



# **Council Plan 2016-19**



**Securing  
your future**

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## Introduction

We are facing an extremely challenging time in Cumbria. The government continues to impose significant cuts to funding for public services. The impact of these cuts is staggering. At the same time we also face the challenge of helping the county recover after the December 2015 Floods.

In this challenging context, Cumbria County Council remains committed to serving the people of Cumbria by embracing change and transforming the way we operate - to make sure that we still provide high quality services in the most efficient way possible to those who need them most. We still aspire to better outcomes for

the people and places in Cumbria - but we are realistic about the role we can play in this.

We are responsible for many of the key services that are important to local communities such as education (including primary and secondary schools), libraries and youth services, social services, highways maintenance, waste disposal, emergency planning, consumer protection and the Fire and Rescue Service.

We may no longer be able to provide some of the services we have in the past - but as community leaders we will do everything we can to secure a bright future for Cumbria.

Managing the cuts to the council's budget over the last few years has had a major impact and necessitated significant changes in what we do and how we do it. The council in 2015 is already a very different organisation to the council of 2012.

So far, we have made savings by reshaping the council and changing the ways we work. This has included reducing our managers and staff, rationalising our property and changing the way we commission and buy services. With a further £76 million of savings to be made over the next 3 years, continuing changes like this will not be enough.

Our area planning approach plays a significant part in the redesign of services, specific consideration of the characteristics of the local area, how people access and use services - those within sparsely populated rural areas and urban areas of the county. We have a commitment to working with communities and the third sector to take forward this work.

This plan sets out the council's vision and priorities for the next 3 years - explaining the future of council services and the changes we will make. In developing this plan we engaged and consulted with the public and organisations from across the whole county.



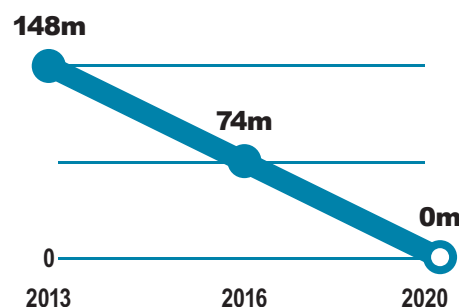


## Our resources

**The council will ensure all its resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible to deliver the priorities set out in the plan over the next 3 years.**

The council's financial resources continue to reduce. Three years ago, the revenue support grant from government contributed £148 million to Cumbria County Council's £797 million annual income (which includes grant funding to schools). Since then that grant has been halved, and will disappear completely by 2020. In 2016/17 the revenue support grant the council will receive from the government is 25.5% less than that received for 2015/16.

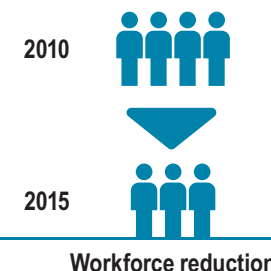
Revenue support grant from government



This represents a significant reduction in the council's income but also a substantial change to the way the council will be funded between now and 2020 which brings added uncertainty. The government set out its spending plans for the next four years as

part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2015. It confirmed that for Local Government by 2020 the link between need (demand) and funding will be broken and replaced by local sources of finance such as Council Tax, Business Rates and Fees and Charges.

CSR also set out the flexibility for those councils who have responsibilities for Adult Social Care (which in Cumbria is the county council), to raise further local revenue from Council Tax, by increasing Council Tax by up to an additional 2% to be spent entirely on adult social care. As the government has already assumed the council will introduce the new social care precept every year by reducing the Revenue Support Grant funding, challenges in respect of the increasing demand for adult social care services in the county remain critical.



The size of the council's workforce will also need to be further reduced over the next 3 years. It has already reduced from 10,000 employees in 2010 (excluding schools) to just under 7000 in 2015 through a programme of vacancy management and voluntary redundancy.

The council will also continue to reduce the number of properties we own as appropriate whilst investing where necessary to ensure that the council has the right properties in the right places.







## Opportunities and challenges

Change brings challenges and it also brings opportunities. In Cumbria we have our own unique set of changing circumstances that the council needs to respond to. Some of the changes we face will not be easy to address - such as how best to meet the needs of our ageing population and supporting communities to recover from the devastating floods of December 2015 - but exciting times also lie ahead with Cumbria set to be at the centre of extensive investment on a range of nationally significant projects which will bring many opportunities to the county.

The scale of the financial challenge means that the council can no longer afford to deliver all the services we used to offer - and those that we will continue to deliver are likely to be provided in a different way - for example building on the work communities already do themselves to provide services and support for local people.

With the advances in technology over the past few years and different expectations from people about how they want to access services, the changes we will be making will mean many people can start to access our services in a way and at times that suits them better - for example renewing library books at any time of the night or day using our online services.

