

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Action Plan (2025-2030)

MITIGATION



Ards and
North Down
Borough Council

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Foreword

We all want Ards and North Down to be a place where people and businesses can thrive. Acting on climate change is not just about reducing emissions, it is about protecting our residents from rising energy costs, improving health and wellbeing, supporting local jobs, and making sure our Borough is ready for the future.

This Climate Action Plan focuses on mitigation. By reducing emissions and improving energy efficiency, we can cut bills and reduce our exposure to volatile energy prices. By investing in modern infrastructure, we keep up with changing technology and future legislation. By creating greener neighbourhoods, we make our communities healthier, safer, and more resilient. And by working with businesses, we can support innovation and growth in the local economy.

This Climate Action Plan is first and foremost about the Council leading by example. Most of the actions set out here focus on reducing emissions from our own buildings, fleet, services, and supply chains.

The Council's role is clear, by making these changes, we are not only lowering our carbon footprint, we are also cutting energy costs, improving efficiency, modernising our infrastructure and preparing for future legislation.

By tackling our own emissions, we can:

- Reduce waste and energy bills across our estate,
- Stabilise our long-term costs against rising energy prices,
- Make sure new projects and assets are built to last,
- Improve the health and wellbeing of staff and service users, and
- Demonstrate leadership to residents, businesses, and partners.

This plan focuses on tackling the sources of climate change. In contrast, our Climate Adaptation Plan addresses how we respond to its unavoidable effects. Together, these plans ensure we are both limiting our impact and building resilience.

Although this plan focuses on Council-led initiatives, it also outlines how we can support the wider Borough, by encouraging energy-saving practices, assisting households and businesses, and collaborating with partners on shared priorities. Our starting point is to lead by example and take action within our own organisation, while supporting broader efforts in the Borough, where we can.

By acting now, we save money, protect services, comply with legislation and help create healthier, stronger communities. In doing so, we will meet our duty to achieve Net Zero by 2050, but there are also benefits that will be felt here and now, in lower costs, modern services and a more resilient Council.

This Plan is about making smart choices today to secure a stronger, fairer and more resilient Borough for tomorrow.

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive Ards and North Down Borough Council

Executive summary

This Climate Action Plan sets out how Ards and North Down Borough Council will reduce its own emissions and prepare for a low-carbon future. It is about more than carbon - it is about saving money, modernising services, complying with future law, and creating healthier communities.

The Plan focuses mainly on the Council's own operations - our buildings, fleet, services, and supply chains. By putting our own house in order first, we can lead by example and show what can be achieved locally. Alongside this, we will support residents, businesses, and partners across the Borough to take action of their own.

Our Targets

- 48% reduction in Council emissions (Scope* 1 and 2) by 2030 (from 2019/20 baseline)
- Net Zero Council emissions by 2050

These targets are ambitious, but they are also practical. Meeting them will cut energy bills, protect us from rising fuel costs, improve air quality and health, support new skills and jobs, and future-proof our infrastructure.

Our Themes

The Plan is organised around five themes where the Council can make the biggest difference.

Buildings and energy	Making our estate more efficient and cleaner to run
Transport	Reducing fleet emissions and promoting cleaner, safer travel
Resource management	Cutting waste, saving money, and supporting a circular economy
Natural environment	Protecting the green spaces that protect us
Governance	Embedding climate action into every decision we make

The Benefits

Every action in this Plan delivers more than emission reductions. They also help:

- Lower costs for the Council, residents and businesses
- Strengthen our economy through innovation and skills
- Improve health and wellbeing through cleaner air and greener places
- Ensure the Council is ready for future legislation and climate challenges.

Moving Forward

This Plan is about taking practical, achievable steps now. It will be monitored and reported openly through a Council Carbon Dashboard and annual updates. Over time, our progress will not only reduce emissions but also deliver lasting benefits for our residents, communities, and local economy.

Together, we can build a Borough that is fairer, healthier, more resilient, and ready for the future.

* The terms Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions come from the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, which classifies emissions by whether they are direct from an organisation's own activities (Scope 1), indirect from purchased energy (Scope 2), or indirect from the wider supply chain (Scope 3)

Our Climate Action Plan: Priorities and objectives

Priority	Council Specific Objectives	Borough Wide Objective
<p>THEME: Buildings and energy</p> <p>Improve energy efficiency and use of renewable technology across the Council estate and promote low-carbon solutions in the wider Borough.</p>	<p>Improve the energy efficiency of Council buildings while maximising renewable energy sources and retrofitting.</p> <p>Embed best practice in Council capital projects to minimise whole-life carbon footprint and mitigate against climate risks.</p>	<p>Work with multi-sectoral and government partners to promote and encourage low-carbon solutions across the Borough.</p>
<p>THEME: Transport</p> <p>Reduce emissions across our fleet and support the development of sustainable and active travel within Council and across the wider Borough.</p>	<p>Reduce carbon emissions across the Council fleet.</p> <p>Increase sustainable and active travel and reduce unnecessary trips by vehicles.</p>	<p>Promote sustainable and active travel across the Borough.</p>
<p>THEME: Resource management</p> <p>Reduce waste, increase recycling, and promote sustainable consumption of resources within Council and across the wider Borough.</p>	<p>Adopt sustainable purchasing practices.</p> <p>Improve resource efficiency and material reuse as part of a low carbon circular economy.</p>	<p>Support the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, and recycle across our Borough.</p>
<p>THEME: Natural environment</p> <p>Protect and enhance the natural environment to improve carbon capture, reduce the severity of climate impact, and restore biodiversity across the Council estate and wider Borough.</p>	<p>Use nature based solutions to increase carbon capture and storage potential of Council land.</p> <p>Protect and enhance biodiversity in our parks and open spaces to strengthen natural carbon capture and resilience.</p>	<p>Work with public and private partners to expand carbon capture opportunities across green spaces.</p>
<p>THEME: Governance</p> <p>Lead by example to develop a Council that enables climate action through collaboration and supports a just transition to net zero across the wider Borough.</p>	<p>Integrate climate action into Council plans, decisions, performance reporting and governance</p> <p>Develop stakeholder partnerships to assist with funding and resourcing of climate actions</p>	<p>Empower, educate, and support our citizens to create a just transition by 2050</p>

Introduction: Our commitment

This Climate Action Plan sets out how Ards and North Down Borough Council will take practical steps to reduce emissions from our own operations. It is mainly about the actions we, as a Council, can take, in our buildings, fleet, supply chains and services, to cut energy waste, reduce costs and future-proof our infrastructure.

This Plan focuses on mitigation, reducing the emissions we produce and preventing new ones. Alongside it, the Council has a Climate Adaptation Plan that looks at how we prepare for the impacts of climate change already happening, such as flooding and extreme weather. Together, these two Plans make sure we are both reducing our contribution and building resilience.

