

Kendal Futures Annual Report 2012 - 2013



The visit to Kendal by
Her Majesty the Queen
and The Princess Royal
July 2013.
© Steven Barber Photography



Kendal Futures is the regeneration partnership for Kendal and seeks to facilitate and encourage investment in the local economy.

The Kendal Futures Board

The Kendal Futures Board (KFB) is independently chaired by private sector businessman Peter Hensman and includes a mixture of public and private sector representatives.

The board is supported by a part time project co-ordinator.

The following is a list of those who were members of the Board for all or part of the year and their nominating body:

- Peter Hensman** (Chair) - Private Sector
- Cllr. Geoff Cook** - South Lakeland Local Committee (CCC)
- Cllr. Ian Stewart** - South Lakeland District Council
- Cllr. Austen Robinson** - Kendal Town Council
- Cllr. Jim Bland** - National Farmers Union
- George Inchmore** - Federation of Small Businesses
- Paul Foster** - Federation of Small Businesses
- Mandy Dixon** - Tourism Sub Group
- Derek Armstrong** - Cumbria Chamber of Commerce
- Richard Greenwood** - Cumbria Tourism
- Bill Broekhuizen** - Kendal College
- Martyn Nicholson** - Confederation of British Industry
- Fenner Pearson** - CoC (Meantime IT)
- Derek Jones** - CoC (South Lakes Leisure)

More information about the work and direction of the Kendal Futures Board can be found on www.southlakeland.gov.uk/kendalfutures

In Support

- Paula Scott** - Kendal Futures Project Co-ordinator
- Joanne Golton** - South Lakeland District Council
- Jayne Kendall** - South Lakeland District Council
- David Ingham** - Cumbria County Council

Glossary

- BID** Business Improvement District
- CoC** Cumbria Chamber of Commerce
- CCC** Cumbria County Council
- DPD** Development Plans Document
- KERAP** Kendal Economic Regeneration Action Plan
- KF** Kendal Futures
- KFB** Kendal Futures Board
- KTC** Kendal Town Council
- LDNP** Lake District National Park
- LAP** Local Area Partnership
- LEP** Local Enterprise Partnership
- SLDC** South Lakeland District Council
- SLLC** South Lakeland Local Committee



The Vision for Kendal

Kendal Futures works to achieve the Vision for Kendal set out in the 2007 Kendal Economic Regeneration Action Plan (KERAP) and to inspire, shape and develop priority projects around 4 key themes. (Both the Vision and priorities were refreshed in January 2012.)

The vision is for Kendal to be:

“An economically dynamic, culturally vibrant contemporary market town with a thriving and distinctive town centre located in one of Europe’s greatest landscapes, achieving its potential to deliver sustainable wealth and well-being for all its residents and admired for its flourishing businesses, educational excellence, enterprise and ambition of its residents, the quality of its built heritage and low carbon economy.”

Kendal Futures will help to move Kendal towards this vision by:

- Theme 1:** Adding value: Moving businesses up the value chain
- Theme 2:** Investing in Kendal town centre: Strategic projects
- Theme 3:** Boosting enterprise and business birth rate
- Theme 4:** Promoting excellent economic infrastructure

Cross cutting priorities

There are several priorities, which overlap across the themes and are key to the further development of the town. These are:

1. Superfast broadband
2. Business Improvement District
3. Access and parking
4. Tourism
5. Invest in Kendal.com
6. Employment land
7. Canal Head

Activities and funding

Kendal Futures has limited resources and so works through other bodies to achieve its aims and objectives where they align with the KERAP.

The activities of Kendal Futures include:

- Lobbying and influencing
- Support and facilitation
- Championing Kendal
- Project delivery

Many of the Kendal Futures Board partners have contributed financially to projects which have benefited Kendal since 2007 and their contributions to current projects are detailed in this report.

In addition, Kendal Futures has received funding to support the role of the part time project co-ordinator from Kendal Town Council, Kendal Local Area Partnership, South Lakeland Local Committee - Cumbria County Council and South Lakeland District Council.

What is this report?

The regeneration and economic development of Kendal is the responsibility of a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

Through close partnership working, Kendal Futures has helped to deliver a range of economic regeneration projects. The achievements of all partners are detailed in this 5th annual report, published by Kendal Futures, which covers the period June 2012 - June 2013.



Highlights of the Kendal Regeneration work - delivering the Vision 2012 to 2013

The main focus for Kendal Futures this year has been to lead the work to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) in Kendal. Leading the business consultation and campaign has been a detailed and time consuming task but its success is essential to the future competitiveness and vibrancy of Kendal. However, it has to be wanted and owned by the business community and the results won't be known until the ballot takes place in October.

The BID will generate a fund of around £150,000 per annum over 5 years to spend on projects which will directly benefit businesses in the town, at a time when access to public sector funds is becoming increasingly restricted. Perhaps more importantly, however, the BID has the potential to create a large and robust business partnership which will be able to influence and direct wider plans for Kendal.

Theme 1: Adding value: Moving businesses up the value chain

Working with businesses to encourage growth and inward investment and increase the number of better paid higher level skilled jobs. Improve Kendal's image as a destination for visitors and support the development of further and higher education opportunities.

Action for Market Towns Convention came to Kendal in October 2012 and showcased the town to 250 national delegates. Kendal Futures won a national competitive process to attract this event. *(Supported by SLDC, KTC, SLLC and Clarks)*

Tourism projects - engaged with KTC to gain their support for a series of tourism projects. Kendal Futures will deliver these during 2013-4 to improve the promotion of the town and the experience of visitors. Projects include brown and white tourism signage, visitor guides, photography and benchmarking work. *(Funding: KTC)*

50,000 Kendal Sense of Place leaflets were distributed within Kendal and to key tourism sites within a 1.5 hour drive of the town. This leaflet is now being updated and reprinted. A further 50,000 copies will be distributed in 2013-14. *(Funding: KTC)*

Group Travel Guide was first produced in 2011-12 and continues to be distributed to promote the town to groups and coach companies.

Courtesy Toilet Scheme was successfully organised by Kendal Futures for a second year, with 12 participating venues across the town centre. *(Funding: SLDC)*

Kendal Festival of Food took place in March 2013 for the fourth year, organised by new event managers, Cinnamon Creative Events and People Junction. The Fabulous Baker Brothers conducted demos in the Town Hall and a range of ticketed and free events were available to the public, including masterclasses, Artisan producer workshops, cake baking competition, mini farmyard, beer festival and a producers market with 55 stalls. *(Funding: KF, SLDC, SLLC & KTC + private sector sponsorship and revenue)*

Events and festivals - Kendal Futures was delighted to give encouragement to several events and festivals organised by others. They bring added interest and vibrancy to the town. Unfortunately, Kendal Futures is unable to find funding for such events, but does its best to support them in other ways.

Fingerpost signage was installed at 8 locations on the outskirts of the town centre to promote the visitor attractions and encourage walking. *(Funding: SLLC)*

Creative and Digital Enterprise Centre plans are being explored through the development of a pilot business incubator unit scheme in partnership with Kendal College. The scheme envisages the development of 2-6 incubator units, over 3 years, at the college's Wildman Street Studios site. The high spec units will be promoted to new business start-ups or businesses wishing to grow out of their spare room that have design and digital media specialisms. They will be offered at low rents and on short term leases to minimise risk. Business support (technical, financial or marketing, for example), communal meeting space and support to hire or purchase equipment will be included. *(Funding: KF £10k - DCLG Town Team grant)*



Highlights of the Kendal Regeneration work - delivering the Vision 2012 to 2013

Theme 2: Investing in Kendal town centre: Strategic projects

Working to support, promote and strengthen a thriving town centre based on a diverse and strong cluster of independent retailers.

Town Team Funding of £10,000 was awarded to Kendal Futures by the Department for Communities and Local Government. This fund was established to support towns who applied unsuccessfully for the Portas Pilot £100k funding in 2012. Kendal Futures is planning to use this funding to develop a town centre Digital and Creative Centre incubator pilot project. (See *theme 1*.)

Business Improvement District consultation and campaign developed, led by Kendal Futures. An experienced BID consultant began work in the autumn of 2012 and has led the consultation process across the town to engage local businesses and gain their views. A website - www.kendalbid.co.uk - was developed and a communications plan established. With the support of a BID Development Group made up of local business people, a business plan has now been completed in line with BID regulations. The BID area has been defined, levy criteria set and projects identified which could be delivered as part of the £150,000 per annum raised through the BID over 5 years. A BID ballot date is set for October 2013 when the 700 businesses within the defined BID area will vote on whether to implement the BID in Kendal. (Funding: SLDC, SLLC, KTC)

Highgate public realm enhancement scheme was completed in January 2013 with the installation of new paving, lighting columns, benches and bins. The scheme included piloting the use of Noxer paving blocks to see if they reduce the levels of air pollution in the area. (Funding: CCC, SLDC, KTC)

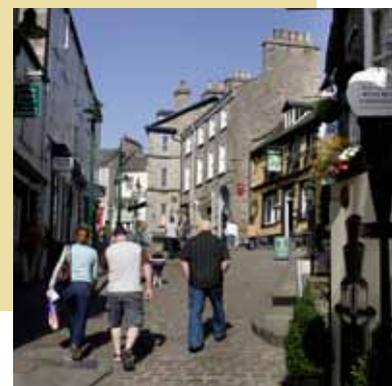
Signage for the yards off Highgate has been designed to promote footfall in Highgate and increase awareness of passers-by to the business/car park access via the yards. Installation will take place later in 2013. (Funding: SLDC, SLLC)

The Public Realm Design Framework is in the final stages of approval and will be published shortly. A complex document - it will be used to encourage a consistent approach to public realm developments from a creative, rather than a technical, perspective, and it is intended that the framework will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

Kendal shop vacancy rate at 13.70% in the quarter ending June 2013. (National average is 14.5%). There are now 60 empty shops in the town out of a total of 438 shops surveyed. The figure has remained the same for the last 2 quarters but there are signs of improvement in the next few months with new retailers moving in. Kendal Futures also sees the BID as a way to improve occupancy in the future.

Kendal Shop front improvement scheme, managed and funded by SLDC, has supported 43 businesses to improve their frontages and enhance the appearance and appeal of the town. It has encouraged £148,246 of private sector investment for improvements, using grants of £51,218 since the scheme began.

Town Benchmarking Study underway with Action for Market Towns to provide a comprehensive portrait of the commercial life of Kendal and gather and analyse data on 12 Key Performance Indicators within the town centre. The work will compare the performance of Kendal to other towns and provide a useful baseline from which to measure the impact of future projects. (Funding: KTC)



Highlights of the Kendal Regeneration work - delivering the Vision 2012 to 2013

Theme 3: Boosting enterprise and business birth rate

Supporting businesses to launch, develop, diversify and grow and encouraging more businesses to relocate to Kendal.

Superfast fibre optic broadband was rolled out to cabinets in Kendal by the end of 2012 (3 years ahead of schedule) following partnership working with BT. There is still a lot of work to do to promote the service and benefits to businesses and ensure access is available to those who need it.

Creative and Digital Enterprise Centre pilot incubator unit plans developed in partnership with Kendal College (see theme 1).

Business Improvement District proposals include an initiative to encourage budding entrepreneurs to 'have a go' at running an enterprise to stimulate new business activity and promote a positive attitude to the town's future by filling empty shops and office units.

www.investinkendal.com continues to promote the town as a place to do business. The site now links to and cross references the wider SLDC site www.investinsouthlakeland.co.uk

Theme 4: Promoting excellent economic infrastructure

Influencing the development of suitable employment sites and supporting transport and access initiatives and better connectivity through parking, walking and cycling projects.

Employment sites - Kendal Futures has continued to lobby for appropriate land allocations for employment sites in the town and has supported the sites proposed in and the soundness of SLDC's Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) at the Public Examination.

Kendal Fell Quarry - Kendal Futures has continued to lobby SLDC and the LDNP for the inclusion of this site in the land allocations process which has potential strategic benefit to Kendal as a key employment site.

Parking - Kendal Futures has updated its car parking priorities for 2013 and beyond with a focus on improving parking and access to the town. Recommendations include:

- Parking promotion initiatives (eg, 'free after 3', 'free on Sundays')
- Improving the provision for coach parking
- Car parking signage improvements
- Park and walk scheme development
- Tidy up New Road to create dedicated coach parking and limited user friendly car parking
- Explore future 'park and ride' development at Kendal Fell Quarry
- Explore options for creating additional car parking spaces within the town.

Brown and white tourism signage on the main entry points to the town and throughout the town centre will be improved to better highlight the range of attractions in Kendal to visitors, and encourage those who usually by-pass Kendal to visit. A mapping exercise is underway and discussions have begun with CCC Highways. (Funding: KTC, private sector contributions)

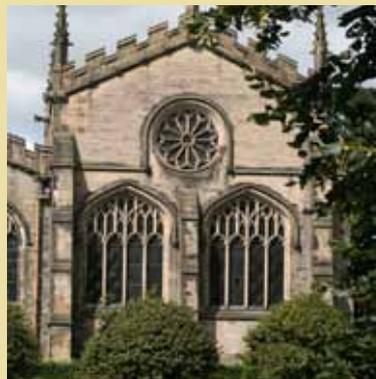


What next for Kendal Futures: Priorities for 2013 - 14

- Hold the BID ballot in October and successfully deliver a Business Improvement District for Kendal to benefit all town centre businesses.
- Support the establishment of the new BID company and help facilitate the transfer of control to local business.
- When SLDC's Land Allocations Development Plan Document is adopted, work with all partners to support and facilitate the delivery of major employment sites.
- Work with KTC and local visitor attractions to improve the brown and white tourism signage to the town.
- Lobby for the adoption of the recommendations made in the Kendal Futures car parking priorities report.
- Work to deliver successful digital and creative incubator units for new start or expanding businesses.
- Deliver tourism projects on behalf of KTC including:
 - improving and updating the brown and white tourism signage at the key junctions to the town to better promote Kendal and improve the experience of visitors.
 - delivering the benchmarking study in partnership with Action for Market Towns.
 - updating and refreshing the image stock for Kendal.
- Work with BT and other superfast broadband providers to promote the service and benefits to businesses and ensure access is available to those need it.

More information

For more information about the work of Kendal Futures please contact Paula Scott on 01539 793284 or email p.scott@southlakeland.gov.uk



Credits

Cover Photograph by Steven Barber.

Additional Photography by Dave Willis, Ben Barden, Tony West, Steve Barber and Henry Iddon.

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