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captivating

cutting edge

creative • communities • caring
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collaborative • commercial

one cumbria

A PROPOSITION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM FROM CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL



a single unitary authority

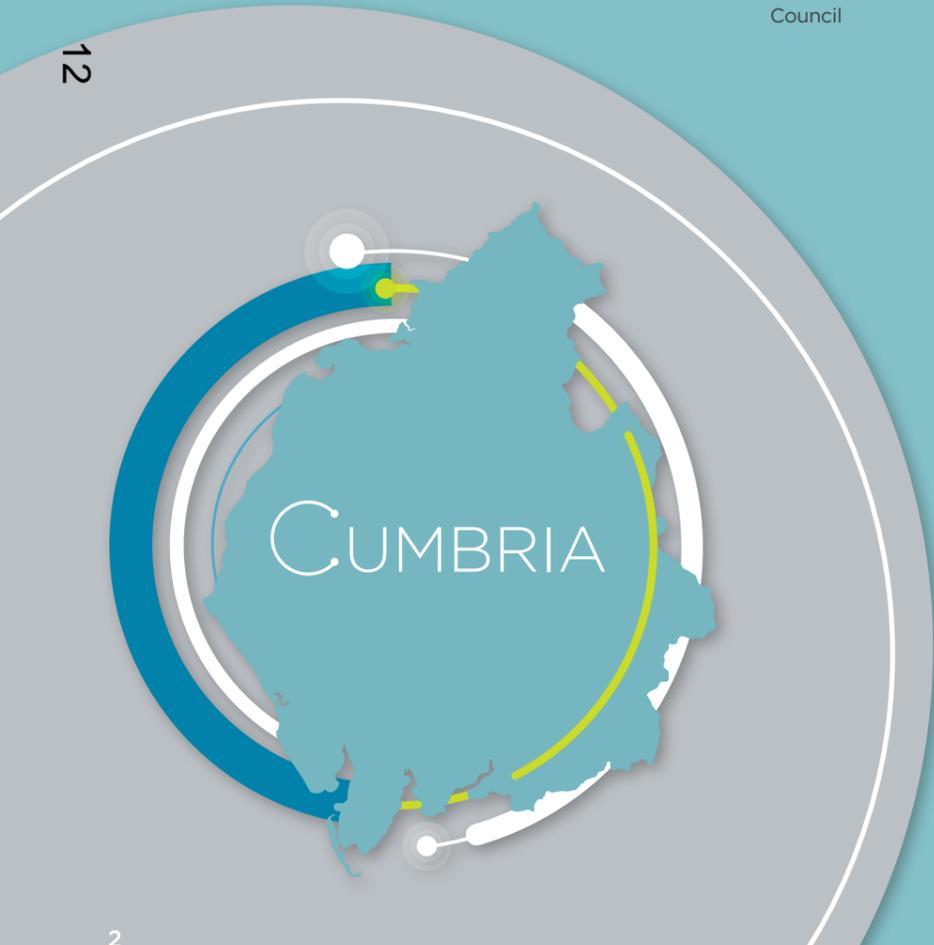
Through this proposal, we formally request agreement from the Secretary of State to replace Cumbria's existing seven councils with a single unitary authority with continuing authority status for the County Council. This will allow rapid and efficient transition to focus on transformation, delivery and provide a strong foundation for a future devolution deal.



Councillor Stewart Young
Leader of Cumbria County Council



Katherine Fairclough
Chief Executive of Cumbria County Council



one

vision

'One' new council for the people of Cumbria

One council that will deliver

- **A clear focus on the future** - modernising local government for the 21st century
- A **strong, single, accountable** voice
- A firm foundation for a **future devolution deal**
- **Strengthened leadership** to transform public services
- **Direct and simple** accountability for residents
- **Stronger town and parish councils and locality working** - more powers to Cumbria's many and varied local communities over what happens in their area
- **Better connected communities** - bringing together people and place - celebrating their unique sense of place, protecting their history and working with them to secure a better collective future for all
- **An ambitious plan for clean, inclusive growth and innovation** - contributing locally, regionally and nationally
- **Better outcomes for all** - we will build on the journey of improvement and transformation that is already well underway in Cumbria. This will create better and more joined up services, new delivery models and easier and simpler access to services for residents and customers
- **Significant savings** - providing a catalyst for reinvestment in transformation and services
- Delivering the very **best value for money** for Cumbria's taxpayers

Through one council we will remove artificial boundaries and layers of bureaucracy and place power in the hands of our communities. We will provide a single easy point of contact for partners, public and the government - removing the existing confusion for residents and customers.

The new council will build on and enhance the County's existing six localities. An approach that successfully balances strategic leadership with real community empowerment and locally led solutions. Working closely with all of our urban and rural communities, parish councils and the third sector Cumbria has a proven track record here and it is an approach that shines out in times of real community need and crisis.

Cumbria comes from a place of strength and confidence. Only a single new council can provide the assurance, leadership and capacity needed to reshape the county's local government offer as well as delivering what is needed to drive transformation through at pace and help Cumbria build a better future.

Only 'one' council can deliver what is needed for all

opportunity

Our offer

Making a significant contribution to the UK

One United Kingdom - one council will accelerate growth in the key priority sectors that will support the UK's post COVID-19 economic recovery. It will deliver food and energy security post-Brexit: advanced manufacturing opportunities, energy solutions, and agritech innovation.

