

# POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 21 October 2020

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Remote Meeting - The public proceedings of the meeting will be broadcast live and recorded for playback on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

Membership:

Councillors Brice, M Burton, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox (Chairman), English, Mrs Gooch, Harvey, McKay, Mortimer, Newton, Perry (Vice-Chairman), Round, Springett and de Wiggondene-Sheppard

*The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.*

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1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 16 September 2020	1 - 8
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any)	
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**Issued on Tuesday 13 October 2020**

**Continued Over/:**

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive**

14. Strategic Plan Review - Update on priority milestones	14 - 24
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## **PART II**

**To move that the public be excluded for the items set out in Part II of the Agenda because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reasons specified having applied the Public Interest Test.**

### **Head of Schedule 12 A and Brief Description**

17. Property Acquisition	Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	118 - 131
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## **INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC**

In order to ask a question at this remote meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 19 October 2020). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to submit a written statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 19 October 2020). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to comment on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk).

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## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Present:** Councillors M Burton, Clark, Cox (Chairman), English, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Harvey, McKay, Mortimer, Newton, Perry, D Rose, Round and Springett

**Also Present:** Councillors Harwood and Munford

29. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received by Councillors Blackmore, Chappell-Tay and Purle.

30. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following Members were present as substitute members:

- Councillor Garten for Councillor Blackmore
- Councillor D Rose for Councillor Purle

31. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

32. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillors Hardwood and Munford were present as Visiting Members for Item 13 – Strategic Plan Review – Update on Priority Milestones.

33. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

34. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

35. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

**RESOLVED:** That Item 15 – Property Acquisition 1 and Item 16 – Property Acquisition 2 be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

36. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2020

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Meeting held 21 July 2020 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed at a later date.

37. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

38. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were three questions from members of the public.

Question from Ms Kate Hammond to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee

*'In relation to your council-led garden community proposal at Lenham, can the chairman confirm what progress has been made with the principal landowners since 21st July?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

Ms Hammond asked the following supplementary question:

*'This is a public funded scheme; this Council has openly said that it's financial situation is critical and the evidence based reports published yesterday detailed how risky the delivery of the Council-Led Garden community is. Given your answer with regard to progress with the landowners, how can the Council justify further spending on this scheme?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Mr Richard Proctor to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee

*'At your meeting of the 29th April and with regards your Heathlands proposal, it was resolved by elected members that a progress report (or update) be provided as a standing item at each future meeting of this Committee. With its apparent absence from this agenda can the chairman give an update summarising any new progress since the last report on the 21st July?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Ms Gail Duff to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee

*'In relation to your council-led garden community proposal at Lenham, is the Chairman willing to provide reassurance that it is within the Council's gift to deliver the promised first 1,400 homes of the scheme by 2038, as offered to the Local Plan Review?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

The full responses were recorded on the webcast and made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

To access the webcast recording, please use the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csgUoArt0Q>

39. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

40. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

41. STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW - UPDATE ON PRIORITY MILESTONES

The Chief Executive introduced the report, with the review and revision of the priority outcomes for the period 2021-2026 as the first step of the wider strategic plan review process. Further reports would be presented to the Committee later in the year, which would include a report on the full consideration of the Covid-19 pandemic. These reports would be informed by two consultation processes with the public and Members, that concerned the experienced and lessons learned from the pandemic. The effects of Covid-19 on the local community and the Council's resources has been significant.

The Chief Executive highlighted that Appendix 1 to the report summarised the feedback received from individual Members and political groups on the existing milestones that had been adopted for implementation between 2019-2024. It was noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair of each service committee had been consulted on the issues raised.

The Committee were asked to provide feedback on the scope of the report, and whether any additional considerations needed to be raised. Officers would then develop the proposals, providing advice, and options where appropriate, on the issues identified. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the service committees would continue to be consulted.

The Committee expressed concern that if Climate Change was made a cross-cutting issue, there would be less impetus on officers to consider the issue. The Committee also felt the expertise provided by the role of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer would be crucial to delivering the action plan, particularly to leverage in funding through Biodiversity and Climate Change grants and funds. It was noted that the Go Green Go Wild Campaign funding was time-sensitive and secured as a singular payment through the Business Rates Retention Scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The content of the report be noted and that feedback on the assessment and conclusions drawn from Member consultation on Council priorities to date, be provided;
2. The feedback from Members concerning capital investment in section 2.9 of the report be noted, and that this forms the basis for officers to develop proposals for further development of the capital strategy and programme and for future organisational roles and arrangements, and to report back to subsequent meetings of the Committee, be agreed;
3. The context for place shaping and economic development as set out in the report be noted, and that the service review briefly described at paragraph 2.15 of the report, be agreed;
4. The issues which need to be addressed concerning the Council's role in community resilience as referred to in paragraph 2.19 of the report be noted, and that a report concerning a protocol be progressed initially via the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee;
5. The Council initiates dialogue with the Business Improvement District concerning current challenges and future investment in the town centre, be agreed;
6. Officers, working at pace with the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee, will review the scope of work undertaken and resources allocated to the community safety unit, be agreed;
7. The direction of travel on modernising the arrangements at the museum is now more modest and focuses on making the best use of existing spaces, be agreed;
8. The Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee review the contribution of the Hazlitt to the town centre economy and consider options for its sustainability, with the findings to be reported to this Committee, be agreed;
9. The reduction of the priority of raising resident satisfaction with cleanliness, to maintaining it, be agreed;
10. The reference to individual projects are removed from areas of particular focus in the Strategic Plan, be agreed; and
11. Climate Change becomes a cross cutting issue for all services to consider proactively and that an officer is required to lead this work and be proactive in finding funding streams to complement the Council's commitment, be agreed.

#### 42. FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report which included a Risk Update shown in Appendix 3 to the report at the request of the Committee following its June 2020 meeting. The impact of Covid-19 on the revenue budget shown in Appendix 1, with some mitigation achieved through the projected underspend on interest costs from a reduction in borrowing to fund the Capital Programme. The projected overspend for the current financial year was £3million. The Council was in the process of applying for a government scheme that would fund up to 75% of the income loss experienced from Sales, Fees and Charges. The current financial situation could be affected by a resurgence in Covid-19.

The major projects arising from the Capital Programme that included work to Brunswick Street, Union Street and the Innovation Centre would continue. In reference to Appendix 3 to the report, a higher level of risk had been attributed to the EU transition due to the threat of a No-Deal Brexit. The risk associated with poor partner relationships had been reduced due to the Council's performance with its' partners and specifically the Parish Councils during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown period.

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance highlighted that one of the three strategic indicators did not reach the first quarter target but was within 10% of the target. A total of 26 targetable indicators were reported to service committees, of which six did not achieve the target set, with four of these sat under the 'A Thriving Place' strategic priority, and had been impacted heavily by the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown period.

The number of affordable homes missed the target by 12 homes which was a direct result of the pandemic as site operations were forced to close temporarily. The construction work has now resumed with Covid-19 measures in place and would take longer to complete.

#### **RESOLVED:** That

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 1 for 2020/21, including the actions taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 be noted;
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 1 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted; and
4. The Risk Update, attached at Appendix 3 to the report, be noted.

43. PROPERTY ACQUISITION 1

The Housing Delivery Manager introduced the report and referenced the Housing Development and Regeneration Investment Plan that was agreed by the Committee in July 2017.

The Committee were informed that of the properties, 12 would have two bedrooms and 2 would have one bedroom and parking facilities were available for all properties. Upon completion, the properties would be managed by Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd (MPH). The predicted internal rate of return calculated on the total Net Market Rental Income meets the financial hurdle rate set for such investments.

Several Members of the Committee expressed doubt in the suitability of the proposed acquisition as they felt that the investment may not necessarily bring about new supply of housing in the market place, as they were homes that would otherwise be available for market sale. Concerns were raised about the lack of social and affordable housing provided and it was clarified that this investment was in accordance with the agreed investment plan which did include affordable housing on other sites.

The Committee considered the investment opportunity and predicted income generated for the Council, as opposed to other methods of increasing income that included an increase in fees and charges and Council Tax. The Committee felt that as the Council's housing company, Maidstone Property Holdings would become the landlord, it would be in a strong position to offer tenancy longevity and a high-quality service.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The financial returns for the scheme shown at Exempt Appendix 2, which support the Housing Development and Regeneration Investment Plan, be noted;
2. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to enter into a land transaction and development agreement with the developer, together with any related appointments, legal actions, deeds and agreements which may be required to facilitate the purchase;
3. The Head of Mid-Kent Legal Services be authorised to appoint the Solicitors required to complete the necessary contract documentation, heads of term, deeds and agreements associated with the purchase on the terms as agreed by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement;
4. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to appoint a management organisation on agreed terms to manage the property and the market rental apartments and to procure and award such contracts for any

services, including repairs and maintenance contracts as necessary;  
and

5. The Director Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to grant such lease(s) of the Property as necessary on terms to be agreed, and authorise the completion of such lease(s) and all ancillary deeds and agreements and the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services be authorised to complete the necessary legal formalities for such lease(s) in due course.

#### 44. PROPERTY ACQUISITION 2

The Housing Delivery Manager introduced the report and noted that the properties under consideration were two-bedrooms in size, with parking facilities and private rear gardens, to be let at market rent rates. If purchased, the properties would be leased to Maidstone Property Holdings Limited (MPH). The predicted internal rate of return, calculated on the total Net Market Rental Income meets the financial hurdle rate set for such investments. The properties were well situated in terms of access to local amenities, and the advice received from agents had indicated that a good level of demand for the properties would be achieved as a result.

The Committee considered the scheme's viability, the purchase price and concern with purchasing properties initially intended for market sale. It was confirmed that the discounted purchase price was based on the Council's own valuation advice rather than through the developer's assumed values.

In response to questions it was confirmed that once transferred to MPH a suitable pet policy would be chosen as this was already being discussed by the company. The fees shown within Appendix 2 of the report would be a one-off payment.

The potential for implementing provisions that promoted the let of the properties to local residents, in the first instance, was discussed. It was noted that that officers would explore a local lettings policy for some of the MPH housing portfolio.

#### **RESOLVED:** That

1. The financial returns for the scheme shown at Exempt Appendix 2, which support the Housing Development and Regeneration Investment Plan, be noted;
2. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to enter into a land transaction and development agreement with the developer for the sums given in Appendix 2, together with any related appointments, legal actions, deeds and agreements which may be required to facilitate the purchase;

3. The Head of Mid Kent Legal Services be authorised to appoint the Solicitors required to complete the necessary contract documentation, heads of terms, deeds and agreements associated with the purchase on the terms as agreed by the Director of Finance;
4. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to appoint a management organisation on agreed terms to manage the Property and the market rental apartments and to procure and award such contracts for any services, including repairs and maintenance contracts as necessary; and
5. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to grant such lease(s) of the Property as necessary on terms to be agreed, and authorise the completion of such lease(s) and all ancillary deeds and agreements and the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services be authorised to complete the necessary legal formalities for such lease(s) in due course.

Councillor Garten requested that his dissent with the resolution be noted.

45. DURATION OF MEETING

7.00 p.m. to 9. 37 p.m.

## 2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Heather House	P&R	25-Nov-20	Officer Update		William Cornall	William Cornall
Financial Hardship Update	P&R	25-Nov-20	Officer Update	?	Steve McGinnes	Steve McGinnes
Office Provision - Principles	P&R	25-Nov-20	Officer Update	Yes	Mark Green	Georgia Hawkes
Council Led Garden Community Update	P&R	25-Nov-20	Officer Update	?	William Cornall	William Cornall
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2025/26	P&R	25-Nov-20	Governance	Yes	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q2 Budget, Performance and Risk Management 2020/21	P&R	25-Nov-20	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Archbishop's Palace Options Appraisal	P&R	16-Dec-20	Asset Management	Yes	Mark Green	Lucy Stroud
Office Provision	P&R	16-Dec-20	Officer Update	Yes	Mark Green	Georgia Hawkes
Council Led Garden Community Update	P&R	16-Dec-20	Officer Update	?	William Cornall	William Cornall
Collection Fund adjustment 2020/21 and Council Tax Base 2021/22	P&R	20-Jan-21	Governance	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Council Led Garden Community Update	P&R	20-Jan-21	Officer Update	?	William Cornall	William Cornall
Medium Term Financial Strategy - Capital Programme 2021/22 - 2025/26	P&R	20-Jan-21	Governance	Yes	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2021/22	P&R	20-Jan-21	Governance	Yes	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Council Led Garden Community Update	P&R	10-Feb-21	Officer Update	?	William Cornall	William Cornall
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2021/22 - Final	P&R	10-Feb-21	Governance	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q3 Budget, Performance and Risk Management 2020/21	P&R	10-Feb-21	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Asset Management Strategy	P&R	TBC	Strategy Update	Yes	Mark Green	Georgia Hawkes
Commissioning and Procurement Strategy	P&R	TBC	Strategy Update	Yes	Mark Green	Georgia Hawkes

# Agenda Item 13

## **NOMINATION FORM TO OUTSIDE BODY**

Date 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020.....

<b>NAME:</b>	Clive English
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	C/O Maidstone House. King street Maidstone.
<b>TELEPHONE NO:</b>	07922616858
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION APPLYING FOR:</b>	One Maidstone Bid Advisory Board
<b>ROLE APPLYING FOR:</b>	Member
<b>REASON FOR APPLYING:</b>	I have been involved with the former Town Centre Management Company and then the BID for some time in one role or another. During that time I have been able to assist with the relaunch of the organisation and with several of its programmes. The new role is a valuable liaison between the Business Community, Council and other stake holders in the Town Centre, and I fill that my experience in this role will contribute to growing these important relationships.
<b>WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE COULD YOU BRING TO THE ORGANISATION?:</b>	Experience in general Committee Work, knowledge of the BID and the Town Centre, and of relevant issues such as Planning



### **NOMINATION FORM TO OUTSIDE BODY**

Date 12 Oct 2020

<b>NAME:</b>	Patrik Garten
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	Kingswood House Pitt Road Maidstone ME17 3NR
<b>TELEPHONE NO:</b>	01622 807 907
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION APPLYING FOR:</b>	One Maidstone Bid
<b>ROLE APPLYING FOR:</b>	MBC Member Representative on the BID Advisory Board
<b>REASON FOR APPLYING:</b>	To appropriately represent MBC and to ensure that MBC's political balance is properly reflected on this strategically important body.
<b>WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE COULD YOU BRING TO THE ORGANISATION?:</b>	MBC Councillor since 2016 MBC BID Representative 2019-2020 Member of Licensing Committee Member of SPI Committee Professional experience in business Called to the Legal Bar 2009

### **NOMINATION FORM TO OUTSIDE BODY**

Date: 13 October 2020

<b>NAME:</b>	Ashleigh Kimmance
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	4 Nicholas Close Barming Maidstone ME16 9PN
<b>TELEPHONE NO:</b>	07709143597
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION APPLYING FOR:</b>	One Maidstone BID Advisory Board
<b>ROLE APPLYING FOR:</b>	Member representative on the BID Advisory Board
<b>REASON FOR APPLYING:</b>	To be able to take on a new challenge.
<b>WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE COULD YOU BRING TO THE ORGANISATION?:</b>	<p>I have been an elected Member of Maidstone Borough Council since 2018 and serve as one of the Council's representatives on the Maidstone Twinning Association. I have good interpersonal skills and would like to further increase my skillset.</p> <p>I have over 30 years of experienced as a cab driver within the town centre and know the area well. I currently serve on a management board for a Housing Co-op Ltd company.</p>

# Agenda Item 14

**Policy and Resources Committee**

**21 October 2020**

## **Strategic Plan Review – Update on priority milestones and 2020/21 budget**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Council
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Alison Broom - Chief Executive Anna Collier – Policy and Information Manager Ellie Dunnett – Head of Finance
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides a brief update with respect to the decisions made by the Policy and Resources Committee in September concerning review of the Strategic Plan in the context of change and uncertainty for the council's financial position and service delivery arising from the impact of the Covid19 pandemic.

### **Purpose of Report**

Noting

### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the Committee notes the report

### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Policy and Resources Committee	21st October 2020 25th November 2020 16th December 2020 20th January 2021 10th February 2021
Council	24th February 2021

## Strategic Plan Review – Update on priority milestones and 2020/21 budget

### 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>This report considers the proposed areas of focus for the Strategic Priorities for the next five years and identifies action for progressing the shaping of the areas of focus for 2021-2026.</p>	Chief Executive
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>Members will also consider the crosscutting objectives when they review and agree areas of focus for 2021-26 and the MTFS as it develops</p>	Chief Executive
<b>Risk Management</b>	Already covered in the risk section	Chief Executive
<b>Financial</b>	The Strategic Plan sets the Council's Priorities and the direction for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	This report is for noting	Chief Executive
<b>Legal</b>	This review of the Council's priorities within the Strategic Plan will enable the Council to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner and which meets the needs and	Legal Team

	<p>aspirations of local inhabitants and stakeholders.</p> <p>In reviewing the priorities, the Council is obliged to ensure that its financial obligations are adhered to. The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and continue to monitor the budget during the course of each municipal year and take remedial action if at any time it appears likely that expenditure will exceed available resources. This review is relevant to the statutory obligation.</p> <p>The S151 Officer has a personal duty under Section 114(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to report to the Council if it appears that the set budget will be exceeded.</p> <p>This will also include the impacts of Section 115(6) of the Act which prohibits any new agreement which would incur expenditure from being entered into following the release of a S114 report and consideration of the implications by the Council. Having received a S114 report, members are obliged to take all reasonable practical measures to bring the budget back into balance. Key considerations for the Council include the need for an adequate contingency provision, taking into account the S151 officer's guidance on the financial prudence of options before members and ensuring that there are reasonable grounds for making decisions.</p> <p>The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 place obligations on the Council to ensure that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control which includes arrangements for management of risk. The review will also contribute to the obligation being discharged.</p>	
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	<p>The recommendations do not have an impact on privacy and data protection. If as a result of the update to the milestones and the emerging MTFS for 2021-2026 changes are required to services involving personal data, then data privacy impact assessments will be undertaken.</p>	Policy and Information Team

<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment. If as a result of the update to the milestones and the emerging MTFS for 2021-2026 changes are required to services, then an Equalities Impact assessment will be undertaken	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	The report is for noting however the financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the council will have an impact on how council services are delivered and therefore will also impact upon the wider determinants of health.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The report updates the Committee on a review of Community Safety that was itself agreed by the Committee in September 2020	Head of Service or Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	No implications	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting of 21 July 2020 this committee agreed the approach and timetable for a review of the priorities and outcomes in the Strategic Plan 2019 to 2045 and updating the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to cover the five-year period 2021 to 2026. The first steps in this review including engagement with all councillors were undertaken in August and reported to the Committee at its September meeting where decisions were made about key areas of focus for cost reduction and approaches to leveraging resources to complement the council's spending and investment. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on progress made with respect to these decisions. The report also contains a brief summary of results from the council's survey of residents' experience of the first phase of the Covid19 pandemic. The survey closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 and a more detailed report will be made to a subsequent meeting of this Committee.
- 2.2 The current Strategic Plan was developed involving a wide cross section of Councillors, staff and other stakeholders in 2018 before being adopted in December of that year. The vision and priorities are clear and remain relevant. Progress has been made across all priorities and details were set out in the July report. Considering the pandemic and its significant impact, work is now being carried out to review our outcomes for 2019/24 to produce a refreshed set of outcomes for 2021/26 reflecting the change in context and resources arising from the impacts of the Covid-19 health emergency; the outcomes and milestones also need to respond to our Covid-19 recovery approach.

## Context

- 2.3 Covid-19 has had a major impact on the Council's financial position. Members were advised of the scale of the impact as currently assessed at the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 July 2020. The impact was set out for the current financial year and for the period of the MTFS. In July, this Committee considered 3 scenarios – adverse, neutral, and favourable. The neutral scenario forecast a budget gap for 2021/22 of £3.3m (assuming that the pre-covid19 identified level of savings is achieved). This represents around 15% of the council's net revenue budget. Even if there is a rapid recovery from the pandemic, the financial impact will be felt for some time. The Council will have to draw on its reserves to fund the current financial year's deficit. The council will need to consider how quickly reserves can be rebuilt and the right level at which to maintain them in the future and reassess the overall level of resources available for the future.
- 2.4 A great degree of uncertainty remains around financial forecasts and the degree of support from central government. This arises from the complex context for local authority funding and changes that were being formulated pre Covid-19 for example with respect to business rates reform as well as the impact of the pandemic.

## Financial Update

- 2.5 The restrictions introduced in order to contain the Covid-19 pandemic continue to have a profound impact on the Council's financial position, both for the current year's forecast and the development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

## Revenue

- 2.6 The Council has continued to submit monthly financial monitoring information to the government. The most recent submission, showing the estimated income losses and expenditure pressures, and the forecast year end position as at the end of September 2020 is summarised within the tables below. The figures represent current estimates and will be subject to change depending on a variety of factors including the speed of economic recovery, further restrictions to contain the spread of Covid-19 and ongoing negotiations in relation to key contracts.
- 2.7 Additional expenditure has been incurred through the Council's response to the pandemic, in supporting vulnerable people, in particular finding accommodation for homeless people and establishing a community hub, purchase of personal protective equipment, and adapting Council buildings to facilitate social distancing. Other sources of pressure on expenditure budgets arise from the potential future costs of temporary accommodation following the removal of the ban on evictions from rented accommodation, and ongoing negotiations with third party suppliers in relation to leisure services following the closure of these facilities and consequent loss of income for the operators. The figures below include a provision for these costs.

<b>Additional Spending Pressures</b>			
	August 2020	September 2020	Full Year 2020-21
	£000	£000	£000
Housing (including homelessness)	3	3	190
Leisure & Cultural services	0	0	661
Environmental and regulatory	0	0	70
ICT	0	0	15
Revenues & Benefits	0	0	20
Shielding (including community hub)	0	0	115
Other services (including PPE)	0	0	313
<b>Total additional pressures</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,384</b>

*Additional Spending Pressures 2020/21*

- 2.8 The most significant budget pressures arise from income losses, both from non-collection of Council Tax and Business Rates, and reduction in the Council's capacity to collect income through sales, fees and charges because of lockdown, government restrictions and social distancing measures related to the pandemic. Current monitoring indicates a slight improvement in the income position, mainly in relation to car parking. At the peak of the lockdown, pay and display parking income collection was down 97% year on year, compared with 60% based on more recent monitoring data. However, parking income makes up a very significant proportion of the council's annual budget (approximately 10% of total resources) and so losses of this level remain very significant in financial terms if the situation continues for a prolonged period.
- 2.9 The Council has recently submitted the first in a series of applications for compensation under the Government's scheme for sales, fees and charges income losses. Under the scheme, Councils will absorb losses up to 5% of their planned 2020/21 sales, fees and charges income, with the government compensating them for 75p in every pound of relevant loss thereafter. We will update the committee on the outcome of this claim when we receive notification from the government.

<b>Income Reductions</b>			
	August 2020	September 2020	Full Year 2020-21
	£000	£000	£000
Business Rates (MBC share)	150	85	703
Council Tax (MBC share)	70	45	855
Sales, fees and charges:			
<i>Parking services</i>	108	75	1,226
<i>Property rentals</i>	152	153	1,217
<i>Leisure &amp; cultural services</i>	47	74	519
<i>Planning fees and advice</i>	32	32	483
<i>Other fees and charges</i>	155	92	717

<b>Total income reductions</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>5,720</b>
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*Loss of income 2020/21*

- 2.10 The government has allocated £3.7bn emergency funding to help local authorities respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. Maidstone Borough Council's share of this is £2.051m. Combining the projected spending pressures and loss of income with this funding, the estimated total impact for this financial year is as follows:

	August 2020	September 2020	Full Year 2020-21
	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure pressures	3	3	1,384
Income reductions	614	556	5,720
Government support	0	0	-2,051
<b>Total impact</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>-860</b>	<b>-5,053</b>

- 2.11 The Council holds sufficient reserves within the general fund and earmarked reserves to fund this shortfall. However, this will represent a significant reduction in reserves which will need to be replaced over the course of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in order to ensure that the Council continues to be financially resilient.

#### Capital

- 2.12 Several capital schemes were put on hold in the first quarter of the year during the initial lockdown period. Most schemes are now progressing as planned, with key projects including the Innovation Centre at Kent Medical Campus and housing developments at Union and Brunswick Street expected to be complete by the end of this financial year. Total expenditure of £28.4m is expected for this financial year.
- 2.13 The Mote Park Visitor Centre and Estate Services Building project remains within the capital programme but has been delayed. A new employer's agent has been appointed and plans are in place to tender the works for this scheme before Christmas. If the tender prices are on budget the works will commence in April 2021.

#### Cash Flow

- 2.14 The Council's cash flow position is currently healthy, although this is expected to decline towards the end of the financial year with reduced receipts from Council Tax and Business Rates placing additional pressure on liquidity and increasing demand for short term borrowing.

#### Next Steps for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy

- 2.15 Medium term financial planning for the period from 2021/22 onwards is progressing, with the current strategic revenue projection identifying a budget gap of £3.3m for next year. Work to identify savings and increase

income generation to help close this gap over the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period is ongoing. Consideration will be given to all sources of funding available to the council (including reserves), and how best to deploy these to ensure that the council remains financially resilient and well placed to support recovery. A detailed report on the Medium-Term Financial strategy will be presented to Policy and Resources committee at its meeting in November. Locally, work on recovery planning is also progressing. As chair of Kent Finance Officers Association, Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business improvement is chairing the finance recovery cell at county level. This group is focussed on short, medium, and longer-term recovery of finances, including loss of income, and cost recovery.

