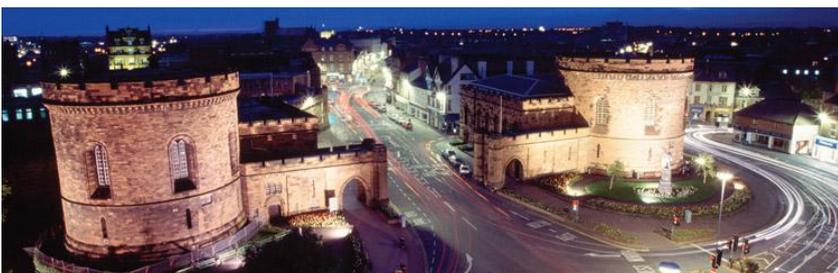


Cumbria County Council Strategic Asset Management Strategy 2011 to 2021



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I. Foreword

Local government throughout the country is going through a period of change and is facing unprecedented financial challenge following the global economic problems. All parts of the County Council are all having to take a close look at what services we currently provide and importantly how we deliver them to ensure that we offer real value for money for our residents and support the most vulnerable people in our communities.



Buildings are more than just a base from which a service is delivered or in which staff work. Good management of our property assets can be a very valuable tool to enable us to deliver our priorities for the people of Cumbria, drive regeneration and make our services more flexible and responsive to our customers' needs.

The Council's property portfolio consists of over 770 buildings scattered throughout the county, from historic courts right through to modern office buildings. The challenge for the Council is to make the best use of these assets to enable us to deliver the services our communities want. This may mean improving buildings, changing their use or even selling them and reinvesting the money in our frontline services – maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Although challenging, I firmly believe that this is also a real time of opportunity for the Council to improve and revise the way that it manages its property assets to become more proactive in using them as a tool to drive regeneration and service improvement. The ending of the Capita contract has enabled us to reshape our Property Service, increasing capacity, skills and knowledge, enabling the service to really drive change and improvement across the Council.

As part of our budget setting process we have also made significant investment in our use of property to support our most vulnerable, investing an additional £1m in our care homes, and £500,000 per year for the next two years to refurbish the publically used care facilities to improve the quality of the environment in which our most vulnerable residents receive services. £1m over two years has also been committed to carrying out work to progress and enhance sites that could be used for development and regeneration in the county.

At the heart of this strategy is the use of property to support our communities and there is no one size fits all approach to this work. Local Councillor's ongoing input into property requirements to meet their communities' needs will be essential. Our resources and solutions will need to be tailored to individual area's needs and in order to deliver and establish this local Member and Committee engagement will be essential and ongoing.

Cllr Stewart Young
Deputy Leader and Portfolio holder for Resources

2. Introduction

This document sets out the vision for Cumbria County Council's property assets for the next 5 to 10 years and describes how the Council will use its property assets to drive and support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.

Our vision is to deliver a modern fit for purpose property portfolio that supports the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities. As part of this we aim to significantly reduce our property portfolio within the next 5 years, reducing and reshaping our portfolio to enable us to focus our limited resources on our key properties ensuring that they are fit for purpose, supporting our services, enabling modern ways of working and improving accessibility, whilst reducing our costs and environmental impact.

In the Council Plan for 2011 – 2014 the Council has made a clear commitment to being as effective and efficient as possible, and this objective underpins our priorities of:

- challenging poverty in all its forms;
- ensuring the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need;
- improve the chances in life of the most disadvantaged in Cumbria.

It is clear that effective use of property can influence all of the services we support and deliver. In particular it will contribute heavily towards making Cumbria County Council effective and efficient as property provides the platform and infrastructure from which many of our services are delivered. In addition rationalisation and modernisation will enable the Council to sell properties and release capital and revenue funding for investment in priority areas across the county.

The Council is committed not only to providing high quality Council services for the people of Cumbria, but also exploring opportunities for supporting and enabling regeneration and development. As a result of this commitment in the 2011/12 budget the Council committed an additional £1m over two years for strategic investment for development. This funding will help the Council to undertake appropriate development feasibility work on key surplus land and property assets in order to ensure development opportunities are exploited.

Supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities is a key priority for the Council and as a result we have committed significant levels of investment in two key areas to support this. An additional £1m over two years has also been agreed to invest in residential care homes to enable each District to have one refurbished, to the Dementia Gold Standard level, bringing considerable benefits to their residents. Further, to this significant investment, we are also committing £500,000 in 2011/12 and again in 2012/13 to refurbish publically used areas in all of our care facilities to continue to improve the quality of the environment in which our most vulnerable residents receive their services.

This strategy has been developed in parallel with the Council's Workforce Development Plan, ICT Strategy, Better Places for Work Programme and Capital Strategy and is in light of the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review and subsequent implications for Cumbria. Although this is a purely County Council strategy, the Council is committed to working in partnership across the public, private and voluntary sectors, wherever possible, not only to deliver efficiencies, but also to deliver continuous service improvement for our customers, and this strategy will underpin and support that work in the future.

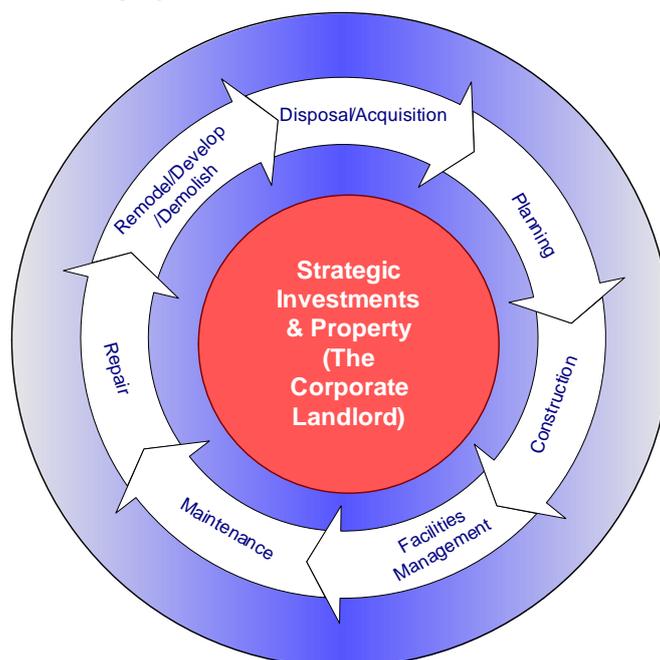
Through work with partners including District Councils, Police, Health Service providers, the voluntary sector and the National Parks, the property team will continue to identify opportunities to share property resources to support and deliver services. The implementation of a new integrated asset management system within the service will also enable the properties of all partners to be mapped, for the first time, thereby building up a picture of what resources the public sector has within Cumbria and enabling decisions to be made with far greater information about the overall impact this may have on public services in their totality in Cumbria.

The County Council’s property portfolio consists of over 770 buildings and has a maintenance backlog of an estimated £54 million (however this figure is felt to be lower than the actual backlog as it is based on data several years old). In addition to the backlog maintenance, the running cost of the portfolio is in excess of £8m per annum and carbon efficiency, economic and environmental sustainability are issues that the Council needs to address. Some of the Council’s property is well located fit for purpose, supporting our ambition for service delivery in Cumbria, however, much is not and reflects historic service arrangements, it is inflexible and needs significant investment to bring it up to an appropriate standard. In some cases, due to location or other constraints it may not be feasible to retain the property in the long term or similarly in some cases it may not be appropriate to dispose of certain properties.

What is clear from the high costs is that this is not sustainable in the medium to long term and that property is not being used as effectively as it could be to drive changes and improvements in services for the people of Cumbria. This strategy seeks to address these issues and detail how changes and improvements will be delivered over the next 5 to 10 years.

Currently the Council’s Property Service is undergoing radical changes to restructure the service so it is best placed to deliver a modern property service to the County Council.

As a result of this reshaping and redefining of the Service’s function, Strategic Investment and Property service will undertake the role of a “Corporate Landlord” and manage all aspects of the Council’s property from the planning of a new building, through the maintenance and running of it to the ultimate demolition or remodelling. This is further supported by a recent revision of the Council’s Constitution moving towards a corporate, rather than directorate-led, approach to property management. The diagram below illustrates the simplified property lifecycle and the service’s pivotal position in managing this.



In order to achieve this reduction and reshaping of the Council's property a number of programmes of work are being undertaken, together with changes to the way that property services and facilities management are delivered. These are detailed within this strategy.

The key areas of work for developing and reviewing the Council's assets include:

- Establishment of the new Strategic Investments and Property Service (SI&PS)
- Reviewing alternative models for delivering the service;
- Developing a "Corporate Landlord" approach;
- Programming a series of property and area reviews in conjunction with ongoing service reviews

Although this strategy currently focuses on building assets, it is important to note that the council owns a number of pieces of land of different sizes and usage throughout the county. This strategy will incorporate land as area property and service reviews are undertaken. Progress on delivering the strategy will be reported on an annual basis.

3. About Cumbria

Geography

Cumbria is the second largest county in England and is comprised of six districts: Allerdale, Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle, Copeland, Eden, and South Lakeland. Carlisle is the only city in the county. The largest town in the county is Barrow-in-Furness, which is between two and three times larger than the second largest town (Kendal). More than half of the county's population live in rural areas. Cumbria is also home to England's largest National Park, the Lake District National Park, and the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall which runs across the northernmost reaches of the county, as well as the Yorkshire Dales National Park which extends into the south eastern area of the County.

As one of the country's most rural counties and including many of the most sparsely populated locations in England, the Council is committed to considering how the impact of all its decisions might affect rural areas. The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken with the development of this strategy highlights the need to ensure that full analyses of the impact on customers and staff are undertaken when considering potential changes to service delivery and location.

Population

With a population of just under 500,000 Cumbria is the second least densely populated county in England. Cumbria's population is 'ageing' with the number and proportion of citizens within older age groups increasing, and this is forecast to continue into the future driven by, to a large extent, immigration of people aged 45 and over and out-migration of younger adults. The rural nature and aging population profile will impact on what types of properties the Council will need to have and where they are located to ensure that communities have appropriate access to services.

