

These notes are an overview of some of the projects and initiatives in each district around the priority themes of the [Kent Environment Strategy](#). Although not a comprehensive reflection of all activity in the area, this note aims to provide an overall picture of the priorities and pressures for delivery of the strategy as well as current and future project development. For background information please also see [Climate Change: A Guide for Kent's Decision Makers](#).

Living within Our Environmental Limits

Energy Efficiency and Housing in Dartford

Homes in Dartford: 39,000

Tenure: 74% owner occupied, 11% Council Properties, 11% private rented, 3% registered social landlords, 1.0% unobtainable

Source: Dartford Private Sector House Condition Survey 2008

Dartford Private Sector House Condition Survey 2008 reported that the average SAP rating for housing in the Borough at that time was measured at 61. The SAP rating for the Council's own housing stock was reported as 71.5 for 2011/12

There are still issues which can be addressed in order to improve efficiency levels further; there are around 25,000 homes with loft insulation below 200mm and 12,000 unfilled cavity walls. In addition, the district also has 6,500 solid wall properties, which are much harder to treat due to the increased cost and invasiveness of the work required.

Fully insulating all the homes in Dartford could cost in the region of £43m - £101m, but could save residents approximately £5.8m per year on their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by 24,000 tonnes per year.



The Council has a duty under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 to promote energy efficiency improvement in the borough and continues to work in partnership with others to fulfil this. For example:

The Warm Front Scheme provides heating and insulation improvements to households on certain income related benefits living in properties that are poorly insulated and/or do not have a working central heating system and qualifying households can get improvements worth up to £3500 (£6000 where oil central heating and other alternative technologies are recommended). From April 2011 to March 2012 Dartford Borough Council have supported delivery of 146 referrals for measures and assisted 54 with £156,892 Warm Front investment brought into the district.

Dartford Borough Council is also working in partnership with Aran Services to provide a cavity wall and loft insulation scheme to residents and external wall

insulation is also being promoted. CERT funding is supporting this scheme and Warm Front referrals are also being made. In the first week of the scheme 12 referrals have been made for insulation measures.

The Green Deal launches nationally from October 2012 and the government hopes it will enable many households and businesses to improve the energy efficiency of their properties. In addition, the new energy company obligation (ECO) will focus on those householders who cannot achieve significant energy savings without an additional or different measure of support. **The Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership** has been formed to communicate the Green Deal and ECO to residents, to support SMEs to take advantage of any new business opportunities arising from the Green Deal and to build the evidence base across Kent. This will enable a successful partnership with a Green Deal provider that draws in as much ECO for Kent as possible.

Planning for Low Carbon

For new development Dartford Borough Council have a minimising carbon emissions planning policy in the Core Strategy, which sets out local requirements for housing and non residential development. Since adoption of the Core Strategy planning applications are determined taking into account the scheme's ability in meeting the local policy requirements.

Schools Activity

Eco-Schools is an international award programme that helps schools to embed environmental principles and save money on utility bills. Schools work towards gaining one of three internationally recognised awards – Bronze, Silver and the Green Flag award, which symbolises excellence in the field of environmental activity.

Achievement is through following a simple seven-step process incorporating a variety of environmental themes, ranging from litter and waste to healthy living and biodiversity.

In Dartford 11 schools have received bronze awards, 12 silver and one has obtained the highest Green Flag award. There are 12 other schools registered in the borough with 13 unregistered.

Wilmington grammar School for Boys has implemented a lighting control project.

For further information on projects in your area please log on to

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/environment_and_climate_change/environment_policy_and_targets/renewable_energy_projects.aspx



Meeting the Climate Change Challenge

Supporting Businesses

Kent County Council's South East Business Carbon Hub provides a comprehensive range of free environmental services for businesses. There are currently over 950 businesses registered on the Hub, approximately 28 of which are based in Dartford. The team has been supporting businesses in measuring

their carbon footprints, implementing environmental management systems, providing sustainable transport advice, eco-driving lessons and running frequent workshops and online webinars.

At the beginning of 2011 the Steps to Environmental Management (STEM) scheme was launched. STEM is a free step-by-step approach for businesses seeking to put into practice a robust system to reduce their environmental impacts and receive certification. So far, over 360 businesses have achieved the first level of STEM.

