



Corporate Plan 2013 to 2015



Foreword: From the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive

Welcome to our Corporate Plan 2013 – 2015. This document is our key strategic document. It sets out the main challenges facing the council, the borough and outlines our plans to tackle them over the next two years.

Central Government funding has been cut and we face the challenge of meeting community expectations with significantly less money. Copeland was one of the hardest hit councils, with almost a third of our funding from Government cut over the four years from 2011 to 2015. During the period of this Corporate Plan we will need to save at least a further £2.69 million. This taken together with changes in Council Tax, Business Rates and the costs of providing services throughout our district all pose significant challenges for Copeland.

We must respond to these challenges positively if we are to serve the needs of Copeland in the best way we can. In 2012/13 we delivered a balanced budget whilst maintaining our core services. We collected waste from approximately 32,000 households, processed 530 planning applications, processed approximately 20,000 revenues and benefits forms and took 65,000 calls through our customer contact centre. We remained a core partner in Britain's Energy Coast which has allocated over £33 million to regeneration projects in West Cumbria and attracted £5.5 million Regional Growth Fund to invest in local businesses.

We are also on track to deliver all of the projects and objectives in our current Corporate Plan. We have also made significant progress redeveloping our website to create quick, easy and efficient access to information and make services available on-line, more conveniently for our customers.

In looking forward, we will continue to take the initiative. We are setting clear priorities for the future, continuing to invest in priority services, supporting economic growth and radically transforming the way we organise ourselves and deliver services.

We recognise we can't do this alone. We will work with businesses, the voluntary sector, other public sector organisations and, most importantly, with our communities to plan and deliver what is needed locally. Our mission for the future is to be, **“an effective Council that works with partners and communities to arrange services for residents in Copeland”**.

Copeland: An introduction

Copeland is situated on the west coast of Cumbria, extending over 737km² with a population of approximately 70,000. The population of the borough is expected to change over the next 20 years with increasing numbers of people aged over 60 and fewer younger people.

Copeland is a place of contrasts. Two thirds of the borough is within the Lake District National Park, so agriculture and tourism play a significant role in the local economy. However, Copeland also plays host to Europe's largest nuclear facility, Sellafield covering over two square miles. The majority of our residents live near the coast with most residents living in our main service centres of Whitehaven, Egremont and Cleator Moor in the north of the borough, and Millom in the south.

The nuclear sector and its supply chain is the major employer within the area, employing over 60% of all employees in Copeland with 72% of employees on site being Copeland residents. Historically, the pay levels for those directly employed within the sector have been significantly higher than other jobs available within the local economy. This is reflected by our weekly wage level which stands at an average £653.70 per week for full time workers for Copeland in 2012. The jobs created at Sellafield enable many of our residents to realise their aspirations. Whilst this is positive for many families within Copeland, for others their experience of living here is different. Some of our residents experience unemployment, survive off low incomes, suffer financial exclusion (no bank account or access to appropriate credit), use food banks, live in houses which don't meet modern standards and lack skills and experience which hinder their ability to take advantage of job opportunities. Whilst this is not everybody's experience of Copeland, nor is it unique to us, our commitment is to arrange services and make policy decisions which take into account the needs of these families and residents.

Key facts:

- Our **youth unemployment** is above national levels with 7.5% of the total number of 16-24 year olds in December 2012 claiming Job Seekers Allowance.
- More than 6,700 households in Copeland are in **fuel poverty**, levels which are above the rest of the country.
- There are 5,500 people **claiming housing benefit**.
- The **GCSE attainment rate** of 5 A*-C's in Copeland, is 48%, compared with a national average of 58.2% and a Cumbrian average of 57%. 13% of working age people have **no qualifications**.
- There are a total of 2,515 children aged between 0-19 years currently **living in poverty**.
- **Life expectancy** varies by 9.6 years according to where you live in the borough, with overall life expectancy below the national average.
- Parts of Copeland are some of the **most deprived** areas in the country, with the proportion of low income households above national levels, and 38% of households have a limiting long-term illness.

- Crime rates fall year on year, however, **domestic violence** continues to be one of the priorities for the county with 46% of victims of domestic violence in the borough being repeat victims.

