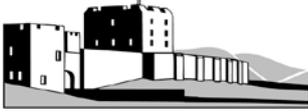


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# **SPECIAL COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

## ***Panel Report***

### **Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010

**Title:** COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PILOT PROJECTS – HARRABY  
AND LONGTOWN

**Report of:** ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Report reference:** CD.20/10

### **Summary:**

This report provides updates on the current position in the development of the two Community Empowerment Pilot projects in Harraby and Longtown

### **Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:**

Members should be aware that relevant Ward Cllrs, including County Cllrs, have been invited to attend the meeting, as have representatives from some of the partner agencies, community stakeholders and Parish Councils. They will be able to add their own unique perspective to questions arising around the value of community engagement as a tool towards community empowerment for local residents. Also, if further relevant information emerges before the date of the Panel which is felt would be useful to inform the discussion, it will be sent to members in advance of the meeting.

### **Recommendations:**

Members are recommended to note the position and through discussion with officers, partners and community stakeholders present at the meeting, try to consider the key lessons from the processes which might inform further discussion on the future of community engagement and empowerment in the transformation of the Council's service delivery.

**Contact Officers:** Rob Burns and Zoe Sutton **Ext:** 7352/7312

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

## 1.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In 2009, the City Council, in association with other partners, including the County Council, Riverside, the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Parish Councils, the PCT and community organisations, agreed to undertake two 'empowerment' pilot projects with a view to testing whether locality based approaches could address community issues more effectively and to provide opportunities for local people to develop the skills, knowledge and interest to empower them to be more involved in making decisions about their neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 The two areas selected were Longtown (and hinterland) and a locally defined area of Harraby.
- 1.3 This report seeks to bring the position up to date on the progress of the two pilots and begin to unpick some of the key lessons learned, which can be used to influence decisions made by all the partner agencies on how, if at all, the process might be rolled out across other areas of the city.
- 1.4 It was clear from early on in the process that the two pilots would take very different paths towards achieving their aims. These will be highlighted in the presentation of this report, which will deal initially, with the two schemes independently but some commonalities may emerge during the discussion.
- 1.5 Community activists who have been involved in both pilots, will attend the meeting and Members are encouraged to invite their views, which will add important perspectives about what 'empowerment' has meant to them and their communities.

## 2.0 **THE LONGTOWN PILOT**

### 2.1 **Summary**

- 2.1.1 The report highlights the opportunities and scope that are presented in supporting empowerment through community led planning using the process that was underway in rural Carlisle with Longtown and area as a focus.
- 2.1.2 The pilot has focussed on the opportunities for principal authorities and service delivery agents working more closely with rural communities building upon the Community Led Planning process that has been in place for the past decade.

2.1.3 The Carlisle Parish Councils' Association (CPCA) and Carlisle Partnership have used the information from community led planning to develop a model for issues based locality working and informing the revised Carlisle Partnership Community Plan.

2.1.4 It is expected that an independent review will be undertaken once the planning process is complete in the pilot area and the emerging model for issues based locality working has been piloted.

## 2.2 **Why Longtown Area?**

2.2.1 Reasons for selection were:

- Pilot was seeking to work with the most vulnerable communities.
- There was a high level of activity in Longtown with the imminent closure of Lochinvar Secondary School;
- Joint Asset and Services Review entitled 'Longtown Moving Forward' a partnership project led by the County Council in partnership with Carlisle City Council and Arthuret Parish Council was active.
- Kirkandrews on Esk provided a more deeply rural perspective.

2.2.2 The rural pilot group was led at an officer level by the Carlisle City Council's Policy and Performance Team working with the Rural Support Team and in partnership with the County's Neighbourhood Development Officer and the Carlisle Development Officer from Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT).

2.2.3 City and County Councillors were involved in early discussions with the parishes in setting the parameters of the pilots.

2.2.4 It was agreed to extend the area of the pilot to include the neighbouring parish of Kirkandrews on Esk was considered to add benefit to the project due to its rurality in relation to Longtown as a key service centre.

2.2.5 Arthuret Parish includes the market town of Longtown and hamlets of Easton and Sandysyke.

2.2.6 Kirkandrews on Esk is adjacent to Arthuret Parish. People living in the parish use Longtown as its primary service centre although some cross the border to Gretna or Newcastleton. Kirkandrews is a sparsely populated rural area.

## 2.3 Process and Current Status

- 2.3.1 Community action groups led by the community were already active in Arthuret and Kirkandrews on Esk parishes at the initiation of the Rural Pilot. The groups consisted of members of the local community, local organisations and parish councils.
- 2.3.2 The Community Action Planning Group for Arthuret is chaired by a community member of Longtown also working for the Community Association, and includes Parish Councillors. Extending the group membership proved challenging, however, during discussion on the various sections of the plans focus groups were used to bring in community members and organisations relevant to the area under review. The Kirkandrews on Esk Group consisted mainly of parish Councillors.
- 2.3.3 Early discussions with the parishes made it clear that that the project should build upon the current activity already underway in the area. Community Led Planning (CLP) in the Longtown area was to be key building block for the pilot project (Annex 1 includes an overview of CLP).
- 2.3.4 Initiated in late 2006, it is expected that both CLPs for Arthuret and Kirkandrews on Esk will be finalised by the end of 2010. This is abnormally long period of time for a community plan. This was largely due to the complexities of Longtown being a key service centre and the demands being placed on the volunteers in the local community by the Joint Asset and Services Review - 'Longtown Moving Forward' programme
- 2.3.5 A key advantage, particularly for Arthuret, was use the large amount of information already gathered by the Longtown Market Town Initiative (MTI), Longtown Moving Forward, and Neighbourhood Forum meetings amongst other data sources. Annex 1 includes an insight of the variety and range of ways in which the planning group gathered evidence for their plan
- 2.3.6 A partnership networking group meets regularly involving organisations that deliver services in the Longtown Area. Including representatives from the Children's Centre/Barnardos, Riverside, Health Centre, Longtown Community Centre, Parish Council, Police, Neighbourhood Development Officer (County Council), Rural Support Officer (City Council) and Tullie House. The partnership network provided support to the local community planning group.
- 2.3.7 Where appropriate local authority officers were invited to provide guidance in forming the plans including the Green Spaces Team, Carlisle Partnership Manager and Economic Development Manager. Other partners that worked

closely with the groups were the Cumbria Rural Housing Trust, Groundwork, Barnardos and Riverside.

2.3.8 The CLPs were funded by grant from ACT, the Neighbourhood Forum and the Longtown Market Town Initiative (MTI) (refer to below for cost breakdown).

## 2.4 Have we met the objectives of the project?

Objective	Progress to date
(1) For the local authorities and their partners to get closer to the needs of their communities and particularly those potentially vulnerable	<p>The existing infrastructure of the parish councils was the basis for the pilot in the rural area. Community led (parish) planning had been underway for some time. The profile of CLPs has been raised through the pilot.</p> <p>The work of the Carlisle Partnership and Rural Support Group will progress the development of actions that bridge the needs of the rural community and strategic planning.</p>
(2) To inform, consult and involve the community in the design and delivery of services	<p>The vehicle for this is the community plan; information has been gathered from a range of sources including drop ins, e.g. for young people, housing needs survey, questionnaires, and the Longtown Moving Forward and Market Town initiatives. The Community Action Plans will be completed by the end of 2010.</p>
(3) To develop Neighbourhood Management or Locality Working as a means of involving communities	<p>The CPCA is in the process of developing a model for issues based approach to locality working.</p> <p>How this will be used by partners to work together on forthcoming challenges will be key.</p>
(4) To explore potential areas for participatory budgeting	<p>Participatory budgeting in rural areas of Carlisle occurs generally through Neighbourhood Forums.</p> <p>There has been no budget provision directly to benefit the rural pilot.</p>
(5) To improve effectiveness and therefore satisfaction with local services	<p>Delivery of the Community Plan will offer opportunity for this to be measured and monitored.</p>
(6) To prepare CAA and particularly to support the Cumbria Local Area	<p>37% in the rural area said they could influence local decisions (Place Survey Data) compared to 33% in Carlisle as a whole. More detailed, valid statistical analysis is not</p>

