

South Lakeland District Council
Council
18 December 2018
Executive Report – Mid Year 2018/19

Portfolio: Economy and Assets Portfolio
Report from: Cllr Graham Vincent

Portfolio Responsibilities

The Council Plan objectives as they relate to the portfolio are of work, and cross-cutting work developed through the Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy.

Working in partnership to ensure a thriving and prosperous District within the context of the wider sub region, through effective economic development, regeneration and transport strategies.

Working in partnership to ensure thriving and prosperous town centres throughout the District.

Providing public realm infrastructure to promote the local economy.

Promoting small businesses in both towns and rural areas.

Encourage and advocating for infrastructure investment to support economic growth.

Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Economic Development Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy

Key Areas:

- Economic Inward investment
- Business Support and Sector Development
- Visitor Economy
- Town Centre Planning, Car Parks and Transportation
- Markets
- Asset Management

Economic Inward investment

The Council is continuing to build relationships with our key partners around Morecambe Bay in the Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region, building on work previously commissioned and the joint statement of intent to collaborate on economic development initiatives. Working together we will be better placed to meet the economic and social challenges that our areas face, especially in regard to the demographic challenges projected for our area.

The Council has been and will continue to be heavily engaged with the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership on the development of the Local Industrial Strategy for Cumbria with officers directly involved with the writing group. This will complement the work we are doing within Lancaster and South Cumbria and set out how Cumbria will facilitate the delivery of the key priorities in the National Industrial Strategy. This document will likely guide future investment priorities within the County and officer involvement with collating the evidence base and development of the key place based initiatives will ensure South Lakeland is fairly represented.

As these agendas progress, the Council will review its 2014 Economic Development Strategy to ensure it is fit for purpose and will enable us to meet the economic opportunities and challenges of the next 5 years. This will be developed in conjunction with the overview and scrutiny committee.

We will continue to work with partners such as developers and landowners to help facilitate employment sites being brought forward and much needed commercial space be delivered.

We will lobby relevant public and private bodies for investment in infrastructure to unlock allocated employment sites and help support the development of the necessary businesses cases to support this investment.

We will work to ensure that as the next local plan is developed it has adequate provision for employment space in the right locations to meet our businesses needs and aspirations. This will be informed by an evidence base, made available through a record of business engagements with the Council's Economic Development Team and responses to the annual Business Premises Survey, the results of which for 2018 will be made available in early 2019.

Business Support and Sector Development

We will continue to work with partners to provide business support services within South Lakeland for both Start-up and existing enterprises. We will review the partnership arrangement with Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and, as the existing agreement reaches an end on 31 March 2019, will determine how business support activity is best delivered beyond the end of this financial year.

The Invest in South Lakeland website and associated social media accounts continue to be a resource for businesses and entrepreneurs, both those already based in the area and those looking to relocate. Information is available on commercial property, finance, recruitment, business support and advice.

Additionally to this, we will explore alternative business support mechanisms with our partners in Barrow and Lancaster to provide a world class support services that is integrated with Lancaster Universities exceptional business support programmes and encompasses a wide range of support such as productivity initiatives and access to finance.

With partners across Morecambe Bay, we will continue to identify our key sectoral strengths and work with industry, the LEPs and relevant government departments to ensure they are supported to grow and deliver world class employment opportunities for our residents.

Following a postal ballot on 30 November it was announced that the businesses of Kendal voted to renew the Kendal Business Improvement District (BID) Scheme. The annual levy created from the BID is used to invest in initiatives to benefit local traders who are part of the scheme. Following the vote outcome it will continue for a further 5 years.

Town Centre Planning, Car Parks and Transportation

The Kendal Town Centre Masterplan will be coming to completion early in 2019 and will incorporate both the Strategic Car Parking Study and the 2nd stage of the Kendal Strategic Transport Infrastructure study being jointly commissioned by the County, District and town council (Kendal). The Masterplan will set out a vision for the future development within Kendal and ensure there is a clear plan for Kendal to meet the future challenges high streets will face as we move forward.

We will continue to work in Ulverston to bring forward key regeneration opportunities such as at Canal Head and the Former Brewery site to maximise private sector investment and positive outcomes for the town.

Where there are willing local partners we will help to facilitate improvements to town and village centres.

Markets

This next financial year will see the start of a market consultation to look at ways of improving Kendal indoor and outdoor market. The market is an extremely important asset for the Town and should be seen as an economic driver for the Town. Consultation will take place with the traders, public, local businesses, Kendal BID and Kendal Futures as well as other stakeholders to look at ways of rejuvenating the market, whether that be a Capital investment in the infrastructure or other innovative ways to improve the offer. The main aim is that by the end of the financial year 2018/19, a clear strategy will be in place to take the markets forward to ensure they thrive in the longer term.

Asset Management

In summer 2018 a report was brought to Cabinet with recommendations for a new corporate asset strategy which looked at an investment strategy for the Council's land and building portfolio. This follows the asset review completed by Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH). The main change to the strategy will be the formation of a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) panel to provide clear direction on all key decisions to be taken on our land and building portfolio. Investment will be focused on where it meets with the Council's priorities, for service requirements/ efficiency or for maintenance requirements. The asset review has highlighted all key assets with guidance for each asset. The SAMP panel will be key to drive these priorities forward looking at a 10 year programme.