

## **Swale Borough Council**

### **Annual Climate and Ecological Emergency Progress Report 2021**

#### **Background**

In June 2019 Swale Borough Council, in common with many other local authorities, passed a motion to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency.

Swale has some of the most ambitious targets in Kent and the UK, seeking to achieve net zero carbon for our own estate by 2025 and across the borough by 2030. Other Kent local authorities' target dates range from 2030 to 2050.

The motion included the provision of an annual report in January of each year.

This is the second annual report covering 2020's activities to address the emergency.

Despite most of the year being affected by COVID19 and the Council's operations changing dramatically, we have made considerable progress against the targets in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration.

Achievements discussed in this report include: the Carbon Trust Report and the start of the Swale House refurbishment process; the development and adoption of our Action Plan; the switch of most of our vehicle fleet to EVs and the installation of more EV charging points; the Solar Together scheme to enable householders to install rooftop solar PV; the roll out of a fuel and water advice service; new guidance for developers on reducing carbon emissions from new-build housing; the reduction of single-use plastics across our estate; and the appointment of a Climate and Ecological Emergency Project Officer.

#### **Establishing a Baseline**

In order to establish the activities required to achieve our targets, we need to understand the existing situation in both the Council and the Borough as a whole.

#### **Energy Consumption and Emissions**

Researchers at the Tyndall Centre in Manchester University have developed a tool used by local authorities to determine necessary emission reductions. Inputting our details gives an annual reduction across the borough of at least 13% per year and up to 25% in order to achieve our targets.

Latest figures on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are released annually by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The latest figures, released in June, give us the data until the end of 2018.

Due to the nature of businesses in Swale, Swale has always had higher energy consumption and carbon emissions from the commercial and industrial sector in

comparison to other Kent districts (as seen in figure 1). The commercial and industrial sector are responsible for most of the carbon emissions in Swale. Emissions from this sector have reduced since a peak in 2010, which has contributed substantially to a reduction in the overall carbon emissions in the borough

