

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Thursday 26th March 2026

Present:- **Councillors** Andy Wait, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Alex Beaumont, Anna Box, John Leach, Duncan Hounsell, Hal MacFie, Saskia Heijltjes and Karen Walker

199 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

200 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

201 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none

202 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

203 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was no urgent business.

The Chair invited Councillor Matt McCabe, Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development, to update the Panel on the Local Plan which is due to be considered at the May meeting.

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

The following members of the public made 3 minute statements:

- Paul Wontner to made a statement regarding 'Planning Policy proposals in the draft Local Plan regarding Somerset Coal Canal'.

The Chair noted that Councillor Gourley had also circulated a statement on this issue and stated that he would be interested in the Panel being updated on this issue.

- Alistair Singleton made a statement regarding Climate and Nature Strategy - Opportunities and Challenges
- Victoria Wells made a statement regarding 'Health and Environment how this impacts people's well-being on a low income'.

Councillor Box and Warren mentioned that more stringent Air Quality targets were discussed at a previous meeting of the Panel.

- Gillian Risbridger made a statement regarding 'A plea for Urban Trees'
- Jenny Lambert made a statement regarding 'Practical solutions, relative impacts of different changes and the importance of public education and motivation'.
- Sue Poole to made a statement regarding 'The update to the Climate and Nature Strategy'.
- Alex Jones made a statement on behalf of Bath & West Community Energy

The Chair thanked the contributors.

205 MINUTES

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

206 CLIMATE AND NATURE STRATEGY UPDATE

Councillor Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath & North East Somerset, introduced the item. Officers showed clips from the National Emergency Briefing and outlined that the session would be structured as follows: *(presentation slides are attached to the minutes)*:

1. Feedback on the outline Climate & Nature Strategy draft, including three questions:
 - Sources used
 - The outline structure
 - The content framework
2. Discussion on people-focused elements (communities, businesses, jobs/skills, and vulnerable groups).

Dan Green, Group Sustainability Director YTL-UK, Wessex Water, addressed the panel and covered the following points: *(presentation slides are attached to the minutes)*:

- Meaning of Sustainability for Wessex Water / YTL
- Challenging Established Approaches
- Sustainability Frameworks

- Biodiversity & Catchment Management
- Climate Mitigation & Adaptation
- Social Sustainability & Vulnerable Customer Support
- Brabazon – Sustainable New Town Development

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

Councillor Heijltjes asked how the Council and Wessex Water could work together to stop sewage pollution so that rivers become safe for nature and for recreational use (e.g., swimming). Dan Green stated that the issue is a rainwater problem, not foul sewage capacity. He stated that the Victorian combined sewer systems collect both rainwater and foul water, causing overload during storms. Managing rain “where it falls” is essential: porous surfaces, reduced hard-standing, sustainable drainage.

He further explained that Wessex Water is investing in additional capacity although integrated catchment management is needed. For ecology, the largest problem is phosphorus, not storm overflows. He referred councillors to Environment Agency’s Catchment Data Explorer for detailed breakdowns.

Councillor Leach noted past Wessex Water accounts where dividends exceeded infrastructure investment and hoped this balance would change. He also asked if foul water is treated by being diluted. Dan Green explained that treatment is a defined process at sewage treatment works with multiple stages. In-network spills may involve some settlement, but this is not classed as treatment. During prolonged rainfall, spills can pass through rapidly, but the aim is to reduce frequency via more storage.

Councillor Leach asked if Wessex Water considers current environmental harm acceptable as long as it does not increase. Dan Green stated that ecological status assessments identify reasons rivers fail to reach “good status”. Only a few sites fail primarily due to storm overflows. Nutrients (phosphorus) remain the major ecological driver, not overflows.

In response to a query from Councillor Leach, Dan Green stated that swallowing water from any river or chlorinated swimming pool is not advised. A river sterilised to swimming-pool levels would have no ecology, so some risk always exists.

Councillor Hounsell thanked Wessex Water for the Bath Hill storage tank in Saltford, which had significantly reduced historic flooding issues.

A member of the public asked if this information (for example on porous pavements) has been shared. Dan Green stated that messages are shared in customer magazines, YouTube content and social media. However, greater impact comes from working with local authorities and developers.

Councillor Wait asked what nitrates and phosphates actually do to a river and what safe levels are. Dan Green explained that both are nutrients that fuel algal growth

and that excessive growth strips dissolved oxygen, causing ecological collapse (eutrophication). Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient in freshwater; nitrogen more so in marine systems. Regulatory limits vary by location, flow and river size; many limits are being tightened.

Councillor Walker asked why Wessex Water is not doing enough with farmers to prevent agricultural run-off and why not divert sewer overflows away from rivers. Dan Green explained that Wessex Water employs catchment advisers and maintains one of the largest teams. Much of this work fills a gap where other regulators have not acted. He further explained that overflows cannot simply be diverted “elsewhere”, they are naturally located in low-lying areas.

Councillor Jackson asked about plans for the Radstock Sewage Plant (Mill Road). She also asked how water rising from old mines is being managed and if the mine-water heat be used for energy. Dan Green stated that Mine-water discharges fall under the Environment Agency, not Wessex Water. Regarding Radstock treatment works, an update will be provided.

The Chair thanked Dan Green.

Climate and Nature Strategy

Officers asked for feedback on the sources:

Members commented that the following additional sources could be incorporated:

- Canal & River Trust
- Bath & Avon River Trust
- Movement Strategy and Air Quality Strategy, once finalised, should be treated as key internal sources.”
- Community Groups/surveys (such as in Peasedown)
- Consider legislation — rights of rivers, nature protection orders — legislation makes things happen.
- Concerns raised about individual responsibility (e.g., car idling near schools; tree vandalism).
- additional health-related sources, including references to the Wellcome Trust and a recent national “Bristol Health Declaration”.

Officers asked for feedback on the outline:

Councillor Leach stated that he would like to see a theme on attitudes, cultural change, and shifting narratives. People need support to adopt sustainable behaviours. The Cabinet Member agreed and emphasised the Council’s influence through communications, partnerships, anchor institutions, and culture-change work.

Councillor MacFie expressed concern that combining climate and nature risks over-emphasising ecology at the expense of carbon reduction. The officer explained the interdependence of climate and ecological crises, the importance of nature-based solutions, and that delaying nature action until a perfect net-zero pathway exists would be harmful.

Councillor Heijltjes highlighted co-benefits (insulation reducing bills) and the importance of focusing on aspects the Council can influence (transport, data, behaviour change).

Councillor Hounsell stated the need for public access to local carbon-emissions data (e.g., at village-level), and targeting messaging to motivations beyond altruism, including financial savings.

Councillor Beaumont suggested stronger community involvement models (local assemblies, place-based engagement).

Councillor Wait highlighted the importance of including threats, such as national policy changes, infrastructure stress (e.g., burst water mains), and power cuts.

Councillor Leach stated that people do care about costs but also about their children and grandchildren.

Councillor Jackson noted asked that historic buildings be considered.

