



Cumberland Local Plan

Scoping Consultation
September 2026

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Introduction

Why are we carrying out a Scoping Consultation?

Cumberland Council is getting ready to prepare the Cumberland Local Plan, after giving Notice to begin Plan-Making on 30th June 2026.

This Scoping Consultation is the first stage in preparing the new Cumberland Local Plan under the Government's reformed plan-making system.

It provides an opportunity for early engagement with residents, businesses, landowners, infrastructure providers, community groups and other stakeholders to help shape the future direction of the Plan.

At this stage, we are not consulting on specific development sites or policy proposals. Instead, we want to understand whether we have identified the right priorities and issues for the Local Plan to focus on, and how we can best engage with communities and stakeholders throughout the plan-making process.

The Scoping Consultation provides an opportunity to tell us:

- Whether we have identified the right priorities for the Local Plan and if there are any additional issues and opportunities that should be considered.
- How you would like to be involved in future stages of engagement and consultation.

The feedback received will help inform the scope, evidence base and overall approach to preparing the Cumberland Local Plan. Following the consultation, a summary of responses and how they have been considered will be published.

This scoping consultation will be open from **14th September to 23rd October 2026**.

What is the Cumberland Local Plan?

The Cumberland Local Plan will guide how the area develops over the next 10 to 15 years. It will set out a positive Vision and spatial strategy for future development of the administrative area of Cumberland Council, excluding the area within the Lake District National Park, as per the below map.

The Plan will identify priorities and objectives for the area and include planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications. It will also identify land allocations and broad locations for future growth. The Local Plan sits alongside national planning policy and neighbourhood plans, providing the framework for managing development and shaping places across Cumberland.

A key part of preparing the Plan will be developing a Vision for Cumberland. The Vision will set out what we want Cumberland to become over the plan period and beyond, helping to guide future growth and investment while reflecting the aspirations of local communities.



What is Cumberland Local Plan's relationship with St Cuthbert's Garden Village?

The Cumberland Local Plan area includes St Cuthbert's Garden Village, a proposed new community of around 10,000 homes to the south of Carlisle. Detailed planning for the Garden Village is being progressed through the separate St Cuthbert's Garden Village Local Plan, which will provide the planning framework for development within the Garden Village area.

The Cumberland Local Plan and the St Cuthbert's Garden Village Local Plan will work alongside one another to help meet Cumberland's future housing, employment and infrastructure needs. The Cumberland Local Plan will provide the wider planning framework for the remainder of the Cumberland area.

What work has been done so far?

We have already begun gathering information and engaging with communities and stakeholders to inform the preparation of the Cumberland Local Plan.

Issues and Options Consultation - An Issues and Options Consultation was undertaken between 1 September 2025 and 31 October 2025. During this consultation, residents, businesses and stakeholders were invited to comment on a range of planning issues affecting Cumberland and to suggest potential ways of addressing them.

Call for Sites - We have also undertaken a Call for Sites, inviting landowners, developers, businesses and other interested parties to submit sites that may be suitable for future development, protection or other land uses. As part of this Scoping Consultation, the Call for Sites has been re-opened.

Local Plan Timetable - A Timetable has been prepared which sets out the key stages and timescales for preparing the Cumberland Local Plan.

For more information on the above, please visit our local plan webpage:

www.cumberland.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/cumberland-local-plan

What are we consulting on?

The Cumberland Local Plan will need to address a wide range of issues affecting the future of the area. Responses received during the previous Issues and Options Consultation, September 2025, highlighted a number of challenges and opportunities across Cumberland. These themes will help inform the scope and content of the new Local Plan.

As this is the beginning of the plan-making process, we are seeking your views on the key priorities and issues that the Local Plan should address. There will be further opportunities to comment as the Plan develops and more detailed proposals emerge.

At this stage we would like your views on the following questions:

Question 1: Are there any key priorities, challenges or opportunities, beyond those identified in this document, that should be considered in preparing the Cumberland Local Plan?

Question 2: Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to engagement to be used throughout the preparation of the Cumberland Local Plan?

