

MEDWAY CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS REPORT 2022-2023



In July 2022, Cabinet agreed to adopt the refreshed **Climate Change Action Plan** and Climate Response Communications and Engagement Strategy.

We calculated the **Council's carbon emissions for 2021/22 which were 8257.41 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e)**, a reduction of 0.54% on the previous year (2020/21). This means that emissions in 2021/22 remained below those of the pandemic year (2020/21), when many of the council's corporate buildings and community facilities were operating at reduced capacity or closed.

We **spoke with over 1275 people at events** during the summer about the refreshed climate change action plan and action they can take.

We hosted a programme of events to support **Great Big Green Week** and engage with all of our communities. Events included an eco-anxiety webinar for schools, an energy café to help people in Medway to find support for rising energy bills and a sustainability in business seminar. The eco-anxiety webinar has had a further 47 online views since the live recording.

175 entries were received for our **Poet-tree competition**, launched to mark World Planting Day and World Poetry Day. The poems, written by children in years 1 to 6 have been published on the Climate Change web pages.

71 responses were received to our survey, to find out from the public about their priorities for climate action in Medway. A positive 84% agree that their actions can help tackle climate change and over half of respondents are aware that Medway Council has a Climate Change Action Plan. The results of the survey have been published to the climate change webpages and it is intended that they will inform future scale engagement activities in 2024.

Based on the results of the survey we have created new progress reporting pages on our climate change webpages so that all updates are in one place.

The **Climate Change newsletter** has been issued regularly and in the last year the number of subscribers has more than doubled to 1,921 which means that our messages are reaching more people.

We launched a **#smallchanges campaign on social media**. We posted 68 times across various platforms. 30.8K people viewed the posts and 802 people interacted with our posts! Our most popular post was #MeatlessMonday on Instagram, with 338 likes.

A Sustainable Warmth Officer was appointed at the end of June to improve the way the Council communicates about discount and energy grant schemes available to residents. **We supported 141 residents to apply for grants to make their homes more energy efficient.**

In partnership with Kent County Council and other Kent districts, we supported **Solar Together Kent** for a second year. The group buying scheme enables homeowners and businesses to install solar panels at a reduced price using pre-vetted and approved installers. **105 properties had solar panels or batteries installed** which is five times as many as the previous round. It is expected that this will save 90 tCO₂ across all installs in the first year.





Residents are now able to donate unwanted reusable items such as furniture, fridges, books, tools and homeware to the Medway charity, **Gillingham Street Angels**, at our 3 Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

18 businesses have signed up to the **Refill scheme** to provide residents and visitors to Medway with somewhere to refill their bottles with free tap water. In total, 66 businesses in Medway now support the scheme which helps to reduce single use plastic.

In June, a **new water fountain** was installed at Riverside Country Park, Rainham using funds from the 2022 Sea-Change Coastal Fountain Fund to help reduce the use of single use plastic.



We have continued to support Medway's schools with climate action. **A schools climate change network** has been set up and meets the second week of each term to share best practice.

36 school classes took part in our **COP27 Walk to Egypt challenge**. It is estimated that nearly 5 tCO₂e was saved by walking 17,665.7 miles rather than travelling by car. This was 3,805.33 miles more than the schools walked during the COP26 Walk to Edinburgh challenge in 2021.

We have continued to promote the **Walk on Wednesday "WOW"** initiative. 5,328 pupils took part in 2022-23 compared to 3,000 in 2021-22, accounting for 20% of all primary school children in Medway.

9 schools in Medway collected awards for their active travel, recycling and other environmental achievements at the **KM Green School Awards** in 2022.

The **Kent and Medway Workplace Wellbeing Award** has been updated to include new climate change pledges. 7 businesses have made a total of 15 environmental pledges as part of their award.

We have worked with Kent County Council to continue to support businesses to **trial an electric vehicle (EV)** for free for 2 months. This year 13 Medway businesses took part meaning that a total of 26 businesses have been supported to trial an EV.

In August 2022, the **Four Elms Hill Air Quality Action Plan** was approved for adoption by the Cabinet. We have also been working with the University of Kent on a project to reduce idling in the Rainham Air Quality Management Area. We held 2 workshops with schools and the local community about the importance of signs in changing behaviours. We asked the groups to produce wording for 1 temporary roadside sign. 2 signs, produced by the University, have now been installed and work is underway with volunteers to measure how effective they are at reducing idling. The community led sign will be installed in May 2023.