The proportion of residents from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups is much lower in Cumbria than nationally: 4% in Cumbria compared to 16.4% nationally. In recent years, however, the proportion of BME residents has been increasing much more rapidly in Cumbria so that over time the ethnic profile of Cumbria will become more representative of the rest of the UK.

Over the coming years the county will be challenged by changing demographics, creating an older and more culturally diverse population. There will be an increased need to provide high quality personalised services that meet the needs of communities and to ensure that there is equality across the county for residents to access to these services.

Environment and transport

North-south communication links in East Cumbria are good, however despite recent improvements east-west road and rail links are relatively poor. The proportion of people who walk to work is higher than the North West average and public transport usage in Cumbria is relatively low.

Around a third of Cumbria's residents say access to decent affordable housing needs improving. Nationally, the average house price is approximately 5.9x average income. In Barrow and Copeland, average house prices are 4.1x average income, however in areas such as Eden and South Lakeland this figure rises to 7.1x and 7.4x respectively although at more local levels this figure can be higher.

Deprivation

Perhaps the biggest issue for Cumbria is tackling the gap between the 'best' and the 'worst'. Overall Cumbria appears to be relatively affluent: levels of deprivation are relatively low and some of the county's residents live in areas where the quality of life is outstanding. However, this masks the

deprivation facing specific neighbourhoods and communities within the county in our urban areas and also in a number of rural communities, with access to services for some communities being among the worst in the UK. As a result, there are inequalities across the county in relation to, for example, levels of educational attainment, crime rates, life expectancy, and household income.

Economy

Employment in Cumbria is mainly based in the public sector in addition to the manufacturing and tourism sectors. Earnings are relatively high in areas of the county that have production industries, however earnings are much lower in rural areas. The public sector is the single largest employer in Cumbria and the current economic climate and subsequent changes and reductions to this sector may have a disproportionate affect on employment levels in the County. For Cumbria as a whole, unemployment levels are lower than the national average, however, there are high levels of worklessness in some pockets of the county.

The workforce in Cumbria has internationally renowned skills in nuclear, naval shipbuilding and specialist engineering expertise which the 'Britain's Energy Coast' initiative aims to build on. Specialist manufacturing jobs in West Cumbria and Barrow provide high paid employment, however, these industries are very dependent upon decisions affecting the nuclear and defence sectors.

Children and young people

Cumbria is home to approximately 111,200 children and young people aged between 0 and 19 years and this age group accounts for 22.4% of Cumbria's total population, which is marginally lower than regional and national proportions of 24.4% and 24% respectively. In the last 10 years the number of 0-19 year olds in Cumbria has fallen by around 4,600 (-4%). This trend is forecast to continue over the next 10 years. As is the case with many areas that are predominantly rural, one of the biggest challenges facing Cumbria is the number of young people leaving the county to seek opportunities. This occurs for both employment and lifestyle that they do not yet see being offered within the county. Reversing this trend is important for the future of the county

The Council's Property

Cumbria County Council has an extensive and varied property portfolio that supports a wide range of service delivery throughout the county. The portfolio was established in 1974 with the merger of assets from Cumberland, Westmorland and part of Lancashire and has grown organically since then. This now consists of over 770 buildings and a rural estate of approximately 620 hectares. The total book value for the County Council's land and buildings was £723 million as at March 2010.

The largest proportion of the portfolio is made up by schools - totalling 322 individual properties (including all types of school) and accounting for over 80% of the total gross internal floor area. In addition the County Council provides Static Libraries (48), Fire Stations (38), Care Homes (33), Offices (95) and a variety of other properties that support service delivery or are held for sale, development or as community assets. (Please note that property numbers were accurate as of 31 December 2010)

The diverse nature of the portfolio means that many of the properties are not fit for the purpose for which they are being used, in terms of location, accessibility, cost and supporting modern ways of working and rapidly changing service delivery.

In light of the changing economic and social drivers faced by the Council and services within Cumbria, the review and refresh of the Council's Asset Management Strategy is timely and will enable the Council to move towards developing a more flexible, sustainable and fit for purpose portfolio that will continue to support services for the communities in Cumbria for the future.

4. The national, regional and local context

National Context

Nationally there are a number of drivers influencing the development of the Council's Asset Management Strategy including the need to become increasingly efficient, reducing back office where possible to support frontline services, the move to increased transparency at all levels of government and a move towards localism.

Where a local authority disposes of its land (other than by way of a grant of a short tenancy for seven years or less), it is under a statutory duty pursuant to section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to do so at the best consideration (ie price) reasonably obtainable, unless a consent to a disposal at an undervalue has been obtained from the Secretary of State.

Generally it is expected that land should be sold for the best consideration reasonably obtainable. However, it is recognised that there may be circumstances where an authority considers it appropriate to dispose of land under market value. Authorities should clearly not divest themselves of valuable public assets unless they are satisfied that the circumstances warrant such action.

One circumstance in which it may be appropriate to dispose of land under market value is where an authority considers that doing so will help to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. The Secretary of State has issued a General Consent on which authorities may rely in these circumstances, unless the difference between the unrestricted value of the land and the consideration being accepted by the authority ("the undervalue") is £2,000,000 (two million pounds) or more, when an application to the Secretary of State would be required.

