

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM CALC

Researched October 2020

1.NALC Case Studies – Climate Change

NALC has brought together 40-odd pages of case studies in one booklet in order to highlight examples of community climate change initiatives. The inspiring projects are divided into the following chapters: biodiversity; carbon off-setting and reduction (eg. declaring climate emergencies and action plans for becoming carbon neutral – includes an example from Kendal); climate change forums; community projects (eg. Kendal’s citizens’ jury); designing greener housing; electric charging points; energy and heating; environmental improvements (eg. grass cutting and In Bloom projects – includes an example of Ulverston planters); flood assistance (eg. equipment); green travel; plastic reduction; trees and tree management (open spaces projects – includes an example of woodland at Windermere).

2.New unitary authority

CCC’s proposal - CCC has now received the formal invitation from Government to submit our full and final proposal by 9 December 2020. We do not yet have a detailed timetable for the period after submission, we have requested this. It submitted a business case to create a single new unitary council for the whole of Cumbria in September. This proposition would see a new council created and that would replace the existing county council and six district councils with a single authority. The invitation for full and final proposals has also been made to all other council leaders across the County. We anticipate from discussions that district council colleagues intend to make alternative proposals. The final decision on the preferred model will be made by Government.

SLDC’s proposal – According to Grange Now, reports went to the Full Council meetings of Barrow Borough Council (BBC), Lancaster City Council (LCC) and SLCC recommending that they develop a case for a new unitary authority for the Morecambe Bay area by merging the three district councils and drawing down certain powers from the county councils. A cross-county boundary unitary authority would be based on the existing functioning economic geography, health footprint (of the Morecambe Bay hospitals of Barrow, Kendal and Lancaster) and strong community links across the Bay area. The case would look at opportunities to work at greater strategic scale and the potential of future Combine Authority arrangements enabling a fuller devolution of resources and powers from government.

3.Planning White Paper Consultation

Proposals for reform of the planning system are set out in a White Paper entitled “Planning for the Future” with a deadline of 29th October 2020. I read the following useful summary in Friends of the Lake District’s magazine. “One of the biggest changes proposed is a “zoning” system under which land would be placed into three categories – protection, renewal and growth. In the renewal and growth zones, there will be a presumption in favour of development meaning that where it met certain criteria and design codes, development

would be allowed without going through a full planning application process. In the protection zone, the planning application process will need to be followed as normal and development will be restricted and subject to more stringent restrictions. A further key change is in the role of Local Plans. These are to be reduced to covering only very specific local development rules and design criteria rather than general planning policies.”

4.Updating Community Emergency Plans for Coronavirus

Cumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) has been updating the main emergency plans for Cumbria to take account of Coronavirus restrictions. Many communities in Cumbria have written a community emergency plan; some very simple, some much more detailed. If you're involved in your local community emergency planning group, Cumbria LRF has produced a guide to help you think about how you might update your plan to take account of the complications of coronavirus restrictions. The guide is available to download here: [Community Emergency Plan](#) . It covers key points to think about; how the statutory sector's emergency plans have changed and keeping your volunteers safe (with sections on door knocking; setting up flood defences; radios, laptops and other equipment; running a co-ordination centre; community reception centres). There are also some suggestions at the back of the guide about how individual households might prepare.

If you don't have a community emergency plan, you can find more information on the ACT website: [https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/what-we ...](https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/what-we-...) Click on the resources section from the menu at the top of the home page and then click on guidance sheets and scroll down to the community emergency planning section where there are a variety of documents including a guide and template. Or contact ACT on info@cumbriaaction.org.uk if you'd like to talk to someone about how your community might plan for emergencies.

5.Branch Libraries to Reopen

Thanks to careful planning and investment by Cumbria County Council, a selection of its branch libraries will reopen to customers on Wednesday 21 October. This follows the reopening of the county council's six main libraries (including Kendal) in August. In South Lakeland the branch libraries that will reopen are: Grange-over-Sands, Ulverston, Windermere and Ambleside. It was felt that libraries have a key role to play in the support and wellbeing of communities. CCC has carried out all the necessary work to make them COVID safe spaces. COVID-secure measures to protect staff and customers include: hand sanitiser stations; signage and floor markings to promote 2 metres social distancing; face coverings to be worn; access will be limited at first to allow staff to manage numbers; returned books will be quarantined for 72 hours.