

## 2 STRATEGY

- 2.1 Cumbria is a county of great diversity in its environment and communities. The quality of much of its environment is exceptional. There are good services and facilities and a wide range of opportunities for employment and housing. However, there are significant economic and social problems.
- 2.2 The challenge for the Structure Plan is to ensure that development is managed in a manner that protects the environment through wise stewardship and also meets the needs of communities. It must address the contrasts that exist between areas of consistently low employment and areas of above average employment and opportunity, between high quality living environments and areas of urban dereliction. It needs to address social and economic changes affecting different parts of the County.
- 2.3 The aim of the Structure Plan is to secure a more sustainable pattern of development, reflecting the Government's four sustainable development objectives:
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone,
  - effective protection of the environment,
  - prudent use of natural resources,
  - maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

### A Sustainable Development Strategy

- 2.4 In promoting the Government's sustainable development objectives specific principles will apply to all new development proposals as set out in Policy ST1. These principles should apply through to the implementation of any proposed development.
- 2.5 There will be continuing emphasis on securing economy in the use of land and buildings consistent with national guidance and Policy DP1 of Regional Planning Guidance. This means following a sequential approach to the location of new development to enable the reuse of land and buildings and minimise the take up of green field land. It will make unused, under used or derelict land and buildings more attractive to the development industry and enable them to be brought back into beneficial use. It will help upgrade the environment and improve overall investor confidence. Additional measures may be needed such as land reclamation or compulsory purchase to ensure that previously developed land is available for reuse.
- 2.6 Not all previously developed land and buildings will be suitable for development. The approach to development must be consistent with Policies ST2 and ST3 which focus development on key service centres whilst at the same time supporting and revitalising rural areas. Some green field development particularly within, or as an extension of, key service centres may therefore be necessary. In selecting sites for development it is important that locations can be served by a range of transport modes.

## Policy ST1 : Promoting sustainable development

All proposals for development including alterations to existing buildings and land use change will be required to promote sustainable development. They should protect the quality of the environment, ensure prudent use of resources and maintain social progress and economic growth by:

1. seeking locations consistent with policy ST2 and ST3 in the following order of priority:
  - a) the appropriate reuse of existing buildings worthy of retention, followed by
  - b) the reuse of previously developed land and only then
  - c) the use of previously undeveloped land,
2. giving priority to sites that are or can be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling,
3. avoiding the loss of, or damage to, important conservation features, including nature conservation interests, landscapes, buildings, archeological sites, historic parks and gardens and visually important public and private open spaces,
4. ensuring high standards of design including siting, scale, use of materials and landscaping which respect and contribute to the distinctive character of townscape and landscape,
5. using energy efficient design and the use of recycled materials and renewable energy technology,
6. promoting good practice in the efficient disposal of waste water and sewage particularly the provision of sustainable drainage systems,
7. avoiding reductions in air or water quality and avoiding the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land,
8. ensuring development is within environmental, infrastructure, community and service constraints, including the road and transport hierarchy and water supply, or that these can be

2.7 Cumbria has a rich diversity and wealth of natural, environmental and built resources that are irreplaceable. These need to be conserved. Development should be used to enhance the quality of all environments. This is as vital in those areas where the present man made environment is of poor quality as in areas recognised for their high amenity value. A high standard of design will be expected in all development. Innovative and imaginative design should be progressed. Development should relate well to the existing built and natural environment.

2.8 Design should also be used to minimise the consumption of resources, for instance, orientating buildings to maximise solar gain, seeking high levels of insulation, recycling materials or using materials that are from sustainable sources or consume less energy in their production. In some cases it can also mean utilising non-grid connected renewable energy.

2.9 New development must also be accommodated within environmental, infrastructure and service thresholds. This includes the physical ability of the landscape to satisfactorily accommodate development, the capacity of sewage treatment works, the road network and water supply systems. Development will not be permitted if it means these thresholds are exceeded unless it is possible to increase capacity at the developer's expense. Where development directly generates costs on the community, such as the need for recreation space in housing development or public transport interchange facilities in employment development, the cost of providing these services will also be born by the developer. In some situations, investment by developers may be used to break critical infrastructure thresholds to the benefit of existing development and communities.

