

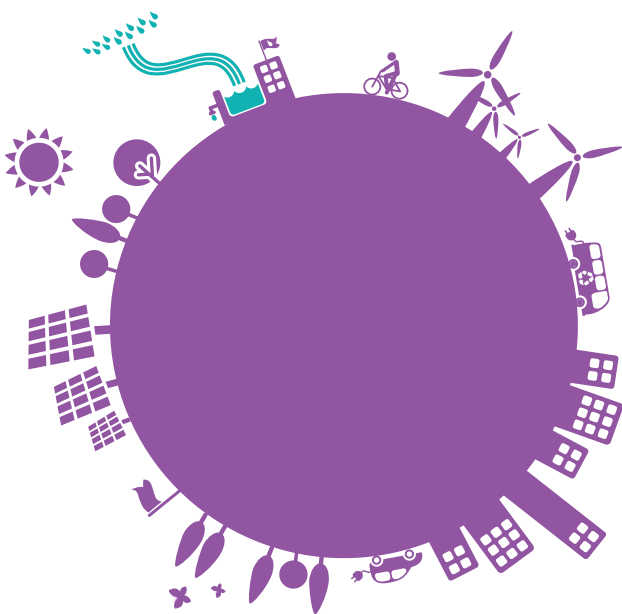


# Carbon Reduction Management Plan



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# Foreword

Climate change is recognised as the biggest threat facing our planet today. This has resulted in the World Health Organisation placing climate change and air pollution at the very top of its list of threats to public health.

The science is clear, we need to act urgently to reduce our carbon emissions to limit global temperature rise to below 1.5° to prevent devastating impacts around the world and closer to home. We also need to prepare for a changing climate.

Climate Change is a long lasting and universal problem that will affect everyone, particularly the more vulnerable. As stewards of this planet our young people need to be confident in our ability to lead by example, therefore this Carbon Reduction Plan sets out our vision and priorities as a council.

As a council, we have a duty of care to protect our residents and the environment.

Significant progress has been made since both Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils declared a climate emergency back in July 2019. The election of a new administration in May saw the need to refresh the original Carbon Reduction Management Plan to set out the councils' vision, commitment and priorities, together with how we intend to achieve some of its climate aspirations.

This Plan will be an integral part of the councils' Corporate Plan ensuring that it is fully embraced across the organisation. This Plan is a call to action and will need the full support and engagement from all parts of Babergh and Mid Suffolk to ensure that our ambition for net zero by 2030 is achieved.



Cllr Daniel Potter  
Babergh District Council



Cllr Tim Weller  
Mid Suffolk District Council



# Introduction:

In 2019 Babergh & Mid Suffolk District councils recognised and declared a climate emergency and made a commitment to investigate ways in which they could reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions as well as supporting the Suffolk wide aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Both councils also agreed to establish a joint council cross-party Environment & Climate Change Task Force to examine ways in which they could respond to the climate change challenge on a spend to save basis.

Collective commitment to tackle climate change can't be achieved alone. Partnerships between businesses, communities and organisations across Babergh & Mid Suffolk will provide a stronger vice on a local, regional, and national level, this will enable a successful transition to net zero. However, it is not just about delivering net zero, it is also about ensuring a more sustainable future for the communities of Babergh & Mid Suffolk to ensure they thrive, prosper, and grow.

The new Corporate Plan is 'designed to seize the opportunities and address the challenges the districts and their organisations face, for the foreseeable future' and it's vision is to support and help facilitate 'Great communities with bright and healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home.' This is reflected in the refreshed version of the Carbon Reduction Management Plan. Together, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District councils' commitment to 'take the lead in responding to the challenge of climate change and protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environments' as well as, 'leaving a positive legacy for our children and grandchildren,' will ensure the sustainability of both districts.

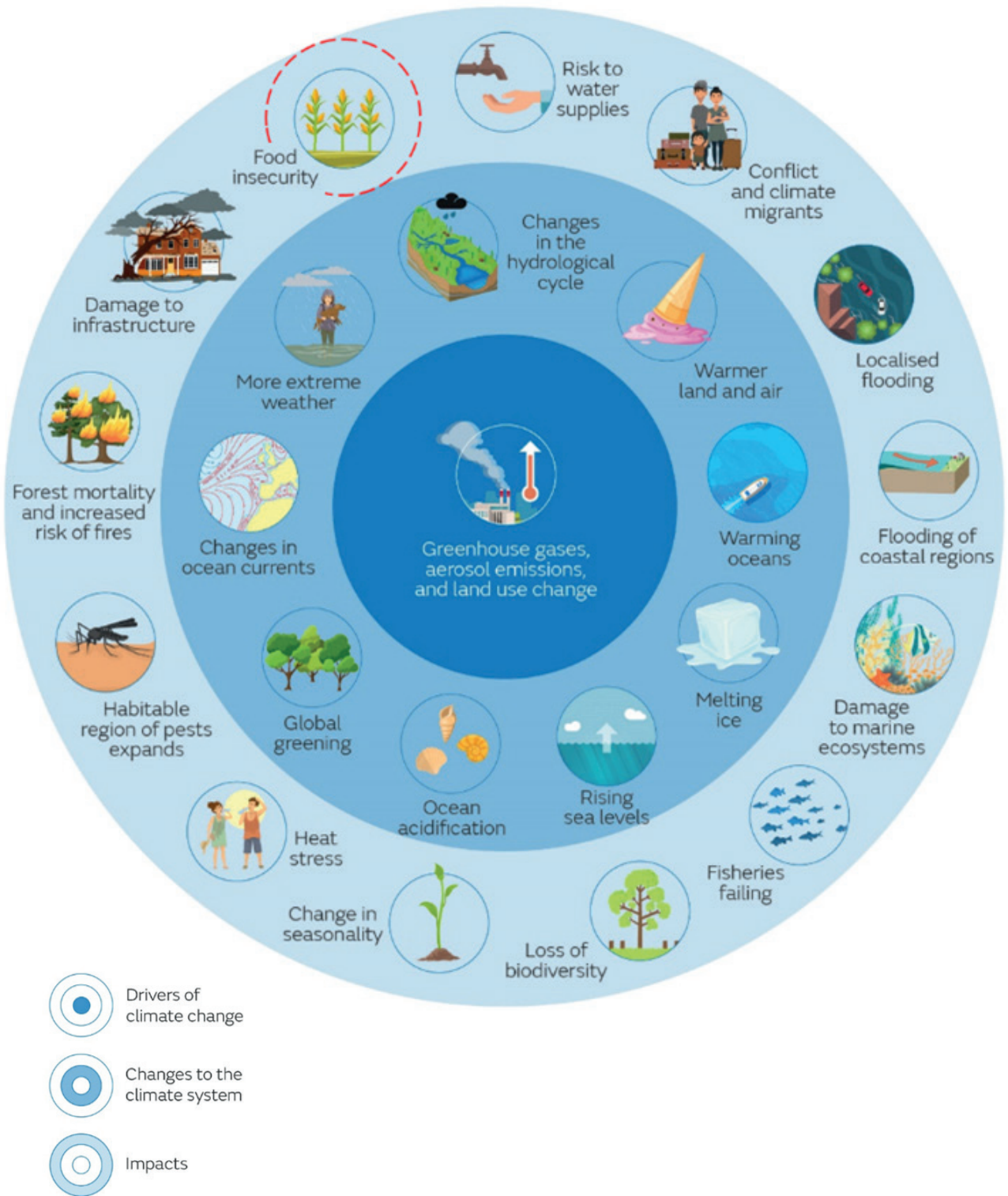
The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented impacts on the ability to move forward on these plans, however, there is now a greater sense of urgency. According to the World Health Organisation, climate change is the single biggest challenge faced by this planet.



