

## **Health and Wellbeing Board**

**4 September 2025**

### **Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2028**

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#### **Summary**

The refreshed version of the Climate Change Action Plan was considered and adopted by the Cabinet on 26 August 2025. It is the third iteration of the plan since the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency in 2019. Its vision aligns with the One Medway Council Plan priority "enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities."

The actions within the plan aim to reduce carbon emissions in line with the One Medway Council Plan objective to achieve net zero by 2050 and increase resilience against the impacts of climate change for both Medway Council and Medway "the Place". The plan has been refreshed to reflect the Council's current approach to climate action and aligns with the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

#### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to note the refreshed Climate Change Action Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 and 2, and provide any feedback or comments.
- 1.2. The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to consider and share how they or the organisations that they represent can work in partnership to support the aspirations of the Climate Change Action Plan and in doing so, amplify the health and wellbeing benefits of climate action across Medway.

#### **2. Budget and policy framework**

- 2.1 A number of strategies and legislation support health and wellbeing through the climate agenda:

- The Paris Agreement and Un Sustainable Development Goal 13, promote global efforts to limit climate change, helping reduce health risks from extreme weather.
- The UK Climate Change Act (2008) and the UK Government's response to the UK Climate Change Committee's (CCC) 2024 Progress Report, set legal and strategi frameworks for reducing emissions, with recognised health benefits such as cleaner air and warmer homes.
- The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) 2022 identifies health threats like heatwaves and air pollution, guiding local adaptation to protect vulnerable communities.
- NHS England became the first health system to embed net zero into legislation, through the Health and Care Act 2022, placing a duty on the NHS to consider statutory emissions and environmental targets in their decisions.
- The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy was formally adopted by the Council in January 2021. The strategy supports a clean economic recovery and healthier environments across the county.
- The One Medway Council Plan 2024/28 acknowledges the Climate Change Action Plan and the journey to net zero by 2050 within Priority 3: "Enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities."

### 3. Background

- 3.1. Medway 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.
- 3.2. The Council's first Climate Change Action Plan was approved by the Cabinet in June 2021 and subsequently a "light touch" refreshed version published in 2022.
- 3.3. Quarterly progress updates against the Climate Change Action Plan are presented to the Climate Oversight and Implementation Board (COIB), which was established in October 2024 and chaired by the Director of Place. Annual progress updates have been published on the Council's climate change web pages since 2021.
- 3.4. Good progress has been made against both iterations of the plan. Infographics showcasing achievements, since the Council declared a Climate Emergency, are included within the Climate Change Action Plan (Appendix 1).
- 3.5. Progress has been made during a period of significant challenges for the Council arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and on-going pressure on government funding.
- 3.6. **Council emissions** - Annual carbon emission reports for the Council's estate and operations are published on the Council's climate change web pages. Based on the latest available data (2023/24), the Council's carbon emissions have fallen by 36% against the baseline year (2018/19). Data for 2024/25 is

currently being collated and will be added to the web pages by the end of 2025.

3.7. **Area wide emissions** – Greenhouse gas emissions estimate data is published annually by the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). The latest estimated figures, published in June 2025, provide data for the calendar year 2023 (January-December). In 2023, Medway’s territorial emissions (those produced due to activities taking place in Medway) were 791.67kt CO<sub>2</sub>e, which represents a reduction of 32% since 2018 (the “baseline” year - the year before a climate emergency was declared by the Council). The extent to which different sectors contribute to total emissions in 2023 is as follows:

- Domestic – 35.31%
- Transport – 34.52%
- Industry, commercial and public sector – 22.32%
- Waste management – 6.19%
- Agriculture – 2%

3.8. In addition to reducing the Council’s emissions and enacting the Council’s leadership role to support a reduction in area wide emissions, the Council also has a role in responding to the changing climate. In support of this the **Climate Change Action Plan (Appendix 1)** includes two new distinct aims, which are not explicitly outlined in the current 2022 action plan. These are:

- Reduce carbon emissions to achieve net zero by 2050 (for Medway Council and Medway “the Place”)
- Increase resilience against the impacts of climate change

3.9. The approach taken to developing the Climate Change Action Plan includes:

- Five priority areas have been identified based on Medway’s emissions sources and opportunities for delivering the most impactful actions. These are:
  - Knowledge and Empowerment
  - Clean, Efficient and Equitable Energy
  - Sustainable Travel and Transport
  - Resource Efficiency
  - Green and Resilient Medway
- The plan includes the context for the need for change, the wider benefits of taking action (including improved health and wellbeing) and a high level explanation of why each priority area is important. It also summarises the approach to delivery of the plan and governance.
- Actions have been updated to reflect progress to date and new opportunities. Actions have been developed to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound). All actions have defined outputs to ensure clear expectation from the outset of delivery and agreed measures of success. The **Action Plan Tables** are included in **Appendix 2**.

- The Climate Change Action Plan aligns with and supports new and emerging Council and county wide strategies and plans. A full list of these is included in the Climate Change Action Plan (Appendix 1, page 33).
- While each action in the Climate Change Action Plan has a clear owner responsible for that action, it is a corporate action plan owned and delivered by the whole organisation. Success will be achieved by the whole organisation committing to and delivering change, driven by strong leadership and governance. Oversight for the delivery of the plan will be led by the Climate Oversight and Implementation Board (COIB), chaired by the Director of Place. Quarterly progress reports will be produced and brought to the COIB before being published on the Council website.