When making such decisions, Local Authorities need to consider the well-being benefits alongside risks, including the loss of a potential capital receipt from the sale of the property at some point in the future, and the potential loss of future annual lease income.

In 2007, the Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets considered how to optimise the community benefit of publicly owned assets by exploring options for greater transfer of asset ownership and management to community groups. The Review recognised that community groups have unique needs and requirements and use community assets in varied ways and therefore support needs to be delivered on an individual case-by-case basis.

The coalition Government is building on the current position and the findings of the Quirk Review through its Localism agenda. The Localism Bill was brought before Parliament on 13 December 2010 and may have an impact on the Council's use of property and its overall property asset base in the medium to long term. The Bill contains a 'package' of reforms that Government intends will establish new rights for communities, revolutionise the planning system and give communities control over planning decisions.

Two key issues arising from this in terms of property are:

Community Right to Challenge is intended as a right for voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, parish councils and local authority employees delivering a service to challenge a council by expressing an interest for running any service for which they are responsible.

A local authority must consider and respond to this challenge which may trigger a procurement exercise for that service in line with the relevant procedure, which the challenging organisation could then bid in, alongside others.

Community Right to Buy is a new requirement for local authorities to keep a list of public or private assets of community value put forward for consideration by communities.

When a particular asset which has been listed comes up for disposal (either the freehold or long leasehold), communities will be given the opportunity to develop a bid and raise the capital to buy the asset when it comes onto the open market.

The Localism Bill also includes proposals for a Local Authority General power of Competence to replace the wellbeing powers that provide the legislative framework for existing community asset transfer arrangements.

Perhaps however, one of the most high profile national drivers to impact on the Council's use of its asset base is the national economic situation. The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review has set the financial context in which the council must work, with headlines of all Government Departments facing a cut of 19% and the focus being shifted to:

- Focus on reducing welfare and wasteful spending;
- Priority areas NHS, Schools, early years and capital investment to support economic growth.

In real terms for Cumbria this means:

- Funding cuts of £35.4m by 2013/14;
- Savings of £68.7m by 2013/14;
- Profiling front loaded into first two years;
- Reduction in capital funding across all departments.

In order to deliver these savings and still ensure that the Council is able to deliver high quality services to the people of Cumbria, it is essential that the Council becomes as efficient and effective as possible including how it uses its property asset base to support services.

Local Context

Cumbria County Council's Council Plan sets out our commitment to improving the lives of local people and delivering good quality services that are responsive to local needs and expectations. In 2010/11 this Plan was updated to reflect that the Council believes that although these are challenging times, they are also times of opportunity to look at how and what services are delivered and how this can be improved. The 2011 Council Plan now notes that "*Our commitment to the customer and doing things in the most efficient way might mean that you find services are delivered in new innovative way*" and this commitment underpins this strategy and the vision for the Council's property assets in the future.

The Council plan has three areas of focus for the next three years:

- challenging poverty in all its forms;
- ensuring the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need;
- improve the chances in life of the most disadvantaged in Cumbria.

These are underpinned by a fourth focus of:

- Cumbria County Council is as effective and efficient as possible.

The Council Plan also recognises that the answer to public service reform lies in involving communities far more in the provision of services, and that this will require communities to take on more responsibility, and the county council to change the way it works.

The efficient and innovative use of property will enable the Council to deliver against all of these focus areas.

Within this framework the Council has a number of other key strategies and service changes that focus on how we will deliver our services including:

- Customer Service Strategy
- ICT Strategy
- Library Review
- BEST (Buildings, Education, Standards, Teamwork) Strategy
- Fire and Rescue Service PFI
- Better for People
- Shared Services
- Carbon Reduction Plan
- Local Transport Plan and Transport Asset Management Plan

This document has been developed in consultation with all of the Directorates across the Council and with Local Area Committees, to ensure that the future of the Council's property portfolio is fully integrated with the service developments and changes that are happening in Cumbria.

5. Our vision, outcomes, priorities

Where are we now?

Cumbria as a county has a population of just 495,000 of which:

- 84,800 (17%) are between 0-15
- 292,200 (59%) are between 16 – 64
- 118,000 (24%) are older

Supporting these communities and the many visitors who visit the county, the County Council at 20 June 2011 has a total of 778 buildings of various standards across the County from which different services are delivered.

These buildings have been broken down into a number of key property types which support the services that the Council delivers. Detailed in the “where do we want to be?” section of this strategy (on pages 14 and 15) is an overview of our long term aims for each of these key areas of work. The appendix to this strategy details the Council’s properties in each District, and is colour coded to reflect which of the key property types each building sits within.

The table below shows the key property types through which our vision will be focussed. It also highlights the spread of these properties across the county, and the localities that the property service will support. The colours shown for each property type reflect the colour coding in the property list appendix.

Key Property Types (detailed description on pages 14 and 15)	Locality						Totals
	Allerdale	Copeland	Carlisle	Eden	Barrow	South Lakes	
Schools	74	47	57	45	41	65	329
Offices (Better Places for Work)	12	14	26	4	7	15	78
Fire and Rescue Service	8	6	4	7	3	12	40
Care Homes & Day Centres	15	9	11	7	10	13	65
Highway Depots	2	3	2	4	1	6	18
Libraries and Archives	9	14	10	4	7	12	56
Houses	10	6	7	9	14	15	61
Farms	4	1	2	2		8	17
Meeting / Village Halls	4	2	1	5		2	14
Storage Facilities	1		12			4	17
Other (e.g. hotel, railway station etc)	22	6	17	11	14	13	83
Total	161	108	149	98	97	165	778
	269		247		262		

The Council is currently undertaking a number of reviews and key programmes of work in relation to major areas of service delivery and these in turn influence the properties that are being used to support these services. The current status of a number of these key pieces of work is detailed below:

- **Children and Young People** - The Corporate Director of Children's Services is currently reviewing the Council's plans for school organisation and capital investment through the BEST methodology (Buildings, Education, Standards, Teamwork), and this will inform the prioritisation of future capital expenditure in line with the Council's Strategy For Learning. The Strategic Asset Management Strategy will deliver any capital schemes resulting from the Review of Schools.

In addition one new Academy building was completed in January 2011, with two others under construction and another due to start in spring 2011. Once completed, these four new builds will have replaced eight predecessor schools. Further building projects are ongoing at a number of schools across the County.

- **Adult and Local Services** - The Council has recognised that the current stock of Council owned care homes are struggling to meet the needs of people with higher needs due to the size and nature of the accommodation. As a result the council has embarked on a modernisation programme in Furness which will see 4 homes replaced with a new 60 bed care home, extra care housing and an increased investment in developing high level support to help people remain in their own homes. We will be reviewing our approach to the delivery of care in other districts as part of our commitment to modernising.

During 2011/12 the Assistant Director Local Services will be consulting on options to assist in developing a new strategy for the future of the Libraries and Archives service throughout the County, following the successful development of the new archive building in Carlisle.

- **Fire and Rescue Service** – The Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) are working with the North West Fire & Rescue Service PFI Project (2011-13) to build five new community fire stations, to improve service delivery. The new stations will be located in Carlisle (East and West), Workington, Penrith and Patterdale in the Lake District National Park. To date the selected PFI contractor has been appointed and the build programme commenced in March 2011. This project will deliver cost effective, sustainable, energy efficient assets, which meet the needs of a modern Fire & Rescue Service and the community of Cumbria. Existing fire stations will benefit for improved welfare facilities through the use of a Capital grant.
- **Better Places for Work** – The Council is currently embarking on an organisational and cultural transformation programme reviewing how and where staff are based and exploring more flexible ways of working making the most of modern technology. This programme of work is called Better Places for Work (BP4W) and will impact mainly on the Council's corporate buildings (eg offices).

This process began with a pilot project in Whitehaven, which successfully enabled the Council to move from four buildings to a modern open plan office. Combined with improved ICT, staff are able to work more flexibly, making use of facilities at other Council premises rather than having to always travel into the main office. This approach is enabling us to save money through running a single more efficient property and to reduce our carbon footprint, whilst supporting staff to have a good work-life balance. This programme has now moved to the Council's largest office base, Carlisle, with a view to moving from the current high number individual office buildings to four clusters based around the city.

In addition to these major areas of work the Council is also undertaking a number of other programmes which will influence the size and shape of our property portfolio, for example the Better Highways initiative, customer access work and shared services, in addition to our commitment to supporting regeneration and economic development across Cumbria.

Where do we want to be?

The Council's vision is to deliver a modern fit for purpose property portfolio that supports the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities. As part of this we aim to significantly reduce our property portfolio, reducing and reshaping it to enable us to focus our limited resources on those buildings that are needed to support high quality service delivery, in a number of key delivery centres throughout the county. Delivering this vision will mean that the Council has only high quality, fit for purpose premises that act as hubs for staff to work from or be based. This will depend upon the service they deliver or support and will aim to make them more accessible to members of the public. This vision for property will be carried out with partners wherever possible.

This reduction in portfolio will enable us to focus our limited resources on our key properties ensuring that they are flexible, fit for purpose and are able to accommodate the changing face of the authority and its service delivery mechanisms in light of technological, social and economic changes that occur. As unsuitable property is disposed of and investment is made in key properties the Council will ensure that access both for customers and staff continues to improve.

Our property will also become increasingly energy efficient supporting the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan and its target to reduce emissions by 25% by 2012. In tandem with this the running and maintenance costs of the portfolio will significantly reduce enabling the Council to save money and re-invest it in priority areas.

The aim is also to move towards all County Council owned property being corporately run and managed by the Strategic Investments and Property team. This will ensure a joined up approach to the management and maintenance of our properties and enable building occupants to focus their expertise and resources on their customers and service delivery rather than the upkeep of any properties.

We will restructure and refocus our team, with a move towards locality working. This will be achieved with the team being grouped into three, with each taking responsibility for a geographical area of the county:

- East (Eden & Carlisle)
- West (Allerdale & Copeland)
- South (Barrow & South Lakeland)

This will enable the team to work closely with Local Committees and stakeholders across their areas and to develop local knowledge of the issues and priorities not only for the Council but also for their area.

