

Hannah Girvan Senior Manager for the Climate and Nature Team W&F



Introduction and Purpose of the Session

- Outlining W&F Council's experience of going through LGR and working to transfer climate and sustainability programmes into the new authorities:
- Personal Experience
- Service Experience
- Council Experience



About me:

- Geography Teacher for 10 years
- Trained in Bristol worked in Manchester for 3 years
- Then moved abroad working in Costa Rica, Rome and Barcelona
- Returned to Cumbria – where I'm from and completed a Masters in Environmental Management 2017/2018
- South Lakeland District Council as Sustainability Officer - Temporary role 1.5years
- Got a job at Cumbria County Council as Environment and Sustainability Lead 1.5years
- Then LGR – Interim Senior Lead for Climate and Nature – 1st year
- Now permanent Senior Manager for Climate and Nature



LGR in Cumbria

Biggest local government restructure since 1974 as Cumbria councils replaced by two authorities

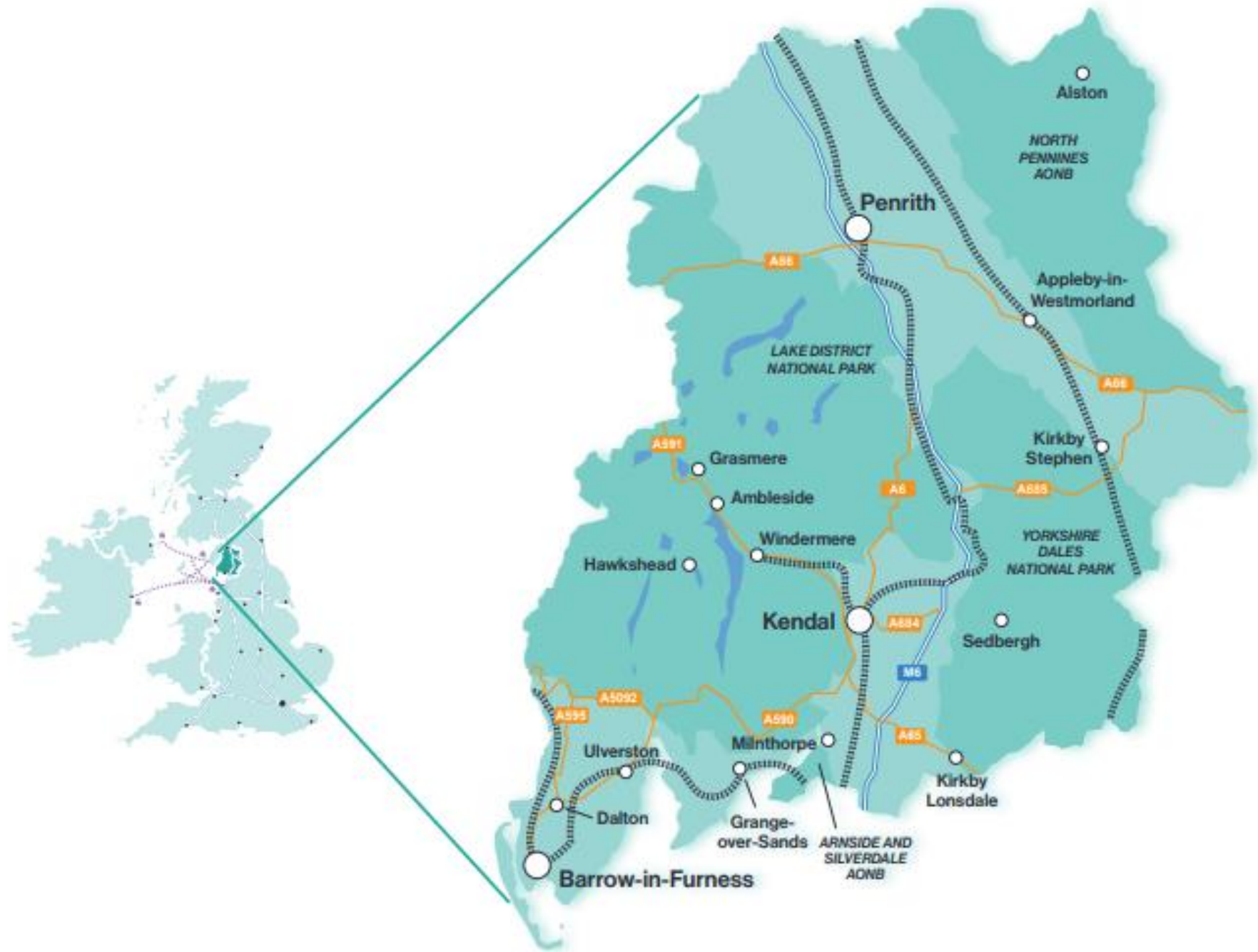
- On 21 July 2021, the Secretary of State announced plans for the reorganisation of local government in Cumbria.
- The county currently operates a tiered structure of local government with the county and district authorities providing different services.
- A consultation was held on four proposals put forward to Government in the spring of 2021.
- This will see the creation of two new unitary authorities within the county boundary which will deliver all services;

Cumberland - comprising the area covered by Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland districts; and

Westmorland and Furness - comprising the area covered by Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland districts.

Vesting Day - the first official day of the two new councils - is on 1 April 2023. Though this is a significant milestone, it will not be the end of the journey with a process of transformation continuing after this point.





Westmorland and Furness | *in numbers*



— **227,600**
people
32,800 in
National Parks



— **55%**
live in rural areas



— **55,500**
in the largest town
of Barrow



— **59,300**
65+ years old
(75,800 in 2040)



— **134,200**
working aged
people



— **10,070**
businesses
providing 115,000 jobs



— **122**
primary schools
20
secondary schools
3
special schools



— **134**
parish councils
10
town councils

About your new council

By area, Westmorland and Furness Council is England's third largest unitary authority. We are committed to building strong links with parish and town councils, local community groups and other organisations.