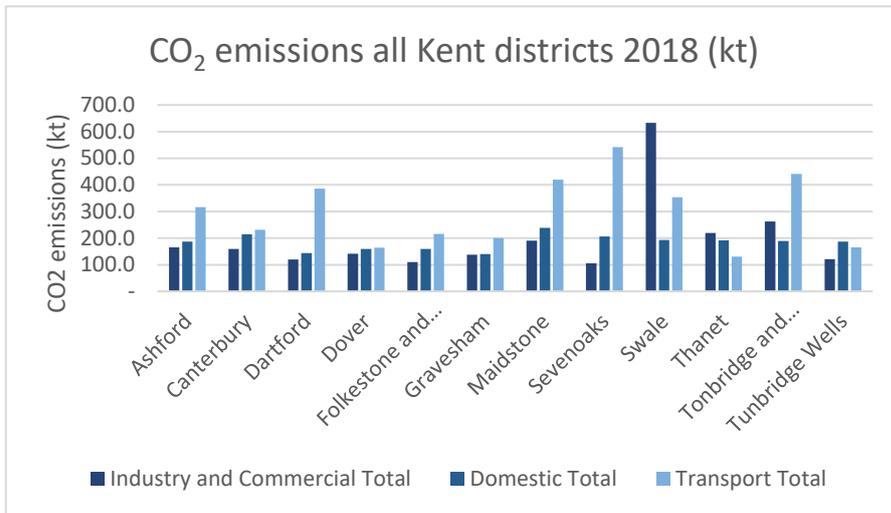


Figure 1 - Source BEIS

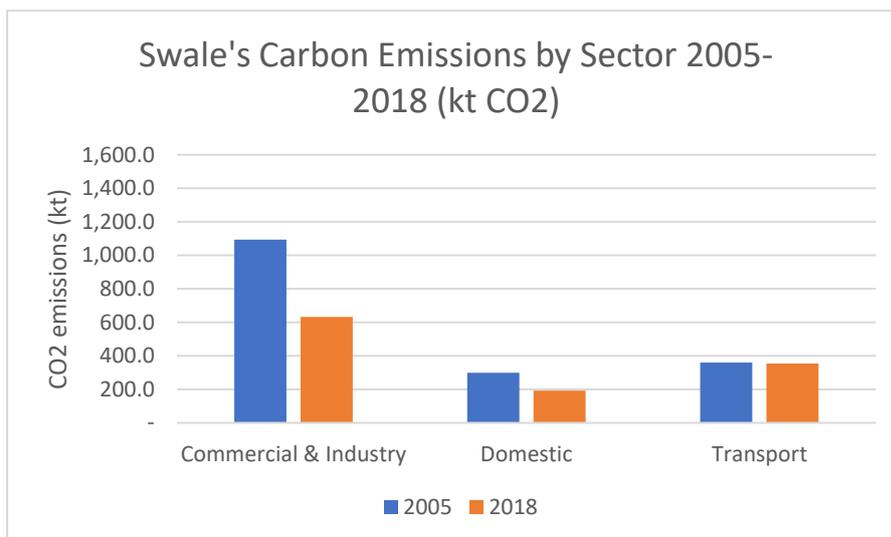


Figure 2 - Source BEIS

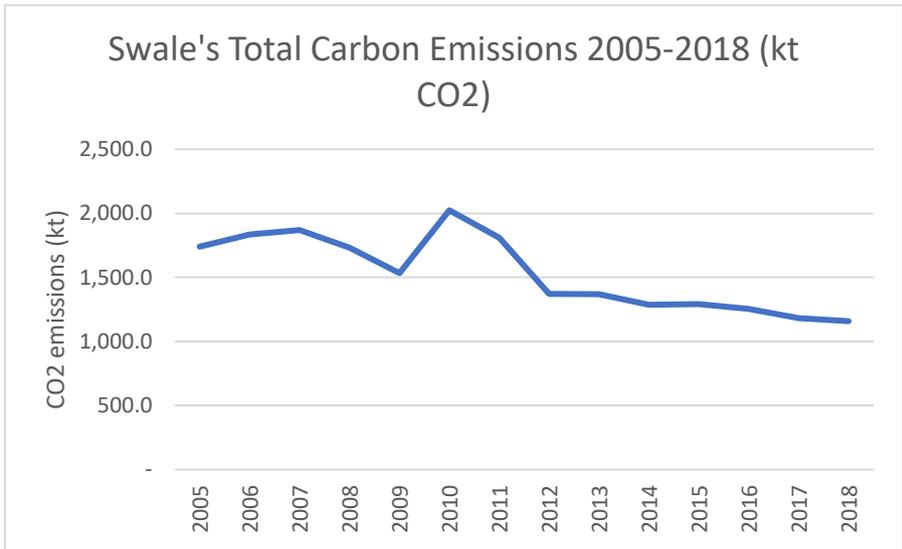


Figure 3 - Source BEIS

In Swale in 2018, 16% of emissions came from domestic properties, 30% from transport, and 54% are industrial and commercial emissions (see figure 2). The total carbon emissions from the borough have decreased over time. Between 2017 and 2018, total carbon emissions fell by 1.93% (see figure 3).

In figures 4, 5 and 6 below the legend of the y-axis on the left refers to emissions from Swale, the legend on the right refers to Kent and Medway.

### Industrial and Commercial Sector

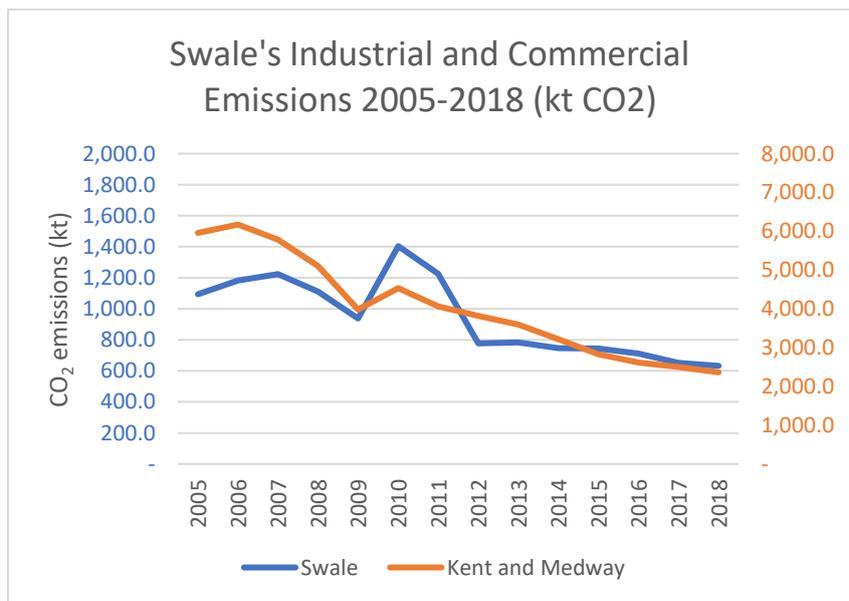


Figure 4 - Source BEIS

At both borough and county level there has been a decrease in emissions from industry. Within Swale's industrial and commercial sector (figure 4) there has been a

42.2% decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions between 2005-2018 with a steep fall to between 2010-2012, which has continued to decline slowly. Between 2017-2018 there was a 2.97% decrease in industrial and commercial CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## Transport

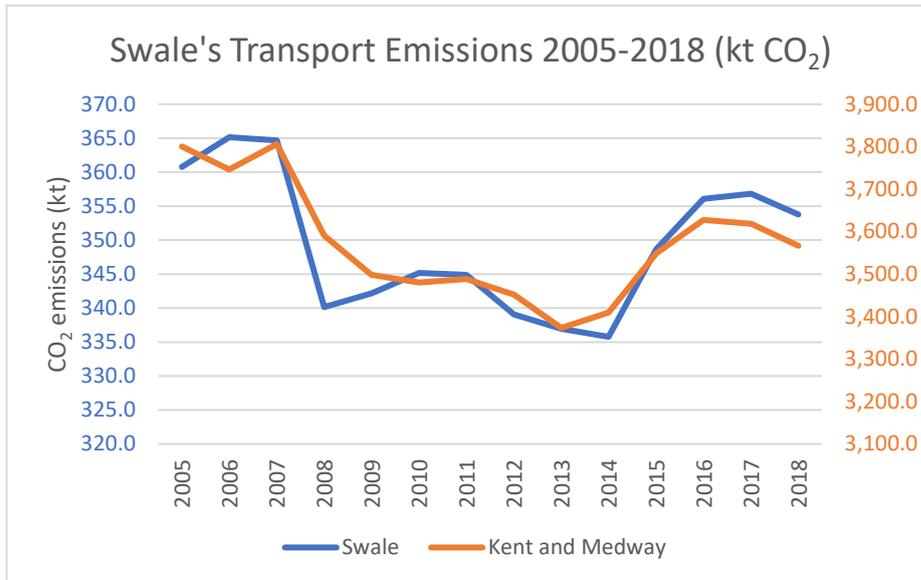


Figure 5 - Source BEIS

In Swale, transport emissions had fallen by 7% between 2005-2014, but rose again by 6% between 2014 and 2017. However, this has started to decrease again between 2017 and 2018, by 0.84% (as shown in figure 5).

