



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3rd October 2023

Councillors Rhys Baker and Patsy Ellis,
Cabinet Members for Waste and
Climate Change

Updated Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

Following a public consultation conducted, a revised Climate Action Strategy has been developed setting out South Kesteven District Council's aspirations to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change within the district.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes the content of the revised South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy**
- 2. Recommends to Cabinet to approve the adoption of the revised South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy**
- 3. Delegates to the Climate Action Working Group and officers to progress the development of the Climate Action Plan and provide regular updates to the Committee**

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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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 revised South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy sets a framework for the Council to respond to the issue of climate change within the district. While there are no direct implications from publishing the Strategy, it sets the framework for further investment in a variety of projects against each of the Themes included within the Strategy.
- 1.2 The development of the 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

- 1.3 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.

- 1.4 Consult with Graham Watts, James Welbourn or Mandy Braithwaite (Do not delete)

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

Climate Change

- 1.5 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy sets out the Council's role in facilitating the transition to net zero carbon for the whole district of South Kesteven. 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 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.
- 2.2 On 14th March 2023, the first Climate Action Strategy document was presented to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee recommended that the Strategy be put out for consultation to gauge public opinion, and for a revised Strategy to be brought back to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The scope, approach and proposed questions for a public consultation on the Climate Action Strategy was subsequently prepared, taking into account that any consultation needed to be conducted after the local elections had taken place on 4th May 2023.
- 2.5 The consultation exercise was designed to determine the level of support from various stakeholders for the newly developed Climate Action Strategy, as well as understanding which areas of activity are priorities for respondents and the commitments from SKDC they want to see to help this happen.

- 2.6 The consultation was open for just over 4 weeks from 10th July. As well as residents of South Kesteven, specific stakeholder groups identified included district Councillors for South Kesteven, Town and Parish councils, voluntary and community groups with an environmental focus, The Woodland Trust, the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership, Lincolnshire Rivers Trust, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Grantham Rivercare and the South Lincolnshire Green Party, as well as Lincolnshire County Council and the Environment Agency. In total, 175 individual responses were received through the consultation process.
- 2.7 A full report on the outcomes of the consultation exercise is attached at Appendix A. South Kesteven District Council also received two separate written consultation responses from the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership and from the Environment Agency, attached at Appendix B and C respectively.
- 2.8 The feedback from the consultation exercise has been very constructive. While there was a broad support for the eight Themes within the Climate Action Strategy, and for areas of focus and priorities, there were clear themes where respondents believed the Council could go further or improve the Strategy. This included feedback on:
- The length and/or technical content of the Climate Action Strategy, with several respondents noting that the document was overly long
 - Further help and guidance for residents of South Kesteven, with a request for the Council to provide more comprehensive information on what individual households can do to contribute towards targets
 - The ambition of targets for carbon reduction and whether this reflected a fair level of ambition for the district
 - Concerns around the cost of the transition to net zero and how this would be fairly managed for all residents
 - Ensuring that adaptation to climate change is considered as important, if not more important, than reducing carbon emissions
 - Concerns that the Strategy lacked specific projects and actions to deliver on ambition
- 2.9 As a result of the feedback received through the consultation exercise, a revised version of the Climate Action Strategy has now been prepared, attached at Appendix D. This has amended the document in a number of areas, including amendments to the vision for the district for 2030, inclusion of a new ambition under the Resources Theme for water management, and various clarifications around the role of climate adaptation.
- 2.10 In response to feedback on the length and format of the Strategy, a separate Climate Action Strategy Executive Summary document has also been prepared, attached at Appendix E. This three page summary notes the key focuses of the Strategy document, includes an overview of the eight Themes identified in order to effectively embed action on climate change, and notes the co-benefits of pursuing action.

- 2.11 It is noted that the Climate Action Strategy remains the first part of a two-step process. 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. In depth detail of projects to be delivered across each of the eight Themes identified, including cost and payback, associated benefits and service area within the Council will be presented as the Climate Action Plan once the full Climate Action Strategy is published.

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 endorse 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 The draft Climate Action Strategy was then considered by Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th March 2023. The Committee recommended the Strategy be put out for public consultation. The consultation was conducted during July and August 2023 and received a good response rate.

7. Background papers

- 7.1 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 14th March 2023 - [Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven.pdf](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A: *Climate Action Strategy Consultation Report*
- 8.2 Appendix B: *Consultation response received from the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership*
- 8.3 Appendix C: *Consultation response received from the Environment Agency*
- 8.4 Appendix D: *Revised Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven*
- 8.4 Appendix E: *Climate Action Strategy Executive Summary*