

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 24 March 2021
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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Issued on Tuesday 16 March 2021

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

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PART II

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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 by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 22 March 2021). 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 make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 22 March 2021). You will need to tell us

which agenda item you wish to speak on.

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

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2021

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

127. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

128. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

129. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

130. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting members.

131. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

132. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillors Chappell-Tay, English, Harvey, McKay, Mortimer, Newton, Perry, Round and de Wiggondene-Sheppard had been lobbied on Item 12 – Review of Planning Inspectorate Decisions – Church Road, Otham.

133. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That item 12 – Review of Planning Inspectorate Decisions – Church Road, Otham be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

134. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

135. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

136. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

137. APPRAISAL SUB-COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That

1. The Appraisal Sub-Committee be appointed to carry out the Annual Appraisal process for the Chief Executive and Directors; and
2. The Sub-Committee's membership be politically balanced with the membership in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders.

138. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified, having applied the Public Interest Test:

Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description

Review of Planning Inspectorate Decision – Church Road, Otham 5 – Legal professional privilege

139. REVIEW OF PLANNING INSPECTORATE DECISIONS - CHURCH ROAD, OTHAM

The Head of Planning and Development introduced the report, referencing the site's inclusion in the Council's adopted Local Plan and outlined the timeline of events up until the outcome of the appeal.

The Head of Mid-Kent Legal outlined the steps that would need to be taken if a statutory challenge under section 288 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 was requested. The grounds of challenge involved showing (a) there has been a failure to comply with relevant procedural requirements, or (b) the decision is not within the powers of the 1990 Act which entails requiring the High Court to review the Inspector's decision on the grounds of illegality, irrationality or procedural unfairness.

The Committee were informed that Counsel had advised in their detailed opinion, that there were no grounds, with any reasonable chance of success, to commence the statutory challenge against the Inspector's decision. The Head of Mid-Kent Legal reiterated that the Inspector had considered a wide range of public documents, including planned highways improvements and Section 106 monies, during the appeals process. The risk of further reputational damage to the Council was noted.

The costs incurred to date were outlined.

The Committee felt that it was not viable to conduct a legal challenge. Members expressed their views regarding the site's inclusion in the Council's adopted Local Plan (agreed by a majority of Full Council in 2017).

The Committee supported an internal review into the Church Road decision.

RESOLVED: That

1. Counsel's opinion about the prospect of a successful challenge against the Inspector's decision in the High Court be noted;
2. The legal implications and the Council's statutory requirements when considering legal challenges be noted;
3. No legal proceedings against the Inspector's decisions be pursued, and therefore that no further action be taken by Maidstone Borough Council concerning the outcome of the planning appeals with respect to Church Road, Otham;
4. The Council issues a statement that explains the position as fully as possible, to be produced in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, as well as Councillors McKay and Newton; and
5. Lessons be learned from the experienced of the Church Road application; and that the terms of reference and lines of enquiry be suggested and presented to the Democracy and General Purposes Committee for consideration.

140. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 9.33 p.m.

Agenda Item 9

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to **Council**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **five** Councillors, to **the Mayor** by: **18 March 2021**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2021

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

Also Present: Councillors Harper, Naghi, J Sams and T Sams

141. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Newton.

Councillor Brice joined the meeting at 6.39 p.m.

142. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

143. **URGENT ITEMS**

There was an urgent update and an urgent item; Item 18a – Appendices A and C and Item 22 – Management of Residential Assets. The reason for urgency was that both items were not available at the time of publication with the former contributing to the financial figures presented within Item 18 – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals.

An urgent update, in the form of an updated Appendix B for Item 15 – Strategic Plan Refresh, had been circulated to the Committee.

144. **CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Item 13 – Reference from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Funding, Item 18 – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals and Item 18a – Appendices A and C would be considered together as they related to the Council's finances.

145. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillors Naghi, J Sams and T Sams were present as Visiting Members for Item 14 – Council-Led Garden Community Update.

Councillor Harper was present as a Visiting Members for Item 15 – Strategic Plan Refresh and Item 16 – Further Development of the Lockmeadow Leisure Complex.

Councillor Naghi was present as a Visiting Member for Item 16 - Further Development of the Lockmeadow Leisure Complex and Item 18 – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals.

146. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

147. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillors M Burton, Chappell-Tay and Round had been lobbied on Item 13 – Reference from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Funding.

Councillors M Burton, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Mrs Gooch, Harvey, McKay, Mortimer, Perry, Round, Springett and de Wiggondene-Sheppard had been lobbied on Item 14 – Council-Led Garden Community Update.

Councillors Chappell-Tay and Round had been lobbied on Item 15 – Strategic Plan Refresh.

Councillor Round had been lobbied on Item 16 – Further Development of the Lockmeadow Leisure Complex.

Councillors M Burton, Chappell-Tay and Round had been lobbied on Item 18 – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals.

Councillor M Burton had been lobbied on Item 20 – Heather House and Pavilion Building.

148. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the following items be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information:

- Item 19 – Sub-Lease of Premises
- Item 20 – Heather House and Pavilion Building
- Item 21 – Granada House
- Item 22 – Management of Residential Assets

149. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed at a later date.

150. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

151. 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

'Tonight's update report for the Council-led garden community project states that "Officers are attempting to engage with the objecting landowners to understand their individual concerns and the extent to which these can be addressed." The eighteen objecting landowners have repeatedly sought to have their property removed from your masterplan. The landowners do not need a discussion; they simply just need the Council to respect their wishes. Do you believe it is acceptable for a local authority to be pressurising landowners to sell their land and engage in negotiations when they have stated their wishes very clearly?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Ms Hammond asked the following supplementary question:

'Is it possible for you to give some sort of guarantees around that right now or is this something you are not willing to do at this particular time?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

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

'Is the Policy & Resources Committee 'in too deep' with the Heathlands Council-led garden community to be able to make a rational decision on this plan; and would they agree that this is not the right housing solution for Maidstone?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Ms Duff asked the following supplementary question:

'It seems that no matter what Save Our Heathlands say that this committee doesn't want to listen to the serious constraints and concerns being raised locally by the residents. You now seem willing to pass this over to Homes England who will in time come to realise that the proposed development doesn't stack up. Is this committee afraid of admitting that it's got it wrong in this case and to draw a line under this sorry saga?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

Question from Mr Steve Heeley to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee

'The Initial Infrastructure Feedback to the Local Plan Review confirmed that Network Rail had 'little support' for a new rail station on either line at Lenham Heath. The promised motorway junction and high-speed rail station have both fallen away. It now seems that a new mainline rail station to serve the proposed new town also looks undeliverable. What enabling infrastructure, if any, is this project going to deliver to get 12,000 new residents to and from Lenham sustainably without using a car?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Heeley asked the following supplementary question:

'The problem with the assumption on internal trips is that the masterplan provides for 800 jobs for 12,000 residents and there's no secondary school, so you can assume for internal trips that if there's no trips to make to employment or education or leisure, then everybody has to travel off of the site. The A20 does not have the capacity to accommodate the considerable increase in traffic, Maidstone town centre is over 12 miles away which rules out genuine walking and cycling trips in any considerable volumes, so what can the sustainable transport strategy actually include that's meaningful to make this development look sustainable?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

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

To access the webcast recording, please use the below link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tLvANonyWU>

152. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

153. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

154. COUNCIL-LED GARDEN COMMUNITY UPDATE

The Director of Regeneration and Place introduced the report and stated that the work necessary to draft the collaboration agreement between the Council and Homes England was ongoing. The agreement would be presented to the Committee at its March 2021 meeting.

It was noted that there had been positive progress with the principal landowners and that the land north of the railway line towards the A20

was currently being explored, as requested by the Local Planning Authority. This could reduce the number of land ownerships within the red line.

In response to statements from the Visiting Members, the Director of Regeneration and Place stated that the narrative used for the Public Health section of the report would be further considered.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

155. STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance introduced the report and outlined the changes implemented following the previous feedback received on the proposed areas of focus shown at Appendix A to the report.

An urgent update to Appendix B had been circulated to the Committee which included the comments from the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee and the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee. These were that two indicators; homelessness as a result of domestic abuse and office vacancy rates be added to the list of proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The latter would depend on whether the Council continued to purchase the data which contained the information requested.

In discussing Appendix A, it was requested that 'across the borough' replace 'for the borough' within proposed area of focus to 'Deliver a sustainable and vibrant leisure and culture offer for the Borough'.

In discussing Appendix B, it was requested that the recovery column for the town centre footfall indicator include when footfall figures have plateaued as well as when pre-covid-19 levels were achieved.

RESOLVED: That

1. Full Council be recommended to approve the revised areas of focus, as set out in Appendix A to the report, for the strategic plan 2021-2026; and
2. The Key Performance Indicators, as set out in the Urgent Update – Appendix B, for 2021-22 be agreed.

156. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCKMEADOW LEISURE COMPLEX

The Leisure Property Manager introduced the report, stating that the Phase I development works had been completed in December 2020. The Phase II works focused on creating a food hall, expanding the outside terrace and the installation of a children's play area. The projects would be funded through the previously allocated £1.5 million from the capital budget.

As a review of the car parking payment system was ongoing, the installation of bollards had been put on hold. The review had intended to discover how many cars would be accessing the site but this was not achievable in the current climate. The bollards could be installed quickly if needed.

Several Members expressed concerns about the significant traffic in the surrounding area, with the Leisure Property Manager having confirmed that the Highways Authority, Kent County Council, had applied for an experimental transport order that could create a one-way system. This would prevent drivers from turning right into Hart Street. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council had been in contact with KCC regarding the traffic management concerns since September 2020.

There were some concerns that insufficient information had been provided to the Committee and that the improvement works should be conducted at a later date. In response to questions, the Leisure Manager highlighted that conducting the improvement works during the lockdown period was preferred and that 24/7 security was in place at the site. The aim of encouraging small businesses into the site was referenced, as three expressions of interest has been received from local businesses. It was hoped that by increasing Lockmeadow's offerings, visitor dwell time would increase. The Committee expressed support overall for investing into the Lockmeadow complex.

RESOLVED: That

1. The proposed improvement work be supported;
2. The requested capital spend be approved;
3. The Director of Finance and Business Improvements be given delegated authority to seek planning permission for and deal with associated planning matters in relation to the landlord works described in the report and to undertake a procurement process and award such contracts for delivery of the works in line with financial procedure rules and applicable public contracts regulations and principles; and
4. The Head of Mid Kent Legal Services be authorised to complete the necessary contract document and agreements associated with the works.

Note: Councillor Round temporarily left the meeting during the item's discussion, at 8.41 p.m.

157. 3RD QUARTER FINANCE, PERFORMANCE & RISK MONITORING REPORT 2020/21

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the financial appendix and reconfirmed that the financial impact of Covid-19 to the Council was projected at £7.5 million. This had been mitigated

somewhat by £2.5 million in unspecified/unallocated Covid-19 government funding and that the Council Tax and Business Rates losses would be accounted for in future financial years. The topics covered within the financial appendix of the report were outlined.

In referencing the Business Rate Retention Pilot Schemes that were put on hold last year, it was proposed that a portion of the funding be directed towards the Bus Station Improvement Project. A correction to the fifth recommendation on the report, to reference Appendix 4 rather than 7, was noted.

The Senior Business Analyst introduced the performance update and stated that two of the three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) did not reach the third quarter target; one by more than 10%. The Success of Relief Duty Outcomes had achieved 35.29% against the 60% target, however the contributing factors to this were outlined. 194 applicants were relieved from homelessness, with a prevention duty outcome of 74.88%. Littering offences had contributed to the KPI on acceptable levels of litter having missed the set target.

Nine KPIs had missed their third quarter target across the Council's three other Service Committees.

The Deputy Head of Audit Partnership introduced the risk monitoring update which focused on the 11 highest scoring areas of risk and outlined the information contained within the report. There had been no changes to the risk ratings, with the two Covid-19 related risks highlighted: internal resilience and capacity and ability to influence recovery externally.

It was noted that some risks had been moved onto the operational risk register to be monitored by the wider and corporate leadership teams. An update would be provided on the operational register during the fourth quarter update. Early horizon scanning, to identify further potential risks to be included in the corporate risk register had been conducted. The register would be aligned with the Council's recovery from Covid-19 and the agreed changes to the Strategic Plan.

In response to questions, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement stated that further information on the income from Maidstone Property Holdings was provided on page 89 of the agenda pack.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 3 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken of proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. The Capital position as at the end of Quarter 3 be noted;

3. The Performance position as at Quarter 3 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted;
4. The Risk Update, attached as Appendix 3 to the report, be noted;
5. The release of £92,000 from earmarked reserves to progress business rates retention pilot projects, and retention of £96, 641 for projects which will remain on hold, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report, be agreed;
6. The proposed reallocation of unspent funding from the business rates retention pilot as set out in Paragraph 2.8 of the report, be agreed;
7. The uncollectable Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) listed in Appendix 5 to the report, be approved for write-off; and
8. The irrecoverable housing benefits payments listed in Appendix 6 to the report, be approved for write-off.

158. REFERENCE FROM THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE - BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION FUNDING

RESOLVED: That the item be considered alongside Item 18 – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals and Item 18a – Urgent Update to Item 18 – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals – Appendices A and C.

159. URGENT UPDATE TO ITEM 18 - MTFS AND BUDGET PROPOSALS - APPENDICES A AND C

RESOLVED: That the item be considered alongside Item 13 – Reference from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Funding and Item 18 – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals.

160. MTFS AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report and noted that the budget had been under consideration for the past few months. The proposed increase in the minimum level of reserves held by the Council, from £2 million to £4 million was highlighted.

The Council's budget deficit had been reduced to £1.6 million, with actions proposed to close the gap over the next three years. There was an additional £860,000 in government funding which was not ring-fenced but was intended to assist in the Council's response to Covid-19, with any remaining funding to be diverted to the Council's recovery strategy. The Committee would receive a report on the strategy in the future.

Feedback from the Council's other Service committees on the perceived impracticality of two savings proposals was highlighted i.e., the £75,000 of savings in year three arising from planning policy, and the £120,000 arising from the restructure of democratic representation. The latter would not occur as the Democracy and General Purposes Committee had chosen not to proceed to the consultation stage for Whole Council elections. As the savings would have occurred in three years' time, it was proposed that they be included as general savings within the Council's budget, with new methods to generate the savings identified in the future.

In addressing the reference from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, the importance of the Local Plan (LP) and planning policy development was reiterated. It was stated that whilst the £200,000 (per annum) expenditure allocated to the LP had now been found to be insufficient, the report set out a way forward that was intended to address the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee's concerns. The additional funding requirements would be identified through Officers reviewing the budget for the Local Plan and planning policy, through to the plan's adoption in 2023. The resulting proposals would be presented to the Committee and the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee.

In response to the concerns expressed, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement provided assurance that the proposals outlined would provide the necessary funding for the LP and planning policies.

The proposed increase in Council Tax was questioned due to the current economic climate. It was noted that if the Council Tax increases were not approved, there would be a financial shortfall.

RESOLVED: That

1. The outcomes of consideration of the budget proposals by the Council's Service Committee's be noted;
2. The updated Strategic Revenue Projection, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be agreed;
3. The Budget Savings Proposals as set out in Appendix B to the report, be agreed;
4. The £5.31 increase in Band D Council Tax for 2021/22 for recommendation to Council, be agreed;
5. The Revised Estimates for 2020/21 and the Budget Estimates for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix C to the report, for recommendation to Council, be agreed;
6. The Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix D to the report, for recommendation to Council, be agreed;

7. The Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Capital Strategy, as set out in Appendix E to the report, for recommendation to Council, be agreed;
8. The increase in the minimum level of reserves to £4 million, be agreed;
9. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy, as set out in Appendix G to the report, be agreed; and
10. The appropriate matters for decision to set a balance budget for 2021/22 and the necessary level of Council Tax in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Localism Act 2011, including the decisions made above, be recommended to Council.

It was noted that by agreeing the recommendations as per the report on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the request from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee was refused.

Note: Councillor Round returned to the meeting at 8.47 p.m.

161. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specific, having applied the public interest test:

Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sub-Lease of Premises | 3 – Financial/Business Affairs |
| Heather House and Pavilion Building | 3 – Financial/Business Affairs |
| Granada House | 3 – Financial/Business Affairs |
| Management of Residential Assets | 1 – Individual |

162. SUB-LEASE OF PREMISES

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report and stated that a public sector body had requested that the Council sub-lease an area of office space for a period of six months on a fixed term contract.

The benefits of the proposal were outlined.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be given delegated authority to negotiate and agree terms for a sub-lease or

licence in respect of part of a floor of Maidstone House for a term of six months for an agreed rental income.

2. The Head of Legal Services be given delegated authority to complete the necessary legal formalities and all agreements and deeds arising from or ancillary to the sub-lease or licence on the terms agreed by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement or to appoint solicitors to complete such legal formalities and documents if considered necessary; and
3. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be given delegated authority to vary the terms of the sub-lease or licence in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee in order to maximise the economic benefits of the transaction and that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to complete the necessary legal formalities and all deeds agreements arising from or ancillary to the transaction.

163. HEATHER HOUSE & PAVILION BUILDING

The Housing Delivery Manager introduced the report and highlighted that the scheme proposed had been considered by the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on 5 January 2021. Local residents and stakeholders had been consulted during engagement exercises.

The new proposal included a new community centre on the Heather House Site and 11 dwellings on the Pavilion Building site, with pre-application advice supportive of the schemes design. A significant funding shortfall had been identified, which would be reduced to £308,000 if the Council's bid to the Land Release Fund was successful. It was noted that the funding gap could be mitigated through the use of CIL payments, grant funding, the Council itself or through a combination of the approaches.

The proposed design focused on providing toilet facilities, kitchen facilities, a sports hall, welcome area and changing facilities. Additional space was available to extend the community facility if the site's future management company wished to do so.

Further consultation with the rugby clubs that used the existing premises would take place before a planning application was submitted for the proposal.

The importance of regeneration to the Parkwood area through the proposed design scheme was highlighted. The Committee expressed support for the proposal and reiterated the significance of improving the community facility.

RESOLVED: That

1. At risk expenditure of £200,000 to make a combined detailed planning application for both sites in accordance with the scheme designs outlined in the report and going out to tender for the works

contract and procurement of the management provider for the proposed new community centre, be agreed;

2. The Head of Mid Kent legal Services be authorised to negotiate and complete all necessary deeds and agreements arising from or ancillary to the application for planning permission; and
3. The construction project would not commence until a follow-up report has been presented to the Committee to approve the final scheme costs and necessary financial commitments associated with the development and management of the sites; to include how the funding gap identified has been bridged, subject to the necessary planning consent, tenders for the works contracts and management provider being received for the scheme.

164. GRANADA HOUSE

The Housing Manager introduced the report and outlined the works that had been undertaken on the property to date and the design scheme proposed.

The additional dwellings proposed would be leased at market rents. The rental income generated from the properties and the increased cost of the scheme were outlined.

It was noted that the installation of a lift was not required by Building Regulations nor was it technically possible to provide. Further funding could be secured from Homes England to assist in the proposed development, however the proposal was to move forward with the development regardless.

The Committee felt that the design scheme should be presented to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to fully consider the Housing Policy impact before a decision was made.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the item be deferred, to allow the design scheme to be presented to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to fully consider the impact on Housing Policy before a decision was made.

165. MANAGEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL ASSETS

The Head of Housing and Community Services introduced the report and highlighted that the Council had retained a small number of service tenancies together with some tenancies let on long leases. Agreement was needed on how to manage these tenancies once the staff members residing at the property retires and the accommodation was no longer required for the betterment of an employee's duties.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to dispose of or to transfer residential property to Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd on the basis set out in Paragraph 4 of the report; and
2. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to grant such leases to Maidstone Property Holdings Limited on terms to be agreed, and to authorise the negotiation and completion of such leases and all necessary and ancillary deeds and agreements and that the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services be authorised to negotiate and complete the necessary legal formalities and all such leases, deeds and agreements in due course.

166. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME

| | Committee | Month | Origin | CLT to clear | Lead | Report Author |
|--|-----------|---|------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Council's Recovery Strategy | P&R | 21-Apr-21 | Officer Update | | U/K | U/K |
| Update Report on Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan | P&R | 21-Apr-21 | Officer Update | | Georgia Hawkes | Helen Miller |
| Council Led Garden Community Update | P&R | 21-Apr-21 | Officer Update | Yes | William Cornall | William Cornall |
| 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 |
| Financial Hardship Update | P&R | TBC | Officer Update | ? | Steve McGinnes | Steve McGinnes |
| Archbishop's Palace Options Appraisal | P&R | TBC | Asset Management | Yes | Mark Green | Lucy Stroud |
| 17 Office Provision | P&R | TBC - update to be given when available | Officer Update | Yes | Mark Green | Georgia Hawkes |

Agenda Item 14

Policy and Resources Committee

24 March 2021

Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Final Decision-Maker | Policy and Resources Committee |
| Lead Head of Service | Georgia Hawkes, Head of Transformation and Property |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Helen Miller, Overview and Scrutiny Officer Biodiversity and Climate Change |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

The report introduces the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy. It shows the relationship between it and existing Council strategies. Kent County Council, as lead authority on the strategy, are asking Kent Local Authorities to endorse the Strategy.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To endorse the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Corporate Leadership Team | 2 March 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 24 March 2021 |

Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is similar in aims to our Biodiversity and Climate Change strategy and action plan and is aligned to the core priority of Safe, Clean and Green in our Strategic Plan. | Georgia Hawkes |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | The report recommendation(s) supports the achievement(s) of the biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected cross cutting objectives by committing to work in partnership to address the climate emergency. | Georgia Hawkes |
| Risk Management | Please see section 4 of the report | Georgia Hawkes |
| Financial | The proposals set out in the recommendation are already within approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. | Senior Finance Manager (Client) |
| Staffing | We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. | Georgia Hawkes |
| Legal | Accepting the recommendations will support the national legal requirements set out in the Climate Act 2008 to reduce carbon emissions. Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers to tackle climate change. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 includes a general power of competence, which gives local authorities the legal capacity to do anything that an individual can do that is not specifically prohibited | Legal Team |
| Privacy and Data Protection | No impacts on Privacy and Data Protection identified as a result of the report and recommendation. | (Policy and Information Team) |
| Equalities | The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment | [Policy & Information Manager] |
| Public Health | We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health of individuals in that it aims to reduce emissions from housing, industry and transport, improve | Public Health Officer |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | air quality and reduce fuel poverty. | |
| Crime and Disorder | There are no Crime and Disorder issues to note. | Georgia Hawkes |
| Procurement | The strategy does not bring additional financial requirements and no procurement will be needed. | Georgia Hawkes & Section 151 Officer |

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The Council adopted the Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in October 2020 which set out our approach to addressing the ecological and climate emergencies. On the 27 January 2021 the Democracy and General Purposes Committee recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee maintain responsibility for the governance of biodiversity and climate change.

1.2 The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, (hereafter called the Strategy) sets out the Kent and Medway response to the climate emergency and how partnership working across the county will drive a resilient economic recovery across Kent. It identified 10 priorities to promote the development of clean and secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address air quality and reduce fuel poverty.

1.3 The aim of the Strategy is to drive change through the county through partnership working. It is an aspirational document and further detail is provided in the implementation plan.

1.4 The Strategy was endorsed by the Kent Chief Executives Group on 29 September 2020 and the Kent Leaders Group on 8 October 2020. It has gone through a consultation process and been revised to reflect changes brought by the COVID19 pandemic. Kent County Council has requested the Strategy be endorsed as soon as practicable.

1.5 For clarity, attention is drawn to Maidstone Borough Council’s Low Emissions Strategy which was approved by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee on 5 December 2017. This is our Air Quality Action Plan which we are required to produce in association with our Air Quality Management Area. It focuses on improving air quality and the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy focuses on addressing the climate change emergency.

1.6 The Strategy contains the four strategic themes;

- Evidence; providing an evidence and intelligence base; providing data sets to identify hot spots and opportunities and help build business cases for action across the county;
- Policy and strategy; supporting the development of evidence based policy and strategy;
- Leadership; support the public sector to play a strong leadership role across the county;
- Action; support increasing and accelerating action across the county.

