



Report to Council

Meeting Date: 6 March 2024

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Deputy Leader, Statutory Lead for Childrens Services and
Childrens, Family Wellbeing and Housing Portfolio Holder**

Report of: Councillor Emma Williamson

Despite the various challenges encountered over the past year, I am honoured to serve as the lead member for Children and Family Wellbeing and Housing in Cumberland.

While there have been and will continue to be numerous obstacles on a national scale, the decrease in funding to local government has posed a particularly difficult challenge. This decrease directly affects our most vulnerable residents and places significant pressure on the delivery of essential public services, such as social care and education. These services are essential for the welfare and economic development of our communities within Cumberland. Nevertheless, despite these considerable challenges, we are dedicated to driving enhancements and upholding strong performance.

A notable change I have witnessed is a significant cultural transformation within our teams. Many discussions I have had with our officers indicate that they now feel listened to and appreciated, thanks to our new vision that prioritises individuals and public health in all aspects of our work. This shift in values and behaviours is crucial for improving services and maintaining high performance.

Moreover, I am proud of the fact that we are currently leading several key programs that emphasize co-production. This involves actively engaging individuals with lived experiences as experts in service design. By doing so, we ensure that our services are designed and shaped to meet the specific requirements of our communities.

It is essential to recognize the strength of our partnerships, as they play a crucial role in our ability to provide high-quality services. Without these collaborative partnerships, we would not be able to effectively address the needs of our communities.

This allows us to utilise our resources more effectively and promote transformation that aligns with the needs and demands of our communities, particularly those who are most in need of our services. In this manner, we are not only tackling national challenges but responding to local need – and crucially we are doing it in partnership with our communities.