



The Cockermouth Partnership

Draft Action Plan

As part of the Countryside Agency's and
North West Development Agency's
Market Towns Initiative

October 2002

Table of contents

1. Introduction	16. Next Steps
2. Other Initiatives Operating within the Partnership Area	17. Monitoring and Evaluation
3. The Partnership	18. Contact Details
4. Community Involvement	Appendix 1 Partnership SWOT Analysis
5. The Vision	Appendix 2 Topic SWOT Analyses
6. Environment	Appendix 3 Rural areas SWOT Analysis
7. Economy	Appendix 4 Issues
8. Sport and Leisure	Appendix 5 Mobility Action Plan
9. Arts, Culture and Heritage	Appendix 6 Accessibility Audit
10. Youth Activities	Appendix 7 Potential Projects
11. Health, Disability and The Elderly	Appendix 8 Strategic Grouping of Projects
12. Transport and Accessibility	Appendix 9 Glossary of Terms
13. Project Appraisal	Annex: Snapshot and Healthcheck – Separate Report
14. Risks and Constraints	
15. Milestones	

1. Introduction

1.1 Historical Background

1.1.1 Cocker mouth developed at the confluence of two rivers - the Cocker and the Derwent - providing a good defensive position with a regular water supply and good crossing point. Under the protection of the earliest castle, the growing settlement became well established as a prosperous market town, providing a central position for local farmers to buy and sell produce and livestock, for locals to make themselves available for hiring and for developing businesses to provide other goods and services. This activity centred on the current Market Place area but gradually spread along the routes from the main river crossing point and to the south, now Station Street. The wide Main Street between the Market Place and the bridge was formed as a result of the roadway becoming the main 'beast' market area for the town and the width and length of this area gives one an idea of the extent of the marketing activities. It also resulted in the economic centre of the town leaving its medieval core by the mid 19th century.

1.1.2 This shift in the economic focus would have been exacerbated by the formation and development of Mitchell's Auction Mart, firstly in Main Street in 1860, but moving to the southern edge of the existent town centre. As with most market towns, its shape and development is, and always has been, heavily influenced by the activities of its farmers and their needs.

1.1.3 In addition, Cocker mouth benefited from its close relationship with the burgeoning port of Whitehaven. Goods from both Carlisle and the Lake District had to pass through Cocker mouth to reach their point of shipment. This proved to be an excellent location to add value to the basic raw materials by processing, and thus tanneries, glove and shoe factories, and spinning mills developed.

1.2 Environmental Background

1.2.1 Cocker mouth is built around the confluence of the rivers Cocker and Derwent, the River Derwent then flowing westwards across the coastal plain to the Solway Firth at Workington. The A66 follows the route of the river to Workington. The town is surrounded to the north east, the east and the south by high fells. There are routes through the fells to the south following the Lorton Valley (B5289), to Crummock Water and Buttermere. The River Cocker flows out of Crummock Water and meanders northwards to Cocker mouth. The Egremont road (A5086), also to the south, gives access to Loweswater.

1.2.2 Despite the evidence of a prosperous market town, there is nothing formal or planned in the way Cocker mouth has developed and the town centre buildings, although individually not of great historical or architectural merit, are all located comfortably together and any single loss would be extremely damaging to the 'street scene'. The majority of the town centre is now protected by Conservation Area status and has 103 Listed Buildings. The town was designated by the Council for British Archaeology in the 1950's as a 'gem town' - one of only 51 towns and cities in Britain worthy of special care in preservation and development as part of the national heritage. A number of properties have been restored with financial support from English Heritage.

1.2.3 There are a number of rural villages surrounding Cocker mouth and which look to Cocker mouth as their service centre. Cocker mouth School, a community school, also serves this area. To the north are Bridekirk, Tallentire, Blindcrake and Bothel and to the east, on the old A66, is Embleton. Lorton, Eaglesfield and Dean lie to the south, with Brigham and Broughton to the west and Papcastle and Dovenby to the north west on the A594 to Maryport.

1.3 Economic Background

1.3.1 In recent years the town has continued to expand with large residential areas although the agricultural and industrial influences have gradually diminished. The town is a magnet for professional and managerial staff from industries on the west coast, due to its environment, quality schools and good road links to the areas of employment. Apart from Jennings Brewery, James Walkers, M Sport and Cockermouth School, there are few large employers (100 + employees) and little manufacturing is now undertaken. Sainsburys are now a major employer in the town and the haulage companies of Eric Nicholson and Lawsons employ significant numbers.

1.3.2 The movement of the economic core of the town centre has been hardened by the most recent development of Sainsburys adjoining the main car park on the southern edge of the town centre. This has left the original Market Place struggling to attract shoppers and led to the decline and disappearance of most retail businesses. Further damaging the retail focus of the town centre are two relatively small edge-of-town units; one concentrating on discount food and household goods and the other on DIY, kitchens, bathrooms, carpets, garden supplies etc.

1.3.3 Cockermouth's employment base has widened with the establishment of the Lakeland Business Park developed by English Estates (now North West Development Agency - NWDA) on one of the entrance routes into town. It is occupied by a number of professional companies and various public agencies. The former Grammar School site was converted into the Strawberry Howe Business Centre 8 years ago and currently accommodates a number of small businesses. The NWDA has also developed a small industrial estate the former Miller's factory site to the north of the river.

1.3.4 Mitchell's Auction Mart has relocated to the edge of the town onto a green field site, and created an agricultural business park with associated businesses and they are planning a training facility for farmers, in partnership with Newton Rigg College.

1.3.5 Tourism has become the only growth industry and this is dominated by small specialist businesses, both in hotels, catering and B and B establishments, supplying tourists direct or tourist related services. The 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease centred in Cumbria resulted in the sudden halting of tourists into the area and the drop in trade to most Cockermouth businesses of some 25%. Tourism businesses in the adjoining rural areas suffered by up to 90% of their previous turnover for several months.

1.3.6 There are a number of small scale tourist attractions in the area, including Wordsworth House, a Toy Museum, a Printing Museum, a Mineral Museum (shortly to be closed), Jennings Brewery tours and a number of galleries including the Castlegate Gallery, Percy House Gallery and the Craft Gallery in the former Fletcher's Wine Warehouse. The Sheep and Wool Centre, on the A66 provides not only an attraction, but also acts as a "gateway centre" promoting tourism throughout West Cumbria. The T.I.C. is located in the Town Hall within the town.

1.3.7 The vacant, former RNAD, Ministry of Defence site, with an expanse of 500 hectares (1200 acres), is located to the west of the village of Broughton. It has been acquired by Allerdale Borough Council and is seen as a potential location for tourism based development. Due to the size of this site, any tourism development is bound to have a significant beneficial impact on the Partnership area, in terms of both direct job creation and in enhancing the profile of the whole area.

1.4 Social and Community Background

1.4.1 The population of the Partnership area has increased from 14,678 in 1991 to 15,313 in 1998, an increase of 4.3%. The population of Cockermouth town, however, over this same period has increased from 7,786 to 8,277, an increase of 6.3%. Cockermouth is the fastest growing town in Allerdale and demand for houses is high. This strong demand has led to rapid increases in house prices in recent years creating problems for young people wishing to get on the housing ladder.

1.4.2 Cockermouth has a large number and variety of voluntary organisations and groups, many of which were represented through the healthcheck process. There are also many groups in the rural areas, particularly in the larger villages. There is a long standing and very active town twinning between Cockermouth and Marvejols, a small town in the south of France.

1.4.3 Cockermouth has a town hall with a local enquiry/payment office for Allerdale Council and has a council chamber and offices for Cockermouth Town Council. The building also accommodates the tourist information centre at ground floor and a day centre for West House in the basement. The County Council has a library in the Main Street and County Contracting have a depot in the town. Capita bda, (formerly the County's engineering and architectural services) are housed in offices in the former Miller's factory.

1.4.4 There are 3 doctors and 3 dental practices in the town, as well as a cottage hospital. There are hospitals at both Workington and Whitehaven offering additional services. For some of the more specialist services, patients have to visit Carlisle or the North East.

1.4.5 The town is well served by sporting clubs and facilities, although some are of poorer quality and need to be upgraded. There is a shortage of good quality football pitches both in and around the town. There are many music groups and dance and drama classes for a variety of preferences. There is a theatre in the town, which also shows films.

1.5 Transport Background

1.5.1 Cockermouth is relatively well placed on the local road network with good access along the A66 to the M6 in the east (approx 30 miles), to Workington (8 miles) and Whitehaven (15 miles) to the west, to the Solway Coast at Maryport (8 miles) north west along the A594 and to the north along the A595 to Carlisle (25 miles) and Scotland, thus encouraging the town to become increasingly a dormitory town for the major employment centres of West Cumbria. The A66 was improved in the 1970's using the closed railway line, thus by passing many of the villages and Cockermouth town centre. The Papcastle by pass was constructed to the west of the town in the early 1990's as a further means of taking traffic out of the town centre.

1.5.2 There are no links to the main line railway network without travelling to either Penrith or Carlisle and public transport access to the railway stations is often inconvenient and poorly publicised. Public transport to and from the town is reasonably good with some of the national bus routes passing through the town en route to more northerly and southerly cities.

1.5.3 Public transport, however, from the town to the surrounding villages is often non-existent or sparse at best, so that there is very heavy reliance on private cars. Easy accessibility around the town and the amount and location of car parks is, therefore, essential for the future viability of the town centre and its businesses. A recent traffic management scheme, including a small section of a one-way system, was introduced; partly to cope with the anticipated increase in incoming traffic to the Sainsburys' supermarket and partly as a long planned alteration to improve the town's circulation system. Although the scheme is operating reasonably smoothly, it has increased traffic pressure in areas of the town that are unsuitable, being mainly residential and historic with very narrow entrances and exits. The situation is under review and, hopefully some remedial works will be undertaken to mitigate these effects.

1.5.4 There are a number of car parks sited around the town, some of which are well positioned and well used, whilst others are less well used. The main central car park, adjoining the Sainsburys' supermarket, is now limited to short stay, for use by shoppers, leaving long term parkers in the southern area of the town with great difficulty in finding a suitable space. Two free spaces for coaches have recently been allocated on the Wakefield Road car park to the north of the river, subsidised by the Town Council.

1.5.5 Improvements to both the traffic flow and location of car parking is exacerbated by the historic nature of the town along three of the main routes into the town centre. Indeed just to travel from one side of the town to the other is seriously restricted by very narrow roads reducing the traffic flow effectively to one way at certain times.

1.5.5 Pedestrian movement around the town is reasonably easy with the wide Main Street, broad pavements and the recent addition of four designated pedestrian crossings. However, once again at critical points, both the road and pavements become extremely narrow and dangerous for both road users and pedestrians. The scope for improvement is limited by the historic nature of the town centre.

1.5.6 Access and ease of movement for elderly people and those with disabilities is, however, difficult with limited areas of dropped kerbs to allow easy wheel-chair movement and numerous shops having one or more steps in order to enter. As many of the shops are small independently run businesses in old buildings, the pressure to improve such accessibility is negligible, although one or two retailers have incorporated wheel-chair ramps into their premises in association with more wide ranging improvements or alterations.

1.5.7 The Sea to Sea (C2C) and Reivers Cycle Routes run through Cockermouth and also provide easy access into the surrounding countryside, especially through Lorton Vale to Loweswater, Crummock Water and Buttermere.

1.5.8 The former railway line through the town has been developed into a cycleway/footpath known as the Green Way. Additional links to the Green Way are being planned as part of the Better Ways to School network.

The debate regarding traffic and transport during the period of this healthcheck has been very much concentrated on the new traffic management measures introduced in the town centre in April 2002 in readiness for the opening of the new Sainsbury's store. The scheme has been very controversial and there have been a number of public meetings, organised by the Partnership and the County Council's Neighbourhood Forum, with the highway authority, to discuss the implications.

1.5.9 The Healthcheck document is contained in full, in a separate annex to this report.

2. Other Initiatives Operating within the Partnership Area

2.1 The Market Towns Initiative is supported by the Countryside Agency and the North West Development Agency. Cockermouth Partnership will need to liaise closely with these two agencies, and work within their strategies, in order to secure funding and successfully implement this plan.

2.2 Specific funding for rural areas will be available through the Regional Rural Recovery Plan, the Rural Development Programme and the emerging Rural Action Zone which will be embodied in a new Cumbria Rural Regeneration Company.

2.3 The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for West Cumbria is a community led partnership whose key role is to promote regeneration. The Cockermouth Partnership will need to establish links with the LSP and maintain contact.

2.4 The area is within the European Objective 2 area and certain projects could be eligible for funding through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or the European Social Fund (ESF). Contact with the Cockermouth based European Liaison Unit will establish which specific projects could be funded as part of the Rural Economic Development Zone.

2.5 The Western Lake District Tourism Partnership has contributed to this Plan and close contact will be maintained with regard to marketing initiatives.

2.6 Parishes in the Partnership area are eligible to apply for projects under the Countryside Agency's Vital Villages programme, administered by Voluntary Action Cumbria. This has been brought to the attention of the parishes at all the community events. Bridekirk, Brigham and Broughton have prepared, or are in the process of preparing, village plans. In addition Blindcrake, Bothel and Threapland and Greysouthern are considering preparing village plans.

2.7 Allerdale Borough Council's Vision is of an area in which all communities share in the prosperity currently enjoyed only in parts of the borough. The aim is to ensure that by 2011, no ward suffers an unemployment rate higher than the North West regional average.

2.8 The Development Plan for the partnership area comprises the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 1991-2006, and the Allerdale Local Plan, adopted in November 1999.

2.9 The Partnership covers the same area as the Cockermouth Neighbourhood Forum, which meets four times a year in order that the public can discuss issues with their elected representatives. The Forum and the Partnership have worked closely together to encourage community involvement in the preparation of the Action Plan and its projects.