Better use of modern technology by the council - ranging from the use of apps for mobiles to report potholes through to the ability to access advice and help online - will not only provide people and businesses in Cumbria with a better and easier way of accessing council services, but will also allow the council to focus its resources on those who are most vulnerable and need more intensive support from the council.





We have an ageing population and going forward our health and social care services will face an increase in demand and this will lead to pressures on services. Our work with GPs, hospitals and other health professionals is particularly important at the moment given some of the improvements needed within the local health economy.

Because of the increases in demand, our role in leading on public health and wellbeing has perhaps never been more critical. There are real opportunities for the council to work more closely with health and third sector

organisations so that people can receive seamless services that focus on putting in place support early on when it's first needed so that issues are prevented from escalating into crises unnecessarily.

We also know we need to make improvements to Children's Services. The 2015 OFSTED report highlighted some areas where we need to do better - and our challenge is to make the necessary improvements needed as quickly as possible.

It's no secret that our geography presents us with some fantastic assets - the county's natural environment offers visitors great

opportunities and this plays an important role in supporting our local economy - as does agriculture, forestry and "green" industries. Making sure the environment is well managed and protected is important in order to support this aspect of the local economy.

But the rurality of Cumbria can also present challenges in terms of access to services and isolation; the road and rail infrastructure; and the cost of providing services. Addressing the issues of rurality is integral to the council's policy development process right through to the design, commissioning and delivery of services.

**£1.3bn National Grid investment in North West Coast connections.**



The £25.1 billion investment coming into the county over the next decade from investors including National Grid, United Utilities, GSK and in support of the nuclear new build could help tackle some of these challenges - not least the hardship and poverty experienced by many in the county as a result of changes to welfare benefits and low paid work.

The council can play a critical role in making sure the range of opportunities this level of investment will have for Cumbria is maximised and understood as a whole from the perspective of local communities - making sure the benefits are realised across the whole of the county so that some of the inequalities we already face are addressed and to ensure that all young people growing up in the county can take advantage of the opportunities this investment will bring.

Maximising the opportunities for Cumbria is particularly important as communities across the county are supported to recover from the devastation caused by flooding in December 2015 and the county's damaged infrastructure is repaired.

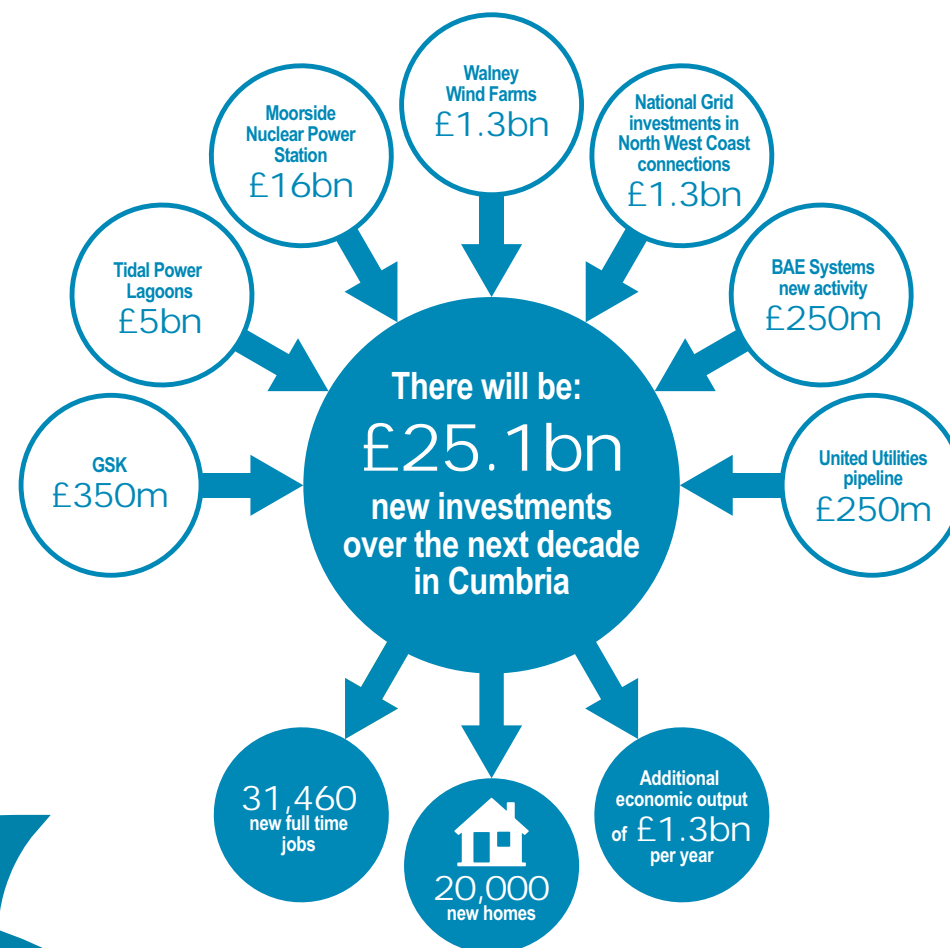
The remarkable resilience and community spirit of communities across the county has again been highlighted in the coverage of these overwhelming events. The council will play a role in helping

to build on the 'Spirit of Cumbria' through asset-based approaches to community development and service delivery.

