

# KENT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

A STRATEGY FOR ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND ECONOMY  
IMPACT REPORT 2017



[kent.gov.uk/environmentstrategy](http://kent.gov.uk/environmentstrategy)

# VISION

The County of Kent is benefitting 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.

## IMPACT REPORT 2017

The annual Impact Report is designed to be a snapshot in time, providing an update on the key challenges we face in relation to the Kent Environment Strategy. It provides a summary of the range of actions that have been taken since the Kent Environment Strategy was launched in 2016, and identifies the impact these actions are having. A more detailed monitoring report and an updated State of the Environment Report is available online at [www.kent.gov.uk/environmentstrategy](http://www.kent.gov.uk/environmentstrategy)

## WORKING TOGETHER, ACHIEVING MORE

The Kent Environment Strategy provides a strategic framework for closer cross-sector partnership working between environment, health and economic agendas. It identifies high level, evidence-based priorities and focusses on the activities that would most benefit from partnership working. It also identifies opportunities where our natural capital can provide positive outcomes for health, well being and ultimately the economy. The strategy enables expertise and resources to be shared and creates greater opportunities to access external funding.



*The environment is central to a strong economy, healthy residents and resilient communities. Utilising our natural and heritage assets innovatively to create economic opportunities, support wellbeing and provide cost effective solutions to climate change challenges such as flooding, drought and heat, is the only sensible way forward.*



**Matthew Balfour**

*(Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste),*

**Andrew Bowles**

*(Leader of Swale Borough Council and Chair of Kent Environment Champions Group).*



## THE KENT ENVIRONMENT CHAMPIONS GROUP

The Kent Environment Champions Group provides the environmental conscience for the County of Kent. The group is composed of elected councillors, statutory organisational representatives and other individuals who are active in environmental matters in Kent and Medway. The Group champions and challenges the progress of the Kent Environment Strategy and provides strategic guidance on the best ways to address important environmental issues and opportunities. The Group also identify and promote good environmental practice across all sectors in Kent, culminating in the annual Kent Environment Strategy Celebration Event.

This year the Group are recognising the achievements of 12 individuals and organisations:

### INDIVIDUALS

- Kris Staples, Greenspaces Ranger, Swale Borough Council
- Louise Butfoy, Resilience and Emergency Planning Assistant, Kent County Council
- Sue Young, Kent Wildlife Trust

### BUSINESSES

- Angela's of Margate
- Maritime Skills Academy
- The Log Barn

### CHARITABLE AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

- Abbey Physic Garden
- Community Chef Project
- Friends of Westbrook Stream
- Tunbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group

### PARTNERSHIPS

- Integrated Community Equipment Supply Service
- Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership

# THE KENT ENVIRONMENT IN FIGURES

## ABOUT KENT

**90**

STRATEGIC PARKS AND GARDENS

**45K**  
HECTARES

OF BROADLEAF WOODLAND

**116**  
SITES

OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE FOR CONSERVATION



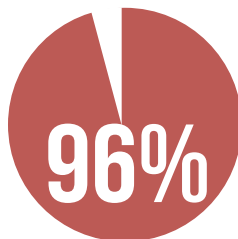
**350 MILES OF COASTLINE, WITH 29 BATHING WATERS**

4,200 MILES OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY



**81% OF KENT'S HABITAT IS RURAL OR OPEN SPACE**

## WHAT THE ENVIRONMENT MEANS TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS



**RESIDENTS** THINK KENT COUNTRYSIDE IS IMPORTANT (**26% VERY IMPORTANT**)

**83% OF RESIDENTS** USE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AT LEAST ONCE A FORTNIGHT, **54% USE IT AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK**



**47%**

OF VISITORS TO KENT STATE COUNTRYSIDE AS THE REASON FOR THE VISIT



**18% OF KENT RESIDENTS** PARTICIPATED IN ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING IN THE PAST YEAR



**12% OF KENT WORKERS WALK OR CYCLE TO WORK**



## RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES



**56,400**

PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN THE LOW CARBON ENVIRONMENT GOODS AND SERVICES SECTOR



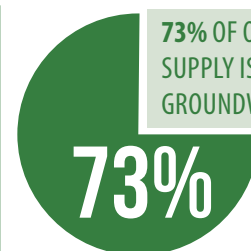
**13,105**

ELECTRIC VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS IN 2016

**4.2 MILLION LORRIES AND 4.7 MILLION CARS** PASS THROUGH THE CHANNEL TUNNEL AND PORT OF DOVER EACH YEAR.



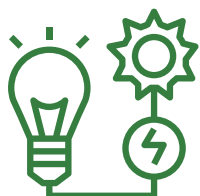
**76,000** PROPERTIES ARE AT RISK OF SURFACE WATER FLOODING AND **60,000** PROPERTIES AT RISK OF TIDAL AND FLUVIAL FLOODING



**73% OF OUR PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY IS TAKEN FROM GROUNDWATER**

**719%**

INCREASE IN KENT'S RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION CAPACITY IN THE LAST 5 YEARS.



