

Dover District Council

Climate Change Strategy

January 2021



Our vision

Delivering a better environment for everyone and helping to inspire individuals, businesses and other organisations to commit to act to reduce the district's carbon footprint.

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Foreword

We are all having an impact on the environment, and it is a collective responsibility to tackle climate change. We all need to take positive action, and we need to do it now.

Dover District Council declared a climate change emergency in January 2020 and set about developing this strategy and action plan, overseen by a cross-party working group.

Our aim is simple: for Dover District Council to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030 at the latest.

This involves looking at all aspects of the Council's work. From the way we heat our buildings, to our supply chain, and from how we travel in the district, to how we support local residents and businesses.

Because we also want to help you live and work more sustainably. We aspire for the whole district to be carbon neutral by 2050.

This will, of course, take time. But we now have a far greater understanding of the effects of human activity on the environment, and the technology, resources and shared commitment to tackle it.

The Climate Change Strategy sets out a vision for a cleaner, greener future.

Cllr Trevor Bartlett
Leader of the Council

Introduction & Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to explain how the Council intends to step up to meet the challenge and turn the climate emergency declaration into a plan of action that will refocus the Council's activity, operations and spheres of influence to reduce emissions, increase sustainability and benefit the wider environment.

Dover District Council (DDC) has a long history of action to improve the environment of the district. Mitigating its impact on climate change, replacing its street lights with LED's, the new Dover Leisure Centre being built to BREAM very good rating (achieving highest energy efficiency rating Leisure Centre in Kent), ensuring Council new build/ refurbishment projects taking a fabric first approach to minimize heat loss, offering energy advice and grants to assist residents improve the thermal efficiency of their properties and achieve affordable warmth. Protecting and enhancing the environment through environmental improvement projects, including the chalk grassland management programme and the River Dour project managed by WCCP raising awareness of the importance of green and blue spaces involving residents to increase ownership of these valuable assets. Encouraging sustainability by taking action to continuously improve recycling rates, piloting a trial of solar p.v and battery storage to monitor the benefits of renewable energy (both in energy costs and demonstrate the effectiveness of 'green' energy sources). Measures are also being taken to increase the District's resilience to the unavoidable impacts of our changing climate through actions such as the recycling of shingle at Kingsdown to address the impact of Longshore Drift and the installation of rock groins to protect properties against rising sea levels. The above actions fall into two categories, those that are implemented once, and not repeated, and those where there is an ongoing need. In declaring a climate change emergency, the Council is acknowledging the need to build on existing action and the necessity of the change in gear required to meet the challenge of climate change.

Dover District Council has also supported International, National and Local initiatives relating to both the environment and our changing climate. Dover District Council is a signatory to the Kent Environment Strategy and Climate Local. It has collected data in relation to Greenhouse Gas Emissions and the Home Energy Conservation Act, even when collection of data was not mandatory. The Council was therefore in the fortunate position of having robust baseline data when the Council formally declared a Climate Emergency in January 2020, following the recommendation made by Cabinet in November 2019.

The purpose of this strategy is to explain how the Council intends to step up to meet the challenge and turn the climate emergency declaration into a plan of action that will refocus the Council's activity, operations and spheres of influence to reduce emissions, increase sustainability and benefit the wider environment. The strategy gives focus how the 2030 target of net zero for the Council's own estate, and the 2050 target for the wider district can be met, through mitigation (measures taken to reduce net emissions) and recognising the need to adapt to the inevitable changing climate. It also recognises the need to tackle the 2030 and 2050 target concurrently to achieve the wide ranging and challenging ambition in the relatively short timescale.

The measures taken in reaction to the Coronavirus pandemic has shown that we can pull out the stops and that we can make dramatic changes to our collective behaviour, resulting in reduction in emissions and improvements in air quality. In the context of the overall picture these benefits are relatively minimal but it's crucial that the impetus is not lost. It's important that the gains made are not lost in the recovery from Covid-19 lockdown. Indeed, any attempt to restart the economy in a "business as usual" scenario would be disastrous.

Whilst there will be a need to balance the additional pressures on Council resources, climate change waits for no one and the impacts continue to grow along with the need for urgent action. The Council's response to COVID 19 has demonstrated the unique role the Council has in leading on and coordinating action that makes sense locally and a workforce that can be deployed where needed and are flexible enough to adapt. These qualities can be used to ensure the 'green thread' of climate change is woven into all of the Council's recovery plans, strategies and projects and considered on a case by case basis to achieve local climate emergency ambition in support of the legally binding National targets.

The need for action

The Stern Report of 2006 demonstrated that the cost of doing nothing to combat climate change far exceeded the modest cost of 1-2% of GDP in the UK, the opportunity for widescale restructuring of the economy and replacing old ways with new and how climate change is interwoven with social issues such as poverty. Professor Stern followed up this report with the book *Why Are We Waiting* (published around the time of COP 21 in Paris). One of the factors mentioned in the book is the need for better communication on the issue. In the last couple of years public knowledge/ perception has indeed increased, not least due to the actions of Greta Thunberg, about whom Sir David Attenborough said 'you have aroused the world. I'm very grateful to you'.

In May 2018 Greta Thunberg won a climate change essay competition, three months later she started to protest outside the Swedish Parliament, calling for a school strike for Climate. Her protests went viral leading to support from students around the world. Since then Greta Thunberg has become the leading voice on the crisis humanity faces arising from climate change, gaining international recognition and inspiring millions to join protests around the world and increasing public awareness on the subject, evidenced by recent surveys outlined below.

The full list of key documents, policies and perception surveys are appendix 1 to this strategy.



The Climate Change Member Working Group: Purpose and Remit

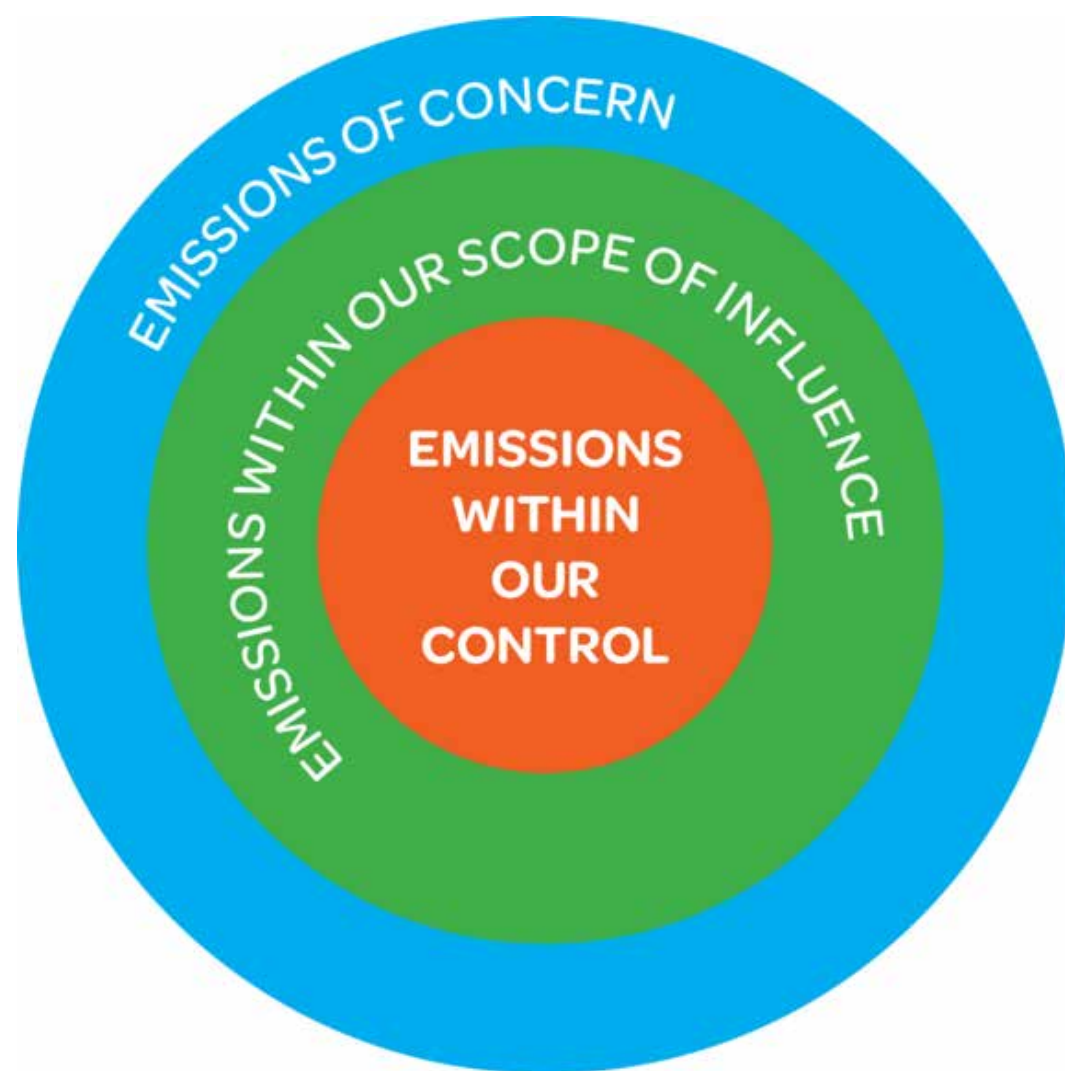
A cross party Climate Change Member Group was set up to explore issues associated with climate change, and currently meet every two months.

The Working Group objectives are:

- To understand the opportunities in delivering and setting a Council wide net zero carbon emission target
- To identify the scope of and prepare, a costed Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, setting out plans for Dover District Council to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030 at the latest
- To identify resources required to implement the Strategy and Action Plan
- To set a regular (no less than annual) review and monitoring process.

Scope of the Strategy

The Strategy recognises that the Council has different levels of control and influence, and indeed areas of concern regarding emission reduction, protection of the environment and meeting the challenges and opportunities of a changing climate.



This strategy also recognises the inter-relationship and interdependence with the wider areas of sustainability and environmental protection. Climate change, sustainability, and environmental action are not the same thing, but neither are they competing ideas. Sustainability cannot be achieved without dealing with climate change or environmental action. The solutions to climate change must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. It is also important to remember that it is necessary to take action to: -

- a) reduce the severity of climate change
- b) deal with the change that is now inevitable.

The scope of the Strategy comprises:

- Consideration of ALL the Council's activity and operations (as detailed in the original Cabinet Report 4 November 2019), where it has control, areas which the Council can influence, and emissions of concern within Dover District
- The need to lead by example recognising and minimising the environmental impacts in discharging the Council's statutory functions, improving the health and wellbeing of our residents and contributing to the sustainable economic development of the district.
- The need to embed environmental sustainability into the effective and efficient running of Council services
- The evolving legal and statutory duties placed on the Council regarding the environment and the national response to climate change.

The Strategy provides a framework for the Council to action. The Strategy and underlying action plans will be living documents due to the complex, fluid and innovative nature of the climate change agenda and the measures that can be taken to address DDC emissions by 2030 and the district emissions by 2050.

The Green Thread

Interaction with the Corporate Plan and Corporate Interdependencies

The Council's Corporate Plan recognizes the inter-dependency between the services we deliver, and outlines how the Council will facilitate and deliver a stronger local economy, stimulate investment and encourage more people to visit whilst protecting the District's natural environment, rich heritage with renewed emphasis on addressing climate change and sustainability.

This Strategy coordinates the Council's 'GREEN THREAD' overall approach to the climate emergency, and actions in the underlying action plans will be incorporated and expanded throughout different departmental strategies and plans, ensuring these commitments work alongside other priorities including equality, health inequalities and social justice, thus ensuring the most vulnerable in the District are not adversely disadvantaged.

Turning the Declaration into a Plan of Action



Defining the Problem

Whilst climate change impacts and emissions know no boundaries, overarching emission figures attributed to the Dover district are provided by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS – formerly DECC). These are detailed on the following pages and will provide both the baseline for and evidence of the progress towards the net zero carbon emission targets set by Dover District Council.

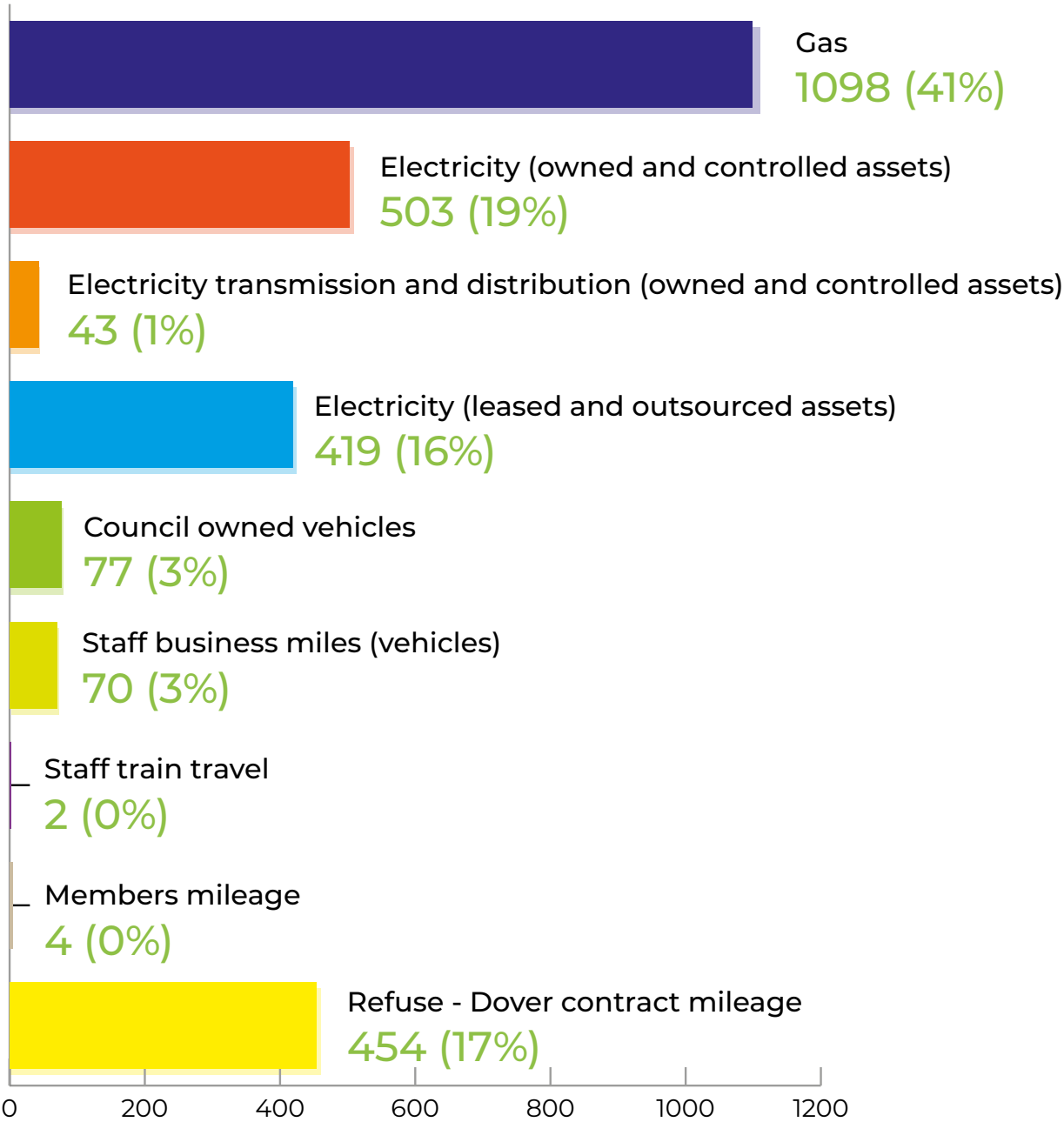
Energy consumption in buildings, and transport are significant emitters within the Council's estate and wider district as highlighted in the following charts, indicating areas that need the greatest attention. The extent of energy used in the domestic sector demonstrates the need for retrofit the existing housing stock, and the need to ensure future development minimizes energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels.



1) Emissions within DDC Control

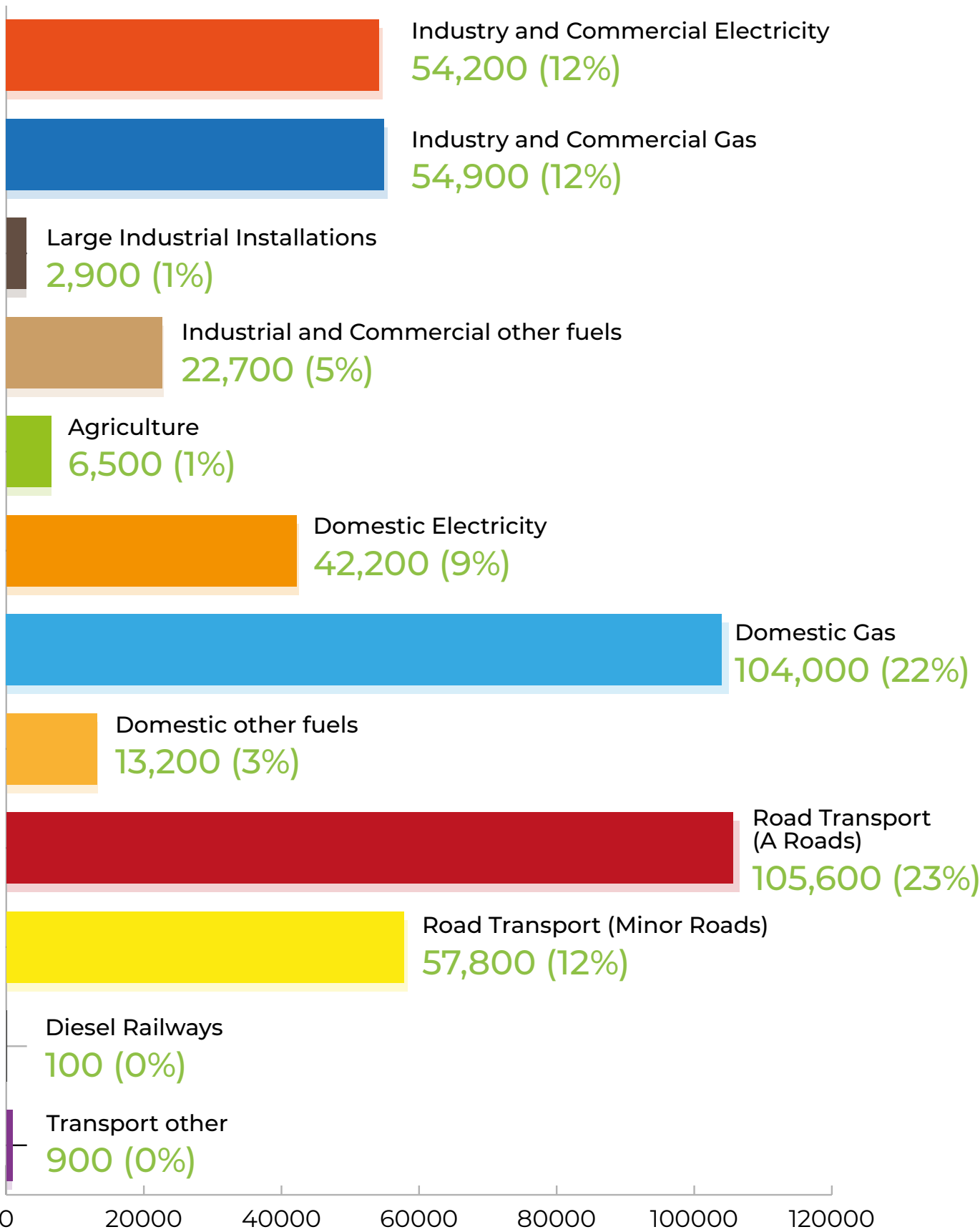
The Council reports annually on the emissions (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report) that result from its own estate and functions and the most recent emissions are broken down in the chart below:

Greenhouse Gas Emission 2018/19 tonnes of CO2



2) Emissions within DDC Sphere of Influence, and emissions of Concern

Local Authority CO2 emissions 2018 tonnes of CO2



How the Climate Change Strategy is actioned

1. Overview of Work Strands

The report to Cabinet in November 2019 outlined 8 themes that are equally relevant across emissions that are within the Council's control, influence or are of concern and are relevant to both inward looking and outward facing workstreams/ functions and actions that are carried by the different departments of the Council :-

- Assets & Estate
- Governance
- Natural Environment
- Air Quality
- Transport
- Housing
- Procurement
- Waste
- Local Development Plan

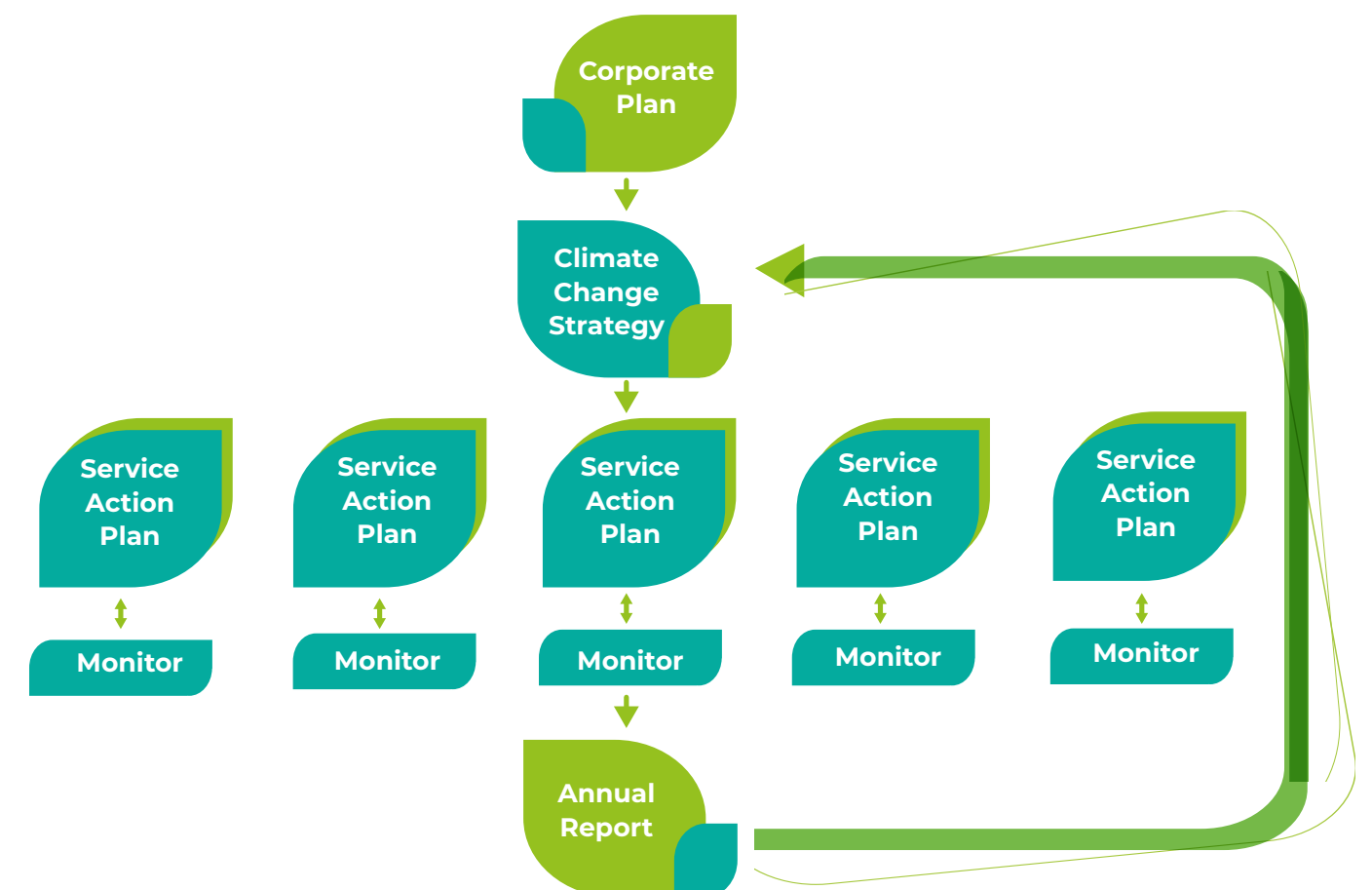


2. Weaving the 'green thread' into Council business

This strategy sets out the high-level ambition and will then need stimulate action in the different service areas across the Council. Overarching plans will be set out under the 3 emission themes (control, influence and concern) and form appendices to this strategy. Each service area will undertake action that falls within their remit and inter departmental collaboration where appropriate.

The importance of constant engagement and communication with the District's community cannot be underestimated in the successful delivery of this strategy and the action plans that will underpin it. Wider community involvement is critical in identifying and removing barriers that currently exist and to achieve buy-in, support, behaviour change and empowering communities to be part of building a better future for the district.

This strategy, and underlying action plans are living documents and will require review and revision to reflect the fast-moving nature of the agenda and ever evolving innovation.





3. Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting are essential to ensure that actions taken are effective and enable informed decisions to be made. Carbon emission metrics, measured against baseline data, are the tools used to highlight the effectiveness of action.

Each service area will be responsible for monitoring the success and impacts of their actions. Achievements and lessons learnt will inform future action/ action plans. Each service area will provide updated information to allow for calculation and collation of the overall picture of Council action into the relevant annual reports.

The Council currently reports progress through the following: -

DDC Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report

– this report, published annually, collates measured emissions data from various sources to demonstrate the total gross greenhouse gas emissions from the Council's own estate, operations and functions.

The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report

has evolved from a fuel poverty focus only to include promotion of carbon reduction, renewable energy, energy efficiency in residential accommodation, how the Local Authority engages stakeholders (domestic consumers, business consumers and the green local supply chain).

The Council provides annual updates to Kent County Council to feed into the **Kent Environment Strategy** yearly Impact Report and Implementation Plan Progress Report. These reports highlight both mitigation and adaptation action taken to support economic growth whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, creating and sustaining communities that are vibrant, healthy and resilient.

Savings through action taken in the areas of Influence and Concern will be collated at a District level and detailed in relevant reporting frameworks if applicable. Nationally published (Local Authority CO2 emissions – Full dataset) should also reflect the savings resulting from mitigation and adaptation measures taken in the District.

The above reports are published on the Council's website and climate change webpages will be updated to reflect action and celebrate successes across the District to inform and inspire others to take action.



Appendix 1

Evidence for action

There is local, national and international evidence that supports the need to act to improve, enhance and protect the environment.

Dover District Council (DDC) is striving with its long term commitment to 'Help the community minimise its carbon footprint, adapt to the changing climate and continue to improve recycling rates' and with its declaration of a 'climate change emergency' has also committed to become a carbon neutral district by 2050.

The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review:

(October 2006) concluded that:

- there is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, if we take strong action now;
- climate change could have very serious impacts on growth and development;
- the costs of stabilising the climate are significant but manageable; delay would be dangerous and much more costly;
- action on climate change is required across all countries, and it need not cap the aspirations for growth of rich or poor countries;

- a range of options exists to cut emissions; strong, deliberate policy action is required to motivate their take-up; and
- climate change demands an international response, based on a shared understanding of long-term goals and agreement on frameworks for action.

Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

Statutory requirement for Local Authorities with a Housing responsibility to report on actions taken to reduce levels of fuel poverty through the improvement of energy efficiency of residential properties in the District. Annual reporting initially focussed on action taken by the Council to reduce levels of fuel poverty through improving the energy efficiency of properties, from 2013 reporting every other year, but requirements extended wider to encompass action taken by the Council to encourage renewable energy, promote sustainability.

Climate Change Act 2008

This sets out legally binding greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets of at least 80% by 2050 against the 1990 baseline.

Paris Agreement 2015

Requires countries to work together in limiting global temperature rise to below 2 degrees as recognised by the IPCC to limit the risks and impacts of climate change.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)

Sets out the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as it recognises the interconnection between economic development, social equity and inclusion. Governments are expected to translate the SDGs into national policy, plans and initiatives.

2016 Kent Fuel Poverty Strategy

The Council approved the Strategy, and committed to supporting the action plan, including the improving the thermal efficiency of properties occupied by residents living in fuel poverty, with consequential impact of reducing domestic emission and improving health of the District's residents.

Clean Growth Strategy 2017

This Strategy underlines the role that local government has in delivering and supporting a low carbon society.

2018 Kent Environment Strategy Council

DDC committed to the Kent Environment Strategy to provide a basis for co-ordinated action across the County, approved in so far as it is consistent with this Council's Corporate priorities and to the extent that resources will allow.

2020 Emissions Reduction Pledge (2018)

Voluntary target and reporting framework to standardise reporting on emissions across Public Sector and wider. Annual requirement to provide information template

UK Government 25-year Environment Plan 2018

Promotes the use and management of land in a sustainable manner, the enhancement and recovery of landscapes and the connection of people with the environment to promote health and wellbeing. It also promotes an increase in resource efficiency and a reduction in pollution and waste, securing a clean, productive and biologically diverse sea and ocean and protection and improvement of the global environment.

Our Waste, Our Resources Strategy for England 2018

Sets out how the Government intends to preserve the stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy and tackling waste crime. It is also their blueprint for eliminating avoidable plastic waste.

Clean Air Strategy 2019

Outlines how the Government intends to tackle all forms of air pollution to ensure cleaner air to breathe and protecting nature whilst boosting the economy.

State of Nature Report 2019

This Report pools the best available data on the UK's biodiversity, with a focus on the trends in species as the key evidence of how nature is faring. In addition to assessing the state of nature it also reviewed the pressures acting upon nature, and the conservation response being made to counter these pressures, in order to give a rounded view of the UK's nature in 2019.

2020 Climate Change Emergency

Dover District Council formerly declared (29 January 2020) DDC to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030. Cabinet also pledged to help support the wider community so that the district can become carbon neutral by 2050.

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)

Natural Environment & Rural

Communities Act (NERC) 2006

Kent County Council (Various)

BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker (March 2020)

Published 7 May 2020 - covers public attitudes towards policies such as energy and climate change. 76% of the public said that they were either very concerned or fairly concerned about climate change. The proportion of people who had any awareness of 'Net Zero' was 35%. The level of support for renewable energy was 82% (solar 86%; off-shore wind 81%; wave and tidal 80%; on-shore wind 77% and biomass 68%)

YouGov opinion poll (28 May 2020) found clear support for putting the environment at the heart of the post-Covid19 recovery from across the UK.

UK Public Opinion on Post-Covid 19 Economy and Environment

The UK public preferred a speech arguing for environmental prioritisation as part of post COVID-19 economic recovery measures, in comparison to a speech arguing that environmental prioritisation is now unaffordable because of COVID-19 related economic damage. Dr Kenward co-author of the study said: -

"That the population as a whole is positive [towards environment-friendly recovery policies] is further confirmation of earlier studies, but that this applies across demographics is new and unusual."

"Normally concern about the environment is more prominent in the middle classes. It seems there may be something about Covid-19 that is making environmental concern more universal."



"We can't yet be sure what that is, but possibly the experience of a new kind of national emergency makes other coming emergencies seem more real to more people."

KES Perception Survey 2018

Kent residents responded that the primary challenges concern housing development, losing green belt land, litter & dog mess, traffic & congestion. 88% of residents claim to give a lot or a fair amount of thought to energy saving in their home. 11% struggle to pay energy bills (corresponds with levels of fuel poverty in the County/ District).

Whilst the full data and findings of this report are not yet known it is likely to address issues such as flooding as detailed below.

Flooding from high tides have in the past had significant consequences in North Deal, with February 1953 and January 1978 being the most significant flood events. However, more recently defenses were overtopped in Gazeen Salts Recreation Ground and the Quay Sandwich as a result of a tidal surge, which involved evacuation from their homes for some residents and damage to several flood defenses. The Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway highlights that sea level rise is like to increase by 0.8m which will bring additional pressures to existing sea defenses.



Links to DDC strategies, policies, plans and related webpages

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Corporate-Information/Corporate-Plan.aspx>

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Regeneration/New-District-Local-Plan/Home.aspx>

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Transport,-Streets--Parking/Parking/Documents--Policies/Home.aspx>

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Environment/Environmental-Health/Air-Quality/Air-Quality-Monitoring.aspx>

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Leisure-Culture-Tourism/Leisure-Facilities/PDF/Parks-and-Amenity-Open-Space-Strategy.pdf>

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Environment/Coast--Rivers/Coast-Protection/Home.aspx>

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Housing/Private-Sector-Housing/Private-Sector-Housing-Strategy.pdf>

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Environment/Climate-Change/Home.aspx>

<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Environment/Energy-Advice/Energy-Advice.aspx>

