

South Lakeland District Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Friday, 4 March 2022
Climate Action and Biodiversity Portfolio Holder
Report

Portfolio: Cllr Dyan Jones

To lead on the Council's policies around Climate change, carbon reduction and sustainable growth, to develop a policy on bio-diversity, raising community awareness and working collaboratively on policy objectives.

Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Air Quality Strategy and action plan
- Active Travel Strategy and action plan
- Climate Change Policy and Action Plan
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

Key Areas

- Air Quality Management Plans
- Leisure, Public Realm, (Parks and Open Spaces (Including cemeteries, trees, woodland and playground improvement)
- Carbon Reduction and Active Travel
- Biodiversity

Leisure, Public Realm, (Parks and Open Spaces (Including cemeteries, trees, woodland and playground improvement)

Town View Field/Nobles Rest

The Friends group are continuing to meet and work closely with Kendal Conservation volunteers to improve areas of the park including Swine Parrock and the line along the beach hedge. Working party day is being planned and trees and bulbs will be ordered for planting over the winter. This will include Hawthorn, Rowan, Elder and some weeping cherry blossom. The Friends are continuing to weed the central beds and look after the recently planted bog areas in the park and Town View Field. The first interpretation board should be in place by the end of the year and we are now creating an additional board to illustrate the wildlife and planting that can be found. The ideas is to make this into a fun activity for children.

It was also suggested at the last meeting that nature workshops could be run in the school holidays.

Playgrounds

The work on Phase 1 of Queens Park is now complete, with new playground opened in July and the pump track opened in September. The official opening was on 13th November and was well attended. Picnic benches have been ordered and in the spring, the group will be looking at additional planting in the woodland area. Funding for Phase 2 - the new skate park has started.

Consultation has taken place in Easedale Rd, Grasmere. Murley Moss, Kendal. Moorside, Flookburgh. Helmside Gardens, Oxenholme to determine the future of these small rarely used playgrounds. Easedale Road will remain as a small toddler area and some of the land will be used for community allotments. Exact plans still to be created.

Murley Moss is currently closed and the residents are very keen for this remain closed due to ASB. A resident would like to take over this area and create an attractive garden. Decision is still to be made on the other spaces but likely to be turned into community gardens.

Following a Consultation and clean up event at Owlett Ash fundraising has now begun to improve this facility and all being well this can be done in 2022.

The Skate Park ramps at Lightburn Park were painted with graffiti art by two local artists at an event in the summer and the Friends group here continue to look after the beds and various planting schemes. They did excellently in this year's Bloom competitions achieving a Gold Award in Britain in Bloom and a special award for Biodiversity in the Cumbria in Bloom.

Trees and Woodland

Work continues in the council's response to Ash dieback on our landholdings. Following the works carried out by Network Rail, SLDC contractors have felled further Ash Dieback infected ash trees at Bluebell Woods, Kendal. Ash Dieback and tree hazard work is being carried out in Yewbarrow Woods, Grange over Sands. Replacement of the felled trees in woodland areas will be through natural regeneration.

Other tree diseases have affected council owned trees in recent months, with Beech trees infected with Ganoderma and Meripilus fungi being removed in Fletcher Park, Greenside and High Tenterfell, Kendal. These trees will be replaced in the winter planting season with native broadleaved species.

Works have commenced at the Kendal Parish Church reaches of Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme. The Environment Agency contractors are removing specific trees as approved in the planning permissions connected to the development with SLDC ensuring compliance with the approved plans.

Carbon Reduction and Active Travel

The Council's Climate Change Policy and Action Plan seeks to deliver a carbon neutral Council by 2030 and a carbon neutral South Lakeland District by 2037 by leading and encourage others to take action around climate change. Whilst South Lakeland will no longer exist in 2023, it is vital that South Lakeland's commitment to climate change is reflected in the new authority.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from South Lakeland as an organisation have more than halved from 5259 tonnes in 2010 to 2476 tonnes in 2019/20 driven by increased energy efficiency, solar panels and the fact that renewable energy has increased as part of the national energy mix. In addition, the size of the Council's estate has decreased.

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

The SLDC Climate change project team meet regularly to oversee progress and reporting on the Climate Change Action Plan. Current work includes:

- Working with building managers to analyse their energy usage in order to reduce emissions through building improvements or culture change
- Staff talk (“Team Talk”) on the travel protocol
- Series of media messages throughout COP26
- Information on Cold to Cosy and our green grants funding outcomes in the Autumn edition of South Lakeland News
- Work with CAfS in Ambleside, which includes: solar PV installation on larger non-domestic buildings, bulk-buying solar PV for domestic properties, energy efficiency measures on domestic properties, carbon footprint calculator roll out for residents and businesses and community engagement.
- Trialling a Scope 3 emissions tool which quantifies our procurement related emissions with our energy management system (Pilio)
- Ongoing work with the Cumbria Local Authority Climate Policy Group on sharing best practice and working to align plans for LGR and beyond

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, including a carbon footprint calculator to engage businesses and residents, a solar PV mapping activity to identify opportunities and talking to residents and businesses about group buying schemes and low carbon engagement events.

Climate Change Community Fund grants have been made to (amongst others);

- Burneside Community Energy (£1,800) towards their Connecting Carbon project:. The project now has 40 people interested in conducting a heat loss survey on their home. Surveyors trained by CAfS will commence in November. The work will highlight areas for improvement to the buildings' thermal envelopes, and signpost CAfS energy services for more technical advice and support.
- Kendal Cycle Club (£1,750), for adult bikeability training for 60 adults in June and July. The sessions were open to new or experienced cyclists who wanted to learn how to cycle safely on urban and rural roads. They provide adult cycle training. The training develops riders' skills and confidence so they can ride in diverse road environments, Sessions were held in June and July.

The SLDC/ SOSCI Scheme is about to install EV charging points across the District in a number of SLDC car parks. The EV charging points are located in locations, which are aimed at the residential market where no off street charging is currently available. The works are on track to be completed by January 2022. Twenty EV charging points will be installed in three locations in Kendal, two in Ulverston and locations in Bowness, Windermere, Ambleside and Grasmere. These will complement those already installed on SLDC car parks at Brewery Street, Ulverston, Low Fold, Ambleside and New Road in Kirkby Lonsdale.

Greening Campaign

SLDC have facilitated the Greening Campaign - a cost toolkit designed to take parish or town councils through steps to help households reduce their carbon footprint.

Communities who have started phase one recently include Duddon and Levens, joining Ulverston, Staveley and Ings, and Coniston.

Grange, Cartmel and Allithwaite, Cartmel Fell, Lower Holker, Lindale and Newton, and Witherslack, Meathop and Ulpha have also banded together as Peninsula Environmental Action Together (PEAT).

PEAT managed to get 301 cards in windows, resulting in actions, which will save 182,293 tons of CO₂.

Active Travel

The council have introduced a green travel protocol that recommends following a hierarchy of more sustainable travel options before using employees' vehicles when travelling for work purposes. The progress made in introducing remote working and virtual meetings, which reduce the need for travel, will be sustained.

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. We have supported the County Council in preparing a Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan for Kendal which will help to form the basis for the continuing development of Kendal's cycle and walking network.

Council will continue to actively monitor and trial new technologies where appropriate, feasible and realistic, in a timely manner for our fleet vehicles. The council has placed an order for the first electric fleet vehicle and delivery is expected in early 2022.

Biodiversity

SLDC and our grounds maintenance contractors Continental Landscapes have worked with the Fellside forum to improve the mowing regime at Kendal heights, working with the volunteers we are working towards improving the wildflower and butterfly population by a few simple changes to the mowing regime. Continental worked alongside the volunteers to cut, rake up and remove the grass to help improve ground conditions to promote more diverse wildflower population; we had to hire in a specialised remote control mower to access this hard to reach area. We have carried out similar improvements to the mowing regime at other locations on Tenterfell in Kendal.

A number of Climate Community funded projects are enhancing biodiversity in the District. These include

The Friends of Noble's Rest received £1,500 to continue their work in Noble's Rest and Town View Fields in Kendal to bio diversify, improve access and to enhance the Natural Flood Management Project work undertaken by South Cumbria Rivers Trust. To date the Friends have planted the Damson orchard in the corner of the field (all the trees are thriving and attracting pollinators) and have established a sympathetic mowing regime which is allowing a more diverse range of native wild flowers to establish themselves. The bog garden in both Town View and Nobles Rest has been planted with Yellow Iris, Purple Loosestrife, Meadowsweet, Creeping Jenny, Marsh Marigold, Hemp Agrimony, Willow Saplins and Cornus/Dogwood.

The Gill Banks Action Group received £940, and has made great progress with the wildflower planting in the woodland area of Gill Banks in Ulverston, clearing brambles to

make space and planting 200 Foxgloves, 300 Primroses, 200 Red Campion and 50 Teasels and are waiting for more plants.

South Cumbria Rivers Trust received £4,000 for their Cool Rivers project to recruit, train and support volunteers to carry out survey work along rivers and becks to determine the extent of tree cover. Shading from tree cover has been found to reduce water temperatures by up to five degrees, which in times of drought and very low water conditions can be critical for the survival of fish such as Atlantic salmon and trout.

SCRT has designed a survey that can be carried out by volunteers, accompanied by supporting resources such as survey guide to help with identification of trees and riparian features. An online survey has also been created to capture the data from the in-the-field surveys. This will then be used to produce a series of maps showing tree cover.

Tracking Information

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Section 151 Officer	N/A	N/A
Monitoring Officer	N/A	N/A
CMT	N/A	N/A

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	24/11/21
Human Resources Lead Specialist	N/A
Communications Team	N/A
Leader	N/A
Committee Chairman	N/A
Portfolio Holder	24/11/21
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	04/03/22
Executive (Cabinet)	N/A
Council	N/A