This vision will be focussed through a number of key property types:

- **Schools** – The aim is to provide high-quality learning environments, fit for the needs of the modern curriculum, in which children and young people can develop, thrive and achieve their full potential. Where appropriate, opportunities for rationalisation of building stock will be pursued, whether through a reduction in the number of establishments or by providing joint-use facilities, as will projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions. In addition the County Council will look to secure the provision of increased school capacity where increased birth rates and / or new residential development gives rise to the need. This will be achieved by working in conjunction with Local Planning Authorities across Cumbria.
- **Better Places for Work** – The vision for the Council's Corporate properties is to rationalise these buildings and transform the remaining back office accommodation into modern fit for

purpose premises that enable modern ways of working and make the most of modern technology.

- **Fire and Rescue Service Properties** – The aim is to provide new and improved facilities in the appropriate locations for fire fighters and the communities they serve, ensuring delivery of the Service’s Integrated Risk Management Plan.
- **Libraries and Archives** – The long term aim of the service is to improve the quality of the building stock. A review and consultation will be undertaken in 2011/12 which will include looking at options for alternative models of provision and shared services with partners, possible rationalisation where appropriate, and alternative forms of service delivery.
- **Care Homes & Day Centres** – The vision is to provide greater opportunities for people to be supported in their own homes including extra care housing. Where residential care is necessary, it will aim to be in high quality settings to support people with high level needs who cannot be supported at home. We will examine Council run care homes in the wider context of modernising Social Care services.
- **Highway’s Depots** - The vision is to align the Council’s Highway depots with the requirements of the Better Highways initiative.
- **Houses** –The vision is to reduce the number of houses which the Council owns where there is no service requirement.
- **Farms** - The current policy is to consider the sale of farms and agricultural land when tenancies come to an end. This approach will be reviewed to ensure this meets the Council’s corporate objectives. Prior to disposal, consideration will be given to the use of surplus assets to facilitate regeneration.
- **Meeting / Village Halls** - The vision is to identify opportunities where there is potential for community asset transfer and/or for development potential to be realised to facilitate the construction of a new facilities for the community.
- **Storage Facilities** - The vision is to reduce the amount of storage space which the Council owns and leases, where there is no service requirement
- **Other** – As can be seen, there are a large number of Council properties that are currently classed as “other” due to the diverse nature of the portfolio. The vision for these properties is to only retain those properties that enable the Council to support the delivery of services to the residents and visitors to Cumbria.
- **Customer Access** – The vision is to ensure at least one County Council presence in each of the main service centres in Cumbria, for example in schools, fire stations, offices or other public sector property. This would where possible be in conjunction with partners such as District Councils and National Parks to ensure a joined up service delivery for our customers.

As one of the country's most rural counties and including many of the most sparsely populated locations in England, the Council is committed to considering how the impact of all its decisions might affect rural areas. As a result this issue will be taken into consideration when reviewing any of our services and how we provide them in the future.

The following sections will detail what we will do to deliver these aims.

How will we get there?

The County Council has established a continual property review programme, which considers the need to acquire new property to help deliver services and to sell or transfer underperforming or surplus assets. When considering the disposal of underperforming or surplus assets the Council carefully considers the need to raise capital from the sale of such assets against other opportunities to improve economic, social and environmental well-being and service delivery, for example through Community Asset Transfer. The County Council's disposal procedure provides for this and for example includes its approach to how County Council land can be used to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing.

The Council is using a number of methods and programmes of work to enable us to move our property portfolio and high ambitions for improvement from where it is now to where we want it to be in the future. These include some short to medium term pieces of work and some much longer medium to long term projects. These key pieces of work and ways of working are detailed in the delivery section of this strategy below.

These include in the short term:

- Establishing and restructuring the new Strategic Investments and Property service to ensure that we have the right levels of support and technical knowledge
- Developing and embedding the use of the Atrium Asset Management System.
- Developing and embedding a corporate approach to property management (Corporate Landlord).
- Agreeing and embedding an approach to facilities management within the Council.
- Reviewing the strategy for all of the property types across the Council's asset base and developing a detailed timetable for their implementation.
- Delivering the Better Places for Work Programme in Carlisle.

And in the medium to long term:

- Restructuring how the Council delivers its capital programme (ex highways).
- Reviewing models and vehicles for delivering the Council's property service.

