



Part I – Release to Press

MeetingCabinetPortfolio AreaEnvironment and Performance.

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## CLIMATE CHANGE – ANNUAL UPDATE OCTOBER 2024

#### **KEY DECISION**

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#### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report builds upon the update provided to the Executive at its meeting in October 2023 and provides Cabinet with an overview of the action that Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) is taking to address climate change. Specifically, the report outlines the most important climate action work undertaken across the eight strategic themes identified as priorities in the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy of 2020.
- 1.2 The report also outlines further action being taken by SBC, in partnership at the county level through the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) and references the regional activities of the East of England Regional Climate Change Forum (RCCF).
- 1.3 Furthermore, the report outlines the street-level work and opportunities being undertaken to support local people in making positive environmental changes in their local areas, reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and increasing support for behavioural change in local neighbourhoods.

- 1.4 Importantly, the report also highlights the continuing need for substantial legislative and financial support from the UK Government to achieve the target for the town and Council to be net-zero by 2030.
- 1.5 The report also presents the latest draft of the Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), prepared in partnership with Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust. This plan summarises progress to date and outlines habitat priorities for the next five years.

#### 2 **RECOMMENDATIONS – CABINET:**

- 2.1 To acknowledge the progress in delivering the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy and action plan across the eight strategic areas, and delegating powers to the Portfolio Holder to make alterations following further engagement with other members.
- 2.2 To approve the Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2028, attached as **Appendix 3**, with a one-page summary in **Appendix 4** and a neighbourhood breakdown in **Appendix 5**.
- 2.3 To note the release of the Climate Change Action Plan tracker available at Stevenage Climate Action Plan (for further details, see 5.17 in **Appendix 1**).
- 2.4 To recognise the updated national climate action context, especially the new UK Government's climate priorities (further details in *"Level 2 UK National Climate Action"* in **Appendix 1**), and SBC's collaborative regional and countywide work.
- 2.5 To note the launch of the Stevenage Green Business Grant Scheme to help local businesses implement greener solutions to reduce their carbon footprint (details in **Appendix 1**, *"Level 6 Stevenage Level"* under *"Businesses"*).
- 2.6 To note the implementation of the "Pathway 3 People & Processes", focusing on ways of working and service-related emissions, particularly the establishment of the Staff Climate Champions Group (details in Appendix 1, "Level 6 Stevenage Level" under "People").

#### 3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Council officers have been working with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance to review the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy<sup>1</sup> and action plan. This includes assessing current and potential projects and identifying the necessary steps to achieve the goal of a net-zero town and Council by 2030.
- 3.2 Central to our efforts to tackle the climate crisis is recognising the actions needed at all levels, from coordinated international efforts, such as those outlined in the latest UNFCCC<sup>2</sup> Conference of the Parties (COPs), all the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Available at: Stevenage Climate Change Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

way through to collective and individual actions that can be implemented in the Stevenage's neighbourhoods and communities.

3.3 This report highlights several of Stevenage Borough Council's engagement and actions, ranging from reflecting global trends to implementing local actions and improving active engagement within the community, as illustrated in the scheme below.



Figure 1. SBC Climate Action Approach: the 9 levels for Climate Change Strategy.

### 4 CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE – SUMMARY

#### Level 1 – Global Climate Action

- 4.1 The Paris Agreement, adopted by 196 countries at COP21 (2015), is a legally binding treaty aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2°C, with efforts to cap it at 1.5°C. It has driven significant global funding for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and investing in low-carbon technologies. Under this treaty, countries are required to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) detailing their plans to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate impacts.
- 4.2 COP28 in Dubai (2023) concluded with the first global stocktake of climate action under the Paris Agreement, revealing slow progress across all areas of climate action and the need for a 43% reduction in global GHG emissions by 2030 from 2019 levels to stay on the 1.5°C pathway, and calling for accelerated climate action and a faster transition away from fossil fuels. COP28 also emphasized scaling up climate finance, with £9.88 billion pledged for the Green Climate Fund and a historic agreement to address climate-related losses and damages in vulnerable countries. However, current climate finance flows fall short of the trillions needed for clean energy transitions and adaptation efforts.

#### Level 2 – UK National Climate Action

- 4.3 The UK has committed to reducing GHG emissions by at least 68% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, aiming for net-zero by 2050.
- 4.4 Nationally, GHG emissions have continued to decrease, with transport as the main emitting sector. Provisional figures for 2023 estimate national net territorial GHG emissions at 384.2 million tCO<sub>2e</sub>, a 5.4% decrease from 2022 and 52.7% lower than in 1990. The long-term trend in UK territorial GHG emissions is outlined below.



Source: DESNZ, National Statistics.

- 4.5 The long-term decrease is due to a shift from coal to gas and renewables, energy efficiency, and a decline in energy-intensive industries. In 2023, emissions fell mainly due to lower gas demand for buildings and products, and higher electricity imports from France.
- 4.6 Despite this progress, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) indicates the UK is not on track to meet its net-zero target, and only a third of the required reductions are backed by credible plans.
- 4.7 The new UK Government aims to reinstate and strengthen climate policies (e.g., ban on petrol and diesel cars, transition to heat pumps) and establish new ones for home retrofitting and decentralised energy production. Its new approach is expected to provide more stable funding for Local Authorities' long-term climate initiatives.

#### Level 3 – Large Businesses

- 4.8 Over 90% of global GDP is now covered by net-zero targets, presenting a significant market opportunity for British businesses and job creation.
- 4.9 Stevenage hosts prominent businesses in aerospace, biotechnology, technology, and defence, many of which are well on track to meet their corporate net-zero targets. Brief case studies on the climate actions and commitments of Fujitsu and the Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst are included in the **Appendix 1**, "Level 3 Large Businesses".
- 4.10 The Council continues to collaborate with these businesses to share best practices and learnings on climate action.

#### Levels 4 & 5 – Regional and Countywide Climate Action

- 4.11 Collective work at countywide and regional levels is crucial for the Council's climate action, bringing together resources for the greatest impact, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- 4.12 The Council actively participates in the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP), a member-led organisation advancing climate change and sustainability initiatives across the county. HCCSP has facilitated collaboration with local partners, secured funding, and coordinated projects delivery, including Solar Together for solar installations, LEVI for charging infrastructure deployment, and the tree planting scheme "Your Tree, Our Future". HCCSP is also collaborating with the Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) to deliver the Sustainable County Mission.
- 4.13 The East of England Regional Climate Change Forum (RCCF) has been established and is enhancing SBC's efforts by providing collaboration opportunities for regional climate action. As part of this collaboration, the Council has been discussing and analysing its sustainable procurement practices through various initiatives.

#### Levels 6 – Stevenage Level

4.14 In 2022, Stevenage recorded its lowest historical GHG emissions at 362.8 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>, a 5.02% decrease from 2021 levels, and 17.5% lower than in the baseline year (2018). GHG emissions have consistently decreased across all sectors since 2005, with transport as the main emitting sector, followed by the residential sector. Stevenage's per capita emissions in 2022 were lower than county, regional, and national averages. The territorial GHG emissions trajectory for Stevenage is shown below.



Figure 3. Stevenage territorial GHG emissions estimates 2005-2022 (ktCO<sub>2e</sub>). Source: Based on DESNZ data.

4.15 The Council's GHG emissions have dropped by 39% since 2018, with a 61% reduction expected by October 2024 when switching the fleet fuel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO).



Figure 4. SBC emissions trajectory so far and expected challenge ahead.

- 4.16 Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, the establishment of a target for Stevenage to be net-zero by 2030 (for both the town and the Council), and the development of the Climate Change Strategy in 2020, the Council has now released its Climate Action Plan Tracker online. This tracker showcases over 50 actions across eight strategic themes, as described in the following paragraphs.
- 4.17 Businesses: The Council has been actively supporting local businesses, particularly micro-businesses and SMEs, in understanding, setting, and meeting their climate goals. This support has been delivered through Wenta's Action Zero Programme (119 businesses registered so far) and the Sustainable Business Programme funded by the UKSPF. These programmes offer advice on understanding sustainable needs, developing action plans, monitoring and reporting progress, and creating Carbon Reduction Plans (CRPs). Building on these programmes, the new Green Business Grant Scheme provides SMEs with £70,000 this year for green solutions implementation. Additionally, the Council continues to promote and deliver actions on sustainable procurement and social value.
- 4.18 Homes: The Council aims to achieve a minimum EPC band C for all 8,000 Council homes by 2030, essential for becoming a net-zero organisation and town<sup>3</sup>. UK Government central funding is crucial for reaching this target. SBC has been delivering decarbonisation and retrofitting actions funded by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), upgrading properties from below EPC band C to above, reducing bills, and cutting emissions. Improvements have included wall insulation, loft insulation, double glazing, efficient lighting, and solar panels. 209 houses were upgraded through SHDF Wave 1, and 237 homes are being retrofitted now under SHDF Wave 2.1. The Council has also been promoting schemes to decarbonise private homes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> While it is essential for SBC 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.

(e.g., LAD, HUG, Solar Together), and ensuring that its new housing developments are greener and include sustainable features as part of its 5-star quality approach. Finally, the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (SBLP) is being partially review, with policies for sustainable, low-carbon, and zero-carbon homes across Stevenage being proposed.



Figure 5. External appearance of Mount Pleasant properties before and after SHDF retrofits.

- 4.19 **Construction & Regeneration:** Transforming the building and construction sector is critical for achieving climate goals. As a leader in town centre regeneration, the Council has significant influence in building better and more sustainable buildings and places. A comprehensive regeneration programme has delivered sustainable projects with various partners (e.g., Railway North MSCP, opened in May 2023) and will deliver key projects in the future, such as the Public Services Hub. A crucial tool for the Council to lead climate action is the Local Plan, currently under partial review to update existing climate policies and incorporate new ones, on topics such as energy efficiency, emissions targets and offsetting (including whole-life carbon targets for large developments), overheating and cooling, water and wastewater management, and green infrastructure.
- 4.20 **Waste & Recycling:** The waste sector significantly impacts climate change. Currently, 77% of residual waste in Hertfordshire is processed at EfW facilities, with a target for zero waste to landfill by 2030. The Council also aims to increase recycling rates to 60% by 2035. However, Stevenage's current recycling rate is 39.1%, the lowest in Hertfordshire. The Council is conducting a pilot programme to increase recycling rates in flat blocks and has implemented solar panels on the rooftops of seven refuse collection lorries, to save money and reduce GHG emissions. SBC has also made progress by participating in the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP), through various initiatives and communication campaigns to promote waste reduction and recycling.



Figure 6. Solar panels installed on Stevenage's refuse collection lorries

- 4.21 **People:** Stevenage can only achieve its net-zero targets if everyone participates. In November 2023, the Council's SLT approved the *Pathway 3 People and Processes*, identifying staff-related emissions requiring significant behavioural changes. To implement Pathway 3, a Staff Climate Champions Group (SCCG) was established to improve engagement, raise awareness, and drive positive change within SBC. This group aims to discuss themes like business travel, waste, water use, and service delivery. Last year, the Council also organised several training initiatives on climate change and sustainability. Finally, as climate adaptation is critical to prepare for and adjust to the climate impacts, the Council developed its first Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA), outlining 51 specific climate-related risks, within four categories and across 18 service areas.
- 4.22 Biodiversity: Biodiversity loss and climate change are intricately connected, making it crucial to protect and enhance biodiversity, and highlighting the importance of new policies such as the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Council aims to plant over 4,000 trees by 2030 and increase the town's tree canopy cover to 19%. Recently, 3,500 saplings were planted in Fairlane Wood, alongside other initiatives like community orchards. The Council is also discussing a new tree replacement policy for new developments in the Local Plan partial review and is developing new strategies for Tree & Woodlands and Green Spaces. Moreover, a new Biodiversity Action Plan (2024-2028) has been produced and is presented for approval. The detailed presentation of this plan is included in Appendix 1, "Level 6 Stevenage Level", under the "Biodiversity" section, whereas the full report is attached as Appendix 3, with a one-page summary in Appendix 4 and a neighbourhood breakdown in Appendix 5.



