



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: PROMOTING CARLISLE

Date of Meeting: 28 AUGUST 2003

Public

Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan: No

Inside Policy Framework

Title: REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Report of: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Report reference: CE 15/03

Summary:

This report sets out for Members the first draft submission to the Boundary Commission which is a working document and will be subject to change following the receipt of the CRED report and consultation with Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive.

Recommendations:

This report requests Members to:

1. Comment on the attached first draft submission to the Boundary Commission.
2. Note that this draft will be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committees on Tuesday 26 August 2003.
3. Note that the formal submission to the Boundary Commission will be approved by the Full Council on 4 September 2003.
4. Note that an update will be made at the meeting on the possibilities of joint submission.
5. Note that the research report from CRED will be forwarded to Members of the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny as soon as received.
6. Note that the details of the document will continue to be developed, as further information becomes available.

Contact Officer: Jason Gooding

Ext: 7470

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

Further to the informal Council meeting held on 7 August 2003, this report includes a draft of the Council's submission for new Unitary Authorities based on Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council, Allerdale Borough Council and Copeland Borough Council, and Barrow Borough Council and South Lakeland District Council. The document by necessity has a focus of Carlisle and Eden and will be further informed and shaped by the receipt of the research study commissioned by the University of Northumbria, CRED commissioned by the Executive. Copies of the CRED report will be made available to Members when it becomes available.

Members should note that the submission will continue to develop and evolve, as information becomes available and in line with comments of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny and the final document will be presented to the City Council for approval on 4 September 2003.

The Council will need to determine whether the application is to be made by Carlisle City Council or in concert with Eden District Council or possibly in partnership with other District Council's across Cumbria as appropriate.

2. CONSULTATION

Consultation to date has been undertaken independently by the University of Northumbria.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

This report requests Members to:

1. Comment on the attached first draft submission to the Boundary Commission.
2. Note that this draft will be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committees on Tuesday 26 August 2003.
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7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To allow the City Council to make a formal submission to the Boundary Committee by the deadline of 8 September 2003 in line with existing Council policy.

8. IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of directly elected Regional Government and new Unitary Structures across Cumbria will have a fundamental affect for the City Council. It is too early at this stage to assess the staffing and financial implications, as these will be determined to a large degree by the preferred model and the functions to be undertaken by any successful authority.

Contact Officer: Jason Gooding

Ext: 7470

**CARLISLE AND EDEN
UNITARY AUTHORITY
A VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

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Introduction

In October 2004, the people of the North West of England will have the opportunity to vote on whether or not they wish to have an elected regional assembly. If they vote yes, then the creation of an elected North West Regional Assembly will mean that local government in Cumbria would be delivered by all purpose unitary authorities (or authority) as opposed to the two tiers of county council and district councils currently in operation.

The people of Cumbria will have the opportunity to choose from at least two models for unitary authorities in the county. In order to determine what these choices should be, the government has asked The Boundary Committee to advise, and the Committee requires each affected local authority to submit its proposal for the future of local government in the event of an elected regional assembly being established.

Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council have both decided that their preferred model is for three unitary authorities in Cumbria based on the current boundaries of Carlisle City Council, Eden District Council, Allerdale District Council, Copeland Borough Council, South Lakeland District Council & Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council

Specifically, the leaders of Eden and Carlisle think that a unitary authority based on the borders of the two existing districts is best for the people they serve because:

- **It's the right size.** It is very important that a new unitary authority strikes the right balance between being too big and too small. If an authority is too big, then it may have more resources at its disposal, but it can become distant from the people it serves; councillors may be expected to represent more people than they effectively can, or councils can become unwieldy and bureaucratic. If an authority is too small then it will lack the capacity to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

The leaders of Eden and Carlisle believe that a unitary authority based on the whole county would be too big. A unitary authority based on Eden and Carlisle's boundaries would be large enough to ensure it has the capacity to deliver high quality services. But just as importantly, it would be small enough to be flexible, responsive and able to shape its services to the needs of people.

- **Carlisle and Eden form a natural area.** Carlisle and Eden have a lot in common. The two district councils have recognised this for some years and the strong partnership between the two authorities evidenced in this document demonstrates that. The border with Scotland to the North and the Pennines and Cumbrian Fells to the East and West enclose an area with a strong sense of identity and community. The M6 and the West Coast Mainline mean that people tend to travel North & South in the area, meaning that Eden and Carlisle form a natural economic area.

- **It makes sense for the delivery of quality public services.** The Carlisle and Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Carlisle and Eden Local Strategic Partnership and the Green Box Recycling Scheme are just a few examples of how the two districts have been working together with other partners to deliver quality public services. The creation of a new unitary authority would mean much more than just stitching the existing districts together with services currently provided by the county. However the success of these initiatives shows that some of the building blocks are already in place to build a new authority that will provide excellent and accessible public services for all of the residents of Carlisle and Eden.

This submission describes the context in which Eden and Carlisle currently operates. It provides and points to the evidence that the best unitary authority for the people of Eden and Carlisle would be based on the existing boundaries of the two districts, and it presents a vision for the delivery of excellent public services shaped by the needs of people.

1. Principles

This submission was prepared in order to propose a new unitary authority that will deliver public services according to the following principles:

Local Leadership

- The Provision of Genuine Community Leadership
- Provision of A Local Approach which is close to the people we serve, listens to them and acts upon what they say
- Devolution of delivery to the lowest appropriate level and recognition of the significance of initiatives such as Quality Parish Councils
- The provision of efficient and effective political representation and leadership

Strong Corporate Governance

- Accountability and transparency
- Development of existing structures and partnerships, in particular local strategic partnerships
- Development of a new organisation which develops the potential of its people in order to recruit and retain excellent staff to deliver excellent public services
- Recognition of diversity in Cumbria and tackling exclusion

Quality Services

- Sustainable, Viable and Durable
- Provision of Equality of Access to our services
- Provision of Convenient and Effective quality services

2. North West Regional Context

It is important to remember that the primary driver for this debate on unitary authorities in Cumbria is the possible establishment of an elected north west regional assembly. It would be unwise to consider any new unitary authorities as simple amalgamations of county and district services as these will be delivered in the context of an elected regional assembly. It is therefore important to briefly consider the role of an elected assembly.

The White Paper, 'Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions', identifies the responsibilities of the proposed regional assemblies.

The chief themes of the Government's modernisation agenda are to improve services and to engage more with local people. Regional assemblies will do this by:

- Improving delivery by ensuring better co-ordinated government at regional level
- Giving regional stakeholders a clearer decision-making framework to engage with
- Promoting sustainable development and improving quality of life

The White Paper states that an elected assembly will be responsible for regional strategies dealing with the following areas:

- Sustainable development
- Economic development
- Skills and employment
- Spatial planning
- Transport
- Waste
- Housing
- Health improvement
- Culture and Tourism
- Biodiversity.

There will be strategic roles for regional assemblies in other areas such as crime reduction, civil contingency planning and rural regeneration.

The strategic framework developed by the regional assemblies will give local authorities the freedom to develop and deliver local services catering for the needs of the communities they serve.

The new, wholly unitary local authorities will, within the new strategic framework act as the community champion and chief service deliverer in their area.

3. Cumbrian Context

The new unitary structure of local government in Cumbria will need to address some fundamental geographical issues..

- The large land mass of Cumbria which is physically divided by lakes, mountain ranges and rivers.
- Very sparse population
- Community isolation
- Poor transportation links, particularly in rural areas and east west long travel time to other large population centres.
- Distinct communities

The Lake District National Park occupies 2,300 of the counties 7,000 sq km. Settlements are typically small and lie along the coast and the major communication routes. Only 20 settlements have a population of more than 2500 and Carlisle is the biggest settlement with some 70,000 people.

The counties economy is heavily reliant on manufacturing and tourism with unemployment levels just below the national average although this conceals variations from 5-6% in the traditional manufacturing towns of West Cumbria to less than 2% in the rural eastern districts of south Lakeland.

Although geographically large in economic terms Cumbria comprises a relatively small overall economy. It ranks 43rd out of 47 sub-regional economies in England on this measure (by LSC area).

Cumbria represents by far the smallest sub-regional economy in the North West – Britain's 3rd largest regional economy.

By district, south Lakeland (including Kendal, Ulverston) and Carlisle represents the most significant economic foci within the County area.

Reflecting the largely rural character and dispersed settlement geography of much of the County, Cumbria presently accounts for less than 7% of the regional employment total for the North West.

To overcome endemic problems of low dynamism, poorly represented knowledge economy, low enterprise and innovation, poor workforce skills, poor accessibility and considerable communities in need will require vigorous creative and dynamic local authority leadership and intervention.

This is to be provided through the Carlisle and Eden Unitary proposal.

4 Local Profile

Geography

The proposed new unitary authority will cover the area currently served by Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council. This forms a natural area of approximately 1200 square miles enclosed by the Scottish border to the north, the Pennines to the east and the Cumbrian fells to the west.

Population

The population served by the proposed new unitary authority comprises of 152,000 people, 70% of which live within the main centres of Carlisle and Penrith. The remainder live in the settlements such as Alston, Appleby, Brampton, Dalston, Kirkby Stephen, Longtown and Wetheral, and in the small villages and agricultural settlements that are scattered throughout the large rural area. There are approximately 70,000 domestic dwellings within the area.

The size of the population in Carlisle district has remained fairly static over the last decade, whereas Eden has witnessed a 9% increase in population between 1991 and 2001 compared to 3% nationally. This is attributed to a high level of inward migration rather than natural growth.

Economics

The most significant employers within the area are engaged in manufacturing, distribution, public services, and consumer services, including tourism. 1 in 4 jobs in the rural area is in agriculture, an industry which was profoundly affected by the Foot and Mouth disease epidemic in 2001. Foot and Mouth disease still presents major challenges for the future of the rural economy, with many farmers giving up their profession. The Foot and Mouth disease cost the area of £250 million and 16,000 jobs were at risk.

