



6

Planning, Policy and  
Economic Development

## SECTION 6 - PLANNING, POLICY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Review of current relevant documents

#### 6.1 A Shared Vision for the Future – The Community Strategy for South Lakeland 2004 – 2024 South Lakeland Strategic Partnership May 2004

The purpose of the Community Strategy is to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of South Lakeland in a sustainable way by highlighting the key issues of the quality of life of the district and by seeking ways of working together to tackle them. The vision has a number of key priorities including the following, which are relevant to this Study:

#### A Vision for Jobs, Skills and Regeneration

A healthy and diverse economy which promotes enterprise and innovation, builds on its environmental strengths, maintains a highly-skilled and educated workforce and contributes to the high quality of life of the area.

#### A Vision for Quality Environment

The rich natural, built and heritage environment of South Lakeland is sustained and wherever possible enhanced for its own sake and for the residents and visitors to the area. People will have a greater understanding of the relevant issues and will benefit from opportunities for increased contact with nature and find a sense of place and belonging.

#### A Vision for Culture

To make South Lakeland a place where culture and creativity are highly valued, enabling them to play a pivotal and dynamic role in enriching all aspects of social, economic and community life and to reveal the unique character and potential of the area for the benefit of local

people and visitors.

#### The Vision for Jobs, Skills and Regeneration

Included below are measures in the Strategy which have particular relevance to the study area.

#### Develop and Support Business

- Assist new and indigenous businesses with growth potential and high value, higher wage employment opportunities and support their growth and development with practical advice and financial assistance where necessary
- Aim to encourage inward investment and sustainable development by businesses, groups and individuals who share a vision to contribute to the long term well-being of the community
- Support and develop cultural and creative industries (with new media and IT as one key 'cluster' alongside the visual arts and historic heritage) together with heritage related opportunities for job creation and business expansion

#### Support Agriculture and Rural Diversification

- Provide ongoing support for farming and food industries through the tracking, branding and promotion of higher value local produce and identification of new marketing opportunities (including those linked to biodiversity and organic farming)
- Ensure that agricultural practices result in environmental benefits and support the maintenance and enhancement of the countryside

#### Develop new workforce opportunities capitalising on existing under-utilised pools of employment potential

- Emphasise both the need and the opportunities for providing local training for trades skills to meet pressing local demands and to raise local environmental quality
- Increase the opportunities for graduates studying elsewhere to return to live and work in South Lakeland after qualifying

#### Focus on the Tourism Sector in South Lakeland as a key sector to deliver employment opportunities and economic growth

- Raise standards and quality in the tourism industry

#### Prioritise and lobby for Public Realm improvement schemes and visitor services which directly affect quality and accessibility

#### To support the special development of Market Towns

- Maintain the special role of Market Towns as centres for shopping, local services and community facilities, taking care to retain their distinctiveness and develop their unique selling points whilst maintaining and enhancing their contribution to fostering community well-being

#### Target Deprivation

- Stimulate regeneration and workforce development in those parts of the District with the most serious deprivation records and where opportunities for environmental enhancement and re-use of brownfield sites exist with East and South Ulverston requiring early attention

#### Deliver serviced land and premises for future developments

- Improve the range and choice of

opportunities for nurturing new businesses and supporting and expanding existing ones through the provision of a range of sites and premises. Where scope exists these should focus on re-using brownfield sites

### **Harness the full potential of current and proposed programmes**

- Promote a policy of 'joined up thinking' to develop sustainable long term and aspirational projects. The Strategic Partnership will focus its efforts on developing and reinforcing a number of key projects and programmes which can contribute most to achieving the longer-term vision for South Lakeland's economy and workforce. Specifically these include:
- **Business Development and Grant Support:** Increased levels of assistance/support for business start-ups and growth. This will include pump-priming grant assistance and the development of schemes to nurture and develop small companies in new technologies, IT, new media and similar emerging fields.
- **Market Towns Initiative:** Focusing resources and investment from a wide range of agencies in the 'holistic' regeneration of South Lakeland's Market Towns. Initially concentrating on Ulverston/Low Furness and the Lakes Market Towns Initiative.
- **Lake District Renaissance:** A programme to lift the quality of experience for visitors to the Lake District and sustainable tourism practices – reinforcing high standards of environment, customer service, the visitor experience and value for money.
- **Business Park Development: Bringing forward** new quality business parks in Kendal and Ulverston to meet identified needs. This will include a second phase of site servicing at Low Mill Business Park, Ulverston.

## **6.2 SLDC's Strategic Plan, 2003**

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for the delivery of services by SLDC to local people from 2003-2006. The Plan will be used to determine the Council's priorities and focus the allocation of financial resources over that period.

