BABERGH

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

2026-2030

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Foreword

Climate change is no longer a distant challenge. It is affecting our communities, our landscapes, our wildlife and our economy today. Across Babergh we are experiencing more frequent extreme weather events, increasing pressures on nature, and rising concerns about energy, food security and the resilience of our communities. At the same time, we have an opportunity to take positive action that delivers lasting benefits for people and the environment. This Climate Action Plan sets out how we intend to do that.

Babergh is a district characterised by its beautiful countryside, historic towns and villages, thriving communities and rich natural environment. Protecting these assets for future generations is a responsibility we all share. Our response to climate change must therefore not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also strengthen the resilience of our communities and restore the natural systems on which we depend. The climate and ecological emergencies are deeply interconnected, and addressing one requires us to address the other.

This Climate Action Plan builds on the progress already made by the Council and our partners. It reflects our commitment to achieving net zero emissions, embedding climate considerations across council services and decision-making, supporting sustainable economic growth, and enabling nature recovery throughout the district. Just as importantly, it recognises the need to prepare for the impacts of climate change that we can no longer avoid. By acting now, we can help ensure that Babergh remains a healthy, prosperous and resilient place in which to live and work.

Many of the most important changes will be achieved through collaboration. Residents, businesses, farmers, community organisations, parish and town councils, and public sector partners all have a role to play. Across Babergh there is already inspiring work taking place to reduce emissions, support wildlife, improve energy efficiency and strengthen community resilience. This plan seeks to build on that momentum and create the conditions for even greater action.

While the challenge is significant, there is much reason for optimism. Climate action can help reduce energy costs, improve health and wellbeing, create economic opportunities, strengthen communities and enhance the places we value most. By working together, we can turn ambition into action and ensure that Babergh is well placed to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

I am proud to present Babergh District Council's Climate Action Plan 2026-2030. It sets a clear direction for the coming years and demonstrates our continued commitment to protecting our environment, supporting our communities and creating a more sustainable future for generations to come.

Councillor Helen Davies
Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Nature Recovery and Biodiversity
Babergh District Council



Introduction

The Climate Action Plan is the new name for the Council's Carbon Reduction Management Plan, reflecting the widening of climate action beyond reduction of climate warming emissions to include addressing the impacts of climate change through resilience and adaptation within the council, and across the district. The development of this plan includes linkages to the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and Nature Recovery agenda, recognising the dual and interconnected climate and ecological emergencies. Climate change remains a key priority for Babergh, and this action plan reflects and supports the Council's Delivery Plan which has three missions shown below.



Mission 3 – Greener Places and Jobs have the following priorities:

- Recovery of the natural environment
- Enabling nature recovery and enhancing biodiversity
- Meeting net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and supporting climate change mitigation and resilience
- Delivering sustainable, inclusive growth focused on people, prosperity and place

The Missions in the delivery plan address the priorities set out in Our Plan for Babergh, including the following, that are relevant to this plan:

Revitalised and Improved Environment

Tackling climate change, reducing carbon emissions, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, and supporting biodiversity and nature recovery, local community energy projects, greener and healthier forms of travel and more energy efficient buildings

Thriving Economy

Supporting the green economy, championing retrofit and renewable energy, sustainable jobs and skills, and supporting local businesses.

Resilient Communities

Engaging, empowering and enabling communities, improving energy-efficiency of listed buildings, improving access to the services and facilities that support thriving communities & the health and wellbeing of our residents, helping with the high cost of living

What this plan covers

This Climate Action Plan (CAP) sets out the Council's approach to tackling climate change and its priorities for emissions reduction, adaptation and resilience through to 2030. The plan will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains up-to-date, responsive to policy and funding changes and aligned with service and budget planning timescales. The Plan identifies key actions and the wider benefits they can deliver for residents, communities, the environment and local economy.

How to use this plan

The plan is organised around the key areas where the Council can reduce emissions, support climate action and strengthen resilience. Each chapter sets out the **objectives, key actions, timescales and co-benefits** for that area.

SCOPE	OBJECTIVE	KEY ACTION(S)	TIMESCALE	CO-BENEFITS
Whether the action relates to the Council, the wider district, or both.	What the action is seeking to achieve.	The practical action being delivered, supported or explored.	When the action is expected to be delivered or progressed.	Wider benefits for residents, communities, the environment and economy.

Evidence and reporting

The Council's annual Greenhouse Gas Report details the latest progress towards the Council's target in more detail, while the Annual Climate Report provides more information on what has been delivered and the difference it has made.

Our latest reports on our emissions and progress on climate action can be found on our new climate webpage - https://www.babergh.gov.uk/what-we-are-doing-to-combat-climate-change

Tackling and responding to climate change – the Council's approach

Our approach at a glance

The Council will lead through its own operations, enable action across the district and partner with others to increase impact. Climate action is treated as a shared responsibility across the organisation, connecting emissions reduction, adaptation, nature recovery and social justice.

How the Council will respond

The Council has a role to play both through the way it operates itself and through its influence across the district. We cannot deliver the scale of change needed alone, so our approach combines action within the organisation with enabling communities, businesses and partners to act.

Our approach is based on three complementary roles:

LEAD	ENABLE	PARTNER
Reduce emissions from Council operations and embed climate and nature	Help households, businesses and communities access opportunities, information and support.	Work with Suffolk-wide and local partners to increase impact and deliver shared objectives.
How - establishing new environmental assessments and identifying improvements to energy management in decision-making.	**How -** Work with relevant partners and community organisations to connect residents and communities with available advice, support and funding opportunities for local climate and energy initiatives.	**How -** continuing to support Sustainable Suffolk and Warm Homes Suffolk, providing a range of support and grants for residents.

The Council will use its own data, wider public data sets, and information from our communities to help design and target work, ensuring more efficient delivery and greater focus on our priorities. This includes identifying those most vulnerable to both the impacts of climate change and any costs for the transition to low-carbon infrastructure and living. The Council aims to create actions that maximise improvements for quality of life and place for our communities, for current and future generations.

Alongside this, the Council recognises the importance of place in design and delivery of climate action, and the need to tailor and coordinate work to ensure it responds to local needs and makes the most of available resources.

Why climate action matters

In response to the growing understanding of the risks of a changing climate and the need to act urgently, the Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and committed to the aspiration of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 for its own operations and activities. A similar aspiration was shared with other councils for a Suffolk-wide 2030 target, and therefore for Babergh. These targets are intended to reduce the additional

energy and warming being added to the atmosphere, helping to support a safer and more stable climate, people's quality of life, a sustainable economy and a thriving natural environment.

Reducing emissions requires action on greenhouse gases from fossil fuels, land use, waste, materials and other sources, while also protecting and managing natural carbon stores so they can continue to capture and hold carbon.

At the same time, Suffolk is already experiencing climate impacts and will continue to do so for many years until global targets are met. There are also potential *tipping points*[1] where we may see irreversible changes in our climate and our ecosystems, driving more dangerous impacts such as sea-level rise and radical changes in the climate we experience.

The Council therefore needs to pursue both mitigation, reducing emissions, and adaptation, preparing for and becoming resilient to the impacts of climate change. *Positive tipping points* can also help accelerate change while creating wider benefits for the Council and residents, including jobs, more resilient communities and a more sustainable local economy.

The Council aims to identify emissions savings that deliver wider benefits and provide value for money, balancing reductions in its own operations with the value of supporting emissions reduction across the district and its communities. The Council recognises that it is one of many actors needed to tackle climate change, with an important role in leadership, enabling, encouraging and supporting action across the district.

Climate action as a shared responsibility

Climate change cannot be treated as a standalone consideration. Almost everything the Council does affects the climate and is also affected by a changing climate. Some people, communities and organisations are more vulnerable both to the transition to a lower-carbon economy and to climate impacts. Climate action can therefore address wider needs, including lower bills, warmer and healthier buildings, reduced pollution and greater resilience.

The Council's approach places sustainability and social justice at the heart of its work and seeks to nurture engaged and resilient communities. Climate change is being embedded in how the Council operates, how programmes are developed, how decisions are made and, in the culture, and experience of the workforce. This is as much about how the Council works as what it delivers.

The Council takes an outward-looking approach and is an active member of UK100 and the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, working to support delivery of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan.

Net zero targets

International agreements such as the Paris Agreement seek to limit global average temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C. The concept of a carbon budget illustrates why early emissions reductions matter: greenhouse gases remain in the atmosphere for a long time and add cumulatively, so the longer emissions continue, the larger the resulting climate challenge.

Global average temperature figures do not fully convey the impacts of a changing climate, particularly the changes in extreme weather that are discussed further in the Adaptation and Resilience chapter. The world is already around 1.4-1.5°C warmer than pre-industrial levels, with the UK warming faster than the global average. This summer was provisionally the warmest on record for the UK with forty days at or over 30°C.[2]

[1] Global Tipping Points | understanding risks & their potential impact
[2] Summer 2026 provisionally hottest on record for the UK - Met Office

Globally we are on course for a rise of 2°C by 2050 and 3°C by 2100, but with the possibility of a 4°C rise [3]. The best-case scenario is to overshoot the 1.5°C target, hitting 1.8°C, and then return to a safer temperature in the future [4]. With Ocean Temperatures at a record high in 2026 [5], there are concerns that the climate is warming at an increasing rate, and one faster than expected. This reinforces the need to reduce emissions as quickly as practicable while preparing for a changing climate.

Carbon neutral and net zero

The terms carbon neutral and net zero have sometimes been used interchangeably, but they have different technical meanings. Key distinctions include which greenhouse gases are included in the assessment and the role of offsetting.

Carbon neutrality can be achieved more readily through offsetting, where an organisation pays into schemes intended to reduce or remove emissions elsewhere rather than reducing its own emissions. Such schemes can raise questions about additionality and the reliability of claimed emissions reductions.

Net zero approaches generally require an organisation to reduce emissions to a small residual level that is difficult to eliminate, with credible removals or other approaches used for the remaining emissions.

Babergh District Council's target and emissions reduction performance

COUNCIL TARGET

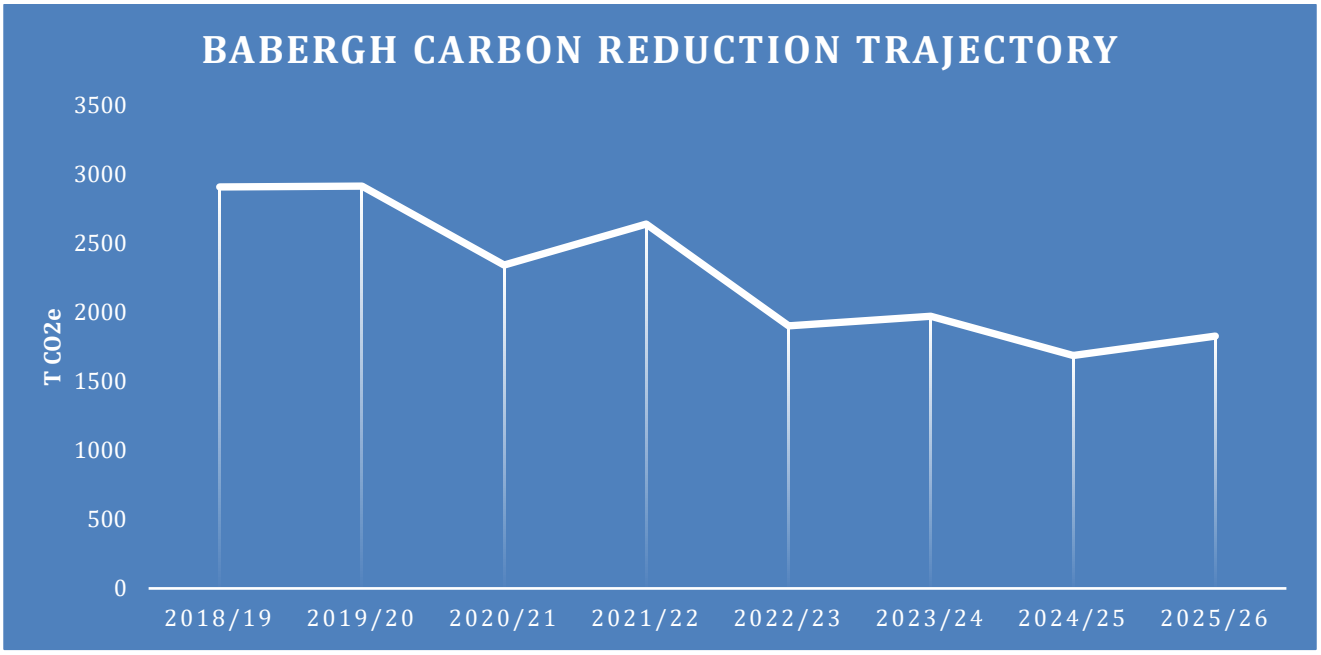
In 2019, the Council committed to a 2030 target of carbon neutrality for its own operations and activities. The Council now uses Net Zero as the preferred expression of this target, reflecting the tighter definition and scrutiny that has developed around emissions reduction targets.

When the target was established, the precise emissions sources and scopes [6]included in it were not fully specified. The Council has since continued to improve its greenhouse gas reporting, including better data collection and increasing coverage across the 15 Scope 3 categories. Scope 3 emissions are indirect emissions from the Council's value chain, and expanding coverage can increase the reported footprint, particularly for purchased goods and services. Further detail on the target definition and emissions included is provided in the latest greenhouse gas report.

Below are the latest emissions figures for Babergh Council's footprint that are considered applicable to the target

BASELINE (2018/19)	2025/2026	REDUCTION SINCE BASELINE
2906 tCO_2e	**1827 tCO_2e**	**37%**

[3] A Well-Adapted UK - Climate Change Committee
[4] UNEP: World set to cross 1.5°C global warming, but can still limit, adapt to and return from higher temperatures
[5] Ocean heat records broken as hottest July temperature recorded - BBC News
[6] with the use of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) protocol scopes and categories/sources terminology.



The Council buys electricity through a green electricity tariff covered by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs). However, standard greenhouse gas reporting uses national average grid carbon intensity factors, so the reported electricity emissions do not fully reflect the impact of the Council's actions. The Council's reported footprint should therefore be considered alongside the methodology used. With electricity representing 16% of the Council's total emissions, dual reporting would show a considerably smaller footprint.

Progress between years can be difficult to interpret because calculation factors, emissions sources and reporting methods change. Weather, such as a colder winter, and changes to the Council estate can also affect annual emissions. The Council is therefo**re exploring additional performance indicators, including measures for buildings and travel, to provide a fuller picture of progress.**

The reported reduction since the baseline year is significant and **is broadly consistent with earlier science-based approaches that sought to halve emissions between 2019 and 2030. However, meeting the 2030 target requires drastic emissions reduction in the next few years.**

Where the Council's emissions come from

The Council's greenhouse gas emissions arise from a range of sources across its buildings, energy use, fleet and travel. The latest emissions profile shows that the largest share comes from the use of fossil fuels to heat buildings, generate hot water and power machinery and vehicles, with electricity also making a significant contribution.

The Council's main reported emissions sources include heating its buildings and hot water, electricity use, fleet and travel, working from home and other fuel usage for tools and machinery. For more information see the latest greenhouse gas report

Reducing reliance on fossil fuels through the electrification of heating and transport, improving energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewable energy will be important to reducing the Council's remaining emissions.

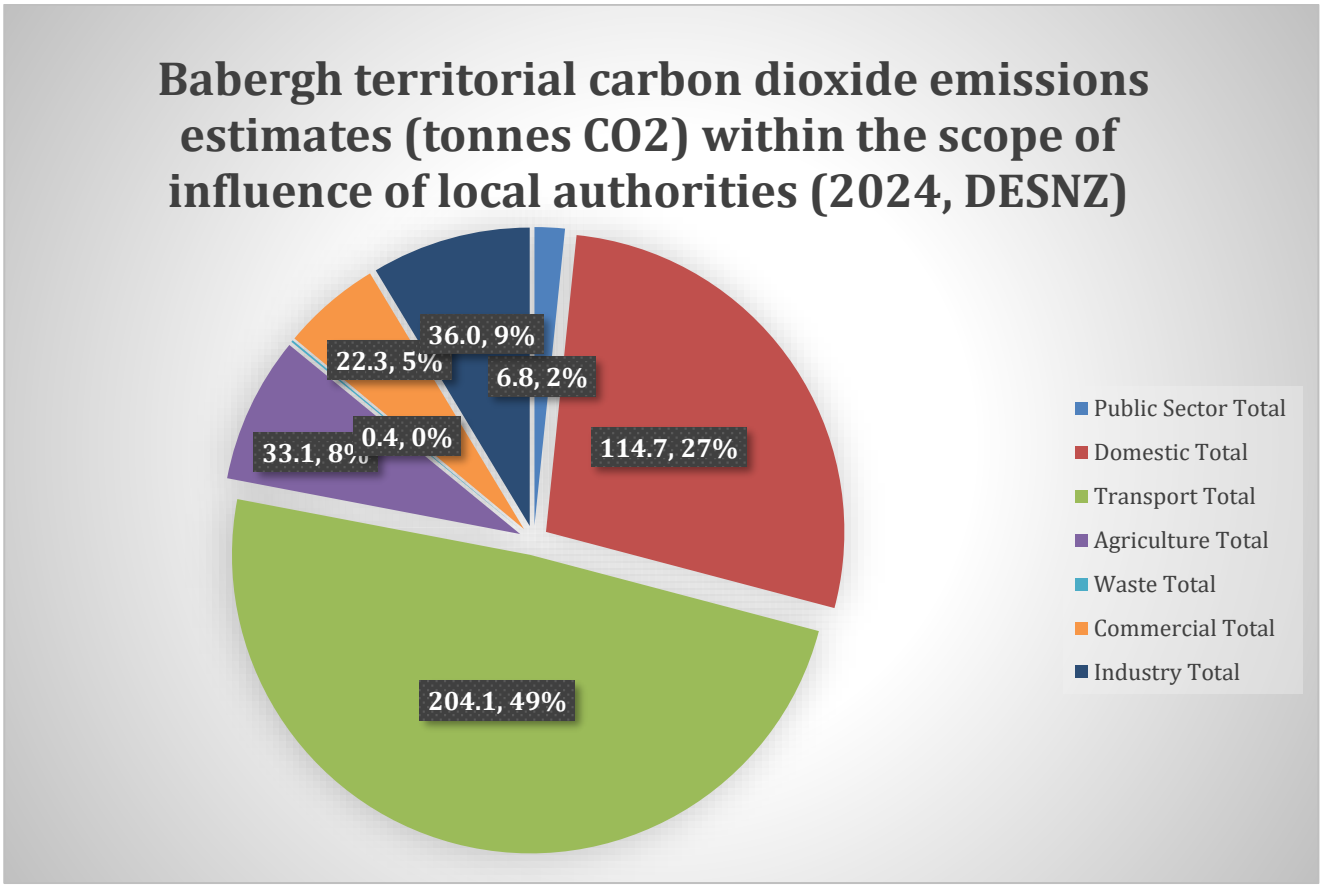


Figure 1. Babergh Council emissions breakdown by Scope and source

District-wide emissions

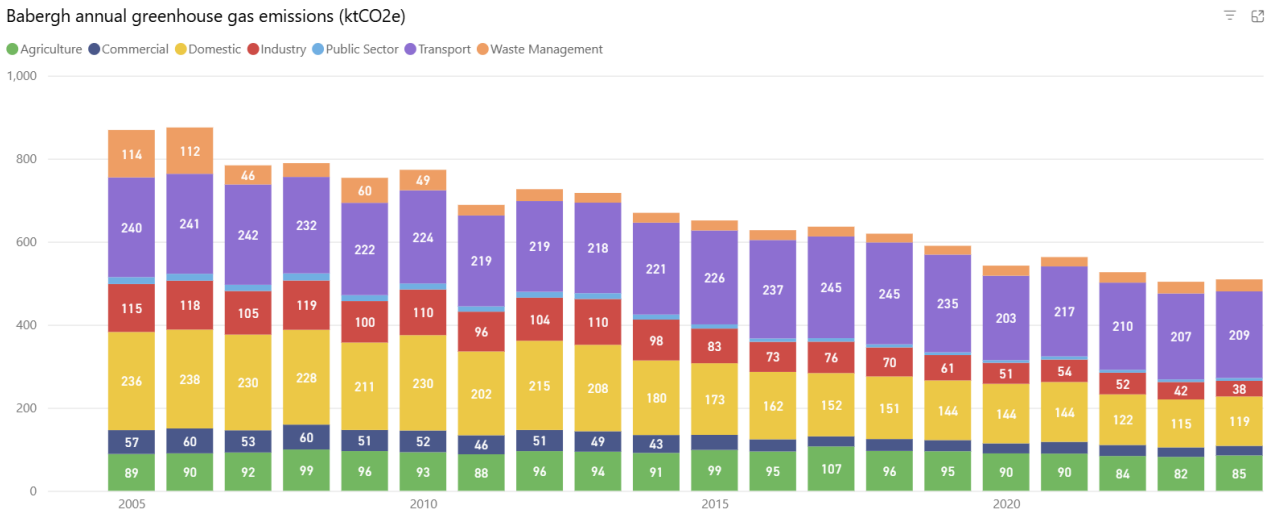
The Council also has an important role in supporting emissions reduction across the wider district. For the latest figures within the scope of influence of local authorities, Babergh's district emissions were approximately 417,600 tonnes CO_2 in 2024, equivalent to 4.3 tonnes CO_2 per person per year.

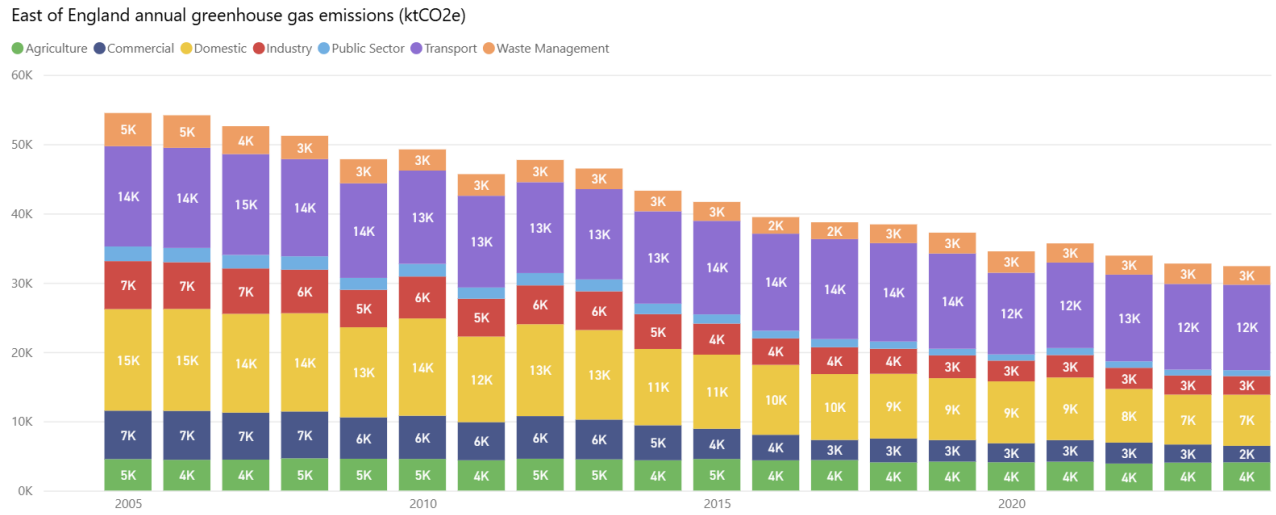
Emissions increased by 1.4% between 2023 and 2024, but have fallen by 42% since 2005, averaging 2.7% per year. Domestic and public sector emissions have halved since 2005, while transport emissions have plateaued and agricultural emissions have changed little over the same period. Public sector emissions account for around 2% of district emissions, demonstrating why Council leadership, planning, enabling and partnership working are important alongside reducing the Council's own footprint. The graph below shows how the emissions breakdown in the most recent emissions estimates from central government



The understanding of where most emissions come from and their rate of change helps set priorities and objectives for work ahead. Whilst area-based emissions are considered within the influence of local authorities, this influence is split between district and county council functions, for example in transport planning and delivery. This reinforces the need for partnership working and joined up delivery and policy making.

The graphs below demonstrate the rate of progress in Babergh in both total emissions and the relative contributions from different sectors over the years, and how they track regional rates of progress.





Data and graphs sourced from the Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics (SODA)'s Suffolk Climate Tracker. Uses data from UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics - GOV.UK for all emissions.

The table below compares territorial emissions considered under local authority influence across the Suffolk Districts for comparison and demonstrates how the type of industry, level of population, condition of housing and commercial building stock, and density and quality of infrastructure will affect emissions across rural and urban areas:

Local Authority	Total emissions (kt CO2e)	% of Suffolk's total emissions	Population ('000s, mid-year estimates)	Per Capita Emissions (tCO2e per year)	Area (km²)	Emissions per km² (kt CO2e)
Babergh	417.6	12.7%	97.0	4.3	611.6	0.7
East Suffolk	946.8	28.7%	249.7	3.8	1,294.8	0.7
Ipswich	314.4	9.5%	140.3	2.2	40.3	7.8
Mid Suffolk	548.1	16.6%	110.8	4.9	871.1	0.6
West Suffolk	1,073.4	32.5%	188.5	5.7	1,034.7	1.0
Suffolk Total	**3,300.3**	**100.0%**	**786.2**	**4.2**	**3,852.5**	**0.9**

Source: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 2005–2024. DESNZ, 2026.

Embedding climate and nature in the Council

Tackling climate change and nature recovery in a fair and beneficial way cannot be achieved through a single team or project. It is a responsibility for the whole organisation and depends on having the right processes, knowledge and leadership in place.

In 2025, the Council created a Climate and Nature Recovery service area to bring together work across sustainable travel, energy, building efficiency, climate change and nature. This provides a central point of coordination while recognising that delivery remains a shared responsibility across the organisation. It also brings senior representation for the work.

The Carbon Reduction Management Plan in previous years has demonstrated the cross-service work that this agenda requires. Training for senior officers and councillors in carbon literacy, and support for a climate champions network has also been integral to putting sustainability at the heart of what we do.

The Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and endorsement of Suffolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy the direction for protecting and enhancing nature. Climate and nature action are closely connected: green and blue infrastructure and other nature-based solutions can provide cooling, reduce flood risks, store water and reduce drought risks. Nature recovery can also capture carbon from the atmosphere and protect carbon already stored in vegetation, trees and soils. Equally, as recent years have shown, the changing climate impacts our local landscapes and ecology significantly and needs to adapt and become more resilient.

The Council will continue to develop processes that help staff and decision makers consider climate and nature at appropriate points in the development and delivery of Council work. This includes recruitment and induction, service planning, project development, procurement and formal decision-making.

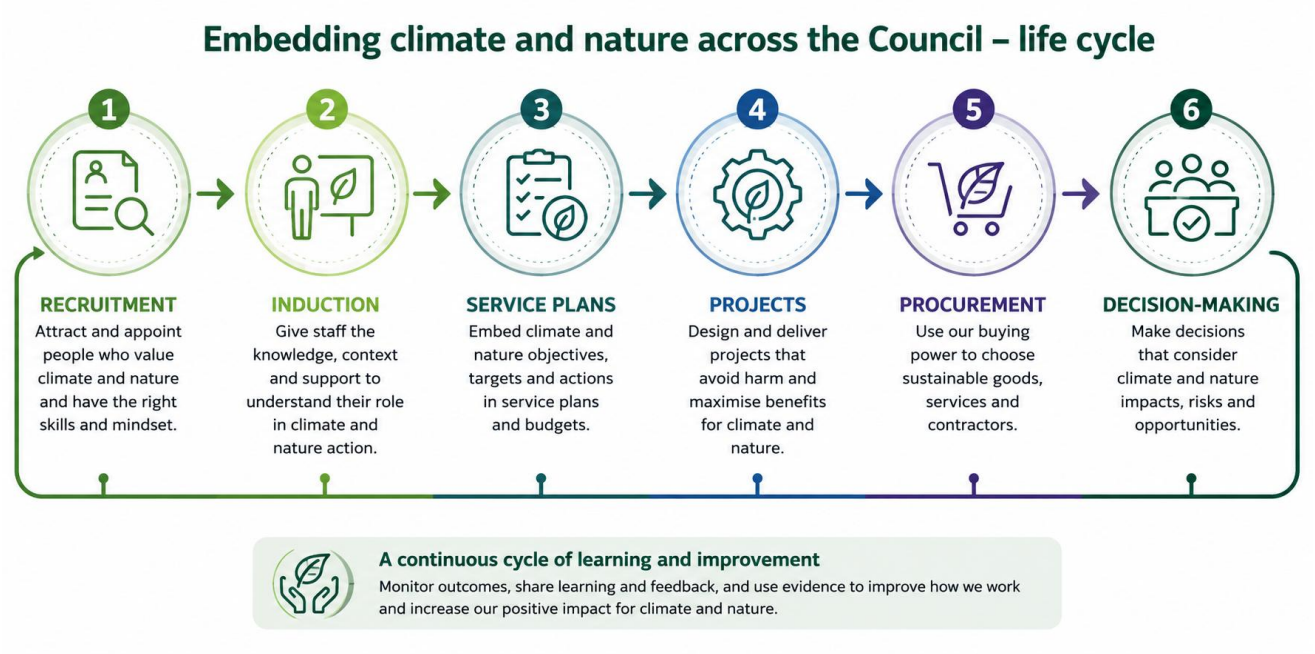


Figure 2 Capture of climate considerations in council operations

The aim is to create a culture that inspires, supports and enables staff to consider climate and nature in their work, while minimising harm and maximising wider benefits. This helps ensure climate change is not the responsibility of a single team but is considered throughout the organisation.

The Council will lead and enable where it can, while working with partners, to increase impact. It will continue working with Sustainable Suffolk to support county-wide climate objectives and the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. The Council will also chair the Suffolk Sustainable Homes working group, supporting leadership and coordination for retrofitting existing homes and improving the design of new homes.

The following section sets out the key organisational actions that will support this approach. These sit alongside the thematic areas of the Climate Action Plan, where more detailed actions are set out for specific areas such as the built environment, sustainable travel, energy and nature recovery.

Governance & organisational leadership

Effective governance and organisational leadership provide the foundation for delivering the Council's climate and nature commitments. Tackling climate change and supporting nature recovery requires action across the organisation, supported by clear accountability, effective decision-making and staff who have the knowledge, confidence and practical tools to contribute.

The Council has already taken significant strides through the creation of the Climate and Nature Recovery Service area, undertaking Carbon Literacy Training, creating a dedicated Climate and Nature Recovery reserves creating a Climate Champions Network and ambitious delivery of its Carbon Reduction Management Plan. In procurement, an important lever for the Council, there has been a programme of contract management training which included raising awareness of our Environmental Ask and environmental implications of contracts. The Council has put in place an environmental policy checklist and captures carbon emissions in contracts.

The Council's approach is built around three connected areas, which provide the framework for the objectives and actions in this chapter:

GOVERNANCE Clear accountability, coordination and oversight for a just climate and nature recovery approach.	**DECISION-MAKING** Consistent consideration of climate, nature and wider sustainability through reporting, projects, procurement and formal decisions.	**PEOPLE & CULTURE** Awareness, Carbon Literacy, learning, support and practical resources across the employee lifecycle.

Objectives

- **Strengthen climate and nature governance** - Establish clear governance and accountability so climate action and nature recovery are coordinated across the organisation.
- **Embed climate in decision-making** - Build climate and nature considerations into relevant policies, projects, reporting and formal decisions.
- **Educate, encourage and equip staff and councillors** - Build the knowledge, confidence and practical tools needed for staff and councillors to contribute to climate and nature action.
- **Reduce supply-chain emissions and improve sustainability outcomes -** Use procurement and social value opportunities to strengthen environmental outcomes across the Council's supply chain.

Local spotlight

Carbon Literacy Training: Building climate knowledge and confidence

Carbon Literacy Training is delivered as an internal programme across Babergh District Council, helping councillors and staff understand climate change and identify practical actions they can take through their work and in their personal lives.



Training initially focused on councillors and the senior leadership team and is now being extended to staff across the Council. All **Climate Change Champions** have completed the training, with some progressing to become Carbon Literacy trainers themselves and supporting colleagues within their departments.

The training aims to build knowledge, confidence and practical understanding of climate action, helping to embed climate considerations across the organisation rather than relying solely on the Council's climate team.

"The Carbon Literacy training really brought home the seriousness and urgency of climate action. It's made me look again at my own habits and think about what more I can do. Since the training, I've found myself questioning my everyday choices and asking what more I can personally change at work and at home to play my part in getting to carbon neutral."

The programme is helping to develop a wider culture of climate awareness across the Council and equip staff to contribute to its climate and net zero ambitions.

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
Council	Strengthen climate and nature governance	Establish a Social and Environmental Justice Board to support governance of a just climate and nature recovery approach.	2026	Stronger governance; improved accountability; coordinated delivery
Council	Embed climate in decision-making	Integrate climate and nature into project lifecycles and support staff to make earlier considerations	2027	Consistent decision-making; improved outcomes; reduced risk
Council	Embed climate in decision-making	Refresh report-writing guidance on environmental assessment and integrate the approach into the decision-making report system	2027	Consistent decision-making; improved outcomes; reduced risk
Council	Educate, encourage and equip staff and councillors	Provide Carbon Literacy and wider environmental training to staff and councillors to build understanding of climate change, emissions reduction and the role of the Council in delivering action.	Ongoing	Informed decision-making; cultural change; leadership capacity
Council	Educate, encourage and equip staff and councillors	Deliver regular climate-focused learning sessions to provide opportunities for staff to build knowledge, share good practice and explore practical opportunities for action.	Ongoing	Increased engagement; knowledge sharing; innovation
Council	Educate, encourage and equip staff and councillors	Integrate climate into recruitment, training and performance objectives. Create a suite of resources to support managers and employees in understanding and contributing to the Council's climate commitment.	2026	Consistent approach; clear expectations; practical support for managers and staff
Council	Reduce supply-chain emissions and improve sustainability outcomes	Training and supporting staff to fulfil existing environmental requirements and relevant social value considerations in procurement processes. Further populate carbon and environmental information in the contracts register to support analysis of Council's footprint and support needs. Complete environmental policy checklists for our contractors.	Ongoing	Reduced supply-chain emissions; improved sustainability outcomes; social value

CHAPTER 3

Sustainable Travel

Transport and travel are a major source of district emissions and are important to the Council's wider work to reduce emissions, improve connectivity and support healthier, more accessible communities.

The Council's approach focuses on reducing unnecessary travel, making sustainable modes of transport easier and more attractive, and supporting the transition to cleaner vehicles and transport services.

REDUCE	SHIFT	CLEAN
Reduce unnecessary journeys and improve access to local services.	Make walking, cycling, public transport and shared transport easier and more attractive.	Support the transition from petrol and diesel to electric and other lower-carbon transport.

Emissions

Transport and travel represented 49% of Babergh District emissions in 2024 within the scope of influence of local authorities. These emissions come primarily from the use of fossil fuels in combustion engines (petrol and diesel). Transport emissions have reduced by 14% since 2005, compared with 38% for total emissions.

Within the Council, the fleet accounts for approximately 6% of Council emissions. These emissions arise primarily from the use of petrol and diesel in combustion-engine vehicles.

The emissions associated with transport include our own fleet of vehicles (vans, waste vehicles) as well as staff and councilor use of their own vehicles for work purposes accounts for under 10% of our footprint (excluding Well To Tank emissions).

Objectives

The Council will work to reduce transport emissions by reducing unnecessary travel, supporting a shift towards more sustainable modes, enabling the transition to cleaner vehicles and improving the efficiency of how we travel.

- **Reduce the need to travel –** Support approaches that reduce unnecessary journeys and improve access to local services.
- **Enable a shift to sustainable transport –** Make walking, cycling, public transport and shared transport easier, safer and more attractive.
- **Support cleaner transport –** Support the transition from petrol and diesel to electric and other lower-carbon transport options.
- **Improve travel efficiency –** Improve the efficiency of Council vehicles and travel, and support more efficient use of transport across the district.

Babergh Plan priorities:

- **Promoting greener and healthier forms of travel**

Sustainable travel in practice

The Council has a Vision for Sustainable Travel which outlines the Council's ambitions to make it easier, safer and more attractive for people to travel more sustainably. It explains why sustainable travel is important and beneficial for communities, and how the Council will support and encourage walking, cycling, public transport and the transition to electric vehicles.

The Vision is supported by delivery plans including the EV Infrastructure Implementation Plan, which sets out how the district can prepare for the transition to electric vehicles and enable residents to make the switch to this low-carbon form of transport, and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which identifies and prioritises improvements needed across the district to help make active travel safer and more comfortable.

Alongside delivering walking and cycling infrastructure, the Council supports initiatives that make cycling a more practical and attractive travel option. These include public cycle maintenance and repair stands, innovative cycle parking and e-bike charging facilities, and subsidised e-bike rental schemes. These initiatives help more people access cycling for everyday journeys and provide an opportunity to try an e-bike at low cost before deciding whether to purchase one.

The Council is also committed to improving access to passenger transport, particularly in more rural areas. It works with Suffolk County Council, transport operators and local communities to develop schemes and secure Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding for new routes and services, and improvements to capital infrastructure such as bus stations and bus stops. This includes up to £250,000 secured by the district council for capital improvements and enhancements to Sudbury Bus Station.

In terms of public access EV chargepoints (EVCPs); there are currently 52 sockets installed to charge vehicles that are owned and operated by Babergh. Within the Plug in Suffolk programme, there are a further 208 sockets being planned within Babergh - these are subject to further feasibility checks and lease arrangements with landowners.

Local spotlight

EEZYBIKE: Making low-carbon travel easier

Babergh District Council has supported the expansion of Eezybike's public e-bike hire scheme to Sudbury and Lavenham, providing residents and visitors with an affordable, convenient and healthy alternative to travelling by car. Bikes can be booked online for half-day or full-day hire, helping people make local journeys, explore the surrounding countryside and try an e-bike without the upfront cost of purchasing one. Residents and visitors can book bikes online, with council funding enabling subsidised hire available at £10 for four hours or £18 for a full day in 2026.



Across the six months covered by the latest monitoring summary, the two Babergh sites recorded 229 hires and an estimated 3,210 miles of e-bike travel. If these journeys had otherwise been made by car, this represents an estimated saving of around 904 $kgCO_2e$. By making e-bikes easier to access and encouraging modal shift away from private cars, the schemes are supporting cleaner, greener travel across Babergh.

Council actions

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescales	Key co-benefits
Both	Reducing the need to travel	Enable flexible and remote working for staff and support planning policies that reduce the need to travel by promoting sustainable development and access to local services.	Ongoing	Reduced congestion; better quality of life
District	Enable a shift to sustainable transport	Deliver Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and related schemes, including new routes, improved cycle parking and e-bike infrastructure, supported through planning, funding and partnership working.	Ongoing	Improved physical and mental wellbeing
		Support behaviour change campaigns and initiatives (e.g. events, training and travel planning) to encourage greater uptake of everyday walking and cycling across communities, workplaces and schools.	Ongoing	Improved air quality and physical and mental wellbeing
		Work with partners, including Suffolk County Council and transport operators, to improve and expand low carbon public transport options, including buses, rail and demand-responsive services.	Ongoing	Improved air quality
Both	Support cleaner transport	Work with partners to expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure, support the transition to lower-emission public transport and promote shared transport options such as car clubs where appropriate.	Ongoing	Reduced emissions; improved air quality; lower running costs
Council	Improve travel efficiency	Continue to improve the efficiency of Council vehicles and staff travel and support the transition to suitable low-emission and electric vehicles where practicable. For example, by undertaking fleet decarbonisation options appraisals and charging infrastructure plans.	Ongoing	Reduced emissions; lower fuel costs; improved air quality

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescales	Key co-benefits
District	Support cleaner transport	Support strategic rail freight and infrastructure improvements through regional partnerships, helping to shift freight from road to rail where possible.	Ongoing	Reduced road congestion; reduced transport emissions; improved freight efficiency

CHAPTER 4

Efficient, low-carbon and resilient buildings and development

Buildings and development are central to energy use, emissions, household costs and climate resilience. Improving the energy performance of existing buildings, supporting low-carbon heating and ensuring new development is designed for maximum sustainability, and a changing climate can reduce emissions while improving comfort, affordability and the long-term resilience of homes, businesses and Council assets.

The Council has a role both through its own estate and through its influence over homes, new development and investment across the district. This includes supporting residents and landlords to improve energy efficiency, working with partners to access retrofit funding and advice, and ensuring that climate and nature considerations are reflected in planning and development.

This chapter focuses on three connected areas that together will improve the energy performance, affordability and resilience of buildings across Babergh.

EFFICIENT HOMES Retrofit, advice and affordability	**LOW-CARBON COUNCIL BUILDINGS** Efficiency, heat, assets and renewables	**RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT** Low-carbon, climate-resilient and nature-positive development

Emissions

Buildings are a significant source of energy use and emissions across the district. The emissions associated with buildings include energy used in homes, the Council's estate, public buildings, businesses and other organisations. This can be from the fabric, the systems within the building and how it is used by occupants.

Energy used for heating, hot water and cooling is a major source of emissions associated with buildings. Reducing these emissions requires a combination of measures, including improving building fabric and energy efficiency, moving away from fossil-fuel heating, increasing the use of renewable energy and ensuring that new development embodies the highest possible standards.

The scale and cost of decarbonisation can vary significantly between buildings. Age, construction, condition, existing heating and electrical systems, planned maintenance and expected lifespan can all affect which measures are appropriate and how they should be sequenced. A whole-property approach is the ideal, considering energy efficiency, heating, renewables, maintenance and future investment together rather than treating individual technologies in isolation.

Energy use is a significant driver of greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing the use of fossil fuels, while increasing the availability of clean and affordable electricity, is therefore central to tackling climate change.

The transition is particularly important as heating and transport become increasingly electrified. More renewable generation, energy storage and electricity network capacity will be needed to provide clean, secure and resilient energy for homes, businesses, communities and public services.

Objectives

The Council will work across its own estate and with residents, landlords, developers and partners to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions, support affordable low-carbon homes and ensure buildings and new development are sustainable and resilient to future climate impacts.

- Improve energy performance and reduce emissions from homes and buildings.
- Align planning, housing and development policy with climate and nature goals.
- Improve the resilience, comfort and affordability of existing buildings.
- Support smarter, cleaner, more flexible and resilient energy systems

Working with residents, landlords and partners

The Council cannot decarbonise the district's buildings alone. Many homes and buildings are privately owned, and effective retrofit depends on access to funding, trusted advice, skilled installers and appropriate technical solutions and infrastructure.

The Council will continue to support residents through promoting access to and influencing energy-efficiency and retrofit initiatives. The Council will also work with landlords and housing partners to encourage improvements in energy efficiency of rental stock.

The Council will address barriers such as the cost and complexity of retrofit partnership working by leveraging national funding and opportunities through the Warm Homes Plan. The Council will work with Suffolk-wide partners, including through relevant sustainable homes networks, to support retrofit of existing homes and improve the design and performance of new homes. Working in partnership helps share knowledge, identify funding opportunities and develop a more consistent approach to sustainable homes.

The District has challenges with large numbers of older, traditionally built and heritage dwellings, dwellings in conservation areas, and a significant proportion of off-gas grid homes relying on oil and other sources of energy for heating and hot water. Census information from 2021 indicates that one-in-five households relied on oil as a single source of heating. A higher-than-average proportion of Babergh's housing stock was built prior to 1900 (around 19% compared with 15% nationally)[7]. Below is a summary of the modelled energy performance of dwellings in the District in comparison to neighbouring districts[8].

Percentage of private sector stock by EPC rating band by Suffolk local authority (modelled estimates)

EPC rating Band	Babergh	Mid Suffolk	East Suffolk	Ipswich	West Suffolk	Suffolk Total
A	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
B	0.9%	1.4%	0.6%	0.9%	1.7%	1.1%
C	19.2%	21.7%	16.7%	19.3%	25.7%	20.5%
D	41.8%	34.9%	49.1%	51.3%	43.3%	44.1%
E	20.9%	21.4%	21.9%	24.9%	18.5%	21.5%
F	13.2%	15.7%	8.7%	3.0%	8.6%	9.8%
G	4.0%	4.9%	3.0%	0.5%	2.3%	2.9%

Source: Building Research Establishment (BRE), 2024. Data reproduced from Babergh State of the District Report 2025

[7] Valuation Office Agency, Council Tax: stock of properties, 2024.
[8] The data reported by BRE are based on modelled results. This approach was taken, as opposed to using lodged EPC range data since EPC records do not cover the whole stock (64% of the stock in Suffolk is covered and EPC ranges are modelled for the remaining stock)

Council estate and long-term asset planning

For Council-owned buildings, decarbonisation needs to be considered alongside the condition, use and expected lifespan of each property. Different buildings require different solutions, and there is no single measure or cost that can be applied universally across the estate.

The Council has created a new working group that brings together colleagues from climate and nature recovery, housing, assets and maintenance to manage utilities, improve understanding of the estate and coordinate investment.

The Asset Management Strategy for the Council's housing stock, currently in development, will set out the principles for future investment in our stock and is being informed by the recently completed stock condition survey. That survey will provide the evidence base for a series of delivery plans covering areas such as decency, compliance, energy efficiency, retrofit and wider climate-related improvements.

The Council is currently assessing both the condition of the stock and the funding available to support future programmes. It is important to note that immediate priority is likely to be investment in homes that are not currently meeting the Decent Homes Standard. As a result, while sustainability and climate objectives remain important, they are unlikely to be the primary driver of investment decisions in the short term unless supported by specific external funding streams, which the Council will continue to explore and pursue.

A more detailed delivery plan for housing sustainability and climate initiatives will be developed before the end of the 2026-2027 financial year. This work will include the further intelligence and analysis needed around areas such as EPC performance.

For the wider non-domestic stock, high-level decarbonisation approaches will be developed for different property types, including potential energy-efficiency measures, low-carbon heating, renewable energy and associated building improvements. Information on asset conditions, energy efficiency works undertaken to date, expected lifespans, planned maintenance and retention expectations will help inform prioritisation. This will support the basis for more detailed feasibility work and help ensure that decarbonisation is coordinated with other planned investments.

The Council will continue to review further opportunities to support decarbonisation in leisure centres as funding and resources permit. Heat Network Efficiency Scheme optimisation studies have already provided useful information about the condition and efficiency of heating systems in sheltered housing accommodation. The findings demonstrate the importance of understanding existing systems and coordinating heating improvements with wider asset and maintenance requirements. The reports provided specific guidance and indicative costs to optimise the efficiency of the heat networks at two of our sheltered housing locations. The reports will help the Council work towards heat network regulation compliance, which also consider improvements in energy efficiency.

The percentage of renewable and green electricity that supplies the national grid is expected to increase in line with the government's target to ensure at least 95% of electricity is generated from low-carbon sources, which should result in a carbon intensity of below 50g CO2e/kWh (currently at 0.13096 kgCO_2e per kWh for DESNZ Scope 2 reporting) as part of the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan[9]. The Council will consider other sources of low-carbon energy such as renewables, both onsite and offsite, alongside community energy schemes with a private connection or using existing network cables through processes such as Power Purchasing Agreements and 'sleeving' to be a buyer for energy from such schemes. Our approach will consider energy security and costs to ensure value for money.

[9] Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity – main report - GOV.UK

Resilient development

New development should help meet the needs of a changing climate rather than creating additional risks for future residents and communities. It should also support sustainable living. The Council will use planning and development processes to support energy-efficient, low-carbon and nature-positive development, including measures that can help manage heat, water and flood risk and support biodiversity. This will cover policies in the Local Plan and provide a supportive planning environment.

Early engagement with developers and partners can help identify opportunities for better design, energy performance, green infrastructure and climate resilience. This approach can reduce the need for costly interventions later and help ensure that new homes and development contribute positively to the district's long-term resilience. It is also vital that new buildings are part of a smarter energy system built upon renewable energy, one that can support demand management, electric heating and transport, and reduce bills for occupants.

Energy planning

The transition to a low-carbon energy system requires greater coordination between energy generation, electricity networks, buildings, transport and local economic activity.

The Council will work with relevant partners and energy-system organisations to ensure that the needs and opportunities of Babergh are understood and reflected in wider energy planning. This includes engaging with emerging regional and local energy planning processes through the new National Energy Systems Operator (NESO) and the emerging Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Plan. This work will consider how future infrastructure can support the electrification of heating and transport as well as development of our communities and economy.

This work will also consider the role of smarter and more flexible energy systems, including storage, demand flexibility and the capacity of local networks to accommodate new generation and increased electricity demand.

Community and locally generated energy can provide wider benefits by keeping investment within communities, improving resilience and creating opportunities for residents and local organisations to participate in the transition.

Local spotlight

Switch Together Suffolk: Helping residents invest in renewable energy

Interest in renewable energy continues to grow among Babergh residents through **Switch Together Suffolk**, a group-buying scheme supporting households to install solar PV and battery storage.

In 2025, **245 Babergh households registered** for the scheme, with **55 residents accepting offers**. This resulted in **35 completed installations**, including **32 solar PV systems and three battery-only installations**.

The scheme resulted in:

- **£260,670 invested** by residents in renewable energy technologies.
- **379 solar panels installed** across the district.
- **31 battery storage installations**, demonstrating demand for energy storage.
- An estimated **25.4 tonnes of CO_2 savings per year**.

The scheme demonstrates how collective purchasing can help residents access renewable energy and battery storage, supporting lower-carbon homes while helping households reduce energy costs and increase energy independence.

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
Both	Improve energy performance and reduce emissions from homes and buildings. Improve the resilience, comfort and affordability of existing buildings.	Continue to support household energy efficiency and retrofit through relevant initiatives, helping residents access advice, funding opportunities and practical support. This includes Cost-of-Living work and other relevant initiatives.	Ongoing	Lower energy bills; warmer homes; improved health and comfort
Both	Improve energy performance and reduce emissions from homes and buildings.	With partners, work with landlords and housing partners to encourage improvements in energy efficiency in the rental sector and support access to relevant programmes and advice.	Ongoing	Lower energy demand; improved housing quality; affordability
Both	Improve energy performance and reduce emissions from homes and buildings.	Work with Suffolk-wide partners, including through relevant sustainable homes networks, to support funded retrofit of existing homes and improve the design and performance of new homes.	Ongoing	Knowledge sharing; stronger partnership working; improved housing outcomes
Both	Support smarter, cleaner, more flexible and resilient energy systems	Provide access to tools that help evaluate solar PV potential for properties and its economic benefits	2027	Local energy resilience; lower bills; reduced emissions
Both	Improve energy performance and reduce emissions from homes and buildings.	Work with community partners, community energy groups and VCSFE partners to coordinate and increase capacity for energy advice and support in our communities for residential and community buildings, using available funding such as Community Infrastructure Levy	Ongoing	Access to funding; warmer homes and community spaces; reduced emissions
District	Align planning, housing and development policy with climate and nature goals.	Work with provisions in the new National Planning Policy Framework, county-wide partners and the best available evidence to inform and develop ambitious policies to support climate and nature positive development in our Local Plan and planning process	2026-2030	Resilient and efficient developments, greener spaces, healthier homes

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
District	Support smarter, more flexible and resilient energy systems	Work with relevant partners and energy-system organisations to ensure Babergh's future energy needs and opportunities are reflected in regional and local energy planning, including identifying and addressing electricity network capacity needed for new generation, low-carbon heating and transport.	2030	Local energy resilience; improved infrastructure planning; reduced emissions
Both	Align planning, housing and development policy with climate and nature goals	Promote biodiversity features such as meadow planting in new developments.	Ongoing	Biodiversity enhancement; improved green spaces; climate adaptation
Both	Align planning, housing and development policy with climate and nature goals	Embed early engagement with developers to support sustainable outcomes.	2026-2027	Better development outcomes; reduced retrofit costs; improved design quality
Council	Improve the resilience, comfort and affordability of existing buildings	Identify a pathway of improvements, and their business cases, for efficiency improvements to Council properties in line with the Strategic Asset Management Plan once it is completed. Scope would include low-carbon heating and fabric upgrades where proportionate to building lifespan.	2027-2028	Better investment planning; reduced energy costs; improved asset management
Council	Align planning, housing and development policy with climate and nature goals	Deliver Social Housing Decarbonisation projects and continue to identify and respond to further funding opportunities.	Ongoing	Reduced emissions; improved housing quality; reduced energy costs
Council	Improve energy performance and reduce emissions from homes and buildings	Investigate Energy Performance Contracting opportunities to deliver energy efficiency and renewable energy projects through investment linked to future energy savings.	2030	Reduced upfront costs; improved asset efficiency; long-term savings

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
Council	Improve energy performance and reduce emissions from homes and buildings	Establish a comprehensive record of metered energy supplies across the Council estate and use the information to improve energy management, identify opportunities and support future investment decisions.	2027	Improved energy management; cost savings; data-driven decision-making
Council	Improve energy performance and reduce emissions from homes and buildings	Review the capacity and use of utility connections across Council sites and identify opportunities to optimise connections and reduce unnecessary capacity and energy costs.	Ongoing	Improved efficiency; reduced costs; reduced energy waste
Council	Support smarter, more flexible and resilient energy systems	Maximise appropriate income and wider benefits from Council-owned renewable energy assets, supporting financial resilience and opportunities for reinvestment.	Ongoing	Revenue generation; financial resilience; reinvestment opportunities
Council	Support and enable delivery and benefit from renewable energy projects	Identify Council-owned properties suitable for rooftop solar PV and battery storage, taking account of building condition, future use and technical and financial feasibility.	Ongoing	Reduced carbon emissions; lower energy costs; increased energy resilience
Council	Support smarter, cleaner, more flexible and resilient energy systems	Work with partners to assess suitable Council sites for solar carports and consider opportunities for renewable generation alongside other site uses.	2027	Renewable energy generation; reduced emissions; potential income generation
District	Support smarter, more flexible and resilient energy systems	Identify opportunities for increasing renewable energy and storage in new developments	Ongoing	Renewable energy generation; reduced emissions; increased energy resilience
District	Support smarter, cleaner, more flexible and resilient energy systems	Work with community energy groups, partners and relevant Council services to identify and maximise opportunities to access Great British Energy funding for community energy projects and Council/partner-led	2026–2030	Increased external investment; community ownership; renewable energy

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
		opportunities, including the GBE Community Fund and GBE Local Partnerships Grant.		generation; energy resilience; reduced emissions

CHAPTER 5

Low-carbon and resilient growth

Supporting businesses to decarbonise and adopt more sustainable practices can reduce emissions, improve resource efficiency and strengthen the long-term resilience and competitiveness of the local economy.

The Council has an important role in enabling businesses to take action through their services, programmes, influence and partnerships. Businesses can benefit from reducing energy and resource use, adopting renewable energy and improving environmental performance, while contributing to wider district climate objectives.

DECARBONISE	SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE	RESILIENCE
Renewable energy, energy efficiency and emissions reduction	Environmental performance, resource efficiency and responsible business	Preparing businesses for climate risks and a changing economy

Emissions

Businesses and commercial activity contribute to emissions across the district, including through energy use, heating, transport, buildings, materials and other business operations, including agriculture and land practices. Supporting businesses to reduce energy and resource use, becoming more efficient in their resources and increase renewable energy can therefore contribute to wider district emissions reduction.

Together Agriculture, Industry and Commercial emissions represent 22% of district emissions in 2024 in Babergh. Whilst Industrial emissions have dropped by 2/3 since 2005, and Commercial by over 50%, Agricultural emissions have not changed significantly.

Objectives

The Council will use its services, programmes, influence and partnerships to help businesses reduce emissions, improve environmental performance and take advantage of the opportunities associated with the transition to a lower-carbon economy.

- Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy and resource efficiency, and become more resilient
- Encourage businesses and contractors to adopt sustainable practices

Local spotlight

Assington Autos – Carbon Charter Gold Award

Assington Autos Ltd, based in Assington, is one of East Anglia's largest licensed vehicle salvage and metal recycling businesses. Working with Groundwork East through the Suffolk Carbon Charter, the business developed a detailed carbon footprint, Environmental Policy and Action Plan and achieved Gold status in 2026.

The Carbon Charter process helped Assington Autos identify and implement practical improvements, including LED lighting, heat pumps, smarter vehicle use and electric battery-powered saws, contributing to an 8.3% reduction in carbon emissions. The business is also planning further measures, including solar PV, electric vehicles and charging points, and planting 1,000 trees.

As a major metal recycler, Assington Autos also contributes to wider resource efficiency and carbon savings, demonstrating how businesses can reduce emissions while improving environmental performance and planning for future investment.

Business decarbonisation

The Council can help businesses by promoting practical opportunities, sharing information and connecting businesses with relevant programmes and partners. This includes renewable energy and energy-efficiency opportunities such as Solar for Business, alongside support that helps businesses understand the potential financial and environmental benefits of reducing energy use and emissions.

Sustainable business practice

Reducing emissions is not limited to energy use. Businesses can also improve their environmental performance through more efficient use of materials and resources, reducing waste, considering environmental impacts in purchasing and supply chains, and adopting practical measures that reduce their overall environmental footprint.

The Council will promote relevant sustainability initiatives and encourage businesses and contractors to consider environmental and social value alongside their wider business objectives. Our Environment Ask in procurement, along with other Suffolk authorities, provides signposting to resources and support, for example Carbon Charter.

Working across Suffolk

Business climate action is not confined to district boundaries. The Council will continue to work with Suffolk-wide and local partners to share knowledge, coordinate activity and identify opportunities for businesses to access support, funding, advice and practical initiatives.

Partnership working can increase the reach and effectiveness of business support while avoiding duplication and helping businesses benefit from a more consistent approach across Suffolk.

Climate resilience

Climate change can create risks for businesses through extreme weather, flooding, heat and disruption to infrastructure and supply chains. These risks are part of the Council's wider adaptation and resilience agenda and are therefore addressed in the Adaptation and Resilience chapter rather than duplicated here.

Business resilience remains an important co-benefit of decarbonisation and sustainable business activity, particularly where measures reduce energy and operating costs, improve resource efficiency or reduce exposure to changing energy and resource costs.

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
District	Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency	Promote initiatives such as Solar for Business and explore opportunities to continue supporting businesses to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and access renewable energy.	Ongoing	Reduced emissions; business cost savings; local economic growth
District	Encourage businesses and contractors to adopt sustainable practices	Promote the Carbon Charter and encourage businesses and contractors to participate in appropriate sustainability and environmental improvement initiatives.	Ongoing	Improved business practices; reduced emissions; reputational benefits
District	Encourage businesses and contractors to adopt sustainable practices	Work with partners to raise awareness of climate risks and encourage businesses to consider adaptation, business continuity and resilience alongside emissions reduction.	Ongoing	Reduced risk; business resilience; economic stability
District	Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency	Support delivery of Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan priorities on clean growth and energy users, and work with partners to coordinate business climate action where this can increase impact.	Ongoing	Coordinated action; shared resources; greater impact
District	Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency	Provide grants for businesses to improve efficiency and decarbonise their premises	Ongoing	Business resilience; economic stability; Improved business practices; reduced emissions; reputational benefits
District	Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions	Provide specialist resilience support for businesses that addresses cost of living, energy and water challenges	2026-2028	Business resilience; economic stability;

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
	and improve energy efficiency			Improved business practices; reduced emissions; reputational benefits
District	Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency	Partner with Suffolk Chamber of Commerce to pilot water credit schemes to enable sustainable business growth	2028	Business resilience; economic stability; Improved business practices; reduced emissions; reputational benefits

CHAPTER 6

Communities and partnerships

Connected and empowered communities, and strong partnerships, are central to practical local climate action. Communities, residents, schools, businesses and local organisations all have an important role to play in responding to climate change, and the Council can help create the conditions, connections and opportunities that enable people to take action.

The Council cannot deliver local climate action alone. Working with communities and partners allows knowledge, skills, resources and opportunities to be shared, while ensuring that local action reflects the needs and priorities of the places and communities it serves.

The Council's approach is centred on three complementary ways of working with communities and partners:

ENGAGE Residents, community events and practical climate action	**CONNECT** Partnerships, networks and local organisations	**EMPOWER** Skills, knowledge and community-led action

Emissions

Community activity does not represent a discrete emissions source in the same way as transport, buildings or energy. Instead, this chapter focuses on the people, organisations and partnerships that can help deliver emissions reductions and build resilience across the district.

Objectives

The Council will work with residents, communities, schools and partners to support practical climate action, strengthen local capacity and create opportunities for people to participate in the transition to a lower-carbon and more resilient district.

- Empower residents and communities to take action on climate change
- Strengthen climate partnerships and collaboration
- Support climate education, skills and future careers
- Support community-led action and resilience

Local spotlight

Schools Green Skills Summit 2025

The Schools Green Skills Summit 2025 brought together **around 85 Year 8 and 9 students from 10 schools across Babergh and Mid Suffolk** to develop their understanding of climate change, climate leadership and green career opportunities.

Hosted by Royal Hospital School and facilitated by the InterClimate Network, students took part in **COP-style climate negotiations**, representing 16 nations and debating issues including climate justice, emissions reductions and climate finance. They also took part in a Climate Question Time with councillors and industry experts, followed by a **Green Skills Careers Fair featuring 13 local organisations** from sectors including energy, engineering, construction, digital technology, food sustainability and waste management.

The summit strengthened partnerships between **local government, schools and businesses**, while supporting students to develop **negotiation, communication, teamwork, confidence and public-speaking skills**. Schools also identified climate priorities and actions they would like to take forward within their school communities.

The event was fully sponsored by local businesses and partners, reinforcing the councils' commitment to **climate education, youth engagement and developing awareness of future green career pathways**.

Key outcome: 85 young people from 10 schools engaged in climate education, leadership activities and direct interaction with local organisations working across the green economy.



Community engagement and action

The Council is committed to working with communities and seeking innovative approaches to local climate action. Building resilient communities is central to the Council's wider priorities, with residents able to access information, opportunities and support that enable them to participate in action in ways that are relevant to their communities.

Community events, engagement activities and local networks provide opportunities to raise awareness of climate initiatives, share practical information and connect residents with organisations and programmes that can support action. Communities are often well placed to identify local priorities and develop solutions that reflect the needs of their area. Community-led activity can also provide wider benefits, including stronger social connections, local investment, improved resilience and greater participation in climate action.

This includes supporting community energy activity where appropriate, recognising the potential for community-led renewable energy and energy-efficiency projects to contribute to local emissions reduction, energy resilience and community benefit.

Partnerships and collaboration

Strong partnerships allow the Council to share knowledge, coordinate activity, develop joint initiatives and identify opportunities for funding and delivery.

The Council will continue to work with established Suffolk-wide and national partners, alongside local organisations, parish councils, schools, community groups and other networks. This includes the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP), partners involved in the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan (SCEP), the Local Government Association (LGA), UK100, and other networks or bodies where relevant.

Working collaboratively can increase the reach and effectiveness of climate action while reducing duplication and helping communities and organisations access appropriate expertise, funding and support. This is seen in the work under the banner of Sustainable Suffolk which provides a vital resource for residents and communities across the county to take action and get support.

Climate education and green skills

Education and skills are important to the long-term transition to a lower-carbon economy. Working with schools, education providers and businesses can help young people understand climate change, develop relevant skills and see the opportunities available through emerging green careers.

The Council will support opportunities that connect climate awareness with practical skills, employment and career pathways.

Local spotlight

Stour Power – Building community energy in the Stour Valley

In October 2024, Babergh District Council, working with Community Energy Pathways, brought residents, community groups and businesses together at Sudbury Arts Centre to explore the potential for community energy across the Stour Valley. The event was designed to build local interest, provide advice from community energy experts and identify people interested in developing a new community energy organisation. Following the event, support and mentoring were made available to help turn this initial interest into action.

The initiative helped kick-start Stour Power, with six directors coming forward to establish the organisation. Founded in 2025, Stour Power Community Energy is now a volunteer-led, not-for-profit community benefit society working across the Stour Valley in Suffolk and Essex. Its aim is to develop community-owned renewable and low-carbon energy projects that reduce emissions while delivering lasting social and economic benefits locally.

Stour Power is now exploring a range of projects, including solar PV on schools, community buildings and local businesses, alongside heat networks and pumped hydro. The organisation is based on democratic community ownership, with a one-member-one-vote approach and any surplus intended to support the continuation of the organisation or wider community benefit.

The development of Stour Power demonstrates how Council support, specialist community energy advice and local volunteers can come together to create lasting community-led action, moving from an initial conversation about local energy to an established organisation developing projects for the future

Community investment in energy improvements

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has also supported community buildings across Babergh to improve energy performance and generate renewable energy. Since April 2024, 10 community energy, and energy-efficiency, projects have been supported through CIL, with approved bids totalling £108,625 and £146,995 recorded as spent to date.

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
District	Empower residents and communities to take action on climate change	Support and attend community events and engagement activities to raise awareness of climate initiatives and connect residents with practical opportunities to take action.	Ongoing	Behaviour change; increased awareness; community resilience
District	Strengthen climate partnerships and collaboration	Continue to represent the council in County-wide work to deliver the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan (SCEP) and support the Suffolk Climate Change partnership and Sustainable Suffolk programme.	Ongoing	Partnership working; knowledge sharing; increased capacity
District	Strengthen climate partnerships and collaboration	Participate in working groups in the Local Government Association (LGA), UK100, and other relevant bodies to develop joint initiatives and identify opportunities for collaborative climate action and funding.	Ongoing	Partnership working; knowledge sharing; increased capacity; funding opportunities
District	Support climate education, skills and future careers	Work with schools, education partners and businesses to promote climate awareness, green skills and careers, including opportunities linked to sustainability and community energy. This includes an annual Schools Green Skills Summit and links to the work of the Suffolk Sustainable Schools Network.	Ongoing	Future skills; increased awareness; employment opportunities; long-term behaviour change
District	Support community-led action and resilience	Work alongside partners such as the Local Resilience Forum and Suffolk Prepared initiative to promote opportunities that strengthen community resilience and enable local climate action.	Ongoing	Community resilience; empowerment; local action

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
District	Support community-led action and resilience	Connect communities with support, advice and funding opportunities for local climate and energy initiatives, helping communities identify local priorities and access appropriate partners, expertise and funding.	2030	Local energy resilience; community empowerment; reduced emissions
District	Empower residents and communities to take action on climate change	Improve the Climate and Nature Recovery public facing webpages on the Council website to make it easier to find information and support to take action	2026	Community empowerment
District	Empower residents and communities to take action on climate change	Explore options to map out local community initiatives in a publicly accessible form	2027	Community empowerment
District	Support community-led action and resilience	Develop resources to support effective use of neighbourhood planning to achieve local climate and energy aims	2027	Community empowerment; local action

CHAPTER 7

Adaptation and resilience

As the Climate Change Committee notes, *'The UK was built for a climate that no longer exists today and will be increasingly distant in years to come[10]"*. Climate change is already affecting Suffolk and our District, impacting people, communities, services, infrastructure and the natural environment. While reducing greenhouse gas emissions remains essential, the Council also needs to understand the impacts that are occurring and prepare for further changes.

The Council's approach to adaptation and resilience focuses on three complementary areas: understanding how climate change is affecting our communities, services and environment; taking action to reduce vulnerability and adapt to changing conditions; and building the capacity of people, infrastructure and services to withstand and recover from climate impacts.

UNDERSTAND RISK	ADAPT	BUILD RESILIENCE
Local impacts, vulnerabilities and climate projections	Nature, water, land, infrastructure and services	Council services, emergency planning and communities

What do we mean by adaptation and resilience?

Climate adaptation means taking action to reduce the harm caused by current and future climate change, while also making the most of opportunities that a changing climate may bring. This can include adapting buildings, land, infrastructure, services and natural systems to cope with higher temperatures, changes in rainfall and more frequent or intense extreme weather.

Climate resilience is the ability of people, communities, services, infrastructure and the natural environment to withstand, respond to and recover from climate impacts while continuing to function. Building resilience means understanding risks in advance and reducing vulnerability wherever possible.

Nature-based approaches can make an important contribution. Better management of vegetation, soils, wetlands and green and blue infrastructure can help provide shade and cooling, slow and store water, reduce flood risk and support biodiversity. Adaptation should therefore be considered in work on nature recovery, land management, water management and spatial planning.

What is changing?

After experiencing the hottest summer on record in 2025, this year has seen further records be broken. There has been 40 days this year at over 30°C, we've had the hottest Spring on record in England, the driest July on record, the first year to have reached 35°C in May, June and July[11], the hottest overall summer on record[12] and England is seeing it's average temperature 2.4°C higher (with Europe in general experiencing around double the rate of warming to rest of the world). In fact, there were 55 days that reached 2.8°C, two weeks more than

[10] https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/a-well-adapted-uk/
[11] ***Summer 2026 so far: A look at the season at the halfway point - Met Office*** and Driest July on record for England and Wales - BBC Weather .
[12] https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/blog/2026/how-exceptional-were-uk-summer-2026-daily-temperatures

the previous highest. The long hot summers have led to droughts, wildfires, impacts upon health, losses in productivity, subsidence, damage to infrastructure and impacts upon ecology.

Whilst we do see variability each year in our climate, until we stop adding more energy to our global climate, we can expect an increase in temperatures and energy in our climate, leading to more extremes of wind, rain, drought and heat. Studies suggest we can expect hotter and longer heatwaves because of climate change [13].

Rainfall patterns are also changing. Although annual rainfall may increase, this can occur alongside wetter winters and drier summers. This creates a combination of risks, including flooding at some times of year and water shortages at others. Adaptation therefore needs to consider how land and water are managed, including opportunities to slow, store and reuse rainfall and to improve the resilience of vegetation, crops and soils.

There are uncertainties about future impacts stemming from the possible rates of decarbonisation globally, complexity in climate projections and tipping points that might be reached. However, we do know that the trend will continue for warmer and wetter winters and hotter drier summers. With more energy in our weather systems, we can expect more extreme storms, with stronger winds and more intense rainfall, just as we can expect more intense and longer duration periods of heat and drought.

National modelling has set out projections for impacts downscale to local authorities, but it is also important to note that these models are continually being updated as the climate changes faster than anticipated and as knowledge improves.

Local Vulnerabilities

For a just response to a changing climate, it is important to understand not just our exposure to changing weather and climate, but what and who is most vulnerable through the ability to plan for, respond to and recover from impacts. Priorities to consider:

- heat and access to cooling, particularly for vulnerable people;
- flooding and changes in rainfall patterns;
- drought and water availability;
- the viability of farming and impacts on food security;
- risks to nature, land and ecosystems;
- impacts on infrastructure, buildings and essential services; and
- the resilience of communities and the local economy.

Objectives

The Council will work to understand the impacts and risks of a changing climate and strengthen the resilience of communities, services, infrastructure and the natural environment.

- Understand and address local climate risks and vulnerabilities
- Build resilience and adaptive capacity
- Support nature and land management to adapt to climate change
- Embed adaptation and resilience into planning and decision-making

[13] Met Office report details rising likelihood of UK hot days - Met Office

Council actions

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
Both	Understand and address local climate risks and vulnerabilities	Complete a Local Climate Impact Profile (LCIP) to assess local climate impacts, risks and vulnerabilities and inform adaptation priorities. This covers Council staff and assets as well as local communities and economy.	2027	Improved risk management; evidence-based planning; resilience
District	Support nature and land management to adapt to climate change	Identify and support opportunities to use nature recovery, green and blue infrastructure and nature-based solutions to improve resilience to heat, flooding, drought and other climate impacts, alongside biodiversity recovery. This includes strengthening resilience and adaptation within the Local Plan.	2026-2030	Biodiversity; cooling; flood resilience; water retention; healthier environments
District	Build resilience and adaptive capacity	Work with the Local Resilience Forum and Joint Emergency Planning Unit to promote resilience advice and support to residents and communities, and create clear materials for advice on the Council website	2027	Resilient communities
Council	Build resilience and adaptive capacity	Review existing local authority adaptation support tools and develop a pilot approach to strengthen resilience across Council services, staff and assets working with the Local Resilience Forum	2026–2030	Improved risk management; stronger service resilience; reduced disruption
District	Improve resilience to flooding, drought and other water-related climate impacts	Work with relevant partners to improve understanding and management of water risks, including opportunities to reduce flood risk, retain and store water during wetter periods and improve resilience to drought and water shortages.	2030	Reduced flood risk; improved water resilience; biodiversity; land resilience
Council	Embed adaptation and resilience into planning and decision-making	Review climate risks in service and corporate risk registers and explore how climate risks can be incorporated into business continuity plans, working with the Joint Emergency Planning Unit.	2026–2030	Improved risk management; service continuity; resilience

Scope	Objective	Key action(s)	Timescale	Key co-benefits
District	Understand and address local climate risks and vulnerabilities	Work with Public Health teams and other partners to identify local impacts and vulnerabilities and develop actions to address climate related health impacts, including exploring Cool Spaces networks.	2026-2030	Improved health and wellbeing; resilient communities
Both	Understand and address local climate risks and vulnerabilities Embed adaptation and resilience into planning and decision-making	Work with local and national academic institutions and research hubs to leverage best practice, advice, evidence, and support for developing and delivering our resilience and adaptation agenda	2026-2028	Improved risk management; stronger service resilience; reduced disruption
Both	Understand and address local climate risks and vulnerabilities	Explore options and create or signpost to guidance for both passive and mechanical cooling in buildings, including behaviour change	2027-2030	Improved health and wellbeing; resilient communities
District	Build resilience and adaptive capacity	Develop pilot-scheme to support businesses, particularly those in the food & drink and agriculture sectors to reduce water consumption. Including water capture, water storage and water reuse considerations.	2028	Business resilience; economic stability; Improved business practices; reduced emissions; reputational benefits
District	Build resilience and adaptive capacity	Work with partners to consider innovative uses of technology or AI to support innovation in the agricultural sector that will improve their resilience to the impacts of climate change.	2028	Business resilience; economic stability; Improved business practices; reduced emissions; reputational benefits

CHAPTER 8

Monitoring, reporting and review

The Council recognises the importance of monitoring both its emissions and the changes in activities that lead to emissions. A clear monitoring framework will show what is being delivered, where progress is being made and where actions need to change. Monitoring will support accountability across the Climate Action Plan and provide an evidence base for future priorities, investment and delivery.

Measure	Report	Review
Indicators and outcomes	Governance and public reporting	Annual / periodic review

Monitoring approach

The Council has an established performance monitoring system which logs progress towards key actions, risks and captures key performance indicators. Energy and utilities are monitored regularly to ensure buildings and services are running as intended and cost effectively. Individual services monitor activities and progress which together help understand both the council's emissions footprint and the progress towards actions. There are also external datasets and reports which capture district wide outcomes and performance (emissions, energy performance of buildings, climate vulnerability, levels of electric vehicles etc.).

The new Social and Environmental Justice board will also provide additional monitoring and oversight. Alongside this, there will be new abilities to capture impacts recorded in decision making, project development and procurement activities.

Reporting

The Council brings together information on its energy and fuel use, and generation, in the annual greenhouse gas report which reports on financial years, using the latest available greenhouse gas conversion factors. The Council will explore how it can monitor and measure carbon sequestration – the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere- though its work on biodiversity and nature recovery and management of its green spaces.

Complementing this is an Annual Climate Report, which brings out details of what has been delivered, its impacts, and next steps. Certain climate and nature themes are also represented in the State of the District report. There is also an annual Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan report, showcasing the collaborative work across Suffolk that the Council supports and participates in.

Internally, progress towards the 2030 net zero target is reported to the Overview and Scrutiny committee annually.

Review

The Climate Action Plan will undergo annual review to ensure that it reflects current service plans, council priorities, national policy changes and local impacts.

Glossary

Term	Plain-English definition
CAP	Climate Action Plan
LCWIP	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
LCLIP	Local Climate Impact Profile
LGA	Local Government Association
PV	Photovoltaic – technology that converts sunlight into electricity, such as solar panels.
SCCP	Suffolk Climate Change Partnership
SCEP	Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan
tCO_2e	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – a standard way of expressing greenhouse gas emissions
UK100	A network of local authorities committed to transitioning to 100% clean energy
Adaptation	Actions taken to prepare for and manage the impacts of climate change
Mitigation	Actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit climate change
Nature-based solutions	Actions that use or restore natural systems to help address challenges such as flooding, heat and water management
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
kWh	Kilowatt-hour – a unit of energy used to measure electricity or heat consumption.
EVCP	Electric Vehicle ChargePoint
BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Plan
VCSFE	Voluntary, Community, Social, Faith and Enterprise

NESO	National Energy System Operator