Agreement, notably, NI4	possible.
(7) To bring neighbourhood planning closer to the corporate and community planning of local providers and partnerships	<p>There is a target in the Community Plan for Carlisle, 2008 for each priority group to identify at least one rural target (from community plans). Progress has been reported to the bi-monthly Rural Support Group meetings which in turn reports to the Carlisle Partnership both through the Executive and the Convenors Group.</p> <p>The CLP actions included in ACT's database have been used to inform the development of the draft Carlisle Partnership Community Plan. The work of the Partnership and Rural Support Group will progress the development of actions that bridge the needs of the community and strategic planning.</p> <p>It is intended to launch Community plans through Neighbourhood Forums as a means of reaching into Cumbria County and City Councils <i>although actions and strategic responses will still need to be highlighted at a senior level.</i></p>
(8) For local councillors to develop their role as community leaders	<p>Ward members supported the pilot in the early part of the pilot during the setting the parameters of the project.</p> <p>Members have been briefed at three tiers of government on the locality working model and have been supportive.</p>
(9) To develop community led planning as a means of involving communities	<p>This is underway in both parishes, and had been for some time prior to the pilot. The Community Plan is due to be completed by the end of 2010.</p> <p>The focus that the pilot brought to the process has probably given it a higher profile both locally and within the organisations.</p>
(10) To enhance the role of quality parish councils	<p>This will need to be reviewed in light of the forthcoming Localism Bill and review of the Parish Charter.</p>

## 2.5. Future Challenges

2.5.1 Rural communities already are to a large degree self sufficient. Self-governance, in the form of Parish Councils, means that there is strong community identity and representation on community issues. The finance available through their precept on the Council Tax means that everyday maintenance of local facilities is often

supported solely by the community itself. Most community facilities and open space are already owned by the community.

- 2.5.2 Community led planning provides a framework for the high level of volunteering in rural communities to develop community-led initiatives as a means to empowerment.
- 2.5.3 A long term aim of the Empowerment Pilot is to develop a model that for engaging and empowering local communities. Empowerment is the ability to allow communities to make decisions. It is a key aim of the Rural Pilot to explore how rural issues from CLPs can be taken up by the Carlisle Partnership Community Plan that is currently being revised.
- 2.5.4 As an outcome of the Rural Pilot and to address the objective to work towards Locality Working, the Rural Empowerment Pilot also encompasses a generic move towards parishes working in localities. This was a challenge that the CPCA identified as an integral part of empowering communities.
- 2.5.6 In partnership with the District and County, the CPCA has been working to develop an issue based locality working model. Funded by the Cumbria Improvement and Efficiency and Partnership (CIEP), five meetings took place around the district, which were attended by representatives from 17 parish councils, representing over 77% of the households in the rural areas of the district.
- 2.5.7 Parish councils identified over 90 individual issues which offered the opportunity for joint working, many of the issues being duplicated by different parish councils. Some of the issues are at a local operational level and should be able to be dealt with in a relatively short timescale. Many of the issues identified arising from community led planning and the on-going work of the parish councils.
- 2.5.8 Those more strategic in nature will be addressed through a longer term project that has secured funding through North West Together We Can (NWTWC)<sup>1</sup>. Annex 2 contains the CPCA's latest report highlighting the issues for rural communities in this context.

### 3.0 THE HARRABY PILOT

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<sup>1</sup> NWTWC has received funding from Communities and Local Government for Targeted Support to areas in need of strategic change with regard to empowerment practices.

- 3.1 The Harraby Pilot is currently being evaluated on several fronts and at the time of writing, not all of the relevant information is available, but this will emerge during the period between this report being distributed and the date of the Panel and it is intended that Members will be sent copies of information which will help to inform the discussion at the meeting.
- 3.2 The evaluation is in 4 parts;
- a) an updated version of an original DVD which was made in vox pop style and which recorded residents opinions about Harraby as a place to live and work. This will be shown at the meeting.
  - b) an update of a residents survey carried out by CN Research. The original survey provided much of the baseline information which informed the direction of project. This is a significant tome and copies are available if Members wish to have one.
  - c) an independent evaluation, commissioned by the Resident Stakeholders Group which reviewed the project from the residents point of view only. A copy is attached for members interest and information. (Annex 3)
  - d) an independent evaluation which looks at the progress and outcomes of the project from the partners' point of view and which will highlight those parts of the process which offer learning opportunities for the future. A summary will be available at the meeting.

#### 4.0 **THE HARRABY EXPERIENCE**

- 4.1 The Harraby area was selected as one of the pilot areas, largely because of the impending closure of what was the Harraby Technology College but which, for the past two years, has been the interim site for the Richard Rose Central Academy
- 4.2 It was acknowledged that the closure of the school would have significant social and economic impacts on the area and the pilot offered an opportunity test the theory of empowerment in a real situation.
- 4.3 The evaluations will show whether or not that ambition has been realised, but it is evident, even without the benefit of considered analysis, that significant and positive changes have occurred in the way that the community engages with local Councillors and agency staff in making decisions about what issues are tackled in the area.

4.4 One of the most telling signs of the fact that the pilot has had real impact lies in the fact that of the 30/40 core group of residents who started off as ‘key community stakeholders’ in 2009, have remained involved in the process and have undertaken a variety of training, learning and information experiences, including Participatory Budgeting

4.5 The local Councillors have bought in to the concept of the pilot and have been willing to share power in terms of involving residents in making key decisions about some key issues, including using the lessons learnt on the PB course, to identify spending on local projects. They have maintained an interest through attending stakeholder group meetings and expanding the agendas of Neighbourhood Forum meetings to include discussion on the progress of the scheme.

## 5.0 RESOURCES

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
For the local authorities and their partners to get closer to the needs of their communities and particularly those potentially vulnerable	The Harraby Pilot brought together a group of Residents, Stakeholders & Partners who engaged with residents in a way that broadened current working practises. The HTWC group now meets on a regular monthly basis to develop community events, engage with Partners and develop services that will improve the quality of life of those people who live in the project area. The group are now well established and, in the main, is made up of individuals who would previously never engaged in any community development activities
To inform, consult and involve the community in the design and delivery of services	The vehicle for this is the Harraby “TWC” Residents & Stakeholder Group who design and complete consultation exercises with regard to local projects & services. They are now working towards becoming a self constituted group and will hopefully become one of the first urban areas in the City to develop their own Community Plan.
To develop Neighbourhood Management or Locality Working	The Harraby “TWC” Group have had the benefit of a Community Involvement Worker for the project area funded by two of the project partners. This has allowed the group to see at first hand the benefits of having a lead officer based in the project area.

as a means of involving communities	Future funding pressures may make this commitment impossible and it is to be seen how the potential removal of this commitment will impact on the project area.
To explore potential areas for participatory budgeting	Participatory budgeting training and exercises have already taken place in the project area. External funding from CIEP was secured to provide training and the Group has completed 2 PB exercises where decisions were made to allocate two blocks of £12,000 of Local Ward Members Local Capital Scheme funding to projects of their choice.
To improve effectiveness and therefore satisfaction with local services	Delivery of local services in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness has been the topic of major debate within the pilot. Some service providers have been more willing to engage and listen to the pilot group than others and this has been a major contention within the pilot.
To prepare CAA and particularly to support the Cumbria Local Area Agreement, notably, NI4	37% of residents in the project area rural area said they could influence local decisions (CNN survey Data September 2010). Within the same survey 58% of residents surveyed confirmed Harraby "TWC" has made a positive difference to their area and over 90% stated they were satisfied with Harraby as an area to live in.
To bring neighbourhood planning closer to the corporate and community planning of local providers and partnerships	Many of the partners are using the pilot to design and host their community engagement activities in this area; the Harraby "TWC" Group do feel that they can take part in the processes but often feel they are the minor partner in the process.
For local councillors to develop their role as community leaders	Ward members have fully supported the pilot and regularly attend the Resident & Stakeholder monthly meetings.
To develop community led planning as a means of involving	The focus that the pilot brought to the process has probably given it a higher profile both locally and within the organisations involved and potentially Harraby "TWC" could be the first urban area to develop its own Community Plan.

communities	
To enhance the role of quality parish councils	N/A

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1<sup>st</sup> October 2010

## Annex 1: Community Led Planning

### Policy Background

The pilots were, at least in part, a response to the changing national policy context and the new **Duty to Involve**. The new Duty is contained within the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act and was enacted, April 2009. It seeks to ensure that local people have greater opportunities to have their say in the design and delivery of council services. It states that where [Best Value authorities] consider it appropriate, they must involve, “representatives of local persons or local persons” in exercise of their functions by:

- Providing information on the exercise of the function
- Consulting about the exercise of the function
- Involving in another way about the exercise of the function

### Community Led Planning

Community-led planning is a structured process, organised by the community, that takes place over an extended period. Local community groups, parish councillors, activists and volunteers work together through the process, helped by external facilitation, to create a vision for the community and an action plan to achieve it. The process uses a mix of evidence collection, different types of consultation, and debate at the very local community level. The resulting vision focuses on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the community and all those who live and work there.