Cumbria is uniquely placed to connect the four nations of the UK. Cumbria is the only county strategically placed at the very heart of the country providing Ports that access the Irish sea and a key route between England and Scotland with the M6 corridor. We are located at the centre of the UK.

We already have a successful cross-nation 'Borderlands' Inclusive Growth Deal showing the clear benefits of cross-border working.

Cumbria will make an even more significant contribution to a strong and growing economy of the North.

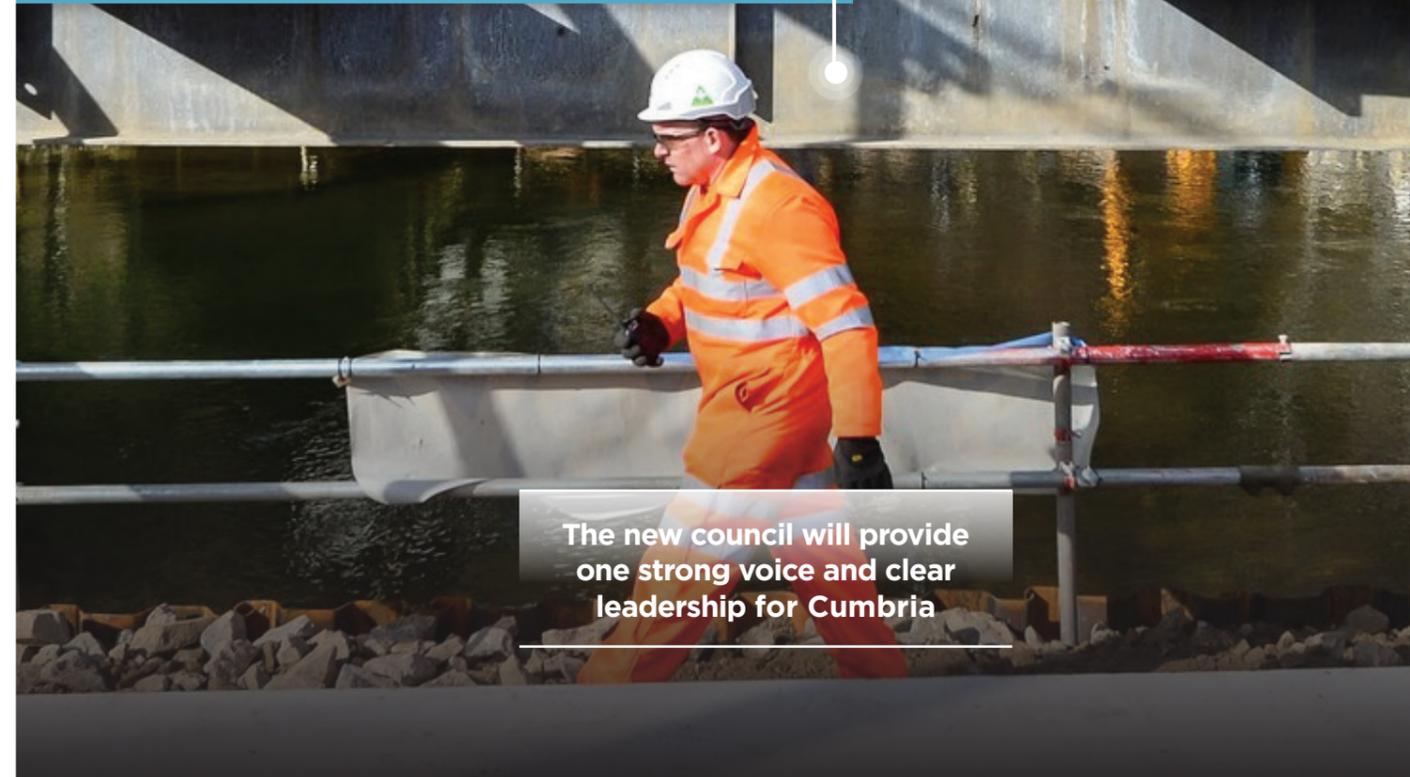
We have an international reputation as a centre of advanced manufacturing, tourism and nuclear excellence.



