

**Climate Change Member Advisory Group**  
**2 February 2023**  
**Item 6. Update on Action Plan**

**Highlights:** The Climate Response team has continued to attend the Kent Climate Change Network and the Procurement sub group which are both key to understanding best practice, partnership opportunities and making progress with Kent and Medway wide activity. Service areas across the Council are increasingly including climate change within their plans and strategies. Several forums have been (re)established which will help to support delivery of the actions in the climate change action plan including the Business for Medway network, and Medway Food Partnership climate change sub group. The Re:fit Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Programme (Phase 1) and LED streetlighting programme are almost complete. A strong sustainable transport programme has continued to be rolled out across Medway's schools during the academic year. Phase 2 of the Solar Together Kent scheme has continued at pace with 74 installs completed by the end of December 2022 compared with a total of 20 installed under Phase 1. The Climate Response team were nominated for and won Team of the Year at the annual Make A Difference Awards in December 2022.

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

Officers are engaging with the Kent Climate Change Network on the development of new actions for the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (ELES) implementation plan (2024-2027) including actions around HR and Sustainable Tourism. The Climate Response team also attended the annual Kent Environment Strategy conference in November. An annual report, highlighting Medway's progress against the ELES for 2022 has been submitted to KCC.

The Kent Climate Change Network procurement sub group has been reviewing DEFRA's updated conversion factors to see how these can be applied to calculate Scope 3 carbon emissions factors and exploring approaches to calculating carbon emissions based on areas of spend. A 6 month industry work placement student started on 9 November and has been researching other local authority approaches to measuring Scope 3 emissions.

The collection and validation of energy usage data for 2021/22 has continued. This information will be used to carry out carbon emissions calculations which will be formalised into a report for publishing on the Council's website in 2023.

The Climate Response team were invited to present at the Kent and Medway Greener NHS Plan Launch in November and encouraged colleagues from Kent County Council to also present to give a holistic view of the Kent and Medway approach to the next zero agenda.

Officers have attended the LGA Climate Action Group quarterly meeting for the first time and will continue to do so. The intention of the group is to gain best practice from others and shape the LGA offer to councils in relation to climate change.

**Priority 2: Public Sector Decision Making**

The following service areas have reported incorporating climate change into strategies, policies and plans and internal service plans:

- The new Highway Strategy and Policy has been produced for consideration by Cabinet in February 2023. It aligns to the Council's priorities for utilising low carbon maintenance techniques and reducing congestion to improve the environment.
- The core theme "Cleaner & Greener" has been included in the Child Friendly Medway (CFM) action plan set by young people. The plan was written in Summer

2022 and reviewed by CFM's leadership team and is now being circulated to Medway Council teams to review the initiative and see how teams can deliver these actions set by young people. This will include the Climate Response team. Young people's interpretation of this theme is:

- **"Cleaner"** and well maintained, free of litter and dirt, with modern play spaces.
- **"Greener"** with greater awareness of, and action to protect, the environment and our future.
- The Climate Change agenda is clearly set out in the Culture and Libraries Management Plan and in manager's PDRs.
- Climate change is included in the Corporate Property strategy.

The Climate Response officer has contributed to a number of key consultations and surveys relating to climate considerations including Lancaster University's survey on health inequality impacts of climate change and Key Cities Net Zero survey.

Learning and Development are working with the Climate Change team on developing an e-learning course to be rolled out via the Council's e-learning platform. This work is currently on hold due to the Climate Response Engagement officer leaving.

The Climate Response team attended the Medway Food Partnership (MFP) annual event in November to promote the climate change action plan with attendees. The Climate Change sub group of the MFP has met and agreed its priorities for the next year. These include:

- Refill - Establish a clear communications plan and toolkit with the aim of increasing the number of Medway businesses signed up to the Refill scheme.
- Develop a resource to explain the link between food and climate change to our residents and partners and develop a list of practical food solutions/pledges to help address climate change
- Use the Sustainable Food Places application process as the catalyst for tracking, monitoring and co-ordinating food work into a strategic approach which aligns with Medway's Climate Change Action Plan
- Explore the Every Mouthful Counts toolkit for Local Authorities to identify where big emissions savings can be made through food and to help establish the next set of priorities.

