

**South Lakeland District Council**  
**Full Council**  
**Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> of June**  
**Carbon Reduction Target and Green Team Update**

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**Portfolio:** Cllr Dyan Jones - Climate Emergency and Localism Portfolio Holder  
**Report from:** David Sykes - Director of Strategy, Innovation and Resources  
**Report Author:** Hannah Girvan – Strategy Specialist (Sustainability)  
**Wards:** All  
**Forward Plan:** Budget and Policy Framework Decision included in the Forward Plan published on 24 March 2020

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**1.0 Expected Outcome**

Climate change is an existential threat to our way of life. Action is needed to tackle climate change at international, national and local level to help to reduce the negative impacts of climate change on our communities and communities around the world

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019 and adopted a Climate Change Policy which committed the Council to play its part in meeting emissions targets set internationally and through UK Carbon budgets. Adoption of the carbon reduction targets recommended in this report will ensure that South Lakeland will make its contribution to addressing the International Panel on Climate Change (2018) recommendations to limit global warming to 1.5°C. In showing a lead on this important issue, the Council hopes to influence other local authorities, Government and other stakeholders to play their part.

The proposal is to adopt carbon reduction targets for SLDC as an organisation and to support a Cumbria wide target which has been recommended by an expert report as necessary to meet international targets. The Covid emergency has provided experience of working across sectors, across organisations and across boundaries to address a serious, complex threat to our lives and our local economy. The opportunity exists to capture that learning and apply it to the greater but longer term threat of climate change.

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Cabinet recommend that Council:**

**(1) Approve the SLDC Climate Change policy be updated to commit the Council as an organisation to be seeking to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030; and**

**(2) Approve the SLDC Climate Change policy be updated to support a Cumbria wide target of Carbon Neutrality by 2037 and to take the necessary steps within its powers and resources to achieve this**

**(3) Note progress on the Climate Change Action Plan, and**

**(4) Approve the establishment of the Climate Change Community Fund set out in Paragraph 3.10.**

**3.0 Background and Proposals**

*The Climate Emergency*

- 3.1 Cabinet considered a report on Carbon Reduction on March 25<sup>th</sup>. In February 2019, South Lakeland District Council declared a Climate Emergency. At the same time, it adopted a Climate Change policy setting out a strategic approach to reducing the Carbon footprint both of the District Council and of the District as a whole. An Action Plan has been prepared containing a series of measures to guide implementation of the policy. At the same time, three series of climate conversations were held and the feedback from these has fed into various iterations of the Action Plan. This is the Action Plan prior to going to overview and scrutiny on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January the Action Plan was reviewed at an overview and scrutiny panel who recommended at the next plan review and officers take into account comments from O&S.

*The Council Plan*

- 3.2 The SLDC's Council Plan adopted in December 2019 sets a strategic priority of meeting the challenge of Climate Change as well as the following actions:

- Working with partners to develop energy saving and energy efficiency initiatives
- Providing energy advice and additional support to households at risk of fuel poverty
- Implementing the Cumbria Public Health Strategy
- Promoting environmental technologies and the green economy
- Working to achieve a carbon neutral South Lakeland
- Promoting sustainable and active transport including cycling and walking
- Conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the District
- Phasing out the use of single-use plastics

In March 2019, the Council, along with all other Cumbrian authorities and the National Parks, adopted the Cumbria Public Health Strategy. The strategy includes a key aim of becoming a 'carbon neutral' county and to mitigate the likely impact of existing climate change.

*Towards a Cumbria Carbon Reduction Target*

- 3.3 In response to the above the Director of Public Health has convened a Climate Change Working Group on which are represented all Cumbrian Local Authorities and National Park Authorities, representatives of the business community, environmental groups and statutory undertakers. That group has been tasked with identifying a deliverable carbon reduction target for the County and priority actions for delivery.
- 3.4 The Climate Change working group has commissioned Smallworld Consulting, a Lancaster University based consultancy led by local climate change expert Mike Berners-Lee to prepare a study which identifies the County's current carbon footprint and recommend appropriate targets. At the time of writing, the Smallworld report was still being finalised. Early indications however are that, if a consumption based approach is adopted, which looks not just at emissions from energy consumption but also at embedded emissions in goods purchased and food consumed by residents and visitors, a 2030 target is unachievable for the County as a whole. A 2037 target is

ambitious but achievable and targets of 2040 and 2045 would be more achievable but harder to justify in terms of meeting national targets and addressing the issue with sufficient urgency.

- 3.5 Meeting the 2037 target will require major technological change, behavioural change, land-use change and resource for delivery, much of which will be outside the direct influence of SLDC. Meeting the target will require very substantial reductions in the use of gas, oil and solid fuel heating, electricity to be substantially decarbonised, substantial increases in carbon absorption through land management, major improvements to energy efficiency in buildings, the phasing out of petrol and diesel vehicles.
- 3.6 In setting a carbon target, there are issues which need to be scoped out. South Lakeland and Cumbria can have little influence on emissions from through traffic on the M6. Similarly the footprint of international air travel for visitors to Cumbria is difficult to attribute or quantify directly.
- 3.7 The engagement of local and national partners will be critical. Much remains to be done to understand the full implications of meeting the target and to influence Government and other partners to play their part in making sure it is achieved. Nonetheless, a clear stance by SLDC will help to add impetus and influence other partners. On balance, the adoption of a 2037 target strikes the right balance between making a real impact on the problem, being deliverable and driving the necessary immediate action. It is therefore recommended that the Council support the adoption of a Cumbria wide target of Carbon neutrality by 2037.
- 3.8 To bring the target into effect, it is proposed to amend the Council's policy on Climate Change as set out in Appendix 4 to
  - (1) commit the Council as an organisation to be seeking to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030; and
  - (2) to support a Cumbria wide target of Carbon Neutrality by 2037 and to take the necessary steps within its powers and resources to achieve this.

#### *The Climate Change Action Plan*

- 3.9 At the same time as this strategic work has been undertaken, SLDC has developed an Action Plan looking at the measures it can implement directly to address its own carbon footprint and to influence others in the short to medium term. The full public action plan is attached as Appendix 1 (it should be noted that this is a plain format of the document; the Action Plan, reformatted for publication, will be circulated to Members under separate cover). This also gives a breakdown of our current carbon footprint both for the council and the district, a forecast for how we can reduce our carbon emissions, how we will monitor progress and the support networks in our community. From what has already been achieved we are hopeful that South Lakeland District Council as an organisation can achieve production based carbon neutrality by 2030, that is emissions produced on site.
- 3.10 Two of the first actions proposed as part of the Action Plan are the following:
  - (1) The Climate Change Community Fund. SLDC will provide a community grant of an initial £20,000. The funding must be spent to benefit the local community on addressing the climate emergency. The fund will support **up to 50% of costs** (up to a maximum of £5000) for voluntary and community groups who wish to deliver community based carbon reduction projects. The full funding criteria are attached as Appendix 2 with the application for Appendix 3. The CCF will be funded from existing climate change resources.

(2) Investigating switching SLDC's electricity tariff to a green tariff from April 2021.

#### **4.0 Consultation**

4.1 Cabinet considered the content of this report at their meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and resolved to make recommendations to Council. Minute CEX/98 refers.

4.2 There have been three rounds of climate conversation meetings around the District. Consultation with Cumbria Action for Sustainability, other local partners and District councils has taken place and a variety of stakeholders are represented on the Climate Change group. Progress on the Climate Change Agenda has been reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in August 2019 and in December 2019 and their views incorporated into the Action Plan. Officers across the council have been consulted and engaged with in the development of the action plan.

#### **5.0 Alternative Options**

5.1 The Council could choose not to adopt a climate change target, or to adopt a later date to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 or 2045.

Clearly there is a global risk in failing to address the challenges of Climate Change in increased severe weather events and flooding, increased refugee flows, competition for water resources, impacts on food production and many others. The actions South Lakeland takes must be seen in the context of global solutions to a global problem. However the global issue will only be addressed if local communities, local authorities, County and sub-regional bodies and national Governments take ownership of it. South Lakeland's actions, whilst they may have limited impacts in themselves, help to build resolve and influence others. Non-adoption of a target or adoption of later targets would reduce the impetus for action locally.

#### **6.0 Links to Council Priorities**

##### *The Council Plan*

6.1 The SLDC's Council Plan adopted in December 2019 sets a strategic priority of meeting the challenge of Climate Change as well as the following actions;

- Working with partners to develop energy saving and energy efficiency initiatives
- Providing energy advice and additional support to households at risk of fuel poverty
- Implementing the Cumbria Public Health Strategy
- Promoting environmental technologies and the green economy
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## 7.0 Implications

### Financial, Resources and Procurement

- 7.1 The Council has funded a number of initiatives to specifically support carbon reduction. An annual contribution of £50,000 has been made to Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAFS) since 2018/19 and is included in the budgets until 2021/22. Other funding has been given to CAFS to support individual initiatives. A budget of £200,000 has been approved to cover 24 months between 2019/20 to 2021/22 to employ a climate change co-ordinator and to provide a budget for grants and environmental projects. The £20,000 Climate Change Community Fund will be funded from the existing Climate Change resource. The capital programme includes £139,200 for energy-saving building enhancements.

The Council is reviewing its Commissioning framework and Procurement Strategy to emphasise the requirement to consider social value, including environmental impacts, and consideration of whole-life costs when procuring all goods and services. For example, procurement exercises for vehicles already include the option of diesel, electric or alternative fuels.

- 7.3 Meeting the Cumbria wide target for 2037 may well have implications which are not known at the moment for the Council. For example, car parking fees are a significant revenue stream for the Council. If car use falls or if charging regimes change, there could be impacts on revenue. Where individual proposals for climate change mitigation and/or adaptation have significant financial impacts, these will be reported on separately.

### Human Resources

- 7.4 A full-time member of staff has been employed to coordinate carbon reduction and steer implementation of the climate action plan.

All staff to engage and take responsibility to enable change to a low carbon organisation.

### Legal

- 7.5 The UK Government has committed to making the UK Net Carbon Zero by 2050 through the Climate Change Act (updated 2019). The Government has also introduced the Environment Bill to make provision about targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment.

### Health, Social, Economic and Environmental

- 7.6 Have you completed a Health, Social, Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment? Yes (Attached at Appendix 5).

### Equality and Diversity

- 7.7 Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis? Yes (Attached at Appendix 6).

### Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Failing to address climate change will result in grave global impacts	Including: increased severe weather events and flooding, increased refugee flows, competition for water resources,	Implement an action plan to reduce the council and districts greenhouse gas emissions.

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
	impacts on food production and many others	

### Contact Officers

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### Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix No.	Name of Appendix
1	SLDC Climate Change Action Plan - Public
2	Climate Change Community Funding Criteria
3	Climate Change Community Funding Application Form
4	Council Policy on Climate Change – Update
5	Health, Social, Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment
6	Equality Impact Analysis

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Legal Services	20 February 2020	10 June 2020
Section 151 Officer	20 February 2020	10 June 2020
Monitoring Officer	20 February 2020	10 June 2020
CMT	20 February 2020	04 March 2020

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	19 February 2020
Human Resources Lead Specialist	N/A
Communications Team	21 February 2020
Leader	21 February 2020
Committee Chairman	21 February 2020
Portfolio Holder	21 February 2020
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	18 March 2020
Council	30 June 2020