

COPELAND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

**EXAMINATION OF CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

**BOROUGH COUNCIL
STATEMENTS:
MATTER 6**

TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

March 2013



6.1. Does the Plan provide a sound basis for improving accessibility in Copeland?

- 6.1.1 As a second tier authority, Copeland is not in a position to implement significant transportation investment, but the Borough Council participates actively in the generation of strategy and plans to promote accessibility. The Core Strategy is a strategic plan, not a delivery plan, and policy in this sphere is directed at explaining Copeland's position regarding what is needed for the strategy to be implemented, as a basis for informing and supporting discussion of relevant delivery plans.
- 6.1.2 Policy T1 is a statement of what the Borough considers appropriate to meet Copeland's needs and to provide satisfactorily for future development. The Strategy for Infrastructure (Doc. 1.9 - see in particular the appendix at page 35) takes this further into specifics, with reference to emerging programmes and the further needs which would be generated by nuclear new build.
- 6.1.3 The strategy statement of LTP3 (Doc 9.1, see in particular page 19) commits the County Council to support this, with significant improvements to capacity on the A595 and the Cumbria Coast rail line, improving access to essential services from rural areas, and public space improvements in Whitehaven town centre.
- 6.1.4 This plan is therefore in tune with and guiding transport planning for Copeland, and is in that way providing an appropriately sound basis. Evidential input shows what is needed to enable the borough to function better and deal with development pressures, while not identifying any 'showstoppers' among the shortcomings identified in infrastructure deficit work.
- 6.1.5 Additionally, Policy T2 looks at the question of Information and Communications Technology, backed up for development management purposes by DM23. The role of a local planning authority in achieving broadband connectivity is of course limited, but it is important for the plan to recognise its importance in enhancing the competitiveness of Copeland as a location for rural business development, and for the local planning authority to have a policy basis for reacting to its spatial implications.

6.2. Is it feasible for the Plan to seek better connections outside the Borough (Policy T1, Section C) and how will these be realised?

6.2.1 It would not be feasible for the Plan to be based on an *intention* for the Borough Council to provide better connections, because the Borough Council is not in a position to guarantee their implementation, but it is important for the Plan to stress the importance of them to achieving the intentions of the plan, so that delivery agencies can formally be made aware of that.

6.2.2 The background to Policy T1C is as follows.

- I. In terms of its transport connections to major population centres and the motorway/main line network, Copeland is one of the most isolated districts in England. In planning for its future development it does not make sense to ignore the critical importance of improving routes beyond our boundaries.
- II. We are planning in the context of a sub-regional approach developed by Britain's Energy Coast with the participation of Copeland, Allerdale and the County. See the Infrastructure section of the Economic Blueprint (Doc. 1.8, pp. 34-37), which refers to the importance of increasing connectivity via projects some of which are entirely in Allerdale – through which most traffic in and out of Copeland must pass.
- III. Allied to this, one can note the complementarity of strategic employment provision (notably, Westlakes/Lillyhall, and the usefulness of better connections between Copeland and the Port of Workington) and the intertwined destinies of Copeland and Allerdale.

6.2.3 For Copeland this is an important cross-boundary issue - which national policy enjoins us to consider - and it is thus entirely appropriate for the plan to refer to these matters. The Borough Council accepts, of course, that the implementation of these projects is not within its gift, but Copeland's case for pursuing support for these projects would be weakened if our development strategy did not express an intention to seek them as an integral part of the strategy. A policy commitment such as this is needed to bolster our contribution to strategic decision making, and/or bidding, at the level of the Transportation Authority (Cumbria C.C.), the Highways Agency or National Rail.

6.2.4 This becomes particularly important when we are contemplating a major development (Moorside), over which we have no control though we do support it, and which could generate a volume of traffic which would compromise the accessibility of the Borough if a strong case is not put forward for capacity improvement, via the NSIP dimension of the planning process. That case will be stronger if supported by a clear policy commitment to seek the necessary improvements.

6.2.5 To conclude, it seems to us that it must be appropriate, if the plan is to maximise its chance of being successful, for the plan to point to work which may be needed via other programmes and strategies, on routes in areas which though outside the Borough are critical to what goes on within it.

6.3. What mechanism will be used to develop a parking strategy and how will this be implemented?

6.3.1 Work has already been carried out towards a parking strategy for Whitehaven, including a consultant study in 2008 (not published), which made recommendations.

6.3.2 Since then the following developments have emerged: -

- work by the County Council on preparing a streetscape scheme for the town centre, which would be accompanied by amendments in the traffic circulation pattern (a LTP3 project, referred to on page 19 of the Transport Plan Strategy Doc. 9.1);
- the programme initiated by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority of moving 'backroom' staff off the Sellafield site. This is bearing fruit in the Albion Square development, which, housing up to 1000 staff, will have impacts on parking provision and traffic movement, and the possible use of Corkickle Station as a 'park and ride' facility or 'transport hub', which in turn impacts on proposals for a transport interchange;
- the award of a Townscape Heritage Improvement grant, which is triggering work which may also have implications for the location of car parking.

6.3.3 Work on the Borough Council's parking strategy is therefore in abeyance and will be brought forward when the above areas of work come together with more certain outcomes established. This should happen later in 2013.

6.3.4 The Borough Council would expect the strategy to be implemented by a variety of means, principally Local Transport Plan projects, NDA/Sellafield resource input probably via Britain's Energy Coast, and management measures which would primarily be the responsibility of the Borough Council.