

# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT POLICY STATEMENT

## Vision

Tackling climate change and making Cambridge cleaner and greener is a key priority of the Council. The Council's vision is for Cambridge to be 'A city that takes robust action to tackle the local and global threat of climate change, both internally and in partnership with local organisations and residents, and to minimise its environmental impact by cutting carbon, waste and pollution'.

The Council is committed to deliver this vision by promoting a high quality and sustainable environment and working in partnership with residents, communities, business and the third sector to maximise opportunities to lower carbon emissions, reduce waste and consumption of resources, and improve biodiversity, air quality and climate change resilience.

This commitment is highlighted in our [Corporate Plan for 2022-2027](#) which sets out our four key priorities for the city:

- Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies
- Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in greatest need
- Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness
- Modernising the council to lead a green city that is fair for all

## Commitments

**Climate Change and carbon reduction:** The Council declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019, and the Council's [Climate Change Strategy 2021-2026](#) shares a vision for Cambridge to be net zero carbon by 2030. The strategy has also set a target to reduce the Council's direct carbon emissions from its corporate buildings, fleet vehicles and business travel to net zero by 2030.

**Biodiversity and the local environment:** The Council declared a Biodiversity Emergency in 2019, and the Council's [Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2030](#) aims to secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the City by 2025 and support the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030.

Through the strategy, the Council commits to: biodiversity mainstreaming so that nature is considered and embedded into everything we do, ensuring a coherent resilient nature network through Cambridge and ensuring nature is understood and experienced by all.

The Council will make its streets and open spaces and communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change and manage the city's streets and open spaces for the benefit of both wildlife and people by ensuring that protection and enhancement of biodiversity is taken into account in all development decisions and management practices.

**Trees:** The Council will work to ensure a resilient tree population and will manage the city's trees so as to maximise the benefits they offer whilst ensuring that the trees we leave for future generations, and the character they bring to our City, are better than those we have inherited. The Council's [Tree Strategy 2016-2026](#) sets a target to increase tree canopy cover across the city by 2% to 19% by 2030.

**Water:** The Council is tackling issues of water quality and water scarcity in the city which are mainly caused by abstraction, wastewater treatment discharges and agricultural diffuse pollution. To address these issues the Council has commissioned an Integrated Water Management Study to inform the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The study will help to develop a sustainable development strategy for the Local Plan and robust policies on water quality and efficiency. The Council is working collaboratively with a number of bodies on this, including Water Resources East, who are planning regional solutions to address these issues. The current Cambridge Local Plan (adopted in 2018) includes policies to increase water efficiency including a target for new developments to ensure water efficiency does not exceed 110litres/per/day and that they are designed to optimise the opportunities for efficient water use, reuse and recycling, including integrated water management and water conservation.

**Waste:** The Council is committed to increasing recycling in the city in order to maximise use of finite resources, thereby minimising energy use and waste disposal. The Council develops services that result in reductions in carbon emissions and support the waste hierarchy: putting waste prevention first, supporting and enabling reuse, and encouraging recycling. The Council supports national and European pressures for change to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste that is sent to landfill. The Council will coordinate and enhance the treatment (by the Waste Disposal Authority) of collected material waste from across the city in the most economical and environmentally responsible manner available, in accordance with statutory requirements and will provide help, advice and education where required.

**Commercial Waste:** In providing commercial waste collection services for businesses and organisations in Cambridge, the Council will ensure that concern for the environment actively influences our working practice every day. Our business and operational activities demonstrate commitment to the prevention of pollution and continual improvement, whilst complying with all relevant legislation and other environmental guidelines relating to the organisation's environmental aspects.

**Transport:** The Council will lead by example to tackle emissions from transport in the city and reduce concentrations of air pollutants and the [Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Strategy](#) outlines the Council's commitment to increase uptake of electric vehicles and supports the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) in Cambridge. The Council will also reduce its direct travel emissions by increasing the number of staff not driving to/from work, and increasing the number cycling to work, choosing healthy commuting options.

