

**The Kent Environment Strategy
Draft LSP Response**

Background

The LSP agreed to respond collectively to the Draft Kent Environment Strategy. Set out below is background information on the Strategy and suggested response to specific elements of the Strategy

LSP is requested to:

1. Approve the response for dispatch on behalf of the Tunbridge Wells Together to Kent County Council

Introduction

1. Since the publication of the 2003 Kent Environment Strategy, Kent has achieved much in the way of advancing environmental performance of the county. Kent still faces many challenges, not least of which are: development pressures; ongoing concerns about air and water quality; continuing decline in biodiversity; and the ongoing effects of climate change such as water shortages, heatwaves and seasonal floods. Some of these challenges, while having the potential for severe economic and social impacts, can also offer opportunities for new business, for public and commercial sectors as well as increased efficiency for residents. Action must be taken to tackle these challenges but taken in such a way that we can convert them into opportunities for economic and social gain. This strategy aims to outline ways in which this can be achieved.
2. The draft strategy is organised into three themes which represent the major challenges and opportunities for Kent over the next 10-20 years.
 - *Prosperity within our environmental limits* – Leading Kent towards consuming resources more efficiently, eliminating waste and minimising pollution.
 - *Rising to the climate change challenge* – Working towards a lower carbon Kent which is prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of climate change.
 - *Value from our natural and living environments* – Optimising the real economic and social benefits of high environmental quality while protecting and enhancing the unique natural and built-in character of Kent.

How will the Strategy be delivered?

3. The delivery of the strategy will be supported by action plans under each of the key themes' objectives. These will focus on key mechanisms and projects which could be tweaked and refreshed on an annual basis. Particularly important will be the degree to which the other emerging strategies can embrace the opportunities offered here, for example, the Environmental

Technologies Sector strategy, the Transport Strategy and the Housing Strategy.

4. The implementation of this strategy will be underpinned by five principles that will inform the way we work:
 - Inspired Kent - We will look across the world to find the best in innovation and solutions for encouraging green technology business growth, challenging the status quo where it is a barrier to progress.
 - I will if you will - The Kent Partnership will lead the way by demonstrating good practice within its own members' operations.
 - Total Kent - We will look at Kent and Medway as a whole and work in partnership to find and deliver cross-sector solutions.
 - Empowered Kent - We will empower communities and businesses, as well as individuals and give them the opportunities they need to be sustainable.
 - Value for Kent - We will maximise the potential of the environment to deliver a full range of benefits for Kent people – health, jobs and recreation - and we will make choices that represent long term value for money.

Consultation on the themes and potential actions

5. For each theme, the 2030 Vision, target(s) and potential priority actions are set out below. After each section, **we have written suggested TWT response in bold**. Overall, the proposed Strategy is welcomed and chimes with the draft TWT Sustainable Community Strategy.
6. **Living (prosperity) within our Environmental Limits**
7. Vision for 2030 - A Kent where we produce and use sustainable goods and services and throw away as little as possible. All Kent businesses benefit from operating in a sustainable way and we are the first choice location for green technology companies. As a result of these sustainable operations and lifestyles our natural resources - air, water, minerals and soil - are high quality and safeguarded and Kent will secure the resources it needs to prosper.

Question:

Do you agree with the 20 year vision? Can you suggest any improvements?

TWT Response:

We think this should have also include All Kent businesses benefit from operating in a sustainable way and we are the first choice location for green technology companies in a thriving low carbon economy by 2030.

8. Target

By 2016 Kent will reverse the annual growth in its ecological footprint on the way to a 40% decrease by 2030.

Question:

Do you think the targets are realistic? If not, what targets would you suggest and why?