The South East Business Carbon Hub and STEM are part funded by the South East ERDF Competitiveness Programme 2007-13 and Kent County Council.

Dartford Borough Council's Carbon Management Plan

Dartford Borough Council has had a carbon management plan in place since 2009 with a target of reducing emissions by 35% by 2012 from a 2007 baseline. In the first two years of the plan DBC have put measures into their corporate properties including:

- Loft and pipework insulation
- Boiler optimisation
- Lighting replacement and controls
- Systems Link audit billing system
- Movement sensors and timers
- Server virtualisation

These have resulted in significant savings as highlighted in the latest round of greenhouse gas reporting below (for further information on emissions reporting in local authorities visit the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) [website](#)).

Dartford GHG Emissions data for period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011			
Tonnes of CO ₂ e			
	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Direct emissions	1056	1175	1468
Indirect Energy	1740	2159	1820
Other Energy	718	884	851
Total gross emissions	3514	4218	4139
Carbon offsets	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Green Tariff	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Total annual emissions	3514	4218	4139

Renewable Energy Opportunities

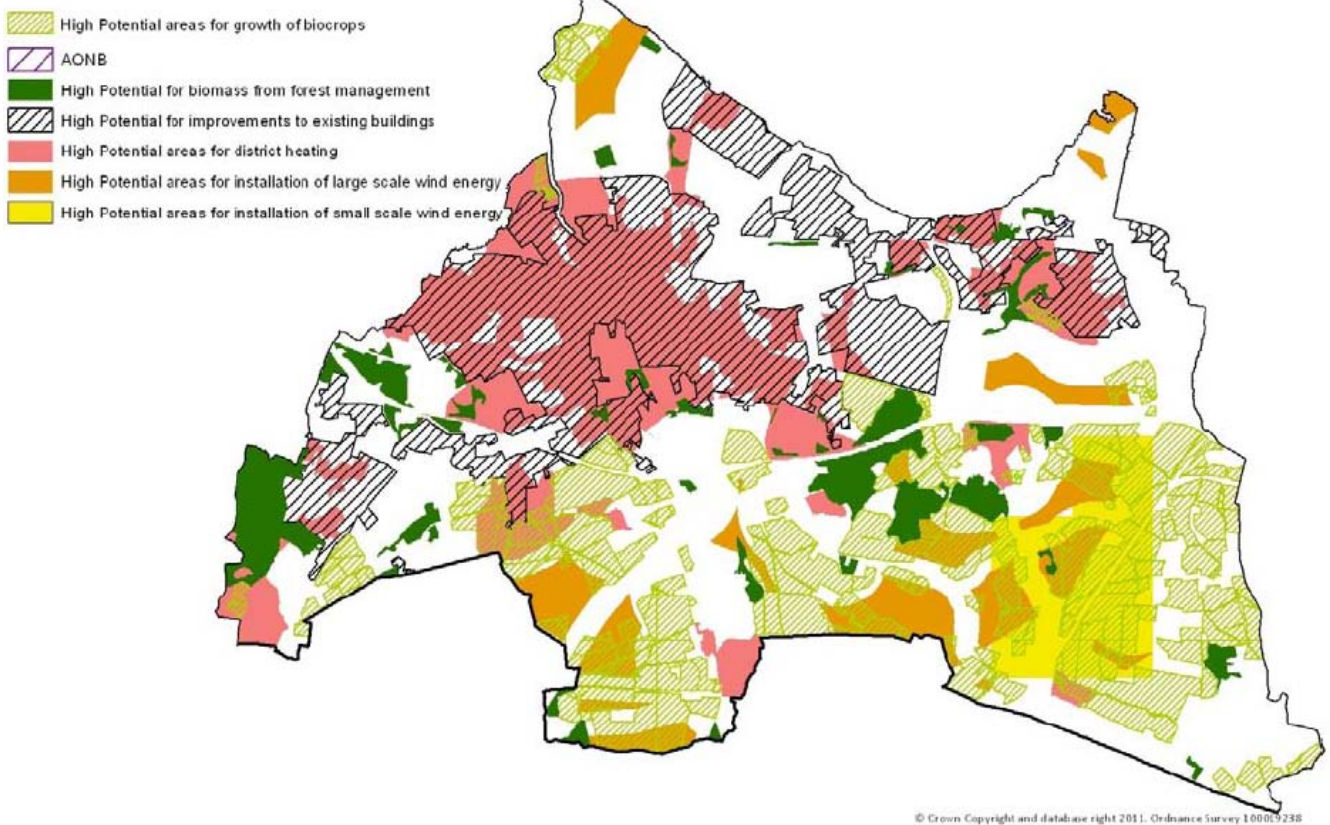
Consultants AECOM were commissioned by the County Council to undertake a renewable energy resource and opportunity study for Kent. This study builds on work done at a regional level and seeks to test and confirm the availability of renewable resources in the County. It further considers the likelihood of these resources being developed, the role of different partners in their delivery and the wider benefits which can accrue from their deployment. The study is accompanied by a proposed action plan which can assist the development of a low carbon and renewable energy strategy for Kent. This will be further developed over the coming months.