Actions resulting from a community-led plan can vary from small scale to those of more significance in creating sustainable facilities and services.

The benefits of community-led planning have been well researched:

- High rates of participation (70% or more household involvement is often achieved).
- Higher turn-out at elections and more candidates standing for Parish Council elections.
- Harnessing the energy and commitment of volunteers to make things happen at a very local level.
- Bringing forward new local projects that already have proven community support.
- Success in attracting external funding for high priority local projects.
- Increased influence over statutory policies and service design. An evidence base to support statutory policy development in Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements and Local Development Frameworks

The community-led planning toolkit developed by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Rural Community Action Network stresses the need for involvement by Local Authority members and officers at crucial times in the process, so that a realistic and achievable action plan is developed.

## **The Rural Carlisle Context**

Since the initiation of the Vital Villages Programme 2003 Parish Councils and community activists in Rural Carlisle have been involved in developing Community Led Plans (CLPs), previously known as Parish Plans, as a means of connecting with their community to deliver services and address issues more effectively. (Refer to Annex 1 for a summary of the benefits of the community led planning process).

The Community-led or Parish Plan Protocol for Carlisle was approved by the Executive Group the Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The protocol set out how communities in rural Carlisle can initiate a community led plan and make the necessary linkages with the principal authorities.

More than 70% of parishes in Carlisle District are involved in Community Led Planning. Currently, of the 34 parishes in rural Carlisle, 19 have completed a plan of which 6 are currently undertaking a refresh, 3 are progressing with their first Community Led Plan (CLP) activity and 3 have or are undertaking a Village Design Statement. All completed plans are available on the Rural Community pages of [www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk).

During the early stages of the Rural Empowerment Pilot it was considered that the project would focus on using existing structures and intelligence. At the core is the Parish Council as the third tier of government and CLPs as a means to connect with the wider rural community.

A long term aim of the Empowerment Pilot is to develop a model that for engaging and empowering local communities. Empowerment is the ability to allow communities to make decisions. It is a key aim of the Rural Pilot to explore how rural issues from CLPs can be taken up by the Carlisle Partnership Community Plan that is currently being revised.

To aid this process, the Rural Support Group has used the Community Led Plan Database that has been developed by Action with Communities (ACT). All the data from the CLPs completed since 2005 is now included, currently, 15 Parishes in Carlisle District. ACT is able to provide bespoke reports using the information. A report was commissioned to provide one strand of evidence to identify rural priorities for Carlisle District in the Carlisle Partnership Community Plan review.

## **Community Led Planning Activities and Data Source – Arthuret Planning Group**

- ◆ **Planning launch** - open consultation involving poster, historical films and ability feed back through mailbox and informal interview with planning group members. Winter 2006
  - Issues, actions and comments logged and
  - collated onto draft action plan summary table
  
- ◆ **Open consultation** over a week in Feb 2009
  - Issues, actions and comments logged and
  - collated onto draft action summary table

- ◆ **Longtown Moving Forward** assessment of public assets and services.
  - Comments on what people felt were good, bad and general about the various publically owned buildings are recorded. Work is needed to draw out comments that can be collated into the action plan summary table.
  - Information on public services and the buildings housing has been summarised in the LMF newsletters
  
- ◆ **Housing Needs Survey** – carried out by Cumbria Rural Housing Trust.
- ◆ **MTI Parking Survey** report Issues and actions from the report need to be drawn out to add to the highways section of the action plan.
- ◆ **Youth Club consultation** event – provided information on youth the services, and provision
- ◆ **Primary School visioning exercise** – some thoughts from younger members about services for children in our communities
- ◆ **Feedback from Neighbourhood Forums**
- ◆ **Highway issues** through the Neighbourhood Forum on-going
- ◆ **Recycling survey**
  - ◆ Undertaken by the Longtown Community Centre
- ◆ **Focus Groups** held in later part of 2009 – early 2010
  - ◆ Green Plan to develop a Green Plan in facilitated by Groundwork
  - ◆ Economic Plan for Longtown – involving 29 local businesses and consulting 90 on the development of the plan
  - ◆ Health & Well-being
  - ◆ Heritage and Culture

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## **Annex 2: Issue Based Locality Working – Report from CPCA**

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### **Developing Issue Based Locality Working in Rural Carlisle**

#### CPCA Locality Working Report – Phase 2

#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. This report extends the Carlisle Parish Councils Association work on locality working for parishes in the rural areas of Carlisle District. Using funding from CIEP, the CPCA has been able to carry out consultation with representatives of nearly 80% of residents in rural Carlisle. Further funding has been obtained to take the locality working project to another stage. Using this funding two new locality working projects are proposed which will be led by the CPCA. These will look at community led planning, with particular reference to requirements of the Localities Bill, and rural broadband.
- 1.2. Issue based locality working proposes that parishes should work together for the duration of matters of common interest rather than come together in fixed clusters. This model, chosen by parish council chairman, is considered to be much more sustainable in that the cost base is low compared with models elsewhere in Cumbria. This will be vital in the context of the results of the spending review.
- 1.3. This report highlights some issues which have been identified by parishes for locality working.
- 1.4. The report also looks ahead to the Localities Bill which could bring a number of significant changes to the way that parishes and community groups will be able to work under new rights and powers.

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#### **2. Introduction**

- 2.1. This report has been written as part of the Carlisle Parish Councils Association (CPCA) commitment to locality working in Carlisle District, a programme which has been running since June 2009.
- 2.2. Stages in this programme include:
  - 2.2.1. Carlisle District Parish Councils Chairman's Meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009.
  - 2.2.2. Parish Council Workshop – Rockcliffe village hall 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009.
  - 2.2.3. Parish Council discussion meetings during early 2010 leading to summary report to funders.
  - 2.2.4. Identification of poor performing broadband as a major issue affecting parish sustainability, leading to joint CPCA/Carlisle City Council Broadband Survey conducted during August 2010.
  - 2.2.5. North West Together We Can grant award of £5000 to further locality working in the rural parishes.
- 2.3. This report should be read in conjunction with other vital documents such as the Carlisle Partnership Community Plan and the Status Report on the Rural Empowerment Pilot October 2010.

### 3. About Carlisle, a brief summary

- 3.1. Carlisle District is made up of a mixture of rural (just over 32%) and urban communities, the historic city of Carlisle being the largest settlement with a number of smaller market towns and large villages.
- 3.2. The current population of Carlisle District is estimated at 104,700. There is expected to be a population growth across all demographic age groups, but most notably Carlisle is expected to see a 69.3% increase in the number of older people living in the district by 2032.
- 3.3. Carlisle is ranked as the 122<sup>nd</sup> most deprived district out of 354 nationally.
- 3.4. Educational achievement amongst the population is lower than the national average. Only 29% of local people have a recognised qualification compared to 32% nationally.
- 3.5. House prices are more affordable in the city, but in rural areas affordability is comparable to 'honey pot' areas across Cumbria.
- 3.6. 34.5% of businesses in Carlisle District are in the rural areas.

### 4. Definition of Locality Working

- 4.1. Locality working is a natural extension of community empowerment which is about people and government working together to make life better. It involves more people influencing decisions about their communities, and more people taking responsibility for tackling local problems, rather than expecting others to do so on their behalf. There are three key ingredients to community empowerment:
  - 4.1.1. Active Citizens: people with the motivation, skills and confidence to speak up for their communities and say what improvements are needed.
  - 4.1.2. Strengthened Communities: community groups with the capability and resources to bring people together to work out shared solutions.
  - 4.1.3. Partnership with Public Bodies: public bodies will be able to work as partners with local people.
- 4.2. For the purpose of this report the term locality working will be used throughout.
- 4.3. Locality working presents lots of strengths and some fears for local communities:

#### Benefits:

- **Capacity** – economies of scale (e.g. clerk and office sharing)
- **Louder Voice on common Issues** – geographic community of interests can lobby for change or influence.
- **Addressing area-wide issues** – e.g. lobbying on public transport. May even be across District boundaries.
- **Better representation and influence** – stronger together.
- **Gaining services** – a cluster might better get a service from the principal authority.
- **Funding leverage** - maybe more chance of gaining funding for a joint project than for 2 separate ones.
- **Networking and exchanging ideas**
- **Training**

#### Fears:

- **Loss of identity** – small parishes fear being swallowed-up by larger parishes.
- **Conflicts of interest**
- **Pressure on councillor and officer time**
- **Apportioning costs and contributions**

- **Geography and capacity** – distance and scale often mitigate against working together.
- **Representation on clusters by wider stakeholders**

## 5. Locality Working and The Big Society

5.1. The proposals for The Big Society fall right into the definition of locality working. However, the question is will the core provisions of The Big Society come to fruition in a workable way right across the country or will communities and local government just pick off the bits that they like? What is The Big Society?