The sub group will continue to meet every quarter and will look to expand the membership of the group in the new year.

The Climate Response team, Economic Development and Communications officers attended a site visit of the Food Innovation Centre at the University of Kent to identify opportunities for partnership working and promotion of the low carbon technologies. An article is due to be included in the next edition of Medway Matters, highlighting the Medway Food Innovation Centre and the [Food Accelerator Programme](#) for food and drink businesses in Medway.

Policies, with sustainability links, are being reviewed by the new Festivals and Events Manager, with outcomes anticipated to benefit the Summer 2023 programme. All Culture and Library services are exploring opportunities to join the [Creative Green Programme](#), looking at ongoing initiatives and future developments and comparing this to the areas identified on the Julies Bicycle website.

The Culture team are in discussions with the Climate Response team, Highways and Regeneration officers regarding a potential new public art commission for Pier Road with the theme of climate change.

We continue to provide work placement and internship opportunities to support the development and delivery of the climate change action plan. This is evidenced by the Climate Response team hosting a 6-month industrial work placement student from November 2022 and the team's commitment to host an intern via the University of Kent's Employability Points scheme and the University of Greenwich in Summer 2023.

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

This will be covered under Agenda Item 4 (Main Meeting Theme – Planning)

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

We have received notification of a number of successful funding bids in Q3, which will support delivery of the climate change action plan:

- The conditional offer of £115,668.00 from the Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) for 150 trees to be planted, across the 2022/23 and 2023/24 planting seasons, as replacements for trees lost on the highway has been confirmed.
- £125,000 from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund to support tree planting across greenspaces and schools.
- Funding from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to establish a health determinants research collaboration (HDRC) with the University of Kent. The funding is for £5,000,000 over five years and the main programme will start in October 2023. Between now and October 2023 we have an additional £300,000 to conduct some development work, specifically around developing research-focussed links with the third sector and underserved communities, and co-developing a communications and engagement plan.
- The Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan has been approved.
- £166,440 awarded by BEIS for a Detailed Planning & Development study for a River Source Heat Network, match funded by £60k.

The Climate Emergency Funding sub group has continued to meet. They have established a funding opportunity register to capture emerging funding opportunities, a risk register and have been researching alternative sources of funding such as community green bonds.

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

All new builds, intended for use by the Council, will incorporate green energy measures currently available as a starting point, and implementation will be reviewed to reflect the most appropriate solution available within the Councils budget.

The Housing Service continues to make good progress in relation to improving the energy efficiency of its housing stock. Data held within the service is at an all-time high, improved by a recent set of EPC surveys and modelling software that sets a programme of works to improve properties to a certain level. The primary focus is on ensuring that all Housing Stock is at EPC level C by 2030. Certain properties currently failing to meet EPC level C are part of a for the Social Housing Decarbonisation fund, for which we anticipate receiving feedback early in 2023.

Works to move properties to net zero remains a significant challenge as the cost increases exponentially for relatively marginal gains in terms of thermal efficiency. The Council will continue to identify suitable work and funding to support the target of making all homes net zero carbon by 2050, or any other standard that might be set from the decent homes criteria applied to social stock.

During October-December, the visits to letting agents to offer advice on complying with all areas of legislation in relation to letting properties, including energy performance, have continued with further advice given to those that were non-compliant.

The Re:fit Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Programme (Phase 1) is anticipated to be complete by end of February 2023. Phase 2 will focus on the delivery of low carbon heating across 20 Council owned buildings as per the successful Phase 3a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding award of £4.27million. The programme will see heat pumps installed across c. 20 Council owned buildings. Surveys are underway which will inform a High Level Appraisal from SSE.

The LED streetlighting programme is substantially complete in terms of physical works (apart from Heritage lanterns).

No building retrofit schemes have been forwarded to the Trading Standards team to check for legitimacy, in this quarter.

