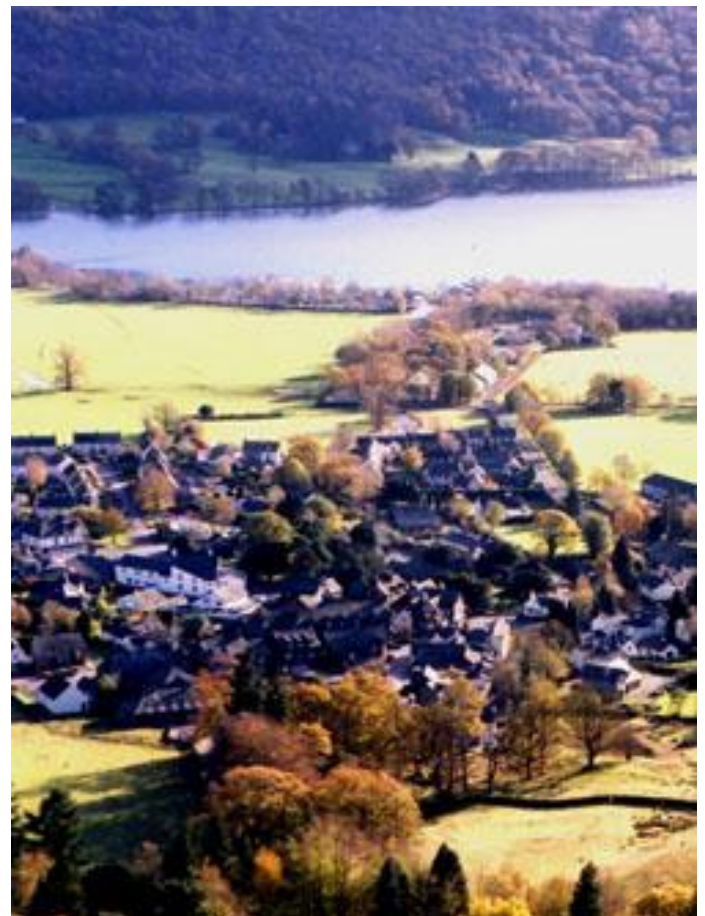


CONISTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2015

A Community Planning document which will supplement the Local Plan as part of the DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE AREA and will be in place from adoption until 2025.



*Coniston from
Maundry Bank, 1940*



*Present day Coniston
from Maundry Bank*

Coniston Neighbourhood Plan

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Why have a Neighbourhood Plan and what is the process?

In September 2012 Coniston Parish Council completed the review of the second Parish Plan produced by the community. From this there were some issues identified specifically about planning, the future of Coniston and in particular ensuring the community retains control of its own destiny. As a result it was identified a Neighbourhood Plan would be beneficial.

One of the facilities of the Localism Act 2011 is to enable more decision-making at a local level. One way to do this is to encourage communities to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. The Coniston Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Coniston Parish Council as the Qualifying Body and covers the whole of the parish - this Neighbourhood Area was designated on 26 February 2014. The Plan complies with European and national legislation.

This Plan will be in place until 2025 and is designed to cover future development up to that time. However this date will not form a cut-off point. Future development beyond this date will continue to be proposed and a new Neighbourhood Plan may then be required to replace this one .

The local planning authority (Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA)) will consider the contents of this Plan when making decisions on planning applications. This is to ensure that the views of the local community are taken fully into account in the decision making process.

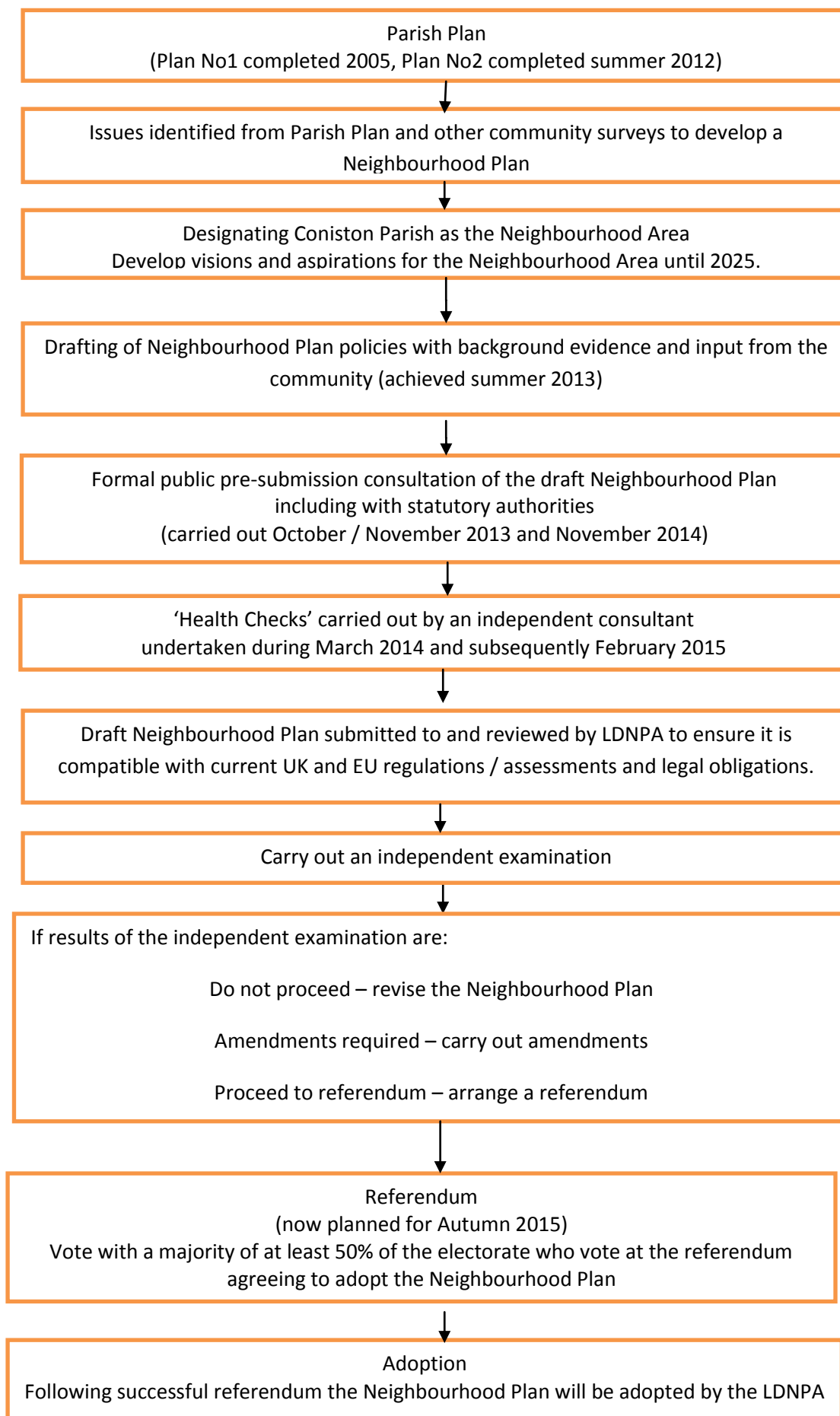
The Coniston Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the area and will sit along-side the LDNPA's Local Plan. It is anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan will take effect from January 2016. It covers the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2025. The Coniston Neighbourhood Plan has drawn the fundamental issues that it addresses directly from the 2012 Coniston Parish Plan, on-going community engagement and the work of Coniston and Torver Community Land Trust.