2.10 The Partnership has established links with Cockermouth School, which is planning to develop a number of addition school/community projects on the school site to add to the recently opened Astro Turf all weather pitch.

2.11 The Local Agenda 21 in Allerdale Group have been approached to discuss potential projects for inclusion in the Action Plan covering recycling, energy conservation and waste minimisation etc.

2.12 Cockermouth has representation on the Community Crime Reduction Partnership for Allerdale and Copeland.

2.13 The Steering Group received a presentation from the Cumbria Rural Volunteer Car Scheme, as a result of which it is intended to create a scheme covering the Cockermouth and district area.

2.14 Allerdale Council is in the process of acquiring the former Ministry of Defence RNAD site at Broughton Moor for redevelopment as a potential site for tourism development. Part of the site is within the Partnership area, and due to the size of the site (500 hectares) it is bound to have a significant beneficial effect on Cockermouth.

3. The Partnership

3.1 The Cockermouth Partnership was formed during 2000 in an attempt to bring together a number of agencies and groups to act on behalf of the whole community, incorporating both town and countryside. The original representation on the Partnership was from the three tiers of local government - Cockermouth Town Council, Allerdale Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, the Cockermouth Chamber of Trade, the Cockermouth Civic Trust, Cockermouth and District Action Group (CADAG) and two co-optees.

3.2 The Partnership undertook a SWOT analysis (Appendix 1) and carried out a series of surveys in the town. They also took on board the survey work undertaken by CADAG. As a result of this they produced a number of priorities for action.

3.3. When the Partnership became aware of the Countryside Agency's Market Towns Initiative, they decided that it met its own objectives and that it would be advantageous to make a submission. They were successful in their bid and appointed a coordinator, the Len Cockcroft Consultancy, to assist them in undertaking a Healthcheck and preparing an Action Plan.

3.4 This core group became the Partnership Steering, as membership of the wider Partnership expanded. It was also agreed that further representation was needed on the Steering Group, particularly from the rural areas, large employers and representing youth interests.

3.5 The Partnership agreed to adopt as the Market Towns Initiative area the same geographical area that was already used by the County Council as the Cockermouth Neighbourhood Forum.

3.6 Together with Cockermouth Town Council area, the Partnership includes the following parishes:

Blindbothel
Blindcrake
Bothel and Threapland
Bridekirk
Brigham
Broughton
Buttermere
Dean
Embleton
Greysouthen
Papcastle
Lorton
Loveswater
Setmurthy

3.7 The Partnership is currently changing its legal status to a non-profit making company limited by guarantee. The registration from Companies House is expected to be completed by the end of 2002 and all the proposed projects will be undertaken by the limited company.

4. Community Involvement

4.1 In order to widen representation on the Partnership, a community event was organised in November 2000. Over 60 organisations within the town were circulated with a questionnaire and invited to an Open Evening with an exhibition and drop in session during the afternoon. The exhibition included survey work undertaken by Cockermouth and District Action Group, plans of Sainsburys' and Mitchell's proposed developments, sketch proposals for potential environmental improvements to Main Street. Excellent media coverage was given to this event. 53 people went through the exhibition in the afternoon and discussed issues with the coordinator and members of the Partnership. 64 attended the evening event which explained the Market Towns Initiative and the healthcheck process and over 50 people signed up to the Partnership. Four Topic Groups were formed to prepare SWOT analyses (Appendix 2) and they were encouraged to reconvene to assist with the completion of the healthcheck and to develop potential projects.

4.2 A further event, targeted at rural parishes, was held on the following evening. Invitations were sent directly to 14 parishes, and rural residents were also encouraged to attend. Only 5 parishes were represented with an overall attendance of 23. The Market Towns Initiative and the complementary Vital Villages Initiative were explained and an open discussion ensued, generally in the form of a SWOT analysis. (Appendix 3) Further meetings were held with some of the parishes not represented at this event.

4.3 Prince Charles and a Business in the Community Team visited Cockermouth in September 2001 and the Partnership were invited to the event. The Partnership, gave a presentation on the state of the town, the problems and some of the aspirations of the Partnership. The Partnership was later approached with an invitation to be included in a marketing pilot with international marketing company, McCann Eriksson. A number of meetings have been held with the company and a new "brand" has been created and will be used in a marketing campaign proposed within this Action Plan.

4.4 The co-ordinator held meetings with major employers including the Chairman of Mitchell's Auction Mart, Peter Greenhill, Frank Almond, the Manager of the new Sainsbury's store and Malcolm Wilson, the Managing Director of MSport. They all were very supportive of the work being undertaken by the Partnership and indicated their willingness to be involved. Peter Greenhill and Frank Almond have both since become members of the Partnership Steering Group.

4.5 A further member representing youth groups and two additional rural members were also invited onto the Steering Group.

4.6 The co-ordinator met with the headteacher of Cockermouth School, Mr Mike Wilde, as one of the major employers in the town, to pursue a means of obtaining the views of pupils at the school as to their wishes and aspirations for new activities and facilities. The School Council, which has representatives from all year groups, reported their findings back to the Partnership. The school are also pursuing a number of projects and the head asked if the Partnership could consider including them in the Action Plan.

4.7 At a second community event, with an excellent attendance of 60, additional Topic Groups (Transport and Mobility; Arts, Culture and Heritage; Youth; Sport and Leisure; Environment; Economy and Voluntary Sector/Health Forum) met to discuss and develop the main issues arising from the earlier SWOT Analyses. The Issues are presented in Appendix 4. These topic groups have continued to meet at regular intervals to consider and develop possible projects.

4.8 Discussions took place with the Cockermouth Town Council Clerk regarding the issues which the Town Council wished to pursue through the Action Plan, and this was followed up with a letter outlining a number of potential projects. Similar meetings were held with representatives of the County Council and Allerdale Council. A number of potential projects were received.

4.9 Throughout this process excellent publicity has been given to the Partnership through the Cockermouth Post, Times and Star, Evening News and Post, CFM Radio, Radio Cumbria and Border TV. There have also been many letters in the local press as a result of issues being raised. In particular, the Times and Star have featured the Partnership's activities and potential projects on the front page.

4.10 All this has helped to raise the profile of the Partnership and it has had a positive effect in the town. There now seems to be a buzz around the town and expectations have been raised.

4.11 The debate about Market Place, for instance, has helped to reverse the trend of shop closures and in the last few months a new gallery has opened, a hairdresser's business has moved in and an interior designer has relocated from smaller premises elsewhere in the town. An architect is considering converting a derelict property for his studio. Perhaps most significant is the acquisition of the former Kedder Training building by Impact Housing Association for social housing and ground floor commercial use. There is also a spate of premises undertaking exterior decoration and this is having a ripple effect throughout the town centre.

5. The Vision

5.1 A well attended visioning event was held at the Kirkgate Centre on the 25th June 2002, in order to inform the wider Partnership of progress to date and to develop a vision for the future of Cockermouth. The facilitator and co-ordinator presented a summary of the main findings from the healthcheck, the SWOT analyses and the Issues. Four groups were formed and they individually discussed their vision for the future of Cockermouth. Group leaders then presented their findings to the whole group. The facilitator summarised these and developed a composite by selecting common themes from the four contributions.

5.2 The coordinator reported this composite back to the Steering Group for discussion and minor revisions were made. The vision was used by the Steering Group to develop a series of strategic objectives for each of the main topic areas: Environment, Economy, Social and Community and Transport and Accessibility.

5.3 Vision

- Cockermouth is an historic market town with a lively community, and is recognized as a good place to live, work and visit. It has an attractive townscape and is set in a quality environment. The town benefits from a diverse economy with a number of small businesses providing jobs for local people.
- The regeneration of the town lies in building on its strengths, broadening its economic base and containing its physical growth. This can be achieved through the development of high value tourism and a programme of festivals, and by creating new opportunities in knowledge-based industries, developing cultural and arts based businesses and attracting specialist retailing.

5.4 Strategic Objectives

- Environmental
 - To preserve the inherent character of the gem town and to enhance that character through positive actions
 - To regenerate the historic core of the town
 - To conserve the natural environment of the surrounding open countryside
- Economic
 - To build upon the strengths of the town – its setting, character, retailing, tourism and professional services to provide opportunities for new employment
 - To develop new employment opportunities
 - To promote the existing vacant sites and premises
- Social and Community
 - To seek to provide for the needs of all sections of the community
- Transport and Communications
 - To seek to provide the means of transport into and through the town from the surrounding villages meeting the requirements of all sections of the community

6. Environment

6.1 The healthcheck revealed that there are 105 listed buildings in the town plus the Castle is a Scheduled Ancient monument. The important historical buildings and places within the town are the Castle, Wordsworth House, All Saints Church, Jennings Brewery, Main Street, Market Place, Kirkgate and Waterloo Street.

6.2 Some of the eyesores identified are now being developed (i.e. Tweedmill Lane and Walkers Yard) leaving the former Council Depot, Market Place and the former Cellar Five building still requiring attention.

6.3 From the SWOT analysis it was recognised that Cockermouth has many obvious strengths, particularly its historic character, wide Main Street and landscape setting on two rivers, on the edge of the Lake District. Its character as a small, compact market town was also emphasised and this led to some concerns that this character was under threat. Suburban sprawl, the design of new housing, traffic circulation and parking were cited as threats. The town's weaknesses were not considered serious and were perceived to be mainly the condition of the fabric, empty premises in Market Place, particularly the former Kedder Training building and the Council Depot and the condition and appearance of street surfaces and signage was raised.

6.4 Consideration of opportunities often spilled into economic issues; those identified were closely related to the town's character and location such as the potential for improvement to the shopping environment, for more specialist shops, expansion of the leisure/café culture and the regeneration and future role of Market Place. It was felt that there was a lack of vision and "joined up" thinking, which is being addressed in this process.

6.5 Jennings Brewery have sold their shop on the Cocker Bridge in Market Place and this is currently being renovated with English Heritage grant aid. The company are also seeking to create a new pedestrian access from Cocker Bridge, to create a riverside walk to their brewery tours from Market Place.

6.6 The main environmental issues arising through the community consultation and topic group working were to agree a joint vision for the future of the town; to encourage the public authorities to use their existing planning powers to ensure a strict adherence to policy and design guidance; to concentrate upon the regeneration of Market Place; to develop town centre design guidance for shop fronts; to develop safer routes to the schools and to contain further physical growth to the town.

6.7 The vision states that the regeneration of the town lies in building on its strengths, broadening its economic base and containing its physical growth. This can be achieved through the development of high value tourism and a programme of festivals, and by creating new opportunities in knowledge-based industries, developing cultural and arts based businesses and attracting specialist retailing.

6.8 The strategic objectives leading from the vision, in relation to the environment are:

- To preserve the inherent character of the gem town and to enhance that character through positive actions
- To regenerate the historic core of the town
- To conserve the natural environment of the surrounding open countryside

6.9 Environment Potential Projects

The environment projects which have been developed by the Environment Topic Group and the Partnership Steering Group are as follows:

1 Enhancement of road and street/pavement surfaces

As alterations have been carried out to roads and footways in the town centre over the years, a wide range of different materials have been used, many of which, including green tarmac, are completely inappropriate for the historical setting.

It is recommended that the County Council, (as Highway Authority) and Allerdale (as Local Planning Authority and responsible for conservation) agree a range of approved materials for all future works and a phased replacement of inappropriate materials. It is further recommended that a programme of enhancement be agreed.

2 Market Place environmental enhancement – Landmark project

Market Place was identified through a number of the topic groups as the area of the town that most needed regeneration. It is the historic core of the town and is included in the town centre conservation area. As well as finding new uses for the many vacant buildings, it is proposed that a scheme for enhancing the road and footway surfaces is produced. A review of street signs and street furniture will complement this work.

3 Review and simplification of road and other signage

Surveys of the town have illustrated the proliferation of signage of different types. There are statutory road signs, warning signs, welcome signs, direction signage, tourist attractions and cycle and pedestrian routes. The signs have been added as required and it would be opportune to undertake a complete review with the aim of reducing the number of signs, by eliminating any unnecessary signs and possibly by combining others. The Town Council have taken the lead in this by commencing discussions with the county Council.

4 Fund to provide grants for restoration of traditional shop fronts

Discussions have taken place with Allerdale planners regarding concerns about the loss of traditional shop fronts. Allerdale are in the process of producing a shop front design guide as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Allerdale Local Plan. The Partnership will establish a grants scheme to encourage owners to restore their shop fronts to a more traditional style in line with the design guide.

5 A new footbridge across River Derwent as an “architectural piece”

There is already a riverside walk to the north of the River Derwent, created by the Town Council. A new pedestrian bridge across the Derwent at the confluence with the River Cocker would complete a circular path with more direct access from the town centre. It is envisaged that this bridge would be designed as an architectural landmark, by way of a design competition.

6 Jennings River Frontage Walkway

Jennings wish to create a new pedestrian access adjacent to their former shop in Market Place and create a riverside walk, to give access to their brewery tours from the Market Place frontage. The footpath is to be landscaped and will also give access to the new bridge mentioned above.

7 Further development of Town Trail

The Civic Trust has developed a very interesting town trail around the town centre with an accompanying illustrated leaflet. The trail is marked with a series of plaques on buildings and places of note. The intention is to extend this trail and produce a new leaflet.

8 Eco Centre, Cockermouth School

Cockermouth School is seeking to develop an Eco Centre on the school site which will be used by the school for curriculum and extra curriculum activities and will also be available to the wider community.

This will include the primary schools within the catchment area, other secondary schools and interested groups within the area, such as the LA 21 Group.

The facility will be constructed partly from recycled materials and will demonstrate energy conservation and efficiency, with working examples of alternative energy production, waste minimisation and a series of different climatic conditions for growing plants in bio domes. It will be capable of measuring pollution, weather conditions, energy production and usage and a whole range of other sustainable processes. It will include a resource centre and research facilities. The school have commissioned a feasibility study for this project and will be seeking funding outside of the education budget to assist with the construction costs.

