



Cumberland Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024

cumberland.gov.uk

About Cumberland

Cumberland Council was formed in 2023 as a unitary authority combining Allerdale Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Copeland Borough Council, and part of Cumbria County Council. The Cumberland Council area has an approximate population of 274,000.

Buses are the backbone of passenger transport in Cumberland. The Council, bus operators and other stakeholders are committed to building on this solid base to improve and expand services, making them more attractive to more residents and visitors, for more journeys. This will not be straightforward, as the geography in Cumberland makes it difficult and expensive to run frequent services in many areas, and significant investment is needed to pump-prime improvements to give them the time to bed in and become commercially sustainable.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan includes many proposed improvements to services, ticketing, infrastructure, vehicles and information, which together would modernise the bus network, bringing benefits in decarbonisation, access to education, employment and services, highway decongestion, improved public health, and enable increased visitor journeys by sustainable modes. This Plan will support the aspirations set out in Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan (CTIP) for the period 2022 – 2037.

The CTIP sets a vision for improving transport and infrastructure in Cumbria, that provides for the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, as well as respecting our special environment.

Key economic sectors within Cumberland include agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing, with notable industries such as the largest nuclear site in Europe. Despite some areas boasting high household earnings, others face significant deprivation and fuel poverty. The council area includes two World Heritage sites and an area of outstanding natural beauty, drawing millions of visitors annually. Buses have a key role to play in relation to accessing employment, allowing people to visit and move around Cumberland sustainably and tackling deprivation and fuel poverty.

The demographic trends in Cumberland indicate an aging population, with the number of residents over 65 expected to increase significantly by 2040. Median household income is £28,794, which is below the national average, and the median house price is £155,630.



Introduction

Cumberland Councillor Denise Rollo, Executive Member for Sustainable, Resilient and Connected Places:

The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) demonstrates our commitment to enhancing Cumberland's bus network. Recognising that buses are the backbone of passenger transport in our region, the council, in partnership with bus operators and key stakeholders, aims to build on this strong foundation to improve and expand services. Our goal is to make bus travel more appealing for both residents and visitors, thereby increasing accessibility for a wider range of journeys.

The BSIP outlines a comprehensive range of proposed enhancements, including improvements to services, ticketing, infrastructure, vehicles, and information systems. These changes aim to modernise the bus network, delivering numerous benefits such as reduced carbon emissions, improved access to education, employment, and essential services, decreased highway congestion, and enhanced public health. The Plan is aligned with the Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan (CTIP) 2022–2037, which envisions a transportation system that meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors while respecting our region's unique environment.

Cumberland's diverse geography presents challenges in delivering frequent bus services, which can be both difficult and costly particularly in rural areas. The BSIP acknowledges these obstacles and emphasises the need for significant investment to kickstart improvements, ensuring they become commercially viable over time. Key economic sectors in the region, including agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing, notably anchored by the largest nuclear site in Europe, stand to benefit from an enhanced bus network. The Plan aims to support these industries while addressing the needs of areas facing economic deprivation and fuel poverty.

Buses are crucial for connecting people to employment opportunities, supporting sustainable travel, and addressing socio-economic challenges. With a rich landscape that includes two World Heritage sites and an area of outstanding natural beauty, Cumberland attracts millions of visitors annually. By enhancing the bus network, we aim to ensure that both visitors and residents can travel efficiently and sustainably, reinforcing our commitment to economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Community engagement will play a vital role in shaping the future of our bus network. We will actively consult with residents to understand which routes are most needed, helping to make travel more viable and sustainable across Cumberland.

Together, we are driving forward our commitment to a greener, more connected, and vibrant Cumberland.

Overview

In 2021 the former Cumbria County Council, working with partners, delivered the first “Bus Service Improvement Plan” (BSIP) for Cumbria, as required by the Department for Transport’s (DfT) “Buses Back Better” strategy. The National Bus Service Strategy for England sets out the ambition and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through reform of how services are planned, delivered and funded.

The Government earmarked £3 billion through the “Buses Back Better” scheme, towards improving bus services throughout England. The original BSIP document was intended to act as a bidding document to access some of this funding. A large amount of the £3 billion was however diverted to essential revenue support for buses during and after the COVID pandemic, to ensure bus services continued to run after the pandemic. This reduced the funding on offer as part of the BSIP scheme to £1.2 billion.

The original Cumbria BSIP was not successful in being awarded any funding. Only thirty-one of the seventy-nine schemes submitted were successful, many successful Plans were building on already well-established work, highlighted in the original “Buses Back Better” document, or were for major fares and infrastructure schemes, not appropriate for Cumbria.

In 2022 Cumbria County Council approved the Cumbria Transport Plan (CTIP). It sets out the transport vision and priorities for the county over the next 15 years, with the aim that in 2037 Cumbria will be one of the best-connected rural geographies in the UK. Clean growth and decarbonised transport networks will be integral to a growing, inclusive economy where our communities will be able to access opportunities, services, education and leisure facilities. Cumbria will be a destination of choice; where people choose to live, visit and work.

The development and delivery of accessible, sustainable and connected transport networks is necessary to support communities and economic growth. This needs all modes of transport to be effectively integrated with each other and with land uses, in a manner that respects our world class environment.