While the focus here is on the Council's own footprint, we also recognise the influence we have across the Borough. Through our role in planning, procurement, open spaces, business support, and community services, we can encourage and support wider action by residents, businesses, and partners.

By acting now, we make smart choices that will save money, protect services, strengthen our economy, and create healthier communities. These steps will also help us meet our statutory duty to achieve Net Zero by 2050. But more importantly, they will deliver real, local benefits today and for future generations.

This Climate Action Plan supports a "just transition", making the shift to a low-carbon future in a way that is fair and inclusive. It ensures that people, communities, and industries affected by the changes are supported, and that everyone benefits from clean energy.

We recognise the challenges ahead including rising energy costs, stricter building and transport standards, and the increasing risks of extreme weather. These challenges should be seen as opportunities. By acting now, we can cut waste, save money, modernise our services and improve quality of life for residents.

Corporate Plan 2024-28 Our commitment

48% reduction in Scope* 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2030
(compared to our baseline year).

Net Zero Council emissions by 2050 at the latest

** Scopes 1, 2 and 3 come from the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and describe whether emissions are from an organisation's own activities, from the energy it buys, or from its wider supply chain*

The Council is aiming to cut its own emissions nearly in half by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050, saving money and future-proofing our services along the way. Short term investment will be needed for long-term cost savings.

In 2019, Ards and North Down Borough Council declared a climate emergency. In 2022, Northern Ireland agreed the Climate Change (NI) Act (NI) and all Councils were identified as public sector organisations with a responsibility to gather data and report on carbon emissions associated with our own organisation. Within Council's Corporate Plan (2024-2028) we made a commitment to 'reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero'.

Net Zero means that we want to ensure the total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions (carbon, methane etc.) we generate from activities like burning fossil fuels such as oil, petrol and gas are offset by removing an equal amount from the atmosphere.

By focusing first on our own operations, the Council will show leadership and demonstrate what can be achieved. Alongside this, we will continue to support households, businesses, and partners across the Borough to reduce emissions and prepare for the future.

Climate action in Ards and North Down is shaped by a strong foundation of international, national, and regional policy. These frameworks not only set legal obligations but also provide compelling economic, social, and environmental reasons to act now.

2015	2019	2019	2022	2024
<p>Paris Climate Agreement</p> <p>International treaty to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees and preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels</p>	<p>UK Climate Change Act</p> <p>Sets targets for the UK to achieve net zero by 2050</p>	<p>Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Climate Emergency Declaration</p> <p>Requires urgent climate change mitigation measures and a climate adaptation plan</p>	<p>Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland)</p> <p>Sets targets for NI to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and an interim target of 48% reduction in GHG emissions on 1990 levels by 2030</p>	<p>Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Climate Adaptation Plan</p> <p>Assesses and prioritises risks to consider climate impacts within service delivery and decisions</p>

Published in 2006 by Her Majesty’s Treasury, the Stern Review, led by economist Nicholas Stern, remains one of the most influential studies on the economics of climate change.

Key findings included:

- Climate change poses serious risks to economic growth and development.
- The costs of stabilising the climate are significant but manageable.
- Delay in action would be dangerous and far more costly.
- Climate action is required globally and does not hinder economic aspirations.
- A wide range of solutions exist to reduce emissions, but strong policy is needed to drive uptake.

The Stern Review concluded that:

“The benefits of strong and early action far outweigh the economic costs of not acting”

The Stern Review helped shift climate policy from being seen as an environmental issue to a core economic and social priority. It underpins the rationale for early investment in mitigation and adaptation, a principle that guides this Plan.

Climate legislation provides the statutory framework for our Climate Action Plan. The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 sets a target that Northern Ireland must cut greenhouse gas emissions by 48% by 2030 and by 77% by 2040, reaching net zero by 2050. Alongside these overall targets, there are sectoral goals, for example, 80% of electricity must come from renewable sources and 70% of all waste must be recycled by 2030.

Why this plan matters

Climate change is already impacting our environment, our communities, and our economy.

By developing this Climate Action Plan, we are ensuring that every aspect of our work across services, policy development and partnerships contributes to building a more sustainable future for our Borough. This plan has been developed by considering the impact on our Borough if no action is taken, and also considers the economic, social, and health benefits to reducing carbon emissions; strengthening the case for climate action.

Climate action is about more than reducing carbon emissions. It is about preparing our Borough for the future and making sure we all benefit from the changes that are coming.

By acting now, we can:

Cut energy bills and protect against rising prices

Energy-efficient homes, schools and workplaces are cheaper to heat and run. Using renewable energy makes us less dependent on fossil fuels and less exposed to sudden price shocks.

Keep up with technology and legislation

The way we build, travel, and do business is changing fast. Councils and communities that adapt early will save money, avoid costly catch-up later and be better placed to meet future legal requirements.

Create healthier, safer places

Cleaner air, more green spaces and better walking and cycling routes all improve our health and wellbeing. This means less pressure on health services and a better quality of life for residents.

Boost our local economy

Investing in energy efficiency, renewable technology and green skills creates new jobs and business opportunities. Supporting innovation helps local companies stay competitive in a fast-changing economy.

Protect what we value most

Preparing for more extreme weather, flooding and other risks helps make our Borough safer and more resilient. By protecting nature, we also protect the services it provides — from cleaner air and water to flood prevention.

Focusing on these practical benefits we will also deliver on our legal duty to reach net zero by 2050. But the real rewards will be local: lower costs, stronger communities, healthier lives, and a Borough that is ready for the future.

The impacts of climate change

Climate change impacts will be felt both globally and locally and will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable members of our community.

Rising global temperatures are causing



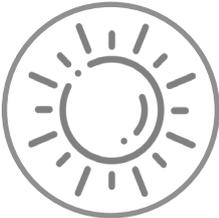
Rising sea levels and increased risk of flooding



More extreme local weather events including storms and flash flooding causing damage to buildings and infrastructure



Increased risk to health and wellbeing - extreme heat, worse local air pollution, introduction of new pests and diseases



More frequent and severe heat waves



Local water shortages and increased energy demand for cooling



Threats to local biodiversity, including the loss of native trees and wildlife

The co-benefits of climate action

There are many associated economic, social, and health benefits to reducing carbon emissions, strengthening the case for climate action.