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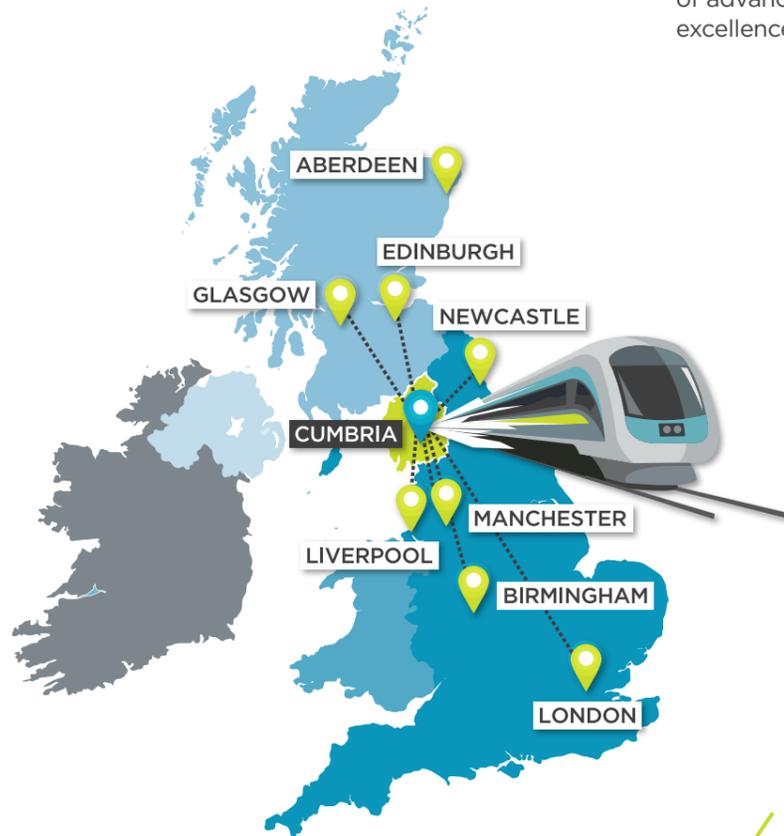
council

Delivering better outcomes for all



The new council will provide one strong voice and clear leadership for Cumbria

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to Aberdeen	4 hr	to Manchester	2 hr
to Edinburgh	1 hr 30	to Birmingham	3 hr
to Glasgow	1 hr 45	to London	3 hr 30
to Newcastle	1 hr 30		
to Liverpool	2 hr		



Levelling up the region

One economy – one council will lead delivery of inclusive and clean growth and the county’s recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cumbria is strongly positioned to support the rebalancing of the UK economy to the benefit of our residents. A unitary council will align and unlock opportunities at a local level while bringing the strategic capacity and expertise needed to deliver strategic change.

Joining up economic development and business support, housing, spatial planning, education and skills provides a powerful platform for boosting the county’s economic growth and recovery. This proposition will also create a single fully integrated, sustainable transport network across Cumbria.

The new council will work with local stakeholders and partners and will ensure levelling up is driven from the bottom up.

It will provide one strong voice and clear leadership for Cumbria. It will champion and contribute to a strong Northern economy alongside other regional and sub-regional economic plans.

14 One council alone can provide the capacity and skills required to successfully deliver major projects and programmes of investment and inclusive growth for our communities.

Unleashing local opportunities

For local residents

One council will lead delivery of the ambition to make Cumbria a great place to live, earn and learn.

Harnessing thriving communities that are well connected, that support each other and have a strong voice to co-design what they want from public services.

One council will celebrate our vibrant towns and their unique identity. Creating more opportunities for skills and jobs that are relevant for the future. Providing personalised support for families and individuals that need it.

Joining up services that work together around one community, one family and one individual to help them identify their strengths, and to access the right support for them. One council will deliver significant additional improvements for children and older people as a result of closer collaboration and even stronger system leadership.

Providing one point of contact – simpler to access and easier to understand.

Protecting and sustaining our breath-taking natural landscape for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

For Cumbrian businesses

One council will provide one point of contact for businesses - providing easier access to the range of services which impact on them and their ability to grow.

It will also provide a single strategic authority that provides the robust leadership of place to secure investment into the county – to unlock opportunities for growth and attract the workforce, skills, and facilities for the future.



I believe that reform is necessary and that, in a county of our size and population, to have 6 District and a County Council is unnecessary, overly expensive and not the most effective means to deliver services to our residents. I also believe that it is possible to create one or at most two administrative bodies/authorities which operate at strategic level on the one hand and can also see the delivery of service effectively to residents at a very local level without further administrative layers in between.
Police & Crime Commissioner for Cumbria

One council will lead delivery of the ambition to make Cumbria a great place to live, earn and learn



For partners

One council will make the public service landscape in Cumbria less complex and easier to navigate. Through strong system leadership one council will lead the transformation of public services. Strategic partners will be able to talk to 'one' council instead of seven – saving time and resources.

The new council will work closely and enhance relationships with the Third Sector and strengthen town and parish councils. Providing them with support and capacity, so that they can build on opportunities to play a greater role with their local communities in decision-making and in service design and delivery.



Leading transformation

One new council will simplify the current arrangements of local government and provide a springboard for accelerated change and improvement into the future.

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A single unitary council, with the County Council as continuing authority, will achieve transition at pace. It will provide a catalyst for rapid reform, building on the best of before but with greater ambition for the future. Delivering a modern 21st century local government solution for the whole of Cumbria.

Cumbria faces a number of significant challenges:

- recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social impacts
- improving infrastructure and digital connectivity
- attracting the workforce the economy needs for the future
- climate and environmental impacts
- creating a more inclusive society and tackling inequalities
- ensuring improvements for children and
- the future sustainability of services over the large rural areas within Cumbria, the ageing population and their increasing complex needs

This one council approach will enhance our abilities to deal with the challenges and unlock the opportunities to create a more inclusive society.

Our communities will continue to thrive, supporting families, children young people and the elderly. Young people in Cumbria will have the prospect to learn new skills, find work, and fulfil their potential. Families will be better supported by a more connected, tailored approach that brings together education, housing, jobs and social care.

one

Older people will be supported to live at home as long as they can and want to and we will provide quality care for those that need it. One council provides the catalyst for bringing systems and partnerships together for the greater benefit of everyone. It will build on the journey of improvement and transformation that is already underway.

