

Cumberland Shadow Executive

27 March 2023

Community Panels

Report from: Cllr Lisa Brown, Deputy Leader
Report Author: Colin Cox
Director of Public Health and Communities
Communities and Localism Working Group
Wards: All Wards
Key Decision: Yes

1.0 Purpose/Summary of report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Shadow Executive on the work of the Communities and Localism Working Group. The Working Group has reached an initial set of conclusions and is now in a position to report back their findings and recommendations. The Working Group has focused on the following topics during its consultation with all Members and lead officers:

- Governance
- Geography
- Community engagement
- Partners

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Shadow Executive: -

(1) Note and comment on the work completed by the Communities and Localism Working Group, including the Terms of Reference for the Community Panels as set out in the Constitution.

(2) Adopt the 8 Area Community Panel model for area working

(3) Agree the key issues that need to be reflected in the funding formula, for the allocation of funding to the Community Panels

(4) Delegate any changes to the Community Panels, Terms of Reference to the Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) in consultation with the Director of Public Health and Communities and the Deputy Leader

(5) Delegate any changes to the funding formula to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Director of Public Health and Communities and the Deputy Leader

3.0 Background and Proposals

Communities and Localism Working Group

- 3.1 In July 2022, the Shadow Executive agreed that Communities and Localism, as a work package within the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Programme, would be a separate service within Cumberland Council.
- 3.2 A Communities and Localism Steering Group, with sub groups, was established to develop the separate service and prepare for the new area working arrangements. The Steering Group had the following aims:
- Develop democratic governance model and associated area working
 - Work with community representatives stakeholders and wider community, including Town and Parish Councils, to engage on local opportunities
 - Build on, develop and continue to support resilient communities and empower residents to shape services
 - Develop and define the Council's strategic approach to supporting inclusive local economies that work for residents which is a key element of the council plan
 - Transformation Stage: Concept testing of strategic intent to further develop the relationship with communities and town or parish councils by co-creation of services with selected partners prior to wider implementation
- 3.3 The sub groups merged in February 2023 to create a single Working Group with a focus on preparing for Day 1, making a smooth transition from the existing 3 Local Committee model to the recommended 8 Community Panel model.
- 3.4 In the report to Council on the Constitution the Chief Legal Officer summarised the purpose of a Community Panel as follows:
- 'It is envisaged that each Community Panel will prepare a Community Plan setting out the priorities for each area and following this appropriate responsibilities and budgets will be devolved to the Panels. Additionally, each panel may request that particular responsibilities are devolved to it. The intention is that this model will be flexible and will develop over time. Each Panel has the flexibility to co-opt members and to set up Working Groups or Task and Finish Groups.'*
- 3.4 To support Members working with the new model, two workshops have been arranged to prepare Members for the first meetings of the 8 Panels. These will both take place in April and cover the responsibilities of the Community Panels including decisions to be made and budgets together

with discussion on engagement and preparation of a Community Neighbourhood Panel Plan.

Governance and funding formula

- 3.5 The Shadow Council agreed the Constitution at its meeting in January 2023. The Constitution sets out the Terms of Reference for the Community Panels, which can have powers delegated to them from the Leader, Executive and Council. The Terms of Reference are included in Appendix A.
- 3.6 Each Community Panel will meet at least 4 times annually. The Constitution states: *'Where a Community Panel exercises powers granted to it by the Executive or Council it must do so within the parameters of the policies set by the Council and Executive and as set out in the terms of reference, including the ability to consider and report to Executive and Council on any matter affecting their area. Community Panels operate within Council policy and decisions must be consistent with the Budget and Policy framework and service specific policies.'*
- 3.7 The Chair and Vice-Chair of each Community Panel will attend the Highways and Transport Board, a structural committee of the Executive.
- 3.8 The Terms of Reference for Overview and Scrutiny Committees includes the following: *'in performing its role, may consult and involve the local community and other local public, private and voluntary bodies or organisations, including the Council's Community Panels.'* The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have the Community Panels within its remit.
- 3.9 The Director of Children and Family Wellbeing has specific powers to nominate local authority governors to maintained schools in consultation with the relevant local Councillor or the Chair and Vice Chair of the relevant Community Panel.
- 3.10 Each Community Panel will be delegated appropriate budgets as approved by the Executive and agreed as part of the annual budget (revenue and capital) approved by Council and will work within the limitations of the guidance for the use of those budgets issued by Executive.
- 3.11 The appropriate budget will be based on a funding formula, not simply a total population. The following key issues are to be reflected in the formula:
- The overall aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents
 - We want our residents to access opportunities that will empower them to achieve their goals. Inequality continues to hold people back from reaching their true potential and we will work with residents and partners to challenge entrenched issues in areas such as health, education, life expectancy and deprivation.
 - We have a key focus on food security and the food system. We believe that each resident has a "Right to Food". This means that food should be adequate, available, and accessible and affordable.

