

The District Wide Carbon Strategy 2026

Our Pathway to Net Zero

Folkestone & Hythe District Council



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Foreword

Councillor Dr Stephen Scoffham, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Climate, Environment and Biodiversity

The stark truth is that we are confronting an international emergency in the damage that is being done to our planet by greenhouse gas emissions. We cannot ignore what is happening and hope that the issues will go away - now is the time to take action.

This is why I am pleased to be able to bring forward this strategy. The district Council is happy to have led on producing this document but this is not just about what we, the Council, can do. We shall continue to work to reduce our emissions but so much more needs to happen across our district.

You will read in this strategy that there are opportunities to get involved in changing the future for the generations to come. We want to work with our local community to pull those ideas together, facilitate where we can and help people take action. Every small change makes a difference.

Please work with us to make sure that this strategy is not just a tick box exercise that gathers dust on a shelf or in a computer file. There are very real and positive actions to lead us to more sustainable solutions so that we can transition to a low-carbon district.

Finally, let me commend this strategy to you as a way of all of us working together to bring about a very positive change in the way we live and how we look after our environment. In the words of Mother Teresa – together we can do great things.



1. Summary

Folkestone & Hythe District Council's District Wide Carbon Strategy sets out a collaborative pathway to tackle the urgent challenges posed by climate change and ecological decline. The strategy aligns with the UK's Net Zero 2050 target, the Paris Agreement, and builds on the Council's 2019 climate emergency declaration. The strategy establishes a practical framework for reducing carbon emissions with the wider community, businesses and partners. The strategy aims to improve climate resilience and support the transition to a greener, low-carbon economy for all.

Key points:

- Over 460 residents, businesses, and organisations helped shape this strategy.
- Emissions across the district have reduced by around 3.6% annually since 2005, a sharper decline is needed to achieve Net Zero.
- The strategy identifies 54 actions grouped into five main categories.
- The Council is only directly responsible for around 0.4% of the district emissions, showing wide scale collaboration is needed.

The strategy sets out a realistic but ambitious target to reach Net Zero by 2041 together.

2. Introduction

In response to our rapidly changing climate and ecological decline, Folkestone & Hythe District Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019.

This committed the Council to:

- working towards Net Zero emissions for its own operations and estates by 2030, and
- developing a wider carbon strategy for the Council to play a leadership role in community, public and business partnerships throughout the district.

This strategy addresses the Council's leadership role and the actions that follow from it. It leaves the 2030 Net Zero target for the Council's own emissions unchanged.

Since then, the Council has been working to reduce emissions from its own operations and estate across the 33 actions set out in the Council's 'Carbon Action Plan'. The plan is underpinned by the Council's corporate plan, 'Our District, Our World' (2025-2030), which has 'Enhancing our local environment and supporting climate action' as one of its five themes.

The Council's own emissions amounted to approximately 1,939 tonnes (t) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) at a baseline year of 2018/19. Data published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) for 2023 (the most recently published data) show that emissions arising across the entire Folkestone & Hythe district amounted to 471.2 kilotonnes (kt) of CO₂e. Emissions from the Council's estate and operations account for around 0.4% of the district total. This demonstrates the limited extent of the Council's direct control over emissions and the essential need for collaborative working across the district to meet the government's Net Zero target.

This strategy integrates with the wider Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy. Progress is monitored through annual reporting, with actions regularly reviewed and updated to reflect new data and national policy, funding opportunities and lessons learned, all while engaging the community, businesses and partners to drive district-wide change towards a sustainable, low-carbon future.

The Council has begun to position itself as an influencer of change within the district establishing the Carbon Innovation Laboratory (CI- Lab) in 2022, an informal, voluntary forum supporting local communities, businesses and individuals to drive actions designed to reduce carbon emissions across the district. As an outcome of this the Council has led a series of events under the Sustainable Futures Forum, to bring the community together, raise awareness, and enable sustainable action to reduce district-wide emissions. The Council has also developed this District Wide Carbon Strategy through consultation with residents to reflect the needs and concerns of the community to create a pragmatic approach for the district to continue to raise awareness, build climate resilience and ultimately reduce carbon emissions across Folkestone & Hythe District.

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the District Wide Carbon Strategy is to collaboratively develop a set of actions aimed at reducing carbon emissions across the entire district. We aim to reduce our impact on the environment, increase energy efficiency and promote a shift to low carbon technologies while enhancing the district's resilience to the impacts of climate change for everyone.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a more sustainable and environmentally responsible district for the people of Folkestone & Hythe while addressing the challenges posed by climate change as we journey towards carbon neutrality.

We recognise that reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change is part of a much wider shift towards more sustainable forms of living that encompasses biodiversity, greater social justice and enhanced prosperity in all walks of life.

3. Context

3.1 Global, National, Regional and Local Context

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

| Global

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change established a global environmental accord to combat “dangerous human interference with the climate system”. The framework is designed to implement The Paris Agreement adopted in 2015 that established a legally binding international accord on temperature change, that placed a world commitment to limit warming to 1.5 – 2.0 Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The United Nations 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.

The United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COP) bring together countries annually to negotiate and advance global action to prevent dangerous human-induced climate change and support adaptation efforts. For example, COP30 held in Belém, Brazil in November 2025, focused on accelerating climate action by agreeing to triple adaptation finance, scale up global climate funding, and launch initiatives for forest protection and just transition.

| National

The Climate Change Act, as amended in 2019, sets a binding target to reduce the United Kingdom'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. A later amendment Order 2019, increases the UK's commitment to a 100% reduction in emissions by 2050.

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 (2024) and more detail is provided in Planning Practice Guidance which is updated periodically.

The most recent Seventh Carbon Budget, covering 2038-2042, developed by the UK's Climate Change Committee (CCC) sets the UK's legally binding greenhouse gas emissions limit at 535 mega tonnes (Mt)CO₂e with an updated goal to cut emissions by 87% by 2040. The budget emphasises that local authorities are expected to take a leading role in achieving Net Zero by retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency, expanding renewable energy and district heating, and supporting electric vehicle infrastructure. The budget also encourages councils to enhance carbon sequestration through measures like afforestation and sustainable land management, in line with the CCC's "Balanced Pathway" and play a key part in driving public engagement and behavioural change towards low-carbon lifestyles, while integrating climate goals into local plans and collaborating with regional and national partners.

| Regional

At the county level Kent County Council (KCC) 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 KCC to support the implementation of the ELES across the district.

KCC is the determining authority for minerals and waste development, and the local transport authority which adopted the Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) in December 2024. LTP5 puts forward the ambition to deliver "emission-free travel by getting effective dedicated infrastructure to electrify vehicles, increase public transport use and make walking and cycling attractive." KCC is also the lead local flood authority and has developed policies for the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of new developments.

| Local

The Council's corporate plan, 'Our District, Our World' (2025-2030) has 'Enhancing our local environment and supporting climate action' as one of its five themes. The plan contains commitments to:

- Reduce the Council's carbon emissions and engage with our communities to support reductions in emissions across the district.
- Help minimise the damaging effects of climate change, working with nature and landowners.
- Protect and enhance plant and animal life, especially in our downland, river, coastal and marshland habitats.

- Ensure new developments are well designed, enhance heritage and local character, are energy efficient and make maximum use of renewable energy.

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. With recent changes to the planning system, the Council will be preparing a new local plan over the next few years and climate change mitigation and adaption will be central to this plan.

3.2 Climate Risk

It is imperative to understand the risks posed by climate change to Folkestone & Hythe District to enable us to build long-term resilience while adapting to climate change. The district is already experiencing the 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.