6. Delivering the strategy

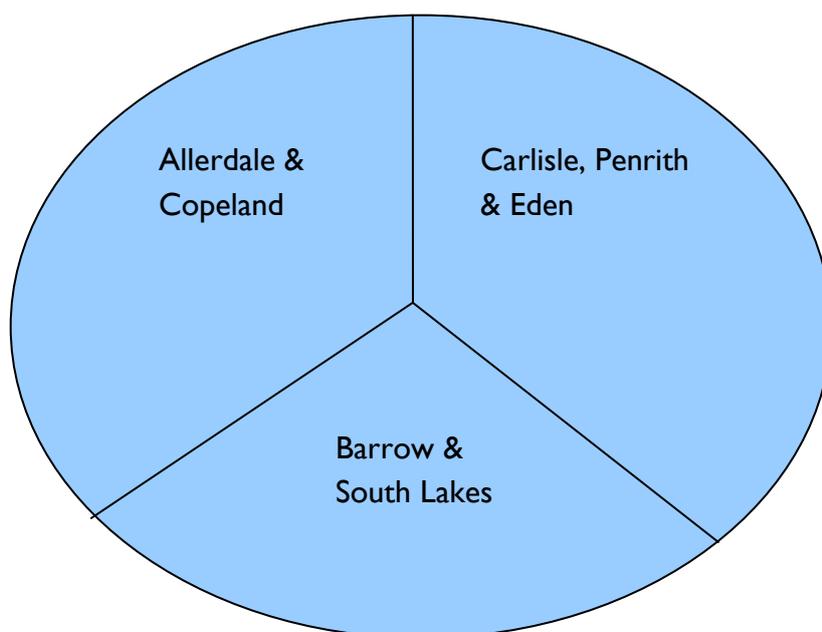
This is a long term strategy led by SI&P and will fundamentally change not only the size quality and function of the Council's property portfolio, but also how property is used to drive and support improvements in service delivery across all areas of the Council's work. This has been broken down into a short medium and long term delivery plan detailed below.

Short to Medium Term

Establishing the new Strategic Investments and Property Service:

Currently the Council's Property Service is undergoing radical changes to restructure the service so it is best placed to deliver a modern property service to the County Council.

The new structure will be focussed on three key areas: Capital Development, Property and Facilities Management. The individual service areas and teams within these areas will work together in a cross cutting way, delivering services in Cumbria based on three geographical areas; West (Allerdale and Copeland), East (Carlisle and Eden) and South (Barrow and South Lakeland).



This restructuring will take place over the early part of the 2011/12 Council year with the new structure being in place by September 2011.

Implement and embed new Asset Management System:

As part of establishing the new SI&P service the Council has invested in a new system, Atrium, to enable all of the Council's asset information including land to be collated, interrogated and mapped. This will be interfaced with the Council's systems as appropriate to ensure the delivery of a fully integrated approach to asset management.

In the medium term, the aim is to work in partnership with other local authorities and organisations within Cumbria to include and overlay their asset information within the system, and thereby enable a fully joined up, Cumbria-wide approach to asset management and decision making.

Day to day management of property, option appraisal and asset management all depend on the availability of accurate up to date asset information so that informed decisions can be made. Bringing the Council's and partner's asset information together in one location will facilitate improved asset management and sustainable property investment decisions.

Corporate Landlord:

The Council is moving away from an approach whereby the occupants of a property are responsible for its management and where if a service required additional space they purchased or leased it themselves.

In order to adopt a holistic approach that enables the Council to manage its property corporately from the planning and development of a building right through to its ultimate demolition or refurbishment a Corporate Landlord approach is being developed. This means a move towards the Strategic Investments and Property taking responsibility directly for all Council property including maintenance, purchase (including leasing in) and disposal (including leasing out). This is supported by a recent revision of the Council's constitution which confirms the move towards a corporate rather than directorate-led approach to property management.

This centralisation will be underpinned by an acknowledgement that occupation of a property incurs a cost, to rent, maintain, heat, insure etc. whether that be per sqm or per occupant. This cost would come from the occupying service's budget and would enable Strategic Investments and Property to undertake the necessary work to support that building. The cost of occupation will include recognition of the opportunity cost of occupying freehold property and rental income will be collected and used corporately to help fund the Corporate Landlord services.

In terms of customer service, this approach to building management will support the Council in improving its services and providing real value for money as it will mean that specialist service providers will no longer be required to focus some of their time and resource on building management and maintenance. Instead they will be able to focus wholly on their service area.

A key element of the corporate landlord approach is a revised focus on maintenance and the allocation of revenue and capital funding for reactive and planned maintenance. Traditionally local authority maintenance budgeting has been based on historic allocations rather than the actual (often much greater) maintenance need. Good practice suggests that 70% of maintenance spend should be planned with the remainder used to tackle urgent or unexpected reactive maintenance. This will be easier to deliver in a rationalised and modernised property portfolio.

Embedding Facilities Management within the Council:

In August 2010, the first phase of Cumbria County Council's 'better places for work' programme was initiated with the opening of Blencathra House in Whitehaven. The accommodation is designed to be more appropriate to the council's needs and brings many employees together under one roof for the first time.

The building has been refurbished to support new ways of working with permanent workstations, hot desks and touchdown places to match various work style needs and preferences. It provides council employees with a professional, effective and pleasant environment within which to undertake their duties, whilst reflecting the aims of the 'corporate landlord' approach. The emphasis throughout the building is on the provision of a safe, secure, fully serviced office environment that complies with statutory requirements and within which employees can focus on their core duties.

The co-ordination of common building issues such as reception and post room services, meeting rooms, security, cleaning, maintenance, arranging fire drills and electrical servicing is now the

responsibility of the site-based facilities management supervisor, with support from building assistants and cleaners. These duties will also embrace improving aspects of sustainability and maximising the benefits of economies of scale.

This full facilities management model will be implemented in all county council properties as the BP4W model progresses, to deliver a consistent standard of workplace support for employees and in turn service benefits to local communities across the county.