- The local economy has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals
- The environment in which our people live has a huge impact on health and wellbeing

Geography

- 3.12 The Cumberland Council Plan sets the overall strategy for the Council, taking a fresh approach to the delivery of inclusive services that are shaped by our residents and communities. The Community Panel model will enable this to happen at a local level.
- 3.13 At this level the Community Panel will be closer to the challenge set out in the Plan,
- ‘We will work hard to remove as many barriers, differences and inequalities as possible to ensure that everyone in our community can engage with us. We also recognise that when we do ask people to engage with us, it has to be meaningful.’*
- 3.14 In fulfilling this purpose, through Neighbourhood Investment Plans, the Community Panels will be free to be more agile and responsive. The greater the degree of local knowledge influencing decisions the more likely the outcomes will meet the needs of the local communities.
- 3.15 The 8 Community Panel model is a compromise. It is the starting point which has the potential to generate engagement at a community level (participatory democracy) whilst respecting the representative democracy of the Electoral Wards and parish and town council boundaries.
- 3.16 The 8 Community Panel model has been created to ensure that a range of community assets are within all panel areas. The model will enable grant funding at operational, tactical and strategic levels across Cumberland, encouraging collaborative funding to maximise investment from external funders.
- 3.17 The Cumberland Council Target Operating Model includes community development as an outreach activity, stating:
- ‘At its core the Target Operating Model will empower communities. Through partnership working and targeted community development, Cumberland Council will seek to strengthen support networks and respond to signs of need early to reduce pressure on the public sector services.’*
- 3.18 Each Community Panel is comprised of all members of the Council representing those wards falling within each Community Panel boundary. The following table sets out the recommended grouping of the wards into the 8 Community Panel model:

Wards	Community Panel
Belle Vue, Castle, Denton Holme, Morton, Yewdale	1
Botcherby, Currock, Harraby North, Harraby South, Upperby	2
Brampton, Houghton and Irthington, Wetheral, Belah, Corby and Hayton, Longtown, Stanwix Urban	3
Solway Coast, Thursby, Aspatria, Wigton, Dalston and Burgh	4
Bothel and Wharrels, Cockermouth North, Cockermouth South, Dearham and Broughton, Keswick, Maryport North, Maryport South	5
Moss Bay and Moorclose, Harrington, Seaton, St Michaels, St. Johns and Great Clifton	6
Bransty, Egremont North and St Bees, Hillcrest and Hensingham, Howgate, Kells and Sandwith, Mirehouse	7
Gosforth, Millom Without, Cleator Moor East and Frizington, Cleator Moor West, Egremont, Millom	8

3.19 A map outlining each ward within the 8 Community Panels is included in Appendix B.

Community Engagement

3.20 The role of the Community Panels is to encourage community engagement and local decision making. They may report on matters of local concern to the Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or the Council. Each Community Panel will work with the community to develop a plan setting out the priorities for their area, this plan can have sections bespoke to the communities within the Community Panel area.

3.21 Alongside the Community Panel a Community Network Panel is recommended. The Community Network Panel is less formal than the Community Panel, it is proposed that such a network is run alongside the Community Panel with deeper reach and engagement with partners and community representatives. Up to 4 network panel meetings per year are anticipated to ensure engagement and participation with the Neighbourhood Investment Plan.

Partners

3.22 North Cumbria has been divided into 8 Integrated Care Communities (ICCs) based on groups of GP practices and their patients. An integrated care community is where teams work together to improve the overall health and wellbeing of their community. This shared purpose will make the ICCs very

important partners in fulfilling the actions and ambitions of the Community Panels. The 8 ICCs do not fall on the same footprint as the 8 Community Panels proposed but there is scope for effective alignment.