Reform will enable us to deliver key services such as housing and planning developments driving out the benefits of a countywide approach whilst at the same time securing local solutions.

At the heart of the new council will be the commitment to create a stronger role for town and parish councils and locality working. Ensuring that all the decisions and services, that are best delivered locally, are done in this way and that they are responsive to the needs of the local communities and their elected members. Strengthening the role of local members and community leadership at the most local level.



Cumbria Third Sector Network supports a move away from the current two-tier system of local government. We believe that a unitary model is easier for the public to understand, easier for third sector organisations to engage with, offers better value for money, and provides an opportunity for greater integration of services and improved outcomes for the people of Cumbria.
Third Sector Network

One council

solution

Now must be the time for reform and for the creation of one council for Cumbria



An opportunity to build on the best

One unitary provides the opportunity to build on the successes of local government across Cumbria to deliver collective ambitions and better outcomes. Providing leadership and helping co-develop local solutions that empower our communities.

The value and success of single leadership working alongside 'shaping and delivering' local solutions has been repeatedly proven over recent years - and is particularly visible during times of major incidents, such as COVID-19. The benefits of this can also be seen through the delivery of innovative solutions already in place - examples include e.g. Think Family and Egerton Court in Barrow. These are both initiatives that put people at the heart of improvement and show the true benefits of joined up system leadership.

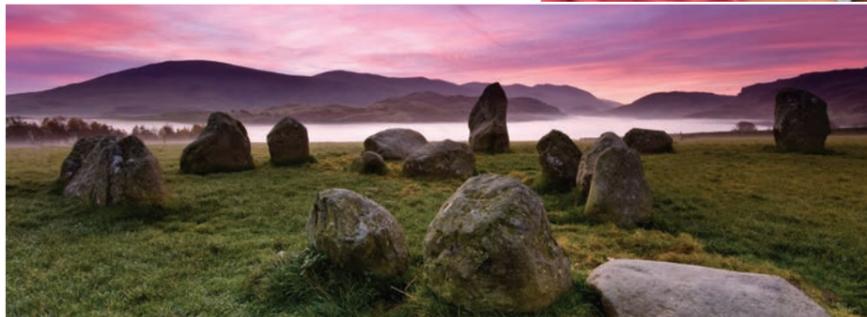
The experience in Cumbria has been that when we all 'collectively focus' on an urgent common goal (e.g. severe weather events) boundaries can be put to one side. A single council for Cumbria will allow us to build on this with an unwavering focus on better outcomes for people.

A single unitary will ensure a fully integrated, sustainable transport network across Cumbria. Economies of scale would be achieved by having a single highways authority for Cumbria, with the opportunity to enhance the local decision making and funding for highways management at a local level. For example, decisions on local roads and public transport may be best made by the local town or parish council. If responsibility for highways was split across 2 unitary authorities it would create artificial transport boundaries within Cumbria and it would be more difficult to coordinate and join up strategic corridors and ensure consistency in standards and delivery.

One council will provide a strong foundation for a future devolution deal creating a single accountable voice in our communities. It will be an organisation of sufficient size and capacity that it can create the conditions needed for sustainable change and improvement, providing services that are responsive and co-developed with partners and communities. This approach will bring efficiencies and improved value for Cumbrian taxpayers and enable greater investment into services and communities.

Change to a single new council for Cumbria will ensure simple and clear access to services for all. Putting the customer at the heart of everything. Removing confusion and making the most of digital and face-to-face help points.

This will enrich the working lives of all local government employees, with a culture of empowerment, innovation, collaboration, flexibility and a shared employee focus and common goal of 'local first'.



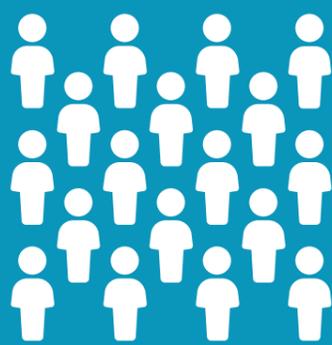
Cumbria Association of Local Councils feels that local government in two-tier areas like Cumbria faces additional challenges that can sometimes make it harder to achieve the strong leadership and accountability which our communities need. The Association welcomes in principle the aim of delivering better public services through a local government reorganisation in Cumbria, which sees arrangements in place that allow communities, through their elected town and parish councils, greater influence over what happens in their areas.
 Chair of Cumbria Association of Local Councils

One new council is the only solution that will improve outcomes for everyone - people and places - for all our communities, families, and children - who are the key to our future.

