

Review of Community Led Planning in South Lakeland

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria
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1. Introduction

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) was asked to review community led planning (CLP) in South Lakeland, through a series of interviews with Parish Councils and CLP groups who have completed plans, to ascertain the progress made by CLP groups in implementing their action plans, and the role that SLDC has played in that delivery. This is intended to identify issues which are relevant to CLP across the district and to make recommendations which will improve support for Community Led Planning in South Lakeland. The work was carried out as part of a 2011-2012 Service Level Agreement with South Lakeland District Council (SLDC).

2. What is Community Led Planning?

Community Led Planning (CLP) is a step-by-step process, that enables every citizen to participate in, and contribute to, improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their local area. It relies on people coming together locally, researching local needs and priorities and agreeing a range of different actions which help to improve their parish or neighbourhood.

Approximately 4,000 communities across England have already been involved in developing Community Led Plans since the late 1970s. These have allowed communities to take responsibility for making things happen locally, rather than waiting on others to do it for them. Their success has relied on volunteers who work closely with parish and town councils and are the driving force behind the activity that takes place.

Experience has shown that CLP is most effective in those areas where the community has developed a strong working relationship with its local authorities. In many cases, an independent and neutral local facilitator is brought in to broker this relationship. Providing impartial advice, resources and examples of best practice, they are able to guide communities through the process and ensure that any actions developed complement and add value to the work of the local authority. ACT has been providing this role in Cumbria as a member of the England-wide Rural Community Action Network.

Community Led Plans contain action plans for their community. Since 2007 there have been 15 CLPs produced in South Lakeland containing 500 actions. It should be possible for 289 of these actions to be tackled by the community alone or with very little support. However the remaining 211 actions are more strategic, requiring those communities to work with partner organisations, such as SLDC, to deliver them. This is one of the ways that local authorities are key to CLP and to helping communities reach their goals.

Some of the main benefits of CLP to local authorities are¹:

- Improved relationships with local communities
- Better understanding of communities needs
- Innovation in service delivery as communities consider whether to take on services
- Positive attitudes towards development and growth
- More active and resilient communities, better able to meet their own needs

¹ Making the Most of Community Led Planning; a best practice guide for local authorities

<http://www.communityplanning.net/pub-film/pdf/MakingTheMostOfCommunityLedPlanning.pdf>

3. The CLP Process

The production of a Community Led Plan can be divided into a series of steps as set out in the table below which also indicates the roles that the community, ACT and the local authority can take at each stage. It's from ACRE's document *Making the Most of Community Led Planning* and is based on national best practice.

Stage	Activities required by communities	ACT support	Local authority support
Launch the Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Get started <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a steering group <input type="checkbox"/> Take stock and plan ahead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract community interest in the plan • Establish a leadership structure • Plan the work ahead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about CLP and the support available • Introduce toolkits and resources which provide a step-by-step guide to producing a plan • Signpost to other successful CLP's • Facilitate launch events • Support new leadership structures helping them plan the next steps and access funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about the CLP and the support available • Attend plan launch events • Offer a named contact who can respond to enquiries and signpost to colleagues where needed
Evidence local needs and aspirations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand your community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research existing facts and information about the local area • Consult everyone locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the use of existing facts and information • Explain the application of different consultation techniques • Suggest ways of making sure that consultation is inclusive • Assist with the analysis of consultation data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make existing facts and information available to communities to help them research their local area • Add value to the work of local facilitators providing resources and support to aid community consultation • Encourage the involvement of councillors in consultation activities
Agree and prioritise Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritising and planning action <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting the plan <input type="checkbox"/> Finalising the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes sense of evidence gathered • Draft actions to improve the community • Agree and prioritise actions • Produce a final document explaining the plan, research undertaken and the actions that will be pursued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with data analysis • Signpost to other communities addressing similar issues • Facilitate events set up to agree and prioritise actions • Make sure actions are developed in consultation with key partners • Provide examples of other plan documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with data analysis • Advise on the development of actions where appropriate • Respond to draft plans • Clarify the support available for the delivery of actions
Deliver and monitor Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Implement and monitor actions <input type="checkbox"/> Review the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with others where needed to implement and monitor the actions specified in the plan • Review the plan when it needs updating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ongoing support and advice for the delivery of actions • Mediate between the community and other partners where issues with delivery arise • Support community groups that have chosen to work together to deliver actions • Monitor progress made towards delivery of actions • Remind communities to review their plan and provide guidance about how to do this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a record of CLP actions • Make use of CLP data for strategic purposes • Provide ongoing officer support for the delivery of actions • Outline expectations for communities to review plans