A significant economic challenge within the area is presented by a relatively low wage economy. For example wages in Carlisle are on average lower than those in Cumbria and nationally. Pockets of deprivation exist within the area; four of Carlisle's twelve wards are among the ten per cent most deprived wards in England, while more than half (17) of Eden's wards are in the top 1,000 most deprived wards nationally for access.

The area provides regionally important leisure and cultural facilities including Rheghed, the Lake District's premier indoor tourist attraction and the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery. These two facilities alone welcomed over 700,000 annual visitors.

The award-winning Lanes shopping centre in Carlisle and which attracted over 10 million visits in 2002, offers one million sq. feet of retail space and is the largest shopping centre north of Preston, west of Newcastle and South of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Carlisle City Council developed, with its partners, the Kingmoor Park complex a premier business park of some 400 acres, with 1,000 jobs on site so far. This was established through the formation of a public/private partnership. Eden Business Park is a 37-acre site in Penrith. This Strategic Employment Site is being developed in partnership by the Eden District Council in conjunction with the North West Development Agency for higher added value and large scale strategic uses.

Environment and Transport

Carlisle and Eden districts benefit from the M6 Motorway, the A66 trans-pennine trunk route and the A69 east west route. However, local public transport in rural areas is limited and presents a challenge for delivery of public services. The A66 will be significantly improved with the duelling of the route and the Temple Sowerby by-pass. Transport and access are essential issues that need to be addressed if the prosperity of the area is to be enhanced and the environment is to be protected.

5 Current Pattern Of Service Delivery

It is not intended in this section to recite the range of services currently provided by the district councils and the county council in the area to be served by the proposed unitary authority. This information is available in the supporting material. This section focuses on the arrangements in place between Carlisle and Eden that will provide some of the building blocks for a new authority. A new unitary authority will of course be an entirely new organisation, not an amalgamation of two districts. These examples do however serve to illustrate how Carlisle and Eden forms a natural unit for delivery of quality public services.

Current Services and joint working initiatives

Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council have a rich history of working in partnership to deliver a range of projects and services, both statutory and non-statutory. The mechanisms used to provide services jointly cover a wide spectrum of delivery models. These are not restricted to formal contractual arrangements between the two authorities, although these do exist where a contract is considered to be the most appropriate way of ensuring effective service delivery.

The two authorities have often come together to provide services and progress initiatives in partnership for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is a very practical justification for joint working; this produces economies of scale and more effectively tackles the challenges faced by public bodies delivering services over a very wide rural area. Secondly the problems faced in the area do not stop or change at the shared boundary and the expansion of a solution tried and tested by one authority into the area covered by the second is therefore often the simplest and most effective method of tackling a shared problem. Finally a spirit of openness and trust exists between the two authorities at both officer and member level, this enables joint projects to be developed and implemented and for any problems that are encountered during this process to be aired and for solutions to be jointly sought.

Many officers have experience of working for both authorities and this has facilitated the sharing of ideas. Officers meet regularly at local and county wide professional groupings. The Carlisle and Eden LSP is a common thread running through all that both authorities do and deliver. Both authorities recognise the benefits that working in the wider LSP partnership can bring to enhance the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area.

Community leadership and community involvement form part of the shared ethos of Carlisle City and Eden district councils and good partnership working are viewed as an integral part of local public service. This is underpinned by both councils spending time, effort and resources in building capacity within the wider community and among partners to in order to meet the needs of local people. This is evidenced in the LSP's activities and in the community involvement which has been undertaken to draw up the community strategies.

The leading members from both authorities meet together regularly to discuss a number of issues, ranging through common service delivery issues to tackling issues that the area commonly faces. The regional and sub-regional agenda is also a regular topic at such meetings, ensuring that a common voice from Carlisle and Eden, is heard in county and North West partnerships and other arenas.

The range of services delivered in partnership include:

- **Carlisle and Eden Local Strategic Partnership.** The LSP was initially formed to meet the requirements for a community leadership role following the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. Its initial purpose was to develop a rapid and co-ordinated response to the community, social and economic challenges that the outbreak brought. The LSP has grown and developed and its remit has broadened to encompass economic, social and environmental wellbeing.
The LSP is developing a track record for attracting external funding to deliver projects to improve the quality of life for local people. It has recently attracted significant new funds to the Carlisle and Eden areas which the district councils would not have been able to access if acting alone examples of this include:
 - The Childrens' Fund has been accessed to deliver a 'Prevention through Performance' arts and crime prevention/awareness project in local schools across the two areas
 - National Lottery funded charity, Youth Music, is delivering through the LSP its 'Singing Communities' project in Carlisle and Eden
 - A new Eden Valley Cycle Way has been developed and launched, aiding tourism and bringing health and economic development benefits locally
 - Through HAZ funding two public health workers will soon be employed to aid the work of the Local Health Groups (which report directly to the LSP)
 - Two pilot project areas in need of regeneration and multi-agency focus are being targeted through LSP partnership working. They are Carlisle and South, Carlisle and Kirkby Thore, Eden.

