



News from ACT

Make Devolution a good thing for rural Cumbria

Thanks to all who responded to the ACT Rural Issues Survey and to those who came to our feedback session in February. We had a really useful discussion. You can see details of the results of the survey on these [Rural Survey Summary slides](#) and read more about what people said [here](#).

The headlines of the survey are that those responding, overwhelmingly, saw local affordable housing and transport as key challenges for people living in our rural communities and want to express those challenges to people in power. Poverty was a more complex picture, with many respondents recognising the hidden nature of poverty and its links with expensive travel and housing.

We will use these headlines to champion rural issues throughout the whole journey to Devolved Mayoral authority and we hope that you will too. See the [messages below from Government](#) about Devolution in Cumbria, and do take the opportunity to respond to the current [consultation](#).



Good News for Cumbria Rural Housing Enabler Service

ACT and Eden Housing Association have been delivering the **Rural Housing Enabler Service** in Cumbria for one year. Last week DEFRA announced funding for a further year for this work across the Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) network. This is great news and we will build on the conversations and relationships which have had a boost as a result of this opportunity.

The Service aims to unlock opportunities to develop small numbers of affordable homes, in rural places (under 3000 population) where a need is identified. We're working with communities, planners and housing associations across the county who know that a handful of affordable homes in the right place is vital for the sustainability of local services. Please [get in touch](#) if you would like to know more.



Planning for your Future through the Local Plan

Do you want to volunteer your place to be part of a supported conversation about the new Local Plan? Unusually, we will do a lot of the work *for you* - so that we can gather ideas and information from you quickly and feed it in to the Plan consultation process with you! So you might like to get to the front of the queue...

As part of our Collaboration Hub and Community Voice work with the Lake District National Park Partnership, ACT is offering to support communities to engage fully with the revision of the Local Plan. The Local Plan will set out to a large extent what will be built and where in the National Park for the next two decades, so it's worth getting involved.

Read more about our approach [here](#) and get in touch with [Fran](#) if you're interested. We would love to work with you on this.

Community Buildings News

Another successful Village Halls Week: 17 – 23 March 2025

[#VillageHallsWeek](#) returned for its eighth year to celebrate, encourage and support the efforts of volunteers who keep these important community buildings open. This national campaign led by ACRE shines a spotlight on the contribution England's 10,000+ village halls make to bringing communities together. Read what Cumbrian village hall volunteers have to say about their experience and find out more about this year's celebration [here](#).



Community Buildings Event

When: Saturday 5 April 10am – 2pm

Where: Braithwaite Institute, Braithwaite, Keswick and Online via zoom

Join us for our next Community Buildings event at Braithwaite Institute where the theme is broadband and WiFi. Whether you already have WiFi at your hall and want to know how to get the most out of it, or are unsure about getting connected, this event is for you.

[Book here](#)

New ACRE Guide to Surveys for Village and Community Halls

This **brand new guide** explains the different types of survey that anyone managing a building like a village hall may need to commission. It also aims to assist surveyors to understand a little about the complexities that may be faced when undertaking such a survey.

ACT recognises that there are very few surveyors available and able to work with hall committees to understand the current condition and future needs of their building.

We have already had good feedback on the Guide. Have a look [here](#) and let us know what you think.

Village & Community Halls

A Guide to Surveys



OUR PEOPLE / FARMERS ARTISANS / COMMUNITY ANIMALS / LAND

NOURISH CUMBRIA

Nourish Cumbria's website will be launching this year. Meanwhile, please help us understand who is producing what food in Cumbria and where, by completing the questionnaire via this QR code.

Nourish Cumbria

Nourish Cumbria celebrates farmers, artisans, chefs and consumers who collaborate to shape the future of food in Cumbria.

It is funded by Cumberland Council and supported by H&H to strengthen and promote Cumbria's food system with an aim to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Cumbria.

This [questionnaire](#) will help the group understand the opportunities of developing our food system by determining what is being produced, by whom and where and where the food goes - how much of it stays in the county.

Please share the [survey link](#) or QR code with any one you know in farming or growing.

News from Friends and Partners



Big Local Lunch 2025

Food Cumberland Partnership is supporting the Big Local Lunch 2025 to enable communities to come together to enjoy healthy, local produce. Funding of up to £200 per project is available for Cumberland-based groups to organise an event which bring people together.

The deadline for applications is 30 April and lunches are to be held in June 2025. For more details, click on [this link](#). You can also use the grant to provide refreshments for events taking place to celebrate [Great Big Green Week](#) (7–15 June 2025) and [Open Farm Sunday](#) (8 June 2025).

We can't wait to see your photos and hear your stories afterwards!

HM Government

HAVE YOUR SAY: CUMBRIA DEVOLUTION

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS ON CREATING A NEW MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY FOR CUMBRIA TO BRING DEVOLUTION TO THE AREA.

WHAT IS ENGLISH DEVOLUTION?

Devolution is where areas and their local leaders gain powers and funding previously held by national government. This means important decisions are made by someone who understands the needs of your community and what changes will have the best and biggest impact.

WHAT IS A MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY?

Mayoral combined authorities are organisations made up of a group of councils who agree to take on devolved powers and funding so that they can take decisions together across a bigger area. They are led by a Mayor – who is elected by you – and do not replace the councils in your area.

COMMUNITY

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CUMBRIA?

A new mayoral combined authority for Cumbria would receive powers, responsibilities and funding to help:

- ✓ Improve **transport** to make it easier for people to commute and travel
- ✓ Tailor **skills and training** for adults to the jobs available locally
- ✓ Build **houses** in the right places, with the right infrastructure
- ✓ Attract **investment** and support **local businesses** to grow
- ✓ Maximise the benefits of the area's local natural **environment** and help tackle **climate change**
- ✓ Improve **health and wellbeing**
- ✓ Give the area a **stronger voice** nationally by taking a seat at the Prime Minister's Council of Nations and Regions

HOW TO ENGAGE?

The consultation is live and closes on **Sunday 13th April 2025 at 23:59**. It is open to all residents, businesses, community and voluntary groups, and other organisations in the area.

You can complete the consultation by scanning the QR Code or using [gov.uk/cumbria-devolution](#)

On Thursday, March 27 5:30 - 7:30 join MHCLG representatives at **The Cross Fell Suite, North Lakes Hotel, Penrith** for a presentation on what devolution means for your region. This **in-person event** is your chance to learn more about the consultation and how to have your say. Book on this [eventbrite link](#). See you there!

And finally...

If you find this information useful, please do share it with others. We'd love you to forward this email to friends and colleagues. You can also follow us on Facebook to keep up with our very latest news and views.

If you're not already an ACT supporter, why not join us? It's free and it means that we can keep in touch with you directly from time to time. You can [unsubscribe](#) at any time from all ACT mailings.

[Become a Supporter](#)