2.10 Recent experience is that flooding events are becoming worse both in frequency and scale. In choosing sites for development a full assessment of the potential risk of flooding should be carried out. A search sequence should be taken to minimise the risk to occupiers of the development or other people who may be affected outside the development, through increased run off or a reduction in the storage capacity of floodplains. This will need to be balanced with the emphasis to be given to previously developed land and buildings. In areas of high risk of flooding, development may not be appropriate even if it is previously developed land, conversely, development may be of sufficient benefit for it to be worth exploring potential mitigation measures. Early discussion on mitigation should take place with the relevant Local Planning Authority and the Environment Agency.

2.11 Development needs to be accessible to all people. This means careful planning and design to meet the needs of vulnerable users including people with restricted mobility and those with special needs, ensuring that facilities for people arriving on foot, by cycle or public transport are provided and that, wherever possible, connections are provided to existing networks outside the site. Design should also take into account the need to create a secure and safe environment, for example ensuring public places and access points are highly visible.

2.12 In applying these principles some flexibility will be required. Generally design aspects will weigh more heavily than locational issues when considering proposed extensions of existing buildings for their current uses. However, an alternative location may be a preferable solution to a need for more space than the extension of an unsuitably located building. The need to conserve the heritage of some buildings will also have a greater influence on design than for instance the use of recycled materials or energy conservation.

**Policy ST1.**

2.13 To promote a sustainable pattern of development, the focus of new development will be on towns defined as key service centres<sup>2</sup>. These are towns where there is potential to support and build on the existing level of service provision and provide good public transport links to outlying settlements. As a minimum such towns should have a primary school, secondary school, library, doctors surgery and a town centre function providing at least a post office and 2000 sq m of retail (Use Class A1)<sup>3</sup> floor space.

2.14 The size and role of these key service centres varies considerably across the County. Local Plans will need to identify the range and scale of development required to support the role of key service centres and ensure that land is brought forward accordingly. In deciding the scale of development required, regard should be had to the capacity of existing services to accommodate development, critical thresholds for new service investment, the size and character of the existing town and the need to secure regeneration or investor confidence. In particular, Policy SD3 of Regional Planning Guidance identifies Carlisle and Barrow in Furness as key towns and cities of regional importance where development should be concentrated. It also identifies the need for modest redevelopment to enable the physical enhancement, regeneration and gradual restructuring of the towns of Dalton in Furness, Ulverston, Maryport, Workington, and Whitehaven.

2.15 To encourage people to live within key service centres, where the opportunity to reduce travel is greatest, it will be necessary to ensure a choice of housing is available. Local Plans will need to make sure that the housing requirement outlined in Policy H14 is managed to sustain the long term needs of key service centres. In areas of high demand, or in key service centres where the scale of development is likely to be limited, this means careful phasing to avoid over development. At the same time it will be important that residents, where possible, have opportunities for employment locally. A supply of land for business development should be available.

2.16 It will also be important that the requirement many employers now have for new technology can be met. High speed connections such as broadband technology are particularly important. Since the majority of employment opportunities are concentrated within key service centres there will be a particular emphasis on ensuring their needs can be secured. **Policy ST2**

satisfactorily overcome at the developers expense without an adverse effect on the environment,

9. reducing the risk of flooding within the development and elsewhere by a choice of location in the following order of priority:
  - a) sites with little or no flood risk, followed by
  - b) sites with low or medium flood risk, and only then
  - c) sites in areas of high flood risk subject to a design which minimises or mitigates any risk,
10. making proper provision for access by pedestrians, cyclists, people with restricted mobility and people with special needs, and
11. promoting a safe and secure environment that designs out crime.