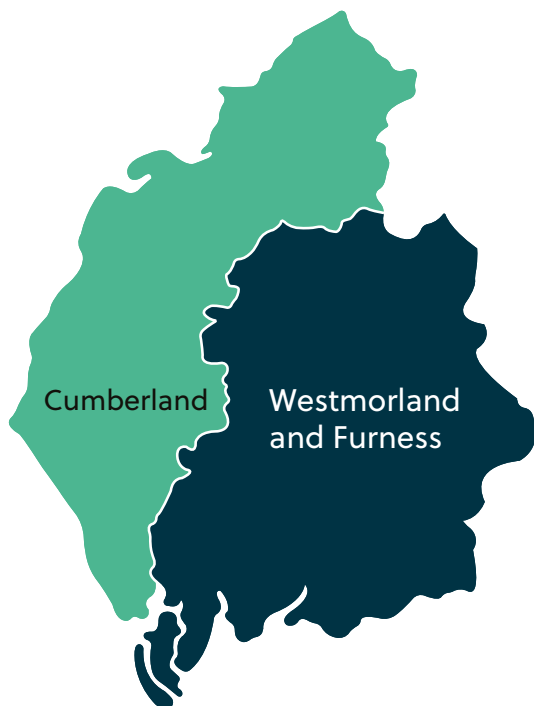
The road network in the Lake District struggles with congestion at peak times, delaying local traffic and deliveries, whilst parking detracts from the spectacular scenery of the area. Enhancements for active travel will be part of the solution, but an extensive, cost effective, frequent network of bus services, operated with top quality modern vehicles, will be essential in encouraging a shift from the private car.

As the economy of the County recovers from the COVID pandemic, and expands to embrace new opportunities, improved public transport to make it a viable alternative to the private car, will be essential to both tackle climate change concerns and keep essential traffic moving, to make Cumberland an attractive place to work and live.

Local Government Reform

In April 2023 Cumbria County Council and six District level Authorities, were combined to form two Unitary Authorities, with the former Allerdale, Copeland and Carlisle areas forming one Authority (Cumberland), and Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland forming a second (Westmorland and Furness).

This BSIP will cover the Cumberland Council Area, but Cumbria is still being covered by a single Enhanced Partnership comprising of Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council and the county's bus operators.



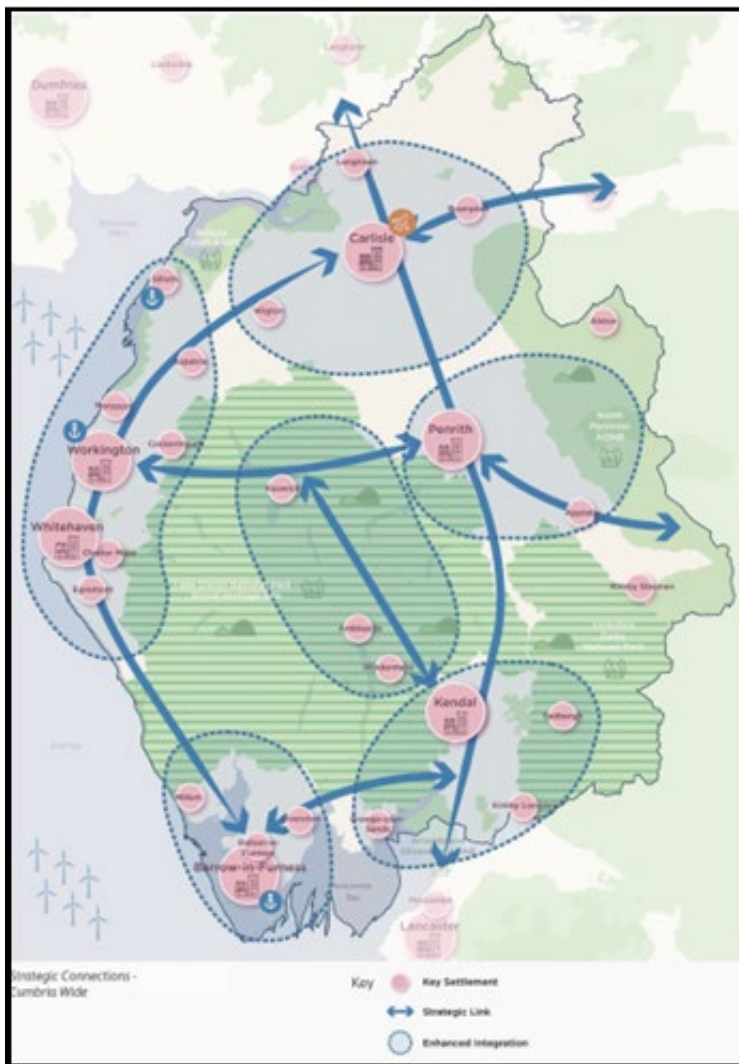
The Cumberland Council Plan's vision is that:

"a fresh approach is taken to the delivery of inclusive services that are shaped by Cumberland's residents and communities. By enabling positive outcomes for health and wellbeing, prosperity, and the environment the potential of Cumberland's people and area can be fulfilled".

It is considered that having a fit for purpose public transport network is essential in order to help the Council deliver its vision in the Council Plan. There are a number of key issues facing the bus network in Cumberland, namely;

- Many of the strategic bus links set out already have strong public transport connections either by bus or rail, but there are weak links especially before and after the normal core operating day.
- There is a lack of inter-ticketing between bus and rail, making travel for areas not on the rail network appear complex, even when good bus services are available.
- Whilst the core network is reasonably well covered, providing bus services in less populated areas will be challenging, and demand responsive transport will be explored.
- Cumberland currently has no Zero Emission buses but will explore all funding opportunities to help facilitate the delivery of Zero Emission buses.

CTIP diagram showing strategic links in Cumbria



In August 2023 Cumberland Council was awarded a grant of £464,743 from DfT as part of a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) plus programme. The grant is over a two-year period (with each tranche to be spent within 12 months) to target the actions that the Council and local operators believe will deliver the best overall outcomes, in growing long term patronage, revenues and maintaining service levels, whilst maintaining essential social and economic connectivity for local communities.