9 Allerdale Local Agenda 21 Group

Discussions have taken place with the Cockermouth based, Allerdale Local Agenda 21 Group, to include their activities and campaigns within the Action Plan. They have produced a three year programme which includes:

- Year 1 – A Real Nappy Project and a Cockermouth Fun Day
- Year 2 – A Plastics Recycling Project
- Year 3 – Creation of a directory and web site of Cumbrian food producers who supply to Cockermouth shops and hotels – to reduce “food miles”

10 Town Hall improvements

The town hall is owned by Allerdale Council and used by both the Borough, as a local office, and the Town Council as offices and Council Chamber and also accommodates the Tourist Information Centre. The building is a former church and is a prominent building within the Market Place area of the town. The building requires substantial renovation works, which when completed will help to enhance the Market Place.

11 Waste Lane improvements

This is a small area of untidy land off St Helens Street which needs to be improved. The area has been included in the Better Ways to School Plan by the County Council and will form part of the footpath and cycle route to All Saints and Cockermouth Schools.

12 Improvements to former Cellar Five building, Main Street

This building has been in a derelict state for many years and detracts seriously from the overall appearance of Main Street. The owner has, to date, been unwilling to comply with requests from the local planning authority, Allerdale, to address the problems. The Council is considering what appropriate action it can take, although it is believed that there is a potential buyer for the building.

7. Economy

7.1 The healthcheck revealed that 32.3% of the working population are employed in distribution, hotels and restaurants, 22.2% in manufacturing, 17.9 % in administration, education and health and 13.4% in banking, finance and insurance. There were only 0.6% employed in agriculture and fishing. This figure excludes self-employed farmers.

7.2 The total number unemployed in November 2001 was 170, representing 2.2% of the working population. The number in employment at December 2000 was 5525 of which 1099 (19.9%) were working for employers with 100 + staff.

7.3 There is a reasonably good mix of retailers in the town centre, with a good variety of convenience shops but, as would be expected in a small town, less shops selling comparison goods. The opening of the Sainsbury's store at Easter 2002 has had a significant impact on the amount and pattern of shopping in Cockermouth, a little longer is required to gauge the real effects.

7.4 The total number of vacant retail units in the town centre in April 2002 was 23, of which 11 have been empty for more than 2 years. 13 of the 23 vacant units (56.5%) were in Market Place from which the focus of retailing has over many years shifted away towards Station Street where Sainsburys and the main public car park are located. There were also a number of vacant shops in King's Arms Lane. Four shops have ceased trading within the six months prior to April 2002. The reasons given for the units remaining empty for long periods are high rents and business rates.

7.5 Mitchell's Auction Mart relocated from the town centre in March 2002 to a new site to the south of the A66, which is being developed as an agricultural business park, with a number of farming related companies and on-site training facilities for farmers.

7.6 M Sport, the Ford Rally Team, relocated to the former Dovenby hospital just outside Cockermouth, in 1999, creating a large number of employment opportunities for local people. They have transformed the former derelict site into a prestige business location. The company is now seeking to expand its operations on the site and also to construct a hotel within the grounds.

7.7 The strengths of Cockermouth include its links with the farming community, its attractive town centre, the human scale of the shopping area, and the range of small shops. There is also a good range of business locations including the Lakeland Business Park, Strawberry How Business Centre, and Derwent Mills industrial site. It has land available for high tech businesses, manufacturing and tourism development. There are extremely good educational facilities both within the town and at the village schools.

7.8 The perceived weaknesses are that the town is outside the National Park, it is between the west coast and the lakes and is ignored by a number of agencies, the commitment to tourism is questioned, there are few employment opportunities for young people and there is a shortage of supply of employment land within the town. There are too many second homes, the organisation of car parking needs to be addressed and there are gaps in the range of shops including a major D.I.Y. store and a white goods outlet. The condition of Market Place is seen as a weakness. There is also a shortage of affordable or starter homes and house prices have increased substantially over the last three years, making it more difficult for first time buyers to enter the home ownership market.

7.9 Among the opportunities that the town could benefit from, is the reinstatement of farmers' markets and Sainsburys is seen as an opportunity to bring more people into Cockermouth. Two areas that could be developed include converting the council depot building to a local conference/resource centre and regenerating Market Place. Cockermouth should also promote itself better and develop the tourism 'product' of the town.

7.10 Threats to the town are seen as the increasing trend of second home ownership, the further expansion of the town and concerns that the character of Cockermouth may change as a result of an influx of tourists. It was feared that the loss of visitors to the town in 2001 due to the Foot and Mouth outbreak could be difficult to win back.

7.11 Specific ideas put forward for consideration include promoting opportunities for specialist shops to “trade off” Sainsburys and to review car parking charges in the Wakefield Road car park.

7.12 Issues raised through consultation and by the topic group included the strengthening of retailing and services, including leisure businesses (related to lifestyle of residents), the enhancement of empty buildings and concerns about the future of the market. It was suggested that Cockermouth should be marketed as a small business opportunity and its events, such as the Christmas lights, the carnival and the Malcolm Wilson Rally should be used to assist the promotion of the town. Attention should be given to the management of car parking, traffic and access, and a solution sought for the future of the council depot building.

7.13 The vision states that the regeneration of the town lies in building on its strengths, broadening its economic base and containing its physical growth. This can be achieved through the development of high value tourism and a programme of festivals, and by creating new opportunities in knowledge-based industries, developing cultural and arts based businesses and attracting specialist retailing.

7.14 The strategic objectives leading from the vision, in relation to the economy are:

- To build upon the strengths of the town – its setting, character, retailing, tourism and professional services to provide opportunities for new employment
- To develop new employment opportunities
- To promote the existing vacant sites and premises

7.15 Economy Potential Projects

The economy projects, which have been developed, by the Economy Topic Group and the Partnership Steering Group are as follows:

1 Develop a theme or brand to market the town

It is fundamental to re-launching Cockermouth as a market town to visit, that a new marketing image/brand is developed and promoted. The Partnership has been fortunate to be selected as one of the pilot market towns to receive marketing advice from McCann Erickson. New brochures will be produced in association with the Town Council, Allerdale and the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership.

2 Develop a car parking strategy for the town

Following the introduction of the new traffic management scheme in the town centre and prior to Allerdale taking responsibility for the control of on-street parking, it is suggested that a review of all parking - short stay, long stay, on street and in car parks, plus coach parking take place. The Partnership wishes to work with Allerdale in this exercise.

3 Co-ordinated signage scheme

The Partnership has identified the need to work with the County Council Allerdale and the Town Council to undertake a review of signage in order to remove surplus signs and combine signs where possible in order to assist visitors to the town.

4 Green Business Park

The owner of the Moota garden centre is seeking to develop an adjacent brownfield site into a “green business park” and attract craft workers, organic growers and other traditional rural trades and skills together with a log style caravan park.

5 Cockermouth School – Specialist School Status

Under the Government's Specialist Schools Initiative Cockermouth School has decided to bid for Maths and Computer Status. The conditions of the bid are firstly that the School must raise £50,000 from external contributions and secondly that the new facilities and resources must be made available for community use. This figure has now been met and the bid has been submitted. It has been short listed for detailed consideration. If the bid is successful, this £50,000 will draw down £700,000 over the next five years.

6 Local Farming and Produce Markets

In order to assist the local farming community and to bring fresh produce to the community, it is proposed to encourage the re-introduction of regular local farming and produce markets.

7 Revitalise weekly street market in Market Place

As part of the initiative to regenerate Market Place, it is considered that the revitalisation of the street market is essential. It is hoped that the re-occupation of vacant premises, the enhancement of the environment and the hosting of live events will bring people back into Market Place and this will assist in revitalising the street market.

8 Opportunities from Introduction of Broadband

Broadband greatly increases the speed in working on the Internet. It is a vital business tool which is already available to businesses throughout Britain, but it is not yet available to businesses in Cockermouth. The NWDA is promoting the introduction of broadband throughout the region and local businesses in the Partnership area must push for early connection. The introduction of Broadband will not only make existing businesses more competitive, nationally and internationally, but, given its location and environment, will also enhance Cockermouth as a potential destination for high tech businesses to locate.

9 Market site at for Hi-Tech businesses

In order to benefit from the introduction of Broadband, it is essential that suitable, high specification units or serviced land, in a pleasant environment are available. Such sites are available in Cockermouth at the NWDA's Lakeland Business Park and should be marketed to both local and incoming companies as having Broadband connections.

10 Market site at Lakeland Business Park for hotel/tourism attraction

There is a prominent site at the Lakeland Business Park, overlooking the A66, which is allocated in the Local Plan for tourism or hotel use. This is an attractive site which, if developed, could help the local tourism industry.

11 M Sport, Dovenby Hall

This 46.5 hectare former hospital site, set in a magnificent natural landscape, has been completely renovated to a very high standard of development as the head quarters of the Ford Motor Rally Team. A second phase of development on this site has been granted planning permission by Allerdale Council. This phase will include four existing buildings being converted to business units, a lecture theatre, a new workshop and a 28 bedroom hotel. The development will have a positive impact on jobs for local people (minimum of 160 new jobs to be created, many of which will be highly skilled) and on tourism in the area.

12 Former RNAD Site, Broughton

This 300 hectare brownfield site is to be conveyed to Allerdale Council by the Ministry of Defence for decontamination and reclamation, prior to development for leisure and tourism purposes. The development is likely to be phased over a number of years and will not only create a substantial number of jobs but will also have a significant, beneficial impact on the tourism industry throughout West Cumbria.

13 Marketing Manager

It is proposed to appoint a Marketing Manager for Cockermouth who, working with the Town Council, Allerdale Council, the Chamber of Trade, the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership and other area and regional organisations, will attract funding for and produce a Marketing Strategy to include the marketing and development of the following:

- Festivals/events
- Tourism
- Creative Industries
- Training
- Industrial and commercial opportunities
- Farmers' markets

The Marketing Manager will assist other organisations in the area in promoting their activities.

A Promotional Strategy will be produced which will increase the value of tourism to the town and attract overnight visitors throughout the year thereby safeguarding and creating jobs and attracting money into the local economy.

The strategy will include:

- Market Research
- Promotion
- Advertising
- Media and Public Relations
- Direct Mail

14 Festivals/Events

The Marketing Manager will work with the Town Council and other groups to develop a programme of festivals and events for local people and to attract visitors to the area throughout the year. The Manager will liaise with accommodation providers to organise new events at times of the year when there is low take up of accommodation.

15 Training

A Customer Care training programme for tourism, retail and service businesses in the town and the rural areas will be developed.

16 Creative Industries

The Partnership will work with a number of agencies including local arts bodies, the North West Arts Board, Made in Cumbria, the NWDA, Business Link, the Cumbria Institute for the Arts and local arts practitioners to build on existing quality arts provision to develop a cluster of arts and craft industries and outlets in the area, with particular emphasis on Market Place.

8. Sport and Leisure

8.1 The healthcheck revealed that for the size of town, there are many organisations, clubs and groups and a good range of sports facilities, but leisure activities beyond eating out and visiting the local pubs are scarce. School age children feel that there is a shortage of leisure activities.

8.2 The town possesses a 25m swimming pool and has an excellent swimming club with 220 members. Members have achieved national and international recognition. Associated with the pool is an old sports hall, climbing wall and gym. There is a cricket club with its own ground, a rugby union club with modern changing/clubhouse facilities, floodlit pitches and an all weather multi use games area used for tennis and other sports. Cockermouth School has recently developed an astro turf, flood lit pitch for use by the school and the local community for hockey, football and training purposes. There is, however, a lack of good quality football pitches to meet the high demand.

8.3 One of the problems identified is that young people go away to university and are not returning to the area after gaining higher qualifications. The shortage of meeting rooms for the many activities was raised, as was the lack of a large meeting/function/conference facility.

8.4 The issues raised through the topic group included the desire to form a Sports Council which would promote more co-operation between sporting organisations/groups, the need to improve some of the existing facilities, the need for better subsidies to promote the health of the community, the promotion of non-ageism in sport and the need for first aid provision for events.

8.5 The vision states that the regeneration of the town lies in building on its strengths, one of which is its recent successes in improving facilities for sports.

8.6 The relevant strategic objective states that the town should seek to provide for the needs of all sections of the community, which includes seeking to meet the demand for improved facilities.

8.7 Potential Sport and Leisure Projects

The projects, which have been developed by the Sport and Leisure Topic Group and the Partnership Steering Group, are as follows:

1 Establish a Sports Council

The object is to form a discussion group of the various sports organisations to exchange good practice and funding information and to act as a lobbying body for improved facilities in the town.

2 Produce a Directory of Sports Clubs

The Partnership will produce a leaflet containing a directory of sports clubs in the town and surrounding villages, with contact names and details of facilities and booking arrangements.

3 New Sports Hall at Cockermouth School for school/community use

The school has increased in size from 960 pupils to 1300 in a little over 10 years and the existing indoor sports facility at the school is not sufficient for the increased numbers. The existing spaces are also used for the ever increasing frequency of exams. A new, larger facility is needed on site to meet this increased demand. The new sports hall would be made available for community use, as the astro turf pitch currently is.

4 Additional playing fields/drainage at Cockermouth School for school and community use

For the reasons set out above, Cockermouth School do not have sufficient football pitches, and the pitches they do have are badly drained. They are in the process of acquiring a lease on adjacent land to create three full size pitches and three mini pitches. They are also seeking to improve the drainage on the existing pitches. The new pitches will be made available for community use.

5 Developments at Cockermouth Cricket Club

The club acquired their ground some years ago and have since made improvements to the facilities. They now wish to upgrade their facilities to attract Minor Counties matches which will have additional benefits in bringing visitors to the town.

6 Tarn Close Improvements

The Town Council have taken a lease from Allerdale for this athletics track and football pitch. The track is in a very poor condition, the pitch needs improvements and the new changing facilities are required.