Have your say

We would like to hear your views on the priorities that should shape the Cumberland Local Plan and how we can best engage with residents, businesses and stakeholders as the Plan progresses.

You can respond by:

- Completing our online consultation at <https://consult.cumberland.gov.uk/scoping-consultation-for-the-cumberland-local-plan>
- Emailing planningpolicy@cumberland.gov.uk
- Writing to Planning Policy Team, Civic Centre, Rickergate, Carlisle, CA3 8QG

If you would like to be kept informed about future stages of the Local Plan, you can register for updates through our website or contact us using the details above.

The consultation closes on 23 October 2026.

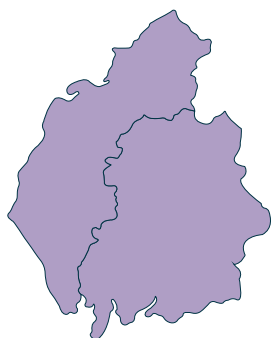
Key Priorities

Previous engagement has helped identify a number of key priorities that reflect the challenges and opportunities facing Cumberland. We would like to know whether these themes reflect the issues that matter most to you and whether there are any additional priorities, challenges or opportunities that should be considered as the Local Plan progresses.

Shaping Cumberland



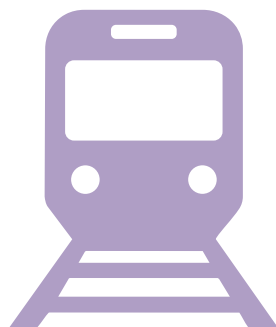
The Cumberland Local Plan will guide how the area grows. Growth is essential for driving change to fulfil the potential of our area. It is important that areas for growth are in the correct location to benefit communities.



Dispersed Geography

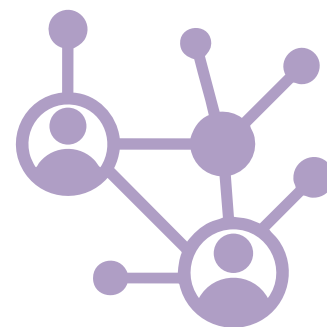
265,000+ residents spread across 1,200+ km².

Cumberland is one of England's largest and most dispersed local plan areas.



Connected Carlisle

Carlisle sits at the crossroads of the West Coast Main Line, M6 and A69, providing nationally important connections for residents, businesses and investment.



A Network of Towns and Villages

More than two thirds of residents live outside Carlisle.

Growth needs to support both the area's main towns and its extensive network of coastal towns, market towns, villages and rural communities.

Identified Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Distribution of growth and development across Cumberland.
- The right amount of growth for different places.
- The role of settlements based on their size and facilities.
- Integrating St Cuthbert's Garden Village into Cumberland's wider growth strategy.
- Settlement boundaries and the extent of built-up areas.
- Making the best use of available land.
- Meeting housing, employment and community needs.
- Understanding environmental and physical land constraints.
- Ensuring development can be delivered.
- Ensuring infrastructure can support growth.
- Bringing empty and underused sites back into use.
- Prioritising the redevelopment of brownfield land.

Housing



There is a need for more homes to meet the needs of our communities. The Government's Standard Method for calculating housing need in an area currently identifies an annual housing need of 1,120 homes across Cumberland. These should be of the right type and in the right location to be able to access everyday needs.



Affordability Pressure

House prices across Cumberland have increased by **17.6%** in recent years, while private rents have increased by up to **34.1%** since 2010. Rising house prices and rents are making it harder for many local people to access suitable housing.



Older Housing Stock

Much of Cumberland's housing stock was built many decades ago, creating challenges around quality, energy efficiency and maintenance.



Housing Choice

Approximately **90%** of homes are houses or bungalows. Cumberland's housing stock is dominated by traditional family housing, creating challenges in meeting a wider range of needs including smaller homes, accessible homes and housing for younger people & older residents.