Examples of these benefits include:

Better jobs, a more inclusive economy and enhanced green skills



A safer, healthier and more resilient Borough with reduced waste and air pollution and a better quality of life for citizens



Local low carbon goods and services, improved food security



More affordable energy and water with reduced fuel poverty



Better homes and offices and an efficient, cleaner transport network



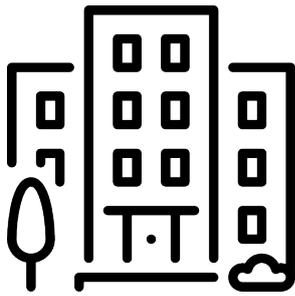
Safeguarding greener spaces for people and nature



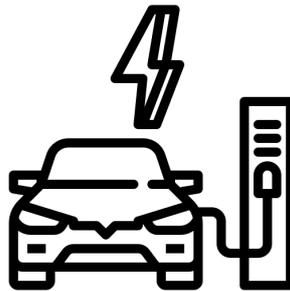
What this plan covers

Reducing emissions is not simple. It means changing how we build, travel, heat our buildings, manage waste, and run public services. Climate change is a complex issue that touches every part of society. Through this Plan, we are contributing to the global effort by addressing local emissions, supporting our communities, and building resilience. But of equal importance, by acting locally, there are also opportunities to save money, improve health and modernise our Borough.

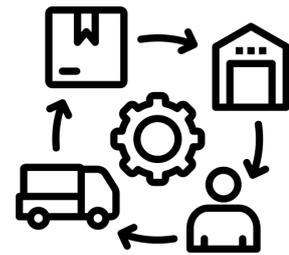
For the Council, some solutions are immediate and practical.



Upgrading old buildings so they are cheaper to run and more energy efficient.



Making sure our fleet and equipment keep up with new technology and fuel standards.



Managing contracts and supply chains in a way that cuts waste and reduces long-term costs.

Addressing Borough-wide climate challenges will take time.

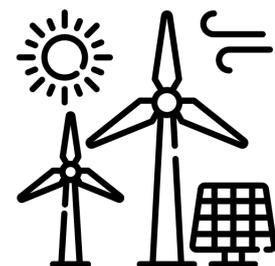
Solutions exist but they will require other public bodies to take action and/or to work in partnership alongside Council.



Supporting households and landlords to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.



Making it easier for people to walk, cycle and use public transport.



Encouraging businesses to adopt new technologies and low-carbon solutions to stay competitive.

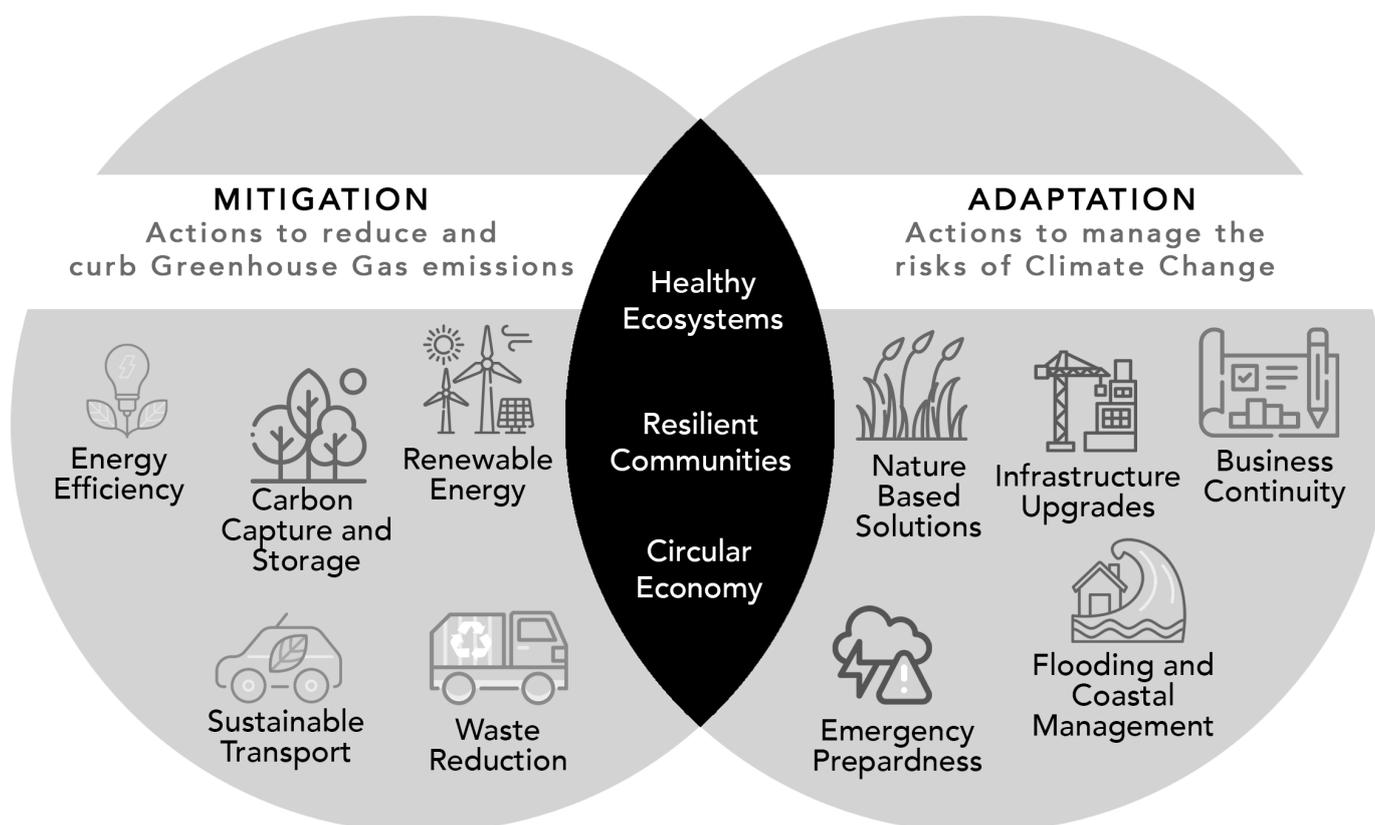
The way we respond to the climate crisis matters, because the solutions, and opportunities, reach far beyond just reducing carbon emissions.

<p>Financial stability</p> <p>Energy price shocks and rising fuel bills strain households, businesses, and the Council itself. Cutting waste and improving efficiency saves money.</p>	<p>Legal compliance</p> <p>Future building, fleet and procurement standards will be stricter. Acting early avoids costly catch-up later.</p>	<p>Health and wellbeing</p> <p>Cleaner air and warmer homes reduce illness and improve quality of life.</p>	<p>Nature and resilience</p> <p>Greener spaces not only absorb carbon but also protect us from flooding and heat, while supporting biodiversity.</p>
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While this plan is primarily focused on actions that Council will implement to help us reduce our emissions, some of the actions we take will also help support others to reduce their emissions.

Mitigation and Adaptation

This Plan is about mitigation, reducing the emissions we produce, while our separate Climate Adaptation Plan focuses on preparing for the risks we cannot avoid. Together, these two approaches ensure we are reducing our own carbon emissions and protecting our communities at the same time.



Understanding our emissions

The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol is the world’s most widely used standard for measuring and managing greenhouse gas emissions. It gives governments, companies, and organisations a common framework to measure, track, and reduce emissions. Without it, data would be inconsistent and hard to compare.

