

Environment and Climate Change Action Plan Update

1. Biodiversity Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Update
1.1 External funding	
Look for outside opportunities for grant funding or other support.	Ongoing The council is utilising grant money on the Rural England Prosperity Fund projects it has agreed with partners (previously reported). West Suffolk Council secured a £17 million loan from the UK Infrastructure Bank to support net zero projects and has been asked to share the learning from this with other local authorities nationally.
Seek external funding to help maintain and increase tree cover in West Suffolk Council managed areas.	Ongoing: National Tree Planting Week – Black Poplars To celebrate National Tree Planting Week West Suffolk Council and local community groups planted a black poplar tree at No Man's Meadows in Bury St Edmunds on 25 November 2024. The tree was grown as part of a species stock at Nowton park, which is the established Suffolk clone bank for the Black Poplar Project that increases the tree's genetic diversity. The black poplar is one of Britain's most endangered native trees, with only a few thousand mature specimens remaining. They are known for their ability to grow quickly and absorb carbon dioxide efficiently and therefore contribute to the broader goal of creating a sustainable environment in the face of climate change. 

Task	Update
1.2 Biodiversity and environment parks and green spaces	
We will identify improvements on the previous judges' scores for our Green Flag (GF) sites	Ongoing: Green Flag status has been retained for the six West Suffolk Parks: Abbey Gardens and Nowton Park in Bury St Edmunds; West Stow Country Park; Brandon Country Park; East Town Park in Haverhill; and Aspal Close Nature Reserve in Beck Row. The applications have been submitted for the six parks in 2025, and judging will take place in May. The Breckland Flora Group are also undertaking research onsite to further understand the ecology of the Field Wormwood plant to inform future management practices. Green infrastructure projects are progressing in Brandon, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket via the Rural England Prosperity Fund.
Encourage responsible use of green spaces - through better information.	Ongoing: The Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) draft has been released for public consultation, aiming to restore and enhance nature across the region.
1.3 Biodiversity and environment, parks and green spaces	
Review the maintenance regimes of grass areas owned by the council in order to increase biodiversity.	Ongoing: Park volunteers, Community Payback and rangers have created a wildlife area within the walled garden at Nowton Park. Wildlife friendly plants and pollinators have been donated from Realise Futures, volunteers and rangers and plants are now being grown from seed. The garden also includes a bug hotel constructed from recycled materials. 'Margaret's pond' donated by one of the regular walkers in Nowton Park is currently being used by mallard ducklings to learn to swim (the ducks have chosen the walled garden as their home this spring). The wildlife garden is also utilised by the local school and nursery children to learn about biodiversity, plants and wildlife. As well as mallards, a variety of other wildlife is using the garden including toads, frogs, newts, bees and butterflies. In terms of grounds maintenance, we continue to provide weekly updates to town and parish councils and elected members on the weekly grass cutting regimes and these updates are shared with the wider public via our web page see link: Grass cutting.
Investigate and develop business cases for grounds maintenance equipment renewal with green equipment.	Ongoing: Within the next net zero update trajectory there are costings and a proposed plan for electric equipment to replace fossil fuel equipment. This is being taken to Cabinet members in the coming months for discussion.

Task	Update
1.4 Partnerships	
Work with local environment groups (for example, community groups) to improve environment and biodiversity at West Suffolk Council managed sites.	Ongoing: Active collaboration with Suffolk County Council and other partners through the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership to address biodiversity and climate challenges. Continued to engage the public through consultations and awareness campaigns, such as the LNRS consultation, to promote environmental stewardship. Collaboration with Suffolk County Council to improve air quality and promote sustainable transport options, including the development of the Local Transport Plan 2025-2040. Volunteers and 60 school children from Guildhall Feoffment school planted early flowering bulbs to enhance the naturalised area near the entrance to the Abbey Gardens.  Creation of Wildlife area at Nowton Nursery Park volunteers and rangers have created a wildlife area within the walled garden at Nowton Park. This includes a shelter for invertebrates, wildlife friendly plants and pollinators. The wildlife garden is also utilised by the nearby Montessori school to teach nursery aged children about biodiversity, plants and wildlife.

Task	Update
	  
New task: Scope project focused on cleaner waterways.	Water meadow management West Suffolk Council in partnership with the Bury Water Meadows group have been working in partnership to improve the management of No Man's Meadows and the Crankles with a view to optimising the biodiversity value of this green corridor,

Task	Update
	enhancing the visual amenity of the wider area and implementing traditional grassland and wetland management practices. 

2. Communities and Communications Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Update
2.1. Reduce public waste and improve recycling output.	
Reduce the amount of waste that is created by public and businesses, such as food waste, through awareness raising campaigns across Suffolk.	Ongoing: Working with Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) the council has taken part in numerous local and national campaigns including: • Global Recycling Day • Food Waste Action Week • The Great British Spring Clean • Earth Day • Compost Week • Buy Nothing New Month Officers have attended schools' skills days, supported school visits to the Energy from Waste facility and attended housing association estate community days. Funding has been received from McDonalds via a grant from Hubbub to install 24 recycling on the go bins to West Suffolk. These have been installed in Brandon, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Bury St Edmunds and have a separate side for recycling plastic bottles and metal cans.
	Throughout the year we take part in numerous campaigns to encourage residents to reduce, reuse and recycle. Suffolk School Skills Days 10 October 2024 – The team

Task	Update
	attended an event at Abbeygate in Bury St Edmunds. Teaching children about recycling and showing them around a bin collection lorry. International E Waste Day - 14 October 2024. Food Savvy, 'Eat Your Pumpkin' campaign. Recipes for using pumpkins and competition promoted on social media - October 2024. Recycling week 14-20 October 2024 – 'Rescue Me' national recycling campaign. Aimed at items that are commonly missed from recycling (yoghurt pots, plastic spray trigger bottles, cardboard toilet roll tubes) Already in 2025, we have supported the Food Waste Action Week and Global Recycling Day on 18 March (where we shared examples of how to reuse and repurpose items, for example glass jars, and give items a second purpose).  The left photograph shows a clear glass jar with a decorative label, filled with various pens and pencils, sitting on a white surface next to a potted plant. The right photograph shows three glass jars of different sizes on a dark surface. One jar contains a green tea bag, another contains a brown tea bag, and the third is empty. A potted plant is visible in the background. We will be sharing best practices throughout the year to reduce waste, especially during Plastic Free July, Secondhand September, Zero Waste Week (1-7 September), Buy Nothing New Month in November and similar campaigns. USA Recycles Day, November - planning to attend RAF Mildenhall child centre with bin collection lorry and wormery.
Work to increase recycling through the use of blue bin and recycling sites in order to maximise the use of the current recycling systems in Suffolk.	Ongoing: The council has now adopted its approaches to Simpler Recycling (commercial and domestic) and is preparing the launches of these schemes in 2026 and 2027 respectively. Local businesses are being visited by the commercial team regarding business recycling and food waste collections ahead of a new collection service being introduced from April 2025. All packaging to be stamped 'Recycle' or 'Do Not Recycle' from 1 April 2027.

Task	Update
	SWP (Communications Group) had a relaunch of the 'Glass, its better in the bank' campaign during March and April 2025 by encouraging people to visit glass banks for a win a hamper competition online and at local glass bank sites. Funding has been applied for from Material Focus to install 18 electrical recycling banks for small domestic appliances across West Suffolk. These would be located at existing sites and be used for recycling of small appliances such as kettles, toasters and hairdryers. We promote recycling throughout the year and especially around periods of high consumerism for example Christmas and Easter. 
Increase the quality of waste collected for recycling in response to commodity market requirements.	Ongoing: Contamination levels have been consistent; major communications campaigns have been limited due to the discussions around the communication of Simpler Recycling and changing collection materials. Countywide promotion of recycling continues through online social media and Suffolk Recycles website. In May 2025, West Suffolk Council will be launching a new recycling initiative, Recycling on the Go bins, to encourage residents and visitors to recycle plastic bottles and cans while out and about, with the support from McDonalds and environmental charity Hubbub. There will be 24 new 'Recycling on-the-Go' bins available to use by the public across Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Mildenhall, after consultations with the town councils and BIDs were successful.
Continue to promote anti-litter initiatives.	Ongoing: Over 400 volunteers took part in this year's annual Great British Spring Clean event during March and April. Using Rural England Prosperity (REP) funding we have: • upgraded over 100 litter and dog bins across West