146 Parishes

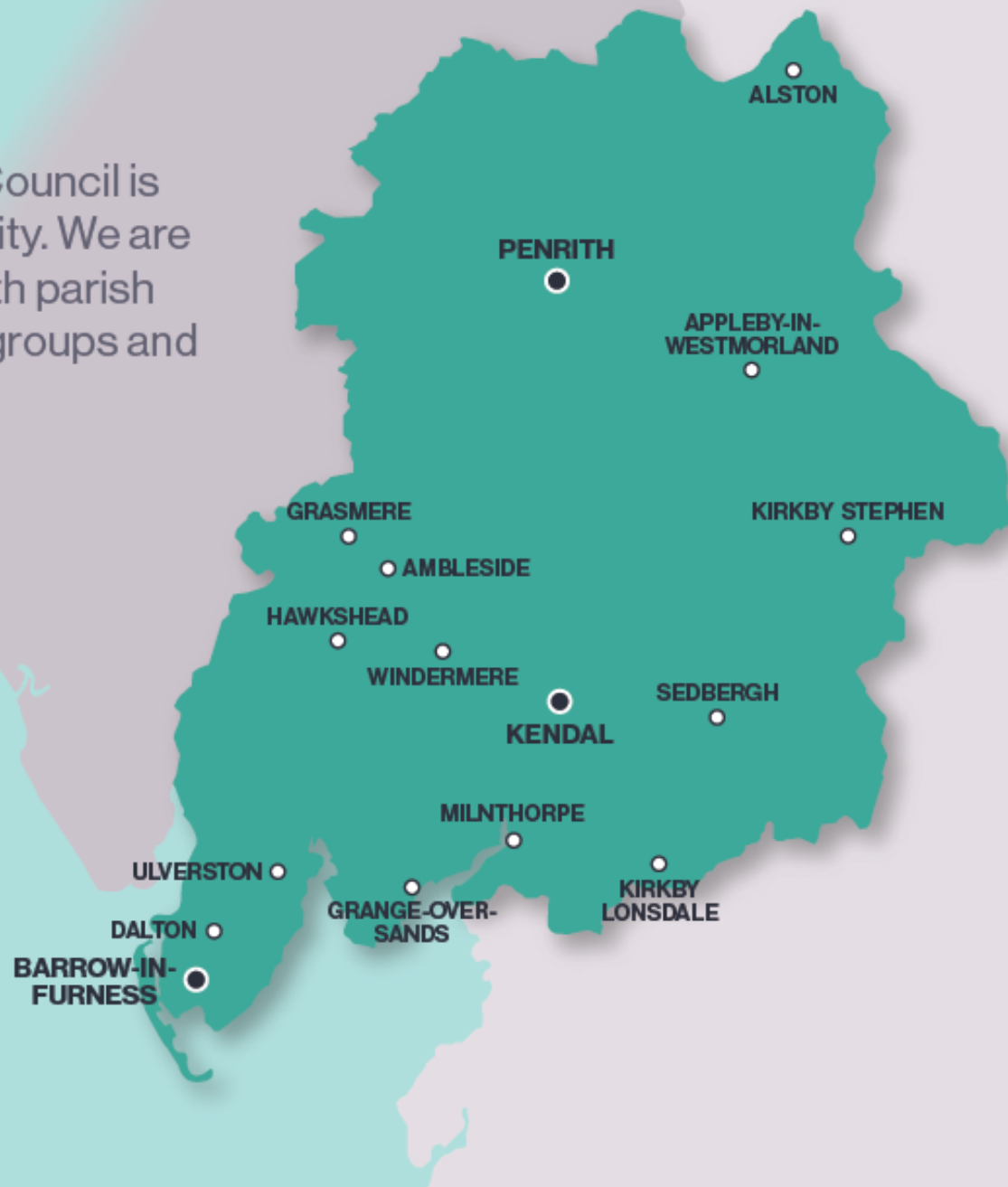
107 Parish Councils

65 Unitary Councillors

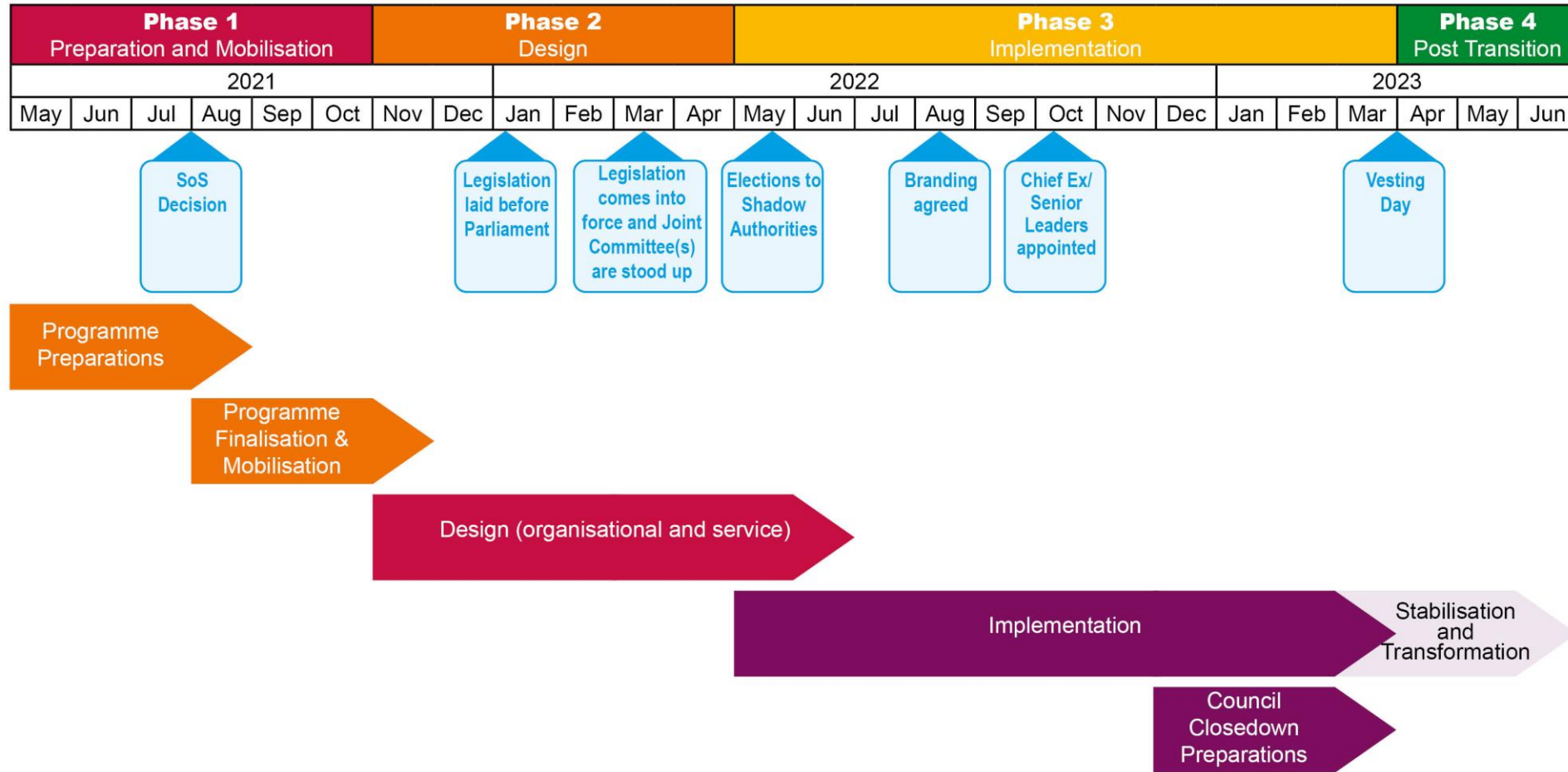
33 Wards

9 Town Councils

9 Cabinet Members /
Portfolio Holders



Timeline and Programme Phasing



Design Phase

November	December	January	February	March	April	May
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Stage 1: Scope of Themes,
Introduction to services

Stage 2: Service
Profile/Baselining, SWOT,
Options Identification

Stage 3: Options Appraisal
Review

Stage 4: Blueprint
development and
approval



Design options

Working assumption
Programme is creating two new unitary councils, each with their own services

Other options may be considered where there is a strong case to do so (e.g. affordability)

Difference between Design (configuration of services) and Delivery vehicles (outsourcing, TECKAL etc.) which could be considered by the new authorities

Separate services

Each authority delivers its own service aligned to the geographical boundaries

Disaggregation

Split existing countywide service to unitary council (1 to 2)

Aggregation

Combine existing district services to unitary council (3 to 1)

Integration

Services currently provided by all councils' (mainly internal support/back office). Require disaggregation before integrating to unitary (7 to 2)

Joint provision Shared services / collaboration

Shared service

Joint governance




Hosted

Led by one authority, each retains statutory duties

Strategic Sub-regional Governance Model

Provided by others

Alternate delivery model Separate entity, LATC, TECKAL

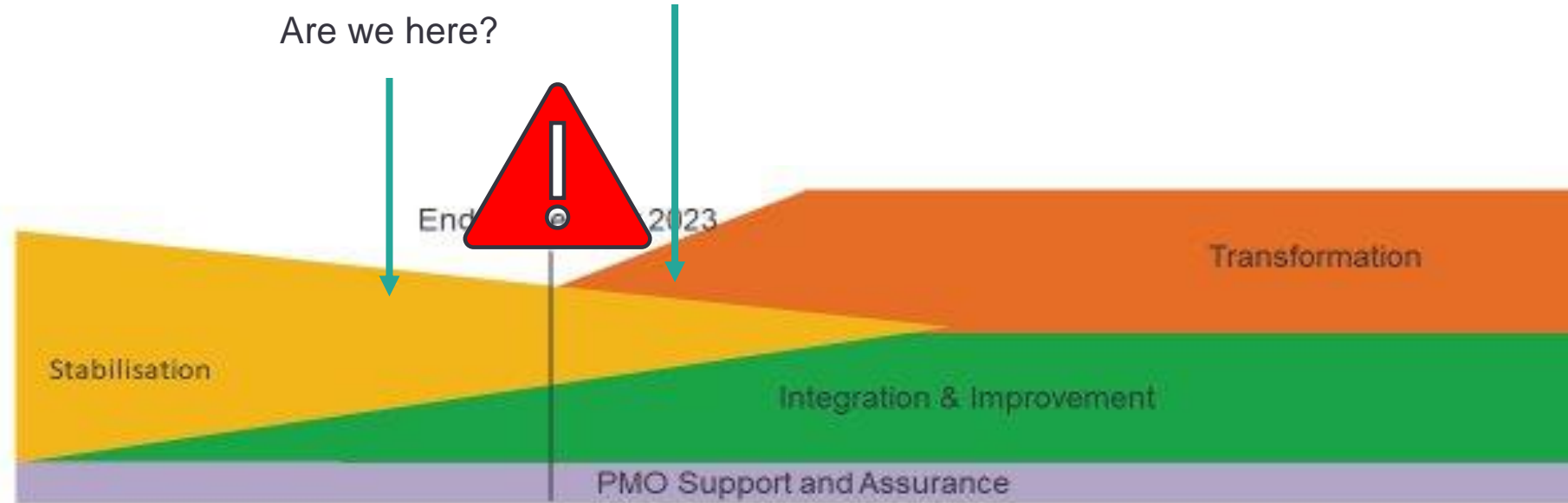
   In some service areas a hybrid of options may be appropriate



Our Changing Journey

End of 26/27?

Are we here?



Stabilisation

- Day 1
- Service Planning

- Building the foundations

Integration & Improvement

- Activity required as a result of LGR

Transformation

Assurance
Governance
Oversight
Monitoring



The Service Area - Politically

- Climate Emergencies:, South Lakes (Feb 2019) and Barrow (July 2019), Eden (July 2019).
- Westmorland and Furness's Shadow Authority confirmed that we face climate and biodiversity crises on the Wednesday 18th September 2022 which will have potentially catastrophic impacts locally, nationally and internationally.

Climate Emergency

Barrow Borough Council declared a climate emergency on 16th July 2019 and made a commitment to reduce carbon emissions. We recognise the need to quickly decarbonise and increase the resilience of...

