

CABINET

5 JULY 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN REFRESH AND CARBON EMISSIONS UPDATE REPORT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Howard Doe, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services

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Summary

In June 2021, Cabinet approved the Council's first Climate Change Action Plan. The publication of the Action Plan supports the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency in 2019 and acknowledges the role of the Council, along with our partners and communities, in achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Action Plan included a commitment to report annually on the Council's carbon emissions.

This report sets out the progress made so far against the Climate Change Action Plan and provides an update on:

- government policies which support climate action
- revisions to the Action Plan
- the Council's annual carbon emissions for 2020/21 and progress against the First Carbon Budget
- an overview of priorities for the next year.

1. Budget and policy framework

1.1. Climate Change is now one of the Council's core values which underpins and frames our choices and decisions. The Climate Change Action Plan supports the delivery of the Council's strategic priority '*Medway: A place to be proud of*' and the key outcome of a '*clean and green environment*'.

1.2. The refreshed Climate Change Action Plan continues to align with the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (KMELES) and commits to

meeting the UK Government's target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 for the country. The timescales for delivering actions remain the same; Do It Now, Short (2023), Medium (2027) and Long term (2030).

- 1.3. Since the publication of the Climate Change Action Plan in 2021 a number of landmark strategies and legislation have come into force, including the Government's Net Zero Strategy, the Environment Act 2021, the National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS), the Glasgow Climate Pact and the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.
- 1.4. We will continue to work with our partners and networks for example through our representation on the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) group, to stay abreast of further policy updates and continue to persuade government to release support to bring the Net Zero Strategy to life.
- 1.5. Progress towards our target of net zero carbon by 2050 continues to be dependent on Government funding being made available and successful bidding for funds, including joint bidding with Kent County Council and Kent's district councils. We will continue to monitor and assess opportunities, as they present themselves, to help bring the reduction target date forward sooner than 2050.

2. Background

- 2.1. Full Council declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and passed a motion committing to establish a clear action plan for Medway to deal with climate change, setting out an achievable and clear timeline.
- 2.2. Cabinet agreed the establishment of a cross party Climate Change Member Advisory Board. The board has met quarterly since September 2019 to oversee the direction of work.
- 2.3. The KMELES was formally adopted by the Council in January 2021 and the Climate Change Action Plan was approved by the Cabinet in June 2021.
- 2.4. Further to its approval, an accessible and simplified version was produced to aid engagement with the comprehensive details of the plan. This has been published online alongside a digital version.
- 2.5. A Climate Change Communications and Engagement Strategy was produced to set out ways in which to make it easy and accessible for all of our communities to engage with the action plan and support them with tackling climate change.

3. Achievements

- 3.1. 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 (Appendix 1) summarises and celebrates our key successes. A **Climate Change Progress Infographic 2021/22 (Appendix 2)** further highlights our achievements.

3.2. A significant number of “Do It Now” actions from within the Climate Change Action Plan have either been established as such that they are now considered fully embedded within core duties or fully completed. They have either been removed from the refreshed Action Plan (2022) which is set out at Appendix 4 to this report, regrouped under “Embedded Within Core Duties” or updated to reflect the next stage of activity. The top 3 most notable actions are listed below; **a summary of the completed actions is set out at Appendix 3.**

- 34 electric vehicle charging points have been installed across 3 council-owned car parks across Medway;
- We supported Solar Together Kent, a scheme to encourage residents to install low-cost solar panels. 21 homeowners had a total of 206 solar panels installed resulting in a CO2 reduction of 16.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). Over 750 residents have registered an interest in the second round of the scheme;
- We delivered a programme of events during the 26th United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP26) and held our first public “Climate Conversation” event attended by over 60 people to share ideas on how to tackle climate change.

3.3. Several Short, Medium and Long-Term actions from the Climate Change Action Plan have been completed ahead of schedule. The full list is set out at Appendix 3.

3.4. We have successfully recruited to a number of posts, which have been instrumental to the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan. The following permanent posts are funded from the relevant departments core revenue budget:

- A Climate Response Engagement Officer and Climate Response Support Officer (in post from August 2021 and October 2021 respectively) – both officers are actively involved in delivering against the plan.
- A Facilities Management and Energy Data and Monitoring Officer – assisting with the thorough and accurate collection and validation of energy data.

