



# Sevenoaks District Council Climate Change Strategy 2024







# Our Vision and Purpose

Climate change, due to greenhouse gas emissions, is one of the biggest environmental concerns of our time. We know it's happening and the effects could be devastating for people and wildlife. We will continue to do all we can with our available resources to tackle this important issue.

Our Climate Change Strategy marks the Council's commitment to tackling the challenge of climate change across the District. It provides a framework for our actions aimed at reducing carbon emissions (mitigation) and adapting to the effects of climate change that are already happening (adaptation), to provide a better environment for future generations.

We recognise that we cannot take on this challenge alone and win – the Council's emissions (from our built assets and fleet) account for less than 0.5% of those from the District as a whole, so in addition to our continuing work on reducing our own emissions, we need to look at how we can help and enable residents, businesses, visitors and community groups to embrace local climate action and behaviour change in order to reduce emissions across the District. We all have a part to play. The Council has a key role in terms of leadership, community engagement and enablement, partnership working, unlocking funding wherever possible and sharing ideas and information.

**Collectively, we will take responsibility for leaving the District in a better place than we found it.**

# Why do we need a Climate Change Strategy?

Globally, nationally and locally our partners are responding to the challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Our strategy will help to place the District within this context, and will build on what we have learned from our own climate change activity over the past five years.

## The global commitment

To limit temperature rise this century well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C

## The UK commitment

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 100% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 or have the capability to remove it safely from the atmosphere

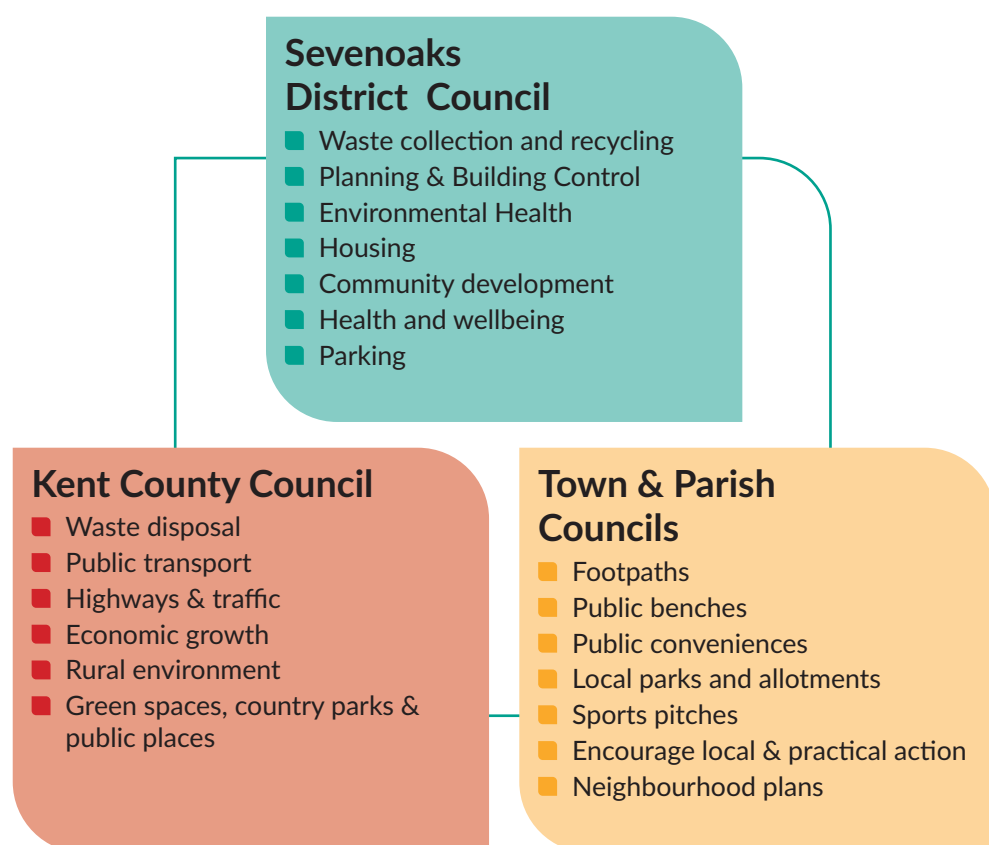
## The Kent commitment

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by the county by 100% by 2050

Whilst there is currently no legal requirement for local authorities to act, the Council is well placed to respond both as an organisation in its own right as well as having the potential to influence and to demonstrate leadership within our communities.