[Climate change the biggest single health threat facing humanity – WHO | York Press](#)

What is climate change: This is summed up eloquently in this article published by the Natural History Museum.

[What is climate change and why does it matter? | Natural History Museum \(nhm.ac.uk\)](#)



Source: Impacts of Climate Change (Met Office 2019)

We know that climate change is already happening in the UK, with the first two decades of this century being the warmest 20-year period in 300 years, and the summers of 2012 and 2023 the hottest since records began in 1884 (Betts, R.A. and Brown, K. (2021)<sup>1</sup>. Extreme weather events are also becoming more frequent, severe, and longer in duration. While we will do all that we can to tackle the growth of greenhouse gas emissions, we must also accept the practical need to adapt to the impacts of climate change and the challenges this presents.

[Technical-Report-The-Third-Climate-Change-Risk-Assessment.pdf \(ukclimaterisk.org\)](https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/Technical-Report-The-Third-Climate-Change-Risk-Assessment.pdf)

**Objective:** To achieve net zero carbon emissions for Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils by 2030. In doing so we will enhance the quality of life and well being for our residents and provide a sustainable economy for businesses.

**Priorities:** In declaring a climate emergency, we have pledged to identify steps that we can take to identify actions we can take to achieve carbon neutrality.

We want to set an example for our communities in how we manage our assets, how we deliver services and how we reduce our own carbon footprint. The areas detailed in this plan have been produced to concentrate our actions and initially, we are focusing on impacting those activities that we can directly change or influence as a council. We are taking steps to make Babergh and Mid Suffolk a greener district for us all and to help sustain and improve the quality of life for our residents, now and in the future. Each year, we will monitor our carbon emissions and report on our progress to achieve net zero (see latest Greenhouse Gas Report 22/23).

The purpose of this updated plan is to describe the carbon reduction and climate resilience actions Babergh and Mid Suffolk council has committed to take in the coming years, most of which are already underway. It does not include the actions which we would like to take but for which we have not yet identified funding. These will be described in greater detail in the next iteration of the plan.

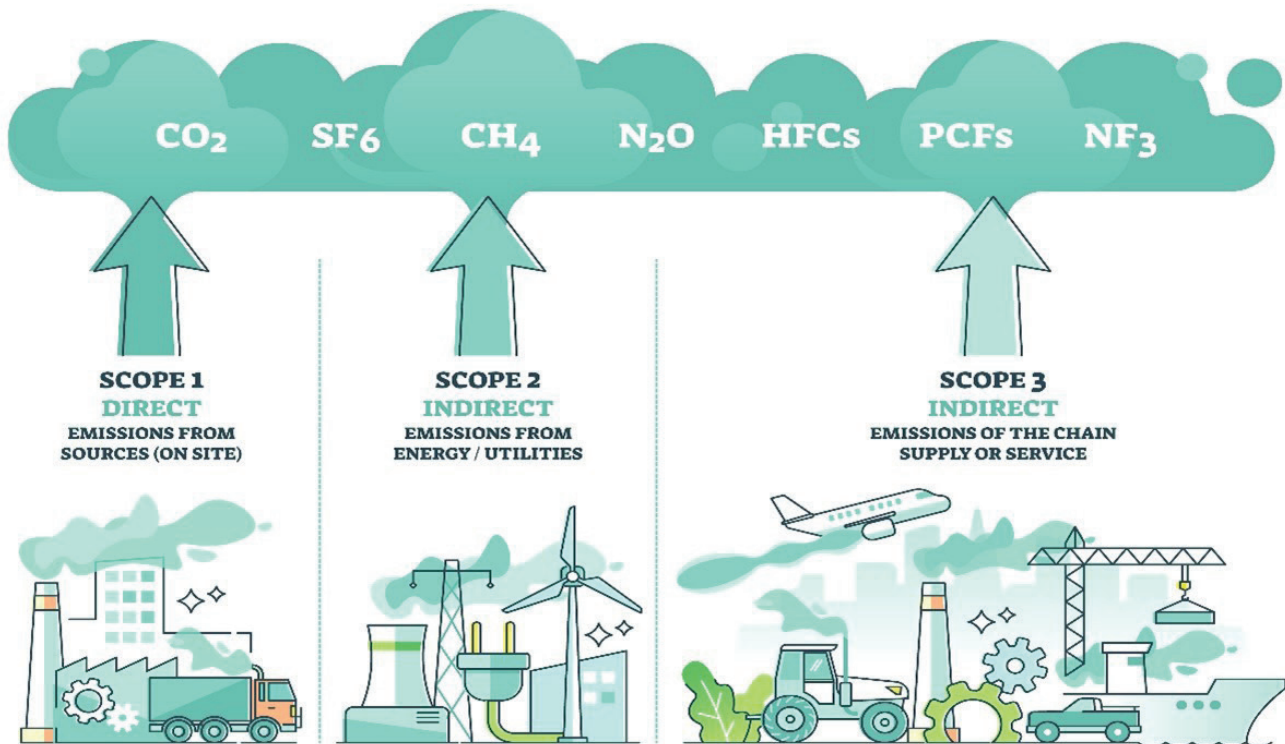
The Carbon Reduction Management Plan sets out the context, rationale and direction for action needed to tackle the climate emergency in Babergh Mid Suffolk. It formalises a high level of ambition, commensurate with the council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and sets out the high-level principles that will underpin the development and execution of climate action by the council. The Strategy is not a rigid document and is intended to be reviewed and updated as new climate science, technology innovation, and public understanding comes to the fore. Changes in local sentiment and behaviour, the international and national policy environment, and evidence of climate impacts will also lead to adaptations to this strategy. The subsequent Action Plan identifies the key actions the council plans to take between now and 2030, based on today's understanding, in its role as a key agent to achieving carbon neutrality across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

This Plan is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every action the councils will take to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, neither is it meant to be an overly technical document and is written for reference by multiple stakeholders within the councils and across the wider district. Detailed technical and specialist projects will derive from this plan and be developed and implemented as standalone pieces of work. The council's lead officers for climate change will review and update this strategy and action plan regularly between now and 2030 and report on its progress. It will also continue to

evaluate and report on its progress as part of its quarterly Corporate Priorities Report.

Establishing a baseline In line with the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial strategy (BEIS) 'Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020' guidance,<sup>1</sup> (link to this) for the purpose of greenhouse gas reporting, emissions are divided into three categories, referred to as Scope 1, 2 and 3. The illustration below provides a definition of these terms and summarises the data used in establishing Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils' baseline CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.

## SCOPES OF EMISSIONS



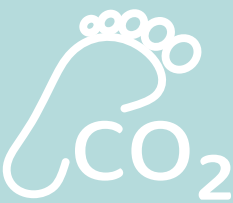
[The five biggest threats to our natural world ..and how we can stop them | Biodiversity | The Guardian](#)

# How will we know we are making a difference?



## **MONITORING CARBON REDUCTION**

ensuring we are on track monitoring carbon reduction in council operations, showing we are on track to carbon neutrality by 2030. This will be reported through our annual Greenhouse Gas Report.



## **REDUCED CARBON FOOTPRINT**

reaching carbon neutrality. A reduced carbon footprint for both districts, demonstrating that we can achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.



## **REDUCING RESIDUAL WASTE**

and improving reuse, resulting in reduced residual waste and improved recycling and composting.



# Strategic Challenges, Risks and Opportunities:

## **Embedding climate change thinking:**

Thinking about the impacts of an action or policy on the climate needs to be in our everyday decision-making (business as usual), and this will be challenging. However, it also provides opportunities for cross-service and multi-disciplinary working which can strengthen the quality of decision making through greater challenge.

## **Carbon literacy and behaviour change:**

A major challenge of rising to the threat of the climate emergency will be improving the level of carbon literacy amongst the district's residents and businesses to increase public understanding and support for the council's actions, as well as to engender behaviour change. Although greater understanding alone may not necessarily lead to behaviour change, it is often a prerequisite to it. Easily understood communications campaigns and resident involvement in planning and decision-making may be of benefit and can have a multiplier effect whereby the actions of a few can influence others. Behaviour change also provides opportunities for supporting local communities and businesses, for example, using less energy can also save money.

The councils have started work in this area and in October 2023, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District councils hosted a series of six 'Community Climate Action Roadshow' events. Each Roadshow featured a series of drop-in style that gave residents the chance to speak to local groups and organisations about climate action tips, initiatives and opportunities in their area. The events in Eye, Sudbury, Hadleigh, Bramford, Stowmarket and Holbrook, with a total of 275 people attending the Roadshows.

As councils' we have also recognised the importance of affecting change internally and have made strident steps to become a Carbon Literate organisation by offering Carbon Literacy to all senior leaders, managers, and councillors.

**Natural environment:** We are already experiencing some of the impacts of climate change. We must carefully manage these impacts and mitigate against further damage. The councils short-term climate change risks include milder and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, and more frequent extreme high temperatures and downpours of rain. Situated in a water stress area, Babergh and Mid Suffolk are at risk from the negative impacts this creates on water supplies, agriculture, homes, businesses and natural habitats.

There is also expected to be an increased threat of wildfires as the century progresses. Such potential climate impacts also increase public health risks related to excessive heat and air quality. Although the district benefits from picturesque landscapes and conservation areas, protected landscapes can add complications to climate emergency issues such as how these sites can be used to meet the councils renewable energy needs, as well as constraints around the retrofitting of buildings in these areas.

The councils agricultural economy contributes to the features of the landscape; however, climate change also poses a threat to this due to changes in seasonality, soil moisture content in summer, and loss of biodiversity including pollinators.

**Economic cost:** Rising to the challenge of the climate crisis will cost money, however not acting will cost much more and have a greater impact on the future for our children, livelihoods and environment. We need to truly value the impact and benefit that a plan or project will have in reducing the causes of climate breakdown and dealing with the impacts of past emissions. Despite it being unavoidable that economic costs will need to be incurred, many climate projects also have the potential to deliver economic benefits such as savings on energy bills. It is therefore vital that these benefits are identified whenever possible to overcome the falsehood that being green always costs more.



### **Sudbury and Stowmarket Solar Multifunction Carport Installations 2022**

This is an example of one of the interventions we've already put in place and links with our ambitious aims to achieve net zero by 2030 as well as less reliance on non-renewable energy.

**110** parking bays

**16** EV Charging points

**756kw** hours of battery storage

**310.8kw** combined peak generation

Up to **16%** generation potential at Sudbury  
and **29%** at Stowmarket leisure centres

**90 tonnes** of CO<sub>2</sub>e saved per annum

**40** covered bays at Sudbury  
and **70** at Stowmarket





Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury – installed an innovative warm water recovery system that reduced bills as well as reliably maintained quality and public health whilst significantly lowering energy consumption and saving 15 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> in its first year. Instead of disposing of heated waste water after it passes through the pool filters, the system recycles it while retaining its temperature.

This avoids the extra cost of adding new water and warming to the required temperature. It is expected that we will receive a return on our investment in less than three years, with the system needing very little maintenance as it is fully automated and can be operated remotely.



## Housing

Reducing carbon emissions from housing is a major challenge. The rural nature of both districts make it even more complex. Decarbonising homes will mean replacing entire heating systems and ensuring they are future proofed in terms of energy efficiency. There are 6800 council owned homes across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, therefore this is a major financial undertaking that both councils are committed to achieving. Some 4000 of these have now secured Energy performance Certificates of C or above.

The Cosy Homes Initiative that was launched in November 2023 committed £2million to energy efficiency schemes. The new initiative aims to assist Mid Suffolk residents enhance the energy efficiency of their home, which will help them save on energy costs and reduce their carbon footprint.



We are offering a generous grant of up to £3,500 per property. Its aim is to improve the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating from a D-G to a C in residential properties. The grant does not need to be paid back and can be spent on insulation, enhancing energy efficiency and facilitating savings.

The grant is available for a range of insulation measures, which include but are not limited to:

- **loft insulation (including clearance)**
- **cavity wall insulation**
- **draught proofing**
- **solid wall, floor and underfloor insulation**
- **roof insulation (both flat roof and pitched roof)**
- **room in roof insulation (considered in special cases, for example listed buildings which need the PAS2035 route).**

We will also work with external stakeholders such as Warm Homes Suffolk to focus on low-income households who struggle to afford adequate heating.

## Planning

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) on sustainable construction; renewable and low carbon energy; and biodiversity and trees, will provide guidance to developers in addressing carbon reduction and sustainable design within new developments, including the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain, to support the implementation of the Councils' adopted planning policies set out in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 Development Plan Document (November 2023).

Cross Street Eye – the regeneration of this previously vacant building has enabled the town council to occupy the office space within the town centre. The low carbon options are an example of Babergh & Mid Suffolk District councils commitment to net zero with this project seeing enhanced insulation in the floor, loft, wall cavity, external wall as well as external shading. The addition of and air source heat pump as well as solar PV on the roof and cycle shelter add additional features. The project is completed with electric bicycle charging points and a double electric car charging point.

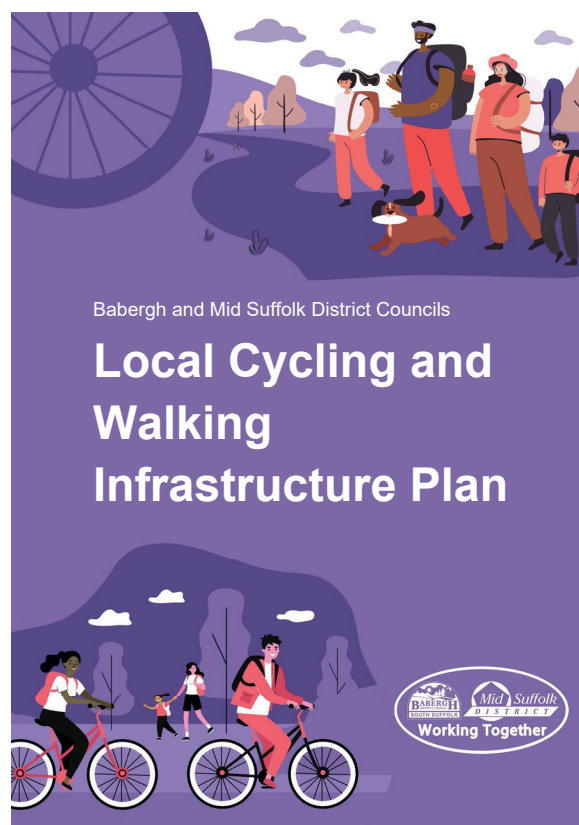
## Sustainable transport

Around 41% of carbon emissions in the Eastern region each year ([based on most recent data](#)) are attributable to transport, 96% of which are from road vehicles.

The hierarchy of sustainable transport involves prioritising lower carbon modes over single occupancy car use. This means encouraging and enabling active travel (walking and cycling), public transport and shared mobility as people's first choice for their short, frequent journeys.

However, the rurality of many of the areas within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk areas poses many complex challenges to this. We experience connectivity issues in both our digital and transport infrastructures and many residents become car dependant.

In terms of active travel, the district councils joint [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\)](#) has given a starting point on where and how parts of the connectivity network need to be improved, and the actions within this Carbon Reduction Management Plan reflect the councils commitment to delivering on the ambitions within the LCWIP.





Other projects, such as the example below, aim to provide opportunity, infrastructure and behaviour change encouragement to increase the uptake of active travel.

## Case study: EezyBike at Needham Market:



Mid Suffolk District council has funded the installation of an EezyBike pod – a secure e-bike charging and parking facility for two RadRunner electric rental cycles at Needham Lake and has funded the subsidising of the cost of renting an e-bike for a half or full day, making it more affordable for local residents and visitors to hire one, for a one-year period.

The project package also includes promotion and suggested routes for cycle hirers. The project aims to encourage more journeys in the area, particularly leisure journeys linked to car-free visitor economy itineraries, to be undertaken by low carbon transport. The project also hopes to encourage a modal shift to e-bikes more generally, by enabling people to try one out at a reduced cost.

Monitoring of the number of cycle hires will enable the council to measure the success and impact of the project. The pilot remains flexible in that if uptake is not good in its current location, the pod can be moved to an alternative place.

Accessing public transport is a struggle for many residents and visitors due to the infrequency and affordability. Whilst the responsibility – and power – to improve this is within the remit of the local transport authority and operators, the district councils can play an important role in advocating for improvements and investing in community transport services.

Where car use is still essential, the key opportunity to reduce carbon emissions lies within the shift from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to electric vehicles (EVs). Further challenges around the affordability of electric vehicles pose issues, together with electricity grid capacity, with investments in expanding electricity grid capacity being largely focused on areas of high demand rather than high potential supply, thus limiting the rural capacity to deliver new renewable generation and electrify transport.

Despite these challenges, the councils recognise the important role local authorities, both individually and in partnership, must play in increasing EV infrastructure roll-out in order to encourage and enable modal shift to EVs. This is reflected in the and the actions within this Carbon Reduction Management Plan and within the councils joint EV Infrastructure Implementation Plan.

As of July 2023, there were a total of 52 EV chargers for public use across Babergh (15 of which are rapid chargers) and 36 EV chargers for public use across Mid Suffolk (4 of which are rapid chargers), according to the [Department for Transport's official statistics for EV charging devices](#).

This is a snapshot in time, and the most accurate up to date picture on existing publicly accessible infrastructure can be found on [ZapMap](#). This is reflected in the actions within this Carbon Reduction Management Plan and the councils joint [EV Infrastructure Implementation Plan](#).



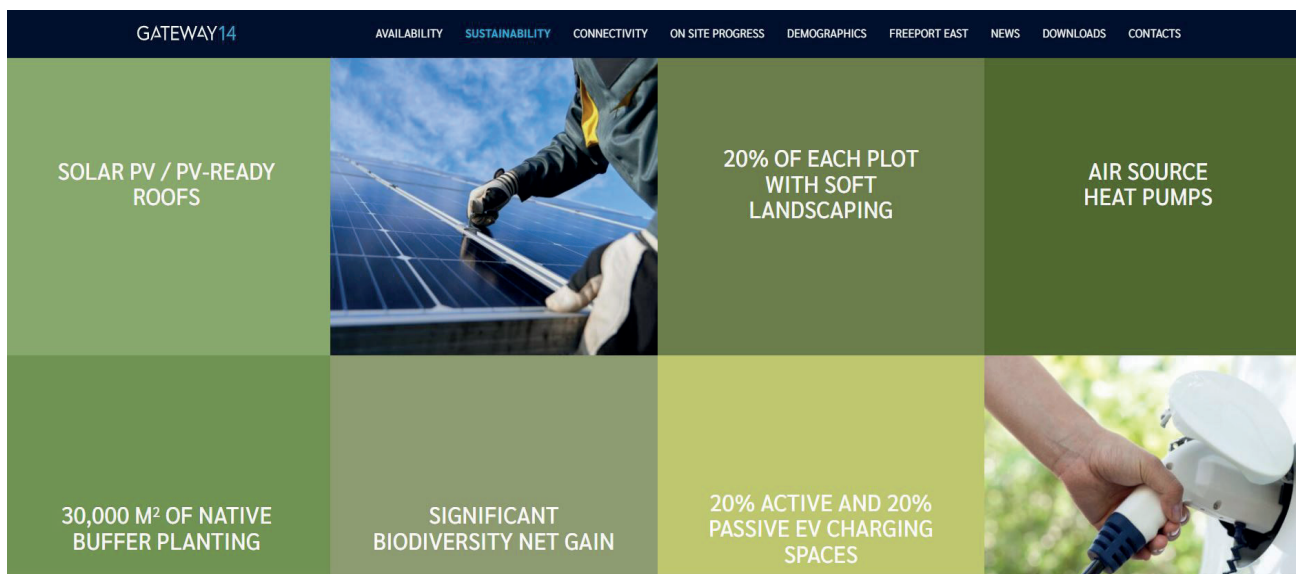


## Waste and recycling

The key is to think beyond recycling and to reduce the amount of waste we produce. Working in partnership is key in achieving this vision [About us - Suffolk Recycling](#) and [Food Savvy](#) both offer helpful advice to residents in the fight to reduce waste as well as to save money.

The switch from diesel powered waste vehicles to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) has seen a significant reduction in CO2e emissions. The 22/23 Greenhouse Gas Report showed that emissions reduced by 1,127t CO2e (79.5%) to 290t CO2e compared with the 2018/19 baseline.





Local businesses, students and workers will benefit from modern, collaborative working and learning spaces at Gateway 14. The early design and operational concept seek to create a unique space – blurring the boundaries between education and the world of work. It includes a range of workspaces, meeting/ training rooms and collaboration spaces within an approximately 30,000 sq ft high quality and sustainable facility with innovation cluster plots on the site meeting a minimum BREEM standard of Excellent.

Gateway 14 is the new state-of-the-art business, innovation and logistics park in Stowmarket which will provide up to 2.36 million sq ft of development opportunities for R&D, manufacturing, and logistics businesses in Mid Suffolk and is part of Freeport East which is committed to working with partners to drive innovation.

A Skills and Innovation Centre would provide a dedicated space for start-ups and businesses looking at innovative ways to grow – including through upskilling of the local workforce. Development of the centre would kickstart the wider innovation cluster development envisaged for the site.

In addition, the Skills and Innovation centre will allow education and training partners to work in collaboration with business, using the flexible space for learning and training where people can up skill or learn new skills for career development or change.

### Community action

As councils Babergh and Mid Suffolk can't tackle climate change on their own, therefore, we need to fully engage with our communities by raising awareness of what they can do to tackle climate change see link for suggestions/ideas/useful organisations [www.babergh.gov.uk/climate-change](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/climate-change) or [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/climate-change](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/climate-change) Developing and maintaining partnerships is key and we have established successful relationships with organisations such as Groundwork [East of England - Groundwork](#) and Community Energy South [Join us - Community Energy South](#)

The promotion of schemes such as Solar Together supports residents in decarbonising and reducing energy bills

## Working in partnership

The term 'no man is an island' is a fitting term that encapsulates the way Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils operate and will be a crucial element in achieving net zero by 2030. We are members of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership [About Us - Creating the Greenest County - Green Suffolk](#) where best practice is shared across all local authorities in the county.

We also have strong links with the Suffolk Association of Local councils [About us | SALC Website](#) and regularly disseminate information to them to be shared with parish councils and residents across both districts. Working in partnership with local businesses has seen some notable success and we currently have 31 businesses across both districts that have been awarded Carbon Charter status. To gain this they must demonstrate their commitment to net zero & sustainability within their business practice.





# Our Priorities for 2024/25

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District councils are committed to rising to the challenges of climate change and will continue to develop robust partnerships to achieve net zero by 2030. As such, we have prioritised the following in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions for:



**Sheltered housing** – ensure they are as energy efficient as possible and retrofit to reduce dependency on fossil fuel energy.



**Leisure centres** – ensure that they are utilising the current energy efficiency measures effectively i.e. solar PV and to reduce the dependency on fossil fuels, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



# Carbon Reduction Management Plan