The map below shows energy opportunities for Dartford and can help to identify where there may be potential for the development of renewable energy projects. It is important to note that this is purely

based on the potential resource identified by AECOM and does not in any way reflect the council's position on the deployment of technologies.

The housing stock owned by Dartford Borough Council has benefitted from a number of initiatives such as 280 KWP of solar PV installed including systems for 116 houses on the Tree Estate. In addition a 100KWP system has been fitted to Crusador Court, a sheltered scheme in Temple Hill, Dartford. There are also systems on 35 individual properties and three on communal systems. Dartford Borough Council is benefitting from the Feed in Tariff for these installations, providing an income stream for the authority.

Energy Opportunities Map Dartford



Travel and Transport

There are a wide range of initiatives currently underway in the Borough, funded through a variety of schemes.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund

Kent has secured £2.3 million over four years from 2011/12 to fund projects that cut transport carbon and create economic growth.

Dartford will benefit from:

- Station Travel Plan funding.
- Ongoing development of Smartcard ticketing technology.

Schools engagement

- Support for a range of walk to school initiatives including Walking Buses, Walk on Wednesday (WoW) and Active Bug.

- Roll out of Kent Rider + National Standard Cycle training with grant funding from Department for Transport.
- Support for school travel plans.
- Targeted road safety and sustainability awareness packages e.g. Small Steps and Zig Zag parking.

Workplace engagement

- Development of New Ways 2 Work, a collaborative partnership with Kent Business to support work place travel plans and sustainable travel choices.

Monitoring the impacts of severe weather in Kent

Dartford Borough Council are partners in the Severe Weather Impacts Monitoring System (SWIMS), an innovative online tool developed by Kent partners to measure how we are impacted by, and responding to, severe weather events. It provides a decision-support tool, informing risk management and business continuity as well as long term planning. Further details are available at www.kent.gov.uk/SWIMS.

The system is a key activity within the Kent Adaptation Action Plan, developed and adopted across Kent partners. The plan won the Improvement and Efficiency South East award for Progress through Innovation for the Kent Climate Change Network. On-going monitoring of progress across Kent is available on our [webpages](#).



Photograph c/o Duncan Dwinell

Valuing our Natural Environment

Understanding the Natural Economy

The Natural Environment White Paper, published by Defra at the end of June 2011, outlines the Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years. Much like Theme 3 of the Kent Environment Strategy, the White Paper recognises that a healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. One initiative announced by the White Paper was the establishment of Local Nature Partnerships, which represent a more holistic view of the natural environment and recognise the wider social and economic benefits biodiversity brings.

The Kent Biodiversity Partnership has recently secured £27,000 of capacity building funding from Defra to develop a Local Nature Partnership, which will focus on engaging additional partners (for example from the business and health sectors) and establishing a vision and set of targets for the natural environment that also recognise the potential for social and economic benefits.

This partnership will act as a framework for KES theme 3 and the continuation of its aim and objectives past the timeframe of the strategy.

Countryside Access

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Management

The Countryside Access Service (CAS) will continue to manage and maintain the 127km of public rights of way in Dartford, responding to the significant correspondence and prioritising according to public need. The popular PRoW network provides access to Kent's iconic countryside, boosting the rural economy through tourism and improving the health of residents.



City to Sea/Bridge Development

The Countryside Access Service will continue to work with partners to deliver a shared use route for pedestrians and cyclists alongside the Thames through Dartford and Gravesham. Parts of this involve upgrading of existing routes and other parts will be completed through the development and regeneration of former industrial sites. Links will also be established to the Bridge Development to provide leisure and commuter routes for residents.

