

NET ZERO 2030 UPDATE - MARCH 2021

Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee - 16 March 2021

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

Status: For Information

Also considered by:

N/A

Key Decision: No

This reports support the Key Aim of The Council's commitment to Net Zero 2030.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

Contact Officer(s): Helen French, Ext. 7357; Margaret Carr, Ext 7341; Naiomi Sargant, Ext.7122

Recommendation to Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee:

To note this update report for information.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council have committed to working towards achieving Net Zero emissions by 2030 on Council assets and services.
- 2 It has also been agreed that the Council will be a "community leader" and encourage low carbon measures across the District through education, best practice, incentives, policy and opportunities. This includes working collaboratively with Kent County Council (KCC), Parish and Town Councils, Local Interest Group and the Local Government Association.
- 3 This report provides a brief update on the progress to achieve the Net Zero 2030 Actions.

Net Zero 2030 Actions and Project Update

- 4 Officers continue to work on delivering the Net Zero 2030 actions. The Net Zero ambition is relevant for all aspects of the Council and the Officer Working Group continues to identify how the actions will be achieved and monitor progress.
- 5 This report provides a summary of a selection of the ongoing projects.

Net Zero 2030 Website

- 6 Work has started on revising the Net Zero 2030 webpages on the Council's website. The webpages will include:
 - An introductory video setting out the Net Zero 2030 commitment and the Council's ambitions
 - The agreed Net Zero 2030 actions
 - Information on current projects and opportunities for the community to get involved
- 7 A new email address has also been set up for the Net Zero work - netzero2030@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Partnership working

- 8 Officers and Members have had discussions with various organisations to strengthen existing partnerships and create new working relationships with regards to Net Zero 2030. Organisations such as:
 - North West Kent Countryside Partnership (NWKCP)
 - KCC Transport Innovations Team
 - Kent Wildlife Trust
 - Kent Climate Change Network
 - Rural Landowners Forum
 - Sevenoaks District Business Board
- 9 We will continue to liaise with other organisations to deliver Net Zero projects. Including through the Town and Parish Forum, with local community groups and with local businesses.

- 10 Any organisations, landowners or community groups who are interested in partnering with the Council to deliver the Net Zero 2030 commitment are encouraged to contact us via netzero2030@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emission Strategy

- 11 The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emission Strategy (ELES) was produced by Kent County Council during 2020 and endorsed by Cabinet in December 2020.
- 12 The Strategy sets out how Kent County Council, in partnership with Medway Council and the Kent district councils, will respond to the UK climate emergency and drive clean, resilient economic recovery across the county.
- 13 Using an evidence based approach, the strategy identifies 10 priority actions to promote the development of an affordable, clean and secure energy supply for the county, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, eliminate poor air quality and reduce fuel poverty.
- 14 An Implementation Plan is being drafted by KCC to support the delivery of the ELES. The Implementation Plan compliments the Council's own Net Zero 2030 work including through:
- Identifying specific actions to achieve a net-zero public sector estate by 2030
 - Developing planning policies to encourage low carbon communities, buildings and travel
 - Encouraging sustainable staff travel policies that reduce the need to travel, encourage modal shift or increase car sharing
 - Developing plans to transition public sector fleets to ultra-low emission vehicles and encourage the private transport sector to do the same
 - Supporting households to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy bills and tackle fuel poverty
 - Investigating and supporting suitable renewable energy opportunities.

Staff Travel Plan

- 15 Work has begun to update the existing Staff Travel Plan. The Plan will set out how the Council will support sustainable staff travel through reducing the need to travel and encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes. Previously this has included a Cycle to Work Scheme, car sharing and flexible working opportunities.
- 16 The new Travel Plan will take account of changing working patterns as a result of Covid-19 as well as new and improved technological opportunities such as electric bikes and electric vehicles.

Low Emission and Electric Vehicle Strategy

- 17 Officers are currently drafting a Low Emission and Electric Vehicle strategy that will set out options to reduce carbon emissions from the Council vehicle fleet. The strategy will also include details of how the Council will support the electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the District.
- 18 We continue to work with representatives from the Transport Innovations Team at Kent County Council to discuss potential opportunities for joint working.

Small Scale Planting

- 19 We are working with North West Kent Countryside Partnership (NWKCP) towards delivering small-scale planting in the District to achieve some carbon sequestration, particularly in more built up areas. This includes exploring planting of tiny forests, creating networks of hedgerows and wildflower planting. These projects can create a network which will provide many ecological and environmental benefits, including contributing towards reaching net zero by 2030.

National Wildlife Week

- 20 Officers have been working with the North West Kent Countryside Partnership to develop activities and interactive material for National Wildlife Week in April 2021. The activities will help communities to learn more about the importance of biodiversity, the effects of climate change on the natural environment and ways in which we can all help to create and improve habitats.

Next Steps

- 21 Officers will continue to assess and implement the delivery projects to and investigate new opportunities to achieve the Net Zero 2030 actions.
- 22 Regular update reports on the Net Zero 2030 work will be provided for members via the Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

The Council have made a commitment to Net Zero 2030.

Key Implications

Financial

Funding for the Net Zero 2030 commitment will be met from existing budgets.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

No legal implications have been identified.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

The Council have committed to Net Zero 2030 and have identified actions to help achieve this goal. We are currently making good progress to achieve the actions within the agreed timescales.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services