Figure 7. Stevenage's Fairlane Wood.

- 4.23 **Transport:** Transport is the main emitting sector in Stevenage, contributing 31.2% of the borough's total GHG emissions. The Council aims to decarbonise its fleet before 2030. Starting October 2024, the fleet will switch to HVO, reducing net GHG emissions by up to 90%. Since 2023, three new electric vehicles have been incorporated into the fleet. The Council also recognises the importance of active travel for meeting its climate targets and is implementing a Cycle Hire scheme across the town, with 45 hubs and 150 e-bikes, along with other cycling initiatives (e.g., cycle hangars, maintenance stands). Additionally, EV chargers are being deployed across the town, an EV Car Club has been established, and a new taxi licensing policy with climate considerations has been developed. The Council also conducted its first post-pandemic Staff Travel Survey to assess employee's commuting and business travel habits and explore further sustainable incentives.
- 4.24 **Energy & Water:** The energy sector is responsible for over two-thirds of global emissions. The UK aims to decarbonise its electricity system by 2035. Meanwhile, the Council has switched to a zero-carbon electricity tariff since 2022, and continuously monitors electricity demand across its main sites using a digital meter explorer. Natural gas usage remains the main challenge for SBC in this regard. In 2023, energy audits were conducted for Daneshill House, Cavendish Road Depot, and the Indoor Market, and efficiency upgrades have been delivered across leisure facilities, Daneshill House, and the MSCPs. Besides energy, water is also crucial for the town's sustainability, especially since Hertfordshire is one of the driest regions in the UK. Water and wastewater management policies are being included in the Local Plan partial review, and rainwater harvesting infrastructure has started to be implemented locally.

#### Level 7-9 – Local Engagement

4.25 Local community engagement remained a key focus for 2023/24. Initiatives included an updated Climate Change Communications and Marketing Plan, a dedicated Climate Action Plan tracker portal for resident feedback, and participation in community events like Stevenage Day, featuring educational stalls and giveaways to promote sustainability. The Council also provided educational online resources, such as an Environmental Days Calendar and a Sustainable Event Handbook. Additionally, the Council engaged with

various stakeholders, including the Central Library, the Stevenage Football Club Foundation, and local businesses, to promote sustainability initiatives.

4.26 Finally, the Council continues to prioritise neighbourhood and street-level work, particularly through topic reference groups and the implementation of the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF). The CCCF has supported eight green community projects within seven wards, delivering benefits such as reduction of waste, improved biodiversity, water conservation, and climate adaptation. Details on the CCCF process, requirements, and case studies are included in **Appendix 1**, *"Level 7-9 – Local Engagement"* under the *"Neighbourhood and Street Level Work"* section. Further information on the approved CCCF projects is available in **Appendix 6**.

#### 5 IMPLICATIONS

#### **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The costs associated with producing and consulting on the climate change strategy have been met from the agreed departmental budget. A number of projects referenced within this report have secured third party funding from government and other sources, such as S106 agreements, to be able to pilot initiatives, or to improve sustainable travel assets. Local CIL funding may also be available to support improvements to local infrastructure that reduce the GHG emissions in the area such as new trees, better lighting, and footway improvements.
- 5.2 It is recognised that a move to net zero and sustainable travel could mean reduced income, for example related to car parking income, which is used to fund other services, and will need to be continually reviewed through the Medium-Term Financial Plan process. There are likely to be significant reductions in income to the Council linked to changes in the way people commute and use the Council's car parks. This will need to be carefully managed to ensure the services and provisions for sustainable transport the income funds can continue.
- 5.3 As the Council works on options and future projects to achieve the ambition of being a net zero carbon Council and town by 2030, Officers will need to bring forward a number of business cases. If the government does not step in to support the local government sector and the Council is required to provide the investment, then a significant reprioritisation of other projects and activities would be required to progress highly complex projects to absorb increased revenue and capital costs.

#### Legal Implications

5.4 There are no direct legal implications associated with adopting or delivering the Climate Change Strategy, however it is likely the UK Government will begin introducing stricter targets with legal implications for those Councils that are not meeting Greenhouse Gases reductions.

#### **Risk Implications**

- 5.5 The greatest risks associated with this work are failing to secure sufficient support from residents, businesses, and government to protect us all from the effect of climate change.
- 5.6 There is also a reputational risk of not meeting our climate targets set in 2019-2020, primarily due to the lack of resources or funding and co-funding from the UK Government.

#### **Policy Implications**

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

#### **Climate Change Implications**

5.8 This report highlights the risks, challenges, and opportunities that the Council must address, not only GHG emissions but its wider climate action aspirations.

#### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

5.9 Climate change affects those in most need both in the UK and around the world. Those in deprivation, hunger or unwell are both most affected by climate change and least able to address it. Therefore, the Council is duty bound as one of those in the world that are more able to act, to act now.

## **APPENDIX 1**

## DETAILED CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL UPDATE 2024

#### 1 LEVEL 1: GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION

- 1.1 The Paris Agreement, adopted by 196 countries at COP21 (2015), is the main framework for global climate action. This legally binding treaty aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to cap it at 1.5°C. It has driven significant global funding for countries to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and invest in low-carbon technologies.
- 1.2 The Paris Agreement requires countries to submit their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)<sup>4</sup>, detailing their plans to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate impacts.
- 1.3 COP28 (Dubai, 2023) concluded with the first global stocktake<sup>5</sup> of international climate action under the Paris Agreement, revealing slow progress across all areas of climate action, and the need for a 43% reduction in global GHG emissions by 2030 from 2019 levels to stay on the 1.5°C pathway. It highlighted a clear emissions gap between current plans and what is needed, calling for accelerated climate action and a faster transition away from fossil fuels.
- 1.4 COP28 emphasised scaling up climate finance, with £9.88 billion pledged by 33 countries, including the UK, for the Green Climate Fund<sup>6</sup> (2024-2027), critical for climate action in developing countries, and a historic agreement to operationalise a new fund for addressing climate-related losses and damages<sup>7</sup> in vulnerable countries (over £510 million committed so far). A global pledge was also made to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency improvements by 2030.
- 1.5 However, current climate finance flows fall far short of the trillions needed to support developing countries with clean energy transitions, national climate plans, and adaptation efforts.
- 1.6 COP28 also recognised the need for a holistic approach, integrating efforts to protect biodiversity and ecosystems with climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

 $<sup>^4</sup>$  The UK 2030 NDC, submitted on 22^{nd} September 2022 can be accessed here: UK NDC 2030 .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Available at: COP 28 Global Stocktake

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Further information at: Green Climate Fund

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Further information at: Losses and Damages Fund

#### 2 LEVEL 2: UK NATIONAL CLIMATE ACTION

- 2.1 The UK has committed to reducing GHG emissions by at least 68% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels under its current NDCs, one of the most ambitious among major economies. Additionally, the UK targets net-zero by 2050<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.2 Provisional figures for UK territorial GHG emissions<sup>9</sup> up to 2023, estimate total national net territorial GHG emissions at 384.2 million tCO<sub>2e</sub>. This is 5.4% below 2022 levels, 14.2% lower than in 2019 (before COVID-19), and 52.7% lower than in 1990.
- 2.3 The long-term trend in UK territorial GHG emissions from 1990 to 2023 is outlined in Figure 1.



Figure 1. UK territorial GHG emissions, 1990-2023 (provisional figure for 2023). Source: DESNZ, National Statistics.

- 2.4 The long-term emissions decrease has been primarily due to the shift from coal to gas and renewables for electricity generation, energy efficiency, and a decline in energy-intensive industries.
- 2.5 In 2023, emissions decreased mainly due to lower gas demand for electricity, generation, reduced usage in buildings and product sectors, and higher electricity imports from France.
- 2.6 In 2023, GHG emissions from electricity supply fell by 10.8 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> (19.6%), from buildings and products by 5.1 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> (6.2%), likely influenced by higher energy prices and energy efficiency, and industrial emissions by 4.6 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> (8.0%), mainly due to reduced fuel consumption in the iron and steel industry.
- 2.7 Domestic transport remained the largest emitter in the UK, accounting for 29.1% of all GHG emissions in 2023, with a 1.6 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> (1.4%) decrease from 2022 and a 11.1% decrease from 2019.
- 2.8 The net UK territorial GHG emissions by sector in 2023 are shown below:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> As outlined in its Net Zero Strategy, available at: UK Net Zero Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> These figures have been released by DESNZ (Department of Energy Security and Net Zero) in March 2024, and are available at: Provisional UK GHG Emissions - National Statistics 2022



Figure 2. UK net territorial GHG emissions by economy sector in 2023 (provisional figures). Source: DESNZ, National Statistics

- 2.9 Continuous monitoring of these reductions helps ensure they can be sustained and improved without worsening energy poverty or limiting access to employment and quality housing.
- 2.10 Rising energy prices may limit short-term energy use and drive behavioural and production changes in the medium-term. This underscores the need for government initiatives to promote insulation, retrofitting, energy efficiency, and sustainable energy sources.
- 2.11 Despite the 2023 emissions reductions, the Climate Change Committee (CCC)<sup>10</sup> has indicated that the UK is not on track to hit its net-zero target, and only a third of the emissions reductions required to achieve the 2030 target are currently covered by credible plans.
- 2.12 The CCC has outlined priority actions for the UK to stay on track with its netzero targets:



Figure 3. CCC-Identified priority actions for the UK to meet its net-zero targets.

2.13 In September 2023, the UK Government announced easing key climate policies, including the ban on petrol and diesel vehicle sales, replacing gas boilers with heat pumps, and property energy efficiency requirements. The CCC criticised these changes as inconsistent with net-zero targets, arguing there was no evidence that reducing climate ambitions would lower costs or support long-term interests for citizens.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> In its CCC Progress in Reducing Emissions Report (2024), available at: CCC Progress in Reducing Emissions Report

- 2.14 The new UK Government is committed to an ambitious climate agenda, aiming to reinstate and strengthen climate policies delayed or weakened by the previous administration, including the ban on petrol and diesel cars, the transition to heat pumps, and the energy efficiency standards for properties.
- 2.15 Priorities defined by the new UK Government<sup>11</sup> include establishing Great British Energy<sup>12</sup>, decarbonising the power grid<sup>13</sup>, upgrading the planning system, enhancing energy efficiency measures, and supporting green growth. These aim to boost energy independence and cut bills by 2030.
- 2.16 One of Government's key policies, the Warm Homes Plan, will invest £6.6 billion over the next parliament to upgrade 5 million homes, reducing bills and cutting fuel poverty through grants and low-interest loans for insulation, solar panels, batteries, and low-carbon heating.
- 2.17 Another key policy, the Local Power Plan, aims to decentralise and boost clean energy production through partnerships between Great British Energy, energy companies, local authorities, and community groups to roll out small and medium-scale clean power projects.
- 2.18 The new Government has committed to award Councils with multi-year funding and end competitive bidding, ensuring stable and predictable funding for effective delivery of local authorities' long-term climate action.
- 2.19 The main new UK Government policy priorities for energy transition and climate action are outlined below.



