Climate Change Annual Update 2026

E&E Select Committee – November 2026

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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Purpose & Recommendations

Purpose

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

Recommendations

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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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



Stevenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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

- **Global Climate Action**

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

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

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



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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

- **UK National Climate Action**

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

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

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

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

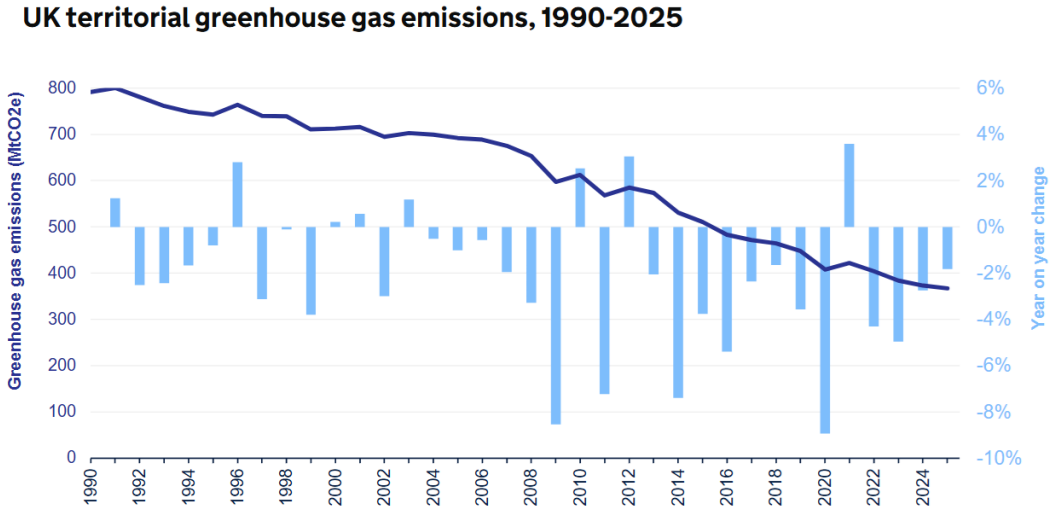
Heat, flooding, and drought identified as the most critical **climate risks** by the Climate Change Committee (CCC).



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **UK National Climate Action**





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



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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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

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

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



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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

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

Emissions consistently decreasing across all sectors since 2005.

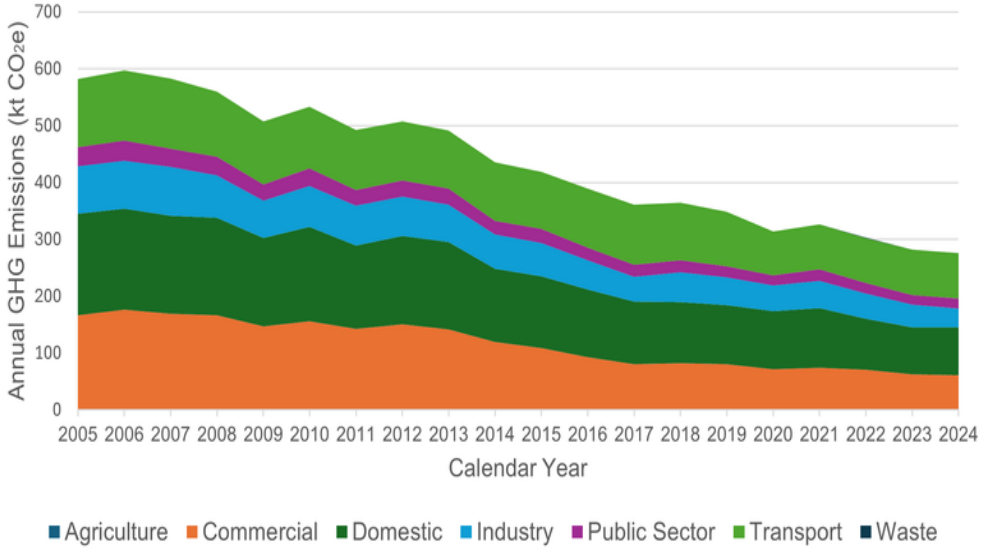
Residential → the main emitting sector (84.7 $ktCO_{2e}$).

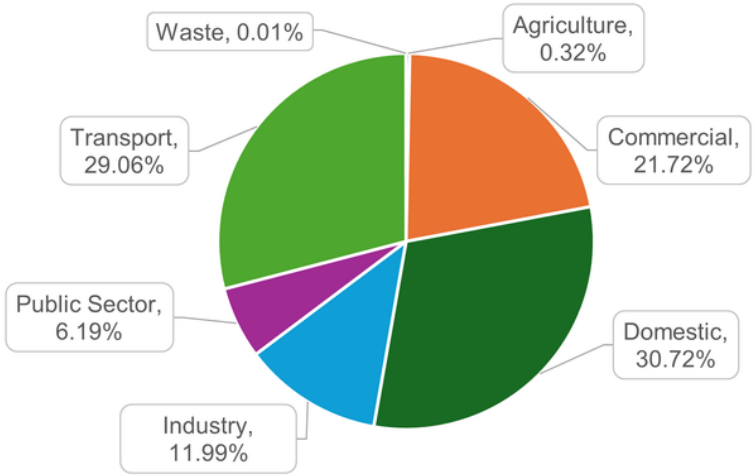


Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **Stevenage (The Town)**





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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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

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

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



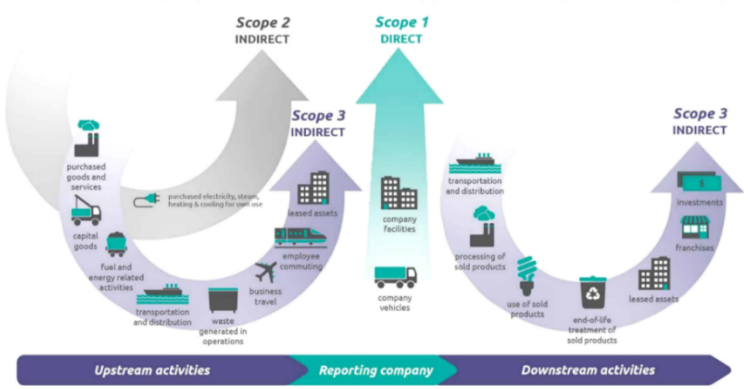
Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council**

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

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



See *Background Document - GHG Reporting Framework Main Report*

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

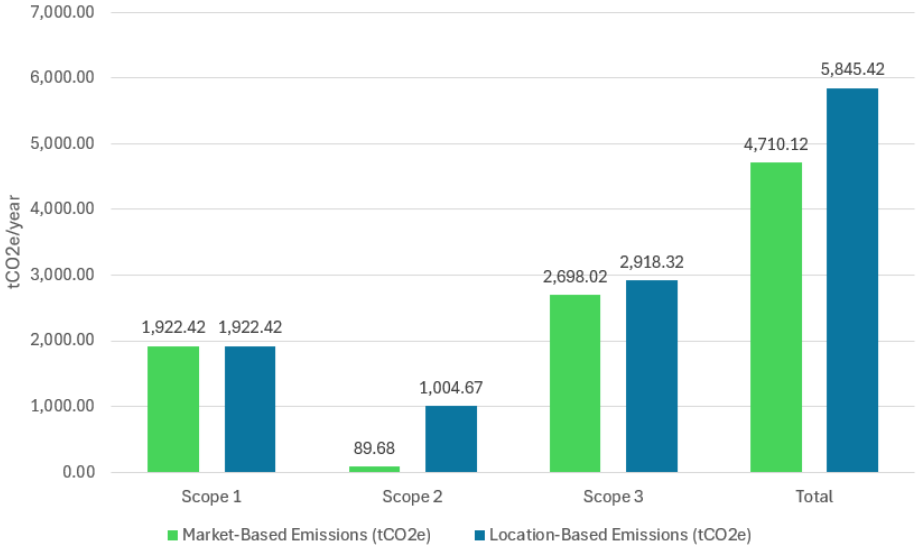
- **The Council**

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

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

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

Total Council's emissions for FY 2023/24
Market-based and location-based.

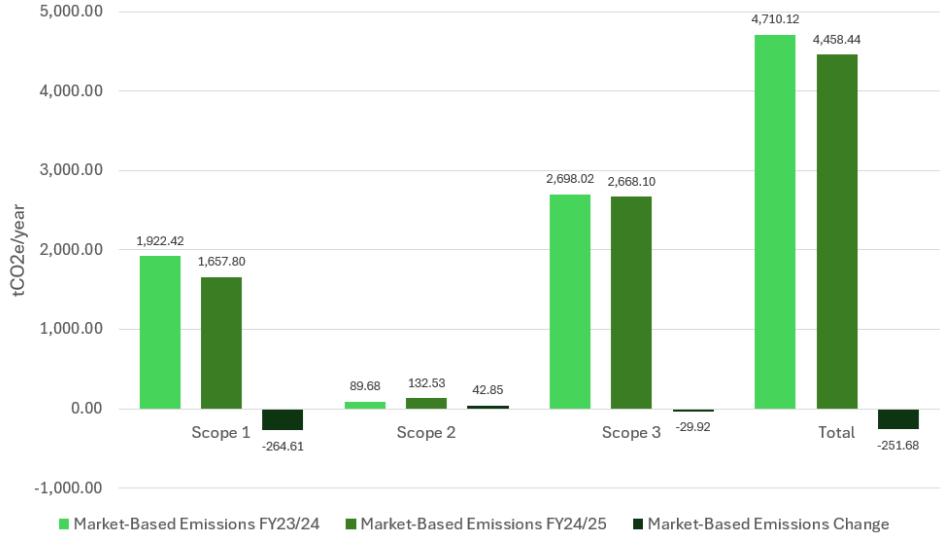


Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council**

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



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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

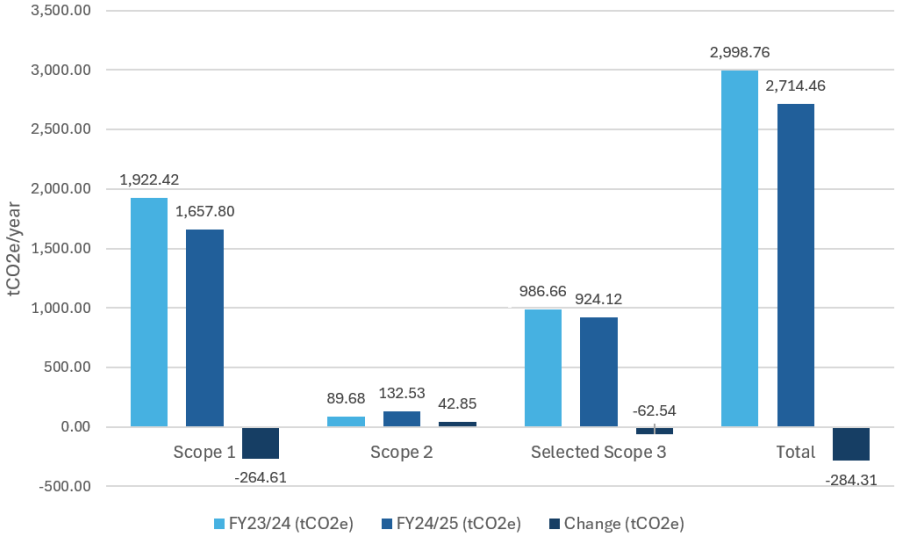
Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council**

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

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

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



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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



1) Businesses

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

2) Homes

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

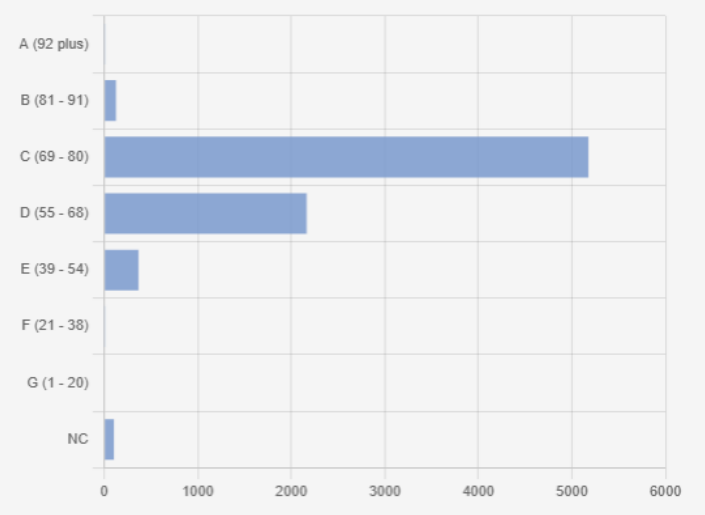


Minimum EPC Band C 8,000 Housing Stock (currently c.66% compliant)

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



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

2) Homes

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



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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



3) Waste & Recycling

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

4) People & Awareness

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



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

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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Adaptation

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


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


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


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



Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)

