

Summary of Achievements

2021/22



Making Copeland a great place to live, work and visit.

Introduction

This has been another year when, despite challenges, I can say I'm incredibly proud of what Copeland – its staff, councillors and residents – has achieved.

This is the final Summary of Achievements I will introduce for Copeland, before we become a part of the Cumberland unitary authority next year.

Safely managing our services in a time of change, and still focusing on growth and the future, has been a tremendous achievement.

For much of the last year we were still in the thick of the pandemic, and continued to deliver vital support to our communities when they needed it most. From the front line to the back office, our staff once again went the extra mile and I want to thank every colleague for their dedication and work this year.

There have been enormous strides made in terms of supporting and expanding our economy. Partnership work has brought about the Industrial Solutions Hub, which will become an exciting focal point for global skills and research. And the Cleator Moor Innovation Quarter will increase diversity and increase resilience in our economy.

We have implemented or supported countless projects to help communities and all while we put unprecedented time and effort into preparing for the historic change that will be the creation of a new unitary council next year.

I hope you can take a moment to read this document and reflect on some of what we – with our partners and

communities – have achieved over the last 12 months. We should all be proud, and excited about what we will achieve together in the future.

Mike Starkie
Mayor of Copeland



Customer Services

- Our team answered almost 35,000 of your phone calls, and around 17,000 emails last year.

The Beacon Museum

- Our museum won a Visit England 'Best Told Story' award.
- Since we reopened at the end of May, we have welcomed around 15,000 visitors.
- We launched an extensive volunteering programme and employed a Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- We successfully applied to the Cultural Recovery Fund to help the museum recover economically after the pandemic.
- Post lockdown, we safely reintroduced activities and events in a Covid-safe way.
- People visited us for free during Free Family Thursdays and Tourism Tuesdays.
- Our volunteers audited around 1,000 museum objects. We also completed valuations on our 'Top 500' assets.
- Our third-floor gallery received a fantastic makeover.
- We introduced a new, easy-to-use booking system.

Property

- We carried out statutory safety checks on all our buildings to make sure they are safe and have detailed maintenance plans.
- We completed the letting of part of the Copeland Centre, securing a rental income.

Bereavement Services

- We kept staff and visitors safe while we continued our services during the pandemic.
- Our Chapel of Remembrance was fully refurbished and we now have a metal memorial 'tree' for people to add leaves to, a baby memorial book and new vases.
- We helped people remember loved ones with special services for Mothers' and Fathers' Day, for baby loss and at Christmas.
- We developed our walled garden at Distington Crematorium, inviting volunteers and schools to help clear overgrowth, plant a lavender maze and prepare an avenue of fruit trees. We plan a wildflower meadow and hope to grow flowers for use in the grounds.
- We brought our grave digging service in-house and offered a new service of annual quality checks on graves.
- We welcomed Community Payback members to work in our open spaces.
- We invested in robotic mowers to cut grass more efficiently and create fewer clippings.
- We now have a recycling station at the Crematorium, cutting the amount of plastic in our grounds.
- We began a programme of refurbishing memorial benches.

Green Spaces

- We've taken on additional contracts to help keep our borough beautiful.
- All our parks staff now have a first aid qualification.
- We carried out around 840 play area inspections – on our own playgrounds and those owned by town and parish councils.

Leisure & Tourism

- We created colourful tourist maps of each of our main towns.
- We commissioned video footage of our towns and villages to promote the borough to visitors.
- Our Coastal art project – Deep Time - continued with designs for pieces of art along the coast.
- We began recruiting and training people to deliver walks and talks for locals and visitors.
- With partners Allerdale Council, we commissioned a cultural strategy, which will be launched later in 2022.
- We sent regular newsletters to our tourism-related businesses and offered them support.
- We launched a new series of Bakers and Makers markets.
- We commissioned a series of family-friendly story walk maps.
- We offered free parking during the festive period.

Jobs & Skills

- Our Work and Skills programme helped more than 100 people gain skills or qualifications such as apprenticeships and NVQs. It also helped people with disabilities and the long-term unemployed move towards employment - with 31 job offers through the programme.
- We supported more than 90 businesses – helping them fill skills gaps and supporting tourism and leisure businesses with advice.

Building Control

- Our team secured more than 90 per cent of local building control work in a very competitive market.
- All applications were determined within the required timescales.
- We successfully dealt with 19 reports of dangerous buildings or structures.
- We retained Quality Assurance accreditation and Chartered Consultancy status - both are internationally recognised and externally assessed.
- During the pandemic we delivered a safe service and our customer feedback was 100 per cent positive.

Regeneration & the Economy

- We hosted a successful Open For Business conference.
- We successfully applied for £370k to help Cleator Moor and Millom draw up business plans to apply for Town Deal money.
- We secured advance funding for Cleator Moor and Millom Town Deals of £2.155m from DLUHC.
- We were offered £22.5m for Cleator Moor and £20.6m for Millom to deliver their Town Investment Plans. Now, we're working on the business plans that we hope will secure that funding.
- We partnered in the Industrial Solutions Hub – a way for Sellafield Ltd, its supply chain and the council to bring together world-leading skills, innovation and research.
- We launched our Young Entrepreneurs' scheme – giving grants, guidance and free market stalls to young people with business ideas. The monthly markets are boosting trade for other town centre businesses too.
- We bought the Leconfield Industrial Estate and launched the Cleator Moor Innovation Quarter – an exciting project to boost our economy and increase its diversity and resilience.