Barrow Borough Council declared a climate emergency on 16th July 2019 and made a commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

 **Eden District Council**
@EdenCouncil · [Follow](#)



Eden council tonight declared a climate emergency and committed to being carbon neutral by 2030



Our Values

Together we are **Westmorland & Furness**



Ambitious



Responsible



Collaborative



Inclusive



Needs-led



Outcomes focused



Ecologically aware

Equity

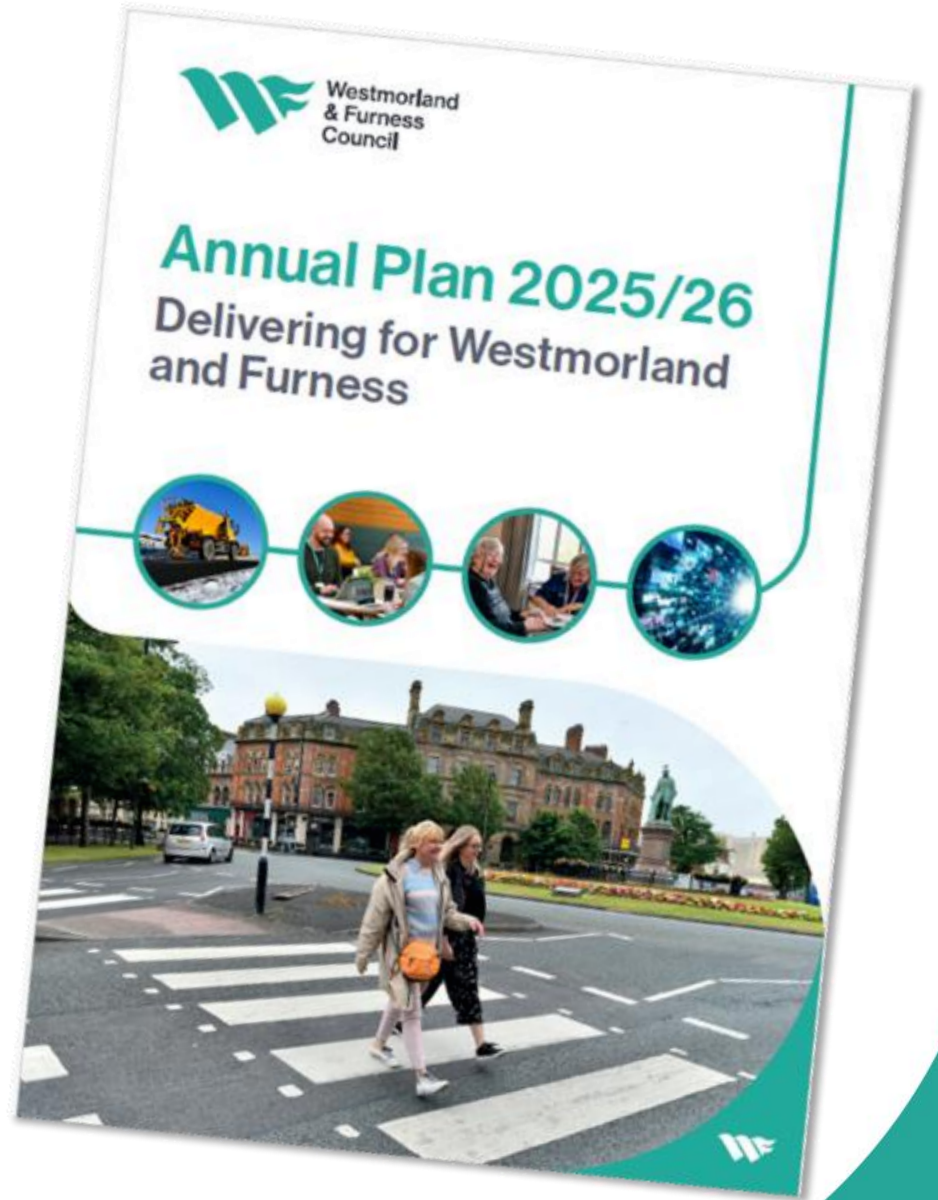
We know that there is a need to address any inequalities, especially those resulting from poverty and rural sparsity. We will focus on the wider determinants that drive those inequalities in a way that is fair and equitable.

Economy

We know that we need to increase our productivity and improve educational outcomes and grow our workforce. We will support sustainable and inclusive growth which benefits our diverse population whilst protecting the environment.

Environment

We recognise our environmental responsibilities, including taking action on climate change and biodiversity loss. We will seek to redress damage and protect our environment for the long-term.



Climate and Nature across W&F and Cumbria

- ZCCP – Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership set up in 2019 – successfully bid for 5 years of funding from NL Climate Action Fund. Carbon Baseline report recommended Cumbria should aim to reach Net Zero by 2037.
- This influenced the council's commitment to be net zero by 2037.
- CAP Part 1 July 2023, Part 2 Dec 2023.



Service Area – Statutory Requirements

- Biodiversity Duty – Jan 24
- LNRS - April 2023 W&F became RA to the Cumbria-wide LNRS – building on the Pilot.
- BNG – Feb 2024

- Climate Change – LAs lacking statutory duties

Figure 7: Legislation, policies, strategies and other drivers that relate to this strategy.

International

- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (COP15)
- UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015)
- G7 2030 Nature Compact 2021
- IPCC AR5 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023



National

- Wildlife Legislation (Protected Species, Habitats and Designated Sites)
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2005 (as amended)
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework
- Making Space for Nature (2010) Prof Sir John Lawton
- 25 Year Environment Plan (2018)
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services
- England Peat Action Plan 2021
- England Trees Action Plan 2021 to 2024
- The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review (2021)
- Environment Act 2021
 - Strengthened Biodiversity Duty for Public Authorities
 - Local Nature Recovery Strategies
 - Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain
- Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide (2023)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023)
- Environmental Improvement Plan 2023



Local

- Cumbria's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)
- Cumbria's Plan Bee Strategy (2023)
- Destination Management Plan for Cumbria: 2024 to 2030
- Going for Growth: Cumbria's Economic Strategy 2025 - 2045



Westmorland and Furness Council's Nature Strategy



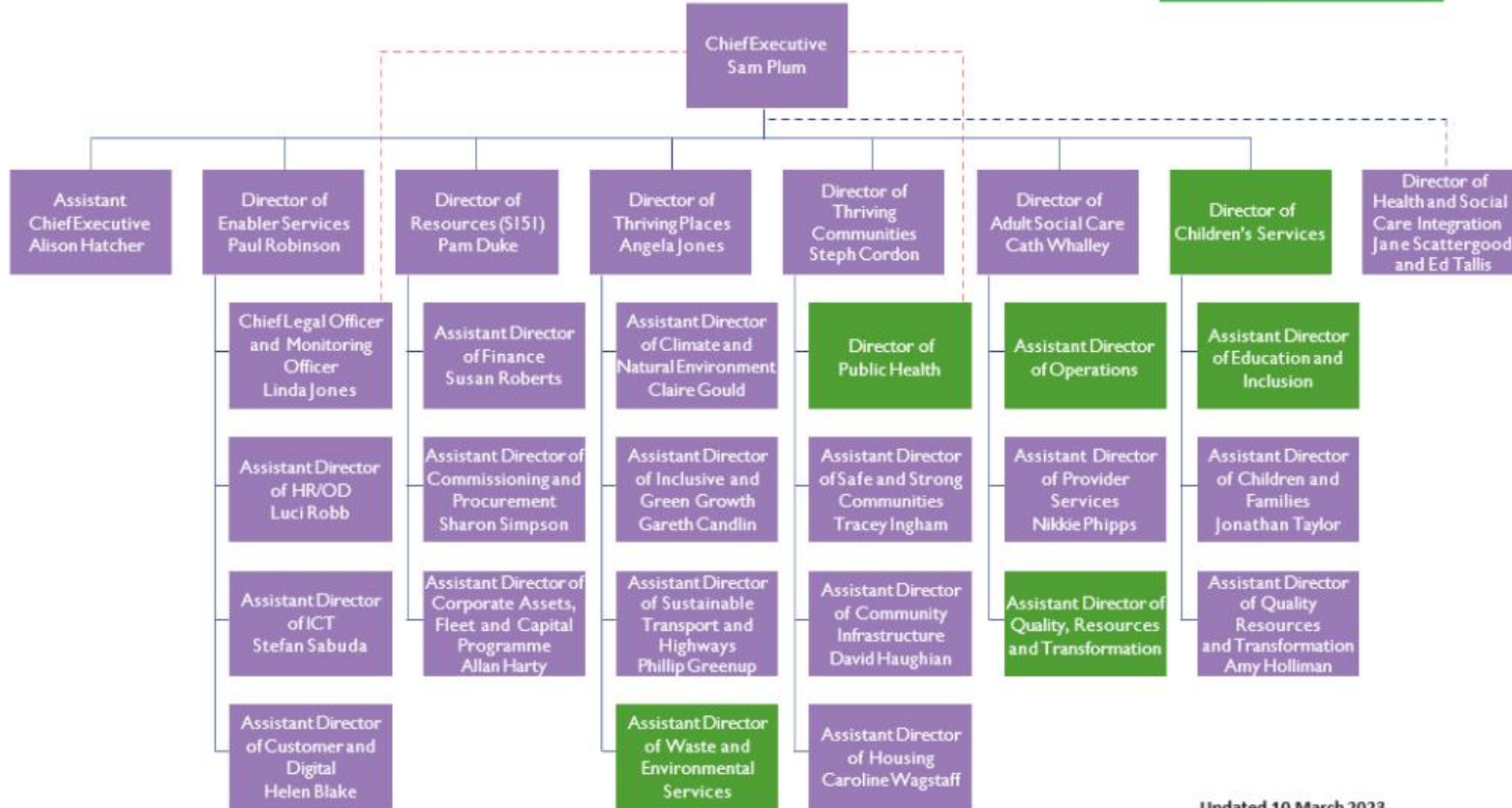
Council

- Council Plan
- Council Plan Delivery Framework
- Active Travel programme
- Capital Strategy 2024 to 2029
- Carbon Management Strategy 2024 to 2029
- Climate Change Action Plan Part One and Two (2024)
- Local Plans

