

STRENGTHENING CUMBRIA'S CIVIL SOCIETY

This collaborative research project (July 2023-December 2024) aimed at understanding what is most needed for a more thriving and equitable community life in Cumbria. By exploring diverse perspectives across the region, we uncovered four distinct viewpoints.

In particular these learnings were co-created to support vital understandings and the aims and values of The Office of Lord-Lieutenant, offering potential pathways for integrating this knowledge into a strategic approach for strengthening Cumbria's civil society.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Collaboration that connects communities to learn from each other is key, and engagement could benefit from moving from a consultation model to empowerment and resourcing networked solutions.



The material, social, and cultural needs of young people form an important meeting point for addressing interconnected and complex problems.



Ecological concerns relate directly to human needs, for example food security, heating, transport and disaster resilience and these links are central to community deliberation, planning, and action.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What matters most to create a more thriving and equitable community life in Cumbria?

4 Workshops
Ambleside
Carlisle
Workington
Barrow-in-Furness



Read the full report here!

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Project Partners



FINDINGS

FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON WHAT IS MOST NEEDED...

The Town Forum

A place that brings diverse people together to make plans, to see the bigger human-nature picture, and to develop a sense of belonging, effectiveness, and ownership for the future.



Interpreted through the metaphor of a village

The Market Square

Here the wider world and rural connections come into view as opportunities to develop bustling businesses and advanced skills become possible, especially for young people.

The Village Gate

Just outside of town, a place to find all the people with the greatest needs and those who might feel excluded so they can be helped. In this place, the resources coming in & how they could help become visible.



The Water Mill

A place that strengthens the food and energy needs of the community, paying attention to the natural world and working with it beyond utility towards intergenerational wellbeing and connection.

METHODOLOGY

The research team used Q Methodology, developed by the British psychologist William Stephenson in the 1950s. This allowed for the development of a shared language among participants and reliable and generalisable factor scores with a small (92 people) data set.

