

3 Supporting the economy

- 3.1 Economic growth has a direct impact on the quality of life; it can increase employment opportunities and income, help regenerate deprived communities and create the investment confidence needed to encourage private sector involvement in improving the environment.
- 3.2 Cumbria's economy has been characterised by a high dependence on manufacturing, agriculture, food processing, tourism, mining and quarrying. There are, however, changes taking place to the economic structure. Employment in both manufacturing and agriculture is experiencing a long term decline, but both still make a significant contribution. The service industries of banking, finance, insurance, retailing, hotels, catering, health and social work are now the fastest growing areas of employment. Tourism is now estimated to support 18% of total employment in the county either directly or indirectly⁷.
- 3.3 Measures⁸ indicate that Cumbria's economic performance is currently worse than almost any other part of the UK and only marginally ahead of Merseyside in the North West. Economic performance could deteriorate further with changes impacting on two of the county's most important high value sectors of nuclear reprocessing and shipbuilding. The area's continued dependence on manufacturing leaves it vulnerable to new business trends, particularly manufactured goods being transferred to countries with low labour costs. Changes to Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the impact of foot and mouth disease have led to serious difficulties for the agricultural industry. The growth of telecom based businesses in financial services and customer care are themselves vulnerable as emerging economies enter more sophisticated markets in the service sector. Problems are magnified by Cumbria's remoteness from major markets.
- 3.4 The Structure Plan has a vital role in enabling the economic fortunes of Cumbria to be improved through giving support to initiatives that increase investment, attract high technology businesses, increase skills and training, and provide good standards of infrastructure for transport, services and employment activities where they are needed to achieve a strong and diverse economy. The future emphasis will be placed on developing high value added business activities, sustaining the county's traditional economic activities and promoting opportunities for diversifying the economy in rural areas. The Structure Plan seeks to complement the Regional (Economic) Strategy (RES) and will guide the implementation of local regeneration initiatives, partnerships and programmes.

- 3.5 The following policies seek to encourage economic initiatives to improve Cumbria's economic performance. Initiatives within the creative industries, outdoor industries and the food and drink sector have potential to improve Cumbria's relative economic performance. The development of the nuclear decommissioning agency and related activities can help to address future concerns in West Cumbria. Tourism initiatives will also have an important role to play in sustaining the Cumbrian economy associated with the need to improve the quality of the public realm.

Employment Land

- 3.6 A key function of the Structure Plan is to make sure that there is an adequate supply of land for a variety of business uses, in the most appropriate locations.
- 3.7 Five Employment Land Market Sectors have been identified and Figure 3 states the key characteristics of each. These cater for the economic sectors identified in the Regional (Economic) Strategy and Policies EC1, EC2, EC3, EC4, EC5 and EC7 of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). It is not appropriate to specify economic sectors for each type of employment land in light of the dispersed nature of sites, the relative isolation of local economies and the need to be responsive to future economic demands. The economic sectors identified in the RES that could have potential across the range of sites are shown in Figure 3.
- 3.8 The current take up and availability of employment land is shown in Figure 4. The Employment Land Market Sectors correspond with those identified in Policy EM13, with the addition of land recorded as 'Own Use'. This land is reserved for expansion by an existing business and is therefore not truly "available" to the open market. Overall it is recognised that there is a surplus of employment land in the county, although it varies by Sub County Area and Employment Land Market Sector. A detailed assessment of available sites⁹ indicates that to maintain a choice of land in each Sub County Area there will be a need to find some new sites. Conversely, where there is an excess supply of employment sites, Local Planning Authorities will need to review the sites which are currently allocated in Local Development Frameworks and remove any which are not needed. Some of these sites may be suitable for alternative uses (see Policy EM14).