# What is the Council responsible for?

The Council has specific services it is responsible for, which differ from those provided by Kent County Council and by our town and parish councils. We can achieve more by working together and through integrating climate action into everything we do.



# What have we done so far?

Climate change has been a key priority for the Council since 2019, and over the last five years we have successfully delivered a wide range of projects in support of this.

<p>Moved more of our fleet to electric. <b>More than 100,000 miles</b> have been travelled in electric vehicles</p> 	<p><b>Installed electric charging points</b> in our car parks, at our offices and on street for taxis</p> 	<p>Working with <b>experts</b> to roll out <b>electric vehicle charging points</b> across more locations</p> 
<p>Purchased new, <b>more efficient</b> and <b>less polluting</b> waste trucks</p> 	<p>New waste rounds are <b>reducing</b> fuel consumption &amp; carbon emissions by <b>5%</b></p> 	<p>Installed <b>motion sensitive lighting</b> in our <b>decked car parks</b></p> 
<p>Produced our <b>first cycling &amp; walking plan</b> and <b>secured funding</b> for a safe walking and cycling route</p> 	<p><b>Hybrid working</b> and <b>virtual meetings</b> have <b>cut</b> staff and councillor travel to work by a third, <b>reducing emissions</b></p> 	<p><b>Air quality</b> has <b>improved</b> over the past <b>nine years</b></p> 
<p>Printing <b>In Shape</b> on <b>carbon neutral</b> paper</p> 	<p>Built a new <b>energy efficient</b> leisure centre, <b>reducing energy</b> and running costs</p> 	<p><b>Net Zero</b> implications included in all major <b>Council decisions</b></p> 
<p>Working with <b>specialists</b> to <b>reduce energy consumption</b> in our buildings</p> 	<p><b>Planted trees</b> across the <b>District</b> to support <b>biodiversity</b> and <b>offset CO<sub>2</sub> emissions</b></p> 	<p>Led Kent's most <b>successful</b> <b>household solar scheme</b> with <b>264 residents</b> <b>signing up</b> for solar panels</p> 

# How will we continue to tackle the challenge of climate change?

Our Climate Change Strategy re-sets the Council's approach. It places community leadership and engagement at the forefront, and recognises that through working with our residents, businesses, partners, visitors and community groups to raise climate awareness and unlock potential, we can make more of a difference.