TWT Response

This is considered to be a reasonable realistic target

9. Objectives

In order to deliver our 20 year vision the Kent Partnership will need to use all its suite of strategies, in particular Integrated Transport, Housing, Regeneration, Sectors and Skills to:

- Enable residents and businesses to consume at sustainable levels by offering smart choices for the way we live, work and travel. For example, Fast Track provides the option to leave the car at home, opportunities for commercial recycling reduces the waste to landfill, Kent foodstuffs offer an alternative to imports.
- Reduce the negative impact of consumption by understanding the lifecycle of products and supporting lean and clean production methods and service provision. For instance supporting low input farming / precision farming to minimise the release of chemicals into our ground water and rivers.
- Use resources more efficiently by reducing waste, enabling reuse and recycling, and optimising energy from waste.
- Maximise the opportunities from these changes in our behaviours to create Kent markets for organisations providing green products, services and technologies.

Question

Do you agree with the objectives? If not, why?

TWT Response

We suggest the following amendment be made as outlined below:

Enable residents and businesses to consume at sustainable levels by offering flexible choices for the way we live, work and travel.

Use resources more efficiently by reducing waste, enabling reuse and recycling, with the remainder being diverted from landfill to energy from waste.

10. Potential priorities for action on Living within our Environmental Limits:

- Reduce domestic water usage.
- Reduce waste arising and going to landfill.

- Improve the biological and chemical quality of our rivers and groundwater to meet Water Framework Directive targets.
- Support communities in improving their sustainability.
- Reduce the footprint of the food chain in Kent.
- Encourage urban design that increases the opportunities for residents to choose sustainable solutions.

Question

From the list of potential priority actions, which three do you think will make the most significant contribution towards delivering the objectives?

TWT Response

Reduce domestic water usage to relieve pressure on existing resources and assist in accommodating the demand from new developments

Reducing waste arising and going to landfill – in particular working on the Love Food Hate Waste campaign, highlighted as having a high impact and working with the waste reprocessing industry to find new, and stimulate existing local, markets for materials collected for recycling

Encourage urban design that increases the opportunities for residents to choose sustainable solutions - Assist in Improve local air quality through a change the priority scoring for investment in highways to address Air Quality Management Area congestion

11. Rising to the climate change challenge

12. Vision for 2030 -A Kent with a thriving low carbon economy that drives a year on year reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Our residents are protected from the financial and health risks of climate change and have increased wellbeing from 'local lifestyles'. The actions we have taken to prepare for the medium and longer term effects of climate change have enhanced the quality and distinctiveness of our landscapes and built environments with:

- Urban design that reduces the impact of extremes of temperature.
- Homes and businesses that are safe from flooding.
- Public services and transport networks that are resilient to severe weather events.
- Linked natural habitats so that wildlife can adapt to changing conditions.

Question

Do you agree with the 20 year vision? Can you suggest any improvements?

TWT Response

Yes, it will drive Kent to make the transition to a low carbon economy to minimise our impact on the environment and to adapt to our changing climate in support of the TWT Sustainable Community Strategy.

13. Target

A 40% reduction in Kent's carbon dioxide emissions by 2030.

Question

Do you think the target is realistic? If not, what targets would you suggest and why?

TWT Response

The target is ambitious and puts the county on track to achieve the UK targets to cut emissions by 34% by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050. It does only relate to the mitigation of climate change through a reduction in emissions. A second target should be considered linked to communities, businesses and service providers taking action to implement plans to adapt flexibly to our changing climate.

14. Objectives

In order to deliver our 20 year vision the Kent Partnership will need to ensure that everyone in the county can, and does, play a role in tackling climate change, from reducing their own emissions to planning for adaptation. Other Kent Strategies will be vital in achieving this, especially Integrated Transport, Housing, and the Regeneration Framework. We will work to:

- Support Kent residents and businesses to reduce their energy consumption and to benefit from a high quality 'local lifestyle'.
- Increase the opportunities for renewable energy generation.
- Provide information to enable services, businesses and individuals to make decisions that are resilient in the face of a changing climate and help them prepare their operations.
- Improve the quality of our natural environment and enable opportunities for wildlife to adapt to climate change.
- Create the conditions to encourage a move to a low carbon economy in Kent and grow the markets for environmental products and services.

