Draft – District-Wide Carbon Plan Part 1

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2.1 Global, National, Regional and Local Context

Several policies at the global, national, regional and local levels of institutions and government set out guidance and targets to tackle climate change.

2.1.1 Global

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) established a global environmental accord to combat "dangerous human interference with the climate system" overseeing the implementation of The Paris Agreement set a legally binding international accord on temperature change adopted in 2015, which places a world commitment to limit warming to 1.5 – 2^{o} Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

In addition, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. This initiated a global urgent call for action to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030. Climate change is embedded throughout the goals and specifically addressed in Goal 13 – '*to take imperative action to combat temperature change and its impacts'.*

The United Nations Conference of the Parties on Biodiversity in December 2022 (COP15) agreed a number of global targets for 2030 including:

- The effective conservation and management of at least 30 per cent of the world's lands, inland waters, coastal areas and oceans, with emphasis on areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and services (informally referred to as the '30 by 30' deal).
- Reducing global food waste by half and significantly reducing over-consumption and waste generation.
- Reducing by half both excess nutrients and the overall risk posed by pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals.

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference at COP26 that took place in Glasgow was intended to further accelerate actions towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, COP27 took place in the Egyptian coastal city of Sharm el-Sheikh and concluded with a historic decision to establish and operationalise a loss and damage fund for vulnerable countries hit by climate-induced disasters. As Antonio Guterres stated in opening COP27:

"The global fight will be won or lost in this crucial decade … Humanity has a choice: co-operate or perish."

2.1.2 National

The Climate Change Act, as amended in 2019, sets a binding target to reduce the United Kingdom's (UK's) greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 compared to 1990 levels, placing a duty on public sector organisations to reduce emissions while adapting to climate change. In addition, the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 later passed increases the UK's commitment to a 100% reduction in emissions by 2050.

Furthermore, the Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener published in 2021 sets out how the UK will manage its carbon budgets and its vision for a decarbonised economy by 2050. Legislation to protect and enhance the environment is also set out in the Environment Act 2021. The Government's policy for new development is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and more detail is provided in Planning Practice Guidance which is updated periodically. Planning Practice Guidance sets out guidance on a range of topics including how planning can address climate change challenges, where evidence can be found and how local planning authorities can identify mitigation measures. National planning policies and guidance are then used by local authorities to draft their local plans which set out where development should take place and what standards it should meet.

2.1.3 Regional

In Kent, local government responsibilities are divided between Kent County Council and the lower-tier borough and district councils. At the county level, following the declaration of a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, Kent County Council developed the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (ELES) to facilitate the agreement to achieve net zero emissions in Kent and Medway by 2050. Folkestone & Hythe District Council is working with Kent County Council to support the implementation of the ELES across the district.

Kent County Council is the determining authority for minerals and waste development and sets out policies for these types of development in its Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Kent County Council is also the local transport authority and is currently developing the Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5). This will set out the transport plan for 2037 considering integrated strategies such as the ELES and other sub-national strategies within the southeast. LTP5 will have a strong focus on reducing carbon emissions from transport by promoting public transport and active travel for shorter journeys, for example by encouraging cycling and walking. Kent County Council is also the lead local flood authority and has developed policies for the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of new developments.

The Kent Nature Partnership has developed the Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020 to 2045 (February 2020) which aims to deliver, over a 25-year period, the maintenance, restoration and creation of habitats across the county and ensure that the county's terrestrial and water environments regain and retain good health.

In addition, Kent County Council is the authority responsible for producing a new plan introduced by the Environment Act 2021, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

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(LNRS), working with district and borough councils and others across Kent. The purpose of the LNRS is to help with nature recovery, support gains in biodiversity, incorporate nature recovery objectives into the planning system and help to deliver national environment targets.

2.1.4 Local

In parallel with Kent County Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council also declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 committing to reducing emissions from its operations and estate to net zero by 2030 as demonstrated in 33 actions undertaken in the Folkestone & District Carbon Action Plan. The council is reviewing the plan to measure progress so far and identify if additional projects will be required to deliver our net zero goal.

This declaration also committed the council to "Develop a strategy for Folkestone and Hythe District Council to play a leadership role in promoting community, public and business partnerships for this Carbon Neutral 2030 Commitment throughout the District." This district-wide plan is intended to help deliver this commitment.

2.2 Corporate Plan: Creating Tomorrow Together

Our Corporate Plan - Creating Tomorrow Together: 2021-30 was developed with climate change embedded into the council's vision for the district. For example,

- Service ambition 1: Positive community leadership by working to support and empower our communities e.g., the formation of the Carbon Innovation Lab (CI-Lab) to develop this District Wide Carbon Plan.
- Service ambition 2: A thriving environment – Ensure a clean, attractive, and safe environment for residents, visitors and businesses.

The corporate plan is also governed by the Greener Folkestone & Hythe guiding principle. This says that we will "encourage and create a more sustainable district by consuming fewer natural resources."

2.2.1 Local Plan and Core Strategy Review

It is recognised that climate change is a major issue that will impact planning, development and land use alongside the opportunities to address the green skills gap and foster growth in a green economy. As a result, it was considered in the Places & Policies Local Plan (2020) which sets out a vision for future development across the district incorporating climate change and the natural environment. Climate change is also a key consideration in the Core Strategy Review (2022) in long-term planning for development to 2037.

We are required to take into account national planning policy (see section 2.1.2) in drawing up our local plan and taking decisions on planning applications. Local plans must be reviewed at least every five years, or sooner if circumstances change. We are currently reviewing our local plan. The review will reflect national climate change policy and best sustainable development practices elsewhere. In addition, it will reflect Government reforms to the planning system introduced through new legislation and guidance.

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2.3 Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

It is imperative to assess and understand the risks posed by climate change to Folkestone & Hythe District (the district) to enable us to build long-term resilience while adapting to climate change.

Most of the population of the district live in coastal towns where areas may be prone to flooding from the sea, rivers and other sources. The north of the district consists of a large area of land that is nationally protected by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation, with attractive villages and wooded landscape, forming part of an area that extends from the white cliffs of Dover to the Surrey and London border. The Romney Marsh area, to the south of the district, is a unique environment reclaimed from the sea over many centuries. It has seaside towns and remote villages and hamlets. The wide expanses of rich agricultural land are crossed by a network of drainage channels and the area is generally protected by sea defences.

The district is already experiencing the potential impacts of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. These will have long-term impacts on our community's quality of life, health, well-being, and economy. The impact on the flora and fauna of the district is already apparent; evidence from Natural England shows that the district has a number of highly vulnerable habitats, including rivers and watercourses on the Romney Marsh, areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, chalk rivers and vegetated coastal shingle. As the ecological base is eroded, positive feedback loops may exacerbate the problems we already face.

The effects of climate change will also impact on the productivity of the district's farmland, raising problems of food security. This suggests that the diversification of crops and local food production will be increasingly important to try to increase our self-sufficiency and reduce the impacts of transporting food over long distances.

The extent of flood risk in the district has been mapped in our Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which was published in 2015. This assessment incorporates the impacts of climate change and the protection of existing flood defences. This study is currently being updated to take account of recent projections of changing weather patterns and sea level rises.

Kent and Medway produced the Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment (CCRIA) in 2019 detailing an assessment of the current and future risks, opportunities and impacts of climate change as well as setting out how Kent and Medway will respond to climate change by building long-term resilience while benefiting from the opportunities it presents in its Climate Adaptation Programme. The council is working with Kent County Council on the implementation of the Climate Adaptation Programme.

3. Purpose and Scope

3.1 Role and Remit of Folkestone & Hythe District Council

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The scope of this district-wide carbon plan covers the broader need to encourage and influence the reduction of carbon emissions across the district. This plan is not intended to cover the emissions of the council's operations and estate as these are reported separately.

It is imperative to state that decarbonisation of the district will rely on the entire district, including communities, residents and businesses being concerned and taking positive actions to vary behaviours if we are to achieve net zero. Currently there is widespread concern about the state of the environment, which is articulated by national and local interest groups, but also acknowledged by large numbers of people of all social groups and ages. Harnessing these concerns and directing them in positive and hopeful directions is the long-term ambition of this plan.

The council understands the various levels of control and influence it has in meeting the challenges of climate change across the district and will seek to explore the opportunities that adapting to our changing climate may present. We will be guided by:

1. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report on Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget which sets out a model of influence highlighting the vital role of the council in influencing local emissions.
2. The people of Folkestone & Hythe District expressed through the voices of the Carbon Innovation Lab (CI-Lab) as well as the views of parish councils, local businesses, community groups, interest groups etc which will be gathered through consultation on this draft plan.

Figure 1: Levers of Influence

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

3.2 District-wide Emissions Profile & Baseline (BEIS data)

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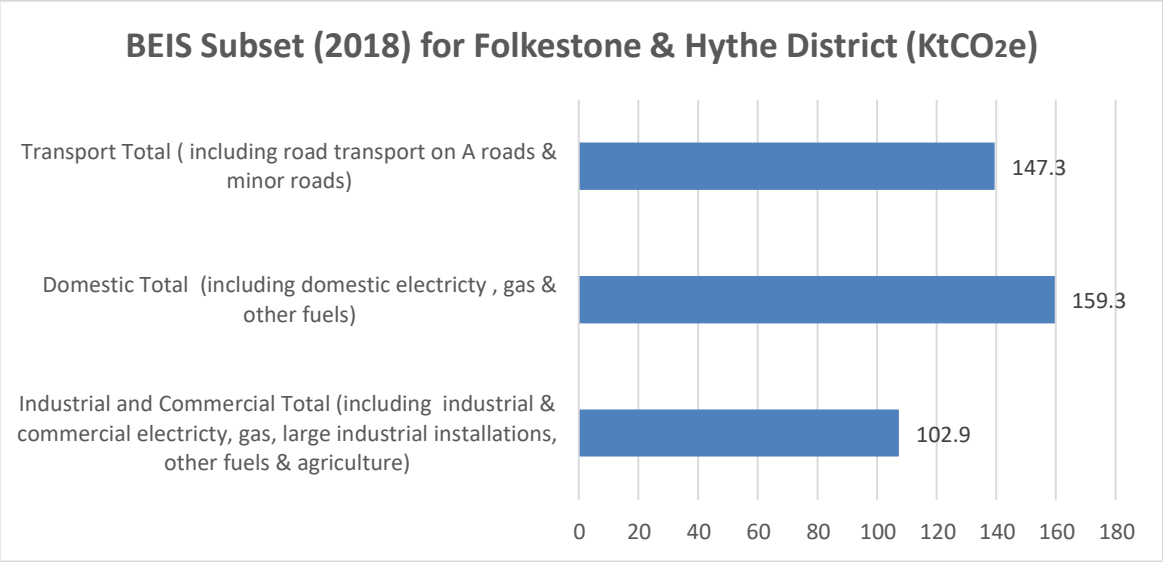
The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)[1], now the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) publishes a set of emissions data which is within the scope of local authorities to influence. For Folkestone & Hythe District, the BEIS data suggests that at a base date of 2018, 409.5 $ktCO_2$ (thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide) were within the scope of the council to influence. The council's emissions (from estate and operations) for 2018/19 were 1,536 tCO_2e. This shows that the council has direct control only over a small portion of the district emissions (which is less than 0.4% of the total district emissions) and demonstrates that collaborative working across the district is essential if we are to meet our net zero targets.

Figure 2: Folkstone & Hythe District-Wide Emissions Profile



There is no universally accepted definition of 'net zero'. However, the Carbon Trust suggests definitions of what net zero means for countries, cities, regions and companies.[1]

For regions, the Carbon Trust says that to achieve net zero an area will need to:

- Set and pursue an ambitious target for all relevant greenhouse gas emissions to pursue a pathway that limits global warming to 1.5°C. Any remaining hard-to-decarbonise emissions can be compensated for with certified greenhouse gas removal (GGR) methods.

In determining what greenhouse gas emissions are relevant, we have used the district-wide profile provided by BEIS (see section 3.2 above).

Regarding greenhouse gas removal, there are several potential methods. The Carbon Trust references the Royal Society's report 'Greenhouse Gas Removal' (2018)[2] which discusses afforestation, coastal habitat restoration and other methods. Any solution must remove emissions permanently. In addition, a solution must not rely on unproven technology or have negative impacts on other areas, for example, damaging valuable habitats by planting trees that are not suited to an

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area. In most cases a local scheme is likely to be the most effective solution, as it can be more easily managed and monitored, giving confidence to local people that action is happening. Planting woodlands or recreating coastal habitats can be effective solutions that can directly benefit residents.

3.4 The Five Pillars of Focus

Table 1 below shows the main emissions sources attributable to the district, identified through the BEIS data subset along with other considerations, these are being regarded as the five pillars of focus through which the district can start to reduce emissions, as at the 2018 base date.

Table 1: District-Wide Emission Sources (as at 2018 base date)

Pillars	Emissions Source	Emissions ($KtCO_2$)	Percentage Contribution (%)
1.	**Road Transport**	**147.3**	**36.0**
2.	**Residential**	**159.3**	**38.9**
3.	**Commercial & Industrial** (including the BEIS figures for industry, commercial, public sector and agriculture categories)	**102.9** *Total comprising:* *Industry – 26.0* *Commercial – 35.2* *Public sector – 33.1* *Agriculture – 8.6*	**25.1**
	Total	**409.5**	**100**
4.	**Other activities** (e.g., water conservation and waste management)	Not specifically included in the BEIS subset of data, but the treatment of waste, water and food production are important district-wide considerations.	
5.	**Land use Absorption** (e.g., land use, land-use change and forestry)	Not specifically included in the BEIS subset of data, but a small proportion of total emissions are reabsorbed through land use, such as woodland and habitat creation and boosting these activities will have carbon and biodiversity benefits.	

4. Defining the level of influence

4.1 The council understands that it can be an influencer of change within the district. It is actively working to support local businesses, community groups and the people of Folkestone & Hythe District and implementing measures to reduce carbon emissions across the district. However, it has only direct control over its operations and estate, which only account for less than 0.4% of district emissions.

4.1.1 Direct Control

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The council has direct control over how it will reduce emissions from its operations and estate including communal areas of the sheltered housing stock. However, it only has an indirect influence on reducing emissions from the general council housing stock as the tenant will determine the energy supplier and how the energy is used. Direct control relates mostly to scope 1 (direct greenhouse gas emissions) including council-owned or controlled mobile combustion sources such as petrol and diesel fuel consumed in vans and cars, combustion of fuels in stationary sources (e.g., natural gas, burning oil, gas oil and LPG consumed within council buildings) and scope 2 emissions (electricity indirect greenhouse gas emissions) including emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, heat or steam that is consumed in the council's own or controlled equipment or operations (e.g., buildings and street lighting). For example, the council is making progress across the 33 actions set out in the Carbon Action Plan 2021 and is currently reviewing the Carbon Action Plan to update and improve its effectiveness.

The council has already:

- Reviewed the energy efficiency performance and condition of all its social homes and has a programme in place to upgrade their energy efficiency and improve the health and well-being of our tenants. This requires substantial resources and investment to achieve net zero in operation. The council is actively seeking and has recently been successful in bidding for financial support from the Government, for example, through bids to the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Reviewed the carbon emissions and comfort levels in the sheltered housing portfolio. The council has an improvement plan that includes improving the energy efficiency and introducing low-carbon heating and electricity generation of these buildings to help contribute to the overall aim of reaching net zero for its operations and estate by 2030.
- Commenced a trial to create a 'decarbonisation plan' for a complex commercial building. A decarbonisation plan for a specific commercial building aims to work towards reducing emissions through multiple measures in the fabric, controls, low-carbon electricity and space heating.
- The council has to make sure that social houses in the district meet the required energy efficiency standards; this will increase in a phased approach over the next few years. The council also can seek to influence (where applicable) property developers, homeowners and landlords to do the same in residential and commercial properties.

4.1.2 Indirect Control

The council has less control over wider emissions that arise within the district, such as emissions from private homes and businesses, transport and other activities, however, it is aware that it has an influential role. It will leverage this role of influence to encourage local businesses, communities, and people to invest in a net zero future. Other actions include scope 3 emissions (other indirect greenhouse gas emissions including emissions generated by business travel and water) that will contribute to wider district emissions. For example, the council is currently undertaking a trial where all procurement contracts include carbon reduction requirements.

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Furthermore, the council has committed to leading by example as follows:

1. Collaborating with developers and individual homeowners to encourage the introduction of net zero measures in the design of our buildings. This is done through the development of a net zero toolkit to provide simple guidance on the most effective sustainability measures.
2. Setting out environmental plans and policies for the district that recognise the importance of our green and blue infrastructure to remove carbon from the atmosphere and enhance biodiversity. This will promote biodiversity and be an asset to all our residents. Delivery of individual projects will need the collaboration of a wide range of partners, including landowners, volunteers and local interest groups. These partners include town and parish councils, developers and others.
3. Adopting an open, collaborative approach and actively supporting our residents, businesses, urban and rural communities and local environmental groups to deliver their low-carbon projects and initiatives. This includes grants, such as the Green Business Grant, and joint initiatives, such as Solar Together Kent. The collaboration includes communicating the tangible and intangible benefits of the council's investment in low-carbon projects.
4. Collaborating with Kent County Council and electricity grid distribution operator to develop a strategic local area energy plan. Over time this will deliver the infrastructure to support decarbonisation across the district.
5. Collaborating with a network of local authorities through UK100 to achieve its climate change and environmental protection objectives.

4.1.3 Place shaping

The council sets out policies to shape the development and conservation of the district's towns, villages, open spaces and countryside through the development plan. This comprises the Places & Policies Local Plan (2020) and Core Strategy Review (2022).