## Domestic

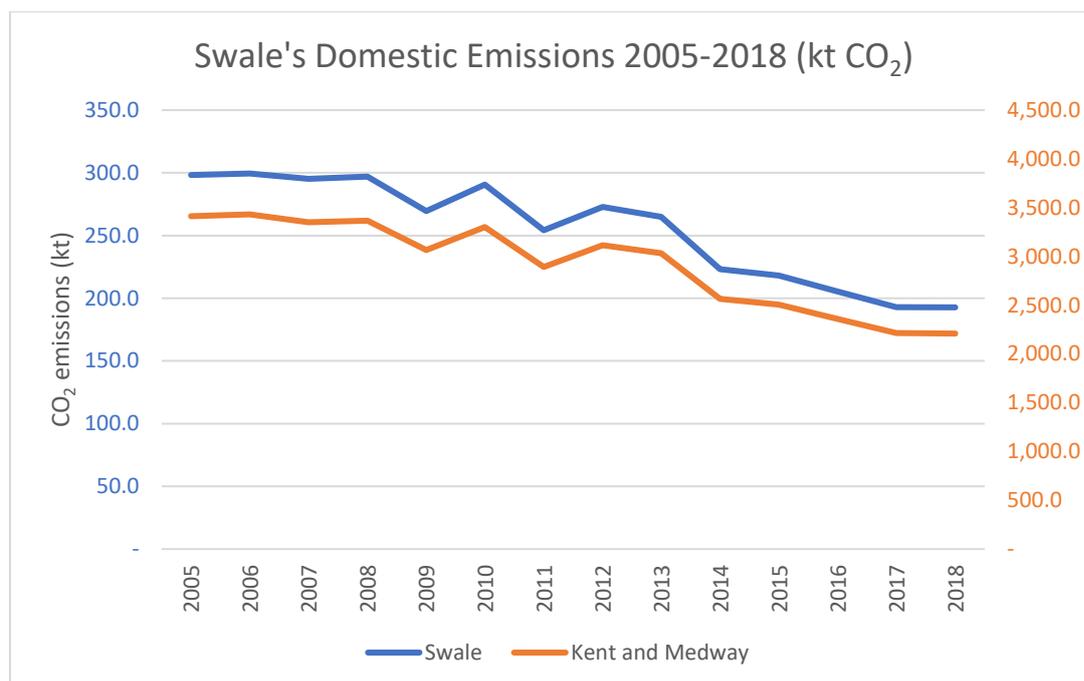


Figure 6 - Source BEIS

Swale's domestic emissions (2018 figures) are the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the County, with 66% resulting from domestic gas emissions, for which Swale also ranks 4<sup>th</sup>. Overall domestic emissions have decreased at a faster rate since 2013. While domestic electricity emissions have continued to follow this trend, domestic gas emissions have not. Between 2017 and 2018 domestic gas emissions increased by 4.8% (121.4 – 127.2 kt).

Overall, emissions across all sectors have been decreasing per capita – in 2005 per capita emissions were at 13.8 tonnes and have decreased to 7.8 tonnes in 2018. Within this time per capita emissions reached a high of 15 tonnes (2010), however the decrease recorded since is likely to be attributed to an increasing population (rising from 135,000 in 2010 to 148,500 in 2018).

## Renewable Energy

At the end of 2018 there were 1,628 installation sites producing renewable electricity in Swale, and 99.3% of these were photovoltaic. The majority of these were domestic roof top installations. In addition, there are seven solar PV sites, four onshore wind installations, one site generating renewable energy from sewerage gas or land fill gas and one site generating energy from biomass. Swale also has two domestic wind installations

These sites plus offshore wind provide a total capacity of 750.4MW of electricity – generating nearly 2,500 GWh. 89% of this comes from offshore wind, and the rest comes from solar photovoltaics (3%), onshore wind (2%), sewerage gas (<1%), landfill gas (<1%) and plant biomass (6%).

As of 1 April 2019, the Feed in Tariff (FiT) scheme has been closed to new applicants. The Smart Export Guarantee came into force in January 2020 enabling domestic and small-scale renewable energy generators to be paid for energy fed into the grid.

The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is a government scheme that aims to encourage the uptake of renewable heat technologies amongst householders, communities, and businesses, through financial incentives for fitting technologies such as heat pumps, solar thermal water heating and biomass boilers

Between April 2014 and April 2019, 128 domestic installations have been accredited for the RHI in Swale, accounting for 11% of Kent and Medway's total.

### Household Waste

Swale Borough Council is the waste collection authority and KCC the disposal authority. We have targets to reduce the amount of residue waste collected and the proportion that is sent to recycling and composting.