- 5.1.1. The Big Society is a major initiative of the current coalition government, hopefully to change the relationship between citizens, the voluntary and community sector and the state. It could involve a radical shake-up of some public services, giving local people and not-for-profit organisations the opportunity to take over their running. However, there is evidence that the general public has a limited appetite to actually run services themselves. Nevertheless, lots of people say that they do want to have a say over how services are run and to hold government to account if they are not done properly. This could well become a vital role for elected parish councils.
- 5.1.2. At the present time there are a series of concepts fostering 'bottom up' working by communities, which, arguably, is nothing new, particularly in Cumbria. However, the current rhetoric would suggest that the government wants to go much further than hitherto and it has looked at how some of this is done in countries like Sweden (free schools) and the USA (community organising).
- 5.1.3. The government talks about training an army of community organisers (5000 has been quoted) to help people organise themselves and make their communities better places to live.
- 5.1.4. How will all this be funded? The government is setting up the Big Society Bank (the previous government introduced the legislation to create a Social Investment Wholesale Bank funded from inactive bank accounts). The bank is planned to open in April 2011, with assets of between £60m-£100m to start with. Also the government wants to see funds re-directed from higher tiers of local government down to parish and community groups, voluntary organisations, charities, social enterprise co-operatives and other groups that want to take over public services.
- 5.1.5. There are concerns that parish councils and volunteer groups will not have the capacity to take on the responsibility of running services hitherto carried out by larger councils.

## 6. Locality Working in Cumbria

6.1. Locality working across Cumbria is well developed, but each district has chosen to develop a different model. These are summarised as follows:

### 6.2. Eden District

- 6.2.1. Upper Eden Group comprising 18 parishes with a fully funded co-ordinator.

The 18 Parishes Involved:

Kirkby Stephen, Hellbeck, Winton, Nateby, Hartley, Kaber, Mallerstang, Waitby, Musgrave, Brough Sowerby, Wharton, Soulby, Brough, Stainmore, Warcop, Crosby Garrett, Ravenstonedale and Newbiggin

See Appendix A-1 for map.

- 6.2.2. Heart of Eden Community Plan comprising 12 parishes coming together to produce a single community plan. The Plan is the culmination of over two years' hard work and sets out what local people value and would like to change in their communities. More importantly, it is also an action plan, which sets out how they intend to actually achieve the changes local people have said they want.

The 12 Parishes involved in producing the Heart of Eden Community Plan are: Appleby-in-Westmorland, Asby, Murton, Dufton, Long Marton, Milburn, Crackenthorpe, Bolton, Kirkby Thore, Bandleyside, Newbiggin, and Temple Sowerby.

Group funded by grants and £2 on the precept per household.

### 6.3. South Lakeland

- 6.3.1. District divided into 8 Local Area Partnerships (LAPs). Early achievements include:

- funding for young people's transport in school holidays
- highway maintenance improvements
- a community led plan for Kendal
- improving public spaces
- planning for community emergencies such as flooding
- progress on affordable housing
- traffic issues including speeding and traffic enforcement
- community solutions for improved broadband access

- 6.3.2. LAPs coincide with Neighbourhood Forum areas.

See Appendix A-2 for map

### 6.4. Copeland – District divided into 5 Localism. Funded through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund

- 6.4.1. Priorities include:

- Planning – local plans, continuity from PC to county and support for neighbourhood development teams
- Public safety
- Community engagement and empowerment.

Feeds into Copeland LSP

See Appendix A-3 for map.

### 6.5. Allerdale

- 6.5.1. Derwent Seven Group

### 6.6. Carlisle

- 6.6.1. Decision taken by Parish Council Chairmen in June 2009 to reject the fixed clustering principle and for parishes to work together on an issue-by-issue basis. When an issue was identified which would benefit from joint working between two or more parishes, then these parishes would come together for the duration of that issue. This principle was considered by all concerned to be more sustainable in

that it was likely to be low cost and could be run by the existing parish clerk structure.

## **7. CPCA Takes the Lead**

7.1. During 2010 the CPCA has pushed ahead with the issue based locality working principle.

7.1.1. In the early part of the year it obtained a £1600 grant from CIEP to run a series of meetings with parish councils in order to identify likely issues which might be considered for joint working.

7.1.2. In September the CPCA was awarded a grant of £5000, via ACT, from North West Together We Can (NWTWC).

### **7.2. CPCA Meetings with Parish Councils – CIEP Funded Project**

7.2.1. A number of objectives were set, as follows:

- Help parishes to understand that they do have a direct line to the Carlisle and/or the County Council. How and who?
- Must establish the correct lines of communication with Carlisle and the County Councils and convince parishes that these lines will work. Is the Parish Charter an adequate vehicle around which to build this relationship?
- Examine community based planning and maybe explore participatory budgeting. Are community plans adequately linking with principle authority strategies?
- Examine the role of Neighbourhood Forums in each community.
- Find out how parishes are approaching, if at all, Quality Parish requirements.
- Explore the relationship between City and County Councillors and their local parishes.
- Electronic communication – is this effective and how will it develop in the future?
- Do Parish Councils fit well into their wider community? Are they engaged with other community groups?
- Find out whether planning consultation with PCs is working and explore whether there is a need for a better relationship with planning officers.
- Are concurrent powers working adequately and how would parishes want to expand these in the future?

7.2.2. As a result of these meetings the CPCA has produced a locality working issues list, which is reproduced in full in Appendix B-1.

7.2.3. The CPCA would propose that the following issues should receive urgent attention:

- **Affordable Housing** – the lack of affordable housing offers a major challenge to parishes everywhere, including those in Carlisle District. This problem is being addressed under the Big Society proposal, Right to Build, where communities will be encouraged to establish local initiatives to take land into community ownership on which to develop a Local Housing Trust, which could provide affordable and open market housing where needed.
- **Clerk support and training** – in conjunction with CALC.

- **Community Led Planning** – this will be a major item in the Big Society agenda and, if deficiencies occur, then the CPCA and Carlisle City Council Rural Support Group need to work together to assist parishes. This is now being addressed as part of the North West Together We Can project. Community Led Planning enables local people to create stronger and more vibrant and more resilient communities, better able to respond to local challenges and opportunities. CLP represents genuine value for money, as communities across the district take on responsibility for making things happen, rather than waiting for others to do it for them.
  - **Footpath maintenance** – this may well be something which becomes neglected as a result of forthcoming cuts to services. Parishes will need to work together to address the problems with common footpaths. The same may well apply to cycleways such as the Dalston to Carlisle cycle path which goes through Cummersdale parish.
  - **Highway maintenance** – there was general concern about the state of highways and a number of issues were identified in this section. The CPCA can assist by ensuring that information is properly disseminated between agencies and seeking clarification from both Carlisle City Council and County Highways about the problems in the 30mph zones.
  - **Winter road maintenance** – the CPCA must ensure that parishes are kept fully informed as to the County and City's intentions.
  - **Loss of local services** – this must be flagged-up by affected parishes and appropriate representations made by those that are directly affected. It is expected that the Localism Bill will bring forward two new initiatives, The Right to Buy and The Right to Bid. These will make it easier for local communities to take into community ownership key facilities such as shops and pubs, as well as bidding to take over the management of local services.
  - **Planning** – changes will be proposed in the Localism Bill. National government intends to simplify planning guidance and remove housing targets previously imposed via Regional Spatial Strategies. The CPCA, through its involvement in the Big Society agenda, must keep parishes informed and ensure that they have the opportunity to be consulted at all stages.
  - **Wind turbines** – where there is opposition to a proposed development, parishes must be prepared to work together to co-ordinate a useful campaign.
  - **Young children and youth services** – there are opportunities for significant improvements to youth services when the Youth Zone opens in Carlisle. The CPCA needs to ensure that the rural parishes can benefit from this major development in the district.
- 7.2.4. **Quality of rural Broadband** In addition to the list of issues the Carlisle Partnership via the Economic Development & Enterprise group have identified the patchy and often non-existent broadband service in the rural parishes as being a major problem leading to:

- Restriction of business opportunities in the rural areas.
- Rural business depopulation (modern business needs good broadband and therefore there is a risk that they will tend to move to where they can get it).
- Human rural depopulation – poor employment prospects because of the above.
- Increase in on-line services, especially in farming, which demand a 2Mb minimum connection.
- Increase in farm diversification which makes use of on-line services.
- Ageing population requiring good connection for recreation and employment needs.

