

Draft Climate Change Strategy / Draft Action Plan

Consultation Summary

Overall, the majority (72%) of respondents were pleased with the Climate Change strategy and its contribution towards the Council's aspiration of carbon neutrality by 2030. Respondents were encouraged by the seriousness with which the Council approached the issue and its willingness to work with new partners and to adopt new approaches.

Initiatives which respondents were encouraged to see included the commitment to reducing chemical usage by the Council across its estates; the creation of a wildflower meadow in Leybourne; the intention to strengthen public transport through a proposed bus partnership; the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit in Tonbridge and the creation of a dedicated climate change page on the Council's website.

The Council was pleased to receive a large number of constructive comments from respondents who put forward suggestions ranging from minor amendments to additional initiatives that the Council might adopt. Particular thanks goes to those who highlighted new material, flagged up individual cases in the Borough and offered their services to the Council to help tackle climate change.

- Biodiversity and the wider local environment is extremely important to local people and this concern was reflected across many of the responses. While people were pleased to see the specific cases that were highlighted in the strategy and action plan, a number of responses expressed interest in a number of local sites and also provided suggestions relating to initiatives such as tree planting and bio diversification across a number of sites around the Borough. Other respondents wanted to see specific details in relation to certain initiatives such as the particularities of proposed landscaping work on verges and other Council owned land.

- A few respondents wanted more details and a wider program relating to renewable energy creation (solar, wind etc.) in the Borough. This related to the designation of sites for this use, the process of securing private sector funding and the financial incentives that might make this happen.
- There was consensus across respondents that electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure across Council owned car parks will be crucial in assisting efforts at achieving carbon neutrality across the Borough.
- A few respondents queried the timeframe for the phasing out of the use of boilers in new development across the Borough. The Council committed to meeting the governments deadline of 2025, but the respondents wanted to know why it wasn't possible to phase them out now.
- There were a few concerns about the current recycling coverage in the Borough, with resident respondents asking for more items to be covered by the local collection. Furthermore, a couple of respondents offered advice relating to the reusing of recyclable material in the local area.
- One respondent was concerned that the housing developments planned in the Borough would have a negative impact on the Council's aspiration of being carbon neutral by 2030. However, a number of respondents were interested in how the Council could enforce high environmental/low-carbon standards on private developers operating in the Borough.
- Several respondents would have preferred to see a greater focus on cycling and its supporting infrastructure in the draft. Respondents put forward suggestions relating to routes, uptake initiatives and potential sites for bike racks.

- A couple of respondents asked for greater clarity and detail on how the local taxi fleet might be encouraged to move from a petrol diesel inventory to one comprised of electric vehicles. This concern also extended to the vehicles used by Council partners and contractors.
- A couple of respondents wanted to see more clarification relating to the scale of the bus partnership scheme. There were questions about how the Council would work with KCC, what the coverage and frequency of the service would be and where the funding for the scheme would originate.
- The draft outlined the Council's plan to create a dedicated climate change page on its website, an initiative that was well received by respondents. There were a couple of responses concerned that the webpage would lack the number of visitors to provide a successful source of information for local people. A couple of respondents suggested ways in which the circulation and traffic would be higher and how the page should be marketed.
- A number of responses related to a lack of full definitions for topics covered in the draft. These related to a small number of subjects including carbon neutrality, various government legislations covering the flexibility of adopting ultra-low-carbon standards in planning, and the criteria of sustainable development. The most common of these related to a criteria to measure and designate the types of carbon pollution and responses. A number of respondents wanted to see the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP) referenced and the evidence and measurement base written around it. In a couple of cases respondents wanted the Council to adhere to a strict timetable for hitting carbon reduction targets and wider issues relating to the GHGP and other international programs and standards.
- Finally, there were a number of suggestions from respondents for measures/initiatives which could be implemented immediately or in the near

future. These suggestions included: the appointment of 'Climate Change Champions' from major local businesses who would work with the Council in a private/public partnership to meet carbon neutral targets; the creation of a dedicated Council member for Climate Change who would coordinate a dedicated response and program aimed at CN2030; and a revision of the Local Plan to place the subject of climate change more centrally.

Overall, the Council was very grateful for the number, depth and constructiveness of the comments received in the consultation.