Figure 3 Employment Land Market Sector definitions

Regional Investment Site	Characteristics in accordance with Policy EC5 of the Regional Spatial Strategy	Regional Economic Sectors:
Strategic Employment Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 5 Ha developed in large plots • Classes B1 (b&c), B2 & B8 of the Use Classes Order • Ancillary B1(a) of the Use Classes Order • Access to the Primary Route network • Potential to be served by public transport. • Good links/proximity to key service centres • Masterplan incorporating landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerospace • Automotive • Aviation • Chemicals • Construction • Creative industries • Digital industries • Energy • Environmental technology
Business / Science Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class B1 of the Use Classes Order • Over 1 Ha • Access to Primary Route Network • Served by public transport, cycle and pedestrian network • Good links/proximity to key service centres • Masterplan and very high standard of design & landscaping • Potential for links to higher education institutions and knowledge based industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and professional • Food and drink • Healthcare (Biotechnology) • Maritime • Sport • Textiles • Tourism
Local Employment Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 5 Ha • Classes B1, B2 & B8 of the Use Classes Order • Good links/proximity to service centres. • Adequate transport access 	
Port Related Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port side access • Over 5 Ha developed in large plots • Classes B1 (b&c), B2 & B8 of the Use Classes Order • Ancillary B1(a) of the Use Classes Order • Served by public transport and rail freight • Access to the Primary Route Network 	

3.9 Local Development Frameworks are required to bring forward sites to meet the requirements of Policy EM13. Land needs to be made available over the whole of the Structure Plan period to satisfy economic demands. The amount of land required by Policy EM13 to be available takes account of the previous take up of employment land within each of the Sub County Areas and Employment Land Market Sector definitions, see Figure 3. It encourages economic growth in areas of need and regeneration; recognises the sub regional role of Carlisle, through the Regional Investment Site at Kingmoor and the requirement to meet local employment needs and sustain the rural economy in North and South and East Cumbria. The provision made for employment land in Furness and

West Cumbria reflects the emphasis on regeneration. Westlakes Science and Technology Park, Whitehaven, is included in the land portfolio due to its strategic importance in the county as a centre for knowledge based enterprise. Policy EM13 also takes into account the land currently available (Figure 4) and the need to maintain existing employment sites that provide an important economic role.

Figure 4 Employment land take up and availability in the county (1 April 1999 to 31 March 2004)

Employment Land Market Sector	Development Completed 1999-2004 (ha)	Development under construction (ha)	Land with Planning Permission (ha)	Land allocated in Local Plans (ha)	Total land available for development (ha)
Regional Investment Site	16.57	1.73	46.62	0	46.62
Strategic Employment Site	3.67	0.71	30.01	150.22	180.23
Business/ Science Park	9.76	18.04	23.92	50.77	74.69
Local Employment Site	30.28	13.28	47.18	161.93	209.11
Port Related	0	0	0	78.12	78.12
Own Use	26.66	0	3.09	11.25	14.34
TOTAL	86.94	33.76	150.82	452.29	603.11

Source: CCC Employment Land Availability, March 2004

3.10 It is important that land is brought forward in a planned way, and that opportunities for employment relate to the requirement for new housing contained in Policy H17. To ensure this, outside the Lake District National Park, a minimum supply of land to meet defined employment land market sectors and anticipated demands is to be made available at five year intervals. These intervals will allow time for existing land to be made 'readily available' for development. They will enable Local Development Frameworks to phase the release of land to meet the investment and regeneration emphasis of the Structure Plan. The supply of land indicated in Policy EM13 should be readily available and not constrained by inadequate service infrastructure, ownership and significant remediation costs. Local Authorities should work in partnership with developers and regeneration agencies such as North West Development Agency and Westlakes Renaissance to ensure the availability of quality sites. There will be a need for additional sites to be brought forward in the Local Development Documents for South Lakeland and Eden districts to deal with the deficiencies in the Business/Science Park category of employment land provision.

- 3.11 Land remaining available at the end of a five year period will count towards the following period. This is particularly important in the case of available Port Related Land in Allerdale and Barrow-in-Furness where no other opportunities exist to bring forward alternative sites. Land will also be safeguarded to ensure the future role of existing ports such as Barrow, Whitehaven, Workington and Silloth (see Policy T26). The supply of sites must also satisfy the requirement of Policy ST5 for an appropriate supply of readily available land in the Local Employment Site Market Sector in each key service centre.
- 3.12 The provision of land in excess of that indicated in Policy EM13 will be justified if it is demonstrated that the existing supply of land does not accommodate user requirements or is needed to satisfy take up rates. In identifying new employment sites Local Development Frameworks will need to take account of the strategy outlined in Policies ST5-12 and provide opportunities for the economic sectors identified in the Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy. Local Development Frameworks will also ensure the scale of employment land proposed is appropriate to the size and character of key service centres and towns and villages defined in Local Development Frameworks.
- 3.13 Within the National Park there is a need to widen the economic base and encourage a range of local employment opportunities. As it is particularly difficult to identify suitable new land for business uses it is important that sites which are suitable and available are reserved for business uses (Classes B1 and B2 of the Use Classes Order) and protected from competition from other forms of development with higher land values, such as tourism and housing.
- 3.14 Due to the scattered nature and small scale of suitable employment sites within the National Park, it is not appropriate to introduce phasing for site development. Many opportunities for employment uses will arise from the conversion of existing buildings and the main need is to ensure that sites already identified for employment uses are retained. **Policy EM13.**