As well as Sellafield creating jobs, significant sums of public money – some **£1.6 billion** each year is spent at Sellafield. This amount of public money should create opportunities to dramatically transform the economic and social circumstances of Copeland. Getting the best from such public expenditure should include: supporting conditions for business growth; job creation and diversification; and skills development. A challenge for us as a Council is to represent our community's needs and lobby for the best possible outcomes. This would also reflect our role in storing and managing high level nuclear waste on behalf of the nation. For each pound of public money spent at Sellafield, we should aim retain the maximum amount of value for all of our communities.

We are here to represent resident's needs and to look to the future in the decisions we make. In looking forward we believe that we can have a positive impact on our resident's lives by delivering statutory services, working in key strategic partnerships and working with the community. Given the impact of the Government's austerity measures on Local Government funding, we will need to make some tough decisions. We have started this process by agreeing our Mission and Priorities for the term of this plan given our financial settlement from government.

Our Mission:

"An effective Council that works with partners and communities to arrange services for residents in Copeland"

Our Priorities are:

- Deliver efficient and effective statutory services
- Be an effective public service partners so we can get the best deal for Copeland
- Working in partnership with communities

In delivering against our mission and priorities we will make our contribution to the Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out the vision for Copeland as 2020 as:-

- Be a strong, diversified and well-connected economy, with a growing, appropriately skilled population with high employment;
- Protect and enhance its special natural environments and be recognised by all as an area of outstanding natural beauty and vibrant lifestyle, which attracts a diverse population and visitor profile;
- Be home to a strong and healthy community, which offers (all of it's) people a good quality of life and enables them to play a full part in their community and locality.
- Be globally recognised as a leading nuclear, energy, environment and related technology business cluster, building on its nuclear assets and its technology and research strengths.

A Transformed Organisation

Over the last two years we have delivered a significant efficiency savings programme. However, to continue to deliver services within the financial settlement from Government, (which is set to reduce further until 2017), we now need to radically and dramatically change the way in which we organise ourselves. This will bring about change for residents, councillors, staff and our partners.

In order to help navigate this process of change, we have a set of guiding principles for how we operate. We will:

- Focus on the delivery of statutory services that reflect our statutory role and remit.
- Be evidenced-based and needs led.
- Deliver seamless services to create better outcomes for our communities.
- Have defined relationships with credible partners,
- Have clarity about what we do and what others do
- Value local decision-making and encourage community participation.
- Invest in and make the best use of technology in the delivery of services.
- Support our staff through change
- Support councillors to lead this change process in their communities

We will also develop new ways of working. We already have some experience of these but the scale and pace of this change will be much greater than before. We need to do this because we cannot afford to stay as we are. We will:

- Commission more of our services in future and directly deliver less.
- Look for new and different partners to help sustain services in future.
- Investigate the potential advantages of pooled budgets.
- Work with partners, including other local councils, to develop shared services and enhanced two tier working, to help reduce our running costs.

In order to make these changes, we will be delivering a number of exciting and ambitious projects. These projects will require some investment from us and we will prioritise those projects which improve service delivery to customers, reduce our running costs and ensure we are strong and resilient.

Some of these projects include:

- Implementing mobile working technologies for employees and councillors to increase productivity, reduce mileage and reduce our carbon footprint
- Develop our contact centre in order to make our services more accessible, and to be able to resolve more customer queries in the most efficient way
- Launch our new website and smart phone technology so residents can access more services, at a time and place to suit them, more easily
- Fully automate our processes where possible, thus reducing red tape, delays and costs
- Invest in wireless technology and support broadband improvements
- Work with neighbouring authorities to progress on a shared services agenda

What this means

We will be very different by 2015. Our change programme will help all of our stakeholders to understand the changes required and how to prepare for them.

For our residents and customers

- We will provide fewer services in future and the level of service you currently experience may change
- Our services will be easier and quicker to access through our website and the customer contact centre
- Access to our online services with support from our customer services officers
- There will be more opportunities to get involved through the Community Asset Transfer, providing feedback on the services and helping to shape what is needed
- We will continue to help those in need, through the delivery of our statutory services
- We will continue to promote equalities and challenge inequality in our policy decisions and design of our services.
- We will continue to represent community needs with our key strategic partners
- We will remain accountable and transparent
- We will demonstrate value for money

For our staff

- There will be an agile working environment, which will be supported by investment in technology and changes to working practices
- An increase in flexibility of roles and responsibilities
- There will be opportunities to take part in change projects; for all staff this will become part of the day job

- Service plans will identify the key priorities for each service area so that all staff and members have a clear focus
- There will be an increased emphasis on people management and performance improvement through appraisals giving staff clear aims, objectives and development plans
- Continue to develop an open and transparent environment that encourages collaborative working, and the break-down of departmental silos
- Staff will be supported through the change process to enable them to deliver services in new ways

For our councillors

- Ward councillors will play an increasing role in their communities
- There will be a key role for Overview and Scrutiny, to hold others to account and help inform the work of the Executive
- There will be more opportunities for councillors to work together in priority Development Groups
- We will support and train councillors to fulfil and adapt to the changing role of public office
- Councillors will champion democratic vitality and make public office more appealing
- Councillors will take on an increased community leadership role ensuring that local services are joined up and coordinated to make the best use of local resources
- Living and leading the values of the council within communities
- Fostering co-operation between communities and ourselves

For our partners

- We will re-affirm our commitment to our key strategic partners in line with the needs of our communities
- We will be clear with our partners about what we can and cannot offer and what we want from them
- We will ask for different partnerships where we need them
- We will be clear about what we need to achieve on behalf of our communities

Priority 1: Deliver efficient and effective statutory services

We currently deliver a range of statutory services. These are the core services which we have a legal duty to provide and will continue to be our key priority. These are services that you may not think readily about such as protecting public safety, waste collection, food safety, emergency planning, building control and homelessness services.

Our statutory services make a real difference to the quality of life in Copeland including helping residents who are experiencing real difficulties with income and housing.

We will continue to invest in our statutory services, including:

- Providing a 24 hour homeless service and reduce the number of residents living in temporary accommodation
- Collecting your household waste, with the aim of working with you to reduce overall levels of household waste whilst encouraging recycling
- Inspecting food businesses on a regular basis to ensure food business operators are complying with current food safety legislation
- Processing planning applications within the timescales set ensuring that development are taking place are in the public interests and helps to safeguard our environment
- Process benefit applications quickly and accurately

Our statutory services are our priority and we will ensure that they are adequately funded and will prioritise investing in these services further. This will:

- Help meet our legal duties
- Reduce the overall cost of providing these services whilst retaining an acceptable standard of service.
- Ensure the services we provide are as efficient and effective as possible, and will prepare us to share the delivery of these services with other councils in the future.

In order to ensure that we are delivering these statutory services to a good standard for our residents, we will monitor a set of key performance indicators throughout the year. We have revised and aligned our performance indicators to the priorities set out within this plan and overall strategic direction of the Council.

Priority 2: Be an effective public service partner so we can get the best deal for Copeland

We have an extensive network of local partners who make a significant contribution to the borough. However, partnerships are a way in which we use our resources so it's important that these partnerships are effective and that our presence there makes a real difference. Looking forward, we will align our partnerships with our priorities and challenges resulting in fewer, more strategic, partnerships.

Some of the challenges the borough faces do not fall within our statutory duties, but because these issues are important to you, we seek to work in partnership with others to address them.

We will continue to invest in a small number of partnerships to address the key challenges and needs of our residents.

We will also seek to form new partnerships where there is evidence that there is a community need to form a partnership and will lead to better results for Copeland residents.

Our key areas of partnership activity are:

Community Safety

- We are members of The **West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership** and the **Cumbria Police Crime Commissioners group**. We are also involved in the work of **Local Multi-agency Problem Solving (LMAPS)** which work at a local level to understand and address problems effectively within local communities.
- Crime rates are relatively low, however, **domestic violence** continues to be one of the priorities for the county, as 46% of victims of domestic violence in the borough being repeat victims. We support **Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)** as a way of working with victims of domestic violence.

Health

- We know that health services continue to be a key priority in making somewhere a good place to live. We also know that staying healthy is important to quality of life.
- Life expectancy is lower than the national average in Copeland therefore we will work with partners and local commissioning structures in Copeland to reduce health inequalities in the borough and to deliver our priorities in the Copeland Health Profile 2012.

- We are currently represented on the **Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Board** who are responsible for making key decisions about how inequalities in health should be tackled and public money invested.

Housing

- The Copeland Housing Strategy running to 2015 sets out the housing issues faced in Copeland and details the priorities to support our residents and the local housing market. This works in conjunction with the Cumbrian Housing Strategy led by Cumbrian Housing Executive Group of which we are a key partner. Our Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2011 identified an annual shortfall of 168 affordable houses against the current need in the borough.
- We lead the **Copeland Strategic Housing Partnership** and work closely with landlords, local service providers and developers to facilitate the right mix of housing type and affordability, to encourage the best use of existing housing stock and to enable people to access the housing and support they need, when they need it. This includes working in partnership with and influencing the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Homes and Communities Agency in their strategies to support housing affordability and infrastructure.

Economy

- As active members of **Britain's Energy Coast** and the **Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership**, we will advocate and seek to influence strategies, resources and developments aimed at increasing the prosperity of Copeland. We work closely with a range of public, private and community based partners through the **Copeland Work and Skills partnership** aimed at increasing the opportunities for our most disadvantaged residents to increase skill levels and enter the local job market. We know that transport is a key issue for people in gaining access to work. This is reflected in our local plan and we seek to influence and encourage partners to prioritise improvements in Copeland's road and transport network.

Environment

- Copeland has a range of distinctive landscapes which require special attention, from shingle beaches, sand dunes, high cliffs and tidal estuaries along the coastal fringe to the mountains and lakes of the Western Lake District. Some areas are particularly at risk of coastal, fluvial and surface water flooding. We will seek to ensure that new development does not contribute to increased surface water run off.
- Much of Copeland's built heritage is of significant historic interest and the Borough has conservation areas in Whitehaven, Cleator Moor, Egremont, Beckermest, and Millom. The Georgian town centre and harbour area of Whitehaven are considered to be of national significance.

Priority 3: Working in partnership with communities

As we reduce our role in direct service delivery there will be opportunities for other organisations and communities to decide their own priorities and to arrange services.

There are already examples of this throughout Copeland, often involving our town and parish councils. The Localism Act, which came into force in 2011, gave new rights and powers to communities and individuals to work with us to identify suitable and sustainable solutions for their communities.

We understand that communities cannot do it alone, so we will help build capacity within communities to respond to the changes and the opportunities arising to help deliver local services in future.

We will continue to invest in:

- Implementing our Community Asset Transfer, Community Right to Buy and Community Right to Challenge policies.
- Working with communities on neighbourhood planning.
- Providing grant funding to organisations which align with our strategic priorities.
- Continue to host the Copeland Partnership Forum and our commitment to the Sustainable Community Strategy ensuring a coordinated approach to dealing with the impacts in reductions in budgets.
- Continuing to host the Copeland Community Fund which provides funding for local organisations and communities which will look at improving community life in Copeland and is directly for the benefit for Copeland residents.

We have locality partnerships throughout our borough. These partnerships will identify projects to address community priorities and solve local problems with the services they receive. They will look to bring about cross-agency solutions and work with communities in fill gaps in provision or to complement public provision.

Our councillors will be at the centre of community life. We will ensure that they receive training in order to fulfil their changing roles and enabling them to help communities adapt. They will also continue to live and lead the values of the Council within communities.

By providing these policies, grant funding and locality partnerships this will enable communities to take control and have more of a say of what goes on in their local area.

Delivering this plan

In this Corporate Plan we include a number of performance measures. The delivery of this plan is supported by our Transformation Plan – our programme of work to transform the way services are delivered - and our Growth Strategy – our plan detailing what we will do to support the future economic prosperity of Copeland. We will also use other specialist strategies and policies where needed.

This will ensure we focus on the most significant challenges and on the priorities for residents.

In addition to monitoring customer satisfaction, we will report progress against our family of key performance indicators quarterly to the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny as part of our commitment to transparency and accountability. The reports will be made available on our website. Alongside the Corporate Plan, all departments will publish a short service plan for the year ahead and report by exception to Corporate Leadership Team. This is supported by our approach to strategic risk management.

Our family of Key Performance indicators

Performance Indicators
Overall satisfaction with Council Services
Increase the % of transaction carried out on the web site digitally
% of invoices paid on time
% of Council Tax collected
Percentage of Non-domestic Rates Collected
Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events
Processing of planning applications
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
Number of new homes build (Net additional homes provided)
Food establishments in the area which are compliant with food hygiene law
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting
Number of repeat homelessness cases – Unintentional/Priority (All Households)
Preventing Homelessness – number of households where homelessness prevented
Number of advice cases regarding Welfare Reform including CAB
Annual reduction in carbon emissions towards 5 year target of 25% reduction by March 2015