Greenhouse gas emissions are grouped into three categories:

Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
Direct emissions from our own operations, like fuel used in council vehicles and gas or oil to heat our buildings.	Indirect emissions from the energy we buy, such as electricity. The electricity is generated outside of Ards and North Down, but it is used here so is classified as an indirect emission.	Other indirect emissions across our wider activities, including suppliers, business travel, and waste.

Every organisation will have its own specific sources of scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, and these will vary across organisations. The diagram (page 13) shows the sources of emissions that Ards and North Down Borough Council has identified as being relevant to include within our Carbon Dashboard.

As part of our approach to reducing emissions, we will also account for carbon offsetting. Any renewable energy generated by the Council and exported back to the grid can be considered as an offset against our overall footprint. In future, carbon captured and stored through new technologies or nature-based solutions may also contribute to reducing our net emissions. For tree planting, only trees that are at least ten years old can be included in official carbon capture calculations. We are already measuring the carbon storage potential of our existing tree canopy and will continue to track this as part of our offsetting efforts.

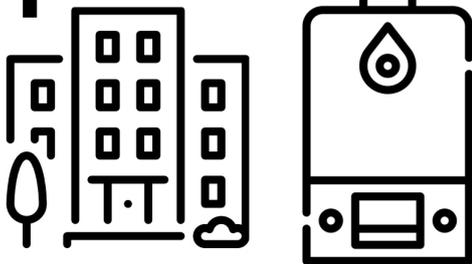
Public reporting to DAERA

From October 2025, the Council must also meet the reporting requirements set by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in relation to carbon mitigation. These include accounting for all relevant emission sources under Scope 1 (direct emissions from our operations) and Scope 2 (indirect emissions from purchased energy). From 2028 we will also have to report on Scope 3 (other indirect emissions such as supply chains and staff travel).

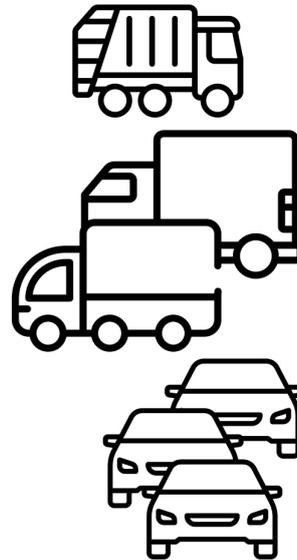
DAERA guidance sets out the timeframe for reporting progress, ensuring that our actions are transparent, consistent, and aligned with regional and national climate targets.

SCOPE

1



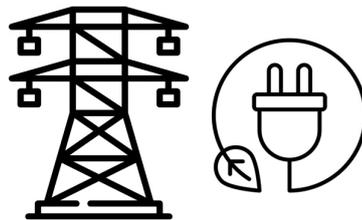
Heating of our buildings
(fuel combustion)



Fuel for our vehicle
fleet (diesel)

SCOPE

2



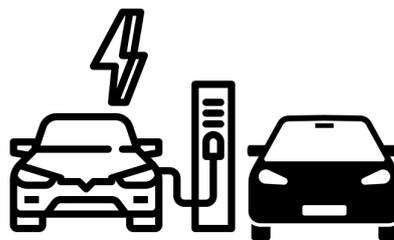
Grid supplied energy including
green energy (electricity)

SCOPE

3



Our supply chain
(goods & services)



Staff commuting and
business mileage



Waste
(treatment &
disposal)



Waste
generated
by Council



Water use

The diagram shows what Ards and North Down Borough Council's carbon dashboard includes under Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and what it plans to include under Scope 3 emissions. This diagram will be updated as the boundary evolves overtime.

Integration of climate action

In Ards and North Down climate action does not sit in isolation. Actions to meet our carbon emission reduction targets are supported by and integrated across the Council.

The Climate Action Plan (Mitigation) and the Climate Adaptation Plan align with each other as part of our climate change and sustainability responsibilities.

The Community Plan The Big Plan 2017-2032	Corporate Plan 2024-2028	Roadmap to Sustainability 2021-2028	Local Development Plan DRAFT 2025
<p>Outlines the Strategic Community Planning Partnership’s commitment to making life better for people who live in Ards and North Down. Community resilience and reducing inequalities are key themes which reinforce the objectives of the Council’s Climate Action Plan.</p>	<p>The Council’s vision is to be A Sustainable Borough. The plan embeds sustainability throughout planning and decision making and prioritises <i>‘reducing carbon emissions as we transition to Net Zero’</i>.</p>	<p>Formalises the Council’s commitment to becoming more sustainable under the direction of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It outlines how through key strategies and partnerships, sustainability performance is improving.</p>	<p>Considers climate change by guiding sustainable growth, protecting the environment, promoting low-carbon design and transport, and building resilience to flooding and coastal risks.</p>

Climate Adaptation Plan

Focuses on building resilience to the potential negative impacts of climate change, based on a comprehensive climate risk assessment, whilst simultaneously optimising the benefits changing climate will bring.

Climate Action Plan (Mitigation)

Works in partnership with the Climate Adaptation Plan

Sustainable Energy Management Strategy 2024-2029	Roadmap to a Green Fleet	Tree and Woodland Strategy Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Environmental Management System	Sustainable Waste and Resource Strategy (Phase 2)
<p>Sets out the Council’s commitment to effective energy and carbon management and outlines the next step in Council’s journey towards achieving Net Zero emissions across our estate.</p>	<p>Sets out a phased approach to de-carbonisation of the Council’s fleet, focusing on introducing electric vehicles for light fleet, upgrading depot infrastructure to meet electricity demand and exploring alternative fuel technology to ensure a Net Zero fleet by 2050</p>	<p>Includes several carbon capture and storage methods including planting 15,000 trees per year, re-wilding certain areas and managing peat bogs within the Borough.</p>	<p>The Council is committed to maintaining ISO 14001 accreditation to ensure it adheres to the highest level of environmental stewardship and demonstrates continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Outlines how the Council can encourage residents and businesses to reduce, reuse, and recycle to support the achievements of the legislative target of 70% recycling by 2030 as set out in the Climate Change (NI) Act 2022.</p>

Costs and benefits of action

Investing in climate action today is not only environmentally responsible but is also economically prudent. Numerous studies have shown that the cost of inaction far outweighs the cost of early intervention. For example, research by UK100 and Queen's University Belfast shows that every £1 invested in climate mitigation and adaptation yields £9 in savings, with early action to reach Net Zero by 2030 potentially saving £1.1 trillion in societal costs, while investments in home retrofitting and sustainable transport can generate billions in energy savings and thousands of new jobs.

One of the most influential analyses, the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change (2006), concluded that the costs of inaction could reach up to 20% of global GDP annually, while the costs of taking early action to reduce emissions would be around 1–2% of GDP. Stern's findings have since been reinforced by further research showing that delayed action leads to higher adaptation costs, greater economic disruption, and more severe social impacts.

