

# Canterbury Sustainable Development Goals Forum

## Reports on local implementation of the Goals



Produced by members of the  
Canterbury SDG Forum, March 2019

# Canterbury SDG Forum

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs or Global Goals) are a common plan to address some of the most pressing problems facing the world today. They were agreed in 2015 after years of negotiation and have now been endorsed by every country in the world. There are 17 interconnected goals, each supported by specific targets, aimed at protecting the planet and ensuring global peace and prosperity.

Everyone is responsible for implementing the Global Goals, including national and local governments, businesses, community groups and individuals. That is why we have set up the Canterbury SDG Forum. This is a unique coalition of individuals and representatives of local organisations focussed on advancing the global goals in the Canterbury District.

So far we have:

- presented a petition to Canterbury City Council asking the council to work with local community groups and institutions to identify good practices which promote the SDGs;
- had discussions with officers of Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council to identify where our agendas overlap and how we can work together;
- identified a number of areas where the SDGs, and the more specific targets within them, have a particular local relevance;
- written short reports which analyse local sustainability issues and possible actions to address them.

In 2019 the UK Government will be presenting to the United Nations a Voluntary National Review of its base-line and progress towards addressing the SDGs. Both the Canterbury SDG forum and Canterbury City Council have submitted reports which we hope will be included.

We would now like to take this cooperation further. In the run-up to the local elections on 2 May 2019, candidates will be putting forward their ideas for the future of the district. That future has to be a sustainable future, and we believe that the SDGs can help to focus thinking about what it should be.

This booklet is an updated version of our reports on local activities which relate to the Global Goals. We are sending it to all the parties fielding candidates in the May elections in the hope that they adopt and respond to our suggestions. The Sustainable Development Goals are a vision for a sustainable world and a sustainable district. We believe they should be reflected in the Corporate Plan which will be adopted by the newly elected Canterbury City Council. We also recommend that the new council should appoint a councillor as its SDG Champion to promote and oversee local implementation of the goals.

It is recognised by world leaders that global warming and biodiversity loss are part of a growing global emergency which threatens us all. The Global Goals are an international response. Will Canterbury rise to the challenge of becoming an SDGs city?

# Foreword

Helen Clark

Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999-2008)

United Nations Development Programme Administrator (2009-2017)

I had an opportunity to visit Canterbury in 2017 to address the UN Peace Service at Canterbury Cathedral and was impressed by the thriving civil society in the city and in the surrounding district. I am therefore delighted to see that the new Canterbury Sustainable Development Goals Forum, working with local universities and in consultation with local government, has produced an impressive set of papers on how the SDGs apply locally and align with local sustainable development plans.

Such 'localisation' of the SDGs and their community ownership, involving a bottom-up approach to development, is very much what the United Nations Development Programme was encouraging when I was heading it at the time of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. I therefore warmly welcome this community-led initiative and wish it well in its ongoing work.

Helen Clark

## Local Reports

The ten reports are on:

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We have selected SDGs and Targets which we see as having a particular local relevance for the Canterbury district. However, all the SDGs are interlinked. The ones which we have selected fall under three broad cross-cutting themes:

**NO ONE SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND:** This theme was stressed at the United Nations when the SDGs were adopted. A sustainable future requires particular focus on the needs of those who are most vulnerable. Our reports 1, 3 and 4 are relevant here.

**PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT:** A sustainable future requires strong measures to deal with air quality, the protection of green and open spaces, the management of waste, and the threat of climate change. Our reports 5, 6, 7 and 8 deal with this.

**STRONG INSTITUTIONS:** A sustainable future cannot be achieved without the infrastructure to raise awareness, formulate robust policies and carry them through. Our reports 2, 9 and 10 focus particularly on universities, local democracy, and partnership working.

The Local organisations represented in the Canterbury SDG Forum are:

Amnesty International Canterbury Group, Canterbury Society,  
Canterbury and District Inter-Faith Action, Ethnic Minorities Independent Council,  
Canterbury Christ Church University Soroptimists International (Canterbury),  
Sustainability Team, United Nations Association Canterbury Branch,  
Canterbury District Fairtrade Steering Group, University of Kent Sustainability Team.  
Canterbury Mothers' Union,

The reports have been written by individual members of Canterbury SDG Forum. They reflect a broad consensus, but the particular views and proposals put forward in the reports are those of the individual authors, and are offered here for further discussion. The authors are:

Michael Vince, Stephen Scoffham, Catherine Morris, Emily Mason, Jane Webb, Huw Kyffin, Jan Pahl, John Walker, Martin Vye, Emily Shirley, Sian Pettman, Richard Norman, Carl Wright, and Balasubramanyam Chandramohan



## SDG Goal 3: HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR ALL

### 1. SDG Goal 3 and relevant local targets:

*Targets 3.1, 3.2 & 3.8 concern safer maternal morbidity, ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under-five, and providing universal health coverage.*

*3.4 Reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.*

*3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.*

### 2. The Issues

The World Health Organisation defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". This laudable aspiration is broadly met within the United Kingdom. However our achievements need to be maintained and improved, especially as premature preventable deaths, mental health and well-being, and alcohol and substance abuse still impact negatively within the district.

Whilst many of the specific targets for Goal 3 are exceeded within the UK, the UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development note that socio-economic status adversely influences health outcomes. For a full description of these complex links, see Public Health England's video describing these wider determinants of health. This impact can be seen in the higher morbidity and earlier death within different wards in Canterbury district.

The Kent Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) lead and advise on work to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Kent by promoting joined-up commissioning across the NHS, social care, public health and other services. This is mirrored in the multi-agency Canterbury HWB. Detail from Kent's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy is focused on the specific issues that relate to the District. The intention is for the local Board to ensure effective local engagement and to monitor local outcomes.

Kent County Council (KCC), Canterbury City Council (CCC) and the Canterbury and Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are tasked with planning to achieve the health and wellbeing of the local population. They work with and through an array of associated statutory and voluntary health, social care and environmental organisations. Responsibility sits within the statutory framework for the National Health and Social Care Services, the Public Health Service and more broadly civil society in general, together with education, water, sanitation and policing services in particular.

The CCG's first five year plan identified the need to address i) long-term conditions, including dementia; ii) the provision of services for urgent care, mental health and services for children and young people; and iii) maternity services.

In line with the Kent Health and Wellbeing Strategy, they aimed to ensure that:

- every child has the best start in life
- people take greater responsibility for their own health
- the quality of life, care and support for those with long-term conditions is improved
- those with mental ill health are supported to live well
- people with dementia are assessed and treated earlier.

The CCG outlined their priorities for promoting health and minimising long-term conditions that impact on premature death, disease or disability by detailing the individual behaviour changes needed:

Prevention strategies

To reduce the level of:

- smoking, especially during pregnancy
- obesity
- alcohol consumption and substance misuse.

To increase:

- the level of physical activity.

that can reduce the risk factors for:

- Cancer
- Cardio-vascular disease and stroke
- Diabetes
- Respiratory disease
- Mental ill-health and dementia.

### 3. Observations

The CCG has worked with the other local CCGs to strengthen and reshape the various contracts with NHS and other providers of their health care services. The aim has been to relocate those activities that can be provided safely and efficiently outside the centralised hospital structures and support more local provision. Whilst achieving some qualitative improvements, changing long established practices has proved a slow process.

Initially the CCG aimed to develop primary and local care services, before later concentrating on the redesign of tertiary care. The Encompass GP hub-based approach being developed across Canterbury and the Integrated Care Service in Herne Bay illustrate this work. An evaluated systematic application of the Local Care Model: multi-disciplinary and multi-agency by Encompass, has been shown to provide a deeper and more comprehensive awareness of patient and carer needs, with a more informed and efficient use of available staff.

Increasingly, shared structures and relationships have been formed to work towards meeting the identified targets locally, within East Kent, and more broadly across Kent and Medway.

Many initiatives are being introduced to facilitate the changes sought:

- local GP based hubs now offer services previously only available at a major hospital
- Discharge to Assess: a programme of assessment on arrival at hospital with immediate return home with short-term intensive multi-disciplinary team support, or assessment at home to prevent removal to hospital but providing this same level of intensive support
- wellbeing initiatives: equipment in local open spaces for adult workouts; guided health walks; library based book-reading groups, are elements that might now be used as a focus for newly developing social rather than drug based prescribing.

Other wellbeing initiatives include:

- dementia cafés and befriending services
- children/family and young people centres
- domestic abuse support systems
- men's SHEDs and gardening groups
- help and support for young people
- peer group support and mental health centres

In preparing this report on the effectiveness and outcome of the CCG's strategy, it became clear that longer term health and well-being improvements will require effective support for women and families in the early years of a child's life and when supporting families or individuals on low incomes and those who are unemployed. This demands an emphasis on some of the other elements in the Starting Well and Living Well sections of the age specific programme identified by Kent's Director of Public Health, outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Kent Public Health Director's age based needs approach for addressing issues:

<p><b>Starting Well:</b> programmes which address maternal, infant, child and young peoples' health together, with related immunisation and vaccination opportunities;</p> <p><b>Living Well:</b> initiatives aimed to assist adults live healthy, stimulating and productive lives. These recognise the impact of population changes over time; the potential for more healthy life-style choices and the impact of housing, employment and environmental factors on wellbeing. Specific diseases identified, cancers, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), coronary heart disease and stroke, have been shown to influence long-term chronic ill-health and early death and these are seen to be negatively associated with socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Mental health and wellbeing issues include mental distress, illness, self-harm and suicide. These are often also associated with substance misuse, alcohol and drug addictions, which may also contribute to increased levels of domestic abuse.</p> <p><b>Ageing Well:</b> focuses on facilities to provide socially stimulating opportunities and activities to enable older people to continue living well at home, with appropriate support and relief for carers. Services to support those with falls and fractures, stroke and transient ischaemic attacks (TIAs), dementia and end of life care are all seen as important resources, particularly when seeking to prevent entry to or enabling early discharge from hospital.</p>
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Commissioners are charged with ensuring they listen to and engage effectively with the public as services are remodelled. Canterbury CCG has developed a range of meetings to explore ideas and respond to questions from the public:

- large parts of the Board's meetings are open to the public and expressly seek questions
- various locality, public reference and disease specific group meetings have been held
- GPs are asked to ensure that their Patient Participation Groups know of planned changes
- specific information-giving and consultation meetings have been held with extensive recording and reporting on the outcomes before decisions are taken. Much of this work has been on an East Kent and more recently Kent and Medway wide basis.