Identified Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Providing a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures.
- Meeting affordable housing needs.
- Accessible and adaptable homes for changing needs.
- Specialist and supported accommodation.
- Second homes and short-term holiday lets.
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- Self-build and custom-build housing.
- Energy efficient homes.
- High-quality design reflecting local character and identity.
- Small and medium-sized housing developments.
- Improving the condition of existing housing stock and bringing empty homes back into use.
- Infrastructure and services to support housing growth.
- Meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

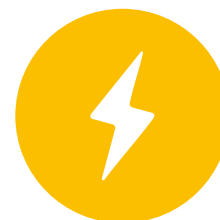
Economy



The Council recognises that a strong local economy benefits our communities and offers opportunities and skills for residents, businesses, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. There is a need to facilitate development to support a range of jobs and improve access to employment prospects. Economic growth should support all groups to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities.

Skilled Trades Economy

Skilled trades employment is **37%** higher than the national average. Cumberland has a strong practical, engineering and technical workforce.



Energy Coast

Home to nationally significant clean energy, nuclear and advanced manufacturing industries. Cumberland plays a key role in supporting the UK's energy transition and is well placed to benefit from future investment and job creation in the energy sector.



Rural & Land Based Economy

Agriculture, tourism and land-based industries remain a key part of Cumberland's economy and identity.



Strong Employment

Just 2.5% claimant unemployment (vs 4.0% nationally).

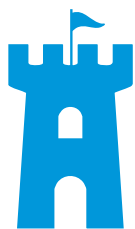
Identified Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Creating high-quality employment opportunities.
- Supporting employment opportunities for young people.
- Attracting and retaining skills and talent.
- Strategic employment sites for growth and investment.
- Safeguarding existing employment land and premises.
- Supporting the nuclear and clean energy sectors.
- Diversifying the local economy.
- Flexible workspaces and business hubs.
- Supporting local businesses and enterprise.
- Tourism, leisure and the visitor economy.
- Agriculture and the rural economy.

Health and Wellbeing



Cumberland's Council Plan 2023-2027 has a central aim of improving the health and wellbeing of residents. Where we live, accessibility to services, facilities and green spaces can all affect physical and mental well-being. The Local Plan can help support healthier lifestyles and better health by ensuring future development reduces inequalities and opens opportunities for all members of our communities.



Rich Heritage

From Hadrian's Wall to Cumberland's industrial, maritime and cultural heritage, the area's historic assets help create distinctive places and strong communities.



Access to Nature

From coast to countryside, Cumberland's natural environment provides opportunities for recreation, active lifestyles and improved mental wellbeing.



Health Inequalities

The Cumberland Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies significant health inequalities across the area. Life expectancy differs markedly across Cumberland's communities including former industrial areas, coastal towns and rural settlements.

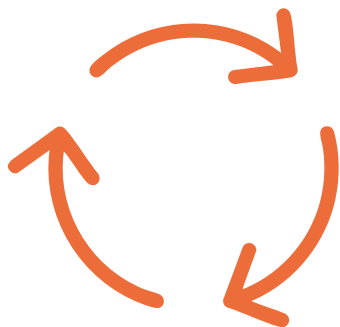
Identified Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Access to health and care services.
- Creating safer and healthier communities.
- Leisure, recreation and sports facilities.
- Public facilities and local services.
- Active travel and healthy lifestyles.
- Safe and inclusive public spaces.
- Accessibility for all members of the community.
- Infrastructure to support health and wellbeing.
- Food security and local food production.
- Allotments and community growing spaces.
- Green spaces, parks and the natural environment.
- Community spaces and local initiatives.
- Arts, culture and wellbeing.

Role of Service Centres



Cumberland Council has a network of centres where retail, leisure, recreation, services and community activity are concentrated. These centres have seen many changes in recent years. Our high streets increasingly need to adapt to be able to contribute to their success.



