

South Lakeland Locality Board Plan 2025-27

Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council has three Locality Boards: Eden, Furness and South Lakeland.

Each Locality Board promotes close working with our communities, making sure local voices are heard when we are developing our services and policies. In addition, they work with residents and community groups on issues that are important to their area.

The three Locality Boards are based on the geographical boundaries of the former District Councils and are made up of the councillors who have been elected in each particular area. Locality Boards have some decision-making powers and budgets, as well as the ability to influence and engage with matters which affect their locality.

Locality Boards have a range of responsibilities which are delivered under the themes below:

- Undertake a community leadership role, bringing together different interest groups from the public, private and voluntary sectors to work in partnership.
- Understand and influence the delivery of council services to ensure this reflects local need.
- Allocation of funding and grants to support locality working, projects and activities.
- Support the local delivery of the Council Highways Service.

Each Locality Board's Locality Plan sets out its priorities based on local issues and opportunities while supporting Westmorland and Furness Council's vision, priorities and values.

Our vision for Westmorland and Furness is to be: "A great place to live, work and thrive".

The council's six priorities are climate, communities, customers, economy and culture, people, and workforce.

This is the South Lakeland Locality Plan for 2025 to 2027.

Contents

Introduction	1
Foreword	2
About South Lakeland	3
The Challenges We Face	4
South Lakeland Locality Board Plan Priorities	5
Delivery	5
What Success Looks Like.....	7

Foreword

We live in a beautiful environment; a World Heritage site, a region with two National Parks and two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where there is a strong sense of community and local pride. The economy is diverse and includes tourism, industry, services and more traditional occupations such as farming and quarrying.

However, there are challenges including affordable housing, high cost of living, access to services, public transport and visitor management. It can be difficult to ensure sustainable local communities where there are high levels of second homes.

The South Lakeland Locality Board provides a forum for Elected Members and partners to work collaboratively and have a local voice in the Westmorland and Furness Council's services and policies. The Locality Board can also provide small amounts of funding to local initiatives aligned to priorities.

The Locality Board has four working groups that include; children and young people, building community assets and addressing inequalities, climate change and biodiversity loss and highways. Each working group has its own local areas of focus and measures progress through local performance measures.

The Locality Plan describes how the Council intends to work for local residents and organisations to help ensure that South Lakeland is a place where our communities are supported and sustained for future generations.

I look forward to working with you all, please do feel able to get in contact in relation to any local issue or priority.

Councillor Suzanne Pender

Chair, South Lakeland Locality Board

About South Lakeland

Population:

Unlike the population of England, which has increased by 6.6% in the past decade, the population of South Lakeland has increased by just 0.8% from 2011, to around 104,500. This represents 46% of the residents of Westmorland and Furness Council.

South Lakeland has an ageing population with over a quarter of residents aged 65 years or older. The proportion of the population aged 65 years or older has increased dramatically in the past decade while the working age and child/young person population has fallen.

Economy & Culture:

Accommodation & Food Services and Wholesale & Retail are the two largest employment sectors in South Lakeland. Gross median annual full-time earnings for employments based in South Lakeland (£28,502) are the lowest of the three locality board areas (Eden £29,523; Furness £34,802).

South Lakeland boasts an internationally recognised cultural offer, from its connections with Wordsworth, Ruskin, Stan Laurel and Beatrix Potter to Grizedale Arts in Conistone and Brewery Arts in Kendal. The Lake District National Park alone attracts over 15 million visitors a year. With additional visitors to the Yorkshire Dales National Park (which includes part of South Lakeland) and villages outside the national parks such as Arncliffe, Cartmel and Grange-over-Sands, the area which has 4 Michelin starred restaurants has some 11,500 local jobs directly associated with leisure industries.

Health & Wellbeing:

Life expectancy at birth in South Lakeland (female, 84.8 years; male 80.3 years) is higher than that for England as a whole. Within South Lakeland there are significant differences in life expectancy for those born into our most deprived and least deprived communities; on average those in our most deprived areas die more than 4 years earlier than those in our most affluent areas and spend nearly 10 more years at the end of these shorter lives in poor health than those in our most advantaged areas.

Housing:

There are approximately 53,800 dwellings in South Lakeland of which 29.5% are estimated not to meet the decent homes standard; South Lakeland has among the highest proportion of non-decent housing in the country.

