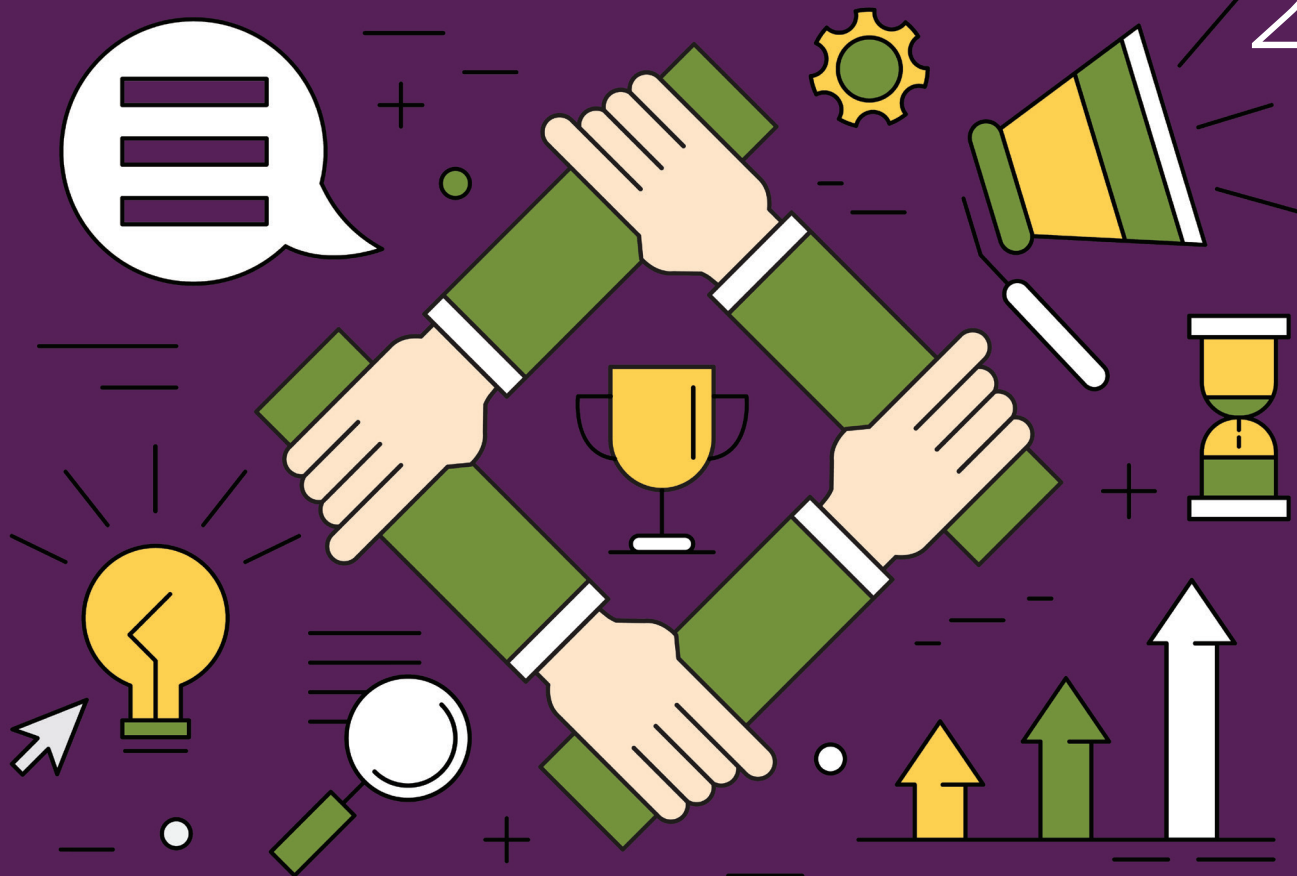


Summary of Achievements

2021/22



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

Introduction

“It’s difficult to put into words the enormous amount of gratitude and admiration I have for each and every colleague who has gone above and beyond for the Copeland community over the past 12 months.

The challenges that we have faced, as individuals, and as a council, have been unprecedented and our officers, and members, have worked tirelessly around the clock for our community.

I’m proud to share just some of our achievements, in this extraordinary year. This document illustrates, in particular, the dedicated workforce here at Copeland, a lot of which goes unseen, for example the £3.7 million worth of contracts awarded by our Procurement team, or the 691 Freedom of Information requests we processed in the last year.

It’s also difficult to quantify the vital role our support services staff play including, for example, our HR, ICT, Communications and Democratic Services teams, who rolled out agile working to hundreds of staff and councillors in a matter of weeks to ensure services to the public would remain largely unaffected. Also, continuing to successfully recruit to key positions, providing 486 hours of essential training, upskilling our teams, and ensuring our workforce was supported during what will be one of the most challenging times in their careers, and lives.

Keeping our employees and communities safe was of paramount importance during the pandemic and we were the first district council in Cumbria to deliver Lateral Flow Testing to frontline staff. This has since been extended to all our employees.

All of this hard work and commitment ultimately makes a fundamental difference to people’s lives across the borough.

With this in mind, I’d also like to thank our residents, partners, councillors and businesses who continue to dedicate time, finances and resources to improving the lives of the people of Copeland.”

Mike Starkie, Mayor of Copeland



Community

- The launch of our Social Prescribing Directory has enabled us to signpost residents to sources of support to improve their mental health and wellbeing.
- The team has co-ordinated more than 1,900 hours of volunteering in the community.
- More than 1,500 emergency food parcels were delivered to residents forced to self-isolate, through our work with the Copeland Resilience Group.
- Emergency food packs and care provisions were provided to 250 families, directly from our offices.
- In addition, 5,000 hot meals were provided to 150 families during the emergency stage of the pandemic.
- Alongside our partners (CAAS, The Rotary Club, Freemasonry, The Lions) and volunteers, we delivered 60 meals and hampers on Christmas Day to those in need.
- In addition, 100 families that were financially struggling were provided with a meat voucher, and fruit and vegetable hamper at Christmas.
- We worked with local charity West Cumbria Community Action Trust to provide support, gifts, food, care packs and resources to more than 300 families during the Christmas period.
- In partnership with Cumbria County Council and Phoenix Enterprise Centre, we have provided 170 families with subsidised fresh food, care items, and financial guidance, to those in financial difficulty.
- We provided 123 children with meals during the October school holiday.
- We attended daily strategic command meetings to co-ordinate the Covid-19 response, throughout the pandemic.
- Digital devices and internet access were provided to 300 pupils experiencing digital poverty, to support their schooling. This project was in partnership with the Sellafield supply chain and Cumbria County Council.
- Financial hardship grants were given to 150 families who were experiencing extreme financial hardship during the pandemic, through our credit union partners.
- We offered up Whitehaven Sports Centre for conversion into a Covid-19 Recovery Centre.
- Our Bereavement Services team increased daily services to accommodate additional demand during the pandemic, supporting families at their lowest moment.

Financial support

We processed:

- 3,321 new claims for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support
- 4,026 changes in circumstances relating to benefit claims
- 31,631 Department for Work and Pensions change notifications
- 357 Test and Trace Support Payment and additional support payments
- 2042 Hardship Fund allocations
- 324 Discretionary Housing Payment applications
- We have awarded £25.8 million in Government grants to businesses during the pandemic.
- We have supported more than 2,500 residents with more than £500,000 through our Council Tax Hardship scheme.

Community and Our Organisation

- The Government's 'Everyone in Scheme' enabled our Housing team to support 95 households who were homeless, or at risk of being homeless. The scheme was launched during the Covid-19 pandemic and placed a discretionary duty on local authorities to accommodate rough sleepers, or those at risk of rough sleeping. Although Copeland has a very low number of rough sleepers, there is a significant number of hidden homeless (those who find shelter with friends or family).
- We have housed 125 homeless individuals or families, over the year, including those with chaotic and high-risk lifestyles. 85 of these households have now moved into long-term accommodation.
- Our team continued to operate a 24 hour-a-day service to our most vulnerable residents, throughout the pandemic. This included responding to 125 out-of-hours calls.
- Advice and assistance was provided to 449 households regarding homelessness issues; 101 of these faced issues around domestic abuse, 12 of these required emergency accommodation and support from our specialist prevention and crisis support officer.
- Our Housing Renewals team completed 35 Housing Standards Inspections to improve housing conditions, to hold landlords to account, ensuring rental properties provide a safe and healthy environment for residents.
- The team dealt with 133 Disabled Facilities Grant applications and implemented a new process reducing waiting times for those in need.
- We have supported six residents, including disabled children, to stay in their own homes through funding major property adaptations.

Systems

- Our Geological Information System (GIS) supported local community Covid-19 volunteer groups to map their geographical boundaries, ensuring no gaps between the groups and that people weren't being missed if they needed support.
- We also used the system to highlight urban areas that were difficult for pedestrians to maintain social distancing due to the pavement width. This was then used to plan alternative routing or pedestrianisation in certain areas.
- We maintained Gold Standard for our Local Address Gazetteer (LLPG) - awarded by GeoPlace who use our data to contribute to their national address database, which is used by organisations including the Fire and Rescue Services, North West Ambulance Service and Cumbria Police.

Meetings

- We have held 68 virtual meetings since May 2020; the equivalent of 172 hours.
- Member attendance at meetings has increased to 86 per cent, compared with 77 per cent in the previous 12 months.
- Around 690 members of the public attended our meetings.

Customers

- We answered more than 41,000 calls and responded to more than 27,000 emails during the pandemic. On average, our calls are answered within 28 seconds.
- We received more than 100 customer compliments.

Strategy

- We have produced, and have reflected the pandemic in our Copeland Vision 2040 document, the Cumbria Nuclear Prospectus and our Corporate Strategy.

