

Informal Cabinet – 20th July 2026
Overview & Scrutiny – 3rd September 2026

Report by: Harriet Robinson – Place and
Climate Lead

Lead Cllr: Executive Councillor for Climate,
Transformation and Workforce



Wards
All

Open / Exempt
Open

Key Decision?
No

Annual Climate Report 2025/26

Executive Summary: *Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has continued to reduce operating costs, improve energy efficiency and strengthen resilience across council services while delivering the Climate Action Plan within budget.*

Strategic Objectives:

- *Achieving net zero carbon Council operations by 2040*
- *Ensuring Council policies support emission reductions and set positive examples for others*
- *Continuously consider environmental impacts in all policymaking and asset management*
- *Collaborating with partners to address environmental issues*
- *Supporting schemes that benefit our residents:*
 - *Continuing to prepare our communities for the effects of a changing climate*
 - *Continuing to secure opportunities for residents to access energy efficiency and green technology funding – lowering their energy bills*

*This third Annual Climate Report of HDC's **Climate Action Plan**, covers all climate-related activities undertaken between April 2025 and April 2026. This follows HDC's adoption of a Climate Strategy in 2023, which established a framework for improving the efficiency, resilience and environmental performance of council services.*

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

This report emphasises the importance of continued adaptation to use modern technologies and approaches. This will maintain momentum towards improving energy efficiency, reducing operational costs and meeting HDC's 2040 carbon reduction commitment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

HDC monitor progress via quarterly tracking of actions, benchmarking against neighbouring local authorities, hosting our Annual Climate Conversation event and annual greenhouse gas reporting. For further content, our Online Climate Hub is being refreshed for the 2026-2027 financial year.

The Climate Action revenue budget for 2025-2026 was £140,000. Spending in 2025-2026 was below budget. The Climate Action revenue budget for 2026-2027 is £92,750.

Key achievements:

- 1. **Emissions Reductions:** from March 2019 to March 2026, HDC has achieved an estimated reduction of 2,429.83 tCO₂e*. This 66.211% decrease primarily covers Scope 1 and 2 emissions and is largely thanks to switching our fleet’s fuel from standard diesel to HVO.
- 2. **Fleet Transition:** HDC initiated a pilot project to use hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) as an alternative fuel, which is estimated to reduce our fleet’s greenhouse gas emissions by 82% or 1,110 tonnes tCO₂. The fleet transitioned to HVO following the procurement process in June 2025. There has been a reduction of 960.1 tonnes of CO₂ year on year (a 74% reduction). This transition was undertaken without reducing operational capability and forms part of maintaining an efficient and resilient fleet.
- 3. **Facilities Upgrades:** Between April 2025 and June 2025, the One Leisure sites had their roof mounted solar panels installed. Roof-mounted solar installations generated **409,490 kW** of electricity during the year, delivering **£86,978** of avoided energy costs and reducing HDC’s exposure to future energy price increases. More details are included in **Appendix 3**.
- 4. **Green Tariffs:** All of HDC’s main corporate sites (including One Leisure) moved onto green energy tariffs from September 2024. This means the gas and electricity are from renewable sources, resulting in a 0% tCO₂ for Scope 2 emissions.
- 5. **Community engagement:** HDC’s 3rd Annual Climate Conversation entitled “Together For Tomorrow” in November 2025 brought together residents, businesses, landowners, parish councils and experts to discuss practical approaches to reducing energy costs, improving resilience and protecting local environments.

*These figures will be updated in September 2026 when the latest conversion factors become available.

Recommendations	
1.1.	To comment on the delivery of the Climate Action Plan for the financial year of 2025-26.
1.2.	To note the progress made by HDC towards achieving net zero carbon Council operations by 2040.

Key Corporate Plan Priorities	
1	Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
2	Lowering carbon emissions Improving housing
Place Strategy Priorities	
1	Pride in Place
2	Inclusive Economy

Report Author(s)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members 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 2025-2026 budget year.
- 1.2 This report will also present a summary of progress, highlighting the current position of HDC, demonstrating actions undertaken for the Council to be:
- **A positive example** through its actions to be a net zero carbon 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 Huntingdonshire help to reduce carbon emissions

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 2.1 In October 2022, HDC passed a **Cost of Living and Climate Change Motion**. This recognised the importance and positive impact of action benefitting the environment and tackling the rising costs of living by reducing consumption of natural resources, shifting to renewables and producing less carbon.
- 2.2 HDC adopted the **Climate Strategy and Climate Action Plan** in February 2023.
- 2.3 HDC hosted its first **Annual Climate Conversation** in November 2023, its 2nd in November 2024 and its 3rd in November 2025. The themes of the events were the following:
- 2023 – HDC's 1st climate event – a general focus on local biodiversity, as well as Climate related issues
 - 2024 – Home Energy and retrofit – an emphasis on changes residents, businesses and beyond can make to reduce their carbon footprints
 - 2025 – Together for Tomorrow – how communities, Councils, businesses and beyond can work together to combat climate change

3. CLIMATE STRATEGY

- 3.1 HDC's Climate vision: we will be a Council that proactively tackles the Climate Crisis and Ecological Emergency, collaborating closely with partners, leading by example to be a net zero carbon Council by 2040, and supporting 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 HDC's own operations by 2040
 - Ensuring HDC 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 – HDC has been tasked to demonstrate its commitment to reducing carbon emissions in the District. It has continued to engage in several key activities and projects in response to the strategic priorities agreed in the Climate Strategy.

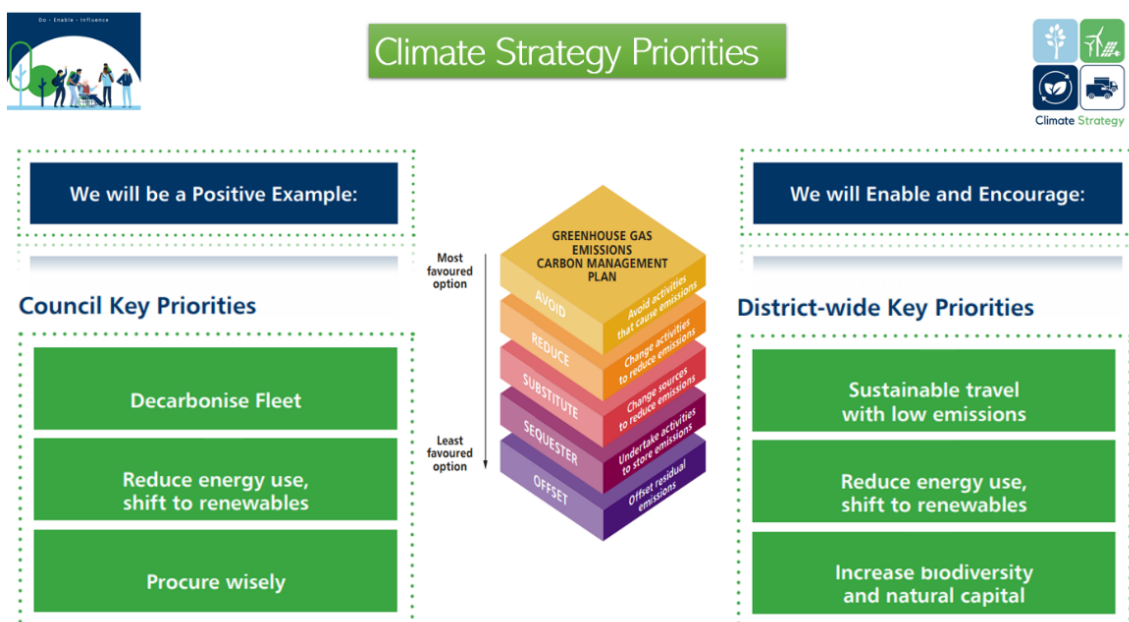
We will be a 'Positive Example' through our direct Council emissions.

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

We will 'Enable & Encourage' our wider District

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

4.2 Table 1: HDC's Key Climate Strategic Priorities



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

4.4 **Appendix 7** summarises the detailed progress against the Climate Actions set for 2026 and beyond. **Appendix 6** is a copy of the latest Climate Action Plan, which was issued in June 2025. The actions within the plan have been characterised by theme area:

- Buildings
- Energy and renewables
- Nature
- Travel and transport
- Waste, recycling and resource management
- Community

5. CORPORATE PLAN

5.1 The Corporate Plan 2023-2028 places strong emphasis on HDC's commitment to delivering its 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 42-53 in the Corporate Plan highlight the 'lowering carbon emissions' actions and their progress. This table can be found in **Appendix 5**.

6. HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES 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 3 years, HDC has continued to collaborate with communities, resident groups, service providers and businesses, which has threaded in to its 'environmental innovation' pillar.

6.2 Further information of this work can be summarised in **Appendix 1**

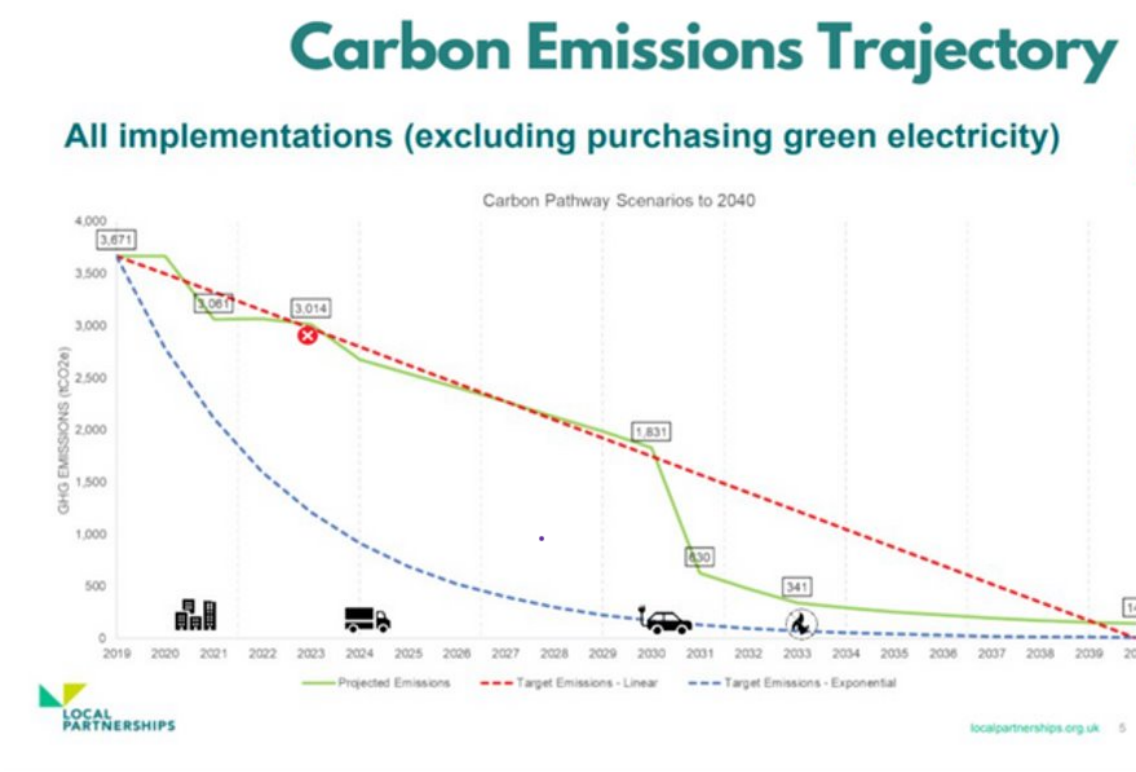
7. MONITORING - CARBON ACCOUNTING

7.1 The Climate Strategy set a carbon trajectory based on our target to achieve net zero Council operations by 2040.

7.2 The conversion factors for the latest greenhouse gas reporting will be published in September 2026. The greenhouse emissions in this report are a guide using last year's conversion factors. Final figures will be released in Q3 2026/27.

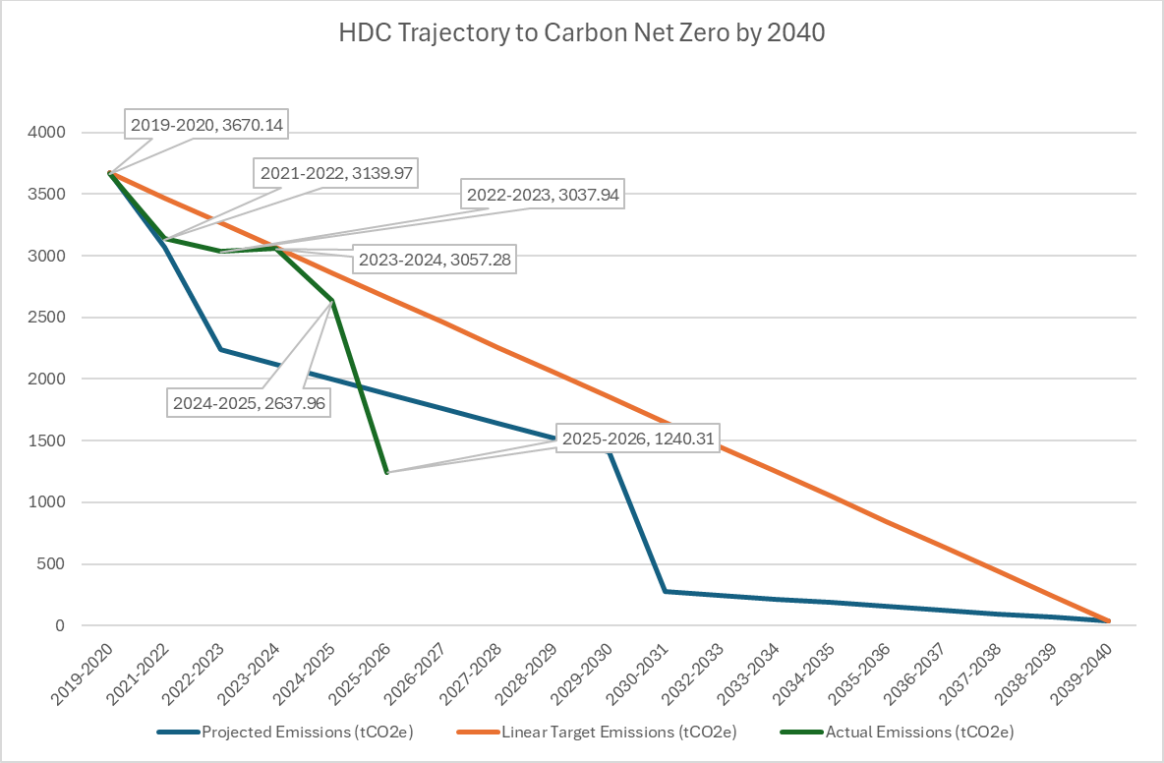
7.3 The greenhouse gas update below shows 2 graphs. Graph 1 is the 2023 model trajectory of emissions provided key steps are taken. Graph 2 shows HDC's actual carbon emissions from April 2019 through to 31st March 2026. This has enabled HDC to understand and plot its progress towards reducing its carbon emissions.

7.4 Graph 1: Model Climate Strategy Trajectory



The light green line in Graph 1 shows the 2023 model, with anticipated timing and impact of planned changes to reduce emissions. If financially prudent opportunities arise to accelerate progress (such as purchasing green electricity), HDC will those opportunities.

7.5 Graph 2: Estimated HDC Trajectory to Carbon Net Zero by 2040



The dark green line in Graph 2 represents actual carbon emissions from HDC operations.

- 7.6** This report discusses Scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions.
- Scope 1 Emissions – direct greenhouse gas emissions from sources owned or controlled by HDC e.g. company vehicles
 - Scope 2 Emissions – indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy that an organisation consumes e.g. electricity or heat
 - Scope 3 Emissions – all other indirect emissions that occur across an organisation's value chain. This includes both upstream (e.g. supply chain) and downstream (e.g. product use) activities.
- 7.7** Estimated total carbon savings from Council emissions (Scopes 1, 2 and some 3) between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2026 are 1,138.7 tCO₂e.
- 7.8** HDC Scope 1 emissions consist of fuel and heating.
- 7.9** Despite increased footfall following HDC's 2025 policy of requiring all staff to be in the office twice a week, HDC's gas consumption reduced from 5,648,500 kW in 2024-2025 to 4,632,993 kW in 2025-2026. This was due to a warmer summer and autumn so less energy was required to heat the buildings. Alongside this, the combined heat and power (CHP) utilised at One Leisure sites had intervals where it was not working and did not require the gas to power it.
- 7.10** HDC's recorded Scope 2 emissions are made up of electricity, of which a green tariff has been secured across all main HDC corporate sites including One Leisure. Green tariffs reduce HDC's electricity to zero emissions due to it being obtained from renewable sources. HDC has the relevant renewable energy guarantees of origin (REGO) confirming its electricity is from renewable sources.

8. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

- 8.1** The Climate Action Plan has been reviewed quarterly with oversight from both the Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce.
- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • 26 th August 2025 | Quarter 1 (Apr – June 2025) |
| • 25 th November 2025 | Quarter 2 (July – Sept 2025) |
| • 21 st April 2026 | Quarter 4 (Oct 2025 – Mar 2026) |
- 8.2** A summary of the quarterly progress in 2025/26 is shown below, illustrating positive progress through its updated actions in the latest version of the Climate Action Plan.

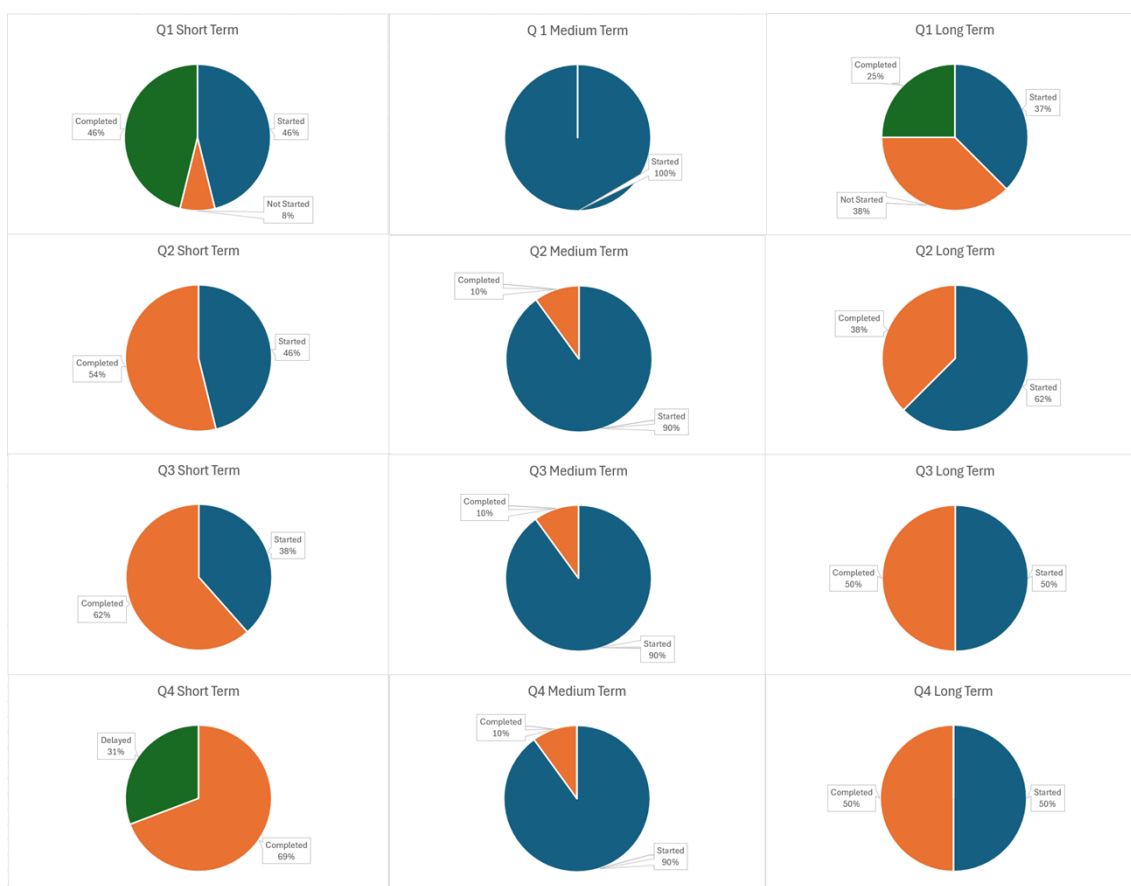


Table 2 identifies the delayed items, reasons for the delays and the mitigations that have been put in place to address them:

Table 2: Delays and Mitigations of Climate Actions

Delayed Action	Reason	Mitigation
Understand sources and availability of data for Scope 3 reporting	Delays due to procurement process for this work taking longer than anticipated	Partner now secured and work will begin in June 2026
Agree Scope 3 emissions approach and include emissions sources for reporting	As above	As above
Enabling communities to deliver climate change activities through community action plans	Delayed to allow time to gather baseline data and better understand community needs	Team has contacted all town and parish councils concerning planning for these action plans with a focus on community energy
Engage with local businesses to explore ways the Council could support them to have less climate impact	Thermal Imaging Camera events owing to staff changes at Cambridge Carbon Footprint. Events also needed to take place in winter	Events now scheduled and planned for November 2026, which is carbon literacy action week

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & NOT RECOMMENDED

- 9.1** Without a strategic framework, HDC would have less ability to monitor energy use, identify operational savings opportunities, secure external funding and coordinate activities that improve resilience to flooding, heat and future energy price volatility.
- 9.2** The absence of a programme would risk fragmented activity, reduced oversight of performance and fewer opportunities to secure external investment which benefits Huntingdonshire residents and businesses.

10. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

10.1 NA – to be confirmed on 3rd September 2026

11. POST-DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

11.1 NA

12. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

12.1 Council Key Priorities and Performance

- *Improving quality of life for local people*
- *Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations*
- *Doing our core work well*

12.2 Financial Implications

12.2.1 The Climate Action revenue budget for 2025-2026 was £140,000 (£80,000 budget with a carry-over of £60,000 from 2024-2025).

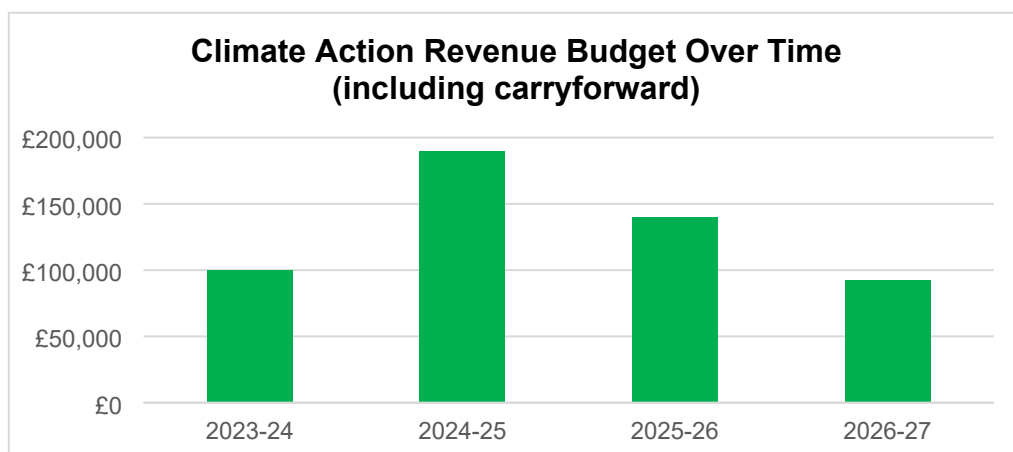
12.2.2 The £60,000 carried forward from 2024-2025 was specifically earmarked for the following:

- £40,000 to support a role in the waste team tasked with tackling the challenges of communal waste collections (i.e. shared bin collections in blocks of flats).
- £15,000 to support research into alternative power sources (e.g. solar) for CCTV cameras. After a procurement process, the implementation costs proved prohibitive and this project did not continue.
- £5,000 for surveys towards the natural flood defences project. Actual spend was lower than expected costs.

12.2.3 The Climate Action revenue budget for 2026-2027 is £92,750. It is made up of:

- £50,000 approved at Full Council in February 2026 as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- £42,750 carried forward from the previous financial year.

12.2.4 Spending on Climate Action continues to decrease as Climate Action Plan objectives are completed.



12.2.5 There is no capital budget for Climate Action in 2026-27.⁸⁰

12.2.6 Table 3 - Allocated contractor spend in 2025-26

Amount	Contractor and Project Name	Purpose
£15,000	Glendale Countryside – Natural Flood Defences	Part of the bid for the Natural Flood Defences (successful funding awarded from the CPCA's Climate Opportunities fund) required a 10% investment from HDC of the overall project cost. This was allocated to hydrological studies to determine the progression of installation of a wet woodland on the Spring Common site.
£18,500	Endotherm – heat treatment	Collaboration with Facilities team. Funding allocated to procure energy-saving additive for wet heating systems that improves heat transfer. Space-heating energy consumption is reduced and comes with an estimated cost saving of 15% on energy bills
£30,000	Eden Seven – Scope 3 Emission work	Tool will be used to track and record all Scope 1, 2 and 2 emissions as well as identify opportunities to reduce costs where possible.
£1,100	Cambridge Carbon Footprint – resident thermal imaging camera training	To train residents how to use a thermal imaging camera, allowing them to borrow these to detect areas of efficiency improvements in their homes to reduce costs on energy bills and subsequently lower carbon emissions. This was completed in Great Paxton and Warboys.

12.2.7 Anticipated revenue costs included in the existing 2026-27 Climate Action budget include:

- 1.5 full time staff working on Climate Action Projects
- Further investigation of Scope 3 emissions and potential routes to Scope 3 emission reductions.
- Contribution towards the 2026 Huntingdonshire Business Awards
- 4 Thermal Imaging Camera training evenings for local businesses in Ramsey, St Ives, St Neots and Huntingdon

12.3 Policy Implications

12.3.1 This report supports delivery of HDC's adopted Climate Strategy, Climate Action Plan, Corporate Plan and Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy. The report does not propose any changes to existing policy and is presented to provide an update on progress against previously approved commitments.

12.4 Legal & Constitutional Implications

12.4.1 This report is for information and monitoring purposes and does not create any new statutory duties or legal obligations for HDC. The activities described in the appendices document (provided with this report as an attachment) support compliance with existing legal requirements relating to environmental management, carbon reporting, procurement and promoting environmental wellbeing.

12.4.2 Delivery of individual projects and programmes within the Climate Action Plan will continue to be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislative, procurement, planning, health and safety and data protection requirements.

12.4.3 This report supports HDC's contribution towards national environmental objectives established through the [Climate Change Act 2008](#) and [Environment Act 2021](#)

12.4.4 Any procurement, grant allocation or project delivery arising from the Climate Action Plan will continue to be undertaken in accordance with the [Procurement Act 2023](#) and other applicable legislation.

12.5 Community Impact

12.5.1 Outcomes from the completion of several Climate Action Plan items have led to significant community impact – especially:

- Community-led improvements to green spaces and nature enrichment
- Investment in council-owned parks to boost biodiversity, increase visitor enjoyment and encourage active lifestyles
- Funding to retrofit community buildings providing security for the future and reductions in energy bills
- Home Energy funding to retrofit residential homes where occupants are on oil and in receipt of certain benefits
- Annual conference for communities to share their challenges with adapting for the future and to share their solutions with peers
- The HDC Place & Climate team, along with service areas across the council, continue to support Climate events in and around the District.

12.6 Environment & Climate Change Implications

- 12.6.1** The environment and climate change implications have been explained in the monitoring section of this report.

12.7 Equality & Diversity Implications

- 12.7.1** Many actions within the programme support residents who are most exposed to high energy costs, inefficient housing and flooding risk.
- 12.7.2** Programmes that improve energy efficiency can provide particular benefits to vulnerable residents and households on lower incomes.

12.8 Implications on Resources

- 12.8.1** The delivery of the Climate Action Plan, Climate Strategy, Corporate Plan carbon-reduction actions and Home Energy strategies is managed primarily by the Place & Climate Lead – Harriet Robinson.
- 12.8.2** The Place & Climate Lead drives HDC's climate agenda and organises the Annual Climate Conversation conference. She works strategically across services to embed and strengthen climate action, while ensuring effective performance oversight, opportunity identification and continuous improvement. She also provides leadership and support to key programmes, including "Biodiversity for All" and "Home Energy." She maximises impact and ensures delivery of the Council's climate commitments.
- 12.8.3** During 2025-26, additional support has been received from a project support officer and a policy and project officer. The Resident Advice Team has also assisted with resident queries concerning the Warm Homes Local Grant scheme.

12.9 Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 12.9.1** Extreme weather events, including flooding, drought and periods of high temperature can affect infrastructure, housing and public health. HDC programmes that improve resilience help communities prepare for these risks.
- 12.9.2** The ability to cool our living environments is becoming increasingly important, along with water security in Cambridgeshire, one of the driest regions in England. Higher temperatures can also disproportionately impact the most vulnerable in our communities.
- 12.9.3** 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.
- 12.9.4** The positive impacts of cleaner and greener places and improved biodiversity are well documented. Addressing the impacts of climate change, and supporting adaptation, improving residents' health and wellbeing now and in the future.

12.10 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

- 12.10.1** The outcome of LGR geographical options is expected to be announced in July 2026. This will dictate Huntingdonshire's new geography in a new unitary authority. Any future

unitary authority will inherit significant property assets, vehicle fleets and operational infrastructure. The work undertaken to improve efficiency, reduce energy consumption and strengthen asset resilience provides a stronger baseline for future service delivery.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT

13.1 The principle risks relate to funding availability, organisational capacity and changing national policy. These could affect the timing and delivery of some projects and limit the achievement of anticipated savings and operational improvements. Progress continues to be monitored through established governance arrangements.

14. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Climate actions undertaken by Place Strategy Journey
- Appendix 2 – Summary of climate action undertaken categorised by Climate Strategy theme
- Appendix 3 – detailed climate actions by Climate Strategy Theme
- Appendix 4 - HDC sites that are on a green energy tariff
- Appendix 5 - Carbon reduction actions in the latest Corporate Plan 2023-2028
- Appendix 6 – updated Climate Action Plan

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

15.1 Table 4 – Relevant files to support this report

Document List	Custodian	File Location
Climate Strategy (including Declaration of a Climate Crisis and Ecological Emergency)	Place & Climate Lead	Full Council – February 2023
Climate Action Plan (last updated June 2025)	Place & Climate Lead	Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities & Partnerships) Panel - June 2025
Motion: Climate Change and the Cost-of-Living Crisis	Place & Climate Lead	Full Council – October 2022
Building Energy Strategy	Facilities Manager	Cabinet - September 2025
Local Area Energy Plan: Huntingdonshire Local Area Report (Version C)	CPCA Executive Director Place and Connectivity	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority - Growth Committee – March 2026
Habitat Banking Report	Biodiversity for All Project Manager	Cabinet – February 2026