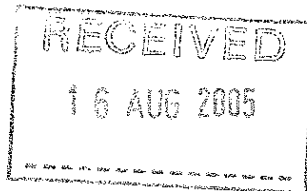


Environmental Well Being Group
c/o West Cumbria Community Empowerment Network
12a Selby Terrace
Maryport
Cumbria
CA15 6NF
Tel: 01900 819191



15 August 2005

Dear Colleague

The Environmental Well Being Group invite you to its next meeting on **WEDNESDAY, 17 August 2005, 2pm – 4pm, at Copeland BC offices, Moresby Parks.**
Please contact the above address for location details.

Agenda

Theme: Liveability (including transport)

1. Apologies

2. Minutes from previous meetings (July 05)

(Minutes previously distributed. Handouts notes from CoRWM presentation only from June 05)

3. Biodiversity and Natural Environment

Purpose:

To review policies and activity in West Cumbria that contributes to improving and maintaining biodiversity and the natural environment in West Cumbria. This includes urban greenspaces as well as the countryside and coast.

To begin to identify gaps and make recommendations for future activity to the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership and begin the process of including these issues in the future Greener, Cleaner priorities and targets.

Short presentations from

- Allerdale BC,
- Copeland BC,
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust and the Biodiversity Partnership
- English Nature,
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group,
- Solway Firth Partnership.

4. AOB

5. Details of next meeting

Please confirm your attendance by contacting Deb Muscat on by phone: 01900 819191 or email: deb@westcumbriacvs.solis.co.uk.

Yours sincerely

Steve Bradley
Chair, Environmental Well Being Group.

Notes from Environmental Well-being Review Group
20th July 2005, St Michaels Church, Workington.

Present:

Keith Parker	Copeland BC (Lead Officer)
Deb Muscat	Community Empowerment Network (Secretary)
Chris Shaw	Cumbria Ass. of Local Councils
Collette Small	Derwent and Solway Housing Ass.
Ian Payne	Allerdale BC
Katrina Rice	Lake District National Park
Howard Jones	Fire and Rescue Service
Mike Heaslip	West Cumbria Partnership
Maureen Rouke	Allerdale BC
Jonathon Smith	Cumbria CC

Apologies:

Steve Bradley	Westlakes Research Institute (Chair)
Liz Clegg	Community Empowerment Network (S. Copeland)
Haydn Howard	
Susan Hammond	Environment Agency
Christine Johnstone	Community Empowerment Network (Older persons)
Maria Toman	Copeland Homes
David Fisher	Copeland Homes
Tony Temple	BNG
Cam Ross	Cumbria CC
David Davis	Copeland BC

1. Minutes Matters arising from previous meeting.
Action:

2. Liveability

Ian Payne, Allerdale BC introduced the concept of Liveability, the latest legislation and how West Cumbria could achieve it in the broadest sense.

Liveability is about the quality of the environment on our doorstep. How it looks, how it feels, etc. There are proven links between areas of deprivation and poor quality of environment. Mori polls have evidenced that environmental services are those that influence how people feel about the success of their local authority.

Safer Stronger Communities Funding – requires local strategic partnerships to set out what they are doing for cleaner, greener communities.

Sustainability requires Education, Encouragement and Enforcement.

Enforcement

- There is a potential of creating environmental wardens (along the lines of neighbourhood wardens). Existing wardens in Manchester have the authority to give out fixed penalty fines for dog fouling and littering.
- Clean neighbourhoods and Environment Act – Outline measures (see handout attached). The Act allows greater enforcement powers to Local Authorities.

Encouragement

- Local Authority must deliver its own services to high environmental quality.
- Provide help with local litter clean ups, etc.
- Develop a method of responding to community problem hot spots.

Education

- This is the most challenging aspect, although there is a lot of good practice to draw on.
- Maidstone in Kent use comic book characters to educate young people.
- Manchester has a man with a megaphone who points out people dropping litter
- Resources to take this aspect forward.

Derwent and Solway (Collette Small)

Housing Associations already support community clean up schemes. Activities could be linked to the DreamSchemes (Schemes whereby young people earn points that convert to activities like swimming, trips, etc for undertaking community activities). Information about these issues could be included in citizenship classes. Neighbourhood wardens would be ideally placed to be involved.

Parish Councils will also have increased powers under the new Act.

Copeland BC have already worked with police to reduce numbers of For Sale vehicles obstructing highways.

2.a. Review of Parish, Town and other community plans (Deb Muscat)

Sarah Mitchell from VAC and Lynn Thomas from Workington Regeneration have identified all liveability concerns that have been raised in local plans. These plans have all arisen from local consultation and have generally been unled, ie the communities have been left to identify the issues that affect them.

Not all communities currently have plans, but they are a fair mix of urban and rural communities. Work is being undertaken to provide plans for all communities.

Cleaner

- 50% would like to have a covered box recycling scheme (uncovered ones spill into the street whilst waiting for collection)
- 50% said that litter was a problem. A few communities have local volunteer clean up days.

Safer

- 25% say that the lack of police presence is an issue, the rest are all working on various locally appropriate solutions to their policing problems through neighbourhood wardens and rural safety groups.
- Approx 25% have issues with antisocial behaviour of young people.
- Approx two thirds have issues with speeding traffic.

Greener

- 60% of all plans mention environment and transport. All of them are looking at locally appropriate transport solutions such as taxi vouchers, community transport schemes, etc.
- 25% want their footpath and cycleways improved.
- 30% stated that they would like the landscape and nature sites protected and improved.

