

KENT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

A STRATEGY FOR ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND ECONOMY
IMPACT REPORT 2011-2016



kent.gov.uk/environmentstrategy

VISION

The County of Kent is benefiting from a competitive, innovative and resilient economy, with our natural and historic assets enhanced and protected for their unique value and positive impact on our society, economy, health and wellbeing.



“ In Kent we all benefit from a truly unique and rich natural, historic and cultural environment. It is part of our heritage and, as highlighted time and time again, is a key factor in people’s decision to live, work and spend time in our county. As KCC Cabinet Members representing Environment, Health and Economy, we know that we have a mandate from our residents and businesses to ensure that our environment is protected and enhanced, improving health outcomes and supporting a resilient, growing economy now and into the future. ”

Matthew Balfour (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport),

Mark Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development),

Roger Gough (Chair of the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board).

WHY A KENT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY? WORKING TOGETHER, ACHIEVING MORE

- **PROVIDES A STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND FRAMEWORK** to enable closer cross-sector partnership working, enabling links between environment, health and the economy.
- **IDENTIFIES HIGH LEVEL, EVIDENCE BASED PRIORITIES** that ensure valuable resources are focused to achieve maximum impact and multiple positive outcomes.
- **FOCUSSES ON THE ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES** that would most benefit from working in partnership due to significant opportunities or challenges that are cross-sector and cross-boundary.
- **ENABLES SHARING OF EXPERTISE** and resources and creates greater opportunities to access external funding.

