, alongside full range of council buildings and assets.

Health and Wellbeing

Feedback	Action taken
Include improvements to dentistry.	No action. Not council function.
Include reference to supporting sex workers.	No specific activity planned on this issue.
Importance of playparks and inequitable distribution.	To be considered through development of parks and open spaces strategy.
Inconsistent role of parishes in maintenance of playgrounds.	To be considered through development of parks and open spaces strategy.
Tackle social isolation.	Included in broader reference to wider determinants of health and role of Community Power.

Culture

Feedback	Action taken
Be clearer on plan for libraries, including in Roose.	Delivery action to develop library strategy including working with communities on plans for Roose and Ulverston libraries.
Too narrow focus on supporting Barrow museums.	Reworded to be broader reference to seeking funding for all our museums and collections.
Suggestion to include reintroduction of mobile library service.	Framework not changed, but issue to be considered through development of library strategy.

Effective Services

Feedback	Action taken

Request for involvement of Members and communities in development of asset optimisation and investment programme.	Description of activity amended to include reference to engaging with stakeholders.

![Westmorland & Furness Council logo]

Cabinet

Report Title	Commissioning Strategy for Westmorland and Furness
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Assistant Director Commissioning & Procurement
Director	Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)
Lead Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Finance
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **NO** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	All
Identify exempt information and exemption category	None
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	n/a
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1: Commissioning Strategy Appendix 2: Equality Screening

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report recommends Cabinet approves the Commissioning Strategy 2024 – 2027

1.2 The Commissioning Strategy sets out the organisational approach to commissioning with an overall objective of achieving better outcomes for residents. It is intended to be an easy read high level summary which provides stakeholders with an overview of our approach to commissioning.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1 Agree the Commissioning Strategy 2024 – 2027.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1 The Commissioning Strategy is one of the Council's foundational strategies that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. It describes our approach to become an "innovative and effective commissioning organisation, with access to vibrant and sustainable markets whilst maintaining positive trusted relationships with our partners.

3.2 The strategy is set within the context of the Council Plan and our vision to make Westmorland and Furness "a great place to live, work and thrive" whilst supporting our economy and culture to achieve "sustainable, inclusive, economic growth" and making sure "customers and communities needs are at the heart of designing our services".

3.3 The expectation is that through the delivery of this commissioning approach we will start to change the focus and impact we as a Council want to achieve through the delivery of our services. It will also ensure that for each service area, options around future delivery are challenged and assessed through the commissioning approach with no bias towards any preference to insourcing / outsourcing.

3.4 The implementation of the strategy will allow us to:

- Deliver better outcomes for residents by designing services which are **needs-led**, **data and intelligence driven and informed by experience**
- provide the most efficient and **best value** use of Council resources in the most economic, efficient, effective and sustainable way
- facilitate transformational change and continuous improvement to deliver **improved outcomes for our residents** whilst delivering our operating model principles
- ensure we are a responsible organisation enabling our services to deliver on our responsibilities for environmental, social and governance factors

3.5 The Westmorland & Furness Commissioning Strategy, the Procurement Strategy and the Social Value (Commissioning & Procurement) Statement all work together as a suite of documents. We are seeking approval of all 3 at the same time to support this approach.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1 The Commissioning Strategy supports the operations of the whole Council and will support the delivery of all Council Plan priorities.

5. Consultation Outcomes

5.1 The Commissioning Strategy has been informed through engagement across the Service and other Council Officers as appropriate. The feedback from

this engagement was developed with research and review of best practice and models from other local authorities.

5.2   Overview and Scrutiny Members have considered and discussed the development of strategy; and feedback incorporated into the final draft.

6.   Alternative Options Considered

6.1   Members may decide not to approve the Commissioning Strategy, or they may decide to amend the strategy to reflect a different approach to commissioning.

7.   Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1   Given the emphasis on ensuring commissioning decisions support how services are delivered, help us achieve our financial sustainability and deliver our change agenda – it is important to describe what commissioning is and how we will use this approach across the organisation. Without an agreed approach there is a risk that we do not maximise the potential of adopting a commissioning approach when making decisions about services.

8.   Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1   This strategy refers the Commissioning Cycle and the importance of collating data and intelligence to support commissioning decisions and developing a commissioning plan.   The data collected and considered as part of the analyse stage will include that to support the current service performance in relation to our climate and biodiversity priorities.

8.2   As we consider our options and develop a commissioning plan – we will be developing clear outcomes for the services moving forward, including supporting the delivery of climate and biodiversity priorities.

8.3   If there is a decision to undertake a procurement exercise in order to achieve the commissioning intentions, then the impact of the service on our Environment, Social and Governance responsibilities (including climate and biodiversity) will be further assessed and evaluated.

9.   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   The Commissioning Strategy supports the operations of the whole Council and will support the delivery of all Council Plan priorities.   Cabinet is authorised to accept the recommendation to approve the Commissioning Strategy 2024 – 2027

10.   Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1   The Council has a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that there are arrangements in place to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all services for

which it has responsibility. There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from this report/OD.

11. Financial Implications

11.1   There are no direct financial implications from the agreeing the Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027. However, the delivery of Commissioning Strategy will have financial implications in supporting the Council's future financial sustainability, decision-making, and value for money. The individual decisions around commissioning will follow the usual governance processes. Capacity within the Commissioning Service was revised as part of the budget setting for 2024/25 and it is anticipated that this will be sufficient to support delivery of the Commissioning Strategy.

11.2   This additional resource available to deliver the strategy is partly within the experienced commissioning tram, but also within Directorates and a business partnering approach has been adopted.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)

12.1   Equality Screening is provided in Appendix 2

13. Background Documents

13.1   Not applicable

Commissioning Strategy
2024-2027

'to become an innovative and effective commissioning organisation, with access to vibrant and sustainable markets whilst maintaining positive trusted relationships with our partners'

Our commissioning strategy strives for the Council "to become an innovative and effective commissioning organisation, with access to vibrant and sustainable markets whilst maintaining positive trusted relationships with our partners".

This strategy is set within the context of the Council Plan and our vision to make Westmorland and Furness "A great place to live, work and thrive" whilst supporting our economy and culture to achieve "sustainable, inclusive, economic growth" and making sure "customers and communities needs are at the heart of designing our services".

Sustainability must be at the centre of our commissioning approach and commissioning decisions – which means balancing the demands of environmental protection and recovery, economic development and growth, and addressing inequality and creating a fairer Westmorland & Furness.

Addressing these to make our vision a reality for everyone requires an approach underpinned by three sustainability principles of equity, economy, and environment.

- **Equity** - We know that there is a need to address any inequalities, especially those resulting from poverty and rural sparsity. We will focus on the wider determinants that drive those inequalities in a way that is fair and equitable.

- **Economy** - We know that we need to increase our productivity and improve educational outcomes, broaden and increase our skills base. We will support sustainable and inclusive growth which benefits our diverse population whilst protecting the environment.

- **Environment** - As a new Council we recognise our environmental responsibilities, including taking action on climate change and biodiversity loss. We will seek to redress damage and protect our environment for the long term.

Adopting these sustainability principles within our commissioning approach will allow us to:

- Deliver better outcomes for residents by designing and commissioning services which are **needs-led, data and intelligence driven and informed by experience**

- Provide the most efficient and **best value** use of Council resources in the most economic, efficient, effective and sustainable way

- Facilitate transformational change and continuous improvement to deliver improved outcomes for our residents whilst delivering our operating model principles through robust commissioning decisions

- Ensure we are a responsible organisation, enabling our services to deliver on our responsibilities for environmental, social and governance factors – including equality for all, financial vulnerability, carbon management reductions in the supply chain, and reversing the bio diversity losses

Contents

Introduction

In its simplest form, Commissioning is the strategic activity of identifying need, allocating resources and determining the best way of meeting these needs, which if appropriate, could include securing a provider, within available means.

This document sets out Westmorland and Furness Council's approach to commissioning and making commissioning decisions with an overall objective of achieving better outcomes for our residents. It is intended to be an easy read, high-level summary which provides stakeholders with an overview of our approach to commissioning.

It is also for officers to read and be aware of – it is about how we make commissioning decisions and what factors are important to be considered in this decision making process, whilst achieving our operating model principles and deliver on our change agenda.

This strategy is ambitious, and we recognise that investment and development will be needed if we are to deliver our ambitions. We have work to do and will need to continue to develop capacity and capability over the next 3 – 5 years.

We will continue to review best practice and update the strategy when required for legislative and regulatory changes and the commissioning team, within the Resources Directorate, will support and act as business partners to other Directorate's and Services to enable delivery of the strategy.

Having a plan for how we work with, and for, our customers is crucial for all council services; this strategy is essential to support the delivery of a suite of Westmorland and Furness foundational strategies – as shown in the diagram below.

In addition to this overarching strategy, we will be developing more detailed and service specific commissioning strategies and statements, some of which will be driven by our statutory responsibilities for sufficiency and market management. These will identify and recognise the more specific questions and challenges that we may face.

What is Commissioning?

Commissioning is the activity of assessing need, agreeing the resources available, and then developing a plan to make best use of these resources to meet these assessed needs. It is the informed design of what we want to deliver in meeting our priority outcomes for our communities. It is frequently, but not always, facilitated by procurement activity.

In simple terms it is about securing better outcomes by commissioning the right services from the right providers at the right time and at the right price.

The current economic climate means that we must look at service delivery in different ways, be innovate in our approaches and look for alternative solutions, through the development of the commissioning plan (as set out in the Commissioning Cycle, see below). This could mean jointly commissioning services with partners or agreeing alternative models of delivery, including the decommissioning of some services, or deciding to deliver ourselves.

We are an ambitious Council and looking to transform our services whilst maintaining equity, economic and environmental sustainability – commissioning can help us achieve this by ensuring timely and appropriate decisions about future service delivery to support our operating model.

To support the delivery of the strategy and our wider ambitions, **both** commissioning **and** procurement need to be clearly defined and the approach understood throughout the council.

Procurement is the strategic process of acquiring goods, works, utilities and services from third parties. This is a process that spans the whole procurement life cycle from identification of needs, monitoring and evaluating services, through to the end of a works or services contract or the end of the useful life of an asset. (See the Procurement Strategy)

Procurement and commissioning are intrinsically linked. The procurement of goods, services, works and utilities is designed to deliver and support commissioners' intentions in a legal and compliant manner, delivering the best value for money.

What is Commissioning not?

If we are to use commissioning as part of our change agenda, then it is important that we understand what commissioning is not! Commissioning in Westmorland and Furness is:

- Not just about the money - securing better outcomes can mean that support comes from many different sources and sometimes the best options are not the cheapest available to us. Where we can, we will look to commission jointly with others to share the cost of services - this could be through the community, with our partners or the family themselves

- Not always about outsourcing or 'buying' things - if we are to ensure best outcomes possible, then this should mean service delivery by those best placed to do so.   There is no commitment to procure all our services from external providers or, indeed, to deliver ourselves.   Through the commissioning plan, we will identity the most appropriate best value, delivery solution for the service, with the resources available and at that time

- Not all about procurement - commissioning is wider than the procurement process and contracts.   Time should be spent on agreeing the purpose for commissioning, understanding the impact of commissioning decisions, developing options with a wide range of stakeholders, crafting the specification. These will be informed by an understanding of the market and of procurement policy.

Challenges and Opportunities

The development of a commissioning model for the Council will play an integral role in the success of the council and ensure ongoing financial sustainability as pressure upon local government budgets continues.

The predecessor councils made extensive savings over the last 10-15 years, from revenue expenditure, whilst demand for services continued to increase, particularly in relation to services to the most vulnerable adults and children; alongside other challenges including the impact of war, supply chain shortages, climate change, inflation, and the cost of living crisis.

These challenges also provide opportunities for us to develop commissioning and the better integration of services as part of our overall change approach. Working in partnership and collaboration with others is one of our key value and principles

We recognise that we need to do more work across the organisation to better understand the data we do have and how we access and interrogate that data to develop intelligence to inform the commissioning cycle.

We are an ambitious council, with a clear vision and want to focus on becoming an innovative and effective commissioning organisation.   To do this we must focus on:

- Making commissioning decisions - with the appropriate data and intelligence to support

- Being outcomes driven – confident about understanding and listening to what is important to residents and communities and that our resources are focused on achieving those outcomes

- Recognising the interdependencies between residents, communities, partner organisations and services, and how we can use this to inform the commissioning cycle

- Engaging as many stakeholders as possible in the commissioning cycle and decision making process – including residents, service users, communities, and providers

- Understanding our strategic and community leadership role and the resources and assets available through working with partners, providers, and communities

- Making best use of available resources, including those within our communities, avoiding duplication and ensuring value for money – seeking innovative ways to do more with less

- Develop capacity and capability to commission strategically and ensure future proofing of services

The Commissioning Cycle

Using the **Commissioning Cycle** as a framework, we have adopted a model of commissioning – shown in the diagram below.

We expect this approach to be used in all key commissioning decisions, thereby ensuring a robust and transparent approach.

The diagram above reflects the four phases of the commissioning cycle. This allows us to make clear, evidence based decisions about services, ensuring that they are future proof for purpose and meets the needs of our residents, and meeting our three sustainability principles of equity, economy, and environment.

These four stages should be proportionate to size and complexity of the service being considered. These would be carried out to enable a methodical and transparent approach to making decisions based on evidence of need, desired outcomes, and within an agreed resource envelope.

Stage 1 – Analyse

This stage is used to ensure the right outcome(s) are being commissioned. A reflective process and asking ourselves what is it we are trying to achieve, what is the gap we need to fill and what future demand are we trying to meet?   Commissioners need to consider these points to ensure they feel confident about what it is that is needed and how this will make a difference to outcomes.

The focus should be on future proofing by design; and we must be creative – thinking innovatively and where necessary support moving away from the current offer.   An opportunity to constructively challenge and **listen** to how services (and therefore outcomes) could be improved.

We will rely on the data and intelligence we collate to have a better understanding and insight about the residents of and places in Westmorland and Furness; using other national and regional information to triangulate this – therefore developing evidence based recommendations on the needs of our communities and service requirements.

This is a good opportunity to co-produce these recommendations and solutions with our communities and partners and incorporate the lived experience.

Our **Customer Strategy** explains more about our vision and approach to being a customer focused organisation, whilst ensuring customers are at the heart everything we do. This strategy must be considered when undertaking this stage of the Commissioning Cycle.

Stage 2 – Plan

At this stage, commissioners should have a sense of what is being commissioned and what outcomes we are looking to achieve. Working together, across the organisation and with our partners - we can get a sense of what needs to be done and what levers we have to influence any added value (or joint commissioning opportunities). With scarce resources, it is important that we have clearly defined outcomes to reduce duplication or competing priorities.

As part of this plan the following must be taken into account when making commissioning decisions:

● The impact of the decision on our commitment to reverse bio diversity loss
● Whether or not the decision has an adverse impact on climate change or whether there are other options which would have more impact
● How the plan can support the vision for achieving carbon net zero (even through the supply chain)
● Whether there is any impact on the equality of opportunity for all to live and active and healthy life as a result of the decision and implementing the plan
● How the plan supports our growing economy, providing people with access to good range of diverse work opportunities and business with the opportunity to continue to develop and diversify

If we are clear on the 'what' – then the plan will help us develop the 'how'. This could be going out to procure a service, keeping with in the resource envelope available, or it could involve supporting, for example, community led delivery, creating and influencing the markets to be able to deliver an alternative service than that already available,

It could also mean that an existing service that has been 'analysed' is decommissioned as it no longer meets our identified priorities, or a provider has underperformed and even bought 'back in house'.

The planning stage should also take into account:

● Commissioning intentions and priorities of partners and other stakeholders, such as the Integrated Care Boards, NHS England, Highways Agency, neighbouring Local Authorities
● Any specific needs of local communities and key points from reviewing the evidence base
● Any policy context and development to future proof the final design, including scope for innovation and flexibility
● A clear exit strategy if we are no longer wishing a provider to deliver the service and a contract to end

Any decisions made in this planning stage will need to be made following the governance process as set out in the constitution – ensuring that they are supported by a clear record with appropriate scrutiny and Director and Member engagement.

Stage 3 – Do and Implement

Having developed the plan – this stage is about the 'doing' – and considering where we are now and what actions are needed to achieve the agreed outcomes. Depending on the plan, these could be short term or simple actions, such as agreeing to procure a service on a similar basis, to more medium to longer term or complex plans that could include developing parts of the market and providers who are able to deliver certain services.

If we are decommissioning or bringing services in house – then the plan must also be followed to ensure there are no inadvertent consequences of the decision made at Stage 2. Implementing this plan will require early dialogue with stakeholders, providing clear communication about the need for change and transparency around the options appraisal.

Commissioning decisions will have implications for staffing – specifically the workforce's capacity and capability. This is not just our own workforce, but also those who are employed by our providers. Recruitment and training can be time consuming and therefore needs to be factored into the 'doing' stage. The People Plan provides more information and advice should be sought from HR Business Partners.

If we are procuring, then the 'Procurement Strategy' must be reviewed and followed. This will ensure we consider the impact equity, economic, environmental sustainability factors, whilst being fair and transparent.

Longer term or complex plans could require support of colleagues in the Programme Management Office and other enabling services in order to ensure successful implementation.

Any decisions actioned will need to follow the governance process as set out in the constitution – ensuring that they are supported by a clear record with appropriate scrutiny and Director and Member engagement.

Stage 4 – Monitor and Review

The final stage of the cycle, before we come back to analyse. An effective monitor and review stage allows us to collate the necessary data and intelligence to support a successful and robust analysis before developing future commissioning plans.

This data can be collected on an ongoing basis through key performance information from contracts, or from experiences and comments from those residents and families, some of whom may already be using services.

Performance data and information from contracts that is to be collated should have been agreed as part of the commissioning plan and informed the procurement process from previous terms. We know that this isn't always the case and as we have a lot of historical contracts that are still delivering services on our behalf, we need to work through them identity those we can improve as a priority – based on our priorities and ensuring equality, economic and environmental sustainability.

For services we deliver ourselves – then it is just as important that we understand how well these are performing and are the meeting the requirements needed. We need to collect date and performance information on these too.

The collection of data and intelligence will allow us benchmark with other Local Authorities and Partners to identify best practice or alternative delivery models.

At this stage too, we can consider any financial information or return on investment – to help us decide whether the service is meeting the outcomes it was intended to, before making any recommendations for the duration – before moving into the analyse stage.

We can also collect data to inform other strategies and polices that are needed when making commissioning decisions, such as data to support whether or not a service has:

- Been able to evidence their impact on reversing bio diversity loss
- Had an adverse or positive impact on climate change
- Made an progress in achieving carbon net zero targets (even through the supply chain and Scope 3 targets)
- Had any impact on the equality of opportunity for all to live and active and healthy life as a result of the decision and implementing the plan
- Supported economic growth in Westmorland and Furness

Commissioning Team as a Business Partner

To ensure opportunities are maximised and commissioning activity is carried out in a robust and transparent way, capturing risks and identifying any mitigations, a Business Partner approach has been implemented with the Commissioning Team.

Currently focusing on 'Care' services the team have been supporting Adult's, Children's and Public Health Services in the ongoing commissioning of services post Local Government Reorganisation. The team have a specific skill set and relevant professional knowledge and expertise to enable this support to be opened to other Directorates and Service areas.

For 2024/25, as we continue to develop and embed the approach in our journey to becoming a commissioning organisation – we will review opportunities for enhancing the role of the Commissioning Team as Business Partner to the other Directorates and Service.

It is acknowledged that our current commissioning model has been focused on the support to Care Services, this is largely because of the historic sovereign arrangements.   As a Unitary Authority, we have other service areas that could be a potential risk for us, and our ambition is to provide the same level of skills and professional support to these other services areas.

This will be an evolving model, and following successful growth bids, the offer from the Team will develop in 2024/25 – subject to successful recruitment – and it is acknowledged that further growth might be needed to support this model over the next 3 years.

Westmorland & Furness Council

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and **armed forces families.**

The EqIA process has two stages, summarised below. Guidance on each stage is available from the policy team via equalities@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.

- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EqIA covers the nine protected characteristics as   well as rurality, socio-economic inequality, care experience and armed forces families. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Note: where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

EIA Proforma

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Commissioning Strategy.

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

To outline the approach for commissioning and making commissioning decisions

3) Consultation

Council Officers, Cabinet Members and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (s) (positive, neutral or negative)	Measures to address impact if required	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	Y	The approach to the redesign and commissioning of services as outlined in the strategy will ensure that protected characteristics are managed and considered. This will be in both the engagement services users, residents in W&F and wider stakeholders - in both discussions about service redesign and commissioning decisions.		N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (s) (positive, neutral or negative)	Measures to address impact if required	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		A separate EIA **may** be required to support the specific commissioning decisions.		
Disability	Y	As above		N
Gender reassignment	Y	As above		N
Marriage or civil partnership	Y	As above		N
Pregnancy or maternity	Y	As above		N
Race	Y	As above		N
Religion or belief	Y	As above		N
Sex	Y	As above		N
Sexual orientation	Y	As above		N
Care Experience	Y	As above		N
People in rural areas	Y	As above		N
Socio-economic inequality	Y	As above		N
Armed-forces families	Y	As above		N
General (other considerations)				

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5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?   No

Full Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/ Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	
Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/ function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

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Section 2: Information Gathering

What *relevant* information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic inequality					
Armed-forces families					

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Section 4. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	☐
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	☐
Develop and implement action plan.	☐
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	☐

Section 5: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

Add rows as necessary.

Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?

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Cabinet

Report Title	Procurement Strategy for Westmorland and Furness
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Assistant Director Commissioning and Procurement
Director	Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)
Lead Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Finance
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **YES** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	All
Identify exempt information and exemption category	None
Reasons for urgency (<u>only</u> where applicable)	n/a
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1: Procurement Strategy 2024 – 2027 Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   This report recommends Cabinet approves the Procurement Strategy 2024 – 2027.

1.2   This strategy sets out our approach to the procurement of goods, works, services and utilities to ensure we deliver value for money, whilst maximising every pound spent and delivering financial sustainability.

2.   Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1   Agree the Procurement Strategy 2024 – 2027.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1 The Procurement Strategy is one of the Council's foundational strategies that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. It defines our strategic approach to procurement for the next 3 years until 2027; and sets out our vision and priorities, incorporating the latest government procurement legislation whilst considering our local and national priorities.

3.2 Our vision for procurement is to work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders ensuing that procurement is carried out in a ethically, social and environmentally responsible way, that delivers value for money and long term benefits for the Council and the residents in Westmorland and Furness.

3.3 To support this vision, we introduce core principles in the way we procure goods, works, services and utilities in order to:

- ensure that services to be procured are designed around our residents and service users, putting their needs at the heart of everything we do
- support local economic growth
- work with local supply chains, the voluntary and community sector, and small to medium enterprises to upskill their workforce and increase opportunities
- build greater connections across the region, working with key stakeholders, including suppliers, health and the third sector
- work with local networks and institutions and increase opportunities for collaboration in procurement
- attract, develop, upskill, train and retain talent within the Council
- use public procurement transformation as a springboard to make procurement easier and more accessible for bidders, especially those in local supply chains
- become forwards looking, using data and intelligence effectively to drive improved decision making, to ensure procurement activity is needs led and sustainable
- take the professional lead in effective and meaningful contract, supplier relationship and supply chain management
- embrace public procurement transformation and maximise innovation and work to continuously improve and streamline procurement activities
- encourage and support the operation of effective markets in all sectors

3.4 This strategy also introduces the Procurement Cycle (as defined by the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply) as the model we will use in our procurement activity.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1 The Procurement Strategy supports the operations of the whole Council and will support the delivery of all Council Plan priorities.

5. Consultation Outcomes

5.1 The Procurement Strategy has been informed through engagement across the Service and other Council Officers as appropriate.   The feedback from this engagement was developed with research and review of best practice and models from other local authorities.

5.2 Overview and Scrutiny Members have considered and discussed the development of strategy; and feedback incorporated into the final draft.

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Members may decide not to approve the Procurement Strategy, or they may decide to amend the strategy to reflect a different approach to procurement.

7. Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1 Given the current emphasis on ensuring the procurement is given a role in the success of the council in delivering its vision and priorities and ensuring ongoing financial sustainability as pressure upon local government budgets continues to increase – it is important to describe what procurement is and how we will use an agreed approach across the organisation.

7.2 Without an agreed approach there is a risk that we do not maximise this potential and ensure the Council complies with the legal and regulatory framework underpinning public procurement.

8. Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1 The importance of Environmental, Social and Governance Factors in procurement is increasing important for the Council and includes addressing the implications of Climate change and Biodiversity through the procurement of goods, works, services and utilities.

8.2 Through the implementation of the Procurement Strategy, we will be looking at how we can how we can achieve the following through the procurement of goods, works, services and utilities:

- minimising negative environmental impacts, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving resources, preventing pollution
- increasing focus on the social factors that include human rights, fair labour practices, diversity and inclusion, and community engagement.
- addressing the ethical and responsible management of providers and their suppliers.

8.3 There is increasing pressure on procurement to manage their supply chains and to hold the increasingly accountable for their impact on the environment and society.

9. Legal and Governance Implications

9.1 Section 111 of the Local Government Act the Council has power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conductive or incidental to, the discharge of its functions. Section 2 (1) of the Local Government Act 2000 enables local authorities to do anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area.

The Procurement Strategy builds on the Council's commitment to addressing the implications of Climate Change and Biodiversity through the procurement of goods, works, services and utilities, and sets out core principles the Council will consider in its procurement processes.

10. Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

The Council has a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that there are arrangements in place to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all services for which it has responsibility. There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from this report/OD.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 There are no financial implications from the agreeing the Procurement Strategy 2024-2027. However, the delivery of the Strategy will have financial implications in supporting the Council's future financial sustainability, decision-making, and value for money. The individual decisions around commissioning will follow the usual governance processes. Capacity within the Service was revised as part of the budget setting for 2024/25 and it is anticipated that this will be sufficient to support delivery of the Procurement Strategy.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)

12.1 Equality Screening is provided in Appendix 2.

13. Background Documents

13.1 Not applicable.

Westmorland & Furness Council

Procurement Strategy
2024-2027

'to work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders ensuring procurement is carried out in an ethically, social and environmentally responsible way, that delivers value for money, and long term benefits for the Council and the residents in Westmorland and Furness'

Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council spends over £340m annually on the purchase of goods, works, services and utilities. This strategy is an important document and sets out our approach to ensure we deliver value for money, whilst maximising every pound spent and delivering financial sustainability.

It creates a valuable opportunity for us to contribute significantly to the economic, environmental and social gains in the local region and for our local communities – through a well-planned, organised and executed procurement process.

It defines our strategic approach to procurement for the next 3 years until 2027; and sets out our vision and priorities, incorporating the latest government procurement legislation, whilst considering our local and national drivers.

This strategy is set within the context of the Council Plan and our vision to make Westmorland and Furness **"A great place to live, work and thrive"** whilst supporting our economy and culture to achieve **"sustainable, inclusive, economic growth"** and making sure **"customers and communities needs are at the heart of designing our services".**

As part of achieving value for money, we are committed to ensuring that sustainability is fundamental in our procurement process looking to work with providers, and other stakeholders, that support our commitment to balancing the demands of environmental protection and recovery, economic development and growth, and addressing inequality and creating a fairer Westmorland & Furness.

Working with and through providers to address the challenges of sustainability must be underpinned by three sustainability principles of equity, economy, and environment.

Equity - We know that there is a need to address any inequalities, especially those resulting from poverty and rural sparsity. We will focus on the wider determinants that drive those inequalities in a way that is fair and equitable.

Economy - We know that we need to increase our productivity and improve educational outcomes, broaden and increase our skills base. We will support sustainable and inclusive growth which benefits our diverse population whilst protecting the environment.

Environment - As a new Council we recognise our environmental responsibilities, including taking action on climate change and biodiversity loss. We will seek to redress damage and protect our environment for the long term.

Contents

What is Procurement?

Procurement is the process through which an organisation establishes and manages contracts for good, works, services and utilities.   Put simply we aim to ensure that we make commercial arrangements and award contracts that provide the Council with value for money, whist proving social value benefits and a sustainable future for the 230,000 residents in Westmorland and Furness.

This strategy applies to all directorates and services across the council and all officers of the council must have regard to this strategy and Contract Procedure Rules (part of the Constitution) when undertaking procurement activity, to ensure all procurement is carried out in a legal and compliant way.

To support the delivery of this strategy, procurement and commissioning need to be defined and understood throughout the council. We have agreed the following definitions:

Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works, services and utilities from third parties. This is a process that spans the whole procurement life cycle from identification of needs, through to the end of a works or services contract or the end of the useful life of an asset.

Commissioning is the strategic activity of identifying need, allocating resources and determining the best way of meeting these needs, which if appropriate, could include securing a provider, within available means.

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Legal and compliance

Public procurement is governed by a legal and regulatory framework which is being transformed to create a simpler and more commercial system, with openness and transparency at its core. Failure to adhere to public procurement law can expose us to costly legal challenges. In that context, this strategy is intended to support compliance with our Contract Procedure Rules, the UK Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and the fundamental procurement principles of transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination and mutual recognition.

Following Brexit, UK procurement is no longer led by the EU Public Contracts Directive 2014, and moving forwards will be regulated by The Procurement Act 2023, Social Value Act 2012 and other legislation specific to the nature of the goods or services being procured.

Developments in this area will be considered and acted upon over the duration of this strategy, and such changes are expected to start to come into effect during October 2024.

These public procurement transformation changes will:

- Create a simpler and more flexible, commercial system, that better meet public needs, while remaining compliant with our international obligations

- Open up public procurement to new entrants, such as small businesses, those in the voluntary and community sector and social enterprises, so that they can compete for, and win, more public contracts

- Embed transparency throughout the commercial lifecycle so that the spending of taxpayers' money can be properly scrutinised

Over time, this public procurement transformation will provide new tools we can utilise in the procurement process, and we will need to upskill staff across the Council, which will be embraced and used to support our vision and aims.

Environment, Social and Governance in Procurement

The importance of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors in procurement is rapidly growing as local authorities and their supply chains are increasingly held accountable for their impact on the environment and society.

For the Council, this means looking how we can achieve the following through the procurement of goods, works, services and utilities:

- Minimising negative environmental impacts, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving resources, preventing pollution – whilst working with providers to increase our bio diversity net gain and achieve our net zero carbon scope 3 target in 2050

- Increasing focus on the social factors that include human rights, fair labour practices, diversity and inclusion, and community engagement. Working with suppliers to look beyond the financial cost of a contract to consider how the services they procure can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area (for more information see the Social Value Statement)

- Addressing the ethical and responsible management of providers and their suppliers. This includes transparency, accountability, and adherence to relevant laws and regulations

By focusing on these ESG factors, not only will we be supporting the Council Vision and Values – but there are other benefits associated with implementing these factors such as cost savings (through resource efficiency, waste reduction and energy conservation) risk management (by helping to identify, assess and mitigate ESG risks) and identifying opportunities for innovation and attracting or retaining talent.

Considering ESG factors will also help us address our sustainability challenge, balancing demands of environmental protection and recovery, economic development and growth, and addressing inequality and creating a fairer Westmorland & Furness.

Challenges and Opportunities

Our strategy is introduced at a time of world-wide and national economic challenges and opportunities, set against a background of uncertainty and change. For procurement activities the impact of Brexit and the upcoming Procurement Act 2023, alongside other challenges including the impact of war, supply chain shortages, climate change, inflation, and the cost of living crisis, make effective procurement particularly important to our Council.

There has been no greater time for the influence of procurement to play an integral part to the success of the council and ensure ongoing financial sustainability as pressure upon local government budgets continues.

The predecessor councils made extensive savings over the last 10-15 years, from revenue expenditure, whilst demand for services continued to increase, particularly in relation to services to the most vulnerable adults and children. In addition, we face challenges in relation to the maintenance and updating of highways and built infrastructure.

These challenges also provide opportunities for us to use our purchasing power to deliver improvements in the structure of markets, provide opportunities for local suppliers, deliver better outcomes for our residents, and support better commissioning and the integration of services across public sector organisations operating in Westmorland and Furness. We as a council commit to prioritise innovation and continuous improvement to meet these challenges.

From 1st January 2024, the Provider Selection Regime has been implemented, which is a new set of rules which govern the arrangement of healthcare services in England.   Recognising that previous legislations could have been a barrier to the aims of the health system, including greater integration and collaboration, the Provider Selection Regime has been designed to give the relevant authorities, including the Council, greater flexibility in selecting providers for health care services.

This could give us more options in the way we procure services for public health, such as sexual health and substance misuse services. The principles include securing the needs of the people who use the services, improving the quality of the services and improving efficiency in the provision of the services.

It could also mean more challenges in successfully implementing joint activity with Integrated Care Boards, as they have different approaches to identifying and securing providers because of this new regime.

We are a new council, with a new vision and new priorities. The new procurement legislation will support the Council to focus on value in its broader sense, beyond economic value. The new procurement procedures are more flexible and are introduced to increase innovation and social responsibility in procurement, enabling us to take advantage of advances in technology.

In the term of this strategy (2024 - 2027) there are also opportunities for us to consider how we enhance our approach to supplier relationship and contract management, management and monitoring of risk in the supply chain, and other effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms. These will all be significant in the delivery of outcomes, and transparency associated with the performance and management of contracts and the financial robustness.

We know that contract management is essential to ensure the Council's interests are protected. When a contact is agreed, suppliers need to be managed to ensure they deliver what has been agreed and operating in line with expectations or statutory requirements.   Specification gaps, price, risk and terms of engagement can all be exploited by providers if not managed correctly.

As part of the delivery of this strategy and supporting delivery plan we need to review our contract management framework, updating documents, policies and templates. This will also support our commissioning cycle by providing clear guidance as to the roles and responsibilities within the contract management process, and thereby improve the collection of data and intelligence.

Effective contract management frameworks will also help us manage the impact of social value with providers.

Our aims, objectives and key priorities

The vision for our approach to procurement is:

......to work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders ensuring procurement is carried out in an ethically, social and environmentally responsible way, that delivers value for money, and long term benefits for the Council and the residents in Westmorland and Furness

This Strategy is set within the context of the Council Plan and our vision to make Westmorland and Furness "A great place to live, work and thrive."

It is important that we do not compromise the integrity of any of our procurement processes and maintain our legal framework obligations of undertaking fair, open and transparent procurement activity whilst supporting the Council Plan and vision.

To support this, our core principles in the way we procure good, works, services and utilities are to:

- Ensure that services to be procured are designed around our residents and service users, putting their needs at the heart of everything we do

- Support local economic growth

- Work with local supply chains, the voluntary and community sector, and small to medium enterprises to upskill their workforce and increase opportunities

- Build greater connections across the region, working with key stakeholders, including suppliers, health and the third sector

- Work with local networks and institutions and increase opportunities for collaboration in procurement

- Attract, develop, upskill, train and retain talent within the Council

- Use public procurement transformation as a springboard to make procurement easier and more accessible for bidders, especially those in local supply chains

- Become forwards looking, using data and intelligence effectively to drive improved decision making, to ensure procurement activity is needs led and sustainable

- Take the professional lead in effective and meaningful contract, supplier relationship and supply chain management

- Embrace public procurement transformation and maximise innovation and work to continuously improve and streamline procurement activities

- Encourage and support the operation of effective markets in all sectors

The Procurement Cycle

The Council has adopted the Procurement Cycle as defined by the Charted Institute of Procurement and Supply. Officers must adhere to the 13 steps of the process this is a important if we are to achieve our vision for the procurement of goods, services, works and utilities.

The extent of breadth and complexity of each step will vary depending on the nature of the procurement exercise and complexities associated with it - such as determining Social Value, costs, market challenges, and application of ESG factors.

Procurement Team as a Business Partner

To ensure opportunities are maximised and procurement activity is carried out in a lawful and robust way, whilst capturing risks and identifying any mitigations, a Business Partner approach has been implemented.

Using the Procurement Cycle as a framework, the Procurement Team offer the following in terms of support to other Directorate's and Services (who are identified as stakeholders) in any procurement exercise.

Steps of the Procurement and Supply Cycle	The Role of the Procurement Team
1. Define Business Needs and Develop Specification	To engage and work with stakeholders to: • Develop a comprehensive, high-level specification, often based on the outcome of the commissioning cycle • Develop the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria that need to be built into the specification • Identify any expected additional costs or savings from the (re) procurement
2. Market Analysis and Make or Buy Decision	To engage and work with stakeholders to: • Identify potential suppliers • Provide information relating to the decision making process, including the make do or buy decision • Understand the market dynamics • Explore the innovation and technology available • Use previous contract performance and knowledge, market insight, benchmarking and research
3. Develop the Strategy and Plan	To define the procurement plan and strategy, including consideration of innovation, technology, risk management, equality, ESG goals and market engagement.

Steps of the Procurement and Supply Cycle	The Role of the Procurement Team
4. Pre-procurement and Market Testing	To work with stakeholders to: ● Identify stakeholder and business needs, including future needs ● Consider other factors including new legislation or market dynamics ● Decide route to market for the tender process
5. Develop Documentation and Detailed Specification	To work with stakeholders to finalise tender documentation, including: ● Detailed specification ● Standard Questionnaire and Qualifying Questions ● Invitation to Tender (ITT) ● Quality and finance scoring evaluations, including Social Value weighting and questions ● Terms and Conditions ● Any other relevant documents ● Consider SMART KPI's, whole life cycle costs and ESG requirements ● Identify and plan evaluation panels ● **Reporting** and evaluation of costs/savings versus the Buisness Plan
6. Supplier Selection to Participate in Tender	When relevant, work with stakeholders to assess and evaluate, including all relevant due diligence checks
7. Issue Tender Documents	Conduct the tender exercise, in compliance with relevant legislation and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules
8. Bid and Tender Evaluation and Validation	To either evaluate or oversee the bid evaluations, in accordance with the pre-defined award criteria.
9. Contract Award and Implementation	Oversee the contract award process, including evaluation feedback and award letters, communication and implementation. Ensure that the successful bidder honours what they have agreed.
10. Warehouse, Logistics and Receipt	To work with other stakeholders to ensure a smooth and efficient process
11. Contract Performance and Improvement	To work with stakeholders to: ● Track and improve performance using SMART KPI's ● Manage the supplier relationship ● Resolve conflicts with agreed actions and timescales ● Discuss plans for continuous improvement ● Manage contractual changes ● This will develop further to focus on the those indicators supporting Social Value

Steps of the Procurement and Supply Cycle	The Role of the Procurement Team
12. Supplier Relationship Management	To work with stakeholders to: • Establish the right level of input, based the type of contract, market place and other factors • Work with the supplier on continuous improvement, additional value and innovative developments • To ensure continuity of supply
13. Management and Review of Process, that will feed into the commissioning cycle	To work with stakeholders to ensure a smooth and efficient process to determine: • If business requirements have changed • What can be learnt from the previous process • Improvements to be incorporated next time • End-of-life considerations

Everyone involved in procurement will need to follow this cycle.

The extent of the Procurement Team's involvement for each activity is dependent on the value and complexity of the exercise and the nature of the goods, works, services and utilities involved. The team are there to offer professional advice and support – at all stages of the process, specifically:

• Providing professional advice, guidance and insights regarding markets, suppliers and contractual options to help support service delivery and improvement

• Leading the development of plans for how we spend our money with suppliers from across the private, public and voluntary, community and faith sectors

• Ensuring that our contracts are developed, awarded and managed in line with best practice, including developing strong relationships with our key suppliers

• Driving social value by encouraging spend with local firms and identifying opportunities to manage and monitor this

• Creating performance dashboards, for higher transparency for Services, on supplier performance

The Procurement Team will support Directorates and Services to consider ESG in the procurement of goods, works, services and utilities – but it is important that Directorates and Services identify and own the risks and opportunities associated with ESG and monitor the impact on their services.

Procurement Alignment with Council Strategies and Plans

Throughout any procurement activity, there should be recognition for the role that the Procurement Team, or other Directorates and Services leading on the activity, can play in delivering on other Council strategies and plans.

This strategy has been written to support and align with the following:

- The Council Plan (and delivery plan)
- The Commissioning Strategy
- Social Value Statement
- Grant Giving Policy
- Carbon Management Strategy

This is one of our foundation strategies for the Council
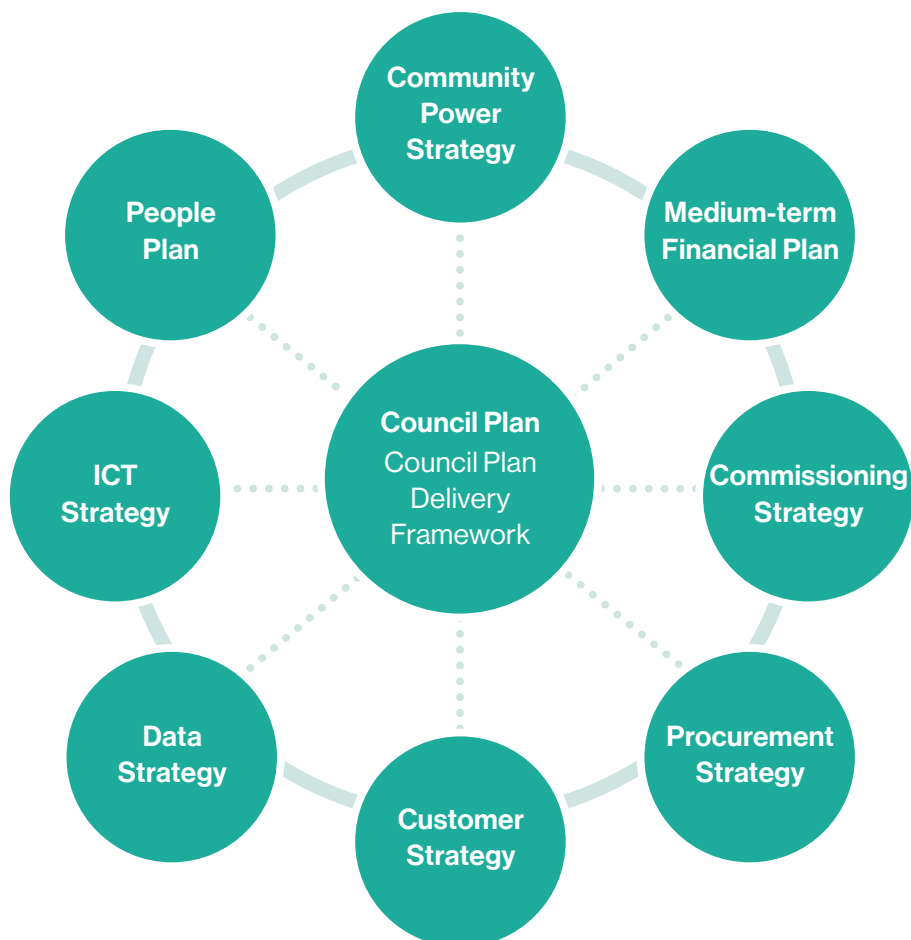
Next Steps

This strategy is part of a journey and builds on the successes, skills and solid foundations created through previous procurement activity, providing confidence in our approach.   A delivery framework is to be developed – setting out how we will deliver the ambitions and vision in this strategy across all Directorates and Services.

Through this procurement activity, the Council is well placed to support the delivery of high quality public services, improvements in outcomes and the maximisation of social value initiatives and environmental sustainability within the local economy.

Our next step is to develop a suite of supporting documentation for this strategy, including a robust Delivery Plan, Procurement Charter and a Social Value Toolkit. We will also review our contract management framework, and the roles and responsibilities associated with the monitoring and management of contracts.

This strategy is ambitious, and we recognise that investment and development will be needed if we are to deliver everything we have set out in this strategy as we continue to develop and grow over the next 3 years.

We will continue to review best practice and update the strategy when required for legislative and regulatory changes.

Westmorland & Furness Council

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and **armed forces families.**

The EqIA process has two stages, summarised below. Guidance on each stage is available from the policy team via equalities@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.

- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EqIA covers the nine protected characteristics as   well as rurality, socio-economic inequality, care experience and armed forces families. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Note: where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Procurement Strategy

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

To outline the approach for procurement of goods, works, services and utilities in the Council

3) Consultation

Council Officers, Cabinet Members and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (s) (positive, neutral or negative)	Measures to address impact if required	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	Y	The implementation of the Procurement Strategy will ensure that any consideration of protected characteristics is taken into account in the procurement and award activity. A separate EIA **may** be required to support the specific procurement activity if as a result of, for example, service redesign or new legislation.		N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (s) (positive, neutral or negative)	Measures to address impact if required	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Disability	Y	As above		N
Gender reassignment	Y	As above		N
Marriage or civil partnership	Y	As above		N
Pregnancy or maternity	Y	As above		N
Race	Y	As above		N
Religion or belief	Y	As above		N
Sex	Y	As above		N
Sexual orientation	Y	As above		N
Care Experience	Y	As above		N
People in rural areas	Y	As above		N
Socio-economic inequality	Y	As above		N
Armed-forces families	Y	As above		N
General (other considerations)				

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?   No

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Full Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/ Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	
Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/ function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

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Section 2: Information Gathering

What **relevant** information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic inequality					
Armed-forces families					

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Section 4. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	☐
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	☐
Develop and implement action plan.	☐
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	☐

Section 5: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

Add rows as necessary.

Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?

Westmorland & Furness Council

Cabinet

Report Title	Social Value Statement
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Assistant Director Commissioning and Procurement
Director	Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)
Lead Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Finance
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **NO** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	All
Identify exempt information and exemption category	None
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	n/a
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1: Social Value Statement Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report recommends Cabinet approves the Social Value Statement.

1.2 This statement sets out more detail about why Social Value is important to the Council and the steps we are taking to seek this added value in the commissioning and procurement of goods, works, services and utilities for residents in Westmorland & Furness. Social Value in its wider context and clarity of our offer across the Council will be considered in further documents / strategy.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1 Agree the Social Value Statement.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1 The Social Value Statement, in relation to commissioning and procurement, will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. We are an ambitious council, and ambitious for our communities too. We will work hard to enable all our villages and towns to thrive; and for our residents to lead healthy, happy lives.

3.2 We are working with suppliers to look beyond the financial cost of a contract to consider how the services they commission and procure can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area.

3.3 It is also important that we maximise those opportunities to ensure that we protect our natural resources, whilst striving to become carbon net zero and addressing biodiversity loss.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1 The Social Value Statement supports the operations of the whole Council and will support the delivery of all Council Plan priorities.

5. Consultation Outcomes

5.1 The Social Value Statement has been informed through engagement across the Service and other Council Officers as appropriate. The feedback from this engagement was developed with research and review of best practice and models from other local authorities.

5.2 Overview and Scrutiny Members have considered and discussed the development of strategy; and feedback incorporated into the final draft

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Members may decide not to approve the Procurement Strategy, or they may decide to amend the strategy to reflect a different approach to procurement.

7. Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1 Without an agreed approach to managing and measuring Social Value in the commissioning and procurement process and the contracts we have with independent providers – there is little consistency to the agreeing and measing any social gains.

7.2 The agreement, management and measurement of any Social Value 'gains' through contracts is crucial for several reasons:

- Accountability: we need to be accountable to residents and stakeholders – demonstrating how we are achieving Social Value through contracts
- Improvement: by measuring Social Value and reviewing what we are doing, we can work over time to improve our approach and performance
- Informed Decisions: Understanding social value informs commissioning and procurement decisions
- Impact Assessment: measuring social value allow us to track progress, identify intended and unexpected outcomes and demonstrate how providers are making a difference to the delivery of our ambition for our residents

7.3   Embedding Social Value in procurement and commissioning and focusing on how suppliers and contract decisions can support social, environmental and employment considerations - outcomes and contract decisions can be measured and made on Social Value as well as price and quality.

8.   Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1   Seeking Social Value in the procurement of goods, works, services and utilities we use supports our Council Plan priorities and other important policies such as our Carbon Management Strategy, Climate Change Action plan.

8.2   Through monitoring and managing social value in contracts we will continue to develop and provide mechanisms for suppliers to engage with us on our priorities around climate and biodiversity and to use mechanisms to effectively track outcomes related to them.

8.3   For example, the climate and our ambition to be carbon net zero for scope 3 emissions by 2050. This can only be achieved through enhanced collaboration and a shared commitment from our stakeholders, including our supply chain.

9.   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public authorities to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts; and for connected purposes. The legislation requires that, when commissioning services subject to the Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015 (above prescribed value thresholds), authorities must 'consider': how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic social and environmental well-being of the relevant area; how in conducting the process of procurement the authority might act with a view to securing that improvement; and whether to undertake any consultation. The legislation provides that, when considering how such improvements may be secured, the authority must consider only matters that are relevant to the subject matter of the procurement and the extent to which it is proportionate in all the circumstances to take those matters into account.

9.2 Legal advice will be provided in relation to any legal implications arising in the delivery of the Social Value Statement.

10. Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1 10.1 The Council has a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that there are arrangements in place to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all services for which it has responsibility. There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from this report/OD.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 There are no direct financial implications from agreeing the Social Value Statement. The financial and non-financial impact of delivery of social value activities will be monitored and reported. There is a potential risk that additional costs could be included within contract prices as social value impacts are delivered, monitored and reported but this will be identified and assessed as part of the overall value for money position.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)

12.1 Equality Screening is provided in Appendix .

13. Background Documents

13.1 Not applicable

Social Value in Commissioning and Procurement – Statement

What is Social Value?

Social Value is defined through the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, which requires all public sector organisations, including the Council, and their suppliers to look beyond the financial cost of a contract to consider how the services they commission and procure can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area.

This statement sets out more detail about why Social Value is important to the Council and the steps we are taking to seek this added value in the commissioning cycle and procurement of goods, works, services and utilities.

It is important to recognise that this statement is focused on approach to seeking Social Value in the goods, works, services and utilities that we buy; and that we ensure that Social Value is considered in the commissioning cycle and decision making process.

There are also services we deliver ourselves, with partners and communities, that also deliver Social Value – and this is being explored further and not covered in this statement.

Why is Social Value important to W&F Council?

Council Plan

We are an ambitious council, and we place people at the centre of everything we do as we look to deliver the best possible outcomes. We are ambitious for our communities too and will work to enable all our villages and towns to thrive; and for our residents to lead healthy, happy lives.

Our natural environment provides opportunities for improving health and wellbeing and we will work hard to maximise those opportunities and to ensure that we protect our natural resources, whilst striving to become carbon net zero and addressing biodiversity loss.

Most importantly we are committed to working to ensure that Westmorland and Furness is a great place to live, work and thrive. Our Council Plan Delivery Framework and other important policies such as our Carbon Management Strategy, Climate Change Action plan, and Customer Strategy all highlight the need for us to be seeking added value in contracts with providers, for example:

- The climate and our ambition to be carbon net zero for scope 3 emissions by 2050. This can only be achieved through enhanced collaboration and a shared commitment from our stakeholders, including our supply chain. Through monitoring and managing social value in contracts we will continue to develop and provide mechanisms for suppliers to engage with us on this crucial target and to use mechanisms to effectively track outcomes related to carbon reduction

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- Sustainable, inclusive and economic growth; supporting new business creation and actively supporting the cultural economy to thrive. Through seeking social value in contracts, we will be able to support local businesses, enhance skills, and increase the number of good quality employment and apprenticeship opportunities available to local people. Social value can be achieved through collaboration and adoption of innovative approaches to service delivery

- Ensuring our customers are at the heart of everything do, whilst promoting greater inclusion of our residents from diverse backgrounds, including those from under-represented groups. Anyone commissioning services must consider the social value of the decisions to maximise the benefits of public spend. If additional value can be identified at the commissioning stage, then more targeted outcomes can be achieved through the procurement process and through subsequent contract monitoring

Our Commissioning Cycle

In the commissioning cycle – when we make decisions whether to deliver a service ourselves or procure – we take the following into account when developing a commissioning plan:

- The impact of the decision on our commitment to reverse bio diversity loss
- Whether or not the decision has an adverse impact on climate change or whether there are other options which would have more impact
- How the plan can support the vision for achieving carbon net zero (even through the supply chain)
- Whether there is any impact on the equality of opportunity for all to live and active and healthy life as a result of the decision and implementing the plan
- How the plan supports our growing economy, providing people with access to good range of diverse work opportunities and business with the opportunity to continue to develop and diversify

In development of a commissioning plan, we will consider social value as part of the decision making process.

For more information on the commissioning cycle, please refer to the **Commissioning Strategy.**

Procurement Process

If the approval of a commissioning plan results in the agreement to start the procurement process, will be looking to explore through this process how providers can support our commitment to the sustainability principles of equality, economy and environment. Specifically:

- **Equity** - ensuring that procurement process highlights and drives out in any inequalities, especially those resulting from poverty and rural sparsity. We will focus on the wider determinants that drive those inequalities in a way that is fair and equitable.

- **Economy** - looking for providers that support our commitment to increase productivity and improve educational outcomes for residents in Westmorland and Furness, whilst broadening opportunities and increasing the diversity of the economy. We are looking to support sustainable and inclusive growth which benefits our diverse population whilst protecting the environment.

- **Environment** - as a new Council we recognise our environmental responsibilities, including taking action on climate change and biodiversity loss. We will seek to redress damage and protect our environment for the long term – and expect any provider we work with to do the same too.

For more information about our procurement process, please see the **Procurement Strategy.**

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Community Wealth and Community Power

Our Council Plan Delivery Framework includes a commitment to agree our community wealth building approach and the role we can play through our commissioning and procurement practices and delivery of environmental and social value through how and where we spend our resources.

Through embedding Social Value in procurement and commissioning and focusing on how suppliers and contract decisions can support social, environmental and employment considerations - outcomes and contract decisions can be measured and made on Social Value as well as price and quality.

'Community Power' is based on the principle that communities have a wealth of knowledge and assets within themselves, which if understood and nurtured by practitioners and policymakers, has the potential to strengthen resilience and enable prevention-focused public services (New Local)

This is a key focus within the Council Plan with a priority for confident, empowered, resilient communities; and a commitment that the council will work closely with the residents and businesses it serves to enable them to shape their own destiny and thrive. This also includes supporting a growing social enterprise sector.

A specific Community Power Strategy is currently under development, however as part of this wider work a Grant Giving Policy has already been established. As an enabler, the Grant Giving Policy also supports community mobilisation and needs to consider how these opportunities can add Social Value.

Anchor Institutions

We are a member of the Bay Anchor Network (BAN; formerly the Morecambe Bay Anchor Collaborative), a network of anchor institutions with links to the Morecambe Bay area. An anchor institution is a large organisation, such as the Council or our Health Partners, that have a significant stake in their local area and have sizeable assets which can be used to support local community health and wellbeing.

As part of the BAN, we will work with other anchor institutions to continue to develop opportunities for building community wealth and address other inequalities.   We do this by working together across the network to manage our resources and operations strategically and intentionally, which can help address local social, economic, and environmental priorities.

The network identified six domains of activity intended to build local community wealth, each with various component indicators. One of these domains is focused on purchasing and commissioning for social value.   Working together we will continue to identify opportunities to address local priorities, through joint contracts and frameworks where possible or sharing information and intelligence to inform our decision making.

Why will we measure social value?

As well as considering social value in our decision making, measuring any Social Value 'gains' through contracts is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Accountability:** we need to be accountable to residents and stakeholders – demonstrating how we are achieving Social Value through contracts
2. **Improvement:** By measuring Social Value and reviewing what we are doing, we can work over time to improve our approach and performance
3. **Informed Decisions:** Understanding social value informs commissioning and procurement decisions
4. **Impact Assessment:** measuring social value allow us to track progress, identify intended and unexpected outcomes and demonstrate how providers are making a difference to the delivery of our ambition for our residents

How will we decide what is Social Value?

How providers intend to achieve Social Value in the delivery of contracts for us will be assessed and determined through the tendering process. Each tendering opportunity will have specific questions included, that will be evaluated by the panel.

These questions will allow us to determine how the provider intends to add value when delivering our contract – and will allow us to assess each on its merits and opportunities. They are part of the overall scoring methodology, along with price and quality.

The actual detail and the approach taken will be relevant and proportionate to the nature and value of each of the contracts that are being tendered for. The commissioning plan stage of the decision making process will provide the information needed to develop these questions and approach.

We have clearly defined procurement processes in place which will document our decision making around contract awards and Social Value.

Measuring Social Value

Once a provider (or providers) has been successfully awarded a contract – the information provided in the tenders around this additional value will be translated into a key performance indicator (or a suite of indicators – depending on the nature of the contract). These key performance indicators will be used to monitor the Providers' commitment and allow us to measure and manage the impact of their service or goods.

The Council has committed to the development of a 'Contracts Dashboard' in 2024/25 – this will allow us to collect, monitor and manage a wide range of performance indicators associated with our contracts. This will include those associated with measuring social value.

This is a priority area for us – and without the dashboard we won't be able to collect the data to demonstrate how successful we have been in adding social value into our contracts. It is hoped we can then develop this further to include calculating the financial benefit of social value.

The dashboard will also underpin the procurement pipeline and feed into the commissioning cycle (see the Procurement and Commissioning Strategies).

We know now that we are consistent in considering Social Value in the tender evaluation process – but then not as consistent in monitoring and managing the contract and therefore the Social Value added.   This is a priority area for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Appendix A gives examples of the key performance indicators that could be used for monitoring and managing the impact of Social Value through contracts. This is not an exhaustive list and additional indicators may be developed and used that are more relevant to different contracts, which are likely to be identified in the commissioning cycle.

Embedding Social Value

Commissioning, procurement and contract management are all critical to ensure we are achieving social value through our providers and suppliers.   To embed Social Value and maximise opportunities in contacts we will ensure that:

- For 2024/25, all new tenders will continue to include tender evaluation questions exploring how the provider is proposing to add value through their contract delivery

- For 2024/25, 50% of these **new** tenders over the annual contact value of £100,000 will have the Social Value criteria included within their evaluation process, translated into key performance indicators that will be monitored and managed– these will be relevant to each contract

- This target will increase to 60% in 2025/26 and 75% in 2026/27

- By including stretching targets, we can focus on 'getting the fundamentals' right in the first year and then fully embed the approach in the coming years

- For the end of 2024/25 – we will produce a report from the Contracts Dashboard – highlighting what contract information we have collated to support embedding social value and agree targets for 2025/26 and 2026/27

- We review the weighting given to Social Value responses in the tendering process and agree a consistent approach for evaluating in the procurement process including increasing the weighting given where appropriate (at the moment, there is not consistent weighting, and we want to consider increasing from the suggested 10%)

- Social Value indicators will be relevant and proportionate to the services or works being commissioned and procured

- We will review these indicators for 2024/25 to determine whether there is a 'standard' set of indicators to be used across all contracts and how this could be implemented

- Suppliers and partners are supported to contribute to delivering this social value approach; and we will be working in 2024/25 to help suppliers understand our expectations for social value.

In 2024/25 as we better understand the implications and requirements of the Procurement Act 2023, there will need to be a focus on ensuring we are collating contract and service performance information to support our commitment to, and demonstrating the positive impact of, social value.

As we become more confident with managing and monitoring Social Value in our contracts and exploring opportunities through the commissioning cycle, there will be other opportunities to develop this further and working with innovative providers to continue to challenge our expectations. This could mean more opportunities for us and will require additional capacity.

Appendix A – How providers may bring Social Value to contracts

These are some examples of how providers and suppliers may bring Social Value to residents in Westmorland & Furness. This isn't an exhaustive list and there will be others not included – the key point is that any will need to be relevant and proportionate to the contract on which they are intended.

- Creating skills and training opportunities

- Creating local employment opportunities for the long term un-employed or those not in education, employment or training

- Promoting greater inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups

- Creating equal opportunities for all and eliminating barriers

- Offering work placements

- Providing career advice, and information on specific careers

- Creating supply chain opportunities for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations in W&F

- Encouraging community engagement

- Supporting local and national projects or initiatives for hard to reach groups

- Make facilities available to groups that would otherwise struggle to access them

- Leveraging additional investment into Communities in W&F

- Support our requirements as a LPA for Biodiversity Net Gains

- Investing in renewable energy, not only provides business to local companies but also creating new jobs and developing new and existing local infrastructure

- Approach to supporting scope 3 net carbon target by 2050

- Approach to supporting ICT strategy

- Opportunities and support for our Care Leavers

- Promoting and implementing the Armed Forces covenant

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى
الاتصال **0300 373 3300**

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Westmorland & Furness Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

• Eliminate discrimination

• Advance equality of opportunity

• Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and **armed forces families.**

The EqIA process has two stages, summarised below. Guidance on each stage is available from the policy team via equalities@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

• **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.

• **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EqIA covers the nine protected characteristics as   well as rurality, socio-economic inequality, care experience and armed forces families. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Note: where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

EIA Proforma

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Social Value Statement

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

To outline the approach for monitoring and managing social value in contracts with independent providers

3) Consultation

Council Officers, Cabinet Members and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (s) (positive, neutral or negative)	Measures to address impact if required	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	Y	The implementation of the Procurement Strategy will ensure that any consideration of protected characteristics is taken into account in the procurement and award activity. The strategy includes the tender evaluation and award process (the Procurement Cycle). Social Value		N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (s) (positive, neutral or negative)	Measures to address impact if required	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		will be considered as part of this. Therefore ant protected characteristics may be considered – and the process is intended to be positive rather than cause any negative impacts. A separate EIA **may** be required to support the specific procurement activity if as a result of, for example, service redesign or new legislation.		
Disability	Y	As above		N
Gender reassignment	Y	As above		N
Marriage or civil partnership	Y	As above		N
Pregnancy or maternity	Y	As above		N
Race	Y	As above		N
Religion or belief	Y	As above		N
Sex	Y	As above		N
Sexual orientation	Y	As above		N
Care Experience	Y	As above		N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (s) (positive, neutral or negative)	Measures to address impact if required	Full EqIA needed Y/N
People in rural areas	Y	As above		N
Socio-economic inequality	Y	As above		N
Armed-forces families	Y	As above		N
General (other considerations)				

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?   No

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Full Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/ Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	
Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/ function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

Section 2: Information Gathering

What *relevant* information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic inequality					
Armed-forces families					

Section 4. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	☐
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	☐
Develop and implement action plan.	☐
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	☐

Section 5: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

Add rows as necessary.

Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?

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Cabinet

Report Title	ICT Strategy 2024 - 2029
Date of Meeting	30 April
Report Author	Stefan Sabuda, Assistant Director - ICT
Director	Paul Robinson, Director Enabler Services
Lead Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Customer and Waste Services
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **YES** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	All
Identify exempt information and exemption category	N/A
Reasons for urgency (<u>only</u> where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1: ICT Strategy 2024 - 2029 Appendix 2: ICT Strategy Delivery Plan 2024 - 2025 Appendix 3: Equality Screening

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   This report recommends that Cabinet agree to approve the ICT Strategy 2024 – 2029 and associated ICT Delivery Plan for 2024 – 2025.

1.2   The ICT Strategy sets out a high-level approach and direction of travel for the organisation's ICT that will provide the building blocks and foundation for the future technical requirements of Westmorland and Furness Council.

1.3   The ICT Strategy is supported by a delivery plan for 2024-2025, which will be updated on an annual basis.

1.4	Strong and secure ICT infrastructure is essential to deliver a wide range of council functions in an effective manner. Innovative design and the use of technology has the power to transform, making services simpler, easier to access, and efficient without compromising on quality.

1.5	Recognising that the significant scale and complexity of ICT changes outlined in the ICT Strategy will take multiple years to deliver, Full Council has agreed additional capital and revenue resources in the Medium Term Financial Plan so that our investment in technology will support the council now and for the future.

1.6	Bringing four legacy councils into one has created significant long-term opportunities for us as a new Unitary Council. It has also however created significant technical challenges in the short to medium term that will take careful planning, time and resources to overcome.

1.7	We are ambitious for the future, but also realistic. This strategy lays out our plans for the next five years, bringing together legacy council ICT services with new emerging technology, supporting our modern workforce, designing, strengthening and improving our offer and customer experience, ensuring always that Westmorland and Furness is 'a great place to live, work and thrive'.

1.8	The ICT Strategy will consider developments in technology to ensure service teams and customers have the best possible applications to support Members and Officers in carrying out their duties in the best possible way.

1.9	An equalities screening of the strategy has been undertaken and accompanies this report.

## 2.	Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1	Agree the ICT Strategy 2024 – 2029 and ICT Strategy Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025.

## 3.	Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1	The ICT Strategy is one of the council's foundational strategies that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. This will be done through supporting our customers and workforce:

- Utilise the expansion of digital inclusion across the Westmorland and Furness area to increase digital engagement with the Council's services;
- Ensure our customer facing applications are fully accessible and support the latest equality, diversity and inclusion standards;
- Ensure information we hold on our customers is respected and well managed in line with our legal obligations by implementing a 'data protection by design and default' approach;

- Identify suitable devices and workplace software to maintain secure, collaborative working;
- Engage with staff to ensure that cyber security awareness is a key part of the council culture and embedded throughout our organisation

3.2 The strategy describes the changes and improvements needed to take place to ensure that the council has a fit-for-purpose, efficient, effective and secure ICT Service and infrastructure for the future. This includes:

- Govern ICT centrally to ensure alignment with the Council's target operating model;
- Provide safe, secure systems that are reliably available to employees, Councillors and customers;
- Use ICT to support the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral and minimise the impact on the environment;
- Support transformation across the Council
- Manage our cyber risk by ensuring we have the right cyber security skills, knowledge and controls in place.
- Provide agile infrastructure enabling new services to be created quickly or existing services scaled on demand
- Explore and utilise emerging technologies wherever appropriate.

3.3 The 2024 -2025 Delivery Plan sets out the key activities for year one of the ICT strategy, many of which are important to lay a firm foundation and building blocks for changes that will be implemented in short, medium and long term. The consolidation of teams, ICT infrastructure, disaggregation and aggregation of systems and the introduction of single policies and procedures is important, to get the basics right before making more significant changes. There are significant interdependencies with the Customer Strategy and People Plan; and alignment of activity across these three strategies is essential to ensure success.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1 The ICT Strategy supports the delivery of the Council Plan priorities and will support the council's operations.

5. Consultation Outcomes

5.1 Engagement sessions have taken place with the following groups and stakeholders to gain initial feedback and ideas on approach to development of the Customer Strategy and its content: Corporate Management Team (CMT); Senior Leadership Team (SLT); All Councillors; ICT Extended Service Management Team; Cabinet, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny; and Trade Unions. The engagement and feedback that was received from the various groups was overwhelmingly supportive of the approach taken in the development of the ICT Strategy.

5.2   The scale of the challenge that the Council's ICT Service faces over the coming years was recognised in all the groups as being significant to ensure that the ICT infrastructure moves from four legacy ICT infrastructures to a single Westmorland and Furness ICT infrastructure.

5.3   The was also a recognition that it will take time and resources to fully deliver the ambitions of the ICT Strategy with a blended approach to stabilise, rationalise, improve and transform the council's ICT, with robust change and risk management arrangements in place to ensure success.

6.   Alternative Options Considered

6.1   Members may decide not to agree the ICT Strategy 2024 – 2029 and associated 2024 – 2025 Delivery Plan or may decide to amend the strategy to reflect a different organisational approach to how the Council's ICT will be developed, transformed and improved.

7.   Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1   The Council Plan Delivery Framework places an emphasis on the use of technologies to ensure that employees and elected members can spend as much time as possible delivering the valued services we provide and allow the continuous improvement of those services.

7.2   The Council's operating model also puts emphasis on ensuring that supporting technology is fit for purpose and supports the delivery of services, promotes digital ways of working, and enables organisational efficiency.

8.   Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1   The ICT Strategy states that it supports the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral. Through the better use of existing technology and the introduction of new technology can support a reduction in the carbon footprint of Westmorland and Furness Council. There is also potential for technology to reduce the need for travel and reduce the use of paper.

9.   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   This is a decision for the Cabinet and the item has been on the Forward Plan as a key decision.

9.2   Legal Services will support any legal work arising from the Strategy and Delivery Plan.

10.   Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1   The Council's ICT Strategy, together with the People Plan and Customer Strategy, will support the development of our workforce that operates in a that operates in a customer focused way. These combined strategies will reflect the importance of developing a digitally skilled and confident workforce, with the ability to meet the expectations of effective and easy access to services.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 There are no direct financial implications of the recommendation contained within this report. In anticipation of the scale of the ICT Strategy change programme, additional capital and revenue resources were secured in the Medium Term Financial Plan to invest in ICT as a key Enabler Service.

11.2 It is anticipated that existing resources will be used to support the delivery of the year 1 plan.

11.3 Should members not approve the recommendation within this report but wish to take a different approach, then the financial implication of this would need to be considered.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)

12.1 Equality Screening is provided as Appendix 3

13. Background Documents

13.1 Not applicable.

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Westmorland & Furness Council

Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Strategy

2024-2029

'**Modern technologies and practices** are embedded into the council with a culture of innovation and continuous improvement that is always seeking to **make a difference**'

Foreword

We are delighted to share with you the first ICT Strategy for Westmorland and Furness Council.

Secure and resilient ICT is central to our journey, enabling this Council to be the very best it can be.

We live in a time where technology plays a significant part in all of our lives – for our communities and residents, customers, businesses and visitors, with technology central to how we deliver services.

We want to harness the opportunities that innovative technologies can offer when designing and delivering important services, providing assurance that for those individuals without internet access, experience, or confidence there will be alternative, appropriate ways to access services.

Strong and secure ICT infrastructure is essential to deliver a wide range of council functions in an effective manner. Innovative design has the power to transform, making services simpler, easier to access, and efficient without compromising on quality.

Bringing four legacy councils into one has created significant long-term opportunities for us as a new Unitary Council. It has also however created significant technical challenges in the short to medium term that will take careful planning, time and resources to overcome.

We are ambitious for the future, but also realistic, so this strategy lays out our plans for the next five years, bringing together legacy council ICT services with new emerging technology, supporting our modern workforce, designing, strengthening and improving our offer and customer experience, ensuring always that Westmorland and Furness is...

'a great place to live, work and thrive'.

Cllr Dyan Jones
Cabinet Member for Customer
and Waste (including ICT portfolio)

Sam Plum
Chief Executive

Contents

ICT Strategy

Westmorland and Furness Council was created in April 2023 with an ambition for our communities, residents, businesses and visitors to make Westmorland and Furness 'a great place to live, work and thrive'. We are working hard to make sure we can deliver efficient and effective services and are seizing the opportunities we have as a new unitary authority to deliver improved services.

Secure, cost effective, efficient and resilient ICT is essential to delivering good council services and allows us to be adaptable to the changing financial, political and regulatory environment within which the Council operates.

In a time of reducing budgets to deliver services, for which demand is increasing and where customer needs and expectations are changing, we need to be confident that the Council can utilise ICT to support these challenges.

New and emerging technologies could fundamentally change the relationship we have with our customers as it gives us the tools to understand and support them in new and innovative ways.

To enable us to deliver the best possible council services, we need to utilise technology to attract, develop and retain staff members, adapting to the changing needs and expectations of a modern workforce.

In addition, we must protect the Council against threats brought by our new digital ways of working and to ensure that safe, secure networks and systems are in place to maintain the delivery of services and to uphold the cyber security of our customers.

This ICT strategy sets out what we want to achieve over the next 5 years using existing and emerging technologies to support delivery of the Council's priorities and, by so doing, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of council services. The strategy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it keeps pace with developments in the creation and learning from new technology.

The ICT strategy is one of the key foundational strategies that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities, as detailed in the Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework.

ICT is a pillar for the delivery of all council services. A robust ICT strategy will support the creation and delivery of a suite of Westmorland and Furness foundational strategies including:
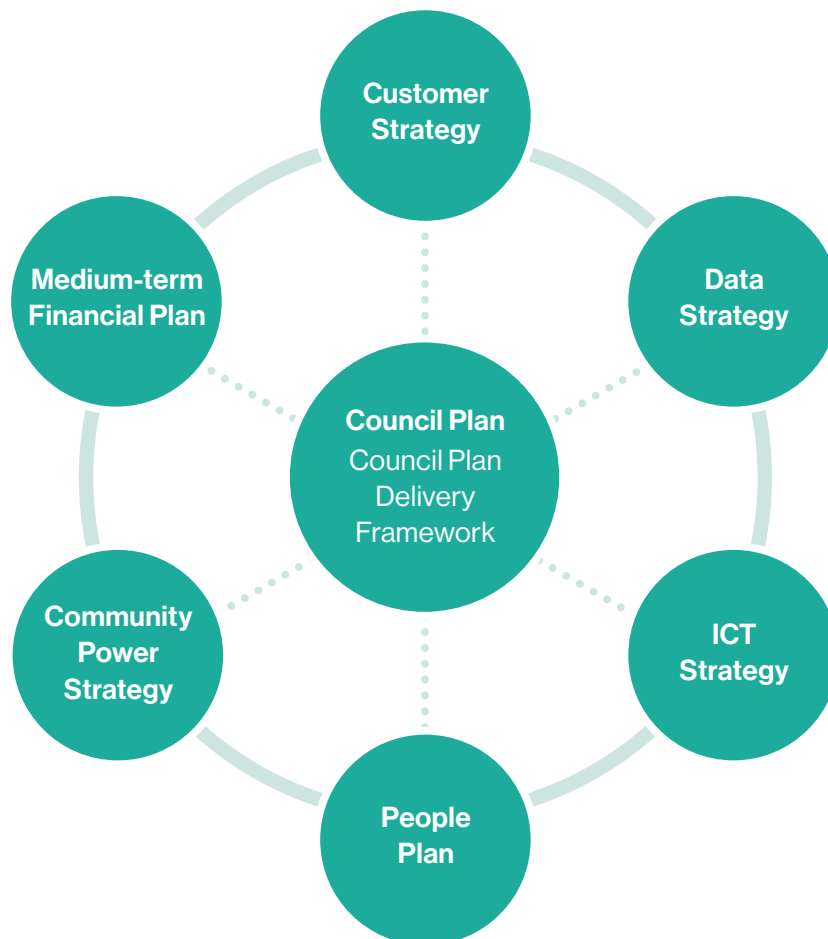
To inform this strategy, we have drawn on best practice from the public and private sectors, and insight gained from employee and elected Councillors feedback.

We have an ambition to reduce inequalities and discrimination within Westmorland and Furness. We want to be a council that understands and takes account of the varying needs and experiences of the different groups among our community, working hard to ensure all our customers, staff and elected Councillors are included, supported and celebrated for who they are.

An Equality Impact Screening has been undertaken to assess the impact of the ambitions of this strategy for people with protected characteristics, where no negative impacts were identified. In addition, a potential positive impact was highlighted in relation to utilising ICT to better understand our customers' needs.

Our Vision

Our ICT vision has been shaped by the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan, Council Plan Delivery Framework and Target Operating Model.

We want to utilise technology to deliver better outcomes for the Council and its communities by driving digital change and innovation based on a foundation of inclusive, secure and connected ICT infrastructure to underpin a high-quality ICT service as a key Council enabler.

Strong ICT is key to the delivery of the Council's strategic ambitions therefore this strategy, in the early years as a new council, and in the context of the challenges of merging four legacy councils into one Unitary Council, will detail how we will deliver these ambitions:

Council Plan

- ICT services are the building blocks of the organisation, supporting all priorities within the Council Plan.

Council Plan Delivery Framework

- Modern technologies and practices are embedded into the council alongside a culture of innovation and continuous improvement that is always seeking to make a difference.

Target Operating Model

- **Easy Access:** Services will be user friendly, caring, and accessible through multiple channels. Wherever possible, to be available and delivered digitally, reducing demand for telephone and in-person interactions so that resources can be focused to those in most need.
- **Effective Services:** Services are outcome focused and maximise the use of technology to drive efficiency and effectiveness. Service delivery is citizen centred and seamless between services and partner organisations.
- **'Fit for purpose' technology across the Council** supports the delivery of services, promotes digital ways of working and enables organisational efficiency.

Making our vision real

Where we are now

Westmorland and Furness Council was formed in 2023 and brought together four legacy councils.

The ICT transition to the new Council enabled all services to continue without major negative impacts.

Given the complex technical infrastructure, work is ongoing to maintain service delivery with operational workarounds in place where required as we progress a carefully managed change programme across the medium to longer term.

The ICT programme of work is complex with lots of work still to do. Bringing together the large number of Council systems and different types of infrastructure will be a key focus and challenge. To succeed, we will balance drive and desire alongside realistic timescales and robust risk and change management. Currently, the Westmorland and Furness ICT service supports:

- **100+** Council buildings
- **400+** Servers
- **400+** ICT Contracts
- **500+** Applications
- **3000+** Personal Computers
- **4000+** Mobile Devices

Which are based over the following legacy infrastructures:

- **4** ICT Networks
- **5** Datacentres

With support being provided by the following ICT teams:

- Approximately **24** W&F ICT Staff
- Approximately **100** ICT staff, hosted by Cumberland Council as an interim hosted service

The scale of the ICT programme of works is significant and will require time, investment and resources over multiple years. Disaggregation, aggregation, improvement and integration works will need to take place on a prioritised basis with interdependencies carefully managed and reviewed.

To support the creation of this strategy, feedback has been sought from industry peers, Councillors and our workforce. In addition, we have vital learning and experience from the legacy councils brought together to form the new Westmorland and Furness Council.

This feedback has informed us that:

- ICT is fundamental to delivering all council services – so a true council priority;
- We need to grow our ICT service and invest in the skills and knowledge of the ICT team;
- Business continuity and service resilience is a top priority;
- Emerging technologies should be explored and utilised where appropriate;
- ICT can support the Council's ambitions to reduce our carbon footprint and protect the environment;
- Investment and place greater focus on improving digital skills is required;
- ICT should support the workforce to deliver efficient and effective council services;
- Improvements for accessing systems and services for staff and customers is needed;
- ICT support is crucial to delivering the Council's new target operating model;
- We must ensure that we use high quality and relevant data and intelligence within our ICT systems to support decision making and improve service delivery;
- Technology is vital to develop and deliver high quality services, via ICT business partners ;
- Co-production of digital solutions with the workforce is needed;
- Connectivity and reliable access to key applications and systems is a top priority, ensuring employees and Councillors have the right technology and access to be an agile workforce;
- Storage and filing solutions require greater focus.

What we want to achieve

ICT to be central to the design of all council services, supporting them to become more sustainable in the long term, as well as meeting customer expectations about the way services should be delivered.

Our key aim is to create an ICT service that the Council can be proud of and rely on, which supports our ambition to put customers at the heart of everything we do.

Our journey to ensure the full benefits that technology can bring will need to evolve over time and may need to change as we progress the technical changes and challenges we face.

We will focus on three key outcomes, with annual delivery plans outlining greater detail.

We want to provide an excellent ICT service	We want to be agile	We want to be secure and resilient
We want to provide a service that inspires and supports the transformation of our council services and improvements to our customers' experiences.	ICT will be a key enabler to developing new products and services, reducing costs across the Council, helping ensure the Council is financially sustainable, supporting our workforce to deliver quality services and providing an improved customer experience.	The Council ICT network and systems need to be safe, secure and resilient. Cyber security is a top priority and needs to be embedded into all working practices across the Council. If problems occur, they are resolved promptly to maintain connectivity and maximise system availability.

How we will get there

We need to invest in cost-effective, secure and accessible technologies. Recognising that the significant scale and complexity of ICT changes outlined in our ICT Strategy will take multiple years to deliver, Full Council has agreed additional capital and revenue resources in the Medium Term Financial Plan so that our investment in technology will support the council now and for the future.

Improvements will be prioritised in line with the ambitions in the Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework and support the delivery of the Council's agreed priority areas. This could include a range of collaborative and integrated projects where we will work internally across service teams and externally across our public sector partners to enable efficiency savings and improvements in customer service.

Supporting our customers

Utilising existing and emerging technology to both understand our customers' needs and expectations, and to ensure customers can access our services in a way that best suits them.

We will:

Provide the ICT tools needed to understand our customers' needs to support service delivery, commissioning and decision making across all service areas.

Utilise the expansion of digital inclusion across the Westmorland and Furness area to increase digital engagement with Council's services.

Ensure our customer facing applications are accessible and support the latest equality, diversity and inclusion standards.

Ensure data and information we hold on our customers is respected and well managed in line with our legal and moral obligations by ensuring a 'data protection by design and default' approach.

Supporting our workforce

Working with employees and Councillors to ensure that ICT services are designed and delivered in the best way to enable colleagues to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

We will:

Identify suitable devices and workplace software to maintain secure collaborative working.

Engage with all employees to ensure that cyber security awareness is a key element of our organisational culture.

Create a culture where ICT Business Partners work with council teams to the develop ICT services required.