4. Updates and revisions to the plan

4.1. A light touch review has been undertaken with officers responsible for each of the actions in the 2021 Climate Change Action Plan - www.medway.gov.uk/climatechangeplan. **A copy of the refreshed Action Plan can be found in Appendix 4.** The actions have been updated to reflect progress and also to check they are still achievable within the timescales and available funding. The plan also takes into account feedback received

through various engagement and benchmarking channels (see section 10 of the report).

- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. Some amendments have also been made to reflect progress of other key corporate projects for example the publication of the Bus Improvement Plan and the City of Culture Bid.
- 4.4. 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 5)**.
- 4.5. The following actions are still underway, and timescales have been adjusted accordingly:
 - **Explore opportunities to join the Green Creative programme to ensure that we act to support climate change and environmental sustainability across our culture, libraries, venues and events programmes (Do It Now)**. Due to the level of funding required to participate in the Green Creative Programme, the timescale for delivery is not achievable and has been changed to Short Term. The business case for the revamp of the Brook Theatre will include strong sustainability elements and could be a potential template for other Medway creative venues.
 - **Work in partnership to develop a common carbon metric for calculating the carbon offset value of nature-based offsetting (Do It Now)**. Officers have opened discussions with other local authorities on their experiences of Natural Capital and Offsetting pilot projects. Based on the experiences of others it is anticipated that a comprehensive ecological assessment would need to be completed in the growing season to identify species and habitats at an estimated cost of circa £25-30k and is subject to identifying suitable funding. This timescale has been updated to Short Term.
 - **Produce a timetable to refresh the Local Transport Plan (Short)**. This work will commence in 22/23 following the publication of Department for

Transport (DfT) guidance on refreshing Local Transport Plans. The timescale has been updated to Short/Medium.

- **Review transport provision policies with private transport sector, including school transport providers to incentivise and switch to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (Short).** An increase in the numbers of pupils requiring transport and a decrease in the number of drivers and vehicles available has added pressure to the transport delivery process. Adding additional requirements at present will potentially further impede delivery. This requires a gradual approach as the change to ultra-low emission vehicles will be costly for providers to undertake, particularly where they are under pressure simply to deliver the transport. Some initial informal conversations have taken place with providers to gauge views. A target has been set to look at all policies relating to school transport to ensure they reflect the climate change agenda in the most appropriate and achievable way. The timescale has been updated to Medium.
- **Undertake a joint working project to repair historic flood defences of existing salt marsh islands (Short Term).** This has been updated from Short to Medium to reflect the current lack of funding. The majority of islands are not owned by the Council and would therefore require funding to be secured by partners (Peel Ports, Environment Agency and RSPB). Repairs are likely to run into millions of pounds.

4.6. The following actions have been removed from the action plan:

- **Create a "Back to Better" Plan.** The actions supporting the key themes of the Back to Better Plan were listed as separate actions within the Climate Change Action Plan i.e., Remote and Agile Working, Cashless and therefore this was considered duplication and removed.
- **Ensure the Heatwave Plan and Cold Weather Plan are reviewed and updated annually.** This action is undertaken as part of the Council's core duties and has therefore been removed.

5. Annual Carbon Emissions Update

5.1. Medway Council's emissions during 2020/21 were 8,303 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO₂e) – equating to a 2,207 tCO₂e or 21% reduction against the previous year and a 3,802 tCO₂e or 31.4% reduction compared with the baseline year (2018/19).

5.2. The reduction has been achieved through a combination of factors including:

- operational changes and a reduction of energy use within our buildings as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- carbon reduction initiatives during this period; primarily the LED street lighting programme.
- decarbonisation of the UK electricity grid.

5.3. The 2020/21 Annual Carbon Emissions Report can be found in **Appendix 6**. It has also been published to the Council website

www.medway.gov.uk/info/200348/climate_change/1502/our_carbon_emissions_reports.

- 5.4. A Carbon Reporting Working Group has been set up to ensure data collection efficiencies and continual improvements to reporting. Data is being gathered for 2021/22 emissions and an annual report will be published to the Council website in early 2023.
- 5.5. We intend to undertake a more extensive assessment of Scope 3 emissions during the next 12 months and use this to inform further actions and projects to reduce emissions.

