

# Cumbernauld

North Lanarkshire

'Mark One' New Town – Designated 9 December 1955

Cumbernauld was identified as a potential means of accommodating some of Glasgow's population in Abercrombie's Clyde Valley Plan of 1946, but was not designated until 1955. Cumbernauld was designed using a 'whole-place approach', consciously departing from the 'neighbourhood' principle adopted in the previous New Towns. Pursuing 'urbanity' as a 'way of life', it applied higher densities within fewer urban areas, with a single town centre on the hilltop. It contains some of the most notable examples of modernist architecture in the UK. It is a town of two halves, bisected by a motorway. The southern half was built with modernist low-rise in a Radburn-style layout by the Development Corporation. The northern half was developed by the private sector, with the Development Corporation acting as facilitator.



## Key facts:

- **Location:** 21 kilometres north east of Glasgow.
- **2011 Census population:** 52,270, in 22,105 households.<sup>1</sup> By the 1990s Cumbernauld had grown to be North Lanarkshire's biggest town.
- **Local authority:** North Lanarkshire Council.
- **Local Plan status:** North Lanarkshire Local Plan (adopted 2012).

## New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 9 December 1955.
- **Designated area:** 1,680 hectares, revised later to 3,152 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 50,000, revised to 70,000 in 1960 (population at designation: 3,000).
- **Development Corporation:** Designated to accommodate Glasgow overspill population. Development Corporation wound up 31 December 1996.

## Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in Cumbernauld that are owner-occupied (71.0%) is higher than the UK New Towns average (58.5%) and higher than the UK average. The majority of owner-occupied homes are former social housing that was purchased under the 'Right to Buy'.
- The North Lanarkshire local authority area ranks 5 out of 32 in the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (1 = most deprived).
- The 2011 Census reported that 52.5% of Cumbernauld residents declared themselves to be in 'very good' health – 5.8% and 5.5% above the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. The proportion of residents that reported 'good' health was slightly lower than the UK New Towns and UK averages.

## Employment/economic profile:

- Cumbernauld is a strategic business centre.
- North Lanarkshire Council is the biggest employer in the town.
- A greater proportion of residents are employed in manufacturing than in Scotland generally, but this proportion is smaller than the Scottish New Town averages. There is also a higher percentage of residents employed in construction than elsewhere in Scotland.

## Development Corporation legacy:

- The experiment of the town centre 'mega-structure' has created a negative image, overshadowing award-winning residential neighbourhoods.
- The town has good-quality walkable neighbourhoods with strong identities within a landscape framework that has withstood 'institutional neglect'.
- Cumbernauld has many committed community groups.
- Cumbernauld was voted the worst town in Scotland in 2002, but the most improved town in Scotland in 2010. In 2012 it won the 'best town' Civic Pride Award, a new category in the Scottish Design Awards.

## Key issues for the future:

- Ongoing town centre regeneration, including provision of a hub building for community activities and start-up businesses.
- Improving the physical condition of former public sector houses sold under the 'Right to Buy'. 80% of former public sector stock is now owner-occupied. This stock is coming to the end of its life and needs major refurbishment.
- Cumbernauld is a 'Community Growth Area', earmarked for housing growth via major urban expansion to the south of the town for 2,000 homes.
- Retrofitting houses for low-carbon energy efficiency.

<sup>1</sup> Locality 2010 area for Cumbernauld used

## Did you know?

It is not possible to take a driving test in Cumbernauld as there are only two sets of traffic lights in the whole town, and these control access to the motorway which bisects the town.