

Council Plan 2019 – 2023

Introduction

Welcome to Allerdale Borough Council's Council Plan for 2019 to 2023.

We have long term ambitions for our area - to make it a thriving place with a bright future - and this plan sets out our contribution over the next 4 years towards making those ambitions a reality. We are determined to improve lives and life chances for everyone in Allerdale and this commitment underpins all our priorities in this plan.

We have seen significant reductions in funding since 2010 and the next few years will see continued pressure on the Council's finances. But, we are determined to do the best for our communities and not let this challenge hamper our ambitions. Instead we will innovate, seek new ways of working whether through technology or collaboration, and find ways to make the money we have work better for our communities.

Driving growth is critical to maintaining and creating good quality jobs for people, in turn helping to reduce poverty and create a sustainable economy for the future. Achieving growth is also vital to provide the funding that will allow the Council to deliver the high quality services that we know our residents expect.

Building on our previous actions we intend to embark on a substantial programme of regeneration and investment – providing new infrastructure for housing, leisure, business, public realm, tourism and investment opportunities. We will use our ability to secure and generate funding to invest significantly in the future of our district to the benefit of everyone who lives, works and visits here, contributing to the future sustainability of our area for years to come.

This Council Plan tells you about what we will achieve for Allerdale and sets out the things we will focus on over the next four years to deliver on our vision and priorities.

Our vision

Our vision is for Allerdale to be **a great place to live, work and visit.**

Our longer term vision for Allerdale is that:

Allerdale is a vibrant and attractive place where people choose to come and live, visit and do business with a larger proportion of working age people and a growing population overall. We have vibrant and thriving towns and villages where people are happy to live and a clean and green environment with a wealth of recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities, taking advantage of the natural and built environment. There are a wide range of suitable and affordable housing types and high quality homes that are in the right places.

Allerdale has a strong, diverse and adaptable economy with a healthy mix of businesses and no reliance on a single industry sector, and businesses successfully trading globally. There are large numbers of entrepreneurs taking advantage of a flourishing business community creating jobs and wealth for local people. Allerdale is a well-connected area with good physical and virtual access, a range of good quality, well paid jobs and a high standard and good range of learning opportunities for all ages. Young people want to live in the area and have access to a range of careers and opportunities and more people have higher skills levels. Allerdale is a world-class tourist destination with worldwide attraction.

Allerdale has healthier communities with the gap in healthy life expectancy across our district narrowed and childhood obesity reduced to below 2018 levels. Inequalities and poverty across our district are reduced and we see improved aspirations and life outcomes in our traditionally more deprived areas. Strong and joined up public services are meeting the needs of our communities and all residents have the opportunity to engage in local decision making with many people participating and taking pride in their community.

Our purpose

Improving lives, improving futures

Everything we do as a Council will be aimed at improving the lives of our residents both now and for the future. Whether that is by delivering high quality services or acting as community leaders to work with others to improve our area.

Our priorities

Economic opportunity and growth

Allerdale's businesses thrive and grow, we attract new businesses to the area and create quality jobs

Stronger and healthier communities

Allerdale's communities are healthy, safe, included and supported

Quality places to live

Allerdale has attractive and welcoming places and spaces; and the right homes in the right places to meet our residents' needs and support well planned growth

Transforming the Council

Transforming the Council is an overarching theme that runs across all of our priorities – we have to make sure that the Council is making the best use of resources and in a healthy financial position, to be able to provide the quality services and improvements to the area set out in our priorities.

Our principles

Strong community leadership

Demonstrating leadership within our communities is vital if we are to achieve our ambitions and we will continue to support the role of councillors in providing collective community leadership and articulating the issues and priorities in their local areas. We also have a vital role as local leaders to influence and lobby at a national regional and county level to ensure that the needs of our communities and our area are recognised and supported.

Partnership and collaboration

We recognise that only through collaborating with others will we achieve our ambitions for our area. Building positive partnerships with the people and communities we serve and our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors is key to all of the ambitions set out in this Plan and it will be vital for us to make sure that we fulfil our role as local leaders able to influence and work well with others.

Innovation and commerciality

We will constantly look for ways to do things differently and better to deliver savings or generate income for the Council. We need to be more entrepreneurial in the way we do business, looking for and taking advantage of opportunities.