Figures 7 and 8 below show the percentage of waste recycled and composted, and residual household waste.

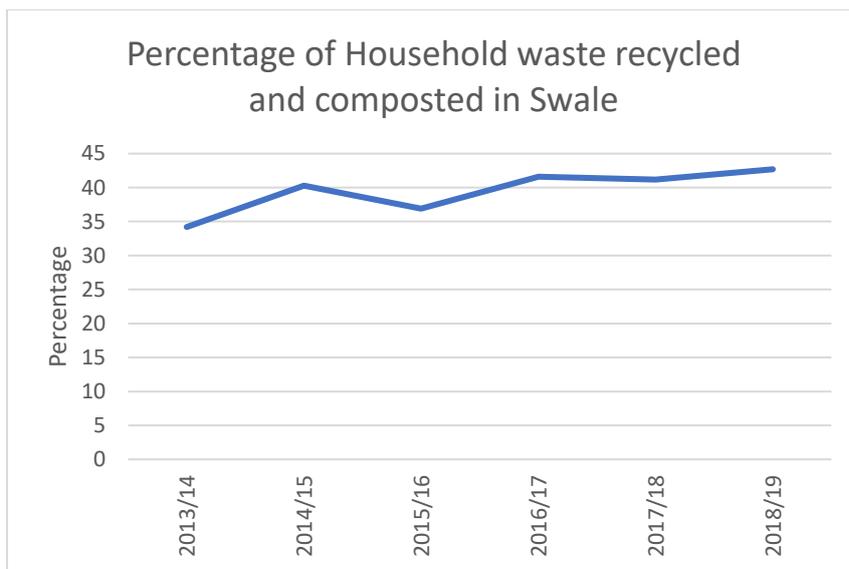


Figure 7 - Source KRP Annual Report

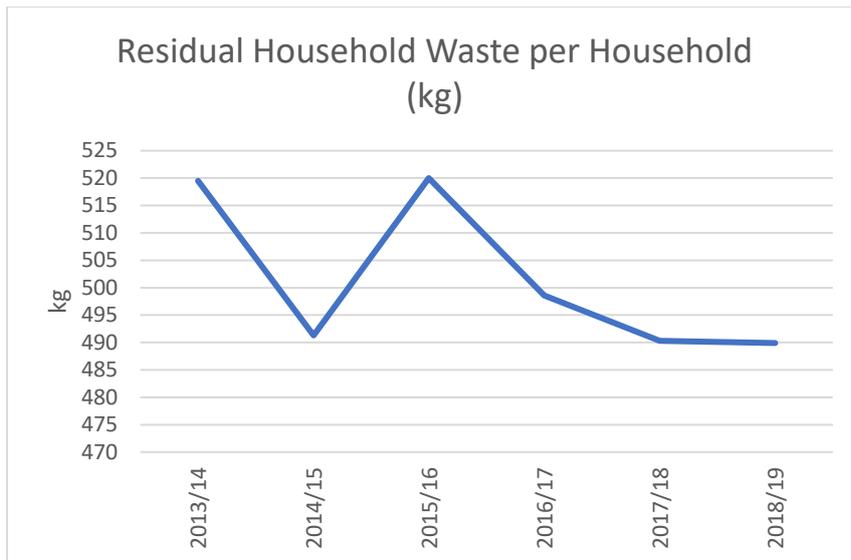


Figure 8 - Source KRP Annual Report

Household waste collection has plateaued (figure 8) and while recycling rates have continued to rise (figure 7), they are lower than our partners in the waste partnership.

Although year-end figures are not yet confirmed, Local Authorities have seen an increase in household waste in 2020 due to COVID19, including food and garden waste; paper, cardboard, and glass; and other recyclables. We are yet to know what percentage of this has been appropriately recycled and whether the circumstances will cause the increase in household waste to continue. Similarly, this year has seen the increase of single-use, non-recyclable PPE items.

### **Swale Borough Council's response to the climate and ecological emergency**

The Climate and Ecological Emergency was declared on 26 June 2019, shortly after the new coalition administration took office following the May 2019 local elections.

Our Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan was adopted by Cabinet on Earth Day - 22 April 2020. It was approved by Council in October.

The full action plan can be found [here](https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Climate-Change-and-Ecological-Emergency/SBC%20CEE%20Action%20Plan%20Final%20with%20illustrations.pdf)<sup>1</sup>. The Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan sets out the Council's strategy and identifies some enabling tools that are essential to progress across a wide range of areas. The plan then identifies a set of specific actions in the following areas: Council operations; Buildings and energy efficiency; Transport and air quality; Resource consumption and waste; Ecology and biodiversity; Resilience, adaptation and offsetting. This report reviews progress under each of these headings.

<sup>1</sup> <https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Climate-Change-and-Ecological-Emergency/SBC%20CEE%20Action%20Plan%20Final%20with%20illustrations.pdf>

## **Enabling Tools – Cross Cutting Themes and Actions**

Swale Borough Council recognises that there are cross-cutting actions needed to underpin the specific actions targeted at the particular causes of carbon emissions. The strategy set out in the Action Plan is based on an approach to Lead, Show, Support.

**LEAD:** We will lead by taking actions to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's own operations and to enhance biodiversity in the management of the Council's own estate.

**SHOW:** Use the council's improved operations and estate as beacon of good practice on the road to net zero.

**SUPPORT:** Assist businesses, organisations and residents to take their own actions and to build the capacity to move towards a low carbon economy in Swale.

