

Copeland and Allerdale sign MoU

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COPELAND Borough Council and Allerdale Borough Council are proposing to establish joint working and collaborative arrangements for the communities they collectively serve in West Cumbria.

Under a jointly created and signed Memorandum of Understanding, the two councils are proposing to work together in order to:

- Drive, with a consistent message, the shared economic opportunities for West Cumbria as one place
- Create more efficient public service delivery
- Utilise and make best use of individual and collective strengths – pool skills and talents
- Raise the bar to offer consistent level of service delivery
- Continue integration approach to service delivery with non-LA partners

Both councils have adapted to large reductions in budget and, having undergone significant political changes in recent times, conditions are now right to come together and develop a plan for what successful collaboration between the councils could look like.

Central to this approach is to respond positively to the economic opportunities and challenges connected with the nuclear sector, to drive a common position around growth and a broader economic base, and a stronger tourism offer.

Both councils have been the subject of a Local Government Association Peer Review; last year for Copeland and just last week for Allerdale. Both reviews are largely positive and recognise the key strengths of both councils, but also recognise that local government is changing and the two neighbouring authorities are well placed to modernise together.

Mike Starkie, Mayor of Copeland, said: “Copeland and Allerdale share similar challenges, but also opportunities that have not been realised to date.

“I am keen that drawing the strengths of both councils together will result in a positive and collaborative approach to promoting our economy, punch above our weight nationally and bring together the best of what we both do in the interests of our business, our communities and the taxpayer - with a strong focus on service delivery.

"It is early in the dialogue and there is much to do, but I feel confident that the will and desire is there to be successful partners. It's far too early to talk about operating models and governance, but I am optimistic that we will lead the way in Cumbria towards a new and modern form of efficient and successful local government.

"What we have today is a Memorandum of Understanding - a commitment to making progress - and I am sure there will be much debate and discussion, both within each council and our communities, but I am convinced that this is the right approach and the right thing to do."

Marion Fitzgerald, Leader of Allerdale Borough Council, said: "We are looking forward to a closer working relationship with Copeland Borough Council to achieve a strong and sustainable future for west Cumbria. We believe it is hugely important everyone works together for the betterment of our area - something which was identified by our recent Peer Challenge. That's why we have been working jointly on a Memorandum of Understanding and hope to formalise that in the near future.

"And this spirit of cooperation is already bearing fruit, with representatives of both councils attending the Convention of the North in Rotherham earlier this month to present a case to Ministers for Growth Funding for our area."



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