Key

Appointed

Recruitment process underway



Thriving Places – Director Angela Jones

Assistant Director – Climate & Natural Environment

 **Claire Gould**

- Climate Change Policy
- Carbon Reduction/Carbon Management
 - Biodiversity Net
 - Gain and Ecology
- Funded Programmes, Projects & Partnerships
- Flood and Coastal Risk Management
- Natural Capital

Innovation Flood Resilience; Multiply Programme; Local Nature Recovery Strategy; CLEP Accountable Body (Legacy Programmes) – Westmorland and Furness Accountable Body


Coastal Community Forest; Planting for Pollinators; Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership – Cumberland Accountable Body

Assistant Director – Inclusive & Green Growth

 **Gareth Candlin**

- Community wealth building
- Economic Development, Regen, towns & villages
- Economic Programmes
 - Green Growth
 - Growth Deals
- Place investment – Town Deals, LU, UKSPF
- Skills and enterprise
- Tourism development
 - Building Control
 - Planning Policy
- Planning Enforcement
- Development Management
 - Housing Delivery
 - Major Projects
- Renewable and nuclear developments
- Digital Infrastructure

Assistant Director – Sustainable Transport & Highways

 **Phillip Greenup**

- Highways Operations
- Strategic Asset Management
 - Transport Planning
 - Transport Policy (Local Transport Plans)
 - Bus Policy – Enhanced Partnerships
 - Rail
 - Sustainable transport
- Decarbonisation and EV charging
- Active Travel – cycling and walking
- Rights of way, countryside management
 - Community Transport
- Strategic Partnerships – Transport for the North
- Traffic management & Parking Services

Community Rail Partnerships – Westmorland and Furness hosted

Assistant Director – Waste & Environmental Services

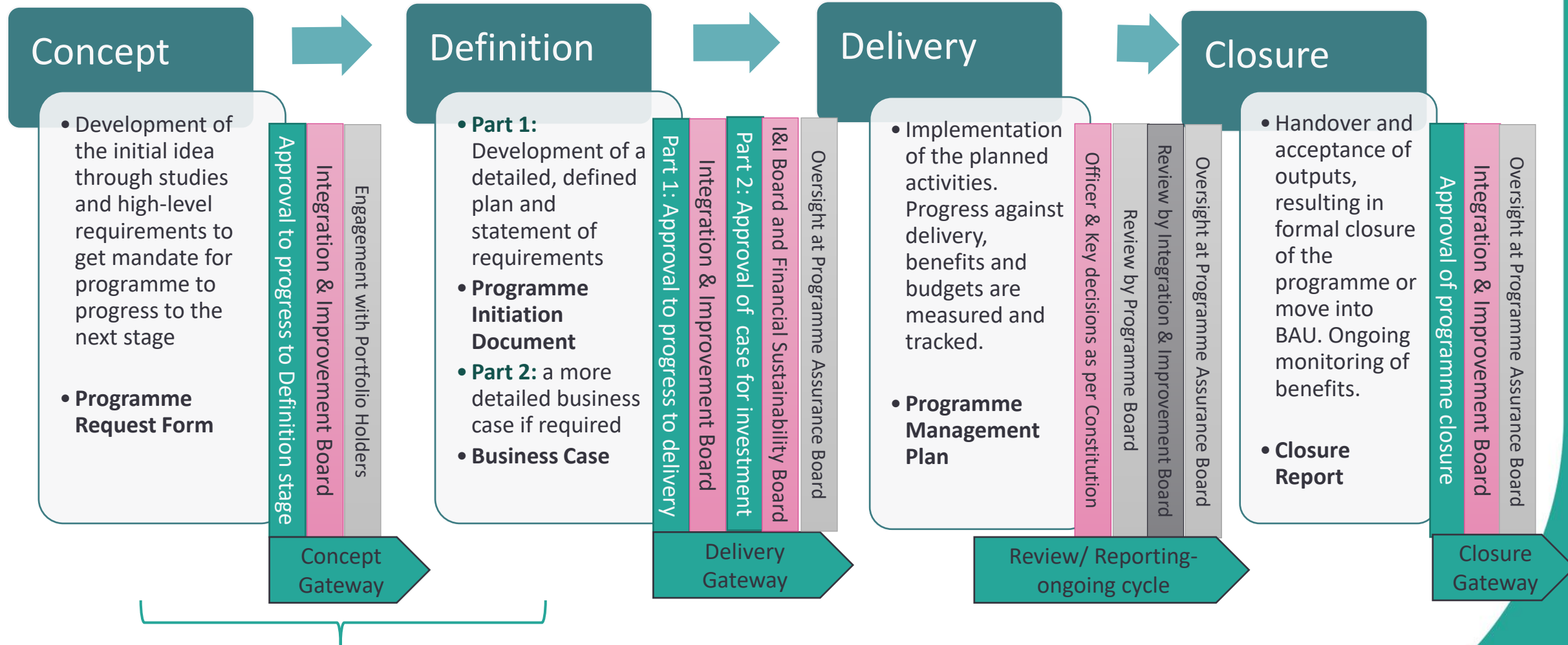


- Strategic Waste planning & services – collection, recycling, disposal & reduction
- Street Scene/ cleansing (separate)
 - Verge Maintenance
- Grounds maintenance
 - Horticulture and trees/arboriculture

Waste – PPP Residual Waste Contract – Cumberland hosted



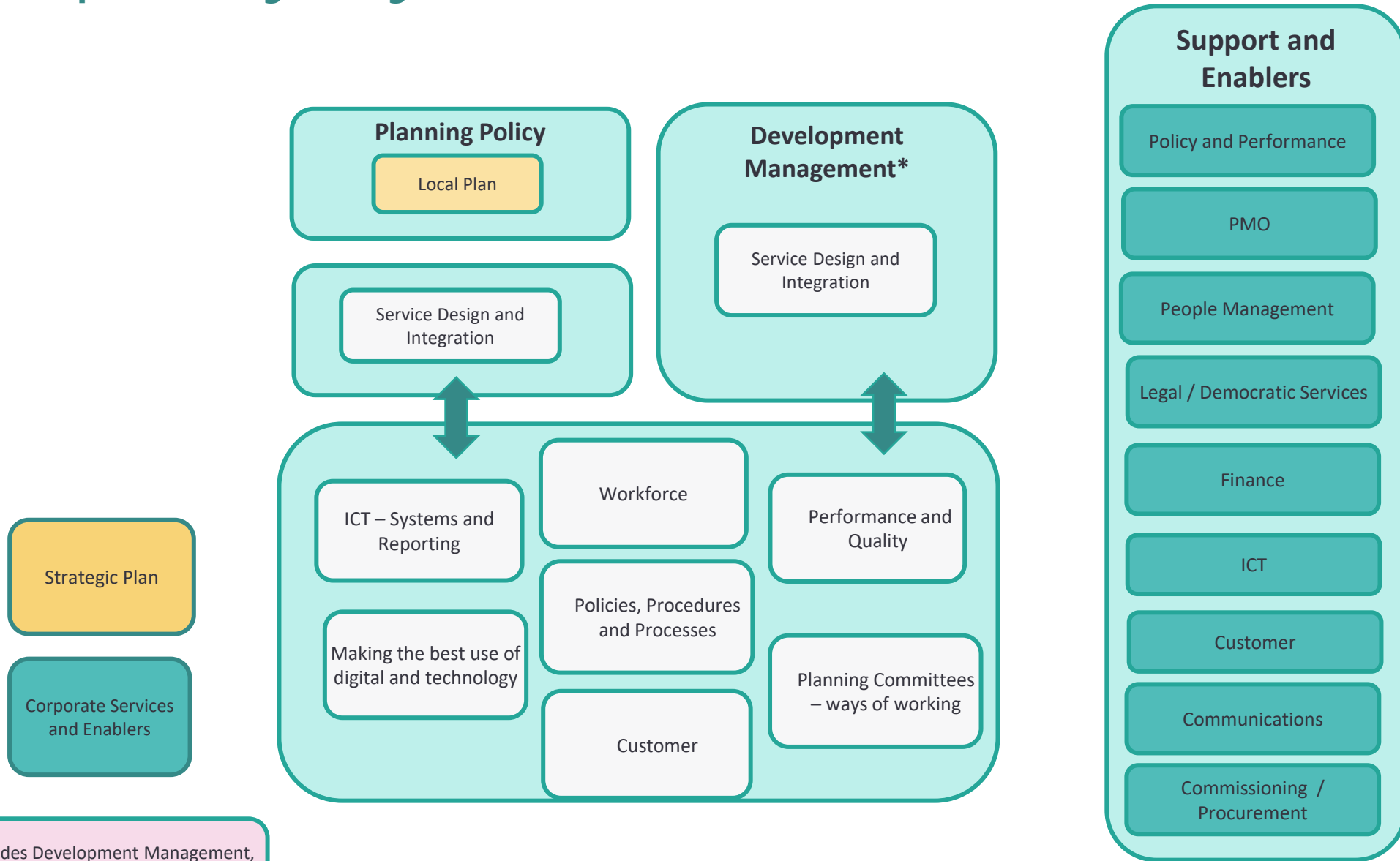
Priority Programme Gateway Process



N.B. Programme/Project Management Toolkit to support this is being soft launched in December 2023



