

Diversity impact assessment

TITLE
Climate Change Action Plan
DATE
30/03/2021
LEAD OFFICER.
Vicki Emrit, Climate Change Co-ordinator, Environmental Services
1 Summary description of the proposed change
<p>What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?</p> <p>This overarching DIA seeks to consider and summarise the cumulative impact the Climate Change Action Plan may have on people with protective characteristics within the Medway community and workforce (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). Further DIA's will be undertaken as required to consider the impact of the individual projects in the Climate Change Action Plan.</p> <p>In April 2019, the council declared a Climate Change Emergency and committed to establishing a clear action plan for Medway to deal with climate change, setting out an achievable and clear timeline.</p> <p>This rolling action plan provides a framework as to how the council will reduce or eliminate the carbon emissions associated with its own estate and operations. It establishes how the council can learn from, support, raise awareness and influence others to reduce carbon emissions across the Medway area to net zero by 2050. The plan also sets out actions to address climate resilience and adaptation. The action plan is a live document and will be monitored and updated annually, to include new and refined actions as we build on our knowledge, new opportunities and national policy arise, new funding streams become available and as we build on our engagement programme.</p> <p>Acting on climate change is not a statutory requirement however, the council has a pivotal role to play by providing local leadership and embedding climate change in the delivery of its services. The action plan acknowledges the significance of working collaboratively with our stakeholders and partners to achieve this ambitious target and will also require considerable effort from the people, communities and organisations within Medway.</p>
2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment
<p>Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile</p> <p>Responding to the climate emergency requires behaviour change across as wide a range of people as possible including staff, residents, businesses, schools, local groups, suppliers and visitors to Medway.</p> <p>We have access to the results of a Climate Change Behavioural Insights Study which was undertaken by Hampshire County Council's Insight and Engagement Unit to inform the approach to behaviour change among citizens as part of a three-council collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council and Kent County Council.</p> <p>The study plays a vital role in developing the climate change action plan and future engagement plans by helping us to understand the key barriers to behaviour change</p>

Diversity impact assessment

in relation to specific actions. It is clear that some people/groups will be more able and/or engaged and willing to make changes.

Individuals need to have the necessary physical (e.g., affordability) and psychological (e.g., knowledge) capability to change their behaviour and these can translate into barriers. The study also identifies the demographic groups that are significantly more likely to be willing to take action against climate change.

A bi-annual public perception survey undertaken by Kent County Council has provided information about local people's attitudes towards the environment and has formed the basis of the Kent Environment Strategy. Medway residents made up the largest number of respondents at 14%.

The most recent survey revealed:

- Three out of four of the Medway residents interviewed consider Kent's natural and historic countryside and environment extremely or very important.
- Enjoyment of the natural environment and importance of protecting for future generations were prominent underlying themes.
- Waste (listed as 'litter/rubbish/waste/dog's mess/keeping it clean) and planning (building/development) were perceived as the two biggest environmental challenges in the county.
- 36% struggle to pay their energy bills to some frequency.
- Only 4% consider climate change as the biggest challenge.

A staff workshop was held in April 2019 to generate ideas from staff, identify actions already underway and gather ideas for further action. Climate Change is now a core council value and all officers have an obligation to consider the impact of key decisions on climate change and to further embed it into their service plans. Assistant Directors and Heads of Service across the Council have been engaged on the development of the plan and have lead responsibility on the delivery of actions.

Officers attended and supported Medway Youth Council's annual conference, about climate change, in November 2019. Officers sat on a "Question and Answer" panel alongside representatives from the Medway Youth Climate Change Group and Extinction Rebellion. It was an opportunity to hear young people, from schools across Medway, talk about what climate change means to them now and their concerns for the future. In their summary report, Medway Youth Council set out actions including working in partnership with us to improve recycling and encourage other positive environmental changes. In support of our Child Friendly Medway vision, we are committed to making sure the views of young people in Medway are included in our developing action plan and have appointed a representative from the Medway Youth Council to become a member of our Climate Change Member Advisory Board.

Medway community groups and partnerships with an interest in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change are invited to share their plans at www.medway.gov.uk/takeaction

At the end of 2019, we sought views from residents on climate change via the Citizens Panel, resulting in 210 responses and intend to carry out further research through this forum.

We are committed to carrying out additional work to gather new evidence to support the developing Climate Change action plan. The plan includes a clear action to create

Diversity impact assessment

a programme of events and opportunities for the communities in Medway to contribute to the developing action plan. We also support the Kent Environment Communications Strategy which intends to understand more about our target audiences across Kent and Medway, from schools and young people, older residents, vulnerable residents, disabled residents and those that are disengaged.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to:

Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age		Yes	
Disability		Yes	
Gender reassignment		Yes	
Marriage/civil partnership		Yes	
Pregnancy/maternity		Yes	
Race		Yes	
Religion/belief		Yes	
Sex		Yes	
Sexual orientation		Yes	
Other (eg low income groups)		Yes	

4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

Scientific evidence states that if no action is taken to respond to the climate emergency, everyone will be adversely impacted but particularly protected characteristic groups. For

Diversity impact assessment

example, the effects of climate change will result in hotter summers which will lead to health and wellbeing risks particularly for vulnerable members of the community such as the very young or elderly.

Measures to tackle climate change, such as those in the action plan, will limit these threats and have direct positive health effects for example increased fitness from cycling and walking and better air quality from reduced car journeys.

Further DIA's will be undertaken for individual projects in the action plan as required. For example, in terms of the age equality strand, consideration will need to be given to differing concerns over accessibility of public transport and different abilities to walk and cycle as an alternative mode of transport.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

Actions which have the biggest impact on carbon emission reduction, such as the installation of renewable energy sources (e.g., solar panels or heat pumps), install of insulation and transitioning to zero emission vehicles, generally require a bigger financial outlay than actions such as correctly recycling materials or buying locally produced food. This may be a barrier to low income groups.

We have included a commitment in the Climate Change Action Plan to continue to engage at a strategic level with local and regional partnerships to give our residents access to schemes offering discounted energy efficiency measures.

6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Create a programme of events and opportunities for the communities in Medway to contribute to the developing Action Plan	PA10 - Comms Sub-Group	September
Engagement Exercise (internal and external) to obtain the views of staff, residents, businesses and stakeholders on what measures they would like to see in the Climate Change Action Plan	PA10 – Comms Sub-Group	November-December
Monitor the progress of the Climate Change Action Plan and ensure DIA's are undertaken as necessary for the individual projects of the Climate Change Action Plan	Climate Change Co-ordinator and relevant project/s service leads	Quarterly Reporting

Diversity impact assessment

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Participate in Kent Green Action meetings (in support of the Kent Environment Communications Strategy) and the Climate Change Network to further understand our audiences.	Climate Change Co-ordinator	Frequency to be determined by KCC – regular attendance
Review the DIA taking into consideration feedback from the Engagement Exercise and intelligence from the above meetings	Climate Change Co-ordinator	May 2022 (to accompany annual Climate Change Action Plan update to Cabinet

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

To proceed with the change, implementing the above action plan.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Ruth Du-Lieu, Assistant Director Front Line Services

Date of authorisation