Define an approach to emerging technologies, such as Intelligent Automation (IA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), with options appraisals to map effectiveness and efficiency.

Engage with staff to ensure that cyber security awareness is cultivated throughout our organisation.

Westmorland and Furness ICT service

The collective expertise and knowledge of the team will be further developed and utilised to provide the Council with resilient, innovative and cost-effective ICT solutions.

We will:

Provide the Council with the ICT needed to deliver its target operating model priority programmes such as Community Focus, Easy Access, Effective Services, Enabling Processes and Supporting Technology.

Carefully manage changes to the technology architecture of the Council – with ICT infrastructure and systems governed centrally to ensure alignment with the Council's target operating model.

Increase the use of platform-based integration, automation and AI solutions to streamline processes and enable cross service working.

Provide safe, secure systems that are reliably available to employees, Councillors and customers via single sign on wherever possible.

Use ICT to support the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral and promote environmental sustainability.

Ensure we design in privacy and security – so that we store and use data we hold about our employees, partners and customers appropriately, and in line with statutory guidance.

Support transformation across the Council.

Manage our cyber risks by ensuring we have the required cyber security skills and knowledge that align to the Central Digital and Data Office and National Cyber Security Centre best practices.

We will develop a timeline to rationalise the number of systems used by the Council to provide the best service with the fewest systems, reducing costs and increasing data integration.

Provide agile infrastructure, enabling new opportunities to be utilised quickly or existing services flexed to meet changes in demand.

To ensure success, we will need to make best use of our resources and will align to Central Government's Digital Services Technology Code of Practice and the Local Government Association's 12 local government digitalisation outcomes:

Digital Services Technology Code of Practice	Local Government Association's 12 strategic digitilisation outcomes
1. Define user needs	1. Connectivity
2. Make things accessible and inclusive	2. Data
3. Be open and use open source	3. Democracy and participation
4. Make use of open standards	4. Economic productivity and growth
5. Use cloud first, where possible	5. Ethics and sustainability
6. Make things secure	6. Inclusion
7. Make privacy integral	7. Leadership
8. Share, reuse and collaborate	8. Organisational capacity
9. Integrate and adapt technology	9. Partnership
10. Make better use of data	10. Security and resilience
11. Define your purchasing strategy	11. Services
12. Make technology sustainable	12. Value

What success looks like

We need to know that our ICT is making a difference, so it is crucial that we measure and evaluate our success. There are several ways in which we will monitor and measure how well we are doing, and whether we are achieving our aims and objectives.

As a new organisation, we accept we have a significant programme of ICT works to stabilise, improve and transform the Council, which will take time to fully implement.

Our measures, together with our priorities, will be reviewed and may need to be adapted and developed on an annual basis to ensure we are measuring our achievements in the best way we can.

Supporting our customers

Utilising existing and emerging technology to both understand our customers' needs and expectations, and to ensure customers can access our services in a way that best suits them.

We would expect to see:

- an increase in the proportion of customer contact delivered through our digital channels.
- increased customers using technology in council buildings such as libraries.
- increase in data driven, customer focused, decision making across the Council.
- improved customer satisfaction.
- reduction in costs and increased efficiency – helping ensure the Council is financially sustainable.

Supporting our workforce and elected members

Working with staff and elected members to ensure that ICT services are designed and delivered in the best way to enable colleagues to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

We would expect to see:

- Increase in the creation and redesign of ICT services that better reflect the needs of our customers and employees;
- Councillors and officers have a high awareness of and commitment to cyber security
- Improved customer and employee satisfaction;
- Reduction in costs and increased efficiency and effectiveness by
  - Automating services, where possible and appropriate
  - Utilising emerging technology, such as artificial intelligence, to support teams and services where appropriate
  - Teams collaborating across the Council and with partners to deliver joined-up services.

Westmorland and Furness ICT service

The collective expertise and knowledge of the team will be further developed and utilised to provide the Council with resilient, innovative and cost-effective ICT solutions enabling delivery of service transformation.

We would expect to see:

- Increase in ICT projects and programmes that carefully progress the key stages of stabilisation, improvement and transformation to help deliver the Council's target operating model;
- Increase in trained and digitally aware staff;
- Increase in agile infrastructure to support new and existing services;
- Resilient, available, safe and secure systems for employees, Councillors and customers
- Reduction in costs and increased efficiency and effectiveness by
  - reducing the number of systems used across the Council
  - increasing the use of platform-based integration, automation and AI solutions where appropriate.

We are ambitious to achieve significant change however realistic that the scale and complexity of work to deliver the aims of this strategy will be delivered over the next 5 years.

An annual delivery plan setting out key activities and milestones for 2024/25 can be found **here**.

During the first year we will further refine the single programme of works and further develop ICT service Key Performance Indicators and Service Level Agreements to measure the success, ensuring transparency and accountability for the performance of the ICT Service.

In addition, the Technology Programme Board will monitor and report on the success measures for all projects, actions and programmes in the ICT Strategy annual delivery plan.

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى
الاتصال 0300 373 3300

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 0300 373 3300 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

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ICT Strategy Delivery Plan 2024/25 (Year 1)   **APPENDIX 2**

Bringing four legacy councils into one has created significant long-term opportunities for us as a new Unitary Council. It has also however created significant technical challenges in the short to medium term that will take careful planning, time and resources to overcome.

Recognising that the significant scale and complexity of ICT changes outlined in the ICT Strategy will take multiple years to deliver.

This delivery plan provides a high-level overview of the work, which will take place in 2024/25 and is structured around 3 key outcomes:

1. Create a better **user experience** by delivering user-centric, accessible, easy to use ICT service
2. Create a better **service experience** by enabling a service-centric approach to support the needs of the council's Directorates
3. Deliver an **effective, efficient and value for money** ICT Service

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **user experience** by delivering user centric, accessible, easy to use ICT service.	Migration from the Skype for Business platform to Microsoft Teams for telephony.	Sept 2024	Staff across the legacy district ICT networks use MS Teams for telephony.
	Enable the ability to communicate on the MS Teams platform across the legacy networks.	Sept 2024	Users communicate via MS Teams across all legacy networks in same way.
	Introduce system to record and track ICT user feedback to inform demand management and service improvements.	Dec 2024 Jan 2025	ICT Feedback system in place Satisfaction data informs ICT work programmes

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **user experience** by delivering user centric, accessible, easy to use ICT service.	Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in place for the provision of ICT to users.	Jan 2025	ICT Service Level Agreements in place.
	Single ICT Service Desk for users to contact should the experience any ICT issues.	Jan 2025	Single ICT Service Desk in place and working effectively
	ICT users from legacy councils migrated into single W&F ICT tenancy.	July 2024 Oct 2024 Feb 2025	Tenancy Migration Plan agreed through ICT Technical Design Authority. Phase 1 tenancy migration test evaluated. Subject to successful testing, all W&F users migrated to single tenancy
	Multi-factor authentication security introduced with login passwords that don't expire.	Mar 2025	Multi-factor authentication in place. Users do not have to change login passwords.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
	Legacy Council ICT policies reviewed, creating a single consolidated suite of policies for the Unitary Council.	Mar 2025	A single suite of W&F ICT policies in place.
Create a better **service experience** by enabling a service-centric approach to support the needs of the council's Directorates.	Introduction of prioritisation to manage ICT demands and projects.	Jul 2024	Robust and transparent ICT prioritisation approach in place.
	ICT Business Partnering approach implemented to support all Directorates.	Sep 2024 Oct 2024 Feb 2025	ICT Business Partners in place ICT Business Partners engage regularly with Directorates. Business Partners collate Directorate requirements for 2025/26 ICT programme of work.
	Support the Council Asset Management Strategy by delivering required ICT solutions across prioritised projects* *Note: asset management changes require separate ICT project delivery plans.	April 2024 May 2024 Oct 2024	Barrow Dock Museum ICT capacity enhanced. Penrith Voreda House ICT in place. Kendal County Hall to South Lakeland House ICT in place.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **service experience** by enabling a service-centric approach to support the needs of the council's Directorates.		Oct 2024	Penrith Mansion House and Town Hall user ICT decommissioned.
		Oct 2024	Penrith Redhills ICT reviewed.
		Mar 2025	Barrow Town Hall customer service ICT
		Mar 2025	Kendal Town Hall customer service ICT
	Deliver 2024/25 prioritised programme of ICT systems and applications aligned to business needs in the Council Plan* *Note: each system change is a major project in its own right and require separate ICT project delivery plans.	Jun 2024	Fleet Management system in place
		Aug 2024	Single W&F Adult Social Care system in place.
		Aug 2024	Single W&F Adult Care Finance System in place.
		Jul 2024	W&F Education Management System contract in place.
		Aug 2024	Single W&F Children's Social Care System in Place.
		Sep 2024	Complete phase 2 of elections management system implementation & testing.
		Sep 2024	Legal Case Management System has agreed W&F data split in place.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
		Oct 2024	W&F Geographical Information System (GIS) approach scoped.
		Nov 2024	Single W&F Development Management System in place.
		Jan 2025	Single W&F HR & Payroll system contract in place.
		Jan 2025	Single W&F Finance system contract in place.
		Mar 2025	All legacy council HR and Payroll managed through single system.
	Additional ICT workforce capacity recruited to support delivery of ICT Delivery Plan.	Jul 2024 / Sep 2024	Phase 1 of additional capacity recruitment held. Phase 2 of additional recruitment held.
	ICT Training and Development Programme in place to enhance ICT skills and continuous development.	Aug 2024	ICT Training and Development Programme scoped and fed into Corporate training programme.
	Transition from multiple former Council to a single W&F ICT Security programme maintaining Cabinet Office	Sep 2024	Single W&F ICT Security Health Check completed.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Deliver an **effective, efficient and value for money** ICT Service	Public Sector Network (PSN) security compliance.	Oct 2024	Single W&F PSN assessment submitted to Cabinet Office.
		Nov 2024	Singe W&F PSN compliance accreditation confirmed.
		Mar 2025 & ongoing	ICT security & cyber improvement programme in place.
	ICT service management system in place.	Sep 2024	Day to day management of ICT Service through the system.
	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) developed to monitor ICT performance.	Sep 2024	KPIs & reporting methods in place.
Deliver an **effective, efficient and value for money** ICT Service	W&F Data Centre options appraised.	Sep 2024	Data Centre options complete.
	Review end user devices for consistent laptop & mobile phone provision.	Oct 2024	End user device review complete.
		Mar 2025	Phase 1 of standardised ICT equipment deployed.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
	Work with corporate procurement team to review all ICT contracts.	Sept 2024 Dec 2024 and ongoing	ICT Service Manager in post. ICT contract register reviewed and future plan developed.
	Develop and implement a benefits realisation process, so that investments in ICT solutions inform potential future environment and efficiency options, helping to ensure the Council is environmentally and financially sustainable.	Mar 2025	ICT related benefits realisation process in place. Potential efficiencies tracked and inform Strategic Planning and Financial Sustainability programme.
	Assess where Microsoft 365 E5 services can replace existing solutions.	Mar 2025 and ongoing	Microsoft 365 E5 suite replaces existing solutions.

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Westmorland & Furness Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
Proforma

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and the **armed forces community.**

The EqIA process has two stages:

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.

- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EIA covers the nine protected characteristics as well as rurality, socio-economic status, care experience and armed forces personnel/ veterans. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Policy – Westmorland and Furness ICT Strategy 2024 - 2029.

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

The ICT Strategy has three focus areas (listed below). The equality impacts of these three priorities are explored in this equality impact assessment.

Supporting our customers, utilising existing and emerging technology to both understand our customers' needs and expectations, and to ensure customers can access our services in a way that best suits them.

We will:
- Provide the ICT tools needed to understand our customers' needs to support service delivery, commissioning and decision making across all service areas
- Utilise the expansion of digital inclusion across the Westmorland and Furness area to increase digital engagement with the Council's services
- Ensure our customer facing applications are fully accessible and support the latest equality, diversity and inclusion standards
- Ensure information we hold on our customers is respected and well managed in line with our legal obligations by implementing a 'data protection by design and default' approach

Supporting our workforce, working with staff to ensure that ICT services are designed and delivered in the best way to enable colleagues to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

We will:

- Identify suitable devices and workplace software to maintain secure collaborative working
- Create a cultural where ICT Business Partners work with Council teams to the develop ICT services needed
- Define an approach to emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), that drive effectiveness and efficiency
- Engage with staff to ensure that cyber security awareness is cultivated throughout our organisation

EIA Proforma   **Page 3**

Westmorland and Furness ICT service, expertise and knowledge of the team will be developed and utilised to provide the Council with protective, innovative and cost-effective ICT.

We will:

- Provide the Council with the ICT needed to deliver its target operating model of Community Focus, Easy Access, Effective Services, Enabling Processes and Supporting Technology
- Govern ICT centrally to ensure alignment with the Council's target operating model
- Increase the use of platform-based integration, automation and AI solutions to streamline processes
- Provide safe, secure systems that are reliably available to staff, Councillors and customers
- Use ICT to support the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral
- Ensure we store and use data we hold about our employees, partners and customers well, and in line with statutory guidance
- Support transformation across the Council
- Manage our cyber risk by ensuring we have the right cyber security skills and knowledge, aligned to the Central Digital and Data Office and National Cyber Security Centre best practices
- Rationalise the number of systems used by the Council to provide the best service with the fewest systems, reducing costs and increasing data integration
- Provide agile infrastructure enabling new services to be created quickly or existing services scaled on demand

3) Consultation

Engagement sessions have taken place with the following groups and stakeholders to gain initial feedback and ideas on approach to development of the Customer Strategy and its content:

Corporate Management Team (CMT), Senior Leadership Team (SLT), All W&F Councillors, ICT Service Management Team, Cabinet, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, Trade Unions

4) Equality screening

EIA Proforma   **Page 4**

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design the services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure all ages are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of age and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
Disability	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impacts - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support	Ensure all disabilities are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure work equipment is suitable/accessible.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		decision making for people with protected characteristics. Fully accessible customer facing applications that support the latest equality, diversity and inclusion standards will make our information and services available to all. Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of disabilities and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Gender reassignment	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics	Ensure gender reassignment is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Consider language/reference to individuals in documents.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of gender reassignment and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Marriage or civil partnership	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service**	Ensure marriage or civil partnership is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of marriage or civil partnership and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a		
Pregnancy or maternity	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure pregnancy and maternity is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of pregnancy and maternity and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
Race	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support	Ensure race is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		decision making for people with protected characteristics Fully accessible customer facing applications that support the latest equality, diversity and inclusion standards will make our information and services available to all. Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Explore language interpretation where required Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of race and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Religion or belief	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics	Ensure religion or belief is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of religion or belief and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Sex	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service**	Ensure sex is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Consider language/reference to individuals in documents. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects /	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a	solutions are considerate of sex and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Sexual orientation	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure sexual orientation is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of sexual orientation and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
Care Experience	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used	Ensure care experience is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of care experience and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
People in rural areas	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce**	Ensure people in rural areas are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure alternative routes of engagement for those with limited/no ICT access. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of people in rural areas and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Socio-economic inequality	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure socio-economic inequalities are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure alternative routes of engagement for those with limited/no ICT access. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of socio-economic inequality and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Armed-forces personnel/veterans	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure armed forces personnel / veterans are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of armed forces personnel / veterans and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
General (other considerations)				

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5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?   Yes ⊠   No ☐

Full Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/ Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	
Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/ function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

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Section 2: Information Gathering

What *relevant* information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic status					
Armed-forces personnel/veterans					

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Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

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Add rows as necessary.

Section 5. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	☐
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	☐
Complete the action plan.	☐
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	☐

Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?

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![Westmorland & Furness Council logo]

Cabinet

Report Title	Customer Strategy 2024-2027
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Helen Blake Assistant Director Customer & Digital
Director	Paul Robinson Director of Enabler Services
Lead Cabinet Member	Cllr Dyan Jones Cabinet Member for Customer and Waste Services
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **YES** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	All
Identify exempt information and exemption category	None
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1: Customer Strategy 2024 - 2027 Appendix 2: Customer Strategy Delivery Plan 2024 - 2025 Appendix 3: Equality Screening

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   This report recommends Cabinet approves the Customer Strategy 2024 – 2027 and Customer Strategy Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025.

1.2   The Customer Strategy sets out the high-level direction of travel for the organisation; and is supported by a delivery plan, which will be updated on an annual basis. An equalities screening of the strategy has been undertaken and accompanies this report.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1 Agree the Customer Strategy 2024-2027 and Customer Strategy Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1 The Customer Strategy is one of the council's foundational strategies that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. It describes our aspirations to be a customer focused organisation expanding on the high-level commitments we have already made in the Council Plan and Delivery Plan:

- To care about customers; listen and have them at the heart of everything we do,
- Put customers and communities needs at the heart of designing our services,
- Ensure customers are able to access services and information easily and equitably, using a channel of their choice.

3.2 This strategy describes the changes and improvements needed to make a positive and lasting difference to our customers. This includes:

- Streamlining and simplifying arrangements for how customers contact us,
- Creating a consistent approach and standard of service from all Westmorland and Furness services,
- Taking action to ensure customers receive a consistent and high-quality experience when they interact with us,
- Developing our approach to listening to and working with citizens and communities to design services that work well from their perspective.

3.3 The Delivery Plan 2024-2025 sets out the key activities for year 1 of the strategy, many of which are important to lay a firm foundation for changes that will be implemented in future years. The consolidation of teams, systems and introduction of single policies and procedures is important, to get the basics right as a new Unitary Council before making more significant changes in the medium to longer-term. There are significant interdependencies with the ICT and People Plan; and alignment of activity across these three strategies is essential to ensure success.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1 The Customer Strategy supports the operations of the whole council and will support the delivery of all council plan priorities.

5. Consultation Outcomes

5.1 The strategy has been informed through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including Customer Service staff, Poverty Working Group, Service Leads, Change Champions, Trade Unions, Elected Members, representatives from Parish and Town Councils; and Advocacy and Community Groups. This insight and feedback has supplemented the information gathered from baselining activity, customer feedback and research into practice in other authorities and sectors.

5.2 Overview and Scrutiny members have helpfully explored the topic on a number of occasions and a workshop open to all councillors took place to develop the strategic direction of travel.

5.3 The engagement and feedback provided overwhelming support for ensuring the council provides multi-channel access to customers. The importance of the continuation of a face to face offer, as well as telephony and online options in a blended model was emphasised.

5.4 There was also an acknowledgement that, for many customers, the digital offer is important to provide a self-service approach at a time that suits people best. The strategy therefore describes an ambition to increase the range of services and transactions that can be undertaken online in a consistent manner.

5.5 The need to understand and address barriers to accessing services emerged as a strong theme from much of the engagement. For example, considering how the lack access to data on mobile phones might impact on peoples ability to contact the council; or considering how the circumstances customers may be living in might impact on the way they present. These types of issues tie in closely with the equality screening that has been undertaken of the strategy and delivery plan; and more detailed equality impact assessments will be required to inform any proposals to change the approach to service delivery.

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Members may decide not to approve the Customer Strategy and associated year 1 delivery plan, or they may decide to amend the strategy to reflect a different approach to customers.

7. Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1 Given the emphasis in the Council Plan and operating model on taking a customer focused approach, it is important to describe what this means and how the council intends to deliver on its ambition.

8. Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1 The strategy refers to the council value of "ecologically aware" and makes a statement the council will consider how the use of channels can support a reduction in the carbon footprint for Westmorland and Furness.

8.2 As changes are explored about how we best support customers to access services, the impact on climate and diversity will be explored. There is potential for reduction in travel and use of paper.

9. Legal and Governance Implications

Legal Services will support any legal work arising from the Strategy.

10. Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1 The Council's Customer Strategy, together with the People Plan and ICT Strategy, will support the development of our workforce that operates in a customer focussed way. These combined strategies will reflect the importance of developing a digitally skilled and confident workforce, with the ability to meet the expectations of effective and easy access to services.

Employees of the Council deserve to work in an environment that is safe. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a legal and moral duty on the Council to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce and the customers we serve is paramount in everything that we do. Elements of the Customer Strategy focus on employee and customer safety and so the agreement of the Customer Strategy should comply with the commitments outlined in the Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement last agreed by Cabinet in April 2023.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 There are no direct financial implications of the recommendation to approve the Customer Strategy and the year 1 Delivery Plan as set out in Appendix 2.

11.2 A number of the deliverables within the plan will have financial implications for the Council. Business cases will be developed for these within which the financial implications will need to be considered.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)

12.1 Equality Screening is provided as Appendix 3

13. Background Documents

13.1 Not applicable.

Westmorland & Furness Council

Customer Strategy
2024-27

'**Customers** at the heart of everything **the Council** does'

Foreword

Customers at the heart of everything we do

Being clear about how we will work with residents, businesses and visitors is essential to how our vision for Westmorland and Furness Council will be delivered in a meaningful way.

We are delighted to share with you our first Customer Strategy, making Westmorland and Furness 'a great place to live, work and thrive'.

Here we describe our intention to be a customer focused organisation, in line with commitments already made in the Council Plan, by:

- caring, listening and always having our customers at the front and centre of everything we do.
- recognising and acknowledging all customers and communities needs when designing and delivering services.
- ensuring equitable access to services and information without compromising on quality.

The changes and improvements required to deliver and make a difference include:

- creating new ways for customers to contact us, ensuring a consistent experience and accessible service for all.
- developing and embedding good practice when listening and working with residents, businesses, visitors, staff and elected councillors

We are confident that Westmorland and Furness Council will be strengthened by this new rich and inclusive, collaborative and caring approach which fully reflects our values and ambitions.

"Together we can".

Councillor Dyan Jones
Cabinet Member for
Customer and Waste

Sam Plum
Chief Executive

Contents

Customer Strategy

Westmorland and Furness Council is here to serve its communities and is committed to putting customers at the heart of everything it does. It is important to us to provide a positive customer experience to all our customers, whenever and however they interact with us or access our services.

The combining of teams and services previously delivered by four councils into one presents a unique opportunity to establish Westmorland and Furness as a council that delivers high quality, value for money services in an effective and timely manner.

Residents, businesses, communities and visitors all access services from the council in different ways dependent on their needs. We recognise that not everyone from these groups might describe themselves as a "customer", however for the purpose of this strategy we have adopted this phrase to describe all groups and individuals that use council services.

We are in a time of great change. Westmorland and Furness Council was created in April 2023, bringing together the teams and services delivered by four legacy councils in the Westmorland and Furness area.

In addition, the public sector and in particular Local Government faces ever reducing budgets for public services, coupled with a change in individual's and communities' needs and expectations.

As a result, this is the perfect time for the council to ensure that we commit to deliver high quality, value for money services from our customers' perspective.

The council is committed to understanding our current and future customers' needs and expectations to ensure services are designed in the best way to deliver what is needed.

To create this strategy, we have drawn on best practice from the public and private sector, and insight gained from customers, staff and councillors feedback.

This Customer Strategy describes what we want to achieve over the next 3 years and the action we will be taking to make sure our approach is fit for the future.

The Customer Strategy is a foundational strategy that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities, as detailed in the Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework.

Having a plan for how we work with, and for, our customers is crucial for all council services; a clear customer strategy is essential to support the creation and delivery of a suite of Westmorland and Furness foundational strategies.
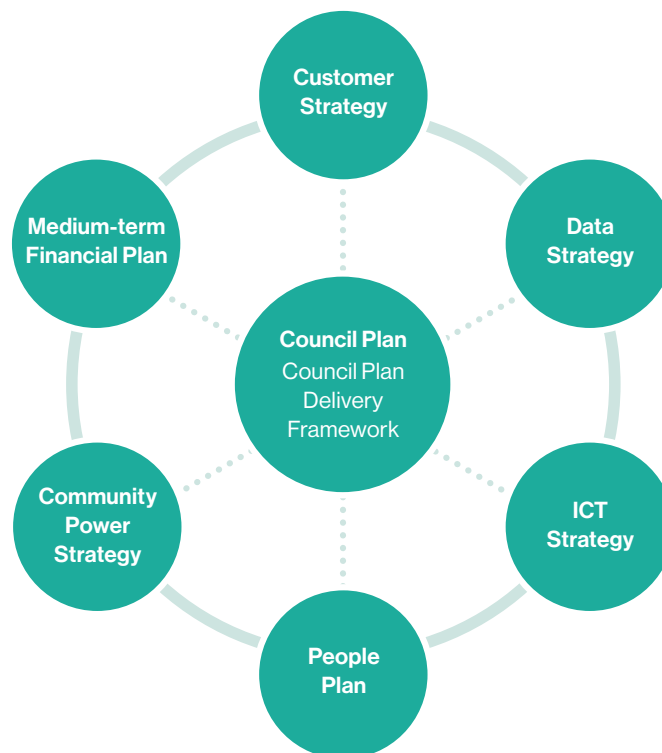
We have an ambition to reduce inequalities and discrimination within Westmorland and Furness. We want to be a council that understands and takes account of the varying needs and experiences of the different groups among our community, working hard to ensure all our customers, staff and councillors are included, supported and celebrated for who they are.

An Equality Impact Screening has been undertaken to understand the potential impacts of this strategy on people with protected characteristics. This screening has shown that no negative impacts were found for anyone with a protected characteristic. In addition, the screening has highlighted several positive impacts that could be realised for older adults, people with disabilities, people where English is not their first language, people in rural areas and people impacted by socio-economic inequality. More detailed equality and diversity impact assessments will be undertaken as part of the work to deliver key actions in support of the strategy.

Our Vision

The vision for our customers has been shaped by the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan, Council Plan Delivery Framework and Target Operating Model.

Customers are a key element to all the Council's strategic plans; this strategy will detail how we will deliver on these ambitions:

Council Plan

- Customers at the heart of everything the council does.

Council Plan Delivery Framework

- Communities and customers are at the heart of everything we do and can access efficient services.
- Our customers are satisfied with their experience of the council.

Target Operating Model

- Services will be user friendly, caring and accessible through multiple channels. Wherever possible services will be available and delivered digitally, reducing demand for phone and in-person interaction so those resources can be focused to those most in need.
- Effective Services: Services are outcome focused and maximise the use of technology to drive efficiency and effectiveness. Service delivery is citizen centred and seamless between services and partner organisations.

The vision for our customer strategy has been shaped by the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan, Council Plan Delivery Framework and Target Operating Model.

Our vision for Westmorland and Furness is to be:

"A great place to live, work and thrive."

Our priorities:

For people

Supporting active, healthy happy lives for young and old.

Supporting people in need and reducing inequality.

For the climate

Providing leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero.

For communities

Confident, empowered, resilient communities.

For the economy and culture

Sustainable, inclusive, economic growth.

For our customers

At the heart of everything we do.

For our workforce

Confident, empowered and inclusive workforce.

Making our vision real

Where we are now

Westmorland and Furness Council was created in April 2023, bringing together the teams and services delivered by four legacy councils in the Westmorland and Furness area.

A lot of work was completed to make sure our customers could easily contact us from day 1 of the new council. However, there is still a significant amount of change needed and longer-term transformation to simplify and streamline the way customers interact with us to improve their experience.

The work to harmonise services and processes will take a number of years given the range and scale of activity the council offers, meaning the customer improvement journey will take time and will need prioritisation.

As we start this journey it's important to understand our current approach and performance. We have spent some time looking at the way things currently work and we found:

- There are some **good examples of positive practice** and an incredibly strong improvement ethos and appetite for change from the whole organisation
- The main channels customers choose to transact with us are by coming to see us in a building (face to face) and by telephone, **73%** of contact is made through these channels and are more expensive channels based on industry standards
- At least **44%** of customer contact is going direct into services rather than through one of the customer service teams which means there is a high degree of variation in approach and experience for customers
- There are currently inconsistencies in the way we enable customers book, pay, tell, register, apply, or check things with the Council, which can be addressed by **standardising our approach**, especially through the Council website development.
- The customer **experience of using the website** is highly variable and depends on locality and type of service
- Performance information relating to customer experience is not consistently gathered and **performance varies across localities**

We are committed to further understand our customers through a variety of ways. In addition to the data we have on customer contact we have sought feedback from our councillors, internal staff focus groups and through groups that represent or advocate for customers. This feedback tells us we need to:

- be approachable and friendly
- understand customers and their needs
- be contactable in a range of ways – online, telephone, face to face
- have an easy to use Westmorland and Furness website so customers can find the information and support they need easily and at a time that suits them
- seek and value customer feedback
- ensure customer service teams have high levels of knowledge to ensure a good service to customers, with first point of resolution to their query wherever possible
- respond to all customer contacts, in a timely manner
- engage with advocacy organisations to ensure they can support the most vulnerable to engage with council services
- empower and support those staff dealing directly with customers, to ensure they have the knowledge and support needed to do their job
- better understand and help to overcome barriers to accessing services that some people experience, such as poverty, trauma, literacy levels, physical accessibility, confidence levels, previous bad experiences, neuro diversity, rurality, low income
- establish, where appropriate, a personal connection with our customers to overcome barriers to accessing our services
- communicate with customers in easily understood language and provide information in different languages and formats

What we want to achieve

Our approach to customers must evolve over time and change if we are to deliver an improved customer experience and support customers to achieve the outcomes they want.

This strategy will be an important driver for how the organisation will operate in the future.

Our vision is that *'services will be user friendly, caring and accessible through multiple channels. Wherever possible services will be available and delivered digitally, reducing demand for telephone and in-person interaction so those resources can be focused to those most in need'.*

Being a customer focused organisation will require a joined up, whole council approach with buy in and action at every level. Organisations that do this well can demonstrate:

- Visible customer focused leadership
- An understanding of their customers
- End to end design of customer journeys
- A confident and empowered workforce
- Aligned and engaged back office teams and supporting processes
- Data driven, using insight, intelligence, performance and management information and feedback to inform design and drive continuous improvement
- A customer focused culture

The Council's values are closely aligned with how a customer-focused organisation operates. This will help us embed the concept of a customer first approach in the way we operate.

Ambitious
Delivering the best experience for all Westmorland and Furness customers

Collaborative
Working across the whole Council with communities and partners to deliver joined up services to all

Responsible
Everyone taking responsibility for their role in ensuring a good customer experience

Ecologically aware
Considering how the use of digital channels can support a reduction in the carbon footprint for Westmorland and Furness

Inclusive
Ensuring that everyone can access our services and taking action to remove barriers that get in the way of this happening

Outcome focused
Listening to our customers and communities to understand what they want to achieve to ensure their needs are met in the most effective way

Needs-led
Focusing on our customers' needs when designing our services and interactions

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Design Principles

High quality customer service is a key element of the council's target operating model. Work is ongoing in 2024/25 to refine the customer related design principles so that customer journeys are efficient, seamless and designed to provide a consistent high quality customer experience.

Design principles currently include:

- We minimise the steps the customer needs to take to access what they need
- Information is simple and easy for users to understand
- First contact resolved through the customer service centre wherever possible
- Self-service is utilised wherever possible
- We put user needs at the heart of our service design
- Customers only need to tell us once, wherever possible
- We optimise technology to create a seamless experience and efficiencies
- We take a consistent approach to managing customer experience across multiple channels and services
- We work proactively with our customers and with honesty
- We measure, track and continuously improve customer service performance.

How we will get there

Outcome 1

Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible and inclusive easy to use services.

We will:

Develop a customer charter and implement service standards to ensure a high quality customer experience, being clear about what customers can and cannot expect.
Implement a multi-channel plan for how we will develop each of the key channels that customers use (website, face to face contact, telephone) and over time explore the potential use of additional channels such chat bots, assisted chat and social media.
Develop our website offering to enable customers to self-serve for as many services as possible, so it is possible to book, pay, tell, apply, check and register for services at time that suits them.
Invest in our physical face to face customer offer so that it is of high quality, with assistance offered to support customers who want to self-serve in these spaces, whilst also offering meaningful, value added conversations in person.
Ensure council information and services are easy to find, understand and access by all of our customers, with a commitment to working with individuals and groups to tackle any barriers.
Further explore the future requirements of a customer relationship management system and a " customer account function' with a clear plan for delivery.
Develop an organisational approach to user centred service design to provide teams with tools and guidance on how they can involve customers in the design of services so that these are well suited to their needs and preferences.
Further develop our approach to customer data, intelligence and insight, to make sure we gather and use a wide range of customer data to better inform service design and delivery, including the need to draw from lived experience and feedback received.
Redesign priority services and put in place a rolling programme of services, which will undergo a level of re-design from a customer perspective. The focus will be to improve the customer experience and increase value for money where possible. We will be focusing on services in the council's priority programmes.
Be honest with customers when things do not go to plan or performance is not to the standards we aim for, committing resources to rectify the issue as soon as possible.
Explore how our customer access channels can connect with the wide range of community led networks, groups and places so that our customers can easily get to the information or service they need through these routes.
Adapt and keep under review our approach to customer experience to compliment and support our new and emerging community power work, which is exploring and developing our relationship with our communities.

Outcome 2

Create a **customer centric culture** and new more efficient ways of working

We will:

Encourage and develop a customer focused culture, putting in place staff training, best practice sharing and development opportunities.
Implement health, safety and wellbeing initiatives to promote positive working between employees and customers, with an unreasonable customer policy in place should it be required by exception.
Support councillors in their role, by providing them with the information and tools they need to support our customers to access council services.
Work with councillors, MPs, Parish and Town Councils to support people to access council and partner services in the most effective ways.
Ensure customer service staff utilise and develop their expertise to advise on partner and community led services that could be of use to our customers.
Ensure that council services provided by our partners on our behalf and commissioned services have the same dedication to a customer focused approach.
Encourage a learning culture, where customer feedback is valued and used to make improvements to council services.

Outcome 3

Deliver **effective, efficient and value for money** customer service

We will:

Establish a single customer service centre to deal with all digital transactions and telephone enquiries resolving as much as possible by a single customer service team. Complex cases will be triaged into service delivery teams for further support.
Apply agreed design principles and guidelines to ensure a consistent approach to customer contact across the organisation. The design principles and guidelines will be applied for each council service, in the most appropriate way, using customer journey mapping, data, intelligence, evidence and insights to ensure the customer access route put in place best meets the needs of the customer.
Develop our self-service customer offer, maximising new technologies to facilitate simple and cost effective access to services in a way that enables customers to do things in a way and at a time that best suits them.

Key to delivering these three strategic outcomes are our people, technology, processes, governance and approach to data.

People – having the right people doing the right jobs supported in the right way is critical.

Technology – to achieve a digital first, multi-channel approach and the model of customer contact we want to adopt will rely heavily on the use of technology.

Processes – to provide a seamless and consistent customer experience we need harmonised and standardised processes and procedures.

Governance – to achieve the consistency we are seeking we will need to put in place policies and principles in relation to customer experience and how customers contact and interact with us.

Data and intelligence – we need an agreed approach to gather, store and make best use of customer data, intelligence and insight.

What success looks like

We need to know that our Customer Strategy is making a difference, so it important that we measure and evaluate our success. There are several ways in which we will monitor and measure how well we are doing, and whether we are achieving our aims and objectives.

As a new organisation, we accept we have a significant programme of works to stabilise, improve and transform the council, which will take time to implement.

Our measures, together with our priorities, will need to be reviewed and may need to be adapted and developed on an annual basis to ensure we are measuring our achievements in the best way we can.

Key success measures and impact

Outcome 1
Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible, easy to use services.

We would expect to see:

- better understanding of, and increased customer satisfaction
- an increase in the proportion of contact delivered through our digital channels
- a reduction in face to face and telephone contact as digital becomes our customers' first choice, resulting from improvements made to our offer
- an improvement in the way we handle telephone calls
- a reduction in the amount of direct contact into services
- reductions in avoidable contacts.

Outcome 2
Create a **customer centric culture** and new more efficient ways of working

We would expect to see:

- better understanding of, and increased customer satisfaction
- greater focus on compliments, positive feedback and learning from others across all sectors to inform our commitment to continuously improvement
- performance improvement in dealing with complaints, subject access requests and freedom of information requests in a timely way
- an embedded customer focused culture within the council
- empowered councillors that can support customers to access services.

Outcome 3

Deliver **effective, efficient and value for money** customer service

We would expect to see:

- better understanding of, and increased customer satisfaction
- reduction in costs associated with non-digital contacts, with efficiencies contributing to the financial sustainability of the Council
- customer service centre resolves an increased number of issues at first point of contact
- specialist staff have more time available for delivery of more complex issues

The ambitions detailed in this strategy will be delivered over 3 years, with an annual delivery plan setting out key activities.

Westmorland & Furness Council

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال 0300 373 3300

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 0300 373 3300 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

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CUSTOMER STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2024/25 (Year 1)   **Appendix 2**

This plan provides a high-level overview of the work, which will take place over the coming year.

It is structured around 3 key outcomes

1. Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible, easy to use services.
2. Create a by **customer centric culture** and new more efficient ways of working
3. Deliver **effective, efficient and value for money** customer service

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible, easy to use services.	Agree and publish a Customer Charter to be clear what customers can and cannot expect.	Sep 2024	Customer Charter in place.
	As services and policies are reviewed, develop or refresh customer service standards and reporting arrangements	Mar 2025	Service standards in place and reported on.
	Options appraisal for delivery of a single Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to inform future technology requirements	Jan 2025	CRM options appraisal complete.
	Options appraisal for delivery of a single customer customer account' function to inform future technology requirements	Jan 2025	Single Customer Account options appraisal complete.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible, easy to use services.	Standardised service patterns in place for digital transactions and a rolling programme in place for digital form consolidation using Government Digital Service standards, linked to new service patterns, the organisation's programme of service redesigns and policy changes	Mar 2025 and ongoing	Single set of key service patterns developed and single set of online forms. Increase in range of transactions available online. Increase in online transactions being undertaken.
	Migration of content from 4 legacy websites linked to single W&F website via a phased programme of service and policy harmonisation.	Mar 2025 and ongoing	2024/25 Prioritised legacy pages decommissioned. Increase in number of service areas with content migrated.
	Ongoing web improvements based on customer feedback, working to best practice Government Digital Services (GDS) standards and working on accessibility standards.	Mar 2025 and ongoing	Website accessibility standards met and improving.
	Options explored for introduction of assisted digital offer including chat bot and web chat functionality linked to plans for future technology.	Jan 2025 Mar 2025	Assisted digital options appraisal complete. Phase 1 delivery plan drafted for assisted digital offer.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible, easy to use services.	Assisted self-service for customers introduced into anchor buildings at Voreda House, Barrow Town Hall, Kendal Town Hall.	Site specific target dates linked to capital programme Aug 2024	Supported digital access to services available in anchor buildings. Voreda House self-service for customers available.
	Single customer service telephony solution introduced.	Sep 2024	Customer service telephony on single system. Call drop rates reduced. Call handling times improved.
	Options appraisal to explore how social media can be further used to share information proactively, receive feedback, engage with particular communities of interest, linked to future technology requirements.	Jan 2025	Social Media options appraisal undertaken.
	Develop a programme of activity across all face-to-face customer access points to ensure a joined up, consistent front of house experience; effective signposting and access to a wider range of information.	Jan 2025	Consistent branding in place. Customer access to information and support from a range of customer access points. Customer satisfaction improved.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible, easy to use services.	Customer access operational in Voreda House, Penrith.	Spring 2024	Customers access a wider range of council services from a single location in the Eden area.
	Customer improvements works commence for Kendal Town Hall and Barrow Town Hall customer service points	Works start by end of Oct 2024	Works start on site with business continuity in place.
	Engage and agree approach with Parish and Town Councils about how we can best support them with signposting residents to council services.	Sep 2024	Parish and Town Councils feel confident to signpost to council services. Customers access council services more easily.
	Develop organisational approach and guidance to use customer design principles.	Jan 2025	Customer service design principles in place.
	Approach and guidance in place about using customer insight and information to improve services, linking to the Community Power Programme	Dec 2025	Customer insight guidance in place. Customer insight evidenced in service redesign and community power programme.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible, easy to use services.			Suite of metrics and sources of customer insight developed. Improvements to services based on learning from compliments and complaints.
	Ongoing engagement with advocacy groups and customers to ensure feedback loop and lived experience informs council activity.	Mar 2025	Customer insight evidenced in service redesign.
	Development of organisational approach to understanding customer experience and customer effort.	Dec 2024	Customer experience and where improvements need to be made is understood.
	Single corporate complaints and compliments policy and process in place incorporating a new unreasonable customer policy.	Jul 2024	New complaints and unreasonable customer policy and process in place.
		Mar 25	Establish targets for dealing with complaints.
		Mar 25	Improved Stage 2 complaints performance maintained.
		Mar 25	Number of complaints upheld by Local Government Ombudsman remain low.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible, easy to use services.	Single system and harmonised processes in place for logging and managing all • Freedom of Information (FOI), • Subject Access Requests (SAR), • MP correspondence.	May 2024 Mar 2025 Jul 2024 Mar 2025 Jul 2024	Single FOI and MP recording system in place. 90% of FOIs responded to within target timescales. Single SAR recording system in place. 75% of SARs responded to within target timescales. Standards for responding to MP correspondence established.
	Approach to learning from complaints and compliments embedded in all directorates with cross-organisational opportunities to share practice established.	Mar 2025 and ongoing	Service improvements made, lessons learnt, visibility of trends informing change.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a **customer centric culture** and new, more efficient ways of working	Develop programme of "customer" learning and support opportunities for Elected Members, working with Member Development group	Dec 2024	Customer learning programme in place for Members. Member survey results show they feel confident signposting customers.
	Implement programme of training and development for customer facing staff on creating a good customer experience for all customers and those customers with specific considerations relating to lived experience for example Disability, Equality, Dementia, Domestic Abuse Veterans, Trauma, Poverty, and other Lived Experiences.	Dec 2024 Jan 2025 Mar 2025 and ongoing	Training Programme developed. Training feedback shows employees feel supported and confident in their role. Establish baseline to measure customer feedback and impact.
	Set up learning exchange forum for staff to share experiences and ideas for customer improvements and training opportunities.	Jul 2024	Learning Forum in place leading to improved culture to discuss customer improvements and greater staff confidence.
	Develop an organisation wide programme of learning and development to support a customer-focused culture.	Mar 25	Customer centric approach adopted and staff feel confident to provide a good customer experience.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Create a **customer centric culture** and new, more efficient ways of working	Work with the change champions network and task groups to implement Customer Strategy and develop innovative ways of working to support our aspirations.	Mar 2025 and ongoing	Customer Experience session held with Change Champions Network. Evidence of employee involvement to support creative and innovative practice and test new ways of working reported to DMTs and CMT.
	Strengthen focus on employee health, safety and wellbeing into customer promise and engage regularly with staff groups and Trade Unions to understand staff experience and any changes to practice required.	Aug 2024	H&S risk assessments reviewed for all high risk customer-facing services.
		Oct 2024	Control measures reviewed for higher risk service teams.
		Oct 2024	Representatives from customer facing services involved in Health & Safety ICT system options appraisal.
		Mar 2025 and ongoing	Number of reported Health & Safety incidents involving customers reduced from March 2024 levels.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Deliver **effective, efficient and value for money** customer service.	Agreed model, structure and implementation plan in place for a single customer service centre.	Dec 2024	Plan in place to identify and rationalise number of published phone where required.
	Functionality of the service centre expanded as part of priority redesign projects.	Mar 2025 and ongoing	Appropriate elements of customer journeys moved into Service Centre.
	Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in place between services and customer services for single, harmonised customer transactions.	Sep 2024	Customer Service SLAs in place.
	Undertake a phased review of opportunities to reduce manual management of processes utilising automation and emerging technology to support customer access and experience.	Mar 2025	Phase 1 Process Automation review completed with opportunities identified that will support speed and streamlining of processes.

Outcome	Key Deliverables	Target Delivery Date	Measures of Success
Deliver **effective, efficient and value for money** customer service.	Put in place a programme of digital solutions to streamline and simply customer journeys	Jan 2025 Mar 25 and ongoing	Digital programme scoped and resourced. Phase 1 of process redesign commenced.
	Develop and implement a benefits realisation process, so that investments in customer experience potential future efficiency options, helping to ensure the and digital solutions inform Council is financially sustainable.	Mar 2025	Benefits realisation process in place. Potential efficiencies tracked and inform Strategic Planning and Financial Sustainability programme.
	Develop a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and baselines for the Customer Strategy to be tracked from 2025/26 onwards including an agreed approach to understanding and measuring customer experience.	Mar 2025	Suite of Customer KPIs developed with baselines in place.

Westmorland & Furness Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
Proforma

APPENDIX 3

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and the **armed forces community.**

The EqIA process has two stages:

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.

- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EIA covers the nine protected characteristics as   well as rurality, socio-economic status, care experience and armed forces personnel/ veterans. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

EIA Proforma   **Page 2**

Decision : Agreement of Westmorland and Furness Customer Strategy 2024 - 2027.

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

Cabinet is being asked to agree a Customer Strategy. This equality impact assessment screening has been undertaken to consider if a full EqIA is required at strategy level. Following the screening exercise a full EqIA is not required. The rationale and findings are set out below

The Customer Strategy has three key outcomes (listed below). The equality impacts of these three priorities are explored in this equality impact assessment.

Outcome 1: Create a better **customer experience** by delivering customer-focused, accessible and inclusive easy to use services.

We will:

- Develop a customer charter and implement service standards to ensure a high quality customer experience, being clear about what customers can and cannot expect

- Implement a multi-channel plan for how we will develop each of the key channels that customers use (website, face to face contact, telephone) and over time explore the potential use of additional channels such chat bots, assisted chat and social media

- Develop our website offering to enable customers to self-serve for as many services as possible, so it is possible to book, pay, tell, apply, check and register for services at time that suits them

- Invest in our physical face to face customer offer so that it is of high quality, with assistance offered to support customers who want to self-serve in these spaces, whilst also offering meaningful, value added conversations in person

- Ensure Council information and services are easy to find, understand and access by all of our customers, with a commitment to working with individuals and groups to tackle any barriers

- Further explore the future requirements of a customer relationship management system and a " customer account function' with a clear plan for delivery

- Develop an organisational approach to user centred service design to provide teams with tools and guidance on how they can involve customers in the design of services so that these are well suited to their needs and preferences

- Further develop our approach to customer data, intelligence and insight, to make sure we gather and use a wide range of customer data to better inform service design and delivery, including the need to draw from lived experience and feedback received

- Redesign priority services and put in place a rolling programme of services, which will undergo a level of re-design from a customer perspective. The focus will be to improve the customer experience and increase value for money where possible. We will be focusing on services in the council's priority programmes

- Be honest with customers when things do not go to plan or performance is not to the standards we aim for, committing resources to rectify the issue as soon as possible

- Explore how our customer access channels can connect with the wide range of community led networks, groups and places so that our customers can easily get to the information or service they need through these routes

- Adapt and keep under review our approach to customer experience to compliment and support our new and emerging community power work, which is exploring and developing our relationship with our communities

Outcome 2: Create a **customer centric culture** and new more efficient ways of working

We will:

- Encourage and develop a customer focused culture, putting in place staff training, best practice sharing and development opportunities

- Implement health, safety and wellbeing initiatives to promote positive working between employees and customers, with an unreasonable customer policy in place should it be required by exception

- Support Councillors in their role, by providing them with the information and tools they need to support our customers to access council services

- Work with Councillors, MPs, Parish and Town Councils to support people to access Council and partner services in the most effective ways

- Ensure customer service staff utilise and develop their expertise to advise on partner and community led services that could be of use to our customers

- Ensure that Council services provided by our partners on our behalf and commissioned services have the same dedication to a customer focused approach

- Encourage a learning culture, where customer feedback is valued and used to make improvements to council services

Outcome 3: Deliver **effective, efficient and value for money** customer service

We will:

- Establish a single customer service centre to deal with all digital transactions and telephone enquiries resolving as much as possible by a single customer service team. Complex cases will be triaged into service delivery teams for further support

- Apply agreed design principles and guidelines to ensure a consistent approach to customer contact across the organisation. The design principles and guidelines will be applied for each council service, in the most appropriate way, using customer journey mapping, data, intelligence, evidence and insights to ensure the customer access route put in place best meets the needs of the customer

- Develop our self-service customer offer, maximising new technologies to facilitate simple and cost effective access to services in a way that enables customers to do things in a way and at a time that best suits them

3) Consultation

Engagement sessions have taken place with the following groups and stakeholders to gain feedback and ideas on approach to development of the Customer Strategy and its content:

Corporate Management Team (CMT), Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Recognised Trade Unions, Change Champions, Cabinet, Corporate, Service Leads and Customer Service Leads, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, all councillors, VCFS and Advocacy Groups including Parish and Town Council representatives, Poverty Working Group,

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** *Potential positive impacts –*	Ensure all age groups are considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives.	N

EIA Proforma   **Page 5**

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Developing a multi-channel plan on how we interact with our customers will ensure that we can connect with our customers in a way that is suitable most for them. Some older adults may find accessing a digital offer challenging, therefore a multi-channel approach will support all age groups, improving access to the Council no matter how people decide to interact with us. Adverse impacts – n/a **Create customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Support digital capability where needed. Ensure people can contact us via multiple channels – online, digital, telephone. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of age and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Disability	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** *Potential positive impacts –* Developing a multi-channel plan on how we interact with our customers will ensure that we can connect with	Ensure all disabilities are considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure Council buildings are fully accessible.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		our customers in a way that is most suitable for them. Improving both our digital and face to face offer could introduce new ways for customers to interact with us that could improve access to Council services for our customers with a disability. Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Explore most inclusive way to develop our digital offer. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of all disabilities and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Gender reassignment	Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service**	Ensure gender reassignment is considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Consider language/reference to individuals in documents. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects /	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a	solutions are considerate of gender reassignment and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure marriage or civil partnership is considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of marriage or civil partnership and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
Pregnancy or maternity	Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure Pregnancy or maternity is considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of pregnancy or maternity and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Race	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** *Potential positive impacts* – Developing a multi-channel plan on how we interact with our customers will ensure that we can connect with our customers in a way that is most suitable for them. Improving both our digital and face to face offer could introduce new ways for customers to interact with us that could improve access to Council services for our customers where English is not their first language. Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure race is considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Explore language interpretation and translation where required. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of race and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
Religion or belief	Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience**	Ensure religion or belief is considered when developing and	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of religion or belief and undertake an Eqia where needed	
Sex	Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure sex is considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Consider language/reference to individuals in documents. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of sex and undertake an Eqia where needed	N
Sexual orientation	Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture**	Ensure sexual orientation is considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of sexual orientation and undertake an Eqia where needed	
Care Experience	Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure care experience is considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Consider language/reference to individuals in documents. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of care experience and undertake an Eqia where needed	N
People in rural areas	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** *Potential positive impacts –* Developing a multi-channel plan on how we interact with our customers will ensure that we can connect with	Ensure the experience of those people in rural areas is considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		our customers in a way that is suitable most for them. Some people in rural areas may have barriers to accessing digital connection and/or transport, therefore a multi-channel approach will support access no matter how people decide to interact with us. Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure alternative routes of engagement for those with limited/no ICT access. Ensure people can contact us via multiple channels – online, digital, telephone. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of people in rural areas and undertake an Eqia where needed	
Socio-economic inequality	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** *Potential positive impacts –* Developing a multi-channel plan on how we interact with our customers will ensure that we can connect with our customers in a way that is suitable most for them.	Ensure socio-economic inequalities are considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives Ensure alternative routes of engagement for those with limited/no ICT access.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Challenges brought by social-economic inequality can restrict how customers are able to interact with us as they are unable to afford transport or digital connectivity. Therefore, a multi-channel approach will support access no matter how people need to interact with us. Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Support digital capability where needed. Ensure people can contact us via multiple channels – online, digital, telephone. Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate socio-economic inequalities and undertake an Eqia where needed	
Armed-forces personnel/veterans	Neutral Y Adverse N	**Create a better customer experience** Adverse impacts – n/a **Create a customer centric culture** Adverse impacts – n/a **Deliver effective, efficient and value for money customer service**	Ensure armed forces personnel/veterans are considered when developing and implementing Customer Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives Ensure any Customer Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate armed forces personnel/veterans and undertake an Eqia where needed	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a		
General (other considerations)				

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?   **No**

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Cabinet

Report Title	People Plan (Workforce Strategy) 2024 – 2027
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Luci Robb Assistant Director HR/ OD
Director	Paul Robinson, Director of Enabler Services
Lead Cabinet Member	Cllr Jonathan Brook Leader of the Council
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **NO** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Identify exempt information and exemption category	None
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1: People Plan 2024 - 2027 Appendix 2: People Plan Delivery Plan 2024-2025 Appendix 3: Equality Screening

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report recommends that Cabinet approves the People Plan 2024 – 2027.

1.2 The People Plan sets out the high-level direction of travel and aspirations for our workforce and is supported by a delivery plan which will be updated on an annual basis. Equality screening of the strategy has been undertaken and accompanies this report.

2.   Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1   Agree the People Plan 2024-2027 and year 1 Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025.

3.   Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1   The People Plan is the one the Council's foundational strategies that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. The vision for our workforce has been shaped by the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan, Council Plan Delivery Framework and our Target Operating Model. It describes our aspiration to have a confident, empowered and inclusive workforce.

3.2   Our People Plan describes how our workforce will achieve the vision and priorities for the Westmorland and Furness Council, it acknowledges how our employees are the driving force behind our services, and as a 'live document' it will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects our priorities, values and our changing world of work.

3.3   We want our Council to be an employer of choice, not one of necessity, with a strong focus on improving health, safety and wellbeing, trust and inclusivity. We recognise that our strength as an organisation is our workforce, who have achieved so much to date, since we formed as a new unity council.

3.4   Much more however remains to be done, so our aspiration is to further create a positive and inclusive workplace culture, where our employees have a sense of belonging and feel valued, can reach their full potential and can actively contribute to the Council's priorities.

3.5   The Council's Customer Strategy and ICT Strategy, together with the People Plan will support the development of our workforce that operates in a customer focused way. Alongside other strategies, these will reflect the importance of developing a digitally skilled and confident workforce, with the ability to meet the expectations of effective and easy access to services.

3.6   In the creation of our People Plan, we have engaged with various groups to understand what is important to our employees. Additionally, we have drawn on good practice from the public and private sectors, and feedback from staff, Trade Unions and elected members to help shape our strategy, our key priorities and our delivery plan.

3.7   Our People Plan is structured around the employee lifecycle and will focus on the following three priorities:

- To attract and retain a talented workforce;
- To create a culture of engagement and wellbeing;
- To develop our workforce to support the achievement of great outcomes.

3.8 The 2024-2025 Delivery Plan sets out the key activities for year 1 of the strategy, many of which are important to lay firm foundations for developing a strong and inclusive workplace culture over the medium to longer term.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1 The People Plan supports the delivery of the Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework.

5. Consultation Outcomes

5.1 The People Plan has been informed through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including our workforce, recognised Trade Unions, Change Champions and elected members. This insight and feedback supplemented the information gathered from best practice research.

5.2 Overview and Scrutiny members have helpfully explored the topic on a number of occasions and a workshop open to all councillors took place in December 2023 to develop the strategic direction of travel.

5.3 The engagement and feedback provided overwhelming support for the development of a People Plan, which supports the full employee lifecycle, including how we want to attract and retain our employees, how we want to engage and motivate our employees and how we will develop our workforce for the future.

5.4 Findings from our initial staff survey also provided helpful insight to how our workforce were feeling following Local Government Re-organisation. From this, we identified the need to ensure we focus upon developing a strong, positive workforce culture, that supports wellbeing, fairness, transparency, and clear management expectations, ensuring we think about our employees as individuals. Within our proposed measures of success, we will continue to draw on the findings from subsequent staff surveys to help inform our progress and performance against key People Plan priorities.

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Members may decide not to agree the People Plan and supporting delivery plan as recommended or may decide to amend the strategy to reflect a different approach to our workforce.

7. Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1 Our employees are at the heart of the delivery of services to our residents and the communities we serve. The People Plan recommended provides a strategic overview and is accompanied by an annual delivery plan of how together we will achieve the vision and priorities for Westmorland and Furness Council.

8.   Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1   Our People Plan strategy references our values and the importance of being "ecologically aware". Within our key people priorities and activities, we will focus on how the development of our people policies and practices we can consider the impact on climate and diversity and how we can support a reduction in the carbon footprint for Westmorland and Furness.

9   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   This is a decision for Cabinet and has been on the Council's Forward Plan.

10   Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1 The Human Resources and Heath, Safety and Wellbeing implications are outlined within this report and the supplementary appendices.

9.   Financial Implications

9.1   There are no direct financial implications of the recommendation to approve the People Plan 2024-2027 and the year 1 Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025 as set out in Appendix 2.

9.2   It is anticipated that existing resources will be used to support the delivery of the year 1 plan.

9.3   Should members not approve the recommendation within this report but which to take a different approach, then the financial implications of this would need to be considered.

10.   Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)

10.1 Equality screening is provided in Appendix 3.

11.   Background Documents

11.1 Not applicable

Westmorland & Furness Council

People Plan

April 2024

OUR WAYS OF WORKING

'A **confident, empowered** and **inclusive workforce**'

Introduction

It's such a privilege and honour to be Westmorland and Furness' new Leader and Chief Executive in the development of our very first People Plan as a new organisation. Our vision for Westmorland and Furness is to be 'A great place to live, work and thrive' and our ultimate goal is to enable our communities to thrive and empower them through the services we offer.

We are in a unique position to create a fresh and new way of working with our communities and residents and to work with our employees, elected members, trade unions and partners to deliver that vision.

Our Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework (2023-2029) sets out our vision, values and priorities. They will guide us through the transition from four councils into one and through a period of change and transformation. There are six priorities, and our People Plan provides an overview on one specifically; to have a 'confident, empowered and inclusive workforce'.

Our People Plan describes how our workforce will achieve the vision and priorities for Westmorland and Furness Council, it acknowledges how our employees are the driving force behind our services, and as a 'live document' it will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects our priorities, values and our changing world of work.

We value the contribution of each and every one of our employees to be innovative, engaged and customer focused, working with elected members, trade unions and partners, to deliver our priorities.

We are committed to supporting our employees' wellbeing, nurturing talent, and creating a healthy working environment that enables colleagues to fulfil their potential and be a place where all are focused on delivering great services.

To create this plan, we have engaged with various groups to understand what is important to our employees. We have listened when creating our ambitions and would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this plan. This plan belongs to our employees and is something we all own and are responsible for.

We are committed to living and breathing our values: ambitious, inclusive, collaborative, outcomes focused, responsible, needs-led and ecologically aware. Being a Caring Council is one of the golden threads that will run through everything we do and strongly highlights why we hold our values so dearly.

To each and every employee, thank you for your contribution.

Cllr Jonathan Brook
Leader
Westmorland and Furness Council

Sam Plum
Chief Executive
Westmorland and Furness Council

People Plan

Our employees are at the heart of the delivery of services to our residents and the communities we serve and our People Plan provides an overview of how together we will achieve the vision and priorities for Westmorland and Furness Council.

A motivated, caring and considerate workforce goes a long way to ensuring both our internal and external customers are treated with respect and are at the heart of everything we do. The People Plan will support the development of a workforce that operates in a customer focused way, embedding the values of the council.

The People Plan is a key strategy that will support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities as detailed in the Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework.

The Council's Customer Strategy and ICT Strategy, together with the People Plan will support the development of a workforce that operates in a customer focused way. These combined strategies will reflect the importance of developing a digitally skilled and confident workforce, with the ability to meet the expectations for effective and easy access to services. These strategies will enable us to put in place the right training, tools, technology, systems and processes to enable our people to provide a great customer experience.

To create this strategy, we have drawn on best practice from the public and private sector, and insight and feedback gained from staff, elected members and trade union.

The Council has a public sector equalities duty, therefore this strategy has sought to understand the needs of people with protected characteristics and an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will inform delivery of the strategy.

Customer Strategy

Data Strategy

Medium-term Financial Plan

Council Plan
Council Plan Delivery Framework

Community Power Strategy

ICT Strategy

People Plan

Practice from the public and private sectors and from insight and feedback gained from staff, trade union colleagues and elected members.

Our vision

The vision for our workforce has been shaped by the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan, Council Plan Delivery Framework and Target Operating Model.

Confident, empowered and inclusive workforce.

Our vision for Westmorland and Furness is to be:
"A great place to live, work and thrive."

Our priorities:

For people

Supporting active, healthy happy lives for young and old.

Supporting people in need and reducing inequality.

For the climate

Providing leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero.

For communities

Confident, empowered, resilient communities.

For the economy and culture

Sustainable, inclusive, economic growth.

For our customers

At the heart of everything we do.

For our workforce

Confident, empowered and inclusive workforce.

We have a motivated workforce who are happy with their work and feel fulfilled.

We have a planned approach to utilising our skilled and committed workforce, to deliver our council priorities within our means.

Internal processes and functions are designed to support a seamless end-to-end experience. Improvement and change is supported by key enabling functions including HR, Legal etc. working closely with service delivery teams.

Making our vision real

Where we are now

As a starting point we need to understand our workforce and some of the current operating challenges and opportunities that we face as a local government employer.

Key facts about our workforce:

Westmorland and Furness Council came into existence on 1 April 2023, following Local Government Reorganisation, where four councils have been brought together into one.

We have approximately 3250 employees, plus approximately 2500 school-based employees.

Our gender split is approximately 70% female and 30% male.

54% of our workforce works part-time hours; 46% of the workforce works full time.

46+ **We have a multi-generational workforce, with the largest percentage of our workforce aged 46+.**

Work is in progress to better understand the makeup of our workforce including their protected characteristics. Going forward we want to encourage employees to share their data to enable further analysis and understanding. This would help identify opportunities for positive action, which in turn, could lead us to becoming an even more inclusive employer.

The challenges we face include:

- An ageing workforce.
- The ability to attract and retain talent, especially in a geographic area where the working age population is declining.
- The ability to attract new employees with the right skills - within Cumbria there are fewer people with qualifications above level 4, compared to the national average.
- High expectations and demands from prospective employees about access to flexible and agile working arrangements.
- Our ability to attract people from diverse or disadvantaged groups.

Our recent staff survey identified that 30% of respondents have caring responsibilities outside of work and 19% have a long-term condition and/or disability.

Our values

What we want to achieve

At Westmorland and Furness Council, our Values are not just words; they underpin everything we do. They guide us in delivering our vision in the Westmorland and Furness Way.

Being a caring council is the golden thread that will run through everything we do, and our Values will help us achieve this.

We are committed to our Values and want employees and elected members to show their commitment too.

We are a caring council that cares about all employees and elected members and creating a healthy working environment that enables everyone to fulfil their potential.

Ambitious

We are ambitious for everyone. We will focus on identifying and delivering the outcomes that our communities want to see. We will support our workforce to innovatively transform services for the better, enabling residents and visitors to have healthy, happy lives.

Inclusive

We will be an inclusive council and will work collectively with partners to challenge each other to improve diversity and eliminate all forms of discrimination in our organisations and through local leadership increase participation in local decision making within under represented communities.

Collaborative

We will work with partners, communities, and residents to deliver the best outcomes for all.

Outcome focused

We are outcome focused and we will focus on identifying and leading the delivery of the changes that our communities want to see.

Responsible

We are responsible, socially, environmentally, and financially. Providing leadership in the drive to become carbon neutral and delivering value for money in everything we do. We will make the best and most efficient use of our resources, while making sustainable decisions and striving to deliver on our promises to you.

Needs-led

We will intervene early to prevent harm, act in an equitable way leaving no-one behind, and enable all to ask for help in order to gain access to the right service, in the right place at the right time.

Ecologically aware

We will provide leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero and sustainable.

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The delivery of our vision and Council Plan priorities can only be achieved if we are able to recruit and retain the right people, with the right skills, values and attitudes to help us innovate and work together to deliver transformation of our services.

We want to be an employer of choice, not one of necessity, with a focus on improving health, safety and wellbeing, trust and inclusivity. We recognise our strength as an organisation is as a result of our employees, who have achieved so much to date, as we have come together to form a new unitary council.

We want to create a positive and inclusive workplace culture, where our employees have a sense of belonging and feel valued, can reach their full potential and actively contribute to the Council's priorities.

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As an employee, we want you to:

- Be part of a highly skilled and effective workforce, enabling change and supporting improvements.
- Be accountable, fulfil your potential and deliver a great service.
- Be proud to work at Westmorland and Furness Council and take pride in all that you do.
- Be motivated and happy with your work.

We will:

- Be a Caring Council, look after the wellbeing of our employees and elected members and together champion a workplace culture that is welcoming and kind.
- Listen to you, supporting you to be innovative and adaptable, we will put in place the right training, tools and technology, systems and processes, so we can transform our services together for the better.
- Value each of you as individuals.
- Provide a learning environment, investing in your development, so you can grow and develop.
- Build together a diverse and inclusive workforce, reflective of the communities we serve.

As a relatively new council, we recognise that we have a lot to achieve and that we need to move away from the legacy of our previous organisations and continue to think and act as the new Westmorland and Furness Council. Therefore, this is an ambitious People Plan, which will be underpinned by a programme of work to be delivered over the course of the next few years.

Over the duration of our People Plan, we want to create a positive, supportive and inclusive culture that celebrates and cares for our people, valuing the contribution they make to the communities we serve and together making Westmorland and Furness a great place to live, work and thrive.

How we will get there

Our People Plan describes how our workforce will achieve the vision and priorities for Westmorland and Furness Council and acknowledges how our employees are the driving force behind our services. Our People Plan, together with our Customer and ICT strategies, are the critical building blocks in supporting the development of a workforce that operates in a customer focused way.

In developing our People Plan we have engaged with various groups, focusing on the core elements of the employee life cycle, as shown on Figure 3.

We have engaged on all areas shown in the employee life cycle, including how we want to attract and retain our employees, how we want to engage and motivate our employees and how we will develop our workforce for the future.

This has helped us identify our key priorities to focus upon.

To achieve our ambition to be a high performing and inclusive council we need to get the basics right as well as being innovative and ambitious. This includes understanding and really listening to our employees. Providing opportunities for employees to share their views and ideas and help shape our council for the future.

In helping us get there we will be setting out our approach 'Doing it the Westmorland and Furness way', which will ensure fairness, transparency and clear management expectations, and thinking about our employees as individuals. This will help create an environment where employees feel valued and comfortable to share their views and ideas and can play a key role in transforming services working with the customers we serve.

EMPLOYEE LIFE CYCLE

- ATTRACT ME
- GET ME STARTED
- DEVELOPMENT
- MANAGE PERFORMANCE
- ENGAGE & MOTIVATE ME
- RECOGNITION
- WISH ME FAREWELL
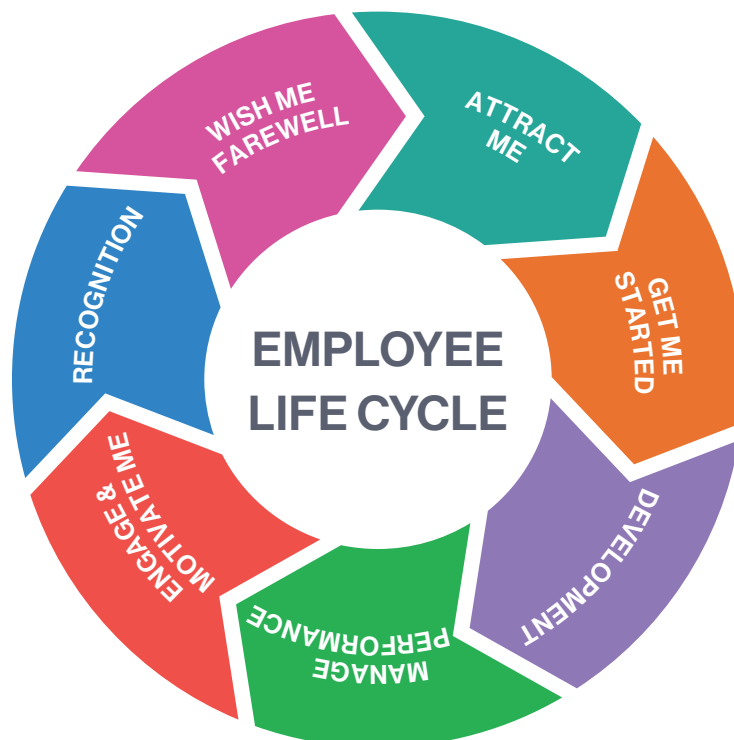
Our People Plan Priorities

Attract and retain a talented workforce.

We want all:

To be inspired to join and be part of W&F delivering great outcomes for our communities.

Together we will:

Attract and retain the right people through a strong employer brand and reputation as a caring, modern and innovative council.

Develop and implement recruitment and retention strategies for recruiting into 'hard to fill' roles and retaining our talented workforce.

Develop a robust process for workforce planning, talent management and succession planning.

Continue to develop person centred flexible working policies and practices that provide the basis of meeting the needs of our customers, balanced with the wellbeing needs of our employees.

Develop a fair pay, reward and recognition framework.

Provide the right onboarding and 'Your Welcome' induction process for all our new employees.

Simplify our recruitment processes and encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds and those who may be furthest from employment.

Build a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Create a culture of engagement and wellbeing.

We want all:

To have a voice and be empowered to develop and grow yourself and our organisation for the future. We want you to feel supported and encouraged to look after your own health and wellbeing.

Together we will:

Prioritise the health, safety, wellbeing and happiness of our people by developing a comprehensive employee wellbeing programme, including a review of people policies and practices that support workplace wellbeing.

Continue our commitment to developing strong working relationships with our recognised Trade Unions, to help shape our culture.

Develop our leaders to grow their knowledge and skills to manage wellbeing issues in the workplace by being fair to all and understanding of individual needs.

Develop a robust process for workforce planning, talent management and succession planning.

Undertake regular, valuable, two-way engagement through a range of internal communication channels that encourages employees to feel trusted, valued, empowered and able to speak out on things that matter to them most.

Create opportunities to work collaboratively with others, sharing ideas and being accountable for making things happen.

Developing our people and achieving great outcomes.

We want all:

To develop skills and competencies so that you can fulfil your potential. Be more innovative and creative, so that together we can help shape and prepare our organisation for our ever-changing needs and achieve great outcomes for our organisation and the communities we serve.

Together we will:

Cultivate a positive culture of continuous improvement, learning and development, inspiring our workforce through the promotion of and access to career development opportunities.

Develop a dedicated programme of learning to help us provide great customer experiences.

Develop leaders who lead well, with positive impact and who are compassionate, collaborative and clear in the achievement of our vision and how we will get there.

Create an environment where we can encourage innovation, continually learning from what we do and working collaboratively with partners and communities to get the best results.

Utilise technology to enable people to work more effectively and deliver a better customer experience.

Maximise the use of apprenticeship levy to develop our existing employees and attract our employees of the future.

Develop a mentoring and coaching culture.

Create a positive culture that promotes ideas that drive efficiencies and better ways of doing things to help the council be financially sustainable.

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What success looks like

We need to know that our People Plan is making a difference, so it is important that we measure and evaluate our success. There are several ways in which we will monitor and measure how well we are doing, and whether we are achieving our aims and objectives.

As a new organisation, we accept we have much to develop, which will take time to implement. Our measures, together with our priorities, will need to be reviewed and may need to be adapted and developed on an annual basis to ensure we are measuring our achievements in the best way that we can.

Key success measures and impact

We will be successful by focusing on:

- Ensuring health, safety and wellbeing as a top priority.
- Increasing the opportunities for employee engagement and feedback and participation in employee surveys increasing.
- Ensuring everyone has an annual and ongoing Let's Talk conversation and professional supervision where applicable.
- Aim to fill the majority of our vacancies first time, with people with the right skills, from a diverse pool of candidates.
- Developing a long-lasting constructive industrial relations climate and reducing employee relations cases.

- An increasing number of employees choosing to provide diversity data.
- Simplify, streamline and strengthen our people policies and practices, ensuring they are inclusive of all.
- Supporting everyone to have access to relevant learning and development.
- Ensuring everyone completes core essential training.
- Developing well-led leaders who are compassionate, collaborative, confident and clear, especially in the way they support and motivate our diverse workforce.
- Increasing the number of talented and hard-working employees being recognised, promoted, rewarded and retained.
- Increasing opportunities for school leavers and early careers.
- Maximising and supporting attendance.

As a living document, our People Plan, together with our more detailed People Plan Delivery Plan will be reviewed annually, in line with other key strategies to ensure it continues to reflect our direction of travel and our relevant priorities for the council, the changing world of work and our workforce.

If you have any questions, or feedback about our People Plan, please contact us at:

learninganddevelopment@ westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال **0300 373 3300**

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে **0300 373 3300** নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

如果您希望通过母语了解此信息，
请致电 **0300 373 3300**

Jeigu norėtumėte gauti šią informaciją savo kalba, skambinkite telefonu 0300 373 3300

W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę zatelefonować pod numer 0300 373 3300

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua, telefone para o 0300 373 3300

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen 0300 373 3300 **numaralı telefonu arayınız**

Together, we will make Westmorland and Furness:

"A great place to live, work and thrive".

YEAR 1 DELIVERY PLAN FOR THE PEOPLE PLAN   **APPENDIX 2**

This plan provides a high-level overview of the work which will take place over the coming year. It will link to the Council Plan vision of creating a confident, empowered and inclusive workforce.

People Plan Priority/Theme	Activity overview	Key Deliverables	Milestones and deadlines	Success Measures
Attract and retain a talented workforce	Develop and implement recruitment and retention strategies for recruiting into 'hard to fill' roles and retaining our talented workforce.	**Recruitment microsite –** Design and develop a recruitment microsite, which sets out what it means to work for W&F and our benefits.	May 2024	Increase in no. of visits to microsite. Increase in no. of applications.
		International Recruitment – scope and develop Phase 1 approach, to support opportunities for International Recruitment within areas of Health and Social Care.	March 2025	Appointment of 5 International recruits Reduction in reliance of agency workers.

			Nov 2024	Joint milestones and deliverables by Workforce Group identified.
		Partnership working – key workforce priorities identified and progressed, via the Workforce Development and Assurance Group (LSC ICB)	Mar 2025	Key milestones and deliverables achieved.
Attract and retain a talented workforce	Develop flexible working policies and practices that provide the basis of meeting the needs of our customers, balanced with the wellbeing needs of our employees.	**Our Ways of Working –** Develop a W&F approach to deliver services based upon customer needs and flexibility of our agile workforce.	April 2024	'Ways of Working' launched at Expo event.
			Oct 2024	Employee survey shows improved satisfaction indicators.
			March 2025	Employee absence reduced to below 15 days lost per FTE.
		Life Events Policy & Procedure - Develop 'Life Events' policy and procedure developed that supports workforce wellbeing	Sept 24	Life Events Policy launched.
			Oct 2024	Employee survey shows improved satisfaction indicators.
			March 2025	Employee absence reduced to below 15 days lost per FTE.

Attract and retain a talented workforce	Development of a fair and transparent pay and reward framework, reflective of the roles within our organisation and the responsibilities of the post.	**Pay & Reward** – Develop a planned programme of service reviews.	June 2024	Pay & Reward options for Service Review Programme scoped and presented to CMT.
		Pay & Reward (HR and Payroll ICT System) – all W&F employees moved to single HR and Payroll System.	Dec 2024 Feb 2025 Mar 2025	Former Barrow employees moved to single Payroll ICT System Formed South Lakeland employees moved to single ICT Payroll System. Former Eden employees moved to single Payroll ICT System
Attract and retain a talented workforce	Build a diverse and inclusive workforce.	**Onboarding -** Provide a great onboarding experience and 'Your Welcome' induction process for all our new employees.	Oct 24 Jan 2025	At least 60% of new employees attending 'Your Welcome' induction. At least 80% of new employees attending 'Your Welcome' induction.

			March 2025	Evaluation scores from Induction process increased.
		Positive action – address equality and inclusion gaps within the workforce by working both individually and with partners to create positive action recruitment campaigns and employment opportunities in relation to deprived, disadvantaged and under-represented groups.	Oct 2024	Data and Systems in place for Annual Gender Pay Gap Reporting.
			March 2025	Increase the recruitment of the number of care experience, NEET, and underrepresented work groups (where identified).
		Through our ambitions to work collaboratively with local communities, Adults and Children's Services, together with Thriving Communities will identify employment opportunities in relation to deprived, disadvantaged and under-represented groups.	March 2025	Improved representation across key service areas, sectors, and apprenticeships in line with the diversity within the community.

		Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Develop and implement a package of EDI training modules and resources and tools to equip our workforce.	Oct 2024 March 2025	EDI training modules and resources developed and launched. At least 3 cohorts of training modules completed.
		Values based recruitment – develop a Values based recruitment process for Westmorland and Furness, ensuring that prospective employees demonstrate and live our values.	Sept 2024	Implementation of Values based criteria including within the recruitment process.
		Accreditations – seek new accreditations from schemes and charities supporting underrepresented groups. For example, Disability Confidence Employer. Inclusive Employers Standard, Age Inclusion.	Oct 2024	Attainment towards identified accreditations progressed.

Create a culture of engagement and wellbeing	Develop a comprehensive employee wellbeing programme, including a review of people policies and practices that support workplace wellbeing.	**Employee recognition –** design and implement a peer-to-peer employee recognition scheme to recognise the valued contribution of our workforce.	Oct 2024	Fully implemented and active employee recognition scheme
		Change Champions – continue to nurture and develop our Change Champions to support organisation transformation and culture change.	Nov 2024 March 2025	Change Champions identified for all service areas. At least 80 Change Champions active across the Council.
		Staff Network Groups – build and develop current and future groups to help shape and inform future people practices.	March 2025	Participation of active staff network groups increased.
Create a culture of engagement and wellbeing	Promote a strong and positive health, safety and wellbeing culture	**Recruitment of Corporate Health & Safety Team –** recruitment to key Health & Safety and Fire Safety roles.	May 2024 Nov 2024	At least 2 additional Health, Safety or Fire Safety roles recruited. At least 4 additional Health, Safety or Fire Safety roles recruited.

		Corporate Health & Safety procedures reviewed – ensure provision of a single suite of Health & Safety procedures for Westmorland and Furness.	June 2024	Implementation of key H&S management arrangements to control risks.
		Fire Warden and First Aid Assurance Review – provides assurance of compliant fire and first aid arrangements in place across core workplaces.	April 2024 Sept 2024	Review findings considered by CMT. Recommendations implemented
		Cabinet approves 2024/25 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies Policy 24/25 and produce and publish W&F Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report 23/24	June 2024 Sept 2024	2023/2024 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report published. 2024/2025 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy approved by Cabinet
		Incident Reporting Systems – procurement for a Council wide incident reporting system to replace legacy systems – promote employee accident, incidents and near miss reporting.	Aug 2024 Dec 2024	Health & Safety ICT system procurement exercise completed. Health & Safety ICT system implemented.

		Occupational Health Service supports employee wellbeing – support in place promptly for employees and line managers when needed.	March 2025	Over 800 Occupational Health appointments supporting W&F employees.
Create a culture of engagement and wellbeing	Creating an environment that supports two-way engagement that encourages employees to feel trusted, valued, empowered and able to speak out.	Employee Engagement programme – develop and implement regular engagement providing two-way communication where employees feel listened to, and where feedback is acted upon.	Apr 2024 March 2025 March 2025 March 2025	Council wide employee 'Expo' Event held. At least 6 corporate all employee Q&A sessions held. At least 6 Directorate / Thematic Q&A held. Participation in employee surveys increases by 5%.
		Let's Talk - Embed 'Let's Talk' conversation tool.	March 2025	80% of employees have an annual 'Let's Talk' or appraisal recorded
Create a culture of engagement and wellbeing	Develop our leaders to grow their knowledge and skills to manage health, safety and wellbeing issues in the workplace	Health, Safety and Wellbeing learning and development - Scope and develop specific health, safety and wellbeing modules, resources and tools to support workforce wellbeing	June 2024 March 2025	30 senior leaders gain IOSH Leading Safety accreditation. 40 managers gain Managing Safety accreditation

Create a culture of engagement and wellbeing	Continue our commitment to developing strong working relationships with our recognised trade unions, to help us shape a positive workplace culture.	**Trade Union Recognition** – supporting opportunities for employee voice through our recognised trade unions, and our informal and formal consultation and negotiation framework.	May 2024 May 2024	All formal corporate and directorate TU consultation groups in place. Informal meetings held with trade unions at least fortnightly.
Developing our people and achieving great outcomes	Create an environment where we can encourage innovation, continually learning from what we do and collaborating with partners and communities to get the best results	**'Developing Our People' –** create guidance and resources for all on how to provide the right learning opportunities, for employees and elected members, to create a learning environment, including the 70:20:10 principle.	June 2024 July 2024 March 2025	Guidance issued. All services complete 2024/25 training needs analysis. At least 80% of employees completing mandatory training.
Developing our people and achieving great outcomes	Simplify and strengthen our people policies, systems, and processes.	**Policy Reviews –** review HR and Health & Safety policies and practices and provide practical support and guidance on their use.	Sept 2024 Dec 2024	Health, Safety and Wellbeing policies prioritised on intranet and regular communications. Phase 1 of streamlined HR policies and procedures in place.