Further information about the Carlisle and Eden Local Strategic Partnership is available in the supporting material.

- **Joint Community Strategy.** The Carlisle and Eden LSP has now developed a draft joint community strategy. This incorporates the communities' priorities as identified in City Vision and Eden Futures and is currently being consulted on, with a view to publication in Dec 2003. The

joint community strategy: *Carlisle and Eden, A Vision for the Future* will become integrated into both authorities' corporate and service delivery planning mechanisms. By this mechanism Carlisle City and Eden District councils ensure that they are close and responsive to community need and local priorities.

- **Carlisle and Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.** This partnership was formed in 2001 when the partners of the existing two district wide partnerships recognised the benefits that could be derived from combining into one partnership. At the time of the merger it was unusual for two local authority areas to come together to form one CDRP. Both Councils contribute to a 'pooled budget' along with the Police, that supplements the funding allocated by the Government and it is used on projects which span across the two local authority areas. The CDRP Leadership Group brings partners together to work on improving community safety and aligning strategies such as those of the Drug Action Team and Drug Task Group. Consultative forums are held twice a year, which involve a wide range of agencies, organisations and community representatives, in order to facilitate problem solving.
- **Recycling Initiatives.** The two councils are working together to tackle our statutory recycling targets. Phase one (the "Green Box" scheme) covers 10,000 households in Carlisle and 4,600 in Eden. We are also operating (phase two) a pilot kerbside collection of garden waste using wheeled bins. Both schemes are proving to be very popular with participants, and making a significant contribution to the councils' recycling tonnages. DEFRA is funding an extension of the Green Box recycling schemes through phases so as to enable us to meet the Governments statutory recycling targets.
- **East Cumbria Countryside Project.** ECCP is a partnership between Eden District Council, Carlisle City Council and Cumbria County Council established in 1985 with the support of the Countryside Commission. This project promotes and enhances the quality of the natural resources of the area, provides opportunities for recreation and enjoyment by local people and visitors, and helps to stimulate a sustainable rural economy. By attracting outside funds to support our core income, the project is able to multiply Eden investment by a factor of 2.5, in support of rural regeneration.
- **De-criminalised parking.** Carlisle City Council developed expertise in the enforcement of de-criminalised parking in its own urban areas. Consequently when parking de-criminalisation took place in Eden a formal contract was entered into between the two authorities. Carlisle City Council as the contractor, enforces the scheme on behalf of Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council, at no additional cost to the taxpayer.

- **M6 Corridor.** The M6 Corridor initiative is a partnership that has been developed between Carlisle City Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council in order to increase inward investment into the three districts on sites around the M6 Motorway. The partnership also now includes the Cumbria Inward Investment Agency. This initiative received funding in April 2002 from Team North West and is now developing a website to attract businesses. Work is still on going and it is expected that the website will become live later this year. It is planned that, once live, this website will link into the North West Development Agency's on line database of sites and premises in the region.
- **Employment Alternatives.** Employment Alternatives is a partnership initiative between Carlisle City Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council, with each of the district councils providing core funding. Its overall objective is to provide training and support to people (largely across rural areas) in order to help them develop their business ideas and/or gain employment. The partnership began in 1996 under the title of 'Lifestyles', and was expanded and relaunched as Employment Alternatives in 2001 (in response to the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak). The scheme supports between 300 and 400 people each year in Eden.
- **Health improvement.** Each district's Local Health Group seeks to address the wider health and well-being agenda through information sharing and partnership working locally. The two groups have recently considered merging into one group covering the Carlisle and Eden areas and are committed to working jointly on a range of projects and initiatives as the health needs of local people are similar across the joint area. To support this, a new post of health development worker, operating across both districts has been created, the post holder is committed to supporting LSP objectives regarding health and well-being.
- **Children and Young People's Strategy.** Eden District Council and Carlisle City Council have, through the local strategic partnership developed a children and young peoples strategy, a copy of which is available in the supporting material.

6. Proposals For Delivery of Services in New Unitary Authorities.

The context within which new unitary authorities will develop future services in the mid 2000s has changed significantly. The unitaries established in the mid 1990s tended to prioritise the matching of service provision against population size, whilst ensuring that the community leadership role was central to that prioritisation. To some extent, delivering new services then tended to be an additional piece of work to accomplish, with many unitaries tacking on new areas of work. The new unitaries will have much larger horizons, grounded in the Government's modernisation agenda which has helped to equip us to lead and become engaged with their local communities, major cross-cutting initiatives and increased partnership working. All of which have strengthened our role and capacity to deliver new areas of work. Added to this the now familiar regime of Best Value, performance indicators, the matching of achievements to funding streams (which can go up or down), show that local authorities like Carlisle and Eden who wish to become a unitary authority are more than capable of taking on the future challenges. We accept those challenges and see them as step changes rather than the leaps of faith that characterised some earlier unitary models.