**Air Quality:** The Council's [Air Quality Action Plan 2018-2023](#) sets out how Cambridge City Council will improve areas of poor air quality in the city and maintain a good level of air quality in a growing city. Cambridge City Council has worked with the Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridgeshire County Council to identify a range of actions which are required to tackle air quality and will take responsibility for ensuring they are progressed. The new Air Quality Action Plan 2023 will take into account legal changes brought in by the Environment Act and will include more action on smoke from solid fuels as well as transport emissions. The Council has also committed to the

renewal and replacement of the network of air quality monitors by the end of 2022, which will ensure that policy is underpinned by accurate data.

**Contaminated land:** The Council is actively committed to identifying and dealing with damaging pollution of the environment in the city within the constraints of national legislation to protect and improve the quality of our environment. The Council's [Contaminated Land Strategy](#) details how the Council will fulfil its statutory inspection duty to identify and remediate contaminated land in Cambridge and restore it to safe, meaningful and climate resilient use.

## Objectives

The Council has identified a range of environmental objectives relating to its own buildings, vehicles, land, services, and to the wider city of Cambridge.

**The Council's medium-term objectives** includes to: Promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the city and sub-region.

**The Council's Climate Change Strategy 2021-2026** has six objectives which detail how the Council will address the causes and consequences of climate change:

1. Reducing carbon emissions from City Council buildings, land, vehicles and services. The Council's [Carbon Management Plan 2021-2026](#) will help to deliver the target of reducing direct carbon emissions from its buildings, fleet vehicles and business travel to net zero by 2030.
2. Reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions from homes and buildings in Cambridge by promoting energy efficiency measures, retrofitting homes and buildings, sustainable construction, renewable energy sources, and encouraging behaviour change.
3. Reducing carbon emissions from transport in Cambridge by promoting sustainable transport, installing electric vehicle charging points as part of our Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Strategy, reducing car travel and traffic congestion, and encouraging behaviour change.
4. Reducing consumption of resources, reducing waste, and increasing recycling in Cambridge by piloting household food waste collections, reducing single-use plastics, and encouraging behaviour change.
5. Promoting sustainable food by encouraging sustainable food practice and procurement, enabling and celebrating locally grown food, promoting behaviour change, and working in partnership with local voluntary and community groups.

6. Supporting Council services, residents and businesses to adapt to the impacts of climate change by promoting water efficiency measures, retrofitting flood measures, reducing overheating in buildings, increasing biodiversity and increasing the tree canopy cover.

**The Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2030** contains seven objectives which detail how the Council will protect and enhance biodiversity in Cambridge:

1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the City by 2025 and support the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030.
2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network.
3. To promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting coordinated action in our communities, businesses and institutions.
4. To ensure that biodiversity is considered by all council service functions and projects.
5. To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs.
6. To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.
7. To establish long term, species and habitat surveys and monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city.

**The Council's Tree Strategy 2016-2026** details four aims:

1. To sustainably manage the Council's own trees and those it manages by agreement.
2. To foster a resilient tree population that responds to the impacts of climate change and urban expansion.
3. To raise awareness of trees being a vital community asset, through promoting continued research, through education via the provision of advice and through partnership working.
4. To make efficient and strategic use of the Council's regulatory powers for the protection of trees of current and future value.

**The Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Strategy 2019** commits to supporting the uptake of electric vehicles in Cambridge through four objectives:

1. To identify sources of funding to develop and install EV Charging infrastructure and where appropriate pursue that funding.

2. To robustly consider EV as a preference for all City Council fleet replacement and new vehicle purchase, where appropriate vehicles are available and meet our operational needs.
3. For the City Council to develop a commercial project to deliver charge points in our car parks in the short term and wider property holdings in the medium term.
4. To promote funding opportunities and provide support for partner organisations to deliver EV charging infrastructure where they are the most appropriate lead (e.g. County Council / on street charging).

**The Air Quality Action Plan 2018-2023** sets out three priorities for maintaining and improving air quality in the city:

1. Reduce local traffic emissions as quickly as possible to meet National Air Quality Objectives.
2. Maintain pollutant levels below National Air Quality Objectives.
3. Improve public health by reducing population exposure to air pollutants.

**The Commercial Waste Service (CWS) short-term and long-term strategy** identified the following as objectives important for the CWS, and the larger Greater Cambridge Waste Service, to achieve:

1. Reducing waste to landfill by increasing recycling.
2. Assist businesses and organisations to reduce their carbon emissions through more effective waste management of waste.
3. To reduce the Council's carbon dioxide emissions and manage the risks to its staff, property and functions, from climate change

**The Contaminated Land Strategy** details the Council's priorities in detailing with contaminated land:

- 1.To protect human health
- 2.To protect controlled waters
- 3.To protect designated ecosystems
- 4.To prevent damage to property
- 5.To prevent any further contamination of land
- 6.To encourage voluntary remediation
- 7.To encourage re-use of brownfield land

**The Council adopted the current Cambridge Local Plan in 2018** which includes a number of policies designed to ensure that new development in Cambridge reduces its environmental impact by minimising carbon emissions, flood risk, pollution and pressure on resources such as water and helping to protect and enhance biodiversity including:

- A minimum 19% reduction in carbon emissions on 2013 Building Regulations requirements (now superseded by the latest Building Regulations which require a 31% reduction in emissions on 2013). Non-residential development is required to achieve BREEAM excellent.
- Support for the provision of renewable and/or low carbon energy generation, including community energy networks, district heating schemes and solar energy.
- A requirement to prepare sustainability statements as part of planning applications, which sets out how developers will achieve carbon reductions through reducing energy demand, energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable energy generation, as well as integrating measures into developments to enable them to adapt to our changing climate and water efficiency measures.
- Water efficiency requirements for all new residential and non-residential development
- A green belt policy which states that new development in the Green Belt will not be approved except in very special circumstances, in line with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- A policy to protect the River Cam: development proposals that are situated along the River Cam should where possible enhance the natural resources of the River and provide opportunities for renaturalisation of the river
- Supporting climate change adaptation by requiring that any flat roofs should be a green or brown roof and requiring the use of sustainable drainage systems for all new development
- A policy to support climate change measures in heritage assets
- Requirements related to electric vehicle charging provision
- The above measures are supported by guidance in the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and Biodiversity SPD

## Actions

The Council has a community leadership role and will deliver its vision through its own activities, the services it provides and partnership working to demonstrate good practice and encourage residents, businesses and organisations to also take action to reduce environmental impacts.

The following environmental issues are identified within the medium-term objectives as priority areas for action:

- To tackle the causes and consequences of climate change
- To encourage sustainable waste management
- To promote more sustainable modes of transport
- To raise awareness of environmental issues and promote sustainable lifestyles
- To manage growth to achieve sustainable neighbourhoods

The following actions will be taken to reduce the Councils environmental impact and to improve the environment in the City:

### **Actions to reduce the Council's environmental impact**

- **The use of water, energy and carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases, directly linked to our activities, will be reduced.** This will include reducing our reliance on fossil fuels to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, increasing the proportion of energy coming from low and zero carbon technologies and ensuring the efficient use of energy and water;
- **Sustainable travel choices for staff will be enabled and encouraged** by incentivising more sustainable forms of employee travel to and from the place of work, promoting working arrangements and policies which reduce the requirement to travel and improve work-life balance, and providing facilities which support alternative sustainable travel options;
- **Emissions from our fleet vehicles will be lowered** by using technology to optimise fleet routes and purchasing ultra-low emission vehicles (vans, trucks, refuse collection vehicles) when they are due for replacement which could lead to a fully electric Council fleet by 2028;
- **The environmental quality, resilience and performance of our buildings and assets will be improved.** We will work with partners to promote and facilitate improvements to the environmental performance of our buildings (such as administration buildings, community centres and swimming pools) and the wider landscape and public realm across the city to reduce energy consumption, heat loss and carbon emissions from these buildings; including through implementing a range of carbon reduction projects and energy efficiency measures such as solar PV, air source heat pumps where possible, LED lighting, investing in building fabric such as insulation to reduce heat loss and require less heating, and building management control systems to minimise heat and water usage;
- **Further investment in our buildings and facilities will be obtained** through applying for Government funding and grants (where eligible and relevant) to implement further carbon reduction schemes and measures;
- **The environmental quality, resilience and biodiversity of our land, water bodies and landscapes across our city will be protected and enhanced** including through tree planting, implementing management plans for all City Council owned nature reserves and wildlife sites, reducing use of herbicides, and implementing sustainable measures to reduce surface water and river flooding
- **An Environmental Management System will be developed and implemented** for the Streets & Open spaces team which we will seek accreditation to ISO14001, which will help to ensure that biodiversity constraints and opportunities are embedded into the work the team undertake and that positive steps for promoting biodiversity are enacted;
- **Regular engagement with businesses and local organisations will focus on the objectives of the Climate Change Strategy**, working collaboratively and enabling change which supports our net zero carbon vision for Cambridge;
- **All tenderers will be required to demonstrate actions to support our net zero carbon vision** for Cambridge and the Council's net zero target, ensuring that all

procurements consider the environmental, social and economic well-being of the City and surrounding area, in their submissions;

- **Voluntary and community groups will be supported** to deliver activities in Cambridge that will help achieve the objectives of the Council's Climate Change Strategy, through the Council's Sustainable City Grant;
- **Targets will be set, progress reviewed, and we will publish information regularly, where appropriate, including in the council's Annual Climate Change Strategy Report** (without duplicating existing reporting processes);
- **Appropriate training, instruction, and supervision to all our employees will be provided** such that they are able to perform their duties in a way that supports our environment policy and objectives, including mandatory environmental awareness training and supplementary net zero carbon training for managers;

### **Actions to improve the environment in the city**

- **Air quality in the city will be improved** by reducing emissions from traffic through: licensing policies to increase the number of electric and hybrid taxis, parking policies, the provision of electric vehicle charge points for residents and taxis, and working with partners to reduce the need to travel and provide lower emission travel alternatives, such as low/zero emissions buses;
- **The environmental impact of transport and travel will be reduced** through our work with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Greater Cambridge Partnership, County Council, businesses, organisations and others and we will promote and plan for sustainable modes of transport that reduce environmental impacts;
- **Waste to landfill will be reduced** by encouraging a shift to a circular economy, reducing the use of single-use plastics and packaging, continually exploring opportunities to increase the types of material that can be recycled, and increasing recycling rates through engagement with residents and businesses. Residents and businesses are actively encouraged to recycle through the provision of free kitchen caddies and green bins to residents and through the provision of pricing incentives for commercial customer;
- **The quality of recycling will be improved** through regular review of reports of contamination to identify frequency of contamination and implementing a set education process (including reviewing signage to ensure it is adequate, letters, leaflets and door-knocking) to raise awareness and reduce contamination of waste;
- **Waste minimisation and recycling will be ensured and promoted** through identifying opportunities in the development of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, including the minimisation of construction waste;
- **Biodiversity across the city will be enhanced** by supporting and working with the Cambridge Nature Network to enhance and link core sites through the City, enhancing water sources for fish stocks, promoting the use of retrofit green roofs on garden buildings and extensions and establishing grassland restoration trials;



- **Brownfield land within the city will be identified and cleaned up where contamination has occurred, it will be restored to safe, meaningful and climate resilient use**, working in partnership with developers. The redevelopment of brownfield sites reduces the pressure on greenfield land and allows for the sustainable use of formerly underdevelopment/derelict land throughout the City;
- **Water quality will be restored** in chalk streams through the promotion of sustainable management of water resources, working in partnership with key stakeholders;
- **Existing Local Plan policies will continue to be implemented** on climate change mitigation, water efficiency, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and permeable paving and surfaces, and will continue to develop policies in the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan to deliver net zero carbon buildings, manage water supply and flood risks and address potential overheating and wider climate risks in new developments;
- **The Council will explore how the Greater Cambridge Local Plan can do more to improve natural and semi-natural spaces** across the Greater Cambridge area including how to make use of new powers to mandate biodiversity net gain, and a proposed requirement for new development to deliver a minimum of 20% Biodiversity Net Gain
- **Renewable energy generation, the Circular Economy and carbon sequestration** will be supported by developing related policies in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan;
- **The environmental impact of food in Cambridge will be improved** by working with local partners and stakeholders in the Cambridge Sustainable Food network, to improve the sustainability of food production, consumption and procurement where possible. This includes supporting partners in the network to achieve the Sustainable Food Places Silver Award for Cambridge and supporting efforts to pursue the Gold Award for the city;
- **Sustainable food will be promoted through engagement with residents and providing grant funding to local projects**. This includes working collaboratively with partners Cambridge Sustainable Food to raise awareness of the impact of food on carbon emissions and promote the benefits of a more sustainable diet, and providing grant funding to sustainable food projects such as CoFarm, who engage the community to produce sustainably grown food and distribute it through community food hubs;
- **The Council will engage and communicate with residents to build knowledge and awareness about environmental issues**. This includes information about practical actions to reduce carbon emissions, public health impacts of air quality and guidance on recycling. Residents will be encouraged and supported to make choices and decisions with low carbon impacts to reduce their environmental impact;
- **The Council will engage with local businesses and voluntary and community organisations** to share best practice on sustainability issues and utilise opportunities to work together to reduce emissions in the city;
- **The Council will work with local partners to protect older people, vulnerable residents and those facing hardship from the wider effects of our changing climate**, and this will include the impact of fuel and water poverty;
- **This policy statement will be reviewed periodically**, and not later than March 2024.
- **This policy will be communicated to everyone working for or on behalf of Cambridge City Council.**

Cambridge City Council expects all staff and all residents to protect the environment and take personal responsibility for their actions. The Council will work with partners, businesses, organisations and community organisations to help residents, businesses and others understand how to protect, maintain and develop the environmental quality of the city.

The Council will use its statutory planning and regulatory powers appropriately to achieve and set high standards of environmental quality in the built and natural environment and in the behaviour of organisations, businesses, residents and communities. It will promote the outcomes listed above to its partners and to other organisations in the city, including through its contracting and commissioning activities, where appropriate.

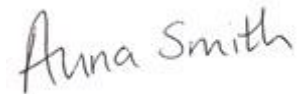
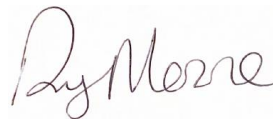
The Council will use its powers to take action where necessary against those who cause harm or detriment to the environmental quality of the city. We will set out detailed actions to further the policy goals set out in this statement in our service operational plans.

Signed:

**Robert Pollock**  
Chief Executive

**Councillor Rosy Moore**  
Executive Councillor

**Councillor Anna Smith**  
Leader



Dated:

14 November 2022

# Appendix 1

## Key Indicators

The risk and impact of the climate change and biodiversity emergencies is reduced, as measured by:

- Number of air quality monitoring points exceeding Nitrogen Dioxide legal limit
- Direct emissions (tCO<sub>2</sub>) from council assets and activities
- Kilogrammes of residual waste per household (black bin)
- % recycling rate (blue bin)
- % of all journeys undertaken by bicycle, public transport and on foot
- Number of electric vehicles in the council's fleet
- Number and percentage of ultra-low/electric taxi vehicles licensed
- Number of low-income households whose homes have been improved with home energy interventions
- Energy and environmental performance of our housing stock (average RdSAP score)
- % of homes delivered at Passivhaus level carbon reduction or above (on schemes delivered by the Council's Housing Development Agency)
- Average Net gain % biodiversity on new Council housing sites
- Number of private sector homes that have been improved for health and safety and energy standards
- Volume of herbicide used on managing city streets and open spaces

## City Council environmental targets

- Reduce the Council's direct carbon emissions to net zero by 2030
- Secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the City by 2025
- Support the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030: to double the area of rich wildlife habitats and green space from 8.5% to 17%.
- Increase tree canopy cover across the City by 2% to 19% by 2030
- 30% electric or petrol hybrid taxi fleet in Cambridge by 2023 and 100% electric or petrol hybrid taxi fleet by 2028.
- 100% current regular bus and coach fleet in Cambridge Euro VI or better; all additional buses/coaches to be zero-emission capable.