			March 2025	Phase 2 of streamlined HR policies and procedures in place.
		Service Reviews, reshaping and restructures – reshaping of services, ensuring our workforce size and structure meets our council vision and Target Operating Model.	May 2024 July 2024 Dec 2024	CMT agree to Phase 1 of Service Reviews. Phase 1 Service Reviews commenced. Phase 1 Service Reviews implemented and evaluated.
Developing our people and achieving great outcomes	Develop leaders who lead well and who are compassionate, collaborative, and clear in the achievement of our vision, our values and culture and how we will get there.	**Leadership and Management Development Programme** - Scope and develop a programme for Westmorland and Furness	March 2025	All levels of management and leadership development in place, including access to apprenticeships
Developing our people and achieving great outcomes	Develop a dedicated programme of learning to help us provide great customer experiences.	**Customer Development Programme** - Development of new customer services training across the organisation	March 2025	Customer Services Development Programme implemented.

			Oct 2024	Launch of Employee Volunteering Scheme
Developing our people and achieving great outcomes	Develop a council wide Employee Volunteering scheme, linked to the Council Priorities and embedding our approach to Community Power	**Employee Volunteering Scheme –** Development of a new scheme, linked to our Council priorities and values, which provides learning and developmental opportunities to our workforce, and supports the communities we serve.	March 2025	At least 25 employees actively engaged in volunteering activities.

Developing our people and achieving great outcomes	Utilise technology to enable people to work more effectively and deliver a better customer experience.	**Learning Management System Development and Implementation** - implement a new learning management system, which offers an integrated blended learning approach, e-learning and booking system to support employee and elected member development.	July 2024 Sept 2024 Oct 2024	New ICT System in place and tested. Core E-learning modules implemented and accessible. All learners registered on the learning management system.
		Digital Skills Development Programme – in line with the ICT Strategy, develop and implement a programme of key digital skills to support employees and elected members to work in a smarter, more secure and efficient manner.	March 2025	A range of digital learning resources are accessible to the workforce.
Developing our people and achieving great outcomes	Maximise the use of apprenticeship levy to develop our existing employees and attract our employees of the future.	**HR/OD Disaggregation** - Disaggregation of Westmorland and Furness Apprenticeship/Early Careers Team	Sept 2024	Utilise fully the apprenticeship levy.

			March 2025	W&F disaggregated Apprenticeship levy allocation fully utilised.
		Utilise Apprenticeships and wider early careers opportunities – aid succession planning and grow our own for hard to fill vacancies by recruiting new to the organisation and offering opportunities to internal staff	March 2025	At least 20 internal and external apprenticeships commenced during 2024/25.
Developing our people and achieving great outcomes	Develop a mentoring and coaching culture.	**Coaching and mentoring** - Introduce a programme to develop coaching skills and a group of internal coaches Scope and design a mentoring programme	March 2025	At least 10 internal coaches and /or mentor in place and being utilised.

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Westmorland & Furness Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
Proforma

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and the **armed forces community.**

The EqIA process has two stages:

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.

- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EIA covers the nine protected characteristics as   well as rurality, socio-economic status, care experience and armed forces personnel/ veterans. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Policy – Westmorland and Furness People Plan 2024-2027.

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

The People Plan 2024 – 2027 will be available to, and relevant for, the whole workforce at Westmorland and Furness Council.

Within this population, it is highly likely that there will be individuals covered by all of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act. It is important that we consider content, accessibility and delivery to ensure inclusivity of the whole workforce, to ensure that no groups are put at a disadvantage and that we are compliant with all relevant employment legislation.

This is an overarching EIA linked to the People Plan. More detailed and full EIA's will be required for some specific strategies, policies and procedures.

3) Consultation

Engagement sessions have taken place with the following groups and stakeholders to gain initial feedback and ideas on approach to development of the People Plan and its content:

Corporate Management Team (CMT), Senior Leadership Team (SLT), HR and OD Team, Trade Unions, Change Champions, Staff Network Groups, Cabinet, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny.

A draft of the People Plan will be shared with the following stakeholders:

CMT, SLT, HR and OD, Trade Unions, Change Champions, Staff Network Groups.

CMT and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny to review the People Plan and Delivery Plan and then recommend to Cabinet for decision and approval.

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all age groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. People will be at different parts of their employment journey, different ages, and different aspects of the People Plan will be relevant at different times to different people. People may also have differing levels of skills and abilities in accessing the People Plan.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure all age groups are considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. Ensure the People Plan and associated documents are accessible in a number of different ways to enable different groups of people to access it, for example, in digital and paper format. Employee life cycle covers every part of an individual's employment lifetime for all, so we will think of all age groups. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			of age and undertake an EIA where required. Examples - Develop ways of working policy that provides a 'needs led' approach with principles underpinning a flexible, modern, agile work style for staff in all stages of life, which also puts the customer and our communities at the heart of delivery. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
Disability	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. People with dyslexia, visual impairment, colour blindness may require additional support or resources to access the People Plan.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure disability is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures, Offer reasonable adjustments and solutions such as a different mouse/keyboard, screen readers, software to users to help with accessibility, test different screen colours/images, branding and	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Content/priorities within the People Plan must take physical and mental disabilities into account during development and implementation. Additional support or resource may be required.	design styles. Design content to suit needs – simple language, bullet points. Ensure the People Plan is accessible in a number of different ways to enable different groups of people to access it, for example, in digital and paper format. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of disabilities and undertake an EIA where required. Examples - In addition to the above reasonable adjustments, explore further options for users with hearing impairments – sign language, through Cumbria Deaf Association.	

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Ensure buildings and work equipment is suitable/accessible. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
Gender reassignment	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. We want to promote an environment and culture where individuals feel safe and confident to be themselves.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure gender reassignment considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. Consider terminology and references to individuals. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of gender reassignment and undertake an EIA where required.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Example - Consider terminology and references to individuals in policy and process. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
Marriage or civil partnership	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure marital/civil partnership status is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of marital status and undertake an EIA where required. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	N
Pregnancy or maternity	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be	**People Plan/Strategy Delivery:**	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. If on maternity leave during implementation, we need to ensure individuals receive any communication or relevant training.	Ensure pregnancy or maternity is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. Line managers to ensure access to those on maternity leave. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of pregnancy/maternity and undertake an EIA where required. Example – Line manager to provide updates during maternity leave including access to all relevant documents, changes, news and developments to maintain the sense of belonging and engagement with the work and colleagues. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Race	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. If English isn't an individual's first language there may be some challenge in understanding the People Plan; our processes, policies and systems. Potential for unconscious bias and indirect discrimination in recruitment, managing change etc.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure race/language is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. Offer the People Plan in different languages. Explore language interpretation and support where required – via the LMS provider, or through contract with DA Languages, or Google Translate, or through colleagues internally. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of race and undertake an EIA where required.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Examples - Offer policies and processes in different languages. Offer language interpretation as required. Monitor key policies and procedures to ensure no bias. For example, recruitment and retention, Pay Gaps, etc. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
Religion or belief	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure religion/belief is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			religion or belief and undertake an EIA where required. Examples - Understand and support different religious requirements and provide reasonable adjustments to accommodate. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
Sex	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. Potential for unconscious bias and indirect discrimination in recruitment, managing change etc.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure sex is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. Consider language/reference to individuals in documents. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of sex and undertake an EIA where required.	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Examples - Monitor key policies and procedures to ensure no bias. For example, recruitment and retention, pay and grading, pay gaps etc. Develop ways of working policy that provides a 'needs led' approach with principles underpinning a flexible, modern, agile work style for staff, which also puts the customer and our communities at the heart of delivery. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
Sexual orientation	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure sexual orientation is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			sexual orientation and undertake an EIA where required. Examples - Consider terminology and reference to individuals and promote an environment and culture where individuals feel save and confident to be themselves. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
Care Experience	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure individuals that have experienced care are considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, as well as its aims and objectives. Offer the People Plan in different formats for accessibility, e.g., digital and paper. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of carers and undertake an EIA where required. Examples - Support during recruitment and selection processes for jobs. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
People in rural areas	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. Accessibility to the People Plan.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure geographical location of people is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. Test digital communication and WiFi/internet access. Ensure alternative copies are available to those with limited/no ICT access. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Plan Delivery plan are considerate of people in rural areas and undertake an EIA.

Examples - Think about digital communication and WiFi/internet access, and ensure alternative copies are available to those with limited/no ICT access.

Consider access to sites, travel and public transport options.

EDI training is provided to the workforce. | |
| Socio-economic status | Y

Positive | We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions.

In some areas, there may be a lower skill and knowledge base. | **People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure socio-economic status is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures.

People Plan/Strategy Delivery:

Accessibility to learning and development. Support digital capability where needed. | N |

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of socio-economic status and undertake an EIA where required. Examples - Identify opportunities for learning and development. Apprenticeships can offer those leaving school and others a supported programme to gain skills, knowledge and qualifications. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
Armed-forces personnel/veterans	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. May not have used digital / laptops / smartphones in role or received training on this previously.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure armed forces personnel/veterans are considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, as well as its aims and objectives. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:**	N

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Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery Plan are considerate of armed forces personnel/veterans and undertake an EIA where required. Examples - Accessibility to learning and development. Support digital capability where needed. Guaranteed interviews in the recruitment process. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	
General (other considerations)	Y Positive	We want to be 'a caring council' and consider the health and wellbeing of our people, so we need to be considerate of all groups when developing and implementation People policy, practice and solutions. Employees with no or limited access to laptops / smartphones / computers in the workplace.	**People Plan/Strategy Document:** Ensure digital access/capability is considered when developing and implementing the People Plan, the Delivery plan and associated policies and procedures. Ensure non-digital ICT learning solutions offered, as well as IT hardware offered where required.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
			Ensure good quality training and support is offered to all system users. **People Plan/Strategy Delivery:** Ensure any workstreams / policies / processes / solutions in the People Plan Delivery plan are considerate of digital access and capability and undertake an EIA where required. EDI training is provided to the workforce.	

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?   **No**

Full Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/ Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	

Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/ function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

Section 2: Information Gathering

What *relevant* information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

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Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic status					
Armed-forces personnel/veterans					

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Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

Add rows as necessary.

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Section 5. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	☐
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	☐
Complete the action plan.	☐
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	☐

Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?

Cabinet

Report Title	Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Beth Middleton – Strategic Lead Local Nature Recovery Strategy Hannah Girvan – Interim Senior Service Lead for Climate and Nature
Director	Angela Jones - Director of Thriving Places
Lead Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate and Biodiversity
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **YES/NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **YES** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Identify exempt information and exemption category	N/A
Reasons for urgency (<u>only</u> where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix A: Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One (draft) Appendix B: Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Equality and Diversity Assessment

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   This report seeks Cabinet approval to adopt the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One for Westmorland and Furness Council. The Part One Action Plan supports the commitments made in the Council Plan and Climate Change Action Plans Part One and Two, as well as meeting the biodiversity duty for public authorities as introduced in the Environment Act 2021.

2.   Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1   agree to adopt the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One in Appendix A and reaffirm the Council's commitment to enhance nature and address biodiversity loss in Westmorland and Furness.

2.2   agree to commit to developing and delivering the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part Two

2.3   ask Council to endorse the decisions of Cabinet in adopting the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part Two

3.   Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1   Westmorland and Furness's Shadow Cabinet passed a motion on the 18th September 2022 confirming that we are facing climate and biodiversity crises, which will have potentially catastrophic impacts locally, nationally and internationally.

3.2   Westmorland and Furness' Council Plan outlines the Council's values, one of which is to be 'ecologically aware' and the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One will underpin this value. Our delivery framework outlines our sustainability principles of equity, economy and the environment. With the third focusing on taking action on climate change and biodiversity loss. Seeking to redress damage and protect our environment for the long term.

3.3   The Part One Action Plan supports the Officer Decision Record from 12th December 2023, which sought recognition of the work being undertaken by the Council to ensure it meets its enhanced 'biodiversity duty' as introduced in the Environment Act 2021. This means that the Council must 'consider what we can do to "conserve and enhance" biodiversity'.

3.4   In addition, the Officer Decision Record from 12th December 2023 approved Westmorland and Furness Council as the Responsible Authority for the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which will further support the Council's biodiversity duty.

3.5   The Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One outlines how the Council is making nature recovery a priority, setting the scene and beginning conversations across the Council and throughout our communities about how we will work together to protect and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems.

3.6   The Part One Action Plan will be followed by a Part Two Action Plan, which will outline in more detail how we will work collaboratively with partners and key stakeholders to address the ecological emergency and encourage joined-up thinking. This part two will be developed using the key priorities and measures that come out of the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

3.7   The Climate and Nature team are supporting the Portfolio Holder, in developing a series of 'Nature Conversations' as part of the public

engagement for the development of both the Part One and Part Two Nature and Biodiversity Action Plans.

4.   Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1   The Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One is the Council's strategic response to the Council Plan priority 'For the Climate: we will address biodiversity loss by encouraging better land management, habitat creation, tree planting and net biodiversity gain in new housing developments'.

4.2   Nature recovery provides wider co-benefits; therefore, the Part One Action Plan finds a balance between delivering on the climate priority, whilst supporting people, communities, economy and culture, customers and the workforce.

5.   Consultation Outcomes

5.1   Throughout the development of the Part One and subsequent Part Two Action Plans, the Climate and Natural Environment Team supported the Portfolio Holder in hosting Nature Conversations with the public to help shape and inform the action plans.

5.2   In the development of the Nature and Biodiversity Part One Action Plan, the Assistant Director of Climate and Natural Environment hosted a workshop on 4th July 2023 to lay the foundations for the Council's Climate and Nature strategies with the Assistant Directors and Directors.

5.3   As part of the wider stakeholder engagement for Part Two, conversations will be held between the Climate and Nature Team and senior managers and officers from relevant departments to agree actions for nature recovery.

5.4   Additionally, the Climate and Natural Environment team will also be engaging with partners and external organisations for consultation with the Part Two Action Plan, which will come off the back of the Cumbria Wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

6.   Alternative Options Considered

6.1   Cabinet could choose not to adopt the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One and set out an alternative strategic course on nature recovery, however due to the biodiversity duty this is not recommended.

7.   Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1   The Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One shows the commitment Westmorland and Furness council has to protecting and enhancing nature in our area. A part two will follow that gives the specific actions across the council which will help make this possible.

8.   Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1   As stressed in the council plan – Climate Change and Biodiversity loss are global issues, impacting everyone. This Action Plan shows the commitment that the council is making to ensure that biodiversity and climate are key priorities. Through prioritising improving our natural environment this impacts positively on health, wellbeing and our economy, helping to build a more resilient area. This plan follows the Climate Change Action Plan Part 1&2 and will be subsequently followed by a detailed Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part 2 – which will give specific actions that the council will take to improve conditions for biodiversity.

9.   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   The Environment Act 2021 amended section 40 (A1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).The Environment Act 2021(the Act) operates as the new framework for environmental protection. The Act strengthens and improves the duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity alongside conservation by way of creating the 'general biodiversity objective'. The Act also requires the preparation and publication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Public bodies must illustrate that they are taking a strategic approach in implementing policies and objectives to take action to further the general biodiversity objective. Government guidance, makes it clear that the duty goes beyond mere maintenance of biodiversity in its current state.

Additional accountability is imposed on Local Authorities to deliver biodiversity reports under section 40(A) of the NERC. The report will need to summarise the actions implemented to comply with the statutory duty under NERC section 40 (1) and (1A). The Council has prepared the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One to comply with the requirements under NERC section 40 (1A).

10.   Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1   The Human Resources, or workforce implications are set out within this report and associated appendices, highlighting 'ecological awareness' as one of the Council's values. The Council also has a responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that there are arrangements in place to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all services for which it has responsibility.

11.   Financial Implications

11.1   The approval of the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan part one will enable development of the Part two activities. Actions developed as part of the Part two action plan are likely to have financial implications and these will be considered through relevant business cases and/or investment opportunities as they are progressed.

**12.	Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)**

12.1	See Appendix B

**13.	Background Documents**

13.1	None.

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Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan

Part One

*Title page

Westmorland & Furness Council

Introduction

As a new unitary council, formed on the 1st April 2023, Westmorland and Furness Council has an ambition to lead on nature recovery and enhance biodiversity. Westmorland and Furness Council has highlighted the importance of the decline in nature by declaring a biodiversity crisis, stating that the Council must act to restore natural habitats, restrict invasive species and reduce pollution. We are in a unique position where we can have nature recovery as a key priority from the outset.

Westmorland and Furness Council will be at the forefront of supporting nature recovery and the challenges that may appear; we will provide leadership working to support local nature recovery, aligning with national policies and supporting the work of local initiatives to deliver meaningful projects. The Council Plan priority and vision to become a leader in the drive to address biodiversity loss and become carbon net zero will be supported by actions to encourage better land management, habitat creation, tree planting and biodiversity net gain in new developments. To support this priority, in our first year Cabinet approved £5 million of priority investment into our area in June 2023, where a 'green thread' throughout the investment shows the Council's commitment to biodiversity.

As a newly formed Council, we are preparing our natural environment programme. This Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One will set the scene and begin conversations across the Council and throughout our communities about how we will work together to protect and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems. Following engagement, we will then compile a Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part Two, which will list our actions to achieve nature recovery and enhance biodiversity across Westmorland and Furness. The Nature and Biodiversity Action Plans will link closely to the Council's Climate Change Action Plans to support the wider co-benefits of nature recovery.

Westmorland and Furness Council recognises the need to act now to support nature recovery and tackle biodiversity loss. Whilst the United Kingdom may be known for its countryside and green spaces, an analysis from the Natural History Museum (2021)[1] states the UK has just half (53%) of its biodiversity remaining since the 1970s and is therefore one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Moreover, the State of Nature Partnership[2] (2023) assessed over 10,000 UK species using Red List criteria, which has shown 151 species are now extinct and a further 16% (around 1,500 species) are now threatened with extinction.

The abundance of freshwater and	The UK distributions of invertebrate	Since 1970, 54% of flowering plant	The abundance of 13 species of

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[1] Natural History Museum (2021) Analysis warns global biodiversity is below 'safe limit' ahead of COP 15 Available at: Analysis warns global biodiversity is below 'safe limit' ahead of COP 15 | Natural History Museum (nhm.ac.uk)

[2] State of Nature Partnership (2023) State of Nature 2023. Available at: TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report_2023_FULL-DOC-v12.pdf (stateofnature.org.uk)

terrestrial species has fallen by 19% since 1970, (based on 753 species)	species have decreased by an average of 13% since 1970.	species have decreased in distribution.	seabird has fallen by an average of 24% since 1986.
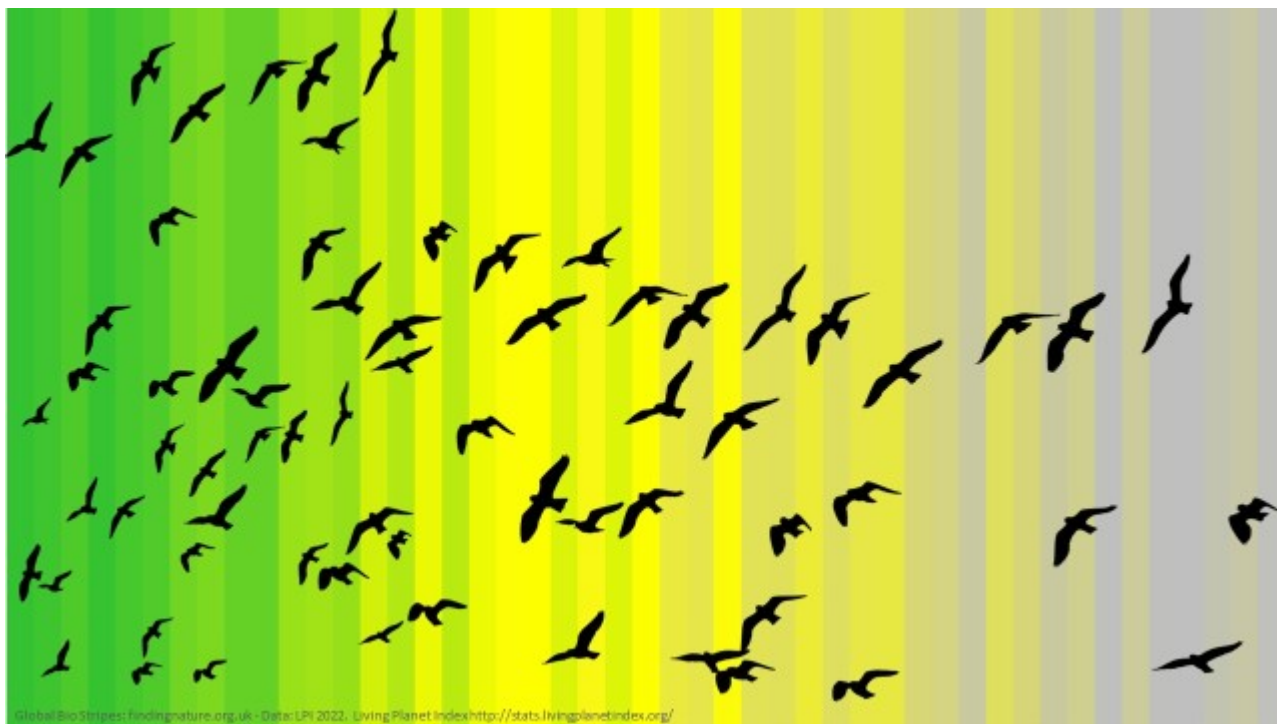
Figure 1 shows how abundance of biodiversity has changed over time - Global Bio Stripes with birds – Data: Living Planet Index http://stats.livingplanetindex.org/

Whilst nature may be in decline nationally, and internationally as figure 1 shows, there are many opportunities in Westmorland and Furness to lead on nature recovery; Cumbria is well positioned to make an outsized contribution to national nature recovery and we have a moral obligation to do so. By geography, we are the third largest unitary authority in England with a total area of 3,754 km² and the most sparsely populated, home to 225,000 people. The Council also covers the Lake District National Park, part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape, North Pennines National Landscape and multiple sites with special conservation status.

<u>Home to:</u>

2 National Parks

2 National Landscapes

21 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

2 Special Protection Areas

3 Ramsar Sites (wetlands of international importance)

180 Sites of Special Scientific Interest

3

Westmorland and Furness is also home to a varied and rich range of natural habitats in a unique landscape; from the coastal and estuarine habitats in the south around Morecambe Bay, to the Lake District summit of Helvellyn at a height of 950 metres above sea level, Westmorland and Furness's natural environment includes everything from montane habitats and peat bogs to coastal plain and saltmarsh; ancient and broadleaved woodlands to grasslands; rivers, lakes and tarns to limestone pavement. The area also has many nationally recognised rare habitats all supporting priority species.

An environment with a rich biodiversity is essential for supporting human life. In recent years, multiple studies have demonstrated the co-benefits of nature recovery, which include:

Social
480,000 people in the North of England still do not have access to green space within 10 minutes walk of their home [3]   • Clean air and water;   • Access to green open spaces;   • Health and wellbeing benefits;   • Green social prescribing and greens social care;   • Outdoor education opportunities for all ages; and   • Natural noise management.
Economic
Green Jobs: 25 temporary jobs and 6 job years created for every 100ha of woodland created [4]   • Nature tourism;   • Sustainable food production;   • Green jobs; and   • Investment in natural capital.
Environmental
20,000 properties were flooded and over £1.5billion of damage caused by floods in Cumbria and Yorkshire in 2015/2016 [5]   • Reduction in flood risk;   • Improved water and air quality;   • Connected, species-rich habitats;   • Carbon sequestration; and   • Healthy pollinator populations.

[3,4,5] https://www.naturenorth.org.uk/business-case/

The importance of landowners and land managers

Agriculture and land-based industries are a significant part of the local economy and define the local landscape, nature and biodiversity. Westmorland and Furness Council wish to support and guide our farming community to have a positive impact on the environment through funding and partnership working that not only benefits nature but supports the economic viability of Cumbrian farming.

Westmorland and Furness are one of these key landowners and can shape how best to manage our land for the benefit of nature. We are reviewing our current practices and looking for opportunities to go further to enhance nature on our assets. We hope to act as an exemplar to show what is possible, when we manage our land in a more nature friendly way. For example, looking at opportunities to link in with Biodiversity Net Gain.

Effective connectivity of nature depends upon sustainable land management practices across the whole of Westmorland and Furness, and place-specific interventions that allow nature corridors to be established and maintained. It is therefore crucial we work alongside our farmers and land managers to allow biodiversity to flourish at a landscape scale.

Cumbria's three major land-based industries are…		
Farming	Conservation	Tourism
Farming, with forestry and other productive land management systems, contributes about £1.1billion Cumbria 9% of the Gross Value Added (GVA). [6]	Conservation, countryside management, outdoor heritage and culture lie within the 'Protected Land Management' sphere; the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership has recently measured natural capital at a value exceeding £1.6 billion c.13% of the Gross Value Added (GVA). [6]	Tourism, which relies heavily on protected heritage and landscape, brings in 65 million visitor days, and £2.9 billion – about 25% of Gross Value Added (GVA). [6]
In addition, a significant proportion of the catering and hospitality of the county is also linked to tourism and farming through extensive use of local produce, estimated as being around 25% of the total Cumbrian workforce.		

6   Cumbria Strategy for Post 16 Land Based Education, Skills and Knowledge Transfer 2020

The State of Nature of Westmorland and Furness

Westmorland and Furness, like the rest of the UK, is experiencing a significant loss of biodiversity. Whilst it is home to a wide range of wildlife and often appears as a lush, green landscape, sadly biodiversity remains under threat from habitat loss, changing land-use, invasive species, pollution and climate change. Only 15% of Westmorland and Furness is currently managed uniquely for wildlife, and only 20% of this remains in good condition. The remaining 80% of land managed for wildlife has been degraded in some way by human activity.

Species

The most recent State of Nature report (2023) finds that nearly one in six of the more than ten thousand species assessed (16%) are at risk of being lost from Great Britain. This figure is even higher for groups such as birds (43%), and amphibians and reptiles (31%). Additionally, the UK distributions of nearly 5,000 invertebrate species have on average decreased by 13% since 1970.
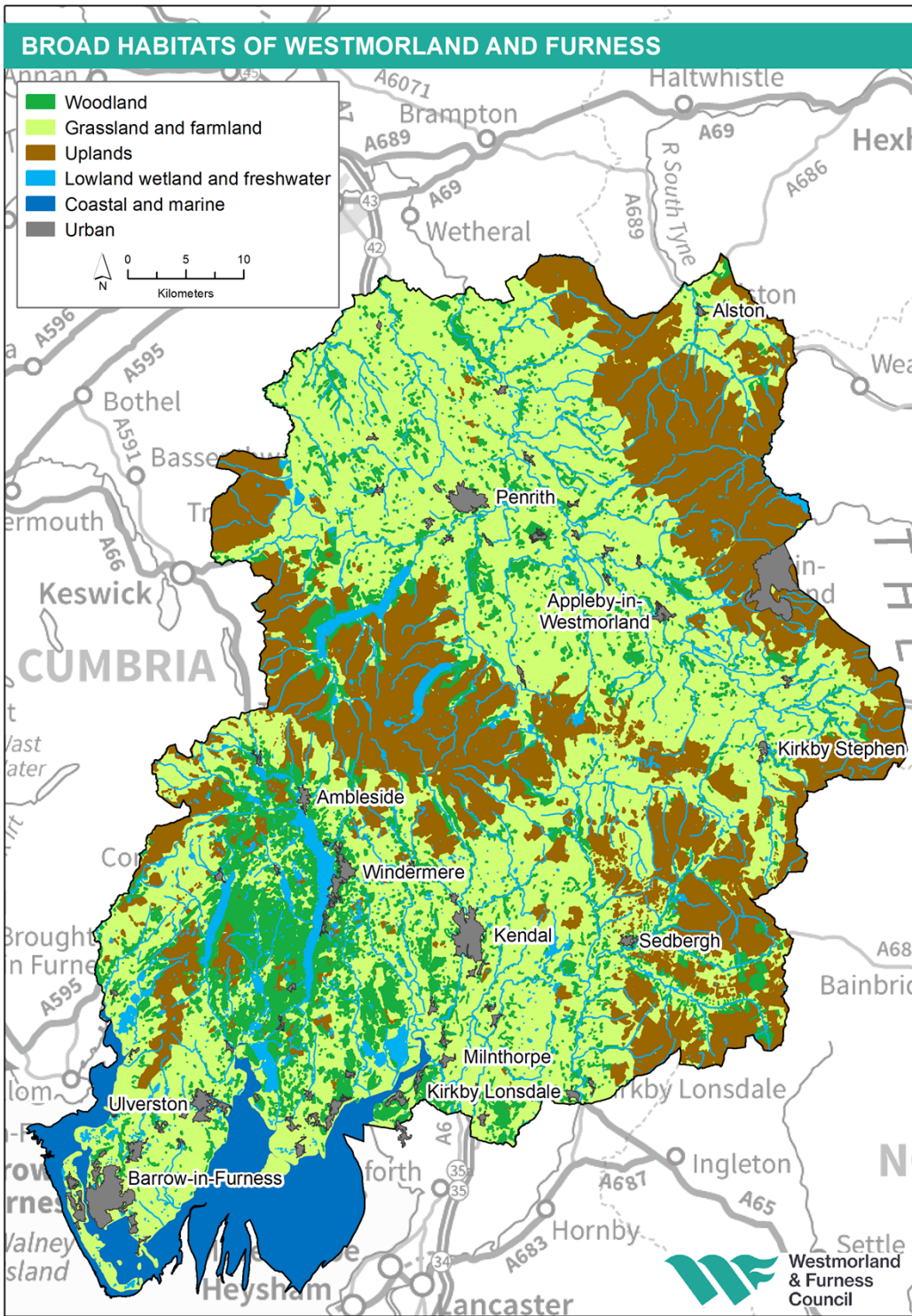
Figure 2: Map showing the main habitat types in Westmorland and Furness

Habitats

For habitats (see Figure 2), only 7% of woodland and 25% of peatlands are assessed as being in good condition, particularly relevant to Cumbria due to our relatively large peatland resource of 31,000 hectares of blanket bog alone. These national trends are unfortunately reflected in Westmorland and Furness, with a notable example of the iconic red squirrel having reduced in its national range and prevalence by 37% since 1993.

Causes of Biodiversity Loss

National causes of biodiversity loss include:

Pollution	Invasive non-native species	Climate change	Poor land management
Habitat loss and fragmentation of habitats	Over exploitation	Disease	

They are closely linked to habitat loss, figure 3 shows the main causes and how they affect different populations.

Habitat loss is a major threat to biodiversity
The Living Planet Report assesses key drivers of species decline

- Habitat degradation
- Exploitation
- Invasive species and disease
- Pollution
- Climate change

Birds
Reptiles and amphibians
Mammals
Fish

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Note: A sample of 3,789 populations evaluated by the Living Planet Index
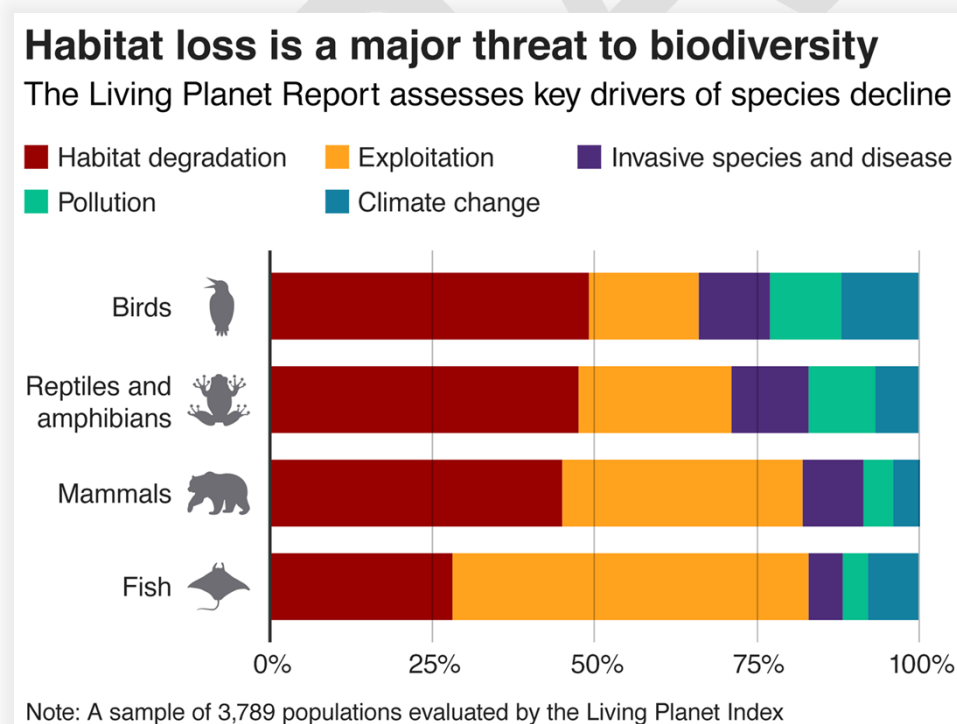
Figure 3: BBC 2019 Nature's Emergency - https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-48104037

The Impacts of Climate Change on Nature

Climate change is the long-term shift in global temperatures and weather patterns. Climate change causes a wide range of negative impacts including increased heat, drought, intense storms, and rising sea levels; these impacts consequently harm wildlife and damage habitats.

Climate change is happening, and the range of impacts associated with wetter winters and warmer, drier summers are evident, such as Storm Desmond in 2015 and 2023 being the UK's hottest year on record with areas of Westmorland and Furness observing temperatures exceeding 30°C. As the frequency of extreme weather events increases, the risk of coastal and fluvial flooding remains a concern as Westmorland and Furness is already one of the wettest regions in England. Summer rain may also become heavier in many places and increase the likelihood of surface water flooding, although total summer rainfall is expected to decline overall. These events are not only dangerous for Westmorland and Furness' residents but cause widespread damage to our environment such as tree loss, landslides, erosion, and the drying out of salt marshes and peat bogs.

Climate change is and will continue to impact upon our natural environment and landscape. The United Kingdom Climate Projections (UKCP) from 2019 predict the following changes relevant to Westmorland and Furness that have the potential to damage habitats, put species at risk or exacerbate the distribution and number of invasive non-native species:

- Greater temperature extremes.

- Hotter, drier summers increasing risk of wildfires.

- Wetter, warmer winters.

- More intense and frequent rainstorm events.

- Sea level rise causing coastal landscape change and flooding events.

- Summer soil and peat moisture content decreases.

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Strategies, Policies and Drivers

To protect and enhance Westmorland and Furness' biodiversity, this Part One Action Plan has taken into consideration the different national, regional and local policies to ensure the interrelation of this document with wider strategic initiatives.

National Legislation

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); and
- Environment Act 2021.
  - Biodiversity Duty;
  - Local Nature Recovery Strategies (Cumbria's LNRS is currently under development);
  - Biodiversity Net Gain.

National, Regional and Local Policy Documents

- UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework;
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services;
- England Peat Action Plan 2021;
- England Trees Action Plan 2021 to 2024;
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs); and
- Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot 2021.

Plans and Policy Drivers:

- Natural England Nature Networks;
- 25 Year Environment Plan;
- Dasgupta Review 2021; and
- Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (2010).

- Lake District UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23);

Figure 4 shows how DEFRA have identified Thriving Plants and Wildlife as their appex goal that all their other goals will help to achieve.

Connections between our environmental goals

Our apex goal
Goal 1:
Thriving plants and wildlife

Improving environmental quality

Goal 2:
Clean air

Goal 3:
Clean and plentiful water

Goal 4:
Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides

Improving our use of resources

Goal 5:
Maximise our resources, minimise our waste

Goal 6:
Using resources from nature sustainably

Improving our mitigation of climate change

Goal 7:
Mitigating and adapting to climate change

Goal 8:
Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards

Improving our biosecurity

Goal 9:
Enhancing biosecurity

Goal 10:
Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment

Figure 4: Environmental Improvement Plan - 2023

Vision and Ambition

Our Council Plan

One of the council's seven values is to be 'Ecologically aware'. In implementing this value we will take a responsible approach to protecting and enhancing our natural environment across all our council functions, embedding nature recovery into Council culture

We are committed to collaborating with partners and key stakeholders, embracing opportunities to achieve nature recovery at a landscape scale in Westmorland and Furness. Working together to realise this goal is the only way to improve the extent, condition and connectivity of priority habitats and the species they support.

Our Council Plan Delivery Framework, Figure 2, shows how the missions are grounded in the three sustainability pillars of equity, economy and environment.

- Equity - We know that there is a need to address any inequalities, especially those resulting from poverty and rural sparsity. We will focus on the wider determinants that drive those inequalities in a way that is fair and equitable.

- Economy - We know that we need to increase our productivity and improve educational outcomes, broaden and increase our skills base. We will support sustainable and inclusive growth which benefits our diverse population whilst protecting the environment.

- Environment - As a new Council we recognise our environmental responsibilities, including taking action on climate change and biodiversity loss. We will seek to redress damage and protect our environment for the long term.

Figure 5 - Westmorland and Furness Council's strategic priorities and delivery themes as set out in the Council Plan.

Our mission for the environment ensures our environment positively impacts on health, well-being and economy and together we build our resilience to climate change and take action to reverse biodiversity loss and to achieve carbon net zero.

Why Act?

Looking after nature not only benefits biodiversity but also brings a wide range of other benefits to our residents. We have aligned these opportunities with our council plan priorities:

- Supporting active, healthy, happy lives for young and old.

- Supporting people in need and reducing inequalities.

- Sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

- Customers at the heart of everything we do.

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Environmental Inequalities

Through our commitments to health and wellbeing, it is crucial we do what we can to address any environmental inequalities facing our most disadvantaged residents across the whole of Westmorland and Furness. From access to green open spaces, to reducing exposure to pollution and climate impacts, we must ensure that our nature solutions and environmental improvements benefit everyone in all areas and that they can be accessed by all. This can also bring social and economic improvements as investing in cleaning our environment and improving our resilience will create jobs and encourage growth.

Our vision for Westmorland and Furness

A holistic approach is needed to tackle biodiversity loss and achieve nature recovery, working across boundaries and in collaboration with everyone who lives, works and enjoys our beautiful area.

We will focus Council action in the six categories shown in the diagram below:
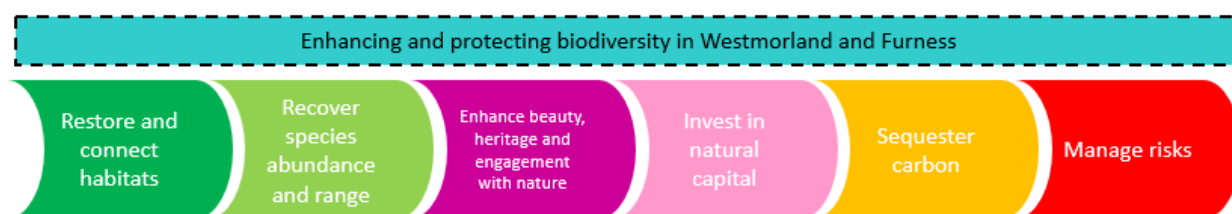
Figure 6: Council action for enhancing and protecting biodiversity in Westmorland and Furness

In our Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part Two, we will organise our actions into these six categories using the associated symbols as a key to each area of activity.

Enhance and Connect Habitats

Sustainable and healthy habitats are vital to all organisms including animals, birds and plants as they depend on these habitats for their air, food, water and shelter. The Council aims to manage all their land in an appropriate way for biodiversity so that the habitats we have, from grassland to coastal habitats to upland habitats, are thriving and supporting a wide range of species. Sustainable management of our land also includes reducing the impact of air and water pollution where appropriate and raising awareness of the issues pollution brings to our local wildlife. Enhancing habitats for biodiversity also brings wider benefits to our residents and visitors as it maintains a sustainable landscape and access to green space.

Preserve Species

Species are all living organisms from the smallest pollinator and plants to iconic species such as the red squirrel and water vole. The Council aims to support partners to protect native species in Westmorland and Furness and appropriately manage invasive non-native species in order to help maintain a rich biodiversity for generations to come and to support our wildlife.

Sequester Carbon

Climate change is and will continue to impact upon our natural environment and landscape. One of the ways we can begin to reverse the effects of climate change is through a method known as carbon sequestration. By, for example, planting trees and hedgerows, and restoring peatland and grassland, carbon can be removed from the atmosphere and stored in our natural assets. Equally supporting businesses and the wider economy to decarbonise and to adopt more sustainable practices can protect and enhance local nature and biodiversity through reducing and mitigating against the impacts of climate change and environmental pollution. This is also supported through the Council's ongoing work through the Climate Change Action Plans.

Enhance Beauty, Heritage and Engagement with the Natural Environment

One of the Council plan priorities is to ensure customers are at the heart of everything we do. There are clear benefits to nature by restoring habitats and protecting species, but there are also wider co-benefits to our residents and visitors from these actions. For example, nature recovery brings health and wellbeing benefits, outdoor learning opportunities, greater access to green open spaces, cleaner air and water, and it supports a green economy. Tourism is a major sector in the local economy and has a significant impact on nature and biodiversity. Local nature is itself an attraction for tourists but there is a balance to be made between promoting this and protecting and restoring the natural environment.

Manage Risks

Unfortunately, there are several risks to healthy biodiversity, which include invasive non-native species, disturbance from recreation, poor management of land and climate change. Westmorland and Furness Council is working to improve the overall flood and climate resilience of small, rural communities that have suffered repeated flooding. By adopting natural management techniques, the Council is showing leadership in sustainably managing risks to enhance biodiversity and benefit the livelihoods of local people. Additionally work to improve nature and biodiversity can also help with adaptation to changes in climate, for example more trees and hedgerows provide shelter and shading for wildlife during periods of hot weather with similar benefits to humans with greener urban areas during heatwaves.

Invest in Natural Capital

Natural Capital comprises the ecosystem services that our natural assets provide, including clean freshwater, clean air, soils and biodiversity. Investing in these services brings wider positive effects such as carbon sequestration and flood management, indirectly creating green jobs and supporting sustainable tourism. By protecting our natural assets and supporting green skills, such as greener farming practices, Westmorland and Furness Council will support these ecosystem services that help support our economy and society.

Joined up Working

To achieve our vision of nature recovery and tackling biodiversity loss across Westmorland and Furness, we recognise the need to work in collaboration with partners. The decline in nature across the UK and Westmorland and Furness, as well as the potential to restore our varied and rich biodiversity, emphasises the importance of nature recovery and joined up working. We believe that by working together and pooling our resources, we can achieve even greater results.

Ambitious work is already taking place by our partners, local communities, parish councils, locality boards and the legacy authorities of Cumbria County Council, Barrow Borough Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council. Westmorland and Furness wish to celebrate the work already taking place and build on these successes by working with others to achieve effective nature recovery at a landscape scale.

Land Management Practices

As a major landowner in Westmorland and Furness, we are open to exploring alternative and innovative options to land management practices, both on our own land and with partners, that benefit our residents, visitors and nature. The Council will always look towards approaches that are evidence-led and compliment the ongoing work of our partners. We are currently exploring alternative options to the use and management of certain weedkiller, roadside verge maintenance, invasive non-native species (INNS) management, and tree planting.

We are adopting a flexible and holistic approach to find the best way of sustainably managing our land that continues to provide services to our residents, but also benefits the environment. By continually assessing the sustainability of our land management practices, the Council will adapt our practices to make sure the needs of our residents and visitors are met in the most nature-friendly way.

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Actions already underway

Nature Recovery

Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Westmorland and Furness Council were formally appointed the responsible authority for the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in July 2023, and will work closely with key partners such as Cumberland Council, Natural England, the Lake District National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park to develop the strategy. We hope to build on the success of the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot to agree a set of priorities and measures for habitat management and creation, and the identification of the most suitable locations for each of these priorities. The LNRS will be designed to align with existing guidance and policies, and to inform future implementation and delivery plans for our own council and for key stakeholders across the county.

23/24 Funding - Biodiversity Boost

Cabinet approved £510,000 from the Priority Investment Fund to be invested in initiatives that will support biodiversity and nature enhancement in Westmorland and Furness. This investment has also supported the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain that became mandatory in February 2024, and through our planning regulations we can ensure that any developments or projects gaining permission will help to leave the environment in a better state than it was found.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development, land and marine management that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before the development took place; BNG became mandatory on 12th February 2024. Westmorland and Furness Council's approach is to deliver 10% net gain in line with mandatory requirement, and work is currently underway to develop the internal systems to support BNG, as well as gathering the evidence base that could support the aspiration for 20% net gain.

23/24 - Climate and Environment Partnership Grants

Westmorland and Furness Council launched the Climate and Environment Partnership Fund of £900,000 in August 2023. This fund is supporting local partnerships to assist nature recovery, manage the risks of climate change and bring wider benefits to our communities, contributing to our aspiration for Westmorland and Furness to be a leader on biodiversity and carbon net zero. The Fund is supporting partnerships across Westmorland and Furness to restore peatland, improve water quality, hinder invasive species propagation, and plant trees and community gardens.

Caring for W&F's Roadside Verges

The sides of Westmorland and Furness' roads are home to hundreds of species of wild plants and animals.

Recognised as a valuable resource for biodiversity, roadside verges can also bring great pleasure and delight, helping us connect with nature on our journeys wherever we go and acting as important corridors to connect one habitat to another for species.

Within Westmorland and Furness there are nearly 383 miles (approximately 600km) of special roadside verges. These range in altitude up to over 600m (2,000ft). This represents an incredible resource for our wildlife. These linear verge networks also help connect habitats and green spaces, enabling species to move freely across our landscape.

Every verge managed by W&F has its own cutting programme. Roadside verges must be managed for safety and there management is timed to help protect the wildlife, some cutting is early in the year and some in July-October, this allows the plants to flower.

A Dark Sky Friendly Authority

As custodians of the night sky and the excellent environment here in Westmorland and Furness, we currently maintain over 21,000 electrical units. It is important that, as a Council, we are mindful of the impact of our work. To reduce light pollution and help protect our nocturnal environment, we work in collaboration with suppliers to gain a better understanding of evolving technologies such as impacts on colour temperatures during the design process. We also work with partner organisations including the Friends of the Lake District who we support for events like "The Big Switch Off" across Cumbria.

We continue to use innovative technologies and solutions to reduce light pollution and are committed to changing specification, design techniques and introducing upward light calculations to help protect the nocturnal environment, all while maintaining the safety of our communities.

Planting

Planting for Pollinators

Planting for Pollinators is a project developed by Cumbria Local Nature Partnership and delivered by Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Westmorland and Furness Council.

The aim of the scheme is to reverse pollinator decline by creating a mosaic of pollinator-friendly habitats, in turn providing food, shelter and nesting places for the likes of bees, butterflies, wasps and other insects. Pollinator-friendly habitats include hedges, species rich grassland, scrub, deadwood, banks, glades and flower rich gardens.

Cumbria Community Forest

Westmorland and Furness Council are working closely with RAISE Cumbria to identify sites for Community Forests in Cumbria. The Community Forests are focused on areas around the urban centres of the county focusing nearer to the coast and runs from Carlisle to Barrow.

By planting trees and bringing woodlands back into use for both people and wildlife we continue to provide new opportunities for leisure, recreation, and cultural activities, enhancing biodiversity, helping us become more resilient to climate change and improving education and healthy lives

Coronation Living Heritage Fund

This scheme supports local tree planting projects across England, aiming to create a lasting reminder of the Coronation while contributing to the government's environmental goals. In October 2023, Westmorland and Furness Council successfully applied for and were awarded £100,000 from Defra for community orchards and micro-woodlands. This investment will ensure that the Council can actively work with community groups and small organisations to plant trees to increase tree cover and bring wider benefits to local people such as access to green spaces and education opportunities on nature.

Westmorland and Furness Council will deliver the following two scheme:

- Coronation Micro Woods: Provides grants to local authorities for planting miniature areas of woodland in urban areas.
- Coronation Community Orchards: Offers grants to local communities and groups for establishing community orchards.

Flood Management

Cumbria's Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme

Westmorland and Furness Council work closely with partners to mitigate the risks caused by climate change, for example by using natural flood management (nature-based solutions) techniques. Cumbria's Innovative Flood Resilience Project (CIFR) has seen over £6 million of government investment into Cumbria to aim to improve the overall flood and climate resilience of small, rural communities that have suffered repeated flooding.

The natural flood management techniques often have considerable benefits for nature. For example, planting areas of hedgerow and woodland, using a range of native species, improves local biodiversity and provides habitat for birds and small mammals. Other natural flood management measures prevent erosion and improve water quality, helping to improve the biodiversity of our becks, rivers and lakes. Some of these other benefits may provide opportunities for others to invest in natural flood management, these and the newly

announced changes brought about by the Environmental Land Management (ELM) and Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) schemes create chances for CiFR to spread the impact further and provide long term and sustainable change.

We have a number of sites situated in Westmorland and Furness and hope the learning from these can be extended further across our area and beyond.

Partnership working

Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership

Westmorland and Furness Council are working directly with the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership (ZCCP) by actively engaging with all groups, in particular the Farming and Other Land Use sector group to achieve net-zero emissions by 2037. The Farming and Other Land Use sector group seeks to respond to sector-based emissions by increasing the natural sequestration potential of land managed for agriculture, as well as wider opportunities to reduce emissions and sequester carbon. The use of green land for business and pleasure is widespread and steeped with tradition, diversity and challenges, and management of that land is crucial to its future. Success in 2037 requires a unified effort across a wide range of stakeholders, including the Council, to achieve a sustainable future for Cumbria with food production at the core of land management delivered through a carefully balanced land use approach, which nurtures carbon storing, biodiversity and regenerating land.

Health and Care Partnerships

The Climate and Natural Environment team are working closely with the Integrated Care Partnerships to collaborate on co-benefits and understand how work to address Health and Wellbeing and Nature Recovery efforts can compliment each other. Linking together with our Public Health colleagues and partners in Natural England and the National Health Service (NHS) to maximise the wider benefits to health and wellbeing from nature. The team are supporting various events and providing information for colleagues working in healthcare to inspire actions that both improve nature and health, for instance nature-friendly management of NHS estates.

Lake District National Park Partnership

Westmorland and Furness Council are one of 22 partners involved in the Lake District National Park Partnership. The partnership's aim is to work towards the vision of the park in the best interests of its environment, communities, economy and visitors, and to have the chance to share best practice. By coming together, the partners can ensure the National Park remains a place where its prosperous economy, world class visitor experiences and

vibrant communities come together to sustain the spectacular landscape, its wildlife and cultural heritage.

Cumbria Local Nature Partnership

The Cumbria Local Nature Partnership (CLNP) was officially recognised and confirmed by Government in 2012 with the purpose of acting as the "prominent and unified voice for the natural environment in Cumbria" and "to foster the development of a strategic natural environment framework for the county". The CLNP acts as a hub for nature and focuses conversations with partners on planning and action for nature recovery. As a local authority, Westmorland and Furness Council support the work of the CLNP to ensure any action has a consideration for the environment and maximises wider benefits.

Cumbria's People and Nature Network

Westmorland and Furness Council support the People and Nature Network, both as a council and as the responsible authority for Cumbria's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The network aims to connect partners to explore the wider links between nature recovery and people, or the social benefits that arise. The network are currently supporting the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to prioritise our actions for nature recovery that bring wider benefits to residents and visitors.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP)

The Climate and Natural Environment team support the CLEP's Rural Sector, aiming to continue to develop a sustainable, productive rural sector, and lead as a UK exemplar for the management of our natural capital. Our rural community supports a variety of land management practices, including farming, forestry and food production that help shape the environment and landscape that we love and enjoy and by working with partners, we can help realise the potential of land and business whilst supporting ecosystem services.

Land and Nature Skills Service

As we continue to grow and expand this 'green industry', we understand that there will be a skills and resources gap; it is essential to work with partners to address this gap through reskilling, up-skilling and training our new and existing workforce to be able to adapt to a nature-friendly approach. Therefore, this perceived gap has the potential to bring a wide range of opportunities to our workforce and support the local economy.

Next steps

This is just a snapshot of the journey the Council is on to enhance nature and address biodiversity loss in Westmorland and Furness. We will follow this plan with a Part Two, which will outline in more detail how we will work collaboratively with colleagues, partners and key stakeholders in our area to address the biodiversity crisis and encourage joined-up thinking. The Part Two also has the opportunity to link to Cumbria's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and so will be developed once the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is published.

Join us on this journey

At Westmorland and Furness Council, one of our core values is being collaborative, and in tackling such a complex and global issue, engaging with our community and residents is paramount to any potential success.

The actions being developed in this plan will also contribute towards the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, helping to inform the activities already taking place and identify any areas where gaps in nature recovery can be addressed.

We want to encourage discussions on nature and biodiversity, and will be reaching out to environment action groups, businesses, charities and community groups to support the planning of our natural environment programme.

If you would like to contact us, email climate@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

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Full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires public bodies to:
- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following 9 **protected characteristics:**

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and **armed forces personnel/vetrans.**

The EqIA process has two stages:
- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if further analysis is needed through an EqIA.
- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function in terms of data and information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement on all nine protected characteristics and rurality and socio-economic status. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to the Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the report.

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name of Decision/Policy/Service/Function being assessed	Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	Strategic Lead Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Department/service area	Climate and Natural Environment
Telephone number and email contact	01539 793243 Beth.middleton@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
Date of Assessment	29/02/2024
Objectives of decision/policy/service/function	The Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One has been developed by the Climate and Natural Environment Team, aiming to support the commitments made in the Council Plan and Climate Change Action Plans Part One and Two, as well as meeting the biodiversity duty for public authorities as introduced in the Environment Act 2021.
Key stakeholders and consultees	Climate and Natural Environment Team. All internal directorates. External partners and stakeholders.

Section 2: Information Gathering

Consider the sources of *relevant* information, evidence, data and research that will help you build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic groups.

Information Source	Location of data/information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?
GOV.UK	Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Complying with the biodiversity duty.
GOV.UK	Reporting your biodiversity duty actions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	How local planning authorities can report their biodiversity duty actions.

Section 3: Assessment of Impact

From the information, evidence, data and research you have gathered, use this section to identify the risks and benefits for each of the different protected characteristic groups.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age	✓			Positive as nature recovery increases access to green open spaces and brings health and wellbeing benefits to all.	
Disability	✓			Positive as nature recovery increases access to green open spaces and brings health and wellbeing benefits to all.	
Sex	✓			Positive as nature recovery increases access to green open spaces and brings health and wellbeing benefits to all.	
Gender reassignment			✓		
Marital and civil partnership status			✓		
Pregnancy and maternity	✓			Positive as nature recovery increases access to green open spaces and brings health and wellbeing benefits to all.	
Race	✓			Positive as nature recovery increases access to green open spaces and brings health and wellbeing benefits to all.	
Religion and/or belief			✓		
Sexual orientation			✓		

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Care Experience	✓			Positive as improving the natural environment in W&F which has health and well being benefits to all.	
People in rural areas	✓			Positive as nature recovery increases access to green open spaces and brings health and wellbeing benefits to all.	
Socio-economic status	✓			Positive as nature recovery increases access to green open spaces and brings health and wellbeing benefits to all, as well as employment opportunities linked to nature recovery and eco or adventure tourism.	
Armed Forces Personnel/Vetrans	✓			Positive as improving the natural environment in W&F which has health and well-being benefits to all.	

Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/ adverse impact or area for further action?	Actions proposed to reduce/ eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the action(s)?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements
None					

Section 5. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination	✓
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality. Complete the action plan.	
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	

Section 6. Review

Date of the next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	31st March 2025 when the Climate Change Action Plan, and Nature and Biodiversity Action Plans will be annually reviewed.
Who will carry out this review?	Climate and Nature Team

Glossary: Definitions of Protected Characteristics

Age: This refers to a person having a particular age or being within an age group.

Disability: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Includes: Physical/sensory disability; Mental Health; Learning disability.

Sex: This refers to a person being either male or female.

Gender reassignment: This is the process of transitioning from one sex to another, considered a personal process rather than a medical one and it does not require someone to undergo medical treatment in order to be protected.

Marital and civil partnership: Legal recognition of a same-sex couple's relationship. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a range of legal matters.

Maternity: The period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding.

Race: It refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. Includes, Asian, Black and White minority ethnic groups inc. Eastern Europeans, Irish people and Gypsy Travellers.

Religion or belief: "Religion" means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. "Belief" includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). The category includes, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and non-religious beliefs such as Humanism.

Sexual orientation: This is whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Transgender: Anyone whose gender identity is neither male nor female as legally defined at birth, and is not undergoing a process of gender resignment.

Rurality: Differential impact on people in rural areas

Socio-economic status: Differential impact on people due to household or personal income.

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![Westmorland & Furness Council logo]

Cabinet

Report Title	Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan ('making' (adoption) of the Plan)
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Gareth Candlin: Assistant Director Inclusive and Green Growth, Damian Law: Specialist Level 2 (Strategy/Planning Policy)
Director	Director of Thriving Places
Lead Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities and Localities
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **NO** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	Grange and Cartmel
Identify exempt information and exemption category	None
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1 – Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum Version Appendix 2 – Examiner's Report Submission Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan Appendix 3 – Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Code Referendum Version Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   The Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan (ACNDP) is a neighbourhood plan prepared by Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council (ACPC). The ACNDP covers Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish and contains local planning policies and local green space designations and is supported by a Design Code. It has recently been the subject of a referendum. Paragraph 38(A) 4 of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires the Authority to

'make' the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting in the referendum upon the plan have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the area. More than half of those voting in the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum on 29 February 2024 voted in favour of the plan. Following a positive result, a Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the adopted development plan for Westmorland and Furness Council. This means it will be given full weight when assessing planning applications that affect land and buildings covered by the plan. The 'making' of the plan is a formal procedure that the Council must undertake in such circumstances to endorse and adopt the plan and legally bring it into force. This report seeks Cabinet approval to 'make' the plan.

2.   Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1   'Make' (adopt) the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan (Appendix 1) under Section 38 (A) 4 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 following a positive referendum result on the 29 February 2024.

3.   Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

Background and Drivers

Neighbourhood Plans – What are they?

3.1   A neighbourhood plan is a plan that ultimately forms part of the Development Plan. It is prepared by a Neighbourhood Planning Body. This is the Parish or Town Council(s) where one exists. In this case the ACNDP has been prepared by Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council (ACPC) which is the Neighbourhood Planning Body.

3.2   A neighbourhood plan has to meet the following 'basic conditions' which are:

- Having regard to national planning policies and guidance;
- Contributing to sustainable development;
- Being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan
- Being compatible with, EU obligations or human rights legislation; and
- Meeting the requirements of Regulation 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

3.3   The plan is subject to an Independent Examination, which may require amendments to the plan following the Examiners Final Report, before proceeding to referendum.

3.4   Subject to a majority vote in favour at referendum, the plan is Made (adopted by Council). It is not for the Council to decide either for or against adoption after referendum.

3.5   Once Made (adopted by Council), it has equivalent weight in decision making to the Local Plan as part of the Development Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans: What is the Local Planning Authority's role?

3.6   The Local Planning Authority's role is:

i.   To approve the Neighbourhood Plan area and the Neighbourhood Planning Body (in a parished area this will be a parish or town council);
ii.   To advise and support the Neighbourhood Planning body;
iii.   To publicise and carry out consultation on the submitted plan;
iv.   To organise (and fund) the independent examination;
v.   To decide what changes should be made to the plan in response to the Examiner's final report;
vi.   To notify representors and consultees of any proposed changes which differ from the examiner's report (which is the forthcoming consultation);
vii.   To approve the Neighbourhood Plan for referendum (with any minor changes that may be necessary);
viii.   To carry out and fund the referendum, supported by Government grant funding to a maximum of £20,000.
ix.   In the event of a majority vote in favour at referendum, the Plan is Made (adopted by Council).

The Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan

Plan preparation

3.7   The ACPC began work on their Plan following the area's designation in January 2015. Informal consultation on the Plan was undertaken in 2016 and 2019. Formal consultation on a draft plan (Regulation 14) took place in September-October 2021. The Plan was then amended and submitted to South Lakeland District Council in November 2022. It was published for formal representation in February 2023 (Regulation 16).

The Examination

3.8   The Examination of the ACNDP commenced in May 2023. It was carried out through the written representations procedure and did not involve any form of hearing sessions. Mr John Mattocks BSc, DipTP, MRTPI, FRGS was appointed as the Examiner by Westmorland and Furness Council with the agreement of ACPC.

3.9   The examination closed in July 2023 with the Examiner's Final Report received on 14 July 2023 (Appendix 2). The Examiner's report includes a series of recommended modifications to the draft Plan that he feels are necessary to meet the basic conditions. The Examiner concluded that "the draft plan, subject to the modifications recommended in this report, meet the basis conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations

and is compatible with Convention Rights'. He also states "that the modifications recommended in this report be made to the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2032 and that the draft plan as modified be submitted to a referendum".

Decision to proceed to referendum

3.10   Following receipt of the examiner's report, and the support of ACPC, under delegated authority on the 8th January 2024 the Assistant Director of Inclusive and Green Growth in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities and Localities agreed to:

- Endorse the proposed changes to the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan as set out in Section 4 of the examiner's report and for the reasons given in the report;
- Agree that a decision statement be issued to inform interested parties that the modified Neighbourhood Development Plan proceed to Referendum.

3.11   The decision statement for the ACDNP to proceed to referendum on the basis of the modifications being made to it and confirmation it meets the basic conditions was published on 17 January 2024, in accordance with Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Relevant persons and organisations were notified of the decision to proceed.

Outcomes & Objectives

Referendum Version of the ACNP

3.12   The Referendum Version of the ACNP (Appendix 1) incorporating the examiner's recommended modifications and additional minor non-substantive changes, addresses a range of issues and includes seven planning policies that seek to:

- Ensure high quality in new development, taking account of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Design Code (see Appendix 3) which accompanies the plan (Policy AC1)
- Conserve and enhance the landscape character of the Parish including protection of significant views (Policy AC2)
- Conserve and enhance the Cartmel Conservation Area (Policy AC3)
- Protect local green space through the designation of eight local green spaces (resulting in changes to the policies map for Allithwaite and Cartmel) (Policy AC4)
- Protect and enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity (Policy AC5)
- Protect dark skies to minimise light pollution (Policy AC6)
- Restrict new dwellings within and immediately adjoining Cartmel village for principal residence occupation only (Policy AC7)

Referendum

3.13   A local referendum was held in Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish on 29th February 2024 to decide whether the local community were in favour of the Plan. From the votes recorded, 259 of the 314 votes (82%) received were in favour of the Plan. The turnout of electors was 20.63%.

Next Steps

3.14   In accordance with the provisions of Section 38A(9) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Council must publish a statement on the Council's website setting out the decision to 'make' the plan and draw attention to interested parties of the decision. The 'made' ACNDP will be published on the website and made available for public inspection, and relevant persons and parties will be notified on where it can be viewed in accordance with Regulation 20 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The current referendum version (Appendix 1) will be updated as the 'made' version, following cabinet approval. The updates will be of a minor non-substantive nature.

4.   Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1   For people the ACNDP aims to protect and enhance the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Area's natural environment including its green infrastructure through the designation of eight local green spaces. It seeks to ensure that new development is supported by pedestrian and cycle routes. Through restricting new dwellings to principal residence occupancy, it seeks to support the sustainability of Cartmel, responding to issues around access to housing.

4.2   The ACNDP has listened to and responds to the needs of its customers and communities. It reflects the collective view of the residents of Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish that have engaged with the Plan-making process in developing a range of policies addressing relevant issues within their Neighbourhood Development Plan area.

4.3   The ACNDP supports the economic and cultural aspirations of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Area, including protecting and enhancing its heritage. It supports the Council's aspirations to become carbon-net zero, protecting against climate change and enhancing biodiversity through sustainable development.

5.   Consultation Outcomes

5.1   A comprehensive Consultation Statement was submitted as part of the Draft ACDNP in November 2022 as was prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (SI No.637) Part 5 Paragraph 15 (2)1 which defines a "consultation statement" as a document which:-

- Contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan
- Explains how they were consulted;
- Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted and
- Describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan

5.2 Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council has undertaken extensive consultation in preparing the plan. Every effort was made to involve the local community and other consultees in an open and meaningful way at every stage of its development. In the Examination report, the Examiner outlined the various consultation stages undertaken by the Parish Council and concludes these satisfy the statutory processes and the relevant basic condition.

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The Council believes the Plan meets the Basic conditions and subject to a majority yes vote should be 'made'. In light of the positive referendum vote, in these circumstances there are considered to be no alternative suitable options other than to 'make' the plan in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

7. Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1 The ACNDP has received a positive referendum vote and the Council believes it meets the Basic Conditions. In these circumstances in accordance with the provisions of Section 38 (A) 4 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council endorses the ACNDP and therefore must 'make' (adopt) it as part of the Development Plan for Westmorland and Furness Council.

8. Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1 One of the Basic Conditions is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Plan is supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment screening that concluded that the Plan would not trigger significant environmental effects. The ACDNP supports the Council's aspirations to become carbon-net zero, protecting against climate change and enhancing biodiversity through sustainable development. It includes policies which seek to support development that:

- Where possible and appropriate, orientates and sites buildings within sites to maximise energy efficiency and take opportunities for energy supply from on-site, decentralised renewable or low carbon energy systems (Policy AC1)
- Includes measures that seek to improve pedestrian facilities and linkages in the Parish and between villages to encourage walking and cycling (Policy AC1)
- Incorporates Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems which avoids all non-permeable surfaces or delivers a water management system

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which minimises surface water run-off and ensures that all surface water is addressed within the site boundary (Policy AC1)

- Protects existing field boundaries such as hedgerows, dry stone walls and lane banks and restore hedgerows and rebuild dry stone walls where lost or unmanaged to support biodiversity (Policies AC3 and AC5)
- Conserves and enhances biodiversity and opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements, requiring where appropriate that they demonstrate they protect and enhance biodiversity and important wildlife habitats as well as deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (Policy AC5)
- Minimise light pollution to help protect the well-being of wildlife (Policy AC6)

9.   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   Legal services are satisfied that all relevant legislation has been taken in to account in the drafting and processing of the ACNDP. Once made the ACNDP will play a robust role in the set of documents which must be considered for the proper planning and development of the area.

10.   Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1   There are no direct Human Resources or Health & Safety implications associated with this report.

11.   Financial Implications

11.1   Although there are no direct financial implications from approving the plan this does result in the Parish Council receiving 25% of any relevant CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) which is an increase from the standard 15%. This is a legislative requirement.

12   Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1   The Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 4.

13.   Risk Implications

13.1   There are no risk implications in connection to endorsing the recommendations in this report. Approval to 'make' the Plan is in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

14.   Background Documents

14.1   Background information including supporting material produced to support the preparation of the ACNDP including the consultation statement can be viewed on the Council's website Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan (southlakeland.gov.uk)

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Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022 - 2032

Referendum Version

January 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Allithwaite and Cartmel Submission Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been produced utilising information and responses from informal consultations carried out with the community between 2014 and 2019. The latest changes have been made following the responses received to the formal Regulation 14 Consultation held between 6th September 2021 to 29th October 2021.

1.2 The Parish was previously known as '*Lower Allithwaite Parish Council*' however, the parish council at their April 2019 meeting requested South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) (who were conducting a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the whole District) change the name to '*Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council*, to reflect the difference in the two villages and this has been reflected within the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.3 The Parish Council decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish in October 2014 and applied to South Lakeland District Council for designation as a neighbourhood area on 15th October 2014. The application for designation was approved by the District Council on 5th February 2015. The designated Neighbourhood Area is the same as the Parish Council Boundary and is shown on Map 1 overleaf. This includes the villages of Allithwaite and Cartmel and the outlying rural areas.

1.4 The Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan is for the period 2022 to 2032.

Background

1.5 The Allithwaite and Cartmel NDP has been prepared taking into consideration extensive community engagement and involvement through the Allithwaite and Cartmel Community Plan (June 2013) and the Cartmel Township Initiative, the Allithwaite Community Orchard consultation and the Allithwaite Paths 4 Communities Bid consultation.

1.6 A steering group comprising Parish Councillors and local residents has been established to progress work on the plan, members:

Chair - Cllr Mike Lamb	Mrs Wendy Graham
Cllr Barry Dean	Mrs Lynne Witton
Cllr Steve Sim	Mr Ian Holcroft
Cllr Caroline Johnson	Mr Colin Burke

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Map 1 - Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
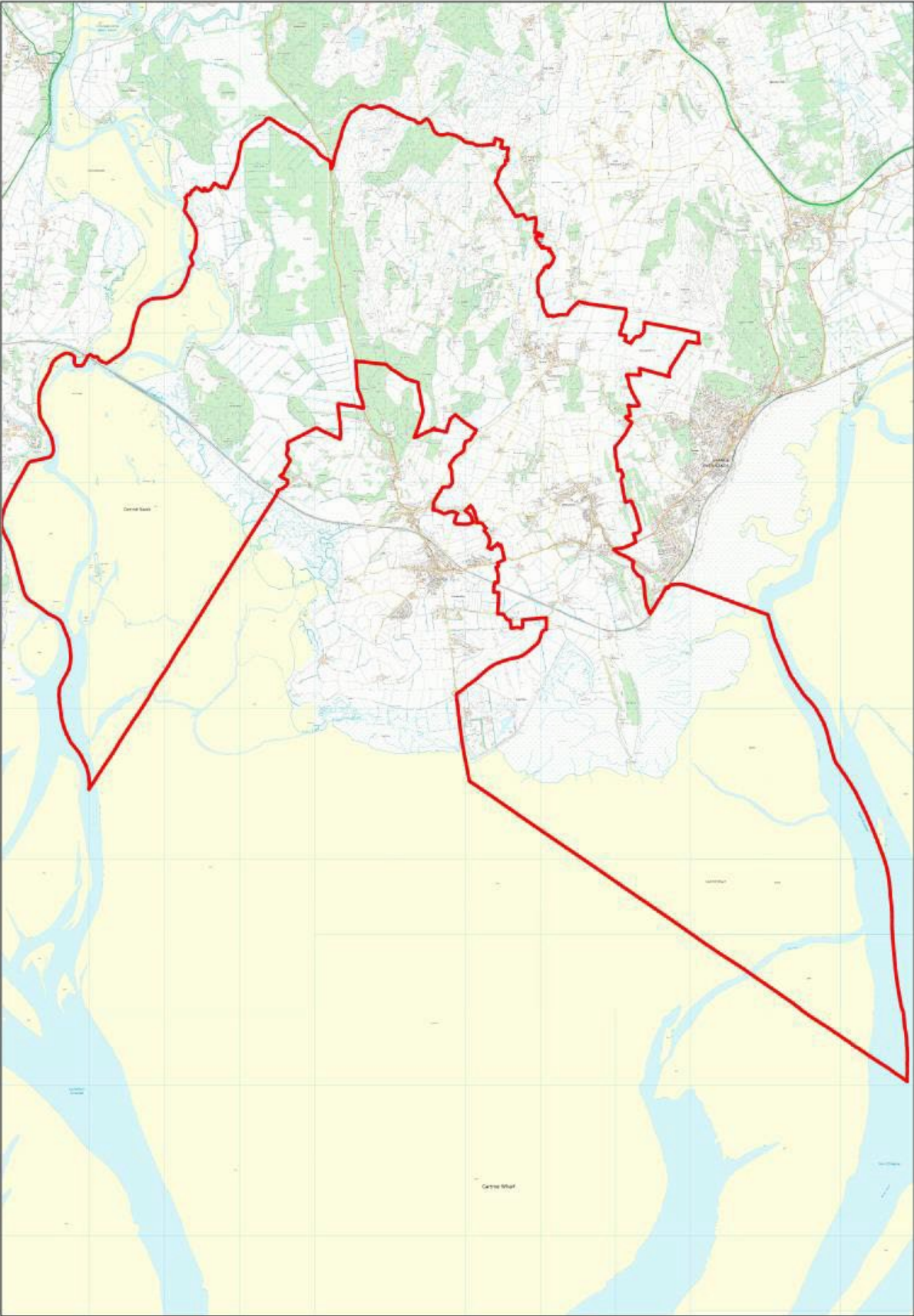
© Crown copyright [and database rights] 2022 OS 100005590 on behalf of Allithwaite and Cartmel
Parish Council

1.7   Consultations took place in the Community centre in Allithwaite in July 2016, the results of which are contained in the Consultation Statement.

1.8   Further consultations took place in September 2019, around the draft document, policies, and allocations. These were in the form of two drop-in sessions, one in Cartmel and one in Allithwaite. Questionnaires were available for residents to complete and post it notes were also available for comments.

1.9   Over 100 people attended the drop-in events, and the residents were in support of the neighbourhood plan. The analysis of the questionnaire and details of the post it notes comments are included in the Consultation Statement.

1.10   The Regulation 14 consultation was carried out between 6th September 2021 and the 29th October 2021. The responses to the consultation and the comments from the Parish Council and subsequent amendments made to the Allithwaite and Cartmel NDP are contained in a table in the Consultation Statement and this document has been revised accordingly.

Planning Policy Context

1.11   The Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan must take account of national planning policy. This is contained in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised in July 2021 and the online National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

1.12   This means the Neighbourhood Development Plan must "plan positively to promote local development" and must "support the strategic development needs" set out in the current Local Plan this being the South Lakeland Local Plan Development Plan Documents. Therefore, the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared to be in "general conformity" with the South Lakeland Local Plan existing planning policies contained in the following documents:

- South Lakeland Core Strategy adopted 2010.
- South Lakeland Land Allocations DPD adopted December 2013.
- South Lakeland Development Management DPD adopted March 2019.

1.13   On the 1 April 2023 Westmorland and Furness Council was established as a unitary authority, combining the former Local Authorities of Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council and the functions of Cumbria County Council (for part of the geographical area of the former County Council now within the Westmorland and Furness Council area). The Neighbourhood Plan includes reference to policies, plans, and targets adopted and set by SLDC, at the time of submission of the Plan pre 1 April 2023. It also includes data relating to SLDC.

1.14   Where South Lakeland Local plan policies are referenced, these may be superseded during the lifetime of the NDP by newly adopted policies. A full list of current relevant policies is included at Appendix 1.

Climate Emergency and Carbon Neutrality

1.15   In 2019 South Lakeland District Council declared a climate emergency, in response to mounting concern at the impacts of climate change from global warming from carbon dioxide emissions. The Council, with other Cumbrian and National Park authorities also adopted the Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy, which includes a key aim of becoming a "carbon neutral" county and of mitigating the likely impact of climate change. South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) aims to become a carbon neutral Council by 2030 and a carbon neutral district by 2037.

1.16   During the preparation of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan South Lakeland District Council in July 2020 adopted a Climate Change Action. 'Carbon neutrality' means balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount absorbed, removed, or offset. This would achieve net zero carbon emissions.

1.17   Westmorland and Furness Council as a new unitary authority want to be at the forefront of tackling the climate emergency. It will provide leadership working to ensure the council is carbon net zero as soon as possible, and the area it serves by 2037.

1.18   Westmorland and Furness Council and Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council believe that becoming net zero will improve the quality of life for residents in Westmorland and Furness and help to build new green, clean growth opportunities for our economy.

1.19   As with the Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Development Plan plays a key role in mitigating and adapting to the climate emergency. It is also a legal requirement to make sure that development and use of land contributes to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

1.20   This Neighbourhood Development Plan has the mitigation of and adaptation to the climate emergency at its heart, forming a key overarching theme for the whole document.

Vision for Allithwaite and Cartmel

1.2.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan sets a vision for the area that reflects the thoughts of the local communities through the consultation responses and the preparation of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan. This vision is as follows:

<table>
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Vision for Allithwaite and Cartmel

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By 2032 Allithwaite and Cartmel will include two very different villages and a number of small rural settlements scattered throughout the countryside. The quality of the landscape has been protected from intrusive developments.

In Allithwaite the village will be enhanced by a number of developments which are well integrated, linked directly to the village with pedestrian circulation having been significantly enhanced.
Traffic management has resulted in a quieter, safer village.

In Cartmel, the heritage aspects of the village have been enhanced, protected, and reflected in the wider village area. Traffic and parking management schemes have improved access to the many businesses; and residents and visitors benefit from improved circulation.

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Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives

1.2.2 The following objectives were taken from the Allithwaite, and Cartmel Community Plan adopted in 2013. The Community Plan was produced from the results of an extensive questionnaire which was completed by residents of the parish. Following the consultation events, the objectives have been updated to reflect the community wishes.

1.2.3 For the vision of the Neighbourhood Development Plan to be realised, planning decisions need to reflect its objectives. The following objectives and links to policies will ensure that the objectives are achieved.

Objective	Description	Policy link
1	To protect the built environment both in the villages and in the wider countryside and raise awareness of Cartmel's Conservation Area.	AC1 AC2

Objective	Description	Policy link
2	To protect locally significant green spaces and views both within the villages and in the surrounding countryside from inappropriate development.	AC3 AC4 AC6
3	To protect and enhance the locally, nationally, and internationally recognised natural environments	AC5
4	To ensure housing stock meets local affordable needs and enables people of all ages to continue to resident within the local area.	Parish Aspiration 1
5	To ensure new housing developments are of a scale, design and density that reflects the character of the surrounding area	Parish Aspiration 2
6	To ensure the proportion of permanent dwellings to second and holiday homes remains at a level that supports a sustainable local community.	AC7
7	To protect and enhance existing levels of access to the local countryside	Parish Aspiration 3
8	To promote safer use of the wider road network, to ensure safer pedestrian and cycle access within the Parish, improve and enhance the cycle network, and improve disabled access to the footpath network.	Parish Aspiration 4
9	To ensure caravan and chalet parks are well contained in the landscape and remain proportional to the size of the residential villages and hamlets	Parish Aspiration 5
10	To ensure a range of local businesses thrive and are well supported by broad band connections	Parish Aspiration 6
11	To ensure the tourist economy grows in a way which supports and enhances the environment and does not adversely impact on traffic and parking issues.	Parish Aspiration 7

Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish

1.24   Allithwaite and Cartmel is a Civil Parish in the Westmorland and Furness District South Lakeland District of the county of Cumbria. The parish was previously called Lower Allithwaite Parish.

1.25   It is bounded to the north by the Lake District National Park and the Morecambe Bay RAMSAR area to the South.

1.26   It includes two villages and a number of small hamlets and scattered farmsteads. There are also a number of caravan and chalet parks which, in addition to the growing number of second homes and holiday lets, significantly increase the population of the area for virtually the whole year.

1.27   In Allithwaite, archaeological evidence shows that the area has been settled since the Bronze age, but the village has only developed since the mid C19 when the then owners of Boarbank Hall built the Church and school and provided a focus for the existing scattered farmsteads.

1.28   The village is sited on higher ground with magnificent views in all directions. To the south and west is the coastal plain and Humphrey Head which is a SSSI limestone Ridge stretching out towards the important RAMSAR site of Morecambe Bay. To the north views are towards the Lake District Fells. The village is sheltered from the east by the limestone ridge of Wartbarrow also a SSSI.

1.29   Allithwaite has a limited range of community facilities including a primary school with nursery, children's playground, community orchard and meadow, allotments, a community centre and playing field, church, charity shop and pub.

1.30   One of the main problems in Allithwaite is that it is divided by the B5277 road and there are many gaps in the footpath network which deter people from walking confidently around the village.

1.31   Cartmel nestles in the valley of the river Eea where the village has grown around the medieval grade 1 listed Priory church. The low-lying pastureland which surrounds the Priory church is an important feature; as are the low round drumlin type hills to the south of the village at Headless Cross. A large part of the village lies within flood zones 2 and 3 and this does restrict areas suitable for any future growth. The conservation area includes the older part of the village and a few very ordinary newer developments have created the impression of a village of two halves.

1.32   The village has three places of worship with Methodist and Quaker chapels in addition to the Church of England Priory church. The latter is, itself, an important visitor destination. There is a Primary school, Montessori Nursery, and secondary school as well as doctor's surgery and village hall and allotments. A large range of shops, pubs, cafes, and restaurants, one of which is Michelin 2 star, all support local and visitor needs and add to its attraction as a visitor destination.

