

# Kent County Council

# Environment Policy



Kent County Council plays a crucial role in ensuring Kent's future prosperity by fostering a healthy and thriving natural environment. Our approach is to minimise conflicts between growth, health and the environment allowing us to live within our ecological and financial means and deliver the national agenda amidst unprecedented change, challenge and opportunity.

Our focus is on protecting and enhancing the environment, and the quality of life for Kent's residents, through environmental conservation, mitigation, adaptation, protection and careful management of our resources and emissions. This includes managing the natural environment, air, water, heritage and waste.

Our aim is to fulfil our compliance obligations and statutory duties whilst influencing environmental outcomes. We will achieve this through evidence-based decision-making and shared knowledge within partnerships and internal and external collaboration.

We understand that the Council's activities and services have an impact on the environment and that we have a responsibility to manage environmental risks and opportunities effectively. We strive to minimise our use of natural resources for the benefit of future generations.

The Council is committed to continually improving the environmental management system to enhance environmental performance. This commitment is supported by the goals and priorities set out in the Environment Plan and supporting strategies, such as Framing Kent's Future, KCC Adaptation Plan, KCC Net Zero 2030 Plan, Kent Environment Strategy, Kent & Medway Energy & Low Emissions Strategy, Kent Biodiversity Strategy, Plan Bee Pollinator Action Plan, Kent Plan Tree and the Active Travel Strategy.

## Our aim is to:

- Safeguard and improve our environment, supporting healthy communities and sustainable growth through delivery of the Environment Plan.

## Our goals are to:

- Deliver green energy and reduce carbon emissions: by enabling the delivery of green energy infrastructure in the county, delivering new zero greenhouse gas emissions across our own estate and operations and collaborating with partners to achieve countywide net zero emissions;
- Adapt to our changing climate: assess climate change risk and impacts, and adapt to future climate conditions and severe weather to protect our residents;



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- Reduce flood risk and effectively manage water resources: mitigate flood risk, improve community flood resilience, and promote sustainable drainage and water efficiency across the county.
- Protect and improve the natural and built environment: drive nature protection and recovery, reduce air pollution and ensure that our habitats are rich with wildlife and plants.
- Manage resources through a circular economy: minimise waste, reuse and recycle materials, enabling the development of a circular economy in Kent;
- Conserve and promote Kent's natural beauty and heritage: maintain Kent's historical environment and promote its unique countryside and natural beauty through public engagement.

## To deliver this we will:

- Engage with partners and services by enhancing knowledge sharing to facilitate collaborative solutions and more efficient delivery models, balancing risk and innovation;
- Explore alternative delivery models that reduce reliance on public funds and find new, affordable ways to finance our environmental ambitions;
- Align local plans and strategic statements, to set broader environmental objectives and develop sustainable local plans that deliver greener infrastructure and attract investment;
- Apply a coordinated approach to decarbonisation, to ensure environmental risks and opportunities support future environmental outcomes;
- Embed our environmental priorities in decision-making to improve our environmental impact across the organisation and through our partnerships, supporting evidence-based approaches and maximising co-benefits;
- Enhance commissioning and procurement to include carbon reduction and social value criteria such as climate, environment and sustainability to support local community organisations and outcomes;
- Use data and evidence to drive informed decision-making about climate and environmental impacts, policies, projects and programs;
- Increase awareness of environmental issues and opportunities through training, webinars and networking opportunities, to ensure staff and leadership have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities in achieving our environmental objectives;



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- Communicate progress, successes, and challenges to ensure stakeholders are well-informed to enable the dissemination of information and requests for data internally and externally;
- Maintain and continually improve our Environmental Management System, meet our compliance obligations and prevent pollution.

This policy will be implemented and monitored through the council's environmental management system. This system is a structured approach to making environmental improvements, which is assessed against the [ISO14001:2015 Standard](#) by the British Standards Institute.

A progress report on the implementation of the policy will be reviewed annually by the Council's corporate management team.

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