

From: Susan Carey, Cabinet Member for Environment  
Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 8 September 2020

Subject: Kent & Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy – Progress Update

Decision No: NA

Classification: Unrestricted

Past pathway of paper: NA

Future pathway of paper: NA

Electoral Division: All

**Summary:** The report presents an update of KCC's progress with the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (ELES), which was formally approved and adopted by the Cabinet Member for Environment in July 2020.

**Recommendation(s)**

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to note KCC's progress with the Strategy and advise on on-going delivery and future monitoring.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 The Strategy includes the commitment to meet the UK Government's target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 for the country from a baseline of 8,958.2 kilo tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> (2017).
- 1.3 The Strategy was adopted by Kent County Council in July 2021. Partner organisations across Kent and Medway then undertook local governance processes to support, endorse or adopt the Strategy over the Autumn and Winter of 2020.

1.4 A three-year Implementation Plan for the Strategy was developed, consulted on, and published in Spring 2021.

1.5 In alignment with other Kent strategies, the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy will now be known as ‘Plan Z.’

## 2. The Energy and Low Emissions Strategy

2.1 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:

1. **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.
2. **POLICY AND STRATEGY:** Facilitate the development of evidence-based policy and strategy to future proof growth, tackle emerging issues and realise opportunities.
3. **LEADERSHIP:** Support the public sector across Kent and Medway to play a strong leadership role with regards to challenges and opportunities.
4. **ACTION:** Facilitate increased and accelerated action and implementation across Kent and Medway.

2.2 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. It also supports green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3 The Strategy identifies 10 priority actions summarised in Table 1 below. Full details of these priorities can be found on pages 15 to 28 of the Strategy.

<b>Table 1: Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy 10 Priority Actions</b>
<p><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.</p>
<p><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.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 3: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b> 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.</p>

<p><b>PRIORITY 4: CLIMATE EMERGENCY INVESTMENT FUND</b> Establish a trusted Kent and Medway 'Climate Emergency' carbon sequestration, offset and renewable energy investment scheme and fund.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 5: BUILDING RETROFIT PROGRAMME</b> Set up a Kent and Medway net-zero buildings retrofit plan and programme for public sector, domestic and businesses.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 6: TRANSPORT, TRAVEL AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 7: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION</b> Set up an opportunities and investment programme for renewable electricity and heat energy generation</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 8: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 9: SUPPORTING LOW CARBON BUSINESS</b> Develop a support programme for Kent and Medway's Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services sector.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 10: COMMUNICATIONS</b> Develop a comprehensive communications, engagement and behaviour change programme targeted at residents, employees, businesses, and visitors.</p>

### 3. Governance Progress Update

- 3.1 Since the Energy and Low Emission Strategy was published, 14 organisations/groups have endorsed or adopted the Strategy. This includes Kent County Council, Thanet District Council, Dover District Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Medway Council, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Dartford Borough Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, and Kent Leaders, the Kent and Medway Environment Board, and Kent Joint Chief Executives.
- 3.2 Gravesham Borough Council and Swale Borough Council declined to endorse or adopt the strategy as both Local Authorities are working toward 2030 net-zero targets for their boroughs and determined the ELES's 2050 target was therefore too late. However, both agreed to support the Strategy and its implementation. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's decision to adopt or endorse the Strategy is still pending.
- 3.3 The Energy and Low Emissions Strategy Implementation Plan was drafted, consulted on, and published in Spring 2021. The Implementation Plan is delivered by partners, coordinated by Kent County Council, and overseen by the Kent and Medway Environment Group, chaired by Colin Carmichael. It consists of over 80 actions, which are defined, timed, and costed, across the 10 priorities of the Strategy. The baseline data for ELES is detailed on page 30 of the strategy.

3.5 The Implementation Plan will be responsive to policy and evidence changes and inform both Business as Usual as well as projects. The Implementation Plan will be formally monitored on an annual basis at financial year end and reported to the Kent and Medway Environment Group, the Kent Environment Board and Kent Leaders.

#### 4. Actions Progress Update

4.1 Progress is already being made against the delivery of the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy. A summary of key actions which have already been delivered is in Table 2 below.