Deliver Better Places for Work in Carlisle:

Cumbria County Council's Better Places to Work initiative introduces modern ways of working that will help the Council develop into a dynamic, forward thinking organisation. The ability to work from a variety of different locations, including from home, will help improve the work life balance of employees and enable Cumbria County Council to attract and retain skilled employees who might otherwise choose to seek employment elsewhere. At the same time, flexible working will help improve productivity, collaboration and lower the Council's carbon footprint as the dependency on traditional desk/office based working reduces.

Under the Better Places to Work initiative, residents in Cumbria will benefit from an improved and more efficient service, whilst employees will gain a culture where work is a thing you do, not a place that you go.

In the short to medium term the Programme in Carlisle aims to move the Council from its 24 office bases across the city to four clusters centred around – The Courts Complex, The Civic Centre for customer services, Dalston and the Park House Building at Kingmoor Park. This will enable the council to consider the most appropriate form of longterm office solution for the city, whether that is to build a purpose built office or to refurbish existing property. Through improved ICT this will enable staff to work more flexibly and where appropriate remotely, helping therefore to reduce costs in terms of maintenance and running the building, travelling and carbon. It will also enable the Council to deliver improvements to the accessibility of the buildings it retains, both for staff and Customers.

Reviewing the strategy for all of the land and property types:

During 2011/12 the Strategic Investments and Property team will be working with the Assistant Directors Group (details of Membership are highlighted on page 21 – “Performance Managing and Reviewing the Strategy”), which has been established to provide a corporate overview of property requirements within the Council, to consider all major land and property types which the authority owns. Where currently not in place, overarching strategies will be developed detailing the approach to be taken with each property type, such as storage, houses or farms, in addition to the larger pieces of land that the Council owns. A detailed timetable will then be developed specifying how and when these strategies will be delivered.

Medium to Long Term

Restructure how we deliver capital programme (excluding highways):

In order to enable a best practice approach to project management we will develop a project team approach to the delivery of the capital programme. This will involve the implementation of clear governance procedures and bring together the right individuals, throughout the authority, who can contribute to the successful development, delivery and completion of projects. This will require the amalgamation of operational, technical, project and contract monitoring skills.

The prioritisation of the limited pot of capital investment funding will be undertaken within the framework of the strategic asset management plan and will require bids for capital funding to be supported by outline business cases, that can be evaluated against set corporate and local area objectives in order to ensure value for money. This will be supported through a peer review system.

Alternative Models of Delivery

The Council is currently looking at different options for delivery of the service in the future, these include continuing to deliver the service in house, looking at shared services, or considering the options for and implications of developing a 'Property Company' (Prop Co).

These options are being reviewed and the implications worked up with "Green Papers" being produced, exploring the potential benefits and issues these models may lead to. These will continue to be developed over the coming months and will be taken developed in consultation with Members and partners.

The Appendix details the Council's properties, their location and the key property type within which they fit.

Community Asset Transfer

The Council's approach to transferring assets to the community will be continued consideration on a case-by-case basis. Assessment will include the well-being benefits to the community and whether it presents value for money. The Council will also ensure that processes are reviewed in line with the Government's proposed Community Right to Challenge and Community Right to Build policies.

7. Performance managing and reviewing the strategy

In order to ensure that there is a fully joined up approach to the Council's delivery of its priorities and how the Asset Management Strategy supports these and delivers its vision, a cross directorate Assistant Director's group has been established. This Group consists of the following representatives:

- Deputy Chief Officer Fire Service
- Assistant Director Strategic Investments & Property
- Assistant Director Planning and Sustainability
- Assistant Director Local Services
- Assistant Director Economic Development
- Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services
- Assistant Director Older People
- Assistant Director Children & Families
- Assistant Director Finance
- Assistant Director Highways & Transport
- Assistant Director Improvement
- Assistant Director Policy & Performance
- Assistant Director People Management
- Assistant Director Public Protection
- Assistant Director Disabilities & Mental Health
- Assistant Director Schools & Learning

This group meets on a regular basis and will not only review the strategy and its delivery but also ensure that it remains current in light of any service changes that may arise.

In a similar way the Council established the Cumbria Asset Managers forum with partner organisations looking at both county and district wide plans and developments and methods of working more efficiently together.

In terms of specific performance management of this strategy, this will be achieved in a number of ways:

- Specific targets built into Directorate and Service Level Service Plans and monitored through Performance Plus performance management system
- Efficiencies committed to as part of the Council's Budget Process being monitored at a Council and Directorate Level.
- Internal monitoring of specific programmes of work

8. Shaping the strategy

In order to deliver this strategy Strategic Investments and Property Service are working closely with all Directorates within the Council in addition to Partners across Cumbria. This has led to an Assistant Director's Property Group being established within the Council chaired by the Assistant Director Strategic Investments and Property. Feedback from these meetings is used to inform the property strategy and individual projects and programmes of work.

As part of the consultation process this strategy has also been taken in a draft format to all of the Local Committees and discussions held with Councillors at and after these meetings to capture Members' views and priorities and ensure that they are reflected within the strategy. In addition the draft has also been taken to Scrutiny Management Board for consideration and any further feedback will be incorporated before producing a final draft for Cabinet's consideration.