

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan



South Cambridgeshire District Council Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan

Introduction

This action plan has been developed in response to the climate and ecological emergencies, to deliver the objectives agreed by Council in the Zero Carbon Strategy adopted in May 2020 and the Doubling Nature Strategy adopted in February 2021. It is a live document, reviewed and updated annually in line with the Council's Business Plan.

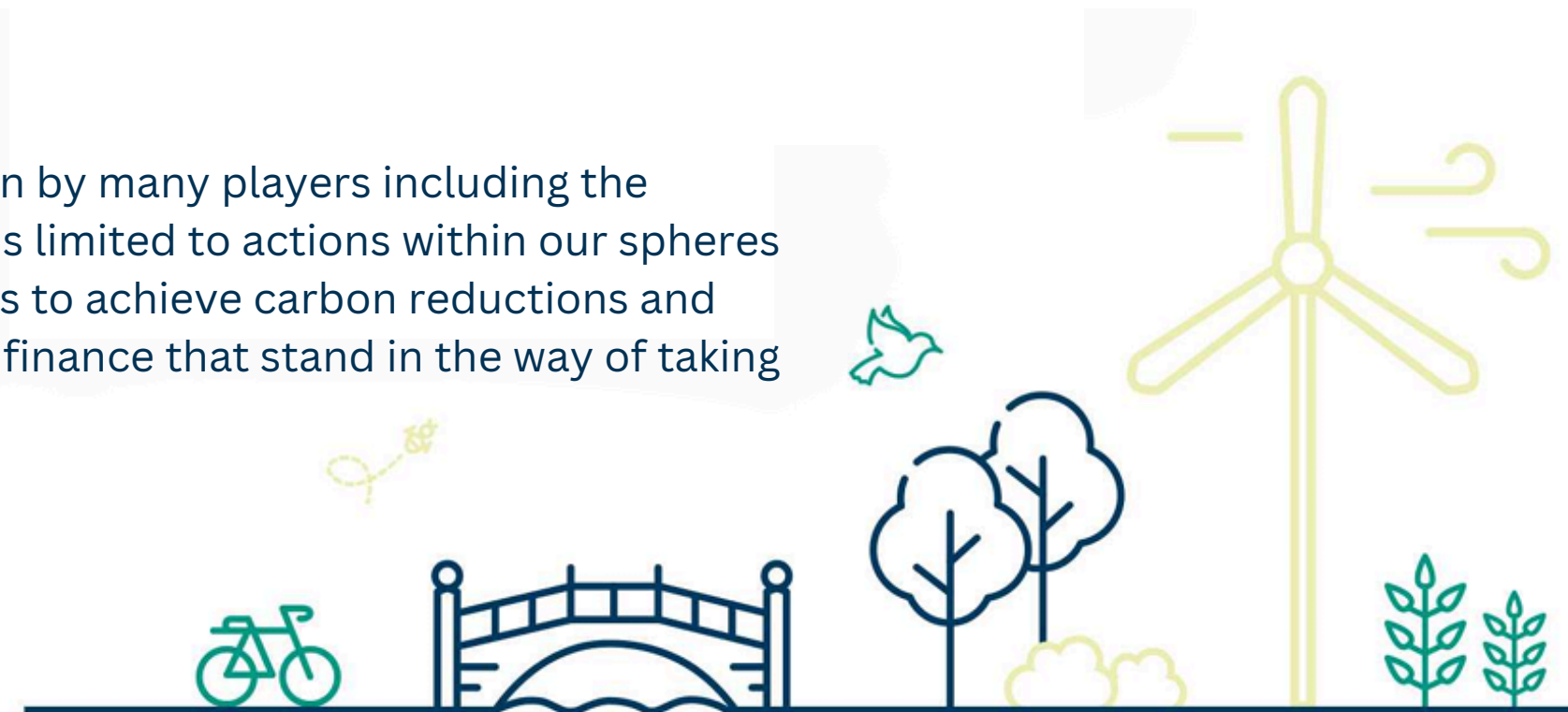
Our Zero Carbon Strategy recognises the need to reach net zero emissions by 2050. This is in line with the science-based emissions target for the UK recommended by the Committee on Climate Change and adopted into UK legislation in June 2019. The target is set at the level necessary to deliver the commitment that the UK made in adopting the 2015 Paris Agreement which aims to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels.

Our Doubling Nature Strategy supports the vision first articulated by Natural Cambridgeshire, the Local Nature Partnership, to double nature in Cambridgeshire by 2050.

The objectives in the Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature strategies are to:

1. reduce net greenhouse gas emissions from the Council's estate and operations by 45% on a 2018-19 baseline by 2025 and by 75% on the same baseline by 2030;
2. achieve net zero for the district of South Cambridgeshire by 2050, (in line with, and as defined by the Committee on Climate Change and adopted into UK legislation in June 2019); and
3. double nature in the district by 2050.

Reaching net zero and doubling nature are ambitious targets which will require concerted action by many players including the UK Government, higher tiers of local government, businesses and households. Our action plan is limited to actions within our spheres of influence. This includes our own estate, our operations and extends to our work with partners to achieve carbon reductions and nature improvements in the wider district. Where we come across limitations of legislation and finance that stand in the way of taking action on the climate crisis, we use our influence to overcome these.



