

<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	16 December 2020
<b>Report Title</b>	Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Tim Valentine, Cabinet Member for the Environment
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Nick Vickers, Chief Financial Officer
<b>Head of Service</b>	Nick Vickers, Chief Financial Officer
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Janet Hill, Climate Change Officer
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Cabinet notes the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy.</li> <li>2. That Swale Borough Council works with KCC to deliver this strategy where appropriate.</li> </ol>

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report is to introduce the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy and to recommend that Cabinet notes it and works with KCC where appropriate.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is to identify an evidence-based pathway to deliver clean growth, and specifically, strategies and actions to eliminate poor air quality, reduce fuel poverty and deliver an affordable, clean and secure energy supply for Kent and Medway. The Strategy includes the commitment to meet the UK Government's target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 for the country.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 In 2020 most councils in Kent declared a climate emergency with varying net zero target dates.
- 2.2 Swale Borough Council set the most ambitious targets in Kent with a borough wide target of net zero by 2030.
- 2.3 KCC, despite lobbying by various LAs and other partners, has retained the government target of 2050 but with significant reductions by 2030.
- 2.4 The objective of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is to outline the Kent and Medway approach to achieving a reduction in carbon

emissions and improvements in air quality, with an agreed Kent and Medway target of net-zero emissions by 2050. The aims of the strategy are:

**EVIDENCE:** Provide an ongoing evidence and intelligence base; linking data sets to identify hot spots and opportunities, and to build the business case for action across Kent and Medway.

**POLICY AND STRATEGY:** Facilitate the development of evidence-based policy and strategy to future proof growth, tackle emerging issues and realise opportunities.

**LEADERSHIP:** Support the public sector across Kent and Medway to play a strong leadership role with regards to challenges and opportunities.

**ACTION:** Facilitate increased and accelerated action and implementation across Kent and Medway.

- 2.5 The Strategy is a key element of the County Council’s and Kent and Medway public sector partners’ approach to tackling the climate emergency. It provides evidence-based pathways to deliver clean growth, and additionally, specific strategies and actions to eliminate poor air quality, reduce fuel poverty and deliver an affordable, clean and secure energy supply for Kent and Medway. The Strategy was reviewed and amended to take account of COVID-19 in May 2020.
- 2.6 The 10 priority actions link directly to a detailed implementation plan which is being finalised and adjusted in light of COVID-19. The Strategy and implementation plan will be made available on the KCC web pages in order that members of the public and external organisations can understand how the Strategy’s Vision is being realised. A summary of the 10 actions, and Swale’s position is given in Table 1 below. The full set of priority actions can be found on pages 15 to 28 of the Strategy.(Appendix1)

<b>Table 1: Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy 10 Priority Actions</b>	
<b>PRIORITY 1: EMISSION REDUCTION PATHWAYS TO 2050</b>	Set area and organisational five-year carbon budgets and emission reduction pathways to 2050, with significant reduction by 2030. <b>Swale: Net Zero by 2030.</b>
<b>PRIORITY 2: PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION MAKING</b>	Develop a consistent approach across Kent and Medway, to assess, manage and mitigate environmental impacts (both positive and negative), resulting from public sector policies, strategies, service delivery, commissioning and procurement. <b>Swale: Timescales more advanced than KCC.</b>

**PRIORITY 3: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Ensure climate change, energy, air quality and environmental considerations are integrated into Local Plans, policies and developments, by developing a clean growth strategic planning policy and guidance framework for Kent and Medway, to drive down emissions and mainstream climate resilience.

**Swale: Local Plan under review.**

**PRIORITY 4: CLIMATE EMERGENCY INVESTMENT FUND**

Establish a trusted Kent and Medway 'Climate Emergency' carbon sequestration, offset and renewable energy investment scheme and fund.

**Swale: Being developed as part of Local Plan policies on Sustainable Construction and Air Quality.**

**PRIORITY 5: BUILDING RETROFIT PROGRAMME**

Set up a Kent and Medway net-zero buildings retrofit plan and programme for public sector, domestic and businesses.

**Swale: Swale House retrofit process started. Nothing developed yet for domestic and businesses, economies of scale could favour joint working.**

**PRIORITY 6: TRANSPORT, TRAVEL AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY**

Set up a smart connectivity and mobility modal shift programme – linking sustainable transport, transport innovations, active travel, virtual working, broadband, digital services, artificial intelligence and behaviour change.

**Swale: Some joint working under way.**

**PRIORITY 7: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION**

Set up an opportunities and investment programme for renewable electricity and heat energy generation.

**Swale: Already have the highest level of renewable generation in Kent, but would welcome appropriate opportunities and investment.**

**PRIORITY 8: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Develop a multi-functional, natural capital opportunity and investment programme – focusing on environmental projects that store carbon, increase climate change resilience, improve air quality and increase biodiversity.

**Swale: investigating tree planting and other natural solutions.**

**PRIORITY 9: SUPPORTING LOW CARBON BUSINESS**

Develop a support programme for Kent and Medway's Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services sector

**Swale: Already supporting businesses but would welcome a joint programme.**

**PRIORITY 10: COMMUNICATIONS**

Develop a comprehensive communications, engagement and behaviour change programme targeted at residents, employees, businesses and visitors.

**Swale: Working on this including via the fuel and water advice outreach service. We have already worked jointly to promote Solar Together but would welcome more joint communications where appropriate.**

### 3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that we note this strategy and that where appropriate we work with KCC to deliver its objectives.

- 3.2 However because our own targets are more ambitious and we are ahead on delivering some of the priorities it is important that we do not always wait for KCC's lead.
- 3.3 Officers who are members of the Kent Climate Change Network have a long established good working relationship with their counterparts at KCC and across all Kent LAs. In the past we have been the "go to" authority for partnership working – in particular the Coastal Communities 2150 project and Sustainable Sheppey. We do not wish to erode this relationship.

## 4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Adopt the strategy – this would undermine our own targets and Action Plan.
- 4.2 Ignore the strategy – there are times when joint working is necessary.
- 4.3 Note the strategy and work jointly when appropriate – this way we can take action independently and ahead of KCC and other Kent LAs but jointly when it will facilitate our progress.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The strategy has been through several rounds of consultation and workshops.
- 5.2 Officers, in particular the Climate Change Officer, the Air Quality Officer and colleagues from Planning Policy, and councillors have taken part and submitted comments.
- 5.3 A presentation was made to informal Cabinet in March 2020 by the then Head of Sustainable Business & Communities from KCC.
- 5.4 Internally the Cabinet member, deputy, the Head of Financial Services and other officers have discussed the merits of adoption versus noting.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The strategy supports Priority 2: Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges
Financial,	Some of the possible joint actions will become projects and will

Resource and Property	necessarily have financial, resource or property implications. These will be considered on a case by case basis before each project commences
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The ELES in part supports our own declaration and action plan
Health and Wellbeing	There will be health benefits from reducing emissions and improving air quality
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, which has been updated as a result of the public consultation. There are no significant negative impacts. As this Strategy is aimed at improving health outcomes, there are likely to be more positive equality impacts than negative, particularly for Age, Maternity, Carers and Disability.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy

## 8 Background Papers

Declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency June 2019

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g2156/Public%20reports%20ack%2026th-Jun-2019%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>

Swale Climate and Emergency Action Plan April 2020

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Climate-Change-and-Ecological-Emergency/SBC%20CEE%20Action%20Plan%20Final%20with%20illustrations.pdf>