Services and actions that reflect local need

We need to be flexible and responsive in the delivery of services. Allerdale is made up of distinct areas with differing issues and needs so we may need to adapt the way we deliver services and projects across those areas depending on identified need. We have some clear disparities between different local areas with some small areas experiencing considerable issues of poverty and inequality and addressing those inequalities will be at the heart of what we do. We will also always consider the impact of our actions on the different needs of communities as they move through life, thinking for example about impacts on early years' development or on our older residents.

Access and fairness

People have different requirements and preferences when it comes to how they access our services so we will make sure we take those into account when we design and deliver services.

Openness and transparency

We believe in the importance of being open and transparent in all that we do, providing the public with the information that they need to decide if we are performing well and responding to their needs.

Our programmes

Our programmes are a key part of our approach to support the delivery of the ambitions set out in this Plan. To help us really focus on what needs to be done we have developed a series of programmes – groups of projects that support our priorities. These programmes will sit alongside our day to day services all of which will also contribute to achieving our priorities.

We have defined four main programmes that we will be progressing over the lifetime of this Plan:

Regeneration and Investment

This ambitious programme is about the delivery of key projects contributing to the physical development of the area and long term financial sustainability of the Council. It contains exciting projects such as the new stadium in Workington - part of the Council's commitment to make sport and leisure accessible to all to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents, as well as giving local businesses a boost by making our towns more attractive to investors.

Maryport Regeneration

The Council's Business Growth Plan highlighted Maryport as key priority for regeneration. This exciting scheme aims to improve the town's most popular areas to increase tourism, employment opportunities and give a boost to the local economy. It includes key projects at the promenade and harbour, as well as enhancements to the town centre, including the areas around Curzon Street and Senhouse Street and linking the centre to the train station.

Transformation and Commercialisation

This major programme is fundamental to us being able to deliver the priorities set out in this Plan. The projects in this programme will focus on the way the Council works, how to make best use of the resources that we have (for example, using technology to deliver improved customer service and more efficient services) and finding ways to generate more income.

Influencing and Reputation

This programme recognises that to achieve many of the ambitions in this Plan we will need to successfully work with and influence key partners and agencies. This programme will focus on our role as community leaders and improving the Council's influence on key issues such as road and rail infrastructure, strategic housing development, health improvements and securing a nuclear legacy for the area.

Transforming the Council

We will make sure we can carry on delivering high quality, value for money services by finding ways to do things differently and better, and by generating income and savings. We will make sure we are in a healthy financial position so that we can deliver vital improvements to the area.

Transforming the Council is fundamental to being able to deliver the priorities set out in this Plan.

We have managed our finances well over the past years and have successfully made changes and savings whilst still offering high quality services to our residents. However, we face a substantial financial challenge over the lifetime of this Plan as local government financing undergoes a fundamental change – by 2021 we expect to have no revenue support grant from Government which means that all of our income will have to come from council tax, business rates and other streams such as investments or service income.

We will need to develop some innovative and collaborative approaches to continue to be able to provide the best public services we possibly can and provide the resource to achieve the ambitions set out in this Plan.

What are we going to do?

As an organisation we need to look at the way the Council works to make best use of the resources that we have, and find ways to generate more income. Exploring creative ways in which we can deliver services for less will also be essential. Our staff and elected members are key to the sustainability and success of the Council so we need to continue to support and invest in them to make sure that they can help to shape and change the organisation.

Through our **Transformation and Commercialisation** and **Regeneration and Investment Programmes** we will:

- Review and redesign processes to provide a better service to customers
- Look for better ways of working and innovative approaches to service delivery – this may lead to different ways of delivering services jointly with partners or through other organisations.
- Make the best use of technology to improve services, both behind the scenes and to help people access a range of services better

- Support people to access services in different ways, to provide choice to people with busy lives, whether that is by accessing services online, on the phone or through local contact points.
- Improve the ways we commission and procure services and goods and manage contracts to make sure we are getting maximum benefit for the Council and the area.
- Look at how we can generate more income from our existing trading services or selling other services.
- Find ways to generate income for the Council that will help to fund local services. We will invest in commercial opportunities that support our priorities and bring money into Allerdale and the Council such as our recent investments at Lillyhall and Reedlands Road in Workington to provide business accommodation.
- Continue to make the most of all the assets in our control, whether this is identifying ways we can build homes on council land or making the most efficient use of properties and land through our Asset Management Plan.
- Continue to invest in our people to provide them with the skills they need, developing our commercial skills for example, as well as investing in them as individuals, supporting their health and wellbeing needs to develop a confident, healthy, productive and flexible workforce who are ready for change.

Making sure that we continue to have good governance arrangements is vital if we are to be a strong organisation making sound decisions. We need to ensure that our elected members are well trained and well informed so that they can operate as effective community leaders able to build positive partnerships and relationships, work successfully with communities, and effectively influence and work with partners – we will therefore continue to deliver an annual councillor development programme and look for additional ways that members can be supported.

Success measures:

- Increased satisfaction with services
- High resident satisfaction with the way the Council runs things
- An increased percentage of residents who agree the Council provides value for money
- Achievement of savings and income targets

Economic opportunity and growth

We will work to support Allerdale businesses to thrive and grow, attract new businesses to the area and create quality jobs.

Why is this important?

Our area is changing. Like much of the UK our population structure is shifting, the proportion of working age people is getting smaller and the proportion of older people is getting bigger ...and it is a trend that is projected to continue. The difference for us is that the pace of this change is faster than in many other areas of the UK. Over the next 20 years we are projected to see the proportion of people over 65 years of age increase from about one fifth to almost one third of our population. Alongside this, current projections are that the overall numbers of people living in Allerdale will reduce.

Without enough working age people our local economy will be affected – our existing businesses are likely to find it increasingly hard to recruit and will not see this as an area that they can stay and grow in; and the area will not be as attractive to new business as a place to invest.

So, to continue to be a prosperous area we will need to grow – grow our numbers of working age people and grow our economy to provide jobs and opportunities for our existing and new residents. This in turn will help to support the range of services and facilities that people need and expect in their area.

Attracting new and different businesses to the area as well as helping those already here to grow will help us to create more varied work opportunities and make our local economy less reliant on a small number of business types.

We want our residents to be able to get good quality jobs, so quality education and training provision that meets the needs of businesses and learners is essential. There is an increasing demand for higher levels of skills and knowledge in the jobs available in our area and even though we are seeing good progress on improving skills levels in Allerdale current projections are that we will not have enough people with the right skills and knowledge to meet future business demand in our area. So as well as attracting more skilled working age people, we need to make sure that our children get the opportunities, from pre-school early years to higher education, to gain the skills and knowledge they need for a good quality of life.

Our location and geography increases the importance of Allerdale having effective connections so we also want to see improved infrastructure and connectivity across our area. This will support businesses and residents and make it easier for visitors to enjoy the area – encouraging more visitors to Allerdale is also important for the local economy, with more money being spent locally on accommodation, food and drink, entertainment and shopping.

To achieve all of this we need to work with and influence key partners and partnerships, education and skills organisations and other public service providers.

What are we going to do?

Support businesses to thrive, grow and invest

We will support growth in the volume and range of jobs on offer through high quality business support activity, using our Local Plan to support sustainable growth, and investing in creating and growing local businesses through initiatives such as the Allerdale Loans Fund.

Through our Regeneration and Investment Programme we will deliver ambitious projects such as the new stadium for Workington, providing a fantastic sporting and community facility as well as supporting local businesses by making the place more attractive to investors.

We will work hard with our partners to create the right conditions for growth including activity to improve connectivity and infrastructure across our area. This means road and rail infrastructure, but also broadband and business accommodation. We will look for opportunities to create and improve business accommodation so that there are quality places for enterprise and business to thrive.

We will continue to play our part as an employer by paying the Foundation Living Wage to our staff and encourage others to do the same including our major contractors. We want to increase the amount we spend with local businesses so will be buying more goods and services locally where we can.

Attract new businesses

All of the activity set out above will help to attract new businesses to our area. We will also continue to put energy into promoting the area as a great place to do business to help create more varied work opportunities and make our local economy less reliant on a small number of business types.

Improve people's skills to succeed

We will use our influence and partnerships to ensure that unemployed people in Allerdale, those who currently have few employment choices, and young people coming into the world of work, have the skills training and advantages they need to access jobs and build a career.

Develop key economic sectors such as tourism to create jobs

We will build on our efforts to promote the area as a fantastic place to visit, encouraging more people to come and see the amazing landscapes and heritage that we have to offer. Parts of our district are in two different World Heritage Sites (the Lake District National Park and Hadrian's Wall) and the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - we want to build on the draw of these special places to encourage more people to explore Allerdale and all it has to offer.

Supporting businesses, festivals, arts and sporting events will also be an important activity to ensure that there is a wide range of quality facilities and things to do for visitors to the area and our residents alike.

Success measures:

- Growth in numbers of jobs in Allerdale
- Growth in numbers of businesses in Allerdale
- Increase in net domestic migration of working age people into the district
- Increase in proportion of working age with Level 3 and 4 qualifications

Stronger and healthier communities

We will work to make sure that our communities are healthy, safe, included and supported.

Why is this important?

We want everyone to have the opportunity to live a healthy and happy life, regardless of where they live in the district.

A person's health is affected by a whole range of factors – lifestyles, environment, homes and communities are all important. In turn someone's health then impacts on their ability to work and enjoy life. Many of our residents enjoy an excellent quality of life and very good health, but in some of our communities people's health outcomes are not so good - how long you can expect to live your life in good health varies considerably across our district and in some local areas people can expect around a quarter of their lives to be spent in poor health.

Like many other areas of the UK one of our key health concerns is obesity. In Allerdale we are seeing a particularly worrying trend in our younger children where the proportion of overweight and obese children has been rising in recent years amongst our 4-5 year olds. Encouraging healthy eating and active lifestyles to reduce childhood obesity will therefore be a focus for the Council over the course of this Plan.

In areas where we see poorer health outcomes we tend to see a correlation with other issues such as higher rates of unemployment,

lower incomes, lower qualification levels and higher rates of child poverty. We have higher than average levels of fuel poverty in some areas where incomes are low or homes are hard to heat – and this can ultimately impact on people's health.

We have clear inequalities between communities within the district with some small areas experiencing considerable issues of poverty and inequality. This means that some of our communities and residents need a helping hand, particularly in our former industrial towns.

Rural living can present significant challenges for low income families and poverty is often a more hidden issue in these areas. So a focus on the health and wellbeing of our more rural communities is also important.

Whilst on the whole Allerdale is a safe place to live, some of our communities have told us that they are experiencing increasing issues with anti-social behaviour. So we will need to work with partners to address local community safety concerns.

What are we going to do?

Encourage healthy, active lifestyles

With our health colleagues we will work to tackle healthy weight issues, promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles to try and reduce levels of obesity, particularly in children. We are well placed to offer a range of opportunities to participate in sport, arts, and leisure activities to help improve health and wellbeing directly through our leisure centres or by supporting other events, facilities and activities such as cycling and walking – making the best use of our fantastic natural environment. Our plans for a new community stadium in Workington build on the success of the nearby leisure centre, helping to improve access to high quality sport and leisure facilities for our residents.

Keep people safe and well

We will make sure that we effectively deliver our range of functions to keep people safe and well including: monitoring food safety, air and water quality; licensing; and using our powers to make Public Space Protection Orders. We will continue to work hard to tackle fuel poverty through schemes to help people reduce their energy bills and make homes cheaper to heat. We will help to prevent homelessness, helping those who face pressures that could tip them into homelessness, as well as supporting those who are already homeless.

We will work with key partners such as the Police through the West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership and the Allerdale Local Focus Hub to address our communities' community safety issues and concerns so people can enjoy their homes and neighbourhoods.

Support and engage with our communities

We have had a strong focus on addressing inequality and poverty for a number of years and are recommitting to tackling these issues here. We will continue our work with partners to address poverty - both in terms of helping those in urgent need through activity such as supporting foodbanks and food initiatives, and working on activity to help people longer term by improving job opportunities, skills and resilience.

We recognise how important it is to find ways to build confidence and capacity within communities. Local community groups and events run by local people with commitment and passion are vitally important and we will look for ways to support these, through advice and assistance.

We have already worked with local communities to transfer some important community facilities such as parks to town and parish councils, bringing them back under more local control, and will continue to look for opportunities to give local communities more influence over local facilities and services. We need to maintain our awareness of local needs by talking to parish and town councils and community groups, and explore new ways to deliver services with them. We will also explore ways to support our councillors more as community leaders.

Success measures:

- Declining trend in overweight and obese children (Reception age)
- Increased numbers of physically active adults
- Reduced health inequalities

Quality places to live

We will work to make sure that we have attractive and welcoming places and spaces; and the right homes in the right places to meet our residents' needs and support well planned growth

Why is this important?

