

Levelling Up Council Vision

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Purpose of this presentation...

- Overview of council's ambitions for further devolution.
- Focus on joint working/collaboration across sub/regional area.
- Reflections on the opportunities for further devolution/public service reform to help tackle the cost of-living crisis.



Where are we -
In the country?



Local Government
Reorganisation

Delivering Two New Councils
for Cumbria



Where are we - in the LGR Process?

- Government LGR Announcement July 2021
- Shadow Elections May 2022
- Vesting Day for new Authorities 1st April 2023
 - Westmorland & Furness to consist of former: Eden, South Lakeland and Barrow in Furness councils
 - Cumberland to consist of former: Carlisle, Allerdale and Copeland councils
 - Cumbria County Council split between the two unitaries



Current levelling up opportunities

- Levelling Up Fund – Round 1 and 2
 - Barrow Category 1, Eden Category 2, South Lakes Category 3
- Brilliant Barrow Town Deal - £25m for 7 schemes
- Borderlands Place Programme
 - Dalton, Ulverston, Penrith
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
 - Barrow £2.5m, Eden £2m, South Lakes £3.8m



Heading in the right direction?



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Ambitions for further Devolution

- Currently spending significant resources to split Cumbria into two unitary councils – Why immediately create a Mayoral combined authority?
- Transition and transformation will take many years
- Open to opportunities for devolution
- However, these must not distract us from our mission
- Devolution must deliver significant benefits for our communities
- Should explore possibilities for an appropriate model to be developed
- Should genuinely be based on functioning economic areas
- Should allow collaboration outside the Cumbria footprint



Levelling up the future - Issues

- The ever-changing funding landscape makes it difficult for local authorities to plan ahead.
- Clearer direction and certainty into future funding would enable us to plan and deliver the right interventions that make a lasting difference.
- Development of bids themselves are expensive, with no guarantee of success.
- Support for organisational capacity building is required.
- Important to genuinely level up across all regions and recognise the particular challenges for more rural areas such as attracting and retaining a working age population and the need to increase productivity and create/sustain high value jobs.
- Ministerial input into decision making for final allocations of Levelling Up Fund undermines the process.
- Short-termism is a critical flaw.



Opportunities for further Devolution

- It is positive that devolution has been extended to non-metropolitan areas.
- The published devolution framework is a good first step. It is good that the framework will apply to all local areas and will not impose a one-size-fits-all approach to governance. Need to go further and faster with other government departments, so the whole of government is taking a 'local first' approach.
- Devo deals should encompass social as well as economic outcomes.
- Simplified approach to growth funding – reduce funding pots, heavy oversight and competition.
- COVID response highlighted what local government can achieve – need to build on that success.
- Greater local control not less, over things that really matter such as planning and transport.
- Foster a greater sense of partnership. We have the appetite!