Cumbria is a large county with diverse communities

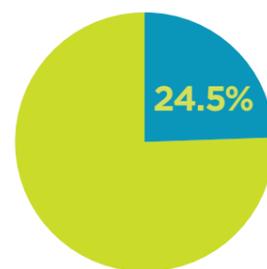
17 with rich cultural heritage. It is also complex.

one



Total Population **500,012**

Cumbria is much less densely populated than the national average



Almost one quarter of the population are aged 65 and over



54% of Cumbria's population live in **rural communities**

Median household income in Cumbria is **£29,434** compared to **£33,278** in the UK



Health cost of inactivity to Cumbria is

£9,100,000

every year



1 in 3 children are claiming a **free school meal** in some areas

The facts

cumbria

8.1%

of communities rank within the 10% most deprived of areas in England



Throughout COVID-19 Cumbria clearly demonstrated the benefits of strategic leadership for the benefit of all



There are **high levels of poverty** and deprivation spread across the county and in particular in the urban areas of **Barrow and West Cumbria**

Over **53,000** volunteers

in Cumbria via community and charitable sector before the COVID-19 pandemic



11,800 Children

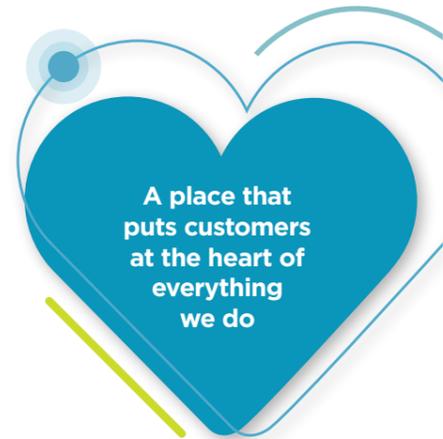
(12.7%) (aged 0-19 years) are living in poverty, this compares to 16.6% nationally



23,670 enterprises

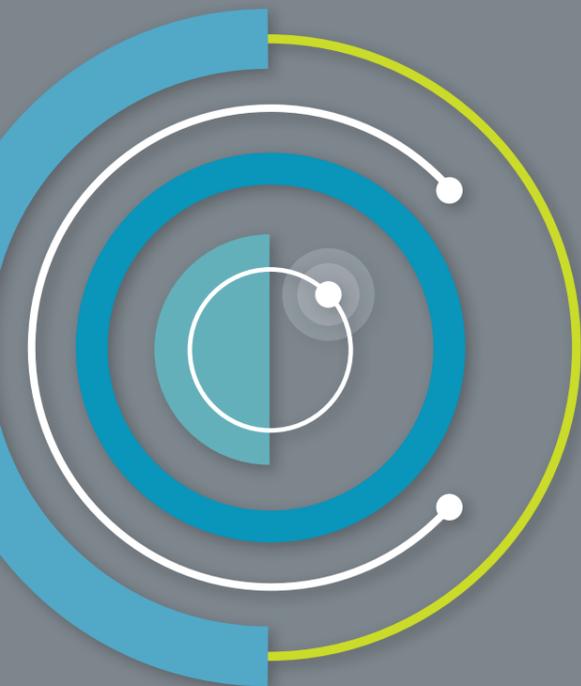
89.5% of which are micro businesses (0-9 employees)

Building a more sustainable future



We are confident that our offer meets the criteria for Local Government Reform.

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Improved outcomes and services

- This will serve as a catalyst for reforming and transforming public services in Cumbria to improve outcomes for Cumbrians, building on the best.
- There is also an opportunity to rethink, reform, and re-imagine service delivery - both rural and urban - using data which allows us to look forwards, not backwards.
- A joint single-organisational approach would be simpler for customers to understand and access, improving their experience.
- An opportunity to build on the work during COVID-19 to support and facilitate local communities by having a single coordinating role for local government.
- More effective collaboration on a regional and national basis to enable Cumbria's voice to be heard more and deliver better outcomes.
- One unitary authority allows for consistency of a strategic approach and the ability to address inequalities across the county in a way that two unitaries does not.



Immediate and long term sustainability

- Organisational efficiency will improve our ability to modernise local government more rapidly and bring it into the 21st century.
- Our workforce will be more connected and agile.
- Residents will be digitally empowered and navigate support more easily.
- Cumbria has a credible geography for reform, with the LEP aligned to the county boundaries. This provides a strong basis for long-term sustainability.



