

South Lakeland District Council
Cabinet
Wednesday, 9 February 2022
Council Plan and Policy Framework - Legacy

Portfolio:	Leader of the Council
Report from:	Director of Strategy, Innovation and Resources
Report Author:	Dan Hudson – Strategy Lead Specialist
Wards:	(All Wards);
Forward Plan:	Budget and Policy Framework Decision included in the Forward Plan as published on 11 th January 2022

Links to Council Plan Priorities:

Working across boundaries –

Delivering a balanced community –

A fairer South Lakeland –

Addressing the climate emergency –

This report sets out how South Lakeland can ensure that the Community Priorities set out in the Council Plan are considered in the policy making framework for the new authority.

1.0 Expected Outcome and Measures of Success

1.1 *This report is concerned with South Lakeland's legacy. It seeks to make sure that, in its final year, during the transition to the establishment of Westmorland and Furness Council, efforts are focused on critical areas of delivery which will be a strong legacy and provide firm foundations on which the new authority can build. It seeks to ensure that the Westmorland and Furness Shadow Authority gives full consideration to the vision and priorities of South Lakeland and its communities in developing its strategy and policy framework*

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet recommend that Council:-

(1) Approve the interim priorities set out in 3.8-3.10; and

(2) Request that the Westmorland and Furness Shadow Authority considers the priorities and proposals set out in Appendix 1 in developing the Policy Framework for the new authority.

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3.0 Background and Proposals

Situation

3.1 Under the forthcoming Cumbria (Structural Changes) Order 2022. South Lakeland District Council will be abolished in April 2023 (along with Cumbria County Council,

Barrow Borough Council and Eden District Council). Responsibility for all Local Government functions will transfer to a new unitary Westmorland and Furness Council. Elections to the Shadow Authority will take place on 5th May 2022. Between May 2022 and March 2023, both authorities will exist in parallel until April 2023 when South Lakeland District Council (and the current County and other Districts) will be abolished and the Shadow Authority will become Westmorland and Furness Council.

- 3.2 The management of the change, future blueprint and operating model of the new Councils are matters initially for the Joint Committee and subsequently for the Shadow Authorities. The LGR process will enable the shadow authorities to deliver their implementation plans.
- 3.3 However this report is about South Lakeland's legacy. It is about examining SLDC's Council Plan and policy framework, making an assessment of what can realistically be achieved by April 2023, what legacy projects are likely to be taken forward and what asks there are likely to be of the Westmorland and Furness Shadow Authority and the new Council in terms of delivering on the Council Plan. Most importantly, the impact of the Local Government Reorganisation process on capacity is such that resource availability for project work is highly constrained.

Method and Criteria

- 3.4 A Project Portfolio Management Approach (PPM) has been adopted in prioritising the Council's work during the remainder of its existence. Project portfolio management (PPM) is the centralized management of the processes, methods, and technologies to analyse and collectively manage current or proposed projects based on key characteristics. This enables the organisation to determine the optimal resource mix for delivery and schedule activities to best achieve our goals whilst recognising constraints.
- 3.5 Through the application of the PPM approach, the Council's remaining tasks have been evaluated in the context of Local Government Reform. These include the Customer Connect programme, the Capital Programme and other Business as Usual activities in the context of Local Government Reorganisation.
- 3.6 Drawing on the principles set out in the Commissioning Strategy, in addition to the basic commissioning questions of defined purpose, strategic alignment and value for money, the following criteria are taken into account
 - Is there a clear rationale for undertaking this activity at this time;
 - Is the project is at an advanced stage/or subject to contractual obligation such that cancellation and/or decommissioning would be less cost effective?
 - Would a Unitary Authority be better positioned to deliver the outcomes of the project?
 - Can the project or activity be delivered by April 2023?
 - If not, what is the legacy position likely to be and what does it enable for the successor authority ?
 - Is there a strategy for transition?
 - What resource will be needed to deliver it (including ongoing costs) and does it represent value for money;
 - Where will the resource be found from and are there any impacts on service delivery
 - Does it involve co-operation with other Westmorland and Furness partner authorities;