In addition, the grant may be used to ensure existing connections are maintained, increase the frequency on key corridors, increase the operating hours of some services, whilst reducing others, to reduce fares, or to introduce new local concessions to open up new markets and revenue.

On the 23rd October 2024 the Government also allocated £150 million (previously earmarked for HS2) towards enhancing bus services in the North (and Midlands). Cumberland Council will receive £1.54 million, which is in addition to the £464,743 received as part of the BSIP Plus programme from DfT.

Current Offer to Passengers

Prior to local bus service deregulation in 1986, Cumbria County Council was awarded a grant of £2.5 million (£7 million at 2024 costs) for local bus service support. By 1998 that had fallen to £180,000 (36p per head of population, the lowest in England). The introduction of the Rural Bus Subsidy Grant of almost £1 million (tenth largest in England) saw a re-introduction of lost bus services.

However, when the grant ended and with other pressures on Council budgets, after public consultation Cumbria County Council took the decision to remove the whole £1.5million budget for local bus service support. For the last ten years, with the exception of a few locally funded routes, bus services in the County have only run if they are commercially viable.

Apart from some reductions in frequency, the commercial network in Cumberland has largely been maintained for the last twenty years, and in the tourist area of the Lake District there has been an expansion of services, with better frequencies; longer operating seasons, plus earlier and later buses. This however contrasts with the limited service provided in most rural areas outside the main tourist region, including to a number of larger settlements, which due to the great distances to main population hubs, often through areas of very sparse population, normally have no daily service or public transport links for work journeys.

There are a number of thriving Community Bus operators, who have stepped in where the commercial market has been unable to deliver a service for the area. An important consideration for the Council in relation to the BSIP Plus funding is how to maintain the good work these groups have done, whilst also meeting the aspirations of many local people for a return of the higher service levels of the past with frequent (at least) six day a week services, including journeys for work.

Cumberland Council is keen to investigate ways of restoring loss of connectivity and tackling climate change with a shift away from the reliance on private motoring. The BSIP Plus funding has given the Council the opportunity to start to turn these aspirations into reality, but the short term nature of the funding remains a concern.



Current Provision

- Over 95% of the market within Cumberland is provided by a single operator (Stagecoach), this offers significant benefits in terms of ticket inter-availability, comprehensive publicity, but has drawbacks of following strategies set nationally.
- Most areas of Carlisle have seven day a week services, and services running from early morning until late evening.
- There are Sunday services within Workington, but other towns have either a limited or no commercially provided Sunday service.
- Outside Carlisle most local services finish at around 6.00pm
- There are generally good networks along main roads between towns, operating at least hourly in the daytime, with a limited evening and Sunday service.
- Services within the Central Lake District are good with high frequencies seven days a week throughout the year, with enhanced frequencies in Summer (Easter to late October)
- Daytime service frequency and coverage within the Central Lake District (Windermere, Ambleside, Coniston, Grasmere, Keswick) has increased significantly within the last 20 years, often commercially but sometimes with initial Council and Lake District National Park Authority support to prove the viability of enhancements.
- Outside the Lake District, since the withdrawal of Cumbria County Council support in 2014, frequencies are limited in most rural areas that aren't on routes between main towns, and many areas, due to the sparse population, have no service.
- Cumberland Council supports a Voluntary Social Car Scheme and demand responsive Rural Wheels Scheme to fill gaps in these areas. There are a number of section 22 permit "Community Bus operations".
- The bus fleet is slowly and aging, but has previously benefited from renewal, with new vehicles in Carlisle and "Gold" standard vehicles on the 300 service (Carlisle - Workington) and the renewal of buses on the 555 service (Keswick - Lancaster).
- During the summer of 2024 Stagecoach are introducing 6 brand new vehicles to serve Whitehaven, this should help to improve service provision.
- Individual fares are often seen to be high, but value season tickets are available for regular travellers in most areas. Higher fares are often necessary in the Lake District to support an all year round service, whilst after the withdrawal of Council financial support, many rural services rely heavily on pass holders of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS - known locally as NoWCard), the free scheme for older and disabled people, to fund their survival.
- Bus stops in most areas are marked and a high proportion of marked stops have timetable posters at the stop.
- There is currently no real-time information provided at bus stations/stops. Stagecoach provide live running information through their app, and travel news updates through the "X" Cumbria and North Lancashire account.

- Bus shelters in the Cumberland area are generally owned and maintained by parish councils. Carlisle benefits from the provision of a number of shelters by an advertising company. Cumberland Council has continued the former County Council scheme of offering grants towards provision or maintenance of shelters.
- Following the COVID pandemic concessionary passholders (ENCTS), who were vital for the viability of many rural routes, have been much slower to return to the bus than adults and young people.
- Whilst there are currently no real-time displays at bus stops, a large number have bus timetable displays which are stop specific, to key destinations, for simplicity for potential passengers, and designed in a large print.

There are currently no electric (or alternative fuel) vehicles operating within Cumberland. The high costs of introduction and low profit margins make it difficult to deliver this important change. The large number of long routes and topography in the area also make them less suitable for a switch to electric buses. Cumberland Council prepared bids for "ZEBRA" funding from the Government in 2023, but the Cumberland submission for routes within Carlisle failed to meet the criteria needed, for the operator to support a bid to the Government.

The £2 fare scheme has been a major incentive to travel in many areas throughout Cumberland where long travel distances and limited population have led to high fares. The scheme however, does not offer any incentive to the regular traveller in towns where fares and weekly season tickets were already at this level.

Like many areas of the Country the area has been affected by unreliability, due to staff sickness and shortages, meaning services are dropped at short notice, whilst delays in vehicle replacement and shortage of parts have also meant services being dropped due to vehicles shortages. Both are affecting passenger confidence and the ability to attract extra passengers onto the network.