In the local context, Ards and North Down Borough Council faces similar risks.

Retrofitting buildings later will be more expensive than integrating energy efficiency now	Health costs associated with poor air quality and fuel poverty will rise if action is delayed	Infrastructure upgrades will be more costly if not aligned with future climate and energy standards
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Moreover, early action increases access to funding and investment. Many climate-related grants and programmes prioritise proactive councils that demonstrate leadership and readiness. By embedding climate action into governance and planning now, the Council positions itself to attract external resources and avoid future financial penalties.

Cost efficiency through co-benefits

While reducing our emissions is important, and we have set aspiring targets to do this, our Climate Action Plan considers the wider picture by recognising the additional benefits of climate action.

Many climate actions deliver multiple returns. For example:

Tree planting not only captures carbon but also reduces flood risk and improves public wellbeing	Transitioning to electric vehicles reduces fuel costs and maintenance while improving air quality	Sustainable procurement strengthens supply chains and supports local businesses
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These co-benefits mean that climate action is not a single-purpose investment, it is a strategic approach to improving public services, reducing risk, and enhancing quality of life.

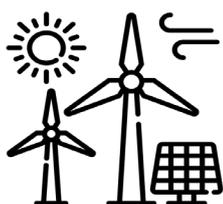
Early, well-planned climate action can save money, reduce risk, and deliver lasting value. By acting now, Ards and North Down Borough Council can avoid future costs, protect its communities, and build a more resilient and prosperous Borough.

Our Climate Action Plan

This Climate Action Plan is organised around five themes: Buildings and Energy, Transport, Resource Management, Natural Environment, and Governance.

These themes were chosen because they reflect the areas where the Council has the greatest influence over its own emissions and where our actions can bring the biggest local benefits. Together they provide a practical framework for action.

They connect the Council's statutory duty to reduce emissions with wider goals: lowering costs, improving health and wellbeing, supporting the economy and protecting our environment.



Buildings and energy

Our buildings and energy use are among our largest costs and emissions sources.

Warmer, cheaper-to-run buildings powered by clean energy

We will improve energy efficiency and use of renewable technology across the Council estate and promote low-carbon solutions in the wider Borough

Co-benefits include:

- Cuts Council energy bills and protects against rising prices
- Warmer, healthier buildings for staff and users;
- Future-proofs buildings against legislation;
- Creates local jobs in retrofit and clean energy



Transport

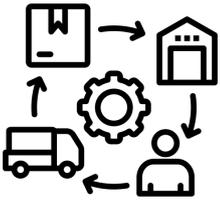
The Council's fleet and staff travel are significant contributors to emissions.

Cleaner, safer, more efficient ways to get around

We will reduce emissions across our fleet and support sustainable and active travel

Co-benefits include:

- Saves money on fuel and maintenance;
- Keeps pace with new transport standards
- Improves local air quality and public health;
- Reduces congestion and makes travel safer



Resource management

How we purchase, use and dispose of resources affects both our emissions and our costs.

Cutting waste saves money and supports local business

We will reduce waste, increase recycling and promote sustainable consumption

Co-benefits include:

- Reduces landfill costs for the Council;
- Supports a circular local economy;
- Encourages innovation in local business;
- Helps residents save money by reusing and recycling



Natural environment

The natural environment is one of Ards and North Down's greatest assets, supporting people, wildlife and climate.

Protecting green spaces to protect people and wildlife

We will protect and enhance the natural environment to improve carbon capture, reduce climate impacts and restore biodiversity

Co-benefits include:

- Reduces flood risk and heat stress;
- Improves quality of life with greener, healthier spaces; Protects biodiversity and tourism assets;
- Provides low-cost, natural solutions to climate risks



Governance

Strong governance ensures climate action is embedded in our decision-making, reporting and partnerships.

Leading by example and future-proofing Council decisions

We will lead by example to enable climate action through collaboration and support a just transition

Co-benefits include:

- Ensures Council decisions are legally compliant and cost-effective;
- Attracts funding and investment; Builds community trust and engagement;
- Strengthens partnerships and long-term resilience

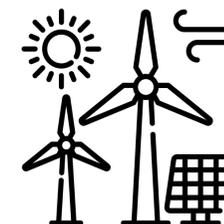
Theme: Buildings and energy

Objectives:

1. Improve the energy efficiency of Council buildings while maximising the renewable energy sources and retrofitting
2. Embed best practice within Council capital projects to maximise their whole-life carbon footprint and mitigate against climate risk
3. Work with multi-sectoral and government partners to promote and encourage low-carbon solutions across the Borough

Council Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Implement and monitor the actions in the Sustainable Energy Management Strategy	1 and 2	2024-2029	High	£££	Energy Management	Saves money on energy bills; protects against rising prices; keeps Council ahead of energy legislation
Install energy efficiency measures to reduce energy demand in Council buildings (target of 25% reduction in carbon emissions by 2028)	1	2028	High	£££	Energy Management Building Managers	Cheaper-to-run buildings; warmer, healthier workspaces; long-term budget savings
Identify opportunities to increase use renewable energy across Council estate to power Council buildings (and where possible to benefit other stakeholders)	1	Pre 2030	Medium	££	Energy Management	Greater energy independence; price stability; future-proofing
Upgrade less efficient heating systems in Council buildings with low carbon renewable heat sources (where feasible)	1	Pre 2030	High	£££	Energy Management	Modern, reliable heating; avoids future compliance costs; improves comfort
Deliver an energy efficiency education programme to Council staff to support behaviour change	1	2027	Low	£	Energy Management Climate & Sustainability	Supports behaviour change; builds staff awareness; reduces running costs
Incorporate into all Council capital projects good sustainable design principles and construction methodologies that focus on reducing lifetime carbon costs and that increase green skills and job opportunities	2	Pre 2030	Medium	£	Capital Projects Procurement	Future-proofs new assets; reduces whole-life costs; creates local green jobs
Deliver the Civic Office Rationalisation Programme by consolidating Council administrative operations into a single, highly energy-efficient building that meets best practice in sustainable design and construction.	1 and 2	2030	High	Cost Neutral	Corporate Services Capital Projects Assets and Property	Reduces energy consumption and operational costs; improves staff wellbeing and collaboration; future-proofs Council infrastructure; demonstrates leadership in sustainable building design

Our priority for the buildings and energy theme is to:
 Improve energy efficiency and use of renewable technology across the Council estate and promote low carbon solutions in the wider Borough



