



# Maryport Town Council Strategy 2015 - 2020

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Supported by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 What is a Town Council Strategy?

The Town Council Strategy is:

- **a statement of the Town Council's vision** for the town, setting out its purpose, values, objectives and key priorities for the next 5 years;
- **a plan of action** designed to achieve longer-term aims, setting out how the Town Council will work in a co-ordinated way to deliver on its priorities;
- **a means to communicate** to the communities of Maryport and Flimby what the Town Council's aims are, what it is going to do, how it is going to meet their needs, and how it plans to spend their money.

## 1.2 Why have a Strategy?

There's at least two good reasons why the Town Council should have a strategy, these include:

- it provides Councillors with a focus for the Town Council's activities over the next few years;
- it tells the communities of Maryport and Flimby what the Town Council is doing, and also what it isn't doing, and how it intends to spend *their* money to meet *their* needs.

The strategy has multiple benefits. Firstly, it enables the Town Council to work in a **more focused** and co-ordinated way, reducing the likelihood of Councillors being side-tracked or distracted by matters considered by the residents of Maryport and Flimby to be less important.

Secondly, the strategy provides a **positive influence** on how the Town Council works, enabling it to be more proactive and less reactive. In other words, encouraging the Council to bring about the changes that are needed rather than just reacting to events as and when they occur.

Thirdly, the strategy provides an agreed framework within which the Town Council can feel confident in taking decisions. This **greater confidence** comes from the strategy providing the logic, or reasoning, for the Council's priorities.

Fourthly, the strategy and its action plan provides the means for the Town Council to track and **monitor progress**. This helps the Council, and others, to see how well the Council is performing.

What is more, the strategy **provides evidence** to support the actions of the Council and this helps to explain the prioritisation and allocation of resources.

For all of the above reasons there are good reasons for the communities of Maryport and Flimby to have confidence in the Town Council, with a strategy that ensures that their priorities are being addressed.

### 1.3 Who was involved and how was it paid for?

The Town Council commissioned an independent facilitator to assist the Town Council working group led by the Mayor, Carol Tindall. The consultations required to prepare the strategy, together with the analysis and production of the final report, have been funded by a grant from the National Lottery's Big Lottery Fund.

Maryport Town Council is very keen to involve the community in planning for local services and facilities and to do what it can to generate more interest in the activities of the Council. After all, most of the Council's activities are paid for by the residents of Maryport and Flimby - through an additional charge on the Council Tax bill (the precept).

Involving the communities can enable the Town Council to be more effective, and the process of engagement can also empower those communities, as they get to take on a much more active role in shaping the future of Maryport and Flimby.

The process of preparing this strategy has provided several illustrations of the many different ways in which the Town Council can involve the community and, through the strategy, should open the way to encourage many more people to participate in the coming months and years. Town Council meetings are already open to members of the public but the work to prepare a strategy has opened new doors, by employing a variety of engagement methods and techniques. This included all day "drop-in" sessions in convenient locations, visual displays to stimulate interest in specific issues, and several focus group meetings involving 10 -12 people to encourage more in-depth discussion on those issues. Consultations as part of this work have also revealed the potential for engaging a wider audience through social media networks, utilising Facebook and Twitter for example to encourage debate and ideas. This is particularly useful for engaging a younger audience in shaping their communities.

## 1.4 How will we know if the strategy has made a difference?

Maryport Town Council is committed to making this work. The preparation of the strategy is an important stepping stone. It is the beginning of an approach that will take several years and will require considerable time, effort and determination from the Councillors involved. Its success is dependent on the willingness of Maryport and Flimby residents to learn more about the work of the Town Council, to be prepared to work with the Council to address those issues that matter most to the communities themselves.

As well as the need for ongoing consultations, there is a need to monitor progress and track the changes resulting from the activities identified in this strategy. At the very least the Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually. The strategy will be reviewed and refreshed every five years.

## 2 WHAT THE TOWN COUNCIL DOES

### 2.1 What is the Town Council?

Maryport Town Council is a statutory body and represents the first tier of local government, serving the residents of Maryport and Flimby. The Council is independently elected and raises a precept – as part of the Council Tax – from the local community.

The Town Council works towards improving community well-being and providing better services at a local level. Activities can be summarised under three main categories:

1. Representing the local community
2. Delivering services to meet local needs
3. Striving to improve quality of life and community well-being.

### 2.2 Who is the Town Council?

18 locally elected Councillors, elected every 4 years, and supported by the Town Clerk(s), make up the Town Council.

From 2015 the Town Council has 5 Councillors for Ewanrigg, 4 for Netherhall, 3 for Ellenborough, 3 for Flimby, 1 for Brookland, 1 for Glasson and 1 for Ellenfoot.

Councillors' details can be found at: [www.maryporttowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.maryporttowncouncil.gov.uk)

## 2.3 How is the Town Council different from other Councils?

Maryport & Flimby are served by Maryport Town Council, but many statutory functions are provided by Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council.

