

## Climate Change Member Advisory Group

13 July 2022

### Item 5. Update on Action Plan

A refreshed version of the Climate Change Action Plan and the 2020/21 annual carbon emissions report were presented to Cabinet on 5 July 2022. Copies of the report are available [here](#).

#### **Priority 1: Emission Reduction Pathways to 2050**

The Council's annual carbon emissions for 2020/21 have been calculated and validated and an annual carbon emissions report has been published to the Council's website [here](#). A thorough audit of the data collection process was also undertaken to see how the process could be improved. The recommendations will be considered when undertaking the emissions calculations for 2021-22.

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

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

Other key actions progressed under **Priority 1** include:

- Evidence was submitted of our annual progress against the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (KMELES) to KCC, celebrating our key achievements. The final overall report is due to be published by KCC in Q2 and will be shared with the group.
- Officers have worked alongside the Kent Climate Change Network to develop key indicators which can be used uniformly by all Kent districts to show progress against the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (KMELES). Indicators to be formalised in Q2.
- Officers have worked alongside the Kent Climate Change Network Procurement subgroup to draft a market position statement to encourage providers to consider actions which will contribute to net zero carbon targets. Kent County Council are currently taking the statement through their formal governance process.

## **Priority 2: Public Sector Decision Making**

- The new contract for recycling resource management was awarded via Cabinet (decision 07/07) and clauses to support the climate agenda were included in the final contract. Officers are currently reviewing how the clauses could be improved upon for future procurements.
- A review of polling districts and polling places has been carried out to inform a report to Full Council in July. As much as possible, it has been recommended that polling places are in easy reach of the majority of voters by foot to minimise the use of vehicles.
- A cohort of 27 officers are currently undertaking Carbon Literacy Training delivered by the Centre for Alternative Technology. The Climate Response Engagement Officer has also joined in a Climate Fresk Workshop, to investigate other climate change staff training options. [Climate Fresk](#) is a workshop-style three hour climate change training session, where a game is used to help the participants learn about the cause and effect of climate change, and how they could be responding to it. Both of these will inform how best to roll out climate change training more widely to staff.
- Two interns have been appointed via the University of Kent's Employability Points scheme to support actions within the action plan and started in the team in June 2022.

## **Priority 3: Planning and Development**

- The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Housing Infrastructure Fund Road and Rail schemes remains on programme. The Road EIA is 55% complete and the Rail EIA is 45% complete.
- Detailed discussions have been undertaken with the Hoo Consortium and SEMS to develop a Surface Water Management scheme for Hoo which will alleviate existing drainage issues within the area

## **Priority 4: Climate Emergency Funding**

- A consortium (of Medway Council, Kent County Council and other Kent districts) has been successfully awarded funds to deliver an LGA Behavioural Insights project to target households who will be impacted by rising fuel costs but who are likely to be ineligible for household support grants. This is with a view to promoting the model to other local authorities if successful.

## **Priority 5: Building Retrofit Programme**

- A project has begun to visit all letting agents in Medway to offer advice on complying with all areas of legislation in relation to letting properties - this includes legislation with regard to energy performance. This has revealed several businesses failing to provide the required information and appropriate action is being taken to ensure future compliance.

## **Priority 6: Transport, Travel and Digital Connectivity**

- The draft Air Quality Action Plan for Four Elms Hill is due to go to Cabinet on 23 August. The source apportionment has been revised and comments received from DEFRA during the consultation process have been addressed. Public consultation comments have also been reviewed.
- Following the award of funding from DEFRA to undertake an anti-idling research project in Rainham in partnership with the University of Kent, a kick off meeting has been held. Two suitable project sites with good visibility have been identified and work is due to commence in the Autumn.
- Officers have been involved in workshop sessions to further review the draft EV Strategy. Refinements are being finalised by officers before bringing this before the relevant Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Climate Change Members Advisory Board, in accordance with the Council's internal governance approval process.
- A series of scoping meetings have taken place with Connected Kerb in conjunction with Kent and Medway EV Chargepoint Network Project. The proposed public EV charging point locations and quantities across Medway are currently being finalised. Separate discussions are taking place with Ubitricity as part of a potential EV on-street charging pilot project.
- Officers are currently developing a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan 'LCWIP' to build upon the 80+ miles of cycle route on Medway's network, as part of the Council's Capability Fund allocation from the Department for Transport (DfT). This will include other active travel revenue workstreams, including schools and workplace initiatives, resources and a dedicated officer.
- Continued to work with the KM Charity to promote the Walk on Wednesday 'WOW' initiative, with approximately 3,000 children across Medway participating. Likewise, the Sustrans Big Walk & Wheel campaign was promoted to Medway schools in March and April this year, with 2,440 schools having registered nationally and close to 8 million children having participated. As a result, 80% of pupils attending St Margaret's at Troy Town Primary School in Rochester walked or cycled during the two week campaign and 81% of students at Greenacre Academy in Walderslade, achieving 6th place nationally. Other active travel focus campaigns promoted during the year include National Walk to School Week in May, Bike Week in June and International Walk to School Month in October.
- The DfT will be publishing guidance for Local Authorities on refreshing their Local Transport Plans later this year. Once this has been received, a timetable for refreshing the Local Transport Plan will be produced. There will be a requirement for a Quantifiable Carbon Reduction (QCR) plan to be included.
- Work is underway to design improvements to the Gas House Road/A2 signalised junction in Rochester, to improve overall traffic flow through this section of the network.
- Two more sites (A229 Maidstone Road junction with ASDA and Princes Avenue junction with Dove Close in Walderslade) have been connected to the Urban Traffic Control system (UTC), allowing remote monitoring of the signals. This means that faults can be detected and corrected quickly and remotely, minimising congestion.

- Continued to support local businesses to switch to ULEV via the Kent REVS scheme. The scheme is regularly promoted via leaflet, website and newsletter. Since the scheme started in February 2021, 15 Medway businesses have participated.
- Fleet Replacement Working group set up to discuss research into alternative fuel technology for the RCV fleet to incorporate into future procurement strategies and update the financial modelling of options.
- Employment Matters Committee accepted the recommendation to increase the mileage rate for those who use private electric vehicles for business and work is underway to implement this positive change.
- Tusker recently gave a presentation to staff on the electric vehicle options available under the salary sacrifice scheme.

### **Priority 7: Renewable Energy Generation**

- The second round of the Solar Together Kent scheme has been promoted via social media and by letter to 10,000 Medway residents, closing to registrations at the end of Q4 2021/22. 784 homeowners registered for the scheme and were issued with personal recommendations, of which 126 have accepted. Surveys are due to commence in Q2. More than 3 times the number of people expected to participate signed up across Kent. Due to the demand, acceptances had to be capped shortly before the original acceptance date. There have been some supply chain issues for the second installer, covering Medway, Swale, Dartford and Gravesham. As a result, all customers in these areas were invited to switch supplier to Homesmart. Homesmart have finished ahead of schedule on a different scheme and so have the capacity and sufficient batteries stockpiled to take on the additional customers across Kent and Medway and still complete installations by the end of 2022.

### **Priority 8: Green and Blue Infrastructure**

- The main Cumulative Ecological Impact Assessment for the Strategic Environmental Management Scheme CEIA is now a completed draft report. An extension of the report concentrating on the North of A228, around Lodge Hill and Chattenden Woods SSSI, is currently underway and will be complete in September 2022.
- Bids have been submitted to the Forestry Commission Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) and Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF) for funding to support tree planting in 2022/23 and 2023/24. The LATF is for 150 replacement standard trees (mainly highway) and the UTCF is for 300 new standards (for schools and greenspaces).

### **Priority 9: Supporting Low Carbon Business**

- It was agreed at the first meeting of the Medway Business Awards to include climate change as an award category.
- A business engagement campaign has begun to build contacts with Medway's businesses.

- Current initiatives (such as the Kent REVS scheme) are being promoted via newsletter, events leaflets and website. Regular meetings scheduled with climate change team to brainstorm future initiative.

## **Priority 10: Communications**

- The Climate Response team attended Armed Forces Day in June. It is estimated that the team had conversations with 300 visitors to the stand. It was an opportunity to promote the Climate Change Action Plan, community initiatives, the Sustainable Warmth Grant and the climate change survey and newsletter.
- The climate change survey has continued to be promoted with a closing date of 1<sup>st</sup> July.
- The Great Big Green Week is currently being planned for 24 September - 2 October, and will include a variety of activities focussed at young people.
- The Community Network has met several times. Many of the members are already working on community initiatives as part of smaller groups, for example, the Rainham Eco Hub and Rochester Eco Hub air quality monitoring programmes, and as such the structure of how the network will work in relation to these existing groups is being organised. The Climate Response Team attended their most recent meeting, to support by answering questions on the expectations of the group, and the refreshed action plan.
- A Climate Change volunteering day for staff has been launched to support the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan.
- A Sustainable Warmth Officer was appointed at the end of June to improve the way the Council communicates about discount and energy grant schemes available to residents.

## **Priority 11: Climate Adaptation and Resilience**

- The draft Adaptation Programme document has been reviewed by the Climate Response Team and comments have been submitted to Kent County Council for consideration.
- A revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is currently being drafted.
- The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have agreed to sustainable drainage conditions on 6 applications submitted since April 1st, 2022 and have approved 8 Sustainable Drainage conditions. These are currently in the process of being completed.