6. Progress against First Carbon Budget

- 6.1. A 2018/19 Carbon Baseline Study recommended a number of interventions to put the Council on a path to reducing its emissions by 95% by 2050 against a baseline year of 2018/19. The study used the science-based target approach to reducing emissions at a rate that is in line with keeping global temperature rises below 1.5°C. This means halving emissions every ten years as opposed to reducing emissions by a fixed amount every year. It set the First Carbon Budget for 2020-27 as 57,631 tCO₂e.
- 6.2. Since then, we have 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.
- 6.3. The study resulted in a slightly revised Medway Pathway, albeit to still reduce emissions by 95% by 2050. The study recommended that no additional investment or additional interventions will be required to meet the First Carbon Budget (57,631 tCO₂e). This is because the decarbonisation of the grid already 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. An updated list of interventions is provided in Table 1 below. An updated summary of progress against each intervention and the availability of resources required to deliver them is also included:

Table 1 – Summary of Interventions to stay within the First Carbon Budget

Intervention	Carbon Savings (tonnes)	Implement latest	Estimated cost	Availability of Funding	Availability of Staff	Progress
Re:fit Phase 1 Buildings	503	2021-22	£3,880,168	Re:fit	Delivered through existing staff	On schedule
Street Lighting to LED	1484	2022-23	£11,155,144	Fully funded	Delivered through existing staff	On schedule
Low Carbon Heating	1064	2022-23	£3,742,757	Re:fit	Delivered through existing staff	Phase 2 currently being programmed
Further solar PV in Buildings	181	2022-23	£1,240,815	Re:fit	Delivered through existing staff	Phase 2 currently being programmed
Further LED Lighting Corporate	119	2022-23	£354,143	Re:fit	Delivered through existing staff	Phase 2 currently being programmed
Further LED Lighting Housing	60	2022-23	£179,689	Re:fit	Delivered through existing staff	Phase 2 currently being programmed
Vans Class II and III to EV	51	2022-23	£580,145	Part core funding (potential requirement for additional costs for EV vehicles)	Delivered through existing staff	Charging infrastructure due for install by end of Summer 2022. Transition of vehicles to EV not yet started outside of one year trial; due to commence once EV points installed
Further LED Lighting Carparks	22	2022-23	Not available	Core funding for survey only. Funding to be determined for delivery.	Staff resource secured from January 2022.	Not yet started
River Source Heat Network	143	2023-24	£889,831	Funding to be secured for DPD study. Funding for delivery to be determined	Delivered through existing staff	Techno-Economic Feasibility Study undertaken. Bid for a Detailed Planning and Development (DPD) study being prepared. Due to be submitted in June 2022
Controls Optimisation	80	2024-25	£129,406	Re:fit	Delivered through existing staff	Future phase of Re:fit
Heating Controls	40	2024-25	£32,824	Re:fit	Delivered through existing staff	Future phase of Re:fit

- 6.4. It should be noted that the costs are desk-top estimations only. With regards to the Re:fit Phase One figures, these were the figures available at the time of the study (May 2021). Once Re:fit Phase One is completed the table above will be updated to reflect estimated and actual figures and the actual carbon savings. The Medway Pathway will be updated again to establish how Re:fit Phase One has impacted on our overall pathway to net zero.
- 6.5. The total Capital investment required to deliver the initiatives (excluding the LED street lighting programme as this is already approved and fully funded) is approximately £700,000 less than the 2018/19 Carbon Baseline estimate. This is still far more than existing budget provision. However, all of the interventions have a payback and will yield savings.
- 6.6. It is likely that additional funding to cover the cost-difference of replacing the Council's fleet of small diesel vehicles with electric, will be required over and above core funding. 20 EV charge points are due to be installed at Gun Wharf by the end of Summer 2022. This has been funded through the Re:fit programme. This will facilitate the phased transition of vehicles to electric, which has not been possible without the infrastructure. Currently the Council's small vehicles are managed directly by each service area. It has become apparent that significant officer time will be required to oversee a phased yet consistent approach to the replacement of vehicles. This could also include opportunities to review usage of vehicles, cost saving opportunities and help to manage the demand for additional infrastructure.
- 6.7. Funding for the delivery of LED lighting in car parks and a potential River Source Heat Network are still to be identified, further to the outcome of studies planned in 2022/23.