This plan requires that actions which address the carbon footprint of the Council's own operations will be an early focus.

Table 1, below, sets out progress on the enabling actions identified in the Action Plan.

| Dept.                                   |                  | Action  | Progress Dec 2020  |
|---|------------------|---|--|
| Actions Swale Borough Council can take: |                  |   |  |
| 1                                       | Resources and HR | <p>Rolling out a climate change learning and development programme for staff to improve understanding of carbon and the wider environmental context. The skills programme will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Base level training for all employees</li> <li>• Encouraging personal responsibility and roll out of a Green Champions Network.</li> <li>• More targeted/ intensive training for organisational decision-makers to enable them to adequately assess carbon impacts in their decisions</li> </ul> | All staff briefings delivered;<br>Training being developed;<br>Intranet messages being sent on a more regular basis. |
| 2                                       | Resources        | Sharing our knowledge – we will provide capacity to share our learning and approaches with others, such as town and parish councils and community groups.   | Five parish council talks given, more planned for 2021;<br>Advice prepared re LED lighting;<br>School talks given.   |
| 3                                       | Resources        | Promotion of low carbon food through council facilities and communication.<br>Promotion of vegan and vegetarian diets using seasonal, local sources to support local food networks.   | Largely on hold due to COVID;<br>Christmas tips given.   |
| 4                                       | Resources        | Identify and align to national days of action to reinforce the message of collective action.  | Timetable drawn up and activities developed for 2021.  |
| 5                                       | Cabinet          | A special projects fund has been set up to fund projects including those to tackle the emergency.   | Fund used to finance Carbon Trust report, Project Officer and Fuel and Water adviser                                 |

Table 1

## Ten High Priority Key Actions

In addition to the enabling tools, we selected ten actions to be classed as 'high priority' for 2020. They are shown in table 2 below and discussed under the theme headings which follow.

|   | Action  | Target date | Annual carbon reduction (tCO <sub>2</sub> e) | Progress Dec 2020   |
|---|---|-------------|--|---|
| 1 | Retro-fit Swale House to cut carbon emissions (e.g. extra insulation, triple glazing, heat pump, solar PV).   | 2025        | 186  | Carbon Trust report delivered March 2020;<br>Consultants appointed, and business case being developed;<br>Bid to Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund submitted.  |
| 2 | Replace SBC fleet vehicles with electric vehicles.  | 2025        | 26   | 9 vans in service Dec 2020;<br>Mayor's car ordered;<br>Pool car ordered.  |
| 3 | Revise procurement strategy to embed the climate and ecological emergency into all procurement decisions.   | 2023        | 780  | Underway  |
| 4 | Prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan, use a planning condition based on a 50% improvement over current building regulations, ratcheting to 75% and 100% improvement by 2025 and 2028 respectively, as the basis for negotiation with developers through pre-application and planning application negotiations. | 2020-2030   | 400 - 1,000+t extra reduction p.a.           | 50% reduction over Building Regs required in all new domestic developments;<br>Developer guidance published and available on website;<br>Local Plan under review.<br>Sustainable Construction Policy and SPD being developed. |
| 5 | Eliminate single-use plastic from council operations wherever possible.   | 2021        | -  | Plastics largely eliminated at Swale House;<br>Cleaning product packaging changed;  |

|           |   |         |                             |   |
|-----------|---|---------|-----------------------------|---|
|           |   |         |                             | Vending machine contracts not being renewed;<br>Biodegradable tree guards being introduced;<br>Rest of estate being considered.   |
| <b>6</b>  | Tree planting on council land (target; 148,100 trees or 60 acres of woodland) to offset 20% of council emissions. | 2025    | 1,481t offset (25t to date) | 2,500 trees planted in country parks 2019/20. 600 metres of hedging to be planted 2020/21. Open space survey undertaken, and potential tree planting sites being identified |
| <b>7</b>  | Install EV charging points across the borough.  | 2025    | to be monitored             | Charging points installed in Swale House, Multistorey Sittingbourne, Central Car Park, Faversham and Rose Street Car Park, Sheerness.                                       |
| <b>8</b>  | Improve facilities and incentives for walking and cycling.  | 2030    | Large                       | Local plan transport strategy developed and out for consultation in early 2021.   |
| <b>9</b>  | Bulk buying scheme for solar PV installations paid-for by residents (in partnership with KCC).                    | 2020-21 | 100                         | Solar Together successfully marketed in the Autumn. Over 450 referrals and 79   |
| <b>10</b> | Fuel and water adviser outreach service to reduce fuel and water bills for vulnerable residents.                  | 2020-23 | to be monitored             | Service Provider appointed early 2020, adviser appointment initially delayed due to COVID. Adviser appointed Oct 2020 and service delivery underway.                        |

Table 2

Progress against all actions can be found [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://swale.gov.uk/news-and-your-council/news-and-campaigns/latest-news/cee-update>

## Council Operations

The Carbon Trust was appointed to undertake carbon foot-printing and baselining of our own estate and to propose steps to achieve carbon net zero across council operations by 2025.

Three workshops were held with members and officers to discuss data needs, scope and outcomes. The report was completed in early 2020 - the full version of which can be found [here](#)<sup>3</sup>.

