

Climate

Matters 2021

Climate change and carbon reduction annual statement



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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Foreword



Climate change is the pressing issue of our time and over the last year we have been reminded of this once again, not only in the urgency of fresh reports from national and international bodies like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); but also, in the extreme weather events that we are seeing with increasing regularity around the world.

While climate change is a global issue – every individual, business, council and community must play its part. That's why in 2019 South Kesteven District Council declared a climate emergency, to put the issue at the centre of our agenda as a local authority. I am proud of this decision to take a stand and begin the process of mapping a vision for a more sustainable district.

After setting out the changes we must make to reduce our environmental impact last year, I am pleased to see that this year South Kesteven District Council's carbon footprint has reduced by almost 25%. While the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns played a part in this reduction, it is a strong step in the right direction – and one that we must

do everything to maintain and improve upon in the year ahead to meet not only our own targets, but the nation's target of a net-zero carbon economy by 2050.

Personally, this is an issue I care deeply about, and as someone who wants to see the South Kesteven district thrive, I know that tackling climate change is crucial to ensuring that our district is a great place to work, live, and visit – today and in the future.

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Since our first Climate Matters report last year, South Kesteven District Council has continued to work through the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and adapt to the changes it imposed on our key services. The impact of various lockdowns and compulsory shut down of services had a significant impact on our reported carbon footprint for the last year.

A particularly striking reduction

was seen for some services in particular, with direct and indirect carbon reductions of over 50% compared to our baseline year. We are conscious that we must continue to look for opportunities to reduce the Council's carbon footprint through targeted projects in order to meet our goal to reduce carbon footprint by at least 30% by 2030 and to net-zero carbon as soon as viable after that.

As well as reporting on two successive years of our carbon footprint, both of which saw a reduction in line with targets, we have set out in this report a number of successes which help to reduce the carbon emissions of the Council and the wider district. This work cuts across service areas and demonstrates the need for continued partnership work to contribute towards national targets to decarbonise the economy.

It has been encouraging to see focus and momentum towards the target of net-zero carbon at a national level as we head towards the crucial COP26 climate change conference to be held in Glasgow in November. It is clear there is a shared ambition to rapidly decarbonise sectors including buildings and transport, and local authorities continue have a key role to play in that.

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Introduction

This is the second Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Annual Statement to highlight the activities, achievements and challenges around climate change since South Kesteven District Council's declaration of Climate Emergency in September 2019.

Main sources of South Kesteven District Council carbon emissions in 2020/21

Baseline year=2018/19
CO2e = carbon dioxide equivalent

7600 Baseline total co2e emissions
5711 2020/21 total co2e emissions

-24.85%

Positive



Negative

Mains gas

1344 baseline mains gas co2e emissions
1461 2020/21 mains gas co2e emissions

+8.73%



Positive

Leased Assets

3157 Baseline Leased Asset (Leisure Centres) co2e emissions
1495 2020/21 Leased Asset (Leisure Centres) co2e emissions



Negative

Vehicle fleet

1918 Baseline vehicle fleet co2e emissions
1967 2020/21 vehicle fleet co2e emissions

+2.54%

Positive

Business travel

99 baseline business travel co2e emissions
70 2020/21 baseline business travel co2e emissions

-25.9%

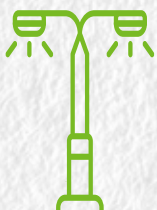


Positive

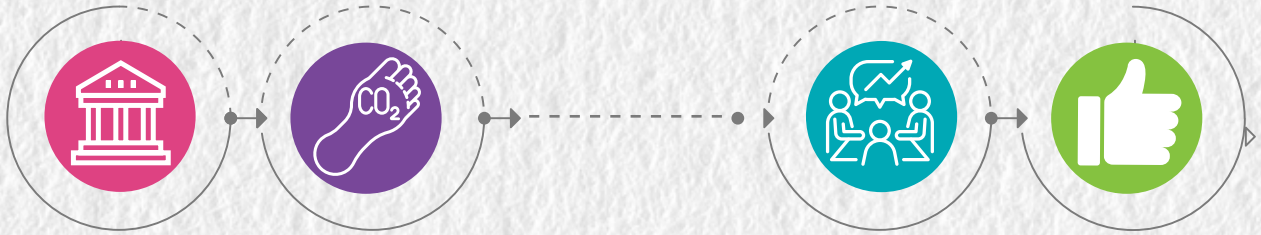
Electricity

1072 baseline electricity use co2e emissions
710 2020/21 electricity use co2e emissions

-33.73%



What has happened in the last year



✓ **Nov 2020**

- **First Climate Matters** report published

✓ **Dec 2020**

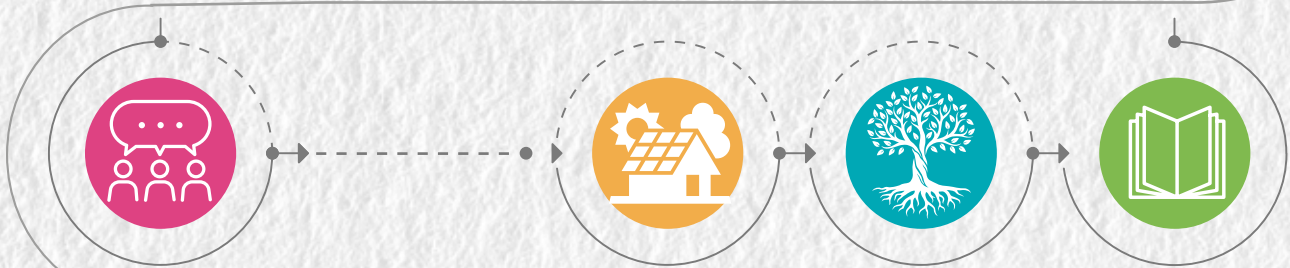
- **Carbon footprint report** for 2019/20 finalised and carbon dashboard developed
- Electric vehicle charging points open in Grantham, Stamford and Market Deeping
- Progress update shared on trial rewilding areas

✓ **Jan 2021**

- First climate change training session for staff held

✓ **Feb 2021**

- Upgrade of heating system at Manor Court flats, Bourne



✓ **March 2021**

- Climate Action Group confirmed as permanent to review Council action

✓ **May 2021**

- Approved allocation of Green Homes Grant upgrades for off gas grid properties

✓ **June 2021**

- Developed bid to DEFRA Treescapes fund with Lincolnshire County Council

✓ **Sept 2021**

- Carbon footprint report for 2020/21 finalised

Over the next 12 months we plan to:

- › Publish Council carbon footprint for 2021/22
- › Review carbon reduction action plan to develop targeted projects to reduce emissions in line with declared targets
- › Conduct review of fleet of Council vehicles to reduce emissions
- › Deliver upgrades in Council housing stock, targeting properties with no gas connection
- › Review the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund for Council housing stock
- › Continue to review opportunities to attract grant funding to help decarbonise key Council functions
- › Develop proposals for greater tree planting within the district to boost biodiversity and contribute to carbon reduction
- › Review the need to adapt to an increased likelihood of extreme weather events, particularly any anticipated impact on Council services
- › Continue to run staff training sessions focusing on climate change and carbon reduction
- › Work to raise awareness with residents, businesses, and other public sector partners
- › Prepare and publish our third annual climate change and carbon reduction statement for autumn 2022



Case Study

Energy and carbon

Upgrade of off-gas grid housing stock

A programme of works to improve energy efficiency has been agreed for over 1000 Council-owned properties. These properties are off the gas supply grid and are heated either by inefficient storage heaters or solid fuel systems, putting tenants at risk of fuel poverty due to high running costs as well as having a high carbon footprint. 160 houses will be upgraded at the end of the year, making use of allocated Green Homes Grant funding, with further upgrades to follow in subsequent years. Each property will be upgraded with either new air source heat pumps or smart storage heaters, supported by solar thermal hot water systems.