It is recognised that the interchange facilities in major towns are poor compared with those in similar sized towns in other areas, and offer a poor first view of the towns for visitors, and therefore will not encourage greater use of public transport.

Current Passenger Survey

A passenger survey took place at three locations (Carlisle, Keswick, and Whitehaven) across Cumberland.

819 participants took part in the survey. Overall, 58% of passengers stated that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. This represents a decline in the satisfaction rating by the public; the 2021 Cumbria wide Passenger Survey noted that passengers had an overall satisfaction rating of 73%.

In the 2023 survey, visitors had given a higher satisfaction rating (82%) than locals at (48%).

The location with the highest satisfaction rating was Keswick with 79%. The location with the lowest satisfaction rating was Whitehaven with 17%.

Male and female passengers were equally satisfied at 65%. However, female passengers were, at 36%, more likely to be dissatisfied than Males at 29%.

ENCTS passengers were slightly more satisfied (48%) than Non-ENCTS passengers (47%).

The age group with the highest satisfaction rating was the 55-64 age group with 50%.

The lowest satisfaction rating came from the 65+ age group (42%).

Improvement Programme for 2024/25

Cumberland

In relation to the first phase of BSIP Plus funding, officers undertook initial discussions with operators to develop a list of potential outcomes, with suggestions being shared with elected members through the Council's Community Panels to seek views and further suggestions.

Following the engagement with Community Panels the Council is now going through a tender process and it is expected that the services will be in place by mid to late Summer.

The focus for the funding will be to pump prime services that will then have a reasonable chance of being commercially viable without subsidy, this will include:-

- Re-introduction of withdrawn routes from Frizington to Cockermouth and Workington; Silloth to Maryport; Millom to Haverigg and from Rockcliffe and Blackwell to Carlisle.
- Expansion of services between Carlisle and Workington, and on Sundays between Maryport and Whitehaven.
- To restore frequent services from Wetheral and Dalston to Carlisle.
- Introduction of later evening and Sunday services on routes from Silloth and Cockermouth to Carlisle.
- Better links to the West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven and the Lillyhall trading estate between Workington and Whitehaven.

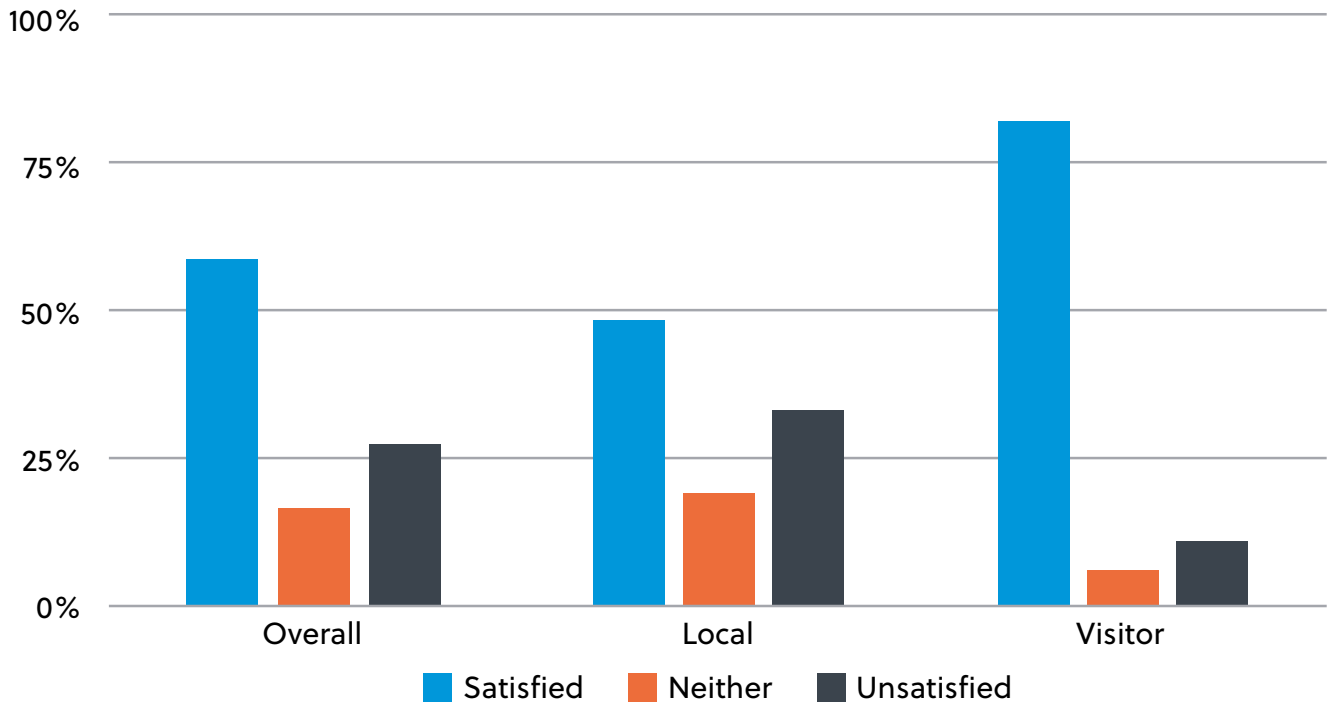
As part of the second phase of BSIP Plus funding it is the Council's intention to explore how it can provide 'sustainable bus services' in rural areas, which may include further exploration of 'on demand' transport. This will include a review of the Council's own fleet and the exploration of service integration.

