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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is the final Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan. It is a statutory document which provides a strategy and policies for the development and use of land within Cumbria, including the Lake District National Park but excluding the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Cumbria County Council and the Lake District National Park Authority are each responsible for the strategic planning of their respective areas. The two authorities have chosen to prepare a joint structure plan so that the planning of the whole county is co-ordinated.
- 1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has now been given Royal Assent. This results in changes to the Planning System. The principal change has been to replace Regional Planning Guidance with a Regional Spatial Strategy and to abolish the current system of Structure and Local Plans. Structure Plans and Local Plans will gradually be replaced by a series of Local Development Documents collectively known as the Local Development Framework (See Figure 1).
- 1.3 The new system will take time to become established and, to ensure continuity, transitional arrangements have been put in place to allow the old system to continue until the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks are further developed. Policies contained in the Structure Plan will be 'saved' for a period of three years from adoption, unless during that period replaced by the policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy, in whole or in part. In those circumstances the Secretary of State may direct that the three year period should be extended. The Structure Plan will remain relevant as a basis on which to guide planning applications whilst the new plans are being prepared. To avoid confusion between the two planning systems any references contained within this Plan are to the new system of Plans.

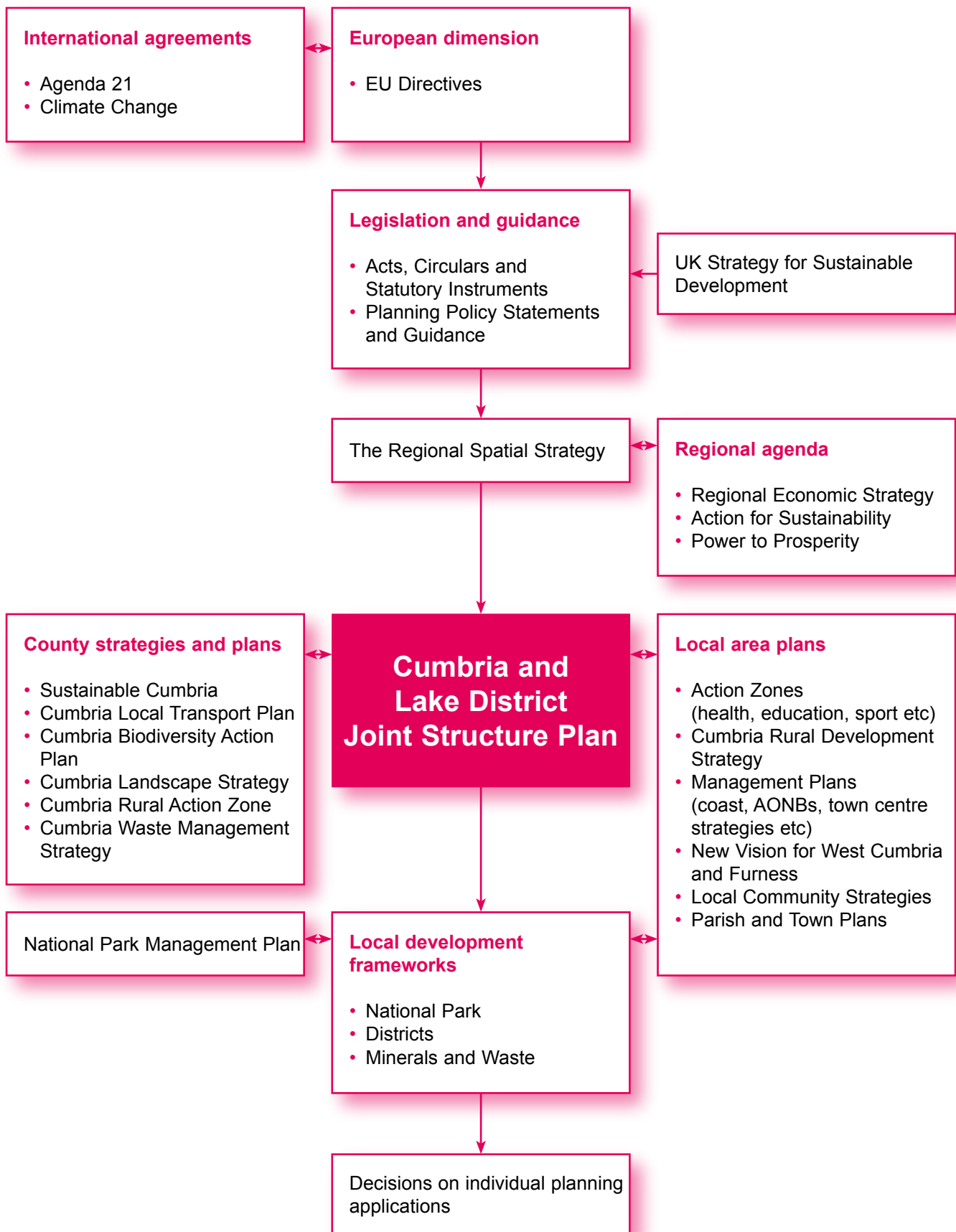
What has influenced the Structure Plan?

- 1.4 The Structure Plan takes into account European, National and Regional Policy, see Figure 2. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West is particularly important. This provides the spatial strategy and development framework for policies in the Structure Plan. Policies contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy, which includes the Regional Transport Strategy, and their relationship with the Structure Plan¹ are listed in Schedule 1.

Figure 1
Local Development
Framework Areas



Figure 2
Policy Context Diagram



- 1.5 In the National Park the strategic planning policies must support the statutory purposes for its designation, modified by the 1995 Environment Act:
- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and
 - To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
- Where irreconcilable conflict arises between these purposes, the first prevails. In pursuing these purposes, the National Park Authority must also:
- Seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Park.
- This must be achieved without involving significant expenditure by the National Park Authority, however we will support, facilitate and encourage partnerships with those agencies whose tasks it is to promote economic or social development of the area.
- 1.6 In the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Arnside/Silverdale, North Pennines and Solway Coast), strategic policies must support their primary purpose of designation – to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing the primary purpose account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but demand should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.
- 1.7 The Structure Plan also relates to and provides the context for the development of other more local policy documents such as Community Strategies and Parish Plans.

Content of the Plan

- 1.8 The formal part of the Structure Plan consists of a 'Written Statement' of policies for the development and use of land in the county and a 'Key Diagram' showing which policies apply to the different parts of the county. The Written Statement is clearly identified by the coloured sections. The Key Diagram is inside the back cover.
- 1.9 The rest of the text is known as the 'Explanatory Memorandum'. It is not part of the formal Plan but provides a fuller explanation and interpretation of the policies.
- 1.10 The Written Statement begins with a section on the overall strategy for development. This is followed by sections dealing with specific subject areas. **All policies within the Structure Plan should be read together.** Some policies are broken down into separate sections, but, unless the policy indicates otherwise, their order does not convey any priority. Policies seek to avoid duplication of national policies, but provide sub regional specificity. The concluding section sets out how the performance of policies will be measured and who will be involved in their implementation.