

South Lakeland District Council
Council
Tuesday, 30 June 2020
Economy, Culture and Leisure Portfolio

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The Council Plan objectives as they relate to the Portfolio area of work, and cross-cutting work developed through the Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy, promoting Culture leisure activities and the arts and developing strategy for cultural assets.

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

The Council plan objectives in relation to promoting culture, leisure activities and the arts.

To work with our cultural organisations to attract investment and to promote South Lakeland as a premier area for Arts and Events.

Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Economic Development Strategy
- Arts and Events
- Grants Strategy
- Licensing and Statement of Gambling Policies

Key Areas:

- Economic Inward Investment
- Business Support and Sector Development
- Visitor Economy
- Town Centre Planning, Car Parks and Transportation Strategies
- Markets
- Arts and Culture
- Grants

- Public Halls
- Use of community assets for the promotion of arts and culture
- Heritage and Events
- Heritage Listed Buildings and built environment
- Voluntary Sector Engagement in relation to Culture and Leisure
- Leisure and Recreation
- Licensing and Gambling
- Cross Authority Economic initiatives

Economic Inward Investment

The ERDF funding of £5.34m was secured in March 2019 following a full application from SLDC and the Environment Agency for Kendal flood alleviation measures. The overall cost of the Kendal phase is £16.3m. Planning permission was approved in June 2019 for the Kendal phase of the scheme, which will provide increased flood protection for 1,480 homes and 1,151 Kendal businesses. Phase 2 of scheme will see Flood Risk Management at Burneside, Staveley and Ings, with Phase 3 upland storage continuing to be developed. The total cost of the scheme is £72m and the EA's full business case to secure the money to deliver the wider scheme was signed off in December 2019. This is expected to be delivered in reaches by June 2023, the date has been extended due to the impacts of Coronavirus.

A successful bid of £2.35m from Coastal Communities Fund bid was secured. £1m of the 'Experience Morecambe Bay' scheme will be put towards Grange-over-Sands Lido and Promenade enhancements, with the further £1.35m delivering an extension of Morecambe Bay Cycleway, an extension to the Bay Cycleway electric bike network and a number of smaller scale projects around the bay led and delivered by Morecambe Bay Partnership and the Morecambe Bay Coastal Communities Team. A public consultation event was held in early March 2020 as well as a 3 week online consultation to update Grange residents and businesses of the works planned for the Promenade and Lido. The results are yet to be collated.

South Lakeland has put forward Ulverston as its chosen location for possible investment through the Borderlands Place Programme. An outline economic case has been submitted in partnership with Cumbria County Council for consideration by the Borderlands Board which, if successful, could release up to £3m of funding for Ulverston.

In February 2020 the Council approved the ballot for the renewal of Ulverston BID. This will enable businesses in the BID area to vote in June 2020 on whether they would like its renewal for another five year term which, if successful, would see greater private investment made available for Ulverston in the coming years. The current term is due to end in September 2020.

Business Support and Sector Development

The Council has participated in economic partnerships, including the Lake District National Park Business Task Force, Furness Economic Development Forum, Kendal and Ulverston BIDs, Kendal Futures, Bowness and Windermere Forward and Sedbergh Economic Partnership among others. SLDC has also built on its working relationships with strategic partners such as Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Tourism, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, attending a number of recently formed business sector panels.

Following the success of the previous three year scheme, SLDC has continued its partnership with the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, funding district-wide Business Support in South Lakeland for 2019/20. The Councils funding for the continuation of the Growth Hub and Business Start-up Support (BSUS) means that potential new and existing businesses in South Lakeland could access free advice, support, training and a match-funded subsidy for specialist consultancy support. A network of experienced advisors is available with expertise in a wide range of different business areas.

The Mint Works is a valued business centre, operating at almost full occupancy and the conference and meeting room facilities are in regular use. Its success has inspired the build of similar hubs as part of the renovation of South Lakeland House and Kendal Town Hall.

Two successful events aimed at promoting skills and education were held in November 2019 in Ulverston and Kendal. The two events were supported by SLDC as part of our commitment to promote career opportunities and help build financial resilience in the area. Local businesses attended the events as exhibitors to showcase the opportunities available as well as colleges, universities and voluntary organisations.

Following the outbreak of Coronavirus a group was formed to plan for South Lakelands economic recovery. The group is made up of key business leaders, representatives, politicians and council officers who are looking at innovative ways in which all sectors can work together to support and develop the District's economic future.

It has been acknowledged that South Lakeland is likely to be one of the most economically vulnerable in Cumbria following the impacts of Coronavirus. Therefore the Economic Recovery Group will also be looking at the opportunities that will emerge and ways in which businesses can benefit from the new ways of working.

The Group has been broken down into three sub groups which will look at the short, medium and long term plans to support the recovery, renewal and sustainability of key parts of the local economy. The sub groups are focussing on Visitor Economy, Town Centres and The Role of Communities in Unlocking Development.

SLDC has played an active role in distributing business support grants across the District following the Coronavirus outbreak. It launched an online application process for businesses to submit an application which were validated in accordance with the guideline from Central Government.

A total of 4900 applications have been received for the Small Business Rate Relief and Extended Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grants. To date £58million of grant support has been paid out to support businesses within South Lakeland.

On 1 June the Council launched the Discretionary Grant Scheme until 15 June 2020. This funding support scheme was aimed at businesses who were not eligible for the Small Business

Grant or Extended Retail, Leisure and Hospitality grants. The scheme prioritised small and micro businesses with fixed property related costs who could demonstrate that they have suffered significant fall in income due to Coronavirus, dependant on this successful applicants could receive a grant of between £2,500 and £10,000.

Visitor Economy

In partnership with other local authorities, SLDC has agreed a financial contribution to Cumbria Tourism towards STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) research for 2019, which measures the volume and value of tourism across Cumbria, helping to inform tourism policy and development. The research is currently being collated.

The most recent STEAM figures for 2018 (2019 figures are not yet available) showed that South Lakeland's contribution is by far the highest share of any other Cumbrian district, totalling £1.3 billion and representing 44% of the county's total tourism revenue of £3 billion. The tourism sector supports 16,177 full-time jobs in South Lakeland, which is almost half of all the tourism-related jobs in Cumbria.

South Lakeland's economy is heavily reliant on the Visitor Economy which has been drastically impacted following the Coronavirus outbreak. The Council is working closely with businesses to support them in introducing measures that protect themselves and the public from the spread of Coronavirus, but allows them to reopen and encourage visitors to visit South Lakeland safely and respectfully.

Town Centre Planning, Car Parks and Transportation Strategies

The Council has published its Kendal Town Centre Strategy which sets out a long-term strategic approach to ensuring Kendal remains an attractive place to live, work and visit. This will inform Council plans, policies and priorities and be used to help secure future investment. The Strategy was launched jointly with the Kendal Vision, led by public/private sector partnership Kendal Futures, and a partnership approach is being taken to deliver on their aspirations. In addition, following the Council's submission of an Expression of Interest for Kendal for the Future High Streets Fund, Kendal has now been selected as a national pilot for the newly formed High Streets Task Force. This will see expertise and resources piloted in Kendal, which can also be applied to wider South Lakeland, before being rolled out across the country next year.

The Council has undertaken a car parking study of Kendal to understand where publicly available visitors, shoppers, workers and public transport car parking is under stress. The study identifies how those stresses are likely to change over time, how council car parks and other publicly owned car parks and on street car parking can be most effectively managed to maximise town centre viability and visitor spend; and to quantify the need for additional parking spaces in the context of effective parking and traffic management. Whilst the report is currently in draft and will be released in due course, some actions have already been taken to address some of the points in the report such as:

- Acquisition of Dowker Lane Car Park
- New Car Park on Parkside Road – Planning obtained and the tender has been received and tender docs being reviewed prior to works starting on site.
- Review of all parking signage in the Town Centre to improve visitor experience.
- Investigation into the feasibility of installing electric vehicle charging points.
- Kendal College has reviewed its charging Policy to offer parking all day for £2 from 1st April 2020. This will open up parking opportunities for the Town during College holidays.

The Government announced that retail businesses and high street shops could reopen to the public from 15 June following their closure during the peak of Coronavirus.