The Council has developed a Communication Plan for the BSIP Plus funding and is undertaking the following activities over the summer period:

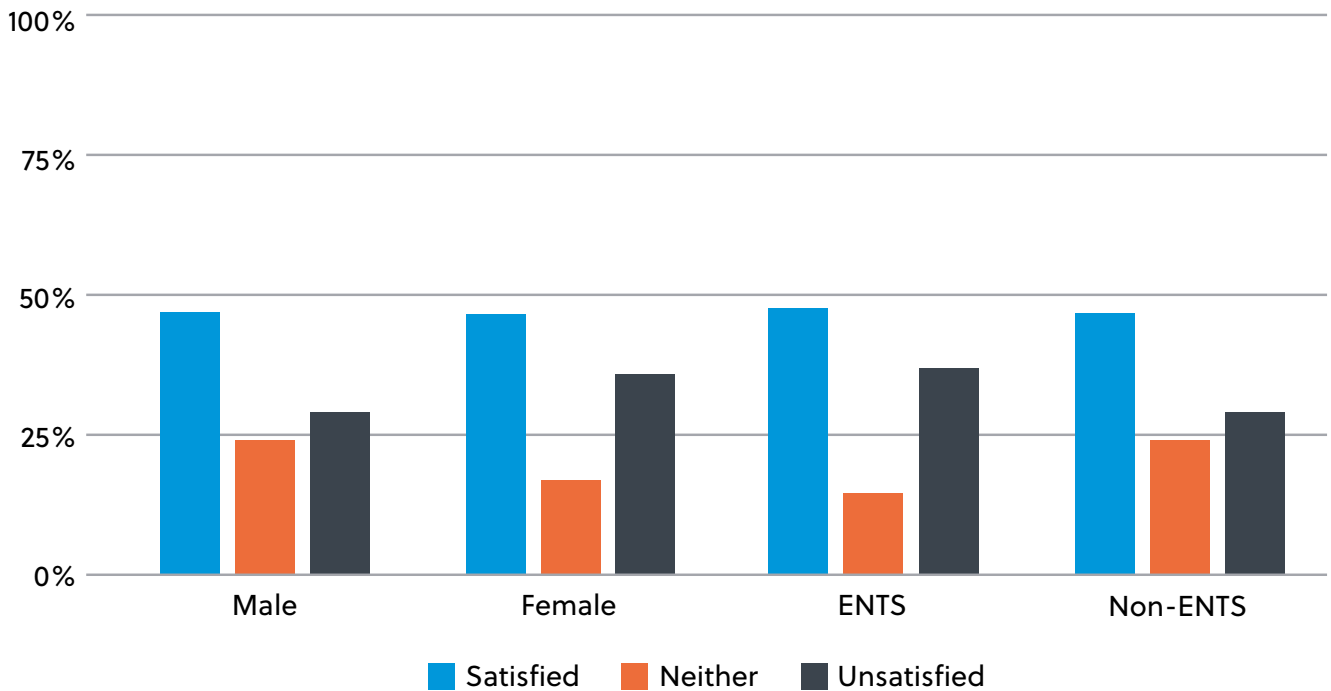
- Continued engagement with Community Panels
- Drop in events
- Online survey / social media
- Continued engagement with stakeholders and operators

The Council is committed to beginning the delivery of the On Demand Transport Rural Mobility Fund pilot in Wigton and Egremont / St Bees.

