

## Council Emissions

### **Aim: Achieve Net Zero by 2030 for the council's own operations.**

Our 2030 target includes emissions from our buildings, fleet and key contracted services (waste, leisure and green space). These are the areas we have either ownership or the greatest control over through direct management or close management of these key council services. Of the emissions we currently assess, this accounts for 90.4% of emissions.

For our wider emissions footprint, we will aim to be Net Zero by 2040 in line with our district target. This includes emissions from staff commuting, staff working from home, spend on goods and services, our own waste and water use. Of the emissions we currently assess, this accounts for 9.6% of emissions. However, there are gaps around understanding emissions from our wider spend on goods and services, such as IT and smaller contracts, as well as understanding emissions related to our leased out estate. As part of this strategy we will assess emissions related to these areas before taking actions to reduce these emissions to achieve Net Zero by 2040.

Nº	ACTION
1	Deliver decarbonisation of key council buildings, particularly the council offices and Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum, and utilise heat decarbonisation and assessment management plans to prioritise future projects and deliver a net zero estate.
2	Optimise council's own estate energy consumption to use and occupation to maximise efficiencies and reduce emissions.
3	Finish transition of council's own fleet to fully electric by 2030.
4	Deliver significant decarbonisation of our three leisure centres by March 2026.
5	Explore options for low carbon heating of Lidos with plan to transition to low carbon heating once boilers reach end-of-life after 2030. Actively manage the sites to reduce energy consumption.
6	Implement use of sustainable low carbon fuels in heavy duty refuse collection vehicles and wider measures to reduce fuel consumption and associated emissions from our waste collection service from 2025/26.
7	Work with our contractor to transition the green space service contract fleet to fully electric, if feasible, and to fully electric machinery by 2030.
8	Reduce staff commuting emissions through measures to support take up of electric vehicles, and encourage walking, cycling, and use of public transport.
9	Identify opportunities for reducing emissions from staff business travel through consideration of schemes including lift sharing and EV car clubs.
10	Assess emissions from spend on goods and services. Work with the Contracts Procurement Group to identify and act on priority areas for action to utilise procurement to reduce emissions, including embodied emissions of goods and materials.
11	Estimate emissions associated with leased buildings, and deliver works required to ensure all commercial properties owned by the council are at least compliant with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards – at present and in the future.
12	Provide climate change training and regular engagement for staff and councillors.
13	Develop council position about offsetting unavoidable emissions to meet 2030 net zero goal that supports local emissions reductions.
14	Publish annual reports of progress towards the council's emissions targets from 2025.
15	Produce roadmap towards 2030 net zero target and for the council's wider emissions beyond 2030 in 2025/26.

## District Emissions

### **Aim: Achieve a Net Zero North Herts district by 2040.**

The key sources of district-wide emissions are: transport, heating in people's homes, and commercial and industry.

We have limited tools available to drive action to reduce emissions across the district ahead of the UK as a whole but can use our role as the planning authority, our convening powers and being a trusted voice to help support action.

Nº	ACTION
16	Expand and improve EV charging in council owned car parks
17	Expand provision for EV charging across the district in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council
18	Identify and seek to secure funding and/or partnership-working to implement improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure across North Herts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cycle parking at destinations</li> <li>- Seeking partners to provide cycle/e-scooter hire schemes</li> <li>- Updating the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to include rural connections</li> </ul>
19	Promote independent advice and / or service and schemes to support residents to retrofit their homes, install low carbon technologies, or reduce their energy usage.
20	Promote and deliver government funded grants to retrofit fuel poor homes
21	Utilise Tenants Charter and enforcement of minimum energy standards to drive improvements in housing to reduce fuel poverty
22	Explore providing support for businesses to take up low carbon technologies and reduce their emissions, including consideration of grants or sharing of good practice
23	Strive where possible for developments on land sold by the council to be Net Zero operational in line with the council's 2040 goals, with monitoring of embodied emissions.
24	Actively engage with Hertfordshire-wide work related to local area energy planning , including identification of options for viable district heating systems
25	Support growth of community energy in our area, including promotion of town or area specific projects to improve rates of installation of low carbon heating and energy efficiency measures in our district
26	Develop design guidance that promotes low emissions in travel and operational use for our major housing developments to support our net zero goal
27	Produce good practice case studies for development in the district, aligning to the gold and silver standards of the Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document to inspire others
28	Integrate consideration of district wide net zero and climate adaptation goals in local plan development process.
29	Utilise new waste collection service and associated communications and engagement to drive improvements in household recycling rates, reaching 60% in 2026/27.

## Adaptation

**Aims: Ensure all operations and services are resilient to the impacts of climate change**

**Become a district that is resilient to unavoidable impacts of climate change**

*Adaptation involves adjusting our lives, environment, work, and communities to changes we face today and in the future, due to climate change. We're already seeing its effects through extreme*

*weather events like floods, heatwaves, and intense storms, impacting supply chains, council services, staff, and residents' health. We must prepare for these risks and adapt accordingly.*

*The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership prioritises adaptation; we've contributed to the adaptation subgroup action plan, assessed climate risks, and helped develop a county-wide risk register and adaptation plan.*

*The MET Office's Local Authority Climate Service provides tools and resources to help us as a Local Authority, better understand the impacts our area faces and helps us on the journey to greater understanding of climate risks and adaptation to climate change.*

Nº	ACTION
30	Signpost residents and businesses in the district to data and resources relating to climate risks and potential impacts, to help best adapt to and mitigate against the changing climate. For example, how to prepare homes for extreme weather, retrofit opportunities, reducing risks of overheating, flood defences, permeable driveways and mitigating flood risks.
31	Engage with water companies and communicate advice on water usage reduction to residents and business.
32	Signpost communities to cool and warm spaces across the district and work with Hertfordshire County Council to update the map of locations available.
33	Establish learnings from the ResilienTogether project and apply to our own sites within North Hertfordshire.
34	Explore the feasibility of providing cool and warm spaces in Council owned buildings during seasonal demand.
35	Record extreme weather events and incidents to enable a monitoring process to record the impacts on our council services, assets and district as a whole.
36	Establish learnings from emergency volunteer work to aid response to emergency events including from extreme weather.
37	Actively work with Hertfordshire County Council and district and borough colleagues to undertake a climate vulnerability mapping exercise

## Biodiversity

### Aim: Increase biodiversity in North Herts

*Biodiversity is defined as the variety of plant and animal life in an area, or in a particular habitat, with a high level of variety or diversity generally considered beneficial.*

*In 2023 NHC declared an Ecological Emergency to show recognition that nature is in crisis, that the climate and ecological emergencies are interlinked, and that we have a duty to act to protect nature.*

*As of January 2024 there is a biodiversity duty upon local authorities to consider what they can do to both conserve and enhance biodiversity. They must subsequently publish policies/objectives/actions. They must first report progress on these in 2026.*

Nº	ACTION
38	Work in partnership with the Wildlife Trust and others to make improvements to North Herts Council sites, and rivers and chalk streams.

39	Continually review opportunities to deliver the aspirational elements of site-specific Greenspace Action Plans; and review and consider additional aspirations as each plan comes up for renewal (e.g. using s106/BNG money to deliver)
40	Review the success of implementing the greenspace wildling audit recommendations; and seek and implement further recommendations from Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW).
41	Make it a priority for river projects to support suitable habitat for water voles; where possible, support the Wildlife Trust's aspiration to reintroduce water voles into Purwell.
42	Explore options to landscape an area of Wilbury Hills Cemetery and incorporate more biodiversity
43	Review the impact of our reduced mowing regimes, and consider management amendments at the appropriate point in the Greenspace Management contract to help increase species diversity.  - Provide communications to residents about the reasons for this and the impacts.
44	Engage with resident groups and provide information on the wider benefits of reduced mowing regimes in areas where this leads to complaints.
45	Identify opportunities to harness the power of volunteers to achieve shared goals around increasing nature
46	Review the finalised version of the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy to identify if there are opportunities to contribute to the priorities identified.
47	Work with colleagues from social housing providers to find opportunities to incorporate nature-positive actions into ongoing work e.g. adding Swift bricks to houses which are being retrofitted.
48	Make full consideration of Biodiversity within the Local Plan Review process including:  - Exploring the possibility of a target above the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for development within North Herts. - Considering the allocation of Nature Networks. - Inviting landowners to put forward potential areas for open space and nature.
49	Review council-owned land to ascertain whether we have sites which may be suitable for biodiversity projects including:  - Wildflower areas and rewilding - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offsetting from development
50	Review the opportunity and feasibility of creating a habitat bank using council estate to sell biodiversity units to developers who need to offset required BNG.
51	Support prospective habitat banks which are in accordance with Local Nature Recovery Strategy aspirations in securing legal agreements to enable access to the Biodiversity gain register.

**Cross Cutting**

Due to the widespread nature of sustainability, as well as the services the council offers, there are a number of actions that fit across the different themes in the strategy. We have therefore grouped these together into 'cross cutting actions'.

Nº	ACTION
52	Annual internal communications and engagement to reduce other sources of the council's emissions with wider environmental benefits, such as the council's waste produced and water consumed.
53	Develop and deliver public facing communications and engagement plan to support residents to act sustainably
54	Continually review opportunities for the museum to host exhibitions on climate change, nature and sustainability
55	Explore introduction of water-saving measures at allotments to reduce hosepipe and sprinkler usage.
56	Identify potential areas that would benefit from cooling (e.g. on walking or cycling routes or in parks) and conduct a feasibility assessment to ascertain whether trees could be planted to provide the required shading.
57	Consider how we can ascertain the value of green-infrastructure and nature-based solutions through assessments of council sites to determine best value and best use.
58	Continue to engage with partners on nature recovery and nature-based solutions to adaptation in the district, for example The North Chilterns Partnership, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Hertfordshire County Council.