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Cumbria flood recovery - six months on

Exactly six months after the floods hit Cumbria, the recovery effort is continuing, with a multi-agency operation ongoing to restore the county and get the lives of flood-affected people back to normal.

The recovery effort, which has been led by Cumbria County Council and has involved over 50 different organisations and agencies, has achieved a huge amount in the last six months. The county is very much open for business and the tourism industry is now showing encouraging visitor numbers and income. Half a year after the floods is a suitable time to take stock of what's been achieved, what still needs to be done and to outline some of the early lessons learned from the floods.

A comprehensive list of recovery achievements one month on from the floods - such as building the Barker Crossing footbridge and the temporary rail station north of the river in Workington, as well setting up flood support centres and dealing with the huge volumes of waste material caused by the floods - can be viewed at: <http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/floods/onemonthon/default.asp>. Six months after November 19th 2009, a fuller picture has emerged of exactly what has been achieved since then in the four main recovery areas of infrastructure, environment, business & economy and welfare.

Infrastructure

Key achievements:

- A new temporary road bridge across the River Derwent in Workington has been crucial in easing congestion in the area and ending the lengthy diversion for communities on either side of the river. The two-lane bridge opened on 21 April, five weeks ahead of schedule and just 72 days after construction began - believed to be one of the fastest temporary road bridge builds of this size ever in the UK. Not only has the construction been done in rapid time, the procurement and funding process which would usually take months if not years, was condensed into less than two months. Cumbria County Council and contractor Morgan Est completed the 350-tonne, 67-metre span temporary bridge thanks to £4.6m funding from the Department for Transport. New traffic management plans have been introduced in the town to keep traffic flowing in the smoothest possible way and a local campaign, 'Keep Workington moving', has run to highlight the benefits of public transport and other alternatives such as cycling and car sharing.

- The remains of Workington's former Northside Bridge have been demolished on the north side of the river so that disruption to the new road link to the temporary bridge will be avoided in the future.
- The increased public transport provision, including buses to take people to Barker Crossing and the new temporary rail station at Workington North, remained in place until the opening of the temporary road bridge. The free rail shuttle service between Workington and Maryport was also extended until the end of May with additional Department for Transport funding.
- Further afield, a programme of road repair works to deal with the general damage to the county's road surfaces from the flood waters has been put in place and instigated.
- Cockermouth Main Street re-opened to traffic on 24 March which included the re-opening of Cocker Bridge and Derwent (Gote) Bridge following repair as well as road resurfacing works. Broughton Bridge, another important link for communities, was repaired and opened to traffic one-way in March and then both ways the following month. Likewise Ouse and Isel bridges were re-opened to traffic in March.
- Portinscale footbridge, on a key walkers' route to Catbells near Keswick, was repaired and re-opened in time for Easter. Brewery Bridge in Cockermouth was also repaired and reopened by Easter.
- Allerdale Borough Council has started works on Riverside car park in Cockermouth which was found to have suffered flood damage.

Tasks ahead:

- While the immediate priorities have been addressed, there is still a considerable amount of work to do. Seven road bridges and one culvert (Scarness) still need to be rebuilt or repaired, including bridges in South Lakeland (Backbarrow Bridge and Bouthrey Bridge), three in rural locations in Allerdale (Low Lorton, Scarness and Little Braithwaite) and Workington's two permanent road bridges (Northside and Workington (Calva) bridges). Now that traffic flows are working relatively well for the temporary road bridge, Cumbria County Council and Allerdale Borough Council are engaging with local people to learn of their aspirations for the new permanent road bridge. Work programmes are in place for the other bridges and it is anticipated they will be repaired or rebuilt and re-opened later this summer and autumn. Connect Roads have confirmed it will attempt to repair Workington (Calva) Bridge rather than demolishing it. If successful, this will mean it could be operational again by the end of this year and Workington would once again have two road bridges.
- Another key link for Workington is the repair or rebuilding of Navvies footbridge. A work programme is in place to do this work. Likewise, Millers footbridge in Cockermouth still needs to be rebuilt or replaced and a work programme is in place to complete this later this summer. In February Cumbria County Council agreed to emergency funding of £250,000 to pay for repairs to the two footbridges.