7 Conversion of Council Depot Building to Community Facility

This former Council Depot building has been leased by the Town Council with the aim of converting it to a large meeting, function, conference and performance facility for community use. The Kirkgate Centre could be involved in the building in an outreach capacity. There are, however, concerns about the structural integrity of the building and a feasibility study is needed to establish its suitability and the market for these proposed uses.

9. Arts, Culture and Heritage

9.1 The healthcheck revealed that within the town there is a great diversity of organisations, clubs and groups. The Kirkgate Centre provides a theatre with a wide range of events, a cinema and a meeting place and it has a museum group developing a collection, but has no dedicated space to display artefacts. The Victoria Hall, owned by the Town Council, also provides a venue for small events and meetings. There are two small, independently run museums; a toy museum and a printing museum. The latter is at risk due to the pending retirement of the owner. There is a public library and a number of private galleries including the long established Castlegate Gallery, the Skylark Gallery and the newly opened Percy House Gallery in Market Place.

9.2 The Town Council has established outstanding twinning activities with Marvejols, in France, and has been rewarded by the presentation of the European Diploma, the Flag of Honour, the Plaque of Honour and the prestigious Council of Europe, “Europe Prize” in 2000. There are a number of town events that have become regular annual fixtures; the Cockermouth Festival, Carnival, Mayday Fair, Christmas Lights Switch on and associated events, the November Fireworks Display and the Malcolm Wilson Rally.

9.3 A potential weakness is that there is too much reliance on a small number of dedicated volunteer organisers and if these volunteers become unable or unwilling to cope with the pressures, events or groups could fold. It was felt that there is apathy, but when one considers all those willing to volunteer to head organisations and those willing to take part but not actively organise groups, it is a symptom of a relatively small population, widely dispersed.

9.4 The Arts, Culture and Heritage Group have met on a number of occasions and have raised many issues. They felt that the regeneration of the town could be focussed on the arts, culture and heritage and reference was made to Ulverston’s success in this initiative. It should be driven by local needs, not those of its visitors and tourists, although it was accepted that this approach would assist the promotion of the town.

9.5 It was identified that there was scope to develop a programme of festivals, linked to local themes, and to work with hotels to identify low occupancy weekends. Market Place was identified as a potential area to concentrate arts events and activities, possibly closing the street to stage performances. There were thoughts of a street café culture with potential to convert a vacant building into studio/workshops with display and retail space. It was felt necessary to appoint a Town Arts/Culture Manager in order to drive this theme forward.

9.6 The vision states that the regeneration of the town lies in building on its strengths. One of its strengths is its heritage and interest in arts and culture.

9.7 The relevant strategic objective states that the town should seek to provide for the needs of all sections of the community. There is a very strong interest in the arts and this is seen as an appropriate theme to regenerate the town around its historic core of Market Place.

9.8 Potential Arts, Culture and Heritage Projects

The projects that have been developed by this Topic Group and the Partnership Steering Group are as follows:

1 Potential Theme for the Regeneration of the Town

The Arts, Culture and Heritage Group have suggested that the theme for the regeneration of the town should be the development of cultural/creative industries centred on the historic core of Market Place. This builds upon the character of the area, the presence of the Kirkgate Centre, the Castlegate and Percy House galleries, the Toy Museum and the Jennings Brewery Tours. There is an opportunity to interpret the heritage of the town (i.e. links with William Wordsworth, John Dalton, Fearon Fallows and Fletcher Christian) and to explore the links between the arts and science. The Cumbria Institute for the Arts is keen to be involved in implementing this strategy.

There is scope to enhance Market Place by replacing the road and footway surfaces with more traditional materials, rationalising the street furniture and signage to create a more pedestrian friendly area and creating a café environment. The footway could be widened at the entrance to Market Place to improve pedestrian safety and to create an attractive space for street theatre and other events. There will also be opportunities to close off Market Place to traffic for occasions to provide larger scale events such as farmers' markets, craft markets, entertainment and also for a rejuvenated street market.

2 The Acquisition of Suitable Premises as Studio/Workshop Space

The partnership will look to acquire vacant premises in Market Place to convert to studio/workshops for artists, including "dirty arts" i.e. lottery, blacksmith etc, with on site business advice. Should the premises have a shop window, there would be scope to display and retail products produced on site. Contact will be made with Made in Cumbria and there are options for the use of upper floor space for youth activities.

3 Astrological Clock

The Cockermouth Astrological Society are seeking to erect an astrological clock in Market Place as a tribute to Fearon Fallows, who was born in Cockermouth and went on to become Astrologer General. Its proposed location in Market Place would provide an additional attraction and initially a focus for the regeneration and changes to take place in Market Place.

4 Arts Forum

The topic group have developed a good working arrangement and wish to continue working together to see their ideas through to completion. It has been suggested that this group could become an Arts Forum for the town, bringing together a number of practitioners and other creative people to develop the themes and projects in this Action Plan and to act as an advisory group to individuals in this field.

5 Development of Programme of Festivals

The Forum will develop a programme of festivals building on the existing events such as the Cockermouth Festival, the Christmas Lights switch on, the Carnival, the Beer Festival etc. The group have already suggested developing a Book Festival. Working with the hotels, the Forum will identify quiet periods when visitors could be attracted to the town. The Forum will produce a Directory of Events which they will update regularly and which will be used as part of the package to promote the town.

6 Redesign of Wordsworth House

Wordsworth House, the birthplace of William Wordsworth, is owned by the National Trust. The curator has taken time out to research the early years of Wordsworth's childhood with a view to the house being redisplayed and interpreted. The fabric of the building has been checked for its authenticity and a major repair and restoration programme is planned to include restoring the garden, to create a more interesting and popular visitor attraction.

7 Sculpture Trail to Enhance Town Trail

The town trail has been planned and implemented by Cockermouth Civic Trust and is a very popular attraction in the town. It is proposed that the Civic Trust extend the trail and that it be enhanced by a series of sculptures to interpret the town's heritage.

8 Kirkgate Centre

The Kirkgate Centre has commissioned a consultancy to advise on the development of the Centre over the next five years. The study is considering the adequacy of the building and the equipment, the programming, marketing and promotion, outreach work, financial strategy, management, staffing and operations and potential future development directions. The Partnership sees the Centre's aims as being complementary to their aim of regenerating Market Place and they will be looking to work very closely together.

10. Youth Activities

10.1 The healthcheck revealed that within the town there are good schools, many organisations, sports clubs and support groups, there is a theatre with a cinema and the Reef is spoken of highly by both children and parents. Many of the youth leaders are excellent and devote many hours on a voluntary basis, but there is a need for more volunteers. Some of the young people, however, feel that the facilities for them are poor and this leads to a “gang” type culture. There are few people aged 18-22 years as they tend to leave the area to go to university and do not return to find employment. A new university out post is needed in the area, possibly as part of the proposed University of the Lakes. There was demand for further sports facilities in the town.

10.2 The Partnership is particularly committed to meeting the needs of young people and has held a number of meetings with different groups to determine the real needs. A youth topic group was formed from youth leaders and has met on a number of occasions. A member from this group has joined the Steering Group. The co-ordinator has been in contact with Cockermouth School and has addressed the School Council, which has representatives from each year group, and has sought ideas from them. The School Council reported back to a meeting of the Partnership. A youth forum was also organised at the Outback, a new club venue at the Globe Hotel. This event was very well attended and the Partnership was presented with an 80 + name petition demanding a skateboard park in the town. A questionnaire was completed showing that 37 respondents wanted a skateboard park, 17 informal hard areas with basketball nets, 11 used the Reef youth centre and asked for larger premises, 9 sought improved transport to the surrounding villages and 5 wanted youth shelters. There was also a request that a junior athletics club be established. 19 of the young people present were prepared to join a group to help plan and implement the ideas, mainly the skateboard park.

10.3 The issues arising from these varied youth meetings included the need to develop links between schools and the community, the need for detached youth work, a shortage of opportunities for young people post 6 pm, the lack of a central venue for general youth work to act as feeder for other groups, access to facilities in the town from surrounding parishes, a larger Reef Youth Centre was needed, and areas for basketball/skateboarding would be very popular.(just turn up, no charge)

10.4 The vision states that the regeneration of the town lies in building on its strengths. The youth of the area is clearly one of the strengths of the area and the Partnership will seek to broaden their opportunities.

10.5 The relevant strategic objective relating to youth issues states that the town should seek to provide for the needs of all sections of the community.

10.6 Potential Youth Projects

The projects that have been developed by the Youth Topic Group and the Partnership Steering Group are as follows:

1 Larger Premises for the Reef Youth Centre in Town Centre

The Reef Youth Centre in Challoner Street is very successful and popular with parents and children alike. The size of the premises is, however, a limiting factor and more space would allow for a broader range of activities. The Partnership will assist the Reef in seeking suitable premises and funding for larger premises. There have been requests for regular under 18's discos and these may be able to be accommodated at new, larger Reef premises.

2 Cinema

Many young people were not aware that there is a regular cinema at the Kirkgate Centre. Following the meeting with the School Council, links have been developed between the school and the Kirkgate Centre to establish which films young people would like to see at the Kirkgate Centre.

3 Basketball Nets

There have been requests for small hard surfaces in a number of locations throughout the town for informal games of basketball whilst providing meeting places for friends to gather. Clearly these areas will need to be selected carefully so that they are where the youths wish to meet but are also in locations that are safe and well lit and will not be a nuisance to nearby residents. These facilities could be linked with the provision of youth shelters. One location, which has been suggested for basketball, would be the conversion of one of the tennis courts at Harris Park.

4 Skateboard Park

The greatest demand from young people was for a skateboard park within the town. At the Youth Forum meeting, a petition of over 80 names was handed in, seeking a skateboard park in the town. Many youngsters congregate in car parks, Lowther Went and the streets using their skateboards, which is neither safe nor free from nuisance. A central, purpose built facility would address the safety issues and involve young people in healthy exercise. The Partnership is keen to identify a suitable site and seek funding for this provision.

5 Rural Transport

A problem of the lack of suitable public transport has been identified for young people travelling into the town and returning home in the evenings. This issue needs to be investigated further to seek suitable solutions.

6 Harris Park Playground

The children's playground in Harris Park is very well used by young children throughout the summer months. The equipment is now in need of refurbishment to maintain the standard required, otherwise some of the items may need to be removed.

11. Health, Housing, The Elderly and Disability

11.1 The healthcheck has revealed that there are three doctors' surgeries within Cockermouth, one of which is in spacious premises, which were modernised ten years ago. The other two have indicated a wish to find larger premises with the possibility of joining together and providing additional health facilities. There is a cottage hospital in Cockermouth which has limited services. For other services patients have to travel to Workington Infirmary or the West Cumberland Hospital at Whitehaven. Some services are only available at Carlisle and for certain specialist services patients have to travel to Newcastle or Middlesbrough. There are three dental practices in the town, although national health provision is very restricted. The villages have no medical or dental services and are totally reliant upon the provision within Cockermouth.

11.2 Cockermouth has a population of 7790 and its hinterland a further 6734. 53% of the Partnership area is resident in Cockermouth town. The population age profiles are in line with regional and national averages. There is a high proportion of the population of Cockermouth within the professional and managerial groups compared with 29.6% for Cumbria and 26.8% nationally. There is a smaller proportion of elderly people living alone in Cockermouth than regionally or nationally. The demand for houses and flats to let is particularly high in Cockermouth town with demand for family and specialised elderly persons' accommodation especially high. House prices in the private sector have increased by 20-25% over the last year. The town and area has a large number of voluntary groups and organisations and relies a great deal on a number of volunteers.

11.3 The SWOT analyses indicated that there was a quality medical provision in Cockermouth. Worryingly, hospital services in Carlisle have attracted several consultants from West Cumbria. There is insufficient NHS dentistry provision. It was felt that there was a need for a co-ordinated approach to health care services i.e. to incorporate all aspects including alternative therapies – treatment centres for i.e. physiotherapy and chiropody.

11.4 Many of the town centre shops are not accessible (90% of all shops are still impossible) by people with disabilities. Car parking must be accessible to all and there must be a continuous programme of dropped kerb provision. It was felt that there was a lack of support groups for elderly and physically disabled people of all ages. Community transport for health related reasons is a very important issue.

11.5 Potential Projects Relating to Health, The Elderly and Disability

The projects that have been developed by this Topic Group and the Partnership Steering Group are as follows:

1 Programme of dropped kerbs

There is a need to continue with the programme of providing dropped kerbs in the town centre and within car parks. The Partnership will seek the cooperation of the County Council and Allerdale Borough Council who are the responsible authorities.

2 Voluntary help with gardening

Elderly and disabled residents living in houses in the public sector can already seek assistance with the upkeep of their gardens. Residents in private sector housing do not qualify and this scheme is intended to recruit a pool of volunteers to work with West House to tend the gardens of these elderly and disabled residents.

3 Combined GP Practises

Combining two of the town's three GP practises (Fitz Road and South Street GP practices) into new, larger central premises would not only provide a better service for patients but would also provide the opportunity to introduce new health care services.

4 Social Housing for First Time Buyers

The healthcheck has revealed that house prices have risen sharply in and around Cockermouth over the last three years. This has made it increasingly more difficult for first time buyers to get onto the housing ladder. The Partnership will work with housing associations to seek to address this problem.

5 Conversion of Former Kedder Building

Impact Housing Association has acquired the former Kedder Training Building in Market Place. The association will be seeking funding from the Housing Corporation to renovate and convert this building into residential flats on the first floor with commercial space, (shops or offices) on the ground floor. The residential accommodation will go some way to address the problem of the lack of suitable rented accommodation in Cockermouth for young people. These premises have been vacant for seven or eight years and have become an eyesore. This acquisition and renovation will have a major, beneficial impact on Market Place, as it is in a key location on the corner, right at the entrance of Market Place.

12. Transport and Accessibility

12.1 The healthcheck revealed that the town did not have either a bus or train station. The nearest railway station is at Workington, 8 miles to the west, but to access the West Coast main line the closest station is at Penrith, some 30+ miles to the east.

12.2 There were adequate car parking spaces, although the recently introduced short stay on Fairfield car park was resulting in it being well under used whilst the other car parks are near to capacity. Allerdale Council have decided to introduce a longer period of stay, which will result in better utilisation of car spaces.

12.3 Public transport between the villages and Cockermouth is not providing the service required by residents who have become more and more reliant upon their own cars for journeys to and from Cockermouth.

12.4 The Greenway, a combined footpath and cycle route, runs through Cockermouth from east to west along the former railway line. The C2C route and the Reivers' cycle ways also run through Cockermouth.

12.5 During the period of the preparation of this healthcheck, a traffic management scheme has been introduced into the town centre. It has not been universally accepted and has led to a number of meetings within the Partnership as well as two public meetings with the Highway Authority. Many issues have been raised regarding manoeuvres at junctions, increased traffic on Kirkgate, traffic lights etc.

12.6 The SWOT analyses identified the strengths of the town as being its wide Main Street, enabling ease of access and its ample and well spaced car parking availability.

12.7 Among its weaknesses were poor and confusing signposting, car parking poorly used, inadequate coach parking and set-down information, poor traffic management and flows, under-developed or poorly linked, safe cycle routes and poor access for mobility impaired pedestrians.

12.8 Public transport lacks disabled access facilities. Ease of transport outside the local area with links to Newcastle for hospital visiting and the timing of bus services and lack of bus services, to the villages were identified as particular problems. There is a general feeling that public transport is only available between 9.30am – 2.30pm as it is geared up to service schools in the mornings and afternoons. There seems to be an acceptance that there is a need to have access to a car, due the inadequacies of the public transport services. This of course leads to public transport routes being cut and the elderly and disadvantaged becoming even more isolated.

12.9 There are a number of congested junctions within the town centre following the introduction of the traffic management scheme at Easter. Market Place has become an unofficial turning circle and it is difficult for pedestrians to cross at the wide mouth. In Main Street and Station Street illegal parking is an issue. Town centre pavements are appalling for wheelchair and pram pushers, double pavements are bad and they are all bumpy. There is a clutter of signs and A boards on the footways which makes movement by people with disabilities and parents with push chairs extremely difficult.

12.10 There is a great opportunity to upgrade the existing cycleway, by adding lights, applying a better wearing course and to extend and join cycle routes to provide an accessible and comprehensive safe route to all schools. There is an opportunity to improve and sort out traffic flows and car parking, including information on disc parking requirements and also to review, clarify and improve signposting for all users. All buses need to have disabled access and be child/young children friendly i.e. Easy Rider type. Perhaps smaller vehicles with wheelchair lifts would be better for servicing the town and the villages. Further potential car and coach parking needs to be identified on the edge of the town with suitable signage to assist visitors to the town.

12.11 A new access onto the A66 could help to reduce congestion in the town centre. People in the villages without their own transport need delivery services and/or community transport for important visits to the doctors, pharmacy, dentist, hospital visiting etc. An express bus service to link with trains at Penrith is needed to create an integrated transport link and an integration of fares.

12.12 There are opportunities for funding community transport through the County Council and the Countryside Agency. Villages can also group together to investigate potential solutions to their transport problems under the Vital Villages Initiative.

12.13 There are serious concerns of potential accidents on St Helens Street, as school children travelling to and from school tend to walk three or four abreast in the road. A further threat is the potential of losing rural public transport if it is not used sufficiently.

12.14 The Mobility Topic Group has utilised workshops, resident and user surveys plus open meetings to establish the issues that are considered to affect Cockermouth. An accessibility review was also conducted with Allerdale Disability Association. The main issues raised were car parking – availability and cost, how to best accommodate coaches, the newly introduced traffic management plan and accessibility around the town, poor public transport system and the need to improve facilities for cycling in the town. There was also great concern about the introduction of the town centre traffic management scheme. There have been a number of teething problems and shift of traffic flows onto other roads. Gallowbarrow and Kirkgate in particular have suffered through substantial increases in traffic.

12.15 Potential Transport and Accessibility Projects

An action plan has been produced through the Mobility Group. This document summarises all the significant points raised to date together with a range of views on possible solutions and actions. Priorities have been established on the basis of the concerns, not on the solutions. It is recognised that some of them – a new link to the A66 – will require major expenditure and timing. Consultation with the appropriate officers and bodies responsible for the elements is considered essential to evolve a realistic and practical plan to address the concerns expressed here.

Five major headings have emerged:

- Planning & Traffic Management
- Parking
- Public Transport
- Accessibility
- Cycles/Safe Routes To School

The full list of issues raised in the Mobility Action Plan is included in Appendix 5.

1 Full traffic survey in town linked to Local Plan proposals

There is no coherent, forward-looking traffic plan available for review, discussion, consultation or continued development. A new comprehensive overall plan is required for the town due to the enormous changes in housing, car ownership and usage, and retail development since the last significant review in 1996. A new plan for local transport and mobility linked to the Allerdale Local Plan is required. This should have a full analysis of current and projected housing developments, car ownership, plus tourist/visitor numbers to determine best options to allow Cockermouth to plan for increased mobility demands whilst retaining its 'gem' qualities and prioritising safe pedestrian movement in all areas of the town.

Ideas put forward for consideration within this comprehensive plan included: moving towards a circulatory inner ring plan, with traffic speed controls and pedestrian crossing priorities; the provision of an alternative route to allow Windmill Lane/Slatefell/ Simonscales Lane traffic to avoid the town centre if travelling to Workington or Carlisle – a northern outer loop should be considered from the A66 to the Carlisle road.

2 Research for new link to A66

A new access onto the A66 from the Lorton Road has been discussed as a possibility for a number of years. It has been raised again in the topic group meetings and it is suggested that the necessary research required to justify this link be commenced as soon as practicable.

3 Strategic review of on road and off road car parking

Allerdale Council are due to take responsibility for on-street car parking in the next few months, in addition to the car parks that the council already controls. Also the traffic management scheme in the town centre has now been operating for over six months. It is therefore considered that it is an opportune time to review the operation of car parking in Cockermouth with the object of seeking the right balance of short and long term parking with the aim of providing a system acceptable to the traders, the local population (including the rural villages) and visitors to the town and to consider the capacity of the overall provision. The Partnership is strongly opposed to the concept of paying for on-street parking which is under consideration by Allerdale Council.

4 Additional Car Parks

The Partnership has identified part of the County Depot site in Sullart Street and the former gas works site as potential addition sites for car parking. The Sullart Street site would be subject to the depot relocating. The Partnership has submitted a request to the County Council for the gas works site to be included in the derelict land reclamation programme.

5 Programme of dropped kerbs

The accessibility audit has identified the need for additional dropped kerbs throughout the town centre. (Full Audit in Appendix 6) A programme of improvements should be agreed with the County as the Highway Authority.

6 Extension of Greenway and Incorporation of “Better Ways to School”

The Greenway, a combined footway and cycleway through the town, has proved to be a hugely popular. Discussions are on going with the County Council with the aim of extending this route and constructing branches into it as part of the government campaign, “Better Ways to School”. Part of this plan involves access to All Saints School and Cockermouth School, via Waste Lane and along St Helens Street, which has been identified as a particularly dangerous route. Cockermouth School intend to seek funding for cycle racks and other facilities to complement this initiative.

7 Improvement to Rubbybanks Road and New Street

Part of this unadopted road was made up as part of the flood defence work undertaken by the Environment Agency six years ago. Part of the route remains unmade and the Partnership will seek a funding package to complete the make up and adoption of the remainder of this route.

8 Community Transport

The Partnership is investigating linking into the existing Rural Community Transport scheme which is managed by the County Council and run by a pool of voluntary drivers. The scheme would operate throughout the whole of the area covered by the Partnership and would be particularly useful in the villages. Potential users would ring a central co-ordinator who would have a number of volunteer drivers who they could call upon. The type of journeys considered appropriate would be hospital visiting, the provision of safe

return transport for young persons in the late evening and any reasonable requests which would help rural people to feel less isolated.

13. Project Appraisal

13.1 The potential projects referred to above, (and full list shown in Appendix 7) were considered by the Steering Group with the aim of reducing the number of projects in the final Action Plan. The Steering Group met on three occasions and using techniques recommended by the Countryside Agency eliminated and amalgamated the potential projects to arrive at a list which was considered challenging, yet achievable within three years. The first workshop involved giving scores to each of the projects for:

- degree of difficulty (simple, hard or difficult)
- implementable (can be done, more thought needed or weird - unacceptable)
- level of importance (must be done, should be done or could be done)

13.2 Using this technique a number of projects were eliminated and other similar projects were amalgamated. A second workshop considered further evaluation techniques, as follows:

- was there a clear lead agency to take the project forward?
- how well progressed was the project?
- is funding for the project likely to be available?
- assessing against the vision and the strategic objectives

13.3 The third workshop considered a final technique to identify links between individual projects across the various topic groups. This demonstrated how by grouping projects a more strategic approach to regeneration of the town could be taken. The results of this appraisal exercise are illustrated in Appendix 8.

13.4 The 46 projects resulting from this process are presented in detail in the Action Plan together with the lead agency, potential funding partners, year of implementation, estimated cost where known, outcomes and outputs.

13.5 A glossary of abbreviations used is included as Appendix 9.

13.6 The projects fall within five main groups:

- Strategic Commercial/Economic Initiatives
- Image and Promotion
- Market Place
- Town Infrastructure/Redevelopment
- Community Needs/Social Capacity Building

13.7 Strategic and economic initiatives include a number of projects which may be led by the private or public sector, but where the Partnership, through the Project Manager, may be able to assist with funding advice and networking and will ensure that each of these project leaders is aware of the other projects within the Action Plan and the potential for working together. (eg Moota Green Business Park, Cockermouth School Eco Centre and Local Agenda 21)

13.8 The Partnership is committed to improving the image and promoting the town and the rural area by appointing a Marketing Manager to work with a number of existing groups. The Manager will take on board the design work undertaken by McCann Erickson in developing a new image for the town. The Manager will also work with the Town Council, other groups and accommodation providers in building on the existing festivals and events and develop a programme of events throughout the year. The image will also be improved by giving grants for enhancement of traditional shop fronts and dealing with a number of eyesores. Further work to develop and promote the successful town trail will be undertaken by the Partnership working with the Civic Trust. The Manager will take a key role in encouraging and supporting customer care training for the retail and tourism sectors.

13.9 There are a number of interrelated projects concerned with the regeneration of the historic Market Place. They cover environmental improvements, economic regeneration, reuse and refurbishment of existing buildings and the creation of a cluster of arts and cultural industries, building upon the successful Kirkgate Centre, a number of galleries and working with local artists and crafts workers. It is proposed that a major piece of consultancy be commissioned to undertake a multi disciplinary feasibility study into this potential and to seek designation as a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme from English Heritage.

13.10 A number of projects relate to infrastructure improvement. These include reviewing the car parking strategy and seeking additional land for car parks, extending cycle routes, co-ordination and rationalisation of signage, enhancing road and footpath surfaces, developing a programme of dropped kerbs and the construction of a new footbridge over the River Derwent. Also included within this category are improvements to the tourism infrastructure such as the redesign and fitting out of Wordsworth House.

13.11 A number of projects have been grouped together as community needs/social capacity building projects and include youth initiatives, sports and leisure facilities and projects related to health provision and the elderly. The provision for young people is seen as a particular priority by the Partnership and includes play facilities for young children, informal play facilities for teenagers to meet both indoor and outdoor, and issues relating to rural transport. The Reef Youth Centre needs larger premises and the Partnership will work with the organisation to assist in the search and in identifying a funding package. There is a proposal to establish both a Sports Council and an Arts Forum to lobby on behalf of the town and work with and assist individual clubs. A number of projects involving bringing together volunteers to help with elderly persons' gardens and with running rural transport are proposed. The Partnership will also work with the GPs in the town to assist them in their search for more convenient and larger premises.

14. Risks and Constraints

14.1 During the project appraisal exercise undertaken by the Steering Group, all the potential projects were debated and a number were excluded from the Action Plan on the basis that they were unlikely to proceed for a number of reasons. Some of the projects were considered to be too ambitious, for example a 50-metre swimming pool, whereas others would be unlikely to be successfully implemented within the three years implementation programme.

14.2 There is a risk that all the funding required for the three years' employment and support of the project officer will not be in place when the Partnership are ready to advertise for the post. This could place constraints on the Partnership's ability to commence the recruitment process.

14.3 The selection of the right person for the Project Officer post is crucial to the success of the programme. Therefore the whole selection procedure must be well thought through and planned, and be thorough in its implementation.

14.4 Once in post, the Project Officer will have significant responsibility and accountability. Support from many individuals and groups, however, will be available. The officer will be responsible to the Company Board, but will also report to, and be supported by, the Steering Group and the wider Partnership membership. Professional support and advice will be available from officers from Allerdale Borough Council, The County Council, the Countryside Agency and the North West Development Agency.

14.5 Some of the projects will require substantial funding from other bodies and the Project Officer will therefore need to be persuasive in order that these bodies prioritise those projects that are contained within the Action Plan. The fact that the projects are supported by a thorough healthcheck and public consultation exercise, and that they are presented in a strategic way in this Action Plan will help to convince these agencies to co-operate with the Partnership whilst external funding is available.

14.6 Informal discussions have taken place with many of the funding bodies and the lead agencies to reduce the risk of projects not proceeding, although nothing can be firmly accepted until formal applications are made.

14.7 The Action Plan will need to be kept in regular review throughout the three years of implementation as priorities may change and new opportunities for funding or partnerships present themselves.

14.8 The success of this programme will depend largely on the continued commitment of the Board members, the Steering Group and the wider Partnership established throughout the first stage of this Market Towns Initiative.