4. Research

To write this report we have gathered the views of those involved with, or interested in, CLP in two main ways:

1) During February and March 2012 ACT conducted telephone interviews with representatives from 11 parishes which have completed Community Led Plans. Many of those interviewed requested that the parish receive a response to their feedback from South Lakeland District Council.

The following questions were asked:

- What has been achieved and how?
- What hasn't been achieved and why?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving the way CLP groups are supported or work with partners, particularly SLDC?
- Have or could you work with the Local Area Partnership (LAP) / other parishes to deliver actions from CLP?

2) During January and March 2012 ACT and SLDC ran workshops to introduce Community Led Planning to District and Parish Councillors. The three sessions were attended by 44 people and included time for attendees to discuss how CLP might be supported more effectively. The feedback from these sessions is covered in section 4.5.

The main comments from the telephone interviews are set out below with an additional summary on the themes which emerged in Appendix One and there is a complete record of each interview in Appendix Two.

4.1 What has been achieved and how?

General Comments from interviewees:

- The most successful projects are those which the community have been able to deliver largely on their own.
- The actions which have been most successful are those where a specific group has been identified to move it forward.
- Volunteering has been encouraged by involving as many people as possible in the production of the Plan and making it clear from the outset that it could not be delivered by the Parish Council alone.
- Actions achieved so far have required little finance as many have involved lobbying the district and county council. Some costs have been met through the Parish precept.
- The creation of the Plan brought the community together to develop a shared understanding of what was important to them and their aspirations for the future. The Plan meant a lot of previously implicit views held by residents were made explicit.
- The Parish Council has a much clearer brief for their activity and now works more in partnership with other Parish Councils, looking at shared issues such as public transport. The LAP also helps to encourage this but it was the Plan which first gave the impetus to joint working.
- The plan is a useful evidence base when accessing funding or trying to influence decisions made, and it helps to inform the Parish Council's priorities.
- It requires a lot of work to encourage people to get involved in delivering actions and it has been useful to build on existing activity and work with existing community groups.

- The main value of the Plan has been to communicate back to residents ‘this is what you said you wanted’. An overwhelming number of people said they valued the Parish woodland and wanted it as a community resource, so a proposal to sell it for development was unsuccessful.
- Successful projects cited by interviewees included community newsletters and websites, upgraded play areas, maintenance of public toilets and winter gritting arrangements. See Appendix One for further information.

4.2 What hasn’t been achieved and why?

General Comments from interviewees:

- The Plan was very ambitious and some issues quite strategic. Projects which can be led by the community are usually successful, however, the community cannot do everything themselves; projects which need the support of local authorities are more difficult to progress.
- The actions which have been more difficult to take forward are those which no one has wanted to pick up and lead on. Local people have identified through the consultation what is important to them but leadership is the key element needed to take it forward. Doing the Plan has not created a new set of community leaders.
- Apathy amongst local residents is a problem and volunteers are difficult to find.
- The response to calls for volunteers varies depending on the project e.g. residents with young children are more likely to get involved in upgrading a play area.
- It is difficult to keep interest alive when residents cannot see tangible successful outcomes as many actions are ongoing.
- Big issues such as transport, and education and employment are difficult to address. It can be difficult to know how these local issues link in with more strategic plans higher up.
- Poor support from higher tiers of local government means progress can be very slow for actions which the Parish Council needs to work with others to implement (most of them).
- Lack of funding can be a problem; people don’t realise how much things cost such as installing and emptying a litter bin. Also, smaller Parish Councils are less likely to want to take on the role of an employer to deliver additional services.
- Relationships with businesses have been difficult as they have been reluctant to engage with the community in this process, possibly not seeing any benefit in doing so.
- Projects which have been a challenge to deliver include those focused on Highways, facilities for young people and reductions in dog fouling. See Appendix One for further information.