Policy EM13: Employment land provision

Local Development Frameworks will ensure that there is the following supply of readily available land for employment purposes in the following Sub County Areas, Employment Land Market Sectors and, outside the National Park, at the start of each period indicated:

Sub County Area	Employment Land Market Sectors	Period		
		2001-2006 (Ha)	2006-2011 (Ha)	2011-2016 (Ha)
City of Carlisle	Regional Investment Site▼	15	20	15
	Strategic Employment Site	10	10	10
	Local Employment Site	15	15	15
	Business/Science Park	5	10	10
North Cumbria Carlisle Allerdale	Strategic Employment Site◆	6	6	6
		5	5	5
	Local Employment Site	2	2	2
	Local Employment Site			
Furness & West Cumbria Allerdale	Strategic Employment Site	20	20	20
	Local Employment Site	10	10	20
	Business/Science Park	3	5	5
	Port Related	7#	0	0
Copeland	Strategic Employment Site	5	5	5
	Local Employment Site	13	13	13
	Business/Science Park*	10	10	10
Barrow-in-Furness	Strategic Employment Site	5	5	5
	Local Employment Site	7	7	7
	Business/Science Park	5	5	5
	Port Related	0	11#	0
South Lakeland	Strategic Employment Site	0	5#	0
	Local Employment Site	3	3	3
	Business/Science Park	3	3	3
South & East Cumbria Eden	Strategic Employment Site	5	10	10
	Local Employment Site	7	7	7
	Business/Science Park	3	3	3
South Lakeland	Strategic Employment Site	5	5	0
	Local Employment Site	5	5	5
	Business/Science Park	3	3	3
Lake District National Park	Local Employment Site (B1 and B2 uses only)	3		

* Includes Strategic Regional Site identified by the NWDA at Westlakes, Copeland

Carry over provision to the next period if not completed

▼ Kingmoor, Carlisle listed in RSS as a Regional Investment Site

◆ Carlisle Airport

Policy EM14: Development of employment land for other purposes

Outside the Lake District National Park, the development of existing employment sites, premises and land allocations for non-employment or mixed uses will be considered where it can be demonstrated that over the Structure Plan period either:

1. The site or premises is likely to remain unsuitable for employment purposes; or
2. The retention of the site or premises in employment use is not needed to meet the requirements of Policy EM13 including the requirement that each Key Service Centre retains an appropriate supply of land within the Local Employment site Market Sector.

Within the Lake District National Park, permission will not be given for the redevelopment or use for other purposes of land and buildings with an established business use for Class B1, B2 or B8 of the Use Classes Order, or of land identified for employment use in the Local Plan or Local Development Documents, unless it can be demonstrated to be unsuitable for business purposes or, exceptionally, viable alternatives are readily available in the locality.

- 3.15 To meet the requirements of Policy EM13 and prepare the way for the proper application of Policy EM14, Local Planning Authorities will need to review land allocated for employment purposes in existing Local Plans to assess its suitability. Not all land will be appropriate or will continue to be needed. Evidence is that there is an excess in the supply of land in certain Employment Land Market Sectors and Sub County Areas⁹. In such cases Policy UR5 of the Regional Spatial Strategy emphasises the need to evaluate the potential for suitable alternative uses. Within urban areas this could include housing or mixed uses particularly on previously developed land. In certain cases, however, consideration should be given to retaining existing agricultural, open space or recreational uses. In determining the appropriateness of alternative uses account will need to be taken of the Structure Plan strategy Policies ST5-12.
- 3.16 Only employment sites that are considered to be unsuitable over the full Structure Plan period or are in excess of the requirements of Policy EM13 will be appropriate for other uses. In assessing whether a site or premises is “unsuitable” consideration will need to be given to the availability and quality of alternative sites or premises, the condition of the site or premises, service infrastructure capacity, and the views of economic development agencies for the area. Available employment land should not be developed for other uses where this would prevent development of the full land provision made in Policy EM13 over each five year period. In the National Park, because of the limited supply of sites and the difficulties of identifying new sites there is a particular need to protect existing business sites and buildings from being redeveloped for alternative uses.
Policy EM14.