In November, we submitted an updated **Bus Service Improvement Plan** to the Department for Transport and conversations have continued with our local bus operators on the long term ambition of ultra-low emission vehicle fleets.

We made **changes to our gritting fleet** so that we could use pre-wetted salt, instead of traditional dry salt, to grit Medway's major roads in Winter. We can use 20% less pre-wetted salt than traditional salt to do the same job, which means we ordered less and reduced the amount of HGV deliveries to our salt store. This resulted in a carbon saving.





Phase One of our **Refit Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Programme** has continued across 11 Council owned buildings. Measures include:

- installing energy efficient LED lights
- updating the showers and urinals at Medway Park to make them more water efficient
- installing water saving devices at Gun Wharf and The Central Theatre
- installing a new air handling unit and control at Gun Wharf to heat and cool the air more efficiently
- replacing boilers with more energy efficient boilers and heat pumps across 5 buildings. This includes Lordswood Library, The Brook Theatre and The Central Theatre
- installing electric vehicle charging points at Gun Wharf
- installing solar panels at Medway Crematorium, Medway Park, Rochester Adult Education and The Central Theatre. Phase one works are anticipated to be complete by Spring 2023.



We completed an exercise to understand the energy rating of all Council owned homes. We also worked out how much it will cost to retrofit all council owned homes to EPC C rating by 2030. This information helped to support our successful bid to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero for more than **£1million of Social Housing Decarbonisation Funds** to improve the energy efficiency ratings of 190 council homes. Work will begin in 2023.

20,359 street lights have been converted to energy efficient LED's (light emitting diodes) as part of our streetlighting improvement programme. By replacing with LED's and dimming the lights, when necessary, Medway's streetlights have used 36% less energy giving a carbon saving of 64 tCO₂e. The programme is now substantially complete.



We have been trialling the use of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil as an alternative to diesel within our **Refuse Collection Vehicle fleet** without impact on vehicle operation or service delivery. This switch has the potential to deliver reductions in the fleet's current carbon emissions by up to 90% and Nitrous Oxides emissions by up to 69% which will help to improve Medway's air quality and reduce service impact upon the environment.

We have **one new electric van** for delivering council services.

20 7kW electric vehicle charge points have been installed at Gun Wharf for use by Council staff and to support our ambitions to switch to an electric fleet.

11 staff have completed Carbon Literacy Training delivered by the Centre for Alternative Technology's Zero Carbon Britain (ZCB).

We **hosted 5 interns from the University of Kent** during the Summer to undertake work to support the climate change action plan. A 6-month work industry placement student was also appointed.

A **Climate Change volunteering day** for staff has been launched to support the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan. A total of 17 volunteer hours on the community allotment at Fort Amherst.





Several **successful funding bids** have been submitted in 2022/23.

These include:

- **£65,000 from the Local Government Association** via a consortium to support a Behavioural Insight project to encourage homeowners to adopt no cost behaviours to reduce their energy consumption, fuel bills and greenhouse gas emissions
- **£76,000 awarded from BEIS** for a techno economic feasibility study for a heat network
- **£115,668.00 from the Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF)** for 150 trees to be planted, across the 2022/23 and 2023/24 planting seasons, as replacements for trees lost on the highway
- **£5000 funding bid from Rochester Riverside** to Medway Adult Education (MAE)'s Dementia Friendly Gardening Club and The Rotary to create an urban community gardening space at the front of the Rochester Community Hub as well 2 potential locations on the High Street
- **£279,533 from DEFRA** through the Air Quality Grant Programme to deliver real time traffic monitoring and data modelling to develop traffic management interventions that will reduce air pollution
- **£1,023,830.09 from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero** through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve energy ratings in council housing stock.
- **£85,000 from the Levelling Up Parks Fund** to deliver improvements including tree planting at Luton Millennium Green.
- **£166,440 from BEIS Heat Network Delivery Unit** for a detailed study for a River Source Heat Network

We have continued to promote the **Medway Tree Fund**. Anyone living, visiting, or working in Medway can donate towards the next generation of trees in Medway. £1,125 has been donated since the fund was launched in 2020.

Medway Adult Education and Rainham Eco-Hub have worked together to add **2 edible-trail spots** at Riverside Country Park and Rainham Precinct.

The **Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)** have agreed to sustainable drainage conditions on 33 applications submitted since 1 April 2022.



You can sign up to our newsletter and learn about climate change action in Medway by visiting:

medway.gov.uk/climatechange

You can also follow us on

 @MedwayClimateChange  @M_ClimateChange

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