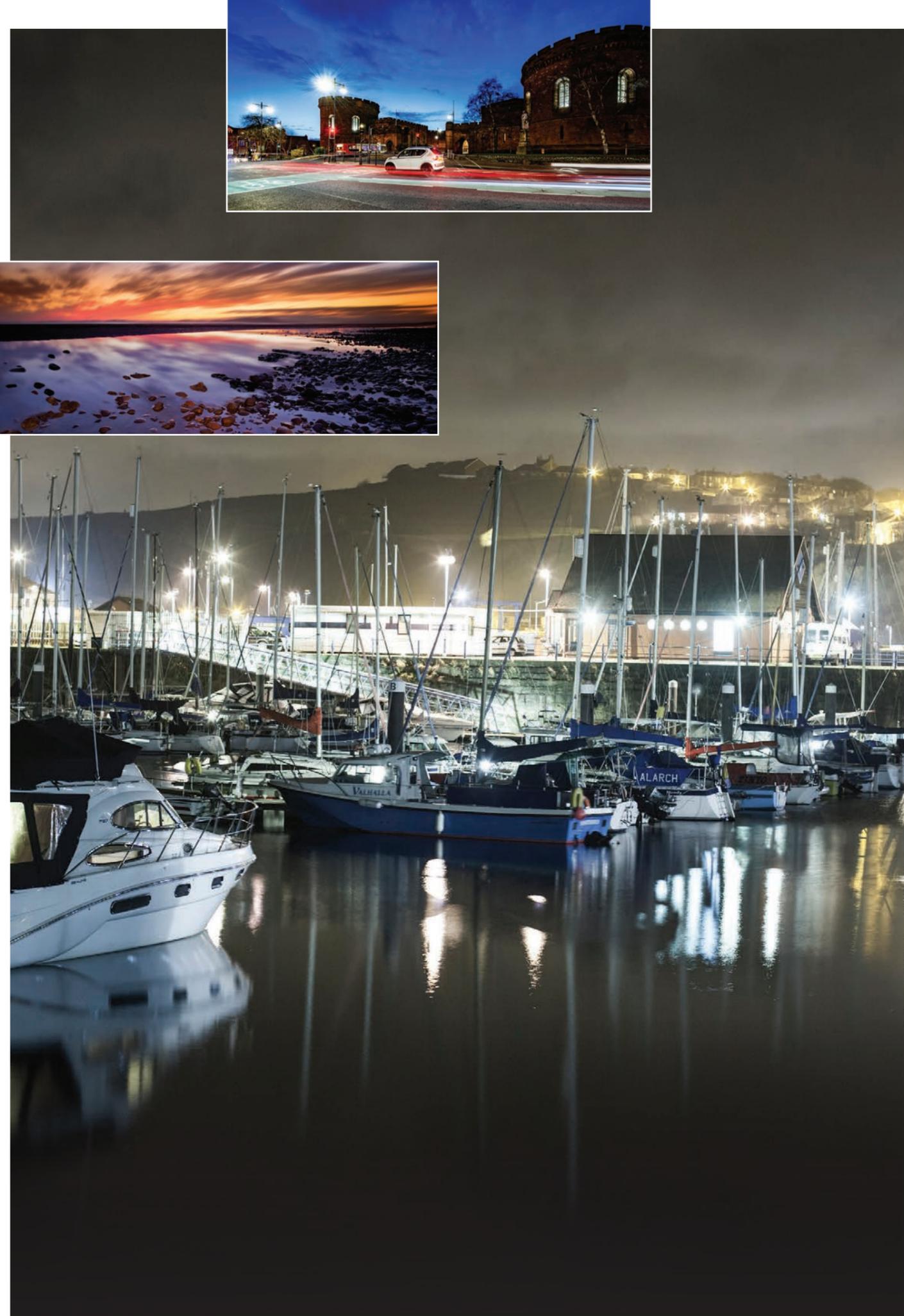
Stronger and more accountable leadership

- A single authority will strengthen our leadership model, providing single system leadership that will have the freedom to be more ambitious in striving for better outcomes.
- Accountability for residents and partners will be clearer.
- Cumbria local government will speak with one voice. This option will support businesses to set up and grow through creating a single, integrated offer for the support they need.
- Simplicity with single leadership. This will ensure the county secures the investment, devolution and support to achieve our economic aspirations and deliver Cumbria's Industrial Strategy.
- Our ability to collaborate with businesses, the third sector, and local communities will be far stronger.
- Existing county-wide organisations and structures such as the Police & Crime Commissioner, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria Tourism, and Cumbria Association of Local Councils will be able to work with a single, accountable authority.
- Strengthened town and parish councils, empowering local places to take on more powers and responsibilities and play a greater role in local decision making and service design and delivery.



Population size

- Current district and county boundaries are coterminous and so the single authority would cover the same geography as the seven existing councils.
- This is a recognised functioning economic area, made up of interconnected areas.
- A single unitary council would result in a population of c500k, meeting the government's population criteria.



stakeholders back this

Many stakeholders and partners are backing the need for change. We all want greater collaboration and modern public services fit for the 21st century. Better more meaningful engagement with customers and the need to strengthen our connections and devolve more power to local communities.

There have been many examples of successful collaboration within Cumbria, between the various tiers of local government and partners, but the time has come for more significant reform.

In 2018, the Leaders of Cumbria's local authorities and key partners discussed how local government reorganisation could help us to achieve our shared ambitions. This debate was led by Cumbria County Council. At this time Cumbria County Council submitted an expression of interest to government to explore options for local government reorganisation to a unitary model.



Following recent engagement with the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government we believe now is the time for change and for Local Government Reform in Cumbria.

Key to the success of this will be meaningful engagement with residents, businesses and partners. Ensuring that the final solution has been achieved through a process of true co-design and collaboration.



The University of Cumbria supports the move for Local Government Reform in Cumbria. A less complex governance structure would simplify how we work with our local government partners, to address Cumbria's significant higher level skills needs, retain our county's talent and to attract new talent into Cumbria.

We look forward to working with partners to shape the further development and implementation of a new model for Cumbria.

Vice Chancellor, University of Cumbria

We have support from across the county in favour of Local Government Reform.

We work in collaboration with all our partners in the best interest of the National Park, a World Heritage Site, its environment, communities, economy and visitors. Our shared vision is that the English Lake District will be an inspirational example of sustainable development in action; a place where its prosperous economy, world class visitor experiences and vibrant communities come together to sustain the spectacular landscape, its wildlife and cultural heritage. We believe that now is the time for change and that a simplified local government structure will help us to achieve this vision.