Question

Do you agree with the objectives? If not, why?

TWT Response

Yes, objectives supported in principle:

Suggested additional wording- Individuals, communities and businesses and service providers will have taken action to reduce their use of natural resources to minimise CO2 emissions, and have planned to adapt flexibly to our changing climate.

Suggest that the objective to Improve the quality of our natural environment and enable opportunities for wildlife to adapt to climate change is amended to include we will have a local environment that is resilient and adaptable to a changing climate supporting a wide range of biodiversity, and is moved to the Value from our Natural and Living Environments.

15. Potential priorities for Rising to the Climate Change Challenge are:

- Increase the generation of renewable energy at community and micro-level.
- Stimulate green technology and services markets in Kent.
- Substantially reducing carbon in the public sector.
- Reduce domestic carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty.
- Increase public understanding of climate change and the action they can take.
- Ensure the risks to public services posed by climate change are understood and planned for.
- Increase the resilience of habitats and species in Kent to climate change.
- Reduce business travel miles and associated carbon dioxide emissions.

Question

From the list of potential priority actions, which three do you think will make the most significant contribution towards delivering the objectives?

TWT Response

Increase the generation of renewable energy at community and micro-level

Stimulate green technology and services markets in Kent

Reduce domestic carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty through the retrofit of 100,000 homes with smart meters and energy saving measures

16. Value from our Natural and Living Environments

17. Vision for 2030 - A Kent where our environment enhances our economy and quality of life and environmental services provide value for money solutions to

economic and social aspirations. A place where our entire natural, geological, historical and cultural heritage is protected enhanced and celebrated. Where we live, work and play in attractive, clean, healthy and enjoyable places.

Question:

Do you agree with the 20 year vision? Can you suggest any improvements?

TWT Response

Yes, it is tune with TWT's Sustainable Community Strategy for the borough to remain a clean beautiful place to live, work and relax.

18. Target

Halt the decline in biodiversity by 2015 (having failed to do this by 2010).

Increase % of people using green space as part of their weekly exercise by 2015.

Increase % of the number of landscape character areas in the county that are in a favourable condition.

Question

Do you think the targets are realistic? If not, what targets would you suggest and why?

TWT Response

It is suggested that target to Increase % of people using green space as part of their weekly exercise by 2015 is unnecessary as the location that exercise is taken is not relevant

19. Objectives

In order to deliver our 20 year vision the Kent Partnership will need to:

- First and foremost, support existing partnerships and programmes working to add to Kent's distinctiveness by protecting and enhancing our existing cultural, recreational and natural heritage.
- Engage people, communities and schools to help them use, understand and take responsibility for their local green spaces and natural and heritage resources.
- Improve the places where some of Kent's most deprived communities are situated by working on urban and urban fringe green infrastructure and heritage.
- Focus on wildlife by improving habitat connectivity and develop multifunctional spaces that are appropriate in scale, location and management, to meet the needs of wildlife and people.

- Provide the information to place environmental solutions at the heart of business cases for economic and social programmes.

Question:

Do you agree with the objectives? If not, why?

TWT Response

The objectives are supported

20. Potential priorities for action on Valuing our Natural and Living Environments are:

- Make Kent green space brilliant.
- Ensure Kent residents have adequate access to green space.
- Improve the potential for leisure activity in the countryside and enhance opportunities for the tourism industry.
- Improve the health, and resilience to climate change, of threatened habitats.
- Improve our understanding of the value for money provided by protecting and enhancing our ecosystems.
- Improve our understanding of our effect on Kent's landscape.
- Use access to natural environments to improve public health.
- Use the environment as a resource to increase educational attainment.
- Improve residents' connection with their local heritage.

Question

From the list of potential priority actions, which three do you think will make the most significant contribution towards delivering the objectives?

TWT Response

Ensure Kent residents have adequate access to green space

Improve the potential for leisure activity in the countryside and enhance opportunities for the tourism industry.

Use access to natural environments to improve public health