15. Milestones

The key milestones in progressing this project will be:

1. September/October 2002 Funding submissions for Project Manager post submitted
2. October/November 2002 Details of accommodation, administrative support, furniture and equipment, together with appointment costs, set up cost and annual revenue costs agreed by Partnership
3. October/November 2002 Job description, person specification and terms of appointment agreed by Partnership in liaison with Countryside Agency.
4. November/December 2002 Agreement of Draft Action Plan by Cockermouth Partnership and submission to Countryside Agency and North West Development Agency
5. December 2002 Advertise for Project Manager in Guardian and local press
6. November/December 2002 Funding for Project Manager secured
7. December 2002 Final Draft Action Plan agreed
8. December 2002 Publicity and promotion of Action Plan
9. December 2002 Formation of company limited by guarantee – Cockermouth Partnership Ltd
10. December 2002/January 2003 Project Manager appointed
11. March 2003 Cockermouth Partnership Project Manager commences in post
12. March 2003 Project Manager in liaison with Steering Group to produce programme for each of three years of the project
13. March 2003 Project Manager, working with Steering Group, to produce detailed work plan with priorities for year one
14. March/April 2003 Project Manager commences work on funding applications for projects
15. May 2003 Project Manager to make first progress report to company board (thereafter to report monthly)
16. December 2003 Project Manager to produce detailed work plan with priorities for year two
17. March 2004 First annual review and evaluation of progress against year 1 work plan
18. December 2004 Project Manager to produce detailed work plan with priorities for year three
19. March 2005 Second annual review and evaluation of progress against year 2 work plan
20. September 2005 Consider situation with outstanding projects/new projects and consider future of project and company, prepare funding submissions to continue project, if appropriate
21. March 2006 Third annual review and final external evaluation of whole three year project

16. Next Steps

16.1 This Action Plan is to be considered by the two sponsoring agencies - the Countryside Agency and the North West Development Agency. When the plan has been agreed, the Partnership will implement the Action Plan over the next three years with continuing support from these two agencies, Cockermouth Town Council, Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council and also working closely with the lead agencies identified for each of the projects.

16.2 The Steering Group has agreed that the appropriate body to take responsibility for implementing the Action Plan is a company limited by guarantee. Directors have been appointed, the Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association have been agreed and the documents have been lodged with Companies House. The company will advertise for and appoint a Project Manager on a three year term to work with the Board, the Steering Group, the wider Partnership and with other partners and funders.

16.3 Submissions have been made to a number of funding bodies for the three years' funding necessary for the Project Manager post and associated costs, and the post will be advertised as soon as the Action Plan is finally agreed and all the funding is guaranteed.

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

17.1 The main sponsoring Bodies, the Countryside Agency and the North West Development Agency will require that the Action Plan be monitored regularly and evaluated against its target outcomes and outputs on an annual basis. A detailed work plan for year one of the plan will be prepared by the Project Manager working with the Steering Group and the Board. The second and third year plans will be prepared in outline at this stage. The Project Manager will be responsible to the Board for the delivery of these work plans against agreed targets.

17.2 The Project Manager will need particular skills and experience to deliver the Action Plan, working with funders and lead agencies. The successful candidate will need to demonstrate knowledge and success of funding projects, to be capable of developing individual projects with the lead agencies, to pursue appropriate funding from a range of funding bodies and to let and manage contracts, as necessary.

17.3 The Project Manager will present a written report to the Company at their regular meetings, on progress being made on individual projects against the agreed work plan. The work plan may need to be adjusted as projects slip for a number of reasons or move forward, or as projects change and new ones are identified. Regular evaluation of the process and of individual projects will be undertaken at the end of each of the three years. The advisors from the Countryside Agency, North West Development Agency, Allerdale and the County Council will be asked to assist in the evaluation process. A final evaluation will be undertaken at the end of the three year implementation process.

18. Contact Details

18.1 Chair of the Partnership and Steering Group

The Chair of the Partnership and of the Steering Group is the Town Mayor of the year. The Mayor will also chair the Company and will be the sole councillor on that Board. The Town Mayor is currently Councillor Derwent Newton. The Partnership would like to thank past chairs – Councillor Isobel Burns and Councillor Eric Nicholson for their assistance in helping to bring the Partnership together and for forging links with the community.

18.2 Secretariat and Administration

Sue Hannah has been secretary to the Partnership and the Steering Group and has been appointed as Company Secretary for the new company. Chris George is treasurer to the Partnership and a board member.

18.3 Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator for this Healthcheck project has been The Len Cockcroft Consultancy Limited from Cockermouth.

18.4 The Membership of the Steering Group

Derwent Newton - Chair (Town Councillor and current Mayor)
Sue Hannah – Secretary (Cockermouth Chamber of Trade)
Chris George – Treasurer (Cockermouth And District Action Group)
Eric Nicholson (Cumbria County Councillor)
Alan Clark (Cumbria County Councillor)
Alan Smith (Allerdale Councillor)
Christine Smith (Allerdale Councillor)
Margaret Jackson (Town Councillor)
Alan Kennon (Town Councillor)

Tim Heslop (Rural Representative)

Michael Dawson (Rural Representative)
Maureen Dodsworth (Cockermouth Civic Trust)
Jonathon Hayward (Youth Representative)
Peter Greenhill (Mitchells - Commercial Representative)
Frank Almond (Sainburys - Commercial Representative)
Richard Cross (Co-opted Member)
Steven Coates (Co-opted – Town Councillor and Deputy Town Mayor)

18.5 Professional Support by:

Ben Brinicombe (Allerdale Regeneration Dept)
Phil Atherton/Georgina Ternent/ Amanda Postlethwaite (CCC Neighbourhood Developments)
Chris Kolek/Juliet Grace/ Ruth Parker (Countryside Agency)
Jennifer Wilson/Gill Ingram North West Development Agency

18.6 Main contact details:

Cllr Derwent Newton, Partnership Chair

c/o Town Hall, Cockermouth

Sue Hannah, Partnership Secretary,

c/o Limelighting, Station Road, Cockermouth

Tel: 01900 822480

Email: sue@limelighting.demon.co.uk

Chris George, Partnership Treasurer

10 Caldecot Avenue, Cockermouth

Tel: 01900 828209

Email: chris@caldecav.freeserve.co.uk

The Len Cockcroft Consultancy, Co-ordinator

18 Deer Orchard Close, Cockermouth CA13 9JH

Tel: 01900 827262

Email: len@cockcroft1.freeserve.co.uk

Appendix 1 Cockermouth Partnership SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Geographic & Historic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location near to Lake District & coast – a ‘gateway’ • Close to A66 • Historic small market ‘Gem’ town • Wide, impressive Main Street • Distinctive character of architectural merit • Two magnificent rivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor control of developments – out-of-character housing, bright green tarmac • Lack of design/development guidelines to give direction • Run down areas, eg Skinner Street, Market Place • Focus of Town Centre moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality of planning decisions through design controls/tighter specifications, including preparation and use of reference Townscape scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewed as a prosperous town • Risk of losing/diluting character through change • Risk of damaging town character through poor planning decisions • Bypassed for funding by other nearby towns
<p>Cultural & Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of quality restaurants & pubs • Good schools, a theatre and cinema • Outstanding twinning activities & achievements • Town events: Cockermouth Festival, Carnival, Donkey Derby, Mayday Fair, Christmas Lights & events, Malcolm Wilson Rally • Range/diversity of clubs & societies • General friendliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on voluntary organisers – events & clubs • Lack of voluntary organisers • Poor facilities for young persons, giving rise to ‘gang’ type activities • Under-utilised buildings – Kedder building, Workshop depot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote & develop sporting & recreational facilities – cycling, fishing • Develop youth opportunities/activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of social venues by lack of trade • Loss of events or clubs through lack of finance, enthusiasm of organisers or supporters • Loss of community spirit • Apathy to improve and cope with changes taking place
<p>Town Centre & Retail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety & diversity of small independent shops – food, delicatessen, craft • Mitchells Auction Rooms, fine art & antiques • Not dominated by large national chains • Well-supported Sunday market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty shops and properties – poor image • Virtually non-existent produce/town market • Out-of-town growth – Aldi, Lakes Home Centre • Little late night or Sunday opening • Few national big name shops • Gaps in shop types – children’s clothing, electrical • Uneven customer care standards • Chewing gum & dog fouling too prominent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late night & Sunday opening, introduce loyalty card • Extend market town concept - develop street market, local produce & arts/crafts, covered area? • Complete Sainsburys development, remove uncertainty, regain confidence in town centre • Improve customer care standards and improve perception of local shops • Encourage new businesses to fill gaps, new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influx of chain stores with inappropriate frontage and loss of distinctive town character • Increased competition from other towns/cities • Shop closures as a result of Sainsburys • Do nothing and allow decline to continue • Allow the main retail focus to move out of the centre • Loss of peripheral services – banks, police
<p>Tourism & Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good walking centre, in & around town, Harris Park, Town Trail • Distinctive, quality museums & galleries – Toy, Mineral, Printing, Castlegate, ReGeneration • Interesting attractions – Jennings Brewery tour, Sheep & Wool Centre, Wordsworth House • Cockermouth Castle, Isel Hall • Range and quality of accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities not open when tourists are in town • Disc parking misunderstood by tourists • Wordsworth House opening hours and dates are fragmented and inconvenient • The Castle is not open at all • Bus connections are not well known or promoted • There are no through ticketing arrangements to book all the way by train + bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better co-ordinated promotion & publicity distribution of tourist strengths as a Gem town, to reinforce identity (inc. internet, M6 advertising) • Develop town as a quality event centre - cultural, European focus, languages, conferences • Improve town information in town – maps and routes marked from car parks • Use tourist traffic to Tourist Information Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing and lose tourist potential • Parking confusion and difficulties continue to deter tourists

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible through bus/rail connection • On Coast to Coast cycle route 		<p>to build Market Place trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and better promotion of other famous sons – Fallows, Dalton 	
<p>Traffic & Pedestrian Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide streets enabling ease of access • Ample car parking availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-developed or linked safe cycle routes. • Poor & confusing general signposting • Car parking poorly used • Inadequate coach parking & set-down information • Poor traffic management & flows • Poor access for mobility impaired pedestrians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade existing cycleway, lights/surface, and extend/join together to provide an accessible and comprehensive safe route to all schools • Improve and sort out traffic flows & car parking, including information on disc parking requirements • Review, clarify and improve signposting for all users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident potential along St Helens Street for school children • Loss of bus services
<p>Business & Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good locations on new parks • Variety of professional and business services • Health of established businesses, eg Jennings • Wide range of experience and skills within local residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty units • Low range of local employment opportunities for all ages and skills • Lack of funding/grant assistance to encourage new businesses • Lack of promotion of opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage new businesses which do not rely on strong city links • Improve promotion of town as potential business location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignore threats to existing businesses • Take action that ends up damaging existing businesses • Ignore potential of the town as a business location

Appendix 2 SWOT Analysis Topic Groups

Workshop: Environment - Group leader: Richard Evans

Strengths

- Geographical position: accessibility to other places
- Historical town

- Attractive parks
- Compact size
- Still performs its original purpose
- Historical foci – Wordsworth House, Castle etc
- Position on two rivers
- “Green” town: good sports facilities
- Views into and out of town are of high quality
- Quality shopping environment
- Good car parks
- Good schools

Weaknesses

- General untidiness: litter, chewing gum etc
- Vacant properties, especially in Market Place
- Run down feeling of Market Place
- Local eyesores: Former Walkers Yard, Tweedmill Lane, Skinner Street, Former Kedder Training Building in Market Place, Council Depot
- Lack of integration on public services/policy
- Poor road surfaces, inappropriate for historic town
- Town is not generally pedestrian friendly
- Car parking strategy/pricing
- Traffic

Opportunities

- Proximity to Lake District National Park
- Potential to improve shopping environment and potential for more specialist shops
- Castle: potential tourist attraction
- Market Place: potential for enhancement
- Expand on leisure/café culture

- Moribund market – compare Keswick
- Vacant buildings, underused buildings: market place, market hall
- Street and property maintenance (grant schemes)
- Town Trail, Town walks
- Rivers have great potential

Threats

- Suburban housing sprawl: scale, design
- Trading conditions (Sainsburys)
- Traffic circulation/management
- Proliferation of hot food takeaways
- Lack of vision/”joined up “ thinking
- Vandalism/youth culture: policing, car crime
- Lack of local political clout
- Too much reliance on tourism?
- Mitchell’s relocation: loss of character, loss of agricultural trade
- Decline of Market Place: future role
- Town increasingly becoming a “dormitory” town

Summary

It was recognised that Cockermouth has many obvious strengths, particularly its historic character and landscape setting on two rivers on the edge of the Lake District. Its character as a small market town was also emphasised and this led to some concerns that this character was under threat. Suburban sprawl, the design of new housing, traffic circulation were cited as threats. The town’s weaknesses were not considered serious and were perceived to be mainly the condition of the fabric and the condition and appearance of street surfaces was raised. Consideration of opportunities often spilled into economic issues; those identified were closely related to the town’s character and location.