## Policy ST2 : New development and key service centres

New development will be focused on the following key service centres:

**City of Carlisle:**  
Carlisle

**Furness and West Cumbria:**  
Aspatria, Barrow In Furness, Cleator Moor, Cockermouth, Dalton-In-Furness, Egremont, Maryport, Millom, Silloth, Ulverston, Whitehaven, Workington

**North Cumbria:**  
Brampton, Longtown, Wigton

**South and East Cumbria:**  
Alston, Appleby, Grange Over Sands, Kendal, Kirkby Lonsdale, Kirkby Stephen, Milnthorpe, Penrith.

The scale of development should be appropriate to the size and role of each key service centre but will in particular reflect the importance of the City of Carlisle and Barrow In Furness as key regional towns.

As a minimum requirement provision should be made in each key service centre for:

1. a supply of new housing over the whole plan period,
2. an available local employment site,
3. a high level of transport accessibility, and
4. the ability to connect to high

speed communications technology.

To ensure consistency with policies EM10 and H14 it will be the role of Local Planning Authorities to manage the above supply of land, particularly in areas of high demand to avoid over development.

### Policy ST3 : Development to sustain rural communities

Small scale development to help sustain local services, meet local needs or support rural businesses will be permitted in towns and villages as defined by Local Plans. It will be the exception for new building to be located in the open countryside.

### Policy ST4 : The City of Carlisle

The City of Carlisle's importance will be fostered by new development that builds on its role as a regional centre for business, commerce, shopping, leisure and tourism. A range of employment opportunities including a Regional Investment Site at Kingmoor will be provided. Opportunities will be taken to strengthen links to employment uses at Kingmoor by all forms of transport. The role of Carlisle airport and its potential for contributing to economic activity within the city will be supported. New housing will be needed to sustain the city's economic potential. The release of land will be phased to minimise vacancies and ensure the refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing housing stock and to give priority to the use of previously developed land. In accommodating new development regard should be had to the city's historic character.

### Policy ST5 : North Cumbria

The need to sustain services and facilities for rural communities in North Cumbria will be addressed by promoting the role of key service centres and other towns and villages defined in Local Plans as a focus for new appropriately scale development particularly housing, local employment, retailing and community facilities.

- 2.17 A significant number of people live and work outside the key service centres. Their needs must be addressed. Whilst sustaining and revitalising rural areas is necessary, development should be located where it benefits the wider rural economy and communities. Outside the key service centres new development will be concentrated in rural towns and villages identified in Local Plans. In identifying these local service centres regard should be had to the need to support local services and the community's need for further development.
- 2.18 Outside local service centres, land will be considered as open countryside although this may contain isolated buildings, farmsteads, hamlets and villages. New development will be permitted in the open countryside where it: has an essential requirement for a rural location, which can not be accommodated elsewhere (such as mineral extraction); is needed to sustain existing businesses, (see Policy EM12); provides for exceptional needs for affordable housing, (see Policies H16 and H19); or is an extension of an existing building. **Policy ST3**

## The City of Carlisle

- 2.19 The regional role identified for Carlisle will influence the way this city will develop. This will include a need to address its close functional relationship with Scotland and the North East of England. It will be the location for a significant scale of development that should support and enhance this role and increase the overall attractiveness for private investment. It will be important to ensure that growth is coordinated and satisfies needs, whilst not adversely affecting the area's cultural heritage and environmental quality. **Policy ST4**

## North Cumbria

- 2.20 Whilst development opportunities in North Cumbria will be focused on Carlisle it is important that the surrounding rural area is sustained through measures that support and diversify the rural economy. This area consists of the rest of Carlisle district along with the adjoining Solway coastal plains. It includes the key service centres of Brampton, Longtown and Wigton, which have important roles in their own right, serving the wider rural community. **Policy ST5**

## Furness and West Cumbria

- 2.21 Furness and West Cumbria has faced long term economic difficulties brought about by the decline in the manufacturing base and its relative remoteness from regional and national markets. The emphasis of new development will be on regenerating and diversifying the economic base, promoting social inclusion and strengthening transport and communication links. Public and private investment will be required to bring this about. It is important that initiatives are coordinated and underpin wider economic strategies that seek to redress the economic imbalance and sustain and promote employment generation. The area covered is from Silloth down the coast to Ulverston and Barrow In Furness. It contains a number of key service centres including Barrow In Furness, which has been identified as being of regional significance. These key service centres are closely related socially, economically and physically and together they form one of the County's most important urban areas. They also retain a strong association with the areas coastal heritage. **Policy ST6**

