

Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy 2021



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Introduction

In July 2019 we declared a climate emergency. The main purpose of this is was to commit to becoming carbon net zero and fully climate resilient by 2030. In some ways it was an easy thing to do; climate change was high profile once again and a report by the Independent Panel on Climate Change had stated that it is likely temperatures will exceed 1.5 degrees between 2030 and 2052 at current levels of CO₂ with highly negative impacts on humanity and nature.

The difficult bit comes next. It requires legislation and action at all levels, from the national to the local and partnerships between council, business, local organisations and communities.

I started working in Lewes at the Community Recycling Centre in Lewes just over one week before the floods in 2000 which caused so much heartache and devastation to the town. The flood was a wake-up call to local people and decision makers to consider the impacts of climate change in all that we do. This culminated with the Coastal Communities 2150 Project in 2012 which was a community partnership brought together to communicate the risks of climate change to communities along the coast and the Ouse Valley.

The partnership approaches which had formed over the years were essentially ended by the 2008 recession as resources focused on sustainability and climate change diminished. With the declaration of the climate emergency this work has begun again with renewed focus and vigour.

Our corporate plan emphasises the priority of tackling climate change. We have already begun decarbonising our social housing stock,

supporting natural flood and infrastructural flood alleviation schemes, initiating hydrogen projects and expanding wildflower and tree planting amongst many other carbon reduction initiatives.

It is a priority for me that we engage with our communities on climate change. We supported the partnership that successfully bid for funds to implement a climate partnership along the Ouse Valley. We've initiated a Community Climate Action Forum and Youth Climate Action Forum as well as Walking and Cycling Forum. It is vital that we work closely with the many active community groups in the District as well Town and Parish Councils.

This strategy and action plan sets out our blueprint moving forwards. It will change as new partnerships form and new opportunities arise, but it sets out clearly our carbon baseline, where we need to focus and what we need to do to tackle greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

2020 was one of the three hottest years (with 2016 and 2019) and flood warnings were issued in Seaford 7 times.

We have a limited window to act

One of the few rays of light from the otherwise tragic experiences of Covid-19 was the rise in cycling due to less cars on the road, the increased appreciation of local nature and the rise in online working with less need to travel.



Whether we will see a resumption of former behaviours and CO₂ emissions remains to be seen but we have had a glimpse of how a better balance positively impacts not only on CO₂ emissions but also on our lives and we must ensure that this is not wasted.

Matthew Bird

Lead Cabinet Member for Sustainability

Part 1

The Vision for 2030



The Vision

By 2030 we will have a net zero carbon and fully climate resilient council. Through our partnerships we will have enabled the district as a whole to progress to net zero carbon and to address the ecological emergency.

Lewes District is a mix of urban and rural communities, coast and countryside, modern and historic buildings, agricultural and industrial businesses.

We have a beautiful district but it can be congested at times, it contains pollution hotspots particularly in Newhaven and Lewes town, it has rural areas with limited public transport, it lacks comprehensive cycling and walking routes, it's vulnerable to flooding and is suffering biodiversity losses in line with the alarming national and international trends. It has areas requiring economic regeneration, it needs more affordable housing and we need to reduce income inequality.

As a result we accept and acknowledge that we have a huge amount of work ahead of us to meet our ambition of becoming a net zero carbon and climate resilient council by 2030 and that we will be doing this with uncertain financial resources.

There is enormous enthusiasm and capacity in our local communities to help us meet these challenges. We have seen how fast we can act and come together and enable massive change when faced with the urgent and

common threat posed by the Coronavirus pandemic. We need to translate this urgency to tackling the climate change and ecological emergency. Although climate change will occur and impact on our lives we have a small window in which to reduce the more severe impacts of climate change, as long as we act now to cut emissions and prepare our communities for some inevitable changes.

Our own experience of flooding within the district, the stark predications of the effects of sea level rise on our coastal communities in and around Seaford and Newhaven, and the impacts of cliff erosion in Peacehaven, drives our resolve to enable climate resilient and sustainable communities.

Arresting biodiversity loss is inextricably tied to climate resilience, flooding impacts, and the ability to sequester and store carbon. Committing to nature-based solutions is essential for our recovery from the current Covid-19 crisis, and to better avoid future pandemics promoting healthy, thriving and resilient communities for the future.

The 'Declaration of the Climate Emergency' is our public statement that work the Council



and others, locally and nationally, already do to mitigate and adapt to climate change must be ramped up and progressed at pace.

But we cannot do this alone.

We have committed to becoming a net zero carbon Council by 2030. This means reducing our directly controllable emissions to as low as possible and then, if required, investing in solutions to reduce the remaining carbon emissions (offsetting).

We have also committed to support and work with others to make the district net zero carbon by 2030 though this target will be much harder to achieve.

We will use our influence and lobbying function to enable this and we will lead by example. We will work in partnership with the community to break down current barriers and enable delivery of projects.

Working together locally

We can only deliver on our vision and strategic goals effectively by understanding all the aspects the council can directly act on and those that we can only deliver by working with others in public, private and voluntary sectors across the district.

Regional Partnerships and Networks

Various partnerships and networks already exist and will be developed to further both district and regional zero carbon aims. New partnerships are in development to further objectives for specific purposes such as retrofitting the social housing stock.

The [Greater Brighton city region](#) has pledged to help tackle the climate change crisis and place itself at the centre of partnership efforts to effect real change.

Together the partners can use their combined authority, lobbying power, expertise and knowledge to work towards **ten pledges** on a range of environmental issues chiefly concerning water and energy conservation.

The Sussex Local Nature Partnership

aims to work across sectors and organizations to secure the healthiest ecological system possible thereby protecting and enhancing the natural environment and all that it gives us. This vision is the key guiding principle behind the work of the LNP, both in terms of its direct delivery and in terms of any advice it may give, the statements it makes and the positions it

may hold. [The Green Growth Platform](#) is the South East Regional Hub of Clean Growth UK, a national business-innovation network that has collectively supported 1000s of businesses across the UK to innovate and grow. Clean Growth UK has hubs in Brighton, Liverpool and Portsmouth. They provide access to university led research and skills through the Greater Brighton city region working groups.

Partnerships have also developed to enable funding bids to take place, these include:

[Ouse Valley CARES](#) a partnership formed of local organisations and community groups including Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park. The partnership was successful in obtaining funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to develop a range of projects tackling climate change along the Ouse Valley.

[Changing Chalk](#) is focused on the chalk grassland landscape of the Sussex Downs and the communities of the coastal urban fringe of Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and Lewes. Development funding of £138,300

has been awarded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to help the Changing Chalk partnership progress their plans to apply for a full grant in 2021. This partnership, led by the National Trust will bring together people and nature, over a five-year period, to tackle the threats, grasp the opportunities and celebrate the heritage that the area offers.



Harnessing Community Action and Expertise

The district is home to a multitude of individuals, organisations, charities, schools, Community Interest Companies and businesses that are like-minded to achieve sustainability goals such as lowering carbon emissions, reducing pollution, improving the natural environment, reducing poverty, promoting community cohesion and more. We are also lucky enough to be close to 2 world leading universities in the fields of sustainability, environment policy and engineering solutions.

Local initiatives include: Plastic Free groups in Newhaven, Seaford and Lewes; Greenhavens Network; Cycle Seahaven; Cycle Lewes; Lewes Walking and Cycling Forum; Refill; OVESCO; Transition Town Lewes; Lewes Climate Hub; Seaford Alliance; amongst many others both long running and **newly emerging**.

There is so much knowledge, experience and expertise that the council desired to bring this together and make it available to others who may be struggling to know how to get started on their sustainability journey. We commissioned 3VA and the Sustainable Business Partnership to facilitate the community **Climate Action Forum** [\[insert link\]](#)

The forum will develop over 2021 to provide a space for the community and youth to engage with the climate change agenda and develop new local action and ownership of the problem as well as the solutions.

Residents (including young people), businesses and organisations can get involved by joining here [\[insert link\]](#).



The Youth Voice

Young people are key to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the longer term. They will inherit our legacy and live with the consequences of climate change. Working closely with young people now will help ensure that sustainability behaviours and climate awareness are taken forward into adulthood. We need to embrace their energy and enthusiasm and enable, rather than stifle, their ideas but they also need to see us act swiftly and decisively for their future.

The **East Sussex Youth Council** is the elected youth voice for East Sussex. It made 'protecting the environment' top of their list of priorities for 2020 mirroring the Youth Parliaments 'Protect our Future' campaign. There is also the **Green United Forum** and schools network. OVESCO have engaged with local schools to install solar panels and many have taken up the environmental challenge by seeking to make their schools more sustainable in many other ways.

Kings Academy in Ringmer is nationally recognised for its sustainability work and is an **Ashden Award** winner. The school generates 70% of its heat on site through a variety of measures including a biomass boiler and heat pumps. They have on-site solar panels and a wind turbine generating **25% of their electrical energy use**. Rainwater flushes the toilets and extensive insulation has been installed.

Most impressively **25%** of their students are actively engaged as **ECO Reps**.

In order to encourage engagement with the district's Climate Action Forum young people from Seaford, Lewes, Ringmer, Chailey and Peacehaven were brought together at the end of October 2020 to speak about how they wanted to address the climate emergency in the Lewes District Area at a facilitated youth specific forum. Some of these young people were also representatives of the East Sussex Youth Cabinet, Seaford Environmental Alliance, Home Schools Network and their own school and college climate action and sustainability groups. The group chose 'campaigning' as their preferred type of action and to focus this within schools and colleges in the area. They also decided to vote for a representative to feedback from the youth group into the wider Climate Action Forum.



ABOVE Youth Climate Action Forum & 3VA

BELOW Rapid Charger installed at Kings Academy, Ringmer



Part 2

Why do we need a strategy?



Why do we need a strategy?

