

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

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 29 November 2019

Subject: Kent & Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy – consultation response and next steps

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This report outlines the results of the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy public consultation which was carried out from 1 July to the 23 September 2019. It sets out the proposed responses and suggested alterations to be made to the Strategy for consideration by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee. The report also sets out next steps for the approval of the Strategy 23 January 2020.

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment as to the:

1. Proposed responses to the feedback from the public consultation and alterations if appropriate; and
2. Next steps for formal agreement of the Strategy in early 2020

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 Energy and Low Emissions Strategy is timely as it outlines a Kent and Medway approach to achieving the target of net zero emissions by 2050 in line with the Committee on Climate Change recent recommendation to the Government <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2019/05/02/phase-out-greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-2050-to-end-uk-contribution-to-global-warming/> and can be part of the solution to tackling the climate emergency as recognised in the Kent County Council Motion on 23 May 2019. In addition to this, Kent County Council is undertaking work to establish its own net zero baseline, set an accelerated target

and develop actions to deliver Kent County Council's part of the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy.

- 1.3 This report outlines the results of the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy public consultation which was carried out from 1 July to the 23 September 2019. It sets out proposed responses and suggested alterations to be made to the Strategy for consideration by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee. The report also sets out next steps for the approval of the Strategy in early 2020

2. Public Consultation Responses

- 2.1 A total of 365 responses were received; 288 from people responding in an individual capacity, 18 responding in a professional capacity, and 57 responding on behalf of public, private and voluntary organisations - including 10 local authorities.
- 2.2 Most respondents agreed (either "strongly agree" or "tend to agree"), with the draft strategy's vision and the priorities identified for each theme. In total, within the 365 responses there were 1,518 individual 'free text' comments, providing a wealth of information and constructive suggestions that will be integrated into the final strategy, evidence base and implementation plan.
- 2.3 Whilst many of the comments were positive about the creation of a dedicated energy and low emissions strategy, there was one clear and consistent message in the feedback that the strategy is not ambitious enough and the speed of action must be quicker. It has always been intended that the strategy be ambitious, and the revised strategy will seek to make this ambition clearer and highlight the link to the climate emergency.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 provides the full consultation feedback and proposed responses which have been recommended by the Kent County Council Kent Environment Strategy Cross Party Member Group. Table 1 below provides a summary of the main feedback and proposed responses.

Table 1: Consultation feedback and suggested responses	
Consultation Feedback	Suggested response to feedback and proposed alterations to the Strategy where appropriate
<p>The strategy is not ambitious enough and the speed of action must be quicker. This was by far the strongest and most frequently mentioned concern raised by all respondent types and age groups. There was a fear that the 2050 target was too far in the future to be meaningful; that action would be delayed or abandoned until a future date; and that the vision did not reflect the urgency of council's climate emergency declarations.</p>	<p>The vision's 2050 net-zero target will not be changed as it is in line with the scientific advice provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and UK Committee on Climate Change and follows the target set in the Climate Change Act. However, we will add a new page setting out interim milestones for 2025, 2030 and 2040, to show how our 2050 target will be achieved.</p> <p>We will also ensure the introduction clearly references the climate emergency and the scale and urgency of the action required. We will also incorporate five-year carbon budgets.</p>
<p>There's a lack of detail on what and how actions will be implemented and monitored. Many respondents wanted to know specific details, including who would be responsible, how it will be funded and timescales. It should be noted that much of this detail will be set out in the implementation plan, which will be published alongside the final strategy.</p>	<p>We will be publishing a detailed operational implementation plan alongside the strategy, which will provide more information on specific actions, including who is responsible, what will be implemented and the timeframes for implementation.</p> <p>Action within the implementation plan will then be distilled down into a smaller number of bold cross cutting actions that will be included in the strategy itself to highlight that action is being taken. This will be developed with the Kent County Council Cross Party Member Group.</p>
<p>There's too much emphasis on electric cars and not enough focus on alternatives to the car. Whilst there was widespread support for accelerating the transition to electric vehicles of all types many respondents were disappointed by the lack of actions to support modal shift away from private vehicles. Many wanted to see greater investment in</p>	<p>We will review all the challenges to ensure the text adequately describes both the short- and long-term issues and priorities.</p> <p>We will change the emissions challenge title to reference net-zero.</p> <p>We will review the transport challenge and actions to ensure active travel and public transport are fully included</p>

<p>public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, with some calling for strong disincentives to tackle congestion and poor air quality hot spots.</p>	
<p>The strategy should acknowledge the role of green infrastructure. Many felt that the strategy needed to include the importance of green infrastructure in balancing carbon dioxide emissions. They called for the strategy to include actions to increase tree coverage and wetland restoration and improve soil and land use.</p>	<p>We will add a new paragraph within the challenges section highlighting the role of natural carbon sequestration and incorporate high level activities within theme 1 and 2.</p>
<p>There's a potential conflict between this strategy's vision and other council policies. This concern primarily related to transport and planning policies, with many respondents feeling that the strategy would be undermined by council decisions made on road schemes; the location of, and infrastructure provided in new developments; and on subsidised public transport.</p>	<p>The strategy will make clear that all growth should be clean growth and not growth at any cost. In addition, partners will work together to produce an assessment framework for key decisions that allows them to be seen through the lens of clean growth and net zero so that if any negative impacts are identified they can either be mitigated or meaningfully offset applying agreed standards.</p>
<p>Continued growth is not compatible with a net-zero ambition. There was concern that the vision could not be achieved whilst there was continued growth in the county, with many stating that the strategy should challenge the scale of planned growth.</p>	<p>We will work with partners to ensure that all growth is seen through the lens of clean growth and net zero and if any negative impacts are identified they can either be mitigated or meaningfully offset applying agreed standards. We will look to provide more information and make the business case as to why future growth in Kent and Medway must be clean, zero-carbon and sustainable.</p>
<p>Achieving the vision will not be possible without changes to national policy or significant government</p>	<p>It will not be possible to achieve the vision without changes to government policy and new sources of funding. We will work together with partners to play a strong</p>

funding.	leadership role, working together and lobbying government for the necessary change.
The strategy should seek to reduce the total carbon footprint of residents and businesses in Kent and Medway. Some respondents called for the strategy to tackle greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors; including aviation, shipping and imported goods and services.	The Strategy will be amended to make it clear that all significant emissions including aviation, shipping and imported goods and services will be tackled utilising all partners' influence and powers as appropriate.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 This report relates to the Strategy itself and not individual costed actions. As projects that KCC 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.
- 3.2 Coordination of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy falls within the remit of the existing Sustainable Business and Communities team. Increased activity due to setting and delivering a net zero target will mean resources may need to be increased in the near future.

4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 This paper and the activity within it is directly linked to KCC Strategic Outcomes, the Kent Environment Strategy and its Implementation Plan and the emerging Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy. It is also relevant to the emerging Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Kent's Public Health Outcomes.

5. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken (Appendix 2) 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 and Disability.

6. General Data Protection Regulation Considerations

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

7. Conclusions, Next Steps and Timescales

- 7.1 As outlined above many of the comments were positive about the creation of a dedicated energy and low emissions strategy; however, there was one clear and consistent message in the feedback that the strategy is not ambitious enough and the speed of action must be quicker.
- 7.2 The intention of the Strategy has always been to be ambitious and 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 by 2050. This ambition will be made clearer in the revised strategy and include the key significant action needed with the Strategy itself alongside the detailed implementation plan.

8. Next Steps and Timescales

- 8.1 Once the consultation responses have been approved by the Environment and Transport Committee these will be incorporated into the Strategy and will come back to the Committee in early 2020. The detailed implementation plan will also be provided, though this will be a live document that will be flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances.

9. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment as to the:

1. Proposed responses to the feedback from the public consultation and any alterations to the text if appropriate; and
2. Next steps for formal agreement of the Strategy in early 2020

8. Background Documents

Appendix 1 – Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy Consultation Report

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Kent Environment Strategy – www.kent.gov.uk/environmentstrategy

Papers presented to Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee [Jan 2018](#), [September 2018](#), [November 2018](#) and [May 2019](#).

9. Contact details

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