Quality of Life

- Almost half of the plans state they are looking for only sensitive development to meet local housing needs. Development must respect the nature and character of out towns and villages.

Jonathan Smith requested clarification as to what communities mean by footpaths and as different bodies are responsible for roadside paths and the public footpath/bridleways network. Plans (Communities) do not differentiate between the two.

Jonathan Smith felt that it was refreshing to see communities thinking about solutions to meet their needs.

Katrina Rice said the Lake District National Park Authority are involved in Parish Planning. Requested that they are involved in future.

Action: DM and KR to set up meeting.

Building on issues raises in community plans.

- Copeland Parishes get together with Copeland BC to identify how activities can be more joined up.
- The new Cleator Moor Development Plan has been based upon the 5 local Parish Plans.
- Police and the Fire and Rescue teams are now locally focused
- Health is shifting to a locality-focused delivery.
- The next stage is to really start delivering the services in a joined up fashion.

3. Safer Stronger Communities Fund (Michael Heaslip)

This new funding stream from the government is underpinned by local organisations working together to deliver locally focused services. Funding begins in April 2006 with Local Area Agreements becoming a working reality in April 2007. A working group is looking at trailing the process in the first year (see handout).

3.a. The Sustainable Communities Strategy

See Handout. Local Area Agreements are the mechanism by which this will be delivered.

The West Cumbria Community Strategy is currently being refreshed.

Action: Ian Payne, Keith Parker: Input to cleaner and greener targets and actions.

4. Area Transport Advisory Groups (Keith Parker, Jonathan Smith)

Discussion as to the role of the ATAGs and how they linked to the LSP.

- Agendas have been transport and highways focused
- JS Confirmed that their remit is broader than highways issues
- Local issues should be taken to the group for discussion.
- Technical language at meetings can make it difficult to engage
- Political posturing can reduce effectiveness of joint ATAG meetings looking at common issues
- Effective ATAGS underpin the Area Transport Plan and will be vital for the development of Community Transport Plans
- Membership of the Groups: Membership list to be circulated to LSP.
- Tim Knowles, Chair of LSP should meet with the Chairs to ensure they understand their role

Action:

LSP: Members to note who they should be taking their local issues to.

Env WBG Officers: to distribute dates etc for the meetings.

Env WBG Officers: to request help from LSP Chair.

Env WBG Officers: to identify any gaps on membership and discuss with Chairs

CC: Ensure that ATAGS and County Councillors are aware of the broad role.

6. Next Meeting:

17 August 2005, Cleator Moor – Biodiversity.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act - Outline of Measures

The Act:

Crime and Disorder

- ensures that local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships will take anti-social behaviour affecting the local environment into account in developing crime and disorder reduction strategies.
- gives local authorities new, more effective powers to deal with alleyways affected by anti-social behaviour.

Fixed Penalty Notices (Fines)

- makes greater use of fixed penalties as an alternative to prosecution, in most cases giving local authorities the flexibility to set their own rates;
- gives parish councils the power to issue fixed penalties for litter, graffiti, fly posting and dog offences;

Nuisance and Abandoned Vehicles

- gives local authorities the power to remove abandoned cars from the streets immediately;
- creates two new offences to help local authorities deal with nuisance parking: offering for sale two or more vehicles, or repairing a vehicle, on the road as part of a business.

Litter

- makes it an offence to drop litter anywhere, including private land and rivers, ponds and lakes;
- gives local authorities new powers (litter clearing notices) to require businesses and individuals to clear litter from their land;
- strengthens existing powers for local authorities to require local businesses to help clear up litter they generate (street litter control notices);
- enables local authorities to restrict the distribution of flyers, hand-outs and pamphlets that can end up as litter;
- confirms that cigarette butts and discarded chewing gum are litter.

Graffiti and fly-posting

- extends graffiti removal notices (as introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) to include fly-posting;
- improves local authorities powers to tackle the sale of spray paints to children;
- strengthens the legislation to make it harder for beneficiaries of fly posting to evade prosecution;
- enables local authorities to recover the costs of removing illegal posters.

Waste

- amends provisions for dealing with fly-tipping by:
 - removing the defence of acting under employer's instructions

- increasing the penalties
- enabling local authorities and the Environment Agency to recover their investigation and clear-up costs
- extending provisions on clear up to the landowner in the absence of the occupier.
- gives local authorities and the Environment Agency the power to issue fixed penalty notices (and, in the case of local authorities, to keep the receipts from such penalties):
 - to businesses that fail to produce waste transfer notes
 - to waste carriers that fail to produce their registration details or evidence they do not need to be registered
 - for waste left out on the streets (local authority only)
- introduces a more effective system for stop, search and seizure of vehicles used in illegal waste disposal; and enabling courts to require forfeiture of such vehicles
- introduces a new provision covering the waste duty of care and the registration of waste carriers
- introduces a new requirement for site waste management plans for construction and demolition projects
- repeals the divestment provisions for waste disposal functions to provide greater flexibility for local authorities to deliver waste management services in the most sustainable way
- reforms the recycling credits scheme to provide increased local flexibility to incentivise more sustainable waste management.

Dogs

- replaces dog byelaws with a new, simplified system which will enable local authorities and parish councils to deal with fouling by dogs, ban dogs from designated areas, require dogs to be kept on a lead and restrict the number of dogs that can be walked by one person.
- gives local authorities, rather than police, sole responsibility for stray dogs.