1.33   Cartmel village is a conservation area. The [Cartmel Conservation Area Appraisal](#) is a good source of background and includes a detailed history of the village and a description of its historic and architectural character as follows:.

"History & Character. Although the centre of Cartmel, known as 'church town', is clustered around the medieval priory church and overlies part of the monastic precinct, the village is mainly a post-medieval settlement that developed after the Dissolution in 1536. The village buildings vary in date from the 17th century to the early 21st century, with a high proportion of attractive 18th and early 19th century houses and side streets such as Cavendish Street and Park View. The old town is separated from 'new town' by fields and a stream; and other buildings such as inns and shops, fronting the two squares houses along Barn Garth, Priest Lane, part of The Causeway and the west side of Aynsome Road include 18th and 19th century houses, with 20th century and more recent houses to the east of Aynsome Road, along Haggs Lane and to the south of the village around Headless Cross.

Settlement pattern. Cartmel has a high-density nucleus in the 'church town', with two or three-storey houses and cottages lining the two squares and side streets. In the 'new town' the development pattern is less dense, with more dwellings set behind front gardens with boundary walls. Buildings are mostly built-in terraces or attached groups, parallel to and fronting the back of the footway, which creates a distinctive, tightly framed village streetscene, important to the character of the settlement. Towards the edges of the village, the settlement pattern becomes less dense; in 'new town' to the east and between Park View and Aynsome Road on the north side of the village there are some large historic houses in spacious ground. East of Aynsome Road and around Haggs lane there are groups of 20th century detached or semi- detached houses; there are a few examples of recent infill within the core of the village, but these are rare. Town End is a triangular green space faced by groups of cottages, at the junction with Haggs Lane and to its south is the secondary school, outside the conservation area.

Historic buildings in Cartmel. Historic houses and cottages in Cartmel [and the parish] are mainly built of limestone rubblestone, traditionally covered in a lime-based roughcast render. Brick is not a local building material. Roofs are laid with local slate with stone ridges; the roof pitch varies with the age of the building and earlier buildings tend to have steeper roofs. Chimneys are important features on roofs; cylindrical chimney stacks occur on some local older houses. Houses tend to be two or three storeys high, and built-in terraced groups or detached, depending on historic social status and function. Traditional doors and windows are set in deep reveals; stone mullioned windows and casements are typical of 17th century properties and timber sash windows, sometimes set within raised architraves, are usual on houses and cottages built from the late 18th century onwards.

'Cumbrian Georgian vernacular' is a phrase that applies to many of the late 18th and early 19th century houses in Cartmel; these follow a pattern seen throughout Cumbria where roughcast render and slate roofs are used alongside a regular pattern of sash windows and doors.

Community buildings. Churches, schools, and other buildings were built to serve the village from the mid-19th century onwards. These were usually architect-designed and not vernacular buildings; these were designed following national trends in architecture and were usually not finished in traditional render but faced in stone, partly to reflect their social status. The primary school in Cartmel is a good example of this type of building, designed by Paley and Austin, the Lancaster architects that also designed the school and church in Allithwaite. Other community buildings include the 1930s village hall, the Methodist church of 1871 and the Friends' meeting house of 1859 designed by Alfred Waterhouse (listed Grade II). The principal religious and community building in Cartmel is the Grade I listed priory church, which is now an important tourist destination.

Farmsteads and farm buildings. Historic farmsteads were either located in village centres or dispersed in the rural area of the parish. Several former farmhouses and farm buildings directly front roads or streets in Cartmel, as Wells House Farm. Farmsteads in Cartmel and the wider the parish have distinctive local characteristics; stone barns and outbuildings are generally built of rubblestone, without a render finish, in contrast to the farmhouses that were traditionally rendered. Farmsteads are often built in a linear form with house and barn aligned but other farm plans are also found in the area, to suit the topography. Local slate roofs and barns with large timber doorways, but few other openings, are typical of traditional farm buildings in the parish. A farmstead characterisation study has not been completed for Cumbria, but Historic England provides general guidance on the character of farmsteads and main farm building types in the Northwest[1]

Protected heritage. Three areas of open ground on the north edge of Cartmel are scheduled monuments, protecting part of the monastic precinct, and the priory gateway is also scheduled.[2] Although not scheduled, there is also likely to be below-ground archaeology in other parts of the village. There is a high proportion of listed buildings in the west part of Cartmel, with fewer to the east but some of these buildings have been identified as candidates for a Local List. All the listed buildings in the conservation area are briefly described in the conservation area appraisal, except for the Friends' meeting house, which was listed in 2019. The conservation area includes open space and fields around the village, including the scheduled areas of the priory, the cemetery, and the racecourse; the racecourse was established from at least 1856 and is part of Holker Estate; these open spaces and watercourses are as important to the character of Cartmel as the buildings and built structures such as bridges and walls."

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[1] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-farmsteads-preliminary-character-statement-north-west/
[2] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1020454

1.34   The racecourse – once used 5 times a year for popular horse races is now developing into a venue regularly used throughout the summer for a number of large events. It also provides the home for the football club, cricket club and scouts.

1.35   Managing the increased pressures caused by traffic attending events at this destination has been the focus of a recent village project – "The Cartmel Township Initiative." The document was the result of extensive consultation and includes an action plan to address issues in the village.

Usual Resident Population	Parish	SLDC	North West
All Usual Residents	1831	103658	7052177
Males	869	50522	3464685
Percentage	47.50	48.7	49.1
Females	962	53136	3587492
Percentage	52.5	51.3	50.9
Lives in a Household	1769	100514	6927820
Percentage	96.6	97	98.2
Lives in a Communal Establishment	62	3144	124357
Percentage	3.4	3	1.8
Schoolchild or Full-Time Student at their Non Term-Time Address	41	1791	76565
Percentage	2.24%	1.73%	1.09%

Table 1: Resident Population – Allithwaite and Cartmel (Census 2011)

1.36   The Census Statistics for Allithwaite and Cartmel indicate that the Parish had a resident population of 1,783 in 2003 and 1,811 in 2011. There are higher proportion older residents than South Lakeland, and England 31.5% of the Allithwaite and Cartmel population were aged 65+ years and older compared to 24.2% in South Lakeland and 16.3% in England.

Age Structure	Parish	SLDC
All Usual Residents	1831	103658
Age 0 to 4	3%	4.3%
Age 5 to 7	2.9%	2.7%
Age 8 to 9	1.6%	1.8%
Age 10 to 14	3.8%	5.2%
Age 15	0.9%	1.2%
Age 16 to 17	2.4%	2.5%
Age 18 to 19	2%	1.9%
Age 20 to 24	3.2%	4.1%
Age 25 to 29	2.5%	4.4%

Age Structure	Parish	SLDC
Age 30 to 44	13.8%	17.1%
Age 45 to 59	23%	21.9%
Age 60 to 64	9.4%	8.5%
Age 65 to 74	16.2%	12.7%
Age 75 to 84	10.4%	8.1%
Age 85 to 89	3.3%	2.2%
Age 90 and over	1.6%	1.2%

Table 2: Age Structure – Allithwaite and Cartmel (Census 2011)

1.37   However slightly fewer of the 16–74-year-olds are economically active 66.9% compared to 70.4% for South Lakeland though a higher number are self- employed 26.2% compared to 20.8% in the district and 14% nationally.

1.38   Allithwaite and Cartmel has a relatively high proportion of detached houses (45.5% of dwellings compared to South Lakeland, 30.8%) and a low proportion of flats (6.0% of dwellings compared to South Lakeland 15.6%. 83.2% of households in Allithwaite and Cartmel are owner occupied, compared to 73% in South Lakeland, with 5.7% of households being social rented accommodation compared to 10.7% in South Lakeland.

Type of dwelling	Parish	SLDC
All Household Spaces	981	53466
Whole House or Bungalow; Detached	446	16460
Percentage	*45.5%*	*30.8%*
Whole House or Bungalow; Semi-Detached	271	15191
Percentage	*27.6%*	*28.4%*
Whole House or Bungalow, Terraced (Including End-Terrace)	187	13263
Percentage	*19.1%*	*24.8%*
Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; Purpose- Built Block of Flats or Tenement	16	5025
Percentage	*1.6%*	*9.4%*
Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; Part of a Converted or Shared House (Including Bed-Sits)	32	2410
Percentage	*3.3%*	*4.5%*
Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; In Commercial Building	11	902
Percentage	*1.1%*	*1.7%*
Caravan or Other Mobile or Temporary Structure	18	215
Percentage	*1.8%*	*0.4%*

Table 3: Housing Data – Allithwaite and Cartmel (Census 2011)

1.39   In terms of transport and accessibility, households are very reliant on private cars with 90.9% of households having 1 car or more compared to 84.7% across South Lakeland.

1.40   The villages are served by the Furness railway with stations at Cark and Kents Bank being within 2-3 mile of each village. The bus service is more intermittent and does not facilitate most journeys to work.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

1.41   A Final Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Initial Screening Report and a Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken by South Lakeland District Council in September 2022, following the amendments made to the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan for submission.

1.42   The SEA screening concluded at Paragraph 2.1.6 as follows:

Based on the objectives and policies of the Plan as proposed South Lakeland District Council concludes the possibility of significant environmental effects can be ruled out and so it will not be necessary to subject the Plan to SEA.

1.43   The HRA concluded at Paragraph 3.14 as follows:

Based on the objectives and policies of Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan as proposed, South Lakeland District Council concludes that the possibility of significant effects on protected sites can be ruled out and therefore, it will not be necessary to subject the Plan to HRA.

1.44   The conclusion remains the same as previous SEA/HRA screening assessments as follows:

Based on the assessments undertaken in the preceding sections, it is concluded that SEA and HRA are not required for the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan, as the possibility of significant effects can be ruled out.

2   Policies

2.0.1   This section sets out the planning policies to guide development in Allithwaite and Cartmel neighbourhood area up to 2025.

2.0.2   The policies are defined below each objective. Whilst the policies are divided between the objectives the plan should be read as a whole and should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies of the South Lakeland Local Plan

2.1   Built Environment and Heritage Assets

> **Objective 1 - To protect the built environment both in the villages and in the wider countryside and raise awareness of Cartmel's Conservation Area.**

General Design Principles

2.1.1   A questionnaire was conducted in 2012, and the results fed into the production of a Community Plan for the Parish in 2013. The frequently voiced message was one that in the future that the area and the villages would stay the same. On the whole respondents appreciated how their village looked, and the surrounding countryside was as much if not more important.

2.1.2   Further consultation in September 2019 re-affirmed the views that the design of new development is important.

2.1.3   The following policies seek to ensure that all development within the Parish is of an appropriate design and nature that allows the parish to grow in a way that retains the existing character.

2.1.4   The revised NPPF (2021) states at paragraph 128 that:

128. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place and should allow a suitable degree of variety.

2.1.5   Paragraph 129 goes on to state [inter alia]:

129. Design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site-specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents.

2.1.6   A Design Code for the Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish has been produced by Aecom as appointed by Locality. This was produced as part of the preparation of the Allithwaite and Cartmel NDP to support the design policies contained within it. Following comments by SLDC, the Design Code has been amended by the Parish Council to reflect the concerns raised.

2.1.7   In November 2017 the Cumbria County Council adopted its updated Cumbria Development Design Guide in November 2017 and which has been subject to a further update which was adopted in January 2023. The updates ensured that the Guide is in line with national guidance. It can be accessed by the following link:

https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/544/3887/43115144751.PDF

2.1.8   It is expected that new development will be in accordance with the Design Principles included in the Design Code and the Cumbria Development Design Guide. This will be addressed within a Design and Access Statement submitted with a planning application.

2.1.9   The Cumbria Development Design Guide may be subject to change from time to time or may be replaced during the lifetime of the NDP and any development will be expected to take account of the latest version of the Cumbria Development Design Guide or successor guidance.

2.1.10   In order to address Climate change, surface water drainage is critical. In line with paragraph 80 of the National Planning Practice Guidance on Flood risk and coastal change, surface water should be discharged in the following order of priority:

- *An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system.*

- *An attenuated discharge to surface water body.*

- *An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer, highway drain or another drainage system.*

- *An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer.*

     Applicants wishing to discharge to public sewer will need to submit clear evidence demonstrating why alternative options are not available as part of the determination of their application.

2.1.11   Where SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) are being designed, they should be integrated with greenspace and green links (green infrastructure). Thought should be given this and the opportunity that such an approach can play in meeting the '10% net gain in biodiversity' for new developments which is expected to be introduced when the Environment Bill is enacted.

Policy AC1 – Design Principles

All new development proposals will be expected to respond positively to the key characteristics of the parish and local design features of the villages as defined in the Allithwaite and Cartmel Design Code. Development should not result in significant harm to the character of the area in which it is located.

Development proposals will be expected to satisfy the following criteria, in so far as they are relevant and applicable to the proposal. A proposal should show that it:

A. Has taken account of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Design Code (to be demonstrated in a Design and Access Statement);

B. Promotes high quality residential design that respects local townscape and landscape character and is inspired by local vernacular building styles, building forms, layouts, and materials (see Allithwaite and Cartmel Design Code);

C. Makes a positive contribution to local identity, and sense of place;

D. Is suitable in terms of the overall design and appearance of the proposed development (including materials, size, scale, density, relationship to the public realm, layout, access) when assessed in relationship with the best features of the context within which the development is located;

E. 1. Demonstrates that no significant harm would be caused to the amenities of adjoining occupiers by reason of loss of sunlight or daylight, overlooking and loss of privacy, visual dominance, noise, air quality or pollution;
2. Would result in the loss of an area or view which makes a contribution to public amenity by virtue of its open space character, appearance, and function;

F. Includes measures that seek to improve pedestrian facilities and linkages in the Parish and between villages to encourage walking and cycling;

G. Orientates and sites buildings to maximise energy efficiency and consider opportunities from trees, landform, and any on site infrastructure to provide shelter from prevailing winds and shade; and take opportunities for energy supply from on-site, decentralized renewable or low carbon energy systems;

H. Incorporates SUDS which avoids all non- permeable surfaces or delivers a water management system which minimises surface water run-off and ensures that all surface water is addressed within the site boundary. Every option should be investigated before discharging surface water into a public sewerage network, in line with the surface water hierarchy in paragraph 2.1.10 above. All SUDs will be designed to accommodate the future impact of climate change.

Cartmel Conservation Area

2.1.12 The Cartmel Conservation area is an asset to the Parish. The conservation area includes not only the two separate built-up areas that form the settlement but also the immediate landscape setting around the village to the north, south, and west, as well as a narrow corridor of meadow land which separates the two discrete built-up areas.

2.1.13 Conservation Areas are ''areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'' (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.

2.1.14 Local authorities are advised to review their Conservation Areas from time to time and to ensure that they have up to date character appraisals, which set out their special interest and provide the basis for development control and enhancement proposals. In addition, English Heritage advises that:

'*It is essential for local authorities to regularly re-evaluate and confirm the importance of the conservation areas in their districts, to be clear about the special interest which it is sought to preserve or enhance in those areas, and to adopt a firm framework for their management in order to achieve this.*' (Conservation Area Practice, English Heritage, 1995, p 4.1).

2.1.15 The Cartmel Conservation Area was designated in 1969 by the Lancashire County Council, with the agreement of North Lonsdale Rural District Council. A character appraisal was prepared by South Lakeland District Council and published in March 2009.

2.1.16 The character appraisal seeks to establish and evaluate the spatial characteristics and particular townscape and architectural qualities of the area. It is organised around these three particular themes:

- Spatial Structure (describing the urban framework: which includes plot sizes and building density, the hierarchy of routes and the incidence and typology of public and private spaces, etc);

- A Summary of Townscape Character (which includes a definition of key landmarks, the identification of significant views and vistas, types of approaches, gateways, sense of enclosure, key open spaces, and the impact of natural elements such as trees and any wider woodland planting, etc); and

- A Definition of Architectural Quality (which examines and evaluates the contribution made by listed buildings, key unlisted buildings, building forms and uses, building materials and decoration, and so on).

2.1.17 A Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) for Cartmel was adopted in March 2023 as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2.1.18   In 2013 South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) adopted the Land
         Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD -

         https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/media/6179/01-local-plan_land-
         allocationsadopted-dec-2013.pdf). This identifies employment and housing
         site allocations as well as environmental and other designations. It forms
         part of the Local Plan. Two areas of land were allocated and shown on the
         plan in the DPD: The Stables, Cartmel Racecourse located off Park View,
         and Land at Haggs Lane, located to the south of the road.

2.1.19   The Stables is located within the Conservation Area and therefore, special
         consideration would need to be given to any redevelopment of the
         racecourse stables, to take account of the character of the conservation
         area Related to this, a site for new stables would need to be identified and
         the impact of such development on the conservation area also carefully
         considered. The existing stable site is bounded by a stone wall, with trees
         along the boundary, features which should be retained. The current stable
         buildings sit low within the site, and this adds to the feeling of openness as
         one leaves the village, with the racecourse to the west.

2.1.20   The Haggs Lane site is just outside the Conservation Area and has outline
         approval but since then the Friends' meeting house has been listed; it is
         essential that the impact of new housing on the setting of the listed
         building and the Conservation Area is taken into account at detailed
         design stage.

The character of streets and public realm

2.1.21   In Cartmel village centre, the building line generally fronts the back of the
         footway, with distinctive cobbled verges or footways between building
         frontages and the road or street. Front gardens are fairly rare in the village
         centre. Raised kerbs for footways are not a feature of the village centre,
         except along part of Aynsome Road and the junction with The Causeway. It
         would be good practice to review the results of the traffic management
         measures introduced following the Cartmel Township Initiative; some of the
         changes have had an intrusive visual impact on the character of Cartmel
         conservation area, such as double yellow lines, marked parking bays and
         associated signage. Vehicular areas, including the two squares and side
         roads, are laid with tarmacadam; there may be potential to reduce areas of
         tarmacadam and introduce more areas of traditional materials as part of
         future improvement schemes.

Local built heritage (non-designated assets or Local List Buildings)

2.1.22   The Cartmel CAMP identifies a local list of non-designated heritage assets
         for the village.

Significant views and the setting of Cartmel

2.1.23   The two parts of Cartmel (church town to the west and new town to the
         east) are separated by fields used for grazing, forming an important open
         space within the conservation area which enables good views of the Priory
         and the village. The fields, water courses, mature trees, boundary walls and

hedges are important to the rural setting of the village. There are attractive views across fields from surrounding roads towards the village. Vistas, views are identified on the Townscape Features Map in the Cartmel conservation area appraisal.

Open Spaces

2.1.24 The areas of land separating the west and east parts of the village that are designated as amenity or public open space in the South Lakeland Local Plan as shown on the Land Allocations DPD policies map replicated in Map 3 should be safeguarded from inappropriate development in accordance with South Lakeland Local Plan policy LA1.10.

Policy AC2 – Development within Cartmel Conservation Area and its setting.

All new development within the Cartmel Conservation Area (Map 2) or within its setting will be expected to conserve and where possible enhance the character of the Conservation Area and its setting as defined in South Lakeland District Council's Cartmel Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009).

Development should not be intrusive nor harm significant views of Cartmel Conservation Area and setting as detailed on the Cartmel Conservation Area Character Appraisal Townscape Features Map and shown in the key and in Map 4B.

A. New development will be expected to take account of local vernacular styles, materials, and details, including roughcast render, timber doors and windows and local slate roofs.

B. Any future redevelopment of the racecourse stables site on Park View should be informed by a design brief with parameters for new development, to take account of the context of the site, features to be retained such as the front boundary wall and the scale, form, density, layout, design, and materials for new buildings.

C. All new development affecting the public realm and private frontages will be required to demonstrate that existing cobbled verges and footways will not be adversely affected or will be reinstated following disturbance.

D. New hard landscaping should enhance the conservation area by using local materials such as cobbles and natural paving and avoid visual and physical clutter in the streetscene.

E. All development proposals affecting any building identified on any future Local List will be required to take account of the character, context and setting of these buildings.

F. Any loss of or substantial harm to a non-designated Heritage Asset will be resisted, taking account of the scale of the loss and the significance of the building or structure.

The pattern of open spaces and landscape character in and around Cartmel should be retained.

Map 2 – Cartmel Conservation Area (Source SLDC Cartmel CAA)

Cartmel Conservation Area
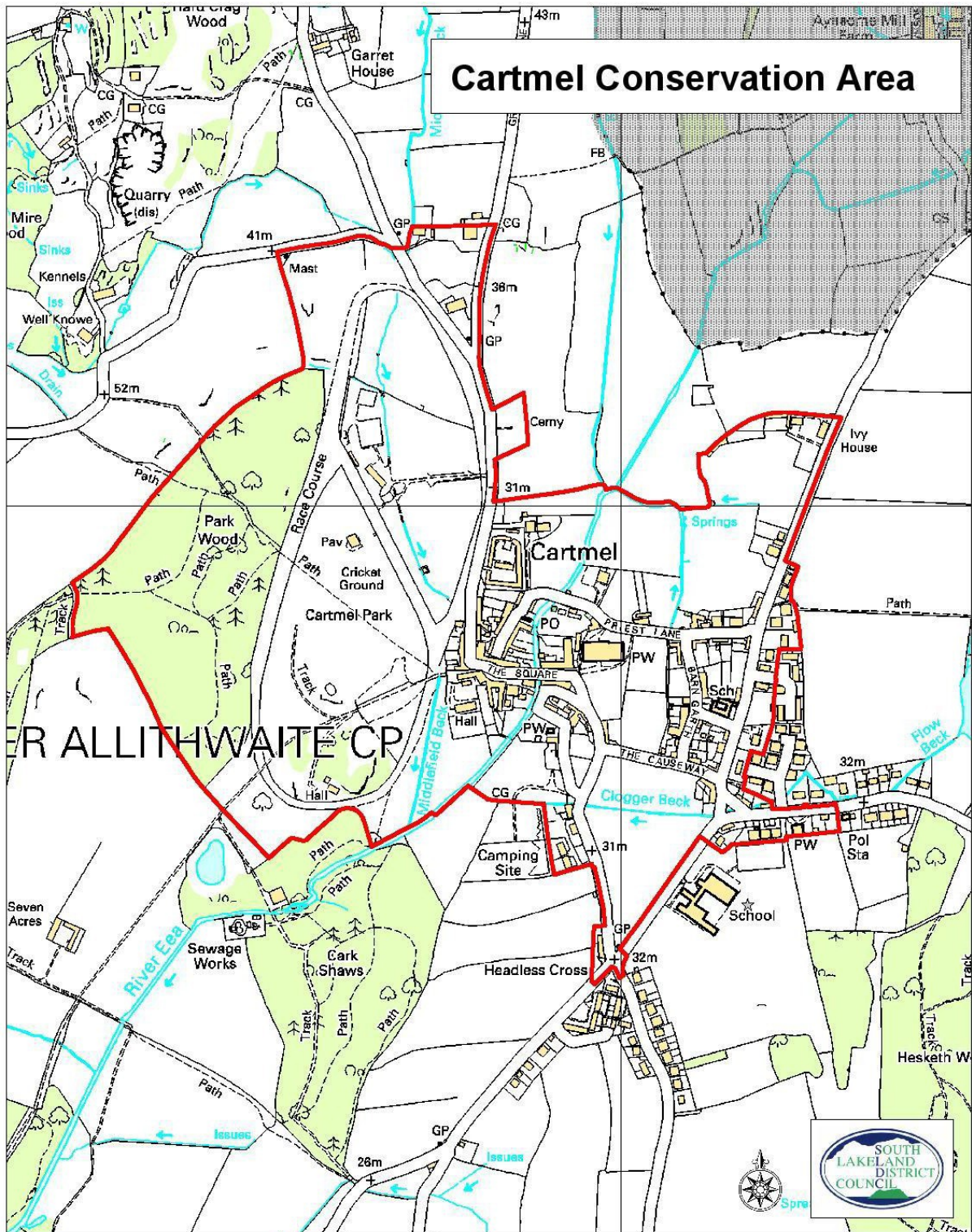
Map 3 – SLDC Land Allocations Policies Map Cartmel and key

Map 11

17/12/2013

Cartmel
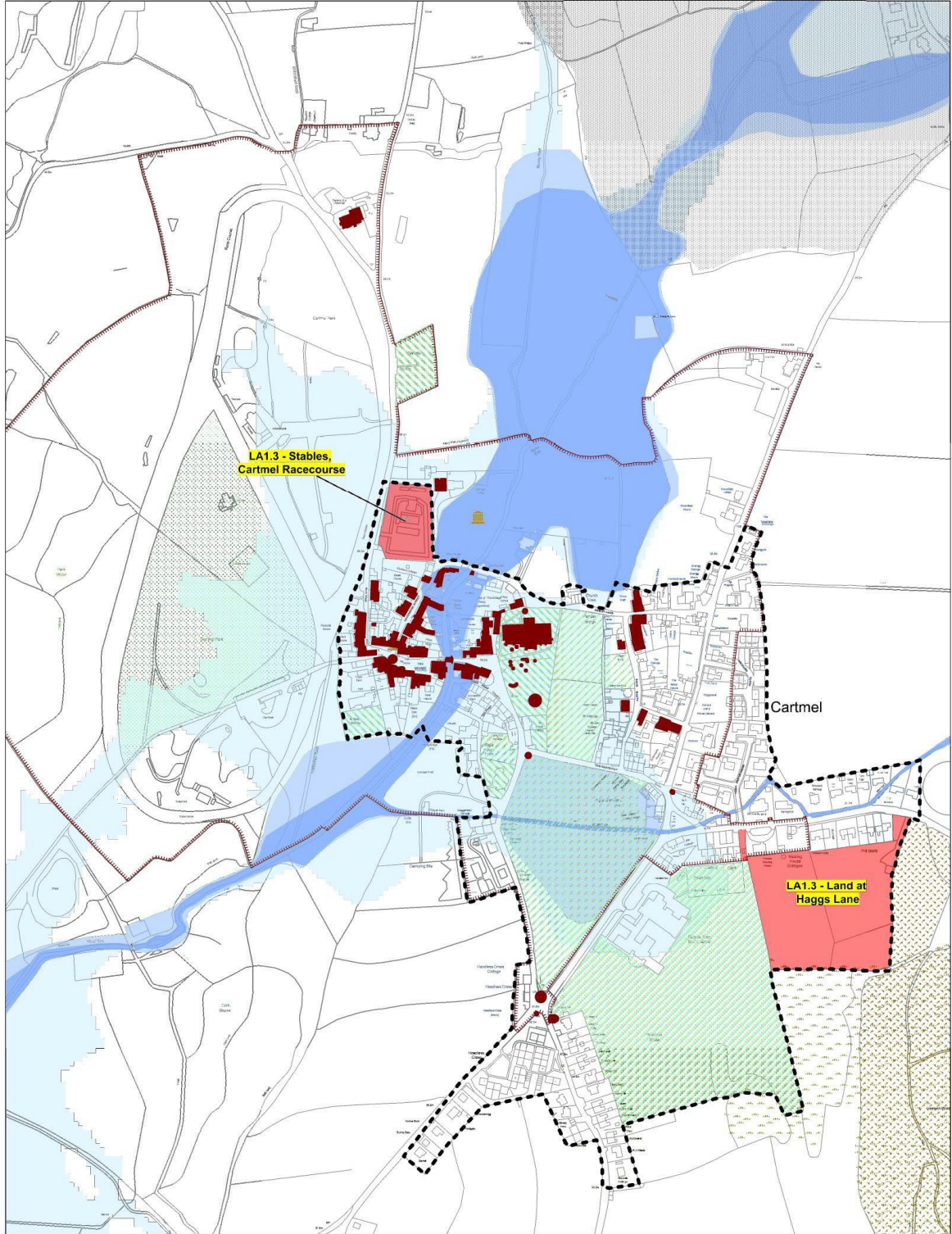
LA1.3 - Stables, Cartmel Racecourse

LA1.3 - Land at Haggs Lane

Cartmel

23

Key

Land Allocated for Development

  Housing Allocation

  Employment allocation

  Mixed use allocation

  Site for other uses

  Development Brief required for site

  Broad location for housing

  Broad location for employment

  Development boundary

Land to be Safeguarded

  Green gap

  Public open space

  Amenity open space (no public access)

  Outdoor sports facilities

  Historic Parks and Gardens

  Existing employment site

  Protected route of Lancaster Canal (saved Local Plan Policy L12)

Environment and Heritage Designations

  Conservation Area

  Listed Building

Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

  (SSSI, SAC/SPA, RAMSAR, UK Nature Reserves and LPOs)

Non-Statutory - Other Recognised Biodiversity Sites / Areas of Interest

  (RIGS, County Wildlife Sites and Verges)

  UK Priority Habitats

  AONB

  Scheduled Ancient Monument

Flood Risk Zones Note: Flood risk Zones are updated quarterly. See www.environment-agency.co.uk for details.

  Zone 2: Medium probability

  Zone 3a: High probability

  Zone 3b: Functional floodplain

Retail

  Primary frontages

  Secondary frontage

  Primary shopping areas

  Town Centre Boundary

Other

  Lake District or Yorkshire Dales National Park

  Outside SouthLakeland District

2.2   Green Infrastructure and Landscape Character

Objectives 2 and 3

Objective 2 - To protect locally significant green spaces and views both within the villages and in the surrounding countryside from inappropriate development.

Objective 3 - To protect and enhance the locally, nationally, and internationally recognised natural environments.

Landscape Character

2.2.1   Consultations carried out in preparing the Allithwaite and Cartmel NDP have shown that open spaces and important to residents and visitors alike. In addition, the quality of the surrounding countryside was seen as being of equal or more importance.

2.2.2   70% of people stated that they admired views every single day, these ranging across all areas of the parish. Walking was the most popular activity with 86% of people walking at least weekly and most of them daily. Apart from pure relaxation, which came second to walking, a variety of sports and other leisure activities was listed – cycling, gardening, horse riding, running and many more.

2.2.3   Various different open spaces throughout the locality were listed, including footpaths generally, Cartmel Park and woods (mentioned by both Allithwaite and Cartmel residents) and Wartbarrow Lane and Fell (Allithwaite). The use of the community centre and playing fields was also referred to.

2.2.4   The character of the landscape that surrounds the villages is an important feature of the area. The quality of the countryside was a key issue in the consultation responses.

2.2.5   The setting of the two settlements of Allithwaite and Cartmel adds significantly to the landscape character of the area, and the Parish Council consider that this should be protected.

2.2.6   There are also a number of significant views of Humphrey Head. This is located in open countryside and is protected from future development as a Ramsar site, a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of conservation, as part of Morecambe Bay. In addition, there is a Site of Special Scientific Interest on Humphrey Head. There is no additional designation required for views of and from Humphrey Head.

Policy AC3 - Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character around Allithwaite and Cartmel

Development proposals should protect and enhance local landscape character by using locally appropriate materials, landscaping schemes and boundary treatments. Proposals should demonstrate how siting and design have taken into consideration local landscape character.

All new development should demonstrate that it respects the landscape features and setting of Cartmel and Allithwaite as identified in the Open space and landscape section of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Design Code and the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance (Cumbria County Council).

In particular they seek to minimise the encroachment of development into visually exposed landscapes and conserve existing landscape features such as trees, hedges, and country lanes as intrinsic parts of new development.

Outside the village any new rural buildings should be located where they do not have a detrimental impact on the landscape character of the area.

Significant Views

Those parts of locally significant views identified below and in the Cartmel Conservation Area Character Appraisal Townscape Features Map that are visible from locations that are freely accessible to members of the general public (for example from a public footpath, right of way, roadside, or other publicly accessible land) should be protected and not significantly detracted from. Developments should take into consideration any adverse impacts on these views through landscape appraisals and impact studies.

List of Views – Allithwaite (Map 4A overleaf)

1. View from the quarry towards Allithwaite.
2. Views of the playing field and community centre in Allithwaite.
3. Views of the orchard, allotments and the King George V playing fields in Allithwaite.
4. Views of St Marys church Allithwaite
5. View from Cartmel Road to Wartbarrow Lane

List of views – Cartmel (Map 4B overleaf)
This list is in addition to those identified on the Townscape Features Map and key in the Cartmel Conservation Area Character Appraisal
6. Views of Headless Cross

7. Views of the racecourse from the land surrounding Cartmel
8. View from Hampsfell to Cartmel

Hedgerows and Dry Stone Walls

Existing field boundaries such as hedgerows, dry stone walls and lane banks are important local landscape features and support biodiversity and should be protected.

Landscaping schemes in areas where dry-stone walls or hedgerows have been lost or are unmanaged should restore hedgerows through traditional hedge-laying and/or replanting with native species, and rebuild dry stone walls to benefit wildlife and maintain landscape character.

Map 4A: Policy AC3 Significant Views- Allithwaite
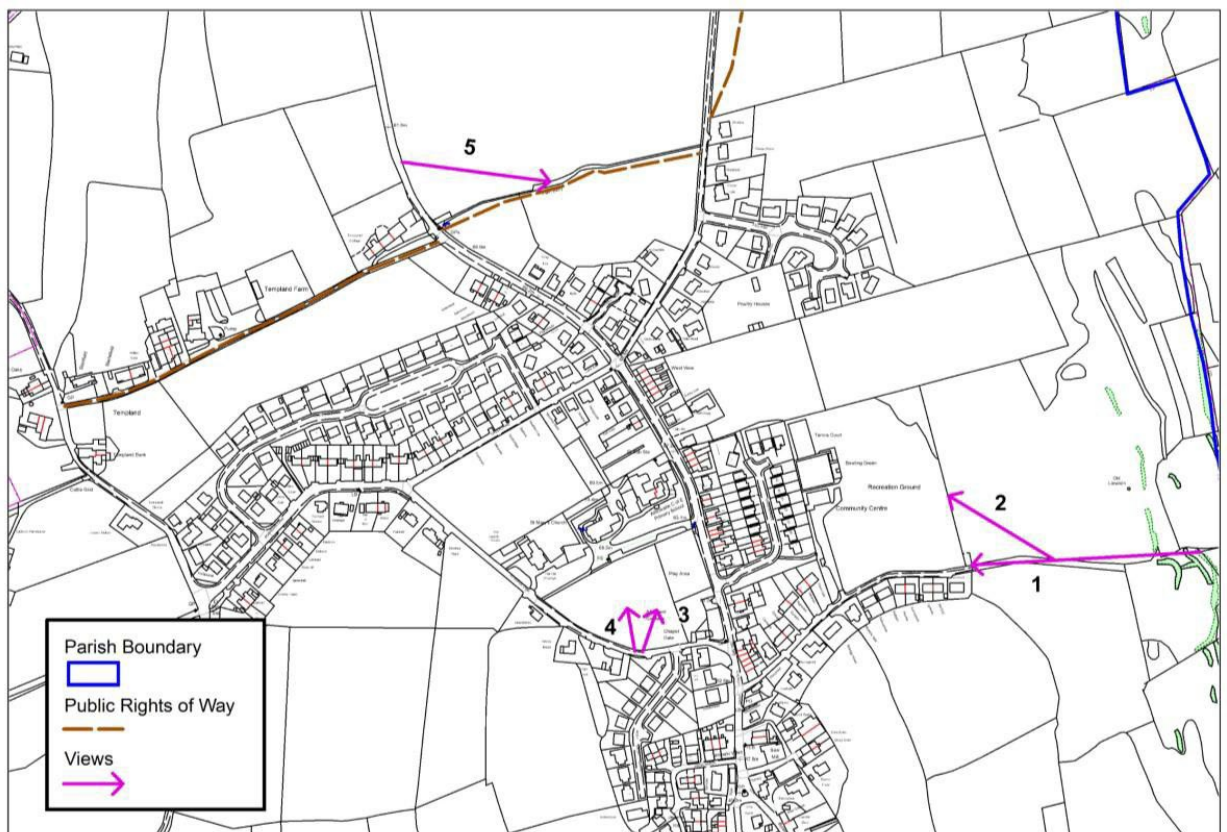
Photographs of Significant Views

View 1 (View from the Quarry towards Allithwaite)

View 2 (View of playing fields and community centre in Allithwaite

View 3 (View of orchard, allotments and KGV playing field

View 4: St Mary's Church

View 5: View from Cartmel Road towards Wartbarrow Lane

Map 4B: Policy AC3 Significant Views- Cartmel
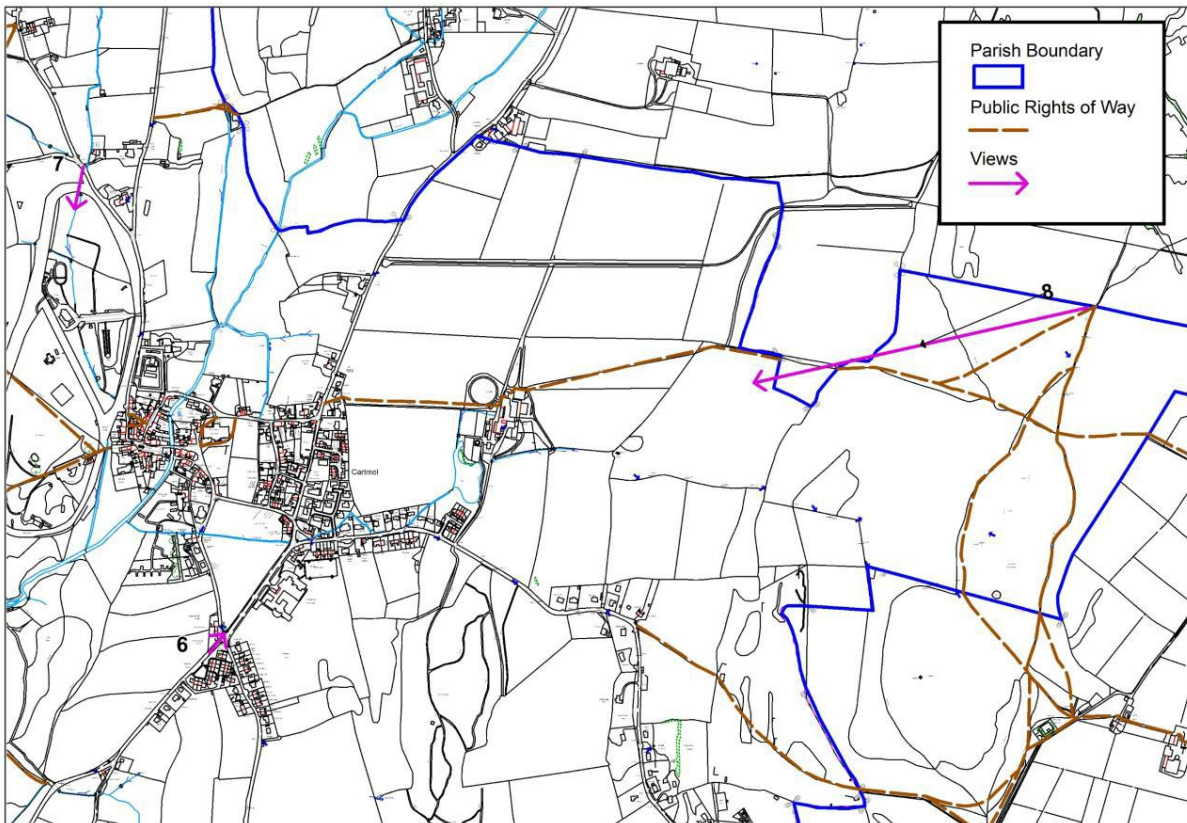
View 6 (View of Headless Cross in its context approaching from south)

View 7 (View of Cartmel racecourse from Croftside looking south)

View 8 (View of Cartmel from Hampsfell

Local Green Spaces

2.2.7 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), at paragraphs 101-103 empowers neighbourhood plans to designate areas of particular local importance as Local Green Space. It states that the designation can only be applied to a green space which:

- is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.
- is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife.
- is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

2.2.8 These Local Green Spaces (LGS) are areas which are attractive, or of historic significance, or of recreational value, or a combination of these. All are highly visible and appreciated by many residents as well as by visitors to the parish.

2.2.9 The Parish Council has stewardship of a green area in the middle of the village; it was decided to turn this space into an area which was more accessible to grownups and children.

2.2.10 After public consultation the area was planned to be a Community Orchard and Meadow which is clean to walk and contains a large number of old varieties of apples, a meadow area, a wildlife strip and an apiary and a permitted footpath. Part of the concept is to allow children free access to the whole area and access was created from the neighbouring King George V Jubilee Play area.

Photos 1 and 2 (Allithwaite Orchard)

2.2.11 This is wholly a dog free area to allow the public a clean and quiet area to sit or play at their leisure and to have access to a limited number of apples during the picking season. A small picnic area has been created with a number of resting seats to take in the views. The area also includes a small group of allotments also neighbouring the King George V Playing Fields.

2.2.12 The Local Green Space Assessment is included on the Parish website.

2.2.13 The Local Green Space Assessment assesses each of the identified sites against the criteria contained within paragraph 102 of the revised NPPF (July 2021).

2.2.14 A summary of the local Green Space Assessment is included in the table below. For the full assessment of the Local Green Spaces, please click the link in paragraph 2.2.12.

Site	Demonstrably Special	Close Proximity to community	Not extensive tract of land
1. Allithwaite Community Playing Fields	This peaceful and tranquil piece of land is important in allowing villagers with limited mobility to rest as they walk between Allithwaite and Cartmel. It is enjoyed by those who stop to sit and those who walk past between the two centres. The site is demonstrably special to the local community.	Within village of Allithwaite	2.0 Ha

Site	Demonstrably Special	Close Proximity to community	Not extensive tract of land
2. King George V Playing Fields	The site provides a valuable recreation resource for local Residents and their children. The consultation confirms the value of this site to the local community providing an important resource for a range of ages. The area has a historical significance within Allithwaite, and is an area known for its tranquillity. The site is demonstrably special to the local community.	Within village of Allithwaite	0.198 Ha
3. Allithwaite Community Orchard	The site performs an important function for the village for both informal and formal recreation. It is a wildlife haven and a safe area for children to travel to and play. This area provides a valued green space at the heart of the community. Many residents expressed how much they enjoyed watching children play, watching wildlife and walking along the footpath.	Within village of Allithwaite	0.321 Ha
4. Allithwaite Quarry	The Allithwaite section of the site which includes a small part of the much larger SSSI (Wart Barrow) has good public access, and potential for public parking in the Community Centre which is linked by a private road to the Quarry. The site is demonstrably special to the local community.	Accessed from the community centre in Allithwaite	0.895 Ha
5. Allithwaite allotments	This oblong shaped, well-maintained, and well- used allotment is located on Church Road on the Northern end of the village. Within the site are numerous well-tended horticultural beds, water butts, sheds, compost bins and poly tunnels. Residential dwellings surround the site on Church Road with the exception of the southeast boundary where it borders the Orchard and KGV. A dense assortment of trees and shrubs line the site's periphery including hawthorn, birch, and holly. A fence with a gate upper and lower on Vicarage Lane line the east boundary through which access to the site, and car parking, can be gained. The site is demonstrably special to the local community.	Within the village of Allithwaite	0.129 Ha

Site	Demonstrably Special	Close Proximity to community	Not extensive tract of land
6.Cartmel Park/ Cricket Ground	Although the football pitches and other play areas are cut regularly, the boundaries of the site are managed to increase the wildlife interest of Cartmel Park. There are large mature trees, which have been underplanted with native flowering shrubs and the grass allowed to grow long with an annual cut with and added attraction with wildflowers e.g., cow parsley in early summer and yellow toadflax in late summer. This area of green open space with recreation facilities, boarded by woodland should be designated a Green Space in order that the residents of the area can continue to enjoy the peace and tranquillity. The above assessment clearly shows the site is demonstrably special to the local community.	Within village of Cartmel	4.96 Ha
7. Cartmel Children's Play Area	The site clearly provides an important and valuable function for the local community. Located at the fringe of the village it is noted to have a long history of use for recreational purposes and other community activities. This site is demonstrably special to the local community.	Within the village of Cartmel	0.123 Ha
8. Cartmel Allotments	The allotments provide healthy activities that lead in turn to healthy eating habits. The setting, adjacent to open fields leading to a river with mature trees encircling and sheltering part of the site, together with the activities on the site and the presence of compost and manure, provides a specific environment for a wide range of wildlife which in turn provides opportunities for discovery and enjoyment for young children. This site is demonstrably special to the local community.	Within the village of Cartmel	0.152 Ha

Photo 3(King George V Playing Fields)   Photo 4 (Community Allotments)

Policy AC4 - Protecting Local Green Spaces

The following are designated as local green spaces (identified on Map 5 and Map 6:

Allithwaite

1.   Allithwaite Community Playing Fields
2.   King George V Playing Fields
3.   Allithwaite Community Orchard
4.   Allithwaite Quarry (excluding Wartbarrow SSSI)
5.   Allithwaite Allotments

 Cartmel

6. Cartmel Park / Cricket Ground
7. Cartmel Children's Play Area
8. Cartmel Allotments

New inappropriate development which impacts adversely on the openness and visual amenity of these sites will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances in accordance with the NPPF section on Green Belt.

Very special circumstances will only exist where the potential harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm caused by new development is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Map 5 – Allithwaite Green Spaces
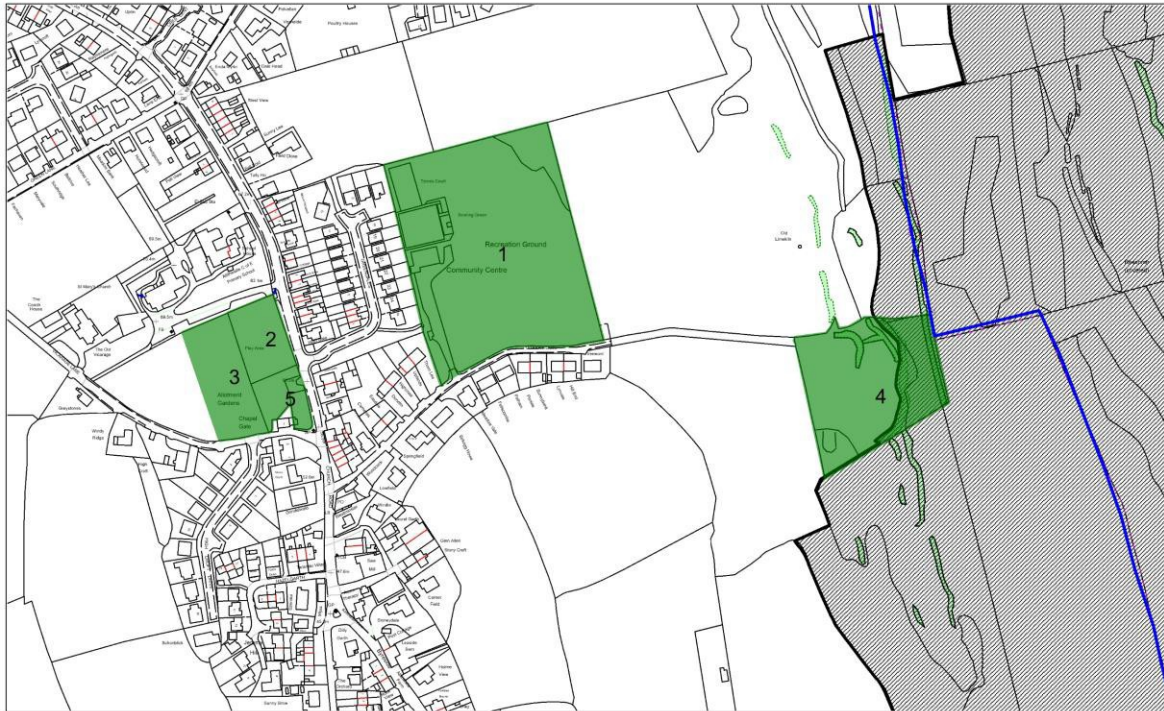
Local Green Space (Policy AC4)   Parish Boundary   SSSI

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Map 6 – Cartmel Green Spaces

Local Green Space (Policy AC4)

metres
Scale 1:3,000

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Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council

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Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

2.2.15 Allithwaite and Cartmel supports a range of protected and vulnerable species. The Neighbourhood Plan is recognised as an important local tool in ensuring that new development has a positive impact on green infrastructure supporting local wildlife and habitats.

2.2.16 The Community Plan identified how much residents valued the surrounding countryside. The link between Global Warming and species protection is well documented and in the community plan 54% of people supported small scale renewable energy projects.

2.2.17 Allithwaite and Cartmel also has a wealth of national land and marine based designations, both within and directly adjacent to the parish. These include:

Adjacent to:

- Morecambe Bay Ramsar site,
- Morecambe Bay Pavements (SAC),
- Morecambe Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI),
- Morecambe Bay Special Protection Area (SPA).

Within:

- Roundsea Wood and Mosses National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- Roundsea Wood and Mosses Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Roundsea Wood and Mosses Special Area Conservation (SAC)
- Humphrey Head Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI),
- Barker Scar Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI),
- Wart Barrow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI),
- Outley Mosses Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI),

2.2.18 Ancient Woodland sites within the parish are as follows:

- Collkeld Wood
- Humphrey Head Wood
- Kirkhead Wood
- Hesketh Wood
- Cark Shaws
- Nicholas Wood
- Rye Croft Wood
- Hagg and Scroggs Wood
- Deanholme Wood
- Waitham Wood
- Old Park Wood
- 5 additional areas of ancient, replanted wood
- 2 additional areas of ancient and semi natural woodland

Policy AC5 - Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Development proposals should conserve and enhance biodiversity in the Neighbourhood Area, and opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements are encouraged.

All developments should minimise impacts from the loss of countryside, wildlife, and the natural environment and where avoidance is not possible mitigate or compensate for any impacts. As part of mitigation measures, designs should give consideration to the need to minimise disturbance to wildlife from noise and light pollution.

As a principle, there should be a measurable net gain enhancement of biodiversity assets, with an aim of achieving a biodiversity net gain of 10% as a minimum requirement and increased to attain maximum possible biodiversity outcome. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off- site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures. The developer will be responsible for maintaining and ensuring the net gain over 30 years. These requirements will be secured through a S106 planning obligation, biodiversity gain plan or other mechanism required by legislation or regulation.

Where relevant to the proposal under consideration, proposals for new development will be required to:

A. Demonstrate how siting and the design has taken into account its potential impact on local habitats and species and ensure no adverse impact either directly or indirectly, on international, national, or locally designated sites, and where avoidance is not possible mitigate or compensate for any impacts.

B. Incorporate existing green infrastructure within any new development.

C. Protect, and enhance wildlife corridors by retaining existing hedgerows, trees, and dry-stone walls.

D. Recognise the importance of and protect the existing network of country lanes.

E. Demonstrate that developments protect and enhance biodiversity and important wildlife habitats. These may include for instance use of swift bricks, bat, and owl boxes, and ensuring that new and converted buildings provide nesting and roosting spaces for bats and birds. A mixture of native species typical of this locality should be incorporated in landscaping schemes which should aim to use appropriate native species trees to break up roof massing.

Dark Skies

2.2.19   It is recognised that dark skies make a significant contribution towards the character of the area at night. Cumbria has some of the darkest skies in the country, where people are still able to see the spectacular natural wonders of the stars above.

2.2.20   Dark skies are not just important for stargazers and astronomers, but also for wildlife. Around 50% of animals are nocturnal – following the light of the moon and stars so light pollution can disrupt their feeding and breeding behaviour.

2.2.21   Dark skies are integral to the tranquility and distinctiveness of the great landscapes of the Cumbria and the neighbouring Lake District National Park. They are important to our well-being, and for the feeding, breeding, and pollinating habit of nocturnal animals.

2.2.22   This issue is not about ridding the landscape of all lighting. People need lighting at night for many reasons. But it can be made to work so much better for us and the environment. Thoughtful consideration to selection and installation of light fixtures and use of energy efficient technologies can both reduce carbon footprint and save money.

2.2.23   Current published national best practice lighting guidance is found in the Institution of lighting Professionals Guidance Note 'The Reduction of Obstructive Light' published in 2021. This is a national good lighting practice that assists with determining the appropriateness of lighting in any scheme in terms of its type and level of illumination in context of the use and location of the proposal. Further current best practice lighting guidance is found in the 'Towards a Dark Sky Standard' published by the UK Dark Skies Partnership in 2021. This provides guidance to improving sky quality and reducing unnecessary and inappropriate light pollution and includes methodology for assessing the extent to which there is a need for internal and external lighting.

2.2.24   Other current relevant guidance / best practice specific to Cumbria is found in the Cumbria Good Lighting Technical Advice Note, referred to as the 'TAN'. The TAN includes a set of Good Lighting Principles that the Council in its decision- making duties and applicants putting forward proposals for new or replacement lighting are encouraged to follow. It also includes a checklist that should accompany all applications or proposals involving the installation of external lighting including replacement. The TAN includes advice on the type of lighting details and assessments to be submitted with planning applications, prior approval notification applications and other relevant consents (e.g., advertisement consent for illuminated signs). In all cases the level of information will be proportionate to the scale of the lighting proposed.

2.2.25   The following policy will be applied to all new development to ensure the darks skies are maintained for future generations.

Policy AC6 - Dark Skies

To minimise light pollution and to maintain the views of our night-time skies, planning proposals that include external lighting and significant openings that would allow internal lighting to be seen externally will have to demonstrate the following:

A.   An assessment is required to determine the need for lighting; whether the benefits of lighting outweigh any harm caused, and to identify any alternative measures available, in accordance with the external lighting methodology in 'Towards a Dark Standard' and any other relevant guidance / best practice lighting guidance.

B.   The nature of the proposed lighting and the level of illumination is appropriate for its use and location taking account of the Institute of Lighting guidance for the reduction of obstructive light and any other relevant guidance / best practice lighting guidance.

C.   Where relevant, an assessment of the internal lighting/glazing is required in accordance with the internal lighting methodology in Towards a Dark Sky Standards and any other relevant guidance / best practice lighting guidance to determine the visual light transmission of new openings and any mitigation measures required.

Applicants will be required to assess the need for lighting, whether the benefits of the lighting outweigh any harm caused and any alternative measures available.

Objective 6

6.   To ensure the proportion of permanent dwellings to second homes and holiday homes remains at a level that supports a sustainable local community.

2.3   Housing - Second Homes and Holiday Homes

Second Homes in Cartmel

2.3.1   Analysing data provided from SLDC Revenues and Benefits system, 12.4% of homes in Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish are recorded as second homes or Business Rates Holiday Lets. This is one of the highest levels outside of the National Parks.

2.3.2   When analysing the data for Cartmel following identifying an appropriate boundary of the Cartmel development boundary (shown in Map 3) + a buffer zone of 200metres, the rate almost doubles to 23.6% of homes. The data is shown in Figure 4 below.

Geography	Business Rates Holiday Let Properties	Council Tax Properties (Not 2nd Homes)	Council Tax Properties - 2nd Homes	Council Tax Total Properties	Council Tax 2nd Homes and BR Holiday Lets	Council Tax Properties plus BR Hol Lets	Council Tax % 2nd Homes	% of CT 2nd Homes or BR Hol Lets
Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish	43	863	79	942	122	985	8%	12.4 %
Cartmel Devt Boundary +200m	28	210	37	247	65	275	15%	23.6 %

Table 4 Second homes/holiday lets in Cartmel.

2.3.3   In order to meet the housing needs of local people, bring greater balance and mixture to the local housing market and create new opportunities for people to live and work here, to strengthen our community and the local economy the Allithwaite and Cartmel NDP also supports the provision of full-time principal residence housing within the boundary defined on Map 7 in this neighbourhood plan.

2.3.4   Over the last ten years, the increase in the number of dwellings was 8% (907 in 2001, 981 in 2011), however the increase in resident population in the Parish amounted to 4% (1758 in 2001, 1831 in 2011), and the number of households increased by 5.9% (776 in 2001, 822 in 2011).

Second Homes/Empty Homes	Parish	SLDC	North West	England
All Household Spaces	981	53466	3150410	23044097
Household Spaces With At Least One Usual Resident	822	46552	3009549	22063368
Percentage	83.8%	87.1%	95.5%	95.7%
Household Spaces With No Usual Residents	159	6914	140861	980729
Percentage	16.2%	12.9%	4.5%	4.3%

Table 5: Housing Data – Allithwaite and Cartmel (Census 2011)

2.3.5   The Parish Council consider it important to have some control over further second homes, to ensure the sustainability of existing communities and the viability and vitality of the existing villages.

2.3.6   In order to meet the housing needs of local people, bring greater balance and mixture to the local housing market and create new opportunities for people to live and work here, to strengthen our community and the local economy the Allithwaite and Cartmel NDP also supports the provision of full-time principal residence housing. This is new housing which has to be used as the principal residence of the household living in it but does not have the price controls that affordable housing does, or any local connection requirement.

> ### Policy AC7 – Principal Residence Requirement
>
> Due to the impact upon the local housing market of the continued uncontrolled growth of dwellings used for holiday accommodation (as second or holiday homes) new open market housing within the boundary identified on Map 7 overleaf, excluding replacement dwellings, will be permitted only where there is a restriction to ensure its occupancy as a Principal Residence.
>
> Sufficient guarantee must be provided of such occupancy restriction through the imposition of a planning condition or legal obligation.
>
> Principal Residences are defined as those occupied as the residents' sole or main residence, where the residents spend the majority of their time when not working away from home.
>
> The condition or obligation on new open market homes will require that they be occupied only as the primary (principal) residence of those persons entitled to occupy them. Occupiers of homes with a Principal Residence condition will be required to keep proof that they are meeting the obligation or condition and be obliged to provide this proof if/when Westmorland and Furness Council requests this information. Proof of Principal Residence is via verifiable evidence which could include, for example (but not limited to) residents being registered on the local electoral register and being registered for and attending local services (such as healthcare, schools etc).

Map 7: Principal Residence Policy Boundary

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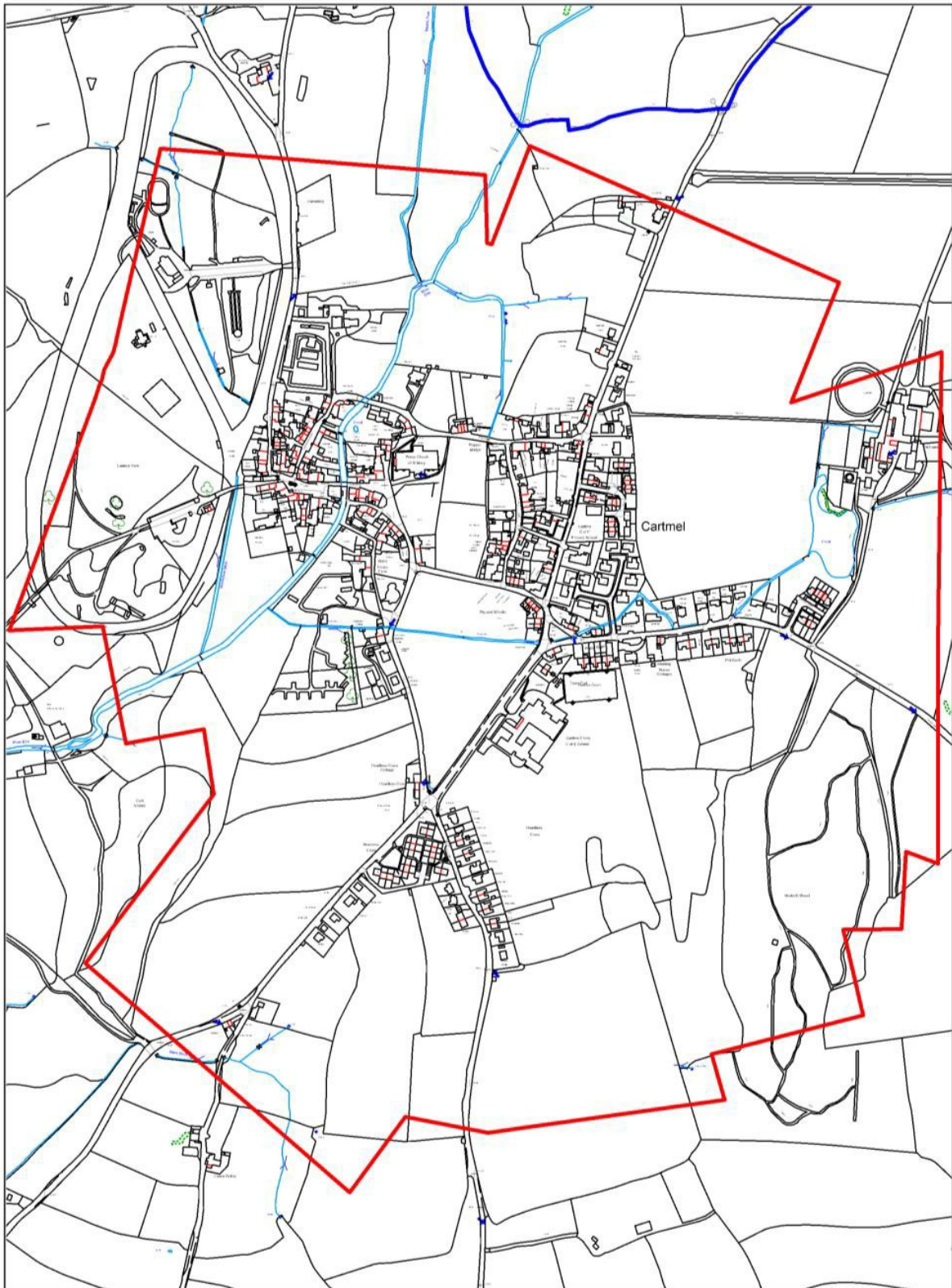
3 Parish Aspirations

3.1 General Residential Development

<div style="border: 1px solid orange;">

Objectives 4 and 5

4. **To ensure housing stock meets local affordable needs and enables people of all ages to continue to resident within the local area.**

5. **To ensure new housing developments are of a scale, design and density that reflects the character of the surrounding area.**

</div>

3.1.1   The result of the Community plan questionnaire in 2012, indicated that housing was a burning issue amongst the community. In addition, it was felt that any housing development should be small scale: 57% were in favour of just 1 to 3 houses, whereas just 9% would support developments of 10 or more.

3.1.2   On the other hand, the great majority of respondents showed strong support for affordable housing, 75% regarding this as very or fairly important. 71% of respondents supported the principle of building for local occupancy, particularly for people connected with the parish.

3.1.2 Census data shows that the villages have a higher-than-average older population requiring a greater number of homes to be built to lifetime housing standards.

3.1.4 A number of sites are allocated for development in the Parish as defined on the South Lakeland Local Plan policies map (see map 3). The Neighbourhood Plan is not looking to allocate any sites for residential development and therefore all applications for new housing in the Parish will be assessed against the relevant policies within the adopted development plan at the time (currently the South Lakeland Local Plan).

Parish Aspiration 1 and 2

1. The Parish Council will work with Westmorland and Furness Council (W&FC) to ensure that new housing development provide affordable housing where possible.

2. In addition, the Parish Council will work with W&FC to ensure that proposals enhance the villages reflecting the priorities identified in the Design Code They should not feature the generic designs associated with suburban developments. They should display the locally distinctive character of the area, typically this should include a variety of style and house types including variations in roof style and building finish to more accurately reflect the diversity and traditional growth found in villages.

3.2 Active Travel

Objectives 7 and 8

7. To protect and enhance existing levels of access to the local countryside.

8. To promote safer use of the wider road network, to ensure safer pedestrian and cycle access within the Parish, improve and enhance the cycle network, and improve disabled access to the footpath network.

3.2.1 In the community plan in 2013, road safety was a concern for both pedestrians and vehicle users. 59% regarded road safety as a problem within the villages.

3.2.2 A consultation held in Allithwaite for a Paths for Communities bid identified a high level of concern about pedestrian safety – it identified particularly dangerous parts of Allithwaite. Parents reported that this prevented children moving around the village independently.

3.2.3 The local road network consists of narrow country lanes. The additional vehicular movements and parking during construction periods has the potential to result in unreasonable dangers to residents.

3.2.4 It is recognised that active travel will improve the health and wellbeing of residents. It will also make a contribution to reducing greenhouse gasses and global warming.

3.2.5 It is considered that the pedestrian experience could be improved by the provision of more direct routes, enhanced facilities and some off-road routes.

3.2.6   Proposals that enhance and improve the existing footpath/cycling network along with the provision of new links in the parish and with adjoining areas? will be supported. Where appropriate, such enhancements, improvements and provision of new links should reflect the most direct routes to village facilities and connect in with any planned / proposed new cycle / pedestrian routes to be developed in the future by the Parish Council.

Parish Aspiration 3

The Parish Council will work with residents, landowners, and statutory bodies to identify potential new routes for public footpaths.

3.3 Caravans and Chalet Parks

Objective 9

9. Caravan and Chalet parks are well contained in the landscape and remain proportional to the size of the residential villages and hamlets.

3.3.1   Allithwaite and Cartmel is a popular tourist and visitor destination due to its location on the border of the Lake District National Park. It has a well- developed range of camping, caravan, and visitor accommodation. The character and quality of the landscape is fundamental to its attractiveness to visitors.

3.3.2   The growth of this type of development although considered to be non-permanent involves the provision of infrastructure – roads, power supplies, sewage and water which significantly impact on the rural nature of the countryside. In addition, the disproportionally large increase in population puts pressure on services such as GP surgeries. Furthermore, this type of development can have a range of impacts on landscape character and visual and general local amenity including effects on immediate and long distance views.

3.3.3   However, the larger holiday parks in the area do provide a seasonal source of employment for local residents and economic support of local businesses.

3.3.4   There are a number of lodges in the parish that are occupied most of the year. The following table includes details of these. (As of August 2019)

Table 6: Static Caravans/Holiday Lodges in Allithwaite and Cartmel

Caravan Park	No of caravans/ Lodges	Seasonal occupancy condition	Not a Principal Residence condition
Blenkett Wood, Allithwaite	18	No restriction	Yes
Burns Farm, Cartmel	24	No occupancy 14 Nov to 1 Mar	Yes
Cartmel Lodge Park, Cartmel	46	No restriction	Yes
High Fell Gate Farm	15	No restriction	Yes
Lakeland Leisure, nr Flookburgh	959 (+100 not implemented yet)	On some	Yes
Old Park Wood (Holker Estate)	387	No occupancy 15 Jan to 1 Mar	Yes
The Pastures	61 (+1 approved 2019 and 1 awaiting decision	No restriction	Yes
TOTAL	**1510 (+ 101 not implemented)**		

3.3.5 The current South Lakeland Local Plan contains policies that seek to support appropriate forms of new tourism accommodation development including caravan and chalet park development taking account of their impacts on landscape character, visual and residential amenity, ability to be served by adequate infrastructure including accessibility and sewerage and need for appropriate design and landscaping.

3.4 Building a Vibrant Community

> **Objectives 10**
>
> **10. A range of local businesses thrive and are well supported by broad band connections.**

3.4.1 The 2013 community plan identified the need for good internet connections both for existing businesses and for the growing number of people working from home. Concerns were expressed about infrastructure provision within the villages. In Allithwaite there are frequent reports of low water pressure in parts of the village and in Cartmel the sewage system regularly causes problems. The recent

Cartmel Township report identified the movement of traffic through the medieval street pattern in Cartmel as being a major problem.

3.4.2   The CIL contribution made to the Parish is important in helping to develop improvements to highways as it is more difficult for villages to feature as a priority in any Highways Authority improvements.

3.4.3   Children in the villages valued having a convenient public play park however they identified the continuing need to improve the equipment.

3.4.4   The village playgrounds are entirely run and funded by small groups of volunteers and do not receive any support from Westmorland and Furness Council. They represent a very important facility in villages where access to other facilities is limited. Larger developments in more urban areas will provide community play spaces but in villages the cumulative impact of a number of smaller developments will not deliver the any on site facilities.

3.5   Parking

<div style="border:2px solid orange; padding:1em">

Objective 11

11. To ensure the tourist economy grows in a way which supports and enhances the environment and does not adversely impact on traffic and parking issues.

</div>

3.5.1   The Cartmel Township Initiative Report was produced in December 2014. One of the issues raised was in relation to parking specifically within Cartmel.

Moving around the village

3.5.2   There are four roads mainly used for travelling through the village which are Haggs Lane, Priest Lane, The Causeway and The Square. Access around the village is therefore restricted, which is exaggerated by narrow streets, restricted visibility in places (for both vehicles and pedestrians), excessive amounts of parked vehicles and servicing activity.

3.5.3   There are three access and exit roads into Cartmel. One from the north, one from Grange-over-Sands to the east, and one to the south. All vehicles entering and exiting the village travel along one or more of these routes. The historic fabric of the village restricts opportunities to increase capacity on the highway network using 'traditional' initiatives.

3.5.4   Traffic flow is seasonal, due to the high proportion of holiday homes and fluctuations due to horse racing. When events are taking place at the racecourse, a considerable amount of traffic passes through the

village in preparation for the event, causing congestion within the village centre. Access into the racecourse is only available via Park View, and horseboxes, coaches, and other large vehicles currently all pass through The Square.

3.5.5   Vehicle speed has been identified as an issue. A traffic calming scheme was implemented outside the primary school in 2012, which has had a mixed response. Pedestrian movement around the village can be difficult due to the limited footways, parked vehicles, and vehicle speed in some parts of the village. It should be noted that the majority of employees who travel into the village are on low wages and need to travel by car because of the distance from where they live and the poor local public transport constraints.

Car Parking

Issues

3.5.6   Parking is not managed or enforced and formal car parking within the village is limited. On-street parking creates congestion within the village centre and restricts pedestrian movement. Some parking is available along The Square and opposite Ford Road, although this is all on-street and only a limited number of spaces are available. Much of the resident parking relies on on- street parking. Business employees often take up limited on-street spaces and remain in the space all day. This is a particular issue for the village. These cars also have a visual impact on the Conservation Area.

3.5.7   The existing racecourse car park has received much investment in recent years. However, with a £2 minimum parking fee, combined with no on-street parking controls, parking associated with businesses and visitors tends to conflict with the needs of local residents. Poor signage also contributes to a situation where space for parking is not as well utilised as it could be.

Supply

3.5.8   Survey work undertaken as part of the CTI reveals that approximately 47 properties on the western side of the village are without on-plot parking spaces. Properties on the eastern side of the village largely have on-plot parking provision and there is therefore less of an issue around parking on this side of the village. However, Barn Garth has 7 properties without on-plot parking provision and 9 existing places appropriate for on-street parking. The Pig & Whistle and Londis junction is often crowded with parked cars and would potentially benefit from the introduction of dedicated parking arrangements at this key access point to the village.

3.5.9   There were several options considered through the CTI and with feedback, recommended actions were included. One of these options was to look at a range of potential sites to develop as additional car parking areas.

3.5.10 Whilst the neighbourhood plan does not seek to allocate a specific site for additional parking, the following parish aspiration will look to address the issues around car parking in Cartmel.

Parish Aspiration 3

Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council will work with local landowners, Westmorland and Furness Council, residents, and business in Cartmel to address the parking issues within the village and potentially providing additional car parking.

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4 Implementation

4.1 Once the Neighbourhood Plan is "made" (the technical term for it being adopted), it will become part of the statutory planning framework for Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish. Once that has happened, the Neighbourhood Plan will be used by Westmorland and Furness Council (along with South Lakeland Development Plan Documents and the National Planning Policy Framework) to make decisions on planning applications. Similarly, Government planning inspectors will take account of the Neighbourhood Plan in deciding planning appeals. Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council will closely scrutinise all planning applications in relation to the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan; it will make representations to Westmorland and Furness Council in support of good proposals which accord with the policies and make objections on any which do not.

4.2 This Neighbourhood Plan also proposes some other ways in which the Parish Council will endeavour to enhance the Parish's social well-being and conserve its environment. To make it easier for people to travel on foot, the Council will develop plans to improve key paths and work in partnership with Westmorland and Furness Council and landowners to implement those improvements and to support enhancements to walking and cycling linkages to the National Cycle Network.

4.3 The Parish Council may consider allocating some of its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts to those improvements. The Parish Council will seek to use the CIL to improve the experience of all residents in moving around and between villages.

4.4 The Parish Council also commits to support preparation of a Conservation Management Plan. The Council will, over the coming years, maintain an overview of whether the Neighbourhood Plan is achieving its objectives.

4.5 In addition to any statutory monitoring that will be undertaken by Westmorland and Furness Council, the Parish Council wishes to track whether the Plan has a positive impact on planning decisions and whether its objectives are being realised.

4.6 The Parish Council would like to acknowledge the very significant input from the people of the Parish who have contributed in a number of ways to the formulation of this plan, including those who completed the parish questionnaire, attended events, and provided geographical and historic knowledge, information dissemination and collection; also to those who participated in and contributed to the main Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the various sub-groups and teams formed to develop particular elements of this Plan.

Appendix 1 – Relevant Local and National Policies and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (revised July 2021) sets out the government's planning policy for England. One of the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans is that they must have appropriate regard to national planning policy and guidance.

The main sections of the NPPF affecting neighbourhood plans are set out in this section.

The NPPF does not change the status of the development plan, that includes "made" neighbourhood plans:

"Para 2. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan[2] unless material considerations indicate otherwise[3]. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements."

Footnote 2:
This includes local and neighbourhood plans that have been brought into force and any spatial development strategies produced by combined authorities.

Footnote 3:
3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

"Paragraph 8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
   a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
   b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful, and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
   c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built, and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

*"Para 10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development***

"Para 11 Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

*For **plan-making** this means that:*

a) *all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;*
b) *strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas[6], unless:*
    i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area[7]; or*
    ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

*For **decision-taking** this means:*
c) *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
d) *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date[8], granting permission unless:*
    i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed[7]; or*
    ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

Footnote 6 As established through statements of common ground (see paragraph 27).

Footnote 7 The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 180) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 67); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

Footnote 8 This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer, as set out in paragraph 73); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years.

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"12. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed."

The application of the presumption has implications for the way communities engage in neighbourhood planning.

"13. The application of the presumption has implications for the way communities engage in neighbourhood planning. Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies."

Additional provisions apply where the provision of housing conflicts with a neighbourhood plan:

"14. In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided all of the following apply[9]:

a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan two years or less before the date on which the decision is made;
b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement;
c) the local planning authority has at least a three-year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five-year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 73); and
d) the local planning authority's housing delivery was at least 45% of that required[9] over the previous three years."

Most neighbourhood plan policies are considered to deal with non-strategic matters and the NPPF sets out how these should be dealt with:

"18. Policies to address non-strategic matters should be included in local plans that contain both strategic and non-strategic policies, and/or in local or neighbourhood plans that contain just non-strategic policies.

21. Plans should make explicit which policies are strategic policies. These should be limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area (and any relevant cross-boundary issues), to provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed. Strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies.

28. non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods, or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving, and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies.

29. Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct, and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies."

Footnote 18: Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area."

The NPPF also sets out how different policies in different plans should be handled:

"30. Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently."

The issue of "prematurity" where a proposal comes forward for decision before a plan is completed is dealt with in paragraph 50:

"50. Refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft plan has yet to be submitted for examination; or – in the case of a neighbourhood plan – before the end of the local planning authority publicity period on the draft plan. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the local planning authority will need to indicate clearly how granting permission for the development concerned would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process."

Communities can also use special types of neighbourhood plan, "orders", to grant planning permission:

"52. Communities can use Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders to grant planning permission. These require the support of the local community through a referendum. Local planning authorities should take a proactive and positive approach to such proposals, working collaboratively with community organisations to resolve any issues before draft orders are submitted for examination."

The NPPF section on housing sets out the relationship between strategic planning policy and neighbourhood plans:

"66. Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations[32]. Once the strategic policies have been adopted, these figures should not need retesting at the neighbourhood plan examination, unless there has been a significant change in circumstances that affects the requirement."

Footnote 32:
Except where a Mayoral, combined authority or high-level joint plan is being prepared as a framework for strategic policies at the individual local authority level; in which case it may be most appropriate for the local authority plans to provide the requirement figure.

"67. Where it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area[33], the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. This figure should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority."

Footnote 33: Because a neighbourhood area is designated at a late stage in the strategic policy-making process, or after strategic policies have been adopted; or in instances where strategic policies for housing are out of date.

Specific guidance is offered neighbourhood planning groups in terms of allocating small sites:

"70. Neighbourhood planning groups should also consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites (of a size consistent with paragraph 69a) suitable for housing in their area."

The NPPF sets out the specific conditions when the Local Green Space designation can be used:

"101. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs, and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

102. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
  a) in reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves;
  b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance,

recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and

c) *local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

103. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts."

Neighbourhood plans should also consider setting local design policy:

"127. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development."

Where relevant, the revised NPPF, introduces the ability for neighbourhood plans under certain conditions to alter Green Belt boundaries:

Guidance is provided on community-led renewable energy initiatives:

"156. Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning."

South Lakeland Local Plan Policies
The following South Lakeland Development Plan policies are relevant to the drafting of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan.

South Lakeland Core Strategy (Adopted October 2010)
CS1.1 Sustainable development principles
CS1.2 The Development Strategy

CS4 Cartmel Peninsula

CS6.1 Meeting the Housing Requirement
CS6.2 Dwelling Mix and Type
CS6.3 Provision of Affordable Housing
CS6.4 Rural Exception Policy
CS6.5A Gypsies and Travellers
CS6.5B Travelling Show People
CS6.6 Making Effective and Efficient Use of Land and Buildings

CS7.1 Meeting the Employment Requirement
CS7.2 Type of Employment Land Required and Sectoral Split
CS7.3 Education and Skills
CS7.4 Rural Economy
CS7.5 town centre and

retail strategy
CS7.6 Tourism Development
CS7.7 Opportunities Provided by Energy and The Low Carbon Economy

CS8.1 Green Infrastructure
CS8.2 Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character
CS8.3A Accessing Open Space, Sport, and Recreation
CS8.3B Quantity of Open Space, Sport, and Recreation
CS8.4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
CS8.5 Coast
CS8.6 Historic Environment
CS8.7 Sustainable Construction, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
CS8.8 Development and Flood Risk
CS8.10 Design

CS9.1 Social and Community Infrastructure
CS9.2 Developer Contributions
CS10.1 Accessing Services.
CS10.2 Transport Impact of New Development

South Lakeland Land Allocations DPD (Adopted Dec 2013)

LA1.0 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development:
LA1.1: Development Boundaries
LA1.3: Housing Allocations
LA1.9: Green Gaps
LA1.10: Existing Green Infrastructure
LA1.11: Existing Outdoor Formal Sports Facilities
LA3.2: Mixed-Use Allocation at Land South of Allithwaite Road, Kent's Bank, Grange- Over-Sands (This Policy relates to land in Grange-over-Sands which abuts the Allithwaite and Cartmel boundary)
LA3.3: Mixed-Use Allocation at Guide's Lot, Grange-Over-Sands (This Policy relates to land in Grange-over-Sands which abuts the Allithwaite and Cartmel boundary)

South Lakeland Development Management Policies DPD

DM1 General Requirements for all development
DM2 Achieving Sustainable High-Quality Design
DM3 Historic Environment
DM4 Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space, Trees, and Landscaping
DM5 Rights of Way and Other Routes Providing Pedestrian, Cycle and Equestrian Access
DM6 Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems
DM7 Addressing Pollution, Contamination Impact and Water Quality
DM8 High Speed Broadband for New Developments
DM9 Parking Provision, new and loss of car parks
DM11 Accessible and Adaptable Homes
DM12 Self Build and Custom Build Housing
DM14 Rural Exception Sites

DM15 Essential Dwellings for Workers in the Countryside

DM16 Conversion of Buildings in Rural Areas

DM17 Retention of Community Facilities

DM18 – Tourist accommodation - caravans, chalets, log cabins, camping, and new purpose-built self-catering accommodation (outside the Arnside and Silverdale AONB)

DM19 – Equestrian related development

DM20 – Advertisements, Signs and Shopfronts

DM21 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

DM22 – Hot Food Takeaways

DM23 – Retail Uses Outside of Town Centres

DM25 – Agricultural Buildings

DM26 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

DM27 – Enforcement

Appendix 2 – Evidence Base

Allithwaite and Cartmel

Regulation 14 Consultation Responses
Allithwaite and Cartmel Local Greenspace Assessment SLDC Data re: Second Homes
Questionnaire Results (July 2016)
Allithwaite and Cartmel Community Plan consultation 2013 Cartmel Township Initiative

Documents published by South Lakeland District Council SLDC pre 1 April 2023

SLDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan update 2017
SLDC (Supplementary Planning Document) Adopted Development Brief for Land South of Allithwaite Road, Kents Bank
SLDC CIL Charging Schedule 2015 SLDC Council Plan 2021-2026 SLDC Climate Change Action Plan
SLDC Housing Strategy (SLHS) 2016-2025 SLDC Housing Position Report, March 2021
SLDC Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2017 SLDC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
Cartmel Conservation Area Character Appraisal and guidance
Emerging Cartmel Conservation Area Management Plan (now adopted as SPD March 2023)

Lake District

Lake District National Park Core Strategy
Lake District National Park Management Plan

Documents published by Cumbria County Council pre 1 April 2023

Parking Guidelines in Cumbria 2002
Extra Care Housing and Supported Living Strategy 2016-2025 (Cumbria County Council)
Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment and Toolkit 2011 Digital Information Strategy 2020-2025:
Cumbria County Council Planning Obligation Policy:
Cumbria Cycling Strategy:
Cumbria Development Design Guide and appendices:
* Cumbria Development Design Guide (PDF 2.7kb)
* Appendix 1 - Parking (PDF 670kb)
* Appendix 2 - Development Management Fees (PDF 273kb)
* Appendix 3 - Criteria for traffic assessment (PDF 427kb)
* Appendix 4 - Highway Design Guidance - Residential (PDF 637kb)
* Appendix 5 - Greenfield Site Calculations (to calculate APC bond) (PDF 251kb)
* Appendix 6 - SuDs components (PDF 893kb)
* Appendix 7 - Drainage Checklist (PDF 642kb)

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- Appendix 8 - Highway agreements / obligations (PDF 305kb)
- Appendix 9 - Public Rights of Way Considerations (PDF 213kb)
- Appendix 10 - Road Lighting Specification and Checklist (PDF 494kb)

National

ONS Census data 2011

Produced by Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council

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Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022 - 2032

Plan submitted to LPA for examination   November 2022

Report to the Westmorland and Furness Council on the Independent Examination of the submission draft Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan

July 2023

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Examiner: John R. Mattocks BSc DipTP MRTPI FRGS

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Summary of main findings

0.1   It is a requirement of the Localism Act that this report should contain a summary of its main findings. The reasons for each of the recommendations are given in the following sections of the report.

