



The Environment:

Local Plan Review Topic Sheet

Introduction

This is one of a number of short topic sheets that have been prepared as part of our early conversations with communities on the Local Plan Review. It is designed to set out some key facts and highlight issues relating to the environment that we will need to consider in reviewing our Local Plan. It is hoped that it will prompt discussions and enable people to join in the conversation.

Some key facts and issues:

- There are **six European protected sites for nature conservation** within our Local Plan Area (LPA), including one 'Special Protected Area' (Morecambe Bay & Duddon Estuary) and five 'Special Areas of Conservation' (Morecambe Bay, Morecambe Bay Pavements, River Kent, Roudsea Wood & Mosses and Duddon Mosses).
- **98.5% of the LPA's Sites of Specific Scientific Interest are in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' condition** (88.6% favourable, 9.9% 'unfavourable recovering'). This is better than Cumbrian (90.8%) and National (93.1%) levels.
- The **LPA contains part of the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** and lies **adjacent to and within the setting of the Lake District Yorkshire Dales National Parks**.
- Out of 28 rivers flowing through our Local Plan area, **water quality in 17 of our rivers is good with 11 in a moderate state and 1 in a bad state**.
- Within the LPA, there are 7 SLDC principal parks and gardens, 31 SLDC community parks, 128 designated outdoor sports facilities, **340 public open spaces amounting to 227 hectares** and **102 private amenity open spaces amounting to 156 hectares**.
- In our Local Plan area, **since 2003 59% of new homes have been built on previously developed (brownfield) land**.
- Our Local Plan area has **varied and special landscapes** including coastal and estuary landscapes, limestone landscapes, valleys, drumlins, moorlands, fells and upland fringes.
- Nationally, wildlife and biodiversity are in decline, and **15% of species are threatened with extinction**.



- There is an **air quality management area in Kendal**, and one monitoring site (Lowther Street, Kendal) continues to exceed air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide, but only by a small margin.

What does our existing Local Plan say about our environment?

- It requires new development to protect and enhance the natural environment, most notably the European protected sites, to ensure there is no harm to habitats or species.
- It seeks to protect and enhance the district's green space network.
- It ensures that new development respects and responds to the area's special landscape qualities.
- It aims to protect natural features that contribute positively to the local environment including trees.
- It requires new development to deliver net gains for biodiversity.
- It requires any potential contamination or pollution impacts of new development to be properly assessed and to be avoided, minimised and mitigated.

What does this mean for the Local Plan Review?

- We need to consider the potential effects that the Local Plan Review may have for the continued protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including safeguarding particular habitats and species.
- We need to identify how new development can contribute to the delivery of net gains for biodiversity.
- We need to establish how new development can mitigate against any potential harmful impacts to the environment.
- We need to ensure that policies and the development strategy continue to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- We need to review current green space designations and identify where additional designations may be needed as well as provide clarity on how new development can contribute to the delivery of new and improved green spaces.
- We need to consider how green spaces and networks are connected.