The resilience of our local communities and the county's infrastructure against extreme weather and other events needs to be a key future focus for the government and all local agencies. The council will work to influence lead agencies such as the Environment Agency and the government, and participate in partnership work where possible, to implement and fund prevention and protection measures. We will also continue to fulfil our Climate Local commitments to reduce carbon emissions and also to improve resilience to the effects of more frequent and severe extreme weather events.

This context is important as it will shape the way the council will need to operate over the next 3 years, as well as what our priorities should be and how our available resources will be spent.

**£250m investment in BAE Systems new activity.**



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## A council for the future: our approach

### Our vision is:

**“To be an effective and efficient organisation that delivers the best possible services for the people of Cumbria within its available resources, protects the vulnerable, and works with others in the community to shape services and help find solutions for the future.”**

Given the context we have outlined, in particular the dramatically reducing budget the Council has to work within, we will need to focus our resources and work in different ways, in order to get the most out of every penny we have and meet our statutory responsibilities. The council will start to look very different over the

next few years as the workforce gets much smaller and digital technology provides other ways to access services.

Our transformation journey will be underpinned by **3 principles for change** that are relevant for the services we provide or commission - as well as applying to the council's own workforce:

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## Securing your future



**In line with these principles, the council of the future will be an organisation that:**

**Prioritises the most vulnerable and those most in need:**

making sure we are there for residents when they need us most - supporting our most vulnerable children and adults.



**Focuses on prevention and early intervention:**

putting in support when it is first needed - primarily because it is the right thing to do, but also to save greater expense later on.

**Encourages independence:**

assisting and empowering people to live healthy, independent lives - drawing on the support already available in their local communities and making sure people are able to access support easily from the council if they need it.

**Listens to communities and involves people in the decisions that affect their lives:**

focusing on working within the communities where people live and work; making sure they can have their say about decisions that affect them - as well as them helping shape the services in their local area and supporting them to grow their resilience.



**Works in partnership:**

with whoever is best placed to do the job, particularly across the public and third sector - making sure we are not working in isolation and maximise the opportunities there are to work together to tackle issues and cut costs.

**Embraces change, using new technology and adopting different ways of working:**

being accessible and responsive to people through our use of technology as well as breaking free from the constraints of history; moving away from outmoded ways of working and thinking; and disposing of buildings that no longer meet our needs.

**Makes every penny we spend count by being as efficient as possible:**

with a workforce that has minimal layers of management and inter-departmental boundaries; staff who are confident and supported to make decisions quickly with support of modern technology; and a tireless focus on making sure we provide value for money and fit for purpose services.

**Invests to save where we can:**

living within our means, but also using every opportunity to invest to enable us to save in the longer term - for example with the buildings and technology we use; the way we maintain our roads; the training and development of staff.

**Doesn't comprise on the public's safety:**

meeting our responsibilities through the delivery of regulatory services, as lead Flood Authority, and as the Fire Authority.

**Is accountable for its actions:**

taking responsibility for the quality of services provided directly or commissioned by us and putting things right when things aren't good enough.

**Influences national policy for the benefit of Cumbria:**

progressing work with the government on the delivery of a Devolution Deal for Cumbria, to maximise benefits for the county.

## Our priorities

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### Children

It's a council priority



To safeguard children and support families and schools so that all children in Cumbria can grow up in a safe environment, and can fulfil their potential.



### We will:

- Continue to improve our services for vulnerable children and families in line with OFSTED's recommendations, by delivering the actions in the Council's Children's Improvement Plan.
- As part of our Improvement Plan, work with partners to improve outcomes for Children Looked After and develop the Council's corporate parenting role.
- Deliver integrated support services for the most vulnerable families in Cumbria, to reduce risks to children, to improve their health and wellbeing, and to prevent problems from escalating.
- Support the work of the Cumbria Alliance of System Leaders to deliver continuous school improvement.
- Work with other organisations through the Children and Young People's Plan to support all young people growing up in Cumbria to take advantage of the unique opportunities in the county that will come as a result of the significant inward investment taking place.



## Our priorities

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### Adults

It's a council priority



To support  
older, disabled  
and vulnerable  
people to live  
independent  
and healthy  
lives.



### We will:

- Work with the NHS and with local people to reduce the need for social care and health care by delivering new prevention and public health services.
- Work with the NHS and integrate the provision of reablement and recovery services and the greater use of technology, to support people to live independently and reduce pressure on hospital services.
- Work with other organisations to accelerate the delivery of Extra Care Housing across Cumbria.
- Work with the NHS at local levels to establish Integrated Care Teams which serve local communities.
- Ensure we meet our safeguarding responsibilities to protect people from abuse and neglect.
- Work with the NHS to modernise the support available in Cumbria for people with Learning Disabilities and people with Mental Health needs.
- Deliver a programme of targeted investment in the modernisation of Cumbria Care Residential provision.



## Our priorities

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### Communities

It's a council priority



To enable communities to help shape their local services, promote health and wellbeing and support those in poverty.



### We will:

- Work with communities and the third sector to enable them to shape, own, or run local services to meet their local needs and promote healthy communities.
- Provide new public health services that empower people to take control of their own health and wellbeing.
- Meet our statutory responsibilities for environment and regulatory services by focusing our work where the risks are greatest.
- Provide an effective Fire and Rescue Service, focusing on vulnerable people and areas of highest risk; and explore with the Police and other partners opportunities for the integration of emergency services.
- Continue to pay the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage to all our employees and encourage other employers to do the same through our procurement processes.



## Our priorities

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### Infrastructure

It's a council priority



To provide  
a safe and well  
managed highways  
network, secure  
infrastructure  
improvements  
and support  
local economic  
growth.



### We will:

- Maintain the highways network to the best possible standard within our available resources.
- Lead flood recovery work to support communities to return to normal as soon as possible through working with government and other agencies to secure the required resources to replace and repair the county's infrastructure where it has been lost or damaged, and promote solutions which will be more resilient in the future where possible.
- Seek additional investment in our highways and transport infrastructure.
- Work with communities and the Third Sector to develop and deliver local transport solutions.
- Support the work of the Cumbria LEP to secure funding, implement initiatives and take action to lead to more, better paid jobs in the county and sustainable growth.
- Commit to socially responsible commissioning and procurement activities and leading by example, invite contracted suppliers, the wider business community, other public sector bodies, and third sector organisations, to make the same commitment.



## Our priorities

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### Efficiency

It's a council priority



To be a  
modern and  
efficient  
council.



### We will:

- Use technology to improve Council services for all our customers and reduce costs through the delivery of our Digital Strategy.
- Support the development of the Council's workforce to ensure it has the right skills, competencies and behaviours to drive the Council's transformation.
- Deliver our Climate Local commitments, work on joint initiatives to deal with waste as efficiently as possible, and promote waste minimisation.
- Regularly review all council services and property to ensure they remain fit for purpose and affordable.





## Key strategies and plans

A small number of key strategies and plans will provide the framework for the transformation the council needs to implement over the coming years, alongside this Council Plan. These include:

- **The Medium Term Financial Plan** - which sets out how we intend to align our priorities with our resources to deliver outcomes for the people of Cumbria for the next three financial years 2016/17-2018/19.
- **The Workforce Plan** - which sets out how we will ensure we have staff with the right skills, competencies and behaviours in the right places whilst also further reducing the council's workforce.
- **The Asset Management Strategy** - which explains the council's approach to rationalising and managing its assets.
- **The Digital Strategy** - which explains how the Council will use digital technology to improve services for customers and achieve significant savings.

There are also a number of thematic strategies and plans which set out specific frameworks for the delivery of the priorities set out above.



## Assessment of equality and rural-proofing

Consideration of the impact on equality has been integral to the development of the priorities set out in the Council Plan. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the Council Plan, and further assessments have been and will be carried out where policy decisions and service changes are being undertaken as part of delivering the priorities set out above.

As part of the council's area planning work and the redesign of services, there is specific consideration of the characteristics of the local area, how people access and use services – those within

sparsely populated rural areas and urban areas of the county.

The council doesn't have the resources to provide all services in the same way in every community in the county, and how services are provided in urban areas often won't work in sparsely populated areas. Within such a diverse county, different communities will have different service needs, strengths and facilities, and therefore solutions and how people access services will be different in different places. The council has a commitment to working with communities and the third sector to take forward this work.





## Reporting on progress

An annual Council Plan Delivery Plan will be produced which will set out detailed activities and milestones or targets which the council will undertake to deliver the priorities set out above. This will be agreed by Cabinet each April. Performance against the Council Plan Delivery Plan will be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.



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