- 1.7 The 10 high level priorities are;
1. Emissions reductions pathways to 2050;
 2. Public Sector Decision Making;
 3. Planning and development;
 4. Climate emergency investment fund;
 5. Building retrofit programme;
 6. Transport, travel and digital connectivity;
 7. Renewable energy generation;
 8. Green infrastructure;
 9. Supporting low carbon businesses;
 10. Communications.
- 1.8 The Strategy is similar to the Council's own Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy, and Action Plan, in many ways. These include;
- The emphasis on Planning and Development and ensuring the climate change is integrated into Local Plans. This is highlighted in our Buildings, Transport and Adapting to Climate Change themes.
 - The Building retrofit programme has similar aims to our Buildings and parts of our Transport themes.
 - The Transport, Travel and Connectivity theme shares many aims with our Transport theme.
 - The Renewable energy generation theme is similar to our Generating Renewable Energy theme.
 - The Green Infrastructure theme is similar to our Enhance and Increase Biodiversity theme.
 - We also recognise the need to help businesses and have woven this into our Transport, Buildings, Adapting to Climate Change and Implementing a Communications Strategy themes.
 - Our strategy and action plan also recognises the importance of communications with residents, businesses and partners.
- 1.9 The first priority of the Strategy is for the county to be net zero by 2050, which is in line with the Government ambition. The ambition of our Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is to be a carbon neutral borough by 2030 if technology and national policy allows. This priority proposes five-year carbon budgets and emission reduction pathways to 2050. This approach differs from that in the Council's own Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan, which focuses on using our control and influence to drive down emissions and not on precise reduction targets due to the unknown nature of government policies and technological advances in the decade and an acknowledgement of the limitations of our control and influence. The Kent and Medway Emissions Analysis and Pathways to Net Zero document, that supports the Strategy, acknowledges feasibility was not assessed when modelling the pathways but it will be considered in action planning. Kent County Council is currently seeking feedback on the Implementation Plan which has a focus on deliverability.
- 1.10 Priority Four of the Strategy is to establish a Kent and Medway Climate Emergency Investment Fund that would be used for carbon sequestration, offset and renewable energy offset schemes. The rationale is to pool funding available and match it to the most cost effective schemes with the

largest impact. The fund would be informed by renewable energy and natural capital project studies. This would help organisations create 'shovel ready' projects that would be suitable for external funding. This priority also suggests assessing the feasibility of a carbon sequestration, offsetting and low carbon investment fund that could be used by the public, community and private sector. These aims do align with our themes of Generating Renewable Energy, Adapting to Climate Change and Enhance and Increase Biodiversity and are highlighted to provide clarity only.

- 1.11 The Strategy aligns with our Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in many ways. This report has highlighted the areas of non alignment. In endorsing the principles contained in KCC's Strategy the Council would not be committing to helping to deliver all the actions in the implementation plan which is linked to this Strategy. Our Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan recognised the important of working with partners across the county to achieve shared aims. This Strategy creates a useful focus for partnership working on these important matters.
-

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 That the Council could approve the endorsement of the Strategy. This would support partnership working to address the climate emergency across Kent. It would enable joint communications, providing consistent messages between key partners.
 - 2.2 That the Council could choose to not endorse the Strategy. This may weaken partnership working on the climate emergency in our borough. Our Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan both highlighted the importance of working with partners to address climate change and recognised partnership working would increase our influence over matters.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Policy and Resources Committee are recommended to approve the endorsement of the Strategy. This will strengthen our partnership working on a range of actions, including communications to residents and businesses, on addressing the climate emergency.
-

4. RISK

- 4.1 There is the potential for loss of reputation if the council does not commit to work with other organisations to address the climate emergency. Our Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy highlights the importance of working in partnership.
-

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 This Strategy was endorsed by the Kent Chief Executives Group on 29 September 2020 and the Kent Leaders Group on 8 October 2020.
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Communications are identified as a priority in the Strategy. The council has provided comments on the draft Communications and Engagement Strategy and been invited to send a representative to the county wide group that would create the communications plan for the Strategy.
-

7. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy
-

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Maidstone Borough Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy
https://maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/380228/Biodiversity-Climate-Change-Strategy.pdf
2. Maidstone Borough Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan
<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/other-services/campaigns-and-projects/tier-2-primary-areas/biodiversity-and-climate-emergency/biodiversity-and-climate-change-action-plan>
3. Maidstone Borough Council's Low Emissions Strategy
https://maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/164674/Low-Emissions-Strategy-December-2017.pdf

KENT AND MEDWAY ENERGY AND LOW EMISSIONS STRATEGY

24



MEETING THE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

JUNE 2020



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FOREWORD

We've only got one world. Just one. And it's changing.

Some will say **"It's always changed"** but this time around humans are responsible. The decisions we make today set the course for our planet's future. We must do the right thing.

Our Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is a big document with a single, simple goal - to ensure that every resident, neighbourhood and business in the county takes some simple steps to care for this beautiful, productive yet fragile part of the world – the bit we call Kent.

It is part of Kent's wider Environment Strategy and offers you an invitation - an invitation to come with us and find something you can do for your world. Get involved. Join in.

The first step is to recognise this climate emergency and the second is to commit to the change we need to rescue and sustain our world. There is huge pressure for growth in our county and we need to find new ways to ensure it is GOOD growth. It matters to our environment, our economy and our health. As the gateway to Europe we are well placed to take a lead on energy and emissions and our contribution could have positive impacts far beyond our county boundaries.

The call to action is all around us. We see a growing number of severe weather events and nature's response of flooding and then water shortages, icy winters and then rising temperatures. Kent is a wonderful county full of opportunity, but the truth is that some of our people live in places where air quality is low or where fuel poverty is high.

We can all make better choices - when we travel, when we invest, where and when developers plan new homes, when we choose a vehicle or when we insulate our homes. Those decisions are better when advice and learning is shared and when private and public sectors work together.

Please take a look at this Strategy and commit yourself to be part of it.

It means the world to us.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Gough".

Roger Gough
Leader of Kent County Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Jarrett".

Alan Jarrett
Leader of Medway Council

VISION

By 2050 the county of Kent has reduced emissions to net-zero and is benefiting from a competitive, innovative and resilient low carbon economy, where no deaths are associated with poor air quality.

INTRODUCTION

The **coronavirus pandemic has changed the world**, but presents an opportunity to rebuild the county stronger, cleaner and more resilient. At the same time, **our climate is changing** and the effects are already being felt in Kent and Medway. Limiting our contribution to global warming and driving low carbon economic recovery will undoubtedly be the most urgent issues of this decade.

In recognition of the UK **environment and climate emergency**, all 14 local authorities in Kent and Medway have committed to ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest. Our joint action has already seen carbon dioxide emissions in the area fall by 37% since 2005, but fully decarbonising our economy

over the coming years will require momentous effort and rely on action taken in partnership.

The coronavirus pandemic will severely restrict growth in the short term, but as we emerge from this crisis the longer-term trajectory will be a **return to growth**, and this growth must be low carbon. By 2031 it is anticipated that there will be almost 180,000 new homes and nearly 400,000 extra people, a 24% increase from 2011 levels. The local economy is also expected to expand, creating an additional 170,300 jobs by 2031 a 21% increase from 2011 levels, in line with forecast population growth.

Economic recovery presents an opportunity to invest in new jobs and low carbon infrastructure; support innovation, re-skilling and retraining to expand the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector; and drive a shift in social norms and behaviour change that will benefit health and reduce emissions. A green, clean economic recovery will help protect the climate, air, land and water on which future generations depend.

Kent and Medway are already experiencing significant environmental issues and constraints.

Trees, hedgerows, grasslands, wetlands and saltmarsh all provide **natural carbon storage** that can provide a significant contribution to our net-zero targets; as well as other environmental and health benefits. However, these important habitats are



at risk from land use pressures, lack of appropriate management, climate change and diseases such as Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*), which threatens Kent's most widespread tree species.

Although air quality is generally improving in line with national trends, there are still **43 Air Quality Management Areas** across Kent and Medway and significant pockets of poor air quality along the county's major road networks. It is estimated that in 2017, there were 922 deaths associated with particulate matter (PM2.5) exposure across Kent and Medway.¹

Pollution from road vehicles is the main cause of poor air quality across Kent and Medway and is also the largest source of carbon emissions. In addition, congestion continues to be a problem, with average journey times on A-roads increasing 6% since 2015. Keeping the county moving is a high priority, as congestion negatively impacts productivity levels and air quality.

Actions to improve and promote public transport and encourage walking and cycling for short journeys, will have the dual benefit of reducing harmful emissions and tackling congestion. Supporting the switch away from petrol and diesel to clean, alternatively fuelled vehicles will also be essential. Over 4,845 ultra-low emission vehicles are already registered in Kent.

The cost of energy is rising. The average annual domestic combined gas and electricity bill increased by 8.8% between 2017 and 2019 and now costs

£1,360.² Government data shows that in 2017, 9.6% of Kent and Medway residents were living in **fuel poverty**.

Many Kent and Medway homes, often those of the most vulnerable residents, are cold and poorly insulated. 34% of homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate have the lowest energy efficiency ratings (E, F and G); usually due to inadequate insulation and inefficient heating systems, which can result in higher energy bills.

In industry, approximately 75% of the energy used is to produce heat, much of which is wasted. This is also true across Kent and Medway. The Government expects **business and industry** to improve energy efficiency by at least 20% by 2030,³ this includes a focus on industrial heat recovery.

Ensuring an **affordable energy supply** for all and continuing to promote energy efficiency, forms a significant element of our Strategy. Supporting new forms of renewable low carbon energy supply will be an important part of the mix, and an opportunity to grow new low carbon sectors. The county has already seen an increase in renewable energy generation of 726% since 2012 (230MW to 1900MW). We must be bold and encourage new developments to create their own decentralised energy.

However, low carbon technologies such as electric vehicles and local renewable energy generation pose a challenge to the electricity grid network in Kent and Medway which is already significantly constrained, and which could inhibit future growth. Therefore,

we must work with the energy utility companies to create a more resilient, **smart and innovative local energy system** to ensure we have the energy we need, when we need it, at the right price and without any negative environmental impacts.

Economic recovery, if clean, is a significant opportunity for Kent and Medway. Measures to tackle poor air quality and lower greenhouse gas emissions will have multiple benefits. For instance, promoting walking and cycling for short journeys improves health and reduces congestion; increasing tree and hedgerow coverage can help improve air quality, manage flood risk and support biodiversity; and supporting a switch to more efficient, low carbon energy use creates jobs and new market opportunities.

By tackling poor air quality, energy and carbon constraints in parallel, and by working closely across the public sector, business and communities to scale up action, we can protect health, the environment and be a significant player in the low carbon environmental goods and services sector (LCEGS) both in the UK and internationally.



¹ Calculated using all age, all cause deaths

² Provisional estimated average bill, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (December 2019).

³ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, "Helping businesses to improve the way they use energy: call for evidence," 18th July 2018 [online]

PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy sets out how we will respond to the UK climate emergency and drive clean, resilient economic recovery across Kent and Medway. Taking an evidence-based approach, it identifies a pathway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, eliminate poor air quality, reduce fuel poverty, and promote the development of an affordable, clean and secure energy supply for this county. It is informed by and delivers, but does not duplicate, the priorities and actions from other strategies related to energy and the environment. The strategy also builds on the strengths and activities of other partner organisations.

The Strategy has four strategic aims:

- 1. EVIDENCE:** Provide an ongoing evidence and intelligence base; linking data sets to identify hot spots and opportunities, and to build the business case for action across Kent and Medway
- 2. POLICY AND STRATEGY:** Facilitate the development of evidence-based policy and strategy to future-proof economic recovery, tackle emerging issues and realise opportunities
- 3. LEADERSHIP:** Support the public sector across Kent and Medway to play a strong leadership role with regards to challenges and opportunities
- 4. ACTION:** Facilitate increased and accelerated action and implementation across Kent and Medway

The priority actions to deliver these four aims over the next five years are described on pages 15-27. Further information on the detailed actions, timescales and outputs are provided in the technical implementation plan, which is published alongside this strategy.

SUPPORTING DELIVERY OF THE KENT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy sits within the framework of the Kent Environment Strategy, which was published in 2016.

The Kent Environment Strategy provides the basis for closer cross-sector partnership working between environment, health and economic agendas. It identifies the high-level priorities to support sustainable economic growth whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and sustaining vibrant, healthy and resilient communities.

The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy delivers across all three themes of the Kent Environment Strategy:

THEME 1: BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR DELIVERY – aims to ensure decision makers have an evidence-based understanding of the risks and opportunities relating to energy and emissions and are incorporating them into strategies, plans and actions.

THEME 2: MAKING THE BEST USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES, AVOIDING OR MINIMISING NEGATIVE IMPACTS – aims to ensure existing infrastructure, assets and resources across the public, private and domestic sector are managed to reduce emissions and build a clean future energy supply.

THEME 3: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE – aims to ensure Kent and Medway's communities, businesses and public sector have embraced clean growth and are working towards developing a clean, affordable and secure local energy future.

POLICY CONTEXT

Climate change, energy and air quality issues are high on the national agenda. The Government has set a clear policy direction by revising the Climate Change Act 2008 to legislate for net-zero by 2050. Net-zero means reducing greenhouse gas emissions to almost zero and balancing any remaining emissions with schemes to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, such as tree planting or technology.

Further policy is set out in the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, the 25 Year Environment Plan (2018), the Clean Growth Strategy (2017), the Clean Air Strategy (2019) and Clean Maritime Plan (2019), which aim to protect and enhance the environment, mitigate climate change, support clean, low carbon economic growth and address the negative impacts on health from a poor environment.

Local action will play a significant role in achieving these ambitions and therefore local policy must reflect these priorities. The key strategies that have influenced the development of the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy are summarised in Figure 1. Further detail on the policies driving action are outlined in the ***Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy Evidence Base***, which is published alongside this strategy.

CHALLENGES



25 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN

Aims to deliver cleaner air and water; thriving plants and animals; connect people with the environment; and secure the environment for future generations.



CLEAN AIR STRATEGY

Focuses on reducing industrial and transport emissions. It also aims to reduce particulate matter emissions from solid fuel used in homes. It also aims to tackle rising agricultural emissions.



THE ROAD TO ZERO

Aims to ensure almost every car and van is zero emission by 2050. It supports delivery of both the Industrial and Clean Growth Strategies.



LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4: DELIVERING GROWTH WITHOUT GRIDLOCK (2016-2031)



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Adopted by all United Nations Member States, the goals provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.



INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Aims to boost productivity, create good jobs and position the UK as a leader in low cost, low carbon innovation.



THE CLEAN GROWTH STRATEGY

Aims to achieve nearly zero emissions from buildings and transport by 2050.



LOCAL ENERGY STRATEGY: ENERGY SOUTH 2 EAST

Provides an analysis of the opportunities and challenges across heat, transport and power in South East England.

OPPORTUNITIES

FIGURE 1: Key national and regional strategies influencing the development of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITY AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN KENT AND MEDWAY

Carbon dioxide emissions in Kent and Medway fell 37% between 2005 and 2017, hitting our 2020 Kent Environment Strategy target two years early.



Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) has been identified in the Tri-LEP Energy Strategy as an exemplar project for replication across the south-east region. Supported by European funding, LoCASE provides free support to help businesses become more competitive and profitable while protecting the environment and encouraging low carbon solutions. Since LoCASE began in 2016, £3.5m has been awarded to 425 Kent and Medway businesses.



The installed capacity of solar, wind, waste and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) increased by 726% in five years, from 230MW in 2012 to 1,900MW in 2017.

Kent and Medway's non-domestic gas consumption decreased by 57% between 2005 and 2018, whilst domestic gas consumption fell by 20% over the same period.

The number of days of moderate or high air pollution in Kent and Medway fell between 2012 and 2016 and there have been improvements in most Air Quality Management Areas.

31



Since the Warm Homes Scheme began in 2014, over 2,400 energy efficiency measures have been installed in over 2,300 homes in Kent and Medway.



89% of newly built homes in Kent and Medway had an Energy Performance Certificate rating of A or B in 2017, meaning they have the highest energy performance, up from 62% in 2011.

Average household electricity use in Kent and Medway continues to fall; down from 4,117 kWh in 2015, to 3,894 kWh in 2018. A 5% reduction in three years.

4,845 ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) are registered in Kent (September 2019). In February 2019, Kent County Council was awarded £180,000 from the Government's Office of Low Emission Vehicles to install 8 rapid chargers for use by taxis in 6 Kent Districts.

In a 2018 survey of Kent residents, 85% reported that they have fitted energy efficiency measures, such as loft or cavity wall insulation, and 40% have fitted energy monitoring equipment.

There has been a 42% increase in people using train stations in Kent in the past ten years. In 2016/17, 1.8 million people used Ebbsfleet International Station.

KENT AND MEDWAY KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

54%

of total fuel consumption is from gas and electricity



Heat networks⁴ currently provide 2% of the UK heat demand, but this is estimated to rise to 43% by 2050.

EFG RATING

23% of homes and 19% of public buildings are E, F, or G rated, meaning they have the worst energy performance, highest energy running costs and make a bigger contribution to emissions.



11% of residents have reported that they struggle to pay their energy bills. 41% of those, live in rented accommodation.⁵

BY 2031 KENT AND MEDWAY ARE EXPECTING TO SEE⁶



178,600
additional homes
(24% growth)



396,300
additional people
(23% growth)



170,300
additional jobs
(21% growth)

This predicted population and economic growth will require a higher demand for energy. It is likely that domestic gas and electricity sales will rise by 23% and 19% respectively from 2014/15 to 2030/31.

32



9.2M

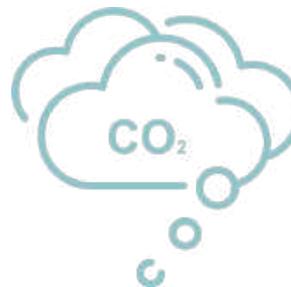
vehicle movements at Port of Dover and Channel Tunnel every year



14.3% increase in the number of vehicles on major roads in Kent between 2006 and 2016



73,000
households in fuel poverty (2017)

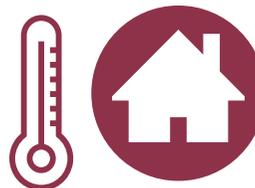


Only a 4.5% fall in carbon emissions from transport since 2005.

43 AIR QUALITY

Air Quality Management Areas, where air pollutants have been known to exceed government objectives.

Kent's rate of Excess Winter Mortality was the same as the South East and English averages in 2017/18.



Kent's rate of Excess Winter Mortality was the same as the South East and English averages in 2017/18.

Kent and Medway's mortality rate associated with poor air quality is worse than the national average.

⁴ Heat networks supply heat from a central source to consumers.

⁵ Kent Environment Strategy resident survey, July 2018

⁶ Figures identified by the Growth and Infrastructure Framework for Kent and Medway

OUR CHALLENGES

Despite the many successes and opportunities, Kent continues to face some significant challenges. These will need to be addressed in the short to medium-term if the environmental condition of the county is not to see considerable deterioration. The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy Evidence Base identifies the key issues, which are summarised here:

SECURING A CLEAN, GREEN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Supporting economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and accommodating the significant levels of housing growth currently required by government will be a major challenge for the county and is an influencing factor in all the key issues identified. This means not only creating new jobs and supporting low carbon innovation, but also advancing climate action in ways that make Kent and Medway more resilient and attractive places for low carbon companies to invest. Principles of Clean Growth (growing our economy whilst reducing greenhouse gas emissions), must be factored into all planning and development polices and decisions, whilst not becoming a barrier to new development.

REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TO NET-ZERO

All local authorities in Kent and Medway have committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero. Our current progress is a 37% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions since 2005 but achieving our target will require a substantial step up in action, both in terms of scale and speed.

Whilst emissions from the industry and commercial sector and domestic sector have fallen significantly over the period (falling 57% and 35% respectively), emissions from the transport sector have only reduced by 4.5% (see Figure 2). The transport sector is now the largest source of emissions in Kent and Medway.

To date, much of the reduction in emissions has been due to a national decrease in the use of coal for electricity generation and the closure of a small number of energy-intensive industrial plants. However, in order to achieve net-zero, all

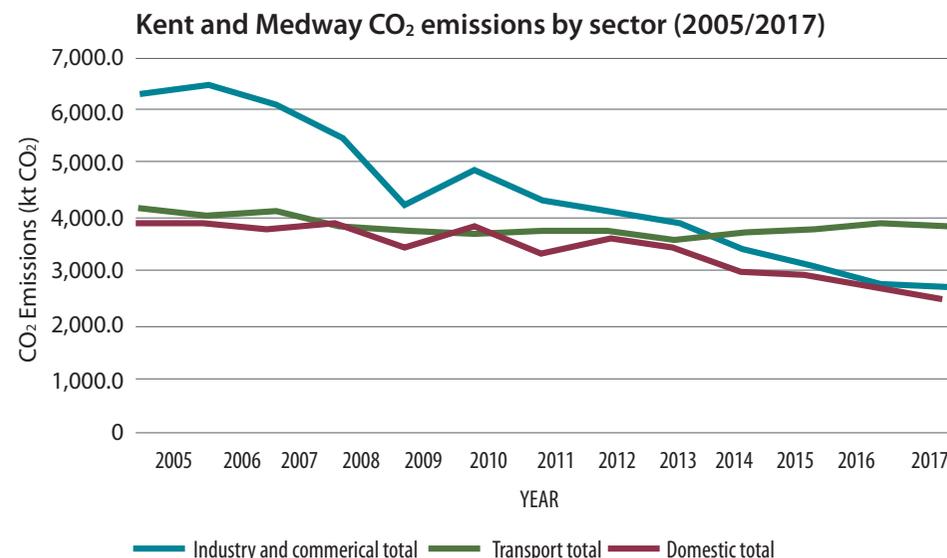


FIGURE 2: CO₂ emissions profile for Kent and Medway; this data includes estimated emissions for the industrial and commercial, transport and domestic sectors. Note: kt refers to kilotons

sectors will need to use resources much more efficiently and switch to low-carbon fuels for electricity, heating and transport.

We will also need to increase the amount of carbon stored in the natural environment; this is known as carbon sequestration. Soil and vegetation such as trees, hedges, wetlands and kelp all store carbon, so improving land management practices and increasing vegetation coverage will be essential if we are to achieve our net-zero target. These measures can also provide other benefits, such as reducing air and water pollution, reducing flood risk, improving biodiversity and providing health, cultural and leisure opportunities for local communities.

TACKLING HOT-SPOTS OF POOR AIR QUALITY

Poor air quality is a major health challenge for the UK causing both short and long-term effects on health. Long-term exposure to air pollution can impact on all stages of life; from asthma in children, to emerging evidence linking fine particulate matter (PM2.5) to the progression of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Public Health England estimates that the cumulative health and social care costs of air pollution (PM2.5 and NO₂) in England could reach £18.6 billion by 2035. Poor air quality also has adverse impacts on the natural environment through damage to vegetation, soils, rivers and lakes.

Although air quality in the county is generally improving in line with national trends, there are still 43 Air Quality Management Areas and significant pockets of poor air quality along the major road networks. Kent and Medway's position between London and the continent brings air quality challenges associated with cross-channel traffic, including a disproportionately large number of HGVs, with their associated diesel emissions. Around the coast and ports, shipping brings additional impacts from the use of marine diesel. Even air pollution sources from outside Kent and Medway impact the population; with easterly winds bringing pollution from continental sources and westerly winds bringing urban pollution from London.

PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

It is often the most vulnerable and deprived that suffer the most from poor air quality, cold homes and fuel poverty. Whilst air pollution is harmful to everyone, some people are at greater risk due to

- living in areas with high levels of air pollution
- learning or working near busy roads
- age; in the womb, infancy, early childhood and the elderly
- existing medical conditions, such as lung and heart disease and asthma.

These vulnerabilities are heightened among those living in the most deprived communities. This is due to poor housing and indoor air quality, the stress of living on a low income, unhealthy diet, smoking and limited access to green spaces.

Eliminating poor air quality and fuel poverty and achieving net-zero emissions will require changes to the way we travel, access services and use energy. We must therefore ensure that all residents in Kent and Medway are supported to make and benefit from these changes. For example, providing funding to help those in fuel poverty improve the energy efficiency of their home and ensuring superfast broadband, public transport and refuelling points for low carbon vehicles are widely available.

GROWTH WITHOUT GRIDLOCK – ENABLING INTEGRATED AND CONNECTED TRANSPORT, TRAVEL AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

A convenient, affordable and reliable transport network is vital for providing access to facilities and services, connecting businesses and communities and reducing social isolation. However, transport contributes over 40% of the county's carbon emissions and pollutants from road vehicles have a negative impact on air quality and human health.

