



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Carbon Reduction Delivery Strategy

2020-2030

Version 2 - December 2024





Vision

By 2030, the council's own operations will be clean and efficient, and we will play a positive role enabling the wider borough to achieve net-zero emissions.



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SECTION ONE

Introduction and Scope



1. Introduction and Scope

Bedford Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019

Climate change is a long-term threat, which needs to be addressed now because our economy and infrastructure are built around existing or historic climatic conditions. To tackle this, we are committed to achieving the carbon neutral ambition by 2030.

This Carbon Reduction Delivery Strategy sets out the approach that Bedford Borough Council will take to become Carbon Neutral by 2030, that is the key aim of this strategy. It explains where we are to date, and the future actions the Council will need to take as a whole to meet this carbon neutral ambition. It also touches on some carbon reduction activities being undertaken by the council already to achieve the objective of reducing emissions of climate changing greenhouse gases.

The Council has a corporate responsibility, both as a large employer and a community leader, to take action to reduce its own emissions. The scope of the carbon reduction strategy is mainly focused on our internal operations where we can have the greatest influence, however, as a Council, we will also support efforts in the borough as a whole to reduce carbon emissions, generate, and use energy more cleanly.

We will regularly review this strategy and action plan to ensure that it is up to date and continues to meet our needs. The effects of climate change are being felt in the UK and abroad. The international consensus on tackling climate change is reflected in UK policy, which has imposed legally binding national carbon reduction budgets.

The Council supports measures to address the climate emergency as outlined by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and we intend to meet IPCC targets and the carbon neutral ambition by 2030.

As well as contributing to legal targets to combat climate change, reducing carbon emissions often also results more immediate local benefits such as lower energy bills, cleaner air, improvements to health, better quality housing and economic benefits.



Global Warming Levels:

Global Warming Levels are a simple way to represent climate change at the global scale, which then drives local changes.

They allow us to explore different strands of climate hazard information consistently. Changes are relative to preindustrial baseline (1850-1900). We have already reached +1.6°C.

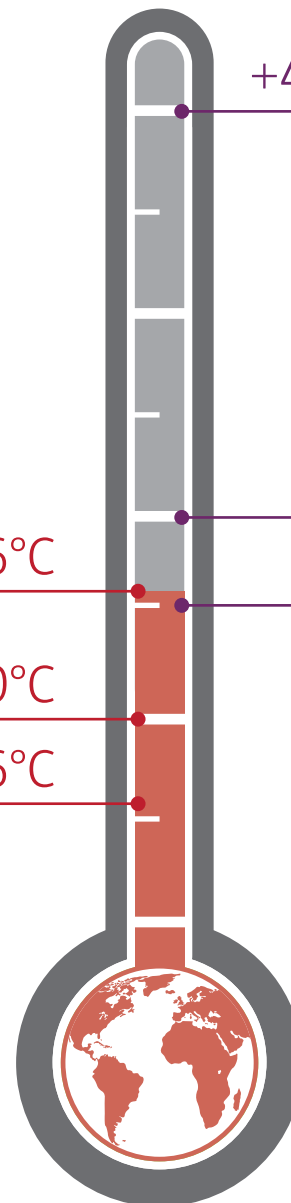
The global temperature is on the rise:

In 2024 the world has exceeded the 1.5°C target, 5 years ahead of the IPCC estimates. Temperatures have been rising since pre-industrial levels, respectively by 0.6°C in 1971-2000 and 1.0°C in 2001-2020.

2024 +1.6°C

2001-2020 +1.0°C

1981-2000 +0.6°C



+4.0°C: Assess Risk

National Climate Guidance:

Independent guidance, adopted by the UK government for the Climate Change Risk Assessment and 3rd National Adaptation Plan, is to prepare for a 2°C rise in global temperature, whilst assessing the risks for 4°C.

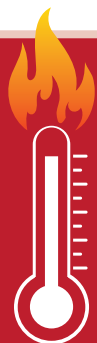
+2.0°C: Prepare

+1.5°C: Target

Paris Agreement:

The Paris agreement says that we must limit global warming to well below 2°C whilst aiming at 1.5°C.

An increase in global temperatures of this magnitude would increase the likelihood of some extreme weather events for example:

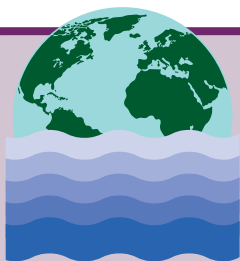


Extremely Hot Weather and Heat Waves

These are likely to increase in frequency, magnitude and length. Conservative projections estimate that a 1-in-20 year hottest day is expected to become a 1-in-2 year event by the end of the century.