Example Planning – Programme Outline

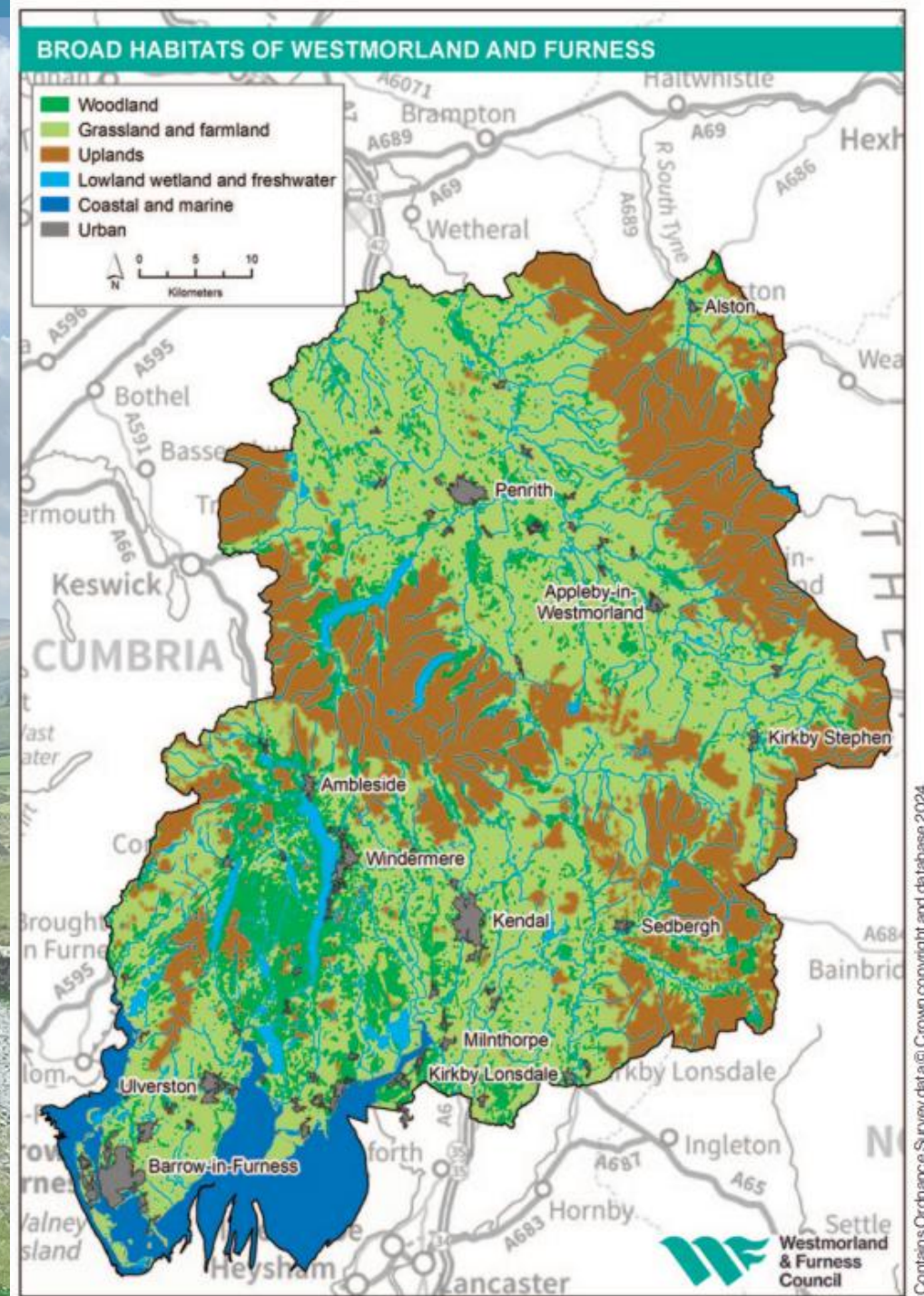


* Includes Development Management, Street Naming and Land Charges teams and Building Control

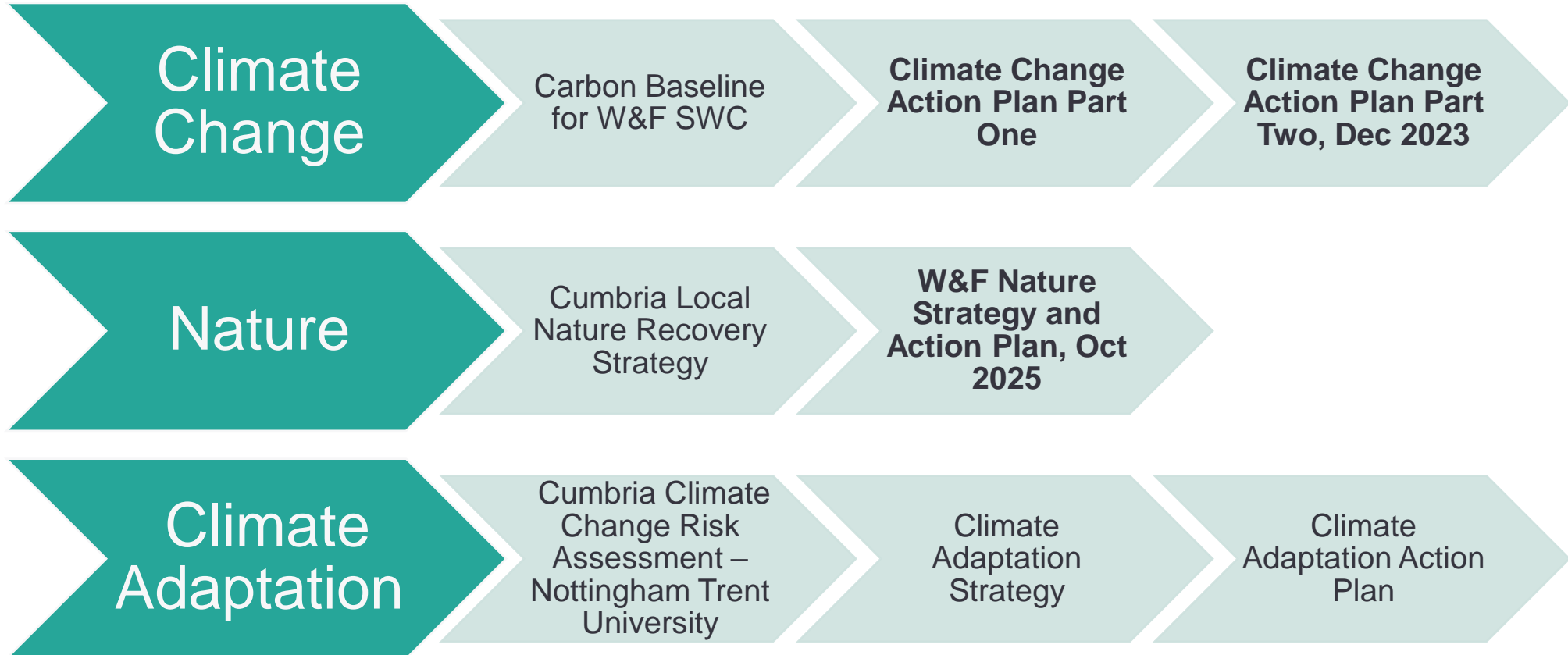


Westmorland and Furness

- 65% of our area is a protected landscape
- Over 110km of coastline
- 21 Special Areas of Conservation
- 2 Special Protection Areas
- 3 Ramsar Sites (wetlands of international importance)
- 180 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- 1035 County Wildlife Sites



Climate and Nature Programme





Westmorland
& Furness
Council

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Biodiversity in the Community