## South and East Cumbria

- 2.22 The priority for the largely rural area of South Lakeland (outside the Furness peninsula) and Eden will be to ensure that the needs of local people are met, consistent with the strategy set out in Policy SD3 of Regional Planning Guidance. This will mean focusing the supply of employment land on indigenous growth. For housing it will mean giving priority to the need for affordable housing. At the same time it will be important to ensure that development sustains existing facilities and supports rural diversification. **Policy ST7**



***Redevelopment of Barrow Town Centre has helped sustain and enhance facilities.***

## Policy ST6 : Furness and West Cumbria

Within Furness and West Cumbria the highest priority will be given to measures that secure regeneration. Opportunities will be promoted to sustain and enhance employment, develop social and community facilities and enable refurbishment and environmental improvements.

Development will be concentrated in the regional town of Barrow In Furness and in other towns where it will be used to diversify the economic base and improve the quality of life. Large scale redevelopment will be considered, where necessary, where this secures an improved environment and an appropriate mix of uses. New housing should complement measures to refurbish the existing stock and offer quality and choice in the housing market. Opportunities that build on the area's maritime and naval heritage and secure a coastal renaissance will be encouraged. The distinctive role and opportunities offered by ports and harbours will be fostered. Sea links for passenger and freight services will be promoted. The provision of new tourism attractions will be encouraged especially where this builds on the heritage of coastal towns. New visitor accommodation will be promoted. Measures will also be taken to secure improved east-west transport communications between Barrow In Furness and West Cumbria and the rest of the region and facilitate improvements in ICT.

## Policy ST7 : South and East Cumbria

The priority for new development in South and East Cumbria will be to ensure that the needs of local people are met. In particular there is a need for further provision of affordable housing. To enable this new housing required by Policy H14 will be located within the key service centres with a significant proportion of affordable housing promoted on large sites. Outside key service centres housing will be considered as an exception to policy where it meets a proven local need for affordable housing and is well related to existing rural communities

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with a preference given to sites within towns and villages defined in Local Plans. The economic and service needs of rural areas will be sustained with rural businesses including tourism supported. The role of key service centres as the focus of retail, leisure and employment opportunities will be promoted.

## Policy ST8 : Lake District National Park

The highest level of protection will be given to the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Lake District National Park. Development in the National Park must not conflict with national park purposes and should where appropriate foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Park. The character of land identified on the Section 3 Conservation Map, lakes and shores, quieter areas, and other sensitive areas will be protected and enhanced. Development which would cause demonstrable harm to the environment, setting or special qualities of the National Park will not be permitted.

Particular priority will be given to development which:-

1. secures housing for local people, or
2. widens the economic base, or
3. helps maintain the viability of farming businesses, or
4. reduces the adverse impacts of car use and improves transport choice.



*Market Square, Keswick.*

## Lake District National Park

- 2.23 The Lake District's landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage are of international significance, recognised by its designation as a National Park and by its inclusion in 1999 on the Government's tentative list of World Heritage Sites. The priority for the National Park will continue to be to ensure that this heritage is conserved, whilst at the same time fostering the economic and social well-being of its local communities. In order to ensure that development in the National Park is compatible with National Park purposes (see para 1.7), the Structure Plan must protect the area from harmful development and recognise the vulnerability of designated sites and features, areas of undeveloped countryside and coast, and particularly sensitive areas such as lake shores and the fells. It will also help provide for public enjoyment of the National Parks special qualities in ways that do not conflict with conservation objectives and the needs of local communities.
- 2.24 The qualities of, and opportunities within, the National Park bring a continuous demand for development, particularly for housing and tourism. The National Park attracts a large number of visitors, generating considerable recreational traffic. These pressures and demands must be addressed to strike the right balance between the protection of the Parks intrinsic qualities, the needs of local communities, and the desire to provide for visitors' enjoyment of the Park. Where there are irreconcilable conflicts between these different needs, the protection of the Park's natural environment will be paramount. **Policy ST8**