Case Study

Efficient LED Streetlights upgrade underway

Over 100 streetlights operated by the Council are due to be upgraded by the end of the year, including lights in Queen Elizabeth Park and nearby riverside walk in Grantham. LED streetlights are around 60% more efficient compared to traditional low sodium fittings. Over 600 lights are due to be upgraded in the next three years, offering significant reductions to the Council's own carbon footprint.

Case Study

Planning

Tree lined streets integrated into new developments

South Kesteven District Council has taken steps to ensure that street trees form an integral part of new large housing developments. Trees planted in new estates provide a boost to biodiversity, sequester carbon and provide shade amongst other benefits. Through partnership work with Design: Midlands, and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), high quality landscaping and street trees are promoted in new developments, with LCC now adopting roads with street trees and taking responsibility for their management. The in-house design panel helps to consider landscaping with developers early in the design process.

Case Study

Decision-making and reporting

Carbon dashboard developed to update on emissions reduction

As part of the monitoring and measurement of the Council's carbon emissions, a new reporting dashboard has been developed to improve transparency and awareness of where reductions or increases in carbon emissions are being achieved. It includes quarterly updates on the four key carbon hotspot areas of gas and electricity used, fleet fuel use and leisure centre energy used each quarter. This oversight into the Council's carbon emissions will help to maintain visibility of the key areas of opportunity to develop carbon reduction and efficiency projects.

Case Study

Biodiversity and green space

Blue Green Corridor boosts biodiversity

The Blue Green corridor project aims to transform the urban river corridor in Grantham and significantly boost habitat quality and biodiversity.

Ambitious plans for Queen Elizabeth Park include the provision of wetland features and river improvements to provide food, shelter and spawning or nesting sites for land and water-based wildlife. By slowing the flow of the river, the project will also help to reduce the peak floodwater during times of heavy rain.

The project is a partnership between South Kesteven District Council, North Kesteven District Council, the Environment Agency and National Trust.



Insight into South Kesteven's district-wide carbon emission figures

Government produces annual data showing each local authority area's carbon emissions, dating back to 2005. This gives a useful insight into both total emissions and the relative proportion per

sector throughout the district of South Kesteven, alongside historic reductions that have been achieved across the area. SKDC's operational carbon emissions represent a small proportion of

total emissions for the district, nevertheless the Council has a significant role to play in leading collaborative efforts to tackle climate change impacts locally.

2%
Public sector
17,900
tonnes carbon

42%
Transport
331,200
tonnes carbon

29%
Industrial and commercial
230,200
tonnes carbon

27%
Domestic
209,200
tonnes carbon

Total
788,500
tonnes carbon

tonnes carbon

Emissions in South Kesteven have

reduced by
30% since 2005.

In 2005, the per capita tonnes of carbon for every South Kesteven resident were:

8.8 tonnes of CO₂e

In 2019

5.5 tonnes of CO₂e



National focus on climate change

As well as considering the emissions of the wider district of South Kesteven, action at the national level against climate change will define our local approach.

COP26 UN Climate Summit

This November, the UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26), which aims to bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris climate agreement of 2015. The UK will seek to demonstrate leadership on climate change and encourage other member states to commit to reductions in carbon emissions, mobilise green finance, focus on adaptation for a changing climate for communities and natural habitats, and work together to deliver on action against climate change.

Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk

The UK government is required to publish a Climate Change Risk Assessment every 5 years which sets out the risks and opportunities from a changing climate. The Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk report was published this year and, alarmingly, found that the gap between the level of risk we face and the level of adaptation underway has widened. The report identifies eight risk areas that require the most urgent attention in the next two years, noting the cost of action now will be cheaper than waiting to deal with the consequences of a changing climate.

UK Transport Decarbonisation Plan

Transport over land is currently the largest emitting sector of the UK economy, and carbon emissions from transport pose a particular problem for more rural areas. Carbon emissions from transport must reduce by 90% by 2050 to meet the economy wide target for net zero carbon. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan was published this summer and sets out a number of policies including measures to ban the sale of large diesel trucks by 2040, and a commitment to electrify the entire fleet of government cars and vans by 2027.