There are a relatively high proportion of homes that are owned. The ratio of socially rented dwellings to privately rented is relatively low. The percentage of local dwellings in council tax bands A and B is low compared with that for England and there are a relatively high proportion of homes in bands G and H.

Climate Change:

The geography and topography of South Lakeland result in a varied climate. In coastal towns such as Ulverston, in the high fells and in more inland Sedburgh, temperature and precipitation reflect the particular circumstances of place and daily weather as well as climate differ considerably. In recent years climatic events such as Storms Desmond (2015) and Arwen (2021) along with very localised heavy rains (Ulverston September 2023) have resulted in considerable distress to local communities and understandably have exacerbated anxieties around climate change.

A 2020 report 'A Carbon Baseline for Cumbria' identifies transport, industrial and commercial fuel use and domestic energy as the largest local contributors to carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions with local per capita production-based emissions greater than that for England as a whole.

Community:

With over 70 town councils, parish councils and parish meetings the geographical communities in South Lakeland vary from super-rural, to hamlets, villages and market towns.

97.7% of the population identify as white with 94.7% having one or more UK identity only. Over half the population consider themselves to be Christian with the next largest group reporting having no religion, minority faiths account for only about 1% of the local population. 2.27% of the population over 16 years identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other (LGBTQ+), 90.77% as straight or heterosexual.

Local communities are generally very cohesive and resilient as demonstrated during the COVID pandemic. However, as is common in rural areas, minority and vulnerable groups (LGBTQ+, those with mental health problems, people with disability, minority faith groups etc) can feel isolated with limited opportunity to connect to peers and, when looking to access services or support, frequently express concern about lack of anonymity. Access to services, post-16 education and recreation can be challenging and expensive, many young people migrate out of the area.

The Challenges We Face

For the majority of local residents, South Lakeland is a wonderful place to live. The beautiful natural environment, low crime rates and a strong sense of community make it attractive, notably to those in retirement. Over time these strengths have contributed to the development of a local socio-economic structure which presents sustainability challenges.

The local economy is relatively low paying, the ratio of local house prices to local salaries makes it difficult for the average local worker to afford local housing. Many local residents who are working are employed in better paying sectors located in Barrow, Lancaster or Copeland with local employers often recruiting from surrounding areas with lower housing costs. The resultant daily migration of workers into and out from the area contributes to the local carbon footprint. Increasing the availability of affordable local housing is a challenge but provides an opportunity to rebalance the local economy, improve housing stock and reduce the local carbon footprint.

Access to goods and services can be challenging. For those living in more rural parts with limited financial means, food, fuel and transport costs can be relatively high; a function of a lack of nearby low cost food retailers, reliance on oil or solid fuel for domestic heating of houses that are often energy inefficient and the need to maintain a vehicle given the limitations of local public transport. For those with health and care needs access to services can be problematic; an ageing population increases the need for social care, however the small local workforce and relatively low pay for care workers limits availability. Furthermore, travel distances and times to secondary and tertiary health care settings are far greater than for those in, or close to, major urban conurbations. Many local young people have limited ability to access education and training, vulnerable and minority groups limited access to people with shared life experience. Mobilising our community assets through volunteering and local engagement, partnership working (particularly with those in health care), improving our digital infrastructure and digital literacy, embracing innovation in communication and taking action to address wider determinants of health are all measures which can mitigate these challenges.

A very attractive visitor offer means the area sees huge tourist numbers. In the most popular places this frequently results in traffic problems. Public transport is limited and there is a tension between maintaining the unique features of the area and major transport infrastructure development. More even distribution of the visitor footfall across the area is both a challenge and an opportunity.

The general affluence of South Lakeland tends to mask areas of significant concern. Geographically constructed measures of deprivation overlook small numbers of households in affluent areas facing challenges from poverty to poor housing and, in rural areas, challenges of access and loneliness. Working closely (at a granular level) with our local community groups, effective collaboration with parish and town councils, supporting our community infrastructure (both physical and social), and targeting resources at individuals and households rather than by geography all present opportunities to address local inequality thus improving the health, wellbeing and life chances for those most vulnerable and increasing a sense of community cohesion and harmony for all.

