



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 18th March 2025

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Update on South Kesteven District Council's Climate Action Plan

Report Author

Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

✉ serena.brown@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide an update to the Committee on South Kesteven District Council's development of a Climate Action Plan.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the update on 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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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?

Sustainable South Kesteven

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 Council has an existing Climate Change Reserve of £300k for the 2024/25 financial year, which was established to help respond to the budgetary pressures driven by the increasing cost of energy, and the Council's stated ambition of carbon reduction across the Council's property portfolio. The Climate Action Strategy 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.
- 1.3 The Council has shown further commitment by increasing the Climate Change Reserve for 2025/26 to £500,000 to accelerate some of the projects and show carbon reduction across the portfolios.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.4 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 national target to reach net zero by 2050, and this activity helps to clarify that role.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

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.

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. Following this declaration of climate emergency, the Council's updated carbon footprint was established, using baseline data from 2018/19, which was presented to [Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21st July 2020](#). This signalled some of the major categories of carbon emissions arising from council operations and highlighted projects to pursue to reduce carbon emissions.
- 2.3. South Kesteven District Council has continued to publish updates on progress towards the outlined carbon emissions target from the 2018/19 year onwards. The latest report covering the 2023/24 period reported a total carbon emissions reduction of 25.27%, discussed in detail at a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on [7th October 2024](#).
- 2.4. A Climate Change Reserve was put in place from the 2023/24 financial year in order to both help respond to the budgetary pressures driven by the increasing cost of energy, and the Council's stated ambition of carbon reduction across the Council's property portfolio. South Kesteven District Council has made significant progress in addressing carbon emissions from its own operations. Some of these major achievements which will have a major impact on the Council's carbon emissions include:
 - Establishment of a programme of £1m to upgrade all Council streetlights to energy efficient LEDs with dimming
 - Securing over £3.5m of funding via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (phase 3c) to install a new low-carbon heating system at Grantham Meres leisure centre
 - Installation of additional solar PV panels at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre as well as at the Council's main offices at The Picture House
 - Overall reduction in electricity consumption and associated carbon emissions across the Council's portfolio of buildings
 - Development of a new Green Fleet Strategy to agree a way forward to decarbonise the Council's vehicles

- 2.5. The Council published its first Climate Action Strategy, endorsed by Cabinet in [November 2023](#), following an extensive consultation exercise and engagement with Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Strategy was developed to set out South Kesteven District Council's aspirations to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change within the whole district.
- 2.6. The Climate Action Strategy sets out eight key themes, reflecting the broad scope of work needed to effectively address climate change for South Kesteven. Each of these Themes has a supporting Vision which delivery of the Climate Action Plan will set out to achieve:

Theme	Vision
Built Environment	Buildings across South Kesteven have high energy efficiency, reduced dependence on fossil fuel heating systems and are better adapted to the impacts of climate change
Power	South Kesteven has increased renewable energy generation and is more self-sufficient for energy
Growing our Green Economy	South Kesteven has a strong low-carbon economy and there are more low-carbon employment opportunities
Natural Environment	Wildlife habitats are valued, maintained, enhanced and created in South Kesteven and biodiversity is restored
Transport	Emissions from transport are reduced throughout South Kesteven and there are more flexible and low carbon travel options
Resources	Waste is valued as a resource and circular economy principles are in practice, water efficiency and management is improved
Communities	People are more aware of the value of a clean and healthy environment and we are better adapted to a changing climate and extremes of weather
Decision Making	Climate and net zero considerations are fully embedded within South Kesteven District Council's decision making at every level

- 2.7. An executive summary of the Climate Action Strategy is included at Appendix A that sets out further detail and areas of focus relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 2.8. A Climate Action Plan is now under development, which will set out specific projects and actions to be delivered under each of the above eight Themes. This will be presented to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at an upcoming meeting in autumn 2025.

- 2.9. The Climate Action Plan will require leadership and activity across all areas of the Council for successful implementation, alongside a careful review of financial implications of all proposed projects, including any sources of grant funding or cost implication for the Council.
- 2.10. Partnership working will also be a crucial element to the successful delivery of many Climate Action projects, particularly those outside of the direct remit of the Council.
- 2.11. More widely linking into key themes within the Climate Action Strategy, a Trees and Woodland Strategy for South Kesteven was published and endorsed by Cabinet in [May 2024](#). The ambitions within this Strategy and associated action plan particularly support the climate resilience and adaptation aspirations for the district.
- 2.12. A separate Biodiversity Action Plan is also under development in 2025, following a new expectation for public authorities as set out in the Environment Act 2021. Further detail on this can be seen in an update presented to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [December 2023](#). The Biodiversity Action Plan will set out specific targets and actions the Council will pursue within its operational remit to protect, enhance and restore biodiversity for the district.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. This report is provided to update Members on the development of a Climate Action Plan in support of the existing Climate Action Strategy.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. No further options are set out within this report which is provided to update Members on the development of a Climate Action Plan in support of the existing Climate Action Strategy.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. This report is provided as an update on the Climate Action Plan.

6. Background papers

- 6.1 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21st July 2020 - [CarbonFootprintReportEnvOSC_Final.pdf](#)
- 6.2 Cabinet 7th November 2023 - [Update on Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven.pdf](#)

- 6.3 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12th December 2023 - [Update on Local Authority Biodiversity duties Report.pdf](#)
- 6.4 Cabinet 12th May 2024 - [Trees and Woodland Strategy 2024-2034.pdf](#)

7 Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix A – Climate Action Strategy Executive Summary.