The breadth and depth of the work undertaken by the commissioning group has been phenomenal, but the bureaucracy required to keep everyone informed is very demanding and perhaps counter-productive, in that it has removed highly skilled people from the delivery of services.

There is extensive community and social work support from local church based groups: drop-in centres provide a social environment, support in making housing and benefit applications, with guidance on any subsequent appeal, and the provision of local foodbank distribution centres. This often involves work previously undertaken by paid staff in local authority or government offices.

Canterbury Soroptimists have worked with the local health services to initiate a text alert system to remind women to make monthly checks of their breasts. Currently they volunteer for arts projects run by Age UK and support Target Ovarian Cancer by taking part and stewarding their sponsored walks.

Obtaining grant funding from either the local authority or Lottery demands extensive work on the part of the agencies seeking to offer services, which may preclude some applicants. The Umbrella Centre in Herne Bay and Home Start family support service have obtained lottery support, but it was seen as a very challenging process.

There are significant problems in recruiting to meet the needs of an ever growing and ageing

population. The need for a workforce with appropriate skills is recognised, but GPs, specialist nurses and consultants are a shrinking resource. Equally, paramedic staff are now more highly trained, resulting in their being able to undertake home visits or run Minor Injury Units within the purview of GP practices. This puts pressure on the numbers available for the prime focus of emergency ambulance work.

Changing the way people work within and across distinctly different health and care systems is a long term challenge. *Local-Care* needs to be seen to be available and effective everywhere, before the public are likely to accept the proposed change to tertiary services.

It is essential to identify and effectively disseminate accounts of progressive and successful initiatives. Whilst some of the health trusts publish magazine style updates on their initiatives, these can be limited in their distribution. Radical changes are planned and will only be accepted if it is demonstrated that new ways of working really do bring benefits and are not merely cost saving measures.

Valuable detail on health, well being and unhealthy lifestyle behaviours are available through the Public Health Observatory and are used by the various agencies. However general awareness of this data is limited. The latest Local Health Profile identifies that the health of people in Canterbury is varied when compared with the England average:

<b>Extract based on the Local Health Profile published July 2018</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about 16% (3,600) of children live in low income families (2015)</li> <li>• 45 conceptions to under 18 yr olds (2016) (Lower than Kent, may indicate benefit from a previous Public Health initiative)</li> <li>• 233 (17%) of children in year 6 were classified as obese, (better than the average for England - 2016/7)</li> <li>• 13 under 18 yr olds were admitted for alcohol-specific hospital stays (45 between 2014-17)</li> <li>• men die 7.1 yrs and women 3.5 yrs earlier in the most deprived areas of Canterbury than in the least deprived; (however, life expectancy is similar to the England average - 2014-16)</li> <li>• 15% of mothers smoking at time of delivery is worse than the England average (2016/17)</li> <li>• 77% of women are supported to initiate breastfeeding (better than the England average - 2016/17)</li> <li>• 854 hospital stays in 2016/17 for alcohol-related harm (better than the England average)</li> <li>• 376 hospital stays for self harm in 10-24 year olds (lower than the Kent average and a decrease in 2017/18)</li> <li>• estimated levels of adult excess weight and physical activity are better than the England average</li> <li>• rates of sexually transmitted infections (2017) and TB (2014-17) are better than average.</li> </ul>

Changes in relation to teenage conception rates and in the level of self-harm in 10-24 yr olds indicate that public health initiatives can directly influence behaviour. Identifying such progress is often a long-term process.

A Kent based research project into *Teenage Parents' Views and Experiences of Sex and Relationships Education*, in 2007, preceded a new initiative to reduce teenage pregnancies. The conception rate in Kent for under 18 yr olds has reduced from 34.6/1000 in 2010 to 18.5/1000 in 2016, in Canterbury it went from 26/1000 in 2010 to 17.8/1000 in 2016.

Between 2016 and 2018 a number of students in Kent Secondary Schools have completed a Mind and Body programme run by Addaction. An evaluation by researchers at the University of Bath of the wider programme showed 81% of participants had fewer self harm thoughts, 91% reduced self harm actions and 73% reported better emotional wellbeing. This result accords with the reduced level of self harm identified in the Canterbury profile for 2017/18.

The WHO European Region report maintains "Health and wellbeing are universal human goals



which are increasingly seen as central to human development and security. Health is no longer seen as simply items of consumption to be financed but is considered an asset that needs to be nurtured and equitably improved and also as a positive concept, emphasising social and personal resources as well as physical capacity." These are increasingly seen as major components for equitable human, economic and social wellbeing.

#### **4. The way forward**

We recognise that workforce constraints are a limiting factor for the NHS achieving the changes planned and believe that they must be addressed urgently. We also acknowledge that structural change every five to ten-years combined with a continuous demand for savings with increased workload, result in lowered staff morale, undermining progressive programmes for change.

With regard to Kent Health and Wellbeing Board and the Canterbury CCG, we believe that the Director of Public Health should ensure that the Annual Report on the Health of the People of Kent is available in hard copy at all major libraries in Kent. The key messages should be publicised widely. The Board and CCG should consider the health, social and economic consequences of ever increasing outsourcing of services. There is a serious risk of fragmentation and associated loss of morale in established services through the use of outsourcing contracts. Such contracts are often associated with a reduction in funding. It seems counter-intuitive to fund extra layers of bureaucracy for in-house monitoring and contract development for both organisations.

The Commissioners should be alert to the adage "Because I plan it/say it - it actually happens", and acknowledge when the public or their staff challenge this view. We also consider that successful achievement of the desired changes in behaviour or organisational structures should be widely publicised in all available publications within the local area. It should be recognised that effective support, recognition and value of staff in all of the health and social care organisation is essential for success. The current round of public meetings appears to be more successful as "listening events" and may well pave the way for a broader understanding of the longer term need for change. Early public meetings were perceived as being "stage managed" with a firmly controlled agenda which sought to produce the desired outcome.

The non-governmental agencies supporting women and families and mental health groups are often dependent on volunteer workers. They are especially vulnerable in the current economic climate and commissioners will need to demonstrate their appreciation and where necessary ensure financial support.

There is a risk to effective local engagement and direction if the eight CCGs are ultimately incorporated within one Kent and Medway body. It is disappointing to learn that local Health and Wellbeing Boards are to be closed, but reassuring to note that this is being resisted in Canterbury.

#### **5. Proposal for consideration by Canterbury City Council**

It is important to recognise and seek to mitigate social health issues, such as major disparities in wealth, continued austerity, changes and pressures within the benefits system, insufficient and un-affordable housing, and the apparent lack of environmental housing control measures, especially of houses in multiple occupation, which can undermine plans to engage individuals in looking to improve their own health and well being.

## SDG GOAL 4: SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION



### 1. SDG Goal 4 and relevant local target:

*Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*

*Target 4.7 By 2030 ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture for peace and nonviolence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.*

### 2. National context

Universities around the UK have been slow to embrace sustainability. They are large institutions with complex portfolios and multiple agendas. Issues such as inclusion, employability and retention are key concerns for managers. The need to compete for students in a commercialised market place is another imperative. Sustainability was for many years a fringe issue which attracted only sporadic support. It is now slowly moving up the agenda but still only attracts a very small percentage of the university annual budget (typically one tenth of 1%) and often depends on the enthusiasm and commitment of individual tutors.

There are, however, some encouraging signs of progress. For example, in recent years government initiatives have nudged universities into looking more closely into how they manage their estates to reduce energy demands. The introduction of measurable targets associated with carbon management plans has driven significant changes in practice. Unfortunately the academic portfolio has not proved so malleable. This is partly because tutors have always jealously guarded their academic freedom and cannot be easily directed. It is also because students themselves, whilst expressing a commitment to sustainability, often adopt an instrumental approach to their studies.

It would be helpful if the status of sustainability in estate management was enhanced through greater use of national compliance regulations. To strengthen the place of sustainability in the academic portfolio, a national fund and award scheme should be established to support academic staff undertaking sustainability initiatives. Questions to do with sustainability should be given greater weight in student and university league tables, and encouragement given to supporting sustainability research through research assessment and reporting mechanisms.

### 3. Policy context

At a national level, there have been numerous reports and guidance documents which call for a greater focus on sustainability. One key landmark was the publication in 2014 of guidance for UK higher education providers by the Higher Education Academy and Quality Assurance Agency. This set out a range of graduate outcomes in four key areas: (a) global citizenship, (b) environmental stewardship, (c) social justice, ethics and well-being, (d) future-thinking. Policy documents emanating from international agencies such as UNESCO have also proliferated. Education was one of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) and is now one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030).

#### 4. Applying SDG 4 in a local context

Both Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) and the University of Kent (UoK) have expressed their commitment to sustainability in internal and external policy documents as well as in the prospectuses they present to students. They have both signed the SDG Accord which affirms their support for the SDGs and commits them to a reporting and dissemination process. Both universities have carbon management plans for their estates and they both support staff in developing sustainability initiatives.

##### *University of Kent*

Sustainability has been an active concept at the University of Kent for the past decade, focusing primarily on operational environmental management and creating opportunities for students to engage informally with sustainability through student societies and volunteering. The signing of the SDG Education Accord by the Vice-Chancellor in February 2018 and subsequent inclusion of a commitment to ESD as part of the University Strategy Refresh have provided a mandate to look at where sustainability can be embedded into the formal curriculum at the university.

This process was initiated over the summer of 2018 through a desktop mapping of all current courses and modules against the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This exercise has provided a baseline from which it is hoped academic schools can build upon existing synergies with the SDGs. Over the next few years we will use the information gathered to raise awareness, empower academics and begin to identify areas of improvement which will be targeted by the emerging University Sustainability Strategy.

The Sustainable Development Goals also feature at the heart of the University of Kent's new culture change project, *FutureProof*. *FutureProof* builds on the successes of previous behaviour change projects (Green Impact and Green15) engaging staff and students to help deliver a University of the future, providing a framework that challenges and supports each University department to review their impacts against the SDGs and working to create positive change. One of *FutureProof's* main aims is to engage the academic community with sustainability beyond the traditional behaviour change model and support them in embedding sustainability into their modules and using the campus as a living lab.

Through Kent Business School, *FutureProof* has supported the addition of sustainability into the formal market research curriculum as well as into informal activities during the school's enhancement week. Sustainability challenges are being used as case studies for students to carry out market research locally, producing recommendations and materials that can be used on campus.

*FutureProof* is also supporting the academic staff in the School of European Culture and Languages to work on case studies of how sustainability may be embedded into a curriculum that is not seen as a traditional fit with sustainability content.

Outside of *FutureProof* the Sustainability Team are encouraging participation in sustainability education by facilitating two Environmental and Sustainability modules as part of the Kent Extra Study Plus project. The Sustainability team is also currently working with academic staff on planning a one-day symposium event for students and academic staff, to learn more about ESD and sustainability pedagogy, hear from other universities across the sector on what they have done and explore co-creation of sustainability module content in joint workshops. It is hoped that this event will raise the profile of ESD across the university and equip academic staff with the knowledge and skills to embed sustainability across their portfolios.

### *Canterbury Christ Church University*

Building the profile of sustainability education at CCCU is a process that has extended over at least a decade and which is still by no means complete. As in many universities the 'greening' of the estate proved a relatively easy target which began with a focus on the three 'R's (reduce, re-use, recycle). Since then, the estate has started to be used for a range of imaginative initiatives. Parts of the grounds have been planted with heritage fruit trees, insect 'hotels' have been set up around the site and a maze cut into the lawn to provide a space where staff and students can relax and reflect. Historically, the university site was once part of a monastic foundation. The 'beer, bread and honey' project, which was launched a few years ago, not only harks back to ancient traditions, but involves students in collecting yeast from around the site and tending the hops which have been planted around the old tennis courts. The beer is marketed under names selected by students – 'Green Chapel Ale', 'St Thomas Ale' and now, 'St Gregory's Ale'. There are also raised beds and allotment plots which encourage groups to come together to grow vegetables and flowers.

Developing sustainability in the academic portfolio has run alongside these developments. A key policy has been to provide staff with modest funding to develop their courses and enhance their skills. Nearly 100 different projects have been supported by what is known as the *Futures Initiative*. Groups of staff in different faculties have begun to build communities of practice which have proved very effective in harnessing creativity. Every faculty is involved. In the Department of Criminology a new programme on policing now focuses on social welfare and community structures. The Faculty of Health and Well-being has shown particular interest in the links between sustainability and medical practice. Students working in Film and Media Studies have engaged with the Kent coastal communities where there are high levels of social deprivation.

One outstanding initiative was the *Whole Earth?* exhibition which was displayed at CCCU during the academic year 2015-16 and opened by an ex-Canterbury student and teacher, Michael Morpurgo. Some 60 metres long, it featured award winning photographs by the pioneering environmental photographer Mark Edwards, and sought to provoke students and staff to reflect on and modify their courses and programmes of study. The exhibition was subsequently shared with a partner university in India where a team of CCCU students participated in a two-day joint conference on sustainability.

These various activities are underpinned by a common philosophy and set of principles. There is a commitment to voluntary and evolutionary change, a supportive organisational structure and a collegiate approach that has minimal hierarchies. Whilst this approach is mirrored to some extent by practice in other universities, CCCU has benefitted from the active support of senior management and has found ways to build on its historical and geographical setting in a consistent way to build its profile. CCCU also has its own Student Green Office which works directly with students and a dedicated team of sustainability staff that operates independently of other structures rather than within the Estates Department. It is also collaborating with The National Union of Students (NUS) on an initiative called [Responsible Futures](#) designed to promote engagement with sustainability-related themes within Higher Education.

CCCU now has a national and international reputation for its sustainability work. The experience in leading and developing sustainability is documented in a recent publication, *Leadership for Sustainability in Higher Education* (Haddock Fraser, Rands and Scoffham, 2018) published by Bloomsbury Academic. In 2018, CCCU was the international winner of the EAUC

green gown award which recognises 'continuous professional improvement' over a period of at least seven years.

*Building on the achievements*

Notwithstanding the difficult financial situation for the universities, we would like to see increased funding for sustainability related activities so that they can be delivered by a dedicated staff team reporting directly to the Principal or Vice Chancellor. These activities should include:

- sustainability initiatives are promoted to link the local community, student body and university activities;
- sustainability literacy is both identified and fully articulated as a graduate attribute;
- sustainability is included in a meaningful way in any newly validated courses whatever the discipline.

**5. Proposals for consideration by Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council**

CCC and KCC should work with the universities by using the opportunities which they can provide to raise awareness of the SDGs, and drawing on the available expertise to help with local implementation of the SDGs.

## **SDG Goal 5: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS**



### **1. SDG Goal 5 and relevant local target:**

5.2 *Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.*

### **2. Issues**

*Domestic abuse* is an incident or a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, often by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. In the vast majority of cases it is experienced by women and perpetrated by men. It is very common and one in four women and girls are affected. Domestic abuse occurs at every level of society. These crimes are as prevalent in Canterbury as they are throughout the UK. Currently 12 women and their children live in the Canterbury Refuge. Other women and girls are supported in the community by a helpline, advice centre, counselling and programmes.

*Human trafficking* involves recruiting, harbouring or transporting people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion and forced to work against their will. Modern day slaves are owned or controlled by an “employer”, through actual or threatened abuse. They are dehumanised and treated as commodities, physically constrained, and restrictions are placed on their freedom of movement. Modern day slavery and trafficking involves UK citizens as well as people trafficked into this country. Trafficked women work in the city’s nail bars and in the sex trade.

### **3. Violence against women in Canterbury district**

Domestic violence is one type of crime which is often hidden or under-estimated. Evidence from the national Crime Survey shows that every year nearly 2 million people, mainly women, suffer domestic abuse and every month seven women are killed by their partner or ex-partner. If similar rates apply in Canterbury it means that over 1000 women experience domestic violence each year.

In Canterbury, Centra are contracted by Kent County Council to provide refuge accommodation for women who have had to leave home because of violence. The refuge also provides child and adult counselling, play facilities and emergency provision of essential food and toiletries. At the same time the Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Service supports women and children affected by domestic violence in Canterbury and East Kent, offering a helpline, counselling, a range of programmes and a team of independent domestic violence advocates. However, all these services have been affected by financial cutbacks. For example, in 2018 the refuge accommodated 18 families but had to turn 44 families away. Moving on into permanent accommodation is hard because of the lack of social and affordable housing, so women and children have to remain at the refuge and spaces are less likely to become available for those who need them.

The introduction of Universal Credit has increased hardship, because of the five-week waiting period before benefits are paid and the imposition of the benefit cap. This means that the refuge may have to support women and children for five weeks or more. There are also issues about court procedures in which women come face to face with their attackers. Proving support for women going to court is important.

In tackling violence and sexual abuse it is important to remember that this is largely a crime perpetrated by men, with both men and women as victims. It is often associated with the abuse of alcohol and other substances, though it also arises from a sense of entitlement and from anger. Changing male attitudes and behaviour must be one goal and there has been some success with courses for male offenders.

While domestic violence continues, refuges for women and children are crucial, as well as financial and housing support. Support for the refuge from Kent County Council is very welcome but women still face serious problems. Leaving a violent home may leave a family penniless and essentially homeless, even though the refuge can provide emergency accommodation. So policy responses should include building more rented houses which people can afford, such as council houses, and paying Universal Credit when people first apply rather than after many weeks.

#### **4. Activity by local groups**

*Canterbury Soroptimists* help to tackle issues of domestic violence locally by running social events at the Refuge, and providing a friendly reception at the advice centre. They also work to raise awareness of human trafficking and modern day slavery. Every year, in partnership with the Gulbenkian Theatre, the "UN 16 Days to End Violence Against Women" are marked with a display, short films and a collection for domestic abuse charities.

*Amnesty International* has a focus on empowering women and girls. They support organisations in Burkina Faso to transform the lives of women and girls at risk of early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The Canterbury group, in partnership with Soroptimists, successfully campaigned for a Cambodian activist, Tep Vanny, to be released from prison.

Every year Amnesty organises a campaign called "Write for Rights" in which the public is invited to write cards or letters in support of selected political prisoners. Several of those given support in this way are women campaigning for equal rights for women.

#### **5. Proposals for consideration by Kent County Council and Canterbury City Council:**

*Violence against women locally:*

The councils should work with the relevant agencies to achieve progress on:

1. Employing enough police and ensuring they are on duty when much crime and anti-social behaviour occurs, that is during the evening and at night
2. Reducing opportunities for alcohol consumption and limiting licensing hours
3. Ensuring a secure and long-term source of funding for refuges, and providing financial support and advice for those who have experienced violence
4. Increasing the provision of social or council housing to enable women and children to move on into their own homes

*Human trafficking*

Canterbury SDG Forum is pleased that the Council has adopted an Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy and a Supplier Code of Conduct to ensure that its contractors and suppliers comply with the Modern Slavery Act.

The councils should work with their partners to raise awareness of modern day slavery and human trafficking, taking steps to prevent them, and should audit their supply chains to ensure that modern day slavery and human trafficking are avoided and suppliers have positive policies to promote gender equality.



## SDG Goal 11: HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

### 1. Relevant SDG Goal and Target

*Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*

*Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services and up-grade slums*

### 2. The issues

#### *Changing patterns in housing*

Recent years have seen profound changes in the ways that people are housed in England, with fewer people being able to afford their own homes and fewer living in council housing, while more are living in the private rented sector and more are becoming homeless. The English Housing Survey provides information about different types of housing and the changing patterns of ownership.

The last ten years have seen a fall in the proportion of households who own their homes, from 71 per cent in 2003 to 64 per cent in 2015. There has also been a fall in the proportion of households who live in the social rented sector (council houses or housing association properties) from 18 per cent in 2007 to 17 per cent in 2015.

The most significant change has been the increase in households living in the private rented sector, from 13 per cent in 2007 to 19 per cent in 2015. There have been substantial increases in the number of households with children living in the private rented sector and in the number of young people. In 2004 around a quarter of young people aged 25-34 lived in the private rented sector but this had increased to nearly half by 2015.

These changes can be summed up as a crisis of affordability. This reflects a number of different trends. They include the rising cost of land, which has led to enormous increases in the cost of new housing, the sale of council housing, which has reduced the numbers of affordable houses, a labour market which provides fewer opportunities for young people, and wage and salary rises which have not kept pace with the rise in house prices.

Since 2012, 103,642 council homes and 46,972 housing association properties for social rent have been lost in England mainly because they were converted to expensive 'affordable rent' properties or sold off under the Right to Buy scheme introduced in 1980. In addition, central government cuts and regulations have prevented local councils building new homes. Just 1,102 new social homes were completed in England in 2017 - down from 36,700 in 2010.