Overwhelming consensus has been gained through global and national research from the likes of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Met Office's UK Climate Projections to set in motion a policy framework that requires us to step up and take responsibility for our local emissions and environmental impacts.

We must act now to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate, to adapt and manage the risks to service provision, local communities, the natural environment, infrastructure and businesses whilst taking a grasp of the multitude of positive opportunities that the changes we need to make will offer us.

The council has a key role to play as a community leader and through the services we provide but we cannot do it alone. The strategy aims to act as a path directing us towards the net zero target and to bring together all the amazing work going on in our communities and expand upon it, to build resilience and adapt to our changing climate.



This strategy will:

- Set out a vision for Lewes District in 2030
- Set out how the council will act as a community leader and reduce its emissions to net zero carbon by 2030
- Provide a framework for action by the council and other partners to assist the district in becoming net zero carbon by 2030
- Enable best practice to be shared and replicated
- Bring together workstreams occurring across the district to monitor progress against the net zero carbon target.

This strategy will not:

- Be delivered by the council alone. The Evidence Base sets the path we need to take based on current evidence. Many of the things that need to happen cannot be delivered by the council but we can influence them. The Action Plan details the current actions we and others are taking and plan to take over the coming years in order to reduce emissions from our own operations and from the district. It is a live document and will be updated as plans are refined and progressed.
- Detail everything going on within the district or all the actions we need to take in future years. The council will monitor, review and update the strategy as required and formally once per year.

Policy Framework

The policy framework is set out on the following page – click through the links to find out more about each item – this isn't a comprehensive list but provides insight into major pieces of policy and how they link to our climate change and sustainability strategy.

Aerial photos pages 9 and 10:
Lewes flood in 2000 © Sussex Express

Policy Framework

Global

Paris Agreement:

Reduce emissions to limit temperature rise to 2°C

UN Sustainability Goals

National

Climate Change Act: Net Zero by 2050

Current Strategy:

- Clean Growth Strategy
- Road to Zero
- Green Future: Our 25-Year Plan to Improve the Environment
- Clean Air Strategy
- Gear Change

Strategy is delivered by:

- The Environment Bill (due 2021)
- The National Planning Policy Framework and the Building Regulations (specifically Part L)
- Future Homes Standard
- The Agricultural Bill

Strategy in development:

- Transport Decarbonisation Plan
- Energy White Paper
- Heat and building strategy

Regional

- East Sussex Environment Strategy 2020
- South2East Energy Strategy 2018
- East Sussex Local Transport Plan
- Transport for the South East – Transport Strategy
- Greater Brighton Energy Plan and Greater Brighton Water Plan
- South Downs National Park Climate Adaptation Strategy
- Sussex Natural Capital Investment Strategy

Local

- Lewes District Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan
- Corporate Plan 2020-2021
- Lewes Local Plan



UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 goals with 169 targets that were adopted by every country in the world in 2015. They set out a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030. The goals are to be achieved by everyone everywhere and seek to make sure that 'No One is left behind'. They address the interconnected global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

Lewes District Council would like to seek to achieve the UN goals in the same period as the net zero carbon target. Many actions within the climate change and sustainability action plan will help deliver the goals but we have not yet gone through a process of detailed analysis.

The table on the following page provides examples of how our 2030 net zero action areas (and their respective goals) align to the SDGs.



UN Sustainable Development Goals Alignment



LDC Action Area:

- Circular economy & Community Wealth



LDC Action Area:

- Agriculture & Food



LDC Action Area:

- Sustainable Transport & Air Quality
- Biodiversity



LDC Action Area:

- Cross cutting theme and part of the green, post covid recovery



LDC Action Area:

- Not specifically mentioned



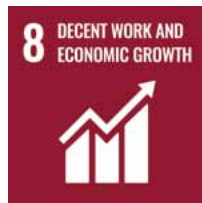
LDC Action Area:

- Water



LDC Action Area:

- Energy & the built environment



LDC Action Area:

- Cross-cutting themes
- Circular economy & Community Wealth



LDC Action Area:

- Cross-cutting theme
- Energy & the built environment



LDC Action Area:

- Circular Economy & Community Wealth
- Energy & the built environment



LDC Action Area:

- All action areas and cross-cutting themes



LDC Action Area:

- Circular Economy & Community Wealth
- Energy & the built environment
- Reducing emissions from waste



LDC Action Area:

- All action areas and cross-cutting themes



LDC Action Area:

- Biodiversity
- Water



LDC Action Area:

- Biodiversity



LDC Action Area:

- Circular Economy & Community Wealth



LDC Action Area:

- Cross-cutting themes
- Expert Panel
- Climate Action Forum
- Circular Economy & Community Wealth

Part 3

Developing the strategy

HIGH AMBITION PATHWAY: 2030 SUMMARY

By 2030, the emissions profile for Lewes is predicted to look very different from today. Concerted local actions can have a significant effect on district emissions, making reductions of around 65%.

Tackling residual emissions - closing the gap to carbon neutrality

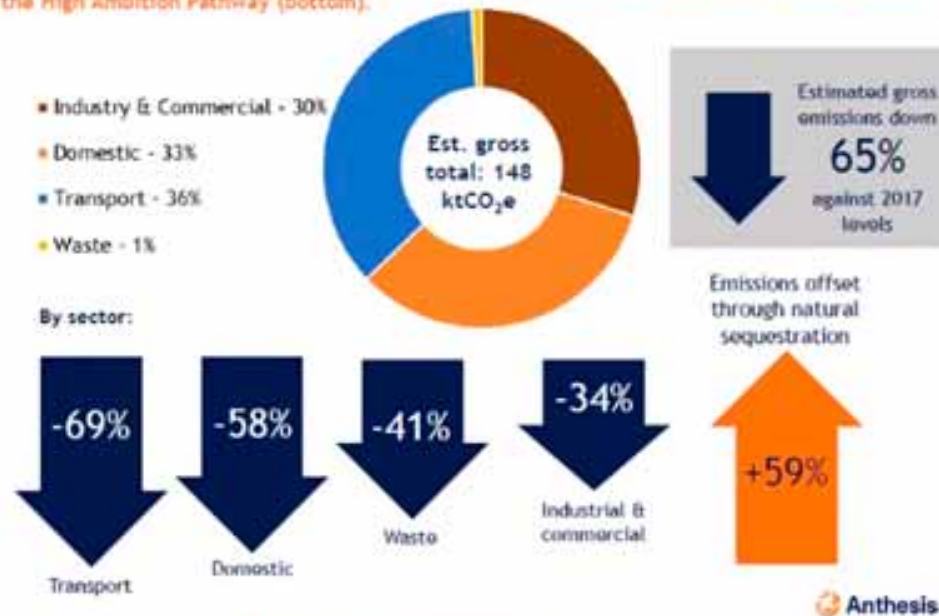
Despite the aggressive actions described, hard-to-remove emissions in industry and freight transport persist. Whilst emissions from the domestic and waste sectors are massively reduced, the scale of improvement is not enough to reach zero by 2030.

Offsetting strategies are recommended as a means of addressing these residual emissions.

Lewes District Council | Executive Summary

Adoption of the High Ambition Pathway interventions delivers emissions reductions of around **two-thirds** by 2030.

Figure III: Estimated 2030 emissions profile (top). Emissions reductions in key sectors under the High Ambition Pathway (bottom).



White, James



Jones, Oliver



Thompson, Nathan



McDevitt, Millie



Richardson, Kate

Developing the strategy

The strategy has been developed over the period June to December 2020 during which time we engaged with around 140 individuals and organisations throughout the district.

Initial guidance was provided in 2019 by the setting up of the **Climate Change Scrutiny Panel**, a cross-party group that has fed into the development of the engagement plan and of the strategy goals and actions, and the **Sustainability Expert Panels** set up to provide the council with expert insight into developing the climate change strategy.

Experts include: individual experts in their field (eg. Planning and architecture); organisations such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust, University of Sussex, Environment Agency, NFU; and other councils such as East Sussex County Council.

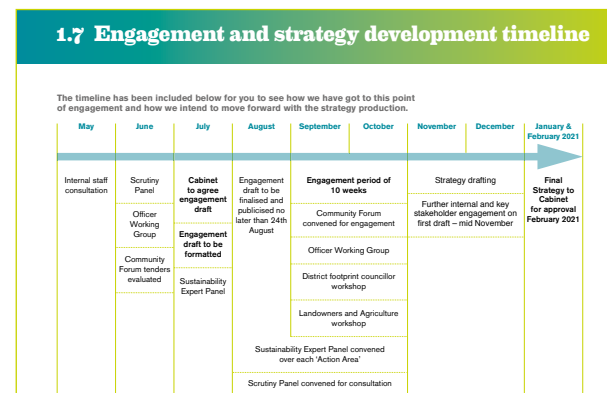
A series of thematic workshops took place involving the 27 representatives on the Expert Panel, to review the **draft Climate Change and Sustainability Framework**.

The Council will continue to work with the group as a critical friend and will actively engage the group to deliver and progress the action plan.

The draft framework and goals were initially developed using an evidence base collated

from national research (such as the UK Climate Projections) [\[insert link\]](#) and the locally specific emission baseline reports such as the district and council carbon baseline reports that were completed by July 2020 and can be found at www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/climatechange.gov.uk

In August 2020 the council commenced the public engagement using the draft framework which ran to the end of October 2020. This coincided with the first virtual meeting of the Climate Action Forum which was also used to engage with the attendees on the draft framework.



The engagement work and responses to the survey has provided direction and specificity to the revised over-arching goals and provided confidence to the council that we are heading in the right direction with our science-based ambition.

The Evidence Base

The need for a clear strategic path and a prioritised action plan has required an evidence base to inform its production. The Strategy and its appendices bring together this evidence to enable the action we must undertake as a local authority to 'get our own house in order' as well as activity the council shall need to do in the wider district to enable others to work towards the district wide net zero target.

