

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>			
MEETING	<b>Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>		
MEETING DATE:	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
TITLE:	<b>Annual Climate and Nature Progress Report 2025</b>		
WARD:	All		
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>			
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Attachment1: Annual Climate and Nature Progress Report 2025 Attachment 2: Action Plan Review 2025 (Annex A to the Annual Climate and Nature Progress Report) Attachment 3: Climate and Nature Resident Survey 2025_Summary Report			

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report updates the panel on the progress made in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies in 2024-25, both as a Council and as a wider district.
- 1.2 This report notes that there is significant activity underway and planned within the Council and across the district to tackle both emergencies. It recognises that more action is needed if we are to meet our climate change targets and enable the district to become Net Zero by 2030, as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2023-27.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

### The Panel is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the progress made in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies during 2024-25, as set out in the Attachments.
- 2.2 Approve the Annual Climate & Nature Progress Report before presentation of the Report to Council on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

### 3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Council's commitment to delivering against the Climate and Ecological Emergencies declared in 2019 and 2020 remains as strong as ever. Whilst the Climate and Ecological Emergencies are not the same, they are linked and share causes and solutions. The Council recognises it has an important role to play in tackling both emergencies, through a combination of its own delivery and enabling others to take action.
- 3.2 This year the Council continued to invest in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies and is grateful for continued partnership working that enables it to reach further towards a low carbon, nature positive and climate resilient district. Tackling climate change will help support the recovery of nature and vice versa and we work where possible to deliver benefits for both emergencies together and the community, for example as we bring forward updated Local Plan proposals.
- 3.3 The Council has made progress reducing emissions on our own estate, reducing our Scope 1 and 2 Emissions by 44% since our baseline year of 2016-17. In February, we agreed to set aside the budget to electrify our waste fleet as vehicles become due for replacement, as well as to decarbonise more of our own buildings. We have continued to install upgrades, including solar PV at Bath Sports and Leisure Centre and have been successful in securing a further £312k from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund to upgrade Carrswood Adult Day Centre and the Civic Centre in Keynsham.
- 3.4 The most recent territorial emissions data, reported by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), shows the steady progress that is being made to reduce emissions across Bath and North East Somerset. Emissions per capita have decreased by 53% since 2005 to 3.4tCO<sub>2</sub>e per person per year, ahead of England and South-West decreases.
- 3.5 Progress to reduce emissions sufficiently quickly towards Net Zero is challenging, however. Greenhouse gas emissions across BANES arise from all the services supporting civic life, the approximately 8,535 businesses, 79,250 homes, and the 3,250,000 km driven each day on our roads, as well as from agriculture. They are the result of many thousands of decisions by residents, visitors and businesses as well as national, regional and local government action and policies.
- 3.6 Between 2005 and 2023, greenhouse gas emissions for the district fell by 46%. The 2022 to 2023 drop of 46 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e was driven by decreases in domestic emissions, public sector, industry and commercial sector emissions. While this annual decrease continues the downward trend in our area's emissions reduction, the district is not on track to achieve net zero by 2030, in common with other local authorities and the national pathway.
- 3.7 The Council is proud to have worked with regional partners to develop the first Local Nature Recovery Strategy in England and delighted to be part of a consortium of partners, led by the Forest of Avon, who were successful in securing funding to develop the first new national forest in 30 years. This new forest will span Bath and North East Somerset (BANES), North Somerset, Bristol, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire and aims to create at least 2500 hectares of new woodland and other tree habitats in its first five years.

- 3.8 We have also made significant progress on our ability to monitor the state of nature across the district. We have calculated the land being managed for nature across our own estate, and we have worked with WECA and neighbouring local authorities to establish a baseline for land managed for nature in BANES and to develop a regional 'wildlife index'.
- 3.9 We have progressed our own Green Infrastructure delivery programme, providing benefits for nature, health and climate resilience. We have developed new Green Infrastructure Standards and a revised Local Plan Green Infrastructure policy.
- 3.10 The approach to the Local Plan has been reset due to updates to national Planning Policy, and we are still ensuring it will be our most ambitious for nature recovery. We are exploring the option of requiring 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), rather than the mandatory 10%, and planned policies include a requirement for sustainable drainage systems and local targets for tree cover.
- 3.11 The Council's regional work has also expanded on climate. We are an active participant in regional energy planning project Mission Net Zero, a £5m initiative, funded by Innovate UK, to accelerate the West of England's transition to Net Zero. We are also contributing to work on regional climate resilience chaired by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (WECA). This complements a project running internally this year to understand how we need to adapt our services as the impacts of climate change are felt.
- 3.12 In Spring 2025, over 800 residents told us how they felt about the state of climate and nature, what they had been doing and why, as well as what the Council could support more of. The most important issues raised were around water, how we restore nature, the energy we use and how we travel. Next was concern about the waste we produce and how we prepare for the impacts of climate change.
- 3.13 Feedback as to how the Council could play a greater role included improving transport options, enabling more energy efficient housing upgrades, protecting and increasing green spaces as well as pursuing stronger policies, enforcement, leadership, and lobbying higher government.
- 3.14 This survey complements the Council's annual Voicebox survey that this year was answered by 1072 residents. This survey told us that access to nature and green spaces was the most important to them in making somewhere a good place to live, alongside affordable, decent housing and the level of crime & antisocial behaviour.
- 3.15 The detailed feedback shared is helping guide us as we update our Climate and Nature Strategy to focus council action, as well as prepare for more community conversations about the roles we all play.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 5.1 The Annual Climate & Nature Progress Report outlines the next steps that are covered by existing budgets or notes where there are resource constraints associated with delivery. Business case development will be undertaken and opportunities to increase external funding will be sought.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 This report recommends that Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel note the positive progress achieved over the past year across the priorities set out in the Climate Emergency Strategy and Ecological Emergency Action Plan. As such, a risk assessment has not been conducted in relation to this report.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

- 7.1 An EIA has not been carried out as this is a report on progress, not new policy. It should be noted that actions to tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergencies have benefits that extend beyond just climate and nature. Home energy efficiency improvements and domestic retrofit can reduce household energy bills. Improved access to public transport and active travel can improve health outcomes and reduce social isolation. Access to nature and green social prescribing can have positive impacts for people experience limiting health conditions.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 8.1 This Report provides a direct update on the Council's progress towards tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies, built on the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declarations in 2019 and 2020 respectively. It delivers on our commitment to report annually.
- 8.2 The Report presents the combined actions of services across the Council and where the Council has worked in partnership and sets out the next steps across the identified priority areas for climate (decarbonising buildings, decarbonising transport, increasing renewable energy generation and decarbonising council operations) and ecology (leadership and evidence, land and water management, nature-based solutions, access and engagement, evidence and monitoring, and working in partnership).

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 None – providing an annual progress report was a commitment set out in the Climate Emergency Strategy and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

This report has been reviewed and cleared by the Executive Director of Sustainable Communities, the Head of Legal Service & Monitoring Officer, and the Council's S151 Officer.

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<b>Background papers</b>	Climate Emergency Strategy – available online - <a href="https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/read-our-climate-strategy-and-action-plan">https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/read-our-climate-strategy-and-action-plan</a>  Ecological Emergency Action Plan – available online - <a href="https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/ecological-emergency-action-plan">https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/ecological-emergency-action-plan</a>  <a href="#">Corporate Strategy 2023-27</a>
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