SLDC has been working closely with CCC, LDNPA, BIDS, Town/Parish Councils and local businesses to ensure they could reopen safely to the public.

Signage has been installed advising people to observe social distancing and the measures introduced by individual shops in accordance with the Government's 'Covid Secure' guidance across principal areas within South Lakeland.

Hand Sanitising stations have also been installed as well as signage directing people to available public toilet facilities. Directional systems will be installed on narrow streets and safe queuing measures installed outside shops. Customers are being encouraged to use contactless payments where possible to minimise the risk of virus transmission.

SLDC will be conducting enhanced cleaning in the principal areas. Public Benches are available for use however signage will be displayed to encourage social distancing.

Markets

Earlier in 2019 it was agreed at Cabinet to explore the potential for an innovative and experienced operator to manage Kendal's indoor and outdoor markets as part of a two stage procurement process. As part of Stage 1 the Council investigated what interest there was in the private sector to take on the running of Kendal markets, whether that be running the markets as one or as two separate markets, understanding the financial implications this would have on our revenue budget, understanding the economic benefits that a new operator could bring to the town and investigating what social value could be added through a different operating model for the markets.

In light of Coronavirus it was felt it was best to re-tender the Markets through a two staged approach. Upon return of tenders, competitive dialogue will begin with those who have submitted a tender, the closing date is 8 July 2020.

Both indoor and outdoor markets have now re-opened to the public following lockdown with safety measures in place.

Arts and Culture

The Council has been working closely with strategic cultural partners throughout 2019/20 and organisations to encourage, support and promote culture, arts and events across the district. Close partnership working with Arts Council England and other cultural organisations has resulted in funding being secured to facilitate significant initiatives to promote South Lakeland as a leading cultural destination and premier rural area for arts, events and festivals.

The Council has begun to explore new opportunities for cultural partnerships, initiatives and development as a cohesive part of the Lancaster South Cumbria Economic Region initiative as well as the promotion of the Cumbria Public Health Strategy.

In August 2019 the Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region (LSCER) was announced as one of only two rural areas in the UK to be accepted as an Arts Cultural Compact, an innovative approach to releasing untapped economic potential through investment in culture.

Work is now underway to use the existing LSCER partnership to bring together key stakeholders to work and innovate to realise the vision for Morecambe Bay, a significant change in how things have been done by piloting a model connecting the three localities'

distinct and different cultural assets to boost future creativity, investment, innovation, jobs and prosperity. The cross sector membership of the Cultural Compact will bring together Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Universities, Colleges, Businesses and Cultural and Creative Organisations.

The Council has been one of the major capital infrastructure developments of the Wordsworth Trust 'Reimagining Wordsworth, and the 'Our Digital Future' initiative at the Brewery Arts Centre.

The Council has been continuing to work with its creative partners, Craven District Council, Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks on the 'Great Place Lakes and Dales' initiative delivering the remaining programme and action plan to promote the development of sustainable, resilient and creative communities which will in turn retain and attract younger people to South Lakeland and Craven districts to influence, support and create our future economy.

Throughout 2019/20 the Council has worked with partners to support leading cultural events such as the Lakes International Comic Art Festival, Lake District Summer Music Festival, Kendal Mountain Festival, Lakes Alive and the Tour of Britain where Kendal hosted the Stage 4 event finish of the cycle race on Beast Banks Kendal after it passed through several South Lakeland villages on route including Sedbergh, Barbondale and Kirkby Lonsdale.

The Council has also continued to support significant community events and cultural initiatives such as Ulverston Lantern Procession, Printfest, Ulverston International Music Festival, Kendal Torchlight, the Ruskin Museum Coniston and Old Laundry Theatre Bowness.

The Council is working in close partnership with its Strategic Cultural Partners to support new virtual ways to host upcoming festivals such as Comic Arts and Kendal Mountain Festival to support the Districts economy and slow the spread of Coronavirus.

Grants

The grant commitments to strategic cultural partners were reviewed at Cabinet in February 2020. The agreed strategic cultural partners demonstrate a high importance to the districts cultural offer would continue to receive a grant payment for the next financial year.

Public Halls and use of community assets for the promotion of arts and culture

Throughout the past year the Council has been supporting cultural and local events for communities through the use of public halls. Regular events held in SLDC halls include:

- Weekly coffee mornings
- Wedding Ceremonies
- Training sessions
- Multi-agency meetings
- Fitness Classes
- Language Classes
- Financial support through the Eden and South Lakes Credit Union
- Theatre performances
- Magistrates and Civil Courts

Approval was granted by Planning Committee on 19 December 2019 to undertake internal refurbishment works on Kendal Town Hall. The Council had consulted the users and supported them in finding alternative, temporary accommodation whilst the works are

underway. The refurbishments will alter the access and usage of the building by visitors and employees.

The refurbishment works to Kendal Town Hall and South Lakeland House were delayed following the outbreak of Coronavirus, however in accordance with guidelines works commenced from 15 June. The contractors are aware of the social distancing and sanitation requirements and are working in line with Government guidelines.

Heritage, Events and Heritage Listed Buildings and built environment

The Burton-in-Kendal Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA) is a three year programme which aims follows a programme of improvements to buildings throughout the village to preserve the heritage and stop the loss of important architectural detail. Progress includes:

- A major public realm improvement scheme for the Square is nearing completion - the scheme will enhance this important space at the centre of the village and help alleviate flooding problems in the area.
- Grant-aided repair work to the former Royal Hotel building is due to commence in the spring.
- Work on the preparation of a Conservation Area Management Plan and Village Design Statement is nearing completion.

The Council has assisted Cartmel Village Society in preparing a draft Conservation Area Management Plan. The aim is to use this plan as a supplementary planning document to inform the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans for Lower Allithwaite parish.

Leisure and Recreation

The Council has worked in partnership with GLL to provide local leisure opportunities such as exercise classes, pool facilities, gym and indoor sports facilities for communities at locations in Kendal, Ulverston and Windermere throughout 2019/20.

A feasibility study for Ulverston leisure Centre is ongoing and the Council is continuing to liaise with user groups and GSK regarding future proposals. Upon completion of the feasibility study a formal consultation period will be held with user groups and the Town Council and once this has been concluded a report will be considered at Cabinet to formally agree the facilities mix.

As reported in the Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder Report, Kendal Leisure hosted a temporary recovery centre and a drive thru testing facility during Coronavirus.

Following the reductions of Coronavirus cases the recovery centre has been decommissioned. GLL are making provisions in line with strict government guidance to safely reopen leisure facilities from July. The materials used of the recovery centre bays will be reused to ensure social distancing in the gym.

Licensing and Gambling

The Licensing Service has undergone a redesign to improve the customer journey as part of the Customer Connect Programme. In the future customers will have the opportunity to apply or renew a licence online. Whilst the service redesign is underway, business as usual is continuing.

Regular Licensing Committee meetings have been held throughout 2019/20 with the responsibility for licensing functions in respect of the Licensing Act 2003, including applications for premises licenses.

In light of Coronavirus the Council has been hosting virtual Licensing Committees to continue with business as usual hosted via Microsoft Teams.

Cross Authority Economic initiatives

SLDC is continuing to work in partnership with Lancaster City Council and Barrow Borough Council to increase the economic prosperity of the Lancaster and South Cumbria region. The three councils have been working closely to develop a more sustainable economy and jointly promote the area as a place to live, study and build a career. There remain ambitious plans to seek national investment for various strategically important projects to support economic vibrancy around Morecambe Bay.

As highlighted in the Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder Report, the work through the Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Partnership has resulted in the creation of a joint committee which will be known as the Lancaster and South Cumbria Joint Committee. This joint committee will provide political and democratic accountability and reinforce the sense of developing a functional economic area.

Work is currently underway to refine and focus proposals for a growth deal type programme to attract significant public investment to transformational growth projects and importantly drive Coronavirus resilience to the region's economy.

There is also collaborative working on another Cross-Bay initiative known as the Cultural Compact, with the area being selected as one of only two "rural" areas in the UK by Arts Council England for an innovative new approach to releasing untapped economic potential through investment in culture.