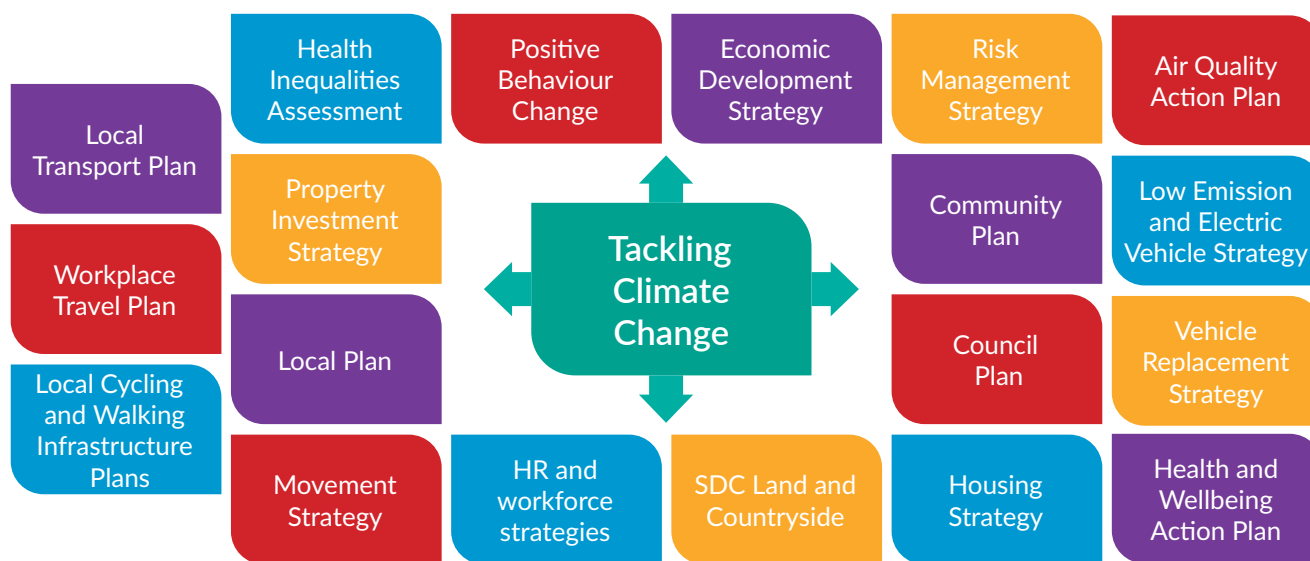
Through taking action locally we can help create a healthier, greener, more resilient and sustainable District.

The Council will lead by example in influencing others to make sure that we are all doing what we can to protect the environment around us. Reducing carbon emissions across the District is a team effort.

Our Climate Change Strategy aligns with the promises our Members set out in the Council Plan priorities: communities, environment, economy, housing and finance and investment.