The economy in rural areas

- 3.17 To maintain rural communities and the vitality of rural life, policies to diversify the economy in rural areas are required. There is an urgent need to reshape agricultural businesses and find new sources of income. Agriculture will, however, remain a key aspect of rural life and the rural economy, valued for its role in shaping the landscape and wildlife habitats. Agri-environment support will be an important component of farm diversification schemes as will development to support processing and marketing of local products.
- 3.18 The Structure Plan seeks to enable the development of businesses in rural areas, in accordance with Policy RU2 of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Plan provides opportunities for diversification that respect local heritage, environmental quality and community needs. Implementation of policy will be facilitated by government agencies and local economic development bodies such as Cumbria Rural Regeneration Company and Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency, working in partnership with local communities.

- 3.19 Whilst key and local service centres will be the preferred locations for new development, there is a need to strengthen the economy in rural areas and provide diversity in the local economic base. This will include the need to diversify farm businesses and support existing businesses, and may require the conversion and extension of suitable buildings.
- 3.20 Development should not lead to the wide dispersal of activity within the open countryside on a scale that could prejudice the vitality of towns and villages, threaten landscape character and undermine wider sustainable development objectives. Proposed uses will therefore need to be consistent with a rural location and result in no more than a modest increase in traffic. Development should be well related physically to existing buildings and be easily accessible.
- 3.21 In the National Park, the existing dependence on the tourism industry needs to be balanced by encouraging a wider economic base. **Policy EM15.**

Tourism

- 3.22 Tourism makes an important contribution to the county's economy. It generates annually £1 billion, equivalent to 18% of Cumbria's Gross Domestic Product, and supports in total roughly 34,000 jobs directly and a further 8,000 indirectly through the supply chain⁷. Changing trends in tourism, particularly the growth of short stays, has led to the lengthening of the tourist season. This brings year round economic benefits and increased employment opportunities, but may bring problems for some local communities and the environment such as access to housing and adverse transport impacts.
- 3.23 Account has been taken of the Regional (Economic) Strategy which takes a positive view of the future role of tourism as an economic sector for growth. However, it recognises that investment is needed in the environment, and assets such as the Lake District National Park and Heritage Coast should be protected. The Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site is identified as a major attraction for sustainable tourism. The Strategy stresses that tourism development can aid the regeneration of West Cumbria and Furness and assist rural diversification. Policy ST10 of the Structure Plan supports this approach.

Policy EM15: Employment development in rural areas

Outside key service centres developments which promote business and employment opportunity will be permitted where they are of a scale and type sympathetic to the character of the area within which they are proposed. Developments will be encouraged where they:

1. utilise existing well-suited buildings, especially traditional structures that make a positive contribution to landscape character
2. do not have a significant adverse transport impact.