Workshop: Economy - Group Leader: Ben Brincombe

Strengths

- Links with farming community
- A market town

- Links with Sellafield
- Small shops/range of shops
- Attractive town – human scale
- Educational facilities – good quality, popular catchment area
- Range of businesses – Strawberry How, Lakeland Business Park, Derwent Mills

Weaknesses

- Outside the National Park
- In between lakes and coast – ignored
- Commitment to Tourism?
- Organisation of car parking
- Employment opportunities for young people
- Supply of employment land within the town
- Range of shops within the town – white goods? Major DIY
- Too many second homes
- Street market declined
- Condition of Market Place

Opportunities

- Farmers' markets
- Sainsbury's could be an opportunity for the town
- Cockermouth should promote itself better
- Need for starter homes/affordable homes
- Market Place – re-themed?
- Develop tourism 'product' of the town
- Develop the depot building as a local/conference resource

Threats

- Character of the town may change with increased tourism – Keswick effect
- Encroachment of second homes

Ideas

- Promote opportunities for specialist shops to “trade off” Sainsburys
- Review car park charges in Wakefield Road
- Look at range of housing opportunities/sites
- Look at availability of industrial land
- Market Place as a café scene

Workshop: Social and Community - Group Leader: Joan Ellis

Strengths

- Lots of organisations
- Lots of support groups
- Easier now for newcomers to integrate

- Good quality of life
- Kirkgate Centre
- Good Secondary School
- Quality workforce
- Quality medical provision
- Good swimming club – 220 members

Weaknesses

- Lack of affordable housing
- Increasing cost of housing
- Lack of research into demographics
- Poor transport links by rail from Penrith
- Miss out on funding
- Few people aged 18-22 years
- Complicated funding maze
- Poor swimming facilities
- Shortage of meeting spaces
- Need for large meeting/function space

Opportunities

- University outpost needed
- Demand for new sports facilities
- Low cost housing for young families
- Inward investment
- Tourism development

Threats

- Becoming a dormitory town
- Sale of local authority housing
- Growth in holiday/second homes
- Brain drain to universities
- Young people not returning to area after gaining higher education

Workshop: Transport and Accessibility - Group Leader: Georgina Ternent

Strengths

- The Greenway cycle/footpath
- Car parks well spaced within the town

Weaknesses

- Ease of transport outside local area – links to Newcastle bus 685 for hospital visiting, timing of bus services and lack of, to villages for example for doctors' appointments
- General feeling that public transport is only available between 9.30am – 2.30pm - geared up to service schools morning and afternoon
- Need to have access to a car or private transport
- Taxi providers – none available early mornings and mid afternoon
- Ease of access to services –not easy, 9 members of group, none work in Cockermouth, all use cars to go to work and nobody car shares. It is virtually impossible to get to work on time using public transport. Question what percentage of people would change if public transport were available, however
- Public transport lacks disabled access facilities
- Congested junctions – Station Street/Main Street, Lorton Street/Station Street, South Street – both ends, Top of Kirkgate/Windmill Lane/Lorton Road, outside “old” Mitchells/Station Street, Gallowbarrow (pre traffic management scheme)
- The town centre is seen as a hot spot – pedestrianisation?
- Market Place unofficial turning circle – mini roundabout here?
- Market Place at mouth difficult for pedestrians to cross
- Main Street and Station Street illegal parking is an issue
- Town centre pavements are appalling for wheelchair and pram pushers, double pavements are bad and they are all bumpy.
- Sandwich boards case an obstacle course for wheelchairs and buggies and are dangerous for people with visual impairments
- Clutter of signage
- Over 30 miles to nearest main line railway station

Opportunities

- Cycle paths - Riverdale estate to connect to Greenway, link to schools, improve lighting
- Footpaths – maintenance and lighting needs to be improved
- Express bus service to link with trains at Penrith – integrated transport link, integrate fares
- All buses etc. need to have disabled access and be child/young children friendly i.e. Easy Rider type. Perhaps smaller vehicles with wheelchair lifts would be better for servicing the town.
- Cheaper taxis for local residents. Dial -a-ride type service for doctors visits.
- New access onto A66 could reduce congestion in town centre
- Information is easy to obtain but larger print would be better on timetables etc.
- Car/coach parking needs to be identified on edge of town with signage

Threats

- Introduction of street parking charges
- Further traffic congestion
- Peripheral streets affected as a result of town centre traffic management

Appendix 3 SWOT Analysis Rural Group

Workshop: Rural Areas – Group Leader: Georgina Ternent

Environment

- People like living in villages – small communities, but villages are growing with more houses but less facilities
- Green areas are getting built on

- Tighter planning controls needed
- Local plans for villages
- Cockermouth is more environmentally attractive than Workington etc.
- Definition of a village – should it have a pub, post office, shop, church: can they support the development of the local economy?
- Over development of tourism could turn the town into a fudge and ice cream centre
- Empty shop in town centre (former Cellar Five)

Economy

- Village shops and post offices – how often are they used, how viable are they?
- Development of local food co-ops, growers and suppliers
- People shopping on Internet find this easier than coming into town. With a delivery charge of say £5 per delivery this may or may not be cost effective
- Sustainable services
- Over reliance on a few employers – what do we do about this?
- What is the future, is it retail, tourism or something else?
- If we look to increase tourism we will need a big hotel development, more car parking, coach parking, holiday cottages, campsites etc.
- Do we want this sort of development?

Social and Community

- Services provided in the villages by the ice cream van, milkman, vegetable delivery van etc. are not just about providing goods
- Home delivery services are vital
- Hospital services in Carlisle have attracted several consultants from West Cumbria
- House prices are driving out born and bred locals

Transport and Accessibility

- Dean – poor public transport however most people seem to have a car, as there are few facilities in the village, people accept this when they move to a village like Dean
- Need plenty of car parks in Cockermouth
- Villages need home delivery/collection services for doctors, pharmacy, dentist, hospital visiting etc.
- Rural transport partnership through Vital Villages

- Parish Transport Grant
- Services need to be sustainable and matched to needs.
- Who will pick up the tab on new services after the 3 years funding has expired?
- Post bus – does this still exist as a service? If so what is available and where is the information available. Poor infrastructure.
- Bus service X5 praised.
- One way systems for Cockermouth town centre.

General

- Cockermouth is type of town that attracts middle class business people and has good schools etc.
- If restrictions are made too tight then business/job creators will go elsewhere, Cockermouth could lose out to Carlisle.
- There has to be a balance to support all the towns in West Cumbria, sustainable development/employment appropriate for the towns and villages could reduce travel.
- Build on strengths and qualities, individuality
- Action plan needs to be realistic in order to receive funding.
- Unique Selling Point.

Appendix 4 Issues

Environment

- Vision for future (not short sighted)
- Market Place regeneration
- Town Centre design guidance

- Authorities to use existing powers
- Routes to schools – pedestrian / disabled
- Housing / urban sprawl

Economy

- Strengthening retail and service / leisure businesses (related to lifestyle of residents)
- Enhancements of empty buildings (for retail / accommodation)
- Market the “Market Town” (eg Christmas lights, carnival, rally)
- Management of car parking / traffic / access
- Existence of market (stalls)
- Market Cockermouth as a small business opportunity (land use)
- Use of depot building

Health, the Elderly and Disability

- Town centre - must be accessible in all areas (90% of all shops are still impossible)
- Car parking - must be accessible to all – consider kerbs.
- Community transport – for health matters – remember disability and isolation
- A lack of support groups for elderly and physically disabled of all ages
- Lack of sufficient NHS dentistry provision
- Need a co-ordinated approach to health care services ie to incorporate all aspects including alternative therapies – treatment centres for ie physio and chiropody

Youth

Develop links between schools and community

- Shortage of opportunities post 6 pm
- Lack of central venue for general youth work to act as feeder for other groups
- Need for detached youth work

- Improving access to groups – circumstances should not affect which groups are available
- Access to facilities in the town from surrounding parishes
- More co-operation between sporting organisations / groups

Potential project: Youth fair / forum / recruitment evening

Note: Further Education must be linked to employment opportunities

Cockermouth School Council

Cinema – not aware of cinema at Kirkgate Centre – potential link up between Kirkgate and school

Ice skating – temporary facilities a possibility

U 18's nights as previously at Uncle Sams

The Reef is very popular – play stations etc – need something else like that

Basketball/skateboarding – just turn up, no charge

Under 18's disco once a fortnight – venue? Possibly at rugby club-how about some sixth formers to keep order!

Public transport to villages, especially evenings

Sport

- Creation of a Cockermouth Sports Council
- Improvement of facilities
- Better subsidies – health of community
- Promotion of non-ageist links to other sports
- First aid provision for sports events

Arts, Culture and Heritage

- Regeneration led by local needs not visitors and tourists
- Establish unique market and brand
- Lobby to open Castle to public
- Close Market Place on regular occasions as performance venue
- Plan programme of themed festivals – linked to local themes, work with hotels to identify low occupancy weekends
- Links between art / technology / making – sculpture trail
- Studio and start up spaces with cheap housing accommodation
- Exploiting our rivers (new bridge?)
- Social and recreation facilities for youth
- Street cafes / licenced / Jennings?
- “Dirty workshop” space
- Convert Kedder Building, catalyst to regeneration - multi use, + pavement widening, performance space, possibly bring TIC forward, Made in Cumbria shop, café, upstairs showrooms/exhibition, back rooms – dirty workshops
- Community gallery space
- Future of Depot building
- The Arts as a Regeneration Tool – compare Ulverston
- A Town Arts/Culture Manager
- Wordsworth House opening times

Traffic and Mobility

- Car parking
- Traffic and management plan
- Public transport
- Accessibility around the town
- Cycle movement – use
- Coaches

Rural Areas

- Affordable housing
- Transport
- Services
- Farmers markets
- Infrastructure
- Rural businesses

Appendix 5 MOBILITY ACTION PLAN Full Issue Listing
Mobility Group May 2002

No	LOCATION	ISSUE	Pty	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/COMMENTS
PLANNING, TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT				
1	Town Overall	No coherent, forward-looking traffic plan available for review, discussion, consultation or continued development	S1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new plan for local transport and mobility is required, with full analysis of current and projected housing developments, car ownership, plus tourist/visitor numbers to determine best options to allow Cockermouth to cope with increased mobility demands whilst retaining 'gem' qualities and prioritising safe pedestrian movement in all areas of town - Consider move towards circulatory inner ring plan, with traffic speed controls and pedestrian crossing priorities. - Provide alternative route to allow Windmill Lane/Slatefell/ Simonscales traffic to avoid town centre if travelling to Workington or Carlisle – a Northern outer loop should be considered from the A66 to the Carlisle road.
2	Town Overall	Poor flow around town – many hold-ups, queues during peak times.	S1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add clear lane marking for right-turning traffic down Gallowbarrow - Remove lane confusion on Station Street prior to Lorton Street junction – make into single lane?
3	Town Overall	Excess Speed around town	M1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make Main Street, Market Place, Station Street and Kirkgate 20mph zones with clear 'gateway' signage and pedestrian priority zones – eg Penrith, Ulverston. - Make all school entrance areas 20mph warned zones during peak school times. - Sign and enforce all speed limits in town, especially entrances at Lamplugh Road, Low Road, Gote Bridge & Castlegate: larger reflective backing, warning road markings, repeat signs – make Cockermouth an SAS Zone – Serious About Speed. Zero tolerance to offenders.
4	Town Overall	Inadequate and poorly managed delivery arrangements for businesses in town	M2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct business survey to determine size/frequency/times to be able to plan better facilities – incorporate within Station Street/ pedestrian/pavement remodelling - design in progress?

5	Kirkgate	Excess traffic volume and speed on Kirkgate, plus large vehicles	S1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measures to improve flows at the Gallowbarrow junction are needed to offer a better alternative for residents travelling from the Windmill etc estates to Workington or Carlisle, as in item 2 above. - Make lower end of Kirkgate one way towards Market Place - Install pedestrian priority zone from Over The Top to Market Place to slow traffic – clearly marked, paved area - Ban heavy vehicles. (Alternative turning arrangements needed)
6	Sullart Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excess noise due to speed humps in Sullart Street. - Also unsafe crossing for pedestrians in lower end of Sullart Street 	S1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Now severely compromised by the increase in traffic volume down Gallowbarrow - Remove and replace with pedestrian crossing, near Coppice Mill Woodworks
8	Station Road/ Gallowbarrow	- ‘No-mans Land’ for right turning traffic into Gallowbarrow at peak times cause cues and encourages use of Kirkgate	S1	- Provide a filter/traffic signal timing/specific lane to allow discharge of right-turning traffic, plus clear lane markings
9	Station Street/ Lorton Street	- Confusion on lane changing to proceed up Station Road	S1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide clear and visible signs plus lane marking to indicate intended traffic flows – current 2 way sign hidden behind traffic light - Remove premature left turn arrow immediately before South Street. - Reduce to single lane and widen pavements, provide delivery bay
10	Main Street	No turning place for large vehicles travelling east on Main Street (or proceeding up Lorton Road if they miss the turn down Gallowbarrow to the town centre)	M2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Previous vehicles would have used Station Street and turned west onto Main Street; vehicles now variously manoeuvring at Market Place, Jennings Brewery Lane or into Sports Centre entrance - Consider clearly signed turning point opposite Sports Centre on Castlegate Drive plus equivalent near Strawberry How
11	Lorton Street	- Obstructions due to Mitchells loading/unloading and Chinese takeaway customers	S2	- Accommodation for both types of customer required, and must be enforced to prevent dangerous temporary obstructions for road users and pedestrians.

