

South Lakeland District Council
Council
Wednesday, 13 July 2022
Promoting South Lakeland and Innovation Portfolio
Holder Report

Portfolio: Cllr Jonathan Brook

Working with partners and stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sector, at national, regional and sub-regional level. To act as an ambassador and advocate for the Communities of South Lakeland.

To represent the Council on local, Regional, National and other strategic partnerships as appropriate.

Oversight and development of the Council Plan priorities in collaboration with Portfolio Holders and based on community need.

Leading on the Councils Public Service Reform agenda.

Leading on Devolution, Local Government Reform and working with the other Cumbrian authorities and civil servants to help to deliver the most appropriate outcomes for our residents from the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

To lead on community engagement.

Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Communications Strategy
- Council Plan
- IT/Information/E Government Strategy
- Performance Management

Key Areas

- Community strategy/area planning/development of recovery group
- Local and Cumbria Wide Strategic Partnerships
- Media and Communications
- Performance Management
- Relationships with Government Departments, and other relevant authorities at a sub-regional, regional.

Community Strategy/Area Planning/Development of Recovery Group

The Council is continuing to work with the Environment Agency (EA) to develop and implement Phase 1 of the Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme plans to adapt the local infrastructure in order to protect communities against the risks associated with Climate Change. Phase 1 of the scheme is continuing to deliver an appreciable net gain in biodiversity.

Planning permission for flood defences along Aynam Road and Waterside was granted in summer 2019. Following consultations with a number of organisations, residents and community groups, a new application has been submitted for these areas for the inclusion of glass panels. The new application will be subject to careful review by the Council's Planning Committee and a sample glass panel based on the planning submission has been revealed at Little Aynam for the community to view.

February 2022 marked the 'One Year' of construction and works have been completed at Romney Gardens, Natland Road/ Ford Park, Clarks, Helsington and Watercrock and improved foundations and strengthened existing flood wall at Dockray Hall.

Most recently construction of the new flood wall alongside the riverside has begun at Sand Aire House, Lambrigg Terrace and Melrose Place. It is anticipated that this area of construction will take approximately 12 months to complete.

The Environment Agency are committed to leaving a lasting legacy for the community and visitors to Kendal and as such have engaged three local schools, seven local charity organisations and over 200 community volunteers to pot over 2000 tree cuttings.

Collaborating with three schools, one mental health charity, older residents of Kendal and four local artists we have supported the delivery of inspired art which will feature in two key locations of the scheme and over 200 students from the local schools have attended site visits and talks.

Recently the Council concluded an internal audit of the European Regional Development Fund Kendal Flood Alleviation Scheme. SLDC is acting as the accountable body for the ERDF to deliver flood relief scheme. The work the Council has undertaken received "substantial assurance" from the auditors which was the highest assessment level, with no recommendations for improvement attached.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council coordinated the distribution of a number of different business grants, test and trace support payments and offered advice and guidance to businesses who were able to re-open between lockdown restrictions. A total of twelve grant schemes were available and distributed to help businesses and individuals of all sizes and sectors, safeguarding businesses and jobs throughout the district. The Council has concluded an internal audit of the process of the grant schemes delivered and distributed. All grant schemes administered by the Council are closed and reconciliation is now underway.

Local and Cumbria Wide Strategic Partnerships

As South Lakeland enters the final nine months of its existence and its functions migrate to the new Westmorland and Furness Council, it is vital that the work achieved through partnerships across and outside Cumbria is sustained. Future relationships with strategic partnerships such as the Local Economic Partnership, the National Park Partnerships, the Cumbria Zero Carbon Partnership, the Morecambe Bay Population Health Partnership the

Local Resilience Forum and the Community Safety Partnership are all being examined as part of the Local Government Reorganisation process. South Lakeland representatives on the various work streams are working hard with colleagues in Barrow, Eden and the County Council to ensure that measures essential to deliver on South Lakeland's priorities are reflected in future arrangements.

One area which Westmorland and Furness will have to consider is the future relationship between South Lakeland, Barrow and Lancaster. In February, the Council considered the issue of taking forward Council Plan priorities – including maintaining linkages with Lancaster was considered and a proposal that the Council Plan priority of working across boundaries be considered as part of the new policy framework. Themes in the Bay Prosperity and Resilience Strategy will put Westmorland and Furness Council in a strong position to continue to develop cross-bay linkages. Strategy themes such as:

- Renewables and clean growth
- Building on the area's arts and cultural offer
- Retaining and attracting the best talent and diversity
- Supporting high-efficiency 'food-agri' innovation
- Enhancing digital connectivity
- Growing healthy communities
- Building resilient town centres

These will prove highly relevant to Barrow, South Lakeland and Eden as the new authority develops its own growth strategy.