It is expected that the Neighbourhood Plan will assist in overcoming the major issues that the community is facing which are:

- the loss of village homes (homes occupied permanently)* ,
the rate of loss is currently running at between 2 and 4 homes per quarter.
- the lack of affordable homes to allow village families to remain in their home village,
despite successful affordable housing schemes the full requirement of affordable homes has never been satisfied.
- the lack of local homes to allow professional families to move to the village,
it is estimated that, even if the affordable housing need can be fully satisfied, the resident population numbers will continue to decline as village homes are lost to the weekend home sector.
- the effect on the village of the decline in tourism within the Lake District,
there is firm evidence that the steady rise in tourism that occurred during the 1980's and 1990's ceased in the early years of the 21st century and there is now a slow decline.
- the potential for overburdening the community with excessive tourism
in the 2011-12 Coniston Parish Plan a 'top-tier' concern voiced by the community was that there should be no major developments or over-developments
- and the potential loss of village facilities.
as the population declines village facilities will be lost, especially where they are operated by volunteers who are village people.

***FOR INFORMATION** - It is appreciated that controlling the loss of village homes may not be possible in the present term by use of planning legislation. However Coniston and Torver Community Land Trust is currently running a project to encourage owners of smaller second homes to allow their home to be used for permanent and local occupancy on short-term leases by reviewing the cost comparison between using the properties this way as an alternative to holiday lets. Changes to legislation in the future may make the control of the loss village homes more practical.

Flowchart of Process of Neighbourhood Plan for Coniston



Introduction to Coniston

“.....Further off the beaten track, and culturally distinct from the rest of South Lakeland, Coniston is fiercely independent, and while you’ll get a warm welcome wherever you go, the locals aren’t quite as in thrall to the gods of tourism and rampant consumerism as elsewhere in the Lakes.....”.

Mark Sutcliffe, Editor, Country Walking Magazine, May 2014.

Coniston is the fifth largest settlement within the Lake District National Park. It is an old mining village and the evidence of many centuries of copper mining and slate quarrying are still very evident within the parish.

The Coniston Mine closed in 1898. It was one of the largest copper mines in Europe during the Victorian era and following closure many of the skilled miners moved away from the parish to find work elsewhere. The slate quarrying industry started in the 13th Century. It continued to expand until the middle years of the 20th Century but has since declined significantly. During the 1960’s approximately 60% of village families were involved in some way with the slate industry and their descendents still live within the parish. This industry still supports a significant number of local families.

The first tourists arrived in Coniston during the 18th Century. Later, during the Victorian era, tourism expanded greatly, partially as a result of the opening of the passenger railway service to the village. The Coniston Branch Line closed to passenger traffic in 1959, a victim of the Beeching cuts.

Coniston is a relatively isolated village. The nearest large villages to Coniston are Hawkshead, 4 miles away and Ambleside, 8 miles away. However, despite being relatively isolated, Coniston is a popular tourist resort and is regarded by many as the finest venue for mountain walking in Northern England. Consequently its main popularity is with those who enjoy outdoor pursuits on its mountains and lake. Fortunately, despite its popularity, Coniston has not developed into a mass-tourist venue in the same way as other Lake District villages have. It retains a thriving village community and still maintains a ‘local’ character which is well-appreciated by its regular discerning visitors.

Notwithstanding the fact that Coniston is a thriving community, the Parish Plan exercises in both 2005 and 2012 identified a number of major issues that were already beginning to affect the community or were likely to affect the community in the near future.

The major issue of concern identified by the 2005 Parish Plan was a critical need for affordable housing to retain young village families that would otherwise move away from their home village. A housing-needs survey in the same year showed that a further 66 affordable homes were required. At that time over 40% of the housing stock in Coniston had ceased to be village homes but had become second homes and holiday houses. By the time the 2012 Parish Plan had been completed this figure had risen to 49%. The report ‘Affordable Housing for Lakeland Communities’ published by Coniston and Torver Community Land Trust (CLT) is also relevant evidence.

The 2012 Parish Plan reinforced this need for affordable housing but also reflected on further major community concerns including the fact that future development within the community both to provide affordable housing, and also for commercial reasons, should be on a modest scale.

An additional issue is the fact that the National Park, including Coniston has seen a decline in visitor numbers over the period 2008 to 2012. However this decline of numbers for Coniston is marginally less than the overall percentage decline within the National Park as a whole. Nevertheless it is clear that Coniston needs to re-focus on its main accolade; the fact that it is one of the leading mountain walking centres in Northern England. There is also a clear need to develop businesses not directly connected to tourism to reduce the dependency of the livelihood of the community on a single industry. To assist in this requirement it is essential to promote the introduction of Ultra High-speed Broadband.

Other potential issues that are likely to affect the community have been identified during the work of Coniston and Torver CLT. As well as identifying the acute need for affordable homes it has gone further and recognised that providing sufficient affordable homes will not prevent the population of the community from further decline. There is therefore a real need to encourage some families attracted to the expanding industries of Low Furness to set up permanent homes in the community either by purchasing existing properties or by allowing self-build of dwellings within the Parish.

The village at present

There is currently a good range of local services and social amenities including a primary and secondary school, fire station, post office and shops with basic supplies, although there are concerns about the potential future decline of these. The main employment locally is agricultural, slate quarrying and tourism although there are many other smaller local businesses. Coniston has a wide range of social and recreational opportunities. The population of the Parish is 928 (Census 2011).

Present special qualities of Coniston:-

- Thriving friendly village community – the number of clubs & societies is increasing.
- Rural old style community
- Picturesque landscape – enjoyed by local families and visitors to the village.
- Important flora & fauna
- Good range of local services & social amenities
- Village retains families that have been in the area for generations
- Iconic housing design, for example, The Banks, Yewdale Road shops, Tilberthwaite Avenue.
- Extensive recreational facilities on the mountains, lower fells, lake shore and lake for the benefit of the local community and visitors.

A vision for the parish in 2025

The parish of Coniston of 2025 will comprise of:

- a vibrant community with its current character still intact;
- a village that is similar to the present despite a small amount of growth and development;
- a permanent resident population that has increased; and
- have sufficient children to help maintain the viability of the primary and secondary schools.

Planning Process

Current planning policies

The LDNPA Core Strategy 2010 explains how the Planning Authority will deliver the overall vision for the National Park strategically and spatially by 2025. These are core policies which are criteria or area based and which broadly guide development in the National Park as a whole.

Development in Coniston will be assessed against the relevant policies within the Core Strategy (Local Plan Part One) and specifically by Policy CS09: South Distinctive Area. The village is considered to be a Rural Service Centre, one of thirteen within the National Park. The Development Plan also comprises the LDNPA Allocations of Land and Minerals Safeguarding Areas – Parts Two and Three respectively of the Local Plan.

The Coniston Neighbourhood Plan is additional to the Core Strategy and in general conformity with it. The Neighbourhood Plan provides more in-depth policies that the community wishes to be pursued. It is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan including the Allocation of Land policy and the Minerals Safeguarding Areas, Parts 2 and 3 respectively.

Planning applications are processed by the LDNPA Development Management Team. Applications are decided either through delegated powers by planning officers (Scheme of Delegation) or by the Development Control Committee.

The community is permitted to comment on planning applications and their comments are considered when applications are processed by the Development Management Team. A checklist has been drawn up by Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT to be used as an aid-memoir to ensure all relevant points are considered when community comments are drafted. (See Annex 6)


The Development Control Committee meets monthly to consider planning applications, enforcement issues and other matters relating to the Town and Country Planning Acts. The Committee consists of 14 members representing local and national interests drawn from Cumbria County Council and District Authorities in addition to appointments made by the Secretary of State (some of these from Parish Councils).

Specifically, over the past ten years, the community of Coniston has developed a close form of co-operation with its planning authority with regards to planning for the village. In particular it runs the programme for the development of affordable housing and 'local-needs' housing based on Housing Needs Surveys. It also monitors compliance with occupancy restrictions. Coniston has over 160 dwellings carrying some form of occupancy restriction and any potential abuse of a restriction is reported to the Compliance Team at the Planning Authority for investigation and, if necessary, corrective action.

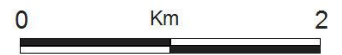
Additionally, work taken on by the Coniston & Torver CLT include some tasks normally performed by Housing and Planning Authorities. A summary of the development of this co-operation is given in the Companion Document '*Evidence to back up the Coniston Neighbourhood Plan*'.

Coniston Neighbourhood Plan Area



 Neighbourhood Plan Area

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Plan Format

Each of the following eight Sections of the Neighbourhood Plan are set out using the following sub-sections:

Aspiration – sub-component objectives of the vision.

Background Information – significant facts (including key outcomes of community consultation) that help justify the provisions in the policy that follows. This information is supplemented where appropriate with Annexes to the Plan and/or separate evidence and supporting documents. Reference is also made to relevant strategic policies in the Lake District National Park Core Strategy.

Policy – the key development and land use requirement for the topic being presented.

How to Implement – how the policy will be applied to have its intended effect.

Complementary Supporting Actions – other non-land use (and therefore not subject to Examination) activities that are intended to bolster the intentions of the policy – some of these are picked again in the Monitoring and Review Section.

1. Our Community

Aspiration

- 1.1 The community intends that Coniston will remain a friendly, progressive, family-based parish of all ages and with a wide range of facilities and services. The community will continue to be actively involved in making honest, fair and consistent decisions about future development, to the benefit of all who wish to reside and work there.

Background Information

In Coniston Parish Plan 2011/12 the following were requested to be retained by the community:-

- Maintain the character of the village
- Current facilities to stay within the village
- No major developments or over-developments

Following further engagement with local people the concerns and requirements of the community, as given in the Parish Plan 2011/12 have been included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Please refer to:

LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS02 – Achieving vibrant & sustainable communities.

Policy CNP 1 – Our Community

- 1.A The Neighbourhood Plan supports development of an appropriate scale that meets the needs of the community, particularly where it enhances the role of Coniston as a rural service centre and helps to retain its unique character and that of the spectacular surrounding landscape.**
- 1.B In particular the Neighbourhood Plan supports developments that provide direct community benefits.**

How to Implement

Through the determination of planning applications.

Through ensuring that Coniston Parish Council and other appropriate bodies are involved at all stages of development.

2. Businesses

Aspiration

2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to ensure that local businesses will prosper and expand, in particular providing additional quality, full-time, permanent and well-paid jobs.

Background Information

Businesses referred to in Coniston Parish Plan 2011/12 as being important are:-

- Local farms
- Motor mechanics
- Filling station
- Bank
- Post Office
- Newsagents
- Hardware store
- Local cafes, pubs and hotels
- Local tradesmen
- Dairy and florist
- Accommodation providers
- Local shops – including the community owned Coniston Co-operative Society

Current facilities the community feel are missing from the village are a bakery, chiropodist and retail chemist facilities.