**£8.3M** THE DIRECT COST OF 53 SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS IN KENT OVER THE LAST 6 YEARS.

**10% HOUSEHOLDS** LIVING IN FUEL POVERTY IN KENT AND MEDWAY



“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, LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE AND HEALTH

## OUR CHALLENGE: MAXIMISING THE VALUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORICAL ASSETS

Population increase, housing development, new transport links and industry all increases demand for resources and puts pressure on our landscape, habitats and natural heritage. In Kent, we have not met our Biodiversity 2010 targets and although there have been some successes over the last 5 years, it is likely that we will also fail to meet our Biodiversity 2020 targets without targeted interventions.

The loss of land to developments and intensive farming has reduced and fragmented populations of wild plants and animals. Climate change, threats from non-native invasive species and diseases such as Ash Dieback, will continue to negatively affect the natural diversity of Kent, and will increasingly impact our historical sites. Sea level rise could significantly impact our maritime heritage and coastal habitats.



## WHAT IMPACT ARE WE HAVING?

Contact with nature, from parks and gardens, to countryside and coast, promotes better physical and mental health. Increasing access to green space and ensuring our natural heritage and historical assets are identified, protected and enhanced is key to ensuring Kent remains attractive to residents and visitors alike, supporting our economy and bringing benefits to health and wellbeing.

- **3 new nature reserves** have been created and 200ha of land improved for the benefit of nature and people, through the £2.5m Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme, hosted by Dover District Council.
- Nearly **£2.5m** has been **invested** through Kent Wildlife Trust to improve Kent's natural environment and access to it.
- **49,228 walking, cycling, riding and canoeing guides** were downloaded from Explore Kent last year. With an average of 2 people using them and using national average spend statistics, this equates to £2.35m income into the Kent Economy.
- Almost **6,700 volunteer days** were spent with Kent Countryside Management Partnerships, valued at over £325,000.
- Kent Country Parks helped **8,500 children get closer to nature** through their education programmes and an additional 1,700 children visited a Forest School.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### FIFTH CONTINENT, ROMNEY MARSH

Kent Wildlife Trust is working with partners to implement the Fifth Continent Landscape Partnership scheme, which was awarded a £1.76m Heritage Lottery grant. The scheme includes the restoration and protection of rare habitats, including ditches and vegetated shingle, and an exciting programme of community activities, including community archaeology, a community film project and citizen science activities. The scheme will also fund over 50 trainee and apprenticeship opportunities for young people on the Marsh.



### SOCIAL PRESCRIPTION PILOT, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

The High Weald Countryside Management Partnership, Explore Kent and Primary Care in Tunbridge Wells are working together to develop an online directory of natural environment projects that health professionals can access and refer clients to. This approach can help clients feel more involved in the community, reduce isolation and help improve health and wellbeing.

### KEARSNEY PARKS, DOVER

Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens are 2 Grade II listed heritage parks which are undergoing restoration through the Parks for People Project, a joint Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund programme. The project will involve the restoration and enhancement

of the key natural and historic aspects of the parks, but also improve sustainable travel to, between, and within the parks.

### SWALE GREEN GRID STRATEGY

The Green Grid strategy takes a joined-up approach to land management, with a focus on the relationship between greenspaces and the communities they serve. It will help create a network of multi-functional greenspaces, providing sustainable access within urban centres and development zones, as well as urban fringe and rural areas, where the two influence each other.

### EBBSFLEET GARDEN CITY, GRAVESHAM

Gravesham Borough Council is working with Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) and health and social care professionals to make Ebbsfleet Garden City a 'Healthy New Town'. The new Garden City will be home to 33,000 residents, up to 30,000 new jobs and 7 new major city parks. EDC have already launched the 'Digital Movement Project', which utilises personal fitness devices to encourage greater physical activity among residents and workers. It is also providing GPS data on movement and usage, which will be used to inform future investment in the city's green space and infrastructure.

