



Climate Change

Action Plan
2021 - 2025

Update 4 - October 2024



Introduction

Staffordshire County Council recognises that climate change is the biggest environmental challenge facing the world today and has reflected this by identifying climate change as one of five key priorities in the council's Strategic Plan.

Staffordshire County Council committed itself to this agenda by declaring a climate change emergency in July 2019 to also achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Strategic Development Framework released in February 2021 sets out how the authority will work towards achieving its carbon emissions target.



The county council has identified a range of actions to stop or significantly reduce the council's carbon emissions. These actions also recognise we need to develop ways to remove carbon that is already in the atmosphere (sequestration). In achieving these actions, the authority will play its part in the global effort to reduce the impact of climate change and meet its net carbon zero target. The council will monitor its carbon emissions each year, to track the success of these actions. Between 2018 and 2023 we have reduced our carbon emissions by 52%.

This is the third revision of the 2021-2025 action plan. This plan shows the completed actions over the last three years and presents reviewed timescales. Next year we will start work on a new action plan in combination with developing a climate change Adaptation Plan.

Simon Tagg - Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

Key Themes



Theme 1: Carbon Reduction

Theme 2: Air Quality

Theme 3: Natural Environment

Theme 4: Waste

Theme 5: Behavioural Change

Carbon Reduction

The Carbon Reduction theme has the most amount of actions within the plan. These actions cover internal staff training, resource use and efficient operation of services as well as starting to change the way that we work. The actions also look to include climate change thinking in policy and Governance processes.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed timeline
CR-01	Ensure climate change and sustainability impacts are considered in decision making, including land disposals and budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directorates to ensure that impacts on climate change will be considered and incorporated into business plan templates• Obtain corporate commitment for procurement processes to include considerations on climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dec 25• Dec 25
CR-02	Continued liaison with Districts and Boroughs to discuss how planning considerations can include climate change mitigation and adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide advice to encourage Local Plan policies to have high regard to climate change mitigation and adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing
CR-03	Review the Staffordshire County Council Policy Position to encourage renewable technologies in appropriate locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the Staffordshire County Council policy position on renewable generation and identify renewable opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aug 25

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed timeline
CR-04	Make better use of Home to School transport by maximising use of every seat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roll out monitoring app to allow Smart Pass monitoring for contracted services• Evaluate results of Smart Pass use and consider if any service changes can be made	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jun 25• Completed
CR-05	Maximise efficiency of the home to school and Special Education needs transport (SEN) services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate options for reducing the number of vehicles and the mileage travelled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed
CR-06	Increase the number of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a 2 year countywide EV charging implementation plan• Complete a feasibility study to better understand Staffordshire County Councils EV demand and capacity for charge points• Work with Amey to roll out EV charging across highways depots where spare electrical capacity is available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oct 25• Jan 25• Nov 24

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed timeline
CR -07	Transition fleet to alternative fuels or more carbon efficient where appropriate by 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement HVO fuelling to all suitable Highways vehicles, plant, machinery and equipment• Develop a costed plan for full EV transition within Staffordshire County Council fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed• Oct 25
CR-08	Prioritise sites to have Building Energy Management systems (BEMS) installed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve 7 BEMS installations per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing
CR-09	Identify opportunities for carbon reduction of the corporate estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Strategic Property to identify priority properties for decarbonisation plans• Quantify carbon savings achieved through maintenance work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apr 25• Ongoing

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed timeline
CR-10	Improve energy efficiency of highway infrastructure and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue delivery of Street Lighting LED retrofit programme • Deliver annual Traffic Signals refurbishment/LED upgrade programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Ongoing
CR-11	Improve understanding of embedded carbon in Highways activities to enable carbon reduction or mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in pilot project with FHRG to develop a standardised carbon reporting tool for highways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
CR-12	Emissions monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor and report the council's annual carbon emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
CR-13	Identify and understand Staffordshire's net zero skills gaps and explore the levers and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a short to medium term roadmap for the transitioning of the Staffordshire supply chain to net zero • Complete a Staffordshire green skills academy feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • May 25
CR-14	Better understand emissions relating to the staff commute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a survey of the staff commute to work, to evaluate potential for modal change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed

Air Quality

The council aims to improve air quality by encouraging active travel and working with vehicle operators within the county to introduce efficient engines and use of low carbon fuels.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
AQ-01	Investigate the impact of introducing a standard requirement for Euro5 or better for home to school transport contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market test feasibility (cost & availability) of including Euro5 as a standard requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed
AQ-02	Agree Bus Service Improvement Plan with interested local bus operators with an agreed transition path to low emission buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secure funding to work with local bus operators to improve the energy efficiency of public transport in Staffordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed
AQ-03	Deliver against objectives of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver and review active travel schemes in Stafford, Burton, Cannock, Lichfield, Newcastle and Tamworth• Work with the District and Boroughs to support bids for sustainable travel delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing• Ongoing

Natural Environment

The natural environment is key to removing carbon out of the atmosphere, through carbon sequestration. The focus of this theme is to maximise the benefit the council's land holding has on the climate. New land management opportunities will be identified to further enhance the positive carbon impact of county land with additional benefits of enhanced biodiversity.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
NE-01	Deliver Zero By Nature Project proposal to sequester carbon through tree planting and land management modifications on Staffordshire County Council land based on completed carbon study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree principles and approach through democratic process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May 25
NE-02	Review policies that impact on our management of habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review land management policies and consider options to lower carbon intensity and/or improve biodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May 25

Waste

Waste management forms a significant part of the council's footprint. This section considers how we can reduce the amount of waste being generated and how we can change our waste management processes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed
W-01	Plateau growth in waste to 0% by 2025, using 2019 pre-pandemic tonnage as the baseline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver 4 campaigns to target reduce, reuse, recycle and home composting. Aim for 1000 residents to purchase discounted compost bins and 5% increase in donations for reuse at the HWRCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing
W-02	Evaluate the potential for transitioning to alternative and low carbon fuels for the Recycling centres service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete HVO trial and transition HWRC plant and outsourced vehicles to low carbon alternatives where feasible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed
W-03	Develop a Staffordshire Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to reduce haulage requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin development of Strategic business case for long term management of dry mixed recycling in Staffordshire with support of local waste partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mar 26
W-04	Investigate options for using closed landfill sites for climate change mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify suitable technologies or changes to land management on closed landfill sites which could assist with climate change objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jan 26

Behavioural Change

Climate change is a problem that is facing everyone. To tackle the issues it will need everyone to make changes to their daily lives. The council plan to work with business and other councils within Staffordshire to produce a joined-up approach to tackling climate change that reaches beyond just the actions of the Authority.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
BC-01	Offer community funding for small scale climate change related projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer an annual fund for climate change projects for schools, parish councils and the local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
BC-02	Raise awareness of climate change and encourage behavioural change through communication campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim for 100% of Members and 1500 staff to complete the internal climate change training Increase climate change awareness of Staffordshire residents. Direct 5000 people to work out carbon footprint and run 2 campaigns or events to help residents understand and reduce carbon footprint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ongoing
BC-03	Engage with communities to raise awareness and highlight opportunities for local action for waste and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a Climate Change & Waste Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sept 25
BC-04	Consider implications and how the changing climate of Staffordshire can be managed and mitigated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Staffordshire County Council Adaptation Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apr 25
BC-05	Work with businesses to raise awareness and reduce their carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80 businesses to complete carbon literacy training 30 businesses to complete the Carbon Tracker tool per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Ongoing

Behavioural Change

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
BC-06	Reduce the number of pupils travelling to school in private vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish 15 new regular walking bus routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dec 25

Completed Actions

	Action	Date completed
<h2>Carbon Reduction</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise the Cabinet Report standard template to include a section on climate change• Identify the resources required to progress the climate change agenda across the council• Climate change team to provide expertise and support to business areas to develop ideas and to deliver innovation• Consider the outcome of the Renewable Energy Audit • Outline options and make recommendations for offset projects • Ensure climate change is a standing agenda item for Staffordshire Development Officers Group• Monitor driver behaviour and provide efficient driving information to staff • Issue all school children with a Smart Pass to monitor usage to identify any inefficiencies in the system• Develop an EV charging infrastructure strategy in partnership with the Districts and Boroughs• Investigate the potential to upgrade electricity supply in SCC building stock to facilitate EV charging in retained property portfolio and identify sites requiring upgrade. • Develop a Highways AMEY fleet plan for phasing in of EVs where suitable vehicles are available• Take a phased approach to complete a review of all SCC owned or leased buildings • Identify opportunities for change through the development of Business Asset Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 21/22• 22/23• Ongoing • 21/22 • Incorporated within Natural Environment action for land management• 21/22• Monitoring ongoing • 21/22• 22/23 • Incorporated within action for EV feasibility study development • 22/23• 22/23 • 22/23

Completed Actions

	Action	Date completed
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage with consultants to produce a review of land/habitats in Staffordshire (including carbon impact, carbon storage benefits, potential opportunities, other benefits ie social and GIS data)• Develop guidance and instructions for staff on GIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 21/22• 21/22
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present an options appraisal for cabinet approval• Investigate options for a single food waste procurement contract to encourage the Districts and Boroughs to introduce separate food waste collections ahead of proposed legislative changes• Complete procurement for a countywide food waste treatment contract• Where feasible transition site and supervisor vehicles from diesel to a lower carbon alternative• Complete HVO trial and transition HWRC plant and outsourced vehicles to low carbon alternatives where feasible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 22/23• 21/22• 22/23• Supervisor vehicles now fall under fleet management. Site vehicles incorporated within HVO trial action• 23/24
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market test feasibility (cost & availability) of including Euro5 as a standard requirement• Secure funding to work with local bus operators to improve the energy efficiency of public transport in Staffordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 23/24• 23/24

Completed Actions

	Action	Date completed
Behaviour change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a Countywide Adaptation Strategy• Staffordshire Business Environment Network (sben) to encourage and provide assistance to install 25 solar PV on businesses• sben to roll out carbon calculator for businesses• Board to set a countywide strategic direction in ways of working to support the transition to Net Zero• 80 businesses to complete carbon literacy training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 22/23• 22/23• 21/22• 21/22• 23/24

Discontinued actions

	Reason
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver DfT/ADEPT Live Labs 2 project (subject to funding approval) to consider opportunities for reducing carbon emissions in certain highways tasks• sben to work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to promote small scale funded tree planting projects with a total of 120 trees across 20 businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding unsuccessful• Not proceeding on business land

Programme Funding

- £3.5 million over 6 years has been made available, specifically for sustainability projects to support the climate change agenda from the council funds.
- Each year the council applies for, and is successful in achieving external funding. This has secured several million pounds to boost our own internal funding. Some projects have climate change as the core aims while others include it as an element alongside other important service delivery objectives. Some of these funding awards are highlighted in the climate change annual report each year.

County Council Climate Change Investment	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total investment
MTFS Budget - Internal Funding	£ 690,000	£ 585,580	£ 596,700	£ 571,160	£590,070	£ 546,700	£ 3,584,21

Programme Roadmap

The council has declared a commitment to be net carbon zero by 2050. Whilst our aspirations are high to reduce this as much as possible we acknowledge we can not reach net zero without some carbon sequestration or offsetting. This also forms a key role within the plan.

The Roadmap shows the projected reduction in Staffordshire County Council's operational emissions. The reduction is based around targets and legislative changes that have already been or will soon to be set by Central Government through consultations, industry developments and economic drivers. The authority understands that there will potentially be further changes to mechanisms the drive decarbonisation across the energy and transport sectors.