0.2   The principal findings in this report are that the draft plan, subject to the modifications recommended in this report, meets the basic conditions as set out in the Town and Country Planning 1990 Act (as amended), does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations and is compatible with Convention Rights.

0.3   It is recommended that the plan, as modified, be submitted to a referendum and that the referendum area need not be extended beyond that of the neighbourhood area. Most of the recommendations I make are for wording changes to policies to ensure that they are clear of meaning for ease of interpretation in determining planning applications and to remove any possible ambiguity, taking the development plan as a whole once the neighbourhood plan becomes part of it. Otherwise, the more significant modifications are that policies AC9 and AC10 be deleted as policies with the matters covered in the supporting text.

Section 1 - Introduction

Appointment

1.01   I have been appointed by the Westmorland and Furness Council (WFC), acting as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, to carry out an independent examination of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan (ACNDP) as submitted to the LPA on 11 November 2022. The LPA carried out publicity for the proposed plan for a period of 6 weeks between 2 February and 16 March 2023 giving details of how representations might be made, in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Plans (General) Regulations 2012 ('the 2012 Regulations')[1]. I was formally appointed as examiner on 20th April 2023 and sent a link to the documentation required under

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[1] All subsequent reference to a Regulation followed by a number is a reference to the 2012 Regulations.

Regulation 17, which included copies of all of the representations received under Regulation 16. I have taken that documentation and all of the representations into account in carrying out the examination.

1.02   I am a Chartered Town Planner (Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute) with over 50 years post-qualification professional experience in local and central government and latterly as a sole practitioner specialising in development plan policy work. I am independent of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council ('the Parish Council' – ACPC) and of the Local Planning Authority. I have no land interests in any part of the plan area.

My role as an examiner

1.03   The terms of reference for the independent examination of a Neighbourhood Development Plan are statutory. They are set out in the Localism Act 2011 and in the 2012 Regulations. As an examiner I must consider whether the plan meets what are called 'the basic conditions'[2]. In summary, these require me to consider:-

- whether, having regard to national policies and to advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it would be appropriate to make the plan;

- whether the making of the plan would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;

- whether the making of the plan would be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;

  and to ensure that:-

- the making of the plan would not breach, and would otherwise be compatible with EU obligations[3] relating to Strategic Environmental and Habitats Assessment and that the plan would be compatible with Convention rights, within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998; and

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[2] These are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as introduced in Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011)

[3] As the United Kingdom has formally left the European Union, the provisions of the European (Withdrawal) Act 2018 apply. At the time of writing, no change to the wording of the relevant primary and secondary legislation has been notified which change references to 'European Obligations'.

- that 'prescribed conditions' would be met and 'prescribed matters' would be complied with in plan preparation and submission[4].

1.04   Legislation requires that my report on the draft plan should contain one of the following recommendations:-

a)   that the draft plan is submitted to a referendum, or

b)   that modifications are made to the draft plan and the modified plan is submitted to a referendum, or

c)   that the proposal for the plan is refused.

I may make recommendations for modifications which I consider need to be made to secure that the plan meets the basic conditions or for compatibility with EU obligations and (Human Rights) Convention Rights. The only other modifications which I may recommend are those to correct errors.

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[4] One such prescribed condition is that the making of the plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

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Section 2 – Statutory compliance and procedural matters

2.01   <u>Local Government re-organisation.</u>   At the time of the submission of the plan and during the Regulation 16 consultation period the Local Planning Authority was the South Lakeland District Council (SLDC), within the County of Cumbria. However, on 1st April 2023 the planning functions of the SLDC passed to a new unitary council, the Westmorland and Furness Council. That council is now the Local Planning Authority responsible for progressing the plan through its later stages. All references in this report to the plan stages completed prior to 1st April 2023 are to be taken as being to the South Lakeland District Council.

2.02   Following the statutory consultation period, the SLDC formally designated the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Area on 28th January 2015. The plan has been submitted by the ACPC as the 'qualifying body' and it relates solely to the designated Neighbourhood Area of Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish.

2.03   The title of the plan is given on the front sheet as the 'Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan 2022 – 2032' and, therefore, the statutory requirement[5] that the plan 'must specify the period for which it is to have effect', has been met. I note that there are a number of references within the plan text to the full title of 'Neighbourhood Development Plan', in other cases describing it simply as a Neighbourhood Plan. I do not regard that as being of any significance nor is it an error requiring correction. In this report I will refer to it simply as a 'neighbourhood plan', solely for brevity, except where the formal title is appropriate.

2.04   The plan does not include provision about development which is 'excluded development'[6] and a plan showing the area to which the Neighbourhood Plan relates has been included as Map 1 on page 5 of the plan. Accordingly, the statutory provision in Regulation 15(1)(a) has been met.

2.05   The legislation states that the 'general rule' is that the examination of the issues by the examiner should take the form of the consideration of written representations. However, an examiner must hold a hearing 'for the purpose of receiving oral representations about an issue' where he or she considers a hearing 'is necessary to ensure adequate examination of the issue or a person

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[5] This statutory requirement is to be found in Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011)
[6] Sections 61J(2) and 61K of the 1990 Act, introduced by section 2 of Schedule 9 to the Localism Act 2011

has a fair chance to put a case'[7].   Before deciding whether a hearing would be required I issued[8] a list of written questions seeking clarification and further information by way of justification for plan policies. Only after receiving that clarification[9] was I able to conclude that I had adequate information to proceed with the examination without recourse to a hearing. I will be referring to my questions and the responses to them in sections 3 and 4 of this report.

2.06   I visited the neighbourhood plan area on Saturday 27th May 2023, which happened to coincide with the first day of the Cartmel Races. That made for a very lively atmosphere in the village but the only effect on my site visit was to prevent access to Cartmel Park and the racecourse area. However, there are adequate photographs available in the Green Space assessment report. I walked through Allithwaite village and up towards the old quarry (which is currently closed for safety reasons) and on towards Kent's Bank.

2.07   The ACPC have submitted a Basic Conditions Statement (BCS) in accordance with the Regulations[10]. It is a very comprehensive document which deals with the legal requirements in section 2. Two of which are covered by paragraph 2.04 and 2.05 above. Section 3.1 provides a comprehensive analysis of the extent to which national policy (NPPF) and advice (NPPG) has been taken into account in formulating the plan and its policies, particularly in the achievement of sustainable development (Table 1) and for plan-making (Table 2). Section 3.5 and Table 3 analyse in detail general conformity of the neighbourhood plan policies with strategic local plan policies. Finally, sections 3.5 and 3.6 deals with compatibility with various EU obligations, including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Human Rights requirements. I summarise these briefly in the next few paragraphs of this report. In overall terms I am satisfied that the BCS ably illustrates the extent to which the basic conditions are met in the plan although there are certain more detailed aspects, most especially related to national policy and guidance on policy interpretation and implementation, which require some detailed scrutiny and in the light of representations made.

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[7] Paragraph 9 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as in reference 1 above)
[8] By email dated 2 May 2023
[9] Email from the WFC on 31 May with additional information on census data on 15 June 2023
[10] Regulation 15(1)(d)

European Union (EU) Obligations[11]

2.08   *Human Rights.* This is dealt with fully in paragraphs 3.6.17-33 of the BCS. No representations have been made to suggest that any infringement of human rights would be likely to occur as the result of the application of the policies in the plan. Consequently, I have no reason to conclude other than that the approach taken in the plan is fully compatible with, and does not breach, Convention Rights.

2.09   *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA),[12] and Habitats and Species Assessment (HRA)*[13] The European Directives have been applied in England through the provisions of the Environmental Assessment Regulations[14] and the Habitats Regulations[15].

2.10   This Neighbourhood Plan does not make any allocations of land for development although it does identify areas of land to be identified as Local Green Space and thus protected from development. In so far as there is to be any development within the plan area this is as provided for in the South Lakeland Local Plan which was, in itself, subject to SEA and HRA procedures. It is evident, as stated in BCS paragraphs 3.6.3-10 for SEA and paragraphs 3.6.11-16 for HRA that the appropriate procedural stages were followed and that the necessary consultations were undertaken with the statutory agencies. Significantly, (3.6.7) there was concurrence with the conclusions that an SEA would not be required and that (3.6.16) there would be no likely significant effect on any European Site, which includes any European Offshore Marine Site.

2.11   BCS Section 3.7 deals briefly with the prescribed basic condition for procedural compliance with Chapter 8, Part 6, of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. However, as it has been concluded that there would not be a likely significant effect on a European Site that condition is satisfied.

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[11] The UK has left the European Union and equivalent legislative provisions have been written into UK law. However, no information is currently available of any amendments in the legislation dealing with neighbourhood plans to provide an alternative to the term 'EU Obligation'. It is, therefore, used in this report to all requirements stemming from EU Directives
[12] Directive 2001/42/EC
[13] Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC
[14] The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Generally referred to as the 'SEA Regulations)
[15] The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (abbreviated to the Habitats Regulations)

2.12   As a result of the analysis provided in the BCS, I am satisfied that the submitted plan is compatible with all EU obligations and meets the basic condition prescribed by section 1 of Schedule 2 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Section 3 - Preparation of the plan and the pre-submission consultation processes

3.01   As required by legislation[16], the ACPC have submitted a Consultation Statement. It sets out in detail the various approaches followed to consult the community during the initial preparation stages of the plan. Following designation, a steering group was established and two presentation days were held in July 2016 with a questionnaire circulated on draft policies. Work on the plan was then suspended until 2019 with a further consultation round in September that year. Formal consultation under Regulation 14 took place for 6 weeks in September and October 2021.   The statutory 'Consultation bodies' were informed. As required, the statement includes a table setting out the Parish Council responses to the representations made including the amendments which were made to the draft plan in consequence. The statement also covers, in section 5, amendments to the Design Code

3.02   The Consultation Statement adequately demonstrates that all of the statutory processes for plan preparation have been followed. Consequently, I am satisfied that the public engagement undertaken during plan preparation satisfies the relevant basic condition.

Section 4 - The Plan. Consideration against the basic conditions

4.01   This section of my report sets out my conclusions on the extent to which the plan itself meets the basic conditions which are set out in the first three bullet points in paragraph 1.03 above. There is a strong link between the matter of general conformity of the NDP with the strategic policies of the South Lakeland Local Plan[17] and that of the achievement of sustainable development. I find that the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the SDLP and will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

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[16] The Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Regulations 15(1)(b) and 15(2)
[17] Primarily in the Core Strategy, adopted October 2010

4.02   In the set of questions put to the ACPC in my email of 2nd May 2023 I raised a number of issues about certain aspects of the plan policies. Many of these are matters of detail in the wording of policy but I have identified one issue which I regard as being of greater significance. That is as provided for in Policy AC8 in the application of a 'Principal Residency' requirement for any new housing permitted within the settlement of Cartmel and a 200 metre zone beyond the current development boundary (plan Map 7). I will deal with that matter first before moving on to discuss other aspects of plan policy, in plan order. Should I conclude that the inclusion of a policy, or part of a policy in the plan means that, as submitted, it does not meet one or more of the basic conditions, I recommend a modification to the plan policy to ensure that the plan, taken as a whole, does meet those conditions. In most instances I will focus on the policy wording itself as included in the plan in emboldened text and, where I conclude that a modification should be made it is implicit that corresponding and appropriate amendments will need to be made to the plan text.

<u>Main issue 1 – Policy AC8. The justification for the imposition of a Principal Residency requirement for new housing development</u>

4.03   Given the significance of this issue, I raised 10 written questions about the application of policy AC8. The policy would apply only to the village of Cartmel and a 200 metre zone around the settlement rather than to the whole parish and is justified by an analysis of census data and data from the SLDC revenues and benefits system, basically council tax returns and those paying business rates, as given in Tables 4 and 5 of the plan along with the text in paragraphs 2.4.6-8.

4.04   The census data given in Table 5 is for 2011 only and is of limited value in that it identifies only those 'household spaces' with no usual resident(s), which includes vacant properties, and for the parish as a whole in comparison with the then SLDC area, the north-west region and England as a whole. It does, however, show a much higher proportion in that category than either the national or regional figures. I asked whether data from the 2021 census might be available but, I understand that would take some time and would be unlikely to be conclusive. That provided shows only a small increase in 'zero-resident households'.

4.05   Much more informative is Table 4. It shows separate statistics for second homes for council tax purposes and holiday lets run on a commercial basis and is able to identify the position in Cartmel, plus 200 m., and the parish as a whole. It shows that taking second homes and holiday lets together, Cartmel has twice the proportion in those categories (23.4%) than the parish as a whole (12.4%). The latter is roughly comparable to the census data. In itself, this provides an adequate basis for applying the policy to Cartmel rather than to the whole parish, including Allithwaite village.

4.06   The high proportion of properties within the specified categories are clear indication of the popularity of the area. Cartmel is a very attractive conservation village conveniently located close to the Lake District as well as Morecambe Bay with the added attraction of the occasional races. There is understandably concern within the community about the impact on local services. That is not to say that temporary residents would not make use of local shops. Holiday lets are also part of the local tourism industry which the local plan strategy looks to support although I accept that the policy can relate only to new build housing which, under current local plan policy, would only be a small proportion of the total dwelling stock.

4.07   Most importantly, Cartmel is identified in adopted Core Strategy policy CS1.2 as a Local Service Centre. It is a focus for local community facilities and housing to meet primarily local needs, including affordable housing, under policy CS4. The housing land allocations made in Cartmel under the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) are, therefore, part of that strategy to provide for local needs and support local services. On that basis, I consider that policy AC8 would be in general conformity with the objectives of the local plan settlement strategy. Without the proposed occupancy restriction it seems likely that at least a proportion of the new housing stock would become second homes or holiday lets, reducing the availability of homes for local people and thus not represent sustainable development.

4.08   There is considerable emphasis in national policy on ensuring that new development is viable to ensure deliverability. In the short term, within the next 5 years, apart from a few single plots, it appears that only one site for housing is

likely to be developed on an allocated site in Cartmel, at Haggs Lane[18]. There is on-going discussion about the proportion of affordable housing to be provided on that site for the development to be viable. An appeal was dismissed and a new application is currently under consideration for which a Viability Assessment[19] was commissioned by the LPA. At the time of writing the outcome of the current discussions on the application cannot be determined. The Viability Assessment does not, and cannot, take into account the implications of the application of policy AC8.

4.09 Affordable housing is the most appropriate means to support local services because it is generally made available only to those with local connections. It is also to accommodate younger families helping to support the local school. Should the imposition of an occupancy condition in accordance with policy AC8 result in a reduction of affordable housing provision on the site in order for it to be viable, or for the site not to be delivered at all, it would run contrary to government policy and guidance. Furthermore, it would undermine local plan policy and fail to provide for sustainable development.

4.10 However, I am assured in response to my questions that the above scenario is an unlikely one. Given the timescale involved before the neighbourhood plan is likely to be 'made' and thus become part of the statutory development plan, I agree. Even should that not prove to be the case, all of the above factors would be 'material considerations' in the determination of a planning application.

4.11 There is only one other site in Cartmel allocated in the SDLP[19] and that is at the racecourse stables which, as I saw on a race day, is very much still in use. The evidence is that it is unlikely to be available in the first five years of the neighbourhood plan period. The plan would, therefore, be in effect by the time any development proposal came forward on that site and could be taken into account.

4.12 It is an interesting concept to draw a 200 m. line around the settlement, as shown on Map 7, in order to 'future proof' the policy. It would encompass any

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[18] Land Allocations DPD, adopted December 2013
[19] Assessment prepared by Continuum, October 2022

new land allocations which might be made in the proposed review local plan for Westmorland and Furness. It means that, for the time being at least, it would have very little, if any, effect. Government policy is that all plans should be effective. For a neighbourhood plan to remain up-to-date, it would need to be reviewed once a new local plan was adopted, especially should it no longer be in 'general conformity' with it. However, that would take time. I do not find that particular provision to be contrary to any basic condition.

4.13 The policy would be implemented through the imposition of a planning condition on the grant of planning permission or through a planning obligation. The circumstances under which either a condition or obligation may be imposed or sought are clearly set out in paragraphs 55 to 57 of the NPPF and in the Government's published guidance on the use of planning conditions. It would be a matter for the LPA to enforce such requirements and I have some reservations about the reasonableness of some of the provisions set out in the box at the top of page 44 in the plan but they are not all-inclusive and would give scope for the LPA to expand or clarify them. On balance, therefore, I find them to be acceptable within the framework set by the NPPF and planning practice guidance.

4.14 My overall conclusion on policy AC8 is, therefore, that it is sufficiently well justified, would be likely to assist in the achievement of sustainable development, having regard to Government planning policy and guidance and in general conformity with the adopted local plan. It meets the basic conditions in those respects.

4.15 I do, however, find that certain more detailed aspects of the policy wording require clarification in order to remove any uncertainty or ambiguity in application and implementation by the LPA when deciding planning applications. This applies more generally to the wording of other policies in the plan and which I identify below as the second main issue. I will deal with the policies in turn, including the wording of policy AC8.

<u>Main Issue 2 – Whether the policies in the plan are sufficiently clear and unambiguous for a decision-maker to apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications.</u>

4.16   This issue derives from the guidance given in paragraph 41-041 in National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Although generally there is a good deal of scope for the way in which policies in neighbourhood plans may be expressed it has to be borne in mind that the plan, once 'made', has statutory force as part of the development plan. Consequently, the 'decision-maker', whether that be the Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State (in most cases a Planning Inspector), should be in no doubt as to the policy intent[20]. For this reason, should the plan contain policies which are not sufficiently clear or unambiguous it would not have had adequate regard to the practice guidance in this regard and would not satisfy the relevant basic condition. The same paragraph in the NPPG also states that a neighbourhood plan should be distinct and reflect the unique characteristics of the neighbourhood area. A policy which simply repeats local plan policy does not have regard to that guidance.

4.17   In this light, my first written question sought clarification of the meaning in practical terms of the word 'support' in the sense of 'development will be supported' usually provided that certain criteria are met. I am aware that this is a terminology often used, even in local plans, but in a statutory context it can only convey an expectation that permission is to be granted in the stated circumstances. The converse applies in that 'not supported' can only be interpreted as 'refuse'. In some cases, the Parish Council have responded to my question by suggesting alternative wording having regard to the guidance and I will take that on board. Otherwise, as long as the meaning is clearly understood by all concerned, the plan does not fail the basic condition for that reason alone.

4.18   *Policy AC1*. From paragraphs 2.1.6 and 2.1.8 in the NP, although it is not explicitly stated, it is apparent that this policy is intended to provide the context for decisions taking account of the design principles contained within the Design Code, applied across the parish although the focus will be in the villages. That is borne out by paragraphs 1.3, 1.4 and 1.10 in the Design Code itself. Consequently, I have treated the Code as being in the nature of supplementary guidance rather than as part of the plan itself.

_____

[20] Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that any determination under the planning Acts must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise

4.19   The PC suggest moving the first sentence of the second paragraph of Policy AC1 into the first paragraph. To do that re-wording is required to avoid 'support' terminology and I recommend accordingly. Re-wording the remainder of the second paragraph in line with the first option suggested by the PC is the most appropriate.

4.20   In the first paragraph is a reference to the 'key attributes' of the parish without an indication as to where the plan-user might find a definition of that term. I agree that a cross-reference to the Design Code would assist and provide clarification. Also, in the second paragraph, it is stated that development which would have a 'detrimental' effect on the character of the area 'will not be supported'. That does not reflect the positive approach to development advocated by Government policy and requires a clear identification of harm before a refusal of permission would be justified.

4.21   A re-wording of the first two paragraphs is necessary to ensure that the policy, and the plan as a whole, has sufficient regard for Government policy and guidance.

4.22   As currently worded the criteria within the policy are linked by the word 'and' which could be interpreted as meaning that all of the criteria should be met for all applications. The PC accept that clarification is needed to make clear that all of the criteria will apply only where relevant and applicable. That should be clear at the outset, not just for criteria F, G and H. I recommend accordingly, including deleting the word 'and'. Other minor modifications to the policy wording will be needed for grammatical correctness.

4.23   Criterion E covers two different aspects. The first refers to the effect on the 'amenities' of the occupiers of adjoining properties. Although the term may be generally understood by a decision-maker it needs to be spelt out: sunlight, visual dominance, overlooking (loss of privacy), noise, air quality and pollution. I do not use the term 'outlook' which suggests the effect on a private view which, in itself, is not a material planning consideration. There has to be a more direct effect on the quality of the residential environment. 'Giving consideration' to something is inconclusive. It is whether a proposed development would cause significant harm which is the appropriate test. The second part of the policy deals with more general public 'amenity' in open space and views and the PC have accepted that it should be subject to a separate criterion, for clarity.

4.24 Finally on policy AC1 I drew attention in my question 8 to the fact that criterion F very largely overlaps with policy AC7. As a result, the PC have suggested that policy AC7 be deleted. Certainly, both are not necessary. Criterion F is more succinct. A difficulty is in implementation unless it so happens that an existing footpath or cycle route runs through a development site or land within the ownership and control of the applicant, so that a condition or planning obligation might secure the desired improvement. It would need to be reasonably related to the development and meet the other tests for such requirements. The inclusion of the words 'relevant and applicable' in the criterion are pertinent in this regard. I agree to the deletion of all after 'cycling' in line 3 because an applicant cannot be expected to know where any future footpath links might be if they are not specified in the plan. That might be a matter for a future plan review.

4.25 The modification to policy AC1 recommended below is necessary to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions.

Recommendation 1.

a. **Delete the first two introductory paragraphs to Policy AC1 and replace them by the following:**

All new development proposals will be expected to respond positively to the key characteristics of the parish and the local design features of the villages as defined in the Allithwaite and Cartmel Design Code. Development should not result in significant harm to the character of the area in which it is located.

Development proposals will be expected to satisfy the following criteria, in so far as they are relevant and applicable to the proposal. A proposal should show that it:-

b. **Delete the word 'and' from the end of each criterion;**

c. **Split criterion E into parts 1 and 2 and reword as follows:-**

    1. Demonstrates that no significant harm would be caused to the amenities of adjoining occupiers by reason of loss of sunlight or daylight, overlooking and loss of privacy, visual dominance, noise, air quality or pollution;

    2. Would result in the loss .... (no change to wording) … **and function.**

d. **In criterion F delete the words 'where relevant' and all after 'cycling' in line 3;**

e.   In criterion G, delete the words 'where possible and appropriate' and amend to read 'orientates and sites buildings to maximise ...'

f.   Delete the words 'where appropriate' in criterion H and commence with 'Incorporates'

4.26   *Policy AC2*.   Although, generally, I do not concern myself with the supporting text the content of paragraph 2.1.22, in dealing with 'significant views', has a direct bearing on the scope of this policy as intended to be applied through the second paragraph. The hyperlink built into the electronic version of the plan does not work, which is a common problem, especially over time. The plan-user has to know to what areas a policy is intended to apply. I accept that the Townscape Features Map in the Conservation Area Appraisal is difficult to reproduce. There are many views identified in it. Although, in general, it is better to include the necessary information within the plan, in this instance that appears not to be feasible. In the circumstances a simple cross-reference to the Features Map is preferable unless hyperlinks are proven to be reliable and durable. I recommend deletion of the hyperlinks. Additionally, it appears that this policy also relates to the additional 'significant views' (6, 7 and 8) listed in policy AC3 and shown on map 4B. Although there is a degree of overlap and duplication, policy AC2 is specific to Cartmel Conservation Area and a further cross-reference to Map 4B is required.   I note (paragraph 2.1.21) that the 'CAMP' has now been adopted as SPD. An update should be treated as an 'error'.

4.27   In the second line of this policy the word 'maintain' is used in relation to protecting the character of the conservation area whereas, as the PC accept in response to my question 9, national policy is to 'conserve', having a more positive connotation.

4.28   I have drawn attention to the fact that it adds nothing to the plan if it states only that a pre-existing local plan policy applies. It is a matter of fact, rather than as new policy, that the fields separating the east and west parts of the village, are already identified as open space and amenity areas (NP map 3) and safeguarded under policy LA1.10 in the Site Allocations DPD. For that reason, a statement to that effect should be included in the plan text, for information, not included within the policy box.

Recommendation 2

a. **Update paragraph 2.1.21 and delete the hyperlink in paragraph 2.1.22 unless it can be made reliable and durable as well as the reference to it in brackets at the end of the second paragraph in policy AC2;**

b. **In the second line of policy AC2 replace the word 'maintain' by 'conserve';**

c. **Add a reference to Map 4B at the end of the second paragraph of policy AC2;**

d. **In the last paragraph of policy AC2, delete all after the first sentence and include as an informative within the plan text, describing the areas shown on Map 3, separating the east and west parts of the village.**

4.29   *Policy AC3.* As I have pointed out, there is an error in the wording of the second paragraph in this policy. The PC agree that 'takes preserves' should be replaced by 'respects'.

4.30   In the fourth paragraph of the policy there is reference to maintaining the dispersed settlement pattern of the parish. That could be interpreted as allowing new dispersed development which would not be in general conformity with the adopted Core Strategy. That reference should be removed for that reason.

4.31   Significant views. As indicated above, there is a degree of overlap here with policy AC2. The same comment applies to the inclusion of a hyper-link. Also the additional views shown on the Landscape Features Map are not listed in paragraph 2.1.22 itself. I make similar recommendations to those for policy AC2. I looked at all of the views listed in the policy with the exception of No. 7 because of the race meeting, but there are photographs of all of them included in the plan. It was easy to see why those views are of value to the community. There may well be others which are valued by individuals and which might be considered upon a plan review. The use of the word 'preserved' in line 4 is unduly negative; I recommend 'protected'

4.32   A representation draws attention to the last paragraph in the policy not making reference to the rebuilding of dry stone walls. That is an aspect of hard landscaping which it would be appropriate to include for consistency with the previous paragraph.

Recommendation 3.

a.   **In the first line of policy AC3 replace the words 'takes preserves' by 'respects';**

b.   **In the fourth paragraph of policy AC3 delete the words between the two commas plus the following 'and' and replace by a single comma;**

c.   **In the section on significant views, delete the reference to paragraph 2.1.22 and replace it by reference to the Townscape Features Map and replace the word 'preserved' in line 4 by 'protected';**

d.   **Delete the hyperlink in the paragraph relating to Cartmel unless it can be made reliable and durable;**

e.   **In the final paragraph of policy AC3 include a reference to the rebuilding of dry stone walls as part of landscaping schemes.**

4.33   *Policy AC4.*   The analysis of green spaces of importance to the local community is a thorough one with a separate document produced setting out the attributes of each site in terms of the criteria set out in national policy (NPPF). I looked at all of them on my site visit and have no issue with any, as a matter of principle. However, I did raise some questions in respect of detailed aspects of policy wording.

4.34   It is generally undesirable and unnecessary to include, in a policy, a statement that the national policy applies, especially referencing paragraph numbers. The areas identified are locally specific and shown on maps 5 and 6. They are the same as in the assessment document, which does not need to be referenced in policy. It is justification. There is a repeat of the policy wording taken from the NPPF but it is not entirely consistent and does not 'have regard' to the fact that not all development is 'inappropriate', even within Local Green Spaces, although the scope for that is likely to be very limited. I have suggested some amendments which have all been agreed by the Parish Council and which I recommend below to ensure that the plan has had regard to these factors.

Recommendation 4.

a. **In lines 1 and 2 of policy AC4, within the brackets, delete the reference to the maps in the Local Green Space Assessment;**
b. **In the first paragraph, delete the words after the brackets and insert 'are designated as' between 'following' and 'Local' in the first line;**
c. **In the penultimate paragraph of policy AC4, insert the word 'inappropriate' after 'New' at the beginning of the first line;**
d. **In the final paragraph of policy AC4, second line, insert the words 'by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm' before 'caused by new development'.**

4.35   *Policy AC5.*   This policy reflects recent policy and legislative changes at national level.   However, the wording of the second paragraph of this policy requires development to 'avoid any impacts …' rather than to 'minimise' such impacts in line with the approach taken in paragraph 174(d) of the NPPF.   The Parish Council have agreed to amending the wording accordingly.   Also, in criterion A of the policy, the siting of new development has the potential to impact on habitats and requires mention.

Recommendation 5.

Amend policy AC5 by replacing the word 'any' by 'minimise' in the first line of the second paragraph and insert the words 'siting and' before 'design' in the first line of criterion A.

4.36   *Policy AC6.*   The second paragraph in this policy duplicates, in a little more detail, criterion A.   On drawing this to the attention of the Parish Council in my question 20, the Council suggests deleting the second paragraph and provide more detailed text for criterion A.   That is a sensible approach to avoid any ambiguity and I recommend it.

4.37   I have also drawn attention (Q21) to the fact that the second sentence in AC6(B) and the final paragraph in the policy are more in the nature of factual informatives rather than policy statements.   In response, the Parish Councll have put forward alternative wording phrased as policy which, in principle, should provide the necessary clarity in the interpretation and application of the policy.

4.38   However, care is needed when referring to documents or guidance produced by other bodies, such as 'Towards a Dark Sky'. Firstly, it is important that the plan-user should be able to find those documents easily. The source should be clearly identified in the plan text. Secondly, although it is reasonable to expect an assessment to be undertaken 'in accordance' with a technical methodology,' 'guidance' has to be what the word suggests and policy should not require a planning decision to be in accordance with it. Guidance is to be taken into account. I adjust the wording in my recommendation to reflect this.

Recommendation 6.

Modify policy AC6 as follows:-

a. **Delete the second paragraph and replace criterion A by the following:-**

   An assessment is required to determine the need for lighting, whether the benefits of lighting outweigh any harm caused, and to identify any alternative measures available, in accordance with the external lighting methodology in 'Towards a Dark Sky Standard'.

b. **Replace criterion B by the following:-**

   The nature of the proposed lighting and the level of illumination is appropriate for its use and location taking account of The Institution of Lighting Professionals' guidance for the reduction of obtrusive light.

c. **Delete the final paragraph and replace it by the following:-**

   Where relevant, an assessment of the internal lighting/glazing is required in accordance with the internal lighting methodology in Towards a Dark Sky Standards to determine the visual light transmission of new openings and any mitigation measures required.

d. **Include a clear reference in supporting text to the source of documents 'Towards a Dark Sky' and the Institution of Lighting Professionals' guidance.**

4.39 *Policy AC7.*   In my questions and comments I drew attention to the overlap between this policy and criterion F in policy AC1 which covers the matter of improved pedestrian and cycle links in a relatively succinct way. It is right that the community should have aspirations to improve these facilities which is entirely in line with Government policy to improve active travel and achieve a healthy society with less reliance on the private car, especially for short journeys. However, there is a difficulty in that the scope for achieving these aims through

decisions on planning applications is limited unless the development scheme is large enough to incorporate such measures within the site layout and where the applicant has control over land to improve access to rights of way. Off-site improvements, especially within the highway, may be achieved in other ways and the use of CIL payments, where meeting statutory criteria, can be on means but that is not an appropriate matter for inclusion within a land use policy statement. Furthermore, if the parish council is to identify improvements to the footpath or cycle network, perhaps also to mention equestrian interests, such improvements should be identified in the plan so that a developer would know what would be required to dovetail with any such improvements.

4.40   In the circumstances the parish council have agreed that policy AC7 may be deleted as a policy in its own right with reliance placed on criterion F in policy AC1. A consequential renumbering of policies will be required. Reference to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money would be most appropriately placed in paragraph 3.1. Any other aspects would move into section 2.3.

Recommendation 7.

Delete policy AC7 with any relevant text moved to section 2.3 of the plan text and with a consequential renumbering of policies. Reference to the priorities for spending CIL receipts should be moved to section 3.1 of the plan.

4.41   *Policy AC8*.   This policy is fully considered in paragraphs 4.03-15 in this report. The only other matter relates to the use of the term 'will only be supported'. The parish council suggest using the word 'accepted' but I do not consider that to be any more clear as to intention. All planning applications have to be 'accepted' unless there are procedural activities. It is clear that in the context of the first paragraph of this policy it means 'will be permitted only (when …)'. That is unambiguous. The meaning would then be 'plain on its face' and I recommend it.

4.42 In the second paragraph there is reference to a requirement for a 'legal agreement'. Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides for planning 'obligations' which term covers both agreements and unilateral undertakings. There is no justification to exclude the latter. The second sentence in the second paragraph, which also uses the 'supported'

terminology, adds nothing to the policy being the converse of what is stated in the first paragraph. It should be deleted to avoid any possible confusion.

Recommendation 8.

a. At the end of the first paragraph in policy AC8 replace the words 'will only be supported' by 'will be permitted only';

b. In the second paragraph, second line replace 'legal agreement' by 'obligation' and delete the second sentence.

4.43 *Policy AC9.* The ACPC have acknowledged the very large degree of overlap between this policy and Policy DM18 in the adopted South Lakeland Development Management Policies DPD. Although it is the case, as stated in the introductory paragraphs that there are a number of caravan and camping sites within the plan area and some pressure for extension or improvements that does not make the policy locally specific. There is a great deal of detail in policy DM18 so that, in certain respects, policy AC9 is less so. It is important to recognise that in taking decisions on planning applications the Local Planning Authority has to consider the development plan as a whole, which means that it is not helpful, and can lead to uncertainty, if policies overlap and duplicate. The Neighbourhood Plan is negatively worded, contrary to the positive approach to plan-making advocated in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the NPPF, although the tone of it remains that permission may be granted provided the criteria are met.

4.44 The fact of the matter is that the wording of the policy is only subtly, if at all, different to that of the section of DM18 which deals with 'All proposals'. Furthermore, the addition of references to long-distance views and sewerage infrastructure, although not in DM18 are covered by DPD polices DM1, 6 and 7, the latter in particular detail about drainage requirements. It is not enough to say that a policy is included to give local emphasis if it does not provide any additional locally specific detail. I do not consider that this policy achieves that. Adequate regard has not been had to national policy and guidance on these matters and the policy should be deleted for the plan to meet the respective basic condition.

4.45 There is no reason why the plan should not continue to include text on this issue referring to local concerns and, perhaps, drawing attention to relevant local plan (Local Development Framework (LDF)) policies.

Recommendation 9.

Delete policy AC9

4.46   *Policy AC10.* In so far as the last part of this policy seeks merely to apply policy DM8 in the Development Management Policies DPD, it is unnecessary, for the same reasons given above. That is that the development plan has to be read as a whole and overlap and duplication can give rise to uncertainty in interpretation. The rest of the policy is not worded in such a way that it clearly relates to matters which are implemented through the planning system. Connection to utilities or the effect on highways infrastructure is a matter for due consideration but it is adequately covered by policies in the LDF. The whole policy is aspirational in its tone and does not provide a clear context for taking planning decisions. However, as for policy AC9, there might well be continuing reference to the issue within the plan text, identified as parish aspirations.

Recommendation 10.

Delete policy AC10.

The correction of errors

4.47   The Local Planning Authority is empowered to make corrections if required during later procedural stages. Nevertheless, it may be helpful should I draw attention to those I have noticed during my reading of the draft plan. I will then make a generic recommendation to cover them. I regard any necessary updates to the plan as being in the nature of corrections to (now) factual errors. That, of course, includes the need to replace references to the South Lakeland District Council by reference to the Westmorland and Furness Council except where they are historic references to actions taken prior to 1st April 2023 (see paragraph 2.01 in this report).

4.48   There are a few minor typological errors as follows:-

Paragraph 2.1.11 appears twice, at the bottom of page 17 and on page 19;

In line 3 of the first paragraph in policy AC3 and line 2 of the second paragraph, there is an errant apostrophe in the word 'it's';

Recommendation 11

Make any necessary amendments to the plan to ensure that it is up-to-date and without error.

Section 5 - Formal conclusion and overall recommendations including consideration of the referendum area

Formal Conclusion

5.01   I conclude that the draft plan, subject to the modifications recommended in this report, meets the basic conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Act 1990 (as amended), does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations and is compatible with Convention Rights.

Overall Recommendation A.

I recommend that the modifications recommended in this report be made to the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022 - 2032 and that the draft plan as modified be submitted to a referendum.

The referendum area

5.02   As I have recommended that the draft plan as modified be submitted to a referendum I am also required under s10(5)(a) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to recommend whether the area for the referendum should extend beyond the neighbourhood area.

5.03   There have been no representations to suggest that the referendum area should be other than the parish of Allithwaite and Cartmel. The parish has well defined boundaries and I see no need for the referendum area to be other than the plan area.

Overall Recommendation B.

The referendum area should not be extended beyond that of the neighbourhood area.

Signed:

John R Mattocks

JOHN R MATTOCKS BSc DipTP MRTPI FRGS   11 July 2023

APPENDIX

Abbreviations used in this report

the 2012 Regulations	The Neighbourhood Plans (General) Regulations 2012
ACNDP	The Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan
ACPC	The Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council ('the Parish Council')
BSC	Basic Conditions Statement
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DPD	Development Plan Document
EU	European Union
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
LDF	Local Development Framework
LP	Local Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority (SLDC until 31.03.23; WFC from 01.04.23)
N(D)P	Neighbourhood (Development) Plan (generic term)
NPPF	The National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
PC	Parish Council
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SLDC	The South Lakeland District Council
WFC	The Westmorland and Furness Council

Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood

Development Plan Design Code

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Referendum Version
January 2024

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1   Introduction

Background

1.1   The Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council (A&CPC) is currently in the process of preparing the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan, a document which will help to shape and to influence development (which, by definition, includes conversions and building renovations or adaptations) within the parish for the period until 2032.

1.2   Locality is the national membership network for community organisations that brings local people together to produce neighbourhood plans. Through the Locality framework, the Parish Council, also known as the Qualifying Body (QB), has approached AECOM to develop design guidance which can be applied across the Neighbourhood Plan area.

1.3   This Design Codes document will provide guidance and clear design principles for new development to adhere to, helping to protect and enhance the rich historic and landscaped character of the parish and its assets.

Purpose

1.4   The purpose of this Design Code report is to raise an appreciation of the character of the parish, notably the villages of Allithwaite and Cartmel, and to use this understanding to provide design guidance which will help to protect the parish identity as it grows in the future. It will identify the different character areas present in both villages and provide a set of guidance which aligns to the local and national planning policy context, and the ambitions of the Parish Council.

Methodology

1.5   The process that was undertaken in order to produce this report was as follows:

- The Parish Council appointed AECOM's Design team to produce a Design Code report;
- AECOM representatives attended an inception meeting and accompanied site visit in both Allithwaite and Cartmel to define the brief;
- AECOM developed an understanding of the design principles that would protect the heritage and landscape setting of the parish, and produced a draft Design Code report;
- The draft Design Code report was sent to the group for review. Various phone calls with the group were held to return the comments to AECOM during the public health crisis, which rendered physical engagement unsafe;
- After capturing the feedback from the draft report, AECOM issued the final Design Code document.

1.6 During the Regulation 14 consultation, South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) made comments on the content of the Design Code Document.

1.7 In September 2022, South Lakeland District Council's newly appointed Conservation Officer reviewed the document. In light of feedback the Parish Council considered it expedient to amend the document accordingly and provide an accessible version that could be available on the SLDC website.

Study Area

1.8 Allithwaite and Cartmel (formerly known as Lower Allithwaite) is a civil parish in Westmorland and Furness. It is a large area, and includes the villages of Allithwaite and Cartmel, along with various smaller hamlets.

1.9 It has been agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Group that there should be focus on Allithwaite and Cartmel villages rather than the entirety of the parish which is sprawling and not necessarily subject to the same level of development pressure.

1.10 Whilst not explicitly referenced, it is expected that all development within the parish should conform to the general principles of the Design Code and seek to uphold the ambitions established within this document.

1.11 Figure 1 overleaf indicates the boundary of the A&CPC Neighbourhood Plan Area, and also identifies Allithwaite and Cartmel as villages of focus.

Figure 1: Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan Area

2. Planning Policy Review

National Planning Policy

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's overarching economic, environmental, and social planning policies for England. The policies within this framework apply to the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and act as a framework against which decisions are made on planning applications.

2.2 The NPPF states that a key objective of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which will be achieved through three overarching objectives. One of these is an environmental objective, which seeks to contribute to protect and enhance the natural, built, and historic environment. The parts of particular relevance to this Design Codes report are:

2.3 **Part 7 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres)** encourages a positive approach to the growth, management, and adaption of town centres, given their role at the heart of local communities.

2.4 **Part 12 (Achieving well-designed places)** states that plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.

2.5 **Part 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)** encourages awareness of the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services.

2.6 **Part 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment)** states heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

2.7 This national guidance will be adhered to and supported within this Design Code document.

National Design Guide 2019

2.8   The National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in principle and in practice. It supports the ambitions of the NPPF to utilise the planning and development process in the creation of high quality places. It is intended to be used by local authorities, applicants, and local communities to establish the design expectations of the Government.

2.9   It identifies ten characteristics which underpin good design; Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes and Buildings, Resources and Lifespan. This report will use the principles of this National Design Guidance to help inform the Design Codes.

Local Planning Policy

Cumbria Development Design Guide

2.10   Cumbria County Council adopted its updated Cumbria Development Design Guide in November 2017, which has been subject to a further update which was adopted in January 2023. The Cumbria Development Design Guide takes into account national standards and includes guidance and Westmorland and Furness Council's adopted standards in relation to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as well as detailed guidance in relation to highways, rather than having two separate guidance documents. The updates have ensured that the Guide is in line with national guidance.

2.11   It is expected that development in the parish will be in accordance with the Cumbria Development Design Guide. The Cumbria Development Design Guide may be subject to change from time to time or may be replaced during the life of the NDP, and any development will be expected to take account of the latest version of the Cumbria Development Design Guide or successor guidance.

South Lakeland Local Plan Core Strategy (2010)

2.12   Westmorland and Furness Council is the Local Planning Authority outside of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Park. The South Lakeland Local Plan Core Strategy provides the strategic planning framework for the district outside of the national parks. It sets the long term vision, objectives and policies that guide development within the district. Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish is located within the Cartmel Peninsula Local Development Framework Area. Both Allithwaite and Cartmel are defined as Local Service Centres.

2.13   Policy CS4 (Cartmel Peninsula) identifies a strategy to apply to the settlements within the Cartmel Peninsula, including Allithwaite and Cartmel within Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council. The ambitions for the peninsula include securing the preservation and enhancement of the distinctive character and appearance of Cartmel village and ensuring that the landscape setting is protected from harmful development.

South Lakeland Local Plan Land Allocations (2013)

2.14   The Land Allocations document allocates land for housing, employment, open space, and other development for the period to 2025. Various Sites are allocated within Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish, all within the villages of Allithwaite and Cartmel. Some of these Sites have been developed since the production of the Land Allocations document. This design code report provides design guidance for those which are still available for development

Lower Allithwaite Community Plan (2013)

2.15   As part of the writing of the Lower Allithwaite Community Plan, an extensive consultation exercise was undertaken. The findings of this engagement have been used to inform the design codes, as they represent the attitudes and ambitions of residents within the Parish. A summary of survey results which particularly relate to design are listed below:

- Open spaces within the village are greatly valued and should be protected, with 91% residents saying such spaces were important or fairly important. The surrounding countryside was considered to be just as important to people.
- 70% of respondents stated that they admired views every single day, ranging across all areas of the parish.
- Although major infrastructure projects were strongly opposed, 54% respondents felt small scale, local renewable energy development was very or fairly important. There was also a strong demand for improved recycling arrangements. There was opposition to inappropriately placed solar panels.
- Respondents viewed road traffic, parking and safety as serious concerns which particularly affect the centre of villages. Car parking was also identified as a significant problem. The lack of pavements and speeding cars were raised as particular issues.
- A 20mph speed limit to address problems was a popular response to the traffic concerns, with 58% respondents choosing this option.

Cartmel Township Initiative (December 2014)

2.16   Lower Allithwaite Parish Council (now Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish) appointed Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners to prepare a strategy for Cartmel in response to various development pressures. This was driven by concern that inappropriate development and increased visitor numbers were threatening the rich heritage and character of the village.

2.17   The initiative presents solutions to address issues relating to highways and traffic matters, but also the environmental and landscaped setting of the village. Although the focus of the document is relevant only to Cartmel, it provides a valuable insight into the context of the village and the spatial pressures and problems deemed important to address by the Parish Council. The Cartmel Township Initiative identifies various initiatives within the Action Plan. The primary focus of the

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document was to address parking and highway issues. Numerous parking solutions and interventions are considered, including utilising the racecourse. There are also actions relating to the public realm. These have been considered within the codes of this section. The actions of direct relevance include the following.

- **Action 5**- Improve Signage; Develop a signage strategy focusing on clearer directions to the village centre car park, points of interest and around the village and parking restrictions.
- **Action 8**- Riverside enhancements; Implementing a well-designed hard and soft landscape scheme along the river edge to create an attractive amenity for visitors and residents.
- **Action 9**- Cycle Facilities; Measures would include provision of cycle parking/ hire facilities to promote recreational cycling around the village for visitors.
- **Action 11**- Improve lighting across the Racecourse car park, along routes to and from it and within the village; Design and impact will need to be managed carefully to maintain the rural character and avoid light pollution.
- **Action 13**- Co-ordinated programme of environmental improvements in conjunction with potential introduction of one-way working; Comprehensive programme of environmental improvements across the village – focusing on the public spaces either side of The Square.

Cartmel Character Area Appraisal (March 2009)

2.18   The document provides a detailed assessment of the conservation area's architectural and historic interest which has formed the basis of the design codes.

Cartmel Village Design Statement (1994)

2.19   The Parish Council provided a hard copy of the Cartmel Village Design Statement which seeks to raise awareness about the Cartmel vernacular and ensure appropriate development. It consolidates feedback from various engagement sessions of the time. The guidance proposed within the Design Statement has been incorporated into the relevant design codes of this document.

3. Place Assessment

Parish Overview

3.1 This section provides a broad overview of the parish area in order to understand the context within which the villages are located. The parish covers a large area between the Lake District National Park and Morecambe Bay. It consists of two villages, Allithwaite and Cartmel, and a small number of hamlets and scattered farmsteads within its rural expanses. The boundary captures approximately 2,859 hectares and extends out into Morecambe Bay. There are approximately 907 households and 1,831 residents according to the 2011 Census. However, this number is likely to be outdated and does not account for the conversion of holiday lodges into residential buildings, which has distorted the number of residents within the villages in recent years.

3.2 Allithwaite and Cartmel are local service centres located in proximity to from Grange-over-Sands, a Victorian seaside resort and key service centre.

3.3 The landscape is a key asset to the parish. It is influenced by agricultural practices, but also by the nearby designations; the Lake District National Park boundary borders the northern edge of the Parish, and the Morecambe Bay Ramsar site and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located to the south and west. Morecambe Bay is considered to be a wetland site of international importance, hence the designations.

3.4 The parish generally has good access to major towns in the area through proximity to the railway line, with railway stations being located at Grange-over-Sands, Kents Bank and Cark. Bus services also provide access from the parish to local towns.

3.5 Given its rural context, there is a reliance on the private car in the parish above the district average. The A590 runs 3km to the northeast, providing a key connection to the M6. The primary route across the Parish is limited to the B5277, which runs through the village of Allithwaite.

Figure 2: The Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Context

The Study Area

3.6   This section provides a more focused analysis and comparative study of the two village areas, Allithwaite and Cartmel. It has been agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Group that there should be focus on Allithwaite and Cartmel villages rather than the entirety of the parish. The village settlements are located approximately one mile apart. It is useful to compare the similarities and differences of the villages to understand their nuances, which will help to produce a more effective set of design codes.

Figure 3: Allithwaite and Cartmel Villages, which form the Study Area

Structure and Evolution

Allithwaite

3.7 Allithwaite is a small village located 1.2 miles to the west of Grange-over-Sands. Farming and fishing were the primary industries in the area given its proximity to Morecambe Bay. Allithwaite was historically a very linear settlement, which focused around Church Road in a north-south arrangement. The village experienced incremental growth until the mid-20th Century, at which point it has broadened and expanded outwards from Church Road. This growth has had to respond to the undulating topography of the area and has created an irregular settlement pattern. Large areas of open space have been retained within the village, despite continuing development. Allithwaite has more households than Cartmel.

Cartmel

3.8 Cartmel is located 2.2 miles north-west of Grange-over-Sands, and only a mile to the north of Allithwaite. It is located on a flat expanse of land. Previously known as 'Church Town' (Cartmel Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Page 15), the origins of Cartmel's growth and street pattern were heavily influenced by the medieval Cartmel Priory Church of St Mary and St Michael, which has been a focus for Christian worship since the 12th Century. The origins of the village centred on 'Church Town' in the west, whilst post-medieval growth located in the east, in 'New Town.' The cores of these areas are separated by a stretch of open green space, which has been retained down the heart of the village. The fame of the Priory and the tradition of horse racing have influenced interest within Cartmel, which is now a popular tourist destination. Whilst the village has been largely able to retain its traditional settlement shape, more recent residential extensions have stretched the eastern and southern extremities.

Comparison

- Despite their relative proximity the villages have different origins, with Cartmel being heavily influenced by the Priory and Allithwaite more reliant on traditional industries.
- The topography has influenced different settlement patterns; Allithwaite is undulating whilst Cartmel is flat. Allithwaite is more expansive than Cartmel.
- Both villages have retained a strong relationship to open spaces.
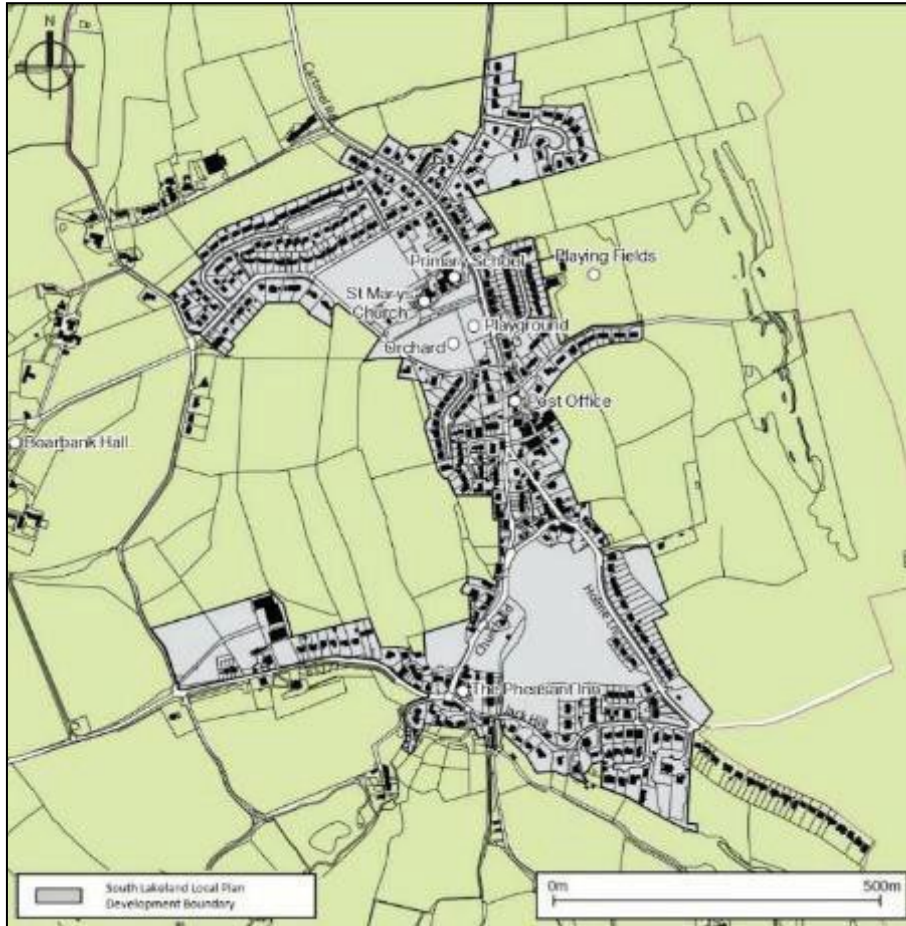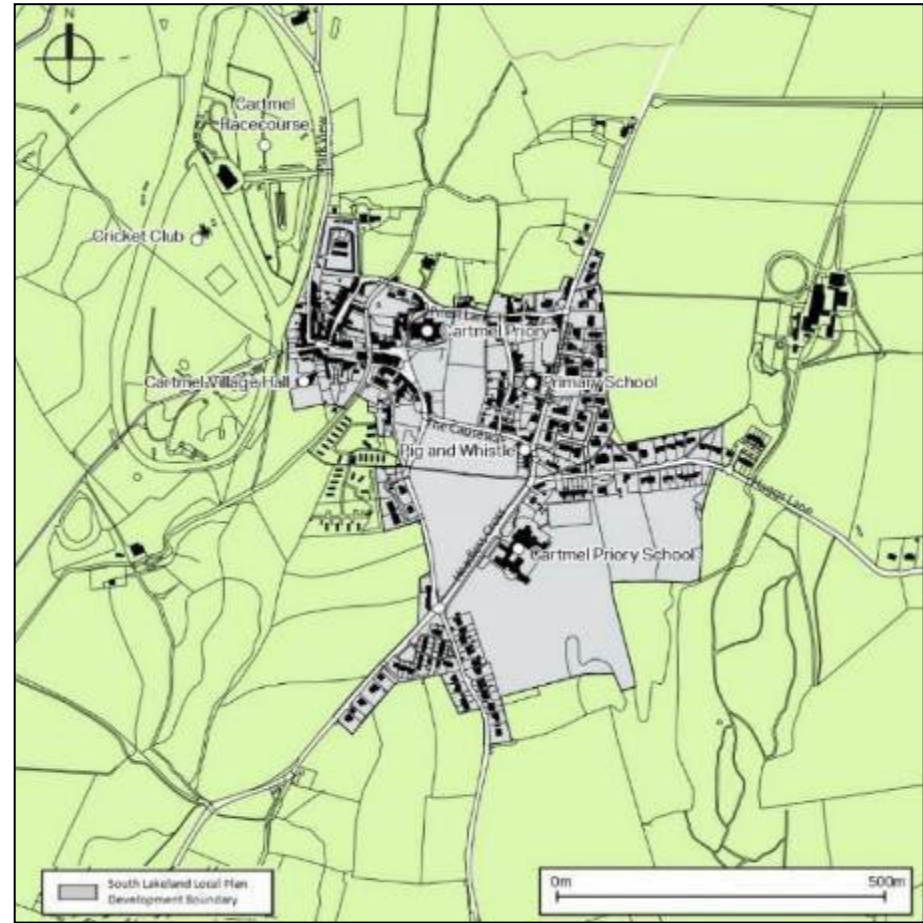
Figure 4: Allithwaite Figure Ground

Figure 5: Cartmel Figure Ground

Open Space and Landscape

Allithwaite

3.9 Allithwaite falls within Landscape Character Type 03a (Open Farmland and Pavements) according to the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance (Cumbria County Council). This is defined by the following:

- Steep limestone slopes and rocky outcrops.

- Grazed land with stone wall field boundaries.

- Rough pasture as open common or fell.

- Sporadic scrub and woodland on steep scarp slopes.

- Stately homes and parklands.

- Extensive open and uninterrupted views from high ground.

3.10 Allithwaite has rolling limestone hills which oversee the lower-lying coastal parts of the Parish in the south. It exhibits a historic field pattern which is defined by hedgerow and dry-stone walls. The medieval enclosure patterns indicate a managed environment. There is openness to the landscape given the long views to Morecambe Bay and to the Lakeland Fells.

3.11 In terms of open green space, Allithwaite has a sports field, a pump track, community centre with playing fields, the King George V playing fields, allotments, and an Orchard. These occupy a central position along Church Road and have a strong presence in the village.

3.12 See South Lakeland Local Plan Policies map for Allithwaite and Cartmel open space designations and the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map for the Local Green Space designations.

Cartmel

3.13 Cartmel falls within two Landscape Character Types which split the village; 03a (Open Farmland and Pavements) to the south-east and 11a (Upland Fringes- Foothills) to the north-west. Headless Cross divides these character types. In addition to the detail about Landscape Character Type 03a, Landscape Character Type 11a is described as exhibiting the following;

- Rolling, hilly or plateau farmland and moorland.

- Occasional rocky outcrops.

- Hills are dissected by numerous streams and minor river valleys.

- Areas of improved grassland, unimproved heathland, and extensive conifer plantations.

- Semi natural woodland in the small valleys.

- Large areas of farmland are bounded by stone walls and hedges.

3.14 Cartmel also exhibits historic field patterns, identified with stone walls and hedges. To the west, by the racecourse, small areas of woodland exist which helps to contain views. The village is concealed by the surrounding topography but occupies a flat expanse of land along the river. The Lake District fells are apparent to the north and acts as an attractive landscape backdrop. In terms of open green space, Cartmel has a cricket ground, football pitch, racecourse, and a cemetery. These occupy a central and visible position within the village; the central green space made up of the Priory, Castle, and Home Meadows, provides breathing space and separates Church Town from New Town. The wide corridor of open green space offered by these fields is of crucial importance to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

3.15 See South Lakeland Local Plan Policies map for Cartmel and the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map for the Open Space designations.

Comparison

- Despite proximity the villages have different origins, with Cartmel being heavily influenced by the Priory and Allithwaite more reliant on traditional industries.

- The topography has influenced different settlement patterns; Allithwaite is undulating whilst Cartmel is flat. Allithwaite is more expansive than Cartmel

- Both villages have retained a strong relationship to open spaces.

- Both Allithwaite and Cartmel have a Primary School, and a Secondary School is present in Cartmel (Cartmel Priory School). These facilities provide additional community open and recreational spaces which serve important roles within the settlements.

Flooding

Allithwaite

3.16 The Parish lies on limestone rock which generally contributes to flood risk. Given the topography and elevation of Allithwaite, however, only land to the south-west of Allithwaite settlement boundary is subject to flooding.

3.17 The fells of the Lake District to the north can be seen from both villages. Allithwaite is a south-facing village in an elevated position within the landscape, affording views across Morecambe Bay to the south. The village is sheltered from the east by a limestone ridge. The undulations of the land provide varied views across the village; parts of the settlement can be hidden whilst parts can also appear exposed and interrupt the ridgelines.

Cartmel

3.18 Flood risk is more commonplace in Cartmel, where the river Eea runs through the Church Town part of the village in the west. Much of the settlement area falls within Flood Zone 2 or 3, although development has avoided areas of flood risk.

3.19 The low-lying pastureland which surrounds Cartmel helps to define the position of the village. Views of the Priory church are common given its central position and scale. The village also enjoys unspoilt views extending to the north and the west, especially northward to the fells of the Lake District. The river acts as a visual landmark within the village and provides attractive short views to the north and the south.

Comparison

- Both Allithwaite and Cartmel share long views to the fells of the Lake District in the north. Panoramic views and glimpses of Morecambe Bay or the fells of the Lake District are common across the area and help to confirm the rural setting of the Parish.

- Allithwaite has a wider range of views than Cartmel due to the undulations of land.

- Cartmel enjoys riverside views, whilst Allithwaite enjoys views to Morecambe Bay.

- Flood risk is a more prevalent risk in Cartmel than in Allithwaite, where no river or tributaries are present. Both settlements, however, should have regard for well-considered drainage solutions so as not to exacerbate surface water flooding.
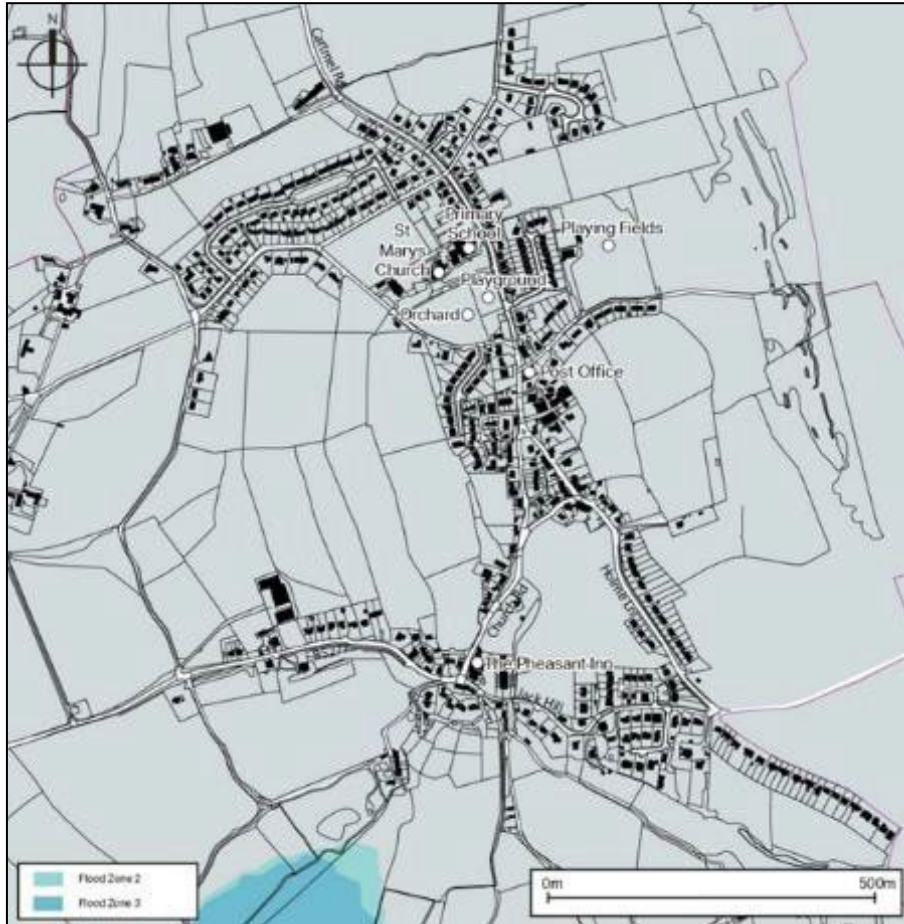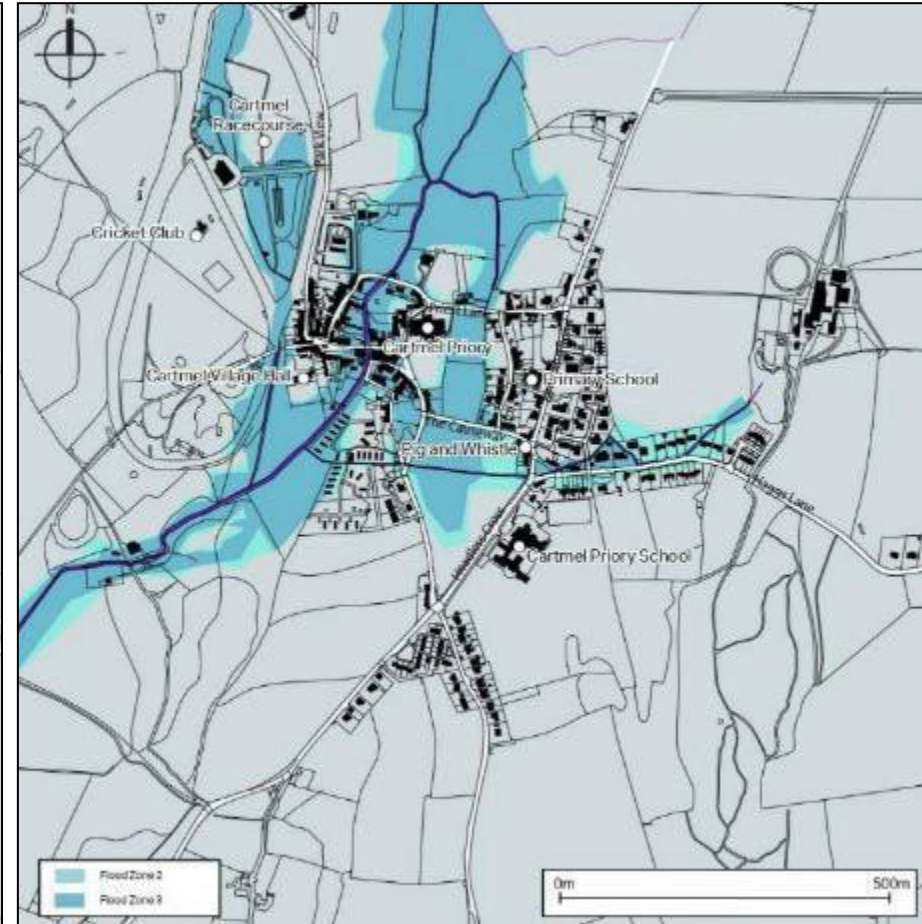
Figure 6: Allithwaite Flood Risk　　　　　　**Figure 7: Cartmel Flood Risk (As at September 2021)**

Source (Environment Agency September 2021)

Movement

Allithwaite

3.20 The street network on the approach to both villages is typically rural, with narrow and winding roads which are enclosed. The key street types within the Parish include;

- Strategic route (the B5277 only).

- Primary village streets.

- Secondary roads.

- Residential cul-de-sacs; and

- Rural lanes.

3.21 The B5277, in Allithwaite, forms the only strategic route within the Parish. Its scale and lack of pavements for pedestrians, however, renders this a barrier to movement, and various roads in Allithwaite are considered to be particularly dangerous due to lack of paving or vehicle speed. Church Road in Allithwaite considered to have the most prevalent parking problems, and road safety on Holme Lane is a concern.

Cartmel

3.22 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) connect both villages to the surrounding landscape. On race day, the PRoW which runs across the Cartmel racecourse is opened up to vehicles, helping to manage the traffic flow through the village.

3.23 Car parking and traffic pressures are considered to be particular problems within the villages, especially in Cartmel given its attractiveness as a visitor and pilgrim destination. Congestion in Cartmel aligns to school hours, and also seasonally to the tourist season. The Cartmel Township Initiative Action Plan (2014) sought to address the parking problems in Cartmel with the implementation of an action plan.

Comparison

- Both villages are served by rural lanes on their approach, helping to reinforce the rural setting.

- PRoW link both villages to the surrounding landscape.

- The National Cycle Network Route 70 connects the villages.
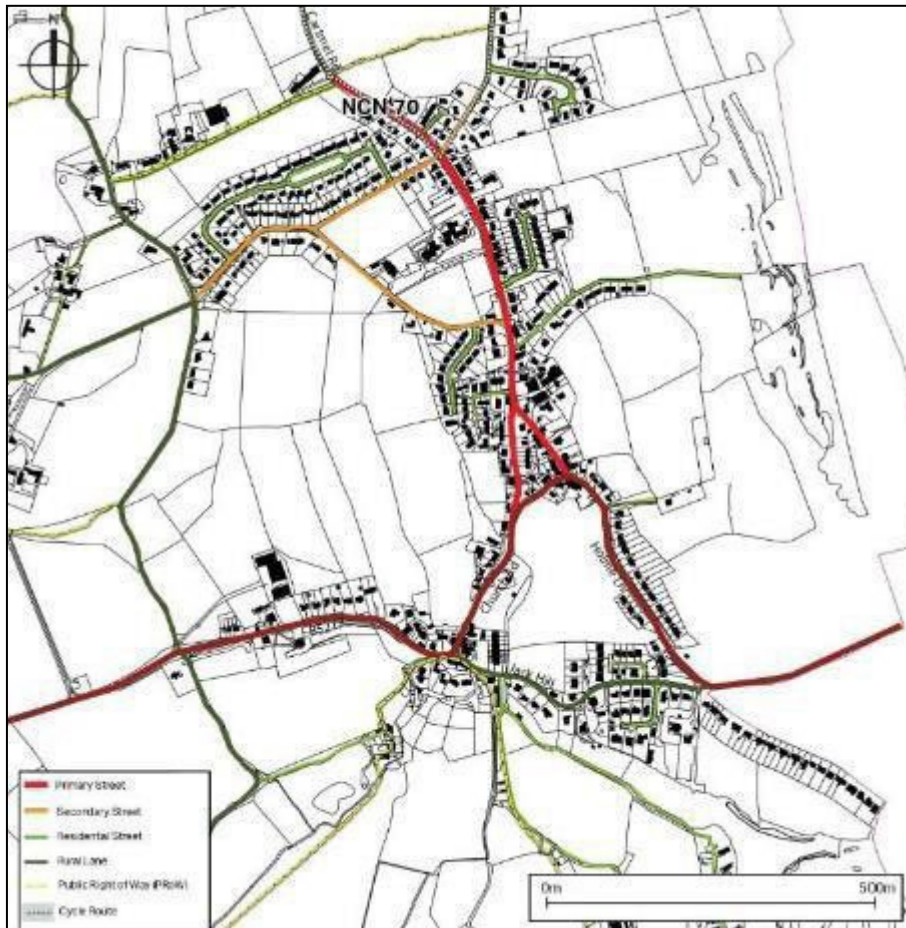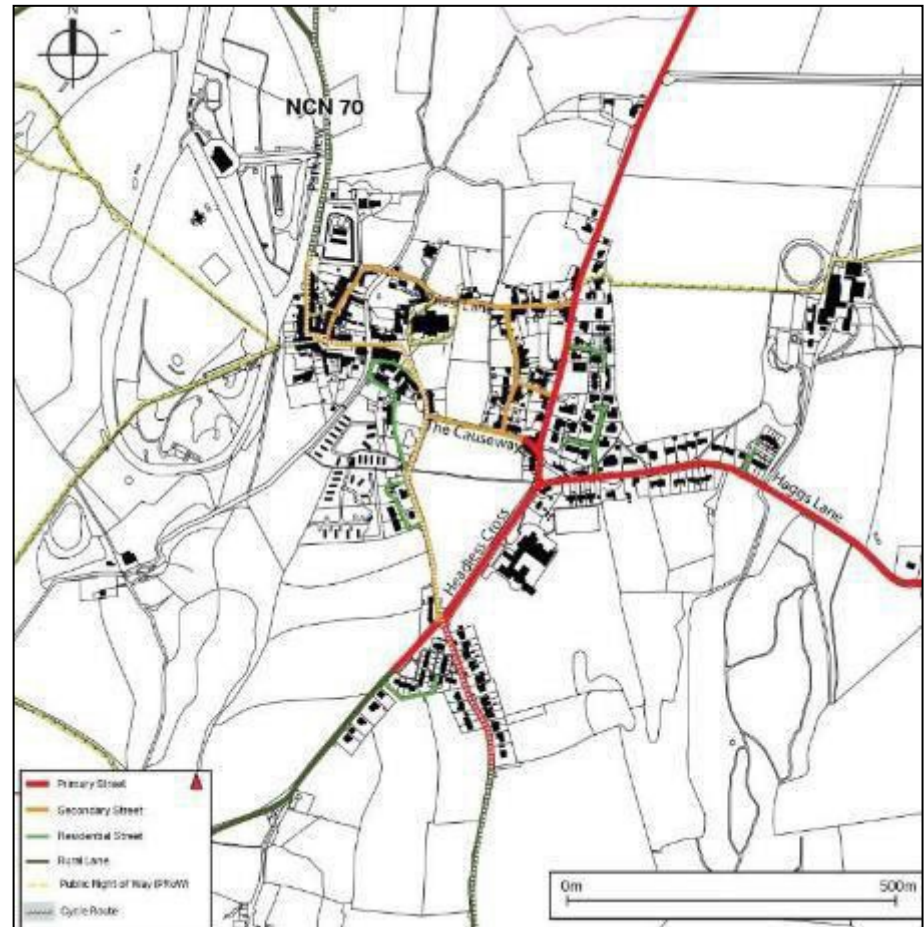
Figure 8: Allithwaite Movement

Figure 9: Cartmel Movement

Heritage Assets

Allithwaite

3.24 Allithwaite has four listed buildings within its settlement boundary, with a number of others located within the local vicinity. There are no other heritage designations within the settlement area.

Cartmel

3.25 Cartmel is one of the oldest villages within Cumbria and maintains a strong tourist appeal. It is based around the 12th Century Priory Church. The majority of the village is a designated Conservation Area (designated in 1969), which covers the built form of the village and the immediate landscape which surrounds it. The immediate landscape setting is a critical aspect of the Conservation Areas visual and historic interest, hence the inclusion within the boundary. This is especially the case on the northern and western edges where there are distinctive views.

3.26 The designation excludes the more recent residential extensions to the south and the east. The majority of the 96 listed buildings within the Parish are located within the Cartmel settlement boundary itself, including the Grade I Priory Church and the medieval Grade II Priory Gatehouse. There are four scheduled areas that comprise the scheduled monument Cartmel Augustinian Priory medieval gatehouse and parts of the priory precinct.

Comparison

- The northern boundary of the Parish borders with the Lake District National Park, a World Heritage Designation, which influences the historical context of both villages.

- Cartmel has a large number of designated assets, which reflects its architectural and historic interest, and its sensitivity to change. Designated heritage assets are protected through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979'.

Figure 10: Allithwaite Heritage Assets
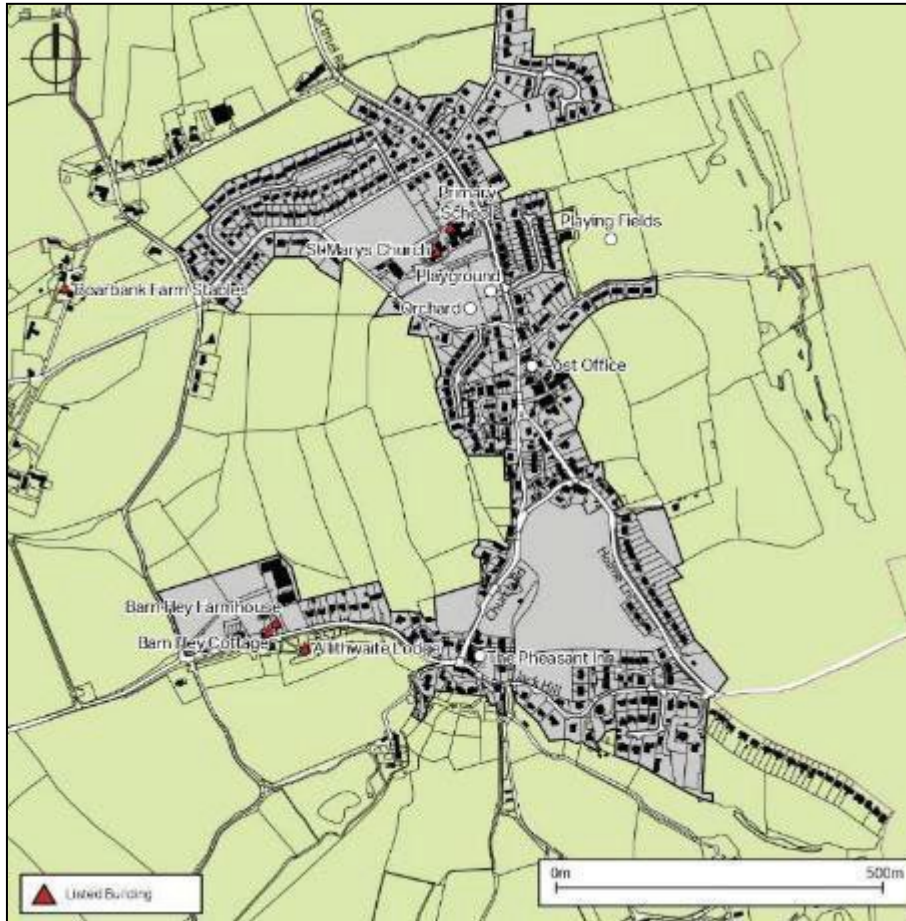
Figure 11 Cartmel Heritage Assets
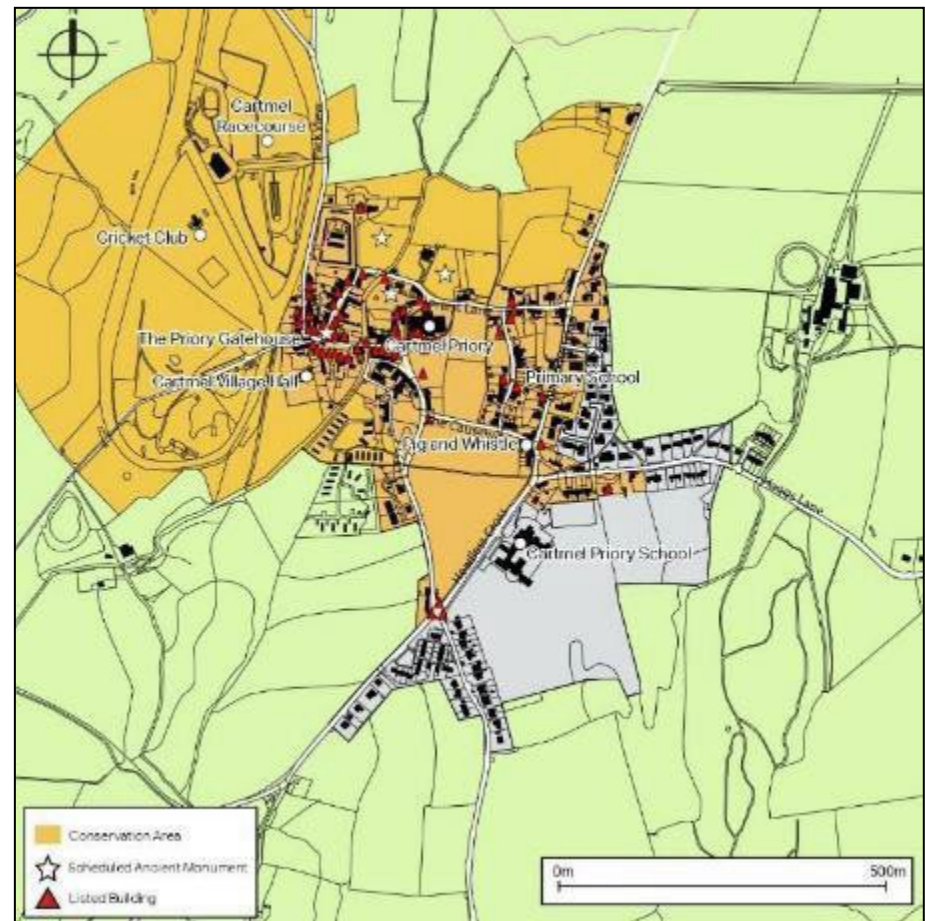
4.   Character Areas

4.0.1   The settlement areas within the parish exhibit different characters. Understanding these character areas can help to generate design cues for future development to adhere to. This section outlines the broad physical contextual characteristics of the villages and is used to articulate what is special and distinctive about these places. The character assessment helps to identify recognisable patterns and elements which differentiate the villages. The features introduced in this section are later used to inform the design codes.

4.0.2   It is important to retain the character of the two villages; Allithwaite and Cartmel. Although sharing some similarities, the villages experience difference development influences, and pressures. Four different character areas across the two villages have been identified which will allow for a more nuanced response to the local pressures within the villages.