Borough Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Develop and consult on a new Local Development Plan (LDP), draft Plan Strategy, and strategic consideration of how we can support sustainable development that seeks to mitigate and adapt to climate change and increase local environmental resilience.	3	2025	Unknown	£	Planning	Shapes new housing and business growth for long-term efficiency; avoids costly retrofits; improves energy performance in the Borough.
Ensure new developments have taken account of energy, water, and other resources and where feasible and practicable integrate micro-generation and passive solar design	3	2030	Low	£	Building Control	Protects future residents from high energy bills; ensures compliance with future building regulations; improves comfort and quality of housing stock.
Conduct a feasibility study to identify suitable locations, technology, and funding mechanisms for a low-carbon district heating scheme to heat Council buildings and where possible benefit other stakeholders	3	2029	High	£££	Regeneration Economic Development Climate & Sustainability	Attracts external investment; creates modern infrastructure; supports business competitiveness; lowers heating costs for households and businesses.
Raise awareness of energy efficiency measures for the home. Create digital tools and other support to tackle fuel poverty in the Borough and to support behaviour change	3	2026	Medium	£	Building Control Planning Climate & Sustainability	Tackles fuel poverty; helps residents save on bills; supports local SMEs in the retrofit sector; builds community resilience to energy price shocks.
Develop programmes that help support the business community to adopt energy efficiency practices that help the Borough progress towards net zero targets	3	Pre 2030	High	££	Economic Development	Lowers operating costs; strengthens competitiveness; supports green innovation; future-proofs local economy against regulatory changes.

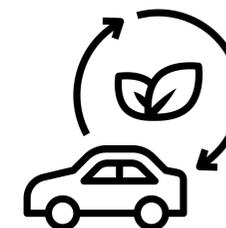
Theme: Transport

Objectives:

1. Reduce carbon emissions across the Council fleet
2. Increase sustainable and active travel and reduce trips by vehicles
3. Promote sustainable and active travel across the Borough

Council Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Implement and monitor the actions in the Roadmap to a Green Fleet (Target of 48% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030)	1	2030	High	£££	Fleet Management Energy Management Climate & Sustainability	Cuts fuel costs; keeps fleet compliant with standards; reduces air pollution
Review and amend the Council's business mileage policy to ensure its alignment with the 2050 net zero carbon target.	2	2028	Medium	£	Finance	Reduces travel costs; encourages smarter working
Deliver driver efficiency training to staff and fleet operators to encourage sustainable travel behaviours	3	2028	Low	£	Fleet Management Energy Management	Saves fuel; improves safety; builds awareness
Promote the new greenways and improving links to town centres, schools, and workplaces to reduce reliance on cars and improve air quality	1, 2 and 3	2028	Low	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Supports healthier lifestyles; enhances community wellbeing
Increase the availability of secure bike storage and undertake an audit of cycling provisions across Council buildings and spaces	2 and 3	2028	Low	£	Climate & Sustainability Regeneration	Encourages active travel; improves staff wellbeing
Regularly review availability of EV chargers within Council car parks to ensure implementation of the Car Parking Strategy contributions to the net zero carbon target	3	2030	Medium	££	Estates Management Regeneration	Supports sustainable transport; reduces congestion

*Our priority for the transport theme is to:
Reduce emissions across our fleet and support the development of sustainable
and active travel within Council and across the wider Borough*



Borough Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Identify funding opportunities and grants available for outdoor activities and active travel	3	2030	Low	£	Parks & Cemeteries Outdoor Recreation	Improves health and wellbeing; increases outdoor recreation opportunities; reduces transport costs for residents.
Work with Translink, Sustrans and other key stakeholders to provide education and participation incentives to encourage active, public and shared modes of transport and improve the cycling network	3	2028	Medium	£	Climate & Sustainability Community Planning Parks & Cemeteries	Reduces congestion and car dependency; improves air quality; lowers travel costs for residents; increases physical activity.
Work in partnership with DfI to encourage walking and cycling through investment in additional infrastructure and creation of linked opportunities	3	2027	Medium	£	Capital Projects Regeneration Climate & Sustainability	Safer streets; healthier communities; reduced pressure on road network; encourages tourism and local business footfall.
Consult on the LDP draft Plan Strategy, including a policy approach to support active travel and sustainable transport.	3	2025	Low	£	Planning	Ensures future development is well-connected; reduces car reliance; improves accessibility for all ages and abilities.

Theme: Resource management

Objectives:

1. Adopt sustainable purchasing practices
2. Improve resource efficiency and material reuse as part of a local carbon circular economy
3. Support the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle across our Borough

Council Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Adopt and implement a Responsible Procurement Policy that requires suppliers to meet minimum sustainability standards and report sustainability performance, prioritising those from our top ten highest-spend contracts	1	2028	High	££	Procurement Climate & Sustainability	Reduces waste; drives supplier innovation; strengthens supply chains
Bring together suppliers, partners, and local business community to promote our approach to responsible procurement and shared learning	1	2027	Medium	£	Procurement Climate & Sustainability	Builds partnerships; shares best practice; supports local business
Include whole life carbon and climate change impact assessments in capital project proposals to limit new sources of emissions, maximise resource efficiency and future-proof new developments to the impacts of climate change	2	2035	High	££	Capital Projects Climate & Sustainability Regeneration	Future-proofs assets; reduces costs over time
Develop a Green Economy Plan to accelerate transition to a low-carbon circular economy	2	2030	Medium	££	Economic Development Climate & Sustainability	Supports new jobs; strengthens resilience; attracts investment
Develop and deliver innovative programmes that support the development of low carbon jobs and skills and attract net zero businesses that help our aspirations to grow the local green economy	1, 2 and 3	2028	Medium	££	Economic Development Climate & Sustainability	Boosts local skills; strengthens economy
Apply a sustainability checklist to events to include requiring vendors to limit their carbon emissions and report performance and actions as part of the Council's Scope 3 reporting obligations (methodology to be determined)	2	2028	Medium	££	Events Waste Management Climate & Sustainability	Reduces single-use waste; promotes greener events

Our priority for the resource management theme is to:
Reduce waste, increase recycling, and promote sustainable consumption of resources within Council and across the wider Borough



Borough Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Meet 60% recycling target of municipal waste by 2030 within the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020	3	2030	Medium	££	Waste Management	Reduces landfill costs; supports circular economy; protects environment; aligns with legislation.
Update the Council's Event's Policy to include a ban on single-use plastic at community-run events on Council land and property	3	2028	Low	£££	Events Waste Management Community	Cuts waste and litter; reduces clean-up costs; promotes sustainable behaviours; improves public spaces.
Work in partnership to expand kerbside recycling streams, improving recycling facilities and supporting government plans to introduce a national deposit returns scheme for containers.	3	2030	High	££	Waste Management	Increases convenience for residents; reduces waste management costs; supports new recycling jobs; improves resource efficiency.
Empower communities to trial and highlight circular economy projects such as repair cafes, tools libraries and resource matching to drive sustainable consumer choice	3	2038	Medium	£	Waste Management Climate & Sustainability Economic Development Community	Saves residents money; strengthens community connections; reduces waste; supports local innovation.
Collaborate with schools, businesses and the public to increase education and awareness about sustainable behaviours to cut carbon emissions	3	2027	Low	£	Waste Management NET Economic Development Climate & Sustainability	Builds long-term behaviour change; reduces household costs; supports business competitiveness; develops skills.

Theme: Natural environment

Objectives:

1. Use nature-based solutions to increase carbon capture and storage potential of Council land
2. Protect and enhance biodiversity in our parks and open spaces to strengthen natural carbon capture and resilience
3. Work with public and private partners to expand carbon capture opportunities across green spaces

Council Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Implement and identify carbon capture actions in the Tree and Woodland Strategy (2021-2032)	1 and 2	2032	High	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Improves biodiversity; reduces flood risk; creates green spaces
Implement and identify carbon capture actions in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan	1 and 2	2030	Medium	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Protects habitats; supports wildlife; boosts wellbeing
Include carbon capture and storage considerations within the Green Flag management plans and develop a plan to increase Green Flag accreditation across all our parks and woodlands	2	2028	Medium	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Improves parks; supports accreditation; engages community
Develop a plan to protect natural carbon sinks such as wetlands and trees, including ancient and long-established woodlands	1	2027	High	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Natural flood defence; protects ecosystems
Between 2021 and 2032 plant 160,000 new trees to increase carbon capture and storage	1	2032	Medium	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Boosts biodiversity; creates shade and shelter
Identify opportunities and locations to enhance green spaces and biodiversity through re-wilding	2	2026	Low	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Improves access to nature; builds resilience

Our priority for the natural environment theme is to:
 Protect and enhance the natural environment to improve carbon capture,
 reduce the severity of climate impact, and restore biodiversity across the
 Council estate and wider Borough



Borough Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Work in partnership with private landowners to identify land for tree planting to increase opportunities for carbon capture and storage enabling us to off-set Council's carbon footprint	3	2026	Medium	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Increases biodiversity; reduces flood risk; creates green spaces for recreation; supports rural economy
Develop and identify funding opportunities to resource a plan creating new woodland provide effective carbon capture and storage	3	2026	Medium	£	Parks & Cemeteries	Provides shade and cooling; improves health and wellbeing; enhances tourism and landscape value.

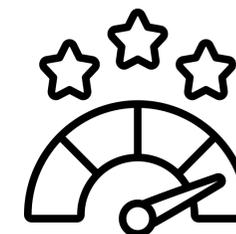
Theme: Governance

Objectives:

1. Integrate climate action into Council plans, decisions, performance reporting and governance
2. Develop stakeholder partnerships to assist with funding and resourcing of climate actions
3. Empower, educate, and support our citizens to create a just transition by 2050

Council Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Establish a Strategic Net Zero Board to oversee our progress towards reducing our carbon emissions	1	2025	High	£	Climate & Sustainability	Provides oversight; builds accountability; shows leadership
Publish a Council Carbon Dashboard and sustainability report for the Council in compliance with the requirements of the NI Climate Act, then publish an update annually	1	2025	Medium	£	Climate & Sustainability Energy Management	Transparency; builds trust; informs decisions
Investigate best practice to collate emissions from Council's supply chains and integrate reporting of Scope 3 emissions into the Carbon Dashboard	1	2026	High	££	Climate & Sustainability Finance Procurement	Future compliance; better supplier engagement
Review the screening methodology applied to Council policies and ensure that carbon reduction is included alongside sustainability, and that all Council staff are supported to apply this methodology	1	2026	Medium	£	Climate & Sustainability Compliance	Ensures sustainability in all decisions
Train all Council staff, senior management, and Elected Members on climate action and how to embed climate action and responsibilities of all senior managers.	1	2026	Low	£	Climate & Sustainability Organisational Development	Builds awareness; embeds culture change
Develop cross-department collaborations and external partnership to assist with sources of funding for climate action	2	2027	Medium	£	Climate & Sustainability	Unlocks funding; builds stronger partnerships

*Our priority for the governance theme is to:
Lead by example to develop a Council that enables climate action through
collaboration and supports a just transition to net zero across the wider Borough*



Council Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Review Council Business Case Template and consider how to include a requirement within each Business Case for an estimate (after agreeing suitable methodology) on carbon emissions (generated or saved) alongside the annual budget.	1	2027	££	Low	Climate & Sustainability	Fosters insight and supports culture change
Review this action plan annually and update as required	1	2026 etc.	£	Low	Climate & Sustainability	Supports just transition; engages residents

Borough Specific Actions	Objectives	Milestones	Carbon Saving Potential	Relative Cost to Council	Responsibility	Co-benefits of Action
Establish a Climate Resilient Communities Group with stakeholders from across the Borough to support a just transition to net zero	2 and 3	2026	Low	Low	Climate & Sustainability Community Planning	Builds community leadership; ensures fair transition; strengthens partnerships; increases access to external funding.
Identify appropriate partnerships to help resource climate actions and work with communities to implement climate action initiatives	2 and 3	2027	Medium	Low	Climate & Sustainability Community Planning	Leverages external investment; reduces Council costs; builds shared responsibility; accelerates delivery of projects.

Monitoring, evaluating and reporting

We will be transparent about progress. Regular updates and a Council Carbon Dashboard will show not only how much we are reducing emissions, but also how we are saving money, improving services, and delivering wider benefits for our communities.

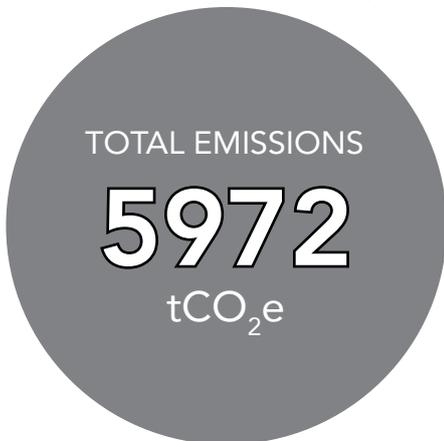
Our carbon dashboard

Where we started (Baseline year 2019/20)



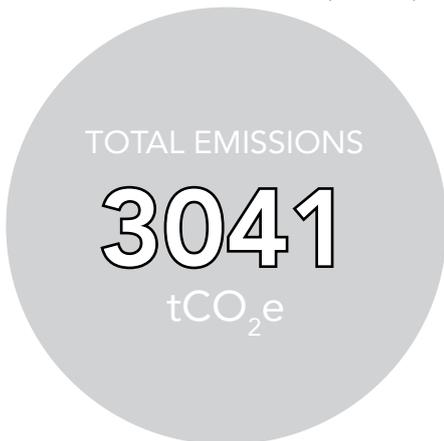
- Scope 1: 5307 tCO₂e
- Scope 2: 1387 tCO₂e
- Scope 3 emissions not yet considered
- 0 green energy supply
- 0 EV chargers
- 0 additional tree planting or rewilding

Where we are (2024/25)



- Scope 1: 5178 tCO₂e
- Scope 2: 1075 tCO₂e
- Scope 3 emissions to be determined
- Green energy supply in place for electricity and natural gas
- 15 EV chargers
- 61,500 additional trees planted
- 132,302 m² of additional re-wilding

Where we aim to be (2030)



- Scope 3 emissions identified, calculated, and reported on
- Green energy supply in place for electricity and natural gas
- 30 EV chargers
- 160,000 additional trees planted (by 2032)
- Plan for additional re-wilding and grassland managed to increase carbon capture and storage
- Carbon capture and storage calculations include in Carbon Dashboard

Progress reporting

We will:

Review progress via our Net Zero Board to measure how well we are meeting the actions and targets in the plan and amend our actions as required

Publish an annual Climate Action Report on our website so the public can see how we are making progress alongside future plans

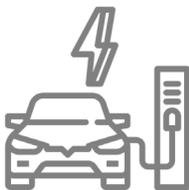
Fully review the plan every four years to keep it relevant and on track to meet the 2050 net zero targets.

