

**From:** Robert Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment  
Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

**To:** Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 25 February 2025

**Subject:** Net Zero 2030 Review

**Key decision:** No

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of report:** None

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

**Electoral Division:** Whole Council

**Summary:** Kent County Council is committed to achieving Net Zero for its estate and operations by 2030. The Net Zero Review provides a comprehensive evaluation of the progress so far and the future deliverability of KCC's Net Zero 2030 commitment considering current understanding, best practice, and context of the organisation. The review provides the evidence base to enable informed decision making about the current pathway and the risks and opportunities associated with the current trajectory towards Net Zero.

**Recommendation(s):** The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider the Net Zero review and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment on priorities to enable the Net Zero 2030 plan to be amended, ensuring that it is realistic and achievable.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Kent County Council's (KCC) Net Zero Plan sets out how the organisation will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our own estate, operations and wholly owned traded services to Net Zero by 2030.
- 1.2 KCC has made good progress against the plan. Since it was adopted, KCC's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have decreased by 11,818 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e), or 51% from the baseline year (2019-20) to date (2023-24).
- 1.3 KCC's related achievements over this period include:
  - Construction of two solar farms delivering 25MW of green electricity (saving over 5,500 tCO<sub>2</sub> annually)
  - 57% reduction in oil, 56% reduction in electricity, and a 17% reduction in gas emissions in our estate (a reduction of 5,347 tCO<sub>2</sub>)

- Efficiencies and savings across the estate, including rationalisation of estate saving over 838 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (of combined electricity and gas emissions) annually
- 70% reduction in waste from KCC's estate and operations and 30% reduction in mileage emissions (a reduction of 1,441 tCO<sub>2</sub>)
- Significant heat pump projects at five sites providing savings of 677 tCO<sub>2</sub>e annually
- Continued roll-out of LED lighting and Solar PV saving an additional 380 tCO<sub>2</sub>e annually.

## **2. Considerations**

- 2.1 KCC net zero projects have predominately been funded through government schemes. Changes to these schemes mean that requirement for match-funding has increased significantly and there continues to be uncertainty regarding future funding schemes and how these may change going forward.
- 2.2 Delivery of the Published Plan in full will reduce KCC's emissions to 3,210 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. It is assumed, under the current plan, that to reach zero, remaining emissions will be offset. The quantum of these remaining emissions mean that additional carbon reduction initiatives where technological solutions exist are required to reduce the offsetting requirement.
- 2.3 The review sets out the indicative level of investment required to deliver the remaining actions in the plan. Some of these actions have a 1-5 year return on investment, whilst others have very long pay back periods.
- 2.4 Given the emissions gap and payback periods, officers are currently investigating opportunities to go further with existing actions and exploring the potential for other interventions that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes:
- Updating and extending targets to maximise emissions savings and reduce leftover emissions
  - Exploring alternative fuels and new technologies not accounted for in the current plan
  - Potential new infrastructure such as EV charge points and solar PV
  - Creating a Scope 3 plan to understand KCC's larger contribution to carbon emissions through contracts and service delivery.
- 2.5 Officers are also exploring green financing opportunities where investment from outside of KCC could be accessed to enable the delivery of projects.

### **3. Today's meeting and next steps**

- 3.1 The Committee is asked for their reflections on the Net Zero review and priorities going forward. This feedback will be then used to update the existing Net Zero Plan.

### **4. Financial implications**

- 4.1 The Net Zero review has been carried out by base-funded staff and at no additional cost to the council.
- 4.2 Relevant spending controls will be considered including Securing Kent's Future in any revision to the plan. Any project created because of an action in the Net Zero Plan will be considered individually and requests for further funding will be brought forward after the development of robust business cases. Where match funding or in-kind funding may be required, it will be assessed on a project-by-project basis.
- 4.3 One of the key reasons for updating the plan is to ensure that costs are understood in detail to reduce financial risk and deliver a business case for projects with correct financial information.
- 4.4 Financing options underpinned by KCC's emerging green finance strategy provide an alternative route to funding for environmental outcomes. This will be crucial in funding environmental interventions moving forward, as current budgets are highly unlikely to be able to fund the measures that are needed to meet the scale of the environmental challenge faced by KCC, unless there are significant changes to how local government is funded.

### **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications identified.

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

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider the Net Zero review and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment on priorities to enable the Net Zero 2030 plan to be amended, ensuring that it is realistic and achievable.

### **7. Background Documents**

- Net Zero Review
- Net Zero Risk Register

### **8. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Review of KCC Net Zero 2030 Plan  
Appendix 2: Net Zero Risk Register

## Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

### 9. Contact details

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