#### Service delivery prioritisation

2.16 As noted in September service prioritisation needs to be conducted and concluded at pace so that the ramifications can be assessed and quantified and a proposed revised MTFS can be properly evaluated and presented to members by December 2020. It will be complemented by several other pieces of work described in the July report to Policy and Resources Committee by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement which will address;

- better use of technology
- external grant funding
- income generation
- office accommodation
- overhead costs of delivering the capital programme
- overhead costs of project delivery
- service commissioning
- shared service arrangements
- staff reward packages
- the structure of democratic representation and
- synergies between service areas

2.17 The Council remains committed to delivering the vision in our Strategic Plan in a period of significant change and continuing uncertainty. This is not only as a result of the Covid-19 but also from central government policy changes including for spatial planning (currently the subject of consultation) and devolution (consultation which had been anticipated this autumn has been delayed until 2021). These are likely to have significant consequences for how and at what pace we can deliver our vision.

2.18 Success in delivering the vision for the borough as reflected in the council's Strategic Plan and the more specific short to medium term priorities depends on community leadership and collaboration with partners in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors.

2.19 The decisions made in September by this committee were

- Further development of the Council's capital strategy and programme including consideration of partnership funding of large-scale projects

and infrastructure including consideration of joint ventures and development corporation

- A review of planning and economic development services reflecting on the effectiveness of our current services and reconsidering our service delivery model taking into account the changes in the planning system and looking at: expertise, organisational arrangements, including the synergies between planning policy and economic development, our arrangements for delivering/enabling construction projects, and agility.
- A report concerning a protocol for working strategically with the community and voluntary sectors and parishes is progressed initially via the Communities Housing and Environment Committee
- That the council initiates dialogue with the Business Improvement District concerning current challenges and future investment in the town centre
- Officers review the scope of work undertaken and resources allocated to the community safety unit.
- The direction of travel on modernising the arrangements at the museum is now more modest and focuses on making the best use of existing spaces.
- Review of the contribution of the Hazlitt to the town centre economy and consideration of options for its sustainability.
- Reduction of the priority of raising resident satisfaction with cleanliness to maintaining it.
- References to individual projects are removed from areas of focus in the Strategic Plan.
- Climate change becomes a cross cutting issue for all services to consider proactively and that an officer is required to lead this work and be proactive in finding funding streams to complement the council's commitment

2.20 Since September attention has been particularly focussed on decisions which have the greatest bearing on achieving a balanced revenue budget for 2021/2 and beyond. Officers have developed options for future service delivery for our cultural services and have commenced work to enable review of community safety and planning and economic development services. As a result

- An options paper relating to the both the Hazlitt theatre and Maidstone Museums will be presented to the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee in November 2020
- A report setting out the scope for reviewing community safety will be presented to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee in November 2020
- Work has commenced to scope the review of planning and economic development services, in consultation with the Chairs of the relevant committees; in the meantime, cost savings with effect for 2021/22 are being identified
- Officers have initiated dialogue with the Business Improvement District concerning current challenges and future investment in the town centre; a meeting will take place at the end of October

- 2.21 As part of the Strategic Plan Review process the Policy and Resources Committee agreed consultation with the public concerning experience of the Covid19 pandemic. An on-line survey was conducted for a period of six weeks and which closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020. It covered feelings and impact for people, economic and lifestyle topics and sought feedback about council services and support available.
- 2.22 Over 1450 responses were received. The data will provide helpful information in terms of building up a picture of the general experience and views of our community. The data can be segmented for example in terms of demographic characteristics including age, ethnicity and gender and those who are more vulnerable to the health and economic impacts of the pandemic for example our shielded population or households with low income. Further work is being undertaken to ensure appropriate weighting before drawing any conclusions from the whole data set. Care will be taken to use the data intelligently. The survey results will be shared in more detail with the Member Covid19 Recovery Consultative Group and drawn on as one source of information for example in our planning for any further response during the Covid19 pandemic including communication, for the recovery phase(s), the council's wider work for example on financial hardship and response to other future emergencies.
- 2.23 A report concerning a protocol for working strategically with the community and voluntary sectors and parishes will be presented to the Communities Housing and Environment Committee at its November meeting. It will draw on experience of working together during the Covid19 pandemic, lessons learnt from the council's perspective and feedback from others including the Maidstone branch of the Kent Association of Local Councils and best practice from elsewhere in the UK.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 This report is for noting only.

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### **4. RISK**

- 4.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications. Risks related to amending actions in the Strategic Plan will be detailed in future reports to this Committee as the changes are finalised.

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### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 All Councillors were consulted on the areas of focus of 2019-2024, they were asked to consider which should be deleted, kept or delayed and

whether there were any new areas of action. The report also refers to consultation with the public with respect to their experience of the Covid19 pandemic.

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## **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 The actions agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in September 2020, which are reported for noting here, will be further progressed and will inform the Council's Strategic Plan milestones and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021-26
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## **7. REPORT APPENDICES**

- 7.1 There are no appendices
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## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**21 October 2020**

### Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Helen Miller, Overview and Scrutiny Officer Biodiversity and Climate Change
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### Executive Summary

The report sets out the outcome from the consideration of the Council motion, from April 2019, on the twin emergencies of biodiversity and climate change. The outcomes are from the Biodiversity and Climate Change Work Group appointed by Policy and Resources Committee.

The report presents the Targets, Strategy and Action Plan for agreement as well as principles for the resourcing and Governance of their delivery. This will ensure the Council fulfils its role in addressing the significant challenges of biodiversity and climate change and provide a robust platform for future decisions and actions to address these issues.

#### Purpose of Report

Decision

#### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Council commits to the following:
  - (a) A carbon neutral Council estate by 2030
  - (b) A net zero Borough by 2050
  - (c) An ambition of a carbon neutral Borough by 2030, if technology and national policy changes allow;
2. That the Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy be adopted;
3. That the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan be adopted as a living document recognising it will be updated as needed to deliver the Strategy and targets;
4. That the funding for the plan be delivered from the £1m pot, previously identified for this purpose, recognising that it will need to:
  - (a) Deliver invest to save initiatives where possible that pay back to the pot for further Biodiversity and Climate Change investment; and
  - (b) Prime projects to be in a position to secure 'shovel ready' funding and any other available sources of external funding; and

5. That the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be requested to bring a report to Democracy and General Purposes Committee outlining the Committee structure options for Biodiversity and Climate Change functions, including a dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or having Overview and Scrutiny functions embedded in the Communities Housing and Environment Committee.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Policy and Resource Committee	21 October 2020

# Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve Safe, Clean and Green corporate priority. By adopting a Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan the overall priority for these matters will be increased significantly.	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The report recommendations support the achievement of the Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected cross cutting objective by agreeing an action plan that will protect and increase biodiversity in the Borough.	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Risk Management</b>	See section 5	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Financial</b>	The expenditure for the Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer to support this work was agreed as part of the MTFS and reaffirmed at the last P&R meeting.  The planned expenditure will be from the agreed £1m pot set aside for this purpose but will need to spent on an invest to save basis where possible to be reinvested in action plan and to prime projects in order to bid for external funding.	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with the appointment of a Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer reporting to the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance. The need for this post was confirmed at P&R Committee on 16 September 2020. This action plan will impact on all services and biodiversity and climate change must be embedded across the Council. The new	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer will not be able to deliver this plan alone and there will be requirements for staff across the council if this plan is to be delivered successfully.	
<b>Legal</b>	<p>Local Authorities have a duty under Section 40 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 in exercising their functions to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Council's intention to create a Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan demonstrates compliance with the statutory duty.</p> <p>The Policy and Resources Committee are responsible for all policy matters not otherwise allocated to any other committee or to Council as part of the policy framework. As such it is for the Policy and Resources Committee to approve the strategy.</p>	Keith Trowell, Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	No impacts on Privacy and Data Protection identified as a result of the report and recommendations.	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	A high level Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and further assessments will be made as part of the delivery of the action plan.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	The actions of this report will have positive benefits on the health of the local population. They will enhance local green spaces that can have a positive effect on mental and physical wellbeing. Adaptation to climate change will lessen the likelihood and severity of negative impacts of climate change including heatwaves and flooding. Local air quality will improve with the transition away from fossil fuels for transport and power to electricity.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no Crime and Disorder issues to note.	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Procurement</b>	There will be significant ongoing procurement implications arising from adopting the strategy and plan as BDCC will be a procurement consideration for all future	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications

	procurement activities.	and Governance & Section 151 Officer
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In April 2019 the Council approved a motion recognising global climate and biodiversity emergencies and requesting the Policy and Resource Committee to;
- undertake a short review of Maidstone Borough Council's governance policies and progress aimed at addressing locally these twin threats and to report on findings;
  - consider a target date of 2030 for the whole of the Borough of Maidstone to be carbon neutral;
  - consider how the Council can strengthen local protection and enhancement of species, habitats and ecosystems services under available powers.

### Target Date

- 2.2 The target dates for the Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy have to consider multiple factors – the dates need to be deliverable but ambitious, they need to reflect scientific consensus and national and international political commitments, they need to consider technology and policy frameworks and they need to understand the urgency of the climate change crisis whilst reflecting the elements under the Council's control. As such the target date in the motion from Council was considered and is recommended to be the following:

- (a) A carbon neutral Council estate by 2030
- (b) A net zero Borough by 2050
- (c) An ambition of a carbon neutral Borough by 2030, if technology and national policy changes allow

These targets reflect the balancing of competing priorities set against the realism of the Council's finances and influence. It is fully recognised that they are extremely ambitious and will require significant work and commitment to deliver, as well as relying on positive developments in factors outside of the Council's control.

- 2.3 The Working Group determined that when all reasonable actions were taken with current technology, and within current government policy, no action plan could be created that would ensure the Borough would be carbon neutral by 2030. It recommends the targets be revised to a net zero borough by 2050, with an ambition of 2030 if technology and national policy changes allow. These revised targets would align us with the Government's and Kent County Council's targets of 2050.
- 2.4 The element of the target most under the Council's control is the emissions from its own estate. The Working Group recognised the importance of showing leadership on the climate change agenda by making the Council's

estate, fleet and activities carbon neutral by 2030. The Carbon Trust was commissioned to measure the current emissions and produce a Carbon Reduction Plan. The Carbon Reduction Plan identifies actions that, along with the expected decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, would reduce the Council's carbon footprint from 1232 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to 564 tCO<sub>2</sub>e which is by 54%. The Working Group recommends that the council commit to having a carbon neutral estate by 2030 and offsets any residual carbon emissions.

- 2.5 The Council's own emissions count for less than 2% of the overall carbon reduction required. The targets for elements outside the Council's direct control include procured services, where the carbon output far exceeds our own estate, but this is where the Council can influence outcomes though not directly control them, for example through its procurement processes and giving priority to biodiversity and climate change in all that it does. In order to deliver on the targets embedding the right culture throughout the organisation is a critical part of the Strategy.

### **The Strategy**

- 2.6 The Working Group recommend that the Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy, Appendix 1, which sets out the rationale for acting on biodiversity and climate change and a suite of themes that present the basis for decisions on the action plan and future development of it. The Working Group researched what it could control and influence for emissions within the borough. It sought expert advice, intelligence from the Climate Change and Biodiversity Residents Survey 2020, Appendix 3, and from an event for land managers on biodiversity. It used this to identify the themes of transport, buildings, renewable energy, waste, adaptation, biodiversity, communications and governance. It established an aim for each theme and developed actions to make real change with input from Heads of Service to ensure the actions were relevant and deliverable and the action plan has had input from Wider Leadership Team.
- 2.7 The Strategy, action plan and targets all recognise that the subjects of Biodiversity and Climate Change are global and constantly changing. National and international policies and technologies are constantly developing. It is also recognised that the scale of the problem is global and that Maidstone Borough Council is a small player in its contribution. However, the way to tackle the biodiversity and climate change emergencies is not just on the macro level, but on the micro too with everyone and every organisation contributing to making an impact. This is why a Strategy is presented, which allows an action plan to be put in place and then constantly developed so that it can be proactive and reactive to the changing biodiversity and climate change context in accordance with the agreed themes.

### **The Action Plan**

- 2.8 The actions were modelled to estimate the reduction of carbon emissions for the Borough by 2030. The actions, and other government policies including decarbonising the national grid, would reduce emissions by 35%.

Other actions were modelled, and it was determined that if unlimited resources were assigned the Council would not be able to reduce emissions below approximately 55%.

- 2.9 The Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan, Appendix 2, shows the actions the council will take to make a meaningful difference in the borough. It indicates the service areas carrying out the action and any costs. The costs for the borough are £1.75m-1.79m. It recommends the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan be adopted as a living document, recognising it will be updated as needed to deliver against the Strategy and targets.
- 2.10 Along with the action plan being a living document, every action within the plan will need to be assessed as it is implemented. All due processes will be followed to ensure value for money and maximum impact on biodiversity gain and carbon reduction. This is particularly important in the shifting environment of new technology and policy. However, it is crucial to understand the principle that carbon saved now is more valuable than carbon saved in the future.

### **Resourcing the Strategy and Plan**

- 2.11 A £1 million pot has previously been identified to address biodiversity and climate change within the borough. It is important that these funds are used solely to cover the additional costs arising from carrying functions in a manner that reduces emissions, or protects biodiversity, and not for business as usual costs of core functions. £1 million will not be enough to deliver against the targets. The £1 million pot will therefore need to be used to deliver invest to save initiatives, where possible, that pay back to the pot for further Biodiversity and Climate Change investment. These could include energy efficiency works on our estate that reduce running costs as well as carbon.
- 2.12 The external funding environment is extremely fluid with multiple funding streams open for short periods. Examples of current funds include the Green Homes Grant Scheme which provides 75% of the costs up to £5k per home to improve energy efficiency and could significantly reduce the funds required to improve energy efficiency of our temporary housing stock. The Renewable Heat Incentive is available for low carbon heating systems on our estate and makes quarterly payments based on the amount of heat generated for 20 years providing a financial as well as carbon payback on investment.
- 2.13 With the number and availability of grants the pot will need to be used to prime projects, including scoping and feasibility studies, to allow us to be in a position to secure 'shovel ready' funding and any other available sources of external funding.
- 2.14 Listed below are the headline cost estimates from the plan. A significant amount of further work will be required when implementing the actions to ensure costs are robust and accurate. As such the costings below should be taken as being for estimate purposes only. It is important to recognise that whilst investment from the pot will look for invest to save, as

biodiversity and climate change principles are prioritised across the Council it may be that in some instances services need to choose a more expensive option to gain biodiversity and climate change benefits. However, for our own estate, as a lot of carbon reduction comes from energy efficiency savings; carbon savings and cost savings go hand in hand.

### **Summary of Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan costs**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Install rapid charging points for electric taxis,	Up to £156k
Consultants for modelling recycling contracts	£10K
Address fly tipping	£40K
Subsidise home composting bins	£20K
Wetlands project creation	£50K
Tree planting, including buying land	£529-565K
Go Green Go Wild grants	£10K
Enhance biodiversity on our land	£10K
Improve energy efficiency of temporary accommodation	£103K
Replace remaining conventional car park lighting with LED	£15K
Make our estate carbon neutral by 2030 (Carbon Reduction Plan)	£807k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1.75m-1.79m</b>

- 2.14 The costs in this table are indicative only, do not take into account payback, the availability of grant funding, assume that the electrification of the council's fleet is done on a replacement basis, and are subject to change and evaluation at the point of delivery.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 That the Policy and Resource Committee approves the Targets, Strategy and Action Plan and endorses the spending principles for the funding pot as set out in this report. The Committee are also recommended to consider how governance of Biodiversity and Climate Change are carried out in the Committee system.
- 3.2 That no action is taken on biodiversity and climate change and no further action is needed. This is not recommended as the Full Council approved a motion recognising the global climate and ecological emergencies in April 2019 and Maidstone Borough Council has its role to play in addressing these.
- 3.3 That the Policy and Resources Committee amend and adapt the proposals as recommended to them by the Group.

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Policy and Resources Committee are recommended to adopt the Targets, Strategy and Action Plan put forward by the Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group and are recommended to review the Governance of Biodiversity and Climate Change within the Committee system going forwards, considering the Group's preference for an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and how that would fit into the current system.
- 

## **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan addresses the motion recognising the global climate and ecological emergencies declared in April 2019. The Working Group has found that the council is unable to ensure the borough is carbon neutral by 2030 yet created a plan that will deliver significant improvements in the next decade and allow the Borough to play its part in the country being net zero by 2050.
- 5.2 There is the potential for loss of reputation in stating the council is unable to ensure the Borough will be carbon neutral by 2030. However, it is important that the Council is transparent and honest it is approach and takes all the actions it can to reduce emissions.
- 5.3 If climate change is not addressed by the Council we miss the opportunity to take action to prevent the serious consequences of uncontrolled climate change as described by the International Panel on Climate Change. This organisation highlights the negative impacts of climate change on the increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, on biodiversity and food security. It stresses the need to strengthen the response to climate change to keep global warming below 1.5°C to avoid the seriously escalating consequences of a greater increase in temperatures.
- 5.4 If biodiversity loss is not addressed by the Council biodiversity will continue to decline in the Borough. Biodiversity provides ecosystem services including clean air, clean water, food and severe weather mitigation as well as its own intrinsic value.
- 5.5 Interest in biodiversity and climate change is high nationally and locally as indicated in the Climate Change and Biodiversity Residents Survey 2020.
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## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 On 22 April 2020 the Policy and Resource Committee resolved that the delay in reporting the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan to the Committee be noted and that the Action Plan be reported to the Committee as soon as it is practicable.
- 6.2 An online residents survey was run from 7 February 2020 to 20 March 2020. Over 1200 responses were received and used to inform the nine themes and actions of the action plan. Key findings included

- residents felt they had a good understanding of climate change with over 80% agreeing that reducing their impact on the environment was a personal priority
- residents felt they had a good understanding of biodiversity with over 80% agreeing that they were very concerned about the loss of the natural environment
- many residents were already adapting their behaviour around food, travel, energy efficiency and waste and more were willing to make change

When presented with a list of 14 actions around climate change and biodiversity and asked to identify their top five in order of priority the top three priorities were;

- plant trees and create other habitats for wildlife
- Invest in active travel infrastructure including cycle routes and pedestrian crossings
- Put in place more electric vehicle charging points

The Survey report is Appendix 1

- 6.3 On 13 March 2020 an event focused on biodiversity was run with land managers, farmers, developers, parish councils and information giving organisations. Over 40 people participated and 26 made pledges on what they would do including providing areas for wildlife, working in partnership and with the public, discussing biodiversity with planners, and links were made between habitat creation and flood management. An action will be added to the action plan regarding working with land managers and farmers after further liaison for clarification.

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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 The need for a communications strategy has been identified in the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan. The Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer will work with Heads of Service to ensure that the action plan is adapted and delivered and will provide regular updates.
- 7.2 A report to Democracy and General Purposes Committee will consider the best Governance arrangements for Biodiversity and Climate Change to ensure that Members are fully engaged in the Council's commitment to delivering against the Targets and Strategy.

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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

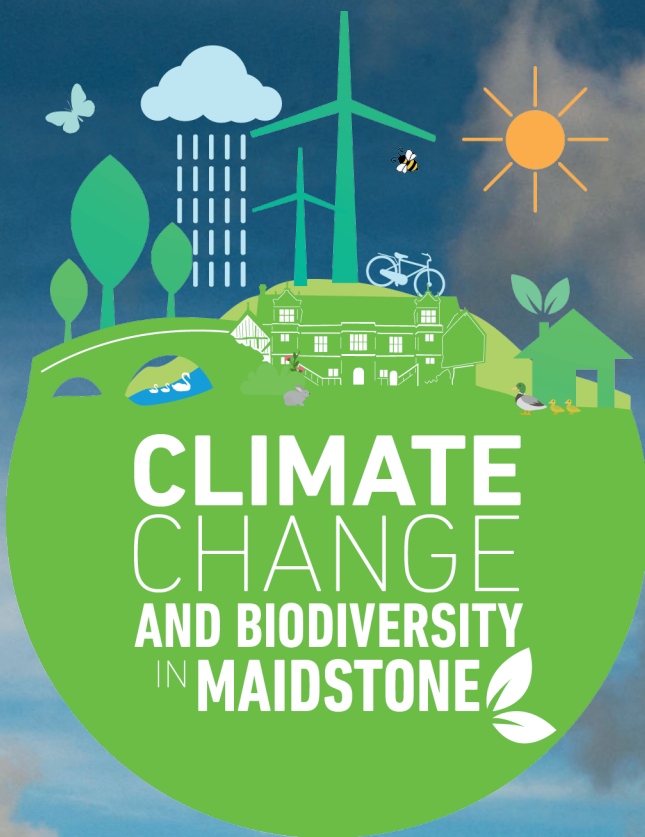
The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy 2020-30
- Appendix 2: Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan 2020-30
- Appendix 3: Climate Change and Biodiversity Residents Survey 2020

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Carbon Trust's Carbon Reduction Plan



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## Foreword from Councillor Harwood, Chairman of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group

People around the world are increasingly aware, concerned and demanding urgent action from their decision-makers to tackle human-caused global heating, degradation of natural habitats and catastrophic collapse of wildlife populations. Maidstone Borough Council has long understood the urgency of this crisis and published its ground-breaking **'Climate Change' overview and scrutiny report** in 2003, containing 50 wide-ranging recommendations. This was followed with the cross-party declaration of a **Biodiversity and Climate Emergency** in April 2019 and an aim of making the Borough carbon neutral by 2030.

Latterly, national and international policy caught up with our local aspirations when in June 2019, the UK Government enshrined in law a reduction in the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gases of 100% by 2050. Further, in May 2019 the United Nation's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) declared that 'nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history – and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world'. The evidence underpinning this declaration identified the UK as one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth. Subsequent detailed research, led by the Natural History Museum, documented the UK comes out bottom amongst the G7 leading economies in terms of how much biodiversity still survives, and that in the European context only Ireland and Malta come out worse, with the UK in the bottom 10% of all countries globally.

Following the Council's 2019 declaration of a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency a cross-party councillor working group was established to identify priorities for action. We sought expert advice to determine how to make unprecedented reductions to our own carbon emissions, and to learn about the actions we must take to cut harmful emissions and stem then reverse the decline in biodiversity across the Borough. To help us we sought the views of residents, businesses and land-managers on how they, and the Council, will phase-out polluting emissions and make us all more resilient to climate change while rescuing biodiversity in the Borough.

We used this work to identify nine clear themes for action. We framed challenging targets for each and identified actions we will take to achieve these aims. New, understanding, opportunities and technologies will emerge as we work to address the challenges we face. Therefore, our strategy must be flexible and adaptable, to make the most of new innovations. We must and will create an exemplar low carbon Borough while enabling a recovery of lost and damaged habitats and wildlife.

Climate change is hitting us harder and faster than modelling scenarios had predicted and, despite all the agreements and policy initiatives, deliberate destruction of natural habitats and wildlife is accelerating too. Climate change and ecological collapse cannot be dismissed as 'environmental issues', as too many people still believe. It is a universal threat, to our health and wellbeing, to agriculture, to peace and security, to quality of life and crucially also to the local, UK and global economy.

# 1 Introduction

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Human activities, including burning fossil fuels and changing land use from wetland or forest to farming, has increased the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, particularly since the industrial revolution. An increase in the level of greenhouse gases increases the global temperature. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [Report](#) 2018 states that the temperature has already risen by 1 °C. It advises that the greater the temperature rise, the greater the impacts of climate change will be to human health, water supply and biodiversity. It recommends rapid reductions in carbon emissions now with the aim to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in their 2019 [Report](#) found that human activities are having unprecedented adverse impacts on the world's species including one million species threatened with extinction. The State of Nature [Report](#) produced by the State of Nature partnership shows a significant decline in terrestrial and freshwater species in the UK since 1970.

Climate change, coupled with the biodiversity and habitat loss, is creating a mass extinction event that has severe impacts on all life on Earth. These challenges are being recognised across the globe with countries and organisations coming together to plan how to address them. Maidstone Borough Council will play its part locally in finding and implementing solutions to address the challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change.

In April 2019 this Council approved a motion recognising global climate and biodiversity emergencies. It created the cross party Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group cross to:

- Consider a target date of 2030 for the whole of the Borough of Maidstone to be carbon neutral
- Consider how the Council can strengthen local protection and enhancement of species, habitats and ecosystems services under available powers.

The Working Group recognises the importance and opportunity in addressing both emergencies together as set out in this strategy.

This strategy and the action plan set out how the council will reduce emissions from its estate to carbon neutral by 2030, work to reduce emissions in the borough by 35-55% by 2030 and is committed to reaching net zero by 2050. The plan is a living document and the Council's ambition remains to achieve net zero as soon as possible – we must take advantage of changes in national policy, new technology or any other opportunities that arise.

## 2 Climate Change

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### International Context

The IPCC provides scientific assessments of climate change, its implications and risks, and recommends ways to adapt to new climate patterns and reduce emissions. In 2018 it [reported](#) that the impacts of global warming would increase significantly when the temperature increase was more than 1.5°C. The report explained how limiting global warming to 1.5°C required emissions of carbon dioxide to be reduced by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 and reaching net zero emissions by 2050. This led to the United Nations Paris [Agreement](#) where countries agreed to work towards holding the increase in global temperatures to well below 2°C and to aim to limit warming to 1.5°C.

### National Context

In the UK the Climate Change [Act](#) 2008 set a target to reduce its carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. The UK [Committee on Climate Change](#) provides the five yearly carbon budgets which aim to reduce carbon emissions by 3% year on year. It describes how carbon is emitted in the UK from vehicles run on fossil fuels including petrol and diesel, from buildings heated by gas, oil or coal and from power stations burning gas or oil to create electricity. It guides the Government on the measures needed to reduce carbon emissions including the move from producing electricity from fossil fuels to low carbon methods, changing transport from fossil fuels to low carbon and reducing carbon from homes, farming and industry.

In 2019 the Act was amended to respond to the Paris Agreement to commit the Government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2050. The Committee on Climate Change will provide future carbon budgets, and guidance, to meet this new target.

In May 2020 the Committee on Climate Change set out key measures which will give economic, social and environmental benefits when rebuilding the nation after the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in a [letter](#) to the Prime Minister. These are:

- Investment in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure
- Supporting reskilling, retraining and research for a net-zero well-adapted economy
- Upgrades to our homes to ensure they are fit for the future
- Making it easy for people to walk, cycle and work remotely
- Tree planting, peatland restoration, green spaces and other green infrastructure

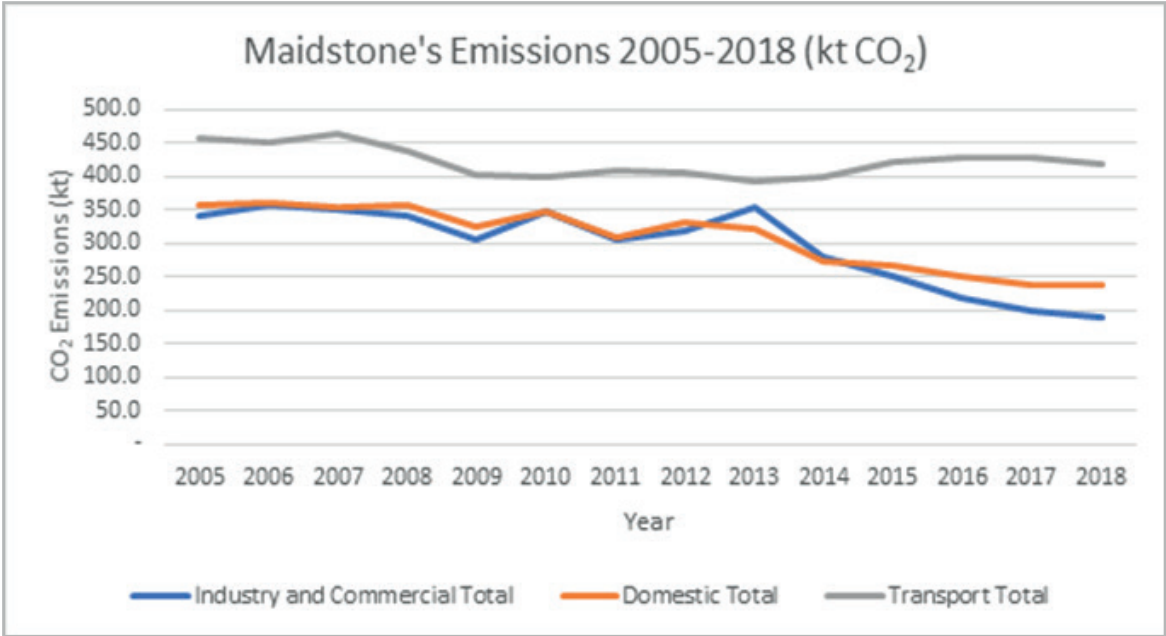
As well as substantially reducing carbon emissions this Council must also adapt to climate change. The Climate Change Act 2008 requires a Climate Change Risk Assessment every five years, and this sets out the risks and opportunities arising from climate change in the UK.

The 2018 National Infrastructure [Assessment](#) sets out a pathway for the UK's infrastructure for the next 30 years. It recognises the challenges of climate change and its recommendations include that the Government provide half the UK's power from renewables by 2030, the infrastructure for electric vehicles, and plan for resilience to flooding and drought.

Local Context

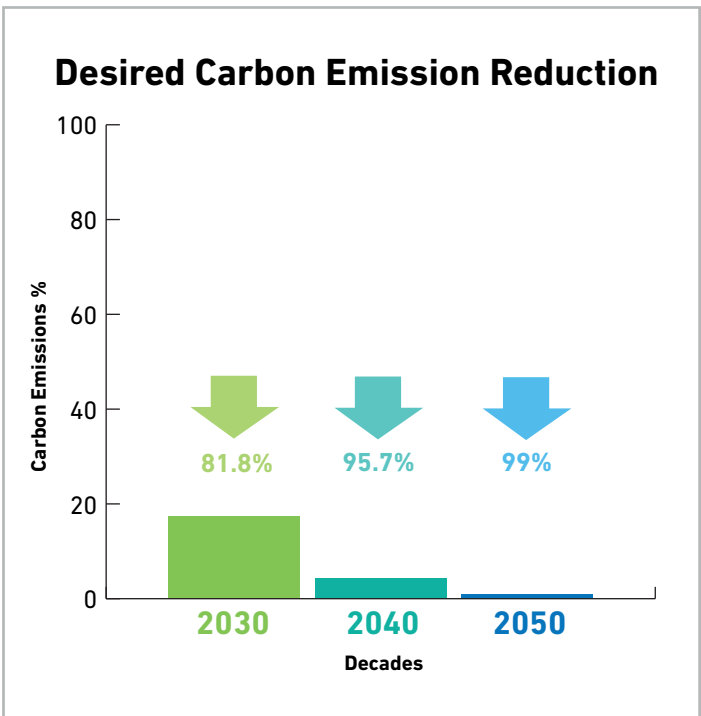
The Kent Environment Strategy, and Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, show how Kent County Council will work with partners, including Maidstone Borough Council, towards a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) data shows, that in the borough, carbon emissions from the homes, industry and commercial sectors have dropped since 2005, particularly since 2013, but emissions from transport have risen since 2014.



Total Carbon Dioxide Emissions by sector, (BEIS 2020)

The [Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research](#) brings science and engineering researchers together to develop sustainable responses to climate change. They developed a tool to show how much carbon emissions must reduce to meet the commitments agreed in the Paris [Agreement](#). This carbon budget provides a 'likely' chance of staying below 2°C and offers an outside chance of holding temperatures to 1.5°C.



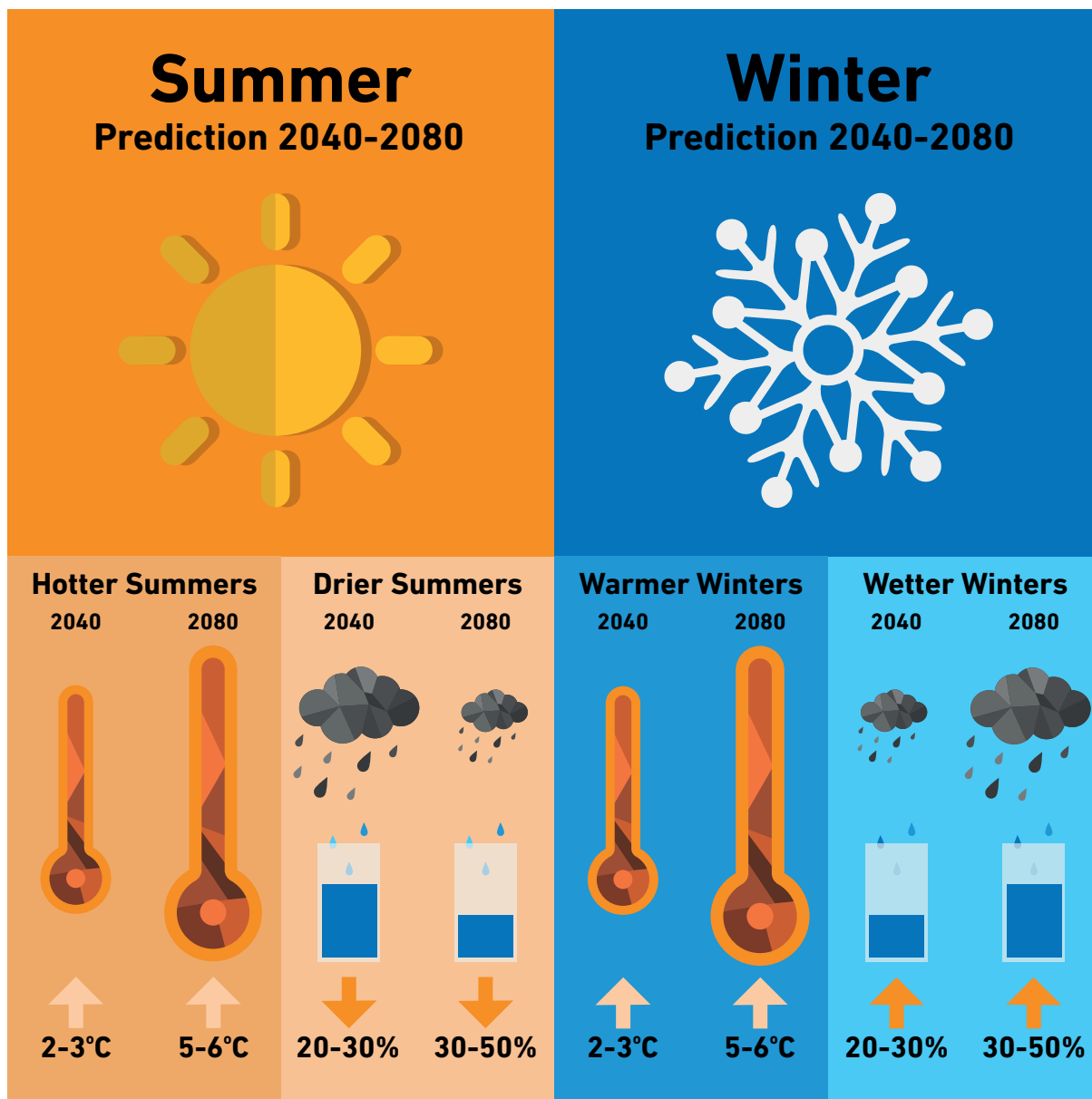
It shows Maidstone Borough should stay within a maximum cumulative carbon dioxide emission budget of 5.4 million tonnes (MtCO<sub>2</sub>) from now to 2100. At our current levels of emissions Maidstone Borough would use the entire budget by 2027 so, though emissions are reducing, we must take substantial action to ensure they reduce much faster.

The Tyndall Centre's research shows we need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 13.4% each year and reach near to carbon zero by 2041. This indicates we should reduce our carbon emissions by at least 81.8% by 2030.

Maidstone Borough Council recognised the climate emergency as a way of acknowledging the need for urgent and effective actions throughout the next decade to reduce emissions. The cumulative level of emissions is so important that a cut in emissions now is more valuable than the same cut later. It is vital to cut emissions now and not to delay just because the route for eliminating emissions is not clear at the start.

The [Kent and Medway Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment](#) (CCRIA) is provided to inform policy and decision-makers of the climate risks that will have the greatest impact on Kent's society, economy and environment, and provides the evidence for future planning.

The expected changes in Kent are:



We will continuously review the need to offset carbon. We will ensure offsetting is assessed in a robust manner and measure proposal against the following principles;

- Contribution to biodiversity in the borough
- Contribution to social good in the borough, which would include a reduction in fuel poverty or in flash flooding

We will have due regard to any guidance the Government produces on offsetting.

### 3 Biodiversity

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Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth including all ecosystems, wild, managed and urban. Healthy ecosystems help mitigate climate change by capturing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. They also help us adapt to climate change impacts by reducing flooding, providing shading to reduce excess heat and reducing soil erosion.

#### International Context

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assesses the state of biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides to society. In 2019 it warned that:

- Nature, and its vital contributions to people, is deteriorating worldwide
- the drivers of this change are accelerating
- that goals for conserving and sustainably using nature cannot be met by current practices and that goals for 2030 can only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors

It states that the UK is one of the most nature depleted nations on Earth.

#### National Context

The UK State of Nature 2019 [Report](#) explains how the abundance and distribution of species has declined since 1970 and continues to decline. It uses a 1970 baseline and recognises there was habitat loss and degradation before that date.

The State of Nature 2019 Report describes how human activity creates pressure on landscapes which has resulted mainly in losses, but also some gains, for biodiversity. Pressures come from agricultural management, urbanisation, pollution, hydrological change, woodland management and invasive non-native species. Climate change can change the timing of important natural events like migration, egg laying and flowering, sometimes resulting in mistiming between species.

The Environment Act, anticipated later this year, will set out how the Government plans to protect and improve the natural environment. It includes commitments to secure improvement on waste management, air and water quality, and biodiversity, and will create the Office for Environmental Protection to ensure improvements are made.

The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan, A Green Future; Our 25 Year [Plan](#) to Improve the Environment, was released in 2018. It uses a natural capital approach, where the socio-economic value of the natural environment is considered through the ecosystem services it provides.

The Environment Act will lay the ground for the Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Strategies across the country. These will help better spatial planning for nature recovery by setting out priorities and opportunities for protecting and investing in nature within a local area. This will help organisations, including Maidstone Borough Council, to identify priorities and opportunities for conserving and enhancing nature. The Act will establish spatial mapping and planning tools to help inform nature recovery and introduces the Environmental Land Management Scheme form of payments for land managers. This will encourage land managers to use nature based solution to challenges including flooding

and water quality. The Act introduces biodiversity net gain into the planning system which requires all new developments to enhance biodiversity. This is expected to lead to the creation, or improvement, of habitat for wildlife providing improvements in air quality, water flow control and provide space for outdoor recreation.

## **Local Context**

The Kent Nature Partnership provided the Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020 to 2045 which shows how the county can maintain, restore and create thriving habitats. It sets out how the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan can be delivered in Kent through a partnership including organisations, businesses and individuals and Maidstone Borough Council will have due regard to it.

The [Kent Biodiversity Strategy](#) can be used to inform local planning policy and decisions. It provides a framework for delivering biodiversity net gain, offering a focus for habitats and species of local importance and helping to identify areas for habitat management, restoration and creation. It will influence the development of a Local Nature Recovery Network in Kent.

## 4 Themes and Aims

Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2019-2046 sets the direction for Maidstone's long-term future. One of the four priorities in our strategic plan is Safe, Clean and Green and we have a cross-cutting objective to respect biodiversity and environmental sustainability.



We will focus on the areas that we can control and influence that will have the most impact on biodiversity and addressing climate change. We understand that some measures, including decarbonising the electricity supply and controlling the sale of vehicles powered by petrol or diesel, will come from Government policy, and we will take consultation opportunities to influence Government policy as well as being directed by it. We have been forced to accept that we cannot, with current powers and technology, ensure that the borough is carbon neutral by 2030. But this remains our aspiration as we aim to achieve carbon neutral status as soon as we can. We are committed to ensuring our estate becomes carbon neutral by 2030 and taking actions to help the borough become net zero by 2050 in line with the amended Climate Change Act.

We will use expertise from organisations including the [Carbon Trust](#) and the [Energy Saving Trust](#) to ensure our interventions are effective and we use up to date best practice. We will bid for external funding for works to address climate change and biodiversity to ensure the best possible outcomes for the Borough.

The Committee on Climate Change recommend that local authority plans focus on decarbonising heating and retrofitting homes, providing for infrastructure for walking and cycling and charging electric vehicles and helping the area adapt to climate change. Their Sixth Carbon Budget will provide further advice for local authorities and this will be used to update the action plan as needed and inform future action plans. It also recommended that the Government should incentivise, support and enable local authorities to deliver emissions reductions and climate adaptation measures at a local level.

In 2030 a subsequent strategy will be required to address the remaining emissions to bring us to net zero by 2050. In the [report](#) Net Zero; The UK's contribution to stopping global warming, the Committee on Climate Change set out a broad timeline for actions required in the decades to 2050. In 2020-30 we must decarbonise electricity, improve the energy efficiency of buildings including using heat networks and heat pumps, provide the charging infrastructure and reduce waste and increase the proportion going to recycling. In 2030 to 2050 we must expand the heat networks and move from gas to other fuels, have zero emission vehicles, prevent emissions from waste, and roll out infrastructure for HGVs to move away from fossil fuels.

We will work with our partners to address climate change and biodiversity together and residents and businesses will be encouraged and supported to play their part. We also understand that some actions may be unpopular with some people and hope that we have explained why it is essential and urgent for us to take these steps to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

This strategy is organised into nine themes. These are areas that were raised in our 2020 Residents' Survey on Biodiversity and Climate Change, in the consultative event with land managers in March 2020, and areas where we believe the Council could have an impact. Each begins with our aim, briefly describes relevant national policy, outlines any local data and highlights any points from the consultative actions. It identifies some of the actions to be taken with more detail given in the action plan. The action plan is a living document and we expect changes in policy, technology and national climate change funding to present further opportunities for addressing climate change and enhancing biodiversity.

Theme 1 - Transport

Our aim for transport:

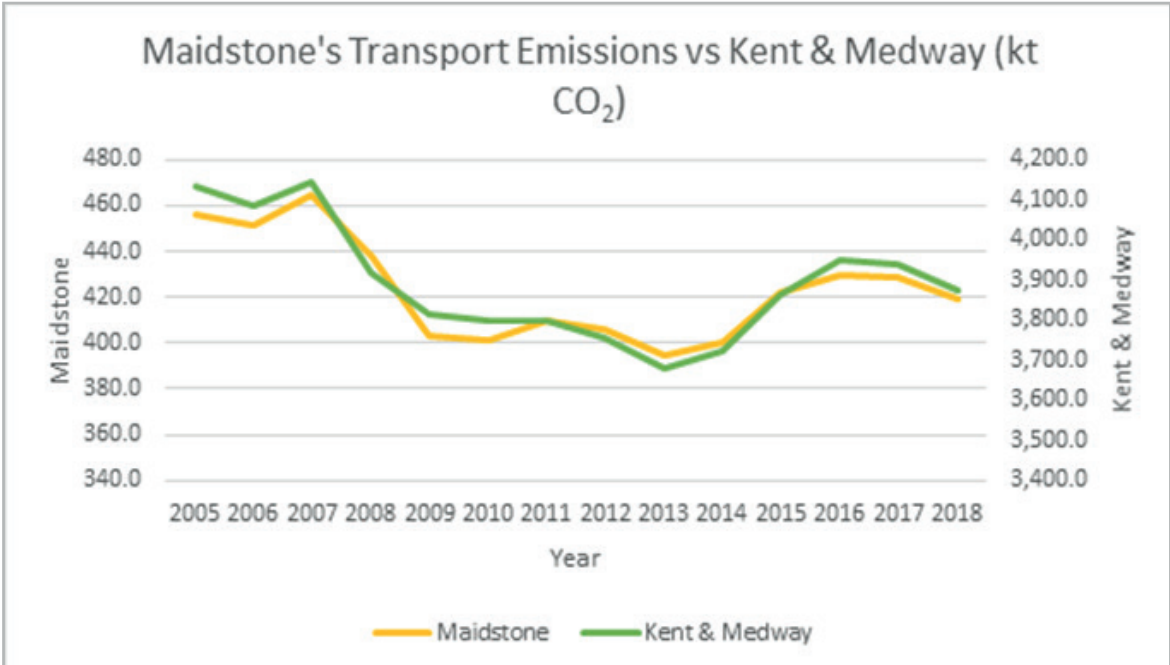
To support the shift from cars to active and mass transport and enable the transformation from fossil fuels to no tailpipe emissions.

The Government’s [consultation](#) Decarbonising Transport; Setting the Challenge, published in March 2020, shows the need for public transport and active travel to become our natural first choice, for vehicles to have no tailpipe emissions and for placed based solutions that meet the needs of local people. The Council will take part in consultations to help shape the Governments Transport Decarbonisation Plan and ensure that Maidstone residents benefit from it.

The Government launched [Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking](#) in July 2020. This aims to put cycling and walking at the heart of decision-making processes. Maidstone Borough Council is working with Kent County Council to bid for funding for works from the Department of Transport to help residents feel safe when walking or cycling in the borough.

A Local Government Association [report](#) recommends that councils can help their communities reduce emissions from transport by using the Avoid Shift Improve framework. This promotes travelling less by doing more online and planning our area to reduce the need for travel; shifting to active transport and decarbonising travel; and increasing the uptake of electric vehicles.

Transport created the largest amount of emissions in the Borough. These dropped 13% between 2005 and 2013, rose from 2013 and then dropped.



Carbon dioxide emissions from transport (BEIS, 2020)

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, which forced people to remain at home and socially distance, showed how adaptable people are. Many managed to work from home with very little notice. With a more planned approach, and with the right technology, it is likely that many will be able to work from home far more than in the past and so make fewer journeys.

During the COVID-19 lockdown period many people noticed the air quality improved and there was less noise from traffic. Air quality [monitoring](#) showed that the monthly average nitrogen dioxide levels were lower in Maidstone during lockdown than in the same months in the previous year.

Our 2020 Residents' Survey on Biodiversity and Climate Change, carried out in February and March, showed that most respondents would like to see investment in active travel infrastructure, including cycle routes and pedestrian crossings with many saying they were willing to walk, or cycle, journeys of less than one mile. Kent's Active Travel [Strategy](#) explained that people walk more in well designed, accessible, streets and cycle more where cycling is separated from traffic. It found that people make journeys that combine walking or cycling with public transport.

Emissions from electric vehicles are significantly lower than from fossil fuel vehicles and will fall further as electricity generation is decarbonised. Electric vehicles are currently more expensive to buy than fossil fuel vehicles, but they are cheaper to run, particularly if you charge them at home. The Government currently provides grant [schemes](#) for installing home charging points and towards the cost of buying a new electric vehicle. Maidstone Borough Council is committed to be an electric vehicle friendly borough and has already provided charging points in some car parks. The Residents' Survey showed widespread support for providing more electric vehicle charging points and support for a requirement for taxis to be electric.

### **We will:**

Use the Local Plan to ensure its supports walking, cycling and public transport

Work with partners to develop Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy

Develop a travel plan for the council staff to reduce emissions from travel ensuring learning from adaptations to the COVID-19 crisis is used

Work with partners to ensure electric vehicle charging points are provided across the borough

Update our Taxi Licensing Policy to ensure new vehicles are electric and that enough rapid charging points are provided for taxis that aren't charged at home

Promote schemes to help businesses move to electric vehicles.

## Theme 2 - Buildings

### Our aim for buildings:

**To support the change from heating and cooling buildings using fossil fuels to low carbon technology and reducing energy needs by increasing energy efficiency.**

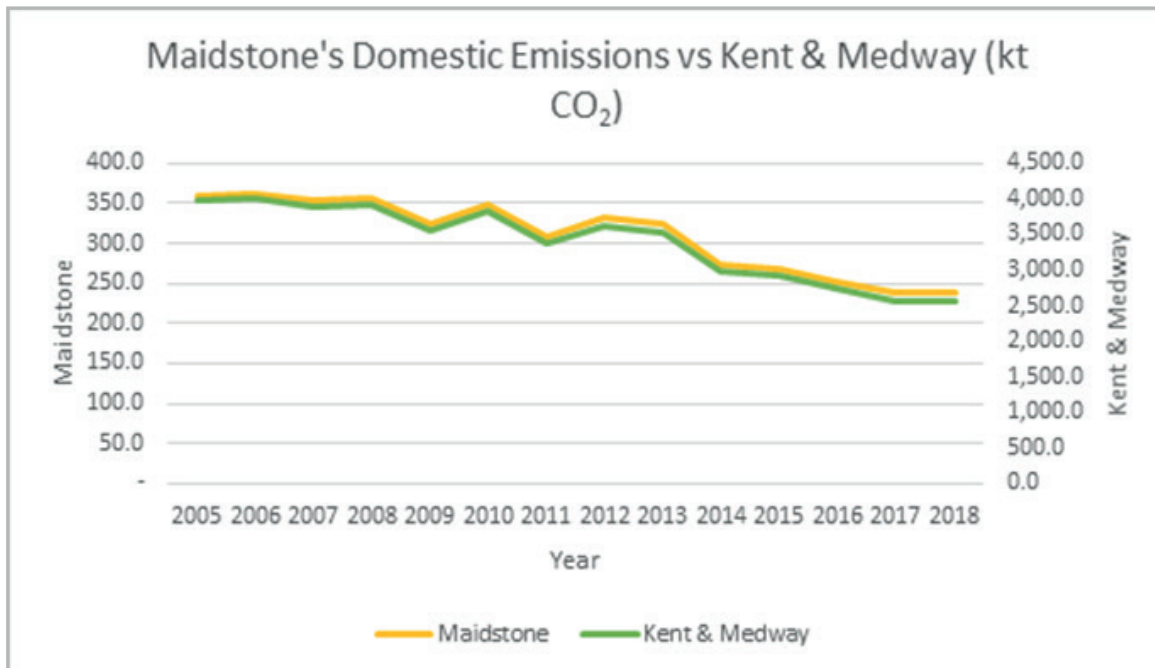
Changes in building regulations over the past four decades have resulted in newer homes being more energy efficient than older homes. People living in more efficient homes generally have lower fuel bills and so are less likely to live in fuel poverty. The Future Homes [Standard](#) describes the new standards anticipated to be introduced by 2025 which would continue this trend and require low-carbon heating and excellent energy efficiency.

The energy efficiency of many older homes has been improved by installing loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, double glazing and more efficient heating systems. Some older buildings have solid walls and these can be insulated externally or internally but this is much more expensive than installing cavity wall insulation and few buildings have been insulated in this way.



The majority homes in England are heated using fossil fuels, mainly gas, but a small number use oil or coal. We must transform buildings by improving the insulation, changing to low carbon heating and cooling systems and using smart controls for heating and appliances to reduce the carbon emissions from them. Lower carbon heating systems include ground, air and water source heat pumps and low carbon district heating systems. These works could generate employment for suitably trained local people.

A significant amount of energy is used to power and heat domestic and non-domestic buildings. 29% of carbon dioxide emissions in the borough come from homes. There has been a 34% decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions between 2005-2017 with a decline since 2012.



Carbon dioxide emissions from homes (BEIS 2020)

The 2020 Residents' Survey on Biodiversity and Climate Change indicated that many respondents have carried out some improvements to the insulation of their homes, but it is likely that the homes that have been improved could benefit from further insulation works and improved heating systems. There are still a significant number of poorly insulated homes where improvements in efficiency would lower heating costs and so reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

The Government's [Green Homes Grant Scheme](#), due to open for applications at the end of September 2020, should help to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes. It will provide homeowners vouchers to cover 75% of the cost of works including insulation of walls, floors and roofs, installation of low carbon heating including heat pumps and solar hot water measures up to £5,000. Homeowners in receipt of certain benefits can receive a voucher for all of the costs of the works up to £10K.

Energy is used by water companies to clean and supply drinking water and we use energy when we heat water. Changes to rainfall patterns suggest we will have less summer rainfall and should use water wisely. We will work with partners to promote water efficiency so reducing water use and reducing water poverty.

### We will:

Support partners to explore the potential for Combined Heat and Power systems and District Heating scheme developments across the community

Promote insulation retrofitting schemes

Promote low carbon heating schemes to residents and businesses

Promote water efficiency measures

## Theme 3 - Generating Renewable Energy

Our aim for generating renewable energy:

**To take every opportunity to generate renewable energy across the borough.**

As a nation, we need to decarbonise energy generation and change from fossil fuels to renewable electricity for transport and in buildings. There are many opportunities to generate solar energy on new and existing buildings and wind or solar energy on land. Generating renewable energy at home reduces the amount of energy bought, and so fuel bills and fuel poverty. Renewable energy installations would generate employment for suitably trained local people.



The Feed In Tariff is closed to new applicants and has been replaced by the [Smart Export Guarantee](#), which pays for electricity exported back to the grid. Energy generation on buildings, or land, generates useful income and it is anticipated that the energy market will change with many smaller producers joining the market. Some householders and businesses may prefer to use a battery system to store excess power to use later.

At the end of 2018 there were over 2000 sites in the borough generating renewable energy. The majority were photovoltaic systems and there were 3 wind powered systems, 3 anaerobic digestion installations and 2 micro combined heat and power installations. Maidstone Borough Council are working with Kent County Council to promote the [Solar Together](#) Scheme to help residents and small businesses benefit from a collective buying programme and will bring forward other opportunities as they arise.

### We will:

Use the Local Plan to support renewable energy generation in new developments

Support residents, businesses and third sector to install renewable energy generation by providing information and promoting grants and savings schemes

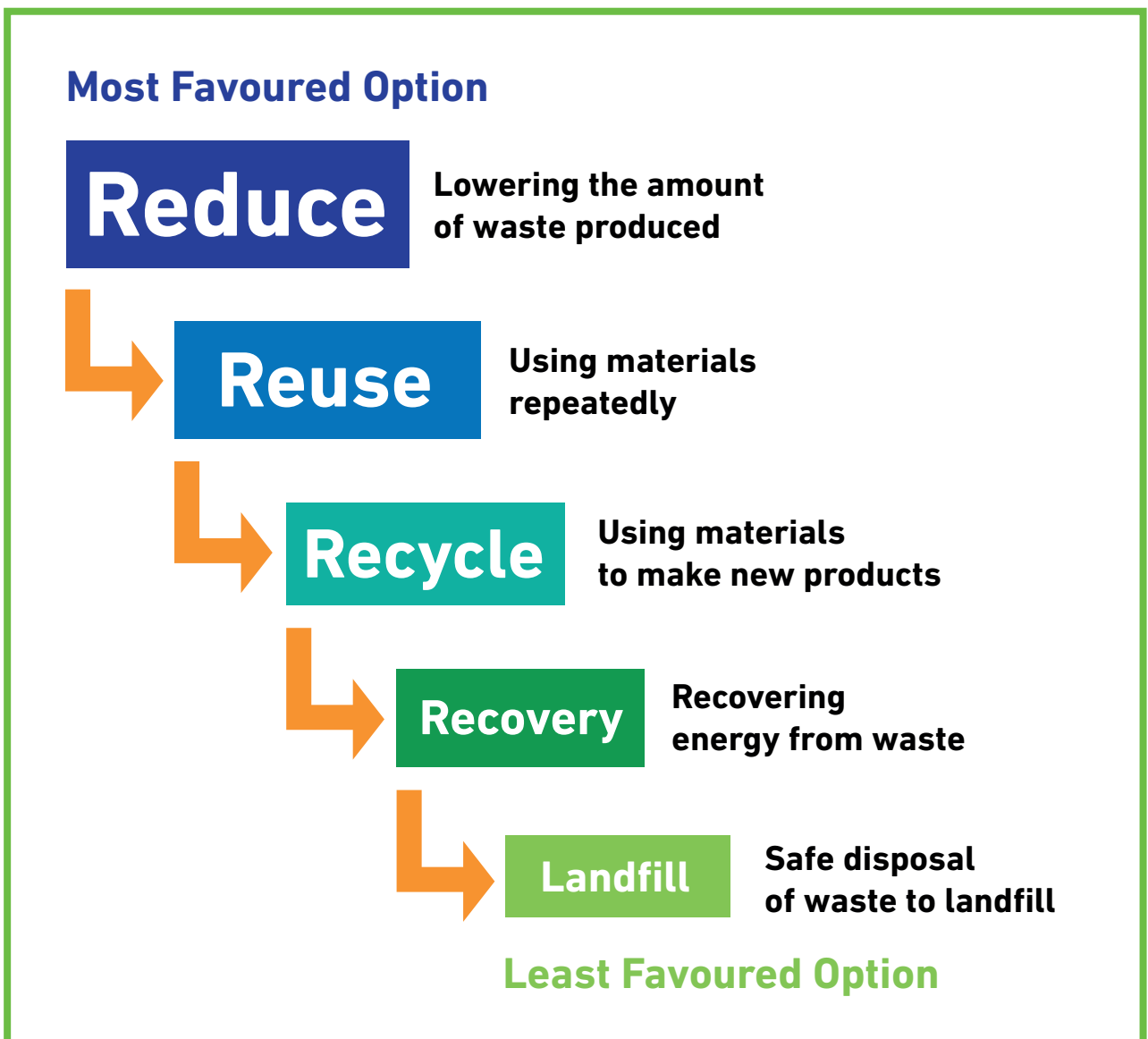
Encourage and support community energy projects.

## Theme 4 - Reducing Waste and Energy Used in Processing.

Our aim for waste reduction and processing:

**To reduce the amount of domestic waste created, increase the proportion re-used, recycled and composted to at least 60% by 2030 and reduce the carbon emitted from processing waste.**

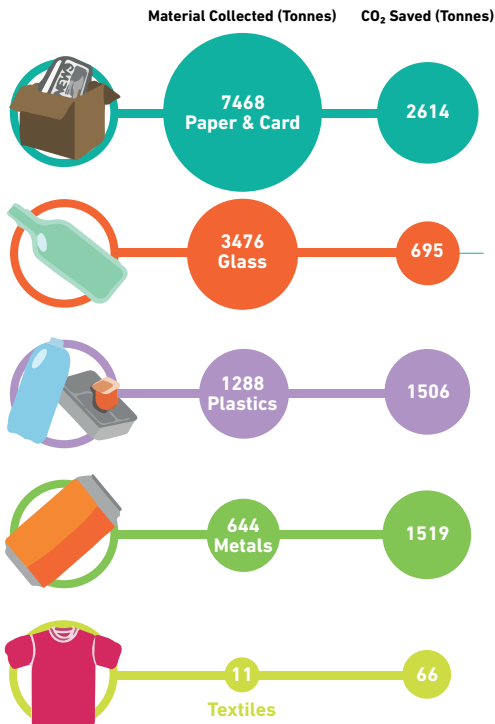
The Government's strategy Our Waste, Our Resources; a [Strategy](#) for England sets out how we must reduce our waste and manage it carefully. Its aims to reduce the amount of waste we create as a society and move to a circular economy where we re-use, remanufacture, repair and recycle. We use least energy when we re-use or repair items and recycling is not the first choice.



The proportion of waste re-used, recycled or composted has increased in the borough since 2010-11. Some useful materials are still put into the waste bins including metals, textiles, food waste. We aim to re-use, recycle or compost at least 60% of household waste by 2030, in line with Government policy.

### Maidstone Recycling Materials

Collected between 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020



Total CO<sub>2</sub> saving achieved in 2019/20 through kerbside recycling collection = 6400 tonnes\*

\*Average footprint of 10 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year per UK Citizen:

Defra Official Statistics: UK's carbon footprint 1997-2011



New bin hanger for residents

The 2020 Residents' Survey on Biodiversity and Climate Change showed many respondents were willing to recycle more, and many already choose re-usable items. Maidstone Borough Council will work with residents to reduce the amount of waste generated and increase the proportion of it that is re-used, recycled or composted, supporting those with communal bins to recycle.

This council has used route optimisation to reduce the distance waste is transported for processing so reducing waste related carbon emissions. We will continue to look to minimise mileage without reducing the service and at ways to decarbonise the vehicles that will be used to provide the services.

### We will:

Encourage and support residents to re-use, recycle and compost

Provide guidance for developers to ensure new developments have suitable recycling facilities

Maximise carbon reduction from recycling materials by making sure waste is processed as close to the borough as possible

Introduce recycling into the street cleansing service

Aim to reduce fly tipping and penalise offenders.

## Theme 5 - Adapting to Climate Change

Our aim for adapting to climate change:

**To build resilient landscapes, communities and services.**

The IPCC are very clear that some level climate change is inevitable even if emissions are cut immediately. It is sensible to prepare for the warmer, drier summers, milder, wetter winters and more intense and frequent storms that are predicted by the [Kent and Medway Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment](#) (CCRIA).

Changes to our landscapes and urban areas can help us fare better during drought, heatwave and flood. Natural flood management helps to hold water in the landscape and release it more slowly, reducing both downstream flooding and the impact of drought. Heat islands are when built up areas are hotter than nearby rural areas, particularly at night. Trees and plants provide shade and cooling and reduce air temperatures during hot weather and reduce the heat island effect. Green roofs also reduce the temperature of the roof surface, reduce run off in heavy rain and may help reduce the temperature inside the building.



Greening our buildings and urban spaces



In our Local Plan Review we will consider:

- where developments should be sited to increase resilience to extreme weather
- how schemes are laid out to increase cooling from shade and reduce surface water flooding
- the design of buildings to help reduce overheating in summer, reduce damage from storms, and to use less water

Maidstone Borough Council understand the importance of local data and will use the Severe Weather Impacts Monitoring System (SWIMS) to ensure we understand and can respond to the local picture. We will ensure our services are resilient in times of severe weather.

Partnership working is vital in adaptation work and the council will work with partners to ensure that infrastructure, such as drinking water, wastewater, electricity, and telephone and internet systems are resilient to changes in climate.

### **We will:**

Ensure our Local Plan supports adaptation to climate change

Use the CCRIA data to plan how to protect the borough from climate impacts

Use SWIMS to understand impacts of severe weather in borough

Ensure our services and operations are resilient to climate change

Support local businesses to be resilient to climate change

Work with partners to strengthen critical infrastructure to climate change

## Theme 6 - Enhancing and Increasing Biodiversity

Our aim for biodiversity:

**To use every opportunity to protect, enhance and increase biodiversity in the Borough.**

The IPBES [report](#) showed that human activities are having very harmful impacts on the world's species, including one million species threatened with extinction. The national strategy is forming with the Environment Act anticipated later in 2020 with the Environmental Land Management Scheme to be introduced in the following years.

The [Kent Biodiversity Strategy](#) 2020 to 2045 focuses on how the county can maintain, restore and create thriving habitats. Maidstone Borough Council recognises the intrinsic value of biodiversity, and the contributions it can make to mitigating carbon emissions and helping us adapt to climate change. It will work in partnership to develop the Nature Recovery Strategy for the area and use this to inform the way it delivers services.



Beavers and their dams



There is broad support for protecting nature locally. The 2020 Residents' Survey on Biodiversity and Climate Change indicated many respondents had a good knowledge of the causes and effects of biodiversity loss with a significant majority expressing concern over loss of the natural environment. Planting trees and creating other habitats for wildlife was the most popular action for the council to take in the Residents' Survey. There was also support for leaving some verges to grow wild to provide useful habitat. At the land managers event many pledged to take action to enhance biodiversity on their land or by providing their expertise. The success of the "Go Green, Go Wild" campaign shows residents and local groups willingness to act to support biodiversity. Maidstone Borough Council will ensure we have the expertise and staff to coordinate work on biodiversity in the borough.

### **We will:**

Require biodiversity net gain on new developments with an emphasis on semi open natural spaces

Agree and implement a Biodiversity Strategy

Implement a plan to increase tree cover by at least 46 hectares

Deliver at least one new wetland project each year

Work with partners to implement a Nature Recovery Strategy

Work with local landowners to deliver landscape scale biodiversity initiatives

Assess potential of our land for enhancing biodiversity including allowing community groups to manage it to enhance biodiversity

## Theme 7 - Making Our Estate Carbon Neutral

Our aim for our estate:

**We will reduce emissions from our estate to as close to carbon neutral as possible by 2030**

Maidstone Borough Council owns and leases buildings and land and runs a fleet of vehicles to carry out its functions. We have already taken some measures to reduce carbon emissions including

- Generating renewable energy using solar panels on Lockmeadow Hall, our depot, the newer part of the museum and the crematorium.
- Reducing energy use by installing heat pumps in the newer part of museum and LED lighting in many of our buildings and some car parks.
- Reducing the mileage of our street cleansing vehicles by route optimisation.
- Providing charging points for electric vehicles in six of our short stay car [parks](#).

We selected the Carbon [Trust](#) to measure our carbon footprint and provide a carbon reduction plan showing a pathway to make our estate carbon neutral by 2030. Their plan highlighted our direct emissions were mainly from fuel consumption in council owned vehicles, and gas and electricity consumed in council operated buildings. It indicated that we should reduce emissions from vehicles and electrify where possible, improve energy efficiency in our buildings and move to electric heat sources and generate more renewable electricity on our buildings. We will investigate how to follow their recommendations and will create a detailed action plan to address them.

The Carbon Trust advise that it is likely that we will still be responsible for 564 tCO<sub>2</sub>e emissions even when we take all reasonable measures available with current technology to reduce our carbon footprint. We will seek ways to offset those emissions on new projects within the borough. These would focus on;

- Reducing emissions by producing renewable power generation
- Absorbing carbon by natural regeneration, tree planting and other ways that increase biodiversity

We lease buildings across the borough and will work with lease holders to improve the energy efficiency of our portfolio.

## **We will:**

Implement the Carbon Trust's Carbon Reduction Plan.

Measure our carbon footprint each year to make sure we're on track

Offset the carbon emissions we cannot prevent emitting

Switch to a 100% renewable energy electricity provider

Use the Warm Homes [Scheme](#) and/or the Green Homes Grant [Scheme](#) to retrofit insulation to our temporary accommodation and top up any funding shortfall.

Use technology to support home working, reducing commuting to work

Ensure the buildings we let move towards a high standard for carbon reduction

## Theme 8 - Communications

### Our communications aim:

**To enable residents, businesses and partner organisations to make informed decisions on climate change and biodiversity and access any funding available.**

People alter their behaviour when social expectations change, they understand the reasons to act, these reasons resonate with their concerns, and they feel able to make the change. This was illustrated by the way the country responded to the Government guidance to lockdown and protect lives at the beginning of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights that people need more than information before making changes. They also need to feel that the matter being addressed is important to them and that their actions can make a difference.

The 2020 Residents' Survey on Biodiversity and Climate Change showed that a significant majority of respondents felt they had a good understanding of the causes and effects of biodiversity loss and of climate change. They were very concerned about the effects of climate change on future generations, and loss of biodiversity and the natural environment. Survey responses suggested a large majority of residents already do, or are willing to consider, personal behaviours that would support biodiversity or reduce climate change.

We asked land managers, parish councils, developers, farmers and organisations with relevant expertise about ways to enhance biodiversity in the borough at an event in March 2020. Many were already taking action and others were willing to consider actions on their land. This led to pledges that included sustainable management, commitments to work in partnership, commitments to set aside an area for wilding/wildflowers, to work to reconnect habitats and to provide training or expertise.

This engagement suggested that many people are already aware of climate change and biodiversity loss and many are taking, or are willing to take, action. Some respondents to the Residents' Survey said that they would like more suggestions on actions they could take, including knowing how to measure their carbon footprint, actions around recycling and waste and what they can do to look after wildlife and plants to grow to encourage biodiversity. We will carry out further resident surveys to ensure we are aware of current opinions. Maidstone Borough Council will help residents by showing the actions they can take and describing the difference those actions will have. It will work with partners and land managers to support biodiversity.

We will ensure our staff, managers and Councillors are trained so they understand the importance of addressing climate change and protecting biodiversity and know how to do that in their role.

We will work with our partner organisations to share information and ensure our actions are effective and working in harmony with each other.

Government strategies, and technology, is evolving and the information and guidance will change over the next ten years. We will adapt our communications as needed.

## **We will:**

Implement a communications strategy and provide relevant messages that encourages individuals, and organisations to act

We will ensure our staff are suitably trained on biodiversity and climate change, related to their role, so they play their part

Build support from key stakeholders and the wider public on enhancing biodiversity and addressing climate change

Provide information and signpost residents and businesses to relevant grants

Work with partners to address climate change and biodiversity effectively and sustainably

## Theme 9 - Decision Making Processes and Governance

**Our aim for embedding climate change and biodiversity in decision making and governance:**

**To ensure that climate change and biodiversity are part of all decisions made**

We will make addressing climate change and enhancing biodiversity part of our normal business practices. We'll make sure they are considered when managers are writing service plans, and that staff can make suggestions, so no opportunity is lost.

Councillors will be trained so they understand what to look for when considering reports to determine whether all opportunities to act are taken. We will change our report templates to ensure biodiversity and climate change will be considered in every report to every committee. We will establish a councillors' body to develop policy and scrutinise decisions relating to biodiversity and climate change.

Funds will be made available for projects to address climate change and biodiversity and assessed to ensure they will deliver a carbon reduction or measurable biodiversity benefit. Biodiversity and climate change will be considered when buying goods and services.

### **We will:**

Provide relevant training for Councillors

Ensure Biodiversity and climate change are considered in service plans and Key Performance Indicators are set as needed

Add biodiversity and climate change to committee report template

Embed biodiversity and climate change into our governance structure

Establish criteria for investment in climate change and biodiversity and invest to save schemes

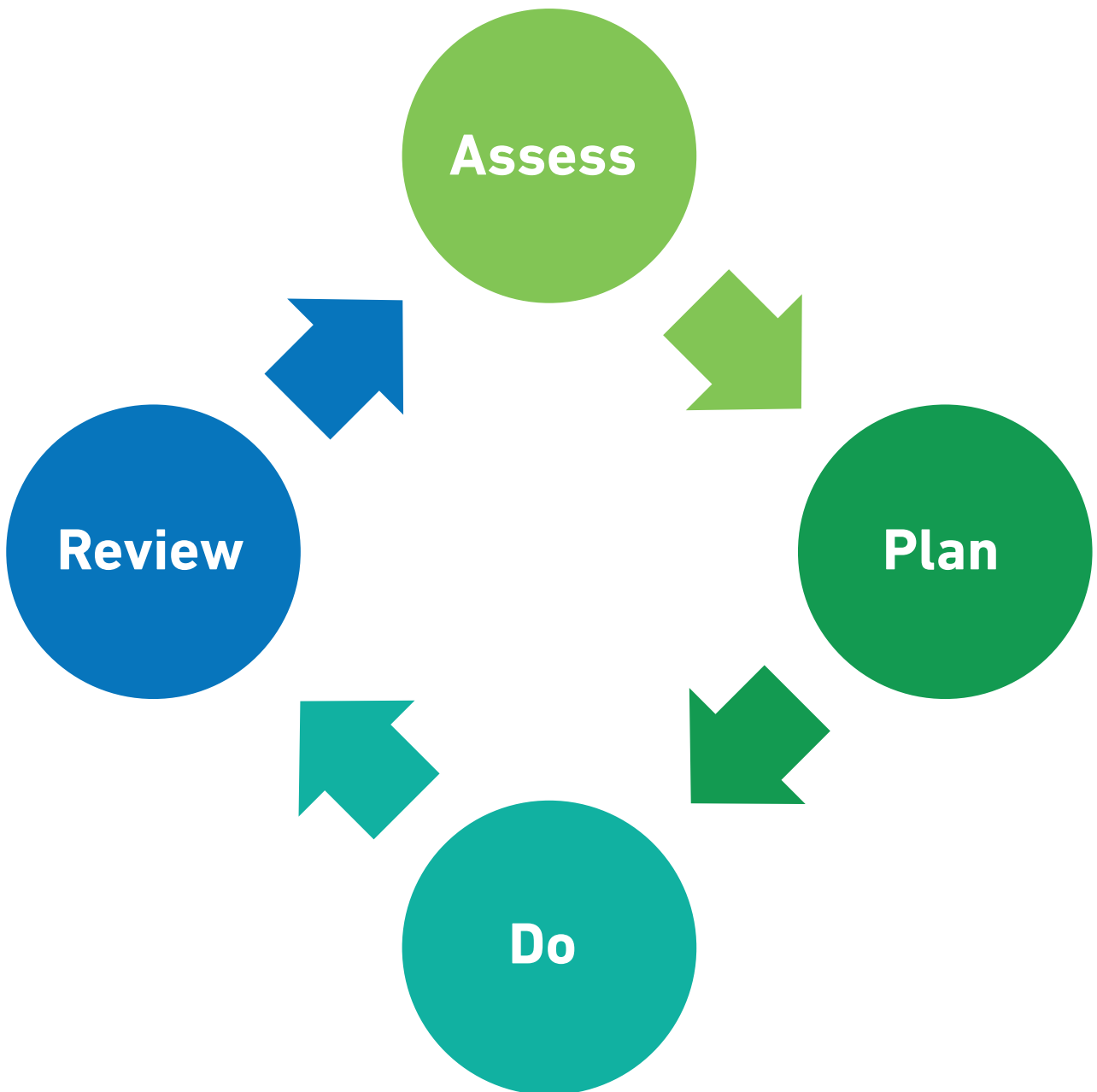
Consider biodiversity and climate change in the way we design, carry out and procure our services

## 5 Delivering and Monitoring

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The action plan sets out the actions the council will take over the decade towards achieving our nine aims. Progress will be monitored every three months to celebrate successes and highlight any actions that need additional work to ensure progress is made. A written report will be made to the relevant committee who will make directions as needed. Emissions from our estate will be measured and reported annually.

We anticipate creating another action plan in or before 2030 to address climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhancing biodiversity for the next decade.



Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
1.0	<b>Transport</b> <b>Aim: To support the shift from cars to active and mass transport and enable the transformation from fossil fuels to no tailpipe emissions.</b> Transport creates the largest amount of emissions in the borough. It has a negative impact on air quality and health. The residents' survey showed support for investing in active travel and providing more charging points for electric vehicles.				
1.1	Draft Local Plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish policies that enable the infrastructure required for low carbon vehicles</li> <li>Ensure policies encourage and enable development proposals which give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with its surrounding areas; and second to facilitating high quality public transport connectivity.</li> </ul>	Emphasis is given to walking, cycling and public transport	Local Plan includes measures and actions that will help to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030	Strategic planning officer time	2020-22
1.2	Work with KCC to develop Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy, and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, as part of the Local Plan review to promote and support a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport.	Integrated Transport Strategy Developed	Increase in infrastructure supporting walking, cycling and buses	Transport and Development Team and Strategic Planning	2020-22
1.3	Produce a business case for the introduction of a parking levy to fund active travel or public transport	Organisations charged for providing car parking spaces may result in fewer	Fewer cars on road, greater use of sustainable transport modes and increased	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer (BDCC Officer) time,	2024

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
		spaces being provided. Funds would be raised.	funding for sustainable infrastructure	Strategic Planning staff time	
1.4	<p>Develop a travel plan for council staff that sets out objectives and an action plan to encourage the shift to electric and ultra-low emission vehicles, more working from home, more sustainable travel patterns and an increase in the use of public transport and active transport modes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parking management on council premises</li> <li>• discounted public transport fares</li> <li>• pool cars</li> <li>• audio and video conferencing</li> <li>• car-sharing</li> <li>• electric bikes</li> <li>• remote and home working</li> <li>• promoting fuel efficient driving techniques to all staff</li> </ul> <p>Update travel expenses policies generally and avoid any perverse incentives. Update before any moves to new premises. Include any learning from working practices that changed due to COVID-19.</p>	Plan developed, formally adopted, disseminated and included in induction for new staff. Staff are given information and support to reduce car use	Staff adopting more sustainable transport practices	BDCC officer, Head of Human Resources, Head of Commissioning and Business Improvement, Transformation and Digital Services, and colleagues time	2021
1.5	Develop policies and increase remote working to reduce travelling to work and office energy needs,	Staff and councillor working	Anticipated reduction in emissions for staff related to work	BDCC officer, Human Resources, Head of	2021

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	without a reduction in outputs or access to services. Uses any learning from new working practices adopted due to COVID 19 responses.	arrangements are changed		Commissioning and Business Improvement, Transformation and Digital Services time, changes could give cost saving	
1.6	Influence design and specification of any new office building to ensure infrastructure enables EVs and low-carbon energy charging infrastructure for them and supports active travel with bike storage, lockers and showers and supports digital working	Any new building able to support the electric vehicle charging needed and active travel	Reduced carbon emissions	BDCC officer time	2020 to when any new building completed
1.7	Have regard to the <a href="#">Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy</a> and its emerging policies relating to electric vehicles. Liaise with KCC, district network operators and other relevant partners. Seek grant and other forms of funding to support this. Seek and take opportunities to provide one or more charging hub.	Funds sought for EV infrastructure and alignment with district and county policies.	Charging points provided to anticipate, and meet, needs for vehicle charging across the borough	Parking Services, Strategic Planning and BDCC Officer time.	2020-30
1.8	Use advice from the Energy Saving Trust (EST) Local Authority Transport Service to facilitate a move to electric taxis. Liaise with relevant partners to monitor use	Achieve the minimum number of rapid (50kW) EV charging points dedicated to taxi use needed in	Monitor charging point provision and ensure there are sufficient. This may require paying for the cost, applying for	Costs vary dependant on location and DNO requirements. Indicative cost of £13K per double	2021-2030

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	and ensure infrastructure is provided appropriately.	town centre in-line with the EST report: 3 by 2021, 16 by 2025 21 by 2027 23 by 2030 and 25 by 2036 A double rapid charging point dedicated for taxis will be provided by KCC and partners in Pudding Lane in 2020.	grant funding, or entering a partnership to ensure provision.	charging point when purchasing 10 or more. Costs circa £156K	
1.9	Draft new licensing policy to reduce number of taxis using fossil fuel by more than 90% by 2030 and by 100% by 2036	240 high mileage fossil fuel vehicles replaced with no tailpipe emission vehicles	No private hire vehicles with tailpipe emissions by end of 2028. No hackney carriage vehicles with tailpipe emissions by the end of 2036.	Licensing and BDCC officer time	2021
1.10	Promote workplace vehicle chargers (and current government <a href="#">Workplace Charging Scheme</a> )	Scheme promoted to businesses	Increased number of EV charging points at businesses	Economic development team	2020 until scheme ends
1.11	Promote ECO stars recognition scheme to fleet operators	Scheme promoted to businesses	Increased number of operators signed up	Economic development team	2020 until scheme ends
1.12	Work with KCC to gather baseline data on the buses operating in the borough and their Euro classification. Support operators to develop their commercial networks	Gather data on the current fleet. Identify opportunities to trial cleaner buses and submit bids for	Increase in public transport usage to improve air quality. More bus friendly infrastructure.	Environmental Protection Team, BDCC Officer	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	in the borough, ensuring that the borough's infrastructure is bus friendly. Work with the Quality Bus Partnership to identify actions to support bus companies to switch to clean technology.	funding at each opportunity	An increase in the proportion of buses rated Euro VI or using low carbon fuels		
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Buildings;</b> <b>Aim: To support the change from heating and cooling buildings using fossil fuels to low carbon technology and reducing energy needs by increasing energy efficiency.</b> 29% of emissions in the borough come from homes. Poorly insulated homes cost more to run and contribute to fuel poverty. The technology is available to make the changes needed. A move from fossil fuels will reduce emissions from non-domestic buildings and greater energy efficiency could reduce costs.				
2.1	Support Kent County Council to explore the potential for Combined Heat and Power systems and District Heating scheme developments across the community	Developed business case	Decision made on feasibility	Development Management, Regeneration and Economic Development time	2020-2021
2.2	Promote access to schemes to residents, landlords and housing associations, for retrofitting insulation to existing homes including ECO3, LA Flex and the Green Homes Grant Scheme	Home owners and landlords access schemes to install insulation so reduce heating bills and reduce carbon emissions Particular emphasis on upgrading homes with an EPC rating of E, F or G	No homes rated E, F or G by 2025 and all homes to be C or better by 2035,	Housing and Health and Communications Staff time	2020-30
2.3	Investigate how to support low carbon heat networks	Identify potential of low carbon networks	Evidence base to support new direction in Local Plan Review	Strategic Planning time	2020-22

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
2.4	Promote low carbon heating including government domestic and non-domestic renewable heat incentive scheme and any other suitable schemes	Low carbon heating, and any grant funding, promoted to businesses, third sector and householders	More homes and businesses retrofit low carbon heating systems	BDCC officer, Housing and Health Team, Economic development team and Communications	2020 to scheme end
2.5	Enforce Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015	Adopt a new Enforcement Policy to assist with ensuring landlords make reasonable improvements to the thermal efficiency of homes	Thermal efficiency of poorest performing privately rented homes is increased	Housing and Health Team	2020-30
2.6	Promote water efficiency to residents in partnership with South East Water	Residents signposted to water saving advice and devices	Water consumption reduction	Housing and health Team, Communications and BDCC officer	2020-30
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Generating Renewable Energy;</b> <b>Aim: To take every opportunity to generate renewable energy across the Borough</b> We need to generate more electricity to support the move from fossil fuels. There are opportunities for retrofitting equipment to existing homes and businesses and requiring renewable energy generation on new developments.				
3.1	Use Local Plan review to investigate how to encourage on-site renewables on all types of new developments	Research produced for onsite renewable generation for all new development	Foundations laid for setting out requirements for renewable energy generation on new developments in Local Plan	Strategic planning officer time	2020-22
3.2	Support residents, businesses and third sector to install renewable energy generation by providing	Information and support provided to	More renewable energy technology installed in borough	BDCC Officer, Housing and Health, Economic	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	information and promoting grants and savings schemes	access advice and relevant schemes		Development and Communications Teams	
3.3	Encourage and support community energy projects. Assess viability of these for carbon offsetting	Projects supported and facilitated	More renewable energy created and used within community	BDCC Officer and Communications	2020-30
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Reducing Waste and energy used for processing waste;</b> <b><i>Aim: To reduce the amount of domestic waste created, increase the proportion re-used, recycled and composted to at least 60% by 2030 and reduce the carbon emitted from processing waste.</i></b> Waste can be re-used as valuable resources and reduce energy consumed in producing new goods. Organic waste must be managed as can release greenhouse gases as it decomposes.				
4.1	Increase percentage of waste re-used recycled/composted by; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging residents to separate food and recyclables (particularly metals and textiles), use appropriate bins and avoid contamination</li> <li>Reviewing, and where possible, improving recycling facilities for flats and those with communal collections</li> <li>Waste and recycling guidance with as much planning weight as possible to be adopted for all new developments</li> <li>Assess feasibility of weekly recycling collections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications strategy to encourage residents to separate food waste, recycle materials appropriately and avoid contamination.</li> <li>Enforcement action where appropriate to address contamination and failure to manage waste in flats/communal collections by managing agents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum of 60% of household waste is re-used, recycled/composted by 2030</li> <li>Less food waste in residual waste</li> <li>Increase capture rates of four key materials (paper, glass, metals and plastics) as well as food waste compared with 2019-20 levels</li> <li>Feasibility of weekly recycling collections used to inform plans for</li> </ul>	Waste services and communication team time Approximately £10K consultants' costs for modelling of alternative collection services including weekly recycling collections	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New guidance to ensure all new developments have sufficient and appropriate provision for recycling</li> <li>Feasibility of weekly collections assessed.</li> </ul>	new waste collection contract.		
4.2	Create and implement a plan to ensure all types of waste are processed in or as close to the borough as possible	Reduce the distance that waste is transported for processing	Maximised carbon reduction from recycling materials.	Waste services team time	2021-23
4.3	Introduce recycling into the street cleansing service including offering community litter picks the opportunity to recycle the waste they collect	Communities supported to plan safe litter picks where recycling can be easily separated from recycling. Litter collected through street cleansing service is separated wherever possible	More community litter picks, and clean recyclable materials reclaimed	Waste services and communication team time	2022-22
4.4	Reduce fly-tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage residents to report fly-tipping using website and improve the reporting back to close the</li> </ul>	Fly-tippers penalised, fly tipping addressed swiftly with minimal emissions	£40k Waste Services	2020-25

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
		communication loop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase enforcement for fly-tipping by increasing camera deployment and joint operation with the Police</li> <li>• Explore ways to control emissions for removing fly tipped waste</li> </ul>			
4.5	Investigate options to encourage home composting and using an anaerobic digester to process the domestic food waste collected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote home composting and assess feasibility of providing subsidised compost bins.</li> <li>• Assess feasibility of requiring communal composting facilities in new developments.</li> <li>• Work with KCC to assess viability anaerobic digestion of domestic food waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidised bins provided to promote home composting</li> <li>• Feasibility and viability studies completed and recommendations made</li> </ul>	£20k to subsidise home compost bins  No costs expected for changes to way KCC processes food waste  Waste Services	2021-22
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Adapting to Climate Change</b>				

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	<b>Aim: To build resilient landscapes, communities and services.</b> We will experience hotter, drier, summers; warmer, wetter, winters and more storms. We must adapt to more frequent severe weather ensuring our landscapes and communities thrive and services are provided.				
5.1	Provide policy on climate change adaptation in Local Plan review, including consideration of flooding, heat and drought.	Climate change adaptation is included as part of Local Plan review	Local Plan review provides policy of climate change adaptation	Strategic Planning Officer time	2020-22
5.2	Ensure Local Plan review considers level of current and future flood risk and developments are planned accordingly.	Flood risks are explicitly considered in Local Plan review	New developments will be directed away from areas of flood risk and required adaptation and mitigations measures will be put in place.	Strategic Planning Officer time	2020-22
5.3	Use Severe Weather Impacts Monitoring System (SWIMS) to understand impacts of severe weather in borough. Work with Kent County Council to implement actions from the <a href="#">Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment</a> in the borough.	SWIMS database used to record severe weather impacts and reports provided to inform MBC risk register. Our vulnerabilities are identified and a plan for resilience is created	Mitigations and controls in place to manage risk of Severe Weather. The Council can take proactive action to protect the borough from climate impacts	BDCC Officer	2020-30
5.4	Work with Medway Flood Partnership to identify and develop actions, including natural flood management, which can help to reduce flood levels.	Medway Flood Partnership supported to deliver actions that reduce flood levels.	Reduction in likelihood of flooding or mitigation measures effective	BDCC officer, Corporate Property Team	2020-30
5.5	Work with Medway Flood Partnership to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding Strategy developed and</li> </ul>	Increase in the level of funds available for projects identified by	Representative on Kent and Medway Environment and	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a funding strategy to identify and secure additional resources for natural flood management.</li> <li>build local communities' resilience to flooding</li> </ul>	<p>reviewed regularly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities at greatest risk from floods identified and helped to create a Community Flood Plan</li> </ul>	Medway Flood Partnership for natural flood management projects to reduce flooding in the borough. Community resilience projects run, and Community Flood Plans written.	Climate Emergency Director's Group. Emergency Planning and Resilience Officer	
5.6	Review our arrangements around our estate, parks and recreation facilities in severe weather situations as part of business continuity management	Ensure identified actions and recommendations are in place for severe weather events.	Our parks, recreational facilities, and operations are resilient to climatic changes	All services, BDCC officer,	2021
5.7	Work with the Kent Resilience Forum, spatial planners and other partners to enhance adaptation and emergency planning contingencies for severe weather and other climate impacts. 'Strengthening' of power and water supply and other critical infrastructure should be a priority alongside ensuring more resilient settlements	An agreed approach reached by partners. Initiatives delivered to make critical infrastructure and settlements more resilient	Operations, estates, assets and equipment are resilient to climate change	Emergency Planning and Resilience Officer and colleagues as needed	2020-30
5.8	Support local businesses to be resilient to climate change including referring to Kent Prepared <a href="#">website</a>	Businesses helped to assess their vulnerability to climate impacts, including extreme weather events and impacts on sending	Businesses have a climate impacts plan, so they are resilient to climate change	Economic development team	2021

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
		and receiving goods and services			
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Enhance and Increase biodiversity</b> <b>Aim: To use every opportunity to protect, enhance and increase biodiversity in the borough.</b> People experience better health when they spend time in nature. Biodiversity provides ecosystem services including clean water, clean air, rainwater absorption and flood mitigation.				
6.1	Draft Local Plan to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require biodiversity net gain within the borough</li> <li>Ensure Garden Communities are an exemplar for biodiversity and deliver semi natural open space</li> <li>Increase tree coverage and other wildlife habitats to allow biodiversity in new developments</li> <li>Ensure that sustainable urban drainage schemes maximise biodiversity potential</li> </ul>	Biodiversity net gain is built into all new developments, with focus of semi open natural spaces.	Biodiversity net gain is achieved, and tree cover increased	Strategic Planning Team and specialist advice as needed	2022
6.2	Adopt Parks and Open Space Biodiversity Action Plan ensuring it is reviewed to keep up to date with latest practices.	Parks and Open Biodiversity Action Plan agreed and implemented across council functions	Every opportunity is taken to enhance biodiversity through council's estate	Parks and Open Spaces	2021
6.3	Support and signpost community groups on tree planting and after care	Advice and signposting provided on sourcing trees, materials, choosing suitable species for site, etc.	Community tree planting of suitable native species in suitable sites	BDCC Officer and Go Green Go Wild function	2020-30

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Cost and Whom</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
6.4	Work with Kent County Council to draft common position statement on biodiversity (including ensuring maintenance regimes which protect and enhance biodiversity)	Position statement drafted	Higher standards of biodiversity achieved through enhanced collaboration	Strategic Planning Officer time	2020-22
6.5	Liaise with Kent Wildlife Trust to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote relevant schemes to residents, schools and community groups to encourage them to enhance biodiversity in their gardens and grounds.</li> <li>• Provide information on habitat development and the benefits of it to nature and ecosystem services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schemes promoted</li> <li>• Information on understanding habitats shared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in numbers of residents, schools and community groups gaining Kent Wildlife Trust awards</li> <li>• Reduction in complaints about, or vandalism of, new habitats</li> </ul>	Communications team, Go Green Go Wild function	2020-30
6.6	Work with Environment Agency, South East Rivers Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust and Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to enhance and expand wetland coverage in Borough (including removal of dams and culverts, achieving improvements to water quality and restoration of ponds, lakes, marshes, wet woodland and bogs)	Identify wetland restoration, reconnection and creation project areas and deliver them	Deliver at least one major new wetland creation or restoration project each year	Heritage Landscape and Design Team Corporate Property team, Parks and Open Spaces team working with partners time and direct work costs (circa £50k)	2020-30
6.7	Work with partners to develop and implement a Nature Recovery Strategy, linking habitat restoration and creation to improve flood protection and water quality	Nature Recovery Strategy developed, and plan implemented	Habitats created and linked reducing flooding and improving water quality	BDCC Officer, Heritage Landscape and Design Team time	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
6.8	Work with local farms and landowners to deliver landscape scale biodiversity initiatives – including reconnection of fragmented natural habitats, floodplain restoration, reduced chemical inputs and reintroduction of lost key stone species	Project areas identified and landowners engaged and committed	Projects implemented and monitored.	BDCC Officer, Heritage Landscape and Design Team time	2020-30
6.9	Where feasible increase tree cover to 2/3 on our estate. Contribute to Kent aim to plant 1.5 million trees and aim towards national average tree cover of 16%. An emphasis on expansion and reconnection of existing woodland (including urban woods) will define this action	Plan created to increase tree cover. Funding identified for buying, planting and maintaining additional tree cover or using systems like ELMS to pay for tree cover in strategic sites.	Tree cover increased on our estate where feasible. Tree cover increased by 46-50 hectares in line with Kent aim.	Parks and Open Spaces, Heritage Landscape and Design Team and BDCC Officer time £414-50k for land £115k for tree planting @ £529-565k	2021 -2030
6.10	Evaluate Council's Go Green Go Wild work. Amend as needed and commit ongoing funds to ensure of work continues.	Project evaluated and amended if needed to deliver suitable advice and support to individuals and community groups	Effective project to support individuals and community groups to enhance biodiversity in borough	Parks and Open Spaces plus £10k for grants	2021
6.11	Ensure that all MBC land and property holdings and land subject to MBC maintenance interventions maximise value for biodiversity	Land and property assessed.	Changes to management and/or introduction of enhancements	Parks and Open Spaces and Property Services (circa £10k)	2020-30
6.12	Audit trees on council land and create maintenance plan.	The location and state of trees on our land is known	Health of trees on our land known and maintenance plan created	Parks and Opens Spaces Staff time for tree audit.	2021

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
6.13	Review our non-operational land to assess potential for enhancing biodiversity including allowing community groups to take responsibility for management	Review completed, parcels of suitable land identified, relevant community groups contacted.	Some parcels of non-operational land used to enhance biodiversity	Property Services and BDCC Officer time	2022
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Making Our Estate Carbon Neutral</b> <b>Aim: We will reduce emissions from our estate to as close to carbon neutral as possible by 2030</b> We emit 480 tCO <sub>2</sub> e from council owned vehicles and 679 tCO <sub>2</sub> e from electricity and gas in our buildings and indirectly emit 3,030 tCO <sub>2</sub> e from services outsourced.				
7.1	Review commissioned Carbon Trust report on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>energy and water efficiency measures</li> <li>travel and investment in infrastructure</li> <li>onsite renewable energy generation</li> </ul> Investigate how to fund recommendations from carbon reduction report including Public Section Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme and options for revolving loan fund to pay for renewable energy developments that payback over time. Offset the 564 tCO <sub>2</sub> e carbon our estate will emit with the Carbon Trusts report recommendations implemented	Implement Carbon Trust report recommendations under spend to save, and investing in measures where needed. Offset projects invested in with preference given to those in borough, followed by in county.	Carbon emissions from our estate significantly reduced. Suitable funds are identified and obtained. Offsetting residual emissions will ensure our estate is carbon neutral by 2030	Indicative costs of £807k to save £77.5k per year when completed. Property Services, Procurement Team and BDCC officer time	2020-30
7.2	Measure our carbon footprint each year and report findings to relevant committee	The council's carbon footprint is measured and reported	This provides a measure of the effectiveness of	BDCC officer	Annually

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
			actions taken to reduce our carbon emissions		
7.3	Buy 100% renewable energy for our buildings and operations where we control the supply	Energy switched to renewable supplier as each contract expires	The electricity used by the Council would be carbon neutral	Unknown, possible minor increase or decrease in costs, Property services team	As each contract expires
7.4	Work in partnership to review our portfolio to identify those homes let as temporary accommodation eligible for insulation under ECO3 funding and arrange installation. Provide top up funding for any measures not fully funded under the ECO3 to ensure all homes let as temporary accommodation are energy efficient. Investigate whether measures could be installed under the Green Homes Grant Scheme	The review will identify the carbon savings. Funding provided for ECO3 provider, or by Green Homes Grant Scheme	All homes let as temporary accommodation are energy efficient	Top up for ECO3 £103,400 – from initial survey, may vary slightly. Green Homes Grant Scheme provides 75% of costs up to £5k. No prices obtained for these works as grant began 01/09/2020 Housing Service	2020-22
7.5	Incorporate energy saving principles into our office accommodation strategy. Uses any learning from new working practices adopted due to COVID19 responses.	Staff and members are supported to use technologies that enable remote and home working; use of expensive office space is minimised.	Staff and members able to work effectively from home and less time spent on travel for meetings.	IT Staff time, Procurement team time, Head of Transformation and Property, possible IT costs.	2021-23
7.6	Increase information held on leased buildings. Identify those with highest emissions to prioritise action. Use role as a landowner	All new developments, alterations and repairs will aspire to	Council sites are recognised as 'green' buildings and spaces.	Property Services, BDCC officer	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	(e.g. at Lockmeadow) to ensure that Council-owned sites set a high standard for carbon reduction and demonstrate how to achieve biodiversity and combat climate change.	being carbon-neutral and will aim to contribute to overall carbon reduction targets.	Details to be developed. Wherever possible, schemes are self-funding, based on lower energy costs.		
7.7	Provide LED lighting in the Maidstone Borough Council car parks that have not yet been improved	Replace lights with LED lights	Carbon emissions from car park lighting reduced by approximately 83%	£15k Parking and Property Services	2020-30
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Implement a communications strategy</b> <b>Aim: To enable residents, businesses and partner organisations to make informed decisions on climate change and biodiversity and access any funding available</b> The Council will encourage and support residents and businesses to address climate change and biodiversity with us.				
8.1	Support residents to understand the changes they can make to reduce, and prepare for, climate change and enhance biodiversity including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taking advantage of financial opportunities through energy efficiency and low-carbon energy generation measures</li> <li>creating less waste and increase proportion of recycling/composting</li> <li>using less water</li> <li>Buying from local businesses</li> <li>Reducing red meat consumption in line with Eatwell guidance</li> <li>Signing up to Environment Agency's flood warning service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide relevant information on government grants and any local schemes on website and social media.</li> <li>Provide information on how to reduce, re-use and recycle waste</li> <li>Local and national campaigns used to promote buying from local businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents use support available retrofit homes so reduce heating bills and reduce carbon emissions</li> <li>At least 60% of household waste is re-used, recycled/composted by 2030</li> <li>Residents use support provided by South East Water Company</li> <li>More buying from local businesses</li> </ul>	Housing and health Team, Waste Services, Regeneration and Economic Development and Communications Staff time, BDCC Officer	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	Work with KCC on joint campaigns where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower red meat consumption promoted</li> <li>Environment Agency's flood warning service promoted using social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents eating less red meat</li> <li>Residents and businesses signed up to Environment Agency's flood warning service</li> </ul>		
8.2	Provide staff awareness information of biodiversity and climate change at induction, and job specific training. Each service area to have biodiversity and climate change induction, and job specific training.	Improve the awareness, engagement and knowledge of our staff	All staff understand the importance of protection biodiversity and climate change and the impacts of their work on them. Staff representatives are identified, and suggestions box supplied.	BDCC officer time and other staff time	2020-21
8.3	Inform partner organisations and residents about the threats from climate change and the ways they and we can adapt to its impacts	Organisations and residents plan for flooding, heat wave and storms	We have a list of organisations to send government heat wave advice to. Organisations and residents are signed up for flood alerts	BDCC officer time and communications Staff Time	2020-30
8.4	Engage with and build support from key stakeholders and the wider public on enhancing biodiversity and addressing climate change. Engage with relevant national days of action	Use information gathered to create and update a communications plan to support this action plan. Work in	Stakeholder and residents are regularly engaged and kept informed on the councils aims and progress on	BDCC officer time and communications Staff Time	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
		partnership with KCC as appropriate	biodiversity and climate change. Stakeholders and community groups are encouraged to create their own action plans		
8.5	Support local businesses to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use support available to reduce their emissions and generate their own power including liaising with KCC when LoCASE funding available</li> <li>• Implement travel plans that promote walking, cycling and public transport</li> <li>• Use the Kent Prepared <a href="#">website</a> to raise awareness of how to prepare for flooding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information, loans and grants on reducing emissions and generating power promoted</li> <li>• Businesses supported to write travel plans</li> <li>• Businesses signposted to Kent Prepared Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses make use of grants and loans available</li> <li>• Businesses have travel plan</li> <li>• Businesses prepared for flooding impacts and has own plan</li> </ul>	Regeneration and Economic Development and communications Staff Time	2020-30
8.6	Liaise with Parish Councils to support their work on biodiversity and climate change	Parish Councils supported to take actions and bid for funding	Parish Councils actively addressing biodiversity and climate change	BDCC Officer	2020-30
8.7	Work with partners to address climate change and biodiversity effectively and sustainably	Best practice shared, ability to submit joint bids	Relevant Officers participate in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent and Medway Environment Group</li> <li>• Kent Climate Change Network</li> <li>• Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership</li> </ul>	Staff time from relevant teams, many already participating	2020-30

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Private Sector Housing Group</li> <li>• Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership</li> <li>• Kent Environmental Health Managers Group</li> <li>• Kent Resource Partnership</li> <li>• Kent Planning Officers Group</li> <li>• Kent Nature Partnership - working group</li> <li>• Kent Resilience Forum – risk assessment group</li> <li>• Transport for the South East</li> <li>• Medway Flood Partnership</li> </ul>		
8.8	Following successful legal action by Housing and Health Team regarding Category 1 Hazards of Excess cold and Building Control Team regarding buildings not built to required standard details to be sent to communications team who will draft press releases on Court cases	Press releases highlighting successful prosecutions	Accommodation and building standards improved and behaviour change as a result of enforcement	Housing and Health, Building Control and Communications Staff time	2020-30
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Decision Making Processes and Governance</b> <b><i>Aim: To ensure that climate change and biodiversity are part of all decisions made</i></b>				

Ref	Action	Output	Outcome	Cost and Whom	Timescale
	It is essential that the council works as one organisation to the shared goals of addressing biodiversity loss and climate change.				
9.1	Provide briefings and training for Councillors and Officers on climate change and biodiversity to create a culture change and ensure climate change and biodiversity are integrated into decision making	Relevant training provided. Report templates include reference to biodiversity and climate change impact Decisions evidence that biodiversity and climate change has been taken into account	Awareness and understanding of the impact of climate change and the importance of biodiversity and this is taken account of in all decision making	Democratic Services Team, Councillor and Senior Officer time, BDCC officer time Staff time	2020-21
9.2	Establish biodiversity and climate change overview and scrutiny committee	Overview and scrutiny functions in relation to biodiversity and climate change Decisions could be called in if relevant to biodiversity or climate change	Reports are scrutinised to ensure biodiversity is protected and climate change is considered	Democratic Services Staff time	2020-21
9.3	Ensure service plans consider biodiversity and addressing climate change and performance indicators are set as needed	Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and addressing climate change are considered when writing service plans and setting performance indicators	Service plans contribute towards addressing the ecological and climate change emergencies	Officer time	2020-21

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Cost and Whom</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
9.4	Review guidance used to help managers plan their services to ensure opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change are taken	Service design toolkit reviewed	Opportunities to enhance biodiversity and mitigate and adapt to climate change are taken when services are designed	Transformation team	2020-21
9.5	Establish criteria for investment in climate change and biodiversity and invest to save schemes. These will consider (a) relative impact in terms of carbon reduction and (b) ease of delivery, such that expenditure is focused on deliverable, affordable initiatives that maximise impact on the carbon reduction target.	Source external, including government, funding for climate change action. Establishing arms-length delivery vehicles and securing innovative financial arrangements for climate change projects and programmes.	Funds available for approved projects	Finance Staff and BDCC Officer time	2020-21
9.6	Develop a corporate policy and approach to social value that incorporates enhancing biodiversity and reducing the council's carbon footprint through the way we design, carry out and procure our services.	Biodiversity and climate change criteria are integrated when developing tenders for services. Energy efficient equipment is chosen	Biodiversity protection and emission reduction metrics are included in tender assessments at each opportunity. Energy efficient equipment is chosen	Transformation and Commissioning Staff, Finance and BDCC Officer time	2021

Maidstone Borough Council

# Climate Change & Biodiversity Residents Survey

2020



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## Methodology

The survey was promoted online through the Council's website and our social media channels. Residents who have signed up for consultation reminders were notified and sent an invitation to participate in the consultation. The survey was open between 7<sup>th</sup> February and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

As an online survey is a self-selection methodology, with residents free to choose whether to participate or not, it was anticipated that returned responses would not necessarily be fully representative of the wider adult population. This report discusses the weighted results to overall responses by demographic questions to ensure that it more accurately matches the known profile of Maidstone Boroughs population by these characteristics.

There was a total of 1304 responses to the survey and 1268 weighted responses.

The results have been weighted by age and gender based on the population in the ONS mid-year population estimates 2018. However, the under-representation of 18 to 34 year olds means that high weights have been applied to responses in this group, therefore results for this group should be treated with caution. It should also be noted that respondents from BME backgrounds are under-represented at 3.9% compared 5.9% in the local area, the results for this group should also be treated with caution.

With a total of 1268 weighted responses to the survey, based on Maidstone's population aged 18 years and over, this means overall results are accurate to  $\pm 2.74\%$  at the 95% confidence level. This means that if we repeated the same survey 100 times, 90 times out of 100 the results would be between  $\pm 2.74\%$  of the calculated response, so the 'true' response could be 2.74% above or below the figures reported (i.e. a 50% agreement rate could in reality lie within the range of 47.24% to 52.74%).

Please note not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed not to the survey overall.

The data has been z-tested at the 95% confidence level. The z-test is a statistical test which determines if the percentage difference between subgroups is large enough to be statistically significant or whether the difference is likely to have occurred by chance. Only significant differences are discussed in this report.

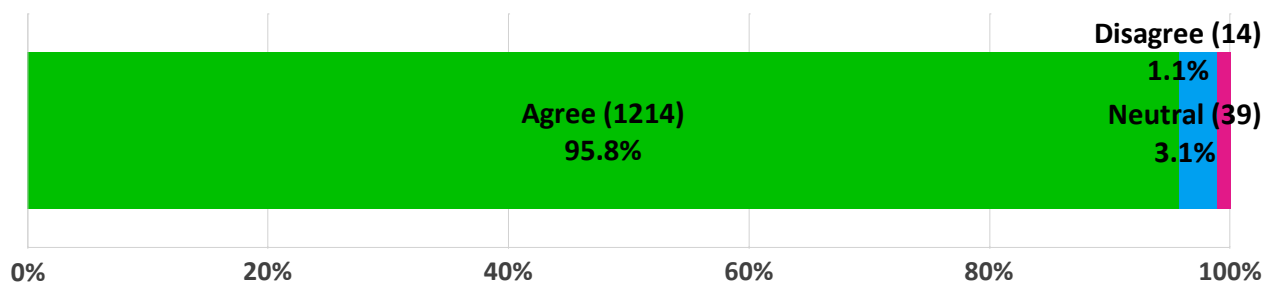
Rounding means that some charts may not add up to 100%.

## Climate Change Knowledge

Survey respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements in the chart below, relating to awareness and knowledge of climate change. Overall, there were high levels of agreement with the majority of respondent either 'Strongly agreeing' or 'Agreeing'.

### **Our Climate is Changing**

There were 1268 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'Strongly agree' with 875 responding this way.



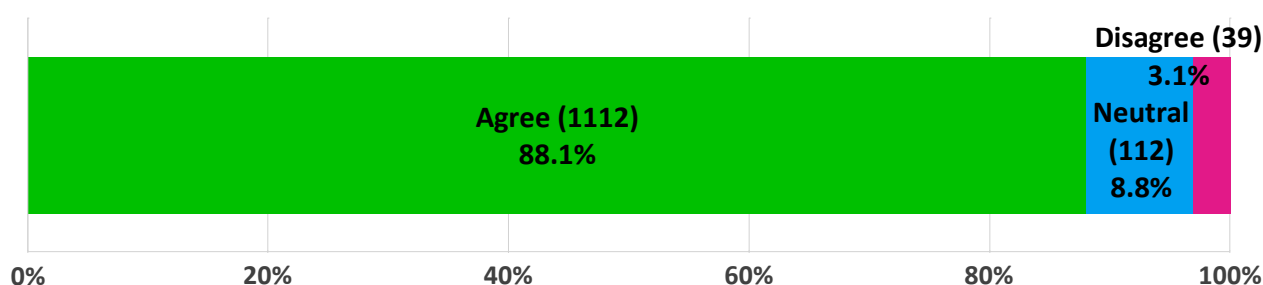
The data shows a significant difference between the response levels between male and female respondents. Female respondents had a greater proportion agreeing at 98.0% ( $\pm 1.1\%$ ) compared to 93.4% ( $\pm 2.0\%$ ) of male respondents.





Respondents aged 55 to 64 years had the greatest proportion disagreeing with this statement at 4.3% ( $\pm 2.8\%$ ), significantly different than that for 18 to 34 year olds, 45 to 55 year olds and those aged 65 years and over. There were no respondents age 18 to 34 years or 45 to 54 years that disagreed.

### **The earth is warming due to human activity**

There were 1262 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'Strongly agree' with 780 responding this way.

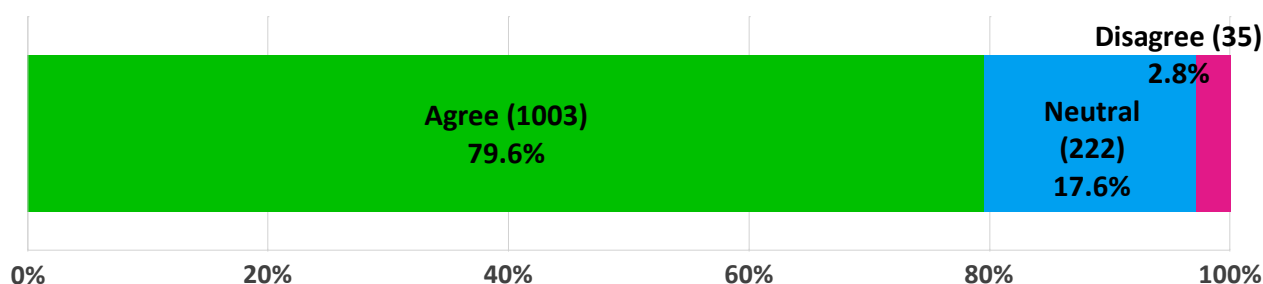




The data shows a significant difference between the response levels between male and female respondents. Female respondents had a greater proportion agreeing at 92.9% compared to 83.0% of male respondents.

	Economically active respondents had a greater proportion agreeing with this statement than respondents that are economically inactive, the difference between these two groups answering this way is significant.
	The 18 to 34 years groups had the greatest proportion agreeing at 95.1%, respondents aged 55 to 64 years had the lowest proportions responding this way at 77.6%, the differences between these groups is significant.

### **I have a good knowledge about the causes and effects of climate change**

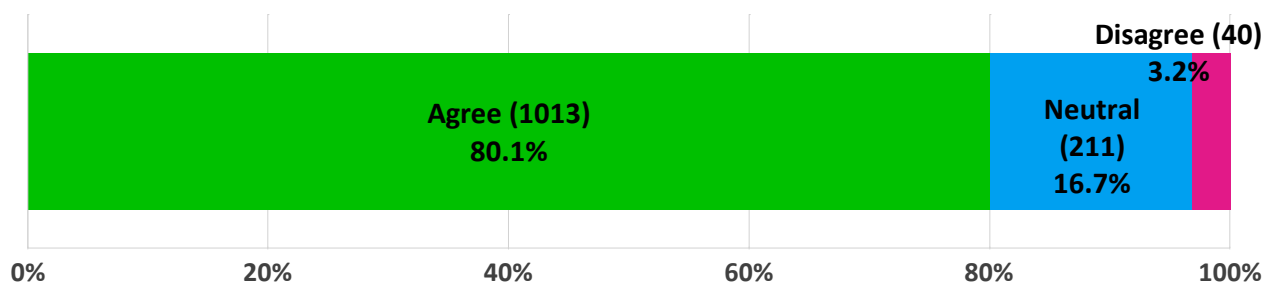
There were 1262 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'Agree' with 625 responding this way. Just one respondent 'Strongly disagreed' with this statement.






	Residents aged 35 to 44 (86.5%) are significantly more likely agree than respondents aged 55 to 64 years (77.4%) and respondents aged 65 years and over (67.8%). Respondents age 65 years and over had the greatest proportion responding neutrally – significantly greater than the other age groups answering this way.
	Economically active respondents had a greater proportion agreeing with this statement at 83.4% than respondents that are economically inactive who had 71.9% agreeing, the difference between these two groups answering this way is significant.

### **I have a good knowledge about the causes and effects of loss of diversity and/or number of animals and plants on our planet**

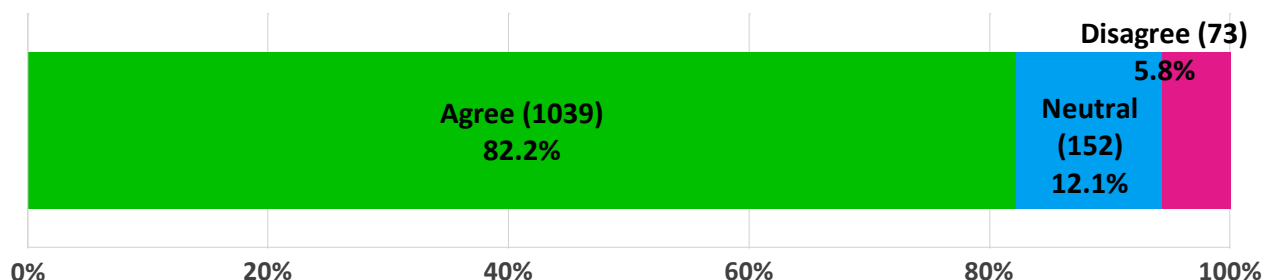
There were 1265 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'Agree' with 612 responding this way. Two respondents 'Strongly disagreed' with this statement.








	The data shows a significant difference between the response levels between male and female respondents. Female respondents had a greater proportion agreeing at 82.3% compared to 77.8% of male respondents.
	Economically active respondents had a greater proportion agreeing with this statement at 82.8% than respondents that are economically inactive who had 75.0% agreeing, the difference between these two groups answering this way is significant.
	Respondents aged 65 years and over had a significantly lower proportion responding positively at 71.7% to this statement.

### My actions can help tackle climate change

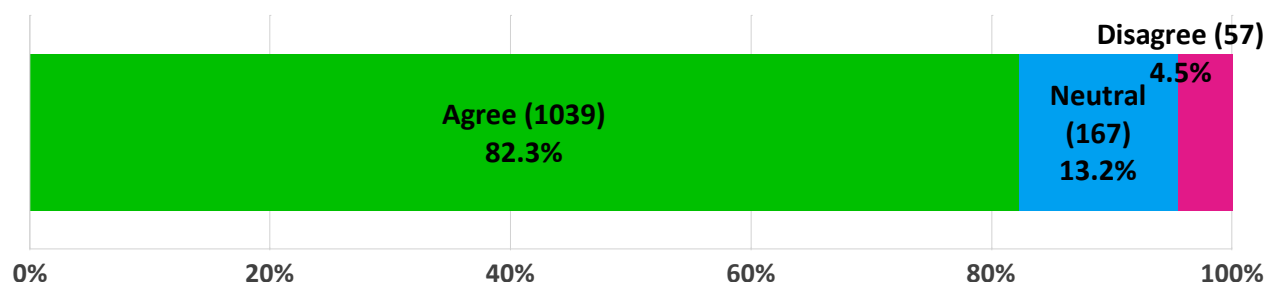
There were 1265 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'Agree' with 552 responding this way.



	Female respondents had a greater proportion agreeing at 86.8% compared to 77.2% of male respondents. The difference between these two groups is significant.
	Economically active respondents had a greater proportion agreeing with this statement at 84.8% than respondents that are economically inactive who had 76.6% agreeing, the difference between these two groups answering this way is significant.
	Respondents under 44 years had significantly greater proportions responding agree than respondents aged 45 years and over.
	A significantly greater proportion of respondents from BME backgrounds agreed with this statement than respondents from white groups, with 93.1% of BME groups agreeing compared to 81.7% of white groups.
	Respondents without a disability had a greater proportion agreeing at 83.2%, than respondents without a disability where 75.3% agreed – the difference between these groups are significant.

Reducing my impact on the environment is a personal priority

There were 1263 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'Agree' with 532 responding this way.



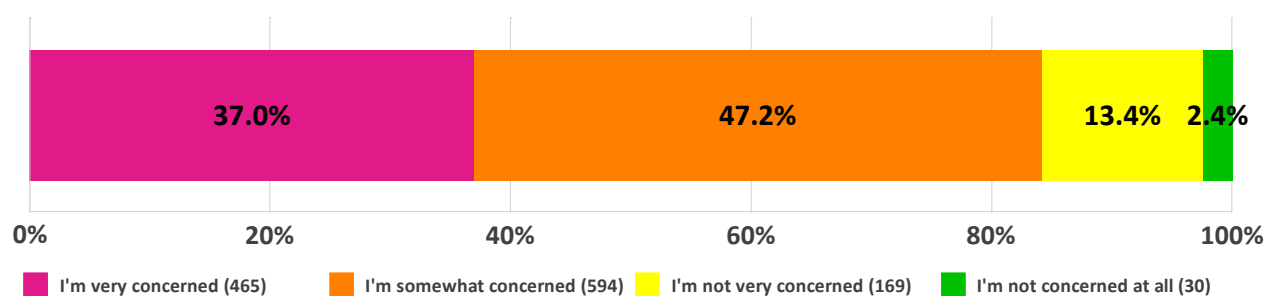
	Female respondents had a greater proportion agreeing at 87.7% compared to 76.6% of male respondents. The difference between these two groups is significant.
	Economically active respondents had a greater proportion agreeing with this statement at 83.8% than respondents that are economically inactive who had 79.2% agreeing, the difference between these two groups answering this way is significant. Economically inactive respondents had a greater proportion responding neutrally at 17.3%.
	Respondents under 44 years had significantly greater proportions responding agree than respondents aged 45 years and over. More than one in five respondents aged 65 years and over neutrally.
	A significantly greater proportion of BME respondents disagreed with this statement compared to respondents from white groups. More than one in five BME respondents disagreed compared to 3.7% of white group respondents.

## Climate Change Concerns

Survey respondents were asked to what extent they were concerned about impacts of climate change.

### The effects of climate change on me personally

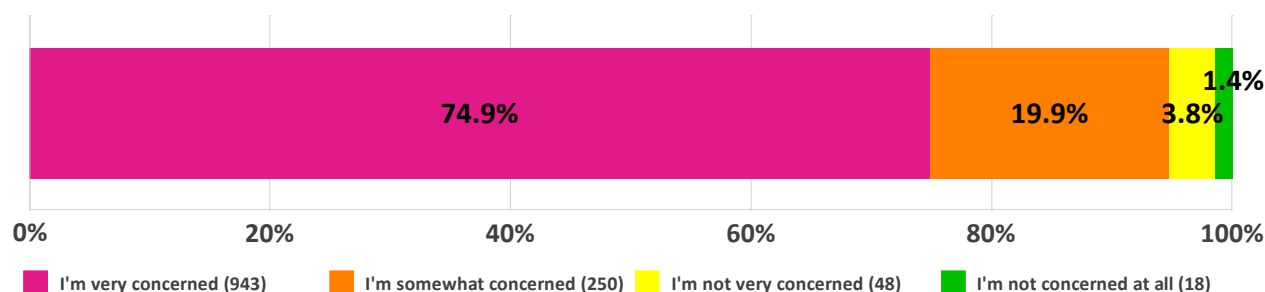
There were 1258 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'I'm somewhat concerned' with 594 responding this way.





	Female respondents showed more concern than male respondents with a greater proportion 'Very concerned' at 44.5% compared to 29.0% of male respondents, and lower proportions of 'not very concerned' and 'not concerned at all'. These differences are significant.
	Economically active respondents showed more concern than economically inactive respondents with a greater proportion 'Very concerned' at 42.3% compared to 25.6% of economically inactive respondents, and lower proportions of 'not very concerned'. These differences are significant.
	Respondents 55 years and over were less concerned than younger respondents, with at least one in five respondents in the older age groups answering, 'Not very concerned' or 'Not concerned at all'.

### The effects of climate change on future generations

There were 1250 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'I'm very concerned' with 943 responding this way.

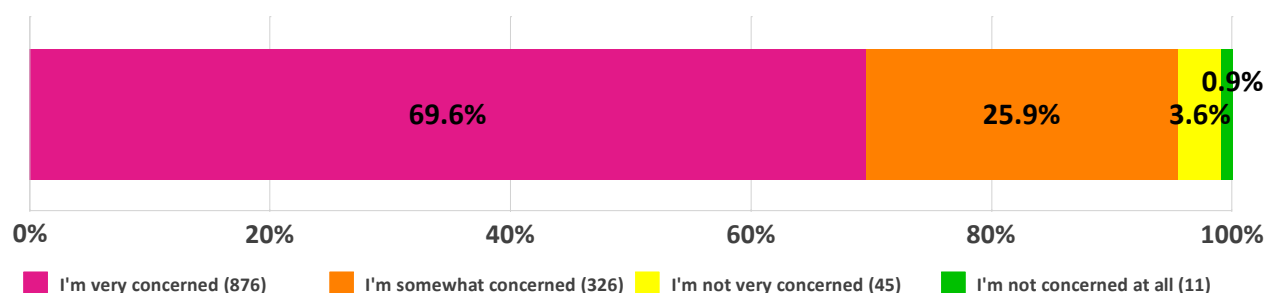




	Female respondents showed more concern than male respondents with a greater proportion 'Very concerned' at 79.5% compared to 70.0% of male respondents. These differences are significant. There were no female respondents who responded, 'Not concerned at all'.
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	Respondents aged 55 to 64 years were less concerned than the other age groups with just over one in ten respondents in this groups answering, 'Not very concerned' or 'Not concerned at all'.
	BME group respondents answered were less concerned compared to respondents from white groups. More than one in ten BME respondents disagreed compared to one in twenty of white group respondents. Through strength of feeling is less overall there were no BME respondents that said they were 'Not concerned at all'.

### The diversity and/or number of animals and plants on our planet

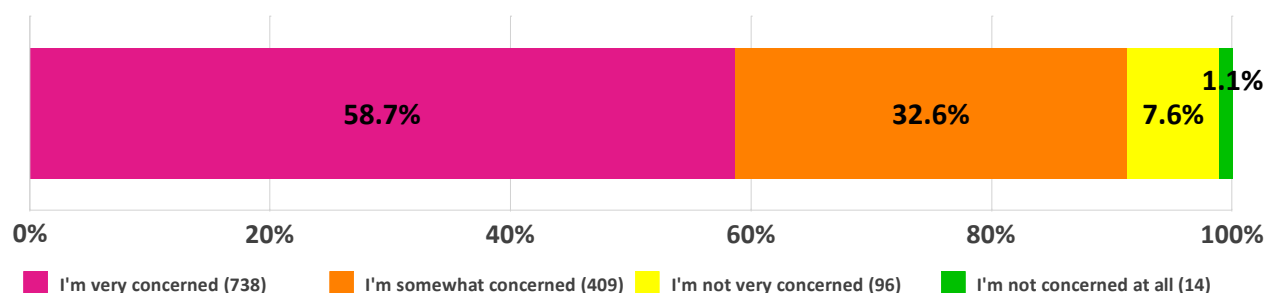
There were 1259 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'I'm very concerned' with 846 responding this way.






	Female respondents showed greater strength of feeling than male respondents with a greater proportion 'Very concerned' at 76.6% compared to 62.1% of male respondents. These differences are significant. There were no female respondents who responded, 'Not concerned at all'.
	Respondents aged 18 to 34 years had the greatest proportion showing concern with 98.0% respondents, this is significantly greater than the proportion responding this way for those 55 years and over.

### The frequency of extreme weather events in the future

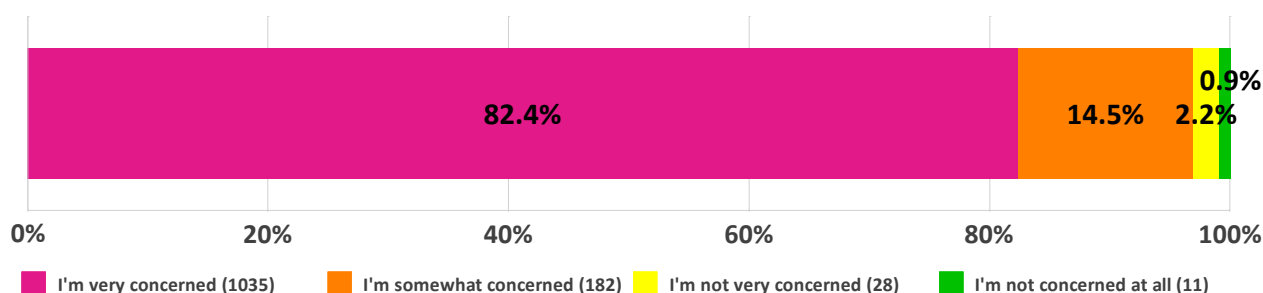
There were 1257 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'I'm very concerned' with 738 responding this way. This was the most common response across all demographic groups.





	Female respondents showed more concern than male respondents with a greater proportion 'Very concerned' at 66.0% compared to 51.0% of male respondents. More than one in ten male respondents answered 'Not very concerned' or Not concerned at all, compared to one in twenty female respondents. These differences are significant.
	Though the proportions between these groups showing concern (Very concern & Somewhat concerned') is comparable, significantly greater proportion of Economically active responds said they were very concerned at 61.1% compared economically inactive respondents at 52.5%
	The 55 to 64 years age groups had significantly lower proportion showing concern compared to the other age groups at 85.2%.

### The loss of the natural environment

There were 1257 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'I'm very concerned' with 1034 responding this way. This was the most common response across all demographic groups.

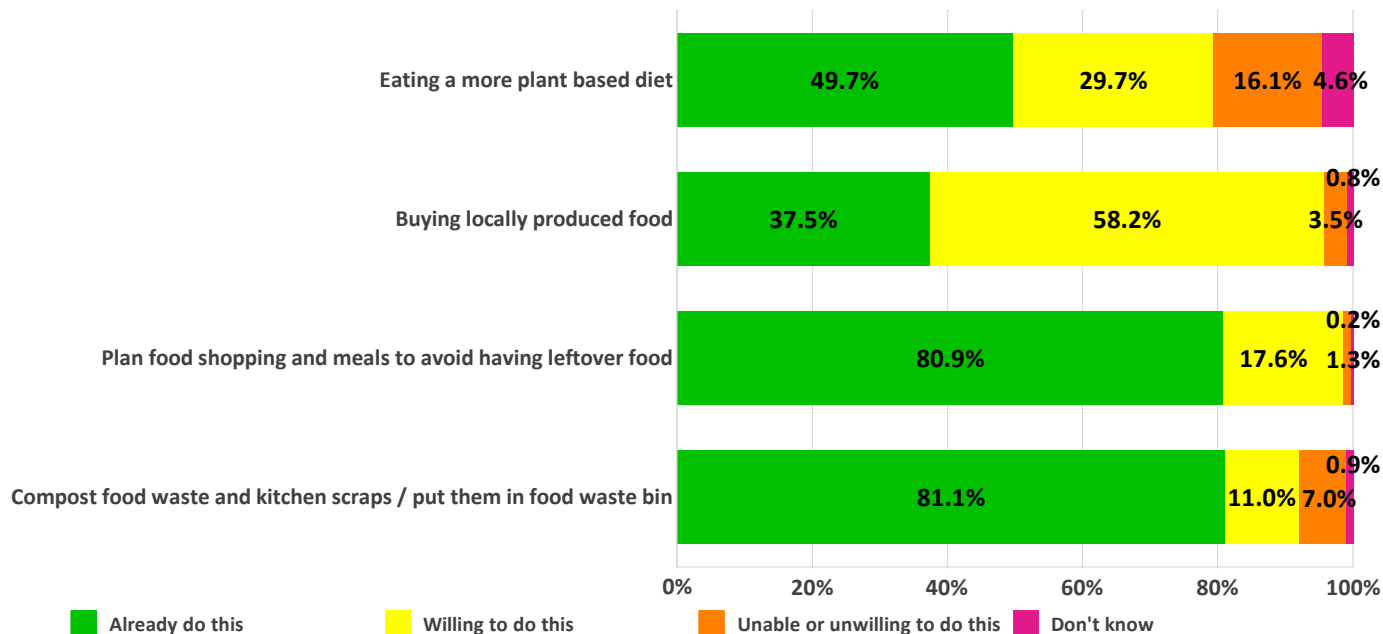


	Female respondents showed a greater strength of concern than male respondents with a greater proportion 'Very concerned' at 88.7% compared to 75.7% of male respondents. These differences are significant.
	There is a significantly different in the proportions responding, 'Not very concerned' and 'Not at all concerned' between respondents aged 55 to 64 years and respondents 65 years and over. The 55 to 64 years group had a greater proportion responding this way.

## Adapting Behaviour

Survey respondents were asked which behaviours, from a list provided, they were already doing, were willing to do, are unable to do and don't know. These behaviours have been grouped together in the charts below.

### Food based behaviours

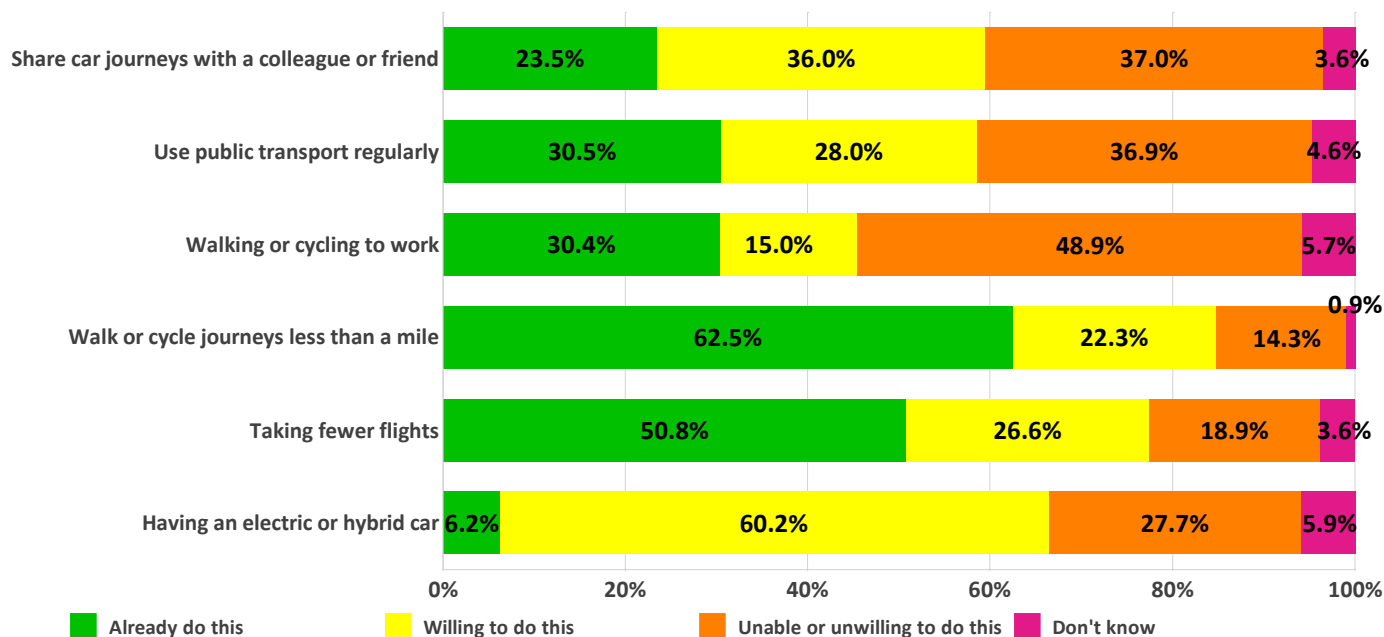


	Just over one in ten female respondents said they would be willing to eat a more plant-based diet compared to just over one in five male respondents.
	A significantly greater proportion of the economically inactive stated they already buy locally produced food, compared to economically active respondents.
	<p>The proportion of those stating they already eat a more plant-based diet decreases as age increases. One in four of those aged 55 to 64 years said they would be unable or unwilling to do this.</p> <p>Respondents over 44 years had significantly greater proportions stating they buy locally produced food than those under 44 years, those under 44 years had greater proportions stated they are willing to do this.</p> <p>One in five respondents aged 18 to 34 years said they are willing to compost or use a food waste bin. This group and the 45 to 54 years group had significantly greater proportions stating they are unable or unwilling to do this compared to the 65 years and over group.</p>
	One in five respondents with disability said they would be willing to eat a more plant-based diet and the same proportion of this group said they would be unwilling or unable to do this.





There was no significant difference in the proportions saying they are unwilling or unable to 'Plan food shopping and meals' across the different demographic groups.

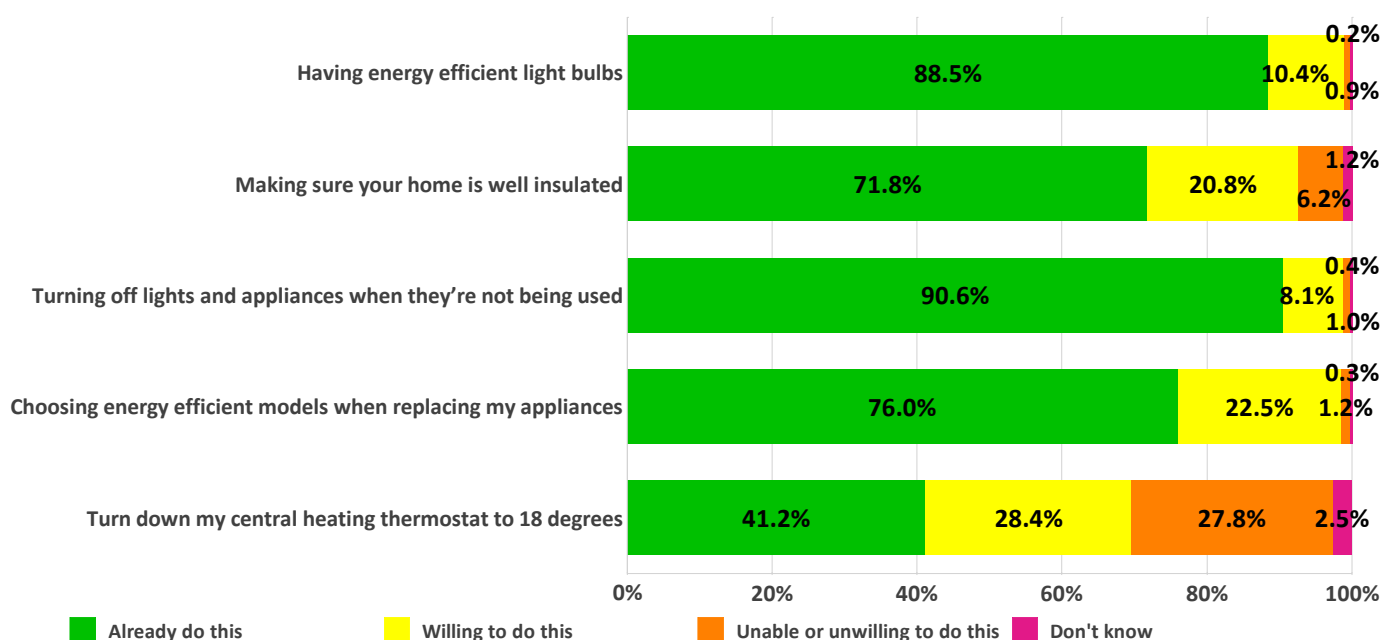
### Travel based behaviours








	<p>Male respondents were less willing or unable to share car journey with 40.1% responding this way compared to 34.0% of female respondents.</p> <p>Male respondents had a significantly greater proportion responding that they are willing to use public transport at 31.5% compared to 24.7% of female respondents.</p> <p>A greater proportion of women than men said they already walk or cycle to work. A significantly greater proportion of male responders said they were unwilling or unable to do this at 52.5% compared to 45.4% of female respondents.</p>
	<p>Economically active respondents were less willing or unable to share car journeys with 40.2% responding this way compared to 30.3% of female respondents.</p> <p>Economically active respondents had a greater proportion that are willing to walk or cycle journey less than a mile and have an electric or hybrid car.</p>
	<p>Respondents aged 18 to 34 years and 65 years and over had significantly lower proportions stating they would be willing to use public transport regularly and the other age groups.</p> <p>The proportions responding unwilling or unable to walk or cycle to work increase as age increases.</p> <p>Respondents aged 55 years and over had significantly greater proportions stating they were unwilling or unable to walk or cycle for journeys less than a mile or take fewer flights.</p>
	<p>A significantly greater proportion of respondents from BME groups said they were unable or unwilling to use public transport regularly with 55.2% responding this way compared to 36.3% of respondents from white groups.</p>

	BME groups had greater proportion stating they were willing to walk or cycle for journeys less than mile with 37.5% responding this way compared to 21.5% of white groups (white groups do have a greater proportion stating they already do this but it is not significantly different from the proportion responding the same from BME groups.
	A significantly greater proportion of disabled respondents said they already car share journeys with 31.9% answering this way compared to 22.5% of none disabled respondents. The most common response from disabled respondents was they are unwilling or unable to for the statements relating to walking and cycling. A significantly greater proportion of disabled respondents said they were unwilling or unable to have an electric or hybrid car.
	There were no significant differences across the demographic groups in responding stating they are willing to take fewer flights.

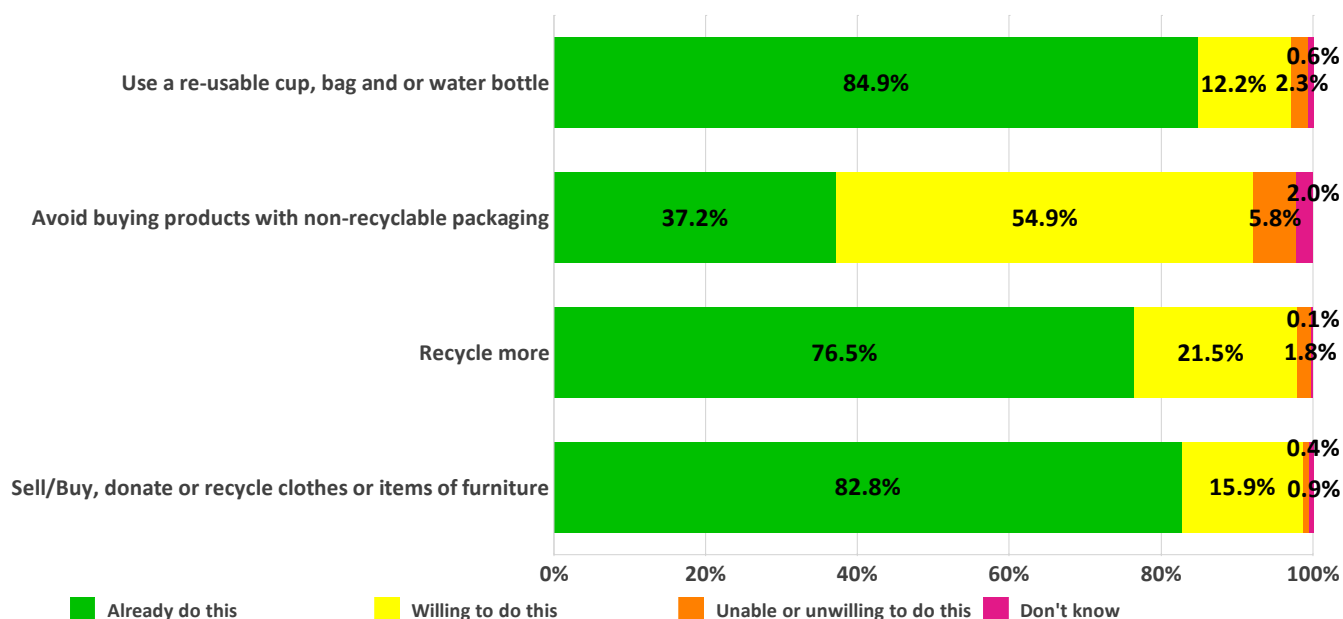
### Energy Efficiency behaviours







	Economically active respondents had a significantly lower proportion stating they already make sure their home is well insulated and significantly greater proportion stating they are unwilling or unable to do this. A greater proportion of economically active respondents said they were willing to turn their central heating down, whereas a greater proportion of economically inactive respondents said they were unwilling or unable to do this.
	Respondents aged 18 to 34 years over had a significantly lower proportion stating they already used energy efficient lightbulbs and choose energy efficient models when replacing appliances than the other age groups and in turn the greatest proportions stating they would be willing to take these measures.

	More than a third of respondents 65 years and over said they were unwilling or unable to turn down their central heating.
	BME respondents over had a significantly lower proportion stating they already used energy efficient lightbulbs, insulate their homes well and chose energy efficient models when replacing appliances than white groups and in turn a greater proportion stating they would be willing to take these measures. 'Unwilling or unable to' was the most common response from BME respondents when asked about turning down central heating.
	A significantly greater proportion respondent with a disability stated they already choose energy efficient models when replacing appliances.
	There were no significantly differences across the demographic groups in response levels to the statement regarding turning off lights and appliances.

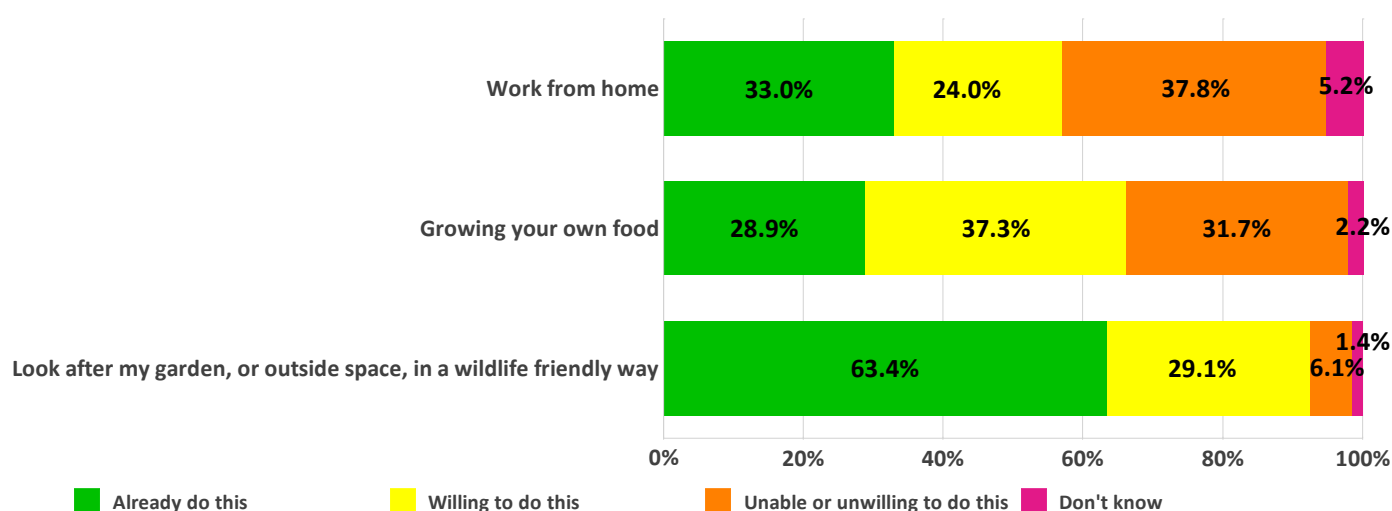
### Waste & Recycling based behaviours







	<p>A significantly greater proportion of female respondents said they use a reusable cup, bag or water bottle compared to male respondents with 92.4% answering this way compared to 77.1%. More than one in six male respondents said they would be willing to do this.</p> <p>A significantly greater proportion of male respondents said they were unwilling or unable to avoid buying products with non-recyclable packaging or recycle more. One in five men said they were willing to sell/buy donate or recycle clothes or items of furniture, (men had lower proportions stating they already do this).</p>
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	<p>A significantly greater proportion of economically active respondents said they use a reusable cup, bag or water bottle and avoid buying products with non-recyclable packaging compared to economically inactive respondents with 89.4%</p> <p>More than one in six economically inactive respondents said they would be willing to do this use a reusable cup, bag or water bottle.</p>
	<p>The proportions responding unwilling or unable to use a reusable cup, bag or water bottle increase as age increases and the proportions already doing so decreases with age.</p> <p>Willingness to avoid buying products with unrecyclable package increases with age. 18 to 34 year olds had the lowest proportion stating they already sell/buy, donate or recycle clothes or furniture items and the greatest stating they would be willing to do this at 19.8%.</p>
	<p>A significantly greater proportion of respondents without a disability said they use a reusable cup, bag or water bottle compared to disabled respondents with 85.8% answering this way compared to 77.5%. Almost one in five disabled respondents said they would be willing to do this.</p>

### Other home-based behaviours



	<p>A significantly greater proportion of female respondents said they would be willing to grow their own food with 40.5% responding this compared to 33.9% of male respondents.</p> <p>A greater proportion of male respondent said they were unwilling or unable to look after their outside space in a wildlife friendly way.</p>
	<p>A significantly greater proportion of economically inactive respondents said they were unwilling or unable to work from home with 41.9% responding this way compared to 35.6%. Economically active respondents had greater proportions saying they already do this and would be willing to do this than economically inactive respondents.</p> <p>A significantly greater proportion of economically inactive respondents said they were unwilling or unable to grow their own food with 40.9% responding this way compared to 27.1% of economically active respondents. 42.3% of economically active respondents said they were willing to do this.</p>

	<p>Respondents aged 18 to 34 years and those aged 65 years and over had significantly lower proportions responding that they already working from home than the other age groups. More than four in ten of respondents from these groups said they were unwilling do unable to do this.</p> <p>Respondents aged 65 years and over had the lowest proportion stating that they are willing to grow their own food and the greatest proportion responding they are unwilling or unable to, these results are significant different than that for the other age groups.</p> <p>Respondents under 45 years that lower proportions stating they already look after their outside space in an environmentally friendly way, and greater proportion stating they are willing to do this compared to the older age groups.</p>
	<p>A significantly greater proportion of disabled respondents said they were unwilling or unable to work from home or grow their own food.</p>

*Suggestions on how individual cans reduce their carbon footprint and protect the variety of animals and plants on planet (Q4)*

The most common theme for suggestions was a round transport with 221 respondents making a suggestion related to this theme. Several commenters made general comments about transport infrastructure and a few mentioned a by-pass.

In the theme of transport there were:

80 mentions of public transport with most people asking for this to be improved. There were statements that local buses are expensive and that public transport options should use environmentally friendly vehicles.

54 commenters made mention of congestion or traffic emissions. These commenters spoke of sitting in traffic and the need for traffic lights to be synced. Some of these comments were linked to those on developments stating that more house building causes more congestion.

35 mentions of sustainable transport options (cycling and walking), here people requested cycle paths and providing encouragement to people to use these options.

32 mentions of electric or hybrid vehicles, here people stated there needs to be more charging points, that they are willing to do this but that these types of vehicles are expensive, some mentioned having incentives for buying this type of vehicle and a couple mentioned the issues around the disposal of the batteries these vehicle use being concern.

There were 177 comments relating to development in the borough. Many of these comments said that too many houses and roads are being built. Some mentioned that brownfield sites should be used for development and not greenfield sites. Others commented that new properties should have eco-measures and there were several comments about lawns being tarmacked over and planning restrictions that mean some properties are unable to installed more eco-friendly measures.

There were 155 comments relating to wildlife and green spaces. Here many people said that more trees need to be planted or that trees should not be cut down, some suggested rewilding areas, planting hedgerows instead of fences and planting in gardens and in civic places that encourages or supports

nature. There were several comments around front gardens being used for driveways and no longer being green and the use of pesticides that are harmful to the environment and/or wildlife.

There were 148 comments relating to society in general. Here many suggested limiting the number of children people have or stated that overpopulation is a big cause of climate change. There were also suggestions that large organisations should be playing a bigger role in preventing climate change and that they have more power to initiate change. There were also requests for national campaigns and education, lobbying of central government for environmental policies and raising awareness generally.

There were 136 comments relating to general behaviour changes with many simply stating that individuals need to think more about their choices and actions in relation to climate change such as buying less, only buying thing you really need, using the car less for short journeys, not littering and washing clothes at lower temperatures.

There were 85 comments relating to waste and recycling (including littering and fly-tipping), with many stating we need to recycle more and that littering needs to stop with several stating that something needs to be done about littering from vehicles. Several queried where recycled materials go. There were a suggestions in this section for bigger food waste and composting bins, TerraCycle recycling points, facilities to recycle plastic goods and difficult to dispose of item such as crisp packets and greater enforcement of littering.

There were 70 comments in relation to packaging. Here people expressed annoyance that manufacturers produce items with non-recyclable packaging and requested less plastic packaging with some feeling that it is unnecessary in particular of fruit and vegetable. A couple mentioned milk delivery in reusable glass bottles with some mentioning encouraging shops to have refill stations.

There were 37 comments about food mile or being able to buy local produce. Here many stressed the need to buy food locally using farm shops or markets and eat seasonally with a couple mentioning growing their own fruit and vegetables. There were also 26 comments that made references to diet with many suggestion vegan and plant-based diets. Several mentioned reducing meat consumption and two mentioned palm oil.

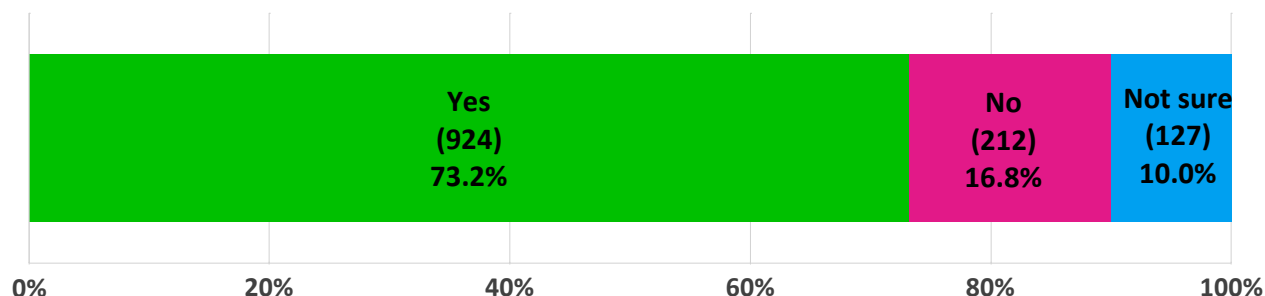
There were 28 comments that referred to some sort of adaptations such as insulation, solar panels and other renewable energy, with some stating there should be more incentives for these. There was a suggestion for villages to have group wind or solar farms run by locals and for a borough wide hot water system.




There were 22 comments relating to eco-products with suggestions that children's toys be made from sustainable wood, using eco-cleaning products and reducing the use of pesticides.

Other comments included, three people who mentioned banning bonfires, several people said the issue of climate change cannot be tackled at a local authority level and a few mentioned general need for more debate of this topic. There were also several comments that mentioned reducing water and the need to dredge the river to prevent flooding and several that mentioned lights in Maidstone House being on at night.

## Information about Climate Change

There were 1263 weighted responses to this statement. The most common response was 'Yes' with 924 responding this way. This was the most common response across all demographic groups.



	Male respondents had a significantly lower proportion responding 'Yes' with 70.4% responding this way compared to 75.8% of female respondents.
	Economically active respondents had a significantly greater proportion responding 'No' than economically inactive respondents and economically inactive respondents had a significantly greater proportion responding, 'Not sure'.
	Respondents aged 18 to 34 years had the greatest proportion responding 'yes' at 77.9% and the 65 years and over group had the lowest proportion responding this way at 69.9% - these proportions are significantly different from each other.

### What people would like to know more about to help you reduce your carbon footprint and protect the variety of animals and plants on the planet (Q6)

A total of 211 respondents made comments in this section, eight gave responses of don't know or not sure and 28 make comments that they already have enough knowledge, that this is a bigger issue than can be tackled by MBC, that they welcome any further advice or additional suggestions of things they would like done. Some made further suggestions of how the council could tackle climate change though the majority of these are outside of the Council's remit.

There were 75 commenters that said they would like more general information about reducing their carbon footprint with many asking for practical tips and small changes that they can do at home which will have an impact.

There were 28 comments that mentioned waste or recycling. Here people request information about what can and can't be recycled, in particular, people mentioned plastics and general confusion about different types of packaging. In this theme there was also people request information on what happens to recycling such as where it goes, how it is reused and success rates by area.

There were 22 comments where people requested further information on what they can do to look after wildlife and plants. Here they wanted to know what they can do to look after wildlife and what plants to grow to encourage biodiversity.

There were 20 comments where people made request for information in relation to purchasing. They wanted to know where to get local produce and what products have packaging that cannot be recycled where eco-friendly shops such as package free and more information on the carbon impact of different types of packaging e.g. a glass jar versus plastic jar.

In relation to transport there were 15 comments here people asked for information about buying electric cars, access to shared car schemes, plans to improve public and sustainable transport options and information on the carbon footprint of journeys by mode of transport e.g. bus versus train.

There were 13 comments about methods of communicating information about climate change and biodiversity. Many stating this needs to be simple and straight forward information. Several people suggested leaflets and posters there was suggestions of using TV and radio to get messages out and for an app.

There were 10 comments relating to food and diet here people wanted to know the carbon impact of what they are eating and if veganism has a significant impact with several people asking for food labelling.

Eight people made comments about having clarity of information suggesting that the current information about climate change is unclear, conflicting and impacts of changes are unknown.

Seven made comment about Council policy in relation to development in the borough stating that the government should be requested to review the housing targets for Maidstone.

Six people requested information about alternative energy and adaptations for the home. Here people asked what the greenest way was to heat their homes and others mentions access to schemes for solar panels and loft insulation.

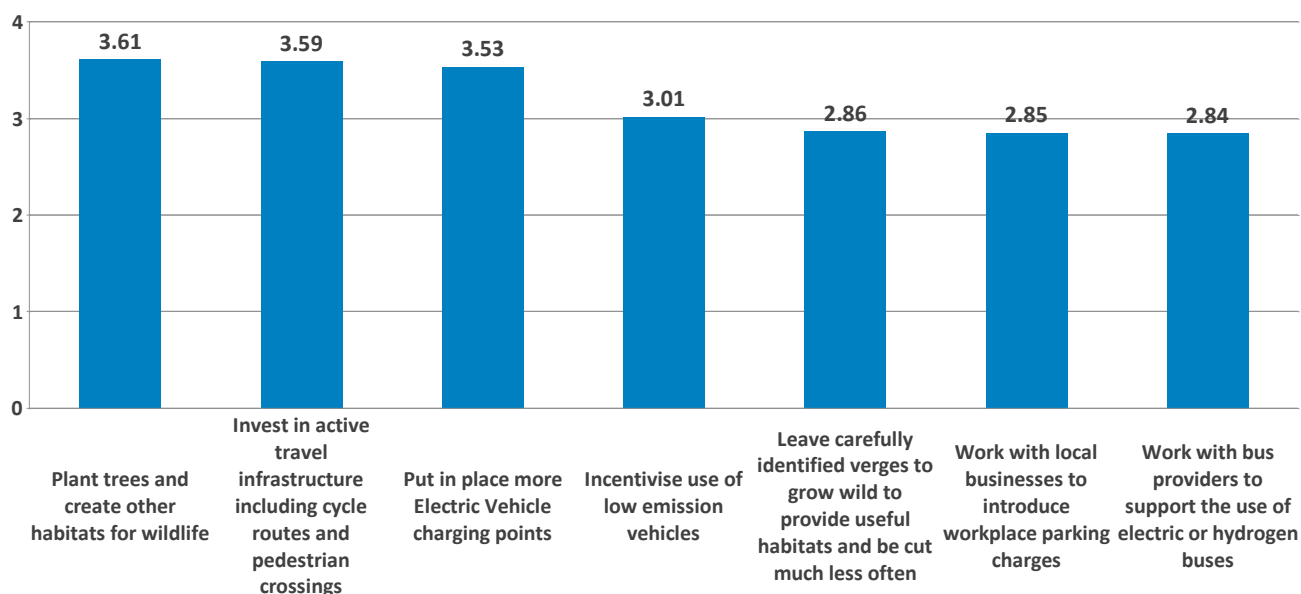
There were eight comments that have been categorised as 'Other', here there were three people who asked for information about how they could get involved in this issue, two requesting information on climate change actions being undertaken by businesses and local authorities, two mentions enforcement and the last commenter request details of the eco-logical and biodiversity surveys relevant to the local area such as the RSPB surveys.

## Priority Actions

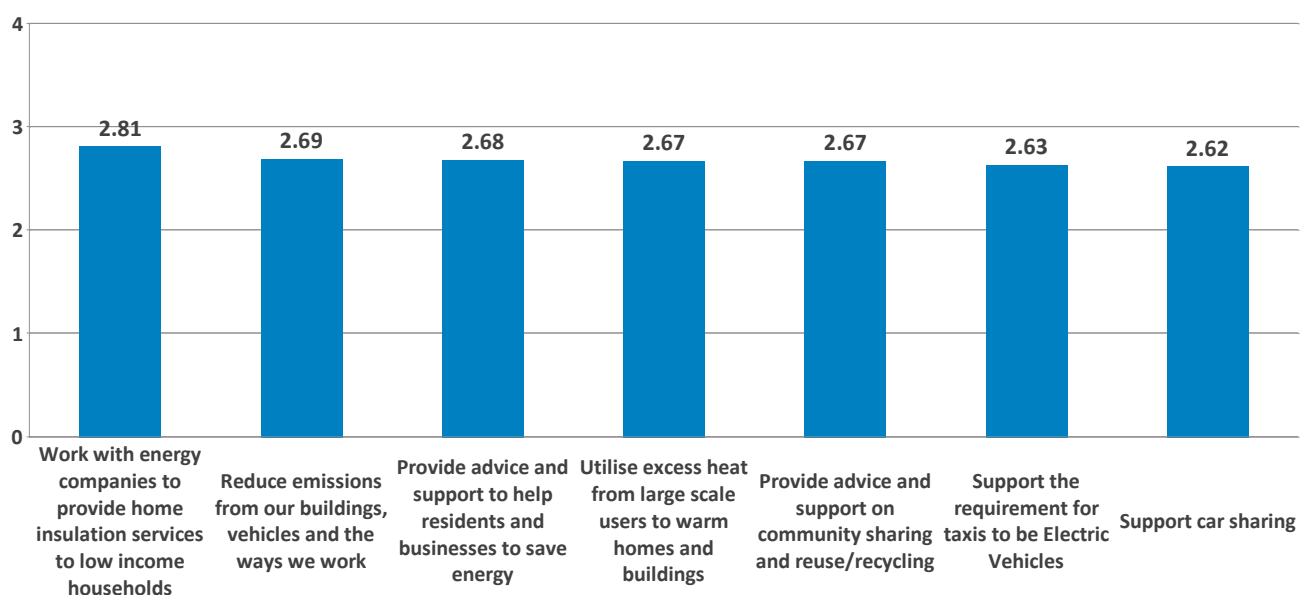
Survey respondents were presented with a list of fourteen actions around climate change and were asked to up to five priorities and place them in order of preference.






For ease of display the top seven and the bottom seven priorities by score are set out on in graphs. However, when analysis refers to 'order' or 'position' these refer to the order of all fourteen priorities.

### Top seven scoring priorities



### Bottom seven scoring priorities



	<p>Female respondents had the same top three as the overall result. Male respondent placed Electric Vehicle charging points as their number one priority followed by habitats for wildlife and active travel infrastructure. The difference between the average scores for Electric vehicle charging points is significantly between these two groups. Male respondents also had greater scores for supporting taxis to be electric. Female respondents also had a significantly higher score than male respondents for leaving verges to grow wild and providing advice on community sharing and reuse/recycling.</p>
	<p>Economically active respondents had the same top three, in the same order as the overall result. Economically inactive respondents had the same top three but placed Electric Vehicle charging as top and Habitats for wildlife as third. The difference between these two groups scores for Electric charging points is significant. Economically active respondents score for providing advice and support on community sharing and reuse/recycling was significantly greater than that for Economically inactive respondents. Economically inactive respondents scored significantly greater for Electric Taxis.</p>
	<p>The top three priorities for all age groups were the same, though in a different order, as the top three in the overall result. The 18 to 34 years group scored work with local businesses on workplace parking charges as third. This age groups also scored support for Electric Taxis significantly lower than the other age groups and scored providing advice on community sharing and reuse/recycling significantly higher. The 65 years and over group had a significantly greater score for electric vehicle charging points than the other age groups.</p>
	<p>White respondent had the same top three priorities, in the same order, as the overall result. BME groups placed habitats for wildlife as first followed by, advice and support to help residents and businesses save energy as second, the scores for these priorities were significantly greater than from White groups. BME groups placed active travel infrastructure as third. BME groups also had a significantly higher score than white groups for leaving verges to grow wild and significantly lower for electric vehicle charging points.</p>
	<p>Respondents without a disability had the same top three priorities as the overall result with slightly different order (Active travel infrastructure, habitats for wildlife and then electric vehicle charging points). Those with a disability had the same top placed habitats for wildlife first, followed by active travel infrastructure and then working with energy companies to provide insulation services to low income households was third. The scores from respondents with a disability were significantly greater than those without a disability for advice and support to help residents and businesses save energy and working with energy companies to provide insulation services to low income households.</p>

## Additional Comments

A total of 735 respondents gave a comment in this section. 45 of these commenters gave comments without information such as 'no further comments' or asked a questions. A couple queried the survey and several suggested that the survey was way to introduce taxes and charges for residents. The majority of comments submitted in this section raised issues that have already been addressed earlier in the survey.

There were 349 comments mentioning development or building in the borough. Here, as before, people were unhappy about house building, some mentioned using brownfield sites and other mentioned that climate change and biodiversity should be more of a consideration such as requirements for green infrastructure and tree lined streets in the planning process.

There were also 117 mentions of things relating to road and transport, here there were suggestions about syncing traffic lights, reviewing the town centre one way system as well as suggestions for a ring road or bypass with commenter stating that HGVs are forced to go through the town centre adding to pollution. There were an additional 37 comments that mentioned vehicle emission most of these were about electric vehicles stating that these should be promoted also a few suggestions of banning heavy polluting vehicles from the town centre. Several people stated that electric vehicles are not the answer due to issues around the recycling and disposal of the batteries they use.

There were 169 comments that mentioned public transport or sustainable transport including walking and cycling. These were people requesting improvements to public transport, in particular buses, with some commenting about the price of public transport in the borough. There were also requests for more cycle lanes and a few suggesting that more could be made of the river for transport.

There were 157 comments mentioned increasing or protecting wildlife and green spaces. Here, as before, people stated trees should not be cut down and there more should be planted, and land managed better for the protection of wildlife. There were suggestions that farmers should plant hedges and more wildlife and nature be integrated with sustainable transport (cycling and walking) to create nature corridors. Comments about crop types and pesticides.

There were 52 comments mentioning waste and litter. Here people requested more recycling facilities in more visible locations such as schools for crisp packets, to find more ways for communities to reduce their waste and increase fines and enforcement for littering and fly-tipping.

There were 26 people that mentioned the need to educate people on climate change or raise awareness of it.

There were 28 comments relating to MBC in general here people were stating that the Council needs to think about its own operations and policies, several of these people mentioned making a commitment like Cornwall Council or a green pledge to be carbon neutral and other stated the council needs to lead by example. Some stated that they don't believe the Council cares about climate change. There were a further nine comments that mentioned putting pressure on central government or lobbying.

There were 22 mentions of emissions generally mentioning off-setting, need for good data and several highlighted issues with idling vehicles.

There were 15 comments mentioning adaptations such as promoting the use of solar panels, green heating and hot water systems and ensuring that properties are insulated. There were also 13 comments mentioning having incentives for changing behaviour such as giving landowners money to create green spaces and incentives for recycle.

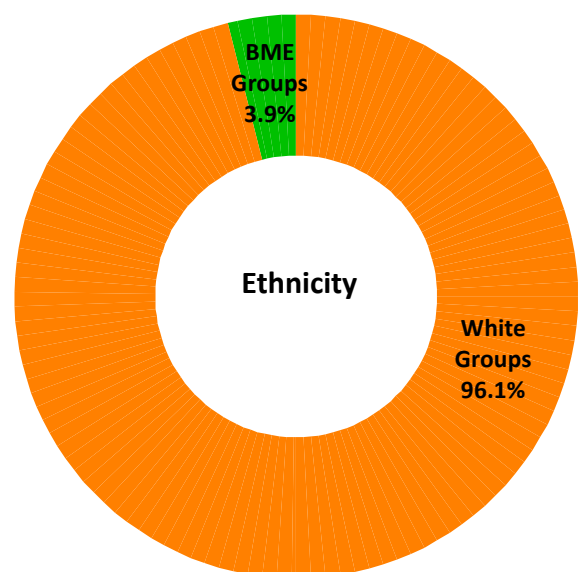
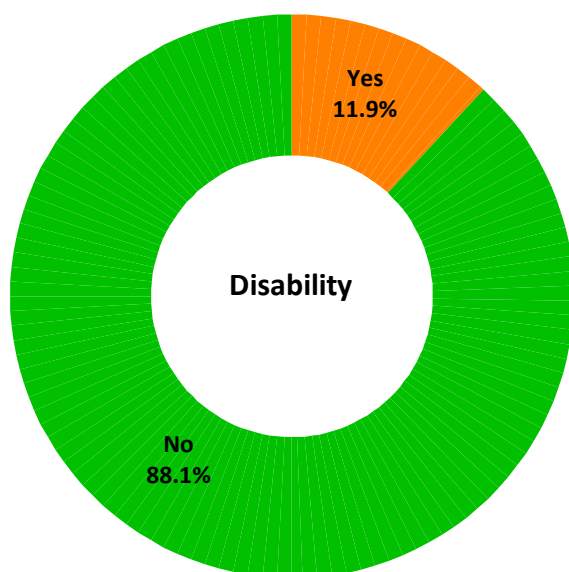
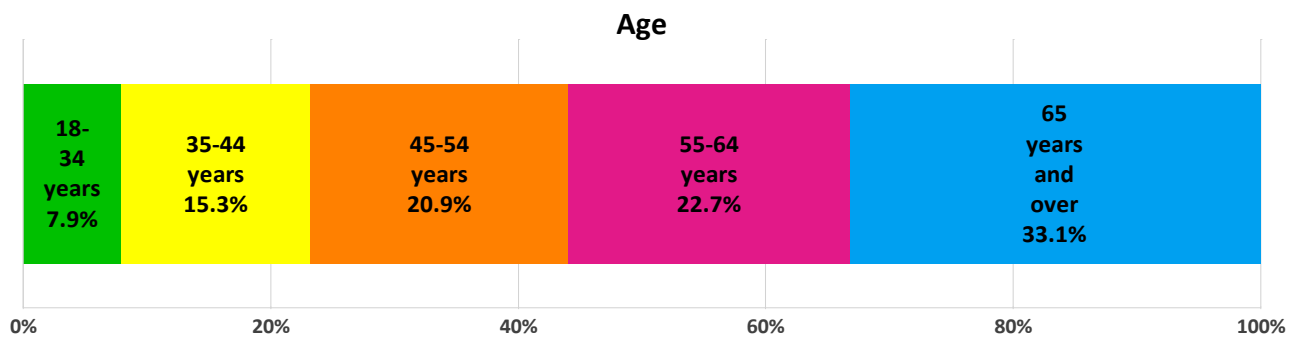
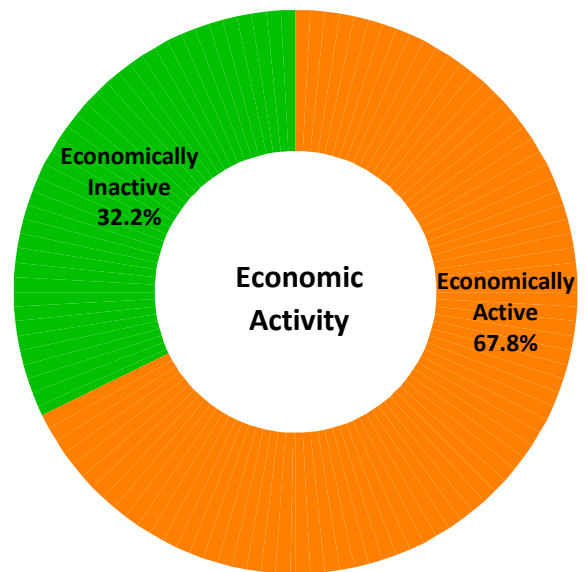
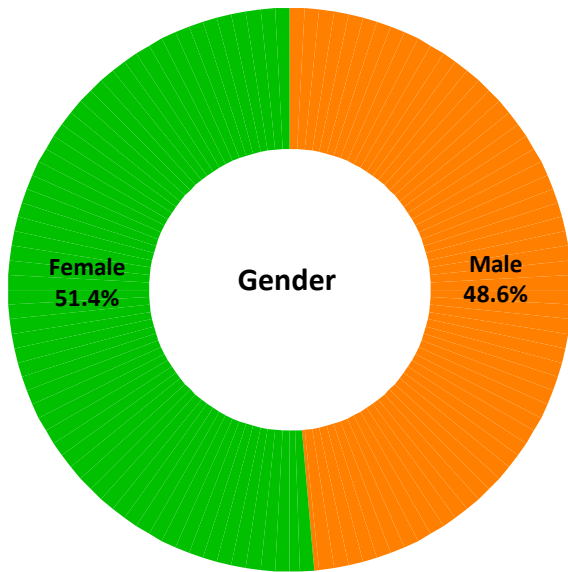
There were 13 people who made comments in relation to lighting stating that shops and businesses should switch off their lights at night (including some comments about MBC office lights) and a few mentioned reducing or turning off street lighting.

There were 14 people who made comments relating to diets, almost all of these related to having a plant based diet with one suggesting that there be a tax on meat or a reduction of tax on fruit and vegetables and a couple mentioning local produce. There was also some mention of allotments in this section.

There were 11 people who mentioned the need for sustainable shops such as repair and refill shops.

There were also 18 'other' comments that didn't fit into any other theme. Within these there were a couple of requests around cloth nappy services and promotion and a couple suggesting harnessing waterpower and a couple mentioning dredging the river.

## Demographics



**Think before you print!**



## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**21 OCTOBER 2020**

### COUNCIL-LED GARDEN COMMUNITY UPDATE

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All, but in particular Harrietsham & Lenham and Headcorn Wards. Lenham Parish Council and Boughton Malherbe Parish Council are affected.

#### Executive Summary

The proposal was last considered by this Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020. The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of the progress made since then in pursuing a council-led garden community, near Lenham Heath (Heathlands). As in the case of previous reports to this Committee, the contents of this report relate to the Council's position as a potential property owner/developer and not as Local Planning Authority (LPA).

#### Purpose of Report

For information.

#### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the contents of this report.

#### Timetable

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Policy and Resources Committee	21 October 2020

# COUNCIL-LED GARDEN COMMUNITY UPDATE

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve all the corporate priorities.</p>	Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendations support the achievement of all the cross cutting objectives.</p> <p>Through delivering much needed homes to include 40% affordable housing of which 70% would be for social or affordable rent. The emerging masterplan is landscape led with up to 50% of the total proposed as green space. Led by the ambitions set out in the Strategic Plan the Council can ensure that the design principles of development where it is the master planner reflect the commitment to reduce health inequalities amongst other things.</p>	Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Risk Management</b>	See section 5.	Director of Regeneration & Place

<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in the Garden Community forms part of the Council's five-year capital programme and budgetary provision exists for the expenditure described in the report and the plans outlined here.</li> </ul>	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.</li> </ul>	Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no legal implications arising from this report as it is for information only.</li> </ul>	Principal Solicitor - Commercial
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No impact identified</li> </ul>	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed if the proposal forms part of the draft spatial strategy of the Local Plan Review.	Equalities and Corporate Policy
<b>Public Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.</li> </ul>	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder.</li> </ul>	Head of Service or Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The revised masterplan brief seeks a biodiversity net gain within the proposed redline.</li> </ul>	Head of Policy Communications & Governance

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council is pursuing this project as it is consistent with its Strategic Plan priority of "embracing growth and enabling infrastructure" and the desired outcomes within it:

- The Council leads master planning and invests in new places which are well designed.

- Key employment sites are delivered.
  - Housing need is met including affordable housing.
  - Sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demands of growth.
- 2.2 This report will provide an update on the progress made since the last report to this Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and addresses the following areas:
- Promotion of Heathlands through the Local Plan Review (LPR)
  - Homes England partnership update
  - Principal Landowners
  - Community engagement
- 2.3 **Promotion of Heathlands through the LPR.** The Local Planning Authority (LPA) published its evidence base for the LPR to the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure (SPI) Committee last month. This evidence base included a report produced by Stantec evaluating the three garden community proposals. This Stantec report will no doubt inform the SPI Committee decision expected in November as to which, if any, of the garden community proposals should feature within the next public consultation stage of the LPR, i.e. the LPA's preferred spatial distribution for future development in the borough.
- 2.4 The Stantec report critiqued the proposal in terms of the following: deliverability, employment, transport, infrastructure, placemaking and governance. The Stantec report concludes that Heathlands could be suitable for inclusion in the LPR but raises the following areas of weakness for further exploration and evidence gathering; connectivity, the western parcels (minerals and waste water treatment plant), relationship to Lenham Heath, possible expansion to the north of railway line and more generally viability / land value capture.
- 2.5 The Council, acting as land promotor / developer will submit representations on all these matters to the LPA within the next two weeks. These areas of uncertainty had been highlighted to this Committee over the course of 2020. The Stantec report in effect appears to set out four possible scenarios for Heathlands were it to proceed:
- 3,000 homes if the western parcel is removed
  - 4,000 homes as per the June 2020 masterplan
  - 4,000 homes but with the northern parcels added to replace lost western parcel
  - 4,000+ homes if the western and northern parcels feature
- 2.6 All these scenarios can be further explored should the broader proposal feature in the next stage of the LPR, in partnership with Homes England and the LPA.
- 2.7 Furthermore, at the request of the LPA, RSK have been commissioned to provide a preliminary assessment of the Heathlands proposal in respect of Nutrient Neutrality requirement, as recently established as a requirement by Natural England. I.e. the Heathlands location falls within the Stour Operational Catchment area and so it will be necessary to demonstrate

that any development would not adversely affect the local water environment. This report is due imminently and a meeting is being scheduled between the Council (as promotor), the LPA and Southern Water to explore this matter and the various possibilities and requirement around the existing wastewater treatment plant.

- 2.8 **Homes England (HE) Partnership update.** HE received on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020, their Development Project Executive approval to undertake their own due diligence of the project to a value of £250k. This sum increased their previous expenditure cap, and this is funding the following: Title due diligence, technical due diligence, financial due diligence, collaboration agreement with MBC and the negotiation of Option Agreements with the principal landowners. It is envisaged that any areas of serious concern will have been identified and raised well in advance of the pivotal November 2020 SPI committee, but so far their findings appear consistent with the conclusions reached and shared by MBC officers and indeed those reached by Stantec too.
- 2.9 This sizeable due diligence budget is helpful as it can also be used for further work to present to the LPA in respect of their various lines of enquiry identified by Stantec, in particular developing the sustainable transport strategy to include opening discussions with Network Rail. HE will also undertake a full independent valuation of the site prior to entering contractual negotiations with the landowners.
- 2.10 HE will seek their final approval for their full £1.5m contribution for match funding with MBC (for the full £3m promotional costs) in February 2021, once they (together with MBC) have concluded the negotiations with the principal landowners. The intention is for contracts to be in place by March 2021.
- 2.11 Furthermore, HE has also provided MBC with some initial ideas as to the possible deal structures that could be utilised between the two organisations for the delivery phase (so post securing outline Planning consent). These will be explored by the Corporate Leadership team once there is clarity in terms of whether Heathlands will feature in the next stage of the LPR, and then brought to this Committee for decision in due course.
- 2.12 **Principal Landowners.** The five principal landowners and the additional landowners to the north of the railway line are fully briefed and are aware that commercial negotiations will need to recommence and proceed at pace after the November SPI decision (assuming that it is a positive decision). They are also aware that these negotiations will now include HE too.
- 2.13 **Community Engagement.** The Parish Council do not support the proposal and to this point it has not been possible to establish a positive dialogue with the Save Our Heathlands group either. If Heathlands does feature in the next stage of the LPR a community engagement strategy will be developed and presented to this Committee for approval before being rolled out. The ideal scenario would be that the Council could work positively with both entities even if they continue to oppose the scheme,

so that their input can be secured to improve the proposals in the event that the project does ultimately proceed, whilst respecting their ultimate preference that it does not. This modus operandi has been offered previously, but arguably prior to the November SPI decision this would have been too early from their perspectives.

- 2.14 **Summary.** Once again good progress has been made since the last update report and it remains possible that the proposal may feature in the next stage of the LPR. If this does occur, there will need to be extensive dialogue with the LPA to develop and refine the proposal further and to provide further information and evidence as required. Furthermore, if this milestone is achieved, further work will need to be undertaken with Members and all stakeholders to develop the desired infrastructure package more fully and then create a plan as to how best it can be delivered. I.e. for a compelling infrastructure package to be delivered, a critical success factor will be a high level of Member consensus and advocacy on the matter with various stakeholders, to include the Local Enterprise Partnership.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The report is for noting.

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 N/A.

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### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 When this proposal was presented to this Committee in September 2019, the likely risks were set out as follows:
- At risk consultancy expenditure.
  - A period of uncertainty for the community affected.
  - Possible negative perceptions of a broader role for the Council in the context of acting as master developer.
  - Maintaining cohesion amongst the landowner group.
- 5.2 These risks have to some degree crystallised and largely remain. However, the level of cohesion amongst what is a now smaller landowner group, is now strong. When the proposal was last reported on 21 July 2020, further risks were identified, that broadly remain unchanged, as follows:

- Terms cannot be agreed with the landowners (principal and minority).
- That the LPA does not support the proposal at the next stage of the LPR.
- Challenge from individuals or organisations that oppose the principle and/or the specific details of MBC's council-led garden community.

### 5.3 New emerging risks are that:

- The LPA could move to support the proposal in the next stage of the LPR process, but this Committee falters in its resolve to continue to back the project over the long term.
- The further due diligence being undertaken by HE could identify currently unforeseen areas of risk.

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## 6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 Nothing further to report since July 2020.

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## 7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The next steps will be to:

- Advance the commercial negotiations with the five principal landowners after the November SPI Committee.
- Continue to promote the proposal to the LPA through the LPR.
- Continue discussions with Homes England.

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## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

None.

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## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

# Agenda Item 17

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted