



Economy and Employment:

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 provide some key facts and highlight economy and employment issues 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 **almost 6,500 businesses in the district**, with most employing fewer than 10 people.
- South Lakeland is **generally prosperous, with 40% of households being classed as 'affluent achievers'** compared to just 23% across England.
- 86% of our working age population is in employment and **unemployment is low** - under 2% compared with 4% for the North West.
- There are **1.03 jobs for every working age person** living in South Lakeland, compared with 0.83 across the North West.
- On average, **jobs in South Lakeland pay £501 per week**, whilst **people who live here earn £571 a week**. This suggests some people who live here work in higher paid jobs outside the district.
- The main sectors that people work in are **accommodation and food, retail, health and manufacturing**.
- The **three-year survival rate for new businesses (63%) is much higher than the national rate (55%)**.
- Our **high streets have fewer empty shops than across the North West (8% compared with 12% regionally)**.
- Over the last five years **about 5,700 square metres of employment and business floor space have been lost to other uses** such as housing.
- At the end of the **2018/2019 monitoring period more than 54 hectares of land were available for employment development**.



- Over the last five years **about 4,500 square metres (net) of additional employment floor space was completed** in total.
- In 2018, **tourism provided South Lakeland with 16,177 full time equivalent jobs**, up 1.5% on 2017.

What does our existing Local Plan say about the economy and employment?

- It gives a target for 4 hectares of employment land to be developed every year between 2010 and 2025, and sets out plans to develop new local employment sites, business and science parks and major employment sites.
- It allocates 60 hectares of land to be developed for employment and businesses uses.
- It identifies 53 'existing employment areas' which are generally business parks or industrial areas providing local employment, and requires that these areas remain in employment uses rather than being redeveloped for other uses.
- It supports appropriate proposals for rural diversification to encourage economic growth in our countryside areas, and encourages the conversion of rural buildings to employment uses.
- It seeks to make sure that our town centres remain vibrant and successful, by ensuring that the main shopping streets continue to have a retail focus, whilst allowing some of the streets further from the main centre to have a wider variety of uses such as cafes and leisure uses.
- It seeks to restrict out of town shopping that could harm our town centres by reducing the number of people visiting them.
- It supports new tourism development where it will help develop the local economy and where any negative impacts can be avoided or minimised.

What does this mean for the Local Plan Review?

- An average of approximately 0.7 hectares of employment land has been developed per year since 2013, which falls well below the 4 hectare target in the Local Plan. We therefore need to understand why employment development hasn't come forward as expected.
- We need to update our evidence on how much land is needed for future employment development, and look at the sites we currently have allocated in the Local Plan to decide whether they still remain suitable for employment development and consider ways in which we can help ensure they are built on.



Shaping our future



SOUTH LAKELAND **LOCAL PLAN** 2040

- We need to consider whether our policies for town centres are flexible enough to allow them respond to changing high street trends and shopping patterns, and how much scope there is for additional housing in town centres.