7. Budget

- 7.1. It is of the upmost 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. All "Do It Now" actions have the funding in place, either through the 2022/23 core budget or external funding.
- 7.2. Where funding for some Short, Medium and Long term actions has not currently been identified, this will need to be considered within budget setting for future years. In addition, it is anticipated that we will also be able to secure funding through partnership bids or direct applications for external grant funding. Initial estimations suggest that circa £350,000 is required to deliver on the Short-Term actions. There may be an element of match funding, for which at this stage we cannot predict the amount as this will be dependent on funding opportunities available at the time. Further refinement of budget needs and options appraisal to determine which interventions will have the biggest carbon saving is a priority for the year ahead. In some instances where additional staff resourcing is required to deliver an action, the intention is to, where possible, fill the resourcing gap with an internship, industry placement or short term consultancy funded from existing budgets.

7.3. During 2021/22, significant levels of funding have been applied for which have/will support the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan:

Table 2 – External funding to support delivery of the plan

Name of Funding	Funding Amount/Status	Objective	Delivery Date
On Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (OZEV)	£85,000 Awarded	To part fund 34 charge points in publicly accessible car parks across Medway	September 2021
Great Big Green Week (National Lottery Community Fund)	£1,500 Awarded	Nationwide celebration of action on climate change - funded Medway's first Electric Vehicle event.	September 2021
Capability Fund (DfT)	£232,107 Awarded	Support active travel initiatives, including the development of a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and deliver of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)	Funding covers the period 2021/22, however some committed workstreams may extend beyond this.
Levelling Up Fund Further match funding from UoK, CHDT and Medway Council	£14,000,000 Awarded	The bid will repurpose and renovate three historic listed buildings, seeking to optimise the sustainability performance of the buildings whilst sensitively responding to listed fabric.	Oct 2021 to Feb 2024
Challenge Fund (DfT)	Circa £5m plus match funding of £1.2m Awarded	Upgrade to tunnel and associated infrastructure.	Completion due 2023
Heat Network Delivery Unit Funding Techno Economic Feasibility Study (BEIS)	£76,000 (£23,000 match fund from the Council) Awarded	Techno Economic Feasibility Study for a Heat Network	End of 2022
Net Zero Innovation Programme (Local Government Association and University College London)	£16,000 Awarded	In collaboration with the University of Kent, we aim to conduct engagement and knowledge transfer workshops with landlords to uncover their understanding and planning for Net Zero.	July 2022
Air Quality Grant Programme 2021 to 2022 (DEFRA)	£14,110 Awarded	Lot 1 – projects designed to reduce air pollutant exceedances	2022/23
Air Quality Grant Programme 2021 to 2022 (DEFRA)	£113,400 Awarded	Lot 2 – projects that will improve knowledge and information about air quality	2022/23

8. Advice and analysis

- 8.1. As noted in the report to Cabinet in June 2021, the challenge Medway has set itself of reaching the target of net zero carbon by 2050, is not going to be an easy task to achieve. The Council needs to maintain climate change as a key priority for the whole organisation. It needs to continue to review, identify and secure the appropriate resources and funding to implement the interventions necessary to achieve its net zero ambitions and ensure we have fully costed projects ready for when funding opportunities arise.
- 8.2. 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 updated Climate Communication Strategy (Appendix 5).
 - 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.

9. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Political/ Reputational	<p>The refreshed climate change action plan is not formalised and resourced.</p> <p>Doing nothing would result in maintaining existing levels of emissions in both the Council's own operations and across the whole of Medway which would have a negative impact on climate change. It would also negate the clear intentions and objectives of the Climate Emergency declaration.</p>	<p>Formal approval and commitment to delivery of the proposed refreshed Climate Change Action Plan.</p> <p>A commitment from across the Council to resource the actions necessary.</p>	C II
Financial	<p>There is a risk that the actions in the Action Plan cannot be fully funded and resourced at the scale required to achieve the necessary speed of change.</p> <p>Potential lack of Government funding to help Medway progress our ambitions.</p> <p>This could result in not being able to meet expectations at pace and the overall net zero carbon emissions.</p>	<p>The development of a robust financial strategy.</p> <p>Key officers on constant review of external funding sources.</p> <p>Full consideration of the financial/resource implications to be made before each action/project commences.</p>	B II
Lack of support from the public	<p>Lack of engagement on the Climate Change Action Plan could result in a damaged relationship with the wider community, mistrust and lack of support for the plan resulting in progress being hindered. It could also lead to potential negative media and press coverage.</p>	<p>Continue to deliver the Communication and Engagement Strategy and update at 12-month intervals</p>	C II

10. Consultation

10.1. The refreshed action plan has been developed in consultation with Council services and teams.

10.2. During COP26, officers hosted Medway's first large scale "Climate Conversation" event at Rochester Corn Exchange, which was attended by over 60 attendees. The main areas of focus, identified at the event, were:

- Waste Hierarchy – reduce, reuse, recycle
- Transport and Air Quality/Sustainable Travel
- Housing and Energy

- Natural Resources

Contributions have been collated and are helping us to create a community action plan to respond to the challenges of climate change. We are developing a Community Network to take the plan forward, with the first meeting held on 1 March.