4.3 Suggestions for improving the way CLP groups are supported or work with partners, particularly SLDC

General Comments:

- The Plan isn’t taken into account when dealing with local authorities
- It is still not clear how Community Plans fit into SLDC, if it is truly bottom up, they should feed into the strategic plan but this does not seem to be happening.
- It seems having a Community Plan doesn’t make a difference in the response you get from local authorities.
- There is recognition that things are difficult due to funding cuts etc and that the Parish is one of many, however, the Parish Council has never had any feedback from agencies about the Plan. The Parish Council contacted SLDC as the Plan is being revised and asked for suggested questions to include in the consultation, but there were none.
- When the County Council wanted to do a traffic plan, information was quoted from the Parish Plan but beyond that no feedback has been given.

- SLDC and the County have never asked what is in Windermere's Community Plan or asked to discuss it; rather it is always the Town Council approaching them instead. For example no one ever asked why they wanted to rescue the toilets but if they had looked at the Plan it would have been clear this was an issue.

Improvements:

- It would help if SLDC and the County Council were more pro-active about asking about what is in Community Plans as much of what they do seems to still be very topdown.
- SLDC can help groups producing plans by encouraging them to include actions relating to their services areas which are realistic and can be implemented.
- SLDC needs to maintain an interest in the Plans once they are completed and follow up with them on the actions. Whether they can deliver / help with an action or not, it is important residents do not feel ignored. More pro-active communication is essential.
- Input from both the County Council and SLDC was positive when the Plan was being produced but not as much when it came to implementing the actions from the Plan. Both could benefit from integrating 'community engagement' into all their departments, not necessarily having one department assigned to it.
- SLDC / County Council could provide print room / copying facilities to PC or advice on developing community websites etc
- When it comes to renewing the Plan, better input from SLDC would be useful, especially when considering what actions are achievable and realistic. The role of the Parish Council Clerk is essential when maintaining links with local authorities, which can be difficult when councillors change.
- We need one officer as a first point of contact who can signpost you to the right person for each issue. A single point of contact could also disseminate information to the appropriate officer to take it forward. Perhaps this could be done through the officer support for the LAPs.
- When a Parish contacts SLDC to ask for help, if they are unable to do this, it would be useful if they could signpost to another source of support or advice.
- Many successes have been where the local authorities and community work together to deliver solutions. Devolving services down to local people, where appropriate, is seen as a positive step forward, however it is felt this should not include Planning decisions.
- SLDC were not easy partners to work with when taking over the public toilet facilities. They would only provide leases to the Town Council which then sub-lets it to the Community Care Trust, which can apply for grants etc not available to the Town Council. It could be an easier arrangement if SLDC were prepared to work directly with community organisations.
- It is important to have good links and to know who to deal with. Developing a good relationship with the right person can make all the difference and a direct telephone number for the appropriate officer is really useful. The SLDC website could be improved as it can be difficult to find out who to contact about a particular issue.
- Many of the actions in the Plan involved working with local authorities. The SLDC Councillor is helpful; however, there is little direct contact with SLDC officers unless initiated by the Parish Council. Working with the Highways Steward is straightforward; however, dealing with larger Highways issues such as traffic management is much more difficult.
- Building relationships and effective communication is the most important element to moving forward with partnership working, as has been shown with developments with the National Park. The County Council don't seem to show the same level of commitment to engaging with communities.