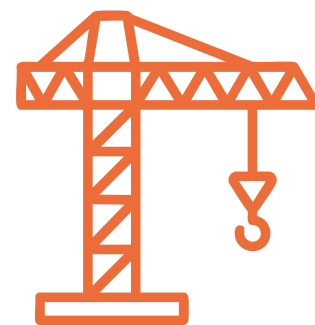
Centres in Transition

Town centres are adapting to changing shopping habits and new ways of living, working and spending leisure time.



Distinctive Places

Carlisle, Workington, Whitehaven, Maryport and other centres each have a unique character and role.



Thriving Centres

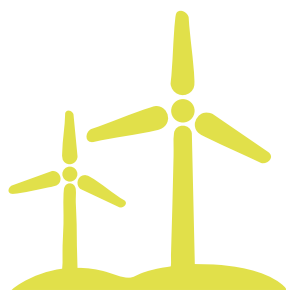
Regeneration projects across Cumberland are helping to improve public spaces, support businesses, enhance connectivity and create attractive places to live, work and visit.

Identified Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Reducing vacancy and long-term empty premises.
- Repurposing and bringing buildings back into use.
- Improving the functionality of centres.
- Affordable space for businesses and community uses.
- Supporting local businesses and independent retailers.
- Infrastructure, accessibility and parking provision.
- Safe and accessible centres.
- Reducing the impact of traffic.
- Attractive environments and public spaces.
- Community, leisure and cultural activities.
- Supporting the evening and night-time economy.

Environment

Climate change and our environment have a huge impact on health, wealth, the economy and the places we live. The Local Plan can help ensure development improves our environment, reduces carbon costs and creates green, healthy places.



Powered by Nature

Cumberland's coastline, rivers and open landscapes provide opportunities for renewable and low-carbon energy generation.



Shaped by Water

The area's coastline, estuaries and river systems help define Cumberland's character but also bring challenges from flooding and coastal change.



Exceptional Natural Environment

From the Solway Firth in the north, to the North Pennines National Landscape in the east, to the Duddon Estuary in the south, Cumberland is home to internationally important habitats, species and landscapes.

Identified Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Climate-resilient and adaptive design.
- Renewable and low-carbon energy generation.
- Energy security and infrastructure solutions.
- Nature recovery, conservation and enhancement.
- Sustainable farming and land management.
- Protecting valued green spaces and habitats.
- Wildlife and biodiversity protection.
- Improving and protecting water quality.
- Pollution prevention and management.
- Coastal change and erosion.
- Flood risk and surface water management.
- Conserving heritage assets and historic buildings.

Infrastructure

Transport options and everyday services can make a significant impact to the lives of our residents. There is a need to ensure suitable infrastructure is in place to support future development.



Strategic Connections

Cumberland benefits from a network of strategic transport infrastructure including the M6, A66, A69, West Coast Main Line, Cumbrian Coast Line and Port of Workington.



Sustainable Communities

Many of Cumberland's towns already provide schools, healthcare, services and transport links. Future growth will need to make best use of existing infrastructure and facilities.



Infrastructure Across a large Geography

Around 1 in 4 workers travel more than 10km to work. Providing access to jobs, education, healthcare and everyday services across Cumberland's large and dispersed geography remains an important infrastructure challenge.

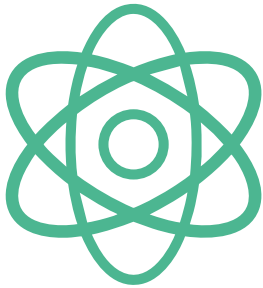
Identified Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Reliable public transport and service coverage.
- Road network capacity and condition.
- Strategic road and motorway infrastructure.
- Safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes.
- Parking provision.
- Rail connectivity and resilience.
- Rural transport and digital connectivity.
- Infrastructure to support future growth.
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Public conveniences and community facilities.
- Access to healthcare services.
- School places and education provision.
- Drainage and wastewater infrastructure.
- Digital connectivity and broadband provision.

Resources for the Future



Minerals and waste management play an important role in supporting homes, businesses, infrastructure and the environment. The Local Plan will help to ensure a steady supply of minerals and network of sustainable waste management facilities to meet current and future needs, whilst minimising the impact on the environment and local communities.