- The Port of Workington, which was successfully dredged and fully operational by mid January 2010, still has a significant amount of structural damage to address. The river bank damage along the parts of the River Derwent which are within the port's jurisdiction has been successfully scoped and ground investigations are ongoing prior to invitations to tender for the repair work being released. The port anticipates proposals for works from contractors during June.

Environment

Key achievements:

- To date, 91 farmers have received grants of up to £6,800 to hire equipment or specialist contractors to remove debris and gravel from their fields through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) - allocated by the Solway, Border and Eden and Cumbria Fells and Dales Local Action Groups. The total value of the grants to help with the clear-up so far amounts to £393,780. The Solway, Border and Eden programme has received 31 successful applications and committed £161,668; and Cumbria Fells and Dales has received 60 successful applications and committed £232,112.

- In the area of flood defences and future flood risks, in February and March the Environment Agency carried out essential emergency works along a half mile stretch of the River Derwent in Cockermouth to help protect local people against the risk of future flooding. 12,000 tonnes of gravel deposited in the floods were removed from the river bed above and below Gote Bridge as well in the River Cocker in the town. The urgent nature of the work meant the Environment Agency worked in the river at a time of year when they would normally prohibit such activity because of the possible impact on wildlife.

- The Environment Agency also extended its free flood warning service to an additional 3,000 homes and businesses in Cumbria in February. The extension was part of a national drive to sign up more homes to the service, which issues free flood warnings to registered properties in risk areas. There are now 9,300 properties registered to receive free flood warnings in Cumbria. In Cockermouth, approximately 160 properties that were affected during the November floods and not previously able to receive flood warnings, are now part of a new flood warning area that has been created to cover; Derwent Mills, Station Street, Derwent Side Gardens, Wakefields Road and Market Place.

- Also in February, the Environment Agency announced plans to spend £57m for the year to March 2011 to reduce the risk of flood and coastal erosion in the North West. The figure included £1.1m expenditure on the ongoing flood recovery works in Cumbria, including the flood defence strengthening works in the High Hill area of Keswick due to be completed by June 10. £3m was set aside for the Thacka Beck flood alleviation scheme in Penrith that will see the creation of a flood storage basin and the replacing and repairing of culverts to protect approximately 260 properties.

- In May 2010 a farm recovery coordinator was employed by the NFU via a grant from the Cumbria Community Foundation to assist farmers still struggling to get land back

into production. Former Natural England Catchment Sensitive Farming Adviser Sandy Brown is now based above the auction ring at Mitchells Lakeland Livestock Centre in Cocker mouth, near to where most of the affected farmers are based. She can source 3-5 days of free business advice for anybody looking to diversify or change their farm plan, explore the possibilities of putting formerly productive agricultural land into Natural England's higher level environmental stewardship scheme so that the flood affected land provides income from being a wildlife habitat, and provides back up to farmers considering an offer from Defra to purchase land covered with debris. This builds on the ongoing communications drive to farmers, which has included dedicated Flood Bulletin newsletters.

- The Jacobs Geomorphological Survey commissioned by Natural England & the Environment Agency to assess the damage caused by the flooding of the River Derwent & Cocker, looking at 14 separate locations was completed on the 27 January, with recommendations to help decide what can be done to stabilise and maintain the river bank both in the short and long term.

- Allerdale Borough Council's building control team has been offering restoration advice to house owners and commercial properties regarding the requirements of building regulations and advice on using suitable contractors. Building control officers were based in Cocker mouth to advise on renovations. Allerdale Borough Council's Planning Team also provided specialist advice. They produced a guidance sheet on the repair of flood-damaged historic buildings and the council's conservation officer offered individual advice to property owners. There was also specialist advice available on the historic and ecological impacts on works needed to damaged structures.

Tasks ahead:

- The longer term issue of the level of flood defences needed in Cumbria in the future still has to be addressed. The flood defences installed in Carlisle following the 2005 floods did their job in 2009. People living in flood-affected areas this time are looking for similar assurances that their homes will be protected in the future. Clearly this is a national issue and Cumbria's priorities need to fit into the Environment Agency's overall programme - but understandably local people have concerns that flooding could reoccur.

- On Public Rights of Way, all of the flood impacts both within the Lake District National Park and across wider Cumbria have now been assessed and a prioritised programme of work developed and begun to tackle the damage to footpaths, bridleways and footbridges. The cost of this programme has been estimated at approximately £3.5 million. So far Defra has agreed funding of £500,000 for the Lake District National Park Authority to progress with repairs to the public rights of way network within the National Park. £190K of funding has been awarded by the North West Improvement and Energy Efficiency partnership to help with the restoration of paths in and around Workington, and work is continuing to secure additional funding from a range of government departments. Subject to securing this funding package, a wider programme of footpaths and bridleway repairs will be mobilised across the Lake District and wider Cumbria - including the Derwent corridor.

- A handful of farmers with small parcels of former agricultural land that cannot be restored to farming use, or included in an agri-environment (Higher Level Stewardship) agreement, have been invited to consider selling the land, so that it can be managed for wider public benefit. Defra has commissioned independent reports from the District Valuer to help take forward negotiations with those farmers who expressed an interest in this option.

- Natural England and the Environment Agency have continued to visit those worst affected farmers throughout Cumbria to discuss the short, mid and long term issues they are facing. Acceptable soft engineering techniques to stabilise and restore the flood plain and river banks are being worked upon, such as tree planting and use of deadwood to stabilise the river bank. 133 flood affected farmers have been visited in the River Derwent, Cocker, & Ehen catchments, 57 not required a visit, 56 farms have large issues which need long term consideration, whilst 20 had issues resolved at first visit.

Business and economy

Key achievements:

- Since the floods, Business Link Northwest advisers have committed more than 4,000 hours to working with flood affected businesses; the equivalent of over 500 working days. Business Link Northwest and the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce continue to work closely with many of the affected businesses behind the scenes to guide them through the lengthy and often complex recovery process.

- The Business Recovery Grant Scheme established by Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Cumbria County Council, which utilises Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) funding, has offered to pay out £1,088,000 to small and medium sized businesses and the Chamber had helped 217 businesses. Activities helped by the grants include website development, introduction of online trading, advertising, training, architect and design work, accountancy support, and support with planning applications.

- Allerdale Borough Council appointed a Flood Recovery Co-ordinator for Cockermouth to assist in co-ordinating the recovery of the retail centre of the town. The council also made £50,000 available to help shop owners in Cockermouth, whose businesses were flooded, to improve their business's appearance and attract more visitors to the town. Many retail businesses have used the floods as an opportunity to upgrade their premises and have reopened in more attractive premises than before the floods. In the immediate flood-affected area of Cockermouth, by May 2010, 133 businesses were trading from their original premises, 18 had relocated temporarily, 58 had repair work in progress and the remaining 9 were awaiting instruction.

- Also in Cockermouth, a range of initiatives helped drive home the message that the town was getting back on its feet. Thanks to the Cockermouth Chamber of Trade, the message 'Cockermouth - open for business' was branded on a fleet of Reays coaches and also jute shopping bags which were promoted by Lord Melvyn Bragg and HRH the Prince of Wales. £30,000 was spent on new visitor leaflets distributed through tourist

information centres, entertainment venues, accommodation venues, retailers and tourist attractions across the region. Information was included on the Chamber of Trade's website and a giant map was put on display at Sainsbury's in the town, which showed which traders were open and where those hit by the floods had relocated to.

- A flood trail was created, in conjunction with Cockermouth Civic Trust, complete with self-guided tour leaflets, story boards in flood-hit premises and 'tide mark' stickers. Hundreds of children participated in a poster competition, designed to brighten the windows of flood-damaged shops.

- The floods have bonded Cockermouth's businesses more closely together. Before November the Cockermouth Chamber of Trade had been disbanded after being reduced to three members. Now there are 145 members representing more than 900 employees and covering everything from motorsport and retailers to window cleaners and IT consultants.

- The Cockermouth Chamber of Trade received support and funding from the West Cumbria Development Agency, which also raised an extra £150,000 from the West Cumbria Development Fund to help businesses affected by the floods through its 'backing business' programme. The organisation's business advisers have helped over 100 businesses to access flood recovery grants and also provide wider advice on issues such as temporary premises.