Noise

- reduces nuisance caused by noise by giving local authorities to:
 - deal with burglar alarms
 - impose fixed penalty fines on licensed premises that ignore warnings to reduce excessive noise levels
- gives local authorities greater flexibility in dealing with noise nuisance.

Architecture and the Built Environment

- establishes the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) on a statutory basis.

Miscellaneous

- enables local authorities to recover the costs of dealing with abandoned shopping trolleys from their owners
- extends the list of statutory nuisances to include light pollution and nuisance for insects
- improves the contaminated land appeals process.

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Report by Co-ordinator

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

What is the report about?

Development of a Local Area Agreement for Cumbria

Why are you bringing this to the meeting?

So that the Board can approve in principle the development of a Local Area Agreement

2. DECISION TO BE MADE/INFORMATION TO NOTE/ RECEIVE COMMENTS ON?

- 2.1 To note the Expression of Interest submitted to Government by Cumbria CC on behalf of Partners
- 2.2 To note that Cumbria will be in the third phase of Local Area Agreements, from April 2007, and to agree that work commence towards a "shadow" Local Area Agreement from April 2006, absorbing the "Sustainable Cumbria" Action Plan.
- 2.3 To confirm that a Local Area Agreement for Cumbria should reflect principles of Subsidiarity, Localism, Neighbourhood Renewal, and West Cumbria – proofing.
- 2.4 To note that a Local Area Agreement parallels, and in no way replaces, the Memorandum of Agreement between Government and West Cumbria, and should reflect, in its application in West Cumbria, the principles of that Memorandum.

3. CONTRIBUTION TO PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES

The West Cumbria "chapter" of a Cumbria-wide Local Area Agreement will programme the implementation and monitoring of the more immediate or routine elements of the Community Strategy for West Cumbria, whilst the Memorandum of Agreement will programme those major long-term transformational changes which are beyond the capacity of local and regional partners to deliver.

Michael Heaslip
Co-ordinator
June 2005

A local Area Agreement for Cumbria – Expression of Interest to Government Office North West

Introduction

1. This note sets out an expression of interest in a Local Area Agreement for Cumbria. It is made by the County Council, following agreement by Members at the Council meeting on 20th May 2005. But it is also made on behalf of, and with support from, all seven local authorities in Cumbria – Cumbria County Council and the Districts of Allerdale, Barrow, Carlisle, Copeland, Eden and South Lakeland. This Expression of Interest also carries the support of the Cumbria Strategic Partnership, the local strategic partnership for the sub-region (which links to and includes representatives from the four local strategic partnerships in Cumbria – Carlisle & Eden LSP, South Lakeland LSP, Furness Partnership, West Cumbria Partnership; and includes 40 of our other partners, including Cumbria Constabulary, Jobcentre Plus, the Health Authority etc). It also has support from the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) which represents most of the 273 parish councils in the area.

Background

2. Some key issues affecting the Sub-region include:
 - Cumbria's size, rurality, sparsity (0.7) persons per hectare (compared with the England/Wales average of 3.4) and remoteness present unique challenges in delivering cost effective, efficient services.
 - Cumbria has a total population of under ½ million with more than 50% living in rural areas and 0.7% from black & minority ethnic groups. A population of this size means that we have to work harder in a regional context to have Cumbria's voice heard alongside major urban areas of Manchester and Merseyside.
 - The County is made up of six district/borough councils and over 273 parish/town Councils. Each of the six district areas is supported by a County Council Local Committee
 - Cumbria's economy has one of the slowest growth rates in the UK and a recent study suggests that of 215 European sub-regions, Cumbria's economy will be the 211th slowest growing up to 2019. Our wealth creation per head is three quarters of the national average.
 - This worsening trend is caused by a relative decline in the number of jobs in high value added sectors like manufacturing (losing 3,000 jobs between 1998-2002). Growth in lower value added sectors has not been fast enough to offset this decline. There are around half as many jobs in the major national growth sectors in Cumbria (business and financial services) as the UK average.
 - 28% of people in Cumbria are aged 24 and under. Proportionately, Cumbria has fewer children and young adults in each age category when compared to the average for England and Wales. There were significant decreases in the number of children and young people from 1991 to 2003.
 - Cumbria's total entry to post 16 full-time education is lower than the national average and large numbers of young people leave Cumbria to go to University but this is not balanced by an inward flow as there are few graduate opportunities in the County.

Strategic Objectives for LAA

3. We are delighted to be able to make an expression of interest in being a pilot as we believe Local Area Agreements can greatly benefit the local authorities and our partners as well as helping to improve central/local relations. More importantly, though, we believe that LAAs can help us to bring about improved performance in local government and better outcomes for the communities and people we serve.
4. Overall, we have set six objectives for a Local Area Agreement (LAA) in Cumbria:
 - To play our part in helping to improve the central/local partnership and explore meaningful ways of extending devolved decision making
 - As an improvement tool to help all of the local authorities deliver improved performance
 - To help further improve partnership working, particularly in respect of a focus on outcomes, and consolidate the priority setting work at a sub-regional level that underpins the Cumbria Strategic Partnership Sub-regional strategy and at a local level, the Local Strategic Partnerships' Community Strategies
 - To capitalise on substantial early work and partner engagement done in developing our second generation LPSA
 - To help us identify possible Gershon efficiencies which can be returned to front line provision
 - To help rationalise and improve the integration of performance management frameworks between the partners within the sub-region and with the Government.