Heavier Rains

Longer dry periods are expected to be accompanied by heavier rains. Comparable projections indicate that a 1-in-20 year rainfall is likely to become a 1-in-5 to 1-in-15 year event.



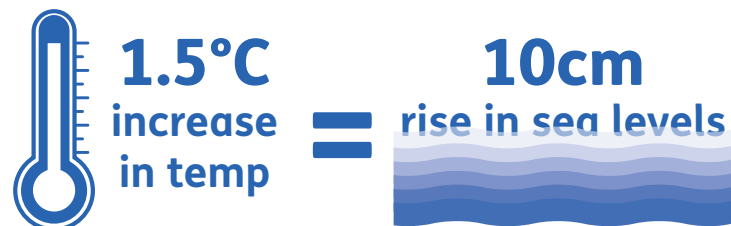
Sea Level Rises

Mean sea level rises are likely to contribute to upward trends in extreme coastal high water levels in the future, which may be exacerbated by more intense storms.

The IPCC report has suggested that we are already seeing the consequences of 1°C of global warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and retreating Arctic Sea ice. Ice sheet instability in Antarctica and/or irreversible loss of the Greenland ice sheet could result in multi-metre rise in sea level over hundreds to thousands of years.

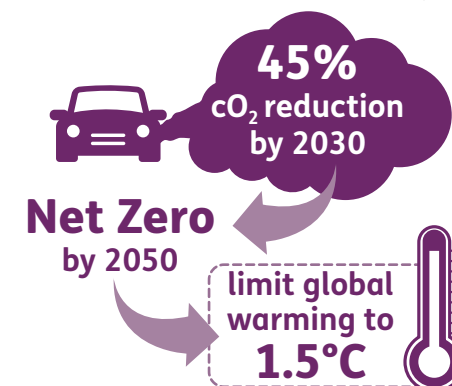


By 2100 global sea level rise would be 10cm higher if temperatures increase above 1.5 - 2 degrees and the Arctic Ocean would be free of sea ice in summer once every 10 years (compared to once every century).



Limiting the warming to 1.5 degrees, rather than the 2 degrees agreed at the Paris convention in 2015, would enable people and ecosystems time to adapt and reduce the risks of complete loss of environments such as, low-lying coastal areas and coral reefs.

However, limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees requires 'rapid and far reaching' transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities. Emissions of carbon dioxide would need to fall by around 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050.



More recently, in 2021 COP26 took place in Glasgow where all attendees agreed to revisit and strengthen their current emissions targets to 2030. The Glasgow Pact increased requirements for long term strategies and the need to keep them up to date and it keeps the 1.5C limit in sight but only if countries take concerted and immediate action. The Climate Change Committee has published The Sixth Carbon Budget² which provides ministers with advice on the volume of greenhouse gases the UK can emit during the period 2033-2037.

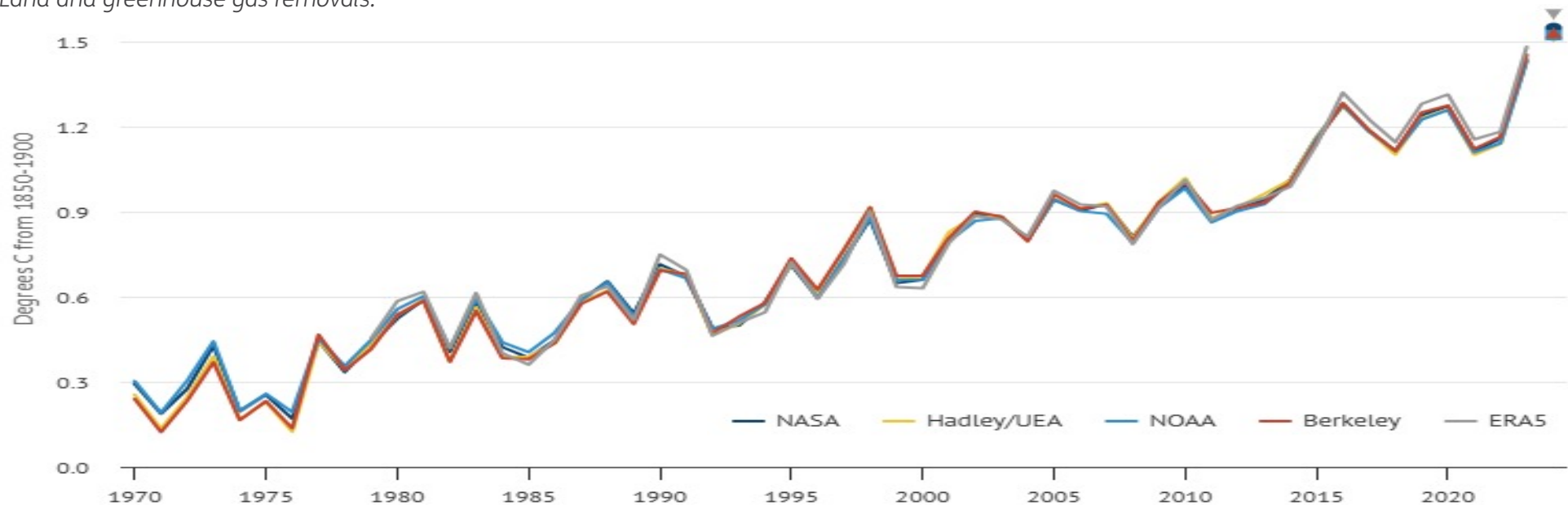
The Budget can be met through four key steps:

- *Take up of low carbon solutions*
- *Expansion of low-carbon energy suppliers*
- *Reducing demand for carbon-intensive activities*
- *Land and greenhouse gas removals.*

The UK, through the Climate Change Act in 2008, is going some way to achieve this with the aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, so far achieving 42% reduction compared to 1990 levels. In 2019, the UK government passed legislation that requires the UK to achieve net zero by 2050.

Ambitious action from authorities, private sectors and local communities is required where society needs to change its laws, infrastructure etc. and commit resources to address this emergency and to make low carbon living the new norm. The IPCC have already suggested that 2024 has reached the 1.5 degrees global warming threshold 5 years earlier than anticipated³.

Global Surface Temperature Records, 1970-2023, and 2024 to-date



2. <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>

3. <https://www.carbonbrief.org/state-of-the-climate-2024-will-be-first-year-above-1-5c-of-global-warming/>

The Met Office Climate Report for Bedford 2020:

What affects the region's weather?

Bedford is located within the Eastern England (EE) climate region. The types of weather that EE experiences across a year include:



Mean annual temperature over EE is high (up to 10.7°C), due to its close position to continental Europe and shelter from south west winds off the Atlantic. In summer, average maximum temperatures are between 20°C and 22°C, compared to winter when they are between 7°C and 8°C.



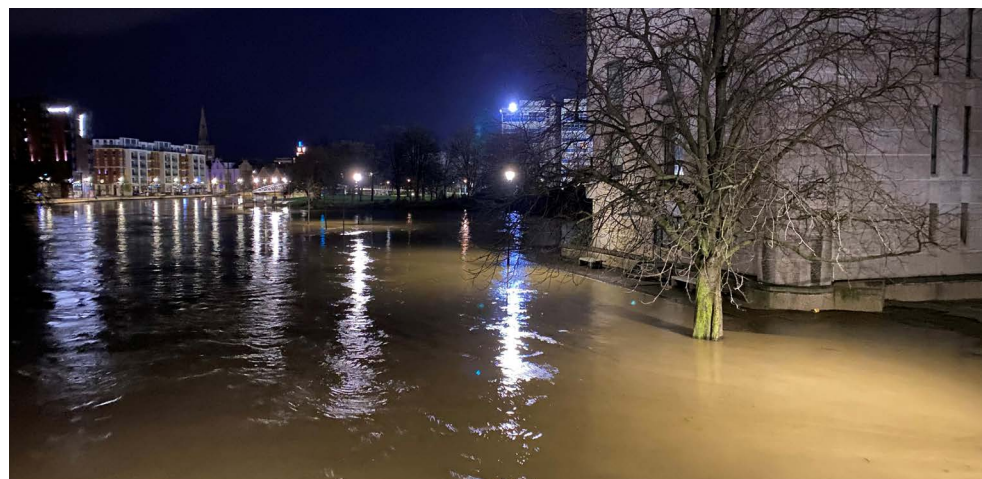
EE has high average summer maximum temperatures of between 20°C to 22°C. Many maximum summer temperature records are held by stations in the region. Some of the UK's highest summer sea temperatures are found in the southern North Sea.



Much of EE receives less than 700mm of rainfall per year; it includes the driest areas of the UK. Average rain amounts are spread relatively evenly across the seasons due to the region's distance away from Atlantic depressions, combined with higher rates of summer convective rainfall.



As EE is generally sheltered from the track of Atlantic depressions, average wind speeds are low. However, the region has the greatest frequency of tornadoes in the UK, which typically last a few minutes and track for around 2 to 5 km.





SECTION TWO

Policy Context

2. Policy Context

This strategy sits within a framework on national regional and local policies relating to energy, emissions and climate change.

The **UK target** is now to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050**

The **Council's Corporate Plan** states that we will **'Protect the Environment'**

This strategy is **supported by other Council strategies**, such as
The Local Plan, Local Transport Plan, and Public Health JSNA

At the wider scale, a number of external strategies and other activities are being developed/implemented alongside this strategy in order to
lead the region towards becoming a zero carbon economy.



3

SECTION THREE

What the Council has achieved so far

3. What the Council has achieved so far

The Council is continuously working to reduce its carbon emissions by implementing projects, which will reduce the amount of energy the Council's buildings consume and encourages the residents and businesses of the Borough to be more energy efficient.

Examples of projects the Council has implemented over recent years include:



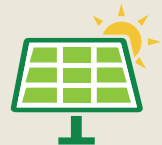
Upgrading the streetlights to LED lanterns across Bedford Borough

Upgrading the lighting at Bedford iLab, Bedford Central Library and other public buildings

Upgrade to Borough Hall lighting (5 floors changing to smart LEDs)

Upgraded the lighting at multi-storey car parks in Bedford Borough

Refurbished residential care homes to a high quality and standard, including better lighting and moving from oil to gas heating and air source heat pumps



Installed 9 solar array systems on various Council buildings

Built a **4.2MW Solar Farm** at Elstow Closed Landfill, generating income and exporting green energy back to the grid.

Installed **evaporative cooling** – saving energy and money by not using air conditioning in the Council's data centre



Reduce fleet emissions by changing from conventional diesel to **Gas to Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO)**



A reduction of **62% carbon emissions** on its own Council buildings from 2009/10 baseline

Installing over **300 electric vehicle charge points** across the Borough



Through the **Mayor's Climate Change Fund...**

2011-2015: helped fund local community projects to save energy (e.g. energy efficient lighting, insulation, solar)

2019-2024: match funded local community projects to save energy and carbon emissions.



Replacing and reducing the number of transformers in Borough Hall basement

Converted from oil heating to **biomass** in the main Borough Hall building



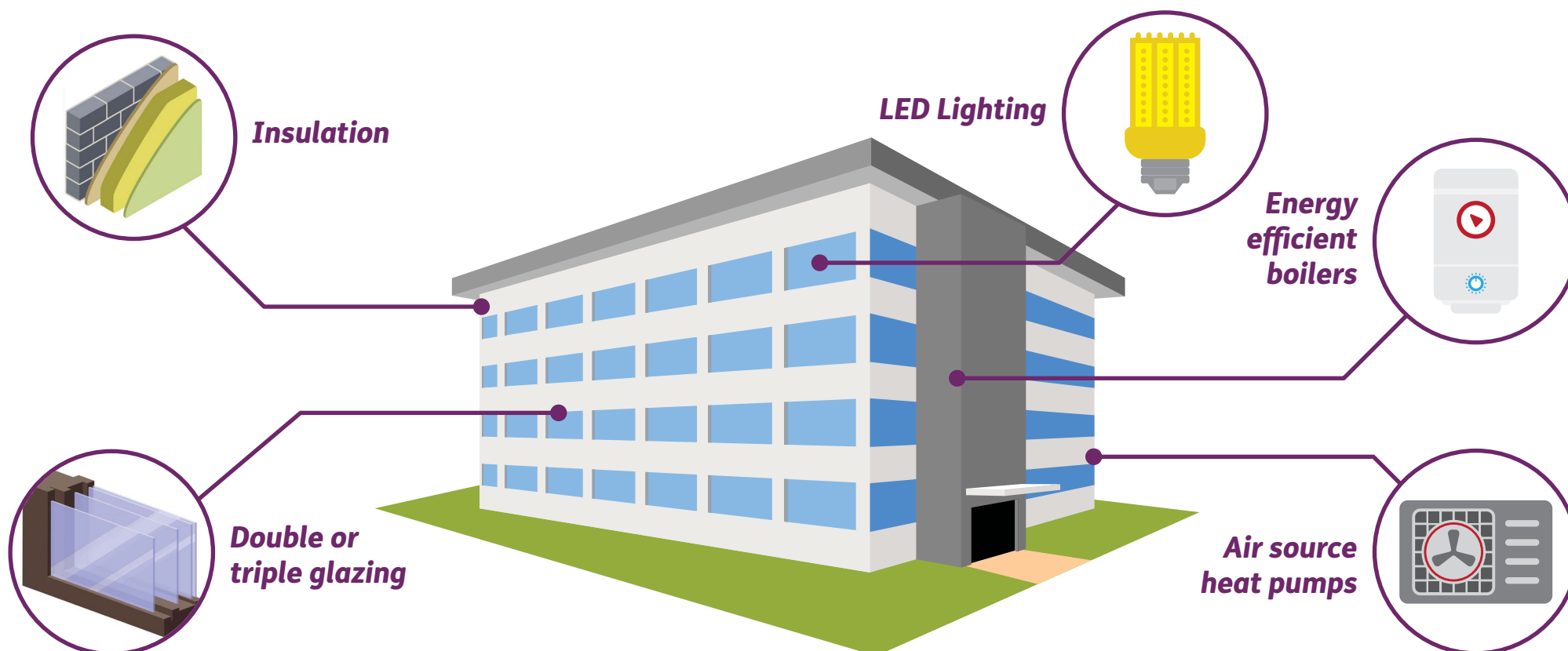
Utilising the renewable power from the local river, the **Hydro Power Facility** has generated income and also educates the local community on alternative sources of energy



Investigating possibilities of an **Energy Park** at a closed landfill site to include anaerobic digestion, ground source heat pumps, solar and battery storage

Improvement projects completed from 2021-24 across the Council sites and schools through R&R, capital and grant funded budgets

Improvement Type	R&R Totals	Schools Totals	Grand Total
Insulation	4	3	7
Double or triple glazing	2	0	2
Energy efficient boilers	4	3	7
LED lighting	4	17	21
Air source heat pumps	0	3	3





SECTION FOUR

Aims, Objectives, Targets and Priorities



4. Aims, Objectives, Target and Priorities

Our aim is to:

Become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030

We will monitor carbon emissions from our own operations and publish these figures annually.

To achieve the carbon neutral target, Bedford Borough Council has three over-arching aims with key objectives:

Reduce:

- *Reduce Council energy usage, through behaviour change and implementation of further projects through the council's current capital Carbon Management Fund.*
- *Replace BBC owned vehicles with suitable electric or hydrogen models when appropriate replacements are available, with immediate moratorium on fossil fuel vehicles under 3.5t, as well as promote sustainable transport alternatives.*
- *Ensure that Council buildings (estates team) has a programme of work to improve EPC ratings.*
- *Work towards the government's goals of no new gas heating from 2025, sooner where possible and 'road to zero' (phase out of petrol and diesel cars) by 2035, again sooner where replacements are available.*

Generate:

- *Generate renewable energy, at the best locations to reduce grid electricity, increase stability of supply and avoid price increases.*

Offset:

- *Consider opportunities to increase Green investment.*
- *To buy 100% renewable electricity through energy contracts.*
- *Any unavoidable emissions to be offset against local community projects e.g. tree planting, maximising green area allocations, green walls/roofs.*

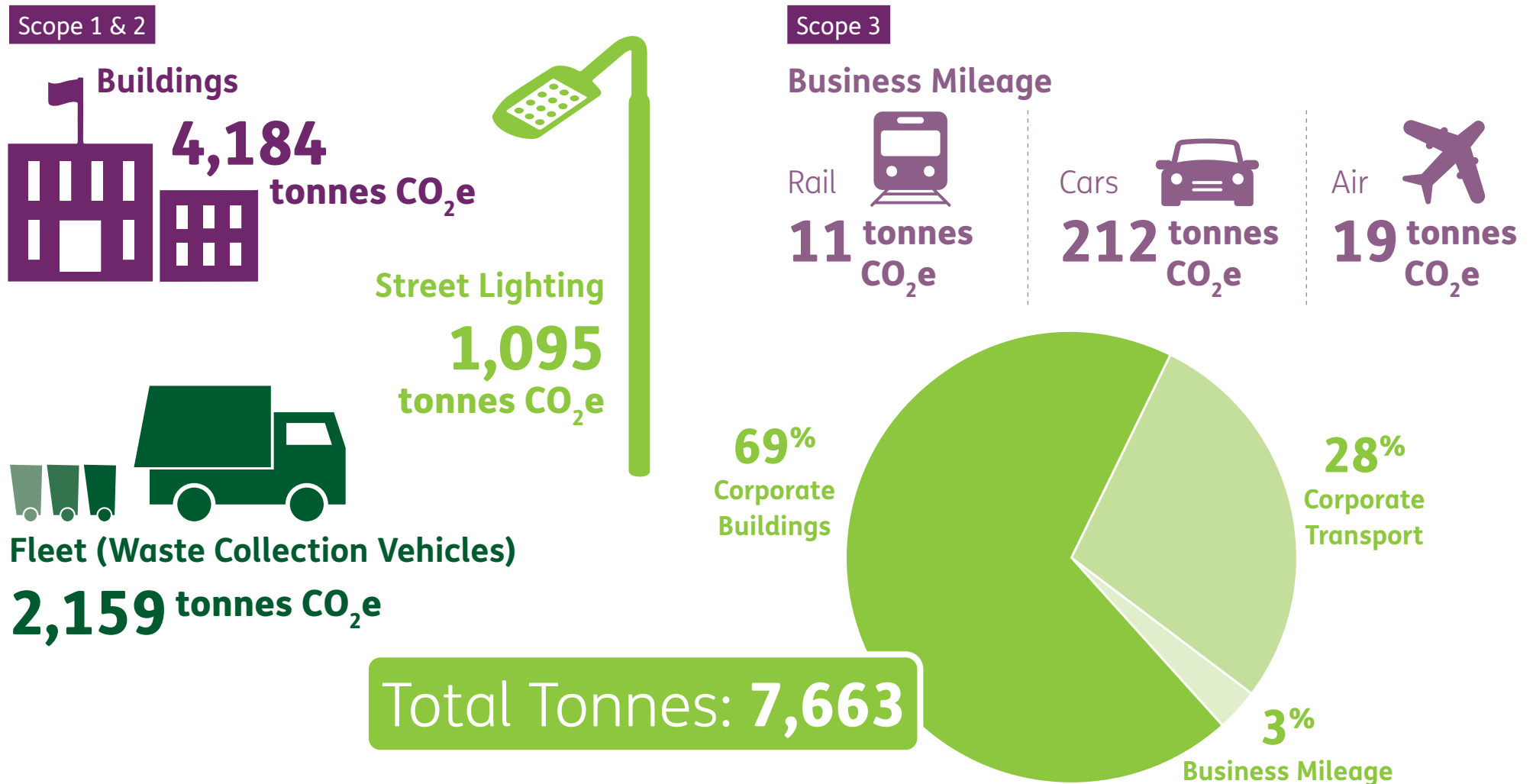
As part of this aim, the Council will:

1. *Incorporate the carbon neutral ambition by 2030 into all Council strategies, work plans and policies including Corporate Plan, Local Plan, Procurement Policies, Finance Strategies etc.*
2. *Work with partners to share best practice.*



4.1. 2018/19 Baseline Emissions from our own operations

Using the Greenhouse Gas Report 2018/19 data, the figures below show the baseline which will be used to measure the year-on-year carbon reduction against to reach our carbon neutral target.



4.2. Steps to implement the Council's Carbon Reduction Delivery Strategy

The first step in implementing a programme of this scale is to identify the resources (both revenue and capital) needed to fund the investigation work.

This work will require technical advice and project feasibility studies to be undertaken to help the council to identify, quantify the financial implications (capital funding and, primarily, revenue savings) for the delivery and sustainability of the project(s).

This information will then enable suitable business cases to be created and results added to the council's medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

To tackle internal emissions we have chosen three priority areas as detailed below:

- 1. Operational Council Buildings*
- 2. Owned Transport*
- 3. Business Travel*



Priority Area 1: Operational Council Buildings

Gas and electricity consumption in our operational buildings account for 69% (5,279 tonnes) the Council's internal carbon footprint.

Operational buildings include our offices, depots, museums, corn exchange, libraries, care homes, and many other small sites. In future years, we expect significant decarbonisation of electricity. The ambitious challenge in meeting our 2030 carbon neutral target will be to decarbonise our heating supplies.

Action Plan

Continually improve energy efficiency and sustainable energy in the Council's existing public building estate by:

Reduce:	Generate:	Offset:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce unnecessary energy consuming equipment. • Purchase only energy efficient equipment. • Enhance buildings with the use of green energy technology. • Comply with Building Regulations (noting the updated changes to Part L) Increasing standards where practicable to do so. • Actively reviewing assets to identify where energy efficiency improvements can be made. • Identifying existing sites which could be suitable for green technologies. • Considering energy efficiency as part of any reactive repair or refurbishment work by reducing energy-using equipment and using energy efficient equipment. • Seek opportunities for decarbonising heating in existing and new buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance buildings with the use of green energy technology. • Identifying existing sites which could be suitable for green technologies. • Seek opportunities for decarbonising heating in existing and new buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To buy 100% renewable electricity through energy contracts. • Consider opportunities to increase green investment. • Any unavoidable emissions to be offset against local community projects e.g. tree planting, maximising green area allocations, green walls/roofs.

Priority Area 2: Owned Transport

Council owned Transport accounts for 28% (2,159 tonnes) of the council's internal carbon footprint based on 2018/19 greenhouse gas data.

The Council runs a fleet of approx. 211 vehicles (excluding tractors, quadbikes, grass-triples) covering a wide range of operations.

Action Plan	
Continually improve fleet efficiency by:	
Reduce:	Offset:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring our vehicle fleet are maintained to a high standard, therefore maximising efficiency. • Optimising refuse and gritting fleet routes. • Ensuring all fleet drivers are trained as part of their Certificate of Professional Competence qualification in the ability to optimise fuel consumption. • The Council will not purchase any more fossil fuel vans (under 3.5t) and will replace our fleet with electric vehicles over the coming years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any unavoidable emissions to be offset against local community projects e.g. tree planting, maximising green area allocations, green walls/roofs.

Priority Area 3: Business Travel

Council Business Travel accounts for 3% (225 tonnes) of the Council's internal carbon footprint. Authorised staff use their own cars and public transport for business travel.

Action Plan	
Continually improve by:	
Reduce:	Offset:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to adopt sustainable transport options such as cycling and walking, car sharing, public transport and ultra-low emission vehicles. • To explore the options for using electric pool vehicles (EVs) for business travel. • Consider a corporate Smart Travel Plan for staff and members to reduce our carbon impact through cutting the amount of travel (e.g. video conferencing), using cars more efficiently and switching to public transport, walking and cycling. • Providing realistic alternatives to lone driving (also known as 'single occupancy car use'); making these alternatives more attractive • Reducing people's need to travel, for example through flexible working practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to adopt sustainable transport options such as cycling and walking, car sharing, public transport and ultra-low emission vehicles.

4.3. Other Contributions to Carbon Neutral Target

Working Practices

Although not always measurable in terms of CO₂ emitted, it is essential to ensure that the council's working practices help achieve positive outcomes across all three priorities.

This can include how we select our suppliers, how staff and councillors use our buildings and deal with inefficiencies and engage with new initiatives.

Action Plan:

- *Ensure all new starters understand the council's environmental aims and policies, as part of induction training*
- *Engage staff and encourage action via internal communications and other initiatives.*
- *Embed green procurement practices within procurement policy to include carbon considerations within tenders and avoid just outsourcing carbon emissions.*
- *Continue the delivery of the digital transformation projects, to enable remote access to services online, to reduce printing and promote efficient use of services e.g. equipping staff with collaborative technology equates to less travel.*

Offsetting

In order to offset any unavoidable CO₂e emissions, the Council will need to explore additional measures, such as promoting carbon sequestration through sustainable woodland management or investing in large-scale renewable energy generation.

Local, borough based offsetting activities will be prioritised, increasing the benefits to local residents and local environment. It is important to note, however, that carbon offsetting is not enough to achieve the net zero target on its own – success relies on maximising demand reduction and renewable electricity generation as a high priority.

Action Plan:

- *Investigate Local initiatives the Council can invest in that will enable achievement of the Carbon Neutral target.*

Priority Areas 1-3, Working Practices and Offsetting will have direct and indirect benefits that will be realised during this work to reduce carbon.

These benefits will be reported on whether they have been measured as affecting the CO₂ emissions of the Council, or, if they have benefitted the local community and environment.

Recycle

Sustainable
development

Greenhouse
gas

Climate
change

Environment

CO₂

Industry

5

SECTION FIVE

Monitoring and Reporting

Energy
saving

5. Monitoring and Reporting

5.1 What is Carbon Neutral?

Bedford Borough Council is using the term ‘Carbon Neutral’ as short hand for the ‘Net Zero Carbon’ definition – the Council will aim to measure emissions, reduce as much as possible and then offset the unavoidable emissions through good quality offsets.

Carbon Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offset emissions against a measured footprint. Specified by PAS 2060. • Mandatory carbon reduction and management plan. • Requires offsets providing genuine and additional GHG reductions.
Net Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling effect (avoided emissions) of products and services is greater than emissions.
Carbon Zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero emissions.
Net Zero Carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to get as close to zero as possible, then offset residual emissions with good quality offsets.
Carbon Positive product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product removes GHG from the atmosphere over its life cycle – e.g. bioplastics, wooden furniture.
Carbon Positive organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation exports renewable energy greater than its equivalent emissions. Organisation uses carbon removal technology (e.g. BECCS) such that removals are greater than emissions.

5.2 Reporting Process

We will prepare and publish an annual progress report via the council’s Climate Change Committee and the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder.

Emissions:

For internal emissions, we will continue to measure and publish our annual carbon footprint, the scope of which is defined as:

- Energy and fuel consumption in our public buildings and offices (where the council is the bill-payer) i.e. electricity (scope 2), natural gas and other heating fuels (scope 1). Monitored via automatic meter data and utility bills.
- Fuel consumption by the council’s own vehicle fleet and machinery. Monitored via internal fuel records (scope 1).
- Emissions from business travel carried out in employees’ and councillor’s own vehicles (the “grey fleet”). Monitored via payroll mileage claims (scope 3).

The Council will follow the Defra guidance and continue to report its direct emissions measured as Scope 1, 2 and will measure its indirect emissions through business travel as Scope 3.

Category	Description	Data used in this analysis
Scope 1	Direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by the reporting organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metered gas data (for buildings where the Council pay the gas bills) (kWh and £) Mileage for Council-owned vehicle fleet and pool cars, along with vehicle make / model and age
Scope 2	Indirect emissions from the generation of energy purchased by the reporting organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metered electricity data (for building where the Council pay the electricity bills) (kWh and £) Note that where data was unavailable, CIBSE Guide F 2012 'typical practice' benchmarks for 'local government office' have been used to estimate fuel consumption
Scope 3	Indirect emissions that result from other activities that occur in the value chain of the reporting organisation, either upstream or downstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of business travel by the Councils' employees

5.3 Reviewing

The national policy context for addressing climate change is continually evolving, so we will review this strategy regularly to ensure that it continues to meet our aims and priorities.



6

SECTION SIX

Resources



6. Resources

Due to the Action Plan covering a ten-year period, much of the work required to be undertaken to become carbon neutral needs to be fully explored and evaluated to provide the best route both from an efficiency and sustainable view point. All this work is subject to identifying funding and meeting a suitable business case for the delivery of a number of projects to assist delivery of the Council's objective of carbon neutral by 2030.

The current resources and commitment below (both from the financial resources of the Council and the actions in the Action Plan table) will enable the council to start the planning and delivery of this work whilst identifying a detailed delivery plan spanning the next ten years to meet the Council's objective.

- *Capital Carbon Management Budget £440k.*
- *Climate Change Fund £400k (to assist the Council and the community to deliver carbon saving projects).*

The work in relation to getting the council to carbon neutral at this stage is forecasted to require £2-4 million of capital funding, along with a yearly revenue budget to allow extra resources to help deliver this work programme. As this work progresses a more accurate forecast will be able to be provided, together with robust business cases, which will then be considered by the council's capital-funding programme.

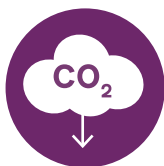
The costs of delivery of the carbon neutral objective to the council is subject to ongoing progression in technology and solutions to find the most sustainable projects. The council should be mindful of future changes which may impact the Council's own carbon neutral work and any decisions are not to be taken lightly, making sure the most suitable solutions are taken forward ensuring the public purse is used effectively. The Council will deliver projects over the period of the strategy 2020-2030; however, no timescales and performances per year can be set or forecasted at this stage until further professional analysis has been undertaken.

This work highlights that there are significant challenges in reducing energy demands and offsetting any remaining CO₂ emissions.

The Council will need to actively work towards enabling the following:



In buildings, it will be necessary to reduce heat and power demands through fabric efficiency improvements and behavioural change. In addition to investing in the existing building stock, this means ensuring that any future development achieves a high standard of energy efficiency in order to minimise any increase in fuel consumption. Long term, all buildings will need to switch from gas / fossil fuels to low and zero carbon heat sources.



Uptake of low and zero carbon (LZC) technologies and battery storage within the Councils' own stock will reduce reliance on fossil fuels, reduce pressure on existing utility infrastructure, improve security of supply, and mitigate against price fluctuations.



A transformation in the transport sector must take place, which would replace all existing vehicles with low and zero emission vehicles. In addition, it will be necessary to reduce vehicle use / mileage through behavioural change and modal shift.



A key challenge for the council is the fact that much of the emissions from vehicles are due to HGVs, and due to technological factors, it is less certain that zero emission models will become commercially available by 2030. This suggests that careful route planning and other marginal efficiency improvements should continue to reduce HGV mileage as much as possible.



In order to offset any remaining CO₂ emissions, the Council will need to explore additional measures, such as promoting carbon sequestration through sustainable woodland management or investing in large-scale renewable energy generation. It is important to note, however, that carbon offsetting is not enough to achieve the net zero target on its own – success relies on maximising demand reduction and renewable electricity generation as a high priority.



The supporting action plan detailed in section 7 of this strategy will aim to support the Council in delivering the intervention measures required to realise the carbon neutral ambition. The action plan covers the following areas: Supporting grid decarbonisation; Demand reduction; Low carbon heating systems; Building integrated renewable energy generation and storage; Low carbon transport and Offsetting. Consideration is given to measures that would directly impact CO₂e emissions from the Councils' own operations.

6.1 Conclusion

The route towards becoming carbon neutral will require a strong level of ambition and commitment, backed up by significant interventions and investment across the Councils' operations. Although meeting the carbon neutral ambition will rely upon various factors outside of the Councils' control, such as the decarbonisation of the grid and availability of key technologies, the fundamental steps required to deliver the net-zero target are clear and, with strong leadership from all areas of the Council, these can be set into action now.

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please contact us at our address below.

Për Informacion معلومات کے لئی برای اطلاع Za Informacije
ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ Informacja Per Informazione তথ্যের জন্য للمعلومات



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