Figure 12: Character Areas across Allithwaite and Cartmel
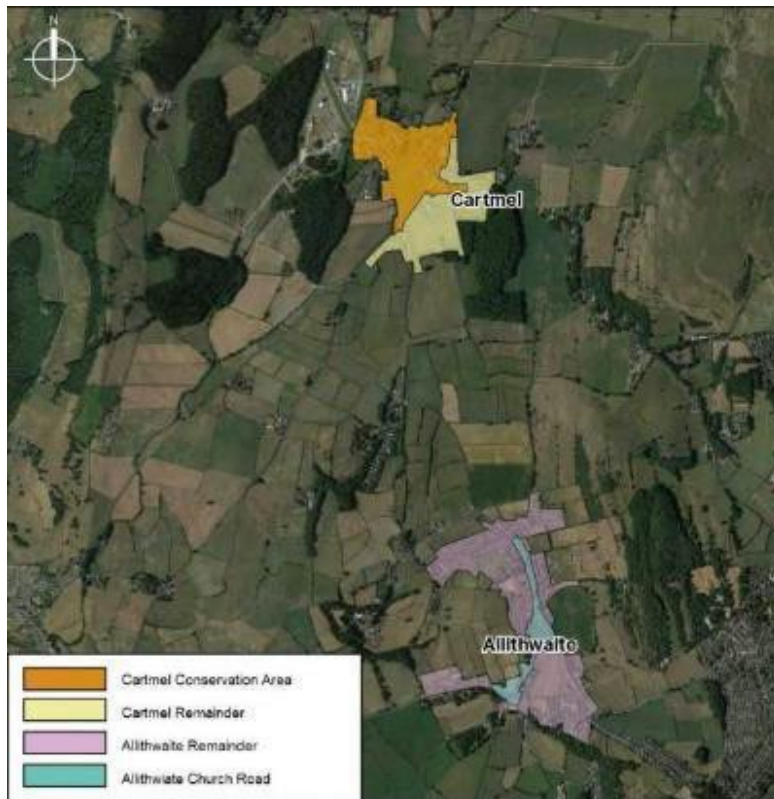
Figure 13: Cartmel Character Areas

A) Cartmel Conservation Area

B) Cartmel Remainder
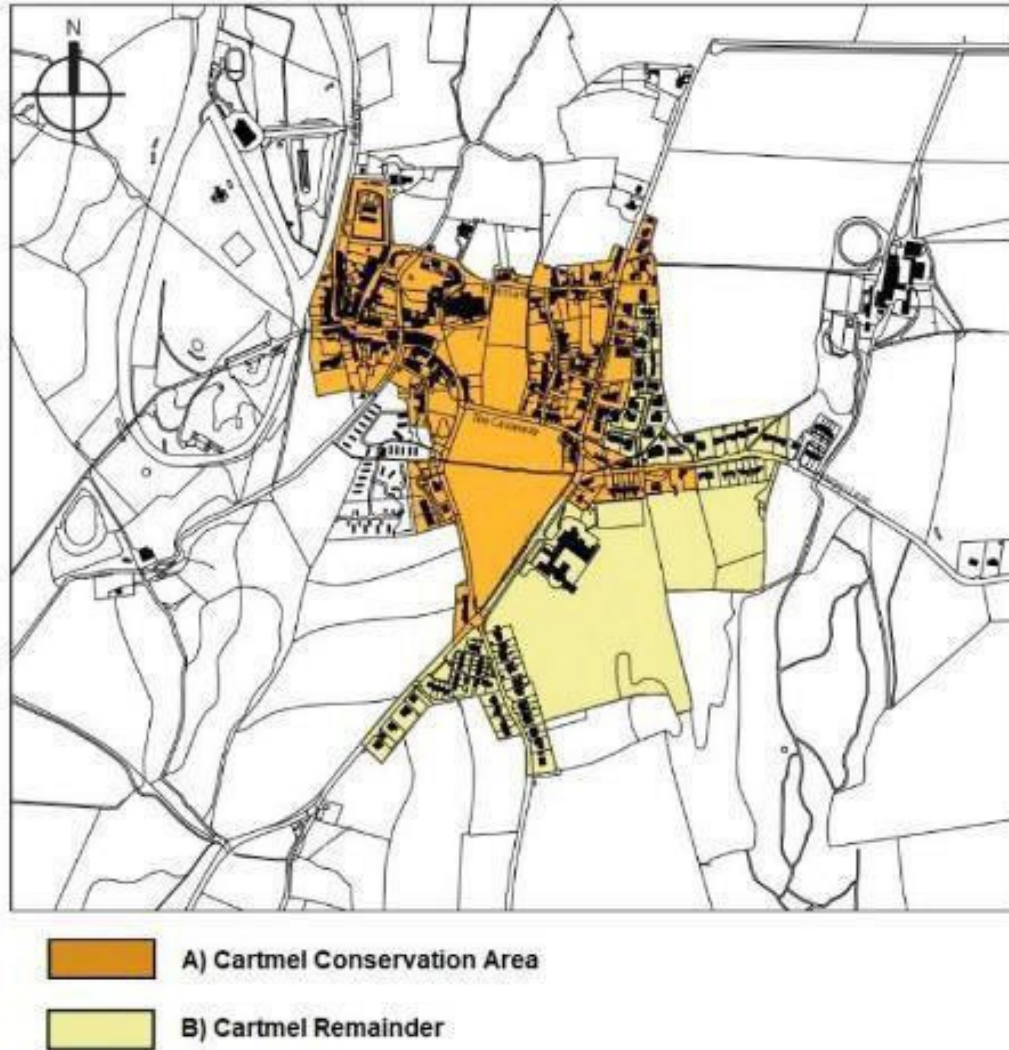
4.0.3 Cartmel is a settlement of two halves, arranged around a triangular greenspace. The settlement is characterised by development along narrow lanes, interspersed with larger greenspaces. Two character areas can be identified within Cartmel as A) and B shown in the Figure above.

4.0.4   Despite having a close proximity, Allithwaite is a different village to Cartmel; it has a different historical trajectory, a different landscape, and a different morphology. It therefore has a different character which development needsto recognise and respond to. In comparison to the tourist appeal of Cartmel, Allithwaite is predominantly a residential village. Although the style of development is varied across the village, two character areas can be identified within Allithwaite.

4.1   A) Cartmel Conservation Area

4.1.1   A stretch of open space separates the two halves of the Conservation Area which have been identified the Cartmel Conservation Area Appraisal; '**Church Town**' is located to the west and captures the traditional village core whilst '**New Town**' is located in the east of the green space. The boundaries are only indicative. Both are within the Conservation Area boundary. There are slight differences between the two halves of the Conservation Area, but the overall character is one of an attractive, traditional village with a rich vernacular.

Figure 14: The two halves of Cartmel Conservation Area: Church Town and New Town
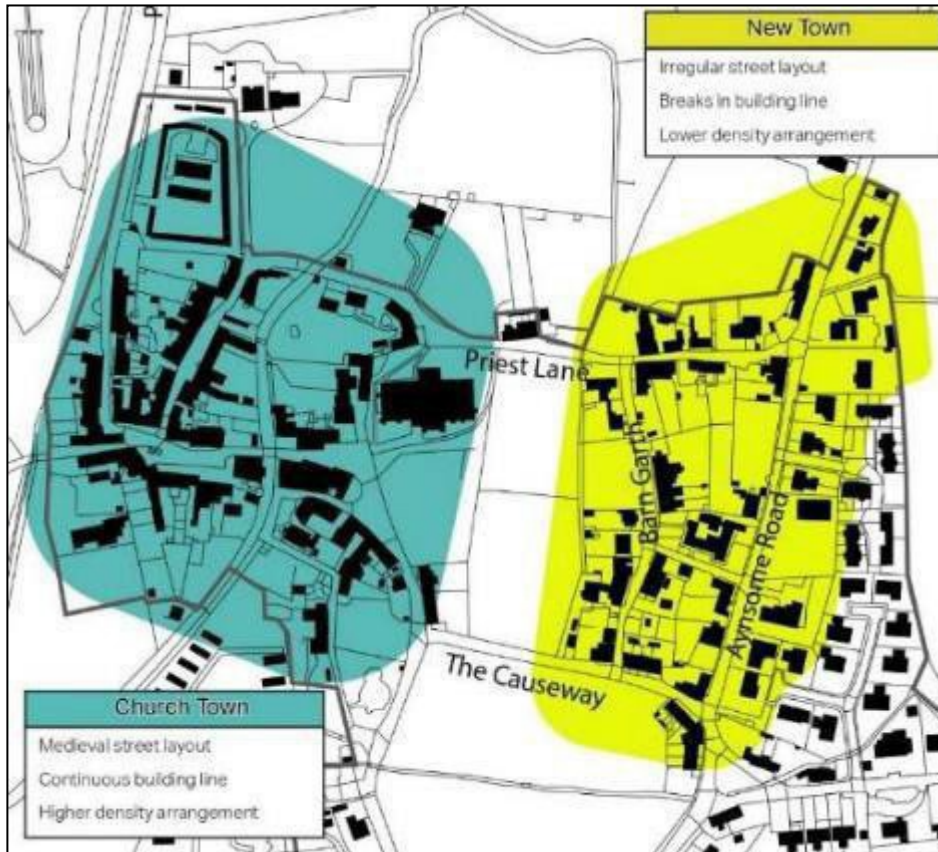
Block Structure and Rhythm

4.1.2   The two halves of the Conservation Area have a slightly different structure and layout. Church Town forms the historic heart of Cartmel. The urban form of Church Town in the west has been influenced by the Priory church and its associated buildings, and is a relatively compact, tight knit cluster of buildings. Traditional buildings are typically high density and have a continuous building line, which is aligned with the medieval street layout. The continuous building line is maintained despite a frequent and irregular stepping of facades. Plots are generally small, and building footprint is shallow, although there are some extensions to the rear which remain hidden from the street view. There are no obviously modern extensions to the layout or arrangement within Church Town.

4.1.3   New Town in the east of the Conservation Area still follows the medieval street pattern but is arranged at a slightly lower density in an irregular grid shape along Barn Garth and Aynsome Road. Continuous frontages are still apparent here however there are more regular breaks between buildings, creating a looser and more spaciousarrangement.

Building Form and Roofscape

4.1.4   Building heights vary between two and three storeys. The tallest buildings are evident around The Square, creating an enclosure favourable to the function of this core space. The roofline is typically pitched towards the street, and many buildings have prominent chimneys, adding rhythm to the roofscape. Where dormers are present, they are of an appropriate size and scale to the building which they occupy.

Street scene

4.1.5   Cartmel Conservation Area maintains a traditional street pattern, influenced by the historical medieval layout. Streets are narrow and organically arranged with a close relationship to the buildings; the intimate nature of the winding streets invites pedestrian intrigue. The majority of streets are bordered with buildings and have no formalised pavement. Instead, pedestrians and road users share the space, which contributes to an enclosed character.

4.1.6   Most streets and squares are tarmacked with no raised pavements and few road markings, although painted lines are a relatively recent response to parking issues within the village. Where they exist, cobbled building aprons do offer some level of separation. The character is one of narrow streets and smaller alleyways; pedestrian-only routes can be found to meander between buildings and offer enchanting permeability. There is very little street lighting within the Conservation Area.

4.1.7   In some parts of the Conservation Area the street widens, creating public squares.

The Square

4.1.8   The Square forms the heart of Cartmel and is a formalised, traditional public. It is enclosed with buildings and invites pedestrians to dwell with various commercial buildings which border the space. It is anchored around the cross (which is C18 on the site of a medieval one) to the west of The Square. The continuous street frontage helps achieve a sense of enclosure between the two- and three-story terraces. Some of the commercial buildings have seating to the front and active shop frontages, helping to enliven the public realm. Despite its attractiveness the presence of parked vehicles adds clutter and undermines the functionality of the space, as does the tarmacked nature of the street.

Devonshire Square

4.1.9   Devonshire Square exists to the east of The Square over the bridge as a more informal public space. This forms a triangular space which opens up access to the Priory church. Similar to The Square, shops and commercial buildings border this space. Parking here is less obtrusive than in The Square, but still interrupts the street scene.

Figure 15: Location of The Square and Devonshire Square
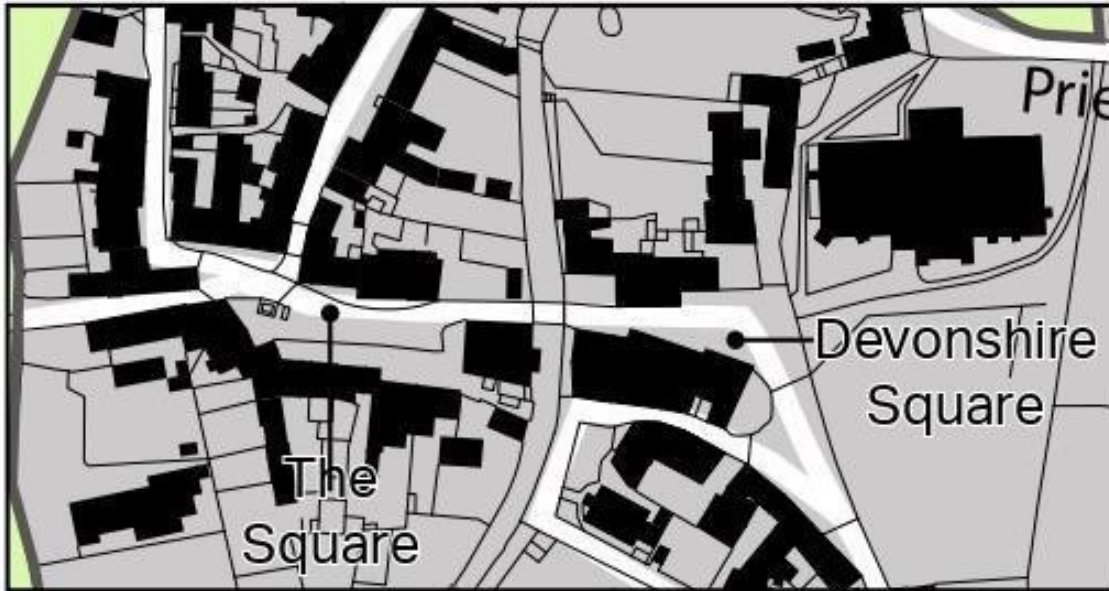
Boundary Treatments

4.1.10   Most buildings within the Conservation Area abut directly onto the street (this is especially the case in Church Town). Where present, the cobbled building aprons provide some level of offset between the buildings and the street. In New Town, there are also some detached and shorter rows of housing which are set back with small front gardens, between 1- 3m long. Despite the heritage of the village most of the streets are tarmacked which does little to complement the surrounding historic vernacular. Where cobbles and historic setts do exist, they provide a rich texture to the streetscape and add attractive character.

4.1.11   Rear gardens are present but typically enclosed and hidden from the streetscape in Church Town. There is more visibility to the rear gardens in New Town, given the more frequent breaks between buildings.

Parking

4.1.12 Parking provision is spatially restricted due to the tight and narrow street pattern. Traditional buildings, with no offset from the street, rely on on-street parking solutions which undermine the streetscape; many of the properties in the west in Church Town are without on-plot parking spaces.

4.1.13 Parking at the village hall and the Cartmel Car Park at the racecourse offers some respite from on-street parking but require vehicles to pass through the village core in order to gain access. Properties to the east of the Conservation Area, in New Town, are better served by on-plot parking.

4.1.14 There are traffic and access issues associated with Cartmel's popularity with visitors. These issues are exacerbated by the historic, narrow street network. The Cartmel Township Initiative (2014) sought to address some of these issues. Further actions are still required in order to achieve a long-term solution.

Views

4.1.15 The Priory church tower acts as an important landmark feature which helps navigation and legibility within the village; the skewed tower is a significant focal point in both long and short views. Short, intimate views are common within the Conservation Area given the dense nature of development, with many points of interest achieved through the enclosure. Where the continuous line of buildings break, attractive views are afforded out to the landscape. The arch of the Priory Gatehouse frames attractive views along Cavendish Street. The narrow bridge across the river also offers picturesque views. Views across the green spaces which divide the Conservation Area helps to define the openness of the village. In general, the organic arrangement of streets around the medieval street pattern creates a richness of views throughout the built Conservation Area.

Detailing

4.1.16 The Conservation Area consists mainly of 17th and 18th Century buildings; the vernacular is one of coherent Georgian townhouses and terraced cottages. There is symmetry across many building frontages, with double fronted as well as single fronted. Structures are roofed in blue-grey slate. Many are formed by a traditional practice of cutting the slates to different lengths and laying gradual or diminishing courses which has had a significant impact on the character of the roofscape. Blue and darker purple slates cut in regular coursing sizes are used in some of the later buildings in the New Town area and help to retain local character.

4.1.17 Traditionally, many buildings in Cartmel would have been rendered, which would have been applied by hand. This may have received a limewash coating or left to weather naturally. In order to reflect this traditional appearance, the following colours are suggested to assist those wishing to paint their property, where the building has been subject to modern render and painting, to avoid an overly stark, bright white, which is not traditional, or a dark colour which can appear severe. Overly bright white, and very dark shades are considered harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is important that if any buildings that are traditionally rendered with lime render are painted, the paint is breathable and compatible with the lime render. This could either be a limewash or breathable paint. Listed building consent may be required for the painting of listed buildings.

4.1.18 Paint finish is also important, and a matt finish is recommended. Natural tones that replicate unpainted or limewashed render may include colours such as:

- RAL 1013 Oyster White.

- RAL 9002 Grey White.

- RAL 9001 Cream.

- RAL 7044 Silk Grey.

- RAL 7032 Pebble Grey.

4.1.19 There is slight overhang of the eaves of the buildings, and coloured bargeboards add decoration where they are present. While this is sometimes the case on later, taller buildings, some have exposed purlins with no bargeboards and smaller and earlier cottages do not have any overhang and the slates finish at the junction of the top of the gable wall with no detailing. Detailing of the eaves is simple and supported with traditional gutters and downpipes. Sash and casement windows are often set in stone surrounds and cills. Wide, brightly painted panel doors with brass or cast-iron furniture are set in masonry openings. Simple stone door canopies punctuate the frontage of buildings and offer rhythm which complements the chimneys.

Figure 16: Rendered historic buildings in Cartmel in the Square. Use of render creates a sense of uniformity

4.1.20 Overall, the Conservation Area exhibits a rich cohesion of architecture which is achieved through a limited palette of materials. The attractiveness of the streetscape is achieved through uniform use of render. Where this has been lost or painted in bright, non-traditional colours this has had a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Positive aspects of the Conservation Area character area:

- The consistency of the Georgian vernacular and either roughcast or painted finishes provides a cohesive settlement aesthetic.

- The recurring presence of chimneys, bargeboards and door canopies add momentum to the streetscape.

- The traditional squares are appealing urban structures.

- Cobbled paving and historic setts which helps to frame the building are an attractive boundary treatment which should be preserved.

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management.

- PVC casement windows look at odds with the traditional use of timber frame.

- Unsympathetic development patterns do little to contribute to the traditional character of the village, and do not support pedestrian or cyclist permeability.

- Much of Cartmel Conservation Area is within the flood plain; inappropriate development could exacerbate local flood problems.

- The retention of traditional render either left unpainted or painted in a neutral tone is important to the character of the Conservation Area. There is uniformity in the use of render rather than variety in surface finishes which is not positive.

Figure 17: Unpainted render finishes are traditional in Cartmel.

4.2 B) Cartmel Remainder

Block Structure and Rhythm

4.2.1 Cartmel has been subject to expansion during the 20ᵗʰ and 21st Century. This has generally been limited to the southern and eastern extremities of the village at Headless Cross, along Haggs Lane and behind Aynsome Road. Developments such as those at Orchard Close and Town End Meadow are considerably different in character to the buildings within the Conservation Area; they present a modern, cul-de-sac arrangement with lower densities.

Building Form and Roofline

4.2.2 Built form is consistent only with the buildings within the same cluster, otherwise there is little commonality between the parcels of development. Orchard Close exhibits blocks of up to four terraced buildings, Town End Meadow presents detached bungalows and modern, large scale, detached two storey buildings are present further east along Haggs Lane. Roofing style also varied between pitched roofs and hipped roofs.

Street scene

4.2.3 The more recent residential developments are organised in a cul-de-sac layout which does little to contribute to pedestrian permeability. It undermines the charm of the medieval street network and introduces a more suburban, inaccessible experience of space, although a PRoW does exist to Town End Meadow. These streets have a formalised, modern character in comparison to the traditional village settlement of the Conservation Area; pavements are established with curbs and buildings are set back from the street. Most roads and pavements are tarmacked and built to highways standards, with no historic features.

Boundary Treatment

4.2.4 Front gardens create an open, spacious feel and also distance the properties from the street network. The gardens are subject to personalisation and exhibit a variety of domestic planting or surfacing in response to occupiers' preferences. Low stone walls, hedgerow, and grassed lawns provide a pleasant boundary treatment, /whilst the presence of high-level fencing does little for the environmental quality of the area.

Parking

4.2.5 The more recent domestic developments are typically served with on-plot parking, although Orchard Close makes use of courtyard parking. In many cases on-plot parking is balanced with attractive gardens and boundary treatments, and as such does not override the streetscape. There are examples, however, where parked vehicles do dominate.

4.2.6   On-plot parking removes parked vehicles from the movement network and reduces potential for congestion, however it can also undermine the street-scene from a visual perspective, as parked cars can come to dominate the attractiveness of a street. Whilst practical, this contributes to a modern character at odds with the rest of the village.

Detailing

4.2.7   Traditional materials, slate roofs and rendered walls are found within this area however the more recent development lacks the detailing and historic integrity of Church Town. The adoption of white painted render does work well and is a positive feature. Roughcast render is present on Orchard Close. In some cases, additions to building fenestration, such as the porches on Orchard Close, confuse the building line.

4.2.8   Notably in this character area is the adoption of modern windows and doors which, again, contrast to the timbered buildings within the Conservation Area. These contemporary additions contribute little to local character and do not uphold the historic value of Cartmel.

Positive aspects within the Cartmel Remainder area

- The character area has shown some appreciation for its proximity to the Conservation Area with the adoption of white and roughcast render

- On-plot parking is an appropriate solution to the narrow street network which serves Cartmel

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management.

- This character area has a responsibility to uphold the traditional character of the Cartmel Conservation Area. There is an opportunity for development here to strengthen and reinforce the nuances of this historic identity and setting.

- Adoption of modern materials and detailing does little to uphold the integrity of the village and its history. Whilst pastiche responses should be avoided, there is a question about the role of recent residential developments in maintaining the historic character of the Conservation Area.

- Cul-de-sacs do not reflect the medieval layout, nor do they support permeability.

Figure 18: Allithwaite Character Areas

C) Allithwaite Church Road

D) Allithwaite Remainder
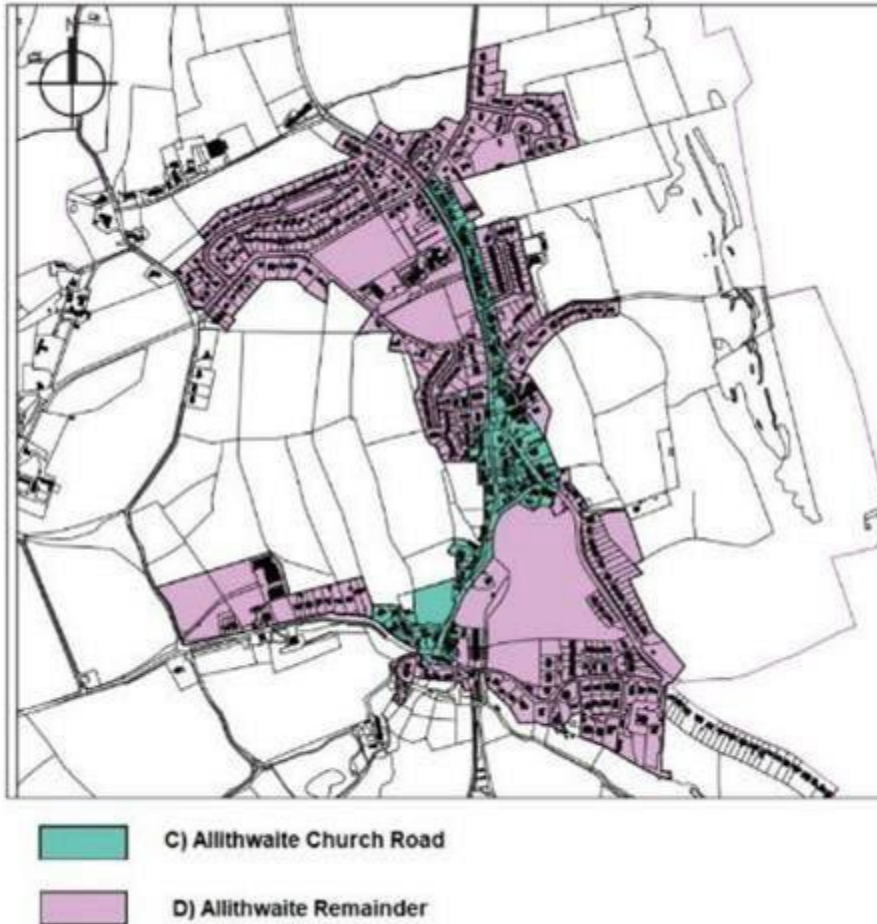
4.3   C) Allithwaite Church Road

Block Structure and Rhythm

4.3.1   Church Road runs from the north to the south of the village in a linear formation. A roundabout and triangular junction exist at the mid-point of the road which creates a nodal point of sorts for the village to centre around. Short terraces of Victorian housing stock line Church Road, along with traditional cottages and also larger detached buildings.

4.3.2 Density and rhythm varies along the street; the terraces to the north of Church Road create a continuous building line however this not maintained down the street where gaps exist between buildings and buildings exhibit a looser structure. In many cases the buildings of Church Road exist only on one side of the street and look out onto open green space, with little enclosure. Enclosure is achieved at the Church Road/ Holme Lane junction where there is a concentration of buildings with no set back from the street.

Building Form and Roofline

4.3.3 The north of Church Road presents a relatively consistent built form, where Victorian terraces face onto the Primary School, the Church, the playground, and the allotments. These buildings share a common building line and strong frontage which confirms this as a primary road through the village. Different roof styles are apparent, from simple pitched roofs (with the pitch facing the street) to front facing gables. Chimney stacks provide some momentum, but these are larger than those seen within Cartmel with additional chimney pots per stack, a design feature indicative of the Victorian era.

4.3.4 The triangular junction represents some of the oldest buildings in the village with traditional cottages. These are irregularly arranged and building and roof lines form a complementary cluster. The scale and size of the buildings along Church Road varies.

Street scene

4.3.5 Church Road follows the traditional street network through Allithwaite. Buildings and boundary walls have a close relationship to the street; in some cases, there is no pavement, and the building is set directly onto the road. Pavements only exist along one side of Church Street in the north, to the front of the Victorian housing stock. The relationship between buildings feels enclosed on the triangular junction but otherwise the streetscape feels quite open and spacious, especially where buildings only exist on one side of the road.

4.3.6 Church Road can be split into two road types; it is a primary road in the north until it meets the triangular junction where it becomes a strategic road (B5277). These road types are shown in Figure 8. Despite the traffic speeds along the strategic road network, there are no formalised pavements to support pedestrian movement, and this feels a space which prioritises vehicle movement. Unlike in Cartmel, there are no formalised public squares within Allithwaite.

Boundary Treatments

4.3.7   Stone walls are common boundary treatments along Church Road. These structures help to delineate public/private space, and also attractively border areas of open space. They also contribute to a traditional rural character and are consistent with boundary treatments across the parish area. Many buildings have a direct relationship to Church Road, with no set back. However, some of the Victorian buildings have a small offset in the form of a garden. Typically, these are distinguished with low stone walls, behind which there is planted gardens or gravel surfacing.

Parking

4.3.8   There is reliance on on-street parking in front of the more traditional buildings along Church Road. This narrows and disrupts the flow of pedestrian and vehicle traffic. On-plot parking has accommodated parking for some buildings in the spaces between buildings, but these are inconsistent in design.

Views

4.3.9   Long views from the north end of Church Road capture Morecambe Bay and are framed by the building line of the Victorian terraces. Many of the buildings along Church Road have attractive views of open green space or recreational space opposite. Historically, the ribbon development of Church Road would have allowed for many more views out to the countryside. The street has become increasingly developed, however, and the 'thickening' of the ribbon has meant views out have been interrupted by recent development.

Detailing

4.3.10   Church Road exhibits a traditional vernacular. The Victorian buildings are identifiable particularly due to the red sandstone detailing on window cills and headers and door lintels. Red sandstone quoins frame the building edges. The scale of this detailing on the building facade is larger than the gentle features exhibited in the Georgian buildings of Cartmel. Bay windows and porches protrude from the face of the building, some are more appropriate to the host building than others. Many of the buildings have an exposed stone frontage, whilst others are finished with a roughcast render. Some of these buildings are easily identified with red stone building tiles, showing date of construction.

4.3.11   The traditional cottages exhibit a simpler façade. Often the windows are framed only by a stone window cill and are simple timber casement or sash. Sometimes the stone buildings are covered with a roughcast or painted render and are similar to the buildings within the Cartmel Conservation area. Porches are simple and proportionate to the building size.

Positive aspects within Church Road character area:

- There is a strong presence of more traditional buildings along Church Road, which helps to confirm the history of Allithwaite. Efforts should be made to retain this heritage and strengthen it where possible.

- Church Road enjoys good access to open space and to the main commercial and civic functions of the village. There is an opportunity to celebrate this as a village core with appropriate design guidance.

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management.

- Address gaps in the street and seek to develop a continuous building line along Church Street. This could be achieved through appropriate infill development to recreate the village core and provide a stronger 'anchor' for the village to centre around.

- Modern materiality does not complement the heritage of this area well.

- On-street parking interrupts flow along this key movement channel.

4.4   D) Allithwaite Remainder

4.4.1   Since the mid-20th Century, residential growth has expanded the settlement beyond Church Road. Parcels of development have changed the character of Allithwaite and added variety to the built fabric of the village. Although varied in style, some commonalities can be identified across these buildings. This character area is similar to that to the Cartmel Remainder.

Block Structure and Rhythm

4.4.2   Development of this character area exists in parcels, or 'clusters', which have radiated away from Church Road. These newer residential additions have started to thicken the linearity of the village with small expansions into the surrounding landscape. These are typically detached or semi-detached dwellings and arranged within parcels of varying densities. Many are arranged in a cul-de-sac layout which does little to promote permeability; Templand Park is in fact the only example of a street which has been developed with a double access/ egress point. The scale of this post-war development is more expansive than the original Allithwaite Church Road character area, which means that the layout of this character area dominates the village.

Building Form and Roofline

4.4.3   Building heights primarily are one storey bungalows to two storeys. Three storey buildings do exist in part, sometimes in response to the local topography. Where the land slopes, buildings have responded to the level change with an additional storey, exaggerating their scale. This is the case at Greendales, High Croft Drive and Fell Side.

4.4.4   At certain points, the views across the local topography result in an exposed roofscape. A combination of pitched and hipped roofs adds to variety. Typically, more recent developments have double roof pitches and abutments to the front, side, or rear of the building. More recent development lacks chimneys and instead exhibits a straight, modern roofline.

Detailing

4.4.5   Many of the buildings are roughcast and white rendering is commonplace in Allithwaite and helps to unify across the variances in building style. Stone is also expressed, mainly in boundary walls but also adopted in some building frontages. Colour painted facades and detailing are rare. PVC used more frequently on window and doors.

Street scene

4.4.6   Street scene within the character area varies; some adopt a more formalised character which has been built to highways standards with curbed pavements and streetlighting, whilst others have no formalised pavement. Cul-de-sacs have streets which are relatively wide compared to the other street types within the village.

4.4.7   Pavements on one or both sides project a modern character which is at odds with the rural setting. These layouts tend to reduce permeability. Where they exist, grass verges help to complement the stone walls and vegetated boundary treatments in achieving a rural character of streetscape.

Boundary Treatments

4.4.8   The majority of buildings are set behind a front garden of varying size and form. Boundary form and structure is also diversified in terms of its height, material, and typology. Hard boundary treatments exist most commonly as fieldstone walls, with softer treatments such as hedgerows and planting also common. Both methods help to contribute to the rural character of the village. Some of the recent parcels of development have less formal boundaries, with open plan front gardens which create a more spacious streetscape. Where wooden fencing does exist, it is used the separate the rear garden plots; it is rarely used on frontages or within front gardens.

Parking

4.4.9   Similar to the Cartmel Remainder area, most of the parking is captured on-plot.

Views

4.4.10   The undulating topography which surrounds Allithwaite offers a range of attractive views across the village. Long views towards Morecambe Bay and the Lake District Fells establish the rural setting, but shorter views are afforded across the village given the level changes. The nature of this arrangement and the extent of open space which punctuates the village make for intriguing views. The views in Allithwaite are open, long ranging and less intimate than in Cartmel. St Mary's Church occupies a prominent hill-top position and acts as a significant landmark for the village.

4.4.11   In some cases, development has not responded so well to topography, and has interrupted views across the village. Where located along a ridgeline, these developments are stark against the landscape and interrupt the quality of views.

Positive aspects and Issues to be addressed within Allithwaite Remainder area:

- There are good examples of response to local topography which can be drawn on for inspiration as how to develop within this context. However, there are also examples of poor responses to topography, where the buildings interrupt views and have little consideration for existing ridgelines.

- Good examples of contemporary interpretations of building style which respond well to context. Also, some styles which do little to celebrate the local vernacular. There is an opportunity to strengthen and bring cohesion to the character area through design guidance.

- Boundary treatments, especially to the rear of properties, need to have particular regard to their position and exposure within the topography.

- Painting over older traditional detailing reduces the character of some buildings.

- The Allithwaite Remainder character area has a different context to the Cartmel Remainder Character area; it does not have the same level of heritage assets as Cartmel and instead is challenged by topography and landscape impact. Although the character is therefore quite similar, the context is vastly different.

5.   Design Codes

5.0.1   The two villages have been divided into various Character Areas. These character areas represent both the traditional vernacular of the villages (Cartmel Conservation Area and Allithwaite Church Road), and also the more recent additions of village growth (Cartmel Remainder and Allithwaite Remainder). The Design Codes in respect of Cartmel have been heavily influenced by the Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

5.0.2   It is important that full account is taken of the local context and that the new development responds to the local "sense of place" within each village. The aim of this section is to ensure that future development consider the surrounding character and adopts key design elements which will complement the existing fabric of the villages.

5.0.3   Implementing these design codes will help to enhance local distinctiveness. Each character area can be characterised by a different development pressure:

5.0.4   **A) Cartmel Conservation Area** - The priority for this character area is to maintain the rich historic vernacular of the Cartmel Conservation Area. Codes will seek to address the setting and character of the village, address traffic and parking issues, and also flood risk given the location within the flood plain. Achieving a good relationship to the surrounding landscape is also important.

5.0.5   **B) Cartmel Remainder** - The priority for this character rea is to achieve design which recognises it proximity to the designations and vernacular of the Cartmel Conservation Area. Achieving high quality residential design which emulates a complementary character is sought. Landscape setting is also crucial.

5.0.6   **C) Allithwaite Church Road** - The priority here is to strengthen the traditional character of this road as the core of the village. Codes will seek to enhance and strengthen building lines and rhythm to establish this as the heart of the village, whilst maintaining visual and physical access to facilities and open space. Guidance will help to raise the environmental quality and parking solutions along the street whilst maintaining views to the north and south.

5.0.7   **D) Allithwaite Remainder** – Given the variety of character and vernacular which is exhibited in Allithwaite Remainder area, there is an opportunity to capture more diverse and contemporary style. Development here needs to adopt a clever response to topography and be aware of views out and across the village. The priority is to secure high quality residential design which sits well within the landscape context. Coding will encourage the adoption of best practice design principals whilst allowing for architectural flexibility.

5.0.8   A number of the codes make reference to enhanced or non-standard materials. In assessing each new development consideration can be given to different surface materials providing they meet the Highways Authority standards and policies.

5.0.9   If any 'approved enhanced materials' are agreed as part of an adoption associated with a new development, consideration will also need to be given to a commuted sum being deposited by developers to meet the future additional maintenance costs of any approved enhanced materials. Generally, the Highways Authority will not use non-standard highway materials. Any use of non-standard materials / enhancement scheme affecting the public highway would need to be agreed in advance by the Westmorland and Furness Council and fully funded by the developer.

The Code Matrix

5.0.10   Not all codes are relevant to all the Character Areas; the matrix table help to identify which codes relate to which area. This allows for a nuanced application of the codes which addresses the development opportunities and pressures unique to each area. To help with their application, the design codes have been separated into themes. The codes have been informed and influenced by the following sources.

- The ambitions of the Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-Submission Draft 2018).

- The findings from the Lower Allithwaite Community Plan Consultation (2013).

- The Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide Draft Appendix 7 (2018).

- Cartmel Township Initiative Action Plan (2014).

- Character Appraisal Cartmel Conservation Area (2009).

- Cartmel Village Design Statement (1994).

- National Design Guidance (2019)..

- Cumbria Development Design Guide (2017)

- Emerging Cartmel Conservation Area Management Plan.

Table 1: When to use the codes

Code Theme	Code Reference	Cartmel Conservation Area	Cartmel Remainder	Allithwaite Church Road	Allithwaite Remainder
Structure and Layout (SL)	SL1 Structure and Layout	X	X	X	X
	SL2 Conservation Area Layout	X			
	SL3 Strengthening Church Road			X	
Built Form (BF)	BF1 Built Form	X	X	X	X
	BF2 Cartmel Conservation Area	X			
	BF3 Conservation Area Density and Orientation	X			
	BF4 Church Road			X	
Heritage Assets (HA)	HA1 Heritage Assets	X	X	X	X
Site Edges (SE)	SE1 Site Edges	X	X	X	X
Views (VEW)	VEW1 Views	X	X	X	X
Topography (TP)	TP1 Addressing Topography			X	X
Water and Drainage (WD)	WD1 Water and Drainage	X	X	X	X
	WD2 Flood Resilient Housing	X	X	X	X
Movement Network (MN)	MN1 All Streets	X	X	X	X
	MN2 Primary Routes	X	X	X	X
	MN3 Secondary Routes	X	X	X	X
	MN4 Residential Streets	X	X	X	X
	MN5 Rural Lanes	X	X	X	X
	MN6 Pedestrian and Cycle connections	X	X	X	X
Parking (PK)	PK1 Parking	X	X	X	X
	PK2 Courtyard	X	X	X	X
	PK3 On-Street Parking	X	X	X	X
	PK4 On-Plot Parking	X	X	X	X
	PK5 Church Road	X	X	X	X
	PK6 Cycle Parking	X	X	X	X
	PK7 Visitor Cycle Parking	X			
Commercial Frontages (CF)	CF1 Commercial Frontages	X		X	
Boundary Treatments (BT)	BT1 boundary Treatments	X	X	X	X

Code Theme	Code Reference	Cartmel Conservation Area	Cartmel Remainder	Allithwaite Church Road	Allithwaite Remainder
	BT2 Cartmel Conservation Area Boundaries	X			
	BT3 Church Road Boundaries			X	
Street scene (ST)	ST1 Street scene	X	X	X	X
	ST2 Church Road Street scene			X	
	ST3 Enhancing the Conservation Area	X			
	ST4 Wayfinding	X	X	X	X
Green/Blue Infrastructure (GB)	GB1 Green/Blue Infrastructure	X	X	X	X
	GB2 Biodiversity	X	X	X	X
Local Landscape (LL)	LL1 Local Landscape	X	X	X	X
Building Material (BM)	BM1 Parish Wide Building Materials	X	X	X	X
	BM2 Roofing	X	X	X	X
	BM3 Church Road Materiality			X	
	BM4 Cartmel Materiality	X			
Eco-Friendly Design (EF)	EF1 Eco-Friendly Design	X	X	X	X

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5.1   Structure and Layout (SL)

The structure and layout of each village differs somewhat; Allithwaite presents a linear structure, whilst Cartmel is a village of two halves. However, both are similar in their arrangement around vast openings of green space. It is important that the character of both villages is retained with respect to this historical morphology.

See also:

- Cumbria Development Design Guide.

- Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance - Sub type 3a Open Farmland and Pavements.

- Emerging Cartmel Conservation Area Management Plan.

Code SL1 Structure and Layout

- Development should make a positive contribution towards the distinctive character and form of the parish as a whole and relate well to its site and its surroundings.

- The form and structure of the new development should ensure that a sense of place is created which respects its context, setting, local village and landscape character.

- The planned and incremental expansion of Allithwaite and Cartmel could result in a loss of character and an increase of settlement fringe developments, pushing the settlement boundary out. Preserving the distinct form of settlements and the intimate relationship to the scale of the landscape is encouraged within the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance- Sub type 3a Open Farmland and Pavements). Village fringes should be protected from unsympathetic development.

- Development should respond to the existing development pattern of its proximity and adopt complementary block sizes, structures, and layouts. Buildings should be arranged in a legible layout which is permeable, and which is well embedded into the existing fabric of the village.

Figure 19: The layout and existing structure of Cartmel
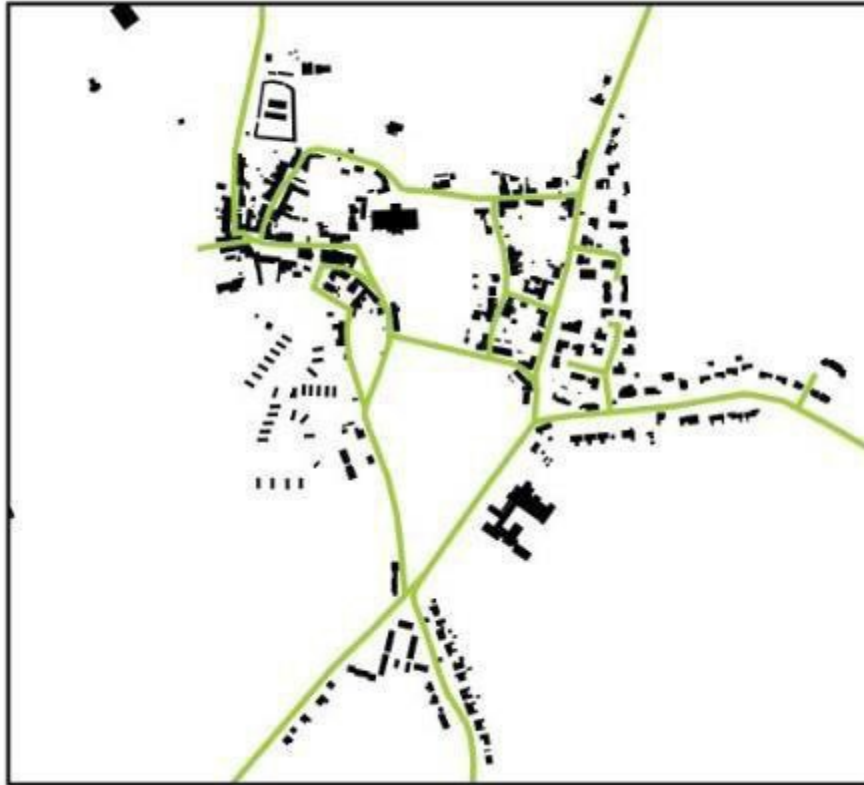
Figure 20: The layout and existing structure of Allithwaite
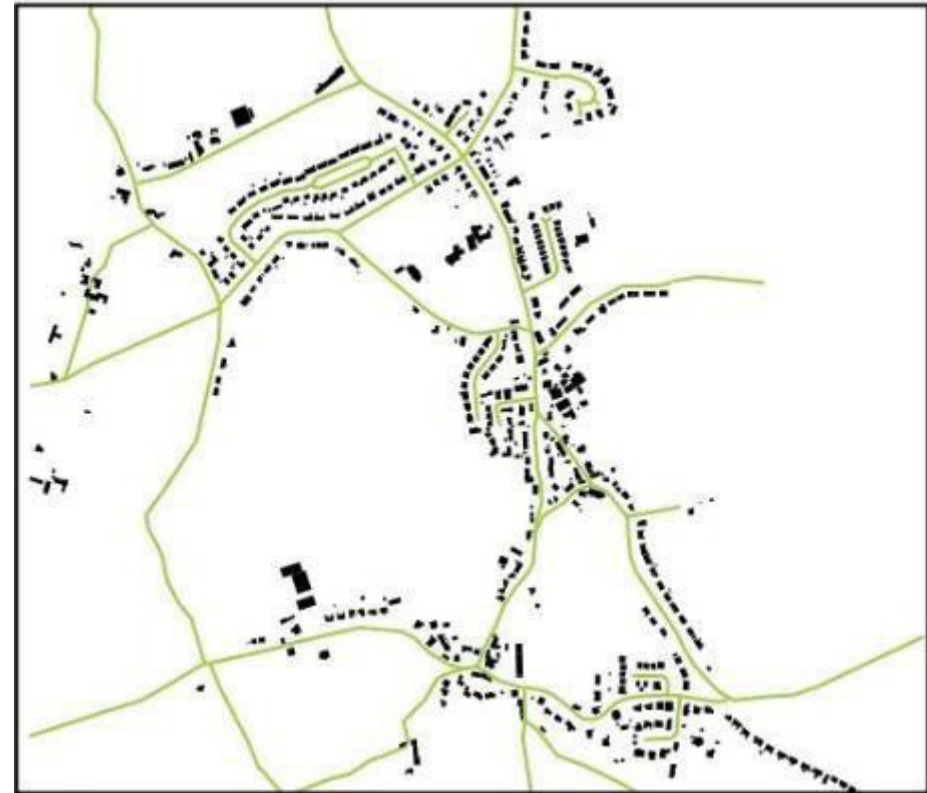
Code SL2 Conservation Area Layout

- includes not only the two separate built up areas that form the settlement but also the immediate landscape setting around the village to the north, south, and west, as well as a narrow corridor of meadow land which separates the two discrete areas. Development within Cartmel Conservation Area should respect the medieval street pattern and preserve or enhance its special character. Cul-de-sac layouts are not considered appropriate within the Conservation Area. Road proposals in New Town, in the east of the Conservation Area are suited to informal layouts **(Village Design Statement, 1994)**

Code SL3 Strengthening Church Road

- Allithwaite is a traditional linear settlement which has expanded out due to post-war developments. Proposals should seek to limit this expansion, whilst working within the context of the local topography.
- Buildings should orientate towards Church Road and reinforce the linearity of this street where possible.

Figure 21: Code SL4 seeks to strengthen Church Road as a spine through the village
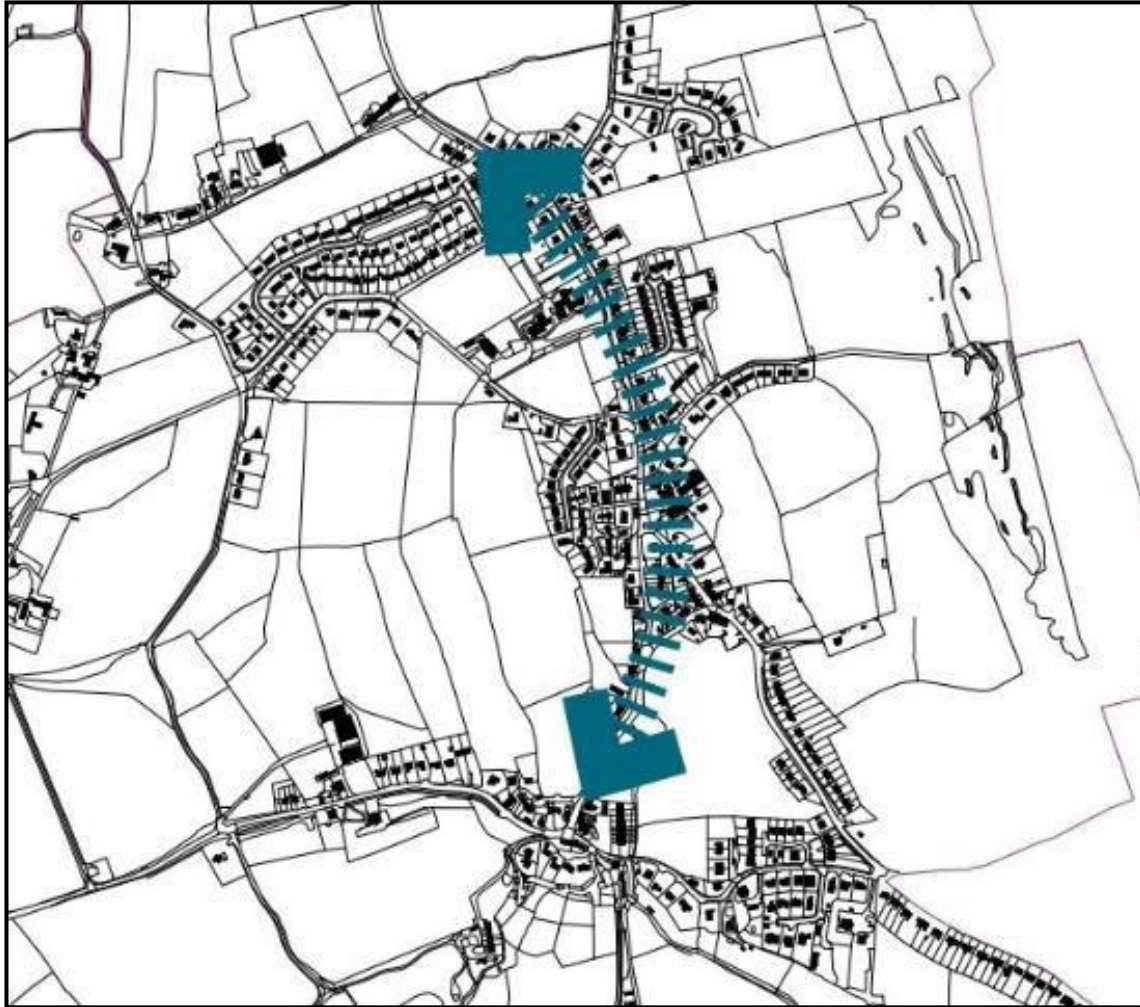
5.2 Built Form (BF)

See also:

- Building for Life 12 (2015) Section 7 (Creating Well defined spaces).

- Cartmel Conservation Area Appraisal.

- Emerging Cartmel Conservation Area Management Plan.

Code BF1 Built Form

- Buildings should be aligned along the street with their main façade and entrance facing it in order to achieve an active frontage which offers natural surveillance. There are considerable areas of open green and recreational spaces in both villages, which should be retained.

- Proposals should consider the surrounding built form in terms of height and scale with careful consideration to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets to avoid causing harm to their significance.

- Enclosure of the street should be complementary to that which already exists in the area.

- Significant increases in size or scale of existing properties should be avoided to help maintain the integrity of the landscape. This is especially important in buildings located on the settlement edges.

- Consideration should be given to the position of a building and how it relates to the termination of a building line or a street. Buildings at the termination of a street should recognise their focal position and adopt a design of an appropriate nature.

- Building proportionality is important and should be respectful of its local and immediate context.

- Orientation to pedestrian-only passageways can enrich these spaces, but must have consideration to the privacy and security of the dwelling

Code BF2 Cartmel Conservation Area

- Buildings should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Careful consideration needs to be given to the height of buildings in this respect, taking account of built form, scale and height of existing buildings in the nearby vicinity of the proposal. Buildings higher than two storeys could cause harmful impacts in this respect.

- Pitched roofs are considered most appropriate in Cartmel and are encouraged. The irregularity of the angle to the street could assist with visually breaking up the massing of new development, for example, with gable end to street, as witnessed with some C19 properties along Aynsome Rd.

- Chimney stacks are a typical feature of the village roofscape. These should be incorporated into new development proposals to correspond with the historic vernacular and enhance the rural character of the village.

- Dormers need to be appropriate to the original building. Inappropriate dormer size can significantly undermine the roofscape and character of the area which they are adopted.

- Buildings located on the gateway points should follow historic precedents in terms of layout and positioning, avoiding appearing overly prominent or detracting from the special character of the village. The setting of heritage assets should be preserved or enhanced, and new development and its curtilage should respect the established building line.

Code BF3 Conservation Area Density and Orientation

- Development within the Cartmel Conservation Area and it's setting should have due consideration for the character of the character area it is situated within and the contribution this makes to the significance of the conservation area, either through provision of a verdant, spacious character or by provision of a rural backdrop. Development should respect the special character of this area and should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA; including through protection of any key views that contribute towards the conservation area's significance. (See Figures 22 and 23)

Figure 22: Church Town in west of CA.   *Figure 23: New Town in east of CA.*
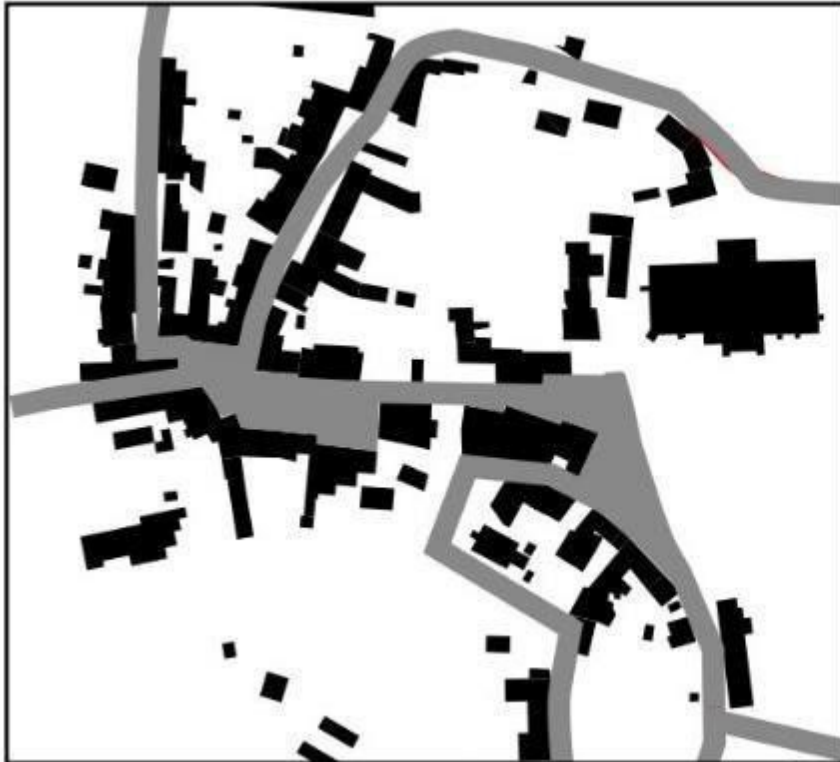
Code BF4 Church Road

- Proposed developments should seek to strengthen the building line along Church Road, which can help to bring momentum down the route and secure the linearity of this street.

- Buildings should be no higher than three storeys and should have careful regard to their topographical position and any impact on views. Tall buildings should not appear dominant within the village.

- The roofline is much more exposed in Allithwaite given its undulating topography. Particular care should be given in Allithwaite that building heights do not encroach on or interrupt views, and that the roofscape is respectful to its setting and exposure.

5.3 Heritage Assets (HA)

See also:

- Streets for All: Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Public Realm Works in Historic Places – Historic England (2018).

Code HA1 Heritage Assets

The parish has a rich history and heritage which should be preserved and celebrated. It is important to protect this traditional character, whilst enabling growth to occur.

- Development should make a positive contribution to the historic and architectural character and form of both Allithwaite and Cartmel.

- Development proposals should preserve the significance of designated heritage assets, including their settings. Designated heritage assets include scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas and the world heritage site, and non-designated heritage assets includes local list buildings. All proposals should clearly demonstrate that the proposals preserve or enhance the significance of these assets. Developments should respect and respond positively to any heritage assets within its physical or visual vicinity.

- Traditional structures, both within the settlement area and the surrounding landscape, should be retained as visible reminders of the history of the villages. Sensitive conversion of traditional, redundant buildings may be considered acceptable and where this preserves the special interest of all heritage sites, would be supported.

- There is an abundance of listed buildings within the Cartmel Conservation Area, and fewer designations in Allithwaite. Development should have regard to Pages 22 and 23 and the location of these assets and how they could be impacted by development proposals.

5.4   Site Edges (SE)

Both Allithwaite and Cartmel are located within an attractive landscaped setting. Engagement undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process indicates open spaces within the village are greatly valued and should be protected, with 91% residents saying such spaces were important or fairly important. The surrounding countryside was considered to be just as important to people (Community Plan, 2013). It is therefore important to ensure development maintains a sensitive relationship to its context in the countryside.

Code SE1 Site Edges

- Boundaries on the settlement edge should reflect the traditional boundaries found within the area.

- Edges of settlement development should adopt regular breaks in built form to increase visual permeability and opportunities for views. The layout should relate to the surrounding landscape context.

- Developers seeking to build in proximity to the surrounding countryside should recognise the unique character and setting of the location and address this positively with appropriate landscaping treatments and responses to local topography and tree cover.

- Any proposals must recognise the exposure to surrounding landscape and views into the settlement. Rear view and treatments are important and should 'fade out' to the landscape.

Figure 24: Code SE1 – Landscaped edges

Breaks between buildings help to retain views out

Settlement edges should blur into the surrounding landscape
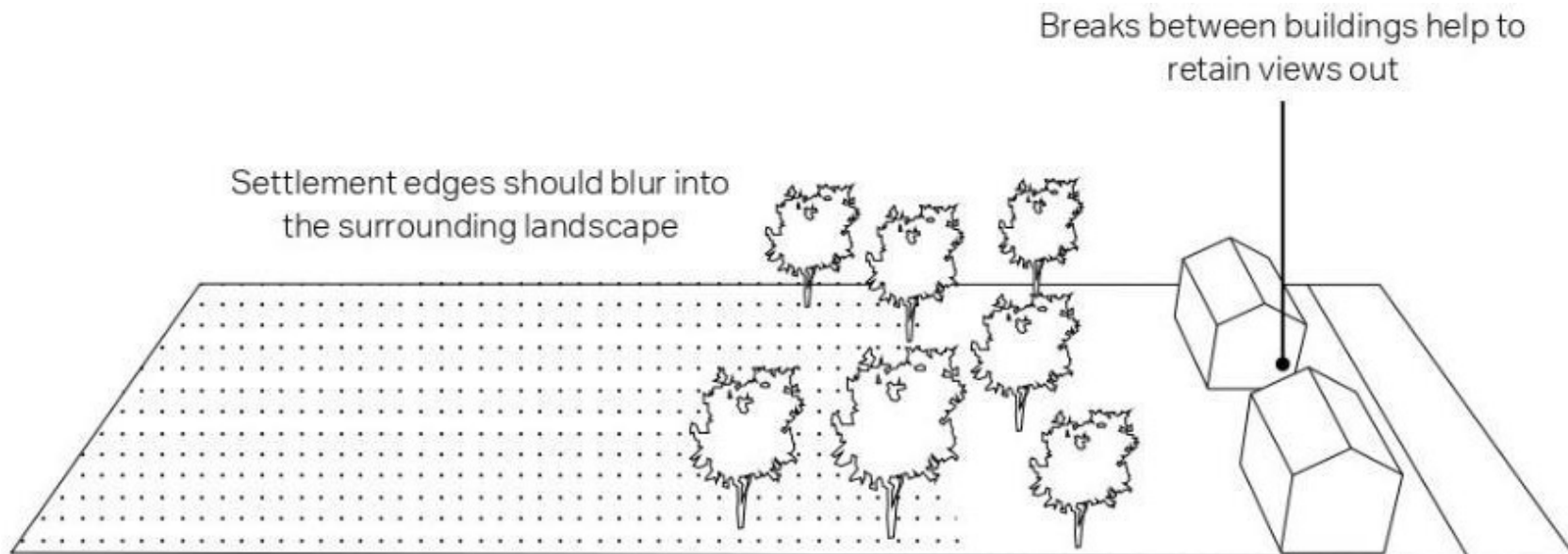
Figure 25: A good example of a settlement edge along Cartmel Road, Allithwaite

5.5   Views

Code VE1 Views

- Development should be aware of its position within the local topography and ensure the height and massing of buildings does not impose on views across the landscape.

- Views towards, from, or incorporating heritage assets, should be preserved, where these views contribute to their significance. An assessment of impact on views should be carried out using guidance set out in The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition), Historic England (2017).

- Development proposals should maintain visual connections with the surrounding countryside and where possible the Bay.

- Visual impact should be enhanced or adequately mitigated through the design of the site layout, buildings, and landscape.

- Development should seek to maintain visual connections to the surrounding local landscape and long views out of the settlement. Development on the settlement edge should adopt a density which allows for spaces between buildings to preserve views of the countryside setting.

- Trees and landscaping should be an integral part of the design strategy to help blend and embed development within its surrounding and to provide privacy.

- As per the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance- Sub type 3a Open Farmland and Pavements, uncluttered skylines and key views should be protected from large scale energy infrastructure

- Key views of settlement landmarks should be maintained and incorporated as development features to help safeguard the settlements' distinctive identity and help with legibility.

- In Allithwaite, development should maintain visual connections with the surrounding countryside and towards Morecambe Bay. Where possible open views towards the countryside and across open spaces should be maintained from key existing routes within the parish and new development sites.

Figure 26: Code VE1 Views

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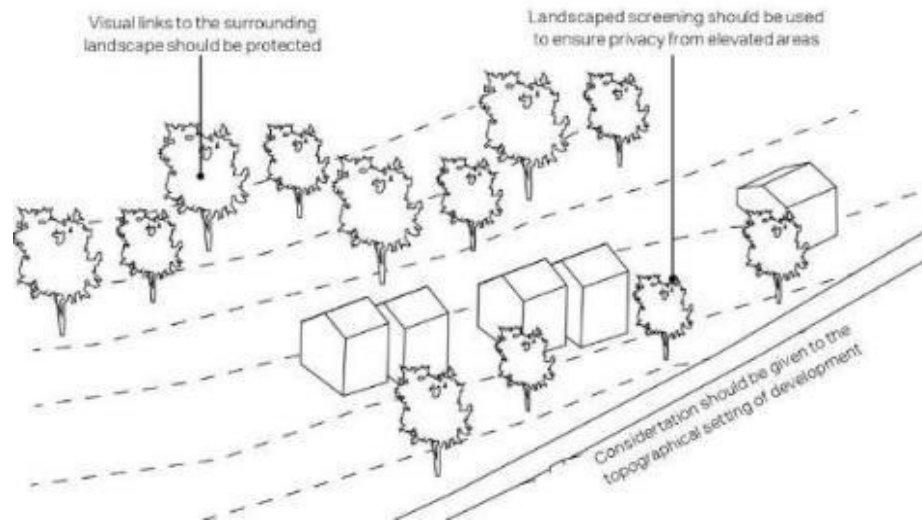
5.6 Topography (TP)

The consideration of changing topography is particularly important when considering the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area. Special consideration should be given to the visual impact of development on exposed or raised ground which could give rise to harm to the conservation area and other designated and non-designated heritage assets.

See also:

- Cumbria Development Design Guide.

Code TP1 Addressing topography

- Allithwaite is set in a more undulating landscape than Cartmel. Development in elevated positions should be aware of its position above other buildings and consider the privacy of those below.

- Buildings on a slope should be orientated to enjoy views to the surrounding landscape but should adopt appropriate screening measures to ensure privacy of other buildings is maintained.

- Buildings should seek to adopt appropriate design solutions to address level changes. Buildings should not appear out of scale in comparison to their surroundings.

- The design of new streets which have to address gradient and level changes should refer to the Cumbria Development Design Guide or any relevant updated guidance for good practice design guidance in this context.

5.7 Water and Drainage (WD)

As from 1st April 2023, the role of Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) passed from the former Cumbria County Council to Westmorland and Furness Council. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) play an important role in the management of surface water run-off in new developments. They help to mitigate adverse effects of stormwater runoff and also provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Cumbria Development Design Guide helps to establish standards for adopting SuDS within developments.

- In terms of the respective roles of the Environment Agency (EA) and Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) in relation to flooding and drainage this is as follows:

- The Environment Agency is responsible for carrying out maintenance, improvement or construction work to manage flood risk on 'main rivers', which includes the River Eea.

- The LLFA is responsible for flood risk management work on 'ordinary watercourses'.

See also:

- The SuDS Manual (CIRIA).

- Improving the flood performance of new buildings: flood resilient construction (2007) Department for Communities and Local Government.

- Water Sensitive Urban Design in the UK (CIRIA) (2013).

Code WD1 Water and Drainage

- It is required that SuDS are to be integrated into developments to help address surface water runoff from the development site. Drainage should be considered early in the development planning and design process, along with other key considerations. Existing watercourses, existing flows of surface water across the site, and existing drainage systems, must be taken into consideration and the drainage strategy should mimic natural drainage patterns as closely as possible.

- Development in elevated positions should have careful consideration of its drainage impacts and the potential impact of surface water run-off. This is especially true in Allithwaite where there are more extreme level changes than in Cartmel.

- Permeable surfaces reduce flood risk by allowing water to filter through. Adoption of permeable paving solutions would help to enhance the street scene through attractive materiality.

Code WD2 Flood Resilient Housing

- Much of Cartmel is located within the floodplain. There are several design approaches which can be incorporated into new development which can help to minimise flood damage, as outlines in national guidance (Improving the flood performance of new buildings, 2007).

- Development of sites within the flood risk areas is discouraged. Any development which is located within the floodplain needs to be carefully considered against its potential impact on flooding.

- Boundary treatments within the flood zone are encouraged to be designed with high water resistance materials and/ or effective seals to minimise water penetration, provided these treatments are in keeping with the local character.

- The site drainage system and management of surface water runoff are important considerations within any development plan.

- Reference should be made to 'Improving the flood performance of new buildings: flood resilient construction (2007) Section 6' for more detailed guidance on flood resilient design and construction.

- Careful layout of internal space can be an effective measure to minimise the impact of floods. Living accommodation and essential services should be designed to be located above predicted flood levels to improve resilience of properties within the flood zone. Proposals should take a proactive approach to incorporating flood resilience into designs.

Figure 27: Addressing water and drainage within developments

The internal layout of buildings within the flood plain should be designed to be as resilient as possible

Raised floor levels and steps can provide some protection from surface water flooding. Any adaptions should support the traditional facade of the Cartmel Conservation Area

Rainwater harvesting features (of appropriate design) are encouraged within new developments

Street landscaping and planting between parking bays can help to address surface water run off

5.8   Movement Network (MN)

- Streets must be designed to meet the technical highways requirements, but also should be recognised as places within their own right. Placemaking principles are encouraged to be adopted within the streetscape, and these spaces should be seen as being attractive and safe by all users on foot, cycle, public and private transport.

- Traffic and congestion issues are prevalent along primary routes in both Allithwaite and Cartmel. Traffic flow in and out of the villages is also problematic due to high vehicle speeds and a lack of paving, made dangerous by a lack of sightlines and close enclosure of the field boundary and hedgerow.

- The Cartmel Township Initiative has sought to address some of these problems within Cartmel village. Further development, however, has the potential to increase pressure on the existing highways network and parking, and exacerbate problems of congestion across both villages. Street layout and design should be an essential consideration for any new development and should include the impacts on existing infrastructure and highways and mitigate appropriately.

- Westmorland and Furness Council is the Highways Authority for the construction, maintenance, and operation of all adopted highways within the Allithwaite and Cartmel parish area. Street design should refer to statutory highways' legislation, and also the Cumbria Development Design Guide (2017) and any future update.

See also:

- Cumbria Development Design Guide.

- The Cartmel Township Initiative (2014).

Code MN1 All Streets

- The general requirement for a footpath is that it should be wide enough to allow people to pass one another when travelling in opposite directions.

- Within the village settlement boundaries, streets should not be built to maximise vehicle speed or capacity. Streets and junctions must be designed with the safety and accessibility of vulnerable groups in mind, with traffic calming measures applied where appropriate, such as changes in material.

- Designs should seek to remove barriers to movement for all users. The streets should be easy to navigate and feel safe for all.

- Carriageway widths should be appropriate for the context and use of the street. Designs should take into account the volume of vehicular and pedestrian activity.

Code MN2 Primary Routes

- Primary roads constitute the main access routes through the villages. Along with Rural Lanes, they are the main routes used for utility vehicles and bus routes. Primary routes should be designed to accommodate heavier traffic flows and through routes.

- Within both Allithwaite and Cartmel, however, the tight relationship between the street and the built form means the primary routes are spatially constrained. These primary routes struggle to accommodate both vehicle and pedestrian movements; often there is no formal pavement on one or on both sides. Whilst this contributes to a rural character, these routes do not exhibit the typical typology and arrangement for a primary vehicle corridor (which would often be formalised with pavements and have a noticeably wider carriageway width).

- The B5277 within Allithwaite in particular is a barrier to pedestrian movement and feels unsafe to walk along. Primary streets should be designed to allow for safe pedestrian and cyclist flow, as well as unhindered vehicular movement.

- On-street parking should be contained within designated spaces and should avoid creating pinch points.

- Primary roads should be defined with strong building lines.

Code MN3 Secondary Routes

- Secondary routes provide access between primary routes. They should emphasise the human scale and be designed for lower traffic volumes compared to primary routes. Secondary Routes should exhibit the following characteristic.

- Carriageways should be designed to be shared between vehicles and cyclists. Vertical traffic calming features such as raised tables may be introduced at key locations. Limited on-street residential and visitor parking to be designed into the layout.

Code MN4 Residential Streets

- Residential streets generally serve a smaller number of buildings and consequently can be of a more intimate scale. With limited vehicular use, these streets work well as informal, shared spaces. Shared surface streets are a prime example of prioritising place over movement. Residential streets (known as Tertiary/ Shared Streets) exhibit the following characteristic.

- Typically serve up to 25 dwellings (cul-de-sac) or 50 dwellings (loop) on section which should not be in excess of 70m.

Code MN5 Rural Lanes

- Rural lanes permeate from the settlement into the landscape, and act as key connectors between the villages. Despite their important function they create an intimate experience of moving around the settlement area and its periphery, into the countryside. High vehicle speeds and the narrow nature of these roads can create quite an unsafe environment for pedestrians.

- Development should seek to maintain a close relationship to the narrow roads which helps to reinforce rural character and scale. Haggs Lane, Cartmel Road, and Locker Lane in particular should have their enclosure preserved.

- It is important to adopt hedgerow and soft boundaries along the rural lanes. Breaks in hedgerow are discouraged.

Code MN6 Pedestrian and Cyclist Connections

- Action 9 of the Cartmel Township Initiative seeks to encourage the adoption of increased cycle facilities. It is also an ambition of the Neighbourhood Group to improve pedestrian and cyclist permeability.

- This means having streets well connected to each other and encouraging active travel options and routes.

- 'Walkable neighbourhoods' are well connected for pedestrian and cyclist activity. Short and walkable distances are usually defined to be within a 5-to-10-minute walk or a five mile trip by bike.

- Connections to existing PRoW and also a wider green network are encouraged. Existing cycle and pedestrian links should be improved and extended where possible.

- Walking and recreational opportunities are encouraged within the Parish. PRoW and access to open land should be well maintained to allow for an appreciation of the local area. Development should include measures which seek to improve pedestrian and cyclist facilities and linkages between villages, creating a more permeable relationship

between Allithwaite and Cartmel. However, public footways need to be managed through waymarking and appropriate surfacing (Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance- Sub type 3a Open Farmland and Pavements).

- New developments should be designed to improve non-vehicular connectivity. It should connect to the existing footpath, PRoW, and cycle networks where possible. The adoption of filtered neighbourhoods, were pedestrians and cyclists enjoy permeability, is encouraged but should be delivered with due regard to building privacy and security. Development should seek to have some active frontage onto any pedestrian linkages.

- The recommended width for an off-carriageway cycle track is 3000mm.

5.9 Parking (PK)

It is important that appropriate parking solutions are adopted which serve the needs of a place whilst avoiding any negative impact on streetscape. Car parking should be conducive to the character of the development. There are a variety of parking solutions across both villages, some which work better in their context than others. Developments should ensure that parking provision aligns with the standards established in the Cumbria Development Design Guide and any future update.

See Also:

- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

- Department for Transport's Manual for Streets 1 and 2.

- Cartmel Township Initiative Action Plan.

- Cumbria Development Design Guide.

- Streets for All: Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places- Historic England (2018).

Code PK1 Parking

- Car parking should be designed so that it fits in with the character of proposed development.

- The standard dimension for a parking bay is 2.4m by 4.8m. It is discouraged to mark out parking bays in thermoplastic or paint given the impact these materials have on the attractiveness of the streetscape. These materials fail to add quality or character to the streetscape. A contrasting colour or texture of the road material is a preferred way of demarking bays.

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- A mix of approaches should be encouraged across developments in order to provide variety, avoid dominance and reflect the differing types and styles of housing within each development.

- All proposed developments should refer to the parking recommendations within the Cartmel Township Initiative Action Plan.

Code PK2 Courtyard Parking

- Consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan suggest there is a preference for courtyard and mews as a parking solution. These places are considered effective when they act as multi-functional spaces, are overlooked to ensure safety, and have at least two vehicular access points. Courtyards are encouraged to accommodate no more than 10 parking spaces; they should be separated if serving more vehicles.

Code PK3 On-Street Parking

- On-street parking is common within the Cartmel Conservation Area, and also along Church Road within Allithwaite. Some levels of on-street parking can be effective in reducing traffic speed and for convenience, and in some cases, there is no other alternative to serve buildings than with this parking typology.

- On-street parking should be provided in small groupings only and not dominate the street scene or detract from the sense of space; efforts to soften it with landscaping and lessen the visual impact are encouraged. Where possible, planting or gaps should be incorporated after every 5 continuous bays of parallel parking. Sensitive demarcation of parking bays is encouraged.

Code PK4 On-Plot Parking

- On-plot residential parking should be long enough to accommodate a vehicle without protruding out from the property into the footway or other part of the highway.

- On-plot parking should not detract from the character of the street or the street scene ~~streetscene~~ or the significance of any heritage assets through inappropriate development in their setting. Hedges, trees, planting, and high quality paving or landscaping help to reduce a car-dominated character and also identify separation between the private and public realm. It is important that, where adopted to the front of properties, appropriate boundary treatments are used to reduce visual impact on the street-scene. Appropriate boundary treatments are discussed in the Boundary Treatments (BT) Codes.

- Garages should be designed to be consistent in architectural style and character of the house they serve. They should be set back from the street frontage and preserve the setting of heritage assets.

- Hard standing driveways must be constructed of porous material to minimise surface water run-off. It should have regard for the potential drainage impacts it may have. It should preserve heritage assets and their settings.

Code PK5 Church Road

- Parking should be tucked discreetly between houses (rather than the front) so as not to dominate the street-scene. The gaps between buildings along this road could be used to accommodate such parking and also reduce the levels of on-street parking.

Code PK6 Cycle Parking

- In order to encourage cycling as an active mode of transport, cycle storage should be considered alongside car parking. All new residential developments should have regards to the location, spatial requirements, and aesthetic of these features.

- New housing development should provide adequate and secure covered storage for cycles and mobility scooters, with level access to the highway within the ownership boundary of each property. Secure and combined electric cycle, mobility scooter and electric vehicle recharging points are also encouraged where appropriate.

- Residential cycle parking needs to be secure and dry, with access restricted to legitimate users.

- Any cycle parking should preserve the significance of all heritage assets through sensitive design that respects its context in terms of materials, design, finish, scale.

Code PK7 Visitor Cycle Parking

- South Lakeland is a popular place to explore by bike. Allithwaite and Cartmel are located along or in very close proximity to National Cycle Route 70 and 700. There is an opportunity to promote cycling by providing cycling parking within the public realm, especially within Cartmel Conservation Area in proximity to the Priory and the public squares. See also the Cartmel Township Initiative Action Plan.

- Visitor cycle parking should be provided in convenient, overlooked locations with easy accessibility.

- Cycle parking needs to have regard for the narrow street widths of the Cartmel Conservation Area. It should not obstruct pedestrian or vehicle movement or flow.

- The provision of cycle parking or hire facilities to promote recreational cycling for visitors is encouraged within Action 9 (Cycle Facilities) of the Cartmel Township Initiative (2014).

- Any cycle parking should preserve the significance of all heritage assets through sensitive design that respects its context in terms of materials, design, finish, scale.

5.10 Commercial Frontages (CF)

See Also the Shopfront Design Toolkit (SLDC 2004).

Code CF1 Commercial Frontages

- The Shopfront Design Toolkit (SLDC, 2004) provides guidance on how to deliver appropriate shopfronts which are complementary to the local character of the villages and Conservation Areas they are located. It can also apply to commercial buildings like restaurants.

- Corporate designs and signage can have an adverse impact on sensitive locations. The style adopted should be modified to respect the age, style, and proportions of the host building.

- Signage should be clear, simple, and legible. Details should be appropriate and sensitive to the street scene. A-boards are strongly discouraged given their impact on the street scene and interruption of pedestrian flow.

- When looking at replacing shop fronts, historic shop fronts should be retained, repaired, or reinstated where possible. Listed building consent and planning permission may be required for works to shopfronts.

- Security features should be designed into the shopfront at an early stage. Visually acceptable security measures include toughened or laminated glass.

- Proposals should avoid overly large shopfront display windows. Shop display windows should be well-proportioned to the host building.

5.11 Boundary Treatments (BT)

Code BT1 Boundary Treatments

- New development should use boundary features which are complementary to the street. The materials proposed for the boundary treatment should be of a high quality and should respond to the village character. They should seek to tie-in with neighbouring properties where these are considered positive.

- Panel fencing along publicly visible boundaries are considered inappropriate to the parish and should be avoided. Panelled fencing detracts from the streetscape and should be avoided to the front of properties, or where the plot meets the street or where this adjoins open countryside.

- Traditional stone walls should be retained and reinforced with the line of other boundary treatments. The restoration and management of limestone walls and hedgerow using traditional methods is encouraged within the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance - Sub type 3a Open Farmland and Pavements. The replacement of walls and hedges with post and wire fencing is discouraged.

Code BT2 Conservation Area Boundaries

- There is typically a very close relationship between the street and the buildings within the Conservation Area, where narrow pavements and streets abut directly to traditional buildings with no boundary of separation.

- Whilst this close relationship to the street is important to the character of the Conservation Area, privacy can be achieved in some ways through appropriate boundary treatments.

- Where adopted, boundary treatments should not impose on the narrow pavement or disrupt the movement of pedestrians.

- Consideration should be given to the existing boundary treatments within the Conservation Area as appropriate precedent. This could include the typologies shown.

- Front gardens should only be included where this is characteristic of the area. Front gardens are not typical within the west of the Conservation Area (in Church Town), although smaller front gardens do exist within the east (in New Town).

- There is a combination of both broad and narrow cobbled building aprons to the floors of numerous buildings in the Conservation Area. These are an attractive feature which help to retain the historic character and should be preserved.

Code BT3 Church Road Boundaries

- Boundary treatments along Church Road in particular should have regard to their surrounding buildings. The boundary lines should seek to strengthen the edge and linearity of this street.

Figure 28: Historic surfaces such as cobbles and setts should be retained.

Figure 29: Attractive and historic boundary features
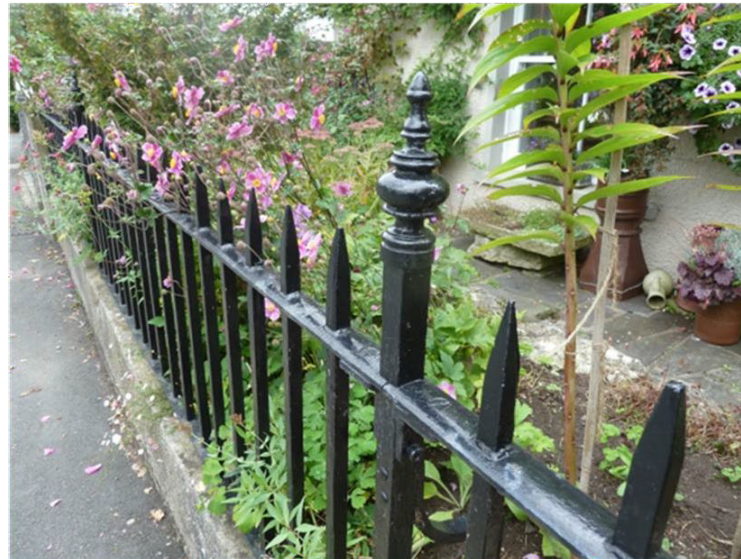
5.12 Street scene (ST)

Code ST1 Street scene

- An attractive public realm can greatly enhance the perception of a place. The quality of streets can be undermined by traffic calming measures or by prioritising vehicle circulation rather than the pedestrian experience.