Performance Improvement

5. In CPA terms, only one of the local authorities in Cumbria is rated 'Good'; four are 'Fair'; and two are 'Weak' (including the County). Much improvement has been made in the recent past and partnership working has strengthened, through for example, Achieving Cumbrian Excellence and a more robust County-wide LSP – the Cumbria Strategic Partnership. This resulted in the Audit Commission's judgement that the County Council is now "well placed to improve the way it works" and that "partners have recognised a clear improvement in the Council's engagement and responsiveness."
6. However, we are keen to continue to improve and to use a wide range of tools to help bring about a quantum leap in performance. We believe LAAs can help us to improve still further through, for example:
 - Helping us to have a sustained focus and clarity on our key priorities and outcomes
 - An improved dialogue with the Government (through GONW) and Government agencies such as the North West Regional Development Agency and Cumbria Vision, on the key priorities for the sub-region. This will help to bring greater clarity and agreement on what matters locally
 - Further encouragement to pool money and find innovative ways of tackling our priorities where we believe it makes sense to tackle common challenges together

- A greater focus on delivery and achievement through the monitoring of outcomes rather than inputs
7. We also feel there are benefits for Government Office North West in having Cumbria as a pilot: clearly the Government will be keen to ensure that LAAs can work in a full range of authorities including those rated 'weak'; not just the 'Good' and 'Excellent'. Cumbria provides an opportunity to test this out but in a group of authorities who have turned the corner and are improving; and more importantly, have a real ambition to demonstrate improvement.
 8. There is another small but important reason for a pilot in Cumbria. It will be led by a Corporate Director at the County who has already successfully negotiated a LAA in the first wave of pilots for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. Thus there is leadership and experience at a senior officer level.

Partnership Working

9. As stated above, we believe that partnership working in Cumbria has dramatically improved in recent months. In particular, there is an increasingly robust sub-regional partnership in the Cumbria Strategic Partnership (CSP). This brings together public, private and voluntary/community sectors to deliver the sub-regional strategy – Sustainable Cumbria 2004 to 2024. It also links well with the four Local Strategic Partnerships: West Cumbria; Carlisle and Eden; South Lakeland; and Furness, particularly through involvement of LSP Chairs on the CSP Executive Board and the thematic and task groups.
10. We are currently reviewing the CSP structure against the shared central/local priorities to ensure we are addressing all of the economic, environmental and social wellbeing issues within Cumbria. Hence, there will be a thematic group to lead on each of the LAA sub-blocks. However, the CSP Executive Board already brings together the local authority and LSP leadership with key sector lead executives.
11. We believe that LAAs could be used to further improve partnership working, especially in respect of the greater focus on agreeing key priorities and greater clarity of those priorities through being more outcome-focussed. This work has already started through, for example: the development of a sub-regional strategy; arrangements for the CSP to develop a strategic response to the refresh of the Regional Economic Strategy; Cumbria championing non city-region engagement with the Northern Way.
12. We are also keen to develop a subsidiarity approach to LAAs. This recognises that priorities work on three levels:
 - Priorities which give rise to outcomes which can only be measured at the County level
 - Priorities which give rise to outcomes which can be measured at local level (defined for LAAs, perhaps, as districts or LSPs) and aggregated to County level. Eg. GCSEs
 - Priorities which are only key issues for the localities, but which are so important as to warrant inclusion in the overall LAA. Eg. Market renewal in Barrow; affordable housing in Eden and South Lakeland

13. This approach would give us an overall County or CSP-level LAA as well as district or LSP level LAAs. Thus we get a strategic approach (at both levels) and a clearer focus on whether delivery is best achieved on a County-wide or locality basis.
14. We also think there are possibilities to involve parish councils, through the involvement of the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC). We are currently developing a charter between the parish councils and the County and the districts where they are keen to be involved. This would help clarify parish involvement, for example, on highways issues. We are also considering ways of incentivising parishes to gain the Quality Parish Council mark by giving them greater involvement (perhaps in scrutiny etc). We would like to explore the possibility to develop these two strands into LAAs in a very meaningful way.
15. The LAA would complement work in our Children and Young People Strategic Partnership to identify priorities and deliver better outcomes for children and young people. We believe that our Priorities Conversation demonstrated that we have a good grasp of the priorities for Cumbria and that we are making good progress towards effective integration of services and development of the Children and Young People's Plan. The ability to pool or align budgets will allow us to further extend some of the innovation in delivery, such as our work as one of the national pathfinder sites for 'Early Support' to develop key working with families of children with disabilities aged 0 to 36 months; and the high number of schools engaged in the "Healthy Schools" initiative.
16. Like many areas, we are considering the possibility of a Public Services Board (PSB). LAAs would help give this work a sharper focus and could provide a model for a Board based on delivery of the LAA outcomes. But we would wish to explore how this works against our 'subsidiarity' model to see if a PSB would work best at County-wide and/or locality level.