Businesses which it is also acknowledged provide important employment for the community are:

- Slate quarrying industry,
- National Trust maintenance site and wood-yard, Boon Crag,
- Coniston Boating Centre site and associated businesses,
- Outdoor Pursuit Centres and Brantwood.

Please refer to:

LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS10 – Achieving design excellence
LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS20 - Vibrant settlement centres
LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS22 – Employment

Local income levels:

Average median household income in the National Park in 2011 was £26,899
(CACI 2012)

In Coniston the average median household income in 2011 was £21,126

Internet speeds currently obtained by village businesses are 0.5 Mbps (standard high-speed broadband)

The number of local permanent residents (LPR's) who are employed locally is approximately 37%.

There has been a slow natural decline in the tourism industry in the Lake District since 2002. Coniston, along with several other Lake District communities is keen to support and assist new enterprises that create well paid jobs with year-round employment especially where it helps to develop alternative industry which is not directly dependent on tourism

Policy CNP 2 - Businesses

- 2.A Development proposals will be supported that will enable the expansion and retention of existing local businesses including those listed in the Background Information. Support will also be given to development proposals for the establishment of new businesses that diversify and strengthen the local economy without significantly adversely affecting the distinctive character of the community.**
- 2.B The upgrading of broadband in the Parish will be encouraged, including the introduction of ultra-high speed broadband at 50Mbps and any further appropriate improvements over time, to assist local businesses and the community as a whole.**

How to Implement – Action Plan

Through the determination of planning applications.

Coniston Parish Council will work with all relevant agencies and authorities including South Lakeland District Council, the Lake District National Park Partnership Business Taskforce and the CBI Small Business Taskforce to support development proposals that will enable the appropriate expansion of local businesses.

Coniston Parish Council will work with Connecting Cumbria to enable access to ultra-high speed broadband in Coniston for those who require it.

Complementary Supporting Actions

Sites for development for employment and also for housing are selected by the Coniston & Torver Community Land Trust in conjunction with Coniston Parish Council and also the planning team at The National Park Authority.

Coniston Parish Council will campaign to improve transport access to Coniston to enhance the availability of people commuting to and from the village for employment purposes.

3. HOUSING – including affordable, empty properties, conversions, local needs homes, self-build & second homes.

Aspiration

- 3.1 Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with Coniston & Torver Community Land Trust (CLT) wish to ensure that local people, including young families, will be able to live in their home village so that they can take an active part in community life.
- 3.2 Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with Coniston & Torver CLT wish to ensure that the level of 'village homes' (i.e. homes lived in permanently) is maintained at a minimum level of 60% by encouraging the return of weekend homes to permanent occupancy and by supporting new-build schemes that are covered by permanent and local occupancy clauses.

Background Information

As requested in Coniston Parish Plan 2011/12:-

- Aim for small developments of typically up to 7 houses per site for local affordable housing
- Any additional dwellings within the Parish must meet the need for permanent homes within the village.
- Character of village is maintained
- Core of local people needed to live in houses in the village to maintain sustainability
- Concerns at the number of houses that do not have local occupancy clauses on them and the potential loss of these homes to the second home market.

Coniston Housing Needs Survey Report – 2013, carried out by Coniston and Torver CLT identified need of 31 dwellings, mainly 1 and 2 bedrooled. See the Coniston Housing-needs Survey 2013.

Census 2011

- Total households = 635 of which 216 are second / holiday homes (34.5%)(although local knowledge puts this figure at 47%)

Figures from Lake District National Park Authority:-

Median figures

- Average median house price in the National Park is £243,617 (CACI 2014)
- Average median household income in the National Park is £27,857 (CACI 2014)
- In Coniston Parish the average median household income is £23,971
- Based on median figures the income to house price affordability ratio is 8.7:1

Lower quartile figures

These refer to people on low incomes and lower house prices.

- House price in the National Park is £180,590
- Household income in the National Park is £15,324
- In Coniston Parish the household income is £13,701

Based on mean figures income to house price affordability ratio for Coniston Parish is 10.2:1 (CACI 2014).

Strict Section 106 agreements have been applied to all homes developed in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver Community Land Trust since 2008 as well as local occupancy agreements on privately developed Local Needs housing.

Please refer to:

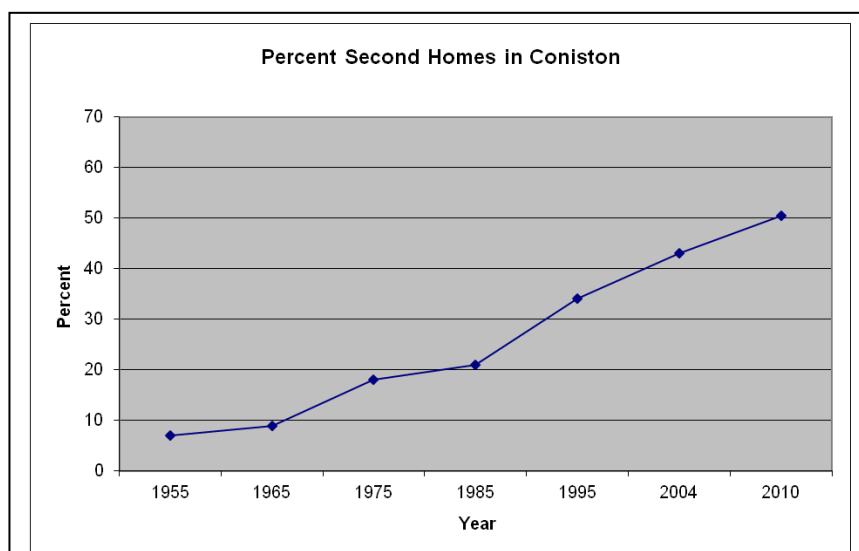
LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS10 – Achieving design excellence

LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS18 – Housing provision

LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS22a – Re-use of buildings for holiday letting accommodation

LDNPA Allocations of Land site CO01H at land off Collingwood Close, Coniston

For definitions of the different types of housing please see Annex 8.