South Lakeland Locality Board Plan Priorities

From March 2023, a series of workshops led by the Area Manager were held with local members. Input from officers representing Public Health, Highways, Children's Services, Community Development amongst others was included and members were invited to consider both quantitative and qualitative data relevant to South Lakeland. From these workshops and subsequent discussions members agreed two themes that should cut across the work of the locality board:

Theme 1: Supporting and empowering our communities across South Lakeland to build the places they are proud of.

Theme 2: Promoting health and wellbeing across the life-course.

At its meeting in July 2023 the Locality Board agreed to the formation of four working groups to consider issues attendant to the priorities for action that had emerged:

Priority 1: Children and Young People: ensuring that our young people have the best start in life and are supported to achieve their full potential.

Priority 2: Building Community Assets and Addressing Inequalities: enabling communities to reduce inequalities, build opportunity and achieve greater independence.

Priority 3: Climate Action and Increasing Biodiversity: caring for our climate and reducing our carbon footprint.

Priority 4: Highways: supporting a safe and effective highways network.

Delivery

South Lakeland Locality Board will work with partners and utilise council funding to support the delivery of the priorities described above.

Member working groups have been formed as described above. Groups meet quarterly (ahead of meetings of the Locality Board) and may also call occasional meetings to consider any urgent matter or to explore a subject of interest. The working groups may draw in officers of the council or third parties with particular expertise to assist them in their deliberations. The core membership of these working groups was agreed by the Locality Board at its meeting in July 2023 with all core members being elected members of Westmorland and Furness Council. Where working groups are considering making recommendation to the Locality Board a majority vote of core members is required. Elected members who are not core members of working groups may attend and may contribute to meetings, they may not (unless deputised by a core member) vote on any motion under consideration. Working groups advise the Locality Board on spend devolved to the Board, they are not decision-making bodies.

Delivery of the Place Plan priorities will be linked to both the Council Plan Delivery Framework [Council Plan Delivery Framework \(Council plan delivery framework | Westmorland and Furness Council\)](#) and the Council's Target Operating Model to both support and influence the delivery of projects and services to best benefit the local area.

Westmorland and Furness Council Plan Delivery Framework

The Framework provides information about what the Council plans to deliver and how it will work with communities and partners to ensure Westmorland and Furness is a great place to live, work and thrive.

The Framework identifies ten strategic delivery themes (*Homes, Growth, Culture, connections, environment, communities, service, care, learning, health and wellbeing*) bringing these together with the Council's vision ("*A great place to live, work and thrive*") and the six strategic priorities (*for people, for the economy and culture, for the climate, for communities, for our customers, for our workforce, for people*), with three sustainability principles of equity, economy and environment.

Community focus

We will focus on early intervention and prevention, working with individuals, community groups, parish and town councils, the voluntary sector and partners to reduce need for our services and improve health and wellbeing.

Easy access

Services will be user friendly, caring and accessible through multiple channels. Wherever possible services will be available and delivered digitally, reducing demand for phone and in-person interaction so those resources can be focused to those most in need.

Effective services

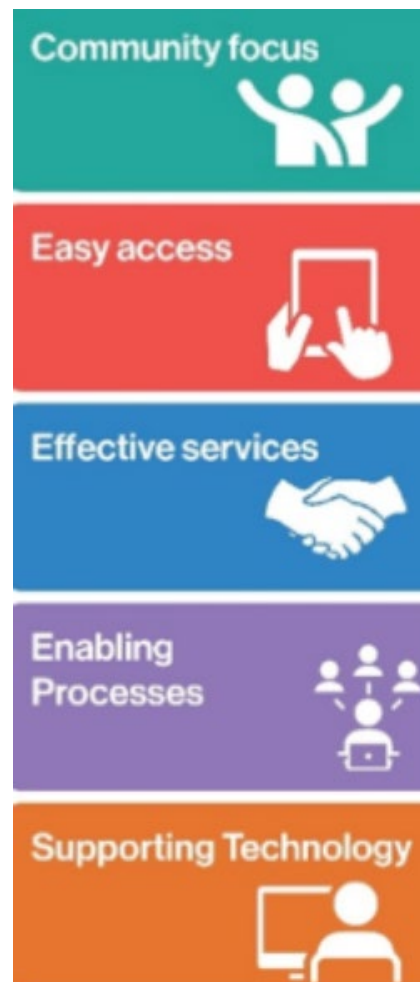
Services are outcome focused and maximise use of technology to drive efficiency and effectiveness. Service delivery is citizen centred and seamless between services and partner organisations

Enabling processes

Internal processes and functions are designed to support a seamless end-to-end experience. Improvement and change is supported by key enabling functions including HR, Legal, PMO etc working closely with service delivery teams.