The CPCA, in conjunction with Carlisle City Council, have been running a broadband survey which, while open to all of Cumbria, has initially focussed on the rural parishes of Carlisle District. This survey is showing that over 50% of rural broadband users are experiencing upload speeds well below the desired 2Mb (56.5% of this group are below 1Mb).

This work is seen by the CPCA as a good example of issue based locality working on behalf of rural parishes.

### **7.3. Rural Empowerment Pilot**

- 7.3.1. The Rural Support Officers, working in the rural community of Carlisle District, have been progressing the Rural Empowerment Pilot. This had the original, longer-term aim of developing a model for engaging and empowering local communities.
- 7.3.2. A number of objectives were defined for the pilot, and these can be summarised as follows:
  - Enable local authorities and their partners to get closer to their communities.
  - To involve the community in the design and delivery of services.
  - Explore potential areas for participatory budgeting.
  - To develop community let planning.
  - To enhance the role of quality parish councils.

For more information read the “Status Report on the Rural Empowerment Pilot October 2010”, a copy of which can be obtained from the rural support officers at Carlisle City Council.

### **7.4. Working With Neighbourhood Forums**

- 7.4.1. The CPCA recognises the vital role played by County Council organised Neighbourhood Forums, which are themselves a form of clustering.
- 7.4.2. Neighbourhood Forums provide a platform for groups of parish councils to come together to discuss matters of common interest to the members.

### **7.5. NWTWC Supporting Community Action Grant**

- 7.5.1. CPCA have been successful in attracting NW Together We Can (NWTWC) funding for a project to develop further their ideas for issue based locality working in rural Carlisle.
- 7.5.2. The activities funded will further progress some of the issues identified at the recent Parish Council/ CPCA workshops funded by CIEP. There

are also strong links to both “Big Society” aspirations and Quality Parish initiatives.

- 7.5.3. The priorities listed above were of common interest to many parishes who attended and so suitable for issue based locality working.
- 7.5.4. Due to the short timescale available for the funding (project delivery required by 10 December) two topics were selected from the priorities discussed. These were seen as being opportune to progress in advance of the many new plans and policies emerging from the coalition.
- 7.5.5. Two awareness raising/training events will be held in October/November; one around the potential value and opportunities for “Community Led Planning [CLP]” in future Government policies and one on “Rural Broadband Solutions”. Additional detailed sessions for clusters of parishes that can action improvements in their community may also be required.
- 7.5.6. Delivery partners have already been approached and at this stage include Carlisle City Council, CALC, ACT, Cumbria CVS, and Alston Cybermoor. Others may be added as detailed plans develop.
- 7.5.7. At the Community Led Planning session, it is anticipated that parishes that have already been involved in parish or community plans will be able to provide feedback and guidance from their experience and also identify the type of support that will be required to effectively deliver the Government’s aspirations through community led plans. This will help shape future support services and events.
- 7.5.8. From the Broadband session, apart from identifying potential improvements to Broadband speeds for some communities, outcomes will include developing a model for issue based locality working that can be replicated for other issues and other groups of parishes.

## **8. The Carlisle Partnership**

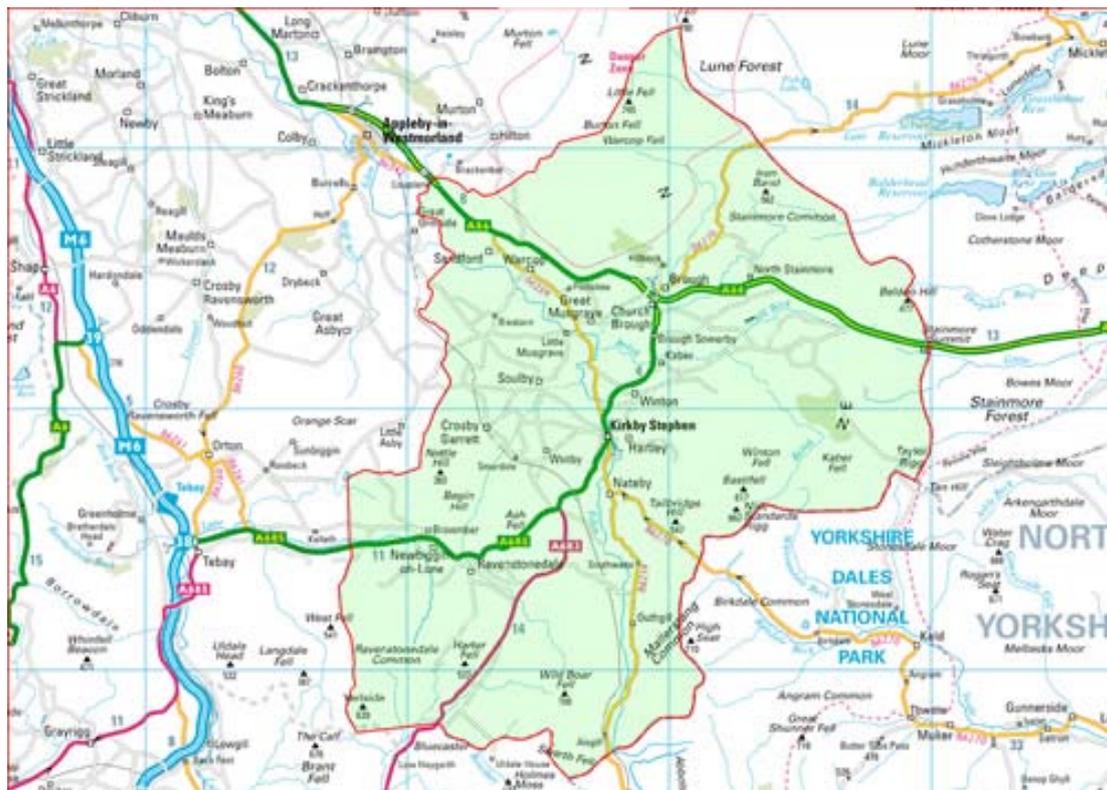
- 8.1. The partnership is made-up of over 80 organisations which have a stake in the area and in improving the quality of life for everyone in Carlisle District.
- 8.2. Carlisle City Council enables the Partnership to meet, discuss community issues and develop plans to make changes in the area. The partners meet in four groups, each one of which helps the Partnership to place its activities in priority order and to ensure that all the important aspects of life get their share of attention. These groups are:
  - 8.2.1. Children and Young people
  - 8.2.2. Healthy Communities
  - 8.2.3. Safer Stronger Communities
  - 8.2.4. Economic Development and Enterprise (ED&E)
- 8.3. The Rural Support Group, on which the CPCA is represented, has an important role in ensuring that the proposals coming from these groups are ‘rural proofed’ and that they meet the needs of the rural population as well as those living in the city.
- 8.4. The Partnership is currently engaged in the production of the Community Plan 2011-2016.
- 8.5. This Community Plan for Carlisle, while very high level, will be backed by Action Plans generated by each of the four groups, and these should have a bearing on the Community Led Plans developed by parishes and community groups.

