

Cumbria Combined Authority Introduction

25th February 2026

Parliamentary context

- Establishing SI made on Monday – at which point Cumbria CA is a legal entity.
- English Devolution Bill expected to receive Royal Assent towards end of Spring
- Mayoral election on track for May 2027 – date set by establishing SI
- OPFCC set to transfer to Cumbria CA at point of election, subject to English Devolution Bill and relevant SI.

Other DPP areas

- Hampshire and the Solent; Greater Essex; Sussex and Brighton; and East Anglia CCAs have had elections delayed from May 2026 to May 2028.
- Establishing SIs have not yet been laid for these areas – means CCAs will not be established till the summer at the earliest.

Powers



A broad suite of enabling powers, with new powers for the Mayor to convene local partners, the general power of competence for the MCA, and a duty on all Mayors to collaborate with neighbouring authorities.



Greater control of local skills and employment provision, with devolution of the Adult Skills Fund, alongside responsibility for Skills Bootcamps, Free Courses for Jobs, and Connect to Work.



Cumbria CA will become the Local Transport Authority, responsible for delivery of the Local Transport Plan and associated strategies, including the identification of a Key Route Network.



A duty to deliver a Spatial Development Strategy for Cumbria, with various powers to support and accelerate delivery (development management, CPO etc). Also a Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England.



Precepting and borrowing powers to support investment, a duty to prepare a local growth plan, and ability to establish a Mayoral Development Corporation.



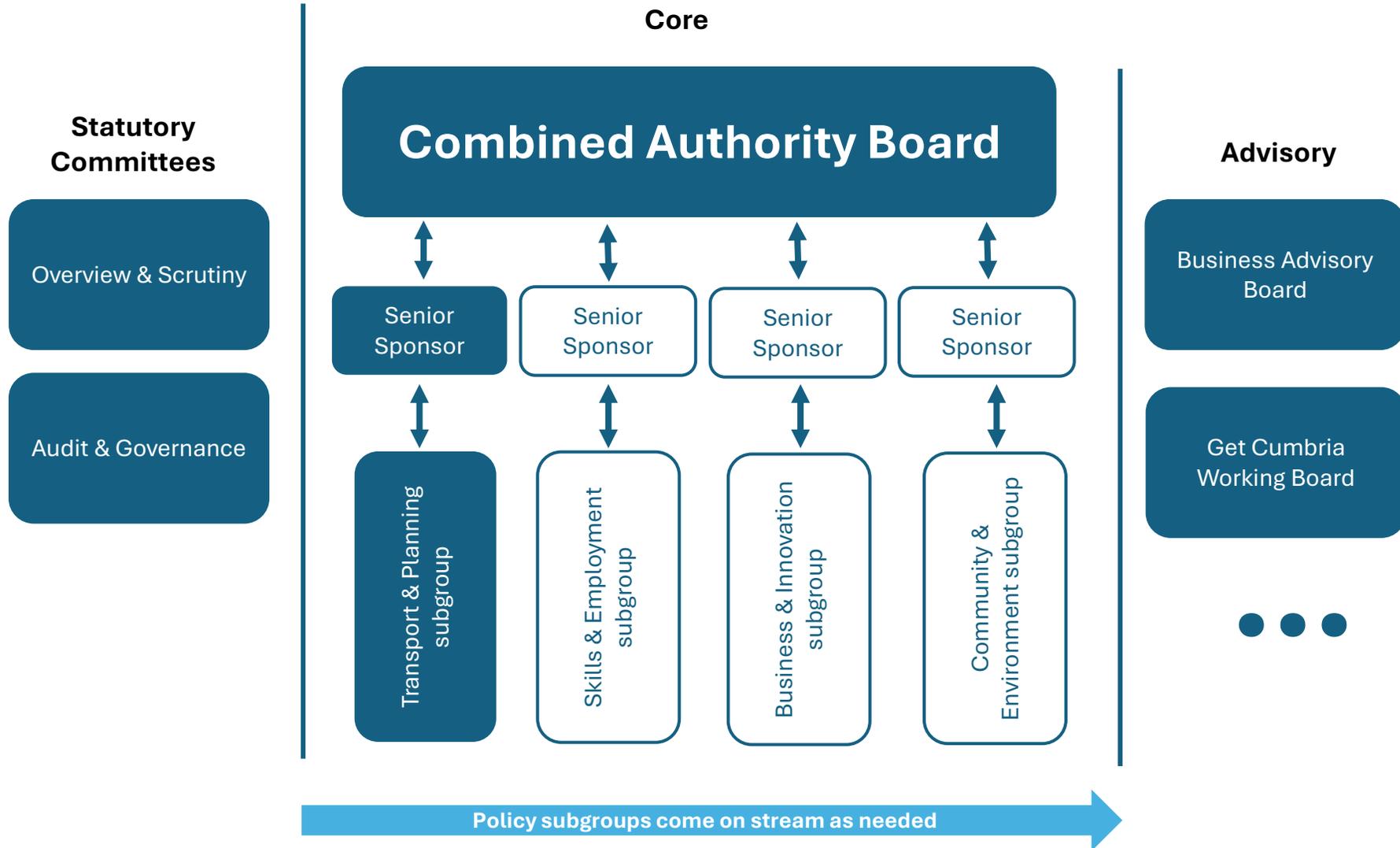
Transfer of PCC and FRA functions to the MCA, alongside a new statutory duty to consider health in the discharge of functions

