# South Lakeland District Council’s response to the Kendal Climate Change Citizen’s Jury Recommendations

Thank you for presenting South Lakeland District Council with your Climate Change recommendations for Kendal. As you will be aware SLDC take Climate Change very seriously and we are doing what we can to help reduce our contributions to global warming.

In 2019 we declared a climate emergency, and in June 2020 Full Council ratified our Action Plan with our target to be a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030 and support a District Wide Target of 2037. On the cabinet we have Cllr Dyan Jones portfolio holder for the Climate Emergency and Localities. Our council plan puts Climate Change as one of the Council’s four key priorities.

We work closely with the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership (ZCCP) to help Cumbria and our district move to a low carbon future. This is a partnership of 70 organisations across Cumbria, including the district and county councils, other organisations including Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS), the National Farmers Union, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP), Lake District National Park Authority and local sustainability groups and schools. The partnership recently successfully bid for National Lottery funding so have a 5 year plan to help Cumbria become a zero carbon council.

The three tiered system of local governance in Cumbria means that some of these recommendations are the responsibility of the town council, the district or county, and others lie with businesses and local communities. We have reviewed the recommendations and have responded to those which fall under SLDC’s control or sphere of influence:

**Food and Farming**

Allotments are the responsibility of the Town Council. Requirements for new housing development including green infrastructure requirements will be reviewed in SLDC’s forthcoming local plan.

Our Economic Development team will look at the opportunity of using our indoor and outdoor markets to incorporate pop-up opportunities for local producers within our towns. (3a)

Although SLDC does not have direct responsibility for agriculture, we do engage with the National Farmers Union through the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership and changes in land use and land management are an important part of the Carbon Reduction Strategy for the County. In addition the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities are working closely with farmers on post common agricultural policy (CAP) changes which include the phasing out the EU's system of "direct payment" subsidies based on the amount of land farmed, and replacing it with a new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) which will instead reward farmers for work to improve landscapes and ecosystems. This will offer major opportunities for carbon capture, natural flood management and biodiversity. (4)

**Housing and Energy**

Your recommendations for new homes to have high energy efficiency is being explored through our local plan. It cannot be made planning policy until it has undergone independent examination and energy efficiency requirements need to be weighed against other development requirements such as affordable housing delivery, but it definitely is a priority for SLDC. Energy efficiency standards in new development will be driven up with the introduction of the Future Homes Standard. We are also looking at the possibility of developing our own energy efficiency and sustainability requirements in our forthcoming Local Plan. (9). Our councillors are happy to lobby governments on greater requirements for energy efficiency. (10a)

Retrofitting homes is one of the biggest challenges for lowering our carbon emissions, and have the potential for many co-benefits for improving residents’ health and financial stability. SLDC work closely with CAfS and Kendal College and we are in discussions with them on how to improve training and accreditation schemes for local trades’ people. Our Housing and Economic Development teams are in discussions with Cumbria LEP’s Construction Sector Panel Group and Skills and Employment Group and the government’s North West Energy Hub regarding this issue. We are making a Cumbria-Wide bid for the next phase of Local Authority Directed Green Homes Grants, led by Eden who have successfully implemented previous rounds. Our councillors are in regular discussions with our local MPs regarding this too.(10b-c)

Locally registered providers may be able to set up temporary accommodations whilst completing upgrading work on their homes, as this already happens with some upgrades. (10d). Our housing team support CAfS with the Cold to Cosy scheme to enable everyone to improve the energy efficiency of their houses. (10e)

SLDC’s business and planning team are working closely with Kendal Vision who are putting sustainability at the heart of this plan for Kendal. We currently support smaller businesses who want to reduce their emissions through Future Fixers and Small Green Business audits. Our ED team also provides Small Business Rates Relief for local independent shops. (10f)

For our own estate we are doing what we can to minimise our direct emissions – such as reviewing our council buildings and have installed solar panels on South Lakeland House, Mintworks and Town View Fields and more are due to have solar panels soon. We are looking at opportunities for renewable energy generation on our land – but have limited land available. (11a)

