Chief Executive's Update

Recommendation that:	**a**	**The Authority is asked to note the update on key topics since the last meeting.**

1 Defra including Hillary Cottam review

1.1 The proposed Hilary Cottam review / pilot project for uplands landscapes / communities continues to be considered and scoped by Defra and Hillary Cottam.

1.2 In early Summer a large roundtable workshop event was hosted by Hilary and the Defra Team in Penrith to discuss the potential for the scheme in Cumbria and explore issues, options and appetite.

1.3 The event was well attended by relevant stakeholders. A decision on the location of the pilot and advice on next steps is anticipated in the Autumn.

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2. Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) Update

2.1 The deferral of the election of any Mayor for a proposed Cumbrian MCA has been confirmed, with any Mayoral election now proposed for May 2027 to align with wider local election cycles.

2.2 The decisions of both Westmoreland and Furness and Cumberland Council's on agreeing to the MCA are due in September / October.

2.3 The Chair of the Lake District National Park Authority has written to the Leaders of both Local Authorities ahead of that process confirming our interest in discussing the governance arrangements and composition of any MCA. Specifically, the Chair reiterated the LDNPA's desire to become a non-constituent member of any Cumbrian MCA.

3. Coast to Coast project

3.1 Natural England have confirmed the Lake District allocation of £600,000 of Coast-to-Coast funding. This is to fund the final year of delivery of the upgrade of the Coast-to-Coast national trail. The funding needs to be spent by 31st March 2026 in time for the completion of the full national trial.

4. World Heritage Committee decision

4.1 The English Lake District State of Conservation report was recently considered at the 47th World Heritage Committee (WHC) meeting. Within the decision notice, which has recently been circulated to you, there is welcome recognition of continuing efforts to address the recommendations arising from previous WHC sessions, including in relation to private vehicular use, affordable housing and the development of an interpretation strategy. It, however, reiterates concerns relating to certain recreational activities, including planning consents issued at Elterwater Quarry and Honister, together with ongoing concerns relating to recreational vehicle use on unsealed roads. This year the WHC has also identified new concerns relating to the state of the Lake District's traditional

agropastoral system. The decision notice will form an important input into the preparation of the new Partnership Plan. A new State of Conservation report prepared for examination by the WHC at its 49th session in 2027.

5. Windermere Gateway progress update

5.1 The Windermere Gateway project continues to build momentum, with recent milestones helping to bring the vision closer to reality. Westmorland and Furness Council's Cabinet has agreed to finalise an agreement with Homes England, securing £9.95 million towards essential highway works, through the Brownfield, Infrastructure and Land Fund. In addition, the Council has also agreed to grant £2.5 million from its Affordable Housing Fund - demonstrating its commitment to providing local, high-quality and sustainable homes.

5.2 Progress is also advancing on the station improvements project with consultants expected to be appointed in late September to undertake a "GRIP4 study". This study will propose enhancements to improve the station's functionality and connectivity, supporting the Windermere Gateway's ambition to create a transformational entrance to the Lake District.

5.3 Community engagement remains central to the work of the Windermere Gateway Strategic Officer Group. A leaflet has recently been distributed to update all households in the LA23 area and two drop-in events are planned at the Marchesi Centre for **Friday 19th September (14:00–20:00)** and **Saturday 20th September (10:00–15:00)** designed to encourage conversation on all projects.

6. BMW Recharge in Nature Partnership

6.1 Lake District hay meadows are being supported through BMW UK funded 'Recharge in Nature' partnership. £65,000 is being invested into a hay meadow project as part of a nature friendly farming initiative to enhance biodiversity on farmland, funded through BMW's Recharge project which is a partnership secured by National Parks Partnerships. The project is being delivered by Cumbria Wildlife Trust with support from the Authority. A few weeks ago, our Farming Officer, Claire Foster, was interviewed by Helen Skelton to talk about our partnership with BMW. The video will be shared widely across social media in the coming weeks.

7. Nutrient Neutrality update

7.1 Earlier this year the Cumbria Nutrient Neutrality Partnership (Westmorland and Furness Council, Cumberland Council and us) received £16.3 million of funding through the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund to develop a plan for delivering nutrient mitigation in four Cumbria catchments.

7.2 Since then, the programme has continued to make good progress towards meeting its funding obligations with MHCLG to unblock 4935 homes by the end of 2026. Two approved contractors - Burrow Environmental and Our Rivers - have been appointed to deliver phosphorus mitigation through Household Package Treatment Plant upgrades, each targeting a 50kg reduction in the first phase. Landowner engagement is also advancing, supported by land agents, enabling early discussions around land use change and credit generation. Collaboration with Natural England in the Eden catchment remains ongoing, particularly around site identification and future land use change agreements.

7.3 Mitigation delivery is expected to accelerate, alongside progress in negotiations for land use change and exploration of potential land purchases to secure further opportunities through the LNMF programme.

8. Visitor Management Update

8.1 The height of the visitor season, supported by good weather, has meant significant pressures in some parts of the Lake District, impacting on our communities and environment. The Strategic Visitor Management Group has continued its work to respond to these pressures. Activity, to date, has included:

- Our Visitor Management team, with the assistance of our Rangers, has arranged and attended weekly multi-agency patrols throughout the summer holidays - with some weekends having multiple patrols. These patrols have an emphasis on engagement and education, albeit enforcement does occur where and when necessary.
- Our Communications Service has initiated an Influence the Influencer social media campaign which has seen significant success. Additionally, we have launched a new web page: Visitor engagement and management : Lake District National Park

8.2 This year we have worked hard with both Councils to understand Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) – the opportunities and limitations. Cumberland Council has served a PSPO across the entire Council area whereas Westmorland and Furness Council have just finished consultation on the proposed designation of three new areas specific PSPOs on East shore Coniston, West shore (Harrowslack) Windermere, and at Blea Tarn. PSPOs provide another tool in visitor management

Background Papers
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