The Council's Vision is to see –

- Homes which meet need
- Opportunities for enjoyment
- Quality jobs in a diverse economy
- Good transport facilities
- A high quality environment
- Healthy and safe communities

The Vision is supported by the Council's Values which are to –

- Work in partnership to secure the well-being of those who live, work or visit the area
- Enable everyone to take part effectively in the activities of the Council
- Recognise the diversity in the District
- Seek continuous improvement in everything we do
- Communicate effectively both internally and externally
- Value our staff as a good employer
- Ensure that equality exists throughout the organisation
- Ensure sustainable principles are considered in all our activities

*The Vision and Values will be implemented through the Council's various statutory plans and strategies, and will be taken into account in this masterplan.*

## **6.3 The Planning Framework**

The current development plan for the study area comprises the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan and the South Lakeland District Council's Local Plan, produced in 1997.

The Structure Plan, together with Local Plans, provides the context for deciding planning applications. The Structure Plan will, in time, be replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy under the new development plan system recently introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Local Plans will be replaced by Local Development Frameworks.

## **6.4 The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 1995**

The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan is a statutory document that guides change in land use by providing a strategy and policies for the development and use of land within Cumbria, including the Lake District National Park. The Structure Plan, therefore, has a major influence on the future pattern of development in the County. It provides a framework within which the District Councils and LDNPA prepare Local Plans and the County Council prepares a Minerals and Waste Local Plan. These translate the broad Structure Plan policies relevant to their area into more detailed policies and site allocations. Cumbria County Council and the Lake District National Park Authority are currently reviewing the Structure Plan and the new proposals have been through an examination in public.

## **6.5 South Lakeland District Council Local Plan, 1997**

Within the Local Plan, Ulverston along with Kendal, are seen as the principle towns where development will be promoted. There are, however, no land allocations for development within the Study Area, although undeveloped land, to the north of the canal and to the north west of the railway, owned by GSK and the Auction Mart Company, is included within the settlement boundary.

## **6.6 South Lakeland District Council Local Development Framework, 2005**

South Lakeland District Council has produced a

Local Development Scheme (LDS) under the new regulations recently published through the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act, which commenced in September 2004. The document sets out the nature of the new Local Development Framework, which can best be described as a folder of planning strategies, policies, proposals and guidance which encompass the Council's core planning policy work for the next 3 years and beyond. The plan is required to have a ten-year time horizon. At this stage work has commenced on two documents in detail. These comprise, the Local Development Scheme (LDS), which seeks to act as the project plan for the production of the Local Development Framework. Secondly, work is proceeding on the South Lakeland Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out the Council's intentions to engage with the communities, which make up the District. It will influence the evolution and content of policies and plans throughout the process of producing the Local Development Framework.

During the period of preparation for the Local Development Framework the Council's South Lakeland Local Plan 1997 - 2006 will remain in force. This document underwent a First Alteration during 2001 and is available as the Adopted South Lakeland Local Plan First Alteration (2004). The plan will be saved under the Government's transitional arrangements for 3 years from adoption.

Within the Local Development Framework the content will be divided into:

- Local Development Documents which will be described as Development Plan Documents (DPD). These will include the Spatial Strategy for the district and Core policies, together with Topic policies which will support and explain the proposals map. DPD's will also include Action Area Plans where detailed proposals may be required for a geographic area or a large single issue requiring management or resolution.
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

which will be produced to manage issues where rapid change is likely, or where the nature of the guidance doesn't require the full rigor of Development Plan Document status. Included within this category are Action Area Plans which are a detailed master planning process for a spatial issue affecting a specific geographical area within the district where the management of development change, the need for regeneration or the management of a conservation led approach to an area is required. The plan will not be comprehensive to the district, but will address all of the related issues affecting one area to provide an in-depth response to the problems or opportunities identified in the designation of the Action Area Plan approach. Within the district a number of options for this Development Plan Document have been identified. Work is currently ongoing with others to examine the scope and suitability of the AAP process to deliver change and regeneration in these areas.

There are a number of projects across the district that might benefit from this approach. These projects may be developed as SPD's linked to policy in the Core Strategy or may develop as separate Action Area Plans. One such potential project identified within the LDS is Ulverston Canalside Regeneration, which is described as:

*"An area adjacent to the canal and auction mart in Ulverston characterized by under-utilised building and warehouses in close proximity to the centre of the market town of Ulverston. The re-use and regeneration of this area is constrained by ownerships and commercial restrictions associated with Glaxo's land holdings, but the land represents a potential area of significant commercial redevelopment. As an Action Plan it will be geographically quite small. The potential for change and growth and its proximity to Ulverston town centre place this scheme on the potential list for Action Plan work."*

Thus the work undertaken in this Study will be

useful as a component of this Action Plan.

## 6.7 SLDC's Economic Development Strategy, 2004

The Council undertook a SWOT Analysis and the following issues were identified which are relevant to this Study:

### Strengths

- Sound base of technology and knowledge based companies
- Growth sectors include tourism, the arts and leisure
- Emerging local "town based" initiatives and partnerships

### Weaknesses (seen as challenges)

- Lack of choice and availability of higher skilled, higher paid jobs
- Acute shortage of quality strategic and local employment sites
- Limited private sector investments, particularly in the west of the district
- Changing trends in agriculture

### Opportunities

- To further develop and improve the quality of the tourist infrastructure
- Strengthen links between agriculture, food products and the tourist industry
- Increase interest in local products

### Threats

- Increasing trend to lower wage, low skilled economy
- Limited employment options
- Likelihood of EU funding post 2006 very doubtful

The Strategy perceives the following as being the Key Issues and priorities for South Lakeland's economy over the next 3 - 5 years. Many of these have relevance to the Study Area

and proposals will need to consider these as appropriate.

- Serious & continuing loss of high-grade, professional/commercial employment coupled with low wage, low skilled economy, leading to a lack of choice and quality of employment in the future - places the District at a competitive disadvantage in terms of attracting and retaining both companies and staff
- Widening affordability gap for local people, with 90% of newly-forming households unable to afford even the cheapest housing. Coupled with supply constraints through the operation of strict planning controls and strong demand for second and holiday homes, "the net effect, if not the intent is social exclusivity" (Newby. H, Green & Pleasant Land)
- The District's economy is heavily dependent upon 2 major sectors, tourism & services, and there is a need to encourage business diversity in key towns and rural communities
- The District suffers from difficulties arising from limited public transport, inconsistent road & rail quality and a lack of ICT, (particularly Broadband) access. There is a need to capitalise on the area's natural environment and heritage assets to take advantage of opportunities arising from "environmentally friendly" tourism and sustainable development.
- There is a need to constantly upgrade and refresh the District's market towns and support the retail sector by tackling traffic congestion and distribution difficulties which pose a threat to future town-centre viability. The growing creative, (cultural) industries sector in South Lakeland is currently undervalued and key strengths (e.g. Visual Arts and Crafts) need to be promoted and developed. There is a need to support and develop the area's tourism infrastructure by

encouraging re-investment and enhancing the quality "offering"

- Emerging local "town-based" initiatives offering time-limited opportunities for significant EU and UK Government funding, requiring active support and commitment of a wide variety of local partners. Action needs to be taken to arrest the deterioration of the "public realm" and to address the lack of public sector investment in car parks, parks and gardens, signage, public conveniences etc to enhance facilities for local and visitors alike. (National Audit Office's "Hot property, 2000 report" states that property maintenance is frequently the first casualty of short-term revenue budget pressures, even where this runs counter to prudent asset management)
  - Tightening of the local labour market - leading to a shortage of people able/willing to do the job, coupled with an apparent mismatch between training needs and workforce development funding could prove a constraint to business viability in the future. Traditional measures of "disadvantage" do not fully reflect the level of need in more rural, dispersed communities such as South Lakeland, yet these are the basis upon which funding regimes are formulated. This puts the area at a competitive disadvantage in relation to other areas of the UK and indeed the North West region
  - South Lakeland must seize the opportunities arising from the North West Development Agency's Coastal Renaissance initiative to modernise and regenerate the District's coastal towns
- 6.8 SLDC's Cultural Strategy for South Lakeland 2005 – 2010, November 2004**

The strategic objectives are:

- 1 Enable young people to develop and pursue their own cultural preferences and to more

easily participate in existing cultural activity

- 2 Enable more people to participate in a wide range of physical activity relevant to their interest, ability and location
- 3 Provide an increased range of sustainable cultural activity to people in the places in which they live
- 4 Develop the potential of the creative industries across the District and maximise the impact of national, regional and county objectives
- 5 Maximise the tourism potential offered by the District's existing and planned cultural assets
- 6 Develop a coordinated, high quality programme to improve the public realm and access to it
- 7 Recognise the value and support the needs of existing and developing events, shows and festivals
- 8 Increase access to culture for all

#### **6.9 SLDC's Arts Strategy for South Lakeland (Consultation Draft) January 2005**

The ambition for this strategy is that, by 2010:

- South Lakeland will have a national reputation as a vibrant centre for the creation and enjoyment of the arts
- Communities that currently have least access to the arts have had an increase in opportunities available to them since 2005
- The number of visitors to South Lakeland who cite the arts as one of their reasons for visiting will have increased
- There will be readily available evidence of the social and economic impact of the

arts on the District

- People working in the arts in South Lakeland will have had significantly more access to opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills
- The creative industries in South Lakeland will have continued to grow
- Policy makers, funders, employers and arts practitioners will be working more together, to enrich the arts life of the District
- The arts will be celebrated for their contribution of the quality of life in South Lakeland

#### **6.10 The Ulverston and Low Furness MTI Partnership Strategy and Action Plan, 2002**

The Brief for this study has drawn ideas and proposals from the Partnership's Action Plan, in particular opportunities for a skatepark, the potential for the Lock Keeper's Cottage at Canal Foot and proposals of the Hearts of Oak Boat Trust

The masterplan study must take account of all of the above policy frameworks in formulating options and recommendations for action