



Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Climate Change Annual Report

From reporting year 2023/24
September 2024

This is the third Climate Change Annual Report following Staffordshire Moorlands District Council declaring a [Climate Emergency](#) in July 2019.

Prior to approval by Cabinet, this report will be considered to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Reports on the delivery of specific projects may have been received by other panels if delivery falls within their remit.

Forward

Cllr. Nigel Yates

Cabinet Member for Climate Change

The effects of climate change are being witnessed in our daily lives, through the increased unpredictability of the jet stream affecting rainfall patterns and inducing volatile swings in our weather. It is imperative that we convert fine words into real actions to both mitigate the changes already occurring and ensure that the Staffordshire Moorlands becomes more resilient in the future.



In 2019, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council unanimously declared a climate emergency, an action to set the district on an irreversible path to carbon neutrality and to ensure a future for our children and generations beyond. It is not an easy path, but it is the right path.

Initial work focussed on embedding the principles of carbon reduction and reversing the decline in biodiversity into day-to-day thinking, augmented by officer and councillor training across the whole organisation.

Over the last twelve months, as Cabinet Member for Climate Change I have focussed on two workstreams – Carbon Reduction within council activities and formulating robust policy to reverse the catastrophic decline in biodiversity across the Moorlands.

Simultaneously, I have given the space and flexibility to a refreshed a dynamic Climate Change Working Group, ably lead by Cllr. Mark Johnson, to look at wider District issues. Combined with a strong and reenforced Officer Team with a focus on home energy resilience and biodiversity we have the footings dug, foundations laid and the build well underway.

This report reflects on our achievements to date, but far more importantly, looks forward to the real and tangible actions that will follow during this Council's term towards our targets of carbon neutrality for council activities and the '30 by 30' target set out in our 'Plan for Nature'.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Annual Climate Change Report highlights the District's ongoing efforts and initiatives undertaken by the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) to combat climate change. This report provides an overview of the council's activities, achievements, and future plans in alignment with regional and national climate goals. It serves as a testament to the council's commitment to fostering sustainability, reducing carbon emissions, and enhancing environmental resilience within the community

Cllr. Mark Johnson
Chair of SMDC Climate Change Working Group
(Photo to Follow)

Over the past year, the Climate Change Working Group has looked at a range of areas relevant to both the Council's own operations and the wider district's emissions.

We examined a range of key topics including waste management, domestic energy efficiency and the council's own operations. With the portfolio holder and officers present we were able to relay Group input directly for the first time, though a full report will also be presented at the end of the municipal year.

The participation in the Group of the previous portfolio holder was helpful, as was the experience of elected members active across all levels, from parish to county.

What became clear over the year was that, building in part on previous work, the Council is now making significant progress on decarbonising its own estate. The installation of solar and heat pumps on Biddulph and Brough Park Leisure Centres are flagship projects of the kind necessary to show leadership on emissions reduction.

Progress has also been made in other areas of council operations such as installing staff EV chargers but the difficulty of ensuring that all parts of the council's and its partners' operations are aligned with SMDC's Climate targets was a recurring theme.

The 2030 target for its own direct footprint remains a target that may, just, be within the Council's grasp.

Where the task is far harder is for the district to achieve the same. The existing target of 2030 is not achievable and arguably never was.

While the level of council engagement with other stakeholders has deepened considerably, the challenges are large and too complex, and the tools available too limited.

Now seems the right time for SMDC to open an honest and transparent debate on this target with elected members and the broader public.

The working group's final session before this report began this process but will return to it again, in step with its task of reshaping the Climate Action Plan into something that Moorlands residents can easily understand and truly be part of.

Summary

This is the third Climate Change Annual Report following Staffordshire Moorlands District Council declaring a [Climate Emergency](#) in July 2019.

Prior to approval by Cabinet, this report will be presented to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Reports on the delivery of specific projects may have been received by other panels if delivery falls within their remit.

The aim of the report is to give an overview of activity, identifies gaps, issues and opportunities, whilst recommending the next steps.

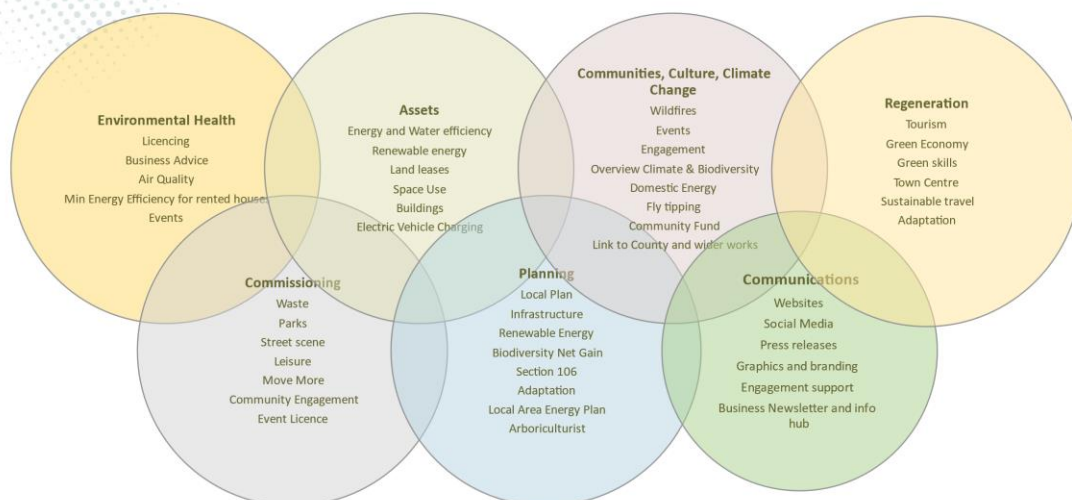
The Council's Climate Change plans, set in 2021/22, were ambitious. Given changes in national policy, delivery timescales and potential further policy changes, it would be prudent to review the targets and plans as part of the work programme for this year.

The Plans can only be achieved through cross-service and partnership working, dividing down into unique projects with an overall programme management.

The [Climate Change Working Group](#) is a cross-party, members group where the Plans and Activities are considered in a transparent, collegiate manner. The group considers actions to combat all the stands of the Climate Change Plan and has investigated issues such as domestic energy, air quality, [Peak Cluster](#) , [Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(LEVI\) funding](#), social housing, waste, and the circular economy.

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Delivery Group consists of senior officers from across the Alliance with responsibility for climate change in their service.

Climate Change & Biodiversity Delivery Group



Corporate Plan 2023-2027

The Council has approved a new [Corporate Plan](#) (2023 -2027) that includes an aim to: *“Protect and improve the environment”*.

With the objectives

- Effective recycling and waste management.
- Meeting the challenges of climate change.
- Provision of high-quality public amenities, clean streets and environmental health.
- Provision of quality parks and open spaces.
- Car parking arrangements that meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

Climate Change Plans

Part 1

This plan sets out how the Council will tackle emissions from its own operations. It was approved in June 2021. [The plan can be found here.](#)

The aims have been combined with the Part 2 Plan to address district-wide emissions. The common title is: Aiming Low: 7 Ways to Net Zero

This [Climate Plan for the district emissions](#) was approved in December 2021 and has ambitious targets to meet net zero across the district by 2030.

The plans mostly focus on emissions reduction, termed climate change mitigation. Adaptation is how we plan to respond to the impacts of localised climate as it changes. This can be physical urban or natural environment solutions or operational with partners such as health care and infrastructure providers.

The overarching plan is set out in seven broad themes as noted on the table on the following page.

Table 1 Action Plan themes

1 The Way We	2 The Way We	3 The Way We	4 The Way We	5 The Way We	6 The Way We	7 The Way We Can
Live	Travel	Work	Make Energy	Look After Our Environment	Manage Waste	Help Change to Occur
Actions						
Support new buildings to be energy efficient and minimise emissions	Reduce emissions from Council vehicles	Reduce emissions from Council buildings	Look at generating green energy for Council buildings	Increase tree cover and improve nature	Reduce carbon emissions from our waste and recycling service	Consider Climate Change in all Council decisions and policies
Tackle fuel poverty and reduce emissions from homes	Support sustainable travel and development	Switch to green energy	Promote the use of renewable energy	Protect and extend the existing green infrastructure	Encourage recycling and the green initiatives	Provide Councillors and staff members with appropriate skills and training
	Support the increased use of EV vehicles	Buy low carbon products and services		Reduce the risk from flooding	Support community initiatives designed to reduce, recycle and repurpose waste	Promote climate change projects
	Encourage people to make journeys by walking or cycling	Support the green economy		Work in partnership with our communities, including the most vulnerable		Encourage community climate change and nature projects
		Support the development of a circular economy				Work with Parish Councils
		Help businesses to get advice and support				Involve and engage our communities and create a more inclusive society
		Encourage Council staff to adopt energy saving/low carbon				Lobby for change

The Way We Live

This theme looks at energy use in our homes.

The first aim is to improve new buildings to minimise emissions. A new planning tool in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Documents was adopted and published in October 2023. This sets out the policy areas which relate to both the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change along with futureproofing infrastructure.

[Staffordshire Moorlands Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\) \(staffsmoorlands.gov.uk\)](https://staffsmoorlands.gov.uk).

In addition, the Alliance with High Peak Borough Council and involvement with Vision Derbyshire enables us to utilise their Climate Change and Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document and adapt it for use in the Staffordshire Moorlands. This includes a toolkit to help developers make better choices when considering a planning application and design. This is being considered by Cabinet in Autumn 2024. This will provide developers and planning applicants with guidance to improve their proposals to mitigate and adapt to climate change and an additional tool for the Planning Applications Committee when making planning decisions.

The second aim of this theme is to tackle both fuel poverty and climate emissions in existing homes. Whilst there are several complex funding streams for domestic energy efficiency and small-scale renewables, these are targeted at low income households with poor energy performance.

It is assumed that those groups would be termed as living in fuel poverty. The latest data suggests 15.8% (7,098) households are living with fuel poverty (2021 data). A map below shows the areas worse and least affected.

Fuel poverty map by small area, 2021

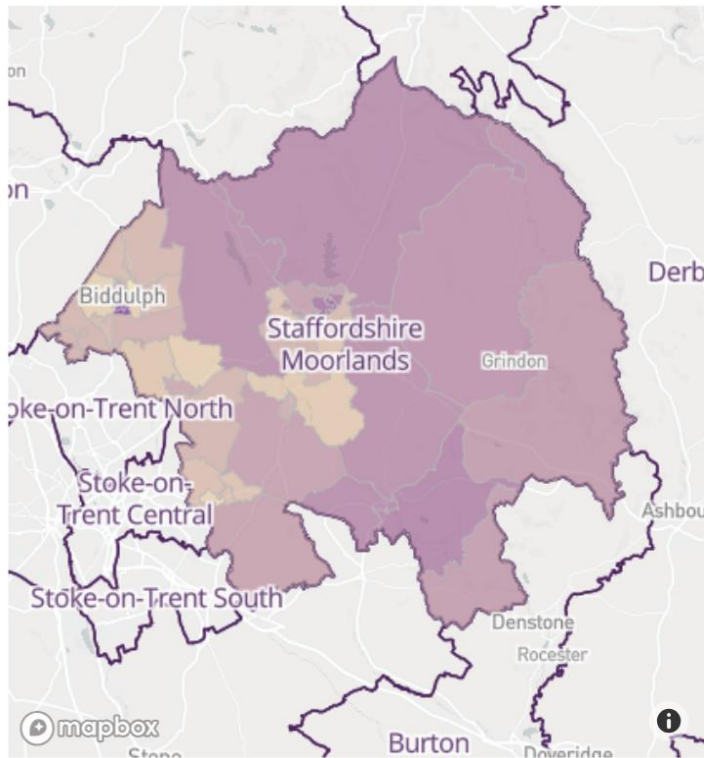


Figure 1 Fuel poverty map

The small areas are "Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), geographical units defined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Key

- Lowest % of households in fuel poverty in constituency
- Highest % of households in fuel poverty in constituency
- Constituency names and boundaries

Tips

Click and drag to move around the map. Scroll or pinch to zoom.

The Energy Performance of 50% of all households has been rated in the last 10 years. Of these, 15,917 have ratings of D to G which are the lowest bands. If this is indicative of houses needing improvement, then the numbers are around 31,834. While this improves the energy performance, making the house warmer, healthier and hopefully cheaper to run - and reduce emissions - it will not take the household to net zero.

Larger homes tend to have more carbon emissions reduction potential but cost more to retrofit. These are less likely to access grant funding due to limitations on the fund design.

The Council is active in the Staffordshire Warmer Homes partnership which successfully secured Green Homes Grant Local GHG LAD (round 1 funding) and also delivered the Council's allocation of over £600,000 GHG LAD round 2 funding in Staffordshire Moorlands.

EPC	Households	Percentage
A	73	0.32%
B	1772	7.83%
C	4882	21.56%
D	10416	46.00%
E	3674	16.23%
F	1299	5.74%
G	528	2.33%

HUG2 began in June 2023, targeting off mains gas properties. The end for referrals is in autumn with tools down in March 2025.

The partnership, managed through Staffordshire County Council, has also continued to deliver energy saving measures through other schemes. Future funding schemes have not been confirmed.

Through Shared Prosperity Fund, Staffordshire Warmer Homes are able to support eligible households which may need additional works to access energy measures funding. This has been a barrier for many households.

ECO4 sets a main obligation called the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO), which requires energy suppliers to achieve a total of £224.3 million in annual bill savings for domestic premises by 31 March 2026.¹

The overall obligation period for ECO4 runs from the commencement of the ECO4 Order on 27 July 2022 to 31 March 2026 and is split into four phases:

- Phase 1: 27 July 2022 to 31 March 2023
- Phase 2: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024
- Phase 3: 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
- Phase 4: 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

Previously the delivery data for ECO by local authority area was available through Ofgem, however, only national figures are now openly available.

Overall, the scale of the task and the speed we need to deliver it at is hampered by lack of skills across the supply chain from advice to installations. Given the rural and historic nature of many areas of the Moorlands, with hard-to-treat homes, this is a complex market to stimulate and a difficult audience to convince.

Deeper interventions, involving retrofit, remain hard to achieve in the absence of committed central funding plus the added inconvenience to householders, although we continue to look at options for making this journey easier for the householder. As part of our Alliance we continue to work with partners in Derbyshire on innovative projects, and we are assessing barriers to retrofit including supply chain and archetypes.

The Council continues to fund Beat the Cold as our key local partner in affordable warmth/fuel poverty advice and to refer to grant schemes.

Through the Shared Prosperity Fund we plan to offer an enhanced energy advice service offering more targeted advice with small measures, more events and home visits, We will use this to refer to grants and to build a pipeline of potential future recipients of funding.

¹ [Energy Company Obligation public reports and data | Ofgem](#)

We can help you save energy

Help is at hand for:

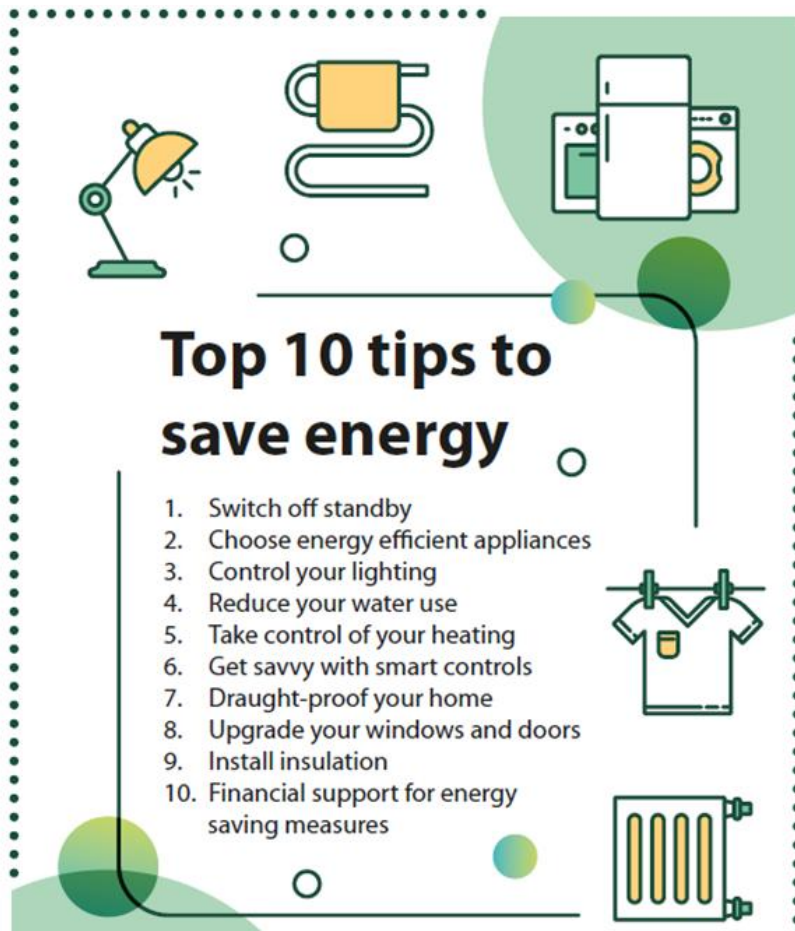
- Impartial energy advice
- Getting assessed for grant funding for energy efficiency or energy generating measures
- Accessing a free home visit with tailored advice and some small energy measures
- Support to understand your bill

For more information please scan the QR code or go to:
www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/Beat-the-Cold
Telephone 01782 914 915
Email enquiries@beatcold.org.uk
Visit <http://www.beatcold.org.uk/>

STAFFORDSHIRE moorlands DISTRICT COUNCIL ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE
Staffordshire Warmer Homes HELPING YOU TO HEAT YOUR HOME
Community Home Solutions BEAT THE COLD

The Alliance appointed a new domestic energy officer to explore new funding opportunities, support cross departmental working and develop new ways of reaching households with support.

A comprehensive Housing Strategy is in development for the entire district.



Top 10 tips to save energy

1. Switch off standby
2. Choose energy efficient appliances
3. Control your lighting
4. Reduce your water use
5. Take control of your heating
6. Get savvy with smart controls
7. Draught-proof your home
8. Upgrade your windows and doors
9. Install insulation
10. Financial support for energy saving measures

Actions from 2022/23 with a progress update

2022/23 Actions	Update
Using existing data to better target households which could benefit from existing and emerging schemes.	Beat the Cold have been commissioned to create a data package to support future targeted engagement.
Improving liaison with Your Housing as the main social housing provider in the Moorlands. Your Housing have a target to have all properties with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C or above by 2030.	Your Housing has presented to the Climate Change Working Group.
Working with the supply chain to support able and willing to pay households to access good advice, quality installations and finance arrangements and continue working with wider professional networks to learn of and apply good practice and innovative thinking. Officers completed a Local Government Association course on upscaling and delivering retrofit programmes.	<p>Partnership with High Peak gives us access to innovative projects.</p> <p>HEAT HUB</p> <p>Skills project to assess gaps and providers</p> <p>Supply chain project</p> <p>Beat the Cold offers - Home visits, advice events, collateral, communication plans</p> <p>Retrofit training for officers</p> <p>Domestic Energy officer in post from Sept 24</p>
Continuing to enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency Scheme with private landlords.	This is ongoing work.
Setting out a comprehensive housing strategy and leave no one behind.	To go to Cabinet in Autumn 2024
Continuing to work with regional and national Government to lobby for additional support and funds and a national training programme.	We work with Midlands Net Zero Hub, the Local Authority Energy Partnership, UK 100, APSE, Local Government Association

Suggested Actions

- How to incentivise or encourage the willing to pay
- How to fund the households at the margin between means-tested grants and an ability to self-finance
- Maintaining peer networks to keep knowledge of emerging schemes up to date and scanning for opportunities.
- Improve working with the supply chain to access grants and stimulate a skills market

The Way We Travel

Emissions from vehicles are a significant issue in Staffordshire Moorlands. Being a mainly rural district, there is considerable reliance on private vehicles for personal journeys. There are also several thoroughfares for haulage vehicles.

The County Council's new Transport Plan has greenhouse gas emissions reduction at its core (in line with policy from the Department of Transport). Given the nature of the Moorlands, this is particularly hard to achieve here, but the district has actively sought and gained early engagement with the County on its plans.

Separate to the Climate Change Plans is the [Air Quality Assessment](#) which sets out the strategy to improve air quality. The co-benefits of this to climate change mitigation are clear, as much of the activity is to encourage either modal shift to active transport methods or improving efficiency of vehicles.

The Air Aware Staffordshire Project is a major campaign to raise awareness of air quality issues across Staffordshire, predominantly to:

- Engage with business to educate on air quality and to develop travel plans;
- Make visits to schools to educate children on air quality and deliver an anti-idling campaign to parents;
- Deliver a website 'air aware' campaign and information on air quality, including [downloadable information](#);
- Develop a joint Electric Vehicle strategy for the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, including district partners and third parties. The Council are partners in the delivery of the approx. £5 million LEVI fund through Staffordshire County Council.

Through the engagement of Air Aware, several schools and businesses now have travel plans accredited by [ModeShift Stars](#).

[The Local Plan](#) adopted in September 2020 sets out ambitions to reduce the need to travel or make it safer and easier to travel by more sustainable forms of transport. (Spatial Objective SO11).

This approach also reflects the aims of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan priorities to promote improved health and protect the environment. The Council will aim to ensure as far as possible that

development minimises traffic problems and maximises the potential benefits of accessibility and new infrastructure to the wider community through active travel methods.

The Council;s and operation partners' fleets has been analysed by the Energy Saving Trust to support a forward plan to systematically improve engine types, efficiencies and fuel use.

The Council's pioneering project to use spent hydrogenated vegetable oil on suitable vehicles not only reduced CO₂ emissions but also particulates. Unfortunately, the tenfold increase in price for HVO had meant that it became significantly more expensive to run the fleet compared to traditional diesel. A decision was made to revert to traditional diesel until a cheaper source is found or prices dropped. Now a strategic buying policy is in place to enable HVO to be used unless prices rise beyond a certain threshold.

Move More Staffordshire Moorlands launched in June 2023 with an aim to adopt active travel models for health but also generate wider environmental benefits. Residents can access details on partners and activities through the dedicated [Move More](#) website.

In the first quarter of 2024 there were 763 registered electric vehicles in the Moorlandsⁱ. This has increased by more than 50% since last year.

The Council has been supporting the County on implementing their LEVI funding programme. This has not been without complexity due to the scale of the project and number of partners. The Council has installed chargers at Moorlands House for visitors and staff.

The Council has established a salary sacrifice scheme for Electric Vehicles for staff. The similar programme for bicycles remains in place.

The barriers to adopting electric vehicles are well documented, varying from the environmental and human rights impacts associated with mineral mining for the batteries along with lifespan and disposal of the batteries, cost of the vehicles, range anxiety, access to a private space to charge and more widely the charging infrastructure.

We are looking to include environmental considerations in our guidance for event holders; this will include travel and accessibility options.

Actions from 2022/23 with an progress update

2022/23 Action	Update
Working with the County Council to deliver the best electric vehicle charging network possible for a pleasant user experience.	This is ongoing plus the Council is supplementing with own chargers at Moorlands House

Continuing to monitor technology shifts for the fleet to demonstrate to other businesses and lead by example.	AES are working with partners to trial major fleet vehicles and fuel types. This will align with procurement strategies for fleet and design of a new depot.
Continuing to encourage active travel through engagement	Air Quality continues to work with schools, Move More is well established, parks spaces and walking festivals are all to support activity.
Continuing to raise awareness of air quality	Environmental Health continue to monitor and engage
Developing incentives for staff, councillors and partners to charge on site and access vehicles.	Chargers are approved at Moorlands House plus EV salary sacrifice for staff

Suggested Actions

- Continue work with HR to review travel plans for staff and councillors
- Ensure EV charging in suitable places for operations
- Assess effectiveness of LEVI, Move More to improve future incentives
- Engage with public transport providers as new transport powers may be devolved.
- Ensure travel is embedded in regeneration, events on our land, planning proposals

The Way We Work

Climate Change considerations are embedded across our service delivery and operations, though we still have much work to do deepen this process. All Council reports have a section that sets out the Climate Change, sustainability and nature implications to inform decision making.

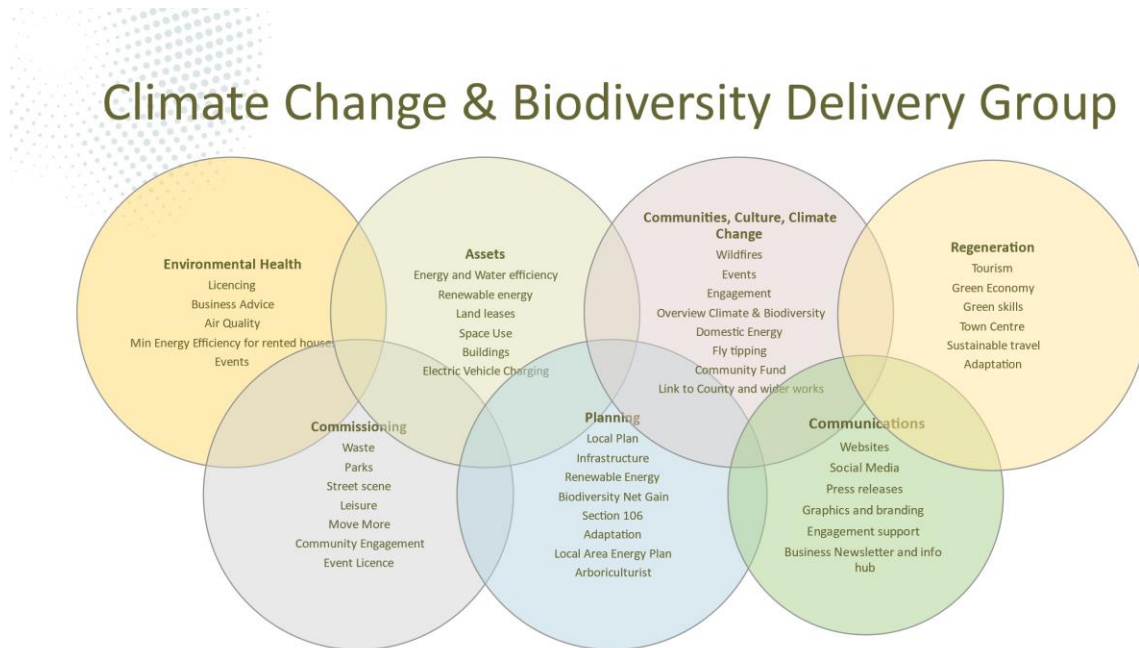
The Climate Change Working Group is a cross-party members group where the Plans and Activities are considered in a transparent, collegiate manner. This group can make recommendations to Scrutiny or Cabinet.

Climate Change reporting is governed through the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Delivery Group consists of senior officers from across the Alliance with responsibility for climate change in their service.

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Group is chaired by the Head of Communities and Climate Change with all relevant Heads of Service. It meets monthly to review and track progress against the aims. Performance indicators are collated and reported annually as part of this report.

The responsibilities of each service relating to climate change and biodiversity is loosely set out in the following diagram. However, many strands of the Climate Change and Plan for Nature require matrix project collaboration across several services.

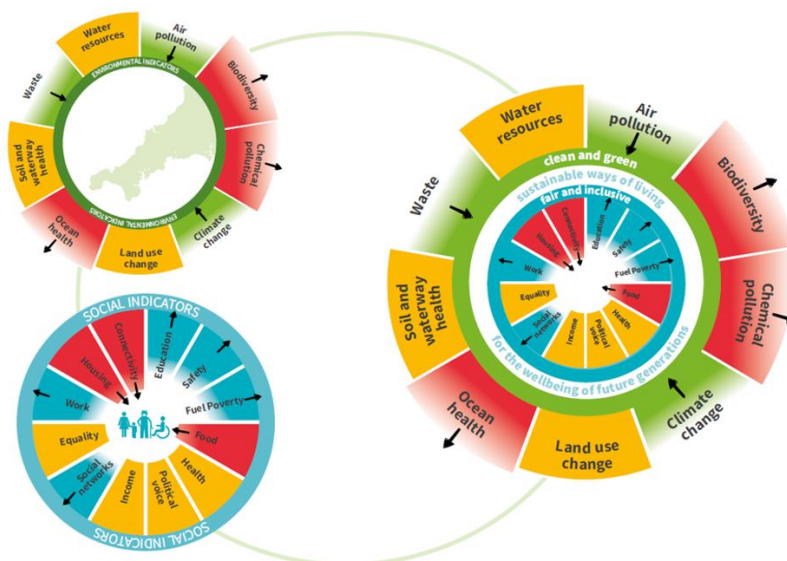


Members and officers sit on groups working with the County and other Local Authorities, including the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Climate Commission and the Staffordshire Sustainability Board.

The Council is accredited with the Carbon Literacy Bronze Award. This training is offered to relevant or interested staff and members and all Heads of Service and our Chief Executive are Carbon Literate. This course is offered twice a year across the Alliance and partners. Councillor members of the Climate Change Working Group have also received an induction based around doughnut economics using the Cornwall Decision Wheel (see below). They have also been requested to do an online course in Biodiversity Net Gain.

Cornwall Decision Wheel

Long Lasting or Extensive Positive Impact	5
Short Term or Limited Positive Impact	4
No Impact or Neutral Impact	3
Short Term or Limited Negative Impact	2
Long Lasting or Severe Negative Impact	1



Targets under the Council operations include reducing emissions from buildings and switching to green energy.

A new [Asset Management Framework](#) was agreed in 2023. The Framework highlights that achieving net zero on these buildings will require investment and careful consideration to futureproof the functionality. Some less invasive works are in progress to replace traditional lights with LEDs, add smart controls and to improve draught proofing.

Carbon emissions generated by Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre are set to fall thanks to a £2.1million project to improve energy efficiency and reduce the building's impact on the environment. This is due to be commissioned go live imminently. The Council has secured £1,910,000 from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and is supplementing this with a further £265,000 from Council funds. Brough Park Leisure Centre is also being redeveloped under the Levelling Up Fund and will incorporate energy saving measures.

The project has replaced the conventional gas boilers with state-of-the-art air source heat pumps and solar panels to enhance the building's energy efficiency and reduce its impact on the environment saving around 300 tonnes of CO₂ every year. More sophisticated controls will enable more efficient use of heat and power.

The Leek Market Hall renovation includes solar panels, air source heat pumps and other energy saving measures to improve the running costs and lower emissions.

The Council's building energy consumption has decreased by 2% since the baseline year (2019), the carbon emissions have decreased by 11%. This includes emissions from leisure which will decrease when the new plant is commissioned.