- It is now becoming clearer how one of the linchpins of the Cumbrian economy, tourism, has been affected. The first months of 2010 were exceptionally difficult for tourism in Cumbria. A telephone survey conducted by Cumbria Tourism with 500 tourism businesses in April 2010 showed that 55% of businesses report profits down for the last 6 months (Oct-Mar), with 29% level and 16% up. The biggest losses were recorded during November, December and January as the county reeled from the effects of flooding and snow and ice. But things picked up in March, with 63% reporting profits up or level on last year and just 37% down. Businesses report visitors spending less and staying for shorter times, along with an increase in last minute bookings. 21% said they had more visitors over Easter this year, 39% the same as last year, 40% less than last year. Despite the trend for last minute bookings, advance bookings for the next 6 months are promising, with 71% level or up on last year for April to June and 73% up or level on last year for July to September. Businesses remain optimistic with 51% saying that for the next 6 months their business expectations 'look good' and just 13% 'not great'. The 'open for business' campaign has borne fruit and Cumbria Tourism has undertaken various initiatives to encourage people to continue with their plans to visit the county. Promotional campaigns have run in a range of local, national and international media, including a reader offer, which ran across 40 regional newspapers in January and February in conjunction with Lakes Hospitality Association and Omega Travel. This resulted in over 860 bookings. For the first time in its history, Cumbria Tourism invested in a TV advertising campaign to run alongside the popular ITV 1 docu-series, The Lakes, which began in January and quickly became ITV's most popular factual series of 2010, attracting an average audience of 4.2 million viewers each week for its 12-week run. The ad campaign ran for the final five episodes of the series and reached over 10 million viewers. A dedicated 'wish you were here' PR campaign inviting celebrities to pen a personal postcard to Cumbria to spread the word

that the county is open for business and welcoming visitors was developed and is still ongoing.

Tasks ahead:

- While a great deal of progress has been made in Cockermouth, the town is not yet fully back on its feet. The reopening of The Trout hotel, expected in June, will be a major benchmark for the town and the rolling programme of reopening still needs to continue.
- Cumbria Tourism is currently bidding for funds to develop and improve visitor facilities and accommodation in west Cumbria and invest in marketing the area, as well as working with partners on securing a food festival to help to relaunch Cockermouth later this year.

Welfare

Key achievements:

- Support is still being delivered directly into communities for flood victims. More than 250 separate community and stakeholder events, such as drop-in surgeries, public meetings and flood recovery workshops, have been held in Allerdale alone since the floods. Flood support centres continue to operate and offer one-to-one advice and support.
- Cumbria flood bulletins continue to be produced and distributed to flood-affected households. The bulletins contain news and updates from a wide range of sources and continue to be one of the main communications methods in many areas. New technologies such as text messaging and Twitter updates have also been used to keep people informed of developments.
- The effect of the floods on children in the county has been a particular area where a lot of work has been carried out. Approximately 800 pupils and students were displaced by the floods i.e. they could not get to their normal school or had to travel on diverted routes in order to get to their normal school. Most of these were around Workington, as a result of the bridge collapse. Cumbria County Council's Children's Services and Transport Operations Team organised a large number of buses/coaches and other forms of transport to ensure that where young people could not access school via their normal route they would be able to continue with their education with as little disruption as possible. Arrangements had to be altered both after the construction of the Barker Crossing footbridge and the construction of the temporary road bridge in Workington. Where transport was supplied for primary school pupils, escorts were employed to accompany them on the long journey to school. Students from colleges entitled to transport used the train to get from one side of Workington to the other. All 14-19 year olds displaced received one-to-one support from Connexions, which included work with acute services (such as young single parents in rented accommodation). Counselling was also delivered in schools and youth workers worked with the police in Cockermouth and Keswick to provide further support to young people. Funding was sought from the DCSF for a mobile youth bus, this bid was successful and is now operational.

Training sessions were offered to schools in order that staff on the ground could deal with the emotional needs of pupils both immediately and in the long term. Advice was published to all schools which included contact numbers of approved psychologists.

- NHS Cumbria has continued to ensure that health services are maintained. Community and hospital services operating out of Cockermouth Community Hospital have continued to operate fully since the floods happened in November. Derwent House Surgery in Cockermouth will be relocating to its previous premises at Derwent House once refurbishment work has been completed. This is expected to be finished by the end of the summer. Cockermouth's South Street Surgery currently has no plans to move premises and will remain in the temporary accommodation on the hospital site. The five Workington GP practices and their community teams (community nurses, health visitors, community midwives etc) have worked together to provide primary care services for their patients living north of the river. The primary health care teams were based in temporary accommodation in Seaton and at Northside Community Centre from Monday to Friday to help patients who were unable to easily access their own GP surgery due to the collapse of the Northside Bridge. Now GP services in Workington are expected to get back to normal by June. The temporary GP and nurse-led clinics in Seaton and Northside will cease on 28 May. Health concerns in the recovery phase also focused on mental health issues. The First Step mental health service, which is normally by GP referral only, has enabled people to self refer in Allerdale. The service says it is too early to say whether the take up of First Step services has increased as a result of the floods.