**Promoting Action and Raising Awareness**

SLDC can have follow up meetings every six months with KTC to review progress around the Climate Change agenda. (12a) As Climate Change is one of SLDC’s four main priorities we are keen to make sure it is one of the most important factors in all decisions made by the council. We have a member of the cabinet who is portfolio holder for the Climate Emergency, our Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive sit on our Climate Change Board, who meet quarterly and review progress being made on our Action Plan, scrutinising our progress and impacts. Along with employing a full time officer as Sustainability Coordinator we have a Climate Action Project Team headed by SLDCs Lead Specialist. (13)

We have a Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment that must be incorporated into the decision making process and this makes sure that Climate Change is incorporated in all decisions. It is important to stress that impacts cannot always be quantified. (13a)

The Kendal Flood Defence scheme will provides significant net benefits to residents, the community and global society, the tree planting will be significant for biodiversity gain. We do not approve development in flood plains or areas at risk of river or marine flooding except in very unusual circumstances. None of our allocated sites are in areas at risk of river flooding. We insist on sustainable drainage systems on all new development and the Environment Agency insist that such systems limit off site flow to green field levels.

Our support for the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership allows for greater involvement of the wider public, and Kendal Vision which includes the involvement of local businesses, who have put sustainability as a major priority. SLDC is a member of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and the (Local Government Association (LGA) which allows for many opportunities to learn from other councils and we are frequently looking for opportunities to trial pilot projects for our district. Our Councillors are part of the Countryside Climate Network with the UK100 and an officer is part of the LGA’s Climate Group.

We are currently running training for officers and members on Carbon Literacy which gives a good basis for implementing change across the organisation. We are training 80 members or officers on the full day Carbon Literacy Accredited course delivered by APSE and have 200 spaces on the CAfS Climate Change 101 training session. We will run regular training for new members and staff. We are also offering this training to Parish Council members. (13)

**Promoting Action and Raising Awareness**

We understand that this is one of the most important roles that the council plays with regarding the climate emergency. Our communications team are already reporting on the different Climate Action that the council is taking or what local communities are involved with. We work closely with CAfS and refer people to their webinars and website for reputable sources of information.

We run regular climate conversations with the public, parish councils and to different organisations such as Kendal Rotary Club. We used to run these in person across the district, but have moved these online since the March lockdown. We are supporting parishes by offering a toolkit that can help them to work with their communities raising awareness and engagement with climate change. (15)

As part of the ZCCP, SLDC in conjunction with others commissioned Small World Consultancy to produce a Carbon Baseline for Cumbria and set out a vision for a low carbon Cumbria – we have incorporated this vision into our updated Council Plan. (16) We are broadly supportive of the Kendal Vision’s focus on sustainability and would expect them to lead with influencing local businesses. (17)

**Transport**

Although Cumbria County Council take the lead on transport we are supportive of measures to improve public transport. We recommend that the county council lobby government on the regulative regime around public transport and would like to see greater transport planning powers for local authorities. (18) CCC lead Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure (LCWIP) and SLDC can support cycling infrastructure through the community infrastructure levy, and ensure developments are cycle friendly. (19)

SLDC have investigated the feasibility of park and ride schemes in Kendal’s Town Centre Car Parking study, but it is unlikely to be effective without substantial subsidy due to Kendal’s size and the nature of its catchment and travel patterns. We have restructured the prices of car parks to fit with lowering emissions. We are looking to locate an electric car club car in our South Lakeland House car park that will be available for all residents. (20)

SLDC will be putting some electric charge points in our Kendal car parks for residents and visitors and we are investigating other options.

**Other Options**

Most of the other option actions are the responsibility of the town council, although we will help communities with advice on tree planting. (22b).

For financial incentives for local businesses and suppliers we already have Small Business Rates Relief and we are looking at other options to help promote local independent shops.

For action 25 as we have already confirmed we do not approve development in flood plains or areas at risk of river or marine flooding except in very unusual circumstances. None of our allocated sites are in areas at risk of river flooding. We insist on sustainable drainage systems on all new development and the Environment Agency insist that such systems limit off site flow to green field levels. With regarding the tourist tax we know that the Lake District National Park is looking into this. (26)

Once again we thank you for taking the time to produce the recommendations and If you have any questions or would like further information please contact climate.action@southlakeland.gov.uk.