12	Market Place	Traffic turning in Market Place compromises pedestrian safety (and other road users)	M2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eliminate turning within Market Place by central pedestrian refuge (possible location for Astro-Clock?). Utilise turning place as 10 above? - Increase pavement width by Kedder building to provide street performance area – ref Culture/Heritage group - Incorporate drop kerb crossing arrangements to cross from Banks side to Granary for mobility-impaired pedestrians
13	South Street/ Station Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blind corner creates collision hazard - Traffic turning right into Station Street has no room without chopping across the South Street exit lane 	S1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make exit from South Street one way, with priority over Station street traffic - Reduce Station Street to single lane at junction with South Street, provide better pedestrian crossing opportunities
14	Fairfield/ Sainsburys Car Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traffic using Sainsburys car park as short cut in both directions - Poor exit to Station road – blind views and poorly observed priorities - No safe pedestrian entrance from Station Road 	S2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolution of right-turning traffic at Gallowbarrow will help - Removal of obstruction (High stone wall to school side) plus clearer Give Way instructions required for Station Road traffic - Remodel to provide clear pedestrian entrance linking with pedestrian ways already marked in car park
15	Castlegate	Excess and difficult traffic flow at peak school times	M3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use peak time traffic lights to prioritise and clarify flows, link into Market Place traffic movement

PARKING				
1	Town Overall	Review and consideration of overall parking strategy required	S2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More roadside parking required - Herringbone in Market Place, Main St (west), Station St. - Additional off-road parking required - Use space at current Fire Station (Lorton Street) - Use County Depot land on Sullart Street - Provide off-road parking for residents by lay-by - Poor use of current car parks for long or short stay – long term parkers secure prime positions discouraging shorter stays - Clearly signed location and promotion of short & long stay parking to better utilise available parking. - Use designated car parks for permit holders - Wakefield Road and Riverside? - Poorly marked signposting to indicate preferred coach routes into town, dropping/collection p and parking - Use of 'yellow spot' system could easily assist guidance - Incorporation of marked drop/collection zones required to prevent obstruction (plus use of clearly designated turning point)
PUBLIC TRANSPORT				
1	Low Road	Poor service to new areas of town – Aldi/Lakes Home Centre	S3	- Extend services to new retail areas of town
2	Main Street	- Poor provision of travel facilities in town	M2	- Shelters and covered seating required – to be carefully integrated into the overall townscape
3	Town & Surround	Confirm numbers of mobility-impaired residents in the area and their transport needs	S1	- To allow better planning and matching of demand with provision with appropriate and innovative services
4	Town & Surround	Poor accessibility of local buses	M2	- Three high steps to be climbed to mount mini-buses – accessibility specification needs to be established and met
5	Town & Surround	Poor timing for a feasible return journey to Carlisle (3 hour 'window' only available at present)	M2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration also needed for journeys through Penrith to London, Scotland. - Co-ordinated ticketing would also help through journeys

6	Town & Surround	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provide targeted hospital visiting services for visiting hours- Provision of safe return transport for young persons – late evening	M1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use of shared community dial-a-ride or co-ordinated taxi pool?
7	Town & Surround	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reduce travelling to work by car	M2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Utilise car sharing incentives, targeted bus/coach services- Provision of common token system for pre-payments across modes – bus, taxi

Appendix 6 Accessibility Audit April 18th 2002

Jim Dandy, Allerdale Disability Association

The audit was conducted by walking around the central core of the town. Comments made by Jim Dandy were recorded relative to safe road crossing, obstructions/barriers to safe movement and general accessibility. It was noted that ADA have prepared a guide to shop accessibility in Cockermouth, which is to be published shortly.

In general, many features of the town are satisfactory. The provision of rotating posts as tactile confirmation of safe crossing at the new traffic lights was appreciated, although the promotion of these features to likely users is not apparent.

The comments are made in the order in which they were noted.

1. South Street, crossing north/south

- Inadequate manoeuvring space for wheelchair users or motorised scooters to mount the north kerb and turn right
- Blind corner on narrow pavement (north side) to Station Street for wheelchair users – danger of crashing into other pedestrians

2. Station Road kerbing to Kittyson Lane

- White line marking required to clearly highlight hazardous kerb step for users coming downhill – immediately opposite drop kerbing up to main pavement.

3. Kittyson Lane crossing to Fairfield Garage

- White marking of drop kerbs required to highlight crossing point.

4. Sullart Street crossing

- Safe crossing required with drop kerbs, especially for Wordsworth Court residents

5. Main Street obstructions

- Sunken drainage gullies on south side pavement (5 off) cause severe discomfort for all wheeled users
- Use of pavement advertising hoardings causes obstructions for partially sighted persons – pubs, shops

6. Main Street crossing

- Remove confusion at pedestrian crossing near Station Street – make into 2 clear crossings, with additional beacon and central refuge protection bollards

- High kerb and step down onto main pavement (across an open drainage channel) is a problem from New Bookshop east – kerbing should be highlighted in white, and a designated crossing point would be an advantage.

7. Station Street crossing

- Development of increased width pavement to north end urgently required, with crossing point
- Upper crossing point required with drop kerbs/tactile surface/differential colouring

8. Market Place crossing

- Help is required to assist pedestrians crossing from across all sides of the Market Place/Main street junction
- Pedestrian refuge in the centre of the main Market Place junction would help divide the crossing into manageable ‘halves’
- Help is also required to cross from Banks’ to the Baguette Bar – drop kerbs/tactile surface/differential colouring.

9. Kirkgate access from Market Place

- Highly unfriendly to pedestrians – narrow kerbs and road, much traffic, travelling too fast

Appendix 7 Potential Projects

Project No.	Description	Lead Agency	Potential Funding
ENVIRONMENT			
1	Review and simplification of road and other signage	C P'ship	CCC, ABC, CTC
2	Enhancement of road and street/pavement surfaces	C P'ship	CCC, ABC
3	Grants for restoration of traditional shop fronts	C P'ship	NWDA, Her Lottery, ABC
4	“Jubilee Bridge” – footbridge across River Derwent as an “architectural piece”	C P'ship	Her Lottery
5	River frontage walkway/Jennings	Jennings	RDP, RAZ
6	Market Place environmental enhancement – Landmark project	C P'ship	Her Lottery
7	Further development of Town Trail	C P'ship	Civ Trust, RDP, RAZ
8	Eco Centre, Cockermouth School	C'mth School	NOF, RDP, RAZ
9	LA 21 work with Allerdale Council and local LA 21 Group	C P'ship	C'mth LA 21, ABC
10	Town Hall improvements	CTC	ABC
11	Waste Lane improvement	C P'ship	CCC (Better Ways to School)
12	Improvements to former Cellar Five building, Main Street	ABC	Private Sector
13	Development of shop front design guide	ABC	Eng Heritage
ECONOMY			
14	Develop a theme – brand – marketing	C P'ship	RDP, RAZ
15	Develop car parking strategy – short stay, long stay, on street and car parks plus coach parking.	C P'ship	ABC
16	Co-ordinated signage scheme including attractions to replace ad hoc existing signage	C P'ship	CCC, ABC, CTC
17	Green Business Park at Moota adjacent to garden centre	Private Sector	RDP, RAZ
18	Cockermouth School – Maths and Computing Specialist status – training facility for	C'mth School	DfES, Private

	community		
19	Regular Farmers' Markets	C P'ship	RDP, RAZ, Private Sector
20	Revitalise weekly street market in Market Place	C P'ship	ABC
21	Opportunities from introduction of Broadband	C P'ship	NWDA
22	Market and promote site at Lakeland Business Park for Hi-Tech businesses	NWDA	CHIA
23	Market and promote site at Lamplugh Road for hotel/tourist attraction	NWDA	CHIA, CTB
24	Appoint Marketing Manager	C P'ship	RDP, RAZ, C'side Ag
25	Develop programme of festivals, events	C P'ship	CTC, ABC, RDP, RAZ, NW Arts Board
26	Produce promotional strategy	C P'ship	CTC, ABC, RDP, CTB
27	Promote and market commercial sites and premises	C P'ship	ABC, CCC, NWDA
28	Develop a Customer Care training programme	C P'ship	LSC, CTB
29	M Sport expansion plans, Dovenby Hall	Private Sector	DTI, NWDA
30	Development of Broughton RNAD site for leisure and green tourism	ABC	CCC, NWDA
SPORT AND LEISURE			
31	Establish Sports Council to share good practice, work together, advice on funding etc	C P'ship	Sports Clubs, ABC, CCC, SAZ
32	Establish directory of sports clubs and produce leaflet(s)	C P'ship	C'mth Sports Council, ABC, N'hood Forum
33	Basket ball nets on hard surface – informal play/ meeting place – 3 or 4 around the town	C P'ship	ABC, Sport England, RDP, RAZ
34	New Sports Hall at Cockermouth School for school and community use	C'mth School	Sport England, RAZ

35	Additional playing fields/drainage at Cockermouth School for school and community use	C'mth School	Football Foundation, RAZ
36	Developments necessary to attract minor counties games to cricket club	C'mth CC	Sport England
37	Indoor bowling hall (Croft Club)		Sport England
38	Ice skating/curling		Sport England
39	Skate boarding area	C P'ship	ABC, CCC, RDP, RAZ
40	50 metre swimming pool – none in county – would draw in custom from wide area and add to reputation of Cockermouth Swimming Club	C'mth Swimming Club	Sport England
41	Cinema – links developed between Cockermouth School & Kirkgate Centre re - demand for films – our first success!	Kirkgate Centre	C'mth School
42	Need for larger, central premises for Reef type activities – informal, “prat about” space – possible table tennis, pool, skittles, café	C'mth P'ship	CCC, Connexions, Lottery Community Fund
43	Tarn Close improvements to track and new changing facilities	CTC	Sport England, ABC
44	Conversion of former council depot building to community facility	C P'ship	CTC, Lottery Community Fund, RDP, RAZ
ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE			
45	Establish Arts Forum	C'mth P'ship	Private sector
46	Potential theme for regeneration of town – cultural/creative industries centred on Market Place – links with Kirkgate Centre, Castlegate Gallery, Percy Gallery - develop café environment	C'mth P'ship	ABC, CCC

47	Acquisition of vacant building – catalyst for regeneration of Market Place – convert to studio/workshops for artists, including “dirty arts” – pottery, blacksmith etc, with on site advice. Shop windows – Made in Cumbria, move TIC forward from Town Hall? Space for youth on first floor. Street café	C'mth P'ship	NW Arts, NWDA, CCC, ABC, Heritage Lottery
48	Enlarge footpath in front of Kedder Building – more sympathetic means of narrowing mouth of Market Place for pedestrians. Use for street theatre, entertainment etc, plus Astrological clock?	C P'ship	Heritage Lottery, CCC
49	Enhance Market Place – surfacing, rationalise signage, street furniture create pedestrian friendly space	C P'ship	Heritage Lottery, CCC
50	Use vacant premises for temporary galleries	C P'ship	CIA
51	Close off Market Place for events, farmers markets, craft markets – regenerate weekly market	C P'ship	CTC, CCC, ABC
52	Build on town's heritage – Fl Christian, Fearon Fallows, Wm Wordsworth, John Dalton	C P'ship	CTC, CCC, ABC
53	Explore links between arts and science	C P'ship	Arts Forum
54	Role of Cumbria Institute for the Arts	CIA	NW Arts Boar
55	Produce directory of events – market the programme	C P'ship	Cockermouth Arts Forum
56	Sculpture trail to enhance town trail	C'mth P'ship	CCC, ABC, Lottery Heritage
57	Redesign of Wordsworth House	National Trust	Eng Heritage
58	Astrological Clock	C'mth Astrological Society	RDP, RAZ
59	Develop a Book Festival	C'mth Arts For	N'hood Forum
60	Kirkgate Theatre Developments	Kirkgate Centre	NW Arts Board
YOUTH			
61	Cinema (link established with Kirkgate Centre)	Kirkgate Centre	C'mth School
62	Ice Skating		Sport England

63	Under 18's nights at Sam's Bar	Private Sector	N'hood Forum
64	Other facility in Town Centre like the Reef - play stations, disco, soft drinks	C P'ship	CCC, RDP, RAZ
65	Poss. under age disco every fortnight – rugby club? 6 th form presence?	Private Sector	N'hood Forum
66	Rural transport issues - getting in to town and home in the evenings	C P'ship	CCC, C'side Agency
67	Areas for basket ball, skate boarding, a number of sites around town	C P'ship	ABC, Sport England
68	Youth shelters at various locations around town	C P'ship	N'hood Forum
69	Improve Harris Park play area	ABC	C'side Agency
HEALTH, HOUSING, ELDERLY AND DISABLED			
70	Enhance Autism units at All Saints and Cockermouth Schools	All Saints and C'mth Schools	Various Trusts
71	Relief for family carers	CCC	Volunteers
72	Better access onto public transport – lifts/lowering steps	Private Sector	C'side Agency
73	Need for more social housing specially adapted bungalows	C P'ship	Housing Assocs, Hsg Corporation
74	Voluntary help with gardening, plus West House residents - supervision	C P'ship	Volunteers, CCF
75	Pool of voluntary drivers	C P'ship	WCCVS, Volunteers
76	LETS trading scheme	C P'ship	WCCVS Volunteers
77	Floating support team	C P'ship	WCCVS Volunteers
78	Alternative premises for Fitz Road and South Street GP practices	GP practices	Primary Health Care Trust
79	Assistance with running of elderly persons clubs	C P'ship	Volunteers

80	Provision of social housing for first time buyers	C P'ship	Impact Housing Assoc, Housing Corporation
TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY			
81	Comprehensive traffic survey in town linked to Local Plan proposals	C P'ship	CCC, ABC
82	Research for new link to A66	C P'ship	CCC, ABC
83	Extension of Greenway and incorporation of "Better Ways to School"	CCC	Schools
84	Programme of dropped kerbs	C P'ship	CCC
85	Strategic review of on road and off road car parking	C P'ship	ABC, CCC
86	Improvement to Rubbybanks Road and New Street	C P'ship	CCC, CTC, ABC, Frontagers
87	Rural Community Transport	C P'ship	CCC, C'side Agency, Volunteers
88	Acquire gas works site for car parking	C P'ship	CCC, NWDA, ABC
89	Use part of County Depot site for car parking	C P'ship	CCC, ABC

Appendix 9 Glossary

C P'ship	Cockermouth Partnership
CTC	Cockermouth Town Council
ABC	Allerdale Borough Council
CCC	Cumbria County Council
C'side Agency	Countryside Agency
NWDA	North West Development Agency
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RAZ	Rural Action Zone
REDZ	Rural Economic Development Zone (European Regional Dev Fund)
ESF	European Social Fund
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NW Arts	North West Arts Board
Sport Eng	Sport England
SAZ	Sports Action Zone
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
Her Lottery	Heritage Lottery
Eng Her	English Heritage
C'side All	Countryside Alliance
DTI	Dept of Trade and Industry
PCT	Primary Care Trust
LC Fund	Lottery Community Fund
LA21	Allerdale Local Agenda 21

