

From: Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: David Wimble, Environment Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment

Subject: **Energy Efficiency Plan**

Key decision: 25/00091

Classification: **Unrestricted**

**Past Pathway of report:** Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 4 November 2025

**Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision**

**Electoral Division:** All electoral divisions

**Summary:** The Energy Efficiency Plan for KCC's estate and operations is proposed to replace KCC's Net Zero Plan and 2030 Net Zero target. The Energy Efficiency Plan outlines a realistic and pragmatic approach for energy management with a focus on financial returns and opportunities to create additional revenue streams for the Council.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment is asked to agree to the proposed decision as set out in the attached Proposed Record of Decision. (Appendix A).

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 KCC has reduced its estate and operation emissions by 55% since 2019, saving millions through energy upgrades and solar farms. However, with less government funding and organisational changes ahead, KCC plans to shift away from its Net Zero Plan to a more pragmatic approach focusing on financial returns, new revenue streams and continued emissions reductions where possible in line with its upcoming strategies.

## **2. The report**

- 2.1 Net Zero energy projects brought the Council financial benefits between 2020 and 2025, including:
- £9million in savings from fuel and utilities
  - £24million from external funding sources to upgrade our estate
  - £1million revenue annually from our two solar farms
- 2.2 Net Zero energy projects contributed to the reduction of KCC's Greenhouse Gas emissions from our estate and operations by 50%.

- 2.3 Despite these achievements, meeting the remaining 50% of the Net Zero target by 2030 presents KCC financial and technological challenges, especially in the context of scarce government funding support.

### **3. Options**

3.1 **Dismissed option – *Retain KCC's Net Zero Plan and target.***

KCC's Net Zero Plan and 2030 target is unattainable and presents the Council with financial and operational risk. Meeting the 2030 target would require considerable investment over the next five years and -indefinitely- commit the Council to 'carbon offsetting'.

3.2 **Dismissed option - *Rescind KCC's Net Zero Plan and 2030 target and do not replace with anything.***

Removing the organisational Net Zero Plan would mean forfeiting a wide range of financial, health, and environmental benefits for both the Council and the people of Kent. It also introduces risk by limiting opportunities to explore efficiencies, reduce costs, apply for funding, and improve resilience across KCC's estate and operations.

3.3 **Preferred option - *Rescind KCC's Net Zero Plan and 2030 target and adopt the proposed Energy Efficiency Plan***

In addition to the above, the proposed plan offers a balanced approach to emissions reductions allowing KCC to continue to modernise assets, explore financial opportunities and efficiencies and provide additional health and environmental benefits to the people of Kent.

- 3.4 A new plan is required to continue to capitalise on the financial and environmental benefits of energy projects.

### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Currently there are no financial penalties or levies for non-compliance with Net Zero 2030 and 2050 targets but that could change in the future.
- 4.2 Requests for funding will be considered alongside robust business cases.

### **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 Currently there are no legal penalties or levies for non-compliance with Net Zero 2030 and 2050 targets but that could change in the future.

### **6. Equalities implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment EqIA was carried out in August 2020. The Adverse Equality Impact Rating was found to be low. Upon review, no change is proposed currently. A fully updated EQIA will be completed.

### **7. Other corporate implications**

7.1 Net Zero is embedded across organisation – particularly the Asset Management Strategy.

## **8. Governance**

8.1 This proposed decision is aligned with the strategic direction of travel in the planned new Strategic Statement as we are planning and preparing policy decisions to progress that strategic vision. Decision-making will continue to progress in line with the new Strategic Statement once enacted.

## **9. Conclusions**

9.1 Net Zero Plan is no longer fit for purpose.

9.2 A new plan is required to continue to capitalise on the financial and environmental benefits of energy projects.

## **10. Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment is asked to agree to the proposed decision as set out in the attached Proposed Record of Decision. (Appendix A).

## **11. Background Documents**

- Energy Efficiency Plan
- Appendix A Proposed Record of Decision

## **12. Contact details**

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