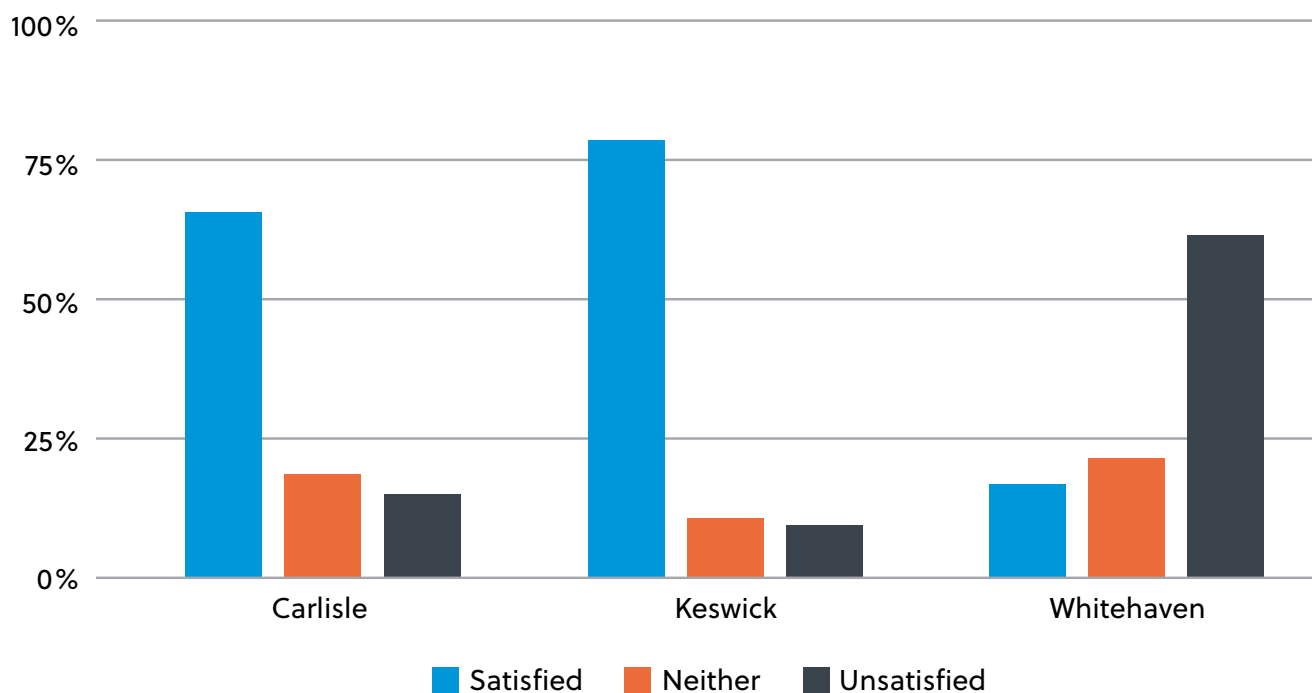
Overall passenger satisfaction



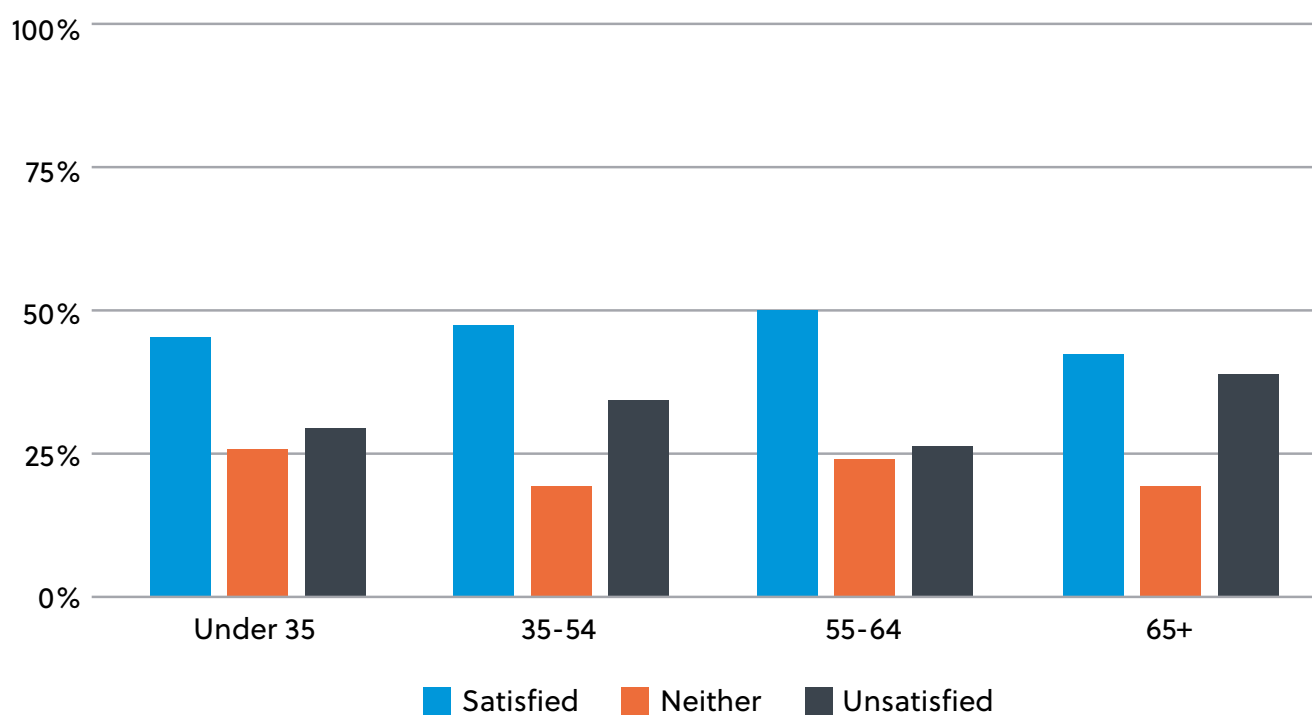
Overall satisfaction by demographic



Passenger satisfaction by urban sample



Passenger satisfaction by age



Ambitions and Proposals

2025-2030 and Beyond

Better bus services will see fewer cars on the road, less congestion, quicker journey times, and will mean more journeys can be run with the same number of vehicles, making the bus a more attractive option. It will also benefit those who are unable to use the bus, as they will be able to get to their destination faster. This is particularly an issue in the Lake District, where the visitors which bring much needed revenue and employment to the area, also cause congestion for those residents going about their jobs, when visitors, especially those visiting just for the day use their cars.

To further support increased bus usage there will need to be measures to discourage car use, such as tougher parking restrictions and charges, plus giving the bus priority at the expense of delays for the motorist.

This has to be done in a cost-effective way. Routes in Cumberland are not highly profitable, so there will need to be a large initial Council investment to kick start the improvements. There will also need to be an acceptance that the bus will not always be the right solution for many rural areas. Investment instead in Demand Responsive Transport solutions, and possibly Park and Ride on the edge of town centres, with frequent bus services offering a link to traffic restricted central areas, may be required.

The Council will look to:

- Reduce the age profile of the bus fleet to offer more attractive service to passengers
- Move to an electric bus fleet
- Improve bus station facilities in Carlisle and Workington
- Improve waiting facilities at Keswick; Whitehaven; Wigton
- Provide more information on next services and any delays or disruption, at key locations

In relation to services the Council will look to:

- On main routes in Carlisle, provide services:
 - 05:00 to 23:00 Monday to Saturday
 - 09:00 to 20:00 on Sundays
 - At least every 10 minutes in the daytime on Monday to Saturday
 - At least every 30 minutes early morning / late evening / Sundays
- Whitehaven / Workington / other routes in Carlisle, provide services:
 - 07:00 to 22:00 Monday to Saturday
 - 09:00 to 18:00 on Sundays
 - At least every 20 minutes in the daytime on Monday to Saturday

- o At least every 30 minutes early morning / evenings Monday to Saturday
- o At least every hour on Sundays
- Main routes between larger towns, provide services:
 - o At least every 30 minutes daytime Monday to Saturday
 - o With first arrival no later than 08:00 and last return no earlier than 18:00
 - o Evening services with last arrival no earlier than 23:00
 - o At least hourly 09:00 to 19:00 Sundays
 - o Faster journey times with a mix of direct Express services and slower services serving more villages
- Rural Areas off main roads, provide services:
 - o Mix of Monday to Saturday, daytime Demand Responsive, and weekly bus services, as appropriate for demand.