Local Public Service Agreements

17. Cumbria is due to negotiate a second generation LPSA later this year for a start date of April 2006. A great deal of early work has been done to ensure we learn from our LPSA I experience and improve arrangements for developing and delivering LPSA II.
18. In particular, the CSP Executive Board and the County Council have established a LPSA Round 2 Task Group. The Group's key task is to develop ideas and advise the County Council and CSP on the submission of an agreement including target areas which support the delivery of the Sub-regional Strategy and the four LSP Community Strategies.
19. This Group has been in operation for some time now and has identified key priorities where inclusion of targets in an LPSA can add value and strengthen delivery. Clearly this work gives us an excellent foundation on which to build a LAA. Given that the LAA and LPSA take as their starting point the identification of priorities, we do not foresee any problems in bringing an LAA and LPSA together as an integrated whole for negotiation and agreement.
20. As with LAAs, we and our partners want to use LPSAs within the LAA framework, as a performance improvement tool to deliver our priorities in the Sub-regional,

LSP and Council Strategies. Given our CPA ratings, we also wish to use LPSAs to evidence improvement and delivery to influence our CPA scores positively over the medium term. Clearly, we will be disappointed if not chosen as an LAA pilot and we have to defer our LPSA II, although we will continue to develop possible LPSA priorities and targets to ensure we are well placed to negotiate in a future tranche.

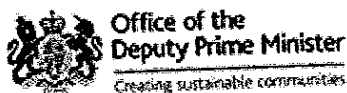
Performance Management

21. There is growing enthusiasm to develop a county-wide Performance Management Observatory, building on our innovative work for the Cumbria Economic Intelligence Partnership, which is led by the County Council through its Research & Intelligence function. This would bring together the performance monitoring arrangements for the outcomes and targets in the LAA in a joined up way using the County's Performance Plus software.
22. We will also explore the extent to which we can use the Cumbria Information Hub, our innovative e-government project, for the electronic sharing of data across the partnerships, which is part of the ODPM LGOL-net national project. Again, we would hope to use Performance Plus software as the automatic repository for performance monitoring information. This would allow GONW to have easy access to performance information on LAA outcomes, with a further reduction in bureaucracy and may provide a mechanism for providing electronic submission of performance information to GONW and Government Departments.
23. We are also keen to work with GONW and other pilots to help rationalise performance management frameworks between the partners in the sub-region and with the Government.
24. The Cumbria Race and Diversity Partnership has been approached by the Audit Commission to be pilot in the Area Profiles work, looking specifically at quality of life and services and what this means for Black and Minority Ethnic citizens. We would also seek to use this work to underpin the LAA across all four strands.

Conclusion

25. The seven Local Authorities are keen to improve and evidence delivery against our key priorities and outcomes. We see LAAs as an excellent tool to help us to achieve this and welcome the opportunity to express interest in being a second wave pilot.

In all likelihood, even if we are not selected as a pilot, we will continue to develop a shadow LAA and LPSA to ensure we are well placed to negotiate assuming a full roll out to all local authorities in the future. This will help us to continue to use LAAs and LPSAs as an improvement tool; however, inevitably, there will not be the full focus that being a pilot would



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Sustainable Communities: building for the future

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Part 1: Decent homes, decent places

Key facts

- Homes in poor condition damage the health of those who live in them and can undermine the sustainability of neighbourhoods.
- Since 1997 we have reduced by about half a million the number of non-decent social homes. We have also helped around 120,000 households in the private sector to make their homes decent.
- We are on track to help 600,000 vulnerable households keep their homes warm through the "Warm Front" energy efficiency scheme between 2001-04.
- Liveability issues - cleaner streets, improved parks, etc - came in the top four of all responses in a survey (MORI April 2000) as to "what would most improve the quality of life in your area".
- During the last five years 245 new parks and Millennium Greens have been created. More than 600 derelict or underused sites have been transformed into community spaces and play areas in partnership with the private sector.
- 1,100 Neighbourhood Wardens have been funded by Government in over 200 deprived communities to improve the local environment and reduce crime and fear of crime.

The challenge

To ensure that all social tenants have a decent home by 2010 (a target established in 2000).

To improve conditions for vulnerable people in private accommodation.

To ensure all tenants, social and private, get an excellent service from their landlord.

To ensure all communities have a clean, safe and attractive environment in which people can take pride.

The response

We are providing for additional investment and reforming the way we deliver our target to make all social housing decent by 2010. Investment to improve social housing will be properly planned and part of the wider neighbourhood renewal strategy. Tenants will be put first.

We are establishing a new Single Inspectorate for housing to help ensure social landlords offer improving standards of service to tenants. And we are providing increased protection for private tenants.

There will be additional resources to improve conditions for vulnerable people in private sector accommodation, both rented and owner occupied. We will support local authorities in effective use of their resources to improve the quality of the local environment. We are taking forward a range of programmes, many spelt out in *Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener*. We are refocusing central government resources to back these initiatives at the national and local levels. This action is in the context of policies across Government to tackle the whole range of issues that affect quality of life, including anti-social behaviour.

We are raising the profile of good design, which gives form and quality to public spaces, housing and other buildings.

The difference

By 2005

- Between 2003-04 and 2005-06, 400,000 fewer households in social homes below the decent homes standard, and 80,000 vulnerable households in the private sector helped to make their homes decent.
- High quality local authority service delivery on local environment, public spaces and parks - every authority should have green spaces that achieve the Green Flag standard for care of parks.
- Neighbourhood wardens in over 500 communities, improving the local environment and reducing crime and fear of crime.

The longer term

- By 2010, all social housing will have been made decent and a further 130,000 vulnerable households in the private sector will have had their homes made decent.
- Improved design quality of public buildings and places integrated into all communities, especially new and revitalised communities in growth areas and market renewal pathfinder areas.

