

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

To: Robert Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment

Subject: Adoption of the Kent County Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025-2028

Key decision: 24/00095

Electoral Division: **All**

Summary: The Climate Change Adaptation Plan sets out how Kent County Council will start to adapt its assets and services to climate change between 2025 and 2028. Findings from the Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway and activity and input from divisions across KCC have shaped the aim, objectives and actions that define the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Actions listed in the action plan have corresponding target outcomes which will be reported on annually at Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee. The final draft reflects comments received.

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Environment is asked to agree:

To ADOPT the Kent County Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025-2028. To

DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to refresh and/or make revisions to the Strategy as appropriate during the lifetime of the strategy.

To DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Growth, Environment and Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

1.1 Kent's climate is changing. More extreme weather, such as extended periods of excessive precipitation, periods of exceptionally hot or cold weather and prolonged spells without precipitation, is highly likely to be experienced across the county. Conditions are expected to shift significantly further away from what Kent has previously enjoyed towards an increasingly disruptive and challenging climate.

1.2 Changes in extreme and average weather conditions are already affecting life in Kent due to the impacts on the built environment, communities, economy, natural environment and public services that shape the county. Climate change adaptation can help to limit the potential harm caused by changes to Kent's climate, as well as harness any of the potential opportunities, whilst also delivering other benefits across the county.

1.3 This paper outlines the steps KCC will take to adapt to climate change between 2025 and 2028.

2. Overview of the Kent County Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025-2028

- 2.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 provides the framework for mitigating climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change. For the latter, it includes a requirement to complete a National Climate Change Risk Assessment every five years, followed by a National Adaptation Programme, setting out how the risks identified in the National Climate Change Risk Assessment will be addressed.
- 2.2 The National Adaptation Programme represents the government's strategy to address the main risks and opportunities identified in the risk assessment for England and is also produced every five years, as a response to the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment.
- 2.3 The second National Adaptation Programme (2018 to 2023) and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting was published in July 2018 and addresses the priority risks identified in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017. The National Adaptation Programme sets out the actions that government is taking, outcomes the government wants to achieve and the means by which the government will be measuring the progress made towards achieving the objectives.
- 2.4 On 23 May 2019 KCC recognised the UK climate and environment emergency acknowledging the significant threats posed and opportunities presented by climate change. In response, the council committed to developing and adopting the Kent & Medway Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan.
- 2.5 In 2020, KCC published the Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway. This led to the preparation and drafting of The Climate Adaptation Programme for Kent and Medway by KCC. This followed a sector-based approach to adaptation across Kent consistent with the Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment and was due for public consultation in September 2022.
- 2.6 However, concerns over the deliverability of The Climate Adaptation Programme for Kent and Medway led to a pause in this county wide work and a revised scope of activity for all individual partner organisations first. Adaptation planning is now currently focussed on KCC and its assets, services and areas of influence, as opposed to a countywide approach. KCC is committed to working with partners, communities and other stakeholders to deliver a countywide response to adapting to the impacts of climate change and will look to explore opportunities for a countywide response during the lifecycle of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan.
- 2.7 The revised scope led to the creation of an internal working group with membership from across divisions deemed most likely to be affected by climate change to redraft the strategy. Subsequent revisions to the draft have led to the final version 5 found in Appendix 2.

- 2.8 The aim of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan is to ensure that KCC is resilient to the negative impacts and well-positioned to benefit from any opportunities that arise from Kent's changing climate.
- 2.9 The Climate Change Adaptation Plan outlines future predictions of the Kent climate and the impacts that might have across the county and how this is likely to affect KCC.
- 2.10 The Climate Change Adaptation Plan aims to deliver on the following objectives to work towards the overarching aim:
- Raise awareness of the risks and opportunities of climate change across KCC.
 - Integrate climate change adaptation into KCC's decision-making and service delivery.
 - Explore opportunities to act upon climate risks and impacts affecting services.
 - Encourage climate change adaptation through KCC activity across Kent.
- 2.11 Actions to meet each objective are set out in Section 6 of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. An annual monitoring report of the plan will be provided that will outline planned activity for each year and show progress made against each action.
- 2.12 The actions that support the delivery of the objectives will be reviewed as part of the annual report.
- 2.13 The adoption of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan supports the delivery of the KCC Environment Plan, which lists adapting to climate change as one of six priority areas of environmental work that the council delivers. It also meets outcomes of priority 3 of Framing Kent's Future 2022-2026, 'Environmental Step Change', which seeks to ensure that the county is well placed to adapt to climate change.

3. Options considered

- 3.1 Do nothing
Continue with a business-as-usual approach and allow climate change impacts to affect KCC and Kent as and when they happen without a strategic approach to mitigating them.
- 3.2 Revise and adopt the Climate Adaptation Programme for Kent and Medway.
Adopt the Climate Adaptation Programme for Kent and Medway, which takes a sector-based approach to adaptation across Kent and Medway, but lacks clearly defined roles and partnership governance, and would require significant financial resourcing to enable delivery.
- 3.3 **Recommended option:** Adopt the Kent County Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025-2028

Adopt the Climate Change Adaptation Plan which will integrate climate risk management into KCC service delivery and encourage climate adaptation across Kent through work that KCC already delivers. The Climate Change Adaptation Plan has defined roles, responsibilities and an agreed governance structure, and does not commit the council to any additional expenditure.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The KCC Climate Change Adaptation Plan has been developed by base funded staff from the Environment and Circular Economy division and at no additional cost to the council. The current actions within the Climate Change Adaptation Plan will be delivered by base funded staff from all services involved. It is not anticipated that the Climate Change Adaptation Plan will place any additional financial obligations on the council. However, where match funding or in-kind funding may be required to further progress outcomes from the action plan this will be assessed on a project by project basis. This will be facilitated by an environmental impact consideration embedded into all future decision making, commissioning and procurement activity, whilst also taking into account the requirements of Securing Kent's Future.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 An EqIA has been undertaken and concluded that the publication of online resources on KCC's website could adversely affect two groups of protected characteristics (age and disability). This will be mitigated by recommendations from KCC's Digital Accessibility Team to ensure that the Plan complies with the Equality Duty 2010.

6. Other corporate implications

- 6.1 Relevant services within the council will need to consider the Climate Change Adaptation Plan in relation to their operations. Delivering the Climate Change Adaptation Plan will require support from other areas of KCC in order to calculate how climate risk is anticipated to affect service delivery and asset management, what actions need to be taken to mitigate risks and the thematic actions set out in the action plan. There are no expectations for any additional spending.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 KCC has prepared the Kent County Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025-2028. The plan sets out how KCC will start to adapt its assets and services to climate change. Internal stakeholders have been consulted during the development of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan and amendments have been made accordingly. It is considered that the Climate Change Adaptation Plan can be adopted at no additional financial burden to the council.

8. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Environment is asked to agree to:

To ADOPT the Kent County Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025-2028.

To DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to refresh and/or make revisions to the Strategy as appropriate during the lifetime of the strategy.

To DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Growth, Environment and Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contract or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

9. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix 1: Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix 2: KCC Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025 – 2028 v5

Appendix 3: Kent & Medway Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment 2019:
[Climate change risk and impact assessment - Kent County Council](#)

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment

10. Contact details

Report Author:

Helen Shulver
Head of Environment
03000 417711
Helen.shulver@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Matthew Smyth
Director for Environment and Circular
Economy
03000 412064
matthew.smyth@kent.gov.uk