

Agenda Item No: 6

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 30th June 2022

Report Title: Climate Change Action – a systemic approach

Report Authors & Job Titles: Sophie Stiles - Business Development Officer
Jennifer Shaw - Strategy and Policy Development Manager

Portfolio Holders & Cllr Bill Barrett – Lead Member for Climate Change

Portfolio Holder for: Cllr Matthew Forest - Portfolio Holder for Environment, Property and Recreation



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Summary: This report outlines Ashford Borough Council’s framework for climate action. The report demonstrates acceptance of the urgency, challenge and a collective responsibility to act in order to meet agreed carbon reduction targets. This delivery contributes to local decarbonisation, in pursuit of national and global targets.

This report also highlights the extensive work the council has already undertaken to reduce the carbon impact of its own assets, on our “Ashford to Zero” journey.

Key Decision: YES

Significantly Affected Wards: ALL

Recommendations : **The Cabinet is recommended:-**

1. To approve the proposed Climate Change Strategy document and Climate Action plan for 2022-24.
2. To approve the spend of £125k to set up the Climate Action Team

Policy Overview: The Paris Agreement¹ is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

In June 2019, the UK government brought in laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. The target will require the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by

¹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

2050 with a commitment to reduce emissions in 2030 by at least 68% compared to 1990.

Kent County Council recognises the UK environment and climate emergency and stated that it will continue to commit resources and align its policies to address this (May 2019). The Kent Environment Strategy 2016 provides the basis for closer cross-sector partnership working between environment, health and economic agendas. It identifies the high-level priorities to support sustainable economic growth whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and sustaining vibrant, healthy and resilient communities. We are active participants in all working and management groups.

In July 2019 Ashford Borough Council declared its aim to become carbon neutral in its own estate and operations by 2030

In December 2020, Ashford Borough Council endorsed the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, which facilitates the setting and agreement of a target of net-zero emissions by 2050 for Kent and Medway.

In December 2020 the Independent Climate Change Committee (ICCC) recognised that the Sixth Carbon Budget could only be achieved if 'Government, regional agencies and local authorities work seamlessly together.'

On 20th April 2021 the Prime Minister announced a more ambitious target. This required the UK to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This is in line with the recommendation from the independent Climate Change Committee. This sixth Carbon Budget limits the volume of greenhouse gases emitted over a 5-year period from 2033 to 2037, taking the UK more than three-quarters of the way to reaching net zero by 2050. This Carbon Budget incorporates the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions for the first time.

In May 2021 our Cabinet affirmed the council's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality within its own estate and operations by 2030 and to work with residents, the local community, businesses and partners to achieve net zero carbon for the wider borough by 2050, supporting the UK government's ambitions.

In October 2021 ahead of COP26 the Government published its Net Zero Strategy – Build Back Greener. This sets out the government's ambition to reach net zero by 2050 and outlines the measures that will drive this. These include funding opportunities, support for local authorities and communities across England in building capability and capacity, plans to help businesses and consumers move to clean power, to support hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs in the green economy and to leverage up to £90 billion of private investment by 2030.

Financial Implications:

Many of the specific project interventions identified in the Climate Action Plan, are already agreed in principle through the corporate plan. Some of these activities will be met through budget setting in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan and will be part of service delivery whilst others will come forward on a project by project basis for funding. This funding is likely to be a mixture of capital and revenue external funding bids, potential Joint Ventures and council funding requests. Clarity on funding opportunities will be provided on a project by project basis.

A projection of financial costs of implementing several different carbon reduction pathway options are summarised in the report, with the full modelling (by Laser UK) included in the supplementary documents. Please note that these are a guide to costings and cannot be definitive because technology and opportunities to reduce energy usage and provide power to meet need are continually evolving, but this gives an indication of required spend to meet our objectives.

Additional costs are required to set up the Climate Action Team of approx. £125k. It is anticipated that the team will indirectly self fund through its role identifying funding opportunities relating to Climate Change from multiple central government sources and achieve efficiencies within service delivery council wide, through better co-ordination on project opportunities and better support for funding opportunities and project delivery.

The Governments new net zero strategy, Build Back Greener published in April sets out funding of at least £1.5bn during the next spending review period. It is envisaged that we will be in a strong position to seek grant and/or commercial support for the more ambitious and large scale projects and we will be actively pursuing opportunities as they arise.

Legal Implications:
Text agreed by [title of Legal Officer] on [date]

There is no statutory duty at the current time for the Local Authority to act to on climate change. The legal implications of each proposed action to implement the Climate Change Strategy will be considered when those actions come forward for decision in the usual way in due course.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

See Full report - Appendix 1

Data Protection Impact Assessment:

N/A

Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):

N/A

**Sustainability
Implications:**

As a local authority we have already committed to net zero carbon targets in our own estate by 2030 and aim to be in line with government targets for the wider borough, by 2050. In order to achieve our own carbon budget and contribute to the wider national and global targets, it is essential that a co-ordinated response is actioned immediately. Our range of influence will mean that failure to act, will have far reaching consequences on the behaviours or our communities and thus their attitudes to sustainability, further limiting our success.

**Other Material
Implications:**

**Exempt from
Publication:**

NO

**Background
Papers:**

Draft Carbon Neutral Action Plan May 2021 – Cabinet Paper

Contact:

Sophie.stiles@ashford.gov.uk
Jennifer.shaw@ashford.gov.uk

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Report Title: Climate Change Action – A Systemic Approach

Introduction and Background

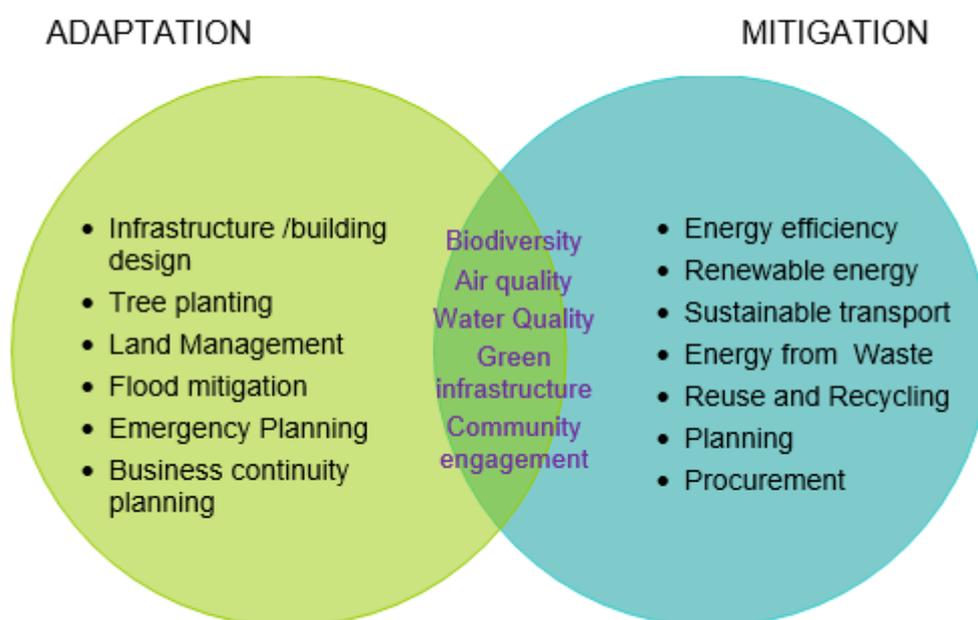
1. The UK Government's sixth Carbon Budget set out the important and dynamic role local authorities have, both directly and indirectly, in delivering carbon reduction in their local area. We need to think globally but act locally with a sense of urgency, priority and scale. The role of Local Government in the climate change crisis is well documented and formally recognised but it is broad ranging from;- active place shaping initiatives and de-carbonising assets; empowerment and partnerships; to leading and influencing change.



2. In May 2021, Ashford Borough Council made a clear commitment to carbon net zero carbon targets within our own estate and to support the government's national agenda (to 2050) more widely in the Borough. The Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC), driven by a lead Member leads on the commitment to act and achieve this agenda.
3. In May 2021 officers initiated consultancy work with Laser Energy (our corporate estate energy provider) to establish the Council's own carbon baseline (on own assets and assist with the borough wide picture) with a view to modelling potential carbon descent plans for net zero for council owned assets. A wide ranging consultation was also undertaken on a proposed climate change strategy to manage our response and climate action plan, "Ashford to Zero" which frames our core priorities and anticipated work for the 2022-24 period. The consultation and its findings were completed in Oct 2021 (full results available on

request). (Our work beyond 2024, will be informed by the success of the current action plan and influenced by emerging technology that impacts future investment and development choices.)

4. Laser has produced a carbon budget to 2100 for the Borough, and several illustrative Carbon reduction pathways for internal assets which give an indication of the breadth and urgency of the task ahead. Further assessments on our proposed plan by climate pressure group Climate Emergency UK and self assessments using government toolkits have also informed the revised Strategy and Action plan (attached).
5. The climate change agenda touches all areas of Council activity, whether focusing on **Mitigation** strategies through greenhouse gas reduction, or **Adaptive** strategies, ensuring resilience to current climate change pressures and future threats. As such success requires a system led approach recognising that work areas will inevitably overlap and requires some organisation.



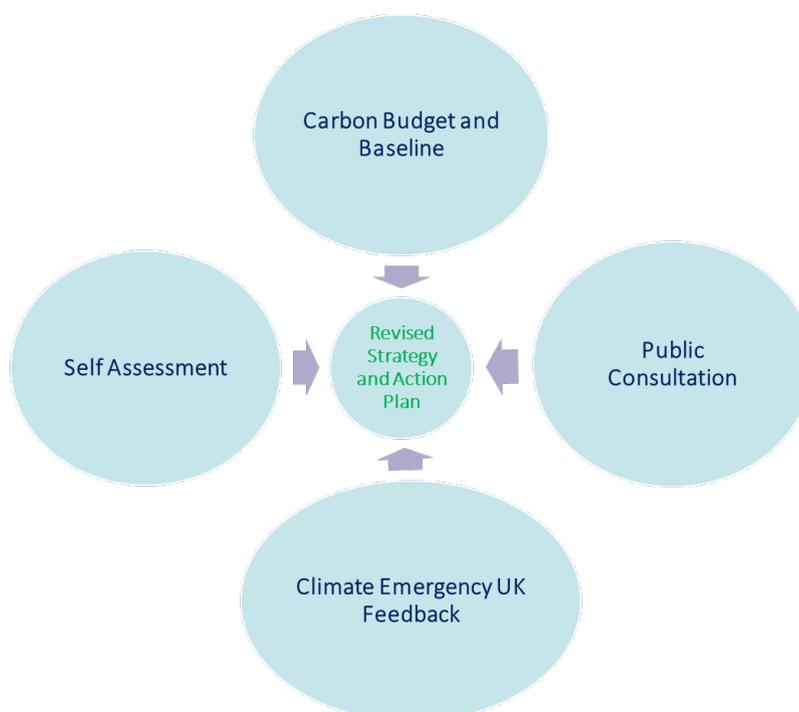
6. Similarly with several government departments driving the agenda (BEIS, DEFRA, DLHC), commitments to KCC strategies being picked up by different services and potential for duplication, there is a need for co-ordination, oversight and shared accountability for outcomes within the Council
7. We also recognise that borough wide success is dependent on greater engagement with our communities and external partners. We will only be able to make any substantial impact to climate change with their support and endorsement. We have a role to empower action and share knowledge, but also to encourage challenge, seek innovation, and understand everyone's priorities and often barriers to engagement if we are to succeed. On average 2-5% of a Local Authority's area emissions are in their direct control e.g.(assets,

procurement choices), but 33% reductions are attainable by targeting activity in our circle of influence, in the wider community. ²

8. Community in this context also refers to our third sector partners including the breadth of business stakeholders from our top employers, housing developers to SMEs. It is only when we engage that we can understand the best delivery models for change, climate change action has to be collaborative to ensure success.
9. Although there are many challenges ahead there are also opportunities. The Government's new net zero strategy, Build Back Greener published in April 2022 sets out funding of at least £1.5bn during next spending review period expanding a portfolio of cross government net zero innovation to fund BEIS-led programmes on power, buildings and industry; DfT-led programmes across transport; and DEFRA led programmes on natural resources, waste and F-gases. We will actively seek funding to enable us not only to deliver on our targets but innovate and lead the agenda.

An informed approach; how we arrived at our strategy and action plan.

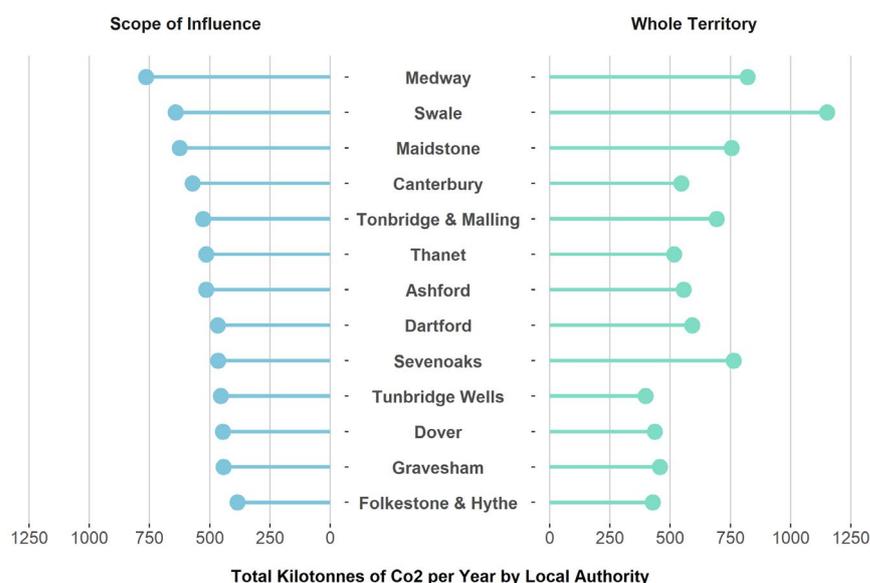
10. Data was key to the strategy's development and ABC is committed to an evidence led approach to understanding what is required and how best to ensure a targeted and localised response. 4 key data sources informed the strategy and action plan.



² Climate Change Committee Local Authorities and the 6th Carbon Budget Dec 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf>

Borough Wide Emissions Data

11. Borough wide emissions data is a useful context to understand the scale of the situation at hand and ensure we focus our efforts collectively. It is recognised that different methodologies produce varying projections, but even if the Authority were to use the most generous carbon footprint analysis, there are significant challenges ahead
12. Carbon emissions within the Borough come from a variety of sources. There are those that are primarily from energy use within the borough boundary, through direct combustion (scope 1 emissions) or the consumption of grid-supplied electricity, heating and/or cooling (scope 2), as well as emissions from the treatment of waste. In addition significant quantities of goods and services we use are produced outside of the borough's boundaries (scope 3 emissions). The emissions associated with these are embedded within them or emitted outside of the borough.
13. According to BEIS data in 2019 the borough's total CO₂ emissions were 555kt. This equates to 4.27t CO₂ per person. BEIS data further suggests that only 40.8ktCO₂ is outside our (and KCC) scope of influence with 38% of road emissions coming from the Motorway.



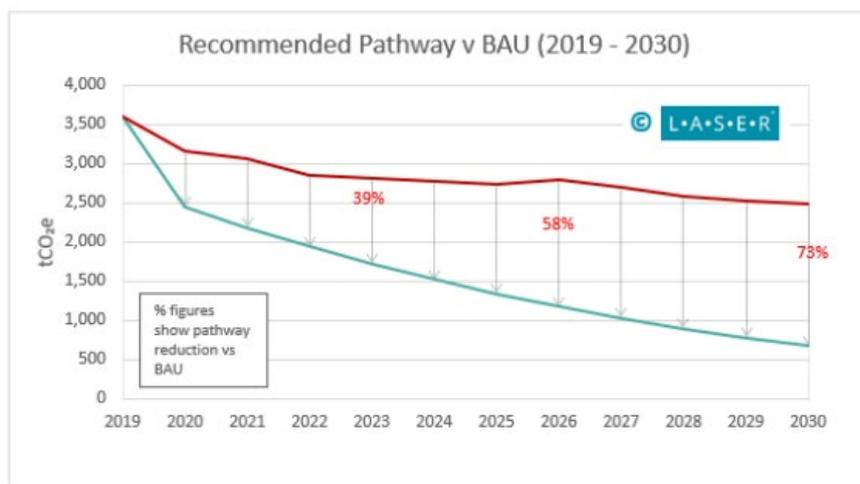
Borough carbon budget

14. A carbon budget sets the amount of CO₂ that can be emitted within a given period to stay within the limits of the Paris Agreement, that is; to stay well inside a 2°C temperature increase and pursuing 1.5°C global temperature target. The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at Manchester University has calculated a carbon budget for each local authority to help them better understand the scale of the challenge when addressing climate change through local action.

15. The Tyndall carbon budget for Ashford³ provides the budget for CO₂ emissions from energy systems from 2020 to 2100. For Ashford to make its 'fair' contribution towards the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the following recommendations should be adopted:
- Initiate an immediate programme of CO₂ mitigation to deliver cuts in emissions averaging a minimum of -13.7% per year to deliver a Paris aligned carbon budget. These annual reductions in emissions require national and local action, and could be part of a wider collaboration with other local authorities.
 - Reach zero or near zero carbon no later than 2041.
 - If we remain at current emission levels we will have used our entire carbon budget to 2100 of 4.1m tonnes by 2027.

ABC's own asset carbon data – Laser UK

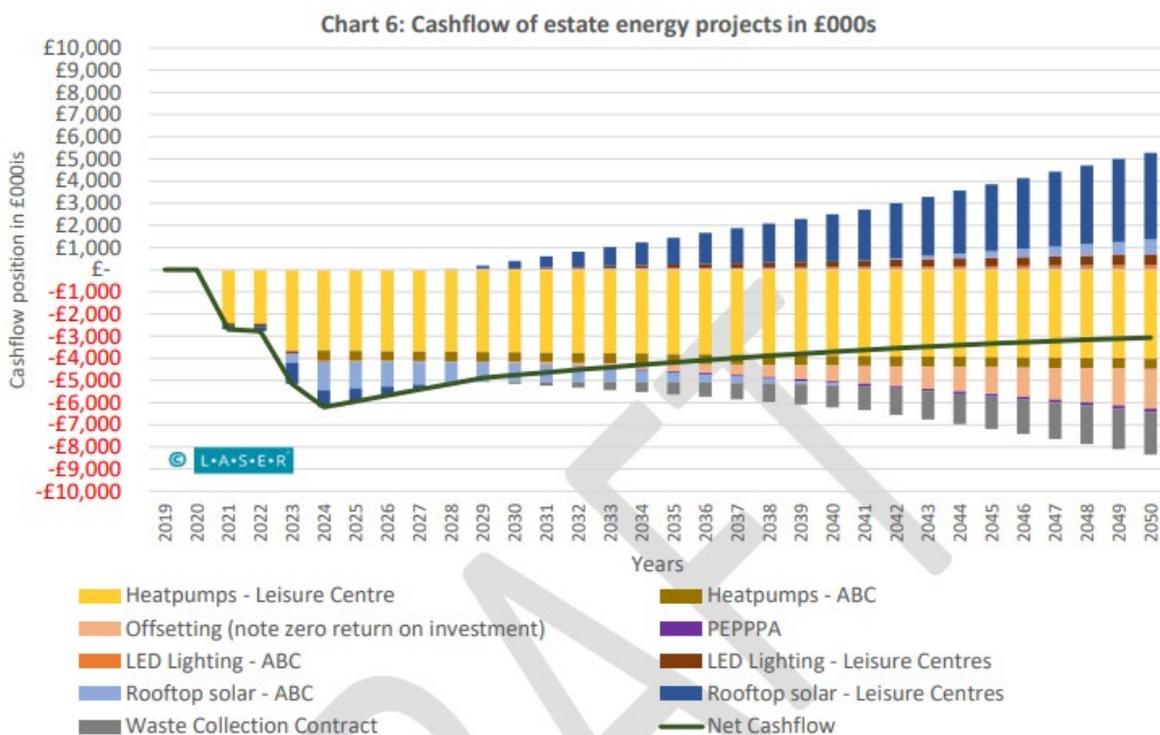
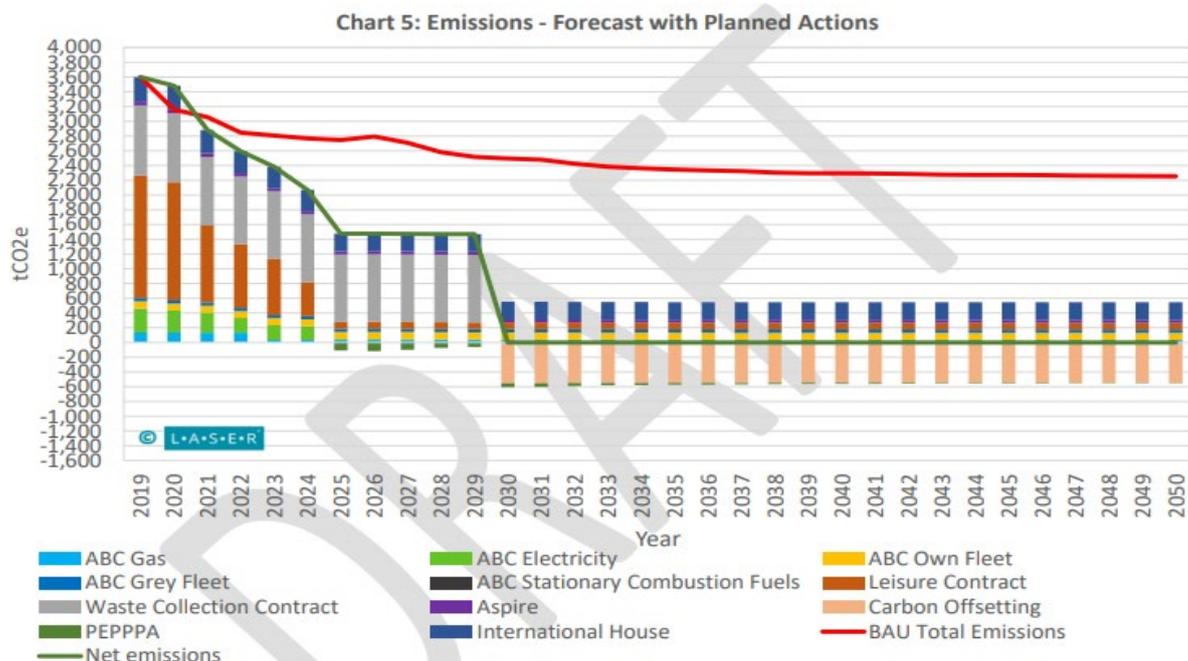
16. Ashford Borough Council needs to lead by example and demonstrate leadership, be in a position to advise best practice to win buy-in from the community, business and other stakeholders. The fundamental starting point is understanding the emissions baseline for estate and operations, analysis of which can help prioritise interventions going forward.
17. Laser UK was commissioned to provide us with a suite of reports to establish an emissions baseline and model carbon reduction pathways to understand the financial implications of achieving net zero within the council's own estate and operations.
18. Key headlines of their analysis include:-
- Laser's ABC internal carbon budget is 23.646 ktCO₂e to 2100, although our target to 2030 is more ambitious
 - Scope 3 emissions make up 83% of our footprint (ie in our supply chain and travel emissions as opposed to those in our control e.g. assets and energy use)
 - When examining emissions sources, Leisure and Waste contracts contribute to 72%
 - International House is a source for 9% of our total



³ <https://carbonbudget.manchester.ac.uk/reports/E07000105/print/>

19. A summary of carbon reduction options (illustrating relative impacts of interventions ranging from LED installation, solar PV installations and farms and transfer of fleet from diesel to electric) has also been received. These illustrate that carbon net zero can be achieved on our estate by 2030 but this can be achieved in different timescales, at different initial outlay and with differing financial return.

Examples include - Scenario 1 – LED and air source heat pump solutions



And Scenario 3 - including solar farm, electric and biodeisel fleet

Chart 9: Emissions - Forecast with Planned Actions

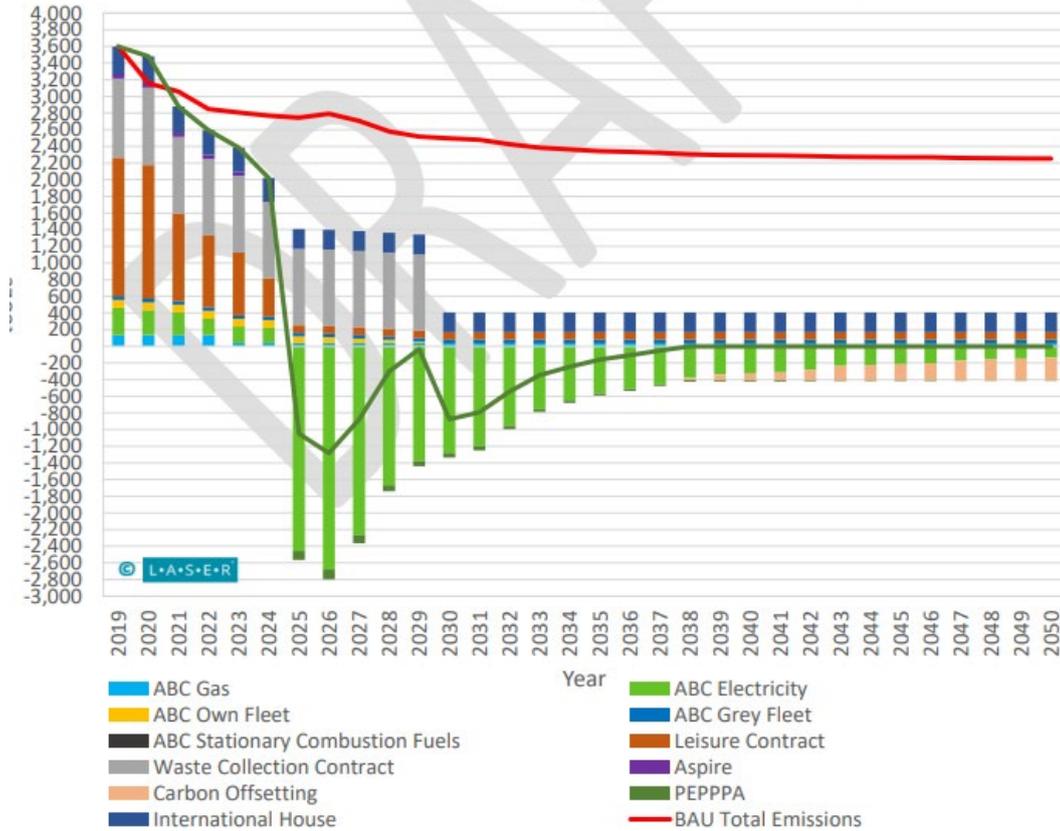
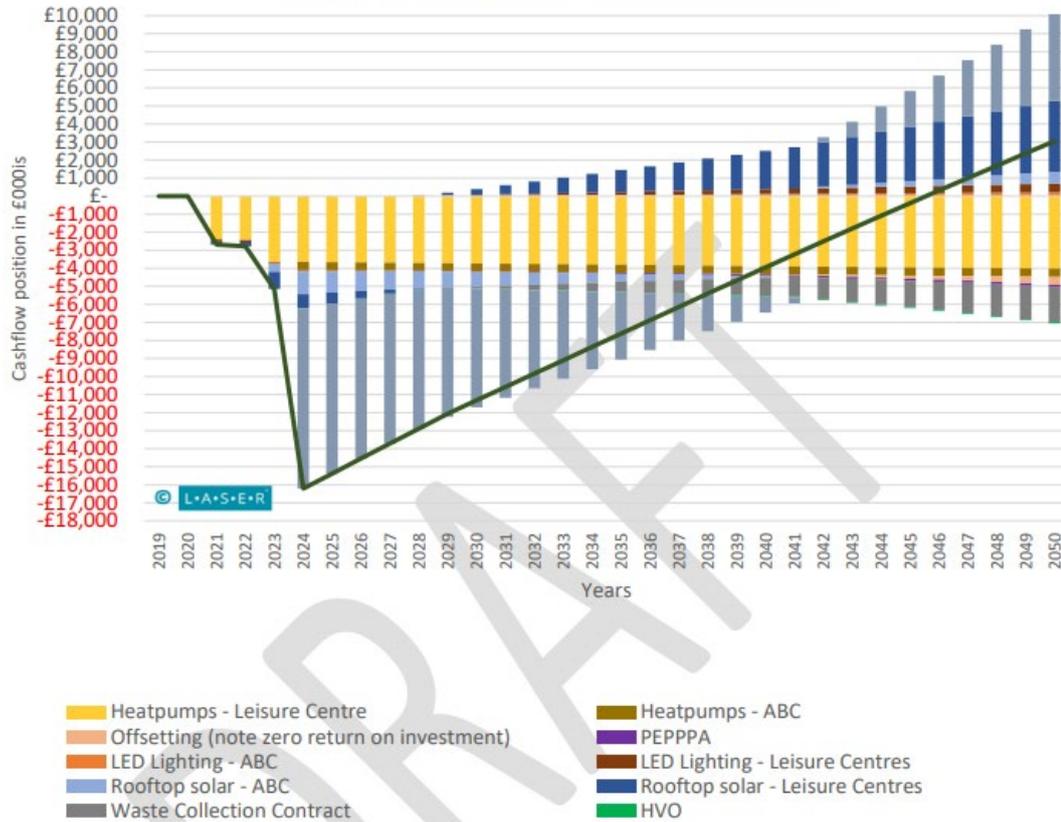


Chart 10: Cashflow of estate energy projects in £000s



20. The interventions (LED, Fuel, Solar Farm) covered in the Laser scenarios were selected as being the most likely options for ABC to consider and therefore have been integrated into the action plan for feasibility testing, and potential delivery. The Laser work gives a broad indication of relative budgets that may be required. Additional work is planned to research emerging technology options and potentially more commercial scenarios to consider for viability.
21. As it is important to consider the individual requirements of different project areas and sites, a blanket application of a single scenario is unlikely to deliver the best carbon reduction outcome. However work is planned to devise individual carbon descent plans for individual assets to ensure greatest carbon reduction for least investment on a project by project basis.

Public Consultation

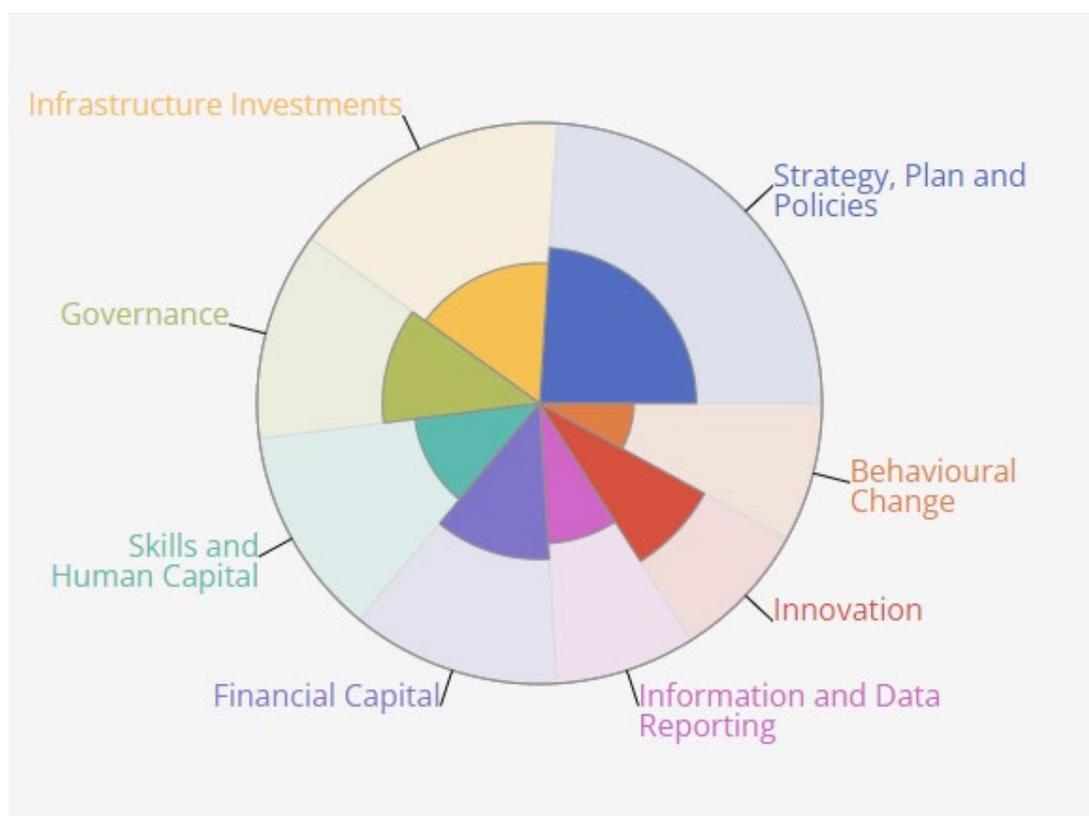
22. In addition to modelling data the Climate Action Plan was also informed through consultation on a draft version, between June to October 2021. The consultation identified the following key messages:
 - Act now – emphasis needs to be on delivering the actions
 - Lead by example – the council to be an exemplar in working to achieve carbon neutrality within its own estate and operations and encouraging others to do so.
 - Information and knowledge – raise awareness of the solutions not just the problems, enable others to take action
 - Engage and collaborate – work together to find and deliver solutions, learn from others experiences
 - Lobby and influence – to initiate wider (national) changes that in turn support local action
 - Future proofing – think about the bigger picture, co -benefits and pros and cons of actions and their relationship with each other.

At an individual level, respondents indicated they would like to:

- Understand more about climate change, its effects at a local level and how to reduce their carbon footprint
- Be able to reduce their car dependency by using public transport, walking and cycling
- Recycle a larger range of items and have access to more local recycling points
- Increase energy and water efficiency and reduce reliance on fossil fuels in their homes
- See improvements to green spaces and more tree planting in both private and public areas for the benefit of people and wildlife
- Make sustainable choices when purchasing products and buy local produce

Self Assessment

23. The Government Funded Net Zero Navigator tool has been used to give a broad assessment of our current organisational maturity in relation to zero carbon. The self-assessment tool looks at different areas of activity, or enablers and gives detailed case studies and suggestions for meeting any areas that are still in development, which can be incorporated into action plans. The aim is to extend the brighter segments of the chart below to the edge of the circle. Currently we are assessed as a 'starting out' organisation but the endorsement of the strategy will improve many areas instantly particularly around governance, behaviour change and policy.



Climate Emergency UK

24. A lobbying organisation known as Climate Emergency UK created a database of UK Local Authority climate & ecological emergency declarations and action plans to help interested parties quickly identify best practice. This sits alongside their checklist of what makes a good action plan⁴.
25. This database was been used to identify areas where it they considered the council's action plan was weak. These areas were:
- Governance Development and Funding
 - Measuring and Setting Emissions Targets
 - Diversity and Social Inclusion
 - Education, Skills and Training

⁴ <https://www.climateemergency.uk/local-authority-checklist/>

We have researched best practice and used this to ensure our strategy and action plan are strengthened in these areas.

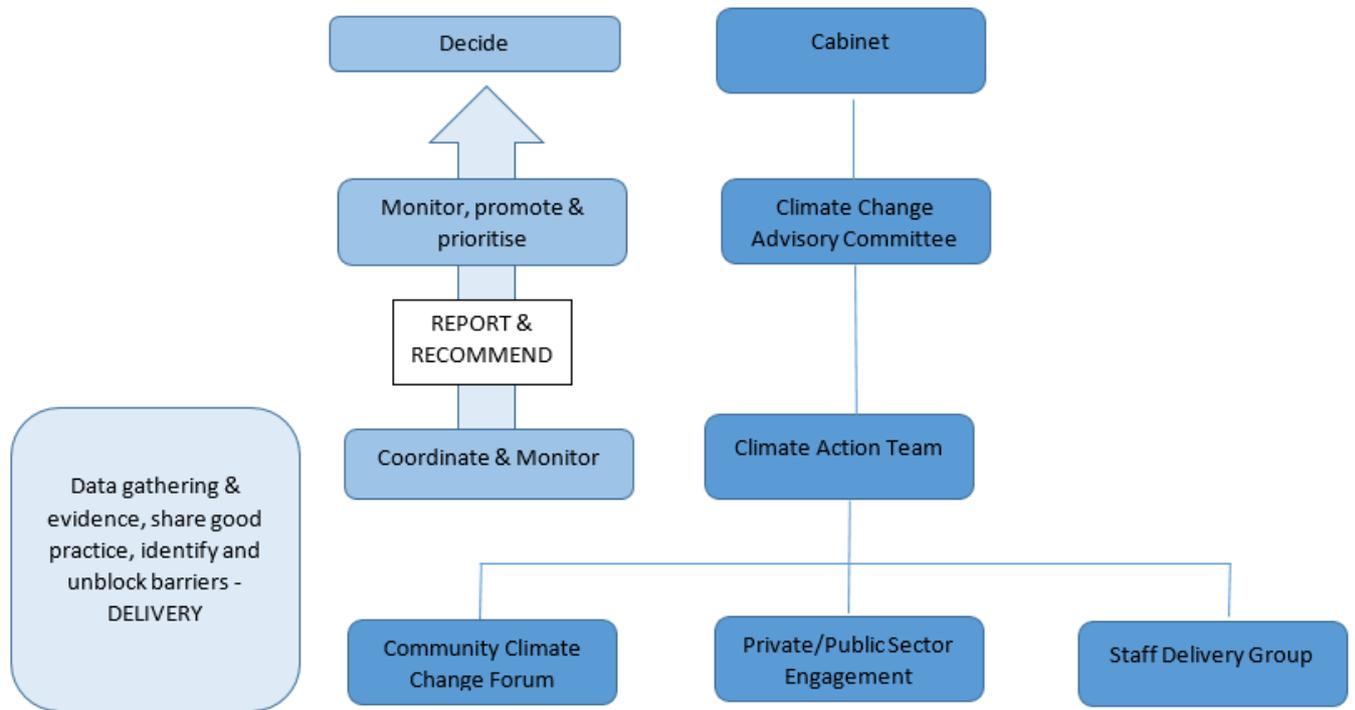
Strategy and Action Plan

26. The research and feedback ensures that we have a well informed position to lead and drive the agenda with ambition, build on our reputation as a resilient, innovative and caring Council, delivering sustainable services that meet resident's needs but which also motivates essential behaviour change.
27. This vision is encapsulated in a Climate Action Strategy that outlines a delivery framework for securing long lasting change, overseen by a Climate Action Team (CAT). The strategy covers both our endeavours to be meet carbon zero within our own estate and Borough wide, working with colleagues and the wider community to integrate climate change considerations into all we do, with associated co benefits to fuel poverty, well-being, biodiversity and air quality.
28. The strategy will also be an umbrella for existing delivery plans that support the strategic vision. It is recognised that there are cross cutting agendas, work is already underway in several areas and climate change considerations are included in existing plans e.g. HRA business plan 2021-2052 and the Waste contract specifications. These two areas need to remain separate from a core action plan in the short term due to financial ring fencing and external partnerships, although they will still be required to meet the core objectives of the strategy.
29. The strategy will be regularly refreshed and updated forming a living and evolving document that is relevant and required until the need for carbon reduction, mitigation and sequestration disappears. This is envisaged to be at least until 2050, but will be dependent on changing technologies and legislation. The success of the strategy and its performance measures will be regularly assessed and annual reports produced to illustrate attainment and celebrate projects and programmes that have been delivered. A bi annual action planning cycle will ensure delivery remains relevant and adaptable.

Climate Action Team

30. With Cabinet support, a new Climate Action Team (Manager and Senior Project Officer) will be set up to co-ordinate this holistic council wide response to the agenda. The team will be the contact for Members and parishes with regards to the actions of the council on the climate change agenda and to support wider parishes in their work on this agenda. The team will monitor the delivery of the Net Zero action Plan, support compliance, report on performance, develop and explore bid funding opportunities and (in responding to gap analysis, policy change and new technologies), develop the next iterations of the plan. It will also have a key role in local, regional and national liaison. (please see the strategy for the full details of this team's work remit).

31. The team will directly report to the CCAC on performance of the strategy. Carbon reduction data alongside other performance measures will be published in annual update reports.



Anticipated Outcomes

32. It is anticipated that the successful adoption of the Climate Change Strategy, Net Zero Action plan and introduction of the Climate Action Team will deliver the following benefits:-

- Attained carbon neutrality targets using an evidence led approach
- Co benefits – e.g. air quality, quality of life, green economy jobs, cost savings
- Community engagement, support and empowerment
- Corporate oversight of 'Green Pioneer' delivery
- Efficiencies with central resource - reduced duplication, single point of liaison
- PR –Council seen as leading, an active positive role model – public satisfaction
- Income generation to support Council, Parish and individual efforts
- Clarity of role and responsibilities for all departments
- Proactive approach to adaptations and interventions rather than reactive

Overview of work and initiatives to date

33. Despite the fact that the forward strategy and action plan have been in development over the last year, this has not halted the delivery of work and initiatives that positively contribute to our declared ambition of 'Ashford to Zero'. Below is a summary of several initiatives that have been undertaken and are moving forward for information.

Housing

Building zero carbon in the Housing Revenue Account

34. The Housing Service has been constructing properties to a high environmental standard using the 'Code for sustainable homes'. For a decade, new build construction in the Housing service has focused upon a fabric first approach; making the building fabric as thermally resistant as possible with low air leakage. The principle being that it is low maintenance.. This particular code also considered the health and wellbeing of the occupant and promoted, materials free from solvents, water based paints, sustainable materials, recycling construction waste, and working from home. Although this code was dropped a few years ago there are many aspects the council have continued to use and improve and have always committed to exceeding building control standards for energy efficiency.
35. Sustainable measures fitted under this code included:
- Photo voltaic panels
 - Solar thermal panels
 - Heat recovery on boiler flue
 - Heat sinks, preheating hot water/heating circuits
 - Water conservation
 - Grey water recycling
 - Air source heat pumps
36. In construction we have embraced the Council's zero carbon ambition and all buildings designed from this point will focus on being zero carbon in operation. Already we are in a position to deliver a 23 unit temporary accommodation facility on Henwood car park, using modular construction. This and Oakleigh House; an independent living scheme we are replacing in South Ashford, will also be zero carbon in operation. To demonstrate this we aim to register the project of 67 units of accommodation as a LETI pioneer, a recognised standard used in London.
37. There is more work to be done with all construction and that is to now push for the reduction in embodied carbon. Over a 60 year period the carbon footprint of a domestic home in construction will not be overtaken by the carbon footprint of the property in operation over that time. Construction standards and knowledge are changing and the Housing Service intend to be at the forefront of a fabric first, low carbon build

Retrofitting Housing Stock

38. As part of the corporate plan Green Pioneer objectives; Housing Services are completing Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) for all types of Council Stock with a view to develop a plan and programme for retrofitting Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock.
39. Surveying started in January 2021 and the expectation was that surveying would be completed by December 2021. Due to access issues, surveying was delayed, final reports and option appraisals are due shortly.
40. Scope of works for this Survey includes:
 - Energy performance survey with additional data collection of 472 dwellings
 - Creation of floor plans for each dwelling (pdf documents including basic measurements)
 - Input data into full Standard Assessment Procedure software (Stroma FSAP 2012) and produce models for each archetype
 - Produce spreadsheet and archetype reports summarising Full SAP software outputs
 - Undertake Option Evaluation exercise based on our organisational targets for energy performance/carbon reduction
41. Scope of carbon reduction considerations

To achieve our target of an EPC rating of band C or above, the following measures would be considered as a matter of course:

 - Low energy lamps
 - Heating controls
 - Cavity wall insulation
 - Loft insulation
 - Solid Wall Insulation (internal and external)
 - Flat roof insulation
 - Room-in-roof insulation
 - Doors and windows
 - Photovoltaic panels
 - Air Source Heat Pumps where current heating system is oil fired
42. The Housing Service have been proactive in maintaining their property. Historically it started 30 years ago with double glazing and cavity insulation for all properties in the housing stock. Also the over cladding of non-traditional construction types increasing the thermal resistance and would number approximately 300 units up to 2010.

43. In more recent years Housing have retrofitted:-
- 45 homes with an air source heat pump (ASHP). The Council started trialling the installation of ASHP around 10 years ago with mixed results. The installation cost is significantly higher than any other fuel source, around 3 times the cost of a similar gas boiler installation. The systems have to be very carefully designed and installed and receiving properties must be very well insulated.
 - Replaced ageing and inefficient boilers with Seasonal Efficiency of Domestic Boilers in the UK (SEDBUK) Band A, high efficiency gas boilers in accordance with the replacement cycle.
 - 36 roofs with PV panels as part of reroofing schemes.
 - 77 non-traditionally built homes fitted with EWI.
 - Insulated 45 timber-framed houses.
 - 13 steel-framed homes having EWI fitted at the moment with a further 12 flats awaiting Planning Permission.
 - Replaced PVCu windows and doors with high performance units (about 200 properties over the last two years).

Corporate Property

Decarbonising the Corporate Estate

44. The Council has already taken advantage of grant funding to dramatically reduce reliance on fossil fuels for assets it owns. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) launched the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme Phase 1 in September 2020. A £1 Billion fund was provided by the Government for public sector bodies to apply for a grant to finance up to 100% of the costs of capital energy-saving projects that meet the scheme criteria.
45. The Council submitted a scheme to “decarbonise” the Stour Centre during a major refurbishment project, which was successful. A £1.7 million pound scheme allowed for the removal of gas fired plant, and the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps along with a substantial Photo Voltaic (solar) array and many other energy adaptations and improvements. All schemes were required to complete by 31st March 2021.
46. The Council were granted a further project change to unspent amount of £330k to replace a 30 year old Air Handling Unit at Tenterden Leisure Centre, which includes the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump and upgrades to the Building Management System. This is currently being delivered.

Solar Photo Voltaic Arrays and carbon offsetting

47. The Council across all its assets has had installed over 100 solar arrays. This began on new build construction and while the feed in tariff was in place to subsidise the retrofitting of systems. Current systems being delivered:

Carlton Road Light Industrial Park

48. This asset was selected because units are new; is wholly owned by the council, has a large continuous roof, structural capacity to support a roof mounted array, and multiple options for the consumption of the generated electricity. The procurement process is complete and appointment of contractor imminent.
49. The system performance will be in the region of a half a megawatt in size (443,418 Kwh generated per annum), with an estimated installation cost of £400k and a gross annual income of £35K if each unit of energy is sold for 8p. This amount of electricity will be generated each year and exceeds initial expectations and complicates the model for exporting the electricity. Initial plan was to supply the Aspire depot but, the depots consumption will not be enough and surplus will be lost to the grid at a low rate.
50. The income options:
 - a. Sell to the grid – which is the worst case scenario at a rate of 4p per unit, and an estimated 16 years to payback the initial capital outlay.
 - b. Sell the electricity to the units - This could be at a rate of 8p – 10p per unit. The units at Carlton Road are light industrial and a high proportion will be for storage; this will not be sufficient to consume the electricity available from the solar array.
 - c. The Aspire depot – Could use the electricity, reducing its running costs. Currently the base load for the depot is insufficient to consume all the electricity which would be generated. Batteries were also considered for power when panels not generating.
 - d. A sleeving agreement – This would be committing/selling the green energy our system produces to another party through an agreement. Our green energy is worth more to sustainable consumers than the National Grid is prepared to pay.

51. Stour Centre Car Park

This asset was selected because it is wholly owned by the council, a large area to support a good sized array, with minimal visual impact given existing use. There are also multiple options for the consumption of the generated electricity. This project is at feasibility stage.

52. This system will require a planning application and consent before it can be delivered. As a car park the visual impact will be seen as minimal. The feasibility study at the moment is considering the appropriate framework to support the solar panels to maximise the production of electricity and minimise damage to the car park construction, in this flood zone.
53. The system's electricity production will be in the region of half a megawatt per annum. The proximity of high electricity consumers means a 'private wire' (direct supply to one user who is prepared to pay an agreed rate) would be the optimal solution. An estimated 64,000 kg CO₂ could be offset each year.
54. Private wire – To Stour Centre or Civic Centre; this option does not rely on the UK Power Network (UKPN) infrastructure. Energy supply could directly reduce consumption of Civic Centre, or by agreement could be sold to the Stour Centre operator at a reduced rate to the open market. The price would be pitched for the

benefit of all parties. There is still capacity after the decarbonisation work to use all the energy produced by the proposed car park array.

55. Current risks – Existing tree lined causeway needs to be examined further to see how it would affect performance. Also car park design new structural supports must not compromise integrity of existing substructure.

Ellingham Industrial Estate

56. Ellingham industrial estate is a collection of light industrial units of varying types of construction, the majority of the buildings are owned by the Council and have planned maintenance to replace some roofs which have aged and have asbestos content; making it an excellent opportunity to consider solar arrays on these assets. We currently have 80 units on this site.
57. This project is going through a feasibility study, which will look at viability by considering how large the arrays could be, who would use the electricity, potential income and how much carbon is offset from the Council's footprint.
58. The business uses for the units, will influence the setup for the distribution or collection of electricity. Where business uses are storage the energy consumption is negligible, so electricity is fed back into the National Grid and at a very low rate of income. If a sleeving agreement could be obtained this could be the best alternative.

International House

59. The age of this asset, poor thermal resistance and plans for reroofing are making a good case for this building to be assessed and a case put forward for improving energy efficiency. Elements of the building to be considered are cladding, retrofitting photovoltaic panels, ground source heat pumps and decarbonising. This building is being included in a bid to BEIS for Low Carbon Skills Funding, which will potentially pay for APSE Energy to develop a bespoke decarbonisation plan and fund design work for ground source heat pump options.

Further sites and systems

60. There is a continuous search for other sites which could be considered for PV. A piece of work is being initiated to evaluate all the Councils assets to model how and where solar arrays can be fitted/erected to gain a reasonable return on the investment, both building and land assets are to be considered. Logical sites to progress are Car parks and large roofs in council ownership because of the reduced impact in terms of visually and development on the environment such as green fields. However, to progress this we need to be clear where connections to UKPN could be made or where private wire can take up the generation or battery storage could evolve and support the projects, to ensure we are getting a good return on the investment required.
61. Further sites not in the Councils ownership will also be considered if a business case shows purchase/use viable

Private Property – Sustainable Warmth Grant

62. Ashford Borough Council has been working with the Greater South Net Zero Hub as part of a consortium, which has received more than £118 million in government funding to launch the Sustainable Warmth scheme. This will enable local authorities across the region to help deliver energy-saving improvements for people who are struggling to pay their heating bills. The grant application scheme available to our residents is funded by the Government and managed by Warmworks with support from Energy Saving Trust.
63. The scheme was launched in early June, offering funding to homeowners and private tenants who live in a home with a low energy rating and have a household income of less than £30,000 a year, or are unemployed and receive an income, health or disability benefit.
64. There are various bands of eligibility but broadly: for owner occupiers, the grant is up to £10,000 (on gas properties) to help pay for the cost of installing insulation upgrades, low carbon heating or renewables. Those properties that are off gas can receive up to £25,000, depending on type of fuel and EPC rating (EPC E, F and G only). For privately rented properties, the grant is up to £5,000. In order to qualify the tenant must meet the income eligibility and the landlord will need to contribute a third towards the cost of the upgrades. Only homes which have an EPC rating of band E, F and G are eligible for help under the scheme.
65. The scheme has been advertised in the local press and will be shared on our social media platforms and website.

Planning

66. Planning has a vital role to play in shaping and enabling resilient low-carbon communities. The core purpose of planning is to create sustainable places that support the environment and human health and wellbeing. In order to achieve this aim we must address both climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation.
67. Although the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030 contains a broad range of policies, which currently enable the Authority to contribute towards tackling climate change, in the period since the examination into and adoption of the Ashford Local Plan, the nature and extent of the climate change crisis has become more defined, and the guidance and form of policies required to mitigate and adapt to this new context has changed significantly.
68. It is vital that we respond to this change in context and that we find ways to build homes for the future that are more sustainable, i.e. do not require retrofit from the outset and generate green energy whilst being commercially viable. Work is therefore underway to explore how we can successfully navigate this conundrum, and start to transition towards 'requiring the market' to deliver greener homes rather than 'encouraging' them to do so. It is envisaged that this could be achieved through the planning system by adopting additional requirements through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that would address the change in context to climate change since the adoption of the Local Plan, by enabling the Council to seek higher sustainable design and construction

standards. Together with future mandatory requirements for biodiversity net gain this will go some way to help to tackle the serious climate change issue.

69. Clearly, the Local Plan process remains the most appropriate vehicle to deal with wider climate change issues and Climate Change will be a golden thread running through our next Local Plan. However, any future revision to our Local Plan is some time away from being adopted. This factor, and the fact that the issue of climate change is so important, leads officers to suggest that it is preferable to promote an SPD. As part of the preparatory work for this, informal consultation work with Developers is in the pipeline to ensure we work together to our mutual benefit. As a precursor to this, research is planned to better understand the extent of demand for sustainable homes locally.

Procurement

70. Procurement is a key part of achieving our carbon reduction targets, not only through direct and indirect use of products and services but also by using our higher sustainability requirements to drive change in the marketplace. As part of the KCC Climate Change Network we have contributed to a Kent Wide position statement, which outlines a proportionate approach to implementing net zero objectives into our contracts.
71. This is a transitional approach and recognises that not all businesses are yet on the same page and should not be discouraged from wanting to work with us, particularly smaller local enterprises. At this stage we are promoting recommended actions businesses should take e.g.
- Calculating scope 1 and 2 carbon footprints and where possible scope 3.
 - Giving a statement of intent for carbon reduction and setting a carbon and climate risk reduction plan for all activities and materials used.
 - Adopting a formal approach to environmental management or recognised accreditation eg Kent STEM⁵ Scheme or ISOs 14001 and 50001.
72. The KCC statement does not give a timeframe for moving from recommendation to requirement. At ABC we would like to see a more formal adoption of key specifications ideally by 2025 subject to consultation and Member consideration.
73. Work is underway to develop policy in this area, looking at the possible standards we hope to incorporate into our specifications, for larger contracts these could include areas such as
- requirements for suppliers to calculate emissions
 - request for providers of relevant size to obtain relevant environmental standards
 - requirement to report on environmental performance at regular intervals throughout contract duration
 - include environmental discussion as standard in contract management
 - set low emission requirements in material, equipment, property and delivery mechanisms.

⁵ Steps to Environmental Management Scheme

74. Recognising the long term costs (both environmental, social and ultimately financial) of failing to drive the agenda through our indirect influence, it is our ambition that to work towards having sustainability criteria that have equal weight to cost and quality.
75. We will work cross Council to support our business stakeholders, providing them with tools to measure their impacts, share best practice and innovation and ensure that no one feels excluded or left behind in the process of moving to net zero.

Queen's Green Canopy

76. The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a national tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. As part of this initiative Ashford aims to plant 135,000 trees, each one representing a resident living in the Borough in 2022. This will not only create a living legacy for Her Majesty but will also make a contribution to climate action, through carbon sequestration and safeguarding and enhancing the environment in our borough for generations to come.
77. The initiative is already well under way with approximately 45k trees already in the ground, with the remainder planned for the next three winter/spring planting seasons through to 2024.
78. The project is being led by Aspire, who will continue to co-ordinate and support projects across the borough, inviting parishes, schools, volunteer groups and land owners to be engaged.

EV charging points

79. We have started a programme to install EV chargers (EVCPs) throughout the borough. Residents and visitors can expect more places to charge electric vehicles as part of plans to accelerate the transition to cleaner modes of transportation.
80. We were successful in obtaining funding to install new EVCPs in some of our car parks. The installation begun on 30/05/22 in the Edinburgh Rd Car Park with 6 x 7kW charge points across 12 bays, on the 2nd floor.
81. This proposal will improve service by increasing access to charging facilities for the anticipated increase in electric vehicle users in the coming years. This will encourage the use of electric vehicles while reducing the environmental impact of vehicle emissions.
82. Therefore to summarise intended outcomes:
 - make the use of electric vehicles in Ashford easier and more practical with more charging points available
 - increase electric vehicle ownership in Ashford
 - reduce carbon emissions to help address the climate emergency
 - improve air quality - linked to public health benefits
 - address national and local expectations regarding electric vehicle ownership

Proposal

83. Members are referred to the recommendations

Equalities Impact Assessment

84. Members are referred to the attached Assessment.
85. Everyone is affected by climate change and this strategy will seek to reduce further harmful effects in the future by collaborative working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to enable residents, business and communities to adapt to those effects already being witnessed, such as extreme weather events. The Climate Change Strategy and Net Zero Action Plan should have positive outcomes across all groups.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

86. Consultation was undertaken on a draft strategy, the 8 core principles and action plan between June to October 2021. Findings from this and other data sources have been incorporated into the recommended strategy and action plan.
87. A Community Stakeholder Group will continue to engage the public on the agenda. It will be independently chaired and meet regularly to give feedback on interventions, priorities and messaging as part of its core role. The group will be demographically representative of the Borough's adult community.

Other Options Considered

88. The alternative option to producing a Climate Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy, i.e. not engaging actively in the agenda and leaving advancement to chance and external influence is not viable. It is right for ABC to take action now and deliver on climate change, not only to meet our legal and ethical obligations but in order to lead the way for the Borough's residents as well as being recognised at a regional and national level.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

89. To succeed in achieving the Council's aim of reducing its own carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 requires a thorough, co-ordinated and evidence led approach.
90. A Climate Action Team will provide capacity to provide this co-ordination, ensure accountability and engage with the community.
91. There is a legal and ethical responsibility to take action.

Next Steps in Process

92. Forward final Laser report to CCAC to note findings and incorporate relevant actions into long term and short term actions plans
93. Recruit and set up climate change team.
94. Set up officer stakeholder group, agree reporting framework and measures.
95. Set up representative Community Stakeholder group
96. Report back to Cabinet on progress in May 2022

Conclusion

97. A carbon baseline and budget has been presented, which can be utilised to focus activity, press urgency and measure impact. The further detailed carbon descent plan will be used to prioritise the most impactful activities.
98. A holistic approach, with central oversight but decentralised accountability will ensure engagement in and delivery of the Climate Change agenda across the Council and the wider borough.

Portfolio Holder's Views

Cllr Matthew Forest, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Land Management (including Sports and Leisure)

99. It is the actions we deliver in the next decade that will have a lasting impact and legacy for generations to come. We recognise and accept our responsibility to deliver on this agenda with both urgency and consideration. This strategy reflects our ambition and commitment to be bold, but illustrates our understanding that long term value (both economic, social and environmental) needs to be supported by a data and community led approach to ensure our interventions have the greatest reach.

Cllr Bill Barrett, Chair Climate Change Advisory Committee

100. Climate action requires commitment and collaboration; it needs to move central stage to become the golden thread running through all our decision making if we are to meet our carbon reduction ambitions. Our strategy and action plan recognises that this requires an invigorated corporate approach, delivered not only through cross departmental working and central governance but also with a strong focus looking outward, engaging and enabling our communities and all stakeholders to work with us in partnership.
101. We accept the challenge and want to see Ashford recognised as a Borough that delivers and leads on this agenda, not only achieving its carbon targets but the many potential co-benefits along the way such as a burgeoning green economy, significantly reduced fuel costs and thus poverty, improved biodiversity, health and well being.

Contact and Email

Sophie Stiles Sophie.stiles@ashford.gov.uk

Jennifer Shaw Jennifer.shaw@ashford.gov.uk

APPENDICES as separate pdfs

1. Equality Impact Assessment
2. Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan for 2022-24

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Glossary

- **BEIS** - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- **Biodiversity** - Biodiversity refers to the variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi. While Earth's biodiversity is so rich that many species have yet to be discovered, many species are being threatened with extinction due to human activities.
- **Carbon Footprint** - A carbon footprint measures the total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by a person, organisation, event or product.
- **Carbon Neutrality** - Carbon neutrality means having a balance between emitting carbon and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere in carbon sinks. Removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and then storing it is known as carbon sequestration. In order to achieve net zero emissions, all worldwide greenhouse gas emissions will have to be counterbalanced by carbon sequestration.
- **Carbon Offsetting** - The balancing of the emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or other greenhouse gases (measured in carbon dioxide equivalents [CO₂e]) from an activity by providing for or investing in an emission reduction elsewhere. If carbon reductions are equivalent to the total carbon footprint of an activity, then the activity is said to be "carbon neutral."
- **Climate Change** - Climate change is the long-term shift in average weather patterns across the world. Since the mid-1800s, humans have contributed to the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air. This causes global temperatures to rise, resulting in long-term changes to the climate.
- **CO₂** - Carbon dioxide, one of the main greenhouse gases.
- **CO₂e** - Carbon dioxide equivalent. Carbon dioxide equivalent is a measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases based upon their global warming potential.
- **Co-benefits** - Co-benefits of climate change mitigation as defined in the 4th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are the positive benefits related to the reduction of greenhouse gases. Examples of such climate mitigation policies include improved energy efficiency of plants, renewable energy uptake and fuel switching which might enable a range of co-benefits such as air-pollution impacts, technological innovation, energy-supply security through increased energy diversity, reduced fuel cost and employment possibilities.

- **EPC Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)** - tell you how energy efficient a building is and give it a rating from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient).
- **EV charging points** - An electric vehicle charging point is equipment that connects an electric vehicle (EV) to a source of electricity to recharge electric cars.
- **Food miles** - The distance between the place where food is grown or made and the place where it is eaten.
- **Greenhouse gases** - Greenhouse gases in the atmosphere absorb heat energy and prevent it all escaping into space. This keeps the Earth warmer than it would be without these gases. The increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is magnifying the greenhouse effect and increasing global temperatures. There are many greenhouse gases but these are some of the most important: water vapour H₂O, carbon dioxide CO₂, methane CH₄, nitrous oxide N₂O, CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons).
- **HRA Housing Revenue Account** - a ring-fenced account of certain defined transactions, relating to local authority housing. It records expenditure and income arising from the provision of housing accommodation by local housing authorities.
- **Health and well-being co benefits** - Health and well-being co-benefits refers to any positive (or negative) impact zero carbon actions have on people's health and well-being. For example a reduction in air pollution has a positive impact on people's health, by reducing asthma and in premature deaths caused by air pollution. Active travel also creates health and well-being co-benefits. It reduces the effects of sedentary lifestyles reducing obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer.
- **Inclusion co-benefits** refers to positive (or negative) impacts zero carbon actions have on inclusion, equity and diversity. It is important that delivering zero carbon actions promotes inclusive growth. Some examples of inclusion co-benefits include reducing fuel poverty, increased access to basic services, or equal access to clean energy, water and air.
- **Job creation** - Zero carbon actions can have a positive (or negative) impact on employment, industrial development and consumption patterns. For example, the deployment of low-carbon technologies and renewable energy systems can foster new job opportunities, or transitioning to a circular economy can release new economic opportunities.
- **KCC** - Kent County Council.
- **KRF** - The Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) is a partnership of organisations and agencies who work together to improve the resilience of Kent and Medway, and to ensure a coordinated response to emergencies that could have a significant impact on communities. The KRF is one of 42 of local resilience forums (LRFs) across England set up in response to the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004.
- **LoCase** - The Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) programme is supported by the European Regional Development Fund to provide a free business support programme in the South East. Its aim is to help businesses become more

competitive and profitable while protecting the environment and encouraging low carbon solutions.

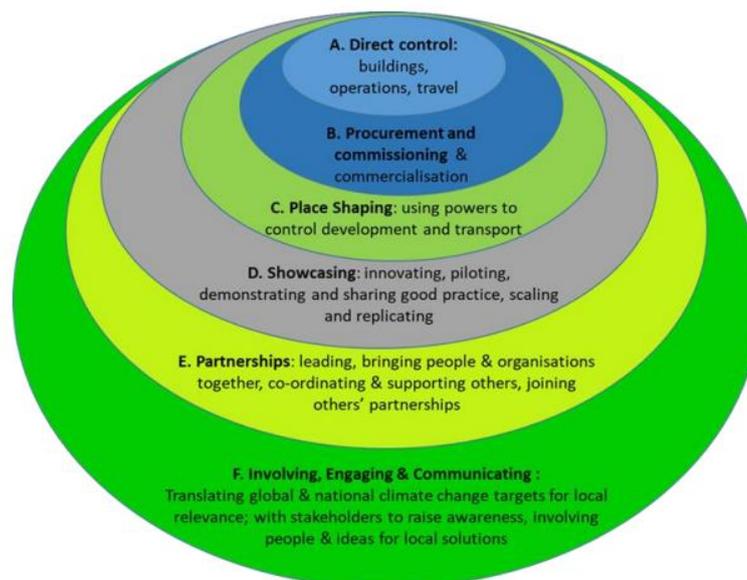
- **Local capacity** - current skills profile of the population in the area as it relates to net-zero requirements and distinguishes between areas where the skills available are (or were) largely due to inward commuters, those where a sufficient skills base exists and those which will need to focus on upskilling.
- **Natural capital** - Natural capital co-benefits include reduction in pollution, increase in biodiversity net gain, enhancement of existing green and blue assets, protection of wildlife and climate resilience. For example, investments in green and blue infrastructure can reduce the urban heat island effect in cities as well as promote urban greening.
- **PV** - Photovoltaic or Solar Energy - conversion of light into electricity using semi-conducting materials
- **Renewable Energy** - The International Energy Agency (IEA) defines renewable energy resources as those derived from natural processes and replenished at a faster rate than they are consumed.
- **Rewilding** - The process of protecting an environment and returning it to its natural state, for example by bringing back wild animals that used to live there.
- **Scope 1 emissions** - Emissions that come directly from operations that are owned or controlled by us - fleet, buildings
- **Scope 2 emissions** - Indirect emissions but in our control, eg. Purchased or consumed electricity, heating or cooling.
- **Scope 3 emissions** - Indirect emissions outside our control that occur in the value chain, e.g. community, investments, purchased goods and services
- **Sleeving Agreement** - a buying structure for purchasing renewable energy, under which power may be sold by the generator to the consumer.
- **STEM** - Steps to Environmental Management Scheme. The scheme helps businesses to improve their environmental performance through a series of assessments and certificates (blue, silver and gold).
- **Sustrans** - A national charity whose mission is to make it easier for people to walk and cycle.
- **WEEE** - Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment recycling; a specialist part of the waste and recycling industry.

Climate Change Strategy June 2022

Overview

1. Climate change, caused by increased greenhouse gas emissions, is having a devastating impact on our planet. Without decisive action to reduce emissions, we are likely to experience an increase in damaging weather events impacting homes, livelihoods, infrastructure, food production, habitats and biodiversity.
2. The global response to this threat is framed in the Paris Agreement¹ a legally binding international treaty, adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.
3. In line with this ambition the UK government have outlined their commitment to net zero carbon by 2050, with a pathway committing us to the Independent Climate Change committee's (ICCC) Sixth Carbon Budget 2020, reducing emissions by 78% by 2035 to 1990 levels.
4. The UK Government's sixth Carbon Budget 2020 sets out the important and dynamic role local authorities have both directly and indirectly in delivering carbon reduction in their local area. We need to think globally but act locally with a sense of urgency, priority and scale. The role of Local Government in the climate change crisis is well documented and formally recognised but it is broad ranging and includes; active place shaping initiatives and de-carbonising of assets; empowerment and engaging partnerships; to lead and influencing change.

Figure 1.2 How local authorities control and influence emissions



Source: 'Onion diagram' based on internal Centre for Sustainability model and amended for this report.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

5. Our borough, sitting in the heart of the Garden of England, with its beautiful countryside and varied towns and villages, needs us all to act together. We must consider how we can adapt and change our behaviour to lessen our impact locally, influencing and supporting positive change nationally and globally.
6. In May 2021, Ashford Borough Council made a clear commitment to carbon net zero targets within our own estate by 2030 and to support the government's national agenda to reach net zero carbon more widely in the Borough by 2050. The Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC), driven by our lead Member, ensures the commitment to act, achieve and collaborate to meet this agenda.
7. This strategy sets out how we will take a systemic approach to meeting both these targets with a two pronged approach. Firstly, through leadership and example, ensuring sustainability considerations, action and accountability are ingrained into all we do as a council and secondly to enable, support and advise all our partners, communities and stakeholders to contribute to our shared goals. We envisage a consultative and problem solving approach will help us understand and tackle any barriers to change and allow us to bring all communities with us in this vital work to secure natural balance, embrace innovation and drive a new green economy.
8. This strategy has a clear timeline to 2050, although this may inevitably require review as new challenges arise or indeed if new technologies bring earlier successes.

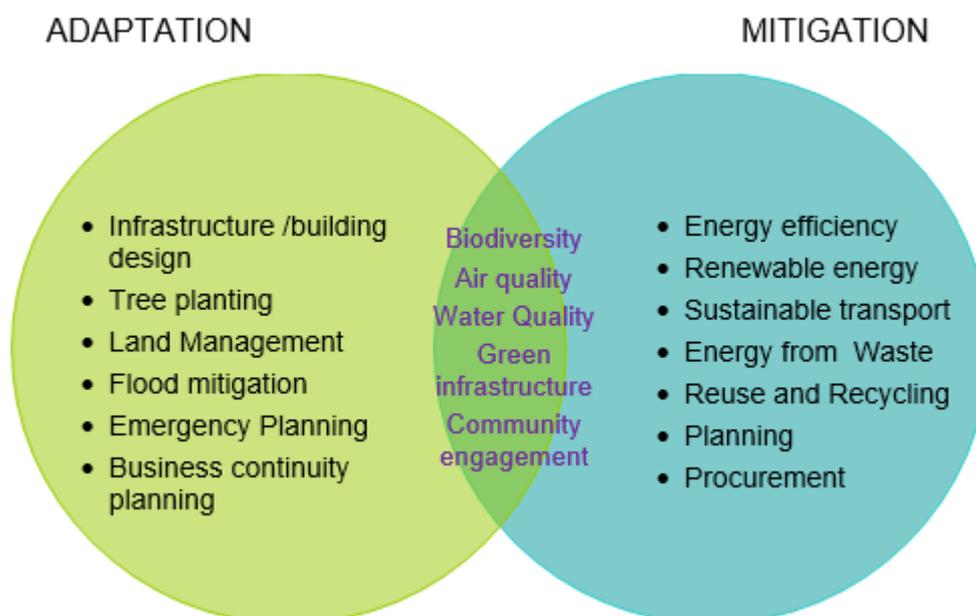
Vision and Purpose

9. To lead and drive this agenda with ambition, build on our reputation as a resilient, innovative and caring Council, delivering sustainable services that meet resident's needs but which also motivates essential behaviour change.
10. The realisation of our vision will help to ensure we continue to deliver high quality and cost effective services to local residents but give increasing weight to the longer term impacts of climate change and acknowledge our responsibility as guardians for the future and exemplars of good practice.
11. We seek to genuinely embed sustainability into all decision making, share our learning and actively support others to engage meaningfully in the agenda.
12. The new strategy will be delivered through the successful adoption of 8 guiding principles which will frame ongoing iterations of our Climate Action Plan, (the first version for 2022-24 attached.) which covers both our internal and external net zero carbon targets.
13. This is more than a set of interventions and exciting new project areas but involves a fresh centralised approach, whereby all council services share accountability, matrix teams become a comfortable norm and data collation and an evidence led approach is always the starting point for prioritisation, to ensure greatest benefits are attained. The action plan will be considered a living document that can respond to data, policy change and new technologies and regularly engages all stakeholders.

14. The action plan will be delivered collaboratively but with central oversight from a new Climate Action Team (CAT), which will build capacity, co-ordinate and support the required activities to deliver on our responsibility as leader and enabler of the local climate change agenda.
15. Adoption of the strategy will confirm Climate Change as the golden thread running through all policy considerations. It confirms that its multiple co-benefits such as health, wellbeing, air quality, biodiversity, energy security and economic development are understood and will enable the Council to demonstrate and illustrate benefits of a holistic, 'One Council' approach.

Our Focus

16. The core focus of the strategy is to tackle the numerous work streams collectively, to prioritise work based on evidence, reduce duplication and ensure work streams and funding opportunities do not fall between the gaps.
17. The Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan touches all areas of Council activity, whether focusing on **Mitigation** strategies through greenhouse gas reduction, or **Adaptive** strategies, ensuring resilience to current climate change pressures and future threats. As such success requires a system led approach recognising that work areas will inevitably overlap and requires some organisation.



18. We are also keenly aware that there is an internal and external context to consider. Only 2-5% of our area emissions are in our direct control (assets, energy use, Etc.) but a further 33% reductions are attainable by targeting activity in our circle of influence, out in the community. ² It is vital that we work on our own assets so

² Climate Change Committee Local Authorities and the 6th Carbon Budget Dec 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf>

that we can lead by example and meet our 2030 targets but we also have a more challenging duty to ensure we meet our 2050 borough wide target by tackling this 33%. The remaining borough wide emissions may be out of our control (and include areas such as aviation, motorway use, power generation etc.), although we have a behaviour change / lobbying role in this regard.

19. Data is key to planning our strategy going forwards and we are committed to an evidence led approach to understanding and best targeting our localised response as well as measuring our impact. This will involve the commissioning of external expertise for feasibility work where appropriate. Qualitative data and resident feedback is also vital to ensuring our policies and actions meet community need.

Delivery model

Climate Action Plan - meeting 2050 target for Borough wide emissions

20. The cornerstone of our approach hangs around 8 priorities, which have been refined through public consultation.

Objective	Outcomes
<p>Priority 1: Raise awareness of climate change to increase understanding and knowledge, empower and enable our partners and residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness within the community of positive choices, replicable projects and activities that can benefit carbon reduction. • Improved 2 way communication, whereby the Community have better means to influence and advise the Council how they can better support and help them to achieve carbon reduction targets. • Improved equity of access and participation in the green agenda • Improved staff skillsets and knowledge
<p>Priority 2: Ensure the council's decision making processes, strategic documents and procedures contribute to climate change; reducing carbon emissions, and increasing local resilience to climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All council departments have shared accountability to the climate change agenda. • There is integration of carbon reduction and sustainability considerations into all processes, procurement and decisions.

<p>Priority 3: Reduce reliance on <i>fossil fuels</i> for energy by increasing renewable energy generation and consumption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in renewable energy use across the Borough. • Higher standards of environmental sustainability in new developments • Council drives local renewable energy generation and usage projects at all scales, supporting the community with accessibility to green energy and sharing learning. • Council achieves 100% green energy use in its own operations.
<p>Priority 4: Encourage and enable a shift towards cleaner modes of <i>transport</i> and reduce car dependency with co benefits to air quality and health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly reduce carbon impact from council related travel and operations. • Increase active and sustainable travel by increasing opportunity through regional and national lobbying; planning and design; and encouraging take up through positive messaging.
<p>Priority 5: Enable <i>business</i> growth while maximising opportunities to reduce carbon emissions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce carbon footprint of business sector and develop a low carbon circular economy. • Increase green industries, skills and jobs in the borough.
<p>Priority 6: Reduce the environmental footprint of <i>buildings</i> through retrofitting existing buildings and improved building standards within new build developments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower carbon footprint of buildings within the Borough through new build regulation, private and public sector retrofit initiatives and use of renewable energy and heat networks where appropriate. • Increase net biodiversity where new building takes place. • Reduce fuel poverty.
<p>Priority 7: Protect, enhance and increase <i>green space</i> for the benefit of people, wildlife and carbon sequestration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased and enhanced biodiversity of open spaces in the borough increasing key species. • Improvement in river water quality • Improve access to open space, food growing and wildlife through land management, community gardening and habitat creation.
<p>Priority 8: Reduce <i>waste</i> and continue high levels of recycling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced tonnage of non-recyclable material collected • Increase re-use and re-appropriation of waste (incl. exploration of projects relating to heat for heat networks and energy from waste).

21. These frame our aspirations and activities going forward across the Authority. A detailed Climate Action Plan (Appendix 1) specifically designed to deliver on each priority and bring together service delivery directly impacting climate change, has been devised to communicate our planned activity and also enable performance management of progress. The strategy has been informed by; a) work from consultants Laser UK who have provided us with indicative carbon descent pathways, b) feedback from public consultation and pressure group Climate Emergency UK and c) self assessment.
22. All planned actions are aligned with the Corporate Plan³, particularly our Green Pioneer theme
 - Reduce reliance on fossil fuels in line with our carbon neutral targets
 - Increase biodiversity and encourage sustainable lifestyles
 - Reduce the amount of waste produced from homes and business

But also Caring Ashford, which strives for *Homes and Neighbourhoods that meet the needs of local people to live sustainably and safely, reduce health inequalities and well being of local people.*
23. The Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) 'Principles for a Green Recovery', which were also adopted as part of our Corporate Plan, will also continue to guide decision making through the lifetime of this strategy.
24. This first 2022-24 action plan has an initial focus on mitigation work looking at carbon reduction projects and governance, impacting on co-benefits such as air quality and biodiversity. It is envisaged that future plans will need to give increasing focus to adaptation projects.
25. We envisage that the proposed plan will be an evolving document and subject to regular review as technological changes, policy and ongoing consultation direct a progressive path to meeting our target levels most quickly and efficiently.
26. Progress will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC), explaining activity to date and highlighting any identified risks to target attainment. Regular updates and information will also be published on our web pages.
27. The strategy, while setting out a new framework and action plan, will also be an umbrella for any existing plans that already deliver on climate action. The HRA business plan 2021-2052 and the Waste contract specifications include commitments to climate change but will be monitored separately from the core action plan in the short term due to financial ring fencing and external partnership requirements which renders our 2030 internal targets challenging (although not impossible). Teams managing these areas will still be required to fully engage in the strategy and report on progress; and the situation will be reviewed for the 2024-26 plan.

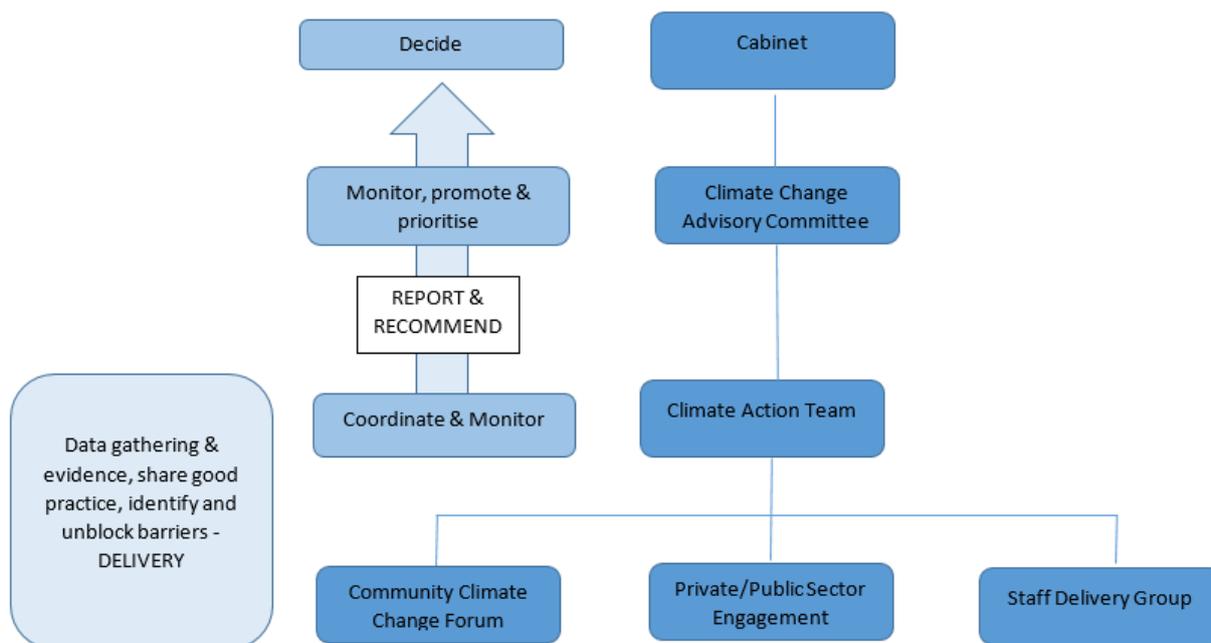
³ <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-council/policies-and-strategies/corporate-plan-and-our-performance/>

Buildings Decarbonisation Programme - meeting our 2030 target

28. Although part of the wider agenda, we need to be able to separate out and identify the specific interventions that will deliver our in house targets for reporting purposes. This work will be framed within a comprehensive Decarbonising Assets programme that will utilise the recent baseline carbon footprint data provided by Laser UK, and involve extensive feasibility work to create bespoke delivery plans for each property in a programme format.
29. Each property plan will have a phased approach on a timeline that, for example, leaves a boiler in place until the end of its life rather than just a shopping list of interventions. This planned approach will enable us to prepare in advance for future government funding rounds proactively. We will also be able to prioritise projects based on cost, carbon reduction profile and speed of impact on a case by case basis. Each plan will outline modelled carbon reduction estimates, as a result of our interventions, over a 20 year period.

Climate Action Team

30. A new Climate Action Team has been set up to co-ordinate this holistic council wide response to the agenda with a systems thinking approach. The team will work to integrate sustainability into day to day service delivery throughout the Council, working with managers to improve business processes and strategies as required. It will support services with compliance through a cross service staff delivery group, where delivery progress against action plans and targets is recorded, barriers to progress identified and resolved, cross working and funding opportunities taken and external communities and partners engaged.
31. While CAT will be responsible to CCAC for oversight, delivery will remain devolved at service level, ensuring accountability for the agenda remains shared and integral.
32. The team will act as a central liaison point for local, regional and national communications, ensuring insights and opportunities are shared with colleagues and any new legislative requirements are met or exceeded. They will liaise with multiple stakeholders and influence and lobby for change (internally and externally) where systemic barriers or conflicting priorities arise
33. The team will support the Climate Change Advisory Committee, acting as its delivery arm. The team will be the central liaison point for members allowing ease of access to information on initiatives, put forward proposals for approval, based on member recommendations and prepare performance management information for the Committee.



Community engagement

34. Borough wide success to meet 2050 targets is dependent on greater engagement with our communities and external partners. We will only be able to make any substantial impact to climate change with their support and endorsement. We have a role to empower action and share knowledge, but also to encourage challenge, seek innovation, and understand everyone's priorities and barriers to engagement if we are to succeed.
35. Community in this context also refers to our third sector partners including the breadth of business stakeholders from our top employers, housing developers to SMEs. It is only when we engage that we can understand the best delivery models for change, climate change action has to be collaborative to ensure success.
36. The CAT team will take on the community engagement role and be the principal local stakeholder contact for community groups, business, third sector and parishes for all sustainability and climate change matters. They will research and sign post suitable project areas and funding opportunities to local partners, provide support and share best practice.
37. The team, working with communications team, economic development team and housing team will be responsible for creating a narrative to better explore social co benefits of climate agenda – health, cost effectiveness, job opportunities, community investment, commercial benefits in a local context to create council wide linkages. They will promote the Local Authorities Leadership role, through social media and other comms, to motivate and incentivise behaviour change.
38. Understanding resident's aspirations and barriers to engagement are vital if we are to work collectively. We envisage setting up a Community Climate Change forum where we have a truly demographically reflective group of 100 residents to give us feedback, help us direct activity and ensure engagement is effective. This would be chaired independently but supported by the climate action team.

Performance management

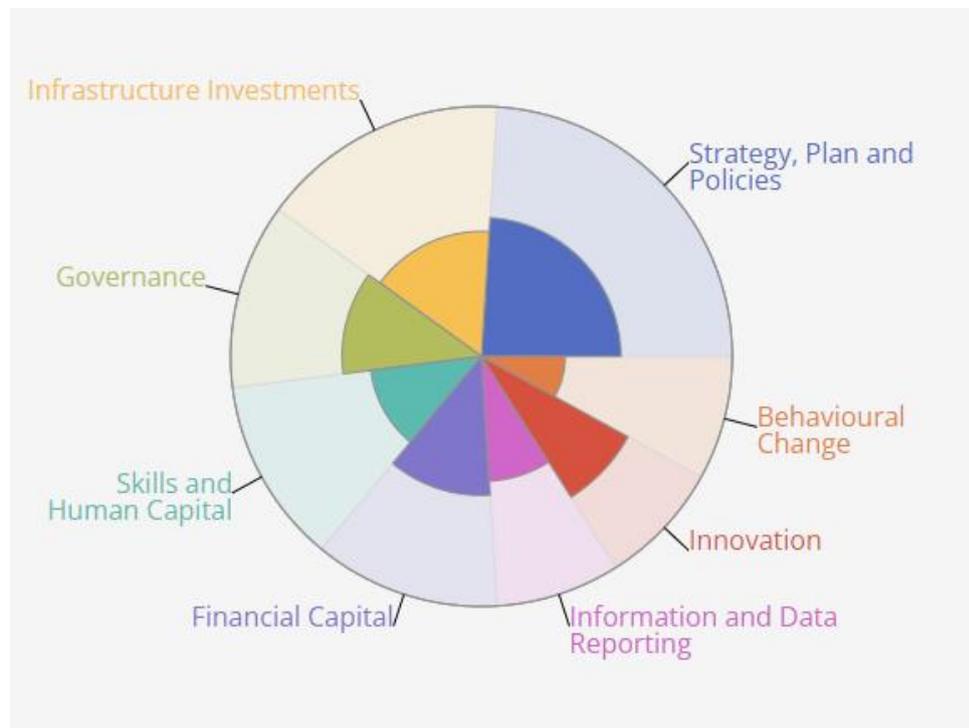
39. Monitoring attainment of the Climate Action Plan will be managed centrally by CAT and will be considered at bi monthly stakeholder meetings. Regular updates on progress will be reported to CCAC, using a RAG (Red Amber Green) status, with project updates and risk/barriers summary for each area. The public will also receive regular updates on progress through our web pages and annual reports.
40. The Council's performance management system will be used to measure attainment of our core targets i.e. carbon reduction and delivery of our action plan, as well as a suite of additional measures that reflect the core priorities and can more tangibly illustrate impact in accordance with our Corporate Plan.
1. % of planned actions in Climate Action Plan 2022-24 completed
 2. Total CO2 emissions - borough wide
 3. Total CO2 emissions - borough wide per capita
 4. Total CO2 emissions - council's own estate and operations (*Corporate Plan (CP) - Councils carbon footprint (tCO₂e)*)
 5. Number of air quality monitoring sites with NO₂ below 40µg/m³ (*CP - Air Quality – average level of NO₂ µg/m³*)
 6. *CP - Number of EV charging point on council property*
 7. % of businesses who tender to work with us who have a carbon reduction plan in place
 8. % of electric/alternative fuel vehicles in council operated fleet
 9. Net gain in tree stock through council led initiatives (*CP - Number of trees planted (net gain) supported through ABC projects*)
 10. % of HRA homes that are below EPC rating C that are retrofitted
 11. Household waste tonnages – aiming for a reduction
41. Work with Laser UK has helped us establish our overall Borough wide and internal carbon footprints and given us illustrative descent pathways to highlight the level of intervention required, reflected in our action plans. These are modelled assessments but we will be able to report on any significant risks to delivery of these high level targets through monitoring the action plan and its future iterations.

Carbon Budget Period	Recommended Carbon Budget (ktCO ₂ e)
2019-2023	11.900
2024-2028	5.952
2029-2033	2.961
2034-2038	1.361
2039-2043	0.611
2044-2048	0.320
2049-2100	0.541
Total Budget	23.646

Recommended Borough Wide Carbon Budget

From Laser UK

42. We will also use the Government Funded Net Zero Navigator tool to ensure our strategic efforts are in line with national best practice delivery models. We have used the tool to self assess our organisational maturity in relation to net zero. Our current standing is illustrated in the chart below



43. The self-assessment tool looks at different areas of activity, or enablers. Currently, we are assessed as a 'starting out' organisation, and it reflects our planned actions as well as our aspiration. Using this tool we will also be able to demonstrate our development over time.
44. In addition, at a service level, a suite of over 80 suggested measures have been collated for services to utilise, evidence their interventions and contribute to measuring outcomes.

Funding

45. Although there are many challenges ahead there are also opportunities. The Governments new net zero strategy, Build Back Greener published in April 2022 sets out funding of at least £1.5bn during the next spending review period, expanding a portfolio of cross government net zero innovation to fund BEIS-led programmes on power, buildings and industry; DfT-led programmes across transport; and DEFRA led programmes on natural resources, waste and F-gases.
46. The Climate Action Team will have a strategic overview of central government policy, its implications and potential funding opportunities. It has been tasked with identifying income streams, signposting these internally and to partners and preparing appropriate bid and grant applications. It is also envisaged that a system thinking approach will help us to identify areas where there are gaps in current delivery to enable a proactive rather than reactive approach to funding applications and project development.

47. Much of the work identified in the Climate Action Plan are already agreed in principle through the corporate plan. Additional identified project areas will emerge for approval as technologies develop and improve
48. The strategy will build on existing successes with grant funding. £1.7m has already been secured to deliver a decarbonisation scheme at the Stour Centre, a further £330k to replace a 30 year old Air Handling Unit with an Air Source Heat Pump and other upgrades and Low Carbon Skills funding to enable consultants APSE Energy to write comprehensive decarbonisation plans for Julie Rose Stadium and International House.

Delivering benefits

50. The successful adoption of the Climate Change Strategy, Climate Action Plan and introduction of the Climate Action Team will deliver multiple benefits including:
 - Attained carbon neutrality targets internally for 2030 and Borough wide for 2050
 - Corporate drive of 'Green Pioneer' delivery
 - Increased public satisfaction as real action demonstrated
 - Co benefits – e.g. improved air quality, quality of life, green economy growth and skills, reduced energy poverty
 - An evidence led approach – giving assurance and political security, justification for chosen pathways
 - Clarity of role and responsibilities for all departments
 - Community engagement, support and empowerment
 - An inclusive approach to support decision making processes that will drive future council ambitions
 - Efficiencies - reduced duplication, single point of liaison
 - PR –Council recognised in leadership role; active, positive role model
 - Proactive approach to adaptations and interventions rather than reactive
 - Ensuring our resources are used sustainably to deliver the outcomes our residents need.
 - Income generation to support Council, Parish and individual efforts and balance budgets
 - A commercial approach that utilises our assets
 - Engender a culture of collaboration, innovation and problem solving through systemic approach.

- Robust delivery framework with aspirations to grow and deliver capacity and skills in the climate change agenda to benefit the organisation, wider community and green economy
- A non risk averse approach but built in capacity for change, understanding the agenda will develop and require adaptability with new data, technologies and impact of climate change already in train.
- Vision for the long term, with a view to securing the futures of generations to come, living and thriving in Ashford

APPENDIX 1: CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2022-24

Priority 1: Raise awareness of climate change and air quality to increase understanding and knowledge, empower and enable our partners and residents

Action	Role of the council	Lead service/team	Links to Corporate Plan
Objective 1.1 Maintain ongoing internal and external 'carbon neutral' communications			
1.1.1 Identify key themes from community consultation and feedback to drive behavioural change and implement communications plan	Deliver	Climate Action Team & Communications	GP1-3
1.1.2 Create new website page and content for climate change information, making sure to link with other sources of regional and national information	Deliver	Climate Action Team and Communications	GP1-3, CA1
1.2.3 Set up a community forum (fully representing the demographic make-up of our communities) to understand public requirements to participate in agenda and key drivers and barriers	Deliver, Support	Climate Action Team	GP1-3, CA1
Objective 1.2 Increase staff and elected member skills and knowledge			
1.2.1 Deliver Carbon Literacy Training and knowledge updates to key staff and all elected members	Deliver	Climate Action Team	GP1-3
1.2.2 Investigate other training opportunities and research best practice to continually increase knowledge and skills of all staff	Deliver, Research	Climate Action Team	GP1-3

Objective 1.3 Encourage others to promote a low carbon, environmentally sustainable ethos			
1.3.1. Drive Eco schools programme in the Borough	Deliver	Climate Action Team	GP1-3
1.3.2 Signpost project ideas, information on eco certification programmes such as ISO 50001 energy management and funding opportunities to business, schools and parishes	Support	Climate Action Team, Economic Development	
1.3.3 Promote opportunities to take part in green volunteering activities	Support	Climate Action Team with Economic Development, Environment Property and Recreation, Housing	CA 2.3 GP1-3
1.3.4 Annual Green Week event to promote and showcase work, signpost projects and engage the community	Deliver	Climate Action Team with other services	GP1-3
1.3.5 Establish a corporate Climate Change Stakeholder Group to nurture a proactive culture, problem solve and lobby as required to enable the council to implement policy	Lobby	Climate Action Team with other services	GP1-3

Priority 2: Ensure the council’s decision making processes, strategic documents and procedures tackle climate change, reducing carbon emissions, positively impacting biodiversity and air quality and increasing local resilience to climate change

Action	Role of the council	Lead service/team	Links to Corporate Plan
Objective 2.1 Review council policies to ensure alignment with carbon neutrality and accountability and integration of carbon reduction and sustainability into all processes and decisions.			
2.1.1 Set up a Climate Change Team responsible for co-ordinating an holistic Local Authority response to the climate change crisis	Deliver	Director Place and Space, Environment Property and Recreation	GP1-3, CA1
2.1.2 Embed Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) Green Principles (adopted in Corporate Plan) into decision making process to support the carbon neutral ambition	Deliver	Policy	
2.1.3 Introduce new procurement policies to include carbon neutral criteria to maximise carbon reduction through purchased services, materials and provision of low emissions fleets by contractors	Deliver, Support	Procurement	TG1, 3; GP1-3
2.1.4 Regularise flexible working arrangements; update policies and procedures to support a longer term flexible working strategy	Deliver	Human Resources	GP1
Objective 2.2 Take a design led approach to delivering sustainable communities supported by evidence based planning policy and guidance			
2.2.1 Adopt and deliver the South of Ashford Garden Community vision and strategy - including ‘low carbon communities’	Deliver	CMO, Planning,	CA 1

2.2.2 Develop a Carbon Statement of Intent for Chilmington, to underpin decision making delivering current and future projects to exemplar environmental standards that also benefits residents health and wellbeing	Deliver	CMO, Planning	CA 1
2.2.3 Develop a scoping document to inform the direction of travel in the next Local Plan. To identify issues and discuss options for 'green' standards for Ashford <i>that reduce Carbon emissions and support pollutant mitigation</i>	Deliver	Planning	GP 1, CA1
2.2.4 Investigate viability of a climate change supplementary planning document to seek development of carbon neutral buildings (residential and commercial) in private and public sector	Deliver	Planning	GP 1,3, TG5, CA1
2.2.5 Utilise GIS technology to inform decision making and planning for , outlining Renewable Energy Opportunities and suitability of locations.	Deliver	IT, GIS, Customer Services	TG2, GP1-3;
Objective 2.3 Improve community resilience to the effects of climate change			
2.3.1 Increase number of parishes with high risk of flooding with emergency plans	Support	Community Safety and Resilience Team	CA 1.3
Objective 2.4 Consider options to offset residual carbon emissions after all reduction measures have been implemented			
2.4.1 Align with Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy action to develop and promote Kent and Medway offset scheme	Deliver	Carbon Action Team	GP1
2.4.2 Set a budget provision to enable carbon offsetting	Deliver	Finance	GP1

Priority 3 - Reduce reliance on fossil fuels for energy generation by increasing renewable energy generation and consumption

Action	Role of the council	Lead service/team	Links to Corporate Plan
Objective 3.1 Increase number of sites suitable for renewable energy generation			
3.1.1 Include renewable energy in the call for sites in the next local plan	Deliver	Planning	GP 1
Objective 3.2 Increase local renewable energy generation			
3.2.1 Encourage community groups to develop small scale renewable energy projects by signposting to information and advice and data.	Support	Climate Action Team	GP 1, CA1
3.2.2 Continue assessing all council owned assets for potential to host solar PV panels and install where financially viable.	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP 1
3.2.3 Explore feasibility and if viable invest in solar batteries (small scale and large scale storage site)	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP 1,3; CA1
3.2.4 Complete feasibility study to determine viability of building a solar farm and implement where/if appropriate	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP 1; CA1
3.2.6 Investigate and report on wind power investment options	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP 1
3.2.7 Switch Civic Centre and other assets to green tariff, and consider own renewable power generation.	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP 1
3.2.8 Investigate scheme options for levelling up green energy access - to those currently excluded due to cost	Deliver	Climate Action Team, Housing,	CA1,3; GP1-3

3.2.9 Conduct feasibility investigations and report on Ground Source Heat Pump options for council properties and wider Network options within the Borough	Deliver	Corporate Property, Housing	CA1,3, GP 1-3
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Priority 4: Encourage and enable a shift towards cleaner modes of transport and reduce car dependency

Action	Role of the council	Lead service/team	Links to Corporate Plan
Objective 4.1 Reduce transport emissions associated with council business and operations			
4.1.1 Develop a green travel plan for staff and members for travel to and from work and work related journeys, informed by improved understanding of travel patterns	Deliver	HR, communications	GP 1,2
4.1.2 Enable increased use of public transport and active travel by provision of incentives and improved facilities such as cycle storage, changing facilities <i>and mileage rate for cycling</i>	Deliver	HR	GP 1,2
4.1.3 Further explore use of electric bikes /scooters and potential for electric pool cars for use on council business	Deliver	HR	GP 1,2
4.1.4 Investigate how to encourage / incentivise the take up of electric vehicles through the lease car scheme to coincide with next lease car contract <i>and explore fuel efficient driver training for essential car users</i>	Deliver	HR	GP 1,2
4.1.5 When vehicles within the grounds maintenance (Aspire) fleet are due for renewal / replacement, opportunities to minimise carbon emissions	Deliver	Environment, Property and Recreation	GP 1

through route optimisation and vehicle specifications will be considered			
4.1.6 Within the review of the waste contract consider minimising carbon emissions through route optimisation and contractors vehicle specifications	Deliver	Environment, Property and Recreation	GP 1
Objective 4.2 Encourage active travel in the borough			
4.2.1 Implement the agreed action plan for cycling and walking to include active travel plans for business, infrastructure improvements and community based initiatives <i>including walking to school schemes</i>	Enable	Environment, Property and Recreation	GP 1
Objective 4.3 Enable and facilitate a borough wide reduction in transport related emissions			
4.3.1 Develop a parking strategy to encourage an overall reduction in car usage and facilitate electric vehicle patronage	Deliver	Parking, Highways, Transportation	GP 1, CA1
4.3.2 Identify areas that would benefit from 20mph speed restriction <i>and/or for optimising traffic flow to reduce pollution levels and</i> make recommendation to Highways Authority	Enable	Parking, Highways, Transportation	CA 1
4.3.3 Review community bus scheme and assess demand for future programme	Deliver	Safety and wellbeing	GP 1, CA1, TG5
4.3.4 Promote existing rural transport services e.g. Kent Connects	Support	Safety and wellbeing	GP 1, CA 1, TG5
4.3.5 Work to improve services and patronage of buses including introducing cleaner buses	Support	Safety and wellbeing	GP 1, CA 1, TG5

4.3.6 Strengthen anti-idling message promoted in schools through CEO road safety programme and other agencies to improve air quality and reduce emissions	Support	Climate Action Team, Parking, Highways, Transportation	TG5, GP1, CA1
4.3.7 Encourage residents to use the Kent Connected for active transport options digital app	Support	Climate Action team	GP 1
4.3.8 Improve understanding of future demand for EV charging points, infrastructure capacity and location. Implement a corporate approach to installation and maintenance of EV charging points	Deliver	Parking, Highways, Transportation, Planning	GP1,2; CA1; TG5

Priority 5 - Enable business growth while maximising opportunities to reduce carbon emissions

Action	Role of the council	Lead service/team	Links to Corporate Plan
Objective 5.1 Encourage businesses to utilise schemes and advice to transition to lower carbon economy			
5.1.1 Promote local low carbon schemes for business such as LoCase, REVs and STEM	Support	Climate Action Team and Economic Development	TG 1.6
5.1.2 Work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote low carbon business opportunities	Support	Climate Action Team and Economic Development	TG 1.6

5.1.3 Collaborate with partners to encourage and develop sustainable tourism opportunities for urban and rural business	Support	Climate Action Team and Economic Development	TG 4.1
Objective 5.2 Provide information and advice to business			
5.2.1 Develop a package of green business support/information materials for top employers and training days	Deliver	Climate Action Team and Economic Development	TG 1.6 GP 1-3
5.2.2 Signpost best practice to businesses. Work with them to understand concerns, aspirations and needs	Deliver, Research	Climate Action Team and Economic Development	TG 1.6 GP1-3
Work with business and colleges to understand and plug green skills gaps	Deliver, Support	Climate Action Team and Economic Development	TG1

Priority 6 - Reduce the environmental footprint of buildings through retrofitting existing buildings and improved building standards within new build developments

Action	Role of the council	Lead service/team	Links to Corporate Plan
Objective 6.1 Council led housing development to be built to highest environmental standards achievable			
6.1.1 New build HRA homes to be built to attain EPC rating A or B	Deliver	Planning, Corporate Property, Housing	GP1 CA1
Objective 6.2 Undertake retrofitting programme for council owned homes			
6.2.1 Undertake stock condition survey	Deliver	Housing	GP 1.6, CA 1.1
6.2.2 Explore efficiencies of scale through joint working with other stock holding local authorities/ Registered Providers through Kent Housing Group	Enable	Housing	GP 1.6, CA 1.1
6.2.3 Develop a delivery plan for decarbonisation of homes to include types of properties, works required and timescales	Deliver	Housing	GP 1.6, CA 1.1
6.2.4 Identify retrofitting pilot projects to test, assess and learn methods	Deliver	Housing	GP 1.6, CA 1.1
6.2.5 Commence phased retrofitting programme	Deliver	Housing	GP 1.6, CA 1.1
Objective 6.3 Reduce water consumption across council owned assets			
6.3.1 Install water saving measures in council owned commercial and residential properties	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP 2.4

6.3.2 Encourage less water usage through behavioural change initiatives	Deliver	Communications , Corporate Property, Environment, Property and Recreation	GP 2.4
Objective 6.4 Retrofit councils own corporate property assets			
6.4.1 Complete condition survey and undertake study to fully understand cost of retrofitting Civic Centre and likely carbon savings aligned with rationalising floor space and more flexible working arrangements for staff. Utilise this information to determine options for future use	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP 1
6.4.2 Maintain daily energy reporting to evaluate energy usage and potential reduction / savings	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP1
6.4.3 Continue ongoing asset management to ensure opportunities to reduce carbon emissions are identified and reflected in future reviews of Asset Management Strategy	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP1
6.4.4 Develop a planned approach to retrofitting corporate assets as identified by condition surveys and prioritise in Asset Management Strategy to maximise opportunities to reduce carbon emissions	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP 1
6.4.5 Undertake post occupancy evaluations for corporate assets following completion of retrofitting works	Deliver	Corporate Property	GP1
Objective 6.5 Improve the energy efficiency of homes in the private sector			
6.5.1 Work with the Greater South East Energy Hub to deliver allocated funding for private homes grants when available	Deliver	Housing, Comms,	GP 1, CA1

6.5.2 Continue energy efficiency grants under the Landlord Accreditation scheme	Deliver	Housing	GP 1, CA1
6.5.3 Identify properties in PRS below band E requiring improvement under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards and take enforcement action where necessary	Deliver	Housing	GP 1, CA1
6.5.4 Actively contribute to Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership to address fuel poverty	Enable	Climate Acton Team, Housing	CA3, GP1
6.5.5 Promote energy efficiency schemes available to homeowners and private landlords	Support	Housing	GP 1

Priority 7: Protect, enhance and improve natural environment for the benefit of people and wildlife

Action	Role of the council	Lead service/team	Links to Corporate Plan
Objective 7.1 Improve biodiversity on council owned land			
7.1.1 Develop and implement land management plans for council owned land which provide specific vision, aims and objectives for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of parcels of land in a given locality	Deliver	Aspire	GP 2.2
7.1.2 Proactively manage ABC tree stock, which will inform future tree management and maintenance programmes	Deliver	Aspire	GP2 CA1
Objective 7.2 Support land based community projects			
7.2.1 Publish community gardening guidance	Deliver	Environment, , Property and Recreation	GP 2.3 TG5 CA3
Objective 7.3 Reduce environmental degradation through land management and habitat creation			
7.3.1 Explore the creation of wildlife habitats in the borough, <i>including roadside planting that seeks to mitigate air pollution</i>	Deliver	Aspire and Planning	GP 2
7.3.2 Work with land based industries and relevant agencies to implement sustainable land management practices	Support	Planning, Climate Action Team and Aspire	GP 2

Priority 8 - Reduce waste and continue high levels of recycling

Action	Role of the council	Lead service/team	Links to Corporate Plan
Objective 8.1 Work with Local Business to reduce waste			
8.1.1 Support reduction in plastic bag and single use plastics usage through reuse/'use your own' initiatives	Support	Environment, Property and Recreation	GP 3
8.1.2 Develop work streams as part of town centre reset to encourage upcycling and facilitate establishment of social enterprises with waste reduction objectives	Enable	Environment, Property and Recreation	GP 3
8.1.3 Increase number of water refill points in local outlets	Enable	Environment, Property and Recreation	GP 2
Objective 8.2 Ensure council processes reduce waste and maximise recycling			
8.2.1 Continue to move to electronic services and digital processes for staff and residents	Deliver	HR & Customer services	TG2
8.2.2 Recycle all the council's technological assets using WEEE and ADISA directives	Deliver	Environment, Property and Recreation	GP3
8.2.3 Eliminate single-use plastic within the council office including rolling out consistent bin system removing plastic and paper cups from vending machines	Deliver	Facilities	GP3
Objective 8.3 Encourage residents to reduce waste			
8.3.1 Continue to promote waste reduction including through home composting and garden waste service	Deliver	Environment, Property and Recreation	GP 3

Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:
 - (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
 - (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
 - (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
 - (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).
3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership*
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief

- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
 - removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.
7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.
8. In terms of timing:
 - Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
 - Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
 - The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Armed Forces Community

9. As part of the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Community made through the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant the council's Cabinet agreed in November 2017 that potential impacts on the Armed Forces Community should be considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.
10. Accordingly, due regard should also be had throughout the decision making process to potential impacts on the groups covered by the Armed Forces Covenant:
 - Current serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
 - Former serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)

- The families of current and former Armed Forces personnel.

Case law principles

11. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have ‘due regard’ to the equality duty and so EIA’s must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on “Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making” (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. *[Equality Duty in decision-making](#)*

Lead officer:	Tracey Butler (Director of Place and Space)
Decision maker:	Cabinet

<p>Decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	<p>To recommend the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan</p>
<p>Date of decision:</p> <p>The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.</p>	<p>30th June 2022</p>
<p>Summary of the proposed decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan sets out the context and activity required for the council to meet its zero carbon commitments within its own estate and operations and across the wider borough.</p> <p>Actions are included to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change.</p> <p>The outcome is to achieve zero carbon within the council's own estate by 2030 and across the wider borough by 2050.</p> <p>Everyone is affected by climate change and this strategy will seek to reduce further harmful effects in the future by collaborative working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to enable residents, business and communities to adapt to those effects already being witnessed, such as extreme weather events.</p>
<p>Information and research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<p>The strategy has been informed by an independent study by Laser Energy to assess the council's and borough's carbon footprint and provide a carbon reduction pathway report.</p> <p>Additionally national data from the BEIS, and the Tyndall Centre has contributed to the understanding of the scale of reduction required to stay with internationally recognised limits set out in the Paris agreement.</p>
<p>Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect 	<p>In 2020 the Stakeholder group shaping the Corporate Plan identified Green Pioneer as one of 3 key themes for the new Corporate Plan. This was the first step in underpinning an approach to a more sustainable future for the borough.</p> <p>In May 2021 Cabinet approved a public consultation on the Draft Carbon Neutral Action Plan. The results of the consultation indicated that residents wanted action now, were keen to take action to reduce their own carbon footprints but wanted guidance and support in how to do this and for the council to take a lead.</p>

people with different protected characteristics?	<p>The consultation did not reveal any significant difference in views across the protected characteristics. However it is important to reflect that there is a financial cost to some of the action required and that climate justice, that means leaving no one behind in the transition to a low carbon economy and to ensure the solutions will be good for both people and planet, must be considered.</p> <p>Tackling climate change has positive outcomes for health and wellbeing with associated co-benefits of improving air quality and the natural environment.</p>
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Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	Medium	Positive (major)
Middle age	High	Positive (major)
Young adult	High	Positive (major)
Children	High	Positive (major)
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	Medium	Positive (major)
Mental	Medium	Positive (major)
Sensory	Medium	Positive (major)
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>RACE</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>SEX</u>		

Men	Low	Positive (major)
Women	Low	Positive (major)
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	Low	Positive (major)
<u>ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY</u> Regular/Reserve personnel	Low	Positive (major)
Former service personnel	Low	Positive (major)
Service families	Low	Positive (major)

<p>Mitigating negative impact:</p> <p>Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.</p>	No negative impacts identified.
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<p>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?</p> <p>Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's <i>Essential Guide</i>, alongside fuller <i>PSED Technical Guidance</i>.</p>	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	N/A
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes

<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or 	<p>National and local data has been used (BEIS, Laser carbon reduction plan) to determine action needed.</p> <p>The Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan should have positive outcomes across all groups.</p> <p>Monitoring will be overseen by the Climate Change Advisory Committee.</p>
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<p>whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported?	
EIA completion date:	27 May 2022