## Major Development

- 2.25 From time to time, major developments projects of regional or national importance but with potentially environmentally damaging effects are proposed. Major development proposals include developments such as pipelines, oil or gas terminals, energy supply schemes (conventional, nuclear, or large scale renewable - on or off

shore), water supply schemes, major mineral workings or proposals for major new waste disposal or management facilities (including those for nuclear waste).

## Policy ST9 : Major development proposals

Major development will only be permitted where:

1. the total benefit clearly outweighs the total detrimental effects,
2. the proposal complies with national standards and best practice for environment, safety and security, and where appropriate is independently reviewed; and
3. alternative locations and methods giving rise to less harm have been fully considered and rejected.
4. In addition in the case of the Lake District National Park and AONBs
  - a) there are no alternative sites available outside the designated areas,
  - b) the need for the development cannot be met in any other way,
  - c) the development has a proven case in the national interest,
  - d) the development is designed and carried out to cause least practicable harm, and
  - e) the development has no overall adverse impacts on the local economy.

Permission will be granted only on condition that:

- I. all possible measures are taken to minimise the adverse effects of development and associated infrastructure, and where appropriate,
- II. provision is made to meet local community needs,
- III. acceptable measures are secured for decommissioning and site restoration, and
- IV. arrangements are made for local community involvement during the development, decommissioning and restoration.

For the purposes of this policy 'major development' is defined as development that has significant environmental effects and is more national than local in character.

- 2.26 Not all major developments will require planning permission. In some cases it is central government that has the responsibility for determining whether a development should go ahead and in other instances separate licensing or regulatory bodies may decide. In both these situations a decision will involve consultation with Local Planning Authorities.
- 2.27 To help Local Planning Authorities determine planning applications or their response to consultations on major development there is a need to test the benefits of the proposal against the extent of harm. The Government's longstanding objective has been that major development should not take place in the National Parks save in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances include the 'Silkin Test' principles – that the development is absolutely necessary and in the national interest, and that there is no practical alternative. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) need the same level of protection. However, wherever the proposal takes place, it will be necessary to take a wide and considered approach to weighing the benefits and detriments of any proposal. Given their scale or nature, major developments will normally be subject to a mandatory or agreed Environmental (or Sustainability) Assessment.
- 2.28 Where the national need is seen to be overriding it is necessary to ensure that general harm and adverse local impact (short and long term) is ameliorated. For instance major developments related to the nuclear industry could impact on the special quality of Cumbria, both directly and in terms of public perception. In these cases there would be a clear requirement to ensure full consultation. The developer should also be required to meet any local community needs where this would help mitigate any adverse effects.
- 2.29 The potential for nuclear related major developments affecting Sellafield, Drigg or other locations in Cumbria is dependent on developing national policy. This includes energy strategy work by the Cabinet Office, the (ongoing) DEFRA Consultation process on "Managing Radioactive Waste Safely", and the proposal to re-shape the approach to "Managing the Nuclear Legacy" on which legislation is expected shortly. The Regional (Economic) Strategy<sup>4</sup> and Policy EQ7 of Regional Planning Guidance refer to the role of the nuclear industry in Cumbria. A range of situations may give rise to the need for new major development. Additional plant at Sellafield to facilitate management of the local or national nuclear legacy is possible in the medium term. New nuclear power stations (to replace plant such as Calder Hall, meet national energy requirements, ensure diversity of supply, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels) could be proposed. Given the extended consultation and investigation timescales required for these developments, proposals to extend the Drigg Low Level Radioactive Waste facility, or construct facilities for additional surface or underground Intermediate or High Level Waste storage (or disposal) are unlikely until well into or beyond the plan period.

### Policy ST9.