Task	Update
	Suffolk, increasing capacities and the types of waste accepted • upgraded litter bins along main 'A' road locations to orange wheelie bins to increase visibility and encourage correct behaviour of litter disposal • purchased 350 Litter pickers and hi-vis waistcoats along with 100 sack hoops to distribute to local groups wanting to regularly do community litter picking. We have continued to promote anti-litter initiatives such as The Great British Spring Clean. 15 members of staff at West Suffolk House volunteered to litter pick during their lunchbreak. We used this campaign to encourage residents to take part and organise their own litter pick. Another litter pick is in the process of being organised for World Environment Day on 5 June at Mildenhall Hub. 
Influence and respond to the future government Recycling and Waste Strategy for England, to be implemented from 2023 onwards.	Ongoing: Suffolk Waste Partnership are planning for new collections proposals under 'Simpler Recycling' which is due to be implemented by 31 March 2026. A weekly food waste collection for householders will be introduced and changes will be made to existing recycling and potentially general waste collections. • Food waste - weekly collection in small caddies. • Dry recycling - comingled (all acceptable materials together) - twin stream (paper and card, and plastics, tins and glass). • General waste – two-weekly collections. We have been ahead of the curve in helping our commercial customers be compliant with the government's new Simpler Recycling legislation. Under the new legislation businesses must separate dry recycling from general waste.

Task	Update
	
Increase activity to promote waste and recycling campaigns to local businesses and residents.	Ongoing: Local businesses are being visited by the commercial team regarding business recycling and food waste collections ahead of a new collection service being introduced from April 2025. New commercial food waste collection scheme is now in place serving over 300 businesses having been offered to existing council customers where a business has 10 or more employees. All packaging to be stamped 'Recycle' or 'Do Not Recycle' from 1 April 2027. We have been encouraging residents to go paperless with their Council Tax bill – reduces waste and saves the amount of paper being used.
2.2 Environment and biodiversity awareness raising campaigns.	
Provide a range of public events and awareness campaigns at Parks, with a Ranger presence, to promote sustainable initiatives and to provide advice to residents on how to protect and enhance habitats within their neighbourhoods.	Ongoing: The council takes part in a variety of initiatives to promote our environmental work and available sustainable themes and programmes. For instance, attending Green Careers Fairs, and promoting these on social media. A recent example was one held at Sybil Andrews Academy. 

Task	Update
	In May 2024, the council ran a free compost giveaway event at Brandon Country Park. This was the best attended on record – with many event goers stating that the council’s promotion was key to attendance. This event will continue annually, with the campaign already running for the event on 7 May 2025.  We promote the use of West Suffolk parks throughout the year, encouraging residents and visitors to make the most of the beautiful scenery and wildlife, whilst getting exercise (such as taking part in parkrun) and fresh air. We will be focusing on this specifically in Love Parks Week from 25 July – 3 August.  With environmental days and campaigns such as World Refill Day on 16 June, we will be showcasing local businesses and market stalls that offer refill services to reduce waste.
Promote local food production.	Ongoing: The council has undertaken various activities to promote community and household food production including Food Savvy Suffolk – the council regularly shares

Task	Update
	posts on the council Facebook page. We have incorporated a focus on locally grown produce when promoting West Suffolk markets. Through locality budgets, councillors have supported Still Good Food in Bury St Edmunds
2.3 Travel and transport partnership working	
Work with Suffolk County Council to ensure West Suffolk benefits from the Cycling and Walking Fund.	Ongoing: This action is ongoing.
2.4 Continue to work with partners and community groups to improve air quality	
Increase impetus on measures to tackle vehicle idling in sensitive locations	Ongoing: This action is ongoing.
Work with partners to promote improvement of Air quality by sharing information and positive work practices.	Ongoing: We promoted Clean Air Night on 22 January, encouraging residents to burn less wood in their homes, reducing the amount of carbon emissions. As May is National Walking Month and International Walk to School Month is in September, we will be sharing information and encouraging residents and staff to walk when they can.
Continue to support residents of West Suffolk to identify and develop community projects aimed at informing and promoting ways to improve air quality throughout the district.	Ongoing: The council has continued to work closely with Suffolk Climate Partnership. The Community Chest (renamed Thriving communities Fund from this year) in 2024-2025: 3.5 per cent of total fund was allocated to projects with a focus on Environment and Sustainability. Of which 100 per cent was for projects aimed to reduce food waste. However it is important to note that this year's grant scheme was launched in parallel with second stage of the Decarbonisation Initiatives Fund (DIF2) and community groups were asked to bid to the DIF for those schemes (see separate update below).
2.5 Promote domestic renewable energy technologies, initially focusing on solar PV and air source heat pumps	
Promote domestic renewable energy technologies, initially focusing on solar PV and air source heat pumps.	Ongoing: West Suffolk Council will be sharing information regarding the Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS) that will be switched off permanently on Monday 30 June 2025 by giving advice and signposting residents to utility providers that will move them across to a smart meter before the deadline. This change will impact households across the country that rely on RTS meters to manage their electricity usage. Throughout the year we will be sharing information on the

Task	Update
	successful DIF2 projects, such as Anselm Community Centre, Hopton Bowls Club and EcoCarriers BSE. We have shared information on the government's Warm and Fuzzy campaign (Boiler upgrade scheme) Energy Saving Trust - Boiler Upgrade Scheme explained, where residents could benefit from a £7,500 government heat pump grant and reduce their emissions.
2.7 Improve Renewable Energy Portfolio	
Continue to invest in our Solar for Business scheme.	Ongoing: In 2024-25, 824KW of new roof mounted solar was installed on 20 buildings in West Suffolk. Roof mounted solar contributed £860,000 to council finances in 2024-2025, and carbon dioxide savings of 2,000 tonnes. Of these 20 installations 13 were on WSC owned buildings. The combined size of these installs is 351kWp with an annual generation of 315,000kWh. In April 2055 we launched the solar for business scheme to businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils. Given its experience in this area, the council is also playing a key role within the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership to expand renewable energy systems in other parts of the public estate, including a solar for schools offer.
Investigate opportunities to build and own another solar farm.	Ongoing: The initial stages of the solar canopies at Mildenhall Hub car park are in the works. The council received a £75,000 grant from the Greater South East Net Zero Hub. This Investment Readiness Scheme grant will support any due diligence work for potential new solar farms.
Investigate opportunities for the development of renewable energy sources including wind and hydrogen.	Ongoing: West Suffolk Council has worked alongside parish and town councils to convert their streetlights to light-emitting diode (LED) lanterns using its new Decarbonisation Initiatives Fund (DIF). Switching over 1,600 town and parish council-owned streetlights to LED lanterns represents a crucial advance in cutting energy use and reducing carbon emissions, as well as lowering costs for taxpayers. 29 expressions of interest were received for the final stage of the Decarbonisation Initiatives Fund (DIF) from community organisations from across West Suffolk. The applications covered a range of measures including solar PV, battery storage, insulation and LED lighting. The applications have come from across West Suffolk covering towns and villages. The total value of the works is over £500,000.
2.8 Improve public electric vehicle charging	
Increase the provision of	Ongoing: Multiple West Suffolk community sites were put

Task	Update
electric vehicle charging facilities on council-owned land.	forward for EV charger installations under LEVI pilot funding including Wings Road carpark Lakenheath and Southgate Community Centre, Bury St Edmunds. Additional site surveys for council owned sites to commence over the summer 2025, sites include leisure centres and county parks. New EV charger installations in Parkway (Bury St Edmunds) and Guineas (Newmarket) car parks are fully commissioned - four 7kW sockets have been installed at each site. Details in press release: Powering a greener future: New EV chargers bring renewable energy to West Suffolk towns  New EV charging points have been installed in town centres, with plans to expand infrastructure as part of the Plug In Suffolk Car Club initiative.
2.9 Deposit returns scheme	
Reverse vending machines.	Ongoing: We have continued to promote the use of the Trovr machines in: The Guineas, Newmarket Leisure Centre, West Suffolk College, Parkway Multi-Storey, Haverhill Leisure Centre and local insurance broker Howden. The Trovr West Suffolk recycling trial has been shortlisted for Campaign of the Year at this year's Awards for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management