A toolkit to encourage and inspire support
for our biodiversity

May 2024



Scope of Influence – Climate and Nature

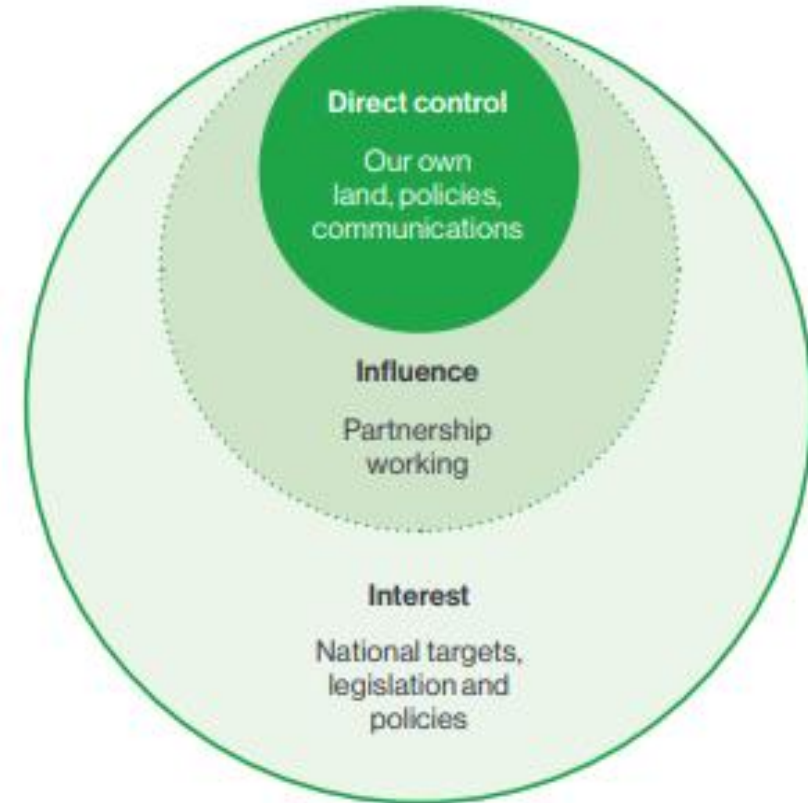
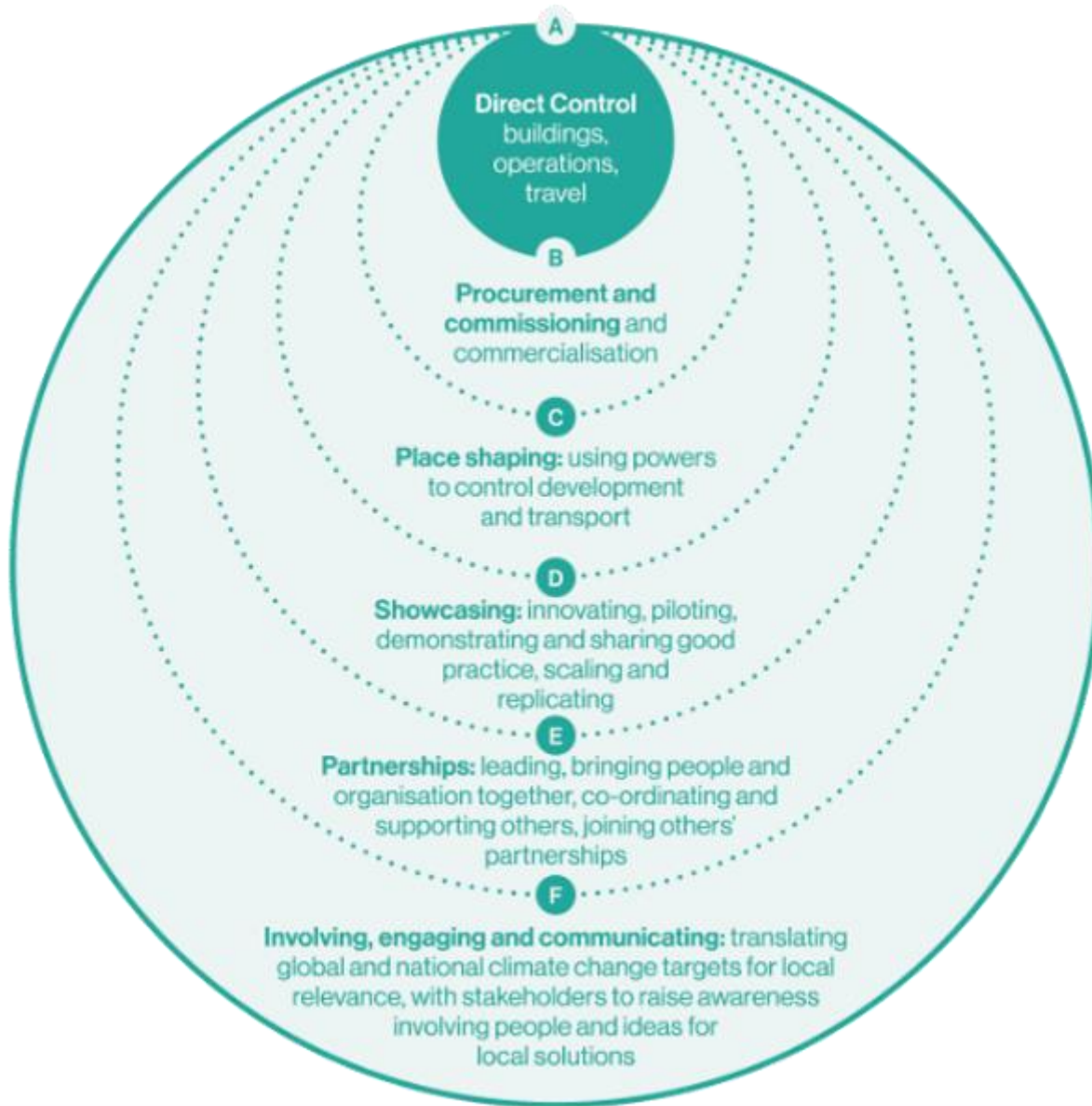


Figure 2: The spheres of influence the Council have over nature recovery.



Westmorland & Furness Council

Climate Action Plan

Part One

Westmorland & Furness Council

Climate Action Plan

Part Two

Westmorland & Furness Council

Carbon Management Strategy

2024-2029

Nottingham Trent University

Cumbria Climate Risk Assessment

2025: Executive Summary

Professor Rowena Hill, Dr Erin Gibson & Rich Pickford

April 2025

W&F Climate Adaptation Strategy (Febish) Action Plan (Mayish)

Westmorland & Furness Council

Nature Strategy

2025 – 2035

Westmorland & Furness Council

Nature Strategy

Appendix A – Action Plan

Westmorland & Furness Council

Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Westmorland & Furness Council

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Biodiversity in the Community

A toolkit to encourage and inspire support for our biodiversity

May 2024

"A great place to live, work and thrive."

Westmorland & Furness Council

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Caring for Westmorland and Furness' Roadside Verges

Wildier in appearance, wildier in nature

The sides of Westmorland and Furness' roads are home to hundreds of species of wild plants and animals. Recognised as a valuable resource for biodiversity, roadside verges can also bring great pleasure and delight, helping us connect with nature on our journeys wherever we go and acting as important corridors to connect one habitat to another for species. This leaflet explains how by working together, we can balance the necessary road safety and maintenance requirements, with sensitive on-going management to help biodiversity on our roadside verges thrive.

CSP Cumbria Road Safety Partnership

Cumbria Wildlife Trust



Collaborative



Cumberland Council



**ZERO CARBON
CUMBRIA
PARTNERSHIP**



**Borderlands
Inclusive
Growth Deal**

An ambitious approach to cross border working



Cumbria Tourism
At the heart of our visitor economy



**Lake District
National Park**



**YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park**

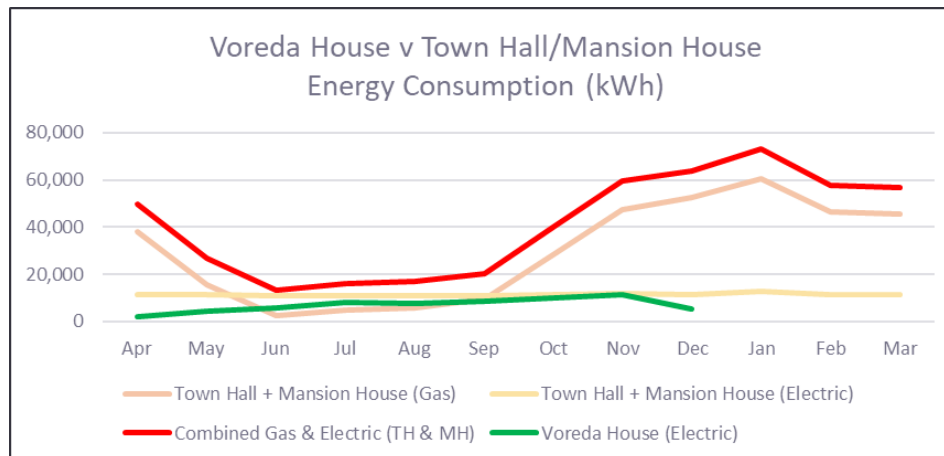
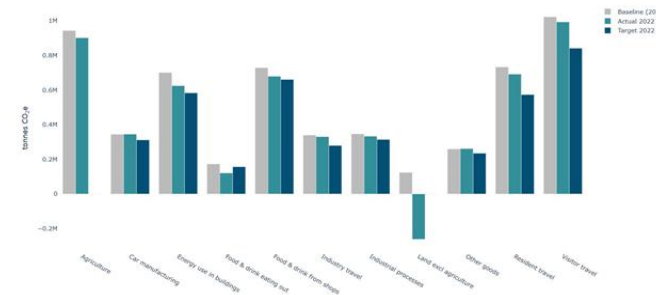


**Lake District
National Park
Partnership**



Climate Change – key achievements

- A Climate and Nature Newsletter has been produced since September 2023 on a quarterly basis. 7 newsletters have been produced since to inform our residents on the Climate and Nature actions that the Council is delivering on.
- The Carbon Management Strategy has been released in January 2024.
- **Award winning office building**
- Voreda House is the UK’s first council office building to achieve Passivhaus EnerPHit accreditation following the retrofit of an ageing office building.
- A carbon emissions dashboard has been created with Small World Consulting and CAFS.

