
Subject:	KENT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 14 May 2018
Report of:	Roger Walton, Director of Environment and Corporate Assets
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Nick Kenton, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste and Health
Decision Type:	Key
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report:	To commit to the Kent Environment Strategy to provide a basis for co-ordinated action across the County. The Strategy produced by Kent County Council (KCC) sets out how it is proposed to respond to the pressures facing Kent's environment, in particular as a result of carbon emissions and climate change.
Recommendation:	That the Council commits to the Kent Environment Strategy approved in so far as it is consistent with this Council's Corporate priorities and to the extent that resources will allow.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Kent Environment Strategy recognises and addresses the challenges and opportunities that unprecedented growth and change over the coming decades will bring. Kent County Council has invited the district councils in Kent to adopt the strategy in order to provide a basis for coordinated action to support economic growth whilst protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environment and creating and sustaining communities that are vibrant, healthy and resilient.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The previous Kent Environment Strategy ran from 2011 until 2015 and was presented to Cabinet in June 2011. A revised Strategy was published in 2016, hence the reason for bringing back to Cabinet.
- 2.2 As a Strategy for environment, economy and health the KES cuts across Directorates within KCC, district/borough Councils and partner organisations, with all having a role in developing and delivering activities both internally and across the county. The new Kent Environment Strategy has 3 broad themes:
- Building the foundations for delivery.
 Making best use of existing resources and minimising negative impacts.
 Towards a sustainable future.
- 2.3 Under each theme, the strategy proposes priorities for action, identifies the lead partners, details timelines and stakeholders and explains how success is going to be measured. For example under the second theme, the strategy proposes that one priority should be to improve our resource efficiency for energy and water. A specific action under this theme is to

deliver co-ordinated retrofitting programmes for Kent and Medway; reducing fuel poverty and improving health outcomes.

2.4 The aims of the strategy are to improve the quality of life for residents and align broadly with this Council's objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan, clean green and safe environment, healthier people and communities and a thriving economy.

2.5 Key messages from a [Kent Environment Strategy Public Opinion](#) Survey undertaken in July 2016 include:-

- There has been no change since 2014 in the importance Kent residents attach to the countryside in general and to having green space nearby, or in their perceptions of the condition of the Kent countryside. However, these were already at high levels, with more than 90% of residents rating the countryside and nearby green space as important and around 80% considering the condition of the countryside to be good or excellent
- Kent residents are now much less likely to believe that the local authority considers the environment when making decisions and younger residents aged 16-24 are least likely to feel that this is the case.
- Residents are no more likely than in 2014 to have energy efficient measures in their home or to engage in environmentally conscious behaviour such as recycling or conserving water. Levels of activity of this kind are generally quite high, but there are areas with scope to encourage residents to engage further, for example use of green energy suppliers or installation of energy generation equipment such as solar panels at home.

2.6 The Council has already undertaken numerous initiatives that fall under the Kent Environment Strategy themes, as evidenced in the [Implementation Plan](#) released in December 2017, i.e:

- DDC is currently developing a new approach landscape character assessment as part of its local plan review.
- The new Leisure Centre in Dover, currently under construction at Whitfield is on target to achieve a BREAAAM Very Good rating;
- The Council has adopted a Heritage Strategy, which was developed with KCC
- The Council's [Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and Conditions](#) have been revised, increasing the value of the Winter Warmth grant and the Urgent Home Loan
- DDC is currently reviewing its local plan and is developing a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that will form part of the evidence base for this review.

2.7 The Kent Environment Strategy could provide a helpful framework within which to continue this work and other aspirations outlined in what we want to achieve by 2020 in the Corporate Plan, and support the key policies and proposals in the [Clean Growth Strategy](#) published by Government in October 2017 that sets out how to grow national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

3 Identification of Options

3.1 Option 1 – Do not support the Kent Environment Strategy

3.2 Option 2 – It is recognised, however, that the Council has limited resources and must focus on its core business, therefore, while there are advantages for the Council in indicating its general support for the Kent Environment Strategy, it will be necessary to point out that it

will only be able to assist directly in the development and implementation of the strategy where this is consistent with the Council's own priorities

4. Evaluation of Options

4.1 Option 1 – Is not recommended

4.2 Option 2 – Is recommended

5. Resource Implications

5.1 Any support offered to the Kent Environment Strategy will be subject to the availability of existing staff resources at the time.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Accountancy have been consulted and have no further comment. (DL)

6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their responsibilities members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>

7. Appendices

8. Background Papers

Contact Officers - Amanda Martin, Climate Change and Energy Conservation Officer