There continues to be a problem with the quality of homes: too many are still neither adequate nor safe. In 2016, a fifth of dwellings in England (20 per cent or 4.7 million homes) failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. The private rented sector had the highest proportion of non-decent homes (27 per cent) while the social rented sector had the lowest at 13 per cent. Among owner occupied homes, 20 per cent failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard in 2016. The problems included damp, poor insulation and neglect of the structure of the dwelling.

Concern about climate change and about the numbers of houses needed have led to some innovative approaches to house building. These include sustainable houses with zero carbon footprints and well designed, high quality factory-built houses which can be assembled on site in days rather than months. A study funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation focused on how sustainable homes can be built more cheaply. It identified the multifaceted nature of



sustainability, and proposed that energy efficiency and tackling greenhouse gas emissions should be key elements of policy for those responsible for delivering new housing.

The Code for Sustainable Homes was introduced in 2006 to help reduce UK carbon omission and create more sustainable homes. Unfortunately, though the code is still operational it is not mandatory in the UK. At the same time other countries have been making progress with the development of more sustainable domestic architecture, designing buildings such as the *Hanse haus*, *Baufritz homes* and the *Weberhaus*. Such innovations can both improve the quality and quantity of the housing stock, protect the environment and also speed up the rate of provision of social and affordable housing.

### *Homelessness*

There is a continuing and growing problem of homelessness in the country as a whole. 'Homelessness' can mean anything from sleeping rough in the street to living in cars and garden sheds, and from 'sofa surfing' to simply lacking a secure home of one's own. However, there are crucial differences between households who are homeless and who have some claim on a local authority for help and those who do not have such a claim.

Most official statistics on homelessness relate to the "statutory homeless", that is to those households which meet specific criteria of priority need set out in legislation, and to whom a homelessness duty has been accepted by a local authority. Such households are rarely homeless in the literal sense of being without a roof over their heads but are more likely to be threatened with the loss of, or are unable to continue with, their current accommodation.

For households which are unintentionally homeless, and in a priority need category (such as having dependent children), the local authority has a duty to provide accommodation. This includes the provision of suitable temporary accommodation until settled accommodation is available. These households are referred to as statutorily homeless acceptances.

As well as the statutory duties to priority need households, local authorities also have a duty to provide free advice and assistance to all households threatened with homelessness. Local authorities often go beyond this to proactively attempt to prevent or relieve homelessness. These actions are discretionary and thus approaches may vary considerably between authorities.

Even those families who are accepted as homeless and in priority need may find themselves in an unsatisfactory situation. The family may be placed in temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfast hotels or hostels where often a whole family will live in a single room, sharing bathrooms and kitchens with other residents.

However, many homeless people do not qualify for help from the local authority. Homeless people without children are essentially on their own, while even those with children may not qualify for help if it is considered that they became homeless intentionally. They are left with few choices, of which the best is the private rented sector. With short-term contracts, unpredictability, poor conditions and high costs, this form of housing is unsuitable for many households, especially those who are vulnerable and in need of a stable, secure home.

The housing charity, Shelter, estimates that at least 320,000 people were homeless in Britain in 2018. This figure rises every year, despite government pledges to tackle the crisis. Overall, 50,000 more children in England, Wales and Scotland were homeless in 2018 compared with five years before, a rise of 59 per cent. There have been particularly sharp increases in some affluent, high housing cost, Conservative heartlands in south-east England.

The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018. The Act modifies and extends

existing homelessness protection in a number of key ways. Under the Act, everyone in a local housing authority's district should be able to access free information and advice on preventing homelessness and securing accommodation when homeless. Someone who is in danger of becoming homeless in the next 56 days has the right to talk to a homelessness officer and this should lead to the development of a personalised plan focused on finding somewhere to live.

### *The cost of land for housing*

Many housing problems are caused or exacerbated by the high price of land. When land is allocated for residential or mixed-use development in a Local Plan the value of the land goes up almost overnight from around £8,000 an acre for agricultural land to over £1 million per acre for residential land use. This is because land with planning permission is a scarce commodity and developers will outbid each other to buy it. The cost of the land for the average new home is a third or more of the overall selling price of the house. With this upfront cost, before even a brick has been laid or any infrastructure provided, the selling price of the house is going to be far beyond the reach of most ordinary people whether to buy or to rent.

This huge increase in value is created when the local community, through the operation of the planning system, grants planning permission for change of use from agricultural to residential. In the past there have been attempts by successive governments to capture some of this increase in value for the general public but this has always failed because the response of landowners has generally been to withhold land from the market to avoid any sharing of the increased value the community creates, and to await a more favourable tax regime.

What is now needed is a new system whereby local authorities not only grant planning permission but also compulsorily acquire the land for development at land values that will enable affordable housing and community infrastructure to be provided. Having used compulsory powers to acquire the land they would then be able to produce a masterplan that could deliver both the community's vision for their own town or city and housing that ordinary people could afford to rent or buy.

This approach would require the repeal of the Land Compensation Act 1961 and its replacement with legislation that compensated landowners for their land in a more equitable way as between the landowner and the community who grant the planning permission. A recent report from the Select Committee of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government pointed to the lessons to be learnt from Germany and the Netherlands and concluded, *'We believe that increases in the value of privately-owned land arising from public policy decisions should be shared with the local community'*.

### **3. The local context**

The housing situation in Canterbury is similar to that for much of the rest of southern England. That is to say, the majority of people have homes that are adequate, safe and affordable, but there is a substantial minority for whom this is not the case. The lack of affordable housing to buy or rent, homelessness, and sub-standard homes are all causes for serious and continuing concern.

Much is said in planning applications about the commitment by the developer to build more 'affordable' homes. With over 16,000 new homes due to be built in the district over the next fifteen years, it would seem as if the housing shortage will soon be solved. However, the commitment to building 'affordable' homes is misleading. The government's definition is that affordable homes should cost no more than 80 per cent of the average local market price. However, the disparity between earnings and the price of housing makes it increasingly hard

for people to be able to buy these so-called, 'affordable' homes. Kent County Council data showed that in 2018 the average weekly earnings for residents of Canterbury were £432.10 per week. At the same time Zoopla calculated that the average price paid for a house in Canterbury was £353,746. This means that in Canterbury the average house price is more than fifteen times the average annual income. This can be compared with figures from the Office of National Statistics showing that on average, full-time workers could expect to pay around 7.8 times their annual workplace-based earnings on purchasing a home in England and Wales in 2017.

The situation in Canterbury is much harder for people trying to buy a home. So-called 'affordable' houses which cost 80 per cent of the average house price for the area will cost more than twelve times the average income and so are completely unaffordable for the majority of local people, especially young people. House prices in Canterbury are higher than elsewhere because of competition from the buy-to-let sector, which caters for the large student population living in houses in multiple occupation, while incomes are lower than in other parts of Kent.

Increasingly young people will find themselves living in the private rented sector. In this situation it is important that the sector is properly regulated. The City Council has set up Canterbury lettings, which is a social lettings agency to match tenants and properties. It gives advice to both landlords and tenants, manages properties and deals with anti-social behaviour. Over the next 20 years or so more than 16,000 new homes are due to be built in the district. Sadly there does not seem much interest among developers working in Canterbury in building more sustainable homes and in using the innovative building methods which are being developed in other European countries. Unless things change it seems that Canterbury will see the spread of yet more poorly insulated and inefficient homes which will be expensive for occupiers and will add to the problems of climate change.

#### *Social or council housing*

'Social' housing was developed in order to provide rented accommodation that is genuinely affordable to people on low incomes. This type of housing may be provided by housing associations or by local councils, when it is often described as 'council' housing. Whereas accommodation in the private sector, whether bought or rented, is to all intents and purposes rationed by price, social housing is rationed by criteria set up by local authorities.

In Canterbury social housing is allocated according to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme. This sets out a range of criteria which include: being in housing need, having a low income, having a local connection, having critical medical or welfare needs, having served with the armed forces and other characteristics. Those who score highly according to these criteria are more likely to qualify for accommodation.

However, the reality is that few houses are available. Figures published by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government for the year 2016/17 show that 19,059 households were waiting for a council property in Kent. Gravesham has the highest social housing waiting list with 3,629 on the register, followed by Canterbury with 2,709, 2,156 in Thanet, 1,939 in Dover, and 1,454 in Shepway. Maidstone has the lowest at 603.

There continues to be a serious shortage of affordable housing. In the city many family-sized homes are now used as shared student houses. In Whitstable there is a proliferation of homes that have been bought by people from outside the district for use as second homes. In Herne Bay there are homes to let but the changes to the benefits system may mean they become

unaffordable for many people. The competition for accommodation and its relative scarcity contributes to high housing costs. Combined, these factors make it difficult for many local people, particularly families with children, to find suitable homes that they can afford.

The Canterbury City Council's Housing Needs Survey of 2009 calculated that 1,104 new affordable homes are needed every year. Existing affordable homes meet only 23 per cent of housing needs. Affordable, decent housing is one of the top five issues for local residents, particularly those under 40 years of age.

Against this background a recent announcement seems both welcome and inadequate. It was announced in July 2018 that more than 60 new council homes will become available to desperate families as part of a £23 million deal. Canterbury City Council revealed details of the substantial investment, which will see it convert student accommodation into flats and houses. The authority has bought the freehold of 44 properties off Sturry Road, which include 193 student bedsits, five three-storey town houses and a three-storey block of flats. This is welcome news but it is a drop in the ocean of housing need in the district.

### *Homelessness in Canterbury*

Homelessness is a continuing and growing problem. The council has a responsibility for homeless people in priority need, but for others the only help comes from charities, most of which are short of funds for their work. Catching Lives, the charity for homeless people in Canterbury, estimates that the number of rough sleepers on an average night is 70+, representing an increase on previous years. The difficulties they face include a lack of affordable housing in and around the area, the fact that many supported accommodation projects have waiting lists of up to a year, and a lack of statutory mental health services.

Porchlight is a Kent-wide charity which supported over 5000 people across the county in 2014/15. The organisation provides help to people who have nowhere to go and no-one to turn to. Porchlight's rough sleeper service gets excellent results and in 2017 87 per cent of the people they supported were helped off the streets. The charity recently received Big Lottery funding which has offered some much-needed stability for the service. However, the future for many homeless people in Kent remains uncertain.

The life expectancy of a homeless person is 30 years below the UK average. On the streets, problems related to a person's physical and mental health are amplified. This keeps them in a cycle of poor health and at risk of premature death.

Poor quality housing also continues to pose a risk to health, whether it is environmental hazards or cold and damp. Kent County Council Department of Public Health focused a recent report on this issue. It showed that in Canterbury district 12,728 homes do not meet the standard for decent homes, the second highest number in Kent after Thanet.