The Council Plan

- 3.7 Appendix 1 analyses the vision, priorities and targets in the Council Plan in detail. The plan was prepared in the knowledge that Local Government re-organisation was a strong possibility and the plan was aligned with those for Barrow and Lancaster. There is also a high degree of alignment with current strategy with Eden. Whilst it will be for the Shadow Authority to prepare a new Council Plan for Westmorland and Furness, the current plan forms a strong basis for influencing the future of the new Council. Issues such as working across borders, addressing a shrinking working age population, carbon reduction and the environment and affordable housing need are present in large parts of Westmorland and Furness. South Lakeland's track record in driving organisational transformation will also offer major opportunities in planning for the new authority.
- 3.8 Key priorities to be taken forward with the intention of being completed by vesting day are the following.
- The final few stages of the Customer Connect project including the completion of the final phase of the refurbishment of South Lakeland House;
 - Covid response including Track and Trace and the distribution of grants
 - The master plan for the GSK site in Ulverston
 - The completion of the roundabout at Cross-a-Moor, Swarthmoor;
 - The completion of works to New Road and Gooseholme Bridge;
 - Phase 1 of the provision of EV charging points;
- 3.9 Some other projects likely to be completed include disabled toilet improvements at Millerground and Cartmel, Kendal Market Lift, the conversion of redundant premises at Ellerthwaite depot to offices, improvements to Rothay Park toilets, flood alleviation works at Windermere Road, Grange and energy saving measures at Ferry Nab.
- 3.10 There are also a number of projects and programmes which are likely to be handed on to Westmorland and Furness Council for continuation and/or completion. These include
- The final completion of works to Grange Promenade and Lido
 - Completion of the South Lakeland Local Plan to include a review of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy (see below);
 - Delivery of the Homes England site at Croftlands and the wider Croftlands development;
 - The Affordable Housing programme including schemes promoted through the Community Housing Fund and proposals being developed for use of Right to Buy receipts;
 - Cumbria Choice
 - The Disabled Facilities Grants programme
 - Work to promote financial inclusion and establishment of a Poverty Truth Commission
 - Participation in National Park and AONB partnerships;
 - Measures associated with delivering Fairer South Lakeland including a Poverty and Truth Commission;
 - Implementation of the Carbon Reduction Action Plan
 - Arts and events funding and improvements to Abbot Hall
 - Completion of Kendal Flood Defences

- Implementation of recommendations of Kendal Parking Study and future of Westmorland Centre car park;
- Ulverston Place Programme
- Ulverston Leisure Centre associated with the GSK master plan.

Economic Development Strategy

- 3.11 There is a proposal in the Council Plan for the preparation of an economic development strategy to replace the current economic growth strategy prepared in 2014. Because of the disruption of the Pandemic, this has not been taken forward. Whilst the Council has a clear approach to economic development with ongoing work on town centres, encouraging inward investment, bringing sites forward and promoting improvements to infrastructure, it is considered that any new economic development strategy should be prepared on a Westmorland and Furness footprint given strong economic linkages particularly between South Lakeland and Barrow. Accordingly, the expectation is that a future economic development strategy should be prepared on a Westmorland and Furness footprint by the new authority.

Local Plan

- 3.12 South Lakeland is currently reviewing its Local Plan, some parts of which date back to 2010. Whilst up to date Development Management policies were adopted in 2019, the Core Strategy was adopted in 2010. The strategic elements of Local Plans for Eden and Barrow have been adopted more recently. Whilst in the long term, the new authority may wish to consider a single plan for its whole area (excluding National Parks), that will take a considerable amount of time to prepare and there is a risk of a policy vacuum in the interim. So there is a strong argument for continuing to progress the plan for South Lakeland already commenced by SLDC to be finalised and adopted by Westmorland and Furness Council. This will place the new authority in the strongest possible position to deliver on important SLDC priorities such as affordable housing delivery, climate change and carbon reduction and strategic infrastructure. This will then place the new authority in a strong position to develop a spatial strategy for Westmorland and Furness with a foundation of robust up-to-date plans across the whole area.

Policy Framework

- 3.13 The Council's policy framework is set out in the Council's constitution. It includes the Council Plan and Local Plan set out above. It also includes a raft of other policies including financial and budgetary policies, climate change policy, housing policies, licencing policies, safeguarding policies, policies on fraud and policies on public health. Some of these are statutory, some are discretionary. Most currently relate only to South Lakeland but some such as Cumbria Choice and the Joint Public Health Policy are currently Cumbria wide. Some are spatial, some are procedural.
- 3.14 The new authority will require a new constitution and policy framework. Appendix 2 lists the documents comprising the existing framework. It will be for the shadow authority and the new authority to decide whether, and how to take these forward. Licencing and Gambling policies are currently under review and will be taken forward in a revised form.

Summary and Conclusions

- 3.15 Local Government Reform offers a major opportunity to align local Government in Westmorland and Furness to transform lives and tackle major issues in the way envisaged in South Lakeland's Council Plan. The opportunity exists to focus efforts in the last year of SLDC on the delivery of essential priorities which will put the new authority in a strong position. Part of that legacy also includes influencing the new shadow authority to ensure that South Lakeland's vision is taken forward and widened by the new authority and the achievement of priorities given renewed impetus with the additional functions, resource and influence of a unitary authority

4.0 Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix No.	Name of Appendix
1	Recommended approach to Council Plan
2	Recommended approach to Policy Framework
3	Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment
4	Equalities Assessment

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 Relevant leads have been consulted about the contents of this report

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 The Council could take the view that no prioritisation is necessary for the final year of its operation and that the future of Council Plan, Local Plan and Policy framework is a matter for the Shadow Authority on which South Lakeland District Council should take no view. This however would negate much of the work that South Lakeland has done to develop strategic focus. It would deprive the shadow authority of soundly based policy and strategy and many years of experience in working with the people and communities of South Lakeland to promote their interests.