As political leaders and officers, experienced in taking on significant challenges in recent times, we believe that we can establish future services which are viable and durable and, which importantly, make sense to our local communities. The challenges will involve us building on the best of what exists, re-organising services where appropriate, developing new services and creating new connections between them which are understandable to local people. The possibility of becoming a unitary brings with it the desire to at last be responsive and flexible and to build our services around people rather than the other way around.

Before we outline our views on how we will deliver our future services, we re-emphasise the guiding principals which are at the heart of our vision for a new Unitary Authority for Carlisle and Eden

- Our role as a Unitary Authority is one of community leadership and local accountability which go beyond the provision of services
- We will be creating a new Authority and will not be tacking together two District Councils
- We will take the opportunity to review and re-organise all our services, those established and new, to ensure they are highly effective. Where there is good practice we will build upon it. Our review of services will always involve consultation with our local communities
- For our services to be effective they will be local and clearly led and have real accountability

- We have a strong awareness of the major changes that our new Unitary Authority will bring and the impact that can have on individuals and groups. We will work positively and sensitively with everyone involved.
- The effectiveness of our future services will be based on outcomes which are performance-managed
- All our services will provide equality of access
- The delivery of our services will be supported by a robust workforce strategy to ensure we have the right number of staff with the right skills and knowledge to ensure high quality provision
- The Carlisle and Eden Local Strategic Partnership will be instrumental in drawing our services together in partnership with other public organisations, together with the voluntary and private sectors, with the joint Community Strategy as the key focus to help us measure our outcomes across all our future services

In developing this aspect of our submission we have drawn together information and outcomes of discussions we have had with a number of established unitary authorities, including Bournemouth, Halton, Warrington and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Councils, all of which are high performing Councils and in different ways have helped us to consider the shape of our future services and perhaps more importantly, the lessons these Councils have learned from their own experiences.

In addition we have been informed by supporting documentation, including OFSTED and SSI reports, LSC information, which have been particularly helpful in considering the shape of our 'new' services – Education and Social Services.

The services we currently deliver put us firmly in the public spotlight and all of them are subject to accountability through national and local performance targets. Many of these services are closest to the concerns of our local communities. They will all be reviewed in the development stage of unitary status. Our main aim is to look at where the connections between services can be established and/or strengthened, how they can be more responsive to our communities' needs and how economies of scale can bring efficiencies where they are needed. We will undergo extensive consultation on all these services to ensure that their future shape is strong in terms of structure and delivery. We are concerned that they all link significantly with Education and Social Services, either in a virtual sense or in terms of co-location. We shall also look at the links between those local services with regional government.

In establishing our new services we are mindful of the joint arrangements which some services have established, some between District and County and others between Districts. We share the Government's view that joint arrangements can sometimes serve to confuse the lines of accountability for local people and that these should be avoided wherever possible. However

we feel that there are some services which will need joint arrangements, not just in terms of making economic sense but to reduce that confusion. We want our services to be economically viable so services such as the work of Coroner's will be shared across all the Unitaries in Cumbria, with one unitary taking lead body responsibility. In our discussions with other unitary authorities, we have noted that joint arrangements also change as unitaries develop and mature.

We are also concerned about those services which are currently being contracted out by Cumbria County Council and currently cover a wide range of areas. These too will be subjected to a rigorous review process. We are outlining in more detail our vision for the delivery of Education and Social Services. These new responsibilities are significant and our political leaders and officers are establishing a clear and coherent understanding of both the challenges and the weight that those responsibilities will bring.

Education and Social Services

Education and Social Services will be vital services for the Carlisle and Eden Unitary Authority. We already have strong strategic and operational links as District Councils and through the Carlisle and Eden LSP. These links include the creative ones between leisure services and local schools; community development work with children and young people and the development of child protection policies. In addition the LSP has recently developed a Children & Young People's Strategy and has representation on the County Council's Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Carlisle City Council leads on the 'Post 16' group involving local secondary school headteachers and further and higher education representatives, with its key remit to make the links between educational achievement and economic regeneration. The City Council is also the lead body for the Sure Start South Carlisle programme and has established strong working relationships with Social Services and the LEA.

Our vision is to bring Education and Children's Social Services together and to build one service around the needs of children and families. This unified approach is at the heart of our new authority and its work will influence and inform the work of other services, particularly housing and homelessness, environmental, leisure and regeneration. We do not underestimate the challenge of this approach and we will build upon the work already being undertaken by Cumbria County Council in developing a single service model and use the models of good practice developed in other authorities. These models include a number of approaches, some incremental, some requiring major structural shifts, whilst others are based on the co-location of multi-disciplinary teams.

We recognise that this vision will require us to have a robust consultation framework in place and that the outcomes will require our elected members to take major policy decisions.

A new delivery model will support our new approach where children are seen in the context of their family, school and community. Our essential question will not be 'how is our new Service doing?' but 'how are our children doing?' In developing this approach, we will establish a Family Support Strategy, which will include a single assessment system that allows all agencies to share a common approach to assessing and recording need. This will prevent children and families who require support services from a range of agencies to have to undergo numerous assessment processes. It will also ensure that the points of entry for all families are understood in terms of accessing service provision.

The role of the Health Service will be crucial for the success of a joint approach to service delivery for children and families. The remit of Health is necessarily complex and we are committed to working closely with our PCTs and the acute Trusts to bring energy, innovation and creativity in our partnership working across Health, Social Services, Education and other services to give a real community sense to local needs. We will also work with Health to further develop the National Service Frameworks for Mental Health and Older Adults. We will ensure that the partnership established to support adults with learning disabilities is localised and strengthened. We want to ensure that the long term needs of this group of adults can stand the test of time and that our joint services being delivered in ten to twenty years can continue to support them. We acknowledge the good work that is already taking place across Cumbria in these areas of work.

Clearly our collaboration with our PCTs, together with private and independent providers will include commissioning of services and our review of Children and Adult Social Services will help us to determine which elements we will contract and from which provider. We also need to review the community base from which those services can be provided, e.g. GP surgery, community centre, etc.

The voluntary, independent and private sector will play a key role in supporting children and families and we aim to extend that role to enable these sectors to contribute their range of skills and experience which is not always available in the statutory sector.

The role of the LSP will be key in delivering our joined-up approach and we will ensure that through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, we will be accountable as a partner within the LSP to our local communities. The influence of the LSP will move us away from thinking about children's services in terms of agencies and funding to a concentration on functions that cut across organisations. As a unitary authority we want to develop a 'wraparound' service which revolves around families, rather than expecting families to revolve around us.

As we begin to pre-figure our unitary status, we are already looking the key issues which affect our children and their families, within both national and local contexts. These are some of them:

Early Years

We are committed to integrated care and education for children 0 – 5 and will work closely with the private and voluntary sector to ensure high quality services are delivered. We are keen to further develop Children's Centres across Carlisle and Eden and to build upon the initiatives in Carlisle South which link to the Sure Start programme. We wish to make the links between high quality child care and progression routes for parents and carers into further/higher education and employment. We also aim to review early years provision in our rural areas.

We will support and further develop the recommendations made by OFSTED in its report of the LEA (June 2001) in terms of defining the distinctive roles of Nursery Schools. Our first priority will be to develop a Carlisle and Eden Early Years Partnership to oversee this area of work and the Partnership will be represented on the LSP.

Children aged 5 – 16

Our joint Service will initially focus on a number of concerns and issues impacting upon children in this age group, including: supporting children in public care, establishing a single assessment system and a unitary review of Special Educational Needs which has inclusion at its heart. We will address the transitional gaps between early years, secondary and further/higher education and focus on any outstanding concerns identified by OFSTED in their last inspection of Cumbria LEA, though it is likely that another inspection will take place before the establishment of unitary authorities.

We are particularly concerned to address the recommendations of the forthcoming Green Paper *Children at Risk* following the Lamming Report, which will inevitably influence the shape of our joined up approach.

The 14-19 Agenda (following the Government's publication *Opportunity & Excellence*) and the awaited Green Paper will be timely for Carlisle and Eden as the new authority addresses, in partnership with the LSC and its Schools, the learning and training needs of this age group. Educational achievement amongst this population is lower than the national average and there are issues for the 14-16 age group, particularly vulnerable children living in rural areas, which need to be prioritised. We are also keen to prioritise the needs of excluded children, the allocation of provision for them and the working relationships with local schools and to provide a network of services that will give real and lasting support.

The last inspection of Children's Services in Cumbria, undertaken by the Social Services Inspectorate, was in 2000 and further one is planned for October 2003. Therefore it will be the recommendations of the latter which will be of most concern to us.

Post 16

There are two key educational reviews which have recently been published, the outcomes of which will be of paramount concern to our unitary authority.

The first one – *Post 16 Learning Provision in the Carlisle Area* (published July 2003) which deals with the future organisation of post 16 learning and training with a particular focus on sixth form education. At the time of writing, consultation on future options are just beginning, so it is inappropriate to comment on them. However we wish to state that the new unitary and the LSC will work in partnership with other stakeholders, including local secondary schools and local further education institutions, to ensure that all the outcomes of the review are addressed. We are particularly concerned that the participation rate in full-time post 16 education in Carlisle and Eden is lower than the average rate for Cumbria as a whole and well below the national average participation rate.

We already have strong working relationships with Carlisle College and will work closely with them to help them achieve the aims of their emerging Strategic Development Plan and any issues which arise from the review of further education colleges across the county. We will be particularly concerned that the needs of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported in full time education and have clear progression routes into further/higher education and employment.

Our concerns also include the 16+ age group who are leaving care and the extent to which support mechanisms in place for them. We will ensure that the corporate parenting role of our elected members is extended fully to this group of young people. The benefits of a unitary in terms of its local responsiveness are very helpful here and we will ensure that all our services are involved in a range of support mechanisms, which help this group of young people become independent.

