

Public - Yes
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Annual Climate Report and Action Plan Update
Meeting/Date:	Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Community and Partnerships) – 10/07/2025 Cabinet – 15/07/2025
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor Climate, Transformation and Workforce - Councillor Lara Davenport-Ray
Report by:	Harriet Robinson – Climate Co-ordinator Helen Lack – Development & Delivery Manager – Parks & Countryside
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

The Climate Action Plan, Strategies, and carbon-reducing emission actions in the Corporate Plan all interconnect with the **Place Strategy's** journeys: Pride in Place, Inclusive Economy, Health Embedded, Travel Transformed and Environmental Innovation. **Appendix 1** illustrates how some of our key achievements throughout 2024-25 have benefitted each of these journeys.

This report presents the second Annual Report of Huntingdonshire District Council's **Climate Action Plan**, covering all climate-related activities undertaken between April 2024 and March 2025. This follows the declaration of a **Climate Emergency and Ecological Crisis** made in February 2023. The updated Climate Action Plan is displayed in **Appendix 6**.

This report outlines the ongoing progress made towards achieving **a carbon net zero 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**.

Strategic Objectives:

- Achieving carbon net zero for HDC's 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 has been using various methods to track progress. This includes quarterly tracking of actions, benchmarking against neighbouring local authorities, annual Climate Conversation events and annual greenhouse gas emissions reporting. The Online Climate Hub, a development from the feedback following 2023's Annual Climate Conversation, is now embedded as part of the Council's community engagement piece and for the promotion of Climate events in and around the District.

This report emphasises the importance of continued efforts and adaptation to modern technologies and approaches to maintain momentum towards HDC achieving carbon net zero by 2040.

Key Achievements:

1. **Emission Reductions:** From March 2019 to March 2025, the Council achieved a reduction of 1,032 tCO₂e. This represents a 34% decrease in overall emissions.
2. **Fleet Transition:** The Council initiated a pilot project to use hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) as an alternative fuel, which is estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 82% or 1,100 tCO₂. In February 2025, the Cabinet approved the use of HVO for all standard diesel vehicles and the process has begun to acquire this fuel after successful tender of contract.
3. **Facilities Upgrades:** Projects such as retrofitting Council buildings continue including the installation of triple glazing and a solar panel canopy at One Leisure Indoor St Ives. The installation began in January 2025 and was commissioned in April 2025.
4. **Green Tariffs:** HDC moved on to green tariffs from September 2024, reducing our Scope 2 carbon emissions for electricity on its main sites to zero.
5. **Carbon E-learning for Staff:** All staff members as of 1st June 2025 now have access to a 30-minute e-learning course concerning Climate and Environment as part of HDC 's staff learning and development offering.
6. **Community Engagement:** This continues with our 2nd Annual Climate Conversation held in November 2024. This brought together stakeholders and residents to discuss and inspire climate action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To comment on the delivery of the Climate Action Plan for 2024-25.
2. To note the progress made by the Council and its partners towards achieving Carbon Net Zero by 2040.
3. To comment on and approve the updated Climate Action plan as shown in **Appendix 6** and note the amendment of actions in **Appendix 7**.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Councillors with an update on progress of the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan since its adoption in February 2023. Key areas of success in this report will cover the 2024-2025 budget year.
- 1.2 This report will also present a summary of progress, highlighting the current position of Huntingdonshire District Council, demonstrating actions undertaken to reduce 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 Council hosted its 2nd Annual **Climate Conversation** in November 2024.

3 CLIMATE STRATEGY

3.1 Climate Vision:

We will be a Council that proactively tackles the Climate Crisis and ecological emergency, collaborating 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 are continuing to place focus on the following:

- Achieving carbon net zero for the Council's own operations by 2040
- Ensuring Council policies and projects enable reduction of carbon 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

The Council has been tasked to demonstrate its commitment to reducing carbon emissions in the District. We have continued to engage in several key activities and projects in response to the strategic priorities agreed with the Climate Strategy adoption.

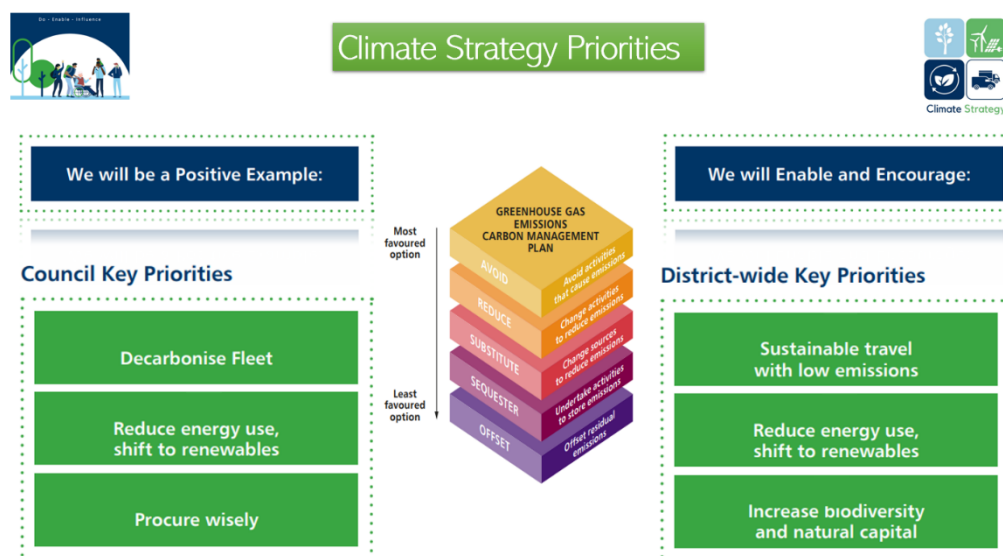
We will be a 'Positive Example' for our direct Council emissions.

- 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.

Table to highlight HDC's Key Climate Strategic 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.

Appendix 2 summarises the detailed progress against the Climate Actions set for 2024/2025. **Appendix 3** goes into these categories in more detail. 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. Items 37-50 in the Plan highlight the 'lowering carbon emissions' actions and their progress. This table can be found in **Appendix 5**.

6 HUNTINGDONSHIRE PLACE STRATEGY

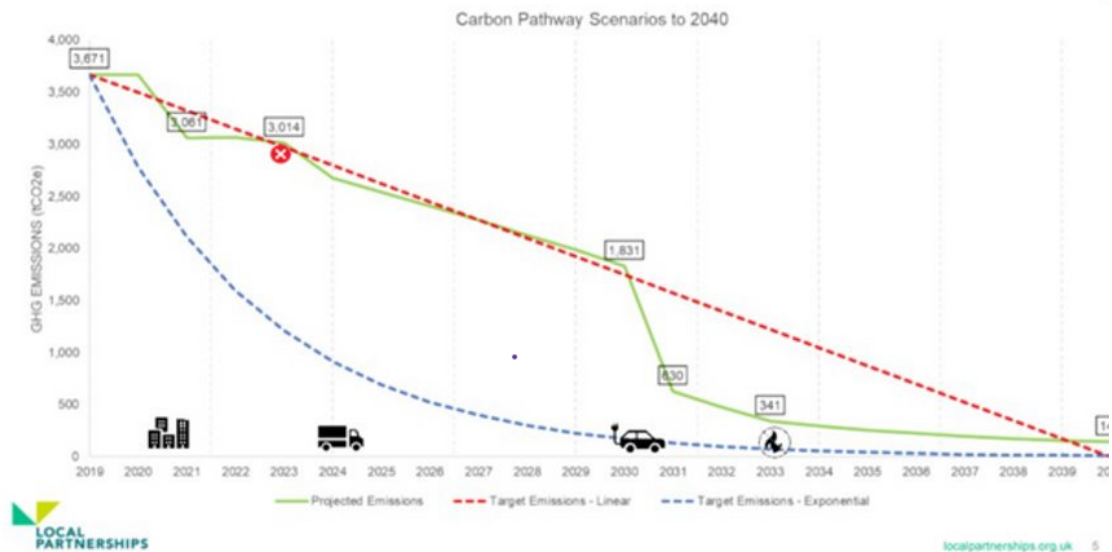
- 6.1 Huntingdonshire Futures sets out a vision to make Huntingdonshire a better place to live, work, and visit over the next 30 years. Over the last 2 years, the Council has started to collaborate with local communities to bring the strategy to life. Environmental Innovation is one of the five journeys agreed within the strategy's adoption.
- 6.2 The Climate and Huntingdonshire Futures teams held an Environmental Innovation launch workshop on 4th June 2024. Through initial consultations with local community groups, aspirations included: "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." Key themes that emerged from the workshop included: supporting Parish Councils, increasing our natural assets and their value, and giving access to more funding opportunities. Following this workshop, it was decided to progress with additional retrofit studies, which have included a partnership with Cambridge Carbon Footprint as well as further community events, which will be held in 2025-26.
- 6.3 The workshop discussed the importance of Climate work taking place across the District. The keynote speakers were Allia (speaking about their Green Business Programme), Groundwork East (speaking about their Green Recovery Programme) and HDC highlighting its Biodiversity programme. Following this, focus groups gathered to identify priorities and areas for action within the next 5, 10 and 30 years.

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 the Welsh Government. Local Partnerships developed the greenhouse gas emissions calculator for local government and built the carbon trajectory based on our plans to achieve a net zero Council by 2040, training the Council to maintain it.
 - 7.1.2 The latest Greenhouse Gas Accounting Report starts from 1st April 2024 and ends on 31st March 2025. This has enabled HDC to plot our progress in reducing our emissions. The graph below shows the ideal scenario in how the reduction in emissions is to be achieved:

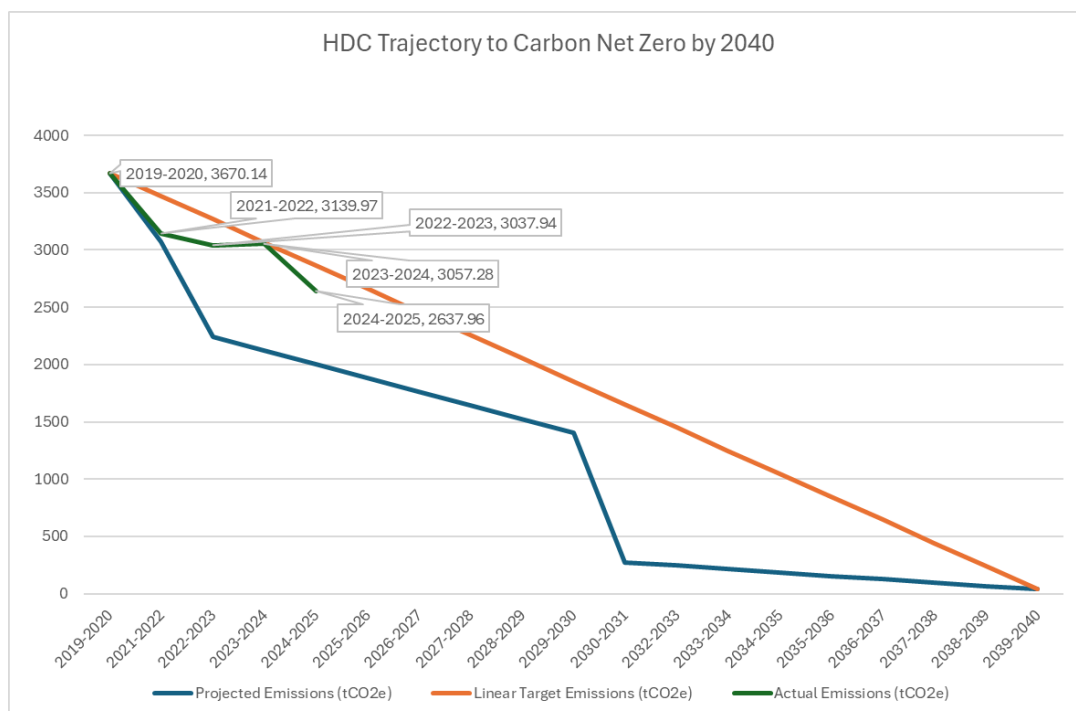
Carbon Emissions Trajectory

All implementations (excluding purchasing green electricity)



The green line (solid) 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, HDC will take these.

7.1.4 The graph below shows where the Council is in terms of its current carbon trajectory:



7.1.3 Carbon savings from Council emissions (Scopes 1,2 and 3) between 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2025 are 1,032.18 tCO₂e. This is the equivalent powering 215 homes' electricity use for a year.

7.1.4 Here are some key points to explain the figures Year on Year between 2023/4 and 2024/5:

- Our Scope 1 emissions consist of fuel and heating.
- Our fuel consumption increased by 3.4% due to an increase in the number of properties being serviced and the number of trade collections taking place, more sweepers being used and increased mileage due to a change in the location of the waste transfer station from Alconbury to Somersham.
- An increased occupancy to Pathfinder House of 15% occurred between 2023-24 and 2024-25. This increase demand on both heating and electricity.
- Our recorded Scope 2 emissions are made up of electricity, which has been purchased from a Green Tariff. Green tariffs for electricity reduce our emissions to zero due to the electricity being obtained from renewable sources. The Council has the relevant renewable energy guarantees of origin (REGO) confirming our electricity are from renewable sources.

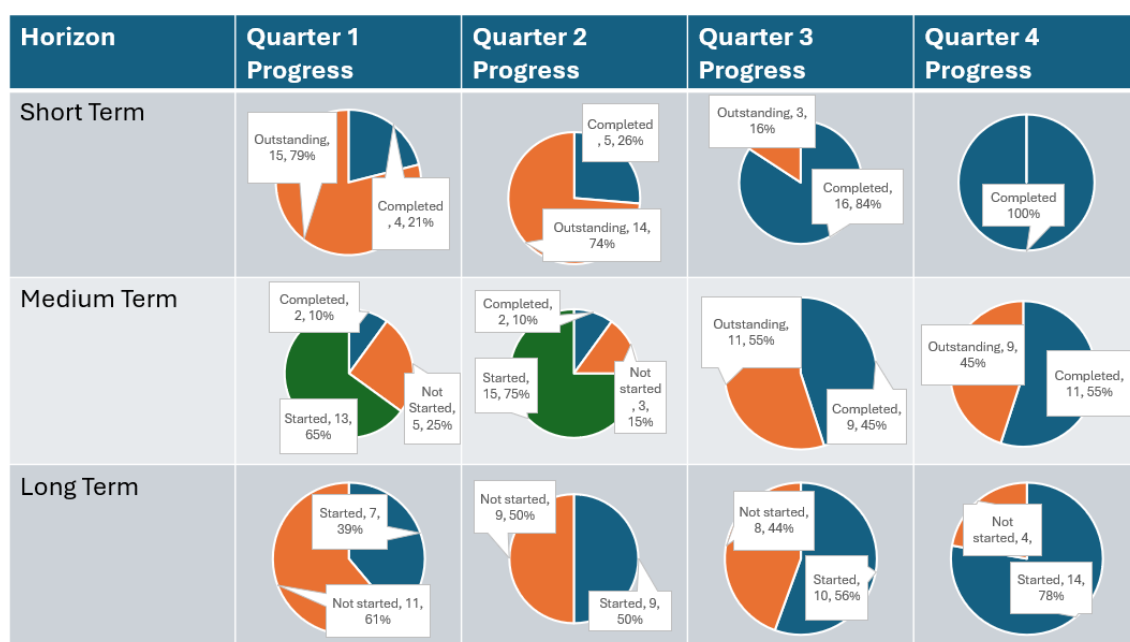
7.2 Climate Action Plan

7.2.1 To ensure continued delivery of the Climate Action Plan. This has and will continue to follow our 'do, enable, influence' principles as set out in the Corporate Plan. The Action Plan has been reviewed quarterly with oversight from both the Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • 19 th June 2024 | Quarter 1 (Apr – June 2023) |
| • 2 nd October 2024 | Quarter 2 (July – Sept 2024) |
| • 17 th December 2024 | Quarter 3 (Oct – Dec 2025) |
| • 22 nd April 2025 | Quarter 4 (Jan – Mar 2025) |

7.2.2 A summary of the quarterly progress in 2024/25 is shown below, illustrating positive progress through short, medium, and long-term target delivery. An updated Climate Action plan for approval is shown in **Appendix 6**. The highlighted differences are shown in **Appendix 7**.