Housing

- We successfully housed 156 people who were homeless.
- 236 households given expert advice and support on their housing situation.
- We supported 87 households with temporary, emergency accommodation.
- We helped 74 people (including 48 children) who needed support with their housing needs because of abusive relationships.
- We facilitated the government's Green Homes grant scheme.

Licensing

- Our team carried out 1,134 land charge searches and 642 personal searches.
- They also processed 416 applications for various different types of licences.

Waste

- We collected almost 30,000 tonnes of waste, and recycled around 36 per cent of it.
- We collected 4,592 tonnes of garden waste. These collections remain included in the price of your council tax.
- We increased the number of trade waste collection contracts by ten per cent.
- We supported around 50 litter picks with equipment, then collected the waste afterwards.
- We employed two seasonal beach cleaners to keep our shores clean for locals and visitors.

Empowering Our Communities

- We partnered in Reboot, a way for businesses to focus and magnify their social impact spending.
- Our Social Prescribing programme secured 5,778 volunteering hours, recruited 91 volunteers and helped 326 people develop their skills.
- Our Social Prescribers advised 250 people on using community activity to improve wellbeing.
- We secured £354,591 of investment through partnerships with third sector and community groups. These projects address financial, social and digital exclusion, health and wellbeing, and cultural awareness.
- On our behalf, Cumbria Law Centre gave free advice to 122 residents, and Citizens Advice helped 2,313 people.
- We created a Multicultural Steering Group to promote cultural understanding. It launched a women's activity programme, a men's walking group and 'conversation cafes' where English can be practiced.
- With partners, we ensured the Phoenix Enterprise Centre Thrift Hub provided healthy, subsidised food to 195 families.
- We created the West Cumbria Aging Well Partnership.
- We organised drop-in events where residents accessed a wide range of support.



- We supported West Cumbria Community Action Trust to give out 50 Christmas day meals, plus hampers and gifts to 289 struggling residents.
- Our hardship grant, delivered by our local Credit Union, helped 110 residents in difficulty due to the pandemic.
- Our staff delivered sandbags to residents during storms, and cleared fallen trees.
- With partners, we created a protocol to ensure families seeking help receive continued support.



Our Organisation

- We welcomed our staff safely back into our offices.
- Many of our staff took on new roles to support the work towards Local Government Reorganisation.
- We installed a new system for staff to manage their leave.
- We completed a gender pay gap report.
- We trained our staff in equality and diversity, safeguarding and climate change.
- We supported our health advocates, mental health first aiders, first aiders and fire wardens to maintain a healthy, safe work place.
- We reviewed many of our organisational structures.
- We achieved the TUC Bronze Health at Work Award.

Improving Our Environment

- We installed new disabled-friendly benches and picnic tables throughout the borough.
- We commissioned a mural for Egremont, and the painting of a bandstand, a gazebo and lamp posts.
- We gave litter picking kits to dozens of community groups.
- We prepared the ground for a new community woodland at Hensingham.
- We planted wildflower areas to support the Cumbria Wildlife Trust and celebrate the Platinum Jubilee.
- Our team planted 300 trees in Mirehouse to reduce flooding.
- CCTV and new lighting in Whitehaven's Castle Park allow residents to enjoy the park safely.
- We have asked residents how they use Castle Park so that we can manage it accordingly, and we hope to help create a 'Friends of' group.
- We developed a Climate Action Plan to help us decarbonise the borough by 2043, and reduce our own emissions to net zero by 2032.
- We created a 'people's panel' to garner local views on what can be done to tackle climate change.
- With BEC, we bought and made safe the former Red Lion pub site in Egremont.



Environmental Health

- We traced more than 3,000 Covid contacts.
- We dealt with 1,843 Environmental Health complaints, including 739 noise complaints, 170 Covid compliance complaints, and 55 complaints about food.
- We carried out 106 infectious disease investigations and 211 food hygiene inspections.
- We visited businesses 1,096 times to advise on Covid safety and compliance.
- Our pest control staff looked into or treated 1,028 reports of pests.

Planning & Development

- We had one of the country's highest rates for the approval of planning applications - 98 per cent of applications were approved.
- We were among the UK's fastest authorities in determining planning applications: 100 per cent of major applications, and 99 per cent of minor ones, were determined within set timescales.
- We successfully defended 80 per cent of appeals against our refusals of planning permission.
- We assessed five of our conservation areas, describing their character and significance in order to preserve and enhance it.
- We dealt with 150 planning enforcement cases.
- We have completed a consultation on our Local Plan - asking how the borough should develop.
- The Whitehaven Bus Station development won three awards - including overall winner - in the Royal Town Planners' Institute North West awards.

Copeland Borough Council

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Proud of our past. Energised for our future.

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