



Westmorland and Furness Council a framework for our new Council Plan

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Introduction

This is an exciting time for Westmorland and Furness and as such we want to hear from you to ensure your views are at the very heart of all that we do. Right now we are preparing our first council plan for Westmorland and Furness Council and this document sets out our vision for the area and the values and priorities of the Council.

It doesn't describe everything that the new Council will do but sets out the strategy and guiding principles.

Please take time to review this document and let us have your feedback by 16 September 2022 on ['Council Plan: Have your say' web page](#).

Foreword

Westmorland and Furness is a new council which brings great opportunity. It is an opportunity to bring together the best of Barrow, Cumbria, Eden and South Lakeland to transform Westmorland and Furness for the better - from Walney to Alston and from the Duddon to the Tyne. It is an opportunity to transform how services are delivered, to build a new vision and work together to deliver it.

It is an opportunity to do big things. Our communities have the vision, the people, the skills and the capacity to grasp the opportunity of Local Government re-organisation and build a bright future for Westmorland and Furness.

This is the beginning of the journey.

Councillor Jonathan Brook

Leader of the Shadow Authority of Westmorland and Furness Council

About Westmorland and Furness Council

Westmorland and Furness Council will be an ambitious authority that will shape public services for the better, building on the best and transforming them for the future.

Covering an area larger than Greater London, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands combined, Westmorland and Furness Council will be England's third largest unitary authority by area when it comes into effect in 2023. It will provide services to approximately 225,000 residents.

The new council officially starts on 1 April 2023 and ahead of that the Council is now drawing up a framework to help shape its future council plan which will set out how the Council will operate in the future to enable Westmorland and Furness to be a truly great place to live, work and thrive.

Westmorland and Furness is unique. It values the distinctiveness in our towns, villages and communities, and it recognises that their needs and aspirations are different. The new council will empower local communities and shape our services to recognize and embrace these differences by being innovative and flexible.

Our largest town is a global leader in advanced sub-sea manufacturing and technology and home to Barrow shipyard. Much of the area is rural and sparsely populated. Our two National Parks (the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales) are the core of a thriving visitor economy. There are about 12,000 businesses in the authority's area which add £5.7 billion of gross value to the national economy every year.

In recent years, we've experienced major flood events and extreme weather. Meeting the challenge of climate change is set to be at the forefront of our priorities.

Context for change

National drivers and challenges

- Levelling up agenda
- Social care reform
- Children's social care reform
- Education Bill
- Cost of living crisis
- Post-Covid recovery
- Climate change and biodiversity

Local opportunities and challenges

- Opportunities and challenges of unitarisation
- Natural assets
- Ageing population and declining working age population
- Health inequalities
- Deprivation
- Financial sustainability of local government

Our values

- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Wellbeing
- Prevention and early intervention
- Transformation
- Protection of natural resources

Westmorland and Furness is unique, and we value the distinctiveness in our towns, villages and communities, and recognise that their needs and aspirations are different. We will empower local communities and shape our services to recognise and embrace these differences by being innovative and flexible.

We will work in collaboration and partnership with our neighbouring authorities, and other public, private and third sector partners to achieve the best person-centred outcomes for all in Westmorland and Furness.

We will transform our services to seek new ways to enable all of our citizens, be it residents, businesses or visitors to have healthy, happy lives. We will take a holistic, and early intervention based approach where it is needed.

Where people need to draw on our support we will provide this with care and compassion and promote equality, diversity and fairness. We will manage our finances and assets carefully and deliver value for money in everything we do.

We recognise our place in the world and our role in responding to national and global issues such as climate change, and will enhance and protect our natural and economic resources.

Our vision

Our vision is one for the whole of Westmorland and Furness. A vision that will also guide the Council through transition and transformation over the next five years to enable Westmorland and Furness to be:

“A great place to live, work and thrive - now and in the future.”

A great place to live

Sustainable communities:

- Modern, person-centred, rural proofed, services - Lifelong independent living - Affordable, suitable and adaptable homes

- High quality housing - More children and young families - Regenerated areas in need
- Support for people with care and housing needs - Support for people in vulnerable situations - Action on deprivation
- Zero carbon ready housing - Flood resilience - Better air and water quality - Enhanced biodiversity
- Re-imagined town centres - Community planning of neighbourhood and place

A great place to work

Sustainable economy:

- A growing workforce - Connected communities, business and higher and further education through training and skills - Better access to jobs
- Advanced manufacturing growth - A modern, sustainable and accessible rural economy - Strategic infrastructure
- Resilience to the rising cost of living - Early intervention - Support for new businesses
- A growing green technology sector - Energy efficiency and decarbonised energy - Sustainable land management
- A circular economy which builds community wealth - More community enterprise - Support for local businesses

A great place to thrive

Sustainable environment:

- Integrated health and social care - Reformed education system - Strategic connectivity - Better connected sparse rural areas
- Greener and more active transport - A sustainable diverse visitor economy across the area - Creative industries
- Joined up action on the wider determinants of health - Promoting asset based regeneration - Better access to services
- A carbon neutral council by 2030 - A carbon neutral area by 2037
- More active travel - More power for local communities - A cherished local environment

Our priorities

Great for all ages and communities:

Seeking a well balanced population with healthy, happy lives for young and old.

Great for sustainable growth:

Promoting sustainable inclusive economic growth across boundaries.

Great for opportunity:

Supporting people who find themselves in vulnerable situations and reducing inequality.

Great for future generations:

Leading the response to the challenge of climate change and biodiversity.

Great places:

Enabling confident, empowered communities in our towns, villages and countryside.

Looking ahead

This document is just the starting point for the new council. Over the next year we will be engaging with residents to understand the opportunities and challenges they face and working out how we can work together to bring about change.

This work, together with your feedback on this framework, will help inform our final council plan for Westmorland and Furness. Creating a sustainable future for our area in partnership with residents, businesses and our communities.

We will use this framework:

- As a starting point for more detailed service planning and strategy development
- To start a much broader and deeper conversation with our residents about what you want from the Council and how you would like to be involved
- To enable our potential partners to understand our vision and priorities to enable further dialogue about areas of common interest
- As a guide when we are making decisions about services or things that impact on our residents to ensure that we maintain our focus