Task	Update																																																																								
	 Below shows the Trovr stats Suffolk Wide for this year, February 2024 to April 2025. April's data includes data up until the 27 April. We will be receiving West Suffolk data the week commencing 12 May. We will update with this when we receive it.																																																																								
Reverse vending machines	<table><tr><th colspan="4">Suffolk Network February 2024 to April 2025</th></tr><tr><th>Month</th><th>Bottles</th><th>Cans</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td>February 2024</td><td>1,040</td><td>169</td><td>1,209</td></tr><tr><td>March 2024</td><td>1,497</td><td>139</td><td>1,636</td></tr><tr><td>April 2024</td><td>1,516</td><td>286</td><td>1,802</td></tr><tr><td>May 2024</td><td>1,100</td><td>209</td><td>1,309</td></tr><tr><td>June 2024</td><td>1,106</td><td>230</td><td>1,336</td></tr><tr><td>July 2024</td><td>847</td><td>103</td><td>950</td></tr><tr><td>August 2024</td><td>932</td><td>164</td><td>1,096</td></tr><tr><td>September 2024</td><td>995</td><td>143</td><td>1,138</td></tr><tr><td>October 2024</td><td>1,091</td><td>166</td><td>1,257</td></tr><tr><td>November 2024</td><td>1,269</td><td>321</td><td>1,590</td></tr><tr><td>December 2024</td><td>1,024</td><td>302</td><td>1,326</td></tr><tr><td>January 2025</td><td>990</td><td>344</td><td>1,294</td></tr><tr><td>February 2025</td><td>949</td><td>84</td><td>1,033</td></tr><tr><td>April 2025</td><td>811</td><td>323</td><td>1,134</td></tr><tr><td>March 2025</td><td>924</td><td>356</td><td>1,280</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>16,091</td><td>3,339</td><td>19,390</td></tr></table>	Suffolk Network February 2024 to April 2025				Month	Bottles	Cans	Total	February 2024	1,040	169	1,209	March 2024	1,497	139	1,636	April 2024	1,516	286	1,802	May 2024	1,100	209	1,309	June 2024	1,106	230	1,336	July 2024	847	103	950	August 2024	932	164	1,096	September 2024	995	143	1,138	October 2024	1,091	166	1,257	November 2024	1,269	321	1,590	December 2024	1,024	302	1,326	January 2025	990	344	1,294	February 2025	949	84	1,033	April 2025	811	323	1,134	March 2025	924	356	1,280	Total	16,091	3,339	19,390
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Task	Update
	
New action: Funding monitoring process	
Establish process to collate and monitor internal and external funding that supports climate change or environmental initiatives	We are developing administrative processes to collate and monitor internal and external funding streams that benefit the local environment or reduces carbon emissions. This will make it easier to promote the work of the council.
2.10 Green taxi fleet	
Review emission requirements as part of the wider evaluation of the taxi policy.	Ongoing: We have completed snapshot fleet analysis for age, emission (CO2) and European Emissions Standards. A 2024 Unmet Demand (Taxi) report was commissioned and completed, and a draft version has been received back. WSC had requested directed coverage around emissions and EVs, and trade, public and stakeholder questionnaires were used. This now awaits analysis. Taxi (and Private Hire Vehicle) Policy review is diarised for a 2025 start. It will take into account the Local Transport Plan, and will set fleet decarbonisation ambitions, strategies and trajectory.

3. Existing Housing Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Update
3.1 By working with partners explore how they wish to improve the energy efficiency of homes.	
Confirm the standard of build intended. Establish a measure against the standard.	Ongoing: West Suffolk Council will work with its Housing Company Barley Homes to meet the new enhanced local plan and building regulations, to support the ambition for the company to be an environmental exemplar, noting the requirement for it to operate commercially.
Improve social housing	Ongoing: Over the course of 2023-2024, 151 homes, under Flagship, have been retrofitted. (no additional update as meetings are scheduled for end of May 25). Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3 funding has

Task	Update
	been announced. A number of social housing providers in West Suffolk have been awarded funding under this scheme: • Flagship Housing Group Limited Grant funding offered: £14,639,955 • The Havebury Housing Partnership Grant funding offered: £3,462,727 • Orwell Housing Association Limited Grant funding offered: £1,820,224 • Sanctuary Housing Association Grant funding offered: £44,286,399 • Stonewater Limited Grant funding offered: £18,724,910 Government target – all social housing in England to achieve at least a Band C by 2030. Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced significant changes to improve the sector and protect tenants. Greater engagement with social housing providers sought within the Housing Strategy, to include these as agenda items at ongoing meetings to identify barriers and opportunities.
Funding programmes to support retrofit and housing improvement	Ongoing: The council has been able to make progress via the national Housing Upgrade Grant (HUG) scheme. HUG2 measures as of 17 April 2025: • Properties with work completed: 72 • Properties with purchase order issued or works commencing: 16 • Air source heat pump: completed- 15. To be completed- 12. • Cavity wall insulation: completed- 11. To be completed- 1. • External wall insulation: completed- 4. • Flat roof insulation: completed- 8. • High retention storage heaters: completed- 3. • Hot water cylinder insulation: completed- 9. • Loft insulation: completed- 52. To be completed- 1. • Solar photovoltaic panels: completed- 47. To be completed- 13. Costs so far: £1,414,549.95 Referrals into this scheme have now stopped. Warm Homes: Local Grant (funding for private stock) under gov Warm Home Plan: Warm Homes Suffolk on behalf of the Suffolk consortium has secured Warm Homes: Local Grant (WHLG) funding