To reach the target of carbon neutrality by 2025, it was identified that the Council must reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions by approximately 68 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, and scope 3 emissions by 994 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year.

Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy. Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the Council, including both upstream and downstream emissions.

This equates to a 14% reduction in emissions year on year to achieve the target.

The Carbon Trust made several recommendations for our buildings and contracts which we have already fulfilled, such as the electrification of our fleet - 9 electric vehicles are now in use, saving over 30 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each year. A new EV pool car and Mayor's car have been ordered. The parking wardens' two vehicles are already electric vehicles.

The council purchases green electricity and green gas. All electricity is sourced from renewable energy, and gas is sourced from anaerobic digestion.

A working group has been set up to examine options for the new waste contract which will start in 2023. The Carbon Trust report showed that about half of the council's carbon footprint arises from the waste contract. Ways in which the impact of the waste collections on carbon emissions and air quality may be reduced is under consideration by the working group.

Consultants are now working on plans for the refurbishment of Swale House, which is expected to commence in 2021. A bid has been made to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant Fund to partially fund this.

Most of Swale House has LED lighting. A full survey of all of our lighting assets in Swale, both within our open spaces and within our off-street car parks has been undertaken. Plans are being drawn up to upgrade to LED any lighting units that have not already been converted. LED consume up to 80% less energy.

All-staff briefings were held in March to explain our planned actions under the Carbon and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Climate-Change-and-Ecological-Emergency/Carbon-Trust-Report-on-Swales-Carbon-Footprint.pdf>

## **Buildings and Energy Efficiency**

The next Local Plan is being prepared and will incorporate actions for buildings and energy efficiency set out in the Action Plan. Already new housing developments are required to reduce carbon emissions by 50% more than required in the current Building Regulations. Guidance has been published to illustrate how developers can achieve the reduction. Applicants are signposted towards this information when seeking pre-application advice. A Sustainable Construction SPD is in development.

Working through planning committee, the energy efficiency of some large developments has been improved. For example, the development of a supermarket, hotel and care home at Perry Court, Faversham will include several innovations including buildings heated by heat pumps, or waste heat recovered from refrigeration, solar PV arrays and EV car chargers including two 50kW rapid chargers at a strategic location adjacent to a motorway junction.

We are considering establishing an offsetting fund. Where the carbon emissions of a development cannot be reduced, the developer would make a payment into the fund to enable the carbon emissions to be offset elsewhere in the borough. The carbon price should be set to allow onsite carbon reduction to provide the lower cost option, to encourage carbon emissions to be avoided rather than offset.

A scheme to encourage householders to fit solar PV, Solar Together, was due to go live in the Spring but was delayed until the Autumn. Since launching over 450 households in Swale registered their interest, and an offer price is now with householders. 79 households have accepted the offer and we anticipate annual carbon savings of up to 30 tonnes.

After a delay due to COVID19, Children and Families were able to appoint a fuel and water adviser in October. The service is being rolled out to vulnerable residents across the borough, albeit in a different way to originally planned. The adviser has a strong track record of partnership working and stakeholder networking.

## **Transport and Air Quality**

Swale Borough Council's 2018 Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in September 2019, identifying key strategic and local measures targeted to improve air quality within all five of its declared AQMAs.

A new Air Quality Management Area for the Keycol Hill (AQMA 7) and an amendment to St Paul's Street to include particulates (AQMA 4) were declared by Swale Borough Council in October 2020. Details have been placed on the Defra website. Many of the current AQAP measures will be relevant to Keycol Hill and we will also investigate any additional measures specific to this area.

The Council will commission two projects to gather evidence and identify the sources of particulates contributing to the increase of PM10 at the St Paul's Street air quality

monitoring station. The results will feed into an Air Quality Action Plan which will identify targeted measures to improve air quality at St Paul's Street.

One of the key strategic measures is the introduction of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) along the length of the A2 within the borough. A feasibility study to assess the costs and air quality benefits of a CAZ has been undertaken by independent consultants Ricardo. The study includes baseline air quality modelling, the development of potential mitigation options and appraisal of these options using an indicative cost benefit analysis. The findings were published in December following Cabinet approval.

We are working with primary schools (Ospringle, Newington and Lower Halstow), liaising with KCC departments to support adoption and improvement through Kent Smarter Travel plans run by the county council. This links to our Clean Air for Schools scheme. A Kent wide bid to Defra's Air Quality Grant Scheme for an education package will support this.

Additionally, we are establishing an anti-idling campaign, initially around school sites and taxi ranks, from which it can be expanded. This has been approved by the Cabinet. Fixed penalty notices are being drafted, but Covid restrictions have delayed the progress.

Planning Policy is incorporating an air quality policy into the emerging local plan.

Faversham now has a town-wide 20 mph speed limit, which will help to improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions, improve road safety and encourage more journeys to be made by walking and cycling.

## **Resource Consumption and Waste**

Wherever possible use of single-use plastics has been reduced in Swale House. Cleaning product packing has been changed. Drinks machines using plastic sachets have been removed. Vending machine – both food and drink – contracts are not being renewed. Plastic envelopes used to post committee papers have been replaced with paper envelopes. Biodegradable tree guards are being used for tree and hedge planting in the council's country parks. Opportunities to reduce the use of single-use plastic in the rest of our estate are being sought.

