

South Lakeland District Council
Council
Tuesday, 30 June 2020
Climate Emergency and Localism Portfolio

Portfolio: Cllr Dyan Jones

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To lead on the Council's policies around Climate change and sustainable growth, develop a policy on bio-diversity, raise community awareness and work collaboratively on policy objectives.

To take the lead on Strategic Waste Management/Recycling and relevant Council Plan measures under the environment objectives.

To drive our Localism agenda.

Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Waste Management Strategy (environmental impacts)
- Air Quality Strategy and action plan
- Active Travel Strategy and action plan
- Council Policy on Climate Change

Key Areas

- Waste Management and Recycling Strategy
- Community micro-energy schemes
- Carbon/Greenhouse gas reduction
- Green agenda – carbon reduction
- Active Travel
- Localism
- Devolution
- Water Quality
- Bio-Diversity

Waste Management and Recycling Strategy

The Climate Emergency and Localism and Customer and Commercial Services Portfolios together support the Waste Management and Street Scene department within this authority.

A communications plan has been developed to promote recycling and waste minimisation, supporting our green initiative. This included content in the pre-Christmas issue of South Lakeland News and various posts on social media platforms. Future on-going communications are scheduled with regard to food waste and regular recycle and reuse messages. There will be further content included in the July 2020 issue of South Lakeland News.

The 2020/21 waste collection calendars were distributed in February 2020. They included additional guidance to encourage and support householders to reduce waste and recycle more effectively, as well as regular content relating to kerbside services.

Throughout 2019/20, Officers attended local events at Kendal, Ambleside and Grange-over-Sands and will continue to promote waste minimisation at events, subject to and following appropriate Covid-19 guidelines from government.

Over the Christmas period the collection crews worked tirelessly to collect a bumper amount of recycling. Week commencing 6 January 2020 the total tonnage of paper, cardboard, glass, cans and plastics collected at the kerbside increased by 6.7%, resulting in a rise of 12 tonnes to 194 tonnes compared to the 182 tonnes collected in the same period in 2019.

Council will continue to work with partners to investigate useful ways to reduce its carbon emissions and will continue to look at all areas of policy and delivery; as part of the Council's action plan designed to tackle climate change, we will continue to investigate practical and cost effective ways to access 'Tetra Pack' recycling.

Clean Air posters have been installed on litter bins across the district to encourage drivers to turn off their engines when in stationary traffic.

We are taking part in a new campaign being run in the Westmorland Gazette and Mail called the 'Green Mission' between March and August across both titles, in print, on the websites and on social media, promoting environmental, climate change and sustainability issues. (Covid-19 has caused some disruption to the publication of these campaigns). The Council is contributing content and shared ideas on key issues as part of our Climate Change Action Plan commitment to highlight local actions, tackling biodiversity loss and the themes of reducing our carbon footprint with information around what practical steps we can take together.

As reported in the Customer and Commercial Services Portfolio Holder report monthly green waste collections were introduced due to the Coronavirus outbreak in response to reduced staffing levels and to ensure crews could work safely and comply with social distancing guidelines.

Air Quality Strategy/ Action Plan and Carbon Reduction

The Council offers low emission parking permits at a reduced rate for cleaner vehicles. Since January 2019 a total of 53 discounted permits have been registered.

Council is required to report on air quality management to Defra every year (statistics for 2019 yet to be reported). Since 2011 Council has reduced the number of air quality management areas that do not meet quality standards from 4 to 1. Council regularly

monitors the remaining site at Lowther Street, Kendal and continues to undertake promotional activities to reduce idling and promotes cycle ways throughout the district, especially to schools. As outlined in the Climate Change Action Plan to tackle climate change the Council will be investigating further, ways to discourage vehicle idling.

The Council introduced a requirement for all developers in its Local Planning Authority area to submit the appropriate information as part of their planning application in order for the Council to assess the developments impact on air quality.

Council supports LEAP and Cold to Cosy schemes which provides advice and support with installation of low energy lightbulbs and other ways to help improve energy efficiency in vulnerable residents' homes.

Community micro-energy schemes and Carbon/Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Council's Climate Change Policy provides focus on how South Lakeland District Council can lead and encourage others to take action around climate change.

Following its adoption the policy recognises the significance of climate change whilst identifying economic and other opportunities offered by addressing and adapting to meet the challenges ahead. Council acknowledges the importance of climate change both in how we manage ourselves as an organisation and how we work with partners at a local, regional and national level, ensuring sustainable growth is a priority.

South Lakeland District Council has been investigating the installation of solar panels on Council owned buildings where feasible. Panels have been installed on South Lakeland House and works are due to commence on the installation at Mintworks and Town View Fields Hostel.

Green Agenda – Activity

Throughout 2019/20 the Council has partnered with Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) to provide support for communities across the district exploring and introducing renewable energy schemes and other projects and topics. The Council will continue funding support throughout 2020/21 to enable CAfS to continue to undertake a comprehensive programme of low carbon initiatives targeted at communities across South Lakeland. The Council's support includes funding a zero carbon project in Ambleside, approval of the installation of solar panels on council buildings and the Council has approached parish councils to identify available land for enhanced tree planting.

In July 2019, cabinet members hosted a series of 'Climate Conversations' with communities across the district. These provided an opportunity to update communities on actions that Council has undertaken following last year's meetings, to gather further ideas and to understand further, the communities' concerns. Following these sessions the Council generated has an action plan which has become the focus of the Green Team, to mitigate climate change and biodiversity loss with partners and stakeholders. Further Climate Conversations were scheduled to take place throughout March 2020 as an opportunity to update communities on the actions that SLDC has taken and will take to mitigate against Climate Change.

In January 2020 a new role was created within the Council to co-ordinate actions identified within the Council's Climate Change Action Plan capturing information and ideas gathered from previous *Climate Conversations* under categories of: inform, influence and implement.

Council are being asked to consider an amendment to the original Climate Change Policy that was adopted in February 2019 to commit the Council to work towards achieving net carbon neutrality in 2030.

The report also requests Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the establishment of the Climate Change Community Fund. This fund would be initially made up of £20,000 and communities will be able to apply for grant funding to support carbon reduction projects.

With support from the Cumbria Leaders Board and Cumbria Chief Executives Group a Climate Change Sub Group was established. The aim of the Climate Change 'Sub Group' is to identify mitigating actions which can be introduced across the county to reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. Delegates from authorities across Cumbria are supporting this group in the creation, introduction and implementation of a Climate Change Strategy.

In 2019 the Council launched 'Fill-up' scheme offering free water refills at council offices and participating businesses across the district. The scheme was designed to encourage the public to drink more water, reduce their use of single use plastics and explore local businesses. Supporting reduction of reliance on single-use plastic water bottles. Up to date 53 businesses have signed up to the initiative and display a window sticker promoting their inclusion in the scheme.

The project to install of EV Charging Points across the District continues to progress, however its delivery has been impacted by Covid-19, therefore a 3-6 month project extension has been approved. A total of 14 SLDC managed sites were reviewed of which 6 currently meet all criteria for project. 4 sites have been referred back to electricity NW as the connection fee is excessive and another 4 sites unfortunately did not meet criteria for the project. The next steps will be review and consult the detailed plans and lease agreements once received and seek Cabinet approval to procure equipment, a contractor and install the charge points.

As reported in the Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder Report the Council is working in partnership with the EA to seek approval from MHCLG to extend the funding guidelines for the Flood Risk Management Scheme Plans due to the delays caused by Coronavirus. The EA have been continuing with survey and investigation works where appropriate and adhering to measure to prevent the risk of spreading of the virus.

Green Agenda – Active Travel

The Active Travel Group has been engaging with key partners to introduce additional cycle routes and safer routes to school. SLDC website now also includes cycling maps for routes across the district ([Click here](#)).

Encouraging cycling is very important in any future reduction of carbon emissions and with support from Defra a Cycling Hub was installed at the Westmorland Shopping Centre in September 2019. The hub provides dedicated changing rooms, cycle parking, maintenance stand and lockers free for public use. The facility provides space for 10 bikes and encourages commuters and visitors to support the council's initiative to reducing carbon emissions and has been well received.

It has been recognised that during the Coronavirus lockdown period, the number of vehicles on the roads reduced and more people are cycling. We will be working in partnership with Cumbria County Council to introduce more cycle lanes and routes where feasible and will work collaboratively to identify any future funding opportunities.

Localism

This year cabinet members held successful meetings with a number of town and parish councils to discuss the benefits of localism and listen to their views. The Council was then able to establish a comprehensive list of community development opportunities to inform SLDC where support mechanisms could be put in place.

A number of Parish and Town Councils were recently invited to apply for grant funding through the Police and Crime Commissioner towards the installation of CCTV cameras in communities. Following successful approval towards grants the Council also provided financial contributions towards installation to Kendal Town Council, Kirkby Lonsdale Town Council, Milnthorpe Parish Council and Windermere Town Council.

Throughout the Coronavirus outbreak, Council has been in contact with Town and Parish, to understand the challenges communities are facing, to share guidance and to support reopening in a safe manner.

Devolution

The Leader of the Council has been closely monitoring and engaging in devolution discussions with the other Cumbrian district and county authorities and Government Ministers, regarding potential devolution agreements. Work is continuing through the Joint Districts Board and Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region to progress and enhance key relationships with other authorities in health, housing and economic growth.

Water Quality

For the fifth consecutive year, in the 2019 bathing season each designated bathing water location in South Lakeland was rated as excellent.

The Council undertakes a statutory function to carry out private water tests at various locations across the district to ensure the safety of communities, implemented by the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2016. Council continues to undertake risk assessments and monitoring across all private water supplies. Where required, the Council continues to investigate any failure to meet standards and takes necessary enforcement action, always ensuring communities are protected.

In February 2020 a Private Water Supplies workshop was held for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to understand the statutory functions relating to testing. A number of outcomes were suggested at the meetings to look at implementing to help improve the service area and provide better understanding for councillors and residents.

Since 1 January 2019 the Council has undertaken 815 sets of private water samples. When gathering a set of samples, officers are sampling for multiple parameters, i.e. bacteriological parameters (E.coli, Enterococci, Clostridia, Coliforms, etc.), metals (copper, lead, nickel, iron, manganese, antimony, arsenic, cadmium, mercury, etc.), chemicals (cyanide, benzene, chloride, fluoride, hydrocarbons, nitrate, nitrite, pesticides, etc.) and other parameters including pH, colour, turbidity, taste and odour and radioactive substances.

The Public Protection Service has completed risk assessments at 58 Regulation 9 supplies (large and/or commercial) and 8 Regulation 10 supplies (small shared domestic) since 1 Jan 2019.

Bio-Diversity

Throughout 2019/20 Council has continued to raise the importance of biodiversity across the district whilst supporting mitigating climate change actions. Representatives from Cabinet met with the Lake District National Park authority to discuss how to increase biodiversity across the district through partnership working.

In December 2019 the Council adopted the Biodiversity Policy, which was designed to recognise the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing local biodiversity, setting out a number of actions as to how it will be achieved.

The policy recognised the importance of plant and insect species and works with contractors to implement different forms of management for open spaces and areas of traditional parks, supporting and enhancing biodiversity.

Principles behind the policy:

- To reduce the carbon emissions created by regular grass cuttings, from decomposition (both those collected and those left on-site) and emissions from vehicles and machinery.
- To increase the diversity of plant species found in green spaces, benefitting local wildlife and the wider environment to diversify local landscape value.

To promote and enhance local and global biodiversity, South Lakeland will:-

1. Ensure where possible that products procured by the Council and its contractors are from sustainable sources and encourage our community and partners to do likewise.
2. Through the implementation of its Climate Change Policy seek to minimise the emissions of greenhouse gases which contribute to global warming and habitat degradation by the Council's own activities and by other stakeholders across the County and sub-region.
3. Through its policy of avoiding the use of single-use plastics, and through encouraging other stakeholders to do the same to minimise pollution of rivers and oceans.
4. Encourage habitat creation, restoration and safeguarding through its planning policies