

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 7 November 2024

Title: Climate and Nature Strategy Update 2023/24 and Action Plan

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Planning and Regeneration

Cabinet member: Councillor Emily O'Brien, Cabinet member for Climate, Nature and Food Systems

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To provide the new Climate and Nature Strategy and Action Plan for publication

Decision type: Key

Officer recommendation(s): Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the Climate and Nature Strategy Update 2023/24 and Action Plan for publication on the council's website.**
- (2) Confirm that the council is committed to 'Pathway 4' and will work to reduce scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions to deliver a net zero council by 2030.**
- (3) Note the achievements to date and that the strategy and action plan are 'live' documents and are updated and amended on an ongoing basis.**
- (4) To delegate authority to Ian Fitzpatrick Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Planning and Regeneration and Councillor Emily O'Brien, Cabinet member for Climate, Nature and Food Systems, to produce and design an executive summary of the update report for publication on the council's website.**

Reasons for recommendations: To progress the aims of the council's Climate Emergency Declaration (2019) to make the council net zero carbon by 2030 and to assist the same aim to be achieved within the wider district.

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1 Introduction

1.1 This paper reports (through Appendix 1) on the progress of the Climate and Nature Strategy and action plan that was approved by Cabinet in July this year, because of the Climate Emergency Declaration made at Full Council in July 2019. The Strategy sets out the vision for a net zero carbon council and district by 2030.

1.2 Appendix 1 provides an overview of all the amazing work and projects that have been going on in the district and at the council during the year 2023/24 and an update on the progress against our targets and net zero ambition. We provide some analysis into the greenhouse gas emissions of the entire district and a continuation of our reporting on the council's contribution to this

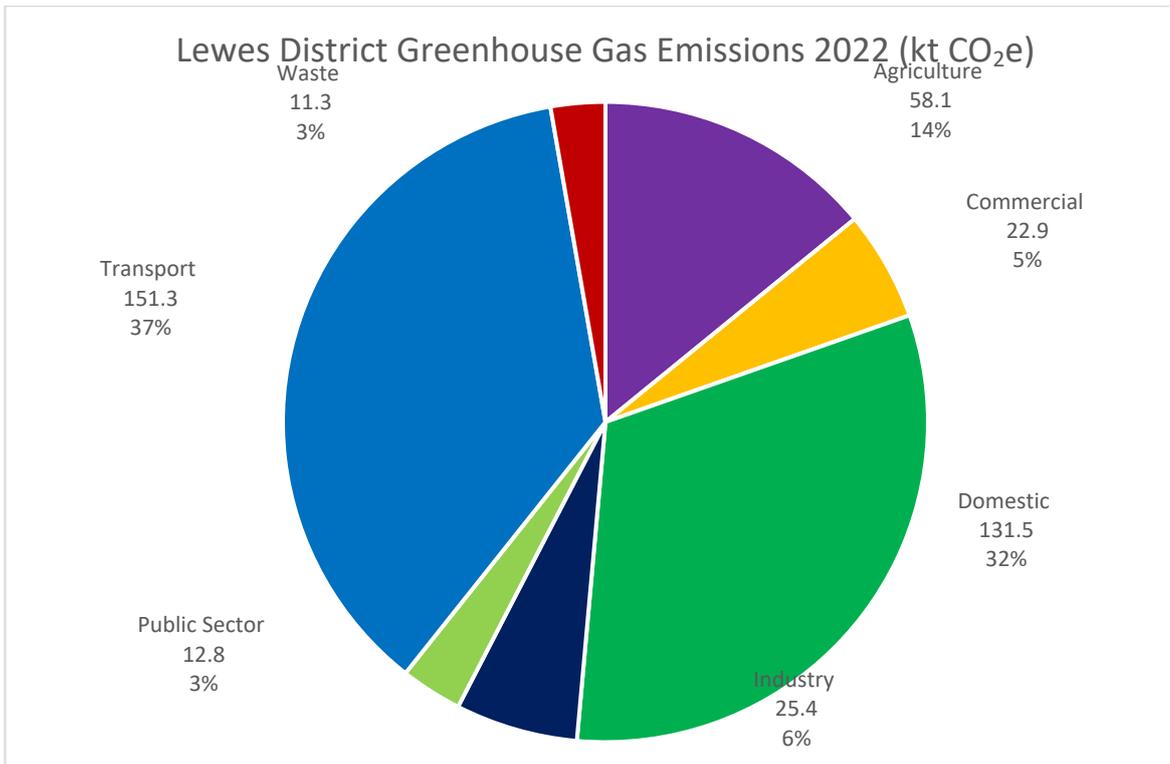
2 Greenhouse gas emissions in Lewes district- up to 2022

2.1 This first section of our update report provides an overview of greenhouse gas emissions generated across the whole of Lewes district, a summary of the data is provided here, please refer to Appendix 1 for more information.

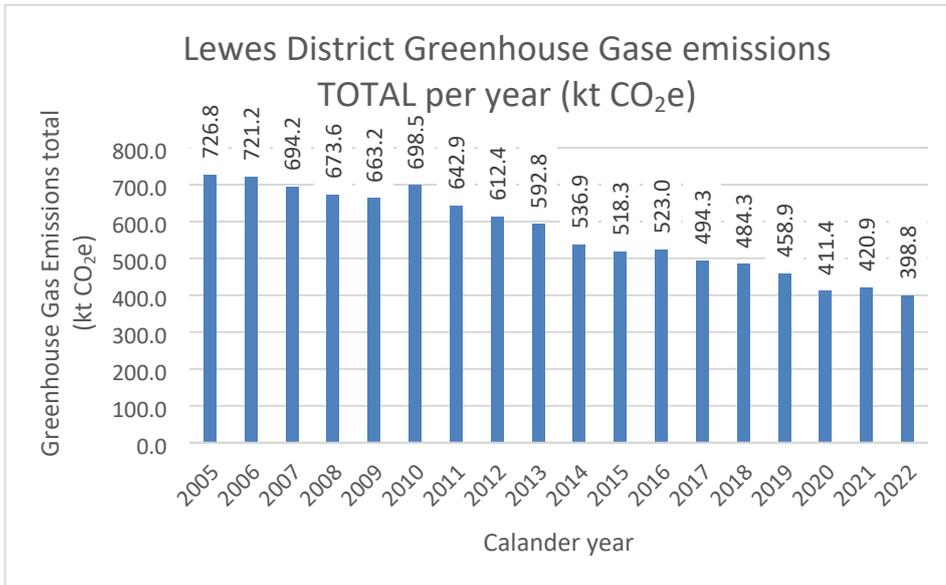
2.2 The district has emitted 398.8ktCO₂e of greenhouse gases in 2022, the most recent data set published by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ)¹.

These greenhouse gas emissions are from a range of sectors as illustrated in the pie chart (graph 1) below, showing across the district the top 3 sources are from transport (37%), the domestic sector (32%) followed by agriculture (14%). Lewes district is semi-rural in nature which may account for the high level of transport use and agricultural emissions.

¹ [UK greenhouse gas emissions: local authority and regional - data.gov.uk](https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-local-authority-and-regional)
<https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-local-authority-and-regional> (link from 28/08/2024)



2.3 Emissions can be tracked back to 2005, the first national data set for district wide emissions. The graph 2 below shows there has been a consistent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Lewes district to 2022, the most recent data available



2.4 From the strategy baseline year of 2018, Lewes district has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 17.6%, a total reduction of 85.9ktCO₂e over 4 years.

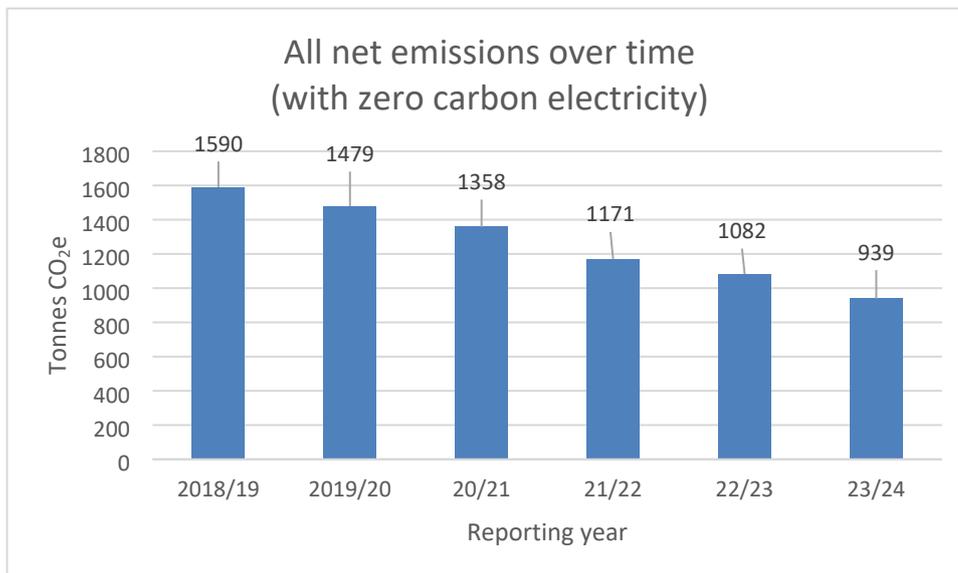
3 Greenhouse gas report for council operations

3.1 The full report is provided in Appendix 1

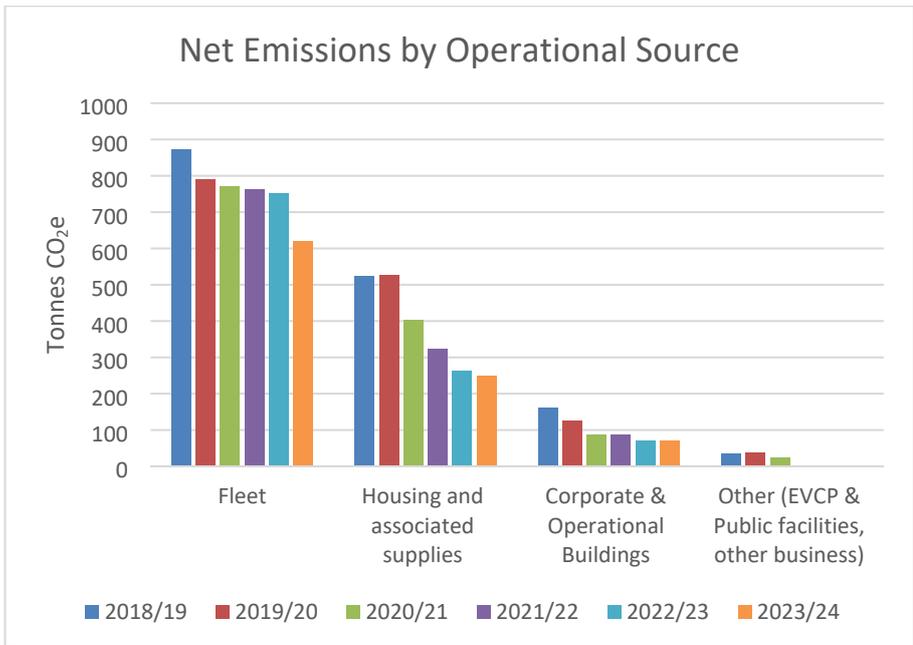
3.2 The council's gross carbon dioxide equivalent emissions for 2023/24 is 1199 tCO₂e.

3.3 The council purchased all its electricity from npower. We use their UK Business Renewable tariff. This tariff is REGO backed and fully compliant with WRI GHG Protocol Scope 2 Guidance and has an Eco-Act assurance stamp. This tariff enables us to reduce our emissions from the consumption of purchased electricity by 100%. This equates to a saving of 260 tonnes CO₂e per year bringing our net emissions down to 939tCO₂e.

3.4 As shown by the graph below the council's carbon emissions have reduced by **41%** since 2018/19. This has been achieved through the procurement of certified 'good quality' green tariff electricity from October 2021, and a rationalisation of its office accommodation that has occurred since 2020 as homeworking became more available to employees. The council has also worked to reduce the mileage of its waste fleet which has in turn also reduced emissions as reported in previous years' carbon updates. We acknowledge that by enabling homeworking the council has likely increased domestic emissions as our staff heat and power their homes more than they would have done otherwise. We have estimated this and included it in our scope 3 emissions as these emissions are no longer within our direct control.



3.5 As shown by graph 6 fleet continues to form the bulk of the council's net carbon emissions at 66% with our communal electricity and gas supplies for our housing stock forming 26.5%. Office buildings form just 7.5% of our net emissions. In early 2024 we transferred our fleet vehicles to HVO (Hydrotreated vegetable oil), we have been able to do this because all our Lewes diesel fleet vehicles refuel via an on-site fuel tank - we anticipate this making a substantial reduction in feet emissions for the 24/25 reporting year. We have illustrated this estimated reduction in the 'Pathways' section of this report.



3.6

The council has carried out some basic modelling to visualise what we need to do reduce our scope 1 and scope 2 carbon emissions to the lowest level possible before we offset remaining emissions to meet our Net Zero by 2030 target. Modelling does not include our scope 3 emissions.

We have provided pathways for our gross emissions. This is to be transparent with regards to our electricity supply being netted off due to a purchased green tariff and allows a visualisation of the emissions based upon gross consumption. Some green tariffs can be considered greenwashing, so it is important to progress reduction measures, on-site generation, heat networks and better purchasing of electricity, for example through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) direct with a renewable energy producer.

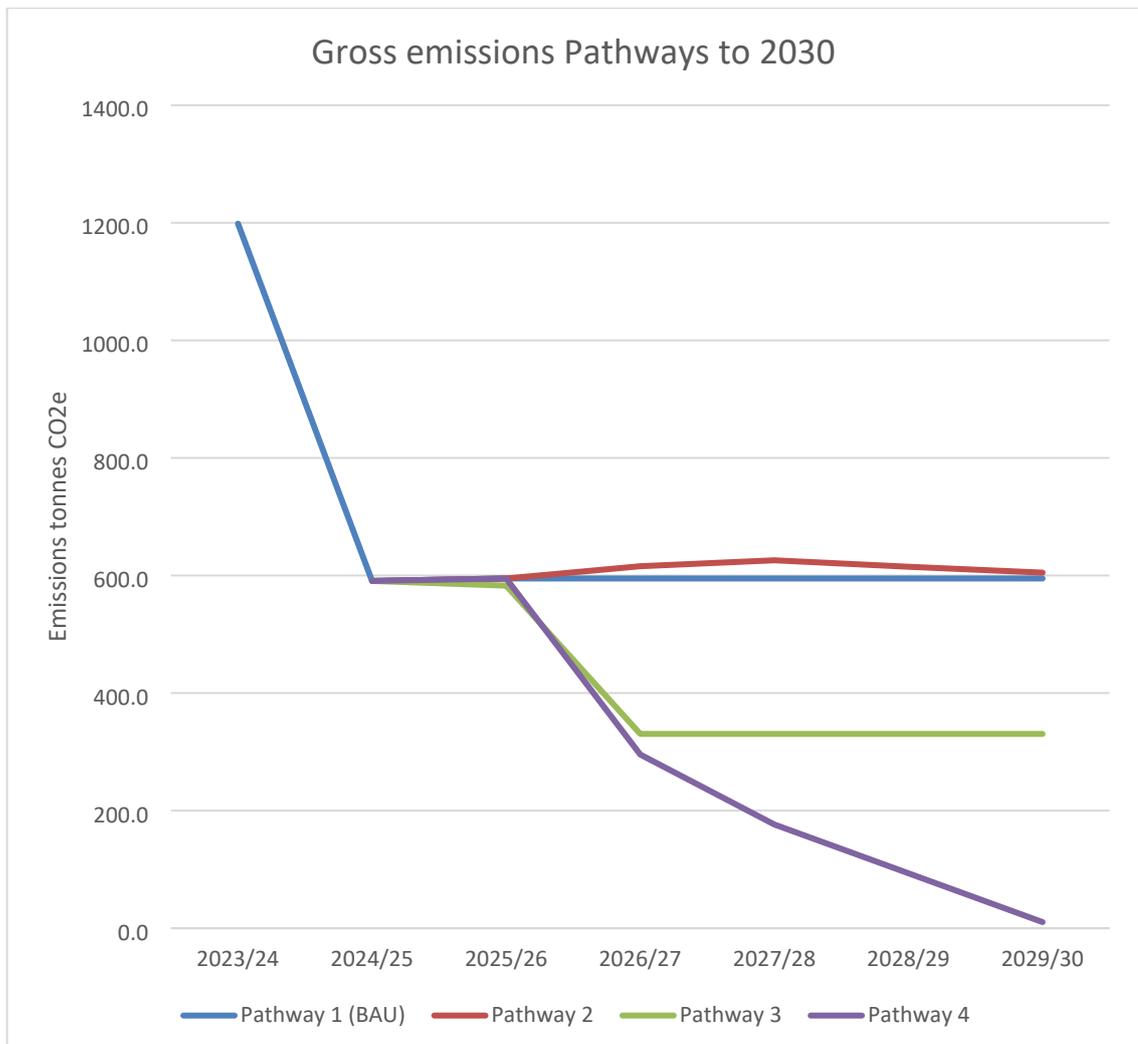
Details on the pathways are provided within Appendix 1.

Pathway 1 remaining emissions at 2030= 594.9 tCO₂e

Pathway 2 remaining emissions at 2030= 604.9 tCO₂e

Pathway 3 remaining emissions at 2030= 330.5 tCO₂e

Pathway 4 remaining emissions at 2030= 10.5 tCO₂e



4 Scope 3 emissions

4.1 Our scope 3 (indirect) emissions are reported in Appendix 1. We will look to review our methodology for reporting scope 3 over the next 12 months. It will however continue to be an evolving area of reporting as we develop and introduce new methods to capture more data.

5 Summary of progress and achievements

5.1 The bulk of the report in Appendix 1 is a review of our progress against our targets, the first report of our performance measures and a collation of case studies showcasing projects to date from across the council and our community partners.

5.2 In summary:

- 4 targets have been completed, or where the target is annual or ongoing, it has been met this year. These are represented by a colour progress score of green within Appendix 1:
 - 1) TSC1 - the publishing of the sustainable procurement policy
 - 2) TEB5 - the adoption of new homes principles
 - 3) TWRS3 - 3km sea defences were surveyed in spring

4) TCW1- Increase in proportion of procurement spend going to local companies-doubled since 2020 to £10.1 million in 2024.

- 5.3
- 3 targets have been assessed as 'at risk', with a colour score of red:
 - 1) TEB2 - 50% reduction in council energy consumption (on 2018/19 baseline) - as of 23/24 there has been an overall reduction in energy consumption of only 7.5%
 - 2) TB1- All major development achieving at least 20% biodiversity net gain-planners do not think we can do/enforce this.
 - 3) TWR2 - District recycling rate increase to 55% (national target) by 2025 - as of 23/24 the district recycling rate is 45%

- 5.4
- 5 targets have all been assessed as amber, mainly due to requiring completion date extensions
 - The remaining 24 targets have been assessed as 'green' - that means they are on course to be completed by the target date.

5.5 Where risks have been highlighted with amber, and in particular, red scores, Officers are working to address issues and if necessary, will look into alternative routes to meet the aims and targets outlined in the strategy.

6 Summary of achievements and case studies provided by our partners

- 6.1
- OVESCO have continued to extend the provision of local rooftop solar PV and has numerous energy champions providing energy advice and home visits to local people.
 - Seaford Community Partnership have published their Seaford Better Cycling Options Study which suggests improvements to cycling within the town and identifies barriers to increased participation and are progressing a new community garden.
 - Cycle Lewes have continued to promote cycling within the town progressing projects to assess cycle parking, install new bike stands, and completing work to plan possible redesigns of the towns streets to give priority to pedestrians, wheelers, and cyclists.
 - Co-Wheels car club have been able to electrify 2 cars thanks to the councils' installation of EV charge points within its car parks at Little East Street and Phoenix Causeway. It is estimated to save just over 5.5 tons of carbon dioxide per year with additional local air quality benefits.
 - Multiple projects completed by the district's climate hubs.
 - Lewes Swift supporters have been installing Swift nest boxes to help existing colonies expand.
 - Wildflower Ringmer have managed to change the mowing regime on the village green to the benefit pollinators on a trial basis for 2025. The group has already improved the biodiversity of many other sites around the village.
 - The UNESCO biosphere is being considered for expansion to include all of Lewes district.
 - Common Cause Co-operative have been working on their Lewes Mosaic Project in partnership with the Railway Land Wildlife Trust to improve biodiversity on six allotment sites across the town.

- The Trees Committee of Friends of Lewes have continued planting trees within the town.
- Lewes District Food Partnership was awarded the bronze award in the recent Sustainable Food Places awards.
- Gardening In Action CIC has published their new Growing Community Toolkit to enable people to setup and run a community group or community garden.
- The Newhaven Town Mayor opened 14 new allotments as part of the Eastside recreation ground project. Grant funding was secured by the district council with match funding provided by Newhaven Town Council.
- Volunteer litter picker groups continue to work actively within the district.
- The Wilder Ouse project has published its end of year report detailing the significant and far-reaching work undertaken to date with regards to delivering nature-based flood solutions and creating a nature recovery network.
- Love our Ouse has carried out a series of consultations, workshops and public events along the Ouse including a workshop to develop the Rights of River Charter, community River Mapping exercise, and a Rights of Rivers Summit delivered in late 2023.
- The Ouse Valley Climate Action project continues to fund and develop projects, some of which are described above, across the grant area. Notable achievements include working with schools.

7 Progress against the action plan

7.1 The action plan is appended to Appendix 1.

7.2 There are currently 85 actions across 8 action areas. There are 4 new actions since the original publication in July.

82% of actions are currently reported as green (complete or on track), 13% as amber (potential or low risks) and 0 are red (at high risk).

Please see Appendix 1 for the full updated action plan.

8 Next steps

8.1 It was proposed by the Scrutiny Emergency Climate Change Panel in September that an executive summary of the update report should be produced to summarise key information and data. This document would be no more than two pages and designed to be as easy to read and understand as possible, it would be published alongside the full update report on the website.

Therefore, this paper requests delegated authority to use the information within the 2023/24 update report to produce new words and graphics for the summary and it is proposed that this is completed before the end of the year.

8.2 We will start to implement the new sustainable procurement policy which will, over time, result in more scope 3 emissions reporting.

- 8.3 We will work to expand (where possible) and improve the accuracy of scope 3 reporting over the next year and report this in the November 2025 update. We may, for example, use a new method to estimate emissions based on spend which will be a temporary solution until contracts require carbon emission disclosure on an annual basis.
- 8.4 We will work to find solutions to the amber and red rated targets and actions within the update report and action plan.

9 Legal implications

- 9.1 The overarching legislation for the Council's climate work is the Climate Change Act 2008 which commits the UK Government to reduce carbon emissions by 2050 to a level at least 100% below the 1990 baseline. This legislation was informed by the 2015 United Nations Paris Agreement which seeks to keep global temperature rises to below 1.5 degrees Celsius. National work and progress on the Act is regularly reviewed and challenged by the Climate Change Committee, whose most recent report can be found [here](#).

Other government documents such as the Clean Growth Strategy (2017) and the Energy White Paper: powering our net zero future (2020) set a national strategic direction or provide guidance and recommendations.

Some actions the Council takes to tackle the climate and nature emergencies are mandatory and required by law, for example changes to waste collections enacted through the Environment Act 2021, and enforcing energy standards through Building Regulations.

As the three recommendations of this report are executive functions and key decisions, Cabinet is the appropriate approval body.

Date of legal advice: 08.10.24

Legal ref: 13389-LDC-OD

10 Financial implications

- 10.1 The financial implications of the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and action plan will be factored into the 2025/26 budget setting process currently underway.

11 Equality analysis

- 11.1 An Equality analysis has been undertaken on the Climate & Nature Strategy 2024. This concluded that:

Improved responses to the impacts of climate change and reducing carbon emissions will generate co-benefits such as improved air quality, and this would generally be positive for all residents in the borough. It was noted also that children will be the owners of our legacy of carbon emissions, and that we have a duty to do what we can to reduce these as soon as possible.

Potentially, vulnerable residents may be more susceptible to the impacts of climate change. For groups such as the elderly, low-income households and those with certain underlying health conditions, tackling climate change is particularly positive. The strategy itself includes actions which will assist different need, including those least able to pay for home improvements to reduce their energy bills, enabling them to cope better with unpredictability of energy prices.

Further analysis is done on a project-by-project basis.

12 Environmental sustainability implications

- 12.1 The strategy is key to delivering the net zero carbon goal of the council by 2030. It will seek to ensure that carbon implications are taken into account throughout the council and in all decisions. The Council's contribution to district emissions is approximately 0.3%.

Implementation of actions to achieve carbon neutrality is key to mitigate the predicted negative impacts of climate change on the environment, economy and communities.

13 Contribution to Community Wealth Building

- 13.1 Community Wealth Building Strategy and Action Plan is a fundamental enabling strand of the Climate and Nature Strategy 2024. Buying more locally, employing local staff, and encouraging local investment in our projects helps increase, and keep, wealth and jobs within our community whilst reducing carbon emissions.

14 Appendices

- Appendix 1 –Climate & Nature Strategy Update Report 2023/24 and action plan

15 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- Climate & Nature Strategy Update 2024 [Climate and Nature Strategy and Action Plan 2024 \(lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk\)](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)