



Low-carbon Lake District: Summit 2010

12pm, Thursday 1 July 2010

Merewood Hotel, Windermere

Summit report

The spectacular landscape of the Lake District has long been an inspiration to artists, writers and holidaymakers. Now, we want to inspire all those who know and love this special place to take action on climate change, too.

The Low-carbon Lake District initiative was launched at a major conference in 2008. Since then, we have been working with partner organisations to make the most of the opportunities that a Low-carbon Lake District offers. Resilient communities, reducing energy costs and generating renewable energy from water, wind, sun and wood. Tourism businesses tapping into the growing market for low-impact holidays. Transport options like bikes, boats, buses and, of course, boots: all low in carbon but high in fun. Locking greenhouse gases into the landscape through good land management. Above all, inspiring the eight million people a year who visit the Lake District to join us in taking action.

The Summit on 1 July brought together 120 invited participants from local and national government, businesses and community organisations. We took stock of our achievements, and planned together for the future. We heard about successful initiatives elsewhere, and learn what we could do better. This report provides a brief summary of the day's discussions.

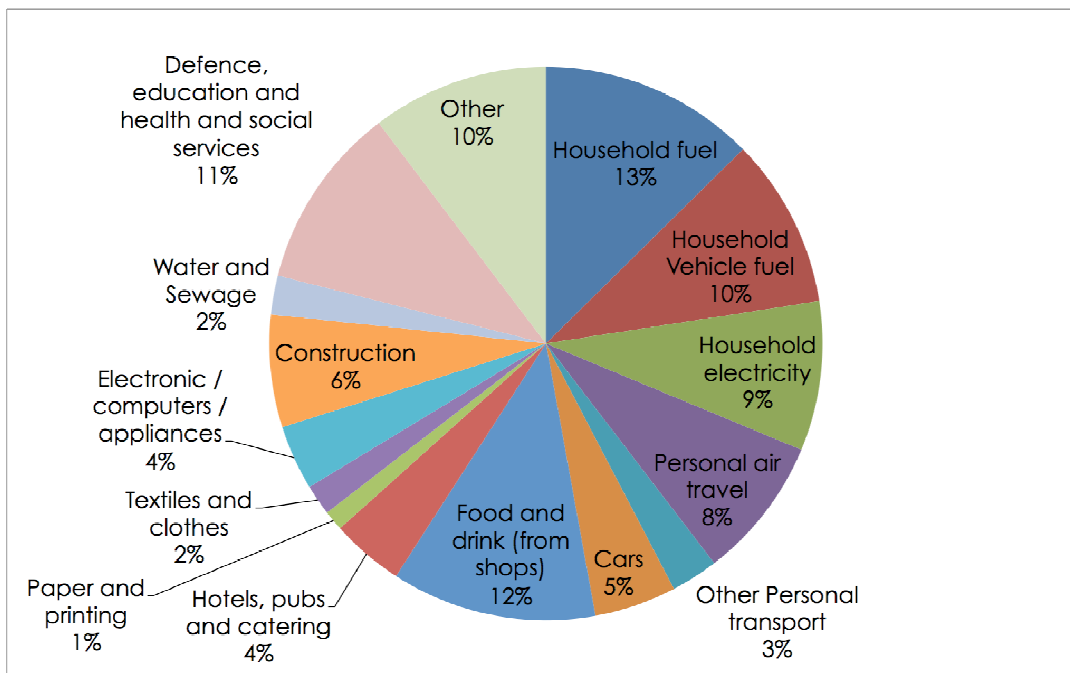
Opening plenary: Developing a carbon budget for the Lake District National Park

Richard Leafe, Chief Executive of the National Park, set the context. The Low-carbon Lake District Initiative was launched in 2008; since then, the National Park has been working with partner organisations to take action on climate change, promoting community renewable energy, reforming planning policies and developing sustainable transport options, for example. The National Park Authority is on course to achieve a reduction in its own carbon emissions of 25 percent emissions by 2012. But the challenge is considerable: by 2050, we need to have reduced the UK's carbon emissions by 80 percent (with a 24% reduction at least by 2020). The latest progress report by the Committee on Climate Change showed that, while carbon emissions are declining, this is due to the recession, and not the result of positive action on climate change: we are not yet achieving the 'step change' that is necessary to bring about a low-carbon economy. (this report is available at <http://www.theccc.org.uk>)



The new coalition government has pledged to lead the way on climate change, with David Cameron saying he wants his administration to be "the greenest government ever". The coalition has set out an ambitious agenda (details at <http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk>) Given the emphasis on localism and decentralisation, it is likely that local areas will be asked to play a central role in achieving climate change objectives. So the Lake District National Park Partnership has agreed to develop and implement a carbon budget, which will allow organisations to work together to measure and manage carbon emissions within the National Park.

Mike Berners-Lee, of Small World Consulting, presented his plans for developing a carbon budget for the National Park. The aim of a carbon budget is to develop an instinct for carbon, a bit like our instinct for money. The work will develop a carbon 'map' of the National Park, measuring carbon using a consumption-based approach (estimating the carbon impact of different consumption actions). The aim is to develop 'good enough' management information, but there are considerable uncertainties and data gaps which should not be underestimated. The work will be simple, realistic about uncertainties, create a broad sense of scale, and be flexible enough to be used by others. Mike presented a pie chart of the emissions of the average UK person (see below)



This picture is likely to be different for the Lake District – for example, the emissions from hotels, pubs and catering are likely to be higher, with lower emissions from construction. But this consumption-based approach makes clear that direct emissions from electricity and fuel are only a small part of the emissions picture.

To draw up the carbon budget, Small World Consulting will begin with the above estimate of UK per capita consumption, then use local data to adjust the picture for the Lake District, looking at emissions from both visitors and residents. This will result in an estimate of the footprint of the local area, which can be used to guide action on climate change. Further details of the approach, and of Mike's book, are here:

<http://howbadarebananas.posterous.com/>

Following Mike's talk, **a short film about the Lake District's response to climate change**, produced by Ben Barden and Debbie McGowan, was shown. The film can be viewed here: www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/lowcarbonlakedistrict. Copies of the film are available for organisations to use with their own audiences.

The following issues were raised in discussion, when Rebecca Willis, climate change adviser to the Lake District National Park Authority and Vice-Chair of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, joined the panel:

- There will be a need to take a careful look at boundary issues. For example, what about the family who arrive in the Lake District in a 4x4 car but came here instead of flying abroad? Mike acknowledged that it is important to be clear about what is in, and what is not included.
- Food and drink was seen as a very significant impact, and one underestimated in many analyses. Should this mean that the Lake District should move away from meat production (sheep/lamb) or would the alternatives be worse?
- Is the recession good for climate change? Rebecca Willis pointed out research by the Sustainable Development Commission (<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=914>) which questions the possibility of increasing economic growth while reducing environmental impacts, and suggests alternative measures of progress.

However, the recession is likely to have a negative effect on efforts to tackle climate change, as there will be more focus on short-term economic difficulties, and less capital available for low-carbon investment.

- There were a number of questions on land management and carbon storage. As the Committee on Climate Change points out in its progress report, this is an area where evidence is lacking, and more incentives are needed. These issues were looked at in a workshop session (see below).
- Many comments focused on bringing about behavior change – what is the role of individuals, companies, local authorities and central government in changing behaviour? The Lake District commands immense ‘brand loyalty’ which could be used to persuade people to act differently. However, the frameworks need to be right – they can only choose to leave their car behind if convenient alternatives to the car (buses, boats, bikes) exist.

Workshop sessions

Community-owned renewable energy: Establishing a community-owned investment trust

A recent consultation led by Cumbria Vision showed strong support among Cumbrian communities for a Cumbria Community-Owned Renewable Energy Trust (CCORT) which would provide a vehicle for individuals to invest in local renewable energy schemes. Detailed plans for the Trust are now being developed by CORE, the LDNP, Cumbria Vision and SENS (Staveley-based community group). At this workshop, members of the project team talked through the plans, and sought feedback, ideas and practical suggestions for ways forward.

Participants discussed some of the barriers to community-owned renewables schemes, in order to see how CCORT could help overcome them. Barriers identified included: lack of an obvious source of advice and support – a ‘one-stop shop’; complicated legal hurdles including planning, consents from Environment Agency and so on; grid connection; and gaining buy-in from the whole community.



Through pooling both expertise and funding, CCORT was seen as a useful way to overcome these barriers, and participants expressed strong support for the concept. There needs to be a clear sense of CCORT's priorities: financial, social, environmental, or a mix? Could the Trust both pay dividends and re-invest into new schemes, funding feasibility studies, for example? How could local authorities be involved – could they work with CCORT to establish an EScO (Energy Services Company)?

Participants then went on to discuss potential projects, funding and legal structures. The project team will now develop these ideas further, in preparation for a launch of the Trust in October 2010.

For further information about this workshop, and a detailed note on the development of CCORT, please contact becky.willis@lakedistrict.gov.uk . To receive an invitation to the October launch, please email merrille.radford@cumbriavision.co.uk .

Low-carbon innovation in the tourism sector

In this session, Impact International facilitators Jonathan Stevens and Tim Appleby worked with tourism businesses and other stakeholders to brainstorm solutions to low-carbon tourism. Participants worked to develop the least sustainable product they could (lead-lined milk cartons) and then the most sustainable (an edible Westmorland Gazette, that could be read and then recycled as breakfast cereal). From this brainstorm, participants began to look at how innovation in the tourism sector could be encouraged. People saw considerable economic development potential. One suggestion was for Cumbria Tourism to hold a workshop for their commercial members, on this theme, to show businesses that changing the way they do things will benefit them. There is a need for radical solutions, such as closing some of the valleys to cars, to enable sustainable transport options to flourish. Nurture Lakeland, Cumbria Tourism and Cumbria Green Business Forum were all seen as central to this agenda. The Lake District National Park will work with these organisations to develop work in this area.

A sustainable transport framework for the Lake District

Where's the carbon in the Lake District's transport system, and what can be done about reducing it?

The transport workshop started with delegates getting to grips with the evidence on how much carbon was being emitted from which parts of the Lake District's transport system – from residents, visitors & freight, travel to the park (where people came from) and travelling around, by purposes of journeys, and how people travelled. This provided the evidence on which to focus ideas for reducing carbon from transport. The workshop then split into two groups – one focussing on policy, the other on projects.

The policy group considered the live consultation for Cumbria's 3rd Local Transport Plan (LTP3). This was to determine its priorities, and specifically (i) how carbon reduction can be reconciled with a thriving economy, or indeed can help the economy thrive; (ii) LTP3 funding priorities and (iii) priorities for reducing carbon emissions from road transport.

The projects group determined that integrating transport within the park would not only reduce emissions locally, but be a powerful instrument to encourage visitors to travel to the park by sustainable means. Initiatives included developing Lake District travel bundles, travel passes targeted on specific markets, rail deals to the park including integrated deals for travel and activities within the park, comprehensive development of targeted travel itineraries and the strategic development of transport hubs. Some of these are already planned for development within the Lake District's Transport Framework, and those that aren't will be considered for development.

For further information on the workshop and on the Lake District's plans for sustainable transport, please contact Alistair.kirkbride@lakedistrict.gov.uk .

Low-carbon Landscapes: Land management for carbon storage

The University of Cumbria has established a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the National Park, looking at carbon management in the landscape – with the aim of improving carbon storage in the soil and vegetation. The project will develop a carbon management toolkit for land managers. At the workshop, participants fed ideas into the development of this toolkit.

Participants acknowledged that data on land management and climate change is hard to find, and the science is uncertain. For example, we don't know how different types of land management affect carbon storage, so a way of measuring this would be useful. Developing an evidence base in this area will be a crucial part of developing the toolkit.

Other points raised at the workshop include:

- Changes to CAP could include reward for peat restoration, so peatland has a value as a carbon store.
- Farmers currently feel that biomass projects are risky and uncertain. A radical switch into biomass production would require extra incentives for landowners, to counter the risk in changing land use.
- A carbon toolkit could be part of a wider soil use advice service, so that carbon is not looked at in isolation, but integrated with other issues, such as animal welfare and biodiversity.
- There is an existing scheme in Scotland which could be looked at. The Scottish Rural Development Programme is funding work in this area.
- The toolkit should be presented in terms of cost savings as well as carbon savings.
- There may be scope for a toolkit at valley level rather than individual farm level – which might help to illustrate how different management interventions affect the landscape.
- The interaction between food production and carbon management needs to be included
- The toolkit will need to be sensitive to market forces, such as the price of oil – there need to be scenarios which allow land managers to plan for the long term.

For further information on this workshop and the toolkit, contact andrew.herbert@lakedistrict.gov.uk or samantha.hagon@lakedistrict.gov.uk .

Closing plenary: Action for a Low-carbon Lake District

This session was a panel discussion chaired by Richard Leafe, with panellists Mark Atherton (NorthWest Development Agency), Marie Fallon (Cumbria County Council), Ali Ross (Sundog Energy), Roger Roberts (Action with Communities in Cumbria) and Bob Cartwright (Lake District National Park).

Mark Atherton, Ali Ross and others expressed strong support for the proposal for a Cumbrian community-owned renewable energy Trust (CCORT, see above), with some uncertainty about the financial viability of community energy schemes which would need to be investigated. While there is a lot of interest in domestic-scale renewables, following the feed-in tariff, and commercial renewable energy development, medium-sized schemes and community-led schemes are still in their infancy.

One possible model is the Green Valleys hydro project in the Brecon Beacons, and Julian Atkins from the Brecon Beacons National Park offered to link to this initiative.

Marie Fallon and Roger Roberts discussed how the squeeze on public spending, and the uncertain economic outlook, would affect low-carbon ambitions. Marie pointed to partnership working, through the Lake District National Park Partnership, as one way forward. She stressed the importance of the carbon budgeting process, which allows comparison of impacts, and means that you are more likely to avoid unintended consequences. Roger stressed the need to promote locally-owned solutions that meet other needs too, such as ensuring a future for upland farming.

To encourage sustainable tourism, Bob Cartwright stressed the importance of working with people and organisations that have day-to-day contact with visitors, such as transport and accommodation providers. There is huge potential in reaching out to these organisations through Nurture Lakeland, Cumbria Tourism and the Cumbria Green Business Forum.

Comments on transport focussed on achieving a balance between new vehicle technologies – such as electric and hybrid vehicles – and alternatives to the car. Marie Fallon signalled a need to take a more fundamental look at transport policy and provision, and highlighted an event planned for September to input into the Local Transport Plan review. She pointed out that there are some good examples already in Cumbria – Center Parcs near Penrith, for example, uses electric vehicles. Sue Walley from SENS (Staveley community group) pointed out that there are some simple changes that could be made, such as reducing some fares and making railway stations accessible for families. Roger Roberts stressed that we should look not just at transport but at what communities' needs are. Good broadband provision, for example, may reduce the need to travel.

Andrew Turney (Field Studies Council) pointed out the need to work with young people, and suggested including them in future events of this kind.

Richard Leafe concluded by reminding people of the achievements so far, and of the challenge ahead if we are to tackle climate change in the context of restricted budgets. He urged people to redouble their commitment and work together to achieve common aims.

The Lake District National Park will work with partner organisations to take forward the areas discussed – community renewable energy; sustainable transport; low-carbon tourism and land management for climate change – in the overall context of a carbon budget for the National Park. The Lake District National Park Partnership provides a useful forum for development of these plans.

Further details on the Lake District's work on climate change, and contacts for this work, can be found at www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/climatechange .

We are very grateful to Windermere Lake Cruises, Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service for sponsoring this event.



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