Work is ongoing to decrease the amount of household waste collected by promoting each separate method of recycling and to increase the amount of garden and food waste collected for compost. We are also working to reduce contamination of recycling that leads to rejected loads, for example through working with the Kent Resource Partnership on county-wide education/communication programme including bin stickers with recycling messages.

We are developing better signposting for residents to recycling facilities for products that cannot be recycled in the kerbside collections.

Community litter picks have been supported when COVID restrictions have permitted activities. Measures have been taken to reduce the amount of plastic litter in the sea,

including 3 plastic recycling bins on Sheppey's beaches. We are working with KCC to stop the export abroad of recyclables and are influencing KCC to maintain or improve the low levels of waste that go to landfill.

We are promoting the reduced use of single-use plastic in partnership with Plastic-Free Faversham. The cancellation of this year's Hop Festival in Faversham removed the opportunity to build on the previous year's success with reusable plastic beer glasses.

We are promoting improved recycling of commercial waste with businesses across the Borough. Collection of dry recycling and food waste has been introduced for Swale House.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

2,500 trees were planted in our country parks in 2019/20. Six hundred metres of hedging will be planted in 2020/21. A baseline audit of our existing trees has been undertaken. An open space survey has also been undertaken and potential tree planting sites are being identified.

We are reducing our use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer whenever possible, and encouraging the use of compost from food waste recycling.

Faversham was recognised for its bee friendly activities by the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust in conjunction with Kent Wildlife Trusts 'Wild about Gardens' project.

Since January 2020 £6850 has been paid to community organisations across the Borough towards projects that will educate residents on environmental matters, enhance biodiversity, and reduce waste. Projects included; cleansing and clearing rubbish and litter from alleyways throughout Sheerness; creating a green and clean garden; creating a community wildlife and pollinator garden on a patch of wasteland; setting up Leysdown Parish in Bloom and developing and maintaining 5 new garden spaces across Leysdown; the purchase of a composter to turn the school food waste into compost to be used in the school grounds; creating wild meadow areas to encourage local flower and fauna to thrive and "Young People's War On Waste" project. COVID19 interrupted the grant process but we hope for it to be resumed in 2021.

Developers being encouraged to leave gaps in garden walls and fences for hedgehogs.

Coppicing in Perry Wood has been increased to two hectares a year, as set out in the management plan. Coppicing enhances biodiversity, allowing wildflowers and insects to thrive as light reaches the woodland floor. The timber is being used locally.

Via the Green Grid we have supported Trees for Farms and Faversham Tree Week.

The recently drafted Local Plan includes policies to improve development outcomes which support access and recreation, green spaces, biodiversity and climate change

adaptation and mitigation, and ensure the installation and maintenance of landscaping in new developments to contribute to biodiversity net gain via suitable conditions or Section 106 agreements.

### **Energy Generation and Storage**

We are signposting residents and businesses through communicating the benefits of installing energy storage with grid balancing capability. Battery storage was offered as an extra during the recent Solar Together promotion.

The Local Plan draft includes policy on renewable technology at micro and macro levels.

Early work has been done with a local business, BEIS and KCC to look at the potential to use waste heat for a heat network for homes and businesses in Sittingbourne.

### **Resilience, Adaptation and Offsetting**

The draft Local Plan includes policy on climate change adaptation.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments have been undertaken and the Local Plan will reflect the level of current and future flood risk. Development in flood risk areas will be avoided.

The Local Plan will provide for linking habitat restoration and creation to improve access, flood protection and water quality, and the installation and maintenance of green infrastructure via suitable conditions or Section 106 agreements in subsequent developments.

We regularly update the Emergency Plan for the borough in partnership with the County Council and make sure everyone is able to access the information they need to assess any risk to their lives, livelihoods, health and prosperity posed by flooding and coastal erosion.

We bring the public, private and third sectors together to work with communities and individuals to reduce the risk of harm – particularly those in vulnerable areas. We have supported communities in the development of their localised emergency and flood plans.

We are working with the Environment Agency, KCC and the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board to manage flood risk and coastal erosion as appropriate across the Borough.

The sections above show how we have progressed against the Action Plan themes. Before looking forward and at our next priority actions we need to discuss two other topics.

## **Vulnerable Residents**

We pledged through the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration to take steps to avoid any adverse impacts on our most vulnerable residents.

We have contracted Children and Families to deliver a Fuel and Water Advice Service throughout the Borough. Vulnerable residents can self-refer or be referred via various stakeholders for advice on their energy and water use, with a view to reducing their bills and reducing their water and energy use and emissions. The service started in October and has already started to reach households.

No adverse impacts for vulnerable residents have been identified from actions taken during 2020. Action to improve air quality, including development of the infrastructure for electric vehicles, adoption of an EV fleet for SBC and encouragement of active travel by walking and cycling help to protect people suffering from respiratory disease and young children. Active travel has direct physical and mental health benefits.

## **COVID19**

At the start of 2020 we could not have anticipated the effect COVID19 would have on all our lives.

COVID19 has delayed some actions such as the Fuel and Water Advice Service which should have started in March, and the installation of EV charging points. However, there have been some positive impacts. We have moved far more rapidly than expected into the use of virtual meetings. All councillors now have dedicated SBC laptops and online council meetings have been a success. Home working has largely proved to be effective, meaning that business and commuting miles have fallen dramatically. The challenge we now face is to be aware of actions that may need to be taken to prevent a return to 'pre-pandemic' working habits. The recovery from COVID19 does, however, provide a good opportunity to encourage behaviour change towards the goals set in the action plan

The collection of year-end data has not always been possible due to COVID19, for example, because it has not been possible to access buildings to collect meter readings at the required time. Estimates will have to be made of our utility bills and consumption. The pattern of consumption in 2020 will be very different from previous years.