The second key review is of Higher Education in Cumbria and detailed in the *Fender Report* (published May 2003). The report identifies the need to raise the profile of higher education across the County and makes a strong case for the development of higher education as a major factor in the social and economic regeneration of the region and the development of a network of universities and colleges to become a 'University of Cumbria'. Given that four of the HE campuses are based in Carlisle, including two HE institutions, it will be essential for our new unitary authority to be closely involved in supporting the recommendations of the Fender report.

At the time of writing, the Carlisle Post 16 Group (led by the City Council) is looking at the possibilities of funding two projects to support the work needed to address the outcomes of both reviews. This underlines our commitment and pre-empts our future work as a new unitary and its key role as community leader.

We are mindful of our statutory role as providers and enablers of adult and community education and will work in partnership with the LSC to ensure that

lifelong learning is an integral part of our service provision, and this will involve the widening (not just increasing) our participation rates and extending the provision of skills for life (basic skills). Our concerns for adult learning include the needs of adults based our rural communities and our links with partners, for instance the Rural Women's Network, to ensure that a diverse range of learning programmes with progression routes is on offer.

The role of the Library Services is crucial in its support of lifelong learning and in reviewing this service and in pursuit of our vision for children and families, it is likely that we will include Library Services within the unified service.

Libraries and Museums

The provision of services in relation to libraries and museums currently provided by the County Council would be incorporated into existing arrangements for delivery of culture, leisure and sports services. These existing arrangements are described in supporting documentation.

Waste and Highways

The future organisational arrangements for the provision of waste and highway services will be concluded when the overall strategic direction of the proposed directly elected regional assembly is known. It is envisaged that the new regional body will undertake the strategic functions and the new unitary authorities will provide the waste disposal activities currently provided by the county council and the waste collection and recycling functions of existing district councils.

Workforce Issues

Our guiding principals include our awareness of the impact of major changes on individuals, including our established and future workforce and the need to develop a robust workforce strategy during the preparation stage of our new unitary authority.

We understand the difficulties which we will face in recruiting some staff, particularly specialist staff, in a climate of intense competition and existing chronic staffing shortages (especially in Social Services). Our workforce strategy, therefore will be developed in partnership, wherever possible, with other new unitary authorities and other agencies, particularly Health.

It will have at its starting point the services our unitary will need to deliver and the range of competencies required to deliver them. Some of those competencies will be core and specialist, whilst others may require multi-disciplinary skills.

7 Joint Arrangements

A Carlisle and Eden unitary authority in the context of a directly elected North West Regional Assembly will be self sufficient.

Three unitary authorities in Cumbria will represent the right balance of closeness to the people they represent and “critical mass” for capacity to deliver. This coupled with the establishment of an elected regional assembly with a strategic role will minimise the requirement for joint arrangements between unitary authorities. A flexible and local approach will be taken to joint commissioning and purchasing, to meet local needs and the constraints of geography. This will include, where appropriate, joint commissioning with other partners including health.

There is a recognition that in the transitional period very detailed mapping and evaluation of statutory services is required, particularly for education and social services. District Councils are considering agreeing to jointly commission service delivery mapping and financial modelling to inform procurement and service delivery patterns.

Joint arrangements may be envisaged in the following areas:

- Coroners - with a single authority taking a lead role on behalf of all three Unitaries.
- Fire - where a joint board is envisaged between the 3 Unitaries as has been successfully implemented in some Scottish authorities and Merseyside.

8 Political Representation.

The precise nature of the political management arrangements for the new authority will be a matter for the authority itself, once fully constituted, to decide upon.

It is not intended to rehearse here the detail of the options available to the new authority but they will be those prescribed under the Local Government Act 2000 and, in respect of the executive arrangements to be adopted, under Section 11 of the Act.

Under the above legislative requirements, the various forms of Executive open to the authority will be:-

- an elected mayor and cabinet or
- a leader and cabinet or
- an elected mayor and Council manager

It should be noted that, because of the potential size of the authority with an anticipated population of in excess of 150,000 and given that it will be a single tier authority, the alternative arrangements for a non-executive model of governance prescribed under Section 32 of the Act and accompanying regulations will not be available to the new authority.

It is assumed that, before deciding upon which executive model of political management to adopt, the new Council would undertake the consultation exercise prescribed under Section 25 of the Act and the accompanying ODPM Guidance and settle the form and detail of both the executive structure and the accompanying overview and scrutiny and regulatory aspects of its constitutional arrangements in the light of the feedback from that consultation. It may be that some transitional provision will be required to enable the creation of a "shadow" authority first with power to carry out the consultative processes referred to above and to put in place the detailed constitutional provisions for the new authority prior to the authority itself coming into being. There are no doubt precedents for such an approach in earlier reorganisations involving a transition from multi to single tier authorities.