Organisational Values

Inclusivity	We will work for all parts of Cumbria, including rural communities, market & coastal towns, and urban centres. It should enhance local voice and leadership
Participation	We will be inclusive of partners, stakeholders, elected members and the public. Community engagement and democratic legitimacy are essential
Transparency	We will operate with openness and integrity, making decisions through clear, accountable processes.
Subsidiarity	We will focus on strategic functions that add value across Cumbria. Constituent councils will retain responsibility for all existing local services, except where transfers are agreed by both councils, or are required by legislation.
Collaboration	We will operate in close partnership with its constituent councils, aligning strategy and delivery through ongoing dialogue and joint decision-making. It will strive to work on the basis of consensus, recognising the equal status and contributions of all parties.
Pragmatism	We will assess options and proposals on the basis of evidence, affordability, and deliverability—not aspiration alone.
Value for money	We will be a lean, strategic body. We will be designed for impact, not size, focusing on strategy, co-ordination and investment.

**Our Governance: how we go about
doing things**

Year 1 Governance proposal



Assurance: Where investment proposals over a certain threshold (e.g. £1m) are coming to the governance board, the relevant business cases will receive check and challenge by a Peer Review process, involving S.151s and a representative from the Business Advisory Board.

Combined Authority Board

The Mayor

Once elected in May 2027, the Mayor will chair the Board and lead on regional priorities.

A visible figurehead and strategic leader, the Mayor drives delivery, represents the region nationally and internationally, and ensures CCA's work supports the long-term goals. The advocate and "one voice of Cumbria".

Representatives of the Constituent Councils

The two constituent councils form the legal core of the CCA and hold voting rights on Board decisions.

Each constituent council will determine who they appoint to the Board based on a membership of two seats per constituent councils.



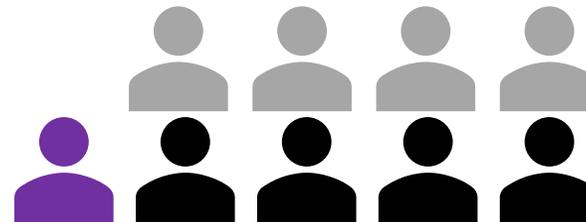
The Board pre-May 27

Non-Constituent Members

Represent organisations across Cumbria. They represent bodies and are not "personal" appointments. They do not hold voting rights, they can play an active role in Board discussions and sit on committees, offering insight from communities across the region.

Associate Members

Associate Members are appointed to provide expertise to the Board. They do not hold voting rights.



Mayor and Board with optional Non-Constituent or Associate Members post-May 27

Senior team

Interim Chief Executive

John Barradell OBE

John brings decades of senior leadership experience, including serving as chief executive of the City of London Corporation and Brighton & Hove City Council. He has also led major national resilience efforts, including the Government's Grenfell Recovery Taskforce and the London Strategic Group during Covid-19.

Temporary Interim S73

Nick Bell

Nick is an experienced local-government finance leader who's spent much of his career helping councils and combined authorities get their finances, systems and governance into strong shape. He's known for stepping into complex situations, building effective finance teams from scratch and putting clear, sustainable financial frameworks in place.

Temporary Interim Monitoring Officer

Catherine Parkinson

Catherine is an experienced local-government lawyer and Monitoring Officer who's spent her career guiding councils through complex governance, legal and ethical issues. She's known for stepping into senior roles across multiple authorities, leading legal and democratic services, strengthening corporate governance and supporting councils during major transitions and reorganisations.

Interim Comms lead

Emily Woolfe

Emily has more than 20 years experience in journalism at both a regional and national level, most recently working as Editorial Director for a newspaper group.

The First Meeting

Date		
18 March	<p>Cumbria Combined Authority Board first meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment of Statutory Officers• Combined Authority Governance• Combined Authority Local Assurance Framework• Combined Authority Budget• CCA Pay and Grading Framework• Enterprising Cumbria – Transfer of Functions• Enterprising Cumbria - Branding• Local Skills Improvement Plan• CA Devolution Prospectus• Urgent Items• Calendar of Meetings• Forward Plan	

Laying the foundations in the first 12-18 months...

Transport & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a robust evidence base for a refreshed Local Transport Plan, as well as Bus Service Improvement Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.• Provide assurance for the delivery of transport funding across Cumbria, supported by a four-year transport delivery plan.• Commence work on a new spatial development strategy for Cumbria, which will set out priorities for housing growth and land use over the next 10-20 years.• Build relationships with Homes England, National Highways and Great British rail ahead of new partnership arrangements coming into force.• Continue to make the case for rail upgrades in Cumbria, both along the coast and on the Lakes Line.
Skills & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement delivery of devolved Adult Skills Funding, including development of new Skills and Commissioning strategies, and ASF funding rules, aligned with the refreshed LSIP.• Continue to deliver existing skills and careers programmes, including Connect to Work, and embed them within the Get Cumbria Working Plan alongside devolved ASF delivery.• Facilitate greater partnership working between local businesses and education providers to strengthen pathways into work in key sectors.
Business and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and refresh Cumbria's business support offer and wider business intelligence, with a clear focus on key sectors for growth, and aligned to the national Industrial Strategy.• Commence work to develop a Cumbria-wide pipeline of inward and follow-on investment opportunities to support a future Investment Prospectus.• Strengthen partnership working with Innovate UK to develop Cumbria's innovation ecosystem.• Build on existing relationships with institutional investors such as pension funds, NWF and the British Business Bank.
Community & Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with local stakeholders to develop a Local Resilience Strategy for Cumbria, as part of the LRF trailblazer pilot.• Build the case for/against alignment of Integrated Care Boundaries, and work with DHSC to explore options.• Work with Defra, DCMS and MHCLG to develop options to pilot new approaches to devolution and partnership working in rural, coastal and peripheral areas.• Build links into the One Creative North partnership and work with constituent authorities to develop Cumbria's cultural offer.
Organisational design & development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with OPFCC to develop a transition plan for PFCC functions from May 2027.• Transfer of Enterprising Cumbria into the Combined Authority, subject to final decisions of Joint Executive Committee including the novation of contracts.• Building the case to government for additional funding to support priorities in Cumbria.• Lay the groundwork for the incoming Mayor, including through development of a Mayoral office

... while supporting existing **Cumbria-wide activity**

- Working with both authorities to refresh the strategic case for **upgrading the Energy Coast rail network**
- Coordinating a shared response to the government's **consultation on a Visitor Levy**
- Supporting a Cumbria-wide bid for a **Local Innovation Partnership**
- Ensuring Cumbria is represented as part of the **Great North Investment Summit**
- Developing a shared **Cumbria-wide investment prospectus for UKREiiF**
- Working with constituent authorities to pull together a shared **four-year transport delivery plan for Cumbria**
- Supporting successful delivery of "**Cumbria day**" in **Westminster**
- Strengthening the case with government about Cumbria getting a **fair share of funding**