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

Work has continued on the drafting of the EV strategy and it is due to be completed in the first half of 2023.

The updated Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was submitted to DfT on 30 November 2022. Bus operator meetings also continue on a quarterly basis, where service developments are discussed with operators. Officers were informed during the quarter that no direct BSIP capital funding will be provided by government following a previous bid submission; however, an associated £170K revenue allocation will be received over a three-year period. Discussions will continue with local bus operators as a longer-term ambition for them to move towards ULEV on their services.

The Council intends to bid for the next round of Active Travel capital funding [ATF4] with further details still to be published by Active Travel England. Dedicated revenue funding is also being used to develop a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan [LCWIP].

Officers have continued to:

- work with schools in Medway to support the development of School Travel Plans, in line with the Modeshift STARS national accreditation platform. This work will continue in to Q4 and 2023/24.
- promote active travel initiatives to schools in Medway. Campaigns which were successfully supported during the quarter included Cycle to School Week, October Walk to School Month, Bikeability and Walk Once a Week (WOW)
- deliver road safety education sessions at schools in Medway, which included promoting safe walking routes for pupils
- promote the Road Safety Education offering to schools in Medway, distributing information to all KS1 & 2 settings during the period. There was a high level of interest in both virtual and in-person delivery during the quarter in line with previous quarters.

The Transport Engineering Team continued work on traffic signal improvement schemes across Q3, in order to improve traffic flows on the network. Successfully delivered schemes in this quarter include improvements to bus priority at the signals in Chatham Waterfront Way Bus Station, and adjustment to signals on the A2 Corporation Street Rochester.

Kent and Medway Journey Share and the Medway Council Closed Car Share Community group were promoted as part of Liftshare Week in October. This was a soft promotion as we are not currently able to incentivise the scheme.

The Environmental Protection team continued to maintain the air quality monitoring network with much reduced officer availability to carry out calibrations, attend to call outs and change diffusion tubes. This has helped to maintain high levels of data capture across our monitoring sites.

#### DEFRA Air Quality Grant Programme

**Rainham idling project:** the signage testing phase of this project has been scheduled for March 2023 to avoid the impacts of the M2/A249 junction works. The Environmental Protection Team attended the Rainham Green Drinks meeting on 5th December 2022 with representatives of the University of Kent project team to discuss the project in more detail with the local community, including the timeline, volunteering for surveys and developing a community lead sign. A workshop is planned to take place early in 2023 to start work developing the community lead sign.

**ULEV feasibility study:** the gateway 1 report was presented to procurement board on 19th October 2022 and approval was given to proceed. Work on the tender documents is being progressed.

A further application was submitted at the end of 2022, under the 2022/23 air quality grant programme to deliver measures in the recently approved Four Elms Hill Air Quality Action Plan. The proposed project involves:

- Deploy a network of air quality sensors (in/around the Four Elms Hill AQMA)
- Carry out a vehicle emissions measurement campaign
- Model the impact of traffic speed scenarios on air quality in the AQMA
- Deliver an engagement and behaviour change programme (including setting up a local action group we are calling the Hoo Peninsula Air Quality Action Group) with a focus on young people
- Upgrades to the KentAir website to host project information, share data etc
- Implement/pilot traffic speed changes in the AQMA using the sensor network to monitor the effect on air quality

Confirmation of successful applications is expected in February/March 2023.

Officers continued to promote the Kent REVS scheme to Medway businesses up until the end of 2022. Out of the 13 Kent districts that participated and Medway, Medway ranked 6th with 26 vehicle loans administered.

From 1st September 2022 the RCV fleet has been successfully operated on Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil without impact on vehicle operation or service delivery. This switch has the potential to deliver reductions in the fleet's current carbon emissions by up to 90% and Nitrous Oxides emissions by up to 69% simultaneously helping to improve Medway's air quality and reduce service impact upon the environment. Work continues to examine the options for a replacement RCV fleet, including zero emissions technology. This is being reviewed in light of the latest technology, financial implications and the overall requirements for the whole fleet. The Waste Project team continues to engage with providers and experts in order to identify any future viable solutions to move from HVO to a zero-emission technology.