Progress will be measured against our committed to:

Reduce Council's Scope* 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 48% by 2030
(compared to our baseline year).

Achieve Net Zero Council emissions by 2050

** Scopes 1, 2 and 3 come from the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and describe whether emissions are from an organisation's own activities, from the energy it buys, or from its wider supply chain*



Summary of priorities and objectives

We have set key priorities and objectives based on an analysis of the Council's emissions, stakeholder input, and opportunities to maximise emissions reductions and wider co-benefits.

These are summarised in the table below.

Priority	Council Specific Objectives	Borough Wide Objective
<p>THEME: Buildings and energy</p> <p>Improve energy efficiency and use of renewable technology across the Council estate and promote low-carbon solutions in the wider Borough.</p>	<p>Improve the energy efficiency of Council buildings while maximising renewable energy sources and retrofitting.</p> <p>Embed best practice in Council capital projects to minimise whole-life carbon footprint and mitigate against climate risks.</p>	<p>Work with multi-sectoral and government partners to promote and encourage low-carbon solutions across the Borough.</p>
<p>THEME: Transport</p> <p>Reduce emissions across our fleet and support the development of sustainable and active travel within Council and across the wider Borough.</p>	<p>Reduce carbon emissions across the Council fleet.</p> <p>Increase sustainable and active travel and reduce unnecessary trips by vehicles.</p>	<p>Promote sustainable and active travel across the Borough.</p>
<p>THEME: Resource management</p> <p>Reduce waste, increase recycling, and promote sustainable consumption of resources within Council and across the wider Borough.</p>	<p>Adopt sustainable purchasing practices.</p> <p>Improve resource efficiency and material reuse as part of a low carbon circular economy.</p>	<p>Support the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle across our Borough.</p>
<p>THEME: Natural environment</p> <p>Protect and enhance the natural environment to improve carbon capture, reduce the severity of climate impact, and restore biodiversity across the Council estate and wider Borough.</p>	<p>Use nature-based solutions to increase carbon capture and storage potential of Council land.</p> <p>Protect and enhance biodiversity in our parks and open spaces to strengthen natural carbon capture and resilience.</p>	<p>Work with public and private partners to expand carbon capture opportunities across green spaces.</p>
<p>THEME: Governance</p> <p>Lead by example to develop a Council that enables climate action through collaboration and supports a just transition to net zero across the wider Borough.</p>	<p>Embed climate action into Council plans, decisions, performance reporting and governance</p> <p>Develop stakeholder partnerships to assist with funding and resourcing of climate actions</p>	<p>Empower, educate, and support our citizens to create a just transition by 2050</p>

Glossary

Carbon capture and storage involved using nature to help tackle climate change. Trees, plants and healthy soils naturally absorb carbon Dioxide (CO₂) from the air and store it in their leaves, roots and the ground. Planting more trees, restoring grasslands and protecting habitats are effective ways to lock away carbon for many years.

Carbon dioxide equivalent is a term for describing different greenhouse gases in a common unit/measure. CO₂e refers to the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) that would have an equivalent global warming impact.

Carbon offsetting means investing in projects and activities that save carbon to help compensate for carbon emissions that cannot be avoided elsewhere. These projects are usually designed to absorb extra carbon, such as through tree planting, or to help reduce future emissions, such as through renewable energy technology. They can also deliver wider community benefits such as employment, biodiversity and improvements to health and wellbeing.

A Circular economy designs out consumer waste and pollution by keeping products and materials in use rather than being thrown away. It involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible to reduce waste to a minimum.

Climate resilience is preparing for hazardous events related to climate change. It involves assessing how climate change will create new risks to an area (such as flooding) and making preemptive changes to remove the risks or help people to better cope with their impacts. It is also referred to as climate adaptation.

Embodied carbon is the carbon footprint of a material, product, or building, including emissions associated with its creation (the extraction of raw materials), transportation, construction and use (operation).

Emissions scopes refers to the classification system for emission by source type: Scope 1: (direct) emissions owned or controlled by an organisation; Scope 2: indirect emissions from purchased electricity, heat, and cooling; Scope 3: other indirect emissions relating to an organisation's activities but outside of their control (e.g. purchased goods and services, waste disposal).

Fossil fuels are carbon rich fuels, including coal, oil, and natural gas, which are derived from the remains of ancient plants and animals.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs), primarily carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, are gases in the atmosphere are responsible for global warming.

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol is the world's most widely used standard for measuring and managing greenhouse gas emissions. It is a set of international accounting and reporting standards developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). It gives governments, companies, and organisations a common framework to measure, track, and reduce their emissions. Without it, data would be inconsistent and hard to compare.

Just transition refers to ensuring that the shift to a low-carbon economy is fair and inclusive, protecting workers, communities, and vulnerable groups from negative impacts while creating opportunities for decent work, social equity, and sustainable development.

KtCO₂e is a measurement of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, representing thousands of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Nature-based solutions are actions that works with and enhances nature to help address challenges like climate change, flooding, biodiversity loss, or health and wellbeing. Examples include restoring wetlands to reduce flood risk, planting trees to cool urban areas, or creating green spaces that improve air quality and support wildlife.

Net Zero is the balance between the emissions we produce and those we remove from the atmosphere through emission saving activities and offsetting. We achieve Net Zero when the amount of emissions we produce each year is equal to or less than the amount we take away. This can be achieved by reducing the emissions we produce and offsetting any remaining emissions that are too expensive or complex to prevent entirely.

Retrofitting involves installing energy-efficient measures, such as insulation, double glazing, and efficient electrical and heating appliances, in existing buildings to improve their environmental performance and reduce the loss of heat and energy.

Whole life carbon relates to the emissions associated with a building or product across its entire lifespan, including its creation, emissions associated with its day-to-day use and emissions related to its eventual disposal. For buildings, this includes emissions from lighting, heating and appliances as well as the embodied emissions associated with its construction, maintenance and disposal.

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