- As of 31 March 2010, the Cumbria Flood Recovery Fund had received 5,194 pledges totalling £2,477,000, of which £2,287,000 had been received. Donations have slowed down considerably but event fundraisers continue to send in cheques. The largest donation has been from Jennings Brewery, who donated over £178,000 in February.

Grants distributed amount to £1,250,954:

	Individuals/ households	Groups
No of grants	931	88
No of applicants	681	72
Total	£571,110	£679,844
Average grant	£613	£7725
Minimum grant	£34	£200
Maximum grant	£19,000	£56,800

Grants have been made to all flooded communities, with Cockermouth the highest number, followed by Workington, Keswick, Ulverston, Penrith, Kendal and Ambleside.

- Allerdale Borough Council has dealt with 21 flood-related housing interviews, of which 11 resulted in homelessness applications and 10 for advice only. Of these, 11 were carried out in the first month and 10 in the following five months. All residents in social housing run by Derwent and Solway, Home and Impact Housing Associations have returned to their homes.

- Impact Furniture Services has provided over 1,000 new and reused items such as furniture, white goods and beds to more than 300 flood affected homes in Cockermouth, Keswick, Workington, Ulverston and Eamont Bridge. It also provided a carpet fitting service, a storage facility for furniture chosen by customers who were unable to have it delivered, and temporary jobs for three long-term unemployed people.

- Libraries have played an important role as a community resource in the recovery operation. Keswick Library is still being used as a flood support centre, alongside its normal library services, and this will continue until at least July 2010. Seaton, Ulverston and Ambleside libraries (along with some of the mobile libraries) were involved in providing flood support and information in the immediate aftermath but have now returned to providing their normal services. Cockermouth Library re-opened on 12 April after five months in temporary accommodation at Christ Church in the town. Staff involved in setting up and providing the temporary service have been invited to attend the Queen's garden party on 20 July. Libraries also actively promoted books about mental health self help and therapies.

- As well as providing ongoing support to flood victims through flood support centres and continued liaison with the third sector, Cumbria County Council, working with the Cumbria Observatory, set up a flood register to gain a definitive picture of the extent and impact of the floods across the county. This includes information from the Red Cross, the flood support centres and from flood-affected people who completed a questionnaire online or through the county council's contact centre. So far 946 people have registered, with Cockermouth (464) and Keswick (273) having the highest number of registrations, followed by Ulverston (49) and Workington (30). According to information gathered from affected householders the most commonly occurring need immediately after the floods was for accommodation (24.8% of residents), with advice about insurance ranking second (9.5%), business support (8.5%), council tax advice (8.2%) and information about the Cumbria Flood Appeal (7.8%).

- The British Red Cross has been providing ongoing emotional and practical support, helping people to register for flood support through its volunteers and staff at Ulverston, Keswick and Cockermouth flood support centres as well as its 24/7 pager number for people who need urgent support. It has signposted many people to other organisations whether finding toys for Christmas or providing help with insurance.

- A Cumbria flood workshop was organised by Lancaster University in Penrith on 24 March to explore the role that research can play in Cumbria's recovery. During the run-up to the workshop, Lancaster's researchers organised a series of community events across Cumbria in order to talk to flooded residents and listen to their concerns. The workshop enabled stakeholders involved in the recovery to meet flooded residents and experts so they could learn lessons from previous research and plan future learning.

- There have been numerous sparks of individual initiative around the county. In Ulverston the community unit has been in discussion with Homebase for a 20% discount for flood affected people. A complementary therapy project has been set up for affected people in South Lakeland - up to six free sessions with a therapist of their choice - while flood victims in Cockermouth received free relaxation therapy sessions to lower stress levels.

Tasks ahead:

- The main priority is for displaced people to get back to their homes and to receive the support they need, particularly in the area of mental health.

Lessons learned

Cumbria's emergency plan, recovery plan and business continuity plan were re-written following the serious flooding in 2005. With early indications from the Environment Agency on November 18th that there would be extensive rainfall and a risk of flooding, the County Council's management team had met the day before the floods to run through the plan and had begun to check bridges and other infrastructure. Six months on there are a series of early lessons from the floods.

- Emergency plans had been well tested, however, the scale of the flooding was beyond what was predicted. Emergency plans now need to be revisited to take account of climate change and severity of the flooding. For example, access routes to some identified emergency reception centres flooded and a local firm did not have flooding as a risk for its emergency plan as it was on a hill, but such was the severity of the flooding, it was badly affected.

- Recovery planning began early whilst the incident was still on going. This allowed key partners to get together and set up working groups on Welfare, Business, Environment and Infrastructure to plan for the impact and quickly respond once the emergency was over. A key lesson was the need to resource the recovery group with project management and to focus other resources on business continuity. The usual work of the council did not stop, because of the flooding, it increased.

- Offers of help came in thick and fast in the form of expertise, food, money, clothing, tents, portable bridges, volunteers etc. Fortunately having learnt from the 2005 floods the Cumbria Community Foundation moved quickly to set up a flood recovery fund to manage donations. This allowed the recovery groups to concentrate on other offers of help but this took a team to establish systems, and dedicated capacity over a number of weeks and months to coordinate the offers and ensure they were channelled to the appropriate recovery group.

- Communities were resilient and where they were organised prior to the flooding there were able to respond quickly and efficiently. Keswick Flood Action Group staffed by volunteers were able to check on the welfare of local people, move furniture upstairs and deal with all kinds of trauma. The council's emergency plan needs to dovetail in a way that supports this community resilience. Prior to the flooding there were 12 flood

action groups, now there are an additional 18 providing an enormous opportunity to maximise the community's contribution alongside the public sector.

- Engaging with strategic funders at an early stage is essential. Offers of government funding came in after every minister's visit - each had a different criteria and method of access, which can be complicated processes for local agencies to navigate. Technical support from central Government was essential in ensuring funding was secured. For example, the Department for Transport appointed consultants and embedded them in the recovery process from the outset to help negotiate the processes of accessing funding for emergency infrastructure works - a first for government and extremely beneficial in creating a single team approach between local and central government. A particular concern for local agencies was the very short timescales for assessing the scale of the damage and submitting claims for assistance. For a significant period after the floods much of the infrastructure most severely affected was submerged beneath the floodwaters, making detailed assessment very difficult. At the point when the water began to subside Cumbria was hit by severe winter weather, blanketing much of the county in snow and ice and again making it difficult to access and assess the damage. These difficulties, combined with the size and rurality of Cumbria made it difficult to hit government deadlines.

- A Crisis Assistance Package could be developed nationally to improve the speed of response locally. Identifying the likely crisis issues facing local agencies in advance would improve preparedness and greatly assist future joint working between central and local government in times of crisis. The package should include an emergency procurement package which simplify the contact between local agencies and with central government and also could include well maintained lists of indemnified structural engineers and other specialists willing to volunteer their expertise in times of crisis. In Cumbria this would have greatly helped speed up the structural inspection of bridges. Many professionals volunteered their services but the local authority was unable to quickly ensure that their work would be indemnified.

- Landscape Management remains a challenge. Public agencies (Natural England, Environment Agency, Lake District National Park Authority) work well together but a common approach needs to be agreed with those that farm the land. With different views of causation and ways of resolving issues like changing river courses there needs to be better landscape management prior to the flooding if these issues are to be resolved in the longer term.

Cllr Eddie Martin, Leader of Cumbria County Council, said:

“There's been an enormous amount of effort gone into the flood recovery operation and the fruits of our labours are there to see. Workington is reconnected, Cockermouth is open for business, many people are back in their homes and getting around the county is far easier for locals, businesses and visitors than it was six months ago. The upturn in people coming back to this beautiful county on holiday is testimony to all that hard work. But the recovery operation continues. Some road and foot bridges still need to be repaired or rebuilt, some people are still waiting to get back into their homes, farmers need certainty on what the future of their ruined land will be, and the local economy needs to build itself back up. Six months on, we want the rest of the country to realise

that Cumbria is open for business, but also to recognise that we're still recovering from the floods and there's some important lessons to be learned."

ENDS

Media enquiries to Gareth Cosslett, News Manager on 01228 226332