

Climate Local Swale Update December 2015

In November 2012 Swale Borough Council and its partners signed up to Climate Local Swale adopting and adapting Climate Local Kent's targets and commitments. This is a short interim report ahead of a final report next year. Once the Kent Environment Strategy has been adopted both Kent and our Climate Local will be refreshed.

Targets, Commitments and Progress

We will work towards a cut in greenhouse gas emissions of 2.6% annually across all sectors in Swale. This should result in achieving the national target of a 34% reduction by 2020 from the 1990 baseline.

In the financial year 2014/15 Swale Borough Council's own CO₂ emissions fell by 4% exceeding the 2.6% target.

Domestic emissions Borough wide have fallen, while transport emissions have remained static

Over 1800 households on Sheppey have received tailored advice on energy saving via Sustainable Sheppey's Green Doctor.

The council has installed electric vehicle charging points in two of its car parks and has recently taken delivery of an electric car. Parking services have replaced one of their cars with an electric one and other services are considering their use.

We will encourage renewable energy installations. In practice we are confident that Swale will increase its energy from renewable sources by at least 10% by 2020.

Two solar farms are in operation on the Isle of Sheppey and several solar farms on the mainland are under construction.

Two wind turbines on the Isle of Sheppey are generating and four more are under construction in the port.

A legacy of the Sustainable Sheppey project has been the establishment of the Sheppey Renewable Energy Trust. The trust has already installed solar panels on Friendship House and is hoping to install more on other community owned buildings

We will work towards the retrofitting of homes across Swale, including through the work of the Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership.

The partnership has been rebranded as the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership thus widening its scope for work outside of the Green Deal.

Since the start of its work over 150 properties in Swale have received over 170 measures to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

We will work with local companies to help them cut their energy, waste and water bills. We will give them guidance on how climate change could affect their company and how they can plan for it.

We regularly sign post businesses to sources of help, training and support via the e-bulletin and our business website and support.

34 Swale based businesses have Steps to Environmental Management accreditation with 28 at Blue level, five at Silver level and one at Gold

Swale Borough Council has recently supported Southern Water in offering SMEs water audit and free retrofitting of water saving devices. A similar service with the addition of classroom sessions for pupils and students is being offered to schools

We will support activity to reduce water consumption in Swale from 160 litres to 140 litres per person per day by 2016.

We have supported both South East Water and Southern Water in their metering roll out programmes. All domestic properties that can be are now metered on the Isle of Sheppey while roll out is ongoing in the rest of the Borough

We will work to support an increase in jobs within the Low Carbon sector.

89 Swale businesses are registered with Low Carbon Kent.

We will ensure that at least 80% of our local wildlife sites are being positively managed improving our already good performance of 78%.

Swale has 80.6% of our local wildlife sites in positive management.

We will work to ensure that at least 95% of Swale's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) remain in 'favourable' or 'recovering' state.

98.1 % of our SSSIs are in a favourable/recovering condition

We will encourage an increase in volunteering, with a target of a 20% increase in hours spent, and a 20% increase in Swale residents taking part in organised outdoor activities.

Currently volunteering hours remain static, but the Volunteering Strategy is being revisited.

Since its introduction in 2013 staff have recorded 25 days of volunteering in various activities, however we understand that the total is higher as not all activities have been logged.

We will increase flooding resilience of Swale homes and bring in partnership funding for flood measures. We will assess all our services for risks and opportunities and build resilience to climate change into our work.

The Front Brents flood alleviation scheme is being delivered in partnership by the Environment Agency and Swale Borough Council, with contributions from local residents and businesses. Brents Community Association (BCA), Faversham Town Council, and Kent County Council also supporting the project. Design and contract management services are being provided by the East Kent Engineering Partnership (EKEP). The tidal flood defence scheme will protect 22 homes and two commercial properties along Faversham Creek, raising the standard of protection to 1 in 75 chance of tidal flooding each year.

In partnership with KCC, and subject to funding a Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SUD) is being considered for Sittingbourne High Street to relieve surface flooding after heavy rainfall

The Environment Agency's Shoreline Management Plan is currently under review.

Through the work of Coastal Communities 2150 we will support local communities in preparing for climate change through the development of community plans for those most at risk or with greatest opportunities.

As a legacy of CC2150 the Sheppey Environment Forum has been set up to work with communities.

For more details of any of the commitments and targets and our progress please contact the Climate Change Office, Janet Hill, janethill@swale.gov.uk 01795 417341