- 3.23 Cumbria Constabulary have reorganised their policing areas (Basic Command Unit, BCU) into two, along the same footprint of the two new Councils. Within the Cumberland BCU there are two levels of organisation, Quadrant (2) and Locality (18). There are opportunities to collaborate on surveys and plans.
- 3.24 Local Focus Hubs have been a successful part of partnership working and will continue as part of the Council's operating model. The Local Focus Hubs will be able to support the Community Panels in collaboration with partners in the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The Local Focus Hubs are skilled in identifying community issues and working with partners in addressing these issues.
- 3.25 The extensive reach and active networks of the Third Sector and parish and town councils will be valuable to the Community Panels. The Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service supported 997 organisations active across the Cumberland Council area in 2022, through the Third Sector Network. There are currently 126 parish and town councils in the Cumberland Council area, stretching from Bewcastle Parish Council on the Scottish Border to Millom Town Council on the Duddon Estuary.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 The feedback on the Cumberland Council Plan included comments with reference to community include the following topics:
 - Person-centred approach
 - Prevention and early intervention
 - Pride and sense of belonging
 - Community wealth building
 - Promoting sport, culture and arts
 - Climate crisis, mitigation and adaption

Quotes from the feedback comments are included in Appendix C.

- 4.2 Member briefings and workshops took place in December 2022 (Cumbria House) and January 2023 (Allerdale House) to discuss the proposals for a new model of area working.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 A range of panel area models, some with more and some with less than 8, have been considered and discussed. These alternative options included the continuation of the 3 Local Committee model on the district council footprints.

6.0 Implications

Financial, Resources and Procurement

- 6.1 Each Community Panel will be delegated appropriate budgets as approved by the Executive and agreed as part of the annual budget (revenue and capital) approved by Council and will work within the limitations of the guidance for the use of those budgets issued by Executive. The Community Panels will be subject to financial controls which are fully compliant with the Financial Procedure Rules.

Human Resources

- 6.2 Workshops to prepare Members for the changes in area working and the new model have been arranged for April. Staff and Members will be briefed on the changes over Spring in preparation for the first round of Panel meetings in summer.

Legal

- 6.3 The Community Panels are “Area Committees” within the definition of section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000. As such, they concern functions which under Executive Arrangements are the responsibility of the Executive and it is properly a decision for the Executive as to how to establish the Panels.
- 6.4 The definition of an “Area Committee” under ss 9E(8) and (9), however, is that it is a Committee of the Council. Once established, therefore, the Community Panels are able to undertake non-Executive functions delegated from full Council. The Panels may, therefore, carry out both Executive and non-Executive functions, and are exempt from the need for political balance, but only so long as each satisfies the following criteria:
- i. It is established to discharge functions in respect of part of the area of the authority, and
 - ii. The members of the Panel who are members of the authority are elected for the wards which fall wholly or partly within that ward.

As proposed, the Community Panels meet these criteria.

Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Have you completed a Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment? No
- 6.5 An Impact Assessment was completed for the Cumberland Council Plan. As the Community Panels draft their first Neighbourhood Investment Plans the need for further assessments will be reviewed.

Equality and Diversity

- 6.6 Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis? No
- 6.7 An Impact Assessment was completed for the Cumberland Council Plan. As the Community Panels draft their first Neighbourhood Investment Plans the need for further assessments will be reviewed.

Risk Management	Consequence	Controls required
There is a reputational risk if Executive do not implement a new model of area working.	The ambitions set out in the Cumberland Council Plan will not be fully realised.	The roles set out in the Constitution have ensured that controls are in place to manage the risk.

7.0 Contributions to Cumberland Council Plan priorities

- 7.1 The new model for Community Panels will help to deliver the priorities in the Plan, at a local level. The increased communication and engagement through the Community Network Panels will inform the first review of the Plan later in the Civic Year.

Contact Officers

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Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix No.	Name of Appendix
A	Terms of Reference for the Community Panels
B	8 Community Panel model map
C	Quotes from Cumberland Council Plan feedback

Background Documents Available

None

Appendix A: Terms of Reference from for the Community Panels extracted from the Constitution.

13 COMMUNITY PANELS

Terms of Reference

13.8 The purposes of the Community Panels are:

13.8.1 To actively encourage local residents to become involved in decision-making on matters which affect them.

13.8.2 To lead and enable effective implementation of the Neighbourhood Investment Plan.

13.8.3 To monitor the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the Council and other main providers in the local area.