Unlike the Borough and County Councils, Maryport Town Council has very few statutory functions or duties. The Town Council has discretion to exercise a wide range of powers which may be used to provide and maintain a variety of important and visible local services. These include the provision and maintenance of allotments, bus shelters, statues & memorials, footpaths, environmental improvements as well as financial support for local events & festivals, festive lighting, youth projects and the Remembrance Day commemorations.

These powers were recently strengthened by the powers contained in the Localism Act 2011. This new Act facilitates the devolution of decision-making powers from central government control to individuals and communities. In particular it provides the “Local authority’s general power of competence” (part 1, chapter 1) which states, “A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally do”.

**TABLE 1: Functions & Responsibilities of Maryport Town Council**

<b>Maryport Town Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lobbying &amp; monitoring other bodies to provide the best possible service for the residents of Maryport and Flimby.</li><li>• Management, maintenance and development of bus shelters.</li><li>• Provision and maintenance of festive lighting.</li><li>• Annual financial support for local organisations including the harbour.</li><li>• Annual support for local events including Maryport Blues Festival and Flimby Carnival.</li><li>• Provision of Community Organisation Grants and support for community events including Mayoral attendance.</li><li>• Provision and maintenance of allotments at Church Street, Sandy Lonning and Flimby.</li><li>• Provision and maintenance of coke ovens amenity site.</li><li>• Management and maintenance of the Fishy Tales Statue on Shipping Brow.</li><li>• Financial support for the promotion of Maryport.</li><li>• Organisation of Remembrance Day commemoration.</li><li>• Comment and observations on planning applications.</li></ul>

**TABLE 2: Main Functions of the Borough and County Councils**

<b>Allerdale Borough Council</b>	<b>Cumbria County Council</b>
Licensing	Education
Building control	Public transport
Planning & development control	Social care
Environmental health	Highways & rights of way
Public car parking	Strategic planning
Housing services	Libraries
Domestic waste collection	Fire & public safety
Recycling	Trading standards
Council Tax collections	Traffic regulation
Street cleansing	Waste management
Leisure Services	

(source: [www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works](http://www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works))

As the most local level of government, Maryport Town Council is very well placed to listen to, and understand, the views of people in their community. Many public bodies and organisations acknowledge this is the hardest information for them to capture and turn to the local knowledge of the Town Council for advice to assist and inform their services.

Thanks to the funding received from the National Lottery via the Big Lottery Fund, the Town Council has been able to learn more about the needs and the aspirations of the local community. Consultations have been completed as part of the work to prepare the strategy.

## 3 WHAT YOU TOLD US

### 3.1 How did we listen?

The Town Council commissioned some work to consult with members of the public in Maryport and Flimby between July and October 2014. This included:

- A questionnaire survey made available through sites across Maryport including the Co-operative supermarket, the library, the Wave Centre, the Town Hall. Almost 300 questionnaires were completed and returned.
- Online survey available on the Town Council's website at [www.maryporttowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.maryporttowncouncil.gov.uk) and promoted via social media.
- Three full day drop-in sessions held at the local supermarket, the library and the leisure centre, enabling over 200 people to learn more about the Town Council and fill out questionnaires.
- Three focus group meetings (two in Maryport and one in Flimby) involving 40 people in in-depth discussions on the role of the Town Council and the priorities for the strategy.





### 3.2 What have we learned?

Details of the responses received from the questionnaire survey are available on request from the Town Council or visit [www.maryporttowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.maryporttowncouncil.gov.uk). The headlines and conclusions from the survey work are summarised below:

**TABLE 2: Top 5 Priorities for Action from Questionnaire Survey**

<b>1</b>	<b>More things to do, for families and children</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Improvements to the town centre &amp; shopping</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Cleaning dirt, removing litter &amp; weeds</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Improvements to the promenade</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Enhancing the town's Christmas lights &amp; festivals</b>

Once again, details including the notes taken of the Focus Group meetings are available on request from the Town Council. The key points are summarised below.

**TABLE 3: Top 5 Priorities from Community Focus Groups**

<b>1</b>	<b>Smarten up appearance &amp; impression of town</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Brighten up the town with markets, events, lights</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Improve promenade</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Community action groups to get things done</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Promote and be proud of Maryport!</b>

The Town Council held a public meeting in February 2015 to “test” the findings from the consultations and the emerging priorities. These were debated and accepted as both relevant and informative to the preparation of the Maryport Town Council strategy.

## 4 WHAT WE WILL DO

### 4.1 Our Vision

The Town Council's vision for Maryport is:

**An attractive, vibrant town where its unique history and maritime heritage is a source of great pride and celebrated, where young people are inspired to live and work, where older people feel safe and secure, and where the community takes the initiative to make things happen and bring about change that is positive and makes us all feel proud of our town.**

### 4.2 Our Mission

To represent the best interests of the town and communities of Maryport and Flimby, by listening to their needs, as well as their hopes and their aspirations, to improve their quality of life and to deliver efficient and effective services to Maryport for the town and all those who visit us.