- 3.24 Tourism should be developed in a sustainable manner, and not prejudice enjoyment and understanding of Cumbria's distinctive environment, culture and history. Cumbria's finest landscapes need protection in accordance with Policy ER2 of the Regional Spatial Strategy and importance should be placed on protecting habitats, species, historic features and environmental assets. The Structure Plan directs new tourism development towards areas where there is need for regeneration and economic diversification in accordance with Policy EC9 of the Regional Spatial Strategy. There is a need for different approaches to tourism in different parts of the county, to take account of the diverse and distinctive local environmental, economic and social conditions.
- 3.25 Outside the Lake District National Park emphasis should be on adding quality to the Cumbria tourism 'offer' and sustaining the attributes of the area. Key service centres provide excellent and accessible locations for new tourism facilities. Tourism development should also help to broaden the role and attractiveness of each centre. In rural areas, tourism uses can assist in the diversification of existing businesses and encourage rural regeneration. They will be supported where their scale can be accommodated without adverse effects on the character and amenity of the local area. Tourism proposals should not contravene the statutory purposes of AONBs (See paragraph 1.6).
- 3.26 The Lake District National Park's special qualities make it the centre-piece of tourist activity, with much to offer all year round. The National Park accounts for over half of the tourism spend and tourism-related jobs in the county, and has the highest concentration of visitors. Tourism development needs to take account of changing leisure trends and visitor expectations, for example in terms of better quality accommodation and facilities, and a more attractive public realm. The Lake District Renaissance project, which aims to revitalise the core Lake District product and raise the quality of the visitor experience shows how, through public and private sector investment, such improvements can be made.
- 3.27 The National Park is a living and working landscape of exceptional beauty, the conservation and enhancement of which is the first purpose of National Park designation. A quality environment will help ensure a thriving tourism industry, and tourism developments should respect the sensitivity of the environment and the communities within the National Park. Landscape character will be safeguarded and, where possible, enhanced. Initiatives such as the Responsible Tourism Scheme, in which businesses are encouraged to assess and manage proactively their environmental performance, and to strengthen community links through local employment and the use of local products and services, can help to further sustainable tourism objectives.

- 3.28 The tourism industry plays a vital role in supporting the second purpose of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities. Visitors to the National Park seek out different experiences, the scenery and peaceful surroundings continuing to be amongst the most significant factors affecting people's enjoyment. The character of the quieter areas, and busier central valleys which are particularly vulnerable to the provision of additional attractions and facilities, will be protected to maintain this diversity.
- 3.29 The seasonal changes are part of the Lake District's appeal and there is a wide range of accommodation, open throughout the year, which enables people to take advantage of the rich seasonal diversity. The provision of facilities throughout the year, which means more opportunities for securing quality year-round employment and sustainable local services, can be encouraged subject to appropriate environmental considerations. A minimum closure period for static caravan sites within the Lake District National Park, ensures that landscape and nature conservation interests can be safeguarded, for example where sites are inadequately screened by native trees or located close to winter wildfowl feeding areas.
- 3.30 Planning Policy Guidance Note 21 on tourism advises that most tourist needs for accommodation, shopping and catering can be met outside the National Parks or by provision that already exists within them.
- 3.31 Within the National Park there has been a recent trend to convert serviced accommodation to other uses and to replace touring caravan pitches with static caravans or chalets. In assessing proposals for changes of use, or conversion, of tourist facilities, particular regard needs to be paid to the public amenity and employment consequences of the development proposal. The desirability of maintaining a reasonable balance of different forms of holiday accommodation or tourist facilities within the National Park as a whole also needs to be taken into account. Any change of use, or conversion from one form of holiday accommodation to another, or to a different use altogether, is to be welcomed only if it is of benefit in maintaining the balance of accommodation provided. The loss of a hotel to another use, particularly if it is the main one in the locality, will be resisted. In the case of touring caravans, it is necessary to ensure that sufficient pitches remain available to cope with the short period of intensive demand at the height of the season. **Policy EM16.**

Policy EM16: Tourism

New tourism facilities will be directed to key service centres and to locations that enable the economic and physical regeneration of an area, where they bring benefit to the local community.

Tourism development will be permitted where this does not prejudice Cumbria's distinctive environmental, cultural and historic character and visitors enjoyment and understanding of it. The emphasis should be on sustaining these attributes and adding quality.

Tourism proposals in the Lake District National Park and AONBs will only be permitted where the statutory purposes of the designated areas are not contravened.

In the Lake District National Park changes of use or conversions which result in the loss of important tourism accommodation or public amenities will not be permitted unless they are demonstrated to be unviable.

Tourism development within or affecting the Lake District National Park will only be permitted where:

1. it would not conflict with the special qualities of the National Park or diminish opportunities for quiet enjoyment,
2. it would not introduce inappropriate activities or levels of use, or otherwise be of a nature and scale detrimental to the character and quality of the environment, and
3. it would not result in the loss of serviced accommodation and of touring caravan pitches to other tourist uses.