



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Cabinet

7th November 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 Cabinet:

1. Approve the adoption of the revised South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy

Decision Information	
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) and Deputy S151 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.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

Climate Change

- 1.4 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 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. A full analysis of the consultation exercise is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.4 The consultation was open for just over 4 weeks from 10th July. In total, 175 individual responses were received through the consultation process.
- 2.5 The feedback from the consultation exercise has been extremely constructive. The main outcomes from the consultation exercise include:
 - 73% of respondents supported the commitments to act on climate change set out in the Climate Action Strategy, with 22% not in support and 5% unsure

- Most respondents reported they believed that the responsibility for tackling climate change lay equally with national and local government, businesses and individuals
- Strong support for the proposed Themes of the strategy, with particular emphasis on the themes of Natural Environment, Transport and Power
- While 46% of respondents agreed that the Climate Action Strategy provides enough information about challenges posed to residents and the district by a changing climate, 35% disagreed, with the remainder choosing to answer don't know/not sure

2.6 There were also 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

2.7 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 B. 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.

2.8 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 C. 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.

2.9 The responses received through the consultation exercise also will provide invaluable feedback regarding the formation of plans for specific projects under each of the eight Themes of the Strategy, to be presented as the Council's Climate Action Plan following the approval of the Climate Action Strategy.

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 Cabinet could amend the South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy and propose an alternative approach for addressing climate change within the district.

4.3 Cabinet 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 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.

- 6.3 Public consultation was conducted in July and August 2023 and the revised Climate Action Strategy was presented to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3rd October 2023.
- 6.4 The revised Climate Action Strategy was then presented to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3rd October 2023. The Committee recommended to Cabinet to approve the adoption of the revised South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy while undertaking to engage with the wider community to further inform the development of the Climate Action Plan.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 14th March 2023 - [Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven.pdf](#)
- 7.2 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3rd October 2023 - [Climate Action Strategy Update - Post Consultation.pdf \(southkesteven.gov.uk\)](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A: *Climate Action Strategy Consultation Report*
- 8.2 Appendix B: *Revised Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven*
- 8.3 Appendix C: *Climate Action Strategy Executive Summary*