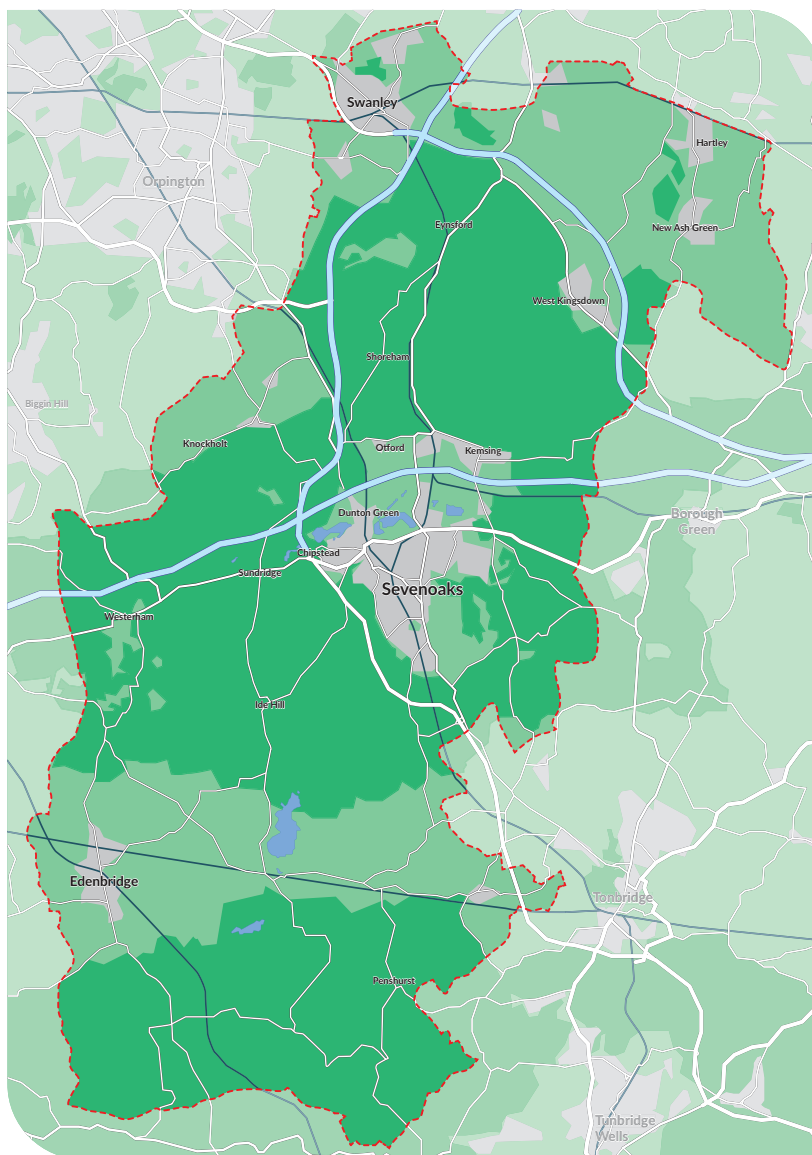


It also influences many of the Council's services and directly relates to other Council strategies, policies and projects, all working towards the common goal of tackling the challenge of climate change.



This robust and inclusive approach ensures that climate change is consistently at the forefront of all Council decisions, across all service areas, innovating and working together to instil positive behaviour change.

# Our District



Sevenoaks District is located in West Kent in the South East of England, covers 143 square miles and has a population of 120,500 (2021 Census).

In 2021 the District emitted over 700ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, approximately 7% of Kent's overall carbon emissions\*.

Transport and domestic use account for the largest proportion of carbon emissions (61% and 26% respectively) in the District\*.

(\*source: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics))





# Our opportunities and challenges:

	Opportunities	Challenges
<b>Strategic road network – the M20, M25, M26, A21 and A25 all run through Sevenoaks District</b>	Provides an opportunity to promote and facilitate sustainable movement including walking, wheeling and cycling for local journeys, and use of electric vehicles, car clubs and public transport.	Many road users are passing through as part of a longer journey and so our ability to have a direct influence on these types of emissions is a significant challenge.
<b>Green Belt – 93% of Sevenoaks District is designated as Green Belt</b>	Land in the Green Belt may provide opportunities for offsetting carbon emissions and carbon capture.	The Green Belt has limited potential for development and it is unlikely that large scale renewable energy schemes would be considered suitable in this location.
<b>Demographics – the population of Sevenoaks District is projected to grow and is ageing</b>	There is an opportunity through the Local Plan to ensure that all new development mitigates and adapts to the impacts of climate change, helping to reduce carbon emissions.	Our ability to influence behaviour change across all age groups is a key challenge, recognising that a one size fits all approach is not likely to be successful.
<b>The Council's sphere of influence</b>	As overall knowledge and understanding of “what works” in reducing emissions also increases, partnership provides increased opportunity to work more effectively in this area. We can help to share “what works” with partners across the district, and continue to engage with our partners such as government, KCC, residents and businesses, as well as working effectively across all our teams, in support of our aims.	The Council has very limited influence on the major sources of the District's emissions (transport and domestic use of gas). Even if we reduced/offset all the Council's emissions, this would only account for 0.5% of those of the District.
<b>Funding and resources</b>	Partnership working provides opportunities for collaboration and can increase the range and impact of available funding.	The cost of living and inflation have impacted our resources; our stated commitment to providing best value to our residents and businesses means we need to prioritise our actions carefully to produce the most effective outcomes.



# Our Climate Change Priorities



# Our Climate Change Priorities

<b>Movement, travel and transport</b> 	<b>Energy and buildings</b> 
<p>We want to change the way we use transport by creating a sustainable movement network across our District, making it easier to walk, wheel, cycle and use public transport. We will embrace new technology and ensure we have the right infrastructure in the right place at the right time. Promoting active travel and reducing carbon emissions from transport will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities.</p>	<p>We want to ensure that all existing and future homes, businesses and other buildings are as efficient as they can be, saving costs for the consumer, and helping to reduce demand for energy and water. We will work with partners and infrastructure providers to share the latest information about schemes and grants available to our communities and businesses.</p>
<p><b>Our aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reduce the need for travel and discourage unnecessary travel</li> <li>■ Increase walking, wheeling and cycling</li> <li>■ Increase use of public transport</li> <li>■ Change the way we move goods</li> <li>■ Shift to electric vehicles</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase energy efficiency of homes and businesses</li> <li>■ Reduce water consumption in homes and businesses</li> <li>■ Embrace new technology including carbon capture / storage</li> </ul>
<p><b>How are we going to get there?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deliver the Movement Strategy and annual Parking Management Review</li> <li>■ Use the results from our EV Infrastructure Study to boost the charging infrastructure across the District</li> <li>■ Continue to deliver our Air Quality Action Plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>How are we going to get there?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide support for home energy retrofit improvements e.g. Solar Together and share ways to save water</li> <li>■ Deliver energy and water efficient development, including embracing the use of new technology, through the Local Plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key measure of success:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deliver a new walking, wheeling and cycling route in Sevenoaks urban area and develop detailed designs for two further routes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key measure of success:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue to be one of the top Kent authorities for Solar Together registrations</li> </ul>

# Our Climate Change Priorities

<b>The Council's built assets and fleet</b> 	<b>Resources, consumption and waste</b> 
<p>We want to lead by example, and to demonstrate that we are doing all we can to continue to reduce the emissions from our own estate and to make sure that our buildings are sustainable well into the future.</p>	<p>We want to improve our rates of recycling and reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste that we collect. We also want our communities to have accessible information as consumers to make choices that support the environment.</p>
<p><b>Our aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings</li> <li>■ Reduce carbon emissions from our fleet</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Significantly increase recycling</li> <li>■ Reduce non-recyclable waste including single use plastics</li> <li>■ Provide the right information to enable our communities to make climate friendly choices</li> </ul>
<p><b>How are we going to get there?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Review the current sustainability of our assets, and where resources allow, implement heat decarbonisation plans for our buildings</li> <li>■ Continue with our plans to replace the fleet with electric vehicles</li> </ul>	<p><b>How are we going to get there?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Review our waste and recycling services and make recommendations for optimising our rates of recycling across the District</li> <li>■ Work with partners to encourage positive behaviour change around consumer choices</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key measure of success:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Achieve a year on year reduction in the Council's carbon emissions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key measure of success:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deliver annual improvement in recycling rates</li> </ul>



# Our Climate Change Priorities

<b>The natural environment</b> 	<b>Awareness and engagement</b> 
<p>We want to preserve and strengthen the protection and climate benefits provided by the natural environment, and demonstrate that we are adapting in a timely and appropriate way to the changing climate.</p>	<p>We want to harness the skills and enthusiasm of our communities in support of the climate change challenge and send the message that local action at any scale plays a hugely important role in reducing the District's emissions.</p>
<p><b>Our aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recover nature and strengthen natural resilience</li> <li>• Improve biodiversity</li> <li>• Increase natural carbon capture / storage</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise climate awareness</li> <li>• Engage residents, businesses and community groups with local action</li> <li>• Develop support and partnership working</li> </ul>
<p><b>How are we going to get there?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners including Kent Wildlife Trust and KCC to deliver enhanced biodiversity and carbon capture / storage</li> <li>• Plant more trees to help offset carbon emissions</li> </ul>	<p><b>How are we going to get there?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote our Better Together online platform to enable communities to deliver local "green" projects</li> <li>• Share local case studies and best practice to inspire community action</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key measure of success:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with our partners to explore and implement a natural capital and biodiversity net gain project</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key measure of success:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver climate change specific engagement with town and parish councils</li> </ul>

To find out more,  
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