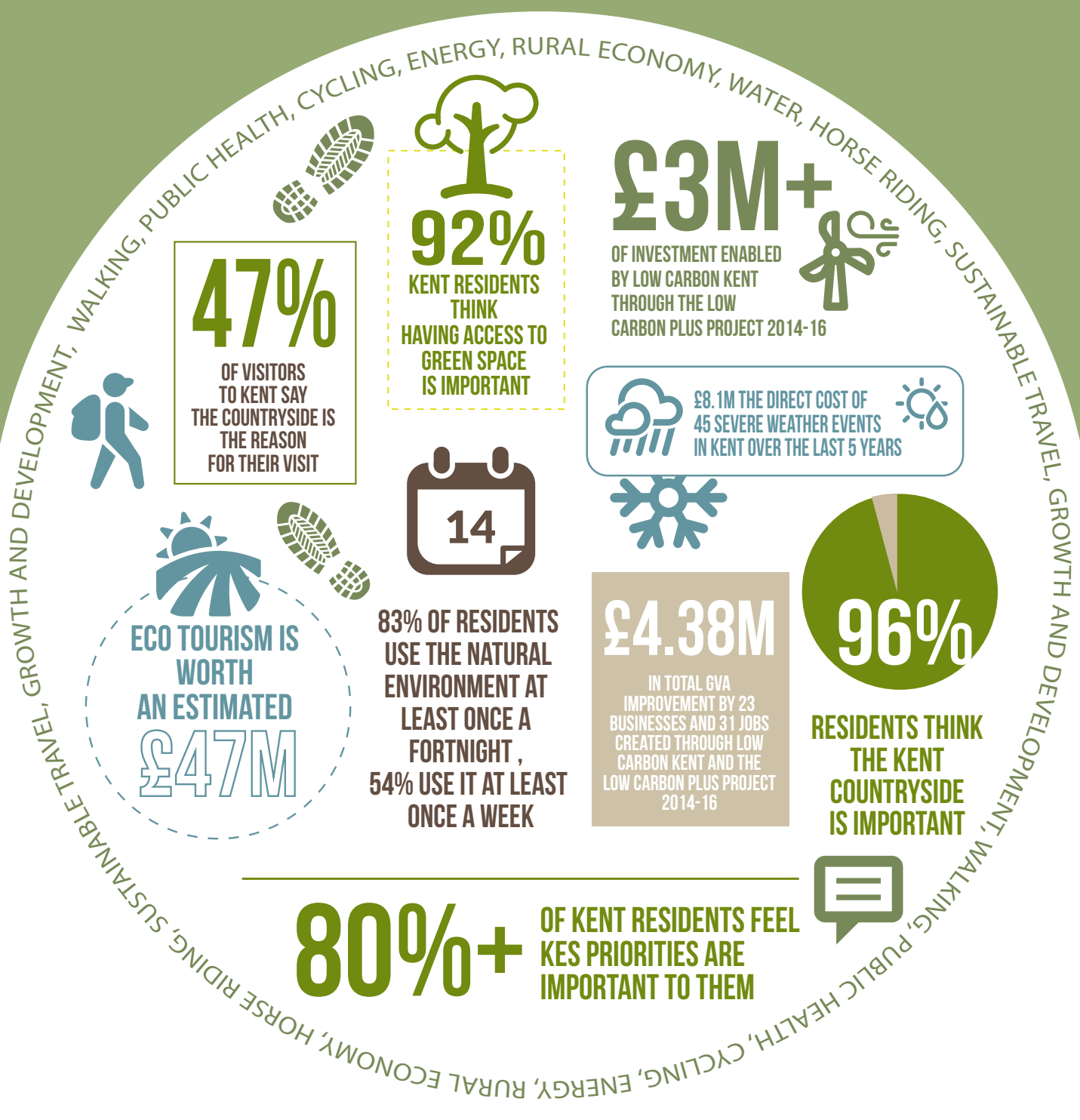


PURPOSE OF THE IMPACT REPORT

The Impact Report (to be produced annually) is designed to be a snapshot in time, providing an update on the key challenges we face as highlighted in the Kent Environment Strategy. It provides a summary of actions being taken to address these challenges; reducing negative impacts, maximising positive outcomes and identifying the impact these actions have had.

The Report will also indicate direction of travel and what the key focus should be for the coming year. A more detailed monitoring and evaluation report will also be produced annually, commencing July 2017, one year after the development of the Kent Environment Strategy Implementation Plan.

WHY THE ENVIRONMENT IS IMPORTANT IN FIGURES



"The Kent countryside is a major part of the standard of living for me and my family."

Male, 45-64, Gravesham – Public Perception Survey 2016



BIODIVERSITY AND HERITAGE – PROTECTING, ENHANCING AND MAXIMISING VALUE

In Kent we have not met our Biodiversity 2010 targets and although there have been real gains for wildlife in some areas, there is still a gradual loss of habitats and species in the county, for example of the Local Wildlife Sites monitored over the past five years, 30% have been damaged and 2% lost. This represents a significant threat to the intrinsic value of Kent's natural environment and to the economic and social benefit that it provides.

It is likely that we will also fail to meet our Biodiversity 2020 targets without targeted interventions.

Once a separate kingdom, and England's oldest county, Kent's easy access to London and Europe, has for centuries ensured a defensive role. The result is a compelling collection of castles, historic houses and maritime heritage. Kent's sacred places are

special too. Canterbury's World Heritage site includes one of England's most important historical buildings: spectacular Canterbury Cathedral, home to the Archbishop of Canterbury and centre of Christian pilgrimage. Ensuring our wealth of historical assets are identified, protected and enhanced is key to Kent's attractiveness to our residents and visitors alike, supporting our economy, health and wellbeing.

WHAT IMPACT ARE WE HAVING?

- Nearly **£19m** has been invested through Kent Wildlife Trust to improve Kent's natural environment and access to it.
- In the past year over **8,700 volunteer days** were spent with Countryside Management Partnerships and Country Parks
- **85 green gyms** across the county
- **142** walking routes, **18** cycle routes, **36** beaches, **210** parks promoted
- In Kent **43,948 hectares of wildlife habitat** are managed in a way that supports the best possible diversity of wildlife. That's 11.74% of land in Kent
- **£861,000 of EU funding** to build resilience to climate change through raising awareness and improved management of the natural environment
- **£6m** has been invested to support the **conservation and enhancement** of the AONB landscape
- **£4.5m of Heritage Lottery Funding** for improvements in the natural environment, decreasing fragmentation and improving people's awareness and connectivity with their local habitats
- Explore Kent has an award winning website with over **400 activities** and events listed
- **Polecats back in Kent** – last seen in the 1870s!

A FLAVOUR OF WHAT ARE WE DOING

DARENT VALLEY LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP:

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit has led a bid to the Heritage Lottery fund to deliver a Landscape Partnership Scheme in the beautiful Darent Valley. We have worked with many local and national partners and together have secured in excess of £3.6m to manage access, celebrate, improve and enhance the landscapes of the valley.

GUARDIANS OF THE DEEP:

Funded through Heritage Lottery Funding and led by Kent Wildlife Trust, the project will have a particular focus on Marine Conservation Zones which have been designated around the Kent coast. Working with schools and local communities the project will raise awareness about marine wildlife and involve people in looking after their particular stretch of coastline. Partners include KCC, Thanet District Council, Medway Council and Natural England.

