



Monday, 10 November 2025

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker,
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To present to the committee the draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the content of the draft Climate Action Plan
2. Recommend to Cabinet to approve the adoption of the final Climate Action Plan, inclusive of any relevant amendments suggested by Committee members
3. Note the proposed reporting schedule on the Climate Action Plan

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? N

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 draft Climate Action Plan includes a column on the estimated cost for South Kesteven District Council of implementing the action, in order to provide a reference guide for the cost of actions. This level of detail does not consider factors such as grant funding contributions or expected payback periods on investment.
- 1.2 The Council has an existing climate change reserve of £500k for the 2025/26 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. It is expected that the Committee will continue to receive annual reports on utilisation of the climate change reserve, including detail on projects funded and expected cost, energy and carbon savings.
- 1.3 Multiple projects referred to within the draft Climate Action Plan have their own budgetary remit outside of the climate change reserve. Where a project included in the draft Climate Action Plan is in the feasibility stage, each project will need to make a budget bid on a case-by-case basis in order to progress.
- 1.4 To date a total of £406k has been committed towards climate change projects which will be funded from the reserve allocation leaving a remaining £94k for further projects.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Legal and Governance

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

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.6 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy, approved by Cabinet in 2023, sets out the Council's role in facilitating the transition to net zero carbon for the whole district of South Kesteven. The Climate Action Plan provides a workplan for the goals of the Climate Action Strategy to ensure continued progress against local and national net-zero carbon goals and associated co-benefits.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

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 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 2024/25 period reported a total carbon emissions reduction of 29.24%**, discussed in detail at a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on [23rd September 2025](#).
- 2.4. The Council has also developed and delivered several key projects which contribute to either energy and carbon reduction for council operations, contributing to a reduction in operational carbon emissions, or energy and carbon reduction for the wider district. These initiatives include:
 - Upgrading all SKDC-owned streetlights to energy efficient LEDs
 - Grantham Meres leisure centre decarbonisation, including installing a modern, upgraded heat pump heating system and additional solar PV panels to reduce running costs
 - Establishment of a climate change reserve fund for both General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts

- Publication of a Green Fleet Strategy for South Kesteven, to drive forward efficiency and decarbonisation targets for Council owned vehicles
- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation upgrades for Council owned tenanted properties, with matched support from government *Warm Homes Plan* funding since 2021
- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation upgrades for eligible private properties in South Kesteven, via support from government *Warm Homes Plan* funding since 2022

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 both within Council operations and the wider 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. These Themes are the framework for the draft Climate Action Plan presented:

- Built Environment
- Power
- Growing our Green Economy
- Natural Environment
- Transport
- Resources
- Communities
- Decision Making

2.7. The draft Climate Action Plan, included at Appendix A, provides a workplan from across service areas of the Council consisting of 64 ongoing, short or medium term actions. Each of these actions includes one or more co-benefits. It is important to recognise that, beyond the uniting theme of delivering carbon emissions reductions or adapting to severe weather, actions will also provide wider benefit for people, economic growth and the wider environment.

2.8. Each of the outlined actions includes a lead officer who is responsible for the implementation or ongoing delivery of the project. The draft Climate Action Plan also includes a framework for delivery that sets out the remit of the action. These have been defined as the following, to help distinguish the benefit of the action:

	Focus	Example
Council	Council operational activity and emissions	Project to reduce energy use in council owned buildings; reducing fuel consumption from Council owned vehicles

District	Statutory and non-statutory Council delivered services within the District	Project to reduce energy use in private properties; provision of electric vehicle charging points for car park users
Communities	Leadership, lobbying, partnership working and communications	Communications to raise awareness for residents; working alongside partners on response to flood events

- 2.9. The purpose of the draft Climate Action Plan is not only to track progress in implementing projects to drive down carbon emissions arising from direct Council operations (energy used in Council buildings, fuel used in Council vehicles), but also to set out actions for the Council's wider service delivery and external-facing work with partners to address climate change for the region. Effective monitoring and reporting of all actions will be fundamental to the success of the Action Plan.
- 2.10. It is proposed that twice yearly reporting will be completed on the Action Plan, with updates provided by the officer lead. An annual report will also be presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update on actions. Any amendments to the plan, following formal adoption of the finalised draft by Cabinet, are proposed to be made by the Director for Housing and Projects in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The South Kesteven Climate Action Plan sets how South Kesteven District Council, within its remit, will address and influence carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of extreme and challenging weather conditions. It is important that these duties are taken into account and the Climate Action Plan provides a framework for the Council to deliver on its ambitions.
- 3.2. The actions included in the Plan both address carbon emissions from Council operations (direct and indirect emissions principally from the operation of buildings and vehicles), as well as reviewing where services delivered by the Council can contribute to the goals of the Climate Action Strategy.
- 3.3. South Kesteven District Council's direct emissions are a small fraction arising from the district of South Kesteven, but our wider work in the district, as well as ongoing work to support energy efficiency improvements in homes across South Kesteven, has the potential to drive much larger reductions.

4. Other Options Considered

3.1 The Council could choose not to publish or report on the projects highlighted within the draft Climate Action Plan.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1. Publishing a Climate Action Plan helps to clarify the specific projects the Council intends to implement and continue towards its ambitions both to meet its own interim net-zero carbon target, but also to contribute to national carbon reduction targets and adaptation strategies.

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 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21st July 2020 – [CarbonFootprintReportEnvOSC_Final.pdf](#)

6.5 Cabinet 12th May 2024 - [Trees and Woodland Strategy 2024-2034.pdf](#)

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix A: Draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven