

Climate Change

Strategic
Development
Framework

Revision 1
January 2024



Foreword

Staffordshire's climate is changing and is predicted to continue to change over the coming decades. We can expect for summers to be hotter and drier, winters milder and wetter and extreme weather events more frequent throughout the year.

At Staffordshire County Council we are committed to tackling climate change and have a target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. We also recognise the importance of preparing for the future and building resilience to the changes in the climate we will face.

Our pro-active approach strives to achieve a healthier population, thriving local environment and prosperous county in challenging times.

We have achieved a 50% in reduction in greenhouse gas emissions since 2019, which has been a great achievement. However, we know we have a long way to go to achieve our net zero ambition and a climate resilient county and we cannot do this on our own. Everyone can play a part. We will continue to build and strengthen links with our partners and communities to allow collaborative working across the county. By working together, providing leadership and support we can make our climate change ambitions a reality for all of Staffordshire.



County Councillor
Simon Tagg

Cabinet Member for Environment,
Infrastructure and Climate Change



Context & background

A 2018 report produced by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, nations need to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. A further IPCC report in 2022 stated to achieve the 1.5°C limit, global emissions must peak by 2025 and by 2030 have reduced by 43% compared to 2019 levels.

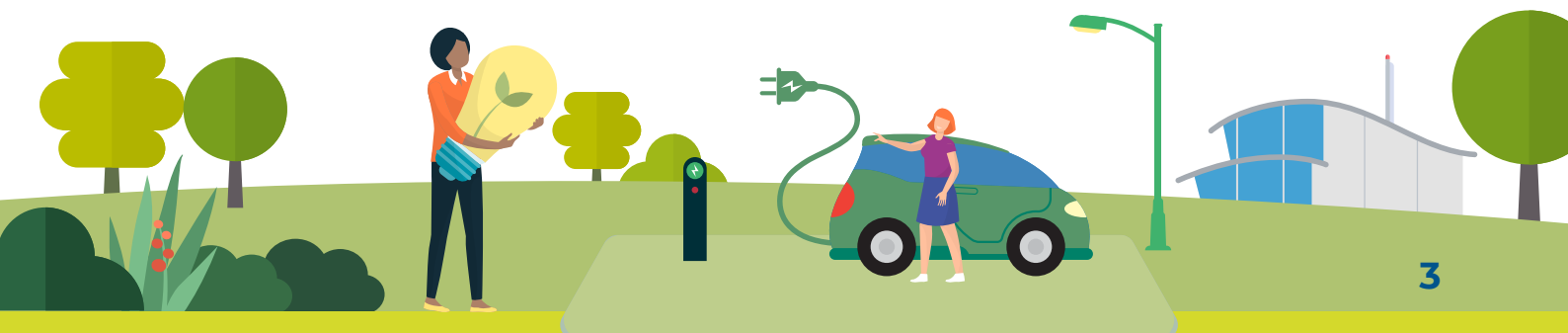
The world is warming faster than at any point in recorded history. In the UK the ten warmest years have all occurred since 2003. The consequences of this warming are being felt in Staffordshire including endangering habitats and species, intensifying heat stress on buildings and the health of the population, particularly the most vulnerable.

Solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions are referred to as mitigation. Putting plans in place to reduce the impact of change are referred to as adaptation. Together these are essential for creating a county resilient to climate change.

In 2019, the UK became the first major economy to pass a law requiring the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. This means we need to remove an equal amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere as we release into it. Following the setting of the UK net zero target, Staffordshire County Council members declared a Climate Change Emergency. The declaration made a commitment for the Council to achieve net zero organisational greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. A climate change action plan was produced identifying key priorities for emission reduction.

The Council led on establishing the Staffordshire Sustainability Board in 2022. This Board is made up of elected members and represents a collaborative forum to influence change and encourage organisations and individuals across Staffordshire to join forces to combat climate change. In 2023 the Council led on producing the Staffordshire Climate Change Adaptation Strategy on behalf of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board. All Staffordshire councils have adopted this Strategy. The Strategy includes a range of objectives to reduce exposure to climate change risk and capitalise on new opportunities to provide a safe, comfortable place to live and work.

Together this Strategic Framework and the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy provide a strong foundation for delivering actions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating a resilient county.



Staffordshire County Council

Climate Change Vision

**Staffordshire County Council
will achieve net zero organisational
emissions by 2050 and we will
deliver our services to enable
thriving, resilient and
sustainable communities.**



Taking action for climate change

For Staffordshire, climate change is likely to mean warmer wetter winters and hotter drier summers with more extreme weather events such as greater flooding and heatwaves. These changes are already being experienced. For example, in 2022 temperatures exceeded 40 degrees for the first time. Increased frequency of flooding and extended periods of drought are also being recorded. Measures to reduce the Council's footprint and build climate change resilience across the services offer the potential to make long-term savings and reduce risk. Using our direct and indirect influence we can help foster positive change to achieve a healthier environment, economy and communities.

Staffordshire County Council greenhouse emissions performance

Each year the council monitors its greenhouse gas emissions footprint and has been successful in achieving a 50% reduction since declaring a climate change emergency. The council's corporate estate, waste and transport continue to form a large proportion of the footprint and are priorities for emission reduction or elimination. We recognise that reducing emissions to zero by 2050 will not be possible for all services. To achieve our net zero target, we will investigate options for sequestration (removing carbon from our atmosphere, for example by tree planting) where carbon emissions cannot be reasonably reduced any further.

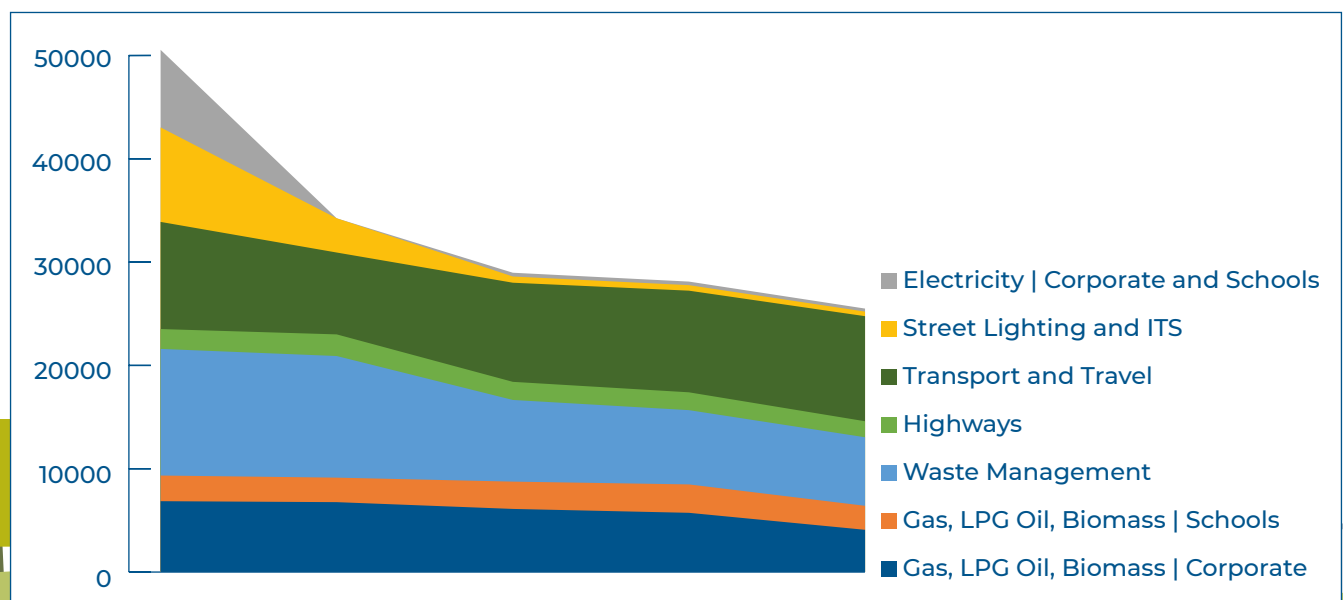
Building climate change resilience

Work is ongoing to reduce emissions to mitigate global warming.

This can slow the pace of global warming but not stop it. Climate change is already impacting people's lives, nature and infrastructure.

It also has the potential to impact all our council services.

The importance of building resilience into our services and local environment and helping communities and businesses cope with the effects of the changing climate will be considered in tandem with reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Principles for achieving net zero and building a county resilient to climate change

- Ensure all council services understand the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to consider and mitigate the risk of the changing climate.
- Be innovative, aspirational and positive leading by example.
- Be positive in our approach, embrace opportunities and build on our successes.
- Empower our staff and members to suggest solutions and commit to delivering the net zero target.
- Have transparent processes and make the best use of the resources we have.



Climate change mitigation and adaptation priority themes

We have identified five priority themes to deliver our vision.

Working together

Share knowledge to stimulate action on climate change
Encourage waste minimisation:

- reduce waste generation
- Increase recycling rates

Embrace circular economy principles

Natural environment and greenspaces

Holistic approach to water catchment management

Enhanced ecological resilience and biodiversity

Greater incorporation of blue and green infrastructure for developments

Health, wellbeing and safety

Increase access to walking and cycling infrastructure

Minimise health inequalities and health risks from the changing climate

Climate change is integrated into business continuity planning

Local economy

Enable the skills to transition to a green economy

Assist business to

- understand climate risks and integrate resilience.
- understand carbon footprinting and reduce emissions
- encourage new technologies and innovation

Critical infrastructure, transport and built environment

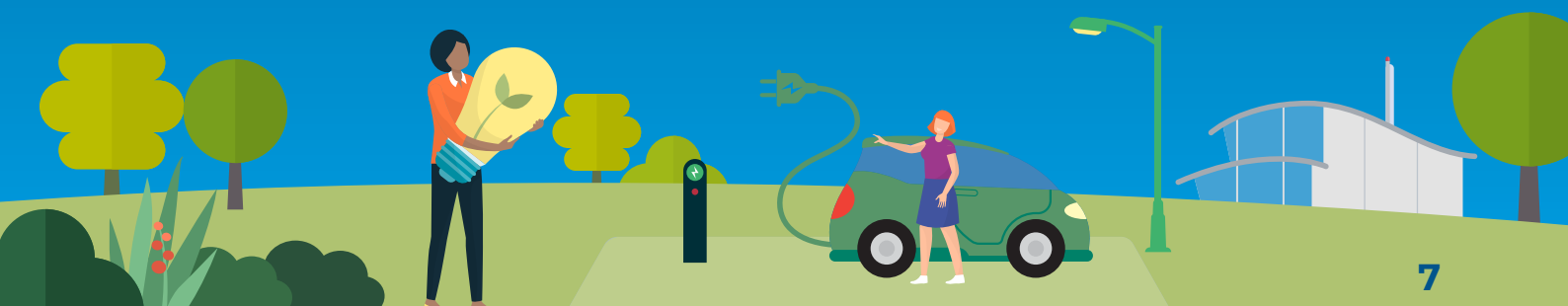
Reduce the carbon footprint of our buildings, infrastructure and fleet

Build climate change resilience into our infrastructure and built environment

Encourage low or zero carbon transport

Increase renewable energy generation

Implement water efficiency measures and flood risk management



Opportunities and levels of influence

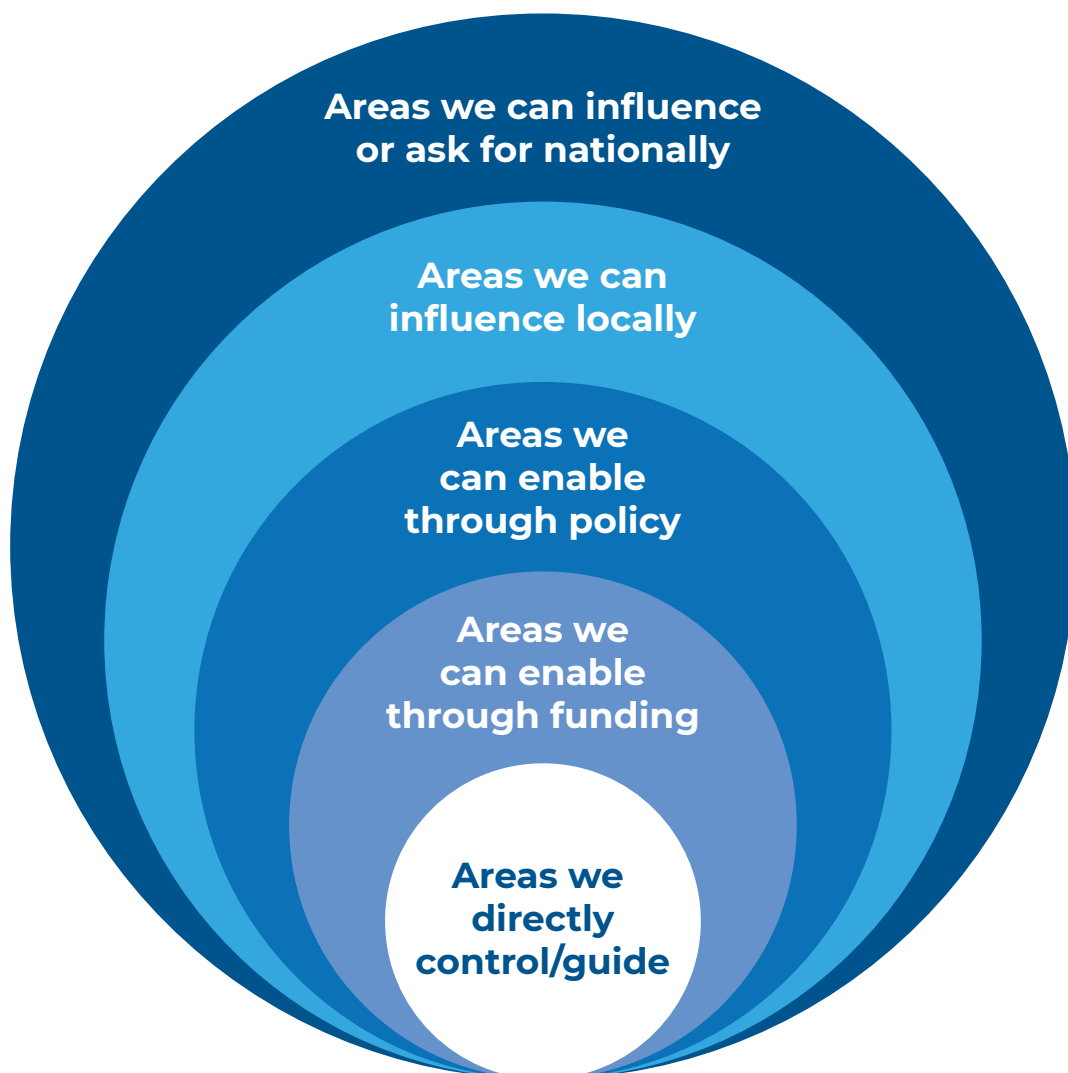
As a council we have direct control of less than 1% of greenhouse gas emissions in Staffordshire. With the help of our partners and communities we will be able to make a bigger impact.

All services will need to play a significant role to achieve the climate change vision. It will require leadership at multiple levels, new ways of thinking and the ability of decision makers to connect with others, working towards joint solutions.

To achieve the vision, we will prioritise the greenhouse gas emissions which the council has direct control over and the greatest degree of influence and work

internally and with partners to increase climate change resilience.

The county council can have varying influence over greenhouse gas emissions and climate change risks that occur within the council area. We will work with our partners and the wider community, to ensure we are considering all the areas we can influence to get a truly countywide approach to climate change.



Our approach to delivery

Our vision cannot be achieved through one decision or investment. Change will be required over a number of years and requires us to be flexible so we can respond to new opportunities.

All our services will take action and we will work with partners where possible to reduce Staffordshire's wider carbon emissions.

Working internally

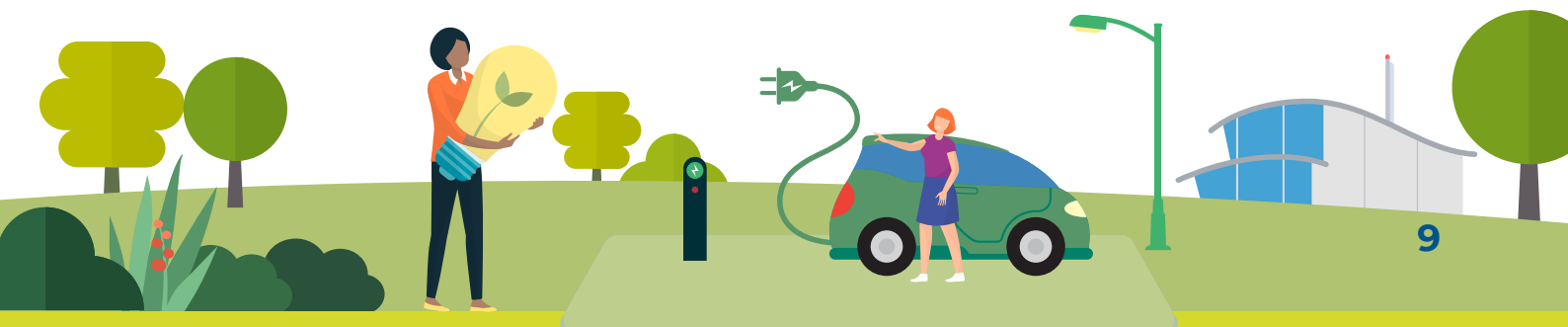
we will

- Ensure our approach is based on robust data with climate change impacts considered across the organisation.
- Prioritise where to focus our efforts on activities where we have the most effective control or influence.
- Make sure all internal strategies and policies reflect our climate change vision.
- Ensure that our actions follow consultation and agreement with elected members.
- Make sure our outwardly focussed strategies reflect the vision, and encourage our partners and communities to do the same wherever possible.
- Ensure any potential impacts on climate and the environment are considered and reflected in our decision making and reporting.

Working with partners and our community

we will

- Seek out opportunities to work with partners and the local community to encourage the climate change agenda, and support any local improvements.
- Give people the skills they need to drive the climate change agenda forward.
- We will encourage and support the transition of the Green Economy within Staffordshire.





Reviewing our progress

The Action plan will be monitored to track our progress and refreshed as required. Our performance, achievement and areas of improvement will be summarised each year in an annual report.

Plans, performances and strategies will be regularly reviewed as we monitor progress and as new technologies and innovative ideas are identified.

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