Westmorland and Furness has commenced preparation of its own Council plan which will set out the vision and priorities for the new authority. SLDC officers are closely engaged in this work. Whilst they do so from a Westmorland and Furness – wide perspective, it is worth noting that SLDC has a strong history of working across boundaries and key SLDC priorities such as sustainable growth, demographic change, climate change and fairness have strong resonance across the new District and work done on South Lakeland's Council Plan provides a strong foundation on which to build.

Work continues with partners including Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership to progress future developments at the Glaxo site in Ulverston and the draft Master Plan for the site is well advanced. Work is also ongoing with the Lake District National Park Authority and Cumbria County Council together with other partners to progress the Windermere Gateway Project.

Media and Communications

The Council is continuing to keep residents and stakeholders regularly updated on the Council's activities through a range of communication channels, including social media, press releases sent to all key media, the resident newspaper published three times a year (South Lakeland News) and website.

This has included developing communications to ensure residents are kept informed about all areas of the Council's work: from anti-littering campaigns and consultations, to the opening of new playgrounds, work to tackle climate change, supporting our communities' financial resilience, as well as responding to media enquiries and supporting filming requests in the district.

Through the year the Communications Team continued to provide regular updates on the Covid-19 pandemic response work, highlighting the variety of support mechanisms available

for businesses, families, communities and vulnerable people, including public health messages and applying for support grant applications.

The Communications Team has supported messaging around Cost of Living issues, including advice and support available and information on Government relief payments, such as the £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate.

The Council's Communications Senior Specialist is a member of a Communications Advisory Group on Local Government Reorganisation and is working with colleagues from the other five districts and Cumbria County Council to support communications around LGR.

This has included regular staff and member updates and briefings, a new external website about LGR, new Shadow Authority website and a staff SharePoint site. The Council's Senior Specialist was also communications lead for the Shadow Authority elections in May and is providing communications support to the new Shadow Authority.

The Communications Team has promoted a number of successful initiatives, including an ongoing community litter 'clean-up' campaign and sign-ups to the new My Account function, making it easier and more convenient for residents and businesses to access council services online. My Account now has more than 12,000 sign-ups since its launch in March 2021.

Internally, the Communications Team has continued to keep Council staff and councillors informed about organisational issues, including the ongoing Customer Connect transformation programme and sharing success stories across the Council.

Performance Management

The Council is committed to delivering high quality, cost effective services that meet the needs of residents and improve quality of life. To help achieve these goals performance is measured frequently and in line with the priorities in the Council Plan. Performance reporting is aligned with the updated Council Plan for 2021-2026 as adopted by Council on 23rd February 2021 – the four current priorities are:

- Working across Boundaries
- Delivering a Balanced Community
- Delivering a Fairer South Lakeland
- Addressing the Climate Emergency

Performance reporting will evolve in line with the move to the new Westmorland and Furness authority. As the new authority develops, South Lakeland will use its existing priorities to influence the strategy of the new authority in addressing the needs of the South Lakeland area and how a future unitary council may deliver stronger benefits for residents. For example integration of health and social care will be critical.

Quarter 4 2021/22 reporting shows good performance and demonstrates that South Lakeland is a very desirable place to live, work and explore. In line with the national trend the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation is just outside target. This is a significantly improved situation when compared with the height of the pandemic. The Council has many mitigations in place to reduce homelessness and these can be seen within the Council Plan Performance Monitoring report each quarter.

Following a review of the Strategic Risks in Quarter 4 2022 it was found that 27% of risks were above appetite. This is a significant improvement compared with the start of Covid-19 in 2020 when 65% of risks were positioned above appetite. This demonstrates the Council's

continuous focus on risk review and mitigation. The Risks can be viewed as part of the Quarter 4 'Council Plan Performance Monitoring' report on the Council's website for 8th June Cabinet.

Detailed information for both performance and risk can be seen in the Cabinet report 'Council Plan Performance Monitoring' following each quarter end. Also the Strategic Risks are reported to Audit Committee twice a year in July and December – and the Operational Risks to Audit Committee in April each year.

Looking ahead the Quarter 1 2022/23 reporting is due to begin soon and results will be prepared for Cabinet on 31st August.

In addition the Council has created a new monthly Performance Dashboard - which provides a succinct view of workload and performance within critical services. Regular situational awareness is vital and allows for resources to be focused where needed.

Tracking Information

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Section 151 Officer	N/A	N/A
Monitoring Officer	N/A	N/A
CMT	01/07/22	01/07/22

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	N/A
Human Resources Lead Specialist	N/A
Communications Team	N/A
Leader	N/A
Committee Chairman	N/A
Portfolio Holder	***
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	N/A
Council	13/07/22