FOREST SCHOOLS:

All Kent's County Parks offer opportunities to join Forest Schools. A six-week programme of Forest School with Temple Grove Academy in Sherwood demonstrated improvements in Years 5 and 6 pupil attainment and behaviour both during the sessions but also when back at school.



ACTIVE RAMSGATE:

Explore Kent were commissioned by Ramsgate Town Council for a 3rd year to deliver the successful Active Ramsgate Initiative, bringing together a range of activities including a cycling route that circles an entire island, cliff-topping walking trails, geocaching challenges and more. The project has brought in over £350,000 to the local economy over the last 2 years against a spend of only £20k each year.

KENT NATURE PARTNERSHIP:

The KNP bring together a wide range of partners across public, private and voluntary sectors, all with an interest in ensuring a healthy natural environment and delivering environmental improvements. The partnership have undertaken a range of initiatives such as developing planning guidance and support, spatial mapping of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), mapping opportunities and raising awareness of the benefits of the natural environment with health professionals and identifying the economic value of natural assets in the county through a natural capital asset assessment.

UP ON THE DOWNS:

The Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme operates along the cliffs and coast of Dover and Shepway, extending inland to cover the beautiful rolling chalk landscapes of the Kent Downs. The five year scheme (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) seeks to work with and engage local communities to conserve and enhance these beautiful landscapes, improving the wildlife and historic heritage value. The scheme, now seen as an exemplar, was conceived by Kent Downs AONB and is now led by Dover District Council. So far the project has enhanced 175 hectares of land for nature and landscape and engaged with 20,246 people

DOVER HERITAGE STRATEGY:

Dover District Heritage Strategy won the category of 'Excellence in Planning for Built Heritage' at the RTP1 South East Awards for Planning Excellence 2015, as produced by the Heritage Conservation Group of Kent County Council, commissioned by Dover District Council and English Heritage. From iconic white cliffs to a wealth of historic sites and attractions, the District of Dover is known around the world for its heritage. The Heritage Strategy seeks to identify and understand the many historic assets in Dover District, and how their special character could contribute to the future of the area, and key objectives in the District Local Plan.

OUR CHALLENGES

ENSURING OUR GROWTH IS SUSTAINABLE

AIR QUALITY, TRANSPORT AND LAND-USE CHANGE

Over the coming decades Kent faces unprecedented levels of growth with an estimated new 158,300 homes and an increase in population of 293,500 people by 2031. Our increasing population, housing development, transport links, industry and agriculture all require space and resources, putting pressure on the county's landscapes and changing how we use the land.

Kent's unique position between London and the continent bring significant challenges in

relation to transport and air quality through cross-channel freight and traffic. Major routes such as the M20 and A2/M2 form important local and strategic links for residents and businesses that when congested result in delay on the wider local network, with additional increasing congestion in our town centres these impacts have significant impacts on our economy.

In relation to air quality, there are currently 40 air quality management areas across the

county where air pollutants have exceeded Central Government levels. Poor air quality is estimated to contribute to approximately 5% of deaths per year across the UK and possibly contributes to more mortality and morbidity than passive smoking.



WHAT IMPACT ARE WE HAVING?

- **£237k** has been invested in electric charging points across nine districts in Kent
- 116 primary schools and **40,000 children** and families are involved in WOW, encouraging green travel. Last academic year this generated 600,000 green journeys and removed 270,000 school-run car journeys from Kent roads.
- Over **£4m external investment** attracted to improve walking and cycling routes
- 20 new pathways created totalling nearly **120km**
- **4.5 km new car free cycle routes**
- **97 new bridges** built after 2013/14 floods to improve access
- **10,000 volunteer hours** inspecting and maintain PROW
- 1,000 children and families are using **70 walking buses in the county.**

A FLAVOUR OF WHAT ARE WE DOING

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE WE FACE AND THE ACTIONS NEEDED:

A £20,000 study to understand high carbon activities associated with the Dover Strait has been enabled through PASSAGE, a 4 year EU funded project. The results of the study will lead to the development and implementation of policy actions to reduce emissions and improve air quality and associated health outcomes.

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN:

This statutory plan outlines five priorities for the county in reducing congestion and the negative impacts of traffic through sustainable and active travel options.

ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY:

Developing and promoting accessible, safer and well-planned active travel opportunities such as walking or cycling. More people travelling actively can lead to improved health, reduced traffic congestion, reduced pollution and financial savings.



DEVELOPING THE KENT COUNTRYSIDE AND COASTAL ACCESS AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN:

Working with partners to improve the public rights of way network, supporting access to the environment and encouraging walking and cycling as alternative forms of travel.

THE KENT AND MEDWAY GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK (GIF)

Identifies the County of Kent's infrastructure needs to 2031, including energy, water and green infrastructure. The next iteration of the GIF will go further and integrate environmental resilience, particularly with regards to scarce resources and the impacts of climate change, minimising negative impacts of growth (such as increased carbon emissions) and maximising positive impacts, including greater access to green space, increased walking and cycling and provision of local energy generation.

NATIONAL CYCLE ROUTE 18: ASHFORD - CANTERBURY

PARTNERS INVOLVED - Natural England, Local Landowners, Spokes, Sustrans, AONB

Nearly 4.5km of a newly created traffic-free cycle route opened in May connecting the villages of Godmersham and Shalmsford Street, between Ashford and Canterbury as part of National Cycle Route 18 connecting Ashford and Canterbury. Following a successful grant application to Natural

England's "Paths for Communities" scheme, the route has been sensitively surfaced to provide a smooth route that can be enjoyed by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. This fantastic extension has also been made possible through the generosity and assistance of local landowners.

4,000 local residents can now cycle safely and sustainably between the two villages, enjoying significant health benefits.

SUPPORTING LOW CARBON BUSINESS

The ERDF funded Low Carbon Plus project has been supporting businesses in realising innovative and low carbon travel opportunities.

Cyclepods Ltd received £20,000 to refurbish office space, upgrade their IT server and invest in a 3D printer to revolutionise their research and design process. This has led to a reduction of 38 tonnes per year in CO2 emissions, created one job whilst safeguarding 16 others and resulted in an increase of £445,000 in their GVA.

UK Electric Bike Centre Ltd is a business start-up based in Staplehurst providing green tourism opportunities through electric bike hire. Low Carbon Plus provided £11,000 of funding to purchase new equipment and optimise their marketing. The grant has enabled the creation of seven new jobs and an increase in GVA of £58,000.

OUR CHALLENGES

MEETING THE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

SEVERE WEATHER, ENERGY USE AND WATER

Increasingly, severe weather events such as flooding are impacting our infrastructure, homes, communities, businesses and delivery of public services. Kent's Severe Weather Impacts Monitoring System (SWIMS) has recorded 45 events over the last 5 years, with direct costs of over £8m.

The winter flooding of 2013-14 alone resulted in direct costs to partners of over £4m with further investment, such as repairs to Highways, increasing this to over £11m.

Kent has the highest risk of local flooding of all local authorities in England. Surface water

flooding is estimated to affect 76,000 properties, of which approximately 60,000 are residential. A further 64,000 properties are at risk from river and coastal flooding, which includes some 46,000 homes. Flooding also impacts our businesses, and nationally it is estimated that 80% do not recover from such events.

At the other end of the scale, Kent is one of the driest regions in England and Wales and our water resources are under continued pressure. 73% of our public water supply is taken from groundwater with the remainder from rivers. However, household water use across the county is 154 litres

per day and is above the national average of 141 litres per household.

Kent is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 34% by 2020 and 60% by 2030 from a 2005 baseline, so far we have seen a 23% reduction since 2005. Integration and promotion of low carbon and renewable technologies, as well as investment in behaviour change measures will be essential to ensure we meet our targets and benefit from the economic opportunities in these sectors; this includes opportunities to retrofit energy technologies to existing housing and public buildings.

WHAT IMPACT ARE WE HAVING?

- **256 business have been supported through Low Carbon Plus**, SMEs have received over £1m in grants and have improved their GVA by £4.38m, averaging a increase in GVA of £190k/business
- **547 businesses** have completed at least one level of the Steps To Environmental Management scheme (STEM) saving

3.9 tonnes of carbon and over £2,000 per business per year.