Buildings and Planning

Building Control service

- We have used a proactive approach to secure over 90 per cent of the market share in a very competitive working environment.
- 100 per cent of applications have been determined within statutory timescales.
- We successfully dealt with 20 reported dangerous buildings/structures.
- We've retained ISO 9001: 2015 (Quality Assurance) accreditation and Chartered Consultancy status with the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), both externally assessed.
- Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, we have continued to provide our services to householders and the construction industry, maintaining our standard of 100 per cent positive feedback.

Council buildings

- We achieved 100 per cent of our statutory compliance checks.
- 100 per cent of our quinquennial building condition surveys were re-surveyed. These are required to ensure that historic, ecclesiastical (church) properties are regularly reviewed and that repairs and maintenance are planned.
- We successfully terminated the PFI agreement on the Copeland Centre, generating both significant savings of around £850,000 per annum, and new income streams for the council. It also allowed us to carry out £1 million improvement works for the benefit of ourselves and tenants.
- Our Moresby Depot has also now been refurbished to create a better working environment for our staff and to allow space to be reallocated to support our new flexible working regime.

Planning service

- We have one of the highest rates for the approval of planning applications in the country with 99 per cent of all applications being approved over the last 12 months.
- We are one of the top performing planning authorities for the speed in which we determine planning applications. Over the last 12 months:
 - 100 per cent of all major applications have been determined within agreed timescales.
 - 99 per cent of minor and other applications have been determined within agreed timescales
- We have also successfully defended 85 per cent of the appeals lodged against our refusals of planning permission.
- We have appraised five of the conservation areas in our borough, over the last 12 months.
- We have dealt with, or are dealing with, 87 planning enforcement cases.
- We moved planning applications online to ensure the public had access to documents and were able to submit comments.

Area

- Our Copeland Local Plan consultation generated more than 1,000 responses from individuals and organisations.
- We registered 197 new properties.



Environment and Economy

Environmental health

- We carried out 1,103 pest control investigations and treatments.
- We also carried out 347 food premises inspections. We dealt with:
 - 191 waste accumulation complaints
 - 96 smoke complaints
 - 767 noise complaints
 - 54 food complaints
- We carried out 929 Covid-19 inspection visits, across the entire borough, and dealt with 1,121 Covid-19 complaints and offered bespoke advice, which continues.
- We processed 1,049 land charges requests and 647 personal search requests.
- Our Licencing team processed more than 100 licencing requests including temporary event notices, variations, new licences and taxi licences.

Green spaces

- We have planted over 40,000 snowdrop, bluebell, daffodil bulbs and other plants as part of our 'Get Cumbria Buzzing' project.
- Our operational teams continued to work through and maintain over 98,2346 SqM of open spaces over 128 locations. That is the equivalent of 1,220 football pitches worth of grass cutting and 70 Olympic pools' worth of plants and flowers in our shrub beds and verges.
- We recycled more than 104 tonnes of green waste over the year.



Waste services

- We have collected 23,000 tonnes of waste and have recycled 36.3 per cent of this.
- We have seen around a 30 per cent increase in the amount of materials for our kerbside recycling collections, as well as an increase in residual waste, fly-tipping and street-cleansing waste.

Economy

- We secured £1 million from central Government for Cleator Moor and Millom, supporting the local communities to access the outdoors and encouraging more active lifestyles through improved play parks, cycleways and sports facilities.
- We have developed two Town Investment Plans for Cleator Moor and Millom, which we hope will draw potential funding of up to £49 million into these areas.
- We supported more than 70 businesses with workforce development and meeting local skills gaps.
- We acquired key assets in the Whitehaven area which will allow us to apply for future funding opportunities.
- We purchased the Leconfield Industrial Estate, in Cleator Moor, and have plans to work with partners to create jobs and business opportunities within the community.
- On behalf of the Copeland community, we joined and now take an active part on a working group formed to start the conversation on whether Copeland is a suitable location for Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) in which to store radioactive waste.
- We successfully used the vision set out in the Cumbria Nuclear Prospectus to attract new interest in development of new nuclear at Moorside, and worked with EDF and partners to develop proposals for a Clean Energy Hub.

The Beacon Museum

- We loaned an exhibit detailing local links to Trans-Atlantic Trade in the 17th Century to the Corning Museum of Glass in New York.
- 6,000 images, 200 artworks and 25 objects were captured in a digital format.
- Implemented a £250,000 digital programme bringing local history to life.
- Welcomed 420 families during the Christmas period and gave out more than 700 gifts.
- Added £115k in value to our most significant individual collection piece.
- We had a Local Government Authority (LGA) light touch review to reset our business strategy.



Copeland Community Fund



- The fund contributed £50,000 to the Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund, £2,000 of supermarket vouchers to community response groups, provided hot food for the nursing staff and made £1,372,640 in grant payments to community groups.
- We committed grants to 26 new projects and provided six development grants, including £20,000 to provide digital devices to support disadvantaged children to learn remotely.

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