

From: Susan Carey, Cabinet Member for Environment
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 15 September 2020

Subject: KCC Environment Policy revision

Decision No: 20/00080

Date: 15 September 2020

Classification: Unrestricted

Past pathway of paper: N/A

Future pathway of paper: For Decision by Cabinet Member

Electoral Division: **County-wide**

Summary: This report presents the revision of the Council's Environment Policy to be formally approved and adopted by the Cabinet Member for Environment.

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment as shown as Appendix A to:

1. Approve the revised Policy for adoption and implementation through the ISO14001 Environmental Management Standard framework; and
2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment & Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement this decision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the Council's Environment Policy is to make a clear public commitment to implement a programme of environmental improvement. This includes reducing the environmental impacts of the Council's operations and services, taking account of future climate risk when planning services and taking decisions and working with partners, businesses and communities to address Kent's environmental issues and priorities.

- 1.2 The current Policy was issued in March 2017. Since that time several environmental priorities have become more significant due to new evidence and heightened public awareness. These include the Climate and Ecological Emergency, the health impacts of air pollution and the need to reduce single-use plastics and other environmentally damaging waste materials.

2. Revised Policy and governance

- 2.1 The Policy is a key document required to meet the criteria of the ISO14001 International Standard for Environmental Management. All services within the Council have been assessed against and certified to this Standard since April 2009, demonstrating that our environmental management, compliance and improvement plans stand up to external scrutiny and reflect good management practice. The policy is supplemented by environmental targets and an action plan.
- 2.2 Key revisions to the Policy include: increased emphasis on the Climate and Ecological Emergency, the health impacts of air pollution and the need to reduce single-use plastics and other environmentally damaging waste materials.
- 2.3 The implementation of the Policy commitments is overseen by the KCC Environment Board, chaired by the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment & Transport. All Directorates are represented at Director level on this board and it reports to the Corporate Management Team. The revision of the Policy was informed by key officers and this Board.
- 2.4 The Sustainable Business & Communities team within Environment, Planning & Enforcement co-ordinate the implementation of the Policy through the Council's environmental programme, engaging with all services to deliver actions to achieve environmental targets. The team provides six-monthly progress reports to each Directorate Management Team as well as to the KCC Environment Board.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The financial implications of delivering the revised Policy will be tested and sought through existing financial mechanisms, namely the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the Capital Programme. Additional scrutiny will be delivered by the KCC Climate Change Fund protocol which has several officer and Member sign off points.
- 3.2 The commitment of staff resources to deliver the Policy will principally be through the Council's established environmental programme. The core staff resources sit within Growth, Environment & Transport Directorate.

4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 The revised Policy aligns with the Kent Environment Strategy and supporting strategies and plans, such as the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions

Strategy, the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy and Kent's Plan Bee. It also includes a commitment to achieve net-zero emissions, for which an accelerated target is also due to be considered by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 15th September 2020.

- 4.2 The environmental programme provides assurance that environmental risks and compliance with relevant legislation is appropriately managed and addressed across all Council services.

5. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached. There are no significant negative impacts. As this Policy is aimed at improving environmental performance and is aligned with the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy there are likely to be more positive equality impacts than negative, particularly for Age, Maternity, Carers and Disability.

6. General Data Protection Regulation Considerations

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

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The intention of the Policy is to continue to make a clear and updated public commitment for Kent County Council to implement a programme of environmental improvements. This includes reducing the environmental impacts of the Council's operations and services, taking account of future climate risk when planning services and taking decisions and working with partners, businesses and communities to address Kent's environmental issues and priorities.
- 7.2 Under the framework of the Kent Environment Strategy and the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, the KCC Sustainable Business and Communities Team co-ordinates the implementation of this Policy through an environmental improvement programme compliant with the Environmental Management Standard ISO14001. It is important the Policy is kept up to date and aligned with new strategies and plans reflecting the Council's commitment to taking action in line with current environmental priorities for Kent.

8. Next Steps and Timescales

- 8.1 Subject to comments from Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee, the Policy will proceed to decision to adopt by the Cabinet Member for Environment and it will then replace the current policy published on the Council's website.

9. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment as shown as Appendix A to:

1. Approve the revised Policy for adoption and implementation through the ISO14001 Environmental Management Standard framework; and
2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement this decision.

10. Appendices and Background Documents

- Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- Appendix B – Revised Environment Policy
- Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment
- Current Environment Policy published here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/environmental-policies/council-environmental-targets-and-performance/council-policy-and-targets>

11. Contact details

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Appendix A Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix B Revised Policy

Appendix C Equality Impact Assessment