

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM CALC

For District Association meeting on Thursday 17th September 2020

1.EA Kent Catchment Flood Risk Mangement Scheme Update

There have been some inevitable delays in the Environment Agency's progress to undertake some site investigation works. Data gathering activities resumed in Kendal in May, with more detailed investigation activities next to locate and map services and underground features. Its Landscape Plans are being drawn up, including how to develop improvements to the Beezons Fields site. It is developing plans to integrate art into the scheme. EA is developing the final detailed design of the scheme for Kendal ahead of construction in Autumn 2020. The scheme will be delivered in small sections known as "reaches", starting in the southern most area at Helsington Mills. The programme will be agreed with SLDC as the planning authority. There will be preparation activities, such as relocating street furniture, diversion of utility services in some locations, traffic management plans and footpath diversions.

Data gathering activities are occurring over the summer (ahead of planning permission submission in 2021) in Burneside, Staveley and Ings and the upstream storage locations. Activities will include: ecological surveys of wildlife use the sites; topographical surveys of land features and boundaries; ground penetrating radar to map services and trial pits to check services and utilities. There will be an opportunity in the Autumn for residents, businesses and local interest groups to look at developing plans. EA is working closely with United Utilities as the flood scheme and a sewer improvement programme for Burneside is developed.

EA is removing excess gravel from a number of locations through Kendal from July. Also routine maintenance activities including invasive species control and vegetation management through the Kent catchment are being undertaken.

2.Village Hall Updates

Kirby-in-Furness community centre has secured £34,000 Village Hall Improvement Grant. Many village halls have applied for a Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) Grant (£10,000) which is being administered by SLDC to help support small businesses affected by coronavirus restrictions, with loss of income from hall hire and fundraising. Financial impacts continue on re-opening with limited venue capacity, some activities not permitted and increased costs due to additional cleaning. Halls needed to be a "business" ratepayer and pass the eligibility test for "expanded retail discount" (premises used for assembly or leisure includes village halls). In July this fund was still open and more information is on SLDC website. Church halls were ineligible for RHL Grant (as exempt from business rates) but could apply to a Discretionary Grant Fund but this is now closed. ACT has updated the

Village Hall Guide to Funders 2020 and improved its Cumbria Community Buildings Directory with social media, baby changing facilities and a better search function. ACRE Information Sheet and appendix template document on re-opening village halls were put on ACT website. They set out practical measures and are centred on risk assessment.

3.SLDC Local Plan Review

SLDC is at an early stage of the review process and is updating key evidence base documents including our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Employment Land and Premises Review (ELPR). To inform these two studies it launched a 'Call for Sites' for land that may be suitable for housing or employment development. The submission of a site through the call for sites exercise does not mean that the site will be allocated. Once submitted, sites will be subject to assessment in the above studies and draft reports of these studies will be available for consultation in early 2021. Through the Local Plan review process the sites in these studies will then be subject to more detailed site assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and community and stakeholder consultation. Decisions on whether sites will ultimately be allocated for development will be taken through the Local Plan review process having regard to development needs, sustainability principles and stakeholder and community feedback. The call for sites is therefore just the start of the process. This initial call for sites exercise will close on 18 September 2020, along with seeking views about which parts of the Local Plan need updating and what the key issues are in planning for the development of the district up to 2040.

www.southlakeland.gov.uk/LocalPlanReview.

4.CVS Health and Care Funding Project

Cumbria CVS Health and Care Funding Project works with voluntary, community, social enterprise sector groups and statutory sector organisations to secure funding for work that will enable Cumbrian communities to be healthy and tackle the health inequalities that exist within and across the communities of Cumbria. CVS is keen to support the development of, and secure funding for, projects and services which create the conditions in which individuals and communities can have opportunities to be healthy and act in support of their own health and wellbeing. Project ideas could include: increasing physical activity or tackling loneliness and reduce social isolation by building community connections and support networks. If you want to work with others to expand an existing health and care project or service or set up a completely new one, CVS can help through its Health and Care Project Funding Officer for Barrow, South Lakeland and South of Copeland, Victoria Peake, victoria.peake@cumbriacvs.org.uk 07436 163 836.

5.Emergency Planning

ACT has been working with community emergency planning groups for several years, supporting them to consider and plan for local emergencies, like flooding, extreme weather and power failure. As coronavirus and lockdown occurred, many communities turned their

plan to good effect to address local needs, for example delivering local shopping, collecting prescriptions and talking with people to reduce the social isolation. Risk assessments were produced so volunteers were able to work safely within clear social distancing rules. There is a lot of guidance about emergency planning (including template risk assessment) on the ACT website at: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/What-We-Do/Community-Emergency-Planning Any community emergency planning group can access free public liability insurance through joining Cumbria Neighbourhood Watch Association for free. ACRE has produced a new "Guide to Community Resilience" with practical tips for rural residents to prepare for, and help each other, at times of crisis.

6.Toilet Tax

The toilet tax campaign was given a boost with confirmation that legislation continued through parliament in July and it completed its House of Commons stages on 3rd September. NALC has been pushing hard to get the Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill 2019-21 moving again and will keep parishes updated on its progress through Parliament.

7.NALC Website Accessibility Requirements

Disabilities can have a significant impact on how a person can access information online, so parish councils must make their websites as accessible as possible. Even making small adjustments to a website can have a considerable effect. This NALC publication (under Development Tools in the Members' Section of the website: www.nalc.gov.uk) provides practical steps that parish councils can follow to understand the new regulations, put in place an accessibility statement and start plans to improve the accessibility of their website.