Figure 4. New UK Government priorities on energy transition and climate action.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Further information at: Make Britain a Clean Energy Superpower

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Initially designed as a publicly owned renewable energy company. Further information at: Great British Energy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The de facto ban on onshore wind in the UK has been scrapped. This change was announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves and took effect on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024. This opens the possibility for Council's owned wind turbines.

#### 3 LEVEL 3: LARGE BUSINESSES

- 3.1 The Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan<sup>14</sup> identifies net-zero as a key growth opportunity of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with over 90% of global GDP covered by a net-zero target. This could create £1 trillion in market opportunities for British businesses and around 480,000 jobs by 2030.
- 3.2 Stevenage hosts several prominent businesses in aerospace, biotechnology, technology, and defence, many of which are well on their way to meeting their corporate net-zero targets and are investing significantly to lower their GHG emissions and adapt to climate change. The Council has surveyed large businesses including GSK, MBDA, Fujitsu, and Wenta.
- 3.3 Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst is an open innovation bioscience campus hosting over 45 companies focused on developing and commercialising nextgeneration medicine. Sustainability and climate commitments are central to this not-for-profit business. Their Incubator building achieved an "Excellent" BREEAM<sup>15</sup> sustainability standard, a rating achieved by only 10% of new non-domestic buildings, and the Accelerator building received a "Very Good" rating. They use 672 solar panels (saving about 28.1 tCO<sub>2e</sub> annually), Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) for heating and cooling, CO<sub>2</sub> pumps for domestic hot water, LED lighting in car parks and indoor areas (further saving 20.65 tCO<sub>2e</sub> each year), motion-activated lights and rainwater harvesting systems. They were the first science park to introduce a furniture and equipment reuse programme, with 85% of staff participating. To support biodiversity, they have installed bird and bat boxes, implemented plant replacement schemes, and created wild meadow areas to promote increased flora and fauna. The campus also includes beehives managed by GSK, located around a woodland walking circuit. They also provide 12 EV charging points and a free shuttle bus service, managed by GSK, for commuters who travel in via train or bus to reduce GHG emissions.



Figure 5. Solar panels at the Incubator Building and Bioscience Catalyst green spaces circuit. Source: Courtesy of Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst.

3.4 Fujitsu has a significant presence in Stevenage, focusing on ICT services. The company is committed to sustainability and aims to achieve net-zero

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Available at: Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Further information at: BREEAM - Sustainable Building Certification

emissions across the global Fujitsu Group by 2040. They are reducing their carbon footprint by purchasing renewable electricity and using energy-efficient technologies (e.g., LED lighting, heat pumps). At the Stevenage site, Fujitsu has undertaken several initiatives: planting over 200 trees and shrubs, including a woodland edge (Gunn Hild Project), and a Japanese Garden with 30 plant species. For these activities, they have engaged with local community groups like the Symonds Green Beavers and Cubs. Additionally, Fujitsu composts all garden, kitchen vegetable, and cardboard waste, as well as the grass clippings and shrub pruning, using this compost in onsite projects for top dressing or mulching. They have also implemented a retaining wall with various grasses and ground cover plants that can grow in gravel and plan to create a large herbaceous border to enhance local biodiversity and the environment.



Figure 6. Fujitsu's eco-wall and planting activities in Stevenage. Source: Courtesy of Fujitsu Stevenage.

3.5 The Council continues to collaborate with these companies to share best practices and learnings regarding GHG reductions and climate action.

### 4 LEVELS 4 & 5: REGIONAL (EELGA-RCCF) / COUNTYWIDE (HCCSP)

- 4.1 A key aspect of the Council's climate action approach is collaborating with local government partners to secure investment, develop business cases, and collectively reduce carbon footprints and enhance sustainability. This joint endeavour brings together our resources for the greatest impact.
- 4.2 It is crucial to highlight that the activities at local, county, and regional levels are as joined up as possible to make work effective and efficient.

#### Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)

4.3 The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)<sup>16</sup>, launched in January 2020, is a member-led strategic partnership advancing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Further information at: Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership

joint work programmes on climate change and sustainability initiatives across Hertfordshire. It includes all 10 districts, the County Council (HCC), and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

- 4.4 The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Performance, the Chief Executive, the Assistant Director for Planning & Regulation, and other officers attend these meetings. SBC actively participates in HCCSP, with the Chief Executive as the lead officer sponsor, and the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Performance as the chair for 2024/25.
- 4.5 SBC is supporting the delivery of five out of the six HCCSP priority themes (see below), with detailed action plans for each.



Figure 7. HCCSP's six priority themes<sup>17</sup>.

- 4.6 Much of SBC's strategic work is focused through HCCSP to harness countylevel collaboration. There are strong linkages between HCCSP and SBC key themes, with a crucial aim of avoiding duplication of efforts at local levels.
- 4.7 Some examples of work undertaken via HCCSP include:
  - Biodiversity Baseline Joint procurement and county-wide reference point for the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)<sup>18</sup> and the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)<sup>19</sup>.
  - Solar Together<sup>20</sup> Joint communications and county-wide coordination of this solar panel purchase and installation scheme, facilitating domestic energy generation with limited authority resources. According to the 2023 End of Project Report, there were 210 interested registrations in Stevenage. Of these, 46 residents accepted PV installations, and 2 accepted battery installations. In the installation phase, 30 installations had been completed, featuring 333 solar panels with a total capacity of 130 kW, and an investment of £286,959, achieving 21.8 tCO<sub>2e</sub> reduced per year. Additionally, 28 batteries with a total energy storage capacity of about 200 kWh were installed.
  - Your Tree, Our Future <sup>21</sup>– Joint communications, logistical, and funding support have enabled thousands of trees to be given away to residents under this scheme. Stevenage has been allocated 6,637 trees in 2023,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> HCCSP is proactively mapping the priority themes to find the best organisations to achieve specific objectives.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Further information at: Local Nature Recovery Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Further information at: Biodiversity Net Gain

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Further information at: Group-Buying for Solar - Solar Together

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Further information at: Your Tree, Our Future

and 3,169 trees in 2024, available for collection and planting in December this year.

- LEVI<sup>22</sup> Funding In September 2023, HCC obtained LEVI funding to support EV charging deployment across the county. SBC submitted candidate sites in the borough, primarily in car parks supporting local parks, sport facilities, and garage compounds. In April 2024, the application was finalised and PAAP<sup>23</sup> was conducted. Later in 2024, SBC will sign a Partnership Agreement, and HCC will start procurement, with contracts expected to be awarded to Charge Point Operators (CPOs) in spring 2025.
- 4.8 The HCCSP approach allows for effective navigation and awareness in a complex, multi-layered environment.
- 4.9 Via HCCSP, SBC has provided training and capacity-building for councillors and officers on sustainability, adaptation, political awareness, and planning.
- 4.10 HCCSP also facilitates networking, intelligence sharing, and collaborative approaches to funding opportunities and officer development through regular Sustainability Officers' Group meetings, offering advice, guidance, and sharing of best practices.

#### Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB): Sustainable County Mission

- 4.11 The Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB)<sup>24</sup> is a collaborative initiative focused on managing and promoting sustainable growth across the county, enhancing the economy, infrastructure, and quality of life.
- 4.12 One of HGB's missions, the Sustainable County Mission<sup>25</sup>, seeks to transform Hertfordshire into a prosperous, low-carbon economy with a thriving natural environment, maximising the benefits of sustainable growth for residents and businesses, and achieving net-zero targets by 2050.
- 4.13 HCCSP has been identified as the key partner in delivering the Sustainable County Mission. This collaboration ensures both organisations effectively address climate change and promote sustainable growth across the county.
- 4.14 As part of HGB's mission, HCCSP has been working on embedding sustainability considerations in all HGB activities and collaborating with other bodies to support achievement of county-wide sustainability ambitions.
- 4.15 HCCSP's plans for the Sustainable County Mission were presented at the HGB on 17 July 2024, highlighting:
  - The breadth and overlap of HCCSP's and HGB's priorities.
  - Potential gaps in resourcing and capacity which HCCSP and HGB could address together.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure – further information at: Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Project Assessment and Approval Process

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Further information at: Hertfordshire Growth Board

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Further information at: HGB - Vision and Missions under the section "Sustainable County".

- Joint working opportunities related to the Sustainable County Mission.
- 4.16 HGB endorsed HCCSP's proposed way forward for the Sustainable County Mission, identifying HCCSP as the lead for Carbon Reduction, Climate Adaptation, and Behavioural Change objectives.

#### East of England Regional Climate Change Forum (RCCF)

- 4.17 SBC and HCCSP are key players in the context of the Regional Climate Change Forum (RCCF)<sup>26</sup> work programme. Led by the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA), RCCF brings together representatives from eight climate change partnerships across the region, covering over 50 local authorities.
- 4.18 RCCF has published an action plan with eight priorities as set out below.



Figure 8. RCCF Action Plan: Eight Priorities.

- 4.19 Hertfordshire leads the adaptation workstream for Priority 5 and collaborates with Suffolk and Cambridgeshire on Priority 7.
- 4.20 In 2024, as part of Priority 6, SBC participated in the RCCF Responsible Procurement Project<sup>27</sup>, which aimed to help Councils organise, prioritise, and deliver their sustainability commitments throughout procurement. The diagnostic assessed 30 economic, social, cultural, and environmental value codes. Various officers from different SBC teams participated, and the outcomes<sup>28</sup> were presented to the RCCF. The project established a baseline of current responsible procurement practices, identified areas for improvement, and set future priorities.
- 4.21 Additionally, SBC is part of the RCCF Sustainable Procurement Sub-Group, which supports peer collaboration on climate-focused procurement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Further information at: East of England Climate Change Forum (RCCF)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Further information at: Responsible Procurement Project - East of England

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Available at: EELGA/RCCF Responsible Procurement Project Report

4.22 EELGA-RCCF also organises the East of England Net Zero Conference, a key annual event for discussing and advancing regional climate goals. The latest conference, held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024 in Cambridge, was attended by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance and SBC officers.

#### 5 LEVEL 6: STEVENAGE LEVEL

- 5.1 Central government data for Stevenage's 2022 territorial emissions<sup>29</sup> has been released<sup>30</sup>. These figures, based complex energy and resources use data, are typically two years behind at a borough level. The 2023 figures will be released in the next 8-9 months.
- 5.2 Based on the latest DESNZ update (on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024), the territorial GHG emissions trajectory for Stevenage is shown below. An infographic of this latest available data is available in **Appendix 2**.



Figure 9. Stevenage territorial GHG emissions estimates 2005-2022 (ktCO<sub>2e</sub>). Source: Based on DESNZ data<sup>31</sup>.