Table to show Short-, Medium- and Long-Term Progress of Climate Action Plan Actions



7.3 CLIMATE UK SCORECARD REPORT

In 2023-24, HDC 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 such as those with similar socio-economic characteristics as determined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The Council has taken learnings from the work of others to identify areas for where we can improve future scores. The Council undertook a review of the scoring mechanism used to ensure our Climate Action Plan addresses opportunities for learning and improvement. The next scorecard results will be announced in June 2025.

8 ANNUAL CLIMATE CONVERSATION

- 8.1 On 6th November 2024 our 2nd Annual Climate Conversation was held by HDC at the Burgess Hall in St Ives. Attended by ninety community groups, businesses, energy charities and local Councils, everyone came together for a busy day of keynote speakers, panels, and surgery sessions. The keynote speakers came from a wide range of backgrounds including sustainability, procurement, energy saving through thermal cameras and retrofitting at scale to reduce energy consumption.
- 8.2 Many positive connections were made during the event, strengthening relationships and enabling stakeholders to connect with one another. HDC partnered with Cambridgeshire Carbon Footprint and Parish Councils to trial training and loaning thermal imaging cameras to residents. The cameras show where heat escapes allowing residents to see where they

can make changes to reduce their energy consumption, whilst reducing their carbon footprint. Afternoon surgery sessions covering measuring Biodiversity Net Gain, engaging children in climate and how to make net zero work for us all in terms of ownership and engagement.



As a direct result of this Climate conversation, further development has been made on:

- Engaging community groups in biodiversity tracking through the iNaturalist app.
- The continued contribution of toolkit development for a locally determined contribution. This will stipulate work Councils will need to do to reach their carbon net zero targets.
- Passing on meet ups for those who are interested in retrofitting their own homes.
- Further promotion of retrofitting government funding schemes such as HUG2 (now finished) and ECO4 FLEX (ongoing until March 2026).
- Incorporating a further shift into sustainable purchasing practices
- Promotion of our Local Plan development and how this affects all residents through several different channels.

9. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 9.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

10 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The delivery of the Climate Action Plan, Climate Strategy and carbon-reducing actions in the Corporate Plan is supported by a Climate Coordinator and a Project Support Officer. The Climate Coordinator 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.

- 10.2 The climate budget for 2023-2024 was £150,000 to support Council services to accelerate the development and delivery of priority climate actions. Services have and will continue to use this funding to develop businesses cases, provide energy strategies, offer in-house e-learning training on climate and contributing to facility upgrades on HDC sites such as roof surveys. Services are then able to 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. An example of where the funding has been used to unlock further investment in the Council is looking to hire a Waste Reduction Engagement Officer, which will be essential in ensuring successful participation among domestic properties receiving communal waste collections in the district.

11 HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 The ability to cool our living environments are increasingly important as is water security in the driest region of England. Higher temperatures can impact the most vulnerable in our community.
- 11.3 Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through better transport, food and energy use choices can result in exceptionally large gains for health, particularly through reduced air pollution.
- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 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.

12.0 APPENDICES

1. Climate Action Undertaken – categorised by Place Strategy Journey
2. Climate Action Undertaken – categorised by Climate Strategy Theme
3. Climate Action Plan – Progress
4. List of HDC Sites that are on a Green Electricity Tariff
5. Corporate Plan Actions and Progress – Lowering Carbon Emissions
6. Updated Climate Action Plan
7. Amended Climate Action Plan

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Climate strategy link:

[Climate Strategy Appendix 1](#)

Link to the 1st Climate Action Plan:

[Climate Strategy - Action Plan](#)

ECO4 Scheme:

[Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\) | Ofgem](#)

[Huntingdonshire Futures | Let's Talk Huntingdonshire](#)

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