

4 Progress to date

4.1 TMBC Estate

4.1.1 Over the last 12-22 months, significant progress has been made investing in renewable and decarbonising technologies across Council facilities, including solar panels and air source heat pumps (ASHP).

4.1.2 Completed projects include the following:

LOCATION	PROJECT DETAIL	PROJECT COST	FUNDING SOURCE	ESTIMATED MWh GENERATED (ANNUAL)	ESTIMATED SAVINGS/ BENEFITS
Tonbridge Pool	149 solar panels installed	£106,290	TMBC	65	£13,175 per year
Tonbridge Pool	150 LED fittings installed	£21,101	TMBC	N/A	£7,100 per year
Larkfield Leisure Centre	450 solar panels installed (in addition to 190 existing)	£316,100	Swimming Pool Support Fund	215	£43,581 per year
Larkfield Leisure Centre	340 LED fittings installed	£51,780	Swimming Pool Support Fund	N/A	£13,950 per year
Larkfield Leisure Centre	Increased roof insulation above changing areas	£122,789	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	N/A	Improved thermal efficiency and reduced energy usage

4.1.3 The following projects are currently in progress with grant funding through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS):

LOCATION	PROJECT DETAIL	TMBC FUNDING	PSDS FUNDING	DELIVERY	ESTIMATED ANNUAL CARBON SAVINGS
Larkfield Leisure Centre	ASHP and new air handling unit to serve the fitness pool, replacing gas boilers	£525,000	£1,164,760	Completion by April 2026	185 tonnes CO ₂ e
Poult Wood Golf Centre	ASHP replacing oil-fired boilers in clubhouse	£40,000	£209,690	Works to commence 2026	37 tonnes CO ₂ e

4.1.4 Looking ahead, the replacement Angel Centre continues to be a key priority for the Council with a sustainable and cost effective design targeting BREEAM 'excellent' standard and incorporating heat pumps and solar panels.

4.2 Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers

4.2.1 Building on the 54 EV chargers already installed, we are working with the supplier to commission the last 14 additional chargers which are hopefully due for completion by next month.

4.3 Biodiversity

4.3.1 A wide range of conservation and biodiversity initiatives have taken place across the Borough, including tree and wildflower planting, pond creation and maintenance, invasive species removal, habitat enhancements, and ecological

surveys, supported by volunteer training, equipment purchases, and public engagement through national wildlife events.

4.4 Home energy reduction

4.4.1 In addition to the July 2025 committee report, members should note the Cabinet Decision Notice (30 June 2025) declining Warm Homes: Local Grant funding due to reputational and financial risk, with the Government to be advised that, while the Council supports home improvements, the scheme was too high risk. Targeted promotion of the Solar Together scheme has delivered successful installations:

- Autumn 2024: 15 PV and 13 battery installations, estimated Year 1 CO2 savings of 13,966kg, total investment £95,682.
- Spring 2025: 38 registrants accepted proposals, 8 have withdrawn, and 9 installations have been completed to date.

4.4.2 An air source heat pump group buying scheme, administered similarly to the Solar Together scheme, is currently being explored.

4.5 Green Business Grant

4.5.1 Between 2023 and 2025, 18 businesses benefited from the Green Business Grant Scheme, which provides capital grants to help local businesses reduce their carbon footprint. Projects included solar panels, air source heat pumps, and EV charging points. In the current financial year, four further projects in Tonbridge, Kings Hill, and East Malling have been offered support and have until the end of the financial year to complete their works.

4.6 Waste

4.6.1 Members will be aware of the current procurement process for the new Waste Contract. Environmental considerations have been incorporated into the preparation of the tender documents, including a proposal for the future use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). Furthermore, environmental considerations form part of the formal tender evaluation criteria.

4.6.2 Whilst recycling rates in the Borough remain as one of the highest in Kent, it is recognised that recycling rates over the last few years have stalled, a trend that has been reflected at both a local and national level. Officers have been working in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Waste and Technical Services to drive this rate up, and have developed and instigated a 'Waste Marketing Programme Action Plan'. Working across Waste Services and our Media Team the Plan covers a 12-month period and sets out a range of initiatives with an aim to raise awareness, educate and promote recycling opportunities in the borough.

Initiatives include a targeted food waste campaign, that is currently in progress, attendance at community events, a review of our waste web site pages and other targeted campaigns including on Garden Waste and residents Duty of Care responsibilities.

5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 5.1 Activities undertaken in relation to climate change are funded, or have been completed using funding, grant monies and value for money assessments previously agreed with the relevant service.

6 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 TMBC has committed to the aspiration of carbon neutral by 2030. Whilst this timescale will no longer be applicable within the landscape of Local Government Reorganisation, there is reputational risk of failing to act on the previously set aspiration.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 None

8 Implementation

- 8.1 Climate change activity is delivered across all council services with support from the Climate Change Officer as required.

9 Cross Cutting Issues

- 9.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 9.1.1 Some impact on reducing emissions in support of carbon neutral by 2030 or enhancing the natural environment.

- 9.1.2 Climate change advice has been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations within this report.

- 9.2 Equalities and Diversity

- 9.2.1 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.

- 9.3 Other If Relevant

- Business Continuity / Resilience

- 9.3.1 Activity on climate change supports business continuity and resilience. By planning for and adapting to climate impacts, the council can maintain essential services, protect assets and ensure operational stability.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	None