- 5.3 In 2022, Stevenage recorded its lowest historical GHG emissions at 362.8 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>, a 5.03% decrease from 2021 (382.0 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>), 17.5% lower than the 2018 baseline year (439.7 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>), and 48.1% lower than in 2005 (699.2 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>).
- 5.4 The reduction from 2021 to 2022 was mainly due to decreases in the domestic (-13.6%), commercial (-6.6%) and public (-5.3%) sectors. Transport and industry increased slightly by 1.1% and 5.6%, respectively, indicating post-COVID-19 recovery.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Territorial GHG emissions are those that occur within Stevenage's geographical borders, including all our residents, businesses, and activities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> The full dataset can be consulted at: UK local authority and regional GHG emissions statistics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Available at: UK local authority and regional GHG emissions.

- 5.5 Since 2005, most sectoral emissions have consistently decreased. Residential emissions dropped significantly by 49.5%, from 185.4 ktCO<sub>2e</sub> in 2005 to 93.7 ktCO<sub>2e</sub> in 2022. The public sector, including SBC, reduced its emissions by 44.9% over the same period, whereas commercial emissions decreased by 58.9%, and waste-related emissions fell by 73.9%.
- 5.6 Stevenage's residential sector reached its lowest recorded emissions level in 2022, driven by a cleaner power grid and a warmer year, resulting in less gas usage. It is crucial to monitor these reductions to ensure they are consistent and sustainable over time, rather than merely reflecting higher energy prices negatively affecting residents.
- 5.7 Total territorial GHG emissions per capita (tCO<sub>2e</sub>) followed a similar trend, with a 17.9% decrease in 2022 compared to 2018, as shown below.



Figure 10. Stevenage territorial GHG emissions estimates 2005-2022 per capita (tCO<sub>2e</sub>). Source: Based on DESNZ data<sup>32</sup>.

- 5.8 Stevenage's annual per capita emissions (4.0 tCO<sub>2e</sub>) are lower than those of Hertfordshire (4.7 tCO<sub>2e</sub>), the East of England (5.6 tCO<sub>2e</sub>), England (5.1 tCO<sub>2e</sub>), and the UK average (5.6 tCO<sub>2e</sub>).
- 5.9 Stevenage's total territorial GHG emissions by economic sector in 2022 are presented below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Available at: UK local authority and regional GHG emissions.



Figure 11. Stevenage territorial GHG emissions estimates in 2022 by economic sector. Source: Based on DESNZ data<sup>33</sup>.

- 5.10 In 2022, transport was the main emitting sector in Stevenage, with 113.1 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>. The residential sector followed with 93.7 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>, primarily from gas heating. The commercial sector and industry accounted for 70.5 and 47.6 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>, respectively, while the public sector (including SBC) contributed just 5.5% of total emissions, mainly from gas use.
- 5.11 In June 2019, SBC declared a Climate Emergency, setting a target for Stevenage to be net-zero emissions by 2030. Tackling climate change and improving sustainability must be central to all activities by the Council, local businesses, and residents.
- 5.12 Scope 1 emissions come from sources directly owned or controlled by the Council, like fuel burned in the fleet vehicles or gas used for heating buildings. Scope 2 emissions are indirect, from the production of energy that SBC purchases and uses, like electricity generation. Scope 3 emissions are not produced by the Council itself or its controlled assets, but from activities up and down its value chain for which it is indirectly responsible. A summary of GHG emissions scopes is shown below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Available at: UK local authority and regional GHG emissions.



Figure 12. GHG emissions scopes for a reporting company/organisation. Source: GHG Protocol, Corporate Value Chain Accounting and Reporting Standard

- 5.13 In July 2020, CLS Energy established an emissions baseline for SBC, primarily covering Scope 1 and 2 emissions, with some Scope 3 considered (from grey fleet mileage reclaim). The total annual emissions for the Council in 2018 (the baseline year) were estimated at 3,399 tCO<sub>2e</sub>.
- 5.14 In 2024, SBC is developing a methodology for annual emissions reporting using the LGA Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool<sup>34</sup>. This may increase the emissions baseline by including more properties and additional Scope 3 emissions, but it will better reflect the Council's actual and current emissions.
- 5.15 Since the original baseline, SBC's emissions have reduced by around 39%, mainly due to the switch to a zero-carbon supply tariff for electricity and efficiency measures. Further reductions are expected by switching the fleet fuel in October 2024, as described in 12.3.



Figure 13. SBC emissions trajectory so far and expected challenge ahead<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Further information at: LGA Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> The figure is considering the important effects of switching the Council's fleet fuel supply to HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil), as described under the Transport section of Level 6.

5.16 In September 2020, SBC released its Stevenage Climate Change Strategy<sup>36</sup>, identifying eight strategic themes to guide the action plan towards net-zero, reflecting the Council's range of services.



Figure 14. Stevenage Climate Change Strategy's 8 strategic themes leading the action plan.

- 5.17 In February 2024, the Council launched the Stevenage Climate Action Plan Tracker<sup>37</sup> with Kausal<sup>38</sup>, an online portal showcasing its efforts to reduce GHG and improve climate resilience. The tracker allows the public, businesses, and organisations to view over 50 actions across the eight strategic areas.
- 5.18 Throughout 2024, Council officers have been updating the Climate Change Action Plan and adapting its structure and contents to align with the Climate Scorecards<sup>39</sup> assessment by Climate Emergency UK. In 2023, SBC scored 27% on this assessment, 2% below the district average. These upgrades are expected to improve the 2024 score.
- 5.19 The following sections highlight the main actions taken by the Council during 2023/24 across the eight strategic themes. The work done in 2023 on establishing three decarbonisation pathways, covering a substantial portion of SBC's emissions, is also included in the following sections.

### 6 LEVEL 6: STRATEGIC THEMES – BUSINESSES

- 6.1 Businesses are seeking the Council's guidance and support on meeting climate-related obligations and achieving their own climate targets.
- 6.2 Since 2022, the Council has funded 200 Gold Memberships for Wenta's Action Zero Programme<sup>40</sup>, helping local SMEs<sup>41</sup> tackle climate change, identify climate opportunities and risks, recognise the benefits of netzero, and reduce their carbon footprint. The service includes advice on setting reduction targets, developing action plans, monitoring, and reporting progress, and obtaining environmental accreditation. Over 119 business have already joined the programme.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Available at: Stevenage Climate Change Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Available at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan Tracker

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Further information at: Kausal - Turn Climate Goals into Actions

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Further information at: Council Climate Action Scorecards - Climate Emergency UK

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Further information at: Wenta Action Zero Programme

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

- 6.3 Since 2023, the Council's Sustainable Business Programme<sup>42</sup>, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), has supported local businesses, and boosted private investment in growth-enhancing activities, including innovation and the adoption of energy-efficient, and low-carbon technologies. As part of this programme<sup>43</sup>, two Meet the Buyer (MTB) events<sup>44</sup> have been held to support contract readiness, helping businesses become more sustainable and competitive by better understanding buyers' sustainability needs to tailor their services and develop Carbon Reduction Plans (CRPs). Other activities include workshops for small and medium-sized businesses and the third sector, offering sustainability support for customer attraction, staff retention, overcoming challenges, and creating sustainability plans and CRPs. There is also bespoke one-to-one consultancy support for sustainability audits, policies, guides, tools, and carbon reduction.
- 6.4 The Council is launching the Stevenage Green Business Grant Scheme to help SMEs implement greener solutions by purchasing and installing new products and equipment to reduce their carbon footprint, water usage, and waste production, improving energy efficiency, and cutting energy costs. Businesses must have undertaken support from either the Stevenage Sustainable Business Programme or Wenta's Action Zero Programme, or another accredited programme that provided them with an independent CRP recommending emissions reduction projects. £70,000 is available for this scheme this year, with funding subject to availability for the next one.
- 6.5 A summary of the business decarbonisation support schemes is provided in Figure 15.
- 6.6 The Council is undertaking the Greener Leases<sup>45</sup> Project for its commercial tenants, reviewing current green initiatives and exploring new opportunities. The goal is to develop procedures and incentives that encourage greener leases while maintaining competitiveness.
- 6.7 As part of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (SBLP) partial review, discussed in later sections, the Council is proposing new policies to promote the creation of local green jobs and integrate sustainable practices into the local economy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Further information at: Sustainable Business Programme

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Further information at: Sustainability Programs by SBC and Sustainable X

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> The last Meet the Buyer event was held on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, at Knebworth Barns, Stevenage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Further information at: Greener Leases



Figure 15. SBC businesses decarbonisation and sustainability support programmes.

- 6.8 In 2023, the Council's SLT approved the *"Pathway 3 People and Processes"* report, to address some of the Council's main Scope 3 emissions, recognising that up to 96% of LAs<sup>46</sup> emissions come from their supply chain, and highlighting sustainable procurement as a critical step forward.
- 6.9 The Council continues to implement Social Value<sup>47</sup> (required by the Social Value Act) through the Social Value Portal<sup>48</sup>. Social Value is the UK's legal approach to implementing key sustainable procurement aspects. It is based on the TOMs national framework<sup>49</sup>, which identifies themes, outcomes, and measures for implementation. Furthermore, the Council has taken regional collective actions to promote sustainable procurement, as highlighted in 4.20.
- 6.10 These schemes and programmes help the Council promote sustainability and net-zero targets across Stevenage, supporting its climate goals.

#### 7 LEVEL 6: STRATEGIC THEMES – HOMES

7.1 The Council has committed to achieving a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)<sup>50</sup> band C for all 8,000 Council homes by 2030<sup>51</sup>. This is vital for becoming a net-zero organisation and town, as the residential sector is Stevenage's second largest emitter, as outlined in 5.10. Below is the current distribution of SBC's housing stock according to the properties' EPC band.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Local Authorities

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Further information at: LGA District Councils Social Value Toolkit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Further information at: Social Value Portal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Further information at: Measurement - Social Value TOM System<sup>™</sup> - Social Value Portal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Further information at: Energy Performance of Buildings Certificates in England and Wales

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> While it is essential for SBC 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.



Figure 16. SBC housing stock EPC bands distribution.

- 7.2 The Council has been delivering projects under UK Government-funded and co-funded initiatives to decarbonise its current social housing stock, such as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)<sup>52</sup>.
- 7.3 The SHDF is a national scheme designed to provide warm, energy-efficient social homes, reducing GHG emissions, and tackling fuel bills and fuel poverty. The Council has used this fund to upgrade social housing properties from below EPC band C to above. These upgrades aim to reduce bills for tenants, deliver warm homes, and cut emissions. Improvements include installing wall insulation, loft insulation, double glazing, energy-efficient lighting, and solar panels.
- 7.4 The Council secured funding from SHDF Wave 1 and Wave 2.1. Wave 1 included houses only, while Wave 2.1 includes houses and some flat blocks.
- 7.5 SHDF Wave 1 involved a £1.84 million grant and a £1.60 million SBC contribution, upgrading 209 social homes to EPC Band C or B using a fabric-first approach. Completed in December 2023, the measures included loft insulation, ventilation, and low-energy lighting at all homes, 95 cavity wall insulations, and 105 solar panel installations.
- 7.6 SHDF Wave 2.1<sup>53</sup> secured a £2.62 million grant and a £3.97 million SBC contribution. It started in March 2023, aiming to retrofit 237 homes, targeting the least energy-efficient properties, to EPC Band C or B using a fabric-first approach. Measures include external and cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, energy-efficient lighting, solar panels, and ventilation, with an expected completion date of September 2025.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Further information at: Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> The SHDF Wave 2.1 figures have been predicted in the bid for funding but could change slightly over the project.