### *The Way Forward*

For too long central government has been indifferent to the crisis of social and affordable housing. Local authority council house building has been decimated at a time when social forms of housing should have been encouraged and funded. Homelessness has been tolerated for too long.

Building homes that people can afford to rent must be a priority. It is predicted that by 2020 only a quarter of 30-year olds will own their own home, down from half in the 1980s. Over a third of young people born since the year 2000 will be unable to afford to purchase a property for the rest of their lives and will have to rely for their housing needs on the private rented sector which has been marked by insecurity of tenure and poor maintenance.

Central and local government need to rethink the pricing and use of land if we are serious about solving the growing housing crisis. Allocating more land for residential development in and around our towns and cities will help, but is only part of the answer. As long as this land has to be purchased at over £1 million per acre there is little prospect of any long-term solution to the crisis of affordability.

Building more sustainable homes should be a priority. Sustainable homes are cheaper to live in than less energy-efficient properties and they are better for the environment. This will help to ensure access for all to adequate, safe, affordable and sustainable housing.

#### **4. Proposals for consideration**

1 Canterbury City Council should embark on a major programme of building social or council housing, now that the government borrowing cap on local authorities has been lifted to enable councils to build housing for sale or rent.

2. Local authorities must ensure that developers and landowners comply fully with their obligation to provide genuinely affordable social housing. These obligations need to be factored into the price developers pay for the land and not re-negotiated at a later date.

3. Planning committees should insist that new housing is built to be sustainable and energy efficient. Modern methods of building can produce sustainable homes more quickly and so can speed up the provision of social and affordable housing with good environmental standards.

4 Both central and local government should respond to the crisis of housing affordability with a much more radical approach to the underlying problem of high land values. This will need to include the repeal of the Land Compensation Act 1961 and a major overhaul of the planning system so that house prices are not inflated by excess compensation to land owners.

5 The City Council, through its community grants programme, should make it possible for not-for-profit organisations concerned with homelessness, such as the Canterbury Housing Advice Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Porchlight, Catching Lives and others, to increase their caseload capacity by ten per cent year-on-year

6 Canterbury Lettings, set up by the City Council to broker tenancies at an affordable rent between private landlords and people on benefit, should be strengthened and developed by the City Council, and an annual report on its achievements should be made public.



## SDG Goal 11: IMPLEMENTING AIR POLLUTION TARGETS

### 1. SDG Goals and relevant local targets:

*Goal 3, Goal 11, Goal 6, Goal 9 and Goal 13, all mention or are relevant (notwithstanding that all the SDGs are to be applied in an integrated way).*

*Targets:*

- 11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management*
- 3.9 By 2030 substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination*

### 2. Issues

The World Health Assembly's mandate is to combat one of the world's most significant causes of premature mortality which caused 9 million deaths globally in 2015.

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) director of public health, Dr Maria Neira, said new urgency was needed to tackle air pollution: "While air pollution knows no borders and puts everyone at risk, those most vulnerable – pregnant women, children, the elderly, those already ill or poor – are particularly affected."

Air pollution in most cities exceeds recommended WHO Air Quality levels and up to 1/3 of deaths from stroke, lung cancer and heart disease are due to air pollution.

#### *Air pollution in the UK*

In the UK air pollution prematurely kills around 50,000 people annually. UK and European air pollution law is based on WHO recommendations. The UK has been in breach of this law since 2010. Air pollution is generated mostly by vehicular traffic. England has the worst air in the UK, and the county of Kent and city of Canterbury are good examples of this.

The Government, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Kent County Council, and the district/unitary authorities are all arguably responsible for achieving compliance with safe and legal air pollution limits in Kent, although the precise nature of the scope of these responsibilities vis-a-vis the Government and the other authorities is currently being litigated in the courts. However, so far all the authorities have failed to achieve air quality objectives, and local Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) are expanding across the country.

An AQMA is designated by a local authority where air pollution levels do not meet or are not likely to meet air quality objectives locally as set out in European and UK law. There is little indication that air pollution will improve with huge car-reliant development proposals going ahead in Kent and elsewhere and with a national increase of car use overall. See here for Defra 2018 Interactive map for AQMAs in the UK: <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/maps>

Canterbury's heavily congested roads with the resulting air pollution prematurely kill 100 people annually and harm thousands of others. Canterbury district has 3 AQMAs. The AQMA for city of Canterbury was extended again in April 2018.

#### *Kent Local Transport Plan 2017*

Although there is a policy that mentions achieving air quality, the reality is that the 'business as usual' plan has nothing within it that will help to achieve air quality limits. See [https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/669666/21980069.1/DOCX/-/Local\\_Transport\\_Plan\\_Consultation\\_main\\_ONLINE\\_text\\_to\\_speech.docx](https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/669666/21980069.1/DOCX/-/Local_Transport_Plan_Consultation_main_ONLINE_text_to_speech.docx)

### *Canterbury's Local Plan 2017*

Canterbury's Local Plan was adopted in July 2017 and is subject to a legal challenge concerning the policies within it that are deemed inadequate to address air pollution breaches. The legal challenge has been stayed until the resolution of a further legal challenge to the Canterbury South Urban Extension (Corinthian) development re air pollution breaches that was heard in the Court of Appeal in September 2018.

### *Canterbury's Air Quality Action Plan adopted 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018*

The general consensus is that the above plan which advocates a 5.7 modal shift away from the private car by 2023 is inadequate to comply with air pollution law. Additionally, the measures relied on to effect the modal shift are uncertain (as dependant on future development contributions from developers) and in fact likely to lead to greater car use because one key measure, the A4 slip road at Wincheap, is about accommodation of car traffic that would ultimately lead to greater car use.

Finally, a key flaw is the failure to add in the increase of traffic from the planned 16,000 extra dwellings in the Local Plan.

### *SDG Targets*

Air pollution's position in the SDGs is unclear. In the SDGs, there is no headline goal on air pollution. Air pollution is specifically mentioned in 2 targets, under health (SDG3) and cities (SDG11), but shares these targets with other issues. Air pollution is mentioned directly in one corresponding target, and indirectly in another. Air pollution is also directly mentioned in 2 proposed indicators relating to these targets.

In principle, air pollution can be indirectly related to other targets specified under the goals for Water (6) in terms of improved water quality and restoration of water related ecosystems, Industry (9) in terms of environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, Cities (11) in terms of sustainable transport systems, Climate (13) in terms of integrating climate change measures into national policies, and Land (15) in terms of restoring sustainable use of ecosystems. In particular, land and ecosystems could be related to acid rain, and climate could be related to co-benefits.

### **3. Local Application of the SDG Targets**

Prime responsibility for localising SDG targets in Canterbury District lies with Canterbury City Council (CCC) and central government which is the designated authority for compliance with air pollution law. Kent County Council (KCC) would also have responsibility under transport, climate change and education. There is however overlap with the responsibilities of a wide range of other national and regional agencies including the Environmental Agency, the South East Local Economic Enterprise Partnership, South East Water/Southern Water, and the Regeneration Board for East Kent.

*Canterbury City Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020* has a specific aim to "contribute to the good health of local people" including "to:

- enable the improvement of cycle routes
- tackle health inequalities through our work with specific target groups
- promote walking trails and cycling routes.

We will also monitor the following measures to understand what impact we and our partners are having on broader issues that need to be tackled in our district:

- a selection of health measures – including life expectancy, mental health prevalence,

- obesity, teenage pregnancy, dementia prevalence
- participation in physical activity
- maintenance and use of cycle routes
- NO2 levels and other air quality measures.”

However, the above aspirations will not reduce air pollution unless vital cycling infrastructure is provided and prioritised at the same time as making it more difficult to drive. It is clear that much greater attention needs to be given to achieving air quality limits and new policies will be needed to achieve these in line with the legal obligations under UK and European law and the SDGs mentioned above.

**4. Proposals for consideration by Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council**

The councils should strengthen their efforts to promote education (e. g. in local schools) and raise public awareness of World Health Organisation air pollution standards, adverse impacts of air pollution on health locally and nationally, and of the SDGs overall. They should incorporate references to SDG targets and reducing air pollution in their specific corporate plans/strategies, particularly by prioritising cycling and walking above other transport modes and ensuring that the lion’s share of funding is allocated to them.

Both councils should draw on relevant national/international experience and expertise on localising SDGs (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, UNDP etc) and on local good practices elsewhere such as Copenhagen’s cycling infrastructure.





## SDG Goal 11: PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

### 1. SDG Goal 11 and relevant local target:

*Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*

*11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.*

### 2. National and local issues

Parks and open spaces across the country have suffered disproportionately from the stringent budget cuts affecting local authorities over the last decade. This is due to the fact that councils have no statutory duty to fund and maintain them. Ironically, during the same timeframe, there has been a growing realisation of the importance of public green space for mental and physical health, biodiversity, air quality, flood control and community cohesion.

The incoherence at the heart of public policy has been voiced in successive high-profile reports. The Heritage Lottery Fund has produced two 'State of the UK Public Parks' reports. The second, published in September 2016, said that "parks and park services are currently facing immense challenges" (p. 22), and drew attention to the growing deficit between the rising use of parks and the declining resources available to manage them. It called for urgent action to halt "the downward trend in the condition of many of our treasured parks and green spaces" and recommended collaborative action to deliver new ways of funding and managing parks.

In 2016/17, the Communities and Local Government Select Committee held an inquiry into the future of public parks. Its report highlighted challenges including:

- sharply reduced council spending with park management budgets cut by up to 97%
- the need for parks to compete with other services for funding
- planning policy not giving them enough weight, particularly as a result of pressures to increase housing supply.

The report warned that "parks are at a tipping point and face a decline with potentially severe consequences unless their vital contribution to areas such as public health, community integration and climate change mitigation is realised." The committee called on councils to publish "strategic plans" recognising the value of parks and open spaces beyond leisure and recreation and setting out how they will be managed to maximise their contribution to wider local authority agendas, such as promoting healthy lifestyles, managing flood risk and tackling social exclusion. This could open up parks to funding beyond their usual budget areas.

On 21 June 2018, 12 national organisations (including Fields in Trust, Keep Britain Tidy and the Parks Alliance) launched 'The Parks Charter' to call for action by politicians to prevent the serious neglect of the country's parks and open spaces. It warned that this neglect would cause parks "to go into serious decline and become problem spaces abandoned by park users and plagued by vandalism – or even closed and sold off." Its six-point plan of action includes a call for "a legal duty for all public green space to be managed to a high standard" and "adequate long-term resources for maintenance, management and improvement".

On 30 September 2018, the *Mail on Sunday* launched a major 'Save Our Parks' campaign to alert the public to the fact that the UK's parks are facing "a tipping point". Its investigations showed that:

- one in three parks no longer has any staff on site, fuelling fears of a rise in crime
- three-quarters of councils have cut back on staff maintenance
- 214 play areas across England have been shut since 2014, with 234 more planned
- park funding has been slashed by at least £15 million over the last two years
- 95% of councils expect to make further cuts to park budgets in the next five years.

Canterbury City Council has had to face the same conflicts, with pressures to sell off open space for development (see below), and reductions in the number of dedicated open space officers. The pressures will be exacerbated as 16,000+ new houses are built across the district over the course of the current Local Plan, necessitating the creation of a range of new parks and open space facilities.

In line with the Parks Charter mentioned above, it would be helpful if the government urgently gave local authorities a statutory duty to ensure that all parks and public green spaces under their responsibility are protected, managed and well maintained. The government should ring-fence local authority funding to ensure that parks and green spaces in their responsibility are appropriately staffed and well maintained. Additionally planning policies should be strengthened to protect parks and green spaces and adopt 'in perpetuity' green space covenants, such as those that exist through Fields in Trust.

### **3. The local policy context**

The responsibility for the designation of the county's common lands, village greens and public footpaths lies with Kent County Council (KCC). KCC also manages a network of country parks across the county, with one in the district of Canterbury – Grove Ferry Picnic Site next to the Stour in Upstreet. Canterbury City Council (CCC) is responsible for the designation, management and promotion of most other public open spaces within the district.

A number of other accessible open spaces are owned privately but allow permissive access. These include Hambrook Marshes on the Stour upstream from Canterbury, and the Southern Slopes beneath the University of Kent. This report will restrict itself to publicly owned open spaces.

CCC's Corporate Strategy for the period 2016-20 sets out a clear priority to "protect and enhance our open spaces, heritage and wildlife" (goal 8). CCC has also adopted an Open Space Strategy for 2014–2020 as part of the Local Plan process, aiming "To develop an interconnected network of diverse, high quality open spaces which meet the needs of local people and make a significant contribution to raising the quality of life for all residents and visitors to Canterbury District." Discussions on the renewal of the Open Spaces Strategy are likely to begin in 2019 and this provides an opportunity to evaluate whether it could become more of a 'strategic plan' along the lines advocated by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee (see above).

CCC adopted a Green Infrastructure Strategy in 2018 which provides a framework for the Council's Transport Strategy, Riverside Strategy, Open Spaces Strategy and Biodiversity Appraisal. CCC will also be adopting a Heritage Strategy for the district in the spring of 2019. It is good to see that the draft strategy recognises that "Public parks, green spaces and gardens are an essential component of our historic environment."

#### **4. Local Actions and Initiatives**

In recent years, the public has become increasingly aware that open spaces are coming under threat from urban development and the financial pressures on local government. Two direct threats to open spaces in Canterbury have galvanised high-profile public campaigns. The first was the Save Chaucer Fields campaign to protect the green gap between the northern edge of urban Canterbury and the University of Kent. The campaign was successful in protecting this area after a planning application was submitted in 2011 for a major development on the Southern Slopes, and the campaign group has recently been further encouraged by the University's amendment of its Framework Masterplan, withdrawing a fresh proposal for a conference hotel on the Southern Slopes and strengthening the commitment to preserve the green landscape setting of the University.

The second campaign started in 2012 when Canterbury City Council, in an attempt to raise capital funds, sought to sell off a playing field in Canterbury for residential development. This met with a large public outcry and a long-running 'Save Kingsmead Field' campaign to protect the field. The campaign concluded with a compromise in 2016 – an agreement to designate 80% of the field as a Village / Town Green and allow limited residential development on the rear 20% of the field. The campaign group has now become the Friends of Kingsmead Field and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council. It continues to work actively to enhance and promote Kingsmead Field.

The award of a Heritage Lottery Grant to Westgate Parks for a five-year project from 2013 to 2018 has also been influential in raising the public's perception of the importance of parks and open spaces. The project included the appointment of a Parks Officer who, with support from a Friends group, put on an impressive range of educational and innovative events in the Westgate Parks. The project has now come to an end, but CCC is funding a Parks Community and Development Officer for Westgate Parks and Dane John Gardens, and the Friends group has just re-launched.

Another positive development is the establishment of an East Kent Parks Forum in the spring of 2017. The initiative came from the Kearsney Parks Project at Dover District Council in conversation with members of other Friends groups in Canterbury and in East Kent. The aim of this group is to provide an opportunity for Friends groups to discuss common problems, share best practices and flag up funding opportunities. So far, five meetings of the forum have taken place – in Dover, Deal, Canterbury, Ashford, and Reculver.

Friends groups play an important role in looking after parks and green spaces. In cases where there is no Friends group for a park or open space, it would be helpful for local residents and residents' associations to work together to form one. It is also helpful for existing Friends groups to support each other.

Residents also need to become more pro-active in reporting problems to the local authorities. If parks and green spaces gain a reputation for anti-social behaviour, or facilities get vandalised and do not get repaired, a downward cycle of decay sets in that is often difficult to reverse.

## 5. Proposals for consideration by Canterbury City Council

- CCC's Open Spaces Strategy, Riverside Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy contain many excellent aims and actions, but many of these will be unattainable without the capacity to implement them. It is imperative that the open spaces team is reinforced by new personnel.
- CCC is in the process of granting planning permission to a series of large residential developments across the district. When play areas and public green spaces in new developments are taken over by a management company, they tend to become neglected and fall into disrepair. CCC should, therefore, consider adopting these open spaces to improve management and strengthen community cohesion.
- The recent appointment of the Parks & Community Development Officer for Dane John Gardens and Westgate Parks is a valuable initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour in public spaces. Additional Parks Officers are needed to discourage anti-social behaviour in other parks and amenity green spaces across the district and to establish linkages between communities and the local authorities.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund recommends that councils should nominate a councillor as a Parks Champion as areas with an elected champion tend to be more likely to have parks which are improving. CCC should consider whether such a position might be helpful, and if so, whether it would be preferable to have one Parks Champion for the district or one for each of the four areas of the district (as is currently the case for litter and enforcement).
- The River Stour provides a green thread through the centre of Canterbury, but is often blighted by unsightly fly-tipping and littering. Much of the rubbish stays in the river for weeks or months as CCC has no pro-active mechanism in place to keep the river clean. CCC needs to work with Serco, the Environment Agency and the Canterbury Riverside group to make sure that the Stour is maintained to a high level and kept clean.
- In line with many of the ideas put forward at the Green Heritage conference held by Canterbury in Bloom in October 2018, CCC should identify ways of working with planners, developers, businesses and community groups to 'green up' public places in innovative ways, e.g. green roofs, tree-planting and imaginative landscaping.
- In line with SDG target 7.7, CCC should work with Friends groups and residents' associations to assess whether more can be done to make the district's open spaces safer, more inclusive and more accessible for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.
- In cases where East Kent Housing manages areas of public open space on behalf of CCC, the Council should ensure that it does so in a pro-active way in cooperation with the local community. Some of these open spaces currently suffer from serious problems (e.g. Vauxhall Field and Hales Place wood in Canterbury), further aggravating the serious level of deprivation of the areas in which they are located.



## SDG Goal 12: WASTE MANAGEMENT

### 1. Goal 12 and relevant local target:

12.5 *By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse*

### 2. Issues

Nationally the issues are familiar:

- fly-tipping and irresponsible waste disposal are blighting the appearance both of the countryside and of urban streets and parks
- plastics are a major source of river and marine pollution, with devastating effects on ocean life
- failure to recycle paper and wood products, food waste, and other items leads to deforestation and environmental degradation, and uses up finite raw materials
- landfill sites are filling up, and they release harmful chemicals and greenhouse gases.

It is to be hoped that the UK Government will proceed urgently with its plans to introduce a mandatory deposit return system for plastic and glass drinks containers. The Government should also consider the case for tax parity between products consumed in restaurants and products consumed as takeaways. The current VAT exemption for takeaways encourages the unnecessary use of disposable containers. We believe that public campaigning and government action is needed to persuade retailers, especially supermarkets, to reduce packaging and plastic wrapping.

All the above problems are apparent locally. Some of them are exacerbated by the presence in Canterbury of a large transient population, including thousands of students, many of whom lack experience in managing refuse disposal, create more waste and fail to recycle effectively.

Others find it difficult to adapt to the local system, having used a different system elsewhere. There have been particular problems with the clearing of waste and litter from main highways and verges, especially the A2 and Thanet Way, and the difficulty of getting coordination between CCC, KCC and Highways England on lane closures to facilitate cleaning.

### 3. Local actions

There has been mounting concern among local residents in recent years about the linked issues of refuse collection, fly-tipping, and litter. This has led to increasing activity by volunteers, both in picking up litter and in reporting problems. Residents' associations and community groups regularly organise litter-picks in their own localities across the district.

It has also led to the setting up of local campaigns to tackle the issues and to call for action by local and national authorities. *Plastic Free Whitstable*, for instance, is a local non-party-political group set up to reduce single use plastics in the town, which has joined Surfers Against Sewage and achieved Plastic Free Coastline status for Whitstable.

These campaigns and actions by local citizens have generated pressure on Canterbury City Council to respond with matching activity and cooperation. Council actions have included the following:

- In October 2015 CCC's Community Committee agreed to nominate a councillor from each area (Canterbury, Herne Bay, Whitstable, and the rural area) to act as a litter liaison councillor.

- Litter Action Guides for each of the four areas, providing advice on reporting problems with litter and fly-tipping, and on dealing with litter and waste, were devised by local campaigners in cooperation with CCC in 2016:  
[https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/downloads/download/96/litter\\_action\\_guides](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/downloads/download/96/litter_action_guides)
- The Canterbury Litter Roundtable was set up in 2016 by local campaigners and councillors to facilitate greater cooperation between residents and the council on litter and waste management issues.
- In 2017 CCC strengthened its enforcement regime, employing 11 new enforcement officers, with a particular focus on issuing fixed penalty fines for littering, fly-tipping and graffiti.
- In February 2018, CCC launched its *Love Where We Live* campaign to raise awareness of the problems of litter and waste, and to encourage local people to take a pride in where they live and work.
- At its meeting in February 2018, CCC full council agreed to work to reduce the use of single-use plastics by encouraging people to refill drinking water bottles, and by investigating the possibility of providing free drinking water on appropriate premises.
- In June 2018, the Community Committee agreed to support the Plastic Free Whitstable campaign, to review the provision of public bins to increase on-street recycling, and to adopt the Refill Scheme for water in council venues and encourage local businesses to extend the scheme across the district.

There is a division of responsibility between Canterbury City Council, which is responsible for waste collection, and Kent County Council, which is responsible for waste disposal. This is pertinent at present as KCC is proposing to introduce charging for the disposal of non-household waste at its Household Waste Recycling Centres. This is controversial and CCC has strongly criticised the proposal on the grounds that it will lead to an increase in fly-tipping in the district.

Other local initiatives include the Waste and Recycling Management Strategy which Canterbury Christ Church University has adopted as part of its 'Framework for Sustainability':

<https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/about-us/docs/sustainability/waste-management-strategy.pdf>

Its Sustainable Food Objectives include:

- minimise the use of disposable cups and food containers, in order to reduce waste
- minimise food waste and ensure that remaining waste is appropriately recycled or composted.

Its food and drink outlets now provide drinks in china cups and mugs, and make an extra charge for disposable cups.

#### **4. Proposals for consideration by Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council**

The growing public awareness is encouraging but the scale of the problems is daunting. More action is needed at both national and local level. We recommend that further actions should include the following:

- The increasing reliance on volunteers for street cleaning and for reporting of problems has its positive side and is understandable as a result of the massive cuts in central funding for local authorities, but is not satisfactory and not sustainable. If volunteering is needed, the council needs to engage more proactively with volunteers and residents' groups and not just treat them as a convenient resource.

- Local businesses and retail outlets should take greater responsibility for dealing with the waste and litter which they generate, not just in the immediate vicinity of their own premises.
- More effective coordination between CCC, KCC, and Highways England is needed to deal with waste and litter on highways verges.
- CCC should conduct a review of its Refuse Collection and Cleaner Streets contracts, prior to the date for the renewal of the contracts, in order to analyse their weaknesses and assess how helpful it might be to improve coordination between the two contracts.
- Landlords and letting agents must recognise and fulfil their responsibilities for waste and refuse disposal from their properties. In particular, they should ensure that all student houses are provided with the requisite bins, including separate red-topped bins for paper and card, and that all student tenants are fully instructed about the procedures for refuse collection. Landlords and agents should be penalised if they fail to comply, and they in turn should monitor the behaviour of their tenants and hold them to account.
- A more effective scheme is needed for refuse collection and recycling from student houses at the end of each academic year. The schemes in 2017 and 2018 were hampered by inadequate publicity and inadequate coordination. Canterbury City Council, the universities, and landlords and letting agents should work together on a more effective scheme, taking advice from local residents who have direct experience of the problems. The universities should introduce campus shops to promote recycling.
- CCC should expand its Refill Scheme and give it more publicity.
- KCC should withdraw its proposal to charge for the disposal of non-household waste.



## SDG Goal 13: CLIMATE ACTION

### 1. SDG Goal 13 and relevant local targets

*The relevant targets are:*

- 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.*
- 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.*
- 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.*

A more detailed study would need to take into account implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, which recognised the role of local and sub-national government, and other global agreements such as the 2016 UN Habitat New Urban Agenda.

### 2. Issues

According to Kent County Council, Kent has the highest risk of local flooding in England and surface water flooding is estimated to affect 76,000 properties with a further 64,000 at risk from river and coastal flooding. Climate change, encouraged by global warming will have a direct impact, especially in coastal areas of Canterbury District around Whitstable and Herne Bay including low-lying, flooding-exposed areas such as Seasalter or Reculver.

Kent is also one of the driest regions in the UK with above-average household water use. The wider climate sustainability issue and impact of carbon emissions on the environment accordingly affects all of the District. This has implications for all aspects of local development including housing and the built environment, open spaces, transport strategy, renewable energy, water resources and drainage and the green economy.

Current challenges in developing a sustainable response to these climate-change related issues include the severe central government cuts in local government funding and the potential financial and other fall-out from Brexit in 2019. There is also a lack of adequate central government support in coordinating and promoting education and raising public awareness of sustainable development and climate change issues, as highlighted in the 2017 House of Commons Environmental Audit Sub Committee report on SDGs. However in a parliamentary question response last year to Rosie Duffield MP, the UK Government indicated willingness to work locally on SDGs with local government and civil society.

### 3. Local Application of the SDG Targets

Prime responsibility for localising SDG targets in Canterbury District lies with Canterbury City Council (CCC) and Kent County Council (KCC). There is however overlap with the responsibilities of a wide range of other national, regional agencies including the Environmental Agency, the South East Local Economic Enterprise Partnership, South East Water/Southern Water, and the Regeneration Board for East Kent.

*Canterbury City Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020* has a specific aim to 'limit the impact of damaging flooding' as measured by percentage of sites achieving standard protection in accordance with the Shorelines Management Plan; it also aims to protect and enhance open spaces, heritage and wildlife. Much more detailed aims and actions on climate change including as they relate to SDG targets 13.1 and 13.2 are set out in the *Canterbury District Local Plan*,



2017 in its Chapter 7, *Climate Change, Flooding, Coastal Change and Water Resources*. This includes a definition of 'sustainable development' as 'mitigation and adaptation to climate change including moving to low carbon economy'. CCC has established a Flood Scrutiny Panel and has detailed provision for flooding in coastal and river areas (such as Seasalter and the Stour basin) and emphasises the importance of proper regulation of new housing development in this respect.

The Plan also deals with sustainable drainage, water quality, efficiency and supply, thereby addressing specific aspects of target 13.1. In its focus on the relationship between climate change and areas such as promoting renewable energy (wind, biomass etc) and energy efficiency, transport (especially provision of public transport/cycling), the green economy and wider environmental aspects, it also corresponds to much of target 13.2 and 13.3. It is proposing to produce a sustainable construction and renewable energy document.

*Kent County Council* has set out its various responses to climate change in the *Kent Environment Strategy: a strategy for environment, health and economy*. This strategy has a major objective 'ensuring that our growth is sustainable' and specifically addresses climate change notably in response to severe weather and flooding, energy use and water. KCC is the Lead Local Flood Authority and has produced a local flood risk management study (2013) and a drainage and planning policy statement (2017) which impacts directly on CCC. KCC further has an ambitious policy of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 34% by 2020 and 60% by 2030 from a 2005 baseline.

Specifically, KCC has identified the following linkages between its environmental strategy targets and SDG 13 targets:

- refresh the Kent Climate Risk Assessment and identify priority adaptation and mitigation actions (1.2)
- develop a low emission strategy (1.5)
- identify energy needs for growth and how these can be met sustainably and ensuring that these are incorporated into the Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF), e.g. district heating and community energy (8.2)
- promote inclusion of environmental and sustainable approaches to water management, such as sustainably managed surface water and increased capacity with sewer systems (8.2)
- provide support and guidance e.g. Kent Design to achieve sustainable growth through incorporating KES priorities (8.3)
- increase the number of people across Kent registered with Floodline Warnings Direct (9.1)
- support communities at risk of flooding to be more actively involved in the management of risk in their area (9.1)
- support businesses in understanding their risk and build resilience to environmental change (9.1)
- development and implementation of a Kent Community Resilience Strategy addressing environmental change (9.1)
- ensure that the risks and opportunities from climate change are understood and inform delivery and commissioning of services (9.2)
- embed climate change adaptation into long term decision making for public authorities (9.2)
- establish approaches to build resilience within the health and social care sectors (9.2)

- devise a sustainable maintenance model for SuDs (Sustainable Drainage scheme) features (9.3)
- reduce the number of properties at flood risk or coastal erosion flood risk through delivery of a six-year capital improvement plan (9.3)
- build resilience of catchments and ecosystems and develop integrated catchment management throughout Kent (9.3)
- support businesses to build resilience to resource scarcity in delivery of products and services.

KCC produced its first annual Impact Report 2011-2016 on its Environmental Strategy in 2017. This provides specific indication on how its targets (and therefore SDG 13 targets) are being met. For example, 547 businesses have been encouraged to save 3.9 tonnes of carbon and over £2,000 per business per year and 14,000 homes have been protected from flooding; overall a reduction of 23% of carbon emissions has been achieved since 2005. It documents specific initiatives such as training 200 local flood wardens since 2014; supporting Simon Langton Boys School Canterbury to install solar panels and LED lighting with a financial benefit of £53,821 and 216 tonnes of CO2 saved; and deployment of £861,000 EU funding to raise awareness on climate change and improve natural environment management.

CCC and KCC are in the process of implementing SDG targets 13.1 and 13.2 targets in an effective and holistic fashion and in some areas such as the promotion of carbon emission are in fact going further. However local groups like Greenpeace are critical of what has been achieved to date in related SDG targets like air pollution. CCC/KCC are also taking measures to increase 'human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning' as set out under 13. There is less specific evidence of explicitly improving education and awareness-raising, although the relevant CCC and strategic documents have been published and are available on-line to the public. Their recent engagement with the Canterbury SDG Forum may offer a model on wide civic engagement.

#### **4. Proposals for consideration by Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council**

The councils should strengthen their efforts to respond to climate change by:

- promoting education (e. g. local schools) and raising public awareness of sustainable development, climate change, and of the SDGs
- referring to the SDG targets in their specific corporate plans/ strategies, drawing on relevant national/international experiences and expertise on localising SDGs (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, UNDP etc)
- working with and actively supporting local initiatives such as the Canterbury SDG Forum, and civil society, academia and the private sector in promoting education and raising awareness on SDGs and in showcasing local good practices.

## SDG Goal 16: ACCOUNTABLE INSTITUTIONS AND REPRESENTATIVE DECISION-MAKING



### 1. SDG Goal 16 and relevant local targets:

16.6 *Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*

16.7 *Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*

### 2. The issues

There has been a history of misunderstanding and distrust on the part of local people towards local government institutions. This is partly a product of widespread ignorance about the respective roles of Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council, and central government. When people see problems in their locality which are not being satisfactorily addressed, and don't know which institution could or should deal with them, there is a tendency to direct a vague sense of blame at 'the council'. Canterbury City Council has itself contributed to the atmosphere of distrust. Until 2015 Canterbury City Council employed the 'Strong Leader and Executive' system. In the years leading up to 2015 the Executive took a number of controversial decisions which generated widespread opposition, and its recalcitrant attitude to criticism strengthened the perception of an unaccountable council which was unwilling to listen. The lack of any real debate within the Executive about these controversial issues also created the sense of an absence of transparency, with the real decisions being taken elsewhere.

The Canterbury Society, in its 2013 *Residents' Vision for Canterbury*, recommended changing from the Executive system to the Committee system. In February 2014 local people across the district formed a Campaign for Democracy in Canterbury District, and began collecting signatures for a petition calling for a referendum on changing to the Committee system. Canterbury City Council then decided to make that change without the need for a referendum. It set up a Governance Commission, with the opportunity for participation by local people, to work out the detailed arrangements for the new system, which then came into operation in May 2015. Since then, there has been a greater openness in the council's deliberations, and an improved level of debate, but there remains a legacy of distrust and disillusion.

This also needs to be seen in the context of a more general crisis of democratic institutions at all levels. Events nationally such as the referendum decision to leave the European Union, and comparable developments in other countries, have been widely interpreted as evidence that large sections of society feel that democratic governments have neglected them and failed them.

One other important factor has been the massive reduction of central government funding for local government. Cash-strapped councils throughout the UK are having to reduce the services they offer, and the limited understanding of the reasons for this has further fuelled the popular sense that local councils are to blame for their failure to meet the needs of those whom they represent. The UK government should explore and adopt measures to decentralise decision-making and devolve substantial powers to local authorities.

### 3. Local Actions

Canterbury City Council's *Corporate Plan 2016-2020* has as its first principle:

Principle 1 We will make clear and transparent decisions having been informed by local opinion.

We will do this by ensuring that:

- we will consult only where there is a genuine opportunity to influence the decision
- when consultation is appropriate, it should take place at a stage in the process when it can genuinely influence the outcome
- sufficient information is provided to allow consultees to provide an informed response
- the consultation will be open and accessible to all relevant interested parties
- the results of the consultation will be taken into account and made publicly available.

The emphasis on the issue of consultation reflects concerns expressed to the Governance Commission about Canterbury City Council's inadequate performance in this respect. Those concerns had been fuelled particularly by the process of consultation on the Local Plan. A Plan shaped largely by the constraints imposed by central government had been presented by the Council leadership as though it were the ideal outcome of consulting local people on what they wanted.

The 2014 Governance Commission Report recommended "that the Council elected in 2015 be requested to develop a new consultation strategy." Since then, the Council has made some limited experiments with new forms of consultation, such as using 'Stickyworld' to enable local people to produce and share their own suggestions rather than simply saying Yes or No to pre-packaged proposals. How best to consult local people remains an unresolved question.

The 2014 Report also recommended "that the new council in 2015 be asked to commence a district-wide Community Governance Review", to look at democratic representation at the most local level, that of parish councils, including the possibility of introducing new town councils for urban areas. The Campaign for Democracy in Canterbury District pressed for this recommendation to be implemented, and saw it as an opportunity to promote greater public participation in local democracy and make it more inclusive.

The Community Governance Review took place in 2017-18, and was itself an encouraging exercise in public consultation. Although it revealed some support for new town councils for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable, the number of people asking for such a change was regarded as insufficient to justify it, and the proposal recommended and adopted was to experiment with new Forums for the three towns and for the rural area, replacing the previous Area Member Panels. The Forums were to be more open and informal, encouraging participation by members of the public and giving them increased speaking rights. The four Forums were established, and held their first meetings in the week 10-17 September 2018.

It is too early to say whether the four new Forums will succeed in making local government in the district more accountable and participatory. They need to be given a full trial. This requires the council to publicise them as effectively as possible, and to continue experimenting with ways of making the meetings more inclusive. It also depends on local people making use of the new opportunities which are offered.

It is also to be hoped that CCC will continue to experiment with new methods of consultation, and will do so more ambitiously. Local organisations such as the Canterbury Society have recommended the use of the 'charrette' process, where politicians, planners and citizens collaborate on identifying issues, drawing up proposals and arriving at decisions in which all have a sense of ownership, rather than confining citizens to the passive role of commenting on pre-formed proposals.

There are also larger challenges to be faced. Many local people are confused about the respective roles of the district council and the county council. They may have some understanding of what goes on at the district level, but for most people Maidstone feels as remote as Westminster. Although it is not on the immediate agenda, the idea of replacing the existing local government structure in Kent with unitary authorities, including one for East Kent, needs to be explored further. It could help to reduce the present confusion, allow for more coherent policy-making, and improve accountability by locating the responsibility for local services in a single authority. The potential disadvantage would be that abolishing the district council and creating a unitary authority might make decision-making even more remote, so if unitary authorities were to be created in the future, they would also need to be combined with enhanced versions of the community forums.

The national funding crisis for local government has to be addressed. The massive cuts in central government funding for local authorities have left them struggling to provide services, and many of them face the prospect of being able to deliver only the most basic of statutory services, if that. Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council are not in such a desperate situation as some other, more deprived areas, but they share in the reduction of their ability to address local needs and to devise enterprising policies for local communities. Along with other local authorities, they have been lobbying central government on this matter. It is essential that the lobbying should continue and be intensified, and that the government should respond. Whatever the changes and improvements which might be made at the local level, the fact remains that the UK's system of government is one of the most centralised in the world. Effective and accountable decision-making at the local level will remain extremely circumscribed unless and until central government takes seriously its talk of 'localism'. A structure of unitary authorities should be seen as a framework for more decentralised government across the whole of the UK, creating strong local authorities able to exercise devolved powers.

#### **4. Proposals for consideration by Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council**

CCC should continue to promote representative decision making by:

- publicising the new community forums, encouraging local people to participate, and experimenting with ways of making them inclusive and participatory
- experimenting with new ways of consulting local people, including use of the 'charrette' process.

CCC, KCC and other district councils

- should together explore the case for new unitary authorities in Kent
- should work with local authorities across the country in a concerted campaign to persuade the UK government to restore funding for local government.

## SDG Goal 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



### 1. SDG Goal 17 and relevant local targets:

17. *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*

SDG17 has five unique features set out in a total of 18 targets which relate to:

- a holistic and cross-cutting approach to sustainable development
- integrating means of implementation across other Goals
- resource mobilisation for funding development and resilience
- technical and human resource capacity for implementation
- value addition through partnerships at local, national and international levels.

### 2. Issues

Although the 18 targets of SDG17 envision global goals and seek collective solutions to issues that cut across local, national and international levels, initiatives at the local level are important as they lead to:

- awareness raising regarding SDGs and the challenge of meeting them by 2030
- conceptual 'buy in' of SDGs and the stimulation of action by individuals, communities and local institutions
- local resource mobilisation (donations by individuals, and civil society organisations; commitment by local bodies; corporate social responsibility funds from the private sector)
- innovations and value addition through local stakeholder partnerships
- building social cohesion and resilient communities.

### 3. Local Application of the SDG Targets

*Coordinated action through the Canterbury SDG Forum*

This has included regular meetings of member organisations, and discussion and coordinated work with regard to:

- mapping capacities and willingness of individual organisations to contribute to SDG action
- raising public awareness about SDGs
- leveraging stakeholder collaboration
- advocacy through local government and local MP
- responding to and aligning activities with national level initiatives (submitting details for UK Voluntary National Review)
- learning from others' initiatives (for example, from localisation in Belgium, at the symposium held in Canterbury on 30 November 2018 on *The Sustainability Challenge: Implementing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals Locally*)
- international liaison: Mr Evert Bessemans from Sint-Truiden local authority in Belgium spoke at the above symposium. He also met Canterbury City Council (CCC) and Kent County Council (KCC) officials in formal and informal interactions facilitated by the SDG Forum.
- cross-country comparison: Dr Carl Wright visited local authorities in Belgium, and attended the Commonwealth Local Government Forum in Kigali, Rwanda. Local

government initiatives in Belgium and Rwanda have a funding context different to that of Canterbury – with relatively more dedicated funding from national level allocated for SDG activities by local government authorities.

#### *Initiatives by Local Government*

Canterbury City Council (CCC) and Kent County Council (KCC):

- CCC responded positively to the ‘Petition relating to UN Sustainable Development Goals’ presented to the meeting of the Council on 26 April 2018 by Dr Carl Wright and 63 signatories.
- The subsequent report from CCC officers to the Policy & Resources Committee on 14 November stated: “The Council works with a diverse range of stakeholders including local community groups, universities and other organisations to progress sustainable development, which contributes to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and objectives and the Council’s Corporate Plan and Local Plan.”
- KCC has environmental and other policies which directly address SDG implementation, for example on climate change, and has also engaged constructively with the Canterbury SDG Forum.

#### *Initiatives by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)*

The activities of most CSOs focus on areas that are specific to particular SDGs, for example, SDG4 for Education. Among the organisations that are represented in the Canterbury SDG Forum, the following [the list will be updated as new information becomes available] have been involved in partnerships that facilitate SDG17 targets 6 and 9 of promoting North-South, South-South and Triangular links.

1. Canterbury District Fairtrade Steering Group (through linking consumers of Fairtrade products in Canterbury with producers in many countries of the South)
2. United Nations Association (through Annual Peace Service that advocates but also channels the support of local community groups and residents to global initiatives of the United Nations).

Canterbury SDG Forum helps to connect, foreground sustainability issues, leverage and add value to the SDG initiatives of different local organisations and to help raise awareness of sustainable development among the wider public. Its openness to new initiatives and links to supportive local government institutions, the local MP and the private sector provide an ideal platform for adopting the holistic and cross-cutting approach of SDG17 in Canterbury.

A more systematic and detailed study would be helpful to align the analysis in this report to Canterbury’s historical and current strengths that underpin its resilience – international links (from Roman times), church, education, and tourism (including UNESCO Heritage Sites). However, this would require funding for data collection, report writing and dissemination.

#### *Private Sector*

Businesses support sustainability through Corporate Social Responsibility funds and/or philanthropy. Kent, being close to the continent, has had extensive contacts through SMEs and their operations in a range of EU countries and these links could well support SDG17 through capacity building of stakeholders. In this context the Kent Business School of the University of Kent also has a role to play.

#### **4. Proposal for consideration by Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council**

CCC and KCC should work with other stakeholders including Canterbury SDG Forum, the private sector, civil society organisations, schools and churches to encourage and promote, especially, north-south partnerships and initiatives in line with the aims of the SDGs.

For information visit our facebook page: [Canterbury SDG Forum](#) or contact us by email at [una-cb@myphone.coop](mailto:una-cb@myphone.coop)

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