

ref: 14//2021
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Director's Office
Regeneration, Culture & Environment
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Dear [REDACTED]

Plant more trees to reduce Medway's carbon footprint

Thank you for your petition requesting more trees be planted to reduce Medway's carbon footprint.

We are very supportive of the need to work collectively to reduce carbon emissions in Medway. In January 2021, we adopted the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (KMELES) which sets an agreed Kent and Medway target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. We realise that significant action is required in the next ten years to achieve this target. A Climate Change Action Plan is currently being developed which includes a priority around green infrastructure. In terms of progress to date, we were successfully awarded funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund via the Forestry Commission at the end of 2020 which enabled over 10, 500 trees to be planted across ten sites in Medway during February and March 2021. We will continue to respond to future funding opportunities which will allow us to extend the tree canopy coverage within Medway. We are also currently developing a Tree Strategy to set clear targets and actions in support of this expansion.

While we recognise the clear benefits of increased tree canopy across Medway, such as improved biodiversity and physical and mental health, trees are just one of the natural solutions to climate change and resilience.

The Climate Change Action Plan highlights the role of other green infrastructure assets, such as grassland and saltmarshes in storing carbon, and therefore includes actions to protect these assets so as to further contribute to a reduction in emissions in Medway. The plan also supports a range of approaches to achieving net zero carbon through reducing energy usage and eliminating carbon through the introduction of renewable sources. As Medway Council accounts for just 1.4% of Medway's carbon footprint, we have included actions in the plan to support others in reducing and eliminating their carbon emissions. The Climate Change Action Plan is

due to be presented to Cabinet in June. A copy of the current version is available here:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=539&MIId=4950&Ver=4>.

I hope this is helpful for you and thank you for your active interest in addressing Climate Change.

You (as lead petitioner) may ask for the matter to be reviewed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee if the petitioner feels that the Council has not dealt with the petition properly. You should do this by giving notice to the Head of Democratic Services at the postal address above or by email (democratic.services@medway.gov.uk) within 10 working days of receiving the response. It would be helpful if you could provide reasons should you decide to request a review.

With best wishes



Richard Hicks
Director of Place & Deputy Chief Executive