### OUR STOUR, ASHFORD AND CANTERBURY

Our Stour is a community project that is encouraging children and adults to get involved in hands-on conservation to improve the rivers and streams of the Stour Valley. Volunteers are learning new skills in river monitoring, conservation, film and photography, and the river corridor is benefitting from improved habitats and invasive species control.

“ You have to go back to nature to recharge your batteries ”

Female, 25-44, Sevenoaks – Public Opinion Survey 2016

# AIR QUALITY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## OUR CHALLENGE: ENSURING GROWTH IS SUSTAINABLE

Over the coming decades Kent faces unprecedented levels of growth, with an estimated 178,000 new homes and a population increase of 396,000 people by 2031. This will put increasing pressure on infrastructure, increase demand for services, and change the way we use the land.

Over 4.2 million lorries and 4.7 million cars pass through the Channel Tunnel and Port of Dover each year, and when major strategic

routes such as the M20 and A2/M2 become congested, there are often knock on delays on the wider local network, causing significant impacts on our economy and air quality. The latest figures from the Department for Transport show that journey delays in Kent rose by 3.8% between 2015 and 2016 and poor air quality is estimated to contribute to approximately 5% of deaths per year across the UK.



## WHAT IMPACT ARE WE HAVING?

Emerging digital technologies and the growth of electric and automated vehicles, present Kent with an exciting opportunity to lead the shift to smart, flexible and low carbon transport. Encouraging active travel, such as walking and cycling and an increasing the use of public transport will also help alleviate congestion pressures, improve air quality and contribute to improved personal health.



- **Superfast broadband** has been rolled out to over **127,000 homes and businesses**, who would otherwise have been left with no, or slow broadband.
- There were **550 apprenticeship** starters in construction, planning and the built environment in 2015/16, an increase of 23.6% on the previous year.
- **232 people successfully completed** adult cycle training, helping them to ride safely and with confidence on Kent's roads.
- **106 bikes** have been **refurbished** and sold back to the community at low cost through a series of community sale events, which were attended by 350 people.
- **85 bridges, 377 fingerposts and 124 kissing gates** were **installed** on Kent's

public rights of way network this year, improving access to the countryside.

- **£1.5m** is being **invested** into 'Step Ahead of the Rest' projects, which aim to get more people walking and cycling to work, training and school.



## HIGHLIGHTS

### WE LOVE WALKERS AND CYCLISTS, RAMSGATE

Businesses in Ramsgate were the first to receive Explore Kent's We Love Walkers and Cyclists Accreditation; a stamp of approval for towns and businesses which support walkers and cyclists. Chair of the Active Ramsgate Committee said: "Our Active Ramsgate Initiative has been very successful and has brought hundreds of thousands of pounds into the town, and this accreditation is testament to the dedication of not just Ramsgate Town Council, but also the local businesses who have supported our efforts".



together with a £2m contribution from the Local Enterprise Partnership, joint funded the construction of a new, £2.7m shared-use towpath along the River Medway, between Aylesford Village and Barming. The route provides residents with a traffic-free, accessible route, which can be used as part of their daily commute or recreation. The works also improved the river bank, creating areas for wildlife and relaxation.

### TRANSPORT FOR THE FUTURE

Kent County Council is a partner in a Department for Transport led project to provide intelligent roadside connectivity along the A2/M2 from London to Dover. 'Connected Corridors' aims to pilot technologies that will provide live data to vehicle drivers, potentially warning them of hazards on the road, roadworks, traffic or even poor weather further along their route. This information will improve traffic flow, reducing congestion and improving air quality. The project will inform national and European

standards for roll out across the strategic road network.

Through the Total Transport project, Kent County Council are examining options to better integrate the transport services currently commissioned by central and local government agencies and provided by different operators. This will allow existing resources to be allocated and coordinated more efficiently, resulting in transport services which better meet customer demand and reduce the need for car journeys.

### A21 NON-MOTORISED ROUTE, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council worked with Highways England and Kent County Council to deliver a high quality non-motorised user route alongside the duelling of the A21 between Pembury and Tonbridge. Cyclists and walkers are now using this traffic-free route to commute to school and work, as well as for leisure.

