

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



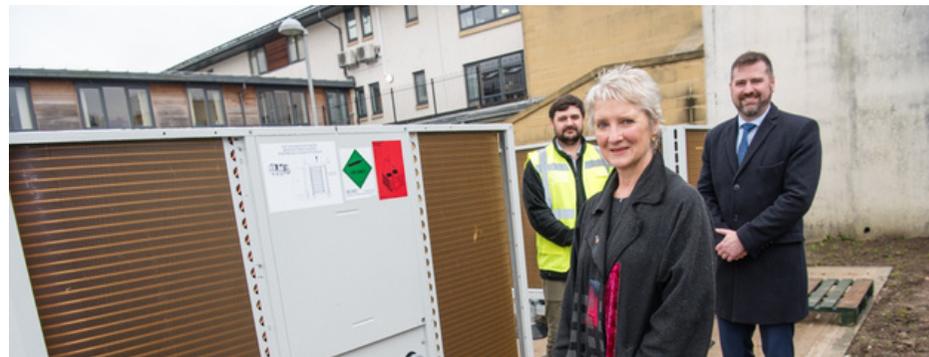
Pictured: Left, community members talking to a member of the CSE team.

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 Blenkharn, 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:

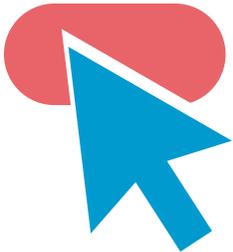
- Dedicated Climate & Ecological Emergency channel in the Council's newsroom. News on action being taken is regularly posted here. The Council also has a You Tube playlist for Climate & Ecological content.
- Monthly 'Bathscape Footprints' podcasts exploring the natural and historic heritage of the Bathscape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

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.