Explore Kent

In 2012, Explore Kent will support and promote 400 guided walks/health walks in Dartford. People can find and book a walk on the [Explore Kent website](#) making it easy for people to get out and walk more. Explore Kent also helped mark and celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in Dartford by promoting a weekend of walks during the planned Diamond Jubilee Walking Festival.

Cycling

Explore Kent organised and promoted Explore Kent Bike Week in July. Consisting of a series of guided bike rides along off-road cycle routes this event catered for all ages and abilities and ran during the school holidays to encourage families to take part. This event capitalised on the buzz, hype and an increased motivation to go out cycling as a result of the launch of Cyclopark, B'SkyB's Skyride in Kent, and the 2012 Olympics.

Common Land and Village Greens

The Countryside Access Service continues to work on the much needed task of updating the Registers of Common Land and Village Greens, as part of the pilot implementation of new provisions contained in the Commons Act 2006. Kent is one of seven pilot areas currently using the new legislation ahead of the proposed national implementation. The Countryside Access Service also continues deal with a high level of activity in relation to complex and often emotive applications to register land as a new village green.

BOAs (Biodiversity Opportunity Areas)

BOAs reflect targets in the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). They indicate where we want to focus our work to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits offering the best opportunities for establishing large habitat areas and/or networks or wildlife habitats. It is not intended or proposed that nature conservation becomes the primary land-use within the target areas, so long as the targets and objectives for each area can be met, and development of any kind is not precluded.

Dartford Borough has a Thames-side Green Corridors BOAs. The map on the next page illustrates the cross-district locations and proximity of BOAs and consequently the need for joint working. For more information please visit <http://www.kentbap.org.uk/kent-boas/>.

On the site we see features of local and national importance, including:

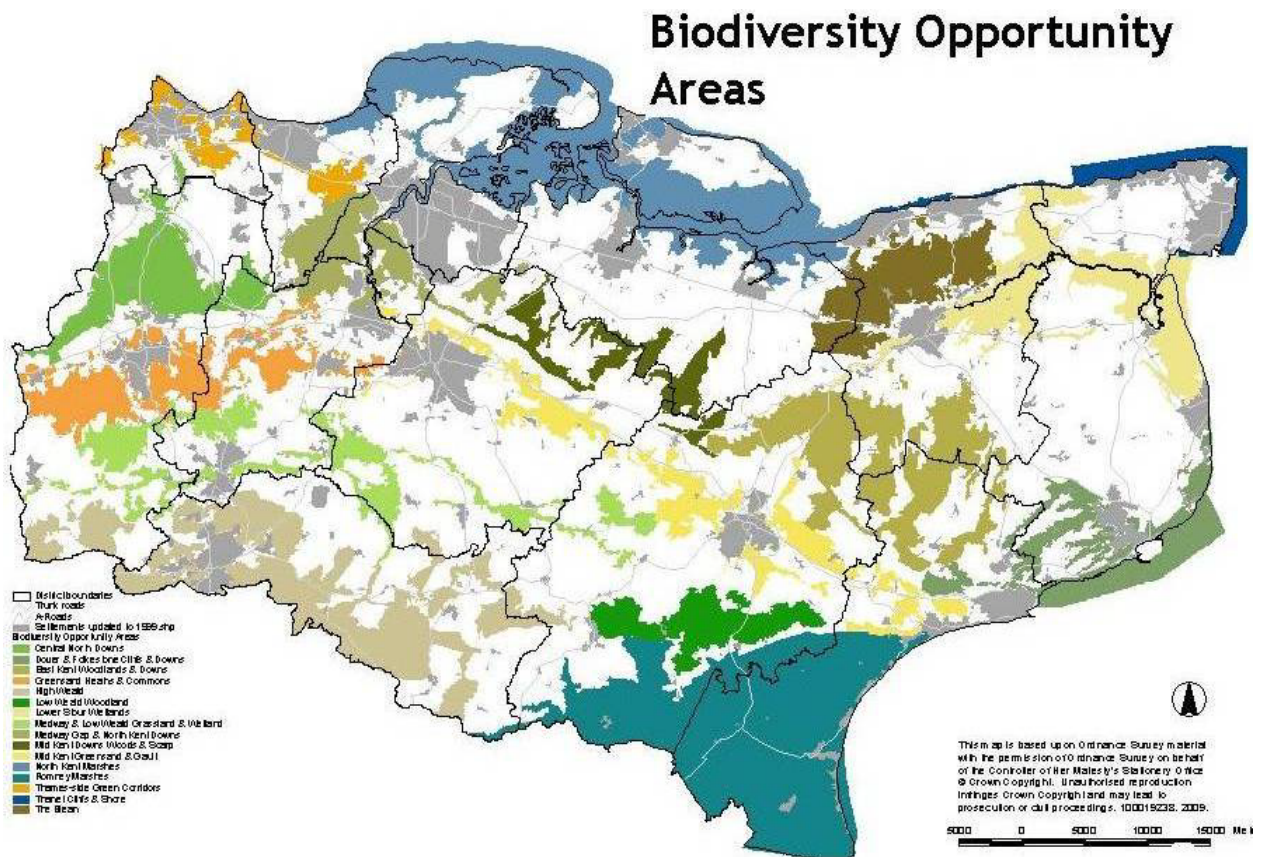
- Nationally important, though not extensive ancient woodland
- One of the most extensive heathland and acid grassland sites in Kent, at Dartford Heath
- Chalk grassland, and important brownfield sites
- Intertidal habitats and coastal grazing marsh, forming a significant part of the wildlife corridor formed by the River Thames