Allerdale is a diverse district with a rich history and stunning landscapes making it a fantastic place to live where people can enjoy an excellent quality of life in a clean, green and safe environment. Making sure that all of our residents can enjoy attractive and welcoming places to live that are clean and green is important and in a few places in Allerdale our residents tell us that their living environment is not as good as it should be.

Alongside clean streets and spaces our residents need leisure and cultural facilities, access to shops, homes and services so that our towns and villages are vibrant and attractive places - important in appealing to visitors and new residents too.

Allerdale needs the right homes in the right places to meet our current and future residents' needs. Affordable, decent housing is something our residents have told us is an important area of focus. We have significant housing affordability issues in some of our towns making it difficult for people to get on to the housing ladder in those areas - in Keswick and Cockermouth house prices are 8.7 and 5.8

times the average household income respectively, making the private housing market inaccessible to many people. Our ageing population means that we need to plan for and encourage the provision of more suitable homes to meet the changing needs that people have throughout their lifetimes.

If we want to encourage more working age people to move to the area to give it a more sustainable future we will need additional homes to buy and to rent. However, it is important to make sure that the right homes are built in the right places and that we have well planned and sustainable growth in terms of housing.

The quality of housing is important both in terms of new build and existing properties. We still have an estimated fifth of all properties that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard so activity to improve standards is important, particularly in the private rented sector. We also need to make sure that we are supporting residents who may be at risk of becoming homeless or who are homeless already.

What are we going to do?

Keep places clean, green and tidy

We will maintain the high quality refuse and recycling service that our residents value and will continue our efforts to increase recycling rates.

We will focus on improving the cleanliness of our streets and public places where residents have told us improvements are required, taking enforcement action where we need to tackle environmental crime.

We will continue to carry out proactive and enforcement work to protect and enhance our built and natural surroundings, whether that is dealing with eyesore properties in our towns or enhancing our high quality natural environment, making sure we have healthier natural systems and habitats.

Help towns and villages to thrive

We will help our towns and villages to thrive through activity to support and improve leisure and cultural facilities, access to shops and services as well as activity to improve the way places look and feel through activity such as our popular facelift schemes.

We have committed to implementing the Maryport Regeneration Scheme to enhance the vitality of the town – increasing tourism and employment opportunities, and giving a boost to the local economy. This will include physical improvements to the promenade, harbour and town centre as well as aiming to address some of the underlying issues that must be influenced if the town is to become truly successful.

Deliver quality homes for growth

We will use our planning policies and powers to ensure that the right new homes are delivered in the right places to meet existing and future need and support economic growth and the sustainability of our area.

We want to take stronger action to ensure that new housing is of a good quality and that we maximise contributions from housing developers towards infrastructure improvements and affordable housing. We will continue to work with developers to try and find ways to unlock development where sites have stalled.

Make sure we have suitable, affordable, decent homes for all

New build, conversions and bringing empty properties back into use all need to be part of the mix to ensure we have a good range and supply of homes. We will continue to focus on providing affordable homes (both to buy and to rent) where they are needed most across the district. The ways that we will do this include supporting Community Land Trusts, securing the maximum numbers of affordable units we can as part of new developments, and working closely with housing associations to make sure there are enough social rented properties.

We will actively work to intervene and bring forward development where we see gaps in provision using council land or delivery mechanisms as appropriate. One of the things we are working on is the creation of a housing company as a vehicle for us to be able to do this more successfully.

To provide for the changing needs that people have through their lifetimes we will continue to deliver our successful grants scheme to enable people to stay in their own homes for longer through adaptations. We will also work with partners to ensure that suitable housing is developed for our ageing population.

We will work to improve the quality of housing in the private sector through inspection and appropriate enforcement, including the private rented sector. We will actively engage with private landlords to provide advice and information and take action against those landlords who don't meet their responsibilities.

Success measures:

- More affordable housing developed
- Improved satisfaction with cleanliness of streets and public places

How will we know if we are succeeding?

This Council Plan is a high level plan setting out what we will focus on over the next 4 years and why. A series of success measures are identified in the Plan which will indicate progress on the longer term outcomes we want to see.

This plan which will inform the development of more detailed programmes and plans and allocations of staff and money.

We will develop a Business Plan which will set out how we will work towards the priorities set out in this Plan. The Business Plan will set out the key activities we will undertake along with more detailed performance measures that we will use to assess our progress. The Business Plan will be refreshed annually.

We will report progress quarterly through our Executive and make these reports available on our website www.allerdale.gov.uk