Coniston Parish Council and Coniston & Torver CLT are concerned at the effect that the reduction in permanent residents is having on community sustainability and vibrancy. In particular village voluntary services are at future risk.

The attached chart shows the percent of second homes in Coniston Parish Since 1955. data has been collected from:

1955, 1965 – District Council records

1965, 1975 – Cllr Bill Rawdon Smith

1985 – calculations by the local GP

1995 – 2010 – calculations made by Coniston Housing Trust

Policy CNP 3 - Housing

3.A Housing development schemes will be supported that:

- **meet local need and local affordable housing need and that satisfy Policy CNP1 of this plan.**
- **allow self-build homes to be developed where these are for permanent occupancy on appropriate sites and which conform to Affordable Housing For Sale criteria (see Annex 8) and satisfy Policy CNP1 of this plan.**

How to Implement – Action plan

Through the determination of planning applications.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with Coniston and Torver CLT will strive to ensure that:

- sufficient affordable homes are available to satisfy the results of current housing-needs surveys. Priority will be given through Section 106 agreements, or equivalent, to residents of Coniston parish who are in need of an affordable home when such homes are allocated or re-allocated,
- sufficient Local Needs Homes are available to satisfy the results of the most recent Coniston and Torver Local Needs Homes survey (for details please see Companion Document '*Evidence to back up the Coniston Neighbourhood Plan*').

Coniston & Torver CLT will be consulted by all developers during the initial stages of new housing developments, new builds and conversion.

Complementary Supporting Actions

Coniston Parish Council and the Coniston & Torver CLT will strive to have the restriction rescinded concerning the current 'local connection' definition for occupancy of Local Need homes. Currently occupancy is restricted to those who originate from the South Distinctive area of the Lake District National Park as defined by the LDNPA's Housing Provision Supplementary Planning Document.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with Coniston & Torver CLT wishes the local connection area to be extended in the future to include parishes in surrounding areas as well as the whole of Low Furness. Historically Coniston has close employment and cultural links with Low Furness and we wish to be able to encourage those who move to the expanding industries of this area, for example GKN plc and the Barrow Shipyard site of BAE Systems, to be able to purchase homes in Coniston built to the Local Homes criteria.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with Coniston & Torver CLT is keen to continue the work previously carried out in partnership with the Lake District National Park Authority to develop, as a Joint Project, a list of sites which may be suitable for housing and which, in total, will meet the existing housing need, as assessed through the Housing Needs Surveys. They will also consider housing needs under Local Needs Homes and Affordable Housing for Sale criteria.

Coniston & Torver CLT will continue to monitor and record the reduction in numbers of permanent village residents and will publish the results periodically. They will also recommend effective corrective action to take to halt such a decline.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will encourage new developments to be of a style in keeping with the village and use local materials and where possible, local tradesmen.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will lobby South Lakeland District Council to increase Council Tax on second homes. Coniston Parish Council will also

lobby central Government, through our Member of Parliament, to amend the planning regulations so that the conversion of dwellings to holiday lets requires planning permission for change of use.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will work to encourage the return of existing second homes to housing that meets local need.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will maintain a list of empty homes and will actively endeavour to return homes to the local affordable housing stock by either assisting the home owner to obtain funding to carry out improvements or by acquiring the lease/ownership of the home to carry out the work.

The Coniston and Torver CLT will continue to assist planning inspectors during planning appeals and actively monitor and comment on the results of appeals.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will continue to oppose the development of all housing which is out of proportion and context to the surroundings and is not sympathetic to the immediate setting and neighbouring buildings.

4, Buildings, Structures and Sites of Historic Importance

Aspiration

- 4.1 The unique character of the area will continue to be retained and enhanced by conserving locally important sites of historic value.

Background Information

Coniston currently has 51 listed Grade 2 sites within the parish and 9 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. (see data in the Companion Document '*Evidence to back up the Coniston Neighbourhood Plan*').

However, there are significant numbers of sites in the parish which are considered to be important to the community but are not covered by any form of English Heritage listings.

In August 2008 an historic building and site survey of Coniston sites was carried out jointly by the Coniston Local History Group and Coniston Parish Council. This resulted in a list of locally important heritage assets being drawn up which has been used since then to guide planning decisions. The list has been included in Annex 7.

The advantage of a community-developed list is:

- It is under the control of the community
- It will always be up to date
- It will be accurate
- It does not involve lengthy and costly listing or scheduling

The List includes places of worship and former educational buildings such the village schools.

Please refer to:

LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS27 – The Acclaimed Historic Environment

Policy CNP 4 – Buildings Structure & Sites of Historic Importance

- 4.A The determination of planning applications will take account of the need to conserve and enhance the character, structure, integrity and settings of scheduled ancient monuments and Grade 2 listed sites within the parish as well as locally important heritage assets as shown on the list in Annex 7.**
- 4.B In the event that a place of worship or the St Andrew's Youth Centre is no longer used for the existing purpose re-use proposals will be supported provided these are in accordance with the policies in this Plan.**

How to Implement

Through the determination of planning applications.

Complementary Supporting Action

The list of locally important heritage assets will be reviewed periodically in conjunction with the Coniston Local History Group.

5. Village Services

Aspiration

- 5.1 The Community wishes to ensure that local village services are retained and enhanced. This applies to services in both private and public services.
- 5.2 The Neighbourhood Plan will also seek to ensure that there will continue to be a range of small independent shops and services.

Background Information

Valued services identified in Coniston Parish Plan 2011/12:-

- GP surgery with dispensing service
- District Nurses
- First Responders
- Coniston Carers
- Coniston Sports & Social Centre and Football field
- Coniston CE Primary School (2014 – number on roll 48, school capacity 70)
- John Ruskin Secondary School (2014 – number on roll 154, school capacity 240)
- Coniston Childcare
- Outdoor swimming pool at John Ruskin Secondary School
- Playground
- Sports grounds – bowling, cricket & tennis
- Coniston Institute
- Fire Station & retained Fire & Rescue crew
- Coniston Mountain Rescue Team
- Crake Valley Motors
- Library
- Public toilets
- David Watts Hardware store
- Butchers and Coniston Co-operative Society
- Undertaker
- Youth Clubs
- Churches
- Recycling facilities
- Number of clubs and organisations in the village
- Tourist Information Centre
- Milkman retailer / Coniston Dairy
- Florist
- Hairdresser

Current facilities the community feel are required or could be usefully developed further are a bakery, a chiropodist and retail chemist facilities (non prescription).