Global and national research is useful at a high level, with the UK Climate Projections [\[insert link\]](#) being of most use locally, but we required an in-depth district analysis, this has been provided in the form of 2 Anthesis reports 'Lewes District Council Carbon Emissions Analysis and Pathways' and the subsequent 'Agriculture and Land-Use' study.

We have also carried out a baseline report on council operations.

A summary of the projections and the district and council baselines can be found in this section of the strategy and the full baseline reports can be found at www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/climatechange

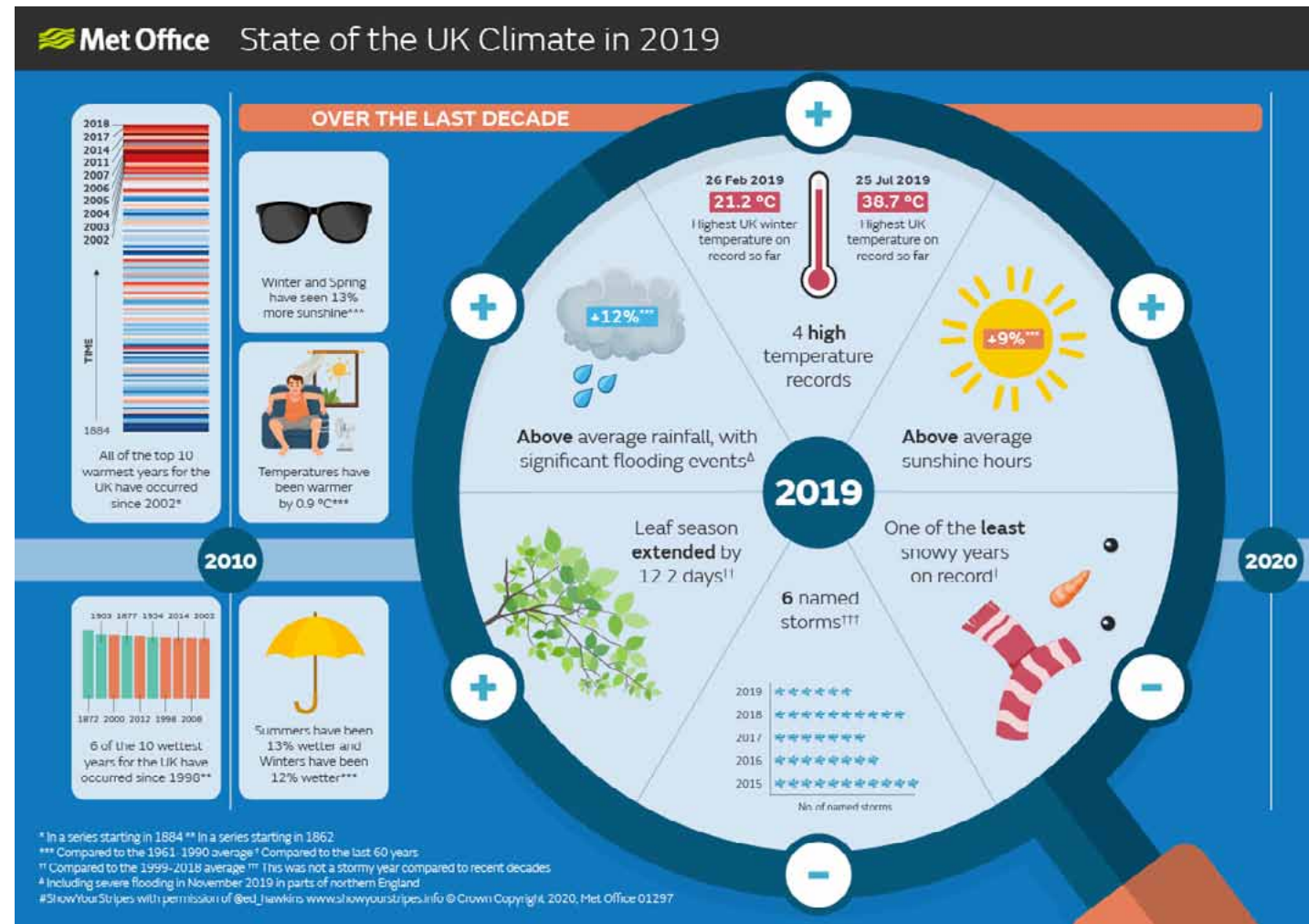
Adapting to Climate Change

The district must become resilient to the effects of climate change through adaptation, for example by preventing homes from overheating, and preventing further increases in emissions which will make these effects worse (mitigation).

The latest State of the UK Climate 2019 report [insert link] shows several indicators consistent with the expected effects of a warming climate.

General climate change trends projected over UK land for the 21st century in UK Climate Projections 2018 are broadly consistent with earlier projections (2009) showing an increased chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers along with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extremes.

You can find out more about how climate change may affect you by using this interactive tool developed by the BBC using the Met Office Climate Projections data. Click here to access the tool <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/ldt-d6338d9f-8789-4bc2-b6d7-3691c0e7d138>

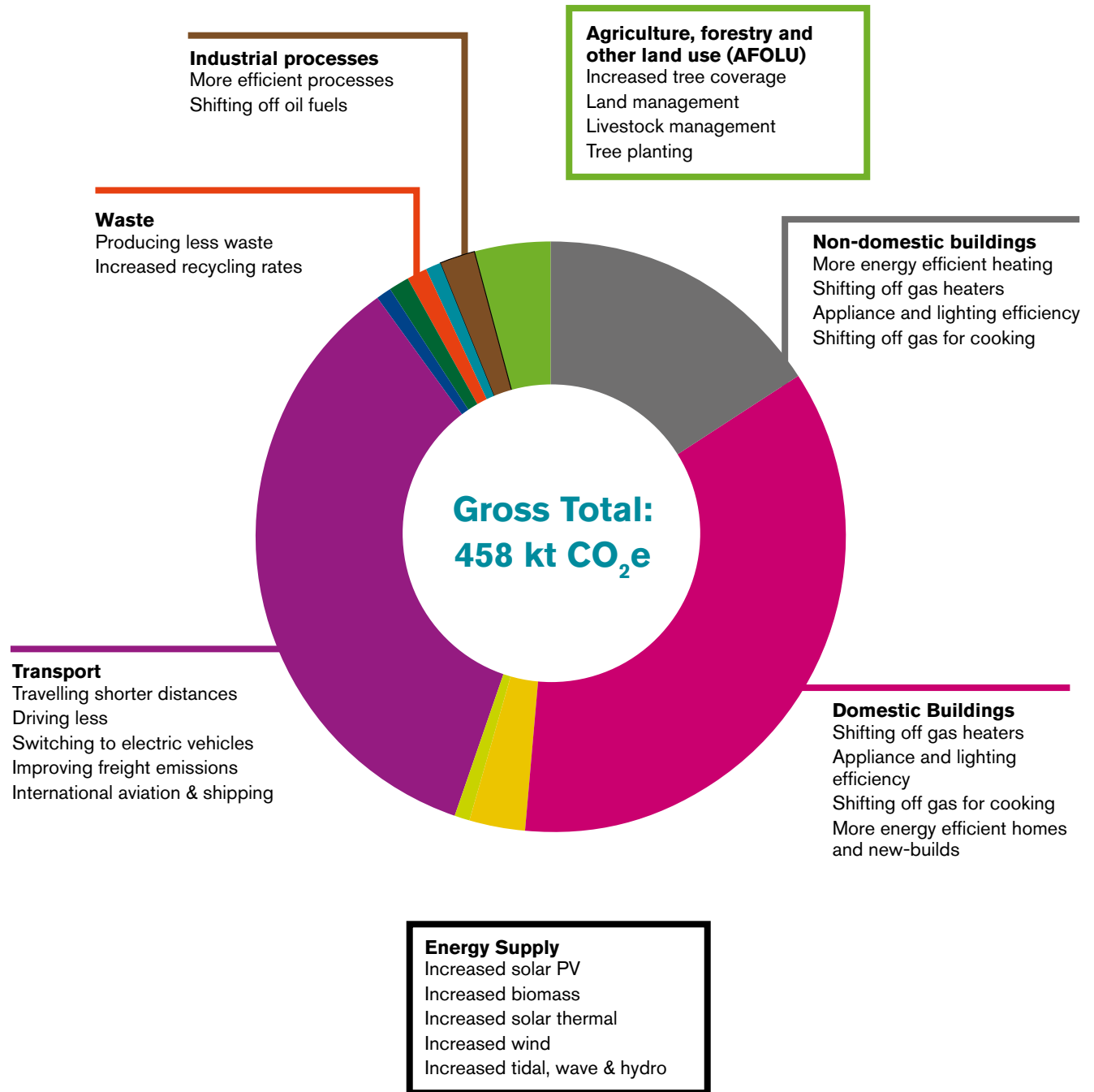


The District Baseline

Anthesis uses the SCATTER local authority emissions inventory tool to define an emissions profile for Lewes district based on 2017 data. SCATTER stands for Setting City Area Targets and Trajectories for Emissions Reductions.

The doughnut chart below defines the baseline emission profile and a summary of the high-level measures modelled within SCATTER to tackle and reduce those emissions.

- Industrial & institutional buildings **16%**
- Residential buildings **36%**
- Commercial buildings & facilities **3%**
- Agricultural fuel use **1%**
- On-road transport **35%**
- Rail transport **1%**
- Off-road transport **<1%**
- Solid waste disposal **<1%**
- Wastewater **1%**
- Industrial processes **2%**
- Livestock **4%**



The District Pathway to Net Zero

This is a simplified summary of some large scale actions that have been modelled to meet our target based on current technology – for more information click [here](#) to read the full baseline report and the action plan.

Baseline
458,000
tonnes CO₂e

56%

**BUILDINGS
EMISSIONS**

7%

**OTHER SOURCES:
WASTE, INDUSTRY
LIVESTOCK**

8%

**CURRENT
LAND USE
CARBON SINK**

37%

**TRANSPORT
EMISSIONS**

1

Demand reduction

- 25% reduction in miles travelled per person
- More than 16,500 medium and deep retrofits to existing housing
- New homes built to PassivHaus standard or equivalent
- Waste has reduced by at least 24%
- At least 65% of waste is recycled
- Industrial process have become more efficient
- 20% reduction in consumption of meat and dairy

2

Decarbonise energy

- Get buildings off oil and gas
- At least 200 MW of renewable energy generation installed
- EV charging infrastructure in place

3

Tackle residual emissions

- 148,000 tonnes to be captured per year by 2030**
- 24% increase in forest cover by 2030
 - Planting a minimum of 48 hectares woodland per year
 - Community and council investment enabled for energy and nature projects

10%

0 CO₂

**NET ZERO
CARBON
BY 2030**

The Council Baseline

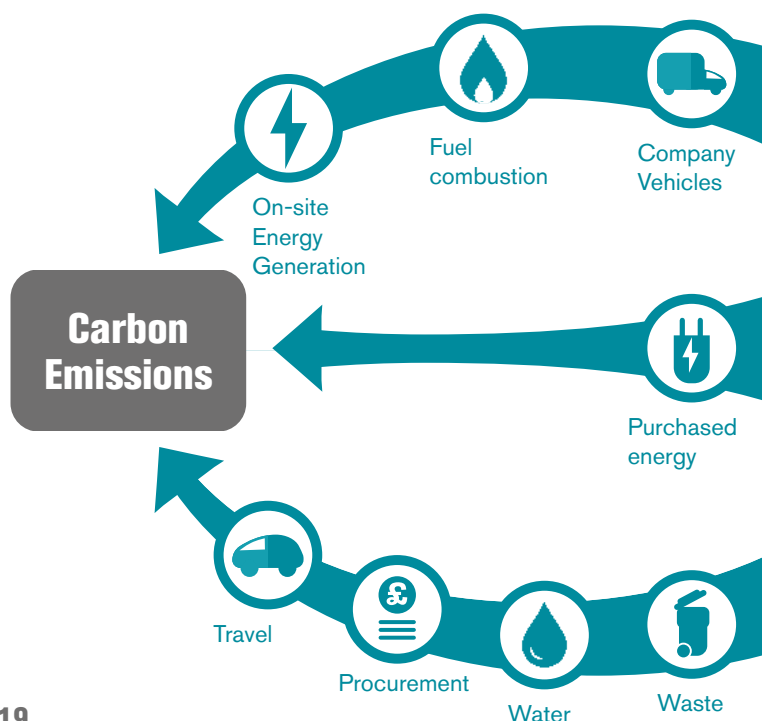
The Council's baseline is based on the Council's directly controllable consumption of gas, electricity and fuel; the baseline emissions for 2018/19 financial year are approximately 1,590 tonnes CO₂e (tCO₂e). This figure is included within the District wide emissions of 458,000 tCO₂e. As such the Council's baseline emissions account for just 0.3% of the overall footprint for the District.

Emissions are divided into three categories referred to as Scope 1, 2 and 3 as illustrated below.

Baseline emissions are reported as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e) and are calculated using the Scope 1 and 2 emissions detailed in the table below.

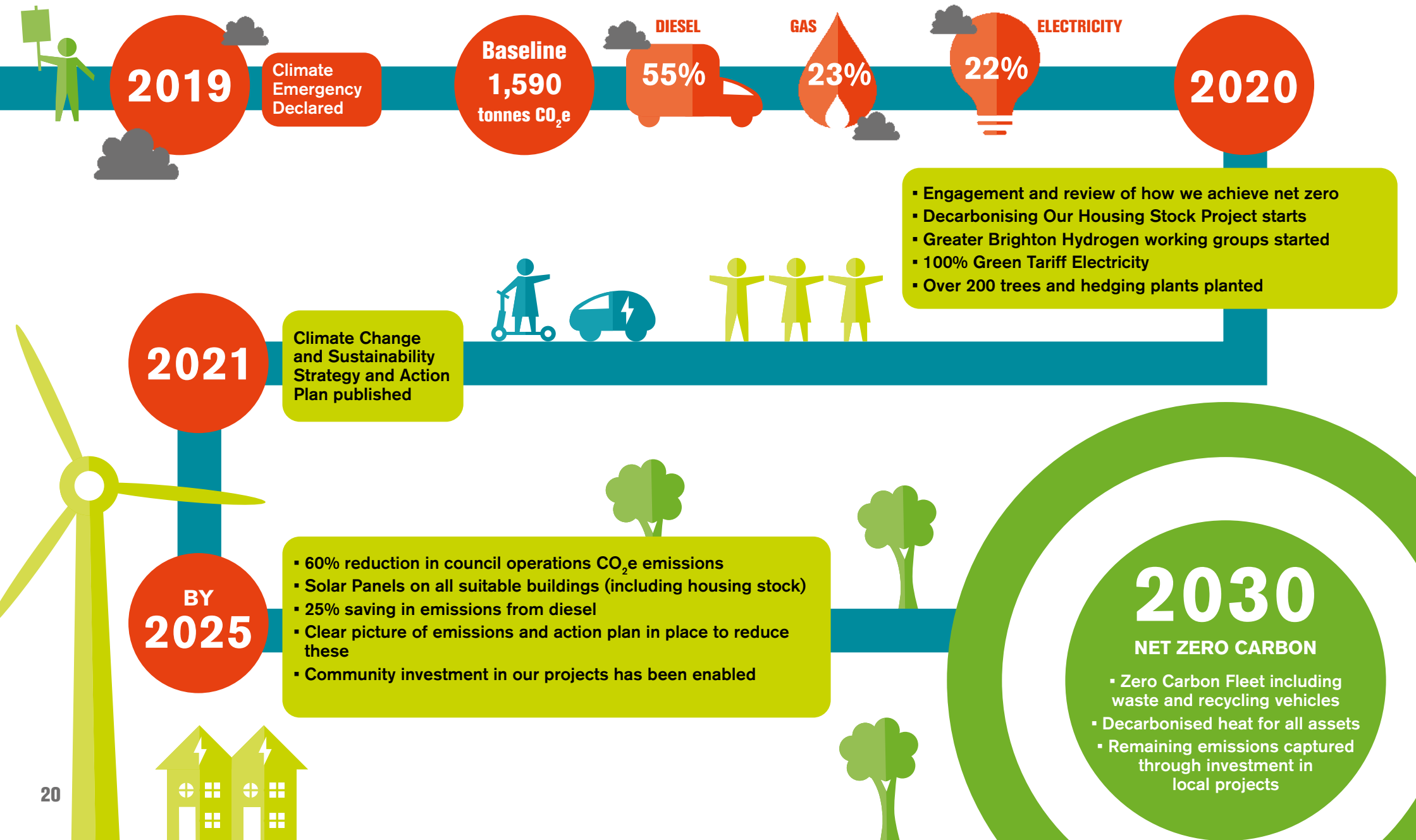
Scope 3 emissions are not something we directly control, they occur when we buy a product or service and the emissions are produced somewhere else. They can be more

difficult than scope 1 and 2 to determine accurately. We will report these emissions as our data collecting procedures improve and where we feel the figures will be accurate. Our ability to reduce emissions from scope 3 sources will also be more difficult but we will work to report them and will clarify those where we have influence or not (for example- our emissions from water use is within our sphere of influence, we can try to reduce consumption once we know what we consume accurately)



Category	Description	Data used in this analysis
SCOPE 1	Direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by Lewes District Council	Metered gas data (for buildings where the Council pay the gas bills) Litres of fuel consumed for fleet vehicles
SCOPE 2	Indirect emissions from the generation of energy purchased by Lewes District Council	Metered electricity data (for buildings where the Council pay the electricity bills)
SCOPE 3	Indirect emissions that result from other activities that occur in the value chain, either upstream or downstream	Not reported this year

The Council's Pathway to Net Zero



Part 4 – The Strategic Action Areas



Part 4 - The Strategic Action Areas

The 7 action areas set out in this Strategy provide the framework for the action plan through which we will focus our efforts in reducing emissions and improving climate resilience.



Some areas cross over, for example the built environment will link with aspects of sustainable transport, so some actions may impact on more than one area.

Each section provides a one-page overview with some facts on the current situation and the 2030 strategic goals. The second page provides a summary of the targets for the area along with key actions happening now or in the near term and the third page highlights a particular case study.

For more information and detail on the actions happening within each theme area please see the full Action Plan in section 6.

In developing the strategy, it became clear that some issues ran throughout all our action areas. These cross-cutting themes are:

Education & training

- Awareness raising and communication with residents- to enable and empower
- Education and training of the next generation
- Upskilling of existing trades to enable the transition to a low carbon economy
- Ongoing upskilling of council officers

Funding

- Developing community investment mechanisms to enable local sustainability and climate initiatives.
- Support of community initiatives by the council to provide confidence to investors/ donors and provide oversight on project delivery and carbon savings.

Evidence and targets

- Good quality and reliable data and evidence is needed to back up our decision making and action prioritisation.
- Data and targets will need collating and updating- we need to ensure we are not duplicating the work of others or creating unnecessary work.

Planning policy and building control

- Strengthen planning policy in our new local plan and through guidance for, and early conversations with, developers.

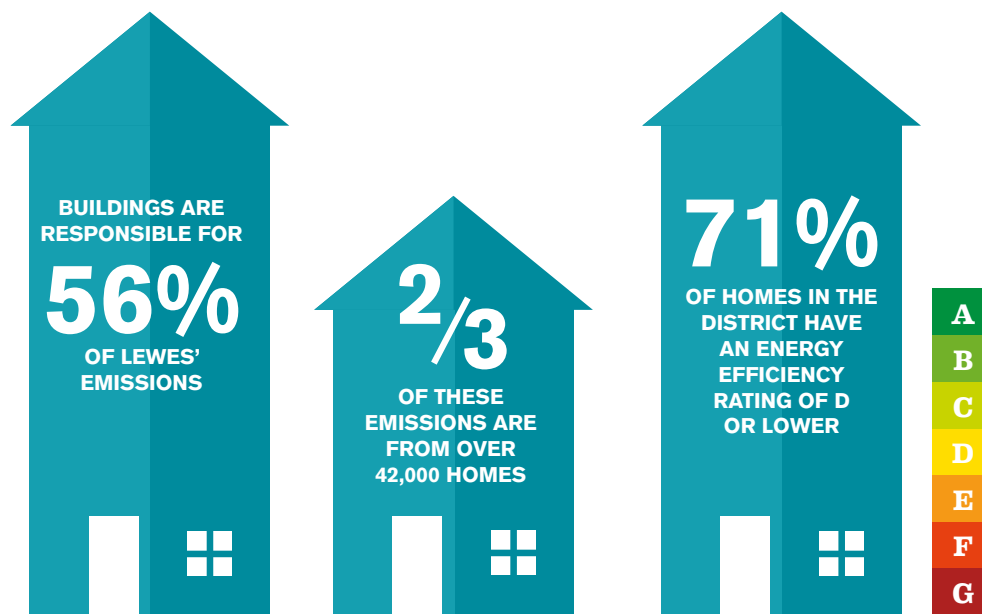
Supporting the action of others

- Obviously the council cannot deliver a net zero district alone but the strategy can support partnership working and the work of others across all action areas.

Energy and the Built Environment



Energy use is the largest source of emissions from our district. This action area covers all the energy consumed by everyone within our district with regards to heating and powering their homes and businesses. It also covers the councils own work to make its buildings net zero carbon and the things we can do to directly influence others such as through planning policy and our housing stock.



2030
GOALS

1

We will have built and encouraged affordable, energy efficient and climate resilient homes.

2

We will have shifted the district to low and zero carbon heat and electricity

3

We will engage early on with developers to ensure they produce low cost, low energy buildings.



12_{MW}

**INCREASE
IN DISTRICT SOLAR
CAPACITY
BY 2025**

50%

**REDUCTION IN
COUNCIL ENERGY
CONSUMPTION
BY 2030**

60%

**REDUCTION IN
COUNCIL CARBON
EMISSIONS
BY 2025**

Key Council actions for 2021/22

- Decarbonising Our Housing Stock project - developing and carrying out energy efficiency and low carbon pilot studies so we can plan a way to decarbonise all of our housing by 2030
- Complete the Asset Review for our non-housing buildings and land- this will allow us to determine our route to net zero buildings and make the most of our other assets for the benefit of the whole district
- Work with the Greater Brighton Economic Board to develop hydrogen hubs
- Support investment in local renewable energy projects
- Support private homeowners and renters in accessing energy efficiency advice and grants such as through Warmer Sussex and the Government Green Homes Grant scheme

Key actions happening in the district:

- Solar schools - Regional work with community energy companies and East Sussex County Council to put solar panels on schools
- Projects to get rural villages off oil for heating and decarbonise electricity
- CommuniHeat Zero Carbon Village - Community Energy company OVESCO in conjunction with UKPN & Buro Happold and Community Energy South are producing a masterplan to decarbonise Barcombe by 2030
- Net Zero Firle - Community energy company BHESCO is leading this project to install a zero carbon micro grid for heat and power in this off-gas village

Spotlight on: Ovesco



OVESCO is the district's local community run energy services company enabling local investment in solar generation projects to reduce our dependency on imported energy.

So far they have built over 5.25MW including projects on Harveys Depot, Priory School, Kings Academy, Brickyard Farm, Barcombe Nurseries and Landport Community Centre amongst others. OVESCO are partners in wider funding bids including Ouse Valley CARES and Communiheat Net zero carbon village at Barcombe.



Installation on the roof of Priory School, Lewes © Andrew Aitchison

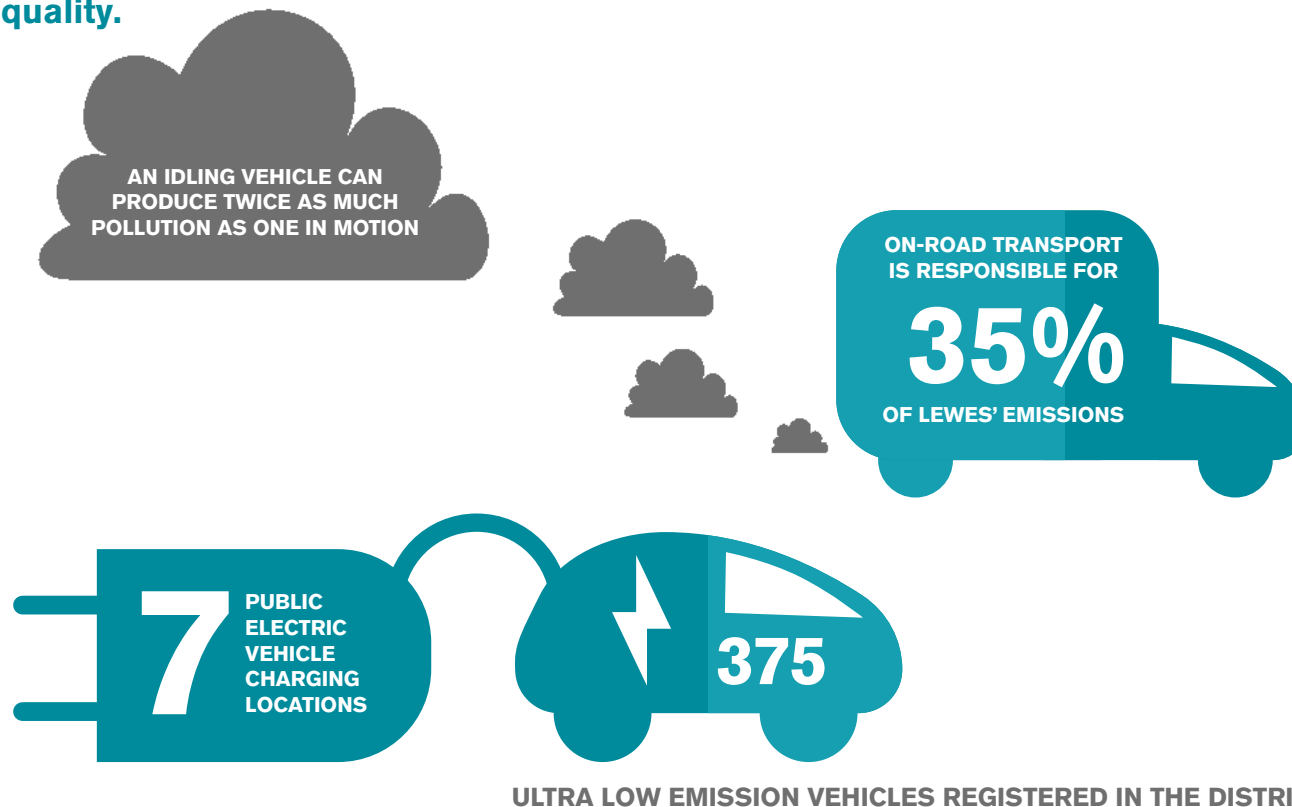
PV installation at Kings Academy, Ringmer © LHW for OVESCO

Sustainable travel and air quality



On-road transport is the second largest source of emissions in the district but it is something that the district council can only influence indirectly. We will facilitate change where we can by working with the community and East Sussex County Council to reduce the need to travel in the first instance and to provide active and low carbon travel options regardless of where in the district you live or travel to.

We have 2 Air Quality Management Areas – one in Lewes town and one in Newhaven. Both these areas have levels of nitrogen dioxide likely to exceed national air quality objectives. Transport is the main reason for the poor air quality.



**2030
GOALS**

We will have improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions by:

1

Reducing reliance on car and need for personal car ownership

2

Encouraging a more sustainable and low carbon district wide transport network

3

We have worked with ESCC to promote and develop sustainable travel across the district



20%

REDUCTION
IN FLEET
FOSSIL FUEL
USE BY 2025

WE WILL
HAVE A ZERO
CARBON FLEET BY
2030

WE WILL
HAVE EV CHARGE
POINTS AND CYCLE
PARKING IN ALL
OUR CAR PARKS BY

2025

NEW AIR QUALITY
ACTION PLANS
FOR LEWES AND
NEWHAVEN BY END

2021

Key Council actions for 2021/22

- Production of the fleet pathway to be zero carbon by 2030
- Assess all car parks for electric vehicle charge points and start installations
- Develop a path towards a low carbon taxi fleet
- New Air Quality Action Plans to be produced for Lewes and Newhaven

Key actions happening in the district:

- Working with East Sussex County Council to improve rural public transport
- Work with East Sussex County Council to deliver the new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Decarbonisation of public transport through use of hydrogen buses and delivering solar power direct to the railway through the Riding Sunbeams project
- Development of Hydrogen fueling hubs

Spotlight on: The Lewes Electric Car Show



The Lewes Electric Car Show has run now for 2 years thanks to Transition Town Lewes, OVESCO, Sussex EV Group and hosts Harvey's Brewery.

800 people visited the last show in 2019 which featured 21 hybrid and fully-electric cars and their owners plus a range of electric motorbikes and mopeds. The show has provided an opportunity for visitors to talk to real-life owners as well as EV experts on the realities of going electric.

Transition Town Lewes have put together some useful information on the show and EV's on their website here [\[insert link\]](#)



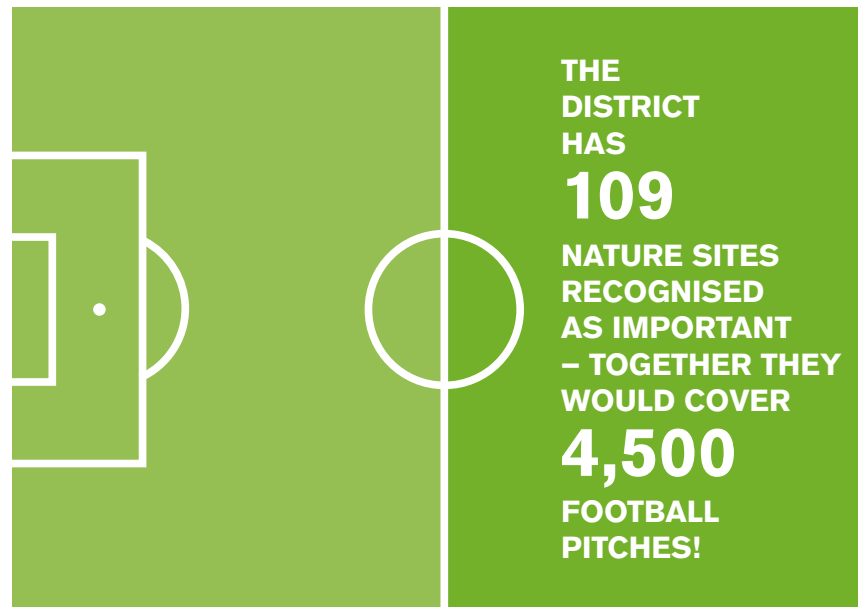
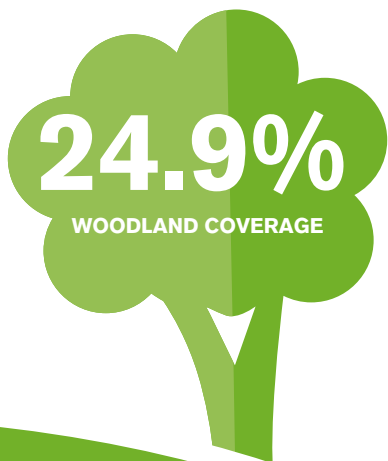
Images courtesy of
Transition Town Lewes



Biodiversity



The land (soil and plants) within the district currently captures 23.9 kt CO₂e per year. Biological diversity is essential and intrinsically linked to every part of our health, livelihoods and our future wellbeing. Healthy and resilient societies depend on giving nature the space it needs yet globally wildlife populations have reduced by 60% and insects by 75% since the 1970's. This action area includes work to improve our natural environment and capture carbon through nature based projects.



2030 GOALS

1

All developments maximise the opportunities for well considered net gains in biodiversity

2

We have increased biodiversity on Council owned and managed landholdings

3

We have engaged and enabled community led nature-based projects and we are involved in partnerships that promote natural capital across the district, including the coast and sea



ALL MAJOR
DEVELOPMENTS TO
ACHIEVE AT LEAST
20%
BIODIVERSITY
NET GAIN
BY 2025

METHOD
TO DETERMINE
LOCATIONS FOR
TREE PLANTING WITHIN
THE DISTRICT BY
2022

TO IMPLEMENT
A CARBON CAPTURE
FUND NO LATER
THAN
2025

Key Council actions for 2021/22

- Adopt a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- Produce a Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Advice Note to advise developers
- Carry out biodiversity training for Officers
- Develop a way of funding community nature based projects
- Develop a method to measure the carbon capture of nature based projects

Key actions happening in the district:

- Partnership delivery of the Local Nature Partnerships 'Sussex Natural Capital Investment Strategy'
- Ouse Valley Cares – development of projects for a National Lottery Grant bid led by the South Downs National Park
- Changing Chalk- Partnership bid led by the National Trust to connect people to nature and address challenges faced by the South Downs

Spotlight on: Lewes Cemetery



Much of Lewes Cemetery is a Designated Local Wildlife Site, recognised as a natural wildflower meadow with many special and exceptionally valuable native plants such as the beautiful purple triangles of the Pyramidal Orchids, the vibrant yellows of the Mouse-ear Hawkweeds, and the hue of delicate white and yellow Bedstraws.

Lewes District Council has changed the management regime in parts of the Cemetery allowing 3.5 acres of traditionally mown grass to become a wildflower meadow. Surveys have been undertaken by the local group Wildflower Lewes and they have also undertaken wildflower plug planting.

To understand the importance of the bee and wasp populations in the cemetery, a series of visits was undertaken throughout summer and early autumn 2020 by James Power. These visits, which will only represent a snapshot of what is present, confirmed that the cemetery supports a good assemblage, including four nationally scarce species. In total, 72 bees and wasps were recorded, representing 34 species, 15% of the total number found in Sussex.

In November 2020 eighteen trees were planted around the perimeter of the Cemetery with the help and funding from the Friends of Lewes. Additionally in early 2021, with funding through the South Downs National Park Authority, works will be undertaken to create a hedgerow on the southern boundary and an area of disturbed ground will be returned to a chalk grassland wildflower meadow.

We are looking to manage the whole of the Cemetery more sensitively to wildlife; maintaining our pesticide free status and monitoring the condition of the wildflower populations to inform future cutting regimes.



Photo courtesy of Wilf Power

Agriculture and food



Emissions from agriculture account for more than 37kt CO₂e per year and are about 8% of the districts total emissions - this figure is slightly higher than is reported in our baseline report as we commissioned a further more detailed study into agricultural and land use that can be found here [\[insert link\]](#).

About 75% of these emissions are from livestock with the remaining 25% from fertilizer application and are typically nitrous oxide emissions

The Council will work with landowners and others such as the National Farmers Union and Sussex Wildlife Trust to work toward more sustainable farming methods and we will develop the local food economy.



2030 GOALS

We will work with in partnership with others to:

1

Educate and enable residents to access affordable, local and seasonal food through supporting opportunities for local production and distribution

2

Implement a district and Sussex wide food strategy

3

Enable and support local food growing using regenerative farming methods



**NFU TARGETS
UK NET ZERO
AGRICULTURE
BY**

2040

**TO HAVE ENGAGED
WITH ALL COUNCIL
TENANTS ABOUT FOOD
GROWING BY**

2022

**GOVERNANCE IN
PLACE AND A
DRAFT STRATEGY
FOR A FOOD
PARTNERSHIP BY**

2022

Key Council actions for 2021/22

- Work with council tenants to enable food growing
- Identify possible land that could be made available for food growing
- Work with existing farmers/local food markets to expand on good practice and access new communities
- Work with district and regional partners on food networks and partnerships

Key actions happening in the district:

- Development of a district-wide food partnership
- Development of a food systems map
- Encouragement of nature friendly farming through the South East Downs Farm Cluster

Spotlight on: Lewes Friday Food Market



Lewes Friday Food Market grew from an idea developed by volunteers from the Transition Town Lewes Food Group and has developed to be run by the Lewes Local Community Interest Company as a not-for-profit initiative. It has mains aims of:

- Developing and supporting sustainable local food systems and culture
- Making it easier for people to buy good quality, healthy, seasonal food
- Supporting and providing a platform for small local food producers and growers
- Reducing the use of single use plastic
- Supporting distribution methods which reduce carbon emissions
- Supporting food related community initiatives and the local economy

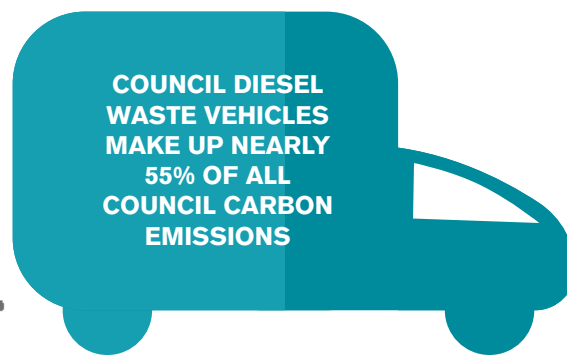


Reducing Emissions from Waste



To reduce emissions from the waste we generate we must work to reduce the districts waste first, then increase the amount we recycle. The council collects around 278kg of waste per person per year and that which is not recycled is incinerated.

Within this action area we include the emissions from our waste collection vehicles, this source of emissions is over half of the total council carbon baseline. The vehicles are currently run on diesel which contains other pollutants as well that lead to poor air quality and pollution.



1

We will have reduced emissions from waste collection

2

We have minimised the waste generated by residents, businesses and visitors recycling)

3

We will have increased the proportion of the waste collected by the council that is recycled and reduced the emissions from this activity where we can influence and control this



PATHWAY TO
ZERO CARBON
WASTE FLEET
PRODUCED
BY END OF
2022

ZERO CARBON
WASTE FLEET BY
2030

55%
OF WASTE
IS RECYCLED
BY
2025

Key Council actions for 2021/22

- Undertake the waste fleet review
- Eliminate use of unnecessary paper within Democratic Services
- Prepare a communications plan to encourage Reduce, Re-use, Recycle
- Develop and take forward new planning guidance to reduce construction waste

Key actions happening in the district:

- Local REFILL campaigns to promote access to water and reduce plastic bottles [[insert link](#)]
- Plastic Free initiatives [[insert link](#)]
- East Sussex County Council review of the Waste and Mineral Local Plan (next consultation due 2021)

Spotlight on: Refill Seaford & Newhaven



Refill Seaford and Newhaven

In January 2018 a group of local people decided to take action, having completed beach and beauty spot litter picks in the past we decided to set up a Facebook Group to raise awareness and to encourage people to reduce single-use plastic from their lives.

The initial response has been encouraging from a variety of businesses, now we want to spread the word wider and involve more and more local organisations and businesses.

The official launch was at Frankie's Beach café on Seaford Esplanade on 1st September 2018 mainly sponsored by South East Water and assisted by some great local volunteers.

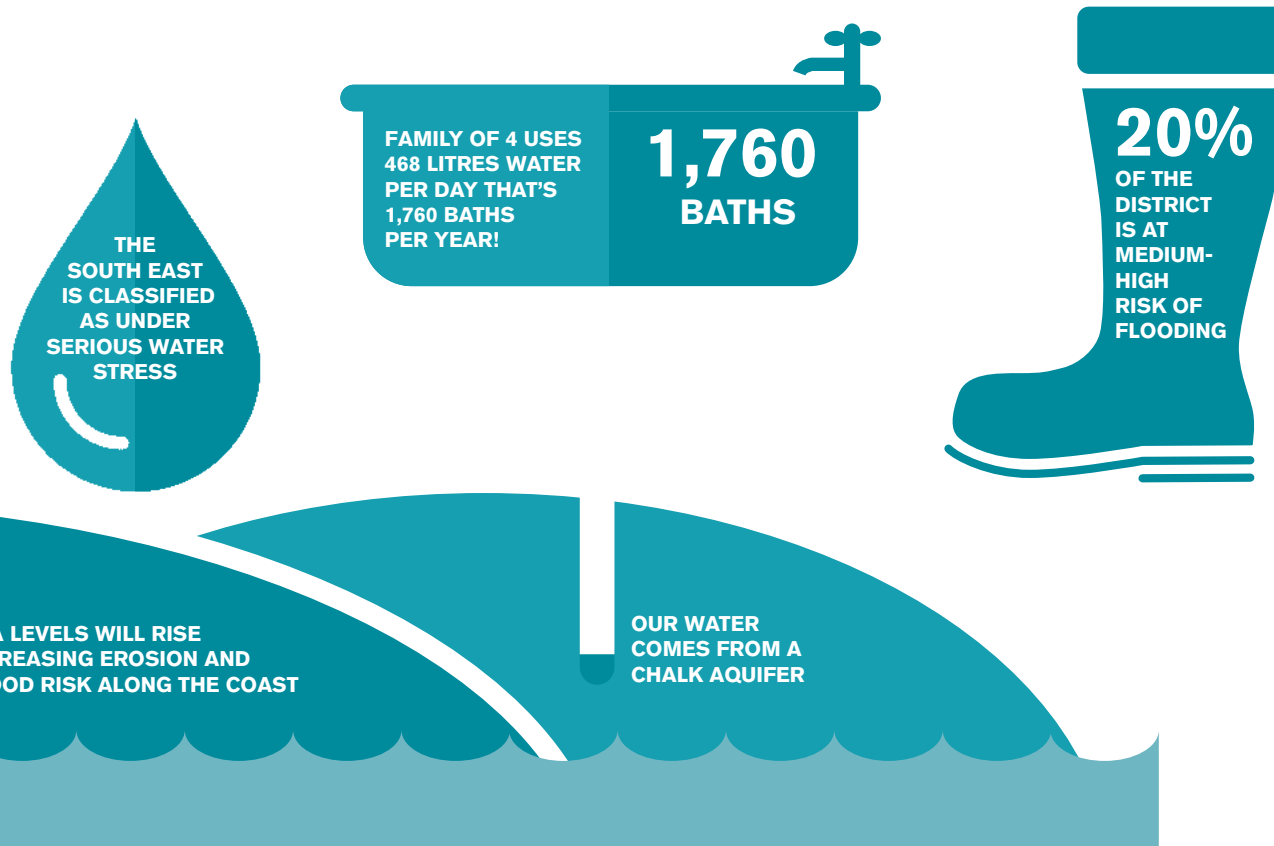




This action area covers the full spectrum of water use and impacts within the district. It covers water consumption as well as flooding from rivers, surface water and the sea and also includes coastal erosion.

We expect to see warmer and drier summers increase water consumption whilst milder and wetter winters will likely see us experience more flooding. Severe rainfall events are likely to increase throughout the year further increasing the risk of flooding.

Whether delivering coastal erosion or flood protection the mechanisms for delivery is complex and the works themselves are expensive, delivered at locations where are inherently dangerous. There is no duty to deliver flood or coastal protection, the Environment Agency and local authorities operate under permissive powers. Partnership working is essential and complex.



2030 GOALS

We will work in partnership with others to achieve:

1

Reduced water consumption in the district; conserved and protected our water resources, including our aquifer

2

Well managed and protected waterways and coastal areas that benefit residents and the natural environment

3

Communities that are resilient against flooding and coastal erosion



100

LITRES
OR LESS WATER
CONSUMED PER
PERSON PER DAY
BY 2030

NEW BUILDS TO
BE WATER
NEUTRAL BY
2030

SOUTHERN
WATER TO
DELIVER UP TO

50,000

WATER EFFICIENCY
AUDITS BY END
OF 2021

ZERO
NEW BUILD
UNITS APPROVED
CONTRARY TO
ENVIRONMENT
ADVICE
REGARDING
FLOODING

Key Council actions for 2021/22

- Work in partnership with the Environment Agency to explore the options viable to manage the risks posed by the undefended cliffs at The Esplanade, Telscombe Cliffs.
- Host coastal management workshop
- Prepare communications (in partnership with water companies) with residents on reducing domestic water use
- Work with partners to develop comms and possible incentives for developers to reduce water consumption and mitigate flood risk
- Produce guidance for developers targeting 100 litres per day in new builds

Key actions happening in the district:

- Expansion of the successful Sussex Flow Initiative to promote natural flood management
- Southern Water's Target 100 campaign to reduce water use
- Southern Water's domestic water efficiency audits
- The Aquifer Partnership will continue to collate knowledge and understanding of our aquifer in order to help us all protect it.

Spotlight on: Sussex Flow Initiative



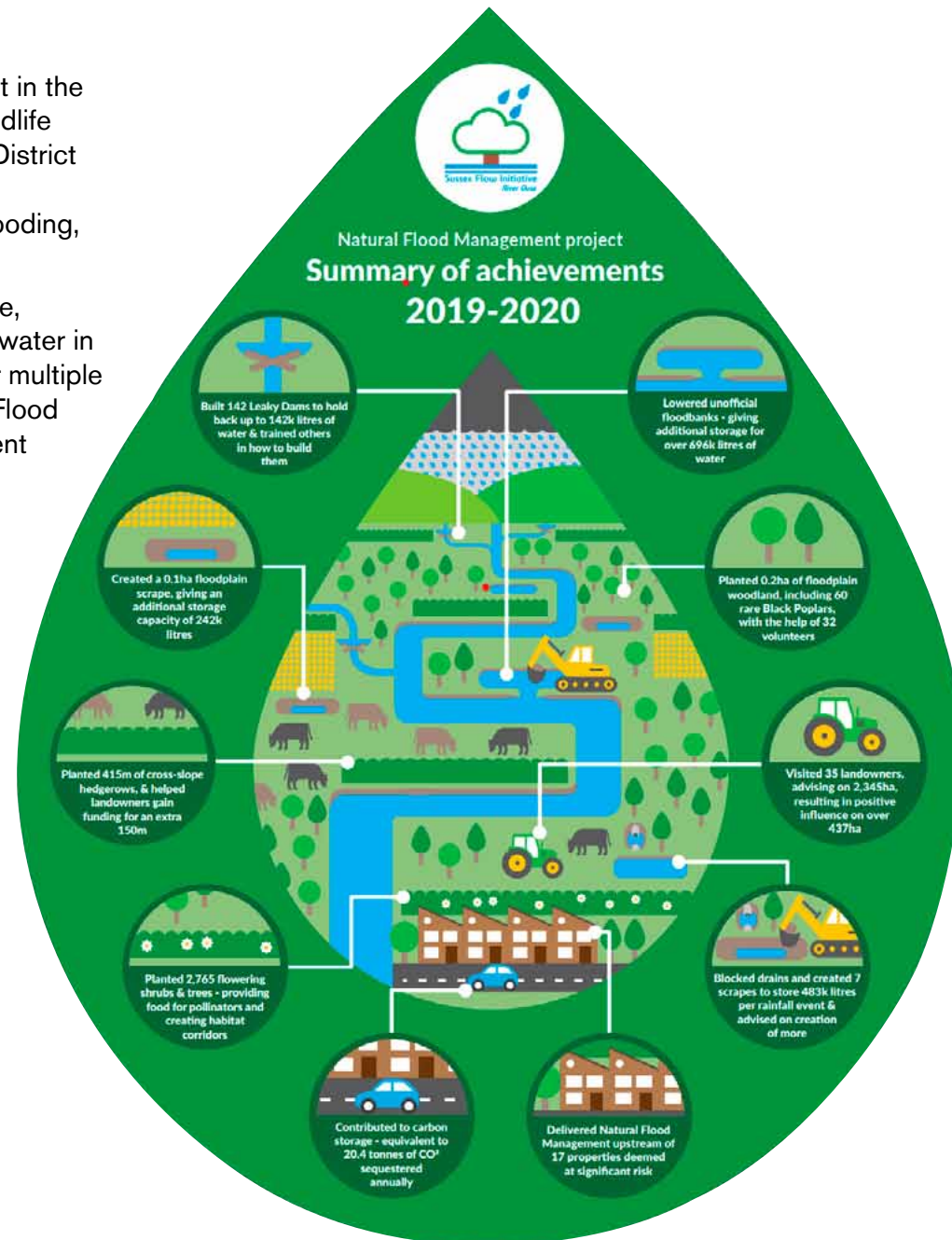
Sussex Flow Initiative

Sussex Flow Initiative (SFI) is a natural flood management project in the River Ouse catchment, and is a partnership between Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust, the Environment Agency and Lewes District Council. The project was originally set up to see if Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures can create positive benefits for flooding, the environment and society in a lowland setting.

SFI works with landowners, local people and others to investigate, promote and create natural features designed to slow and store water in the landscape and to help reduce flood peaks. We aim to deliver multiple benefits for people and wildlife, as well as to show how Natural Flood Management can be used to support traditional flood management methods to help reduce flooding.

Our Natural Flood Management work includes:

- Introducing Large Woody Debris – leaky dams
- Ditch blocking
- Flood storage areas
- Recreating and restoring washland meadows
- Managing and creating riparian corridors
- Cross-slope hedge planting
- Riparian tree planting (along riverbanks)
- Woodland planting and management
- Soil management to improve capacity to absorb water (infiltration)





The Community wealth building (CWB) approach sits alongside sustainability as the two key policy drivers for the council. As an anchor institution the council can use its spending power and influence to drive investment into the local economy enabling a green economic recovery and local job creation and retention.

The Circular economy seeks to keep resources in use for as long as possible then recover and regenerate the materials at the end of each service life – it links with the CWB agenda in that we can generate local employment and wealth by doing this within our community – re-use networks are a good example of this.

This action area links with many of the other areas within this strategy through things such as decarbonising our housing and creation of community investment vehicles.



1

The Council has a sustainable procurement policy that facilitates local supply chains and encourages a circular economy

2

The council has enabled local re-use networks

3

Investment has been made into the local urban, coastal and rural economies increasing local employment opportunities and reducing income inequality

4

Local skills, supply chains and employment opportunities are improved as a result of our partnerships with East Sussex College Group, public sector organisations, social enterprises, cooperative businesses, as well as other forms of business, particularly focussing on clean and green technologies

Circular Economy and Community Wealth

The Council commissioned the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to undertake a diagnostic study and consequently offer recommendations to the council on how it could deliver a CWB based approach to its work. This study was undertaken during the summer of 2020 and involved in-depth interviews with a range of council staff and partners, as well as consideration of various council policy and strategy documentation.

‘Re-imagining Lewes District Action Plan’ was informed by the final report and will develop 5 pillars of Community Wealth Building using the power and influence of the Council as an anchor institution with a procurement spend of over £7.5 million per year to build a platform for greater local and community ownership of the economy whilst building back a greener post-COVID economy.





COMMUNITY
INVESTMENT IN
LOCAL PROJECTS IS
POSSIBLE NO
LATER THAN
2025

AT LEAST
HALF OF ANNUAL
COUNCIL SPEND IS
WITH SUSSEX BASED
PROVIDERS BY
2030

ALL ANCHOR
INSTITUTIONS WITHIN
THE DISTRICT HAVE
TAKEN UP THE CWB
APPROACH

Key Council actions for 2021/22

- Deliver the Reimagining Lewes District Action Plan
- Mobilise a district wide approach to develop the green economy
- Analyse procurement and commissioning spend
- Develop a localised social value framework
- Deliver the Net Zero Innovation Fund project – Alternative finance models

Key actions happening in the district:

- Team East Sussex Plan- 'think local, act local' embedded as key mission to focus procurement on local providers.
- Greater Brighton Economic Board 3 pillar approach to recovery of economic, environmental and social resilience
- Set up of Lewes District Anchor Network

Spotlight on: Locally constructed social housing



A new development of highly sustainable council homes in Newhaven has been completed during 2020. The 13 modular flats in Fort Road incorporate a host of eco-friendly and sustainable features, including the latest solar panels that will feed energy into hi-tech batteries, effectively taking the homes 'off-grid' for up to three months of the year.

The two-bedroom and one-bedroom apartments have been built by local employer Boutique Modern, a specialist manufacturer of modular homes. The firm designs and builds the properties in their local factory in Newhaven before moving them to the site for installation. 60% of the workforce on this project came from the local college.



Part 5

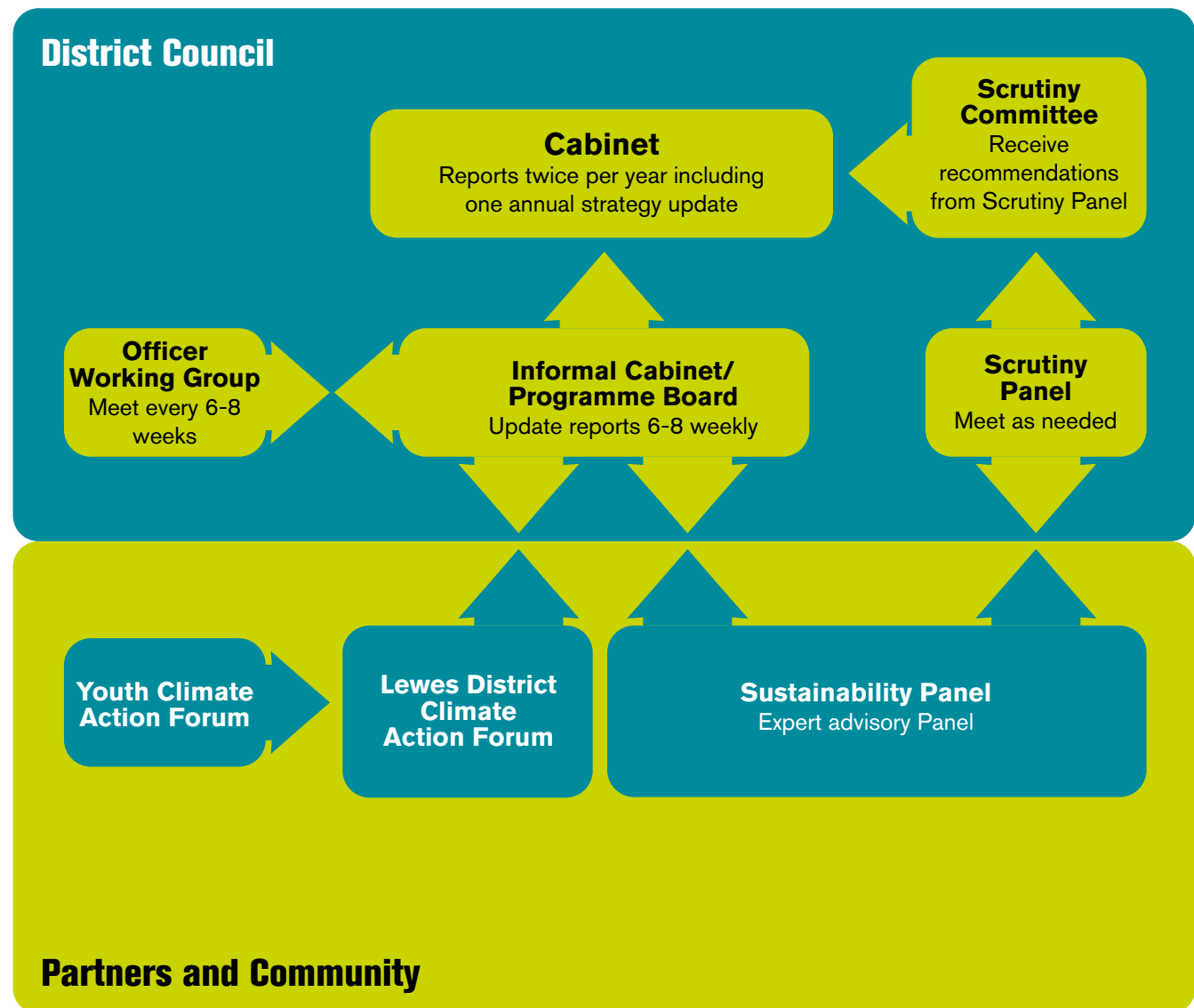
Delivering the strategy



Delivering the Strategy

The council acknowledges that some areas of the action plan are less developed than others and some workstreams will evolve over time as we work out the best solutions. We also appreciate the amount of time that can be spent on monitoring and reporting to the detriment of project delivery.

To ensure the action plan has appropriate monitoring and oversight at a senior level within the council the strategy will be overseen as follows:



Tackling Residual Emissions

In order to achieve the net zero carbon goal it is expected that the Council will have to carry out some degree of offsetting.

Offsetting is where we pay an amount of money towards projects that reduce carbon emissions somewhere else to the value of the emissions we are still generating.

We are clear that direct action to reduce consumption and emissions is our priority.

'Offsetting' will be considered only as a last resort when no other option exists.

There was clear direction from the draft framework engagement that locally-based projects should be considered before anything out of boundary (called 'Insetting'). It was generally accepted that due to cost the council should not be expected to offset emissions outside of its baseline (scope 3) but that the council should show clear reductions in these indirect emissions to 2030.

The council has committed to invest in projects to capture the residual emissions from its own operations (direct scope 1 & scope 2 sources) by 2030 and will assess the cost of including known scope 3.

We will explore opportunities for projects that capture carbon either through natural carbon sequestration (such as tree planting) or through technological innovation (such as investing in local solar power).

We will research and develop the methodology we could use for primarily local, but possibly regional projects to meet any council residual emissions by 2030.

We will use the opportunity provided to us by the Net Zero Innovation Fund to investigate the potential to **enable community investment** in these or similar projects. This may be in the form of some kind of **council backed community bond** or a **donation-based community fund**, or a combination of the two.

These alternative funding mechanisms will supplement other available funding streams.

It is possible that regional work (such as that by Ouse Valley CARES and the Sussex Local Nature Partnership) on this subject may offer alternative or complimentary models of tackling residual emissions.



Part 6

The Action Plan and Sustainability Indicators

The action plan details the actions underway and planned to start to address the strategic challenges and goals set out in this strategy. The action plan is a live document managed by the internal council Officer Working Group and the Strategy & Partnership Lead-Sustainability.

The plan will be updated and published annually in September.

Alongside this plan sits a suite of indicators. Those that can be reported now have been but some are still in development and depend on the ability to get baseline data. Finalising the indicators will be a key task for inclusion in the 2021 update report.

