

KENDAL FUTURES

ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - 2014

“This picturesque Lake District town has superlative shopping, bags of community spirit and an enviable location in the heart of one of Britain’s most beautiful locations. The scenic surrounds, low crime rate, vibrant community activities and wide-ranging programme at the Brewery Arts Centre all add to Kendal’s appeal.

Why we love it: friendly, fecund and slap bang in the middle of some of the world’s most beautiful countryside.” The Sunday Times



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

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 also 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. John McCreesh – South Lakeland Local Committee (CCC)

Cllr. Giles Archibald – South Lakeland District Council

Cllr. Austen Robinson – Kendal Town Council

Cllr. Jim Bland – National Farmers Union

Brian Harrison – Federation of Small Businesses

Steve Dunne – Federation of Small Businesses

Mandy Dixon – Tourism Sub Group

Derek Armstrong – Cumbria Chamber of Commerce

Richard Greenwood – Cumbria Tourism

Ian Stephens – Cumbria Tourism

Bill Broekhuizen – Kendal College

Louise Shrapnel – Kendal College

Martyn Nicholson – Confederation of British Industry

Fenner Pearson – CCoC / Meantime IT

Derek Jones – CCoC / North Country Leisure

Daniel Morley – Kendal Business Improvement District

IN SUPPORT

Paula Scott – Kendal Futures Project Co-ordinator

Joanne Golton – South Lakeland District Council

GLOSSARY

BID	Business Improvement District
CCoC	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





KENDAL FUTURES

THE VISION FOR KENDAL

The Kendal Futures Board 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.”

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

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*





KENDAL FUTURES

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.

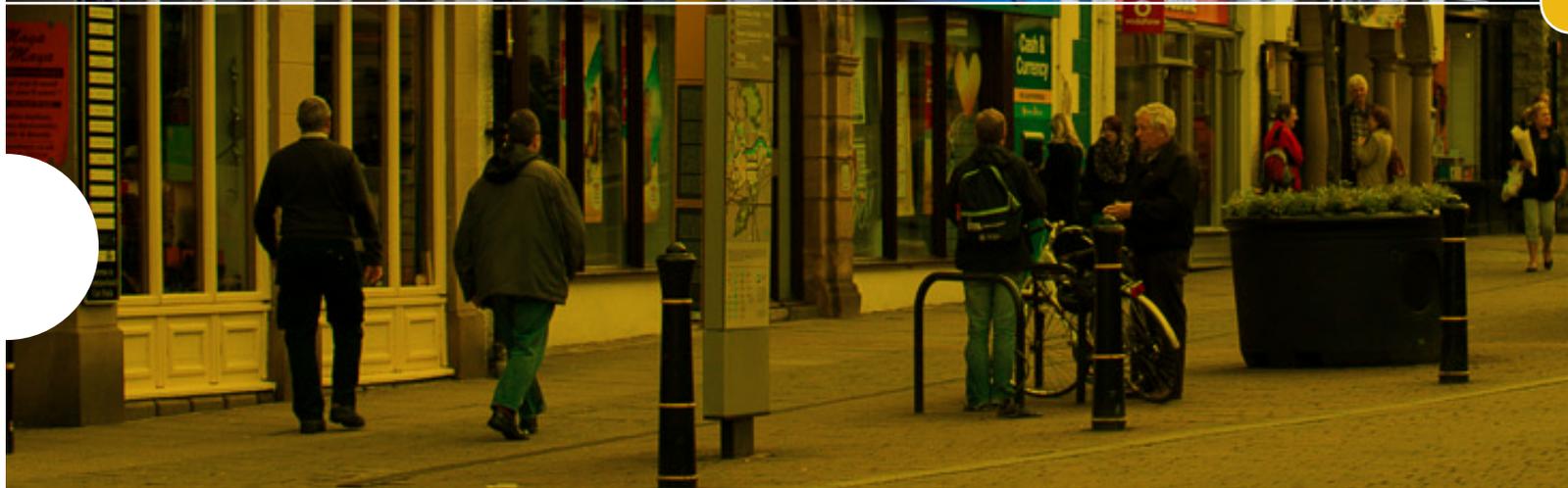
In addition, Kendal Futures has received funding to support the role of the part time project co-ordinator from Kendal Town Council, South Lakeland Local Committee (Cumbria County Council) and South Lakeland District Council.

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 6th annual report, published by Kendal Futures, which covers the period June 2013 – June 2014.





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KENDAL REGENERATION WORK - DELIVERING THE VISION 2013 TO 2014

Two large projects have dominated the work of Kendal Futures in the past year:

KENDAL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Throughout the previous year (2012-13), Kendal Futures led the work to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) in the centre of Kendal.

This detailed and time consuming work continued through the autumn of 2013 as the Vote YES campaign progressed. In late October, the town's business community emphatically voted YES and gave their backing to Kendal's BID. Turnout in the ballot was 43%, with 72% of businesses by number voting in favour and 68% in favour by size.

Further support and help was provided by Kendal Futures to establish the newly formed Kendal BID Company and publically elect a volunteer board of Directors from the town's business community. On 8th April 2014, Kendal BID Limited was incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 as a private company limited by guarantee.

The Directors will have responsibility for delivering the Kendal BID business plan and investing the funds raised through the 1% BID levy on initiatives to improve business trading and attract more customers to the town.

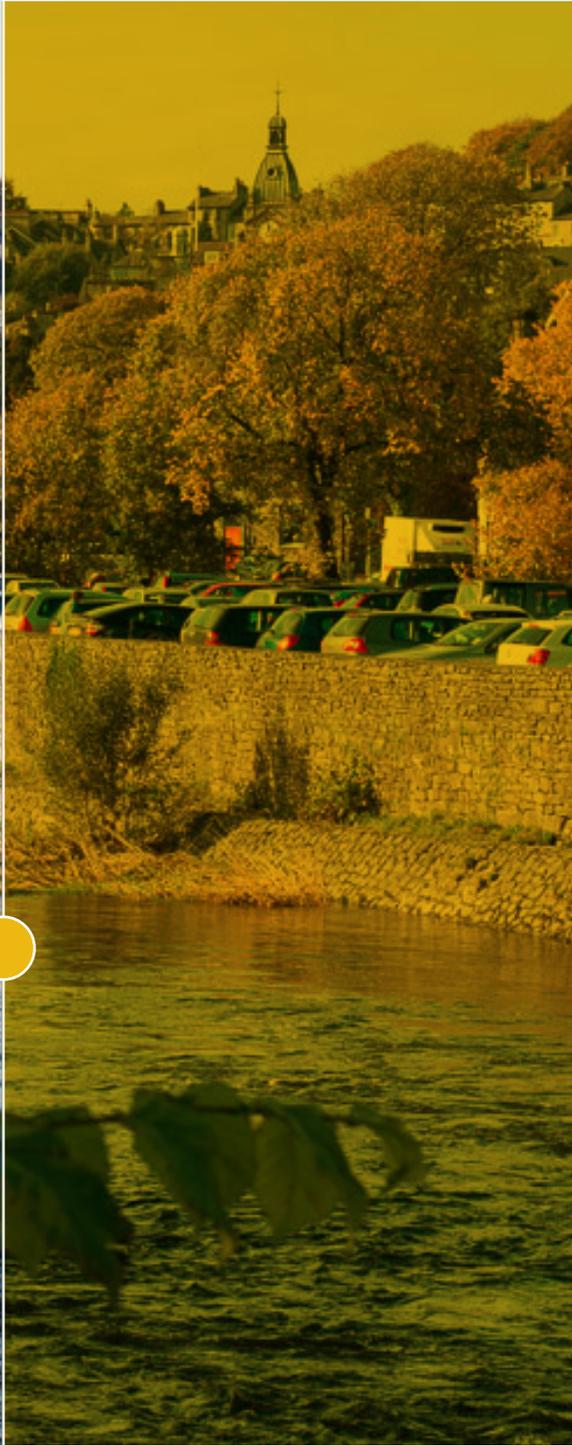
A fund of up to £1 million over 5 years will enable Kendal BID Company to deliver the 4 main priorities which the town's business community believe are essential to the future competitiveness and vibrancy of Kendal:

- Confident Kendal (marketing and promotion);
- Clean Kendal (a clean, safe and attractive environment);
- Convenient Kendal (a convenient and accessible town centre)
- and Competitive Kendal (a more enterprising and competitive town centre).

Perhaps more importantly, however, the BID will create a large and robust business partnership which will be able to influence wider plans for Kendal. The BID Chairman sits on the KFB to ensure a good working relationship and avoid duplication.

More information about Kendal BID can be found on www.kendalbid.co.uk





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KENDAL REGENERATION WORK - DELIVERING THE VISION 2013 TO 2014

Two large projects have dominated the work of Kendal Futures in the past year:

KENDAL ECONOMIC REGENERATION ACTION PLAN REFRESH

The Kendal Economic Regeneration Action Plan (KERAP) was developed in June 2007 following the involvement of, and extensive consultation with, a range of public sector partners, voluntary organisations, residents and businesses in Kendal.

Much has been achieved in Kendal since 2007; many projects have been delivered and new projects are emerging. Together with a changing economic outlook and funding challenges, a refresh of the original KERAP is now required.

The KERAP has been used to successfully focus economic regeneration in Kendal; as a strategic framework to coordinate project delivery; to lobby for public and private sector intervention; and to serve as a reference document to support bids for external funding. The KERAP was endorsed by all stakeholders as the action plan for Kendal regeneration and the Kendal Futures Board was established as the body responsible for leading the delivery of the Action Plan.

Kendal Futures has appointed consultants to revisit and update the KERAP. They will establish what has been achieved and delivered from the original plan, identify whether the current priorities are still appropriate, what actions still should be addressed and what new priorities and initiatives should become a focus to maximise synergy and value for money.

The consultants will establish whether the Vision for Kendal is still relevant and appropriate for a further ten years.

The resulting, refreshed KERAP will be published in late 2014 and will make the business case for continued investment in Kendal to politicians, public sector partners and the private sector.

It will identify priority projects and establish how key initiatives can be integrated and delivered to make best use of available resources. It is vital that the action plan continues to maintain a focus on a clear, evidence-based economic development agenda for Kendal.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KENDAL REGENERATION WORK - DELIVERING THE VISION 2013 TO 2014

A number of other projects have been completed to ensure Kendal continues to make progress against the KERAP priorities, including:

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.

Tourism projects have been delivered with funding from Kendal Town Council to better promote the town to visitors, including updating and distributing visitor guides and improving Kendal's photography library. (Funding: KTC)

Events and festivals play an increasingly important part in the town calendar and make a substantial contribution to its economy. Kendal enjoyed two new festivals in 2013 - Kendal Wool Gathering attracted 4,000 visitors and The Lakes International Comic Art Festival attracted an audience of 4-5,000 with large numbers of international visitors.

Kendal Mountain Festival won the Best Tourism Event Award at the national VisitEngland Awards for Excellence in May 2014.

Kendal Festival of Food took place in March 2014, and was listed as Country Living's top UK food festival for all ages.

Brown and white tourism signage designs have been produced by Cumbria Highways to better promote Kendal's attractions from the A591, direct traffic to appropriate junctions at the north and south entrances to the town and navigate it effectively through the town centre. Consultation is underway with the town's attractions before final designs are agreed and permissions can be sought for installation. (Funding: KTC)

Kendal College secured £3 million investment into the Wildman Street campus in a capital funding bid. This extensive new development of its Northern campus and its art and design studios will create modern buildings with state of the art facilities and will further transform Wildman Street. A main aim of the project is to attract employers to use the College's facilities to enhance their business.

Kendal Leisure Centre is now being run by North Country Leisure with plans to better support the culture, tourism and health agenda for the area. SLDC is investing £1 million in improvements over the next two years and a strategy to determine the long term future of the Leisure Centre will be developed.

THEME 1:

ADDING VALUE:
MOVING BUSINESSES
UP THE VALUE CHAIN



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.

Signage for the Highgate Yards was designed to promote footfall in Highgate and increase awareness of the businesses and car parks accessed via the yards. Installation is scheduled to take place in late 2014. (Funding: SLDC, SLLC)

Kendal Benchmarking Study, published in November 2013, was conducted by Action for Market Towns and provided a portrait of the commercial life of Kendal based on data analysed against 12 Key Performance Indicators. It compares the town's performance favorably to other similar sized towns nationally and it also provides a baseline from which to measure the impact of future projects (such as those developed by the BID). Repeating the study at least bi-annually will be important in future. (Funding: KTC)

Kendal shop vacancy rate has improved in the last year and now stands at 10.39% in the quarter ending June 2014 (the national average is 13.9%). There were 45 empty shops in the town out of a total of 433 shops surveyed.

The Market Place Task and Finish Group has been set up to consider ideas for improving Kendal's Market Place, develop a plan and identify sources of funding. The first stage of consultations will include conducting a pedestrian survey to gain ideas from members of the public and businesses. (Funding: KTC, SLDC)





THEME 3:

BOOSTING ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS BIRTH RATE

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

The Factory developments by Mealbank Properties at their Castle Mills site have been welcomed by the Kendal Futures Board for helping to implement the KERAP's vision for creative and digital work spaces in Kendal. There has been large demand for the town centre work space from local artists and creative businesses and the project brings an under used asset back to life.

Creative and Digital Enterprise Centre plans are being demand tested with the development of 3 pilot business incubator

units at Kendal Museum in partnership with Kendal College for new business start-ups or home-based businesses wishing to grow. (Funding: KF/DCLG Town Team grant, Kendal College)

Housing and employment was discussed for the first time by the Kendal Futures Board after reports from local employers that high house prices were impacting on their ability to recruit suitably qualified staff. Kendal Futures will lobby and facilitate action to address these issues in future, and welcomed the adoption of SLDC's Local Plan which will increase the housing supply.

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 welcomed the adoption of SLDC's Local Plan and will continue to play a proactive role in promoting the development of the allocated employment sites to ensure they serve the town well.

Kendal Fell Quarry offers considerable potential as a key employment site for the town and Kendal Futures has offered encouragement to it's owners as they address the challenge of developing deliverable plans and providing suitable infrastructure.

Parking - Kendal Futures has formed a Car Parking Task & Finish Group with the remit to review and develop three or four concrete proposals from their car parking priorities which SLDC and CCC can be encouraged to progress. Kendal Futures will continue to influence the emerging parking strategies from the local authorities in future.

WHAT NEXT FOR KENDAL FUTURES?

PRIORITIES FOR 2014-2015

- Launch the new Kendal Economic Growth Action Plan and gain the endorsement of private and public sector partners.
- Work with Cumbria County Council Highways and the town's visitor attractions to install the brown and white tourism signage in spring 2015.
- Challenge SLDC to address the car parking recommendations of the Car Parking Task and Finish Group.
- Facilitate the development of suitable plans and investment for public realm improvements to Market Place.
- Evaluate the demand for the pilot business incubator units at Kendal Museum in partnership with Kendal College to inform a larger development project for an enterprise centre in future.
- Work with partners to support and facilitate the delivery of major employment sites.
- Work with local business groups, Connecting Cumbria and BT to promote the benefits of superfast broadband within Kendal, and ensure any gaps in provision are addressed.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the work of Kendal Futures please contact Paula Scott on 01539 793 284 or email p.scott@southlakeland.gov.uk



All photography in this document by Christopher Holmes