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



Credit: Wired, <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/climate-change-facts>

protected by the Kent Downs National Landscape. Here, villages and wooded landscapes form part of an area of chalk downland 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 agricultural land are crossed by a network of drainage channels and the area is generally protected by sea defences. The extent of flood risk in the district has been mapped in our Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which was published in 2015. This assessment incorporates the impacts of climate change and the protection of existing flood defences and is being updated for the new local plan to take account of projections of changing weather patterns and sea level rises and storm surges.

Kent and Medway produced the Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment in 2019 detailing an assessment of the current and future risks, opportunities and impacts of climate change. The assessment also sets out how Kent and Medway will respond to climate change by building long-term resilience while benefiting from how climate change is tackled in its Climate Adaptation Programme. The Council is working with KCC on the implementation of the Climate Adaptation Programme.

4. Scope and Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 District Council Remit

The scope of this District Wide Carbon Strategy covers the broader need to encourage and influence the reduction of carbon emissions across the district. This strategy is not intended to cover the emissions from the Council's own 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 and changing behaviour, if we are to achieve Net Zero.

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 any benefits presented by mitigating and adapting to our changing climate. We will be guided by:

- The Climate Change Committees's report on Local Authorities and the Seventh Carbon Budget which sets out a model of influence highlighting the vital role of councils in influencing local emissions.
- The people of Folkestone & Hythe District expressed through the voices of the Sustainable Future Forum, as well as the views of parish councils, local businesses, community groups and interest groups gathered through consultation on this plan.

We will do all we can to influence, inspire and support our communities, residents and businesses to take positive action and work together towards reducing carbon emissions and achieving Net Zero across the district.

4.2 District Wide Carbon Budget

The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) publishes district-wide carbon data for Folkestone & Hythe District. The latest available data shows that in 2023 the district's emissions totaled 471ktCO₂e and that the district has reduced its emissions by approximately 49% since 2005 (Figure 1), primarily from commercial and domestic emissions (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Total KtCO₂e reduction by year F&HDC

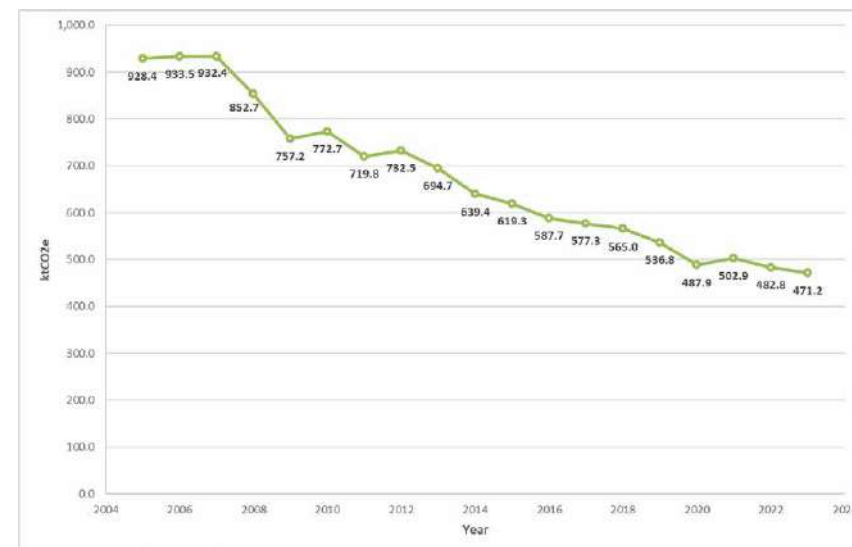
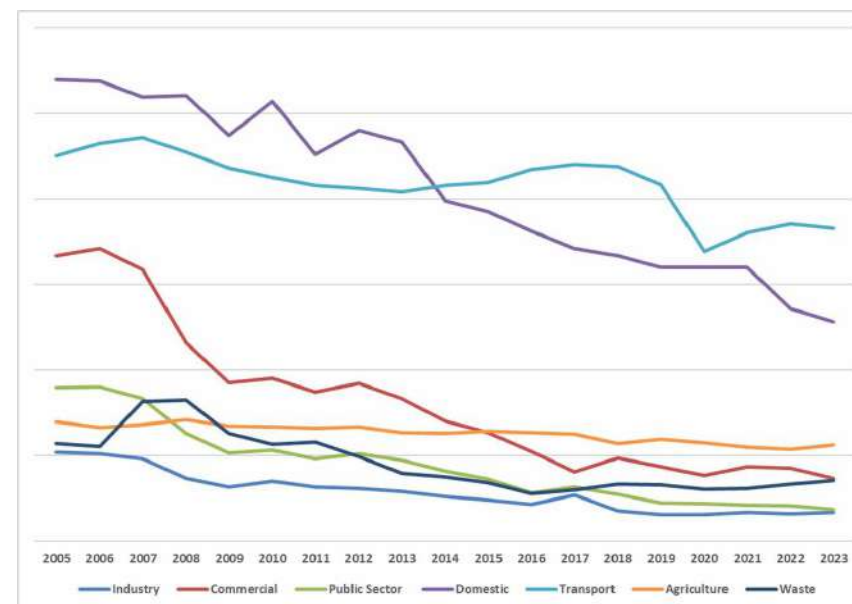


Figure 2: Total KtCO₂e by sector



To provide a consistent and realistic framework, this strategy adopts the Climate Change Committee’s ‘Balanced Pathway’, which aligns with the UK’s legally binding Net Zero 2050 target and the Paris Agreement goal. Under the CCC Balanced Pathway, the district’s indicative carbon budget from 2023 to 2100 is 5.88 MtCO₂e, distributed across five-year periods.

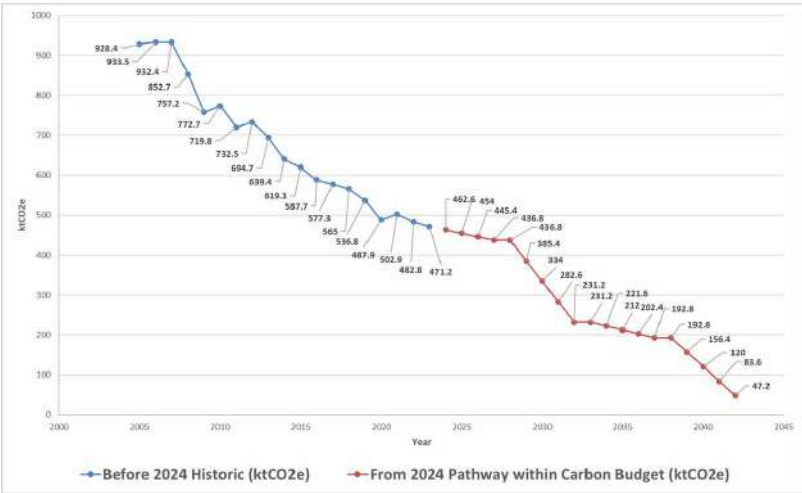
At the current carbon decline rate of 3.6% per year, the district would exceed its carbon budget by 2035. The district’s carbon budget figures are derived from the Logika Local Authority Carbon Budget Tool. This tool was introduced in 2025 to provide local authorities with science-based carbon budgets aligned with the UK’s legally binding Net Zero 2050 target and the principles of the Paris Agreement. For Folkestone and Hythe the recommended budget is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Logika Carbon Budget Recommendation

Carbon Budget Period	Carbon Budget Years	Recommended Carbon Budget for F&H (ktCO ₂ Ee)
4th Carbon Budget	2023 – 2027	2270
5th Carbon Budget	2028 – 2032	1670
6th Carbon Budget	2033 – 2037	1060
7th Carbon Budget	2038 – 2042	600
“Budget” to 2047	2043 – 2047	250

To keep within the district’s fair share of emissions and its carbon budget, the current annual reduction rate of 3.6% must increase sharply to around 10.5% per year, ensuring emissions fall fast enough to avoid exceeding the science-based limit. Figure 3 shows the historic emissions to 2023 and the pathway from 2024 needed to stay within the carbon budget.

Figure 3: Logika Carbon Budget Recommendation



To remain within our district’s carbon budget requires ambitious, coordinated action across all sectors. This sharper reduction pathway is achievable if collaboration and steps are taken to accelerate progress.

4.3 Public Consultation

The development of this strategy has taken a collaborative approach and incorporated opinions and feedback from residents.

The consultation on this strategy ran from the 6th of November to the 1st of December 2023, using multiple methods including an online portal, targeted mailouts to 5,000 households, four drop-in events (in Folkestone, New Romney, Hythe and the North Downs), and a dedicated Council email address. The Council collaborated with LVB Creative to produce social media videos and reached stakeholders via email, including 834 businesses, Carbon Innovation Lab members, 41 statutory partners, schools, town/ parish councils and local community groups.

The consultation received comments from 455 respondents. A questionnaire was provided for people's comments. Some questions provided space to provide further comments or examples from residents' experiences or best practice from other organisations. The Council received almost 2,500 individual comments on the draft district wide carbon plan in total.

More than 80% of respondents supported the Draft District Wide Carbon Strategy of which 55% of respondents fully supported and 25% supported some parts of the strategy over others. 69% of respondents agreed with the Five Priority Pillars of Focus. For areas and actions where the majority of the public disagreed, actions have been updated or reprioritised to better reflect the feedback from the consultation. 79% of respondents think that individuals can play a role in tackling climate change with 69% prepared to make personal lifestyle adjustments to contribute to lessening their environmental footprint and the district's overall emissions.

The Council has responded to each written comment it received (which can be found on the Council's website) and made changes throughout this document to align with the concerns and priorities gathered through the public consultation process.

A fundamental change to this strategy was asking respondents for a realistic target date for the district to reach Net Zero, with 38% opting for

a 2040 date and 37% opting for a 2050 Net Zero date in line with central government.

The following lists the most frequent suggestions and comments received from the consultation in priority order, and details the changes and additions included in the strategy.



| **Set Clear, Ambitious and Measurable Targets**

Changes have been made to this strategy including the addition of section 6.1 “Net Zero Target Date” which establishes a specific target date of 2041 based both on scientific projections and carbon budget for the district and from the consultation which indicated that residents accept that this is a date which they are willing to support (page 35). The Net Zero goal is specific, ambitious and responsibilities assigned to ensure accountability and progress.

| **Substantially Improve and Incentivise Public Transport**

Kent County Council are the local transport authority and the Council will continue to work with them and bus operators to increase investment in electric buses and increase the frequency of services as well as seek to offer incentives to shift travel away from cars. Equally, the Council will continue to support and increase cycling and walking infrastructure. These changes have been made more specific and included under Pillar 1 (page 27).

| **Prioritise Social Equity and Support for Low-Income Households**

It is a key focus of the Council to support vulnerable, low income and disadvantage groups and residents to access services, grants and

information. Additional emphasis has been added to this strategy for the Council to continue to support all residents to access and provide grants and targeted assistance to disadvantaged groups so that they are able to participate and build resilience to the impacts of climate change (page 19).

| Strengthen Climate Adaptation and Resilience

The public consultation received numerous concerns about extreme weather and climate impacts, highlighting the need for greater preparation, adaptation and resilience building across the district. In response, a specific action has been added to this strategy to develop inclusive plans for heatwaves, flooding and drought, with a focus on protecting vulnerable populations (added to Pillar 2, on page 29).

To strengthen this approach, the Council will align district actions with the Kent County Council (KCC) Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2025-2028, supporting its framework and objectives to ensure the district is well placed to adapt to climate change and build resilience across local services and communities. Additionally, the Council will explore the inclusion of “Cool Neighbourhood” principles in the policies of the next local plan and design codes to enhance local adaptation and urban cooling measures. It is important to note that building regulations, which apply to new developments, are set nationally and cannot be amended at the district level. However, we will monitor national developments, including the government’s forthcoming Future Homes Standards which are anticipated to address issues such as rooftop solar and heat gain in buildings.

| Enhance Biodiversity, Tree Planting and Green Spaces

The Council will work with landowners, local environmental groups and town and parish councils to encourage and expand tree planting, protect

green areas and integrate biodiversity and carbon sequestration. Specific support for England Trees Action Plan and the Forestry Commission’s planting target to increase tree canopy and woodland cover from 14.5% to at least 16.5% by 2050 has been added to pillar 5 (page 33).

| Increase Community Engagement and Education

More specific emphasis to continue and expand the Sustainable Futures Forum, the Council’s Youth Forum, and continue to foster ongoing education, workshops, and transparent communication to build public awareness and involvement has been added to both pillar 2 and 3 of this strategy (pages 29 and 31).

| Remove Barriers to Sustainable Choices in Planning and Regulation

Where possible the Council will provide planning policies and design guidance to support the use of solar panels and other sustainable technologies on new and refurbished buildings. The Council will examine past planning decisions to see whether the use of sustainable technologies is particularly problematic for small-scale proposals, particularly those in conservation areas and on listed buildings. If evidence shows that this is an area that needs to be addressed, we will provide guidance to help applicants through the process. Larger renewable energy schemes, such as ground mounted solar arrays above 50MW output, are assessed through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) process and are decided by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, although the district Council will be consulted on these schemes.

Encourage Dietary behavior Change and highlight local Food Systems

Promotion of reduced meat and dairy consumption, local food sourcing, and food waste reduction through awareness campaigns to inform residents about the health benefits and potential cost savings of eating less meat and more local produce, while making it clear that dietary choices are personal and the Council's role is to provide information, not to dictate what people eat.

Allocate Resources and Budget for Implementation

Much of the scope and responsibility of the district wide emission reductions are out of the Council's control, capacity and resources. More specific action to seek large scale government and external funding wherever possible and dedicate sufficient funding and staff has been added to Pillar 2 of this strategy, so that the Council can lead by example, partner and influence decarbonisation as widely as possible across the district. The Council will also seek to work with neighbouring authorities, where possible, to share resources and put in joint bids for funding.

Recognise the Need for Systemic Change Beyond Individual Action

Additional emphasis that government and business leadership is essential for meaningful progress has been added to page 26 of this strategy.

Balance Mitigation and Adaptation Efforts

More emphasis to address both emission reductions and preparations for unavoidable climate impacts, possibly with dedicated working groups, has been added throughout this strategy.

Communicate the Urgency and Co-Benefits of Climate Action

The strategy now highlights the immediate need for action and the additional benefits such as better health and lower bills in section 5.3.

4.4 Defining the level of influence

The Council has the ability to exercise (a) direct control (b) indirect control (c) influence and (d) leadership. It is actively working to support local businesses, community groups and the people of Folkestone & Hythe District and implement measures to reduce carbon emissions across the district.

Direct Control

Direct control relates mostly to:

- Scope 1 (direct greenhouse gas emissions) including Council -owned or controlled sources such as petrol and diesel 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 that is consumed in the Council's own or controlled equipment or operations (e.g., buildings and street lighting).

