

Public - Yes
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Annual Climate Review

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Community and Partnerships) – 06/06/2024

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor Climate & Environment -
Councillor Lara Davenport-Ray

Report by: Neil Sloper – Assistant Director
Strategic Insight & Delivery
Helen Lack – Development & Delivery Manager
Harriet Robinson – Climate Co-ordinator

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report presents the first Annual Review of Huntingdonshire District Council's **Climate Action Plan**, covering all climate-related activities undertaken since the declaration of a **Climate Emergency and Ecological Crisis** in February 2023. It outlines the progress made towards achieving a **net zero carbon council by 2040**, as set out in the Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

The delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy, through the action plan, addresses the Council's Corporate Plan priority of **Creating a Better Huntingdonshire for Future Generations**, particularly the objective of **Lowering Carbon Emissions**.

Key Achievements:

1. **Emission Reductions:** From 2019 to March 2023, the Council achieved a reduction of 692 tCO₂e, representing an 18.86% decrease in overall emissions.
2. **Fleet Transition:** The Council initiated a pilot project to use hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) as an alternative fuel, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 92%.
3. **Facilities Upgrades:** Projects such as retrofitting Council buildings with LED lighting and receiving grants for solar panels and triple glazing at St Ives Leisure Centre were completed.
4. **Carbon Literacy Training:** Over 60 staff members were certified as carbon literate through training programs conducted by Groundworks East.
5. **Community Engagement:** The first Climate Conversation events were held, bringing together stakeholders and residents to discuss and inspire climate action.

Strategic Objectives:

- Achieving net zero for Council operations by 2040.
- Ensuring Council policies support emission reductions and serve as positive examples.
- Continuously considering environmental impacts in all policymaking and asset management.
- Collaborating with partners to address environmental issues.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Council utilises various methods to track progress, including quarterly tracking of actions, benchmarking against neighbouring local authorities, annual Climate Conversation events, and Greenhouse Gas Accounting. An online Climate Hub has been developed and launched. Developed following engagement in 2023's Climate Conversation it is designed to enable and influence communities and businesses to contribute towards lower carbon emissions. A Climate Impact Assessment Tool is in development and will be launched this year to further support the Council in Climate aware decision making.

The report emphasises the importance of continued efforts and adaptation to new technologies and approaches to maintain momentum towards achieving the net zero goal by 2040.

The Committee is

RECOMMENDED

1. To comment on the delivery of the Climate Strategy Action Plan in 2023/24.
2. To note the progress made by the Council and its partners towards achieving Carbon Net Zero by 2040.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny (Environment, Communities & Partnerships) with an update on progress of the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy since its adoption in February 2023, highlighting key areas of success and achievement throughout the year.
- 1.2 To present a summary of progress, highlighting the current position of Huntingdonshire District Council, demonstrating the progress that has been made in reducing emissions through the approach set out in the Climate Strategy for the Council to be:
- **a positive example** through its actions to be a net carbon zero Council by 2040.
 - **an enabler** supporting action within our communities and across our partners.
 - **an encourager** to ensure the efforts of those that live, work and visit our district help to achieve the aspiration of a net carbon zero Huntingdonshire by 2040.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 2022 the Council passed a **Cost of Living and Climate Change Motion**. This recognised the importance and positive impact of action benefiting the climate and environment in tackling the rising costs of living by reducing consumption of natural resources, shifting to renewables, and producing less carbon emissions.
- 2.2 This Council adopted the **Climate Strategy and Climate Action Plan** in February 2023.
- 2.3 The Council hosted its first **Climate Conversation** with our communities in November 2023.
- 2.4 The Overview & Scrutiny (Environment, Communities & Partnerships) was presented with an overview of the use of the **Climate Emergency UK Council Climate Scorecards** and how the Council uses the framework to identify and learn best practice as well as benchmarking the Council against our geographic and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy comparator Council's with a similar geographic and demographic nature.

3 CLIMATE STRATEGY

3.1 Climate Vision:

We will be a Council that proactively tackles the climate crisis and ecological emergency, working closely with partners, and leading by example to be a net carbon zero Council by 2040, and support Huntingdonshire to achieve the same goal.

3.2 Climate Objectives:

We are working to achieve our vision, responding to the climate crisis and ecological emergency and will continue to place focus on the following:

- Achieving net Zero for the Council's own operations by 2040
- Ensuring Council policies and projects enable reduction of emissions and provide positive examples for businesses and residents.
- Continually demonstrating that we consider environmental impact in all policymaking and our stewardship of council assets and resources.
- Influencing our updated Local Plan and working closely with the Planning Service to reflect the priorities outlined in our Climate Action Plan
- Maximising the opportunities to work with others collaboratively to address environmental issues.

4 PROGRESS TO DATE

4.1 Strategic Priorities

For the Council to demonstrate its commitment to the reduction in carbon emissions in the district, we have engaged in several key activities and projects in response to the strategic priorities agreed with the adoption of the Climate Strategy. A document giving full details of key projects and progress can be found in Appendix 4.

We will be 'Positive Example' for our direct Council emissions.

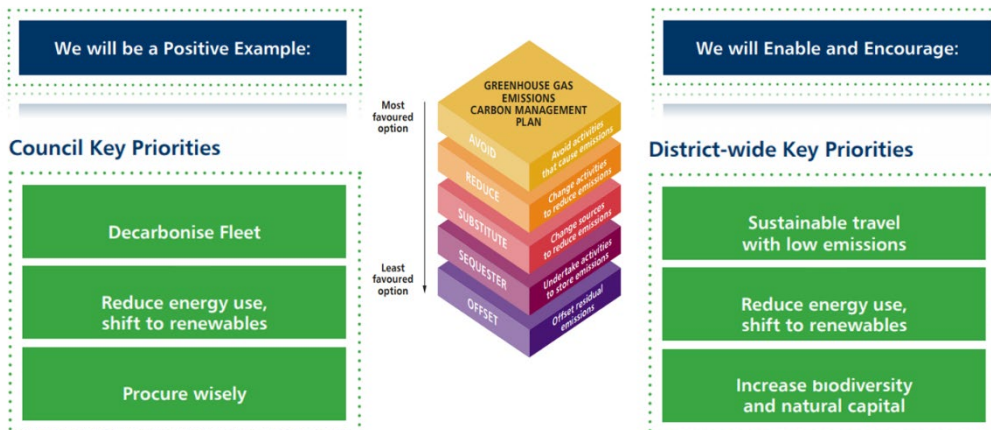
- Decarbonise Fleet
- Reduce Energy use, shift to renewables.
- Procure wisely.

We will 'Enable & Encourage' our District.

- Sustainable Travel with Low Emissions
- Reduce energy use, shift to renewables.
- Increase Biodiversity and Natural Capital



Climate Strategy Priorities



4.2 The Climate Strategy includes a detailed Action Plan which sets out our actions to deliver net zero carbon emissions both in terms of our own services and to support our local communities to do the same.

4.3 Appendix 5 sets out the detailed progress against the Climate Actions set for 2023/2024. The Actions are categorised by theme area.

- Buildings;
- Energy & Renewables;
- Nature;
- Travel & Transport;
- Waste, Recycling & Resource Management; and
- Community.

5 CORPORATE PLAN

5.1 The Corporate plan 2023-2028 places strong emphasis on the Council's commitment to delivering their reduced carbon emissions target.

Priority 1: Improving quality of life for local people

Priority 2: Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations

Priority 3: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations

5.2 WE SAID, WE DID

As part of the Annual review of the Corporate Plan the following achievements in 2023/24 related to reducing Carbon Emissions were included:

- Hosting a weekend of Climate Conversation events.
- Commissioning a study on priority landscapes and undertaking biodiversity surveys to help deliver the Huntingdonshire Plan for Nature.
- Developing an Electronic Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy adopted in March 2024.
- Receiving an improved score of 27% (from zero in 2021) from an independent review of our Climate Action by Climate Emergency UK, demonstrating the immediate impact of our Climate Strategy and Action Plan (adopted in February 2023) but not yet showing the impact of recent work as scores don't reflect activity since March.



5.3 The Council has already made progress in delivering the Outcomes of the 2024/25 Corporate Plan to delivery the outcome of Lowering Carbon Emissions (see below table).

DO	Action	Progress
37	Complete Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Fuel Trial and present a business case for decision	On Target
38	Deliver a Fleet Decarbonisation Plan	On Target
39	Deliver our Energy Strategy	Started
40	Deliver the Climate Conversation in 2024, showcasing community action and listening to local people in their communities	Complete Nov 2023. Next planned Nov 2024
41	Identify emissions from HDC IT data centres to include in reporting and establish disposal methods for IT equipment to reduce environment impact	On Target
42	Establish climate and carbon emissions learning and development plan for Council employees	Started
43	Accelerate Solar Power Adoption on Council Buildings	On Target

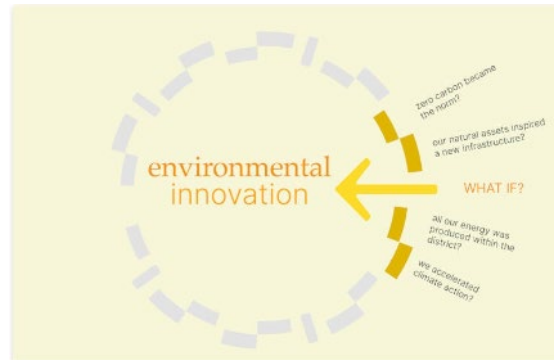
Enable	Action	Progress
44	Support community projects and plans that reduce carbon emissions.	On Target
45	Deliver Biodiversity for All (2023-2025) to enable community action and support green skills development.	On Target
46	Commission Active Travel Studies (UKSPF) to influence/inform future investment priorities.	On Target
47	Deliver the Phase 1 Rural Pilot HDC Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Actions.	On Target

Influence	Action	Progress
48	Develop the Council's procurement rules to further embed social and environmental value.	On Target
48	Expand positive climate action support for local businesses, celebrating best practice and sharing knowledge.	On Target
50	Adopt the Huntingdonshire Plan for Nature and influence the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy with our priorities.	On Target

6 HUNTINGDONSHIRE PLACE STRATEGY

6.1 Huntingdonshire Futures sets out a vision to make Huntingdonshire a better place to live, work, and visit over the next 30 years.

Over the last year, the Council has started to work with local communities to bring the strategy to life. Environmental Innovation is one of the 5 journeys agreed with the adoption of the strategy. Preparation to commence the Environmental Innovation journey has taken place.



6.2 The Climate and Huntingdonshire Futures teams are linking up to run an Environmental Innovation launch workshop on 4th June 2024. Through initial consultations with local community groups, they stated that: “all houses should have no carbon footprint, we should be protecting what we already have and there needs to be more done to make people change.”

6.3 The workshop will build on these statements, discussing why they're important and what is being done currently. There will be a small number of speakers and focus groups to identify priorities and areas for action within the next 5, 10 and 30 years. An external steering group will then be formed to oversee the delivery of actions through working groups targeting the priorities identified to develop practical actions and attract funding into Huntingdonshire.

7 MONITORING

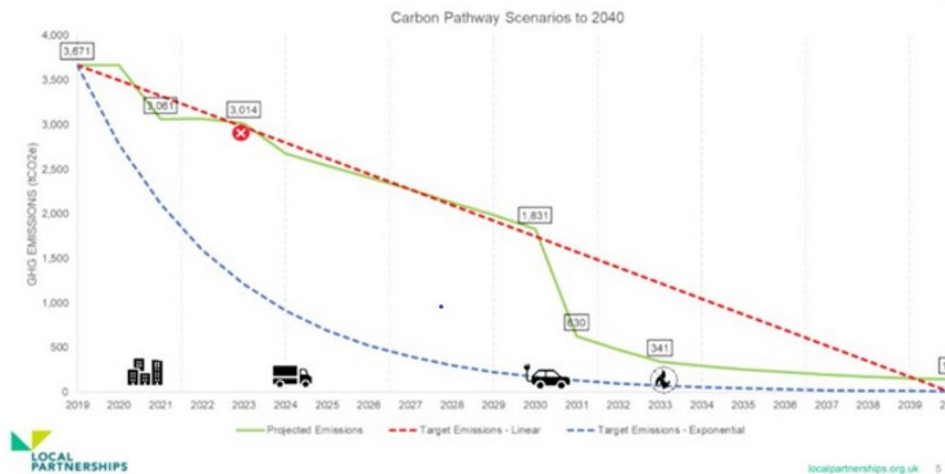
7.1 Carbon Accounting

7.1.1 The Climate Strategy set a carbon trajectory for the Council with Local Partnerships, an in-house public sector consultancy jointly owned by the Local Government Association, HM Treasury and Welsh Government. Local Partnerships developed the greenhouse gas emissions calculator for local government and built the carbon trajectory based on our plans to active a net zero Council by 2040, training the Council to maintain it.

7.1.2 The latest Greenhouse Gas Accounting Report ends March 2023, but enables HDC to plot our progress so far in emissions reduction. The current position shows the Council is ahead of trajectory set out in the Climate Strategy.

Carbon Emissions Trajectory

All implementations (excluding purchasing green electricity)

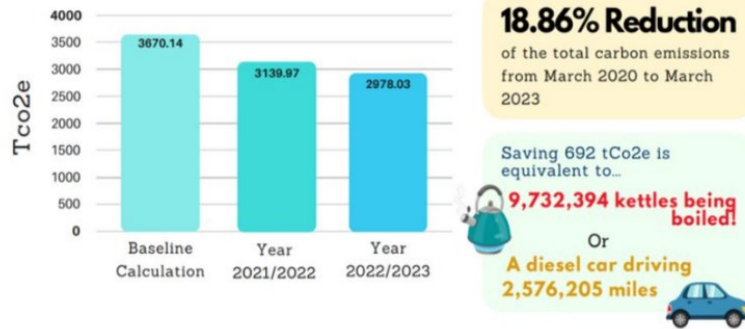


7.1.4 The green line shows the anticipated timing and impact of planned changes to reduce emissions. If opportunities arise to accelerate progress remaining within the financial considerations of the Council services will take them.

7.1.3 Carbon savings from April 2019 to March 2023 are 692 tCo2e (for full emissions breakdown by scope see Appendix 5)

Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Scope 1, 2 and 3 Included



DRAFT – SUBJECT TO REVISED TRAJECTORY BEING RECEIVED

7.2 Carbon Action Plan

7.2.1 To ensure continued delivery of Climate action either directly, encouraged or enabled by the Council operational progress is reviewed quarterly with oversight from the Senior Leadership Team and the Executive Councillor for Climate and Environment.

- 27th June 2023 Quarter 1 (Apr – June 2023)
- 24th October 2023 Quarter 2 (July – Sept 2023)
- 19th December 2023 Quarter 3 (Oct – Dec 2023)
- 24th March 2024 Quarter 4 (Jan – Mar 2024)

7.2.2 A summary of the quarterly progress in 2023/24 is shown below, illustrating positive progress through short, medium, and long-term target delivery. The three remaining short-term actions, which were not completed by the end of 2023/24, are listed below with an update on progress.

Horizon	Target Date	Quarter 1 Progress	Quarter 2 Progress	Quarter 3 Progress	Quarter 4 Progress
SHORT TERM	2024				
MEDIUM TERM	2025 & 2026				
LONG TERM	2027 & onwards				

Outstanding Short-Term Action	Progress to Date
Update Procurement Rules to ensure new contracts/services minimise negative impact on the Climate.	Bespoke training sessions with ARU begun in March for Sarah & procurement team. Next steps are the creation of toolkits from ARU

Implement impact assessments for all key decisions to ensure climate implications are considered.	Climate Impact Assessment tool submitted to ideas process in development.
Develop an approach to capturing carbon emissions in reports and business case development and include climate considerations within all key strategies and governance documents.	Work underway to include more climate specific wording in report template.

7.3 CLIMATE UK REPORT

Earlier in the year the Council received the improved score of 27% (from zero in 2021) from an independent review of our Climate Action by Climate Emergency UK, this demonstrated the immediate impact of developing the Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan. The scorecard used by Climate Emergency UK enables benchmarking against our neighbouring authorities and those with similar socio-economic characteristics as determined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. To ensure the Council adopts best practice, learns from the work of others and can identify areas where the Council can improve future scores, the Council has undertaken a review of the scoring mechanism that Climate Emergency UK use to ensure our Climate Action Plan addresses any opportunities for learning/improvement.

8 CLIMATE CONVERSATION

8.1 In November 2023 the inaugural Climate Conversation was held by the Council. During a busy weekend of activities, 77 residents, local businesses and community groups came together to share and learn from each other. Key speakers from a range of background inspired thinking and action around Climate Change within the District. Attendees were also able to take part in enabling workshops to connect with organisations and share knowledge and experiences.



- 8.2 Many positive connections were made during the event, strengthening relationships and enabling stakeholders to connect with one another. As a direct result of the success and input to the Climate Conversation, the Council developed and piloted an online Climate Hub of key sustainability and climate information, resources and knowledge. The 'pilot' version of the Climate Hub proved to be a positive way to enable local communities to connect and sign post residents to key providers for advice. This was launched fully on 17th May.



9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The delivery of the Climate Action Plan is supported by a Climate Coordinator. This role leads on the Climate Conversation, collaborates with Council services to support their climate actions and develop new ones, reports progress across the Council against the Climate Action Plan, reviews benchmarking and opportunities and supports officers directly engaged in climate work such as the Biodiversity for All project and Home Energy.
- 9.2 An annual climate budget of £100,000 supports Council services to accelerate the development and delivery of priority climate actions. Services have and will continue to use this funding to develop business cases, pilots and projects that deliver progress to net carbon zero, providing access to specialist services where needed. Service can then apply for evidence-based investment in transformational projects such as accelerating solar or transitioning from fossil fuels through the transformation budgets or medium-term financial planning process.

10 HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Climate change is directly contributing to humanitarian emergencies from heatwaves, wildfires, and floods which are increasing in scale, frequency, and intensity. Locally our communities experience challenges from heat, drought and flooding.
- 10.2 The ability to cool our living environments are increasingly important as is water security in the driest region of the England. Higher temperatures can impact the most vulnerable of our community.
- 10.3 Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through better transport, food and energy use choices can result in very large gains for health, particularly through reduced air pollution.

- 10.3 The positive impacts of cleaner and greener places and improved biodiversity are well known in addressing the impacts of climate change as well as our health and well-being.
- 10.4 The Climate Strategy for Huntingdonshire continues to support the Council's commitment to encourage a healthy and active community, particularly as more work is progressed to support climate adaptation.

11.0 APPENDICES

1. Climate Strategy
2. Climate Action Plan – individual actions per priority and theme
3. Climate Action Plan – Progress
4. CEUK Scorecards Report

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Environmental Principles – Cabinet Oct 2021

<https://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s117526/4.%20Environment%20Principles%20Report.pdf>

Environment Bill 2020-21 and 2021-22

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020>

25-year Environment Plan for England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111187654/pdfs/ukdsi_9780111187654_en.pdf

When needed, climate strategy link:

climate-strategy-appendix-1-climate-strategy.pdf
(huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

Climate action plan link:

climate-strategy-action-plan.pdf (huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

Appendix 2

Buildings

- Swimming Pool Sport England £700k fund awarded for PV solar, triple glazing and insulated pool cover at ONSI.
- RIBA stage 4/final reports for the decarbonisation plans for EFH, PFH and OLH dry side completed.
- Increased meter readings for water, gas and electricity at sites to enable more accurate monitoring of consumption.
- Home energy support of HUG2 & ECO4 Flex schemes encouraging and enabling residents to improve the energy efficiency of homes.

Energy & Renewables

- LED lighting projects completed at EFH and PFH
- Solar reporting done on all sites to establish best potential sites, cap ex outlay and payback times.
- Solar PV roof surveys on 4 potential sites arranged to be completed April 2024
- Involvement in LAEP (Local Area Energy Plan) steering group as board member

Nature

- Green Skills Biodiversity completed across the district with Groundwork East and students.
- Biodiversity grant scheme created, and 10 sites selected across the district.
- Graduate ecologists employed to work on biodiversity projects.
- HDC site biodiversity audit reports completed.
- Community planting day at Huntingdon Riverside Park
- Community planting 400+ trees at Sapley Park

Travel & Transport

- Internal fleet review at completion stage
- HVO fuel pilot project launched to run from November 2023 to June 2024
- Influencing and encouraging other large organisations on trialling (Fire & Police services) – leading by example
- EV charging resident survey undertaken.
- EV Charging Strategy completed.
- Promoting cycling and active travel to staff and residents via partnership with 'Love to Ride'
- Internal staff travel survey completed.

Waste, Recycling & Resource Management

- Establish sustainable procurement training programme with ARU.
- Sustainable nappy scheme implemented.
- Implementation of cable recycling bins in select locations

- Carbon Literacy Training – members of staff now certified Carbon Literate
- Yearly greenhouse gas accounting completed of HDC's own emissions.
- Climate Impact Assessment Tool – internal pilot project



Community

- Climate Conversation community and stakeholder events
- Climate Education pilot project with 5 local schools
- Creation of Online Climate Hub
- Home Energy schemes support and advice.
- Green Business Programme launched for local businesses as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Kids Climate Strategy created.
- Home Energy Coffee mornings in partnership with Cambridgeshire Libraries, Citizens Advice and PECT

Appendix 2 (Cont.)

CLIMATE ACTION UNDERTAKEN

CATEGORISED BY STRATEGY THEME

 BUILDINGS	 ENERGY & RENEWABLES	 NATURE	 TRAVEL & TRANSPORT	 WASTE, RECYCLING & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	 COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swimming Pool Support Fund £700k awarded for PV Solar at OLSI, Triple Glazing and Insulated pool cover. RIBA stage 4/ final reports for the decarbonisation plans for EFH, PFH and OLH Dryside completed Increased meter readings for water, gas and electricity at sites to enable more accurate monitoring of consumption. Home energy support of HUG2 & ECO4 Flex schemes encouraging & enabling residents to improve the energy efficiency of homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LED Lighting projects completed at EFH and PFH Solar reporting done on all sites to establish best potential sites, cap ex outlay and payback times. Solar PV roof surveys on 4 potential sites arranged to be completed April 2024 Involvement in LAEP (Local Area Energy Plan) steering group as board member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Green Skills Biodiversity Projects completed across the District with Groundwork East and students. Biodiversity Grant Scheme created and 10 sites selected across the District 2 Graduate Ecologists employed to work on Biodiversity projects HDC site Biodiversity audit reports completed Community Planting Day at Huntingdon Riverside Park Community Planting 400+ trees at Sapley Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Fleet Review at completion stage HVO Fuel Pilot Project launched to run from November 2023 to July 2024 Influencing and encouraging other large organisations on trialing HVO - leading by example EV charging resident survey undertaken EV Charging Strategy completed Promoting cycling and active travel to staff and residents via partnership with Love to Ride Internal Staff travel survey completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established sustainable procurement training Program with ARU Real nappy scheme implemented Implementation of cable recycling bins in select locations Carbon Literacy Training - 63 members of staff now certified Carbon Literate Yearly Greenhouse Gas Accounting completed of HDC's own emissions Climate Impact Assessment Tool Internal Pilot Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Conversation community and stakeholder events Climate Education Pilot project - 5 local schools Creation of Online Climate Hub Home Energy scheme support and advice Green Business Programme launched for local businesses as part of the UK shared prosperity fund Kids Climate Strategy created Home Energy Coffee Mornings in partnership with Cambs Libraries

Appendix 3

Decarbonising our Fleet

- HVO Fleet Trial

HDC declared a climate emergency in 2023. As part of the strategy, research from the Local Partnerships Consultancy showed that Co2e from HDC's fleet was one of the single, largest contributors of greenhouse gas emissions from the Council. Transitioning the fleet to alternative fuels to reduce carbon emissions were highlighted as a key priority and hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) was selected as an alternative fuel as it reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 92%. This fuel is much cleaner than standard road diesel so the harmful tailpipe emissions from NOx is reduced by up to 25% and PPMs are reduced by up to 60%. The project is trialling the fuel in 15 vehicles, which range from tractors to mowers to skip lorries to reflect the diversity of the fleet in terms of size, usage and vehicle ages. The timeframe of the project is from November 2023 through to June 2024 in a low stress period to determine the success criteria.

- Facilities

The facilities team have several projects ongoing to meet the criteria set out in the climate strategy, particularly with retrofitting Council buildings to make them more sustainable. The LED Lighting Project was finished at the end of March 2024 which updated Council properties with longer term sustainable lighting for the offices. Facilities received a grant fund from the Lottery fund for £700,000 for updating the swimming pool facilities at One Leisure St Ives. Other upcoming work includes an ideas process for the PV roof surveys and a submission for the upcoming energy strategy.

- GHG Calculator – Monitoring

To establish a robust monitoring mechanism to track carbon emissions, the Council has engaged with Local Partnerships, a joint venture between HM Treasury, the Local Government Association and Welsh Government to embed their Climate Tool into our reporting processes. The tool calculates local authority carbon emissions, which can be then used to identify the key sources of HDC's carbon emissions, set out the pathway we need to follow to achieve our net Zero Carbon target and to continue to monitor our emissions.

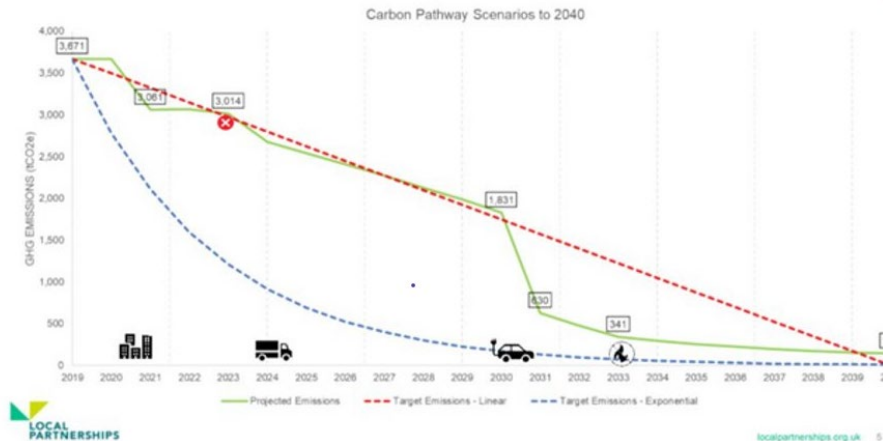
Our latest Greenhouse Gas Accounting Report ends March 2023, but enables HDC to plot our progress so far in emissions reduction.

The current position, viewable in the graph below indicates that HDC are in the positive position of being slightly below both the targeted and projected emissions set out in the Climate Strategy originally.

Savings from April 2019 to March 2023 are 692 tCo2e (for full emissions breakdown by scope see Appendix 5)

Carbon Emissions Trajectory

All implementations (excluding purchasing green electricity)

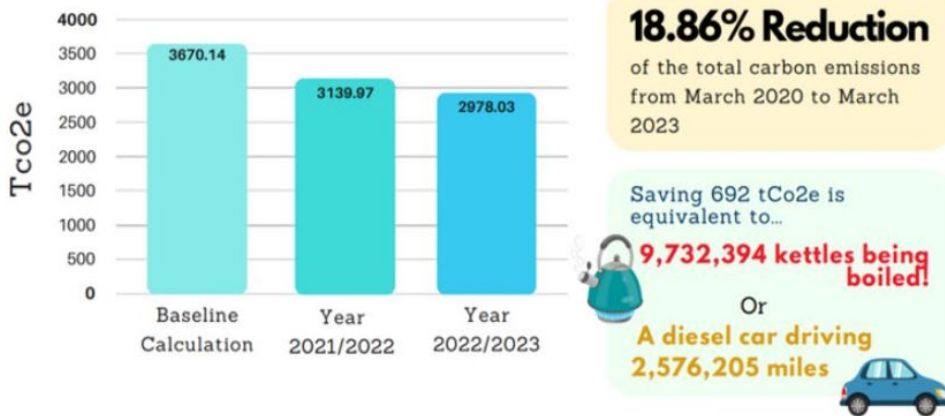


Whilst the Council would like to move its fleet to renewable fuel the technology, practicalities of service provision in Huntingdonshire and costs of this mean that this must be planned as the market and technology develops. Actions have therefore concentrated on fuel efficiency, piloting a lower carbon impact fuel (HVO) and starting to develop a plan for phasing to non-fossil fuel in the future.

The green line shows the original anticipated timing and impact of the changes we planned to make. If opportunities arise to achieve this sooner, within the financial considerations of operating the Council’s services we will take them.

Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Scope 1, 2 and 3 Included



DRAFT – SUBJECT TO REVISED TRAJECTORY BEING RECEIVED

- Facilities Team

HDC has been looking at ways to reduce its own carbon waste from their own services. It has recently been awarded £700,000 from Sport England as part of the Swimming Pool Support Fund. This funding will go towards the installation of solar panels and triple glazing at St Ives Leisure Centre. This aligns with HDC’s commitment to sustainability, ensuring that the facility remains environmentally

friendly and energy efficient. £650,000 of this will be assigned to solar car ports and £50,000 has been assigned for triple glazing windows around the pool. Work will commence later this year.

- Carbon Literacy Training – Groundworks East

Groundworks East have been running carbon literacy training, which has been made available to all staff from January to April 2024. 62 members of staff have been certified as carbon literate so far. This is a great step forward in educating our employees on key climate issues and the small changes that can be made within their own roles and lives to combat climate change and reduce carbon emissions. The certified staff members feature a mix of those who have undertaken the management and leadership course and the generic staff course. Discussions are in place to examine a shorter course for the next financial year in a classroom scenario to entice more staff to attend.

- Online Climate Hub

Based on the feedback from the Annual Climate Conversation 2023, HDC have launched an online climate hub. In 2023 there were a series of events including the Conversation, which invited local stakeholders, community groups and residents to gather and discuss Climate Change and the local environment in Huntingdonshire. Feedback from the sessions suggested the need for a platform where this engagement could continue, which led to the creation of the Hub. It's split into 12 sections, showing what HDC is doing to tackle climate change, resources for local authorities, information on biodiversity and launched on 17th May 2024.

- Impact Assessment Tool

Developed to **influence** HDC's ideas process, a trialled impact assessment tool was submitted with the plan of embedding this into any pre-project and strategy work to give consideration of possible climate and environmental implications before projects begin. The initial feedback focussed on further trials of the tool required, an introduction of a short version of the assessment tool and a demonstration of the benefits against the time and effort it takes to use the tool.

Procuring Wisely

Huntingdonshire District Council have partnered with Anglia Ruskin University to develop a bespoke sustainable procurement training programme to support HDC's procurement team to achieve the Council's net zero target. The training programme, internal toolkit and stakeholder toolkit will help embed this knowledge to allow a transfer across the rest of the organisation. The toolkit focuses on approaching procurement to drive reductions in supply chain emissions. The training programme covers themes such as circular procurement, engaging suppliers on net zero, low carbon procurement strategies, net zero landscape, reporting progress and much more. The first sustainable procurement training sessions started in Q4, enabling our procurement team to gain the knowledge and insight

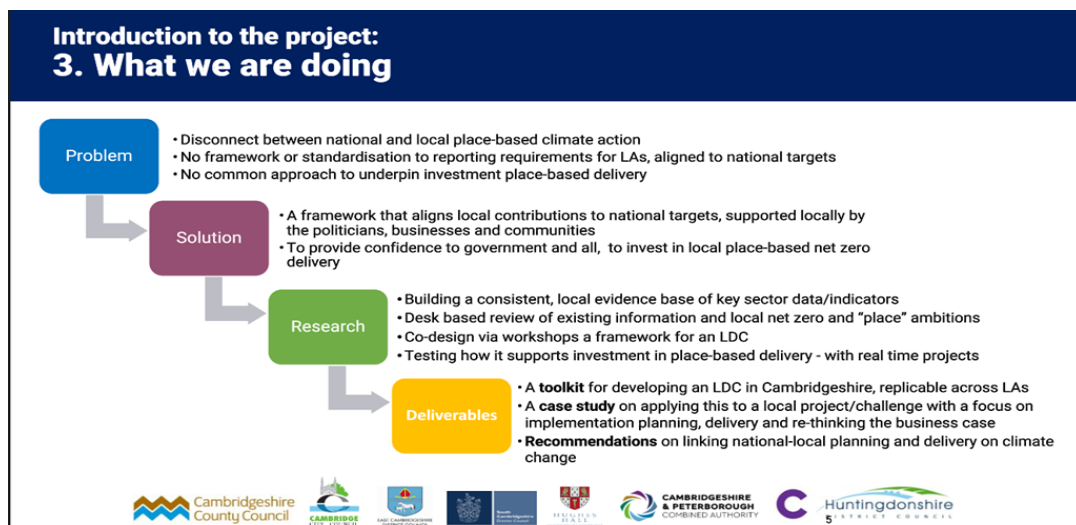


- LAEP

Local Area Energy Planning, or LAEP, aims to define the extent of the transformation required to transition an area’s energy system to net zero in each timeframe. Huntingdonshire District Council was asked to contribute to the development of LAEP for Cambridgeshire with partners. These partners are Cambridgeshire County Council (Lead Partner), the CPCA, Cambridgeshire City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council. HDC’s participation within the LAEP steering group, will ensure Huntingdonshire is part of the solution leading the way in planning for the future and tackling Climate Change.

- CANFFUND

Currently, there is no standardised reporting requirements for local authorities which align to the government’s climate initiatives and targets. The CANFFUND Pathfinder Project, funded by Innovate UK, is a collaboration between CCC and all its district councils. It began on 1st March 2024 and will run until June 2025 and has just finished its 1st stage, which has involved lead researchers from Cambridge University analysing various current reporting frameworks from involved local authorities, local net zero targets and place-based ambitions to provide evidence-based foundations for working to build a framework that aligns local contributions to these national targets. In Phase 2 a workshop will be held where key, interested stakeholders can come along to share knowledge and network, building on the foundation of the work they have done already.



- Climate Education

In partnership with PECT, HDC is piloting a climate education programme within 4 schools: Thongsley Fields Primary School, Crosshall Junior School, Ernulf Academy Secondary School and Stukeley Meadows Primary School. The project is designed to continually **engage** and educate young people on key climate issues including sustainability, increasing biodiversity for all, minimisation waste and engaging their own communities. The initial trial is from January 2024 through to January 2025 and if successful, the aim is to expand this to fund additional schools in the following year. As well as this, HDC have developed a children's climate change guide to be used in schools. This aims to give a brief lesson on climate change, what our Climate Strategy is at HDC and why we need to tackle climate change together. HDC have also been invited to attend the ECO Awards hosted by PECT. This is an opportunity for primary and secondary schools to come together and take part in practical hand-on activities to inspire new ideas and projects to back to schools.



- Food Poverty and Sustainable Food Action Plan

Through the climate reserve, HDC is assisting with funding for consultancy services to enable support the development of a comprehensive food security and sustainable living action plan for Huntingdonshire. The consultation, scheduled to finish in December 2024, will provide a 10-year plan for the whole district to combine fighting food poverty and engaging in sustainable living. This £5,000 project will align its goals with those of the climate action plan, climate strategy and the corporate plan and link in community green spaces with growing food. Work has already begun on this through the Food for Nought initiative, which has delivered more than 2,600 tonnes of surplus food from local farmers and supermarkets which would have otherwise been disposed. Going forward, the plan will involve working with schools, food banks and partners to lower carbon emissions whilst promoting communities to grow their own food, thus becoming more self-sufficient, **creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations.**



Increase Biodiversity and Natural Capital

- Biodiversity and Green Skills Programmes

With funding received from the CPCA, the Bio4All team have been tackling the national biodiversity crisis on a local level, **enabling** HDC's aims of combatting climate change. Bio4All identified 'strategic sites', examining them for carbon sequestration, improved air quality, shading, reduced physical erosion through chemical water as these



climate change threats are exacerbated towards the local ecology. Using the Bio4All's environmental grant scheme, ecologists are reporting on and facilitating financial incentives for these environmental improvements which will be carried out on externally owned public landholdings. This will **help to create a better Huntingdonshire for future generations.**

These are our natural environment's resistance to climate change. Alongside this, the team has also employed a programme to extend these climate combatting 'Green Skills' to the wider community. This has been done through several educational packages carried out through biodiversity work on HDC's own estates. A citizen science application has been adopted (iNaturalist), connecting the public to nature, whilst providing our ecologists with vital data regarding Huntingdonshire's local fauna and flora's responses to climate change. Each applicant will have their land audited, and a report written, which will provide 3 additive scenarios to improve the local environment and outline a way to manage the land sustainably. HDC will fund up to £8,000 of the work the applicant has selected to adopt from their report.

- Green Recovery Project

HDC has hosted its 4th Green Recovery Project in collaboration with Groundworks East, this time focussing on Paxton Pits Nature Reserve. Paxton Pits supports a high diversity of habitats and wildlife. This work will help to maintain that level of biodiversity and the condition of the already developed and valuable habitats. The initiative ran for 8 weeks, primarily focussing on landscaping skill development for the volunteers taking part, including earning a Level 1 City & Guilds qualification in horticulture and landscaping. The Project is a key step towards creating a greener, more resilient future for Huntingdonshire and was made possible through a £1.3 million grant from Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).



- Community Chest

Initially, the community chest scheme welcomed applications to focus on residents recover post the pandemic. This has now evolved into provision of funding for community projects which have to meet one of the following criteria: improving the quality of life and wellbeing for everyone, keeping people out of crisis, helping people in crisis and lowering carbon emissions. HDC has awarded grants to key community green initiatives including £1,000 to Hilton Community Garden to provide equipment to grow their own fruits and vegetables and £1,000 to Upwood Allotments to provide a shed to house gardening equipment.



- Green Flag Awards

Launched in 1996 by Keep Britain Tidy, The Green Flag Award is a scheme for the national benchmark standard for parks and green spaces. Parks who win the award must fulfil several key criteria including demonstrating sustainability, conservation and heritage and community involvement. HDC has received 3 awards for 3 of their parks: Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Paxton Pits Nature Reserve and Priory Park in St Neots. This is a huge testament to work that has been **done** to **enable** people to care for green spaces so that everyone can enjoy them.

Appendix 4

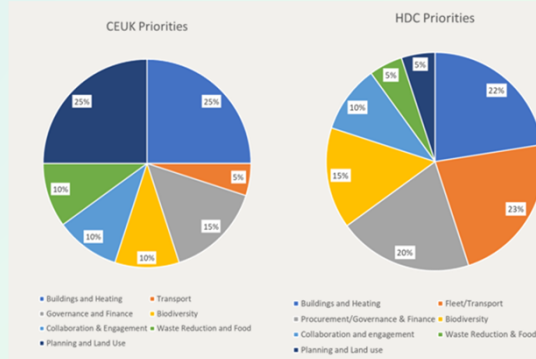
Climate Emergency UK – Council Climate Scorecards GAP Analysis

**Benchmarking.
Learning.
Identifying gaps.**

Undertaking the GAP analysis based upon our Climate Emergency UK council scorecards score, has identified –

- Possible areas for improvement
- Suggested new actions for forthcoming years
- Help to improve our score and also enhance the Climate Action Plan.

Suggested actions to bridge the gaps are currently being discussed and agreed with relevant services and will be put forward as suggestions in the Annual Climate Review.



A FURTHER BENCHMARKING TASK USING CIPFA NEAREST NEIGHBOURS WILL ALSO BE UNDERTAKEN AS PART OF THIS WORK, TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT OUR SCORE COMPARATIVELY