## Looking forward

We have revisited our Action Plan and identified another top 10 actions to prioritise for 2021 – four retained from 2020 and six new ones.

They are detailed in table 3 below.

|   | Action  | Target date | Annual carbon reduction (tCO2e) | Progress Dec 2020  |
|---|---|-------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Retro-fit Swale House to cut carbon emissions (e.g. extra insulation, triple glazing, heat pump, solar PV).       | 2025        | 186                             | Carbon Trust report delivered March 2020<br>Consultants appointed; business case being developed.<br>Bid to Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund submitted.  |
| 2 | Revise procurement strategy to embed the climate and ecological emergency into all procurement decisions.         | 2023        | 780                             | A Member working group has been set up to discuss the focus for a revised Commissioning and Procurement Strategy with an expected completion date of March 2021. The new strategy will provide more emphasis on this topic and crucially require contractors to report back throughout contract terms on their achievement of targets. The existing strategy and procedures do encourage social value considerations with climate being one of the themes. Recent successes include the fuel and water poverty contract, APCOA civil enforcement contract and the purchase of utilities. |
| 3 | Tree planting on council land (target; 148,100 trees or 60 acres of woodland) to offset 20% of council emissions. | 2025        | 1,481t offset of woodland       | 2,500 trees planted in country parks 2019/20. 600m of hedging to be planted in 2020/21<br>Open space survey undertaken, and potential tree planting sites being identified   |

|   |  |        |        |   |
|---|--|--------|--------|---|
| 4 | Improve facilities and incentives for walking and cycling.   | 2030   | Large  | Local plan transport strategy developed and out for consultation in early 2021. Working with Kent Downs AONB and Medway Swale Estuary Partnership on the Linking Coast to Downs project to develop leisure routes, with work being undertaken to identify potential routes. The team are also providing information to Explore Kent who are designing a map to encourage active travel in the Faversham and Sittingbourne area. |
| 5 | Increase engagement with staff to roll out learning about the climate & ecological emergency.                              | Short  |        | Staff briefings delivered and training being developed for return to office working. Intranet messaging increased. First staff commuting survey has been conducted however subsequent work delayed by COVID-19. All staff and councillors provided with home working equipment and services functioning remotely.   |
| 6 | Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions and improve ecology and biodiversity.  | Medium | Medium | To promote business fleet decarbonisation and work-place car chargers. Energy improvement grant signposting via e-bulletin for businesses and website for householders  |
| 7 | Set up an offset fund to enable off-site offsetting within the borough.  | Short  | Large  | Part of the viability study for the Local Plan Review. Further development of an offsetting fund planned.   |
| 8 | Decrease the amount of household waste collected and increase proportion of material that goes to recycling or composting. | Short  | Medium | Work is progressing to encourage recycling (e.g. through a bin sticker campaign) and improve the separation of food waste from the residual waste via increased use of the food waste recycling collections.  |

|    |  |       |       |   |
|----|--|-------|-------|---|
| 9  | Ensure LED lighting is fitted across the council estate, including parks and open spaces.  | 2023  | 19    | Most of Swale House has LEDs. A full survey of all our lighting assets in Swale, both within our open spaces and within our off-street car parks undertaken. Some car park lighting units already upgraded to LED, so will not require any work. Suitable options for the older stock being considered. We are anticipating a full bill of quantities for the upgrade works required by the end of November, to enable us to put together a contract and go out to tender on the upgrade works. . |
| 10 | Improve air quality, focussing on AQMAs along the A2 and the setting up of an EV car-club. | Short | Small | Anti-idling campaign approved by Cabinet. FPNs being developed. Taxi drivers regularly reminded via newsletters<br>20mph zone in Faversham developed by FTC & KCC and trial underway.<br>Clean Air Zone feasibility study and options appraisal completed. Working with KCC to explore delivery.  |

Table 3

While these are our top priority actions, we will not be disregarding the others.

## **Conclusion**

The latest data available show that during 2018 carbon emissions in Swale fell by just 2%. The science-led target is for a minimum reduction of 13% year-on-year. This comparison shows just how significant the change that is required. In due course the government data may show a significant fall in carbon emissions in Swale during 2020, due to the lockdown and other restrictions required to reduce the spread of COVID 19. The challenge will be to retain and build on the best adaptations that have contributed to a reduction in carbon emissions while facilitating and improving our everyday lives (e.g. video conferencing technology, good broadband, more journeys made by walking and cycling, supporting local businesses).

In the eighteen months since the Climate and Ecological Emergency was declared, Swale has made good progress in what have been, for the last year, extremely unusual and challenging circumstances. We remain a leader in Kent in both our ambition and achievement. Highlights include electrification of the SBC vehicle fleet, improved infrastructure of electric vehicle charging across the borough, and the planning condition requiring new built homes to emit 50% less carbon emissions than the current building regulations.

It is always the case that the first reductions made to carbon emissions are the easiest to make. Substantial year-on-year cuts will become increasingly difficult to make. Our challenge is to ensure that the impetus continues to meet our targets.