

UNDERSTANDING THE COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF THE NORTH WEST

**LOCAL AUTHORITY
DISTRICT SUMMARY:**

COPELAND

JUNE 2009



Copeland contains six of the 47 communities considered within the regional study of coastal communities across the North West¹. This summary offers a high level extract of analysis into those communities.

- **Millom** is one of the largest of the coastal communities in the south western corner of Cumbria. It is geographically peripheral and separated from the main population and commercial centres in the county by poor highway infrastructure. Millom is a local employment and service centre. The future of the town is likely to be heavily influenced by any decision to locate a new nuclear power station on the Cumbrian coast.
- **Ravenglass, Seascale and St.Bees** are small settlements which attract a successful and increasingly ageing population². All these settlements host workers active within the nuclear industry (working either at Sellafield or related sites such as West Lakes Science Park). None of these communities plays much of a role as an employment centre, although St.Bees hosts a boarding school which supports a number of jobs and influences the socio-economic profile of the settlement.
- **Whitehaven** is the administrative centre of the Copeland and a sub-regional employment and retail centre. Whitehaven was formerly a trading port; commercial use of the harbour is now limited, but it remains an important fish landing and distribution centre. The leisure potential of the harbour has been strengthened by the provision of a tidal lock, marina pontoons and related services. Whitehaven could not be described as a resort, yet its accessible and secure harbour, well maintained Georgian quarter and accessibility via the coastal road and rail network may well provide an opportunity for its development as a Maritime destination alongside Maryport.
- **Haverigg** is a small centre situated on the north bank of the Duddon Estuary close to Millom. Its local economy and employment profile is dominated by HMP Haverigg, a Category C prison located on a former RAF base with capacity for up to 644 male prisoners.

Data relating to the socio-economic and environmental characteristics of each settlement can be found in the [Understanding the Coastal Communities of the North West . Data Workbook](#). This data can be brought together to provide a detailed picture for the coastal communities within Copeland. The table below records the relative performance of each settlement against a set of summary indicators. It defines the performance of each community with reference to the sub-regional average for each indicator³.

¹ Understanding the Coastal Communities of the North West; Rural Innovation; June 2009

² See Understanding the Coastal Communities of the North West . Data Workbook; 2001 Population and 2001 . 2007 Population Change

³ A sub-regional rather than regional average has been used because of the significant impact of communities within Merseyside on the overall regional data. See main report, Geographic Analysis (page 6)

Community	Population	Aged Pop.	Pop Growth	Low Income	Car Ownership	Deprivation	Unemployment	Retail & Hospitality	Access to Services	Employment Centre	House Ownership	Private Rented Housing
Millom	6,110	=	-	+	-	=	-	=	-	=	=	=
Ravenglass	324	+		-	+						=	+
Seascale	1,706	+	=	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
St Bees	1,381	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Whitehaven	24,976	=	+	+	-	+	=	+	-	=	+	-
Haverigg	1,063	=	+	=	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	=

= about average, + more than average, - less than average
gaps indicate where Lower Super Output Area analysis was not possible for some settlements

Typology

Within the main report four typologies of coastal communities have been identified; large urban areas, working towns by the sea, maritime towns and settlements of choice⁴.

Millom and Whitehaven are categorised as Maritime Towns. These are the places where the coastal influence is most powerful. This descriptor covers a much broader range of places than the national focus on 'Seaside Towns' has so far allowed. Maritime Towns have at some point been defined by a functional / economic relationship with the sea. Their future will be heavily influenced by the coastal features which have and continue to attract people and businesses to them. They can be resorts or ports, and are frequently both. Policy relating to Maritime Towns should regard their coastal location as a core issue, and understand the challenges and opportunities that it provides.

Ravenglass, Seascale, St.Bees and Haverigg are all categorised as Settlements of Choice. These are popular communities made

⁴ See main report, Functional Typology of Coastal Settlements (page 82)

even more attractive by the high quality environment of their coastal location. They have a strong link to the sea and have often developed around their role as a harbour or haven. The coastal location of these settlements is a very real asset yet it risks prejudicing their future as sustainable communities . both in terms of low carbon living and the balance and vibrancy of their population and business stock. These communities tend not to have structural social economic problems requiring bold intervention. Instead they need gentle but positive management to ensure they remain relatively balanced communities able to meet the obligations of sustainable living.

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