Please refer to:

- LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS19 – Community, health & education facilities
- LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS20 – Vibrant settlement centres
- LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS21 – Open space and recreation

Policy CNP 5 – Village Services

5.A The Neighbourhood Plan will support appropriate development proposals that will enable the retention of key local services.

5.B The Neighbourhood Plan will:

- **encourage and support development proposals for vital services that may be at risk of closure or decline and also support new development ventures that will provide additional services and facilities,**
- **oppose development proposals that would result in the loss of a key local service unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a community need for the facility or that community use of the property is no longer suitable or viable.**

How to Implement

Through the determination of planning applications.

Complementary Supporting Actions

The services given in the Background Information will be monitored carefully for issues or trends that may affect their business so that any necessary action can be taken in a timely manner which may prevent loss of specific services.

Coniston Parish Council will facilitate an annual meeting of public and private stakeholders of relevance to the area to provide positive feedback and ensure service providers are aware of the relative isolation of Coniston and the problems that could occur if facilities were closed or removed.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will have regular contact with both schools in the village and be aware of any potential required changes.

The community considers it essential to retain a primary and secondary school in the Neighbourhood Area. Coniston Parish Council will strive to help maintain these facilities by making sure affordable housing needs are completely met, thereby ensuring young local families can remain in the parish and also by encouraging second home owners to allow their properties to be leased to those wishing to remain in the community.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will develop a Community Asset Register for South Lakeland District Council to ensure the community is told when any properties on this register come up for sale thereby enabling the community to acquire the property if appropriate.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will develop a Parish Register for vulnerable properties and land not eligible for inclusion in the Community Asset Register to enable the community to protect them and have some control over future use (see also Policy 4).

6. Tourism

Aspiration

- 6.1 The community wants visitors to Coniston to continue to recognise that it is a friendly, living and working community that takes pride in itself, the quality tourism experience it offers and the special qualities of the Parish.
- 6.2 The community wishes to ensure that tourism developments within the community are of an appropriate scale and meet the aims and wishes of the community as a whole.
- 6.3 The present accolade that Coniston is one of the leading centres for mountain walking in the North of England should be built on and promoted.
- 6.4 The Community is aware of the recent decline in tourism within the Lake District National Park. It wishes to recognise the causes for this decline and identify if any actions of a scale appropriate to the wishes of the Community, as identified in Policy 1 of this Plan, should be supported in the Parish.

Background Information

Coniston was one of the very first villages in the Lake District to welcome visitors (1710). During the early years of the 19th century tourism, as an industry, developed despite lack of suitable means of transport, as intrepid travellers reached the locality on foot and wrote about the village and its scenic attractions. Today, Coniston's special attraction as a visitor destination is that it still appears as a hard-working, friendly, 'real' local village and maintains a healthy distance from the pressures of mass-tourism and tacky tourist attractions. Those who provide facilities for visitors should aim to maintain this quality of service and Coniston's unique appeal to avoid discerning visitors from going elsewhere.

Currently (2014) the number of bed-spaces available for visitor accommodation are:

Hotels	57
Guest Houses / B&B	104
Youth hostels	86
Self catering accommodation	150

The following visitor attractions can be enjoyed in Coniston:-

- The landscape and natural history
- Coniston Water
- Coniston Boating Centre
- Steam Yacht Gondola
- Coniston Launch
- Ruskin Museum
- Brantwood House and Museum
- Coniston's rich industrial history
- Tarn Hows
- Rights of way and footpaths including Cumbria Way.
- Mountaineering venues, for example Dow Crag, Grey Crag.
- Iconic fell walking routes such as the ascent of Coniston Old Man.

Coniston has a Tourist Information Centre which has been run solely by local volunteers since 2008.

Many successful events are held within Coniston:-

- Records Week
- Coniston 14 Road Race – community organised event
- Malcolm Wilson Rally
- Coppermines / Grizedale Stages Rally
- Fred Whitton Four Seasons Ride
- Montane Lakeland 50 and Lakeland 100 Challenges
- Coniston to Barrow walk (as part of Keswick to Barrow walk)
- Guide Dogs Annual Charity Challenge
- Long distance swims
- Lakeland Trails Marathon & Coniston Challenge races

Important Visitor Accommodation available in the Parish

- Two Youth Hostels – Coppermines and Holly How
- Outdoor Education Centres – Low Bank Ground and Thurston
- Camping / caravan sites – Beckthwaite, Coniston Hall, Park Coppice, Pier Cottage
- Holiday Fellowship – Monk Coniston
- Hotels, guest houses and bed & breakfasts
- Self catering accommodation.

Visitor numbers for Coniston

- 250,000 – 300,000 (Jura Consultants producing the Ruskin Museum Business Plan for Bluebird Project in 2003)
- 30,000 Coniston Launch in 2010
- 27,934 Brantwood in 2010.

Visitor numbers for the Lake District National Park

- 15.8 million visitors a year (Source: STEAM 2009: Cumbria Tourism)
- 23.1 million tourist days (Source: STEAM 2009: Cumbria Tourism)
- Visitors to the Lake District coming by private motor vehicle: 89 per cent

Community concerns relating to tourism voiced during the Community Consultation exercise are that improved staff training is felt to be necessary within the tourist sector and the fact that some businesses would benefit significantly by up-grading their hospitality.

Please refer to:

- LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS21 – Open space & recreation
- LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS24 – Delivering sustainable tourism
- LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS25 – Protecting the spectacular landscape
- LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS28 – Lakeshore development

Policy CNP6 - Tourism

- 6.A The Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of new tourist attractions that have no significant adverse impact on the local community and are of an appropriate scale and in accordance with the policies of this plan.**
- 6.B The Neighbourhood Plan also supports development proposals that constitute an appropriate extension and / or improvement of existing tourist attractions and services, in particular:-**
- **Steam Yacht Gondola**
 - **Coniston Launch**
 - **Ruskin Museum**
 - **Brantwood**
 - **Coniston Boating Centre**
 - **Industrial archaeological sites including The Coniston Coppermines, Penny Rigg Copper Mill and Coniston Old Man 18th Century slate workings, provided the proposals are in accordance with the policies of this plan.**

How to Implement – Action Plan

Through the determination of planning applications.