South Cambridgeshire District Council Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan

Governance, development and funding

The action plan is led by the Head of Climate, Environment and Waste. Responsibility for developing and delivering the plan sits with the Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment, who is advised by the Council's cross-party Climate and Environment Advisory Committee. Progress in implementing the action plan is monitored by the Climate and Environment team. Progress reviews are provided to the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee at six monthly intervals, who make recommendations to Cabinet or the lead Cabinet Member for the Environment as appropriate.

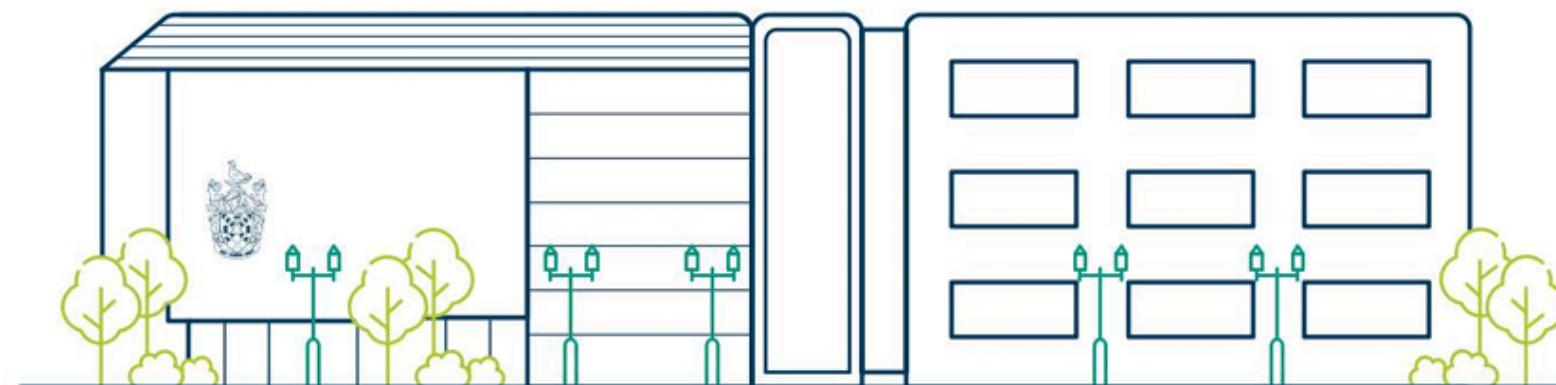
The plan is embedded in the Council's Business Plan 2020 - 25, which sets 'Being Green to our Core' as a key objective for the Council. Funding for the plan is agreed annually through the Council's budget-setting process, which takes place alongside an annual review of the Council's Business Plan. Funding is drawn from sources including existing budgets, external grants and awards and from Council reserves, in particular, the 'Renewables Reserve', made up of business rates from renewable energy developments in the district, retained under the Business Rates Retention scheme, and earmarked for Green to our Core initiatives. In the longer term, many projects in the plan deliver net cost savings to the Council due to lower energy bills following investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Integration of the plan into existing local authority plans and strategies

The Council has a process in place to ensure that implications for climate change in new and revised local authority plans and strategies are considered before decisions on these are made. Climate change and Biodiversity and green spaces are key themes in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan which draws upon a strong net zero carbon evidence base.

Community, engagement and communication

The Council will involve residents, businesses and other local partners in the development and delivery of the plan through regular communication and engagement activities, co-ordinated through an internal Climate Communications group. For actions which require working in partnership, the Council will identify and engage relevant partners and establishment agreements for collaborative action. The Zero Carbon Communities programme is key for both communicating key messages, collaboration and delivery of projects. As part of the programme, the Climate and Environment team are exploring working with relevant organisations to engage a wider range of participants including young people.



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Co-benefits

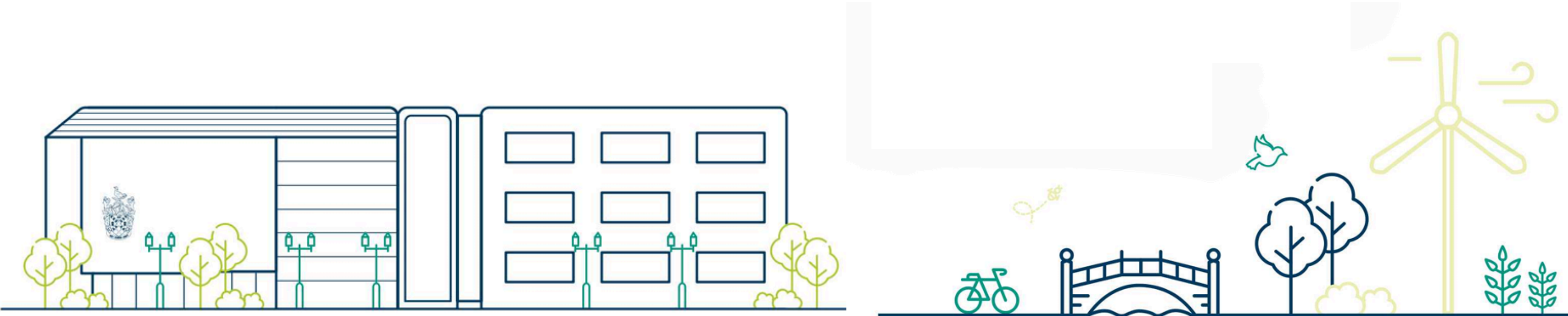
Actions to reduce carbon emissions often result in significant benefits, known as co-benefits, to health and wellbeing, community cohesion and nature.

Examples of these include:

- Switching from fossil fuel powered vehicles to electric vehicles and/or active travel results in fewer vehicle emissions and cleaner air, which has a positive impact on health and wellbeing
- Switching from car journeys to cycling or walking means more physical exercise which has a positive impact on health and wellbeing
- Organising community projects funded through our Zero Carbon Communities grant benefits social cohesion
- Planting trees to lock up carbon, provided the trees are well chosen, can enhance green space and provide natural habitat

Impacts of climate change

The impacts of climate change can already be seen in South Cambridgeshire, for example in the unprecedented heat and drought of summer 2022. Further warming is inevitable due to time lags in how quickly the Earth's climate system responds to changes in emissions. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out for this plan and will highlight unequal impacts and action to mitigate these.



| RAG rating | Action | Responsible Officer | Expected Completion Date | Progress at 01/05/24 | Next Milestone |
|------------|--|---|--------------------------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Reduce consumption of resources and waste | | | | |
| 1.1 | Identify and implement strategies for overall waste/materials reduction, decreased residual waste and increased recycling. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | <p>Repair Cafes are promoted on our social channels, we provide printing services for posters, provide waste statistics, collect e-waste from events and grant funding through the Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) Grant fund.</p> <p>‘Metals matters’ social media campaign was successfully delivered, increasing the amount of metal packaging recycled. Engagement and recall rates were better than forecast. Recycling samples showed that captured aluminium packaging increased, almost 3 tonnes of additional aluminium and steel collected during the campaign month compared to any other month in Q1-3.</p> <p>A comms campaign focussed on correct use of the blue recycling bins was carried out.</p> <p>‘Fight Food Waste’ campaign, including a food waste pledge, social media and email comms. Each month there was a £60 food shop voucher prize draw. A pilot scheme offered free menstrual cups to those on low incomes as an alternative to disposable menstrual products.</p> <p>Over 12 Community Actions Days were held, focusing on resource recovery of bulky items and other household goods.</p> | Ongoing |

Completed Actions

- Review recycling facilities across the Council and implement changes – completed 2019
- Review use of disposable single-use plastic and implement changes – completed 2019
- Move to paper-free Council and committee meetings – completed 2022



| RAG rating | Action | Responsible Officer | Expected Completion Date | Progress at 01/05/24 | Next Milestone |
|------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| 2 | Decarbonise planning and land use | | | | |
| 2.1 | Progress planning policies related to net zero carbon and wider climate change policies as part of work on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Preferred Options consultation and work on the draft plan. | Planning Policy Manager | Ongoing | An update to the Local Plan timetable was agreed by Members in March 2024. Continuing uncertainties regarding key external dependencies for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan - in particular relating to water availability and transport strategy, and more recently the Government's programme for Greater Cambridge - have meant that the timetable expectations agreed in 2022 cannot now be met. An indicative revised timetable has been published for preparing the plan under the new plan-making system, which would achieve Gateway 1, the start of the formal 30-month process, by autumn/winter 2025. | Draft version of the Local plan to be completed for consultation, anticipated in 2025. |
| 2.2 | Progress planning policies related to net zero carbon and wider climate change policies as part of work on the Northeast Cambridge Area Action Plan (NCAAP). | Planning Policy Manager | 2024/25 | An update to the NCAAP timetable was agreed by Members in March 2024. The DCO Examination process is ongoing with a decision expected by the end of 2024. The future of the NECAAP will be kept under review once timings are clearer and considering the implications of, and options provided by, the new plan making system and including accounting for other issues raised in the March 2024 report. This will be done to seek to provide a clear planning framework for this key strategic site as soon as possible. | Public consultation, date to be confirmed |
| 2.3 | Use all available means to encourage developers to go beyond current requirements for energy efficiency in new developments. | Planning Policy Manager | Ongoing | Pre-application discussions are used to encourage developers to go beyond existing policy requirements. For housing this includes encouraging electrification of heat and renewable energy generation above our current 10% policy requirement. For commercial development, use of BREEAM is encouraged, with many schemes achieving BREEAM excellent as a minimum. The use of new energy metrics (space heating demand and energy use intensity) is also encouraged. Implementation of measures is secured through planning conditions. | Ongoing |