- **£40m investment over 3 years** (2016-2019) and is expected to reduce electricity use by 60% delivering savings of at least £3.5m per annum
- 81 schools have been supported with a total **investment of £1.78m**. This will result in

lifetime savings of 32,351 tonnes CO₂ and £6.77m

- Since 2005 **£4.5m has been invested through Salix funding** in energy efficiency projects with expected lifetime savings of £12.2m.
- **14,000 additional homes have been protected from flooding**

A FLAVOUR OF WHAT ARE WE DOING

KENT WARM HOMES/WARMER STREETS Kent and Medway partnership supporting residents to save energy in their home. To date 2,000 domestic properties have been retrofitted, £6.5m invested delivering approximately 2m tonnes of carbon savings. "We've been through three recessions and this time round we are finding it much more of a struggle to find the heating money. The insulation will make a big difference to our spending on fuel and I'd encourage people to find out more about this scheme."

LOW CARBON ACROSS THE SOUTHEAST (LOCASE) is a partnership of local authorities and universities providing support and grants to SMEs for low carbon initiatives across the southeast, creating 200 jobs and £9million private sector investment by 2019 in the low carbon sector

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: Multiple organisations and partnerships are working closely with our communities to increase their resilience to environmental change. These projects are focused on building local capacity, increasing awareness, developing stronger networks and supporting volunteers. Since 2011 over 80 Parish Councils have, or are in the process of developing, community emergency plans and around 200 flood wardens have been trained since the 2013/14 floods.

SANDWICH TOWN TIDAL DEFENCE SCHEME:

The £23.5m Sandwich Town Tidal Defence (STTD) scheme was completed in September 2015. The scheme was delivered between the Environment Agency, KCC and Pfizer, representing the first partnership funded flood defence scheme in the south east and in 2014 the scheme was awarded the Kent Design and Development Award (Civils and Infrastructure category). The 14km of improved and raised

defences, new flood wall at the town quay and 240 hectare tidal flood relief area reduces the risk of tidal flooding to 488 homes and 94 commercial properties in Sandwich as well as to the Discovery Park. The level of protection is raised from a 1 in 20 year level of protection (classed as at significant risk) to 1 in 200 year (low risk).

DISTRICT HEATING: Supporting delivery of Kent's Renewable Energy Action Plan, EU funding has been used to identify opportunities for district heating schemes across Kent and Medway. The pre-feasibility work has been used to successfully win £50,000 of funding from Central Government to complete a feasibility study for a district heating scheme for Sessions House in Maidstone, working with KCC, Maidstone Borough Council and HM Prison Maidstone.

DELIVERING INNOVATION IN IRRIGATION: Two EU funded projects have supported research into the risks and opportunities in relation to irrigation for Kent (WATERr and Fusion). Market sector research has supported the development of a Water Efficient Technology 'WET' Centre. This is a Commercial partnership between the NIAB, East Malling Research and suppliers of irrigation equipment, with start-up support from KCC and South East Water. There is now potential for East Malling Research to become a 'Centre of Excellence' for irrigation technologies and practices.

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS: Salix funding has supported Simon Langton Boys School in Canterbury to install 70kWp of Solar PV with an annual saving and FIT income of £11,921 a year. In addition the installation of lighting controls, LED lighting and heat zoning in the school has given rise to total financial benefits per annum of £53,821 and 216 tonnes CO₂ saved.

PUBLIC SECTOR ESTATES:

Kent County Council reduced its corporate CO₂ emissions by 19% and 8750 tonnes between 2010 and 2015 through streetlighting, energy efficiency improvements and business travel; that's equivalent to the energy used by 2,500 medium sized homes.

Dartford Borough Council have undertaken a range of energy saving activities including boiler optimisation, changes to lighting, server virtualisation and pipework insulation. In the Councils recent Greenhouse Gas Emissions report we reported a 43% emission reduction since 2008/09 (exceeding their target of 34%).

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council completed its first solar panel installation on the Tennis Centre roof in September 2014 – in just over 2 years of operation the solar PV system has generated 205,633 kWh of renewable electricity. Which equates to 111,382kg of saved carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust are working with Skanska on their first energy performance contract, anticipated to save 1,032,000 kWh of energy annually, and 390 tCO₂ annually.

Dover District Council have undertaken measures including LED lighting and motion detecting lighting in the corridors at the main Council offices at Whitfield. Loft insulation has been increased in parts of the building and new boilers are being installed. This has resulted in a 22.38 reduction CO₂/M² since 2008/09.

Swale Borough Council have reduced their GHG emissions by a total of 24% since the base line year (2009/2010) through a range of energy efficiency projects.