Kent is already experiencing increased congestion on its road and rail network. The average delay on Kent's A-roads has increased almost 7% since 2015 and average speed has dropped 1% over the same period. With severe congestion on the highway network, particularly in major town centres, growth across the county will be constrained without investment.

Achieving safe and effective transport networks that support clean economic recovery is a significant challenge. Our action must not only focus on low carbon road transport such as electric and hydrogen vehicles, but also promote smarter driving and traffic management; improve infrastructure for walking and cycling (active travel); ensure convenient connections to clean public transport; and support new transport models such as car clubs, car sharing and automated vehicles through the use of smart technology.

Promoting and supporting active travel will be an essential element of the strategy, which will not just help to reduce emissions, but also bring numerous health benefits.

At the same time, we need to support smarter working practices. The coronavirus pandemic forced many organisations and businesses to adapt to home working

overnight. As restrictions are lifted and the economy recovers, we must utilise and learn from this experience, whilst continuing to improve broadband services and enhance access to digital services to ensure demand for travel reduces permanently. Over 95% of Kent and Medway's homes and businesses now have access to superfast broadband, but there are still significant challenges to get 100% consistent coverage and service across the county and ensure the full benefits of digitalisation are realised.

ENSURING ENERGY SUPPLIES ARE LOW-CARBON, SECURE, AFFORDABLE AND LOCAL WHERE POSSIBLE

Energy prices are increasing again. Government data estimates that the average annual domestic combined gas and electricity bill increased by 8.8% between 2017 and 2019 and now costs £1,360. Higher energy prices can have an impact on business recovery and residents' wellbeing. Although fuel poverty levels vary across the county; from 12.3% in Thanet, to 7.7% in Dartford, eight council areas recorded fuel poverty rates higher than the South East average of 8.7% in 2017.

Continued housing growth means that our energy consumption is set to rise. A study commissioned by Kent County Council revealed that between 2014/15 and 2030/31, domestic gas demand in Kent and Medway is expected to increase by 23% and domestic electricity demand is expected to increase by 19%.

Demand for energy is exacerbated by the fact that large amounts are wasted. The UK has some of the least energy efficient housing stock in Europe and much of the industrial heat produced in South East England is released into the atmosphere, despite the fact it could be reused. There is a huge opportunity to utilise more efficient technology to reduce energy demand and achieve cost savings for residents and businesses alike.

Demand for heat and electricity, together with generation and supply is intrinsically linked to carbon dioxide emissions, due to our current reliance on fossil fuels. It is therefore essential to understand how much energy is used, by whom, how and for what, and how this might change in the future. This will allow us to identify the most appropriate and cost-effective interventions to support the transition to a secure, affordable, low or zero carbon energy system.

The challenge of decarbonising energy at the local level will be threefold:

- Increase the supply of local, low carbon energy generation, at or near the point of use, whether domestic or industrial.
- Significantly cut consumption of energy derived from fossil fuels, for example, facilitating low-carbon energy connections for properties that are not connected to the gas network and still heated by coal or oil.
- Eliminate wasted energy through greater energy efficiency, targeting industrial processes, commercial buildings and homes.

OVERCOMING ENERGY GRID CONSTRAINTS

Energy security is vital to the development and growth of Kent and Medway in the coming years. However, the energy system in the UK and Kent is changing. Two-thirds of the UK's existing coal, gas and nuclear power stations are set to close by 2030 and any future power stations must be largely decarbonised, if the UK is to achieve its legally binding target of cutting carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050.

Much of the county is already subject to electricity grid network constraints, which is making new connections increasingly difficult, particularly for new energy generation projects. Electricity demand is also expected to grow significantly by 2050, driven by the growth in electric vehicles and increased electrification of heating, which could see up to 60% of homes using heat pumps. A drive towards locally generated renewable energy, often from smaller, more dispersed sources, will further ramp up pressure on an already constrained electricity grid network.

Changing supply and demand, though an enormous opportunity, also presents significant challenges to our existing system nationally and locally. It will require large amounts of investment in infrastructure and the transmission and distribution networks. It will be essential to map existing electricity and gas grid constraints against future development, to identify potential issues early and to identify any opportunities for local generation solutions, such as district heating systems.

HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS STRATEGY

Underpinning this Strategy is the *Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy Evidence Base*, which is drawn from a wide range of sources:

- Government strategies, plans, reports and national data sets.
- The Tri-LEP Energy Strategy and Evidence Base.
- The Kent and Medway State of the Environment Report and annual monitoring report.
- AECOM Renewable Energy for Kent 2017 Update.
- Public health indicators and evidence covering national and local area data.
- Home energy conservation and fuel poverty action plans and reports.
- Air quality monitoring plans and reports from Kent District and Borough Councils and Medway Council.
- Public and private sector research and current activity on the topics of energy, fuel poverty, transport, air quality, growth and planning and the impacts on public health.
- The 2018 Kent Environment Strategy Public Perception Survey.

Central to the development of this strategy has been stakeholder engagement, through a dedicated cross-sector working group, workshops and consultations. Organisations and partners involved in the development of the strategy include, amongst others, all Local Authorities in Kent and Medway, Joint Chief Executives, Joint Kent Leaders, NHS, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, Public Health, Kent Housing Group, Kent and Medway Air Quality

Partnership, Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership, Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership, Kent Planning Officers Group and Kent Health and Wellbeing Board. A summary of the review process is shown in Figure 3.

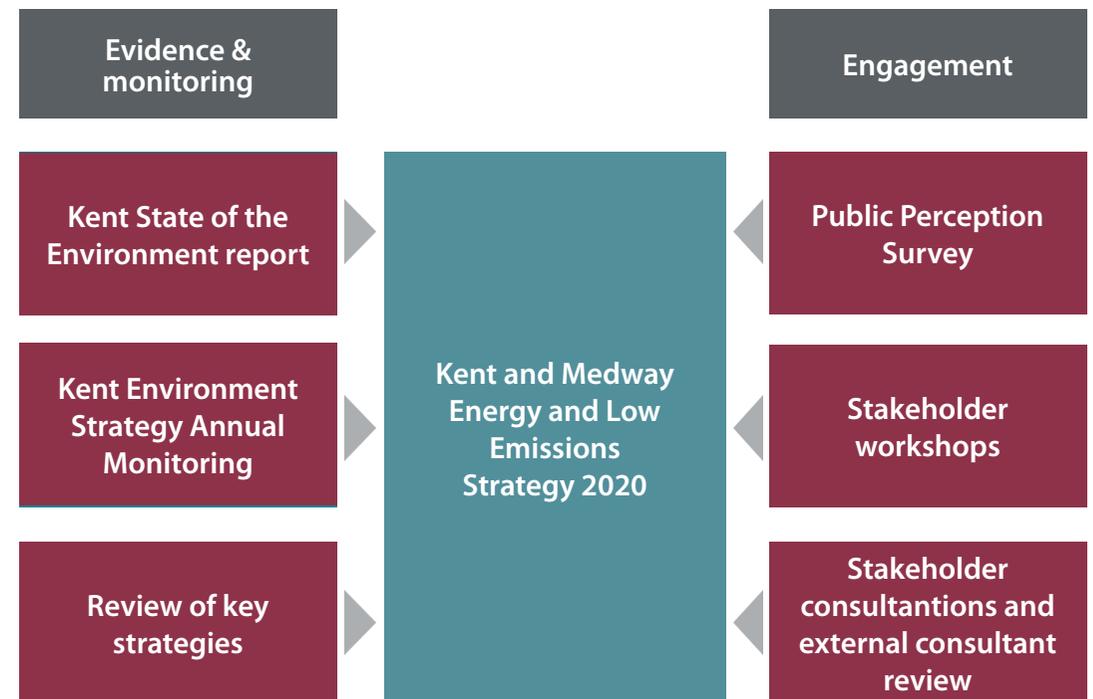


Figure 3: Summary of the review process used to develop the Kent and Medway Low Emissions Strategy

ENERGY SOUTH TO EAST: TOWARDS A LOW CARBON ECONOMY - THE TRI-LEP ENERGY STRATEGY

The Government’s Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has requested and provided the funding to all Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to produce regional Local Energy Opportunities Strategies, which should provide a clear analysis of the local opportunities and challenges across heat, transport and power.

In response to this request, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) has partnered with Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3, to develop an ambitious regional Local Energy Strategy, which aims to reduce emissions from energy and transport and support clean growth.

The strategy has identified five themes and 18 potential technological project model interventions, which are shown in Figure 4. These interventions will be scalable across the geography to increase impact and investment and develop partnership working across Local Enterprise Partnerships, including Kent and Medway. Where project models are relevant for Kent and Medway, suitable actions will be reflected in the Kent and Medway Low Emissions Strategy.

The full strategy can be found at www.southeastlep.com/our-strategy/energy-south2east.

| FIVE PRIORITY THEMES | | PROJECT MODELS |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
|  | LOW CARBON HEATING | #1 District Heat Networks rollout #2 Off-gas grid homes #3 Hydrogen injection into the Natural Gas grid #16 New-build homes on hydrogen grid |
|  | ENERGY SAVING AND EFFICIENCY | #2 Off-gas grid homes #9 Energy Efficiency in homes #10 SME Support Programme |
|  | RENEWABLE GENERATION | #4 Offshore wind development #5 Solar and microgrid on landfill sites #6 Biomass fuel supply chain development #7 Solar energy for Network Rail #8 Car parks - solar potential #17 Biofuel evolution |
|  | SMART ENERGY SYSTEM | #5 Solar and microgrid on landfill sites #11 Housing and community microgrids #12 EV charging & hydrogen-fuelling infrastructure #15 Setup of ESCO / MUSCO infrastructure #18 Support developments in CO2 capture |
|  | TRANSPORT REVOLUTION | #12 EV charging & hydrogen-fuelling infrastructure #13 CNG fleet fuelling #14 Ports - modernisation of energy infrastructures |

Figure 4: The 5 themes and 18 project models in the Energy South2East Action Plan.

OUR TEN PRIORITIES

Achieving our vision will require significant, coordinated action across all sectors for the next thirty years. The following pages describe the ten areas that have been identified as a priority for collaboration and the immediate, short- and longer-term actions required.

The priorities are not listed in order of importance and will be implemented concurrently. No regrets actions that should be undertaken immediately have also been included to ensure significant action takes place as soon as possible.

A technical implementation plan accompanies this strategy and provides detailed information on the specific actions that will be taken, action owners, timescales and outputs.





PRIORITY 1: EMISSION REDUCTION PATHWAYS TO 2050

Set five-year carbon budgets and emission reduction pathways to 2050 for Kent and Medway, with significant reduction by 2030.

RATIONALE

Carbon budgets will set quotas for the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted in five-year periods. These can then be used to identify the actions (or pathways), that will allow us to stay within our carbon budgets. Such evidence-based pathways will ensure we prioritise the most cost-effective activities and will support more collaborative working with partners across the county, region and nationally. It will also highlight where appropriate engagement is needed to influence aspects outside local authorities' control.

OUTCOME

Everyone in Kent and Medway can see the scale of action required to achieve net-zero emission by 2050, with significant reductions in emissions by 2030. Decision makers understand where action and resources should be targeted. Progress is monitored and reported.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|---|
| DO NOW | Agree evidence and current baseline for five-year carbon budgets. |
| | Set local authority carbon budgets with emission reduction pathways to net zero by 2050, with significant reduction by 2030. |
| SHORT TERM (BY 2023) | Set costed and jointly owned area-based carbon budgets for Kent and Medway. |
| | Set detailed, area-based emission reduction pathways to net zero by 2050, with significant reduction by 2030. Pathways to cover all public and private organisations and communities. |
| | Monitor and report progress publicly. |
| FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030) | Develop a full carbon footprint for Kent and Medway based on consumption (not territorial or organisational boundaries), with consumption targets and reduction measures integrated into existing carbon budgets. |



PRIORITY 2: PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION MAKING

Develop a consistent approach across Kent and Medway, to assess, manage and mitigate environmental impacts (both positive and negative), resulting from public sector policies, strategies, service delivery, commissioning and procurement.

RATIONALE

The decisions made by Kent and Medway’s public sector affect the environment and everyone living and working in the area. Kent County Council alone spends over £1.5 billion each year providing a range of essential services to the people of Kent. Developing a simple way to assess, manage and mitigate these impacts will ensure public sector policies, services and spending support our environmental targets. In addition, the public sector’s influence and spending power will help drive demand and support innovation in the local clean growth sector.

OUTCOME

Public sector decisions and spending are consistent with our net-zero and clean growth targets and are utilising opportunities to drive market change and support expansion in the clean growth sector.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|--|
| DO NOW | Develop a simple checklist to identify where significant environmental issues and opportunities may arise, for use on imminent key decisions, major commissions and procurements. |
| | Revisit existing social value commitments within contracts and align to climate change and net-zero ambitions where possible. |
| | Stronger emphasis on reducing carbon miles and on buying local goods and services where possible. |
| SHORT TERM (BY 2023) | Develop a full net-zero and climate change impact assessment and social value framework aligned with Kent and Medway targets, to include: specific policies such as requiring the supply chain to match net-zero commitments; simple checklists; guidance and tool kits; training and technical support. |
| | Develop a supply chain support programme to enable small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), within large supply chains to effect change and reduce costs; adopt new lower impact processes and win new business. |
| FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030) | Consider expanding to include a full carbon and ecological footprint, based on consumption and lifetime costs in strategy, policy, commissioning and procurement. |



PRIORITY 3: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Ensure climate change, energy, air quality and environmental considerations are integrated into Local Plans, policies and developments, by developing a clean growth strategic planning policy and guidance framework for Kent and Medway, to drive down emissions and incorporate climate resilience.

RATIONALE

Almost 180,000 new homes will have been built in Kent and Medway by 2031 and will still be in use after 2050. To ensure the buildings and infrastructure we construct today are fit for the zero-carbon future, we need to ensure planning policies and decisions embrace clean growth, support good quality sustainable design and promote low carbon travel, transport and digital connectivity. A joint evidence base and planning resource, together with shared position statements, guidance and policies will help inform planning decisions and future-proof new developments.

OUTCOME

New developments in the county are sustainable, carbon neutral and climate resilient. Kent and Medway's development and construction industry is supported to be cutting edge to enable a quicker economic recovery for the sector.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|---|
| DO NOW | Secure agreement for a joint Kent and Medway clean growth and climate change evidence base and planning resource, to ensure that planning decisions are fully informed by the latest evidence and advice. |
| | Refresh the Kent Design Guide to reflect clean growth, net-zero and climate change mitigation and adaptation. |
| SHORT TERM (BY 2023) | Develop a jointly owned, clean growth and climate change evidence base for planning policy and development control. |
| | Develop a clean growth and climate change strategic planning framework for Local Plans and development, by identifying common guidance, position statements, policies and targets. |
| | Set stretching net-zero targets for any new development over 100 houses. |
| FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030) | Fully integrate clean growth and climate change into Local Plans and planning policies. |
| | Aim for "energy positive" new developments and communities (communities producing more energy than they are using). |



PRIORITY 4: CLIMATE EMERGENCY INVESTMENT FUND

Establish a trusted Kent and Medway ‘climate emergency’ carbon offset scheme and renewable energy investment fund

RATIONALE

Before the coronavirus pandemic, funding for climate emergency actions came from many disparate sources including; developer contributions, business rates, public sector funding, charitable donations from residents and businesses, and external grants and funding. There is likely to be significantly less funding available for environmental projects in the short to medium term, so ensuring money is invested in projects that have the greatest impact and bring multiple benefits will become increasingly important.

A climate emergency investment fund for Kent and Medway will pool the funding available and match it to the most cost effective and biggest impact schemes. The fund will be informed by renewable energy and natural capital opportunities studies.

OUTCOME

Developers, businesses, public sector and residents can offset their carbon emissions by investing in meaningful ‘climate emergency’ projects in Kent and Medway, such as tree and hedge planting, habitat improvement, renewable energy generation and building retrofit. The fund not only generates additional resources for delivering our climate emergency targets, but also brings environmental and social benefits.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|---|
| DO NOW | Review existing funding streams and see how they can be tweaked to provide additional resource. |
| | Package up quick wins and ‘oven-ready’ projects suitable for external funding such as crowd funding or business sponsorship |
| | Review external funding expertise and opportunities and look at increasing access to finance through collaboration and development of a central resource. |
| SHORT TERM (BY 2023) | Develop and promote a Kent and Medway offset scheme and permanent crowd funding space to support new and existing local environmental projects and groups. |
| FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030) | Further develop a cross-sector, multi-agency sequestration, offset and low carbon investment fund for Kent and Medway that can be used by the public, community and private sector. |

CASE STUDY: WORKING WITH SCHOOLS TO TACKLE AIR POLLUTION

In 2018, Maidstone Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council environmental health teams worked with local schools to tackle local air pollution. Schools who signed up to the Clean Air for Schools Scheme were helped to undertake an engaging class experiment. Schools were provided with two free air monitoring tubes per month, along with a teaching pack and guidance on how to record data and report the results back to the council.

This hands-on approach allowed students to analyse the direct relationship between the volume of traffic outside their school and its impact on air pollution within the school grounds. The objective was to encourage a reduction in car journeys made by parents and to highlight the effects of leaving engines idling while dropping off and collecting children.

The project was launched in conjunction with the KM Charity Team's Green Champions and is sponsored by the Mid-Kent Environmental Health Team, with no funding required from the schools. For more information, or to register, visit: www.maidstone.gov.uk/cleanairforschools. Similar schemes are now also run by Medway Council and Swale Borough Council, in partnership with the KM Charity Team.



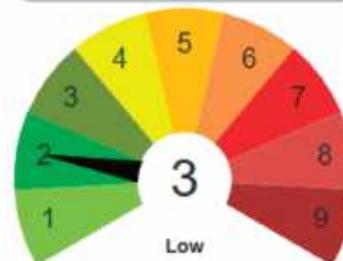
CASE STUDY: KENT AIR WEBSITE

The Kent and Medway Air Quality Monitoring Network is funded by the district and borough councils within the county, Medway Council and Kent County Council. The network aims to promote the improvement of air quality within the region, to help local authorities to meet their obligations under environmental regulations and to maintain an accessible database of robust measurements for public reporting, research and development.

The Kent Air website has been developed by the network to provide easy public access to live air quality levels, historic data measured from automatic monitoring and NO2 diffusion tubes, and published data and reports for Medway and all district and borough councils except for Dartford and Sevenoaks (whose data is hosted on the London Air Quality Network website: www.londonair.org.uk). The website also provides information about the health impacts of air pollution and recommended health advice for the forecast level of pollution.

[Home / Latest Levels](#)

Highest Reporting Site - Canterbury
AURN



- [Monitoring Site Summary](#)
- [24 Hour Summary](#)
- [Dynamic Tables](#)
- [Current Levels](#)



PRIORITY 5: BUILDING RETROFIT PROGRAMME

Develop Kent and Medway net-zero buildings retrofit plans and programmes for public sector, domestic and business.

RATIONALE

Over the next 30 years, most of the emissions from the built environment will be from buildings or communities that are already in existence today. In addition, some of our most vulnerable residents are living in cold, energy inefficient homes which are expensive to run; worsening health problems and causing fuel poverty. Funding for building improvements is fragmented and complicated by property ownership issues, and projects often need to be done at scale to attract the investment needed.

In the short term, our activities will focus on expanding and accelerating existing domestic energy efficiency and fuel poverty initiatives and supporting energy efficiency and low carbon heat generation in non-domestic buildings. These programmes will then need to be expanded to ensure retrofit is seen from the perspective of a 'place', linking public buildings and the public realm, schools, businesses and homes, both rented and owned.

OUTCOME

Greenhouse gas emissions from Kent and Medway's existing buildings are significantly reduced and the housing stock no longer exacerbates levels of fuel poverty. High volume retrofit programmes for homes, businesses and public sector buildings maximise external funding and finance, supporting the local retrofit industry to be cutting edge.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>DO NOW</p> | <p>Undertake 'quick-wins' in public and commercial premises such as converting lighting to LEDs, installing energy and water efficiency measures and controls and training building managers.</p> <p>Utilise and promote existing funding pots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent and Medway Warm Homes Programme and other domestic energy efficiency and fuel poverty projects through the Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership (KEEP). • LOCASE (Low Carbon Across the South East) grant support programme to improve efficiency of local businesses. |
| <p>SHORT TERM (BY 2023)</p> | <p>Establish a public sector building retrofit programme, identifying joint initiatives that maximise economies of scale including shared buildings and facilities, EV charging and micro energy generation.</p> <p>Look to scale up housing retrofit by maximising government funding and developing innovative funding mechanisms with a focus on fuel poor; difficult to treat properties such as park homes; off-gas properties; private rented sector; and 'Able to Pay'.</p> <p>Scope cross-sector place-based approach, identifying quick wins and how we can work with private investors to scale up retrofit across Kent and Medway.</p> |
| <p>FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030)</p> | <p>Develop a large scale, cross-sector, area-based retrofit programme. The programme will focus on place and public realm, including business and communities, to create net-zero and "energy positive" communities.</p> |



PRIORITY 6: TRANSPORT, TRAVEL AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Set up a smart connectivity and mobility modal shift programme – linking sustainable transport, transport innovations, active travel, virtual working, broadband, digital services, artificial intelligence and behaviour change.

RATIONALE

Tackling poor air quality and achieving safe and effective transport networks that support low carbon economic recovery have been highlighted as key challenges for Kent and Medway. Furthermore, greenhouse gas emissions from transport have remained stubbornly high, but the coronavirus pandemic triggered a change in digital and travel behaviours that could be utilised to ensure emissions from transport are reduced permanently.

Tackling these issues and opportunities will require a combination of measures that improve infrastructure and facilities to encourage low carbon travel and drive behaviour change. We must also continue to tackle poor air quality hotspots, through the implementation of Air Quality Management Plans.

OUTCOME

Greenhouse gas emissions from transport and travel are significantly reduced and air quality is improved.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

DO NOW

Set a challenging 2030 business miles reduction target for the public sector.

Work collaboratively with the public and private sector to roll out EV charging points and infrastructure for walking and cycling.

Support public transport providers, including school transport providers, to use lower emission vehicles.

Tackle poor air quality hotspots through the implementation of Air Quality Management Plans.

SHORT TERM (BY 2023)

Develop and expand sustainable travel policies that reduce car use and business miles, through a hierarchy of travel options to reduce the need to travel, encourage modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport or increase car sharing.

Implementation of low-carbon mobility hubs for electric cars, electric bikes and push bikes, to include battery storage and solar panels where possible.

FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030)

Review and develop approaches that consider:

- locating services nearer to public transport or within walking distance of communities
- reallocation of road space in favour of more sustainable travel modes
- increased control, regulation and charging for public parking in favour of electric vehicles and public transport
- increased involvement in regulation of public transport and taxis to tackle poor air quality and lower greenhouse gas emissions
- testing and roll-out of new technologies to enable the transition to low carbon transport and travel.

CASE STUDY: PARK AND PEDAL IN CANTERBURY

In June 2018, Canterbury City Council launched its Park and Pedal scheme at Wincheap Park and Ride. Over 1,200 journeys were recorded between July 2018 and January 2019. Of these journeys, 87% were by customers who were not regular users of the Wincheap Park and Ride and would normally have driven into the city centre.

Cyclists who sign-up to the scheme pay a £15 deposit for a key card that allows them to leave their bike in a high security compound. They are then able to drive to the car park each morning and park for free, before grabbing their bike and heading into the city, helping to cut the queues and improving air quality in the town centre.

The scheme was largely funded by a £21,300 grant from Kent County Council. The Park and Pedal map can be viewed on Canterbury City Council website and shows bike routes from Wincheap Park and Ride into the city, cycle racks and places to refill your water bottle.



CASE STUDY: MAKING KENT HOMES WARMER

Through a combination of schemes and initiatives, local authorities in Kent and Medway have been able to maximise funding and signpost residents to initiatives that make homes warmer, reduce health inequalities and lower carbon emissions.

Since 2013, Dartford, Dover, Gravesham, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells Councils have offered a Collective Energy Switching scheme, called Energy Deal. Residents can register for free to take part in energy auctions (held 3 times a year), to identify lower energy tariffs without any obligation to switch. Since 2013, the Energy Deal has helped residents save £804,632 on their energy bills collectively.

Kent and Medway partners are also working together to promote the Warm Homes scheme that helps residents identify energy efficiency measures that will help lower their energy bills and make their homes feel warmer. Since the Warm Homes scheme began in 2014, over 2,400 energy efficiency measures have been installed in over 2,300 homes. In total, the measures are expected to save an estimated 39,000 tonnes of carbon and save residents £8.8 million over the course of the measures' life.

For more information visit www.energydealswitch.com and www.kent.gov.uk/warmhomes





PRIORITY 7: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION

Set up an opportunities and investment programme for renewable electricity and heat energy generation.

RATIONALE

Securing a low carbon, sustainable economic recovery will require us to transform the way we generate energy. Whilst some of this will be done at the national level, we must also support new low-carbon energy infrastructure opportunities, such as those presented in the Tri-LEP Energy Strategy. We will focus on supporting opportunities that allow more of our energy to be produced locally and from renewable sources and increasing the number of new developments supplied by local energy centres and district heating schemes.

OUTCOME

The county is an exemplar for renewable energy generation; producing more low carbon energy than it consumes and stimulating enhanced renewable energy supply chain opportunities that will support a green recovery.

47

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|---|
| DO NOW | <p>Install roof-top solar panels on all suitable public sector buildings.</p> <p>Support residents and small businesses to install roof-top solar panels, by offering a group purchasing scheme such as Solar Together Kent.</p> |
| SHORT TERM (BY 2023) | <p>Undertake a renewable electricity and heat energy generation opportunities study for Kent and Medway. The study will build on existing knowledge and focus on all existing and emerging technologies including solar, wind, nuclear, heat pumps, district heating and green gas such as hydrogen.</p> |
| FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030) | <p>Develop a joint Future Energy Investment Programme for Kent and Medway looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hydrogen • green gas • decentralised energy in new developments • community energy generation • other emerging energy technologies. |



PRIORITY 8: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop a multi-functional, natural capital opportunity and investment programme – focusing on environmental projects that store carbon, increase climate change resilience, improve air quality and soil health and increase biodiversity.

RATIONALE

Soil, trees, hedgerows, grassland, wetlands and maritime habitats all store carbon, so improving land management practices and increasing coverage of these habitats will be essential if we are to achieve our net-zero target. In addition, our actions to increase carbon storage can also support our efforts to respond to the ecological emergency, support the Kent Biodiversity Strategy and increase resilience to climate change. The development of an opportunity and investment programme will ensure resources can be targeted at the most appropriate projects, capable of generating the most benefits.

OUTCOME

There is increased capacity for Kent and Medway’s natural environment to store carbon and offset the county’s greenhouse gas emissions: bringing additional benefits such as reduced air and water pollution, increased flood storage capacity, improved biodiversity and providing health, cultural and leisure opportunities for local communities.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|--|
| DO NOW | <p>Identify natural environment ‘quick-wins’ and areas where tree establishment is needed, especially in relation to Ash Dieback.</p> <p>Produce tree planting guidance to ensure the right tree species are planted in the most appropriate places.</p> |
| SHORT TERM (BY 2023) | <p>Assess the carbon and resilience value of natural capital in Kent and Medway, together with other potential functions.</p> <p>Scope develop and implement a multi-functional, natural capital opportunity and investment programme.</p> |
| FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030) | <p>Expand the natural capital opportunity and investment programme to include all sectors.</p> |



PRIORITY 9: SUPPORTING LOW CARBON BUSINESS

Develop and implement a Kent and Medway business recovery and support programme to cut costs and win new business.

RATIONALE

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on local businesses and many will need support to recover. In addition, whilst many local businesses have already taken action to save money and reduce their impact on the environment, our evidence shows that this activity needs to be expanded and rapidly accelerated if we are to achieve our low carbon vision. A dual pronged approach to local business support, which utilises the considerable purchasing power of Kent and Medway’s public sector and supports businesses to reduce their environmental impact will help drive a low carbon economic recovery.

OUTCOME

Greenhouse gas emissions from local small and medium sized enterprises are reduced and businesses are supported to make the most of the economic opportunities that arise as we transition to a low carbon economy.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|---|
| DO NOW | <p>Support public sector suppliers to complete Steps to Environmental Management (STEM) training (or equivalent), in order to identify supply chain emissions and drive efficiencies where possible⁷</p> <p>Promote and refer businesses and supply chain to LOCASE, for support and access to grant funding to reduce their costs and access new markets.</p> |
| SHORT TERM (BY 2023) | <p>Conduct public sector supply chain assessments, focusing on the largest suppliers.</p> <p>Undertake a supply chain analysis of the economic opportunities from the low carbon sector across Kent and Medway (funded through SELEP).</p> <p>Require public sector suppliers to undertake STEM or a similar scheme.</p> <p>Working in partnership with local authorities and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, develop a targeted business support supply chain programme for the Kent and Medway public sector, building on LOCASE.</p> |
| FOR LONGER TERM CONSIDERATION (BY 2030) | <p>Develop local supply chain, low carbon clusters or opportunities (dependent on supply chain analysis).</p> |

⁷ The STEM accreditation scheme was developed through Low Carbon Across the South East (LOCASE) and is free to members of the Low Carbon Kent business network. It helps businesses improve their environmental performance through a series of assessments and certificates (blue, silver and gold), which correspond to National Standard BS 8555.



PRIORITY 10: COMMUNICATIONS

Develop a comprehensive communications, engagement and behaviour change programme targeted at residents, employees, businesses and visitors.

RATIONALE

We will not tackle the climate emergency through technology alone: our net-zero future will only be achieved if we successfully change perceptions, behaviour and social norms. Despite a recent surge in public interest in climate change there remain many psychological, social and cultural barriers to behaviour change, alongside a lack of physical capability or opportunity. These barriers are compounded by many competing voices seeking to advance their own part of the environmental agenda. We will need to work closely with our partners to develop simple, tailored and targeted communications that raise awareness and encourage a change in perceptions and behaviour.

OUTCOME

Residents, employees, businesses and visitors to Kent and Medway understand how their actions impact the environment; are aware of the risks of climate change and poor air quality; appreciate the value of the natural environment; and are sufficiently well informed and motivated to adopt more sustainable and low carbon behaviours. This increased awareness and engagement increases the impact of the other programmes developed through this Strategy.

HIGH LEVEL ACTIVITIES

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| DO NOW | Link up existing stakeholder communications and agree shared messages on topics such as air quality, fuel poverty, active travel and energy efficiency. Use the Kent Environment Strategy Conference as a mechanism to raise the profile of local authority collective action. |
| SHORT TERM (BY 2023) | Develop a joint communications, engagement and behaviour change strategy and programme for residents, public sector staff and businesses. Monitor effectiveness of campaigns and develop into targeted behaviour change programmes. |

CASE STUDY: ELECTRIC BUS TRIAL

In March 2018, Kent took part in an eight-week electric bus demonstrator trial commissioned by Volvo Bus UK and ABB UK. The trial aimed to demonstrate to Kent County Council, Prologis and Arriva (the bus operators), that electric buses can be operational without disrupting current schedules, whilst also improving air quality, energy efficiency, noise and passenger comfort, as well as providing financial benefits. The trial was conducted along the 23.6km-long 'Fastrack Route A', operating 20 hours daily between Dartford and Bluewater.

Data gathered from the trial showed that an energy saving of 69.3% could be realised on the Fastrack Route A (based on the annual energy use of current diesel buses; 2,063MW, versus the energy used by the bus on the trial; 634MW). Feedback from Arriva was positive, with the electric bus outperforming expectations and the drivers reporting that they preferred the electric vehicles. The public were also complimentary, with 70% of Twitter comments being neutral or positive.

The demonstration proved that the vehicle operated within Fastrack's operational requirements. It also helped promote the drive towards zero emissions technology and whilst the vehicle itself drew attention, the visual element of the charging infrastructure proved to be much more effective and thought provoking for the general public and stakeholders alike.



CASE STUDY: LOW CARBON ACROSS THE SOUTH EAST

The Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) project provides free support to help businesses become more competitive and profitable, by reducing environmental impacts through resource efficiencies and encouraging low carbon innovation. It does this through a three-pronged approach of stimulating demand, supporting supply and transferring knowledge. The scheme is administered by Kent County Council and supports businesses in Kent and Medway, Essex, Thurrock, Southend-on-Sea and East Sussex.

So far the project has seen nearly £3.5 million of EU grant funding approved for 425 Kent and Medway Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), towards a huge range of purposes. This investment is set to deliver over 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent of savings through 250 energy and resource efficiency projects; from simple lighting, heating and insulation works, to investing in more effective and sustainable business practices. To date this support has helped create 160 jobs, launch 45 new products or services and support 31 business start-ups in Kent and Medway's burgeoning Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services sector.

It was due to this success that LoCASE was identified as an exemplar project for replication across the south east in the Energy South2East regional local energy strategy. It was also selected as a runner-up by the President of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) Awards in 2018.

The project will continue to administer additional funding up to a value of £49 million to support businesses in the South East, in addition to expanding delivery into the neighbouring Local Economic Partnership (LEP) areas of Coast to Capital, Enterprise M3 and the Solent. This will open up access to LoCASE support to any SME based in Kent, Medway, Essex, Surrey, Hampshire and the Solent.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS STRATEGY

The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy sets out how we will respond to the UK climate emergency and ensure our recovery from the coronavirus pandemic drives clean and resilient economic growth, eliminates poor air quality, reduces fuel poverty, and promotes the development of an affordable, clean and secure energy supply across Kent and Medway. Building on the strengths and activities of local authorities and their partners, the strategy identifies ten high level priorities for action now and in the short- and long-term.

The strategy is owned by all 14 Kent and Medway local authorities, but the actions will need to be taken in partnership with other public and private sector partners, academic and charitable organisations. In addition, the strategy will develop programmes that will require the support of local businesses, community groups and residents if they are to be successful.

A technical implementation plan accompanies this strategy and provides detailed information on the specific actions that will be taken to achieve each priority, the partners involved, timescales and outputs. Progress, risks and issues will be regularly reviewed by Kent Leaders, Kent Chief Executives and appropriate partnerships. Progress reports and the latest indicators will be published online at www.kent.gov.uk/environment.

The Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is a sub-strategy of the Kent Environment Strategy and is intrinsically linked to several other strategic documents and policies across Kent. These are shown in Figure 4.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Regional | Energy South to East: Local Industrial Strategy |
| | Local Economic Plan and Strategic Economic Statement |
| | Transport Strategy for the South East |
| County wide | Environment Strategy |
| | Growth and Infrastructure Framework |
| | Biodiversity Strategy |
| | Local Transport Plan |
| | Active Travel Strategy (excluding Medway) |
| | Health and Wellbeing Strategy |
| | Joint Strategic Needs Assessment |
| | Fuel Poverty Strategy |
| | Housing Strategy |
| | Enterprise and Productivity Strategy (in development) |
| | Sustainability and Transformation Plan |
| Local | Local Plans |
| | Covid-19 recovery plans |
| | Green Infrastructure Strategies |
| | Sustainable School Travel Strategy (Medway only) |
| | Walking and Cycling Strategies |
| | Air Quality Management Area Strategies |

Figure 4: Key strategies linked to the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy

MEASURING PROGRESS – OUR INDICATORS

To ensure our activities remain effective, it is essential that we monitor and evaluate progress against our priorities regularly. To do this we will establish and monitor the following key indicators; ensuring that they remain measurable over the lifetime of this strategy. These indicators will be monitored quarterly (as they are updated) and published online.

| THEME | INDICATOR | BASELINE |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Carbon dioxide emissions | Total carbon dioxide (CO ₂) emissions | 8,958.2 kilo tonnes of CO ₂ (2017). Total CO ₂ emissions have fallen by 37% since 2005. |
| | Per capita carbon dioxide (CO ₂) emissions | 4.9 tonnes per person (2017). |
| Air quality | Annual exceedance of key air pollutants | 2 site failures for NO _x and 2 site failure for O ₃ (2018). |
| | Number of days of moderate or higher air pollution | 78 days (21.3% of the year), where at least one pollutant recorded levels of moderate or higher air pollution (2018). |
| | Deaths associated with particulate matter (PM2.5) | 922 deaths associated with particulate matter (2017). |
| | Number of air quality management areas | 43 air quality management areas (2019). |
| Green infrastructure | Tree canopy coverage | To be developed |
| | Carbon storage value of habitats | To be developed |
| Energy | Annual energy consumption of local authority estate (all 14 councils) | To be developed |
| | Average domestic energy consumption (gas and electricity) per customer | 16,781 kilowatt hours (2017). |
| | Carbon emissions from gas and electricity consumption | 4.87 Mega tonnes CO ₂ (2017). |
| | Renewable electricity generation | 1,751 Mega Watts (2018). |

| | | |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Transport | Carbon emissions from the transport sector | 3,953.7 kilo tonnes of CO ₂ (2017). |
| | Active travel to school (walking, cycling, scooting) | 64.2% of primary school children. 36.6% of secondary school children (2018). |
| | Active travel to work (census data – updated every 10 years) | In 2011, 32% of people that work within 5km of their home actively travelled to work in Kent. |
| | Journey delays on local A-roads (excluding Medway) | 35.4 seconds per vehicle per mile (2018). |
| | Journey delays on local A-roads (Medway only) | 46.9 seconds per vehicle per mile (2018). |
| | Electric Vehicle Registrations | 4,845 electric vehicle registrations (December 2019). |
| | Road transport fuel consumption | 1,182,943 tons of oil equivalent. |
| | Number of car share / car clubs in operation | To be developed |
| | Kilometres of footpath/cycle lane improved | To be developed |
| Housing and health | Households in fuel poverty | 73,010 (9.6%) households in fuel poverty (2017). |
| | Excess winter deaths | 1,610 excess winter deaths 29.6% averaged excess winter mortality (2017/18). |
| | Carbon emissions from the domestic sector | 2,585.9 kilo tonnes of CO ₂ (2017). |
| | Household water consumption | To be developed |
| | Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of homes | 83% of new builds had an EPC rating of A or B (2018). 16% of all domestic EPC lodgements were rated A or B for energy efficiency (2018). |
| | Number of energy efficiency measures installed in homes | To be developed |

GLOSSARY

Active travel - Travel and transport by physically active modes of transport such as cycling, walking or scooting.

Air quality - The composition of the air in terms of how much pollution it contains.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) – Where Local Authorities have found that air pollution objectives have been exceeded or are not likely to be achieved, an Air Quality Management Area must be declared. The size of these areas is not predefined and can vary.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) – Formed in 2016 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial strategy is a government department responsible for business, industrial strategy, science and innovation and energy and climate change policy.

Car club – Car clubs allow you to rent a car by the hour. Car clubs offer the benefits of using a car without the expense or inconvenience of maintaining and running your own car.

Clean energy – Energy that is not produced from fossil fuels (coal, oil or natural gas)

Clean growth – set out in the Government’s Clean Growth Strategy, the concept aims to lower carbon emissions, protecting the environment and meeting

our climate change obligations, whilst stimulating growth and prosperity, increasing earning power and creating and supporting thousands of jobs.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP) - When electricity is generated, up to 60% of the energy can be wasted as lost heat. Combined Heat and Power schemes are designed to recover most of this waste heat and use it to power a turbine and generate more electricity.

Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) – Formed in 2001, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is the government department responsible for environmental protection, food production and standards, agriculture, fisheries and rural communities in England.

District heating - A district heating system is a network of insulated pipes, which delivers heat (or chilled water) from a centralised energy centre to multiple end users [see also Heat Network].

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) - EPCs are intended to inform potential buyers or tenants about the energy performance of a building, so they can consider energy efficiency as part of their investment or business decision. The scale is from A-G, A being the most efficient.

Energy switching – a process carried out by consumers aiming to reduce their energy bills by changing their energy provider.

Excess Winter Deaths – is defined as the difference between the number of deaths which occurred in winter (December to March) and the average number of deaths during the preceding months (August to November) and the subsequent four months (April to July).

Flexible working - Flexible working is a way of working that suits an employee’s needs, for example having flexible start and finish times, or working from home.

Fuel poverty - Fuel poverty in England is measured by the Low Income High Costs definition, which considers a household to be in fuel poverty if they have fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and where if they were to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – A computer system that allows analysis of spatial data by organising layers of information into visual maps and 3D scenes. Commonly used GIS applications are ArcGIS and MapInfo.

Greenhouse gases - As defined under the Kyoto Protocol, these include:

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) Methane (CH₄) Nitrous oxide (N₂O)

Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) Perfluorocarbons (PFCs) Sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆)

Green infrastructure - Green infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities.

Growth and Infrastructure Framework – prepared by Kent County Council to provide a view of emerging development and infrastructure requirements to support growth across Kent and Medway. It provides a strategic framework across the County, for identifying and prioritising investment across a range of infrastructure, for planned growth up to 2031.

Hard-to-treat homes – homes that cannot accommodate routine, cost-effective energy efficiency measures. Homes considered hard-to-treat are often not connected to the gas network or are built with solid walls (without a cavity); this includes older properties and park homes.

Heat networks - A heat network, sometimes called district heating, is a distribution system of insulated pipes that takes heat from a central source and delivers it to a number of domestic or non-domestic buildings. The heat source might be a facility that provides a dedicated supply to the heat network, such as a combined heat and power plant; or heat recovered from industry and urban infrastructure, canals and rivers, or energy from waste plants.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – LEPs are locally owned partnerships between local authorities and

businesses. They play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs.

Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) – An EU funded project set up to help businesses tackle and adapt to climate change, by aiming to reduce costs by cutting emissions and promoting the opportunities of the low carbon and environmental goods and services market.

Low carbon economy - An economy which has a minimal output of greenhouse gas emissions.

Mega Watt (MW) - a measure of power, one million watts.

Net-zero – Achieving net-zero carbon emissions by deeply cutting emissions, with remaining emissions offset by removal from the atmosphere (eg. by trees or technology).

Renewable energy - Energy produced using naturally replenishing resources. This includes solar power, wind, wave, tide and hydroelectricity. Wood, straw and waste are often called solid renewable energy, while landfill gas and sewerage gas can be described as gaseous renewables.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) - Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises who employ fewer than 250 people and which have an annual turnover of less than £25 million.

Superfast broadband - In the UK, 'superfast' broadband is defined as a connection with download speeds of 24Mb or above.

Sustainable development - Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is central to the economic, environmental and social success of the country and is the core principle underpinning the National Planning Policy Framework.

Tri-LEP – A term used to describe collaboration between the South East, Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnerships. The Tri-LEP area covers much of south east England including Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Essex.

Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) – Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs), also known as plug-in vehicles, emit extremely low levels of motor vehicle emissions compared to traditional petrol or diesel vehicles.

Vulnerable resident – A term for an individual who is at risk of harm due to life circumstances such as being homeless, frail or elderly or has a mental or physical illness.

KENT AND MEDWAY ENERGY AND LOW EMISSIONS STRATEGY

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Agenda Item 15

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

24th March 2021

FLOOD RISK ALLEVIATION - UPDATE

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Final Decision-Maker | Policy & Resources Committee |
| Lead Director | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | High Street, Coxheath & Hunton, Headcorn, Marden & Yalding, Staplehurst |

Executive Summary

Maidstone Borough Council is a member of the Medway Flood Partnership, which was established in 2017 to address flood risk in the Medway catchment area above Allington Lock. This report describes initiatives currently in progress and sets out priorities for funding over the coming financial year.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That progress be noted with flood management initiatives delivered by Maidstone Borough Council as part of the Medway Flood Partnership.
2. That £50,000 be allocated for the Natural Flood Management scheme described in paragraph 2.14 and Appendix B subject to confirmation of match funding.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Policy & Resources Committee | 24 March 2021 |

FLOOD RISK ALLEVIATION - UPDATE

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | The decision will support all four strategic plan objectives by reducing flood risk, but in particular supports that strategic priority of making the borough safe, clean and green. | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | The report recommendations support the objective of respecting biodiversity and environmental sustainability. | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Risk Management | See paragraph 5.1. | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Financial | The Council has a capital budget of £950,000 to fund the Flood Action Plan projects described in this report. | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Staffing | Staffing support for flood risk alleviation and community resilience is provided by the Head of Commissioning and Business Improvement and her team. | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Legal | <p>The initiatives to manage flood risk detailed in this report as proposed by the Medway Flood Partnership will enable the Council to continue to discharge its statutory duties to include the responsibilities outlined below.</p> <p>The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 gives the Environment Agency (EA) a strategic overview of the management of flood and coastal erosion risk. It also gives upper tier local</p> | Legal Team |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>authorities, responsibility for preparing and putting in place strategies for managing flood risk from groundwater, surface water and ordinary watercourses in their areas.</p> <p>Kent County Council as the lead local flood authority has the responsibilities referred to above.</p> <p>In addition, Maidstone Council is a risk management authority and can carry out flood risk management works on minor watercourses, working with Lead Local Flood Authorities and others, including through taking decisions on development in their area which ensure that risks are effectively managed.</p> <p>The public authorities with responsibility for flood risk management are obliged to have regard to the EA's National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England and KCC's strategy when taking action to tackle flooding in their area.</p> <p>All risk management public authorities have a duty to co-operate with each other and to share data. to deliver flood risk management better to the benefit of their communities.</p> <p>The recommendations in this report are in accordance with the statutory obligations and the requirement for co-operation between the public authorities when discharging their functions under the 2010 Act.</p> <p>The recommendations also fall within the Policy and Resources functions, which</p> | |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| | includes (1) risk management strategy; (2) emergency and resilience planning. | |
| Privacy and Data Protection | Data collected as part of projects described in this report, e.g., data about individual households affected by flooding, is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act. | Policy and Information Manager |
| Equalities | Consideration is given to the equalities impacts as part of each individual projects. | Senior Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer |
| Public Health | The report recommendations support the public health agenda by reducing the risk of individuals being affected by flooding. | Public Health Officer |
| Crime and Disorder | Flood risk has an impact on community safety generally. The measures outlined in the report will help to achieve increased community resilience and reduce the risk to health and safety during incidences of flooding. | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Procurement | Council and statutory procurement requirements will be met in relation to all procurement and commissioning carried out as part of flood risk management work. | Director of Finance & Business Improvement |

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

2.1 Maidstone Borough is at the heart of the Medway catchment area. The rivers Beult, Teise and Medway join at Yalding and flow through Maidstone towards the Thames Estuary. This brings a significant risk of flooding, as was seen in the floods of winter 2013/14. Recognising that a collective approach is needed to address these risks, the Medway Flood Partnership was established in 2017. It brings together a range of organisations concerned with flood risk management and reduction in the Medway catchment area upstream of Allington Lock, including not only the Environment Agency (EA) and the principal local authorities but also a whole range of other relevant bodies. The partnership's objectives are defined as follows:

- Develop a shared understanding of the strategic challenges and opportunities within the catchment and the need for collaboration to address them
- Develop a shared action plan for the next 5 years, and a 25 year vision for the future
- Improve communications and engagement by adopting a joined up approach to engagement with communities, government and MPs
- Broker strategic solutions to problems identified through the partnership
- Identify the inter-relationships between partner projects and ensure coordination between them.

2.2 The partnership therefore provides a vital framework for developing initiatives to manage flood risk. It recognises that effective management of flood risk requires a range of different approaches, and so categorises these in three work streams, as follows:

- capital investment and maintenance
- natural flood management
- community resilience.

2.3 The partnership's report on year 3 of its work is attached as Appendix A. Initiatives of particular relevance to Maidstone borough are described below, together with a proposed new initiative for 2021/22.

Capital investment and maintenance

2.4 Following the floods of winter 2013/14, extensive work was carried out to investigate the feasibility of large scale engineering solutions to flood risk. There were no schemes identified that provided viable solutions. The main capital scheme in the overall Medway Flood Partnership programme is the expansion of the Leigh Flood Storage Area, which is currently subject to a public inquiry.

Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme

2.5 The focus over the past few years has moved to schemes that target individual properties which are at risk. Phase 1 of the Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme (MMFRS) has installed Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures to 256 homes across the middle Medway villages at a cost of £1.54 million. This was funded by up to £7,500 per property through Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA), with the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) providing an additional £195,000 to the project (Appendix A, Action 5).

2.6 As described in Appendix A, the Winter 2019/20 flooding tested the measures at some properties, successfully in many cases, but with issues identified at others. Follow up work has been undertaken and the measures have been checked and signed off with the homeowner.

- 2.7 Not all properties at very significant risk of flooding are suitable for PFR. The EA commissioned Jacobs Engineering to undertake initial assessments on properties for which property flood resilience measures are not suitable, with a view to developing small community level resilience schemes which could reduce flood risk to property. Unfortunately, none of these schemes provided value for money, mainly because the schemes proposed only assisted a few properties. The details have been shared with the property owners involved so that they can take steps at their own cost if they wish. If new community resilience measures become available they will be investigated and progressed, if appropriate.

Maidstone Town Centre

- 2.8 Following flooding of properties at the lower end of the High Street in 2013/14, the two subways beneath the A229 have been blocked off. However, the Medway Street subway also acts as a conduit for flood water to reach the lower High Street area. Accordingly, as a final part of the Bridges Gyratory Scheme, a flood barrier will be built on the town side of the subway. This work has been delayed, but is now expected to be completed in 2021.

Mote Park Lake

- 2.9 Following the mandatory 10 year review (under the Reservoirs Act 1975) of the Mote Park Lake reservoir in 2014, the Council received recommendations for measures in the interests of safety (MIOS). The measures advised that the spillway capacity of the lake be increased to reduce risk of failure of the dam due to overtopping, to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP).
- 2.10 To ensure legal compliance under the Reservoirs Act, the Council commissioned the 2016 Flood Study and an ALARP assessment (April 2017) resulting in the appointment of Black & Veatch (now Binnies) Flood Engineers to act as designer to carry out an options appraisal and design development including obtaining planning consent for works to increase the spillway capacity.
- 2.11 Upon planning approval, Binnies appointment was extended to include detailed design and preparation of tender documentation for the dam works. The approved works comprise a 50m wide auxiliary spillway, on abutment formed with grass covered articulated concrete blocks and a wave wall. Breheny Civil Engineering were instructed to carry out the works and the civils works to the dam and spillway commenced April 2020 and were completed in December 2020. A MIOS certificate under Section 10(6) of the Reservoirs Act 1975 was issued by a member of the All Reservoirs Panel on 20th Dec 2020 which has been accepted by the Environment Agency ensuring that the Council's legal obligations for the works have been discharged.
- 2.12 The landscaping works surrounding the new abutment including the planting of trees and seeding grassed areas are being undertaken at present.
- 2.13 Breheny's works to the boathouse to install new automated sluice gates should commence at the end of April with completion expected late July. The works involve pouring a concrete slab under water to provide a stable platform to insert stop logs for the installation of the penstock gates.

Maintenance

2.14 Maintaining watercourses, drains and sewers is essential to minimise the risk of flooding. Kent County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the area and has the prime responsibility for co-ordinating this work. Maidstone Borough Council works closely with the relevant officers at KCC to identify and address problems in our borough. We hold a small budget of £30,000 per annum which allows us to carry out drainage works and maintenance works to ordinary watercourses. Normally these works would be the responsibility of the landowner, but in some situations it is more cost-effective to fund the work ourselves rather than relying on enforcement action (see Appendix A, Action 12).

Natural Flood Management

2.15 Natural Flood Management (NFM) is the alteration, restoration or use of landscape features to reduce flood risk to properties. There are a wide range of techniques used including small 'leaky dams', new hedgerows, river bank restoration, targeted tree planting and techniques to hold water temporarily on land to 'slow the flow', reduce and delay flood peaks and store more water away from homes. As well as helping to reduce flood risk, NFM techniques also provide wider social and environmental benefits by improving the environment and wildlife for people to enjoy.

2.16 Following a previous report to Policy and Resources Committee, it was agreed to fund an NFM scheme, carried out by the South East Rivers Trust (SERT), to manage flood risk along the Hogg Stream (also known as School Stream) in Headcorn. SERT engaged with landowners in the area and obtained agreement to install NFM structures to help mitigate flooding downstream. Specifically, a flood storage pond has been created and a number of Leaky Woody Structures have been installed. These are illustrated in Appendix A, pages 16 and 18.

2.17 Building on the completion of this project, the South East Rivers Trust now proposes to carry out three further projects for the Council. Funding from the Council of £50,000 would be matched by third party funding of £180,000 that SERT can access. Details are set out in Appendix B.

Community Resilience

2.18 The main agencies responsible for emergency planning, response and recovery - Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and the Environment Agency - have an established framework for responding to flood incidents. This allows us to make joint decisions and respond effectively by co-ordinating operational activity and share resources and equipment. It is also essential that individual households and local communities are equipped to protect themselves and their properties.

2.19 For the area of greatest risk of flooding in Maidstone borough, at the confluence of the Medway, Beult and Teise, a 'Medway Confluence Plan' (see Appendix A, Action 40) has been developed in conjunction with Kent County

Council and the Environment Agency. This plan was activated successfully in Winter 2020/21 in dealing with two flooding incidents, as follows.

- 2.20 On 27 December 2020, Storm Bella led to flood warnings being activated for Collier Street, Yalding Village and Little Venice. The Medway Confluence Plan was activated. Sandbags were supplied by the EA to Yalding and Collier Street. MBC worked with the management of Little Venice and deployed Incident liaison Officers to the site to help with warning, informing and advising residents to leave the site before the flooding hit. As a result, over 100 occupants found alternative accommodation before the site flooded. There were road closures as a result of the flooding but no property flooding recorded. Subsequently MBC provided street sweepers to clean up affected roads in Yalding village, Collier Street and Little Venice.
- 2.21 On 19th January 2021, Storm Christoph led to flood warnings being activated for Collier Street, Yalding Village and Little Venice. The Medway Confluence Plan was activated again. Planning commenced for the possible evacuation of Little Venice. Eventually, the rainfall was not as heavy as initially expected so there was no need to evacuate Little Venice or any other location. Again, there were road closures as a result of flooding but no property flooding recorded.
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option 1:** To continue to work with the EA and other partners as part of the Medway Flood Partnership and to utilise the Flood Action Plan capital budget for schemes that meet the objectives of the Partnership and the Council's own investment criteria.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** To remain as a member of the Medway Flood Partnership but not commit any funding for flood risk management.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is Option 1 as this is the most likely option to deliver reductions in flood risk and is affordable in the context of the Council's medium term financial strategy.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 This report deals with the broad risk to the community posed by flooding. Risks associated with projects described in the report are addressed at the level of the individual project.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Progress on flood risk management work is reported to Policy and Resources Committee. The Council also maintains regular contact with representatives of the local community, including parish councillors, in relation to flooding issues.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Council will continue to work with the Medway Flood Partnership in implementing the actions described in the report.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

Appendix A: Medway Flood Action Plan – Year 3 Report

Appendix B: Proposed Natural Flood Management Schemes 2021-22

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

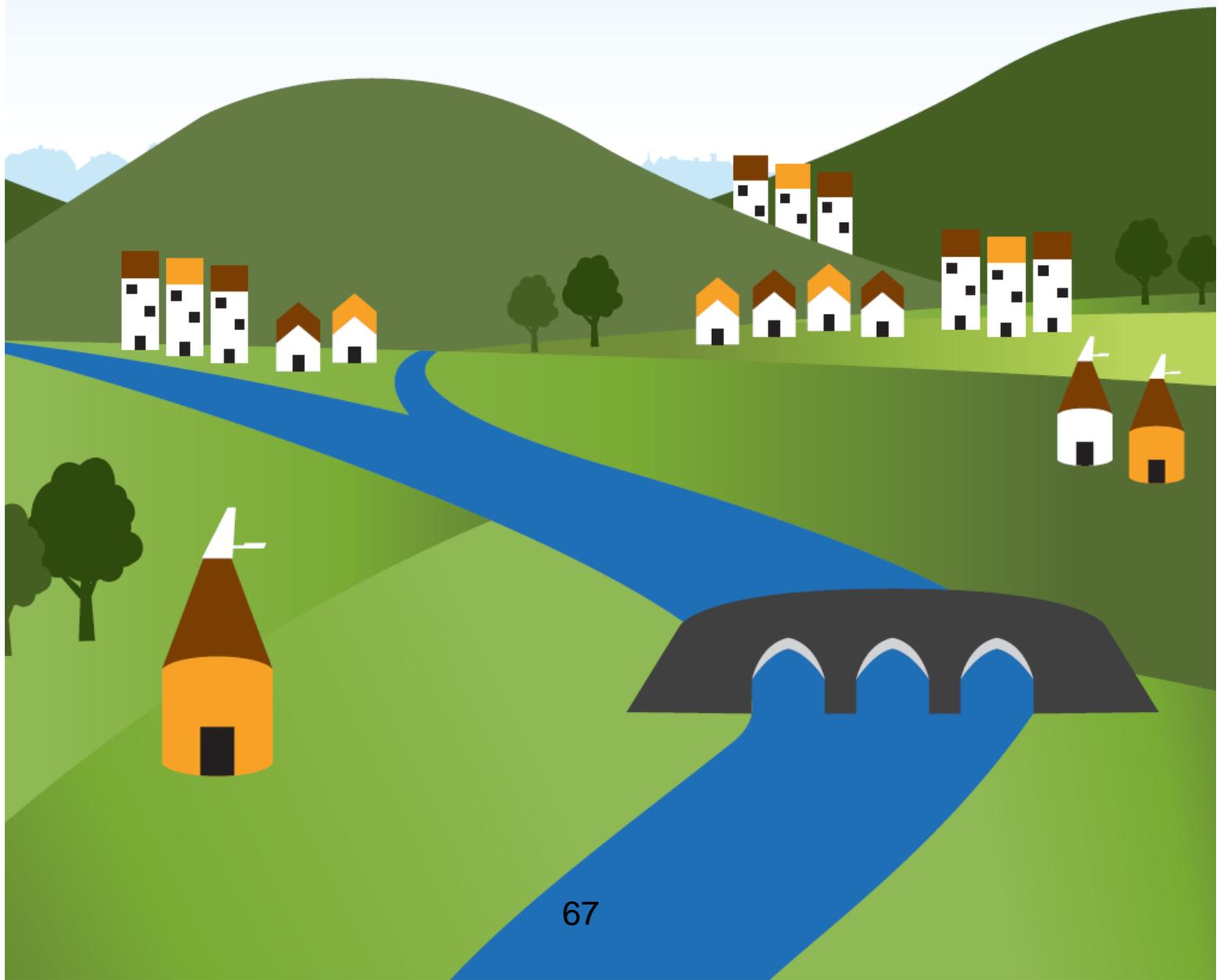


Working with the Medway Flood Partnership

Medway Flood Action Plan

Plan Together - Deliver in Partnership

Year 3 report - December 2020



The Medway Flood Partnership

The Medway Flood Partnership was established in January 2017 and brings together local partners, national agencies, non-governmental organisations and community representatives with the aim of reducing flood risk within the Medway catchment and create better places for people, properties and businesses.

The partnership brings together senior representatives from the following organisations:

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Country Land and Business Association• Forestry Commission• Kent Association of Local Councils• Maidstone Borough Council• Natural England• South East Rivers Trust• Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment Agency• Joint Parish Flood Group• Kent County Council• National Farmers Union• Sevenoaks District Council• Southern Water• Tunbridge Wells Borough Council• Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board |
|--|---|

Reducing the risk of flooding in the Medway catchment is a complex problem that is best solved by working in partnership. During the December 2013 flood event, approximately 965 homes were flooded across the Medway catchment, devastating people and livelihoods. Over 9,000 properties across the Medway catchment are at risk of river flooding with more at risk from other sources such as surface water or sewer flooding.

The flood action plan was first published at the end of 2017 and sets out what partner organisations will do to reduce flood risk in the short term. While this flood action plan is a significant milestone in addressing flood risk in the Medway catchment, it is part of a longer journey with the partnership, communities and with individuals to build awareness and preparedness for flooding, and identify and develop more actions which can help to reduce flood levels. Over the coming years, the partnership will continue to work with communities to develop this plan further and consider the 25 year vision and the pathway to getting there.

This action plan is a 'living document' that will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Medway Flood Partnership to make sure that actions are delivered and new information and ideas are incorporated. All members are committed to its delivery and embedding an integrated approach to flood risk management into our organisations.

For more information about the Medway Flood Partnership or to view the Medway Flood Action Plan, please see our webpage on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-river-medway-partnership-objectives-members-and-action-plan>

Capital investment and maintenance



Actions include traditional, engineered flood defence projects which help to reduce the risk of flooding to people, property and businesses.

It also includes maintenance of flood risk assets, such as sluices, to ensure they are in good operational condition and the maintenance of river channels which includes ditch and highway gully clearance, weed cutting, tree and debris removal and desilting of river beds.

Action 1. Coult Stream flood storage area

Carry out works to enable the Coult Stream Flood Storage Area to be used more frequently to reduce the risk of flooding to homes in smaller events.

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Where | River Medway at Leigh and Hildenborough | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | March 2018 | Supporting organisations | |

Action completed in Year 1

The Environment Agency has spent £7,500 on works to ensure the Coult Stream flood storage area protects 51 properties in Snoll Hatch and East Peckham from a 1 in 100 flood (a flood with a 1% probability of occurring in any year).

Action 2. East Peckham scheme

Carry out feasibility and funding investigations to develop and deliver (if applicable) a scheme to reduce risk to homes and businesses in East Peckham.

| | | | |
|-------|--------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | East Peckham | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | 2017-2022 | Supporting organisations | Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Kent County Council, South East Local Enterprise Partnership |

Year 3 progress: action ongoing

In January 2020, after advertising the scheme in the parish magazine and carrying out a letter drop, the Environment Agency successfully carried out threshold surveys to 270 properties in East Peckham.

Through the threshold surveys we measured the lowest entry point for flood water to enter a property. In practice, this means visiting each house and measuring the height of doorsteps, air bricks and damp proof courses. We then compared these levels to the level of predicted flooding to understand whether water would enter the building in a particular flood event.

The information we gathered has helped us identify 115 properties that are eligible for Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures.

PFR includes measures such as flood doors, flood barriers, and non-return valves on waste pipes to help reduce the impact of flooding to homes.



Surveying threshold heights in East Peckham, Jan 2020

We are pleased to confirm that we have secured 93% of the funding for the scheme through government Flood Defence Grant in Aid. We have put in a bid to the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee for the remainder of the funding which has been agreed in principle and we expect this to be approved in spring 2021. Subject to this approval, the scheme will pay the cost of PFR measures for each property in the scheme up to a total cost of £7,500 per property.

The next step is to put the project out to tender and we expect to appoint a contractor in early spring 2021.

Action 3. Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme:

Reduce flood risk to 1,470 homes in Tonbridge and Hildenborough by carrying out construction works to enlarge the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA) and build embankments in Hildenborough.

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Where | River Medway at Leigh and Hildenborough | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | 2019-2022 | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

In December 2019 the Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA) was put into action for the first time since 2014. We saw prolonged steady rainfall in the week leading up to the impounding, with totals of approximately 80mm for the week.

As a result, the Environment Agency started to store water on 20 December and the FSA was used for a period of 62 hours in total before flows were low enough that we no longer needed to store water. The water level reached in the reservoir was 27.08m which accounted for 60% of its storage capacity.



Storing water in the Leigh Flood Storage Area, February 2020

Several weeks later on 16 February 2020, we needed to utilise the Leigh FSA again and over a period of 66 hours we stored water up to a level of 27.83m which this time accounted for 90% of the total storage capacity.

You can find out more about how the Leigh FSA works to reduce downstream flood risk by viewing our YouTube animation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FVsi0WNa50> or search for “Leigh Flood Storage Area”.

The scheme to expand the FSA is continuing to progress as planned, despite some disruption from Covid-19. A key piece of work over the past 18 months has been our consultation with landowners and organisations about our proposal to increase the maximum stored water level within the Leigh FSA during times of flood.

Currently we are able to store water to a maximum level of 28.05m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) as measured at the control structure. Our investigations have shown that storing water to 28.6m AOD will reduce flood risk to over 1,400 homes and businesses in Tonbridge and Hildenborough. Storing to this level will cover 16.4 hectares of extra footprint but will provide 7.3million m³ of storage – a capacity increase of 24%.

Increasing this maximum stored water level requires permission from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Approval for this is essential to enable both the Leigh expansion and Hildenborough aspects of the scheme to progress. Over the last 18 months we have been talking to local organisations and landowners who are affected by the increase in stored water level to explain what it means for them and discuss any concerns they have. We submitted our request to the Secretary of State to increase the stored water level in the Leigh FSA in early June 2020. Unfortunately we have been unable to resolve objections to the proposal so Defra will hold an inquiry. This is due to take place in early 2021.

Action 4. Leigh flood storage area interim works

Carry out a 3-year programme of engineering works to keep the Leigh Flood Storage Area in good operational condition.

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Where | Leigh | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing to 2019 | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update: action complete

The £1.2million, 3 year programme of improvement works on the Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA) is now complete. These works keep the existing flood storage area fully operational and compliant with the statutory Reservoirs Act until the works to expand the FSA, which include further statutory works, are completed. These works were designed to complement the scheme to expand the Leigh Flood Storage Area and included:

- a 2-year project to refurbish the drains at the toe of the 1.3km main embankment.
- refurbishing the lifting mechanism on the north gate.
- replacing the original 1981 switchboard with a new one which will last for the next 50 years.
- replacing the original 1981 “back up” generator with a new generator which is designed to last for the next 30 years. This generator supplies back up power so the structure can continue to operate if there is a power cut.
- refurbishing the Powder Mill stream bridge. This provides access for maintenance, grass clearance and silt clearing.
- installing new security measures to ensure the structure is safe and secure.

New action 4b: Leigh gauging stations upgrade project

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Where | Upstream of the Leigh Flood Storage Area | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing to 2023 | Supporting organisations | |

New action in Year 3

Over the next 3 years the Environment Agency will upgrade 8 gauging stations across the Medway catchment. The data from these sites is used to work out when and how to best to operate the Leigh Flood Storage Area control structure in order to maximise the storage capacity available. The works will include refurbishment of the equipment that collects and records information about river flows and levels, and the buildings which house them.

Action 5. Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme – Phase 1

Carry out scoping surveys to understand which homes at greatest risk of flooding in the Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme area are suitable for property resistance measures. Where homeowners agree, install property resistance measures in suitable homes in the Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme area.

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Yalding, Collier Street, Hunton, Marden, West Farleigh, East Farleigh, Wateringbury and Nettlestead | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | 2017-2019 | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Joint Parish Flood Group, Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee |

Year 3 progress update: action complete

The MMFRS began in 2017 and started with an initial survey of over 460 properties across 8 parish council areas around the confluence of the Rivers Medway, Beult and Teise, including Yalding and Collier Street. These surveys assessed whether properties at significant risk of flooding were suitable for Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures which include flood doors, flood gates and air brick covers.

The PFR delivery was then split into 2 phases:

- Phase 1a was a pilot scheme to install measures to 28 properties and was completed early in 2018. The purpose of the pilot was to showcase the variety of PFR measures available and to build understanding and confidence within the community around the scheme and the measures.
- Phase 1b incorporated the remaining eligible 255 properties whose owners had expressed an interest. This phase of the project went to competitive tender using the Environment Agency's new PFR Framework in November 2018. This was the first project to use this process and at the time, was the largest PFR project in the country.



Flood barriers reducing risk to 3 properties

In total, the scheme has installed PFR measures to 256 homes across the middle Medway villages and has cost £1.54million. The scheme received government funding up to £7,500 per property through Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA), and the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) agreed to provide an additional £195,000 to the project through local levy.

The Winter 2019/20 flooding tested the measures at some properties, successfully in many cases but issues were identified at some. These have now been resolved and all properties have been visited and measures have been checked and signed off with the homeowner.

One challenge for the project has been ensuring that the power supply for sump pumps will be maintained during a flood. In Yalding in particular 2 substations are located within the floodplain and we have worked closely with UKPN who are improving the flood resilience of the substations to ensure that the power stays on. One substation in Burgess Bank has been raised and UKPN are considering options for another at Lyngs Close.



Raised substation at Burgess Bank, Yalding

PFR schemes rely on the take up of homeowners so community engagement has been critical to the success of the project. This scheme (Phase 1b) had 85% take up, compared to an average take up of 70% of other PFR schemes. We absolutely couldn't have achieved this without the help and support of the Parish Councils so the project team would like to say a massive thank you!

Action 6. Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme – Phase 2

With funding from Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee investigate and implement community level resilience measures to reduce the impact of flooding in the Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme area. This includes localised flood defences to reduce risk to homes at greatest risk of flooding

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Yalding, Collier Street, Hunton, Marden, West Farleigh, East Farleigh, Wateringbury and Nettlestead | Owner | Environment Agency, Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council |
| When | 2018-2020 | Supporting organisations | Joint Parish Flood Group, Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee |

Year 3 progress update: action complete

A study has shown that, in discrete locations, small community level resilience schemes could reduce flood risk to property. Unfortunately, none of these schemes meet the value for money criteria. This is mainly because the schemes proposed only assist a few properties. The details have been shared with the property owners involved so that they can take steps if they wish. If new community resilience measures become available they will be investigated and progressed, if appropriate.

Action 7. Environment Agency annual maintenance programme

Continue to carry out the Environment Agency's annual programme of maintenance work on Main Rivers across the catchment to maintain the flow of water and ensure flood risk assets are in good condition.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Each year the Environment Agency spend approximately £1million on maintenance works across the Medway catchment to ensure that water flows unobstructed down through the catchment, and that structures and defences are in good working order.

Despite Covid-19, the Environment Agency's 2020 maintenance programme largely continued as planned. Our operational teams have adapted their ways of working to incorporate social distancing and other measures to stay safe.

In October our staff spent three full days carrying out tree works and clearing vegetation on the Penn Stream near Higham Wood. They went all the way from up stream of Frog Bridge on Shipbourne Road to almost the confluence of the Tonbridge Mill Stream, downstream of Old Hadlow Road. We have now completed all planned maintenance on this stream for this year.

In addition to our planned maintenance work, our field teams also carry out a wide range of reactive work such as clearing obstacles to keep rivers flowing. If you see any obstructions in watercourses that may present a flood risk please report them through the Environment Agency's free incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60

The Environment Agency's annual maintenance programme can be found on gov.uk:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/asset-management/index.html>

Action 8. Collated maintenance map

Collate the flood maintenance activities of risk management authorities across the catchment. Make this information available to communities to raise awareness of the work that is being done to manage flood risk in the catchment and use it to encourage riparian landowners to carry out their own maintenance.

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | 2018/19 onwards | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

The impact of Covid-19 has delayed the progress of this action though we hope to push this forward again over the coming year.

In the meantime, the Environment Agency's national live maintenance map can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-and-coastal-maintenance-programme>

Action 9. Maintenance group

Set up a Medway Maintenance Group to discuss and review the planned maintenance work of the Environment Agency, Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, local councils, Kent County Council Highways and Southern Water. Involve local community representatives to promote a joined up approach and increase community involvement.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, Southern Water, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Kent Association of Local Councils, Joint Parish Flood Group, Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

The impact of Covid-19 has delayed the progress of this action though we hope to push this forward again over the coming year.

Action 10: Culvert inspections

Carry out a rolling programme of work to inspect Environment Agency owned culverts across the catchment to ensure they continue to convey flows.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Annually | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

No further CCTV surveys were carried out in the Medway catchment this year, however desilting works have been carried out on 2 culverts in Hildenborough and Tonbridge. This year, the local Environment Agency team have been focussing on developing a longer term plan for CCTV culvert surveys and are reviewing the data on all 196 culverts across the Medway catchment in order to build a programme for future years.

Action 11: Removal of old structures to reduce flood risk

Work with partners and communities to consider where removal of old structures, such as retention weirs and automatic sluices, may help to lower water levels and reduce flood risk. Where appropriate, work with partners and the community to carry out these works.

| | | | |
|-------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Where | Rivers Teise, Beult and Eden | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | 2018-2022 | Supporting organisations | South East Rivers Trust |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

As noted in the Year 2 report, the Darman's and Duddies auto sluices near Laddingford can't continue to operate in the present manner for the foreseeable future, but as they do not reduce flood risk they do not attract funding for maintenance.

At these sluices the Environment Agency is considering setting a permanent water level which works for all river users. These structures would then be welded in place to prevent them from failing. As noted in the Year 2 report, the next step is to carry out modelling to test the effect of different water levels. Covid-19 has delayed work on this but we are pleased to report that we have now got funding to progress the modelling of different water levels and what effect they would have.

Once this is complete we will carry out further consultation with the local community to agree any actions.

Action 12: Watercourse maintenance

Carry out drainage works and maintenance works to Ordinary Watercourses on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council to maintain flow of water.

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Where | Maidstone Borough | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017-2020 | Supporting organisations | Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Kent County Council is continuing to manage Maidstone Borough Council's ditch maintenance work. This work is programmed annually. KCC works with local Parish Councils and Highways to identify issues that need attention.

Action 13. River Grom trash screen, Tunbridge Wells

Improve the trash screen on the River Grom culvert entrance to prevent flooding due to blockage.

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Where | Tunbridge Wells | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017/18 | Supporting organisations | |

Action completed in Year 1

Kent County Council invested £7,000 to install a new trash screen across a culvert on the River Grom in Tunbridge Wells.

Action 14. Tunbridge Wells

Investigate ways to reduce risk of flooding at Neville Street and in the Warwick Park area of Tunbridge Wells. If feasible, develop funding plans and deliver flood risk management measures.

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Where | Neville Street/Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017/18 | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Kent County Council has explored opportunities to deliver Natural Flood Management on the Commons, but unfortunately the soil on the site does not lend itself to these measures. KCC is planning improvements to the highway drainage on the highways that cross the Commons, this will help to reduce the runoff. We will continue look for opportunities within this work to manage surface water flow.

Action 15. Southern Water drainage maintenance

Continue to carry out Southern Water's proactive programme of maintenance work to maintain an effective system, include regular reviews to ensure appropriate maintenance is carried out.

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Southern Water |
| When | Rolling programme | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update:

Rolling programme under continual review

Action 16. Southern Water asset surveys

Carry out a targeted programme of surveys of Southern Water assets to improve our understanding of their condition and inform our future Capital Maintenance plan.

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Southern Water |
| When | Rolling programme | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update:

Rolling programme under continual review

Action 17. Drainage Area Plans

Update Drainage Area Plans for:

Headcorn, Horsmonden, Staplehurst, Ashford, Redgate Mill Crowborough, Aylesford, Ham Hill, Tonbridge, Bidborough, Biddenden, Coxheath, Edenbridge, Luxfords Lane East Grinstead, Eden Vale East Grinstead, Felbridge, Forest Row, Godstone, Hawkhurst South, Leeds, Lingfield, Paddock Wood, Tunbridge Wells North & South, Copthorne, Wateringbury.

Use these to understand the impact of weather/climate change and growth on waste water systems and identify how this impact can be managed to reduce flood risk from sewers to homes.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Southern Water |
| When | By March 2020 | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Environment Agency, Borough and District Councils as required |

Action completed in Year 2

The Drainage Area Plans for 25 sewerage catchments within the Medway River Basin District have been updated. The interventions identified in these plans to improve performance are being prioritised against other needs across the Southern Water region. The Drainage Area Plans will be used as level 3 tactical planning documents alongside the LLFA Surface Water Management Plans to determine strategic level plans for the River Basin District as part of the creation of the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). The DWMP will identify potential partnership opportunities and will be completed by summer 2022. All parties responsible for drainage within the Medway river basin will be engaged as a part of this framework.

Year 3 update:

The Drainage & Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) for the Medway catchment is progressing. A stakeholder engagement session was held on 10 September to discuss the results of the first stage of the risk based assessment and agree planning objectives for the catchment. Kent County Council, the Environment Agency and Medway Catchment Partnerships all joined this positive discussion. The next steps are to identify how performance changes over time due to population growth, climate change and urban creep and what options are available to address the predicted emerging risks. Future stakeholder workshops will be arranged to discuss options and the potential opportunities for a partnership approach to resolving issues.

Action 18. IDB watercourse maintenance

Carry out annual maintenance work within Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board district to maintain flow of water.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board |
| When | Annually | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

In 2019, the IDB suffered with its maintenance programme as a result of plant malfunctions. We did however manage to complete the majority of our standard works to keep our watercourses clear.

Despite Covid-19, this year (2020) has seen an improvement in the number of watercourses mowed, weed cut and desilted. Contractor aid and improved weather has allowed for the season to go into November, with further hand operations being conducted throughout December. We also continue to be a visual presence throughout the district, with regular inspections and clearance of grates and culverts.

New plans for improving the maintenance plan of the IDB, along with closer works with contractors and landowners are set to make further efficiencies in the work carried out in the district. This will also see rotations put in place to aid our conservation efforts, while still offering a primarily drainage related service.

There are plans to remove and reinstate critical structures to both clear decaying assets and to improve existing ones where necessary. We have recently re-adopted the diversion sluice on Gravelly Ways to keep a better eye on its condition after consultation with local landowners and Kent County Council.

Moving forwards, we are working closely with the Environment Agency to push works on previously overlooked watercourses where possible, while continuing to hold care of biodiversity and conservation in high regard. Along with the Lower Board, we are progressing with negotiations towards a formal Public Sector Cooperation Agreement PCSA so that we can further improve coordination and efficiencies of works on assets in which we have a shared interest.

Action 19. Community Infrastructure Levy

Support infrastructure projects which will reduce flood risk by considering valid bids for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding.

| | | | |
|-------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Where | Sevenoaks District | Owner | Sevenoaks District Council |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

There have now been 3 meetings of the Council's CIL Spending Board (May and December 2018 and December 2019). The Board has awarded CIL to 17 infrastructure projects, with one dealing with flood mitigation. The next CIL Spending Board will be held on Wednesday 10 March 2021. The deadline for bids towards this Board closed on 31 December 2020.

No further bids have been submitted to Sevenoaks's CIL Spending Board to bring forward flood mitigation proposals at present. However, future bids may include flood mitigation projects as this is an appropriate use of CIL. The Council's CIL Governance arrangements and assessment criteria were changed in June 2019 and again in July 2020. Any persons submitting their bids are advised to look at these governance reviews as they provide clear guidance as to what the Council assesses when looking at bids for CIL monies. A guide has also been produced for organisations wishing to submit bids. Anyone wishing to submit a bid can email cil@sevenoaks.gov.uk for copy.

The interactive tool (on the SDC website) provides up to date information on how much CIL has been received by the Council. It also shows how much CIL income there has been from qualifying development in each Parish and how much CIL will be given to the relevant Town Parish/ Council. In line with legislation there is nothing to prevent Town/Parish Councils from spending their CIL income on flood mitigation projects. Parish and Town Councils can be contacted separately in regard to their own CIL monies.

New action: Ightham Property Flood Resilience measures

Carry out scoping surveys to understand which homes at greatest risk of flooding in Ightham are suitable for property resistance measures. Where homeowners agree, install property resistance measures in suitable homes.

| | | | |
|-------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Where | Ightham | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2018/19 | Supporting organisations | |

Action completed in Year 2

Kent County Council (KCC) has delivered property flood resilience (PFR) measures to 12 properties in Ightham following the flooding in 2016. KCC worked with the Flood Action Group in Ightham to determine the best course of action to manage the flood risk in the village and resolved to provide PFR for those properties that were eligible. The PFR measures installed are primarily passive, that is they are always in place (for instance flood resistant doors) and do not have to be specially deployed, this is because Ightham does not benefit from flood warnings and the flood risk is very flashy in nature.

New action: Highway drainage pilot

Use innovative technology to manage highway drainage.

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Where | Maidstone Borough | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2020-2021 | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Kent County Council is running a pilot project in Maidstone to proactively target maintenance works to the locations at highest risk of blockage.

Kent County Council have employed KaarbonTech to use GIS mapping to assess the condition of drains and gullies in Maidstone so that those most at risk of blocking up can be targeted with proactive cleaning before they get blocked – saving money and reducing flood risk.

All 36,000 gullies in Maidstone have been inspected and their condition plotted. The system then analyses multiple sources of data including:

- Cleansing history over the past 9 years
- Complaints over the past 5 years
- Remedial maintenance over the past 5 years
- Historic CCTV surveys

This data was then analysed to identify patterns and continued use of the system will improve the accuracy of these models over time. By striking a better balance between proactive and reactive maintenance the overall cost per gully will be reduced.

17,000 odd gullies will be cleansed proactively during the next 2 months. It's hoped this new way of working will be more efficient and reduce the cost of maintenance and flood risk

Natural Flood Management



Actions in this theme of work look at how natural flood management techniques could work in combination with engineered solutions to help to slow the flow of water and reduce the impacts of flooding.

There are a wide range of techniques including measures to help slow and/or reduce flows including re-meandering rivers, targeted woodland planting, and techniques to hold water temporarily on the land. As well as

helping to reduce flood risk, natural flood management techniques can also provide wider social and environmental benefits by improving our environment for people and wildlife to enjoy.

Action 20. Supporting NFM through annual maintenance programmes

Work with partners to consider how our annual maintenance work can support natural flood management measures where they help to reduce flood risk.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Annually | Supporting organisations | South East Rivers Trust, Natural England, Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, Kent County Council, Southern Water, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Joint Parish Flood Group, Kent Association of Local Councils, Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

The Environment Agency considers natural flood management plans through its internal consultation on the annual flood risk management maintenance programme. In the future, we plan to take the collated maintenance programme to the NFM steering group with the aim of identifying opportunities to 'slow the flow'.

Action 21. Improving the River Beult SSSI for people and wildlife

Identify, investigate and agree options to improve the River Beult SSSI for people and wildlife by working with landowners, local partners and groups. This will include options to slow flood flows and use unoccupied areas of the floodplain to temporarily accept flood water.

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Where | River Beult between Hadmans Bridge near Smarden and its confluence with the River Medway at Yalding | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | 2017/18 | Supporting organisations | Natural England |

Action completed in Year 1

The Environment Agency published the *Improving the River Beult SSSI for people and wildlife* report on the gov.uk website in August 2018: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-river-medway-partnership-objectives-members-and-action-plan>

The next step is to put the plan into action and this very much depends on the cooperation and support of local landowners. The Environment Agency and Natural England will use the plan to continue working with partners and local people to design and build the improvement measures. Further surveys and actions will be needed to inform the design stages. Partnership funding will also be needed and a wide variety of sources will be considered, many of which are detailed in the improvement plan.

Action 22. Mill Farm

Provide 12,500m³ of flood storage at Mill Farm, Marden and use this site to demonstrate the technique to build support for natural flood management measures.

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Where | Mill Farm, Marden | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017 | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency, Mill Farm |

Action completed in Year 1

Kent County Council worked in partnership with a local landowner, to complete a 12,500m³ flood storage area in Marden which will store peak flows from the drainage ditch network and River Teise which contribute to the flooding within the catchment.

Construction of the £40,000 project took place between November 2016 and December 2017. In addition to storing water, the site provides additional habitat across this higher level stewardship farm, which supports a wide diversity of bird life. The site will be managed for wildlife and has no public access so will be an undisturbed haven for wildlife within the local area.

An opening event was held on 18 May 2018 to showcase the flood storage area to other local landowners. A number of follow up meetings took place with other landowners interested in natural flood management measures.

Action 23. Paddock Wood

Investigate opportunities to use natural flood management techniques to reduce flood risk in Paddock Wood.

| | | | |
|-------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Where | Paddock Wood | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017/18 | Supporting organisations | Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Kent County Council has restored 433 metres of overgrown and neglected ditch at Whetsted Woods, Paddock Wood. The ditch takes flow from the Tudeley Brook when the water level rises, this increases the capacity of the Tudeley Brook, which has an overflow from the nearby Graveley Ways Stream that poses a flood risk to the town.

Native moisture tolerant trees will be planted in the vicinity of the works to increase the biodiversity value of the project and to mitigate against the vegetation removed as part of the process of restoring the ditch system.

Action 24. Ightham

Investigate opportunities to use natural flood management techniques to reduce flood risk around Ightham.

| | | | |
|-------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Where | Ightham | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017/18 | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

As noted in the Year 2 report, opportunities for Natural Flood Management in this catchment are limited though the South East Rivers Trust and Countryside Management Partnership are continuing to look for opportunities. However, now that the property resilience measures have been delivered to properties in Ightham this project is a lower priority (see supplementary Ightham action in the Capital Investment and Maintenance theme).

Action 25. Catchment Sensitive Farming

Explore how we can use the Catchment Sensitive Farming approach to provide advice to farmers about managing water on-farm that promotes natural flood management measures.

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------------|---|
| Where | River Teise and River Beult catchments | Owner | Natural England |
| When | 2016-2020 | Supporting organisations | Southern Water (Beult) & South East Water (Teise) |

Year 3 progress update: action complete

Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) team has continued to advise farmers in the Medway catchment on measures to reduce diffuse water pollution, improve soils and the natural flood management capacity of their land. Advice and approval has been provided to Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier applications on water-related options and capital items to protect and reduce farm-yard runoff. Southern Water are funding the Upper Beult Farm Cluster in partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust. CSF advisors are also continuing to work closely with both water company partners in the Teise and Upper Beult catchments to strengthen the advice-offer to farmers.

New action 25b: Catchment Sensitive Farming

Continue to use the Catchment Sensitive Farming approach to provide advice to farmers about managing water on-farm that promotes natural flood management measures.

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Where | River Teise and River Beult catchments | Owner | Natural England |
| When | April 2021 to 2025 | Supporting organisations | |

New action in Year 3

Catchment Sensitive Farming work in the Medway catchment will continue into the future with funding from Defra.

The focus for 2020/21 will be on farms in high priority water quality areas. From 2021/22 onwards, the programme will be expanded to both high and medium priority water quality areas. It will also address emerging themes such as air quality, flood risk and related sustainable farming practices.

Action 26. Ashdown Forest

Investigate the potential to hold floodwater in the upper catchment by restoring areas of wet heathland in Ashdown Forest through the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Scheme.

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Where | Ashdown Forest / River Medway headwaters | Owner | Natural England |
| When | 2016-2021 | Supporting organisations | Ashdown Forest Conservators |

Action completed in Year 2

Natural England has worked with landowners at Ashdown Forest to agree a Countryside Stewardship agreement which will fund the 7,500m³ pond restoration work. The agreement was signed in January 2019 and the landowner has planned work to take place in autumn/winter 2019.

Action 27. West Kent Woods

Explore the potential for natural flood management techniques in the West Kent Woods ecological network around Sevenoaks-Hildenborough-Hadlow-Kings Hill including the use of attenuation methods to slow the flow.

| | | | |
|-------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Where | River Bourne | Owner | Natural England |
| When | 2017-2020 | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Assessment of the condition of the SSSI woodlands in West Kent is being done. Follow-up advice is being given to woodland owners which includes advice on flood reduction measures that enhance the woodlands for nature and people.

Action 28. Countryside Stewardship

Invest in Countryside Stewardship agreements in the catchment, including creation/ restoration/ maintenance of diverse habitats to improve water quality and reduce run-off / erosion.

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Natural England / Forestry Commission |
| When | Extended until 2029 when the last agreements may end | Supporting organisations | Southern Water, Landowners and farmers |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

In 2020, the focus has been on creating landscape-scale delivery with landowners in 3 specific project areas. This has been particularly successful in Marden where 5 new Countryside Stewardship agreements are proceeding. All 5 agreements have put measures in place to protect the Lesser Teise/Teise from agricultural run-off. These measure have also created grassland and scrub areas to improve water storage and biodiversity gains. A total of 164 hectares will be sown with deep-rooted crops that will improve soil structure, and reduce compaction and run-off from the land.

A project in Shadoxhurst at the top of the River Beult is also bringing many landowners into agreements to help deliver natural flood management.

Defra have confirmed that agreements will continue to be set up until 2024 when the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme is introduced.

Action 29. Priority NFM sub-catchments

Through the FRAMES project, identify priority sub-catchments where natural flood management techniques will achieve greatest benefit in reducing flood risk in the catchment. Carry out modelling and identify the techniques to achieve this.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | South East Rivers Trust |
| When | 2017/18 | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Kent County Council |

Action completed in Year 2

Following consultation with partners supported by a wide variety of evidence, SERT have identified 2 flood-affected communities most likely to benefit from natural flood management in the short term. These are Headcorn, where around 20 properties are regularly at risk from flooding from the 'School Stream' (also known as the Hogg Stream); and Five Oak Green, where in the region of 100 properties are at risk from flooding from the Alder Stream.

The small area of these sub-catchments means that natural flood management interventions are likely to have a greater effect. In addition, the nature of the headwaters and surrounding landscape make these catchments particularly suitable for this approach. Much has been learnt through the process of identifying these catchments which can be applied elsewhere.

In the longer term it is hoped that interventions in an increasing number of sub-catchments will have a cumulative effect, and help contribute to reducing flood risk further downstream.

Action 30. Delivering NFM

Through the FRAMES project, work with local communities and landowners in priority sub catchments to design and deliver natural flood management schemes which will test land-management techniques.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | South East Rivers Trust |
| When | 2018-2021 | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Thanks to significant progress in reaching agreements with landowners in the sub-catchments affecting Headcorn and Five Oak Green, this year the South East Rivers Trust has been able to fully focus on delivery. We have substantially completed work on 4 sites, with work underway at another 4 and on track to be completed by March 2021. Further work has been identified for 2021-22 should funding become available. Sites on the Alder Stream protecting Five Oak Green and Capel include:

- Pembury Woods (2 locations) – Leaky Woody Dam construction
- Reeds Farm – Leaky Woody Dam construction and fencing of 9ha of ancient riparian woodland
- Amhurst Hill Farm – Leaky Woody Dam construction and ditch restoration/pond creation
- Sites on the School Stream protecting Headcorn
- Kingnood Pond – flood storage area holding >600m³
- Stonehall Farm – creation of Leaky Woody Dams and wetland creation
- Birch Wood – Leaky Woody Dams and woodland management



Leaky Woody Dam in operation during Storm Dennis, Feb 2020

The storms of February 2020 affected all of our project areas with properties affected at Five Oak Green and in particular a dozen cottages in the hamlet of Capel. We have worked closely with the residents and the local flood warden to identify the source of the problem there, and have restored an ancient flood relief ditch as an interim measure. The rainfall events were remarkable, and have caused us to re-evaluate the size of the structures we install. These are built even more robustly now, and having seen them put to the test, they perform very well and hold back large volumes of water.



Leaky Woody Dam construction

The projects not only contribute to flood mitigation but also deliver multiple benefits for biodiversity, landowners and the public, these include:

- Creation of a biodiversity rich ponds and water meadows
- Protection and restoration of 9ha of ancient woodland under threat from sheep grazing
- Improved fencing and access routes for farmers
- Establishment of new NFM delivery sector amongst local woodland and drainage contractors
- Public education in NFM through a specially constructed display area at Bedgebury Pinetum visitor centre

A full report, and short videos of the project will be available via the SERT website in spring 2021.

The EU FRAMES element of the project was fully delivered in June 2020. We learned much from this and are very grateful to our European partners for their support and encouragement.

Action 31. NFM funding strategy

Develop a funding strategy to identify and secure additional resources for natural flood management measures across the catchment. This will be a live document and reviewed regularly.

| | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | South East Rivers Trust |
| When | 2017/18 and reviewed regularly | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Kent County Council, Southern Water, Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

£560,000 has been secured to deliver NFM measures in the Medway catchment. In 2020 the Environment Agency increased their Defra funded contribution by £70,000 to £370,000. The match funding from the EU FRAMES project increased by £35,000 to £165,000. Maidstone Borough Council contributed £25,000 of further funding towards delivering NFM within their borough. This has enabled increased delivery of NFM in the catchment.

Further grant applications have been made to the Government's Green Recovery Fund and Maidstone Borough Council. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council have also indicated a willingness to fund aspects of NFM delivery by the project.

The current economic uncertainty has delayed a definitive funding strategy however SERT is continuing to gather information on potential funding sources in order to compile a guide to potential funding avenues. The incoming 'Environmental Land Management Scheme' for farmers and landowners should offer good potential for NFM delivery on the basis of "public money for public goods". This will include payments to manage land in order to reduce flood risk.

Action 32. Building NFM awareness and take-up

Through the FRAMES project, coordinate the use of existing mechanisms and networks across the partnership to build understanding of the wider benefits of natural flood management techniques and encourage landowners and tenants to consider implementing them within their current practices.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | South East Rivers Trust |
| When | 2018-2021 | Supporting organisations | Natural England, National Farmers Union, Country Land and Business Association, Environment Agency, Kent County Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Unfortunately Covid restrictions required the cancellation of most public events for landowners and community groups in 2020. Immediately following Storm Ciara in February 2020 with South East Water we did organise a meeting for flood affected residents of Five Oak Green and Capel villages. This was attended by Greg Clark MP and helped promote a better understanding of the causes of such flood events, and potential solutions such as NFM. Follow up meetings hosted by Five Oak Green Parish Council have continued via Zoom. We continue to successfully recruit new landowners to the programme through direct approaches and site meetings.

SERT has promoted wider public understanding of NFM through articles on its website, webinars and social media: southeastriverstrust.org/category/natural-flood-management/

The final report of the EU FRAMES project is available on its website at northsearegion.eu/frames/. This includes sections on SERT's NFM pilot as well as contributions from KCC and other partners on community resilience and the innovative 'Multi-level' approach to flooding across the North Sea region.

In 2021 we plan to create publically viewable NFM structures at Bedgebury Pinetum, and recommence events as conditions allow.

Action 33. Develop and share NFM case studies

Identify and develop natural flood management case studies from across the country. Build a database of more local demonstration projects and sites suitable for potential walkovers / visits.

Use these to build landowner support for the techniques to slow the flow of flood water and other natural flood management techniques, through targeted discussions with landowners in priority sub-catchments.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | South East Rivers Trust |
| When | 2018-2021 | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Kent County Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

We are continuing to gather examples of emerging NFM best practice from around the country and share them with our partners.

We now have 8 project locations in the Medway catchment which are particularly suitable for walkovers and site visits, each of which demonstrate different aspects of NFM. These have been particularly helpful in persuading new landowners to come on board. The sites at Sissinghurst Castle (National Trust) and Bedgebury Forest (Forestry Commission) have been designated as demonstration sites as these are easily accessible to the public. Display panels are planned for Bedgebury, and are already in place at Sissinghurst.

A monitoring programme is in place to help develop a greater understanding of the effectiveness of NFM in mitigating flood risk. The NFM structures created are being logged on a national database. In spring 2021 case studies and a final report will be produced and published on the SERT website.



Above: Kingsnoad pond (flood storage area) in normal conditions



Above: Kingsnoad pond during flood conditions

Community resilience



Actions in this theme consider a broad range of activities to improve community resilience, which not only aims to reduce the impact of flooding on communities, but also helps them to continue to function during a flood. This might be by ensuring that the power supply is uninterrupted or by managing traffic to prevent properties flooding from road wash.

The Medway Flood Partnership brings together a wide variety of organisations to work on raising awareness of flood risk, building individual preparedness, emergency planning activities to ensure local communities are ready to respond, and identifying community measures to reduce the impact of flooding.

Action 34. Raising awareness of the Medway Flood Action Plan and developing it into the future

Run community drop in sessions and workshops to raise awareness of the Medway Flood Action Plan and develop it further to build flood resilience across the catchment and identify next steps for the action plan.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency and Kent County Council |
| When | 2018/19 | Supporting organisations | Medway Flood Partnership |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

As reported in Year 2, the Environment Agency consulted on an updated National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy for England in 2019. The new National FCERM Strategy for England was laid before Parliament in July 2020 and has now been formally adopted and published. All documents associated with the Strategy can be found on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-strategy-for-england--2>

The Strategy sets out a vision of “a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100”. In particular, it describes how we as a nation can move from the concept of protection to resilience and how we embed that across our society. The Medway Flood Partnership is already working to some extent on a number of the themes and objectives discussed in the Strategy and as such will be well-placed to coordinate the delivery of the ambitions it describes.

To turn the measures within the Strategy into practical action, the Environment Agency plans to work with partners to create an action plan which will capture national actions that will start to deliver the measures over the next 5 years. This national action plan is being developed so that it is web based and accessible to national organisations, the public and local partners to inspire practical delivery locally. This will enable both the Environment Agency and our partners to keep actions up to date and ‘live’, so we can all track our progress.

The action plan is expected to be published by April 2021 and the Medway Flood Partnership will use it to consider how we can support its delivery through the Medway Flood Action Plan.

Action 35. Raising awareness of flood risk to residents

Support local communities to help build residents' awareness of their individual flood risk and what they can do to prepare and respond

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Kent Association of Local Councils |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Environment Agency, Kent Resilience Team, Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Despite Covid-19 limiting face-to-face engagement, a lot of work has still gone on this year to build awareness of flood risk amongst communities within the Medway catchment. 2 virtual meetings have taken place with the Tonbridge Flood Wardens group, including a presentation about the progress of the Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme.

Work has been ongoing to empower Flood Wardens and communities across the catchment to use the materials available on the Kent Resilience Forum web pages to run local flood awareness campaigns.

The Environment Agency's National Flood Action Campaign ran again this year in the week of 9 November and included social media advertising targeting Maidstone, Tonbridge and East Peckham.

Maidstone Borough Council included an article in their November magazine to encourage sign up to flood warnings and highlight new online Flood Warden training which has been developed this year.

More broadly, at a national level, the Environment Agency is working to develop new school resources for local Environment Agency engagement staff and teachers to use to increase awareness of flooding and how to prepare. We hope to roll this out once this become available.



Image from the Environment Agency's forthcoming video demonstrating how to complete a flood plan

Action 36. Extended Floodline Service

Raise awareness of the Extended Floodline Service and work with local councils to encourage them to register for this free service.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent Resilience Team |

Action completed in Year 1

Maidstone Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Sevenoaks District Council have now all signed up to the Extended Floodline Service.

Through this service, Environment Agency Floodline call handlers will be able to provide up-to-date and locally relevant flooding information direct to residents 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on behalf of the Council.

Action 37. Build awareness of how structures work to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses
 Working with communities and partners, build community understanding about how flood risk management assets are operated to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses without increasing risk to others.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Kent Association of Local Councils, Joint Parish Flood Group, Kent Resilience Team, Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

The Environment Agency has continued to raise awareness of how our assets and structures work to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses across the Medway catchment. The Leigh FSA was part of Queen Mary University’s ‘virtual field trip’ to Tonbridge, and we also delivered a presentation about the Leigh FSA expansion works to the Tonbridge Flood Wardens at their virtual meeting in October.

The Leigh FSA animation continues to be a very useful tool to help people understand how the online flood storage area works to reduce flood risk to Tonbridge. We continued to promote the animation during the flooding experienced between December 2019 and March 2020. Since it went up on YouTube in December 2019 it has received over 6,000 views.

The animation can be viewed on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FVsi0WNa50> or by searching Leigh Flood Storage Area.

Action 38. Promoting flood awareness
 Continue to promote flood awareness and preparedness and encourage Parish Councils and community groups to complete and test their own flood plans.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Kent Resilience Team and Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent Association of Local Councils |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Work on this action has continued this year and the Environment Agency met virtually with the Tonbridge Flood Wardens in November to do a table top test of their Community Flood Plan, support them with updating it and integrating their newly trained wardens.

Over this year, the Environment Agency has refreshed the gap analysis of community risk and preparedness. This describes the number of properties at risk across the partnership area, the number of properties signed up to receive Flood Warnings in the area, the number of Flood Wardens trained and where community flood plans are in place. This information was presented to a wide audience of partners at the Kent Resilience Forum’s Winter Preparedness Briefing in October. The analysis showed that currently there are 155 communities at risk of flooding across the county. There are 360 trained Flood Wardens across Kent, but over 1,000 are needed and the majority of communities don’t have Flood Wardens or flood plans in place.

The gap analysis has been shared with district and borough councils to encourage communities to recognise the risk and create community flood plans. This gap analysis will also be sent to parish councils with a list of the Flood Wardens that the Environment Agency have registered for them, including new wardens that have been recently trained.

Action 39. Local flood forums

Support communities to establish local flood forums in Headcorn, Ightham and Hildenborough and develop local resilience plans

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Headcorn, Ightham, Hildenborough. Further communities may be added as the project progresses | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017-2019 | Supporting organisations | National Flood Forum, Environment Agency |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Through the National Flood Forum (NFF), Kent County Council is continuing to support Flood Action Groups in Ightham, Headcorn, Hildenborough, East Peckham, Tunbridge Wells and Collier Street. Support has also been offered to the flood committee run by the Parish Council in Five Oak Green. The NFF has supported groups during the pandemic through virtual meetings.

These groups help to raise questions and concerns in the communities to the appropriate risk management authorities and improve communication between these authorities and flood-vulnerable communities.

The groups are discussing forming a countywide group of flood action groups, to offer mutual support and information sharing.

Action 40. Operational plan for Yalding and Collier Street

Work with partners to develop a jointly owned flood incident plan, to include road closures, to support communities during flood events in Yalding and Collier Street.

If this pilot is successful, develop similar plans for other key communities in the catchment

| | | | |
|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Yalding and Collier Street | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | 2017 onwards | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Kent Resilience Team, Maidstone Borough Council, Yalding and Collier Street Parish Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

As noted in the Year 2 report, the draft plan was successfully used in the December 2019 flooding, and again during the flood events in February and March 2020. A multi-agency debrief of the response was carried out in January 2020 and the learning has been used to refine the plan for future use. A key action identified in the debrief was to widen the membership of the plan to include Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, and Little Venice Country Park and Marina, to better join up our emergency response in the area.

Action 41. Flood training

Run training for Parish Councillors and Clerks in at risk communities to build understanding of all aspects of flooding.

| | | | |
|-------|-------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | County wide | Owner | Kent Association of Local Councils |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency, Kent Resilience Team |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

In 2019 the Environment Agency ran a pilot with Folkestone and Hythe to train council staff as Flood Wardens and help build understanding of the role of Flood Wardens to support the Council's planning for the wider response. This was very successful with 45 staff trained. As a result, Sevenoaks District Council subsequently asked for training for their staff and over 30 staff attended.

The Environment Agency presented a paper on the pilot to the local emergency planning group to raise awareness of the approach. There was positive interest so another session was held on 8 December 2020 to train a further 30 staff from across 6 different borough and district councils.

Action 42. Flood Wardens

Recruit, train and maintain engagement with new and existing volunteer flood wardens.

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Ongoing - Tonbridge, Hildenborough, Edenbridge, Yalding, Little Venice Country Park and Marina, Paddock Wood, East Peckham, East Farleigh, Collier Street. New communities on demand | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing, as required | Supporting organisations | Kent Resilience Team, Tonbridge and Malling BC, Tunbridge Wells BC, Sevenoaks DC, Kent Association of Local Councils, Joint Parish Flood Group, Maidstone BC |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

With Covid-19 and physical restrictions in place this year, much of the community engagement work has gone online and the Environment Agency and Kent Resilience Forum have re-designed the previously face-to-face Flood Warden training into an e-training package which has been delivered with tremendous success.

Virtual Flood Warden training sessions were run on 13 October and 24 November to a total of 152 attendees. Online polls run through the session helped to check the audience's understanding and ensure the training was effective and at the right pace for everyone. 4 speakers joined the event covering:

- the role of a Flood Warden before, during and after a flood
- flood and weather warnings from the EA and Met Office
- types of flooding
- flood safety awareness including operating safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The training has received excellent feedback from attendees:

- *"A clear presentation with a great deal of ground covered in detail, with all questions answered quickly and well"*
- *"Everyone present was made to feel welcome and involved"*
- *"The role of the Volunteer Flood Warden was recognised as a vital and valued part of the response to flooding"*
- *"I look forward to playing my part as a Volunteer Flood Warden"*

We are using all the feedback to continue to develop the programme.

Existing Flood Wardens also received a refresher session which included Covid-19 guidance. The session enabled Wardens to share how they have helped their communities prepare since receiving their training. Interestingly, feedback showed that communities with Flood Wardens in place often found they were able to enact their emergency plan for the Covid-19 response more quickly. This was because they already had networks and channels in place.

In some areas, the Covid-19 response has actually increased the number of Flood Wardens. This is because people who have assisted in the response want to continue supporting their communities. You can find out more about becoming a Flood Warden here: www.kentprepared.org.uk/flood-warden



Action 43. Emergency flood plans for rural businesses

Develop an emergency flood plan template for rural businesses to ensure they know what action to take in the event of a flood.

Use existing mechanisms to work with businesses and landowners to promote flood awareness and preparedness and encourage them to complete their own the plans.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | National Farmers Union |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency, Kent Resilience Team, Country Land and Business Association |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Action 44. Kent Prepared

Use Kent Prepared website to raise awareness of flood risk to the business community

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Kent Resilience Team |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Environment Agency, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Maidstone Borough Council |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

The impact of Covid-19 along with planning for EU Exit has delayed the progress of the redevelopment of the Kent Prepared website though we hope to push this forward again over the coming year.

The Kent Prepared website continues to house flood awareness advice, resources and information for businesses, to aid with preparedness and business continuity in the event of flooding: <https://www.kentprepared.org.uk/>

Actions 45: Traffic management measures to reduce flood risk

Investigate and install traffic management measures as part of the Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to homes from road wash.

| | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Yalding, Collier Street and Hunton | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017-2022 | Supporting organisations | Yalding, Collier Street and Hunton Parish Councils, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Resilience Team, other councils as necessary |

Year 3 progress update: action complete

Kent County Council Highways have worked closely with the Parish Councils of Yalding, Collier Street and Hunton to plan temporary traffic management measures which can be deployed when needed to reduce the risk of flooding from road wash. The kit was delivered in Year 1 and the protocol for use was finalised in Year 2.

The measures were put into action during the flood events of December 2019 and February/March 2020 as part of the Medway Confluence Operational Framework (see Action 40). The measures had some limited success and learning was identified during the multi-agency debrief after the December flood event.

Actions 46: Traffic management measures to reduce flood risk

Use learning from Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme to consider other areas in the catchment where traffic management may help to increase resilience to flooding. Work with local businesses to raise their awareness of how they can help to reduce flood risk.

| | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Yalding, Collier Street and Hunton | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017-2022 | Supporting organisations | Yalding, Collier Street and Hunton Parish Councils, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Resilience Team, other councils as necessary |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Now that Action 45 is complete, KCC will work with other areas to identify where there are opportunities to manage traffic in this way. Conversations are currently ongoing with Marden Parish Council, however, Covid-19 restrictions are likely to delay this work.

Action 47. Asset resilience

Understand which Southern Water assets are key to community resilience during flood events. Work with partners to consider how to make these sites more resilient so that they can continue to support communities during flooding.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Southern Water |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Environment Agency |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Action 48. Testing community flood plans in the Middle Medway

Develop and deliver a rolling exercise programme to test community flood plans within the Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme area, including any action needed for homes with property level resilience measures.

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Yalding, Collier Street, Hunton, Marden, West Farleigh, East Farleigh, Wateringbury and Nettlestead | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Rolling programme from 2018 | Supporting organisations | Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council, Kent Resilience Team, Joint Parish Flood Group |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Property Flood Resilience measures have now been installed to 228 properties in Phase 1b. A few of these properties were affected by flooding in December 2019. An investigation found that some measures needed minor remedial works, some brickwork needed sealing, and some measures had been deployed incorrectly by the residents. Our contractor revisited these properties to complete corrective works and we received positive reports that they performed well during the flood event in March 2020.

Over 2020, our contractor has visited all participating residents to explain and demonstrate the measures so that they are able to deploy their measures themselves when required. Instruction on storage and maintenance has also been provided.

An exercise also took place over several days during February 2020 during which residents had the opportunity to practise the installation of their measures under the supervision of the contractor and for the measures to be tested.

Correct deployment of the measures is essential so the Environment Agency will continue to work with the parish councils to incorporate a PFR exercise into tests of community flood plans. This will give residents the opportunity to check they are able to deploy them and check their measures are in good working condition.

Action 49. Testing community flood plans

Develop and deliver a rolling exercise programme to test community flood plans.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent Resilience Team, relevant Borough and District Councils |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Communities can download scenarios to test their community plans from the Kent Prepared website: <https://www.kentprepared.org.uk/>. The Environment Agency are still offering to support communities to hold exercises virtually. This has been advertised at the Kent Resilience Forum's Winter Preparedness briefing in October, at the training sessions for new Flood Wardens and at the refresher session for existing Flood Wardens.

Action 50. Flood asset register

Compile a register of flood risk assets in Kent, including high risk culverts, watercourses and other drainage assets, structures and locations.

Share this flood risk management asset information so that local communities understand where local assets are and who is responsible for them.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Where | County of Kent | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017 | Supporting organisations | All Risk Management Authorities |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

At the end of Year 1, Kent County Council had prepared a beta version of a website which collates flood risk assets, watercourses etc, which was being tested. The website has been revised after beta-testing however, Covid-19 has delayed progress this year. The updated website will now be launched in 2021.

Action 51. Flood Risk to Communities documents

Develop and publish *Flood Risk to Communities* documents for all Kent districts and boroughs to explain all sources of flood risk in an area, who is responsible for managing different flood risks, who will do what in an emergency and what is currently planned to manage flood risk in the area

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Where | In each borough and district of Kent, including: Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks | Owner | Kent County Council |
| When | 2017 | Supporting organisations | All Risk Management Authorities |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

Kent County Council has prepared draft Flood Risk to Communities documents for all Kent districts and boroughs. These can be found on the KCC website here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/flooding-and-drainage-policies/flood-risk-to-communities>

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has delayed progress in finalising these documents this year so Kent County Council now expect to complete them in Summer 2021.

Action 52. Using national planning policy to manage flood risk

Continue to apply national planning policy and local approaches to the practical design of development and sustainable drainage systems to ensure that planning for new development reduces the risk of flooding

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Kent County Council, Environment Agency |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

In March 2019, Sevenoaks District Council's Draft Local Plan was submitted for public examination. The Planning Inspector's Examination of the Local Plan concluded that the Plan was not legally compliant in respect to duty to co-operate. Sevenoaks District Council's subsequent judicial review against the decision to reject the draft Local Plan, was unsuccessful. In December 2020 Sevenoaks District Council submitted an application to the Court of Appeal to challenge the decision of the Judge. They are awaiting the outcome of the application. Any documents or news can be found on the Council's website: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069131/emerging_local_plan

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has prepared a new borough-wide Local Plan focused on the period up to 2031. This new Local Plan has been consulted upon and now is at the examination stage. Documents and news can be found on the Council's webpage: <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/services/planning-and-development/planning/planning-local-plans>

Action 53. Managing flood risk in new developments

Continue to encourage developers to have pre-application discussions to ensure new development incorporates flood risk management best practice.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Kent County Council and Environment Agency |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

The Environment Agency has continued to provide a pre-planning application advice service this year, where developers can discuss their proposals and gain flood risk mitigation advice, before submitting a planning application to the planning authority.

The Environment Agency has talked to developers about 10 sites within the Medway Flood Action Plan area this year and encouraged them to include best practice measures in their developments. Of the 5 pre-planning applications we advised last year, 2 have submitted amended plans implementing our advice in regards to flood risk mitigation.

Kent County Council also offer pre-planning application advice where developers can discuss their drainage proposals prior to submitting an application.

Action 54. Neighbourhood plans

Encourage Town and Parish Councils who are preparing Neighbourhood Plans to consider sustainable drainage and flooding mitigation measures in their Plans where appropriate

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Where | Catchment wide | Owner | Kent Association of Local Councils |
| When | Ongoing | Supporting organisations | Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council, Environment Agency |

Year 3 progress update: action ongoing

The Kent Association of Local Councils has continued to encourage town and parish councils to consider incorporating flood policies specific to their local area into their Neighbourhood Plans. These policies could include sustainable drainage systems and flood mitigation measures as appropriate.

Through 2020, articles were published in the Kent Association of Local Councils' Parish News.

Proposed Natural Flood Management Schemes 2021-2

Medway Flood Action Plan – Maidstone Borough Council

Reducing the risk of harm from flooding & improving water resources in the River Beult catchment for people and wildlife

Background

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) highlights 'taking action to reduce the risk of harm from flooding, including greater use of natural flood solutions'. The Medway Flood Action Plan, published November 2017, identifies Natural Flood Management (NFM) as a key theme to manage or reduce the risk and impacts of flooding to benefit properties upstream of Allington Lock.

NFM is the alteration, restoration or use of landscape features to reduce flood risk to properties. There are a wide range of techniques used including small 'leaky dams', new hedgerows, river bank restoration, targeted tree planting and techniques to hold water temporarily on land to 'slow the flow', reduce and delay flood peaks and store more water away from homes. As well as helping to reduce flood risk, NFM techniques also provide wider social and environmental benefits by improving our environment and wildlife for people to enjoy.

The region is facing increasing challenges to its water resources. Population growth is increasing demand, while at the same time we are experiencing changes to weather patterns where summer droughts are becoming more common. This has serious long term consequences for domestic and agricultural supply as well as impacting on river ecology and wildlife, with knock on effects for human health and well-being.

Since 2018, the South East Rivers Trust (SERT) have been delivering a NFM project on the School (or Hogg) Stream, north of Headcorn with the aim of reducing the impacts of flooding in the village. This has been highly successful in engaging landowners to permit delivery of pilot projects on their land (see below). This work has been funded by EU Interreg FRAMES project, Environment Agency and Maidstone Borough Council.

SERT has also been working with landowners and fruit growers in the area on projects which aim to increase the water resource in aquifers and storage ponds in order to save winter rains to combat summer droughts. The proposal which follows aims to integrate these approaches in 2021-22 in order to cost-effectively combat flooding and water resource issues through innovative approaches to land management. This will provide a model which can be adopted by farmers across the Borough through the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) to be phased in over the next seven years. The benefits of this are:

- ☐ Reduced flooding impact on homes and businesses through NFM;
- ☐ A more secure, clean water supply;
- ☐ An attractive, resilient landscape that supports sustainable agriculture, and flourishing wildlife;
- ☐ Improved river ecology with benefits for wildlife and recreational fishing.

The project will consist of three strands:

1. **Headcorn - School Stream NFM**
2. **A Climate Resilient River Beult Catchment for Water & Communities**
3. **Holistic Water Management around Polyunnel**

The projects identified here are proposed as matched investments during 2021 to March 2022 within the more rural parishes of Maidstone Borough Council. The aim is to reduce flood risk and improve water resources in the Beult catchment. The effects will be monitored to inform future investment, as part of a national programme of NFM projects across England. The NFM projects proposed complement the geography of the community resilience projects in Yalding and Collier Street, providing a balanced investment in flood risk reduction and water resource across the Borough.

| 2021 – 2022 PROPOSED PROJECTS (UNDER £100K) | £000's | | |
|---|--------|-------|------------|
| | MBC | Match | Total Cost |
| Maidstone NFM & Water Resources | 50 | 180 | 230 |

Match funding for the above project is provided from:

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Green Recovery Fund 2 ⁽¹⁾ | £125,000 – applied for |
| PROWATER ⁽²⁾ | £25,000 – committed |
| Holistic Water for Horticulture ⁽³⁾ | £30,000 – committed |

- (1) DEFRA have invested £300,000 over 4 years in this pilot project to implement and monitor a number of NFM projects in the Medway catchment. SERT are currently in discussions with the EA about the prospects of further funding. We have been invited to apply to a second round of the Green Recovery Fund for 2021-22 to implement further NFM in the Medway Catchment;
- (2) PROWATER is SERT partnership project dedicated to improving water resources in the Beult catchment and funded by the EU and water companies amongst others;
- (3) Holistic Water for Horticulture receives funding from water companies and the 'Courtauld Commitment' alliance of major retailers.

The projects listed above will all take place within Maidstone Borough. The costs at this stage are outline, however if necessary, the value of MBC's investment can be fixed.

| 1. Headcorn - School Stream NFM |
|---|
| Background |
| <p>The School Stream starts as a small spring and flows from the Greensand ridge through the northern part of the village of Headcorn to join the River Beult SSSI. The stream drains a catchment which is dominated by heavy clays, which results in very sudden and dramatic rises in water level during heavy rainfall events, flooding parts of Headcorn including domestic properties and the primary school.</p> <p>The existing project has been very successful in engaging six landowners in the key areas of the catchment. We have delivered projects on four of these holdings to date. SERT have created an off-line storage pond at Kingsnoad storing 600m³ at peak flows and delivered approx. 60 large Leaky Woody Structures (LWS) (last few still in progress until April '21). The scheme is being monitored, and although it is too early to claim that it is successful in delivering its aims, initial results look promising and the interventions are operating as designed.</p> <p>Headcorn Parish Council are already engaged in the project in a local flood partnership with the South East Rivers Trust, Kent County Council, Natural England, Southern Water, The National Flood Forum and others.</p> |
| Project Objectives |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue mapping and scoping of the catchment (inc. use of 'SCALGO' software) to identify locations where further NFM will have the greatest impact; 2. Engage with the existing six landowners in the catchment to deliver further NFM interventions on their land, in order to fully exploit the available opportunities to minimise flood risk; 3. Develop new relationships with neighbouring landowners in order to expand the scope of the project 4. Work with the other strands of this project (see below) in order to develop integrated solutions to both flooding and water resource shortages; 5. Continue to deliver NFM interventions (such as LWS and water retention features) to provide sufficient storage and slow the flow options to make a difference to properties at risk of flooding in Headcorn, as well as contributing to reducing flood risk downstream to Yalding; 6. Report back to Defra and Maidstone Borough Council on the success of NFM through monitoring data; 7. Engage local communities in the work through talks, site visits and practical volunteer activities, as the lifting of Covid restrictions allows. |

| 2. A Climate Resilient River Beult Catchment for Water & Communities |
|---|
| Background |
| <p>Climate Change will lead to wetter winters and hotter, drier summers, with extreme weather events becoming more likely, resulting in increased flooding as well as drought risks. Water is already scarce in the region with demand for water forecast to exceed supply by 2025. As a strategic water resource catchment for drinking water supply, improving the resilience of the Medway to climate change is crucial to provide a resilient water supply.</p> |

SERT has been delivering PROWATER, an EU Funded innovative partnership project with Kent County Council and South East Water, to develop an approach to increasing the resilience of catchments through the use of nature-based solutions that support multiple benefits, such as reduced flood risk, improved water quality, better habitats for wildlife and carbon storage. Using ‘Ecosystem Based Adaptation Measures’ like temporary water retention features, improving soil health (e.g. cover crops to increase root diversity and soil organic matter in a field to reduce surface runoff by increasing infiltration rates; see [HERE](#)) and headwater wetland restoration (to increase roughness and temporarily store more water in traditional headwater areas).

It is also testing the use of quantification tools and frameworks to build ‘Payment for Ecosystem Services’ (PES) schemes and a long-term vision for the implementation of Ecosystem Based Adaptation Measures, that would provide a future framework for delivery, bringing together public and private funders. This also links to Green Recovery, ELMS and the 25 YEP. This project is part funded through the European Regional Development Fund and MBC would provide match funding contribution.

Project Objectives

1. Identify priority areas for delivery of multiple benefits with a focus on water resources and flooding, linking to the NFM project;
2. Co-creation of a collaborative catchment-scale plan to deliver nature-based solutions, built on the evidence base developed through PROWATER, FRAMES and other projects;
3. Identifying potential ‘buyers’, ‘brokers’, and ‘sellers’ in a future PES scheme;
4. Quantification of the impact of delivery plans across the area on water resources, providing evidence for future investment and engagement;
5. Build a shared portfolio of opportunities through land owner engagement and working with the catchment partnership for delivery. The portfolio will be accessible to all partners in the catchment, promoting a “joined up” working approach;
6. Engage with landowners to provide resources and advice on the impact of their practices on runoff and retention of water, and the impacts this has downstream (flooding, water quality and water resources), through workshops and 1:1 visits;
7. Deliver community events (virtual or face to face) to increase levels of knowledge and support of the use of natural processes and best practice farming in addressing flood risk, water quality and water shortage issues related to climate change and land use.

3. Holistic Water Management around Poly-tunnels

Background

The cultivation of soft fruit through poly-tunnel based horticulture is a highly profitable and growing activity in the Maidstone area that brings significant socio-economic benefits; employment for the local population in sectors along the supply chain and benefits to local businesses.

Poly-tunnel based horticulture is now an established part of the local physical and social landscape and will probably expand further since climate change effects will drive change in the types of crops that can be grown in the area. Despite these

benefits, runoff from poly-tunnel structures can contribute to localised flooding and soil erosion. Runoff from 'fertigation' (irrigation water + added nutrients to optimise crop growth) can infiltrate soils and lead to the pollution of both surface and groundwater waterbodies.

SERT have been working with growers in the South East as part of the Holistic Water for Horticulture (HWH; see [HERE](#)) project, to deliver a collaborative approach to holistic water management around Maidstone's poly-tunnels. The project is delivered through positive engagement and collaboration with growers to manage runoff to:

1. Capture and store water on site in farm reservoirs for soft fruit crop precision irrigation and top fruit growers (this will reduce demand on mains supply and help to reduce the volume of runoff);
2. Reduce flood risk through strategically designed and installed NFM measures at poly-tunnel sites to control the return of excess runoff to the environment.

Project Objectives

1. Mapping - identify clusters of poly-tunnels potentially at risk in the Medway area (e.g. flooding, contributing to runoff or soil erosion);
2. Mapping - identify potential areas for soft fruit sector growth (planning permission applications);
3. Relations Development - establish and maintain communications with growers (tenants/landowners), producer organisations and landowners in the Maidstone area on the benefits of a holistic water management approach;
4. Relations Development - visit growers to discuss and outline suitable techniques for water capture, NFM and water quality on their site. Discuss and outline potential multiple benefits from the measures (recreation – public footpaths and bridleways, biodiversity, habitat creation, creating a more positive perception of poly-tunnel horticulture);
5. Agree design of project with growers / landowners with a view to deliver flood risk and water management measures;
6. Manage hand-over to deliver the detailed design / construction phases.

Agenda Item 16

Policy and Resources Committee

24 March 2021

Local Plan Review Budget

| | |
|---|--|
| Final Decision-Maker | Policy and Resources Committee |
| Lead Head of Service/Lead Director | Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement Rob Jarman, Head of Planning |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

As reported to the last meeting of the Committee on 10 February 2021, it has been identified that there may be insufficient resources in the budget to fund work on the Local Plan Review and related planning policy work. This report sets out the programme for the Local Plan Review and related projects and shows how these will be delivered within the Council's agreed budget and policy framework.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That it notes:

1. The programme for the Local Plan Review and related projects.
2. Arrangements for funding this work in line with the Council's agreed budget and policy framework.
3. The process for monitoring actual expenditure and reporting this back to Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee and this Committee.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Policy and Resources Committee | 24 March 2021 |

Local Plan Review Budget

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | The Local Plan is a key part of the framework for delivering the corporate priorities. The budget for the Local Plan Review sets out in financial terms how it will be delivered, within the context of the overall budget, which reflects the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | Service budgets support the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that they support the Council's other strategic priorities. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Risk Management | This has been addressed in section 5 of the report. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Financial | Set out in body of report. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Staffing | Service budgets identify the level of resources available for staffing over the medium term. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Legal | There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations as the report is for noting and not for decision. The Council is under a duty to ensure that the review costs of the Local Plan Review is funded within agreed budgets and policy framework and in accordance with the provisions set out in the Council's Constitution. Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) the Section 151 Officer has statutory responsibilities in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority. The financial implications set out in the main body of the report is a relevant consideration. This report helps to fulfil these responsibilities. | [Legal Services] |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Privacy and Data Protection | Privacy and Data Protection is considered as part of the development of new budget proposals. There are no specific implications arising from this report. | Policy and Information Team |
| Equalities | No implications. | Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer |
| Public Health | No implications. | [Public Health Officer] |
| Crime and Disorder | No implications. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Procurement | The budget sets out the resources available for individual activities and therefore sets the financial framework for decisions about procurement of specific services. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Local Plan Review

- 2.1 Maidstone Borough Council has a current, adopted Local Plan which covers the period 2011-2031. When examining the Plan, the government's independent Inspector stated that an early review would be required. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework has subsequently been revised and introduced amended requirements which the Local Plan review will need to address.
- 2.2 The Local Plan plays a central part in delivery of the Council's strategic priorities. It is therefore essential that appropriate budgetary provision exists to ensure that the review is carried out to a high standard.

Funding Arrangements

- 2.3 The Council has set aside an annual budget of £200,000 for work on the Local Plan Review, above and beyond the day-to-day running costs of the in-house Planning Policy team. As the Local Plan Review is a multi-year project, it has been agreed that unused budgets may be carried forward from one year to the next.
- 2.4 At the outset of the Local Plan Review process, a detailed projection was prepared by planning officers and reported to Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on 25th June 2019. This indicated that the annual allocation would be more than sufficient to fund the necessary work over the lifetime of the review. Costs were projected to be £794,500 against an available budget of £1 million (ie £200,000 per annum for the five years 2018/19 to 2022/23).
- 2.5 At the start of the financial year 2020/21, there was £308,280 of unused budget from previous years' allocations. In line with the principle of carrying forward unused budgets from one year to the next, this was available to be used in 2020/21.
- 2.6 During 2020/21, a number of issues emerged that have created pressure on the budget for the Local Plan Review:
 - further work on sustainability appraisals and transport modelling
 - accelerated timetable for LPR completion
 - extension of contracts for specialist contractors
 - volume of responses to December 2020 consultation.
- 2.7 These were recognised at a late stage in the course of the normal annual budget setting cycle so were not reflected in budget growth proposals in the usual way. However, when budget proposals came to be considered by Service Committees, the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee concluded at its meeting on 12th January 2021 that further resources should be directed to the formation and strengthening of the Council's planning policies and expressed concern expressed that the Local Plan Review budget was insufficient. The matter was accordingly referred to Policy and Resources Committee.

2.8 Policy and Resources Committee considered the recommendations from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on 10th February 2021. The officer report to Policy and Resources Committee noted that the recommendations of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee arose from substantive issues about the pressure on planning budgets. It was agreed by the Committee that these issues would be dealt with through the budget setting and monitoring process, as follows:

- Current year (2020/21) pressures on the planning service budget would be addressed as described in the Quarter 3 budget monitoring report, as presented to Policy and Resources Committee on 10th February.
- So far as the overall funding of the local plan review is concerned, officers would review the budget for the current local plan review, through to its prospective adoption in 2023, and would bring forward growth proposals for future years and/or proposals for budget transfers in 2021/22 in future reports to Policy and Resources and Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committees. These would be dealt with through the budget virement process within the 2021/22 financial year.

Review of funding requirements

2.9 A thorough review of the work needed to bring the Local Plan Review process to completion has now been carried out by the Head of Planning and the Interim Local Plan Review Director in conjunction with finance staff. A summary of the projected costs is included in Appendix A. In drawing up these projections, every effort has been made to anticipate all the likely future requirements. Where work needs to be outsourced, a prudent estimate of the likely cost has been made, balancing the cost of obtaining advice in the market and the need for the Council to obtain value for money.

2.10 Recognising that an exercise such as this cannot give a precise projection of detailed expenditure, a contingency of £30,000 has been included. The amount of the contingency may increase if some lines in the programme under-spend; conversely it may be necessary to draw on the contingency if there are areas of over-spend, or new requirements emerge.

2.11 Note that work on the Town Centre Plan has not been included in the costs to be funded from the Local Plan Review budget, as set out in Appendix A. This is because the Head of Planning has confirmed that this work may be funded from Section 106 contributions. The Town Centre Plan is intended to be cross-cutting, including strategies that go beyond the minimum requirements of the Local Plan Review. This Committee will be consulted on its scope in due course.

2.12 Overall, it can be seen that an additional £200,000 will be required in 2021/22 and an additional £135,000 in 2022/23, above and beyond existing budgets. It is proposed that these additional requirements be dealt with as follows.

2021/22 – The Council has an annual corporate contingency budget of £300,000. The £200,000 will be funded from this budget. This gives less capacity for addressing other unexpected overspends, but the contingency can be replenished during the course of 2021/22 with any windfall gains.

2022/23 – The additional spend of £135,000 will be included as a proposed growth item as part of the Council’s consideration of its budget for 2022/23. This consideration starts in July 2021 with a report to Policy and Resources Committee setting out the scope for the annual update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget planning process.

Note that the existing Local Plan budget allocation for 2022/23 is £300,000, rather than £200,000. This is because £100,000 of budget allocations for future years were brought forward to 2022/23 in the Strategic Revenue Projection agreed by Policy and Resources Committee on 10th February. If possible, in year funding of £100,000 will be identified as part of the 2022/23 budget process in order to avoid having to bring forward future allocations in this way.

- 2.13 The Council will also need to consider the ongoing level of funding for local plan review work. However, by doing this as part of the regular annual process, the priority for planning work can be weighed fairly by members against other budget priorities, rather than a unilateral decision being made which could inadvertently lead to funding being reduced in an unplanned way elsewhere in the Council’s budget.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option 1:** To note the proposed course of action.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** The Committee could propose an alternative course of action.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option. It provides a good level of assurance that there is sufficient funding to deliver the Local Plan Review and related projects, and is consistent with the Council’s agreed budget policy and framework.

5. RISKS

- 5.1 The projections set out in this report remain subject to risk and uncertainty. This is mitigated by the inclusion of a contingency figure within the overall projections and will be managed during the remainder of the Local Plan Review project by regular monitoring of expenditure and any updates to the projections.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 This report responds to previous Committee feedback at Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 12th January 2021 and Policy and Resources Committee on 10th February 2021.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 In line with the commitment made to Policy and Resources Committee on 10th February 2021, the findings described in this report will be reported to Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee at its next meeting.
- 7.2 Actual spend against the projections set out in Appendix A will be reported quarterly to Policy and Resources Committee and the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee. If at any stage it appears that overall expenditure will exceed the projected levels, officers will put forward proposals for dealing with the overspend.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following document is to be published with this report and forms part of the report:

- Appendix A: Local Plan Review and related projects – projected expenditure.
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

APPENDIX A

LOCAL PLAN REVIEW AND RELATED PROJECTS PROJECTED EXPENDITURE 2021/22 AND 2022/23

The table below sets out projected one-off expenditure on the Local Plan Review and related projects. It does not include in-house staffing and establishment costs.

| | 2021/22 £000 | 2022/23 £000 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Core spending | | |
| Specialist advice: | 170 | 70 |
| <i>Ecological Advice Service</i> | | |
| <i>Economic development needs assessment</i> | | |
| <i>Gypsies and Travellers DPD</i> | | |
| <i>Habitat Regulations Assessment</i> | | |
| <i>Invicta Barracks</i> | | |
| <i>Leeds Langleigh Relief Road - Business Case</i> | | |
| <i>Settlement Hierarchy Assessment</i> | | |
| <i>Sustainability Appraisal</i> | | |
| <i>Traffic & Highways Modelling</i> | | |
| <i>Viability Assessment</i> | | |
| <i>Water Cycle Study</i> | | |
| <i>Other</i> | | |
| Regulation 19 submission | 10 | |
| LPR preparation, examination, adoption and legal costs | 50 | 310 |
| Total Core Spending | 230 | 380 |
| New requirements: | 30 | |
| <i>Green & Blue Infrastructure</i> | | |
| <i>Phosphates & Nitrates Study</i> | | |
| Discretionary: | 35 | |
| <i>Garden Settlements Independent Test</i> | | |
| <i>Additional SPDs</i> | | |
| Additional staffing requirements | 75 | 25 |
| Contingency | 30 | 30 |
| Budget allocation | -200 | -300 |
| BALANCE TO BE FUNDED | 200 | 135 |

Funded separately: Town Centre Plan

Agenda Item 17

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

24 MARCH 2021

COUNCIL-LED GARDEN COMMUNITY UPDATE

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Final Decision-Maker | Policy & Resources Committee |
| Lead Head of Service | William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place |
| Classification | <p>Public report with private appendix.</p> <p>The information contained within Appendix 2 is considered exempt under the following paragraph of part I of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:-</p> <p>3 = Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)</p> <p>Public Interest Test</p> <p>Whilst there is public interest in the disclosure of this information as it relates to a proposed development the interest in not jeopardising the financial position of the Council through the disclosure of commercially sensitive information outweighs the interest in favour of disclosure.</p> |
| Wards affected | All, but in particular Harrietsham & Lenham and Headcorn Wards. |

Executive Summary

The proposal was last considered by this Committee on 10th February 2020. The purpose of this report is to gain approval to enter into a Collaboration Agreement (CA) with Homes England (HE). 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 decision.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee agree to enter into the Collaboration Agreement (CA) as shown in Exempt Appendix 2 to the report and the Director of Regeneration and Place be granted delegated authority to make minor amendments to the CA, prior to its signing, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.

| Timetable | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Meeting</i> | <i>Date</i> |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 24 March 2021 |

COUNCIL-LED GARDEN COMMUNITY UPDATE

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p> | <p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling • Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve all the corporate priorities.</p> | <p>Director of Regeneration & Place</p> |
| <p>Cross Cutting Objectives</p> | <p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <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. 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> | <p>Director of Regeneration & Place</p> |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Risk Management | See section 5. | Director of Regeneration & Place |
| Financial | 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. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Staffing | We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. | Director of Regeneration & Place |
| Legal | <p>The Council has a general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011; this is the power to do anything an individual can do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. This power can be used for the Council to enter into the proposed collaboration agreement with Homes England.</p> <p>The Council also has the power under section 111 of the LGA 1972 to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.</p> <p>Acting on the recommendation is within the Council's powers as set out in the above statutory provisions.</p> <p>HE should be required to warrant to the Council that use of the DPP (or any alternative panel or framework) will be compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and that HE will indemnify the Council against any claims or losses caused by HE's use of the DPP (or any alternative panel or framework) which is not compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.</p> | Principal Solicitor – Commercial/Pinsent Mason |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Privacy and Data Protection | No impact identified | Policy and Information Team |
| Equalities | 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 |
| Public Health | We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals more broadly. However, the period of uncertainty whilst the opportunity is being explored could negatively affect local residents. | Public Health Officer |
| Crime and Disorder | The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder. | Head of Service or Manager |
| Procurement | N/A. | Head of Service & Section 151 Officer |
| Biodiversity | The revised masterplan brief seeks a biodiversity net gain within the proposed redline. | 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 principally seeks approval to enter a CA (summarised in Appendix 1 and attached as Exempt Appendix 2) with HE, but will also provide a brief update on two further matters, so will cover the progress made since the last report to this Committee, in respect of the following areas:

- Homes England (HE) partnership
- Promotion of Heathlands through the Local Plan Review (LPR)
- Principal Landowners

2.3 **Homes England (HE) Partnership.** On 16th December 2020, this Committee considered three possible deal structures as to how the Council

could collaborate with HE with the goal of delivering the Heathlands project.

2.4 To recap, the December 2020 report to this Committee stated that the Council should enter into a CA with HE which will cover the period from now through to the submission of a Planning Application for the scheme in approximately five years-time (assuming that the scheme is allocated within the Local Plan), and beyond into the delivery phase too, and cover the following areas:

- *Establish commitment from both the Council and HE to co fund, on a 50:50 basis the ongoing promotion, Land Option and Planning Application costs up to an anticipated figure of circa £3m. This Committee has previously decided to meet these costs in their entirety, and they feature in the Council's capital programme. If costs look likely to exceed this figure both parties will seek authority for this additional expenditure.*
- *The selection and appointment of any consultancy advice required after the CA is in place. All reports and surveys commissioned after the Collaboration Agreement has been entered into will be for the joint benefit of the Council and HE.*
- *Governance arrangements around shared decision making.*
- *The resources in respect of staff time and grade that each organisation will contribute. There should be some political representation too, possibly the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee.*
- *Responsibilities in relation to exercising the Option Agreements. It is envisaged at this stage that HE will control the Option and will potentially fully fund the acquisition.*
- *The responsibilities of both the Council and HE during the delivery phase of the development. This will likely include how preferred developers are selected, how the estate is managed (roads, parks etc) and a timetable for the delivery of the enabling infrastructure works. HE will lead on all these points but seek input from the Council to help shape the development.*

2.5 Furthermore, the December report then set out three different options as to how the deal could be structured to recover its investment, as follows:

- **Option 1 - Master-developer 50:50 Joint Venture with Homes England.** *This would mean that both parties remain equal and active partners across the likely 25-year delivery period of the project, funding the acquisition of the land and the key infrastructure elements, and recovering this investment through the onward sale of development land parcels to the housebuilder / developer sector. The parties would share risk and reward equally.*

- **Option 2 – MBC cease further investment prior to delivery phase.** In this scenario, the Council would simply co-fund the circa £3m required to secure Planning Consent and secure the Land Options but limit our financial exposure to this, and recover our investment through one of two variants depending on our risk appetite:
 - **Option 2A. Seek a "Priority Return"** whereby the Council has first call on any receipts from serviced land parcel sales that HE secures up to the sum invested by the Council (i.e., circa £1.5m). This would be the quickest and most secure route to the Council recovering its investment, but it would not be rewarded with any profit for its endeavours.

- **Option 2B. Seek a "Share of Planning Uplift"** over the duration of the 25-year delivery phase. HE will be aiming to recover its own investment in the land and infrastructure plus a profit by capturing the Planning Uplift that would be achieved between exercising the land options and disposing of serviced land parcels (with the benefit of Outline Planning permission) to developers. Rather than take a Priority Return (as per Option 2A) HE would offer the Council a share in the Planning uplift of each development land parcel over the duration of the delivery period, say 40 parcels of 100 homes. Whilst there can be no guarantee about the level of financial returns, the Council would generate returns over the entire duration of the project and could recover its initial investment of circa £1.5m within the first six years of the delivery phase.

This option would offer the potential of an income stream for the Council for future re-investment. It is proposed that if this option is the Council's preferred route then this would enable the council to invest in Heathlands in a way consistent with our Strategic Objectives including delivery of affordable housing and custodianship to ensure maintenance of a good quality public realm.

2.6 **The Committee decided to proceed with Option 2B (highlighted), subject to the Committee itself approving the final form of the CA (attached as Exempt Appendix 2).**

2.7 The CA attached is very nearly in its final form, and so the recommendation is that the report author be granted authority to negotiate minor amendments to it prior to signing, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee. Given this requirement, the Council's acting solicitor, Anne Bowden of Pinsent Mason, will also be in attendance to answer any questions on the CA.

- 2.8 The CA contains clauses that will give the Council “right of first refusal” to acquire some or all the circa 2,000 affordable homes that will be built on Heathlands, as well as some of the commercial property too.
- 2.9 **Promotion of Heathlands through the LPR.** The Council is working closely with HE and is on track to make the submission by the due date (being end of March 2021). The Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee will be fully briefed prior to the submission being made.
- 2.10 **Principal Landowners.** Constructive dialogue continues with the principal landowners and / or their representatives, with the discussion focussed upon the proposed terms for the Option Agreement put forward by HE. The expectation is that the Option Agreements will be entered into in Q1 of the next financial year.
- 2.11 Whilst the proposed redline is still being refined, with the development shifting northwards, it is likely that there will be a much-reduced pool of landownership parcels required to deliver Heathlands.
- 2.12 At this stage, it is therefore probable that all 18 landowners that had previously requested that their landholdings be removed from the proposal, can be obliged. Regardless, the revised masterplan will once again safeguard existing homes in the locality inclusive of the provision of green buffers around them.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee has the following options:

Option 1 – To enter into the CA in the form or substantially the form attached as Exempt Appendix 2 and grant authority to the report author to negotiate minor amendments to it, prior to signing, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee. This is the preferred option.

Option 2 – To not enter into the CA. This is not recommended as it would compromise the chances of securing an “allocation” for Heathlands in the Local Plan Review. It would also mean that the Council would need to identify an alternative partner within a tight time frame, or indeed have a much greater financial exposure itself in delivering the whole Heathlands concept.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is recommended, as it gives a clear means for the Council to achieve its strategic objectives and secure a return on its financial investment in the project.
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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 now a smaller core landowner group, is now strong.

5.3 Further risks that have since been added and remain are:

- Terms cannot be agreed with the principal landowners.
- Challenge from individuals or organisations that oppose the principle and/or the specific details of the Council's council-led garden community.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 Nothing further to report.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The next steps will be to:

- Advance the commercial negotiations with the principal landowners.
- Enter into the CA with HE subject to approval by this Committee by 31st March 2021.
- Continue to engage with the LPA to refine and evolve the Heathlands concept.
- Make the third stage submission to the LPA by 31st March 2021.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Legal Summary

Exempt Appendix 2 – Proposed CA

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL: HEATHLANDS GARDEN COMMUNITY

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT WITH HOMES ENGLAND: KEY TERMS SUMMARY

1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Maidstone Borough Council (the "**Council**") has agreed in principle to enter into a collaboration agreement (the "**Agreement**") with Homes England ("**HE**") in relation to the promotion and ultimate development and disposal of land intended to form Heathlands Garden Community (the "**Site**").
- 1.2 The parties' objectives are enshrined in the Agreement:-
- 1.2.1 comprehensive development of the entire Site for at least 4,000 homes
 - 1.2.2 holistic and sustainable development in line with Garden Community principles
 - 1.2.3 policy compliant affordable housing offer
- 1.3 The parties will initially work together to continue promoting the Site through the Local Plan Review process for allocation as a residential development site. If the Site is allocated for residential development then the parties will work together to seek planning permission (although HE will lead).
- 1.4 If planning permission is obtained for the Site, then the project will move into an "operational" or "delivery" stage (the "**Operational Stage**"). HE will take the lead from this point in, and will be responsible for delivering key site-wide infrastructure, and disposing of serviced phases or plots within the site, to developers for residential-led development, through its Developer Partner Panel (DPP).
- 1.5 The Initial Stage of the Agreement can last for up to ten years from the date of the Agreement. The Operational Stage can last for up to a further 35 years.

2. INITIAL STAGE OF AGREEMENT

- 2.1 To date, the Council has taken the lead on promoting the Site through the early stages of the Local Plan Review. A further submission is anticipated to be made in March 2021. If the Site is allocated for residential development in the review, then it will be open to the parties to make an application for planning permission for the Site.
- 2.2 As from entry into the Agreement the parties will work together through a senior level Steering Group, and also an operational level Working Group. This will create appropriate forums for decision making and day to day supervision of activities, monitoring progress of the project.
- 2.3 Within three months of entry into the Agreement, the parties will agree a "**Planning Strategy**" which will set out how they propose to obtain planning permission for the scheme (if allocated). The Planning Strategy will be agreed by the Steering Group. They will follow this Planning Strategy together to seek to obtain planning permission if the site is allocated.
- 2.4 Planning permission is likely to comprise an outline planning permission for the whole Site (ie a Masterplan), and probably a full permission for one or two early phases that are ready for delivery.
- 2.5 All costs at this early stage are shared 50/50 on the basis of expenditure incurred by each party.

3. OPERATIONAL STAGE OF AGREEMENT

- 3.1 If the Site is allocated, and planning permission is obtained, then the parties will agree:-
- 3.1.1 an Acquisition Strategy (how they will assemble the Site for delivery);
 - 3.1.2 a Development Strategy (what site-wide infrastructure will be delivered, where, and when: this includes not only roads and drainage but also "green infrastructure" such as parkland and also social infrastructure such as schools);
 - 3.1.3 a Marketing and Sales Strategy (how they will market the Site or parts of it to developers);
 - 3.1.4 an Estate Management Strategy (how the "common parts" of the Site will be managed in the long term). The Council will specifically be able to influence this Strategy and will be able to obtain input from members of local stakeholder groups to guide and oversee implementation of this Strategy.
- 3.2 Whilst Homes England will lead on the implementation of these Strategies, the Council will still have a "seat at the table" in terms of monitoring and where necessary influencing delivery.
- 3.3 HE will be responsible for leading in relation to acquisition of land within the Site. HE is in negotiations with a number of major landowners with a view to putting in place option agreements with those landowners, which will mean that a substantial proportion of the Site will be under its control.
- 3.4 All costs incurred during the Operational Stage will be allocated to a project account (a ledger account). As and when serviced plots or phases are sold to developers through HE's DPP panel, the sales receipts from those disposals will be credited to the ledger account. As and when there is any surplus in that account it will be allocated between HE and the Council in agreed proportions to reflect the financial and operational input of each party.
- 3.5 Where HE sells any land to a developer for delivery of affordable housing, the arrangements will provide for the Council to have a "right of first refusal" to acquire that affordable housing. This does not oblige the Council to acquire those units, but gives it the first right to do so at a price equal to that offered by RP's in the market.
- 3.6 Where HE retains any land to construct commercial development, the Council will have a "right of first refusal" to acquire those commercial units. This does not oblige the Council to acquire those units, but gives it the first right to do so at a price equal to that offered by purchasers in the market.
- 3.7 Whilst the Operational Stage can last for up to 35 years, if HE "sits on its hands" for 2+ years then the Council can serve notice on it, and ultimately terminate the Agreement. It is acknowledged that if the Council terminates early, then it may still have "sunk costs" and/or not have realised the full value of its time and economic investment in the Site. Therefore, HE has agreed that for the following ten years the Council would still get its share of proceeds in relation to the Site as if the Agreement were still in existence.

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

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Agenda Item 19

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Agenda Item 20

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