- 10.3. During 2021, Climate Emergency UK assessed all UK local authority Climate Change action plans that were published before 20 September 2021. The assessments were made against a checklist developed by Friends of the Earth, Ashden, The Centre for Alternative Technology and APSE. The Council subsequently ranked 31 out of all local authorities in the country, receiving full marks in three categories: measuring and setting emissions targets, co-benefits and education, skills and training. We acknowledge that there are areas for improvement and have included new actions in the refreshed plan to address gaps identified as a result of the assessment and the audit completed by the Climate Response intern during the summer. These include actions such as a commitment to engage with harder to reach communities and integrate actions into HR processes.
- 10.4. The draft refreshed action plan was also presented to the Climate Change Members Advisory Board on 26 May 2022 for discussion and review and was positively received. Members were invited to submit comments by 7 June 2022, and these are currently being worked through. The comments received do not impact on the proposed content of the action plan.
- 10.5. We also issued an online survey in May 2022 to further understand our residents and communities thoughts on climate change, what is important to them and how informed they feel about climate action in Medway. The survey is due to close to responses on 1 July 2022. It is anticipated that the results will help us to improve our engagement programme.
- 10.6. The Climate Response team has continued to engage with key internal and external stakeholders including the Medway Food Partnership, Medway Education Partnership, Medway Makers, Major Developers Forum and University of Kent.
- 10.7. On the new climate change web pages, the Climate Response team welcome invitations from the public to attend events to talk about climate change and the action plan.
- 10.8. Subject to approval, 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. We will continue to promote key messages on our social media pages.
- 10.9. A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out (Appendix 7). The findings of this indicate the plan does not need a full diversity impact assessment in this area, rather further assessments will be undertaken for individual projects in the action plan as required.

11. Climate change implications

- 11.1. The refreshed Action Plan is intended to continue to have a direct positive impact on climate change and the Council's aspirations of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The impact will be monitored and reported through Service Plans, the Climate Change Member Advisory Group and Cabinet.

12. Financial implications

- 12.1. An annual budget of £175k, including staff costs, has been allocated towards the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan. As actions are developed, the supporting evidence and any cost implications will be identified, and the business case outlined through the appropriate governance processes. The Council will continue to be required to embed climate change within its overall financial strategy and identify resources within the Capital Strategy and Revenue Budget. As evidenced against section 6 of the report, the indicative level of investment required to deliver against the action plan, (in support of the net-zero target for the Medway area and beyond the First Carbon Budget for the Council's own estate and operations), is far more than existing budget provision. Officers will continue to identify and explore and respond to potential funding opportunities.

13. Legal implications

- 13.1. 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.

14. Recommendations

- 14.1. The Cabinet is asked to agree to adopt the refreshed Climate Change Action Plan as set out at Appendix 4.
- 14.2. The Cabinet is asked to note the Annual Carbon Emissions Report as set out at Appendix 6.

15. Suggested reason for decision

- 15.1. To support and uphold the Climate Emergency declaration and continued action against the net zero carbon targets.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Climate Change Progress Update 2021/22

Appendix 2: Climate Change Progress Infographic 2021/22

Appendix 3: Climate Change Action Plan Completed Actions

Appendix 4: Refreshed Climate Change Action Plan 2022

Appendix 5: Climate Change Communications and Engagement Strategy
2022

Appendix 6: Carbon Emission Report 2020/21

Appendix 7: Diversity Impact Assessment 2022

Background papers

Climate Emergency Declaration – Full Council - April 2019:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=4160&Ver=4>

Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy Cabinet Report -
January 2021:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieIssueDetails.aspx?IId=29741&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI24574>

Climate Change Action Plan and Medway Net Zero Carbon Baseline Report –
June 2021:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=5037>

Link to recording of Climate Change Member Advisory Group meeting – May
2022:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=539&MId=5309&Ver=4>