- Materials used in the public realm should be of a high quality and enhance the character of the villages. Street design should support the use of space by residents and visitors through the adoption of an attractive material palette and the provision of street furniture. Cluttering the street scene with unnecessary features should be avoided.

- Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan identified a concern about pavement clutter, including 'A' boards on the street. Streets should be designed to accommodate the needs of commercial buildings without interrupting pedestrian flow.

- Lighting schemes must be careful not to cause unacceptable levels of light pollution. They should not infringe on the countryside setting of the villages. Glare, which is considered to be an uncomfortable brightness of a light source, should be avoided. Developments should be designed to conserve and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the dark night skies.

- Lighting should only be adopted in areas where it is considered appropriate, or where it would bring a benefit to the functionality of that area.

- Highway designs should seek to avoid the need to incorporate signage. Speed reduction should be self-evident and rational. Where possible the behaviour of road users should be encouraged by design features and layout rather than signage or markings, which can require maintenance and result in a visually cluttered streetscape.

- Planting should be an essential part of street design to help with integration and biodiversity.

Code ST2 Church Road Street scene

- Church Road should be enhanced as a key space within the village. Enhancements to paving, planting or street furniture are encouraged where the space allows, especially by the Church, the School, the Orchard, and the Post Office. Grass verges should be retained.

Figure 30: Historic surfacing in Cartmel includes sandstone flags and cobbles, which should be retained.

Code ST3 Enhancing the Conservation Area

- Cobbles and historic setts within Cartmel help to frame the traditional buildings, add character to the streetscape, and are effective in defining areas of pedestrian priority. Repairs to cobbled surfaces should be carried out carefully and have particular regard to traditional laying techniques. Cobbled building aprons should be retained especially within The Square.

- Surfacing treatment is particularly encouraged within The Square and Devonshire Square in Cartmel to indicate to drivers they are entering a special environment. These spaces should be retained as important public squares. Design features which encourage pedestrian dwell time and improve the quality of the public realm are encouraged.

- Action 11 of the Cartmel Township Initiative seeks to improve lighting across the Racecourse car park, along routes to and from it and within the village. Any design of lighting will need to be managed carefully to maintain the rural character and avoid light pollution. It is important installation does not impact on the local dark skies.

- The riverside is an attractive asset within Cartmel. Any public space which has visual or physical access should be of a high quality and seek to celebrate the riverside.

Code ST4 Wayfinding

- Cartmel is a popular tourist and visitor destination. To help maximise the visitor experience, it is important to incorporate an effective wayfinding network. Action 5 of the Cartmel Township Initiative seeks to improve signage within Cartmel. Signage is a necessary element to improve the legibility and safety of roads in the parish, for residents, users, and visitors of the village.

- Signage should acknowledge the full range of people using the village. Signs are encouraged to be mounted on buildings or existing platforms so as not to detract or clutter the street scene.

- Ensure wayfinding is considered through the adoption of appropriate signing. New wayfinding infrastructure should be designed to align against and complement the existing features.

- Wayfinding in the Conservation Area should have particular regard to its setting, so as not to detract from the vernacular of buildings.

5.13 Green and Blue Infrastructure (GB)

See also the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance.

Code GB1 Green and Blue Infrastructure

- Green infrastructure (GI) is the planned and managed network of green spaces and natural elements which connect and exist within our urban environments. Blue infrastructure (BI) refers to water or fluvial networks which are also present, such as rivers or ponds. Integration of green and blue infrastructure has proven health, environmental and economic benefits. It fulfils a multi-functional role, enables sustainable growth, and enriches the streetscape experience.

- GI provision in residential developments can be varied and can include informal space, footpaths, bridleways, cycleways, SuDS, natural habitats, and street trees. GI can also include gardens which are the responsibility of individual owners but can contribute to ecological networks if managed appropriately.

- Field boundaries should be reinforced with appropriate planting. Planting should reflect the natural shrub species of the locality and utilise native species. Reference should be made to the **Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance.**

- Consideration should be given to the provision of growing areas, either in the form of individual gardens or communal spaces, to ensure all residents have the opportunity to grow their own food. This aligns with the feedback from public consultation events which saw respondents' welcome space for growing food.

- Blue infrastructure is encouraged where appropriate. Water features such as ponds and streams to support wildlife diversity and improve community quality of life should be considered within designs. Any access from new development to the waterway should be convenient, attractive, and safe.

Code GB2 Biodiversity

- New developments and building extensions should aim to strengthen biodiversity and the natural environment.

- Existing habitats and biodiversity corridors should be protected and enhanced.

- New development proposals should aim for the creation of new habitats and wildlife corridors; e.g., by aligning back and front gardens. Gardens and boundary treatments should be designed to allow the movement of wildlife and provide habitat for local species

- The adoption of swift bricks, bat and owl boxes are encouraged to help provide nesting and roosting spaces or bats and birds.

- Proposals should seek to enhance wildlife corridors to support local biodiversity such as the provision of new areas of woodland, hedgerows, grassland, or wetland habitats.

5.14 Local Landscape (LL)

Code LL1 Local Landscape

- The landscape is integral to the identity of the parish; it is surrounded by local and national designations which require preservation and protection.

- Any development proposals should seek to ensure there is no adverse impact on national or locally designated sites. Existing landscape features such as hedges and trees should be conserved as intrinsic parts of the development area.

- The landscape and open space areas identified within the South Lakeland Local Plan Policies map for Allithwaite, and Cartmel and the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map should be preserved and protected from development.

- The scale, massing and layout of all new buildings should be informed by a sensitive response to local topography, landscape character and wider setting of development within the parish.

- Within new developments opportunities for creating public spaces should be identified. The design of the public space between buildings should be given as much consideration as the buildings themselves.

- The local countryside should be preserved from intrusions such as significant wind farm development • New development proposals should not be visually intrusive; appropriate scale, design and screening should be adopted to protect the views of the locality.

- Trees should be retained and enhanced in new development proposals.

- Materials used in developments should complement the landscape and natural setting of the parish.

5.15 Building Materiality (BM)

Code BM1 Parish-wide Building Materiality

- Both Allithwaite and Cartmel exhibit a style of slate roofs and rendered walls. There is more consistency in appearance and style in the Cartmel Conservation Area than in Allithwaite.

- Architectural appearance should be appropriate to the context and take account of the eclectic mix of form and style. Development should adopt traditional materials or new materials that complement the character and appearance of the CA and avoid pastiche.

- Materials within new development should complement the architectural character and quality of its immediate context. The following materials are encouraged within building designs.

- Natural stone, where possible sourced from local quarries. The use of quarried limestone of similar geological composition and colour to the locally predominant material and in shaped rectangular blocks and laid to even beds and perpend joints.

- Render should be a neutral shade to imitate unpainted historic render or a natural neutral limewash,

- Porches in general need to be slate roofed (gabled or lean to roof forms/open sided or enclosed walls).

- There is scope for variation in architectural style as there is precedent for this within the villages already. Individual architectural expression is expected and encouraged, as long as the design of buildings and spaces is harmonious. It should contribute to a cohesive local identity.

- Materials within new development should complement the architectural character and quality of its immediate context. Preference for the design of new buildings to use natural materials (for roofs, external walls, and joinery) which have a coherence with the existing buildings of the parish. Materials should be selected with care to ensure they are the type which will blend into their surroundings with age and weathering.

- Modern interpretations of the traditional style are encouraged within both Allithwaite and Cartmel. Natural materials such as stone and slate, and an appreciation for the simplicity of style within the area, are welcomed to retain the local heritage in a more contemporary format.

Code BM2 Roofing

- The design of new buildings should incorporate roofing materials and patterns which complement their immediate context.

- Natural slate is the preferred material.

Code BM3 Church Road Materiality

- Red sand-stone detailing should be preserved on the traditional buildings of Church Road. Modern incorporation of red sandstone in this character area is supported but it must avoid being pastiche in style. The red sand-stone complements natural stone frontages.

- Red clay tile roofing works well on the Victorian buildings along Church Road. This should be retained on these buildings. Slate is a good alternative on the cottages of Church Road.

- Roughcast or render is an appropriate frontage material.

- Boundary treatments to the front should be traditional in character and should respect the boundary line of adjacent properties. Sensitive strengthening of the building and boundary line is encouraged where this adheres to the traditional character of the area in terms of boundary height, materials, construction methods and design.

- The adoption of high quality paving or material which indicates pedestrian presence by the school and the church is encouraged. (will require consultation with the Highway Authority).

Code BM4 Cartmel Materiality

- All buildings within the Conservation Area will help to shape the character and appearance of this designation in some way. The impact of the buildings is not only determined by their public elevations but also the stylistic detailing, decorative features, and the way in which they relate to the roofscape and wider skyline.

- Cartmel exhibits a particularly distinct vernacular of medieval, post-medieval and Georgian neo-classical facades and building styles. The character or appearance of the Cartmel Conservation Area should be preserved or enhanced through new development.

- Architectural detailing in development proposals should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Cartmel. Whilst contemporary interpretations are welcomed, these need to respect the historical merits and vernacular of Cartmel.

- The use of colourwashes and masonry paints should avoid garish or synthetic colours; natural tones that replicate unpainted or limewashed render are preferred.

- The removal of traditional building surface treatments to expose the masonry below is largely discouraged, as it often exposes walling construction which was never designed to be exposed. Removal undermines the traditional character of the Conservation Area.

Figure 30: Historic windows and other features should be retained.

- Symmetry across building frontages is a common pattern in the Conservation Area, with double fronted elevations as well as single fronted or asymmetrical arrangements. Designs should seek to complement the surrounding context.

- Avoid the use of uPVC windows in favour of timber framed buildings where possible. UPVC should also be avoided in rainwater goods such as gutters and downpipes (Consultation Responses).

- Original doors and windows and other joinery features should be retained.

- Seek to retain chimney stacks for the character they add to the Conservation Area as a whole.

- Modern standard doors are inappropriate.

- Replacement windows should be carefully considered, following guidance set out in the Cartmel CAMP on replacement windows. The scale of window and door opening should be retained, as should the relationship of solid and void.

5.16 Eco-Friendly Design (EF)

Code EF1 Eco Friendly Design

- It is important that new developments adopt sustainable, eco-friendly designs which complement the existing architectural style and rurality of the parish.

- Integration of sustainability should be considered at the design stage, with consideration of passive solar heating, cooling, and energy efficient strategies. These should respond specifically to local site conditions and the opportunities presented in these areas.

- Retro-fitting renewable technologies to heritage buildings may require Listed Building Consent and should be done with care to protect the character of the existing building.

- Developments should demonstrate innovative design and the increased use of sustainable natural materials, incorporating green roofs, where possible.

- Designs should encourage local recycling, energy production and energy efficiency.

- Rainwater harvesting helps to capture and store rainwater, and also enables re-use of greywater. These systems help reduce surface water run-off, which could help the parish to address drainage and flood concerns.

- These systems can have an impact on the external appearance of buildings if not pre-considered. Efforts should be made to conceal the buildings.

- Solar panels help to achieve energy efficiency; however, they can have an aesthetic impact on the roofscape. There is support within the parish for small scale renewable energy schemes which do not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape.

- Solar panels on historic buildings and within the Cartmel Conservation Area may require planning permission and should not detract from the appearance of the building, or its historic vernacular. It should not interrupt building line or roofline. Panels should especially have regard to the position below any views in the landscape.

- Solar panels should be integrated into the design from the onset. Tile or slate colours, which are complementary to the existing roofing materials of the building or the nearby buildings, are encouraged.

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6 Site Specific Codes

6.0.1   This section of the Design Code document will identify the allocated Sites within Allithwaite and Cartmel and apply relevant codes to help guide their development. This can be used to inform the design process when these Sites come forward for delivery. The detail of this section has been informed by the South Lakeland Local Plan Land Allocations Document (2013), and the consultation responses to the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan.

6.0.2   Whilst most of the Sites allocated in the South Lakeland Land Allocations DPD are available, some Sites have been subject to planning applications, and some have been developed since the adoption of the Local Plan Land Allocations Document in 2013. This section is intended to be used as high level guidance to inform Site design and is provided for all Sites unless they have been constructed and delivered at the time of writing. A planning application has been resubmitted to South Lakeland District Council (Reference SL/2022/0055)

6.0.3   Updated information received from South Lakeland District Council in 2022 indicated that the owners of the following sites have requested that they be de-allocated, however as they are still allocations currently, they have been included for completeness:

- Land to the rear of Almond Bank.

- Land to the rear of Bankfield.

Table 2: Site Specific Coding

Code Theme	Code Reference	Land to the rear of Almond Bank	Land to rear of Barn Hey	Land to the rear of Bankfield	Land to the South of Haggs Lane	Stables, Cartmel Race Course
Structure and Layout (SL)	SL1 Structure and Layout	X	X	X	X	X
	SL2 Conservation Area Layout				X	X
	SL3 Strengthening Church Road					X
Built Form (BF)	BF1 Built Form	X	X	X	X	X
	BF2 Cartmel Conservation Area					X
	BF3 Conservation Area Density and Orientation					X
	BF4 Church Road	X				
Heritage Assets (HA)	HA1 Heritage Assets		X		X	X

Code Theme	Code Reference	Land to the rear of Almond Bank	Land to rear of Barn Hey	Land to the rear of Bankfield	Land to the South of Haggs Lane	Stables, Cartmel Race Course
Site Edges (SE)	SE1 Site Edges	X	X	X	X	X
Views (VEW)	VEW1 Views	X	X	X	X	X
Topography (TP)	TP1 Addressing Topography	X	X			
Water and Drainage (WD)	WD1 Water and Drainage	X	X	X	X	X
	WD2 Flood Resilient Housing				X	X
Movement Network (MN)	MN1 All Streets	X	X	X	X	X
	MN2 Primary Routes	X	X		X	
	MN3 Secondary Routes					
	MN4 Residential Streets	X	X	X	X	X
	MN5 Rural Lanes		X			
	MN6 Pedestrian and Cycle connections	X	X	X	X	X
Parking (PK)	PK1 Parking	X	X	X	X	X
	PK2 Courtyard	X	X	X	X	X
	PK3 On-Street Parking	X	X	X	X	X
	PK4 On-Plot Parking	X	X	X	X	X
	PK5 Church Road	X				
	PK6 Cycle Parking					
	PK7 Visitor Cycle Parking					
Commercial Frontages (CF)	CF1 Commercial Frontages					
Boundary Treatments (BT)	BT1 boundary Treatments	X	X	X	X	X
	BT2 Cartmel Conservation Area Boundaries					X
	BT3 Church Road Boundaries	X				
Street scene (ST)	ST1 Street scene	X	X	X	X	X
	ST2 Church Road Street scene	X				
	ST3 Enhancing the Conservation Area					X
	ST4 Wayfinding	X	X	X	X	X
Green/Blue Infrastructure (GB)	GB1 Green/Blue Infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X
	GB2 Biodiversity	X	X	X	X	X
Local Landscape (LL)	LL1 Local Landscape	X	X	X	X	X

Code Theme	Code Reference	Land to the rear of Almond Bank	Land to rear of Barn Hey	Land to the rear of Bankfield	Land to the South of Haggs Lane	Stables, Cartmel Race Course
Building Material (BM)	BM1 Parish Wide Building Materials	X	X	X	X	X
	BM2 Roofing	X	X	X	X	X
	BM3 Church Road Materiality	X				
	BM4 Cartmel Materiality					X
Eco-Friendly Design (EF)	EF1 Eco-Friendly Design	X	X	X	X	X

6.1   Land to the rear of Almond Bank (0.4ha)

Policy guidance as per the South Lakeland Local Plan Land Allocations Document (2013) at paragraph 4.26 suggests the that access to the site is key issue along with a need for the style and layout of new development to respect that of existing properties adjoining the site.

Additional criteria put forward in this design code include:

- Pedestrian routes along the B5277/ Church Road needs substantial improvement.

- Potential route across the fields to the rear of the Site for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Development should have an active frontage onto Church Road, although it may be appropriate to set buildings slightly back.

- The proposed development should seek to avoid any overbearing impact on surrounding buildings, with particular regard to Patch Cottage. (The frontage opposite these buildings is particularly important defining this edge. Properties should have an active relationship onto the existing buildings).

- Development needs to have regard for the raised position of the Site so as not to appear dominating.

Figure 31: Land to rear of Almond Bank

▬	Flood Zone 2	▬	Boundary Consideration
▭	Flood Zone 3	••••	Views
▲	Listed Building	▬	Conservation Area
▬	Nearby Property Consideration		
▬	Potential Pedestrian Link or Enhancement		
▬	Landscaping/ Greenspace Consideration		
▨	Green Infrastructure Consideration		
💧	Drainage Consideration		

6.2 Land to the rear of Barn Hey (1.1ha)

Policy guidance as per the South Lakeland Local Plan Land Allocations Document (2013) (Paragraph 4.24) suggests the following for this Site:

- The carriageway significantly narrows upon entry into the village. Proposals will need to incorporate highways management to ensure pedestrian safety along 'The Narrows.'

- The Site should use its position on the settlement boundary to create an attractive entrance to Allithwaite.

- There is potential to link the Site to Boarbank Lane via a pedestrian route.

- Entrance to the Site is to be achieved off Locker Lane rather than the B5277, however the character of Locker Lane as a rural route should be retained, with its hedgerow and grass verges safeguarded where possible. Widening should be limited up to the Site access point.

- Development needs to have careful consideration for the setting of Barn Hey.

- The rear outlook of the existing properties needs careful consideration.

Figure 32: Land to the rear of Barn Hey

6.3   Land to the rear of Bankfield (0.35ha)

Policy guidance as per the South Lakeland Local Plan Land Allocations Document (2013) paragraph 4.23 suggests the following for this Site;

- Trees and hedges along the edge of the Site should be retained in order to ensure an appropriate settlement boundary is achieved.

- Appropriate access should be arranged along with greater pedestrian safety particularly on and around Holme

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Figure 33: Land to rear of Bankfield

Flood Zone 2	Boundary Consideration
Flood Zone 3	●●● Views
▲ Listed Building	Conservation Area
▬ Nearby Property Consideration	
Potential Pedestrian Link or Enhancement	
Landscaping/ Greenspace Consideration	
▨ Green Infrastructure Consideration	
💧 Drainage Consideration	

6.4 Land at Haggs Lane (2.2ha)

6.4.1   Policy guidance as per the South Lakeland Local Plan Land Allocations Document (2013) (Paragraph 4.29) suggests the following for this Site:

- It is important that safe and suitable access and egress is provided for the Site.

- Footpaths along Haggs Lane may require improving in order to allow safe pedestrian access into the village. Alternative access to the village should be considered.

- An ecological buffer needs to be retained between the Site and Hesketh Wood and incorporating a third of the site as vegetation.

- Ensure the development of the protects and enhances the character of Cartmel Conservation Area and its setting.

- Development should reflect the well-established character of Cartmel avoiding the feel of a large estate.

6.4.2   Additional criteria put forward in this design code include:

- The Site currently acts as a water store during flood events. Any development needs to have robust drainage systems and recognise the important role which this Site plays during flood events.

- Consideration should be given to outlook of existing properties along Haggs Lane, with particular regard for the Quaker Meeting House which is a Grade II listed heritage asset.

- There is potential to provide an improved pedestrian access from the Site into Hesketh Wood, reducing reliance on the existing crossing point on Haggs Lane which is considered to be unsuitable.

- The significance, including the setting, of the grade II listed Quaker House should be preserved.
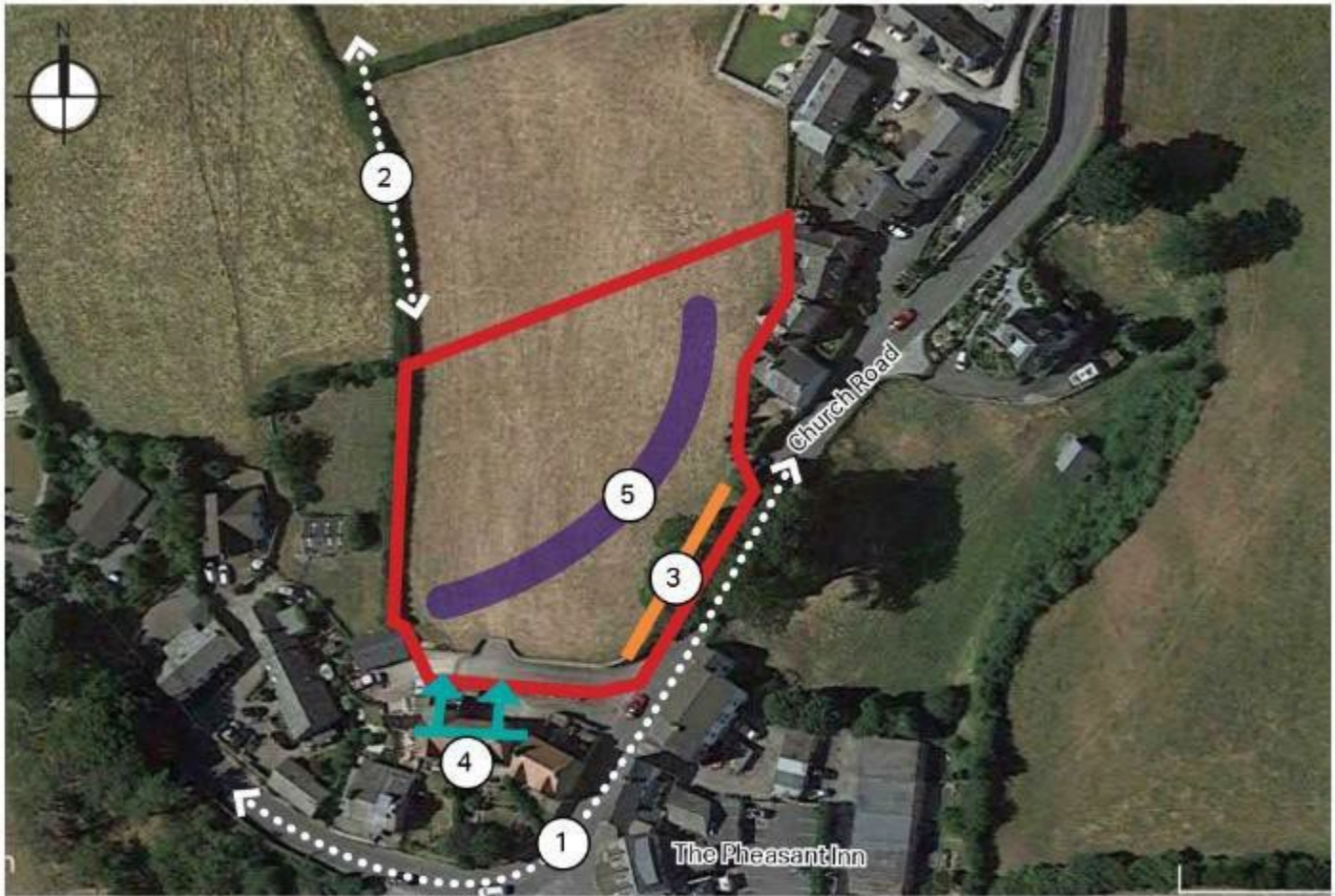
Figure 34: Land at Haggs Lane

Legend:

- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3
- Listed Building
- Nearby Property Consideration
- Potential Pedestrian Link or Enhancement
- Landscaping/ Greenspace Consideration
- Green Infrastructure Consideration
- Drainage Consideration
- Boundary Consideration
- Views
- Conservation Area

6.5   Stables, Cartmel Racecourse (0.48ha)

6.5.1   Policy guidance as per the South Lakeland Local Plan Land Allocations Document (2013) (Paragraph 4.30) suggests the following for this Site:

- Development is dependent on appropriate relocation of the racecourse stables.

- Development needs to respond to its location relating to the risk of flooding.

- Site is located within the Cartmel Conservation Area, and within proximity of Listed Buildings and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Designs and layouts need to be sympathetic to these heritage assets.

- Appropriate access arrangements are important.

Figure 35: The Stables, Cartmel Racecourse

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7. Next Steps

7.1 This document has provided a comparative analysis of the villages Allithwaite and Cartmel, within the Allithwaite and Carmel Parish area. It has identified character areas within the two villages and has sought to understand the local identities. This document has provided an evidence base for the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan, and it is recommended that the codes are embedded within the forthcoming plan as policy.

7.2 The design codes within this document should give certainty to developers as they will be able to design a scheme that is reflective of community aspirations, and also offers guidance to good design and placemaking principles.

7.3 Future developers should also make sure that they have observed the guidance in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's National Design Guide, as well as the many other documents referenced within this report.

7.4 Developers should also note that housing developments of any size should strive to achieve carbon neutrality in line with the Government's forthcoming Future Homes Standard. Further standards on residential developments should also be obtained from Building for Life 12, a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.

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Appendix 4 Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan – Decision to 'make' – adopt the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan and bring it into legal force.

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

The Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Plan, once 'made' will form part of the Development Plan and will be used to determine planning applications in the Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish area. Planning is vital in promoting equality and inclusion and in reducing poverty, inequality and exclusion. It often involves the (re)distribution of resources, which means that there may be negative impacts resulting from planning decisions.

3) Consultation

The following consultations have been undertaken in the preparation of the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan by Allithwaite and Cartmel Parish Council:
- Initial consultation (Summer 2016 and Autumn 2019)
- Pre-submission consultation (Regulation 14) (6th September – 29th October 2021)

Residents, businesses and other stakeholders were invited to comment on the neighbourhood plan at each consultation. The consultations were advertised online and locally to encourage any other interested parties to engage in the process. Further information regarding the consultations and consultees can be found in the Consultation Statement and Appendices / Analysis documents.

The Council (former South Lakeland District Council) has undertaken the following consultations on the Allithwaite and Cartmel Neighbourhood Development Plan:

- Submission Draft consultation (Regulation 16) (2 February to 16 March 2023). The Regulation 14 and 16 consultations were conducted in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Regulation 14 and 16 consultations were publicised within the Parish and more widely through a variety of methods (web, letters, newsletter, newspaper (Grange Now and Westmorland Gazette), relevant inspection points and other locations etc) and so were accessible to a wide range of people and comments were invited in writing, by email and on-line. The inspection points are accessible for people with mobility issues (Kendal library, Grange Library and Kendal Town Hall). The Neighbourhood Plan Group, have, as part of previous consultation, sent to every household in the Parish, details of the Plan and different ways in which the document can be viewed and responded, ensuring that people from all societal groups have had chance to be aware of and respond to the consultation. Various equality groups active in South Lakeland were emailed about the Plan. Cumbria Inter-Faith Forum, Cumbria Equalities Group, and Age UK South Lakeland were emailed about the Plan. There are some details of the demographic make-up of the parish's population in the Neighbourhood Plan itself.

The Consultation Statement evidences the outcome of the engagement. It includes a breakdown of who responded at the first stage of consultation in 2016 – setting out respondees by age range. There is no evidence of equality issues being raised as part of the consultation.

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	N			
Disability	Y	Policy AC2 specifies new hard landscaping within Cartmel	Planning policies are not considered in isolation when	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Conservation Area should use local materials such as cobbles and natural paving to avoid visual and physical clutter in the streetscene. This could potentially affect disability protected characteristics through introducing materials that may impact on levels of accessibility	determining a planning application and all relevant policies within the Development Plan Framework should be taken into account. Policy DM2 of the South Lakeland Local Plan (Achieving Sustainable High Quality Design) specifies that development proposals should deliver inclusive design and layouts that are satisfactory in terms of means of access for all and would therefore mitigate any potential negative impact of Policy AC2.	
Gender reassignment	N			N
Marriage or civil partnership	N			N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Pregnancy or maternity	N			N
Race	N			N
Religion or belief	N			N
Sex	N			N
Sexual orientation	N			N
Care Experience	N			N
People in rural areas	N	Policy AC7 may have positive impacts for the sustainability of Cartmel – helping to sustain services and facilities	None necessary	N
Socio-economic status	N			N
Armed-forces personnel/veterans	N			N
General (other considerations)	N			N

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?　　　Yes ☐　　　No ☑

1 Full Equality Impact Assessment template

1.1 Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/ Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	
Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/	

function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

1.2 Section 2: Information Gathering

What *relevant* information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

1.3 Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					

Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic status					
Armed-forces personnel/veterans					

1.4 Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

Add rows as necessary.

1.5 Section 5. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	☐
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	☐
Complete the action plan.	☐
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	☐

1.6 Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?

Cabinet

Report Title	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Caroline Wagstaff – Assistant Director Housing
Director	Steph Cordon – Director of Thriving Communities
Lead Cabinet Member	Cllr Judith Derbyshire – Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **NO** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	All
Identify exempt information and exemption category	None
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1 – Westmorland and Furness Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029. Appendix 2 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 Equality Impact Assessment.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report seeks to establish the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 which has been developed to inform and promote the Council's approach to the prevention and relief of homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

1.2 The development of a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping is a statutory requirements under the Homelessness Act 2002.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1   Approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 attached at Appendix 1.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1   The provision of advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness is a statutory duty. The strategy sets out the Council's key objectives and includes an action plan outlining the steps that will be taken to achieve the objectives.

3.2   The development of a Homelessness Strategy is required under the Homelessness Act 2002. It is considered best practice to include Rough Sleeping. The strategy contains statistical information to inform service development and delivery including data relating to rough sleepers.

3.3   The provision of support in safe accommodation for people escaping domestic abuse is a requirement under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The strategy outlines the Councils approach to supporting victims of domestic abuse presenting as homeless.

3.4   Both nationally and within Westmorland and Furness homelessness presentations are increasing as the demand for affordable accommodation outstrips supply. The strategy identifies the current position with a view to working with partners to ensure an adequate supply of interim and settled accommodations is available.

3.5   The strategy sets out how the Council will work with partners to prevent homelessness and the actions it will take to ensure people experiencing homelessness are supported to access accommodation that meets their needs.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1   This strategy will contribute to the delivery of key council priorities by ensuring a clear plan is in place to prevent homelessness and for securing sufficient accommodation and support for people who become homeless.

4.2   The provision of safe, long term housing is fundamental to ensuring people are healthy, happy and able to lead fulfilling lives.

4.3   Access to housing is essential in reducing inequalities including: accessing employment; education; health care and community activities, which enables people to reach their full potential.

4.4   The strategy identifies the needs of individuals to ensure that support is available to those in most need to ensure young people and adults alike are protected from harm and empowered to achieve their ambitions.

5. Consultation Outcomes

5.1 The Westmorland and Furness Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed and shaped with involvement from colleagues from across the organisation. It has also been informed by feedback from external partners.

5.2 Formal public consultation is not required for the adoption of this strategy.

5.3 An engagement exercise was undertaken through a public survey between 19 January 2024 and 2 February 2024. Key stakeholders included: statutory services; commissioned services; Third Sector Organisations and the general public.

5.4 The views of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee were also gathered at their meeting in February 2024.

5.5 The feedback gathered from stakeholders has informed the strategy development including:

- Amending references to 'former districts' by defining the Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland areas.

- Improving reference to other Strategies relevant to homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

- Reference to the National Health Services Act 2006 as introduced by the Social Care Act 2012.

- Confirmation that identifying Care Experienced Young People does not lessen services for other young people.

- Amending the delivery model to consider rurality and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

- Improving actions to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

- Confirming the Councils commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant by strengthening the relevant actions.

- Clarifying reporting and monitoring mechanisms.

- Clarifying references to the Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation service and referrals to partner agencies.

5.6 Feedback regarding wider housing issues will be considered when producing the Housing Strategy. This includes the need for: improved options for mental health support; supported accommodation; long term funding; the inclusion of Registered Providers in the early stages of planning housing developments; and early contact regarding strategy development.

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The formation of a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a statutory requirement, therefore no alternative options have been considered.

7.   Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1   The approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy fulfils the statutory requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002.

8.   Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1   Actions in relation to the implementation of this strategy will be assessed against the Council's key priorities linked to environmental, climate change and Net Zero. The impacts will be considered and assessed against each individual action.

8.2   Actions with the most significant climate and biodiversity implications are likely to be associated with the future development of housing. Details will be included in the Housing Strategy which will be developed on completion of the Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment.

8.3   Climate change/extreme weather can disproportionately impact people who are rough sleeping. This is due to their inability to protect themselves from the impact of extreme cold, heat, wind and rain. The development of this strategy will help to protect vulnerable people against the societal effects of climate change.

9.   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   The Council has a duty under section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002 to ensure that a homelessness strategy for its district is published within five years of the publication of the previous homelessness strategy for the district.

9.2   Officers have prepared the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 and consulted on this with services, statutory and voluntary agencies and the public. The strategy is appended to this report at Appendix 1.

10.   Human Resources, Heath Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1   There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from this report however progress against objectives outlined within the strategy, are reliant upon having an established and skilled homelessness team. Consideration should also be given to ensure compliance to workplace safety in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

11.   Financial Implications

11.1   There are no direct financial implications of the recommendation contained within this report.

12.   Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA guidance)

12.1   The strategy contains information relating to the characteristics of individuals approaching the homelessness service and pays due regard to the public sector equality duty.

12.2 An Equality Impact Assessment undertaken on the draft strategy is attached at Appendix 2.

12.3 Mitigating actions have been incorporated into the final strategy.

13. Background Documents

13.1 Homelessness Act 2002 Homelessness Act 2002 (legislation.gov.uk)

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Westmorland & Furness Council

DRAFT

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029

Translation Services

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If you have any questions or feedback about our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, please contact us at: **housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk**

If you or someone you know is at risk of homelessness, please visit the Council's website for further information **www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk**

2

Foreword

Welcome to Westmorland and Furness's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which sets out the Council's priorities for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping over the next five years.

Having a stable, safe and secure home is essential to enable people to live healthy, happy, active and fulfilling independent lives in their communities. We recognise the negative impacts that homelessness has on the health and wellbeing of those who are affected.

Homelessness is a complex issue and we are facing an unprecedented combination of economic, social and global pressures on the housing 'system'. We have a unique opportunity to build on the strengths and successes experienced in each of the former Districts and we are committed to sharing our best practices to find flexible solutions across our new area.

The prevention of homelessness is our top priority, as 'prevention is better than a cure'. This strategy sets out how we will collaborate with our partners to ensure that support is available before people have to leave their existing homes. We will work to help people remain in their existing accommodation and, where this isn't possible, find an alternative before they become homeless. We value our existing partnerships with both statutory services, housing associations and the third sector and we will build on these connections to ensure access to: housing-related support;

benefits advice; domestic abuse support; addiction recovery and health support; and budgeting and life skills support.

We will work closely with others to find longer term solutions to the prevention of homelessness by increasing the supply of safe and affordable housing.

Our strategic action plan also details what we will do to help those who experience homelessness including how we will use our temporary accommodation effectively to minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. In addition, we will work proactively to support individuals who are rough sleeping.

I would like to thank all organisations who have contributed to our work to date and who continue to support our residents. I would also like to express my admiration for all the Westmorland and Furness staff who work with residents to prevent homelessness and to find suitable homes for those who have been made homeless, and I would like to acknowledge their hard work, passion and dedication.

Judith Derbyshire
Cabinet Member for Housing & Homelessness

Contents

Section 1 | **Strategy**

Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how the newly formed Unitary Council will work collaboratively to meet the needs of residents at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, Westmorland and Furness Council is required to develop a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every five years.

This strategy has been developed during the first year of the newly created Unitary Authority using the findings from the homelessness review required by Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) Regulations (2008). Details of the review are included in Section 2.

This Strategy refers to the areas covered by the former Tier 2 districts as Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland.

Nationally and locally homelessness and rough sleeping are increasing.

Maintaining tenancies and accessing settled accommodation in Westmorland and Furness has become increasingly difficult due to the current economic and housing climate. Pressures on household finances are increasing due to the cost of living crisis, lasting impact of welfare reform, a sustained period of austerity and a reduced housing supply.

There are not enough homes available to buy or rent for people on moderate/low incomes. The shortage of socially rented and supported accommodation has increased the reliance on private rented dwellings. The private rented sector is becoming harder to access due to increased

rents, landlords leaving the sector and other pressures such as the demand for supported housing via the exempt housing benefit regulations and government resettlement programmes.

The Councils operating area contains diverse communities ranging from Barrow, a busy shipbuilding town and port with cutting edge sub-sea technology industries, to rural, land-based market towns and villages with a strong visitor and cultural economy in Eden and South Lakeland.

The needs of each area are well understood by the Homelessness Teams based in each area (also known as Housing Options teams) formed following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The transition to a Unitary Authority has created opportunities to build on previous joint working, existing strengths, align services and further develop partnership working with other statutory agencies and third sector organisations.

This strategy considers the relevant legislation, reviews the situation in Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland and identifies the actions we will take to address homelessness and rough sleeping across Westmorland and Furness.

Our action plan can be found on pages 35-39.

Strategic vision, aims and objectives

Our vision for Westmorland and Furness is to be: 'A great place to live, work and thrive'.

The provision of support to those facing or experiencing homelessness enables people to secure housing which improves health and wellbeing, enables access to employment and learning alongside facilitating connectivity and integration in the wider community.

Our aim is to prevent and tackle homelessness in all its forms to ensure that everyone can live in a place they call home - a home which is affordable, clean, safe and warm, from which people can build stable, independent lives with access to schools, work and cultural activities.

Homes

Growth

Health & wellbeing

Culture

Our strategic priorities as set out in the Council Plan

for the economy and culture

for people

Learning

Connections

for our workforce

for the climate

Our vision for Westmorland & Furness is to be: "A great place to live, work and thrive"

Care

Environment

for our customers

for communities

Service

Communities

Ten delivery themes supporting the Council Plan priorities

Our Key objectives are to:

Prevent homelessness

Relieve homelessness when it can't be prevented

Provide support for people who are rough sleeping including pathways into settled accommodation

Our operating model helps us provide preventative support before people are in crisis.

Teams are located in Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland and we are committed to providing face–to-face appointments in addition to digital options and telephone support.

Where a household does not have access to technology/digital communication/phone signals are minimal and public transport is not available, we will offer face-to-face meetings within the household's current accommodation or at a place accessible to them.

We work closely with other agencies to ensure the needs of each household are addressed and provide a focused personalised housing plan (PHP).

Community focus
We will focus on early intervention and prevention, working with individuals, community groups, parish and town councils, the voluntary sector and partners to reduce need for our services and improve health and wellbeing.

Easy access
Services will be user friendly, caring and accessible through multiple channels. Wherever possible services will be available and delivered digitally, reducing demand for phone and in-person interaction so those resources can be focused to those most in need.

Effective services
Services are outcome focused and maximise use of technology to drive efficiency and effectiveness. Service delivery is citizen centred and seamless between services and partner organisations.

Enabling Processes
Internal processes and functions are designed to support a seamless end-to-end experience. Improvement and change is supported by key enabling functions including HR, Legal, PMO etc working closely with service delivery teams.

Supporting Technology
'Fit for purpose' technology across the Council that supports the delivery of services, promotes digital ways of working, and enables organisational efficiency.

Current context

Levels of homelessness

Nationally, levels of homelessness and rough sleeping are rising. The year 2021/22 saw a significant increase in people presenting due to the end of an assured short hold tenancy.

In the year 2022/23, 311,990 initial assessments were made - an increase of 7% from the previous year. Of these, 298,430 were owed a prevention or relief duty - up 6.8% on the previous year and 3% above pre-Covid levels.[1]

Notable national changes for 2022/23 compared to the previous year include:

- decreases in the proportion of successful outcomes at the end of prevention and relief duties

- increases in number of households due to the end of an assured short hold tenancy due to landlords wishing to sell or re-let properties

- an increase in households owed a prevention or relief duty where the main applicant was aged 65-74 (23.3%)

- an increase in number of households owed a prevention or relief duty where the main applicant was in full-time (up 10.8%) or part-time work (up 6.5%), as well as a 19.3% increase in households where the main applicant was retired.

Between 2019/20 and 2022/23 Westmorland and Furness saw an overall increase of 5.2% in the number of households owed a prevention or relief duty as detailed in the graph below.

Number of households by initial assessment of homelessness duty: Total owed a prevention or relief duty
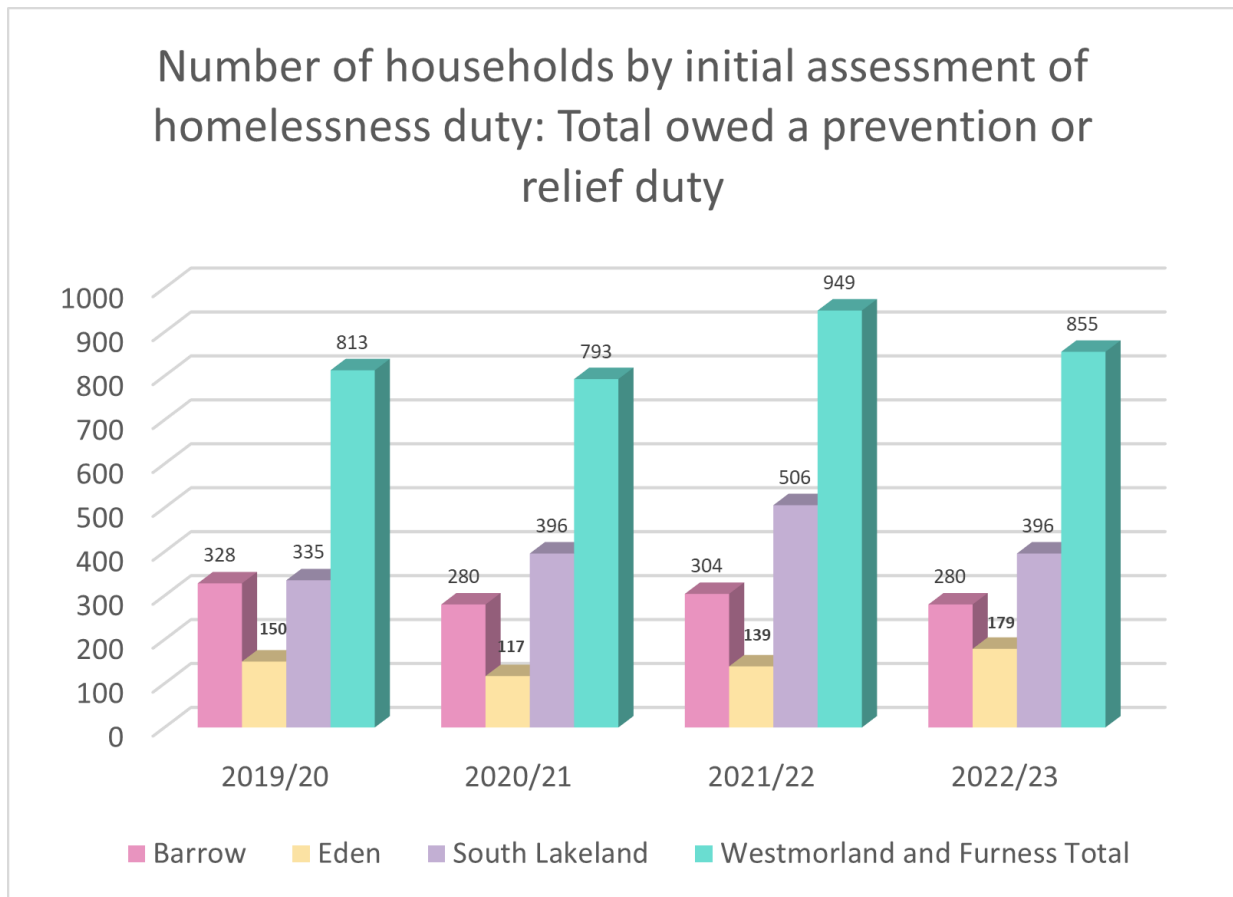
Please note that data relating to the end of social tenancies has been removed due to changes in reporting practices.

[1]Please note all homelessness data is taken from the HLIC Data as available on the Gov.UK website unless indicated otherwise.

In 2018, duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017 were implemented.

Notable changes in Westmorland and Furness for 2022/23 compared to the previous year include:

- Variable changes across Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland in the proportion of successful outcomes (at the end of prevention and relief duties)

- An increase in the loss of last settled accommodation due to valid Section 21 eviction notices

- An increase in the number of households with drug dependency needs, alcohol dependency needs and offending history

Main duty acceptances in South Lakeland are particularly high due to persistent difficulties in accessing affordable accommodation.

Main Duty Accepted

Legend: Barrow, Eden, South Lakeland, Westmorland and Furness Total

Year	Barrow	Eden	South Lakeland	Westmorland and Furness Total
2019/20	3	0	25	28
2020/21	3	1	52	56
2021/22	3	5	33	41
2022/23	0	3	40	43
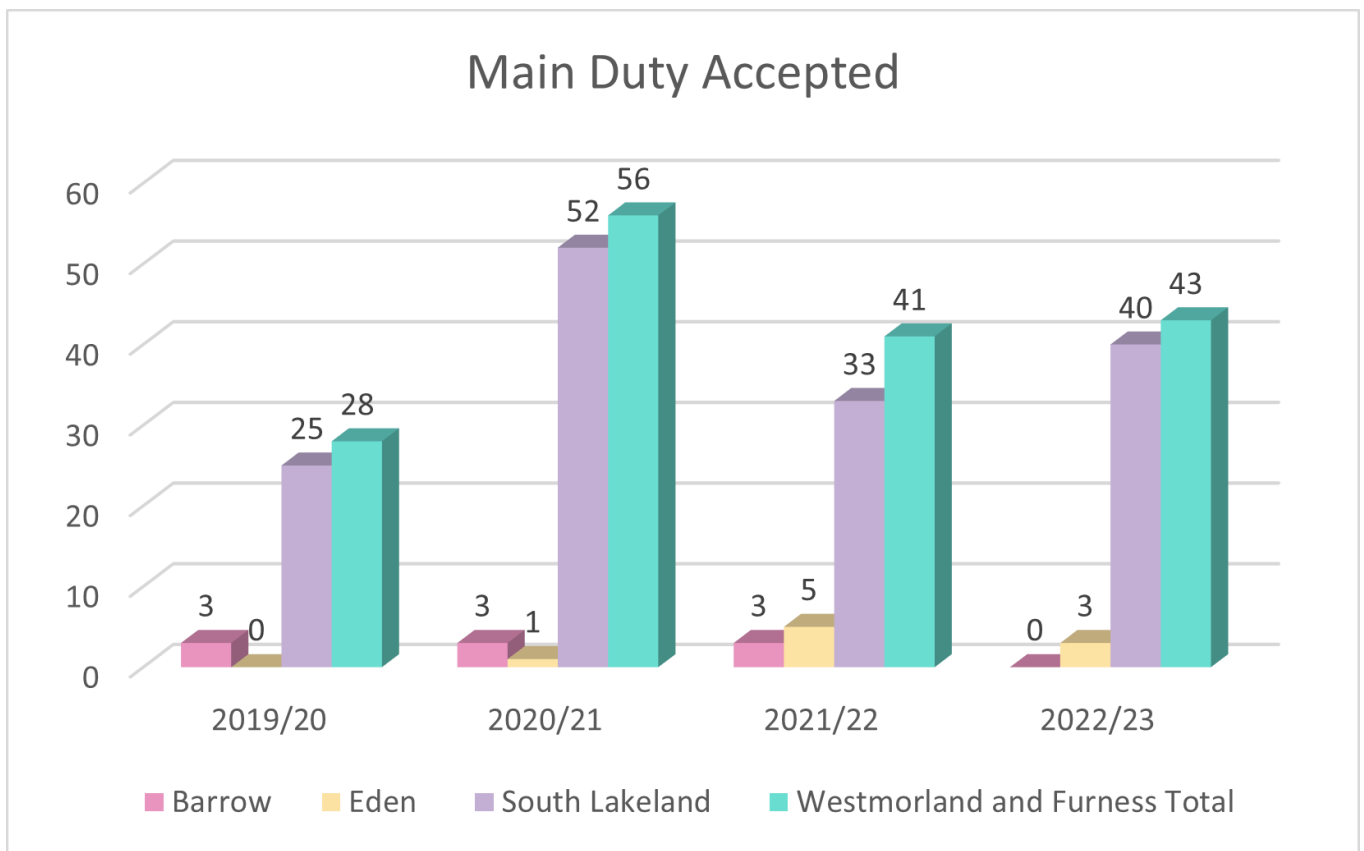
Reasons for homelessness presentations

The reasons for homelessness presentations are complex and often inter-related. A combination of housing supply and affordability together with welfare policy and the economy affect people's ability to secure accommoda-tion and sustain relationships within the household.

Nationally, the most common reason for the threatened loss of last settled accommoda-tion in 2022/23 was due to the end of their private rented assured shorthold tenancy because of landlords wishing to sell or re-let the property. Increased rents also contributed to ending these tenancies.

The most common reason for those owed a relief duty was domestic abuse. The non-violent breakdown of relationships is also prevalent.

In Westmorland and Furness the main reasons for homeless presentations remain consistent and are in line with national trends i.e. the end of private tenancies, followed by family or friends no longer willing to accom-modate, followed by domestic abuse and non-violent relationship breakdown with partner.

Please see page 28 for information on assessments for prevention and relief duties**.**

Reason for loss of last settled home for households	Owed a prevention duty			Owed a relief duty		
April 2022 – March 2023	**BBC***	**EDC***	**SLDC***	**BBC***	**EDC***	**SLDC***
Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	25	26	16	39	15	54
End of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold	59	37	106	15	2	33
Domestic abuse	11	20	3	31	15	43
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	13	18	4	23	7	37
Eviction from supported housing	12	0	5	0	1	4
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold	4	16	13	20	1	9
Other violence or harassment	0	1	3	5	6	27
Left institution with no accommodation available	0	0	0	5	0	11
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	0	1	0	6	3	13
Other/not known	4	3	7	1	2	0
End of social rented tenancy (Relief only)[2]				7	5	8
Total April 2022 - March 2023	128	122	157	152	57	239

*BBC– Barrow Borough Council | EDC—Eden District Council | SLDC—South Lakeland District Council

[2] End of social rented tenancy for prevention has been removed due to variations in reporting practices.

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Case Study | **Housing Related Support Service – Single female**

The client became homeless following the loss of employment which included the provision of accommodation. The client was also vulnerable due to long term drug use, a criminal history, and involvement in an abusive relationship.

Accommodation was secured by the homelessness team and housing-related support was provided. This focused on building a trusting and positive relationship, ensuring housing costs from Universal Credit were paid directly to the landlord to prevent rent arrears increasing, maximising income from benefit entitlements and grants, addressing tenancy issues promptly, liaising with Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), the relevant Housing Officers, Probation, Recovery Steps, Victim Support, GP practice and the Police; and carrying out joint working where possible.

A Discretionary Housing Payment was awarded which cleared the outstanding rent arrears, and paid the rent shortfall caused by under occupancy of the two-bed accommodation for a six-month period. As the client was unfit for work support was provided to undertake a work capability assessment and the Universal Credit claim was updated. This resulted in increased income and no expectation from DWP for her to be involved in work-related activity. The client then felt confident to make a claim for Personal Independence Payment which was also successful. Additional income received was utilised to improve the home and take up responsibility for payment of the rent shortfall.

The client was able to build a trusting relationship with support staff at Eden Housing Association to start to communicate and work with other organisations such as the Police. This client now has a secure assured tenancy, is trying to make more positive life choices, has increased income and self-confidence and is more able to reach out for help in the future as needed enabling her to make significant progress and prevent repeat homelessness.

Where we are

Westmorland and Furness Council is one of two new unitary authorities created on 1 April 2023 in Cumbria. It comprises the former Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council.

We cover 3,754 Km2, with 1,900 Km2 within National Parks. We are England's most sparsely populated local authority area with 60 people per square kilometre across the whole area. This ranges from 25 in Eden to 864 in Barrow, which presents challenges in sustaining and delivering services.

Between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of Eden and South Lakeland rose while the population in Barrow fell, leading to an overall rise from 225,400 to 226,600 (1.47% increase).[3]

Compared to the national average, Westmorland and Furness and Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland had older age profiles at the Office for National Statistics annual estimates of the resident population (Mid-2022); with lower proportions of younger residents and higher proportions of older residents.

However, there was some variation between Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland. Barrow had a greater proportion of younger residents than Eden and South Lakeland.

Inversely, Eden and South Lakeland had greater proportions of older residents than Barrow-in-Furness.

Of all Local Authority Districts (LADs) nationally, South Lakeland had the fifth lowest proportion of 0-15 year olds.

[3] Census 2021 Population estimates - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

How we work

Whilst Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland have their own challenges, we have strong working relationships which we will build on to further develop services. We already have:

- Established homelessness teams comprising experienced staff with a local presence in each area. NB: In Eden the services are delivered by Eden Housing Association under contract up to 31 March 2025.
- Information accessible on line including a directory of private landlords.
- A range of temporary accommodation.
- Support services.
- A common allocation policy for social housing through Cumbria Choice Based Lettings (CBL).
- Care leaver's protocols.
- Hospital discharge protocols.
- Prison leaver protocols.
- A commitment to support veterans.
- Provision for emergency accommodation through the Severe Weather Emergency Protocols (SWEP).
- A Rough Sleeper Charter.
- Consistent standards for support for victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation.
- Strong relationships with statutory and third sector partner organisations.

We know from our homelessness needs analysis conducted in December 2023 (see page 14) that:

- Instances of people being threatened with homelessness, experiencing homelessness and people rough sleeping are increasing. There are many reasons for this including the end of private rented tenancies, instances of domestic abuse and relationship break-downs.
- We are supporting more people with increasingly complex needs.
- Affordable accommodation is becoming increasingly difficult to access. This is due to increased house prices, fewer socially rented and private rented properties being available and increased rents in the private sector.
- People leaving care; fleeing from domestic abuse; those who have had contact with the criminal justice system and those with mental health or substance misuse issues are particularly vulnerable and need additional support to secure and maintain accommodation.
- We are likely to see increased presentations from refugees. Support will be offered to refugees in line with the Homeless Reduction Act 2018.
- Pressure on interim (temporary) accommodation is likely to increase due to difficulties in accessing settled (permanent) accommodation.

Please note: Where specific providers are referred to throughout the Strategy, these are the current providers and may be subject to change dependent on funding and commissioning outcomes.

Related strategies and policies

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aligns with other key strategies some of which are under development. When reviewing the action plan we will consider the following:

- Housing Strategy (under development)
- Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (under development)
- Customer Strategy
- Climate Change Action Plan
- Current Local Plans and future Westmorland and Furness Local Plan
- Temporary Accommodation Strategy (under development)
- Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy
- The Armed Forces Covenant

What we want to achieve and how we will do it

OBJECTIVE 1: Prevent homelessness

We will provide a consistent delivery model by aligning services and practices relating to each objective. We will achieve this by standardising: team structures; reporting systems; and through staff training.

We want to prevent homelessness wherever possible. We will achieve this by:

- Understanding the reasons for homelessness and the needs of those affected.

- Working with partners to ensure that households are able to establish and sustain tenures.
- Improving information available to people about their housing options.
- Improving referral pathways.
- Working with partners to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing.
- Increasing access to the private rented sector.

OBJECTIVE 2: Relieve homelessness

When we can't prevent homelessness we want to relieve it. We will achieve this by:

- Meeting the need for interim accommodation by increasing the number of units available and through the effective use of existing units.

- Increasing access to settled accommodation by working with housing providers.
- Ensuring support is available to victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation.

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide support for people who are rough sleeping including pathways into settled accommodation

We are committed to work towards the central government objectives to make rough sleeping rare, brief and non-recurring. We will achieve this by:

- Developing consistent monitoring systems to measure levels of rough sleeping so that resources can be targeted to areas of highest need.

- Raising awareness of rough sleeping to facilitate appropriate reporting of rough sleepers enabling timely contact to be made.
- Providing a proactive outreach service.
- Working with partners to improve pathways into housing which identify and provide for additional support where this is required.

Reviewing and monitoring

We will know we have succeeded when we have:

- Aligned homelessness services so that all residents receive the same offer and level of support.

- Increased preventative work so that fewer people experience homelessness.

- Increased housing solutions for households facing homelessness so that people spend less time in interim and temporary accommodation.

- Increased interim and temporary accommodation so that reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation is reduced.

- Increased support for individuals facing street homelessness so more people have pathways into secure housing.

This Strategy will be reviewed when required by legislative or regulatory changes, and a new strategy will be published within five years as required by Section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002.

The action plan will be updated quarterly by the Homelessness Strategic Lead in conjunction with the Homelessness Operational Lead.

Progress on the priorities will be reported to the Senior Manager Housing Landlord and Homelessness Services, the Assistant

Director of Housing, the Director of Thriving Communities and the Housing and Homelessness Portfolio Holder on a quarterly basis.

A summary of progress performance and actions will be circulated to key partners.

We will engage with partners for feedback and will arrange meetings where necessary.

The following key performance indicators will be reported to Cabinet as part of the Council's corporate monitoring procedures. This information is publicly available on the Westmorland and Furness Council website in the committee reports.

- The number of households in interim and temporary accommodation during the quarter.

- The percentage of successful homeless prevention outcomes of cases closed during the quarter.

- The percentage of successful homeless relief outcomes of cases closed during the quarter.

- The total number of people who are confirmed to be rough sleeping in Westmorland and Furness.

Updates and information will be provided to the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee on request. Targets will be set and reviewed annually by senior managers.

Section 2 | **Needs Analysis**

People accessing our services

Care experienced young people

Care experienced young people are young people aged over 16 leaving local authority care.

According to the Department for Education, in 2021/22 there were 45,940 care experienced young people in England now aged 17 to 21.[4] There are various categories of care experienced young people including: Eligible Childs; Relevant Child; Former Relevant Child and Qualifying Care Leaver.

Information on Westmorland and Furness's services for care experienced young people can be found on the Council's website—children's services/care leavers.

An independent review of children's social care conducted in 2022 found evidence suggesting that those leaving care are at greater risk of becoming homeless than adults in the wider population, estimating that 26% of the homeless population has spent time in care at some point in their lives.[5]

Care experienced young people are particularly at risk of homelessness due to factors such as:

- A shortage of suitable, affordable accommodation
- Accommodation moves impacting education
- Greater social isolation
- Lack of family support to rely on during difficult periods

Care experienced young people 18+ owed a prevention or relief duty

	2019/20	2021/22	2021/22	2022/23
Barrow	31	23	27	26
Eden	14	10	10	15
South Lakeland	14	5	18	15
Westmorland and Furness	59	38	55	56

Care leaver 18+ owed a prevention or relief duty

■ Barrow ■ Eden ■ South Lakeland ■ Westmorland and Furness

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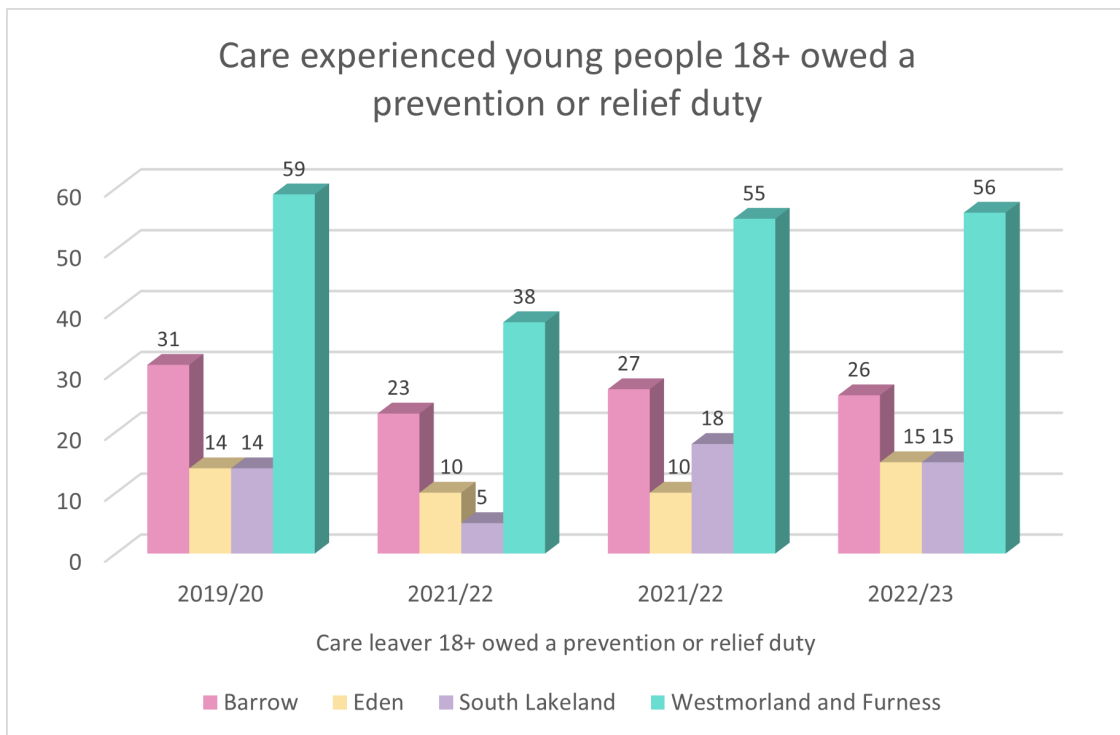
[4] Support for Care experienced young people; House of Commons Library, October 2023 CBP-8429.pdf (parliament.uk)
[5] Josh MacAlister, Independent Review of children's social care, Recommendations annexes (PDF), May 2022:Independent review of children's social care - recommendation annexes (publishing.service.gov.uk) page 141

The Youth Homeless teams work closely with social workers to prepare young people for independent living which includes establishing pathways into housing.

Pathway Advisers stay involved with the young person until they are 21 (potentially 25) years old. Prior to leaving care an assessment is undertaken and a plan produced which encompasses a wide range of aspirations including housing. In addition the young person can access a 'Setting up Home' allowance to cover essential items.

Where a young person is at risk of homelessness they are referred to the Gateway Group which includes representatives from relevant agencies including supported housing providers and the Homelessness Team.

If accommodation is not secured and the young person remains at risk of homelessness a referral is made under the Duty to Refer. Where appropriate, the young person will be provided with interim accommodation.

In Westmorland and Furness the number of people owed a prevention or relief duty with support needs identified as 'care experienced young people' have remained consistent, with the exception of 2021/22 which can be attributed to the Covid pandemic. In 2022/23 this represented just over 6% of presentations. The number of 16/17 years olds has been minimal averaging four annually across the footprint.

Referral protocols are in place in Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland. These are scheduled for alignment.

Other young people

Although care experienced young people have been identified as a specific group at risk of homelessness, Westmorland and Furness Council recognises other young people are in need of similar support. This includes young people fleeing domestic abuse, young people fleeing home because of coming out as gay, or those who may be sexually exploited.

Case Study | **Care Leaver – Single female age 20, sofa surfing in South Lakeland**

The Care leaver moved into the area having experienced domestic abuse. She approached the homelessness team in South Lakeland having left her most recent accommodation due to friends no longer being willing to accommodate her.

The team were able to access private rented accommodation in Eden through the Rough Sleeper Initiative funded Property Links scheme, which matches homeless people with private landlords. The team provided her rent in advance and worked with her Corporate Parent's Social Care team (out of area) to access a setting up home grant, which enabled her to buy essential items to establish her new home. The team provided additional support to access a food parcel, set up utility bills and update her Universal Credit Claim.

Since being housed she has received advice on managing her tenancy and she has recently attended job interviews.

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Contact with criminal justice system

Statutory Homelessness (H-CLIC[6]) data for 2022/23 shows that in England 16.45% of households with a support need, owed a duty had an offending history. Westmorland and Furness fell below this at 8.6%

The Duty to Refer applies to prison releases and protocols are in place for Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland. In June 2023 the Offenders (Day of Release from Detention) Act was passed allowing prison governors the power to release prisoners with mental health issues, substance misuse problems or who have far to travel home, on a Wednesday or Thursday rather than on a Friday which aims to prevent last minute homeless presentation.

The Community Accommodation Service (CAS) provides temporary accommodation for up to 84 nights for homeless prison leavers and those moving on from Approved Premises or the Bail Accommodation and Support Service. Support to secure settled accommodation is also provided.

The homelessness teams work closely with the CAS team, probation and the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to minimise homelessness amongst ex-offenders.

Households with an offending history owed a duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Barrow	109	109	80	87
Eden	48	45	34	41
South Lakeland	59	50	42	58
Westmorland and Furness	216	204	156	186
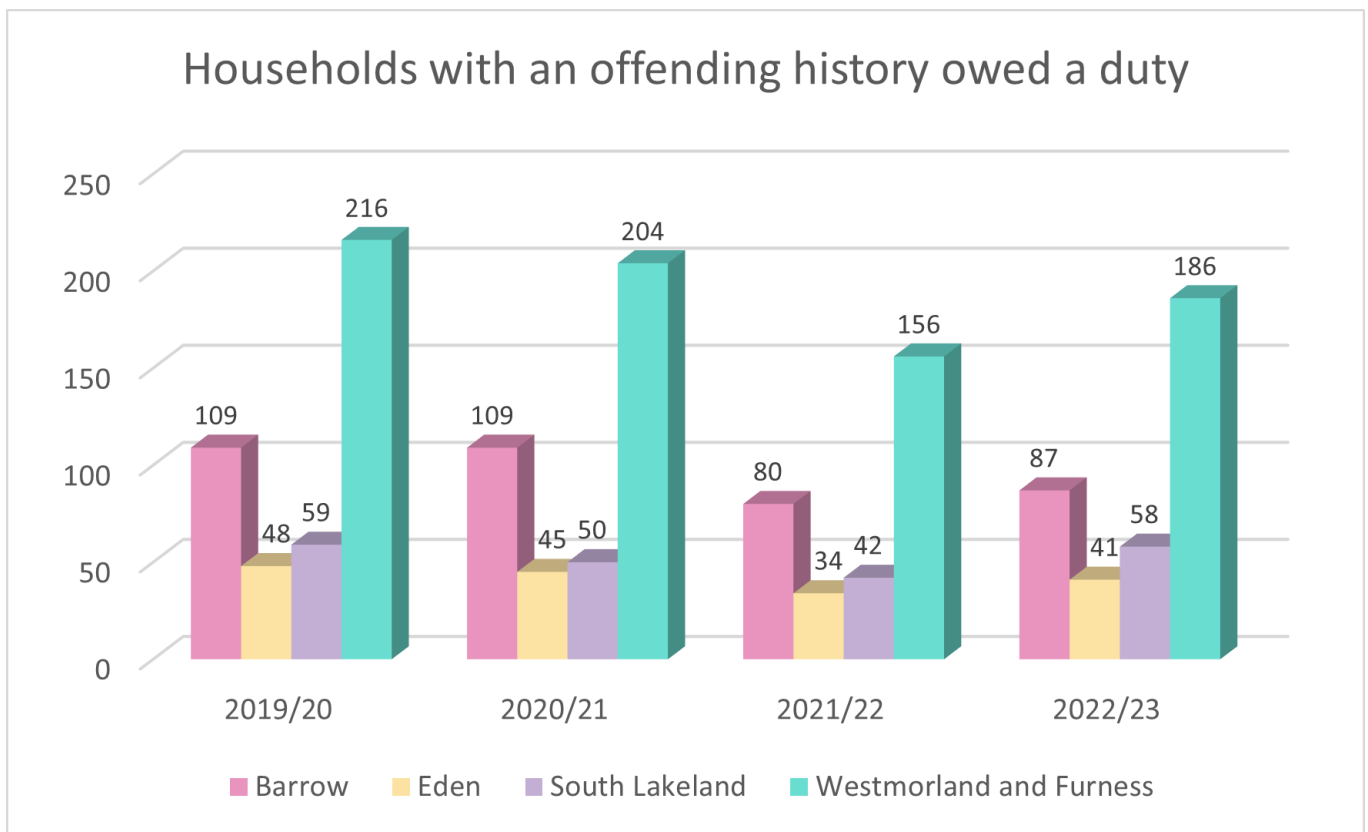
[6] Statutory Homelessness detailed local authority-level tables April 2022 – March 2023 Tables on homelessness www.gov.uk

Complex needs

The number of households who have identified health related support needs is increasing.

Since the withdrawal of the 'Supporting People' funding in 2021 support providers have relied on exempt housing benefit to fund limited housing related support. The lack of regulation means that levels of support provided can be varied.

There is a gap in support provision for individual falling below statutory thresholds. Where appropriate the homelessness team refer individual to Health and Wellbeing Coaches. In addition, Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland currently have funding from the National Lottery for a part time Floating Support worker who provides assistance to people moving into settled accommodation to help them settle into their new home by offering support to complete universal credit applications, set up utilities and sources essential items.

Additional support has been provided utilising Control Outbreak Management Funding for the Changing Futures cohort i.e. individual presenting with three out of the following five characteristics: homelessness; domestic abuse; contact with the criminal justice system; mental health issues and substance misuse. This funding is not being renewed.

The homelessness teams refer individuals seeking help to recover from addiction to the commissioned service Recovery Steps Cumbria which is a partnership between Humankind and The Well Communities (The Well).

The Well provides a range of services and initiatives to support mental health and addiction recovery and minimises the harm caused by alcohol and substance misuse. They provide housing, hospital and street outreach, therapeutic programmes and activities, through peer run community hubs.

In developing this strategy the Council has considered all the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Duty 2011. In particular, due regard has been given to how people with a physical or mental disability can receive a 'reasonable adjustment' in all service areas.

Westmorland and Furness support needs of households owed a duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
History of mental health problems	409	356	431	447
Physical ill health and disability	238	204	278	285
Drug dependency needs	92	80	68	87
Alcohol dependency needs	82	59	66	91
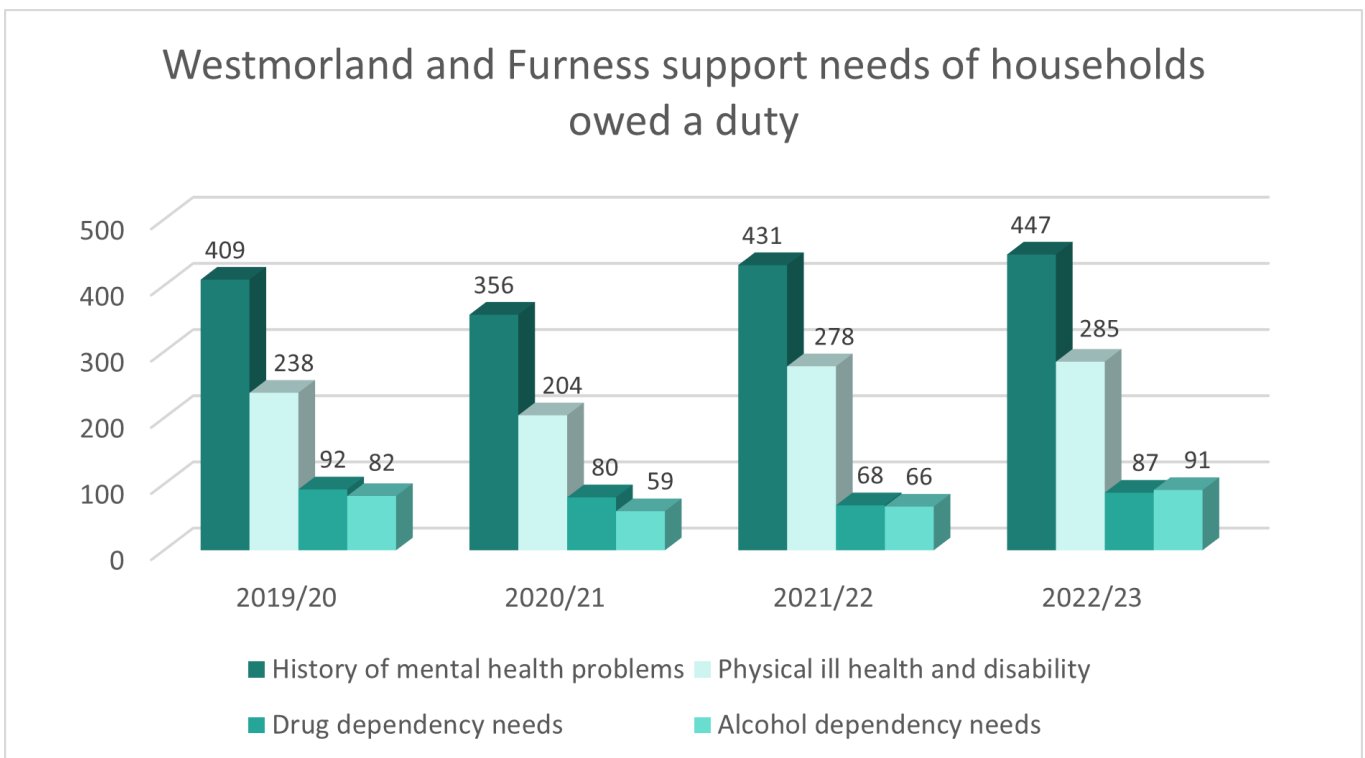
Domestic abuse victims and perpetrators

Domestic Abuse is defined under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as any incident or pattern of incidents of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse between those aged 16 and over and personally connected to each other.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales for the year ending March 2022 estimated that around five in every 100 adults aged 16 years and over (2.4 million people) experienced domestic abuse in the 12 months to March 2022.

The number of domestic abuse related crimes has continued to increase in recent years with the latest figure 7.7% higher than the year ending March 2021, and 14.1% higher than the year ending 2020. The increase in domestic abuse related crimes recorded by the police may reflect increased reporting.[7]

People fleeing from domestic abuse are in priority need and can present as homeless to any local authority, regardless of local connection. Interim accommodation is provided where required. A Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment is undertaken using the DASH assessment tool developed by Victim Support in Cumbria which incorporates the Domestic Homicide Timeline. Referrals are made to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) where appropriate, which members of the homelessness teams attend. MARAC aims to share information with relevant agencies with a view to providing support to victims to ensure their safety.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a statutory duty on local authorities to deliver support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuges and other safe accommodation and to assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims or their children, including those who require highly specialist support and those who come from outside the area.

The homelessness teams refer all victims to a Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation (DASSA) worker. Referral protocols are in place and are scheduled for alignment.

Up to the end of December 2023 Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation was provided by Women's Community Matters in Barrow; via the Housing Options Team at Eden Housing Association in Eden, and via the Homelessness Team in South Lakeland.

Services have been recommissioned for 2024 and going forward the core DASSA Service will be delivered by Women's Community Matters in Barrow; via the Housing Options Team at Eden Housing Association in Eden, and by Springfield Domestic Abuse Support in South Lakeland (Springfield) in South Lakeland.

The homelessness teams engage with other domestic abuse support providers including, Victim Support; Gateway for Women and The Birchall Trust in partnership with SafetyNet.

Springfield also have refuge accommodation which is open to applicants nationally.

Details of the support provided by agencies is available on the Westmorland and Furness Council website.

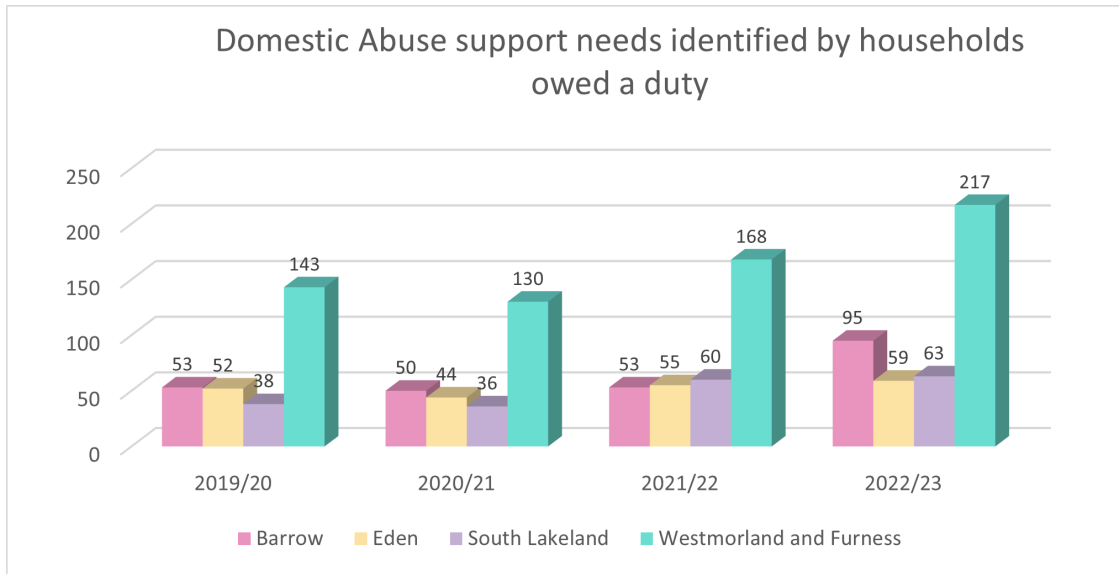The service is also represented on the Community Safety Partnership Domestic Abuse sub group.

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[7] Office for National statistics people population and community/crime and justice domestic abuse prevalence and trends England and Wales year ending March 2022

Presentations to the homelessness teams in Barrow and South Lakeland have increased significantly since 2020/2021. A further rise is anticipated as awareness of domestic abuse and the support available increases.

The homelessness teams offer support to assist perpetrators of domestic abuse secure alternative accommodation. While it is recognised that it may be preferable for perpetrators to leave the property at which the abuse is taking place interim accommodation is only provided where there is reason to believe that the perpetrator is in priority need.

Members of the homelessness teams take part in Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) meetings with other agencies to assess and plan interventions to target and disrupt serial perpetrators. The aim is to provide support to help individuals address the behaviours which are causing harm.

Domestic Abuse support needs identified by households owed a duty

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Barrow	53	50	53	95
Eden	52	44	55	59
South Lakeland	38	36	60	63
Westmorland and Furness	143	130	168	217

Case Study | **Female age 61 Domestic Abuse victim**

The client presented six times over a five year period. This mature lady and her partner had a long history of alcohol abuse. They had a very affluent lifestyle with regular foreign holidays which was one of the factors for her repeatedly returning to the relationship.

Most of the presentations were following Domestic Violence Protection Orders from Police call outs which rendered her homeless as the property belonged to the perpetrator to which she had no rights of occupation.

Unfortunately, despite best attempts, he always managed to persuade her to return following the initial period of separation as the alternative of living in less affluent circumstances was not favourable.

Following the development of the Women's Accommodation and Support Centre (WASC) at Bath Street, Barrow the additional wrap around support from the agencies commissioned to deliver Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation has enabled her to recognise and not minimize the harm the violent relationship and alcohol were having on her health and wellbeing. Benefits and personal income from pensions were maximised to allow her to move into her own accommodation following additional preference being awarded in relation to the domestic abuse via Cumbria Choice Based Lettings. She was able to make this her home and build a healthier relationship with her partner without living together which has given her autonomy and broken the cycle of abuse.

This support was funded by the Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation from DHLUC.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Primary support for refugees is provided by the Resettlement Team which sits within Westmorland and Furness's Safe and Strong Communities Team.

There are a number of resettlement schemes open to refugees including: UK Resettlement Scheme (global); Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC); Afghan Citizen Relocation Scheme (ACRS); Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP); Resettlement of Hong Kong British Nationals and Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland made a pledge to house 16 individuals arriving under the resettlement schemes (totalling 48 for the Unitary area). Historically there has been a low uptake of accommodation due to house-hold preferences for more urban locations, with greater support networks. Homeless presentations for this cohort have therefore been rare. Changes in central government policy have meant that individuals refusing this accommodation may now be classed as intentionally homeless. Therefore uptake is expected to increase.

As a result of the war between Russia and Ukraine, a number of households (Hosts) came forward to offer accommodation to people fleeing from the war (Guests). Between February 2022 and November 30 2023 a total of 18 homeless presentations were made by this cohort, 15 of which were due to 'accommodation or arrangement broken down'.

Fewer presentations are anticipated as the Resettlement Team work closely with Guests to rematch with alternative Hosts/find other accommodation to avoid homelessness.

There are currently two hotels located in Barrow accommodating asylum seekers. Serco is procuring additional dispersed accommodation.

A protocol is in place to ensure referrals to the homelessness teams are made as soon as a positive decision has been made. The notice period is significantly less than the 56 days prevention period.

The current cohort comprises single men accommodated in hotels, however the increased use of dispersed accommodation has led to an increase in presentations from families. A continual flow of presentations is anticipated.

It should be noted that while refugees will have experienced traumatic events, refugee status does not automatically mean that individuals are in priority need. Therefore interim accommodation will not always be provided whilst homeless assessments are undertaken and Personal Housing Plans agreed.

The homelessness teams liaise with voluntary sector groups including Furness Multicultural Forum; Penrith and Eden Refugee Network.

