

Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan

Active travel and green transportation

Action 1.1 Update the Integrated Transport Strategy, and work towards a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to prioritise walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicles.

Action 1.2 Deliver policies that enable infrastructure for

- i. Low carbon transportation,
- ii. Active travel, and that
- iii. Facilitates high quality public transport connectivity in new developments and existing communities.

Action 1.3 Identify low carbon transportation, active travel, and public transport indicators that align with strategic planning and monitor implementation of sustainable transport policies.

Action 1.4 Deliver Policy that ensures sustainable travel, such as bike racks, pool cars, EV charging, active travel, is integrated into all Maidstone Borough Council construction of new buildings (offices, housing, leisure facilities) and building acquisitions.

Action 1.5 Deliver an EV Strategy for the borough that provides sufficient EV charging infrastructure to support the transition to EVs and reduces range anxiety, with consideration of changing and new emerging technologies.

Action 1.6 Facilitate a move to electric taxis by providing nine rapid charge points in total by 2025, and twelve rapid charge points by 2030.

Action 1.7 Work with the taxi trade to find solutions to licencing that will encourage gradual business led shift to EVs' and promote greener accreditation and campaigns to support taxi trade to move to EVs.

Action 1.8 Actively participate in Quality Bus Partnership and ensure that the borough's infrastructure is bus friendly.

Decarbonising and insulating homes and buildings

Action 2.1 Explore grants schemes for residents, landlords and housing associations, for retrofitting insulation, and low carbon heating systems.

Action 2.2 Enforce Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015.

Generating renewable energy

Action 3.1 Ensure Sustainability DPD as part of larger Development Plan requires on-site renewables on all types of new developments and identify indicators that align with strategic planning and monitor implementation.

Reducing waste

Action 4.1 Investigate recycling strategies in the Town centre.

Action 4.2 Ensure MBC offices and buildings have recycling facilities.

Adapting to climate change

Action 5.1 Deliver policy as part of design and sustainability DPD and future Development Plan evolution for long term climate change adaptation in new developments to flooding, heatwaves, and drought and ensure longer term climate impacts are being considered as part of planning and policy decisions. Identify indicators that align with strategic planning and monitor implementation.

Action 5.2 Identify actions to mitigate climate change in existing developments.

Action 5.3 Conduct Borough Climate Impact Assessment and (i) identify natural flood management (nature-based solutions and sustainable urban drainage), (ii) build local communities' resilience, (iii) support business continuity management, and (iv) priorities and strengthen power and water supply and other critical infrastructure ensuring more resilient communities.

Enhancing and increasing biodiversity

Action 6.1 Monitor Biodiversity Net Gain to adopted standard.

Action 6.2 Ensure sustainable urban drainage schemes (SuDS) maximise biodiversity potential.

Action 6.3 Develop Supplementary Planning Documents for Garden community and other strategic development sites that ensure are exemplar for biodiversity and deliver semi natural open space.

Action 6.4 Enhance and expand wetland coverage across the Borough to support nutrient neutrality, flood prevention, and enhance biodiversity.

Action 6.5 Implement a Nature Recovery Strategy, linking habitat restoration and creation to improve flood protection and water quality.

Action 6.6 Work with local farms and landowners to deliver landscape scale biodiversity initiatives Nature Recovery Strategy – including reconnection of habitats, floodplain restoration, reduced chemical inputs and reintroduction of lost native species.

Action 6.7 Increase borough canopy cover expanding ancient forests and reconnecting of existing woodland including urban woods, and greening town centres.

Action 6.8 Review Maidstone Borough Council non-operational land to assess potential for enhancing biodiversity including allowing community groups to take responsibility for management.

Making our estate carbon neutral

Action 7.1 Deliver Maidstone Borough Council 2030 Net Zero Commitment, by (i) Decarbonising the councils' buildings through low carbon heating, LEDs, insulation and smart controls, (ii) decarbonising the council's fleet to fully EV, (iii) investing in renewable energy generation, (iv) incorporate energy saving principles into office strategies, and (v) support staff to shift to electric/ultra-low emission vehicles, public transportation and more flexible working.

Action 7.2 Measure the Council's carbon footprint each year and report findings to relevant committees and the public.

Action 7.3 Purchase 100% renewable energy for our buildings and operations where we control the supply (market dependant with maximum 10% offset) and investigate Public Energy Partnership Power Purchase Agreement (PEPPPA).

Action 7.4 Identify temporary accommodation assets eligible for insulation and low carbon heating upgrades under funding schemes and arrange installation. Provide top up funding for any measures not fully funded to ensure all homes let by MBC as temporary accommodation are energy efficient and EPC rating improved to requirement.

Action 7.5 Improve data management on all property including leased buildings and prioritise decarbonisation actions and improve EPC ratings.

Action 7.6 Deliver 100% LED lighting in MBC carparks.

Communications and engagement strategy

Action 8.1 Support residents (including adults, women, youths and children, faith groups, minority groups, and marginalised groups), partners, and wider stakeholders (Parish councils, farmers, and landowners) to understand the changes they can make to reduce and prepare for climate change. Including:

- Supporting residents to reduce their individual carbon footprints, upskilling and green job creation, buying local, conserve water, and with sustainable lifestyles and Eatwell guidance.
- Promote schemes which help residents, landlords and housing associations reduce energy bills and decarbonise their buildings e.g. retrofitting grants and

the government domestic and non-domestic renewable heat incentive programme.

- Support and encourage residents, businesses and the third sector to install renewable energy generation or develop community energy projects, by providing information and promoting grants, shared investment, and savings schemes.
- Encourage residents to separate food and recyclables, use appropriate bins, compost at home, avoid contamination and reduce waste production through promoting the circular economy strategy.
- Support residents, schools and community groups with biodiversity improvement and protection, promoting relevant schemes, such as tree planting and after care, and encouraging them to enhance biodiversity in their gardens and grounds.

Action 8.2 Provide staff awareness information of biodiversity and climate change at induction and provide job specific sustainability training to each service area.

Action 8.3 Enable local businesses to reduce their carbon footprint by providing information on funding opportunities, carbon calculators, localised supply chains and travel plans that promote active travel and public transport, and support businesses to use the Kent Prepare website to raise awareness of how to prepare for flooding.

Sustainable decision-making processes and governance

Action 9.1 Provide briefings and training for councillors and our managers on carbon, climate change, and biodiversity to create a culture change and ensure climate change and biodiversity are integrated into decision making.

Action 9.2 Ensure service plans consider biodiversity and climate change and monitor with performance indicators, so that managers plan their services to ensure opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change are taken.

Action 9.3 Deliver Policy that ensures sustainability criteria is used for all Maidstone Borough Council construction of new buildings (offices, housing, leisure facilities) and sustainability criteria is part of decision-making process for all Maidstone Borough Council building acquisitions, to ensure buildings owned by the council are sustainable, future proofed, and align with our net zero commitment.

Action 9.4 Establish criteria for investment in climate change and biodiversity and invest to save schemes (eg. renewables, heat networks). These will consider relative impact in terms of carbon reduction and ease of delivery, such that expenditure is focused on deliverable, affordable initiatives that maximise impact on the carbon reduction targets.

Action 9.5 Deliver corporate policy and sustainable procurement approach to reduce (Scope 3) MBC carbon footprint from contracts and services and ensure a 'carbon cost' is part of procurement and decision making.