7.0 Implications

Financial, Resources and Procurement

- 7.1 The Council Plan and the projects and initiatives contained within it have been developed in line with the Council's budgeting processes to be deliverable within current budgets. Any variations relating to individual projects will be captured through the Council's budget monitoring processes. Officers from all Cumbria councils are working on potential budgets for the 2 new unitary authorities based on current budgets and are also working on a methodology for how the 2023/24 budgets will be prepared and approved.

Human Resources

- 7.2 The Council will need to ensure that staff resources are allocated appropriately to the priorities in this report and that systems are in place to support with the smooth running of the agreed priorities.

Legal

- 7.3 The Councils Monitoring Officer is the Technical Lead for the Legal and Democratic work stream reporting to the Lawrence Conway as the Sponsor of the work stream.

Part of the work stream is the drafting of a new Constitution for the Westmorland and Furness Council. This workstream is underway and engagement will be taking place with all Themes, People, Place and Enabling to agree the matters to be included in the Budget and Policy Framework.

- 7.4 The new constitution will include the Budget and Policy Framework items. Including matters required by Law to be included for Unitary Council Budget and Policy Frameworks.
- 7.5 The Councils Budget and Policy Framework list the following Policies within Article 4 of the Constitution.
- 7.6 The policy framework means the following plans and strategies:
- Council Plan;
 - Council Policy on Climate Change
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme;
 - Community Engagement Strategy;
 - Community Safety Plan;
 - Medium Term Financial Plan;
 - Treasury Management Statement;
 - Procurement and Commissioning Strategy;
 - Anti-Bribery, Fraud and Corruption Policy;
 - Anti-Money Laundering Policy;
 - Plans and strategies which together comprise the Development Plan, including local development schemes and Development Framework documents;
 - South Lakeland Housing Strategy;
 - Choice Based Lettings Allocation Policy;
 - Local Lettings Policy;
 - Licensing Policy;
 - Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy;
 - Economic Growth Strategy;
 - Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy.
- 7.7 This report makes proposals in relation to policies contained within Article 4. Members will be aware that the Licensing and Gambling Policy are currently being reviewed and consulted upon before consideration by Full Council.

Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment

7.8 The Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 3

7.9 Summary of Health and Sustainability Impacts

		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Environment and Health	Greenhouse gases emissions	Y			
	Air Quality	Y			
	Biodiversity	Y			
	Impacts of Climate Change	Y			

	Reduced or zero requirement for energy, building space, materials or travel	Y			
	Active Travel	Y			
Economy and Culture	Inclusive and sustainable development	Y			
	Jobs and levels of pay	Y			
	Healthier high streets	Y			
	Culture, creativity and heritage	Y			
Housing and Communities	Standard of housing	Y			
	Access to housing	Y			
	Crime	Y			
	Social connectedness	Y			

Equality and Diversity

7.10 The Equality Impact Analysis is attached at Appendix 4

7.11 Summary of Equality and Diversity impacts

Please indicate: P = Positive impact; 0 = Neutral; N = Negative; Enter "X"					
Age	P		0		N
Disability	P		0		N
Gender reassignment (transgender)	P		0		N
Marriage & civil partnership	P		0		N
Pregnancy & maternity	P		0		N
Race/ethnicity	P		0		N
Religion or belief	P		0		N
Sex/gender	P		0		N
Sexual orientation	P		0		N
Armed forces families	P		0		N
Rurality	P		0		N
Socio-economic disadvantage	P		0		N

Risk Management	Consequence	Controls required
	The value of much of the work that South Lakeland has done to develop	The interests of the people and communities of South Lakeland are championed

Risk Management	Consequence	Controls required
Shadow Authority does not take SLDC priorities forward in the new authority	strategic focus would be lost depriving the new authority of soundly based policy and strategy and many years of experience in working with the people and communities of South Lakeland to promote their interests.	by all engaged in the Local Government reform process

Contact Officers

Dan Hudson. Strategy Lead Specialist

x3378 email: d.hudson@southlakeland.gov.uk

Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
SLDC Constitution	https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/media/7603/south-lakeland-district-council-constitution-april-2021.pdf
SLDC Council Plan	South Lakeland Council Plan
SLDC Commissioning Strategy	A3 commissioning strat FINAL June2020 Layout 1 (southlakeland.gov.uk)

Tracking Information

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Section 151 Officer	25/01/22	31/01/22
Monitoring Officer	25/01/22	28/01/22
CMT	25/01/22 by e-mail	31/01/22

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	N/A
Human Resources Lead Specialist	28/01/22
Communications Team	28/01/22
Leader	25/01/22
Committee Chairman	25/01/22
Portfolio Holder	25/01/22
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	9/02/22
Council	22/02/22