Case Study | Homelessness Support for Refugees

A recent positive decision from the Home Office for a family of five resulted in the homelessness team responding to the 21 day notice given to refugees who are expected to leave their asylum accommodation within that timeframe.

The family were supported by the Asylum Lead who accompanied the family to the initial meeting where the family were assessed in accordance with the Homeless Reduction Act 2018. Following this, temporary accommodation was provided whilst further work commenced to assist the family to find secure affordable accommodation. There were some difficulties to overcome as the family were concerned that the property was not large enough for their needs, once explained that this was only temporary, their expectations were managed and the family signed the licence agreement for the flat.

The homeless team have been working in partnership with the Asylum Lead, the Multicultural Forum, the Furness Refugee Support Group and the Salvation Army to support the family during their journey into more permanent accommodation. Translation and interpretation services have been made available to assist the family move forward with settling into the area in the long term.

Armed Forces Families

In drafting this strategy, the Council has given consideration to the Armed Forces Covenant which has been enshrined in law through the enactment of the Armed Forces Act 2021, resulting in additional actions including improvements to the assessment screening questions and referral pathways.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) Veteran Survey 2022 indicates that the majority of veterans (78.9%) live in an owner-occupied or shared ownership house or flat. This is higher than the general population. A further 8.9% lived in privately rented accommodation and 6% lived in a socially rented house or flat, with 2.3% living with family or friends.[8]

Around 1 in 400 veterans said they were homeless, rough sleeping or living in a refuge for domestic abuse.

Geography	% of population aged 16+ who have previously served in the armed forces
Westmorland & Furness	4.7%
Barrow	4.8%
Eden	4.6%
South Lakeland	4.5%
England & Wales	3.8%

Data from the 2021 Census shows the proportion of veterans residing in Westmorland and Furness is low - however numbers are above the national average.

Homeless presentations amongst veterans in Westmorland and Furness are relatively low, the highest numbers being in Barrow.

Cumbria Choice Based Lettings reflects Westmorland and Furness' commitment to veterans, by including provision under the Qualification Rules in relation to Local Connection and Financial Resources and by giving additional preference to meet the relevant criteria.[9]

Nationally, Riverside deliver OpFORTITUDE which is a centralised referral pathway into veteran supported housing.

The Royal British Legion also offer crisis grants for veterans, including accommodation costs for rough sleepers. Details are available on the Royal British Legion website.

Locally, the Rawthay Project CIC provide peer led support to veterans including residential recovery for up to three months. Details are available on the Rawthay Project website.

Support needs of household owed a prevention or relief duty: Served in HM Forces

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Barrow	4	5	10	13
Eden	0	5	6	3
South Lakeland	6	4	2	6
Westmorland and Furness	16	14	18	22

8. ONS Veterans' Survey 2022, demographic overview and coverage analysis, UK: December 2023
9 Cumbria Choice Based Lettings Allocation Policy www.cumbriachoice.org.uk

Challenges accessing affordable accommodation
Housing supply, tenure and affordability

Between 2019 and 2021 new housing supply fell below the government target of 300,000.[10] While Census data shows there an increase of over 1.4 million households from 2011 to 2021.[11]

Westmorland and Furness area has a mean affordability ratio of 7.3 i.e. the mean house price is 7.3 times the mean annual household income.[12]

In England, properties sold under the Right to Buy/Aquire have not been replaced. The supply of social rented homes let at affordable 'social' rents fell by almost 210,000 between 2012 and 2020. Only 11% of new 'affordable' homes built in England are at "genuinely affordable social rents".[13]

Nationally 15.5 million households own their accommodation either outright, with a mortgage or through shared ownership (62.5%). Renting from private landlords has increased to 5 million (20.3%), and renting from social landlords has fallen to 4.2 million (17.1%).

In Westmorland and Furness the percentage of owner occupiers is higher than the national average at 72%, with private renting and renting from social landlords being lower at 17% and 11% respectively.

Average market rents range from £511 per calendar month for a one bedroom property to £983 for a 4+ bedroom property.

Cumbria Choice is a partnership between the two Cumbrian local authorities (Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness) and six housing associations: (Accent Housing Association; Castles and Coasts Housing Association; Eden Housing Association; Home Group, Riverside and South Lakes Housing) with a single allocations policy and application form for available social housing across Cumbria.

Eligible applicants are placed into one of three Bands according to their housing need:

- **Band A**: Urgent housing need to move
- **Band B**: Statutory housing need to move
- **Band C:** All other applicants in housing need

At the end of December 2023, there were a total of 7,511 applicants on the housing register banded as follows:

Area	Band A	Band B	Band C	Unverified	Total
Barrow	118	857	1699	4	2678
Eden	23	264	736	17	1040
South Lakeland	186	987	2572	48	3793
Westmorland and Furness Total	327	2,108	5,007	69	7,511

[10] House of Commons Library, 2022 UK research-briefings
[11] Census 2021 www.ons.gov.uk people population and community
[12] Experian Data - © Experian 2023 - All rights reserved
[13] Chartered Institute of Housing, 2021 www.cih.org

The household composition is detailed below.

Household composition	Barrow	Eden	South Lakeland	Grand Total
2 adults (couple)	133	74	331	538
2 adults (non couple)	26	9	44	79
2+ Adults (non couple)	2	2	10	14
Couple 1 child	98	41	197	336
Couple 2 children	110	51	190	351
Couple 3 children	73	24	71	168
Couple 4 or more children	49	19	45	113
Couple over 55	38	67	128	233
Parent with 1 Adult child	57	26	55	138
Parent with 2+ Adult children	6	6	24	36
Single 1 child	307	74	333	714
Single 2 children	230	63	235	528
Single 3 children	118	27	96	241
Single 4 or more children	54	15	45	114
Single over 55	285	151	566	1002
Single person	975	301	1182	2458
Not stated	117	90	241	448
Grand Total	2678	1040	3793	7511

Economic disadvantage and welfare reform

In 2021, the working age population stood at 123,777 (55%). 7.9% of the council area is amongst the 10% most deprived areas in England.

The 2019 Indices of Deprivation published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) classified 12 of Westmorland and Furness' 144 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) as being within the 10% most deprived areas in England. All of these communities are located within the Barrow area.

In contrast, Westmorland and Furness had seven LSOAs classified as in the 10% least deprived of LSOAs nationally. The majority of these LSOAs are located within the South Lakeland area (six LSOAs in South Lakeland, one in Barrow-in-Furness). However, it is important to note that not all socially and economically disadvantaged people in Westmorland and Furness will be living in the most deprived areas, therefore consideration should be given to all.

Eden and South Lakeland have seen the greatest fall in the percentage of people aged 16 years and over (excluding full-time students) who were employed across the North West, while Barrow has seen this figure rise.

Approximately 5.2% of households in Westmorland and Furness have an annual household income below £10,000.[14]

In Westmorland and Furness approximately 4.4% of households fall within the 'Family Basics' Mosaic Category. The category definition is: Families with limited resources who budget to make ends meet. Key Features include: families with children, council/housing association tenants, low discretionary income, low affluence and internet via smartphone.[15]

Changes to welfare benefits from 2010 have

impacted those on the lowest incomes creating affordability barriers.

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) - the rates used to calculate Housing Benefit for people in private rented accommodation) has been frozen since 2020. As this is based on rents payable in 2018/19, the gap between the benefit available and the rents charged has increased. This causes significant issues in South Lakeland and Eden where there is a prevalence of second homes and tourist accommodation, which has led to higher rents.

The benefits cap limiting total benefit received and the introduction of Universal Credit has further impacted claimants making access to home ownership and private rented accommodation unaffordable.

The Local Housing Allowance is due to be increased in April 2024.

LHA Weekly Rates	1 Bed shared rates	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Barrow	£81.35	£86.54	£102.41	£126.58	£166.85
Eden	£68.00	£80.55	£97.81	£120.82	£155.34
South Lakeland	£68.00	£113.92	£138.08	£166.85	£195.62

Average Private rents based on Office for National Statistics data 2021/2022				
Weekly Rates	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Barrow	£114.69	£125.54	£150.92	£207.46
Eden	£107.54	£129.46	£151.62	£201.46
South Lakeland	£131.30	£157.84	£188.77	£271.85

Difference	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Barrow	£28.15	£23.13	£24.34	£40.61
Eden	£26.99	£31.65	£30.80	£46.12
South Lakeland	£17.38	£19.76	£21.92	£76.23

[14] & [15] Experian Data - © Experian 2023 - All rights reserved

Case Study | **Family served Section 21 notice**

A pregnant female with two children contacted the homelessness team, having received a Section 21 notice from her private sector landlord who had decided to sell the property. The applicant faced additional challenges due to an anxiety disorder, making changes to daily routines difficult. In addition, one of her children had autism.

The homelessness team provided interim accommodation and support to: liaise with school to access the pupil premium and school transport; maximise her income, register with Cumbria Choice Based Lettings and search for a property in the private rented sector.

The client was allocated a property with a housing association and received further support through Ways to Welfare for essentials for her new home. The client, children and new baby are now settled in their home.

Second homes and empty homes

Westmorland and Furness attracts many visitors. Use of accommodation for bed and breakfast and Airbnb is therefore prevalent reducing the availability of private rented accommodation.

The total number of properties empty for six months is approximately 2,358.[16] This can be broken down to:

- Barrow : 951
- Eden : 547
- South Lakeland : 860

The total number of second homes is approximately 5,441.[17] This can be broken down to:

- Barrow : 362
- Eden : 1,278
- South Lakeland : 3,801

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[16] and [17] Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Council Tax base 2022 Please note: This figure reflects a snapshot in time. As empty property figures are derived from 'live data', numbers may differ across other Council documents depending upon the information at the time of creation www.gov.uk/ government collections council-taxbase-statistics

Legal context

All local authorities have a statutory duty to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Relevant legislation is contained in a number of different Acts including:

- Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 which requires local authorities to have an allocations scheme for social housing

- Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 (as introduced by the Health and Social Care Act (2011)) which requires a local authority to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of people in its area. Government guidance on homelessness strategies and reviews says that this duty includes people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness

- Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 which contains the primary legislation which provides for action to prevent homelessness and assist people threatened with or who are homeless

- The Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 which was made under Section 189(2) of the Housing Act 1996 and introduced the need for a homelessness strategy and extended the priority need categories to include people who are vulnerable as a result of time spent in the armed forces

- The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 which requires local authorities to ensure that their websites and applications are made more accessible for users, unless doing so would impose a disproportionate burden on the public sector body

- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which introduced duties for local authorities to take action at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness and to support house-holds already homeless to find secure accommodation. It also places a duty on public bodies to refer people threatened with or experiencing homelessness to the local authority, with consent

- In 2021 the Domestic Abuse Act which strengthened support to Victims of Domestic Abuse in safe accommodation and included a new definition which local authorities must use

In September 2022 the Government updated its Rough Sleeping Strategy, which is based on a whole system approach to prevent rough sleeping from occurring, intervening swiftly when it does aiding recovery to ensure people can stay off the streets and ensuring there is a more joined-up approach.

How this works in practice

The Council will provide support if a person is legally homeless or will become homeless within the next 56 days if they:

- Have no legal right to live in accommodation anywhere in the world

- Cannot get into their home, for example the landlord has locked them out

- It is not reasonable to stay in their home - for example the person is at risk of violence or abuse

- Are forced to live apart from their family or people they normally live with because there is no suitable accommodation for them

- Are living in very poor conditions which pose a risk to health

UK citizens and people living in the UK who have recourse to public funds are eligible for support.

Applicants can make applications to any local authority, however, applicants are usually considered by councils to which they have a local connection. A person has a local connection when, usually six months out of the last 12 months or three out of the last five years:

(a) They are, or were in the past, normally resident there, and that residence was of their own choice; or

(b) They are employed there; or

(c) They have family associations living there; or

(d) Because of any special circumstances.

An assessment is made to determine 'priority need' and a personalised housing plan (PHP) is developed with the applicant.

The plan includes the circumstances which have caused the homelessness, their housing needs and any support they would need to avoid homelessness.

The plan also sets out the steps the applicant and the Council will take.

The applicant may agree or disagree with the plan but must set out any reason for their disagreement.

Priority need applies automatically if:

- The applicant or someone they live with is pregnant

- The applicant is fleeing from domestic abuse

- The applicant has 'dependent children' living with them (under 16 or under 19 if they are studying full-time)

- The applicant is 16 or 17

- The applicant is a care experienced young person

- The applicant is homeless after a flood, fire or other disaster

- The applicant is assessed by the council as vulnerable. It is for the Council to decide whether the person is vulnerable for the purposes of a homeless application. Being vulnerable means being much more vulnerable than most people if they were homeless, and likely to suffer more harm in the same situation. People do not always have a priority need if they are disabled or have a health condition. Officers take a composite approach and consider individual circumstances, the Equality Act 2010 and its protected characteristics.

Prevention duty applies where there is evidence that eligible applicants will be homeless within 56 days.

A relief duty applies when there is reason to believe the applicant is actually homeless. Reasonable steps must be taken to help the applicant secure accommodation for at least six months. This does not mean that the authority has to source and provide accommodation, but that it should try to agree reasonable steps for itself and the applicant which could result in accommodation being found.

Interim accommodation is provided for eligible applicants while investigations are undertaken to confirm if they are in priority need.

The relief duty can be ended where an applicant is deemed to be intentionally homeless. This is where someone deliberately does or does not do something which causes their homelessness where otherwise the accommodation would be available and they could have continued to occupy it. Acts or omissions are not considered deliberate in circumstances beyond the persons control e.g. the result of Universal Credit delays in payments.
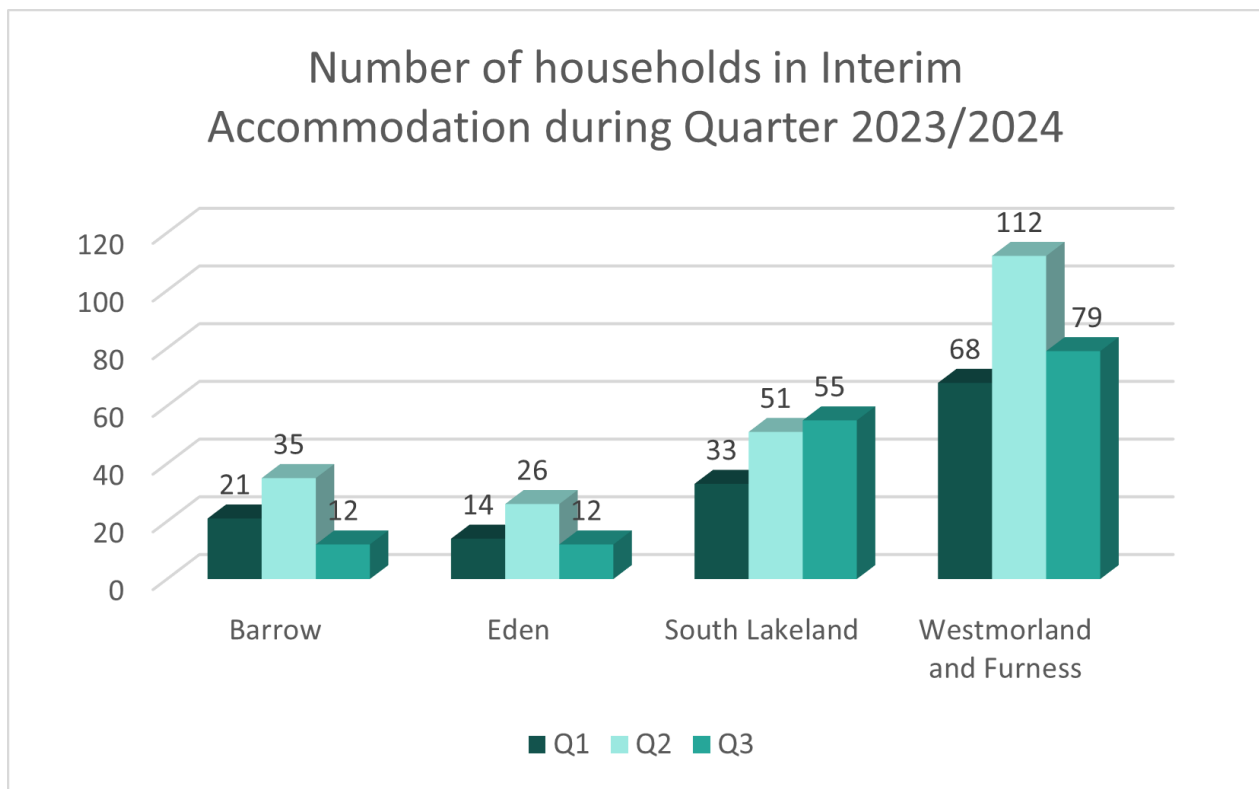
Interim accommodation

Interim accommodation is provided when households are eligible for support under the Relief Duty.

The Council has access to 50 units of interim accommodation, 10 of which incorporate target hardening measures making them suitable for victims of domestic abuse. An additional four designated domestic abuse units are available via Furness Homeless Support Group.

Units of dispersed accommodation predominate in Barrow and Eden while the majority of units in South Lakeland are within the Hostel.

Bed and Breakfast accommodation is used to supplement provision. In accordance with DLUHC guidance, families are not placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for prolonged periods of time.

Use of interim accommodation is highest in South Lakeland where access to affordable accommodation is particularly problematic.

Number of households in Interim Accommodation during Quarter 2023/2024

	Q1	Q2	Q3
Barrow	21	35	12
Eden	14	26	12
South Lakeland	33	51	55
Westmorland and Furness	68	112	79

Rough sleeping

Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland undertake an annual evidence-based estimate of rough sleepers in line with government guidance. This provides information about the estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night between 1 October and 30 November each year to show year-on-year trends.

Rough sleepers are defined as people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments) and people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes").

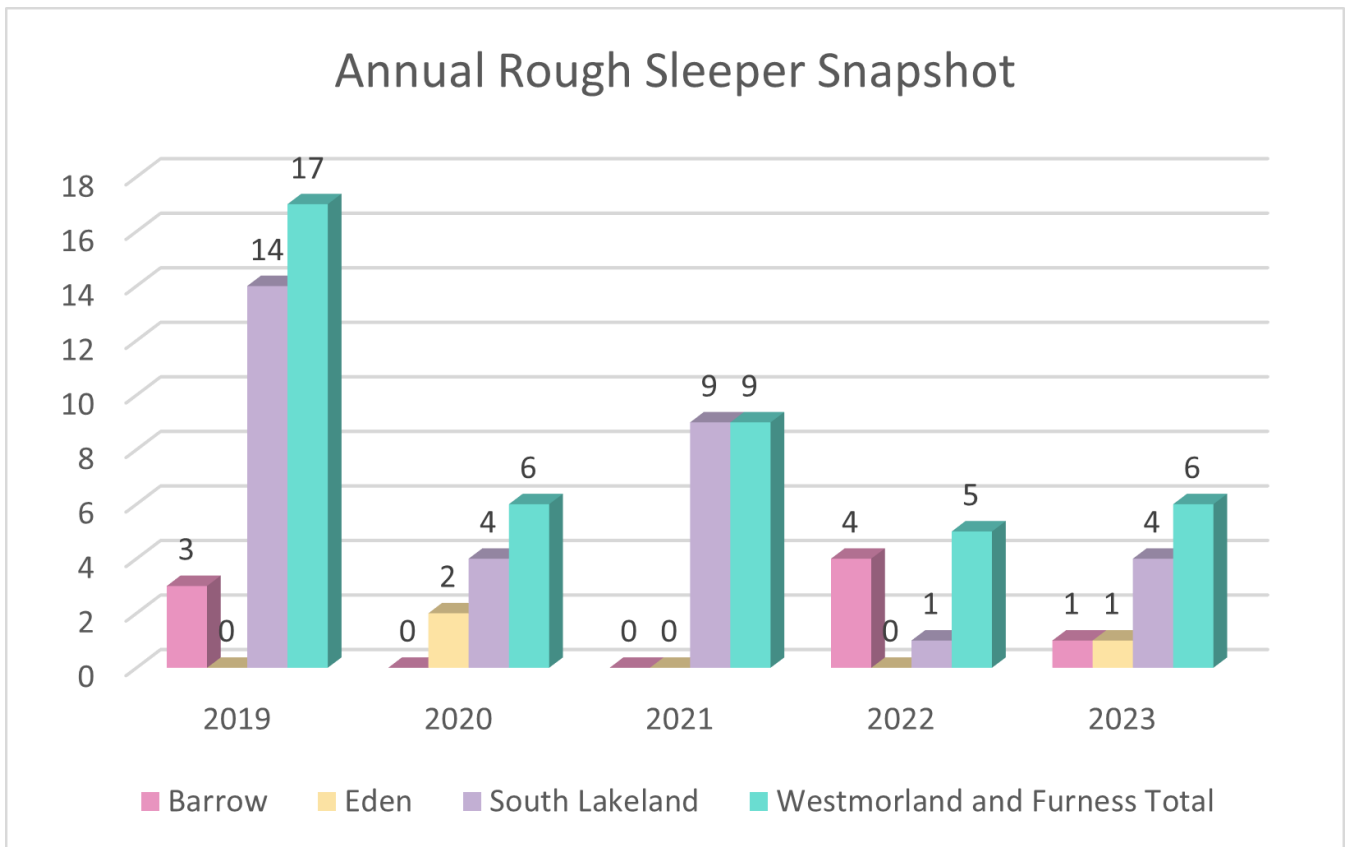This definition of rough sleeping does not include people in hostels or shelters, individuals who are sofa surfing, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or Travellers.

Barrow and Eden have low instances of people rough sleeping, with South Lakeland seeing higher levels - again reflecting the difficulties in access to affordable accommodation.

Information gathered during the initial homelessness application process indicates that 'sofa surfing' is prevalent across Westmorland and Furness.

Monthly data gathered since 2020 presents a similar picture. The majority of rough sleepers are single male, UK nationals.

It should be noted that geographically rough sleeping is primarily an issue in towns, however this may be due to challenges around reporting and identifying individuals in rural areas.

Annual Rough Sleeper Snapshot — bar chart showing Barrow, Eden, South Lakeland, and Westmorland and Furness Total rough sleeper counts for 2019–2023.

Year	Barrow	Eden	South Lakeland	Westmorland and Furness Total
2019	3	0	14	17
2020	0	2	4	6
2021	0	0	9	9
2022	4	0	1	5
2023	1	1	4	6

Fluctuations in the number of people sleeping rough on a single night is illustrated below:
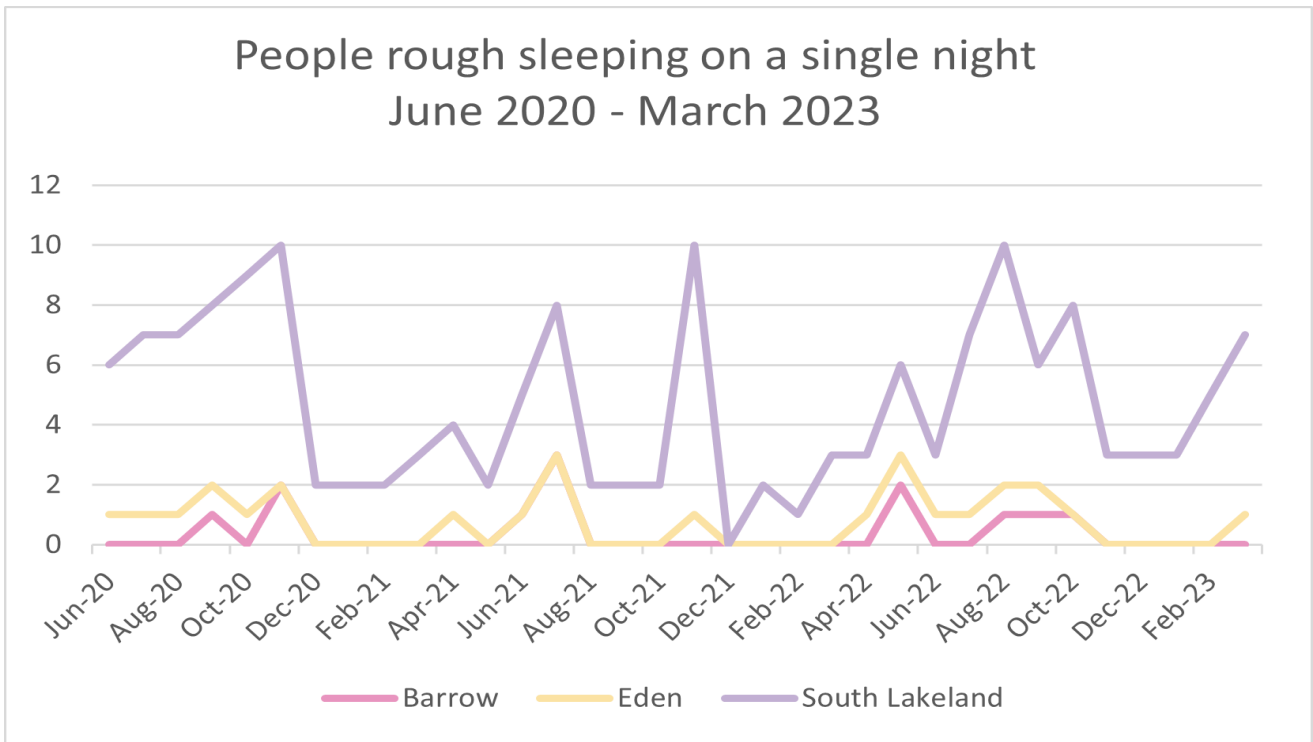
In line with government policy, the Council is committed to preventing rough sleeping where possible, and when is does occur acting to ensure that it is brief and non-reoccurring.
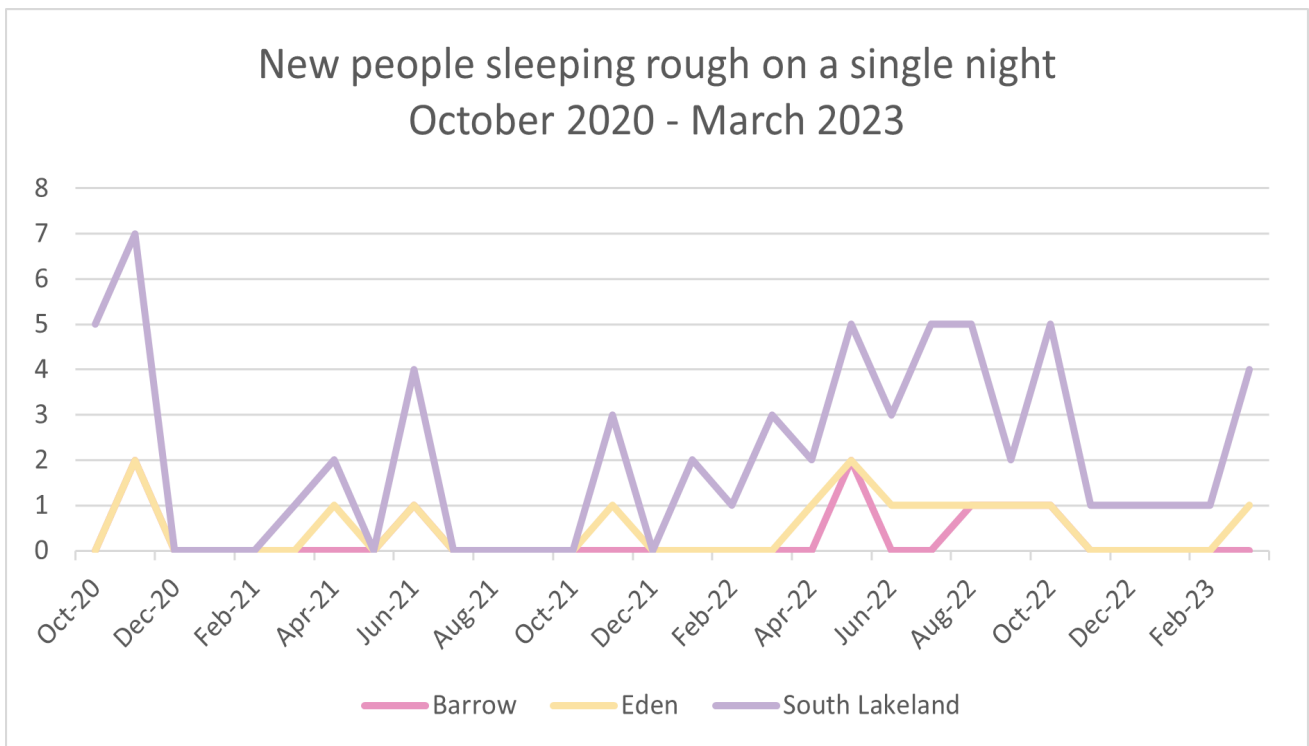
The chart below show the number of new rough sleepers between October 2020 and March 2023.

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Case Study | **Confirmed Male Rough Sleeper**

A number of reports were received from the public who were concerned about a gentleman bedding down in shop doorways. Staff made several visits to offer assistance and check the welfare of the man. It was established that he was a Veteran who insisted that he did not want an intervention from the statutory services provided by the Council. He described himself as "fine" and this is "just what I do". He wasn't local to the area but had been living in supported accommodation relating to substance misuse. He was getting hot drinks and food items from members of the public and was in good spirits.

The following week further reports were received which fitted the same description. Staff went out again to speak to the man and check his welfare. He was still unwilling to access our services. He was offered alternative assistance in the form of advice around local organisations providing warm spaces, food and companionship. He was also given the information leaflets on how to contact us and where to come for assistance and access accommodation during periods of severe weather (SWEP)

The actions to try and engage this gentleman to date have not been successful. The Council is committed to improving engagement with hard to reach clients to encourage positive changes and is in the process of implementing a pilot project which will proactively engage with vulnerable individuals.

Severe weather emergency protocol

During periods of severe weather - which includes persistent cold, extreme heat, excessive rain and high winds - the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is implemented.

Individuals at risk of significant harm are provided emergency accommodation. In exceptional circumstances individuals who pose a risk to others are excluded from this provision. To date there have been no deaths whilst sleeping on the streets within Westmorland and Furness.

Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland are in receipt of Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding which, prior to the formation of the new Council, has been used differently in each locality. Initiatives include:

- Rough Sleeper Co-ordinators – under-taking outreach work to assist rough sleepers to find pathways into accommodation.

- Tenancy Sustainment Officers – undertaking activities to maintain

tenancies and providing support in temporary accommodation to find pathways into permanent accommodation.

- Supported lettings – providing intensive support to ensure individuals are supported into permanent accommodation and are able to maintain the tenancy.

- Private Rented Accommodation Officers – facilitating access to accommodation in the private sector and liaising with landlords to ensure tenancies are maintained.

In October 2023 the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) allocated additional funding for a project in South Lakeland to combat the relatively high instances of street homelessness. This has been used to develop a project in collaboration with The Well Communities and Manna House to provide additional support to individuals facing barriers to accessing housing with a view to providing pathways into long term accommodation.

Performance

To monitor our performance Westmorland and Furness Council publicises key performance indicators via the quarterly Corporate Monitoring report for Cabinet.

The measures used are:

- The number of households in temporary accommodation - Target 73 per quarter
- The percentage of positive homeless prevention outcomes -Target 65%
- The percentage of positive homeless relief outcomes - Target 55%

The number households whose prevention and relief duty ended due to secure accommodation are detailed in the charts below:

Barrow: Prevention Duty Ended

Barrow: Relief Duty Ended

Eden: Prevention Duty Ended

Eden: Relief Duty Ended

South Lakeland: Pevention Duty Ended

Year	Prevention duty Ended	Secured accommodation for 6+months	%
2019/20	108	58	54%
2020/21	161	131	81%
2021/22	266	227	85%
2022/23	165	109	66%

South Lakeland: Relief Duty Ended

Year	Relief duty Ended	Secured accommodation for 6+months	%
2019/20	268	117	44%
2020/21	240	92	38%
2021/22	198	69	35%
2022/23	272	85	31%

In addition the following are monitored:

- The number of households owed a main duty.
- The number of households accessing Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
- The number of nights in temporary accommodation.
- The number of rough sleepers reported and the number contacted.

Section 3 | **Action Plan**

Theme	Aims	Objectives	Actions	*Target/ progress
Cross cutting: • **PREVENTION** • **RELIEF** • **ROUGH SLEEPING**	**Provide a consistent delivery model across the unitary footprint with flexibility to meet specific needs in each area**	**Provide a consistent approach to prevention activities across Westmorland and Furness**	Implement a new interim Homelessness Team structure leading to a transformed service delivery model	Medium
			Standardise temporary accommodation offer to ensure consistent access and support is available to households	Short
			Standardise the reporting system utilising relevant IT system to ensure a consistent approach is taken to record keeping and relevant information is available to Officers adhering to GDPR	Short
			Update the Personal Housing Plan (PHP) screening questions asked during assessments to capture risk factors such as domestic abuse, substance misuse, risky behaviours, gambling, and vulnerabilities to County Lines, mental health, old age, ill health, trauma including trauma experienced by refugees, people with disabilities and veterans/members of the armed forces community	Short
			Develop a rolling training programme for staff in addition to mandatory training including: legislative update; domestic abuse awareness, trauma informed practice, addiction awareness, mental health first aid and housing policies specific to the armed forces community	Short
			Standardise fees and charges methodology	Short
PREVENTION **Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping**	**Prevent homelessness amongst all 'at risk' groups**	**Understand the reasons for homelessness and the needs of those affected**	Consolidate information on housing and homelessness across Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland	Short
			Ensure clients with protected characteristics can access homelessness prevention and rehousing advice: accessible premises, website, documents, staff training	Short
			Monitor data on the characteristics of clients at risk of homelessness and use the information to inform pathways for prevention	Medium
			Monitor rough sleeper numbers and reasons for rough sleeping	Short
			Engage with people with lived experience of services; Domestic Abuse Lived Experience Network; The Well; service user feedback	Medium
			Share information to work collaboratively with partners of the Cumbria Homelessness Forum	Medium
			Adopt a trauma informed approach to all homelessness services	Medium

*Target Progress
Short: 31 March 2025 | **Medium:** 31 March 2027 | **Long:** 31 March 2029

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Theme	Aims	Objectives	Actions	*Target/ progress
Continued … **PREVENTION** **Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping**	**Improve access to advice and support**	**Ensure households are able to establish new and maintain existing tenures**	Increase provision of tenancy support in partnership with accommodation providers including pre-tenancy support, particularly for high risk clients; clients in supported housing; refugees and care experienced young people	Medium
			Work with the Resettlement Team and third sector partners to address the needs of refugees to ensure clients with protected characteristics can access services	Short
			Consider options for providing dedicated resource to help individuals sustain tenancies including the use of Rough Sleeper Initiative funding and ensuring clients with protected characteristics can access services/support	Short
			Increase access to specialist services e.g. Debt Advice; Health & Wellbeing Coaches	Medium
			Work with Adult Social Care/Mental Health services to ensure that individual care needs are assessed and appropriate provision is in place at the earliest opportunity	Short
			Work with housing associations (Duty to Refer) and private landlords to establish protocols for early identification of clients at risk of eviction	Short
			Work with DWP to ensure that appropriate benefits are claimed, ways into work are promoted and claims are processed promptly to assist homeless households	Short
		Improve referral pathways	Promote the work of the homelessness service/ share best practice through meetings and networking events	Medium
			Ensure people are well informed about their housing options.	Short
			Increase awareness of the Duty to Refer	Medium
			Review pathway referral protocols: care experienced young people/hospital discharge/ prison leavers/domestic abuse/refugees	Medium
			Work with housing associations, community land trusts and private developers to imple-ment an affordable housing development programme which responds to local needs	Short
		Maintain and develop services	Bid for funding to maintain and further develop homelessness and rough sleeper services	Short

*Target Progress
Short: 31 March 2025 | **Medium:** 31 March 2027 | **Long**: 31 March 2029

Theme	Aims	Objectives	Actions	*Target/ progress
Continued … **PREVENTION** **Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping**	**Increase access to safe affordable housing**	**Ensure plans for an increased supply of affordable housing are in place**	Ensure the Housing Strategy and Planning Policy supports the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Short
			Work with Housing Standards and Services to develop an Empty Homes strategy	Short
			Increase availability of Council housing stock	Long
			Work with registered providers to increase the supply of affordable housing	Long
			Work with housing associations to consider initiatives aimed at addressing under-occupation, particularly in relation to older people struggling in their current accommodation due to mobility or disability	Long
			Consider partnership opportunities with Stoll's Veteran Nomination Scheme	Long
			Work with housing associations and care providers to increase the supply of supported accommodation to respond to local needs	Long
			Work with Housing Standards to increase the supply of shared housing through the provision of advice re HMO licensing	Medium/ Long
			Work with partners via the Community Safety Partnership to develop positive interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour/re-offending	Medium
			Ensure staffing resource and advice is available to encourage private sector landlords to work with the Council to help households secure and maintain tenancies	Short
		Increase access to good quality affordable housing (social and private sector)	Utilise deposit schemes/rent in advance to secure accommodation	Short
			Develop a rent guarantee scheme/incentives for hard to place households	Short
			Actively engage with private landlords through landlord forums	Short
			Consider establishing a Local Lettings Agency	Long
			Work with the Cumbria Choice Partnership to ensure the allocations policy remains relevant in supporting this strategy	Short
			Work with housing standards enforcement teams to improve support available to landlords and tenants	Medium

*Target Progress
Short: 31 March 2025 | **Medium:** 31 March 2027 | **Long**: 31 March 2029

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Theme	Aims	Objectives	Actions	*Target/ progress
RELIEF: **Supporting people experiencing homelessness**	**Meet temporary accommodation housing needs and reduce reliance on B&B accommodation**	**Effectively utilise existing temporary accommodation**	Implement systems to ensure the use of temporary accommodation is maximised across Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland	Short
			Minimise void turnaround times	Short
			Improve move on pathways into settled accommodation by working in partnership with housing associations and private landlords	Medium
			Develop relationships with hotel/B& B providers	Short
		Increase the supply of good quality, value for money temporary accommodation	Investigate options for increasing the supply of smaller units across all tenures	Medium
			Investigate acquiring additional units on the open market	Medium
			Investigate the use of caravan parks	Long
			Consider the best use of accommodation provision at Town View Fields	Short
	Improve the quality of life for victims of domestic abuse	**Provide support for victims of domestic abuse**	Work with partners to ensure that specialist support is available to victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation	Short
			Work with partners to ensure that housing related support is available to victims of domestic abuse	Short
			Engage with partners to raise awareness of domestic abuse ie: preventing abuse; identifying abuse; support services available to victims of abuse including support in safe accommodation (DASSA)	Medium
			Work with partners to actively seek funding opportunities to develop an accommodation programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse	Medium

*Target Progress
Short: 31 March 2025 | **Medium:** 31 March 2027 | **Long**: 31 March 2029

Prevention aims, objectives and actions are also relevant to relief cases to enable individuals to move on into secure accommodation and have support to sustain this

Theme	Aims	Objectives	Actions	*Target/ progress
ROUGH SLEEPING: **Support people at risk of or who are rough sleeping**	**Ensuring Rough Sleeping is rare, brief and non-recurring**	**Access accurate data**	Develop monitoring systems to measure levels of rough sleepers and enable individual recording and assessment to provide data which can be shared/used to develop services	Short
		Preventing rough sleeping	Promote positive communications to help the general public: report rough sleepers; understand the difference between street based activity and those who are homeless; support rough sleepers	Short
		Provide support to those experiencing street homelessness	Introduce a Rough Sleeper Charter to outline the support available to rough sleepers	Short
			Provide a proactive outreach service	Short
			Work with Housing Associations, private landlords, private and third sector organisations to develop housing pathways for individual with additional support needs	Medium
			Explore options for working with the voluntary sector to establish night shelter provision	Medium
			Work with the voluntary sector to ensure access to day centres/foodbanks	Short
			Work with mental health and drug/alcohol support providers to improve access to services for rough sleepers	Medium
			Review severe weather protocol and winter provision annually to ensure appropriate protection is available for rough sleepers, where possible leading to more suitable housing	Short

*Target Progress
Short: 31 March 2025 | **Medium:** 31 March 2027 | **Long**: 31 March 2029

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Full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires public bodies to:
- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following 9 **protected characteristics:**

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and **armed forces personnel/veterans.**

The EqIA process has two stages:
- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if further analysis is needed through an EqIA.
- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function in terms of data and information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement on all nine protected characteristics and rurality and socio-economic status. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to the Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the report.

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name of Decision/Policy/Service/Function being assessed	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029.
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	On behalf of Caroline Wagstaff Assistant Director of Housing and Claire Watters. Competed by Chris Root external equality diversity and inclusion expert.
Department/service area	Housing
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	3/2/24
Objectives of decision/policy/service/function	Westmorland and Furness Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how the newly formed Unitary Council will work collaboratively to meet the needs of residents at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.
Key stakeholders and consultees	

Section 2: Information Gathering

Consider the sources of *relevant* information, evidence, data and research that will help you build up a picture of the likely impact of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic groups.

Information Source	Location of data/information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?
	There is various data reporting within this strategy including government statistical data with links alongside the data graphs.	The data graphs show by Barrow/Eden/South Lakeland and total Westmorland and Furness: 1. Number of households by initial assessment of homelessness duty: Total owed a prevention or relief duty. 2. Main Duty Accepted. 3. Care experienced young people 18+ owed a prevention or relief duty. 4. Households with an offending history owed a duty. 5. Westmorland and Furness support needs of households owed a duty. 6. Domestic Abuse support needs identified by households owed a duty. 7. Support needs of household owed a prevention or relief duty: Served in HM Forces. 8. Numbers of households in temporary accommodation during 2023/24. 9. Annual rough sleepers snapshot up to 2023.
Add rows as necessary		The strategy includes charts on: 1. Reasons for loss of last settles home for households. 2. Reasons for homelessness presentation 3. Housing Needs charts.

		4. LHA Weekly Rates and Average Private rent based on ONS data 2021/22. 5. People rough sleeping on a single night June 2020 – March 2023. 6. New people sleeping rough on a single night October 2020 to March 2023. 7. Performance charts.

Section 3: Assessment of Impact
From the information, evidence, data and research you have gathered, use this section to identify the risks and benefits for each of the different protected characteristic groups.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age	✓	✓		**Young People:** Care experienced young people have been specifically identified within the strategy as a group who are at greater risk of homelessness than adults in the wider population. This will priorities and assist this group of young people.	Although care experienced young people are quite rightly identified as a group at risk of homelessness it should not lesson the service that young people fleeing domestic abuse, young people fleeing home because of coming out as gay, or those who may be being sexually exploited.
				Older People: It is noted in page 36 of the Action plan is a proposed long term target to contact caravan parks. This may be an area that some older people may benefit from as a short term target.	If older people are living in under occupied family housing and are starting to struggle with stairs due to mobility or disability accessing, a single level home which is accessible and away from the main noise of the town may suit them better thus releasing family housing and making available on the waiting list.
				Consideration must be given to the most accessible form of communications for all. It is accepted that good technology and digital communication will support the delivery of service for many, however the Council must make	This strategy needs to consider the Public Sector (Website and Mobile Application) Accessibility Regulation 2018.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
				sure those who would be excluded from this form of communication due to age, disability, poverty/cost or in some rural areas signal, can still have the same level of service.	It may benefit the strategy to put the this particular regulation within the section in page 25 titled - Legal context.
Disability	✓	✓		There are references to people with a disability within the strategy, but it may benefit from a section on responding to people with physical or mental disabilities, the Public Sector Duty of 'Reasonable Adjustment. **The strategy states on page 26 that: In the section:** Priority need applies automatically if: The applicant is assessed by the council as vulnerable. It is for the Council to decide whether the person is vulnerable for the purposes of a homeless application. Being vulnerable means being much more vulnerable than most people if they were homeless, and likely to suffer more harm in the same situation. People do not always have a priority need if they are disabled or have a health condition. **Officers take a composite approach and consider individual circumstances.**	**Note:** Section proposed is drafted for consideration at the end of this form, including some Veteran's needs. **It is advised that the end of this paragraph reads:** Officers take a composite approach and consider individual circumstances, the Equality Act 2010 and its protected characteristics.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Sex	✓			The section in the strategy on domestic abuse and victims and perpetrators page 18 refers to and is in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.	
Gender reassignment	✓			**Action Plan pages 33 to 37. The second section in yellow, in the second and third action:** It is important that it states that the actions will ensure clients with protected characteristics can access services.	
Marital and civil partnership status	✓			**Action Plan pages 33 to 37. The second section in yellow, in the second and third action:** It is important that it states that the actions will ensure clients with protected characteristics can access services.	
Pregnancy and maternity	✓			**Action Plan pages 33 to 37. The second section in yellow, in the second and third action:** It is important that it states that the actions will ensure clients with protected characteristics can access services.	
Race	✓			**Action Plan pages 33 to 37. The second section in yellow, in the second and third action:** It is	

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
				important that it states that the actions will ensure clients with protected characteristics can access services.	
Religion and/or belief	✓			**Action Plan pages 33 to 37. The second section in yellow, in the second and third action:** It is important that it states that the actions will ensure clients with protected characteristics can access services.	
Sexual orientation	✓			**Action Plan pages 33 to 37. The second section in yellow, in the second and third action:** It is important that it states that the actions will ensure clients with protected characteristics can access services.	
Care Experience	✓			Care experienced young people have been specifically identified within the strategy as a group who are at greater risk of homelessness than adults in the wider population. This will priorities and assist this group of young people.	
People in rural areas		✓		This strategy states that good technology and digital	This strategy must show how due to some people living in some rural areas

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
				communication will support the delivery of service.	with a poor signal still have the same level of service.
Socio-economic status	✓			Homelessness and Rough Sleeping is primarily but not exclusively due to social economic status. The emphasis on continued support and a strategic approach to supporting people to stay in accommodation is a main driver of this strategy.	
Armed Forces Personnel/Veterans	✓			It is noted that the strategy on page 11 refers to a commitment to support Veterans.	**Note** that the chart on page 21 identifies that the number of people aged 16 + who have previously services in the armed forces is above the nation average and so additional resourced may be needed.

Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/ adverse impact or area for further action?	Actions proposed to reduce/ eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the action(s)?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements
All advise impacts are noted within the protected characterises section with proposed action.					
Action Plan pages 33 to 37	In the first section in blue: **The fourth action** should include people with a disability. **The fifth action:** should include veterans. **The fifth action:** which is about rolling out training should have a short-term target as March 2027 is too long a target date.				

Action Plan pages 33 to 37	The second section in yellow: **The second and third action:** Important that it states that the action will ensure clients with protected characteristics can access services.				

Section 5. **Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment** (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.

Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality. Complete the action plan.

Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.

✓	x

Section 6. **Review**

Date of the next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	2026 (Due to the changing nature of homelessness EIA should be carried out every two years.
Who will carry out this review?	

Responding to people with physical or mental disabilities, including some Veteran's needs. (Place at the end of the Complex Needs section on page 17).

This strategy will consider all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and its Public Sector Duty 2011. In particular it will take due regard and consider how people with a physical or mental disability can received 'Reasonable Adjustment' in all service areas.

Glossary: Definitions of Protected Characteristics

Age: This refers to a person having a particular age or being within an age group.

Disability: A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Includes: Physical/sensory disability; Mental Health; Learning disability.

Sex: This refers to a person being either male or female.

Gender reassignment: This is the process of transitioning from one sex to another, considered a personal process rather than a medical one and it does not require someone to undergo medical treatment in order to be protected.

Marital and civil partnership: Legal recognition of a same-sex couple's relationship. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a range of legal matters.

Maternity: The period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding.

Race: It refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. Includes, Asian, Black and White minority ethnic groups inc. Eastern Europeans, Irish people and Gypsy Travellers.

Religion or belief: "Religion" means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. "Belief" includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). The category includes Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and non-religious beliefs such as Humanism.

Sexual orientation: This is whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Other protected areas:

Transgender: Everyone whose gender identity is neither male nor female as legally defined at birth and is not undergoing a process of gender resignment.

Rurality: Differential impact on people in rural areas.

Socio-economic status: Differential impact on people due to household or personal income.

Armed Forces Personnel/Veterans.

Cabinet

Report Title	Westmorland and Furness Cared for Children and Care Experienced Young People's Strategy
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Jonathan Taylor, Assistant Director - Children and Families Susan Hodkin, Partnership and Improvement Manager
Director	Milorad Vasic, Director – Childrens Services
Lead Cabinet Member	Cllr Sue Sanderson
Why is this a key decision?	1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. **NO** 2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. **NO** For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.
Wards Affected	All
Identify exempt information and exemption category	N/A
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1 – Care For and Care Experienced Strategy

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an overview of our new strategy for cared-for children in Westmorland and Furness. Unlike the preceding county strategy, concluding in 2023, this new strategy is tailored specifically to our local context.

2.   Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1   Endorse the Cared for Children and Care Experienced Young People's Strategy.

2.2   Consider and discuss how the broad spectrum of the council can contribute to the development and the delivery of the strategy.

3.   Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

3.1   Statutory Obligation: It is our statutory duty to have a strategy in place for cared-for children. This document not only fulfils that obligation but also goes beyond, embodying a commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the children and young people in our care.

3.2   Successful delivery of the strategy will depend on effective collaboration with partners, and the various stakeholders including statutory agencies and community organisations and networks. The council must actively develop and maintain these partnerships to enhance the overall system for cared for children and care experienced young people.

3.3   Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be crucial so that the council can regularly assess the impact of the strategy, ensuring that it meets its intended goals.

3.4   To enable us to do this we propose to establish a multi-agency cared for children partnership board. We will establish key performance indicators (KPI's) and feedback mechanisms to track progress and provide challenge.

3.5   Alignment with Our Promise: The priorities outlined in the new strategy are rooted in the voices of the children in our care, reflecting the insights gathered from "Our Promise" and the wider consultations that we have undertaken. By incorporating their perspectives, we aim to ensure that our approach resonates with the actual needs and aspirations of the children in our care.

3.6   Inclusive Consultation: A significant aspect of the strategy development process involved consultation with care experienced young adults. This collaboration was not just a one-way process but a co-production, fostering a sense of ownership and relevance among those who have experienced our care system. Their valuable input has shaped the strategy to be more responsive and in sync with the realities that they face.

3.7   Local Focus: Recognising the unique needs and dynamics of Westmorland and Furness, our strategy is tailored to address the specific challenges and opportunities within our local communities.

3.8   Delivery Plan: A delivery plan that outlines specific milestones and timelines for the effective implementation of the strategy will be developed.

4.   Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

4.1   The strategy links to most of the priorities within the council plan, specifically: Supporting active, healthy happy lives for young and old. We are ambitious for all our children and young people; committed to listening to their aspirations and showing them how much we care.

5.   Consultation Outcomes

5.1   Consultation with care experienced children and young people identified several changes to the strategy, including a change to the priority of 'partnerships with carers' to 'relationships with carers'

5.2   Consultation with Corporate Parenting Board has brought about some changes to the document including more of description of the partnership responsibility to corporate parenting.

6.   Alternative Options Considered

6.1   N/A

7.   Reasons for the Recommendations

7.1   As outlined in the report, the local authority has a duty to publish a strategy for care for and care experienced children and young people.

8.   Climate and Biodiversity Implications

8.1   N/A

9.   Legal and Governance Implications

9.1   The local authority is under a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of any child it is looking after. This includes, in particular, a duty to promote the child's educational achievement.

9.2   A local authority may be under a statutory duty to provide care leaving support. Entitlement to care leaving support depends on the age of the young person, the length of time they were looked after and their age when they ceased to be looked after by the local authority. The categories of children entitled to support as care leavers and the main obligations owed to them are set out in more detail in Volume 3 of the Children Act Statutory Guidance pages 10-14. In certain situations the duty to provide support will continue until the young person's 25th birthday.

9.3   There will be young people with care experience in Westmorland and Furness to whom the local authority owes no statutory duty to provide care leaving support, either because they do not meet the criteria for support (typically

because they ceased to be looked after before their 16th birthday) or because they were last looked after by another local authority.

9.4 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a set of corporate parenting principles which a local authority must have regard to when carrying out its functions in relation to children and young people who are looked after by the local authority or are entitled to care leaving support as a relevant child or a former relevant child. The corporate parenting principles do not replace or change existing legal duties, for example in relation to the provision of accommodation for care leavers aged 18 and above. The corporate parenting principles do not alter the legal position that the duty to provide care leaving support is owed by the local authority that last looked after the child.

9.5 The Government has stated its ambition to strengthen and extend corporate parenting responsibilities for children in care and care leavers

9.6 The local authority is required to prepare strategic plan for children in care, a corporate parenting strategy/plan and a strategy for care leavers. These plans will be requested prior to any OFSTED inspection. The local authority is also under a legal duty to consult on and publish a "local offer for care leavers" setting out the services it offers to care leavers.

10. Human Resources Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

10.1 There are no direct health, wellbeing or safety implications but HR / OD are able to support where required and ensure links to the people plan.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 This report requests the endorsement of the new 'Cared for Children and Care Experienced Young People's Strategy'. The proposals contained within the report do not result in any additional financial implications to the local authority.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EiA Guidance)

12.1 Care experienced protected characteristic. EIA to follow.

13. Background Documents

- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Childrens Act 2004
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers: The Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Care Leaver Covenant (DfE 2018)

Cared for Children and Care Experienced Young People's Strategy

Vision

For our cared for and care experienced children and young people to be safe, happy, and healthy, to enjoy life and realise their potential.

A message from our Promise Ambassadors

We want this strategy to be your guide to making sure we receive our promise.

A message from our Care Experienced Ambassador

Being a looked after child and moving on into independence can be a tough journey, it is essential to have that support and stability. This strategy is built with the young person in mind, it's a drive that brings everyone together, it's a promise. Reading this strategy brings me hope for the future, that these young people are in safe hands with people who are committed through and through into delivering the promise to you.

A message from Sue Sanderson, Cabinet Member, Children's Services, Education and Skills

Our vision emphases our commitment to a service dedicated to meeting the needs of children, young people, and families, to ensure they experience the best that life has to offer.

Our leadership commitment drives us to consistently challenge ourselves, aiming for continuous improvement in the quality and effectiveness of our services to enhance safety and well-being for children, young people, and their families.

Our goal is to deliver outstanding services, recognising that some families require additional support to stay together. However, if staying at home is not possible, we will provide the care, support, and stability that children deserve.

As corporate parents, we are dedicated to offering the highest quality care and support to our cared for children and care experienced young people/adults. We understand the significance of stable homes in ensuring their happiness, health, and the best possible outcomes.

Taking an active approach to our corporate parenting responsibilities, we actively listen to the voices of our cared for children and care experienced young people/adults, collaborating closely with our partners. Collaborating with our partners is essential to delivering our strategy. 'Partnership' stands as a cornerstone in our strategy implementation through the development of a Cared for Children Partnership Board we will broaden the reach and effectiveness and strengthen our capacity to deliver outstanding services.

This strategy outlines our ambitions until 2028 and details the actions the council and its partners must take to facilitate continuous improvement for the children in our care and those that have left our care.

Councillor Sue Sanderson
Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills

A message from Milorad Vasic, Director of Children's Services

As the Director of Children Services, it is my great pleasure to present this Cared for Children and Care Experienced Young People's Strategy, that underscores our unwavering commitment to the well-being, growth, and future success of every child or young person in our care or who has experienced care.

The journey of a cared for child is a unique and often challenging one, shaped by a variety of factors that demand our collective attention, empathy, and action. In recognising this, our strategy is built upon the principles of compassion, empowerment, and partnership. It is a testament to our dedication to providing the highest standards of care and support to each child, irrespective of their circumstances. In the pages that follow, you will find a strategic roadmap that addresses the holistic needs of cared for children and for those who have care experience, encompassing not only their immediate welfare but also their long-term development. We aim to create an environment where every child feels valued, heard, and empowered to reach their full potential.

This strategy is not just a document, it is a pledge to our children. It reflects our determination to collaborate with families, communities, and all stakeholders involved in the care of these remarkable young individuals. Together, we will build a foundation that nurtures resilience, promotes education, and fosters a sense of belonging.

As we embark on this journey, I extend my deepest gratitude to all the dedicated professionals, foster families, and partners who contribute to the realisation of our vision. Your commitment to the well-being of our children is the cornerstone of our success.

I invite you to embrace this strategy with an open heart and a shared sense of responsibility. Let us work hand in hand in making a difference, creating a brighter, more promising future for every child and young person.

Milorad Vasic
Director of Children's Services

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Co-producing our strategy

Our cared for children strategy has been collaboratively crafted with input from our dedicated Promise Ambassadors who are members of our children in care council. We deeply appreciate the thoughtful reflection they have devoted to bringing this strategy to fruition. It is inspiring to witness how our young ambassadors aspire to support fellow individuals navigating the care system aiming to enhance their overall experiences.

Recognising that actions speak louder than words we acknowledge the importance of demonstrating tangible results, therefore moving forward the Promise Ambassadors will actively participate in shaping our delivery plans.

The collective voices of children and young people coupled with insights from our Corporate Parenting Board will serve as crucial benchmarks holding us accountable to the commitments we have made.

Our approach

Our approach is that it is imperative for every child to have the best. Our goal is for them to grow up in a happy, loving, and caring home. We will always seek to keep children and young people within their family networks, doing all that we can to enable families to stay together. In some situations, we take the difficult decision to place a child in our care. When that does happen, we take a strengths-based approach focussing on identifying the strengths, or assets, as well as the needs and difficulties of children, young people, and families. Whilst in our care, we prioritise maintaining relationships with their families and friends, working towards safe and timely reunification.

Our child-centred practice helps us to assemble the evidence base about the child's lived experiences, especially the impact on the child of any adverse childhood experiences. We take a strengths-based, solution focused approach to our work, and support the family and network to come up with their own solutions.

Collaboration with statutory and other partners is integral to our approach. Through working closely with others, we can create an effective supportive system for children and families.

Our Promise

Each of our priorities relates to Our Promise which was designed by young people. The guiding thread woven into all our priorities and aspirations for cared for children and care experienced young people is centred on the voice of the child and their active participation in ensuring our effective purposeful actions make a difference.

To ensure that we bring this to life we will ...

- Incorporate mechanisms for open communication, actively seeking and valuing the perspectives of children.

- Create spaces where they feel heard, respected, and encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

- Ensure decisions affecting them are made collaboratively, promoting a sense of ownership and agency in their own development.

Our two guiding principles

Incorporating the guiding principles of relationships and inclusivity into our strategy gives us a shared foundation. 'Relationships' emphasises the importance of nurturing meaningful connections and 'inclusivity' underscores the commitment to embracing diversity, ensuring that voices are heard. Together these principles contribute to a strategy that prioritises meaningful relationships, diversity, and a sense of belonging.

Relationships

The strategy document 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' was clear on the importance of providing cared for children with stable, loving homes close to their communities. To achieve this, Westmorland and Furness Council must prioritise loving and safe relationships for children alongside being a world-class corporate parent.

In our compassionate strategy for cared for and care experienced children and young people, a foundational principle, centres around the importance of meaningful relationships. Acknowledging that children need to feel loved, we will prioritise the development of strong connections as an essential principle. This commitment extends to creating an environment where cared for children not only feel loved but also have the opportunity to develop a robust sense of self.

Additionally, understanding and embracing their life stories is woven into the fabric of our care, ensuring that each child's journey is acknowledged, respected, and supported with empathy.

Inclusivity

Our second key principle revolves around inclusive practice, emphasising the importance of inclusivity in our approach. This principle extends to creating a nurturing environment that embraces the diversity of vulnerable children, including those with disabilities and those who identify as LGBTQ. Central to our inclusive care is the acknowledgment and respect for cultural identity, creating an atmosphere where every child feels valued and affirmed for who they are. This commitment ensures that our care is sensitive to the unique needs and backgrounds of each child under our support.

Our Five Priorities

Steps to Independence

Relationships with Carers and Families

Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Education, Employment and Training

Home - Stability and Security

Home - Stability and Security

Stability and consistency in good homes is paramount for children and young people to feel safe, loved and cared for. If children do have to move homes, then it is important that children know why this is happening, that moves are planned, and where possible there should be time built into the plan so that children get to know their new home and carers.

A stable family home provides a sense of belonging and permanence. It contributes to a strong identity and connection to our communities.

To deliver on this priority we will …

- Focus on ensuring stable and secure family homes to provide a sense of continuity, security, and safety.
- Regularly evaluate our practice to minimise disruptions and enhance the overall stability of home.
- Implement trauma-informed care approaches to address past experiences and support emotional well-being.

'Because I think every home needs love'
Promise Ambassador

Education, Employment and Training

Championed by our Virtual School, children and young people will be supported and encouraged to become successful independent adults who enjoy learning and are aspirational for their future. Education empowers children and young people; providing them with the foundation to achieve their academic and broader aspirations. Our strategy aims to support cared for children and care experienced young people to develop the confidence and self-belief to achieve their ambition.

To deliver on this priority we will …

- Secure access to and attendance at high quality local provision from the early years through to post sixteen
- Identify, assess, and provide the required support to meet children and young people's needs.
- Ensure support is in place to remove the barriers that impact on attendance including accessing the curriculum
- Work with educational providers to develop a supportive learning environment and with social workers to produce Personal Educational Plans (PEPS) which promote the educational achievement of cared for children
- Ensure these plans contain SMART Targets that are aspirational using Pupil Premium Plus to support their achievement.
- Celebrate achievements of progress made in education.

Health and Emotional Well-being

Being healthy is the foundation to a child's physical, mental health and wellbeing and significantly contributes to their overall quality of life. Early intervention and preventative health measures can mitigate the risks of long-term health issues.

We know that a child's experiences and environment impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing. Children with care experience are more likely to experience health risk factors such as past trauma, loss, poor self-esteem, and adverse experience. Children with strong emotional foundations are better equipped to build and maintain healthy connections and relationships.

Prioritising children's health and emotional wellbeing will help them to develop resilience, enabling them to cope better with life's challenges and setbacks.

To deliver on this priority we will ...

- Prioritise mental health support services to address the specific emotional health needs of our cared for and care experienced children, providing counselling services and resources for emotional resilience.
- Implement trauma informed care practices across the children's health and social care workforce to promote healing and resilience.
- Involve children and young people in healthcare decisions, so that their voices can inform service delivery.
- Continue to demonstrate compliance with statutory requirements to support positive emotional health and well-being of our cared for and care experienced children.
- Encourage and facilitate opportunities for physical activity and recreation. This could be sports, outdoor activities, active play, arts, and cultural activities.
- Foster emotional resilience, and support healthy relationships with caregivers, peers, and mentors

'People don't understand when I'm angry I will stay angry. So, leave me. Don't shout.'
A young person

Relationships with Carers and Families

Prioritising relationships with carers and families is essential for creating a comprehensive and supportive care system that nurtures the well-being, development, and success of cared for children. Building strong relationships with carers and families establishes a foundation for enduring connections, even as children transition into adulthood, providing ongoing support.

To deliver on this priority we will …

- Enable strong relationships with foster families, ensuring they receive appropriate training and support.
- Facilitate communication and collaboration between birth families and caregivers when it is in the child's best interest.
- Support brothers and sisters to stay in touch and build strong relationships if they cannot live together in the same home.
- Promote open and transparent communication channels ensuring that families and carers feel heard and valued in decisions about their child.

Steps to independence

Empowering care experienced young adults on their journey to independence means guiding them towards becoming not only successful and happy adults but also nurturing confidence in their professional endeavours and potential parenting roles. At the age of 18, when young people transition out of care, they often face feelings of solitude, isolation, and financial uncertainty as they embark on the path to independent living. The financial strain posed by housing costs further complicates their journey to self-sufficiency. Addressing the vital issue of housing becomes a collaborative effort.

In recognising these challenges and understanding the obstacles that care experienced young adults often face, our heartfelt ambition is to develop a strategy that alleviates these challenges, nurturing an environment where they can navigate their path without facing these difficulties.

Our approach is rooted in empathy and support, aiming to create an environment where care experienced young adults can not only overcome obstacles but also thrive, finding fulfilment and success on their unique paths to independence.

To deliver on this priority we will ...

- Ensure that care experienced young adults are equipped with practical life skills, including financial literacy, decision-making, and problem-solving.
- Provide opportunities for vocational training and career guidance.
- Have a Local Offer that is accessible and comprehensive.
- Develop a coherent pathway to apprenticeships and employment opportunities where care experienced young people feel supported.

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Our Seven Outcomes

Our outcomes will be how we measure success. They have evolved through a process of collaboration, aligning closely with what matters to children, young people, their carers, families, and professionals across the partnerships. These outcomes, tied to our five priorities guide our actions, which are detailed in a live Delivery Plan will be regularly reviewed by the Cared for Children Partnership Board.

Care experienced young people feel cared for, safe, settled, connected, and supported in transitioning to adulthood.

The gap in achievement for cared for children and young people will be narrowed and increasingly be in line with their peers and better than national cared for children and young people

Care experienced young people have a smooth transition into interdependence and living in their own homes by being equipped with essential life skills and a sense of self-efficacy.

When children need to be cared for, plans for permanence are achieved quickly, and fully involve children, families, and carers.

Children and young people will experience a more enriched and supportive environment, leading to enhanced personal development, improved self-esteem, and a greater sense of purpose.

Children and young people have long lasting healthy relationships with caregivers, peers, and support networks, contributing to a strong sense of belonging.
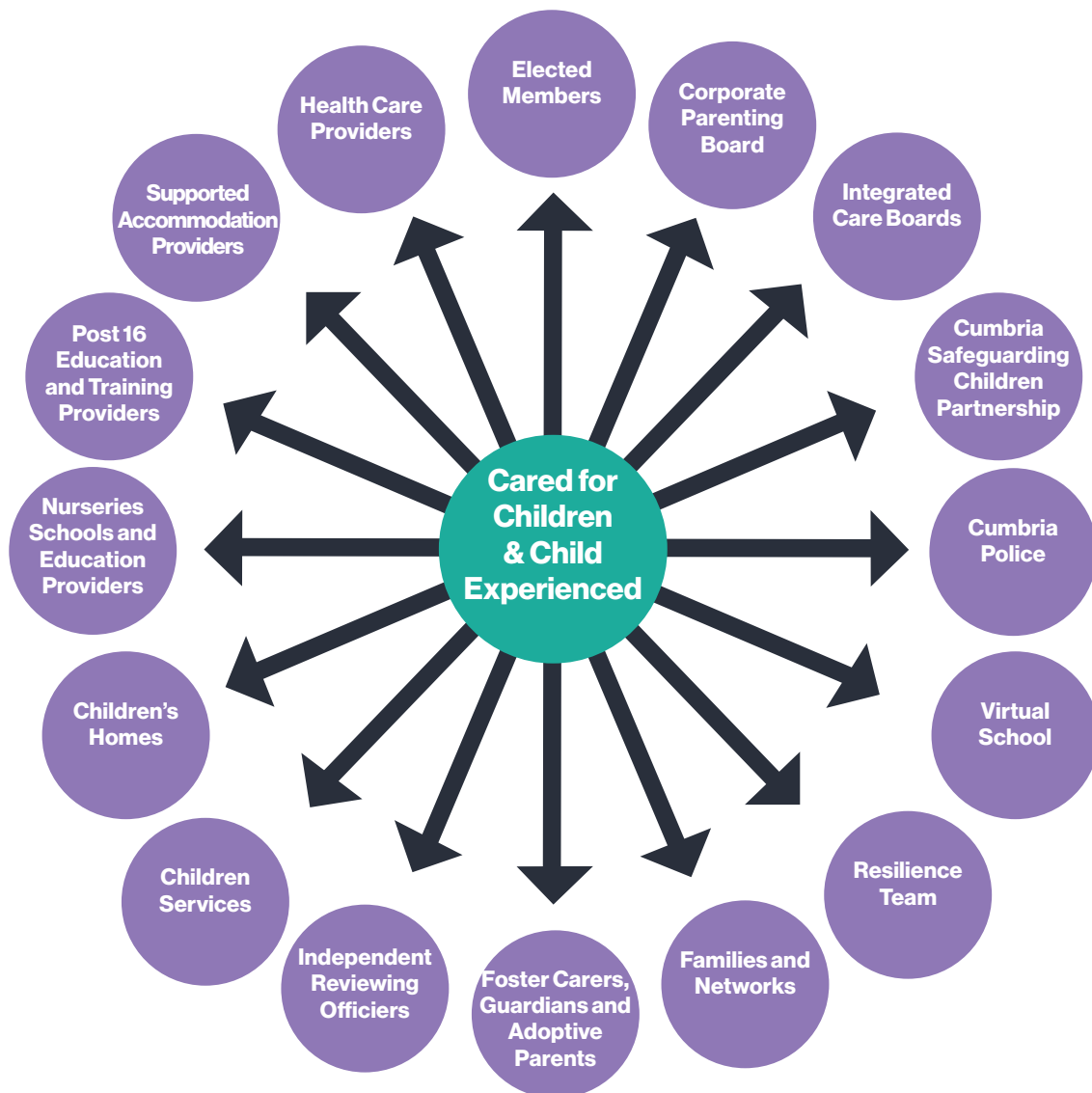
Children and young people experience improved emotional and physical health and well-being, developing a positive self-image and resilience.

A Partnership Strategy

Our strategy revolves around a collaborative effort with partners from the public, private, and third sectors. Together, we are committed to providing the highest standard of care and support for our children and young people. The synergy with our partners is crucial for achieving positive outcomes and delivering effective services tailored to the unique needs of cared for children and care experience young people.

Our partners understand their roles, working alongside us to ensure the health, well-being, and support of each child we are responsible for. As a partnership, we can provide a whole system approach to children's needs.

Corporate Parenting

All children deserve to be cared for, respected, listened to, supported, feel safe and loved. Our cared for children and care experienced young people are no different. However, without a stable family to support them, and often having experienced trauma, they face more challenges in achieving their aspirations.

As Corporate Parents it is our responsibility to care for them. This responsibility is not just with social workers and professionals who work directly with children and young people, but with all Westmorland and Furness staff, elected Members, and partners. We want everyone to read this strategy and ask themselves: "What can I do in my role to help children and young people that are cared for or have a care experience?"

'Corporate Parenting' is the term that is used to describe the responsibilities that a local authority or council has when a child or young person can no longer be looked after by their parent(s) or family. A Court will have decided that it is in a child's best interest for this to happen. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 states that a Local Authority is the Corporate Parent of cared for and care experienced children and young people. It should act in the best interests of these children and young people; keeping them safe; promoting their physical and mental wellbeing, encouraging them to express their views, wishes and feelings. It should make sure that they live in stable homes, have consistent education or training, and healthy relationships. It should have high aspirations for children and help them prepare for adulthood and independent living.

Statutory Guidance to the Act (2018) states that the role that councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on the local authority and its partners (including the NHS England and any Integrated Care Board for that local authority area, the police, probation, and education) to co-operate with a view to making arrangements to improve the well-being of children in their area.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 set out seven corporate parenting principles to which councils should have regard in exercising their responsibilities to cared for and care experienced children and young people.

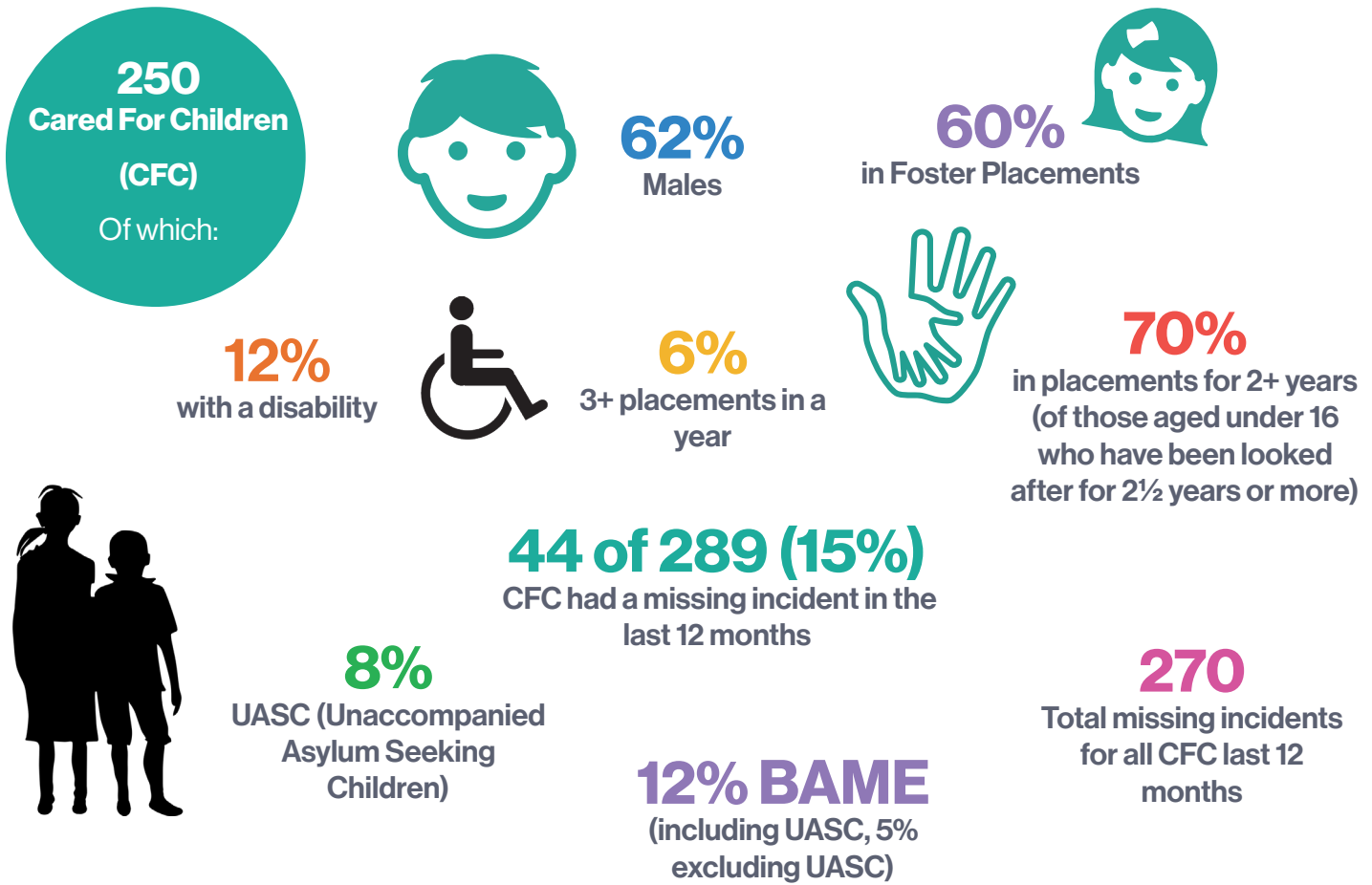| |
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| **To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.** |
| **To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.** |
| **To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.** |
| **To help those children and young people gain access to, and make best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.** |
| **To help those children and young people gain access to, and make best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.** |
| **For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.** |
| **To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living** |

About the children in our care and care experienced

Data from the ChAT 27-02-2024:

250 Cared For Children (CFC) Of which:

62% Males

60% in Foster Placements

12% with a disability

6% 3+ placements in a year

70% in placements for 2+ years (of those aged under 16 who have been looked after for 2½ years or more)

44 of 289 (15%) CFC had a missing incident in the last 12 months

8% UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)

12% BAME (including UASC, 5% excluding UASC)

270 Total missing incidents for all CFC last 12 months

180 Care Experienced (Relevant, Former Relevant & Qualifying) Of which:

57% Males

4% UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)

19% with a disability

43% in education, employment or training (EET)

Support for Carers

Our foster carers play an invaluable role in the lives of the children in their care, providing them with loving, stable homes and the support which can help to transform a child's life.

In recognition of this crucial role Cumbria Fostering are committed to providing all our foster carers with high quality training and development opportunities to make sure that the outcomes for the children in their care are the best they can be regularly reviewing our carers' support needs, progress, and achievements every year.

This includes the initial Skills to Foster training undertaken as part of our foster carer preparation, as well as 21 hours of mandatory training each year, and advanced training courses such as Fostering Changes for our specialist and experienced carers.

As well as a wealth of training our comprehensive support package includes:

- A dedicated supervising social worker who will be there to support and advise, as well as support from our experienced foster carers through our peer mentoring scheme.
- Regular, local support groups enable foster carers to share experiences, knowledge and extend their support network. Our support groups produce their own newsletter which will keep carers up to date with developments in the world of fostering.
- An out of hour's duty service for emergency issues outside of standard office hours.
- Emotional Wellbeing Practitioners managed by Cumbria Fostering to offer support and advice to foster carers and children if they are struggling.
- Social activities for carers and their children, including a Summer 'Walk and Talk' event and a Christmas party.
- Annual Long Service Awards which recognise the amazing contribution of our carers with awards for those who have completed between five to more than 30 years of service.
- Foster carers are offered the opportunity to contribute to and shape the policy of our service; through joining our Steering Group, Corporate Parenting Board and Virtual School Governance Board.
- Our Fostering Friendly Employer scheme was launched in 2014 to encourage local businesses to be supportive and flexible employers, enabling foster carers to balance their work and caring responsibilities.
- Cumbria Fostering pays for our carers to be members of the Fostering Network - an independent agency which provides advice, support, and advocacy to foster carers.

As part of 'Cumbria's biggest family,' we make sure that our foster carers are fully prepared and supported to meet the needs of different children. Our foster carers Chris and Heather, from Barrow, said: "After a year of fostering with an independent agency and feeling unsupported we moved over to foster with the council. We now feel part of a 'family,' we can go to meetings with other local foster carers, share our experiences with each other and there are more people to listen to us. We regularly meet with other foster carers in town for a chat and there are get-togethers for the kids at Christmas and in the summer. You get a lot of support, which is essential."

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Kinship Care

A Kinship carer is any friend or family member, who is not a child's parent but raising them for a significant amount of the time, either as a temporary or permanent arrangement. Kinship care will be the first consideration for any child who cannot live safely at home with their parents. If a suitable kinship carer can be found, they will receive help to step into this role. This support will be ongoing and flexible. It will suit the needs of the family depending on their personal circumstances, the age of the child, the child's experiences of trauma and adversity before coming into kinship care and the relationship with the parents. Children in kinship care will live without stigma and with a sense of love, belonging and stability throughout their childhood.

Governance

Working with partners under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote cooperation between 'relevant partners', including the police, the NHS and education providers, while those partners have a duty to cooperate with the local authority in turn. Guidance on the Act highlights that corporate parenting is a 'task [that] must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies. The Corporate Parent Board requires partner agencies to be accountable for the delivery of the priorities alongside the council.

The NHS has a significant role in ensuring the timely and effective delivery of health services to children in care as part of their statutory responsibilities. The NHS Constitution for England make clear the responsibilities of NHS Integrated Care Boards and NHS England to cared for children and care experienced young people. The government's response to the UK Care Review 'Stable Homes, built on love' consultation, published in September 2023, outlines that strengthened corporate parenting responsibilities will also be extended to relevant public bodies which incorporates Integrated Care Boards within the next 18 months.

Cared For Children Partnership Board

We need to collaborate as a partnership to address challenges collectively, we will aim to involve new partners and community groups for innovative solutions. It is crucial to acknowledge and celebrate the successes and strengths of our organisations, the partnership and the children and young people in our care. With our new collaborative Cared for Children Partnership approach we are committed to offering a more seamless and caring experience for the children and young people in our care.

Children & Young People's Voice

Corporate Parenting Board

Multi agency Cared for Children Partnership

Participation (workstream)	Ambitions Group (workstream)	Care Experienced Partnership (workstream)	Be Healthy (workstream)

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Delivering Our Strategy

Delivery of the strategy will sit with the Cared for Children Partnership Board; the Assistant Director for Childrens Services will report back regularly to the Corporate Parenting Board. The impact of the work will be measured by key indicators presented as part of the board's performance report.

The CiCC's and the Care Experienced forums form part of the core membership of the Board and drive the agenda, ensuring that children and young people receive feedback from partners and officers of the council.

References

The Children's Social Care National Framework will set direction for multiagency practice to improve outcomes and emphasise the importance of family networks and kinship carers in supporting children and young people. **Children's social care: national framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 will clarify to all organisations working with children and young people that family networks should be considered more often and thoroughly. **Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**

Any reference in the document to 'care experience' means any child or young person to whom W&F owes a legal duty as a 'looked after child' or 'care leaver', as defined in the Children Act 1989 and related legislation.

Westmorland & Furness Council

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

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Together, we will make Westmorland and Furness:

"A great place to live, work and thrive".

JN 27333