### MEDWAY TOWPATH, MAIDSTONE

Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council and Aylesford Parish Council,

*“I have a cycling buddy and we go out weekly for fun and fitness...it's liberating, fun and sociable!”*

Adult cycling training participant, 2017

# SEVERE WEATHER, ENERGY, WATER AND WASTE

## OUR CHALLENGE: CREATING A LOW CARBON AND CLIMATE RESILIENT KENT

Severe weather events such as flooding and heatwaves impact our infrastructure, homes, communities, businesses and the delivery of public services. Kent's Severe Weather Impacts Monitoring System (SWIMS) has recorded 53 events over the last 6 years, with direct costs of over £8.3m.

Kent has the highest risk of local flooding of all local authorities in England. Surface water flooding is estimated to affect 76,000 properties, with 140,000 people at risk. A further 60,000 properties are at risk from river and coastal flooding, of which 38,000 are currently benefiting from flood defences.

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.

We know that greenhouse gases are the dominant cause of observed climate change since the mid 20th century, which is why Kent is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 34% by 2020 and 60% by 2030. We have already achieved

a 33% reduction since 2005, but we will need to continue to promote and integrate low carbon technology into our homes and businesses if we are to meet our 2030 target and benefit from the economic opportunities in this sector.



## WHAT IMPACT ARE WE HAVING?

- Since August 2016, Low Carbon Kent has assisted 146 SMEs, **awarded £1,023,000** and supported the creation of 13 new businesses and 37 jobs. This has saved 1,742 tonnes of carbon and increased average turnover by £6,333 per SME.
- There has been a **7.6% reduction** in energy use by Kent's District and Borough Councils and Medway Council since 2012/13.
- So far Kent County Council has **upgraded 81,250** highway street lights to LED lamps,

which has reduced energy consumption by 22%, and is expected to reduce energy consumption by 65% once all the street lights have been upgraded.

- Since 2011, **581 businesses** have completed at least one level of the Steps to Environmental Management Scheme (STEM), saving on average 3.9 tonnes of carbon and over £2,000 per business per year.
- 46% of Kent's household waste (tonnage) was **recycled or composted**, and less than

2.8% was sent to landfill in 2016/17. This is above the national average.

- Since April 2015 the Environment Agency has **reduced the risk of flooding** or coastal erosion to **5,866 households**, with an additional 6,616 households due to be protected by March 2018.
- 75 Kent communities now have community resilience plans in place and **219 volunteer flood wardens** are available to respond within their neighbourhood.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### MAKING KENT HOMES WARMER

Kent and Medway partners are working together to help residents save energy and feel warmer in their homes. Through the Warm Homes Scheme, 2,391 energy efficiency measures have been installed in over 2,200 homes. In total, the measures are expected to save an estimated 39,000 tonnes of carbon, and save residents £8.8m over the course of the measure's life.

### BATTERY STORAGE PROJECTS

Dartford Borough Council are working with partners to install battery storage technology to 11 of its properties that already benefit from solar photovoltaic panels. The project will help reveal the financial and energy saving implications of energy storage technology and develop a business case for wider roll out. Through the EU funded Triple A project, Kent County Council are trialling battery storage in a further 10 homes across Kent.

### SUPPORTING LOW CARBON BUSINESS

Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) is a £18.8 million EU funded partnership programme that provides support and grants to SMEs in south east England for low carbon initiatives. Examples include: Angela's of Margate is a business start-up seafood restaurant, aiming to offer responsibly



sourced food with the smallest possible carbon footprint. LoCASE provided £10,000 of funding towards the refurbishment of aged premises; including LED lighting, new white goods, upcycled furniture, wood-fired oven and a 200l composter (for use in their community garden project). The grant has supported the creation of 5 new jobs and enabled them to maintain a low carbon footprint from launch.

Winterdale Cheesemakers are a well-established and award-winning manufacturer of Kentish Cheese. The facility already use a

ground source heat pump, solar photovoltaic panels and an electric vehicle for deliveries, but they are working with LoCASE to design and part fund further low carbon improvements that will allow them to completely operate from renewable sources even when the sun isn't shining. This will save a further 6.5 tonnes of CO2 and over £2,500 in energy spend.

### IRRIGATION INNOVATION

The Water Efficiency Technologies Centre was developed by NIAB East Malling Research in collaboration with commercial partners and support from Meiosis, South East Water, Kent County Council and LEAF. The centre, which opened in July, has been designed to showcase the latest developments in irrigation management and soil moisture sensing technologies. By reducing run-off and improving water efficiency, growers can typically reduce the usage of water, fertilisers, pesticides and energy by 20% and increase fruit yields by up to 10%.

“ We've been through 3 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 ”