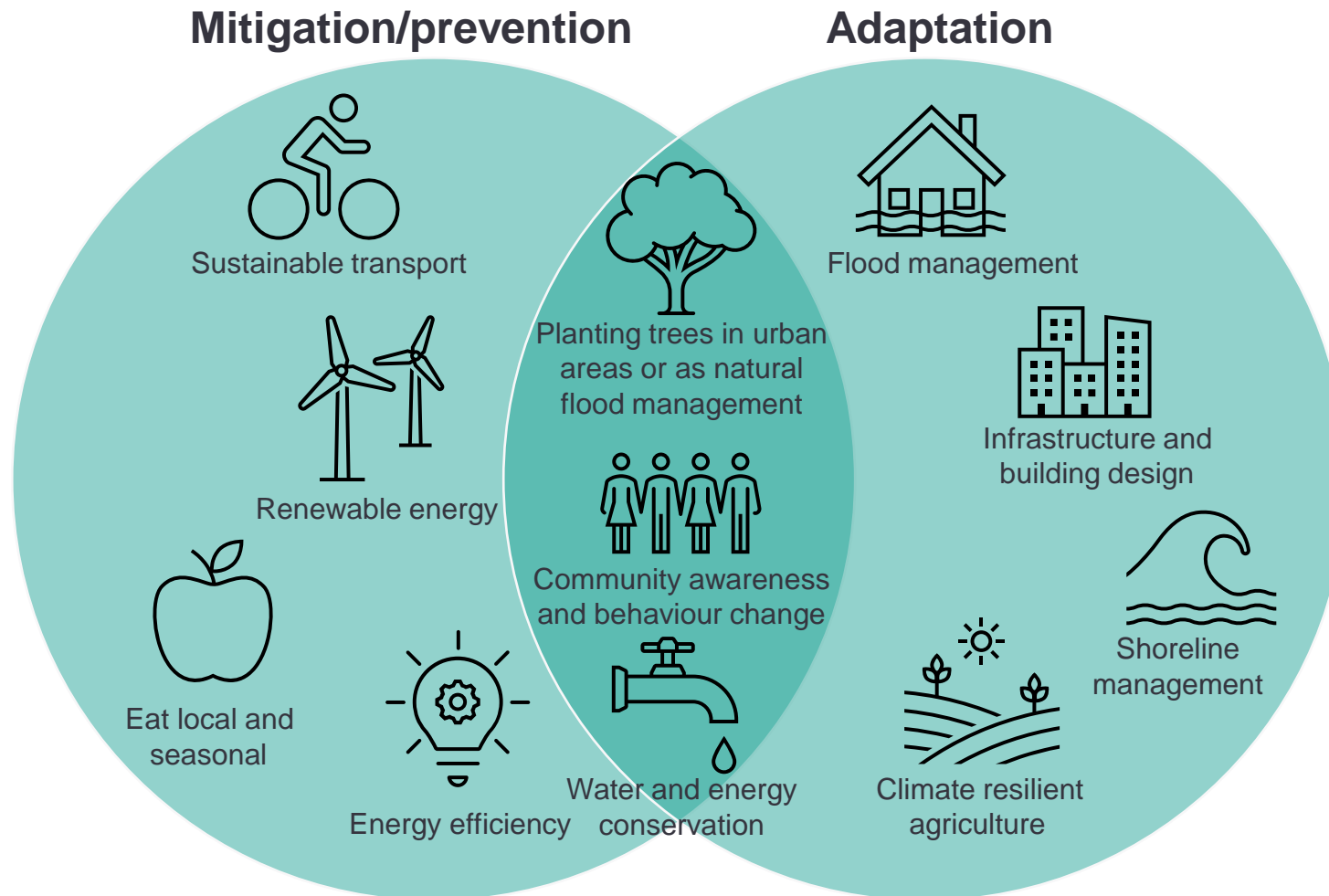


Sandscale Solar Farm

- The solar farm covers an area of approximately 11.9 ha and encompasses a field of wet meadow previously used for grazing cattle and sheep.
- Planning for the 2 x 1MW solar farms were approved in March 2023.
- The contractor, Vital Energi, were procured through a two stage Design and Build tender in April 2023. The project cost is **£2.78m**.
- The solar PV system comprises of:
 - Total output 2,162 kWp
 - 3,969 solar PV modules.
 - 14 No solar inverters.



Mitigation vs Adaptation

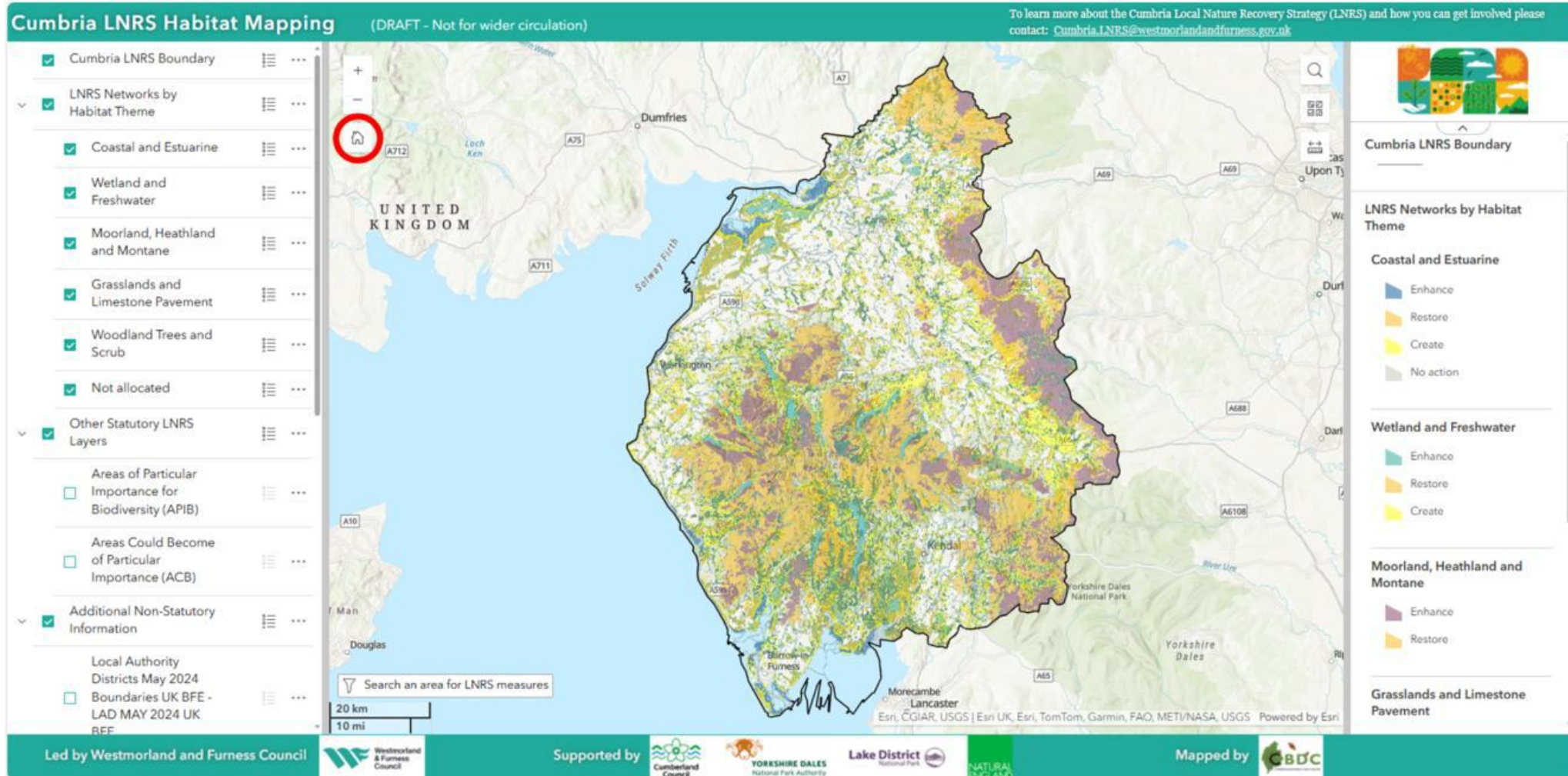


Adaptation = resilience.

If we can't further reduce the likelihood of these events occurring, how can we reduce the impact of them?



Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Cumbria Wide



Using the Local Habitat Map

The screenshot displays a web-based map interface for Cumbria's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The map shows various habitat zones color-coded by theme and action. A popup window is open over a specific measure, providing details for 'Wetland and Freshwater'.

Wetland and Freshwater

Habitat Category	Wetland and Freshwater
Action Category	Enhance
Measure ID	82
Measure Description	Support natural processes and function in river channels, floodplains and lakeshores, to benefit the habitats and species they support, through

Legend:

- Cumbria LNRS Boundary**
- LNRS Networks by Habitat Theme**
 - Coastal and Estuarine**
 - Enhance (Blue)
 - Restore (Orange)
 - Create (Yellow)
 - No action (Grey)
 - Wetland and Freshwater**
 - Enhance (Teal)
 - Restore (Orange)
 - Create (Yellow)
 - Moorland, Heathland and Montane**
 - Enhance (Purple)
 - Restore (Orange)
 - Woodland Trees and Scrub**
 - Enhance (Green)
 - Restore (Orange)

Map Features: Search bar, zoom controls, scale bar (500m/1,000ft), and attribution (Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS | Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS | Powered by Esri).

Supporters: Westmorland & Furness Council, Cumberland Council, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Lake District National Park, Natural England, Cumbria Biodiversity Centre (CBDC).



Nature Strategy

- Nature Strategy
- Appendix 1: Action Plan
- Appendix 2: Biodiversity Duty Report.

- This strategy document superseded the Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan Part One and is the one document that the Council will use.
- **Approved at Cabinet 14 October 2025.**

Enhancing and protecting biodiversity in Westmorland and Furness



One Tree per Resident

Planting 250,000 trees – one for every resident across Westmorland and Furness.

Previous schemes (24/25)

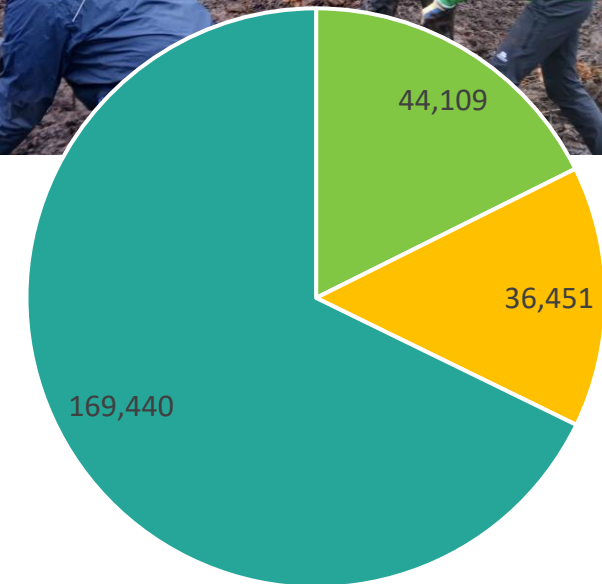
- Micro Woodlands & Community Orchards

This year (25/26)

- Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Grant
- Free Trees for Residents

Future planting (26/27)

- Developing partnerships e.g. Raise & National Trust



■ Already planted ■ Proposed for 25/26 ■ Gap

Planting Season	Numbers of Trees Planted	Meters of Hedgerow Planted	Numbers of Trees Proposed	Meters of Hedgerow Proposed
23/34	35999	1635	0	0
24/25	6162	313	0	0
25/26	0	0	33883	2568



Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- Required by law – Environment Act 2021
- All developments that meet certain criteria must demonstrate a **10% net gain in biodiversity “units”**
- Ambition of 20% biodiversity net gain for Westmorland and Furness...
- Drives private green finance into land management and nature recovery
- Affected all council developments since February 2024. Management burden going forwards.
- Opportunity for council to address its own BNG needs through SPV?

ON-SITE
(UNITS)



Delivered through habitat creation/enhancement via landscaping/green infrastructure

OFF-SITE
(UNITS)



Delivered off-site through habitat creation/enhancement, including via habitat banks, with public and private landowners

STATUTORY
CREDITS*



Delivered through large-scale habitat projects delivering high value habitats which can also provide long-term nature-based solutions





Nature
Net Gains

Introducing: Nature Net Gains

A simple, one-stop shop for buyers to meet environmental requirements with ease

Trusted, high-integrity, high-quality BNG units and Nutrient Neutrality credits

Every pound reinvested into Cumbria's landscapes for the benefit of our communities



Introducing: Nature Net Gains

A simple, trusted route for landowners to generate income from nature markets

Offering support and brokerage services to empower landowners to navigate the process of supplying BNG units and Nutrient Neutrality credits

Channeling investment into Cumbrian land providing a fair return to those delivering nature recovery.



**Nature
Net Gains**

The benefits



Support LNRS delivery



£multi-million in private finance for nature



Trusted route for farmers to generate income



Support landowners to navigate nature markets



Sustainable economic growth



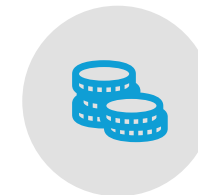
Facilitate development



Ring-fence risk in a separate legal entity



Self-sustaining model with minimal upfront investment



Income potential & cost savings



LGA Corporate Peer Challenge



Corporate Peer Challenge

The report highlights:

- A workforce who are proud of the impact they have in communities and are highly committed to the services they represent.
- Positive and open culture, with staff committed to improvement.
- The clear benefit from leadership which is held in high regard. Particularly noted is the leadership approach of the chief executive, leader and cabinet.
- Solid financial management and good governance foundations.
- National recognition in areas such as Children's Services, [climate action](#), and partnership working.

5 Main Themes:

- Local Priorities and Outcomes
- Organisational and Place Leadership
- Governance and culture
- Finance planning and management
- Capacity for improvement

Footer area for presentation title or web address



Devolution v LGR

Devolution

In England, devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The process in which the structure and responsibilities of local authorities are reconfigured.

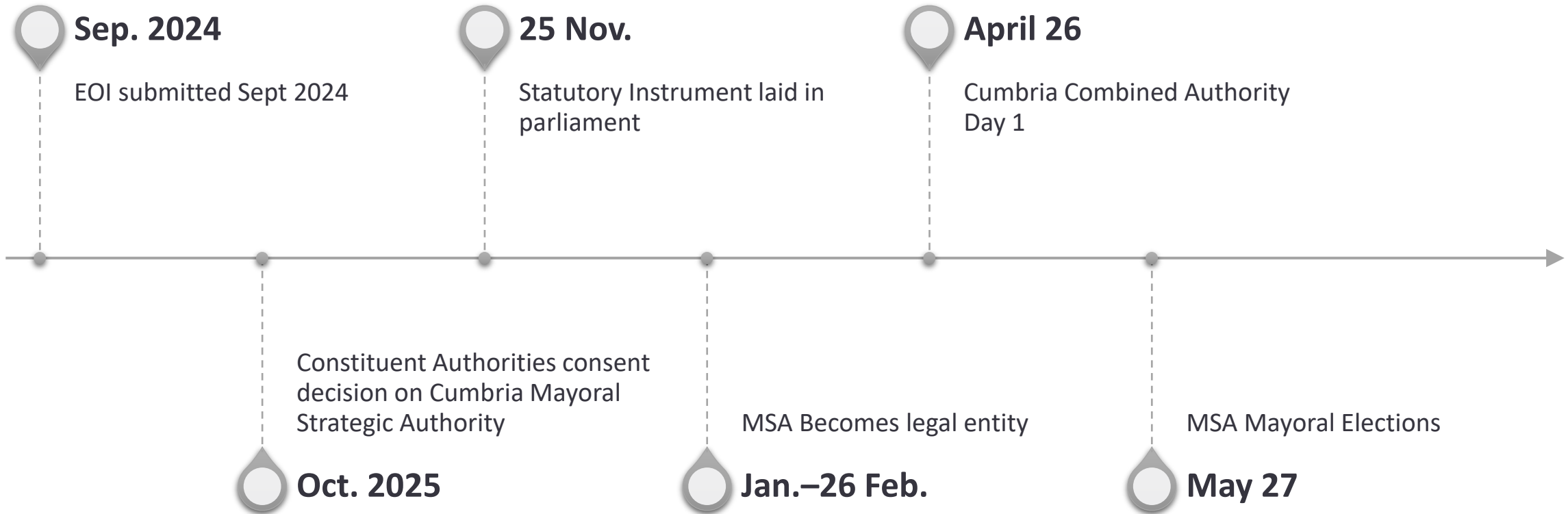
- *Reset the relationship between central and local government*
- *Give communities stronger tools to shape the future of their local areas, improving accountability*
- *Building capacity across the local government sector.*

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

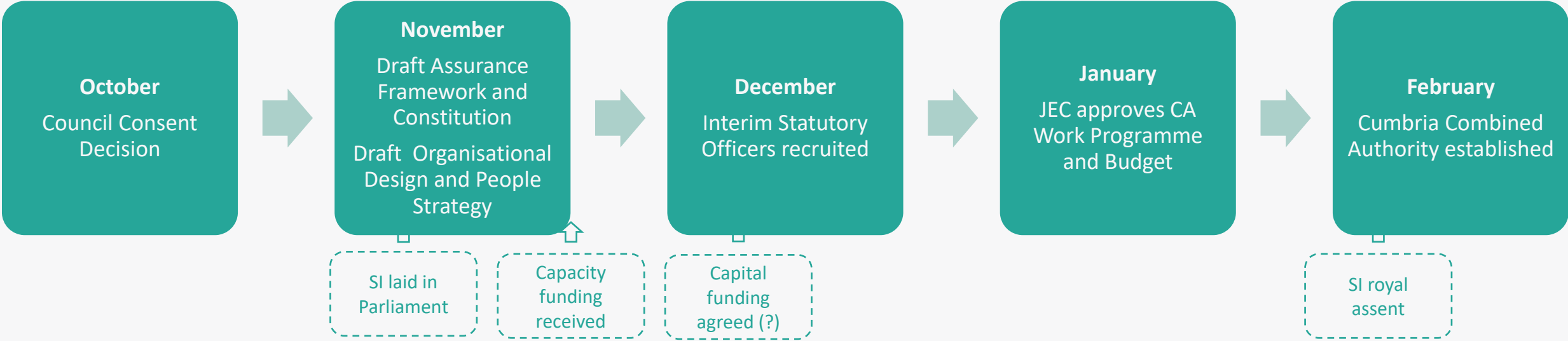
<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/devolution-and-lgr-hub/devolution-and-local-government-reorganisation-faqs-and-glossary>



Devolution Priority Programme



Key milestones to establishment



Communications and Engagement

Rationale for a Cumbria MCA



Stronger voice: Ensures Cumbria has a place at the top table both nationally & across the North.



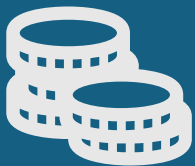
Local control: Devolution of skills funding, new powers to accelerate development, and a path to integrated settlements.



Joined-up Leadership: A statutory basis for joint working and integrated service delivery at the pan-Cumbria level.



Clear investment focus: A single local growth plan with a mayor empowered to convene business and cornerstone investment.



Guaranteed funding: £333m guaranteed investment over 30 years, plus access to future MCA-focused funding and potential revenue raisers.



Future opportunities: Able to shape the next wave of devolution around issues like the rural economy, environment, and tourism.

National Policy Context

- Over half of England's population is currently covered by Mayoral devolution, with that set to rise to two-thirds via the Devolution Priority Programme.
- Clear government ambition to complete devolution in the North of England, with collaboration and engagement through “Great North” increasingly driven by regional mayors.
- The English Devolution and Community Engagement Bill will create a more standardized model of regional government – “strategic authorities” – underpinned by a statutory framework of powers and functions.
- The government has made clear that the current framework is the “the floor, not the ceiling”, and it wants to deepen devolution over time, with a new cohort of Mayors wanting to focus on rural issues.

