

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD

4 December 2012

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 CLIMATE LOCAL KENT COMMITMENT

Climate Local is a Local Government Association initiative to drive, inspire and support council action on a changing climate. This report outlines the purpose of the new initiative and introduces and explains the Climate Local Kent Commitment signed by the Kent Forum and what this means for Tonbridge and Malling.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Climate Local Initiative succeeds the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change which the Council signed up to in 2007 and which led to the development of the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2008-2011). The initiative provides a framework for councils that can reflect local priorities and opportunities for action on climate change, through, for example, saving on their energy bills, generating income from renewable energy and attracting new jobs and investment in 'green' industries.
- 1.1.2 It consists of a Climate Local Commitment for councils to sign up to - either individually or collectively – to demonstrate their commitment to addressing climate change. By signing the commitment, councils will be asked to set out what actions they intend to undertake locally to help reduce carbon emissions and respond to changes in the climate within their own operations, services and with the local community.

1.2 Climate Local Kent Commitment - introduction

- 1.2.1 In response to the Local Government initiative, Kent County Council (KCC) has developed a collective agreement for the Kent districts called 'Climate Local Kent'.
- 1.2.2 The Commitment was reported to the Kent Forum on 20th July 2012 and is attached as Annex 1 to this report. This is the standard commitment prepared by the Local Government Association – it has not been tailored specifically for Kent. As highlighted in this report, the Commitment is a broad framework within which

locally-owned and determined commitments and actions to reduce carbon emissions and to manage climate impacts can be set. The decision was taken by KCC to utilise the targets in the Kent Environment Strategy for Climate Local Kent.

- 1.2.3 The Borough Council has been consulted informally at officer level on draft Climate Local Kent targets and commitments. The adopted version (see Annex 2 to this report) has reflected many of our suggested changes. In terms of monitoring the targets, it is proposed by KCC that this is undertaken on a six monthly basis through the Kent Forum and Kent Joint Chief Executives group.
- 1.2.4 The Climate Local Kent Commitment was launched and formally signed by Paul Carter, Chairman of the Kent Forum and Leader of KCC, on 18th September 2012 at the Kent Environment Strategy Conference.

1.3 Climate Local Kent – implications for Tonbridge and Malling

- 1.3.1 The next stage in the process involves the Kent districts ratifying the Climate Local Kent Commitment, which is the principal reason for this report. KCC has set a deadline of achieving this by 30th March 2013.
- 1.3.2 The Commitment contains 11 Climate Local Kent targets. Responsibility for the delivery of these targets will fall to several different agencies including KCC, the Environment Agency, the water companies and local authorities.
- 1.3.3 Essentially, Climate Local Kent is not introducing anything new. In some respects it is replicating legally binding commitments identified in primary legislation e.g. the target of a 34% reduction in emissions by 2020 is taken from the Government's Carbon Budgets. These Carbon Budgets are legally binding five year plans which set the path for achieving the target in the Climate Change Act 2008 of reducing the UK's greenhouse gas emissions to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. The value of the Commitment is that it will enable the Kent districts and KCC to work collectively together to maximise the opportunities and benefits of action on climate change for the benefit of local residents and business. With this in mind, being part of the collective commitment could potentially add value to what the Council is currently doing in respect of taking action on climate change through, for example, learning from experiences and achievements of other districts in Kent.
- 1.3.4 The Borough Council therefore has a role to play in helping to deliver some of these targets. However, given the work already being undertaken on climate change issues, assisting with the delivery of these targets is not seen to necessitate the investment of any additional resources or any significant changes to the activities currently being undertaken. For example, the Council is already part of the Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership which has been established to help residents in our local communities benefit from the Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation which are aimed at improving the energy efficiency, and therefore lowering CO₂ emissions, of existing residential stock.

1.3.5 The Commitment refers to the setting of local targets. It is suggested that, for the time being, this matter is kept under review. It may well be, for example, that a range of county-level targets, in addition to those included in Annex 2, could be adopted that districts could then sign up to if they wish rather than each district developing their own, potentially different local targets. Such an approach could achieve greater county-wide consistency .

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 Climate Local Kent is not a legally binding commitment so there are no legal implications arising from this report.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 There are no additional costs involved in ratifying and being part of the Climate Local Kent commitment. The need to consider any future initiatives or joint actions which might come forward will be assessed on their individual merits.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 There are no risks involved in ratifying the Climate Local Kent Commitment.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That the Climate Local Kent Commitment, as set out in Annex 1, and the Climate Local Kent targets, as set out in Annex 2, **BE RATIFIED**.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

None

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Chief Executive

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The subject matter of the report and the recommendation does not have implications for different groups in the community.

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	The subject matter does not relate to the issue of equality
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		The content of this report does not impact on this or provide an opportunity to do so.

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.