

# WARWICKSHIRE SUSTAINABLE FUTURES ANNUAL REPORT

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2024



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# Foreword

**I am delighted to present the first annual update to Warwickshire County Council's Sustainable Futures Strategy. Since the publication of our strategy in 2023, we have made significant strides towards our vision of a sustainable future for Warwickshire. This report highlights our progress and reaffirms our commitment to addressing the urgent challenges posed by climate change.**

Our journey towards sustainability is driven by our strategic priority to reduce carbon emissions to net zero across the Council by 2030 and to support Warwickshire in achieving the same by 2050 or earlier. This ambitious goal requires a concerted effort across all areas, and I am proud of the progress we have made so far.

A key priority this year has been adapting to the impacts of climate change which are being seen across the county. We have taken proactive measures to build resilience against the increasing risks of flooding and extreme heat events. Our dedicated Adaptation Officer, comprehensive adaptation framework, and collaborative efforts with regional partners have strengthened our ability to respond to these challenges.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to continuous improvement. We will expand our Carbon Literacy training to empower our staff and leaders to make informed decisions and take meaningful actions to reduce their carbon impact, while also equipping them to understand and address climate risks. All our efforts, both at an organisational and county level, will be guided by the measures we have developed to track our performance and ensure accountability.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in this journey. Together, we are making a difference and paving the way for a sustainable future for Warwickshire.



**Cllr. Heather Timms,  
Portfolio Holder for Environment,  
Climate and Culture  
Warwickshire County Council**

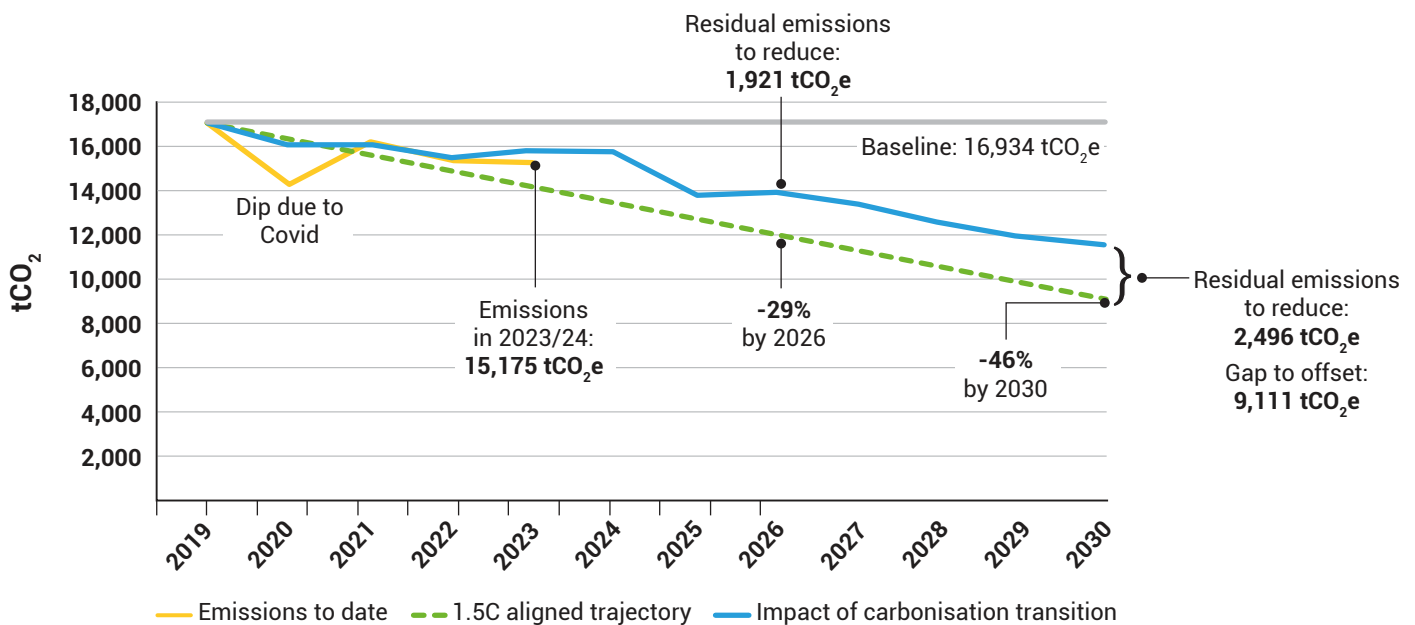
# Introduction

In 2023, we published our Sustainable Futures Strategy which outlines a framework, key actions, and enablers for achieving our strategic priority of becoming a county with a sustainable future. This involves adapting to and mitigating climate change, reducing our carbon emissions to net zero across the Council by 2030 and supporting Warwickshire in achieving the same by 2050 or earlier. It also means creating a sustainable environment aligned with other council priorities, including education, sustainable economic growth, improved transport and infrastructure, and our health in all policies approach.

This annual report provides an update on our activity to date, specifically focusing on our progress towards net zero as both a council and county, as well as the work we have done to adapt to climate change.

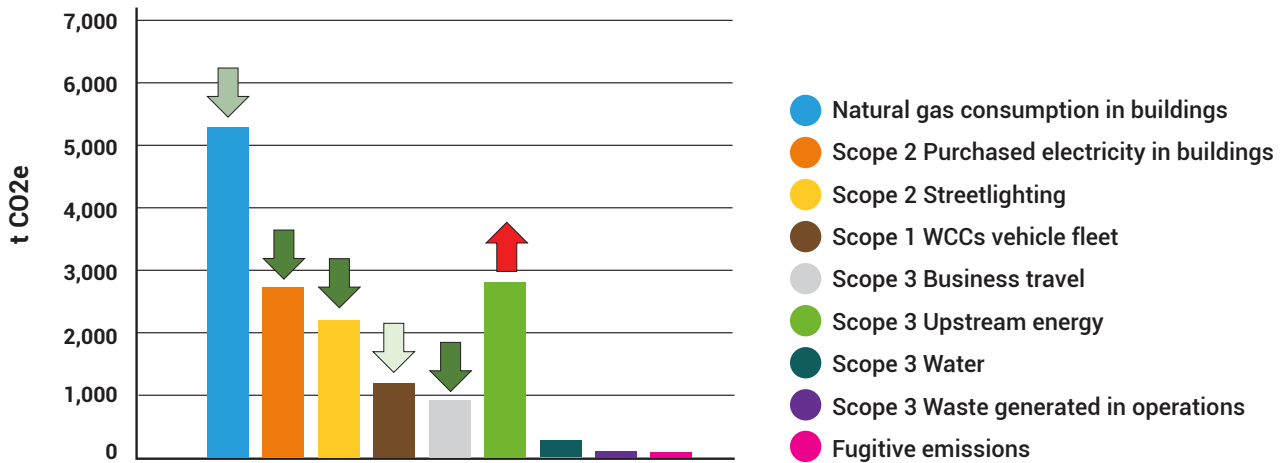
Each section includes a table setting out progress against the measures and targets set out in the original strategy. This is accompanied by a narrative describing work carried out since this time.

## Warwickshire County Council (WCC) emissions



This graph shows reduced emissions in 22/23 and 23/24 against the revised baseline. However, this is not currently at the pace needed to meet the 2030 trajectory.

**2023/24 Total Emissions per Emission Source**



This second chart illustrates how we have reduced emissions by 10% to 15,175tCO2e. Our biggest reductions coming from:

1. Electricity usage: carbon emissions associated with electricity used in our buildings decreased by 24%.
2. Streetlighting: carbon emissions associated with streetlighting decreased by 17%.
3. Business travel: carbon emissions from business travel decreased by 26%.

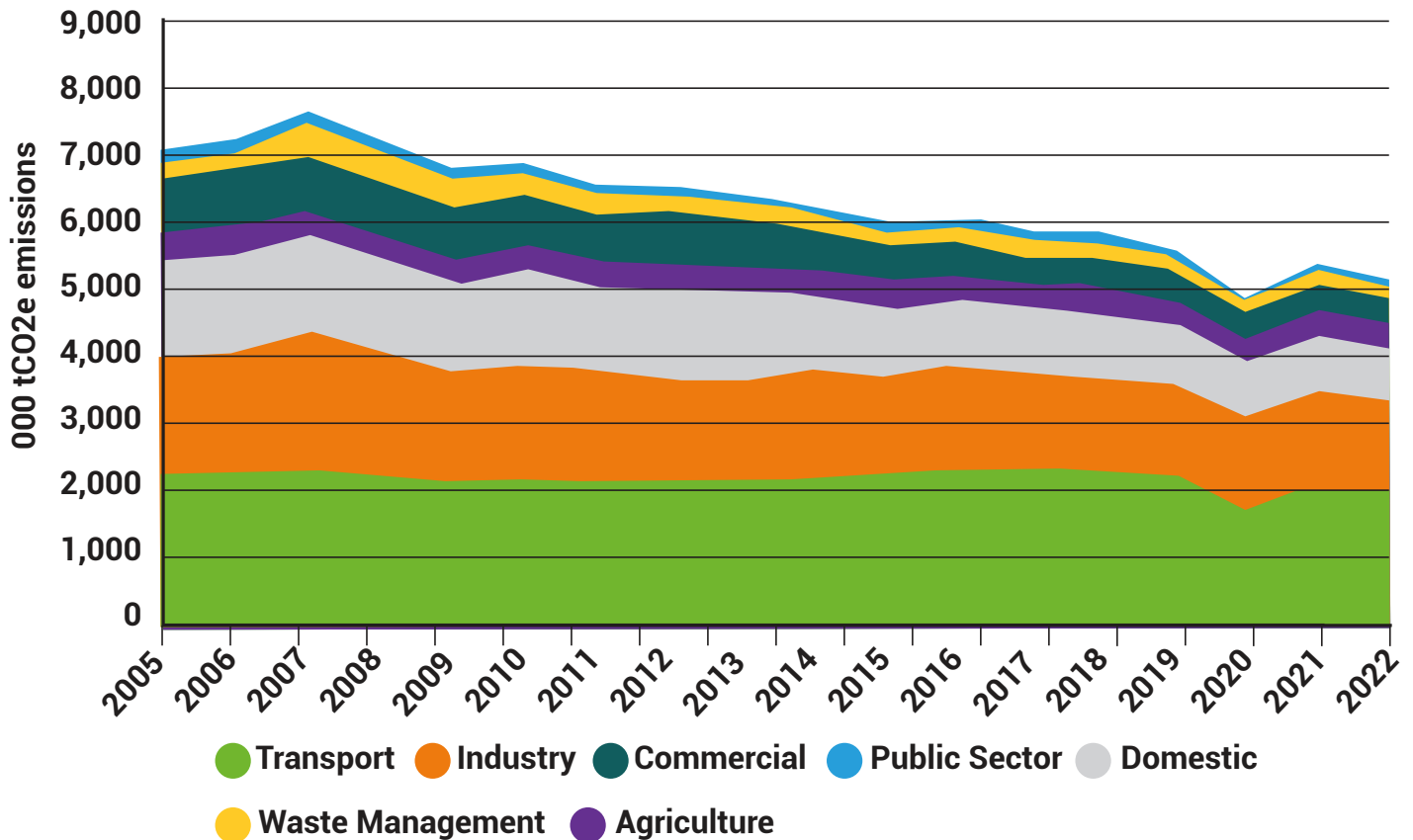
Upstream emissions related to the extraction, transport, refining, purification, and conversion of primary fuels, as well as changes in the grid mix for electricity, are outside of our control. These upstream emissions were 13% higher than the baseline.

These changes help us to see a year on year reduction on CO2e emissions from WCC.

Objective	Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
To achieve net zero carbon CO2e emissions for WCC by 2030	Year on year reduction of CO2e emissions from WCC (tCO2e)	Net zero by 2030	Originally: 18,245 Revised: 16,934 <sup>1</sup>	14,288	16,021	15,306	15,175

<sup>1</sup>The baseline has fallen from 18,245 tCO2e (7.2% reduction) due to property disposals and acquisitions, new information on some building stock and improved methodology on previously overestimated business travel emissions. Baseline corrections align with the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Protocol.

## Warwickshire county-wide emissions



County-wide data is provided by DESNZ, with the most recent data being available for 2022. This shows greenhouse gas emissions reducing by 7.5% since 2019/20.

The largest sources of emissions continue to be transport and industry, followed by the domestic and agriculture sectors, with the public sector contributing the smallest proportion.

The chart above shows the dip in emissions during 2021 that was experienced across all sectors due to COVID-19 and whilst we have seen increased emissions since then, these have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, despite these reductions, motorway traffic emissions have not reduced and this is significant for Warwickshire, as motorway traffic accounts for over 44% of transport emissions, compared with 21% nationally.

Objective	Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
To achieve net zero CO2e emissions for Warwickshire by 2050	Year on year reduction of CO2e emissions from Warwickshire (tCO2e) <sup>1</sup>	Net zero by 2050	5,538,000	4,900,000	5,342,000	5,120,000	Not available

*1 Figures presented in the original publication of the sustainable futures strategy in 2023 have been reduced following a change in calculation method by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) affecting figures going back to 2005. Figures are now based on the June 2024 UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics publication.*

# Adapting to climate change

**Climate change is already challenging our county, directly impacting our services and communities, particularly through increased flooding risks and extreme heat events. To build our resilience for future events, we have taken the following measures:**

- Recruited a dedicated Adaptation Officer to work across services and with partners, providing support in understanding issues, assessing risks and developing adaptation plans.
- Developed an overarching adaptation framework, aligned with British Standards, which outlines our approach towards climate adaptation and provides a focus on the most vulnerable services.
- Carried out climate risk assessments, accompanying risk registers and action plans for priority services, including Fire & Rescue, Public Health, County Highways, Engineering Design Services, Transport Planning & Commissioning, Transport Delivery, Highway Development Management and Communities, Libraries, Heritage & Registration.
- Strengthened knowledge and support through collaboration with regional partners, joining existing partnerships (River Severn Partnership, West Midlands Climate Adaptation Local Authority Group) and establishing a new Climate Adaptation Working Group in Warwickshire with our district and borough councils. This supports a coordinated approach towards climate resilience.
- Developed a dedicated adaptation plan for our Transport and County Highway Services, outlining climate risks, cascading and interdependent risks, impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation actions based on adaptive capacity.
- Participated in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) local authority Adaptation Reporting Pilot, sharing Warwickshire's risks to inform the national Climate Change Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Programme.
- Delivered a presentation with Warwick District Council to over 70 residents, community group members and Warwickshire Climate Alliance to raise awareness of expected future climate changes and the implications for Warwickshire. This included practical advice on preparing for extreme weather events, and built on our popular adaptation podcast, available on our Sustainable Warwickshire website.
- Participated in an Adaptation event hosted by Rugby Borough Council.



In the year ahead, we plan to:

- Continue supporting prioritised services to understand climate change risks, conducting risk assessments and developing adaptation action plans to ensure service continuity. This will include Ecology, Libraries, Heritage and Culture, and Property Services.
- Work across services to increase flood resilience.

When the Sustainable Futures Strategy was published in 2023, we said that we would develop measures to support our Adaptation work. Consequently the following measures have been developed and will be used to track our performance in future years.

Link to Objective	Target	Measure	2023/24 Progress
1C. Improve resilience of our transport system through climate change adaptation	All transport services to have adaptation plans in place by 2030	Number of transport services with adaptation action plans in place	Three (of four) transport and highway services have plans in place
2D. Improve Warwickshire's built environment to provide resilience to changes in climate	All built environment services (including our heritage assets) have adaptation plans in place by 2030	Number of services with adaptation action plans in place	Currently working with Property and Heritage & Culture services to assess adaptation risks and expect plans to be in place within the year.
5C. Improve resilience of our natural habitat through climate change adaptation	Nature-based services (including flooding) to have adaptation plans in place by 2030	Number of natural capital services with adaptation plans in place	Currently working with Flooding and Ecology services to assess adaptation risks and expect plans to be in place within the year.

# Behaviour Change & Communications

## What we have done to raise awareness and educate colleagues to help us adapt to climate change and reduce our emissions

**Becoming a sustainable county is one of three strategic priorities within the Council Plan, reflecting the need to work together across the county and council to adapt and take action to mitigate climate change.**

Therefore, a significant action within the first year of our strategy has been to work with leaders and embed climate action within key strategies within the Council. We have adopted a Carbon Literacy approach which has helped enable behaviour change to support our net zero targets.

We are now accredited as a Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation and have developed in-house expertise to roll out Carbon Literacy Training further within the organisation. We have trained five cohorts of officers, as well as our Portfolio Holder and members of our Leadership Team. Individual accreditation requires participants to make two work-related pledges to reduce their carbon impact, and this has seen an array of commitments that support the ambitions of our strategy. This includes:

- Pledges potentially saving up to 31,000Kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year, either supporting our wider Warwickshire ambitions or more directly within the Council;
- Examples of pledges include embedding consideration of carbon impacts within wider decision making and team meetings, reducing resources used in campaigns and projects, sharing knowledge and experience across teams, and team solutions such as car sharing to reduce emissions associated with travelling.

Our senior leaders attended a half-day session focusing on our sustainability challenges – providing them with support and capacity to identify opportunities at a service level to reduce emissions and consider the adaptations required within their services.

In May, we conducted our first annual Staff Sustainability Survey to help us understand colleagues' motivations and behaviours, informing actions to increase awareness and change within the organisation.

The Climate Action Group has continued to meet, providing an employee-led space to discuss climate change action, share best practice and hear from experts about the steps we can take, both as individuals and an organisation, to help mitigate our impact on the environment.

In the year ahead, we will:

- Continue to roll out Carbon Literacy training across the organisation
- Develop an action plan following our staff survey
- Continue to raise awareness and encourage staff to take action.

## **What we have done to raise awareness and inspire our communities and businesses to help us adapt to climate change and reduce our emissions**

This year, that has included:

- Our communications have focused on using our sustainability journey to raise awareness of climate change, whilst also encouraging residents and businesses to adapt their behaviours. We've done this through signposting to useful resources via the [www.sustainablewarwickshire.co.uk](http://www.sustainablewarwickshire.co.uk) website, sharing news and opportunities via a monthly Sustainable Warwickshire newsletter and featuring conversations on local sustainability issues via the Sustainable Warwickshire podcast.
- Sharing our approach and ambitions at conferences and meetings to engage and influence stakeholders and businesses across the county. This has included strategic discussions with some of our top CO2e emitting businesses and other public sector partners.
- Working in partnership with others already on the journey so that we can increase effectiveness. This includes relationships with the West Midlands Combined Authority's Energy Capital team, Midlands Net Zero, National Farmers Union, Cadent, and National Grid.
- All Warwickshire District and Borough Councils have declared a Climate Emergency and we have continued to lead the county's Climate Emergency Partnership to ensure information and practices are shared, and where possible, joint working is established.
- With approximately 85,000 children enrolled in schools and 5,000 teachers working across Warwickshire schools, working with our education institutions is important to our 2050 ambitions. We have begun a partnership with Let's Go Zero so that we can develop a strategy for engaging all our schools in delivering DfE's sustainability requirements and the continued roll out of an Eco-Schools programme.



# Transport

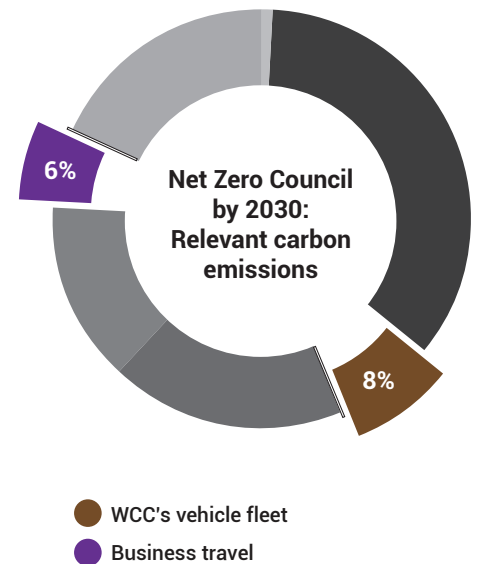
## Warwickshire County Council (WCC)

### Council related transport and travel

We have reduced council-related travel by 26% since 2019, a reduction of 304 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, exceeding our target. Some of the reduction can be attributed to new ways of working post-COVID, optimising digital working, and greater controls over staff training and conferences.

Our achievements this year include:

- Following a trial of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil in non-emergency fire vehicles, we have begun a pilot, fuelling vehicles used in one of our household waste and recycling centres. We are also replacing council-owned fleet with lower emissions vehicles, including several specialist all-electric vehicles such as a Home Library delivery vehicle, two mobile libraries, and a utility vehicle for use in our country parks.
- Incorporating sustainable travel and driving practices into mandatory training for staff driving on council-related business.
- Increasing our understanding of staff travel behaviours through our staff sustainability survey.



In the year ahead, we will:

- Continue replacing the council-owned fleet with lower emission vehicles.
- Review and evaluate the HVO trial to inform our fleet strategy.
- Develop an action plan based on our staff sustainability survey, including encouraging and promoting sustainable travel options.
- Develop a strategic approach to fleet that helps us better understand the steps we need to take to support our ambition to decarbonise travel and transport.
- Develop measures to understand the impact of emissions on our Home to School transport service.

Objective	Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1B. Reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from council related travel	Year on year reduction of CO2e emissions from Council travel (fleet)	Reduce council travel emissions by 1,100 tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2030	1171 <sup>2</sup>	497	813	934	867
	Year on year reduction of CO2e emissions from Council travel (business)		1181	717	1049	1206	1144

<sup>2</sup>The emissions for baseline and subsequent years were re-calculated following the publication of the Sustainable Futures Strategy in 2023 using an improved methodology resulting in a reduction in baseline emissions from 1,391 tCO2e (15.8%).

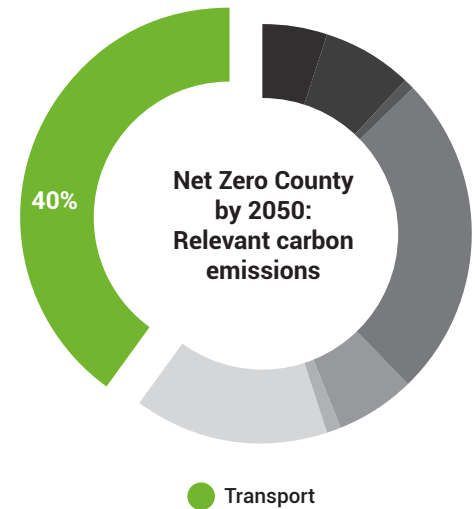
## Warwickshire Transport

Using nationally available data for Warwickshire, overall transport emissions make up 40% of all of Warwickshire emissions. The latest available data shows that emissions in 2022 increased, following a 21% decrease in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, current emissions are 8.5% lower than 2019 levels. This mirrors the national and regional position where similar increases were reported. Despite these reductions in the sector as a whole, there have been no reductions in emissions from motorway traffic compared to 2005. This is significant for Warwickshire, as motorway traffic accounts for over 45% of transport emissions compared to 22% nationally and over the same period we can report a 15% reduction in non motorway traffic in the county.

Transport across the county remains our biggest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>e, with our Local Transport Plan (LTP4) being the strategic instrument to drive change. LTP4 was launched in 2023 with one of its priority outcomes to consider vehicle emissions, underpinning the key themes of Environment and Place, recognising the impact transport choices have on carbon emissions and the need to connect areas across the county in sustainable ways.

Progress this year has included:

- Developed Area Strategies and Implementation Plans to support LTP4. We are currently evaluating drafts before sharing them with District and Borough partners.
- Rolled out publicly available electric vehicle (EV) charge points, now at a rate of 102.2 per 100,000 population (as of January, 2025). Whilst this is lower than the England average of 111/100,000, as a rural county we compare well to similar rural counties, who are generally reporting between 60 and 90 charge points/100,000 population. We have recently secured £3.295 million from the LEVI Capital Fund. Procurement of additional charge points is anticipated for Spring 2025, with the first roll-out of new on-street charging infrastructure from Autumn 2025.
- Progressed development work for a new Rugby Parkway railway station to improve rail access, support the Houlton urban extension (over 6,000 homes), and serve as a Park and Ride for the wider catchment area. Outline planning permission and land acquisition have already been secured. Delivery funding and finance options are being explored, and engagement with Network



Rail and key stakeholders is ongoing to progress the network change requirements and refine the Business Case.

- Committed £13.864 million in funding to support the Warwickshire Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) 2 scheme. This includes funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), Stagecoach Midlands, and Section 106 developer contributions to enable the introduction of 27 all-electric buses and associated charging infrastructure on key routes across Warwickshire.
- Published our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), setting out our plans to improve bus services across Warwickshire and provide residents with better access to transport with lower (or zero) emissions.
- Achieved 40% of Warwickshire schools signing up for the safe and active travel programme in 2023/24. The digital offer has helped to increase uptake.
- The Safe and Active Travel team continues to engage with businesses to support them in developing active travel plans, offering best practices, resources, and roadshow events. To date, 43 businesses have engaged with the Active Travel Programme, and a further 98 have signed up for the Love to Ride app.
- Continuing to support the production of locally sourced produce via the Warwickshire Food and Drink Programme helps reduce the miles travelled from farm to fork for Warwickshire residents and businesses.
- The Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is a long-term, county-wide plan for investment in walking, wheeling, and cycling routes and Active Travel Zones. It was approved by Warwickshire County Council in February 2024.

Objective	Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1A. Reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and air quality pollutants emitted from journeys made by Warwickshire businesses and residents	Year on year emissions reduction from A roads and minor roads (kCO <sub>2</sub> e) <sup>1</sup>	TBA	1,140	896	1003	1029	Not available
	Bus patronage in Warwickshire (passenger journeys – millions)		13.75	11.02	3.59	7.84	9.23

<sup>1</sup>This metric excludes motorways and allows our focus to be on those roads where we have the greatest impact. In 2022, this measure equated to approximately 50% of the transport sector.



# Built Environment and Energy

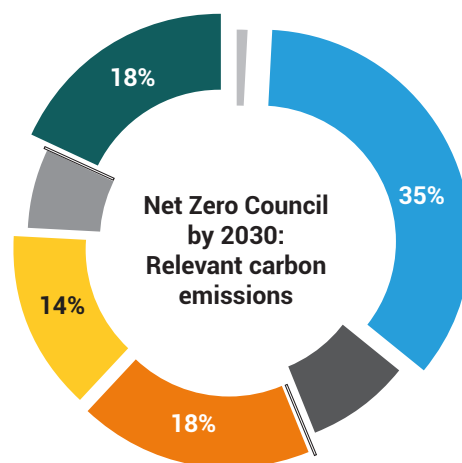
## Warwickshire County Council Buildings and Streetlighting

The energy we use for heat and power is the largest contributor to CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions across our estate. We have reduced electricity consumption from our revised baseline by 24% for our buildings and by 17% for streetlighting. Gas used for heating our buildings has also seen reduced emissions against the revised baseline, although at a slower rate of 7%.

Delivery in this area has included:

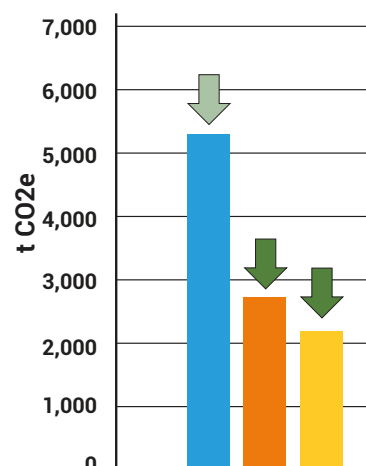
- Generating 136 MWh of renewable electricity in 2023/24, avoiding 'having to purchase 28.16 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year. This includes the installation of solar panels at Ryton Pools Country Parks, Warwickshire Fire & Rescue training facility, and new facilities to support children in care.
- Purchasing 'Pure Green' electricity through Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) for our corporate buildings, ensuring our electricity is solely from renewable sources and allowing us to report zero emissions for scope 2 electricity use in those buildings.
- Developing a Decarbonisation Strategy, identifying the assets with the highest combined gas and electricity emissions to focus on next steps.
- Applying to central government for funding from the Low Carbon Skills Fund and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to support estates decarbonisation; unfortunately, these applications have not been successful.
- Approximately 90% of our street lights have been replaced with LEDs, with the remainder being lower wattage and being replaced as part of ongoing maintenance. Within our buildings we are rolling out a programme to replace lighting with LEDs which is expected to be complete by March 2025.
- Partnering with SCAPE to secure funding for an Energy Management system that monitors energy use across a new all-through school in Warwickshire.

Carbon emissions (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) estate boundary



- Natural gas consumption in buildings
- Fugitive emissions from refrigeration
- Purchased electricity in buildings
- Streetlighting
- Upstream energy

2023/24 Total Emissions per Emission Source



- Natural gas consumption in buildings
- Scope 2 Purchased electricity in buildings
- Scope 2 Streetlighting



- Obtaining landlord approval for five WCC schools to install solar PV.
- Replacing aged and inefficient gas boilers in 16 properties.

In the year ahead, we will:

- Advance the Decarbonisation Strategy by obtaining RIBA 3 and 3+ surveys for 15 additional properties. This will support funding applications to the central government Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Grant, enabling WCC to reduce emissions.
- Continue to support schools wishing to self-fund renewable projects through our Landlord Approval programme.
- Improve the efficiency of our buildings as part of our maintenance programmes across our portfolio. This includes re-roofing two museums in Warwickshire, planned boiler replacements at six properties, planned window replacements at five properties, and identifying and seeking funding for the next phase of whole-site planned LED lighting replacements, including Shire Hall.
- Continue to renew and undertake energy efficiency surveys and use these to inform future works and investments.

Despite seeing decreases in our gas and electricity consumption, the amount of CO2e emitted from our buildings and street lightings has increased because of upstream energy factors.

Objective	Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<b>2C.</b> To reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from council buildings and street lighting	Year on year reduction of CO2e emissions from Council assets (landlord and occupier) and streetlighting.	Reduce CO2e emissions by at least 1,650 tonnes of CO2e by 2030.	11,765 <sup>1</sup>	10,652	10,728	10,059	10,082

<sup>1</sup>The baseline has dropped from 12,250 tCO2e (4% reduction) due to property movements, new information on some building stock. Baseline corrections align with the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Protocol.

## Warwickshire county wide emissions

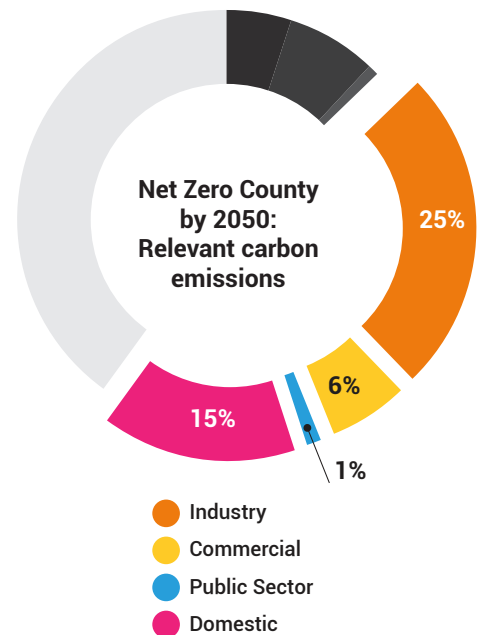
Having a better understanding our energy needs across the county is a fundamental step in reducing our carbon emissions associated with buildings and energy use. We have been working with key partners across the county and region to develop our approach to Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP). So far, we have:

- Communicated the benefits of LAEP with key stakeholders and secured outline support for proceeding with a county-level LAEP, with strong partnership working across district and borough councils.
- Worked closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority to extend access to their LAEP+ tool to Warwickshire, providing us with geo-spatial energy data that will allow us to deliver key stages of a plan.
- Developed a methodology and dataset to improve publicly available information regarding domestic Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), providing a more comprehensive understanding of EPC ratings across the county. This data is being used by Act on Energy to support residents in parts of the county with retrofit energy efficiency improvements.
- Continued to report on renewables installation across Warwickshire, now reporting an increase in generation to 290,649 MWh in 2023 from 195,703 MWh in 2019. Installed capacity has increased to 285 MW from 192 MW in that period.
- Welcomed Warwick District Council in introducing a Net Zero Carbon Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Document to reduce the impacts over the lifetime of new residential and large non-domestic developments, preventing emissions increases from new developments in parts of the county.

We have also been active in working with other organisations with key assets across the county that impact energy use. This includes encouraging energy reductions by:

- Directly supporting schools, funding 50 schools to be awarded the Eco-Schools flag, and indirectly through Let's Go Zero, which provides wider, dedicated support to schools across the county to help them carry out energy audits and develop their own Climate Action Plans.
- Our Green Shoots Fund has continued to fund projects to the value of £750k to date. This has included improvements to community buildings such as energy-efficient lighting, installation of renewables, and more efficient heating.

Proportion of Warwickshire's 5,120,000 Co2e emissions



- Through the joint venture between Warwickshire Property and Development Group, WCC and housebuilder Countryside new homes are being built that prioritise energy efficiency and sustainability. Examples such as the 71 homes in Brookmill, North Warwickshire are benefiting from improved construction practices and reductions in emissions by the use of air source heat pumps, electric vehicle charges and solar panels.

In the year ahead, we will:

- Analyse energy consumption data to understand the challenges facing our existing energy system (Local Area Energy Plan stage 3). This will be communicated with key stakeholders to support investment in the remaining stages of the plan.
- Continue to roll out a programme of engagement with schools, supporting an additional 50 schools to participate in the Eco-Schools programme. We will develop a more coordinated approach across council services and with partners to encourage all Warwickshire schools to actively support the aims set out in our strategy, while helping them improve their financial sustainability through energy savings.

Objective	Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<b>2A.</b> Increase the amount of energy generated from renewable sources	Amount of installed energy in Warwickshire (MW)	Annual increase	192 (to Dec 2019)	194 (to Dec 2020)	199 (to Dec 2021)	212 (to Dec 2022)	285 (to Dec 2023)
	Emissions from Warwickshire's homes (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	610,000tCO <sub>2</sub> e by 2027 (aligning to 2050 decarbonisation pathway)	866,600	858,300	875,000	766,300	Not yet available
<b>2B.</b> To reduce the amount of carbon dioxide arising from energy and building use across Warwickshire's homes, schools and businesses	Emissions from Warwickshire's businesses (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	1,297,000 tCO <sub>2</sub> e by 2027 (aligning to 2050 decarbonisation pathway)	1,721,000	1,614,800	1,767,200	1,631,700	Not yet available



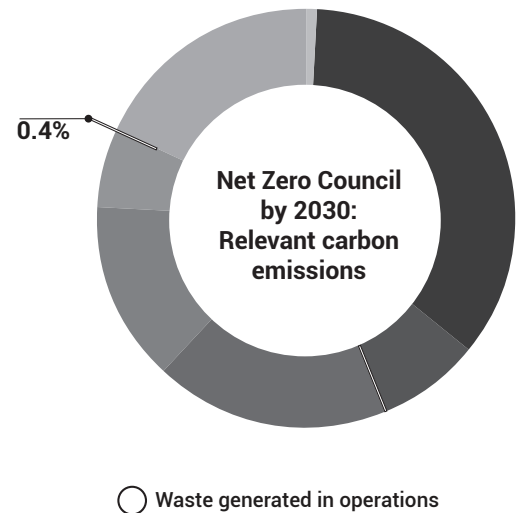
# Waste and Resources

## Warwickshire County Council's Waste and Recycling

We continue to take action to reduce waste from council buildings. Although we have seen an increase this year, this correlates with the growing number of staff working from our buildings post-COVID. Our Sustainability Survey provided insights into staff behaviours, informing our approach to waste education. Our staff network has also hosted events to promote resource reduction.

Our achievements this year include:

- Launching a new recycling campaign to encourage better waste disposal and recycling behaviours.
- Introduced recycling for new waste streams, including food waste and takeaway coffee cups.
- Conducting a staff sustainability survey and holding focus groups to better understand staff behaviours and attitudes regarding waste disposal in our buildings.
- Providing targeted support for office locations with lower recycling rates.
- Continuing to send our food waste for anaerobic digestion.
- Organising fashion swapping events to encourage the reuse of unwanted clothes, shoes and accessories.
- Reducing our reliance on paper. Since November 2023, our use of Docusign has saved the equivalent of 137,000 pages of paper, which is comparable to removing two cars from the road or conserving 29 trees<sup>1</sup>.



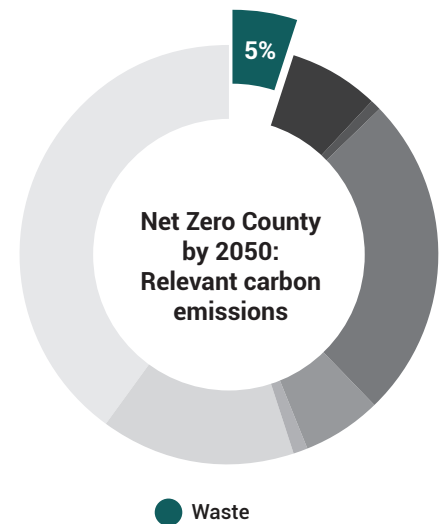
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mapfre.com/en/insights/sustainability/recycling-paper-saves-trees/>

In the year ahead, we will:

- Continue to raise awareness among staff about correct waste disposal and encourage recycling and reusing.
- Increase our food waste capture to reduce residual waste and continue sending it for anaerobic digestion.
- Introduce office sustainability champions to support behaviour change within the council.

## Warwickshire Waste and Recycling

Changes to kerbside recycling has helped to reduce the amount of residual waste produced across the county. This includes the introduction of food waste bins and improved recycling schemes in some districts, reducing the need to recycle these items at household waste recycling centres.



Objective	Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<b>3A.</b> Reduce the amount of waste arising in Warwickshire	Reduction in household waste	Recycle at least 65% of waste (household waste)	51.1%	49.5%	47.9%	48.0%	53.2%
		Recycle at least 65% of waste (household waste at recycling centres)	60%	54%	56%	56%	56%
		Reduce landfill below 10% by 2035	12.1%	10.0%	14.4%	9.3%	8.3%
<b>3B.</b> Establish a material recirculation approach that provides commercial opportunities and sustainable jobs	Align with emerging Economic Strategy alongside nationally available data for commercial and industrial waste and construction and demolition.	Reduce residual household waste per household to 50% of 2019 levels by 2042	477kg	509kg	508kgs	450kg	417kg
		Reduce all household waste per person to 50% of 2019 levels by 2042	440kg	457kg	437kg	389kg	392kg
		Available data sources are not yet available and therefore this measure is still in development					

Some of the highlights include:

- The recycling and composting performance improved substantially in 2023/24, largely due to the rise in green waste volumes from a low base in 2022/23. This is a better position than the England average, which reported as 43.4% in 2022. In addition, there was a full year benefit from the new recycling services in Warwick and Stratford (such as improved dry recycling, a separate food waste collection and a three-weekly collection of residual waste). In the last year this performance has been consolidated and further improvement work is on-going.
- All bio waste collected in Warwickshire is now treated locally, reducing the distance it travels for processing.

- Good progress has been made in reducing the amount of residual waste sent to landfill, thereby lowering our carbon emissions. In fact, our projected annual carbon emissions as a waste authority is -15,678 tCO<sub>2</sub>; this reflects the fact that we remove more carbon from the environment than we emit because of the positive effect of composting, recycling, waste incineration and offsetting landfill.
- All waste collection authorities now use a common, customer-focused system for collecting dry mixed recycling at the kerbside. This makes it easier for residents to recycle, and these valuable materials are taken to a local facility for sorting and onward delivery to UK-based reprocessors.
- Plastic film is now being collected in Warwick district, and the entire Warwickshire area will have this service by spring 2025.
- Campaigns and workshops are held across communities and schools to encourage waste reduction, with a focus on reuse, recycling, and composting.
- Repair cafés have been established across the county to promote and encourage reuse instead of discarding items.

In the year ahead we will:

- See changes to government policy that will result in all district and borough councils collecting food waste separately, with the aim of starting in April 2026.
- Have three districts and boroughs introducing separate food waste collections and other changes to their collection services.
- Develop our approach to material recirculation (circular economy), taking into account best practice from others and the approaches used by neighbouring authorities.



# Sustainable Communities and Green Economy

## Warwickshire County Council

Emissions across our communities and businesses is a significant proportion of our total emissions as a county. Therefore, it is essential that we influence as many of our residents and businesses to take action to support our ambitions for 2050, reducing energy demands and therefore providing financial benefits across the Warwickshire economy and across all communities, especially those with the most financial disadvantage.

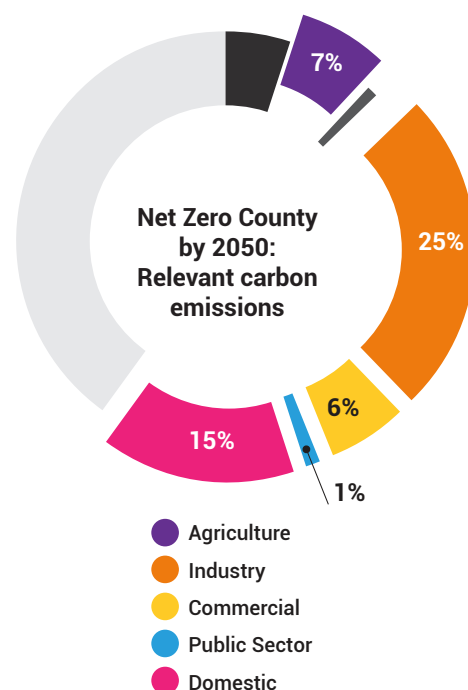
In the past year, we have:

### 1. Strategic Planning and Policy

- Published our Strategic Economic Plan (2024-2034), establishing Sustainable Growth as one of three strategic pillars. This plan places green technologies, carbon emission reductions, and the promotion of eco-friendly practices at the core of our work across businesses and communities.
- Considered climate change and biodiversity within all Creating Opportunities Place Plans, with pilots Nuneaton, Mancetter and Lillington prioritising these issues.

### 2. Business Support and Partnerships

- Identified businesses in Warwickshire contributing the most emissions and found that the majority have their own targets to achieve net zero carbon by 2050 or earlier.
- Delivered the Business Energy Advice Service (BEAS) pilot in Warwickshire with funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The pilot engaged over 400 businesses and produced tailored decarbonisation plans for 131 of them. Grants totalling £640,767 were awarded to 23 businesses for energy-saving projects.
- Funded the Green Business Podcast as part of the BEAS pilot, providing coverage of sustainability opportunities and challenges for businesses.





- Joined partners from across the county to participate in a Rural Climathon hosted by the University of Gloucester, supporting a shift towards more sustainable farming practices.
- Since April 2024, Warwickshire County Council's Future Focus Skills Programme has provided salary support to businesses, encouraging 15 new apprentices to start in sustainability jobs across Warwickshire.
- Included regular sustainability content in our monthly business-facing publication, Warwickshire Means Business, to inform, influence, and support Warwickshire businesses in delivering more sustainably.

### **3. Community Engagement and Education**

- Based in the North of the county, we commissioned a creative practitioner through our Library Service to engage communities with an interactive, creative roadshow focused on environmental responsibility and climate change.
- Promoted sustainable content during Green Libraries Week in October across physical and virtual resources in our community settings. Delivered a series of sustainability and crafts events in our libraries and produced a social media campaign that engaged over 2,500 people.
- Hosted a free family fun-day in Nuneaton for the local community, focusing on nature and wellbeing.
- As part of our Food Strategy we have launched a network of Food Champions in November 2023 to encourage community volunteers to promote the co-benefits of affordable, healthy food and sustainable food choices.
- Engaged with communities to share our ambitions and inspire action at events such as Leamington's Eco-Fest, Stratford's Climate Action Day, and Warwickshire Recorders Group.
- Engaged with young people across Warwickshire to inspire and educate them, including bespoke sessions at the Youth Conference and engagement with Coventry and Warwick Universities.

## 4. Internal Initiatives and Collaborations

- Promoted local businesses, supporting the local economy and reducing carbon emissions associated with transport. Successful campaigns have included our shop local campaign over Christmas and producing a guide for new Warwickshire residents.
- Worked with the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) to share our approach and aspirations with their membership. Presented at their conference and provided funding to develop expertise for delivering Carbon Literacy Training across the Town & Parish Council network.
- Aligned several funding streams, including Councillor Grants, with sustainability aims, encouraging award recipients to consider the climate change and biodiversity implications of their activities.
- Continued to fund projects through our Green Shoots Fund, including Warwickshire Climate Alliance's Big Save Roadshows across six towns across North Warwickshire and Nuneaton as well as community planting schemes.

## 5. Public Health and Environmental Initiatives

- Collaborated with Public Health colleagues across the county to support the actions of partners within the Warwickshire Air Quality Alliance, helping to deliver carbon-reducing benefits. Examples include actions by District and Borough Councils encouraging EV use for taxis and private hire vehicles, and policies requiring hackney carriages to shift to ultra-low emission vehicles as a minimum.

In the year ahead, we will:

- Engage our biggest CO<sub>2</sub>e-emitting businesses that have not declared decarbonisation ambitions to better understand their sustainability goals.
- Continue to engage and inspire our communities to take action, extending activities through our library outreach campaigns.
- Host a sustainability and energy-focused panel session at this year's UKREIF, promoting the benefits of investing in Warwickshire from a sustainability perspective.
- Review the focus of existing community investment funds, including the Social Fabric Fund and Councillor Grants, to consider including climate change and biodiversity as priorities.

- Incorporate sustainability and climate change into our wider community engagement activities, including our work with the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) and commissioning across the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.
- Publish and deliver the 'Kind Communities-Kind Food' community programme of events and activities for April 2025 – March 2026, reinforcing community-powered approaches to healthier and more sustainable food sourcing.
- Produce and promote a Warwickshire Food Champions Toolkit for healthier and more sustainable food.
- Increase the number of Warwickshire Food Champions from 30 to 60, enhancing the impact of the programme across the county.
- Encourage the growth of community-led healthy and sustainable food projects through the provision of £28.5K in Kind Communities - Kind Food Grant funding.
- Following an audit of community-led food projects in Warwickshire, produce a partnership report in 2025/26 on the scale of these projects. This report will highlight projects featuring sustainability and biodiversity as key elements, enabling further support and recognition.
- Pilot a 'Warwickshire Food Miles' scheme at a local level.

**4A.** Grow our economy in a sustainable way to support new low carbon businesses and ensure Warwickshire businesses can successfully transition to Net Zero.

This will be measured by the Index of Growth that is being developed to support the Strategic Economic Plan.

**4B.** To improve prosperity, health and wellbeing for Warwickshire's communities through our sustainable actions.

We will continue to work with the third sector to establish an appropriate measure for this objective.

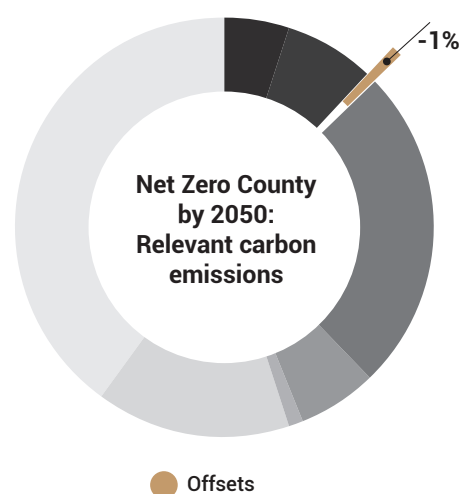


# Natural Capital and Biodiversity

While reducing carbon emissions at both council and county levels is the most significant action we can take to achieve net zero, our work on natural capital ambitions continues. This has included:

- Establishing our own tree nursery to provide future tree stock, receiving £1.9 million in external grants, setting up a new tree team, and planting 65,018 trees against our overall target of 566,000 trees. However, this is behind where we had planned to be to meet the 2030 target. Work is currently underway to identify land availability across the council estate to meet the target as this has been the challenge preventing more planting to date.
- Developing our Tree and Woodland Strategy.
- Welcoming almost one million visitors to our country parks and greenways, supporting people in better understanding the natural environment. Research indicates that this makes them more likely to support our sustainability ambitions.
- Outlining our approach in the Natural Capital Investment Strategy on how we use income from developer contributions, environmental markets, and nature-based compensation schemes such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to invest in and manage our natural assets. This helps address issues such as flooding, carbon reduction, and air and water quality.
- Conducting satellite imagery of Warwickshire habitats, which is now being analysed.
- Managing the Warwickshire Biodiversity Offsetting scheme following a successful pilot. Additionally, we have achieved Responsible Body (RB) status, allowing us to create Conservation Covenants to establish habitat banks under the mandatory scheme. This provides a mechanism for developers to comply with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation, encouraging biodiversity investment close to development sites and enhancing biodiversity across Warwickshire.

Proportion of Warwickshire's 5,120,000 Co2e emissions



- Developing our knowledge and understanding of carbon offsetting opportunities, informing our Offsetting Policy and Offsetting Plan.

In the year ahead, we will:

- Publish the Tree and Woodland Strategy.
- Establish Conservation Covenants with landowners in Warwickshire, expanding the county's portfolio of available Habitat Banks under the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) scheme.
- Deliver our first tree planting scheme compliant with the Woodland Carbon Code.
- Prioritise the identification of land to support our tree planting commitments.
- Finalise our carbon offsetting plan and publish our Offsetting Policy statement.
- Explore opportunities to support our offsetting requirements.

Objective	Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
<b>5A.</b> Increase the coverage and connectivity of habitats in Warwickshire as a percentage increase of total land	Total area of land managed through schemes designed to manage and enhance biodiversity (Ha)	30% of Warwickshire land protected and used to support the recovery of nature by 2030	To be finalised once the Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been published.					
	Percentage of habitat biodiversity net gain in the council's rural estate	Annual increase	N/A					4Ha
	Total area of biodiversity net gain schemes established	Annual increase	N/A					22.93Ha
<b>5B.</b> Objective: Increase the amount of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO <sub>2</sub> e) captured and stored through nature-based solutions in Warwickshire	Number of tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e captured and stored annually through nature-based solutions in Warwickshire <sup>1</sup>	2030, 2050 and annual target to be established through the insetting and offsetting plan	46,500	45,400	43,1010	42,600	Not available	
	Annual change in soil and vegetation carbon storage per habitat (CO <sub>2</sub> e carbon/ha) in the Council's estate		To be developed	N/A				
	Number of trees planted per year	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,719	15,866	49,189	

<sup>1</sup>From UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics; 2005-2022, DESNZ 2024; Includes forestry, cropland, grassland, settlements, and bioenergy, with forestry being the largest offset, followed by grassland and cropland showing net positive emissions.