The resources

- We are providing a total of around £2.8bn over the next three years to improve council housing.
- For 2003-04, £842m has already been allocated to local authorities to fund improvements to both council housing and privately owned homes, as well as new social housing. From 2004-05 onwards allocations will be made following advice from the new Regional Housing Boards (see Part 6).
- £685m new PFI credits are being made available for improvement of local authority housing in addition to the £760m already allocated.
- Our new rates of funding improvements in the management and maintenance of the council stock will mean support will be £500m higher in 2005-06 than would have been the case.
- £201m over the next three years for schemes to improve liveability. This funding complements the increased resources available to local authorities.

The key actions

Decent Homes

1.1 We have recently reviewed how we will deliver the decent homes target. The review team included representation from local government and other external contributors. We will publish the report setting out how we need to adjust policies to ensure all social tenants have decent housing by 2010. The key points are below.

Getting the basics right for decent social housing

1.2 Plans to improve social housing will be required to form part of a wider strategy for neighbourhood renewal and sustainable communities.

Housing providers will work closely with Local Strategic Partnerships and New Deal for Communities/Neighbourhood Management Partnerships.

1.3 Tenants must be at the heart of plans at all stages in the process, starting with drawing up options for investment. We will strengthen independent support for tenants.

Getting the framework right for social housing

1.4 Local authorities should separate their landlord function from their strategic housing responsibilities. Best Value reports show that landlords' concerns often dominate Local Authorities' thinking on housing when they should be considering strategies for whole local housing markets. Separation helps ensure that proper attention is given to both the strategic and landlord functions.

1.5 Local authorities will be able to choose the right approach for additional investment in housing stock which they own from the three existing options: stock transfer; the Private Finance Initiative (PFI); and, for high performing authorities, Arms Length Housing Management Organisations (ALMOs). Authorities that do not use these options cannot expect increased investment in their stock above that from the Housing Investment Programme. Authorities can use different options from this list for different parts of their stock, as part of an overarching strategy.

1.6 We will remove any unnecessary barriers to stock transfer, including meeting the cost of early redemption of Public Works Loan Board debt, extending arrangements for repaying overhanging debt to partial stock transfers, and exploring options for gap funding of negative value housing stock.

1.7 We will consult by April 2003 on additional models for funding future housing stock transfers that both secure the extra investment needed and improve the service to tenants.

The decent homes standard

In 2000 we set a standard for decent housing whereby housing should:

- *Be above the statutory minimum standard (i.e. the fitness standard)*
- *Be in a reasonable state of repair*
- *Provide reasonably modern facilities and services*
- *Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.*

Non-Decent Local Authority Dwellings by Local Authority as at April 2001



1.8 We will strive to make it easier for local authorities to refurbish homes through the PFI, for instance through resolving outstanding technical and legal issues, standardising documentation and providing more support. We will develop proposals to enable Local Authorities to build new social housing under PFI as part of a refurbishment scheme.

1.9 Following the recent consultation on local authority housing finance,

we will set out details of possible further freedoms and flexibilities for high performing (3*) ALMOs to borrow prudentially within public expenditure control totals.

Making the improvements happen for social housing

1.10 We expect every local authority with stock to produce an objective and rigorous appraisal of investment options for Government sign-off by July 2005. We will provide support to authorities to do this, and to put viable plans in place, through the Community Housing Task Force.

1.11 The Government will intervene where authorities fail to act, consistent with its approach to intervention following completion of Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPAs) and with the Joint Protocol agreed with the Local Government Association under the Central Local Partnership.

1.12 From April 2003 the new Single Inspectorate for housing will seek to ensure that all housing association and local authority tenants receive a consistently good and improving standard of service, and will pursue the drive for excellence in housing management.

1.13 We will work with landlords to increase the skills and capacity of those responsible for delivery of decent homes.



Many Council tenants will see their homes improved through stock transfer

Helping vulnerable occupants of private housing

1.14 We want to help more people in private housing have the opportunity of a decent home. Following the recent regulatory reform order, local authorities will be able to offer a wider range of financial help for the improvement of privately-owned housing including loans. We have made available an extra £30m in both 2004/5 and 2005/6 to help local authorities support new ways to fund repairs and improvements to the homes of low income/vulnerable homeowners/tenants, especially older people. This will form part of the single regional housing pot.

1.15 We have announced more funding for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) to help vulnerable home owners and tenants, especially older people and the disabled, apply for grants and loans and arrange for work to be carried out. HIAs will become part of the wider Supporting People programme that draws together a range of programmes to ensure vulnerable people are helped to live as independently as possible. Other Government initiatives such as the "Warm Front" programme and the "Keep Warm, Keep Well" campaign make a major contribution to decent housing conditions in the private sector, especially for older people.

1.16 We will continue to encourage schemes such as the "Houseproud Partnership" which offers support and loan finance to homeowners to repair their properties or carry out adaptations.

1.17 Tenants of private landlords will receive more statutory protection. Our Housing Bill, due to be published shortly, will contain provisions on mandatory licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and provisions to allow local authorities to license private landlords in low demand areas.

Better places

1.18 Liveability is essentially about quality local environments. It is therefore right that local authorities take the prime responsibility. We will work closely with local government through the shared priorities programme under the Central Local Partnership to sustain momentum. In particular central and local government are working together to develop a programme of pathfinder projects to drive a step change in performance across a range of issues including improving the local environment.

1.19 The role of national government is to provide support and the right frameworks to ensure local authorities can and do deliver. We have already increased, by £1bn over the next three years, the budget from which local authorities fund improvements to the local environment. In addition we are providing £201m over the next three years for schemes to improve liveability.



We are providing £2.8bn to improve council housing.

At a national level

1.20 We will help local authorities deliver greater improvements to their local environment by making better use of available powers. We are consulting on options for reforming the legislative framework of powers and responsibilities and will announce our intentions after consultation closes in February 2003.

1.21 We are introducing a new "Liveability" Fund totalling £89m over the next three years. This will support significant local authority led projects to improve parks and public spaces. We will announce details of the fund in April 2003. We will consider linking this funding with local public service agreements.

1.22 Existing performance systems such as Best Value (BV) and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) will be developed further to embrace liveability issues. From April 2003, local authorities will measure local environmental quality, in respect of litter and rubbish, through a new "cleanliness" BV Performance Indicator. The Audit Commission is piloting the form that CPAs will take for district councils when they are carried out later this year. Liveability features prominently in their proposals and the Government will discuss with the Commission the lessons arising from the pilot work.

1.23 We will improve the safety, cleanliness and attractiveness of commercial areas through legislative proposals currently in Parliament to enable the setting up of Business Improvement Districts. We have just published guidance on this.

1.24 In addition to the £201m liveability funding, there will be over £50m for Neighbourhood Warden Schemes, which play an important role in improving liveability.

1.25 We will implement Planning Policy Guidance to provide a clearer framework for the provision, protection and enhancement of open spaces and playing fields.

1.26 We will provide a total of £41m over the next three years to:

- support the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to drive up design standards, including skills. We want to see a step change in the quality of design, especially in growth areas and revitalised areas of low demand. Proper masterplanning should be integral to the design of major new developments, especially in growth areas and market renewal pathfinders;
- launch a new Unit - CABE Space - in April 2003. This unit will champion high quality planning, design, and the management and care of parks and public spaces, and will provide hands-on support to local authorities and others to apply best practice to improve the local environment and reduce crime and fear of crime;
- develop national quality standards and measurable targets for urban parks and green spaces, and expand the new Green Flags Partnership that acknowledges and rewards good practice in management of parks. We will also continue to support innovation in regeneration through our special grants programme;
- promote regional Centres of Excellence whose role will include best practice in regeneration, design and management of urban environments.

Urban Renaissance - making it happen

Much of our liveability agenda was set out in the Urban White Paper - Our Towns and Cities: the future - published in November 2000.

Good progress is being made towards achieving the urban renaissance described in the White Paper. For example we have:

- *Achieved target of 60% of all new homes to be built on brownfield land.*
- *Set out our vision and five-year improvement programme for parks and public spaces.*
- *Launched eight new Urban Regeneration Companies, making 11 in total, to redevelop and bring back investment to some of the worst areas of our cities.*
- *Identified seven Millennium Communities.*
- *Introduced comprehensive package of fiscal measures, worth £1bn over five years, to encourage investment in urban areas.*
- *Worked closely with 24 towns and cities in England to identify best practice and to examine ways of overcoming barriers to progress.*

In addition:

- *Regional Centres of Excellence are being set up in all English regions to improve skills and training in urban design.*
- *English Partnerships and Regional Development Agencies are promoting a wide range of sustainable regeneration projects across the country.*

At a local and neighbourhood level

1.27 In recognition of the solid track record of Groundwork (an environmental regeneration charity) in facilitating community-led improvements to the local environment, we are increasing their funding from £10m this year to reach £14m in 2005-06, a total of £40m over the next three years.

1.28 Groundwork's total allocation will fund 4,500 major projects each year, in partnership with local authorities and communities, transforming

over 6,000 hectares of local spaces and engaging over 50,000 local people.

1.29 Groundwork will also act as the conduit for a total of £30m over the next three years to support the new 'Community Enablers Scheme'. This is an increase of £27m on previous plans and will fund projects where local groups wish to take action to improve their local spaces and play areas. We will promote "World Environment Day", 5 June, to stimulate local communities into action to improve their local environment.

Urban Renaissance continued

Last November the Deputy Prime Minister and more than a dozen Ministers hosted a two-day Urban Summit in Birmingham to take stock of developments since the White Paper and to listen to views on how we can make faster progress. 150 speakers and 1,500 delegates from all sectors came together at the Summit and many of the issues debated there are taken forward in this Plan. The Summit was a key milestone towards the preparation of a major report on the state of our towns and cities to be published in 2005.

Green Flag Award Scheme

The Green Flag Award Scheme recognises the good management and care of parks and green spaces. It is managed by the Civic Trust.

The Government has announced its plans to create a new Green Flag Award Partnership and to transform the scheme so that it is a more nationally accepted quality standard.

Winners of the Green Flag Award are judged against a number of criteria, including whether the site is:

- a welcoming place;*
- clean and well-maintained;*
- sustainable; and*
- community involvement is actively pursued.*

1.30 Our Home Zones pilot programme has been successful in creating quieter and safer residential streets. We will encourage local authorities to develop Home Zones as a model for their residential streets, both in existing communities and when planning new developments. And we will work with partners to improve standards of design and care for our streets more generally.

1.31 We will continue to support innovative new community-based schemes - such as the "Idea Stores" - that offer community leisure services with library and adult education services, 'Healthy Living' Centres, community sports clubs and local leisure centres.

1.32 We will build on the successful Neighbourhood Management (NM) scheme - a way to join up the delivery of public services to a neighbourhood, in a partnership between communities and service providers. We will shortly launch a limited second round of NM pathfinders to explore the potential of this approach further.

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

1.33 We will continue to tackle the symptoms and causes of anti-social behaviour such as noisy neighbours, littering, graffiti, and vandalism that undermine the quality of life in our communities and especially in our most

deprived neighbourhoods.

1.34 A new cross-cutting unit in the Home Office is preparing proposals for tackling anti-social behaviour. Our strategy and the necessary reforms to achieve it will be set out in a White Paper and Bill planned for this year.

1.35 We will put 'planning out crime' at the heart of the planning process through updating our headline Planning Policy Guidance (PPG1). This will be supported by good practice guidance containing practical examples and suggestions.

1.36 We will pursue plans for neighbourhood and street wardens to be a personal presence to take care of neighbourhoods, targeting crime, anti-social behaviour and local environmental problems, such as litter, fly-tipping and abandoned cars.

Deprived communities and social exclusion

Communities will be sustainable only if they are fully inclusive and basic minimum standards of public services are delivered. This is true everywhere, but especially so in the most deprived neighbourhoods and for the most vulnerable groups in society.



The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit will continue to work to narrow the gap between deprived communities and the rest, through implementation of its national strategy action plan. At the centre of this is a drive to ensure that these communities benefit from effective public services.

The Social Exclusion Unit will continue to underpin the vision of sustainable communities through its work to understand and tackle social exclusion. An announcement about the Unit's forward work programme will be made shortly.

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- [Sustainable Communities: Building for the future - Summary \(PDF 411 Kb\)](#) 
- [Sustainable Communities: building for the future \(PDF 2121 Kb\)](#) 
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ALLERDALE AREA TRANSPORT ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERSHIP

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS (3)

Mrs B Cannon
Mr D Fairbairn
Mr G Humes

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (14)

Allerdale Borough Council – Mr J Milburn
Cumbria Police – Mr S Rothery, Traffic Management Officer
Age Concern – Andrew Holland
Stagecoach Cumberland – Richard Martin, Operations Manager
Local Business – John Grainger, Director of Operations, Cumbria Inward Investment Agency
Local Environment – Diane Standen, Allerdale 21 Forum
Allerdale Disability Association- David Howarth, Access Co-ordinator
Northern Trains – Chris Raby
Cycling/Pedestrian – Diane Moys
Taxi Operators – Mr I Afleck
Community Voluntary Transport – Mr N Greggains, North Cumbria Community
Transport Committee c/o Solway Garage, Curzon Street, Maryport
Health – Mr M Graham, North Cumbria PCT
LDNPA – Vacancy
Primary School Heads Assoc – Pauline Robertson
Local Access Forum - Mr D Young, 2 Ellerbeck Close, Workington, Cumbria. CA14 4HY
Housing Associations – Vacancy
Haulage Companies – Mr A Higgins, Director of Operations, System Group Ltd, Carlisle Airport
Business Park, Carlisle CA6 4NW

OFFICERS (13)

Graham Whiteley, C, E & E
Bob Allen, C, E & E
Mr P Atherton
Richard Evans, Allerdale Borough Council, Allerdale House, Workington, Cumbria CA14 3YJ
Mr A Butler, Assistant Area Engineer
Mr Keith Parker, West Cumbria Strategic Partnership
CMB
Box File
SPARES (4)

TOTAL (AT PRESENT) 30

COPELAND AREA TRANSPORT ADVISORY GROUP**(SALLY)****DISTRIBUTION LIST****June 2005****MEMBERSHIP (20)**

County Councillors (2)	Mr J B McAllister and Mr J Woolley
Age Concern NW Cumbria (1)	Mr A Holland
Copeland Local Agenda 21 Forum (1)	Mr R Hargreaves
Copeland Borough Councillor (2)	Mr H Wormstrup and Mr R Salkeld
Cycling/Pedestrian Interests (1)	Vacancy
Cumbria Constabulary (1)	Mr S Rothery
Local Business (1)	John Granger
West Cumbria Primary Care Trust (1)	Vacancy
Women (1)	Mrs M Dinning
Copeland Disability Forum (1)	Ms J Prince
Lake District National Park (1)	Mr A J Johnston
Copeland Rail Users Group (1)	Mr A Potts
Stagecoach (1)	Mr R Martin
Cumbria Local Access Forum (1)	Mr D Graham
First North Western (1)	Mr C Raby
West Cumbria LSP (1)	Ms E A Clegg
Highways Working Group (1)	Mr B Kirk
Copeland Parish Council (1)	Mr R Stewart

OFFICERS: (17)

Mr John Dell – Area Engineer, EC&E Richmond House, Catherine Street, Whitehaven
Mr S Sykes, Capita Symonds, c/o Richmond House, Catherine Street, Whitehaven
Mr J Hughes, Economic Development, Copeland Borough Council (01946 - 598435)
Mr K Parker, West Cumbria Strategic Partnership, (Environmental Well-being Group)
Mr R Terwey, Strategic Planning Manager, EC&E, Carlisle
Mr J Smith, Principal Transport Policy Officer, EC&E, Carlisle
Mr J Marriott, Copeland Area Support Manager, EC&E, Richmond House
Mr G Whiteley – C E & E
Mr M Heaslip, 1 Wilson Street, Workington, CA14 4AZ
Mr S Ratcliffe (Policy and Strategy Manager), LDNP Office, Murley Moss, Kendal
Mr M Eccles (Access and Recreation Manager), LDNP Office, Murley Moss, Kendal
Mr R Craig (Traffic and Transport Adviser), LDNP Office, Murley Moss, Kendal
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