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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, 17 November 2026
Time: 6.00pm,
Location: Council Chamber
Contact: Gemma O'Donnell (01438) 242216
committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: Leanne Brady (Chair), Peter Wilkins (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Jim Brown, Claire Parris, Jade Woods, Doug Bainbridge CC, Jan Bainbridge CC, John Blackwood, Jaysica Marvell, Graham Spencer and Nigel Williams

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AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2026.
3 - 6

3. CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE
Members to receive a presentation on the annual Climate Change Update and are invited to interview the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport & Planning, Cllr Rob Broom and the Climate Change Officers regarding the update on the Council's Climate Change performance.
7 - 172

4. URGENT PART I BUSINESS
To consider any Part 1 business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

5. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS
To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

Agenda Published 09/11/2026

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 6 October 2026
Time: 6.00pm
Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Peter Wilkins (Chair), Dermot Kehoe, Jade Woods, Doug Bainbridge CC, Jan Bainbridge CC, Jaysica Marvell, Graham Spencer and Nigel Williams

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.30pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leanne Brady, John Blackwood Jim Brown and Claire Parris.

Councillor Dermot Kehoe was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Jim Brown.

Councillor Peter Wilkins chaired the Committee due to Councillor Leanne Brady going on maternity leave, and it was noted that he would be Chair until further notice.

Councillor Coleen De Freitas, The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Young People, was also in attendance for the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2026 were agreed by the Committee.

3 UPDATE ON STEVENAGE WORKS AND THE SKILLS AGENDA

The Committee received an update on the previous review of Stevenage Works and the Skills Agenda, which had been completed in January 2025. Members were advised that the initiative had continued to develop through partnership working with North Hertfordshire College, local schools, businesses and contractors involved in the regeneration programme.

It was noted that Stevenage Works operated through the Council and formed part of the wider procurement and partnership arrangements, with contractors expected to support local skills and employment opportunities across the town.

Members discussed the work being undertaken to address local skills gaps, including adult skills, apprenticeships and pathways into professional qualifications.

Officers highlighted work with North Hertfordshire College and the University of Hertfordshire, including opportunities in sectors such as childcare and early years.

Members also discussed young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET), and were advised that work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was underway to better understand the cohort, barriers to employment and the potential development of a Youth Hub in the town.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Young People discussed the Council's work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, and discussions took place regarding efforts to reach young people who may lack existing networks or direction.

Members also considered the promotion of positive success stories through the Youth Council and Mission 44, however discussions took place regarding concerns about inappropriate online comments directed towards young people. Officers confirmed that the promotion of positive achievements remained important while recognising the need to protect young people online.

Members discussed careers advice and were advised that existing resources, including the Hertfordshire Futures Opportunity Portal, were being promoted locally. The need for greater access to careers advice for adults considering a career change was also raised, with officers noting that this was being considered through the adult skills work with North Hertfordshire College.

The Committee was advised that the local skills strategy was being aligned with the Hertfordshire Economic Strategy and that partnership working with employers remained a key priority. This included engagement with larger businesses such as Airbus and support for SMEs through WENTA and the Council's business centre.

Members also discussed the economic pressures facing businesses, including rising costs, and were advised that developing local skills and ensuring businesses could access an appropriately skilled workforce formed an important part of supporting Stevenage's wider economy.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Portfolio Holder explained that the Council supported SME's through a range of initiatives, including business advice and guidance on funding and grants for local businesses. The Council was also working to maintain and improve its industrial units to improve energy efficiency and reduce operating costs for businesses. It was also working with local colleges, schools and employers, to develop skills, promote STEM careers and create pathways into employment.

Members welcomed the progress made and commended the work undertaken through Stevenage Works and the Skills Agenda, while highlighting the importance of continuing to monitor the number of young people who were not in education, employment or training.

4 **UPDATE ON COST OF LIVING**

The Committee received an update on the Council's work to support residents with the cost of living, with progress considered against the recommendations from the previous review.

Officers outlined the range of advice and signposting available through Council services, including face to face support, Citizens Advice, welfare and debt advisers, tenancy and housing options teams. The importance of early intervention was emphasised, particularly where residents were experiencing difficulties with rent or other household costs, to prevent issues escalating.

The Committee was advised that the previous Housing Support Fund had been replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund, with support administered through Citizens Advice following an affordability assessment. Other financial assistance, including support with rent shortfalls and schemes continued to be promoted to residents.

Members discussed the continuation of Community Cafes and were advised that, although the original funding was no longer available, alternative funding had been secured to support community cafés until July 2027. Officers agreed to provide Members with information on the locations of the Community Cafés so that residents could be appropriately signposted. Officers also clarified that the Court Desk was available to all residents, including those renting privately.

The Committee was advised that frontline staff continued to receive training to help identify and respond to cost of living issues, particularly officers working directly with residents.

Members considered Council Tax and rent arrears, which were monitored and reported through the Council's performance arrangements. Officers advised that work was underway to explore the relationship between arrears and areas of deprivation or lower incomes, with a view to provide targeted support. It was further noted that rent arrears were also benchmarked against other local authorities across Hertfordshire.

The impact of the cost of living on local businesses was also discussed. Officers acknowledged the pressures facing the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, including energy and fuel costs and changing consumer behaviour. Support was being provided through WENTA and the promotion of available grants, while regeneration activity and engagement with businesses and market traders were being used to support the town centre and diversify its offer.

In response to a question on whether the Council was doing all it could to support residents, the Portfolio Holder advised Members that although the Council had limited influence over wider costs such as energy, fuel and food prices, significant work was being undertaken through advice, signposting, tenant engagement and early intervention.

Members also highlighted the Council's work to improve the energy efficiency of its

housing stock, including investment in 237 homes through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, with 66% of Council homes now meeting EPC B or C standards. Further investment was expected to improve a total of 379 Council homes through the programme.

5 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access toInformation) (Variation) Order 2006.

2.That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

Climate Change Annual Update 2026

E&E Select Committee – November 2026

Alex Robinson	Director - Planning and Regulation
Fabian B. Oyarzun	Head of Climate Action
Veronica Chan	Climate Change Programme Lead Officer

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Purpose & Recommendations

Purpose

- The report details Stevenage's Climate Change Strategy delivery during 2025/26, covering progress across the eight strategic themes, resulting in wider benefits for the town and residents such as warmer, cheaper-to-heat homes, better and more accessible greenspaces, enhanced natural environments, support for vulnerable groups, and business competitiveness.
- It also outlines the introduction of a new Greenhouse Gas Accounting Framework for Council's emissions.
- Measures for 2026/27 are outlined. These build on the established ones to increase benefits to our residents, whilst improving our environment.

Recommendations

- That the 2026 Climate Change Annual Update (Appendix 1), detailing 2025/26 delivery, be noted.
- That Cabinet approves the forward-looking actions for 2026/27 as set out in 3.22.

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- This year's report marks an evolution in reporting by adopting a **streamlined 6-level structure** for climate action to prioritise local delivery and tangible impacts and communications.



Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- Our focus: the 6 levels for Climate Change Strategy.

- **Global Climate Action**

At COP29 the UK PM set a national target of **81% GHG reduction by 2035** (vs. 1990), exc. int. aviation and shipping, upgrading the previous pledge (68% cut by 2030).

2025 ranked globally as the **3rd warmest year on record** (following 2024 and 2023) (global air T° c.1.47°C above pre-industrial levels).

UNEP's Limiting Overshoot report (Sep 26) → Under current policies and near-term trajectories, **exceedance of 1.5°C** is widely assessed as **unavoidable**.



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- Our focus: the 6 levels for Climate Change Strategy.

- **UK National Climate Action**

One of the most ambitious targets among major economies (inc. **net-zero** by **2050)**.

Government national programmes: **GBE, WHP, LPP**.

All ten of the UK's **warmest years** on record have occurred since 2000 (2025 ranking the 1st, followed by 2022 and 2023).

Formal **droughts** declared in 2022, 2025, and 2026.

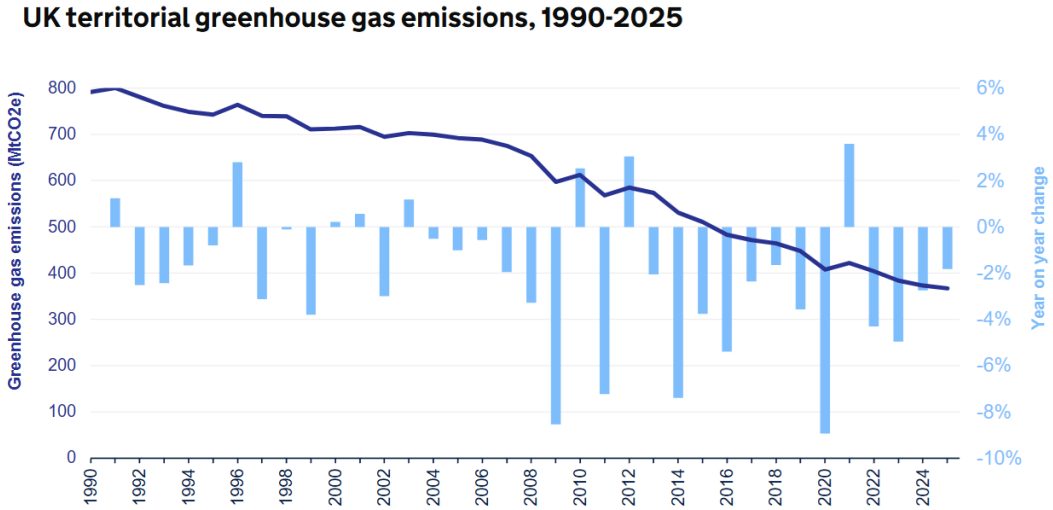
Heat, flooding, and drought identified as the most critical **climate risks** by the Climate Change Committee (CCC).



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **UK National Climate Action**





GHG emissions continue to decrease. Transport → Main emitting sector (31% of total).



Provisional figures for 2025 estimate national net territorial GHG emissions at **367 $MtCO_{2e}$** (2% below 2024, 54% below 1990).

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- Our focus: the 6 levels for Climate Change Strategy.
- **Regional / Countywide**

HCCSP → Crucial for SBC's climate action, facilitating collaboration, securing investment, and coordinating projects for greater impact.

- Solar Together (Round 4: 12 PV installations, c.50 kW capacity; 10 BESS, 0.08 MWh).
- "Your Tree, Our Future" (2,329 trees distributed in 2025; 7,600 claimed for 2026 with 2,000 funded by the Council).
- Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy (endorsed in Jul-25, £2,000 contribution for implementation).



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- Our focus: the 6 levels for Climate Change Strategy.
- **Stevenage (The Town)**

In 2024, Stevenage recorded its lowest historical emissions under the influence of local authority.

Emissions consistently decreasing across all sectors since 2005.

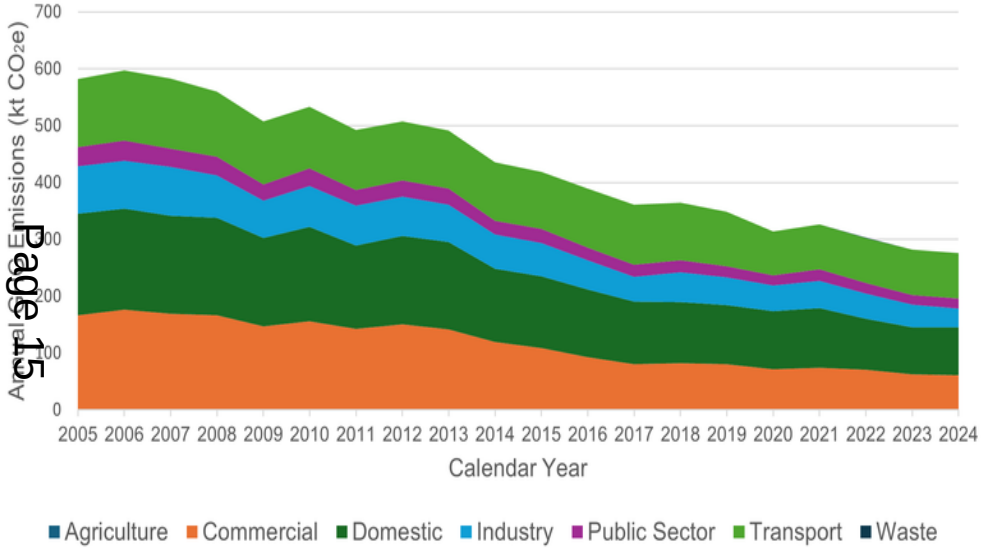
Residential → the main emitting sector (84.7 $ktCO_{2e}$).

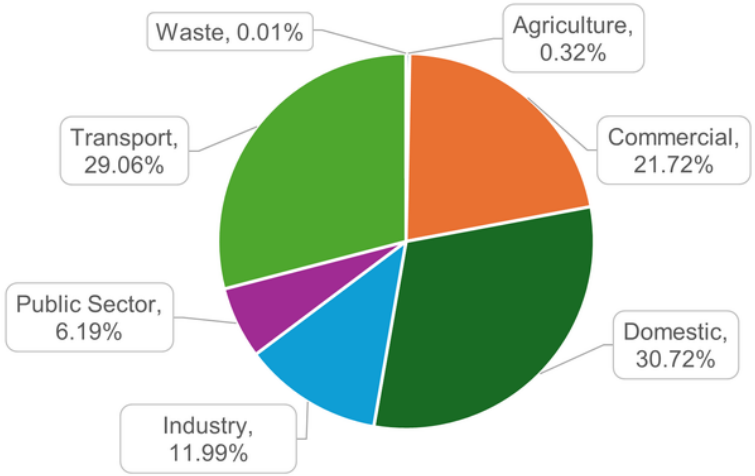


Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **Stevenage (The Town)**





In 2024, Stevenage recorded its lowest emissions within LA influence at **275.7 $ktCO_{2e}$**, (2.2% drop from 2023, 52.6% lower than in 2005.

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- Our focus: the 6 levels for Climate Change Strategy.
- **The Council**

Stevenage Climate Action Plan Tracker is now online → Over 50 actions across 8 strategic themes.

The Council has implemented a new **GHG Emissions Accounting Framework** aligned with the GHG Protocol.



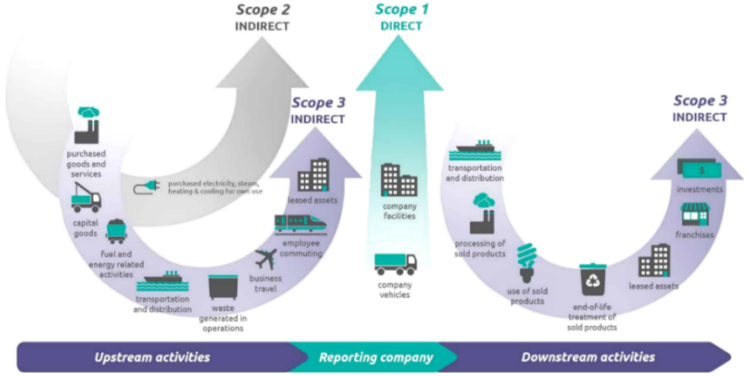
Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council**

Jul 2020 → CLS Energy established a **2018 emissions baseline** (3,399 tCO_{2e}) (covering Scope 1, 2, and limited Scope 3 → Not comprehensive, covering 12 locations, and omitting key emission sources.

The Council **updated** its **baseline** to **FY 2023/24**, incorporating 700+ buildings and facilities and indirect emission sources → T&D losses, well-to-tank (WTT) upstream, water supply, and fugitive emissions.



See *Background Document - GHG Reporting Framework Main Report*

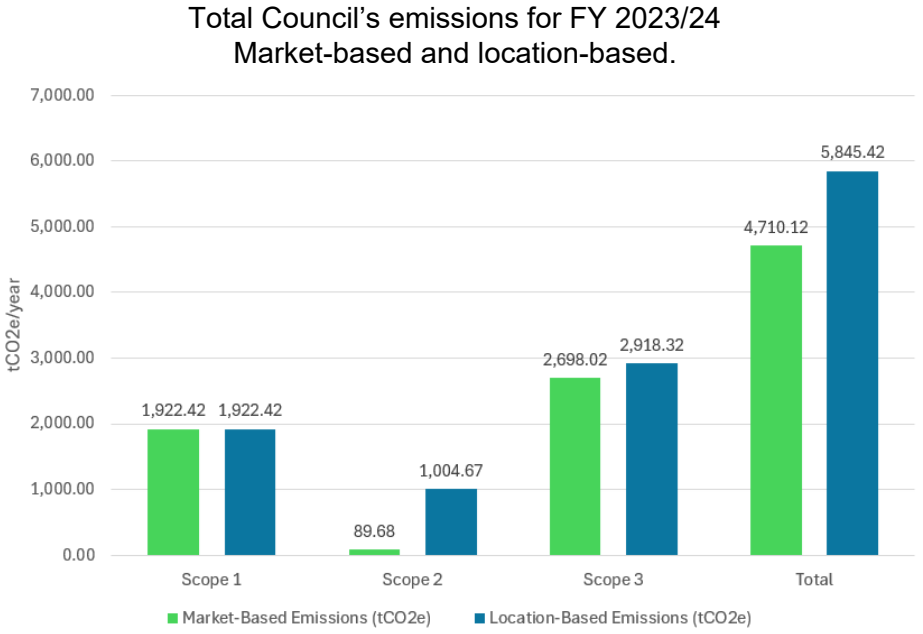
Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council**

On a **market-based approach**, the updated baseline stands at **4,710.12 tCO_{2e}**.

Natural gas heating remains the Council's main emissions challenge and reduction priority.

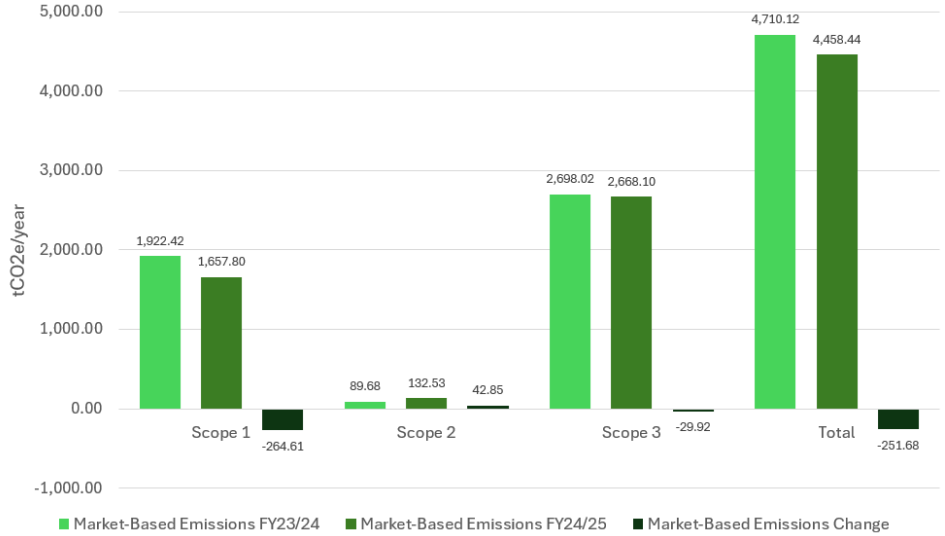
Market-based approach → Accounts for **contractual instruments & procurement decisions** (e.g., EDF Zero Carbon for Business tariff).



Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council**

For the FY 2024/25, the Council's total market-based emissions were recorded at **4,458.44 tCO_{2e}** (**5.3% reduction** from the previous year)



Total Council's Emissions per Scope (market-based) for FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25

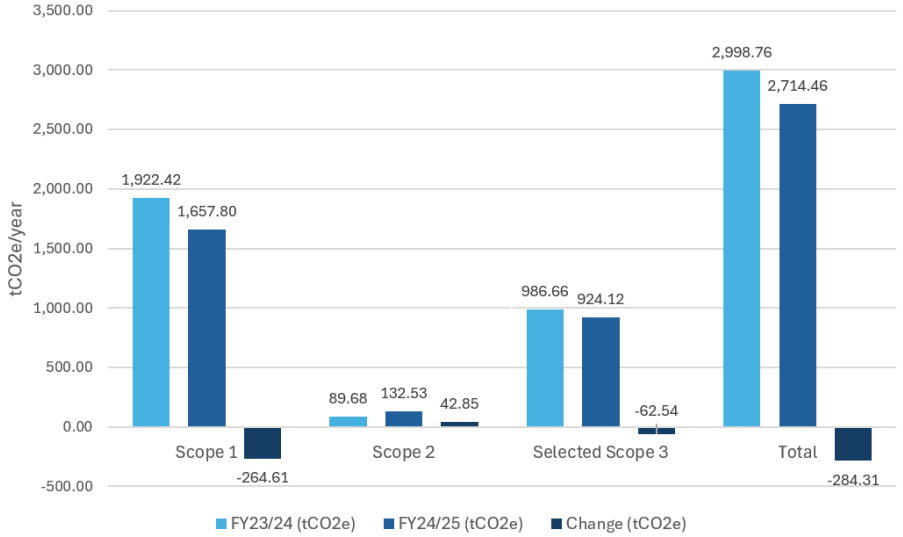
Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council**

🔎 Formal progress tracking against the 2030 target is based on a **dedicated target-tracking boundary.**

🎯 It comprises market-based Scope 1 & 2 and a subset of Scope 3 assets (e.g., major leisure facilities).

📊 Standing at **2,998.76 tCO_{2e}** for **FY23/24** and **2,714.46 tCO_{2e}** for **FY24/25** (a 9.5% annual reduction).



Total Council's target-tracking emissions (market-based) for FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25.

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



1) Businesses

- Wenta Zero Action Programme
  - 155 businesses joined.
- UKSPF Small Business Sustainability Programme.
- Green Business Grant Scheme
  - £70k supporting 8 businesses.
- Cooperative Procurement Strategy (2025-2028).
- Social Value Implementation.
- Green skills promotion (North Hertfordshire College's TC Campus & Pioneering Young STEM Futures).

2) Homes

- Completed SHDF Wave 2.1 (£2.62m grant + £3.97m SBC, 237 homes).
- WHSH (£3.85m grant + £3.15m SBC, 379 homes by 2028).
- Decent Homes & MRC.
- Private Homes Decarbonisation
  - ECO 4 & GBIS (48 households), WHLG (£1.5m grant, 100 homes by 2028).
- Housing Development 5★ Approach.

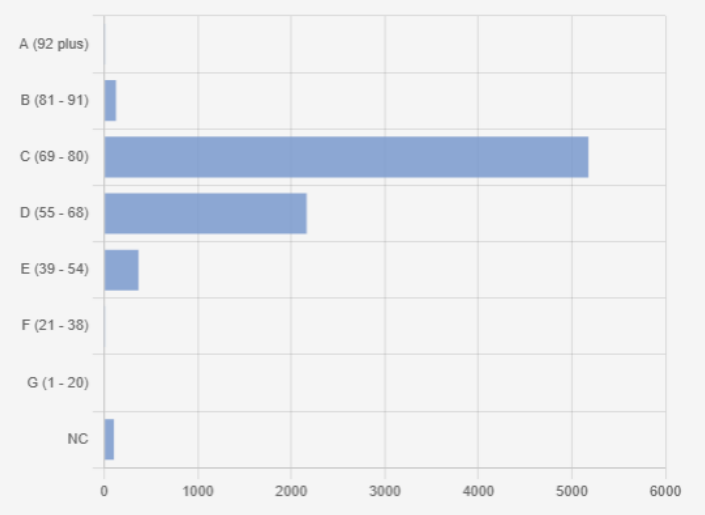


Minimum EPC Band C 8,000 Housing Stock (currently c.66% compliant)

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



Distribution of the Council's housing stock by EPC band.

2) Homes

- Completed SHDF Wave 2.1 (£2.62m grant + £3.97m SBC, 237 homes).
- WHSH (£3.85m grant + £3.15m SBC, 379 homes by 2028).
- Decent Homes & MRC.
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- Housing Development 5★ Approach.



Minimum EPC Band C 8,000 Housing Stock (currently c.66% compliant)

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



3) Waste & Recycling

- HWP Initiatives & Campaigns
  - Herts Sustainable Families
  - Recycle your Bike (240 bikes).
- Recycling bring-bank sites improved.
- Completed Flat-blocks Recycling Project Phase 2 (41 blocks, £719k EPR).
- Separate Food Waste Collection (to 38,000 properties + businesses).

4) People & Awareness

- Climate Champions Group
  - Events Sustainability
  - Reusing & Recycling
  - Active Travel
  - Greening the Workplace
- Literacy & Training.
- Climate Adaptation & Risk Assessment.



60% Recycling Rate by 2035
Zero Waste to Landfill by 2030

10-year contracts directing all residual waste to EfW (HCC).

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Adaptation

- Recent extreme weather events in Stevenage → Increasing need for effective climate adaptation.


Jun-Aug 2025 extreme heat → Amber heat-health alerts / T° +30°C → Increased risks for vulnerable groups.


Jul-2025 heavy thunderstorms & rainfall → Flash flooding, significant surface water along Station Road and Eastbourne Avenue.


Severe winter weather (Dec-25 & Jan-26) brought snow and extreme cold, disrupting travel and local activities.



Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)

- Council's CCRA updated with DEFRA guidelines: Risks categorised by five affected sectors and impacts assessed under +2°C and +4°C warming scenarios.
- 50 climate risks identified, most of them currently rated low to medium → Medium-to-high risks increase under warming scenarios.



In progress

- Integrating the relevant risks to the various Council's **Operational Risk Registers (ORRs)**.
- A **Five-Year Climate Adaptation Plan** is in its final stages of development.

Stevenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



5) Construction & Regeneration

- Regeneration Programme
  - New Leisure Centre, all-electric, fossil-fuel-free.
  - New Indoor Market, all-electric.
  - New Engineering & Construction Campus (North Hertfordshire College).
- Local Plan Partial Review.

6) Transport

- Fuel & Fleet
  - HVO Switch (98.6% direct emissions reduction).
  - Fleet Replacement (7 EVs).
- Cycle Hire Scheme Re-launch
  - 90,000 journeys, 239k km cycled.
- EV Charging Infrastructure (LEVI).
- 7 Secured Cycle Hangars.
- Taxi Licensing Policy Fees.



SBC Fleet Decarbonisation by 2030

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Local Plan Partial Review

- **New and Updated Climate Policies**
- The updated planning framework incorporates upgraded policies across key areas:



Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



7) Energy & Water

- Zero Carbon Electricity Tariff.
- Leisure Facilities
  - Boilers, BMSs, LED projects.
- LED Upgrades
  - Gordon Craig Theatre
  - Town Centre Clocktower
  - MSCPs
  - Daneshill House.
- Telex Water Project.
- Rainwater Harvesting Projects.

UK Power Grid Decarbonisation (2035).

8) Biodiversity

- Tree Planting (New street trees, CIL-funded trees).
- Trees & woodland maintenance.
- Miyawaki micro-woods (3,000 whips)
  - Peartree Park, Chells Park & Symonds Green.
- Tree & Woodlands and Green Spaces Strategies.
- Biodiversity Action Plan.
- BNG Implementation.
- Green Spaces Volunteers.



4,000 Trees Planted by 2030. 19% Town's Tree Canopy.

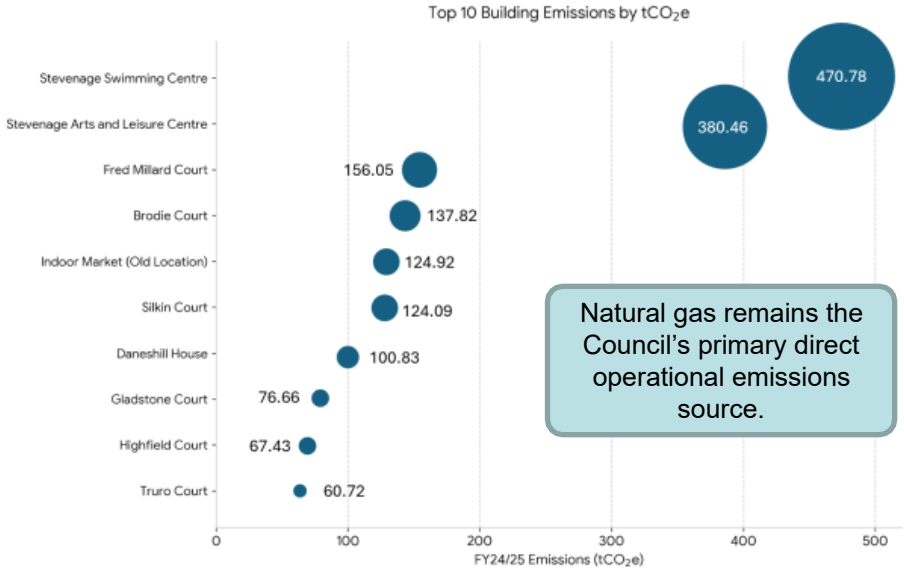
Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**

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- Telex Water Project.
- Rainwater Harvesting Projects.

UK Power Grid Decarbonisation (2035).



Top 10 GHG emitting Council sites identified on a market-based approach

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- Our focus: the 6 levels for Climate Change Strategy.

- **Local Community**

Local community engagement → a key focus: meeting stakeholders at events (Stevenage Day, Int. Day of Older People).

Provision of educational resources (Sustainable Event Handbook, Sustainability Newsletter for Schools).

Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) approved projects (2025/26) supporting benefits:

- Reduction of waste, improved biodiversity, water conservation, climate adaptation, tree planting.



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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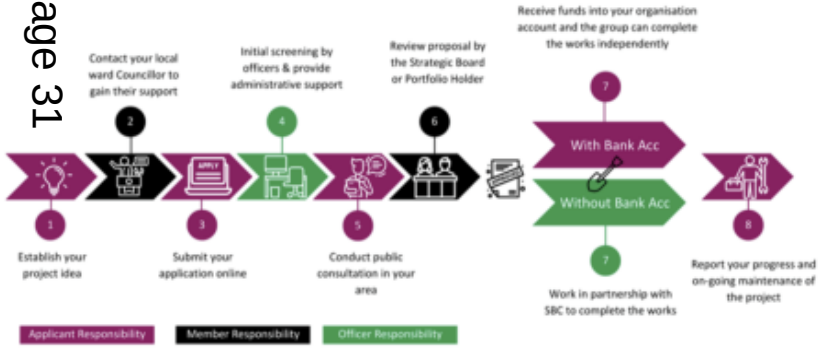


Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) → Local Environment Action Fund (LEAF)**

Funded by CIL. **£7,500 available per ward, per year**, totalling **£97,500** to support environmental initiatives across the borough.



LEAF is now part of the Cooperative Neighbourhoods Programme

CCCF Approved Projects in 2025/26

Project Name	Ward	Applicant
Bowling Green Tree Planting	Old Town	Stevenage Old Town Business and Community Partnership
Millennium Garden Tree Planting	Old Town	Stevenage Old Town Business and Community Partnership
St Nicholas Health Centre Community Garden Upgrade	St Nicholas	St Nicholas Community Centre
St Nicholas Community Centre Outdoor Nature Area	St Nicholas	St Nicholas Community Centre
Roebuck Community Rainwater Collection	Roebuck	Roebuck Shops Business Owners
Highcroft Secured Cycle Hangar	Roebuck	Local Resident
Trafford Close Bulb Planting	Old Town	Local Resident
Buckthorne Avenue Tree & Bulb Planting	Bedwell	Local Resident
Vardon Road Bulb Planting	Martin's Wood	Stevenage Muslim Community Centre
Greydells Allotment Rainwater Collection	Almond Hill	Stevenage Gardens and Allotments Association (SGAA)

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Forward-Looking Actions FY 2026-27



The following initiatives are planned or being implemented in 2026/27 to maintain strategic momentum across the town and Council climate-related actions.

- Continue delivering Warm Homes Social Housing and Warm Homes Local Grant.
- Continue consolidating and monitoring Council utility bills and meter reading procedures.
- Explore decarbonisation and green energy across Council assets via a building decarbonisation group.
- Plant +100 more trees, including CIL-funded and tree replacement. Miyawaki micro-woods & “Your Tree, Our Future” scheme also considered.
- Develop CIL-funded meadow improvement works.
- Continue progress in construction of the New Sports & Leisure Centre.
- Complete improvement works at flats to ensure they have access to recycling services (Simpler Recycling).
- Continue delivery of Local Environment Action Funding (LEAF) via Cooperative Neighbourhoods.
- Complete the Climate Adaptation Plan and continue embedding climate risks into the Council’s risk registers.
- Install public EV charging points funded by LEVI in partnership with HCC.
- Install more secure cycle hangars across the town.
- Assess future fleet requirements for an electrification roadmap.

Thanks for your attention.

Any questions?



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Part I – Release to Press

Agenda item: ##

Meeting	Cabinet
Portfolio Area	Environment, Planning and Transport
Date	08 October 2026



CLIMATE CHANGE – ANNUAL UPDATE OCTOBER 2026

KEY DECISION

Author	Alex Robinson
Lead Officers	Alex Robinson, Fabian Oyarzun, Veronica Chan
Contact Officer	Alex Robinson

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The report provides the annual update on delivery Stevenage's Climate Change Strategy covering Council-led action and progress across the eight strategic themes.

1.2 Work included implementing a new Greenhouse Gas Accounting Framework for Council's emissions, with a multi-scope inventory covering over 700 buildings, fuel and energy use, water use, and other indirect emissions.

1.3 In 2024, Stevenage recorded its lowest territorial emissions within local authority influence, at 275.7 $ktCO_{2e}$ (2.2% lower than in 2023 and 52.6% below the 2005 level) with per capita emissions of 3.0 tCO_{2e}, below the Hertfordshire and East of England average.

1.4 The report highlights actions delivered in 2025/26 including those done with partners and local communities. These create wider benefits for residents and businesses including warmer homes and buildings which are cheaper to heat, increasing greenspaces and assets for community wellbeing and

enhancing the natural environment. Measures to be delivered in 2026/27 will build on these to increase benefits to more of our residents, whilst improving our environment.

1.5 While the Council continues to make steady progress towards its sustainability objectives, achieving its long-term goals will require ongoing legislative and financial support from central Government to ensure local living standards and energy efficiency continue to rise.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS - CABINET:

2.1 That the 2026 Climate Change Annual Update (Appendix 1), detailing 2025/26 delivery, be noted.

2.2 That Cabinet approves the forward-looking actions for 2026/27 as set out in 3.22.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in June 2019, Stevenage Borough Council (the Council) committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2030, recognising that this transition is deeply intertwined with building a sustainable future, thriving local economy, and improved quality of life. This commitment is supported by the 2020 Stevenage Climate Change Strategy, and guided by the online Climate Action Plan Tracker, while embedding "Tackling Climate Change" as a core priority within the Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan to build long-term community resilience, enhance local environmental quality, and safeguard residents' wellbeing.

3.2 This year's report marks an evolution in reporting by adopting a streamlined 6-level structure for climate action (Global, National, Region & County, Town, Council, and Local Community) to prioritise local delivery and tangible impacts communications.

PROGRESS ACROSS THE 6-LEVEL FRAMEWORK

3.3 The following summarises the 6-level framework adopted by the Council and the main steps being taken under each:

3.4 **Global Context:** Grounded in the Paris Agreement (2015) framework, targeting limits on global warming to 1.5 °C. Aligned with international milestones, including the UK's commitment at COP[1]29 (Baku, 2024) to cut GHG emissions by at least 81% by 2035 relative to 1990 levels.

3.5 **National Context:** Structured around the UK's legally binding net-zero target for 2050 and provisional 2025 territorial emissions data showing a 54% reduction since 1990. Benefitting from national programmes such as the Warm Homes Plan, the Local Power Plan, and the establishment of Great

[1] COP: Conference of the Parties

British Energy, alongside responding to national adaptation warnings regarding extreme heat, flooding, and drought.

3.6 **Region & County:** Delivering joint county-wide projects through the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) such as Solar Together, "Your Tree, Our Future" planting, and the Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy development and implementation and continuing to prepare for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

3.7 **The Town (Town-Level Data):** According to DESNZ[2] 2024 data (published in June 2026), Stevenage recorded its lowers territorial emissions within local authority influence at 275.7 ktCO_{2e}, a 2.2% drop from 2023 and 52.6% lower than in 2005. Per capita emissions stood at 3.0 tCO_{2e}, falling below the wider Hertfordshire (3.1 tCO_{2e}) and East of England (3.6 tCO_{2e}) averages. Sector breakdown shows that Domestic (30.72%) and Transport (29.06%) are the main emitting sources in the town.

3.8 **The Council (Operations & Governance):** Established a comprehensive and rigorous internal multi-scope Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Accounting Framework including a GHG inventory covering over 700 assets under the operational control consolidation approach (see *Background Document - GHG Reporting Framework Main Report*), replacing legacy baselines to govern future reduction strategies and decision-making. The revised market-based baseline (including all Scopes 1, 2 and 3) for FY 2023/24 stands at 4,710.12 tCO_{2e}, with FY 2024/25 emissions recorded at 4,458.44 tCO_{2e} (a 5.3% reduction). Formal progress tracking against the 2030 target is based on a dedicated target-tracking boundary comprising market-based Scope 1 and 2 and a selected subset of Scope 3 assets, standing at 2,998.76 tCO_{2e} for FY23/24 and 2,714.46 tCO_{2e} for FY24/25 (a 9.5% annual reduction).

3.9 **Local Community:** Engaging residents via the Climate Action Plan Tracker. Participated in Stevenage Day with a climate action stall in the STEM Village. Approved and funded 10 ward-level community-led green projects via the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF). The approved projects covered a diverse range of environmental and sustainability enhancements across the borough: tree planting & improvements, community gardens & nature areas, rainwater harvesting, active travel infrastructure, and bulb planting.

DELIVERY ACROSS THE 8 STRATEGIC THEMES

3.10 The following sets out the key areas of delivery the Council has made across the 8 strategic themes:

3.11 **Businesses:**

- Supported SMEs[3] through 200 Wenta's Action Zero Gold Memberships to create carbon reduction plans.
- Delivered the Small Business Sustainability Support Programme (workshops, audits, consultancy) via Sustainable X using UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

[2] DESNZ: UK Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

[3] SMEs: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

- Awarded £70,000 Green Business Grant to seven SMEs/charities to implement energy-saving measures and clean technologies.
- Promoted green skills through North Hertfordshire College's Town Centre Campus and the Pioneering Young STEM[4] Futures programme.
- Continued embedding Social Value via the Social Value Portal and national TOMs[5] framework.
- Enacted the Co-operative Procurement Strategy 2025-2028.

3.12 **Homes:**

- Progressing toward EPC[6] Band C for all Council homes by 2030 (currently ~66% compliant). Subject to affordability through Housing Revenue Account and UK Government funding availability.
- Completed the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1: £2.62m grant + £3.97m Council match. 237 homes retrofitted using a fabric-first approach.
- Progressed the Major Refurbishment Contract, delivering insulation, efficient lighting, and upgraded windows/doors into properties.
- Started Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (£3.85m grant + £3.15m Council match) to upgrade c.379 Council homes by 2028.
- Supported 48 private households via ECO4[7] and GBIS[8] schemes.
- Secured and started delivery of £1.5m from the Warm Homes: Local Grant to upgrade ~100 low-income private homes by 2028.
- Supported the delivery of Solar Together and the Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy through HCCSP.
- Delivered sustainable new-build housing using a 5-star quality design approach.

3.13 **Construction & Regeneration:**

- Advanced construction of the all-electric, fossil-fuel-free Sports & Leisure Centre (featuring solar panels and heat pumps), completing in late 2027.
- Relocated the Indoor Market to a modern, all-electric facility; and repurposed the old building into a new Engineering and Construction Campus.
- Adopted the Local Plan Partial Review (July 2026) with strengthened policies on operational emissions, energy use, cooling, water efficiency, decentralised energy systems, green infrastructure, and SuDS[9].

3.14 **Waste & Recycling:**

- Worked with the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership toward zero waste to landfill by 2030.
- Upgraded eight neighbourhood recycling sites using UK Shared Prosperity Fund and CCCF funding.

[4] STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

[5] TOMs: Themes, Outcomes, and Measures.

[6] EPC: Energy Performance Certificate.

[7] ECO4: Energy Company Obligation - Phase 4.

[8] GBIS: Great British Insulation Scheme.

[9] SuDS: Sustainable Drainage Systems.

- Completed Flat-Block Recycling Pilot Phase 2 across 41 blocks funded by £719k of EPR[10] funding, introducing custom three-wheeled bins, and expecting a 4% uplift in borough recycling rate.
- Rolled out weekly food waste collections to 38,000 properties (77,000 caddies deployed), alongside commercial food waste services.
- Recovered 240 unwanted or fly-tipped bikes through Recycle Your Cycle.
- Promoted Herts Sustainable Families initiatives.

3.15 **People & Awareness:**

- Integrated "Tackling Climate Change" as a Corporate Plan priority.
- Established a 28-member staff Climate Champions group with dedicated topic sub-groups (e.g., active travel, recycling, events).
- Promoted carbon literacy training for officers and members via LGA[11] and APSE[12].
- Updated the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) (~50 climate risks) and integrated findings into corporate and operational risk registers.
- Prepared a 5-Year Climate Adaptation Plan.

3.16 **Biodiversity:**

- Planted 121 new street trees while maintaining ~30,100 trees and 18 woodlands.
- Delivered additional tree planting and woodland management (Lanterns Lane) funded via CIL[13].
- Supported the delivery of the “Your Tree, Our Future” planting scheme.
- Created three new Miyawaki micro-woods (3,000 whips) at Peartree Park, Chells Park, and Symonds Green.
- Adopted the Tree & Woodland Strategy and Green Spaces Strategy (June 2025).
- Started implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan (2024-2028) (including a dedicated tracker portal).
- Established full Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) monitoring via Exacom/Uniform, securing delivery sites at Chells Park, Canterbury Way, and Fishers Green.
- Green Space Volunteers contributed over 1,700 hours to green space improvements.
- New wildflower areas were created at Fairlands Valley Lakes and St Nicholas Park.

3.17 **Transport:**

- Switched the entire Council’s road fleet to 100% Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), cutting direct emissions by 98.6% (c. 760 tCO_{2e} avoided).
- Expanded the EV fleet to include seven electric vehicles and vans.
- Re-launched the Beryl Bikes Cycle Hire Scheme (150 e-bikes, 45 bays), recording over 90,000 journeys and 239,000 km cycled by mid-2026.

[10] EPR: Extended Producer Responsibility.

[11] LGA: Local Government Association.

[12] APSE: Association for Public Service Excellence.

[13] CIL: Community Infrastructure Levy.

- Installed seven secure cycle hangars across the town.
- Partnered with HCC[14] under LEVI[15] funding (Urban Fox awarded as the CPO in December 2025) for public EV charger rollouts in late autumn 2026.
- Approved licensing fee discounts for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles (50% for Zero Emission Vehicles, 25% for Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles).

3.18 **Energy & Water:**

- Maintained Zero Carbon for Business tariff with EDF for corporate electricity supply, guaranteeing zero Scope 2 emissions.
- Completed Phase 1 of the Gordon Craig Theatre lighting refit (replacing auditorium fittings with LEDs[16]) and awarded Phase 2 for stage lighting.
- Delivered LED upgrades at the Town Centre Clocktower, St George's & Westgate Multi-Storey Car Parks, and Daneshill House.
- Partnered with Everyone Active to drive energy efficiency (boilers, BMS[17], LED lighting) across leisure sites.
- Appointed Telex Water as portfolio manager and launched a 15-month Automatic Meter Reading trial.
- Installed community rainwater harvesting systems (Roebuck shops and Greydells Allotments).
- Engaged with Great British Energy on future local funding and shared ownership models under the Local Power Plan.

3.19 Appendix 1 provides a detailed update on Stevenage's Climate Change Strategy and action plan delivery.

STRATEGIC CLASSIFICATION OF CLIMATE ACTIONS

3.20 To transparently demonstrate how the Council's climate actions deliver value and impacts, a detailed strategic assessment of climate-related interventions has been undertaken, cataloguing and evaluation major actions across delivery mechanisms, funding streams, influence pathways, and operational impact boundaries (as detailed in section 17 of Appendix 1).

3.21 The results highlight a balanced and proactive approach: while the majority of initiatives are directly council-led or capital-backed, a significant proportion actively leverages external grant funding, drives wider town-wide and community benefits, or directly cuts net operational GHG emissions (such as through fleet decarbonisation, estate energy efficiency, and extensive borough-wide green infrastructure management).

FORWARD-LOOKING DELIVERY ACTIONS FY 2026/27

3.22 The following forward-looking initiatives are planned for 2026/27 to maintain strategic momentum across the town and Council climate-related actions. To

[14] HCC: Hertfordshire County Council.

[15] LEVI: Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure.

[16] LED: Light Emitting Diode.

[17] BMS: Building Management System.

ensure these measures resonate directly with local residents, they are explicitly designed to bring practical benefits back to our community, easing cost-of-living pressures through lower utility bills, creating warmer and healthier homes and spaces, expanding accessible green spaces, and securing a cleaner, more resilient environment for every Stevenage resident. The focus remains on coupling environmental improvements with measures that improve people's daily lives and capture operational efficiencies.

Homes

- Continue delivering the Warm Homes: Social Housing programme with Equans to upgrade approximately c.379 Council homes by April 2028.
- Deliver Year 2 of the Warm Homes: Local Grant, providing energy performance upgrades and low-carbon heating to eligible low-income private households.
- Transition to a dedicated delivery vehicle for the Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy (led by HCCSP).
- Review the Private Rented Sector Exemptions register for Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).
- Continue applying a 5-star approach to housing development projects.

Energy & Water

- Continue consolidating and monitoring Council utility bills and meter reading procedures.
- Explore decarbonisation and green energy across Council assets and operationalise a building decarbonisation group focused on prioritised sites.
- Progress Phase 2 of the Gordon Craig Theatre lighting project, installing LED stage lights to complete the high-efficiency transition.
- Implement rainwater harvesting opportunities at allotment sites.

Biodiversity

- Plant over 100 more trees, including CIL-funded initiatives, and tree replacement policies. Miyawaki micro-woods, the "Your Tree, Our Future" scheme, and other local projects are also considered.
- Develop CIL-funded meadow improvement works.
- Carry out developer-funded improvements to Fishers Green Common Pond.
- Continue work to implement the Biodiversity Action Plan via targeted conservation and update its online tracker portal.
- Implement the Tree & Woodland Strategy's targeted actions, focusing on increasing canopy cover and nature connectivity.
- Implement actions outlined in the Green Spaces Strategy (2025-2035).
- Implement and monitor Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) actions.

Construction & Regeneration

- Continue progress in construction of the New Sports & Leisure Centre.
- Continue to work with regeneration partners committed to zero-carbon operations and responsible development.

Waste & Recycling

- Complete improvement works at flats to ensure they have access to recycling services, in line with Simpler Recycling legislation.
- Introduce kerbside flexible plastics recycling for all households by 31 March 2027.
- Promote recycling via communications and resident and schools' engagement.
- Promote Recycle your Cycle, Herts Sustainable Families, and other initiatives through the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership.

Businesses

- Keep on implementing Social Value and the Cooperative Procurement Strategy.
- Add sustainability objectives to Pavement Licensing and Street Trading Policies targeting single-use plastics and efficient outdoor heating.

People & Awareness

- Continue the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF), using an enhanced model to empower resident-led climate projects via Cooperative Neighbourhoods.
- Maintain and update the online climate action tracker portal.
- Publish the termly Sustainability Newsletter for schools and colleges.
- Fully operationalise the GHG Accounting framework to standardise climate tracking across the Council.
- Complete the Climate Adaptation Plan and continue embedding high-priority climate risks into the Council's risk registers.
- Continue delivering the Climate Champions programme focusing on recycling, events, active travel, and green workspaces.
- Assess and propose upgrades for Stevenage Day and other events' sustainability features.

Transport

- Move toward the physical installation of public EV charging points funded by LEVI in partnership with HCC.
- Deliver public artworks for the Stevenage Heart Trails at Fairlands Valley Park, Millennium Path, and King George V Playground to promote active travel.
- Install more secure cycle hangars across the town.
- Monitor Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) usage across fleet operations.
- Assess future fleet requirements for an electrification roadmap (including Cavendish base analysis and replacement cycles).

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The annual update on climate change actions is a significant mechanism to ensure the Council maintains transparent, robust, and auditable tracking of its progress toward its broader sustainability and operational targets, ensuring that local delivery continues to improve residents' lives and protect the environment while meeting its net-zero target.

4.2 Noting the annual update and endorsing the forward-looking delivery actions for FY 2026/27 allow members to evaluate past delivery performance (such as the successful rollout of 100% HVO across the Council road fleet, major social housing retrofits lowering utility bills and tackling fuel poverty, estate energy efficiency measures, and grassroots community projects funded via the Climate Change Community Fund) alongside future planned activities in local decarbonisation, waste management, active travel, and biodiversity, among others.

4.3 Alternative options to this course of action were assessed, as indicated below.

4.4 Option 1: Do nothing. This option was rejected because failing to actively progress and report on climate action would lack transparency, fail to meet emerging public expectations for local environmental leadership, and leave the Council without a structured mechanism to manage future environmental and climate responsibilities that directly affect residents' health, comfort, and financial wellbeing.

4.5 Option 2: Delay formal reporting of climate progress. This option was rejected because it would weaken future external funding bids (such as housing and retrofit grants that lower bills for residents) and leave the Council without a clear framework to evaluate long-term target progress and community benefits.

4.6 Option 3: Do not report annually to Cabinet. This option was rejected because, while there is no strict statutory duty to produce an annual climate cabinet report, choosing not to report would hinder transparency, negatively impact strategic decision-making, undermine the Council's corporate priority of "Tackling Climate Change" as set out in the corporate plan, and weaken the commitment to achieving long-term community climate resilience and raising local living standards.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

5.1 Approving the annual update, the forward-looking programme, and the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting Framework has no direct, unbudgeted financial impact. The delivery of individual climate, retrofit, and biodiversity initiatives will continue to be managed through existing capital and revenue budgets, external grants, Section 106 contributions, and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), among others.

5.2 The Council will continue to allocate £97,500 per year from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) through the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF), supporting ward-level sustainability projects led by community organisations.

5.3 Achieving net zero by 2030 will require strong business cases. If Government support falls short, existing projects may need reprioritisation to manage financial pressures.

Legal Implications

5.4 There are no direct legal implications arising from noting the annual update or adopting the updated GHG baseline and reporting framework. The actions align with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008 and prepare the Council for emerging public sector reporting standards.

Risk Implications

5.5 Endorsing the updated framework mitigates data and reporting risks by establishing a verified multi-scope baseline across over 700 assets under the operational control approach. Failure to adopt a standardised framework would increase the risk of audit non-compliance and misalignment during the transition to new unitary authorities.

5.6 Delivery is challenged by internal capacity limits, supply chain issues, and reliance on external partners, potentially delaying progress and raising costs.

5.7 Missing the 2030 net-zero target could damage the Council's or the new unitary authority's reputation amid growing public scrutiny and national benchmarking. National policy shifts or delays may disrupt local plans, while stricter regulations could increase compliance burdens and expenses.

Policy Implications

5.8 The annual update on climate change supports the Council's own Climate Change Strategy delivery and wider corporate ambitions for a low carbon future across the town.

5.9 The actions outlined are consistent with wider corporate priorities, including the Medium-Term Financial Plan, Housing and Regeneration strategies, the Local Plan, and the Co-operative Procurement Strategy.

5.10 At the county level, the report aligns with the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) priorities.

5.11 Nationally, the report supports Government strategies such as the Warm Homes Plan, the Local Power Plan, and the UK's commitment to carbon budgets under the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended).

Climate Change Implications

5.12 This report highlights the risks, challenges, and opportunities that the Council must address, not only GHG emissions but its wider climate action aspirations. Actions outlined contribute directly to reducing GHG emissions across housing, transport, procurement, energy, and biodiversity.

5.13 The proposals also support climate adaptation and resilience. Workstreams such as the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA), biodiversity enhancement, and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) policies strengthen the town's ability to cope with flooding, heatwaves, and other extreme weather impacts.

5.14 Failure to progress climate action would increase local vulnerability to climate risks, undermine national and countywide net-zero objectives, and expose the Council to higher long-term costs.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

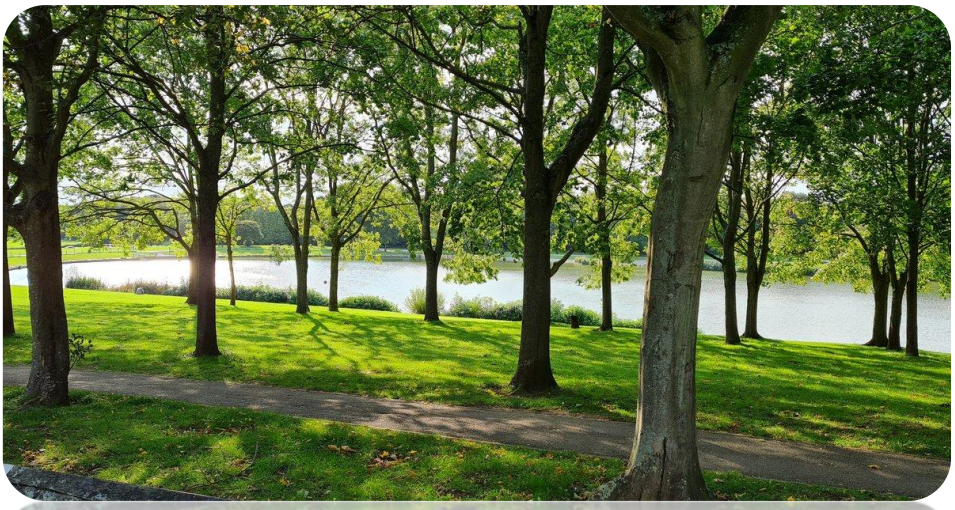
5.15 The climate initiatives endorsed within the report, specifically fuel poverty mitigation, home energy efficiency grants, and community-led ward projects, actively support vulnerable groups and help address health and socioeconomic inequalities across Stevenage.

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APPENDIX 1

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

2026 CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL UPDATE



OCTOBER 2026

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPENDIX 1

2026 CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL UPDATE

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To report the annual summary of actions taken, and progress made, across the six-level framework guiding Stevenage's climate action, spanning global commitments, national frameworks, regional and county-wide collaboration, town-wide data, Council initiatives across the eight strategic themes set out in the 2020 Climate Change Strategy, and community-level engagement.

1.2 This report highlights how the Council is embedding resource efficiency, tackling fuel poverty, lowering emissions, and driving measurable sustainability outcomes through local delivery, despite financial constraints and structural transitions such as Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). These local actions directly benefit residents and local businesses by making homes warmer and cheaper to heat, improving air quality, protecting environmental health, supporting SMEs, and expanding accessible green spaces and assets for community wellbeing, urban cooling, and climate resilience.

1.3 To note that while Stevenage continues to make progress towards its sustainability objectives, achieving its 2030 net-zero target will require ongoing legislative and financial support from central Government to ensure local living standards and energy efficiency continue to rise.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency[1] by Stevenage Borough Council (hereafter, the Council) in June 2019, a commitment was established to work toward net-zero emissions by 2030, recognising that this transition is deeply intertwined with building a sustainable future, a thriving local economy, and an improved quality of life for residents. Resource efficiency, environmental protection, and public wellbeing remain central to all activities undertaken by the Council.

2.2 To guide this path, the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy[2] was released in September 2020, identifying eight strategic themes that lead the action plan. Furthermore, "Tackling Climate Change" has been formally embedded as a core strategic priority within the Council's Corporate Plan[3] to build long-term community resilience.

[1] Available at: Climate Change Emergency - Motion to Council

[2] Available at: Stevenage Climate Change Strategy

[3] Available at: Corporate Plan: Making Stevenage Even Better (2024-2027)

2.3 This 2026 Climate Change Annual Update marks an evolution in the Council's approach to climate reporting. Building upon the previous years' reports and appendices, a transition has been made to a streamlined 6-level structure designed to be more focused on delivery at a local level.

2.4 Following an extraordinary year marked by extreme summer heatwaves, severe water supply constraints, and drought conditions, the Council's local delivery is actively prioritising building long-term community and environmental resilience while safeguarding residents' wellbeing.

2.5 This report marks an evolution in the Council's approach to climate reporting. Building upon the previous year's reports, a transition has been made to a streamlined 6-level structure designed to be more focused on delivery at a local level.

2.6 Tangible actions taken by the Council that directly impact residents, businesses, and the natural environment are prioritised, recognising that the most effective climate action is achieved within the town, neighbourhoods, and communities. This report is structured to reflect this hierarchy of impact, transitioning from the broad context to the primary area of influence:



Figure 1. Stevenage Borough Council's Updated Approach: 6 Levels for Climate Action.

2.7 A critical advancement integrated into this year's reporting is the adoption of a structured internal Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Accounting Framework. By implementing this standardised methodology aligned with the GHG Protocol[4], the transparency and accuracy of organisational emissions accounting have been significantly enhanced, ensuring that progress toward the 2030 target is guided by verified data.

2.8 Climate action in Stevenage is cutting emissions while improving residents' lives by lowering energy bills, tackling fuel poverty, and making homes warmer and more comfortable. Cleaner air, healthier travel choices, enhanced green spaces providing shade and urban cooling, and greater resilience to extreme weather also contribute to better wellbeing and a more sustainable town.

[4] Further information at: GHG Protocol

2.9 In February 2024, the Council launched the Stevenage's Climate Action Plan Tracker[5] on the Kausal platform. This supports effective delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan by capturing detailed progress on 54 actions linked to the Strategy and its priorities.

2.10 While navigating the transition toward Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) alongside ongoing economic and financial constraints, commitment to a more sustainable future remains in place, ensuring the Council delivers value for money and manages resources prudently.

2.11 The actions detailed in the following sections demonstrate that while achieving the climate targets requires continued legislative and financial support from central Government, clear and measurable progress is being made in Stevenage.

1 LEVEL 1: GLOBAL CONTEXT

1.1 The Paris Agreement, adopted by 196 countries at COP21 (2015), remains the cornerstone of global climate action. It legally commits signatories to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels[6].

1.2 The Agreement supports global mechanisms, including climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building frameworks. It also establishes a ratchet mechanism, requiring signatories to outline national targets through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)[7] on five-year cycles.

1.3 At COP29 (Baku, Azerbaijan, 2024), the UK announced a new national target to cut GHG emissions[8] by at least 81% by 2035 (relative to 1990). This represents an upgrade from the previous pledge of a 68% cut by 2030[9].

1.4 Despite pledges, 2025 ranked globally as the third-warmest year on record (following 2024 and 2023), with global surface air temperatures reaching approximately 1.47°C above pre-industrial levels. Furthermore, data indicates that the past 11 consecutive years (2015 to 2025) officially rank as the 11 warmest years on record globally[10].

1.5 Furthermore, the report Limiting Overshoot[11] by UNEP, published in September 2026, established that under current policies and alternative near-term trajectories, exceedance of 1.5 °C of global temperature is now widely assessed as unavoidable.

1.6 Beyond emissions reduction, international focus has turned to structural climate resilience and adaptation. Over recent UN Climate Change COPs, key global frameworks (such as the Baku Adaptation Road Map and the Belém Adaptation Indicators) have been established in this regard, shaping

[5] Available at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan

[6] Further information at: The Paris Agreement (UNFCCC)

[7] Further information at: Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

[8] Excluding international aviation and shipping,

[9] Further information at: UK shows international leadership in tackling climate crisis (GOV.UK)

[10] Further information at: Global Climate Highlights 2025 – Insights from the Copernicus Climate Change Service

[11] Available at: UNEP - Limiting Overshoot

the domestic mandates needed to protect communities against extreme weather, water stress, and rising temperatures.

1.7 Furthermore, outcomes from COP30 in Belém (Brazil) reinforce the critical global shift from target-setting to real execution through the "Belém Political Package", which emphasises practical economic resilience, energy security, and localised adaptation.

2 LEVEL 2: NATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 The UK has committed to reducing GHG emissions by at least 68% by 2030 and 81% by 2035 (both relative to 1990 levels), maintaining its legally binding 2050 target[12].

2.2 Provisional figures for territorial GHG emissions[13] estimate national net territorial emissions at 367 $MtCO_{2e}$ for 2025. This is 2% below 2024 levels and 54% lower than in 1990.

2.3 The long-term trend in UK territorial GHG emissions from 1990 to 2025 is shown in Figure 2.

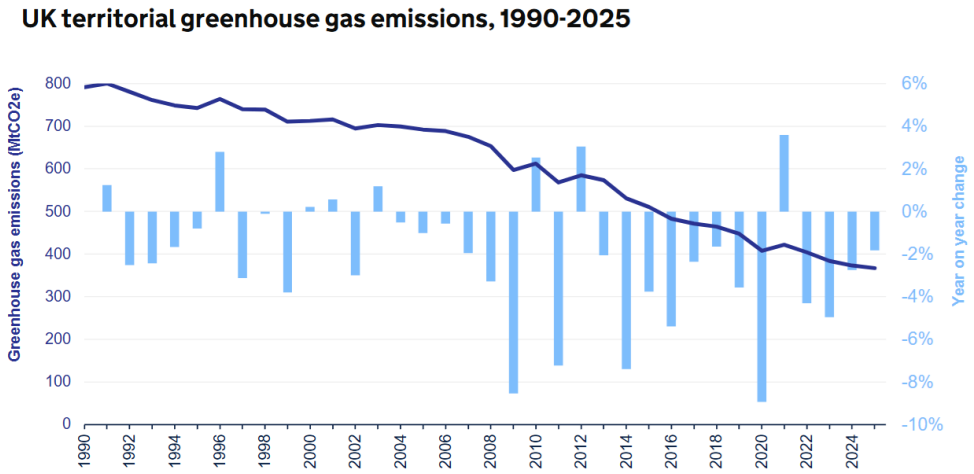


Figure 2. UK territorial GHG emissions, 1990-2025 (provisional figure for 2025). Source: DESNZ, National Statistics.

2.4 The long-term emissions decline continues to be driven by structural shifts in the energy system, including the power grid transition from fossil fuels to renewables and improved energy efficiency.

2.5 Domestic transport remained the UK's largest emitting sector in 2025, accounting for 31% of total net emissions. National net territorial emissions by sector in 2025 are detailed in Figure 3.

[12] As outlined in its Net Zero Strategy, available at: UK Net Zero Strategy

[13] Further information at: 2025 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Provisional Figures).

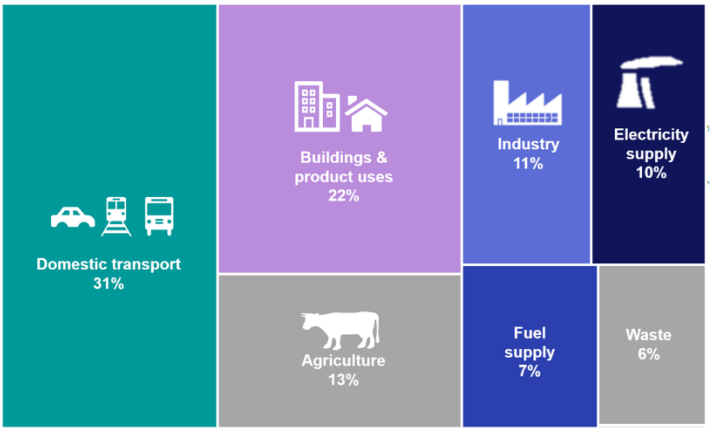


Figure 3. UK net territorial GHG emissions by sector, 2025 (provisional figures).
Source: DESNZ, National Statistics

2.6 At the national policy level, emphasis has been placed on building a "clean energy superpower" to protect the UK from volatile international fossil fuel markets and insulate households from energy price shocks. National priorities include establishing Great British Energy (GBE)[14], decarbonising the power grid, and upgrading planning frameworks to fast-track low-carbon technologies.

2.7 To tackle household emissions and secure energy affordability, the government launched the Warm Homes Plan[15], a £6.6 billion national investment over the current parliament to upgrade 5 million homes through enhanced insulation, fabric retrofitting, and low-carbon heating to lower energy bills and lift families out of fuel poverty.

2.8 Complementing this, the Local Power Plan (LPP)[16] seeks to decentralise energy generation by partnering GBE with local authorities and community energy groups, providing funding and support to deliver small- and medium-scale renewable projects.

2.9 Alongside mitigation, accelerating climate risks have made adaptation a critical priority. All ten of the UK's warmest years on record have occurred since 2000 (with 2025 ranking the warmest, followed by 2022 and 2023). Moreover, February 2024 was the wettest February since records began in 1836, while formal droughts were declared in 2022, 2025, and 2026.

2.10 Addressing these growing vulnerabilities, the Climate Change Committee (CCC)'s A Well Adapted UK 2026[17] Report identifies heat, flooding, and drought as the most critical climate risks. In response, the Government aims to set stronger adaptation objectives in the upcoming National Adaptation Programme (NAP)[18], planning for a minimum 2°C temperature rise by 2050.

2.11 The CCC has warned that while the UK is making progress, delivery paces, particularly regarding domestic building retrofits, heat pump deployment, and

[14] Further information at: Great British Energy.
[15] Further information at: Warm Homes Plan.
[16] Further information at: GBE - Local Power Plan.
[17] Available at: CCC - A Well-Adapted UK.
[18] Further information at: UK Government - Understanding climate adaptation and the NAP3.

industrial electrification, must accelerate significantly to keep national targets within reach.

2.12 Overall, to ensure efficient local delivery, national frameworks stress the importance of long-term support for local authorities. In this context, the Government has committed to awarding local authorities multi-year funding and ending competitive bidding.

3 LEVEL 3: REGION & COUNTY

3.1 Collaborative regional partnerships are a key aspect of the Council's climate action as they enable it to attract investment, build strong business cases, share back-office resources, and eliminate administrative duplication, ensuring that local actions deliver maximum value for money.

3.2 Alignment across local, county, and regional initiatives is essential to ensure climate action is both effective and efficient.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

3.3 Following ongoing structural discussions and recent national announcements regarding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), Hertfordshire continues to navigate a potential transition from its current two-tier system toward a new unitary structure.

3.4 Neighbouring authorities across the area, including partner Councils such as North Herts and Welwyn Hatfield, share a 2030 target to achieve net-zero emissions for their own operations, closely aligning with Stevenage Borough Council's organisational goals.

3.5 Regardless of the final structural outcome, the ongoing focus on administrative reorganisation provides an important context to streamline governance, integrate local services, and leverage collaborative opportunities to support sustainable ambitions, resilience, and green economic growth.

Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)

3.6 Launched in January 2020, HCCSP[19] is a member-led partnership delivering joint climate and sustainability initiatives across Hertfordshire. Members include all 10 districts, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), and Hertfordshire Futures[20].

3.7 The Council has actively participated in HCCSP, supporting its priorities, particularly on carbon reduction, adaptation, biodiversity and retrofit, focusing strategic work at county level to maximise impact and avoid duplication of efforts.

[19] Further information at: Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership

[20] Further information at: Hertfordshire Futures

3.8 Key initiatives undertaken via HCCSP include:

- Solar Together[21] – A group-buying scheme for domestic PV panels and batteries. Round 4 launched in January 2025 and closed in June 2025. According to the 2025 End of Scheme Report, Stevenage received 143 interested registrations (138 for PV, 5 for batteries) from homeowners and businesses. Of these, 24 accepted installation offers, 19 paid deposits, and 12 solar PV installations were completed (consisting of 121 panels with a 0.05 MW capacity, £82,596 in private investment, 10,065 kg of annual CO_2 reduction, and 10 batteries totalling 0.08 MWh).
- Your Tree, Our Future[22] – A scheme distributing thousands of trees to residents for planting. In 2025, Stevenage residents planted 2,329 trees. For the upcoming December 2026 distribution, the Council contributed £1,000 to secure an additional 2,000 trees for Stevenage residents, complementing the 3,000 funded by HCC (bringing the total to 5,000). Backed by targeted communications, Stevenage residents have claimed over 7,600 trees alongside more than 1,000 metres of hedgerow packs. The map below shows where the trees given away during the first four years of the scheme have been planted in Stevenage, by postcode area.

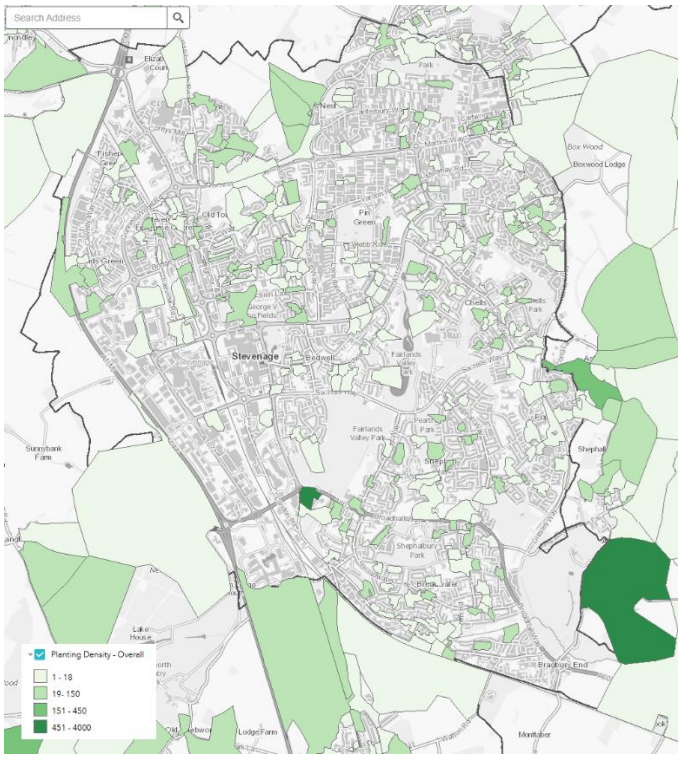


Figure 4. Your Tree Our Future giveaway trees planted locations in Stevenage[23].

- Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy[24] – Endorsed by the Council in July 2025, this strategy was developed through the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA) led by HCCSP. Moving into its delivery phase, the

[21] Further information at: Group-Buying for Solar - Solar Together

[22] Further information at: Your Tree, Our Future

[23] Further information at: HCC - Your Tree Our Future

[24] Further information at: Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy 2025 to 2028.

Council has contributed £2,000 to support strategy implementation, and a dedicated HCCSP officer has been appointed to the role. Designed as a three-year, evidence-based roadmap, the strategy seeks to accelerate domestic retrofit by strengthening supply chains, ensuring equitable access, and coordinating delivery. Its vision is supported by key goals: increasing uptake and demand for retrofit measures; maximising social, economic, and environmental co-benefits; boosting local supply chain capacity and quality; and establishing a trusted delivery model and governance.

3.9 Through HCCSP, the Council has also delivered training and capacity-building for councillors and officers on sustainability, adaptation, retrofitting, political awareness, and planning.

3.10 More recently, HCCSP has also developed a dedicated workstream to support officers in navigating LGR, helping to shape optimal outcomes for future sustainability services across the new structures.

Other County-Wide and Regional Climate Collaboration Initiatives

3.11 Through HCCSP, the Council continues to collaborate with the Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB)'s[25] Sustainable County Mission[26], supporting a prosperous low-carbon economy and thriving natural environment, maximising the benefits of sustainable growth and meeting long-term reduction goals through joint action on carbon reduction, climate adaptation, and behavioural change.

3.12 The Council and HCCSP also contribute to Climate Forum East (formerly the Regional Climate Change Forum)[27], led by Local Government East[28] (formerly EELGA). This forum brings together eight climate partnerships across the region, covering over 50 local authorities across the region.

3.13 Local Government East also organises the East of England Net Zero and Climate Resilience Conference, a key annual event advancing the region's climate agenda. The 2026 conference[29], scheduled for October, will continue to engage the Portfolio Holder (PH) for Environment, Transport and Planning and officers.

4 LEVEL 4: STEVENAGE (THE TOWN)

4.1 Central government data for Stevenage's 2024 territorial emissions[30] has been released[31]. These figures are based on detailed energy and resource

[25] Further information at: Hertfordshire Growth Board.

[26] Further information at: HGB - Vision and Missions under the section "Sustainable County".

[27] Further information at: East of England Climate Change Forum (RCCF) .

[28] Further information at: Local Government East.

[29] Further information at: Climate East 2026.

[30] Territorial GHG emissions are those that occur within Stevenage's geographical borders, including all our residents, businesses, and activities.

[31] The full dataset can be consulted at: UK local authority and regional GHG emissions statistics.

use. Because borough-level data is published with a standard two-year lag, 2025 figures will be available in the next 8-9 months.

4.2 The latest DESNZ update (30 June 2026) shows the trajectory of territorial GHG emissions within the scope of local authority (LA) influence (see Figure 5).

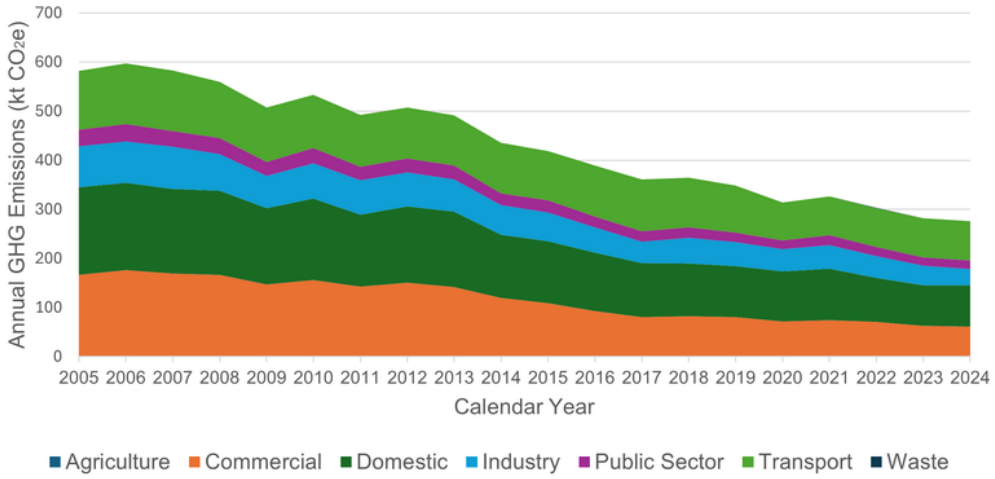


Figure 5. Stevenage territorial GHG emissions within the scope of influence of LAs, estimates 2005-2024 ($ktCO_{2e}$). Source: Based on DESNZ data[32].

4.3 Emissions within the LA's scope of influence represent a practical subset of emissions over which the Council exercises realistic oversight, excluding national-level industry and regional infrastructure. This subset provides a clearer picture of emissions the Council can meaningfully impact to protect environmental quality.

4.4 In 2024, Stevenage recorded its lowest emissions within LA influence at 275.7 $ktCO_{2e}$, a 2.2% drop from 2023 (281.8 $ktCO_{2e}$), and 52.6% lower than in 2005 (582.0 $ktCO_{2e}$).

4.5 The reduction from 2022 to 2023 was primarily driven by drops in industrial (-17.6%) and commercial (-2.7%) emissions, with a slight increase in transport (+0.3%), domestic (+2.5%), and public sector (+1.0%) emissions.

4.6 Over the long term since 2005, sectoral emissions have consistently decreased. Residential emissions dropped by 52.6%, from 178.7 $ktCO_{2e}$ in 2005 to 84.7 $ktCO_{2e}$ in 2024. The public sector, including the Council, reduced its emissions by 49.6% over the same period, whereas commercial and industrial emissions decreased by 63.9% and 60.2%, respectively. Transport emissions also decreased by 33.2%, from 119.9 $ktCO_{2e}$ in 2005 to 80.1 $ktCO_{2e}$ in 2024.

4.7 Crucially, ongoing monitoring is essential to ensure these reductions are sustained and not simply a by-product of high energy costs affecting households or businesses.

4.8 Stevenage's 2024 per capita emissions within LA influence (3.0 tCO_{2e}) were below Hertfordshire (3.1 tCO_{2e}), and the East of England (3.6 tCO_{2e}).

[32] Available at: UK local authority and regional GHG emissions.

4.9 Stevenage's total territorial GHG emissions within LA influence by sector in 2024 are presented in Figure 6.

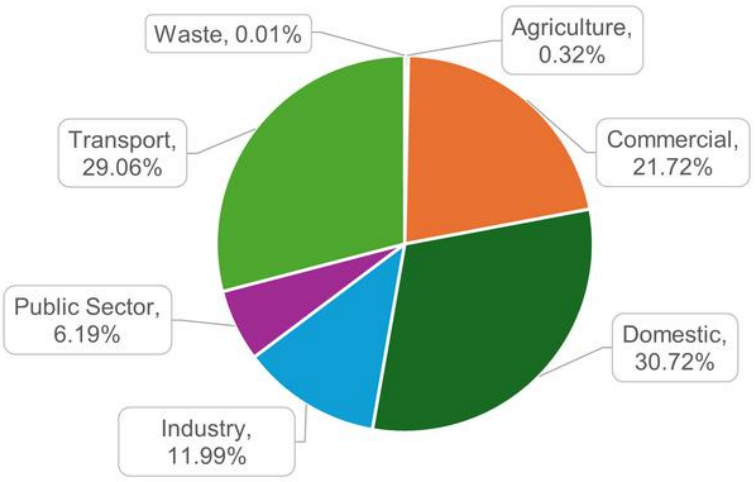


Figure 6. Stevenage territorial GHG emissions within LA influence, estimates in 2024 by economic sector. Source: Based on DESNZ data[33].

4.10 In 2024, domestic emissions were the highest (84.7 $ktCO_{2e}$, primarily from gas heating), followed by transport (80.1 $ktCO_{2e}$), commercial (59.9 $ktCO_{2e}$), and industry (31.1 $ktCO_{2e}$). The public sector, including the Council, accounted for just 17.1 $ktCO_{2e}$.

5 LEVEL 5: THE COUNCIL

5.1 In June 2019, the Council established a target to work toward net-zero emissions by 2030, making resource efficiency, energy reduction, and sound asset management central priorities for Council services and operations to safeguard public wellbeing and long-term community resilience.

Council's New Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Accounting Framework

5.2 To ensure robust, consistent, and transparent tracking toward its climate goals, the Council has implemented a new internal GHG Emissions Accounting Framework aligned with the GHG Protocol[34].

5.3 The core methodology and data inventories are detailed in the "GHG Reporting Framework Main Report" background document, establishing a comprehensive baseline and multi-scope methodology across Scopes 1, 2, and 3.

5.4 Based on the GHG Protocol, Scope 1 emissions come from sources directly owned or controlled by the Council (e.g., fuel burned in vehicles or gas used for heating buildings). Scope 2 emissions are indirect, from the production of energy that the Council purchases and uses, like electricity. Scope 3 emissions arise from activities up and down its value chain for which the

[33] Available at: UK local authority and regional GHG emissions.

[34] Further information at: GHG Protocol.

Council is indirectly responsible. A summary of GHG emissions scopes is shown in Figure 7.

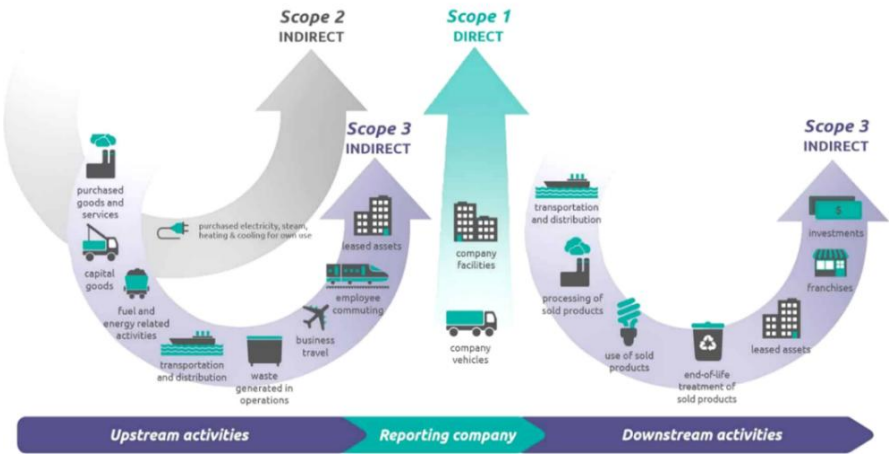


Figure 7. GHG emissions scopes for a reporting organisation.
Source: GHG Protocol, Corporate Value Chain Accounting and Reporting Standard.

5.5 In July 2020, CLS Energy established an initial 2018 emissions baseline for the Council at 3,399 tCO_{2e} (covering Scope 1 and 2 emissions, with limited Scope 3 considered). However, this baseline was not comprehensive, covering only 12 locations and omitting key sources like water and upstream emissions, and lacked full data granularity.

5.6 While previous reports tracked progress against this initial figure, indicating a 39% reduction by 2023 and projected reductions up to 61% following Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fleet adoption, these figures have been comprehensively re-evaluated.

5.7 Under the new framework, the Council updated its baseline to the 2023/24 financial year to incorporate over 700 buildings and facilities alongside expanded indirect emission sources, including transmission and distribution (T&D) losses, well-to-tank (WTT) upstream energy impacts, water supply, and fugitive emissions.

5.8 On a market-based approach, the updated baseline stands at 4,710.12 tCO_{2e}, with natural gas heating remaining the Council's primary operational emissions challenge and reduction priority.

5.9 The Council reports electricity emissions on a market-based approach to reflect its energy procurement choices. While the location-based method reflects average local grid intensity, the market-based method accounts for contractual instruments such as the Council’s EDF Zero Carbon for Business tariff. This allows the Council to accurately measure and report the direct emissions benefits of sourcing zero-carbon electricity. A comparison between both approaches for the FY 2023/24 under the new GHG Accounting Framework can be found below.

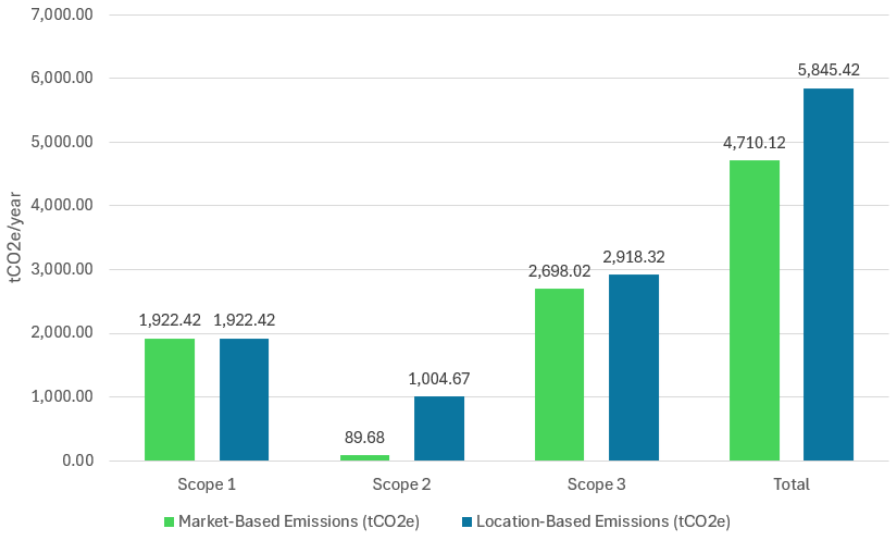


Figure 8. Total Council's emissions for FY 2023/24, market-based and location-based.

5.10 For the 2024/25 financial year, the Council's total market-based emissions were recorded at 4,458.44 tCO_{2e} (a 5.3% reduction from the previous year), as detailed below.

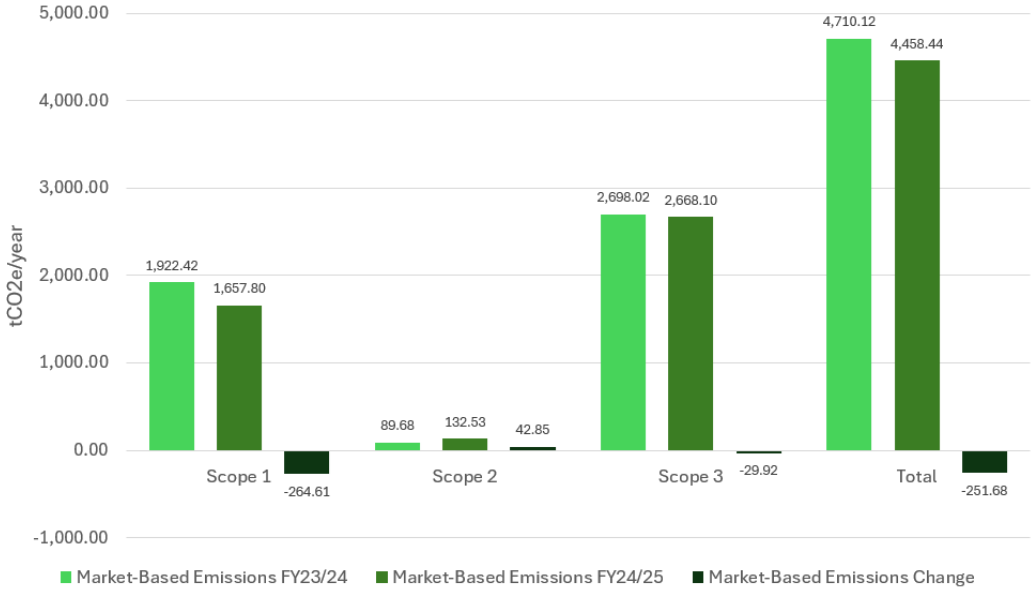


Figure 9. Total Council's emissions per scope (market-based) for FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25.

5.11 Formal progress tracking against the 2030 target utilises a dedicated target-tracking boundary comprising market-based Scope 1 and 2 alongside a selected subset of significant Scope 3 assets (such as major leisure facilities like the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre and the Swimming Centre), standing at 2,714.46 tCO_{2e} for FY24/25. This specific boundary design provides crucial continuity with the Council's historic published emissions position while maintaining operational visibility over large, Council-owned assets that remain essential to the town's carbon profile, even though they are technically classified as Scope 3 indirect emissions.

5.12 The market-based target-tracking emissions for financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 can be seen below. An overall 9.50% of emissions reductions can be attributed mainly to decreases in Scope 1 and 3 emissions.

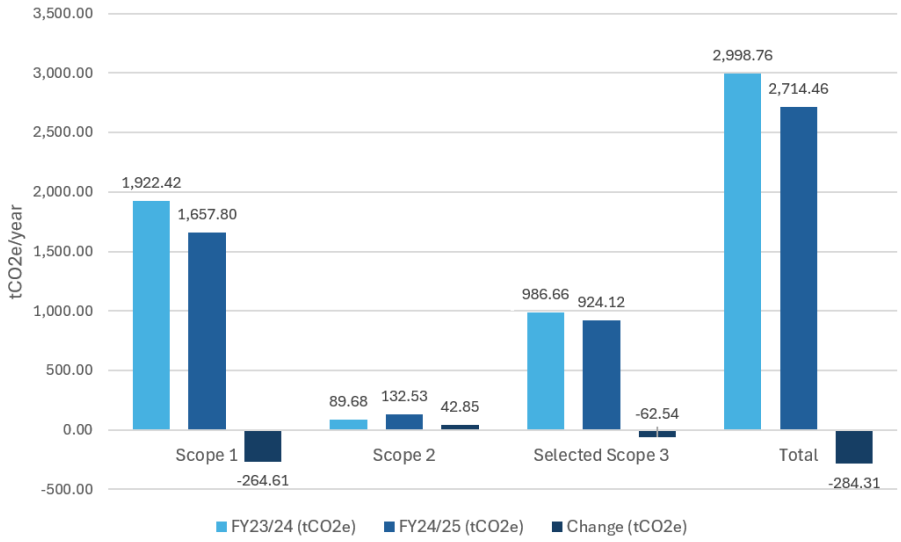


Figure 10. Total Council's target-tracking emissions (market-based) for FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25.

5.13 Figures for the 2025/26 financial year are currently in development as part of ongoing framework implementation.

5.14 Ultimately, this GHG Accounting Framework implementation transitions the Council from a limited legacy baseline to a comprehensive multi-scope inventory, positioning it to prioritise reduction measures, particularly around building heating, and ensure transparent, accountable progress toward its long-term goals.

Climate Action Plan Tracker & Climate Scorecards

5.15 In September 2020, the Council released its Stevenage Climate Change Strategy[35], built around eight strategic themes guiding the action plan to net-zero.

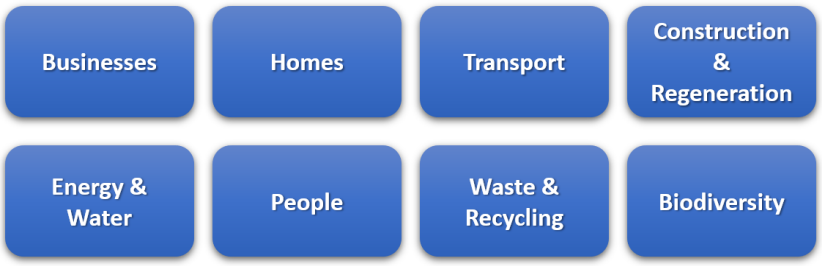


Figure 11. Stevenage Climate Change Strategy's 8 strategic themes leading the action plan.

[35] Available at: Stevenage Climate Change Strategy

5.16 In February 2024, the Council, in partnership with Kausal[36], launched the Stevenage Climate Action Plan Tracker[37], an online portal showcasing over 50 actions across the eight strategic themes.

5.17 Throughout 2025 and into 2026, officers continued refining the tracker structure and contents to align with the Climate Scorecards[38] assessment by Climate Emergency UK. In the June 2025 results, the Council scored 35%, an increase of 8 percentage points from its 2023 score of 27%. Notable improvements were seen in Waste Reduction & Food (+19%), and Governance and Finance (+23%). The highest-scoring categories were Buildings & Heating (55%) and Collaboration & Engagement (52%). The full scores can be seen in the table below.

Questions	Stevenage Borough Council	
Category	**2025 score**	**Versus 2023**
Buildings & Heating	**55%**	--
Transport	**13%**	▲ **4**
Planning & Land Use	**14%**	▼ **-2**
Governance & Finance	**39%**	▲ **23**
Biodiversity	**18%**	▲ **3**
Collaboration & Engagement	**52%**	▲ **7**
Waste Reduction & Food	**42%**	▲ **19**
Total score	**35%**	▲ **8**

Table 1. Climate Scorecards 2025 – Stevenage Borough Council Results[39].

5.18 The following sections highlight the main actions taken by the Council during 2025/26 across the eight strategic themes.

6 LEVEL 5 – STRATEGIC THEME: BUSINESSES

6.1 Positioned within the UK's high growth "Golden Triangle", Stevenage hosts prominent international corporations (such as Airbus, GSK, MBDA, Fujitsu, and the Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst) driving innovation across aerospace, biotechnology, ICT[40], and defence. Through ongoing collaboration, the Council works alongside these key employers to share best practice, boost local economic resilience, and accelerate emissions reductions.

6.2 The Council support initiatives focus on empowering local SMEs[41], individual companies, and the VCSE[42] sector to navigate climate obligations, lower operating costs to ease financial pressures, and build sustainable business models.

[36] Further information at: Kausal - Turn Climate Goals into Actions
[37] Available at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan Tracker
[38] Further information at: Council Climate Action Scorecards - Climate Emergency UK
[39] Further information at: Stevenage Borough Council - Climate Action Scorecards
[40] Information and Communication Technology
[41] Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
[42] Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise

6.3 Since 2022, the Council has funded 200 Gold Memberships for Wenta's Action Zero Programme[43], helping local SMEs tackle climate change, identify operational efficiencies, lower utility overheads, and reduce footprint by setting targets and developing Carbon Reduction Plans (CRPs), monitoring and reporting progress and achieving accreditations. To date, 155 local businesses have joined.

6.4 Between 2023 and March 2026, the Council delivered the Small Business Sustainability Support Programme[44] via Sustainable X[45] using UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)[46]. This initiative provided workshops, audits, and tailored 1:1 consultancy to help local businesses cut running costs, enhance workplace comfort, improve efficiency, boost market competitiveness, and adopt clean technologies.

6.5 Introduced in late 2024 with a £70,000 fund, the Stevenage Green Business Grant[47] helped seven local SMEs and charities implement energy-saving measures and clean technologies following completed CRPs, directly lowering their running costs. Throughout 2025/26, the Council provided ongoing support to the awarded entities to assist them in implementation.



Figure 12. SPS Training Solutions' Solar PV installation funded by the Green Business Grant.

6.6 Building on these foundations into 2026/27, the Council is fostering local green and technical skills (benefiting local residents and youth employment) by supporting the opening of North Hertfordshire College's New Town Centre Campus for engineering and construction courses from September 2026 and continuing the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme to ensure young people can access sustainable career pathways.

6.7 To address supply-chain emissions while driving local value, the Council continues to apply Social Value[48] via the Social Value Portal[49] using the

[43] Further information at: Wenta Action Zero Programme & BTC Stevenage - Action Zero

[44] Further information at: Sustainable Business Programme

[45] Further information at: Sustainability Programmes by SBC and Sustainable X

[46] UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Further information at: UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Prospectus

[47] Further information at: Stevenage Green Business Grants Summary

[48] Social Value is the UK's statutory approach to embedding sustainable procurement. Further information at: LGA District Councils Social Value Toolkit

[49] Further information at: Social Value Portal

national TOMs framework[50], maintaining a minimum 10% weighting in contract awards. Updated in May 2025[51], these metrics now include reducing Scope 1 & 2 emissions, increasing Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) adoption, supporting certified carbon offsets, and cutting plastic waste.

6.8 Furthermore, the Council's Co-operative Procurement Strategy 2025–2028[52] came into effect in June 2025. This strategy embeds sustainability to support net-zero goals while championing local wealth building, reducing waste, and promoting circular economy and biodiversity enhancements.

7 LEVEL 5 – STRATEGIC THEME: HOMES

7.1 The Council has committed to achieving a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)[53] Band C for all 8,000 of its homes by 2030[54], ensuring safe, warm, and lower-cost living for tenants to protect households against rising energy costs and health risks associated with cold housing. Currently, around 66% of the Council's housing stock meets or exceeds EPC Band C, as shown below.

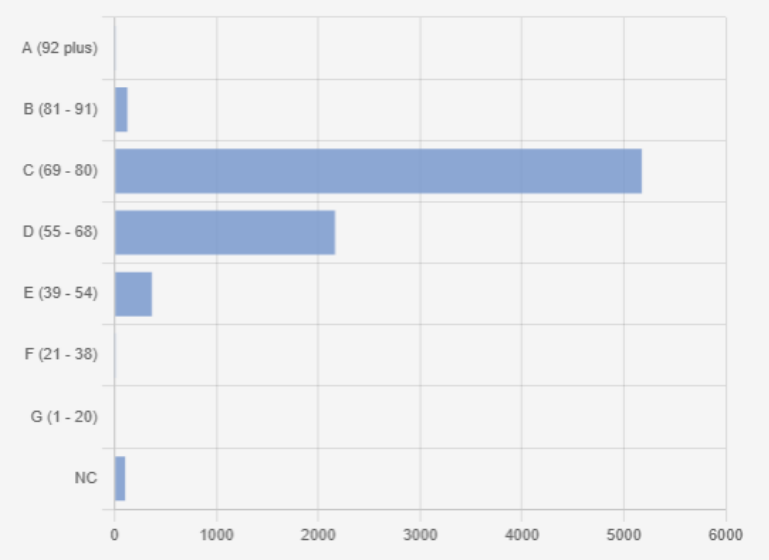


Figure 13. Distribution of the Council's housing stock by EPC band.

7.2 Central government funding and co-funding remain critical to tackling retrofitting challenges across both social and private housing stock to lift vulnerable families out of fuel poverty.

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50 Further information at: Measurement - Social Value TOM System™ - Social Value Portal

51 These are applied to procurements over £175,000 for services, and £250,000 for works that last 6 months or more. The Council is also exploring proportionate ways of embedding social value for mid-value procurements.

52 Available at: Co-operative Procurement Strategy 2025-28

53 Further information at: Energy Performance of Buildings Certificates in England and Wales

54 While it is essential for the Council to continue investing in decarbonising its social housing stock and achieving an EPC standard that ensures safe, warm, and quality homes, this is subject to affordability within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), given the broader pressures currently faced by all social landlords.

7.3 Following a £2.62 million grant award alongside a £3.97 million Council contribution, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)[55] Wave 2.1 project successfully concluded in July 2025. This initiative retrofitted 237 properties (comprising 16 flat blocks and 100 houses) using a fabric-first approach (installing wall and loft insulation, double glazing, energy-efficient lighting, and solar panels) to lift the Council's least efficient homes to EPC Band C or B, directly cutting tenants' bills, improving indoor comfort, safeguarding health, and lowering emissions. Aico Environmental Sensors were also installed in selected homes to monitor temperature, humidity, and damp/mould risks.



Figure 14. SHDF Wave 2.1 retrofitting works.

7.4 The town-wide Major Refurbishment Contract (MRC)[56] continues through 2026, building on work from previous years. While focused on structural maintenance, communal repairs, and fire safety across low- and mid-rise blocks, it integrated vital energy upgrades like wall and loft insulation, energy-efficient lighting, and new windows and doors, significantly lowering energy bills, alleviating cosot-of-living pressures, and improving thermal comfort for residents.

7.5 Building on these efforts, the Council commenced the three-year delivery of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund [57] (Wave 3) following a £3.85 million grant award a alongside Council co-funding (£3.15m). Partnering with Equans Regeneration Ltd, this project will upgrade 379 Council homes by 2028 with insulation, windows, doors, solar panels, and ventilation upgrades, aiming to achieve at least EPC Band C, reducing emissions, tackling fuel poverty, lowering household utility bills, and improving tenant well-being.

7.6 Running alongside dedicated decarbonisation funds, the ongoing Decent Homes[58] programme continues to upgrade energy efficiency across Council-owned homes through targeted window, door, and heating replacements to ensure homes remain safe, warm, and affordable.

[55] Further information at: Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

[56] Further information at: SBC Current Major Works

[57] Further information at: Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3

[58] Further information at: Decent Homes Works

7.7 The Council is also promoting schemes to decarbonise private homes, building on regional collaboration via HCCSP through the Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy and Solar Together scheme (as noted in 3.8 - Level 3) to extend financial and comfort benefits across the wider community.

7.8 Partnering with the National Energy Foundation (NEF), the Council helped eligible homeowners and private tenants access funding for energy efficiency measures under the Energy Company Obligation[59] Round 4 (ECO4) and Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS)[60]. Supporting 48 households to permanently lower bills, improve home warmth, and reduce emissions, this NEF-managed scheme (now closed to new applications) operates until 31st December 2026 to finalise any remedial works.

7.9 In 2025, the Council secured £1.5m from the Warm Homes: Local Grant (WHLG) to provide energy upgrades and low-carbon heating to approximately 100 low-income privately owned households[61], from 2025 to 2028. Delivered in partnership with NEF, it funds insulation, solar panels, Air-Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs), and low-carbon heating systems for EPC Band D-G properties. Eligible households include those with an income below £36,000, those in receipt of means-tested benefits, or those living in areas of high economic need[62].



Figure 15. Warm Homes Local Grant – Stevenage Leaflet. The scheme is open until 2028.

[59] Further information at: Help from your energy supplier: the Energy Company Obligation

[60] Further information at: Apply for support from the Great British Insulation Scheme

[61] Based on average retrofit costs per property.

[62] Further information at: Stevenage - Warm Homes Local Grant

7.10 Addressing record housing demand in Stevenage, the Council is also delivering sustainable new homes through the Make Stevenage Even Better (MSEB)[63] Corporate Plan. All new Council housing developments follow a 5-star quality approach[64] with sustainability as a key criterion. Following award-winning schemes like Helston House and the Kenilworth Close (Phase 1), recent developments like the 27-home Dunn Close integrate advanced low-carbon features such as ASHPs, solar panels, and heat recovery systems, underpinned by a fabric-first approach to maximise energy efficiency and minimise heating costs for residents.

8 LEVEL 5: STRATEGIC THEME: CONSTRUCTION & REGENERATION

8.1 The building and construction sector is a major contributor to GHG emissions, making its transformation essential for tackling climate change and protecting the built environment for future generations.

8.2 Stevenage's regeneration programme[65] seeks to create a vibrant, mixed-use town centre that reflects the aspirations of residents and businesses while respecting its New Town heritage and enhancing community life.

8.3 As a leader in regeneration, the Council has significant influence to deliver sustainably designed, climate-resilient buildings and public spaces that benefit the entire community by improving public health, comfort, and local environmental quality.

8.4 The Council continues to work with regeneration partners committed to zero-carbon operations and responsible development, promoting energy-efficient designs, sustainable construction practices, and materials reuse and recycling.

8.5 A key flagship regeneration project is the new Sports & Leisure Centre on St George's Way, which will combine facilities from the Arts & Leisure Centre and Swimming Centre, two of the Council's highest energy-consuming buildings. Following formal planning permission granted in September 2025, main construction works have commenced with completion expected in late 2027.

8.6 Designed as a fully electric, fossil-fuel-free building, the new Sports & Leisure Centre will feature a 25-metre 10-lane pool, teaching pool, splash pad, soft-play, six-court sports hall, fitness suite, multi-purpose studios, and a café. Engineered for high energy efficiency, it features an estimated annual energy use of 1,246 MWh (182.5 kWh/m^2), supported by on-site solar PV generating 14.8 MWh annually; ASHPs for heating, cooling, and pool water; high insulation levels; LED lighting; and smart energy management systems. Furthermore, the project commits to a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and provides a sustainable transport hub equipped with EV charging and extensive cycle parking, delivering a modern, low-cost community facility.

[63] Available at: Corporate Plan: Making Stevenage Even Better (2024-2027)

[64] Further information at: Housing Development – On the Right Road

[65] Further information at: Stevenage Even Better - Stevenage Regeneration



Figure 16. New Sports & Leisure Centre proposal.

8.7 Furthermore, the Stevenage Indoor Market has been relocated to a prominent, bespoke, and modern facility on the ground floor of Boston House in Park Place. Designed with an all-electric energy supply, the bright, welcoming, and flexible trading space secures the market's long-term future for local traders and shoppers.



Figure 17. New Stevenage Indoor Market in Boston House, Park Place.

8.8 Additionally, works have started to repurpose the former Indoor Market building into a new Engineering and Construction Campus for North Hertfordshire College, funded through the Government's Towns Fund, providing modern, high-tech training and career facilities for students, apprentices, and adult learners to foster local green skills and employment pathways.

Stevenage's Local Plan Partial Review

8.9 One of the crucial tools the Council uses to lead climate action is the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (SBLP)[66], which integrates strategies translating climate goals into practical mitigation and adaptation measures.

8.10 The Council successfully completed a partial review[67] of the SBLP, which was finalised and adopted in July 2026 following extensive public consultation and viability processes.

8.11 The partial review prioritises climate policies within its strategic approach, balancing low-carbon housing and development with the provision of new jobs and infrastructure, and the protection of green and cultural assets for residents.

8.12 The updated planning framework incorporates upgraded policies across key areas:

- Contribution to mitigating and adapting to climate change, reducing emissions, providing carbon sequestration, and securing sustainable resource use.
- Major developments should aim to achieve net-zero regulated operational emissions by reducing overall energy demand, supplying energy efficiently, and adopting ultra-low or zero-carbon energy generation, with whole-life carbon net-zero proposals strongly supported.
- Developments must prioritise active travel and public transport by integrating necessary infrastructure.
- Developments should minimise air conditioning demand where appropriate by balancing solar gain and shading, managing internal heat, and providing passive ventilation to protect occupants from extreme heat.
- New dwellings must restrict water consumption to a maximum of 110 litres per person per day. Proposals should provide rainwater harvesting (for new dwellings) or grey water recycling (for non-residential developments where appropriate) and encourage water neutrality.
- Strong support is given for decentralised/district heat networks, intelligent energy systems, ultra-low or zero-carbon CHP[68] systems, and local renewable generation with surplus fed into the national grid.
- Urban greening is encouraged, with support for incorporating green roofs, blue-green roofs, bio-solar roofs, or green walls.
- Proposals that align with circular economy principles, local green jobs provision, local food-growing spaces (allotments, orchards, and food markets) enhancements, and sustainable waste disposal are strongly supported.

[66] Further information at: Stevenage Borough Local Plan

[67] Further information at: Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update 2026

[68] Combined Heat and Power

- All developments should use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to prevent increased peak run-off rates and follow the surface water disposal hierarchy. Development must also protect adjacent flood defences, maintain watercourses buffer zones, and re-naturalise culverts.

8.13 The adoption of these enhanced policies is expected to make a significant contribution toward achieving the town's sustainability objectives while protecting community infrastructure against climate risks and securing healthier, safer environment for residents.

9 LEVEL 5: STRATEGIC THEME: WASTE & RECYCLING

9.1 The waste sector significantly impacts climate change, making waste reduction, reuse, repair, recycling, and recovery central to the Council's management approach.

9.2 The Council is a member of the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership[69] (HWP), a collaborative initiative bringing together all 10 district and borough councils alongside HCC.

9.3 HWP supports residents in reducing, reusing, and recycling waste through awareness campaigns and long-term strategies, driving Council-led initiatives to cut waste and boost recycling.

9.4 HWP targets zero waste to landfill by 2030, aiming for 100% of Hertfordshire's residual waste to be processed at energy-from-waste (EfW) facilities. While April 2024 10-year HCC's ended directed landfill disposal, some rejected recycling may still reach landfill indirectly[70].

9.5 The Council handles regular bin and bulky waste collections[71] alongside 13 recycling banks across the town[72]. In June 2025, eight neighbourhood recycling sites were upgraded with new signage and infrastructure, funded via the UKSPF and the Council's Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF)[73] to make recycling more accessible and cleaner for residents.

9.6 The Council operates an in-house recycling collection service, separating materials into paper & card, glass, plastics, and cans, with private arrangements for onward processing.

9.7 In 2025/26, the Council collected 29,562.09 tonnes of household waste from kerbside collections and 11,072.01 tonnes of recycling. Stevenage residents produced an average of about 321 kg of waste (recycled and residual) per person annually[74], compared to the Hertfordshire average of 378 kg[75]. The

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69 Further information at: Waste Aware Hertfordshire Partnership

70 Further information at: HCC - New contracts to end landfill for Hertfordshire waste

71 Further information at: Stevenage Household Waste Management Policy

72 Further information at: Stevenage Recycling Banks

73 As described in paragraph 14.4.

74 Based on a population estimate of 90,508 inhabitants in Stevenage.

75 Further information at: Hemel Today - Average of 378kg of waste thrown away by every Hertfordshire resident in 2025

Council targets a 60% recycling rate by 2035[76]; however, the 2025-26 figures indicate Stevenage's recycling rate stands at 37.5%, the lowest in the county, prompting targeted action in this regard.

9.8 The Council promotes recycling across corporate, residential, and commercial sites. Following Cabinet approval in July 2025[77], Phase 2 of the flat-block recycling pilot concluded by December 2025. Building on Phase 1, which increased flat-block recycling by 185% across six blocks, Phase 2 expanded to around 41 blocks, integrating resident engagement, surveys and educational materials alongside a custom three-wheeled bin designed for easier use on stairs. Backed by £719k of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding, the project provides opportunities for residents to recycle plastics, glass, cardboard and food to ensure equal access to recycling services across all housing types. Based on the pilot results, an overall 4% increase in the borough's recycling rate is anticipated if similar performance is achieved across all flats, with monitoring currently underway.



Figure 18. Three-wheeled bin tailored for Flat-Blocks Recycling Project[78].

9.9 The Council provided free glass, tins, and plastic recycling services to local schools, alongside paid paper collections, while promoting recycling awareness to approximately 3,000 children through 11 school assemblies.

9.10 In March 2026, the Council successfully launched separate weekly food waste collections across 38,000 properties (deploying 77,000 new caddies) in line with national Simpler Recycling[79] legislation. Promoted via a school children competition to design recycling superheroes (such as Captain Carrot), the service reduces GHG emissions and is expected to boost recycling rates by around 5%.

[76] Further information at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan – Action WR 1. Increase Recycling Rates

[77] Further information at: SBC Items at Meetings - Flat Block Recycling Improvements

[78] Further information at: BBC - Multi-wheeled bins introduced in recycling trial

[79] Further information at: Simpler Recycling in England: Policy Update



Figure 19. One of the selected Stevenage's food recycling superheroes: *Captain Carrot*.

9.11 Furthermore, the Council launched a commercial food waste collection service for businesses and schools on 31 March 2025, meeting statutory deadlines.

9.12 Under the Recycle Your Cycle[80] scheme, the Council collected 240 unwanted, abandoned or fly-tipped bikes in 2025/26 for refurbishment, reuse, and community benefit.

9.13 Finally, partnering with HWP, the Council continues to promote the Herts Sustainable Families[81] initiative, which includes Herts Reusable Nappies, Herts Sustainable Periods, and Herts Confident Continence, aiming to stimulate reusable alternatives to single-use products to help local families lower household expenses and reduce plastic waste.

10 LEVEL 5: STRATEGIC THEME: PEOPLE & AWARENESS

10.1 Stevenage can only achieve its sustainability objectives if everyone plays their part to build a healthier, cleaner, greener, more resilient town. By educating, engaging, supporting, listening to, and communicating with residents from all backgrounds, the Council can encourage the behavioural changes needed.

10.2 Most resident-focused actions are outlined in **Level 6** of this report. Some internal awareness and governance actions are highlighted below to emphasise fostering a sustainable culture within the Council.

10.3 As part of embedding this commitment into high-level governance, "Tackling Climate Change" has been incorporated as a core priority of the Council's Corporate Plan, Making Stevenage Even Better (2024-2027)[82], cementing the net-zero target and climate response as one of the organisation's primary focuses.

[80] Further information at: Recycle Your Cycle

[81] Further information at: Herts Sustainable Families - Hertfordshire County Council

[82] Further information at: Corporate Plan: Making Stevenage Even Better (2024-2027)

10.4 In November 2023, the Council acknowledged the *"Pathway 3 - People and Processes"* report, identifying that Council's people-related emissions arise mainly from ways of working: commuting, business travel, waste production, water use, and resource consumption. To drive behavioural change, a Staff Climate Champions Group (SCCG) of 28 members from across departments has been established to raise awareness and strengthen engagement.

10.5 Priority topics (as shown below) were selected for 2025-26 (with continuing work into 2026-27). To address them, working sub-groups have been established to focus on challenges and opportunities linked to ways of working and organisational emissions.



Figure 20. Stevenage Climate Champions – Topic-specific working sub-groups for 2025-26.

10.6 Key deliverables from these sub-groups include analysing staff commuting and business travel incentives, producing an active travel induction pack for officers, upgrading recycling infrastructure and signage at Daneshill House and Cavendish, and conducting sustainability reviews of Council-led events like Stevenage Day.

10.7 Climate literacy is critical to raising environmental awareness and enabling informed decision-making. The Council continues to promote free carbon literacy opportunities for officers and members via the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), of which it is a member.

Climate Adaptation

10.8 Climate adaptation is a vital part of building resilience. The Global Centre on Adaptation[83] defines it as the *"means to act to prepare for and adjust to the current and projected impacts of climate change"*.

10.9 Adaptation aims to reduce vulnerability and ensure that Council's operations and policies can withstand climate impacts.

10.10 Recent extreme weather events affecting Stevenage and the wider Hertfordshire area indicate the increasing need for effective climate action, both to reduce emissions and to strengthen local resilience.

10.11 In June and August 2025, periods of extreme heat resulted in Amber Heat-Health alerts across the East of England, with temperatures exceeding 30°C and increased risks identified for older people and other vulnerable groups. In July 2025, heavy thunderstorms and intense rainfall caused flash flooding in Stevenage, with significant surface water reported along Station Road and Eastbourne Avenue. The severe winter weather in December 2025 and January 2026 brought snow and extreme cold, disrupting travel and local

[83] Further information at: Global Center on Adaptation.

activities (e.g., football and hockey). Together, these events illustrate the range of extreme weather-related pressure on communities, infrastructure, services, and vulnerable residents.

10.12 As part of its ongoing work, in June 2025, the Council updated its Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)[84], in line with DEFRA's[85] guidance (noting that adaptation reporting is voluntary for local authorities). This review assessed climate risks for Council services and assets across multiple climate scenarios (current, +2°C and +4°C), ensuring a robust understanding of future vulnerabilities.

10.13 The updated CCRA identifies about 50 climate-related risks across five sectors: natural environment, infrastructure, health and communities, business and industry, and international dimensions. While most risks are currently rated low to medium, medium-to-high risks increase under future warming scenarios.

10.14 The CCRA enhances preparedness by helping the Council understand and plan for potential climate risks. To increase service resilience, the Council began working with its risk lead in early 2026 to incorporate these climate risks directly into relevant operational and corporate risk registers.

10.15 The Council acknowledges the importance of climate adaptation and remains committed to building long-term operational resilience.

10.16 Looking through 2026, the Council is finalising a 5-Year Climate Adaptation Plan to provide a structured framework for medium-term preparedness, strengthening service resilience, prioritising monitoring impacts, safeguarding vulnerable infrastructure, enhancing emergency preparedness, broadening stakeholder engagement, and supporting residents.

11 LEVEL 5: STRATEGIC THEME: BIODIVERSITY

11.1 Biodiversity loss and climate change are closely linked. Climate change accelerates biodiversity loss, undermining nature's ability to regulate GHG emissions, while ecosystems like woodlands and wetlands act as vital carbon sinks. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity is crucial to tackling climate change.

11.2 Tree planting plays a key role in Stevenage in this context, reducing GHGs, mitigating climate impacts, improving air quality, providing wildlife habitats, cooling urban areas, lowering energy demand, and fostering healthier, more sustainable communities.

11.3 The Council has committed to planting over 4,000 trees by 2030 [86] and increasing the town's canopy cover to 19%, in line with the Woodland Trust's

[84] A Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) for local authorities involves evaluating the potential impacts of climate change on the local area and the services provided by the authority.

[85] Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

[86] Further information at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan – Action BI3: Plant 4,000 Trees in Stevenage by 2030

Emergency Tree Plan (2020)[87] and its Amenity Tree Management Policy[88]. A 2024, i-Tree Canopy[89] assessment found existing canopy cover at 22%, though ward-levels coverage varies, dropping to 13% in some areas[90].

11.4 As part of its ongoing commitment, the Council plants around 100 mature trees annually, adding 121 new street trees in 2025/26. During this period, the Council also maintained 30,103 trees, 18 woodlands, 399 ha of grass, and 24 ha of shrub beds. Additionally, CIL[91] funding has been allocated for two major projects: £80,000 funded across 2025/26 and 2026/27 to plant 80 trees across Stevenage (with planting scheduled for completion by January 2027), and £30,000 allocated for woodland management works at Lanterns Lane woods.

11.5 Following three Miyawaki micro-woods[92] planted by the Council in 2024/25 using DEFRA's Coronation Living Heritage Fund (at St Nicholas Park, Hampson Park and Shephalbury Park, with 5,000 saplings), the Council created three more micro-woods in 2025/26 using 3,000 whips planted at Peartree Park, Chells Park, and Symonds Green.

11.6 A further rollout of new Miyawaki micro-woods is planned for 2026/27, backed by £30,000 in CIL funding for two micro-woods at Donkey Park and Broadhall Way. Species include beech, cherry, elder, hawthorn, hazel, holly, hornbeam, lime, field maple, and oak. These extend existing woodland, improve wildlife corridors, and connect wooded areas with grassland meadows. Monitoring confirms the Miyawaki technique has been highly successful in Stevenage.



Figure 21. Stevenage's Miyawaki micro-wood at Chells Park.

11.7 These initiatives complement the "Your Tree, Our Future" scheme detailed in 3.8.

[87] Available at: Emergency Tree Plan - Woodland Trust

[88] Available at: Stevenage Amenity Tree Management Policy

[89] i-Tree Canopy is an online canopy cover assessment tool, which provides a scientifically robust and consistent approach to estimating canopy cover. Further information at: i-Tree Canopy.

[90] Further information at: Stevenage Tree and Woodland Strategy

[91] Community Infrastructure Levy

[92] Further information at: Council secures funding to plant new trees in Stevenage

11.8 Following public consultation, the Council adopted the Tree & Woodland Strategy (2025-2035)[93] in June 2025. It sets out 59 targeted actions to manage, protect, and enhance the borough's trees, woodlands, and ancient hedgerows across 10 key themes to strengthen Stevenage's climate resilience. It highlights the role of trees in carbon capture, air quality, and urban cooling, prioritising tree species with high carbon storage potential and targeting areas with low canopy cover.

11.9 While tree planting is vital, supporting biodiversity also requires a diverse range of habitats, including woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, and hedgerows.

11.10 Following public consultation, the Cabinet adopted Green Spaces Strategy (2025–2035)[94] in June 2025. This 10-year framework outlines how parks, woodlands, and wildlife areas will be protected and enhanced to support biodiversity, climate resilience, and community well-being by providing accessible, high-quality green spaces for residents. Early initiatives, including ecological surveys, are underway to balance development, ecology, and resident needs.

11.11 The Council also adopted the Biodiversity Action Plan (2024-2028)[95] as a strategic framework to guide local conservation efforts. Progress is driven by implementing targeted conservation across five priority habitats and tracked now via a dedicated online portal[96]. Though there is currently no dedicated budget for full delivery, ongoing coordination, seasonal work, and volunteer engagement are helping implement key actions. By strengthening ecosystems, increasing habitat connectivity, and supporting species diversity, the BAP contributes directly to climate resilience and sustainability.

11.12 The Council is also implementing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) [97], now mandatory for all developments and requiring at least 10% biodiversity increase. The Council has transitioned to a full BNG monitoring framework via Exacom[98], integrated into development management procedures (using Uniform[99]) to screen qualifying planning applications. Priority delivery sites have been identified, and work is underway at Chells Park, Canterbury Way Playing Fields, and Fishers Green.

11.13 Several of the above-mentioned initiatives rely on volunteers. In 2025-26, Green Space Volunteers[100] contributed over 1,700 hours to improving open spaces, carrying out woodland coppicing, pond improvements, tree planting, and butterfly surveys. Additionally, Council-led bulb planting at Hampson Park, Edmunds Drive, and Trent Close enhanced seasonal colour and boosted community pride and local environmental stewardship.

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93 Available at: Stevenage Tree and Woodland Strategy

94 Available at: Stevenage Green Space Strategy.

95 Further information at: Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan.

96 Available at: Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan: A Wilder Stevenage 2024-2028.

97 Further information at: Biodiversity Net Gain

98 Further information at: Exacom - Products (Biodiversity Net Gain Module)

99 Further information at: Uniform - Local Authority Case Management Software

100 Further information at: Stevenage Green Space Volunteers

11.14 In addition, work is also underway to expand a town-wide network of grassland meadows, with ongoing identification of new sites to increase coverage and ecological value. This includes a CIL-funded "Meadow Grassland - Town Wide" project (£20,000 funded for 2026/27) to identify existing meadow and rough grassland in autumn/winter 2026 and seeding completed by February 2027. Moreover, two new wildflower meadow areas were established in Fairlands Valley Lakes and St Nicholas Park to support biodiversity, improve habitat connectivity, and boost pollinator populations.

12 LEVEL 5: STRATEGIC THEME: TRANSPORT

12.1 Transport is one of the largest sources of GHG emissions in Stevenage, making action in this sector critical to achieving overall reductions and improving local air quality.

12.2 In the Climate Change Strategy, the Council committed to decarbonising its fleet by 2030 to lead by example in cutting operational emissions.

12.3 Following SLT's endorsement of *"Pathway 1 – Fuel and Fleet"* in 2023, the Council switched from diesel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)[101] in October 2024 as a low-carbon transitional solution, covering all road and non-road vehicles as well as machinery.

12.4 FY 25/26 marked the first financial year the Council's road fleet operated on 100% HVO. According to Renewable Fuel Declarations, issued as part of the Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme by Zemo Partnership[102], during this year the Council used about 300,000 litres of HVO to power its road fleet, resulting in just 10.7 tCO_{2e} of direct (tank-to-wheel) emissions, and avoiding c. 760 tCO_{2e} of direct emissions compared to standard diesel use, reducing direct road fleet emissions by 98.6% against FY 23/24 levels.

12.5 In line with Pathway 1, since August 2023, the Council has incorporated seven electric vans and small vehicles into its fleet, with plans to add more through a fleet replacement plan in the short- and mid-term. This rollout is supported by ongoing charging infrastructure assessments for a fully electrified fleet.

[101] HVO is a synthetic, second-generation paraffinic biofuel produced from vegetable oil waste. Due to its production process, HVO has a longer shelf life than regular biodiesel. It is produced to conform to EN15940 & ASTM D975 standards for paraffinic & diesel fuels, and the EU Fuel Quality Directive (FQD) 2009/30/EC Annex 2. It was identified as a direct, drop-in replacement for diesel. It can be stored in the same fuel tank and be used in the same way as diesel, without modifications to the Council's fleet or machinery.

[102] Further information at: Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme | Fuels | Zemo Partnership



Figure 22. Stevenage Borough Council's small 100% Electric Vehicle (EV).

12.6 The Council recognises active travel as vital to meeting climate targets, cutting emissions, supporting healthier lifestyles, improving public health, and easing congestion. This is further supported by the Stevenage Heart Trails[103], launched in March 2026, which span over 27 miles of traffic-free routes connecting communities with local art and heritage while encouraging outdoor physical activity.

12.7 In October 2024, partnering with Beryl Bikes[104], the Council launched a town-wide Cycle Hire Scheme[105], featuring 45 bays and 150 e-bikes, funded via the UK Government's Towns Fund and Section 106 contributions[106]. In June 2025, the scheme was successfully re-launched following a temporary pause to address vandalism. As of mid-2026, most bikes have been repaired, and all 45 parking bays are operational. Between the scheme's launch and mid-May 2026, users completed over 90,000 journeys on Beryl Bikes, cycling a total distance exceeding 239,000 km, demonstrating a strong community uptake in active travel.



Figure 23. Stevenage's Cycle Hire Scheme in partnership with Beryl Bikes.

[103] Further information at: Stevenage Heart Trails

[104] Further information at: Stevenage Bike Share - Beryl

[105] Further information at: Cycle Hire Scheme - Part I Report & Cycle Hire Scheme - Report and Public Consultation Feedback

[106] GHG savings are tracked and reported to Council members and officers by Beryl.

12.8 The Council also introduced a staff cycle hire scheme allowing employees to use Beryl bikes during work hours (Monday to Friday, 9 AM - 5 PM), with individual journeys capped at 30 minutes, but unlimited journeys per day, providing an incentive for active and sustainable business travel and supporting staff wellbeing.

12.9 Through a Climate Champions working sub-group, the Council has promoted sustainable travel benefits for staff (including a Sustainable Travel Induction Pack included in starter pack). Staff benefits include the Enterprise EV Car Club[107], SmartGo Stevenage[108] (with discounted rail and bus tickets and passes, and railcards), and the Green Commute Initiative[109] Cycle-to-Work scheme (enabling staff to obtain bikes and e-bikes, and accessories up to £3,600 via gross salary deductions over up to 36 months).

12.10 The Council expanded the provision of lockable bike shelters by installing seven cycle hangars[110] across the town to provide a secure storage alternative for residents living in flats or homes with limited space. Additionally, secure cycle parking has been identified as a potential Phase 2 CIL project (£40,000 allocated to deliver 6 standalone facilities).



Figure 24. Cycle hangar at South Gate, Town Centre, Stevenage.

12.11 Furthermore, the Council has delivered and progressed a programme of underpass upgrades, improving key walking and cycling links with safety and public realm enhancements for year-round use to ensure active travel routes are safe, welcoming, and accessible for residents.

12.12 While private cars remain essential, they must also transition, driving the Council's commitment to expanding public EV charging infrastructure across the town to support residents in shifting toward cleaner vehicles.

12.13 The Council is expanding provision through LEVI[111] funding. In September 2023, HCC secured funding to expand EV charging across the county. Under

[107] Further information at: Enterprise Car Club Launches in Stevenage

[108] Further information at: SmartGo Stevenage

[109] Further information at: Cycle to Work Scheme - Green Commute Initiative

[110] Cycle hangar locations available at: Lockable Bike Shelters

[111] Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure – further information at: Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding.

a partnership agreement with HCC, the Council carried out initial feasibility studies identifying up to 50 potential sites across parkland, leisure locations, and garages. Following a tender process in July 2025, the contract was awarded by HCC in December 2025, appointing Urban Fox as the Charge Point Operator (CPO) for Stevenage. Site assessments and resident engagement are underway, with physical rollout scheduled for late autumn 2026.

12.14 Moreover, under its Garages Asset Management Plan (2025–2035)[112], the Council is also exploring opportunities to convert underutilised garage sites into EV charging spaces, subject to suitability and local demand to improve neighbourhood infrastructure.

12.15 Finally, following a review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy[113], the Cabinet approved a two-tier licensing fee discount structure in October 2025 (effective January 2026 through 2030). To promote cleaner vehicles in line with net-zero targets and national policy, the policy offers a 50% discount for Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) and a 25% discount for Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)[114].

13 LEVEL 5: STRATEGIC THEME: ENERGY & WATER

Energy

13.1 The energy sector accounts for over two-thirds of global GHG emissions. Both the source and level of energy use present opportunities to significantly reduce the Council's operational emissions and overhead costs while easing budget pressures.

13.2 The UK aims to decarbonise its power grid by 2035. Heating, however, remains difficult to decarbonise and is still largely reliant on natural gas.

13.3 Different actions have been undertaken by the Council to monitor and better understand electricity and gas consumption across its sites, aiming to introduce decarbonisation measures and reduce natural gas dependency.

13.4 The Council continues with its Zero Carbon for Business (ZCB)[115] tariff with EDF Energy for corporate electricity supply. This guarantees zero-carbon electricity and zero Scope 2 emissions under GHG Protocol best practice. The Council is working to consolidate its multiple accounts into a single zero-carbon tariff contract procured corporately to secure efficiency savings.

13.5 The Council completed Phase 1 of the Gordon Craig Theatre lighting project, installing infrastructure for a new LED control system and replacing all auditorium house fittings from tungsten to high-efficiency LED units to lower theatre maintenance and energy expenses.

[112] Further information at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan - HO4

[113] Further information at: Stevenage Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy

[114] Further information at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan - TR6

[115] Further information at: EDF Zero Carbon for Business



Figure 25. Gordon Craig Theathre auditorium lights.

13.6 Following this, the Council awarded Phase 2 for stage lighting equipment at the Gordon Craig Theatre, aiming to further cut running costs and energy use by transitioning from tungsten and incandescent sources to modern LEDs.

13.7 Leisure facilities, managed by Everyone Active (EA), are among the Council's top energy users. Since April 2023, EA has introduced energy efficiency measures across the facilities, including LED lighting, Building Management Systems (BMS) upgrades, and insulation works. For example, at Ridlins Athletic Stadium, more energy-efficient boilers were installed in January 2026, whereas internal LED lighting upgrade at the Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre was completed in May 2025.

13.8 In 2025, the Town Centre Clocktower lighting system was also replaced with an LED system, reducing energy consumption and maintenance costs while enabling multi-colour displays to mark days of national significance.



Figure 26. New Town Centre Clocktower LED lighting system.

13.9 The Council also upgraded lighting at St George's and Westgate Multi-Storey Car Parks (MSCPs) to full efficient LED systems with motion sensors (completed in summer 2025 and late 2025, respectively) to improve car park safety, visibility, and energy efficiency.



Figure 27. St George's MSCP new efficient LED lighting system.

13.10 Natural gas remains the Council's primary direct operational emissions source, accounting for approximately 73% of total Scope 1 emissions in FY24/25 (see "GHG Reporting Framework Main Report" in the background documents), with top consumption concentrated in a small number of assets. Phasing out natural gas for space heating and hot water remains the main challenge for building decarbonisation and long-term financial resilience.

13.11 As part of the Council's GHG Accounting Strategy (as described from paragraph 5.2 onwards), the top 10 emitting Council sites have been identified on a market-based approach (where corporately procured electricity emissions count as zero due to the zero-carbon tariff option). These comprise the target-tracking buildings (covering Scope 1, Scope 2, and selected Scope 3 assets), against which the Council measures its progress towards net-zero. To actively target and address emissions across priority sites, a dedicated building decarbonisation group of officers is currently being established.

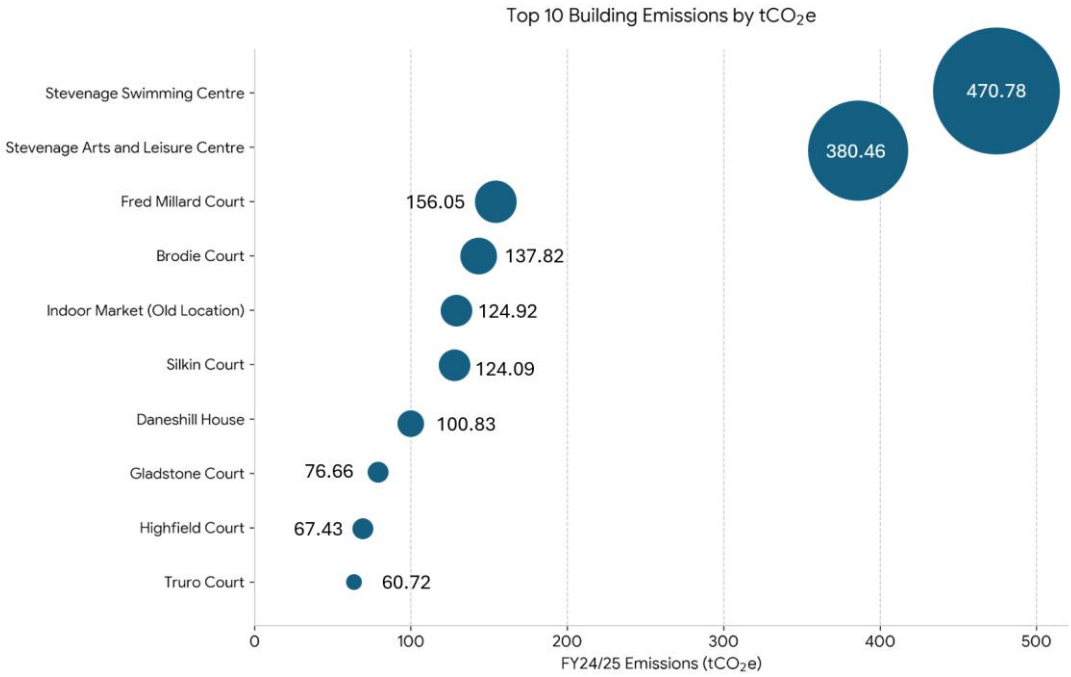


Figure 28. Top 10 GHG emitting Council sites identified on a market-based approach.

13.12 The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)[116], and Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF)[117], which previously supported energy efficiency and low-carbon projects in public buildings, lack UK Government funding for 2026/27[118][119]. If this persists, it will constrain the Council's ability to phase out natural gas, requiring alternative financing options.

13.13 Addressing these emissions is critical for environmental targets and generating substantial financial savings on Council energy bills that can be reinvested into frontline services. In addition, the Council is improving energy billing and payment processes to reduce inefficiencies and costs.

13.14 Internal scoping work on Community Energy began in 2025/26. Still in its early stages, it aims to enhance understanding of the community energy landscape through training, expert insights, and collaboration. Additionally, Council officers have attended Great British Energy (GBE) webinars to provide local authority input on emerging GBE local funding instruments (part of the Local Power Plan delivery), partnership grants, and shared ownership models ahead of GBE's definitive funding announcements in autumn/winter 2026.

Water

13.15 Alongside energy, water is central to Stevenage's sustainability and climate resilience. As UK summers get hotter and drier, Stevenage's water supply is increasingly constrained, and Hertfordshire remains among the driest parts of the UK.

13.16 In 2025, the Council began working with Telex Water[120] as its new portfolio manager, moving sites to Source for Business[121] to secure competitive rates. Beyond cost savings, Telex Water offers a data insights portal to track site-level consumption and identify potential leakages or inefficiencies. To simplify management and improve monitoring, the aim is to transfer all Council sites to the new supplier. As part of the partnership, the Council is also benefitting from a free 15-month Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) trial at a high-usage site, enabling it to gather more precise data and inform future water efficiency initiatives.

13.17 Following the adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update[122] in July 2026, enhanced policies have been established to improve water efficiency, flood prevention, and sustainable water management across Stevenage.

13.18 Specific policies for Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) promote their use in developments to manage surface water runoff, reduce flood risk, enhance

[116] Further information at: Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme
[117] Further information at: Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund
[118] Further information at: Low Carbon Skills Fund - Salix Finance
[119] Further information at: Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme - Salix Finance
[120] Further information at: Water supplier for businesses - Telex Water
[121] Further information at: Source for Business
[122] Further information at: Stevenage Local Plan Partial Update 2026

infiltration, incorporating rainwater harvesting, and reduce mains water demand to safeguard local water supplies.

13.19 Updated flood management policies aim to ensure new developments withstand flooding without transferring risk elsewhere, while protecting adjacent flood defences, maintaining watercourse buffer zones, and re-naturalising culverts.

13.20 The Local Plan Partial Update also encourages water-saving technologies to reduce consumption and improve efficiency, with a water use target of 110 litres per person per day in new developments.

13.21 Wastewater policies ensure adequate infrastructure for new developments while protecting water quality. Together with the promotion of greywater recycling, these measures will strengthen the town's resilience and support sustainable water management.

13.22 Practical community-level projects have also been delivered, including the Roebuck Community Rainwater Harvesting initiative completed in March 2026, which involved installing a water butt to collect roof rainwater for watering outside shop planters and reducing mains water demand.

13.23 Furthermore, the Greydells Allotments Rainwater Harvesting project was completed in May 2026, featuring gutter repairs and the installation of a 1,000-litre rainwater harvesting tank on a robust concrete base with a raised support frame, debris-prevention filter, and overflow pipe to capture runoff from neighbouring garage roofs and facilitate filling watering cans to support local food-growing and community resilience.



Figure 29. Greydells allotments rainwater harvesting project.

14 LEVEL 6: LOCAL COMMUNITY

14.1 Engaging communities at the neighbourhoods and ward level remained a priority in 2025/26. While many initiatives across the previous themes directly benefit residents or involve them as volunteers, this section highlights broader engagement, communication efforts, and the delivery of the Climate

Change Community Fund (CCCF), which relies on active participation from residents, businesses, community groups, and charities.

14.2 Each year, the Council updates its Climate Change Communications and Marketing Plan, outlining objectives, target audiences, key messages, strategies, and specific campaigns.

14.3 The Climate Action Plan Tracker[123], described in 5.16, allows residents and viewers to provide direct feedback to the Council regarding climate actions, enabling further engagement and participation and ensuring accountability to the community.

14.4 Community events provide excellent engagement opportunities. In June 2026, the Climate Change participated in Stevenage Day for the fourth consecutive year, hosting a Climate Action Stall in the STEM Village to promote sustainable living, renewable energy, home energy efficiency, recycling, and carbon footprint reduction through interactive and educational activities. The event also provided an opportunity to promote Council's climate change initiatives such as the CCCF and WHLG.



Figure 30. 2026 Stevenage Day's Climate Action stall.

14.5 In terms of the sustainability of Stevenage Day itself, several measures were incorporated into the event planning and delivery: encouraging sustainable transport via the provision of free secure cycling parking, reducing energy consumption by using energy efficient generations and stage equipped with LED lighting, and promoting proper on-site recycling.

14.6 The Council continues to promote awareness through online resources, including the Stevenage Sustainability Newsletter for Schools and Colleges[124]. Shared at the start of each term, the newsletter supports environmental education by providing educational institutions with information on funding opportunities, upcoming events, and available sustainability-related resources.

[123] Available at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan Tracker

[124] Available at: Stevenage Sustainability Newsletter June 2026



Stevenage
SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER
for Schools and Colleges Summer Term 2026

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

EV Charging Scheme for Schools & Educational Institutions – Extended!

This government funding supports the installation of electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints on school sites, helping schools reduce emissions and support sustainable travel. Schools and education institution can get 75% off the cost to buy and install chargepoint up to a maximum of £2000 per socket and up to 40 sockets across all sites. The Scheme will be closed on the 31 March 2027

More information Workplace Charging Scheme for state-funded education institutions - GOV-UK Find a grant

Stevenage Climate Change Community Fund

Grants of up to £7,500 are available through the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) to support fixed infrastructure projects that help address climate change and its impacts. Schools and education institutions can apply for funding for initiatives such as cycle hangers to encourage active travel, recycling bins to improve recycling rates, drinking water fountains to prepare for hotter summer days, vegetable patches to raise awareness of food miles, or water butts to promote water conservation. If your institution is interested, contact climatechange@stevenage.gov.uk

For details Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF)

EVENTS/CAMPAIGN

Stevenage Day 2026

Join us at Stevenage Day 2026 on Sunday 14 June 2026 for a fun day of community celebrations, entertainment and activities. Visitors will be able to make use of recycling facilities and free cycle storage on the day, helping everyone enjoy a more sustainable event. Be sure to visit the Stevenage Borough Council stalls to learn more about waste and recycling services, as well as local action on climate change and how you can get involved.

Screening of Power Station at Broadway Cinema & Theatre, Letchworth

Inspired by lockdown mutual aid initiatives, artist-activists Hilary Powell and Dan Edelstyn decided to turn their street into an energy-generating powerhouse — a prototype for a new way of living, with the hope of galvanising a wider push towards sustainable alternatives. Directed by the duo, Power Station charts their turbulent journey, from pitching the idea to their neighbours and sleeping on the roof of their home, to raising finance and launching a bid for a Christmas number one single.

Date: 10 June
Full event starts at 4:30pm, including a screening of Power Station at 5:20pm Ticket: £4

Get your ticket here: https://www.broadway-letchworth.com/cinema/whats-on/power-station-qa-co-director-dan-edelstyn/

Warm Homes Local Grant

The Warm Homes Local Grant (WHLG) is a government scheme that helps households improve the energy efficiency of privately owned or privately rented homes, making them warmer and cheaper to heat. The grant is available to homes with low energy performance (EPC ratings D–G) where the household

- income is £36,000 a year or less,
- someone in the home receives means-tested benefits, or
- the property is located in an area of higher economic need (IMD 1 or 2).

Schools can play an important role by sharing this information with families who may be eligible, helping parents and carers access support that can reduce energy bills and improve living conditions for students at home, please share link Warm Homes: Local Grant (privately owned and rented homes)

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 31. Stevenage Sustainability Newsletter for Schools and Colleges (Summer 2026).

Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF)

14.7 The Council continues to deliver the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF)[125], now in its fourth year of implementation during 2026/27.

14.8 To boost delivery, streamline resident engagement, and align with corporate priorities, administrative oversight of the £97,500 fund was formally transferred to the Community Development team in 2026, integrating it directly into the Cooperative Neighbourhoods (CN) Programme[126] to ensure grassroots projects closely match local community priorities.

14.9 The CCCF provides financial and technical support to community groups in Stevenage wishing to develop and implement 'green projects'. These projects must positively impact the local natural environment, aiding climate change mitigation or adaptation within Stevenage while enhancing neighbourhood liveability.

14.10 Funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), £7,500 remains available per ward, per year for potential CCCF projects, maintaining a guaranteed allocation of £97,500 to support environmental initiatives across the borough. From 2026, any funds remaining unspent at the end of the financial year will be returned to the CIL pot to be earmarked for strategic green energy projects.

14.11 The CCCF accepts rolling applications from various groups and individuals within the community, including schools, charities, clubs and societies, faith

[125] Further information at: Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF)

[126] Further information at: Stevenage Cooperative Neighbourhoods

groups, and businesses. The Council aims to empower these groups to act against climate change and create local value. Under the updated administration, Community Development officers actively co-design project proposals with residents and partners, focusing on under-represented areas to ensure effective resource use and equitable community benefit.

14.12 Successful applications must be endorsed by a local Councillor, be infrastructure-based, and provide sustainability and environmental benefits.

14.13 In its third year of CCCF implementation (FY 2025/26), 10 projects were approved across Stevenage wards, totalling £28,370, as detailed below.

Table 2. CCCF approved projects in 2025/26.

Project Name	Ward	Description	Applicant	£ Approved
Bowling Green Tree Planting	Old Town	A new cherry tree has been planted to replace a diseased tree at Bowling Green while commemorating the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day. The tree enhances the local landscape, increases biodiversity, stores carbon, and provides shade to help the area adapt to a changing climate.	Stevenage Old Town Business and Community Partnership	450
Millennium Garden Tree Planting	Old Town	Seven carefully selected trees have been planted to celebrate the Millennium Garden's 25th anniversary while minimising the future impact on the nearby bowls greens or the footpath. The new trees enhance biodiversity, increase carbon absorption, improve resilience to climate change, and provide long-term seasonal interest.	Stevenage Old Town Business and Community Partnership	3150
St Nicholas Health Centre Community Garden Upgrade	St Nicholas	Co-funded project to transform an outdoor NHS space into an accessible community garden for therapeutic gardening and wellbeing activities. Newly planted plants, rainwater collection and decked area will enhance biodiversity, improve climate resilience, and create a greener space that supports both people and wildlife.	St Nicholas Community Centre	6000
St Nicholas Community Centre Outdoor Nature Area	St Nicholas	A new outdoor nature and learning area is being created to provide opportunities for environmental education, recreation and community activities. The project will increase biodiversity, create new wildlife habitat, and improve resilience to climate change through additional planting and green infrastructure.	St Nicholas Community Centre	1000
Roebuck Community Rainwater Collection	Roebuck	Rainwater harvesting system is being installed to collect and reuse rainwater for watering plants. This reduces demand on the public water supply, supports sustainable water management, and helps communities adapt to increasing drought and hotter summers.	Roebuck Shops Business Owners	1650
Highcroft Secured Cycle Hangar	Roebuck	A secure cycle hangar is being installed to enable residents without suitable storage to store their bike more easily. The project encourages sustainable travel, helping to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, and support healthier lifestyles.	Local Resident	5000
Trafford Close Bulb Planting	Old Town	Spring-flowering bulbs have been planted to create seasonal colour and provide an early food source for bees and other pollinators. The project enhances biodiversity, supports local wildlife, and creates a more attractive green space for residents.	Local Resident	2700

Project Name	Ward	Description	Applicant	£ Approved
Buckthorne Avenue Tree & Bulb Planting	Bedwell	New trees and spring bulbs are being planted to replace those lost to disease and improve the local streetscape. The planting will increase biodiversity, capture carbon, provide shade, support pollinators, and strengthen resilience to climate change.	Local Resident	4620
Vardon Road Bulb Planting	Martin's Wood	A mix of spring-flowering bulbs are being planted to provide continuous colour and food source for pollinators from February to May. The project enhances biodiversity, supports local wildlife, and creates a more attractive and climate-resilient neighbourhood.	Stevenage Muslim Community Centre	1500
Greydells Allotment Rainwater Collection	Almond Hill	Installing a 1000 Litre rainwater harvesting tank to capture runoff from the neighbouring garage roofs. The utilisation of rainwater harvesting will help reduce mains water usage and supply costs. Rainwater is also ideal for garden/allotment irrigation, as it is softer and free from chlorine, encouraging healthy plant growth.	Stevenage Gardens and Allotments Association (SGAA)	2300

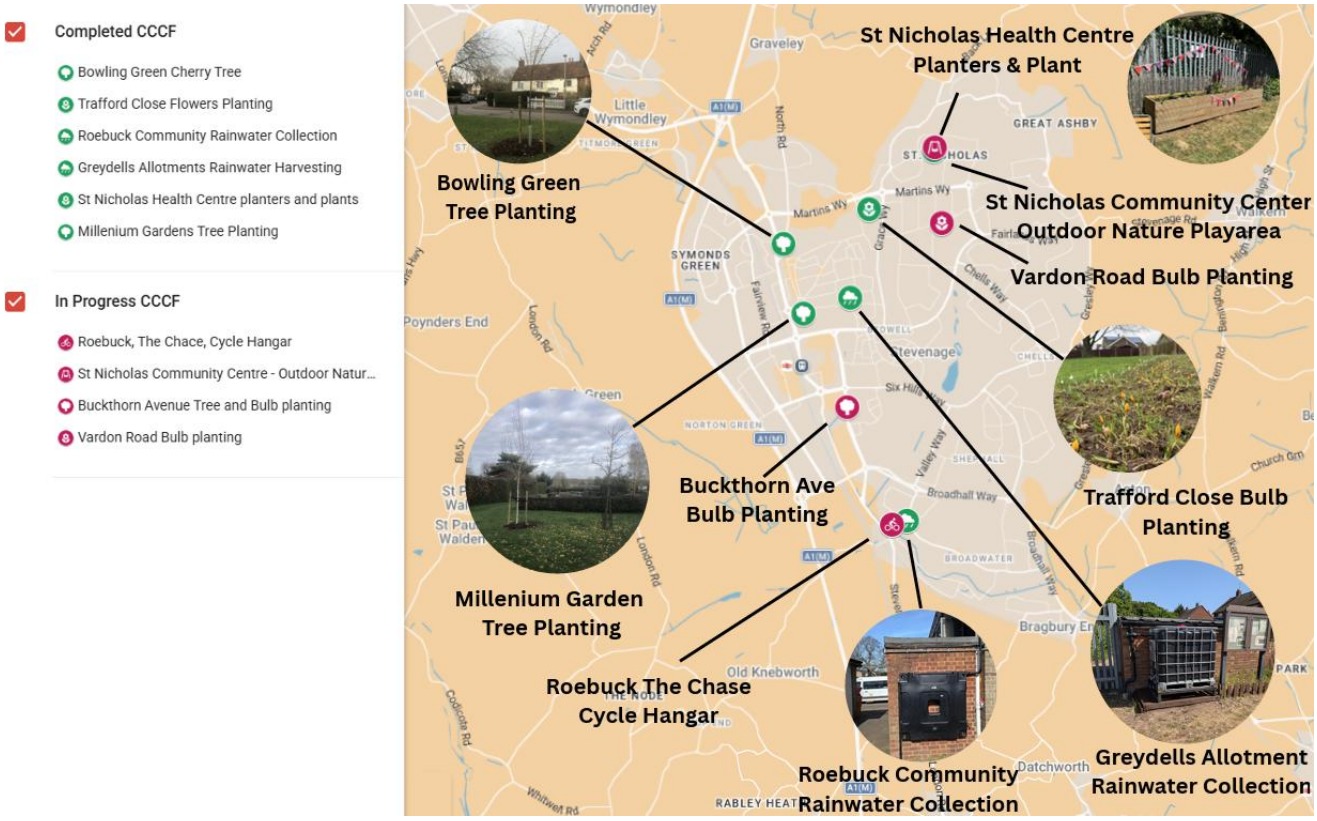


Figure 32. Location and progress status of the CCCF projects approved during the FY 2025/26.



Figure 33. St Nicholas Community Centre & Old Town Tree Planting CCCF Projects.

14.1 Ultimately, the success of Stevenage's climate action relies on grassroots empowerment. Through the CCCF and active local engagement, the Council is enabling residents and community groups to lead practical green projects, ensuring the journey to net-zero is built from the ground up to benefit people and the local environment.

15 STRATEGIC CLASSIFICATION OF CLIMATE ACTIONS

15.1 To transparently demonstrate how the Council delivers value, the following matrix evaluates Stevenage's climate-related interventions according to their strategic delivery mechanisms, funding streams, influence pathways, and operational impact boundaries.

Stevenage Borough Council Climate-Related Actions	Collaborative effort with other LAs	External Grant / Funding Secured (inc. CIL, S106, etc.)	Council Capital, Revenue or Resources Allocated	Direct Delivery / Council-led	Influencing Others / Leading by Example	Wider-Town & Community Benefits	Community Participation	Council's Operations - GHG Emissions Reductions
Solar Together	☑		☑		☑	☑	☑	
Your Tree, Our Future	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑	☑	
Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑		
Climate Action Portal			☑	☑				
Wenta Action Zero Programme			☑		☑	☑	☑	
Small Business Sustainability Support Programme		☑	☑		☑	☑	☑	
Green Business Grant			☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Social Value			☑	☑	☑	☑		
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1		☑	☑	☑		☑		☑
Warm Homes Social Housing Fund		☑	☑	☑		☑		☑
Major Refurbishment Contract (MRC)			☑	☑		☑		☑
Decent Homes Programme			☑	☑		☑		☑
ECO4 & GBIS		☑	☑			☑	☑	
Warm Homes Local Grant	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
New Sports & Leisure Centre		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑
New Indoor Market Location		☑	☑	☑		☑		☑
Stevenage Local Plan Partial Review			☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Recycling Banks Improvements		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		

Stevenage Borough Council Climate-Related Actions	Collaborative effort with other LAs	External Grant / Funding Secured (inc. CIL, S106, etc.)	Council Capital, Revenue or Resources Allocated	Direct Delivery / Council-led	Influencing Others / Leading by Example	Wider-Town & Community Benefits	Community Participation	Council's Operations - GHG Emissions Reductions
Flat Block Recycling Project (Phase 2)		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Recycling Awareness Promotion at School Assemblies			☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Weekly Food Waste Collections		☑	☑	☑		☑	☑	
Recycle your Cycle Scheme	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑	☑	
Herts Sustainable Families Initiative	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑	☑	
Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑		
5-Year Climate Adaptation Plan			☑	☑	☑	☑		
Mature Tree Planting		☑	☑	☑		☑		☑
Tree & Woodland Management		☑	☑	☑		☑		
Grass and Shrub Beds Management		☑	☑	☑		☑		
Miyawaki Micro-Woods		☑	☑	☑		☑		☑
Tree & Woodland Strategy (2025-2035)		☑	☑	☑		☑	☑	☑
Green Spaces Strategy (2025-2035)		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Biodiversity Action Plan (2024-2028) & Online Tracker		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)		☑	☑	☑		☑		
Green Space Volunteers			☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Meadows Network Works		☑	☑	☑		☑		☑
HVO Transition & Monitoring			☑	☑	☑	☑		☑
EVs Fleet Integration			☑	☑	☑	☑		☑
Fleet Electrification Alternatives Assessment		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑
Stevenage Heart Trails		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Cycle Hire Scheme (Beryl Bikes)		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Sustainable Travel Induction Pack			☑	☑	☑			
SmartGo Stevenage			☑		☑			
Green Commute Initiative - Cycle to Work Scheme			☑		☑			

Stevenage Borough Council Climate-Related Actions	Collaborative effort with other LAs	External Grant / Funding Secured (inc. CIL, S106, etc.)	Council Capital, Revenue or Resources Allocated	Direct Delivery / Council-led	Influencing Others / Leading by Example	Wider-Town & Community Benefits	Community Participation	Council's Operations - GHG Emissions Reductions
Cycle Hangars Installations		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Underpass Upgrades Programme		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
LEVI Funding EV Charging Deployment	☑	☑	☑			☑		
Garages Asset Management Plan			☑	☑		☑		☑
Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy			☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Zero Carbon for Business Tariff (EDF Energy)			☑	☑				☑
Gordon Craig Theatre Lighting Project			☑	☑	☑	☑		☑
Leisure Sites Energy Efficiency Measures (Everyone Active)		☑	☑		☑	☑		☑
Town Centre Clocktower Lighting Project			☑	☑	☑	☑		☑
MSCPs Lighting Upgrades Programme			☑	☑	☑	☑		☑
SBC Building Decarbonisation Group			☑	☑				☑
Energy Bills & Payment Processes Improvements			☑	☑				☑
Energy Bills Consolidation & Transfer			☑	☑				☑
Telex Water Portfolio Manager Contract			☑					☑
Water Bills Consolidation & Transfer			☑					☑
Telex Water Data Insights Portal & High-Usage Water Site AMR Trial			☑					☑
Rainwater Harvesting Projects		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Stevenage Day - Climate Action Stall			☑	☑	☑		☑	
Sustainability Newsletter for Schools & Colleges			☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF)		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	

List of Acronyms

AMR: Automatic Meter Reading.
APSE: Association for Public Service Excellence.
ASHP: Air Source Heat Pump.
BAP: Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan.
BMS: Building Management System.
BNG: Biodiversity Net Gain.
CCC: Climate Change Committee.
CCCF: Climate Change Community Fund.
CCRA: Climate Change Risk Assessment.
CIL: Community Infrastructure Levy.
COP: UNFCC Conference of the Parties.
COP21: 21st UNFCC Conference of the Parties, Paris, France, 2015.
COP29: 29th UNFCC Conference of the Parties, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2024
COP30: 30th UNFCC Conference of the Parties, Belem, Brazil, 2025
Council: Stevenage Borough Council.
CPO: Charge Point Operator.
CRP: Carbon Reduction Plan.
DEFRA: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
DESNZ: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.
EA: Everyone Active.
ECO: Energy Company Obligation.
EELGA: East of England Local Government Association.
EfW: Energy from Waste.
EPC: Energy Performance Certificate.
EPR: Extended Producer Responsibility.
EV: Electric Vehicle.
GBE: Great British Energy.
GBIS: Great British Insulation Scheme.
GHG: Greenhouse Gas.
ha: Hectares.
HCC: Hertfordshire County Council.
HCCSP: Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership.
HGB: Hertfordshire Growth Board.
HRA: Housing Revenues Account.
HVO: Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil.
HWP: Hertfordshire Waste Partnership.
ICT: Information and Communication Technology.
ktCO2e: Thousands of tonnes (kilo-tonnes) of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.
LA / LAs: Local Authority / Local Authorities.
LARA: Local Area Retrofit Accelerator.
LCSF: Low Carbon Skills Fund.
LED: Light-Emitting Diode.
LEP: Local Enterprise Partnership.
LEVI: Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure.
LGA: Local Government Association.
LGR: Local Government Reorganisation.
LP: Local Plan.
LPP: UK Government's Local Power Plan.

LULUCF: Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry.
MRC: Major Refurbishment Contract.
MSCP: Multi-Storey Car Park.
MSEB: Make Stevenage Even Better.
MtCO2e: Millions of tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.
MW: Megawatt.
MWh: Megawatt-hour.
NAP: National Adaptation Programme.
NDC: Nationally Determined Contribution.
NEF: National Energy Foundation.
Net-Zero: Balance in the amount of GHG emitted with the amount removed from the atmosphere, resulting in no net increase in these gases.
ORR: Operational Risk Register.
PH: Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport, and Planning.
PSDS: Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.
PV: Photovoltaic.
RCCF: East of England Regional Climate Change Forum.
SBC: Stevenage Borough Council.
SBLP: Stevenage Borough Local Plan.
SCCG: Staff Climate Champions Group.
SHDF: Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
SLT: Senior Leadership Team.
SME: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise.
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.
SuDS: Sustainable Drainage System.
tCO2: Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide.
tCO2e: Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent, a standard unit used to measure the impact of different greenhouse gases on global warming.
The Council: Stevenage Borough Council.
T&D: Transmission and Distribution.
TOMs: Themes, Outcomes and Measures (Social Value).
UK: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
UKSPF: UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
ULEV: Ultra Low Emission Vehicle.
UN: United Nations.
UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme.
UNFCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
VCSE: Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise.
WHLG: Warm Homes Local Grant.
WHSH: Warm Homes Social Housing.
WNWN: Waste Not Want Not.
WTT: Well-to-Tank.
ZCB: Zero Carbon for Business Tariff.
ZEV: Zero Emission Vehicle.

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Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reporting Framework

July 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1. This emissions reporting framework provides a comprehensive overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting within the context of relevant regulations. It outlines the approach adopted by Stevenage Borough Council (hereafter 'the Council') to measure and report its organisational emissions. Results of two annual GHG inventories, financial year 2023-2024 (FY23/24) and financial year 2024-2025 (FY24/25), are presented in addition to data considerations and recommendations.

1.2. The document is organised following national and local context for GHG accounting, followed by the methodology chosen for the emissions reporting framework, assumptions taken and data limitations identified, restructuring of baseline year emissions, results for both annual inventories, further work and finally recommendations.

1.3. GHG accounting, also known as carbon accounting, involves measuring and monitoring GHG emissions (hereafter 'emissions') using standardised methods, and reporting them in accordance with established protocols.

1.4. These standardised methods enable organisations, including governments and companies, to quantify emissions generated directly by their operations as well as indirectly through upstream[1] and downstream activities.[2][3]

1.5. Emissions are categorised into distinct reporting scopes, as defined by the GHG Protocol:[4]

Scope 1

Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions released into the atmosphere from sources owned or controlled by the organisation. These include emissions from gas-fired heating systems, the organisation's vehicle fleet, and fugitive

[1] Upstream activities refer to the purchased value chain and are emissions related to purchased goods and services by the reporting organisation. These emissions occur before the product or service reaches the Council; for example, emissions from the extraction and processing of office supplies or fuel for the fleet, also known as well-to-tank emissions.

[2] Downstream activities refer to the sold or provided value chain and are emissions related to provided goods and services. These occur after a product or service leaves the Council's operational control; for example, utility usage in leased assets where the Council is the lessor, or financial investments such as pension funds.

[3] World Resources Institute: Climate Disclosures

[4] National Audit Office: Measuring and Reporting Public Sector GHG Emissions

emissions, such as leaks of greenhouse gases like fluorinated gases from refrigeration or air-conditioning units.

Scope 2

Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions resulting from the generation of purchased energy. For local governments, the primary source is emissions from electricity generation used in buildings and street lighting, but this also includes purchased heat, such as from local heat networks.

Scope 3

Scope 3 emissions encompass all other indirect emissions not included in Scope 2 that occur because of an organisation's activities but originate from sources not owned or controlled by it. These include upstream emissions, such as employee business travel and purchased goods and services, as well as downstream emissions, such as those from investments and leased assets. Direct waste produced from operations and water use are also included in Scope 3.

Measuring Scope 3 emissions can be challenging due to the need for diverse data, often held by third parties, which may affect data accessibility and quality. Despite this, Scope 3 emissions often represent the largest portion of an organisation's total footprint, typically accounting for 60-80%.[5]

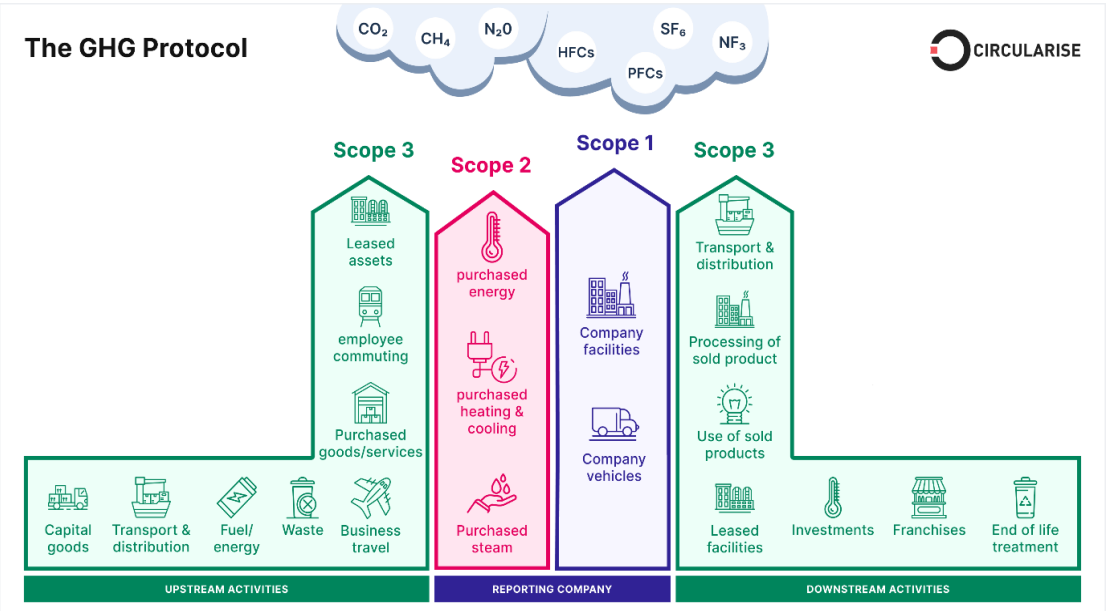


Figure 1. Diagram displaying Scope 1, 2 and 3 emission sources. Source: Circularise

[5] Local Government Association: Climate Change Reporting Guidance

Outside of Scopes

Some emissions fall outside the Scope 1, 2, and 3 categories defined by the GHG Protocol. For example, biogenic CO_2 emissions - those from the combustion of fuels derived from biological sources - are considered 'outside of scopes' because their net carbon impact is zero. This is due to the CO_2 absorbed during the growth phase of the biomass equalling the CO_2 released upon combustion. While these emissions are considered outside of scope and therefore do not form part of an organisation's core inventory, they should be reported separately for transparency. [6]

1.6. A detailed breakdown of activity sources within each scope for the Council is provided later, in Section 4.2.2.

2. GHG Accounting: National Context

2.1. National Policy Context

2.1.1. The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 established the world's first legally binding national framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, setting the foundation for the country's long-term climate ambitions. In June 2019, the Act was amended to commit the UK to achieving net zero emissions by 2050; interim emission reduction targets on the path to net zero are in situ, providing a structured timeline for national emission reductions. [7]

2.1.2. Furthermore, more recently at COP29, the UK pledged to a minimum 81% reduction in GHG emissions by 2035 (relative to 1990 levels), confirming the nation's dedication to climate action. [8]

2.1.3. To meet these legal obligations, the UK Government tracks progress through the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHGI), an annual national dataset published by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), the government department responsible for energy and climate policy. The GHGI is compiled following the internationally recognised 2006 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines, ensuring consistency and comparability of emissions data globally.

[6] UK Government: GHG Conversion Factors
[7] Climate Change Committee: Climate Action
[8] Climate Change Committee: COP29 Key Outcomes

2.1.4. The GHGI provides a detailed sectoral breakdown of emissions, covering eight main areas: transport, buildings and product uses, industry, electricity supply, fuel supply, agriculture, land use, and waste. While emissions from public sector buildings are specifically categorised as a subgroup within one of the sectors, all other emissions pertaining to the public sector are less identifiable.

2.2. Public Sector Context

2.2.1. The public sector is a significant component of the UK economy thus contributing to national GHG emissions. As of December 2025, public sector expenditure - including central government departments and their partner organisations, as well as the wider public sector comprising local government, the NHS, emergency services, and academy schools - accounted for 44% of the UK's Gross Domestic Product.[9]

2.2.2. The UK Government has articulated its ambition for the public sector to lead in emissions reduction and exemplify best practice. This commitment was first set out in the 2017 Clean Growth Strategy and reaffirmed in the 2021 Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, which targets halving direct emissions from public sector buildings by 2032 and achieving a 75% reduction by 2037. These targets apply across central government and the wider public sector, including local authorities. Complementary commitments to public sector decarbonisation are also embedded in several other government strategies, such as the Heat & Buildings Strategy (2021), Green Finance Strategy (2019), and National Infrastructure Strategy (2020).

2.2.3. Despite the public sector's economic scale and leadership ambitions, a June 2022 report by the National Audit Office (NAO) highlighted significant gaps in emissions measurement. The report found no single, reliable metric capturing the full extent of public sector emissions. While decarbonisation goals cover the entire sector, mandatory emissions measurement and reporting currently only apply to central government. The NAO recommended that DESNZ review and enhance measurement and reporting practices to ensure comprehensive emissions data coverage across the whole public sector.[10]

2.2.4. In this context, it is crucial to evaluate how local authorities may be required to undertake mandatory emissions reporting in the future, particularly considering potential changes resulting from Local Government

[9] HM Treasury: Public Spending Statistics (December 2025)
[10] National Audit Office: Measuring and Reporting Public Sector GHG Emissions

Reorganisation (LGR). Further discussion on this topic is detailed in Section 2.6.

2.3. Reporting Standards

2.3.1. The Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP) is the leading global standard for measuring and reporting emissions. Developed in 1998 and published in 2001 by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), it provides comprehensive guidance for corporate and organisational emissions inventories. The GHGP underpins many global reporting frameworks, including UK government guidance, and forms the basis for other standards such as ISO 14064-1 and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) 305. Its terminology and principles - particularly the categorisation of emissions into Scopes 1, 2, and 3 - have become global best practice. Because of this stature, the Council has chosen to adopt the GHGP as its core methodology for its emissions reporting framework, detailed further in Section 4.1.

2.3.2. ISO 14064-1 is a standard developed by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) that provides detailed requirements for quantifying and verifying GHG emissions. Originally published in 2006 and updated in 2018, ISO 14064-1[11] consists of three parts covering organisational inventories, project quantification, and verification. While not freely available, it is widely used as it mandates third-party verification, enhancing the credibility and transparency of emissions reporting. In late 2025, ISO and the GHGP announced a partnership to merge their accounting standards into a unified global framework, aiming to simplify emissions accounting worldwide.[12]

2.3.3. The GRI offers a broad sustainability reporting framework that is the most widely used globally. Its GRI 305 standard specifically addresses emissions reporting and aligns closely with the GHG Protocol. The GRI framework is freely accessible and is particularly popular among organisations with comprehensive environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting requirements.

2.3.4. While these reporting standards are not mandated, they underpin many UK statutory reporting requirements and are explicitly referenced in government guidance, as discussed in the following section.

[11] Last reviewed and confirmed in 2024.
[12] GHG Protocol: Press Release

2.4. National Statutory Requirements and Guidance

2.4.1. While there are dedicated standards for calculating and reporting organisational emissions, the obligation to report typically arises within broader sustainability reporting frameworks and statutory guidance.

2.4.2. This section outlines the current statutory frameworks and guidance shaping emissions reporting in the UK, highlighting distinctions between public and private sector requirements and upcoming regulatory changes. These frameworks provide context for potential future reporting obligations for local authorities.

2.4.3. Public Sector Reporting

2.4.3.1. In the UK, emissions reporting for central government departments and arm's-length bodies[13] is governed by two complementary frameworks:

Greening Government Commitments (GGCs)

An internal performance management framework that sets government-wide emissions reduction targets and tracks progress against operational baselines. It focuses on managing and driving emissions reductions across government operations.

HM Treasury's Sustainability Reporting Guidance (SRG)

A statutory framework requiring auditable disclosures of emissions within annual financial reports. It emphasises climate-related risk reporting aligned with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). [14]

2.4.3.2. Both frameworks require reporting of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions (with limited Scope 3) and use the accounting principles derived from the GHGP. However, neither the GGC nor SRG apply to public sector organisations beyond central government and their immediate partners. Emissions from the wider public sector, including local authorities, currently fall outside these frameworks and there is no equivalent process in place.

[13] Central government departments and their executive agencies, non-ministerial departments and non-departmental public bodies (excluding devolved administrations and overseas territories).

[14] The Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) was established in 2015 to develop a voluntary framework for consistent climate-related financial disclosures, structured around four pillars: governance, strategy, risk management, and metrics and targets. While widely adopted and embedded into UK statutory reporting requirements, the TCFD completed its remit and was formally disbanded in 2023 following the publication of the International Sustainability Standards Board's (ISSB) IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards.

2.4.4. Private Sector Reporting

2.4.4.1. Private companies in the UK primarily report emissions under the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) framework[15], introduced for financial years starting on or after 1st April 2019. SECR applies to:

- UK quoted companies[16]; and
- Large unquoted companies and Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) meeting at least two of the following criteria:
    - Turnover equal to or exceeding £36 million
    - Balance sheet total equal to or over £18 million
    - More than 250 employees

2.4.4.2. SECR, based on the GHGP, recommends the operational control approach (detailed further in Section 4.2.1) for emissions accounting. Organisations must report global or national emissions alongside an emissions intensity metric. Reporting is included within the Director's Report or Energy and Carbon Report, with mandatory Scope 1 and 2 disclosures and encouraged Scope 3 reporting. SECR also requires the disclosure of energy efficiency measures planned or undertaken.

2.4.5. Upcoming Changes

2.4.5.1. From 2026, the UK Government will require private companies to gradually adopt mandatory climate-related financial disclosures. These disclosures will follow the UK Sustainability Reporting Standards (UK SRS), which are adapted from the International Sustainability Standards Board's (ISSB) IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards - specifically IFRS[17] S1 (general sustainability disclosures) and IFRS S2 (climate-related disclosures) - to fit the UK context.

2.4.5.2. This alignment ensures UK organisations report in a globally consistent and transparent manner. The UK SRS is intended to become the foundation for national sustainability reporting, gradually superseding and expanding existing frameworks such as SECR.

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[15] UK Government: Environmental Reporting Guidelines (March 2019)

[16] A quoted company is defined in section 385(2) of the Companies Act 2006 as a company that is UK incorporated and whose equity share capital is listed on the Main Market of the London Stock Exchange UK or in an EEA State or admitted to trading on the New York Stock Exchange or Nasdaq.

[17] The International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation (IFRS)

2.5. Local Authority Context: Current Reporting Landscape

2.5.1. Local authorities in England have previously been requested by the Government to measure and report emissions from their own estate and operations. In 2011, authorities were asked to publish their emissions data for the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 financial years. This request was repeated annually until 2014. Authorities were asked, at minimum, to publish total CO_2e emissions for Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 where possible, on their websites.[18] The Council published data in accordance with these requests, further detailed in Section 3.2.

2.5.2. As a request rather than a statutory requirement, uptake varied annually. The letters and reporting ceased after 2014 due to departmental restructuring - from the Department of Energy and Climate Change to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) - and a shift towards the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHGI) methodology.

2.5.3. Reporting of emissions data by local authorities remains voluntary, although many councils choose to disclose progress against their carbon reduction targets. According to 2024 figures, 92% of local authorities report Scope 1 and 2 emissions from their own operations, while 35% report at least some Scope 3 emissions. [19] In addition, the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), a not-for-profit organisation which manages a global environmental disclosure system, reported that 104 UK local authorities disclosed climate data through the CDP-ICLEI Track[20] [21] in 2024, representing a 52% increase compared with 2023. [22] This reflects a broader trend towards greater transparency and consistency in local authority emissions reporting, although participation in external disclosure platforms remains optional.

2.5.4. In 2020, Local Partnerships, in collaboration with the Local Government Association (LGA), developed a free Excel-based GHG accounting tool for UK local authorities. Updated annually, the tool covers Scopes 1 to 3 and incorporates current DESNZ emission factors. It also includes summary tables and graphs intended to support interpretation by non-specialist audiences.

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[18] UK Government: Sharing Information on GHG Emissions
[19] Local Government Association: Climate Change Reporting Guidance
[20] CDP-ICLEI Track Reporting
[21] Through this platform, authorities submit quantitative and qualitative data on governance, baseline emissions, climate hazards, adaptation goals, mitigation targets, planning and actions.
[22] Climate Disclosure Project: Press Release (Jun 2025)

Although national usage rates are not known, nine of the eleven Hertfordshire authorities use the tool for emissions disclosure.

2.5.5. The tool has also been reviewed by CDP, meaning that its outputs may be used by authorities that wish to disclose through the CDP-ICLEI Track system; however, reference to this route is included here for context only and does not indicate any current proposal for the Council to report through that platform.

2.5.6. Some authorities choose to conduct in-house reporting, whereas others outsource the process to external consultants. Data from 2023 suggested that three out of the eleven local authorities in Hertfordshire outsource their emissions reporting. The remainder relied on internal officer resource.

2.6. Local Authority Context: Future Reporting Landscape

2.6.1. LGR will consolidate local authorities across the UK. This transition offers central government an opportunity to streamline emissions reporting by replacing multiple legacy reports with a single, unified report for each new authority. Should the government mandate emissions reporting for local authorities, it is likely to do so post-LGR, once new geographical and operational boundaries are established.

2.6.2. In addition, as 2030 approaches, organisations will face increasing reputational pressure to offset residual emissions they cannot eliminate to meet net zero targets. This is expected to drive significant growth in the procurement of carbon offsets, including Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code credits, through the Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM). These purchases carry responsibility, necessitating robust reporting mechanisms to accurately record the retirement of carbon credits and prevent double counting. Platforms such as the CDP or financial disclosure frameworks like the UK SRS may provide appropriate mechanisms.

2.6.3. In line with current reporting frameworks, it is likely that any government mandate for local authority emissions reporting would require mandatory disclosure of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, with Scope 3 emissions remaining optional due to their complexity and variability. It is unlikely that the government would enforce adherence to the GGCs, SRG, or newer UK SRS frameworks (Section 2.3), as these cover broader sustainability measures beyond GHG emissions.

2.6.4. Instead, the most likely process would be to require councils to publish their emissions data on their websites, like the approach taken between 2008 and 2014, or via a central database. Given the established uptake and support for

Local Partnerships standardised Excel-based accounting tool, it is probable that this tool would form the basis for consistent and accessible reporting. For this reason, the tool has been selected by the Council to supplement the emissions reporting framework alongside the GHGP.

3. GHG Accounting: Stevenage Borough Council Context

3.1. Climate Goals and Targets

3.1.1. The Council's Climate Change Strategy[23] sets a clear vision to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The strategy prioritises reducing emissions from Council operations, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing community engagement on climate action. Key focus areas include improving energy efficiency in buildings, transitioning to low-carbon transport, and supporting local renewable energy projects.

3.1.2. A structured emissions reporting framework is integral to tracking progress against these goals and ensuring transparency and accountability in the Council's climate commitments.

3.2. Historic Emissions Data

3.2.1. To support the update of its reporting process and base year, the Council has reviewed all previously published emissions data to ensure continuity and credibility.

3.2.2. In response to the Government's 2011 request for emissions data, the Council published annual emissions data on its website covering 2010 to 2013. Although the webpage is no longer live, a summary of the archived data is provided in Table 1, with the latest (and only available) report included in *Appendix A – Historic Stevenage Borough Council GHG Emissions Report (2012/2013)*. The report also presents historic emissions intensity ratios per Full Time Equivalent (FTE), a metric commonly used in reporting frameworks, using 2008/09 as the base year. Reported activity sources included fleet fuel, natural gas, LPG, purchased electricity, business travel, and water consumption and disposal. However, it is unclear which buildings were included in the dataset, as no asset list is provided. The report does, however, refer to Stevenage Swimming Centre, which was operated at the time by

[23] Stevenage Borough Council: Climate Change Strategy

Stevenage Leisure Ltd, despite stating that the Council applied the operational control approach. In the 2013 report, operational control is defined as covering operations 'directly under its own control or through subsidiaries and partners of operations'.

3.2.3. The latest GHG figures published in the archived report relate to 2012/13, when emissions totalled 6,634.5 tCO_2e, comprising 2,355.2 tCO_2e Scope 1, 3,377.5 tCO_2e Scope 2, and 901.7 tCO_2e Scope 3. While the report does not provide a full asset list or estate boundary, which limits clarity over the organisational scope of the inventory, helpful conclusions can still be drawn from the report, such as demonstrating the emissions profile at the time was dominated by purchased electricity, followed by natural gas use and fleet diesel.

Table 1.Stevenage Borough Council historic emissions data (2010-2013)

			2010/2011 GHG CO_2e (kg)				2011/2012 GHG CO_2e (kg				2012/2013 GHG CO_2e (kg)			
			Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3	Total	Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3	Total	Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3	Total
Scope 1	Emissions Direct	Own or controlled transport freight diesel	825,466	NA	156,536	**982,002**	979,451	NA	221,291	**1,200,743**	999,021	NA	225,712	**1,224,734**
	Emissions Direct	Owned or controlled transport freight petrol	35,613	NA	6,302	**41,915**	31,708	NA	6,717	**38,425**	31,735	NA	6,723	**38,457**
	Emissions Direct	Natural gas fuels combustion	1,411,100	NA	137,005	**1,548,105**	1,097,965	NA	113,373	**1,210,438**	1,319,334	NA	136,343	**1,455,678**
	Emissions Direct	LPG fuels combustion	5,953	NA	745	**6,698**	4,863	NA	609	**5,472**	5,156	NA	645	**5,801**
	Emissions Direct	Gas oil fuels combustion	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Emissions Direct	Process emissions	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Emissions Direct	Fugitive emissions	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Scope 2	Emissions Indirect	Consumption of purchased electricity	NA	3,830,312	504,765	**4,335,077**	NA	3,425,592	457,189	**3,882,781**	NA	3,377,544	450,776	**3,828,320**
	Emissions Indirect	Consumption of purchased heat	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Emissions Indirect	Consumption of purchased steam or cooling	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Scope 3	Emissions (other) Indirect	Transport related activities (business travel)	NA	NA	41,430	**41,430**	NA	NA	51,899	**51,899**	NA	NA	64682	**64682**
	Emissions (other) Indirect	Water consumption and disposal	NA	NA	7,974	**7,974**	NA	NA	14,353	**14,353**	NA	NA	16,858	**16,858**
	Emissions (other) Indirect	Waste disposal (own estate waste, recycling)	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
	Emissions (other) Indirect	Leased assets, franchising and outsourcing	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
	Emissions (other) Indirect	Sold goods and services (use of goods, services, contractors)	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
	Emissions (other) Indirect	Purchased materials and fuels (extraction, processing and production)	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
		TOTAL	2,278,132	3,830,312	845,757	**6,963,201**	2,113,987	3,425,592	865,431	**6,404,111**	2,355,246	3,377,544	901,739	**6,634,530**

3.2.4. Currently, the Council's most comprehensive and transparent source of emissions data is its online Climate Change Action Plan tracker[24]. The tracker presents the Council's emissions baseline using data provided in a carbon assessment report undertaken by an external consultant in 2020, discussed in more detail later in Section 6.1. An emissions timeline is also provided on the site, visible in Figure 2. Key highlights from the website include:

- Baseline emissions were approximately 3,400 tCO_2e.
- Switching to a zero-carbon electricity tariff since 2020 has reduced emissions by 35.7% (1,212 tCO_2e/year).
- By 2023, emissions had been reduced by about 40% to roughly 2,060 tCO_2e.
- In February 2024, the Council committed to switching its fleet fuel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), expected to reduce emissions by over 700 tCO_2e. annually once fully implemented.
- Projected emissions for 2025 are around 1,334 tCO_2e/year, a 61% reduction from the baseline.
- Remaining emissions by 2030 are expected to be approximately 300 tCO_2e/year, primarily from natural gas heating.

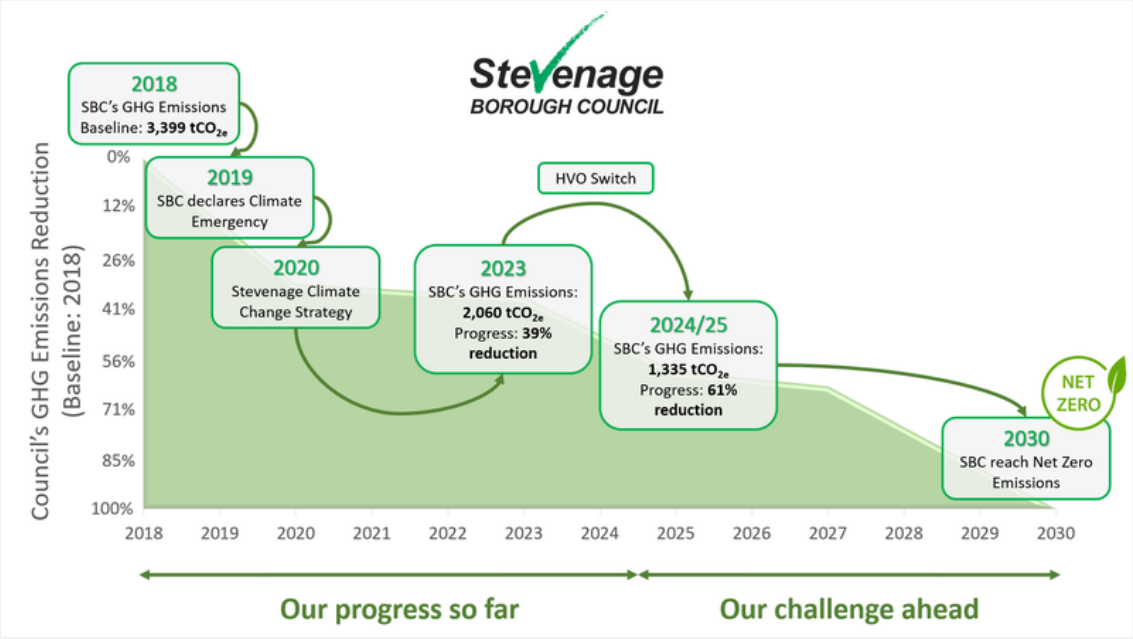


Figure 2. Stevenage Borough Council emissions reduction progress

[24] Stevenage Climate Action Plan

3.2.5. The update of the baseline to financial year 2023/24, together with comparison against the previously reported baseline as outlined above, is discussed later in Section 6.1.

3.3. Need for an Emissions Reporting Framework

3.3.1. The Council currently does not undertake annual emissions reporting nor operate a formal GHG reporting framework. Consequently, emissions data collection and reporting across the organisation lack consistency and structure. Developing a repeatable, structured reporting framework is essential to improve the management of organisational emissions and support the Council's climate ambitions and support decision-making.

3.3.2. This position is supported by a Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) review conducted via Hertfordshire County Council in September 2024, which assessed the Council's climate data and reporting arrangements. The review recommended establishing a clear GHG reporting strategy detailing reporting frequency, requirements, and data collection processes (see *Appendix B – Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) 2024/25)*

3.3.3. To enable meaningful tracking over time, the Council has identified the need to update its original base year to better reflect its estate and operational activities. A revised base year will provide a more representative baseline for assessing future emissions reductions and strengthen performance management. Further detail on the base year update is provided in Section 6.1.

3.3.4. Developing a formal reporting framework, supported by wider staff participation and clearly defined data collection protocols, will reduce reliance on external consultants and enable more efficient use of Council resources over the long term. Moreover, it will enable the identification and prioritisation of decarbonisation initiatives, strengthen both internal and external transparency, improve monitoring of energy efficiency performance, and facilitate benchmarking of emissions trends against comparable local authorities.

3.3.5. Embedding internal capability will also support continuity and consistency as organisational structures and reporting expectations evolve, potentially following LGR. An emissions reporting framework aligned with the GHGP, and the Local Partnerships tool will facilitate future integration of emissions data with neighbouring authorities post-reorganisation.

3.3.6. Since 2020, the Council has been a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP), which includes a dedicated carbon subgroup. This subgroup has published the Carbon Strategic Action Plan, which sets a key objective to develop a standardised carbon measurement framework for Hertfordshire authorities. This framework aims to establish consistent methodologies for emissions and sequestration based on agreed boundaries and is targeted for completion by 2028. Implementing a formal emissions reporting framework within the Council will directly support the HCCSP in achieving this county-wide goal.

4. Emissions Reporting Framework: Methodology

4.1. Chosen Reporting Standards

4.1.1. As mentioned previously, the Council has adopted the GHGP, specifically the Corporate Standard[25] (hereafter 'the standard'), as the foundational methodology for defining its inventory boundary and calculating emissions. Aligning annual emissions inventories with the standard ensures the Council's preparedness to adapt to any future reporting scenarios.

4.1.2. The standard is underpinned by five key principles that guide robust emissions reporting frameworks:

Relevance: The inventory must accurately reflect the Council's emissions and meet the decision-making needs of internal and external stakeholders.

Completeness: All GHG emission sources and activities within the defined inventory boundary should be accounted for and reported. Any exclusions must be clearly disclosed and justified.

Consistency: Methodologies should be applied consistently over time to enable meaningful comparisons. Any changes to data, boundaries, or methods must be transparently documented.

Transparency: Reporting should be factual and coherent, supported by a clear audit trail. Assumptions, methodologies, and data sources must be fully disclosed.

Accuracy: Emissions quantification should avoid systematic over- or underestimation, with uncertainties minimised as far as practicable, ensuring users can trust the integrity of the information.

[25] GHG Protocol Corporate Standard

4.1.3. In addition to the GHGP, the Council has also adopted the Local Partnership's GHG accounting tool[26]. This tool is widely used across UK local authorities, facilitating straightforward comparison and benchmarking of emissions data. It supports easy submission and performance tracking against peer councils, promoting transparency and collaborative progress. In addition, it's expected to aid integration of emissions data with neighbouring authorities following LGR.

4.1.4. However, the tool currently supports only location-based emissions reporting and does not accommodate market-based emissions (dual reporting), defined in Section 4.4.1. Furthermore, while the tool is useful for standardised reporting, it remains relatively high level in some areas and does not eliminate the need for robust internal data collection and management. For example, it uses a single total energy consumption figure for Council buildings, so the accuracy and usefulness of its outputs still depend on the quality of the data provided by the Council. The tool therefore helps to structure and report emissions data, but does not remove a significant proportion of the administrative work required to gather, validate and prepare the source data.

4.1.5. To ensure comprehensive and accurate reporting, the Council maintains the GHGP as its primary methodology, using the Local Partnerships tool as a complementary resource. This dual approach enables both location-based and market-based emissions reporting. While future updates to the tool may include market-based emissions, this is not yet confirmed.

4.2. Setting the Inventory Boundary

Determining an inventory boundary is first step in calculating emissions resulting from the Council's activities. This boundary defines the organisational and operational scopes, clearly specifying which activities and sources are included in the emissions inventory.

4.2.1. Organisational Boundary

4.2.1.1. The organisational boundary defines the scope of operations and activities included in the emissions inventory. The Council selects a consolidation approach for emissions and applies it consistently each reporting year, establishing the structural boundary for GHG reporting.

[26] Local Partnerships GHG Accounting Tool

4.2.1.2. Two approaches exist for consolidating emissions:[27]

a) **Equity Share Approach**: Emissions are accounted for proportional to the organisation's equity share in an operation, reflecting economic interest. This approach is common among large businesses with ownership stakes in external operations.

b) **Control approach:** The organisation accounts for 100% of emissions from operations it controls, excluding emissions from operations where it has ownership but no control. Control can be financial or operational:

Financial Control: The organisation can direct financial and operating policies to gain economic benefits, usually retaining majority risks and rewards. This aligns reporting with financial accounts, especially for organisations with subsidiaries without day-to-day operational control.

Operational Control: The organisation has full authority to implement operating policies at the operation and accounts for all emissions from such operations.

4.2.1.3. When using the control approach to consolidate emissions, organisations must choose between either the operational control or financial control criteria. The GHGP does not prescribe which approach to use for voluntary reporting, advising organisations to select the method best suited to their activities and reporting needs.

4.2.1.4. The Council has adopted the operational control approach, under which it accounts for 100% of emissions from operations where it has full authority to implement operating policies. This provides a clear basis for tracking emissions associated with activities under the Council's direct control and ensures that progress towards the net zero target is measured against emissions it can most directly influence. The approach is also widely used, including by neighbouring local authorities, which should help facilitate a more consistent consolidation of emissions following LGR. It should, however, be noted that previously published Council emissions data either did not explicitly confirm the use of the operational control approach[28] or, where it did, applied

[27] Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting: Consolidation Approaches
[28] In reference to the previous baseline emissions obtained in 2020 via external consultancy.

a relatively broad definition[29]. The potential implications for the updated base year are considered further in Section 6.1.

4.2.2. Operational Boundary

4.2.2.1. The operational boundary specifies the emission sources and activities included in the Council's inventory, defining the scope of operational control over emissions. It complements the organisational boundary by detailing which direct and indirect emissions are accounted for, ensuring transparent and consistent reporting.

4.2.2.2. The operational boundary includes sources across Scopes 1 to 3, and certain emissions outside these scopes, defined in Section 1.

Scope 1

a) Natural gas usage in council operated buildings.
b) Fuel usage in council operated fleet (road vehicles and machinery).
c) Fugitive emissions from council operated buildings.

Scope 2

a) Purchased electricity for council operated buildings and assets.[30]
b) Purchased electricity for street lighting in the borough.
c) Purchased electricity for council electric vehicle fleet charging.[31]

Scope 3

a) Grey fleet travel mileage (car transport only).[32]
b) Water consumption and treatment at council operated sites and council leased assets.
c) Transmission and distribution losses from all purchased electricity use.
d) Well-to-tank emissions from council liquid fuel and purchased electricity use.

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[29] In reference to the 2010-2013 reporting period and production of the Financial Year 2012/2013 report seen in *Appendix A – Historic Stevenage Borough Council GHG Emissions Report (2012/2013)*.

[30] Includes electricity consumed by public electric vehicle charge points (EVCPs) where supply is provided through Council-procured electricity contracts. This electricity use is retained within Scope 2, as it relates to a Council-operated service over which the Council maintains control of both the infrastructure and electricity provision. In line with common reporting practice, Scope 2 emissions associated with EV charging are attributed to the organisation that procures the electricity, while service providers that do not hold the relevant supply contract would not ordinarily report this consumption within Scope 2.

[31] Where staff charging has taken place at Council-supplied EVCPs, the associated kWh consumption has been separated from item (a) to avoid double counting. Staff charging at all other locations remains included in Scope 2.

[32] Wider staff business travel, for example use of rail or other public transport is currently not included.

e) Utility consumption in downstream leased commercial[33] and residential assets - where available - including gas, electricity, water and other fuel usage.
f) Fugitive emissions from downstream leased commercial assets, where available.

Outside of Scopes

a) Biogenic CO_2 emissions from average diesel biofuel blend use in Council fleet.
b) Biogenic CO_2 emissions from average petrol biofuel blend use in Council fleet.
c) Biogenic CO_2 emissions from HVO use in Council fleet.

4.2.2.3. Activity data refers to quantitative measures of activities that result in emissions, such as litres of fuel, kilowatt-hours of electricity, or miles travelled. Accurate and reliable activity data are fundamental to calculating a reliable emissions inventory.

4.2.2.4. Table 2 outlines the Council's emission sources, activity units, and collection methods, in addition to the groups or individual with primary access to the data (i.e., data custodian).

4.2.2.5. A complete asset list is provided in *Appendix C – Asset List (Operational and Non-Operational Control)*, comprising both assets under the Council's operational control and non-controlled assets, such as leased assets and tenanted spaces, clearly labelled within the same dataset.

[33] Sites where the Council is the lessor. Includes large consumption, third-party managed sites, such as Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre, Stevenage Swimming Pool, Stevenage Business and Technology Centre etc.

Table 2.Included emission sources and data collection and calculation processes

Scope	Emission Source	Unit	Data Custodian	Data Collection Method for Activity Data and Emission Factor
1	Natural Gas Use: Council-operated sites	Kilowatt-hours (kWh)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Sourced from online energy supplier portals and customer service reports. Where unavailable, kWh consumption was extracted manually from invoices. Where gas usage was only available in cubic metres (m^3), Gross Calorific Value (GCV) was applied to convert to kWh for consistency with DESNZ emission factors, many of which are published on a gross CV basis. Invoice-specific conversion formulae were used. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the fuels category for natural gas.
1	Fugitive Emissions: Council-operated sites	Kilograms (kg)	Facilities	Activity data: Refrigerant leakages identified in maintenance contractor reports and extracted manually. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the refrigerants category under blends for the specific refrigerant concerned.
1	Road Fleet Fuel Use: Council-operated	Litres	Procurement and Compliance Manager	Activity data: Fuel use reports exported from the internal fuel management system. Fuel type is recorded separately, and usage is manually categorised by asset type, for example road fleet or machinery. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the liquid fuels category for diesel average biofuel blend and petrol average biofuel blend, and the biofuels category for biodiesel HVO, where applicable.

Scope	Emission Source	Unit	Data Custodian	Data Collection Method for Activity Data and Emission Factor
1	Machinery Fleet: Council-operated	Litres	Procurement and Compliance Manager	Activity data: Fuel use reports exported from the internal fuel management system. Fuel type is recorded separately, and usage is manually categorised by asset type, for example machinery or road fleet. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the liquid fuels category for petrol average biofuel blend, and the biofuels category for biodiesel HVO, where applicable.
2	Purchased Electricity: Council-operated sites and assets	Kilowatt-hours (kWh)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Sourced from online energy supplier portals and customer service reports. Where unavailable, kWh consumption was extracted manually from invoices. Emission factor(s): For location-based reporting, calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the UK electricity category for grid electricity. For market-based reporting, supplier-specific emission factors are used where available; otherwise, a residual mix factor is applied. Further detail is provided in Section 4.4.1.
2	Purchased Electricity: Borough wide street lighting	Kilowatt-hours (kWh)	Engineering Services & Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Sourced through annual recharge invoices from Hertfordshire County Council and online energy supplier portals. Emission factor(s): For location-based reporting, calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the UK electricity category for grid electricity. For market-based reporting, supplier-specific emission factors are used where available; otherwise, a residual mix factor is applied.
2	Purchased Electricity: Council owned electric vehicles (fleet)	Kilowatt-hours (kWh)	Parking Enforcement	Activity data: Staff charging data obtained through Blink customer service reports using RFID (radio frequency identification) card charging records. Emission factor(s): For location-based reporting, calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the UK electricity category for grid electricity. For

Scope	Emission Source	Unit	Data Custodian	Data Collection Method for Activity Data and Emission Factor
				market-based reporting, supplier-specific emission factors are used where available; otherwise, a residual mix factor is applied.
3	Grey Fleet: Staff business travel by private car (driver mileage only)	Miles	Human Resources	Activity data: Sourced from the internal staff mileage claims system. Only mileage claimed for staff use of private cars as the driver is included. Passenger and bicycle claims are excluded, as these do not represent additional grey fleet vehicle mileage and could otherwise result in double counting. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the Scope 3 business travel – land category for average car, unknown fuel.
3	Water Consumption: Council-operated sites	Cubic metres (m^3)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Water consumption data gathered from meter readings and invoices, supported by Telex Water. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the water supply category for water supply.
3	Water Treatment: Council-operated sites	Cubic metres (m^3)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Water consumption and rate-to-sewer (%) data gathered from meter readings and invoices, supported by Telex Water. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the water supply category for wastewater treatment.
3	Water Consumption: Council leased assets	Cubic metres (m^3)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Water consumption data gathered from meter readings and invoices, supported by Telex Water. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the water supply category for water supply.

Scope	Emission Source	Unit	Data Custodian	Data Collection Method for Activity Data and Emission Factor
3	Water Treatment: Council-leased sites	Cubic metres (m^3)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Water consumption and rate-to-sewer (%) data gathered from meter readings and invoices, supported by Telex Water. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the water supply category for wastewater treatment.
3	Commercial Downstream Leased Assets: Utility consumption	Various (kWh, litres, m^3, kg)	Third - Party Site Managers & Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: For large, third-party managed sites, such as the Business and Technology Centre, Arts and Leisure Centre, and Stevenage Swimming Pool, data was sourced directly from site operators. For smaller commercial leased assets, activity data was collected through online energy supplier portals where available. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the relevant category by utility type, including UK electricity, fuels, and water supply factors, or supplier-specific electricity emission factors for market-based reporting.
3	Residential Downstream Leased Assets: Utility consumption	Various (kWh, litres, m^3, kg)	Energy and Utilities Manager & Housing Asset Management	Activity data: Tenant utility consumption for residential schemes gathered through online energy supplier portals, invoices, and meter readings where available. This category covers tenant-controlled areas only and excludes landlord-controlled areas, which are reported in Scope 1 and Scope 2. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the relevant category by utility type, including UK electricity, fuels, and water supply factors, or supplier-specific electricity emission factors for market-based reporting.
3	Transmission and Distribution (T&D) Losses: All purchased electricity	Kilowatt-hours (kWh)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Based on all purchased electricity reported within Scope 2, including street lighting, buildings, and electric vehicles. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the UK electricity category for transmission and distribution losses.

Scope	Emission Source	Unit	Data Custodian	Data Collection Method for Activity Data and Emission Factor
3	Well-to-Tank (WTT): Liquid fuel use for Council-operated fleet	Litres	Procurement and Compliance Manager	Activity data: Based on litre consumption data from the internal fuel management system for diesel, petrol, and HVO. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the relevant well-to-tank fuel categories for diesel, petrol and HVO.
3	Well-to-Tank (WTT): Natural gas use in Council-operated buildings	Kilowatt-hours (kWh)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Based on natural gas consumption data already identified for Scope 1 reporting. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the well-to-tank category for natural gas.
3	Well-to-Tank (WTT): Grey fleet	Miles	Human Resources	Activity data: Based on grey fleet mileage claim data. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the WTT passenger vehicles & business travel – land category for WTT cars (by size), average car, unknown fuel.
3	Well-to-Tank (WTT): Purchased electricity for council operated sites and assets	Kilowatt-hours (kWh)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Based on purchased electricity consumption data already gathered for Council-operated sites and assets, borough-wide street lighting, and staff electric vehicle charging. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the well-to-tank category for WTT – UK electricity (generation). This factor is applied in both location-based and market-based reporting to provide a conservative estimate for market-based emissions.
3	Well-to-Tank: T&D losses associated	Kilowatt-hours (kWh)	Energy and Utilities Manager	Activity data: Based on purchased electricity consumption data already gathered for Council-operated sites and assets, borough-wide street lighting, and staff electric vehicle charging.

Scope	Emission Source	Unit	Data Custodian	Data Collection Method for Activity Data and Emission Factor
	with purchased electricity use			Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the well-to-tank category for transmission and distribution losses for grid electricity.
3	Outside of Scopes: Biogenic CO_2 Council-operated fleet	Litres	Procurement and Compliance Manager	Activity data: Based on litre consumption data from the internal fuel management system for diesel, petrol, and HVO. Emission factor(s): Calculated using the DESNZ annual GHG conversion factors dataset and the outside of scopes category within forecourt fuels containing biodiesel for diesel and petrol, and the biofuels category for biodiesel HVO.

4.3. Exclusions from the Operational Boundary

4.3.1. Broad emission source exclusions

4.3.1.1. Various emission sources have been excluded from the emissions reporting framework and, accordingly, from both annual GHG inventories. These exclusions reflect present data availability constraints, methodological limitations, and areas where further development is required before robust and repeatable reporting can be established. Table 3 sets out the principal excluded emission sources and the rationale for their exclusion.

Table 3.Excluded emission sources and reasoning

Scope	Excluded Emission Source	Reasoning / Justification
3	Direct waste from Council-operated sites, including residual and recyclable waste	No established process currently exists for collecting consistent waste activity data from Council sites. Capturing this data would likely require coordination with cleaning contractors to obtain reliable weight or container data before collection. This is identified as a potential area for future development (see Section 8.3)
3	Emissions arising from waste processing, treatment and disposal by the Council's waste contractors[34]	These data have not previously been collected and are not currently readily accessible. Relevant emissions data would need to be obtained directly from contractors and aligned to waste arising from the Stevenage area. Work is ongoing, but this source remains excluded at present.
3	Staff commuting	Although indicative information exists from a 2023 staff travel survey, the survey was voluntary and is not repeated annually. This limits reproducibility and makes year-on-year reporting unreliable. A one-off internal estimate may be developed separately, but this source is excluded from the formal inventories.

[34] For private arrangements the Council has with waste management, excluding any services contracted by HCC.

Scope	Excluded Emission Source	Reasoning / Justification
3	Staff working from home	As with staff commuting, current available information was obtained through a voluntary survey which cannot currently be reproduced consistently on an annual basis. This source is therefore excluded from the formal inventories.
3	Procurement and wider supply chain emissions	No current data collection process is in place for quantifying procurement-related emissions. This remains a significant but methodologically complex area for future development.
3	Contractor emissions associated with social housing development and regeneration schemes delivered on the Council's behalf	This area has not yet been assessed in detail. It is complex, hard to standardise, and likely to depend on the availability and quality of data from developers and contractors. Further investigation is required before inclusion can be considered.
3	Emissions associated with Council financial investments, including pensions	This is a complex reporting area requiring additional methodological consideration and access to suitable data. It has not yet been assessed and is excluded from the current inventories.
3	Emissions from tenanted spaces within downstream leased assets, including commercial and residential units, where the Council is not the primary utility account holder	Where the Council does not hold the utility contract, the underlying activity data are not currently accessible. These emissions cannot therefore be quantified reliably and are excluded.

4.3.2. Excluded utility accounts within the utility dataset

4.3.2.1. In addition to the general source exclusions set out above, several individual utility meters relating to gas, electricity and water have been excluded from the utility dataset underpinning the two inventories (FY23/24 and FY24/25). In most cases, the Council is aware of these meters and their statuses, but they were excluded because they showed no relevant activity

during the reporting period, related only to activity outside of the reporting period, or could not be processed within the timeframe of the development of this framework.

4.3.2.2. 705 individual meters across the three utilities (gas, water and electric) were included across the two GHG inventories, while a further 385 meters were excluded, indicating an approximate estate coverage of ~65%, based on best available knowledge at the time.

4.3.2.3. While this serves as an approximate indicator of dataset coverage, further reconciliation may identify additional utility accounts or assets; however, it is likely that any such additions are more likely to relate to Scope 3 activity rather than Scope 1 and 2.

4.3.2.4. The excluded meters should also be interpreted carefully. Of the total exclusions, a third were excluded due to recording zero consumption, disconnection, or only showing consumption outside of the reporting period (April 2023 to March 2025). A further ~54% were identified through a later reconciliation exercise and could not be fully reviewed within the reporting timeframe. The excluded total therefore overstates the extend of materially missing in-scope emissions data.

4.3.3. Initial exclusions identified during data collection

4.3.3.1. Of the 385 excluded meters, 178 were identified through the initial data collection and review process using energy supplier online portals. 89 of these showed zero consumption or had been disconnected, and a further 38 showed consumption only outside of the reporting period. Together, 127 of the 178 accounts (~71%) had no relevant in-period activity for inclusion in the inventories.

4.3.3.2. Most of the remaining exclusions reflected data access or quality issues. Consumption data from 23 meters required overly time-consuming manual extraction from invoices with varying formats and were deemed not readily workable within the reporting timeframe. A further 8 meters were not visible on the supplier portal, 4 were not under the Council's operational control, and 1 was excluded due to unreliable data.

4.3.4. Additional exclusions identified through reconciliation

4.3.4.1. A further 207 meters, representing ~54% of all excluded utility assets, were identified through a later reconciliation exercise against internal asset and property records.[35]

4.3.4.2. As these meters were identified after the initial extraction stage, they could not be fully retrieved, analysed and quality-checked within the reporting timeframe. Their exclusion reflects the timing of data discovery and practical data access constraints rather than necessarily indicating material omissions from the Council's core reported emissions.

4.3.5. Ongoing improvement of data coverage

4.3.5.1. The Council continues to review the excluded meters to determine whether underlying activity data can be recovered and incorporated into future inventories. The current inventories should therefore be understood as representing the best available utility dataset at the time of reporting, while acknowledging that some assets remain excluded for data access, timing, quality or reporting-period reasons.

4.4. Calculating Emissions

4.4.1. Dual reporting of purchased electricity emissions

4.4.1.1. To provide a more complete view of its carbon footprint, the Council reports Scope 2, and some Scope 3, electricity emissions on both a location-based and market-based basis, in accordance with the GHGP.

4.4.1.2. The location-based method reflects the average emissions intensity of the electricity grid from which consumption is drawn. It uses national grid-average emission factors and therefore represents the emissions associated with electricity consumption regardless of the Council's contractual arrangements with suppliers. In the UK, the relevant grid-average emission factors are published annually by DESNZ. Transmission and Distribution (T&D) losses are excluded from DESNZ Scope 2 electricity factors and are therefore reported separately within Scope 3 where applicable.

4.4.1.3. The market-based method reflects emissions associated with the electricity products procured by the organisation through contractual instruments, such as renewable electricity tariffs. Supplier-specific emission

[35] Provided by the Energy and Utilities Manager and Housing Asset Management colleagues.

factors are applied where available. Where they are not available, a residual mix emission factor is used in accordance with the GHGP.

4.4.1.4. The Council uses location-based reporting to show the emissions associated with its electricity consumption within the wider grid, and market-based reporting to reflect the effect of its electricity procurement choices. Market-based reporting has also been included to support tracking of the Council's progress towards its net zero target. This dual approach further addresses the limitation of the Local Partnerships GHG accounting tool, which supports location-based reporting only, by providing a supplementary market-based view.

4.4.1.5. For the Council, electricity consumption supplied under the EDF Zero Carbon for Business contract is the only activity data in Scope 2 and 3 assigned a supplier-specific emission factor in the market-based inventory. In this case, a factor of zero is applied. Electricity consumption from other suppliers is assigned the relevant UK residual mix factor. Some third-party managed sites in Scope 3, outside of the EDF contract, have also been calculated using supplier-specific emission factors for market-based reporting.[36]

4.4.1.6. Where supplier-specific factors are unavailable, the residual mix factor is applied, sourced from the Association of Issuing Bodies (AIB). As the UK residual mix factor is published in CO_2 only, it is converted to CO_2e for consistency using the ratio of CO_2 to CO_2e derived from the corresponding DESNZ UK electricity emission factor. Details are provided in *Appendix D – Residual Mix Factor Calculation.*

4.4.2. Emission Factors

4.4.2.1. Emission factors convert activity data into GHG emissions and are typically expressed as kilograms of CO_2e per unit of activity. The Council uses UK Government emission factors published annually by DESNZ, which are publicly available and widely used in organisational carbon reporting.[37] Although these factors are generally published in kg CO_2e, the Council coverts the resulting outputs into tCO_2e, as set out in Section 4.4.4 below.

4.4.2.2. The Council applies the majority approach when selecting the appropriate year of emission factors for each reporting year. Under this approach, the factors from the calendar year containing the majority of the reporting period

[36] Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre, Stevenage Swimming Pool, Ridlins Stadium, Fairlands Valley Aqua Park, and the Golf and Conference Centre.

[37] UK Government: GHG Reporting Conversion Factors

are used. For example, the 2023 DESNZ factors are applied to the reporting year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, and the 2024 DESNZ factors are applied to the reporting year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The alternative blended approach, which weights factors across two calendar years, was not adopted as doing so would have fragmented the methodology across two years, increasing the risk of calculation error.

4.4.2.3. DESNZ emission factors account for the principal greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and relevant fluorinated gases, and convert these into carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) using Global Warming Potentials (GWPs)[38]. The Council reports emissions as total CO_2e and does not provide a gas-by-gas breakdown. This is consistent with the output format of the Local Partnerships tool and is considered appropriate for the purposes of the Council's reporting.

4.4.3. Source-specific factors and exceptions

4.4.3.1. All emission sources are calculated using the relevant annual DESNZ emission factors, with the exception of market-based Scope 2 and some Scope 3 electricity consumption which use either a supplier-specific emission factor or the UK residual mix factor, as described above.

4.4.4. Emissions calculation formula

4.4.4.1. Emissions are calculated by multiplying activity data by the relevant emission factor, using compatible units, and converting kilograms of CO_2e to tonnes where required:

$$\textit{Emissions } (tCO_2e) = \frac{Activity\ Data\ \times Emission\ Factor}{1000}$$

Where necessary, activity data are first converted into the correct unit before the relevant factor is applied. For example, natural gas recorded in cubic metres (m^3) is converted to kilowatt-hours (kWh) using the appropriate conversion methodology before the DESNZ factor is applied.

[38] DESNZ uses the 100-year period for the GWPs. The larger the GWP, the more the gas warms the atmosphere compared to CO_2 over the same period. Further information: Greenhouse Gas Protocol: Global Warming Potential Values 2024

4.4.4.2. For illustration, if a building consumed 10,000 kWh of natural gas and the relevant emission factor was 0.182 kg CO_2e/kWh, emissions would be calculated as follows:

$$Emissions\ (tCO_2e) = 10{,}000\ kWh \times 0.182\ kg\ CO_2e \,/\, 1000$$

$$Emissions\ (tCO_2e) = \frac{1{,}820}{1000} = 1.82\ tCO_2e$$

4.4.4.3. Calculations for all reported emission sources across Scope 1, Scope 2 (location-based and market-based), and Scope 3 are provided in *Appendix F – Emission Group and Asset Specific GHG Calculations.* This serves as a comprehensive reference to the calculations applied, ensuring full transparency and reproducibility of the emissions inventory.

5. Methodological Assumptions and Data Limitations

5.1. Key Assumptions and Limitations

5.1.1. The annual inventories presented in this report have been prepared using the best available data at the time of analysis and a consistent methodology across the reporting period. However, the results should be interpreted with regard to several known limitations relating to data completeness, data quality, and the current maturity of emissions reporting processes.

5.1.2. Detailed explanations of the inventory boundary, exclusions and calculation methods are set out in Section 4; this section summarises the principal assumptions and limitations that may affect interpretation of the results. Reported emissions may also be affected by changes in national conversion factors between reporting years, even where underlying activity data remain unchanged.

5.1.3. Market-based electricity emissions are materially influenced by the availability of supplier-specific emission factors. Where supplier-specific factors are unavailable, the UK residual mix factor is applied. For FY24/25, the converted residual mix factor used in the inventory was approximately 0.425 kgCO_2e/kWh, compared with around 0.207 kgCO_2e/kWh for the equivalent location-based grid factor. As a result, electricity supplies reported using the residual mix factor produce materially higher market-based emissions than if they were reported on a location-based basis.

5.1.4. For Scope 2 purchased electricity (FY24/25), 93.6% of total consumption was calculated using the supplier-specific factor from EDF and 6.4% using the residual mix factor. If the electricity currently reported using residual mix were instead reported on a location-based basis, market-based emissions would be approximately 68.0 tCO_2e lower; in other words, this use of the residual mix emission factor adds around 68.0 tCO_2e to the reported market-based total. Relevant Scope 3 electricity-related emissions are subject to the same methodological issue, although their influence on the Council's overall reported position is less significant. This effect should therefore be considered when interpreting the difference between location-based and market-based electricity results.

5.2. Data Completeness and Quality

5.2.1. The inventories reflect the best available utility and operational data for the Council's known in-scope assets at the time of reporting, but coverage remains under development. As set out in Section 4.3, some utility accounts and assets have been excluded due to zero or out-of-period consumption, data access constraints, validation issues, or late identification through reconciliation.

5.2.2. Activity data quality also varies across sources and includes a mixture of actual readings, supplier-estimated values, portal downloads, invoice extraction and third-party returns. Utility data are currently obtained from multiple supplier portals and reporting formats, which can make historic data extraction, cleaning and verification time-consuming and less consistent across reporting cycles.

5.2.3. In some cases, this has limited the ease with which complete consumption histories can be retrieved and quality-checked within the reporting timeframe. The Council is therefore seeking to improve the efficiency and consistency of future reporting through a more streamlined approach to supplier data access and energy procurement arrangements. This affects the precision of reported emissions, particularly at individual site level.

5.2.4. Meter type information across the estate is currently being assessed to help understand the maturity and reliability of the underlying utility dataset. However, only partial information was available at the time of preparing these inventories, and this was not considered sufficient to support meaningful analysis or reporting of meter type coverage across the estate. Accordingly, no quantified breakdown has been provided at this stage. Estimated readings should also be interpreted with caution where year-on-year variation may not be fully reflected in the underlying data.

5.2.5. For some mixed-use assets, natural gas consumption cannot yet be fully disaggregated between operationally controlled areas and tenant use due to the absence of sub-metering or sufficiently granular billing data. Where gas consumption is shared and cannot be reliably separated, total gas consumption has been conservatively attributed within the inventory. This approach avoids under-reporting emissions associated with assets under operational control, but it is likely to materially overstate Scope 1 emissions from these sites and inflate the contribution of natural gas use from mixed-use schemes within the Council's direct operational emissions.

5.2.6. As the exact split between landlord and tenant consumption is not currently known, the scale of this overstatement cannot yet be quantified robustly. Readers should therefore interpret gas emissions from these sites with caution and refer to Section 7.4 for further detail on the contribution these mixed-use assets make to the Council's reported Scope 1 emissions.

5.2.7. Fugitive emissions should also be interpreted with caution, as these are currently derived from maintenance and servicing records; where no refrigerant additions were recorded, emissions have been assumed to be zero, although this does not necessarily confirm the absence of leakage.

5.2.8. The Council is continuing to improve the completeness and maturity of the underlying dataset through the development of a centralised asset and meter register, improved visibility of meter type and meter health, and a more structured approach to data validation and collection.

5.3. Scope 3, Reporting Process and Assurance

5.3.1. Scope 3 reporting remains partial and should be understood as an improved estimate of wider indirect emissions rather than a complete organisational Scope 3 inventory. Several categories remain excluded where robust, reproducible activity data are not yet available, while some included Scope 3 sources rely on data supplied by third parties, including externally managed sites and leased assets. As a result, Scope 3 emissions are currently more subject to data availability and methodological constraint than Scope 1 and Scope 2 reporting.

5.3.2. The inventories have been subject to internal quality checks but have not been independently verified. Reporting also currently depends on input from multiple service areas across a large and operationally diverse estate, coordinated through limited staff resource. This creates a need for a more formalised and distributed data collection system, with clearer data ownership,

standardised templates and defined reporting responsibilities, to support a repeatable and timely annual reporting cycle.

6. Baseline Emissions

6.1. Original Base Year

6.1.1. As discussed in Section 3.3, the Council commissioned CLS Energy Consultancy Ltd to prepare a carbon baseline report in July 2020. The report was intended to establish a starting point for future carbon, energy, fuel and cost reduction work, and was explicitly framed as a baseline derived from the data made available at the time, rather than as a complete organisational greenhouse gas inventory.

6.1.2. The exact period of activity data used to construct the original baseline cannot now be confirmed with certainty. Internal understanding within the Council is that 2018 data informed the consultant's baseline. However, this cannot be verified from the report itself or from the underlying source data, which is no longer available. The report contains a later reference to electricity costs for the period April 2019 to March 2020, but this appears in the context of an illustrative savings example rather than as a clear statement of the baseline year. On that basis, the original baseline period should be treated as uncertain.

6.1.3. The baseline covered 12 locations, listed below, with the first eight treated as council owned and operated, and the latter four treated as council owned but operated by others on the Council's behalf:

- Cavendish Depot
- Daneshill House
- Indoor Market
- St George's MSCP
- Silkin Court
- Ridlins
- Meadway *(specific site unknown, presumably Meadway Pavillion)*
- Shephalbury Park Changing Rooms
- Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre
- Stevenage Swimming Pool
- Stevenage Golf and Conference Centre
- Fairlands Valley Park.

6.1.4. The baseline report does not explicitly state whether it applies the GHG Protocol's operational control, financial control or equity share approach. However, the treatment of sites suggests that a pragmatic, hybrid boundary was adopted. The Council's directly operated sites were included as a matter of course, while the leisure sites were also included on the basis that they were Council owned and could hypothetically be brought back in-house in future.

6.1.5. At the same time, the report acknowledges that the leisure sites are arguably Scope 3 and that the Council has discretion over whether to include them. It also notes that, if leisure partner organisations are already including emissions from these sites within their own carbon reduction plans, their inclusion in the Council's baseline would create double counting. This indicates that the original boundary was not fixed through a clearly defined control methodology but instead reflected a more pragmatic and locally determined reporting choice.

6.1.6. The baseline includes emissions from electricity and gas usage, where applicable, across the 12 locations listed above, together with other fuel use associated with the Council's fleet and staff business mileage reclaim. The consultant also included separate Scope 3 entries for 'Mileage Avoided Diesel' and 'Mileage Avoided Petrol'.

6.1.7. The report excluded several emissions sources because data was unavailable, incomplete or unclear at the time. It stated that there was no factoring for water, waste, renewable energy or other aspects, and later clarified that F-gases from air conditioning units had not been included. It also noted that some sites, such as community centres, pavilions and public conveniences, were outside the dataset received, and that LPG or heating oil were absent because their use could not be confirmed.

6.1.8. By emissions source, the consultant baseline reported gas as the largest contributor at 37% of total emissions, followed by electricity at 36% and diesel at 22%, with the remaining 5% arising from other fuel use and mileage-related Scope 3 entries. A summary of emissions by scope and source is set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4.CLS Energy Consultancy Total Emissions per Scope (2020)

Scope	Emissions (tCO_2e)
Scope 1	2,145
Scope 2	1,212
Scope 3	45
Total	**3,402**

Table 5.CLS Energy Consultancy Emissions Breakdown by Source (2020)

Scope	Emission Source	Activity Data	Emissions (tCO_2e)
Scope 1	Gas (buildings)	6,797,075 kWh	1,253.585
Scope 1	Diesel including gas oil (fleet use)	332,348 litres	868.141
Scope 1	Unleaded petrol (machinery use)	10,452 litres	23.089
Scope 2	Purchased electricity (buildings)	4,742,936 kWh	1,212.295
Scope 3	Mileage reclaim diesel (staff business travel)	70,208 miles	19.589
Scope 3	Mileage reclaim petrol (staff business travel)	71,694 miles	20.865
Scope 3	Mileage avoided diesel (staff business travel)	8,615 miles	2.404
Scope 3	Mileage avoided petrol (staff business travel)	8,798 miles	2.560
Total			**3,402.528**

6.1.9. The original baseline report lacks granularity and provides only limited raw underlying data beyond annual totals, broad site groupings and selected commentary. In practical terms, this means that the detailed baseline methodology, meter-level breakdowns, monthly patterns and assumptions cannot now be fully reconstructed from the report alone. This limitation is particularly relevant for the leisure sites, where the consultant noted that only total annual electricity and gas figures were available.

6.1.10. The consultant baseline also includes additional Scope 3 entries labelled 'Mileage Avoided Diesel' and 'Mileage Avoided Petrol', alongside standard grey fleet mileage reclaim data. The report briefly refers to these as miles driven with a business passenger but does not set out a transparent calculation method or clearly explain whether these figures represent a distinct emissions source or an additional treatment of journeys already captured elsewhere.

6.1.11. In the absence of a clear methodological explanation or supporting source data, inclusion of these 'avoided mileage' figures introduce uncertainty and may create a risk of double counting. For the updated baseline, outlined next, only standard grey fleet mileage reclaim data has therefore been included, as this provides a clearer, more auditable and more comparable basis for reporting over time.

6.2. Updated Base Year

6.2.1. An updated baseline has been established using FY23/24 emissions data. Unlike the original baseline, which was limited in scope and based on a relatively small number of sites and sources, the FY23/24 baseline reflects a substantially more comprehensive organisational inventory.

6.2.2. The updated baseline includes more than 700 assets across Scopes 1, 2 and 3. This represents a significant expansion compared with the 12 locations included in the original baseline and provides a much more complete picture of the Council's emissions footprint.

6.2.3. The updated baseline also applies a clearer and more consistent treatment of organisational boundaries. While the original consultant baseline included several leisure-related assets within Scopes 1 and 2, the FY23/24 inventory treats the majority of these as Scope 3 emissions, in line with the GHGP. In practice, this means that emissions associated with sites such as Ridlins, Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre, Stevenage Swimming Pool, the Golf and Conference Centre, and Fairlands Valley Park are no longer reported within the Council's direct operational footprint, but instead within leased or indirect categories. The Indoor Market remains within the Council's direct reporting boundary for this updated baseline.[39]

6.2.4. The FY23/24 baseline also includes a wider range of emission sources than the original baseline. In addition to fuel use, gas, electricity and grey fleet mileage, it includes water supply and treatment, fugitive emissions, well-to-tank emissions for relevant fuels and electricity, and transmission and

[39] Refers to the 'old' indoor market location within St George's MSCP.

distribution losses associated with purchased electricity. For staff business travel, only standard grey fleet mileage claims have been included; the ambiguous passenger-related 'mileage avoided' categories used in the original consultant report have not been carried forward, as previously mentioned.

6.2.5. For FY23/24, the Council reports both location-based and market-based emissions. The location-based dataset provides the most suitable basis for comparison with the original consultant baseline, which appears to have applied standard electricity conversion factors and is therefore best interpreted as location-based in practice. However, the market-based dataset is the more appropriate baseline for future target tracking, as it reflects the Council's current electricity procurement arrangements and formal reporting approach.

6.2.6. On a location-based basis, FY23/24 emissions totalled 5845.42 tCO_2e. On a market-based basis, FY23/24 emissions totalled 4,710.12 tCO_2e, and this figure is adopted as the Council's formal revised baseline inventory. The FY23/24 market-based baseline is summarised in Table 6 below alongside the FY23/24 location-based breakdown for comparison purposes.

Table 6.Total emissions for Financial Year 2023/24, market-based and location-based

Scope	Market-Based Emissions (tCO_2e)	Location-Based Emissions (tCO_2e)
Scope 1	1,922.42	1,922.42
Scope 2	89.68	1,004.67
Scope 3	2,698.02	2,918.32
Total	**4,710.12**	**5,845.42**

6.2.7. Within the FY23/24 market-based baseline, Scope 3 is the largest contributor, reflecting the breadth of leased-site emissions, upstream fuel and electricity emissions, and other indirect sources now included within the inventory[40]. Scope 1 remains materially significant, driven principally by natural gas consumption at operated sites and diesel use[41]. Scope 2 is comparatively low under the market-based method because purchased electricity for operated assets is reported using a much lower market-based emission factor

[40] 87% of all Scope 3 emissions under market-based reporting originated from the use of gas or electricity in leased buildings; 67% were derived from natural gas-related emission sources with 20% from electricity-related emission sources.

[41] Diesel use in FY23/24 was still relatively high as the use of HVO for the Council's fleet had not yet been introduced. This is discussed further in Section 7.

than under the location-based method, reflecting the Council's EDF Zero Carbon for Business tariff.

6.3. Base Year Comparison & Analysis

6.3.1. Direct comparison between the original consultant baseline and the updated FY23/24 baseline should be assessed carefully. Although both provide useful baseline reference points, they are not methodologically identical. The original baseline was narrower in scope, included only 12 locations, excluded several emissions sources now reported, and applied a pragmatic approach to the treatment of leisure-related assets. By contrast, the FY23/24 baseline is a much more comprehensive organisational inventory covering more than 700 assets and a wider range of direct and indirect emission sources. In addition, the new baseline correctly allocates Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions from buildings using a fixed operational control approach.

6.3.2. For comparison purposes, the most appropriate reference is the FY23/24 location-based baseline, because the original consultant report is best interpreted as location-based in practice. On this basis, reported emissions increased from 3,402.00 tCO_2e in the original baseline to 5,845.42 tCO_2e in FY23/24. However, this increase should not be interpreted as a simple deterioration in emissions performance. A substantial part of the difference is explained by the expansion in reporting boundary, improved data coverage, the inclusion of additional categories such as water and upstream emissions, and the reclassification of certain leisure-related sites from Scopes 1 and 2 into Scope 3.

Table 7.Scope total comparisons for location-based emissions between the original baseline and new baseline year data

Scope	Original Baseline (tCO_2e)	FY23/24 location-based baseline (tCO_2e)	Absolute Change (tCO_2e)
Scope 1	2,145.00	1,922.42	- 222.58
Scope 2	1,212.00	1,004.67	- 207.33
Scope 3	45.00	2,918.32	+ 2,873.32
Total	**3,402.00**	**5,845.42**	**+ 2,443.42**

6.3.3. The scope comparison illustrates that the most significant change between the two baselines is within Scope 3, which increases from 45 tCO_2e in the original baseline to 2,918.32 tCO_2e in the FY23/24 location-based baseline.

This does not indicate a like-for-like increase in the Council's indirect emissions alone, but instead reflects the much broader reporting boundary and more comprehensive methodology applied in the updated inventory. In particular, the FY23/24 baseline includes additional indirect sources such as leased-site energy use, water, well-to-tank emissions and transmission and distribution losses, while also moving several leisure-related assets out of Scopes 1 and 2 and into Scope 3 in line with the operational control approach.

6.3.4. By contrast, both Scope 1 and Scope 2 are lower in the FY23/24 location-based baseline than in the original consultant baseline. However, these changes should again be interpreted with caution given the differences in site coverage, categorisation and data completeness between the two approaches. In several cases, emissions have not necessarily reduced in operational terms but have instead been reclassified or newly captured under a different scope.

6.3.5. The most significant methodological shift between the two baselines is therefore the treatment of scope and boundary. In the original baseline, several leisure sites were included alongside directly operated Council sites, despite the report itself acknowledging that these could arguably be treated as Scope 3. In the updated baseline, this ambiguity has largely been resolved by treating the majority of these emissions as indirect. As a result, differences at scope level do not necessarily indicate that emissions have been reduced or increased in operational terms; in several cases, emissions have simply moved from one scope to another.

6.3.6. The updated baseline should therefore be understood as a rebased and more robust foundation for future reporting rather than as a direct continuation of the original consultant baseline. For transparency, the original baseline remains useful as an historic reference point, and the FY23/24 location-based inventory provides the best available comparator to it. However, the Council's formal revised market-based inventory baseline is the FY23/24 market-based inventory total of 4,710.12 tCO_2e, as this best reflects the Council's current reporting approach and electricity procurement position.

6.3.7. For the purposes of tracking progress against the Council's 2030 net zero target, the applicable target-tracking boundary is defined separately in Section 7.2 and comprises market-based Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions plus selected Scope 3 sites.

Table 8.Summary comparison of baseline approaches

Baseline	Reporting Basis	Total Emissions (tCO_2e)	Key Notes
Original baseline (consultant report, published 2020)	Presumed location-based	3,402.00	Partial baseline based on limited available data; covered 12 locations only; included some leisure assets within Scopes 1 and 2; excluded several sources now reported, including water and upstream emissions.
Updated baseline (FY23/24)	Location-based	5,845.42	Used for broad comparison with the original baseline because it is the closest methodological equivalent to the earlier approach. Reflects a wider organisational boundary and more complete source coverage.
Updated baseline (FY23/24)	Market-based	4,710.12	Adopted as the Council's formal revised market-based inventory baseline, reflecting current electricity procurement and reporting practice. The specific target-tracking boundary is defined in Section 7.2.

6.3.8. Table 8 summarises the three baseline reference points used in this report: the original consultant baseline, the updated FY23/24 location-based comparator, and the FY23/24 market-based baseline adopted for future reference.

7. Inventory Results & Analysis

This section presents the results of the Council's FY23/24 and FY24/25 greenhouse gas inventories on both a location-based and market-based basis. Analysis focuses on the core reported inventory within Scopes 1, 2 and 3. Biogenic CO_2 emissions associated with fleet fuel use are excluded from the core inventory totals and are discussed separately in Section 7.8.

7.1. Inventory Overview (Location-Based and Market-Based)

7.1.1. Table 9 , Figure 3 and Figure 4 summarise the Council's greenhouse gas inventories for FY23/24 and FY24/25 on both a location-based and market-based basis. Across both reporting methods, total reported emissions decreased year-on-year. On a location-based basis, emissions fell from 5,845.42 tCO_2e in FY23/24 to 5,582.49 tCO_2e in FY24/25, a reduction of 262.92 tCO_2e (-4.5%). On a market-based basis, emissions fell from 4,710.12 tCO_2e to 4,458.44 tCO_2e, a reduction of 251.68 tCO_2e (-5.3%).

Table 9.Total emissions per scope by reporting basis

Scope	**Location-Based Emissions (tCO_2e)**				**Market-Based Emissions (tCO_2e)**			
	FY23/24	FY24/25	Change	Change (%)	FY23/24	FY24/25	Change	Change (%)
Scope 1	1,922.42	1,657.8	- 264.61	- 13.8%	1,922.42	1,657.80	- 264.61	- 13.8%
Scope 2	1,004.67	998.78	- 5.89	- 0.6%	89.68	132.53	+ 42.85	+ 47.8%
Scope 3	2,918.32	2,925.91	+ 7.58	- 0.3%	2,698.02	2,668.1	- 29.92	- 1.1%
Total	**5,845.42**	**5,582.49**	**- 262.92**	**- 4.5%**	**4,710.12**	**4,458.44**	**- 251.68**	**- 5.3%**

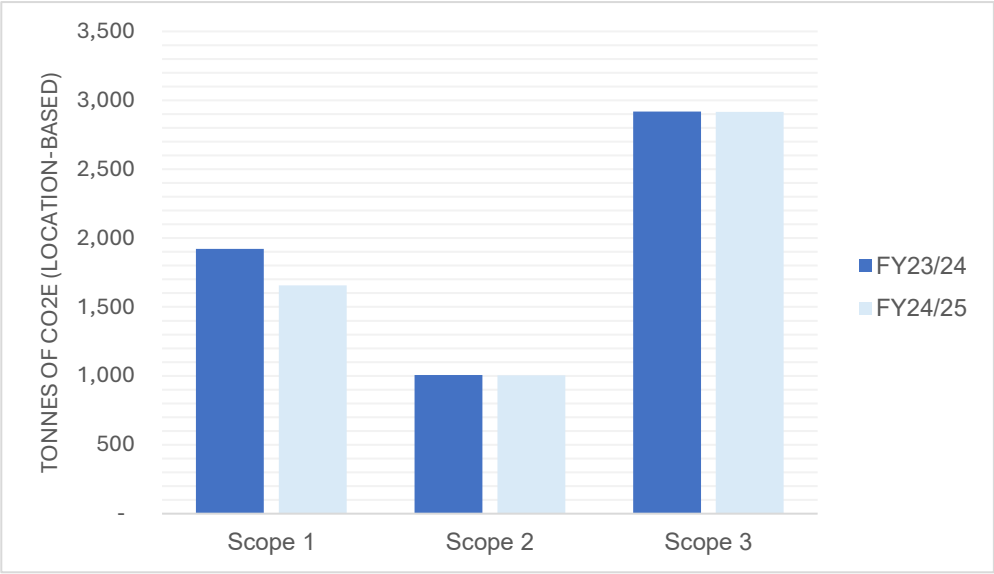


Figure 3. Location-based emissions, FY23/24 and FY24/25

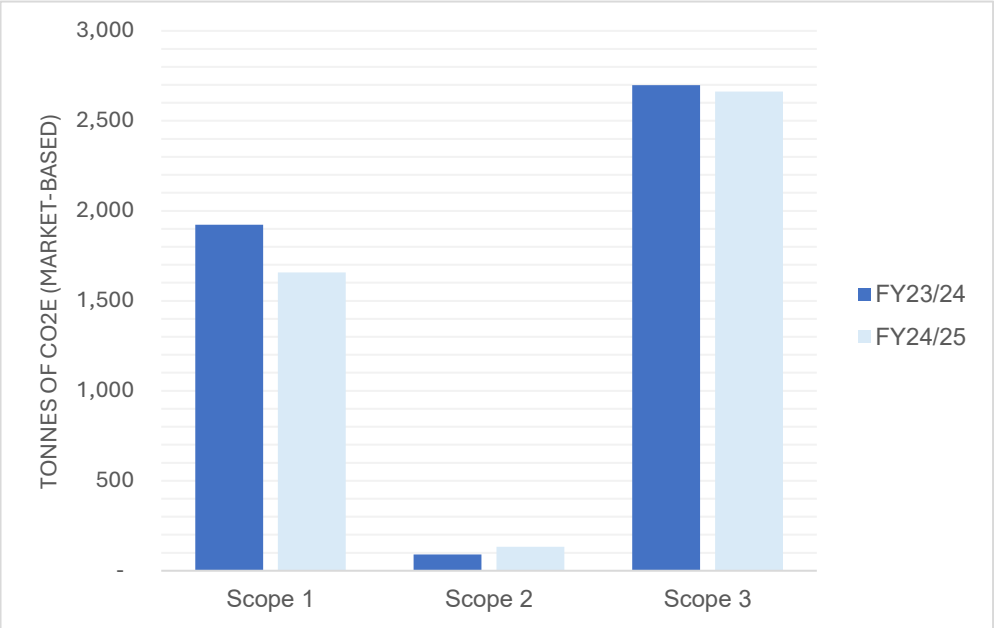


Figure 4. Market-based, FY23/24 and FY24/25

7.1.2. The overall reduction was driven primarily by lower Scope 1 emissions. Scope 1 fell from 1,922.42 tCO_2e to 1,657.80 tCO_2e on both a location-based and market-based basis, a decrease of 264.61 tCO_2e (-13.8%). This reflects a substantial reduction in fleet fuel emissions in FY24/25, partly offset by an increase in emissions from natural gas use at operated sites due to increased consumption.

7.1.3. Scope 2 emissions remained broadly stable on a location-based basis, decreasing slightly from 1,004.67 tCO_2e to 998.78 tCO_2e (-0.6%). On a market-based basis, however, Scope 2 increased from 89.68 tCO_2e to 132.53 tCO_2e

(+47.8%). This increase should be interpreted in context. In both years, market-based Scope 2 emissions remained substantially lower than the corresponding location-based figures, reflecting the significant effect of the Council's EDF Zero Carbon for Business tariff. Compared with the location-based method, market-based reporting reduced Scope 2 emissions by 91% in FY23/24 and 87% in FY24/25. The year-on-year increase in market-based Scope 2 therefore does not indicate a deterioration in electricity performance alone but rather reflects the proportion of electricity consumption reported using supplier-specific factors compared with residual mix factors in FY24/25.

7.1.4. Scope 3 emissions remained the largest component of the inventory under both reporting methods. On a location-based basis, Scope 3 remained broadly stable, decreasing slightly from 2,918.32 tCO_2e to 2,925.91 tCO_2e (-0.3%). On a market-based basis, Scope 3 fell from 2,698.02 tCO_2e to 2,668.1 tCO_2e (-1.1%). The relative stability of Scope 3 reflects offsetting movements across several indirect emission sources, including leased asset energy use, upstream fuel emissions and electricity-related emissions

7.1.5. In profile terms, the inventory remained dominated by Scope 3 emissions, followed by Scope 1, with Scope 2 contributing the smallest share under the market-based method. In FY24/25, Scope 3 accounted for approximately 52.3% of total location-based emissions and 59.8% of total market-based emissions, while Scope 1 accounted for 29.7% and 37.2% respectively. This reflects both the breadth of indirect emission sources included in the inventory and the effect of the Council's electricity procurement arrangements on reported market-based Scope 2 emissions.

7.1.6. The emissions-by-source profile provides additional context to the overall year-on-year change. On both a location-based and market-based basis, heating remained the largest emission source and increased year-on-year, while fleet fuel use recorded the largest reduction. Well-to-tank emissions (from all sources) remained broadly stable, while staff business travel and water-related emissions both decreased modestly. Fugitive emissions also reduced year-on-year based on the records available. The main difference between the location-based and market-based source profiles remained purchased electricity, reinforcing that the Council's overall emissions trend was driven primarily by changes in heating and fleet fuel use, while the treatment of electricity procurement continued to have a significant effect on the market-based inventory.

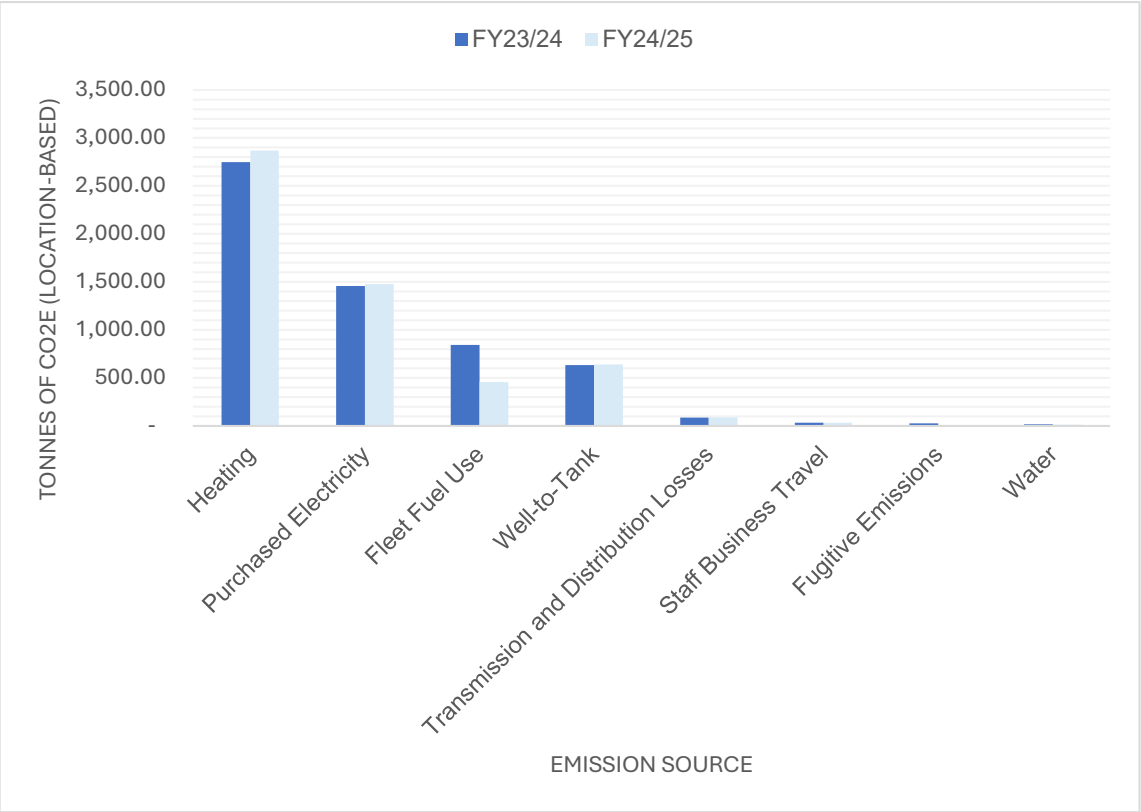


Figure 5. Location-based emissions by emission source (Scope 1, 2, and 3)

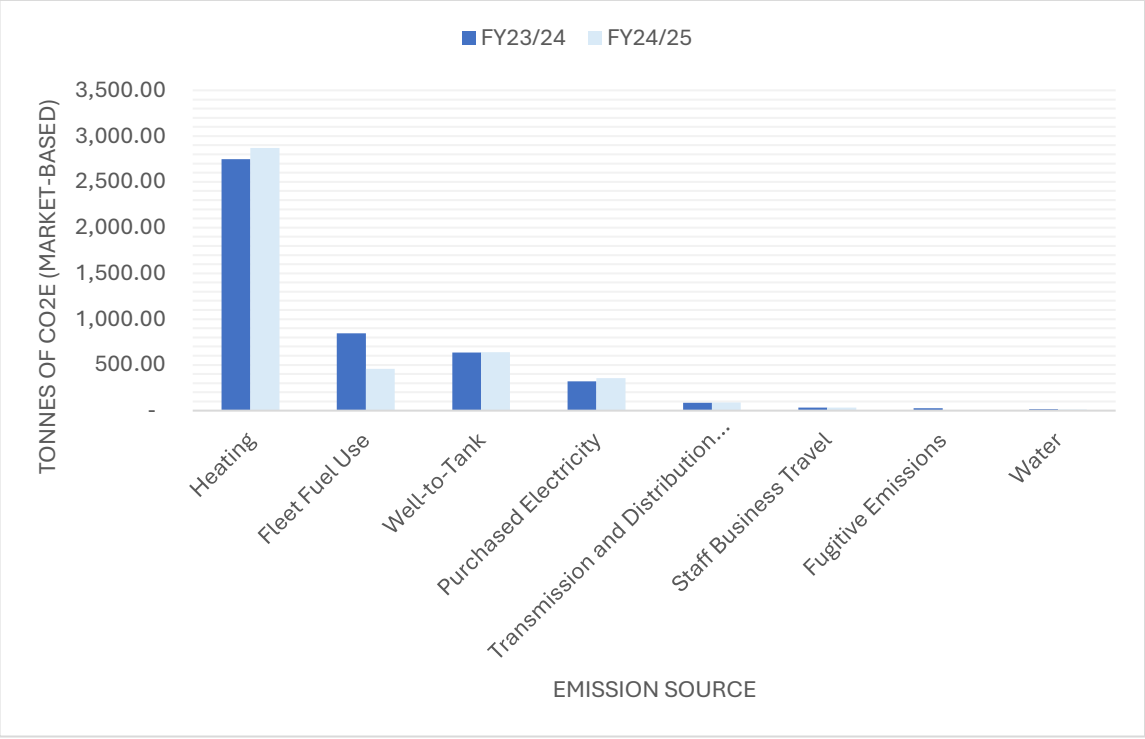


Figure 6. Market-based emissions by emission source (Scope 1,2, and 3)

7.1.7. Overall, the results indicate a modest year-on-year reduction in the Council's reported emissions footprint, driven mainly by improvements in direct fuel-related emissions. However, the inventories also show that reported performance remains sensitive to the treatment of electricity emissions and to the inclusion of wider indirect sources, particularly within Scope 3. More detailed analysis by emission source is provided in the following sections.

7.2. Tracking Progress against the Council's Net Zero Target

7.2.1. As the Council moves to annual emissions reporting, a clear target-tracking boundary is needed to measure progress against the Council's 2030 net zero target. For this purpose, the Council will track progress using market-based Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, plus a limited subset of Scope 3 emissions relating to major third-party managed sites that were included in the Council's earlier consultant baseline and have historically featured in published emissions reporting.

7.2.2. This approach provides continuity with the Council's historic published emissions position while retaining visibility of several large, Council-owned assets that remain significant to the Council's wider carbon profile. Although these sites sit outside the Council's direct operational control and are therefore reported within Scope 3, their inclusion within the target-tracking boundary recognises their scale, visibility and historic treatment within the Council's emission baseline.

7.2.3. The selected Scope 3 sites included within the Council's boundary for progress tracking are:

- Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre
- Stevenage Swimming Centre
- Stevenage Golf and Conference Centre
- Ridlins Stadium
- Fairlands Valley Aqua Park

7.2.4. Together, these five sites contributed 986.66 tCO_2e in FY23/24 and 924.12 tCO_2e in FY24/25 on a market-based basis, equivalent to approximately 20% of the Council's total market-based inventory

Table 10.Target-tracking emissions boundary: market-based Scope 1 and Scope 2, plus selected Scope 3 sites

Scope	FY23/24 (tCO_2e)	FY24/25 (tCO_2e)	Change (tCO_2e)	Change (%)
Scope 1	1,922.42	1,657.80	- 264.61	- 13.8 %
Scope 2	89.68	132.53	+ 42.85	+ 47.8%
Selected Scope 3 Sites	986.66	924.12	- 62.54	- 6.3%
Total	**2,998.76**	**2,714.46**	**- 284.31**	**- 9.5%**

7.2.5. On this basis, the Council's target-tracking emissions total for FY24/25 is 2,714.46 tCO_2e. This represents a reduction of 284.31 tCO_2e, or 9.5%, compared with FY23/24. If this FY24/25 figure is used as the starting point for the remaining period to 2030, the Council would need to reduce emissions by an average of approximately 542.89 tCO_2e per year over the next five financial years to reach net zero.

Table 11.Selected Scope 3 sites included within the target-tracking boundary, market-based emissions

Site	FY23/24 MB (tCO_2e)	FY24/25 MB (tCO_2e)	Change (tCO_2e)	Change (%)
Stevenage Swimming Centre	522.98	468.79	- 54.19	- 10.4%
Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre	383.72	378.45	- 5.26	- 1.4%
Ridlins Stadium	41.10	35.35	- 5.75	- 14%
Stevenage Golf and Conference Centre	34.37	38.41	+ 4.04	+ 11.8%
Fairlands Valley Aqua Park	4.49	3.13	- 1.36	- 30.3%
Total	**986.66**	**924.12**	**- 62.53**	**- 6.3%**

7.2.6. The target-tracking boundary should be interpreted alongside the wider emissions inventory presented in this report. The Council will continue to report its full Scope 1, Scope 2, and available Scope 3 emissions annually for transparency. However, formal progress against the Council's 2030 net zero target will be assessed using the market-based target tracking boundary set out in this section.

7.3. Indicative Cost of Offsetting Residual Emissions

7.3.1. Sections 7.1 and 7.2 set out the Council's current emissions position and the proposed target-tracking boundary for measuring progress against the 2030 net zero target. A related consideration is the potential future cost of offsetting any residual emissions that remain after operational reductions have been pursued. The figures presented below are therefore intended as indicative benchmarks only. They do not represent a current financial liability, a recommendation to offset at this stage, or a fixed forecast of future carbon prices, all of which may change over time. In addition, HCCSP has previously

stated the need for the Council to prioritise mitigation first, due to the co-benefits such as cost savings.

7.3.2. Three benchmark price types are used to illustrate the potential scale of cost. First, the 2025 UK ETS civil penalty carbon price of £41.84/ tCO_2e provides an official UK regulatory benchmark[42]. Second, for the voluntary carbon market[43] (VCM), an assumption of $25/ tCO_2e [44] has been used as a broad proxy for higher-quality nature-based credits.[45] Third, UK-specific voluntary carbon benchmarks are also shown using the 2024 average transaction prices for Woodland Carbon Code (£26.85/ tCO_2e) and Peatland Code (£25.04/ tCO_2e) units[46]. Further detail on voluntary market pricing is provided in *Appendix G – Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) Pricing: Ecosystem Marketplace.*

7.3.3. Using the latest FY24/25 target-tracking total set out in Section 7.2, the indicative cost of offsetting a total of 2,714.46 tCO_2e would be approximately £113kper year using the UK ETS benchmark, £73kusing the Woodland Carbon Code benchmark, £68k using the Peatland Code benchmark, or around $68k using the illustrative $25 voluntary market assumption.

Table 12.Indicative annual cost of offsetting FY24/25 target-tracking emissions (residual emissions)

Benchmark Price	**FY24/25 target-tracking emissions: 2,714.46 tCO_2e**
UK ETS civil penalty price (2025) - £41.84	~£113,000
Woodland Carbon Code average (2024) - £26.85	~£73,000
Peatland Code average (2024) - £25.04	~£68,000
Higher-quality nature-based credit assumption - $25 USD	~$68,000 USD

7.3.4. The Council should therefore consider a future offsetting strategy carefully. Lower-priced voluntary credits may appear attractive in cost terms, but they

[42] UK Government: UK ETS Carbon Price 2025
[43] Ecosystem Marketplace: 2025 State of the Voluntary Carbon Market (SOVCM)
[44] Ecosystem Marketplace's 2024 data show materially higher prices for several nature-based project types, including $14.97 for Improved Forest Management, $20.44 for Afforestation/Reforestation/Revegetation and $29.72 for Blue Carbon. On this basis, in conjunction with prior industry knowledge, a $25t/$CO_2e$ assumption has been chosen.
[45] The VCM global 2024 average transaction price of $6.34/$tCO_2e$ is not considered an appropriate planning assumption for the Council, given the quality and reputational concerns associated with lower-priced credits.
[46] Woodland Carbon Code (WCC): Carbon Prices

may not provide the level of integrity, permanence or co-benefit assurance that would be expected for a public body. Conversely, higher-integrity UK nature-code units and stronger nature-based voluntary credits are likely to command a premium. For this reason, the figures above are best interpreted as broad planning benchmarks to illustrate the scale of possible future costs, rather than as target prices for procurement.

7.4. Natural Gas Consumption

7.4.1. Natural gas remained one of the Council's largest reported emission sources in both years and increased overall in FY24/25. Total reported natural gas consumption rose from 14.84 million kWh in FY23/24 to 15.55 million kWh in FY24/25, an increase of 4.7%. Associated emissions increased from 2,715.39 tCO_2e to 2,843.45 tCO_2e, a rise of 128.06 tCO_2e (+4.7%).

7.4.2. Within the Council's directly operated estate, natural gas emissions increased from 1,078.93 tCO_2e in FY23/24 to 1,201.99 tCO_2e in FY24/25 (+11.4%), reflecting an increase in reported gas consumption from 5.90 million kWh to 6.57 million kWh. Reported natural gas emissions from all leased assets, captured within Scope 3, remained broadly stable, increasing from 1,636.46 tCO_2e to 1,641.45 tCO_2e (+0.3%). In FY24/25, natural gas accounted for approximately 72.5% of the Council's total Scope 1 emissions, confirming that it remains the dominant direct operational emissions source.

7.4.3. The Scope 1 increase was driven primarily by operated residential assets, which rose from 824.16 tCO_2e to 937.24 tCO_2e (+13.7%) and accounted for approximately 78% of all Scope 1 natural gas emissions in FY24/25. This rise is largely attributed to the development of Brodie Court, which emitted ~98 tCO_2e in FY24/25 and where tenant and landlord usage could not be split.

7.4.4. Within Scope 3, the largest contributors remained leased residential assets and leased leisure assets, which together accounted for approximately 95.3% of leased natural gas emissions in FY24/25, indicating emissions are concentrated in a small number of large residential and leisure-related sites.

7.4.5. The overall trend should be interpreted alongside the data limitation set out in Section 5. For several mixed-use housing schemes, natural gas consumption cannot yet be fully disaggregated between landlord-controlled and tenant-controlled areas due to the absence of sub-metering or sufficiently granular billing data. Reported Scope 1 natural gas emissions for some residential schemes are therefore likely to be overstated. Even with this caveat, the results clearly indicate that natural gas remains one of the Council's

principal residual emission sources and a key priority area for future estate decarbonisation activity.

Table 13.Natural gas consumption, FY23/24 and FY24/25

Category	Scope	FY23/24 (kWh)	FY24/25 (kWh)	Change (%)
Operated assets	Scope 1	5,898,092	6,571,851	+ 11.4%
Leased assets	Scope 3	8,945,857	8,974,599	+ 0.3%
Total natural gas		**14,843,949**	**15,546,450**	**+ 4.7%**

Table 14.Natural gas emissions, FY23/24 and FY24/25

Category	Scope	FY23/24 (tCO_2e)	FY24/25 (tCO_2e)	Change (%)
Operated assets	Scope 1	1,078.93	1,201.99	+ 11.4%
Leased assets	Scope 3	1,636.46	1,641.45	+ 0.3%
Total natural gas		**2,715.39**	**2,843.45**	**+ 4.7%**

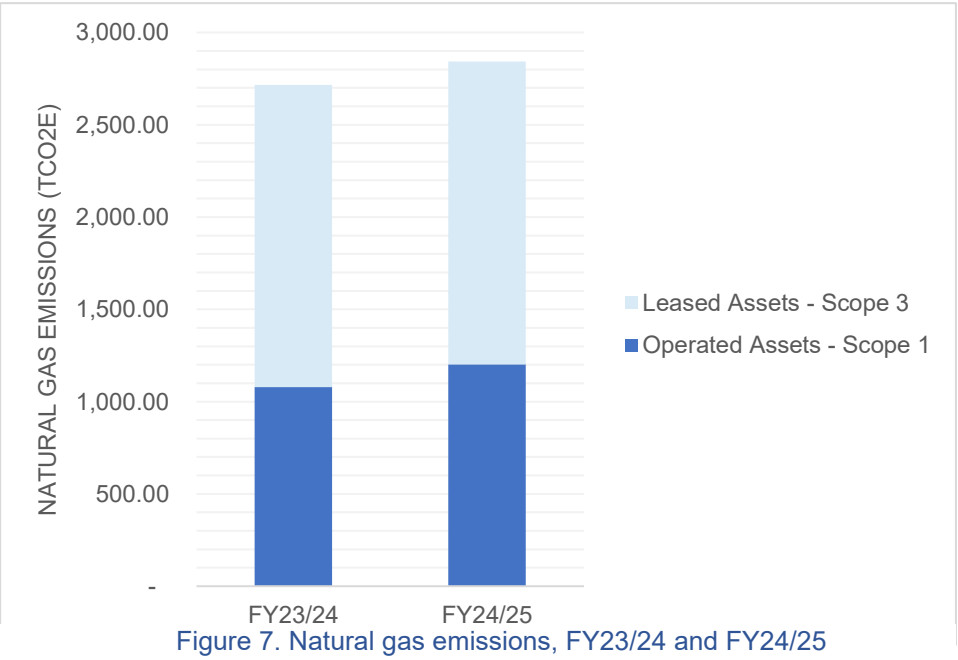


Figure 7. Natural gas emissions, FY23/24 and FY24/25

7.4.6. Top 10 Gas Consuming Sites in FY24/25

7.4.6.1. A review of the highest gas-consuming individual sites in FY24/25 shows that reported usage is concentrated in a relatively small number of assets. The top ten sites are dominated by residential schemes and major leisure-related sites, several of which sit outside the Council's direct operational control and are therefore reported within Scope 3. This is important when interpreting the results, as some of the residential schemes are affected by the current inability to fully separate landlord-controlled and tenant-controlled gas use, meaning that reported Scope 1 emissions for these assets may be overstated.

7.4.6.2. The site-level results also help identify priority locations for further investigation. Daneshill House stands out as a high-consuming corporate asset and should be reviewed further in relation to building operating hours, heating demand and patterns of office use. The Indoor Market also remains one of the Council's highest gas-consuming operated assets in FY24/25, although it is expected to move into Scope 3 in the next reporting period following the new lease arrangement and will therefore sit outside the Council's direct target-tracking boundary going forward.[47]

7.4.6.3. The ten highest gas-consuming sites accounted for 71.3% of the Council's total reported natural gas consumption and associated emissions in FY24/25, indicating that future investigation and reduction activity should be focused on a relatively small number of high-impact assets.

[47] Refers to the 'old' Indoor Market location (St George's MSCP) as the Indoor Market operations did not migrate to the new location until late 2025. In FY25/26, emissions generated from the ground level space of the MSCP will be under operational control of the new sole lessee and therefore considered Scope 3 emissions for the Council.

Table 15.Top 10 gas-consuming sites, FY24/25

Rank	Site	Scope	Sub-category	FY24/25 gas use (kWh)	FY24/25 emissions (tCO_2e)
1	Stevenage Swimming Centre	3	Leisure	2,384,729	436.17
2	Brent Court	3	Residential	1,717,997	314.22
3	Harrow Court	3	Residential	1,407,157	257.37
4	Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre	3	Leisure	1,314,404	240.40
5	Roundmead	3	Residential	962,821	176.10
6	Fred Millard Court	1	Residential	853,189	156.05
7	Indoor Market	1	Commercial	682,986	124.92
8	Silkin Court	1	Residential	678,481	124.09
9	Daneshill House	1	Corporate	551,295	100.83
10	Brodie Court	1	Residential	534,333	97.73
Total				11,087,392	2,027.88

7.5. Fuel Use in Council Fleet

7.5.1. Total fuel use across the Council's road fleet and machinery remained broadly stable between the two years, increasing slightly from 337,331 litres in FY23/24 to 338,993 litres in FY24/25 (+0.5%). Despite this, associated direct emissions fell sharply from 843.49 tCO_2e to 455.81 tCO_2e, a reduction of 387.68 tCO_2e (-46.0%).

Table 16.Council fleet fuel use and direct emissions, FY23/24 and FY24/25 (Scope 1)

Fuel	FY23/24 (litres)	FY24/25 (litres)	Change (%)	FY23/24 (CO_2e)	FY23/24 (tCO_2e)	Change (%)
Diesel	327,901.0	171,518.5	- 47.7%	823.71	430.99	- 47.7%
Petrol	9,430.1	9,207.3	- 2.4%	19.78	19.19	- 3.0%
HVO	-	158,267.4	-	0.00	5.63	-
Total Fleet Fuel	337,331.1	338,933.1	+ 0.5%	843.49	455.81	- 46.0%

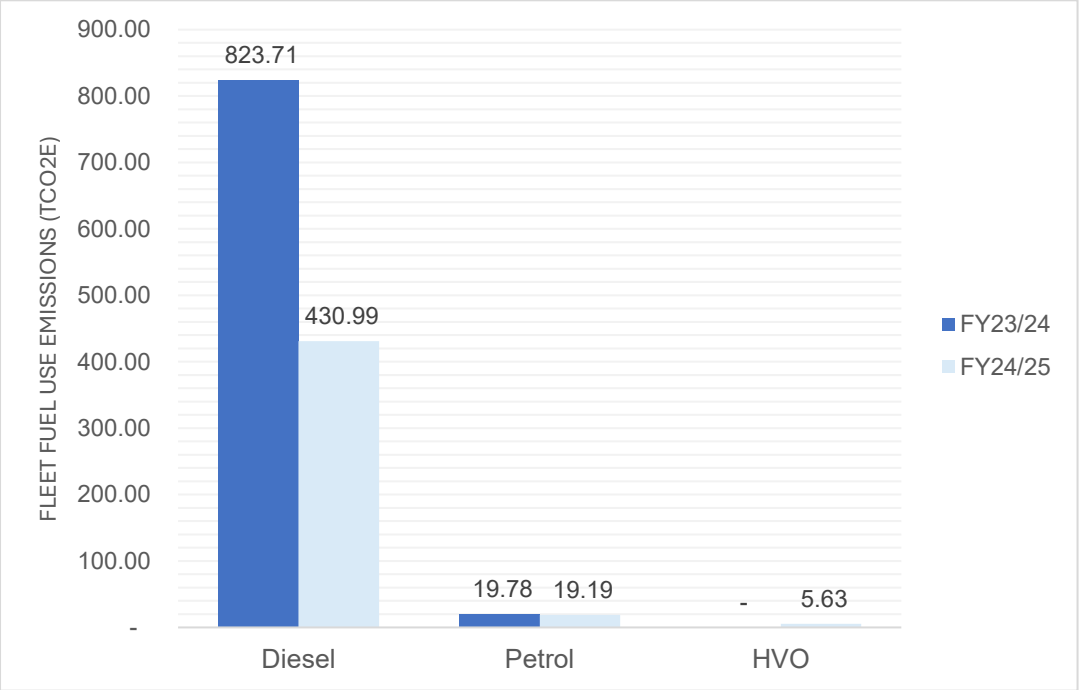


Figure 8. Fleet Fuel Use Emissions by Fuel Type, FY23/24 and FY24/25 (Scope 1)

7.5.2. The main driver of this change was the replacement of diesel with hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) at the start of October 2024. Diesel use fell from 327,901 litres in FY23/24 to 171,519 litres in FY24/25 (-47.7%), while HVO use increased from zero to 158,267 litres. Although HVO represented 46.7% of total fleet fuel use in FY24/25, it contributed only 5.63 tCO_2e to reported Scope 1 emissions, compared with 430.99 tCO_2e from the remaining diesel use. Petrol use was limited to machinery and remained broadly stable year-on-year at around 9,200 litres.

7.5.3. The reduction was concentrated within the road fleet, where fuel use remained almost unchanged overall, increasing slightly from 320,895 litres to 321,959 litres (+0.3%), while emissions fell from 806.11 tCO_2e to 424.76 tCO_2e (-47.3%). Machinery fuel use increased from 16,436 litres to 17,035 litres (+3.6%), while emissions decreased from 37.38 tCO_2e to 31.05 tCO_2e (-16.9%). In FY24/25, the road fleet accounted for 93.2% of total fleet Scope 1 emissions, compared with 6.8% from machinery.

7.5.4. A counterfactual comparison demonstrates the scale of the HVO effect. If the 158,267 litres of HVO used in FY24/25 had instead been diesel, the Council's Scope 1 fleet emissions would have been approximately 397.69 tCO_2e higher for that fuel volume, compared with the actual reported HVO emissions of 5.63 tCO_2e. On this basis, the switch to HVO in FY24/25 is estimated to have avoided approximately 392.06 tCO_2e of direct fleet emissions over the 6-month period.

7.5.5. The shift from diesel to HVO also affected upstream (Scope 3) emissions, although less dramatically than Scope 1. Well-to-tank emissions from diesel, petrol and HVO together fell from 205.83 tCO_2e in FY23/24 to 198.62 tCO_2e in FY24/25 (-3.5%), reflecting lower diesel use partly offset by the inclusion of HVO supply-chain emissions.

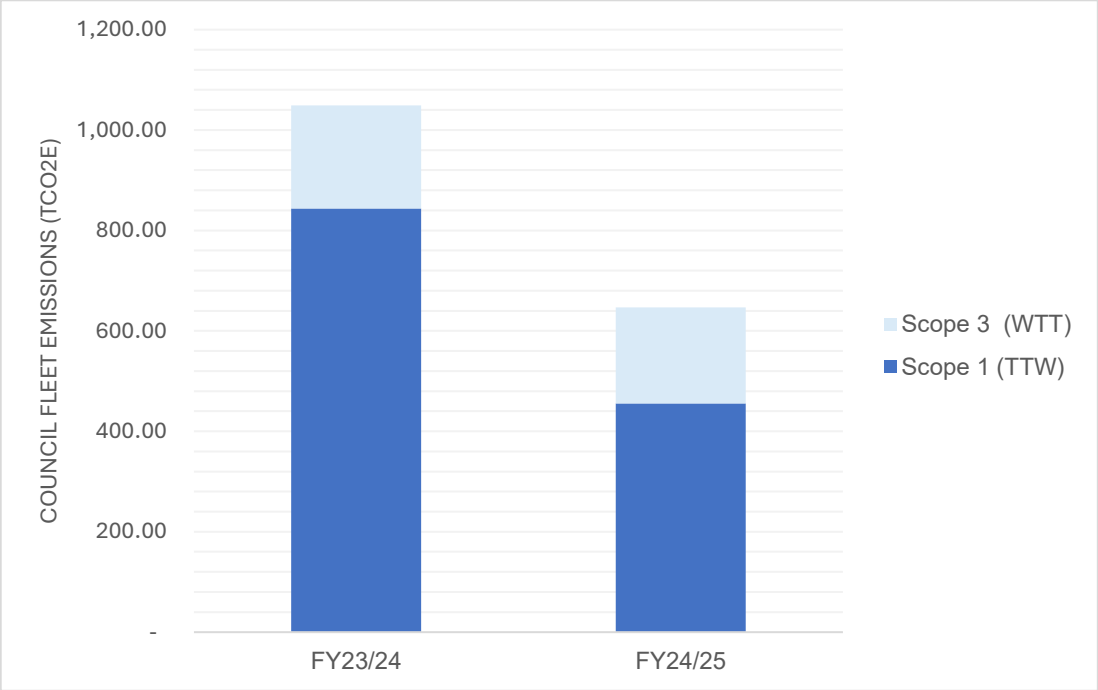


Figure 9. Total Fuel Use Emissions, FY23/24 and FY24/25, Scope 1 and 3

7.5.6. The results indicate that fleet decarbonisation has already delivered a significant reduction in the Council's direct emissions profile. However, fuel use has not yet reduced in absolute terms. This suggests that future progress will depend not only on maintaining the lower-emission fuel mix, but also on reducing overall fuel demand through measures such as fleet optimisation, route efficiency, vehicle replacement and wider service decarbonisation.

7.6. Purchased Electricity Consumption

7.6.1. Total reported purchased electricity consumption increased slightly overall in FY24/25. Across both operated and leased assets, total electricity use rose from 7.03 million kWh in FY23/24 to 7.14 million kWh in FY24/25, an increase of 1.5%. On a location-based basis, associated emissions increased from 1,456.04 tCO_2e to 1,477.74 tCO_2e (+1.5%). On a market-based basis, total electricity emissions increased from 320.75 tCO_2e to 353.68 tCO_2e (+10.3%).

Table 17.Purchased Electricity Consumption, FY23/24 and FY24/25

Category	Scope	FY23/24 (kWh)	FY24/25 (kWh)	Change (%)
Operated assets, street lighting and fleet EV use	Scope 2	4,851,751	4,823,875	- 0.6%
Leased assets and parking enforcement contractor EV use	Scope 3	2,179,742.92	2,313,229.75	+ 6.1%
Total purchased electricity		**7,031,494**	**7,137,104**	**+ 1.5%**

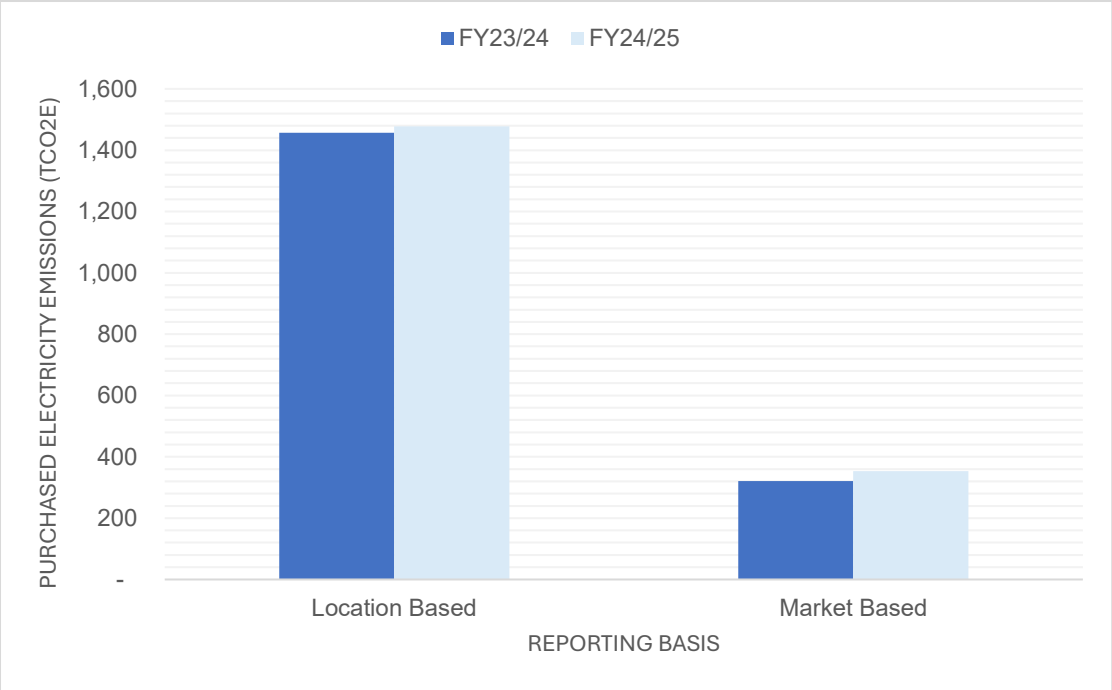


Figure 10. Purchased Electricity Emissions, FY23/24 and FY24/25 (Location-Based and Market-Based)

7.6.2. Within Scope 2, which covers electricity purchased for operated assets, street lighting and fleet EV charging, total electricity consumption remained broadly stable, decreasing slightly from 4.85 million kWh in FY23/24 to 4.82 million kWh in FY24/25 (-0.6%). Location-based Scope 2 emissions also remained mostly unchanged, falling marginally from 1,004.67 tCO_2e to 998.78 tCO_2e (-0.6%). Market-based Scope 2 emissions, however, increased from 89.68 tCO_2e to 132.53 tCO_2e (+47.8%). This increase should be interpreted in context. In both years, market-based Scope 2 emissions remained substantially lower than the corresponding location-based figures, reflecting the significant effect of the Council's EDF Zero Carbon for Business tariff. Compared with the location-based method, market-based reporting reduced Scope 2 emissions by 91% in FY23/24 and 87% in FY24/25. The year-on-year increase in market-based Scope 2 was driven mainly by a greater proportion of Scope 2 electricity being reported using the residual mix factor rather than the EDF supplier-specific factor in FY24/25.[48]

7.6.3. Electricity use within Scope 2 remained concentrated in operated buildings. In FY24/25, operated buildings accounted for 4.74 million kWh, equivalent to approximately 98% of all Scope 2 purchased electricity consumption. The

[48] Largely due to the development of Brodie Court which was not placed on the EDF Zero Carbon for Business tariff.

largest operated-asset sub-categories were residential and corporate buildings. Within the corporate estate, Daneshill House and Cavendish Road Depot and Offices were the most significant electricity users. Within operated residential assets, the highest-consuming sites included Harrow Court, Brent Court, Brodie Court, Wellfield Court and Silkin Court. These sites represent sensible priorities for further review of direct electricity demand and potential cost-saving measures. This remains relevant even where sites are supplied under the EDF tariff, as lower consumption would reduce energy costs and location-based emissions, while improving resilience against potential tariff changes.

7.6.4. Street lighting increased from 64,973 kWh to 77,692 kWh (+19.6%), while electricity used for SBC fleet EV charging increased from 1,415 kWh to 6,079 kWh. Although still small in absolute terms, the latter more than quadrupled year-on-year and reflects increased recorded charging activity.

7.6.5. Within Scope 3, electricity consumption from leased assets and contractor EV use increased from 2.18 million kWh in FY23/24 to 2.31 million kWh in FY24/25 (+6.1%). On a location-based basis, associated emissions increased from 451.37 tCO_2e to 478.95 tCO_2e (+6.1%). On a market-based basis, however, emissions fell from 231.06 tCO_2e to 221.15 tCO_2e (-4.3%). This suggests that changes in supplier-specific factors and residual mix treatment had a meaningful effect on the market-based result for leased assets, particularly for high-consuming leisure sites.

7.6.6. A review of the highest electricity-consuming sites in FY24/25 shows that demand is concentrated across a relatively small number of large corporate, leisure, transport and residential assets, with both directly operated and leased sites represented in the top ten, presented in Table 18 below.

Table 18.Top 10 Purchased Electricity Sites by Consumption, FY24/25

Rank	Site	Scope	Sub-category	FY24/25 electricity use (kWh)	FY24/25 emissions (tCO_2e)
1	Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre	3	Leisure	1,240,334	138.05
2	Daneshill House	2	Corporate	1,079,261	0.00
3	Business and Technology Centre	3	Commercial	481,785	0.00
4	Car Park - St George's Way MSCP	2	Transport	379,330	0.00
5	Cavendish Road Depot and Offices	2	Corporate	355,979	0.00
6	Stevenage Swimming Centre	3	Leisure	293,066	32.62
7	Indoor Market	2	Commercial	282,187	0.00
8	Harrow Court	2	Residential	137,897	0.00
9	Brent Court	2	Residential	134,386	0.00
10	Car Park - Railway North MSCP	2	Transport	131,963	0.00

7.6.7. The inclusion of both Scope 2 and Scope 3 sites in this table helps show the relative scale of major electricity users across the wider estate, including sites that sit outside the Council's formal net zero target-tracking boundary.

Table 19.Top 10 Purchased Electricity Sites by Market-Based Emissions, FY24/25

Rank	Site	Scope	Sub-category	FY24/25 electricity use (kWh)	FY24/25 emissions (tCO_2e)
1	Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre	3	Leisure	1,240,334	138.05
2	Brodie Court	2	Residential	94,311	40.09
3	Stevenage Swimming Centre	3	Leisure	293,066	32.62
4	CCTV Cameras (UMS)	2	Miscellaneous	68,465	29.10
5	Street Lighting/EV Charging (unassigned)	2	n/a	75,004	19.89
6	Highfield Court	2	Residential	38,464	13.37
7	Stevenage Golf and Conference Centre	3	Leisure	116,265	12.94
8	Grosvenor Court (Wardens House)	2	Residential	21,084	8.96
9	Ridlins Stadium	3	Leisure	38,988	4.34
10	Town Square (4)	3	Commercial	8,746	3.72

7.7. Other Reported Emission Sources

7.7.1. In addition to natural gas, fleet fuel use and purchased electricity, the Council reports a few smaller emission sources that improve the completeness of the inventory. These include staff business travel, water supply and treatment, fugitive emissions, transmission and distribution (T&D) losses, and well-to-tank (WTT) emissions associated with gas, electricity and fuel use. Collectively, these sources totalled 796.87 tCO_2e in FY23/24 and 780.03 tCO_2e in FY24/25, a reduction of 16.84 tCO_2e (-2.1%).

7.7.2. The largest part of this section relates to upstream energy and fuel emissions, particularly WTT emissions and electricity T&D losses. Total well-to-tank emissions increased slightly from 634.81 tCO_2e in FY23/24 to 646.26 tCO_2e in FY24/25 (+1.8%). Within this, WTT emissions from natural gas increased from 178.18 tCO_2e to 198.54 tCO_2e, reflecting the rise in gas consumption discussed in Section 7.4. WTT emissions from fleet fuels fell overall from 205.83 tCO_2e to 198.62 tCO_2e (-3.5%), as lower diesel-related upstream emissions were partly offset by the introduction of HVO supply-chain

emissions in FY24/25. WTT emissions associated with purchased electricity and related T&D losses remained mostly unchanged at 241.96 tCO_2e in FY23/24 and 240.57 tCO_2e in FY24/25.

7.7.3. Transmission and distribution losses from purchased electricity also remained stable, increasing slightly from 86.92 tCO_2e in FY23/24 to 88.28 tCO_2e in FY24/25 (+1.6%), due to the stability of Scope 2 electricity consumption across the two years. Staff business travel decreased modestly from 33.75 tCO_2e to 32.38 tCO_2e (-4.1%), while water-related emissions fell from 15.40 tCO_2e to 13.12 tCO_2e (-14.8%).

7.7.4. Fugitive emissions fell from 25.98 tCO_2e in FY23/24 to zero in FY24/25. No fugitive emissions were recorded for the Council's directly operated sites in either year; the fugitive emissions reported in FY23/24 originate from the leisure sites, with no leaks recorded in FY24/25, explaining the year-on-year reduction. As noted in Section 5, fugitive emissions are currently derived from maintenance and servicing records, and the absence of recorded refrigerant additions does not necessarily confirm the absence of leakage.

Table 20.Summary of other reported emission sources, FY23/24 and FY24/25

Emission Source Group	FY23/24 (tCO_2e)	FY24/25 (tCO_2e)	Change (tCO_2e)	Change (%)
Transmission and distribution losses	86.92	88.28	+ 1.36	+ 1.6%
WTT – natural gas	178.18	198.54	+ 20.35	+ 11.4%
WTT – purchased electricity and related T&D	241.96	240.57	- 1.4	- 0.6%
WTT – fuel fleet use	205.83	198.62	- 7.2	- 3.5%
WTT – grey fleet	8.84	8.53	- 0.31	- 3.5%
Staff business travel (grey fleet)	33.75	32.38	- 1.37	- 4.1%
Water	15.40	13.12	- 2.27	- 14.8%
Fugitive emissions	25.98	0.00	- 25.98	- 100%
Total	796.87	780.03	-16.84	- 2.11%

7.8. Outside of Scope Emissions

7.8.1. In addition to the core Scope 1, 2 and 3 inventory, the Council has separately recorded biogenic CO_2 emissions[49] associated with the use of diesel, petrol and hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in the fleet. These emissions are reported as outside of scopes in accordance with GHG reporting conventions and do not form part of the Council's core inventory totals or progress tracking against the net zero target. They are included separately for transparency only.

7.8.2. Outside of scope biogenic CO_2 emissions increased from 47.04 tCO_2e in FY23/24 to 413.23 tCO_2e in FY24/25. This increase was driven by the introduction of HVO in FY24/25, which contributed 384.59 tCO_2e of reported biogenic CO_2. By comparison, biogenic CO_2 associated with diesel fell from

[49] Biogenic CO_2 reported outside of scopes represents the biomass-derived share of combustion emissions arising from Scope 1 fuel use. These emissions occur at the point of fuel combustion but are excluded from the core Scope 1 total and disclosed separately in line with standard greenhouse gas accounting practice. This is because these emissions are sequestered during the growth stage of the biomass and are therefore considered net zero carbon.

45.91 tCO_2e to 27.44 tCO_2e, reflecting the reduction in diesel use, while petrol-related biogenic CO_2 remained broadly stable at 1.13 tCO_2e in FY23/24 and 1.20 tCO_2e in FY24/25.

7.8.3. The increase in reported outside of scope emissions should not be read as a deterioration in the Council's core emissions performance. Rather, it reflects the change in fleet fuel mix, with a much greater proportion of fuel use coming from bio-based fuel, particularly HVO, during FY24/25. Reporting these emissions separately provides a fuller picture of fleet fuel use while maintaining consistency with standard GHG accounting practice.

8. Further Work

To strengthen the Council's emissions reporting framework and improve the completeness, consistency and efficiency of future inventories, several priority areas for further work have been identified. These relate both to preparation of the next annual inventory and to the continued development of the underlying data collection, management and reporting processes. Together, they are intended to support a more repeatable annual reporting cycle, improve data quality and expand the scope of emissions covered over time.

8.1. Financial Year 2025/26 Reporting and Priority Improvements

8.1.1. The immediate priority is to prepare and report the Council's greenhouse gas inventory for financial year 2025/26, maintaining continuity with the methodology established in this framework and enabling year-on-year comparison against the updated baseline.

8.1.2. As part of this process, priority should be given to reviewing the 207 utility meters identified through the later reconciliation exercise (see Section 4.3.4) to determine whether underlying activity data can be recovered, validated and incorporated into future inventories. This would help improve coverage of the utility dataset and reduce the number of potentially in-scope assets carried forward as exclusions. Priority should be given to exclusions most likely to affect Scope 1 and Scope 2 completeness before wider Scope 3 recovery work is undertaken.

8.1.3. Alongside preparation of the FY25/26 inventory, the Council should begin implementing a small number of immediate priority improvements. These include establishing an internal building emissions working group to support coordination of utility, asset and facilities data across relevant service areas, and progressing the agreed investigation into the division of natural gas consumption between landlord-controlled and tenant-controlled areas within the independent living schemes, beginning with priority assets such as Silkin Court and Fred Millard Court.

8.1.4. The proposed working group would also help identify suitable decarbonisation projects and support the proactive collection of consumption, asset and site data in advance of any future Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), or similar funding opportunities. As such funding rounds can have short application windows, having the necessary data, approvals and cross-service input available in advance would place the Council in a stronger position to respond quickly in developing bids.

8.2. Automation and Data Management

8.2.1. Over time, the Council should seek to reduce reliance on manual extraction and processing by introducing a more structured and partially automated reporting process. This could include the use of existing tools such as Excel and Power BI to support annual data processing, quality checks and dashboard-style reporting, improving both efficiency and transparency.

8.2.2. This should also be aided by the consolidation of utility accounts into a smaller number of providers, helping to streamline data access and reduce the complexity of annual reporting.

8.2.3. In addition, this should be supported by clearer data ownership across service areas, standardised collection templates and an agreed annual reporting timetable.

8.2.4. Regarding improvements to core data management arrangements, further work includes maintaining an up-to-date register of utility meters and supply identifiers across the estate, particularly where sites undergo supplier changes, are newly brought into use, or are decommissioned. Additionally, operational teams should aim to secure at least one physical electricity, gas and water meter reading per meter annually, embedding this within existing procedures where practicable to reduce estimates.

8.2.5. For fleet management, the database should include new attributes such as vehicle weight, where applicable, to support closer alignment with Local

Partnerships tool classifications and improve consistency of reporting over time.

8.2.6. Further process improvements should also include creation of a central internal register for refrigeration and air conditioning systems, recording key information such as asset location, refrigerant type, system charge capacity, servicing history, leakage volumes, procurement and decommissioning dates, and relevant supporting records, helping to reduce uncertainty in fugitive emissions reporting.

8.2.7. The aforementioned improvements will aid in improving data quality and strengthening the audit trails that underpin future inventories.

8.3. Expanding Scope 3 Emissions Coverage

8.3.1. A key area for further work is the gradual expansion of Scope 3 coverage, prioritising categories where activity data are likely to be both significant and reasonably obtainable.

8.3.2. This should include seeking energy consumption data from third-party managed community centres and exploring contractual mechanisms requiring tenants to provide annual energy consumption data, thereby improving the completeness of downstream leased asset reporting.

8.3.3. Further work is also recommended with the procurement team to assess the feasibility of capturing supply chain emissions, and with waste contractors to obtain activity and emissions data for waste arising from Council operations.

8.3.4. In addition, the Council should assess whether existing HR or expenses systems could be adapted to capture public transport business travel more systematically, allowing reported business travel emissions to move beyond grey fleet mileage alone.

8.3.5. Given the complexity of Scope 3 reporting, these areas should be developed gradually and in line with data availability, significance and staff capacity.

8.4. Renewable Energy and Carbon Sequestration

8.4.1. As the reporting framework matures, the Council should also strengthen its approach to renewable energy and sequestration-related data. This includes collecting and integrating annual electricity export data from Council-owned solar photovoltaic systems, where available, in order to improve understanding of on-site generation and exported electricity associated with Council assets.

8.4.2. In parallel, the Council should explore the availability of carbon sequestration data associated with newly created woodland, other tree planting schemes, and the wider carbon stock of Council-managed green spaces. Although sequestration does not form part of the core organisational emissions inventory in the same way as Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, improved understanding of these data would support wider climate strategy development.

9. Considerations

9.1. Council Target Considerations

a) Approve the change of base year from the initial GHG base year, developed using data provided by CLS Energy Consultancy, to an updated FY2023/24 inventory that accounts for a wider scope of operational activities. The original base year was not previously approved by Cabinet, having been established as an operational decision within the Planning and Regulation department.

b) Approve the emissions accounting and reporting framework outlined in the report (methodology), aligned with financial year reporting, and based on operational control of assets, rather than financial control or the equity share approach. The operational control approach has been used historically by the Council.

c) Recognise that to follow reporting procedures outlined in Recommendation (b), third party-managed large-consumption sites such as the leisure centre, swimming centre, indoor market, and BTC will be reported on within the Council's Scope 3 (indirect) emissions.

d) Approve the proposed scope boundary for tracking progress against the Council's 2030 net zero target: market-based Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions plus a limited subset of significant Scope 3 emissions relating to Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre, Stevenage Swimming Centre, Stevenage Golf and Conference Centre, Ridlins Stadium and Fairlands Valley Aqua Park.

e) Continue to report both location-based and market-based emissions annually and clearly specify which reporting basis is used for formal target tracking.

9.2. Council Operations Considerations

a) Develop an internal building emissions working group comprised of varied officer levels who can support in prioritising and developing site decarbonisation projects through the provision of accurate energy consumption data, floor plans, site audits, procurement options and legal

advice, for example. This will aid in streamlining the decision-making and project management process.

b) Prioritise investigating the emissions split, resultant from natural gas usage, between landlord-controlled areas and tenant-controlled areas in housing schemes, specifically independent living schemes. Where sub-metering is not viable, floor plans with the area size of landlord-controlled areas should be created, allowing for more accurate Scope 1 emissions allocation.

c) Consolidate utilities to as few providers as possible with all consumption data accessible via an online portal. Transfer eligible sites promptly once contracts expire and debts are cleared and maintain an up-to-date list of non-consolidated sites and meter numbers.

d) Consider switching sites on non-green electricity tariffs to the EDF zero carbon corporate contract or another similar green tariff.

e) Where smart-meter upgrades are not feasible, agree to mandate a physical meter read once per annum for all Council operated sites and areas, ideally around the financial year end period to improve activity data.

f) Consider the collection of waste data from key corporate sites including Daneshill House, Cavendish Road, and the Stevenage Museum whereby the volume or weight of waste type is recorded pre-collection.

10. Glossary

Activity Data: Data on the magnitude of human activity resulting in GHG emissions, e.g., litres of fuel consumed, kilowatt-hours of electricity used.

Baseline Year: The reference year against which emissions reductions or increases are measured.

Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO_2e): A metric measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases based on their global warming potential (GWP), expressed as the amount of CO_2 that would have the same warming effect.

Emission Factor: A coefficient that quantifies the emissions or removals of a gas per unit activity, e.g., kilograms of CO_2 emitted per litre of fuel consumed.

Equity Share: A method for setting organisational boundaries where a company accounts for emissions from operations according to its share of equity in the operation.

GHG Emissions Reduction Target: A quantitative goal set by an organisation to reduce its GHG emissions over a specified timeframe.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI): An international independent standards organisation that helps businesses and governments report their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) impacts.

Global Warming Potential (GWP): A factor describing the radiative forcing impact of a GHG relative to CO_2 over a specific time horizon, typically 100 years.

Greening Government Commitments (GGCs): UK Government targets for reducing the environmental impact of public sector operations, including commitments to reduce GHG emissions and increase renewable energy use.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol: A widely used international accounting tool for government and business leaders to understand, quantify, and manage greenhouse gas emissions.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs): Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, contributing to the greenhouse effect. Common GHGs include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and fluorinated gases.

International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB): A global standard-setting body established by IFRS Foundation to develop sustainability-related financial disclosure standards.

Inventory: A comprehensive accounting of GHG emissions and removals associated with an organisation's activities during a specified time period.

Local Partnerships Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool: An excel document developed to assist local authorities and public sector organisations in the UK with calculating and reporting their GHG emissions in alignment with recognised standards.

Location-Based Emissions: Scope 2 emissions calculated using average grid emission factors based on the physical location where electricity consumption occurs.

Market-Based Emissions: Scope 2 emissions calculated using specific contractual instruments such as renewable energy certificates (RECs) or purchase power agreements (PPAs) to reflect the emissions associated with purchased electricity.

Net Zero: Achieving a balance between emitted and removed GHGs, often through reductions and/or offsets, so that the net emissions equal zero.

Offsets / Carbon Offsets: Reductions or removals of GHG emissions from outside the organisation's boundary used to compensate for emissions occurring within the boundary.

Operational Control: A method for setting organisational boundaries where the company accounts for 100% of emissions from operations over which it has full authority to introduce and implement operating policies.

Organisational Boundary: The boundary that defines which operations and activities are included in the GHG inventory, based on control or equity share approaches.

Residual Mix Factor: A factor used to represent the average emissions intensity of electricity consumed after accounting for supplier-specific or contractual instruments, used in market-based Scope 2 accounting.

Scope 1 Emissions (Direct Emissions): Emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the organisation, such as fuel combustion in company vehicles or on-site manufacturing processes.

Scope 2 Emissions (Indirect Emissions from Purchased Energy): Emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating, or cooling consumed by the organisation.

Scope 3 Emissions (Other Indirect Emissions): Emissions that are a consequence of the activities of the organisation but occur from sources not owned or controlled by the organisation, such as business travel, waste disposal, and supply chain emissions.

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR): A UK government regulation requiring large companies to report their energy use, carbon emissions and energy efficiency actions annually.

Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD): An industry-led initiative providing recommendations for companies to disclose climate related financial risks and opportunities.

Verification / Assurance: The process of independent review and validation of GHG emissions data and reports to ensure accuracy and reliability.

11. Appendices

1. Appendix A – Historic Stevenage Borough Council GHG Emissions Report (2012/2013)
2. Appendix B – Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) 2024/25
3. Appendix C – Asset List (Operational and Non-Operational Control)
4. Appendix D – Residual Mix Factor Calculation
5. Appendix F – Emission Group and Asset Specific GHG Calculations
6. Appendix G – Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) Pricing: Ecosystem Marketplace

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