The Places and Policies Local Plan (PPLP) sets out the energy hierarchy as a sequence for reducing carbon emissions, starting with reducing the need for energy by making changes to the design and fabric of a building ('fabric first'), then using energy more efficiently within the building, before using energy from renewable or low carbon technologies and finally ensuring that any fossil fuels that are required are used as efficiently as possible.

This is supported by the Core Strategy Review (CSR) which aims to minimise carbon emissions by reducing emissions from new buildings. Policy SS3: Place-Shaping and Sustainable Settlements Strategy states that proposals should be designed to contribute to local place-shaping and sustainable development *"through appropriate sustainable construction measures, including water efficiency and a proportion of energy from renewable/low carbon sources on new-build development".*

Other policies from these plans seek to: enhance the district's biodiversity and its green infrastructure (PPLP policy NE2, CSR policy CSD4); protect and enhance its

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water and coastal environment (PPLP policies NE8 and NE9, CSR policy CSD5); promote sustainable development (PPLP policy CC2); improve health and wellbeing (PPLP policy HW2); support active lifestyles as part of new developments (PPLP policy HW3); and promote active travel such as walking and cycling (PPLP policy HW4, CSR policy SS3).

Other organisations also produce plans and strategies that influence the council's planning decisions and landowners' and estate managers' decisions. These include the Management Plan for the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (2021-2026) and other guidance produced by the AONB partnership for the Kent Downs area.

Various plans and strategies will also be developed as the District-wide Carbon Plan is completed and implemented, such as Local Nature Recovery Strategies mandated by the 2021 Environment Act. Kent County Council and partners will develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy when more detailed guidance is published by the Government.

4.1.4 Partnership and Engagement

The council recognises that in some ways it can enable actions through partnership working, initiating and promoting best practices to influence carbon emissions reductions, such as leading the way on electric vehicle charging points, with the installation of 132 charging points in 26 car parks across the district.

In other ways, we can engage through communication, awareness raising, and consulting with local businesses, community groups and the people. This will lead to a variety of behaviours that promote our move towards a low-carbon future. For example, the Carbon Innovation Lab (CI-Lab) is an informal voluntary forum to drive forward local action to reduce carbon emissions in the district that the council helps to facilitate. The CI-Lab has already had an impact with the development of the Folkestone & Hythe Sustainable Futures Forum TEDx-style event and talk videos which provided a platform for our residents to share and develop their sustainable ideas into deliverable actions – from small projects to larger programmes.

4.2 Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

Climate change will present challenges, risks and opportunities. How we address these will be crucial to the future of the district. This is because climate change will have a long-lasting impact on the people, place and economy of the district. Therefore, it poses several challenges to the district, as outlined below.

4.2.1 Challenges

Several barriers need to be addressed before net-zero targets can be achieved such as:

Challenges	Description
Support & Guidance	Lack of consistent long-term national government support and guidance or changing national guidance with the reform of the planning system and the creation of new government departments.

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Finance	High and uncertain costs to transition to a low carbon economy. Lack of capacity to bid for available government funding and apply for private and community finance to invest in the low-carbon infrastructure.
Lack of Control	Little or no control over some of the higher sources of emissions such as road transport and existing residential properties. These sources may be influenced more by other organisations, such as National Highways or the National Grid and rising energy costs.
Costs	High capital costs to switch to low-carbon energy technologies for the average individual and organisation even though these are offset over time by the reduced cost of energy.
Planning	Restrictions under current planning rules and the robustness of planning policies in implementing mitigation and adaptation measures. Proposals to reform the planning system are currently being considered by Parliament through the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill.
Resources	Increasing government cuts result in significant staffing issues to deliver the scale of carbon activities needed. Lack of knowledge and a detailed understanding of the most significant issues surrounding climate change and where gains can be made. Competing requirements for limited funds, time and commitment from all stakeholders
Local electrical grid capacity	Lack of adequate grid electricity capacity to support wide-scale electrification in transportation and buildings. Extended lead times and high connection costs to the existing grid infrastructure, even for small-scale initiatives.
Regional and national policies	Targets set by the national or regional policy are often outside of the council's direct control such as: o transport o health services and buildings o education services and buildings

4.2.2 Risks

Measures need to be put in place to manage and adapt to climate risks such as:

Risks	Description
Weather	UK Climate Projections predicts hotter, drier summers and warmer wetter winters for the Kent and Medway region, including potential impacts on farming and food production, water treatment, rivers and coasts, and localised flash flooding.
Buildings & Infrastructure	Potential damage to buildings & infrastructure from increasing floods, storms, winds and rain. Increase in costs of maintenance and repair and remediation of affected areas.

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Roads & Transport	Increase in the likelihood of weather damage and potholes to the road and rail infrastructure. Increase the risk of disruption to travel and potential impact on air quality.
Health and Well-being	Potential risks to health and well-being because of heat waves, cold snaps, flooding and storms include the impact on water quality and sewerage disposal, grid blackouts alongside risks to people's homes and health. Potential reduction in air quality during warm, still and dry spells where emissions may be retained in the local atmosphere and rise to more dangerous levels.
Natural environment	Potential risks to loss of natural capital, green infrastructure, increasing urban heat effect, and the spread of pests and diseases affecting native species and rare habitats. Potential risks of unsustainable use of agricultural fertilisers and runoff into rivers affecting oxygen levels and the local habitats.
Managing conflicting priorities	Implementing low-carbon solutions in isolation may have detrimental impacts on other areas of the economy or environment. The need is a consistent and integrated approach developed over time and in a collaborative manner with all stakeholders to reduce risks.

4.2.3 Opportunities

The council recognises that we cannot achieve net zero alone. However, we can act as an influencer of change and support the inspiring work local people and organisations already undertake throughout the district. Focusing on our five priority pillars, we will seek to tackle climate change challenges as set out below.

- **Transportation**

With road transport being a significant source of carbon emissions in the district (around 36 per cent of the district's emissions at the 2018 base date), the council continues to work closely with Kent County Council to reduce emissions from our roads, for example by influencing the development of the Local Transport Strategy 5. (Motorways and trunk roads are operated and maintained by National Highways and are outside the scope of the BEIS dataset in section 3.4 above.) We are also taking the opportunity to reduce emissions from transportation by rolling out electric vehicle charging points in car parks across the district and encouraging taxi drivers to switch to electric or hybrid modes of transportation. We continue to support active travel initiatives and develop cycle routes throughout the district. Ambitious regeneration plans for the Folkestone town centre, for example, assisted by an award from the Government's Levelling Up Fund will provide improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, an improved public realm, remodelled road junctions and enhanced links to Folkestone Central railway station.

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However, not all journeys can be made by walking or cycling, so improved public transport will also be vital to reducing carbon emissions from transport. We will continue to influence Kent County Council, the local transport authority, as well as the rail and bus companies that provide the services.

Further opportunities will be created following the announcement that the sale of new petrol and diesel cars sales will stop from 2030. We hope that the increase in charging points will encourage people to use electric vehicles for commuting, business and leisure use.

- **Residential**

We are always exploring ways to influence this emission source, which accounted for around 39 per cent of the district's emissions at the 2018 base date. For example, the council is taking part in the county-wide Solar Together Kent project; a solar panel and battery storage group-purchase scheme which has been extended for another year to 2023/24. The scheme allows residents and small businesses to install solar panels on their homes and businesses at an affordable price. It also provides battery storage to make maximum use of renewable energy. With a typical home solar panel installation providing savings of around 0.74 to 0.94 tonnes of carbon emissions a year, the current phase of Solar Together Kent could yield carbon savings of around 100 to 125 tonnes a year for the district, or around 1,000 to 1,250 tonnes a year in total across the Kent and Medway area.

As part of the decarbonisation plans for its sheltered housing schemes and other buildings, the council is actively seeking to incorporate renewable generation technologies such as solar PV panels and heat pumps as well as reduce their energy consumption by improving insulation.

The council actively signposts to support (financial and other) for our residents and homeowners to benefit from the move towards a net zero future, most recently financial support to install measures that reduce energy consumption in our homes and businesses, such as the Government's Green Homes Grant.

Opportunities will also exist to encourage energy efficiency and the uptake of low carbon technologies by homeowners and landlords with the view to the government enforcing landlords to meet the minimum energy efficiency performance standards EPC B and C by 2025 for all new tenancies and from 2028 for existing tenancies. For example, the council, as a major landlord, has decided to reduce emissions from our council housing stock. This will reduce energy bills and improve tenants' health and well-being. This includes current work to upgrade 109 homes of our housing stock to EPC C rating through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund wave 1 award. The successful award of £2.6m through wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will help the council to improve a further 300 social homes over two years.

- **Commercial and Industrial**

The commercial and industrial sector accounted for around 25 per cent of the district's emissions at the 2018 base date. (For this category we have combined the BEIS figures for commercial, industrial, public sector and agriculture.) The way we

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are influencing this emission source is by evaluating social and environmental considerations in procurement and contracting. Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important factor in businesses' long-term viability and we anticipate that this will create an opportunity for the council to promote the benefits of greening our businesses. This may help local firms win contracts. Grants and funding for district businesses and support for funding applications are promoted on the council's website.

- **Other activities (e.g., water conservation and waste management)**

Reducing, reusing and recycling waste is central to our waste management and we are influencing this emission source by promoting this throughout the council's practices and the wider district. Recently, we recorded a 5% drop in carbon emissions in 2022 by the district's waste operator. We recognise the potential of a local circular economy to create and support local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We also recognise the potential to reduce carbon emissions associated with raw materials extraction and landfill.

- **Land use Absorption (e.g., land use, land-use change and forestry)**

As set out in section 3.2, tree planting and the creation of new habitats has the potential to absorb carbon emissions that cannot be removed earlier in the process. The council will look to influence this emission source through the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. This will promote tree planting and habitat creation as part of the proposed developments. We will also work with Kent County Council on a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent, which is a requirement arising from the Environment Act. Climate change also presents an opportunity for the district to protect its natural capital, reduce the use of pesticides, improve biodiversity, improve air quality and deliver other benefits. For example, as part of its own grounds' maintenance work, the council plants native and semi-native trees, maintain wildflower areas around the district to benefit bees and other pollinators, and supplies summer and winter bedding plants 100 % peat free.

5. Our Approach

5.1 Where we are now.

These are examples of actions that are currently being undertaken by the council, other organisations, businesses and local groups across the five pillars of focus.

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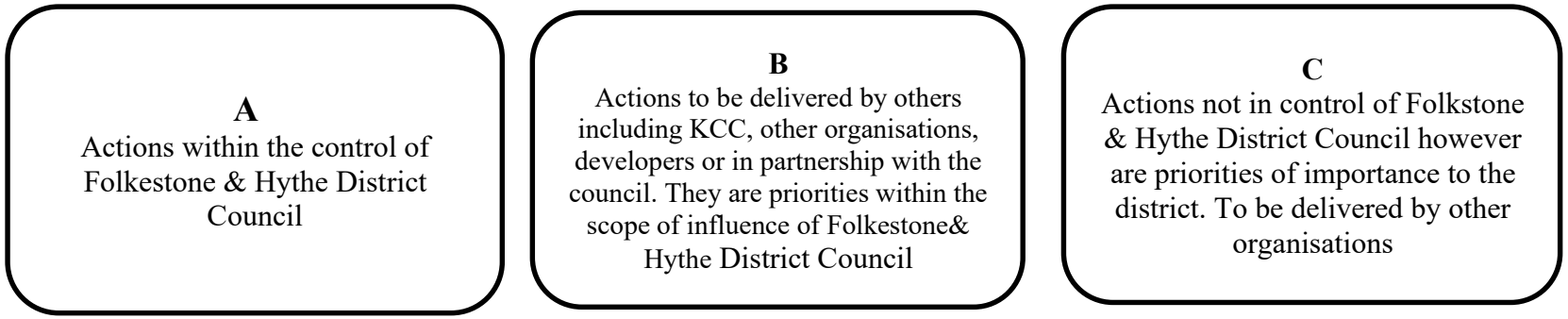
The five priority pillars of focus are as follows:

Keys



Pillars	Actions	Delivery
Transport	Promoting active travel by promoting walking and cycling, launching campaigns, improving walking, and cycling infrastructure and use of public transport to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation.	A & B
	Working with local transport providers and Kent County Council to improve public transportation services, including better connectivity and increased frequency of bus services to make public transport a more attractive and viable option for residents.	B & C
	Encouraging the use of electric vehicles by installing electric vehicle charging points in car parks across the district and providing a salary sacrifice scheme for the purchase of electric vehicles for staff.	A, B & C
	Through the Climate Change Network, taxi drivers are being encouraged to switch to electric vehicles and working with partners to secure funding to further support the transition to an electric vehicle future.	A, B & C
	Encourage and support businesses to promote a switch to sustainable modes of transportation as the choice of travel.	C

Pillars	Actions	Delivery
Residential	Residents are encouraged to make their homes more energy efficient through various schemes such as the Green Homes Grant and the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA).	A
	A Kent-wide scheme “Solar Together Kent” to purchase solar panels and battery storage is being promoted to residents and businesses.	A, B & C
	Residents were encouraged to make low-cost or no-cost energy-efficient tips through the Share the Warmth Campaign.	A
	Launching educational campaigns to raise awareness about climate change and encourage residents to act.	A
	Incorporating climate change into Local Plans to ensure sustainable new developments with minimal environmental impact.	A
	Providing practical, easy-to-follow advice using the Net Zero Toolkit. The toolkit provides a pathway for this transition by giving step-by-step guidance on embedding 'green by design' into projects.	A & B
	District warm spaces to provide warm spaces in the district’s community hubs in New Romney, Hythe and Folkestone and the Nepalese Community Centre to help residents struggling with increased heating costs.	A & C
	Signposting to available low-carbon funding options and advice.	A & B

Pillars	Actions	Delivery
Commercial & Industrial	Working with businesses, charities and other organisations to reduce energy consumption, promote low-carbon technologies and sustainable transportation.	A, B & C
	Energy efficiency grants such as the green business grant encourage businesses to become more energy efficient.	A & B
	Planning policies that encourage new developments to be designed and built energy-efficiently and in an environmentally sustainable way.	A & B
	Upgrading 321 adoptable streetlights to LED in phase 1 of the programme.	A & B

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Pillars	Actions	Delivery
Other activities (water conservation and waste management)	Promoting waste efficient practices and water conservation by working with the water resource management plans.	B &C
	Working with Kent County Council to promote sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff and reduce flooding risk while preserving natural water resources.	A & B
	Recycling by implementing a comprehensive recycling scheme to reduce waste in the district which allows residents to recycle a wide range of materials such as paper, cardboard, glass, metal, and plastic as well as encouraging waste reduction through various initiatives such as promoting reusable bags, cups, and water bottles.	B
	Explore opportunities to promote a circular economy where applicable.	A & B
	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	A &B

Pillars	Actions	Delivery
Land use Absorption including Local Nature Recovery Strategy, improving biodiversity	Working with key stakeholders to manage and maintain the district's coastal environment, which includes areas of special scientific interest and significant habitats for wildlife.	A & B
	Improving biodiversity by protecting and enhancing local green and natural spaces. This includes initiatives such as creating wildlife corridors and promoting native plant species.	A & B
	Implementation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure that networks are strategically planned and that spaces and places are well connected. This will deliver wider benefits, including recreation, biodiversity, health etc.	A & B
	Working with Kent County Council on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	A & B

Several other projects and initiatives that are positively impacting our environment are being delivered by local groups, businesses and partners within the CI-Lab with help from the council where applicable including:

Folkestone & Hythe Sustainable Futures Forum (SFF) was created to foster community engagement with the main aim to deliver various projects arising from the CI-Lab and across the district which the council will facilitate. The first SFF project is a TEDx-style talk video and event. This included a series of community engagement events to bring together businesses, community groups and individuals

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to deliver inspiring talks showcasing inspiring projects or initiatives or ideas ongoing in the district culminating in a main event that took place on the 29th of April 2023.

Incredible Edible Cheriton & Broadmead was founded in 2019 to create edible spaces in Cheriton and Broadmead. They have installed planters along Cheriton High Street with edible food for humans and plants for pollinators. They grow fruits, vegetables and flowers, set up a community fridge, and explore community composting. They operate a “help yourself” policy and practice a “no-dig” policy on all plots to encourage carbon capture.

Elham Environment Group aims to reduce carbon emissions within the local community and was awarded money in a Kent County Council competition. With the money, they designed 'Operation Energy Saver'. In this operation, the Energy Saving Trust conducted a carbon audit of a sample of properties in the village and distributed free energy-saving light bulbs supplied by Electricity Supply Utilities to participants in the audit. They arranged with a local solar photovoltaic (PV) supplier a bulk discount scheme for residents. They have held three eco-fairs to showcase energy-saving technologies and are focusing on improving biodiversity in their public spaces.

Hythe Environment Community Group founded in 2011 and changed to its current name in 2017 provides a community-led approach to making the Hythe area a more fulfilling, sustainable and environmentally aware place to live in. They aim to help the local community to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, reduce excess waste, improve recycling etc. It consists of sub-groups delivering various pieces of work such as free home visits with a thermal camera to review energy use, growing hops in gardens and community spaces, organising apple pressing days, seed, plant and produce swaps, gleaning, fruit tree grafting and pruning courses, advice and guidance to schools on pollinator-friendly projects, the drop-off point for recycling small electrical waste among others.

Kent Community Energy is a community energy society working across Kent, developing and owning renewable energy projects and advancing energy efficiency and retrofit. They are a sister society to Orchard Community Energy, which operates across Swale and Medway, a member of Community Energy South and Community Energy England and have delivered projects including grants for Folkestone Youth Project’s Urban Wilderness space at The Shed and for the Hythe Community Orchard. They are developing fuel poverty, energy efficiency and retrofit projects and seeking to install community-owned solar on commercial rooftops including in the Folkestone and Hythe district.

Sandgate Community Gardens founded in 2019 set up their first garden in Enbrook Park growing organic fruit, herbs, and flowers for pollinators and vegetables using 'no dig' methods. They have also planted fruit and nut orchards in Sandgate Park and Golden Valley Park (or Fremantle Park) growing include herbs, flowers and perennial fruit and vegetables which people can help themselves to along

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with five small vegetable plots for local families with hop plants being cultivated there as part of the Hythe Hops Scheme. Specialising in advising on organic, 'no dig' growing methods and composting to households and organisations.

The Touchbase Community Garden affectionately referred to by Touchbase members as 'the farm' is a sustainable growing project run by Touchbase Care. Touchbase is a community group for adults with disabilities and neuro-diverse conditions. They grow vegetables which when harvested are used in their community kitchen, providing healthy daily meals for members in their care centre as well as catering services for local businesses and events in the local area. The produce from the garden allows them to reduce the carbon impact of their catering as well providing meaningful well-being activities for their members. Their focus in 2023 is to increase biodiversity in the space by planting fruit trees and a sensory garden, which is focused on supporting biodiversity in the space.

Environmental work in schools – Schools across the district have been undertaking inspiring work to connect their pupils to the environment around them. The council is facilitating Hawkinge Primary School, Seabrook Primary School and the Turner Schools to encourage participation in the Eco-Schools Programme to be recognised as empowering young people to make a difference in their school, local community and the environment around them. Eco-Schools is an international programme that provides a structured approach to environmental education in schools.

The District Food Network - The Folkestone and Hythe District Food Network (DFN) was set up in 2021 to gain a better understanding of needs across the Folkestone & Hythe District Council area and to enable everyone to know who is delivering what food services to which groups of service users. It is open to all organisations that provide food services and provides a forum in which they can communicate, share information and coordinate their activities. Members of the network can lend their different areas of expertise to identify barriers that prevent access to good food and to work together to address gaps in service provision.

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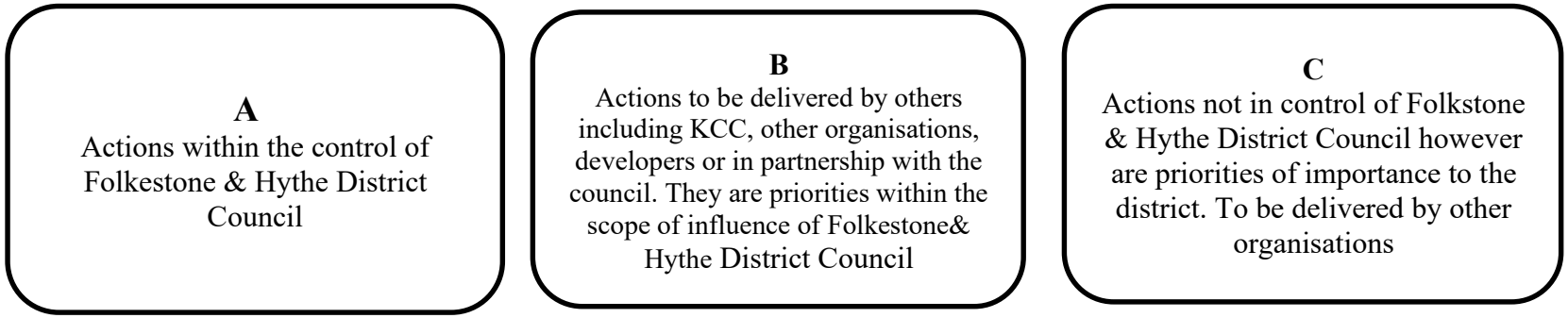
5.2 Setting the Vision - What a Sustainable Folkestone & Hythe District should look like

Folkestone & Hythe District Council will continue to support the UK's response to climate change by making sustainable progress to deliver the net zero vision. We will commit to doing everything within our power and influence to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while working with local businesses, groups and residents. By prioritising the health and resilience of our residents, and listening to and supporting our communities, we build consensus for long-term, sustainable solutions and actions that deliver multiple benefits as we transition to a low-carbon district.

5.3 Where We Want to Be.

Everyone living and working in the district will have to work together and share knowledge if we are to navigate our way from where we are now to where we want to be. In achieving a thriving local low-carbon economy, active mobility would be the option of choice to travel around the district, and homes incorporating low-carbon technologies as a standard, increase recycling and expand recycling into re-purposing of our domestic consumables. Working with communities to create biodiversity-friendly green spaces with planting and management, promoting high recycling rates and maintaining investment in low-carbon technologies.

Keys



Pillar 1: Road Transport

Theme	Areas of Action	Key Partners	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Facilitate the improvement of cycle networks and footpaths. 2. Facilitate the improvement of digital connectivity to reduce travel needs. 3. Continue to explore the rollout of electric vehicle charging points across the district. 4. Explore the provision of car clubs within the district. 5. Explore the provision of e-bikes and bike storage facilities. 6. Encourage inward investment in the right low-carbon infrastructure for the district, which could include the Council investing in low-carbon heating schemes which include private sector residents and businesses. 7. Lobbying the government for a more joined-up and affordable public transport system.	Department for Transport Kent County Council Transport Cycle Clubs Schools and Colleges Town and Parish Councils Residents	A, B & C
Social Infrastructure	1. Promote inclusive active travel by prioritising walking, cycling, car-sharing and public transport infrastructure to be the option of choice to travel within the district. 2. Promote the positive impact on health, well-being and socio-economic benefits of switching to sustainable and secure modes of transportation. 3. Encourage residents to use public transport.		

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	4. Encourage car sharing as a travel option more widely		
Communications & Involvement	1. Work with schools to promote Kent County Council's Bikeability programme to get more pupils cycling. 2. Encourage local taxi policy to include requirements to move to ultra-low emissions vehicles. 3. Work with Kent County Council to influence the Local Transport Plan 5. 4. Actively collaborate with residents on improvement to local greenways, footpaths and cycle routes. 5. Promote walk to school schemes.		

Pillar 2: Residential

Themes	Area of Actions	Key Partners	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Promote skills training and career pathways in local carbon technologies through our schools and colleges that will address the current skills gap across all ages. 2. Encourage improvement of resilience in building designs through the Local Plan	Registered landlords Residents associations House developers/builders Homeowners Town and Parish Councils Local community groups F&HDC Landlords Forum Alliance of Folkestone Residential Association	A, B & C
Social Infrastructure	1. Provide advice on energy efficiency measures, waste minimisation and water conservation. 2. Actively identify and support vulnerable and low incomes homes by signposting available funding options for home energy improvement.		
Communication & Involvement	1. Signpost to available national grants and resources.		

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	2. Collaborate with other Local Authorities to take competitive advantage of collective purchasing power for low-carbon technologies. 3. Provide support and guidance to the private rented sector and private landlords on energy efficiency measures and compliance with energy efficiency requirements. 4. Communicate with our residents to demonstrate the benefits of low-carbon technologies in the district. 5. Respond to consultations to try to influence the Government's planning reforms so that climate change mitigation and adaption are at the heart of the new planning system.		

Pillar 3: Commercial and industrial

Themes	Area of Actions	Key Partners	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Facilitate Town Centre Regeneration	Kent County Council Public Sector Landowners Commercial Landowners Businesses Town and Parish Councils Folkestone Hythe and District Hotel and Catering Association	A, B & C
Social Infrastructure	1. Raise awareness of the financial and reputational benefits of reducing their environmental impacts on businesses.		
Communication & Involvement	1. Signpost to business grants and resources 2. Work with the Federation of small businesses to identify areas of support. 3. Promote circular economy where applicable.		

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Pillar 4: Other activities including water conservation and waste management.

Themes	Area of Actions	Key Partners	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Support Kent County Council to promote reduction, reuse and recycling and encourage waste minimisation. 2. Encourage and support local food growing and production. 3. Facilitate the development of repair cafes and collection points for recyclables. 4. Promote and support tree planting.	Kent County Council Waste infrastructure Providers Schools and Colleges Allotment Associations Town and Parish Councils Community growing groups	A, B & C
Social Infrastructure	1. Explore ways to protect and improve air and water quality. 2. Engage with Southern Water to promote water quality.		
Communication & Involvement	1. Collaborate with Kent County Council to reduce waste production. 2. Respond to consultations to try to influence the plans of water companies, so that water conservation, leakage reduction and effective wastewater treatment are given the highest priority. 3. Explore working in partnership with water companies to achieve your common aims		

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Pillar 5: Land use Absorption including Local Nature Recovery Strategy, improving biodiversity.

Themes	Area of Actions	Key Partners	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Provide support to Kent County Council on the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. 2. Explore ways within the community to implement the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. 3. Promote and support community planting of gardens, orchards, and wildflower meadows, promoting pollinator-friendly planting, and developing natural green spaces. 4. Collaborate with Kent County Council on options for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) in collaboration with the water and sewage providers where applicable. 5. Create opportunities for carbon offset planting and protecting the coastline.	Landowners Allotment associations Health care providers Community groups Food groups Schools and colleges Farmers	A, B & C
Social Infrastructure	1. Provide support for local food growing and production. 2. Support local agriculture to improve and maintain hedgerows as a place for nature		
Communication & Involvement	1. Work with Kent County Council on the implementation of the Climate Adaptation Programme for Kent and Medway.		

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5.4 How do we fund our vision?

We recognise that funding and resources are critical to the delivery of the actions in the plan however, the council along with other local authorities is limited in their ability to deliver the net zero due to a lack of consistent and sufficient funding. This means that the costs involved in moving towards net zero as a district are greater than the council's resources and we are critically aware of the need for immediate actions as well as long-term planning.

Traditionally funds are related to specific district programmes that support the delivery of national or regional climate policy and have come from a combination of the council's funds with significant matched funding support from the central government which the council typically applies for the funding from central government through a time-limited bid window and may sometimes be unsuccessful.

The council will play a role to identify, signpost and utilise the power of collective action and specifically:

- new sources of funding will be needed for climate projects and will need to come from additional partners for example the council and community working with the private sector with appropriate governance, consultation and compliance structures.
- Resources from working in collaboration and supporting community-led projects and roll-out with a net zero objective.

Collaborative and long-term working with residential and commercial landlords to incentivise and support their transition to carbon new-zero in the built environment

6. Action Plan

Where applicable, the council will:

1. Work with private investors to co-fund key local infrastructure projects.

2. Enhance the council's capability to continue to identify and bid for government funding for appropriate local projects.

3. Strengthen the partnership with the communities and local economy to bring forward climate projects in collaboration with others.

4. Embed and communicate the cross-cutting principles of net zero into all the projects where the council has a role or influence, including redevelopments and regeneration activity within the district, recognizing that net zero is to the economic and social benefit of all.

5. Build the quantified district plan to demonstrate the financial and social benefits of carbon net zero projects and the impact on the place.

6. Engage with local stakeholders, such as the local grid infrastructure services, to deliver key improvements to the electricity grid to support the transition to net zero.

It is therefore critical to stress the need for significant government funding, other ongoing external funding sources and contributions from partners, businesses and our communities.

7. **Monitoring and Evaluating Progress** -To include how we will monitor progress and incorporate lessons learnt from the process. Accurate monitoring and measurement of the plan are critical to the success of the plan and are the responsibility of all parties and residents. We will continue to use nationally supported indicators from the central government to measure and report carbon emissions against the targets. Within the district, we will create our community-level plan and monitoring to net zero and adopt an open style of communication and action.

8**. Conclusion**

9. Summary Table by Pillar as an appendix

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