The Council is making progress across the 33 actions set out in the Carbon Action Plan 2021.

Figure 4: Levels of Influence



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. The Council prioritises local supply chains in our contracting processes and seeks to embed sustainability into all agreements, so that our broader impact supports the goal of achieving

Net Zero emissions. This aligns with the Council's corporate plan which contains the commitment to: "Support projects that encourage people to spend locally, particularly with the Council's own schemes and projects where we partner with other organisations."

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

- Collaborating with developers and individual homeowners to encourage the introduction of Net Zero measures in the design of our buildings. This has been done through the development of a Net Zero toolkit to provide simple guidance on the most effective sustainability measures and can also be taken forward in new local plan policies.
- 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. 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.
- Adopting an open, collaborative approach and actively supporting our residents, businesses and communities to deliver their low-carbon projects and initiatives.
- The collaboration includes communicating the tangible and intangible benefits of the Council's investment in low-carbon projects.
- Collaborating with KCC 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.
- Collaborating with a network of local authorities through UK100 to achieve its climate change objectives.

| Place Shaping

The Council's approach to reducing and adapting to climate change is embedded in key planning documents, notably the Places & Policies Local Plan (PPLP, 2020) and the Core Strategy Review (CSR, 2022). The PPLP establishes an energy hierarchy (Policy CC2), prioritising reduced energy demand through building design ('fabric first'), followed by efficient energy use, adoption of renewable or low carbon technologies and efficient use of any required fossil fuels. The CSR reinforces this through Policy SS3, which requires new developments to incorporate sustainable construction, water efficiency and a proportion of energy from renewable or low carbon sources.

Additional policies—PPLP NE2 and CSR CSD4 (biodiversity and green infrastructure), PPLP NE8/NE9 and CSR CSD5 (water and coastal protection), PPLP HW2 (health and wellbeing), HW3 (active lifestyles) and HW4/CSR SS3 (active travel)—further support climate resilience and emissions reduction by enhancing natural habitats, promoting sustainable transport and encouraging healthier, low-carbon lifestyles. These policies will be reviewed as part of the Council's new local plan and there may be opportunities to develop more ambitious policies, depending on the planning reforms currently being introduced by the government.

These efforts are complemented by external strategies such as the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan (2021-2026) and the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy which will guide landscape-scale adaptation and nature recovery across the district and wider region.

| Partnership and Engagement

The Council recognises that 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 as of 2025.

We can also engage through communication, awareness raising and consulting with local businesses, community groups and local people. This can help promote changes in behaviour that move the district further to a low carbon future.

For example, the Sustainable Futures Forum has hosted events which provided a platform for our residents to share and develop their sustainable ideas into deliverable actions from small projects to larger programmes. Additionally, following the success of the Green Business Grant Scheme 2023-2024, the Council launched a new Green Grants Programme that targets projects and initiatives to support the Council's Net Zero commitment. A total of £210,000 was made available for community groups and businesses over 2025 to 2027 for green and sustainable projects that create social cohesion, increase climate resilience, support local small businesses and community groups adapt and reduce their carbon, increase energy efficiency, cut costs and enhance green spaces and local wildlife.



Folkestone & Hythe Sustainable Futures Forum

4.5 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.

| Challenges

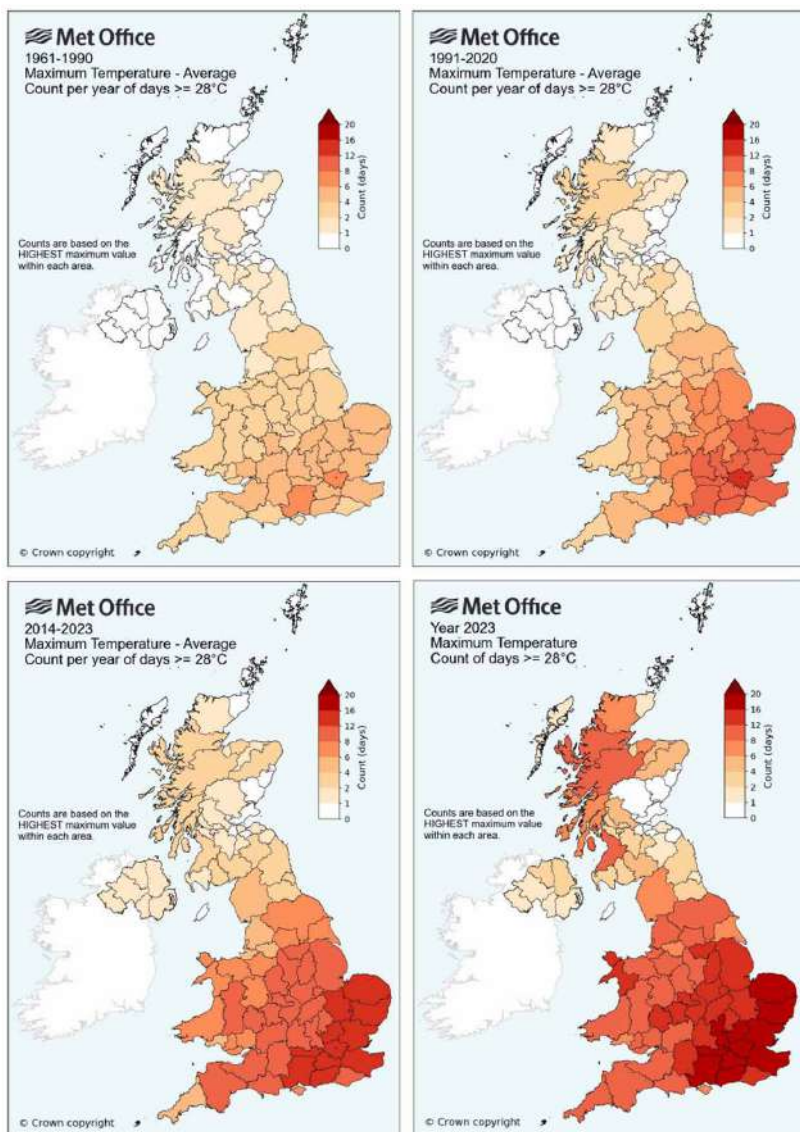
Several barriers need to be addressed before Net Zero targets can be achieved. Inconsistent and changing government policies create uncertainty and slow progress, while high and unpredictable costs, along with limited capacity to access funding, hinder investment in low-carbon infrastructure. Local authorities often lack control over major emission

sources like transport and housing, and high upfront costs for low-carbon technologies deter adoption despite long-term savings. National planning rules, such as those which seek to protect the character of historic buildings and conservation areas, may affect what homeowners can do to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Funding cuts combined with limited capacity and competing priorities reduce the ability to deliver carbon reduction at scale. Additionally, inadequate and costly electrical grid infrastructure slows the electrification of transport and buildings, and many key targets are set at national or regional levels, limiting local councils direct influence and coordination efforts.

| Risks

Measures need to be put in place to manage and adapt to climate risks. UK climate projections indicate hotter, drier summers (Figure 5) and warmer, wetter winters for Kent and Medway, raising risks for farming, food production, water treatment, rivers, coasts and increasing the likelihood of flash flooding. Buildings and infrastructure face potential damage from more frequent floods, storms, winds and rain, leading to higher maintenance and repair costs. Roads and transport may suffer increased weather damage, potholes and travel disruption, with local residents suffering from poorer air quality. Health and wellbeing are threatened by heatwaves, cold snaps, flooding and storms, with additional risks from compromised water quality, sewerage disposal, grid blackouts and deteriorating air quality during stagnant weather. The natural environment is at risk from the loss of green infrastructure, urban heat effects, pests, diseases and unsustainable agricultural practices that harm local habitats. Implementing low-carbon solutions without an integrated approach can create new economic or environmental problems, highlighting the need for consistent, collaborative risk management across all sectors.

Figure 5: MET Office Maximum temperature 1961-90, 1991-2020, 2014-2023, and 2023



Opportunities

The Council recognises that we cannot achieve Net Zero alone. However, we can influence change and support the inspiring work local people and organisations are already undertaking throughout the district. There are opportunities, that at a local level would reduce pollution, improve health, reduce costs and waste, improve wellbeing, support wildlife and have visible and large impacts in the district. These opportunities have the twin benefits of reducing carbon emissions and improving life for residents. The following opportunity areas have shaped the 5 pillars priorities of this strategy:

Transportation (39%)

With road transport being a significant source of carbon emissions in the district (around 39% of the district's emissions), the Council continues to work closely with KCC to reduce emissions from our roads, including on the implementation of the Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) (Motorways and trunk roads are operated and maintained by National Highways.) With over 7,000 heavy lorries passing through the district every day on journeys to and from mainland Europe, reducing diesel fume emissions is high priority. The Council has been campaigning to shift freight from road to rail and to improve and upgrade the rail network. 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, remodeled road junctions and enhanced links to Folkestone Central railway station.

However, not all journeys can be made by walking or cycling, so improved public transport will also be vital to reducing carbon emissions. We will continue to influence KCC, 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 will stop from 2035. We hope that the increase in charging points will encourage people to use electric vehicles for commuting, business and leisure use.

Residential (27%)

We are always exploring ways to influence this emission source, which accounts for around 27% of the district's emissions. For example, the Council is taking part in the county-wide Switch Together Kent project, a solar panel and battery storage group-purchase scheme. The scheme allows residents and small businesses to install solar panels on their homes and businesses at an affordable price. It also provides heat pumps and 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 energy 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.

Benefits will arise from encouraging energy independence and the uptake of low carbon technologies by homeowners and landlords. This will partly be driven by 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 housing stock. This will reduce energy bills and improve tenants' health and well-being. This current work to upgrade 109 homes of our housing stock to EPC C rating and the successful award of £2.6m through wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve a further 300 social homes over two years.

Commercial and Industrial (15%)

The commercial and industrial sector contributes approximately 15% of the district's emissions (including public sector), making it a key focus for local climate action. The Council is actively integrating social and environmental considerations into its procurement and contracting, and recognises that sustainability is increasingly vital for business resilience and competitiveness.

To directly support local businesses, especially those thinking local and green, the Council launched the Green Business Grant Scheme in 2023, a significant initiative designed to empower local enterprises, community groups and organisations to lead on carbon reduction and sustainability.

The Council is committed to promoting the interests of local businesses, helping them access funding, achieve sustainability accreditations and showcase their environmental leadership through, for example, the Sustainable Futures Forum, which has supported local eco-champions and business leaders to network and learn from others. This approach not only supports the district's climate goals but also helps local enterprises thrive in a greener, more competitive marketplace.

Waste and Water (8%)

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 6.3% drop in carbon emissions between 2020 and 2023 by our district's waste operator.

Currently, just under half of the district's waste is recycled, with the remainder being incinerated at an energy recovery facility. The Council's 'Raise the Rate' campaign is actively working to improve recycling rates by focusing on specific materials and educating residents on correct sorting practices. A key initiative last year targeted food waste, resulting in a 15% increase in food waste recycling compared to the previous year.

The district's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy includes actions to protect water resources, enhance wetland habitats, and promote sustainable water management. Initiatives include encouraging water-saving measures in new developments, promoting rainwater disconnection from sewers, expanding urban green spaces to reduce runoff and supporting the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) such as swales, ponds and rain gardens to manage surface water and reduce flood risk.

Carbon Absorption and Biodiversity (-1%)

Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent and Medway is a requirement arising from the Environment Act. As part of this process there are opportunities 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, maintains wildflower areas around the district to benefit bees and other pollinators and supplies summer and winter bedding plants 100% peat free.



Credit: Woodland Trust

4.6 The Five Pillars of Focus

Building on the opportunity areas identified, Table 1 below shows the total emissions attributable to these sources across the district. Along with other considerations, these are being regarded as the five pillars of focus that account for 90% of the district's total emissions (in 2023).

DESNZ estimate that 334.3KtCO₂ or 71% of district’s total emissions can be influenced by the Council excluding large industrial sites, railways, motorways, land-use, livestock and soils.

Table 2: District-Wide Emission Sources

Pillars	Emissions Source	2023 Emissions (KtCO ₂)	%
1.	Road Transport	183.1	39%
2.	Residential	128.4	27%
3.	Commercial & Industrial (includes public sector)	72.3	15%
4.	Waste and Water	35.6	8% Waste ¹
5.	Carbon Absorption & Biodiversity	-4.7	-1% emissions reabsorbed through Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry

¹ Not specifically included in the DESNZ data however water and food production are also important district-wide considerations included under this pillar.

5. Approach

We will commit to doing all we can to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions while working with local businesses, groups and residents to reduce wider emissions. By prioritising the health and resilience of our residents, and listening to and supporting our communities, we aim to build consensus for long-term, sustainable solutions and actions that deliver multiple benefits as we transition to a low-carbon district.

5.1 Inclusion, Equality and Working Together

The Council is committed to inclusion, equality and working together to build a fairer, more resilient community for all. Climate change will impact the most vulnerable the most. While climate breakdown affects everyone, its impacts are not felt equally. People who are socially, economically or otherwise marginalised, including minority groups, women, disabled people, older people, children, migrants, LGBTQ+ people and those on low incomes are disproportionately affected by extreme weather, health risks and economic disruption caused by climate change. Without deliberate, inclusive action, climate change risks deepening existing structural inequalities and creating new injustices. The Council is committed to embedding equality and human rights into our climate response, ensuring that the voices and needs of the most affected are central to our strategies and solutions.

5.2 Where We are Now

This section includes examples of actions that are currently being undertaken or have recently been completed by the Council and other organisations, businesses and local groups across the five pillars of focus.

We aim to build on successes and initiatives that work, learning lessons from community projects.

| **Transportation**

- In partnership with KCC, the Council is working to promote active travel by launching campaigns, improving walking and cycling infrastructure and the use of public transport to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation, including the installation of safe bike storage and new bicycle priority cycle lanes in 2025.
- The Council also works with local transport providers and KCC to improve public transportation services, including securing better connectivity and increased frequency of bus services to make public transport a more attractive and viable option for residents.
- The Council is encouraging the use of electric vehicles and reducing 'range anxiety' by installing electric vehicle charging points in its car parks across the district and providing a salary sacrifice scheme for the purchase of electric vehicles for its staff.
- Through KCC's 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.

| **Residential**

- The Council has implemented a series of public events under the Sustainable Futures Forum to foster community engagement to support various projects across the district and bring together businesses, community groups and individuals to deliver talks showcasing inspiring projects, initiatives and ideas.

- The Council is supporting and encouraging residents to make their homes more energy efficient through various schemes such as the Green Homes Grant and the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA).
- The Council supports a Kent-wide scheme, "Switch Together Kent", to purchase solar panels, heat pumps, and battery storage at discounted rates for residents, local organisations and businesses.
- Residents were encouraged to make low-cost or no-cost energy-efficient tips through the 'Share the Warmth' campaign. The Council has also launched educational campaigns to raise awareness about climate change and encourage residents to act.
- Officers at the Council are incorporating climate change into local plans to promote sustainable new developments with minimal environmental impact and will build on this for the new local plan. In addition, the Council created the Net Zero Toolkit which provides a pathway and step-by-step guidance on embedding 'green by design' principles into projects.
- The Council has supported district warm spaces in community hubs in New Romney, Hythe and Folkestone and the Nepalese Community Centre to help residents struggling with increased heating costs.
- The Council has signposted available low-carbon funding options and advice to residents.

| **Commercial and Industrial**

- The Council is working with businesses, charities and other organisations to reduce energy consumption, promote low-carbon technologies and sustainable transportation. Energy efficiency grants such as the green business grant in 2023 and green grant programme

in 2025 encourage local groups, charities, schools, parishes and businesses to become more energy efficient, start up green projects, plant trees and other sustainable initiatives.

- Officers will also develop planning policies that encourage new developments to be designed and built in an energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable way as part of the new local plan.
- The Council has upgraded 729 district-owned streetlights to LED.

| **Waste and Water**

- The Council promotes waste efficient practices and water conservation by working with the water resource management plans.
- We also work with KCC to promote sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff and reduce flooding risk while preserving natural water resources. We utilise the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in district planning to avoid development in areas of high flood risk, and the SFRA will be updated for the new local plan.
- The Council implements a comprehensive recycling scheme to reduce waste in the district. The scheme allows residents to recycle a wide range of materials such as paper, cardboard, glass, metal and plastic. It also encourages waste reduction through initiatives such as promoting reusable bags, cups and water bottles.
- The Council is exploring opportunities to promote a circular economy where applicable.

| **Carbon Absorption and Biodiversity**

- The Council is working with key stakeholders to manage and maintain the district's coastal environment, which includes sites of special

scientific interest (SSSIs) and significant habitats for wildlife of international importance.

- The Council cares for and is improving biodiversity by protecting and enhancing local green and natural spaces. This includes initiatives such as creating wildlife corridors and promoting native plant species in our parks.
- The Council is implementing 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 and health.
- The Council has also worked with KCC to develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and will work with partners on its implementation.

| **Other Projects and Initiatives**

Other projects and initiatives that are positively influencing our environment are being delivered by local groups, businesses and partners with, in some cases, support from the Council . Examples include:

Cheriton Community Network 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, operate a community fridge and explore community composting. They have a “help yourself” policy and practice a “no-dig” methods 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 KCC competition. With the money, they designed ‘Operation Energy Saver’. In this initiative, the

Energy Saving Trust conducted a carbon audit of a sample of properties in the village and distributed free energy-saving light bulbs to participants supplied by electricity supply utility companies. They arranged a bulk discount scheme for residents with a local solar PV supplier. 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 was founded in 2011 and changed to its current name in 2017. The group 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 and improve recycling. The group 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, and a drop-off point for recycling small electrical waste.

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. They have also planted fruit and nut orchards in Sandgate Park and Golden Valley Park (or Fremantle Park). They grow herbs, flowers and perennial fruit and vegetables which people can help themselves to, along with five small vegetable plots for local families with hop plants being cultivated there as part of the Hythe Hops Scheme. They also specialise in advising on organic, 'no dig' growing methods and composting to households and organisations.

The Touchbase Community Garden is affectionately referred to by Touchbase members as 'the farm' and 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 as providing meaningful well-being activities for their members. Their recent focus has been to increase biodiversity in the space by planting fruit trees and a sensory garden..

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 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.

5.3 Where We Want to Be

Our shared vision is for an energy-resilient district where people can move freely, young people can easily access our towns and green jobs are created to support a vibrant local economy. We aim for robust local businesses and supply chains, equitable and energy-efficient homes ready for extreme weather, enriched biodiversity, strong public infrastructure and clean, green streets free from pollution, litter and plastic.

To achieve this vision, this strategy has identified five key pillars, each supported by specific actions. These actions reflect the level of direct control or influence the Council hold and are informed by residents' feedback, as well as global, national and local contexts, laws, strategies and ambitions. The following sections outline each key pillar with its associated physical infrastructure, social resilience and communications and engagement considerations.

| Sustainable Transport

This pillar focuses on enhancing both physical and social infrastructure to promote sustainable transport options. Actions include facilitating improvements to cycle networks and footpaths, enhancing digital connectivity to reduce travel needs, and expanding the rollout of electric vehicle charging points in line with demand. The Council will explore the

provision of car clubs, e-bikes, and safer bike storage facilities, encouraging investment in low-carbon infrastructure, and lobbying the government for a more integrated and affordable public transport system.

On the social resilience front, we aim to promote inclusive active travel by prioritising walking, cycling, car-sharing and public transport as preferred modes of travel. We will highlight the health, well-being and local socio-economic benefits of switching to sustainable transportation and encourage greater use of public transport and car sharing.

Communication and involvement actions include working with schools to promote cycling through programmes like KCC's Bikeability, encouraging taxi services to adopt ultra-low emission vehicles, collaborating with KCC on the implementation of the Local Transport Plan 5 and engaging residents in promoting local greenways, footpaths, cycle routes and walk-to-school schemes.

| Resilient Residents

The second pillar aims to build resilience in our residential areas. We will promote skills training and career pathways in low-carbon technologies through schools and colleges to address current skills gaps. We will also seek to increase climate resilience in our buildings and spaces through the policies in the new local plan, as well as working with registered landlords, residents' associations, homebuilders and community groups.

Social resilience actions include providing advice on energy efficiency, waste minimisation and water conservation. We will actively identify and support vulnerable and low-income households by signposting available funding for home energy improvements, supporting community hubs, and facilitating repair cafés.

In terms of communication and involvement, we will direct residents to national grants and resources, collaborate with other local authorities to

leverage collective purchasing power for low-carbon technologies and provide guidance to the private rented sector on energy efficiency. We will also communicate the benefits of low-carbon technologies and respond to government consultations to ensure climate change mitigation and adaptation are central to planning reforms.

| **Sustainable Business**

This pillar supports the regeneration of town centres and investment in renewable energy, particularly in industrial estates. We will work closely with public and commercial landowners, businesses and town and parish councils to facilitate these initiatives.

We aim to raise awareness among businesses about the financial and reputational benefits of reducing environmental impacts. Support will be provided to help businesses calculate their carbon footprints and connect with local supply chains. We will also highlight local projects and ventures that share environmental goals.

Communication actions include signposting businesses to relevant grants and resources, working with the Federation of Small Businesses to identify support needs and promoting the circular economy.

| **Reduced Waste and Water Usage**

The fourth pillar is dedicated to reducing waste and water usage across the district. We will support KCC in promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling and encouraging local food growing. Additional actions include facilitating the development of repair cafés and establishing collection points for recyclables.

To protect and improve air and water quality, we will engage with Southern Water and promote the use of water butts and water-saving devices, as

well as encourage behaviour changes, such as shorter showers and boiling only the water needed.

Our communication efforts will focus on collaborating with KCC to reduce waste production, responding to consultations to influence water company plans and exploring partnerships with water companies to achieve shared objectives.

| **Greater Carbon Absorption and Biodiversity**

The final pillar aims to enhance carbon absorption and biodiversity within the district. We will support KCC in implementing the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy and explore ways to implement the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy at the community level. Actions include promoting community planting of gardens, orchards and wildflower meadows, supporting pollinator-friendly planting, developing natural green spaces and collaborating on sustainable drainage systems. We will also create opportunities and encourage carbon offset planting, protect the coastline, plant trees, rewild land, reduce the use of pesticides and fertilisers and avoid peat use.

Social resilience actions involve supporting local food growing, helping local agriculture maintain hedgerows for nature and working with farmers and landowners to create wildlife corridors and improve biodiversity.

In terms of communication and involvement, we will work with KCC on the implementation of the Climate Adaptation Programme for Kent and Medway.

This comprehensive approach, structured around these five pillars, will guide our district towards a more sustainable, resilient and vibrant future.



5.4 How Do We Fund the District's Net Zero Transition?

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 its ability to deliver the Net Zero commitment 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.

Over the next 5 to 10 years, UK local authorities can access significant national and regional funding streams, ranging from targeted grants like the £19 million Local Net Zero Accelerator Programme, to ongoing support through Local Net Zero Hubs and a share of the UK's multi-billion-pound annual Net Zero investment, to help residents achieve Net Zero. However, successfully securing and delivering these funds requires strong cross-sector partnerships, robust local data to evidence need and impact

and the development of commercial models to attract private investment alongside public grants. Building internal capacity and skills, collaborating with community groups and regional hubs and aligning with consolidated, long-term government funding strategies are essential for local authorities to maximise these opportunities and deliver lasting benefits for residents.

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 central government. The Council typically applies for these funds through a time-limited bid window and may sometimes be unsuccessful.

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

- (i) New sources of funding from additional partners, for example the Council and community working with the private sector with appropriate governance, consultation and compliance structures;
- (ii) Resources from working in collaboration and supporting community-led projects and rollout with a Net Zero objective; and
- (iii) Collaborative and long-term working with residential and commercial landlords to incentivise and support their transition to carbon Net Zero in the built environment.

The Council will encourage local businesses to take a leading role in decarbonising our district, as their investment and commitment are critical to achieving meaningful emissions reductions and future-proofing the local economy. While local government can set ambitious targets, provide guidance and create enabling policies, the scale of transformation required depends on businesses embedding Net Zero strategies into their

operations, investing in clean technologies and innovating new solutions. Proactive decarbonisation not only ensures compliance with evolving regulations but also opens up new opportunities for growth, resilience and access to finance. National frameworks like the UK Net Zero Council and programmes such as Innovate UK's Net Zero Living increasingly prioritise business-led climate action and public-private collaboration. By working closely with local authorities and leveraging available support, businesses can drive the transition to a low-carbon future, benefiting both their bottom line and the wider community.

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, recognising 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.
7. Monitor progress and incorporate lessons learnt from the process. Accurate monitoring and measurement of the plan are critical to its

success and are the responsibility of all parties and residents. We will continue to use nationally supported indicators from government to measure and report carbon emissions against the targets.

6. District Net Zero Action Plan

This section details 54 specific actions under each pillar and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Key

A

Actions within the control of Folkestone & Hythe District Council

B

Actions to be delivered by others including KCC, other organisations, developers or in partnership with the Council . They are priorities within the scope of influence of Folkestone & Hythe District Council

C

Actions not in control of Folkestone & Hythe District Council . However they are priorities of importance to the district. To be delivered by other organisations

Pillar 1: Sustainable Transport



Theme	Actions	Indicator / Measure	Key Partners / Responsibility	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Facilitate the improvement of cycle networks and footpaths.	% of planned new cycle lanes delivered annually and number of footpath enhancements per year	Department for Transport	A, B & C
	2. Facilitate the improvement of digital connectivity to reduce travel needs.	Survey of residents working remotely and broadband roll out locally	KCC Transport Cycle Clubs	
	3. Continue to explore the rollout of electric vehicle charging points across the district.	Number of public charging points installed per year	Schools and Colleges Town and Parish councils	
	4. Explore the provision of car clubs and share schemes within the district.	Number of active car club vehicles	Residents	
	5. Explore the provision of e-bikes and bike storage facilities.	Number of e-bike installations annually and storage options	Bus operators and Stagecoach	
	6. Encourage investment in low-carbon infrastructure for the district, which could include the Council investing in solar PV or low-carbon heating schemes which include private sector residents and businesses.	Number of low-carbon heating schemes started		
	7. Lobbying the government for a more joined-up and affordable public transport system.	Number of lobbying activities per year		
Social Resilience	8. 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.	Survey - % increase in journeys made by walking/cycling/car-share/public transport		
	9. Encourage and work with KCC to incentivise residents to use public transport.	% increase in public transport patronage		

Theme	Actions	Indicator / Measure	Key Partners / Responsibility	Delivery
Communications & Involvement	10. Work with schools to promote KCC's Bikeability programme to get more pupils cycling.	Number of pupils completing Bikeability	Department for Transport	A, B & C
	11. Encourage local taxi policy to include requirements to move to ultra-low emissions vehicles.	% of taxi/private hire fleet that are ULEVs	KCC Transport Cycle Clubs	
	12. Work with KCC to influence the Local Transport Plan.	Level of local plan alignment	Schools and Colleges Town and Parish councils	
	13. Actively collaborate with residents on improvement to local greenways, footpaths and cycle routes.	Number of resident consultations and feedback received	Residents	
	14. Promote walk to school schemes.	Number of schools participating		

Pillar 2: Resilient Residents



Theme	Actions	Indicator / Measure	Key Partners / Responsibility	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	Number of students completing relevant courses	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
	2. Encourage improvement of resilience in building designs through the local plan	Survey of residents working remotely and broadband roll out locally		
	3. Support a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) and support stakeholders to deliver cleaner, more efficient and resilient energy solutions tailored to community needs	Utilisation of evidence-base for achieving Net Zero by identifying the most effective pathways for decarbonising local energy systems		
Social Resilience	4. Provide advice on energy efficiency measures, waste minimisation and water conservation. Encourage take up of heat pumps, solar installations and insulating homes.	Number and types of information disseminated		
	5. Actively identify and support vulnerable and low incomes homes by signposting available funding options for home energy improvement.	Number of households supported		
	6. Support the creation and development of sustainability hubs.	Number of active hubs supported		
	7. Develop inclusive plans for heatwaves, flooding and drought, with a focus on protecting vulnerable populations	Plans completed		

Theme	Actions	Indicator / Measure	Key Partners / Responsibility	Delivery
Communications & Involvement	8. Collaborate with other local authorities to take competitive advantage of collective purchasing power for low-carbon technologies.	Value of collective investment	Registered landlords Residents associations House developers/ builders	A, B & C
	9. Provide support and guidance to the private rented sector and private landlords on energy efficiency measures and compliance with energy efficiency requirements.	Number of private landlords engaged	Homeowners Town and Parish councils Local community groups	
	10. Communicate with our residents to demonstrate the benefits of low-carbon technologies in the district. Support all residents' access and provide grants and targeted assistance to disadvantaged groups so that they are able to participate.	Number of communication campaigns	F&HDC Landlords Forum Alliance of Folkestone Residential Association	
	11. 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.	Number of formal responses		

Pillar 3: Sustainable Business



Theme	Actions	Indicator / Measure	Key Partners / Responsibility	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Support Town Centre Regeneration with climate adaptation and resilience at its core.	Number of completed regeneration projects (SuDS, trees and urban hot spots, water capture etc)	KCC Public Sector Landowners Commercial Landowners Businesses Town and Parish councils Folkestone Hythe and District Hotel and Catering Association	A, B & C
	2. Support renewable Energy Investment – industrial estates, Council energy broker.	Number of renewable energy projects initiated		
Social Resilience	3. Raise awareness of the financial and reputational benefits of reducing environmental impacts on businesses.	Number of business engagement/ awareness communications		
	4. Support local business and SMEs to calculate their carbon footprint.	Number of businesses completed carbon audits		
	5. Join up local supply chains to reduce waste and support local economy and residents shopping locally.	Number of business engagement/ awareness communications		
	6. Continue and expand the Sustainable Futures Forum and continue to foster ongoing education and workshops, to build public awareness, involvement, and highlight local projects and likeminded ventures.	Number of business engagement/ awareness events		
Communications & Involvement	7. Signpost to business grants and resources.	Number of communications signposts issued		
	8. Work with the Federation of Small Businesses to identify areas of support.	Survey and Business feedback		
	9. Promote circular economy where applicable.	Number of circular economy communications issued and local projects started		

Pillar 4: Reduced Waste and Water Usage



Theme	Actions	Indicator / Measure	Key Partners / Responsibility	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Support KCC to promote reduction, reuse and recycling and encourage waste minimisation.	% household recycling rate	KCC	A, B & C
	2. Encourage and support local food growing and production.	Survey - Number of residents participating in food growing schemes	Waste infrastructure Providers/ Companies	
	3. Facilitate the development of repair cafes and collection points for specialist recyclables.	Number of repair cafes or collection points established	Schools and Colleges Allotment Associations Town and Parish councils	
Social Resilience	4. Engage with Southern Water to promote water quality	Number of joint initiatives with Southern Water	Community growing groups	
	5. Encourage use of water butts	Survey - Number of water butts	Businesses	
	6. Raise awareness of the circular economy among residents, businesses and community groups through campaigns, workshops, local events and easily accessible guidance	Number of communications / events	Local charities and clubs	
	7. Encourage use of water saving devices and behavior change around using water (3 minute showers, aeration taps, boil the water you need etc.)	Number of residents reached by campaigns		
Communications & Involvement	8. Collaborate with KCC to reduce waste production.	Number of collaborative initiatives		
	9. 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.	Number of consultation responses submitted		
	10. Explore working in partnership with water companies to achieve our common aims	Number of partnership projects		

District-level emissions are calculated from waste collected within district boundaries, regardless of where it is processed.

Pillar 5: Greater Carbon Absorption and Biodiversity



Theme	Actions	Indicator / Measure	Key Partners / Responsibility	Delivery
Physical Infrastructure	1. Provide support to KCC on the implementation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Number of LNRS projects supported in the district	Kent County Council Landowners Allotment associations Health care providers Community groups Food groups Schools and colleges Farmers Kent Wildlife Trust The Woodland Trust The Environmental Agency	A, B & C
	2. Explore ways within the community to implement the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.	Number of community GBI projects supported		
	3. Promote and support community planting of gardens, orchards and wildflower meadows, promoting pollinator-friendly planting, and developing natural green spaces.	Number of planting projects completed per year		
	4. Collaborate with KCC on options for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) in collaboration with the water and sewerage providers where applicable.	Number/% new developments with SuDs		
	5. Create opportunities for carbon offset planting and protecting the coastline (e.g. nature-based solutions for coastal defences, managed woodland creation or restoration to help lock away carbon)	Hectares of nature-based solution or restored areas		
	6. Support tree planting, rewilding land, encourage reduction of pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers, and no peat. The Council will encourage landowners, local environmental groups and town and parish councils to expand tree planting, protect green areas and integrate biodiversity and carbon sequestration in line with the UK Forestry Commission's ambitious target to increase district canopy cover from the current estimated 14% to the national target of 18% by 2050.	Number of trees planted and hectares rewilded per year		

Theme	Actions	Indicator / Measure	Key Partners / Responsibility	Delivery
Social Resilience	7. Provide support for local food growing and production.	Survey - Number of food-growing initiatives	Kent County Council Landowners Allotment associations Health care providers Community groups Food groups	A, B & C
	8. Support local agriculture to improve and maintain hedgerows as a place for nature	Length (km) of hedgerows restored/managed		
	9. Work with farmers and landowners to create wildlife corridors, wild areas and improve biodiversity	Number/km of wildlife corridors created or improved		
Communications & Involvement	10. Work with KCC on the implementation of the Climate Adaptation Programme for Kent and Medway.	Number of district actions delivered as part of adaptation plan	Schools and colleges Farmers	

6.1 Net Zero Target Date

The target date for Net Zero for the Folkestone & Hythe District is 2041. This date is based on the Climate Change Committee's 'Balanced Pathway', which aligns our districts fair share of carbon emissions with the UK's legally binding Net Zero 2050 target and the Paris Agreement goal. The response from the consultation indicates that residents accept that this is a date which they are willing to support.

Setting a later target, such as 2050, may appear more achievable, but it would likely result in the district exceeding its fair share of the global carbon budget. A target date of 2041 will ensure Folkestone & Hythe District stays within its science-based carbon budget of 5.88 MtCO₂e to 2100, in line with the Paris Agreement and the district's fair share of global emissions. At the current carbon reduction rate of 3.6% per year, the district would exceed this budget by 2035, making a sharp and sustained decrease in emissions essential. The 2041 target is ambitious because it requires accelerating reductions across all pillars identified in this strategy. It is realistic because it builds on historic emissions, existing progress, leverages national and regional policies, and focuses on collaboration with residents, businesses and partners.

Delaying action increases the risk of more severe climate impacts and undermines efforts to protect public health, the local environment and future generations. Early and ambitious action is necessary to ensure that Folkestone & Hythe remains within its science-based carbon budget and demonstrates climate leadership at the local level. If the district can increase its annual emissions reduction rate incrementally reaching at least 10% per year by the late 2020s it will greatly improve the likelihood of staying within its science-based carbon budget and meeting its climate commitments.

6.2 Monitoring and Evaluating Progress

The Council will continue to monitor and report progress toward the district's Net Zero target, but there are some important limitations to note. The main source of emissions data is central government, which is often delayed by one to two years. In addition, the Council has limited capacity and resources to carry out detailed local monitoring, and priorities may shift over time.

Despite these challenges, the Council is committed to reporting progress regularly and transparently. We will make an annual report to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is important as it will provide an opportunity for an independent review by elected councillors from all political parties of the progress on the actions identified in this strategy. In addition, we will issue annual updates on emissions and climate actions, using the best available data. Updates will be published on the Council's website and shared with the community, so residents and stakeholders can see how we are all progressing and where further effort is needed.

7. Conclusion

The Folkestone & Hythe District Wide Carbon Strategy represents a vital and comprehensive framework to address the urgent and complex challenge of climate change at a local level. While the Council's direct emissions represent a small fraction of overall district emissions, the plan acknowledges that achieving Net Zero requires a united and collaborative effort across every sector - residents, businesses, community groups and partners.

Through clear, evidence-led actions in energy, transport, biodiversity, waste, water and sustainable land management, the plan has set out 54

actions within the Council's realm of influence to reduce carbon emissions, increase resilience to climate impacts, and enhance the district's natural and built environment. The strategy has been formulated through community engagement and inclusive approaches that recognise the need for behavioral change alongside infrastructure development. Success depends on ongoing collaboration, transparent monitoring and adaptability as new data, technologies and funding opportunities emerge. By setting ambitious but achievable targets and fostering a culture of innovation and partnership, the Council will facilitate, support and lead to create a healthier, more equitable and more sustainable future for all its residents.



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