Figure 17. External appearance of Mount Pleasant properties before and after SHDF retrofits.



Figure 18. Solar panels installations in SBC housing stock using SHDF Wave 1.

- 7.7 The Council has installed Aico Environmental Sensors in some Wave 2.1 homes, measuring humidity, temperature, heat loss, and damp and mould risk, and aiding SBC in assessing the benefits from SHDF works.
- 7.8 SBC is undertaking a town-wide major five-year refurbishing programme<sup>54</sup> across its social housing, including energy efficiency measures like insulation, energy-efficient lighting, windows, and doors.
- 7.9 The Council is promoting grants and schemes to decarbonise private homes, aiming to improve their energy efficiency, reduce GHG emissions, and support the net-zero town target.
- 7.10 One of the promoted schemes is Solar Together, detailed in paragraph 4.7.
- 7.11 The Council is also promoting the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2)<sup>55</sup>, which provides free energy-efficient home improvements<sup>56</sup> to low-income and off-gas households. The scheme is running from April 2023 to March 2025. The promotion has involved direct letter drops to 481 targeted homes, communications with 257 stakeholders<sup>57</sup>, and a social media campaign reaching nearly 19,000 people. Posters were also placed on digital screens, buses, and community noticeboards.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Further information at: Current Major Works

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Further information at: Home Upgrade Grant: Phase 2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Including insulation and ventilation upgrades, low-carbon heating and hot water systems, and solar PV installations, among others.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Including VCSFE (Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise) members, Councillors, community centres, and local shops.

- 7.12 The Council helped deliver the Green Home Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 (LAD3) and Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1 (HUG1), supporting energy efficiency upgrades for low-efficiency and low-income households. Both schemes closed in September 2023. The Council actively promoted the schemes through various channels, including direct mail to 200 residents, letter to landlords, social media campaigns (reaching over 30,000 people), digital displays in the town centre, and leaflets distributed in community centres and at public events.
- 7.13 Central government funding and co-funding are critical for SBC to tackle retrofitting challenges. The Warm Homes Plan, detailed in 2.16, can significantly support SBC in enhancing the energy efficiency of its housing stock, reducing fuel poverty, and meeting its climate targets.
- 7.14 The Council is committed to greener developments within the area, with all its new housing developments adhering to a 5-star quality approach<sup>58</sup>, one of which is sustainability.
- 7.15 A recently delivered example is Helston House, an all-electric scheme with 29 apartments for Council tenants, featuring roof PV panels contributing to the landlord's running costs, battery systems, electric boilers, triple glazing, and heat recovery systems.



Figure 19. Helston House external view and solar panels on the rooftop.

- 7.16 Kenilworth Close is another ongoing development with sustainable features. Phase 1 is complete, including 31 houses, 57 flats, 88 independent living homes, seven shops, and an indoor community space. It uses hybrid heating systems, with Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) providing most of the heat, solar panels and batteries supplying electricity for various landlord needs, including lifts and lighting, Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) throughout the entire development, and green roofs.
- 7.17 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan (SBLP) partial review<sup>59</sup> proposes policies for sustainable, low-carbon, and zero-carbon homes. These include energy efficiency, GHG emissions targets, heating and cooling measures to prevent overheating and limit energy-dependent cooling systems, green

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Further information at: Housing Development – On the Right Road

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Local Plan Partial Review

infrastructure, digital connectivity, water and wastewater management, and circular economy principles.

### 8 LEVEL 6: STRATEGIC THEMES – CONSTRUCTION & REGENERATION

- 8.1 The building and construction sector is a major GHG emissions contributor, making its transformation crucial for addressing climate change.
- 8.2 Stevenage's regeneration programme aims to transform the town into a vibrant, mixed-use centre that reflects residents' and businesses' aspirations while honouring its new town heritage.
- 8.3 As a leader in town centre regeneration, the Council has significant influence to build better buildings and places that are sustainably designed and resilient to climate change.
- 8.4 The Council continues to work with regeneration partners committed to zerocarbon operations, responsible development, and sustainable initiatives like new construction practices, energy-efficient designs, materials reuse, and recycling.
- 8.5 The Public Services Hub is central to the town's regeneration, aiming to create a modern, multifunctional space for various public services and community facilities. Though still in the early design stages, the Council is working to ensure this new building is low-carbon, easy to maintain, and innovative.
- 8.6 The Railway North Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP), opened in May 2023, is part of the regeneration programme. It provides 622 parking spaces, including 30 for EVs, operating 24 hours a day. It also features secure parking for 83 bicycles. Equipped with solar panels and battery storage, it has achieved a low carbon footprint assessed through an LCA<sup>60</sup>.



Figure 20. Railway North MSCP's PV panels and external view of the building.

8.7 One of the crucial tools the Council uses to lead climate action is the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (SBLP). This plan integrates strategies and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Life Cycle Assessment: A comprehensive method used to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with all stages of a product's life, in this case a building, from raw material extraction through to disposal and recycling (end of life).

actions, translating climate goals into practical mitigation and adaptation measures.

- 8.8 The SBLP 2021-2031<sup>61</sup>, adopted in May 2019, provides a strategic framework for sustainable development, ensuring new developments align with climate action goals.
- 8.9 The Council is currently conducting a partial review of the SBLP 2011-2031 to update existing climate policies and incorporate new ones.
- 8.10 As part of the partial review, climate policies are being prioritised in the SBLP's strategic planning. The Council aims to balance new low-carbon homes and developments with the provision of new jobs and infrastructure, while protecting Stevenage's green and cultural assets.
- 8.11 Regarding construction, the SBLP partial review is incorporating critical policies related to energy efficiency, which will set GHG emissions targets for developments and may require contributions to a Carbon Offset Fund where these targets cannot be met on-site. It also addresses overheating and cooling, water efficiency, and green roofs and walls, among others. Under the reviewed policies, large-scale major development proposals would be required to demonstrate whole-life carbon net zero, including the construction phase, through an assessment and statement.
- 8.12 The approval and implementation of these policies are expected to significantly advance the town's net-zero targets.

### 9 LEVEL 6: STRATEGIC THEMES – WASTE & RECYCLING

- 9.1 The waste sector significantly impacts climate change. In 2022, Stevenage's waste-related GHG emissions were 15.3 ktCO<sub>2e</sub>, 4.03% of the town's total territorial emissions<sup>62</sup>. Preventing and recovering waste can reduce emissions across all economic sectors.
- 9.2 Reducing, reusing, repairing, recycling, and recovering must be central to the Council's waste management and operations.
- 9.3 The Council participates in Hertfordshire Waste Partnership<sup>63</sup> (HWP), a collaborative initiative involving all 10 district and borough councils in Hertfordshire, along with HCC.
- 9.4 HWP aims to help residents reduce, reuse, and recycle waste effectively, through public awareness campaigns and long-term strategies. Through HWP, SBC has launched various initiatives to promote waste reduction and recycling within the community.
- 9.5 HWP aims for 100% of Hertfordshire's residual waste to be processed at energy-from-waste (EfW) facilities, targeting zero waste to landfill by 2030. In

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Borough Local Plan

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Further information at: UK Local Authority and Regional GHG Emissions Statistics

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Further information at: Waste Aware Hertfordshire Partnership

2022/23, 77% of Hertfordshire's residual waste went to EfW, with 23% to landfill, showing a growing trend away from the latter.

- 9.6 SBC handles regular bin and bulky waste collections<sup>64</sup>. Besides kerbside recycling service, the Council provides recycling banks located throughout the town<sup>65</sup>.
- 9.7 SBC operates an in-house recycling collection service, separating materials into paper & card, glass, plastics, and cans, with private arrangements for their onwards journeys.
- 9.8 In 2023/24, the Council collected over 30,295 tonnes of waste, with 11,855 tonnes recycled or composted, and 18,440 tonnes as residual waste. The average Stevenage resident produced about 338 kg of waste (recycled and residual) per year<sup>66</sup>, compared to the UK average of 377 kg<sup>67</sup>.
- 9.9 The Council aims to increase recycling rates to 60% by 2035<sup>68</sup>. However, the HWP Annual Report 2023-24<sup>69</sup> shows Stevenage's recycling rate at 39.1%, the lowest in Hertfordshire. This is a critical area for improvement, identified as a key theme to be addressed by the Stevenage Climate Champions Group (SCCG) (see 10.4) as proposed in the "*Pathway 3 People and Processes*" report approved in early 2024. A set of actions to be discussed under the SCCG, throughout the entire waste management process has been suggested as part of this pathway.
- 9.10 The Council promotes increasing recycling rates across SBC's sites, housing, and commercial buildings. It launched a pilot programme to improve recycling rates in flat blocks<sup>70</sup>. The first phase introduced better recycling infrastructure and signage at six flat blocks, resulting in a 185% increase in recycling. The programme features resident surveys, engagement to understand recycling habits and barriers, and educational resources, with plans to expand successful strategies.
- 9.11 SBC provides free recycling services for glass, tins, and plastic to local schools, and paid collections for paper recycling. The Council also offers educational opportunities on recycling and sustainability.
- 9.12 The Council is currently preparing for a UK Government mandate requiring weekly food waste collections for households starting in 2026<sup>71</sup>. SBC is also working with HWP on a campaign to reduce edible food waste by 20%, saving 10,000 tonnes of food<sup>72</sup>.
- 9.13 In 2023, SBC installed solar panels on the rooftops of seven refuse collection lorries, saving up to 1,100 litres of diesel per lorry per year, reducing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Household Waste Management Policy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Recycling Banks

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Based on a population estimate of 89,737 inhabitants in Stevenage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Further information at: Local Authority Collected Waste Management - Annual Results 2022/23

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan – Action WR 1. Increase Recycling Rates

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Currently in draft version. The previous report is available at: Hertfordshire Waste Partnership Annual Report 2022-2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan - WR1. Increase Recycling Rates

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Further information at: New £295m for Councils to introduce weekly Food Waste Collections

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Further information at: #WorthSaving – Save Food, Save Money

emissions and saving money, as an effort to decarbonise its waste management operations<sup>73</sup>.



Figure 21. Solar panels installed on Stevenage's refuse collection lorries.

- 9.14 As part of Recycle Your Cycle<sup>74</sup>, SBC is collecting unwanted, abandoned or fly-tipped bikes, which are then refurbished and reused. 155 bikes were collected and donated to this scheme in 2023/24.
- 9.15 Working in partnership with HWP SBC has been promoting the Herts Sustainable Families<sup>75</sup> initiative which includes Herts Reusable Nappies, Herts Sustainable Periods and Herts Confident Continence, aiming to stimulate sustainable alternatives to single-use products.
- 9.16 Finally, SBC awarded funding to the Stevenage Repair Café project in Bedwell, through the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) (see Levels 7-9 of this report).

#### 10 LEVEL 6: STRATEGIC THEMES – PEOPLE

- 10.1 Stevenage can only achieve its net-zero targets if everyone plays their part. By educating, engaging, supporting, listening, and communicating with residents from all backgrounds, the Council can promote the behavioural changes needed in this regard.
- 10.2 Most people-related actions led by the Council are detailed in Levels 7-9 of this report. Some internal awareness and governance actions are highlighted below to emphasise fostering a sustainable culture within the Council.
- 10.3 In November 2023, the Council's senior leaders approved the *"Pathway 3 People and Processes"* report, which identifies that SBC's people-related emissions primarily stem from ways of working: commuting, business travel, waste production, water use, and resource utilisation. Addressing these requires profound behavioural changes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Further information at: Stevenage's Refuse Lorries Go Green

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Further information at: Recycle Your Cycle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Further information at: Herts Sustainable Families - Hertfordshire County Council

- 10.4 As part of implementing Pathway 3, a Staff Climate Champions Group (SCCG) with 27 members from various SBC departments<sup>76</sup> has been established. This group aims to enhance SBC's engagement in sustainability, raise awareness, and drive positive changes.
- 10.5 A climate champion is an individual interested in climate change and its relevance to their job duties. They are expected to actively participate in and lead organisational transformation related to climate change within the Council.
- 10.6 The SCCG is an attempt to enhance sustainable governance within the Council, helping implement strategies, manage goals, and ensure accountability.
- 10.7 Topics considered for SCCG coordination include, but are not limited to:
  - Climate awareness and communications.
  - Resources use and services decarbonisation safeguarding performance and taxpayers value.
  - Waste production and water use footprint.
  - Building decarbonisation and energy monitoring.
  - Climate risks, adaptation, and resilience.
- 10.8 Climate literacy is crucial for awareness, enabling better understanding of environmental challenges and informed decision making to address them. In 2024, the Council organised Carbon Literacy Training (delivered by APSE) for 40 officers. Training on sustainable building certifications is scheduled for October 2024. Through HCCSP, further training on planning and climate change has been provided over the last year.

#### **Climate Adaptation**

- 10.9 Climate adaptation is a critical aspect of behavioural change and awareness that needs to be developed within SBC. The Global Centre on Adaptation<sup>77</sup> defines climate adaptation as the *"means to act to prepare for and adjust to the current and projected impacts of climate change"*.
- 10.10 Adaptation, which aims to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience, is a critical aspect of climate response and is essential to ensure that SBC's operations and policies are resilient to the climate impacts.
- 10.11 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.
- 10.12 In July 2024, the Council completed and approved its first CCRA, outlining 51 specific climate change-related risks, within four categories (heat, drought, flooding, and general climate trends) across 18 service areas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Teams represented are: Estates & Facilities; Technology; Digital & Transformation; Finances; Human Resources; Communications; Planning & Development Control; Engineering Services; Climate Action; Environmental Health; Housing Development; Regeneration; Community Advice & Support; Corporate Policy & Performance; Direct Services (Operations, Garages, Environmental Policy, Green Spaces, Waste Management, Wellbeing & Leisure); Housing Investment; and Community Development.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Further information at: Global Center on Adaptation

- 10.13 The CCRA improves adaptation awareness, aiding the Council in better understanding and planning for potential future climate-related risks. The CCRA also aims to increase the resilience of Council services by identifying and embedding climate risks into pre-existing Operational Risk Registers (ORRs), reviewed annually.
- 10.14 The Council acknowledges the importance of climate adaptation and is committed to act accordingly to become resilient and adaptable to climate change risks. By agreeing to the CCRA, the Council ensured it will be working towards a better-adapted operational future.

#### 11 LEVEL 6: STRATEGIC THEMES – BIODIVERSITY

- 11.1 Biodiversity loss and climate change are intricately connected, with their impacts deeply intertwined. Climate change drives biodiversity loss, undermining nature's ability to regulate GHG emissions, while ecosystems like woodlands and wetlands are significant carbon sinks, absorbing GHGs. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity is crucial for addressing climate change.
- 11.2 Tree planting is vital for Stevenage's in this context. It reduces GHGs, mitigates climate change impacts, enhances air quality, provides wildlife habitats, and creates cooler urban areas, reducing energy consumption, and fostering a healthier, more sustainable environment for residents.
- 11.3 The Council has committed to planting over 4,000 trees by 2030<sup>78</sup> and increase the town's tree canopy cover to 19%, as recommended by the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Plan (2020)<sup>79</sup>, and indicated in its Amenity Tree Management Policy<sup>80</sup>
- 11.4 In addition to creating Community Orchards, SBC's planting targets have progressed over the past year through Fairlane Wood, a 1-hectare new woodland in the South Field of Fairlands Valley Park. This was officially planted (January-February 2023) and opened with the help of the community and local schools. A total of 3,500 tree saplings, typically 2-3 feet tall, were planted to create this new community woodland. These saplings are expected to establish within 8-10 years, with an anticipated survival rate of 80% in the first few years under reasonable weather conditions and the absence of pests, diseases, and vandalism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan – Action BI3: Plant 4,000 Trees in Stevenage by 2030

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Available at: Emergency Tree Plan - Woodland Trust

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Available at: Stevenage Amenity Tree Management Policy



Figure 22. Stevenage's Fairlane Wood.

- 11.5 Additionally, three new micro woods<sup>81</sup> will be created using the Miyawaki technique and DEFRA<sup>82</sup>'s Coronation Living Heritage Fund, planting 4,500 saplings of various species across three sites St Nicholas Park, Hampson Park, and Shephalbury Park in December 2024-January 2025.
- 11.6 These planting initiatives complement the trees planted through the "Your Tree, Our Future" scheme, detailed in 4.7.
- 11.7 In the context of the Local Plan partial review, the Council is currently discussing an updated tree replacement policy for new developments to reduce net tree loss. This policy would set specific standards for replacing removed trees, ensuring no net loss of tree cover, and aiming to increase tree-canopy cover.
- 11.8 While tree planting is important, supporting biodiversity requires the provision of a matrix of habitats, including woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, and ancient hedgerows. In this context, SBC has undertaken public consultations for a new Tree & Woodland Strategy and a new Green Spaces Strategy.
- 11.9 The Tree & Woodland Strategy will be a comprehensive 10-year plan to enhance and maintain the town's tree stock, ancient hedgerows, and woodlands. The Green Spaces Strategy outlines a 10-year vision for developing and managing local parks, gardens, and other green spaces. Both strategies are crucial for climate action in terms of carbon sequestration, biodiversity, urban cooling, and flood mitigation.
- 11.10 Last year, SBC's Green Space Volunteers<sup>83</sup> also contributed over 1,000 hours to improving open spaces in Stevenage.
- 11.11 Finally, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now mandatory for all developments within Stevenage, requiring minimum of 10% increase in biodiversity<sup>84</sup>. The Council is actively working on its implementation, and it has identified key sites, such as Chells Park and Canterbury Way Playing Fields, where works have started.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Further information at: Council secures funding to plant new trees in Stevenage

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Green Space Volunteers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Further information at: Biodiversity Net Gain

#### **Biodiversity Action Plan (2024-2028)**

- 11.12 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)<sup>85</sup> places a duty on local authorities to conserve, restore, or enhance biodiversity, as far as is consistent with their functions.
- 11.13 Despite being largely urban, around 24% of Stevenage's total area consists of green habitats. The borough has 37 Local Wildlife Sites, mostly ancient woodlands. Local Wildlife Sites are sites that do not qualify as being of national importance, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) but they are considered of local importance for wildlife.
- 11.14 Stevenage currently remains the only district/borough in Hertfordshire to have a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) were commissioned to undertake a review of the 2017-2022 BAP for SBC.
- 11.15 The review aimed to increase biodiversity (natural habitats and the species they support) across Stevenage by defining, facilitating, and enabling a coordinated programme of practical action by SBC, working with the local community, and contributing to natural solutions to the climate crisis.
- 11.16 A new Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2028 (Appendix 3) has been produced from this review. A one-page summary of the BAP 2024-2028, highlighting the overall objectives and actions is included as Appendix 4 and a neighbourhood breakdown as Appendix 5.
- 11.17 The key objectives of the Stevenage BAP are to:
  - Be realistic and achievable yet ambitious, within the capacity of SBC and partners,
  - Be compatible with and complement the HCCSP Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity<sup>86</sup>,
  - Be accessible, in language terms, to the wider Stevenage community,
  - Provide evidence to support future funding bids to assist with delivery,
  - Identify priorities based on protecting those important wildlife sites and/or those at risk of losing their wildlife potential if works are not delivered within the next 5-8 years.
- 11.18 Progress against previous BAP actions has been achieved through a combined effort from the Council's in-house teams, specialist external contractors, Green Space Volunteers, and wider community engagement.
- 11.19 During the previous BAP period (2017-2022), Stevenage secured funding grants from the Environment Agency £ 24,000 for installing planted coir rolls to the main lake at Fairlands Valley Park, and £10,000 for improving daylight to Stevenage Brook. Local Community Budget (LCB) funding also supported the creation of wildflower meadows, pond improvements, and orchard planting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Available at: Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Available at: HCCSP Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity May 2024

- 11.20 The new BAP 2024-2028 (**Appendix 3**) sets out 63 actions demonstrating the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity across the town. These actions are grouped into the five habitat types found within Stevenage:
  - Woodland 23 actions
  - Grassland 13 actions
  - Wetland 20 actions
  - Ancient hedgerows 2 actions
  - Neighbourhood nature 5 actions
- 11.21 Actions range from relatively simple tasks like removing invasive non-native species, to more complex efforts such as improving the vertical structure within the woodlands (to create layers of vegetation from ground cover through to tree canopy) through thinning, ride, and glade creation. All actions align with the Council's aspirations to improve the sustainability and quality of its open spaces and support climate actions.
- 11.22 Most of the sites included in the BAP 2024-2028 are managed by the Council, although some actions associated with these sites have the potential to be delivered in partnership with others, including the Environment Agency and Green Space Volunteers.
- 11.23 A neighbourhood breakdown of the Local Wildlife Sites, their respective actions, estimated costs, and carbon storage capacity is included in **Appendix 5**.
- 11.24 The delivery of the BAP 2024-2028 will continue to be overseen by the BAP Steering Group, comprising officers, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance, and HMWT.

#### 12 LEVEL 6: STRATEGIC THEMES – TRANSPORT

- 12.1 Transport is the largest GHG emissions source in Stevenage, as highlighted in 5.9 and 5.10, contributing 31.2% of the borough's total. It is also the UK's largest GHG emitter, with emissions rising post-COVID-19.
- 12.2 In the Climate Change Strategy, the Council committed to decarbonise its fleet before 2030. SBC's fleet accounted for about 23% of the Council's 2018 GHG emissions (baseline).
- 12.3 In 2023, the Council's SLT approved the "Pathway 1 Fuel and Fleet" report, included as part of the Climate Change Annual Update 2023, focused on reducing GHG emissions from SBC's fleet. The Council decided to switch from diesel to an ultra-low carbon fuel, Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)<sup>87</sup> in 2024, as a transitional decarbonisation alternative, and start exploring definite solutions such EVs for cars and small vans from 2025 and for light

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> 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 has been 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.

duty vehicles from 2027. For heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)<sup>88</sup> the Council agreed to start analysing different Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs), such as EVs or Hydrogen Fuel-Cell Electric Vehicles (HFCEVs), depending on technology readiness, from 2027.

- 12.4 The Council approved the switch to HVO for the entire SBC fleet on 21 February 2024. The transition, starting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024<sup>89</sup>, will reduce net GHG emissions by up to 90%. It is expected that this transition will lead by example and inspire others to do the same across Stevenage.
- 12.5 In line with Pathway 1, since August 2023, the Council has procured and incorporated the first three electric vans to its fleet, with plans to add more as part of its fleet replacement plan. SBC has also installed solar panels on the rooftops of seven refuse collection lorries, as outlined in 9.13.
- 12.6 The Council is cognisant of the importance of active travel to meet their climate targets. Encouraging walking, cycling, and public transport use helps reduce emissions, foster healthier lifestyles, and reduce traffic congestion.
- 12.7 The Council is launching a Cycle Hire Scheme<sup>90</sup> across the town with 45 hubs and 150 e-bikes by September-October 2024. Last year, SBC conducted a market interest assessment to gather views from potential suppliers. The Council also held a business and community engagement event and public consultation for stakeholders, including businesses, residents, and market players. Following a formal tender in December 2023, Beryl was chosen. Funding and phasing were agreed upon by SBC in March 2024. The scheme aims to promote active travel and reduce transport related GHG emissions<sup>91</sup>.
- 12.8 The Railway North Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) opened in May 2023, offers 80 secure and covered bicycle storage spaces, protected from the elements and vandalism. This storage, managed by Spokesafe, is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- 12.9 SBC installed four cycle hangars<sup>92</sup> across the town to provide a bike storage alternative for residents living in flats or small houses with limited or no space to store their bikes.
- 12.10 Six maintenance stands have been installed in the town, to provide cyclists with access to tools needed for any repairs whilst cycling.
- 12.11 Private cars will remain crucial for transportation and must play a role in the energy transition and climate change mitigation. SBC is committed to expanding public EV charging infrastructure across the town.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Around 63% of the emissions of SBC's owned fleet come from heavy-duty vehicles, primarily refuse and recycling collection vehicles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> The Council uses the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Framework RM6177 110 Liquid Fuel - National Fuels 2, for the provision of fuels. This is a bulk auction run by CCS, and the contract runs for two years. On the last one, SBC stipulated that it would be switching to HVO during the contract, so it was awarded to two suppliers, one for diesel and one for HVO. When the switch occurs, the Council just cease ordering the diesel and start ordering HVO. Further information at: National Fuels 2 - CCS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Further information at: Cycle Hire Scheme - Part I Report & Cycle Hire Scheme - Report and Public Consultation Feedback

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> GHG savings will be tracked and reported to Council members and officers by Beryl.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Cycle hangar locations available at: Lockable Bike Shelters

- 12.12 Over the past year, the Council installed 18 EV charge points (36 bays) at various locations<sup>93</sup> across Stevenage through the Neighbourhood Centres EV Charge Point Project, funded by the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS)<sup>94</sup> from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV).
- 12.13 Additionally, the Council installed two Blink EV chargers (4 bays) at Marshgate in 2023, funded by contributions from developer Autolus.
- 12.14 In May 2023, 30 EV charging points (single socket) were opened at the Railway North MSCP.



Figure 23. Railway North MSCP's EV chargers and cycle parking facilities.

- 12.15 More EV chargers are planned to be delivered through LEVI funding, as detailed in 4.7. These will be added to the existing charging infrastructure.
- 12.16 In 2023, the Council granted planning permission for the construction of the Gridserve Electric Forecourt, set to open by the end of 2024, with 34 simultaneous charge points.
- 12.17 In 2023, an EV Car Club<sup>95</sup>, run by Enterprise, was launched in Stevenage, offering an eco-friendly transport option. SBC staff can enrol in it and use these vehicles for business travel, without needing to use a personal car.



Figure 24. Stevenage's Enterprise EV Car Club.

12.18 Parcel lockers have been installed across the town<sup>96</sup> with InPost, reducing the number of delivery vans and last-mile GHG emissions by up to 75%

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Locations include Bedwell Shops, the Glebe Shops, Oaks Cross Shops, The Hyde Shops, St Nicholas Pavilion, Archer Road Shops, and Filey Close Shops.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Further information at: On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme Guidance for Local Authorities

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> Further information at: Enterprise Car Club Launches in Stevenage

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Further information at: Stevenage Climate Action Plan – TR11 – Installation of Parcel Lockers in the Town

compared to traditional to-door delivery services. This also helps improve local air quality.

- 12.19 SBC conducted a Staff Travel Survey in 2023/24, the first after COVID-19, to assess and understand commuting and business travel habits and preference of Council employees. The survey identified barriers to sustainable transport and explored ways to encourage eco-friendly practices. Survey findings, alongside grey fleet data, are expected to inform future initiatives to reduce GHG emissions of Council operations and promote sustainable travel within the staff.
- 12.20 Meanwhile, the Council continues to provide incentives to its employees through SmartGo Stevenage<sup>97</sup>, a Cycle to Work Scheme provided by the Green Commute Initiative<sup>98</sup>, a pool bike scheme, and bike storage and maintenance facilities.
- 12.21 In 2023, the Council established a new taxi and private hire licensing policy, including climate change considerations, while safeguarding community service provision. Approved by the General Purposes Committee (GPC) in December 2023, the policy sets low emissions standards and age limits to phase out older, more polluting vehicles. It also offers incentives for EVs, such as reduced licensing fees and grants for residential charging points.

#### 13 LEVEL 6: STRATEGIC THEMES – ENERGY & WATER

#### Energy

- 13.1 The energy sector is responsible for over two-thirds of global GHG emissions. The source and usage level of energy involves the opportunity to make significant changes in SBC's emissions.
- 13.2 The UK aims to decarbonise its electricity system by 2035, which is later than Stevenage's target. Heating, in turn, remains a hard to decarbonise sector and is still primarily reliant on natural gas.
- 13.3 A set of different actions and projects have been undertaken by the Council to monitor and better understand its energy consumption (electricity and gas) across their sites, aiming to introduce decarbonisation measures and reduce dependency on natural gas.
- 13.4 In early 2022, SBC switched to a Zero Carbon for Business (ZCB)<sup>99</sup> tariff with EDF Energy for its corporate electricity supply. This guarantees zero carbon electricity, allowing SBC to report zero carbon emissions for its electricity supply under the best practice under the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Based on the average GHG emission factor of the UK power grid, the ZCB tariff chosen, and SBC's annual electricity demand, it is estimated that over 1,500 tCO<sub>2e</sub> could be avoided per year.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Further information at: SmartGo Stevenage

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Further information at: Cycle to Work Scheme - Green Commute Initiative

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Further information at: EDF Zero Carbon for Business

- 13.5 The Council is currently monitoring its electricity consumption across 27 SBC sites<sup>100</sup> using a digital meter explorer by Grid Edge<sup>101</sup>. This provides insights into out-of-hours energy use and unusual consumption patterns, prompting further operational analysis of the sites. For example, the Indoor Market now charges stallholders based on categorised electricity usage, aiming to incentivise energy efficiency.
- 13.6 The Council's leisure facilities, managed by Everyone Active (EA), are among the top energy consumers and GHG emitters. Under the new leisure contract, since April 2023, EA has executed energy efficiency measures across the facilities, including LED replacement of lighting, Building Management Systems (BMS) upgrades, and insulation works<sup>102</sup>.
- 13.7 In 2023, the Council conducted energy audits at Daneshill House, Cavendish Road Depot, and the Indoor Market, analysing electricity and gas. Daneshill House audit focused on short-term savings, while Cavendish Road and the Indoor Market aimed for medium to long-term low carbon measures. A set of recommendations from the audits are now known by SBC, which is working to take further action.
- 13.8 Last year, improvements at Daneshill House aimed to enhance operations. These included moving the former CSC to the ground floor and replacing the first-floor atrium uplighters with LED lighting. Short-term measures have been prioritised due to the planned mid-term replacement with a new Public Services Hub, as described in 8.5.
- 13.9 The Council has been analysing an upgrade programme for St George's MSCP and Westgate MSCP. St. George's MSCP now has LED lighting and motion sensors to reduce electricity consumption. A feasibility study on PV panels, battery storage, and further LED replacements was completed (May 2024) with SAVI Energy, informing further actions for the facility. The Council has also started switching Westgate MSCP to LED lighting.
- 13.10 The new Railway North MSCP, completed in May 2023, has incorporated 76 solar panels, and as of December 2023, these have saved 9.18 tCO<sub>2e</sub>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> The sites being monitored through the Grid Edge meter explorer are: Railway North MSCP; Arts & Leisure Centre & Gordon Craig Theatre; Daneshill House; Swimming Centre; Business & Technology Centre (BTC); St George's Way MSCP; Cavendish Road Depot; Indoor Market; Harrow Court; Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre; Highfield Court; Brent Court; Golf & Conference Centre; New Bus Interchange; Westgate MSCP; Silkin Court; Shaftesbury Court; Wellfield Court; Grosvenor Court; Gladstone Court; Walpole Court; Pinewoods Lodge; Fred Millard Court; Hobbs Court; Ridlins Athletic Tracks; Truro Court; Fairlands Valley Aqua Park.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Further information at: Grid Edge

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Some of the works conducted include:

<sup>•</sup> Golf & Conference Centre: Replacement of floodlights for driving range and replacement of driving range bay lighting.

<sup>•</sup> Ridlins Athletics Stadium: Internal lighting LED installation to replace floodlights and BMS upgrade and reconfiguration process.

<sup>•</sup> Arts & Leisure Centre: External lighting changed to LEDs; Plate Heat Exchanger (PHE) insulation jackets, and internal LED lighting upgrade programme.

<sup>•</sup> Swimming Centre: Pool cover installed, pipe insulation completed, internal and main pool lighting replaced with LED, PHE insulation jackets, and BMS upgrade and reconfiguration process.

- 13.11 The main challenge for SBC buildings' energy decarbonisation is reducing and phasing out natural gas use (about 3,000 tCO<sub>2e</sub>/year), primarily used for heating and hot water.
- 13.12 The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)<sup>103</sup>, is an important opportunity in this regard, offering funding for energy efficiency and low-carbon projects, which could help phase out natural gas and reduce GHG emissions.
- 13.13 Decarbonising Council buildings can positively impact Stevenage's broader decarbonisation targets by leading by example and directly contributing to the public, residential, and commercial sector decarbonisation. These interactions are shown below.





#### Water

- 13.14 In addition to energy, water is also crucial for the town's sustainability and climate response. As the UK summers are getting hotter and drier, Stevenage's water usage rises while availability drops. Hertfordshire is one of the driest regions in the UK, yet it uses twice as much water per capita as Manchester.
- 13.15 The Local Plan partial review, currently being proposed, includes several policies on water supply, consumption, flooding prevention, and wastewater management.
- 13.16 Specific proposed policies for Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) aim to promote their use to manage surface water runoff, reduce flood risk, and protect the water system. These policies can significantly impact water saving by enhancing water infiltration and incorporating rainwater harvesting, reducing mains water demand.
- 13.17 Proposed flood risk management policies aims to ensure new developments are flood-resilient and do not increase flood risk elsewhere, protecting the overall water system.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Further information at: Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

- 13.18 New proposed policies also encourage water-saving technologies in developments to reduce consumption and achieve efficiency. The review proposes a water use target of 110 litres per person per day for new developments, addressing the area's severe water stress and promoting sustainable practices.
- 13.19 Additionally, proposed wastewater management policies ensure adequate infrastructure for new developments and protect water quality. These policies, along with greywater recycling implementations, would enhance the town's resilience and sustainable water management.
- 13.20 Finally, last year, the Council installed six 200-litre water butts at its garage site at Whitesmead Road. The collected water is used at nearby allotments, reducing reliance on mains water and helping keep plants healthy.



Figure 26. Whitesmead Road garage site - Water butts' installations and nearby allotments.

#### 14 LEVEL 7-9: LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 14.1 Prioritising climate change engagement at the local level within neighbourhoods, wards, and communities, remained a key focus in 2023/24.
- 14.2 This section outlines the efforts undertaken over the past year to foster community engagement, awareness, and relationships.
- 14.3 Each year, an updated Climate Change Communications and Marketing Plan is prepared by the Council. The plan outlines the aims, target audiences, key messages, and strategies for the year ahead alongside specific campaigns for promotion.
- 14.4 The Climate Action Plan Tracker, described in 5.17, allows residents and viewers to provide direct feedback to the Council, enabling further engagement and participation.
- 14.5 Events provide excellent opportunities for resident engagement. In June 2024, Climate Action officers participated in Stevenage Day for the second consecutive year, hosting a Climate Action stall. The stall provided educational information on climate change and the Council's work and promoted programmes such as the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) and HUG2. Interactive activities and engagement giveaways, including seed packets, plantable pencils, and biodegradable toothbrushes, were available to stimulate discussions on emissions, food and waste.



Figure 27. 2024 Stevenage Day's Climate Action stall.

14.6 The Council has made progress in promoting sustainability awareness and good practices by providing online resources for public education and engagement. These resources include an Environmental Days Calendar<sup>104</sup> for 2024, which will be updated annually, serving as a quick go-to resource for identifying important international and national environmental dates throughout the year, facilitating community awareness activities around these. Additionally, the Council offers a Sustainable Event Handbook<sup>105</sup> that guides residents on organising eco-friendly events, including utilising renewable energy, reducing energy consumption, waste management, and sourcing local food.



Figure 28. 2024 Environmental Days Calendar.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Available at: 2024 Environmental Days Calendar

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Available at: Stevenage Events Sustainability Guide

- 14.7 The Council continues to engage with stakeholders such as Stevenage Central Library, Stevenage Football Club Foundation, and some local businesses.
- 14.8 Throughout the year, climate talks were delivered at Stevenage Central Library in April for children and in October for mature residents.
- 14.9 In the summer, SBC engaged with the East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust with a presentation on sustainable transport and participation in their Green Day.
- 14.10 In October, the Portfolio Holder and officers visited Fujitsu to learn about the company's sustainability initiatives and community partnerships, and engage in a presentation on sustainability and biodiversity, and a tree planting session with the Symonds Green Cub Scouts.
- 14.11 The Council continues to engage in youth strategy group meetings with external partners. The Youth Mayor and Youth Council collaborate with the Council to ensure the voices of the Borough's younger residents are heard and empowered.

#### Neighbourhood and Street Level Work

- 14.12 The Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF)<sup>106</sup>, previously known as Dragon's Den and introduced by the Portfolio Holder, had its pilot year in 2023/24.
- 14.13 The CCCF aims to provide 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.
- 14.14 Funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), £7,500 is available per ward, per year for potential CCCF projects, totalling £97,500 to support environmental initiatives across the borough. This funding is additional to Members' Local Community Budgets (LCBs) but is distinct in that the CCCF allocation of £7,500 is for the ward as a whole, rather than per ward member.
- 14.15 The CCCF accepts applications on a rolling basis and is open to various groups within the community, including schools, charities, clubs and societies, faith groups, and local businesses. The Council aims to empower these groups to act against climate change and create local value.
- 14.16 Successful applications must meet several requirements, including endorsement by a local Councillor, being infrastructure-based, and being designed to maximise sustainability and environmental benefits.
- 14.17 The application process for the CCCF follows a 5-step journey:
  - 1. Idea Development: The group identifies a green initiative and seeks financial support to develop the project.
  - 2. Councillor Engagement: The group contacts a local Councillor, presenting the aims and benefits of the proposed project, for championship.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Further information at: Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF)

- 3. Application Submission: With the Councillor's support, the group applies to the CCCF via an online form, detailing the project.
- 4. Review and Evaluation: Climate Action officers review the application and provide technical support to assess project feasibility. The application is then evaluated by the Climate Change Project Group (CCPG)<sup>107</sup>. If approved, funds are disbursed to the community group's bank account to commence project works.
- 5. Implementation and Monitoring: During the project's implementation, the applicant receives ongoing monitoring and support from officers to ensure smooth progress.
- 14.18 A simplified infographic for the process is demonstrated below.



Figure 29.Simplified CCCF application process for community groups.

14.19 In the year 2023/24, eight projects, as shown below, were approved for the CCCF across different Stevenage wards, with a total amount of £26,850. More details of these projects are included at **Appendix 6**, with two feature projects detailed in the following figures.

Project Name	Stevenage Ward	Organisation
Repair Café	Bedwell	Bedwell Community Centre
Coventry Close Community Garden	St Nicholas	Waste Not Want Not and residents
Peartree Rainwater Collection Pilot	Shephall	Shephall Residents Group
Elliot Road Community Garden	Chells	Everyone Active Charitable Trust
Silkin Court Garden	Bandley Hill & Poplars	Waste Not Want Not and residents
Austen Paths Planter and Beds	Chells	Waste Not Want Not
Hampson Park Orchard Extension and Tree Planting	Almond Hill	Friends of Hampson Park
Old Town Christmas Tree	Old Town	Stevenage Old Town Business and Community Partnership

Table 1. CCCF a	approved projects in 2023/24.
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> The CCPG oversees the approval of applications for the CCCF. The group is led by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance and the Climate Change Programme Lead Officer and comprises senior officers and Councillors.

#### **Coventry Close Community Garden**

The Coventry Close Community Garden project, led by the community group Waste Not Want Not (WNWN) and championed by Cllr. Sandra Barr of St Nicholas, applied for £600 from the CCCF to create a community garden within an underutilised green space situated between residential properties. The initiative also aimed to establish a local gardening group to promote social interaction.

The project received approval in October 2023, with work commencing shortly after the allocation of funds. WNWN, in collaboration with local residents, transformed the 16x14 metre area by planting 13 fruiting and flowering bushes, clustered perennials and spring flowering bulbs. This effort created a more diverse habitat for birds and insects, particularly pollinators. The plant species were chosen for their low maintenance requirements and resilience to future climatic changes.

The project also included the installation of raised vegetable beds, enhancing the community's ability to grow their own produce. Additionally, locally crafted wooden benches, made from donated wood, were installed to provide an outdoor social space for residents.

Soil health in the area was also improved with the addition of peat-free compost, soil conditioner and wood chip.

The project was completed in spring 2024. Before and after photographs are available for viewing to the right and below.

Before





Figure 30. CCCF Featured Project - Coventry Close Community Garden.

After

#### Peartree Rainwater Collection Pilot

The Peartree Rainwater Collection Pilot, led by the Shephall Resident's Group and endorsed by Councillor Rob Broom of Shephall, sought funding to enhance the front area of Peartree Shops with additional shrubs and flowers, and to install a rainwater collection system. This system is designed to harvest sufficient water for the maintenance of these flowerbeds.

The project received approval in October 2023 and was allocated a total of £2,000. This funding covered the costs of a structural engineer evaluation, raw materials, plants, and installation.

The installation of the 200-litre capacity water butt promotes water conservation in the area, reducing the dependency on tap water from nearby shops for watering the flowerbeds. Should the project prove beneficial and replicable in the long term, it may be possible to install similar measures in other neighbourhood centres.

The project was successfully completed in August 2024. Photographs of the installation are available for viewing on the right.



Figure 31. CCCF Featured Project - Peartree Rainwater Collection Pilot.

14.20 In collaboration with technical groups focused on sustainable transport, the Council has continued to work on the Topic Reference Group for Sustainable Travel (ATTLEE). Site visits were conducted at St George's Way and the Forum, King George V & Tesco. This group aims to address concerns, develop initiatives, and support collective ambitions.

## List of Acronyms

- **APSE:** Association for Public Service Excellence.
- ASHP: Air Source Heat Pump.
- **BAP:** Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan.
- BMS: Building Management System.
- **BNG:** Biodiversity Net Gain.
- **BREEAM:** Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method.
- **CCC:** Climate Change Committee.
- **CCCF:** Climate Change Community Fund.
- **CCPG:** Climate Change Progress Group.
- **CCRA:** Climate Change Risk Assessment.
- **CIL:** Community Infrastructure Levy.
- **COP:** UNFCC Conference of the Parties.
- **COP21:** 21<sup>st</sup> UNFCC Conference of the Parties, Paris, France, 2015.
- **COP28:** 28<sup>th</sup> UNFCC Conference of the Parties, Dubai, UAE, 2023.
- **Council:** Stevenage Borough Council.
- **COVID-19:** Coronavirus Disease 2019.
- **CPO:** Charge Point Operator.
- **CRP:** Carbon Reduction Plan.
- **CSC:** Customer Service Centre.
- **DEFRA:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- **DESNZ:** Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- **EA:** Everyone Active.
- **EELGA:** East of England Local Government Association.
- EfW: Energy from Waste.
- **EPC:** Energy Performance Certificate.
- **EV:** Electric Vehicle.
- **GDP:** Gross Domestic Product.
- **GHG:** Greenhouse Gas.
- **GPC:** General Purposes Committee.
- HCC: Hertfordshire County Council.
- **HCCSP:** Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership.
- **HFCEV:** Hydrogen Fuel-Cell Electric Vehicle.
- **HGB:** Hertfordshire Growth Board.

HGV:	Heavy Good Vehicle.
HMWT:	Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.
HP:	Heat Pump.
HRA:	Housing Revenues Account.
HUG1:	Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1
HUG2:	Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2
HVO:	Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil.
HWP:	Hertfordshire Waste Partnership.
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology.
ktCO2e:	Thousands of tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.
LA:	Local Authority.
LAD3:	Green Home Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 3.
LCA:	Life Cycle Assessment.
LCB:	Local Community Budget.
LED:	Light-Emitting Diode.
LEP:	Local Enterprise Partnership.
LEVI:	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure.
LGA:	Local Government Association.
LNRS:	Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
LP:	Local Plan.
LULUCF:	Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry.
MSCP:	Multi-Storey Car Park.
MTB:	Meet the Buyer
MtCO2e:	Millions of tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.
MVHR:	Mechanical ventilation with Heat Recovery.
NDC:	Nationally Determined Contribution.
Net-Zero:	Balance in the amount of GHG emitted with the amount removed from the atmosphere, resulting in no net increase in these gases.
NHS:	National Healthcare System.
ORCS:	On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme.
ORR:	Operational Risk Register.
OZEV:	Office for Zero Emission Vehicles.
PAAP:	Project Assessment and Approval Process.
PSDS:	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.
D\/.	Dhatavaltaia

**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.
SSSI:	Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
SuDS:	Sustainable Drainage System.
tCO2e:	Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent, a standard unit used to measure the impact of different greenhouse gases on global warming.
TOMs:	Themes, Outcomes and Measures (Social Value).
UK:	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
UKSPF:	UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
UNFCC:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
WNWN:	Waste Not Want Not.
ZCB:	Zero Carbon for Business Tariff.
ZEV:	Zero Emissions Vehicle.

# Other Appendices

Appendix 2	Stevenage Territorial Emissions Infographic
Appendix 3	Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2028 Report
Appendix 4	Biodiversity Action Plan One-Page Summary
Appendix 5	BAP – Neighbourhood Breakdown
Appendix 6	Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) Projects