| RAG rating | Action | Responsible Officer | Expected Completion Date | Progress at 01/05/24 | Next Milestone |
|------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| 3 | Decarbonise transport | | | | |
| 3.1 | Decarbonise the Council's vehicle fleet | | | | |
| 3.1.1 | Procure low emissions vehicles where new vehicles are needed and when replacing end of life vehicles (subject to availability of suitable alternative models and charging infrastructure). | Service Manager, Operations | Fleet decarbonisation strategy programme from 2020 - 2028 | In addition to the 3 electric refuse collection vehicles (eRCVs) there is a further one due to be delivered in Q1 2024/25. An electric street sweeper for paths and cycle ways has also been purchased. | Order to be placed for 4th eRCV to be delivered in Q1 2024/25. |
| 3.1.2 | Develop and deliver solar PV, battery storage and electric vehicle charging network at the Council Depot - Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network project (WREN). | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager | Q3 2023/24 | Final outline design changes were completed in Q2. Enabling works have progressed. Due to risks associated with contractor delivery and final design information delays, the decision was taken to change main contractor and procure a new Principal Designer and Principal Contractor. Whilst this introduces delay from the original timescale, it manages the risk of further delay or under performance during project delivery. Preliminary works have been completed to enable site development including an access road and site clearance prior to solar build out. | Tender for the main contractor to start in end of Q1 24/25. Main works planned to start from Q3 2024/25. |
| 3.1.3 | Investigate feasibility of substituting diesel with Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) biofuel in one or more vehicles as an interim measure to reduce GHG emissions. | Service Manager, Operations | Q2 2022/23 | Procurement for HVO was completed and contract awarded. The service is currently running 18 vehicles on HVO. A second HVO tank to enable the service to look at fuelling further vehicles has been procured. | |



| RAG rating | Action | Responsible Officer | Expected Completion Date | Progress at 01/05/24 | Next Milestone |
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| 3.2 | Reduce emissions from the Council's business mileage | | | | |
| 3.3 | Work with partners to install EV charging points across the district | | | | |
| 3.3.1 | Install Rapid chargers to help meet vehicle charging needs of taxi-drivers. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Q4 2022/23 | We continue to work with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to enhance public EVCP provision. | Continue to identify opportunities with CCC and CPCA via their Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy and Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) bid. |
| 3.3.2 | Support development of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and Cambridgeshire County Council's (CCC) Cambridgeshire-wide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging strategy. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | We have contributed to CPCA EV Charging Strategy development, commenting on the draft version, and are liaising with CCC to support their bid to the LEVI Fund, through promoting their offer to parish councils. | CPCA EV Strategy to be considered at Board level in Q2 2024/25, LEVI bid submitted by CCC Q2 2024/25. |
| 3.3.3 | Deliver publicly accessible EV Charge Points (EVCPs), working with partners. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | £15k awarded in grant funding for community EVCPs in 2023/24, for chargers in Shepreth, Milton and Over. Further work has taken place to promote the grant, including two webinars. Sheltered accommodation chargers seeing steady utilisation, no significant EVCP errors/issues. | Continue to run and promote EVCP grant. Any further rollout at sheltered accommodation on hold (see action 3.3.7). |
| 3.3.4 | Install EVCPs at South Cambs Hall for use by staff and visitors. | Corporate Programme Manager | Q3 2022/23 | The EVCPs are complete and in use. Comprehensive testing occurred in Q2, and any issues fixed. Any replacements were undertaken at the cost of the contractor. | N/A - Action Complete |
| 3.3.5 | Procure single supplier for EV chargers on Council assets. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | | Work undertaken to understand options available in procuring a fully-funded solution for EV charging on our own estate. | Procure single supplier for EV chargers on Council assets. |



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| 3.4 | Work with partners on sustainable transport and travel strategy | | | | |
| 3.4.1 | Through the CPCA, develop and implement a strategy to decarbonise transport. | N/A | Ongoing | The CPCA's Local Transport Connectivity Plan was approved in November 2023. Its mission is to support the transport network to respond to climate change and protect the environment. Schemes include bus enhancements, rail capacity and improving active travel. The strategy includes an alternative fuel strategy. The CPCA went out for consultation on EVCPs in February 2024 and is working to draft an EV Infrastructure Strategy. | Continue to work with CPCA and CCC to deliver strategy actions and develop strategy. |
| 3.4.2 | Through the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP), develop and implement City Deal funded sustainable transport initiatives. | N/a | Ongoing | Current GCP projects are Cambourne to Cambridge, Waterbeach to Cambridge, Cambridge Southeast, and the 12 Greenways. These projects are a significant investment in sustainable and active travel across Greater Cambridge. | Ongoing |
| 3.5 | Taxis and private hire | | | | |
| 3.6 | Support community sustainable travel initiatives | | | | |
| 3.6.1 | Explore feasibility of community car share/e-club schemes with rural coverage. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Q4 2023-24 | Investigated possible partnership with CCC and Cambridge City Council on their Enterprise club, not possible for SCDC to join due to existing contractual arrangements. CamShare (lift share website for Cambridgeshire) to be closed due to defunding by CCC, users to be transferred to Lift Share. Not currently within budget to set up a new community scheme with Lift Share. | Investigate partnership with existing car share schemes, research car share schemes in other rural Local Authorities to inform next steps. |
| 3.7 | Support sustainable travel through planning policy | | | | |



| RAG rating | Action | Responsible Officer | Expected Completion Date | Progress at 01/05/24 | Next Milestone |
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| 3.7.1 | Progress planning policies which limit the need to travel and facilitate active travel modes as part of work on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Preferred Options consultation and work on the draft plan. | Planning Policy Manager | ongoing | See Action 2.1 | Draft version of the Local Plan to be completed for consultation, anticipated in 2025. |
| 3.7.2 | Progress planning policies which limit the need to travel and facilitate active travel modes as part of work on the as part of work on the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NEAAP). | Planning Policy Manager | 2024/25 | See Action 2.2 | Public consultation, date to be confirmed. |
| Completed actions: | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up salary sacrifice electric car scheme – completed April 2022; purchase of 7 cars approved through the scheme in 2022-23 • Develop strategy for EV charging infrastructure on Council assets, see here – completed October 2022 • Support development of CCC’s Active Travel Strategy, see here adopted March 2023 (SCDC led the development of the Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments) • Revise taxi licensing policy to phase out fossil fuelled vehicles- completed 2019 and amended 2021 to require all licensed private hire and hackney carriage vehicles to be zero or ultra-low emission by 01 December 2028. • Support community-led active travel projects through Zero Carbon Communities grants (13 community-led active travel projects supported through Zero Carbon Communities grants schemes in 2019 and 2020, see list of projects supported here) | | | | | |
| 4 | Decarbonise housing and other buildings | | | | |
| 4.1 | Decarbonise the Council’s buildings & streetlighting | | | | |



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|------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| 4.1.1 | Complete retrofit of South Cambridgeshire Hall to include Ground Source Heat Pump, Solar PV car park canopy, Lighting upgrade and new Building Energy Management System. | Corporate Programme Manager | Q4 2022/23 | <p>A technical Project Manager, Employers Agent and a Clerk of Works have been brought in to enhance project management through to completion. Systems and procedures are in place to ensure that problems are reported and that rectification plans are put in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Management System (BMS) is awaiting completion and testing. • Chiller efficiencies are complete subject to resolution of issue with power supply. • LED Lighting is 95% complete. Awaiting completion and testing. • Solar carports are complete and in use. • Ground Source Heat Pump is complete subject to testing of heating and cooling modes. • Air Handling Unit upgrade is complete subject to testing. <p>A design rectification has been proposed by the contractor to resolve an issue with operation of the chiller and solar carports to be undertaken at the contractor's cost.</p> | Work is expected to be completed by August 2024. |
| 4.1.2 | Review community rooms on our sheltered housing schemes to identify and deliver carbon reduction opportunities. | Service Manager, Housing Assets | Q4 2024-25 | Communal rooms are being assessed in their entirety for overall costs and viability with levels of use, a new project has been formed to include ALL works required, including decoration, appliances and fixtures and fittings. | Results and analysis available in Q3 24/25. |
| 4.1.3 | Install solar PV array to Elm Court sheltered housing scheme, Over. | Service Manager, Housing Assets | Q3 2023-24 | Due to technical factors, the project is not economical at this stage. | None |
| 4.1.4 | Install LED fittings in all Council-owned streetlights. | Climate and Environment Team Manager | Q4 2022/23 | NA – Action complete. | NA – Action complete |



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| 4.1.5 | Raise energy performance of all Council properties to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C or above. | Service Manager – Housing Assets | Q4 2026/7 subject to securing funding from Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), Government targets moved to 2030 | The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) project is underway, with data being reviewed. Remaining properties requiring improvements will be identified through the data and any works outside of grant funding levels will be planned in, funding permitted. | SHDF Wave 3 bid submission and full EPC band C upgrade plan to be prepared by Q3 24/25 |
| 4.1.6 | Improve energy efficiency of the Council’s Ermine St Housing Company properties. | Head of Ermine Street | Ongoing | A full stock condition survey was completed in June 23, and RDSAP data obtained used and shared with Aran Insulation to provide them data to make more informed decisions regarding future improvements. | Work with Housing on data management using the Asset Management System. |
| 4.1.7 | Deliver housing with energy efficiency specifications which exceed current requirements on Council owned land including through the Council’s South Cambridgeshire Investment Partnership (SCIP). | Head of Housing | | In March 2024, the Council agreed to acquire 102 affordable homes from SCIP. 72 of these homes will be for affordable council rent and will achieve 101% improvement above Building Regs Part L equivalent to “passive house standard”. They will benefit from triple-glazing, air-source heating and hot water, solar PV and MVHR technology. | Complete contract between SCDC HRA and SCIP in July 2024. |
| 4.2 | Decarbonise the Council’s buildings & streetlighting | | | | |
| 4.2.1 | Working through Cambridgeshire Energy Retrofit Partnership, deliver government funded HUG2 scheme. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Q4 2024-25 | A framework has been established with five installers (across Cambridgeshire). Targeted marketing has been undertaken to promote HUG2. An Action on Energy workshop was held in Q3 for residents and contractors. Regular communications are shared through social media, the Council’s website, the Action on Energy website, the ZCC Newsletter and the South Cambs Magazine. In-person events have been attended to promote the scheme including drop-in sessions. | Complete delivery of HUG2 in Q4 24/25. |



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| 4.2.2 | Develop the Action on Energy scheme to serve the needs of able-to-pay households. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Q4 2023/24 | An Action on Energy website has been launched, setting out how households can access a framework of installers. Regular communications relating to Action on Energy are put out via the website and social media channels, including a retrofit guide that has been added to the website. | Ongoing |
| 4.2.3 | Raise energy performance of private rented sector properties. | Principal Officer – People & Protection | Ongoing | Standard letters and notices have been produced for officers to use when doing Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) enforcement. The PRS Exemptions register has been reviewed and there is now a list of properties that are being looked at. | All landlords with registered exemptions will be written to, advising that these will expire in 2024 and requesting evidence supporting their exemption to see if it is valid. Further MEES non-compliant properties will be identified using the private sector housing stock condition survey report due in summer 2024. |
| 4.2.4 | Find ways to be at the cutting edge of improvements to historic buildings that achieve an appropriate balance between heritage and energy efficiency. | Built and Natural Environment Manager | Ongoing | Guidance on historic buildings is provided on the website, where a guidance page has been produced on making historic homes more energy efficient, as well as through guidance which is provided by 3C Building Control. Webinars on this have also been provided by 3C Building Control. | Ongoing |

Completed Actions:

- Deliver the government-funded Sustainable Warmth project to upgrade up to 80 privately owned properties occupied by low-income households.
- Local Energy Advice Project providing free home energy advice for eligible households set up and in operation, 2019
- Revamped free thermal imaging camera loan scheme and training for residents set up and in operation, 2022
- Webpage created, providing information, resources and case studies to support owners to make their heritage homes more energy efficient, see [here](#).
- Cambridgeshire County Council’s Cambridgeshire Solar Together group buying scheme supported and delivered in South Cambs
- Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme set up and providing an annual round of funding to support community-led projects to improve energy performance of community buildings, see [here](#).



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|------------|---|---|--------------------------|--|--|
| 5 | Decarbonise business and industry | | | | |
| 5.1 | Decarbonise the Council's commercial property. | Head of Economic Development & Investment | Ongoing | Efficiency improvements completed at 270 Cambridge Science Park and the EPC improved to A rating. Assessments on potential sustainability measures for SCDC's Science Park properties have been completed. This considers current EPC rating, potential EPC rating with measures, costs and tenancy breaks for scheduling of works. IST members approved roof works to 140 Cambridge Science Park which would also allow for solar PV to be added to the roof. Procurement exercise underway for contractor to carry out roof works to 140 CSP which will involve solar PV install. | Ongoing. Work expected to commence spring 2025. Opportunities at our other commercial properties will be reviewed as and when tenant breaks approach, or as necessary. |
| 5.2 | Provide advice and resources to help businesses understand what they can do to become greener. | Economic Development Team Leader | Ongoing | Webinars were promoted to support Allia with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Green Impact programme, including 'Why measuring Carbon for your business makes sense', to help businesses harness funding and advice to support them on their journey to become Net Zero. Applications for the BPIC Jumpstart Grant scheme were scored on their impact on the environment and the measures they will take to reduce carbon emissions. A thermal imaging article was featured in the winter edition of the South Cambs Magazine and through social media channels, and four businesses expressed an interest in using them. These continue to be promoted to businesses. Q4 saw two businesses and one parish council use them. Business engagement surveys were conducted. 21 businesses said they need help and advice on helping their business become 'greener' and for reducing utility bills. | As part of the Green Impact Business program, Allia and PECT will be hosting webinars and in person events to promote the scheme during Q1/3 2024/25. |
| 5.3 | Identify funding opportunities to help businesses meet economic challenges specifically to help businesses to be greener. | | Q4 2024-25 | A delivery partner (Allia) was appointed for a scheme to provide a business support consultancy program to help advise businesses on how to reduce carbon emissions. The programme launched in September 2023. 21 business have been accepted on to the programme. 16 of these have completed the initial awareness session. Five have completed the diagnostics work, and one has completed a five-year net zero plan. One is eligible and has moved to the grant funding stage. | The programme is currently being reviewed to ensure the target of 53 businesses supported is met. |



| RAG rating | Action | Responsible Officer | Expected Completion Date | Progress at 01/05/24 | Next Milestone |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|--|--|
| 5.4 | Explore setting up work hubs and co-working spaces to reduce commuter travel distances | Economic Development Team Leader | Ongoing | Refurbishment of rental space is complete and measures to increase security measures are being explored. The space is now set up and there are some exciting events / workshops booked in and are looking for other opportunities for businesses and community groups to use the space. | The space should be fully functional by end of August 24 dependent upon the procurement of a booking system. |
| Completed actions: | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put in place new procurement rules requiring that awarding of contracts >£5,000 takes account of decarbonisation plans of bidders – completed 2019 | | | | | |
| 6 | Decarbonise food systems and agriculture | | | | |
| 6.1 | Run communication campaigns to encourage carbon-friendly diets eg Meat Free Monday, Veganuary | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | An article was published in the South Cambs Magazine, including signposts to Community Chest support; food waste campaigns; and food bank and community vegetable garden network. Hosted a widely promoted “Climate-Friendly Cook with Me” Zoom event with Cllr Shrobona Bhattacharya, with a focus on reducing food waste and enjoying plant-based recipes. | Ongoing |
| 6.2 | Explore feasibility of further work in this area, for example, Sustainable Food Strategy | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Q4 2022/23 | Planning is underway to develop a sustainable food network. An internal forum has been set up and an external meeting organised to begin the process of considering what sustainable food will look like in South Cambridgeshire. Initial invitations were distributed and publicised through the Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) newsletter. | Develop plan for sustainable food network. |
| 7 | Deliver training, education, communications and advocacy | | | | |
| 7.1 | Embed environmental sustainability into HR processes. | HR Co-ordinator | Q4 2023/24 | Tusker Green car scheme continues to be promoted to staff, alongside other actions that reduce emissions from business travel including the Council's ZipCar and the CamShare car sharing scheme. Communications were included in the HR newsletter and a webinar held in September 2023. A meeting has been arranged to consider opportunities to reduce carbon emissions from business travel. | Ongoing |



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| 7.2 | Deliver Carbon Literacy Training to staff and Members. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | Four courses have been completed with 21 employees completing pledges and receiving certification and 49 colleagues participating in the course. Our certification application was approved in September 2023. SCDC is now a Bronze certified Carbon Literate Organisation. | Achieve Silver Carbon Literate Organisation status. |
| 7.3 | Develop and deliver appropriate communications around climate change. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | Four ZCC newsletters were published. Local Climate Conference took place in November 2023 with guest speakers on local issues (biodiversity, flooding, community energy, EV charging). There were 70 attendees. Green Connect webinar session 'Funding My Project' held in September 2023 with 21 sign ups. March event was a climate-friendly cooking demonstration. A home energy drop-in in Cottenham and Rampton was held, and team represented SCDC at Kings College "Imaginarium" and Haslingfield and Harlton "Re-imagining Energy and Community Microgrids" events. Activity session at Romsey Mill youth club in Northstowe. A film was commissioned to show ZCC grant recipients and 'doubling nature' projects. Consistent climate feature in South Cambs Magazine. Frequent posts on ZCC Facebook (reach up 138.4% in May 2024, 47 posts since January 2024) | Ongoing work |
| 7.4 | Advocacy work to influence and support other bodies. | All, including elected Members | Ongoing | The Climate and Environment Advisory Committee (CEAC) Chair represented South Cambridgeshire in the Combined Authority areas meeting regarding Locally Determined Contributions (LDCs) for carbon reduction. There was also attendance at the Oxford-Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership Environmental Sub-Group and at the LGA Parliamentary Drop-in on climate change. The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste was a member of the Selection Committee for the Zayed Sustainability Prize (a global prize that recognises NPOs, SMEs and high schools for their impactful, innovative and inspiring sustainable solutions) in the Climate Action Category. The Prize Award ceremony was held at COP28 in December 2023. | Ongoing |



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| 7.5 | Award grants of up to £15,000 to at least nine community projects to reduce carbon and engage communities on climate change through the Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | In July 2023, the Grants Advisory Committee (GAC) approved a total grant award value of £124,900 to 10 projects. Projects include a new electric van for a mobile foodbank; a repair café network, thermal camera scheme and Open Eco Homes work; solar PV for three community buildings. On-going work to promote the scheme and its outcomes continues. Revisions to the grant criteria were proposed and approved by CEAC, GAC and Cabinet. Round 6 of the grants launched in April 2024. An application workshop was held in April 2024 to support groups developing project proposals. | Award of Round 6 of the grant scheme. |
| Completed actions: | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff climate change toolkit launched including intranet webpage and Staff Climate Change Handbook – completed 2022 • Carbon Literacy Trust accredited 7 hour training course for staff successfully piloted January 2023; the first of a rolling programme of quarterly courses was delivered in April. | | | | | |
| 8 | Respond to the ecological emergency | | | | |
| 8.1 | Increase green infrastructure and enhance biodiversity through Planning | | | | |
| 8.1.1 | Progress planning policies related to doubling nature as part of wider work on green infrastructure on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Preferred Options consultation and work on the draft plan. | Planning Policy Manager | Ongoing | Training has now been given to planners and Planning Committees for the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. BNG pre-application guidance is in place and on website, and BNG pre-application service has been launched. Successful bid to DLUCH Pro-Tech Innovation Fund to secure and develop software to monitor delivery of BNG. Software procurement underway. Training and briefing of agents forum undertaken. | Ongoing |



| RAG rating | Action | Responsible Officer | Expected Completion Date | Progress at 01/05/24 | Next Milestone |
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| 8.1.2 | Promote good practice in securing benefits to biodiversity through development by publishing case study/ies. | Natural Environment Team Leader | Ongoing | The implementation of BNG is a long-term action, delivering long term benefits across a broad range of land uses. Approximately 86 ha of land is under S106 agreement for BNG. Habitats to be created are: Other Neutral Grassland, Calcareous Grassland, Woodland, Scrub, and hedgerows. SCDC has a further 71 ha of land with S106 agreements, (two separate suppliers) in progress (similar habitats to that agreed), and four more suppliers declaring interests. BNG uplift from baseline for these habitats is between 150 and 200% increase in measurable biodiversity, offsetting development with a minimal 10% increase in biodiversity from the development baseline measurement. | The production of marketing materials by end September 2024 that set out BNG success across Greater Cambridge and highlight ongoing work with BNG providers to deliver significant positive outcomes for nature. |
| 8.2 | Increase nature by supporting community action | | | | |
| 8.2.1 | Provide grants for biodiversity through the Community Chest. | Communities Manager | Ongoing | Two applications were approved by GAC. One to help enhance the natural environment on a wooded piece of land in Meldreth, the other to Girton Local Nature Recovery Plan Group for the parish memorial garden. Publicity has been carried out to increase application numbers. | Continue promotion via SCDC channels and through publication of case studies of local nature recovery projects to encourage/inspire grant uptake. |
| 8.2.2 | Support tree-planting through Six Free Trees scheme. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | 46 parish councils have participated. 146 trees have been received and planted by parishes across the district. Follow up press release completed with photos submitted. | Run scheme again in Nov/Dec 2024/25 with ambition of at least 50 Parish Councils taking part. |



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| 8.2.3 | Explore options for delivering support for parish councils and community groups to create and deliver Local Nature Recovery Plans. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Q4 2022/23 | Case studies of visits to five community nature projects have been included in the ZCC newsletter and published on the website alongside directory of community projects. Directory of local nature projects and relevant contacts included on website to enable peer-to-peer support/discussion for community nature projects. | Continue promoting toolkit and explore support for parish and community groups. Liaise with CCC who have gained funding for a 2-year post to support community nature projects. Improve comms around grant schemes and diversify engagement on nature through video and storytelling. |
| 8.2.4 | Support volunteers through our role as Tree Warden network co-ordinator. | Natural Environment Team Manager | Under review and on hold | A review of the process to designate and record TPOs across the district has commenced with two pilots (Harston & Boxworth). This work is ending, and a report will be prepared setting out the learning from these. A report has been produced by the Trees Team that highlights this work and is currently being assessed. | Long-term review. Focus on work of Trees Team by BNE in f/y 24/25. |
| 8.2.5 | Share community project good practice at Green Connect webinars and Climate and Environment fortnight. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | Case studies detailing visits to five community nature projects have been included in the ZCC newsletter and published on the SCDC website alongside directory of community projects. | Ongoing |
| 8.2.6 | Promote gardening for nature to our residents to increase awareness and better enable residents to preserve and enhance nature within their own spheres. | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Ongoing | Four seasonal 'gardening for nature' articles in S. Cambs Magazine. Allotment toolkit updates with information for allotment organisers on improving/supporting nature on allotment sites.' Help a Hedgehog' video produced and shared to staff and via SCDC social media. Councillors attended local events, including West Wickham's 'Gardening with Climate Change' event and chairing of the speaker panel at Histon and Impington Eco Fest. | Compile South Cambs Magazine readers' suggestions for gardening for nature to include in Autumn 24/25 issue. As per action 8.2.3 work gardening for nature into diversified communications (film, storytelling) around gardening for nature. |



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| 8.3 | Enhance opportunities for nature on our own estate | | | | |
| 8.3.1 | Take forward opportunities for tree-planting, wildflower strips and other initiatives on Council housing estates. | Service Manager, Tenancy and Estates | Ongoing | With the support of our grounds maintenance contractor, 34 new standard trees and 228 whips were planted across two sites. We also have a three-year maintenance programme in place. The trees on these two sites are being cared for via regular inspections by our grounds maintenance contractor through an agreed programme. Advised by Ecologist, nature enhancement (trees, wildflowers, bird box, habitat piles) provided on three HRA sites, ongoing maintenance by grounds maintenance contractor. Scoping exercise underway to identify HRA land suitable for nature improvements, and to establish management plan for these areas. | Identify further opportunities for tree planting on HRA land using shortlist of sites taken from Ecologist report, where possible making use of free trees provided by schemes such as Woodland Trust and The Conservation Volunteers. |
| 8.4 | Enhance opportunities for nature through our work managing watercourses | | | | |
| 8.4.1 | Review management of awarded watercourses with a view to action to improve biodiversity. | Environment Operations Manager | Ongoing | Joint habitat improvement project with the Wild Trout Trust (WTT) and Cambridge Water conducted on the River Mel, to restore the chalk stream riverbed in Meldreth. This was publicised in the national and local media. The next phase is to look at a different section of the River Mel and the introduction of 60 Tons of gravel to improve trout habitat. Postponed due to poor weather conditions since August 2023. Small projects also being supported by waiving consent fees in favour of nature projects. | Moving forwards with WTT and other partner organisations on projects e.g. restoration work at the River Rhee, and bank strengthening at Shepreth. Works for the second phase of the River Mel project are expected for September 2024 to reduce the impact on the existing habitat. Habitat restoration project for the River Shep due to be delivered in September 2024. |



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| 8.5 | Enhance opportunities for nature through working with partners | | | | |
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| 8.5.1 | Work with Highways England to ensure positive environmental legacy from A428 Improvement works | Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Manager | Q4 2022/23 | A feasibility study for Biodiversity Net Gain was completed in March 2022. The A428 legacy working group continue to seek improvements with a particular focus on active travel. | Highways England to progress. Updates via the relaunched A428 Legacy Working Group. |
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Completed actions:

- Update and strengthen guidance relating to biodiversity by drafting and adopting a new Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, adopted Feb 2022
- Complete audit of trees on Council housing estates and undertake recommended maintenance work