From 2024, the electricity contract changed to Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin certificated. This means for every kilowatt hour used, a kilowatt hour is generated by renewables and assigned to the Council’s portfolio. This supports the development of renewable energy nationally and reduces the carbon footprint of the council.

Grid emissions per kilowatt-hour have not changed much as is the case for electricity due to low emissions gas not being readily available. Gas use can be more seasonally effected than electricity and consumption would have been impacted on weather.

A performance indicator framework has been established for council operations, as have baselines and monitoring systems. However, changes in the systems collecting staff mileage have resulted in issues analysing that data in order to enable us to publish our carbon footprint. This needs more investigation with the platform supplier to resolve.

Issues with the fleet data also mean that these figures are more provisional than in previous years. This also needs to work with partners to resolve.

The Alliance is a member of UK100, APSE and the Local Authority Energy Partnership where we can use peer experience to help build capacity and knowledge.

Our newsletter to businesses is used to share information on support available to them for courses, grants and advice on sustainability. We support promotion of the Environmental Quality Mark for Peak District and Staffordshire. Our Environmental Health and Enforcement Officers are able to provide guidance to support businesses comply with new legislation or access incentive to improve their environmental performance.

Actions from 2022/23 with progress update

2022/23 Action	Update
Deliver the new Asset Management Plan, embedding energy use and carbon emissions	The Asset Management Framework was agreed in 2023. Consideration is made to carbon and net zero.
Provide training to support the new sustainable procurement policy and means to monitor the success	Awaiting new legislation briefing to align.

Establish incentives for alternative travel for staff.	EV and bike salary sacrifice in place. Chargers installed at Moorlands House in progress. Working with Modeshift Stars to assess other options. IT places where appropriate for flexible working.
Provide electric vehicle charges at council offices	In progress
Continue to work with County and other partners	Ongoing
Collaborate on verges and management of green spaces	Green spaces Strategy has been agreed. Visit to Derbyshire Dales District Council to learn lessons. Some trials on equipment have been carried out. Continued engagement with the County on highways verges mowing

Suggested Actions

- Embed climate and nature considerations at scoping phase of policy and projects.
- Improve programme management and oversight to realise opportunities from aligning initiatives (this was also in the Peer Challenge review)
- Maximise opportunities through better collaboration across the Alliance and partners
- Respond quickly to opportunities whilst maintaining standards and protocols
- Work better across services. The Agile working policy for staff has enabled suitable roles to use blended working approaches to reduce travel time and resources for both commuting and meetings. However, a replacement informal networking mechanism needs to be established to replicate those 'water cooler' information-sharing moments .
- Use the Alliance: Our Future Programme to embed better practices
- Roll out 365 for improved collaboration and reduced server emissions
- Continue to scope and then trial sustainability guidance for events permissions on Council land.

The Way We Make Energy

This aim considers generating renewable energy for the Council Buildings and promoting renewable energy more widely.

The new [Climate Change and Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document](#) encourages the use of renewables in new and majorly renovated properties. A climate consideration tool has been developed through Alliance partners which the Council is seeking approval to adopt.

We are also exploring some online tools to support householders to make decision on whether solar is suitable for their property.

An initial audit of Council-owned buildings has been carried out to assess the feasibility of installing onsite renewables. This work informs the Asset Management Plan as well as future capital investments in renewable energy measures. These will be used as part of the rationalisation of the use of the buildings takes place to ensure they are fit for purpose.

We now have solar panels on one leisure centre and are looking to replicate this model with others.

The Council needs to find means to engage with changes in the wider renewable energy landscape and encourage community energy. The Planning Department has begun to collate data on applications for renewables and will publish this in its annual monitoring report.

Along with potential changes in the planning framework this work will help us better understand and overcome the issues and barriers we face in encouraging appropriate renewable energy projects.

In our Alliance, we benefit from the work Derbyshire and the Peak District National Park have done around spatial strategies for renewables. We will also benefit from understanding the opportunities which can be realised through a Local Area Action Plan. This is a digital twin which simulates the energy networks across the area and can be used to generate scenarios to future proof infrastructure, as we shift to different fuels for different purposes.

The East Midlands Mayor has funded a Local Area Plan programme covering the entire area. If Staffordshire Moorlands decides this would be useful, the cost is not insignificant and would need to be considered carefully.

Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund we are setting up a one-off fund for community groups to adopt renewable energy or energy efficiency on a community building.

Suggested Actions 22/23 Updates

2022/23 Action	Update
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Embed renewables into Asset Management Plan for Council buildings	The Asset Management Framework was agreed in 2023. Consideration is made to carbon and net zero.
Embed renewables in supplementary planning guidance	This is in place with enhanced toolkit to be approved.
Assess and develop schemes for householders and business to encourage uptake.	Support community energy with one off fund This incentive is still nascent
Use funding streams in the Way We Live section to target small scale domestic PV at scale	Improved engagement and working with supply chain relating to grants

Suggested Actions

- Track planning applications in the whole, not just in silo
- Develop further support for communities and residents
- Continue to explore funding mechanisms for council buildings
- Explore bulk-buy schemes
- Explore the benefits of a Local Area Energy Plan

The Way We Look After Our Environment

The Council has an enhanced duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (and subsequently the Environment Act 2021) to take appropriate action to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

In response to this, the Council produced a Plan for Nature with support from the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. The Plan for Nature provides a baseline review of the state of nature across the Staffordshire Moorlands, and identifies key areas/project streams for the Council to focus their efforts on to increase biodiversity and support nature's recovery. The Plan was formally adopted by cabinet in October 2023.



To help meet the extended biodiversity duty, the Alliance also employed a biodiversity officer in November 2023 to develop best practices, establish project streams, and to work across departments and with communities and other key stakeholders

The Council will be required to report back

to Government on how it is meeting its biodiversity duties. The Council is developing internal monitoring and reporting procedures for biodiversity against the targets set out within the Plan for Nature. Furthermore, the Council is in the process of establishing a proper governance structure for nature and biodiversity work, including regular working groups and project trackers, taking an active, ongoing and systematic approach which complements the existing governance structure for climate change work, given that nature and climate are closely linked.

The Council is exploring training on biodiversity for both members and selected officers, the purpose being to ensure that biodiversity is a key consideration in decision making and operations across the Council. The Council is taking a strategic approach to align nature and climate work with other services and ambitions, including increasing tree cover, improving air quality and adapting to climate change.

The Council adopted a Nature Recovery Declaration in April 2024 which acknowledges the nature crisis, sets out a commitment to support the recovery of nature across the Staffordshire Moorlands, and lists a number of actions which the Council will undertake.

The delivery of the Council's nature and biodiversity ambitions aims to align with other plans and strategies, such as the Green Spaces Strategy (for parks and open spaces), and the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018).

While the six pilot sites to be initially managed under the Green Spaces Strategy will be relatively small in size, we regard this as an important way of showing our commitment to more effective ecological practices. Officers and Cabinet Members and officers have engaged with councils such as Derbyshire Dales to ensure that the new policy is put into practice in a robust and cost-effective manner, and one which gains the support of the community as a whole.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements (under the Environment Act 2021) became mandatory from February 2024 for larger developments, and from April 2024 for smaller developments. This requires most developments in the planning process to secure a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity for a 30-year period. The Council is exploring systems to monitor and track BNG and ensure it is properly integrated into the Council's planning and development processes.

BNG remains a new and evolving area across the country.

The Council continues to work closely with community groups across the Staffordshire Moorlands, including through an established Green Network, to support collaboration and peer to peer learning. The Community Climate and Nature fund continues to support local groups on nature improvement



and engagement projects. Within the limits of capacity, funding and regulation, officers seek to adopt an 'open-doors' 'can-do' approach, working on ad-hoc projects such as tree trails and moving Community Orchards into genuine community management.

The Council is working in partnership with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Moorlands Climate Action, OUTSIDE Arts, SCVYS and Keele University on a major lottery-funded project – 'Nature in Your Neighbourhood'. The project aims to measurably improve the quality of selected green spaces across the Moorlands and connect people with nature, including through citizens science.

There has also been a wider social media and communications campaign run on nature and biodiversity.

Work on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire, with Staffordshire County Council and other stakeholders, has progressed throughout 2024.

Suggested Actions 22/23 Updates

22/23 Action	Update
Adopt the Plan for Nature	Approved October 23
Set out priorities and actions from the plan and dedicate a resource to deliver it	Biodiversity officer is now in post and has established internal groups and is working with external groups to set up mechanisms to establish these.
Scan for external funding for potential projects within the plan	Project list being is being developed Grantfinder licence is set up to identify funds Already have a partnership with Nature in Your Neighbourhood.
Consider declaring a nature emergency	Approved April 24
Maintain oversight on the development on Biodiversity Net Gain legislation and systems	Planning officers and Biodiversity officer group set up
Continue to work with external groups and improve collaborative relationships	Local Nature Recovery Strategy Green Network Nature in your Neighbourhood. One-off projects
Continue communications on impact of wildfires	Ongoing
Maintain a Public Spaces Protection Order in high wildfire risk areas.	Introduced but now lapsed. Meetings are taking place to review its effect and overall approach to wildfires in time for next summer.

Suggested Actions

- Revising the tree strategy to include canopy targets
- Formalise the Governance of the Plan for Nature
- Embed nature based solutions into climate change risk adaptation
- Continue seasonally based communications with residents and businesses

The Way We Manage Waste

The Council continues to be a high performer, achieving a 54.5% recycling rate, which is high compared to national statistics.

We encourage people and businesses to follow the waste hierarchy. A redevelopment of the website offers opportunities to guide users to reuse incentives rather than straight to waste disposal. There will also be an A-Z of what to recycle and where.

Staffordshire County have developed excellent initiatives through their recycling centres. Maintaining joint engagement around this is a benefit of the Waste partnership.

AES have used an engagement vehicle called Dennis and officers to visit schools across the Moorlands.

The officers also attend many events to disseminate messages about how to reduce waste and dispose any remaining waste appropriately. We also have proactive campaigns on fly tipping to encourage responsible waste disposal.

We will use our sustainable procurement policy to push up the supply chain to encourage the creation of a circular economy and help suppliers consider cradle to cradle product and systems design.

We recognise several community groups are establishing localised repair cafes. Leek has Plastic Free status, thanks to the work of Moorlands Climate Action. We will offer support to promote these types of initiatives where possible, helping other groups to learn from the successes of these projects.

We are developing guidelines for events to consider minimising waste. These would be included in application for permission paperwork.

Our officers who liaise with businesses are able to advise on changes to legislation and initiatives.

We support food bank initiatives to reduce food waste and to support cost of living support programmes.

We have been delayed setting up the Refill scheme but have made some progress getting key officers on board.

Separation of the emission from the waste fleet has been an issue to enable assessing the operational impacts. However, we are working with AES to try to resolve this.

The imminent rebuild of the Fowlchurch depot presents opportunities for innovative approaches to recycling and we are working closely with County officers to ensure that full use is made of this. The County's successful paint re-use scheme shows what can be achieved; we are working with County to explore the chance of reintroducing resident recycling on SMDC land such as car parks.

Suggested Actions

- Deepen our already strong relationships with the County
- Consider space for recycling banks in SMDC spaces
- Set up Refill and launch
- Explore the emission calculator for waste operations

The Way We Can Help Change to Occur



Opportunities by sphere of influence by Climate Change Committee

We recognise the importance of working with external agencies, community groups, businesses, parish and town councils, academic communities, landowners and so on to support us deliver this cross-cutting agenda.

The Council is engaged with a number of key agencies to assist with the development of our plans, including all the other councils of Staffordshire, The Midlands Net Zero Hub, the Energy Saving Trust, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Anthesis sustainability consultancy and Keele University.

We sit on several steering and working groups with Staffordshire County Council and our peers in other districts and boroughs and the Peak District National Park and the Local Authority Energy Partnership.

As part of the Alliance, we are able to benefit from learning from colleagues and projects in Derbyshire and the East Midlands which we can use where applicable.

The Council has joined the UK100 group of local authorities with ambitious climate change targets. This includes access to the Countryside Climate Network. We are also active members of many other peer networks to share learning and support, including the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Climate Commission.

Our role as the Local Planning Authority gives us the ability to encourage climate and nature development. The upcoming review of the Local Plan will enable us to embed those further. We are already encouraging good practice through our guidance.

[Supplementary planning documents and design guidance - Staffordshire Moorlands District Council \(staffs Moorlands.gov.uk\)](https://staffs Moorlands.gov.uk)

We recognise that we must lead by example in areas such as driving the supply chain with procurement policy and procedures. Meanwhile we must leverage the collective impact of community groups, parishes and town councils to help each other and be more than the sum of their parts when it comes to taking action to help people to action.

The Council uses existing channels to communicate widely about what it does and why. It has also shared good practice to residents and businesses to engage and inspire.

We are working together with Staffordshire County and all the boroughs and districts on a joint communications plan to embed and enhance messages. Part of this programme was to host the giant carbon bubble representing one tonne of carbon dioxide. Visitors to Leek recently had a bit of a surprise seeing this in the street.

Working with Support Staffordshire we have set up Staffordshire Moorlands Green Network which meets regularly to share good practice and collaborate. The network is made up of active environmental groups and organisations including farmer representatives.

We need to work better internally in order to join up community efforts. Joining up community initiatives would maximise reach and hook in those disengaged.

We recognise that young people will have to consider climate change in their future lives and careers. It is important that they are able to confidently discuss and potentially constructively debate around climate and nature themes.

Working with Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS) the pilot Youth ECO Leaders programme was established. The programme had three parts along the learn-talk-do model

- Carbon literacy
- Debate in the Council Chamber
- Practical Project or volunteering.

Each participant would receive a completion certificate which they could add to their CV or can be used in a personal statement for university or college in the future. Unfortunately some elements of this were unsuccessful. We are working with SCVYS and other groups to develop an alternative.

Community Climate Change and Nature Fund

Our Community [Climate Change and Nature Fund](#) is open to community groups who need a little help to get a project started or sustain it. We hope this will help to expand our network of interested groups outside those who we know that already doing what they can to move the agenda forward.

The groups we have supported so far are:

Group	Project
Endon & Stanley Action Group	Bat boxes
On the Horizon	Walking
Foxlowe Arts Centre	Heating Controls
Butterton Village w/MCA	Tree planting
Bradnop Village Hall	Roof insulation
Foxt Village Hall	Solar and battery toilet
Stockton Brook Time and Space	nature engagement events. The Big Draw
Whiston Play Area	Wildflower beds as part of play area upgrade
Biddulph Youth Community Zone (BYCZ)	Contribution to LED supply and fit project

Quarnford and Heathly Quarnford memorial Hall	Garden development with bee-friendly trees
Brown Edge Allotments	Create space for community groups to learn about horticulture
MCA	HUG Arts Festival 2023
Back Dane	Tree Planting event
Swifts of Leek (MCA)	Swift Boxes
OUTSIDE - Biddulph Library	Wellbeing garden - arts
Oakamoor village Group	Establish an orchard
Werrington Library	Wellbeing garden - with kids
MCA Repair Café	Room hire for Repair Cafes (10 sessions)
Leek Allotments	School growing club
Outside – Trees	Biddulph East Housing Estate and Leek North Housing Estate with your Housing light up trees, Engagement
Christ Church Biddulph Moor Parochial Church Council - Church Hall Lighting Scheme	LED lighting
Greenwood Growth CIC - Plant with Me	Forest Schools & Plant trees with families
Bolton Gate Arts - R & D	Climate Performance Art piece - Facilitators
Oakmoor Village Group - Phase 2	Phase 2 orchard, Stile, footpath
Waterhouses Allotment Association - Water Harvesting	Rainwater harvesting - recycled materials
Moorlands Climate Action - HUG 2024	HUG Arts Festival
Grindon Village Hall Trust	Grindon Village Hall Loft Insulation

Creative Cheadle Staffordshire	Courtyard Garden
Outside	Bell Vue Rail Garden

Table 2 Community Climate Fund Awardees

Suggested Actions 22/23 Updates

2022/23 Actions	Update
Maintain the Community Climate and Nature Fund	Budget set £20k plus support from AES. Active panel to assess applications
Continue to forge partnerships and collaborate	Internal mapping of groups and officers in progress
Continue to share good practice	Other authority partners and community groups
Work better with Parish and Town Councils on climate and nature	This has been raised as an issue to resolve.
Continue to collaborate with Staffordshire County Council	Active in all the strategic groups and project specific groups

Performance Indicators

The performance indicators are aligned to the aims of the Climate Change Plan along with other indicators used in the performance framework of the Council.

The table below collates the most up to date available on these indicators and shows subsets of the overall operational carbon footprint of the Council.

Sources range from Government data sets, strategic partner and energy and fuel records and our air quality monitoring systems.

We have asked for figures for the waste fleet to be separated out and need to add that to our process.

A new tool has become available for calculating the full emissions of the waste collection process. We are assessing the tool to consider if it would be a useful addition to the performance indicators.

Changes in waste legislation are imminent and may impact future food waste collections

The Plan for Nature has been approved and will provide a framework for nature-based targets for the district, including a mechanism for canopy cover and other metrics to measure, monitor and target.

Operational Carbon Footprint

The council has committed to report annual operational carbon emissions.

Unfortunately, the new mileage reporting system does not seem to be able to provide accurate mileage information for staff and councillors. We are working to resolve this. This is a small portion of our operational emission, so they have been omitted on this occasion

The tables below list the tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent emitted through the Council's operations in the listed functions.

Operational Footprint	Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Compared to baseline	%age reduction
Energy in Buildings	tCO2e	421	341	311	335	318	-103	24.5%
Fleet	tCO2e	420	444	366	166	474	54	-12.8%
Leisure	tCO2e	798	405	677	778	764	-34	4.2%
TOTAL	tCO2e	1639	1191	1354	1279	1556	-83	5.06%

Table 3 Operational Footprint

Emissions from buildings including leisure have decreased. This will be further decreased with the commissioning of the new plant and solar arrays on our leisure centres.

The fleet had reduced emissions with using spent hydrogenated vegetable oil, however volatility in the market price resulted in returning to diesel.

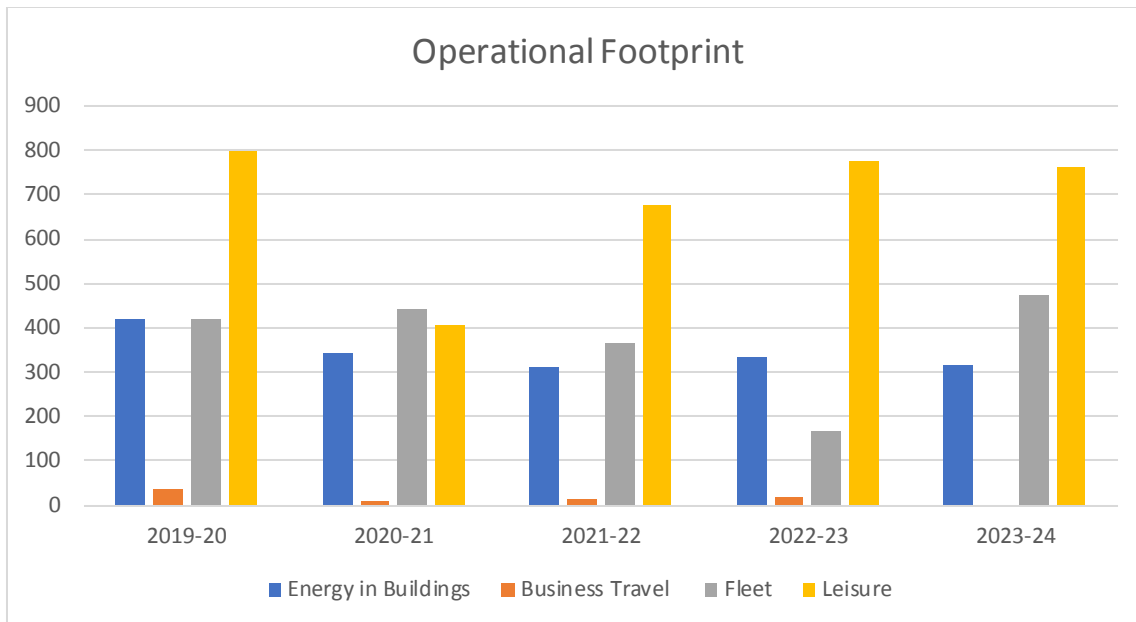


Figure 2 Operational Footprint total by year

The emissions footprint is calculated using the Local Government Association conversion factors.

The Council has pledged to publish this footprint annually as part of the membership with Staffordshire Sustainability Board and the partnership with Staffordshire County Council and all boroughs and districts in the area.

The council includes leisure and waste services in the emissions total as these are core services, despite having third party management organisations. The council works closely with these organisations to support emissions reductions initiatives, but aligning and reporting on third parties remains problematic.

Since the transfer of operations to Norse we have not managed to capture their emissions in the same way as the other partner deliveries. The Climate Change Plan needs reviewed and aligned to national targets and objectives, whilst remaining ambitious there needs to be realistic timescales.

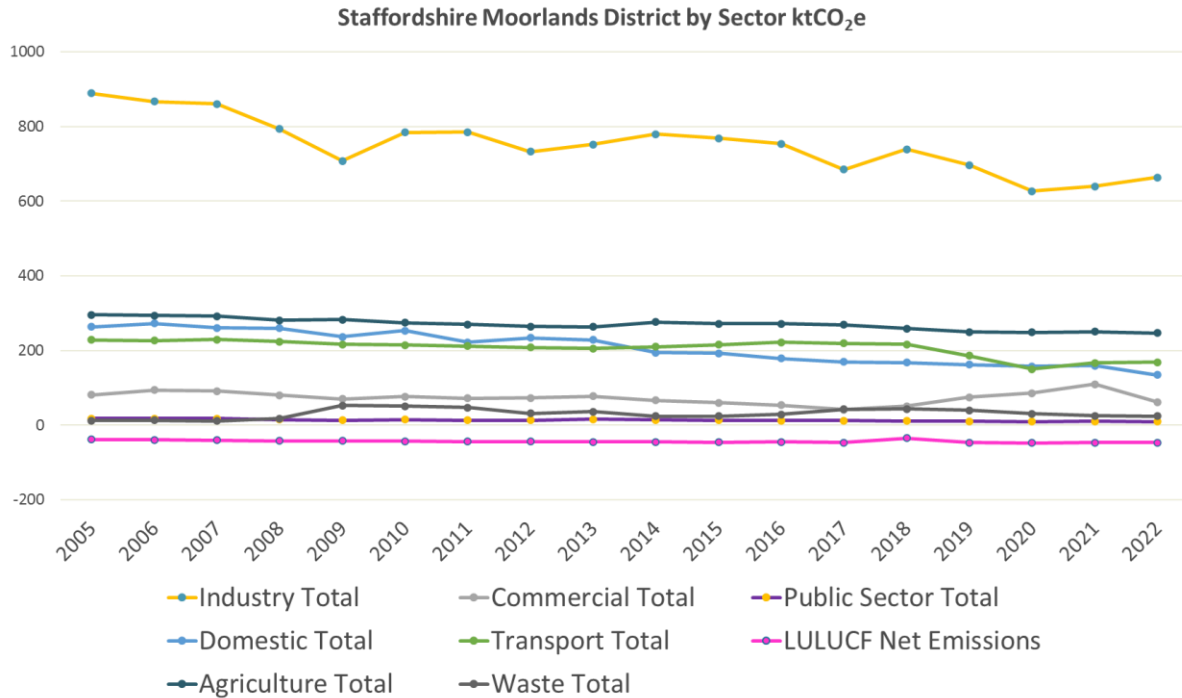
AIM	MEASURE						
		Units	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
We will support action including retrofitting to reduce fuel poverty, prevent health hazards relating to damp and excess cold. and reduce emissions from homes	Emissions from residential buildings (baseline 2019/2020)	ktCO2e	158	155	134	not available	not available
	10% of households will be living in fuel poverty by 2025 and 0% by 2030. (baseline 2019/2020)	households	16%	18%		15.8%	not available
	Proportion of properties with an EPC less than 10 years old (baseline 2019/2020)		13%			19,973 (56%)	22,644 (50%)
	Proportion of properties EPC less than 10 years old with rating D to G (baseline 2019/2020)		72%			14,274 (71%)	15,917 (70%)
Reduce emissions from Council vehicles and Council related activity	Fleet vehicles - Carbon dioxide equivalent	ktCO2e	420	444	366	166	not available
	Officer business miles (grey fleet) Carbon dioxide equivalent	ktCO2e	34	11	12	18	not available
	Officer business miles (grey fleet)	miles	122,960	39,644	46,299	62,880	not available
	Councillor business miles carbon dioxide equivalent	tCO2e	0.7			2.4	not available
We will encourage and support the increased use of EV vehicles	Number of Electric Vehicles (not including hybrids)	vehicles (commercial/private/car HGV/LGV/motor-bike)	113	173	313	495	763
	NEW Indicator Electric vehicle charging points in area - publicly accessible	Publicly available points	8	9	14	10	14
We will work in partnership to reduce travel and transport related emissions	Vehicle-related emissions	ktCO2e	184	150	168	not available	not available
We will reduce energy use and improve the energy efficiency of Council buildings including Leisure Centres	Emissions from Council buildings - SMDC	ktCO2e	421	341	311	335	318
	Emissions from leisure centres - SMDC incl Water Supply	ktCO2e	798	405	677	778	764
We will reduce the number of products purchased by the Council, chose low carbon/carbon neutral products where possible, and seek	Develop monitoring for Sustainable Procurement Policy	TBC					To be developed

to use contractors who are working towards carbon neutrality							
We will increase tree cover, and improve wildlife habitats and biodiversity	There will be 20% urban canopy cover by 2025 and 24% by 2030.		17-19%				to be developed
We will work in partnership to deliver our Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)	Mortality attributable to PM2.5 pollution across the District will remain below the national average.	µg/m3				10.7	10.8
	Annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO2) across the district		Leek 39.4 µg/m3 and Cellarhead 42.3 µg/m3 (2019 Air Quality Report)				(39 Sites) 100% < 40 ug/m3; 100% < 36% um3
We will implement measures to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's waste and recycling service	Emissions from waste (fleet). Waste emissions	tCO2e	919 tCO2e				To be developed
We will work with Staffordshire County Council and other Staffordshire Councils to encourage recycling and the broader greener agenda	% of waste reused, recycled or composted by 2025.	percentage of all collected waste by weight	56.40%	57.70%	54.50%	52.30%	54.50%
	Residual collected waste per household	kg per household	379	405	411	386.37	380
Total Waste for district	Household collected waste total	Tonnes	38,275	42,344	40,127	33,703	35,226
Waste per capita		kg per capita	389	430	418	370	387

Table 4 Performance Indicator

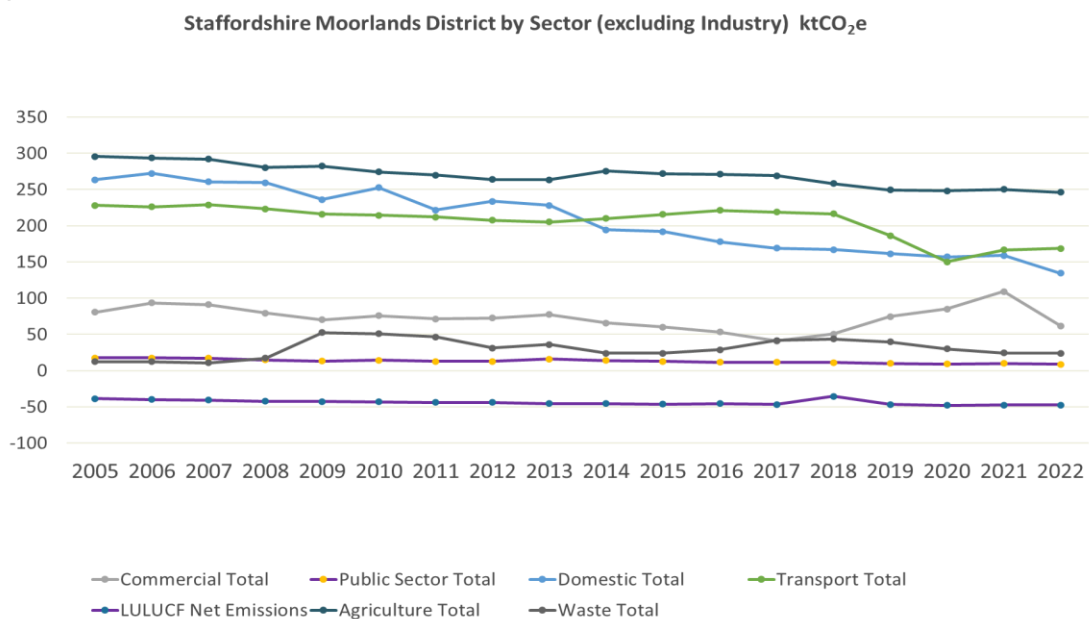
Targets and District Emissions

Staffordshire Moorlands' district emissions are accentuated by the cement industry. The graph below represents emissions dating back to 2005.



Removing the industrial emissions provides more granularity for the other subsectors.

Land use figures are below zero owing to the carbon sequestration capacity of the peat moorlands.



Develop Delivery Plans

We aim to review the existing part 1 and 2 plans and create a separate strategy and one comprehensive plan which is more easily navigable. Within the plan we will identify those aims that the council has operational control over and those we can influence. We may set targets for operations and district separately. Establishing ambitions but realistic targets that the public can understand, along with visible pathways and milestones (including for Part 2 district-wide emissions) will be a priority for the coming year.

In doing this we will have regard to national and international targets, those of other relevant authorities, and reflect the particular make-up of the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Developing a strategic housing strategy to maximise funding opportunities and target using available data, we will aim to scale up the uptake of retrofit for energy efficiency and small-scale renewables.

Working with Staffordshire County Council, we are facilitating the use of our car parks to improve the electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the district. This is specifically aimed at residents but can be used by anyone. This will provide a coherent and consistent service across Staffordshire which will improve the end use experience. This is key to encourage people to adopt electric vehicles.

The new Sustainable Procurement Policy is to be embedded into operations through training of budget holders to understand the principles and the mechanisms.

Review the pilot Eco Youth Leader programme to improve and develop.

Sustain and grow the Staffordshire Moorlands Green Network.

Climate supplementary planning document toolkit proposal in Autumn.

Community mapping for greater cohesion.

Suggested Action

- Set up an-Alliance wide database of groups and their interests complying with GDPR. Tracking engagement in events.

Reports

Project-specific reports will go through the relevant overview & scrutiny panels.

ⁱ [Vehicle licensing statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vehicle-licensing-statistics-data-tables)