Within these sites we find several key species including:

Brown hare, water vole, reed bunting, adder, shrill carder bumblebee *Bombus sylvarum*, the brown-banded carder bee *Bombus humilis*, the picture-winged fly *Dorycera graminum*, and the weevil-hunting wasp *Cerceris quinquefasciata*.

To maintain and improve the areas, Dover's current targets include:

- Protect, restore and enhance grazing marsh and coastal habitats, including saltmarsh. Restore grazing marsh at Dartford Marshes.
- Improve woodland management, and reconnect important woodlands.
- Restore, enhance and recreate heathland and grassland both in and around built-up areas.
- Protect and manage the most significant brownfield sites
- Use biodiversity projects to improve the engagement of local people with the natural environment.
- Ensure that development contributes to delivery of biodiversity targets.



Heritage and Protection of Assets at Risk

Funding is being sought to carry out Heritage Crime Risk Assessments in each District which will be incorporated into Strategic Crime Assessments.

Funding is being sought to develop a Heritage Warden programme to help monitor the condition of heritage assets and record damage or loss.

Work is being undertaken in conjunction with Natural England, English Heritage and landowners to increase the number of designated assets in Higher Level Stewardship. The Kent farmsteads survey identifies historic buildings across the county. SHINE funding allows the creation of polygons to identify designated assets and this information will be used by Natural England in their Higher Level Stewardship application assessment, and for identifying potential sites.

Kent Climate Change Network

The Kent Climate Change Network meet quarterly to share best practice and learning, develop initiatives and provide input into county-wide programmes. Successful joint initiatives include collaboration on the Kent Housing Retrofit programme, the Severe Weather Impacts Monitoring System and development of the Kent Environment Strategy. The Network also won an award for *Progress through Innovation* in 2011 from Improvement and Efficiency South East for their work on the Kent Adaptation Action Plan.

The Climate Change Network representative for Dartford Borough Council is **Sandra Woodfall** (Sandra.Woodfall@dartford.gov.uk).

Elected Member Support

All of the projects and activities highlighted in this note require Leadership, support and promotion within Districts and communities across Kent.

Influencing and Communicating

Some of the issues raised here, such as the housing stock in Dartford, energy efficiency and the deployment of renewable energy require our residents to be aware of the projects, grants and initiatives available to them. Although there are wide ranging communications in place, it is the local knowledge, support and influence of Members which can significantly improve uptake.

As highlighted in this note, businesses in Kent are signing up to the South East Business Carbon Hub to reduce their energy bills. Twenty eight of these are in Dartford but there is room for many more. Local knowledge and promotion can support uptake for this free resource, benefitting business in the area.

Where there are planning decisions to be made, Member influence is needed to improve resource efficiency, transport networks, the development of BOAs and the deployment of renewable energy as appropriate.

Further information on specific projects can be found in ***Climate Change: A Guide for Kent's Decision Makers*** along with a checklist of key factors to consider in the decision-making process.