

**South Lakeland District Council**  
**Council**  
**Tuesday, 15 December 2020**  
**Climate Emergency and Localism**

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**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 was developed to promote recycling and waste minimisation, supporting our green initiative. This included content in the recent edition 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.

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. Unfortunately the Council was unable to attend any other Local events due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Council has been and 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.

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

We took part in a new campaign led by 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, and climate change and sustainability issues. (Covid-19 had caused some disruption to the publication of these campaigns). The Council contributed 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. During the second Lockdown throughout November, the Council was able to maintain regular green and grey waste collections.

## **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 36 discounted permits have been registered.

Council is required to report on air quality management to Defra every year. Since 2011 Council has reduced the number of air quality management areas that do not meet quality standards from 4 to 1. The Council is continuing to regularly monitor 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 has 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 is continuing to support the 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, Mintworks and Town View Fields Hostel and works are due to commence on the installation at Ferry Nab.

### **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 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. Following the 'Climate Conversations' hosted by Cabinet members in July 2019 the Council generated an action plan. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 the face to face 'Climate Conversations' scheduled for March 2020 were cancelled, however virtual sessions were held in July 2020 where attendees were provided with an update on the Council's progress in relation to the action plan.

In June 2020 Council approved an amendment to the original Climate Change Policy that was adopted in February 2019 to commit the Council to work towards achieving carbon neutrality in 2030 and to support a district wide target of carbon neutrality by 2037.

Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the Climate Change Community Fund. This fund, initially made up of £20,000 invited communities to apply for matched grant funding to support carbon reduction projects. Open to applicants from August until the end of September this year, we now have 10 successful projects ranging from action planning generated by a Citizen's Jury, to bike ability courses, help with energy efficiency measures and peat bog restoration.

With support from the Cumbria Leaders Board and Cumbria Chief Executives Group a Climate Change Sub Group was established. Led by Lake District National Park Authority - the aim of the Climate Change 'Sub Group' is to identify mitigating actions which can be introduced across the county to reduce risks and impacts of climate change. Delegates from Cumbria authorities support this group and the introduction and implementation of the Climate Change Strategy.

SLDC are part of the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership of 70 organisations across Cumbria who are committed to lowering carbon emissions in Cumbria. This partnership commissioned *Small World Consultancy* to write a report on Cumbria's baseline carbon emissions and a suggested target of 2037 for net zero emissions. SLDC were the first authority to ratify that date. *Cumbria Action for Sustainability* have successfully bid for National Lottery Funding of £2.5million to help support the *Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership*.

The project to install of EV Charging Points across the District continues to progress. Its delivery has been impacted by Covid-19, therefore the project has been postponed. A total of 14 SLDC managed sites were reviewed of which 6 currently meet all criteria for 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.

### **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 in 2019 at the Westmorland Shopping Centre. The popular hub provides cycle parking, a maintenance stand and lockers, all free for public use. The facility provides space for 10 bikes and encourages commuters and visitors to support the council's initiative to reduce carbon emissions and has been well received.

It was recognised that during the Coronavirus lockdown period in March 2020, the number of vehicles on the roads reduced and more people are cycling. Therefore we have been 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.

Council will continue to actively monitor and trial new technologies where appropriate, feasible and realistic, in a timely manner

### **Localism**

Earlier in 2020 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.

Since the Coronavirus outbreak, Council has been in regular contact with Town and Parish Council virtually to understand the challenges communities have been facing during this time and share guidance and support.

Town and Parish Council have also been involved in the consultation surrounding The Bay proposal following the invitation from Government for submissions towards Local Government Reorganisation.

A number of Parish and Town Councils were 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.

## **Devolution**

The Leader of the Council has been closely monitoring and engaging in discussions with district and county authorities surrounding options for Local Government Reorganisation. The Council has submitted a proposal to Government in partnership with Lancaster City Council and Barrow Borough Council, to explore the opportunities for 'The Bay' to 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. Due to Coronavirus the assessments for 2020 were not completed.

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 has been continuing to undertake risk assessments and monitoring across all private water supplies in accordance with Covid-19 regulations and safety precautions. Where required, the Council continues to investigate any failure to meet standards and takes necessary enforcement action, always ensuring communities are protected.

## **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.

The Biodiversity Policy was designed to recognise the Councils commitment to protecting and enhancing local biodiversity, setting out a number 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