Officers asked for feedback on the framework:

Councillor Leach stated that the framework needs a chapter on economic practices, including plastics use, packaging and supply chains.

Councillor Wait mentioned a recognition of plant-based diets as a shift and suggested wetlands creation as a major resilience intervention.

Councillor Heijltjes agreed on a plant-based shift and added regenerative farming. She also argued the Council should focus resources on areas where it can have the greatest influence.

Councillor MacFie reiterated concern that resources must be targeted and questioned practicality of acting across all areas simultaneously.

Councillor Walker emphasised the importance of food-waste education and practical household skills.

Officers asked for feedback on the people focused sections of the strategy:

Councillor Wait spoke about queuing at recycling centre queues (61 cars at Keynsham) and urged consideration of additional recycling centres.

Councillor MacFie commended officers for the report/presentation and stated that stressed carers and the most vulnerable must be central.

Councillor Heijltjes asked how children and young people will be consulted meaningfully. The officer outlined a recent secondary-school climate conference, upcoming engagement with university students and primary schools and analysis of school sustainability plans.

Councillor Walker asked for stronger involvement of schools and colleges in shaping local skills pipelines and matching young people's training to local job opportunities.

Councillor Wait raised concerns about under-resourced public-sector agencies (planning enforcement, EA, water regulation) and the impact on delivery.

Councillor Henman mentioned – a better allocation from the West of England Combined Authority; tourist levy powers and national action on energy-industry taxation.

The Chair closed the item and thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for their presentation and Panel members for their input.

207 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the workplan with the following suggestions:

- Home to School Transport (large and rising cost).
- Play Provision — following Full Council motion. *The Chair agreed to discuss with the Chair of the CAHW Panel where Play Provision is best placed.*

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

My name is Paul Wontner, I represent the **Somersetshire Coal Canal Communities Alliance**.

You have all received documents in recent days, via the Guildhall, which describes in detail the concerns we have on this subject and I urge you to read them.

The Somersetshire Coal Canal is a much respected and well enjoyed heritage asset, however the Coal Canal Society have vision and plans to restore it to a navigable waterway along it's Northern Arm.

PAUSE

B&NES have a policy proposal, **HD/SCCW**, which was in the November 2025 Reset Local Plan Options Consultation that supports the restoration.

We believe that the inclusion of the proposed policy is at complete odds with the **Draft Climate and Nature Strategy**.

Our **Alliance** is formed from 5 of the 7 Parish Councils, landowners and residents along its route all who object and have already objected formally to the inclusion of the restoration policy.

It is our intent to have B&NES withdraw the proposal for support of restoration including the safeguarding of land.

The restoration would destroy countless mature habitats that have developed in the 125yrs since it closed, it would remove the enjoyment so many have from the current status.

Within **Combe Hay** alone, the plans include :

- Building of x5 new road bridges
- Rebuilding a tunnel and an aqueduct
- Extracting water from Cam Brook
- Destruction of over 2000 mature trees
- Threatens the village cemetery
- Safeguarding of land for diversions not discussed with landowners
- The plans do not include the digging out of the 100,000's tons infill of the original canal, filled in the 1940's 50's and 60s with building rubble and waste from Bath City.

This detail applies to Combe Hay, similar is planned for **Dunkerton, Monkton Combe, Camerton, Midford**, all of whom have a variety of other challenges including threats to property survival where diversions are not possible.

There are in total, 22 bridges planned, including over the A367.

There is no evidence of public support, no evidence of ecological benefit, no evidence of economic benefit, no evidence of feasibility of what amounts to a major infrastructure project for decades, no funding demonstrated.

This restoration and the support of B&NES would rip apart rural communities, and we believe is wrong for B&NES to consider a policy that supports such unfeasible and unpopular plans.

Our aim is to have B&NES withdraw the proposed policy.

We want this to be withdrawn now and not appear in Draft Local Plan.

For these reasons, **The Alliance** respectfully ask you to look carefully into how the proposed policy has been developed and request reconsideration of its inclusion.

A more appropriate approach would be to leave things as they are and recognise the historic and ecological importance of the canal corridor while supporting the conservation and protection of existing structures and landscape character.

We look for your support in this matter and thank you for listening.

Good morning.

The paper before you is both excellent and comprehensive. It is eloquent testimony to the exceptional quality of the officer team we are blessed with at B&NES, and is a fine start point for the Climate and Nature Strategy Update process which lies ahead.

Since – and even before – B&NES declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 (and I note Cllrs Jackson and Walker as veterans of that historic vote), we have been recognised as a pioneer amongst Local Authorities in the way we have addressed the Climate and Ecological crises that beset us. Now there is a chance to take that leadership to a whole new and exciting level.

Whatever you may be tempted to think about some fellow Cllrs in the dark watches of the night, my personal experience is that all – well, almost all – are good people who enter politics with a genuine passion to improve the lives of those they represent. Sometimes, though, long hours of endeavour may lead to a sense of frustration, a sense that nothing is happening, or, if it is, progress is glacially slow. It can be hard to see the improvements.

And since 2019, the context within which your climate and nature work unfolds has got progressively more fraught. Almost all the dials are moving faster than the experts predicted even seven years ago. Only on Monday, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres stated that every key

climate indicator is flashing red and that Planet Earth is being pushed beyond its limits.

So, the challenge you face is stark, but equally broad is the scale of the opportunity open to you. With ambition and with courage, there is so much you can achieve.

The paper argues compellingly for a move from cruder quantitative KPIs (300Mw, 68,000 homes, etc) to harder but more valuable qualitative ones, so that you have an opportunity to drive forward social justice and confront the toxic inequality which is proving so corrosive to our communities and our faltering democracy.

You have the chance to push not just rapid take-up of renewable energy, but to promote it being

community-owned, re-weaving the social fabric of the areas where it is sited.

You could follow Oxford County Council's Principle of Future Generations, so that the interests of future generations are considered in all council decision-making – supported by a Future Generations Member Champion and inclusion in a Cabinet Portfolio.

Could we not copy Henley's Green Futures Awards, the UK's first schools award to embed climate resilience at its heart?

So, Councillors, now is surely a time for brave and creative thinking. I urge you to let your ambition fly free. The 2016 COP Paris Agreement spoke of

countries exercising their 'highest possible ambition', and you surely should too.

You will, of course, be confronted by the merchants of doubt, of division and of disinformation – whether emanating from the White House, from Reform UK or from (from a small vocal minority in) Batheaston. You will need determination, but let your courage be unbridled.

If you do so, you will not only improve the lives of many. You will preserve and potentially save them. The hopes and the prospects of our children, our grandchildren and those who come after us rest on your shoulders. We rely on you.

Thank you.

Victoria Wells statement

Health and Environment are interrelated impacts is felt for people on a lowered income.

Please note some references and statistics you might find upsetting.

Inequality in the environment impacts on residents health

Indoor pollution as well as outdoor pollution, is a significant health risk.

Why we need to act now ,

Cancer rates up by 24% in last 20 yrs for under 50s NHS England ...

There is a real prospect of our children's life expectancy possibly lower than our parents.

People on lower incomes have less choice when making environmental improvement . Such as housing, heating , food , transport , cost of water ..

These contribute to increased health risks, including:

acute and chronic respiratory conditions (such as asthma and lung cancer)

cardiovascular conditions (such as heart attacks and strokes)

neurological conditions

mental health

widening of health inequalities

deaths related to adverse weather events

Deaths due to extreme hot and cold weather, particularly in vulnerable groups such as babies and older people People with disabilities and long term health conditions (for example, there were around 3,000 excess deaths during the heatwaves of 2022 in England).

NICE sustainability

The World Health Organization has called climate change the 'single biggest threat facing humanity' and The Lancet Countdown Report 2022 states climate change 'is undermining every dimension of health monitored'.

Wellcome Trustenvironment

Driving equitable health outcomes

A healthier future for everyone can only be achieved in a world where everyone's experience of health matters. Wellcome Trust are accountable to society for delivering their mission and have a role to play in making health outcomes more equitable within and between countries.

Mitigating effects

People who have direct access to green space on their doorstep are less likely to have hospital admissions.

Nice guidelines

Having access to accessible and affordable transport in addition to creating better air we breathe here in Banes.

This would be a good health outcome.

Remember Not everyone ride a bikes!

With increasing ageing population and disabled people the effects this has on mobility.

Safer pathways that not blocked by cars , bins and street signs , scooters and bikes.

Creating safer road to cross and travel on that are accessible to all is a key to healthier environments .

This is a good health outcome.

Planting up streets to keep the temperature down in summer and increase biodiversity.

This is a good health outcome.

Climate and Nature Recovery needs to be inclusive to all residents. Regardless of income.

Working together with residents , communities, businesses to achieve a better health will protect our landscape city and surrounding areas for future generations.

Thank you for listening.

Statement - Gillian Risbridger

BANES - A Plea for Urban Trees

Mature trees provide immense, irreplaceable environmental benefits, including massive carbon storage, significant oxygen production, air pollution filtration, and erosion control. They are critical habitats for wildlife and provide shade that lowers temperatures in cities. It takes decades to replace the ecological, aesthetic, and functional value of a mature tree.

Stop cutting down broadleaved mature trees, which are then replaced with a monoculture of willow, saplings or semi-mature trees that are not maintained and therefore die.

Examples

Lower Bristol Road near Cleveland Bridge – 3 different mature trees cut down, replaced by 4 semi-mature willows and grass – 1 tree flourished, 3 chopped down as sickly and replaced with saplings, which were bent over by drunken louts. Maintenance vehicles keep parking on grass, now we are left with weeds and mud and one willow tree.

North side of river, by Avon Street car park, mature trees cut down as they were in the way of the “building site”. Still hideous building site, as covid prevented North Quays development, no replanting. Riverside planting is a monoculture of willows. Wildflowers planted, looked beautiful 1st year, ok 2nd year, now swamped by nettles and thistles. Willow arch never maintained, 1/3 died back, not replanted.

Plant Vegetation, not bollards.

Lower Wells Road recently had new works, no resident consultation. New traffic lights increased asphalt pavement by metre along 12 metres, with bollards to prevent parking. Instead, permeable or porous paving, including gravel, grass-concrete pavers, porous asphalt, and permeable concrete blocks could have been used to let water infiltrate the ground, reducing flood risk and surface pooling. Together with planting vegetation eg small trees, hedges or shrubs – better for nature and better aesthetically.

My asks

- 1) Council must put preservation orders on all mature trees in Bath and developers can work/plan round them, rather than removing them.**
- 2) Nature needs a variety of trees, not a monoculture, plant micro forests**
- 3) Newly planted areas must be properly maintained until vegetation established**
- 4) Porus pavements with vegetation - rather than bollards on wide impermeable pavements.**

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3 minutes slot - Climate policy and development scrutiny panel 26/3/26

Im speaking on behalf of Climate Hub in connection with the development of a combined climate and nature strategy.

We welcome the intention to learn from elsewhere and also the recognition of climate injustice and the need for a focus on equity as part of the transition process. We suggest this should include proactively engaging with less often heard, and marginalised groups.

In terms of reference documents we strongly suggest that the 'National Security assessment on global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security' should be added to highlight the urgency of the situation, especially when it comes to looking at resources for tackling these issues.

We support the Big Shifts - but suggest that these will need additional policy shifts across the council, for example, what practical steps might be considered and taken in respect of 'buying and wasting less'; when our high street, especially in Bath city centre is so geared to consumerism. We need to start re-imagining our high streets as places for learning /sharing/growing as communities and repurposing away from the traditional 'buy more new stuff' style shopping street.

In relation to the Enablers - it looks like a good list - but we would like to ask what practical support the council is going to provide to the voluntary and community sector to support their role in communicating with our communities and bringing people and businesses on board?

It is recognised in the strategy that there are many green or eco focussed VCS organisations that are working with and in communities across Banes - in many cases with very little financial support and relying on a vast amount of volunteer input.

Speaking from experience this can be exhausting - from creating and running events and activities to raise awareness and support people to engage positively with the climate and nature crises, to fundraising, keeping organisations going, bringing in new volunteers, and working collaboratively with others.

It would be a great encouragement if the support in writing could be translated into real practical and financial support to back the work of organisations like Climate Hub and others who are working so hard to engage with our communities and to help deliver a more positive future.

For example, funding to put on large events such as the proposed Big Bath screening of the Peoples Emergency Briefing - how is this to be paid for ?
Funding to support VCS led engagement to raise awareness, to train facilitators for climate cafes to support people experiencing climate anxiety, to support networking and to offer some relief from the constant struggle to raise funds to do what is recognised in this strategy as urgent work.

We therefore encourage the council to be imaginative and innovative in developing new ways to bring funding to a strong climate and nature strategy - e.g. green bonds as

developed elsewhere to support green infrastructure, and setting up funds for green growth in the VCS in partnership with other anchor institutions for a start.

Members are very welcome to visit us in Bath bus station to find out about what we do and the many other VCS working in this sector.

Thank you

My name is Alex Jones, Director of Operations and Impact [at](#) Bath & West Community Energy / BWCE. Today I'd like to talk about the impact of our work in B&NES, supported by the close working relationship we have with you, our local authority.

Community energy means renewable energy projects that are owned and led by local people, with profits reinvested back into the community. Instead of distant commercial developers, community organisations raise funds from local residents, build renewable generation like solar or hydro, and then use the income to cut carbon emissions, support households, and strengthen local resilience.

Back in 2010, B&NES council helped us get started when we worked together on school rooftop solar, our first projects. Today, BWCE is one of the UK's largest and most established community energy organisations. We operate around 46 renewable energy projects, including 39 rooftop solar, six groundmount sites, and one hydro installation. Our renewable energy capacity is about 15 MW, and we generate enough electricity each year to meet the equivalent annual demand of around 5200 homes.

Alongside generating clean energy, our Community Fund distributes surplus revenue to local projects that reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. To date we've donated £470,000 to the fund, and 119 local community projects have been awarded grants. From Share and Repair to the Genesis Trust or Marksbury School PTA, our funding has supported a range of causes, demonstrating the positive cycle where local clean energy directly funds social and environmental benefit.

BWCE has grown into a pioneer in the sector, continually developing new models and testing innovative approaches, from largescale solar to retrofit support for individual households. Our work is rooted in the belief that communities can and should play a meaningful role in the energy transition. Our latest ground mount solar project, Fairy Hill, in Compton Dando, will be trialling a local supply project, enabling households in the community near the solar farm to benefit from lower cost, locally sourced clean electricity.

A major reason we have been able to deliver at this scale is our longstanding partnership with B&NES. Collaboration on planning, site access, and strategic alignment has enabled community owned solar on schools, public buildings, and community sites. The partnership has unlocked opportunities that simply wouldn't have been possible otherwise, and it stands as a strong example of what can be achieved when councils and communities work side by side.

As the council reviews its climate and nature strategy, it's clear that tackling the challenges ahead will require a combination of ambition, collaboration, and community involvement. Community energy is one of the areas where those come together most effectively.

The BWCE example illustrates that with high ambition and enthusiasm, we can find different ways of getting things done. We have shown that these can bring benefits far beyond energy, to help B&NES in their aim of Improving People's Lives

Thank you for your time.

Climate and Nature Strategy Update

Sustainability PDS Panel working session
26th March 2026

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Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives



Agenda

1. Introduction

2. Context and inspiration to the collective challenge

1. Video excerpts from the National Emergency Briefing
2. Future Ambition Board civic partnership working - Dan Green, Group Sustainability Director, YTL/Wessex Water

3. Examine proposed outline of the Climate & Nature Strategy

1. Feedback from the Panel on the sources, outline and framework for the strategy

4. Examine the proposed people-focused elements of the C&N Strategy

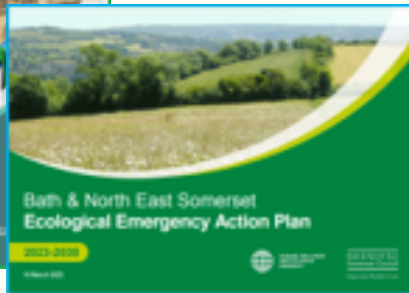
1. Feedback from the Panel as to how the strategy should empower communities and businesses, enable the right jobs and skills and support the most vulnerable, during and beyond the current transitions

5. Additional: Seeking the Panel's view of the recent Bristol City Council Climate Action Plan 'What Can I Do?' section

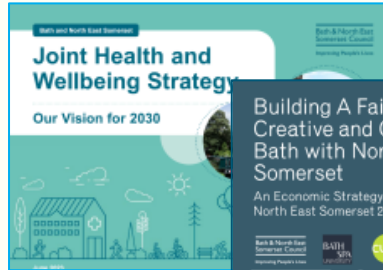
The 2026 Climate and Nature Strategy brings together existing B&NES strategies and plans at the strategy mid point to 2030



Climate Emergency Strategy 2019-2030



Ecological Emergency Action Plan 2023-2030



Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy to 2030



Economic Strategy 2024-2034



Input into the West of England:

1. Growth Strategy 2025
2. Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2023
3. Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2024



Greener Places Plan 2025 to 2035

Greener Places Plan 2025-2035



Annual Climate & Nature Progress Reports (Autumn)
(Plus annual CDP disclosure)

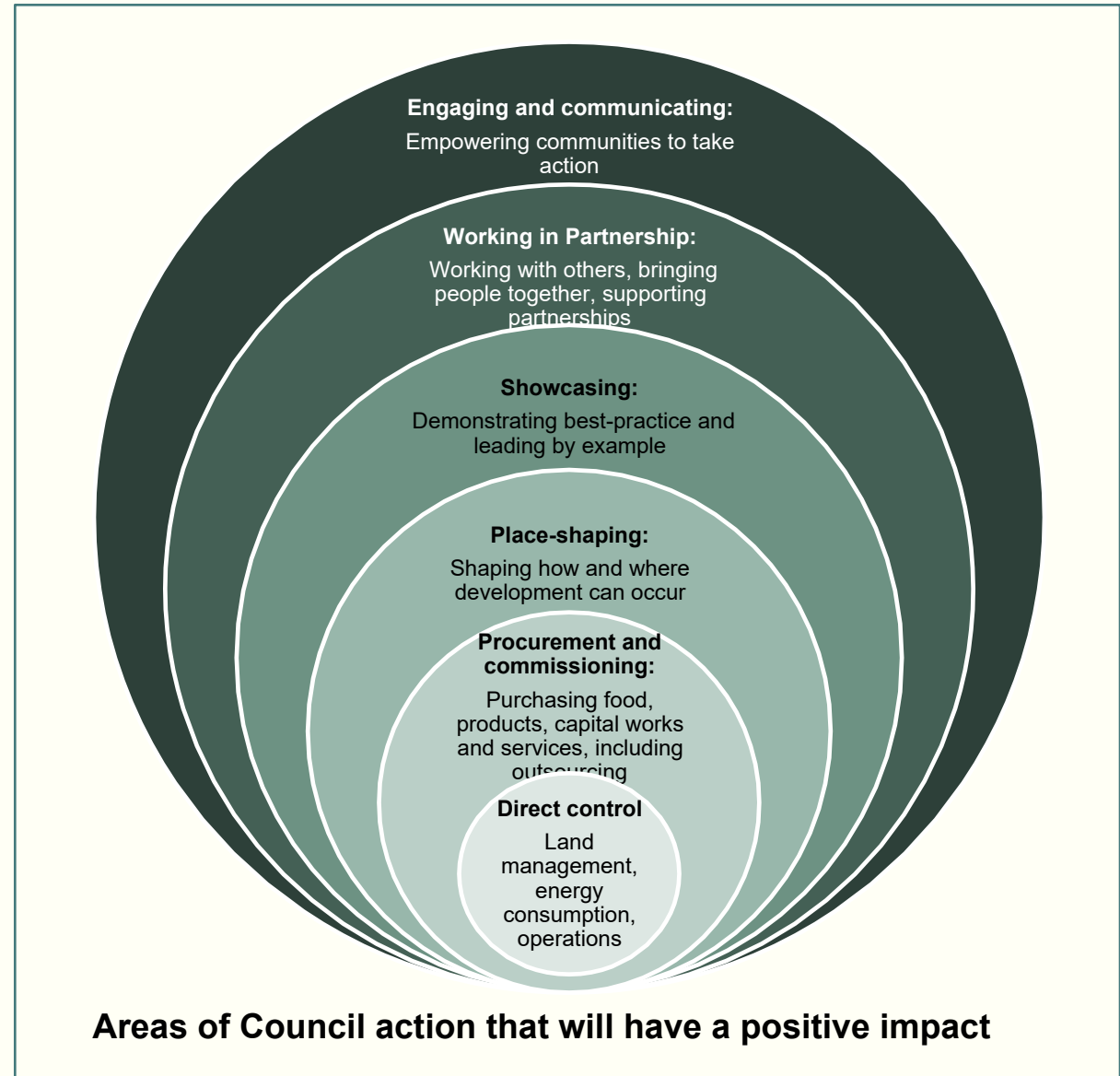


B&NES Climate and Ecological publications cover both B&NES Council action and the wider Bath and North East Somerset District.

The council has made its commitment to address the emergencies, most recently set out in the 2023-2027 Corporate Strategy.

B&NES Council has a key role to play to enable progress towards the emergencies

The Council will also rely on partnership working for successful delivery, for example from the Future Ambition Board civic partners, the many climate and nature groups working within the district and established regional partnerships such as the West of England Nature Partnership.

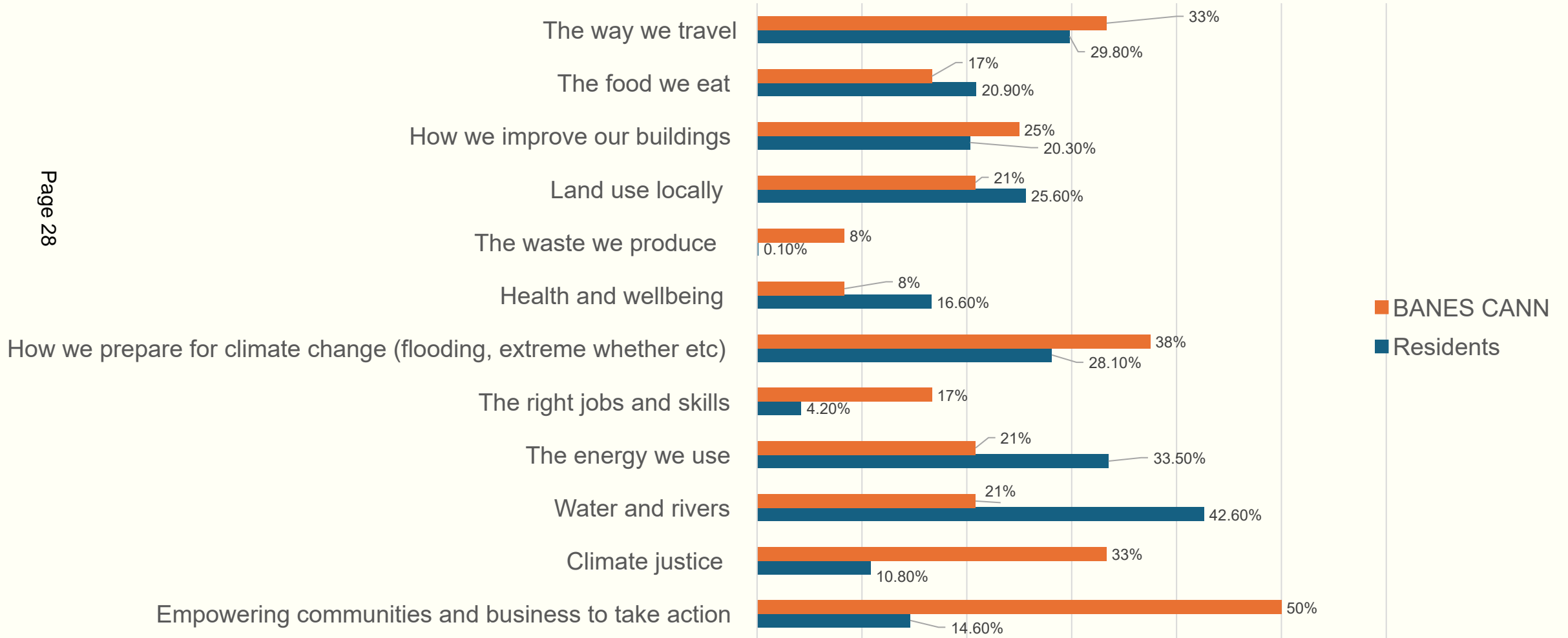


Key sources used in developing the high-level strategy framework

- Lewes Council Climate and Nature Strategy – as highlighted by the LGA and Friends of the Earth
- Newham Council Climate Transition Plan – as highlighted by the LGA and UK100
- The Climate Action Scorecard framework – external benchmarking of Local Authorities every 18 months. B&NES currently 17th of Single Teir authorities – the first non-major city or London borough
- Bristol climate transition plan analysis – utilising software ClimateView that B&NES is using from Jan 2026 and Bristol City Council Climate Action Plan 2026-2028.
- The 7th Carbon Budget report and focus
- UK's 3rd independent Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3-IA), Climate Change Committee 2022 (4th assessment due to be published mid-2026)
- Met Office Local Climate Service report for Bath and North East Somerset
- West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- West of England Climate Adaptation Report (ARP4) 2025
- Doughnut Economics Action Lab
- City of Bristol Just Transition declaration
- The Well-being of Future Generations Act, Wales 2015
- 'Climate change and social justice: an evidence review', Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- B&NES existing strategies and plans including the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the Economic Strategy
- West of England Combined Authority strategies and plans including the Growth Strategy

Feedback from our communities during 2025

2025 BANES Climate and Nature Network (CANN) Forum vs Resident survey priorities, sorted by smallest difference. This shows areas where the Forum attendees and Residents are most aligned



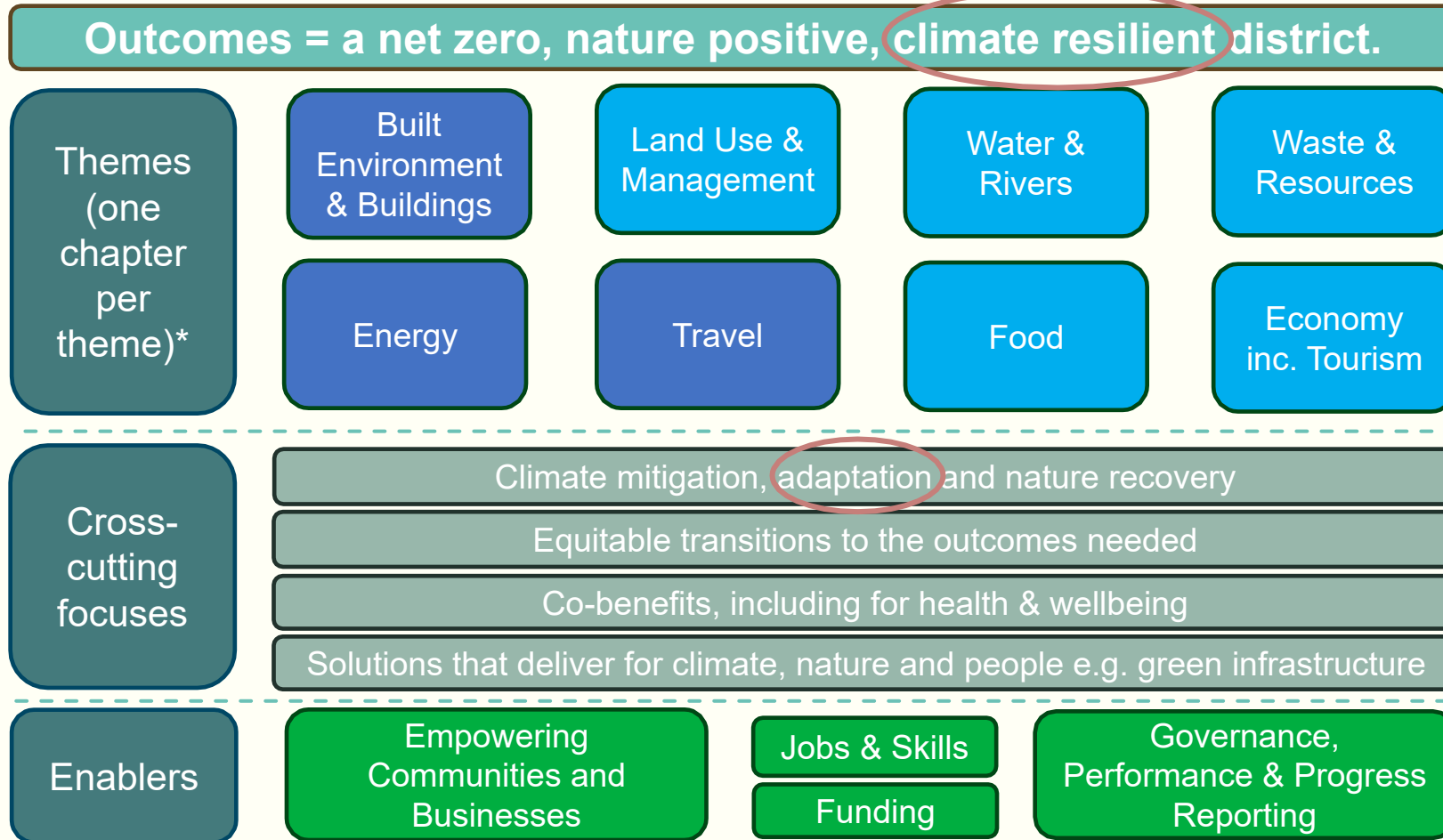


Questions:

1. Are there any further sources that Officers should consider to cross reference against the draft strategy outline?

The Strategy will set out what the Council and partners can each deliver, enable and influence across Bath and North East Somerset

Strategy Outline



* Council Operations to be incorporated within each theme, splitting the content and actions by what the council should deliver for its own operations, and where it can enable and influence the district e.g. via policy, place-based work, convening, funded projects or information sharing



Questions:

1. Are there any recommendations (feedback) as to how to improve the draft strategy outline?

The strategy framework includes:

Principles

that underpin the strategy

'Futures'

statements about the resilient district we are working to create against each theme

Big Shifts

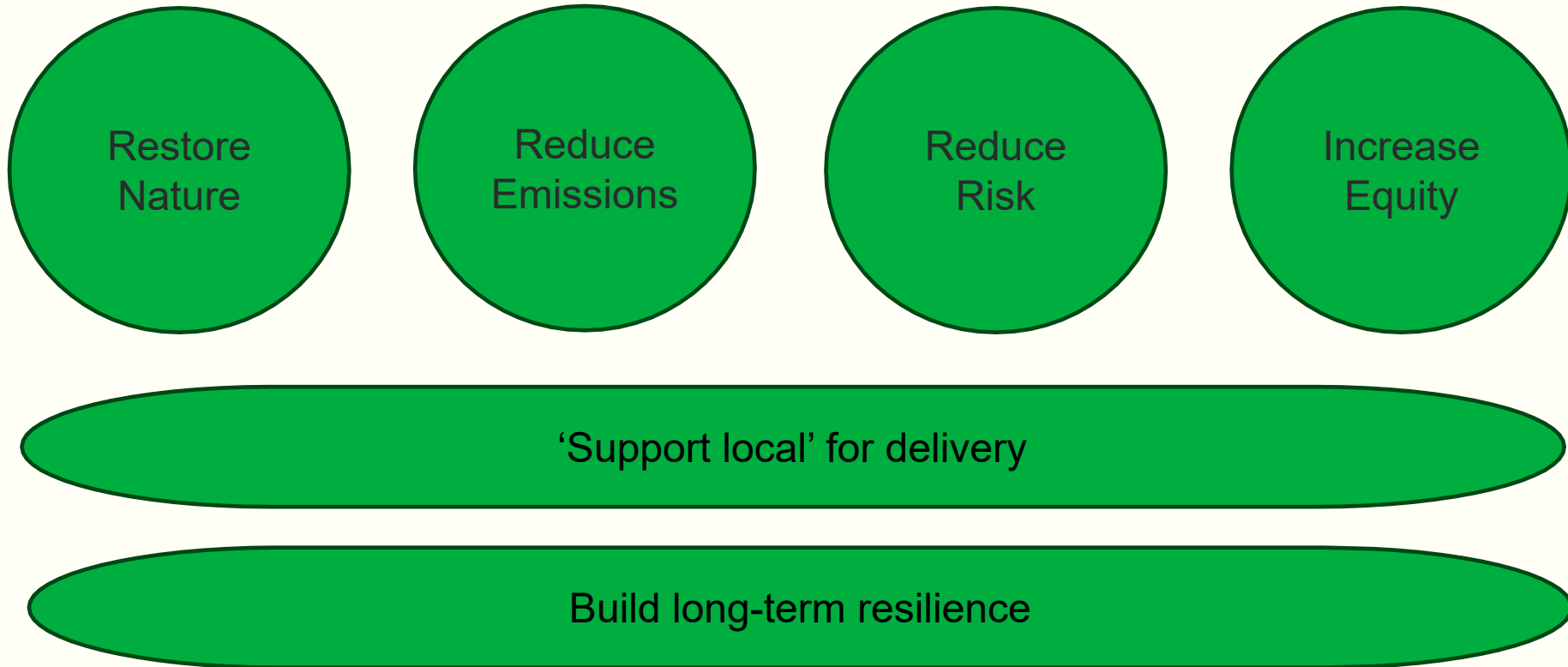
needed to deliver these Futures from a Climate and Nature perspective e.g. electrify energy

Enablers

that will help ensure robust delivery

Draft Strategy Principles.

The Strategy will work to:



What are the 'Futures' we want to see?



1. Our homes, workplaces and schools are comfortable, healthy and energy efficient



2. The electricity we use is renewable, reliable and affordable



3. We prefer to walk, cycle, or use public transport and goods are safely moved without polluting our streets



4. Sharing, buying & wasting less is our normal



5. We eat well and sustainably



6. Our neighbourhoods and local economy is resilient, connected and green



7. Wildlife is thriving



8. Our rivers and streams are clean and full of life

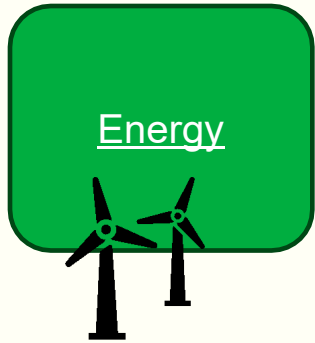


9. We are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate, including increased flooding, extreme heat and drought



10. How we live and work reduces the impacts we have beyond our borders

What are the 'Big Shifts' needed to deliver these 'Futures'?



We need to electrify Energy

We need to become **renewable energy powered and increasingly efficient**, with local & regional sources supporting our needs to contribute to national energy security



Our built environment must become **future-proofed** and **fossil-fuel free**, while **supporting nature recovery**.



We need to electrify Travel

New infrastructure needs to be climate resilient and support better public transport, more active travel and nature recovery.

Our **vehicles are replaced with electric ones** and are charged with renewable energy.



We need to **significantly reduce pollution** into our rivers and streams

We need to **slow the flow of water** throughout the landscape using natural solutions and **reduce water consumption to increase our resilience**



We need to use our land more smartly and efficiently to **create more space for nature and adapt to climate change**, while providing sustainable food security.

How we adapt and use our land is key for **building local resilience**



We need to **lower our consumption** and get used to re-using, sharing and mending, wasting less.

Our **local economy will become more resilient** and shift towards lower impact supply chains & activities.



What we eat can significantly reduce impacts on nature and lowers emissions. We know and act on this.

What are our enablers

1. Targeting and increasing investment, including through innovative partnerships and national support*
2. Partnering with our Anchor Institutions
3. Enabling individual, community, civic and place-based action - through and throughout our communities
4. Collaborating beyond B&NES' borders, whilst retaining our principle of support for local delivery
5. Growing our district's climate and nature action capacity and effectiveness
6. Focusing on nature-based solutions that deliver for both climate and nature
7. Focusing on enabling the right skills and jobs

* *Climate and nature action remains a non-statutory area for Local Authorities, limiting investment from current budgets*



Questions:

1. Does the above framework capture the feedback that the Panel receives in its role as Elected Members as to what is needed to deliver a long-term resilient Bath and North East Somerset in which everyone thrives?
2. Are there any recommendations (feedback) from the Panel as to how to improve this framework?

What are the 'Futures' we want to see?



1. Our homes, workplaces and schools are comfortable, healthy and energy efficient



2. The electricity we use is renewable, reliable and affordable



3. We prefer to walk, cycle, or use public transport and goods are safely moved without polluting our streets



4. Sharing, buying & wasting less is our normal



5. We eat well and sustainably



6. Our neighbourhoods and local economy is resilient, connected and green



7. Wildlife is thriving



8. Our rivers and streams are clean and full of life



9. We are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate, including increased flooding, extreme heat and drought



10. How we live and work reduces the impacts we have beyond our borders



Questions:

The panel is invited to provide recommendations (feedback) as to how to ensure the combined Climate and Nature Strategy focuses on the most impactful ways to deliver community and resident-focused aspects of the draft outline:

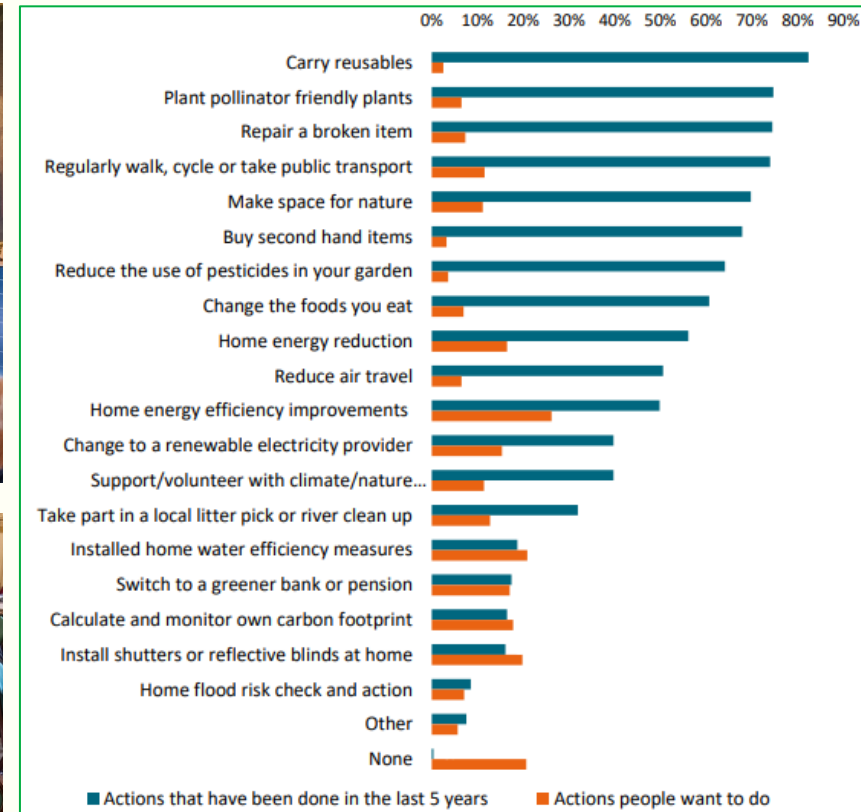
- Empowering communities and businesses
- Enabling the right jobs and skills
- Supporting the most vulnerable, during and beyond the current transitions

Empowering communities to go even further

- Bath and North East Somerset already has long-standing, highly motivated communities acting for climate, nature, adaptation and long-term resilience who want to go further
- Feedback to date for the strategy from resident communities has cited having places and ways to come together locally is key to co-ordinate action for climate and nature, as well as to build community
- Bath and North East Somerset has two local communities taking part in the Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership's Community Climate and Nature Action Project to develop community climate action plans - Twerton & Whiteway Community Network and Bath Mind



Climate and Nature Network Forum, November 2025, attended by 171 people



Top 10 actions taken in the last 5 years and the Top 10 actions residents would like to take but currently cannot or do not
Resident Climate and Nature Survey, Summer 2025, 833 responses



Enabling the right jobs and skills

- The Council will continue to work with organisations representing the business community, including via the civic Future Ambition Board that includes Bath BID and Business West
- To date, the Council has promoted WECA's free carbon surveys for SMEs and Green Business grants to help businesses invest in improving the energy efficiency of their premises.
 - While Green Business Grants finished in October 2025, Low Carbon Surveys will continue to be available. B&NES Council's Carbon Reduction Accelerator scheme remains live; there will be a continuation of the social enterprise support programme and officers will work with WECA on new green grant schemes for businesses.
- Enabling the right jobs and skills is a multi-faceted challenge because of the wide range of jobs and skills that are critical to the delivery of mitigation and adaptation in relation to the climate and nature emergencies.
 - A clear definition of green skills is needed to make sure that all valuable jobs and skills are visible and supported. It will be important to build capacity in B&NES and regionally to train these skills for which capital and physical space will be key.

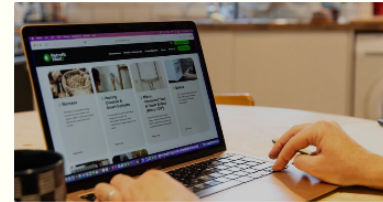
West of England Growth Hub, Green Business Support



Carbon Surveys



Green Business Grants



Retrofit West



Nature and Business Resources



Green Jobs and Skills

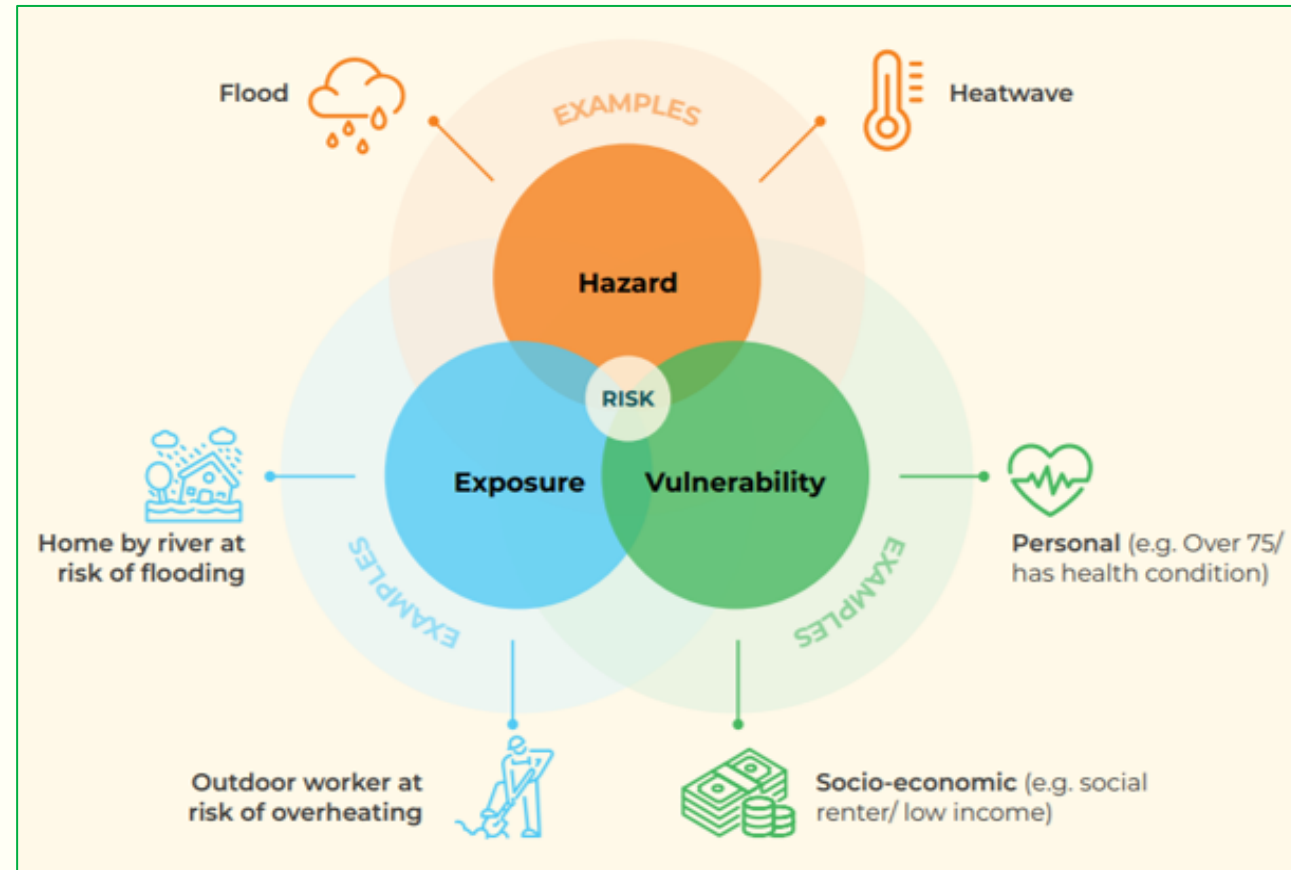
- Manufacturing
- Environmental Management
- Land management
- Entrepreneurship
- Teaching
- Home upgrade engineers
- Agriculture
- Construction & Transport
- Conservation
- Growing & food production
- Waste & Environment



Supporting the most vulnerable, during and beyond the current transitions

- Climate impacts can affect anyone, but certain groups have the potential to be more affected than others.
 - Climate risk and potential for impact depends on three key factors: hazard, exposure, and vulnerability.
 - Climate risks intersect with existing health and social inequalities, and people and groups experiencing multiple inequalities are most vulnerable.
- Page 42
- Climate injustice also presents itself in several other ways:
- Disadvantaged groups contribute least to causing climate change yet are likely to be most affected by its impacts
 - Disadvantaged groups are often underrepresented in decision making
 - Lower income groups tend to pay proportionally more towards implementing climate policies while benefiting least from them

Sources: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Climate Just



Local Climate Adaptation Tool (LCAT) <https://lcat.uk/>



Questions:

The panel is invited to provide recommendations (feedback) as to how to ensure the combined Climate and Nature Strategy focuses on the most impactful ways to deliver community and resident-focused aspects of the draft outline:

- Empowering communities and businesses
- Enabling the right jobs and skills
- Supporting the most vulnerable, during and beyond the current transitions



Questions:

The recently-published [Bristol City Council Climate Action Plan 2026-28](#) encourages citizens to take individual action.

It is the case that wider society, including businesses and governments, must make a very significant contribution to tackling the climate and nature emergencies and be acting first.

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Where it comes to citizen contributions, Officers would be keen to understand from the Panel their views on this new Climate Action Plan's focus for citizens, for consistency at regional level.

Bristol City Council Climate Action Plan – What Can I Do Section

One of the best ways to get ideas and inspiration for climate action is from people just like us. [Bristol Climate Hub](#) has stories from people right across Bristol, from all walks of life. If you can't access the Hub website, here's a list of the most impactful actions to aim for – choose what's appropriate for you. For example, if your close friends and family live on another continent, your decision on flying will be different from someone taking lots of city breaks each year.

- Switching to living without a car - use public transport, walk, wheel or cycle instead
- Reducing flying
- Engage in your city – supporting local businesses instead of big online retailers, using your library and other local facilities, joining together in collective action like the Community Climate and Nature Action project
- Refurbishment and renovation of your home to reduce your energy use and switching to a heat pump instead of a gas boiler. Good places to look for help with this in Bristol are the Bright Green Homes programme and Retrofit West or for general advice visit the Energy Saving Trust
- Buying fewer things new (like clothes and electrical and electronic goods) - and making the things you buy last longer
- Don't believe misinformation, such as about the effectiveness of climate actions, or about reduced concern for climate change, and counter misinformation when you safely can
- Eating less meat and fewer dairy products, using the money saved to support local farmers by buying their products

Source: [Bristol City Council Climate Action Plan 2026-28 \(page 23\)](#)



Timeline

The strategy development timeline includes:

- **March:** Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel
- **May/June:** wider engagement to prioritise contents, action and funding feasibility
- **July/August:** Climate Resilient Council (adaptation) update is an agenda item at July Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel. Draft collated and finalised.
- **September:** Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel before October document design
- **November:** Cabinet, Council and publication