Working with Volunteers:

- Despite a commitment to deliver the additional winter gritting service locally, there is a hesitance to volunteer to deliver more services; volunteers should not be seen as a substitute for services which should be delivered by local authorities.
- Officers need to understand that we are not experts in these very technical areas, many of the documents are too long and full of jargon, difficult enough for Parish Councillors, extremely off-putting for any new volunteers.
- Some parishes are fortunate in that the County and SLDC Councillors live locally and are involved, however, it is felt that some written communications with the local authorities could benefit from being clearer and in more 'plain English'.
- Many issues are developing which take up a lot of time and can be difficult for the Parish Council to cope with; LDF and Land Allocations, Emergency Plan / Flood Action Group, Transport Plan, changes to Clerk's taxation etc. There are too many meetings including those for the LAP, Neighbourhood Forum, CALC, LDF briefings, various committees etc.
- There are too many organisations and meetings; LDNPA, County Council, Neighbourhood Forums, District Council, Local Area Partnerships (LAPs), Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) etc. There needs to be some rationalisation.

Positive Comments:

- Communication is mostly through County and SLDC councillors - works well
- Communication with both our County and SLDC Councillors is good and we can get answers to our questions but we also need to be prioritised.
- Local County and SLDC Councillors are an effective way of communicating with the councils.
- The Parish Council don't deal much with SLDC, but where they have, they have been helpful
- When help was needed, and asked for, there was a positive response from officers.
- SLDC's instigation of the Local Area Partnerships is much appreciated.
- SLDC have been extremely helpful for the projects which have included them such as providing equipment and support for the litter picking group.
- Input from Julia Wilson (ACT) was very important to get the Plan off the ground, particularly in a small parish where it can be difficult to get enthusiasm to get involved. Funding from ACT and the Neighbourhood Forum was also important.
- The LDNPA has been extremely supportive and the Plan has been vital in discussions, particularly when working on the Neighbourhood Planning pilot. It is an important tool which the Parish Council, and others, can use to articulate the views of residents with credibility.
- The Police have always been really helpful.

4.4 Working with the Local Area Partnership (LAP) / other parishes to deliver actions from CLP

LAPs and CLPs:

- There is no focus on those Parishes which have Plans, nor is there any recognition given to these when setting the agenda or deciding on issues to be discussed.
- It would be useful to take account of the Plans in the LAPs to identify the shared issues e.g. highways, which could be better tackled together.
- Parishes which have Plans should use them as a starting point to look at what the shared issues are, taking into account that some may be older than others and priorities do change over time.

- Parishes could work together to address shared issues in a way that is easier and more appropriate to do together. For example the Parish Council would happily pay to share a 'Lengthsman' or Handyman with Kendal, but would not employ one their own.
- By working together, looking at the important issues for residents identified in the Plans, we can decide what the priorities should be and use the funding to take these forward.
- Community Plans aren't mentioned at the LAP, however, the Plan does influence what the Staveley and Ings Parish representative says at the meetings. It is not clear if this is also the case for the other parishes.
- The Plan helped to give the Parish Council a clear mandate and sense of direction. It is not clear if other Parish Council representatives are aware of what is in their Plans when they raise issues at the LAP.
- Community Plans, and other information should inform the big issues raised and prioritised in the LAP; it is amazing how many people don't seem to use their Plans to inform what they are doing. The LAPs should be asking where are your Plans and how up to date are they? The Town Council also plans to include LAP agendas and meeting minutes in their Parish Council meetings so they are discussed with the whole council.

General Comments:

- The LAP has taken a while to get going but recent meetings have had a positive outlook for the future. The LAP has been focussed on spending the pot of money made available where it should be more about sharing experience, expertise and best practise.
- The LAP looks like it will focus more on progressing common issues shared by the parishes in the future. It has been great to get funding for individual parish projects such as landscaping for the new seat at the bus stop, but the plans to focus more on shared issues is a positive step forward.
- It is too early to judge the effectiveness of the LAPs, they can be seen as yet another tier of local government and it has caused confusion recently over issues such as how to report highways issues, direct to Cumbria Highways or through the LAP, this took a while to sort out.
- Dent's Plan works because of the way it was led and the commitment of the Chair in particular; this same strong leadership is needed for the LAP to be effective. The Parish Plan was ambitious and includes issues which could benefit from Parishes working together; however, getting them to agree on priorities would be difficult. For issues such as transport, working across parishes may be the only way to find a viable solution.
- The LAP was designed to bring a degree of local control to issues like Highways etc but instead has been focused on odd jobs to spend funding on such as bins and grass verges. The forum is there to discuss and find solutions but it doesn't work if it is too funding focused. There is an element of people on the LAP pushing to get their own projects funded rather than looking at the greater good for the whole area. Parishes should be coming together to work on bigger shared issues and to have a stronger voice.
- The LAPs are a positive step forward, enabling parishes to better work together, share best practise, and communicate directly with local authorities and others. A stronger combined voice is possible for parishes which were previously seen as small and insignificant. There is some overlap with the Neighbourhood Forums, however, which needs to be addressed.
- The LAPs are another layer of bureaucracy forced upon parishes without asking for a view on whether it can fit in with what already exists. They could be important with developments in larger issues such as Broadband provision, Highways, Affordable Housing etc but so far the LAP has mostly been about grants. There is also question about the double layer of meetings with the LAP and Neighbourhood Forums.
- The Parish doesn't have a lot in common with the others in the LAP and it has been difficult to move things forward. One of the big issues with the LAP has been problems with dealing with Cumbria Highways. Winter snow clearance and pot holes etc have been a key shared issue across the parishes and they do have a stronger voice together than they would separately.

- There is a question over whether it is necessary to have both LAPs and Neighbourhood Forums, and if they could be amalgamated. Also, there is some concern over the parish representatives at the LAP meetings, many of whom are Parish Clerks rather than Councillors, especially in respect of the financial decisions made at the meetings.
- The development of the LAP has been positive and it is helpful to work together with other parishes, particularly on larger shared issues such as access to Broadband. The funding element can sometimes help to focus the activity and give an opportunity to solve certain problems, however, the cooperative working and combined voice of the Parish Councils is the more important role of the LAP.
- The discussions in the LAP are useful, particularly when agencies such as Age UK, the Police, or Young Cumbria attend as they would be unlikely to attend individual Parish Council meetings. The LAP could make better use of this, bringing others in to share their expertise so the Parishes aren't starting from scratch when working on something.
- Funding tended to be prioritised, rather than looking at what the big issues are, and decisions about the funding tended to be based on who was in the room making the decision at the time. This seems to be changing and more of the big issues have been discussed.
- The LAP could benefit from looking at the experience of others, SLDC have held a meeting for the LAP Chairs which is a good start.

4.5 Discussion at CLP workshops

During January and March 2012 ACT and SLDC ran workshops to introduce Community Led Planning to District and Parish Councillors. The three sessions were attended by 44 people and included time for attendees to discuss how CLP might be supported more effectively. The comments that were made are listed below and we have categorised them to suggest which organisations may be best placed to lead on them using guidance from the table in section 3.

Local Authorities

Groups need confidence that the named contacts in each organisation can lead the group to the right person (director?) or department

Where is the support from Chief Executives? CLP groups need to know the process has "clout"

The CLP group needs to know what local authorities can do; whether their actions are impossible/possible

All organisations need to make it clear what they can provide to help to deliver actions

Support to print CLPs

ACT

Signposting

Facilitating

Providing advice and guidance

Information sharing

Assistance in developing strategy/vision

Understanding of what different local organisations do

A model Community Led Plan

Sharing good practice

How to get young people involved and encourage "quiet" voices

Local Area Partnerships

LAPs should analyse CLPs to determine common threads and agree priorities for coordinated action

SLDC to continue to provide secretarial and administrative support for LAPs

Match fund the cost of producing a CLP

Partnership between ACT and Local Authorities

Raising awareness of CLPs with LAPs.

Funding for CLPs

Ensuring achievable goals

5. Recommendations

Many of the CLP groups interviewed had positive stories to tell about how their CLPs had benefitted their communities and SLDC already does a great deal to support CLP in South Lakeland. This includes:

- Funding ACT to provide neutral facilitation, advice and guidance for CLP groups and plan production
- Adding value to ACT's support by providing additional resources and expertise as needed
- Providing a named "key contact" to reduce confusion for CLP groups over who to deal with at SLDC
- Having a commitment to comment on draft action plans helps to reduce the inclusion of actions which are unrealistic.
- Funding ACT to provide reports from their database of CLP actions which can provide CLP data for strategic planning

It is clear from interviews that not all communities were aware of this support; please see Recommendation 13 below.

However, the research suggests that there is more that all the agencies in South Lakeland who have a stake in CLP could do. The fourteen recommendations are based on the following;

- The recent research carried out by ACT as detailed in section 4
- ACT's experience of supporting CLP in Cumbria since the introduction of Parish Planning in 2001 through the Countryside Agency's Vital Villages programme.
- Good Practice as set out in the ACRE publication *Making the Most of Community Led Planning: a best practice guide for local authorities*

Recommendation 1: SLDC responds to those interviewed.

Several of the telephone interviewees requested feedback on this report from SLDC and would like to know how the Council intends to use it.

- SLDC response – we fully support this recommendation and intend to share the review report and response with those interviewed. We also intend to share these with SLDC Management Team, SLDC Councillors, Local Area Partnership (LAP) Chairs, all parish and town councils and parish meetings plus all groups who have produced or are producing a plan.

Recommendation 2: Clarify whether CLPs are used to influence priorities and ACT/SLDC to make this information available to new and existing CLP groups.

Some of the telephone interviewees were unsure whether their CLPs were used to influence SLDC's priorities.

- SLDC response – the increased support being offered to groups by the council to help the engagement by groups to be more robust, this leads to a better quality of community information and a confidence to use this data when setting priorities. We recognise the concern that CLPs aren't taken into account by local authorities and used in strategic planning. We will put in place the use of CLP actions to inform SLDC processes. Use community data from CLP, Census and other surveys during policy away days with SLDC Councillors and Senior Management Team and ultimately the corporate, service and budget planning processes.

Recommendation 3: SLDC to integrate CLP into their strategic and annual work planning and make specific reference to the CLP actions they will implement.

CLP groups need greater clarity on how to link CLPs to local authority strategies. The most strategic issues are the ones which are most difficult for CLP groups to progress.

- SLDC response – improve 2 way communications between the council and groups. After the plan is produced officer support continues with delivering the partnership actions, which are monitored and reported through the quarterly performance management process. CLPs are incorporated into the service planning and budgeting processes of the council as per recommendation 2. Use the SLDC website to share information of achievements and actions completed in the engagement style of you said, we did. Localism will provide more opportunity for parishes and CLP groups, through the Community Right to Bid and the Community Right to Challenge. Two Participatory Budgeting Pilots have been chosen, Windermere and Ulverston Town Council's, these pilots will use local information including from their community plans to decide how SLDC budgets are spent in their areas. Participatory Budgeting may be offered to more parishes if the pilots are successful.

Recommendation 4: SLDC to summarise how CLP groups can work with different departments to deliver their actions.

Local authorities could be clearer on how they can work with CLP groups to deliver relevant actions once the plan has been produced. There is support from SLDC as plans are being produced but they also need assistance to deliver their action plans particularly for those actions which communities can't deliver alone.

- SLDC response – district and county responsibilities identified with groups. Officers provide clear guidance on what is and what isn't possible during the development of the plan, which helps manage expectations, we also appreciate groups want to be ambitious but this needs to be with full knowledge of what is likely to happen and what may not. We have a Parish Liaison Officer who is specifically tasked with being the key contact for groups to signpost within the council, but also signpost to funders, government schemes and other organisations where possible.

Recommendation 5: SLDC to contact communities with Community Led Plans and offer support with relevant actions and prioritise issues to be integrated as per recommendation 3.

Some groups had a sense that they were always going to the local authorities for help; that it wasn't a two way relationship.

- SLDC response – SLDC to work with groups to identify partnership actions which are problematic for groups and identify ways these can be achieved, involving Assistant Directors to resolve issues relevant to their service.

Recommendation 6: SLDC and ACT to explore the provision of small grants for CLP production.

Funding is important for CLP production but unless a CLP covers a large population the cost of production is generally low; often a few hundred pounds. However, providing funding demonstrates a willingness to support the CLP process and provides an opportunity to draw up an agreement between the funder and the CLP groups which sets out what each can expect from the other and which can be mutually beneficial.