<b>ELES Priority</b>	<b>Description of Progress</b>	<b>Result/Next Step</b>
<b>PRIORITY 1: EMISSION REDUCTION PATHWAYS TO 2050</b>	Delivered in December 2020, the Kent and Medway Emissions Analysis and Pathways to Net Zero 2050 report was commissioned to understand the optimum pathway for achieving the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy's target of Net Zero by 2050. It recommends an evidence-based carbon budget for Kent and Medway; future emissions pathways defined by a range of interventions; and highlights the scale and speed of implementation needed.	This report will help Local Authorities set area and organisational five-year carbon budgets and emission reduction pathways to 2050. It also helps identify which sectors are the largest emitters and what key action is needed to be able to reach Net Zero.
<b>PRIORITY 2: PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION MAKING</b>	KCC is leading on the development, testing and rollout of a comprehensive climate change impact assessment and social value framework for public sector decision making, with associated policies, guidance, training, and support.	The final product is due at the end of 2021 for roll out in 2022.
<b>PRIORITY 3: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	A refreshed Kent Design Guide in digital format is in development to replace the 2005 printed version. The refreshed guide aims to ensure there is a county level framework for design quality in building development, including sustainability and renewable energy. This framework directly	The aim is to have the web site publicly available and ready for use by Spring 2022. Once the engagement process concludes, responses will be collated, and work will get underway to further amend the web site early in the New Year.

	follows the ten characteristics of well-designed places outlined in the National Design Guide published by MHCLG.	
<b>PRIORITY 4: CLIMATE EMERGENCY INVESTMENT FUND</b>	Research is underway reviewing options for delivering green investment through Local Authority Pension Schemes.	A review of findings is due in late 2021.
<b>PRIORITY 5: BUILDING RETROFIT PROGRAMME</b>	KCC has committed to an accelerated target of Net Zero by 2030 for its own estate and services and has secured grant funding of £20.6m from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. This funding will support significant retrofit of our estate.	The Public Sector Decarbonisation fund projects will deliver a further reduction of 40% in KCC's carbon emissions by March 2022. (A report on the PSDS schemes came to Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee in 29 June 2021.)
<b>PRIORITY 6: TRANSPORT, TRAVEL AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY</b>	<p>KCC is facilitating a District / Borough wide EV charger network project. This could provide hundreds of charging points across Kent and Medway and will operate as a Supplier funded model with revenue share back to the local authorities.</p> <p>KCC is keen to ensure our smaller communities don't miss out and as such are offering chargers to Parishes who wish to serve their local residents. Parish offices, village halls and community centres are all possible locations for EV chargers</p>	<p>Currently 150 locations have been put forward across the county. This project will provide charging from 7 to 50kwh.</p> <p>Installations within Parishes are beginning shortly on the first 20 locations with the reserve list growing all the time. This project will provide charging from 7-22kwh with funding provided by the Government Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), Kent Lane Rental Fund and the Department for Transport.</p>
<b>PRIORITY 7: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION</b>	Solar Together Kent is a collective solar PV buying scheme that helps households get a reduced-price installation of solar panels. It was run in partnership with iChoosr (the collective buying provider) and coordinated by KCC together with Medway Council and nine District/Borough Councils. The scheme has run from September 2020 and will complete in September 2021.	Solar Together Kent is moving forward opportunities and investment in renewable electricity and heat energy generation. Installations will continue until the end of September 2021 with a total of 450 installs expected providing an annual CO2 reduction of 450 tonnes.

<p><b>PRIORITY 8: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p>	<p>Delivered in June 2021, report, Natural Solutions to Climate Change in Kent, was commissioned that summarises the findings of an overarching assessment of opportunities for nature-based solutions in Kent and the potential benefits these present the county. It also notes the next steps in developing a countywide approach for nature-based solutions to climate change in Kent</p>	<p>Nature-based solutions present an opportunity for us to tackle some of the county's climate change and ecological challenges, whilst delivering wider socioeconomic benefits.</p> <p>As a result of the commission, we now have a better understanding of the potential for nature-based solutions in the county. Whilst the Council's estate presents opportunities, wider joined up thinking and partnership working will enable bigger and better gains for the county.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 9: SUPPORTING LOW CARBON BUSINESS</b></p>	<p>Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE), led by KCC, is a programme of integrated measures, consisting of financial assistance and business support, to increase demand for clean technology, increase energy efficiency of businesses, and increase growth of the low carbon environmental goods and services sector. The programme was extended to June 2023 with an additional £14m grant from MHCLG.</p>	<p>Since LoCASE was extended, there have been 1,436 enquiry forms submitted across the SELEP. These have already been turned in to 105 approved projects totalling £617,806.</p> <p>This is in addition to the initial programme which ran from February 2016 and supported 1,278 Small and Medium Enterprises, through £5m of grant funding, totalling investments of £12.5m.</p> <p>In May, Low Carbon Kent Network won the category Delivering Clean Growth in the ADEPT President's Award</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 10: COMMS</b></p>	<p>A comprehensive Kent Environmental Communications and Engagement strategy has been developed and agreed with partners. It is designed to ensure a collaborative</p>	<p>Supporting a partnership approach to communication and engagement through Kent Green Action means maximised efficiencies and resources, but also creates material that is more</p>

	<p>approach to communications, under the banner Kent Green Action, across Kent and Medway. The action plan includes creating a social media calendar, engaging our staff, sharing our stories via press releases and awards submissions, and engaging with the local community.</p>	<p>impactful and far-reaching.</p> <p>The aim is to unite work and inspire and encourage everyone to connect with nature and take action to improve Kent's environment.</p> <p>KCC will once again be running the annual KES conference, based around the themes of COP26, to raise the profile of our work, showcase exemplars, and further the local partnerships and collaborative working that is already underway. Last year's online conference was a huge success with over 350 attendees and presentations from Lord Deben and Greg Clark MP.</p>
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4.2 The Energy and Low Emissions Strategy was also a key part of Kent County Council's entry for the Local Government Chronical Awards in the 'climate response' category. KCC were shortlisted and winners will be announced in November.

## 5. Financial Implications

5.1 This report relates to the Strategy itself and not individual costed actions. Every partner in ELES is responsible for its own budget in delivering our joint objectives and individual areas of responsibility. As projects that Kent County Council are involved in are developed, the supporting evidence and any cost implications will be identified, and the business case developed through the appropriate governance processes.

5.2 Coordination of the delivery of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy falls within the remit of the existing Sustainable Business and Communities team.

5.3 Kent County Council has committed to an accelerated target of Net Zero by 2030 for its own estate and services and has secured grant funding of £20.6m from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for projects that will deliver a further reduction of 40% in KCC's carbon emissions by March 2022. (A report on the PSDS schemes came to Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee in 29 June 2021.)

## **6. Policy Framework**

- 6.1 This paper and the activity within it are directly linked to the Kent County Council's commitment to "A Cleaner and Greener Kent" and directly supports the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan.
- 6.2 The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy forms part of the Kent Environment Strategy and its Implementation Plan. The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is also relevant to the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework, Local Transport Plan 4 (and will inform LTP5) and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Kent's Public Health Outcomes.
- 6.2 Any changes required to KCC policies to implement the Energy and Low Emission Strategy will need to be assessed as part of the policy change process.

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 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.

## **8. General Data Protection Regulation Considerations**

- 8.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not needed as this Strategy does not require the processing of personal data.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The intention of the Strategy is to recognise the climate emergency and the need to take significant action in the next 10 years in order to be able to achieve net zero emissions for the county by 2050.
- 9.2 Significant support has been gained for the Strategy from Local Authorities across Kent and Medway and progress is already being made across a number of priorities.

## **10. Next Steps and Timescales**

- 10.1 The Implementation Plan will be formally monitored on an annual basis at financial year end and reported to the Kent and Medway Environment Group, the Kent Environment Board and Kent Leaders.



## 11. Recommendation(s)

### **Recommendation(s):**

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to note KCC's progress with the Strategy and advise on on-going delivery and future monitoring.

## 10. Appendices and Background Documents

- Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy and Implementation Plan – <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/environmental-policies/kent-and-medway-energy-and-low-emissions-strategy>
- Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy EQIA -- [https://www.kent.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/120431/Kent-and-Medway-Energy-and-Low-Emissions-Strategy-EqIA.pdf](https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/120431/Kent-and-Medway-Energy-and-Low-Emissions-Strategy-EqIA.pdf)
- Kent Environment Strategy – [www.kent.gov.uk/environmentstrategy](http://www.kent.gov.uk/environmentstrategy)
- Kent Green Action – [www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/kent-green-action](http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/kent-green-action)
- Papers presented to Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee [Jan 2018](#), [September 2018](#), [November 2018](#), [May 2019](#) and [November 2019](#).

## 11. Contact details

Christine Wissink – Interim Head of Sustainable Business & Communities  
[Christine.wissink@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.wissink@kent.gov.uk) 03000 413482

**Relevant Director:** Stephanie Holt-Castle, Director Growth and Communities 03000 412064