Supporting technology

'Fit for purpose' technology across the Council that supports the delivery of services, promotes digital ways of working, and enables organisational efficiency.



Westmorland and Furness Target Operating Model

An operating model helps us plan and deliver activities, projects and programmes that will support the priorities we have as a Council.

The Westmorland and Furness target operating model has been designed with a focus on early intervention and improving the customer experience.

What Success Looks Like

- A Locality Board that is a strong advocate within the council for South Lakeland communities, that contributes to and has influence in the development of council policy, and that helps progress an agenda which empowers local communities to have greater control in matters that affect them.
- Evidence of work with partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors to support the delivery of social care throughout the life-course, for children, young people, working age adults and older adults who need social support.
- Close working with parish councils, town councils and local partners across all sectors. Evidenced by ongoing and fruitful engagement with the Locality Board and its working groups.
- Each of the Working Groups has agreed “Areas of Focus” for the next two years. These will be areas within the wider scope of the Working Groups where proactive work will be undertaken to ensure delivery of priorities. As part of the Working Groups’ work programmes performance measures will be developed to measure how successful the working groups have been in delivery their areas of focus.

PRIORITY 1: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- **Scope**
 - Provide opportunity for children and young people to broaden their life experience and enable them to achieve their aspirations; supporting them to make safe and sound decisions as they move into young adulthood.
 - Address issues attendant to child poverty.
 - Ensure those in their early years have the best start in life.
 - Local members actively engaged with supporting cared for and care experienced children and young people in their role as corporate parents (as corporate parents, it is every councillor's responsibility to make sure that the council is meeting its duties towards children in care and care leavers as described in the Children and Social Work Act 2017).
- **Areas of Focus**
 - Youth work- support universal youth work in line with Family Help strategy (strengthen the offer for young people)
 - Rurality, young people and families- identify unmet need through partnership working with the voluntary sector, Family Help and Learning Improvement Service.
 - Positive well-being- Continue to support play provision, linking to the emerging Playground Strategy 2025-2030

PRIORITY 2: BUILDING COMMUNITY ASSETS AND ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES

- **Scope**
 - Maintain and enhance physical and social infrastructure locally.
 - Support those most vulnerable and disadvantaged.
 - Promote community resilience (local groups actively supporting their communities).
 - Contribute to providing accessible and rewarding local employment.
 - Supports the local voluntary sector, ensuring it flourishes and continues to provide additionality to statutory services.
 - Maintaining and developing local art and sport as key community assets.
 - Enable and encourage social engagement and physical activity that supports the mental and physical wellbeing of residents throughout the course of their lives.
- **Areas of Focus**
 - Maintain and enhance physical and social infrastructure locally
 - Supports the local voluntary sector, ensuring it flourishes and continues to provide additionality to statutory services

PRIORITY 3: CLIMATE ACTION AND INCREASING BIODIVERSITY

- **Scope**
 - Help facilitate large scale strategic infrastructure projects that encourage lower carbon lifestyle choices around travel, work and leisure.
 - Maintain, develop and promote use of our local network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways to encourage active low carbon travel choices.
 - Raise awareness and understanding of issues attendant to climate action, enabling individuals and communities to act and make choices that contribute to mitigating climate change.
 - Support local communities and community groups with an interest in addressing climate change and promoting biodiversity.
- **Areas of Focus**

- Encourage and support those managing **community infrastructure with plans to decarbonise.**
- Support local parish and town councils and community groups **to manage, protect and enhance biodiversity.**

PRIORITY 4: HIGHWAYS

- Measurable effective local investment, collaboration the Council's Highways and Transport Strategic Board and engagement with local communities to:
 - Maintain a safe local highway infrastructure.
 - Ensure the needs of all highway users are appropriately met.
 - Develop local traffic management schemes attendant to the needs of communities.
 - Support effective sustainable travel including public transport.
 - Support the resilience of the local network at times of stress (flooding, snow etc).

The Locality Board will develop a set of key measurables against which progress on its priorities can be assessed. An annual review of the Locality Board Plan will ensure it remains relevant and is an effective tool in improving local wellbeing.