- SLDC response - SLDC will review the possibility of regularly funding ACT in the grant process to maintain a grants scheme for CLP groups using SLDC funding for 2012/13. Conditions for the grant can be set including: groups agree to involve organisations in the creation of the plan and take the plan to LAPs on completion.

Recommendation 7: SLDC to look for opportunities to raise awareness of CLP among officers and members in addition to recommendation 3.

- SLDC response – we have undertaken significant work to improve external communications regarding CLPs, attending the CALC meeting, a one minute read on parish development, website information including a web mapping tool and running 4 Councillor training sessions, these were also open to parishes and communities interested in producing plans. We need to do more work on the internal communications with officers and continue raising awareness with SLDC councillors. LAP profiles can be updated with Census and other survey data, in addition to the actions and priorities of current CLPs.

Recommendation 8: Ensure that information about who to contact about a particular issue is easy to find on the SLDC website.

Support for CLP across local authorities including at CEO level was requested so that it isn't just the responsibility of the community engagement officers. This would help with delivery of actions needing local authority support to tackle.

- SLDC response – for service related issues e.g. dog fouling, waste and recycling issues, groups should use the SLDC contact centre who will deal with a request where they can and forward on to the relevant officer where they can't, they will also ensure that enquiries are monitored according to the SLDC Customer Charter and chase officers where a response has been delayed. SLDC service information, and where appropriate, the contact details for that service are on the website. It is SLDC policy to not put named contacts onto the website, as these can go out of date quickly as staff change roles, and enquiries could be missed or significantly delayed. For non specific issues such as discussions and communication the Community Engagement / Parish Liaison Officer is the dedicated initial point of contact.

Recommendation 9: New CLPs to be presented to their LAP as they are produced.

- SLDC response - encourage LAPs to put CLP onto their agendas and parishes to present new plans to LAP for information.

Recommendation 10: LAP action plans could refer to CLPs as evidence of need.

- SLDC response - fully support this recommendation, Partnerships and Communities officers to support LAPs with this and add as a standing item on LAP agendas. Use LAP profiles which include data and statistics on each LAPs area, including CLP actions, to inform priorities and decision making process. Update LAP funding application forms and guidance to include CLPs as evidence of need.

Recommendation 11: LAPs could encourage their parishes to have up to date CLPs to feed information into meetings and action plans.

It was evident that there is still work to be done to integrate CLPs into LAPs. Some LAPs don't use CLPs to prioritise their activities or refer to them at all.

- SLDC response - fully support this recommendation, Partnerships and Communities officers to support LAPs with this and add as a standing item on LAP agendas. Use LAP profiles which include data and statistics on each LAPs area, including CLP actions, to inform priorities and decision making process.

Recommendation 12: SLDC to clarify what can be provided to CLP groups with regard to printing and copying.

Other forms of support can be offered to CLP groups.

- SLDC Response – SLDC print room can provide quotes to outside organisations but has not done this regularly enough to refine the procedure and publicise this service. EN to work with the print room to provide this service for groups and investigate delivery possibilities. Cumbria County Council provides a complete service including delivery, economies of scale, finishing service and official quotes. This could be added to the document produced for recommendation 13.

Recommendation 13: Further work is needed clarify the different but complementary roles that SLDC and ACT can take to support Community Led Planning.

This would help to ensure that CLP groups receive appropriate support to produce and implement CLPs.

- SLDC response - there is potential to update the current Community Led Plan leaflet produced by ACT or produce a separate document for groups, specifying the type of support available from officers at the relevant supporting organisations, including ACT and SLDC.

Recommendation 14: Consider sharing this report with Cumbria County Council and Lake District National Park Authority.

This would contribute to making CLP more effective in South Lakeland as much of the information is relevant to all the local authorities.

- SLDC response - Cumbria County Councils Area Engagement team will have the opportunity to respond to any elements affecting the County Council. The report will be sent to both Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities.

Please note: Cumbria County Council have been given the opportunity to respond to the review and to date (August 2012) no response has been received.