Council Size

The existing electoral arrangements in Carlisle and Eden are as follows:

| Carlisle City | Eden District |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Population (2001 census) 100,739 | Population (2001 census) 49,777 |
| Electorate (July 2003) 79,756 | Electorate (July 2003) 40,039 |
| No. of Council members 52 | No. of Council members 38 |
| No. of wards 22 | No. of wards 30 |
| (12 urban and 10 rural) | |
| Councillor/elector ratio 1:1533 | Councillor to elector ratio 1:1053 |

| | |
|--|--|
| County electoral divisions 17 | No. of County electoral divisions 9 |
| County Councillor/elector ratio 1:4691 | County Councillor/elector ratio 1:4449 |

Combined Carlisle/Eden

A unitary authority created within the current boundaries of Carlisle and Eden would have a population of 150,516 and an electorate of 119,795.

Options for the size of a combined Carlisle/Eden unitary authority have to take account of the need to balance appropriate representation at local level with the wider strategic role of the new authority, and have regard to the particular geographical characteristics of the area. They would also have to facilitate electoral arrangements with the aim of achieving equality of representation across the whole area of the new council.

In the absence of statutory prescription of local authority sizes, the Electoral Commission's guidance on the present round of periodic reviews contains advice on council size, highlighting the current variation in size even between authorities of the same type. In formulating options, the need for sufficient councillors to represent constituents properly, formulate policy and represent the authority on external bodies and inter agency partnerships has to be weighed against the difficulties that can arise in internal management if there are too many councillors. It is noted that the Commission has no particular view on whether new management structures should result in change in council size although it expects the tendency towards reductions is likely to continue. The ability of non-executive members to hold the executive to account properly, however, would be impaired if there were too few councillors.

Options based on a simple combination of the existing number of District Councillors (90) or County Councillors (26) are discounted as either too big (being larger than the existing County Council) or too small.

If the current councillor to elector ratio for Carlisle (1:1553) or Eden (1:1053) were used instead, the resulting sizes of 78 and 113 would still be too large.

A combined Carlisle/Eden authority would have a population of 150,516 (2001 census). While it is accepted that Council size in any particular area will depend on the characteristics and needs of that area, comparison of a number of existing unitary authorities of similar size in the regions under review nevertheless provides a pointer to what may be an appropriate range of Council sizes, as follows:

| <u>Authority</u> | <u>Population</u> | <u>No. of members</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Blackburn with Darwen | 137,470 | 62 ⁽¹⁾ |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 139,132 | 59 |
| Blackpool | 142,283 | 42 |

| | | |
|--------------------|---------|-------------------|
| South Tyneside | 152,785 | 60 ⁽²⁾ |
| North Lincolnshire | 152,849 | 43 |

*periodic review final recommendation proposes increase to 64
currently under review – draft recommendation proposes reduction to 54*

Options within that range result in varying levels of representation, as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 42 members (ratio 1:2850) | 19 Carlisle urban 9 Carlisle rural 14 Eden |
| 52 members (ratio 1: 2300) | 24 Carlisle urban 10 Carlisle rural 18 Eden |
| 60 members (ratio 1:2000) | 27 Carlisle urban 13 Carlisle rural 20 Eden |

A 42 member authority would have a much lower level of representation compared with either of the existing councils, resulting in geographically much larger wards, particularly in the Eden area. An authority of between 52 or 60 member authority might therefore provide more effective local government having regard to the multi-function nature of unitary authorities.

A 52 member authority could be established by using the current County divisions as the basis for the new wards but allocating two members to each ward. There would be broad equality of representation within these existing boundaries because the electoral areas in question were reviewed relatively recently (1999) on a county-wide basis.

9 Conclusion

Why we are recommending a new Carlisle and Eden Unitary Authority.

The Boundary Committee, set up by the government, has been asked to undertake a four stage review of local government in the area proposed for regional government, where there are currently two tiers of local government. Cumbria is on such area having one County and six district Councils. The Committee has requested that each Council in this area submit their proposals for unitary authority (single councils who perform all local government functions of an area). The Boundary Committee has produced guidance on how this submission should be approached. Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council have joined together to prepare this single submission, recommending one unitary authority spanning the boundaries of the two District Councils. We have done so because we believe that this best meets the needs of local people. This would provide a Council serving a population of 150,000. Unitary Councils up and down the Country vary in population size enormously from under 50,000 to a million population. However the qualities that the Boundary Commission, and we endorse to see in proposed unitary authorities new Councils should be:

- Effective and convenient
- Close to local people
- Viable and durable

A Council serving a very small population may find it difficult to provide all the services necessary on the income available to it. Most of the very large unitary authorities in population size serve densely populated urban areas, where services are provided to many people living close to each other.

Some of the most successful Councils which were created during Local Government Review in the 90s provide services in the population range of 100-200,000. Therefore the proposed Carlisle and Eden Authority would fit well into that.

Of particular note is the highly successful Carlisle and Eden Local Strategic Partnership, formed in 2001 as a response to the Foot and Mouth Disease. This partnership bringing together public, private, voluntary and community sectors in an area has proved an ideal mechanism for improving the social, economic and environmental well being of Carlisle and Eden.

This joint working provides a very sound base from which to build a unitary authority. A new unitary would combine the services currently provided by both the District Councils and the County Council in an area and provide the opportunity to build an excellent council for local people.