

Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Date: Monday, 16th January, 2023

Time: 4.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

Councillors: Karen Walker, Joel Hirst, Shelley Bromley, Paul Crossley,
Grant Johnson, Ruth Malloy, Lisa O'Brien, Ryan Wills and Dr Kumar



Michaela Gay

Democratic Services

Lewis House, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JG

Telephone: 01225 394411

Web-site - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk>

E-mail: Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk

NOTES:

1. **Inspection of Papers:** Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Council's website: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

Paper copies are available for inspection at the Guildhall - Bath.

2. **Details of decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above.

3. **Recording at Meetings:-**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 now allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control.

Some of our meetings are webcast. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed. If you would prefer not to be filmed for the webcast, please make yourself known to the camera operators.

To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, we require the consent of parents or guardians before filming children or young people. For more information, please speak to the camera operator.

The Council will broadcast the images and sound live via the internet www.bathnes.gov.uk/webcast An archived recording of the proceedings will also be available for viewing after the meeting. The Council may also use the images/sound recordings on its social media site or share with other organisations, such as broadcasters.

4. **Public Speaking at Meetings**

The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group.

Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting. This means that for meetings held on Thursdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 5.00pm the previous Monday.

Further details of the scheme can be found at:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=12942>

5. **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are signposted. Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

6. Supplementary information for meetings

Additional information and Protocols and procedures relating to meetings

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13505>

**Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel - Monday,
16th January, 2023**

at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 6.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to indicate:

- (a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.
- (b) The nature of their interest.
- (c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** or an **other interest**,
(as defined in Part 4.4 Appendix B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of his staff before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

5. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

At the time of publication no notifications had been received.

7. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 12)

8. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ANNUAL REPORT AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (Pages 13 - 86)

The report is attached. There will be a presentation at the meeting.

9. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member will update the Panel on any relevant issues. Panel members may ask questions on the update provided.

10. PANEL WORKPLAN (Pages 87 - 90)

This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel. Any suggestions for further items or amendments to the current programme will be logged and scheduled in consultation with the Panel's Chair and supporting senior officers.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Michaela Gay who can be contacted on 01225 394411.

This page is intentionally left blank

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

**MINUTES OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT
AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING**

Monday, 14th November, 2022

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Walker, Joel Hirst, Shelley Bromley, Paul Crossley, Grant Johnson, Ruth Malloy, Lisa O'Brien, Dr Kumar and Shaun Stephenson-McGall (in place of Ryan Wills)

48 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

49 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Wills sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Stephenson-McGall.

51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

52 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

**53 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS,
PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING**

Councillor Hirst made a statement on public transport/buses. *A copy of the statement is attached to the minutes.*

Councillor Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel, made a statement. She explained that she had recently met with mayor Norris and there was a plan to use the WECA Planning Board more proactively going forwards, rather than as a rubber stamp. She thanked the mayor for these effective discussions.

54 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

55 WECA SCRUTINY - PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Chair introduced the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Mayor Dan Norris.

Mayor Norris thanked the Panel. He explained that there are some fundamental challenges regarding bus services - a major issue being the shortage of drivers which was made worse when the Government invited bus drivers to become HGV drivers during the pandemic. There is a need to identify, recruit, train and retain 200-300 drivers. The mayor stated that we need to think differently to find a solution such as changing shift patterns so that more women (who can often have more child and elder care responsibilities) could become drivers. He invited BANES to join in the recruitment drive and help to come up with initiatives and ideas. He stated that the other pressing issue is inflation which effects transport etc. cost of fuel. He explained that the most pressing issue at the moment is the lack of drivers. He stated that the number 12 service would continue until April 2023 and that he was constantly trying to patch up the system and do the best he can. He stated that people describe the problems well but what is needed is solutions. He went on to speak about bus stops – he stated the funds had been identified to improve bus stops and appealed for Councillors to urge their officers to remove any impediments to these improvements so that the money can be used. He stated that there is an option for him to take control of the bus stops so that they can all be brought up to a standard. He added that Bristol City Council had done this.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Crossley stated that he was glad the number 12 service had been extended to April 2023. He asked about flexibility in the bus service, for example a bus goes to the station and then changes number/service and goes back out – he asked if the mayor was looking at merging fragile routes. Mayor Norris stated that flexibility is exactly what is needed.

Councillor Crossley asked why we can't work in partnership regarding bus stops rather than handing responsibility to WECA. The mayor stated that if WECA controlled the bus stops, there could be economies of scale.

Councillor O'Brien asked if Town Councils can approach the mayor's office direct regarding bus stops. The mayor agreed and stated that they would need to know if there are any issue such as planning/wiring/lighting.

Councillor O'Brien stated that some local Parish Council's run a Dial and Ride service, they do not get funding from BANES – can they approach the mayor's office direct regarding funding for vehicles. The mayor explained that a 'Community Innovation Fund Prospectus' will be coming in – the WECA office would need to see the plan/case for funding requests.

In response to a query on Parish and Town Council precepts from Councillor Walker, the mayor responded that if there is money, it must be used and monitored. He stated that he would look at proposals on merit and he had no prejudgement.

Councillor Hirst asked what could be done to improve the situation for RUH workers. He suggested working closely with the RUH, a conversation with First Bus and also maybe buses coming from the south could divert to the RUH. The mayor stated that many employers used to provide transport for workers and that can be revisited as part of finding solutions. Councillors know their wards and their areas best. We need to address the issue of driver shortages, especially with regard to particular areas, solutions could include looking at Taxi drivers, students etc.

Councillor Hirst asked about the growth in passenger numbers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire but a fall in BANES along with a reduction in passenger satisfaction. The mayor explained that Bristol had been hit harder by challenges – they were unable to offer 5% of their services whereas in BANES it was only 2.5%. He stated that lower passenger satisfaction is to be expected but it will turn around in time. He stated that sometimes lower passenger numbers was the result of people working remotely which is good for the environment.

Councillor Johnson thanked the mayor for his support with bus services in Paulton, especially with the school bus service. He stated that it made sense to hand over bus stops and asked about sustainable bus stops. The mayor stated that he wanted to look at best practice.

Councillor Johnson stated that the Unite Union is calling for employers to have more responsibility for late night workers. He asked what WECA is doing to help this situation. The mayor stated that this was important and explained that one aspect was to have agreement to always honour the last bus service of the evening, even if earlier services have to be cancelled.

Councillor MacFie asked if there would be a qualitative investigation regarding the 178 service. The mayor stated that it was important to make logical decisions. He stated that data can be used to see where routes are working and smarter decisions can be made based on that data. He added that quality data also helps commercial operators.

Councillor Duguid stated that BANES contributes £26 per head while for others it is around £16. He asked that, if a franchising route was pursued – would there be increased costs for community transport and supported bus services. The mayor stated that he did not know the details at that level but the general answer is yes although we could get money in too as we should not rely on one source.

Councillor Stephenson-McGall stated that, in visiting Parish and Town Council's he had noticed a common theme is about changes to bus timetables enforced by First Bus. He acknowledged the issue about a shortage in drivers. He explained that some communities in the centre of North East Somerset are in a difficult position and feel left behind in terms of the public transport network. He asked how WECA could work with these communities. He also stated that the new timetables are not accessible (many signs and symbols). The mayor stated that he knew the

communities well and understands the issues. He stated that he wants to find new ways of working on the challenges, he explained that he is hoping to use to fund for local community groups to liberate people to come up with good ideas. He acknowledged that the bus information is not good. He added that, on meeting some groups of people, he found that some people are not aware of all bus routes. He stated that it is a challenging time but he is optimistic and thinks it will be 12 months before the situation is significantly better.

Councillor Stephenson-McGall stated that one third of bus drivers in the city are providing a near 24 hour service to students yet other residents/villages get no service at all. Could university's run their own bus service – what is WECA doing about this? The mayor explained that the quality of services to University's is a commercial decision. He stated that he would like to see a contribution from university's as they are big businesses and have a responsibility to the wider society. He explained that he had asked for a meeting with the Vice Chancellors and Student Union leaders.

Councillor Bromley asked if drivers could be included in any allowances for workers from Europe and if WECA has or could approach Government ministers on this. The mayor stated that the M10 (Metro mayors) have agreed to approach ministers which has been difficult as there have been so many changes in Government recently. There is a widespread skills shortage and drivers did not always feel welcome post Brexit. He stated that the Metro mayors can work collectively on this.

Councillor Bromley stated that Wessex Water provide transport for their staff and asked if this system could be expanded. The mayor stated that he would talk to the Chair of Wessex Water about it.

Councillor Malloy asked about a possible incentive scheme – people could be helped to learn to drive if they agree to work as a bus driver for a certain time. The mayor stated that it is difficult to restrict drivers once they have been trained – this would need clarity at Government level.

Councillor Walker asked the Cabinet Member, Councillor Sarah Warren, her view on bus stops being moved to WECA responsibility. Councillor Warren stated that she would consult officers on this.

The Chair thanked mayor Norris for attending the meeting and answering questions. She encouraged Councillors to send any ideas for initiatives to the WECA office.

56 PLANNING PERFORMANCE

Simon De Beer, Head of Planning, introduced the item.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Walker asked how the costs were made up with regard to planning appeals. The officer explained that he could provide more detail for the panel but explained that costs would generally be made up of legal advice and external expert advice.

Councillor Hirst asked if the SPD in January 2021 had been effective with regard to having a balance between homes for families and HMO's. The officer explained that the SPD introduced new criteria with regard to family properties being sandwiched by HMO's. He stated that there had been some success in this area. He stated that there were also other requirements in the policy regarding energy performance and room size and that this was having an effect too.

In response to a query from Councillor Hirst regarding the way the data is presented, the officer stated he would take this back.

Councillor Johnson asked if there is a register regarding 106 agreements in terms of completion and fulfilment. He asked about information regarding an access point to housing in Paulton. The officer stated that an officer monitors 106 agreements, she explained that developers are bound by the agreements, and they can be followed up. She further explained that there are different types of 106 agreement. She agreed to check to see if this information would be available for Councillors. She stated that if there is a case of concern that is brought to officers' attention it can be followed up.

Councillor Walker asked if 106 agreements are amended/reduced with a new planning application on the same site for reduced properties. The officer confirmed that the 106 agreement is renegotiated.

Councillor Bromley stated that she acknowledged the staffing issues and high case load for the team and congratulated them on their work.

Councillor O'Brien asked about an application in Keynsham which had not been approved but after an appeal had been given a year to complete the enforcement. The officer explained that the system builds in steps in order to complete the process – it would not be expedient to take enforcement action while an appeal is in process.

Councillor Crossley referenced the successful move, in 2007, from 4 planning committees to one. He asked about the planning appeal statistics for 2021. The officer explained that generally appeal statistics are good but they are expressed as a percentage so if there is a low number, this can make the results seem negative.

Councillor Malloy asked if it was in local or Government control to set fees for listed building applications and that for trees. The officer explained that fees for statutory services are set nationally. The Council has control over discretionary fees such as pre application advice.

The Chair thanked the officers.

57 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

There was no Cabinet Member update.

58 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the future workplan

The meeting ended at 5.54 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

to

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Climate & Environmental Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	16 January 2023	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: <i>[Cabinet reports only]</i>
		E 9999
TITLE:	Climate Annual Report & Ecological Emergency Action Plan	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Annex 1: Climate Progress Report (Climate Annual Report, part 1)		
Annex 2: Climate Action Plan & Route Map to 2030 (Climate Annual Report, part 2)		
Annex 3: Ecological Emergency Action Plan		

1 THE ISSUE

On both the climate and ecological emergencies real progress has been made over the past year and greater ambition is driving action planning. Additional resources for climate, transport strategy and sustainability within the corporate estate is enabling us to make faster progress than in previous years. Action to increase renewable energy on the Council's estate and within the district is a particular highlight.

However – in common with all other local authorities - we cannot yet claim to be on track to deliver net zero commitments by 2030. In part, this is down to issues beyond our direct control, where regional or national action is needed. These issues are explained in the Report section below. A key issue, for example, is national-level electricity grid constraints.

However, there is more to be done locally and next year will see further progress, particularly through our own renewable energy programme, capital strategy, commercial strategy, corporate landlord project and, regionally, through the development of the WECA Retrofit Accelerator project.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to;

- 2.1 To note the positive progress and achievements over the last year on implementation of the Council's Climate Strategy. This is summarised in the **Climate Progress Report, at Annex 1**, which includes a range of climate and nature case studies.
- 2.2 To note the particular progress made in understanding renewable energy in Bath and North East Somerset and in the development of the delivery pipeline shown in the **renewables section of the Climate Progress Report, at Annex 1**.
- 2.3 To note the **Climate Action Plan and Route-map to 2030, at Annex 2**.
- 2.4 To note the development of the **Ecological Emergency Action Plan, at Annex 3**
- 2.5 To note that the ambition on nature recovery contained in the Ecological Emergency Action Plan will only be fully realised with external investment and through working in partnership.
- 2.6 To provide comments on both the Climate Annual Report and the new Ecological Emergency Action Plan prior to submission to Cabinet and then full Council in March 2023.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Climate Annual Report is based on the three priorities for action defined for Bath and North East Somerset in the 2019 strategy: Increase in Local Renewable Energy Generation; Decarbonising Buildings and Decarbonisation Transport. The following sections outline action and issues against the three climate priorities.

3.2 Increase in Local Renewable Energy Generation

Targets for 2030 – a minimum of 300MW renewable energy generating capacity in district (baseline 29.04 MW in 2022), with interim targets of 50MW by 2023 and 150MW by 2025; 12MW renewable generating capacity installed on Council estate to meet Council energy consumption

Area installed renewable capacity is currently approx. 29.04 MW, made up of ground-mounted solar farms at Chelwood and Wilmington Farm and roof-mounted solar installations across the district. With a pipeline of approved or in progress projects of 25.7MW; 6.4MW of known potential sites and an expectation of much larger sites coming forward to pre-app stage over the next year. The rate of domestic and business rooftop solar installation has doubled since we declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. On the Council's estate, a potential pipeline of 10MW has been identified, increasing confidence that the 12MW needed to cover the Council's own emissions can be delivered.

To become net zero in the Council's own operations, we have a target to install 12MW. Our current BANES Renewable Energy Development Fund (REDF) is £1.5 m over three years, focused on delivering renewables on our own estate. Significant progress has been made in this area over the past six months, following the appointment of our Renewable Energy Programme Manager. We have already identified the potential pipeline of projects that will deliver 10MW and are confident the remaining 2MW will be delivered by 2030.

Our wider target is to facilitate delivery of 300MW of renewable capacity at district level. While there has been a sharp increase in private roof mounted solar since 2019, data collection/analysis is challenging.

The rate of domestic and business solar PV installed capacity has doubled since we declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, facilitated by the Council's promotion over the last year of the West of

England Combined Authority's Solar Together programme. We expect this trend to continue, and for domestic solar to play a stronger role in meeting our 2030 target. Regen's report of 2018¹ identified the potential of 76.6MW from rooftop solar and this could increase as technology improves. The Local Plan Partial Update, which will be considered at Cabinet this week, contains significant updates to both renewable energy and new build policy that will further enable this development.

The principal risk identified to delivery of renewables is from national-level grid constraints, which are impacting on the potential to connect new supply; to resolve this will require action at national level (by National Grid, the regulator, Ofgem, and/or the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy), and we are lobbying with WECA, as well as considering options for local action to balance new supply/demand. Next year, we will begin investigation of options for energy storage, which is an important component of a flexible energy network addressing issues around intermittency in renewable energy generation.

3.3 Decarbonising Buildings

Targets for 2030 – 65,000 domestic properties in need of retrofit; target of net zero on operation of the corporate and commercial estate.

Data and metrics for non-council buildings are challenging, as there is no requirement to measure energy efficiency of domestic properties except at the point of sale, and no mechanism for capturing independent action by property owners. Data on the Council's own estate is not yet comprehensive and further work is needed before we can baseline performance and quantify cost of delivering targets.

Legal Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards for residential / commercial lettings will increase progressively between now and 2030, driving energy efficiency in the commercial estate and through the private rental sector.

To achieve net zero across the district, we have established that 65,000 domestic properties will need some degree of retrofitting work to increase energy efficiency. Without council housing stock as a primary focus, our priority is to influence the retrofit market (both supply and demand side) and its finance, both of which have been adversely affected by inconsistent central government funding policy over recent years.

To date, we have focused our efforts on co-developing and supporting the new WECA Retrofit Accelerator project, which will target support to the 'self-funding' retrofit market from mid-2023. In addition, we provide some limited grants and loans to eligible homeowners to undertake energy saving measures, but this is not yet at a scale that will impact on targets.

The WECA Accelerator will provide a one-stop-shop advice service and brokerage for homeowners, as well as work to develop the supply chain of retrofit contractors. WECA's delivery targets to 2025 anticipate completion of 5000 surveys across WoE (with only approx. 150 actual homes planned for retrofit in BANES by 2025). Whilst this initiative alone will make only limited impact on our 2030 targets, the Accelerator is intended to prime the market ahead of future government funding (eg the £7bn announced at Autumn Statement for energy saving measures, details tbc), allowing us to scale up quickly when central resources are switched on.

We have a new Energy Strategy and Projects Manager in posts and will be developing our strategic approach to retrofit across all tenures (owner occupiers (66%), social renters (14%) and private landlords (20%). This will focus on Accelerator promotion, support for community-based approaches, working with Planning and Conservation on a more streamlined approach for listed buildings and conservation areas, further to the recent development of the Retrofit SPD; new Bath Green Homes project to showcase completed retrofit projects to other home owners; and identification of financing mechanisms for owner-occupiers.

¹ https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Planning-and-Building-Control/Planning-Policy/LP20162036/bnes_renewable_energy_resource_update_report_2018_publication_version.pdf

Whilst we are at an early stage in work to decarbonise our own corporate and commercial estate, progress has been made, highlighted by the delivery of excellent retrofitting examples such as Grosvenor House (listed building) and Charlton House, both of which include solar roofs and with further work in progress now at two more care homes and the new Pixash Lane recycling centre and Two Rivers Primary School, both of which is being built to extremely high environmental standards. For further details of these examples and more, see Annex 1 Climate Progress Report. The Council has recently appointed a new Head of Corporate Estate this year and a new Corporate Asset Management Strategy will be produced by autumn 2023, identifying both short and longer-term opportunities to decarbonise the corporate estate. A new Commercial Estate Strategy is also in development with the aim to increase energy efficiency in line with the Council's 2030 Net Zero target.

3.2 Decarbonising Transport

Targets for 2030 – 25% reduction in car and van mileage per person per year. Council fleet to be net zero.

The WoE Decarbonisation Study shows that infrastructure alone is not sufficient to achieve the shift required to get to carbon zero and that significant behaviour change and demand management is needed to reduce car dependency.

At national level, transport is the largest contributor to the UK's domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In B&NES, it is a close third, at 29%, not far behind energy use in non-domestic buildings.

In January 2022, Cabinet approved the BANES elements of the Combined Authority's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for submission to Department for Transport (DfT). In April 2022, the DfT confirmed the Combined Authority's five-year Settlement (£540m between 2022/23 and 2026/27.)

Of the 25 CRSTS schemes identified across the Combined Authority area, six are within BANES, creating a programme of spend in the region of £138m, comprising around £120m of grant funding. (Bath City Centre is one of the schemes - which will see substantial changes and improvements to bus access and improve the interchange between different modes).

The CRSTS programme is a significant uplift in capital funding relative to current levels and presents an unprecedented opportunity to help tackle the Climate Emergency. The delivery of the CRSTS infrastructure is, however, not sufficient on its own to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030. We also need significant additional investment in bus and rail services to provide decent alternatives to car use.

Considerable progress has been made locally to create safer walking and cycling routes and more liveable neighbourhoods – for full details, please see actions over the last year highlighted in Annex 1: Climate Progress Report.

Fleet decarbonisation within Council's own operations constitutes a small proportion of the Council's carbon footprint. Conversion to electric vehicles is underway, starting with 30 electric vans, street cleansing machines and sweepers, with options being pursued to switch the rest of the fleet to electric where technically feasible.

3.4 Further Council Action, Community Leadership and Partnership Working

Action on buildings, fleet and renewables will go a long way to address our Scope 1 and 2 emissions. Further work is needed to understand and drive down our wider carbon footprint, or Scope 3 emissions. The development of the Corporate Procurement Strategy has action on net zero embedded and staff are being trained in how to use their commissioning opportunities to reduce carbon emissions from goods and services. Specialist work is also in train to analyse the

Council's Scope 3 emissions, which will inform the development of this work. (NB The Greenhouse Gas Protocol defines Scopes 1 and 2 as emissions that are owned or controlled by an organisation ie the gas, electricity, fuel used. Scope 3 emissions are from activities of the organisation but not from sources owned or controlled by it, such as bought goods and services via contracts.)

The Council is driving further action across the district through the new Future Ambition Partnership and the development of a new Climate & Nature group that brings together public, business and community sectors to create new joint actions. Support for community action continues and has grown over the last year, enabling more parishes to develop action plans and more support for the Community Forums, including providing a two week showcase for community action and experience sharing during September's Climate & Nature Festival.

3.5 Ecological Emergency Action Plan

This is the first Ecological Emergency Action Plan to be developed in response to the Ecological Emergency Declaration made in 2020. Work to develop this plan was delayed by a combination of Covid and staff shortages. It should be noted that this new plan builds on a considerable body of natural environment work by the Council and partners over a number of years.

Our vision is to 'increase the extent of land and waterways managed positively for nature'. This is aligned to the national target to have 30% of land protected for nature by 2030 – in Bath and North East Somerset this would equate to c10,500ha of land across the district.

A priority action is to produce a 'State of Nature' framework for Bath and North East Somerset, including an ecological baseline and wildlife index to measure progress against, and targets for nature recovery.

This will build on regional ambitions for nature recovery (as outlined in the West of England Nature Partnership Strategy: WENP Strategy). For example, we know that declines in wildlife populations continue: an estimated 97% fewer cuckoos and 96% fewer swifts in the West of England (Avon) than 25 years ago. In the UK we have seen long-term declines in insect species such as butterflies (46% since 1970) and moths, a 64% decline in the abundance of UK Priority Species, and a 54% decline in farmland birds

Our priority 'to increase the abundance and distribution of key species across B&NES' is consistent with the national target to reverse the decline in wildlife by 2030.

The plan builds on our experience in securing external funding for green infrastructure projects and recognises our pivotal role in delivering nature recovery at the regional level. In the Plan we set out three broad strategic priorities to guide action for BANES to deliver the transformation required to become 'Nature Positive by 2030':

- increase the extent of land and waterways managed positively for nature across B&NES
- increase the abundance and distribution of key species across B&NES
- enable more people to access and engage with nature

The plan presents a series of strategic outcomes needed for the Council to achieve a step change by 2030, along with the immediate actions that we will take to progress these. These actions will help us to:

- mainstream nature recovery in decision-making, ensuring that we are having a positive impact on nature across all service areas;
- commit to manage our own landholdings, across a range of services, in a way that actively supports nature recovery;
- deliver more for nature from existing projects ie Bathscape, Waterscape, Bath Riverline, Chew Valley Reconnected and Somer Valley Rediscovered;

- pursue more external investment, and establishing a prospectus for investment;
- improve communities' access to and engagement with nature;
- Improve our evidence base and monitoring of the state of nature in B&NES.

In the Ecological Emergency Action Plan Exec Summary (Annex 3), we have included a table of 10 priority actions, which have been chosen due to their potential to make a particularly significant contribution to nature recovery.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The Council's climate action plans are in keeping with the role identified for local government in the Climate Change Act 2008 and the regular reports of the UK's climate advisory body, the UK Climate Change Committee.

4.2

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The Climate Progress Report and Action Plan outlines next steps that are covered by planned 2023-24 budgets, although it is noted that business case development, particularly with regard to development of the energy programme will be undertaken and that opportunities to extend external funding will be sought.

5.2 The ambition contained in the Ecological Emergency Action Plan can only be realised through additional external investment.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6.2 A key risk that has been entered into the Corporate Risk Register is that of the nationwide problem of electricity grid capacity constraints standing in the way of the installation of new local renewable energy. We are working at both regional and national level, along with many other local authorities, seeking action by national government to solve this problem.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 No adverse impacts have been identified in relation to equalities groups or protected characteristics under Equalities legislation. Actions in relation to promoting home energy efficiency / domestic retrofit will have a positive impact on cost of living challenges. Access to nature has been identified as a key priority for our work responding to the ecological emergency, with an emphasis in increasing social justice in access to natural greenspace. Actions linked to green social prescribing will have positive impacts for people experiencing limiting health conditions

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 This package of work directly takes forward the Council's commitments in relation to the Climate Emergency declared in 2019 and delivers our commitment to report annually on progress in doing so. It presents the combined actions of services across the Council.
- 8.2 The package also includes the first Ecological Emergency Action Plan since the Ecological Emergency declaration in 2020.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The development of both the Climate and Ecological Emergency plans has involved working across many Council services to identify and consider options for action on our net zero and nature positive 2030 goals. We will continue to explore options for further action and build these into future plans.

10 CONSULTATION

- The Climate Annual Report 2022 progress report provides details of extensive community engagement work undertaken as part of the Council's climate response.
- A workshop was held with the Climate & Nature Theme Group of the FAB Partnership in November, focusing on the Energy challenge (renewables and retrofit).
- We are currently funding CSE to deliver a pilot project involving selected communities in exploring options for renewable energy generation (sites, technologies, scales – preferences and constraints).
- The Ecological Emergency Action Plan has been developed with input from local environmental groups and residents, through a stakeholder workshop and a webinar held in September as part of the Council's annual Climate and Nature Festival.
- Our approach to Renewable Energy and the Ecological Emergency Action Plan have both been subject to early engagement with the PDS panel in October this year.
- Over half of BANES parishes were actively engaged through dedicated workshops on renewables, transport and local nature action planning as part of November's Parish Liaison meeting.
- We use regular questions in the Voicebox survey to track community views on climate and nature action.
- All reports in the package have been reviewed by Corporate Management Team and have sign off from the Chief Executive, the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

Contact person	Jackie Clayton & Louise Morris JackieLouise_jobshare@bathnes.gov.uk
Background papers	Annex 1: Climate Progress Report (Climate Annual Report Part 1) Annex 2: Climate Action Plan & Route-map to 2030 (Climate Annual Report Part 2)

Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format
--

Climate & Ecological Emergency Progress Report 2022 - A focus on achievements

This report outlines the key achievements in 2022-23

Action to reduce carbon emissions, restore nature and creation of new and improved green infrastructure provides a host of opportunities and benefits. Achieving the district-wide zero carbon target, nature recovery and green infrastructure ambitions by 2030 will also create improved health, social equality and economic and community resilience.

Energy: Renewables and Sustainable Buildings

A closer look at some of the key work accomplished over the past year, from improving the energy efficiency of our own buildings to supporting community focussed discussions about local renewable energy generation. Each case study below demonstrates our commitment to enabling Bath and North East Somerset to reach net zero by 2030.

Solar Together

The West of England Combined Authority ran a pilot scheme in partnership with an independent group-buying organisation called iChoosr. By clubbing together, everyone who has registered for the Solar Together West of England scheme had the opportunity to be offered cheaper deals to install solar panels and set up a battery storage system at home. In the Bath and North East Somerset area more than 300 homeowners have invested in solar panels and 20 battery storage systems (all installations on track for completion by December 2022).

Economy and Resilience



Co-benefits

In 2019, the Council was invited by Ashden to join a working group to develop the Ashden Toolkit for Councils. Alongside a directory of action, four co-benefits associated with action to cut carbon emissions were identified:

Health, Economy, Equity, and Resilience



Pictured: A contractor installing a solar panel on a roof.

Community Energy Conversations



Pictured: Left, community members talking to a member of the CSE team.

The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) have piloted a project facilitating conversations with local people about the types and scales of renewable energy which are acceptable to them. The project has been run where there is high potential for renewable energy generation based on evidence from the council's research; Hinton Blewett and Temple Cloud, Stowey-Sutton and East and West Harptree, and Peasedown and Wellow. Through workshops and an online survey, CSE have explored generating renewable energy in these areas with residents through hypothetical discussion. The workshops were well attended and response rates for the surveys have reflected this, demonstrating that local people are invested in the future of the places they live and work.

Economy and Resilience



Decarbonising care homes



Pictured: Alison Born member for Adult Services, Kevin Guy leader of the council and a member of council staff, picture stood next to a air source heat pump.

Solar PV panels have been installed on the roof of Charlton House and an Air Source Heat Pump is being installed to heat the building and provide hot water. The care home has also switched to using energy efficient long-life LED lights. The energy saving measures are expected to cut carbon emissions from Charlton House by 57.51 tonnes and save £14,287 in energy costs each year.

Two further care homes are set to benefit from similar energy saving measures this year.

Economy and Resilience



Two Rivers C of E Primary School construction



Pictured: An illustration of what the finished school will look like with a full solar array on the roof.

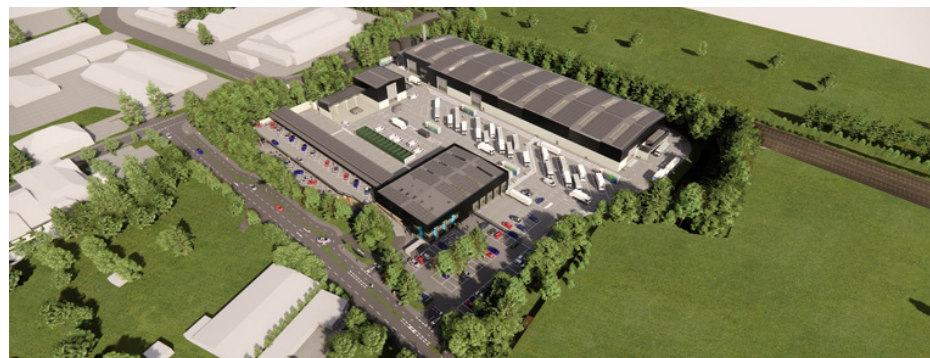
Keynsham's new Two Rivers C of E Primary School has been built to high sustainable standards thanks to additional funding from Bath & North East Somerset Council. To ensure the buildings are of the highest environmental standards to achieve Passivhaus accreditation, the council contributed an additional £835k of S106 funding from developers to the project.

The building produces its own energy from photovoltaic panels on the roof generating 102,269 kWh annually. The building also benefits from excellent insulation, triple glazing, two electric air source heat pumps and a mechanical ventilation system incorporating heat recovery.

Economy and Resilience



Construction begins on Keynsham Recycling Hub



Pictured: An illustration of what the Keynsham Recycling Hub will look like when complete.

The first phase of construction has begun for the new Keynsham Recycling Hub Reuse and Recycling Centre (RRC) and is due to be opened in late autumn. When complete the hub will have on-site renewable energy generation via a 3800m² 2,783-kilowatt peak solar panel array, providing much of the power needed for operations. Office and welfare buildings have also been designed to be energy efficient using fabric-first construction methods alongside a host of other sustainability measures such as rainwater harvesting, sustainable drainage and wildlife corridors.

Economy and Resilience



Roman Baths



Pictured: The Kings Bath drained of water to install heat exchange pipes.

An innovative emissions-reduction scheme means that spa water from the Roman Baths is being used to decrease the council's carbon footprint. Installation of high-grade stainless steel energy blades in the King's Spring have allowed for a new 100 kilowatt heat system (the equivalent of heating 20 or 30 average domestic homes) to provide carbon neutral heat to the Baths Complex and next door Clore Learning Centre.

It is the second council heat pump project in Bath taking advantage of the thermal spring water, the other being Bath Abbey next door, and will achieve a financial saving over its more than 20-year lifespan due to reduced heating expenses.

[Watch a video explaining the new Roman Bath's heating system.](#)

Economy and Resilience



Affordable Warmth



Pictured: A contractor installs loft insulation.

The affordable warmth grant using money from several funding pots including; Council affordable warmth scheme, Government Green Homes Grant - Local Authority Delivery scheme (LAD) and Government Sustainable Warmth scheme – Home upgrade Grant (HUG), has enabled community members with most need to access home energy efficiency improvements.

Feedback has been positive so far, for example one beneficiary said, "My home has been seriously upgraded and I'm very happy with the results." - Air Source Heat Pump and loft insulation. Midsomer Norton

Equity and Resilience



Transport: New Schemes and Tech

A closer look at some of the key work accomplished over the past year, from consulting on new community focused schemes to investing in new technology to repair roads. Each case study below demonstrates our commitment to enabling Bath and North East Somerset to reach net zero by 2030.

Liveable Neighbourhoods



Pictured: The Liveable Neighbourhoods illustrated logo, depicting people running, using a wheelchair and cycling.

Extensive public engagement has taken place on the introduction of 'Liveable Neighbourhoods'. Encouraging residents to re-think how street space can be used to prioritise people, reduce our reliance on cars, and encourage more active travel. Working collaboratively with the council, residents have put forward a range of measures to be considered, including safer crossings, wider pavements, improved seating and public space, and a range of traffic-calming measures.

Health, Equity and Resilience



E-scooter rollout



Pictured: Councillor Sarah Warren, deputy leader and cabinet member for climate and sustainable travel and Ian Blenkarn, director of education and student services at the University of Bath riding e-scooters.

The West of England's e-scooter trial has extended to cover the University of Bath's Claverton Down campus. The third phase of the e-scooter trial in Bath, which was introduced in 2020, now extends to over eight square miles to enable more people to easily commute or take short journeys around the city, including up Widcombe Hill to reach the University of Bath. The e-scooters have replaced approximately 90,000 car journeys since being introduced across the UK.

Health and Economy



Low Emission Thermal Road Tech



Pictured: Photo of new thermal road repair system a yellow truck with the bath and north east somerset logo on the side.

A new carbon-saving alternative to traditional methods of repairing roads is being used. The new thermal road repair system helps to significantly reduce emissions as it improves and maintains roads while producing zero waste. The process reuses existing road surface material and there is no excavation of material that then needs disposing, making the process zero waste. By eliminating the need for power tools road repairs can be made faster, noise levels are reduced, and carbon emissions are significantly lower.

The system and the fully self-contained vehicle it travels in are also fitted with solar panels further reducing its carbon impact.

Economy and Resilience



Expansion of electric vehicle charging points



Pictured: Left, Cllr Sarah Warren, deputy leader and cabinet member for climate and sustainable travel and right, Cllr Kevin Guy, leader of the council stand in front of an electric car plugged into a charging point.

30 new electric charging points have been made available following the expansion of the Revive vehicle charging network to help reduce transport emissions. The charging points are being installed at eight locations across the district including 16 rapid (50kW) and 14 fast (22kW) public charging bays.

The new charge points bring the total number of charging bays provided by the council across Bath & North East Somerset to 50.

Economy and Resilience



Better cycling and pedestrian paths



Pictured: A cycle lane with two cyclists using it, the lane is grey with a white painted symbol of a bicycle,

The A36 Beckford Road and the A4 Upper Bristol Road improvement schemes have created new separated cycle lanes and easier crossing points for pedestrians across junctions. There will also be better access for cycling and wheeling by relocating the existing bus stops. The two schemes have been funded by £500,000 from the Government's Active Travel Fund to enable more people to walk or cycle for local trips.

The schemes include new cycle lanes, which will be separated from motor traffic by cycle lane separators, improved side road junctions and relocating existing bus stops and reconfiguring space to improve access for cyclists.

Health and Economy



Chew Valley Trail



Pictured: Left to right, Cllr Sarah Warren, Metro Mayor Dan Norris, resident Bill Blyth, Bristol Water Chief Operating Officer Richard Price and local residents including two children.

A new 2.7km all-weather path allowing more people to take in the beautiful sights of Chew Valley Lake and enjoy the benefits of being outside opened in spring 2022. The £1.6m walking and cycling path on the northern section of the lake has made the Chew Valley Trail accessible for pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy. The 840m off-road pedestrian and cycle shared use path trail allows people of all ages to access the section between Woodford Lodge and Walley Court Road traffic free. The project was funded by £1.1m from the West of England Combined Authority, a £507,000 grant from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and contributions from Bath & North East Somerset Council and Bristol Water, who own the reservoir.

Health and Economy



Community: Engagement and partnerships

A closer look at some of the key work accomplished over the past year, from the Climate Festival's second year to the establishment of new partnerships. Engaging with the community as individuals, community groups, businesses or through Parish and Town Councils, is essential if the Council wants to be successful in achieving its goal of net zero by 2030.

Climate and Biodiversity Festival



Pictured: Community day event with Bath Abbey in the background, in the foreground there are people walking and browsing several gazebos.

In September 2022 the council ran its second Climate and Biodiversity festival which saw over 500 people take part in 50+ events relating to climate and nature over the Great Big Green Week. Most events were community led and supported already active climate groups in promoting local projects including a 'community day' event which ran outside Bath Abbey. Stalls were set up in the square next to the Abbey where visitors to the city of Bath could take part in climate themed activities and discussions with stall holders.

Equity and Resilience



Great Avon Litter Pick



Pictured: Nine Bath Sea Cadets at the Great Avon River Pick on a floating barge with their hands raised in the air.

More than 120 bags of litter were collected from the banks of the River Avon in Bath and North East Somerset by volunteers and local organisations as part of the Great British Spring Clean 2022. One hundred and seventy people of all ages came together to clear the litter using equipment provided by Bath & North East Somerset Council including 70 litter pickers, 30 children's pickers, sacks, gloves and high vis jackets.

Health and Resilience



Chew Valley Reconnected



Pictured: Northern section of the Chew Valley Lake Recreational Trail

The northern section of the Chew Valley Lake Recreational Trail opened in May 2022. The project was part funded and led by B&NES working with Bristol Water and West of England Rural Network. B&NES have since secured WECA funding to develop the business case for the southern section and have recruited a Project Manager to lead on this and develop the wider Chew Valley Reconnected project. The aim of the project is to strengthen the Nature Recovery Network through connecting existing habitats and filling identified 'gaps' in the network, which will drive nature's recovery and deliver wider societal benefits.

Health, Equity and Resilience



Bathscape



Pictured: A Bathscape volunteer runs an engagement session with two children.

In addition to continuing delivery of nature, heritage, access, health and education outcomes, the council-led Bathscape Landscape Partnership Scheme has sown three new areas of wildflower meadow, run weekly habitat management practical volunteer days, and a programme of outdoor wildlife, walking and training events attracting over 2000 local residents.

In addition, the sixth Bathscape Walking Festival took place in September, with over 1400 people joining one or more of the 60+ walks, supported by more than 30 volunteers giving over 350 hours of their time.

Health, Equity and Resilience



WaterSpace



Pictured: People using paddleboards on the river in Saltford.

The WaterSpace programme aims to revitalise the waterways through B&NES. In Bath, the team have secured funding to deliver the first phase of the Bath River Line, a 10km greenway through the heart of the city. We have also joined up with South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol City Council to extend the project across the region, through the WaterSpace Connected project.

In November, a workshop was held with key stakeholders to identify the priorities for the next 5 years, including delivering improvements for wildlife, water quality, recreation, and access.

Health, Equity and Resilience



Biodiversity Net Gain



Pictured: A birds eye view of Somer Valley.

The Environment Act will require all developments to deliver a minimum 10% 'net gain in biodiversity' from November 2023, which means that development must leave nature in a better state than before.

We will formally adopt a requirement for developments in B&NES to deliver biodiversity net gain in early 2023, but this policy has been influencing planning applications from 1 November 2022. We have done this ahead of national requirements to ensure we are accelerating action to recover nature.

Health, Economy and Resilience



The Future Ambition Board: Green Group



Pictured: Wide shot of the city of Bath

The Future Ambition Board was established in 2021 to lead on action planning for a fairer, greener, more creative, and connected Bath City Region. The Climate and Nature sub group of the partnership is led by a business representative and includes 15 reps from public, private and community sectors in B&NES, across a range of subject areas.

The sub group has met three times, focusing on:

- Understanding the experience and expertise each person can bring to the partnership
- What is already happening in the climate action space in B&NES
- Identifying opportunities to unlock more action.

Health, Economy, Equity, and Resilience



Haycombe Crematorium



Pictured: The top Chapel at Haycombe Cemetery.

Managed by the council, Haycombe Cemetery has made efforts to support biodiversity and nature on site. Following a surprise inspection, they received a 95% score for environmental awareness (22% above industry average). The score reflects the cemetery's commitment to sustainability demonstrated across the site.

Finally to manage the grounds electric machinery and vehicles are used while memorial benches are created from recycled materials and overlook areas managed for nature including wildflower meadows.

Resilience



Somer Valley Social Prescribing



Pictured: A family of four ride bicycles past a background of green trees.



Pictured: A family of three walk their backs to the viewer in a large park.

Bath & North East Somerset Council has been awarded £1.6 million from Active Travel England to deliver an innovative new Active Travel Social Prescribing Hub in the Somer Valley.

The new hub will promote social prescribing through health professionals and self-referrals into a range of active travel interventions, such as walking and cycling, as an alternative or in addition to prescribing medication. Social prescribing aims to support people's mental health and physical wellbeing in a holistic way. There are also additional benefits to encouraging behavioural change away from using cars, including reduced carbon emissions, traffic congestion and improved air quality.

The hub is being based within the Somer Valley, as it has lower levels of active travel and higher rates of car ownership and use. The main hub will be at the Healthy Living Centre in Radstock with regular pop-up hubs in high street locations in Midsomer Norton, Paulton and Westfield. It will be delivered in conjunction with other council initiatives in the Somer Valley, including green social prescribing, which together will deliver greater benefits to health, wellbeing and the climate.

Health, Equity, and Resilience





Community Engagement Summary

Council communication channels:

- Dedicated Climate & Ecological Emergency channel in the Council's newsroom. News on action being taken is regularly posted here. The Council also has a You Tube playlist for Climate & Ecological content.
- Monthly 'Bathscape Footprints' podcasts exploring the natural and historic heritage of the Bathscape area attracted over 1400 listeners.



Social media:

- Campaigns run on Council and Green BathNES channels: A-Z of Sustainability, Energy Saving Advice, and social media was a key tool used for engagement and promotion during the Climate & Biodiversity Festival 2022.

Website:

- Ecological emergency pages are being added alongside the Climate Emergency content.
- The Energy Efficiency, Retrofitting and Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document has been published online, including illustrations. The document is also available in PDF format.
- The Bathscape website was updated this year with the addition of primary school outdoor learning resources, walking trail guides and an upgraded map of the area and its heritage interest.
- The WaterSpace team have produced a short promotional film showcasing all the River Avon has to offer, from the stunning wildlife, exciting recreational opportunities and beautiful landscapes, there is so much to discover along the river. <https://youtu.be/HK5jl1wvrfo>



Community Engagement Summary

Engagement events:

- Second Climate & Biodiversity Festival held 24th September to -2nd Oct 2022. 56 events, with 34 organisations involved
- Three parish areas took part in the Renewable Energy Conversations project
- Parish and Town Council partnership working
- Support provided to Climate & Nature Working Groups in two Forum areas. Parish Liaison Climate & Nature Emergency Workshop held in November.
- A bioblitz was held on the weekend of City Nature Challenge UK at Bath City Farm with around 100 people joining the Bathscape-led activities, while as part of the summer Bristol and Bath Festival of Nature three Bathscape wildlife walks and an outdoor exhibition of artwork on beetles, pollinators and the value of 'weeds' were arranged.



Page 34

Partnership working:

- Working with the West of England combined Authority to support action in Bath and North East Somerset with a focus on transport, home and business energy efficiency.
- A new Climate & Nature Partnership (Business-led), a theme group of the Future Ambition Board, has been set up.
- After a hiatus due to Covid pressure on public services, the Climate Emergency Public Services Working Group (B&NES Council-led), reformed to improve joint working.
- B&NES actively engage with local and regional partnerships and working groups including West of England Environment Partnership, Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership, Natural History Consortium and West of England Green Infrastructure Working Group.



DRAFT - BANES Council Action Plan & Route Map 2022

This document is an overview of priority actions which the Council is taking to tackle the climate emergency.

The route map is a high-level visualisation of key actions planned from now until 2030. The table that follows contains key actions categorised by strategic priority, noting progress and next steps. It is organised by the three priority areas for action:

1. **Decarbonising Buildings – making energy efficiency improvement** of the majority of existing buildings (domestic and non-domestic) and zero-carbon new builds
2. **Decarbonising Transport:** a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling to reduce transport emissions
3. A rapid and large-scale increase in **Local Renewable Energy Generation**
4. **Net Zero Council – the Council's own operations and where it has influence**

The final table lists the Council's strategies and policies that are supporting delivery of the strategic priorities.

This document is updated annually.



Each action tile includes a progress bar:
1= action/strategy still in formation
2= action/strategy in place, but with no current outputs
3= action/strategy well underway with current outputs
4= action/strategy mature, with plans for redevelopment or additions
5= Bespoke action/strategy now complete and considered finished

Strategic Priority for action:

1. Decarbonising Buildings

1.1 Development of strategic approach to home energy efficiency retrofit (private sector)

PROGRESS UPDATE

Strategy and Projects Manager recruited to the Climate and Environmental Sustainability team to assess the role the council is best placed to play, and which stakeholders we need to engage with, to enable rapid development of the private sector retrofit market in Bath and North East Somerset, including maximising the benefits to the area from the WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub project.

NEXT STEPS

Junior energy policy and projects officer to be recruited by December 2022. Strategic approach to retrofit assessed and recommendations made on the favoured approach and role of the Council by end March 2023



1.2 Energy profiling of the housing stock in BANES and analyse cost effective interventions

PROGRESS UPDATE

Training in use of the Parity Projects Pathway Analysis tool has been delivered to selected staff and an initial report profiling the housing stock in BANES has been produced which analyses the measures and costs that would be required to meet two Net Zero investment scenario targets: achieving net zero with and without 'disruptive' measures.

NEXT STEPS

Use tool to analyse and cost potential interventions in communities with high proportion of people living in energy poverty, housing stock with shortest payback periods for retrofit interventions. Analysis of most impactful retrofit interventions to inform supply-side training provided by retrofit hub, etc.



1.3 Roll out grant funding schemes for low income households

PROGRESS UPDATE

In partnership with BCC and NSC, BANES are rolling out Bright Green Homes; an affordable warmth grant for low income, low energy-efficient households which don't have gas heating, with mechanisms to encourage take-up from owner-occupier and private rented properties.

NEXT STEPS

Continue to bid for further Government funding for affordable warmth grants as they become available. The Council is currently working with BCC and NSC again to secure further funding to continue the Bright Green Homes Scheme for 2 years to March 2025. The proposed scheme will offer insulation, low carbon heating and solar PV to 500 low income households across the consortium.



Strategic Priority for action:

1. Decarbonising Buildings

1.4

Develop communication strategies to drive public interest and access to information about retrofit work.

PROGRESS UPDATE

- Updated Energy at Home website to provide basic retrofitting and low-carbon heating information to households.
- Successful completion of a Climate and Biodiversity Festival in 2021 and 2022, including a platform for talking about energy efficiency advice in the context of a cost of living crisis.

NEXT STEPS

Review scope for uploading bespoke estimated retrofit costings for individual households to the Energy at Home website to allow access to more detailed and nuanced information.



1.5

Develop planning policies and guidance to enable energy efficiency improvement of buildings

PROGRESS UPDATE

Energy Efficiency, Retrofitting & Sustainable Construction SPD published. In the process of passing a Local Plan Partial Update which updates parts of the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan to make sure planning decisions better address the climate emergency

NEXT STEPS

Develop updates to the full Strategy and Placemaking Plan for the period 2024-34 which further improve the sustainable construction policies to continue reducing energy demand and use, whilst also integrating adaptation elements robustly into building design requirements.



1.6

Maximise benefits to B&NES residents from WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub

PROGRESS UPDATE

Helped shape the WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub: a three year programme that will encourage, support and guide homeowners from initial thoughts about retrofit, through surveying, advice on measures to signposting to capable installers to carry out works. The Hub will fund consortium members to increase capacity and provision of retrofit services across the region. Region wide marketing and awareness raising campaign in 2023. CSE appointed as consortium lead in October 2022.

NEXT STEPS

WECA and CSE developing first phase of the Hub for first outputs in 2023. Council will ensure maximum benefit for B&NES residents.



Strategic Priority for Action: 2. Decarbonising Transport

2.1

Development of a suite of capital programmes to reduce car use by 25% in B&NES

PROGRESS UPDATE

Developed the Journey to Net Zero strategy, which sets out how the council will deliver sustainable transport for the next eight years through a suite of approved capital programmes and potential future programmes, including: building public transport options; providing for travel on bike and foot; creating improved places to live and work; cleaner, greener school travel; supporting future mobility and improved rural connectivity.

NEXT STEPS

Delivery of transport improvements identified in the Journey to Net Zero through £540m of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, and liveable neighbourhood programme. Funding awarded from DfT in combination with the Bus Service Improvement Programme funding of £105m.



2.2

Increasing ability to estimate whole-life carbon emissions of transport impact from development projects

PROGRESS UPDATE

Developing a new West of England Regional Transport Model which allows us to model the impact of transport schemes and provides a framework for estimating the impact of projects on transport emissions to allow for better cost-benefit analysis and mapping of emissions reductions against carbon targets.

NEXT STEPS

Complete and gain approval of the West of England Regional Transport Model during Spring 2023.



2.3

Work to increase grid capacity in BANES to allow for faster rollout of EV fast chargers

PROGRESS UPDATE

The council is consulting with the National Grid to set aside significant funds to upgrade the grid in next funding period, beginning in 2023, to ensure grid capacity to allow for faster rollout of fast/rapid charge points for electric vehicles in the area.

NEXT STEPS

Continue quarterly operational engagement meetings with WPD and attend Draft Ofgem Determination workshops in anticipation of final determination expected by early 2023.

NB Overlap with Renewable Energy section on the grid constraint issue



Strategic Priority for Action:

3. Increasing Local Renewable Energy Generation

3.1

Develop an evidence base to inform new Local Plan and future workstreams regarding potential deployment of renewable energy in BANES

PROGRESS UPDATE

Completing a bottom-up assessment of potential renewable, low and zero carbon energy technologies, at different scales and locations across Bath and North East Somerset. Enabling decisions to be taken based on policies supporting and facilitating deployment these energy systems and to aid officers and developers when assessing applications for new development sites or for larger-scale new generation schemes.

NEXT STEPS

Initiate work to develop renewable energy policy approach and evidence base for the new Local Plan. The primary goal will be to further enable renewable energy generation schemes, with a holistic focus on community benefit and biodiversity integration.



3.2

Develop communication strategies to drive public interest and access to information and expertise about renewable energy

PROGRESS UPDATE

Promoted innovative new group-buying programme led by WECA called Solar Together. Scheme gave participants reassurance that they were buying high-quality solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage, access to competitive prices, and guidance and information at every stage through the process.

NEXT STEPS

Review Solar Together with WECA and investigate running another round following high demand of initial offer. Develop a district-wide energy strategy. Continue work with CSE on the community Renewable Energy Conversations project.



3.3

Development of Energy Action Plan to provide strategic framework and outline of short- and longer-term actions

PROGRESS UPDATE

Progress Update: Review underway and strategic framework and recommendations for actions emerging. Senior officer and member engagement to take place during November and December 2022, with view to approval of first Energy Action Plan by March 2023. Will encompass both retrofit and renewables, direct delivery, influencing and partnership work.

NEXT STEPS: to be determined



Strategic Priority for Action:

4. Net Zero Council

4.1
Develop council knowledge and capacity for increasing renewable generation on council properties

PROGRESS UPDATE

Renewable Action Group formed to coordinate development of a pipeline of council renewable projects and spending of the renewable energy development fund. Ensure that all the council is positioned to apply for all relevant national public sector grants. C. 400kw of solar PV installed capacity on council estate; 1.3MW in pipeline; 8.3MW in potential pipeline.

NEXT STEPS

Completion of sites in pipeline and feasibility work of potential pipeline sites including solar canopies on P&R car parks and 4MW ground mounted site. Energy strategy work following on from Aecom Strategy Options report and AECOM RERAS.

See 3.3



4.2
Put in place the framework and policies for measuring and reducing the council's Scope 3 emissions

PROGRESS UPDATE

A new Procurement strategy has been published which formalises the council's need to: consider the carbon footprint and environmental impact of products and services bought. A study has been commissioned from Spherics data company produce a first comprehensive estimate of council scope 3 procurement emissions.

NEXT STEPS

Development of method for integrating sustainable procurement strategy into procurement bid and scoring documents. Dialogue with the largest emitters in the council's suppliers to review strategy for reducing supply chain emissions.



4.3
Waste Services action to reduce operational carbon emissions

PROGRESS UPDATE

Waste Services redevelopment of the Pixash Lane site has been designed to bring the operational carbon emissions from the main waste management and recycling depot in Keynsham close to zero. The redevelopment is now well underway and includes a solar array of xxx KW/MW, energy efficiency building fabric, EV charging, waste-water recycling for vehicle washing and at least 10% bio-diversity net gain.

NEXT STEPS

The development is expected to be top-performing in relation to sustainable build features and future-proofed with capacity to increase recycling.



Strategic Priority for Action:

4. Net Zero Council

4.4 Property Services projects to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's corporate estate

PROGRESS UPDATE

Work completed on Charlton House Care Home in Keynsham including solar roof, energy efficiency improvement, LED lighting and a heat pump. Work underway to do the same for two more care homes: Combe Lea and Cleeve Court, due for completion end of 2022 for solar and LED lighting.

NEXT STEPS

A new funding bid had been submitted to Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund to pay for heat pumps in the care homes above which if successful will be completed by 2024. A pipeline of projects in the Corporate estate to decarbonise buildings and increase renewables.



4.5 Decarbonising Council fleet programme

PROGRESS UPDATE

Converting our fleet from petrol and diesel to electric when alternative models are available, that are feasible and affordable. 30 electric vehicles currently in fleet; small vans and street cleansing pedestrian machines and sweepers. We trialled an electric waste collection truck.

NEXT STEPS

6 more vehicles due for replacement this year. We are in the process when replacement is due to convert to alternatives for hand-held/small powered pieces of kit – strimmers, leaf-blowers, hedge-trimmers, chain-saws and are prioritising use of these in the CAZ and other noise and emissions sensitive areas/uses.



4.6 Aligning council policies and plans

PROGRESS UPDATE

The council's Corporate Strategy to 2024, adopted in 2019, has tackling the climate and ecological emergency as a core policy and sets out a series of specific actions to help deliver our net zero commitments. Updates on projects that deliver the core policy are reported in the council's [newsroom](#)

NEXT STEPS

Work is underway on planning for the council's corporate planning frameworks following the current Corporate Strategy period. One of the options being considered for this is to adopt the "doughnut" model which places the environmental ceiling alongside social outcomes as the key decision-making framework.



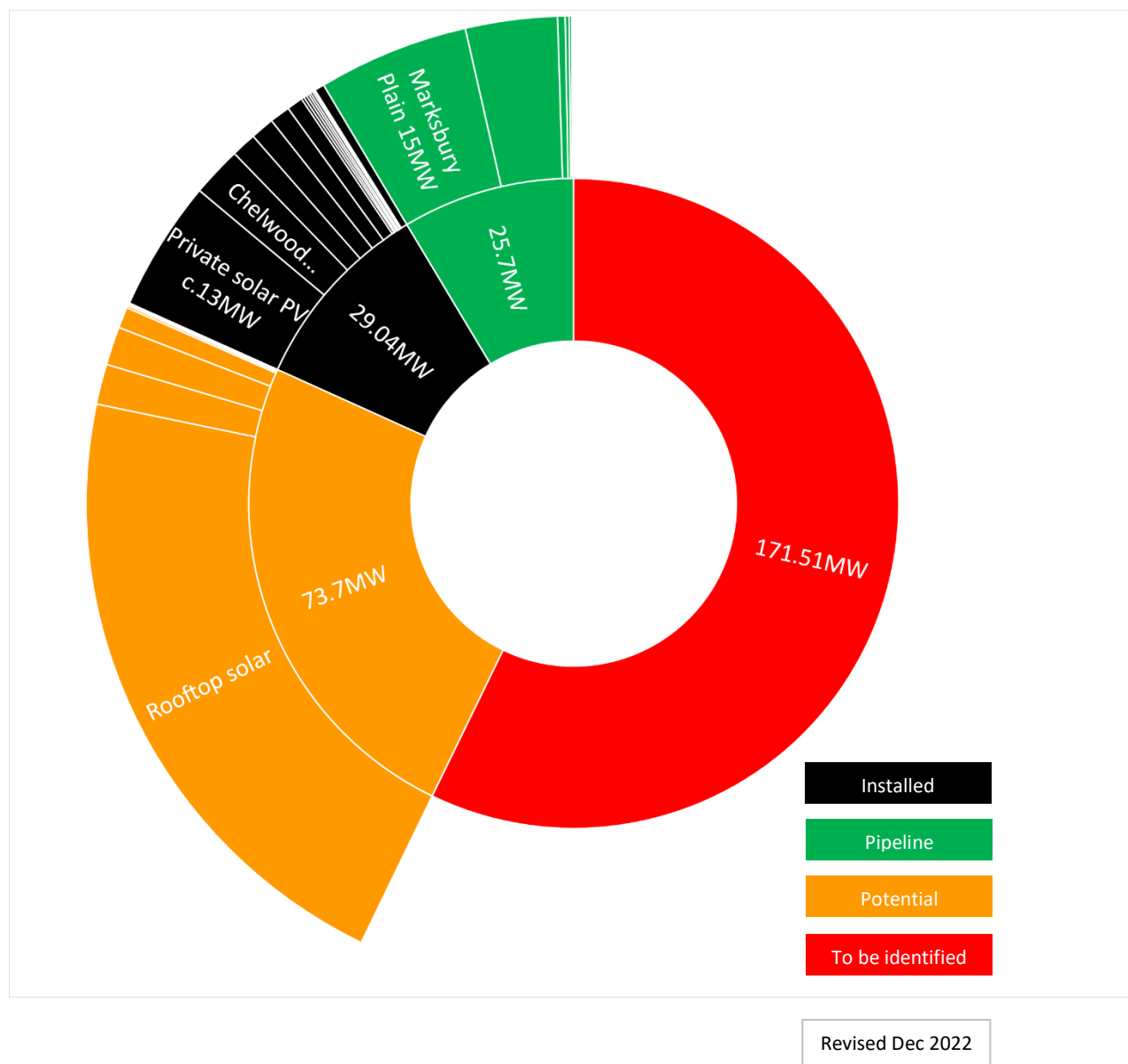
Strategic priority	Strategies and plans enabling delivery
Transport	West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan West of England Joint Local Transport Journey to Net Zero Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan Bus Service Improvement Plan City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Low Traffic Neighbourhood Strategy On-street Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy	Local Planning Policies Energy Efficiency, Retrofitting and Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document
Council	Waste Strategy (<i>available early 2023</i>) Corporate Estate Management Strategy (<i>available end of 2023</i>)

Increasing Local Renewable Energy Generation update 2022

There has been significant progress in the development of the pipeline of renewable energy installations in 2022.

The chart below shows the installed capacity across Bath and North East Somerset (black); pipeline (green); potential pipeline (orange) and capacity yet to be identified (red) of a total of 300MW energy capacity level that includes both heating and electricity.

The 300MW is an indication of the scale needed across the district to help meet the target for Bath and North East Somerset to become net zero by 2030, based on a Scatter stretch pathway illustrated in the Climate Emergency Study 'Synthesis of Evidence'¹.



Installed capacity (black)

The installed capacity is illustrated in black and in the chart is shown as 29.04MW. This total is made up of existing ground mounted solar farms at Chelwood, Wilmington Farm as well as a number of roof mounted solar PV installations across the Council's corporate and commercial estate and community energy roof mounted solar PV across a number of academized schools. The figure includes anaerobic digestion (2.5MW); biomass (2.03MW); sewage gas (0.63); landfill (1.6MW) and incineration (0.06MW). It should be considered therefore that >2.5MW of capacity is from combustion renewables as opposed to clean renewables at the point of generation.

A significant proportion of the installed capacity (13MW) is estimated to be on domestic solar rooftops, however there is a significant degree of uncertainty associated with this figure and it is therefore considered provisional. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy have acknowledged the problem in the document in this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renewable-energy-statistics-data-sources-and-methodologies>; *'For many technologies, especially electricity, no single data source can provide complete coverage, therefore, several data sources are used. However, between the data sources, there is duplication of data for some sites.'* The Microgeneration Certification Scheme data, for example, provides an indication of the number and size of installations of rooftop solar but is reliant on installers inputting the correct figures. It's also known that not all solar installations are required to be registered with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme and as such the actual level of installed capacity may be higher. A higher estimate of installed rooftop solar capacity from a file provided by MCS suggested approximately 40MW. However, this is thought to be unrealistically high at this stage and due to errors with data entry. All data sources are going through a process of validation and reconciliation with the other District Network Operator (Distribution Future Energy Scenarios) and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy data in order that we get to interoperability of sources; remove duplication and predict the higher estimate based on survey data.

It should be noted that the West of England Combined Authority Solar Together scheme that B&NES were a partner in resulted in 1MW of domestic rooftop solar installation across approximately 280 properties.

Pipeline (green)

The pipeline value is 25.7MW. There is a much higher level of certainty associated with this figure as it is made up large ground mounted solar sites (Marksbury Plain and Howgrove Farm) that have this year acquired planning consent; and a number of rooftop solar sites on the academised schools and corporate estate including care homes; sports centres and a new waste recycling facility at Pixash Lane in Keynsham.

Potential Pipeline (orange)

The potential pipeline value is estimated at 73.7MW. This includes a community ground mounted solar farm at Fairy Hill near Compton Dando; as well as leased leisure facilities and car park solar canopies at the Council's park and ride sites for which feasibility work is currently underway. Most of this figure is made up of the identified rooftop solar PV potential identified by Camco in https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Planning-and-Building-Control/Planning-Policy/LP20162036/bnes_renewable_energy_resource_update_report_2018_publication_version.pdf as totalling 76.6MW. Approximately 13.3MW is thought to have been installed and therefore 63.3MW rooftop potential remains. The latest MCS data indicates that annual installation of rooftop solar capacity may now be as high as 2MW or more. This is thought to be as a result of increased demand relating to the energy and cost of living crisis.

Yet to be identified (red)

It is expected that this figure of 171.51MW is likely to reduce as more larger generation schemes acquire planning consent, for example it is possible that a number of wind turbine proposals may emerge as a result of changes to the planning framework through the Local Plan Partial Update currently in process. No figures have been included in the chart above for potential wind generation as the current planning framework largely prevent wind development. The Anthesis report (https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Environment/anthesis_bnes_climate_emergency_discussion_pack_final.pdf) identifies a potential of 70MW by 2030, although no sites or proposals have yet come forward.

A 2018 Regen report² estimated that '3% of homes having PV totalling 8MW of domestic capacity and around 81 roof-mounted commercial and industrial projects totalling 2.5MW of capacity' existed in the authority area. It is expected that there will be a substantial growth in this area of energy generation, giving the relatively low proportion of homes with solar PV and current context of high electricity costs.

The potential hydro power resource is very low at 0.4MWe as the waterways in B&NES have insufficient 'head' i.e. power, to make hydro-power viable. However, Bath and West Community Energy are enabling a rapid increase in rooftop solar across the district, particularly on public sector and commercial rooftops.

The MCS data suggests that the rate of domestic and business solar PV installed capacity has approximately doubled since we declared a Climate Emergency in 2019.

The proportion of installed capacity that is provided by community energy is very high at 40% when compared to other areas across the country. This allied with enabling planning policy work and engagement with the DNO suggest that there is likely to be an increasing rate of growth in renewable energy installations up to and beyond 2030.

There is still no national methodology to report on installed renewable energy capacity across the full range of technologies. Therefore, these figures are subject to change in the future as the methodology and data sources improve.

Route Map: Projected Milestones*

2022

Page 46



**March 2019 -
B&NES Council
declares a Climate
Emergency**



**Partnership working
through 'One Shared
Vision' to deliver
climate action**



**30 additional new
public EV charge
points installed by
the council**



**Local Plan
Partial
Update
adopted**

Gov Targets
Future Homes :
No fossil fuel
heating in new
builds
2025

Gov Targets
Ofgem to invest
300m in grid and
3500 EV charge
points
2023

Gov Targets
Environmental
bill to come
into force
2023

Gov Targets
All HMOs will
have EPC C,
MEES require
EPC D
2023



**Low carbon
Keynsham
recycling centre
construction**



**Partnership actively
accelerating
impact across all
priority areas**



**First Liveable
Neighbourhood
areas implemented**



**'Towards Zero
Waste 2030'
Strategy
adopted**

Gov Targets
Aim for 1GW
hydrogen
production
capacity
2025

Gov Targets
Expected decision
on long term
decarbonisation
of heat
2025

Gov Targets
Up to 3k jobs
created through
increased public
transport
2025



**£1.5m B&NES
capital invested in
yield generating
renewable energy**



**Full update of
Local Plan
planning policy**



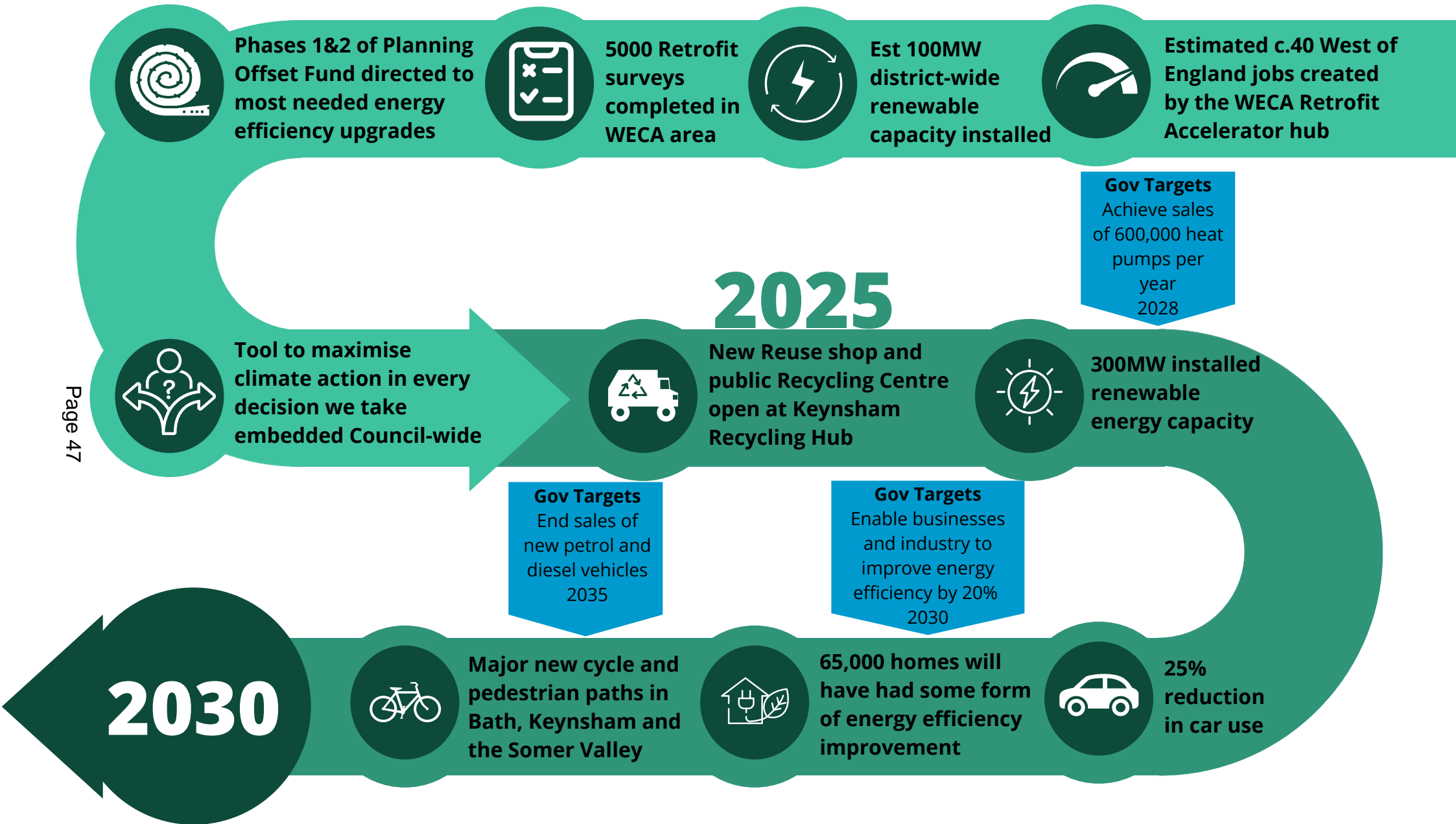
**6-10MW
installed on
corporate
estate**



**Projected 19K
B&NES residents
targeted by retrofit
accelerator**

*Milestones are all based on expected outcomes from ongoing workstreams, they are subject to change and will be reviewed annually.

Version 6



This page is intentionally left blank

Executive Summary

The Ecological Emergency

Globally, nationally and locally, nature is collapsing at an alarming rate. The world has lost 60% of its wild vertebrates, 83% of freshwater species and up to 76% of insects since 1970. In our region, populations of once common birds such as swifts and cuckoos have plummeted in the past 25 years alone.

This matters to all of us because of the vital role that wildlife and nature play in supporting our wellbeing, society and economy. Nature provides the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and many of the resources we need to survive and maintain our quality of life. In total, more than half of the world's economy is moderately or highly dependent on nature.

Our work so far

Since declaring an ecological emergency, we have been working hard to reverse the decline in nature. We have created a Green Transformation Service to provide the capacity needed to tackle the ecological emergency, and we have introduced new planning policy to ensure developments make positive contributions to biodiversity, ahead of national requirements.

We have also been taking action on the ground via several initiatives and projects, including:

- Through the Bathscape Scheme, caring for **80 hectares of woodland** and **100 grassland sites**, as well as creating **12 new flower-rich meadows**, by 2024.
- Securing funding to create **nature-rich areas across 34 hectares of green space** through 'Somer Valley Rediscovered'.
- Changing our management practices across **42 hectares of our parks and green spaces** to benefit pollinators, through the Let's Get Buzzing campaign.
- Planting **100,000 trees** across B&NES between 2019 and 2023.
- **Stopping the use of pesticides** to manage street weeds.

This is just the start of the action needed to help restore nature across Bath and North East Somerset.

Our Vision

Our Vision is to be Nature Positive by 2030

This will mean that Bath and North East Somerset Council will be making a positive contribution to nature recovery, across all our service areas and through all our decision making.

It will also mean that we are taking a regional and national lead in responding to the ecological emergency, working in step with communities and partners across the district to restore nature.

An Ecological Emergency Action Plan

This Action Plan sets out how we intend to build on our work so far to address the ecological emergency and become nature positive by 2030. The Action Plan focuses on 45 actions that we believe will deliver the biggest impact for nature recovery. Of these, we have identified the following 10 as our top priorities due to their potential to make a particularly significant contribution to nature recovery:

Action no.	Description
1.2	Roll-out and embed a Council-wide decision support tool to ensure potential impacts on nature inform all major decisions and projects across the Council, and conduct an analysis of the Council's 'biodiversity footprint' to support this.
1.6	Ensure policies and guidance in the new Local Plan address the ecological emergency and improve access to nature, and consider adopting Building with Nature standards.
2.1	Identify and deliver opportunities for nature recovery and biodiversity net gain on the following sites: Entry Hill, Odd Down Sports Ground, The Approach Golf Course and Lansdown.
2.2	Package together and fund already-identified opportunities for improving the management of our parks and green spaces for nature.
3.3	Work with Bristol Avon Rivers Trust to restore the River Chew. This will involve identifying, costing and evaluating options for removal or retrofitting of weirs and other barriers to fish passage within the Chew Catchment, and accessing funding for priority projects.
4.1	Seek funding for a dedicated post (or posts) for the Neighbourhood Nature Areas scheme, supporting communities in active management of their local green and blue spaces for nature.
5.1	Produce a 'State of Nature' framework for B&NES, including an 'ecological baseline' and wildlife index for B&NES to measure progress against, and targets for nature recovery.
5.4	Survey the condition of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) within B&NES to identify those that lack management plans or are in unfavourable condition, and use this evidence to prioritise improvements in management.
6.7	Enable and support partners in engaging farmers and landholders on managing land for nature in strategic locations and directing them to funding to do so, focusing initially on the Somer Valley and the River Avon corridor.
6.8	Support farmers in creating farmer clusters within B&NES, enabling us to engage with farmers and landholders at a landscape scale; and work with the Duchy of Cornwall, FWAG SW and other partners to spread good practice from exemplar farms.

Reversing the decline in nature will take time, and we are still at the start of our journey. This Action Plan will be a live document that is updated as progress is made, further evidence comes to light, and new opportunities arise.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	4
Our Vision and Priorities	12
Some of our work to date	13
B&NES Councils' Ecological Emergency Action Plan	16
Appendix 1: Further Information on our Priorities and monitoring success	27
Appendix 2: The State of Nature in B&NES	31
Appendix 3: Our Partnership Working	35

Introduction

What is the ecological emergency?

Looking up from the centre of Bath at the surrounding historic and beautiful landscape, standing at the edge of Chew Valley Lake, or taking a walk through St Catherine Valley, you would rightly be thankful that Bath and North East Somerset has such a rich and varied landscape. However, this outward appearance belies the troubling state of our natural environment.

Over the past couple of centuries, humanity's use of land and resources has placed unsustainable pressure on nature, threatening the stability of ecosystems both globally and locally. The Global Footprint Network¹ and WWF estimate² that the average person in the UK lives at about 2.5 times the world's ecological limit; in other words, if every person on Earth consumed as much as the average UK citizen, we would need 2.5 earths to support the world's population. This is not sustainable or equitable.

One of the consequences is that nature has been collapsing at an alarming rate:

- Globally, we have lost 60% of wild vertebrates, 83% of freshwater species³ and up to 76% of insects⁴ since 1970.
- In the UK, we have seen long-term declines in insect species such as butterflies and moths (25% since 1970 for the latter), a 64% decline in the abundance of UK Priority Species, and a 54% decline in breeding farmland birds. 43% of bird species and 26% of terrestrial mammal species in the countryside are now threatened with extinction.⁵
- And in the West of England region, figures from the BTO suggest that numbers of once common birds such as swifts and cuckoos have dropped by more than 95% in the past 25 years alone.

While evidence before 1970 is patchy, we do know that wildlife in the UK and locally had already been significantly depleted by this point⁵.

In July 2020, B&NES Council declared an ecological emergency, recognising the severity of the degradation of the natural environment and loss of wildlife, and the urgency of action to restore nature.

¹ [Footprint Network: Compare Countries](#)

² WWF (2021), *Thriving Within Planetary Means*

³ World Wildlife Fund (2018), *2018 Living Planet report*.

⁴ Hallann et al. (2017), *More than 75 percent decline over 27 years in total flying insect biomass in protected areas*

⁵ State of Nature Report (2019)

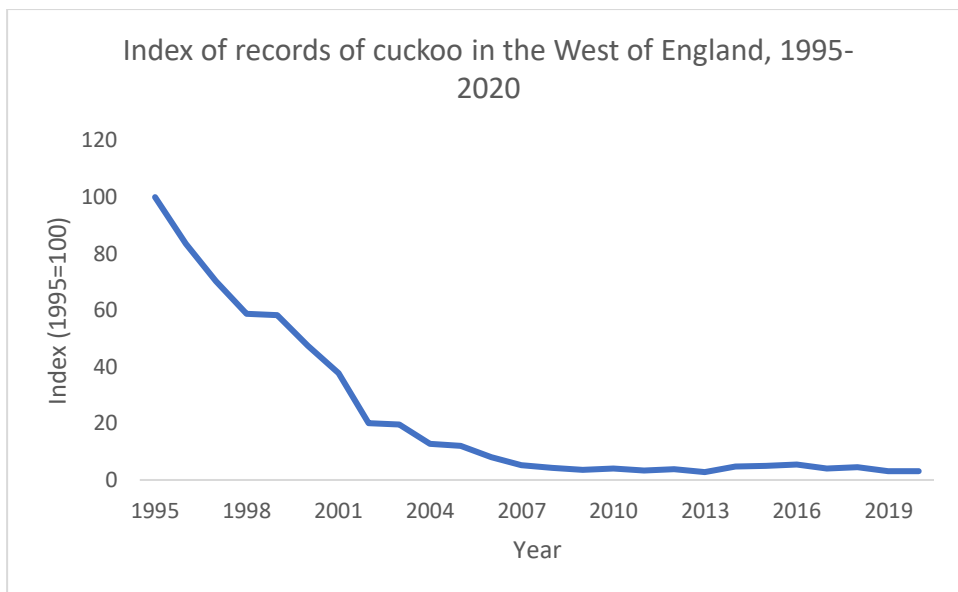


Figure 1 – figures from BTO suggest that the population of cuckoo in the West of England has crashed in the period between 1995 to 2021. For every 100 cuckoos in the region in 1995, there may now only be four.

What are the causes behind this?

A range of interacting factors are behind the decline in nature, including changes in land use and land management, the use of pesticides and other pollutants, the modification of our waterways, the presence of invasive non-native species, climate change, and a failure to factor in the costs of these impacts within our economic systems.

The biggest factor in the decline in wildlife in the UK and locally is the loss and degradation of habitats. Since the Second World War in particular, intensification and expansion of farming, alongside urban development has meant we have lost much of the space that nature needs to thrive. One of the most startling figures is that the UK lost 97% of its lowland meadows between the 1930s and 1980s. In addition, the removal of scrub and hedges, overgrazing, and the lack of good woodland management and protection have all contributed to nature's decline.

While the use of pesticides has helped to increase farming yields significantly over the past 75 years, they have also had a profound impact on wildlife. In the 1960s and 1970s, the widespread use of now-banned pesticides contributed to startling declines in birds of prey and songbirds. Newer generations of pesticides (such as neonicotinoids) are toxic to insects and other invertebrates on land and in water⁶, with potential impacts on the populations of animals and plants that are dependent on insects for food and pollination.

The effects of climate change on wildlife are already being felt, with some species being pushed northward due to warming temperatures and others struggling with changes in the

⁶ Pisa, L.W., Amaral-Rogers, V., Belzunces, L.P. et al. Effects of neonicotinoids and fipronil on non-target invertebrates. *Environ Sci Pollut Res* 22, 68–102 (2015).

timing of the availability of their food sources. Additionally, invasive species, such as *Rhododendron Ponticum* and *Himalayan Balsam*, are altering our ecosystems and continue to spread⁷, while introduced diseases such as Ash Dieback threaten the survival of our native plants and animals.



Figure 2 – Himalayan Balsam from Asia, is one of our most problematic non-native species. The plant competes with native plants on river banks, reducing biodiversity, and when it dies back in the winter, it leads to erosion of river banks⁸. It can be found in the B&NES region, including along the River Avon.

Rivers, streams and lakes face unique challenges

Our freshwater environment (including rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands) has been impacted by a unique combination of pressures in addition to those outlined above:

- Well-publicised pollution issues, such as run off from farms and urban areas, and sewage being discharged into rivers, harm river ecosystems and can kill freshwater wildlife;
- Modifications to waterways, such as the straightening of river channels and the installation of weirs, change the river ecosystem and can create barriers to fish completing their migration and reaching spawning sites (99% of British rivers have artificial barriers obstructing migrating fish);

⁷ On average, 10–12 new non-native species become established in the UK each year, with 10-20% of these causing serious adverse impacts. State of Nature Report, 2019

⁸ [Himalayan Balsam: It's an alien plant invasion, National Trust.](#)

- Pharmaceuticals and microplastics are present in increasing concentrations, and we do not fully understand the impacts this is having on wildlife;
- And both drought and water abstraction can lead to streams drying up and oxygen levels falling, in turn depleting or killing fish populations;

Due to these pressures, only two of the 18 waterbodies in B&NES are in 'good' ecological status.

Why does this matter?

The ecological emergency matters to all of us because of the vital role that wildlife and nature play in supporting our wellbeing, society and economy. Nature provides the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and many of the resources we need to survive and maintain our quality of life.

For example, approximately three-quarters of all crop types grown by humans require pollination by insects; put simply, we would struggle to feed ourselves without insects providing pollination.



Figure 3: pollinators, such as this tawny mining bee, play a crucial role in the growing of much of the food we eat: approximately three-quarters of all crop types grown by humans require pollination by insects. Image from the Woodland Trust.

And deteriorating soil health is one of the biggest challenges facing farming and food security today, with large areas of soil in the UK considered to be degraded. Insects, worms and soil microbes break down organic matter, such as leaves, manure and other waste, returning it to the soil and providing the nutrients that plants and, therefore, our food need to grow. Without a healthy and biodiverse soil, this complex processes that underpin the natural world and our food are put at risk.

There is also much that remains to be understood on how ecosystems function; nature is not simple, and we simply do not know the consequences of further deterioration of the

natural environment. There have been and will continue to be ecological ‘tipping points’ that lead to abrupt changes in the ability of nature to function and provide what we need to survive.

Nature and the economy

The World Economic Forum estimate that over half of the world’s GDP is moderately or highly dependent on nature⁹, though arguably everything we produce is ultimately dependent on nature. But many of the services provided to us by nature are not priced into conventional economic decision-making: for example, no explicit cost is usually placed on the degradation of soil or of habitat loss incurred to produce a crop, or on the impact of worsening air quality from traffic generated by a new housing development¹⁰.

B&NES Council is developing a decision support tool with people and nature at its heart, which will better integrate the impacts of decisions the Council makes on these environmental ‘externalities’, such as biodiversity and pollution. This aims to help reduce our demands on nature and enable it to recover, ensuring everyone is able to enjoy a good quality of life and helping to ensure our collective wellbeing into the future.

Aside from these vital services, the world is a much poorer place without nature. Numerous studies show the importance of interacting with nature for our health and wellbeing, reducing the risk of physical ailments, such as cardiovascular diseases, and poor mental health.

What about the climate emergency?

B&NES has also declared a climate emergency, with an ambitious goal to be carbon neutral by 2030. While the climate and ecological emergencies are not the same, they are linked:

- They share some of the same causes, such as over-consumption of resources and changes in land use;
- Many of the solutions to tackling the ecological emergency, such as reducing consumption of meat and dairy or restoring habitats, will also help us to mitigate climate change;
- Nature-based solutions, such as well-placed woodland and wetland creation, can be important tools in adapting to the effects of climate change while contributing to nature’s recovery and sequestering carbon; and
- Tackling climate change will also help reduce the pressure on nature.

⁹ World Economic Forum (2020), *Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy*

¹⁰ For further information and a more detailed explanation of how and why this is the case, see ‘The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review’ (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>).

The table below demonstrates some of the actions that will be important in tackling both the ecological and climate emergencies, and some that are primarily focused on one of the Emergencies.

Actions that largely focus on net zero	Actions that deliver net zero and nature recovery	Actions that largely focus on nature recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrofitting of homes to reduce heating costs • Delivering more electric vehicle charging points • Increasing renewable energy generation, including solar and wind • Reducing embedded carbon in construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging environmentally-friendly diets and food choices • Habitat restoration and creation, including woodlands • Development of an environmental decision-making tool • Reducing consumption and encouraging a circular economy • Reducing car use in favour of public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing pesticide use • Improved management of grassland sites and verges, and hedgerows • Removing river barriers and restoring natural flows • Reducing agricultural, industrial and domestic pollutant run-off • Integrating wildlife-friendly spaces into developments

An Ecological Emergency Action Plan

We know what we need to do to tackle the ecological emergency in Bath and North East Somerset: protect and sustain our existing nature-rich sites; create bigger, better and better-connected habitats at scale; and manage all our land and water sympathetically for wildlife.

As well as benefitting nature, taking this approach across the district presents a huge opportunity to enrich our society, wellbeing and economy:

- Expanding and creating habitats, such as woodlands and wetlands, will sequester carbon and help us to tackle the climate emergency, provide natural flood management, and improve our water quality.
- More and better-managed grasslands and scrubland will increase insect and pollinator populations, boosting our food and soil security.
- More nature-rich green and blue spaces where people live and work will lead to happier and healthier communities, reducing the burden on our health and care system.

- A thriving natural environment underpins a sustainable economy, can produce a flourishing green tourism industry, and creates skilled jobs in ecology and land management.

Meeting the challenge of the ecological emergency requires action from organisations, businesses, communities and individuals across the region. B&NES Council recognises it has an important role to play in tackling the ecological emergency, both through its own delivery and through supporting others to take action (see Figure 4).

We held a series of internal and external discussions and workshops (2021-2022) to better understand what the Council's most impactful actions for nature could be. Building on these, this Action Plan details what we will do to tackle the ecological emergency and become Nature Positive by 2030.



Figure 4 - As a local authority, B&NES Council has different spheres of influence, and in each of these its role is different. The diagram above shows how the role of the Council in tackling the ecological emergency changes as its direct influence decreases from 'direct control' to 'engaging and communicating'.

Our Vision is to be Nature Positive by 2030

Our vision is to be **nature positive as an organisation by 2030**. This means that B&NES Council will be making **a positive contribution to nature recovery**, with all parts of the Council integrating the response to the ecological emergency into their decision-making. It will also mean that we are taking a regional and national **lead in responding to the ecological emergency**, working in step with communities and partners across the district to restore nature.

We have set out three guiding Priorities to inform the actions in this document, so that each action in our Action Plan contributes to one or more of these Priorities.

Our Three Priorities:



Increase the extent of land and waterways managed positively for nature across B&NES



Increase the abundance and distribution of key species across B&NES



Enable more people to access and engage with nature

For an explanation of why we have chosen these three priorities and how we will monitor success in delivering against these, please see Appendix 1.

Some of our work to date

B&NES Council formally declared an ecological emergency in July 2020, recognising the need for an urgent and decisive response to restore nature.

Since then, we have expanded our Green Transformation team to provide the capacity needed to tackle the ecological emergency and to deliver Strategic Green Infrastructure¹¹ (GI) Projects that will benefit both nature and people. And we have taken forward new planning policy for securing Biodiversity Net Gain¹², ahead of the Environment Act requirements, and has strengthened other planning policies to help protect and restore nature.

We have also been taking action on the ground via several initiatives and projects:

Bathscape (Strategic GI Project)

The Bathscape is the beautiful natural landscape surrounding the World Heritage city of Bath, with its undulating grasslands and woodlands offering a haven for residents, visitors and nature.

The Bathscape scheme was launched in 2018 with the aim of improving the management and use of the landscape for people and nature. So far, working in partnership with eleven organisations, we have sown eight new areas of flower-rich meadows, provided advice to better manage 47 hectares of woodland and over 40 grassland sites, created eighteen new walking trails, and much more.

Next steps: We will continue working towards our objectives of caring for 80 hectares of woodland and 100 grassland sites across the Bathscape, as well as creating 12 new flower-rich meadows by 2024, with a view to extending the Scheme beyond 2024.

Somer Valley Rediscovered (Strategic GI Project) and the Limestone Link

The Somer Valley Rediscovered project aims to improve biodiversity and people's access to and connection with nature in the Somer Valley, which covers Radstock, Midsomer Norton and Westfield, the large villages of Paulton and Peasedown St John, and the surrounding countryside and smaller villages.

A successful £1.1 million bid to the West of England Green Recovery Fund is providing the funding needed to create nature-rich areas across 34 hectares of green space in the Midsomer Norton and Radstock area, which will include tree planting, grassland restoration, and hedgerow expansion. We have also appointed a project manager for Somer Valley Rediscovered, who has been working with local communities and town and parish councils to shape this work.

¹¹ 'Green infrastructure' is a term used to describe the network of natural green and blue spaces in an area, including woodlands, grasslands, rivers and lakes, hedges, parks, gardens, allotments and amenity space.

¹² Biodiversity Net Gain is the requirement that all development must have a net positive impact on biodiversity of at least 10%. For more information, see <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities>.

Somer Valley Rediscovered (Strategic GI Project) and the Limestone Link

Next steps: As well as delivering improvements across 34 hectares of green space, we will continue engaging local communities to identify further opportunities for restoring nature and improving the wellbeing of local communities.

Additionally, we are working in partnership on a wider vision for the Limestone Link, a corridor for nature and people connecting the protected landscapes of the Cotswolds and Mendip Hills.

WaterSpace (Strategic GI Project)

Through Waterspace, we are working in partnership with the Environment Agency, the Canal & River Trust, Wessex Water, South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol City Council to take a holistic and integrated approach to improving the River Avon corridor, from Dundas Aqueduct through to Bristol.

This includes Bath River Line, a new, riverside linear park in Bath that will connect green spaces and enable people to better enjoy the river environment, as well as proposals to improve biodiversity and access to nature along the River Avon between Bristol and Bath (WaterSpace Connected).

Next steps: We are submitting a funding case for the western section of the River Line (between Newbridge and Green Park). A second phase will consider the eastern section (from Pulteney Weir to Batheaston); this section of the route will be defined following further consultation.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act will require all developments to deliver a minimum 10% 'net gain in biodiversity' from November 2023, which means that development must leave nature in a better state than before.

We will adopt a requirement for developments in B&NES to deliver biodiversity net gain in early 2023, ahead of the national requirements, to ensure we are accelerating action to recover nature.

Next steps: Our biodiversity net gain policy will be formally adopted in the spring of 2023 and has been influencing planning applications from 1 November 2022.

Let's get Buzzing

The Council's **Let's Get Buzzing** campaign has seen B&NES Council take the lead in changing our management practices across 42 hectares of grassland across our parks, open spaces and verges to create wildflower meadows, benefit biodiversity, and increase communities' access to nature-rich areas.

The scheme is popular and much of this work has been achieved with help from volunteers. We have now launched a Neighbourhood Nature Area scheme to support volunteers in adopting the management of areas of open grass to benefit wildlife.

Next steps: We want to manage more of our Council-owned parks and green space for wildlife, and creating more wildflower-rich grasslands will be a vital part of this. We will continue to work with local communities to ensure we are creating nature-rich habitat in the right places and in the right way.

Trees and woodland

One of the key actions in tackling the ecological emergency, as well as the climate emergency, is increasing tree cover across the district. In 2019 we announced an aim to plant 100,000 trees across B&NES by 2023, which we are on track to deliver through planting trees on Council land (such as Innox Park in Twerton, Weston Park, Keynsham Memorial Park and Saltford), planting street trees, tree giveaways and more.

We have also mapped the best opportunities for increasing tree and woodland cover across B&NES, helping us to target planting and woodland creation in the most appropriate areas for nature and people, and we have secured funding for a Tree Officer post to boost our efforts to get trees in the ground.

Next steps: We will continue efforts to plant trees on council-owned land and to support local groups in their efforts to get trees in the ground. During the second half of the 2022/2023 planting period, we will prepare for a new phase of action beyond 2023.

We are also continuing our work in partnership across the West of England to deliver the [Forest of Avon Plan](#), with the ultimate ambition of doubling tree and woodland cover by 2050.

Reducing pesticide use

Following the Council's declaration of an ecological emergency, and the concerns shared by many residents about the use of weedkiller, in 2021 we took the decision to stop the use of pesticides containing glyphosate on our streets and pavements. The annual spray has been replaced with manual removal of weeds and mechanically sweeping, until other viable treatment solutions can be identified.

Glyphosate is now only used in very restricted circumstances, focussed on invasive weeds, such as Japanese Knotweed or Giant Hogweed, and treatment of tree stumps using injection where necessary.

Next steps: We are exploring more efficient alternatives to digging out and sweeping weeds, such as the use of biodegradable foam or heat-based treatments, which will need to be assessed for their carbon footprint and cost.

B&NES Councils' Ecological Emergency Action Plan

The Action Plan below sets out how we intend to address the ecological emergency up to 2030. As resources are limited, we have focused on actions that we believe will make the biggest impact, while being realistic and achievable. And to keep the Plan as focussed and concise as possible, we have not included actions that are already embedded in our operations (such as our policy to restrict the use of pesticides to very restricted circumstances, and existing planning policies related to the natural environment).

Although the Plan focuses on what we can do as a council, many of the actions will involve working in partnership with communities, organisations and businesses across B&NES and beyond. We will continue to support and engage with the West of England Nature Partnership (WENP), the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership (BACP) and Natural History Consortium, in particular, to ensure we are maximising opportunities for collaboration and partnership working. Appendix 3 provides more detail on our partnership working on the natural environment.

This is a live Action Plan that will be updated as progress is made, further evidence comes to light, and new opportunities arise. We recognise the importance of reporting progress against the Action Plan, which we will do on an annual basis.

The actions in the table below are organised under the following themes:

1. Mainstreaming nature recovery in leadership and decision-making
2. Increasing the extent of land and water managed positively for nature
3. Increasing investment into nature-based solutions and wildlife-friendly interventions
4. Enabling more people to access and engage with nature
5. Improving our evidence base and monitoring
6. Working in partnership

Each action has one or more Service Areas named against it, demonstrating which Service Area(s) within the Council will be principally involved in its delivery. For every action, the Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery team will support the identified Service Area in its delivery.

A note on our Strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) Projects

The Strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) Projects being led by B&NES Council (Bathscape, Chew Valley Reconnected, Somer Valley Rediscovered and WaterSpace) each have their own programme of activities. Delivery of these Projects is a crucial part of our efforts to address the ecological emergency but, to avoid duplication, we have only included the most significant and new actions for nature's recovery related to these Projects in this Action Plan.

For further information on the Strategic GI Projects, please go to the following links where websites exist:

- [Bathscape](#)
- [Somer Valley Rediscovered](#)
- [WaterSpace](#), including [Bath River Line](#)



Theme: Mainstreaming nature recovery in leadership and decision-making

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s) involved	Timeline
The strategic approach and decision-making across the council are based on sustainable principles that contribute towards nature recovery	1.1	Integrate the Nature Positive vision & priorities into the strategic framework that will be set out in the next Corporate Strategy (2024-).	Strategy	2023
	1.2	Roll-out and embed a Council-wide decision support tool to ensure potential impacts on nature inform all major decisions and projects across the Council, and conduct an analysis of the Council's 'biodiversity footprint' to support this.	Climate & Environmental Sustainability	2023-24
	1.3	Ensure the Council's Commercial Strategy supports the vision of being Nature Positive by 2030 and helps tackle the ecological emergency. This should include a framework for using the West of England Nature Recovery Network and, when published, the West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy, to inform land acquisition, management and disposal.	Business Change	2023-24
Council employees have a good understanding of the ecological emergency and the action they can take to address it in their work	1.4	Produce and deliver an ecological emergency literacy training programme for Council employees and members.	Green Infrastructure (GI) & Nature Recovery	2023
Our planning system is making a positive contribution to nature recovery and improves people's access to nature on their doorstep	1.5	Produce a guidance note for renewable energy projects, including solar and wind developments, to embed management for nature into their schemes.	Climate & Environmental Sustainability	2023-24
	1.6	Ensure policies and guidance in the new Local Plan address the ecological emergency and improve access to nature, and consider adopting Building with Nature standards.	Planning	2023-25

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s) involved	Timeline
	1.7	Evaluate the feasibility of setting a higher requirement for biodiversity net gain, above the mandatory figure of 10%.	Planning GI & Nature Recovery	2023
We are minimising the impact of our procurement and purchasing on nature	1.8	Review and update the Council's approach to food to integrate opportunities to reduce the impact of food production on nature.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-24
	1.9	Incorporate standards related to nature recovery in the council's minimum standards for procurement.	Procurement	2023



Theme: Increasing the extent of land and water managed positively for nature

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
The management of council-owned land maximises opportunities for nature recovery, while considering other uses and the needs of residents	2.1	Identify and deliver opportunities for nature recovery and biodiversity net gain on the following sites as a priority: Entry Hill, Odd Down Sports Ground, The Approach Golf Course and Lansdown, and then on B&NES Council's wider estate.	Commercial Estate Leisure GI & Nature Recovery	2023-24
	2.2	Package together and fund already-identified opportunities for improving the management of our parks and green spaces for nature.	Parks and Green Spaces Bereavement Services	2023-24
	2.3	Design, fund and deliver a training programme for operational staff on how to better manage parks and green spaces for nature.	Parks and Green Spaces	2023-25

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
	2.4	Adjust cutting regimes of highways verges where there is scope for improved management for nature.	Highways Parks and Green Spaces	2023-24
We are continuing to increase tree and woodland cover on our estate, and we are managing our existing trees and woodland to improve their condition for nature.	2.5	Produce a B&NES Tree and Woodland Strategy for 2023-30, including plans for increasing tree and woodland cover, and improving woodland management on our own estate.	Parks and Green Spaces GI & Nature Recovery	2023
Our Strategic Green Infrastructure Projects are delivering large-scale interventions for nature recovery across B&NES	2.6	Create an improved 45-hectare nature park at Somerdale, Keynsham as part of WaterSpace Connected and in partnership with Taylor Wimpey.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-24
	2.7	Extend the Bathscape Partnership Scheme to 2025 and develop the project through to 2030.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-25
	2.8	Deliver 34 hectares of improved, nature-rich green space in and around Midsomer Norton, Westfield and Radstock as part of Somer Valley Rediscovered.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-25
	2.9	Establish the Chew Valley Reconnected Partnership (CVRP) to coordinate activity among stakeholders and communities to enhance the natural environment of the Chew Valley	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-24



Theme: Increasing investment into nature-based solutions and wildlife-friendly interventions

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
Nature-based solutions are being used to reduce pollution from roads and urban areas	3.1	Identify priority areas for nature-based solutions to localised flooding and runoff of pollutants from the road network and developments; and facilitate partners, including Bristol Avon Rivers Trust and FWAG SW, delivering targeted solutions with landowners.	Highways Maintenance GI & Nature Recovery	2023-25
	3.2	As part of the development of the Local Plan 2025, require developments to deliver Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) that meet adoptable standards and benefit wildlife.	Highways Maintenance Planning	2023-25
The number of artificial barriers to fish passage has been reduced and rivers are in a more natural state	3.3	Work with Bristol Avon Rivers Trust to restore the River Chew. This will involve identifying, costing and evaluating options for removal or retrofitting of weirs and other barriers to fish passage within the Chew catchment, river habitat restoration, and accessing funding for priority projects.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-30
Development and infrastructure projects are integrating positive interventions for wildlife as a matter of course, including bats and nesting birds, and are minimising any negative impacts on wildlife	3.4	Pilot bat-friendly lighting to reduce the impact on light pollution on wildlife along the Avon River corridor (as part of WaterSpace) and use this to inform our approach to street lighting.	GI & Nature Recovery Highways Maintenance	2023-24
	3.5	Produce a toolkit of ecological interventions for highways, infrastructure and regeneration projects that are easy to deliver at low cost and that can contribute to delivery of biodiversity net gain.	GI & Nature Recovery Regeneration and Housing	2023-24

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
There is greater investment into nature-based solutions across the district , enabling us to accelerate nature recovery while tackling climate change and meeting other societal challenges	3.6	Scope out opportunities for the use of nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation (carbon sequestration) and adaptation across the district, and options for funding/financing these.	Climate & Environmental Sustainability GI & Nature Recovery	2023-24
	3.7	Use the Invest in B&NES website, as well as other established channels of communication, to better communicate the opportunities to invest in nature for businesses.	Business and Skills	2023



Theme: Enabling more people to access and engage with nature

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
Communities are supported in managing their local green and blue spaces for nature through the Neighbourhood Nature Areas scheme	4.1	Seek funding for a dedicated post (or posts) for the Neighbourhood Nature Areas scheme, supporting communities in active management of their local green and blue spaces for nature.	Parks and Green Spaces Bereavement Services	2023-24
Individuals and communities are aware of the actions that they can take to tackle the ecological emergency and of the benefits that this could provide to them	4.2	Create a dedicated Council webpage on the ecological emergency, and use this as a hub to communicate the work we are doing to address the ecological emergency and how residents can contribute towards nature recovery.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
	4.3	Embed tackling the ecological emergency within the Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan, explore opportunities for celebrating our natural environment as heritage, and better integrate the ecological emergency within communications related to heritage.	Heritage GI & Nature Recovery	2023-24
We are maximising opportunities to improve people's health and wellbeing through access to and engagement with nature	4.4	Work with partners to establish a social prescribing network within B&NES and make available grants for providers of nature-based activities to build their capacity.	Public Health	2023-24
	4.5	Incorporate actions to improve people's access to nature within the developing Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset.	Public Health	2023
There are more and better opportunities for people to enter a career in the natural environment	4.6	Create apprenticeships, work placements and/or other opportunities for work within the GI & Nature Recovery team, land management and/or ecologists within B&NES.	Business and Skills GI & Nature Recovery	2023-25



Theme: Improving our evidence base and monitoring

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
We have a framework in place that enables us to monitor changes in the natural environment and	5.1	Produce a 'State of Nature' framework for B&NES, including an 'ecological baseline' and wildlife index for B&NES to measure progress against, and targets for nature recovery.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
evaluate the success of our actions for nature recovery	5.2	Trial repeatable techniques for monitoring wildlife populations (such as insect traps or standardised bird counts) on sites owned or managed by B&NES Council, to help evaluate of the effectiveness of interventions for nature.	GI & Nature Recovery	2024-26
	5.3	Continue to monitor change in tree canopy cover across B&NES, updating the figure at least every three years based on a baseline of 16.5% in 2020.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-30
Evidence on the natural environment is used to target action to recover nature and improve people's access to nature	5.4	Survey the condition of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) within B&NES to identify those that lack management plans or are in unfavourable condition and use this evidence to prioritise improvements in management, with an initial focus on SNCIs under B&NES Council ownership.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-26
	5.5	Combine access to green space mapping with data on multiple deprivation to identify priority areas for improving access to good-quality green space.	Public Health GI & Nature Recovery	2023
We are better and more regularly monitoring people's engagement with nature	5.6	Include questions in the Council's Voicebox survey from 2023 onwards that monitor people's interest in and engagement with nature.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-30
We are efficiently reporting our progress on tackling the ecological emergency within the Council and externally as required	5.7	Develop and implement a single corporate reporting approach that aligns reporting to government on the implementation of the enhanced NERC duty on Local Authorities with internal reporting on delivery of the Ecological Emergency Action Plan	Gi & Nature Recovery	2023



Theme: Working in partnership

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
Communities are supported in leading on nature recovery in their locality	6.1	Produce guidance and a template to support parish and town councils in producing Local Nature Action Plans, and ensure these are linked with Avon Wildlife Trust's Wildlife Champion Network	GI & Nature Recovery	2023
We are continuing to work closely with partner organisations to deliver strategic opportunities for nature recovery	6.2	Support the Forest of Avon Trust and Avon Needs Trees in delivering the 'Great Avon Wood' within B&NES, providing a new woodland for nature and people, and in their work to establish more trees and woodlands across B&NES.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-25
	6.3	Engage with the Beaver Management Group to identify opportunities for restoring biodiversity, re-naturalising waterways and delivering nature-based solutions to flooding, as well as potential challenges, related to the beaver population in B&NES	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-25
	6.4	With partners, agree and implement robust measures to sustain and enhance the bat populations of our European-designated sites, including finalising bat SAC guidance for B&NES and defining biodiversity net gain solutions for bats.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-24
	6.5	Work with National Trust and local residents to establish a nature-rich, accessible wildlife corridor from Bath to Bathampton Meadows.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-25
	6.6	With partners, ascertain the need and capacity for a sustainable strategy for long-term restoration and management of key grassland sites across B&NES or the wider West of England region.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023

Outcome	Action no.	Action	Service Area(s)	Timeline
We are working in partnership with farmers, landholders and other partners to improve the management of land for nature across B&NES	6.7	Enable and support partners in engaging farmers and landholders on managing land for nature in strategic locations and directing them to funding to do so, focusing initially on the Somer Valley and the River Avon corridor.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-30
	6.8	Support farmers in creating farmer clusters within B&NES, enabling us to engage with farmers and landholders at a landscape scale; and work with the Duchy of Cornwall, FWAG SW and other partners to spread good practice from exemplar farms.	GI & Nature Recovery	2023-25

Appendix 1: Further Information on our Priorities and monitoring success

Priority 1: Increase the extent of land and waterways managed positively for nature

Nature needs space to thrive. To tackle the ecological emergency and restore nature, we need to ensure we protect our most important sites for nature, restore degraded habitats and create new ones. We also need to make sure that spaces for nature are well-connected to form a Nature Recovery Network, as experience has shown that wildlife cannot thrive in small pockets of isolated habitat.

The [West of England Nature Recovery Network](#) sets out where we need to focus efforts to restore, create, expand and connect habitat by mapping the ecological connectivity of the landscape, and will continue to be used to inform our work.

Particularly important is protecting our most important sites for nature, such as the 14% of B&NES that is designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), and the more than 3% designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). It's crucial that these sites, alongside Local Nature Reserves and other priority habitats, are well-managed, that they are protected from adverse impacts, and are connected to other wildlife-rich habitats. Outside of these core sites, we need to create a more wildlife-friendly environment that is managed sustainably, whether that be in agriculture, urban areas, or our parks and green spaces.

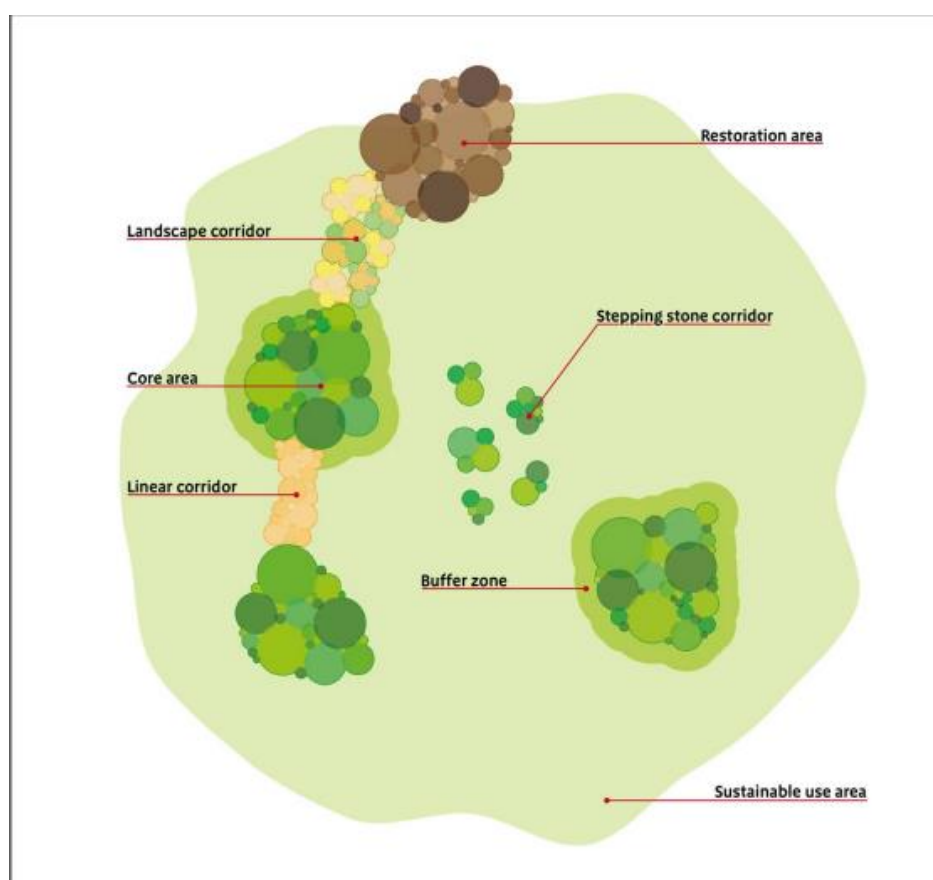


Figure 5 - The components of an ecological network, from the Lawton Report, 2010.

How we propose to monitor success for Priority 1:

Focus	Proposed indicators under council influence	Proposed wider indicators
Land management	The percentage of land managed positively for nature within the Council estate	The percentage of land managed for nature (as defined by the UK Government) within B&NES
Designated Sites	The condition of key designated sites (SSSIs and SNCLs) that B&NES Council owns or manages	Percentage of key designated sites (SSSIs and SNCLs) within B&NES being in favourable condition for wildlife
Tree and woodland cover	Hectares of trees/woodland planted by B&NES Council and through our Strategic GI Projects	Tree and woodland canopy cover in B&NES
Freshwater environment	N/A	Water quality of waterbodies across B&NES Number of fish barriers removed or modified for passage
Development	Average percent biodiversity net gain delivered by developments within B&NES	N/A

Priority 2: Increase the abundance and distribution of key species across B&NES

As explained in the introduction to this document factors including habitat loss and degradation, increasing use of pesticides, pollution and climate change, have led to wildlife across our region and the rest of the UK suffering significant declines in recent history.

Ultimately, as part of a healthy and sustainable natural environment, we need to increase the abundance and distribution of species across B&NES. This is reflected in the West of England Nature Partnership headline ambition to increase the abundance of wildlife from 2020 levels by 30% by 2030¹³ and the Government's targets for biodiversity on land¹⁴.

While many species have suffered declines, it is specialist species (those that are adapted to specific habitats and environmental conditions) that have declined the most. Therefore, we need to ensure we are focusing our efforts on restoring species that have undergone historic declines and that are indicators of a healthy environment. For example, many pollinating species have suffered stark declines and are crucial to the production of much of

¹³ [WENP Strategy 2021-2030](#).

¹⁴ Environment Update, Statement made on 16 December 2022 (Statement UIN HLWS449). Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-12-16/hlws449>

the food we eat, and so should be the focus of concerted efforts to increase their abundance.

How we propose to monitor success for Priority 2:

Focus	Proposed indicators under council influence	Proposed wider indicators
Wildlife abundance and distribution	N/A	B&NES Wildlife Index*

**We plan to monitor the status of key indicator species across B&NES using analysis of records from the Bristol Environmental Records Centre. One of the actions following the publication of this plan will be to decide what these species should be, but it will likely involve a mixture of taxa (birds, mammals, fish, insects etc.) and include species of conservation concern.*

Priority 3: Enable more people to access and engage with nature

To effectively tackle the ecological emergency, we need large numbers of people taking and demanding action. Evidence shows that people will only take action for the environment if they care for it; and we will only care for what we experience and engage with. Therefore, giving people opportunities to access and engage with nature is a crucial part of restoring nature, leading to a greater number of people creating wildlife-rich spaces in their homes, gardens and community spaces, volunteering, and demanding change.

Moreover, an increasing amount of evidence¹⁵ demonstrates the importance of access to nature for our health and wellbeing. Tackling the ecological emergency will, therefore, go hand-in-hand with improving people's physical and mental health and reducing inequalities in access to nature. It is important that we focus efforts on communities with the least access to and engagement with nature, who are likely to benefit the most from these opportunities.

¹⁵ See, e.g., [Natural England's 'rapid scoping review of health and wellbeing evidence for the Framework of Green Infrastructure Standards'](#) and ['Nature-based outdoor activities for mental and physical health: Systematic review and meta-analysis'](#).

How we propose to monitor success for Priority 3:

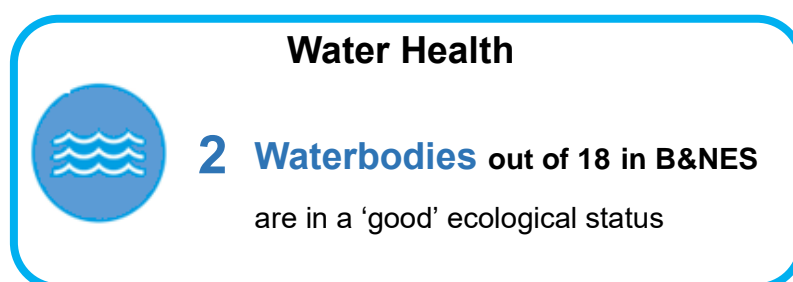
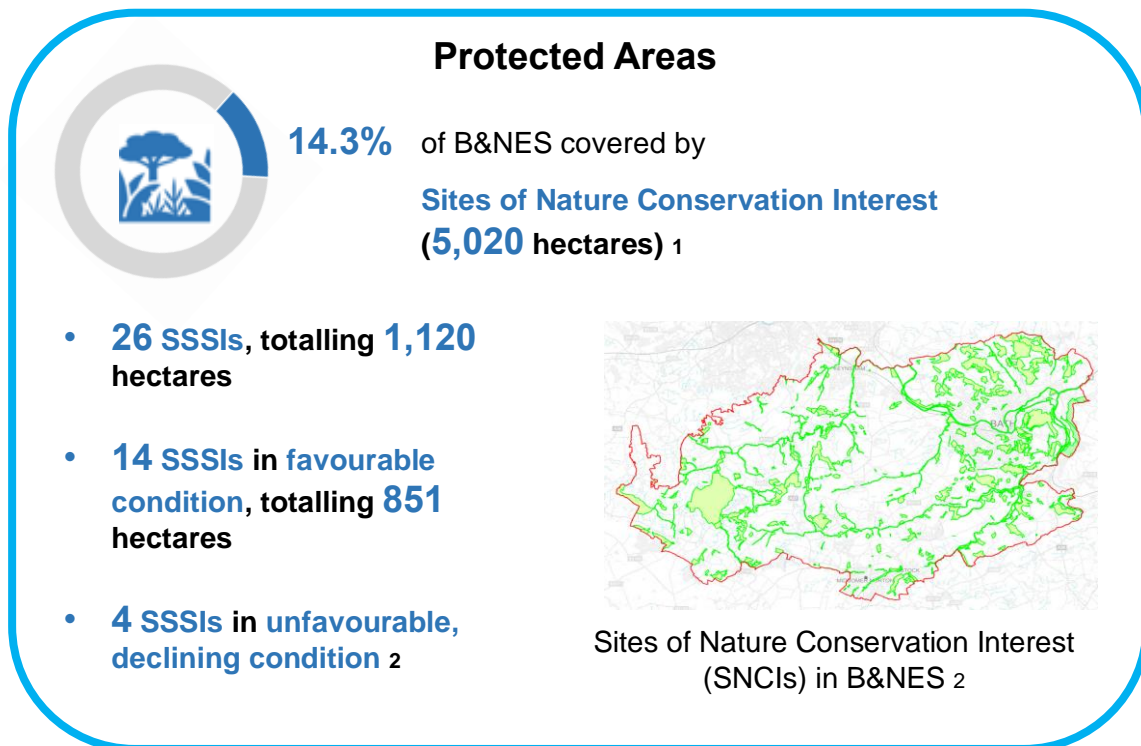
Focus	Proposed indicators under council influence	Proposed wider indicators
Access to Green Space	Availability of Accessible Natural Green Space as measured by ANGST standards ¹⁶ , including measurement of those falling within the 20% most deprived areas	Number of people making at least weekly visits to natural green space, as reported through the Voicebox survey
Action for nature	Number of parish and town councils to have produced a Local Nature Action Plan	The number of people taking action for nature, as reported through the Voicebox survey
Nature and health	Number of people engaged through project activities that seek to increase community participation in greenspace	Investment in Green Social Prescribing within B&NES/£
Food growing	Area of allotments per capita (ha/capita)	N/A
Infrastructure	Length of new or improved footpaths and cycle paths created (km)	N/A

¹⁶ Planned and actual percentage of households within 300m of new or improved publicly usable greenspace of 0.2ha or more in size

Appendix 2: The State of Nature in B&NES

One of the actions in the Action Plan is to create a 'State of Nature' report for B&NES, setting out the current state of the natural environment across the region and thereby providing a baseline from which we can measure progress.

In the meantime, some of the key figures that we do know about our natural environment are set out in the infographics below.



Green Space



1,982 hectares of **accessible green space** in B&NES ⁷

The equivalent of more than

4 Chew Valley Lakes



There are **24** allotment sites

with **1,209** plots in B&NES ⁸

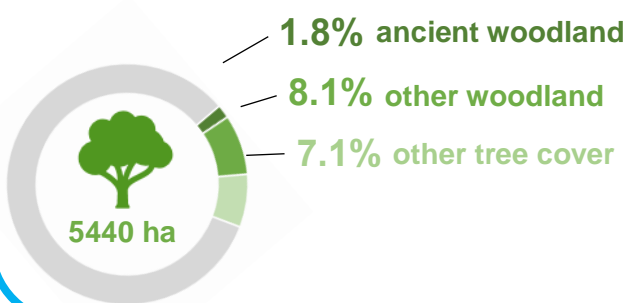
This equates to **162 people per plot**, with an **average wait time of 2.4 years** ⁸

263m: median distance to nearest park, public garden or playing field for people living in B&NES¹⁷

Trees and Woodland

Trees and Woodland

17% of B&NES is covered by **tree canopy**:



¹⁷

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/datasets/accesstopublicgreenspaceingreatbritain>

Species

15

The number of the UK's 18 species of bats in B&NES



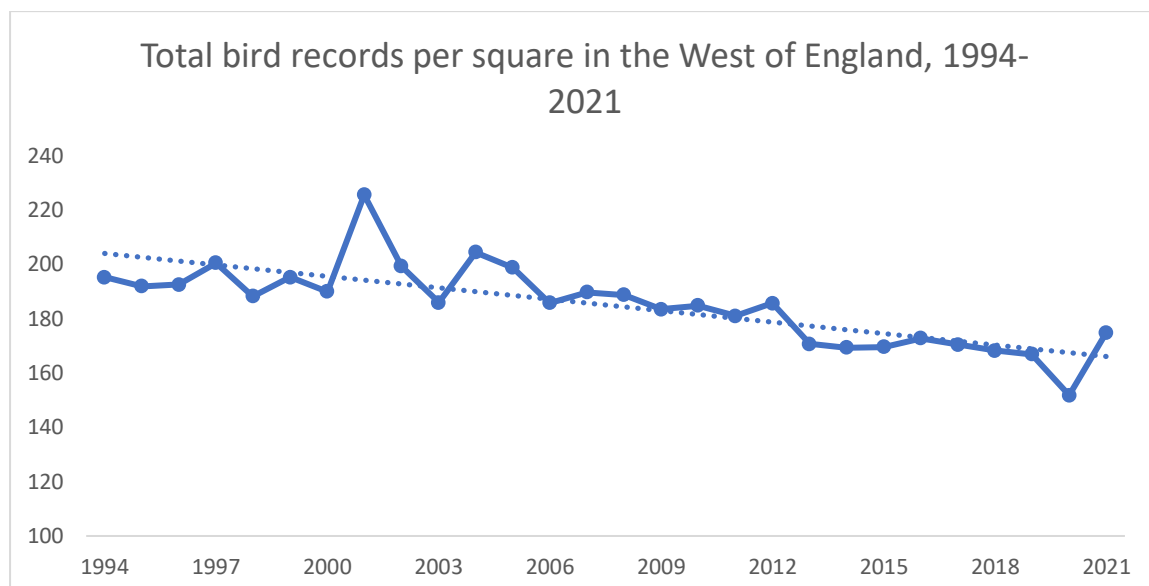
91% and 96%

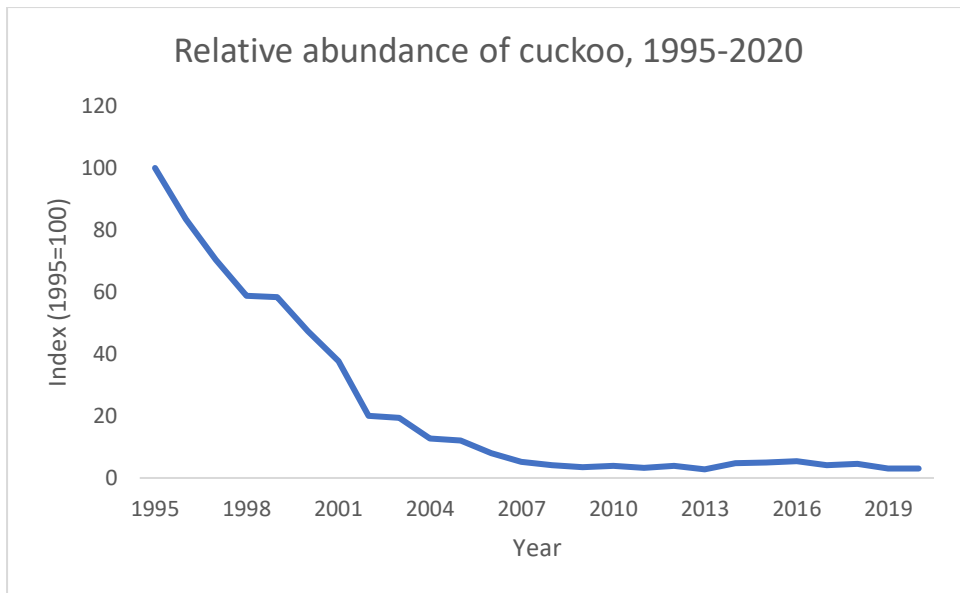
The estimated declines in the populations of swifts and cuckoos across the West of England since 1995



46%

The decline in butterflies of the wider countryside across England since 1970





Appendix 3: Our Partnership Working

We need people, communities, charities, businesses and local and regional government to be pulling together to effectively tackle the ecological emergency. Working in partnership is, therefore, imperative to nature's recovery. Fortunately, we have a history of strong partnership working on the natural environment in B&NES and across the West of England:



The **West of England Nature Partnership (WENP)** is the designated Local Nature Partnership for the West of England, with a vision of a thriving and well-connected natural environment in the West of England that underpins a healthy and resilient society and economy. WENP has a number of working groups driving action to restore nature in the region, including on agriculture, trees and woodland, nature and health, and financing nature-based solutions.

The [West of England Nature Recovery Network](#) mapped through WENP is a vital part of our approach to restoring nature, and is used extensively in our planning and project development.

B&NES Council has been part of WENP since its inception, and is represented on its Board and Executive Group as a funder of the partnership. For more information, visit the [WENP website](#).



The **Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership (BACP)** brings together a wide range of stakeholders across the Bristol Avon Catchment who share a common desire to improve the water environment and restore the catchment to better health for future generations. It is one of over 100 Catchment Partnerships delivering the Catchment Based Approach across England.

B&NES Council sits on the Steering Group of the BACP and contributes to its Catchment Partnership Fund. For more information, visit the [BACP website](#).



B&NES Council is part of the **Natural History Consortium (NHC)**, a charitable collaboration of 14 organisations working together on a shared mission: to develop, test and disseminate best practice to engage everyone with the environment and natural world.

The NHC runs the Festival of Nature, BioBlitz and Communicate Conference, and much more. It is a crucial collaboration in improving people's access to and engagement with nature across our region. For more information, visit the [NHC website](#).



We also have one of England's 13 Community Forests in our region: **The Forest of Avon**. The [Forest of Avon Plan](#) sets out a long-term, generational vision for trees and woodlands across the West of England, and has been endorsed by the four Local Authorities and the West of England Combined Authority.

We continue to work closely in partnership with a range of organisations, including the Forest of Avon Trust, Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission, and local charities and community groups, to maximise the benefits that trees and woodland can deliver for wildlife and people.



We are fortunate to have two protected landscapes in B&NES: the **Cotswolds National Landscape** and the **Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**. B&NES Council is represented on the Cotswolds Conservation Board and on the Mendip Hills Partnership Committee.

We work closely with the two protected landscapes to ensure a joint-up approach to nature's recovery, and have worked with both the Cotswolds and Mendip Hills on their respective Nature Recovery Plans.



The **Bathscape Partnership** brings together twelve organisations with the shared ambition of improving the management and use of the landscape surrounding Bath for people and nature. In close consultation with residents, landowners, dozens of Bath community groups and volunteers, and many more local and national organisations, the Partnership carefully defined and shaped the ambitious Bathscape Scheme and raised the funding to make it happen.

So far, this Partnership has led to the establishment of eight new areas of flower-rich meadows, provided advice to better manage 47 hectares of woodland and over 40 grassland sites, created eighteen new walking trails, and much more.



Somer Valley Rediscovered is a partnership project covering the Somer Valley Area that aims to connect people to their local landscape, improve biodiversity and climate resilience of those landscapes, and improve people's health and wellbeing.

Currently, the partnership steering group consists of B&NES Council, Wessex Water, Natural England, the University of Bath, Radstock Town Council, Westfield Parish Council, Midsomer Norton Town Council / Midsomer Norton Town Trust, Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership and 3SG.



Through **Waterspace**, we are working in partnership with the Environment Agency, the Canal & River Trust, Wessex Water, South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol City Council to take a holistic and integrated approach to improving the River Avon corridor, from Dundas Aqueduct through to Bristol.

Working with our neighbouring Local Authorities

We work closely on the natural environment with the three other Local Authorities in the West of England and with the West of England Combined Authority through regular meetings of the West of England Green Infrastructure Working Group and the Environment Officer Steering Group.

Parish and Town Councils

Parish and Town Councils across B&NES are vital to tackling the ecological emergency locally. We are working closely with Councils across the district on local projects that help to tackle the ecological emergency and improve residents' lives, such as our work delivering improvements across 34 hectares of green space in the Somer Valley.

We are also exploring helping Parish and Town Councils produce Local Nature Action Plans for their local area, utilising local knowledge and expertise to drive action to restore nature across the district.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

This Forward Plan lists all the items coming to the Panel over the next few months.

Inevitably, some of the published information may change; Government guidance recognises that the plan is a best assessment, at the time of publication, of anticipated decision making. The online Forward Plan is updated regularly and can be seen on the Council's website at:

Page 87

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>

The Forward Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to openness and participation in decision making. It assists the Panel in planning their input to policy formulation and development, and in reviewing the work of the Cabinet.

Should you wish to make representations, please contact the report author or, Democratic Services (). A formal agenda will be issued 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Agenda papers can be inspected on the Council's website.

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
16TH JANUARY 2023				
16 Jan 2023 16 Mar 2023	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel Council	Climate Emergency Annual Report	Jane Wildblood Tel: 01225 477685	Director of Sustainable Communities
16 Jan 2023 16 Mar 2023 Page 88	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel Council	Ecological Emergency Action Plan	Mark Minkley	Director of Sustainable Communities
6TH MARCH 2022				
ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED:				
	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Electric Vehicle Charging Points	Chris Major Tel: 01225 39 4231	Director of Sustainable Communities

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	WECA Spatial Development Strategy	Simon De Beer Tel: 01225 477616	Director of Sustainable Communities
Page 89	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Littering Review (progress report)	Carol Maclellan Tel: 01225 394106	Director of Sustainable Communities
	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Bath Quays North Regeneration		Chief Operating Officer
The Forward Plan is administered by DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk				

This page is intentionally left blank