St Cuthberts Garden Village

St Cuthbert's Garden Village which will seek to deliver 10,000 new homes along with employment and retail opportunities is an opportunity for the Council to be ambitious in relation to delivering modal shift. As part of the St Cuthbert's Garden Village proposals a new dedicated busway is being explored. A new, dedicated service can provide the capacity for the concentrated flows (Durdar- City Centre) where a bus service is most likely to be efficient for potential passengers, without impacting on capacity on existing bus routes. A dedicated busway will allow for services to be increased as the SCGV is built out, with potential for services running every few minutes. A dedicated busway will enable bus services to run quickly and reliably between Durdar, the main development site and the city centre, with journey times of around 10 minutes, low enough to be attractive and competitive with the private car.

Targets

As part of the Cumbria County Council Bus Service Improvement Plan potential initiatives, interventions and schemes were identified. Cumberland Council has updated the targets based on the Council Plan and the Council's approach in relation to the BSIP Plus funding.

Delivery of any of these options will be subject to the availability of sufficient external funding, the relevant community engagement and consultation being undertaken, and the appropriate consents obtained via the relevant regulatory authorities.

A summary of the key areas for improvement is stated below.

- **Access to employment for visitor/hospitality industry within the Lake District.**

Many employers within the hospitality and tourism sectors have struggled to recruit sufficient staff to deliver their services. This has been exacerbated by the United Kingdom leaving the European Union and the COVID-19 pandemic with many workers returning to their home countries. This proposal will deliver a transport solution to enable workers to travel from areas of Cumbria with higher rates of unemployment to locations within the Lake District National Park.

- **Access to employment / learning in rural areas.**

Public transport can provide crucial links between rural areas and essential services like healthcare, education, and employment. The absence of commercially viable routes often results in unmet local transport needs. The Council will explore expanding Community Transport initiatives as they provide reliable transportation and enhanced accessibility, leading to improved healthcare, education, and employment outcomes. Community transport can offer flexible solutions, addressing unmet local transport needs and directly tackling community challenges.

- **Improve awareness of what is already available.**

This intervention will publicise the existing passenger transport offer in Cumbria via a combination of marketing campaigns, digital information and paper-based timetable booklets, working in partnership with bus operators, key employers and community groups.

- **Major infrastructure improvements.**

A busway will be considered to serve a new development comprising up to 10,000 dwellings, forming St Cuthberts Garden Village, which is integral to the sustainable growth of the city of Carlisle. Such a large growth in potential traffic will put strains on an already at capacity road network, and will lead to delays on existing bus services. A busway will offer fast attractive alternative transport from the development to the City Centre. As part of any future capital funding that is available the Council will also consider bus station upgrades.

- **Better parking restrictions and enforcement**

This proposal will deliver improved on-street parking controls in; Carlisle; Borrowdale/ Newlands Valley, areas susceptible to parking issues which delay bus services. This will be achieved by a variety of traditional interventions by Civil Enforcement Officers and the introduction of camera technology where traditional enforcement has not been effective.

- **Better accessibility for rural areas.**

Many rural areas in Cumberland have little or no public transport. Building on the Rural Mobility Fund pilot, this measure will expand the digital demand responsive transport offer in other localities where a need has been identified.

- **New bus/rail ticketing to make sustainable travel more attractive to visitors.**

Initial conversations with bus and train operating companies indicates an appetite to introduce multi-modal tickets. This will enhance the ability for passengers to travel in Cumberland using a single, transferrable ticket, which could also be marketed for local events and attractions, making reaching Cumberland by sustainable means more attractive.

- **Better ticketing for young people; workers; families/groups.**

This proposal will increase the range of ticket offers available for regular travellers including those attending education courses and the local workforce. If delivered and successful, this initiative should achieve reduced private car use and improve access to education and employment where travel costs are currently prohibitive.

- **Funding for modernisation of fleet to zero emissions.**

Cumbria County Council previously applied for funding to deliver zero-emission buses via the Government's All-Electric Bus Town Fund. This proposal will entail engagement with operators to support any aspirations to acquire a fleet of zero-emission vehicles and the installation of the associated charging infrastructure. Cumberland Council will continue to explore all funding opportunities to support the delivery of zero-emission buses.



Delivery

Funding values have not been included at this stage, as schemes will be designed around funding that becomes available, and can be as ambitious or as limited as funding and the schemes allow.

Cumberland wide

Problem - Difficulty in access to jobs within Central Lake District leading to staff shortages

Details

Vacancies in Lake District hospitality industry are difficult to fill due to limited availability of staff in the area and the high costs of accommodation.

Staff are available in other areas, but limited transport is a barrier.

How

Work with Department of Work & Pensions teams, to try to identify where extra transport is needed and how this can be delivered.

Provided new bus services at a fare low enough to make attractive but which will generate sufficient revenue to make the service viable.

Problem - Improved Bus/ Rail ticketing

Details

The large visitor attraction of the Lake District puts extreme pressure on a road network, which has limited space to expand. Congestion impacts on the local population and will make the area less attractive to visit.

There are good bus links from many parts of the County into main line stations.

How

Offer a combined bus and rail ticket – with 4 (for weekend visitors) and 7 day bus ticket options.

Problem - Expansion of Rural Mobility Project

Details

Many areas of the County have no bus services and experience shows demand is too low to make one viable, and what has previously been offered is too inflexible to be attractive.

How

Build on knowledge learnt from current pilot schemes to expand into other suitable areas, whilst taking into account existing bus operations.