It explains that Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 aim to ensure reasonable adjustments to websites are made, so they are accessible to people with various disabilities (including vision, motor, learning or hearing). All parish council websites will have to comply from 23rd September 2020. Parishes are expected to meet certain website standards (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.1). There is a link to a basic accessibility check (picking a sample of pages on the website) in the resources section if a parish council cannot access or afford expert support on website accessibility. Some online material (such as heritage collections, maps, archived websites) are exempt from meeting the standards. Then the parish council needs to carry out a disproportionate burden assessment (weighing up the cost burden on the council of making the website accessible versus the benefits to disabled users). Next the parish council will need to publish an accessibility statement on the website as a webpage (describing how the website is or is not compliant with the regulations - there is a link to a sample one in the resources section). It will need to cover how people can get alternatives to content that is not accessible to them. The statement should be updated to reflect changes to the site as the work is carried out. The parish council will need to create a text only version of the website. The NALC publication lists the steps required in both the evaluation and remedial phases and gives the links to various online resources.

8. CCC Highways Asset Management Strategy

This was approved by Cabinet in July. It provides a framework for future maintenance of the county's road network. Cumbria has the fourth largest highway network in England, with over 7,900km of carriageway, 4,000 km of footways and cycleways, 3,200 structures, (including some 1,800 bridges, 900 large culverts and 500 retaining walls), 145,000 road gullies and 45,000 street lighting columns. The Council faces a significant challenge to make sure the highway asset is well managed, and to ensure the network operates efficiently. With limited resources it is now more important than ever to adopt innovative practices and increase its use of digital technology. The strategy sets out the council's commitment to:

- Enhancing the customer experience and keeping customers better informed
- Making it easier for customers to access information online, by phone and email
- Providing staff with the right resources, skills and capability to carry out their roles effectively in a digital organisation
- Continuing to work with partner organisations and communities to achieve shared aspirations
- Working closely with Parish and Town Councils to further develop the Working Together project to support communities to undertake additional work on the highway within an agreed protocol
- Develop innovative solutions using digital technology to improve the resilience of our highways network and reduce the impact of climate change.

The strategy can be read and downloaded in full on the county council's website here:

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/roads-transport/highwayassetmanagement.asp>

9.Lancaster and South Cumbria Joint Committee

SLDC, Lancaster City Council and Barrow Borough Council were set to agree to create a formal shared link between the three councils. The Lancaster and South Cumbria will promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the areas, driving growth in shared areas such as the visitor economy, culture, energy, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, life sciences, health innovation and higher education. This link is the next stage in the councils' Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region Partnership which launched in 2019 and has been promoting its work directly to national government. Next is develop a growth deal type programme to attract significant public investment.

10.Broadband Support for Communities

Businesses and residents could be eligible for funding towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband if speeds are less than 100 Mbps using vouchers (£1,500 per home and £3,500 for small-medium sized business). To find out more go to:

<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/> There are also alternative broadband options.

B4RN is a fibre optic broadband network (registered as a non-profit community benefit society) which offers 1,000Mbps fibre to the house (FTTH) broadband to every property in

the coverage area (<https://b4rn.org.uk/>). Communities can also investigate full fibre to the premises (FTTP) broadband with Openreach (www.openreach.co.uk/communityfibre).

11. YDNPA Local Plan – Consultation No.2

YDNPA consulted last year on what people wanted to see in the Local Plan, with people saying that they wanted to see more “plan-led” approach to development; new development that supports biodiversity; lower carbon development; better broadband and mobile infrastructure; continued conservation of the National Park’s special qualities. The next stage is to consult on alternative options for delivering some of these outcomes. In July it launched its “Ambitions” consultation to look at 3 key areas of future strategy, namely: number of new homes needed to support community sustainability; the level of emissions to aim at in new development; what kind of development to allow on farms, with 3 options given for each one. There is an online survey or the simple response form can be emailed to: localplan@yorksiredales.org.uk by 25th September. All parish clerks were emailed the documents on 31st July. The link can be found at: <https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/park-authority/living-and-working/planning-policy/local-plan-2023-40/consultation-no-2-exploring-our-options-ambitions/> After this consultation will follow consultation on the spatial strategy (where development should go) and new housing sites.

12. A590 M6 Junction 36 to Brettargh Holt Improvements

Households in South Lakeland have been written to by Highways England about the maintenance and improvement works planned for this autumn, with resurfacing of road and roundabouts and the replacements of drainage facilities, bridge joints and sections of safety barrier. All the detail about contraflows and full road closures is in the letter and can be found at: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/programme/a590-maintenance-schemes/ If you click on road projects and North West it is one of the schemes listed with a link to the leaflet that was sent to all households.

13. Local Government Reorganisation

CCC Cabinet agreed to submit a proposal which, if supported by Government, would see the creating of a single new unitary council for the whole of Cumbria. The new council would replace the existing county council and six district councils with a single authority. Cabinet made their decision after careful consideration of the report which set out a range of significant benefits, including;

- Savings of £96 million over five years – as a minimum
- A clear focus on the future – modernising local government for the 21st century
- A strong, single, accountable voice for the County and a firm foundation for a future devolution deal
- More powers to Cumbria’s many and varied local communities over what happens in their area – through stronger town and parish councils and building on the existing strengths of locality working
- Strengthened leadership to transform public services

- Direct and simple accountability for residents
- Better outcomes for all – we will build on the journey of improvement and transformation that is already well underway in Cumbria. This will create simpler more joined up services, new delivery models and easier access for residents and customers
- A catalyst for reinvestment in transformation and services
- The very best value for money for Cumbria's taxpayers

The next step will be to submit this proposal to Government and we anticipate a response in the Autumn.