

# Energy and Environmental Observatory of Kent [UK]

## Key Achievements

Kent's data observatory has been incorporated as a priority within the Kent Environment Strategy. This, along with endorsement of the strategy across all local authorities in Kent, supports the long-term legacy of the observatory.

## Context & Rationale

Kent County Council is a strategic level authority which works with partners from local authorities, business and communities. Together the partnership has identified a number of high level priorities in terms of environment and related economic and health outcomes, which reflect key challenges and opportunities which the county faces with air quality, energy, transport, water, resources, severe weather, land-use change and biodiversity. Those priorities form the basis of the Kent Environment Strategy and delivery will be met through an implementation plan and the actions and activities detailed within it. Together these form our sustainable energy action plan (SEAP) incorporating wider socio-economic outcomes.



As public sector resources are increasingly stretched, it has never been more important to ensure that every decision, policy and project has a clear evidence based justification, and as part of the consultation on the strategy a central evidence base has emerged as a key need across our partners.

## Description

The main development stage of the data observatory will take place as part of the implementation plan activity. It needs to support stakeholders in developing policies, actions and decisions that are delivering on the Kent Environment Strategy priorities.

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Development is likely then to take a phased approach with phase one incorporating existing county and local level data valuable for monitoring of key performance indicators, such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. This is an important starting point for the observatory as we need to ensure that the activities we deliver remain effective and pragmatic, it is essential then that we can monitor and evaluate progress. Further development of the observatory will then be informed through continuous stakeholder engagement.

## Main Results

The importance and value of using data forms strategic priorities within the Kent Environment Strategy, not only for monitoring and evaluating progress but for informing current and future decision making. The strategy has been endorsed across local authorities in Kent and all are currently taking it through internal adoption processes for launch in spring 2016.

## Lessons Learned & Success Factor

The actual development of the data observatory is at an early stage. However, data has already played a key role in informing us on what our priorities are. A baseline emissions report provided a review of data available, providers of those data, key performance indicators and gaps in those data. This report provided a baseline for partners to work from and has underpinned, along with stakeholder engagement, the development of our strategy including the needs and requirements of a data observatory.

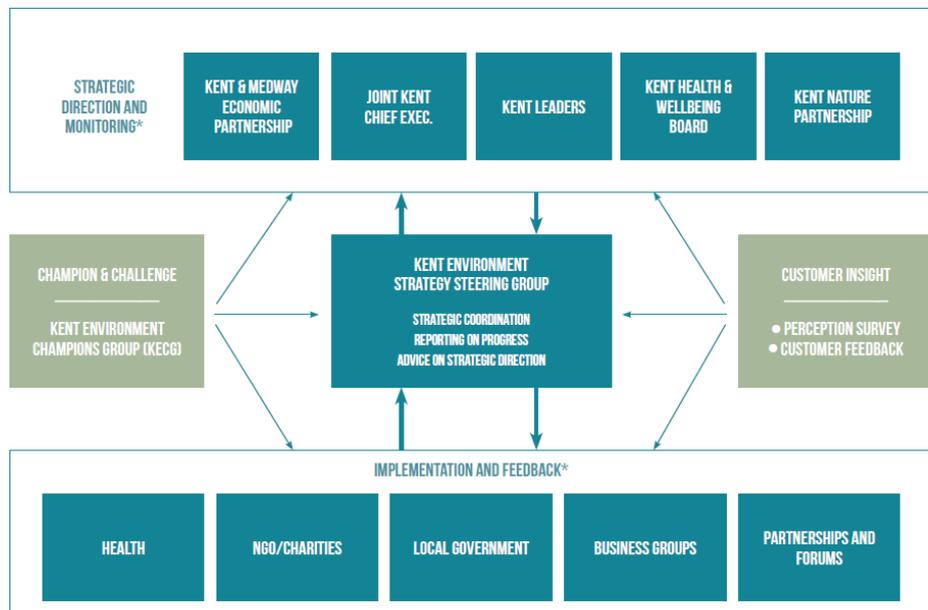


Some key lessons that will be taken forward when developing the observatory are:

- Take an evidence-based approach: what does the observatory need to be providing for stakeholders and what approach can be adopted to achieve this?
- Communicate and engage with key stakeholders early on in the process of development to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Identify the legacy from the outset, embedding it into decision making processes.

## Implementing Structure & Partners - Governance

The data observatory has already been integrated as a key priority into the Kent Environment Strategy and as such will link into and inform a number of stakeholder groups. The image below highlights the governance structure for the strategy and a number of those key stakeholder groups. Kent County Council will facilitate and host the observatory and associated website with partner support and engagement where needed.



\*Representatives sit on the Kent Environment Strategy Steering Group  
The main reporting line will be to Kent Leaders and Joint Chief Execs

## Financing and Costs / Time Frame

DATA4ACTION is providing support for the initial development of scope and establishment for a data observatory. Initial data sets to incorporate into the observatory will be existing county and local level data with requirements for further data needs and development to be determined through continuous stakeholder engagement.

To date the focus of our work has been on stakeholder engagement and development of the scope of the strategy and the data observatory. The development of the observatory itself will take place as part of the implementation plan, during 2016 which will be through support of the DATA4ACTION project.

## Contacts & Links

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Observatory website: under development