**A.R. Auld – Chairman CPCA**

1<sup>st</sup> October 2010

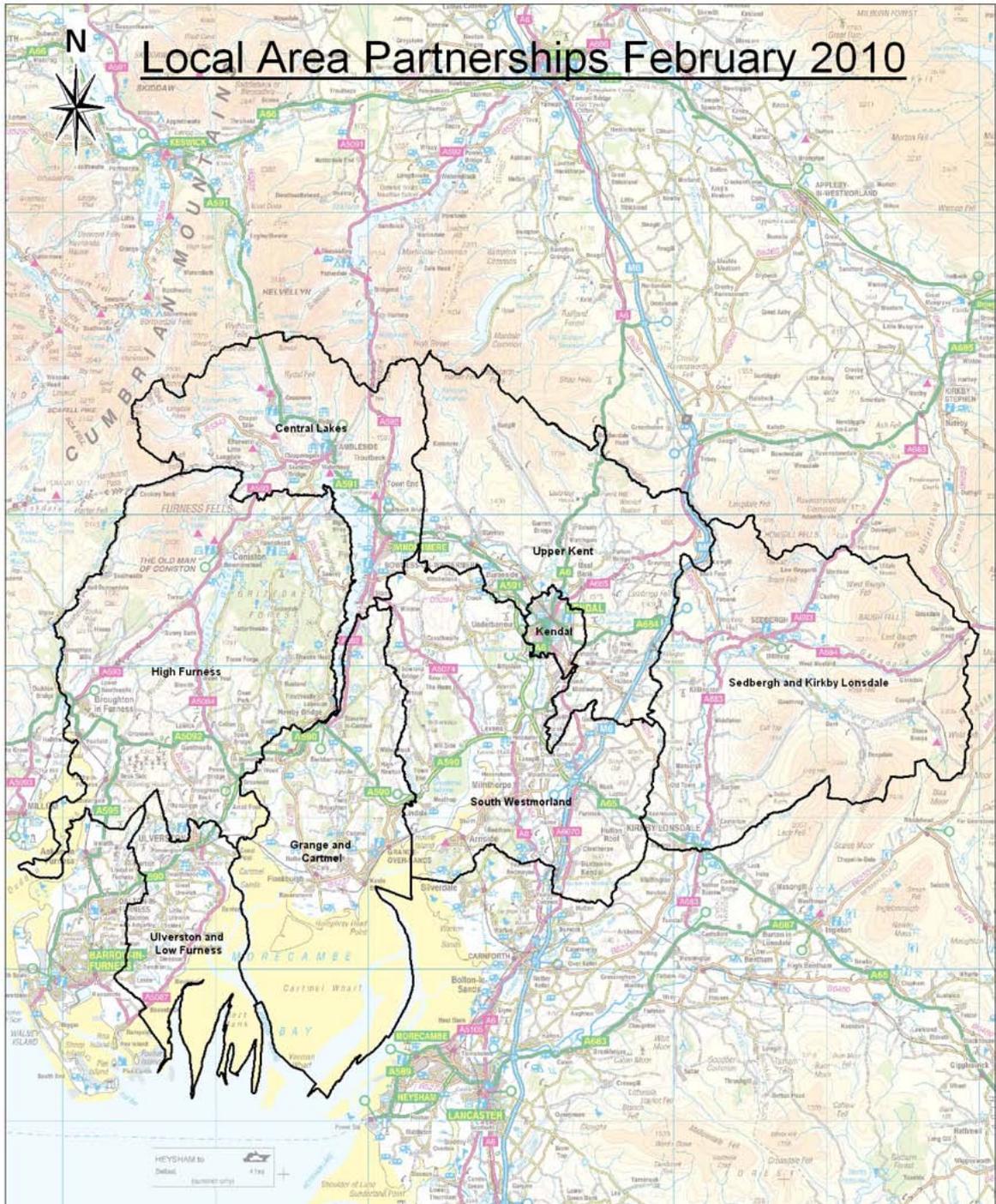
## APPENDIX A-1

### Map of Upper Eden Community Plan Area



## APPENDIX A-2

### Map of South Lakeland Local Area Partnerships



## APPENDIX A-3

### Map of Copeland Localities



## APPENDIX B-1

CATEGORY	ISSUE	PARTNERS	NOTES & SUGGESTIONS
Affordable Housing	<p>1) Affordable housing proposals &amp; housing needs surveys.</p> <p>2) Burgh-by-Sands PC identified need in parish survey &amp; discussed with planners etc but didn't get what wanted when housing provided. S.106 local occupancy provision not included.</p>	Carlisle CC; Housing Agencies; Neighbouring PCs.	<p>PCs to make use of Wetheral PC questions on housing in parish/ community plan questionnaires.</p> <p>S.106s - refer to Orton PC example with Impact Housing.</p>
Animal Carcass Removal	<p>Problems encountered with removal from rivers and elsewhere prompting health concerns for local residents &amp; visitors and the possible contamination of local water supply. Two issues identified:-</p> <p>1) When the owner is not known it is difficult to get anyone to remove carcasses due to high costs</p> <p>2) PCs need clear advice on the correct procedure to be followed</p>	Owner; DEFRA; Other PCs; CCC; Carlisle CC	
Anti-Social Behaviour & Vandalism	A problem in certain areas of Brampton & Longtown	Police	
Clerks to PCs	Parish Council Clerks need additional support and more opportunities to share experience and best practice	CALC; CPCA; PCs; CCC; Carlisle CC.	1) CPCA to arrange regular meetings for clerks
Community/ Parish Planning	<p>1) Brampton Area Parish Plan produced in 2005 but has never been updated. Recent attempt to get a revised version failed as several pulled out of the group.</p> <p>2) For smaller parishes scrap big glossy expensive plans for a much simpler document that would be reviewed annually or biannually.</p>	Neighbouring PCs; ACT; Carlisle CC	<p>Individual parish/community plans (including Brampton Community Plan) are being revised where needed with help from Carlisle CC RSO</p> <p>Discuss with ACT and Carlisle CC RSO</p>
Councillor attendance at PC meetings	Most of the parish councils were satisfied with the support given by CCC and Carlisle CC councillors but concern was expressed about some who never attend parish council meetings.	PC; CCC; Carlisle CC.	
Dog Fouling	Identified as a general concern. Need to improve enforcement.	Carlisle CC; CCC; Other PCs.	
Flood Defences	Environment Agency are doing lot of work at Crosby-on-Eden. CCC and Carlisle CC need to work with them regarding drains etc.	Environment Agency; CCC;Carlisle CC;PCs.	
Fly Tipping	Orton PC have a problem with getting some hardcore removed that has been dumped on the highway grass verge. Neither Carlisle CC nor Capita will accept responsibility.	CCC; Carlisle CC.	

Footpath Maintenance	Overgrowth needs to be kept cut back in Arthuret parish.	Carlisle CC; CCC	Carlisle CC is not very responsive to problems such as encroachment on footpaths
Highway Maintenance	<p>General concern about the state of the highways and highway maintenance. Specific issues include:-</p> <p>1) Damaged surfaces, including potholes, need to be repaired much quicker to prevent a dangerous situation</p> <p>2) Need to improve the continuity of service across CCC &amp; Carlisle CC areas of responsibility</p> <p>3) Provide more information on who will deal with problems instead of being passed back and forth between Carlisle CC and CCC</p> <p>4) Need regular and more frequent maintenance programme</p> <p>5) Repairs need to be long term, not short term which don't last</p> <p>6) Verges encroaching on highways need to be kept cut back</p> <p>7) Kirkandrews-on-Esk advised that the current process is not working smoothly for the roads in the parish that are managed by Carrillion (A7, A6071) and needs improvement</p> <p>8) Much of the damage to the roads in the Solport and Stapleton parish is caused by the large number of heavy vehicles. The Peat Works makes a funding contribution but the Forestry Commission doesn't.</p> <p>9) Greater consideration should be taken of traffic issues when dealing with planning applications</p>	Carlisle CC;CCC;Highway Stewart;Carrillion;Forestry Commission;Neighbouring PCs;NALC;Regional Government	Covers road maintenance, safety, traffic levels, speeding, positioning of 30mph zones and grass cutting of verges
Highways Issues	Do not feel it is appropriate for PCs to have to go through Neighbourhood Forums as currently advised to do.	CCC	
Housing Developments (large)	<p>1) Concerns about increased volume of traffic.</p> <p>2) Ensure have S.106 agreements for local occupancy.</p>	CCC; Carlisle CC; Police	Morton Development (1,000 houses) a particular concern.
Illegal Developments & Businesses/ Caravans	<p>1) Carlisle CC need to improve enforcement activity as illegal developers etc find ways to get round the 'stop' notices.</p> <p>2) Ascertain what the protocol is in the City Council.</p>	Carlisle CC  Carlisle CC.	3 currently developing in Burgh-by-Sands parish.
Incinerators	Suggestion that should have incinerators (for rubbish disposal) provided for community use.		Not feasible due to environment and H & S issues

Joint Working - in a community	There are concerns about the lack of communication and coherence between the various independent organisations that are currently trying to influence the future of Brampton and the surrounding area. Groups include:-Brampton Economic Partnership;Brampton & District Business Association;Brampton & Beyond Development Trust;Sustainable Brampton.	Brampton PC;Other PCs;Carlisle CC;CCC;The various groups in the town.	Brampton PC should be taking a more proactive role in the cross communication and joint working of the various different groups to ensure that they are not at variance with each other and are all working to a common objective.Note: Brampton Economic Partnership may be the catalyst and provide the overview
Litter & Litter Collection	1) Identified as a general concern. Need to improve enforcement.  2) Litter collection in rural communities. Suggestions:- - Use volunteers but need formal arrangement for collection of rubbish bags - Use Lengthsman shared between parishes	Carlisle CC; CCC; Other PCs.	Irthington parish have a regular group of volunteers who go out to pick up rubbish but then have a problem getting the rubbish bags collected. (Borders NHS Trust - Pharmacy Practices Committee)Action already taken by Nicholforest PC - notified Bewcastle PC; local MP + cross-border MP involved. Need cross Border working to try to resolve the issue. PCSOs may be getting the power to issue parking penalties which could ease the problem. Landowner
Loss of Local Services	An application for a pharmacy in Newcastleton could affect patients living in Nicholforest and neighbouring parishes in England. If the pharmacy opens the Newcastleton GP practice(which covers a wide area) would most likely lose its dispensary. The resultant loss of income could lead to practice being scaled down & English patients having to move to another practice.The situation is made more complicated by the fact that the Borders NHS Trust has differing work practices to NHS Cumbria.	Newcastleton Patient Focus Group; adjoining PCs; elected members; Borders NHS Trust.	Wetheral PC is working on the Scotby problem. Suggested ways forward:- 1) Improve urban Councillors and Officers understanding of rural planning issues and the role of the PCs. 2) Improve PCs understanding of how best to respond to planning applications. 3) Review of
Parking - local	Identified as a general problem, particularly at school drop off and pick up times. Need to improve parking restriction enforcement. Other concerns include:-  1) Parking at Lanercost Abbey has been restricted by the landowner causing some problems for visitors to the Abbey and Dacre Hall 2) Problem with parking in narrow roads in Wetheral and near Great Corby & Scotby schools.	CCC; Carlisle CC; Police; Local Community	
Planning Applications and Consultations	Identified as a general concern by many PCs. Specific issues include:- 1) Improved consultation with PCs, with greater notice taken of their local knowledge and of the views of the community.  2) Need for more feedback regarding decisions made, with clearer explanation as to how PCs comments are taken into consideration.	Carlisle CC; Other PCs; CPCA	

	<p>3) Concern over inappropriate development and the apparent lack of understanding of urban councillors and officers involved in planning regarding rural planning issues and the role of PCs.</p> <p>4) Suggestion that PCs may not fully understand how to best respond to planning applications, particularly on how to communicate the more local issues.</p>		<p>planning protocols, especially site visits.</p> <p>4) Strengthen the Parish Charter to support the above.</p> <p>5) Lobby Carlisle CC with PCs views.</p> <p>6) Hold regular issue based joint meetings with representatives from each parish, e.g. every 6 weeks.</p> <p>7) Clustering of parishes with similar issues to have stronger voice.</p>
River Bank Erosion	<p>1) Cummersdale PC have concerns about erosion affecting the Sustrans Cycle Way.</p> <p>2) Kirkandrews-on-Esk are concerned about encroachment on the graveyard.</p>	Landowner; CCC; Carlisle CC	
Street Lighting Maintenance	<p>Improve how lighting defects are reported. Farlam PC experienced delay in repairs because the location postcode was needed rather than the number on the light.</p>	Carlisle CC; CCC	
Traffic Calming & Speed Restrictions	<p>Identified as a general concern. Specific concerns include:-</p> <p>1) Speed restriction enforcement needed - particularly in residential and school areas.</p> <p>2) Weight restriction needed on Albert St, Longtown.</p> <p>3) HGV speed restriction through Dalston needs to be enforced. Police not interested.</p> <p>4) Problem with the volume of tourist traffic (particularly buses) coming through Lanercost. Would like some signage to make drivers more aware that they are entering a village.</p> <p>5) Additional speed restriction needed at Newtown on A6071.</p>	CCC;Carlisle CC;Police	<p>Work also with other PCs along Hadrian's Wall Corridor</p> <p>New speed restriction on Cumwhitton main road by the new play area - being pursued through the Neighbourhood Forum</p>
Wind Turbine Developments	<p>1) General concerns about various proposed large developments. PCs want to ensure that full consultations are carried out and that the views of the community are acted upon.</p>	Developer; Neighbouring PCs; Carlisle CC; CCC; CPCA; Landowners.	

	<p>2) <u>Nicholforest PC have requested help for joint working with other PCs and cross-border councils.</u>                  Action already taken by Nicholforest PC:-                  a) Following developer and NOWT presentations sent out independent questionnaire round parish. Over 50% return, analysed individual questions, majority against development.                  b) Advised results to MP and local Councillors.                  c) Sent copy to Arthuret, Bewcastle &amp; Kirkandrews-on-Esk PCs.                  d) Made contact with independant planning expert.</p>		<p>Developer is Banks Developments</p> <p>Affected parishes need to work with any cross-border areas also having concerns about the proposed string of developments.</p>
<p>Winter Maintenance</p>	<p>Gritting and keeping roads passable was identified as a general concern.                  Some specific concerns are:-</p> <p>1) Needs to be improved for all areas in a parish</p> <p>2) Need more grit bins that are filled regularly - how is a siting requested, who supplies them, what is the cost and who pays for them?</p> <p>3) Grit needs to be put out earlier - Oct/ Nov time</p> <p>4) Need continuity of gritting on both sides of the border - Scottish roads cleared &amp; gritted but not done on English side</p>	<p>CCC;                  Carlisle CC;                  Other PCs</p>	
<p>Young Children &amp; Youth Facilities</p>	<p>1) More leisure and recreational facilities are needed in the rural areas for all ages. There is a concern that all provision in the district is now being centred on the Youth Zone.</p> <p>2) Brampton PC have project to develop skate park/ BMX track in Brampton. Understand that Carlisle CC may be able to provide a MUGA for Brampton.</p>	<p>CCC;                  Carlisle CC;                  Youth Zone;                  Young People;                  Play England;                  Police;                  Local Community</p>	<p><u>Info</u>                  1) Wetheral PC MUGA funding so far - £12k                  Wetheral PC, £1.5k CPCA Grants, £2k N/Hood Forum. Applied to CWMET - Hadfield Trust &amp; Hayton are contributing.                  2) Stanwix Rural PCSO tried to start a Youth Club but had local opposition.</p>

## Harraby – Together We Can

### Stakeholders Group Empowerment Pilot Evaluation

#### Objectives

The purpose of this report is to bring together the thoughts of the stakeholders in the Harraby Together We Can (HTWC) group only, not officers of any of the statutory agencies and to present an evaluation of the pilot project from the residents point of view. This information was to be used to propose recommendations about key issues when approaching the formation of similar groups elsewhere in the city. It was not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation of the HTWC.

#### Key Questions

The intention was to cast light on<sup>1</sup> the answers to particular questions:

- What difference has it made to the delivery of services locally?
- Do individuals feel more empowered than they did previously, if so how is that manifesting itself?
- Do residents feel they have more say in what happens?
- How have residents been enabled, informed etc eg training/information days/mentoring etc
- Do residents feel themselves to be equal partners? If not why not?
- What do they feel about the future eg how sustainable would the process be if there wasn't so much officer time going into supporting it. Are they sufficiently confident to be able to carry on.
- What are the main good things to have emerged from project? Why?
- What hasn't been successful and why?
- What would they like to see happen in future as far as their development as individuals and a group is concerned eg more training, more responsibility?
- How should the group develop eg as an independent entity, as a sub group of the Community Association, in some way connected with the Neighbourhood Forum?
- What kind of support would they envisage would be required for the group to remain active?
- If there were any lessons to be learned for residents in other areas wishing to follow a similar route, what would they be?

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<sup>1</sup> "Cast light on" not "answer" because, as will be seen from the content of this report, the responses to the questions were complex and varied, sometimes diametrically opposed.

## Methodology

Group and individual interviews were held with members of the community who were, to differing degrees engaged in the work of the group. A total of 14 people were involved. Each interview was structured around the list of questions but the discussion was allowed to move into areas of particular interest and concern to those present and so some questions which were not a part of the original brief were addressed because they were important to the members of the community who were interested.

This report was then prepared on the basis of notes taken at the meeting. The conclusions and emphasis within it are those of the writer, based on the interviews. These conclusions have not been referred back to the interviewees.

## Indicative conclusions

- What difference has it made to the delivery of services locally?**

Whilst the group agree that they have had some notable successes (see below) they recognize that they are still at a stage of establishment of the group. They have some prominence within the estate and in parts of the local authorities but they are not naturally the first port of call when seeking to influence local services and they are not recognized within the Councils ( and other statutory bodies) as representative of the community. There is confusion about the role of HTWC/ the Neighbourhood Forum, the Community Association and the function of elected members. The group are realistic about this and acknowledge that there will always be a need for each of these bodies. They believe that, in time, and given more and better opportunities to communicate with officers of the Councils and other agencies (through regular meetings of the Officer Group) clarity about different roles and respect for HTWC will emerge.

On a practical front there have been a number of activities and initiatives which are describe a little more fully below which have contributed to a reported belief amongst the residents that the HTWC group has made a difference on the estate.

- Do individuals feel more empowered than they did previously, if so how is that manifesting itself?**

Yes and no! There is a degree of recognition of the role of the group and its ability to influence events in Harraby, to that extent they feel empowered. However, the group is constrained by the limited acknowledgement of their role in some quarters, confusion about the relative responsibilities of the NF and HTWC and Councillors and problems caused by the difference between the boundaries of the community and the boundaries of wards.

- **Do residents feel they have more say in what happens?**  
The brief for this report did not include surveying residents in general but all members of HTWC who were interviewed felt that the project provided them with a route to express their views and to have those views heard. They recognized that the views of the group would not always prevail but understood that that was the nature of local decision making.

- **How have residents been enabled, informed etc eg training/information days/mentoring etc**

Those interviewed had engaged in a number of training opportunities on community empowerment and participative budgeting. Amongst those interviewed there was limited conviction that these had provided them with the skills that they needed and a view that they would continue to need professional support to deliver their work. Amongst some there was even suspicion that this training had been provided in order that the council felt justified in reducing the support provided.

- **Do residents feel themselves to be equal partners? If not why not?**

There are now three broad groups involved in local decision making: Councillors, Council Officers and HTWC. HTWC still feel the minor partner in decision making. They feel unable to influence Council Officers directly, they need to use the Councillors to do that. They feel unable to access the right officers directly, they need help from Community Support Officers (from the City or the County) or from Members and they feel that Members find it in their own interests to maintain this status quo.

Despite all that there is a belief that the process has improved and worked still better when there were regular meetings with the Officer group.

- **What do they feel about the future eg how sustainable would the process be if there wasn't so much officer time going into supporting it. Are they sufficiently confident to be able to carry on.**

There are a number of issues here. Firstly as discussed elsewhere the group in general do not feel that they would be sustainable without continuing skilled support. Nor would they be as effective because the group relies on the contacts of the officers to "open doors".

One of the big issues dividing the group at the moment is becoming a formally constituted body. The majority of the group are not convinced that this is the way forward, for a variety of reasons. Some do not want to take on the responsibility ("I don't want to be kept awake at night by HTWC"), some feel that the group is working well as it stands so why change it and some fear that such a move is a way for the council to withdraw support. A significant minority of those interviewed believe that a formal constitution will have a number of advantages in terms of the credibility of the group, its grant raising ability and giving greater clarity to the purpose of the group.

The group are certainly aware that there is much that needs to be done around the estate – not least engaging in the debate about the future of the school and the implication of any plans that are being prepared for the future use of the site.

- **What are the main good things to have emerged from project? Why?**

The project is proud of its success in a number of small, clearly focused initiatives. The Harraby Gala has been a great success in providing a focus for the community and has been attractive to a wide cross section of people. It has been a great deal of work but this has been shared across many people and that process of working as a team has been fundamental in helping the establishment of the group. Likewise the development of the history group, the current touring theatre/drama initiative, and the quiz nights have, in their different ways promoted the activity of HTWC and brought the community together.

The BMX track was a different but equally valuable project the group had to establish relationships with different partners in order to deliver it and the success of the project gave the group credibility in the community. Even this project was not without its problems ( see below). The provision of the new playground adjacent to the community is seen as a real success in terms of securing a major new resource for the estate but see below re problems.

The group feels that, in various degrees, they have been successful in communicating the activity of HTWC. The production of a DVD, the “You said: We did” publication, the use of surveys through the Gala group, the development of the Facebook group have all raised awareness. Nevertheless here is an awareness that there is always more that can be done and that there will always be people who it is more difficult to get the message to.

- **What hasn't been successful and why?**

All of those interviewed shared a frustration that the major issue concerning Harraby, the future of the NCTC site, had made little or no progress over the last two years. In their view the future of the school was the key factor in bringing the group together and despite some constructive approaches to working with partners to deliver a plan for the future of the site nothing appeared to have happened. They felt they had been excluded from the process, deliberately or otherwise and that a solution would simply be dropped upon the estate without effective local consultation. This was a major frustration for the group.

Problems have also been experienced with the installation of the new play area adjacent to the community centre. The siting of the pieces of equipment has led to a number of complaints and calls to have the pieces re-located. In the view of the group this could have been avoided if the views of the community, as expressed through HTWC, had been given proper recognition during the planning process. Regular and meaningful engagement with the Officer group is seen as the best way to handle such problems with communication.

The provision of the BMX track also threw up unforeseen problems because no account had been taken of the views of people who lived close to the site but outside the Harraby ward.

There has been a minor issue relating to keeping the group going. Things have not always worked smoothly and there have been comings and goings within the group. It has been important that a core of people, with professional support have looked beyond any short term issues that have arisen and kept

an eye on the long term benefits to Harraby.

- **What would they like to see happen in future as far as their development as individuals and a group is concerned eg more training, more responsibility? How should the group develop eg as an independent entity, as a sub group of the Community Association, in some way connected with the Neighbourhood Forum?**

There is no clear consensus on this with the exception that there is a clear view that the Neighbourhood Forum (NF) is not thought to offer a workable solution. The boundaries are not co-terminus and the NF is seen as being lead by the Councillors rather than lead by the community. The NF is seen as political and formal and an inappropriate vehicle for the work of HTWC.

Members of the group recognize that this is far from ideal and leads to a duplication of effort and some confusion for residents. Some members of the group believe that, in time, it would be worth discussing the idea of the NF and HTWC joining forces. This would require significant change on both sides but may be to the benefit of the community.

As discussed elsewhere in this paper there is a lack of consensus about the desirability of forming an independently constituted body (at least for now)

- **What kind of support would they envisage would be required for the group to remain active?**

The group are clear, unanimous even, that they could not continue to operate without the support of a council officer. Several reasons are given for this:

- The need to have someone who knows their way around the Civic Centre
- The need for practical support with the operation of the group – essentially secretarial services
- The need for occasional specialist knowledge about where to obtain advice, information expertise.

They feel that the group could not operate at all without the first two and would quickly collapse.

- **If there were any lessons to be learned for residents in other areas wishing to follow a similar route, what would they be?**

Significant problems have arisen about boundaries. The natural boundaries of the Harraby estate span two Wards; Harraby and Botcherby. This has caused confusion, and even conflict with the County Neighbourhood Committees.

### **Recommendations for other group**

- From the beginning have clear and achievable objectives – these can be built upon later
- Find a cause to champion and common ground upon which to meet (physically and philosophically)
- Agree with ward Councillors the geographical area in which you will operate

- Agree with the Neighbourhood Forum the split in responsibilities for the two groups or better still establish joint working to avoid duplication of effort.
- Secure finance to facilitate the operation of the group – secretarial and administrative costs
- Agree with the councils the nature and extent of professional support to be made available
- Get some quick wins with big publicity to ensure that the community get to know about you and know you can deliver
- Establish regular liaison meetings with key officers from the Councils, police, Riverside etc – this is the root of influence and the route for information
- Work hard to maintain supportive relationships with members. You have different responsibilities and must work together for the benefit of the community you serve. Mutual respect is the key – that must be earned.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate – and still expect someone not to know!
- Work hard to avoid becoming a clique. Use social activities to draw new people into the group to replace those who are sure to leave.
- The “Big Society” – you saw it here first!