Promotion of staff discount for bus travel continues with the appropriate information provided for both the Council staff website and Arriva website.

In terms of producing a timetable to refresh Medway's Local Transport Plan, officers are still awaiting the publication of required guidance from central government before proceeding

with this action. It is anticipated that there will be a requirement for a Quantifiable Carbon Reduction (QCR) plan to be included.

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

Under the Solar Together Kent scheme, 74 installs have been completed in Q3 with a further 22 installs booked. There have been some delays in booking installs due to supply chain issues, due to global shortages however the installer is working to ensure that all customers, wishing to proceed, have an installation booked by January 2023. The portfolio holder has given approval for Medway Council to participate in another round of the programme in 2023, scheduled to launch at the end of March.

As noted under Priority Area 4, the bid for additional funding for a Detailed Planning & Development study for a River Source Heat Network in partnership with BEIS has been successful and the tender process will commence by end of Q3 in conjunction with the Hoo heat district network techno-economic phase.

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

As per the update under Priority Area 4, £125,000 from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund has been awarded to support tree planting across greenspaces and schools in 2023.

As part of the Clear Channel Environmental Innovation Fund, a site has been identified for a green living roofed bus stop and living wall/vertical meadow on the High Street in Intra at the junction with Bath Hard Lane. Planning has been submitted for the living wall and we are awaiting timescales for works to the bus stop.

Working with the Rainham Eco-Hub, edible-trail spots at Riverside Country Park and Rainham Precinct have been added. Several other sites have been identified across Medway, with 4-5 to be launched in Spring 2023. Medway Adult Education (MAE)'s Dementia Friendly Gardening Club has been successful, in partnership with The Rotary, in a £5000 funding bid from Rochester Riverside to create an urban community gardening space at the front of the Rochester Community Hub, as well as 2 potential locations on the high street. MAE are working with several GP Surgeries to help create community gardening spaces and then run workshops there. MAE's Fort Amherst allotment is active. Several courses and workshops have taken place in this period although more learner numbers are needed.

A partnership project is being explored with stakeholders on the beneficial use of dredged material as a coastal flood prevention measure and habitat creation.

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

The Climate Response Officer presented to a group of businesses at the relaunched Business for Medway event in November, at which the Federation of Small Businesses were in attendance. The presentation included a simple approach to calculating emissions and developing an action and engagement plan. Businesses were shown the case studies page on the Council's climate change webpage and encouraged to submit examples of their own progress. The [www.medway.gov.uk/netzerojourney](http://www.medway.gov.uk/netzerojourney) link was also shared with the group so that they could look at the resources and funding opportunities available to businesses.

The Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (KICC's) business support programme is 7 months in, with 8 businesses on intensive scale up programmes. Net zero understanding is ingrained within start-up business support.

The number of businesses reached via Medway's Economic Development communication streams (newsletter, social media, business events) has increased. Business for Medway has also noted it's interest in looking into wholesale energy purchases and the potential for it to be renewable in the future.

The Upcycle Your Waste project continues to be promoted to businesses.

Climate Change and Biodiversity Net Gain were featured items at the annual Major Developer's Forum, with the Climate Response officer invited to give a presentation to attendees.

No complaints regarding the Essential Packaging and Waste Directive were received between October-December 2022.

### **Priority 10: Communications**

The Child Friendly Medway team sponsored the October Walk to School project – through funding prizes to encourage student and schools participation.

The results of the public survey on Climate Change have been collated and reviewed. 71 responses were received of which a positive 84% agree that their actions can help tackle climate change and 90% agree that reducing the impact on the environment is a personal priority. Over half of respondents are aware that Medway Council has a Climate Change Action Plan and what it includes (59%). Only 29% of respondents agree that they know climate change related campaigns and events are taking place in Medway and 24% agree that they know they can get involved in climate change action in Medway. The Climate Response team shared the results of the survey at a recent Service Managers meeting and asked the group to consider existing links with under-represented groups that could be progressed as part of future engagement activities. A response to the suggestions raised in the survey will be published on the Climate Change webpages in Q4. It is intended that the responses to the survey will inform future engagement activities in 2023.

Schools are being provided support through the Schools Climate Change Network which meets the second week of each term. There have been no requests for school lesson plans or support with home learning activities to date from this group. The Kent Air website has information for schools available. When the vacant Environmental Protection Officer and Climate Response Engagement Officer posts are filled, this will be looked at again, to check there is still a need for these resources. The team will continue to encourage more schools to join the group to share best practice and ideas.

In November, officers supported and attended the annual KM Green School Awards in Ashford, where nine schools in Medway collected awards for their active travel achievements, including safer routes to school, recycling and other environmental initiatives. Promotional coverage was featured on the Kent Online.

Medway Adult Education (MAE) has been running Family Learning after-school gardening clubs at three primary schools, including supporting them on their journeys to eco-school statuses. MAE are also working with the Family Hubs- recently helping enable the clearance of a garden space at Oaklands, in preparation for family gardening sessions to begin delivery from early January.

MAE continues to run online courses in Climate Change and Environmental Awareness. The Medway Remakery is live and delivers some workshops around Medway in repairing and fixing e.g., donated items through charity shops. MAE are in discussions with Men in Sheds and The Octopus Foundation to deliver 'green' DIY workshops and courses. MAE are also actively seeking to recruit woodwork tutors to offer many more options internally.

Due to a high number of referrals from LAD2, where a number of referrals were transferred over to LAD3/Sustainable Warmth, Housing officers are now focusing on promoting HUG1 (Home Upgrade Grant) as part of the Sustainable Warmth Competition. Officers are working closely with the Communications team to target off gas properties. Officers are also awaiting a project proposal from Eon around the ECO4 (Energy Company Obligation) Scheme. A Statement of Intent has been published on the Medway Council website. The Housing team has also been working with community groups, social media and other media channels to promote schemes, grants and advice, such as the Household support fund and Energy Saving Trust.

The "Share the Warmth" campaign has now ended. Data is being collected by The Behaviouralist and a full report on the campaign, along with lessons learnt, are expected early in 2023. The Housing team are also working with the University of Kent/Kent Business School to deliver a project called "Net Zero Landlord" as part of the Net Zero Innovation Programme, funded by the Local Government Association. Focus groups are scheduled for February and March 2023.

Highways are part of ADEPT and LCRIG which are platforms that keep the Council up to date on decarbonisation matters in the industry. The Highways team are investigating setting up an innovation group to formulate a decarbonisation plan and alongside our Highway Infrastructure Contract partners, Volker Highways, are looking to create research links with academic institutions and third parties.

The concept of an informal staff network and inter-departmental sustainability challenge were raised at the Service Manager's meeting as part of presentation in September and the groups input/feedback was requested. The staff climate change volunteering day was also promoted.

Development of a behavioural change programme for councillors is on pause until after the elections in 2023.

A document showing the links between external and internal partners and networks has been produced and can be found at Appendix 1 (Medway Climate Change Action – Partnership Working).

An expanded update will be provided against Agenda Item 5 (Communications and Engagement).

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

The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy has been drafted and will be taken to Cabinet in early 2023.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have agreed to sustainable drainage conditions on 23 applications submitted since 1 April 2022. These are currently in the process of being completed. The LLFA are consulted on all major applications and also have a list of all applications in order to comment on and secure Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) where appropriate.

A consultant has been instructed and has begun undertaking modelling and optioneering for a Flood Alleviation Scheme to reduce flood risk and increase resilience in Luton. This stage will be completed by the new financial year (2023/24).

Officers have continued to work with developers and the SEMS development to find the best solutions to deliver improvements in Hoo using outputs from the Surface Water Management Plan.



Discussions are under way with the Environment Agency regarding funding for the Strood Flood Risk Strategy.

The Surface Water Management Plan for Lower and Middle Stoke is almost complete