Coniston Parish Council will review development proposals from tourist providers including the Coniston Business Forum and will work and give advice to all tourist providers on the suitability of the proposals to the Community.

Complementary Supporting Actions

Coniston Parish Council will monitor the effect on Coniston of the recent decline in tourism in the Lake District National Park and help, discuss and advise both those serving the tourist industry and also the wider community on what development proposals would be acceptable to counteract this decline, in accordance with the policies of this Plan.

Coniston Parish Council will continue to encourage visitors to make use of, and enjoy the outdoor opportunities provided by the mountains, forests, fell-sides and the Lake that are within the Parish.

Coniston Parish Council will also support and encourage tourist signposting of the above attractions from both the A590 and A591 routes.

Coniston Parish Council will encourage and assist tourism providers to build on the present accolade that Coniston is one of the leading centres for mountain walking in the North of England.

Coniston Parish Council is keen to support organised events that make use of the Parish's natural mountain, fell and water features where they are in accordance with the policies of this Plan and do not interfere with the life of the community or create overcrowding or excessive noise. In particular Coniston Parish Council will also continue to encourage and support recreational events that:

- provide a direct economic benefit to the Parish community,
- use the Cumbria County Council Notification of Events Form
- follow guidance given in Nurture Lakeland Guide to Sustainable Organised Recreational Events
- publicise their events to the community in advance
- Have minimal negative effect on the local community.

7. Transport / Traffic Management / Parking

Aspiration

- 7.1 Coniston Parish Council wishes to ensure that the number of vehicles on the local road network will be sustainable, allowing local people to go about their daily business unhindered. Visitors will be encouraged to choose to explore the Coniston area by bus, boat, bike and foot as an alternative to car and will encourage the continued development of off-road facilities. However major promotions of cycling should be discouraged until suitable alternative are available.
- 7.2 Coniston Parish Council wishes to ensure the retention of existing off-road and on-road parking facilities and support additional off-road parking which is of a modest size and is proven to be required.

Background Information

Figures from Cumbria County Council:-

A593 Broughton to Torver southbound – average daily traffic in 2012 = 572 vehicles
 A593 Broughton to Torver northbound – average daily traffic in 2012 = 588 vehicles

A5084 Lowick Bridge southbound – average daily traffic in 2012 = 853 vehicles
 A5084 Lowick Bridge northbound – average daily traffic in 2012 = 932 vehicles

A593 Clappersgate southbound – average daily traffic in 2012 = 3290 vehicles
 A593 Clappersgate northbound – average daily traffic in 2012 = 3304 vehicles

Congestion issues occur during the following dates and times.

Route	Date period	Times
A593, Ambleside to Coniston	Bank holiday weekends plus weekends March to October. Weekdays, holiday periods plus June to September.	9:30 am to 5:00pm.
A593, Coniston to Broughton		
A5084, Torver to Lowick Green		
B5285, Hawkshead to Coniston		

The Community values the bus connections from Ulverston and Windermere (X12 and 505).

Currently there is limited coach parking with only 2 coach parking spaces available on Lake Road by Coniston Water and 3 coach parking spaces at Ruskin Avenue. Frequency of coach visits during the main tourist season (May to September) is:

Month	Average weekly visits
May	Average 6.5 a week, (1 per day)
June	Average 7.8 a week, (< 2 per day)
July	Average 9.7 a week, (1 to 2 a day)
August	Average 9.2 a week, (1 to 2 per day)
September	Average 5.5 a week, (up to 1 per day)
Other times	Average 2.3 a week, (up to 1 every 2 days)

The on-street time restricted parking on Yewdale Road, where the majority of the shops are located, is valued by the community. The free car parking is available on Coppermines Road, Station Road, Old Furness Road, the Walna Scar Fell Gate, Hawkshead Old Road, Shepherds Bridge Lane, and other areas throughout the village is valued by the community and benefits visitors to the area.

Comparative details of visitor parking per week in the central village car park during the main tourist season is shown in the Companion Document '*Evidence to back up the Coniston Neighbourhood Plan*'.

Please refer to LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS14 – Sustainable transport solutions.

The community considers that many sections of the main roads serving Coniston are narrow with blind corners and present a hazard to both cyclists and pedestrians. Further use of main roads by cyclists should be discouraged until suitable alternatives are available.

The community has expressed concern about the fact that the permitted dimensions of tour buses that are allowed to use the main roads that serve the village has increased in recent years (by approximately 11%).

Policy CNP 7 – Transport / Traffic Management / Parking

7.A The Neighbourhood Plan supports development of the infrastructure that enables road users to remain safer, for example, through the provision of off-road cycleways to remove bicycles from main roads, and also footpaths to remove pedestrians from main roads.

7.B The Neighbourhood Plan also supports:

- **development that improves the management of traffic in the parish,**
- **development that ensure that existing parking areas in the village are maintained for use by both local people and visitors.**
- **development of additional parking facilities of limited size where there is a proven need for such facilities.**

How to Implement – Action Plan

Through the determination of planning applications.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will review with Cumbria County Council Highways the transport issues, including establishing off-road cycle routes to key locations within the parish and to improving 2-way traffic on Lake Road.

Coniston Parish Council will work with Lake District National Park Authority, National Trust and land owners to improve signage for footpaths and bridleways.

Coniston Parish Council will pursue a bridleway from Coniston to Broughton, Coniston-Hawkshead and around Coniston Water by liaising with landowners and horse riders.

Complementary Supporting Actions

Coniston Parish Council will encourage authorities to improve the local road network to increase ease of access to and from Coniston for all road users.

Coniston Parish Council will work with bus transport authorities to examine the feasibility of:

- establishing new routes such as linking Coniston directly to the West Coast Main Line rail services at Oxenholme via Ambleside and Hawkshead,
- and improving the connections between new electric train services running from Manchester Airport into Windermere station once electrification to Windermere has been completed.

