

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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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
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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