Whilst we have yet to adopt a view on which if any proposals best meets the needs of the park, we see advantage in having one Council covering the whole of the National Park. This would give us a stronger united voice for Lake District National Park.

Chairman, Lake District National Park Authority

financial savings

Net benefit over five years of Local Government Reform

One council = £96million

21 **Two councils = £33 million**

As is = £0million

One new council and the confidence to deliver significant savings in a challenging financial context

Now, more than ever, against the financial challenges that we all face, a unified approach is needed to deliver the scale and pace of change and recovery that is needed. Better long-term outcomes for our residents and business cannot be delivered from an unsustainable financial standing. Only reorganisation and subsequent transformation of the system to one council can ensure the immediate and long-term sustainability required.

We must remove the duplication, simplify decision making, and provide system leadership that is able to deliver the ambitions of our county and region.

We have considered the different options this reform could reflect, through a move to either one or two unitary authorities. A single unitary authority/one new council would deliver the best outcomes for residents and real value for money, allowing the new council to reinvest the benefits for its residents.

An efficient, streamlined single unitary authority model offers the potential for net benefits (cumulative savings less costs of change) of reorganisation over five years of £96m, with ambitious transformation this could be significantly more at £185m for the new council. The lost benefits of any other model – other than a single new council – are too significant to be ignored and they will not provide the very best value for money for Cumbria’s taxpayers.

Only one council delivers the maximum benefits and clearly meets the criteria of being ‘value for money and efficiency’ and delivering ‘cost savings and recovering costs of change’.

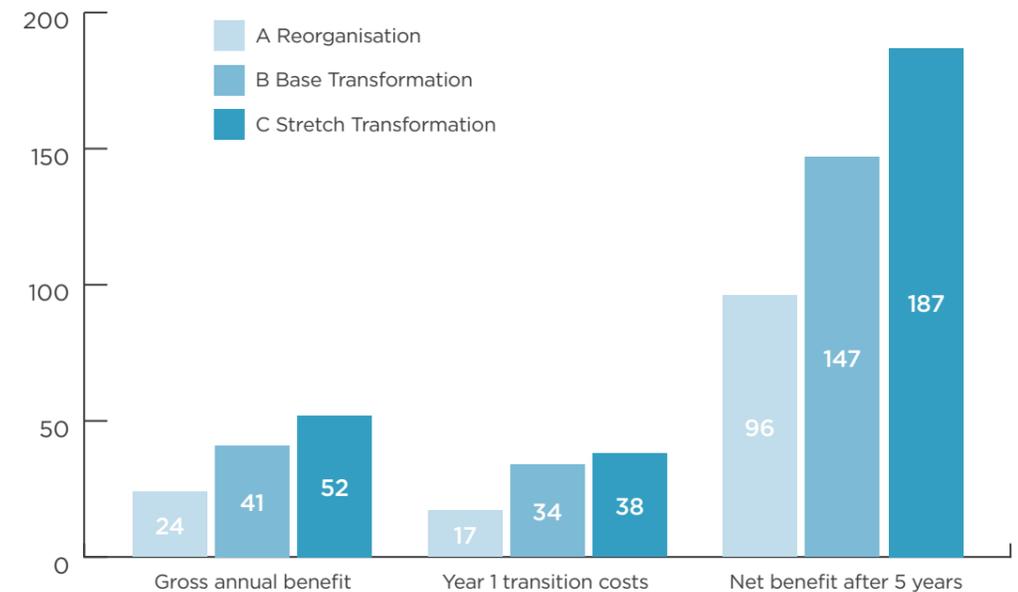
Financial savings

- Reorganisation into a single council delivers £24million in cost savings to the local government system per annum.
- The payback period for investment in reorganisation to a single council is less than a year.
- Transformation could deliver up to an additional £28million benefits per annum.

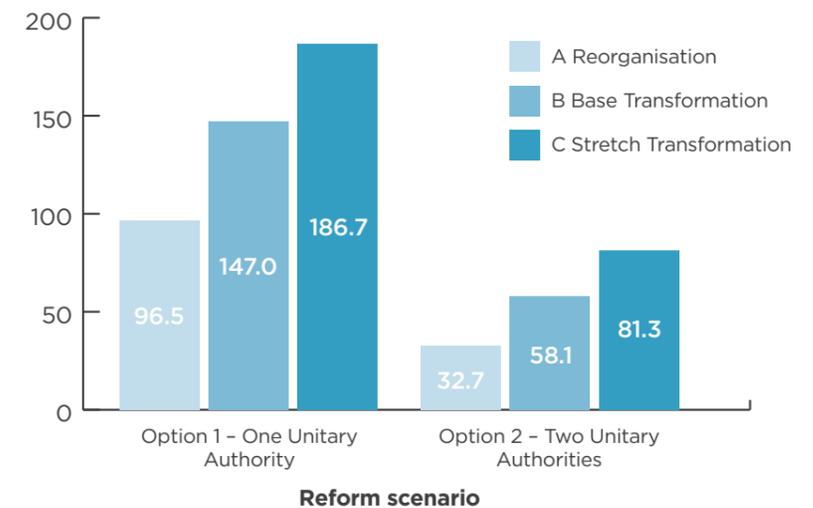
Council tax harmonisation

- The current council tax landscape in Cumbria does not pose a significant challenge to reform.
- We have a steady harmonisation plan for council tax rates over five years.

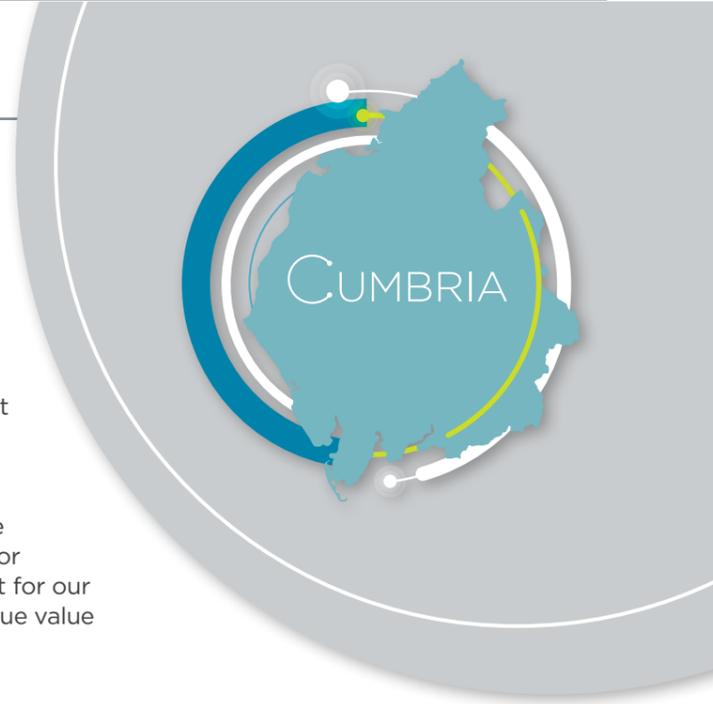
Headline figures for reform to a single unitary authority



Estimated cumulative net benefit after five years



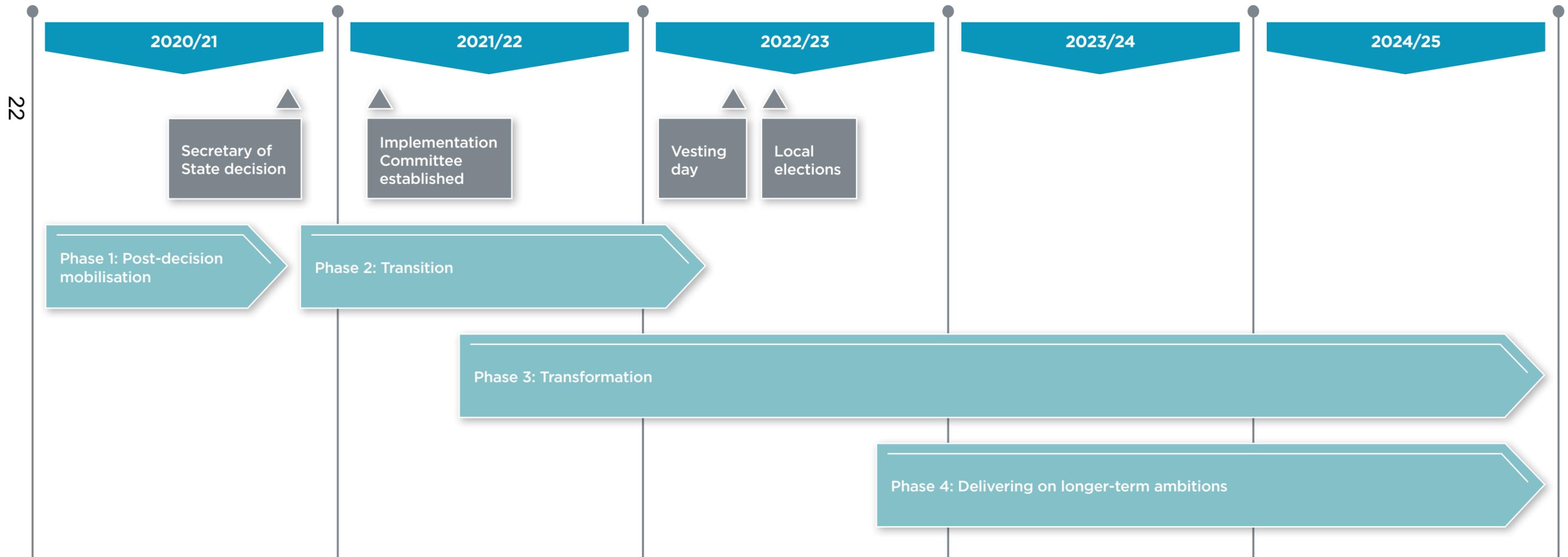
Delivering reform successfully



We are committed to reform, and ready to make this change happen. As the continuing authority, Cumbria County Council will be the basis of a new council building on the best of the existing local government system. We will collaborate with districts, town and parish councils and partners on the specifics of the new council and how it operates, whilst ensuring a public consultation takes place in order to capture the wants and needs of our residents.

We are confident in our proposal and will commence more detailed planning while it is being considered, to prepare for transition and transformation, using this change as catalyst for our ambition - reforming the council in a way which ensures true value for money for our residents.

Years



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