



Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Bath & North East Somerset Annual Climate and Nature Progress Report 2023-24



TACKLING THE CLIMATE &
ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

Contents

Foreword	3
Working with Communities	6
Climate Emergency	8
Ecological Emergency	20
Economic Strategy	29
Annex A:	31
Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency	
Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency	
Progress on Actions – Economic Strategy	

Foreword

In 2019, we were one of the first councils to declare a climate emergency. We committed to providing the leadership to enable the Bath and North East Somerset area to become carbon neutral by 2030 while doing the same for our own operations. In 2020, we declared an ecological emergency, recognising the severity of the degradation of the natural environment and loss of wildlife, and the urgent need to take action to restore nature.

This year we have redoubled our efforts to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies. We have installed new heat pumps, solar PV and LED lighting upgrades on our estate. We have commenced a significant IT infrastructure project, shifting our on-site, energy intensive servers to an off-site, low carbon alternative. We have opened the new Keynsham Recycling Hub, with a 783 kWp solar PV array, rainwater harvesting and more than 200 trees and 500 metres of perimeter hedgerows. We have made three through-traffic restrictions permanent under the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, with a further five currently being trialled.

Our Biodiversity Net Gain policy is already delivering on sites across the district, including Englishcombe Lane and Charlcombe Meadows. Our new Local Plan will include additional requirements for nature: sustainable urban drainage systems, more and better-quality green infrastructure, and local targets for tree cover. Our place-based projects are delivering for people and nature, the Somer Valley Rediscovered project for example, has seen over 1,000 people attend 36 events in the first few months of 2024.

We continue to collaborate with partners, supporting the Green Open Homes and Green Heritage Homes projects to increase understanding and uptake of domestic retrofit measures. Our cooperation agreements with Bath & West Community Energy and Keynsham Community Energy have been renewed, enabling us to continue to deliver local renewable energy projects. Working with our partners Avon Needs Trees and the Forest of Avon Trust has led to new projects including the Great Avon Wood and the Lower Chew Forest, creating 522 acres of nature-rich woodland and grassland collectively.

Looking ahead, I am hopeful for key policy changes from the new UK Government. A step change in action at a national level is critical for us to achieve our goals and continue delivering for local people. We will be updating our response to the climate and ecological emergencies in 2025, drawing together our approach with a new joint strategy. I hope that you will continue to engage with us as we work to reduce our emissions, adapt to the changing climate and restore nature.



**Councillor Sarah Warren,
Deputy Council Leader and
Cabinet Member for Climate
and Sustainable Travel**

Working with Communities

Working with our local communities is an important part of delivering action for climate and nature. By encouraging individuals to share their views, participate in action and connect with local landscapes we can tackle the climate and ecological emergencies together. This section shares some of the highlights of our work with communities.

- A collaboration between Somer Valley Rediscovered and Youth Connect South West, has enabled young people to connect with nature through the delivery of short courses on bush craft and film and editing skills in nature video creation.
- A Green Social Prescribing offer in Somer Valley, has provided over 1000 hours of well-being activities, attended by 142 local people. These activities have been led by expert facilitators to enable adults to benefit from local nature and support mental and physical health.
- The [Bathscape Podcast, Footprints](#), offers educational and engaging programming on the countryside around Bath. The podcast was nominated for Best Local Show at the 2023 and 2024 Audio and Radio Industry Awards.
- Communities have been supported to connect with the natural landscape surrounding the city of Bath, keep active and improve their wellbeing, through Bathscape's rolling programme of weekly well-being walks. Details are available on the [Bathscape website](#).

CASE STUDY: Collaboration with the Prince's Trust

In September 2023, a collaboration between Somer Valley Rediscovered and the Prince's Trust Programme at Bath College, set out to raise young people's awareness of local nature and the importance of climate awareness.

To date, two teams of young people have been supported to gain skills and confidence through practical volunteering experiences, with a third beginning in June 2024. These experiences have opened the door to further opportunities, with one young person proceeding to a work placement within the Somer Valley Rediscovered project.



A group of young people volunteer as part of a collaboration between Somer Valley Rediscovered and the Prince's Trust.

Working with Communities Continued

- In March 2024, Students aged 11- 18 spoke with Councillor Sarah Warren about priority areas for decarbonisation and nature recovery during the BANES Youth Climate Summit, attended by almost 100 students. The students were invited to share their experiences and perspectives to feed into the council's Active Travel Masterplan.
- In June 2023, charity Climate Hub BANES, took over a vacant unit in Bath city centre, offering activities and information about the climate and ecological emergencies. The temporary use of the property was part of Bath & North East Somerset Council's Vacant Unit Action Project to breathe new life into vacant spaces. We will continue to work with Climate Hub BANES to secure them a more permanent base.
- The council has collaborated with partners in support of community engagement events such as the Festival of Nature, where we facilitated a joint panel discussion on how renewable energy can benefit nature in June 2023, and the Climate Hub Springtime Assembly.
- Nature-based activities and sharing of ideas and action to tackle climate and ecological emergencies, have been delivered through green infrastructure projects including Bathscape and Somer Valley Rediscovered.

CASE STUDY: Doughnut Economics at Bath Abbey

In October 2023, community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprises came together at Bath Abbey as part of the Gaia & Treasuring Creation Festival, to hear economist Kate Raworth, talk about Doughnut Economics – an innovative approach to economic thinking that can meet people's needs within the capacity of the planet.

Participants mapped initiatives already underway as well as the challenges and opportunities to further the approach in our district. The mapping work will be used to better inform community engagement on climate and nature across the district, helping to reach a range of people and cover the topics people feel most resonate with them.



Pictured: Economist Kate Raworth (left) and Councillor Sarah Warren (right) in front of the Gaia installation in Bath Abbey.

Climate Emergency

Tackling the Climate Emergency

Our Climate Emergency Strategy sets our ambition and priorities to tackle the climate emergency, with actions targeted across the Bath and North East Somerset area and our own operations. Our four priorities are to:

1. Decarbonise Buildings;
2. Decarbonise Transport;
3. Increase Renewable Energy Generation; and
4. Decarbonise the council's own operations.

Our principles for delivery of these priorities include working in partnership, providing leadership and enabling community action.

As a council, our scope 1 and 2 emissions account for <1% of the total emissions for the wider Bath and North East Somerset area. In alignment with our principles, we see tackling our own operational emissions as important work to provide local leadership on the climate emergency.

To date, much of our emissions progress as a council has been facilitated by the decarbonisation of the electricity grid as renewable energy generation has increased nationally. We are now looking to deliver a step-change in action as a council. The pathway to net zero will not be linear, and many of the projects

highlighted in this report may not deliver carbon savings until the coming years as it takes time for impact to filter through into data. We look forward to reporting our progress in future years, alongside further projects already in the pipeline.

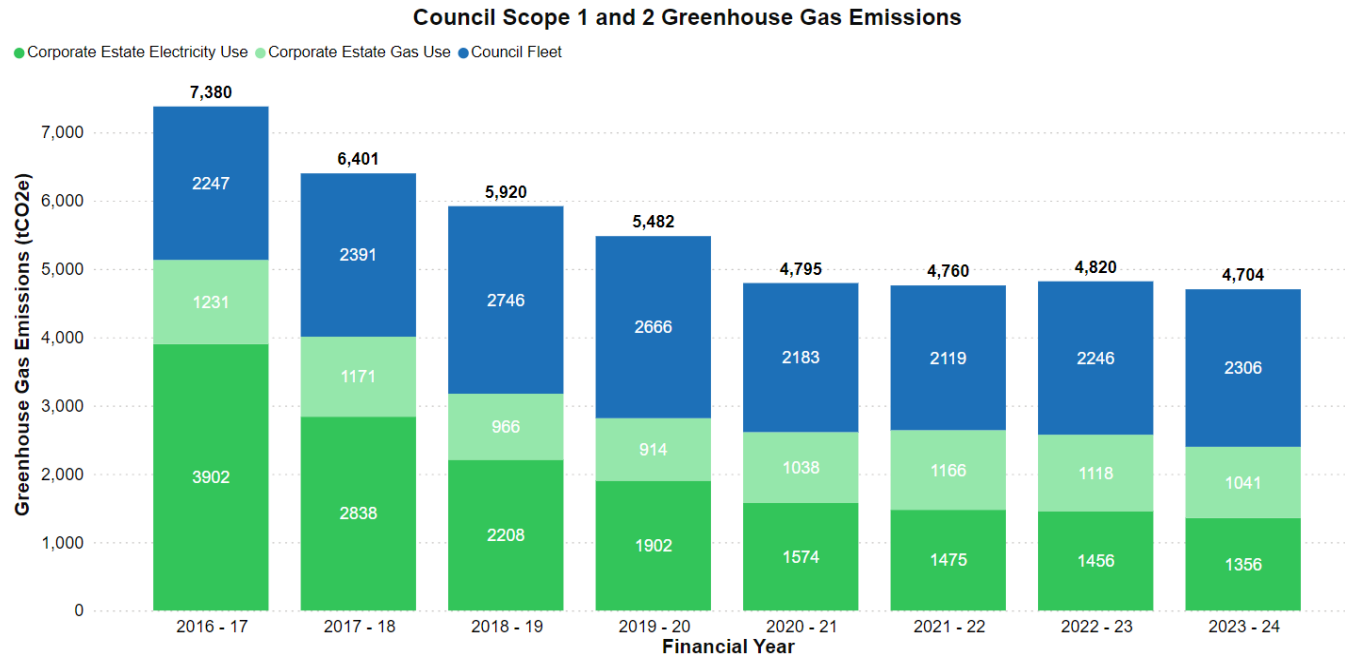
Alongside working on our own emissions as a council, we also work in partnership to support emissions reductions across the whole of the Bath and North East Somerset area. This section of the report highlights some of the key pieces of work completed or underway to tackle the climate emergency.



Pictured left to right: Mandy Lake (Climate Hub), Councillor Oli Henman, Carmen Jones (Climate Hub), Alanna Wright (National Trust) at the Climate Hub Springtime Assembly.

Where We Are Now: Decarbonising Council Operations

The graph below focuses on Scope 1 and 2 emissions for the council's own operations. This includes emissions from gas and electricity use in buildings under our control, and our own vehicle fleet. The council's emissions make up less than 1% of emissions for the Bath and North East Somerset area.



Between 2016-17 and 2023-24*, we have successfully reduced our emissions by 36%. A significant drop in emissions was experienced during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and this reduction has been sustained with emissions for the 2023-24 reporting year even lower than those reported during the pandemic. Historic emissions reductions have largely been due to the decarbonisation of the electricity grid, but the following pages provide detail on some of the recently completed or currently underway projects that we expect will reduce our operational emissions over the coming years. We are continuing to explore options for new projects that will lead to a step change in emissions reductions across the council.

***Note:** electricity and gas consumption values for the latter half of 2023-24 are based on conservative estimates due to ongoing billing issues. These values may be subject to change in subsequent reporting cycles.

Highlights: Decarbonising Council Operations

Decarbonising our own operations is crucial to lead action on climate change in the region. We have been recognised by independent organisations for our leadership and are making practical progress on decarbonising our electricity and heating, while decarbonising our vehicle fleet remains a significant challenge.

- Our new Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 sets out our two core policies – tackling the climate and ecological emergencies and giving people a bigger say.
- Tackling the climate emergency has been embedded in all Council decision making via our Doughnut Decision Tool. This requires all Council decisions to be considered through the lens of doughnut economics, capturing the impact on our planetary boundaries and our social foundation.
- In 2023, B&NES were awarded our first B Score from the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), for our progress on tackling the climate emergency. Last year, 109 states and regions around the world disclosed their climate data through the Project.
- We were ranked 7th of UK local authorities by Climate Scorecards UK, which assessed action across seven categories: buildings & heating, transport, planning & land use, governance & finance, biodiversity, governance & finance, and waste reduction & food.

CASE STUDY: Keynsham Recycling Hub

B&NES has invested £41.8m in a state-of-the-art waste facility in Keynsham. The first phase, a public household waste, reuse and recycling centre, opened in April 2023. The final phase of the project, an operational hub to deliver frontline services such as recycling, waste collections and vehicle servicing, is now complete, opening in February 2024.

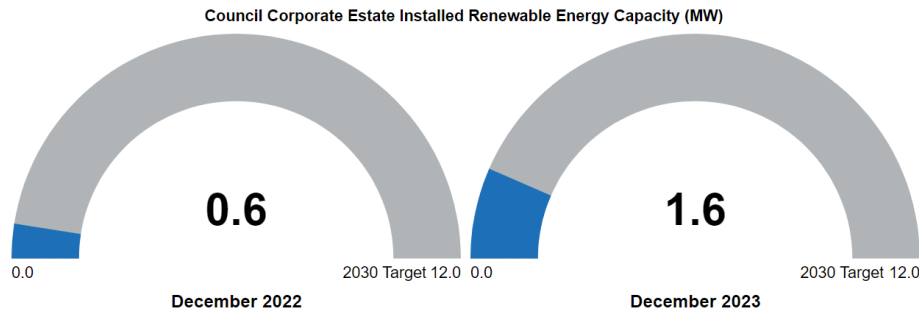
The scheme has been designed with carefully considered sustainability measures built in, including a 3800m² (783KWp) solar PV array on top of the buildings and rainwater harvesting, used for vehicle washing and plant watering. More than 200 trees and 500m of perimeter hedgerows have been planted, strengthening wildlife corridors and supporting biodiversity net gain.



Pictured left to right at the opening of Keynsham Recycling Hub: B&NES Council leader, Councillor Kevin Guy, B&NES Council Chair, Councillor Sarah Moore and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Tim Ball.

Highlights: Decarbonising Council Operations Continued

- In 2023, two care homes (Combe Lea and Cleeve Court) had air source heat pumps, LED lighting and rooftop solar installed. This will result in estimated annual carbon savings of approximately 100 tonnes CO₂, around 4% of the council's corporate estate emissions.
- Renewable energy capacity on the council's corporate estate increased from 0.6 MW to 1.6 MW in December 2023:



- An electric HGV refuse truck has been trialled to replace existing diesel models that are reaching the end of their life. This trial compliments progress elsewhere in our vehicle fleet, with 20% of light commercial vehicles now electric.
- Heat Decarbonisation Plans are underway for our highest emitting buildings and a bid has been submitted for £122k to the Low Carbon Skills Fund for 'Bath Major Assets Energy Network' including Guildhall; Victoria Art Gallery; Roman Baths & Pump Rooms; and Bath Sports & Leisure Centre.

CASE STUDY: Upgrading IT Infrastructure

A significant project to transition our IT infrastructure from on-site servers to off-site cloud servers is currently underway. The council's current servers are located onsite in Keynsham and Bath and are energy-intensive. This project will see the servers transitioned to an off-site cloud-based solution with a low carbon partner.

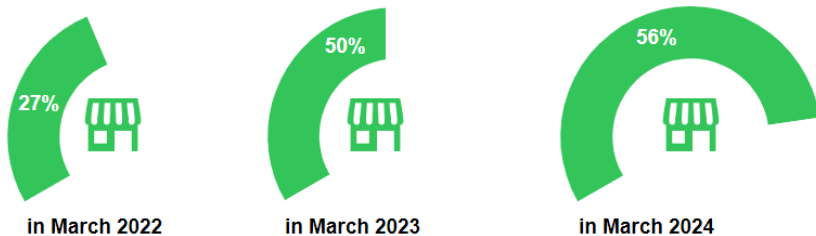
The project will deliver estimated carbon savings of 124 tonnes of CO₂e over a five-year period. The project is partway through its first year with the impact on energy use and emissions not yet reflected in our data.

Highlights: Decarbonising Council Operations – Scope 3 Emissions

Scope 3 emissions are those that are produced indirectly by activities outside an organisation's own operations. For the council, this includes emissions associated with our procurement of goods and services, the buildings we own but do not occupy and our corporate travel.

Scope 3 emissions are difficult to measure and reduce as they fall outside our direct control. As a council we are making progress in identifying our Scope 3 emissions sources and what actions we can take to reduce them.

- The percentage of council-owned commercial units with an EPC of A-C has increased from 27% to 56% in March 2024. This means that buildings that are leased from us will be more energy efficient and have lower emissions associated with them.



CASE STUDY: Pension Fund's Net Zero Goals

Avon Pension Fund provides the Local Government Pension Scheme pension for 400+ local employers and has over 130,000 members, including over 11,000 B&NES council members (employees, pensioners, etc).

Last year the Fund engaged key stakeholders in a review of the net zero targets it sets for its £5.8 billion of investments. Their member survey received over 5,000 responses.

The climate goal review led to the Fund bringing forward its net zero target from 2050 to 2045. This target is underpinned by near-term targets, designed to reduce emissions and finance climate transition. For example, by 2030 they will divest from all companies within high impact sectors that are not on target to reach net zero by 2050.

In 2023 the Fund agreed to allocate 3% of its assets to local impact investments.

In January 2024 they invested alongside five other pension funds into a portfolio of 17 solar farms in the south-west. The collaborative investment will generate around 196MW of electricity, equivalent to powering nearly 70,000 homes.

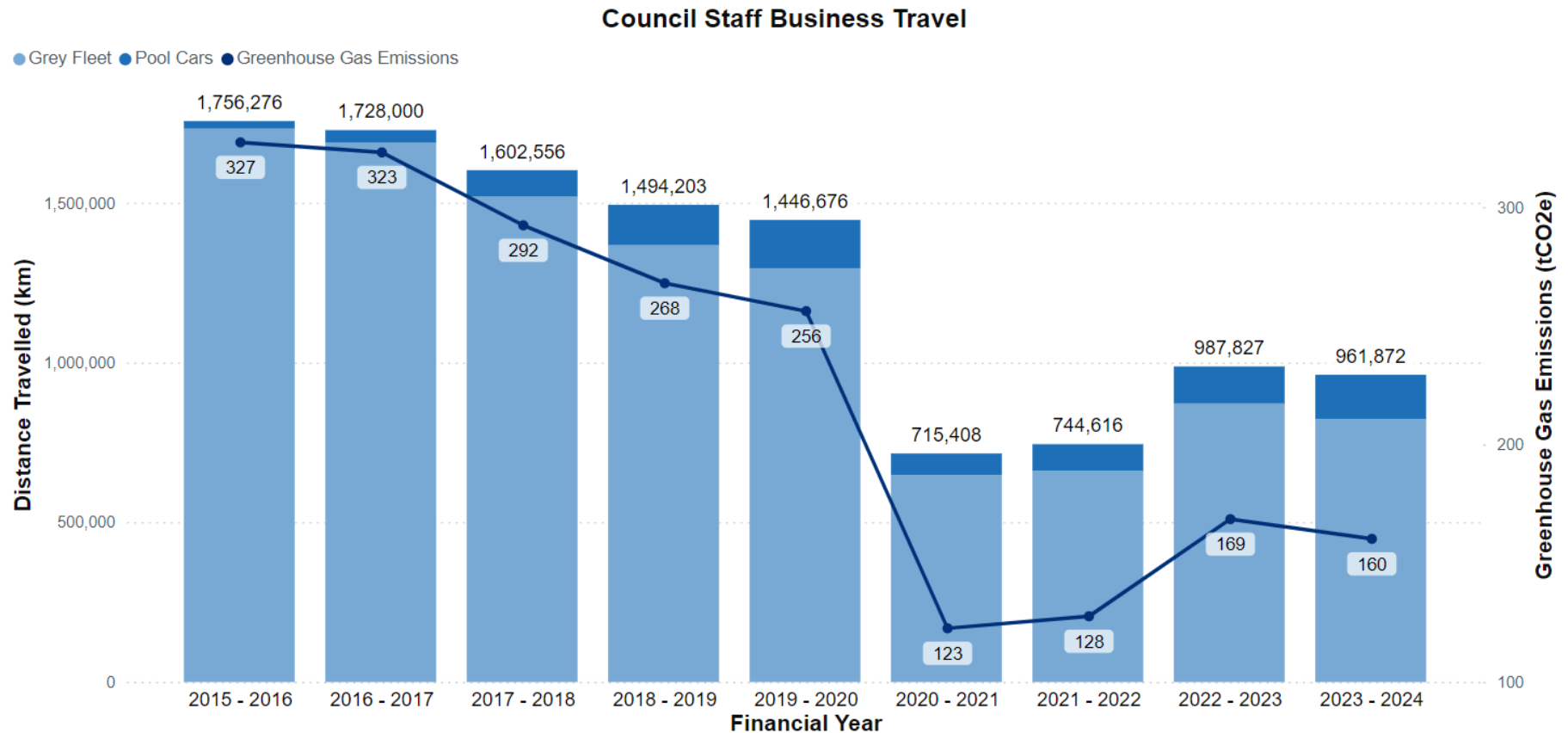
This investment in local renewable energy will deliver attractive financial returns to help protect Avon Pension Fund members' pensions.



A visit to an Avon Pension Fund investment, a solar farm in South Gloucestershire.

Highlights: Decarbonising Council Operations – Corporate Travel

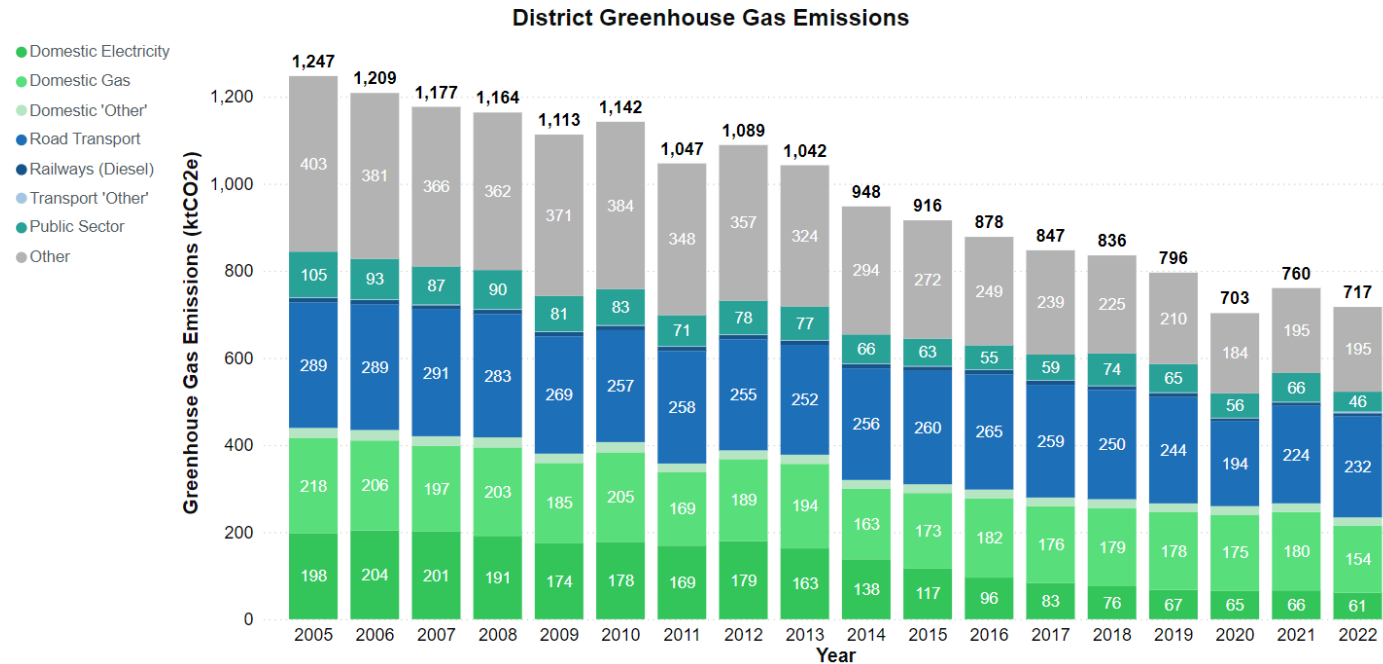
The emissions from council staff business travel are not captured as part of our Scope 1 and 2 emissions which are reported on page 10. These emissions are classified as part of our Scope 3 emissions. We are making progress at reducing overall business travel mileage and increasing the number of electric vehicles in our pool car fleet, while encouraging staff to use pool cars rather than their own cars for business travel. The emissions associated with business travel have fallen by **51%** since 2015-16.



Where We Are Now – Decarbonising Bath and North East Somerset District

The graph below shows the Scope 1 and 2 emissions for the Bath and North East Somerset area.

These emissions arise from the direct (gas, petrol, diesel) and indirect (electricity) use of energy, including: homes; commercial and public sector buildings; industry; transport; land use, land use change and forestry; agriculture; and waste management.



Between 2005 and 2022, greenhouse gas emissions for the district fell by 43%. This is significant progress indicating that we have returned to a falling trajectory after the temporary post-Covid bounce back.

The Climate Change Committee estimates that local authorities in the UK have power or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas². Although B&NES does not have direct control across all areas, we prioritise action where we can have the most impact and deliver for residents – working to decarbonise buildings, transport, and increase renewable energy generation. The following pages share some highlights of projects that are completed or underway to support and deliver emissions reductions across the district.

Highlights: Decarbonising Buildings

Roughly a third of emissions in Bath and North East Somerset come from electricity and gas use in our domestic buildings. Retrofitting existing buildings to improve their energy efficiency, and decarbonising electricity and heating sources are crucial to reduce these emissions. Through unique partnerships, we are balancing the need for decarbonisation with our World Heritage Status in Bath and have been recognised as the leading UK local authority for our action on buildings and heating.

- The Buildings & Heating section for Climate Scorecard UK ranked B&NES 1st of all local authorities in the UK.
- The council is a key partner in the WECA Retrofit West programme, providing grant funding and free retrofit advice to residents and local businesses, as well as delivering green skills development to encourage the scale up of retrofit in the district.
- Residents who are interested in retrofitting their homes have been connected to local services through an advice line. Calls from people in Bath and North East Somerset make up 18% of total enquiries to the Retrofit West programme, and homes in the region make up 20% of housing stock.

CASE STUDY: Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard Regulations require private rented homes to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E or above.

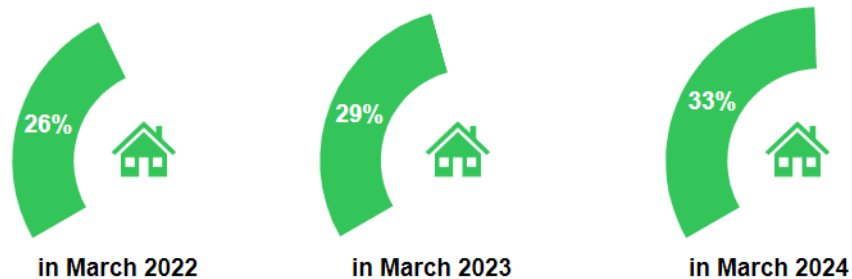
In 2022, Bath & North East Somerset council identified domestic rental properties in BANES with an EPC below that level. Where properties fell short of the minimum E energy rating, the landlords were issued with Compliance Notices, requiring them to improve energy performance or pay a £5000 fine per property.

Improvements have now been completed in more than 70 properties. The introduction of energy efficiency measures has resulted in a fall in annual energy costs by an average of £388 per property and enabled the saving of more than 125.7 tonnes of CO₂ across the district, an average of 3 tonnes per property.



Highlights: Decarbonising Buildings Continued

- The council is a key partner in [Green Heritage Homes](#), a collaborative project to improve understanding of energy efficiency works to listed buildings. The project has a new dedicated Conservation Officer helping to develop pre-application advice for retrofit.
- There were 132 heat pumps installed on domestic buildings in the 2023-24 financial year.
- The percentage of domestic homes in Bath and North East Somerset with an EPC rating of A-C has increased from 26% in March 2022, to 33% in March 2024.



CASE STUDY: Green Open Homes

The Green Open Homes BANES weekend in November 2023 saw 22 homeowners across Bath and the Chew Valley open their homes to showcase energy saving measures to inspire visitors to act on their own home energy. The weekend was made possible by 46 volunteers, including B&NES Green Transformation staff, and attracted 788 visits.

Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE) has secured funding to run further Green Open Homes events in communities throughout BANES in 2024, this time taking a community-led approach. B&NES council is currently supporting with the search for 'champions' to run local events in their area.



A group of people look at solar panels on a roof at one of last year's Green Open Homes.

Highlights: Decarbonising Transport

Decarbonising transport remains one of our biggest challenges, in part due to the rural-urban nature of our district and the combination of changes needed to policy, behaviour and technology. We focus on creating an environment that makes it easier to travel by public transport or active travel, including walking, wheeling and cycling.

- The number of passenger journeys in Bath and North East Somerset taking place on local bus services has increased from 8 million in 2021-22 to 9 million in 2022-23.
- A feasibility study for reopening Salford rail station has been completed, with report publication expected by the end of this year.
- The numbers of rail passenger entries and exits (rail use) has increased at all BANES train stations between 2021-22 and 2022-23. At Bath Spa station there were an estimated 5,468,466 passenger entries and exits in 2022-23, compared to 4,085,704 in 2021-22.
- Since TIER took over the e-Bike/Scooter trials in September 2023 148,111 kilometres have been clocked. There's been more than 70,000 trips taking place and nearly 10,000 riders travelling sustainably.
- 21 bike hangars have already been installed to give people easy and safe storage for bicycles, with a further 20 consulted on.

CASE STUDY: Electric Bus Service

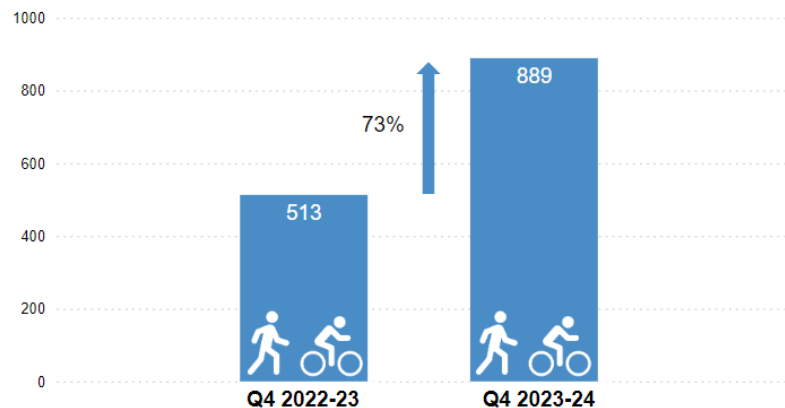
Travel between the busiest locations in Bath has become greener thanks to the introduction of a new electric bus service. Operated by community-interest company The Big Lemon, the bus, which is the first in the region, provides a vital link between Bath city centre, the University of Bath and the Royal United Hospital. The number 20 route, which is subsidised by the B&NES council Transport Bus Levy, benefits residents, students, tourists and hospital visitors, by providing a greener transportation option.



Left to right: Jason Freeman, Operations Manager Bristol & The West at The Big Lemon; Colin Morris, General Manager at The Big Lemon; Georgia-Rose Gleeson, Sustainability Officer at The Royal United Hospital; Councillor Sarah Warren; Tom Druitt, CEO at The Big Lemon.

Highlights: Decarbonising Transport Continued

- Key transport projects have been put forward to consultation including Bath City Centre, the Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor and Somer Valley Links, with nearly 7,000 responses.
- ModeSHIFT stars awarded to numerous schools. The ModeSHIFT scheme recognises schools, businesses and other organisations that have shown excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable and active travel.
- Three Liveable Neighbourhood through traffic restrictions were made permanent, one new trial has been introduced and approval given for two more trial Liveable Neighbourhoods later this year.
- Average daily bicycle and pedestrian volumes per counting site have increased by 73% when comparing Q4 (Jan-March) 2023 to Q4 2024:



CASE STUDY: Queen Charlton Lane, Whitchurch

As part of the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, through-traffic restrictions were introduced on a trial basis in three locations in 2022, including Queen Charlton Lane, Whitchurch. The aim of the restrictions was to prevent residential areas being used as short cuts and to increase the choice and safety for people who choose to walk, wheel or cycle.

During the trial period for the through-traffic restriction in Queen Charlton Lane, the council gathered feedback from residents and monitored changes to traffic volumes. The monitoring demonstrated that there were no significant traffic impacts on primary alternative routes. Feedback from residents has been positive, with 65% more likely to walk for a short journey since the scheme had been introduced and 54% more likely to cycle or wheel.

Following the success of the three trials, the schemes were made permanent in 2024. The council is now delivering five more through-traffic restriction trials under the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme.



Highlights: Increasing Renewable Energy Generation

Increasing renewable energy generation across the district helps to decarbonise the electricity grid and reduce the emissions associated with our electricity use. We work in close partnership with local energy organisations to identify and develop renewable energy projects that benefit local people. Significant growth in installed capacity is expected but further work is still needed to identify enough suitable sites to meet our 300MW target by 2030.

- The council has renewed its cooperation agreement with Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE) for a further five years, through to 2028 and its cooperation agreement with Keynsham Community Energy. These agreements enable the organisations to continue working together to identify energy projects within the district, opportunities for joint research about community-based projects and opportunities for people in the area to invest in renewable energy projects.
- The council hosted a Wessex Community Energy Network conference in November 2023 on the theme of “Energy Local”- a model that allows renewable energy to be sold to local communities via an “Energy Local Club”. Over 40 people participated in the event at Guildhall, and it has led to the Council and BWCE partnering to develop an Energy Local pilot.
- B&NES council has been awarded £173,166 from the Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPFS) to install rooftop photo voltaic (PV) panels on Bath Sports and Leisure Centre. Installing the solar PV is expected to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 23.04 tonnes and save £41,000 in energy costs each year.

CASE STUDY: Solar Together

B&NES is currently in the second phase of Solar Together West of England, a group-buying scheme delivered in partnership with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and their partner iChoosr Ltd. The scheme offers an easy way for residents and local business to invest in solar panels and battery storage to power their homes and support the council’s carbon neutral ambitions.

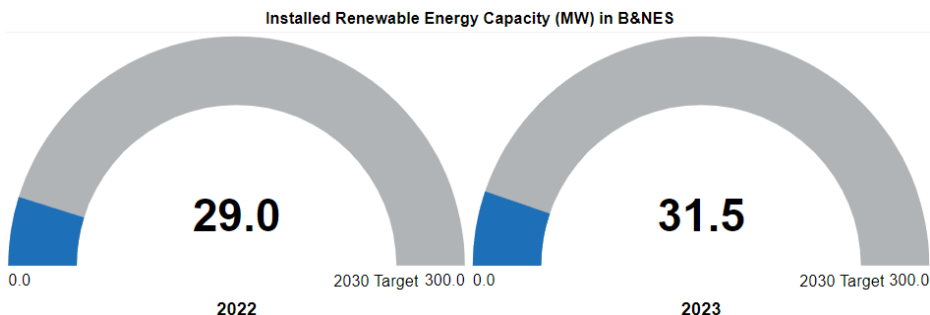
The first round, launched as a pilot in 2021, resulted in around 1 MW of installed capacity, with a carbon reduction of 207,518kg. Following this success, the scheme has been approved for a second and third round. The second round is in the delivery phase, with around 280 installations of solar panels due to be completed on BANES residents’ rooftops.



A person installs solar panels on a rooftop.

Highlights: Increasing Renewable Energy Generation Continued

- The Marksbury Plain commercial solar farm is currently under construction and will provide up to 15 megawatts (MW) of capacity. A 9 MW solar farm has planning consent at Howgrove Farm (north of Nempnett Thrubwell) and a pre-application submission has been made for a 6.7 MW solar farm with 49.5 MW of battery storage. The council is looking at options for development of larger renewables projects to meet a generation gap within our own 12 MW target.
- The council is a partner to the £5m Mission Net Zero project led by Bristol City Council. The project will develop a Local Area Energy Plan and Climate Investment Plan for the West of England region. This will give B&NES detailed data on which to base its energy strategy going forward in support of meeting the target for 300 MW new renewables generation by 2030.
- There were 587 domestic solar PV installations in the 2023-24 financial year.
- Installed renewable energy capacity has increased from 23 MW in 2022, to 31.5 MW in 2023:

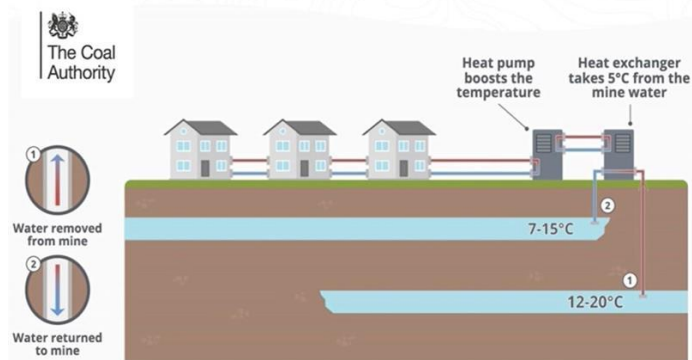


CASE STUDY: Heat from Mines

The council are working with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) with £1.6m WECA funding to see if heat pumps could utilise warmer water in old mine pits for heating and cooling. There is the potential to heat more than 100,000 homes, schools and hospitals across the West of England.

350 homes, offices, a college and an arts centre in Gateshead (Tyne and Wear) are among the existing schemes that inform the viability of such a scheme in this area.

A successful scheme utilises water that is warmer than the water closer to the surface and goes through a heat exchanger and heat pumps. This can also be used for cooling in times of extreme heat. These pumps use electricity but can generate two to four times the electricity units in heat. With growing decarbonisation of the electricity grid, this provides a very low carbon opportunity for heating and cooling.



Explanation of heat recovery from mines.
Credit: The Coal Authority.

Ecological Emergency

Tackling the Ecological Emergency

Our Ecological Emergency Action Plan sets our priorities and the actions we are taking to tackle the ecological emergency. Our three priorities are to:

1. Increase the extent of land and waterways managed positively for nature;
2. Increase the abundance and distribution of key species; and
3. Enable more people to access and engage with nature.

We are not able to tackle the Ecological Emergency alone, but we recognise that we have an important role to play in tackling the Ecological Emergency, both through our own delivery and policy-making, and through supporting others to take action.

Much of our work on nature recovery so far is being delivered through our Strategic Green Infrastructure Projects, which have led place-based partnerships to benefit nature and people. We are now looking to step up our ambition by better integrating nature recovery across the Council, in areas such as planning, regeneration, management of our estate, and day-to-day operations.

This report provides an update on our progress in tackling the ecological emergency and summarises the work we have done as a council so far.

We look forward to reporting our progress in delivering the Ecological Emergency Action Plan in future years, and to deliver other exciting projects that are in the pipeline.



HM Lord-Lieutenant Mr Mohammed Saddiq, the Chair of Council, Councillor Sarah Moore, the Mayor of Bath, Councillor Dine Romero and council Leader, Councillor Kevin Guy, and Children from Widcombe Junior School planting an English oak in Victoria Park.

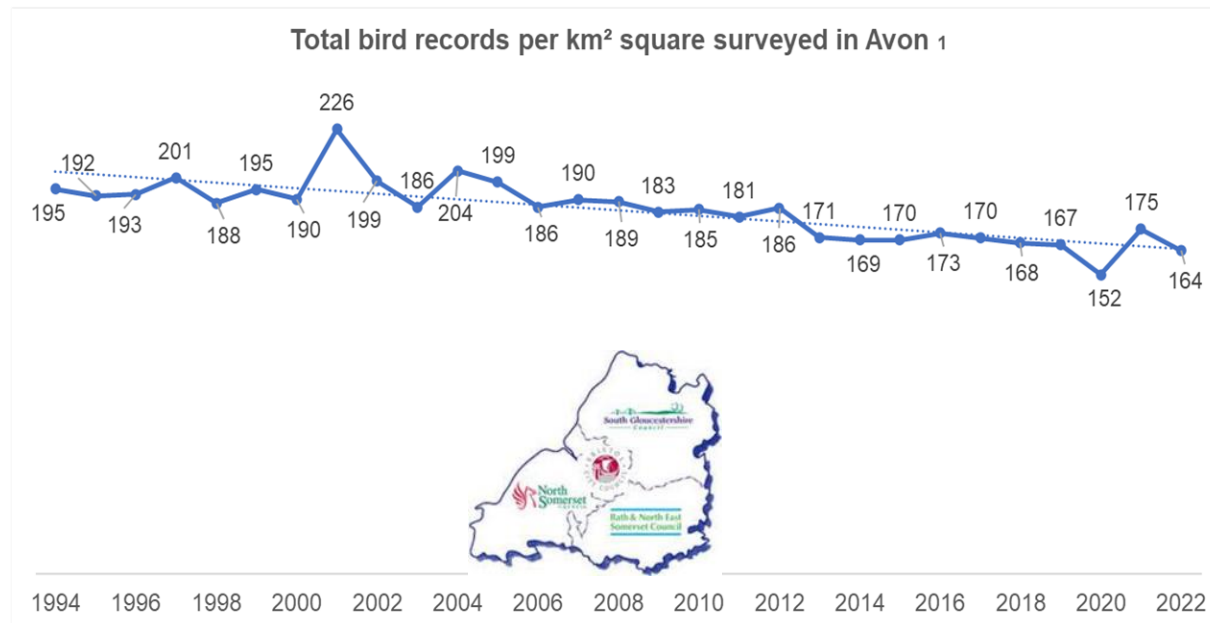


Participants on a Somer Valley Rediscovered Green Social Prescribing course in Midsomer Norton.

Ecological Emergency: Where We Are Now – Bath and North East Somerset District

This section of the Annual Report looks at the data we have on wildlife across the whole of the Bath and North East Somerset area.

The best data we have on wildlife populations is derived from the British Trust for Ornithology's annual Breeding Bird Survey. This data is only currently available for the whole of the West of England, but we expect the declines in BANES will mirror these changes.

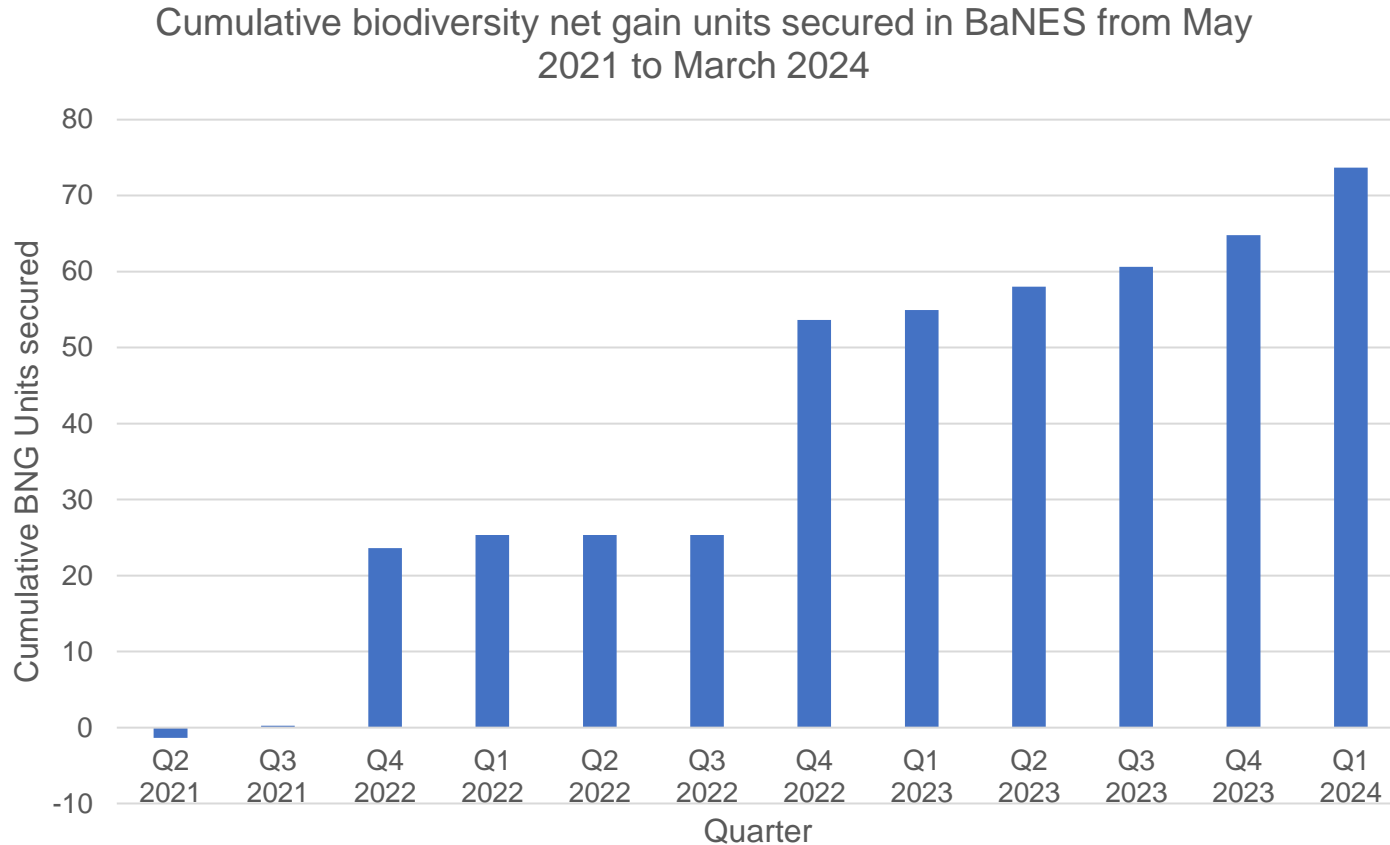


Between 1994 and 2022, bird populations across the West of England (Avon) fell by approximately 16%. Although these records only go back to 1994, from UK records we can be confident that populations would have fallen significantly before the mid-1990s. The overall decline also masks more drastic decline in certain species, particularly 'specialist' species and insect-eating birds. For example, the swift count in the region fell by 91%, and the cuckoo count by 98%.

As the decline in wildlife is associated with land use change, agricultural intensification, and pollution across the district (as well as climate change), B&NES council does not have direct control over the majority of actions that are needed to reverse the decline in wildlife. That is why we are committed to showing leadership and working in partnership to enable action across the district.

Ecological Emergency: Where We Are Now – Bath & North East Somerset Council

This section of the Annual Report looks at the amount of habitat improved as a result of our Biodiversity Net Gain policy.



Between May 2021 and February 2024, a cumulative 74 'Biodiversity Units' were secured through planning applications, equivalent to restoring 23 ha of neutral grassland from poor to moderate condition. Most of these Units were secured **before** 10% Biodiversity Net Gain was made mandatory through Planning Policy (January 2023), through a proactive approach. Two large developments were responsible for the majority of the Units delivered.

Highlights: Leadership and Evidence

Having declared an ecological emergency in 2020, it is crucial that B&NES council shows leadership in responding to the crisis facing nature. This year, we have been recognised as the joint-leading local authority nationwide for our response to nature's decline, helped by our ambitious approach to biodiversity net gain. Monitoring the state of nature in the district remains a significant challenge.

- B&NES was ranked joint first out of all local authorities in the country for action on biodiversity by Climate Scorecards UK.
- B&NES was one of the first councils to adopt Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), meaning developments in the District will be delivering net gains for nature ahead of most places. Our Biodiversity Net Gain policy gained full statutory weight in January 2023, more than a year ahead of national requirements.
- Our developing Local Plan will be our most ambitious for nature recovery. In addition to BNG, emerging policies include a requirement for 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems', requirements for developments to have more and better 'green infrastructure', and local targets for tree cover.
- Our Nature Recovery Manager is leading development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the West of England, which is on course to be first in the country to go to publication. The LNRS will set priorities and 'focus areas' for nature recovery across the region, enabling us to better target resources.

- We have produced the first Strategic Evidence Base for nature in the district, which will help to show how we are progressing towards our ambitions for nature recovery. We are continuing to work with neighbouring local authorities to improve our monitoring of habitats and wildlife.

CASE STUDY: Englishcombe Lane

The council is delivering 16 homes for people with autism and/or learning disabilities at Englishcombe Lane.

The development has been designed to create a tranquil and nature-rich setting, with the aim of achieving 'Building with Nature' Full Accreditation.

As well as the site being nature-rich, the decision to pursue 20% BNG has created the potential for community led biodiversity enhancement schemes in the Englishcombe area.



Opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain at Englishcombe Lane

Highlights: Land and Investment

Managing more of our land for nature is one of the key ways the council can directly contribute to nature recovery. This year, we have utilised a variety of funding sources and projects to manage more of our land for nature, although challenges such as dealing with the impact of ash dieback remain.

- Having identified council owned sites where there are opportunities for nature recovery, including Odd Down, Entry Hill, and Lansdown, we have secured funding for a Landscape City project that will improve the city's ecological network and develop masterplans for these sites. The project will take forward ideas for an Eco Hub at Entry Hill and a proposed nature trail at Odd Down Sports Ground.
- We are beginning to utilise funding received through Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to fund nature recovery on council-owned sites. This includes enhancing 0.5 hectares of bramble scrub to more biodiversity-rich 'mixed scrub' at Charlcombe Meadows, and we expect to replicate this approach on other sites as the demand for BNG grows.
- Bath West Community Energy's proposed solar farm at Fairy Hill will deliver 20% BNG by delivering grassland meadow, shrub and tree planting. This demonstrates how renewable energy and nature recovery can go hand-in-hand.
- The Somer Valley Rediscovered Project is improving the management of five sites across the Somer Valley for nature. This includes delivering 34 hectares of improved, nature-rich green space in Waterside Valley, with better access for local communities and visitors.

CASE STUDY: Waterside Valley

Through the Somer Valley Rediscovered project, we are working with local communities to improve the management of five sites across the Somer Valley for nature, including Waterside Valley.

Waterside Valley was purchased in July 2021 by Westfield Parish Council with the purpose of enhancing the land as public open space, retaining its wildlife value and natural aspect.

Further to developing a masterplan for the site in 2022 with local people and landscape architects, we are now carrying out actions to help nature and improve access for local people. This includes improving grassland management, tree planting, hedge laying, improving paths, and new interpretation boards.

Through training and volunteer days, we are empowering the local community to manage habitat and monitor wildlife on site.



Volunteers undertaking scrub management in Waterside Valley

Highlights: Land and Investment Continued

- The [Bathscape Landscape Partnership](#) continues to be an effective vehicle for improving the value of the landscape surrounding Bath for nature, while maintaining its unique character. So far, Bathscape has improved the management of 80 hectares of woodland and 100 grasslands, as well as creating 12 new flower-rich meadows.
- We awarded £90,000 of CiL funding to Your Park Bristol and Bath to manage more space for pollinators in our parks and green spaces. This was topped up by £75,000 from the West of England Combined Authority's Pollinator Fund, enabling the creation of new meadows, ponds, planting of new trees and hedgerows.
- Our '[Call for Nature Sites](#)' has resulted in 12 landowners submitting proposals for nature recovery on their land, which we can match with funding through, for example, biodiversity net gain. The proposals include the creation of species-rich grassland, hedgerows, orchards, woodland, ponds and more. The approved sites can be viewed on our [online map](#).
- Our flagship urban green infrastructure project, the [Bath River Line](#) is being delivered this year through a £1.6m investment to improve the river corridor through western Bath. The project will include a number of interventions across the route, including 7ha of green space and path being improved for nature.

CASE STUDY: Improving Bath's parks for pollinators and people

In August 2023, we awarded £90,000 of CiL funding to Your Park Bristol and Bath to manage more space for pollinators in Bath's parks and green spaces. Together with £75,000 from the Combined Authority's Pollinator Fund, this totals £165,000 to transform 18 parks for nature across the city.

In Brickfields park, Your Park has been working with University of Bath students to rejuvenate a bug hotel, sow wildflower seed around the nature pond margins, and take care of hundreds of trees planted in 2022.

And in Henrietta Park, Bee Active has been making the most of a felled tree by working with volunteers to build a stumpery. The stumpery contains sunken logs that provide habitat for invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and small mammals, as well as being home to a variety of pollinator plants and ferns.



© Your Park Bristol and Bath

Volunteers helping to build a bug hotel.

Highlights: Access and Engagement

Alongside restoring nature, one of our key commitments is increasing residents' access to and engagement with nature. We have a variety of projects that are engaging and empowering people to take action for nature locally, especially where this helps to tackle inequalities in access to green spaces.

- The Somer Valley Rediscovered project has seen over 1,000 people attend 36 events so far in 2024, with 1,038 people attending 33 events in 2023. It has also created numerous volunteering opportunities for residents, including habitat management, wildlife surveying, and monitoring water quality.
- Bathscape continues to engage thousands of people in and around Bath in the city's landscape through walks, events and volunteering opportunities. Bathscape's Footprints podcast was again nominated for Best Local Show at the Radio Academy Audio & Radio Industry Awards in 2024, following its first nomination last year.
- WaterSpace Connected is facilitating the construction of a new bridge across the River Avon at Somerdale, opening new opportunities for communities to connect with nature. It is also working with local residents through the Somerdale Shed to manage local green spaces for nature.
- We have published new webpages related to the [Ecological Emergency on the council website](#), enabling residents to better understand our work and how they can help wildlife in the district.

CASE STUDY: Nextdoor Nature

Following a successful bid by B&NES to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Avon Wildlife Trust is delivering the 'Nextdoor Nature' project in the Somer Valley. Nextdoor Nature is empowering local communities to manage green spaces for nature, working alongside 'Somer Valley Rediscovered'.

Through Nextdoor Nature, community-led projects have blossomed, including an accessible sensory garden in Peasedown, a community food-growing space outside a pub in Paulton, and improving the Manor Copse woodland and playpark for residents and wildlife.



Residents in the Somer Valley gathering to clear space for a new community garden as part of the Somer Valley Nextdoor Nature project.

Highlights: Working in Partnership

We are not able to reverse nature's decline alone, and we are fortunate to have lots of ambitious organisations taking action for nature in the district.

This year has seen several exciting developments that we have either led or supported in partnership, which are helping progress towards regional ambitions for nature recovery and meeting our manifesto commitment to double tree coverage by 2050 .

- We have supported Avon Needs Trees and the Forest of Avon Trust in securing two huge opportunities for woodland creation in BANES: the 100-acre Great Avon Wood, and the 422-acre Lower Chew Forest. These are significant contributions towards our ambition to double tree coverage across the district by 2050.
- Together with the Forest of Avon Trust, we led a successful bid to be one of the four areas in the country shortlisted for a £10 million grant to create a new 'Forest for the Nation'. If successful, this would enable us to work across the West of England, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire to expand woodland cover and improve woodland management at scale.
- We have published Guidance and Templates for Parish and Town Councils to create their own 'Nature Action Plans', empowering them to identify local opportunities and actions for nature recovery. A number of Parish and Town councils are using this opportunity to create a plan for nature.

- We supported Bristol Avon Rivers Trust in a successful bid to the West of England Green Recovery Fund to develop 'farmer clusters' in the Chew, Cam and Wellow catchments. These will be transformative in enabling us to better engage with farmers and landholders on delivering our ambitions for nature recovery.
- We have established the Chew Valley Reconnected Partnership to strengthen the Nature Recovery Network and improve the water environment in the Chew Valley. The partnership brings together members representing natural environment and community interests in the Chew Valley, led by an independent Chair.
- The Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership, which we are a supporting member of, published the [Bristol Avon Fish Recovery Strategy](#) in August 2023. The Strategy sets out how we can restore the health of our rivers and bring back thriving fish populations across the catchment.
- Building on the Fish Recovery Strategy, Bristol Avon Rivers Trust has finalised an Action Plan for improving biodiversity along the River Chew. The Action Plan will help us to focus our efforts to restore the health of the Chew through Chew Valley Reconnected.

Highlights: Working in Partnership Continued

CASE STUDY: Great Avon Wood and Wick Farm

Partnership working is proving critical to achieving our ambition to double woodland cover across BANES, demonstrated by two landmark new woodlands in the district

The '[Great Avon Wood](#)', a ground-breaking partnership between Avon Needs Trees (ANT) and the Forest of Avon Trust, is well on its way to creating a 100-acre woodland north of Pensford, the largest woodland creation project on record for the West of England.

This impressive new woodland will soon be trumped in size by the ANT's recent purchase of 422 acres of land near Compton Dando, which will be transformed into the [Lower Chew Forest](#). Lower Chew Forest will be home to 100,000 trees and a mosaic of nature-rich habitats, including wetlands, miles of hedgerow, and species-rich grassland.



Volunteers planting trees in the Great Avon Wood

Together, the two new woodlands could increase woodland cover across B&NES by almost 7%, making a significant contribution towards our ambition of doubling tree coverage across the district by 2050.

In addition to this, a successful Landscape Recovery Fund bid led by ANT will lead to farmers and landholders collaborating to deliver more trees and woodlands across 2,500 acres of land near to Lower Chew Forest. This could include new woodland, hedgerows, field trees and agroforestry, where trees are incorporated alongside grazing or crop production.



Trees planted in the Great Avon Wood

Economic Strategy

Our new [Economic Strategy 2024-2034](#) sets out our priorities across six pillars: greener economy, good work, resilient business, creativity and innovation, housing affordability, and stronger places. Actions across these pillars will drive our overarching vision – *Bath with North East Somerset: Ambitious Together for a Fair, Green, Creative and Connected City Region*.

Tackling the climate and ecological emergencies is at the heart of our Economic Strategy, as our new economy must be a green one. Actions relating to the climate and ecological emergencies cut across the pillars, with headlines including:

Greener Economy: Delivering net zero & nature positive and enhancing our natural assets.

- Build local energy generation capacity and demand for energy saving measures.
- Support businesses to deliver net zero and nature positive in BANES.
- Create opportunities for residents to train and upskill for future green economy jobs.
- Develop BANES to be a broad green economy.

Resilient Business: Building a diverse, creative and sustainable business base.

- We will invest in the infrastructure businesses need.
- We will promote alternative business models and community-led action.

Housing Affordability: Ensuring residents have access to affordable and high quality housing.

- We will deliver high quality and sustainable housing for future generations.

Stronger Places: Enabling all people and places to share in prosperity.

- We will improve & invest in sustainable connectivity within Bath and North East Somerset and to the subregion.
- We will promote place-based strengths to drive economic growth in urban centres and rural areas.
- We will support local food supply chains and food security.

Specific actions set out within the Strategy bolster our response to the climate and ecological emergencies and are included in Annex A. Progress and next steps will be shared in future reports.

References

- 1 – Kate Raworth (2017), Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist
- 2 – The Climate Change Committee (2020), [Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget](#).

Progress on Actions

Progress on Actions – Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plans

The following pages provide an update on our key actions contained within both our Climate Action Plan for 2023-24 and Ecological Emergency Action Plan. Alongside each action, progress update and next steps, there is a numbered progress rating. The ratings correspond to the below:

- 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

The Ecological Emergency Action Plan will remain the same for the 2024-25 year, but an updated Climate Action Plan has been included.

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Buildings

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
1.1	Development of strategic approach to home energy efficiency retrofit and decarbonisation of heat.	<p>In partnership with the Mayoral Combined Authority, we have been involved in the setup of Retrofit West which aims to accelerate delivery of retrofit outside of the grant funded schemes for low-income households.</p> <p>The new Green Heritage Homes project, in partnership with BWCE and Bath Preservation Trust aims to increase the rate of sensitive retrofitting of historic and listed buildings by growing knowledge and confidence among householders and professionals.</p>	<p>Create of a cross-council working group to ensure a shared approach to retrofit of council-owned buildings.</p> <p>Respond to the outcome of Heat Network Zoning consultation from Government (date TBD).</p> <p>Identify further opportunities to partner with community organisations and bring in funding to support uptake of retrofit measures.</p> <p>Work with WECA, Bristol and South Gloucestershire on the Heat from Mines desktop feasibility study, by May 2025.</p>	1
1.2	Energy profiling of the housing stock in BANES and analyse cost effective interventions.	Completed		5

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Buildings 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
1.3	Promote government grant schemes including for low-income households, to maximise uptake locally. Explore options to increase direct support for low-income households.	Currently delivering Bright Green Homes scheme with Bristol City Council (City Leap) and North Somerset Council, with 52 eligible households from Bath and North East Somerset to date. Work is ongoing to widen reach of the scheme.	Continue to bid for further Government funding for grants. Continue to raise awareness and use of current support offers, for example, through the Energy at Home website.	3
1.4	Develop communication strategies to drive public interest and access to information about retrofit and domestic renewables.	Retrofit Plan Builder tool using Parity Projects data now available for residents to use on the Energy at Home website. Communications are ongoing across the Combined Authority area to raise the profile of the Retrofit West Programme . Our Green Open Homes weekend in November, delivered in partnership with BWCE, Bath Preservation Trust, Buro Happold and Transition Bath, saw nearly 800 people visit 22 properties in Bath and the Chew Valley.	Continue to update the Energy at Home website to make it more useful to residents. Further develop communications approach to amplify support available for retrofit and renewables, e.g. via Green Heritage Homes, Green Open Homes and Solar Together projects. Ongoing preparations for Green Open Homes 2024 with more events with partners including BWCE.	3

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Buildings 3

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
1.5	Develop planning policies and guidance to enable energy efficiency improvement of buildings.	The Local Plan Partial Update was adopted in 2023, which amended or updated parts of the adopted Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan to better address the council's priorities, in particular, the climate and ecological emergencies. The Local Plan 2022-42 Options document public consultation closed in April 2024. Policy approaches consulted on included: energy based sustainable construction requirements for new residential and non-residential development, embodied carbon assessment requirements and a retrofit/reuse-first approach to applications involving demolition of an existing building.	The representations received from the public consultation will be reviewed and further evidence work will be undertaken if needed. This will inform the policy approach taken forward in the Draft Plan, which is due to be completed by end 2024.	1

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Buildings 4

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
1.6	Maximise benefits to BANES residents from WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub.	Retrofit West Accelerator advice programme launched in July 2023. There has been good engagement with the advice line, BANES households make up 18% of total enquiries (107 people) and 20% of the housing stock in the region.	<p>Continue to identify opportunities to maximise benefits to BANES residents from Accelerator as a whole, including ongoing engagement with the Combined Authority retrofit steering group.</p> <p>Promote the Retrofit West service to more BANES residents.</p> <p>Work with partners including Bath College to provide business support and skills training to grow the retrofit supply chain locally.</p>	3

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Transport

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
2.1	Development of a suite of capital programmes to contribute to a reduction in car use by 25% in BANES.	Significant investment is planned as part of the CRSTS. Projects funded through this scheme should enable a shift towards lowering transport emissions and giving people more travel choices. Public engagement undertaken on projects including the Bristol to Bath, Somer Valley Links, and Bath City Centre.	Bristol to Bath Sustainable Corridor - tendering for detailed design. Somer Valley Links - Project handover from WECA to B&NES due Summer 2024 for full business case and delivery.	3
2.2	Increasing ability to estimate whole-life carbon emissions of transport impact from development projects.	West of England Regional Transport Model (WERTM) is now in use to allow for the estimation of the user impacts of proposed interventions. CRSTS projects are producing Carbon Management Plans (CMP) to design out high embedded carbon early in the design process and to influence choices. Embedded carbon in materials to be quantified (part of CMP).	Ensure that all infrastructure projects have a Carbon Management Plan as part of the brief. Ensure embedded carbon is quantified and included in the monetised impacts assessments so that it is included in the Benefit Cost Ratio.	3

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Transport 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
2.3	Work with NGED as DNO/DSO to increase grid capacity in BANES to allow for faster rollout of EV fast chargers.	Delivery of EVI is mainly limited by local infrastructure at sub-station level, resolved through project build upgrades. Apr'23 saw project related network upgrade costs become DNO responsibility, amortised across all customer bills. Continued DNO operational engagement meetings, discussing EVI plans with DNO officers.	DNO plans introduction of automated application assessment software, addressing admin bottleneck. Continue DNO operational meetings, focusing on supporting significant EVI work packages of WECA Green Recovery Fund (GRF) and OZEV Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund.	3

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Increasing Local Renewable Energy Generation

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
3.1	Develop an evidence base to inform new Local Plan and future workstreams regarding potential deployment of renewable energy in BANES.	<p>The evidence base, the Renewable Energy Resource Assessment (technical resource assessment) has been published.</p> <p>The Local Plan Partial Update was adopted in 2023. The Local Plan 2022-42 is in progress with the Options document setting out the proposed updates to renewable energy policies. The public consultation closed in April 2024.</p>	<p>The representations received on the Options document from the public consultation will be reviewed and further evidence work will be undertaken if needed. This will inform the policy approach taken forward in the Draft Plan, which is to be completed for the end of the year.</p>	4
3.2	Develop communication and engagement strategies to drive public interest and access to information and expertise about renewable energy.	[Action combined with #1.4]		n/a
3.3	Development of Energy Strategy to provide strategic framework and outline of short and longer-term actions.	<p>The Mission Net Zero project has launched. The project will develop a Local Area Energy Plan and Climate Investment Plan for the West of England region. This will give the council detailed data on which to base our Energy Strategy.</p>	<p>Work under way to develop the Energy Strategy with internal and external stakeholders.</p>	1

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Council Operations

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
4.1	<p>Develop pipeline of Council renewables projects in line with 2030 target for 12MW installed capacity.</p>	<p>Rooftop solar and LED lighting completed at two more care homes.</p> <p>Clutton Highways solar PV, battery and EV chargepoints installed.</p> <p>£173k grant won for Bath Sports & Leisure Centre rooftop solar.</p> <p>Progressed scheme proposals for Royal Victoria Park nursery rooftop solar; Haycombe Cemetery and St Keyna School (24/25), Odd Down Sports Ground and Keynsham Children's centre.</p> <p>Commenced work with community energy provider installing rooftop solar on Keynsham Leisure Centre</p> <p>Funding awarded from South West Net Zero Hub for meeting c.10MW shortfall in renewable capacity.</p> <p>Progressing Energy Systems Assessments and Heat Decarbonisation Plans for buildings on corporate estate.</p>	<p>Pursue feasibility work for central Bath Council buildings renewable energy and heat decarbonisation work.</p> <p>Use Energy Systems Assessment and Heat Decarbonisation Plans completed to progress building decarbonisation and renewables.</p> <p>Complete rooftop solar installations at Royal Victoria Park; Haycombe Cemetery; Children's Centres; Odd Down Sports Ground etc.</p> <p>Provide evidence to senior leadership around options for meeting 12MW target, to enable a strategic decision on future investment relating to larger non-rooftop sites.</p>	3

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Council Operations 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
4.2	Put in place the framework and policies for measuring and reducing the council's Scope 3 emissions.	Limited progress on Scope 3 emissions to date. Analysis is available on where our scope 3 emissions are coming from and we have continued to learn from partners about best practice in this area. Specific work has been undertaken for our heritage estate scope 3 which will provide a pilot for a full-council approach.	Develop and pilot approaches to measurement with key teams and suppliers. Set out approach as part of updated Climate Emergency Strategy.	2
4.3	Waste Services action to reduce operational carbon emissions.	The Pixash Lane site is completed and opened to the public in 2023. The site includes a 780 KWP solar array, EV charging, waste-water recycling for vehicle washing and >10% biodiversity net gain.	Further scoping for potential electrification of waste fleet, more detail under action 4.5.	4
4.4	Property Services projects to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's corporate estate.	[Action combined with #4.1]		n/a

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Council Operations 3

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
4.5	Decarbonising Council fleet programme.	<p>Set up Fleet Transition working group, including data analysis and electric vehicle infrastructure expertise.</p> <p>Robust initial assessment of baseline emissions from fleet operations, based on existing organisational fuel usage data.</p> <p>Outlined fleet replacement schedule. Assessing the provision of electric vehicle infrastructure at Pixash to support future fleets.</p> <p>Determined feasibility and requirements for a support study by external Fleet Transition experts.</p> <p>Identified current availability of battery electric Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV).</p> <p>Trialled one type of electric refuse truck in 2024 over several weeks.</p>	<p>The Energy Savings Trust (EST) will be carrying out a detailed feasibility study starting at the end of May to cover:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish zero emission vehicle alternatives to current fleet 2. Assess whether alternatives are fit for purpose and required duty cycles 3. Analyse CO2 savings and whole life costs of alternatives 4. Establish the charging infrastructure requirements. <p>Further trials of electric refuse trucks with different manufacturers will be carried out over the coming months. Once the feasibility study is complete and vehicle trials have been carried out, an initial Fleet Transition Plan will be produced for review by Council.</p>	3

Progress on Actions – Climate Emergency – Decarbonising Council Operations 4

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
4.6	Aligning council policies and plans.	<p>The updated Corporate Strategy, agreed in July 2023, continues to prioritise tackling the climate and ecological emergencies. In addition, the Corporate Strategy is informed by doughnut economic principles, which are being further embedded across Council strategic planning and decision making through the use of a bespoke doughnut decision tool.</p> <p>The Council's Economic Strategy is informed by doughnut economic principles, and supports dedicated action on climate and nature, through a focus on creating a Greener Economy, as well as actions promoting green skills, resilient businesses and places, and sustainable tourism.</p> <p>The Local Plan Options consultation included strengthened policies supporting climate and nature goals.</p>	<p>Continue to ensure that the Local Plan development supports strong environmental policies.</p> <p>Develop implementation plans for the Economic Strategy, including action to deliver Greener Economy commitments through the annual updating of our Climate Action Plan.</p> <p>Continue to develop climate and nature KPIs/reporting.</p> <p>Develop and agree internal business case guidance on costing non-delivery of net zero targets to prioritise options that reduce emissions.</p>	4

Climate Action Plan – New actions for 2024-25

No.	Action for 2024-25
Buildings	
1.1	a) Deliver level 0 planning advice to 24 homeowners and 10 full pre-app advice
	b) Develop online guidance pages for Green Heritage Homes project
	c) Engage planners in GHH training modules to enable more planning approvals for retrofit of listed buildings
1.2	Support the programme of Green Open Homes events with Bath and West Community Energy
1.3	Work with West of England Combined Authority and local delivery partners to promote Retrofit West advice and support to B&NES residents ensuring uptake is proportional to other Unitary Authority areas
1.4	Support town and parish Councils and community groups to access funding and expertise to retrofit Community Buildings
1.5	Promote WECA Green Business Grants to support rollout of rooftop solar and heat pumps to commercial buildings
Transport	
2.1	Detailed plans for transport are set out in the Journey to Net Zero plans for Bath and for North East Somerset
Renewables	
3.1	Ensure the Local Plan provides a supportive policy environment to reach the target of 300MW of in-District generation by 2030 with updated policy re enabling wind development in line with new central government policy.
3.2	Develop a Local Area Energy Plan for Bath & North East Somerset through the regional Mission Net Zero project (completion date November 2025).

Climate Action Plan – 2024-25

No.	Action
3.3	Develop a business case for Council to co-invest in renewables sites for local Community Energy projects via a Joint Venture
3.4	Support development of local Community Energy groups through Cooperation Agreements, exploring opportunities for joint projects to accelerate delivery (including solar project with Keynsham Community Energy on Keynsham Leisure Centre)
3.5	Work with Distribution Systems Operator and new Regional Energy System Planner to understand grid opportunities and constraints locally, and unlock new investment to meet future demand
Council	
4.1	Develop an implementation plan for decarbonisation of the council's own vehicle fleet.
	Develop a full plan for heat decarbonisation of Corporate Estate by 2030 including costed Heat Decarbonisation Plans for each significant building
	Develop pipeline and costing for 12MW Council owned renewable generation by 2030 (including a minimum 2MW of wind), and deliver an additional 230KW installed capacity in 2024-25
	Develop and pilot approaches to measure and reduce Council Scope 3 emissions. Set out approach as part of updated Climate & Nature Strategy.
Other	
5.1	As part of the development of the new Climate & Nature Strategy, set out our approach to climate change adaptation and resilience, including identifying priority actions.

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Leadership and Evidence

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
1.1	Integrate the ecological emergency into the strategic framework that will be set out in the next Corporate Strategy (2024-)	Corporate Strategy published in 2023, including references to the Ecological Emergency. Action Completed.		5
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, mitigating impacts where necessary.	We have developed a decision support tool, the 'outer ring' of which reflects considerations needed for addressing the Ecological Emergency.	Continue roll-out of the tool across the Council and help to refine the outer ring as needed. Develop advice and guidance on how to determine project outcomes for the considerations in the outer ring.	4
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.	Initial discussions have been held to identify the best opportunities for nature recovery within the corporate landlord programme.	Integrate nature recovery into the objectives and measures into the corporate landlord programme. Develop the asset challenge framework and drafting of the policy.	2

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Leadership and Evidence 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
1.4	Produce and deliver an ecological emergency literacy training programme for Council employees and members.	We have searched for any national resources that we could utilise, which do not exist. From initial scoping of content that would be useful, developing a programme for B&NES alone will be resource intensive.	Explore options for a regional (West of England) programme with the Combined Authority and other Unitary Authorities to make better use of regional resources.	2
1.5	Produce a guidance note for renewable energy projects, including solar and wind developments, to embed management for nature into their schemes.	We are working on including guidance on integrating biodiversity in solar development into the pre-application process for solar developments.	<p>Confirm suitability of guidance, integrate into pre-application process and publish on website.</p> <p>Following publication, check that guidance it is being used by applicants.</p>	3
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.	<p>The Local Plan Options Document included options to adopt the Natural England GI Framework standards, including an Urban Greening Factor, and to Incorporate Natural England Green Space standards.</p> <p>There is also a policy option to include a requirement for new street lined trees, a locally agreed tree canopy cover target, and incorporate the 'right tree, right place' principle.</p>	The representations received from the public consultation on the Local Plan will be reviewed and further evidence work will be undertaken if needed. This will inform the policy approach taken forward in the Draft Plan, which is due to be completed by end 2024.	4

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Leadership and Evidence 3

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
1.7	Evaluate the feasibility of setting a higher requirement for biodiversity net gain, above the mandatory figure of 10%.	<p>Mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) has been in force since January 2023, over a year ahead of the national deadline. The policy has resulted in 74 ‘Biodiversity Units’ being required so far, equivalent to restoring 27 ha of neutral grassland from poor to moderate condition.</p> <p>The Local Plan Options Document included options to require 20% biodiversity net gain.</p>	<p>Develop an evidence case for 20% BNG policy to support the next stage of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Ascertain the BNG requirements for the site allocations in the Local Plan, and consider how these will be delivered.</p>	2
1.8	Review and update the Council’s approach to food to integrate opportunities to reduce the impact of food production on nature.	<p>Internal stakeholder group for Food Strategy development first met in Feb 2024.</p>	<p>Publish Food Strategy and ensure it helps to address Ecological Emergency.</p>	1
1.9	Incorporate standards related to nature recovery in the council’s minimum standards for procurement.	<p>Our procurement form has been updated to better reflect Ecological Emergency. We have discussed the best opportunities to reduce impact on nature through procurement in March 2024, ahead of the updating of the B&NES Procurement Strategy in 2024.</p>	<p>Update the B&NES Procurement Strategy to ensure it better reflects opportunities to reduce impact on nature.</p>	3

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Land and Water Management

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
2.1	<p>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.</p>	<p>Funding from West of England Green Recovery Fund (GRF) for development of Entry Hill Ecology Centre has been secured.</p> <p>An Odd Down nature trail and habitat creation through biodiversity net gain has been included in a planning application for a new Odd Down Sports Pavilion.</p> <p>The potential for a nature park at Lansdown is being explored.</p>	<p>Develop proposal for Entry Hill Ecology Centre if GRF bid successful.</p> <p>Continue delivery of nature improvements at Odd Down.</p> <p>Ascertain potential for joint solar and nature park at Lansdown.</p> <p>Opportunities for use of additional council assets for nature recovery will also be explored, including through the expansion of the council’s BNG Pathfinder project and the possible recruitment of a land advisor.</p>	3
2.2	<p>Package together and fund already-identified opportunities for improving the management of our parks and green spaces for nature.</p>	<p>Successful application to Pollinator Fund to provide more nature-rich space for pollinators in our parks and green spaces. Site database produced with potential for nature recovery action, but lack of bid opportunities/resource to develop bids has meant this hasn't progressed beyond the fund.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor opportunities for funding.</p>	3

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Land and Water Management 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
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 staff have completed training on managing grassland for nature. The CPRE Hedgerow Heroes project has also provided training on hedgerow laying and management	Continue to monitor potential funding sources that could enable us to deliver additional training.	3
2.4	Adjust cutting regimes of highways verges where there is scope for improved management for nature.	Not progressed in 2023/24.	<p>Review the Wildthings verges project from ~2000, which assessed verge habitat interests and need for improved management.</p> <p>Explore restarting the project and calling out for other verges of interest to be identified.</p>	1
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.	A first draft of the Strategy was produced in early 2024.	Finalise the Strategy and ensure it adequately addresses the ecological emergency.	4

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Land and Water Management 3

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
2.6	Create an improved 45-hectare nature park at Somerdale, Keynsham as part of WaterSpace Connected and in partnership with Taylor Wimpey.	The WaterSpace Connected project is working with landowners Taylor Wimpey to improve the space. They are currently exploring options for land management that would maximise nature gain and people engagement.	Develop a masterplan for the nature park.	3
2.7	Extend the Bathscape Partnership Scheme to 2025 and develop the project through to 2030.	Awaiting the official sign off from the lottery for an extension to the Bathscape Partnership to 2026. EOI submitted to West of England Green Recovery Fund to support development of next phase submitted Dec 2023, expect to be successful as of May 2024.	Following confirmation of GRF funding, develop next phase of Bathscape.	3
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.	This is being delivered through Somer Valley Rediscovered. See the Somer Valley Rediscovered website for further detail.	Continued delivery through Somer Valley Rediscovered; completion planned for 2025.	3
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.	Partnership established in 2023, and is ongoing through the Chew Valley Reconnected project.	Continue to support and coordinate the Chew Valley Reconnected Partnership (CVRP).	4

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Nature-Based Solutions

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
3.1	<p>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.</p>	<p>Met with Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) to discuss opportunities and provide mapping to facilitate identifying of opportunities.</p> <p>Further progress has not yet been possible due to competing priorities but will be picked up in the coming year.</p>	<p>Explore further whether investment in nature-based solutions is feasible at this stage.</p> <p>South Gloucestershire Council and BART are working on a Green Recovery Fund-funded project on this subject, which we will be able to engage with and learn from.</p>	1
3.2	<p>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.</p>	<p>Included as an Option in Local Plan Consultation.</p>	<p>The representations received from the public consultation on the Local Plan will be reviewed and further evidence work will be undertaken if needed. This will inform the policy approach taken forward in the Draft Plan, which is due to be completed by end 2024.</p> <p>Ensure any policy reflects best practice and opportunities, and links with Green Infrastructure policy and standards.</p>	4

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Nature-Based Solutions 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
3.3	<p>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.</p>	<p>Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) has completed the detailed Chew Fish Recovery Action Plan, which fulfils the first part of this action.</p> <p>We are working with BART to undertake feasibility work for the removal of the weir and creation of a new wetland area in Keynsham Memorial Park. This has been funded through the Water Environment Investment Fund, BART and the Council with in-kind support provided by EA.</p>	<p>Engage with BART and farm cluster on delivery of the Action Plan, particularly through Chew Valley Reconnected. We anticipate that the proposed Chew Farm Cluster (see 6.8) will better enable delivery of the Chew Fish Recovery Action Plan.</p>	3
3.4	<p>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.</p>	<p>We have begun working with the Bath University bat research lab to explore a joint research project on bat-friendly lighting solutions in BaNES.</p>	<p>We are developing a new partnership approach with the University to developing bat-friendly lighting solutions on the Bristol Bath Railway Path, along the River Avon corridor, and other active travel routes.</p>	2

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Nature-Based Solutions 3

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
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.	A report on the most beneficial interventions has been produced.	Scope out initial list of interventions from this report for internal discussion. Explore links with Green Infrastructure standards	2
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.	B&NES is part of a West of England group set up to work on climate adaptation, including the potential for nature-based solutions.	Continue to work with WoE Group to ascertain the need for climate adaptation and identify opportunities for nature-based solutions and how these might be funded. Work with / support carbon off-setting policy requirements.	2
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.	The West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy development involved engaging with businesses on opportunities to invest in nature. Following this, we are now part of regional work to develop a nature forum for businesses.	Continue to support the development of a regional nature forum for businesses. Once the forum is established, identify any resulting opportunities to better engage businesses in B&NES in nature recovery.	3

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Access and Engagement

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
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.	We submitted a successful bid to the UK SPF for a 'Nextdoor Nature' project in the Somer Valley, which delivers these objectives in that area and is run by Avon Wildlife Trust (AWT). The project started in mid-2023.	Continue to support Avon Wildlife Trust in delivering the 'Nextdoor Nature' project in the Somer Valley. Monitor opportunities for funding posts in other areas or across the whole of BANES.	3
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.	Action completed. A number of webpages were published in 2023, providing residents with more accessible information on the ecological emergency.	Maintain and add to webpages as required to ensure information on how we are tackling the ecological emergency is kept up-to-date.	5
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.	The Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan is currently being drafted, and we are working to ensure it best reflects opportunities for nature recovery.	Finalise and publish the updated Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan and deliver any relevant actions resulting from that Plan.	3

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Access and Engagement 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
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.	A BANES Green Social Prescribing Providers meeting has been set up through Somer Valley Rediscovered, and Bath City Farm are hosting an event on 20th June to showcase GSP to health professionals.	The West of England Nature Partnership (WENP) Nature and Health Coordinator now has additional capacity to take this forwards due to funding arrangements. The new 3SG Social Prescribing Manager is in the process of creating a BANES social prescribing strategy, which we are now engaging with.	3
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.	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy published in 2023.	Explore opportunities resulting from the Strategy to improve people's access to nature.	5
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.	We have not progressed this action due to a lack of resource to define and develop roles, and to support roles once in place.	Explore opportunities with universities for student placements or projects, which would be less resource intensive.	1

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Evidence and Monitoring

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
5.1	<p>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.</p>	<p>Strategic Evidence Base, including information on the natural environment, finalised and published. Ecological emergency indicators have been developed for our internal reporting hub.</p> <p>We are now working in partnership through the West of England Environmental Data Group to develop a regional wildlife index, which could be refined for B&NES, and to develop a regional monitoring framework for nature recovery.</p>	<p>Update our Strategic Evidence Base and ecological emergency indicators with new information as it becomes available.</p> <p>Continue to work with the West of England Environmental Data Group to agree a regional monitoring framework for nature recovery and a regional wildlife index this year.</p>	3
5.2	<p>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.</p>	<p>We are now working on this action in partnership through the West of England Environmental Data Group.</p>	<p>Continue to progress through West of England Environmental Data Group.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for trialling novel monitoring solution such as acoustic monitors, perhaps through the council's pathfinder sites in conjunction with community groups.</p>	2

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Evidence and Monitoring 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
5.3	Continue to monitor change in tree canopy cover across BANES, updating the figure at least every three years based on a baseline of 16.5% in 2020.	Approach to monitoring agreed at the West of England level through the regional Tree and Woodland Group.	Use agreed West of England approach to monitor tree cover in BANES.	4
5.4	Survey the condition of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) within BANES 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.	<p>Desktop exercise completed, and initial round of visits to council-owned SNCIs completed.</p> <p>Engaging with West of England Environmental Data Group on a regional approach to prioritising monitoring of all SNCIs (i.e. not just council-owned).</p>	<p>Further analysis of management needed and actions to be identified to get council-owned SNCIs to good management.</p> <p>Apply regional approach to BANES once agreed.</p>	3
5.5	Combine access to green space mapping with data on multiple deprivation to identify priority areas for improving access to green space.	The developing Green Infrastructure Strategy will be mapping access to green space across the district and using this information alongside data on multiple deprivation to identify priority areas.	To be progressed through the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which is expected to be published in December 2024.	5

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Evidence and Monitoring 3

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
5.6	Include questions in the Council's Voicebox survey from 2023 onwards that monitor people's interest in and engagement with nature.	Questions regarding people's engagement with nature and green spaces included in Voicebox survey 2023 (Question 5). The findings from this report can be found online (link).	Refine questions for 2024 as needed.	5
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.	NERC duty first consideration completed and presented to senior leadership in 2023.	Approach and scope of reporting to be developed, including regional collaboration.	3

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Working in Partnership

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
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.	‘Nature Action Plan’ guidance and template published in early 2024 and communicated to Parish and Town Councils.	Continue to support Parish and Town Councils in producing NAPs as required.	5
6.2	Support the Forest of Avon Trust and Avon Needs Trees in delivering the ‘Great Avon Wood’ within BANES, providing a new woodland for nature and people, and in their work to establish more trees and woodlands across BANES.	Support provided to the design of the Great Avon Wood. Work now ongoing by Forest of Avon Trust and Avon Need Trees to establish the woodland.	Provide support to Forest of Avon Trust and Avon Needs Trees as required.	4
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 BANES.	In contact with Avon Wildlife Trust regarding B&NES being represented on the Beaver Management Group.	Secure representation on the Beaver Management group. Identify ways in which the presence of beavers can deliver nature-based solutions, and how B&NES Council can help to overcome any potential challenges.	2

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Working in Partnership 2

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
6.4	With partners, agree and implement robust measures to sustain and enhance the bat populations of our European-designated sites, including securing a long-term plan for Combe Down Stone Mine and finalising the bat SAC guidance for B&NES.	Joint visit undertaken to review scheme and explore options for securing legacy of mine stabilisation project.	Update and publish SAC guidance for B&NES. Establish internal working group to guide long term legacy of stabilisation project.	2
6.5	Work with National Trust and local residents to establish a nature-rich, accessible wildlife corridor from Bath to Bathampton Meadows.	National Trust led community engagement on what is important to residents in 2023 - the responses indicated there is widespread support for habitat improvements. Some habitat improvements have also begun, including hedge laying.	Continue to support and engage with National Trust in improving management for nature and improving access to Bathampton Meadows for residents.	3
6.6	With partners, ascertain the need and capacity for a sustainable strategy for long-term restoration and management of key grassland sites across BANES or the wider West of England region.	Pathfinder Project through Somer Valley Rediscovered has explored options and feasibility of bringing derelict grasslands sites into active management. Progress on a wider strategy has been put on hold while the West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is being developed.	Following publication of the LNRS, explore the appetite for developing an approach for restoring and managing grassland sites across WoE. Explore opportunities for grassland restoration on corporate estate, including working to develop countryside management service.	2

Progress on Actions – Ecological Emergency – Working in Partnership 3

No.	Action	Progress Update	Next Steps	Progress Rating
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.	West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) development is ongoing, which will provide farmers and landholders with a tool to ascertain how they can best help nature in strategic locations, and links to funding and guidance.	LNRS to be published later this year. If the establishment of a farmer cluster (see 6.8) in the Somer Valley is successful, begin engagement with this Cluster. Scope out engagement in Avon Corridor with BART and Natural England through Waterspace Connected.	3
6.8	Support farmers in creating farmer clusters within BANES, 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.	Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) submitted a successful bid to establish Farm Clusters in the Chew Valley, and the Cam & Wellow, both key areas for BANES.	Support BART in the establishment of farm clusters and use these as opportunities to engage with farmers on delivery of strategic priorities.	3

Progress on Actions – Economic Strategy – Greener Economy

No.	Action [Progress Updates & Next Steps Provided 2025]
Build local energy generation capacity and demand for energy saving measures.	
1.2	Promote the Energy@Home service to residents on low incomes to increase take up of grant support and advice.
1.3	Work with Bath and West Community Energy to increase awareness of their renewable energy projects and support.
1.4	Scope community green bonds to help local residents to invest in local projects across our city, town and rural centres.
1.5	Explore the development of a Local Area Energy Plan, working with sector and regional partners, to ensure our electricity grid supports electrification and decarbonisation.
Support businesses to deliver net zero and nature positive in BANES.	
2.1	Promote WECA's free carbon surveys for SMEs and Green Business grants to help businesses invest in improving the energy efficiency of their premises.
2.2	Develop and promote BANES as a location for leading sustainable businesses (e.g. with B Corp status).
Create opportunities for residents to train and upskill for future green economy jobs.	
3.1	Work with WECA's Retrofit Academy to help local people access training for careers in retrofit.
3.2	Develop an apprenticeship programme for routes into nature and environment jobs.
3.3	Work with our education providers – including schools, Bath College, independent training Providers and universities' - to promote awareness of green jobs and green skills to the current and future workforce (such as through the FWD project).

Progress on Actions – Economic Strategy – Greener Economy 2

No.	Action [Progress Updates & Next Steps Provided 2025]
Develop BANES to be a broad green economy.	
4.1	Continue the roll out of the council's climate literacy training, and develop ecological literacy modules, to increase understanding of climate and nature issues.
4.2	Work with WECA and regional partners to capitalise on the opportunities of the regional green economy.
4.3	Support the work of Retrofit West in developing the business supply chain for retrofit within the district.