### 4.3 Our Strategic Aims

We have reviewed our priorities, taking account of the key points raised through the community consultations, and set out the Town Council's 5 strategic themes and specific aims for 2015 to 2020. These are:

1. **Environment:** To make Maryport a more *attractive* place to live, work and visit
2. **Community:** To contribute to a more *active* Maryport where people are given more opportunities to participate in a range of activities for all ages and abilities.
3. **Economy:** To market & *promote* Maryport in collaboration with the town's businesses and organisations.
4. **Culture & Heritage:** To protect and maintain Maryport's finest historical and cultural assets, taking *pride* in what makes the town a distinctive place to live, work and visit.
5. **Communications:** To continue to improve communications between the Town Council and the community it serves, extending the opportunities for the town's residents to *participate* in the activities of the Council.

## 5 ACTION PLAN

### 5.1 Priorities for Action

The actions that will be needed to satisfy these five strategic aims will be monitored closely and refreshed annually throughout the period 2015 to 2020.

From 2016 Maryport Town Council will deliver support and services to address the following priorities:

#### **Strategic Aim 1: Attractive Maryport**

1.1 Provide support for localised environmental improvements where these are visible and enhance prominent areas or features of Maryport & Flimby, including provision of display boards and seating.

1.2 Support community action to create attractive entrances to Maryport for those arriving by road and rail, including floral displays, signage and interpretation.

1.3 Support community action to enhance the appearance of Maryport town centre, including floral displays, signage, shop screens and interpretation.

1.4 Provide regular repairs, maintenance and cleaning of the bus shelters in Maryport and Flimby, and ensure provision of shelters meets passenger requirements.

#### **Strategic Aim 2: Active Maryport**

2.1 Facilitate a community working group to bid for funding to improve the town's Promenade area as an accessible, recreational resource for all ages.

2.2 Provide small grants to support local community groups, clubs and societies which encourage a diverse range of opportunities for social interaction and exercise for all ages and abilities.

2.3 Provide allotments to individuals and families to create the opportunities for residents without access to a garden to enjoy the health benefits of fresh air, exercise, home grown produce, and the opportunity to meet with like-minded

people. Develop new plots as funding permits in accordance with demand.

### **Strategic Aim 3: Promote Maryport**

3.1 Provide funding to support local projects and initiatives that seek to raise the profile of Maryport and Flimby, enhancing people's impressions of the local area.

3.2 Provide funding to support festivals and events specifically where these contribute positively to the promotion of Maryport and Flimby as a place to live, work and visit.

3.3 Work in partnership with local businesses to provide the annual Christmas lights, developing lighting as funding allows.

3.4 Work in partnership with the local schools to stage local events and to encourage their participation the town's programme of festival's and activities.

3.5 Support individuals as "ambassadors" for Maryport and Flimby, putting the town "on the map" as they seek to achieve their goals both in the UK and overseas.

### **Strategic Aim 4: Pride in Maryport**

4.1 Maintain and develop key monuments and memorials that celebrate Maryport's history and its industrial and maritime heritage.

4.2 Organise the annual Remembrance Day Commemorations to recognise the bravery of local men and women who have served their country.

4.3 Work in partnership with the local schools to encourage young people to take pride in their local area, including campaigns to keep Maryport and Flimby tidy.

4.4 Support community action to maintain and enhance Maryport's Promenade.

4.5 Encourage garden, allotment and other improvements through community competitions.

### **Strategic Aim 5: Participate in Maryport**

5.1 Establish a programme of regular community consultations to inform the work of the Town Council.

5.2 Establish a community reference group to review the Town Council's progress in implementing this strategy.

5.3 Establish new channels of communication for the residents and taxpayers of Maryport & Flimby to be kept informed of Council activities and achievements, including use of website, social media & newsletter, with additional means for engaging with the community provided.

5.4 Encourage members of the community to attend Council Meetings.

### **Activities Addressing Multiple Strategic Aims**

6.1 Lobby government and other bodies to create coastal improvements, creating new local employment opportunities and a resource for recreation and tourism.

6.2 Lobby health and other bodies to support the provision of a community based health service appropriate to the area.

6.3 Lobby government and other bodies to support provision of effective flood protection improvements.

6.4 Lobby principal councils to support improvements to town centre highways and parking management.

## 5.2 NOT Priorities for Action

Having stated what the Town Council's main priorities are (above) it is also worthwhile stating what are not considered to be priorities for the Town Council. These include:

- The delivery or funding of services where other bodies have a clear remit to deliver those functions in Maryport.
- The delivery of services where these are more appropriately and cost effectively provided in the private sector.

In these instances Maryport Town Council may choose, as appropriate, to influence how these services are delivered in order to represent the social, economic and environmental well-being of people in Maryport & Flimby.

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