

CLIMATE CHANGE MEMBER ADVISORY GROUP

26 MAY 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN REFRESH AND CARBON EMISSIONS UPDATE REPORT

Climate Change Action Plan Refresh

In June 2021, Cabinet approved the Council's first Climate Change Action Plan.

One year on from the publication of the Action Plan, significant progress has been achieved despite continued challenges in managing both the response to Covid-19 and the response to the climate emergency. The **Climate Change Progress Update 2021/22** document (Appendix 1) celebrates our key successes.

It was noted at Cabinet in 2021, that the Action Plan will be a live document which will be updated. The Action Plan also included a commitment to report annually on the Council's carbon emissions.

A light touch review of the Action Plan has been undertaken with officers responsible for each of the actions in the 2021 plan. The actions have been updated to reflect progress and also to check they are still achievable within the timescales and available funding. The refreshed Action Plan has also been developed in consultation with Council services and teams and takes into account feedback received through various engagement and benchmarking channels. **A copy of the refreshed Action Plan can be found in Appendix 2.**

The wording of some actions has been refined or actions combined for clarity and to eliminate duplication, particularly around renewable energy generation projects and the Re:fit programme. The Action Plan has also been formatted to meet website accessibility regulations.

The table has been reformatted so that the majority of actions are listed out without distinction between "header" and "sub actions". "Header" actions are only used to delineate groups of actions; this is to aid with internal reporting.

A significant number of "Do It Now" actions have either been established as such that they are now considered Business As Usual or fully completed. They have either been removed from the refreshed Climate Change Action Plan (2022), regrouped under Business As Usual or updated to reflect the next stage of activity. A number of Short, Medium and Long Term actions have been completed ahead of

schedule. 5 actions have experienced delays to delivery, and therefore timescales have been adjusted accordingly. **A summary of the completed actions can be found in Appendix 3.**

New actions have been clearly marked as such in the refreshed plan. They largely focus on:

- assessing the carbon/financial impact of actions to assist with prioritisation
- further embedding council values in the employee journey
- activities to support the Cultural Strategy
- further supporting staff to apply environmental considerations within procurement processes
- building retrofit
- school infrastructure – trees, planting and EV charge points
- engagement activities to support the delivery of the updated Climate Change Communications and Engagement Strategy (Appendix 4).

Annual Carbon Emissions Update

The 2020/21 Annual Carbon Emissions Report is currently being validated and will be included as an appendix when the Action Plan goes to Cabinet in July 2022.

Data is also being gathered for 2021/22 emissions and an annual report will be published to the Council website in early 2023.

Progress against First Carbon Budget

In 2019/20 the Council's carbon emissions were 10,510.27 tCO₂e, a reduction of 13.2% on the baseline year 2018/19. This reduction has been achieved primarily through the decarbonisation of the electricity grid.

The 2018/19 Carbon Baseline Study recommended a number of interventions in order to meet the First Carbon Budget by 2027. We commissioned a technical study to assess the impact, of 2019/20 emissions data and revisions to the Re:fit Phase 1 programme, on the proposed interventions.

The study resulted in a slightly revised Medway Pathway to reduce emissions by 95% by 2050. The study recommended that no additional investment or additional interventions (above those already recommended) will be required to meet the First Carbon Budget (57,631 tCO₂e). This is because the decarbonisation of the grid gives Medway a better starting point, with the same interventions having a bigger impact in terms of the percentage of the original Baseline. Over the whole cycle (2020/27), if all of the interventions are implemented, there would be an overall surplus of 1,221 tCO₂e against the First Carbon Budget. Once Re:fit Phase One is completed, it is intended that the Medway Pathway will be updated again to establish how Re:fit Phase One has impacted on our overall pathway to net zero.

It is of the utmost importance that the Council continues to identify the resources necessary to keep to a science-based pathway, selecting and implementing

interventions in a timely manner so that the Carbon Budget deficit is drastically reduced.

Next Steps

To support the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan, the following areas have been identified as a priority for the year ahead.

- Further refinement of budget needs and options appraisal to determine which interventions will have the biggest carbon saving
- Update how we report on progress against each of the actions
- Establishing a community network to tap into the wealth of enthusiasm and activity within our communities
- Community engagement and events
- Engagement with business and commerce as per Climate Communication Strategy
- Staff training
- Joined up working with Kent Climate Change Network (CCN) regarding county wide targets, to ensure a consistent approach to measuring emissions
- Identify initiatives and resources to support net-zero carbon targets for the Medway area and also those which will be a priority in preparing to address the Second Carbon Budget.

We will be issuing an online survey alongside the draft refreshed action plan to further understand our residents and communities' thoughts on climate change and what is important to them. Also, to understand how informed they feel about climate action in Medway. It is anticipated that the results will help us to improve our engagement programme.

***Member Advisory Group are invited to submit comments on the plan for consideration by end of 7 June 2022
by email to climatechange@medway.gov.uk***

The refreshed action plan and annual carbon emissions report for 2020/21 will be submitted to Cabinet on 5 July 2022.

Further to endorsement, an accessible version of the refreshed action plan will be published on our website alongside the 2021 version. The simplified and digital versions will also be updated.

The annual carbon emissions report will also be published on the Council website.

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