Climate Change Strategy 2026–2031

Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council

Publication date: March 2026 Review date: by March 2031

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Contents

Read our up to date action plan on our website here

Air source heat pumps at Parkside pools.

Click on a title to skip to the section

1.0 Foreword

Over 10 years ago, we set our first targets for Cambridge City Council's greenhouse gas reductions and we are making great progress, more than halving our own emissions since 2014/15.

A decade on, the world looks very different. Renewables have overtaken coal's share in the global energy mix[1]. One in five cars sold globally is now electric[2]. The UK's 'net zero economy' expanded 10% in 2024[3] - outpacing the rest of the economy three-fold.

Scientific evidence is pointing to a peak or near peak in global greenhouse gas emissions, but it is the strength and consistency of future policies and local goals that will move them to a sustained decline.

Our new Climate Change Strategy for 2026 restates our commitment to targeting net zero emissions in our operations by 2030, and to supporting the city to do the same. Every action we take together makes a difference for the future and improves lives today.

Our 2026-2031 sustainability goals for the organisation and city are the result of a thoughtful and rigorous process - grounded in strategy, collaboration and shared city-wide commitment. We developed these goals through a structured approach that combined insights from our 2021-2026 strategy performance, feedback from our community and businesses, as well as a view of the opportunities and challenges ahead.

We must continue to navigate budget constraints. However, investing in climate priorities will create long-term value both in terms of savings on fuel and energy costs and the wider social and economic benefits.

We have introduced a near-term 2028 goal for our organisation's emissions, reflecting that local government reorganisation is happening then. This 2028 goal takes us to the end of the period that Cambridge City Council is likely to have the same responsibilities for policies and services as it does now. Beyond that, it is likely that a new organisation will be established and new targets will emerge.

We want to be certain that Cambridge's net zero vision remains a permanent structural component of operations and policy in the future.

To amplify carbon savings and progress to a sustainable Cambridge, we are keen to deepen collaborations with key partners in the community and business. Working side-by-side, we can scale city-wide actions and achieve the vision for a sustainable city. Whilst this is something that we already do, the goal in the 2026-2031 strategy is to accelerate this.

I am looking forward to working together, bringing the action plan to life and scaling the positive impact that we know we can achieve for Cambridge.

Cllr Rosy Moore
Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment
Cambridge City Council

Cllr Rosy Moore, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment

'One Cambridge, fair for all'

Our vision

The council's overall mission is to create 'One Cambridge, fair for all' and lead a united city, in which a dynamic economy and prosperity are combined with social justice and equality.

Our vision is for a Cambridge where decarbonisation and sustainability are central to prosperity:

Cambridge is a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean river, clean air, and biodiverse green spaces.

Strong nature networks are coordinated between relevant bodies to combat the impacts of social and climate injustice.

The effects of climate change are already being felt in Cambridge.

Mitigating climate change through decarbonisation and sustainability is embedded in the council's work. Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030 is the first priority in the **Corporate Plan** and is a core part of the **Council's Vision**.

Our focus during 2026-2031 is to:

1. **Continue** to reduce the council's own emissions and increase organisational climate resilience.
2. **Provide** support to reduce Cambridge city's emissions, mitigating and adapting to climate change, to increase its climate resilience.
3. **Protect and enhance** nature, biodiversity and the urban forest.
4. **Achieve** better outcomes for people's daily lives through lower energy bills, cleaner air, more comfortable homes, greener neighbourhoods, with new job opportunities and a stronger local economy.
5. **Ensure** that our Climate Change Strategy is fair and inclusive, delivering a just transition, so that those most affected by climate change are not left behind and the benefits of addressing climate change, including improved health, wellbeing and livelihoods, for current and future generations, are shared widely and felt by all.

The strategy sets out our continued and renewed drive to build on the achievements to date, respond to changes in policy and develop the next steps to achieving our net zero vision for the city and net zero target for Cambridge City Council.

Our approach

The strategy sets out detailed objectives that underpin the council's approach:

- **Continue** to reduce the council's direct emissions to work towards net zero and increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- **Continue** to support residents and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change through the provision of services and as a housing provider.
- **Use** our policy and financial powers to create systemic change.
- **Convene and collaborate** with local partners, businesses, organisations and residents to act.
- **Influence** government, industry and regulators to make the necessary changes and investments needed to enable the city to achieve net zero.

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Net zero council by 2030: Reduce the council's direct carbon emissions from our corporate buildings (including swimming pools, office buildings, car parks, sheltered housing schemes, community centres, arts venues and the crematorium), our fleet vehicles (including vans, trucks and refuse vehicles) and business travel to net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Our near-term goal is to reduce emissions by 69% by March 2028 (from 2014/15 baseline).

Sustainable Cambridge

Net zero Cambridge vision for 2030: One of Cambridge City Council's missions is to support the reduction of energy consumption and its associated carbon emissions across the whole city, not only from our own estate but also through our services, housing provision and planning powers, to **work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions in Cambridge.**

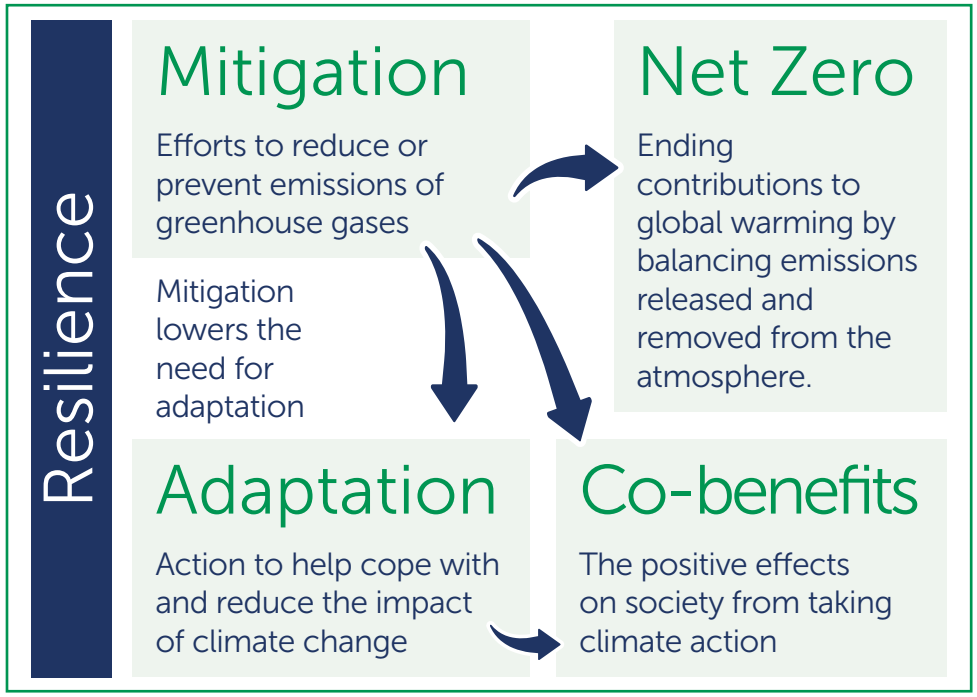
Working together for a sustainable Cambridge

Our 2026-2031 strategy aims to deepen relationships with key partners in the community and with business. Together, we can scale city-wide actions to avoid emissions, learn from each other and continue to **work towards achieving the vision for a net zero city by 2030.**

Building on our previous strategy (2021-2026)

This Climate Change Strategy builds on the council's previous strategy (2021–2026) and we have worked together with neighbouring South Cambridgeshire District Council to ensure the goals of both are aligned. This reflects our integrated approach across shared services, such as planning and waste. It also anticipates the potential future changes into a unitary, as part of local government reorganisation.

The updated strategy integrates climate adaptation actions throughout, rather than treating adaptation as a separate objective as we have done previously. This reflects our commitment to mitigation and adaptation to climate change in a coordinated way.



Accreditation: Adapted from Met Office/Defra (2024)

We have introduced two new standalone goals:

1 Focusing on our supply chain and procurement.

Recognising the growing importance of reducing emissions from our suppliers and delivering wider social and environmental value. These 'Scope 3' emissions occur at sources the council does not own or control.

2 Focusing on community support and engagement.

Giving greater prominence to our role in supporting, empowering and motivating individuals and communities, particularly those most vulnerable to climate impacts, to adopt low-carbon lifestyles.

We have also set a near-term goal for 2028.

Using the council's emissions reduction to inform future decisions by the council or a new unitary to achieve net zero by 2030.

Our goals 2026-2031

Energy and retrofit

Improving energy efficiency and climate resilience of homes and buildings across Cambridge.

Transport

Reducing the need for fossil fuel-powered travel and encouraging the use of low and zero carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions.

Nature and water

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water to support Cambridge to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Waste minimisation

Reducing waste and supporting a circular economy.

Sustainable food

Increasing access to local, low impact, seasonal food and reducing food waste.

Supply chain and procurement

Reducing emissions and maximising social and environmental value of procurement and partnerships across Cambridge.

Community support and engagement

Ensuring a just transition: providing accessible and inclusive support to communities and residents to empower and enable them in shifting toward more sustainable habits.

Collaboration

Working together for a sustainable Cambridge - deepening relationships with and between key partners in the community and with business, innovation and anchor institutions in the city as part of a city-wide approach to climate change and inclusive innovation.

The co-benefits of climate action in Cambridge

Cambridge will take a strategic, collaborative, place-based approach to both mitigating and adapting to climate change, alongside socially inclusive economic growth.

The co-benefits of climate action are the additional positive outcomes beyond reduced greenhouse gas emissions, such as:

- Health gains from cleaner air and transport
- Economic rewards via innovation and green jobs
- Nature enhancement for biodiversity and water quality
- Increased resilience to the impacts of extreme weather such as shading, urban cooling, flood mitigation
- Public support strengthened by broader social value

Major bodies like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and World Resources Institute have released data confirming that the immediate co-benefits, specifically in health and economic stability, often outweigh the costs of implementation.

The FLIP framework describes the co-benefits of climate action.

- **Free: A net positive return on investment when all societal costs (for example, healthcare, energy bills) are considered.**
- **Local: Benefits, such as cleaner air, job creation and urban greening, are tangible and felt by residents.**
- **Immediate: Advantages are realised soon after action is taken - as distinct from global, long-term climate impacts associated with reductions in GHGs.**
- **Persuasive: Climate action creates benefits that align with core local priorities unrelated to climate, such as promoting economic growth, protecting public health and reducing inequality.**

Progress so far

The council has been tackling climate change since the launch of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter in 2007 and our first Climate Change Strategy in 2008.

In 2019 the council declared a climate emergency, recognising the urgency of the action needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C and avoid severe and irreversible consequences for people and ecosystems.

Real progress has been made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions both within the city, and by the council.

By 2024-2025, the council reduced its emissions by 51.9% from the 2014-2015 baseline against which it measures its emissions reductions.

In 2023 (the last complete year for which data is available), Cambridge's greenhouse gas emissions had reduced by 47.3% since 2005. Per capita emissions reduced over the same period, from 8.4 tonnes CO_2 equivalent (tCO_2e) per person, to 3.5 tCO_2e.

This reduction was partly achieved by the decarbonisation of the national grid and other government policies, and partly through the council investing in carbon reduction projects for its buildings and fleet.

Cambridge was named an 'A' list city by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) in 2025, for the third year in a row, one of only 120 'A' list cities worldwide, and the council is also a top performing council in Climate Emergency UK's Council Climate Actions Scorecards - both of which recognise our leadership in addressing climate change.

Cities CDP A List 2025

Council emissions reduced by **51.9%** by 2024-2025

Cambridge emissions reduced by **47.3%** by 2023

Highlights of action taken

2007–2008
Setting the foundations

Kickstarted local climate action by launching the Cambridge Climate Change Charter, our first strategy and a dedicated internal Climate Change Fund.

2011–2012
Boosting energy efficiency

Upgraded energy efficiency across council homes, four major swimming pools and helped 500 households to install insulation.

2014-2015
Greener streets and homes

Added 600 new bike parking spaces to encourage cycling, installed solar panels at community centres and published the Greening Your Home guide.

2016
Switch to green electricity

Moved council buildings to 100% renewable electricity, reduced energy use by 50% in two car parks with LEDs and Cambridge achieved Bronze Sustainable Food City status.

2017–2018
Pioneering standards

Became the first council to mandate low-emission taxis, required new developments to cut carbon emissions by 19% and helped to fund the World's Biggest Repair Café to fight throwaway culture.

2019–2020
Emergency declaration

Officially declared Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies, installed solar panels on key civic buildings and launched the Cambridge Canopy Project and planted 500 trees.

2021–2022
Electrification and investment

Rolled out electric refuse trucks, distributed £150,000 in Green Business Grants and invested £1.7 million of grant funding to reduce emissions at local swimming pools.

2023
Major clean energy investments

Funding secured for £6.1 million solar project (Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network), continued installing EV charging points and brought conservation grazing to East Barnwell to improve local biodiversity.

2024–2025
Going for gold

Adopted a new air quality strategy, committed to a herbicide-free approach, successful delivery of £5 million project to upgrade 48 council homes to net zero carbon standards, started the contract to build the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network (2025) with construction commencing in 2026, council recognised by Carbon Disclosure Project as an 'A' list city for the third year running for our work to mitigate and adapt to climate change, Cambridge Sustainable Food Partnership achieved the Gold Sustainable Food Places Award, and Cambridge Folk Festival earned an 'Outstanding' green certification.

Key opportunities and challenges

Much of the city's carbon reduction so far has come from a greener national grid and more efficient technology.

The UK's Climate Change Committee estimates that around one third of the UK's required emissions cuts by 2040 will rely on household decisions and locally delivered action, especially in housing, transport, waste, energy and land use.

As we get closer to achieving our 2030 vision, a greater focus will be required on the more challenging aspects of reducing emissions such as investing in heritage buildings, local infrastructure and enabling behaviour change.

We also recognise that as a fast-growing hub for UK research and innovation, including in climate solutions, we must decouple economic expansion and new housing development from carbon emissions, using our plan making powers to ensure that new developments in Greater Cambridge mitigate rather than compound climate risks.

We also could apply our city's renowned climate research and innovation to solve local problems and enable local people to access quality employment in climate related roles.

Cambridge City Council continues to plan with ambition

We are developing specific proposals for the Civic Quarter project which could deliver significant carbon reductions for the Guildhall, Corn Exchange and Market Square (subject to approval and funding).

Building on our successful council house programme with over 1,000 new homes built to date, the council aspires to build a further 1,300 new council homes by 2036 with a significant proportion delivered by 2030, subject to Homes England funding.

Our council homes are designed to meet the Sustainable Housing Design Guide which is currently the Cam Standard – a low energy performance standard[4]. Post-2030, new homes will target a net zero standard.

The city's proposed City Centre Heat Network could play a significant role in decarbonising heating for our city centre. We have already put in place studies to define the specific requirements and investment required for decarbonising the council's commercial vehicle fleet and the council owned corporate, community and commercial premises that have not yet been addressed.

Businesses and other public organisations in the city are taking significant action to reduce their emissions, but more is needed, if Cambridge is to become a net zero carbon city.

Amongst others, the council works with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Greater Cambridge Partnership and with city institutions such as the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University, as well as businesses both large and small, and community organisations, to meet the challenges.

Continued action by communities and individuals is central to tackling climate change, and the council aims to support and empower people to protect nature and reduce emissions.

Your views included

Our 2026–2031 sustainability goals and strategy integrate direct feedback from local businesses and residents and build on the learning from the monitoring of previous strategies.

Engagement with residents and businesses helps us to prioritise areas of work to take forward in the implementation of the strategy. Some of these are already included in our action plan and help us to understand that we are aligned with our residents and those responses reinforce our strategy.

We received strong support for the new strategy outline with 86.4% of respondents supporting or strongly supporting the strategy vision.

From the November 2025 engagement, we identified:

1. A need to show clearly what the council is directly responsible for and therefore where we can have the most impact. In parallel, we also need to highlight the areas where we are not the lead authority and therefore have less control. The diagram on page 22 shows our direct areas of responsibility and impact.
2. Strong support for one of the strategy's new focus areas: supporting and applying research and innovation on climate change, so we will prioritise this within the implementation of the strategy.

3. Some additional ideas for the strategy, such as renewable energy development, group purchasing schemes, wildflower planting on public land led by residents, more visual communication and engagement and annual environment events.
4. A request for guidance or resources to help individuals act on climate change. In some instances, we already have a lot of guidance – such as home improvement guides and a council-approved list of retrofit contractors. We will share these more widely and more frequently with residents.
5. Strong concern about the rapid growth in Cambridge potentially damaging biodiversity and undermining climate goals. Policies in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan will aim to ensure that new development is required to consider climate change and biodiversity and the Climate Change Strategy is aligned with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service.
6. A need for further education on the impacts of climate change and the solutions to build resilience. This is something the council already provides to staff, councillors and residents so this feedback has reinforced the need to continue this, raise awareness of it and explore the feasibility of increasing it in the future.
7. Concerns about the use of offsetting. It was helpful to understand that many residents shared the same concerns as us about offsetting and so, we will continue to prioritise carbon reduction over offsetting and explore how councils might compensate for unavoidable residual emissions to meet net zero targets in the future – see page 23 (section 5.0) for further explanation.

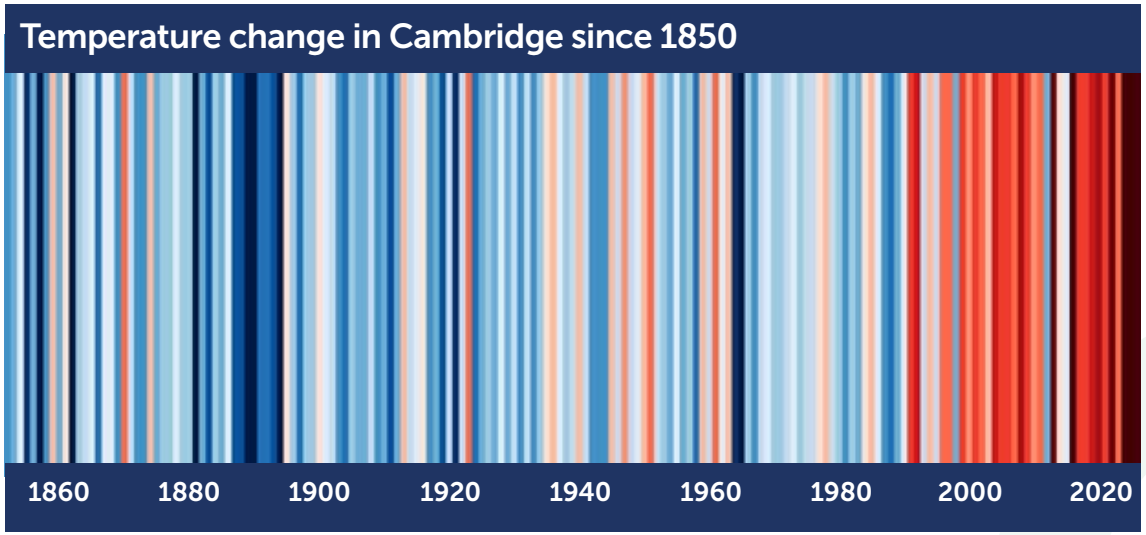
Climate risks in Cambridge

Climate change increases the risk and frequency of extreme weather such as increased summer temperatures, water shortages and droughts and more frequent flood events.

The effects of climate change are already being felt in Cambridge.

This series of vertical-coloured bars shows the progressive heating of our planet in a single, striking image. Each stripe represents the average temperature for a single year, relative to the average temperature over the period from 1961 to 2010. They show clearly and vividly how global average temperatures have risen over nearly two centuries.

Shades of blue indicate cooler-than-average years, while red shows years that were hotter than average. The stark band of deep red stripes on the right-hand side of the graphic shows the rapid heating of our planet in recent decades.



Attribution: Professor Ed Hawkins (University of Reading)
https://showyourstripes.info/s/europe/unitedkingdom/cambridge

Overheating

Hotter urban temperatures

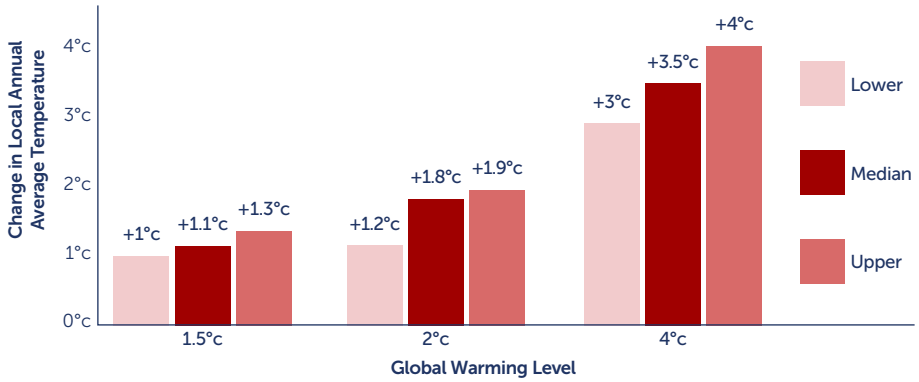
Urban areas such as Cambridge are particularly vulnerable to increased temperatures due to the heat island effect. This is where cities experience hotter temperatures in comparison to surrounding suburban or rural areas.

Man-made surfaces absorb the sun's heat and radiate it back to be trapped within dense urban areas.

Record-breaking temperatures in Cambridge in recent years (38.7°C was reached in 2019, the highest recorded temperature in the UK at the time, and 39.9°C was reached in 2022) highlight the increasing frequency of extreme weather events in the UK, increasing drought and intense summer rainfall risks – a key driver for surface water flooding. By 2050, Cambridge's average summer is projected to be around 2.2°C warmer than it was on average between 1981 and 2000 and around 3% drier.

Change in Annual Average Temperature in Cambridge

Changes are relative to 1981-2000 when the local annual average temperature was 10.2°C. In the most recent decades, 2001-2020, modelled local annual average temperature was 11.0°C.



Description: *Projections of local changes (°C) in annual in the average of the daily mean temperature for three future Global Warming Levels. Changes are relative to a 1981-2000 baseline when global warming was 0.6°C above the pre-industrial period.*

This dataset can be viewed on the Climate Data Portal - Annual Average Temperature Change.

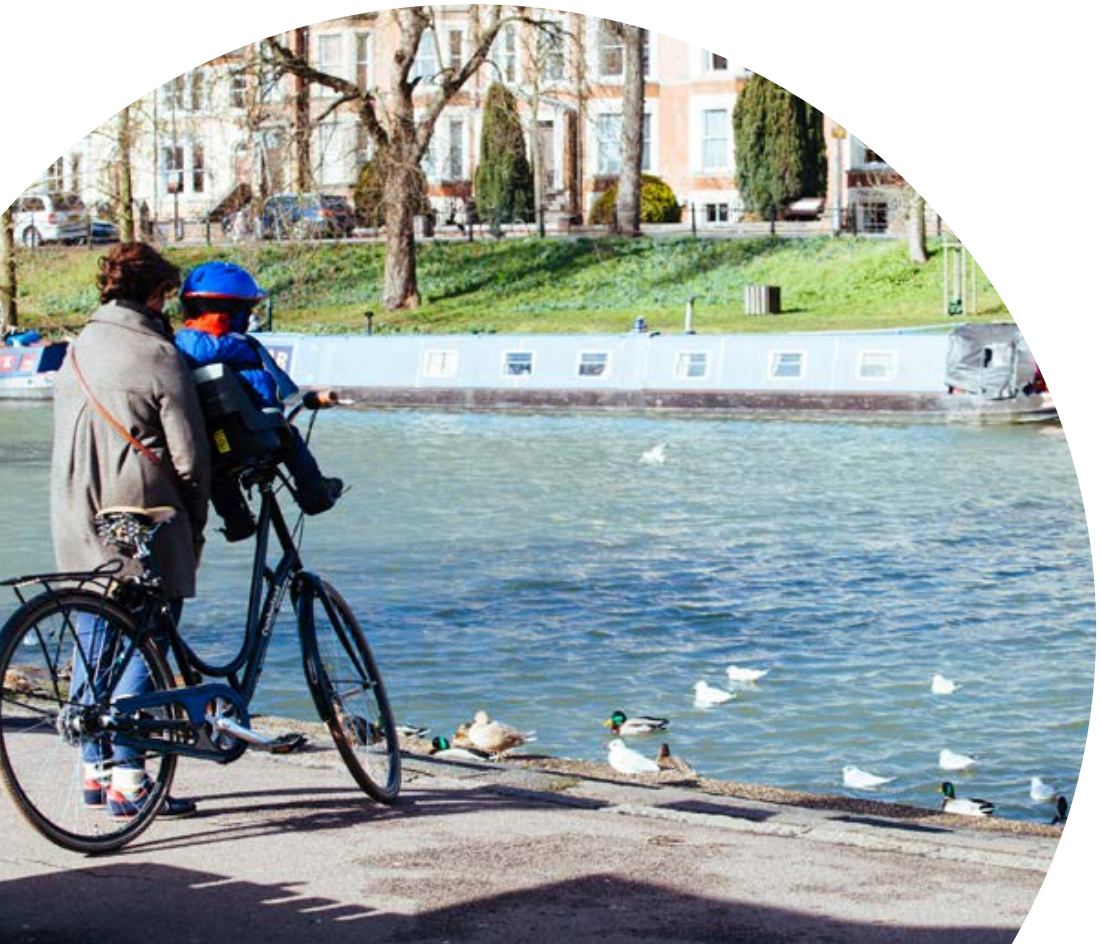
Information on global warming levels and lower/median/upper estimates can be found in the Scientific Detail.

Water scarcity

Drier and hotter summers

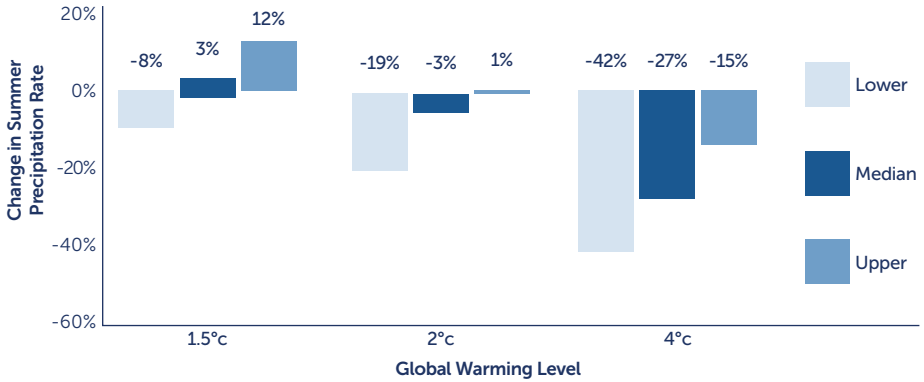
The east receives only two thirds of average national rainfall, making it the driest region in the UK and vulnerable to water shortages. Greater Cambridge is one of the driest areas in the UK, and Cambridge Water's supply zone is classified as an area of 'serious water stress' by the Environment Agency.

The combination of low rainfall and high temperatures, population growth, and environmental requirements has increased the strain on groundwater sources resulting in water scarcity.



Change in Summer Precipitation Rate in Cambridge

Changes are relative to 1981-2000 when the local summer precipitation rate was 1.59mm/day. In the most recent decades, 2001-2020, modelled local summer precipitation rate was 1.64mm/day.



Description: *Projections of local changes (% change) in summer in the precipitation rate for three future Global Warming Levels.*

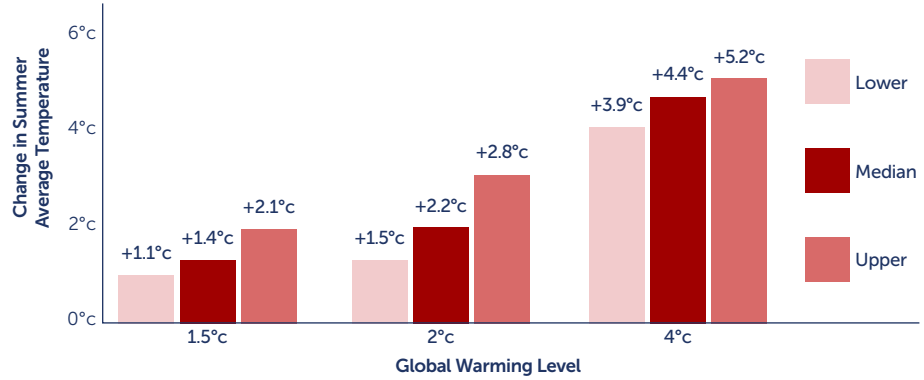
Changes are relative to a 1981-2000 baseline when global warming was 0.6°C above the pre-industrial period. summer: June, July, August.

This dataset can be viewed on the Climate Data Portal - Summer Precipitation Rate Change.

Information on global warming levels and lower/median/upper estimates can be found in the Scientific Detail.

Change in Summer Average Temperature in Cambridge

Changes are relative to 1981-2000 when the local summer average temperature was 16.4°C. In the most recent decades, 2001-2020, modelled local summer average temperature was 17.6°C.



Description: *Projections of local changes (°C) in summer in the average of the daily mean temperature for three future Global Warming Levels. Changes are relative to a 1981-2000 baseline when global warming was 0.6°C above the pre-industrial period. summer: June, July, August.*

This dataset can be viewed on the Climate Data Portal - Summer Average Temperature Change.

Information on global warming levels and lower/median/upper estimates can be found in the Scientific Detail.

Flooding

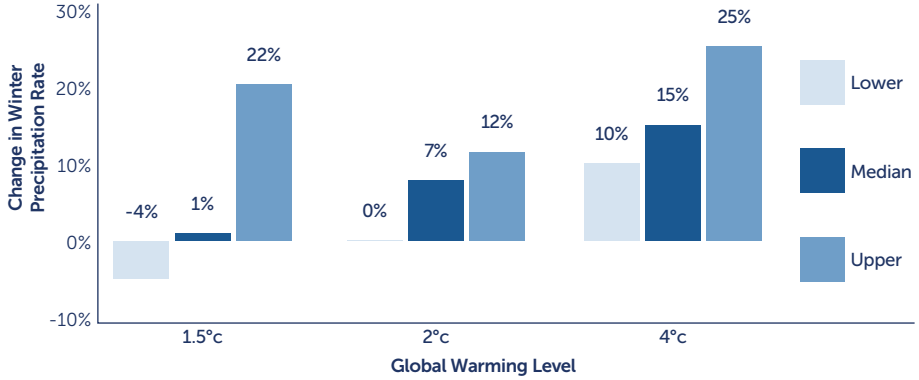
Warmer and wetter winters

Winters in the UK will on average be both warmer and wetter than the recent past. By 2050, Cambridge's average winter is projected to be around 1.3°C warmer than it was on average from 1981 to 2000 and around 7% wetter[1].

An increase in both the intensity of winter rainfall and the number of wet days is expected, driving up winter river and surface water flood risks.

Change in Winter Precipitation Rate in Cambridge

Changes are relative to 1981-2000 when the local winter precipitation rate was 1.38mm/day. In the most recent decades, 2001-2020, modelled local winter precipitation rate was 1.44mm/day.



Description: *Projections of local changes (% change) in winter in the precipitation rate for three future Global Warming Levels. Changes are relative to a 1981-2000 baseline when global warming was 0.6°C above the pre-industrial period. winter: December, January, February.*

This dataset can be viewed on the Climate Data Portal - Winter Precipitation Rate Change.

Information on global warming levels and lower/median/upper estimates can be found in the Scientific Detail.

1. Local Authority Climate Explorer [Beta, V1.0], Met Office Climate Data Portal

Summary of emissions

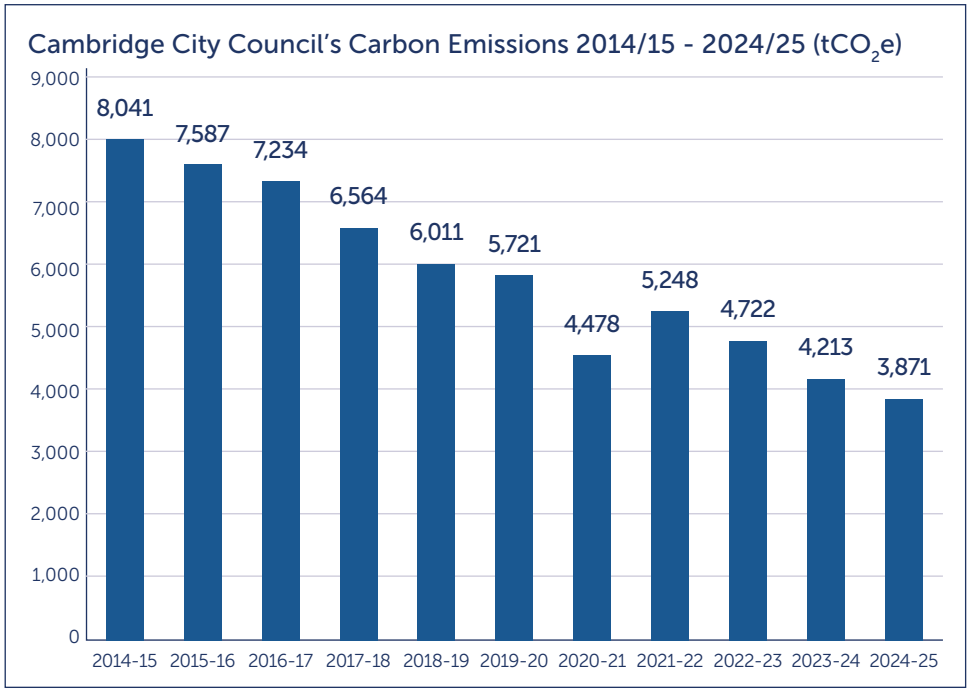
Cambridge City Council

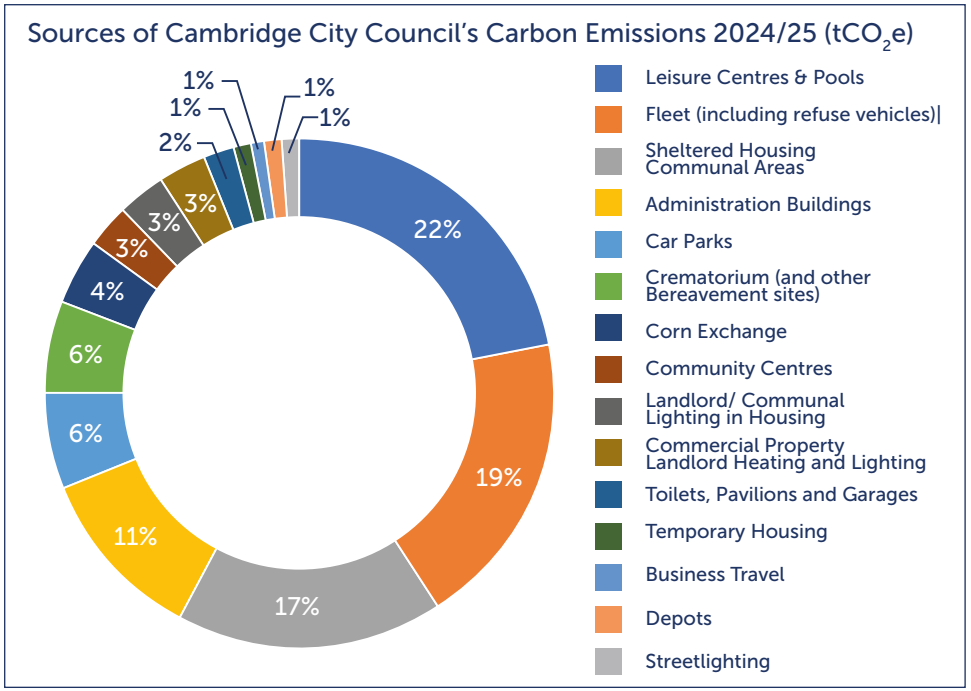
Cambridge City Council's total gross greenhouse gas emissions[6] for 2024-2025 were 3,871 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2e).

Emissions were 8.1% lower in 2024-2025 than in 2023-2024 (4,213 tCO_2e) and 51.9% lower than the 2014-2015 baseline when emissions were 8,041 tCO_2e.

As an organisation, Cambridge City Council was only directly responsible for 0.7% of total carbon emissions in the city in 2023.

This is compared to the UK national average where local authorities are responsible for between 2% and 5%[5].



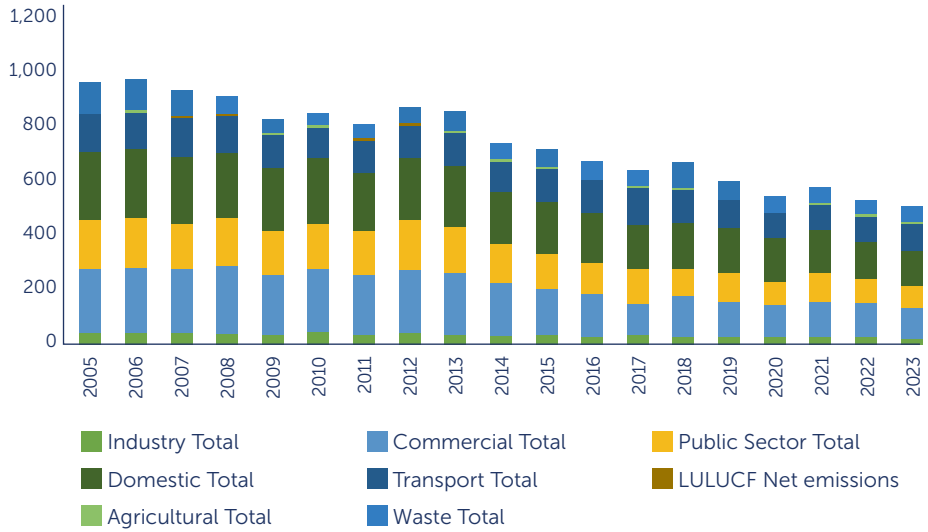


Cambridge

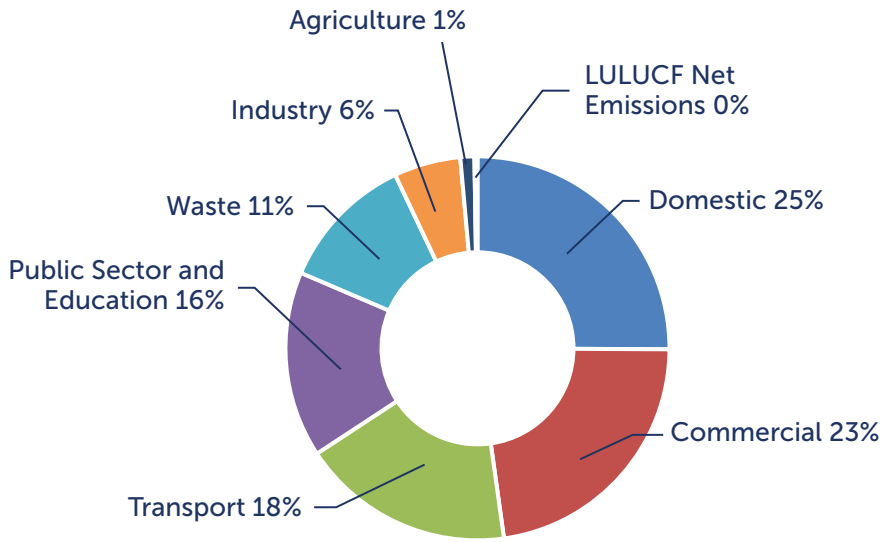
Cambridge's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 47.3% since 2005, a reduction of 465.8 kt CO_2e, from 985.1 kt CO_2e in 2005 to 519.3 kt CO_2e in 20236. Per capita emissions have reduced over the same period, from 8.4 t CO_2e per person, to 3.5 t CO_2e.

Cambridge's energy profile is dominated by the commercial and public sectors, reflecting the city's concentration of high-value commercial activity, as well as its globally recognised research and public service institutions.

Cambridge Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2023 ($ktCO_2e$)

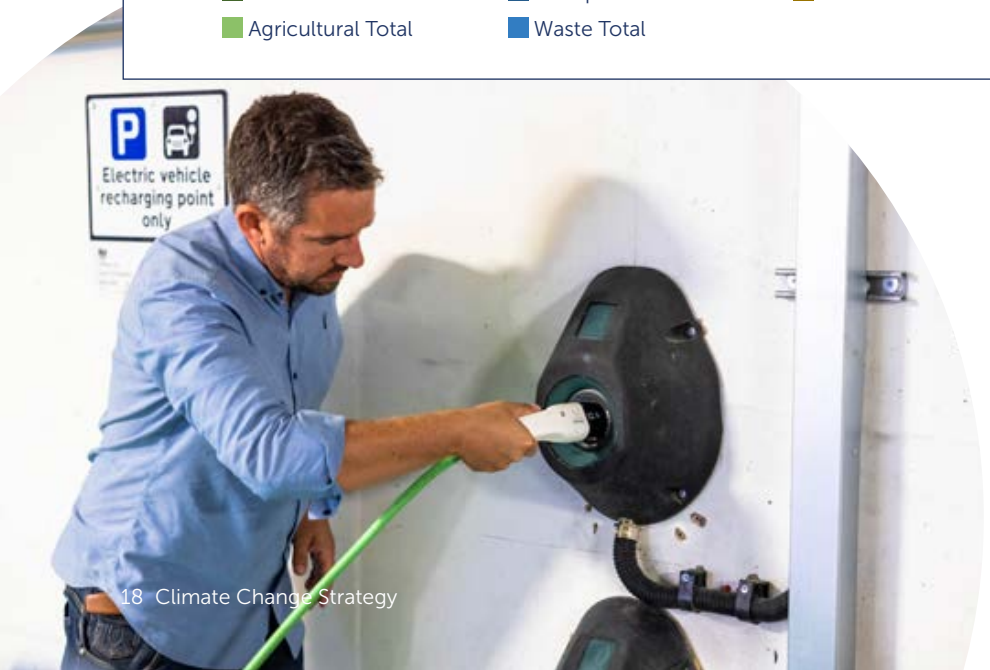


Cambridge's Emissions 2023 (kt CO_2e)



Accreditation: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 2005-2023, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics

Figure note: LULUCF (Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry) includes emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use, land-use change and forestry activities.



Policy contexts

National context

While the council is committed to taking ambitious local action on climate change, decarbonisation across the city requires supportive and enabling national policies:

1. **Climate Change Act 2008** established the world's first legally binding carbon reduction targets. It introduced carbon budgets to systematically reduce emissions by 2050.
2. **Net Zero by 2050** The UK has committed to reaching net zero by 2050 and to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030 and at least **81% by 2035** (compared to 1990 levels) announced in 2024 as its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement.
3. **Clean Power 2030** and action plan.

The UK Climate Change Committee has estimated that over 30% of the emissions reductions needed to meet the Sixth Carbon Budget rely on action delivered at the local level, particularly in key areas such as housing, transport, waste, energy, and land use.

However, the UK Climate Change Committee has also highlighted that local authorities are currently constrained by limited powers, fragmented short-term funding, and unclear mandates, all of which reduce their ability to act at scale and pace[7].

To overcome these challenges, Cambridge City Council will continue to work closely with partners across Greater Cambridge and with networks such as UK100, APSE Energy and the Local Government Association, to influence national policy and advocate for the powers and resources local government needs to drive the transition to a zero carbon and climate-resilient future.

We will use our voice to call for:

- Statutory duties on climate action for local authorities to clarify expectations and strengthen accountability.
- Long-term, devolved funding to replace the current patchwork of competitive grants.
- Policy reforms that support local delivery of low-carbon housing retrofit, sustainable transport, renewable energy, and nature recovery.
- Greater local control over planning and energy systems, including the ability to enforce higher environmental standards and lead Local Area Energy Plans.

Local context

Mitigating climate change through decarbonisation and sustainability is embedded in the council's work.

It is the first priority in the **Corporate Plan**: Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030.

It is a core part of the **Council's Vision**: Decarbonisation and sustainability are central to prosperity. Cambridge is a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean river, clean air, and biodiverse green spaces.

Local context (continued)

Land use policy

The emerging **Greater Cambridge Local Plan** makes provision for at least 48,000 new homes in Greater Cambridge by 2045. In its **Local Government Reorganisation proposal**, the council estimated that these new homes could lead to the Greater Cambridge population growing by 75,000 people by 2040 (from 325,000 to 400,000).

Through the **Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service**, the council has a role to play in managing the impact of growth on carbon emissions in Cambridge, to ensure that growth is sustainable and doesn't undermine progress on climate change and nature. The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan plays a significant part in this.

The draft Local Plan shows where new homes and workplaces could be built over the next 20 years and sets out the proposed development in and around Cambridge.

Two of the key themes that went out to consultation for the draft Local Plan include climate change and biodiversity and green spaces. The proposed policies that fall under these themes – such as net zero carbon new buildings policy, renewable energy and water efficiency – ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation are incorporated into new homes and buildings and they are designed for a changing climate for example. Proposals include:

- **Building to net zero:** new-build homes must be built to be energy efficient and use onsite renewable energy generation to meet their remaining energy needs, thus requiring new development to achieve net zero operational emissions.
- **Supporting and encouraging proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy** generation schemes, including domestic schemes.
- **Water efficiency:** new development will have a requirement to reduce water use. Developments of 100+ dwellings required to meet 80 litres/person/day, smaller schemes required to meet 90–100 litres/person/day.
- **Circular economy:** policy now includes a presumption in favour of reuse and refurbishment of existing buildings over demolition.

National Planning Policy Framework

The government has consulted on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which could result in considerable change to national planning policy. The proposed changes seek to widen presumption in favour of development in certain locations. It also proposes to restrict the ability of Local Planning Authorities to set standards in local plans on matters covered by other regulatory regimes, particularly building regulations. In future, this could impact on the ability of the council to set building standards related to climate change.

Spatial Development Strategies

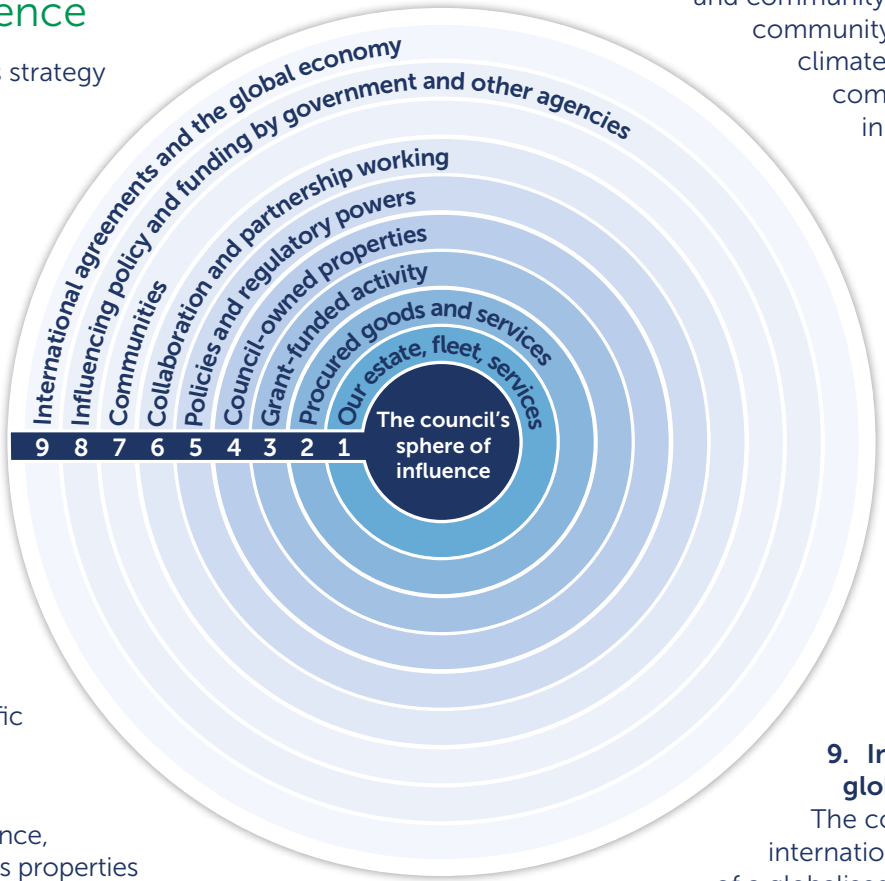
The government has also introduced a new tier of development plans called Spatial Development Strategies, which in the case of Cambridgeshire would be prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. These will address certain strategic planning matters such as the quantity of growth and its broad location. Local Plans would then have to take these into account. The Combined Authority anticipates that the first Spatial Development Strategy would be adopted in 2028.

4.0 Our sphere of influence

The Climate Change Strategy has been developed to ensure that Cambridge takes a strategic, collaborative, place-based approach to both mitigating and adapting to climate change alongside socially inclusive economic growth. There are areas where Cambridge City Council has direct responsibility and others where we have less direct influence and we will work with others to achieve outcomes.

The council's sphere of influence

The diagram outlines the specific focus of this strategy and the council's spheres of influence



1. **Council estate, fleet and services**
   The council has direct control over its buildings, land and assets, vehicle fleet and the services that it provides and how these are delivered and managed.

2. **Procured goods and services**
   When it procures new services from private contractors (for example, leisure management contract), the council can require its contractors to take to steps to mitigate climate impacts.

3. **Grant-funded activity**
   The council sets the overall priorities for grant funding that it provides, such as the Community Grants and Sustainable City Grants. Voluntary and community organisations submit applications for specific activities.

4. **Council-owned properties**
   The council improves the energy performance, climate resilience and thermal comfort in its properties where others are responsible for the energy consumption and bills (such as in council homes, or commercial property).

5. **Policies and regulatory powers**
   The council can use its regulatory powers, such as its planning policies, to help build climate resilience (for example, the Local Plan and planning policy, and taxi licensing).

6. **Collaboration and partnership working**
   The council can support and empower local residents, voluntary and community groups to identify community-owned and community-led solutions (such as convening city-wide climate change and sustainability partnerships with community and business groups, and we work in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

7. **Communities**
   The council can inform and influence the actions, decisions and choices of businesses, organisations and individual residents and it can work collaboratively with them to develop whole-system solutions but it has no direct control over their decisions or activities.

8. **Influencing policy and funding by government and other agencies**
   The council can influence government policy but it has no direct control.

9. **International agreements and the global economy**
   The council has no direct influence over international climate change agreements or the impact of a globalised economy on the climate.

Our Climate Change Strategy 2026-2031 focuses on Cambridge City Council's actions to reduce emissions and build climate resilience within its direct influence, while working in partnership to drive wider city-wide change. It is in this way that we will deliver change at scale.

Working in partnership to drive wider city-wide change

Who does what?

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Strategic powers in areas such as transport and economic policy with a directly elected mayor. Includes the two-tier county and district/city councils of Cambridgeshire and the unitary council of Peterborough.

The councils within a combined authority remain separate entities delivering their existing council functions but may carry out new activities collectively across their region.

Cambridgeshire County Council

Responsible for services such as transport, highways, waste disposal, public health, children's services and adult social care.

Cambridge City Council

Responsible for place-related services such as housing, waste collection, planning and licensing. Unlike the rural parts of Cambridgeshire, there are no parish councils in Cambridge City, so services often provided by them are provided by the City Council in Cambridge, such as allotments, local neighbourhood facilities such as community buildings, parks, playgrounds and public toilets.

Greater Cambridge Shared Services

A partnership between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to deliver the Planning Service and the Waste Service for their areas together.

Greater Cambridge Partnership

Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Business Board

The Partnership is delivering the city deal for economic development, including housing and skills, and supporting growth with an integrated transport plan.

5.0 Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Reduce our direct carbon emissions towards achieving our net zero target

Increasing our organisation's climate resilience

Enhancing the sustainability of our organisation

Setting a near-term goal for 2028

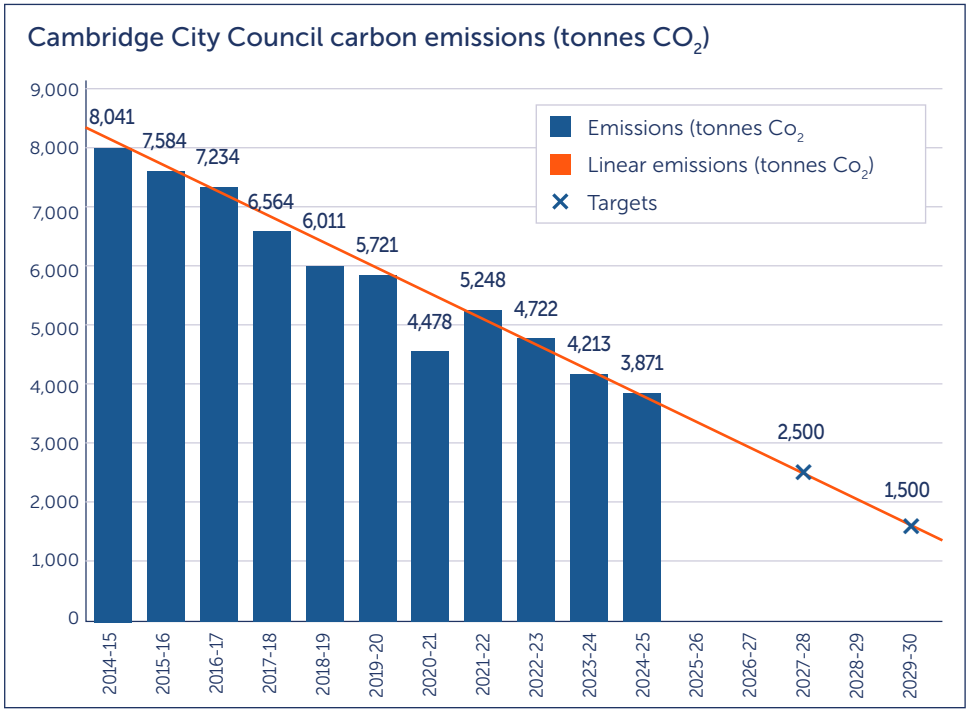
Whilst the council's net-zero target for 2030 has not changed, in light of Local Government Reorganisation, which aims to create a single unitary council system by April 2028, we have also set a near term target for the council's emissions.

Net zero target: Reduce the council's direct carbon emissions from our corporate buildings (including swimming pools, office buildings, car parks, sheltered housing schemes, community centres, arts venues and the crematorium) our fleet vehicles (including vans, trucks and refuse vehicles), and business travel to net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Work has been carried out to estimate the council's emissions by the end of 2027-2028 (and 2029-2030), based on the planned projects and the increase in the amount of renewable energy powering the electricity grid (also known as the 'greening of the grid'). It is estimated based on the last 10 years of data, that the council's total emissions could be approximately 2,500 tCO_2e by March 2028 and 1,500 tCO_2e by March 2030.

Our near-term goal is to reduce emissions by 69% by March 2028 (from 2014-2015 baseline).

We will explore **how councils might compensate for unavoidable residual emissions to meet net zero targets.** This will inform any future decisions that may be needed by the council to achieve net zero by 2030. We will look at how offsetting programmes local to Cambridgeshire could be supported to deliver credible, high quality local emissions reductions and benefits.



Measuring and monitoring progress: Goals, KPIs and co-benefits

Progress will be transparently tracked through our annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) report.

The GHG report sets out the total gross greenhouse gas emissions from our own estate and operations. It currently includes emissions from the following scopes:

- Scope 1 emissions, which are those released as a direct result of an activity, such as the use of gas in heating boilers and fuel burned in the council-owned fleet vehicles.
- Scope 2 emissions are those released as an indirect consumption of an energy commodity such as purchased grid electricity used in the council's operations (buildings and for charging Electric Vehicles (EV)).
- Scope 3 emissions are all other indirect emissions other than electricity. The council's Greenhouse Gas report includes the following Scope 3 emissions from sources it currently has processes for but does not directly control or has outsourced to another provider to deliver, such as the council's leisure facilities. Our Scope 3 emissions therefore include:
  a. Business travel (by means not owned or controlled by the authority): Staff and councillor mileage, rail journeys, flights.
  b. Outsourced activities: Leisure facilities' gas and electricity consumption, hotel stays, transmission and distribution losses from Scope 2 (council electricity consumption) and outsourced activities electricity consumption (leisure facilities).

Measuring emissions from our suppliers

To further reduce emissions, the council will **undertake work to understand, manage and reduce emissions from our suppliers.** These are emissions that occur indirectly because of the council's operations but occur at sources which the council does not own or control. These are known as Scope 3 emissions. We recognise that usually Scope 3 emissions, represent 70-80% of a local authority's total emissions[8].

For example, Cambridgeshire County Council estimates that 99% of its greenhouse gas emissions fall under Scope 3[9]. Reporting on emissions from suppliers and setting targets to reduce them can be difficult in terms of gathering the necessary information but is recommended by the UK's Climate Change Committee who advise organisations to 'measure and report Scopes 1 and 2 as a minimum, define and report on Scope 3 as actively as possible'[10].

Beyond the greenhouse gas data, we recognise the tangible co-benefits of this transition: upgraded assets, reduced energy bills, cleaner air and improved health outcomes for our staff and community through energy efficient buildings, active travel and fleet electrification.

6.0 Governance and deliverability

Strong governance keeps our ambition grounded and real

As a democratically elected body, we **report regularly on the goals, our performance and our progress.** Each year, we produce an annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) report that summarises our achievements, detailing the total gross greenhouse gas emissions from our own properties and fleet.

Transparency in our reporting and long-term thinking makes sure our sustainability goals for the organisation and city are the result of **a thoughtful and rigorous process, grounded in strategy, collaboration and shared city-wide commitment.**

To ensure that the **impacts on climate and nature from actions and projects undertaken by the council** are considered, we use the following mechanisms:

- **Committee reporting.** As part of our decision-making procedures, all reports must consider any likely impacts on climate change and the council's net zero target.
- **Budget setting.** All new revenue and capital budget proposals require a climate rating.
- **Procurement.** Considerations for climate change and nature must be made through the procurement process under our social value framework.

The Climate Change Strategy action plan will be updated on a regular basis and can be viewed on the council's website.

7.1 Energy and retrofit

Improving energy efficiency and climate resilience of homes and buildings across Cambridge

Transition to low-carbon infrastructure

Housing improvements through retrofit support

Sustainability standards for new developments

Background

Our city faces several challenges to reduce energy consumption and achieve net zero across the entire city, some of which are unique to Cambridge.

Research by the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership found that the UK, and indeed Cambridge, has some of the oldest and least energy-efficient housing in Western Europe, which are predominantly heated by gas. These need to be retrofitted with better insulation and electric heating technologies for the UK to meet both its medium and long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Retrofit is defined as a process of making improvements to a home or building to make it more energy efficient. Measures can include improvements to insulation of walls, floors, lofts, windows and doors alongside appropriate ventilation to maintain good indoor air quality. Retrofits may also include solar photovoltaic (PV) installation and upgrades to heating, hot water and lighting, or measures to reduce water use. A whole-house approach is essential to ensure homes are healthy, comfortable and resilient to both cold winters and increasingly hotter summers.

The process of retrofitting brings a number of co-benefits: reduced energy consumption resulting in lower energy bills and a more comfortable home which is cooler in summer and warmer in winter, bringing benefits to health and wellbeing. Retrofitting can help to tackle fuel poverty when targeted at low-income households and vulnerable households, to support a just transition. Retrofitting also can improve air quality of the city, increase resilience to extreme weather, provide local jobs and skills, and provide a more resilient energy system for Cambridge, reducing exposure to volatile energy prices and improving long-term energy security.

Many of the challenges to scaling retrofits in Cambridge are like those seen across the UK. However, some are linked to local contextual conditions such as high housing costs, a higher proportion of emissions from domestic buildings than the national average and large numbers of private rented and heritage listed homes. Current barriers include high upfront costs, a lack of skilled retrofit professionals and inadequate national funding structures which are complex and difficult to access.

The retrofit potential in Cambridge is significant but realising it requires a coordinated, well-resourced, and locally tailored approach to improving energy efficiency, phasing out fossil fuels and ensuring a resilient, low-carbon energy system. Crucially, we must ensure this transition is fair, protecting residents from fuel poverty and the health impacts of a changing climate.

Delivering this approach at scale will require changes in government policy, long-term funding certainty, a skilled work force and strong co-ordination across public, private and community partners.

Funding is also a key constraint but with rising energy costs, the need for ongoing maintenance and new regulatory standards, investment is needed. Our investment in council buildings and facilities is driven by a dual purpose: reducing energy costs; and fulfilling our commitment to become operationally net zero. We are taking a measured approach to funding, actively pursuing external funding opportunities and prioritising projects that deliver the most significant, cost-effective emission reductions. This ensures we make the best possible use of available resources for retrofitting and decarbonisation while modernising our estate for the long term.

We also recognise that as a fast-growing hub for UK innovation, we must decouple economic expansion and new housing development from carbon emissions, using our plan making powers to ensure that new developments in Greater Cambridge mitigate rather than compound climate risks.

In addition to our retrofit work on our commercial and corporate property portfolios, we also play an important role in delivery across the city as a housing provider and developer, planning authority and as a convenor, enabler and advocate.

Through strong partnership working, targeted investment and advocacy for national policy reform, we will help drive progress at scale, despite limited direct powers, to enable the development of low-carbon energy infrastructure across the city, support delivery of high-quality retrofit and ensure that new development incorporates climate mitigation and adaptation measures.

Over the course of the strategy, the council aims to

1. **Increase the energy efficiency of homes and buildings** in Cambridge, reducing heat loss and overall energy demand.
2. **Enhance the climate resilience of homes** in Cambridge, to ensure homes and residents are better prepared for extreme weather, such as hotter and more frequent heatwaves.
3. **Support and enable the phase out of fossil fuels as far as possible,** especially gas heating, across the city's buildings.
4. Ensure the energy required to heat and power homes in Cambridge increasingly comes from **low- or zero-carbon energy sources,** supported by robust infrastructure that enhances energy security and long-term affordability.
5. **Reduce fuel poverty** by enabling residents to live in well-insulated homes that stay warm in winter and cool in summer, providing resilience to heatwaves that will become more frequent and more intense as the climate changes.
6. **Provide support to increase the amount of renewable energy generated** in the city by supporting community-led energy projects
7. **Attract and align funding to enable retrofit delivery at scale** and to stimulate the local retrofit economy for long-term social and economic benefits for communities.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

We have updated our **Asset Management and Decarbonisation Plan** to ensure our commercial and corporate property portfolios are both financially robust and environmentally resilient. This process involves an assessment of priority sites and funding routes, allowing us to develop a targeted improvement programme that ensures our estate is fit for the future.

Strategic frameworks (continued)

Sustainable Cambridge

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together to create the first **joint Local Plan for Greater Cambridge.** The draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation ended in January 2026. The plan will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in December 2026 following further consultation in Summer 2026 and it is anticipated to be adopted in late 2028, subject to further consultations and approvals.

Sustainable Housing Design Guide

The Sustainable Housing Design Guide and its 2024 Addendum (incorporating the Cam Standard)

The Sustainable Housing Design Guide, ensures that all new council housing will be designed to Cam Standard from 2021, and to a net zero standard from 2030.

Local Area Energy Plan

The Local Area Energy Plan is a place-based evidence base that sets out what energy infrastructure is needed, where it should be located, and when it must be delivered to support long term economic growth and local energy security.

Cambridgeshire County Council Community Energy Action Plan

The Cambridgeshire County Council Community Energy Action Plan sets out proposed Cambridgeshire County Council actions to support communities which want to develop their own clean energy projects, promote domestic energy efficiency in their neighbourhoods and raise awareness of clean energy opportunities.

Action on Energy Cambridgeshire

Action on Energy Cambridgeshire is a partnership between Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

It provides advice on how to maximise the energy efficiency of homes, save money on energy bills and cut carbon emissions.

Objectives

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

1. Based on the outcomes of the Asset Management Review, we will establish **a targeted property improvement programme to reduce emissions** across our corporate and commercial estate to meet minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings in line with legislation.

   Our plan will detail how we will meet **energy efficiency standards for council-owned leased properties** to comply with The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 and ensure that properties are fit for purpose in terms of function, size, environmental performance, cost, financial return and location. We will identify priority sites for improvement, assess the decarbonisation measures required, and determine potential funding routes.

   Where we don't yet have defined proposals, our strategic review of the Asset Management and Decarbonisation Plan will **identify further potential actions and the funding required** to reduce or offset the residual emissions from our building stock.

2. Through the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA), we will **invest at scale to improve the energy performance, climate resilience and thermal comfort of council homes.** This will prioritise achieving EPC C, reducing fuel poverty and supporting our pathway to net zero housing.

Sustainable Cambridge

1. Building on our successful council house programme the council aspires to **deliver 1,300 new council homes by 2036 with a significant number delivered by 2030,** subject to Homes England funding. Our council homes are designed to meet the Sustainable Housing Design Guide which is currently the Cam Standard – a low energy performance standard. Post 2030, new homes will target a net zero standard.

2. We will **create a cohesive, city-wide retrofit strategy that enables accelerated, equitable and high-impact retrofit** across all housing tenures – council homes, private rented sector and owner-occupied homes. This will allow a coordinated approach to fragmented retrofit efforts under one defined delivery approach, attract and align funding to enable delivery at scale, develop local skills and supply chain, and stimulate the local retrofit economy whilst contributing to wider the economy.

3. By 2030, we will **increase the proportion of homes achieving EPC C** or above, prioritising council homes and low performing properties and reduce reliance on fossil fuel heating across the city. This will be in line with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) and national policy frameworks to reduce the overall demand from homes and buildings though targeted retrofit measures.

4. We will target energy efficiency improvements and clean heat upgrades towards households most at risk of **fuel poverty, focusing on low-income residents and homes in the lowest EPC bands,** to reduce exposure to cold, damp and overheating by 2030.

Delivery

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Transition to low-carbon infrastructure

i. Leisure facilities

The council's leisure facilities, as a group, were responsible for the greatest proportion of the council's emissions in 2024-2025. The procurement of a new leisure management contract for 2026-2041 will seek to reduce carbon emissions.

ii. Civic Quarter project

This major redevelopment project, if approved, will upgrade the council-owned Guildhall, Corn Exchange and Market Square and could be completed in December 2028. The project targets operational net zero for the Guildhall and water neutrality across the site, with a 65% reduction in Corn Exchange emissions through upgrades to the building's energy efficiency and solar power and include a future connection to the proposed City Centre Heat Network.

iii. Commercial properties

We are developing a plan which will detail how we will meet energy efficiency standards for council-owned leased properties to comply with The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 and ensure that properties are fit for purpose in terms of function, size, environmental performance, cost, financial return and location. We will identify priority sites for improvement, assess the decarbonisation measures required, and determine potential funding routes.

iv. City centre buildings (through City Centre Heat Network)

Feasibility work has started to consider supplying renewable heating to the council's heritage buildings like the Guildhall, Corn Exchange and Parkside Pool complex through the City Centre Heat Network. This would involve working with partner properties throughout the city centre, with the aim of co-ordinating rapid decarbonisation and most specifically providing a decarbonisation solution where ability to do so on site is limited due to building age, construction and size. The council and partners are working towards a final approval for this project in 2027-2028.

Sustainable Cambridge

City delivery partnerships

Leveraging our role as a community leader and major landowner, we are driving system-wide change through three areas of activity:

Transition to low-carbon infrastructure

We are collaborating with regional partners to build the backbone of a sustainable Cambridge.

i. City Centre Heat Network

Working in partnership with the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University and some of the Cambridge Colleges, we are exploring a transformative low-carbon heat network to provide a viable alternative to fossil fuel heating for major city institutions, which if approved, would be delivered from 2030.

ii. Local Area Energy Plan

Led by Cambridgeshire County Council, this strategic framework ensures our transition to a low-carbon, sustainable and resilient energy system is technically robust and socially inclusive, aligning national targets with local priorities to be economically viable.

The plan supports both existing communities and future growth while reinforcing long-term sustainability and energy security.

We will contribute to the production and maintenance of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP), an evidence base for Cambridgeshire setting out the energy infrastructure requirements for current and future growth, and how this growth can be delivered sustainably.

iii. Community energy

Supporting Cambridgeshire County Council to deliver the Community Energy Action Plan, we aim to empower residents to increase local renewable energy generation.

Meaningful community-led climate action, helping to reduce emissions and delivering long-term benefits in energy savings will strengthen local energy resilience and deliver wider social and economic benefits across the city.

Housing improvements through retrofit support

We are accelerating the retrofit of existing homes, prioritising those most in need.

i. Improving energy efficiency of existing council homes

We recognise our responsibility to lead by example in reducing emissions from the built environment through the retrofitting of existing council homes. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) plays a central role in delivering energy efficiency improvements and climate resilience across the council's housing stock. **Over the next five years, the HRA will invest over £100 million in safe, decent and energy efficient homes.**

Building on established retrofit programmes, we will continue to deliver high quality, whole house retrofit that reduces carbon emissions, improves energy efficiency and supports progress towards minimum energy performance standards. This work will continue to prioritise resident health, comfort and affordability, while acting as a demonstrator for low-carbon retrofit approaches that can be scaled across the city to support our transition to net zero. We aim to support learning, skills and the growth of a resilient supply chain.

ii. Action on Energy

The council will develop Action on Energy further as a key local route for energy advice and retrofit support. We are strengthening this partnership between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities. It provides trusted, locally tailored advice on energy efficiency measures, available funding opportunities and support to find experienced installers, helping households reduce energy demand, lower energy bills and cut carbon emissions.

It also develops and supports the supply chain to build capacity, resilience and skills to meet the retrofit demands of the future, and works with partners to support market development, encourage high quality standards and will be a vehicle to explore innovative approaches to finance and delivery.

iii. Targeted delivery on low-income private homes

We continue to deliver upgrades for low-income private homes, focusing on areas of deprivation to ensure a fair transition for all residents with Action on Energy partners increasing Energy Performance when relevant funding is available.

iv. Council house building programme

In relation to our council house building programme, subject to Homes England funding, the council committed in our recent budget to an aspiration to build 1,300 more council homes by 2036.

Sustainability standards for new developments

We are embedding rigorous climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements into the economic growth of the city.

i. Council housing standards

We are leading by example, with all new council housing designed to meet the sustainable housing design guide which exceeds minimum standards on energy and carbon emissions. This is being delivered through the Cam Standard from 2021 and moving towards operational net zero from 2030, biodiversity and water efficiency.

ii. Building to net zero standards

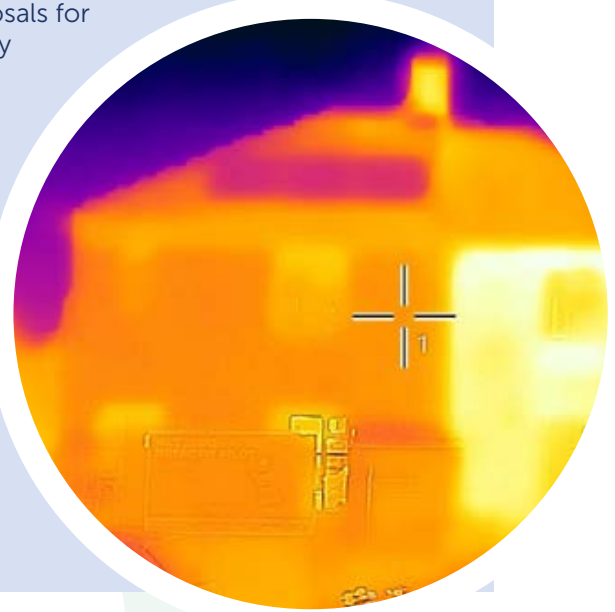
Through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, we intend to mandate that new build homes achieve operational net zero, including insulation, energy and water efficiency, biodiversity net gain and onsite renewables subject to national policy.

iii. Low-carbon energy generation

The emerging Local Plan planning policies will support and encourage proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy generation schemes, including domestic schemes.

iv. Building climate resilient homes and buildings

Through the emerging Local Plan, require all new developments to embed climate resilience into their design including responding to the Urban Heat Island Effect and implementing the cooling hierarchy to prioritise design led approaches to reduce the risk of overheating in buildings.



7.2 Nature and water

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water to support Cambridge to adapt to the impacts of climate change

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water

Enabling efficient water use and adapting to climate change

Standards for sustainable growth

Community and neighbourhood action

Background

Protecting and enhancing nature is a fundamental structural component of building a climate-resilient Cambridge. Healthy, interconnected natural systems act as critical infrastructure that regulates temperature, manages flood risk and stores carbon. A city rich in biodiversity, characterised by a diverse, resilient, well-managed urban forest, clean rivers, and connected habitats, increases our capacity to adapt to rising temperatures and extreme weather events. This approach places nature at the core of our response to the climate emergency.

Cambridge City Council manages more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. It is also responsible for maintaining 23 km of water courses, including some globally rare chalk streams, which are vital freshwater ecosystems and over 30,000 trees.

The biodiversity emergency

In 2019, Cambridge City Council declared a biodiversity emergency and a climate change emergency in recognition of the pressures facing our natural world, both locally and internationally. The council's Biodiversity Strategy 2026–2031 embeds biodiversity principles and considerations across all council service areas and the communities we serve.

Some of the key driving forces causing the biodiversity emergency are increasing demands for housing, food and energy production. These can result in habitat loss, habitat degradation and fragmentation and environmental pollution. They also contribute to, and exacerbate, the effects of climate change.

As urbanisation intensifies, the loss of biodiversity exacerbates our vulnerability to the urban heat island effect (overheating in urban areas), flooding and water stress. Residents have been clear about their priorities, identifying biodiversity loss as the most urgent climate-related challenge facing Greater Cambridge, closely followed by water scarcity and quality. We are committed to addressing these challenges with a clear view of the risks, recognising that protecting nature is essential for both mitigation and adaptation.

Strategic frameworks

'Sustainable Cambridge City Council' and 'Sustainable Cambridge'

This Climate Change Strategy has been developed to align with the council's **Biodiversity Strategy (2026–2031)** and **Urban Forest Strategy (2026–2036)**, ensuring that the council's approach to adapting to climate change is coordinated with work to increase the city's tree canopy and enhance biodiversity in the city.

The Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2031 integrates biodiversity into planning and operations, focusing on mainstreaming nature, enhancing core reserves and promoting community-led action. Working towards these objectives also helps to address climate change, in particular helping Cambridge to adapt and be more resilient to climate change.

The Urban Forest Strategy 2026-2036 guides our commitment to growing a diverse and equitable urban forest through shared action across all land ownerships that serves as a living legacy for future generations.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy is an evidence-based plan agreed to reverse biodiversity decline and restore habitats at a regional scale.

Objectives

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

1. We will take **a strategic, whole-estate approach to enhancing nature and safeguarding water** across council-owned land during 2026-2031, recognising the critical role that green and blue infrastructure plays in supporting biodiversity, managing water and strengthening Cambridge's resilience to climate change.

   We will continue managing our Local Nature Reserves and Commons, ensuring that every site achieves at least one habitat condition improvement (as defined by DEFRA Condition Assessment) by 2031. This will include the creation and expansion of meadows, scrub and woodland habitats, improved habitat connectivity and strengthening the role of these spaces in water management and climate adaptation.

2. We will take a strategic approach to **managing water more efficiently across the Council's estate** during 2026-2031, focusing on reducing demand, enabling more efficient water use and re-use, managing surface water more sustainably and strengthening resilience to drought and flooding.

   We will **ensure that water is managed sustainably** across the council's assets, supporting adaptation to a changing climate while delivering wider environmental benefits. This will include improving water efficiency and resource management at council facilities such as our swimming pools, a programme of water efficiency retrofit measures in council housing and rainwater management for irrigation.

3. We will **increase the extent, quality and connectivity of habitats** during 2026-2031, ensuring that all sites maximise their potential for biodiversity, whilst playing a critical role in managing water and responding to climate change.

   Connecting urban habitats gives wildlife a network to move safely through the city. It helps animals move around to find food, mates, and new places to live, reducing the risk of species disappearing from isolated pockets of land. By keeping these green pathways open, nature is better able to cope with a changing climate. Healthy, connected habitats also support the things people rely on – like pollination, clean air and a thriving ecosystem.

Sustainable Cambridge

Our goals are designed to leave a lasting impact on the city's landscape:

1. We will secure a measurable increase in biodiversity across the city by 2031, supporting the Natural Cambridgeshire vision to **'double nature' across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

   An ambitious vision for **a high-quality natural environment** is essential for contributing to the local quality of life. We will integrate biodiversity into planning, housing and operations and adopt the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy to achieve a 20% biodiversity net gain for council-led developments.

2. The very best **wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network** that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

   Wildlife **habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked.**

3. We have set a target to **expand tree canopy cover from 17% to 20% by 2050.** This will be done by the **growth of the existing canopy, minimising unnecessary canopy loss** (through felling and pruning) **and planting to achieve approximately 4 hectares of new canopy annually** across the city (on public and private land) (the equivalent of between five and six football pitches) prioritising areas of greatest need to ensure equitable access to shade and cooling.

Delivery

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Our strategy for 2026-2031 includes transformative projects to both enhance nature, safeguard watercourses and enable efficient water use – supporting adaptation to a changing climate while delivering wider environmental benefits.

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water

i. Climate-resilient land management practices in our parks and open spaces

We are reducing reliance on chemicals, adopting less intensive management practices and expanding drought-tolerant and pollinator-friendly planting across parks, verges and open spaces. For example, we have already ceased the use of herbicides on grass verges and will trial new grass-cutting and collecting methods that reduce soil fertility, creating improved conditions for wildflowers and supporting biodiversity.

Enabling efficient water use and adapting to climate change

i. Water retrofit and water recovery measures

We will target water retrofit and water recovery measures at council facilities. This includes implementing water reduction measures to three swimming pools: Abbey Leisure Complex, King's Hedges Learner Pool and Parkside Pool, incorporating pool water recovery systems which clean and re-use backwashed water.

These measures will reduce water consumption by 90%, whilst also reducing chemical use and the energy required to heat water, supporting both climate mitigation and adaptation objectives.

ii. Water efficiency retrofit measures

Making use of government funding, we will help the council's tenants maximise water efficiency and reduce their water bills. This will support long-term sustainable development and resilience to water scarcity.

iii. Engineered and nature-based solutions

Across the wider council estate, we will prioritise the use of both engineered and nature-based solutions to manage water and respond to climate risks.

We will explore the feasibility of installing rainwater harvesting systems on or near council-owned buildings and car parks, enabling rainwater to be captured and stored for uses such as irrigation of trees and open spaces.

This approach, if feasible, reduces demand on mains water, lowers flood risk during heavy rainfall and improves drought resilience by retaining water for use during dry periods. We will also explore the use of rain gardens in communal areas and car parks across council housing sites. Rain gardens help to reduce surface water run-off, manage intense rainfall and reduce flood risk by soaking up rainwater when it falls. This nature-based solution supports biodiversity to flourish and supports cooling in urban areas.

iv. Allotment sites and splash pads

We are exploring water recovery measures and rainwater harvesting using Water Scarcity Funding in partnership with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service.

Delivery (continued)

Sustainable Cambridge

City delivery partnerships

To increase our impact, we are strengthening collaborations to deliver systemic change across three key areas:

Enhancing nature and safeguarding water

i. We are taking **a partnership-led approach to managing water resources and reducing flood risk.** This includes the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project, which focuses on protecting nationally significant streams like Cherry Hinton Brook, Hobson's Brook, Vicars Brook at Coe Fen and Coldham's Brook on Stourbridge Common. We are also innovating with trial projects, such as exploring the viability of using solar-powered pumps to improve flow at Jesus Green Ditch and working with the Cambridge Water Scarcity Group to advocate for strategic, long-term water supply solutions.

Standards for sustainable growth

i. We are **using our influence within the planning system.** Existing planning policy standards for sustainable drainage already go beyond national requirements and through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, we are exploring policies that mandate higher standards for both water efficiency (currently capped at 110 litres/person/day) and sustainable drainage. The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning System will also continue to develop work to **ensure that new developments deliver a biodiversity net gain** and progress planning policies in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan which protect and enhance nature.

Community and neighbourhood action

i. We are empowering residents to take ownership of their local environment through **'Nature in your neighbourhood'** initiatives. By promoting Nature City Accreditation and pollinator-friendly projects, we are fostering a culture of shared stewardship where communities actively contribute to the city's climate resilience.

Sustainable drainage at King's Park Eddington

7.3 Transport

Reducing the need for fossil fuel-powered travel and encouraging the use of low and zero carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions

Enabling the electric vehicle transition

Scaling sustainable infrastructure

Background

Transport plays a critical role in Cambridge's transition to a net zero city, currently accounting for approximately 18% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions.

Cambridge is a compact city, which naturally supports lower carbon travel options. As a result, transport emissions (18%) are significantly lower than the national average of 32%. However, continued population and employment growth demands that we remain proactive.

Reducing emissions from our own transport operations is an important part of the council's approach to tackling climate change. In 2024-2025, our fleet accounted for 19% of the council's direct emissions, making it the second largest contributor to our total emissions. The council's vehicle fleet is critical in delivering statutory, discretionary and income generating services which include the maintenance of public buildings and spaces, the maintenance of the council's homes and pest control services.

While the city already benefits from very high cycling and walking rates, compared to the national average (top city for cycling and seventh in England for walking)[11], continued action is required to reduce our residual reliance on fossil-fuelled travel. Our overarching aim is to facilitate a decisive shift toward sustainable modes: walking, cycling, public transport and electric vehicles (EV); ensuring that when residents and visitors need to travel, they can do so conveniently and sustainably.

We are navigating specific local hurdles to decarbonisation:

- **Infrastructure constraints:** Many Cambridge homes rely on on-street parking, making the installation of EV charging infrastructure for residents complicated. While on-street chargers have already been installed, scaling up provision remains a key challenge.
- **Convenience and perception:** Car use often remains the default where sustainable alternatives are perceived as less reliable or convenient.
- **Governance complexity:** We recognise that the multi-layered responsibility for transport, shared between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Greater Cambridge Partnership, can be a source of frustration for residents. We are committed to navigating this landscape to influence regional priorities effectively.
- **National policy:** Changes to national policy, including the delay to the ban on new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 to 2035 and reduction in ambition of these policies, can create a challenging environment, increase uncertainty and slow momentum for change.

Responsibilities for transport in Cambridge

Local authority area	Responsible for
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	Overarching strategy and project delivery including active travel and public transport.
Cambridgeshire County Council	Manages and maintains roads, pavements and highways including busways, on-street parking and on-street electric vehicle infrastructure.
Cambridge City Council	Manages land use planning, street-cleaning, off-street parking, car parks, taxi licensing, managing off-street electric vehicle infrastructure development.
Greater Cambridge Partnership (a partnership in which Cambridge City Council is a voting member)	Reducing congestion in Cambridge including implementing new green infrastructure and smart cities initiatives.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Our **Fleet Replacement and Decarbonisation Programme** targets a decarbonised council fleet by 2030. It is a three-year rolling replacement programme of fleet vans and trucks with electric zero emissions vehicles, where feasible and financially viable. Where this is not possible, alternative low-emission fuels such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) may be considered.

Strategic frameworks (continued)

Sustainable Cambridge

Our local actions support and align with the national direction of travel for transport decarbonisation. We are working in the context of the **UK's Zero Emission Vehicle mandate**, which requires 100% of new cars and vans sold to be zero-emission by 2035.

Furthermore, our approach mirrors the **UK's Climate Change Committee's Seventh Carbon Budget,** which emphasises that infrastructure improvements must precede and enable the behavioural shift toward public transport and EVs.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

Building Regulations set the framework for EV charge points required.

Whilst the emerging **Greater Cambridge Local Plan** focuses on the submission of site-wide electric vehicle strategies for major sites to ensure a coordinated and properly designed-in approach to their provision (and also ensuring sufficient grid capacity is available).

The **Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document** sets out the standards required to meet the visions, objectives and policies of the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans as sustainably as possible, with guidance to ensure improved design and quality of new developments while reducing environmental impact.

In terms of wider work to promote sustainable transport modes, the **Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan** sets the broad framework, although the current Mayor has suspended the 15% traffic reduction target within it, pending update.

The Combined Authority is currently developing the **Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy** which will set out the specific approach to transport strategy in Greater Cambridge.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership's Future Investment Strategy, published in 2023, sets out a programme of sustainable transport investment funded by the Greater Cambridge City Deal. As well as the investment in walking, cycling and public transport routes themselves, the Greater Cambridge Partnership commits to 20% net biodiversity gain on all infrastructure projects. Through its **SMART programme** it is also developing innovative solutions to sustainable city growth.

Objectives

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

1. We aim to **replace the council's fleet of 120 vans and trucks with EVs or alternative fuel vehicles by 2030.**

   For every electric vehicle which replaces an internal combustion engine in the fleet, there will be **immediate benefits to local air quality** as electric vehicles create no carbon emissions at the point of use. The fleet replacement and decarbonisation programme should significantly reduce emissions from the councils' fleet.

2. Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service, a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City councils is committed to **replacing its refuse collection vehicles with EVs or alternative fuel vehicles by 2030.**

   The **Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network solar project,** known as the WREN project, which began construction in 2026, **will support the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service's transition** to electric refuse collection vehicles.

Sustainable Cambridge

Through this strategy, the council seeks to achieve four long-term outcomes for Cambridge:

1. **Seamless sustainable travel**
   A city where residents move easily between areas using active modes or public transport.
2. **Emissions reduction**
   A significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions driven by a shift away from internal combustion engines.
3. **Confident EV transition**
   An expanded, accessible network of 600 EV charging points that allows residents to switch to electric vehicles with confidence.
4. **Public transport integration**
   A convenient system that makes public transport the logical, low-carbon choice over private car use.

Delivery

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Our strategy for 2026-2031 includes the following transport projects:

Enabling the electric vehicle transition

i. **Council fleet and operations**

Following the opening of our new Cowley Road operational hub, which was designed to include required EV charging infrastructure, the council is proceeding with the **rolling three-year replacement of vans and trucks with electric zero emissions vehicles, where feasible and financially viable.** Where this is not possible, such as for the 20 tractors and mowers that do not currently have EV options, alternative low-emission fuels such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) may be considered.

ii. **Waste vehicles**

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service, a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City councils, is **progressively replacing refuse collection vehicles with electric vehicles or low-carbon alternatives when they are due for replacement.**

Following a successful trial of using HVO as a direct replacement for mineral diesel fuel to power eight waste vehicles in 2022, 11 of the waste vehicles that operate in Cambridge have mainly used HVO since 2023-2024, which has resulted in at least a 90% reduction in carbon emissions when compared to running the same vehicles on diesel.

Of the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service's 58-vehicle fleet, 30 refuse collection vehicles now run on HVO and four are fully electric. Due to electricity grid constraints, this is the maximum number of electric refuse collection vehicles that can currently be charged at the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service's Waterbeach depot.

iii. Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network

The Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network solar project, known as the WREN project, will support the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service's transition to electric refuse collection vehicles. **The WREN project is essential to overcome the barrier of local electricity grid capacity constraints,** which is currently at capacity for charging the four electric waste vehicles that are currently in the fleet.

By providing renewable energy from a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array and an energy storage solution to charge, the WREN project will be able to power up to 18 waste vehicles on land adjacent to the Greater Cambridge Waste service Depot at Waterbeach.

The project has been funded by Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, with construction having begun in early 2026, and is expected to reduce the shared service's emissions by 539 tCO_2e per year once operational.

iv. Business mileage

To encourage **lower carbon business journeys,** staff have access to pool bikes, two electric bikes and two electric cargo bikes. Staff also have membership of the city-wide car club, as alternatives to using their own petrol or diesel or fleet vehicle for business journeys. The 35 low-emission vehicles in the car club are available to residents too, 24-hours a day with pay-as-you-go access, using the Enterprise Rent-A-Car branches across the city or the mobile app.

Delivery (continued)

Sustainable Cambridge

City delivery partnerships

To increase our impact, we are deepening collaborations to deliver systemic change across two strategic themes:

Enabling the electric vehicle transition

We are actively removing barriers to EV adoption through direct intervention and policy.

i. Charging infrastructure

In collaboration with a commercial partner, we are supporting them to bid for funds to **deploy approximately 600 charging points across 14 council car park sites.** This project, delivered at no cost to the council, addresses the 'driveway gap' by providing overnight charging with free parking between 6pm and 8am. We are also working with partner councils to support the delivery of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy and delivery of Cambridgeshire County Council's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) grant scheme.

ii. Planning for the future

We are embedding resilience into the city's growth. New **council homes are being built with EV infrastructure** (50% will have active, fast charging places and 50% will have ductwork for future provision) and reduced parking ratios to discourage car dependency.

Through the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan and the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, we are ensuring all new developments prioritise access to low-carbon transport, and that new housing and non-residential developments are designed to support walking, cycling and public transport.

Scaling sustainable infrastructure

We work side-by-side with regional partners to deliver major transport projects. Reducing emissions from transport requires a continued shift away from private car use altogether, particularly for shorter journeys.

i. Active travel corridors

As a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership, we support the delivery of the 12 Greenways and the Chisholm Trail (Phase 2), **creating high-quality connections between communities and employment hubs.**

ii. Network improvements

We are advocating for and supporting improvements to bus and cycling infrastructure on key arteries like Madingley Road, Hills Road and the A1134 **to make sustainable choices the easiest choices** for everyday journeys.

iii. Public transport corridors

A number of **high quality public transport corridors are being developed,** to improve the connectivity of neighbouring areas into Cambridge, such as Cambourne to Cambridge, (west-east corridor) and Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) (a south-east corridor) which aims to provide a dedicated public transport route including a guided busway, bus priority measures and supporting walking/cycling infrastructure.

iv. Smart Cities

Through the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Smart Cities programme, we will **support the improvement of the travel network in Cambridge by using digital technology, data and innovation** to understand travel behaviours, optimise the transport network and enable more sustainable travel choices.

7.4 Waste minimisation

Reducing waste and supporting a circular economy

Collaborative service delivery

Empowering community action

Background

Emissions from waste contributed 11% of the city's total emissions in 2023, making efficient waste management a critical component of our net zero vision. Through the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service, a partnership between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, we deliver initiatives that support residents and commercial customers to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Our strategy focuses on reducing the volume of waste sent to landfill and driving a shift toward sustainable consumption patterns.

Reducing waste, reducing resource consumption and increasing recycling and re-use are essential parts of reducing emissions. Cambridge City Council-run events at the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, and open spaces are single-use plastic free since 2021 to reduce plastic waste pre-dating wider UK legislation, implemented by the government in England from October 2023. The council is committed to promoting the urgent need to remove single use plastic from all day-to-day use in businesses and events around the city.

It is estimated that 45% of global emissions could be tackled by shifting towards a circular economy, keeping products in circulation through maintenance, reuse and refurbishment rather than disposal.

While households in Greater Cambridge achieved a recycling rate of approximately 50% in 2024-2025, significant challenges remain regarding residual waste. Local analysis carried out in 2022 revealed that 33% of the contents of general waste bins is food waste, mirroring national waste composition trends where one third of landfill waste is food. Furthermore, with 25% of food purchased nationally ending up as waste, avoiding waste at the source remains a priority.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Single-use plastics were banned in a 2021 Council policy decision

Organisers for events taking place on Cambridge City Council land must not use any single use plastic on site and provide evidence of this when planning or applying for the event, as well as displaying signage at events to inform the public of this.

Sustainable Cambridge

Nationally, our approach is framed by the **Environment Act 2021** and the **UK Government's Resources and Waste Strategy**, which aim to drive nationwide consistency in recycling and support a circular economy.

Locally, operations are guided by the **Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service collection policy** and the upcoming **Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy** due for adoption in 2025/26.

We are also preparing to meet the **'Simpler Recycling' requirements** which have nationwide requirements to improve recycling, ensuring core recyclables (paper and card, glass bottles and jars, plastic tubs, post and trays, and bottles and Tetrapak cartons) are collected by March 2026 and soft plastics are included by March 2027.

Objectives

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

1. To continue to implement existing requirements to **eliminate single-use plastics at events on council-owned land.**

   This action supports a shift towards more sustainable, low-waste public events across the city.

2. To continue **to minimise waste and increase recycling in our offices and operations** during 2026-2031.

Sustainable Cambridge

To achieve our vision for a low-waste city, we will:

1. To address the significant proportion of food waste currently going to landfill, we are implementing a **phased rollout of weekly food waste collections** for domestic properties which started in early 2026 and diverts organic matter from landfill.
2. Support the **transition to a circular economy** by empowering residents to adopt reuse and repair behaviours through targeted communications and support.
3. **Support commercial premises to design out waste** and meet their recycling duties.

Delivery

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Recycling collections at council office buildings

i Within all council offices we use recycled paper, and collect paper, confidential waste, cardboard, plastic, glass and tins for recycling and collect food waste for compost

Recycling of building and construction materials including children's play areas

i As part of our approach to building new council homes, we follow construction waste regulations and requirements: prioritising reduction, reuse, and recycling over landfill disposal. We adhere to the duty of care which mandates that we securely store, correctly classify, and legally dispose of waste, primarily through registered carriers. This includes segregating waste (such as metals, plastics, wood) at the source to maximise recycling.

ii We will also use recycled materials for surfacing in council playgrounds to reduce waste and support a circular economy, replacing play surfaces that require regular maintenance and replacement with bark and sand materials.

Sustainable Cambridge

City delivery partnerships

To amplify our impact, we are deepening collaborations to deliver systemic change across two strategic themes:

Collaborative service delivery

i Through the Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough partnership, we collaborate to **deliver mutually beneficial projects and influence national policy across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.** This collaboration provides the mechanism to respond to consultations and ensures a strategic, area-wide approach to resource management.

ii The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste (GCSW) service between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council delivers initiatives that **support residents and commercial customers to reduce the amount of resources going to landfill (reduce, reuse, and recycle).** GCSW recycled approximately 50% of waste in 2024-2025 and are targeting 55% by 2030.

Empowering community action

i We are supporting community action on waste by funding voluntary organisations through the Sustainable City Grant to run waste reduction initiatives like repair cafes, which help residents reuse electrical items and clothing.

ii We also continue to partner with community groups to redistribute abandoned bikes and support the national Refill campaign by promoting free drinking water access across the city, including maintaining council-provided facilities and the integration of new fountain sites, to reduce single-use plastics across the city.

7.5 Sustainable food

Increasing access to local, low impact, seasonal food and reducing food waste.

Promote and advocate for sustainable food

Integrate food into the built environment

Empower community action

Background

Cambridge Sustainable Food defines sustainable food as food that is produced, processed, and consumed in ways that are environmentally friendly, socially just, and economically viable. It emphasises eating seasonal, locally sourced, and agroecological produce (organic, regenerative), reducing food waste, promoting plant-based options, and ensuring fair treatment of producers and workers.

Purchasing, eating and advocating for sustainable food represents a tangible action that the council, businesses and residents can take to lower greenhouse gas emissions from production, packaging and transport.

Cambridge has established itself as a pioneer in this field. In 2024, the city was awarded the Sustainable Food Places Gold Award, becoming only the third place in the UK to receive this recognition. This follows the achievement of the Silver award in 2021 and Bronze award in 2016, demonstrating a long-term trajectory of leadership. Our overarching purpose is to maintain this momentum, ensuring Cambridge continues to be seen as a place to grow, procure, access and eat sustainable food.

Promoting sustainable food principles brings wider social and health benefits. While Cambridge City Council has limited direct powers in relation to food and the wider food system and provides limited catering for select events, we can use our community leadership role, procurement practices and influence to embed sustainable food principles in our own operations and to act as a positive example for others across the city.

Nationally, the food system is a major contributor to climate change, with agriculture and land use accounting for approximately 12% of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions. The UK's Climate Change Committee notes high meat intake in the UK and advises that a 20% reduction in meat and dairy consumption by 2030 is critical to meeting net zero targets.

Locally, we recognise that as a district council, we have limited direct control over food production. However, we are committed to lead by example in our operations and champion sustainable practices.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Cambridge City Council's **Sustainable Food Policy Statement** looks out beyond the council's own statutory responsibilities surrounding food hygiene and food safety into this wider role food can play in reducing carbon emissions, improving biodiversity and health. We will focus on the food provided at civic meetings and events and in community centres and cafés.

In 2023, a council motion committed to **increasing the amount of plant-based food** being offered at civic events and events on open spaces and in community centres (providing that the majority of plant-based choices are consumed at events and that suppliers can fulfil this requirement and at the same cost as non-plant-based foods).

Sustainable Cambridge

We align our support for sustainable food with the **UK's Climate Change Committee** recommendation for a 25-35% cut in overall meat consumption by 2040/2050 to safeguard natural ecosystems.

Furthermore, our work builds upon the **Sustainable Food Places framework**, which focuses on key themes including 'action on climate and biodiversity' and moving 'from food insecurity to food justice'.

Objectives

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

1. We will build on Cambridge City Council's Sustainable Food Policy commitments by strengthening the council's role in how it procures, provides and promotes sustainable food to **embed sustainable food principles across Council services and activities** during 2026-2031.
2. The council will **promote and normalise plant-based food** by transitioning to provide more plant-based food options at council meetings and events where food is served, due to the greenhouse gas emissions of meat and dairy production. From 2026 we will provide 100% plant-based food at annual council civic events, including Remembrance Day, the Mayor's Reception, the Annual Full Council meeting, Reach Fair and Midsummer Fair.

   Catering will be predominantly plant-based, seasonal and local, procured from local suppliers, where possible.

Sustainable Cambridge

To strengthen Cambridge's food resilience, we will:

1. **Promote and advocate for sustainable food** across the city, acting as a visible leader and part of the Cambridge Sustainable Food Partnership.
2. Enable **easier access to locally grown, healthy produce** for residents.
3. Embed **sustainable food principles into planning, land use and funding** the areas where we hold direct influence.

Delivery

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Our strategy for 2026-2031 will:

Promote and advocate for sustainable food

i. **Transitioning away from meat and dairy**
Moving to plant-based food when the council is serving and procuring food, thus helping to normalise the low-carbon choice of plant-based food.

ii. **Embedding sustainable food principles**
Introducing these in council catering contracts and food procurement.

iii. **Extend the availability of plant-based food**
Increase plant-based food options in our open-spaces and at events on council-owned land.

Empower community action

i. **Using surplus food to reduce food waste**

Council-run community centres will continue to play an important role in reducing food waste and working towards more sustainable food practices through activities including hosting holiday lunch activities and breakfast clubs, hosting a social supermarket, supporting circulation of surplus food.

ii. **Innovating community approaches for sustainable food**

This is in keeping with the council's community wealth building approach – to cultivate a more inclusive, fair and sustainable economy with support for local charities and community groups. We will commission Cambridge Sustainable Food to run the café at the Meadows Community Centre from 2026.

The café will serve meals that are freshly cooked, seasonal, predominantly plant-based and where suitable utilise surplus food, helping to reduce food waste and lower carbon emissions. If successful, this innovative model could be rolled out to other community centres across the city, increasing accessibility to affordable, sustainable food and ensuring a stronger, fairer local food system.

Delivery (continued)

Sustainable Cambridge

We recognise that Cambridge already possesses a strong foundation driven by an active network of community and voluntary organisations. Our role is to complement and enable this work through two strategic themes:

Integrating food into the built environment

We will use our planning powers and land assets to expand community food growing and access to fresh food.

i. New developments

We are encouraging developers to incorporate food-growing opportunities – such as allotments, community orchards, and rooftop gardens – into new residential and non-residential schemes through the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). We've also included policy in the emerging **Greater Cambridge Local Plan** which includes a criterion on providing opportunities to access healthy food including through allotments and food growing opportunities.

ii. Underused spaces

We will work with 'Friends of' groups and residents to transform underused local spaces into community orchards and wildlife gardens.

iii. Accessible allotments

To ensure inclusivity, we are dividing existing allotment plots into smaller, manageable sizes and raising awareness of their availability.

iv. Fresh local produce at Cambridge Market

We support access to fresh, local and sustainably sourced food through the active management of Cambridge Market, where a significant proportion of stalls sell fresh produce, and where residents value the market as an important way to buy local food that is not readily available elsewhere.

Empower community action

City delivery partnerships

We will strengthen our collaboration with the voluntary sector to scale impact.

i. Gold award

We will continue to support the Cambridge Sustainable Food Network to maintain the city's Gold award status. These community and voluntary organisations are working to increase awareness and engage on the benefits of sustainable food across the city. We'll work in partnership with them to support, enable and strengthen their work.

ii. Grant funding

Through the **Sustainable City Grant**, we fund projects that increase access to low-impact, seasonal food. For example, in 2025-2026, we funded a surplus food collection project that connects local growers with those in need, simultaneously addressing food waste and food justice.

7.6 Supply chain and procurement

Reducing emissions and maximising the social and environmental value of procurement and partnerships across Cambridge

Understand, manage and reduce emissions from our suppliers

Background

Procurement regulations can help embed sustainability into the purchasing lifecycle of an organisation like Cambridge City Council.

These target Scope 3 emissions (that occur indirectly through council' suppliers, contractors and purchases) by encouraging us to select low-carbon providers and prioritise circular materials that reduce waste and resource depletion. As Scope 3 emissions usually represent 70-80% of a local authority's total emissions, this is an important area to consider[12].

They enforce ethical standards in supply chains and regulatory compliance and transparency through supplier audits and reporting. Together, supply chain and procurement can help mitigate Scope 3 emissions (often an organisation's largest environmental footprint) and ensure environmental regulatory compliance.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Cambridge City Council incorporates sustainability and environmental impacts of procurement into its **Contract Procedure Rules**.

For contracts over certain thresholds, criteria that improve the environmental well-being of Cambridge must be included. **Cambridge City Council's Social Value Framework** seeks to use every opportunity in the purchasing decisions to award contracts, lease buildings or issue grants to maximise social value. As part of our approach to community wealth building, it supports using the council's funds to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of our city.

Sustainable Cambridge

As a contracting authority the council must comply with the **Procurement Act 2023** which significantly enhances the role of social value in public procurement, requiring authorities to integrate social, economic, and environmental considerations into their procurement processes.

A supplier provided induction hobs for Cambridge Sustainable Food, facilitated through the Match my Project online platform

Objectives

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

1. During 2026-2031, the council will undertake work to **understand, manage and reduce emissions from our suppliers.**

   Understanding these sources of emissions will give us a more comprehensive view of the council's overall emissions and allow us to support suppliers to further reduce their emissions, and in turn, the council's emissions.

2. We will **expand the use of our Social Value Framework** for commissioning and procurement during 2026-2031.

Sustainable Cambridge

By demonstrating good practice in procurement and social value, we will encourage and support other organisations to adopt similar practices.

Delivery

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Social value in procurement can help Cambridge City Council carry out activities in a way that creates long lasting benefits for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities.

Understand, manage and reduce emissions from our suppliers

i. **Supplier emissions**
As part of our commitment to reducing our emissions further, we will look to engage with suppliers and partners to understand, manage and support the reduction of emissions from our suppliers.

ii. **Social value framework**
The Match my Project online platform helps match suppliers with community projects in Cambridge to deliver social value activities that need support.

All Cambridge City Council suppliers should register on the Match my Project platform and use it to deliver at least part of their social value offering.

Sustainable Cambridge

By demonstrating good practice in procurement and social value, we will encourage and support other organisations to adopt similar practices.

7.7 Community support and engagement

Ensuring a just transition: providing accessible and inclusive support to communities and residents to empower and enable them in shifting toward more sustainable habits.

Communication and engagement

Place-based action

Capacity building and skills

Background

While the council is directly responsible for only 0.7% of emissions in Cambridge, our influence extends much further. Working with other local authorities, we estimate that we can influence around one third of local area emissions through policy, service delivery and leadership.

However, the most significant shift must come from local businesses, organisations and the community; with estimates suggesting that 60% of necessary reductions rely on consumer behaviour change, such as adopting low-carbon products and altering diets[13].

Consequently, our role is to show leadership that empowers residents and businesses to play their part in this collective effort.

To deliver this strategy, requires all staff and councillors to be able to embed the priority wherever possible in the council's work. To support our organisation to do this, we deliver training to increase carbon literacy and ensure that we all understand how to take positive action as part of the council's work.

We are committed to ensuring that the transition to a net zero Cambridge is a 'just transition'. This recognises that climate change disproportionately affects low-income and ethnically diverse communities, and we must ensure these groups are not left behind. Our challenge is to ensure that the benefits of climate action, such as improved health, wellbeing and economic opportunity, are shared widely and felt by all.

Strategic frameworks

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Cambridge City Council's Corporate Plan for 2022 to 2027

Sustainable Cambridge

Our approach is anchored in the council's Community Wealth Building Strategy which puts forward that wealth should be fairly owned and shared within the local economy.

The Climate Change Strategy aligns with its four key themes:

- Using the Council's resources, assets and powers to build community wealth
- Building an inclusive and sustainable local economy
- Empowering residents and communities
- Supporting whole-system approaches.

Objectives

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

1. To deliver training to increase carbon literacy and **ensure that staff and councillors understand how to take positive action** as part of the council's work to lead Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and work towards a net zero council by 2030.

   We will continue to provide this training to new starters, managers, staff and councillors **to ensure consideration for climate change is embedded** in our staff thinking and organisational culture.

Sustainable Cambridge

1. We will **support communities to take forward their own climate and nature initiatives,** empowering residents to take meaningful climate action during 2026-2031, while delivering long-term benefits in energy savings, local resilience and social equity.

Delivery

Sustainable Cambridge City Council

Capacity building and skills

i. Training for managers and councillors

The training emphasises the **actions attendees can take at work and at home to help the council and the city to mitigate and adapt to climate change.**

Delivery

Sustainable Cambridge

To increase our impact, we are deepening collaborations to deliver systemic change across three key areas:

Capacity building and skills city delivery partnerships

i We support voluntary and community organisation activities with funding through the Sustainable City Grants.

ii We convene the **Local Climate Change Forum** with community and voluntary organisations to facilitate the sharing of best practice and opportunities to work together in the community.

iii **Community-led renewable energy projects:** The council will support Cambridgeshire County Council to promote community energy generation, supporting communities to take a bottom-up approach to reducing energy demand by exploring opportunities to enable and grow community energy projects, including local renewable generation and shared ownership models.

iv We will provide free advice on energy efficiency improvements through our Action on Energy advice service.

Communication and engagement

i We are **updating and sharing resources that help residents understand how to reduce their emissions.** We will cascade information through community organisations to ensure accessibility.

ii We are exploring further workshops to increase carbon literacy across the city and will deploy evidence-based 'nudge' techniques at high-footfall venues like the Corn Exchange to encourage low-carbon choices.

Place-based action

i We are localising our strategy by co-developing **Neighbourhood Climate Action Plans for the city neighbourhoods.** These plans highlight local priorities – such as tree planting opportunities or repair cafés – making climate action relevant and accessible to residents within their own neighbourhoods.

Part three 8.0 Working together for a sustainable Cambridge

Background

Together, across the city, we have already delivered significant impacts to increase sustainability and working side by side we can do so much more. We are supporting and encouraging partners to share best practice and learning, collaborate and explore city-wide approaches to reduce the city's emissions and adapt to climate change.

Cambridge is a world-renowned centre for research and innovation, with globally significant life science and technology sectors and an emerging cleantech sector, providing innovative low-carbon solutions to the changing climate. This provides the unique opportunity to accelerate climate solutions and decarbonisation locally and globally and to create meaningful and high-quality employment for local people in the green economy.

Goal

Our 2026-2031 strategy aims to deepen relationships with and between key partners in the community and with business, innovation and anchor institutions in the city. Cambridge's strength lies in its people, institutions, businesses and innovation ecosystem. Together, we can scale city-wide actions to reduce emissions, learn from and each other and continue to work towards achieving the vision for a net zero city.

Outcomes

Through this collaborative approach, we aim to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Strengthen collective leadership and shared responsibility for delivering a net zero Cambridge.
2. Facilitate a joint dialogue with businesses and institutional stakeholders to share collective progress and identify new opportunities for action.
3. Increased deployment of innovative low-carbon and climate-resilient solutions, supported by collaboration between researchers, businesses and the public sector.
4. Greater visibility and uptake of best practice, with organisations across the city learning from one another and building momentum through shared success.
5. A clearer understanding of Greater Cambridge's emissions and contribution to national climate targets, potentially supported by the development of a locally determined carbon budget.
6. Growth of a thriving climate innovation and green economy in Greater Cambridge, supporting high-quality jobs and scalable solutions with local, national and global impact.

Strategic framework

The Cambridge City Leaders Climate Change Group is a collaborative initiative bringing together key local, business, and institutional leaders to drive the city's vision of becoming net zero carbon by 2030. The group focuses on sharing best practices, accelerating decarbonisation, and co-developing a city-wide climate plan to tackle emissions.

The group acts as a bridge between council initiatives and practical actions taken by businesses and organisations in Cambridge.

Objectives

1. We will strengthen partnerships that bring together businesses, public sector organisations, institutions and civic leaders to align around shared climate priorities and accelerate collective action.
2. By convening and supporting cross-sector collaboration, we aim to reduce duplication, unlock system-wide solutions and address emissions that cannot be tackled by individual organisations alone, in the spirit of 'together we are greater than the sum of our parts'.
3. We recognise that significant and impactful action is already taking place across the city to tackle climate change. We will use our role to help share learning, promote best practice and highlight the positive action already happening in Cambridge.

Delivery

Convening, enabling collaboration and shaping a shared approach to climate action

i The council will continue to convene the City Leaders Climate Change Group, working in collaboration with the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) and Cambridge Zero. This brings together Cambridge based businesses, public sector and institutions committed to accelerating the city's transition to a net zero, climate-resilient future.

Promoting best practice and sharing success

i We will seek to develop a regular sustainability newsletter to share success and good practice from across the city.

ii We will also use our convening role to bring people and organisations together and explore opportunities to recognise and celebrate organisations that are delivering action to reduce emissions and strengthen the climate resilience of the city, including through the potential development of an annual sustainability awards for Cambridge.

iii We will coordinate a research project in partnership with the Cambridge Ahead Young Advisory Committee Sustainability Subgroup to engage with businesses and organisations based in Cambridge through an interview-based approach to identify key themes, challenges, opportunities and areas of good practice to addressing climate change

Partnership working to support the growth of innovation, climate tech and the green economy

i Through our partnership approach, we will support the growth of a climate cluster in Greater Cambridge in partnership with Innovate Cambridge, Cambridge Cleantech, Cambridge Zero, CISL, and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to drive innovation, recognising the city's unique role in developing and scaling solutions across the wider region that can reduce emissions locally and nationally. Together this helps to drive innovation, support climate-focused businesses, and grow the green economy – creating high-quality, long-term green jobs.

ii The council will support innovation by partnering with CISL LivingLab Accelerator project and other university, business and innovation partners, to explore funding opportunities, contribute learning from the Corn Exchange and the Guildhall and provide testbed environments where feasible. This approach will help innovators trial and scale retrofit and sustainability solutions in operational settings and aims to bridge the gap between research, innovation and implementation, accelerating the deployment of solutions that reduce emissions and enhance climate resilience.

iii We'll also work in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and local business networks to support businesses to reduce carbon emissions by facilitating access to tailored advice, funding opportunities and peer support.

Exploring a carbon budget for Greater Cambridge

i We will work with other local authorities including South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to explore the feasibility of developing a Locally Determined Contribution for the Greater Cambridge area, aligning with the new unitary authority area following local government reorganisation. If feasible, a Locally Determined Contribution would set out local area-wide targets and actions in relation to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building resilience to climate change impacts and develop a carbon budget for the area.

Green skills and employment

i We will support people to access and prepare for green job opportunities through green skills development, digital badges and employer engagement and collaboration with a range of partners.

ii As part of our retrofit programme we are investing in the future workforce by providing retrofit apprenticeships to develop the practical skills needed for long-term careers in the green economy, while also contributing to the delivery of low-carbon homes across the city.

iii We are also linking young people, especially those who are facing most disadvantage, to career opportunities in the climate sector through employment and skills projects, such as Included, Region of Learning and the Skill Mill.

iv We will work with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service and South Cambridgeshire District Council on a shared approach to implementing the Employment and Skills Plans which are encouraged as part of the Section 106 process as a route to enabling access to jobs including green/ climate related roles created during the construction and operation phases of new developments.

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Glossary of terms

Term	Meaning
Cam Standard	The Cam Standard provides a robust baseline maintaining low-energy and climate change resilience requirements which all new Council housing developments must either meet or exceed. It is a stepping stone to increasingly sustainable outcomes.
Sustainable Housing Design Guide	The 2021 Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide provides a summary of the council's expectations for sustainable design and placemaking for new council homes, setting high sustainability standards. The Guide ensures that all new Council housing will be designed to Cam Standard from 2021, and target Net Zero Carbon from 2030.
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)	The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority was established in 2017. It is made up of a directly elected Mayor, seven local authorities and the Business Board (Local Enterprise Partnership). The Combined Authority works with local councils, the Business Board, local public services, Government departments and agencies, universities and businesses to grow the local and national economy.
Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)	A global non-profit that runs the world's only independent environmental disclosure system for companies, capital markets, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts.

Term	Meaning
Climate Change Committee (CCC)	An independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008 whose purpose is to advise the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets and to report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.
Climate Cluster	A local ecosystem of businesses, researchers and government organisations collaborating to develop and implement innovative sustainable solutions which address climate change, driving innovation and fostering green growth (often in sectors such as renewable energy, clean technology and sustainability).
Community Energy	Renewable energy generation designed, developed, owned, used and controlled by the community, often community groups. This means that communities benefit financially from the clean energy projects they deliver, either by generating revenue for community initiatives or by offering cheaper energy to residents.
District Heat Network	A system that generates heat in a central location (such as an energy centre) and supplies it through a network of underground pipes carrying hot water, to provide heat and hot water to multiple buildings, avoiding the need for individual boilers or heat pumps.

Glossary of terms (continued)

Term	Meaning
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)	An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rates the energy efficiency and environmental impact of a property. It is rated on a scale from A to G (where A is the most efficient and G the least efficient).
Greater Cambridge City Deal	The Greater Cambridge City Deal is a deal between central Government and local authorities in the Greater Cambridge areas which is providing up to £500 million funding over 15 years from
Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)	The delivery body for the Greater Cambridge City Deal, bringing investment to improve local infrastructure, transport, housing and skills. The 5 partners are Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, the University of Cambridge and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service	The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service is the joint planning service for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The service is currently developing
Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service	The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service is a joint service responsible for waste collection from domestic properties for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. It also provides a commercial waste collection service for businesses

Term	Meaning
Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are the release of gases, primarily carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere (caused by burning fossil fuels) that trap heat, causing the greenhouse effect and global warming, causing the climate to change.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	A ring-fenced account, managed by Cambridge City Council, recording income and expenditure for council-owned housing, including rent, service charges, maintenance, and capital investment. It operates on a self-financing basis (since 2012), allowing local control over housing investment.
Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)	A fossil-free biofuel alternative for petrol and diesel, made from waste materials like vegetable oils and animal fats via the process of hydrogenation.
LED	A light-emitting diode (LED) is a semiconductor light source that emits light when current flows through it. LED lighting
Living Lab	A real-world environment to test innovative sustainable solutions in the built environment.
Local Area Energy Plan	A place-based evidence base that sets out what energy infrastructure is needed, where it should be located, and when it must be delivered to support long term economic growth and local energy security to inform strategies and plans for local energy infrastructure requirements and guide Cambridgeshire's transition

Glossary of terms (continued)

Term	Meaning
Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)	The upcoming changes in the structure, responsibilities, and boundaries of local councils in England. It is a government-driven process for 'two-tier' areas (such as Cambridgeshire) where there are currently both district (including city) councils and a county council delivering different services to the same area, to be reorganised so that all services for an area are delivered by a single council, termed a Unitary Authority.
Local Plan	Local Plans are prepared by Local Planning authorities to set out a vision and a framework for the future development of an area.
Net Zero	Reducing carbon emissions to as close to zero as possible and any residual emissions are required to be balanced by schemes to offset an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as through planting trees or using technology like carbon capture and storage.
Passivhaus	Passivhaus is a voluntary standard of energy efficiency in homes and other buildings. It focusses on a fabric-first approach to minimising energy consumption from space heating and cooling. Passivhaus buildings are well constructed, insulated and ventilated, so that they retain heat from the sun and the activities of occupants, requiring very little additional heating or cooling.
Rain gardens	A shallow area of ground or dip which receives run-off from roofs and other hard surfaces, designed to capture, filter, and absorb rainwater run-off from impermeable surfaces.
Rainwater harvesting systems	A system which collects, filters, and stores rainwater, usually from rooftops via gutters, for later use, reducing reliance on mains water.
Retrofit	The process of making improvements to a home or building to make it more energy efficient. Measures can include improvements to insulation of walls, floors, lofts, windows and doors alongside appropriate ventilation to maintain good indoor air quality. Retrofits may also include solar photovoltaic (PV) installation and upgrades to heating, hot water and lighting, or measures to reduce water use.
Scope 1, 2, 3 emissions	Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions categorise an organisation's greenhouse gases based on ownership and source. Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned/controlled sources (e.g. fuel combustion such as gas in buildings, company vehicles). Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from purchased energy (e.g. electricity, heat). Scope 3 includes all other indirect emissions as a result of an organisation's operations (e.g. purchased goods and services, business travel, outsourced services).
Solar PV	Solar electricity panels, also known as photovoltaics (PV), capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity for use.
Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)	Plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEV) or extended range electric vehicles (E-Rev) with carbon dioxide emissions less than 75g per km.
Urban Heat Island effect	When towns and cities are warmer than nearby rural areas because buildings, roads and other hard surfaces absorb and trap heat, and there is less vegetation to cool the air.
Zero-emission vehicles	Vehicles that emit no emissions during their operation. These include battery electric vehicles, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and electric vehicles.

CAMBRIDGE
CITY COUNCIL

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