# Climate Change Action Plan – Annual Progress Report 2023-24

* + - * Climate Emergency UK gave Medway Council a score of 39% for its action on climate, meaning a position of joint 22nd out of all (186) UK single tier authorities.  Only 26 UK single tier authorities scored over 50%.  The findings will support the refresh of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan in 2025.
* The LED street lighting upgrade program is now nearly complete, leading to an encouraging 27.47% reduction in energy usage compared to last year (2022/23).
* We are actively working on our plans to ensure that all council housing stock meets national and government targets for energy efficiency. This year, we completed 650 Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) surveys. The data has allowed us to identify the necessary improvements and costs for properties with an EPC rating below C. Improvement work is scheduled to begin in 2024/25.
* We hosted three information sessions on home retrofitting for homeowners in Medway, partnering with the University of Greenwich and Kent County Council. Our goal was to share helpful and unbiased advice on how to improve energy efficiency and retrofit your home. We welcomed 38 residents to these events. If you missed them, a recording of the session is still available on our climate change webpages.
* The Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) scheme and the Home Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG2) scheme have been launched to help improve energy efficiency for low-income and vulnerable households. ECO4 is designed to support these households in making energy-efficient upgrades to their homes. The HUG2 scheme aims to provide funding for energy-saving upgrades specifically for residents with off-grid gas heating systems who may be affected by rising energy costs. This initiative was recently introduced at Hoo Marina Park, where it benefited approximately 50 eligible properties. These applications have received approval from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, allowing the installations to move forward in 2024/25.
* In partnership with Kent County Council and other districts in Kent, we supported Solar Together Kent for a third year. The group buying scheme enables homeowners and businesses to install solar panels at a reduced price using pre-vetted and approved installers. 82 properties had solar panels installed, which is expected to save 73 tonnes of carbon dioxide across all installs in the first year. 6 homeowners chose to add a battery to an existing solar PV installation. For the first time under this scheme, a Medway based installer was appointed to carry out the installations.
* Work has started on a Detailed Planning Development study for a Heat District Network in Chatham to inform the Council’s understanding.
* We have begun preparing a draft Climate Change policy which will be included in Medway’s Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation in Summer 2024.
* The following funding bids have been successful in 2023/24:
  + £744,379 of Swimming Pool Support Fund from Sport England – for the install of Solar PV and replacement of gas boilers at Hoo Sports Centre.
  + £68,000 of LEVI Capability Funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles – to support delivery of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.
  + £486,418 of Active Travel Funding (ATF4) from Active Travel England - to deliver a School Streets programme.
  + £768,780 of Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP+) Funding from Department for Transport – to support Medway’s Free Bus Weekend and new evening and Sunday frequency uplifts from January 2024.
* A dedicated Electric Vehicle Project Officer has been appointed to oversee delivery of on-street EV charging points across Medway and a new Public Transport Officer has been appointed to assist with promotion of bus services.
* A Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been developed and public consultation completed. High level costings for routes are now being produced.
* Promotion of school active travel initiatives has continued including a new ‘Walkin N Wheelin’ competition (which saw 11,235 active travel journeys made), two new walking campaigns - Little Trekkers and Striders - (which saw 32,227 active travel journeys made) and ongoing delivery of the Bikeability scheme (and the appointment of an additional instructor to enhance availability).
* The School Streets scheme was launched across seven sites in March 2024.
* Three electric vehicles have been acquired this year; one of these is for the Mayor’s Office.
* A living roof bus shelter has been installed on Intra supported by Clear Channel’s Environmental Innovation Fund. The roof comprises a mix of wildflowers and sedum to provide a habitat for pollinating insects and incorporates a solar panel which powers the lighting.
* 30 trees have been planted as part of the Local Authority Tree Fund across Medway to replace trees previously lost.
* Around 50 trees were given away by the Climate Response Team as part of National Tree Week.
* A new Water a Tree scheme has been set up to encourage the local community to support with top up watering of young trees in Medway during dry weather.
* A new Community Climate Working Group (CCWG) was established in October 2023. The group consists of members from various sectors within Medway’s communities. They collaborate to share best practices, identify opportunities and challenges, and promote the climate agenda within their networks.
* A new Climate Change Member Working Party was established in November 2023, with the aim of supporting and encouraging local climate action within their communities and networks. A Climate Action Ward Improvement Plan (CAWIP) template has been developed to help members develop an action plan for their ward for delivery during 2024/25. Members will be expected to report on their progress against the plan every 4 months.
* We hosted 2 interns (one from Greenwich University and one from the University of Kent) during summer 2023 to carry out work in support of the Climate Change Action Plan.
* The new Climate Response Engagement Officer joined the team in May 2023 and completed carbon literacy training. This is the first step in becoming certified as a trainer.
* The 23 Community Actions for 2023 campaign showcased inspiring examples of how people can team up on important topics like Green Energy and Nature-Based Solutions to create stronger, more resilient communities. The "What’s good for us is good for our climate" campaign was launched in January 2024 to promote the link between healthy lifestyle options and a reduced carbon footprint.
* The Climate Response Team attended the Over 55’s Fair, The Medway Schools Creative Network, the Pentagon Great Big Green Week event, Kent and Medway Creative Sector Sustainability Day, the Medway Adult Education Open Day, Medway Pride, Wild about Capstone, Lordswood Beavers’ group, Green Careers Week at Mid Kent college, Annual Major Developer’s Forum, Rochester Eco Fair, Home Energy event for staff at Medway Hospital, Medway Food Partnership annual event, Rainham Eco Hub green drinks, Introduction to Public Health event and Medway Matters Live to talk to people about the Climate Change Action Plan.
* Artwork showcasing the inspiring thoughts of Medway’s young people on climate change has been prominently displayed in Gillingham and Strood town centre. The initiative, led by the Medway Cultural Education Partnership, involved Zest Theatre and Ideas Test delivering workshops in schools and youth settings to engage young people to explore the critical issue of climate change.
* Climate-friendly food actions to inspire individuals, businesses, and organizations are now available on the Medway Food Partnership and Climate Change web pages.
* Medway's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has allocated funding to various charities and community groups to implement initiatives related to climate change. These projects include feasibility studies for developing a scrap store and assessing the viability of a parklet in the Intra area. Additionally, £30,000 has been designated to assist small and medium-sized businesses in Medway in becoming more sustainable through access to grants and net zero audits. The Partners for Green Growth grant has been launched, offering up to £2,500 to businesses with a decarbonisation plan that want to implement measures such as solar panels. Complementing this, a Green Audit scheme has been established in collaboration with the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, providing free audits and decarbonisation plans for businesses looking to begin their journey towards net zero. So far, 12 audits have been completed this year.