



Climate Change & Environment Strategy 2026 – 2028

Delivering a thriving, resilient and low carbon Cambridgeshire





Babraham Road Park & Ride Solar Canopy



Content

Foreword..... 2

A Thriving, Resilient, Low Carbon Cambridgeshire 3

Carbon Reduction Plan..... 11

Climate Risk and Adaptation Plan 16

Nature & Biodiversity Plan 20

Working with our Communities, Businesses and Partners 24

Appendices 27



Foreword

Cambridgeshire is at a crossroads. The climate and nature emergencies are no longer abstract - they are shaping our lives today. Record-breaking heatwaves, water scarcity, and biodiversity loss are stark reminders that we must act, and act decisively.

This Climate Change & Environment Strategy 2026–2028 is our commitment to lead that action. It sets out a clear, ambitious plan to cut emissions, build resilience, and restore nature - while ensuring that every step delivers real benefits for the people of Cambridgeshire. This is about more than responding to risk; it is about creating opportunity. Warmer, healthier homes, cleaner air, thriving green spaces, and new green jobs are within our reach. By acting now, we can take control of our future: reducing costs, improving wellbeing, and making our communities stronger and fairer.

Our vision is clear: to achieve a net zero Cambridgeshire by 2045 while supporting our communities and nature to thrive as the climate changes.

This means embedding climate action across all services and partnerships, ensuring that the transition is just, inclusive, and delivers co-benefits for health, wellbeing, and economic opportunity.

Our targets remain bold because the challenge demands nothing less. By 2028, we will have significantly reduced carbon emissions, embedded climate risk into every service we provide, and accelerated nature recovery across our county. We will do this in partnership with communities, businesses, and public sector colleagues because no single organisation can solve these challenges alone.

This Strategy is about safeguarding our future. It is about ensuring Cambridgeshire remains a place where people and nature can thrive together. We will lead by example, but we cannot do it alone - everyone has a role to play.

Now is the time for action. We invite residents, businesses, and partners to join us in delivering this vision. Together, we can turn ambition into reality, take back control of our future, and ensure Cambridgeshire leads the way in responding to the greatest challenge of our time.

Image + signature?



A Thriving, Resilient, Low Carbon Cambridgeshire

Our Ambitions for the council and Cambridgeshire



Cambridgeshire's Climate and Nature

Cambridgeshire is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, with increasingly extreme weather events - like floods, droughts, wildfires, and heatwaves - that are testing the limits of our infrastructure, public services, and community resilience. These events are not only damaging but also unevenly felt, with some communities affected more than others and some better equipped to cope than others, deepening existing inequalities.

Rising temperatures are currently the most visible impact. In July 2019, Cambridgeshire recorded the UK's highest temperature at 38.7°C, a record that was broken in July 2022 when Cambridge reached 39.9°C. Between 2010 and 2019, the region experienced 11 heatwaves, and average maximum temperatures continue to rise year-on-year. These trends are expected to accelerate.

Looking ahead, if global temperatures rise by 2°C, Cambridgeshire is projected to face:

- More frequent hot days above 25°C, which pose serious health risks - especially for older adults, young children, and people with existing health conditions.
- Heavier rainfall and more intense storms, increasing the likelihood of flash flooding, damage to roads and buildings, and disruption to transport and utilities.

We are already one of the most water-stressed regions in the country, with demand rising due to rapid population growth and exacerbated by climate change. Cambridgeshire relies heavily on chalk aquifers, which are under increasing pressure from over-

abstraction. Without urgent action, projections indicate the region could face drinking water shortages by the mid-2030s.

At the same time, Cambridgeshire is one of the most nature-depleted counties in England. Despite being home to landscapes of national and international ecological importance - such as the Ouse and Nene Washes - biodiversity loss and habitat degradation are severe:

- Only 8% of land in the county is classified as nature-rich habitat, compared to a UK average of 16%.
- Tree canopy cover averages just 10% per ward, with even lower coverage in rural areas due to intensive farming and land use.
- The remaining nature-rich areas, mainly semi-natural grasslands and broadleaf woodlands, are under growing pressure from development and climate change.

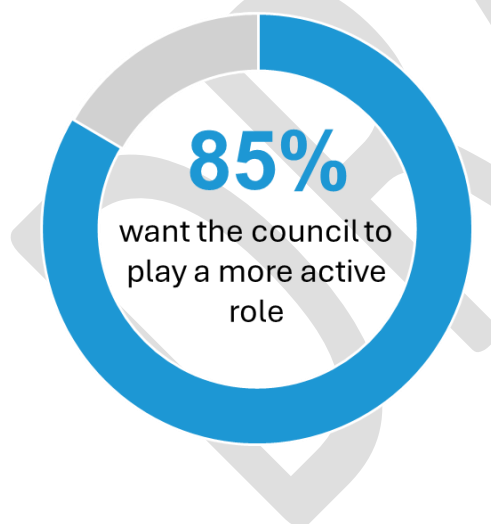
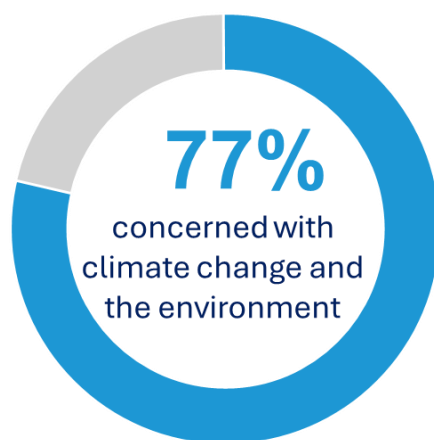
These challenges affect everyone - impacting our health, homes, food supply, and local wildlife. Tackling the climate and nature crises directly helps overcome these issues while delivering multiple benefits for communities. For example, planting trees cools urban areas during heatwaves, reduces flood risk by improving water absorption, and creates vital habitats for birds and insects. Restoring wetlands filters water, stores carbon and protects homes from flooding. Improving soil health not only boosts food production but also locks away carbon and supports biodiversity. That's why it's urgent to cut emissions, prepare for future climate impacts, and restore nature across the county.



Creating a Greener, Fairer, More Caring Cambridgeshire

We believe that tackling climate change and supporting nature is not just about reducing emissions - it's about creating a better Cambridgeshire for everyone. A place where people are healthier, communities are stronger, and no one is left behind.

We know our communities are deeply concerned about climate change and nature depletion - and they want us to act. Our 2025 Quality of Life Survey showed that 77% of residents are worried about climate change, and 85% want the council to play a more active role in protecting and enhancing the natural environment.



By embedding climate action across our services and partnerships, we're helping deliver on wider priorities - improving health, reducing inequalities, supporting inclusive economic growth, and protecting our environment for future generations.

Our approach focuses on unlocking the multiple benefits of climate action. From warmer homes and cleaner air to green jobs and thriving natural spaces, we're ensuring that the journey to net zero delivers real, lasting value for Cambridgeshire's communities.

Our ambition is to deliver net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045 while supporting our communities and nature to adapt and thrive as the climate changes

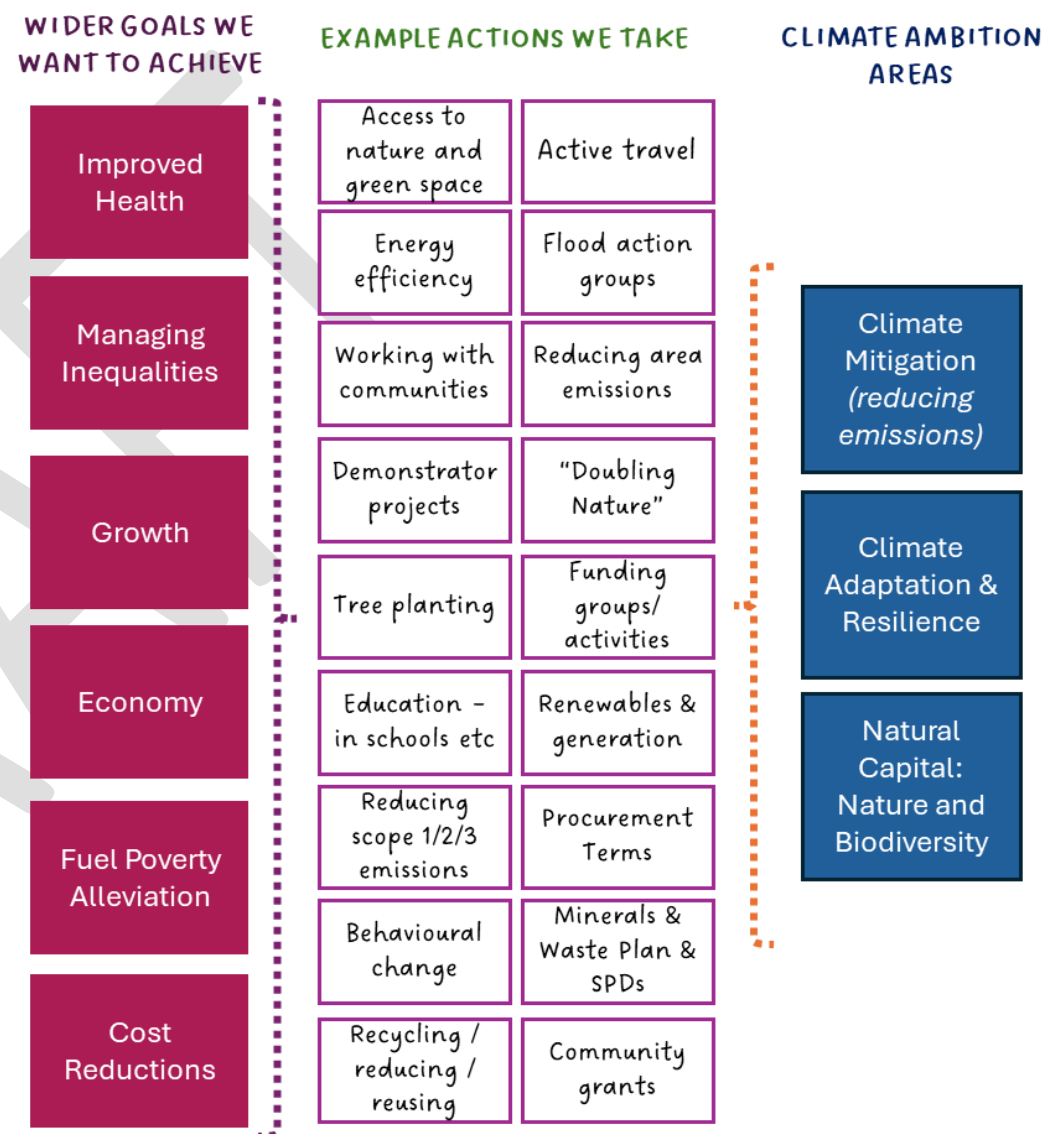
We are committed to a *just transition* - ensuring that the shift to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future is inclusive and equitable. This means supporting vulnerable communities, creating green jobs, and ensuring that the benefits of climate action are shared fairly across Cambridgeshire.



Through this strategy, we will ensure the council is:

- **Improving Services:** We're making our services more efficient, climate-friendly, and resilient: saving money, reducing emissions, and preparing for future climate impacts. This includes better use of our buildings and resources, supporting colleagues with the right tools, training, and equipment, and embedding climate adaptation into service planning to build long-term resilience.
- **Enhancing Health and Wellbeing:** Well designed and delivered climate and nature action can mean warmer homes, cleaner air, and more green spaces. We're backing projects like home energy efficiency retrofits, community energy and nature-based solutions that improve everyday life.
- **Supporting Local, sustainable Growth:** We're helping to shape a local economy that's low-carbon and future-ready. Projects like the *energy infrastructure planning* will support greener homes, businesses, and transport - bringing inward investment into Cambridgeshire and opportunity for Cambridgeshire businesses.
- **Working in Partnership:** We can't do this alone. We're working with local voluntary and charitable groups, businesses, and the wider public sector locally to share ideas, pool resources, and deliver real change - together.

We will focus on where we are best placed to act - taking responsibility where we can directly influence change and enabling others where they are better positioned to lead. As *enablers of change*, we will foster collaboration, unlock investment, and support innovation to accelerate progress toward a greener, fairer, and more caring Cambridgeshire.





Building On Past Success

We enter this next phase of action with a strong foundation of proven success; we have already delivered a range of impactful initiatives that demonstrate our commitment to decarbonisation, resilience, nature and innovation.

Since 2018/19, we've reduced our organisational carbon emissions by 32%¹. This has been achieved through practical steps like upgrading our buildings to be more energy efficient and installing solar carports at New Shire Hall to produce clean energy. We're also improving how we make decisions, strengthening how we ensure climate and nature are considered, and we've trained colleagues across the organisation to help embed environmental action into everyday work.

We've worked closely with local communities and other councils to support climate action at a local level. At the same time, we've carried out detailed studies of emissions from our rural estate and completed a climate risk assessment. These efforts have helped shape our new Climate & Environment Strategy.

Looking ahead, we know we must keep up the momentum. Continued action is vital - not just to cut emissions further, but also to protect and restore nature, and to make sure our services can cope with the growing impacts of climate change.

¹ As of FY2024/2025



Cambridgeshire Road Verge with wildflowers



Four Components of Action

Our approach is structured around 4 interconnected parts:

1. **Carbon reduction and climate mitigation** focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions across our operations and estate. This includes energy efficiency measures, renewable energy generation, and low-carbon procurement practices, all aimed at strengthening progress toward our net zero targets.
2. **Resilience and adaptation** ensure that our services and infrastructure are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate. As outlined in the National Adaptation Programme, “local government has responsibility for ensuring that the delivery of services locally is resilient to the impacts of the changing climate.” In response, we are embedding climate risk assessments into strategic planning and investing in measures that enhance our ability to respond to extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and other climate-related challenges.
3. **Nature & biodiversity** recognises the critical role of nature to our daily lives. We are committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity across our assets, supporting nature recovery through sustainable land management, habitat restoration, and community engagement. This work is underpinned by our statutory biodiversity duty, which requires public authorities to consider biodiversity in the exercise of their functions and to take steps to conserve and enhance it. Our approach also aligns with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), ensuring that our actions contribute to locally identified priorities for restoring and connecting nature, and that biodiversity gains are embedded within our service delivery.
4. **Empowering our communities** focuses on our role as an *enabler of change*, with a responsibility to create the right conditions - through funding, education, policy, or awareness - so that community-led action becomes not only possible, but inevitable. It recognises that we cannot do everything alone, and that there is significant momentum within our Cambridge communities and businesses who are eager to act but need our support to overcome key challenges.

Targets

Our new targets keep the same high level of ambition but are now aligned with our refreshed strategy timeline, which runs to 2028. With a shorter timeframe, we're sharpening our focus to make every action count - prioritising the areas where we can deliver the biggest impact. These targets will accelerate progress on climate and nature while also improving services, enhancing the quality of our places, and ensuring great value for Cambridgeshire residents.

To deliver these targets, we will implement a range of actions across policy development, further training and capacity building, innovative pilot projects and infrastructure delivery, partnership working, and continued policy refinement.

Our action plan focuses specifically on new and additional activities required to meet our climate targets. Activities that are now fully embedded - such as our Climate Training Programme - are considered "business as usual" and are therefore not included in the action plan.

Much of our action plan is self-funded, enabling us to attract external funding, such as grants, into Cambridgeshire. This approach ensures value for money for our communities. Where strong business cases exist, council funds will also be considered.

Full details of our new actions can be found in the Action Plan.

By 2028, the council will...



Mitigation Target 1

Reduce scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions (from our buildings and fleet transport) by 67.5% against its 2018/19 baseline.

Mitigation Target 2

Reduce its value chain carbon emissions (all scope 3) by 37.8% against its 2018/19 baseline (excludes land use and agriculture)

Mitigation Target 3

Reduce its forest, land and agriculture (FLAG) carbon emissions by 10.7% against its 2022/23 baseline.

Adaptation Target 4

Integrate climate risk into every service-level risk register and align to the UK national adaptation programme guidance to prepare for a 2°C and plan for a 4°C rise in temperature.

Nature & Biodiversity Target 5

Complete audits and conservation plans for 67% (23) of our 34 important biodiversity sites, detailing the required actions for each site.

Nature & Biodiversity Target 6

Increase the hedgerow planting by 2,052 meters by 2028 on its own assets.

Communities Target 7

Establish at least 8 new projects and/or plans where the council is well placed to make it easier for Cambridgeshire communities and businesses to take action to reduce carbon, enhance community resilience, restore nature and reduce their environmental impact. Continue existing initiatives that are supporting this objective.

Governance, Monitoring & Reporting

Monitoring progress is essential to show whether we're delivering on our climate commitments.

The Climate Change and Environment Board drives the council's climate ambitions by providing strategic leadership and oversight. Chaired by the Executive Director for Place and Sustainability, the Board ensures effective implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan, monitors progress, and steers key projects to deliver meaningful outcomes.

Alongside reporting to the Board, we will monitor and publicly report our progress through:

- **Annual Reporting:** Every autumn, we'll take an update on our progress to Environment & Green Investment Committee, publicly sharing how we have delivered against our climate targets and the council's annual carbon footprint.
- **Tracking Actions:** We'll monitor the Action Plan using specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure transparency and accountability.

We are also working to improve how we use data - introducing more timely updates and better estimates to spot early signs if things are off track. This will help us respond faster and stay on course.



Tenant farmers' meeting and carbon training



Carbon Reduction Plan

Reducing our organisational carbon emissions



Why do we need to reduce carbon?

The Climate Change Act 2008 sets the national target for the UK to reach net zero by 2050 and requires local governments to contribute through local planning and action.

Evidence shows that a place-specific approach, which responds to local characteristics and needs, is far more effective than a one-size-fits-all national model. Implementing the most cost-effective local solutions can reduce investment requirements, nearly double energy savings, and deliver greater social, health, and economic benefits.

As a council, we play a critical role in tackling climate change and delivering net zero. Reducing carbon emissions is essential to protecting our communities, improving public health, and ensuring long-term economic and environmental resilience. By changing how we spend public funding and design services, we can embed carbon reduction into everything we do - ensuring that our £1.2 billion annual turnover is invested in ways that minimise environmental impact while also delivering our vital services.

Carbon emissions contribute to climate change, which increases the frequency and severity of local risks such as flooding, heatwaves, and poor air quality. These impacts disproportionately affect vulnerable residents and place pressure on local services, infrastructure, and budgets.

By reducing emissions locally, we can:

- **Safeguard public health and wellbeing** through cleaner air, warmer, healthier homes, better access to quality green space and more active travel.
- **Deliver cost savings** by improving energy efficiency in public buildings and housing stock.
- **Unlock funding and investment** by working with partners in energy infrastructure planning and making Cambridgeshire attractive for both growth and net zero investment
- **Tackling fuel and transport poverty** to ensure all Cambridgeshire residents are supported to thrive
- **Support local jobs and innovation** in the growing green economy.
- **Enhance climate resilience** by integrating nature-based solutions and sustainable land use.

Carbon reduction is not just an environmental issue - it's a strategic opportunity to deliver better and fairer outcomes for our residents.



The Council's Carbon Footprint

The council has been monitoring and reporting on our carbon footprint since 2018/19. We use an established methodology aligned with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, and include emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and F-gases. Our assessments cover more than many other areas do, as we want to understand as much as possible about the full extent of our carbon emissions. We include:

- **Scope 1 & 2 emissions:** Direct emissions from council-owned buildings and fleet vehicles.
- **Scope 3 emissions:** Indirect emissions across the value chain, including all procured goods and services, colleagues commuting and home working, and waste.
- **FLAG emissions:** Emissions from council-owned Forests, Land use, and Agriculture.

Our carbon footprints demonstrate the reductions we have achieved so far. Since the 2018/19 baseline, we have delivered a **32% reduction in emissions** through significant investments in decarbonising our buildings and construction activities, alongside our continued purchasing of low-carbon energy.

However, further work is required to ensure we remain on track. Our projected emissions between now and 2027/28 illustrate the scale of the challenge ahead, with actions needed to maintain our previous reductions and deliver more to bring our emissions below the dotted line.

Our approach identifies emissions hotspots and enables the development of credible, high-impact targets and actions. It also reveals critical gaps - such as areas where technologies or solutions are currently unavailable - ensuring that climate ambitions are grounded in practical, achievable pathways to carbon reduction.

This framework underpins our rigorous annual monitoring and reporting process, helping track emissions and assess progress. It supports transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, with ongoing efforts to strengthen methodologies and enhance data quality.

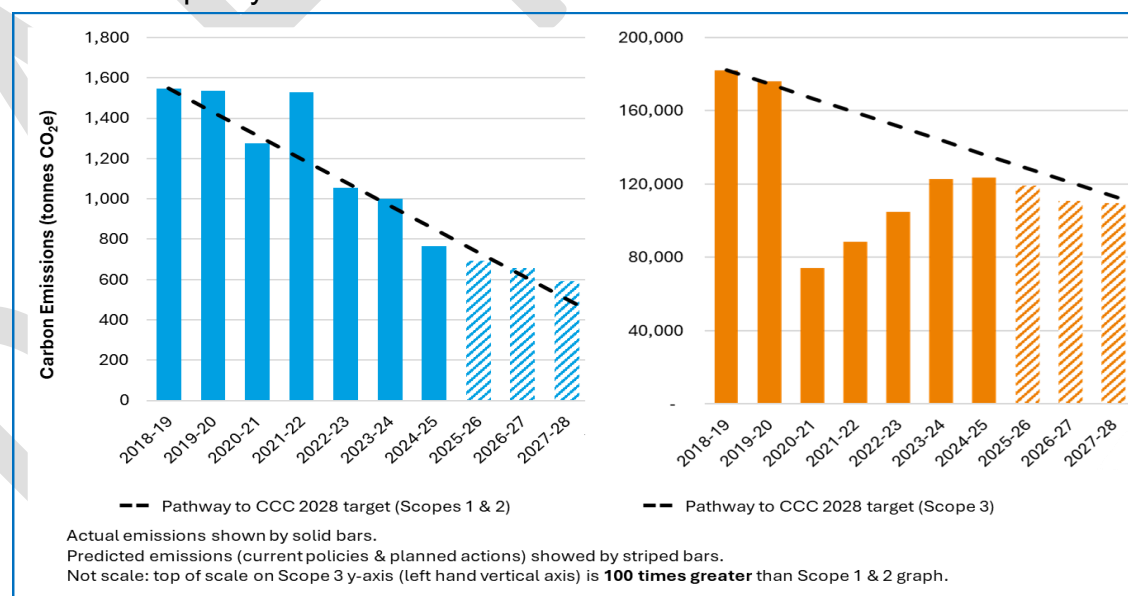


Figure 1 Cambridge County Council carbon emissions since 2018/19. The dotted line shows our emissions reduction trajectory, setting annual interim milestones, aligned to our targets



Targets and Key Action Areas

In setting our updated carbon reduction targets, we have built upon our previous commitments, pro-rating them where applicable to align with our new 2028 end date, which has been necessitated by changes happening through Local Government Reform. Our approach is grounded in best practice and guided by science-based methodologies.

In addition, we have developed a separate FLAG (Forest, Land and Agriculture) target, bringing the council's approach in line with international best practice and the UK Committee on Climate Change targets, to address land-related emissions and removals.

To set our ambition and monitor progress, by 2028 we will...

Mitigation Target 1:

Reduce scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions (from our buildings and fleet transport) by 67.5% against its 2018/19 baseline.

Mitigation Target 2:

Reduce its value chain carbon emissions (all scope 3) by 37.8% against its 2018/19 baseline (excludes land use and agriculture)

Mitigation Target 3:

Reduce carbon emissions from its own forest, land and agriculture (FLAG) by 10.7% against its 2022/23 baseline.

Our carbon reduction actions are focused on areas where we can achieve the highest impact and make the most significant progress toward our targets. We concentrate on the key areas that are directly aligned with our climate goals, while also prioritising actions that offer valuable co-benefits. These include improving our working environment, enhancing resource efficiency, making financial savings and securing greater value for money and social value from our suppliers.

Key areas of focus include:

- Continued reduction of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, particularly from the council fleet.
- Strengthening procurement practices and supporting local supply chain partners to tackle Scope 3 emissions.
- Improving emissions data for the rural estate and collaborating with tenant farmers to reduce agricultural emissions.
- Enhancing data coverage to address the estimated 26% of emissions for which we currently lack robust data.

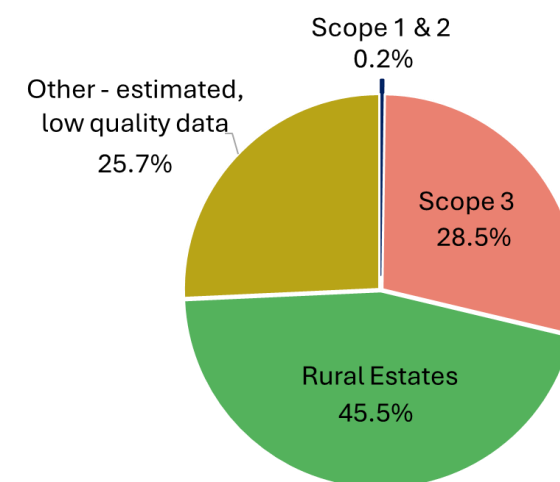


Figure 2 Council carbon footprint proportions.



Role of Carbon Offsetting

Carbon offsetting is a way to balance greenhouse gas emissions by reducing or removing emissions elsewhere. It's often used when some emissions are hard to eliminate because of technology, infrastructure, or cost challenges.

The Environment Agency defines offsetting as:

“Reducing or removing greenhouse gas emissions to balance ongoing emissions, to achieve claims such as climate neutrality or net zero.”

The council follows the Carbon Hierarchy (Figure 3): our priority is to permanently avoid and reduce emissions. However, some sectors face significant challenges that may prevent us from meeting targets on time. In these cases, we may consider carbon offsets as part of our journey to net zero.

Why Have a Policy?

Offsets can be controversial if they're not credible and transparent. Carbon Offsetting Policy sets clear principles for what we consider robust and trustworthy offsetting practices. This ensures:

- Any offsets we use genuinely remove emissions.
- A consistent approach across the council and its partners.
- Transparency for the public.

The policy does not commit us to offsetting, but it provides a framework should offsets become necessary.

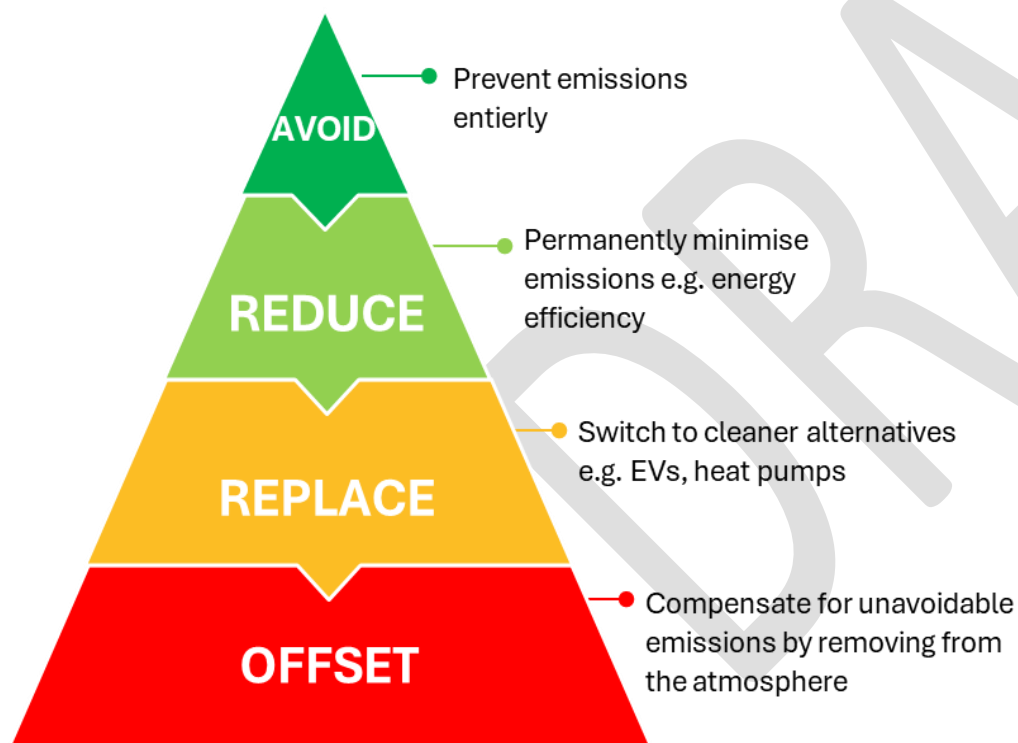


Figure 3 The Carbon Hierarchy



Climate Risk and Adaptation Plan

Ensuring our services are resilient to our changing climate



What is Climate Risk and Adaptation?

Climate change is increasingly disrupting daily weather patterns - altering temperatures, rainfall, and wind conditions - and intensifying the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. These changes pose growing risks to communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems across Cambridgeshire

The UK's National Adaptation Programme makes it clear: *“Local government has responsibility for ensuring that the delivery of services locally is resilient to the impacts of the changing climate.”*

Local authorities are therefore central to delivering climate adaptation: ensuring that public services, infrastructure, and communities are prepared for and protected against climate-related risks.

Climate adaptation means acting before disasters strike: taking proactive measures to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to climate impacts *before* they occur. It's about:

- **Preparedness:** Anticipating risks and planning ahead
- **Resilience-building:** Strengthening systems, infrastructure, and communities
- **Emergency response improvement:** Enhancing capacity to respond effectively when events occur

Rather than only reacting to damage after it occurs, adaptation focuses on reducing the likelihood and impact of harm in the first place. These measures are most effective when implemented early, often preventing serious consequences altogether.

Emergency response and business continuity planning remain essential, but they must be complemented by forward-looking strategies that embed resilience into local systems and services. That's why early action and long-term resilience must be at the heart of how we design and deliver our vital services.

Why should our services be adapted and resilient to climate risks?

PROTECTING PEOPLE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Extreme weather events like flooding, heatwaves, and droughts are becoming more frequent and intense



REDUCING LONG-TERM COSTS

Investing in climate resilience now can prevent costly damage later



CO-BENEFITS FOR HEALTH, EQUITY, AND NATURE

Climate resilience can improve air quality, green space, and mental health



ENSURING SERVICE CONTINUITY

Public services need to function reliably even during climate shocks





Climate Change Risk Assessment

To help us understand where and how we may need to focus efforts, we have completed an initial Climate Change Risk Assessment. This explores where our services interact with extreme weather events - such as flooding or extreme heat - and how they are currently being affected.

Importantly, it takes a forward-looking view, drawing lessons from past extreme events, such as the short but intense heatwave in 2022 when temperatures across the UK exceeded 40°C. These insights help us prepare for a future where such events are likely to become more frequent and severe.

The focus is on identifying key vulnerabilities and enabling us to prioritise action so we can continue to operate effectively under changing climate conditions. Some of the key challenges include:

- **Buildings and Workplaces:** Our buildings - both those we work from and those we provide for community use - face new pressures. E.g. we currently offer warm hubs in winter, but is there a growing need to also have cool hubs in summer?
- **Workforce Resilience:** The ability of our colleagues to carry out their roles, especially frontline workers who deliver vital services in our communities. We need to ensure they are supported and protected during extreme weather events.
- **Business Continuity and Service Planning:** Our business continuity and service plans must embed resilience into how we operate. This includes adapting procedures, infrastructure, and support systems to withstand future climate-related disruptions.



Flooding on Welney Wash Road



Target and Key Action Areas

Our climate adaptation target builds directly from the key challenges identified in our Climate Change Risk Assessment. It reflects our commitment to ensuring that the way we deliver services is resilient to future climate impacts.

To set our ambition and monitor progress, by 2028 we will...

Adaptation Target 4:

Integrate climate risk into every service-level risk register and align to the UK national adaptation programme guidance to prepare for a 2°C and plan for a 4°C rise in temperature.

To meet the challenges ahead and deliver this target, we are focusing on long-term resilience planning. This means delivering work that will underpin service design now and beyond the life of this Strategy. We will align with the UK's National Adaptation Programme and embed climate risk assessments into planning and service delivery.

Our approach includes:

- **Enabling nature-based solutions and resilient infrastructure:** Supporting adaptation through blue and green infrastructure, sustainable drainage, and climate-resilient buildings.
- **Supporting our crucial supply-chain partners:** Working with key suppliers to help them understand how climate impacts may affect the services they provide to us, and to take action to build their own resilience. This ensures continuity and reliability across our service delivery.

- **Aligning local adaptation strategies with national frameworks and preparing for funding opportunities:** Leveraging national guidance and resources to strengthen local delivery and unlock co-benefits.



Nature & Biodiversity Plan

Supporting nature to thrive



Understanding biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth - from plants and animals to fungi and tiny microorganisms. It includes the ecosystems they form and the genetic differences within each species. This rich diversity is essential for a healthy planet. It helps provide clean air and water, supports food production, and plays a key role in regulating our climate.

“Our economies, livelihoods and well-being all depend on our most precious asset: Nature.”
- Dasgupta Review, 2021

Biodiversity isn't just useful - it's valuable in its own right. It makes our landscapes more vibrant and meaningful, and it supports vital services that benefit us all, such as:

- Storing carbon to help tackle climate change
- Reducing the risk of flooding
- Cooling our towns and cities
- Keeping our air, water, and soils clean and healthy
- Supporting pollination which underpins our food security

Cambridgeshire County Council's Role in Protecting Nature

We have a major role to play in protecting and restoring biodiversity, following the [Lawton Principles](#) of 'more, bigger, better and joined up'. The council manages over 33,000 acres of rural land, much of which is farmed but still holds significant ecological value. This includes important nature conservation sites like:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – e.g. Devil's Dyke, Whittlesford -Thriplow Hummocky Fields
- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites
- Protected Roadside Verges

Cambridgeshire's natural environment is rich in habitats that support a wide range of wildlife. A recent biodiversity audit of our land found rare species like *grass-poly* and *fairy shrimp*, and highlighted areas where nature could be improved and better connected to create corridors for wildlife to move and species to spread - especially around sites like *Beechwoods Local Nature Reserve* and *Devil's Dyke*. Strengthening these ecological networks will help wildlife move more freely and adapt to changing conditions.

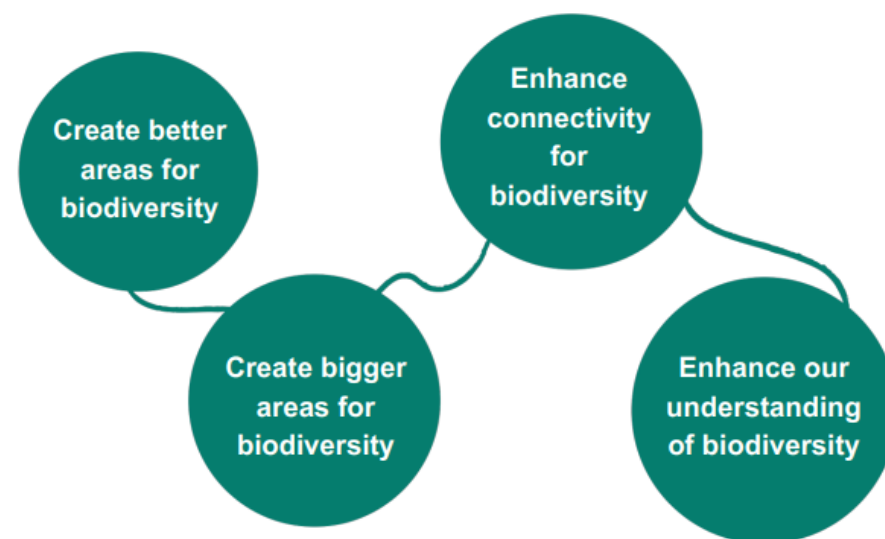
The council's land also offers strong potential for creating habitat banks: areas managed to deliver biodiversity net gain and support long-term nature recovery. These could include wildflower meadows, restored wetlands, or woodland corridors that provide safe spaces for species to move, adapt and thrive.



Biodiversity Strategy 2025

We already have two key nature-related strategies: our [Biodiversity Strategy 2025](#) and our [Tree & Woodland Strategy](#). Setting out our approach in detail, they show how we are placing biodiversity at the core of everything we do. Restoring and enhancing biodiversity is a vital pathway to tackling the climate crisis and building resilient, thriving communities.

We envision a greener, fairer, and more caring county - rich in diverse wildlife and accessible greenspaces - where healthy ecosystems support health and wellbeing. To enhance and build resilience we need to make our county's biodiversity bigger, better and more connected.



Tree planting at Fenstanton & Hilton Primary School



Targets and Key Action Areas

To deliver our nature ambitions, we have two key targets which build directly from our existing nature strategies:

To set our ambition and monitor progress, by 2028 we will...

Nature & Biodiversity 6:

Complete audits and conservation plans for 67% (23) of our 34 important Biodiversity sites, detailing the required actions for each site.

Nature & Biodiversity 7:

Increase the hedgerow planting by 2052 meters by 2028 on its own assets

To deliver our targets, our [Biodiversity Strategy 2025](#) and [Tree and Woodland Strategy 2025](#) outline a comprehensive set of actions across four key themes:

- **Enhancing and Protecting Biodiversity:** We're committed to improving biodiversity across the county. This means planning proactively for nature, expanding protected areas, and ensuring all new developments contribute positively to the environment. We're putting communities at the heart of this work - supporting local efforts to restore nature and leave it in a better state for future generations.
- **Growing and Caring for Trees and Woodlands:** Trees and woodlands are essential for wildlife, climate resilience, and

community wellbeing. We aim to increase tree cover across our land, improve the health of existing woodlands, and secure funding to support long-term care. We're also tackling the causes of biodiversity loss - like pollution, land use change, and climate impacts - through better land management.

- **Joining Up Strategies for Greater Impact:** Our tree and biodiversity work won't sit in isolation. It will be fully integrated with wider council strategies, helping us respond more effectively to the climate and nature emergencies. Trees and green spaces will be recognised as vital infrastructure, supporting everything from public health to flood prevention.
- **Engaging and Empowering Communities:** We believe everyone has a role to play in nature recovery. Through education, advocacy, and partnerships, we'll build public support and help people reconnect with the natural world. Working together with communities and local organisations, we'll inspire action and lead the way in restoring biodiversity across Cambridgeshire.



Working with our Communities, Businesses and Partners

Enabling change and supporting others to act



The Council as an Enabler of Change

Tackling climate change and supporting nature to flourish is a big challenge, and we know we can't do it alone. That's why we are focused on helping everyone - communities, businesses and our local partners - play their part.

Whether it's through local initiatives or collaborative projects, we want to ensure that we are creating a supportive environment for others to reach their own ambitions. Together, we can build a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive future for our county.

Our approach to collaboration integrates 4 key elements:

1. **Supporting local action:** We want to make it easier for people, businesses and communities in Cambridgeshire to reduce carbon emissions, protect nature, and build resilience to climate impacts. Climate action should also bring wider benefits - like cleaner air, warmer homes, and better places to live.
2. **Working together:** We will focus on what we're best placed to do, and work with others where they're better placed to lead. We believe in partnership and shared responsibility.
3. **Creating space for action:** Our role isn't to do everything ourselves. Instead, we'll create the conditions for others to act where we can. We can offer support, facilitate partnerships and connect businesses and communities with funding opportunities.
4. **Backing community leadership:** We know that communities often have the energy, ideas, and networks to lead change. We'll support them to take action in ways that work for their local area.





Target and Key Action Areas

We're committed to helping Cambridgeshire's communities, businesses, and public sector partners take meaningful action. Our role is to listen, learn, and understand what's needed to make action easier and focus on how we can help create the right conditions for success, whether through funding, education, policy, or awareness. By removing barriers and connecting people, ideas, and resources, we'll make climate and nature action not just possible, but inevitable.

To drive this forward, we're taking an action-focused approach, as our target illustrates:

To set our ambition and monitor progress, by 2028 we will...

Target 8:

Establish at least 8 new projects and/or plans where the council is well placed to make it easier for Cambridgeshire communities and businesses to take action to reduce carbon, enhance community resilience, restore nature and reduce their environmental impact. Continue existing initiatives that are supporting this objective.

To achieve this, we will deliver actions that:

- **Unlock community-led action:** We support local groups to identify and deliver their own projects - whether tackling flooding, developing community energy or enhancing nature and biodiversity. Where this involves our colleagues and services, as much as possible work to co-design and co-deliver projects in ways that communities feel is most beneficial

- **Support the most vulnerable:** Through initiatives like home energy retrofits, we help reduce energy bills, cut carbon, and improve health outcomes for those who need it most.
- **Enable change for everyone:** We're removing barriers for those ready to act but held back - like residents who want to switch to electric vehicles but lack home charging options - by investing in the right infrastructure and pioneering finance solutions that make net zero and climate adaptation more affordable and accessible.



Appendices

Action Plan

Add in link following Committee

Carbon Offsetting Policy

Add in link following Committee