Coniston Parish Council will work with local organisations and authorities on car park pricing with the aim of establish appropriate realistic pricing for car parks to support the community, local businesses and help encourage visitors to the area.

Coniston Parish Council will work with Cumbria County Council Highways Department to accommodate the parking of additional coaches at agreed locations on the edge of the village.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with the Coniston & Torver CLT will work with Cumbria County Council Highways, the Planning Authority and landowners to survey the car-parking needs for residents and visitors to the village and establish any required off-road parking to meet the results of the survey.

Coniston Parish Council will work with Cumbria County Council Highways to identify possible solutions to the problems that are likely to be caused by the permitted increase in the size of tour buses using the narrow main roads into the village.

8 Environmental Sustainability

Aspiration

- 8.1 The Community of Coniston wishes that the local environment, including the landscape, special habitats, flora and fauna will be protected and we will have effective measures in place to attempt to guard against the adverse effects of climate change. The non-renewable resources will be used wisely and all the buildings will be as energy efficient as possible.
- 8.2 The community will be fully protected from future flooding incidents by joint action between the Coniston Flood Forum group, Coniston Parish Council, local authorities and the Environment Agency to ensure timely preventative-action work is completed.
- 8.3 Yewdale Wood, Tilberthwaite Valley, the Coppermines valley, Monk Coniston and Common Lands to the south of the village are used by many local people and visitors for walking and cycling. These areas are important in their current state and the community would like them to be retained as such.
- 8.4 Coniston Parish Council is keen to promote renewable energy schemes within the Parish which are realistic in benefit and where there is minimal visual effect on the environment.

Background Information

Coniston as a community is generally supportive of the LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS15 which requires that all new development incorporates the highest practical energy efficiency standards. Where possible, Coniston residents would also like to see existing buildings obtain higher still energy efficiency standards.

Renewable Energy

Potential sites for additional renewable energy hydroelectric schemes include:

- Former Far End Saw Mill site, fed from Yewdale Beck
- Scrow Beck (above the existing Coppermines Beck scheme)
- Meally Gill, above Holywath footbridge

Flooding

The flooding events in 2005 and more seriously in 2009 suggest that increased storm rainfall events are to be anticipated. Part of Coniston is a designated flood risk area by the Environment Agency with serious potential threat to life and property.

Additionally, there are records of historic flooding in Coniston dating back to 1850. Flood modelling carried out by the Environment Agency confirms which areas in the village are at greatest risk of flooding. Twelve residential properties out of approximately 500 in the village were flooded in 2009 which is to date the worst flooding experienced in Coniston since 1950.

The sites in the Parish designated as being prone to flooding are shown on the Environment Agency flood map (April 2014 edition) (see Companion Document '*Evidence to back up the Coniston Neighbourhood Plan*').

There is a Low and Medium Risk of flooding within the village and a High Risk of flooding adjacent to the lake shore.

Definitions and references:

Quieter areas = restful, tranquil areas, free of loud noise, and also natural areas with no developments.

Green corridor = land close to urban environment with habitat to support wildlife, biodiversity and promotes environmentally sustainable forms of transport

Please also refer to:

LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS16 – Generating renewable and low carbon energy

Policy CNP 8 – Environmental Sustainability

8.A When determining planning applications affecting the following environmental attributes of Coniston Parish, due account will be given to protecting, enabling and enhancing:

- **the Coniston & Crake Catchment area to ensure the long-term protection of water quality within the area.**
- **Yewdale Wood to protect it as a green corridor**
- **renewable energy schemes including hydro schemes**
- **the quieter areas at the head of Coniston Lake in the Monk Coniston area**
- **the Yewdale and Tilberthwaite Valleys**
- **Coppermines Valley**
- **the Common Lands to the south of the Village**

8.B Development proposals and engineering works which reduce the risk of flooding will be supported.

How to Implement – Action Plan

Through the determination of planning applications.

Coniston is supportive of renewable energy and the objectives of LDNPA Core Strategy Policy CS16. In particular, the parish is keen to attract renewable energy schemes that demonstrate evidence of community consultation at early stages in the development – especially when this leads to a tangible benefit to the community. This could, for example, be in the form of allowing community investment in the scheme or developer investment in other low carbon initiatives in Coniston. The Parish will identify potential schemes and invite interest from private funders.

The parish is keen to see its renewable energy opportunities optimally utilised. The parish is particularly keen to develop local hydroelectricity potential, and would like to see greater use of renewable heating – especially in off-gas buildings, to achieve the greatest reductions in fuel bills and carbon emissions. Therefore, as above, the parish will identify potential schemes and invite interest from private funders.

Complementary Supporting Actions

Coniston Parish Council will support and promote any work that is undertaken to protect and enhance the natural environment and the landscape of the parish.

Studies by Coniston and Crake Catchment Partnership are ongoing with respect to the effect of current environmental issues on the long term water quality in Coniston Water and associated watercourses.

Coniston Parish Council in conjunction with Coniston Flood Forum will liaise with the Environment Agency to request and support any hard engineering solutions to flooding threat and associated planning requirements and to ensure these plans are implemented in a timely manner. They will liaise with Cumbria County Council to ensure that all drains and gullies are kept well maintained to an agreed schedule to guard against surface water flooding. They will also ensure that full accurate assessments of flooding consequences are carried out with all proposed new developments in the parish.

Coniston Parish Council will work with South Lakeland District Council and Cumbria County Council to educate the parish on reducing wastage (for example water & energy saving) and to encourage the development of environmentally friendly schemes (for example walking buses).

Monitoring and Plan Review

Coniston Parish Council, supported by the Lake District National Park Authority will monitor and review progress annually of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The attached Performance Monitoring Framework (Annex 2) shows how the implementation of each policy in the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken and what efforts will be made to address under-performance.

An overarching review of the issues and concerns within the community will take place every 5 years. If this and/or the annual monitoring work shows that the Neighbourhood Plan is no longer fit for purpose then work will start on altering part or producing a new Plan.

Otherwise it is envisaged that the Plan will be replaced by a new one in 2025.

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