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



In progress

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

Stevenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



5) Construction & Regeneration

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

6) Transport

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



SBC Fleet Decarbonisation by 2030

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Local Plan Partial Review

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

Contribution to climate mitigation and adaptation	Net-zero regulated operational emissions (major developments)	Whole-life carbon net-zero	Carbon sequestration provision	Urban greening: green roofs, blue-green roofs, bio-solar roofs, green walls
Energy demand reduction & efficient energy supply	Ultra-low or zero-carbon energy generation	Decentralised & District Heat Networks	Intelligent Energy Systems	Ultra-low or Zero-carbon CHP
Local Renewable Generation (with surplus into the grid)	Air conditioning demand minimisation	Solar gain and shading balance	Internal heat management & Passive ventilation	Active travel and public transport integration
Sustainable use of resources	Circular economy principles	Sustainable waste disposal	Local green jobs provision	Local food-growing spaces (allotments, orchards, food markets)
Water consumption limits	Water neutrality encouragement	Rainwater harvesting & Greywater recycling	Surface water disposal hierarchy	Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
	Flood defences protection	Watercourses buffer zones	Culverts re-naturalisation	

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



7) Energy & Water

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

UK Power Grid Decarbonisation (2035).

8) Biodiversity

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



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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

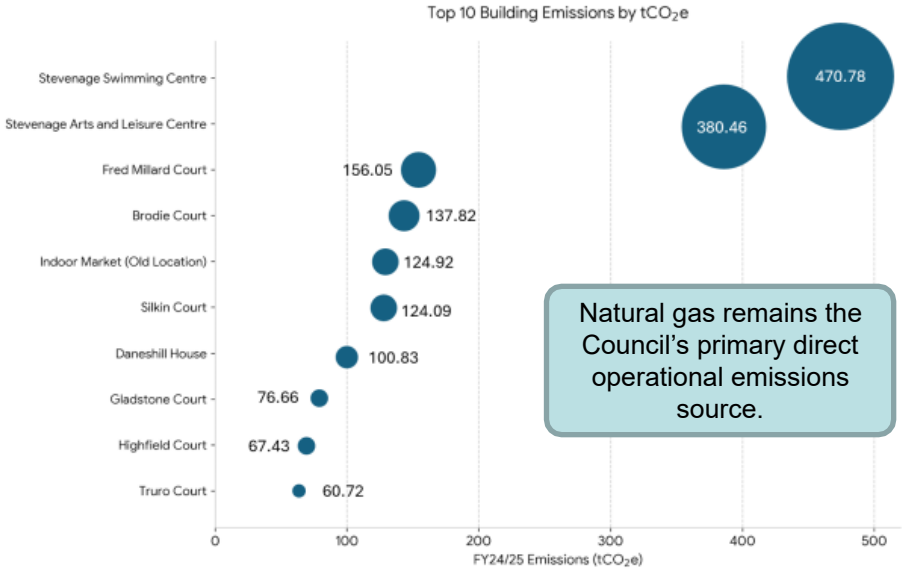
- **The Council: 8 Strategic Themes**



7) Energy & Water

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

UK Power Grid Decarbonisation (2035).



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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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

- **Local Community**

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

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

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

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



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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

- **Local Community**

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

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

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

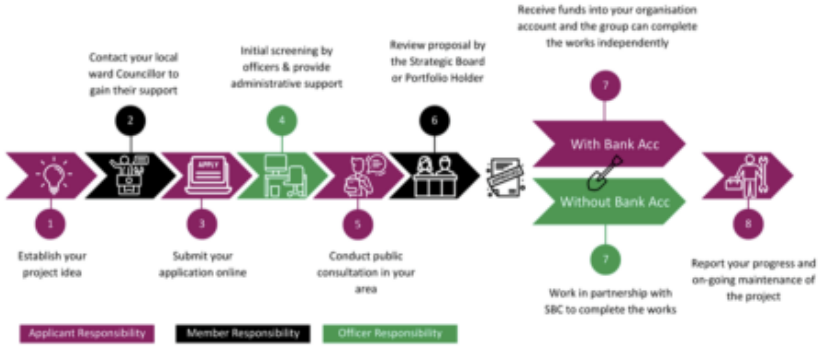
- Reduction of waste, improved biodiversity, water conservation, climate adaptation, tree planting.



Climate Change Strategy: 6 Levels

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

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



LEAF is now part of the Cooperative Neighbourhoods Programme

CCCF Approved Projects in 2025/26

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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Forward-Looking Actions FY 2026-27



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

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

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL

Thanks for your attention.

Any questions?



Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL