



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14th March 2023

Report of Councillor Mark Whittington,
Cabinet Member for Waste and Climate
Change

Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy sets out the Council's proposed approach to addressing carbon emissions and climate change within the district of South Kesteven.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Notes the content of the South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy**
2. **Recommends to Cabinet to approve the adoption of the South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy**
3. **Delegates to the Chief Finance Officer to take forward development of the Climate Action Plan**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Growth and our economy Housing that meets the needs of all residents Healthy and strong communities Clean and sustainable environment High performing Council
Which wards are impacted?	All wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy sets a framework for the Council to respond to the issue of climate change within the district. The development of the proposed Climate Action Plan, following publication of this Climate Action Strategy, will need to carefully review financial implications of all proposed projects including any sources of grant funding support or cost implications to the Council.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 It is good practice for a local authority to present a strategy on the issues and impacts of climate change within the district. South Kesteven District Council is one of the local authorities to have formally declared a climate emergency, which set carbon reduction targets for Council operations. The climate emergency declaration also noted the wider leadership potential of the Council to help fulfil the UK government's target to reach net zero by 2050, and this strategy helps to clarify that role.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Climate Change

- 1.3 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy sets out how the district can respond to the global issue of climate change at a local level, and proposes a framework for action based on eight distinct areas of activity that the Council can have influence upon. The Climate Action Strategy is crucial for formally setting ambition to both reduce carbon emissions from within the district, and to adapt to the expected impacts of a changing climate.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 From heating our homes to filling up our cars, burning fossil fuels releases the greenhouse gases that increase global temperatures. We are already seeing the effects here in the UK, with a record temperature of 40.3°C being recorded in Coningsby, Lincolnshire, on 19th July 2022.
- 2.2 The world faces a huge challenge to address climate change, but there are solutions to rapidly slow carbon emissions. In 2019, the UK government set out a target to achieve net zero carbon emissions across the whole of the UK by 2050. This commitment means the UK now has less than 30 years to completely decarbonise its economy.
- 2.3 There is a clear role for local government to shape, drive, and deliver local action on climate change. South Kesteven District Council made a formal declaration of climate emergency on 26 September 2019 with cross party support. Alongside this, the Council confirmed the political ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by at least 30% by 2030, and to endeavour to become net-zero as soon as viable before 2050. Over three-quarters of local authorities in the UK have now taken the step of declaring a climate emergency.
- 2.4 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy sets out ambitions for the wider district regarding climate change. The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a framework for action for South Kesteven to reduce carbon emissions and safely adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The full Strategy is included at Appendix A and an overview presentation is included at Appendix B.
- 2.5 Building on current strategy, including South Kesteven District Council's Corporate Plan and ongoing work to reduce Council carbon emissions, the Climate Action Strategy will provide a significant step forward in helping to address a range of systemic challenges that are seen in South Kesteven.
- 2.6 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy proposes eight distinct policy areas for the Council to focus upon regarding climate change:
- Built Environment
 - Power
 - Growing our green economy

- Natural Environment
- Transport
- Resources
- Communities
- Decision making

2.7 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy is the first part of a two-step approach. The Strategy document addresses context, reviews the current policy background and direction for work, considers interaction with other Council corporate priorities and sets out sources of information for carbon emissions available at the local authority level. The Strategy proposes the development of a Climate Action Plan, using the framework of eight policy areas, to set out the Council's approach in greater detail.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy is a new strategy to set the direction for how South Kesteven District Council can address and influence carbon emissions and adaptation to climate change. This goes beyond work to address carbon emissions from Council operations (principally from the operation of buildings and vehicles), which have been identified as being less than 1% of the total carbon emissions arising from the district of South Kesteven.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 There is no statutory obligation to monitor or report on carbon emissions which arise from Council operations or from the wider district. Nevertheless, by doing so and setting out how the Council proposes to address these, it is acting in alignment with its climate emergency declaration of 2019.
- 4.2 The Committee could amend the South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy and propose an alternative approach for addressing climate change within the district.
- 4.3 The Committee could reject the South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy and choose not to progress work on climate change within the district.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended to the Committee to note the contents of the South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy, and to recommend to Cabinet to approve a final version. The Strategy sets out a robust framework for action and how the Council is able to respond across different areas to the problems presented by climate change and the net to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 South Kesteven's Climate Action Group of twelve councillors and relevant Council officers received a draft Climate Action Strategy and discussed the document on 24th February 2023. The document was well received. It was noted it is fundamental the Council considers climate adaptation in regard to its own services, to avoid unintended consequences of increasing carbon emissions and waste in response to weather events. This will be taken forward as part of our Climate Action Plan.
- 6.2 It was also noted there is a need to undertake further engagement with our community on the content of the strategy and intentions of the Climate Action Plan, as set out within the Strategy.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A: *South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy*.
- 7.2 Appendix B: Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven presentation.