Problem - Encourage more young people to use buses

Details

Adult fares are charged from the age of 16, but young people are still on no or low incomes, and also about to qualify to learn to drive.

How

Extend child (or a reduced) fares to 21 and explore the expansion of a more nuanced £2 fare cap.

Problem - Introduction of Zero Emission buses

Details

There are currently no zero emission vehicles in Cumberland and some of the typography in rural areas do not suit electric powered vehicles, whilst marginal viability of network.

How

Work with operators to identify the right zero emission vehicles for the County and the best places to implement them.

Work with operators to obtain grants to fund the purchase of vehicles and associated infrastructure required.

Problem - Improved quality of vehicles

Details

The bus needs to compete with car to attract people to use them.

How

Invest in better quality seating; onboard wi-fi and charging points, and onboard stop announcements.

Problem - Poor use of school transport vehicles for use

Details

Increases in costs to meet PSVAR legislation and Bus Open Data Service requirements mean using school transport vehicles between school services to offer local bus services is difficult, with operators of high floor coaches providing the best price.

How

Explore offering incentives for operators to use vehicles suitable for local bus services on school services.

Problem - Poor awareness of what is already available

Details

Discounted fares, services, and information, are often available but details are poorly communicated, especially to non or infrequent users.

How

Find ways of simplifying messages and better communicating information to make bus use more attractive.

West and South Cumberland

The area has good frequency of service on the main roads between towns and also within the towns themselves, but there is only very limited service to any settlements which lie off these main links.

Rural areas within 15 miles of the Wigton area will benefit in 2024 from the new Rural Mobility service, offering improved links to the town and also onward connections to Carlisle and West Cumbria.

There are six buses an hour from Whitehaven to Workington and half hourly services from Whitehaven to Frizington and Egremont, plus town services in Whitehaven. But away from these routes there are limited or no services for large sections of the region.

Rural areas within 10 miles of Egremont and St Bees will benefit in 2024 from the new Rural Mobility service, offering improved links to onward connections to Whitehaven and Workington.

Problem - Poor Connections a Penrith rail Station with buses to Keswick

Details

Penrith is a major gateway station for the Northern Lake District, and potentially for West Cumbria, but the bus service currently only runs every hour, whilst the erratic nature of the timetable and incorporating connections North and South and to/from Keswick make it difficult to design a timetable, leaving potentially long waits at Penrith.

How

Fund a second hourly bus to make the service half hourly, to make public transport a more attractive option for visitors and local people.

Problem - Lack of Evening Buses

Details

Whilst many areas have frequent services in the daytime, they end at around 6pm, which limits visitor travel, meaning those who wish to stay later have to take a car - this also impacts the hospitality industry.

How

Trial later services on Lakes routes in Summer.

Problem - No Late buses from Penrith to Keswick

Details

When encouraging the visitor market, the last bus from Penrith to Keswick is at 20:15, but there are three trains from Birmingham or London or four from Manchester after this time.

How

Trial a later service on Fridays in Summer, to meet trains from the South.

Problem - Limited facilities at Keswick Bus Station

Details

Keswick is a major interchange point for visitors but waiting facilities are very limited and information provision basic.

How

Work with the site owner to offer better shelter facilities, and also look to introduce real-time information screens to offer information on journey options.

Problem - Limited Service to Lillyhall trading estate

Details

There are a number of large employers (including Cumberland Council) and education facilities at Lillyhall, but the peak buses only run every half hour.

How

Increase the peak frequency of the route from Workington and Whitehaven to every 15 minutes.

Problem - No direct service from Cleator Moor to West Cumberland Hospital

Details

Patients, visitors and staff travelling from the Cleator Moor area either have a long walk from stops in Hensingham, or need to travel into Whitehaven and back on another bus.

How

Re-route the service from Cleator Moor to Whitehaven to run via the Hospital (and pick up at the same stops as the current service).

Provide an alternative service for areas of Hensingham no longer served due to the diversion.

Problem - Low frequency of service to West Cumberland Hospital

Details

Hospitals in Carlisle and Barrow have frequent links but buses to the West Cumberland Hospital are only every 30 minutes.

How

Increase the frequency of the route to every 15 minutes by diverting service from Cleator Moor to additionally serve the hospital.

Problem - Low frequency to Mirehouse Estate in Whitehaven

Details

Whilst the Mirehouse Estate has four buses an hour they depart from Whitehaven town centre just 3 minutes apart, and Mirehouse 4 minutes apart, so only offer a half hourly service.

Due to the way the network is operated in the town, it is difficult to solve this.

How

Look for ways of making different links to allow a co-ordinated 15 minute service.

North Cumberland

Most areas of the city have or are within reasonable walking distance of frequent services, often with very early morning, late night and Sunday services.

There is a good network of services on the key routes into the city, but in rural areas services are limited. Wetheral and Dalston saw their service substantially reduced in early 2022.

Problem - Access from new Garden Village site South of Carlisle to City Centre

Details

St Cuthbert's Garden Village, Carlisle is an ambitious proposal that could include the development of 10,000 new homes, new employment opportunities, community facilities and a new Southern Link Road. Such a large growth in potential traffic will put strains on an already at capacity road network, and will lead to delays on existing bus services.

How

Provide a dedicated "busway" from site to centre of City. A busway will offer fast attractive alternative transport from the development to the City Centre. As part of any future capital funding that is available the Council will also consider bus station upgrades.

Problem - Poor access to Hadrian's Wall

Details

Until 2014 there was a regular service from Carlisle to sites on Hadrian's Wall but today there is none.

How

Fund a link in Summer from Carlisle or Brampton to link with the current AD122 service at Walltown – to also offer access from Northumberland to Birdoswald, Banks, and Lanercost.

Also links to Bowness on Solway for Hadrian's Wall Trail.