Managing Specialist Waste

Cumberland has a unique role in supporting the UK's nuclear sector through specialist waste management and infrastructure.



Recycling Across Cumberland

Cumberland is served by 7 Household Waste Recycling Centres. Future planning will need to ensure waste management infrastructure continues to support communities and growth.



Nature from Industry

Former mineral sites can become valuable spaces for nature and communities. Clints Quarry near Egremont, once used for limestone extraction, is now a nature reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest supporting a rich variety of habitats and species.

Identified Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Maintaining a steady and adequate supply of minerals.
- Protecting the environment and local communities.
- Landscape character and visual impacts.
- Transport and movement of materials.
- Site restoration and aftercare.
- Waste management capacity.
- Reducing waste and increasing recycling.
- Management of nuclear and specialist waste.

Engagement

The Cumberland Council Plan 2023-2027 sets out the Council's vision for community engagement. To support this, the Community Engagement Framework 2026 and accompanying Toolkit have been developed through Cumberland Council's Community Power Programme. The Framework is built around four key principles: Inclusive, Coordinated, Collaborative and Meaningful, ensuring communities are engaged early, barriers to participation are reduced, and people have opportunities to influence decisions.

These principles will play an important role in the preparation of the Cumberland Local Plan, which will be prepared through a series of consultation and engagement stages in accordance with national planning legislation and regulations. Community and stakeholder feedback will be essential in helping to shape the Plan throughout its preparation.

The Council is currently preparing an Engagement Strategy which will set out how we will communicate with and involve communities, stakeholders and interested parties throughout the preparation of the Cumberland Local Plan, in accordance with national planning requirements and guidance.

We are seeking your views on our proposed approach to help ensure that opportunities to participate are accessible, inclusive and reach as many people as possible. Your feedback will help shape the final Engagement Strategy.

The draft Engagement Strategy can be found here: <https://consult.cumberland.gov.uk/scoping-consultation-for-the-cumberland-local-plan>

A summary of the proposed approach and the groups we intend to engage with is set out below:

How we plan to engage

We want to make it as easy as possible for people to help shape the Cumberland Local Plan. To reach a wide range of communities, stakeholders and interested parties, we propose to use a mix of digital, face-to-face and targeted engagement methods, including:

- Updates to our website on the Council's dedicated planning policy web pages: www.cumberland.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/cumberland-local-plan
- Social media channels, including Facebook and X.
- Mainstream media, including press releases and coverage in local newspapers.
- The Council's resident email newsletter.
- Direct email notifications to consultees and those registered for Local Plan updates.
- Public exhibitions, displays and drop in events at locations across Cumberland.
- Online consultation and engagement platforms.
- Pop-up stalls at existing community events.
- Engagement activities with schools, colleges and higher education providers.
- Targeted meetings, workshops and focus groups with stakeholders, infrastructure providers and community organisations.

As part of our approach, we will continue to develop digital engagement methods that make it easier for people to access information and participate in consultations. However, we recognise that not everyone wishes to engage online and will continue to provide opportunities for face-to-face engagement throughout the preparation of the Cumberland Local Plan.

Who we will engage with

We want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved in preparing the Local Plan. This includes engagement with:

- Local communities and residents.
- Young people and seldom-heard groups.
- Businesses, landowners and those with an interest in development.
- Voluntary, community and charitable organisations.
- Bodies representing people with protected characteristics.
- Town and Parish Councils.
- Infrastructure and service providers.
- General and specific consultation bodies.
- Neighbouring authorities and strategic partners.

Next Steps

This scoping consultation is the first stage in preparing the Cumberland Local Plan and provides an opportunity to help shape its future direction.

Following the consultation, the Council will review all comments received and publish a summary of the responses and how they have been considered.

Feedback on the proposed priorities, challenges and opportunities (Question 1) will help inform the scope of the Local Plan, while comments on engagement (Question 2) will help refine the final Engagement Strategy.

There will be further opportunities to get involved as the Cumberland Local Plan progresses and more detailed proposals are developed.