#### 4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1. A focused Climate Change Action Plan helps to respond to specific challenges and harness opportunities.
- 4.2. The Local Government Association suggests that local authorities, through their policies and partnerships, have a strong influence over more than a third of emissions in their area and many residents and businesses look to the Council for leadership on climate action. A large number of actions in the Climate Change Action Plan reflect this either through the implementation of strategy or directly supporting Medway's communities.
- 4.3. The plan has synergies with the priorities of the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Delivering against the actions within the Climate Change Action Plan will directly support the building blocks of health and wellbeing enabling residents to make healthier choices. Some examples include:
  - Introducing School Streets in Medway makes **safer, healthier streets** for children by improving **air quality** which aids with respiratory illnesses, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport.
  - Supporting volunteers to participate in tree planting activities led to reports of increased wellbeing and **social connection**. Long term, expanding our greenspaces and increasing tree canopy coverage will provide opportunities for improved **air quality**, improved **shade** during heatwaves, increased opportunities for **outdoor activity** and social interaction.
  - Supporting Medway's homeowners to access funding to make their homes more energy efficient, helps to **lower energy bills** and make **warmer, healthier homes**.
- 4.4. While climate change will be experienced by everyone, it is important to recognise its consequences will not be shared equally. Many of the most harmful impacts fall disproportionately on vulnerable groups including children, older adults and individuals with disabilities or health conditions. Additionally, access to climate solutions is not universal, meaning some communities may be excluded from the advantages of taking action.

- 4.5. To address this, the Climate Change Action Plan must be rooted in equity and inclusion to reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for the Medway's most vulnerable communities. This includes ensuring that our decision making processes consider vulnerable populations, engage directly with under-represented communities and ensure that local voices shape local solutions. This approach aligns with Medway's ambition to become a Marmot Place and contributes to making Medway a cleaner, greener, safer, and more connected place for all.
- 4.6. Collaborative action will be key to driving forward action towards net zero for Medway "The Place", enabled by strong partnership working with a range of key stakeholders. A list of these is included in the Climate Change Action Plan (Appendix 1, page 33). By aligning efforts, we can amplify the wider benefits of climate action, including health and wellbeing, and ensure a joined-up approach to improving population health in Medway.

## 5. Risk Management

- 5.1. The Climate Change Action Plan sets out two clear aims: to achieve net zero and improve resilience, to be achieved through carbon reduction and climate adaptation measures and strong leadership. Not achieving these aims poses a risk to the organisation and this is reflected in the Council's corporate risk register (Appendix 3).

## 6. Consultation

- 6.1. A public survey, on the proposed aims and priority areas for the new plan, was undertaken in 2024 resulting in more than 400 responses. The survey results will be published on the climate change web pages when the plan is published.
- 6.2. A number of teams and committees have been consulted during the development of the Climate Change Action Plan including service areas across the Council, the Climate Oversight and Implementation Board, Medway's Community Climate Working Group, the Member Climate Working Party, Regeneration, Culture and Environment (RCE) Departmental Management Team (DMT) and Children and Adults (C&A) Departmental Management Team (DMT), Corporate Management Team (CMT), Overview and Scrutiny (Business Support and Digital (BS&D) and RCE) and Cabinet.
- 6.3. Medway's Community Climate Working Group, which meets quarterly supported by the Climate Response team, is made up of organisations across Medway including NHS Kent and Medway representatives, care providers, the voluntary sector and more. Involvement from other community representatives is welcome.
- 6.4. The Climate Response team attend quarterly meetings of the NHS Kent and Medway ICS Environmental and Sustainability Steering Group to exchange knowledge and seek opportunities for system working on climate action with partners and trusts.

- 6.5. The Climate Response team has a strong focus on community engagement. In addition to the specific actions in the Climate Change Action Plan, a Communications and Engagement Strategy (Appendix 4) sets out our approach to engagement during 2025/26, which includes promoting the links between climate action and the wider benefits such as improved health and wellbeing.

## 7. Climate change implications

- 7.1. The Climate Change Action Plan is intended to continue to have a direct positive impact on the Council's aspirations of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Individual actions in the plan will have varying levels of impact on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and/or improved resilience. The actions which are intended to have a sustained long-term impact on behaviour change, such as improvements to bus infrastructure and services to encourage increased bus passenger numbers, will clearly have the biggest impact on greenhouse gas emission reductions. The scientific evidence shows that our climate is changing which will have consequences on service delivery and an increased demand for a pro-active response. The Climate Change Action Plan 2025-28 seeks to respond to the challenges arising, ensuring the Council provides high-quality services and safeguards the health and wellbeing of Medway's communities.

## 8. Financial implications

- 8.1. The goal of achieving net zero carbon by 2050 for both the Council and the area itself is a challenging task, coupled with supporting all of Medway's communities to become resilient to the impacts of climate change. The pace and scale of action required, far exceeds the Council's own resources, and is dependent on government policy and funding to achieve it. Actions within the Climate Change Action Plan are funded through relevant service budgets and external grant funding. Delivery of some of the actions contained within the plan may have financial implications and business cases will be developed and presented for consideration through the relevant governance processes where this is the case.

## 9. Legal implications

- 9.1. There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Local authorities undertake a key role in addressing climate change at a local level and are able to decide how best to address these challenges. The publication of a Climate Change Action Plan is lawful under the Localism Act 2011.

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## Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Medway Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2028  
APPENDIX 2: Climate Change Action Plan Tables  
APPENDIX 3: Corporate Risk Register – Climate Change  
APPENDIX 4: Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025

## Background papers

[Climate Emergency Declaration – Full Council - April 2019](#)

[2022 Climate Change Action Plan](#)