

## **REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**3 DECEMBER 2020**

### **KENT AND MEDWAY ENERGY AND LOW EMISSIONS STRATEGY – FORMAL ADOPTION**

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive

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#### Summary

The report will provide an update on the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (KMELES) and present it for formal adoption.

Members are asked to note the current status of the Strategy and its submission to Cabinet. The Strategy will inform the Council's emerging Climate Change Action Plan. Where new funding is required to tackle the climate emergency, this would also need to be agreed by Council.

1. Budget and policy framework
  - 1.1. The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (Appendix 1) forms part of the Kent Environment Strategy and Implementation Plan. It is also relevant to the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework.
  - 1.2. In April 2019, Full Council declared a climate change emergency in Medway. Responding to this declaration fits with the Council Strategy priority 'Medway: A place to be proud of' and the key outcome of a 'clean and green environment'.
  - 1.3. The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is a key element of the Council's approach to tackling the climate emergency and is currently informing the Council's emerging Climate Change Action Plan.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The purpose of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is to identify an evidence-based pathway to deliver clean growth, and specifically, strategies and actions to eliminate poor air quality, reduce fuel poverty and deliver an affordable, clean and secure energy supply for Kent and Medway. The Strategy includes the commitment to meet the UK Government's target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 for the country.

## 3. Consultation and Formal Adoption Pathway

- 3.1 The Strategy has been produced by Kent County Council following a public consultation period during July-September 2019.
- 3.2 Medway Council, along with all other Kent local authorities, were invited to participate and responded to the consultation on the Draft Strategy and engaged further in an Implementation Plan workshop at the end of 2019.
- 3.3 Following the evaluation of comments received during the consultation process, a final Draft Strategy was produced with 10 high level priorities identified for action. The Strategy was further reviewed and amended during May 2020 to account for Covid-19.
- 3.4 The Strategy has been approved by the Kent Chief Executives Group and Kent Leaders Group with the Leader as co-signatory. The Strategy will be formally launched by Kent County Council at the Kent and Medway Net-Zero Conference on 27 November 2020.
- 3.5 Local authorities across Kent are now being asked to take the Strategy through their own internal processes for formal adoption.
- 3.6 Medway Council's Cabinet has previously been made aware of the significance of the Strategy during its development (Please refer to Background Papers 1,2 and 3 at the back of this paper).

## 4. Options

- 4.1 The objective of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is to outline a joint Kent and Medway approach to achieving a reduction in carbon emissions and improvements in air quality, with an agreed Kent and Medway target of net-zero emissions by 2050.
- 4.2 The aims of the strategy are:
  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 growth, 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.
- 4.3 10 priority actions have been identified and link directly to a detailed Implementation Plan which is being finalised. A summary of the actions is given in Table 1 below. The full set of priority actions can be found on pages 15 to 28 of the Strategy.
- 4.4 Medway Council officers are developing a separate Medway Climate Change Action Plan in discussion with the Climate Change Member Advisory Group which is scheduled for presentation to Cabinet in March 2021. The Plan will inform both Business as Usual as well as how we will achieve net-zero carbon emissions as an organisation and across the wider Medway area. The 10 priority actions will further link to the Medway Climate Change Action Plan to ensure a cohesive approach. Progress will be monitored and reported through Service Plans, the Climate Change Member Advisory Group and Cabinet. Progress will be celebrated through the annual Kent Environment Strategy Impact Report.

<b>Table 1: Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy 10 Priority Actions</b>
<p><b>PRIORITY 1: EMISSION REDUCTION PATHWAYS TO 2050</b> Set area and organisational five-year carbon budgets and emission reduction pathways to 2050, with significant reduction by 2030.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 2: PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION MAKING</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 3: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b> 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 mainstream climate resilience.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 4: CLIMATE EMERGENCY INVESTMENT FUND</b> Establish a trusted Kent and Medway 'Climate Emergency' carbon sequestration, offset and renewable energy investment scheme and fund.</p>

<p><b>PRIORITY 5: BUILDING RETROFIT PROGRAMME</b> Set up a Kent and Medway net-zero buildings retrofit plan and programme for public sector, domestic and businesses.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 6: TRANSPORT, TRAVEL AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 7: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION</b> Set up an opportunities and investment programme for renewable electricity and heat energy generation.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 8: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</b> 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 increase biodiversity.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 9: SUPPORTING LOW CARBON BUSINESS</b> Develop a support programme for Kent and Medway’s Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services sector.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 10: COMMUNICATIONS</b> Develop a comprehensive communications, engagement and behaviour change programme targeted at residents, employees, businesses and visitors.</p>

5. Advice and analysis

5.1 The intention of the Strategy is to recognise the climate emergency and the need to take significant joined up action in the next 10 years to be able to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

5.2 Recommending the adoption of the Strategy serves to not only acknowledge its relevance in setting out a consistent approach to net zero emissions but also realises the significance of working in partnership at scale. It offers an opportunity to pool the resources and expertise required to address the climate emergency, which Medway Council has committed to do.

## 6. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is not formally adopted by the Council*  *There are no recognised risks from adopting the Strategy	This could result in Medway applying an inconsistent approach to the rest of Kent in the reduction of carbon emissions /improvement to air quality. It could limit opportunities for joint partnership working and access to shared resources/intelligence. This could further result in not being able to meet expectations at pace and the overall net zero target.	Formal adoption and commitment to the delivery of the Strategy	B2

## 7. Climate change implications

7.1 The Strategy is intended to have a direct positive impact on climate change and the Council's developing action plans. The impact will be monitored and reported through Service Plans, the Climate Change Member Advisory Group and Cabinet

## 8. Financial implications

8.1 This report relates to the Strategy itself and not individual costed actions. As future projects are developed, the supporting evidence and any cost implications will be identified, and the business case outlined through the appropriate governance processes. Tackling the climate emergency will require the Council to develop a robust financial strategy and commitment to a significant level of investment, which is far in excess of the existing budget provision.

## 9. Legal implications

9.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 places national targets on the reduction of emissions by 2050. The Council has powers to do anything an individual could, under the power of general competence in the Localism Act 2011. This includes taking steps to reduce Council emissions, which contribute to the local and national targets.

## 10. Recommendation

10.1 Members are asked to note and consider the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy prior to its submission to Cabinet on 12 January 2021 for formal consideration and adoption.

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## Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – [Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy](#)

## Background papers

- 1 – [Kent Environment Strategy](#) and [Implementation Plan](#)
- 2 – [Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy Public Consultation Report](#)
- 3 – Cabinet Reports, [July 2019](#) and [March 2020](#)