

South Lakeland District Council
Council
23 March 2021
Climate Emergency and Localism

Portfolio: Cllr Dyan Jones

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.

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

The Council took part in a new campaign led by the Westmorland Gazette and Mail called the 'Green Mission' across both titles, in print, on the websites and on social media, promoting environmental, and climate change and sustainability issues. 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.

In January 2021 the Council launched a competition inviting school children to design inspirational new artwork for the bin wagons. The winning designs would be emblazoned onto several vehicles from SLDC's fleet which visits 56,000 homes each week, travelling around 17,000 miles, as well as being displayed on posters across South Lakeland.

As reported in the Customer and Commercial Services Portfolio Holder report, during the first Lockdown the Council made sure that all available vehicles were on the road each day and loaned vehicles from other authorities to continue with the scheduled grey waste and recycling collections. With the increased number of people working from home the Council has seen a very significant increase in recycling tonnages collected.

Air Quality Strategy/ Action Plan and Carbon Reduction

The Council is continuing to offer low emission parking permits at a reduced rate for cleaner vehicles.

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 now 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.

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.

We have been measuring our GHG emissions in detail since 2010 and SLDC organisational carbon emissions have seen a 50% decrease falling from 5259 tonnes in 2010 to 2611 tonnes in 2018/19.

This drop has come partly from increased efficiency throughout our estate, but also it must be noted that for electricity the carbon factor used has reduced by nearly 40% in the UK due to an increase in renewable energy in the energy mix of electricity UK wide. Additionally the council has sold some properties so the size of the council's estate has reduced. Therefore, while the council has made significant progress on reducing emissions through mitigation actions, the greening of the national grid and organisational changes have also had significant impacts.

Solar Panels have been installed on South Lakeland House, Mintworks and Town View Fields Hostel and Ferry Nab.

Green Agenda – Activity

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 has continued to provide 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. This support included 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.

The 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.

The Climate Change Community Fund, initially made up of £20,000 invited communities to apply for matched grant funding to support carbon reduction projects. Applicants were open from August until the end of September 2020, and there were 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 Cumbria County Council and 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. 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 seek Cabinet approval to procure equipment, a contractor and install the charge points.

The Climate Change Action Plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

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.

It was recognised that during the Coronavirus lockdowns, the number of vehicles on the roads reduced and more people were 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

During 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.

Throughout the pandemic, 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 Councils have also been involved in the consultation surrounding The Bay proposal for submission towards Local Government Reorganisation. All Town and Parish Councils have now been encouraged to take part in the consultation event launched by Government.

Devolution

The Leader of the Council has been leading and engaging in discussions with district and county authorities surrounding options for Local Government Reorganisation. An update can be found within the Promoting South Lakeland Report.

Water Quality

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

The 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 recognises 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.

The full policy can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

The Council Plan 2021 reinforces the Councils commitments on key priorities to reduce inequalities, deliver sustainable economic growth and respond to the very clear and dramatic threat posed by climate change and biodiversity loss.

Now the culvert work at Town View Fields is completed, the field's biodiversity will be further enriched by the planting of a wildflower meadow and a small damson orchard to help attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies.