

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	26th March 2026	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Climate and Nature Strategy Policy Development Session	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
None		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 At the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel of 23rd October 2025, it was agreed that the Panel would have the opportunity to review and input into the development of the updated Climate and Nature Strategy during 2026.

1.2 At the meeting on 22nd January 2026, it was confirmed that the meeting of 26th March would be an opportunity to contribute recommendations to the strategy's development.

1.3 This paper sets out the contents that will be used in the meeting on 26th March.

1.4 The strategy development timeline includes:

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

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

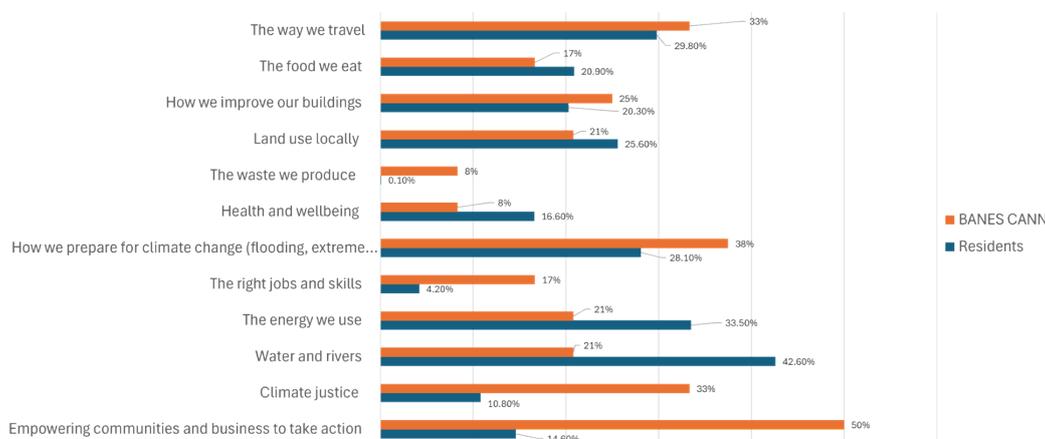
- 2.1 Read this paper in advance of the meeting and consider the questions posed to prepare for the working session.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 In its 2024 Climate and Nature Progress Report, B&NES Council set out that it would bring together its current 2019 Climate Strategy & Action Plan and 2020 Ecological Emergency Action Plan into one updated Strategy and Action Plan.
- 3.2 This update would recognise the interconnectedness of both emergencies and result in a single document that updates how the corporate Core Policy of Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies would be delivered at the mid-point to 2030.
- 3.3 To establish the framework for the combined strategy, Officers have conducted analysis of good practice. This includes:
 - a) Lewes Council Climate and Nature Strategy – as highlighted by the LGA and Friends of the Earth as an example of a combined strategy
 - b) Newham Council Climate Transition Plan – as highlighted by the LGA and UK100
 - c) The Climate Action Scorecard framework – external benchmarking of Local Authorities every 18 months. B&NES currently 17th of Single Teir authorities – the first non-major city or London borough
 - d) Bristol climate transition plan analysis – utilising software ClimateView that B&NES is using from Jan 2026 and Bristol City Council Climate Action Plan 2026-2028.
 - e) The 7th Carbon Budget report and focus
 - f) UK's 3rd independent Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3-IA), Climate Change Committee 2022 (4th assessment due to be published mid-2026)
 - g) Met Office Local Climate Service report for Bath and North East Somerset
 - h) West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy
 - i) West of England Climate Adaptation Report (ARP4) 2025
 - j) Doughnut Economics Action Lab
 - k) City of Bristol Just Transition declaration
 - l) The Well-being of Future Generations Act, Wales 2015
 - m) 'Climate change and social justice: an evidence review', Joseph Rowntree Foundation
 - n) B&NES existing strategies and plans including the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the Economic Strategy
 - o) West of England Combined Authority strategies and plans including the Growth Strategy

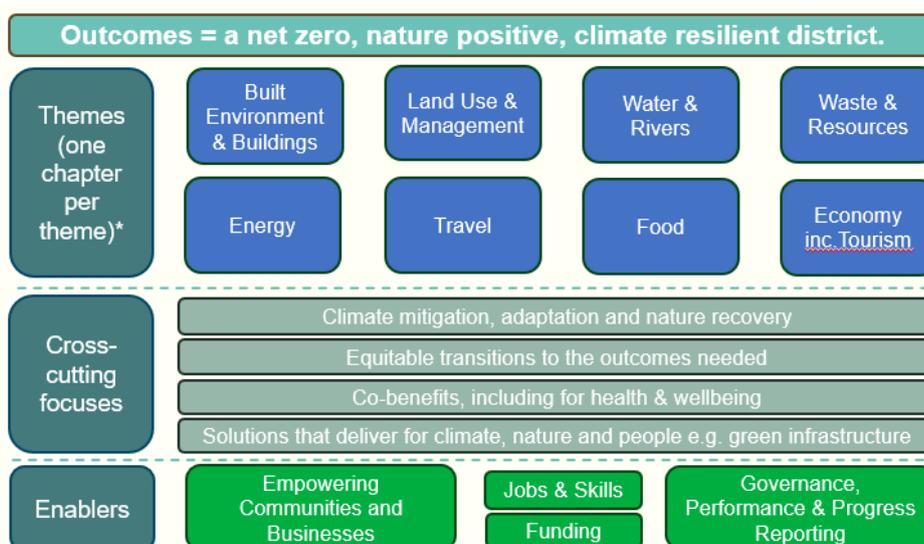
3.4 This review was combined with the views of residents, community groups & businesses, collected in 2025, to provide a draft outline for the strategy

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



3.5 The strategy will be drafted against the environmental context set out in the Annual Climate and Nature Progress Report 2025, i.e. of nature depletion, reduced greenhouse gas emissions tracking ahead of the national picture, but not sufficiently quickly, and of the need to adapt to an already changing climate. This latter is complex to forecast as global climate enters new levels of warming. The Met Office forecasts warmer, wetter winters and hotter drier summers with increased intensity of summer rain for the UK and Bath and North East Somerset. As we edge closer to missing internationally agreed targets to limit global warming to 1.5C, avoiding the worst impacts of climate change, climate scientists are increasingly calling for more attention to be paid to High Impact-Low Likelihood (HILL) scenarios, which could result in e.g. a shift to extremely cold winters in the UK. Amidst the uncertainty, the need to be agile and resilient to more extreme climate conditions will be of importance.

Draft Climate and Nature strategy outline



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

Questions:

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

3.6 Within the strategy outline, a further level of draft content has been developed, including:

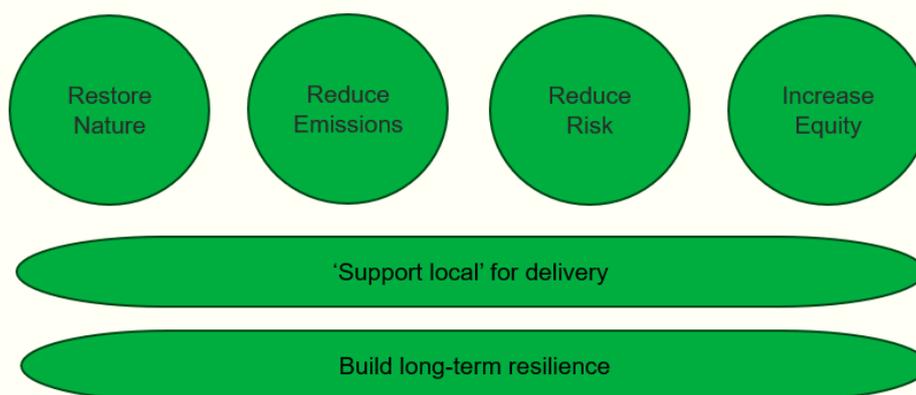
- a) Overall principles that underpin the strategy
- b) 'Futures' - statements about the resilient district we are working to create against each theme
- c) 'Big Shifts' needed to deliver these Futures from a Climate and Nature perspective e.g. electrify energy
- d) Enablers that will help ensure robust delivery

These would consider key characteristics of Bath and North East Somerset as a district:

- The inequalities that exist between our communities
- The special protections that cover large areas of both our rural and urban environments
- The fact that our communities live across rural, semi-rural and urban environments

Draft Strategy Principles.

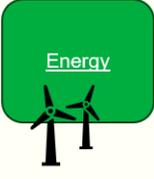
The Strategy will work to:



What are the 'Futures' we want to see?

-  1. Our homes, workplaces and schools are comfortable, healthy and energy efficient
-  2. The electricity we use is renewable, reliable and affordable
-  3. We prefer to walk, cycle, or use public transport and goods are safely moved without polluting our streets
-  4. Sharing, buying & wasting less is our normal
-  5. We eat well and sustainably
-  6. Our neighbourhoods and local economy is resilient, connected and green
-  7. Wildlife is thriving
-  8. Our rivers and streams are clean and full of life
-  9. We are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate, including increased flooding, extreme heat and drought
-  10. How we live and work reduces the impacts we have beyond our borders

What are the 'big shifts' needed to deliver these 'Futures'?

 <p>Energy</p>	 <p>Built Environment & Buildings</p>	 <p>Travel</p>	 <p>Water & Rivers</p>	 <p>Land Use & Management</p>	 <p>Waste & Resources</p>	 <p>Food</p>
<p>We need to electrify Energy</p> <p>We need to become renewable energy powered and increasingly efficient, with local & regional sources supporting our needs to contribute to national energy security</p>	<p>Our built environment must become future-proofed and fossil-fuel free, while supporting nature recovery.</p>	<p>We need to electrify Travel</p> <p>New infrastructure needs to be climate resilient and support better public transport, more active travel and nature recovery.</p> <p>Our vehicles are replaced with electric ones and are charged with renewable energy.</p>	<p>We need to significantly reduce pollution into our rivers and streams</p> <p>We need to slow the flow of water throughout the landscape using natural solutions and reduce water consumption to increase our resilience</p>	<p>We need to use our land more smartly and efficiently to create more space for nature and adapt to climate change, while providing sustainable food security.</p> <p>How we adapt and use our land is key for building local resilience</p>	<p>We need to lower our consumption and get used to re-using, sharing and mending, wasting less.</p> <p>Our local economy will become more resilient and shift towards lower impact supply chains & activities.</p>	<p>What we eat can significantly reduce impacts on nature and lowers emissions. We know and act on this.</p>

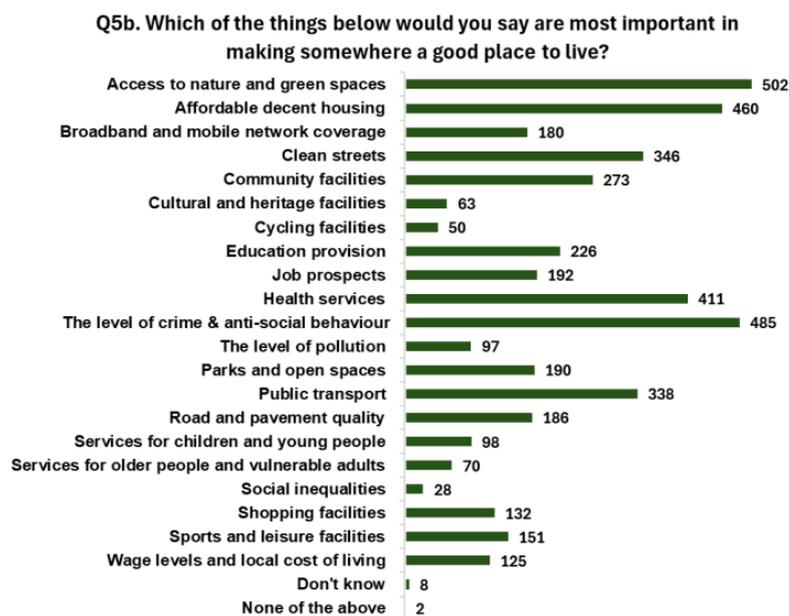
What are our enablers

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

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

3.7 The Climate and Nature strategy presents the positive opportunity to address the climate & ecological emergencies in a way that improves equity and, together with focus from teams such as Public Health, delivers outcomes such as warmer, safer homes that cost less to heat, as well as improve access to green spaces, considered top priorities by residents.

Bath & North East Somerset Council – Voicebox 33



Number of responses per option. Respondents could select up to five options. The level of crime and anti-social behaviour and affordable decent housing had the two highest number of responses in 2023.

3.8 The strategy would seek to prioritise solutions that support nature recovery and lower climate impacts, for example through Green Infrastructure, nature-based solutions and increased tree and woodland cover.

3.9 The decisions made within the strategy must not lock in future risk and cost.

3.10 KPI development: a key consideration has been to understand how digital tools can inform the conversion of existing plans and targets into an overall climate (mitigation) transition plan for Bath and North East Somerset to update current KPIs. From this assessment and as mentioned in the October 2025 PDS Panel, Officers are using the ClimateView transition planning method, as used by Bristol City Council, Glasgow City Council and more recently Manchester City Council to establish this plan. The results of this work are still being analysed, and the panel will be asked to scrutinise the outputs in a later session.

Questions:

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

Questions:

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

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

- 3.11 Bath and North East Somerset already has highly motivated communities acting for climate, nature, adaptation and long-term resilience. These include communities acting within the places that they live, as well as businesses and business communities, schools, colleges and universities, and groups who share common interests.
- 3.12 Feedback to date for the strategy from resident communities has cited having places and ways to come together locally is key to co-ordinate action for climate and nature, as well as build community. These places should act as warm and cool spaces for the most vulnerable and have cooking facilities to enable the sharing of (local) food.
- 3.13 Bath and North East Somerset has two local communities taking part in the Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership's [Community Climate and Nature Action Project](#). The project enables those within each community to develop their own Climate and Nature Action Plans, and the project is now in its 4th wave of community participants with previous communities based in Bristol. Bath and North East Somerset communities are the Twerton and Whiteway Network and Bath Mind. Learnings from these communities will also be important to inform future rollout of the CCNA Project.
- 3.14 To date, the Council has promoted WECA's free carbon surveys for SMEs and Green Business grants to help businesses invest in improving the energy efficiency of their premises. While Green Business Grants finished in October 2025, Low Carbon Surveys will continue to be available. B&NES Council's Carbon Reduction Accelerator scheme remains live; there will be a continuation of the social enterprise support programme and officers will work with WECA on new green grant schemes for businesses. The Council will continue to work with organisations representing the business community, including via the civic Future Ambition Board that includes Bath BID and Business West.
- 3.15 Enabling the right jobs and skills is a multi-faceted challenge because of the wide range of jobs and skills that are critical to the delivery of mitigation and adaptation in relation to the climate and nature emergencies. These range from growing and food production, to managing land for nature effectively, to inspiring and educating for change, to home upgrade/retrofit skills, the manufacturing skills that will encourage businesses to locate in the district, to the general entrepreneurial skills that will enable local businesses to establish, navigate change and succeed, plus many more. A clear definition of green skills is

needed to make sure that all valuable jobs and skills are visible and supported. It will be important to build capacity in B&NES and regionally to train these skills for which capital and physical space will be key.

3.16 In the Climate and Nature Annual Progress update in November 2025, the action plan committed to wider and more consistent engagement with the West of England Combined Authority Green Skills Lead, including:

- a) Looking at pathways from existing and upcoming construction/green skills projects into retrofit, promoting and supporting the academy.
- b) Utilising learnings from our programmes in the West of England to continue to develop Green Skills Provision over 25/26 including:
- c) Utilising Hubs and Community Outreach, as well as partnerships to build awareness of Green Skills in B&NES including employment pathways
- d) Identifying opportunities to make green skills training and green jobs more accessible to all residents, focusing on entry level opportunities, and addressing barriers such as geography, caring responsibilities, inclusion and system capacity.

3.17 Climate impacts can affect anyone, but certain groups have the potential to be more affected than others. (Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation). Climate risk and potential for impact depends on three key factors:

- a) Exposure - the proximity of a person to the climate hazard. This is largely shaped by where people live and work (e.g. outdoor worker) and the characteristics of that place (e.g. is there shading or a cool space available during extreme heat).
- b) Sensitivity - the personal features of an individual which influence how strongly someone is affected by different climate hazards, such as age, and health.
- c) Adaptive capacity - how well individuals or groups can prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate impacts. This is influenced by environmental factors, such access to green space, and social factors, such as income, inequality and strength of social networks.

3.18 Climate risks intersect with existing health and social inequalities, and people and groups experiencing multiple causes of vulnerability are the most vulnerable.

3.19 Climate injustice also presents itself in several other ways. Disadvantaged groups contribute the least to causing climate change yet are likely to be most affected by its impacts. Lower income and marginalised groups also tend to pay proportionally more towards implementing climate policies while benefiting the least from them. In addition, their voices are often underrepresented in decision making (Joseph Rowntree Foundation).

3.20 Based on those groups either most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, or who have less opportunity to effect needed transitions, for example upgrading and electrifying their homes, the Strategy EqIA has identified the following protected characteristics to support most closely:

- a) Race
- b) Disability
- c) Age, especially the elderly & young children

- d) Sex, especially women
- e) Pregnancy and Maternity
- f) Socio-economically disadvantaged communities*
- g) Rural communities*
- h) Care experienced*

*B&NES Council recognises the Equalities Act protected characteristics, as well as a number of further groups

In Summer 2026, Officers will seek to understand the local views and priorities of these protected groups to support existing understanding from work at regional and national level.

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 process for updating the Climate & Nature strategy will include funding feasibility assessment at high level. As with the existing strategy/actions plans, business case development would be undertaken on a project-by-project basis as it came forward and opportunities to increase external funding will be sought.
- 5.2 As set out in the Climate and Nature Annual Progress Report 2025, making progress against the Climate and Ecological Emergencies will require significant investment, including from regional and national government. In the past year, there has been the closure of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund and of the West of England Green Recovery Fund without replacements. Support for residents, businesses and organisations in local areas will be critical to enable progress.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 This report and working session is at the formative stage of policy design. As such, a risk assessment has not been conducted in relation to this report. However, more broadly the following risks to delivery of the climate and ecological emergencies in B&NES are noted:
- 6.2 For Climate mitigation: looking at greatest materiality in terms of district territorial emissions, the risk is that our district level progress, in line with the national picture to date, is too slow, due to necessary reliance on rollout of low carbon technologies and reliance on reduced private car use by households (e.g. heat pumps and EVs where the latter switch also has impacts on health, nature, continued congestion etc.). The strategy will seek to mitigate this through both its focus and action planning, as well as calling for what is needed at regional and national level to support fair transitions and unlock greater pace.
- 6.3 For Nature recovery: the risk that the data needed to support our understanding of and acting on the ecological emergency is only recently emerging to support

strategic conversations, including as a council. There is therefore the risk that the step change needed for nature in a short time is challenging to deliver without a different decision-making and resourcing model. For example, how to deliver the national COP target of 30% of our land (as a council and as a district) being managed for nature by 2030. This will be mitigated by the strategy setting out how this needs to happen, building on current internal work to establish how the Council might manage 30% of its own land for nature.

6.4 For long-term resilience: the risk that we do not have the resources to act on the areas and aspects of our district, including our buildings, built environment, natural landscape and services to people that would be required to adapt to the already-changing climate.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An EIA has been developed to support this strategy and will be published in March 2026.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 This Report provides a direct contribution to the Council’s progress towards tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies, built on the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declarations in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None. This is a working session.

10 CONSULTATION

This report has been approved by Cllr Warren.

Contact person	Mark Minkley, Strategic Manager – Climate & Environment Mark_Minkley@bathnes.gov.uk
Background papers	Climate Emergency Strategy – available online - https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/read-our-climate-strategy-and-action-plan Ecological Emergency Action Plan – available online - https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/ecological-emergency-action-plan Corporate Strategy 2023-27
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