13.8.4 To lead on development of a Neighbourhood Investment Plan, which includes all main priorities for improvement of the Area, for approval by the Executive.

13.9 In pursuit of these objectives, the Community Panel may:

13.9.1 Consult, engage and involve local people and organisations in development and delivery of the Neighbourhood Investment Plan.

13.9.2 Consult, engage and involve partner agencies in development and delivery of the Neighbourhood Investment Plan.

13.9.3 Actively review the activities of other agencies within its area with a view to ensuring that services, initiatives and their manner of delivery meet local requirements as fully as possible.

13.9.4 Constructively challenge service providers to improve the standards of service and the levels of public satisfaction and trust with them.

13.9.5 Identify priorities for allocation of budgets delegated to the Community Panel.

13.9.6 Commission activity to improve local quality of life and public satisfaction in its area.

13.9.7 Promote and publicise initiatives taken to improve local quality of life and public satisfaction and to increase participation in decision making.

13.9.8 Request and consider reports in support of the Community Panel's work.

13.10 The Community Panel will also produce an Annual Report which will review and evaluate the degree to which it was successful in achieving its objectives and effective in promoting community leadership.

Delegated powers

- 13.11 The Council and the Executive may delegate powers and functions to the Community Panels which will be recorded here.

Conflicts of Interest

- 13.12 If an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scrutinising specific decisions or proposals in relation to the business of the Community Panel for which an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Council is a member, then that Councillor may not speak or vote at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting unless a dispensation to do so is given by the Standards and Governance Committee.
- 13.13 Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is reviewing policy generally, the Community Panel member must declare their interest before the relevant agenda item is reached, but need not withdraw.

Access to Information

- 13.14 Community Panels will comply with the Access to Information Procedure Rules. Agendas and notices for meetings which deal with both functions of the Executive and functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive will state clearly which items are which.

Appendix B: 8 Community Panel model map



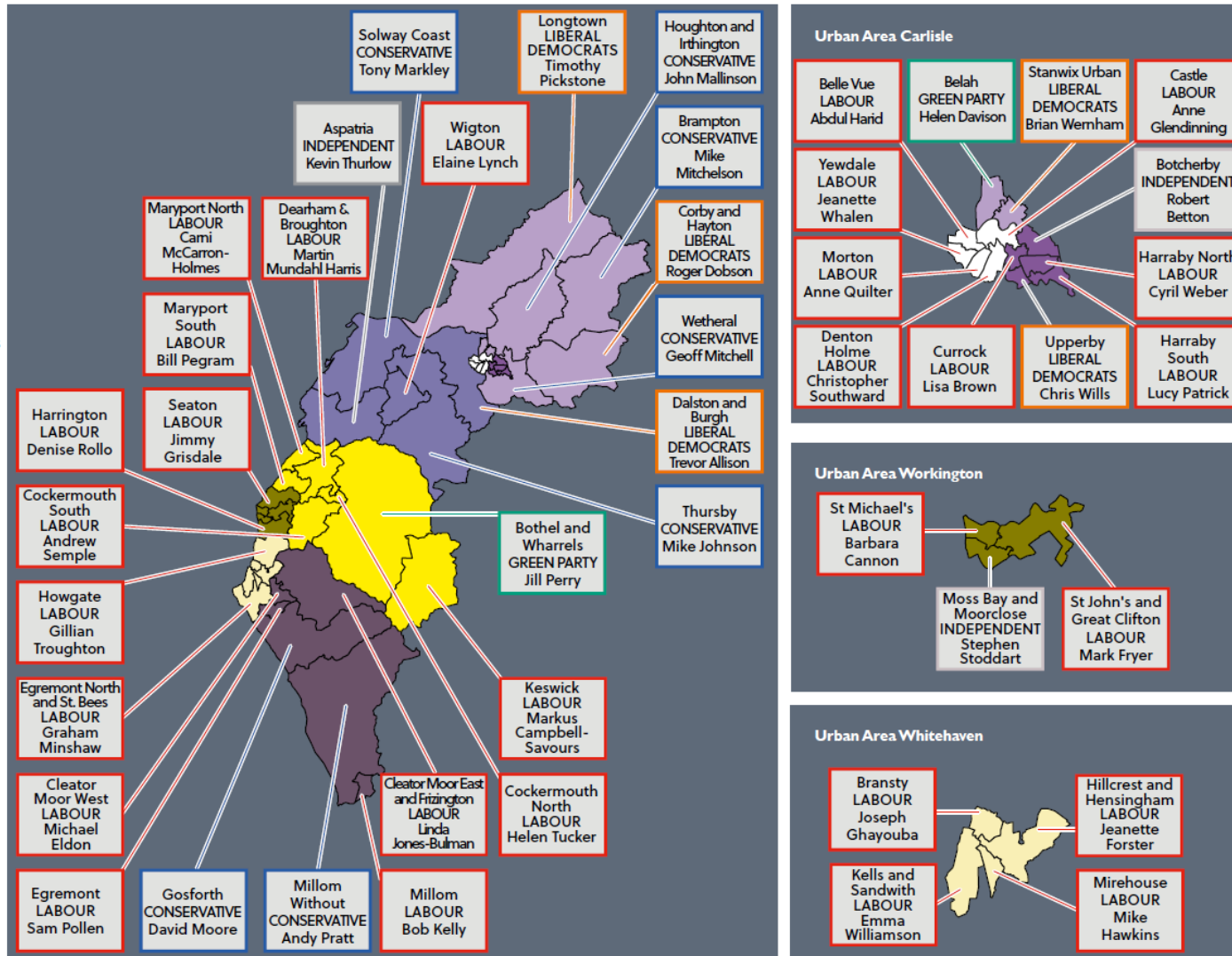
Cumberland Council

Cumberland Community Panels

Cumberland Council consists of eight Community Panels

- Panel one
- Panel two
- Panel three
- Panel four
- Panel five
- Panel six
- Panel seven
- Panel eight

March 2023



Appendix C: Quotes from feedback on Cumberland Council Plan

The overall impression of third sector organisations involved in the online event was very positive; they liked the vision and overall ambition of Cumberland Council, and the prospect of better joined up services.

Voluntary and community sector groups felt that they had a role to play in helping user and resident voices to be heard (alongside other routes), but were clear that this is resource intensive, and would require funding (and similarly, that the Council will need to ensure engagement activity is adequately resourced if it to be successful).

West Cumbria Child Poverty Forum agree that accessible and trusted services are crucial, particularly for families who have faced barriers in successfully working with Councils previously. From our extensive work to understand challenges around social housing, we found that a person-centred approach and partnership working were essential in getting the best outcomes for families. We encourage the Council to embrace a relational approach when working with residents who use their services, using their discretionary powers to ensure that the individual circumstances of each family in need are fully understood and met. UCLan champions community participation and the role that communities can play in shaping their future. We welcome the ambition to involve and engage residents in decisions that impact on them. When doing this, we urge the Council to consider innovative methods to engage all residents, including children and young people. We believe that through the delivery of practical support and interventions by community-based teams, a plan that enables communities to find solutions for themselves and be supported in delivering their solutions. We encourage the Council to take inspiration from innovative local government approaches such as the Preston model which uses local procurement within the Council and other anchor institutions as a means (amongst many) to build community wealth.

There needs to be more ambition for cultural arts and development - how do we inspire people and provide opportunities to engage in culture, arts and sports in order to boost wellbeing and learning? I would like to see more emphasis on working with arts and community organisations to provide opportunities in the community from grass roots onwards, working together using our parks and leisure services and becoming better at engaging vulnerable group

I would like to see more mentioned about tackling climate change in the plan. We are very vulnerable to extreme weather events and this will only get worse. I would also love to see a focus green spaces in our urban areas. There should be more community engagement and civic pride encouraged in residents, volunteering opportunities could be advertised better, giving residents a chance to meet up and tackle loneliness and promote pride in public areas, improving the area for all.

Cumbria is an amazing county with lovely people and it could make a lot more of itself by working collaboratively and bringing a sense of pride back to communities. We should lead the way with green energy and set an example of how respecting the environment and working with it instead of against it can produce healthier, prosperous communities.

People need to know where to get help until the new council is a bit more evolved and wrap around services are more integrated as community and social care .

Cumberland is very well placed, as a Unitary Authority with a huge geography, dispersed rural communities and natural environment to deliver a much more inclusive, fair, low-impact, community-centred, sustainable strategy that delivers for local people.

I would like to see effective services in the community aimed at supporting older adults with their current issues (given the population balance) and enabling younger people who need to be able to live and work locally. It would be good to see services helping grow community activity and sense of belonging.