Task	Update			
	WHLG allocation	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	Capital allocation	£1,011,732.90	£1,474,430.40	£1,444,592
	Admin and ancillary cost	£178,541.10	£260,193.60	£254,928
	Total spend	£1,190,274.00	£1,734,624.00	£1,699,520
	Suffolk’s allocation has been disappointing and well below the bid amount put forward. Objective put forward to mobilize grant delivery quickly to demonstrate effectiveness and request underspend to top up allocation.			
	Warm Homes Suffolk are now planning for delivery, which will require sign off by DESNZ.			
	There are three eligibility pathways:			
	1. Eligible postcode (pre-determined based on indices of multiple deprivation).			
	2. Income proxies (receipt of a means tested benefit or household meets ECO4 Flex Route).			
	3. Household Income Threshold.			
Of note, West Suffolk has no eligible postcode. Marketing, signposting and promotion will therefore be fundamental to take up.				
Suffolk Retrofit interest free loan available. December 2024 figures: 17 enquiries from West Suffolk.				
New task: Working with Suffolk partners, consider the development of a reporting system for social homes and private rented sector (PRS)	This will make it easier to understand the challenges, the quality of the housing in the area, and in engaging with households.			
	Improved reporting of HUG2, build on learning to develop effective reporting for WH:LG.			
	Ongoing – work to use our links to the main social housing providers to get more info on their housing, and their funding schemes; ideally this will be formalised, but not totally within our control.			
3.3. Improve housing through funding and regulation				
Establish regular monitoring of performance. Number of rented homes identified against those brought up to standard.	Complete: Required data was added to Key Performance Indicator (KPI) dashboard in October 2023.			

Task	Update
Support Suffolk-wide projects to improve Private Rented housing.	Ongoing: The council is primarily working through the Safe Suffolk Renters (SSR) project, which has an objective to improve living conditions and energy performance. Primarily working with private sector landlords, letting agents and rural estates. Suffolk Safer Renting (SSR) is progressing validation inspections of those properties that Building Research Establishment (BRE) modelled as containing a Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Cat 1 for Excess Cold. SSR are also targeting EPC F and G rated rented properties to bring them up to standard. The Housing Stock Condition survey has been completed by the BRE commissioned by SSR and published on the website. The report evaluates the private stock across Suffolk and each council has access to a dwelling level Stock Condition Database (HSCD). The database is therefore now available to be used by Suffolk to target (modelled) fuel poor households and low EPC properties. There is additional work being undertaken with SODA to explore overlaying health and housing (BRE) data to better where vulnerable households which could transform how we target vulnerable households with energy improvement grants or loans. Analysis of the HSCD is enabling targeted work to inspect properties modelled to be in poor condition or cold. This is being used to target potential eligible households with information regarding Warm Homes: Local Grant, ECO4, Warm Fuzzy Home (rebranded Boiler Upgrade Grant). Safe Suffolk Renters will continue for 2025-26 as a partnership between East and West with a focus on preparing landlords for the Renters Rights Act and targeting low EPC rated properties with appropriate intervention. There will be a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) and external reporting, so this should start to happen. In the private rented sector, we are also currently developing a project with Elveden Estates to target energy efficiency upgrades using ECO 4 funding to suitable properties with EPC rating F and G.
Improve signposting to funding.	Ongoing: Webpages are under constant review to ensure up to date information. Healthy Homes Officer – responding to direct energy efficiency enquiries and working proactively with comms and partners. New CAB contract includes energy efficiency advice.
Explore options for housing improvement	Ongoing: The new housing strategy includes housing improvement commitments that includes retrofit:

Task	Update
(retrofit) in upcoming housing strategy.	"Continue bids for funding from the Government and others to reduce emissions across all housing markets and to deliver improvements in energy efficiency particularly focusing on low-income households and vulnerable residents, working with partners across Suffolk." The housing strategy was adopted in November 2024.
Housing improvement loans scheme.	Ongoing: A scoping report on local housing funding schemes was delivered in January 2024.
Lendology - Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme	We will promote the Suffolk wide interest free loan scheme which is now live.
New action: Data collection and usage	
Ensure that all decisions are underpinned by evidence and performance measures are put in place.	Ongoing: Make good use of data sources including from Suffolk Office of Data Analytics' Environment and Housing reports. In the latter half of 2024, by overlapping this data with other location-based data, the council worked with Suffolk County council to develop a model to aid in locating, prioritising, and targeting resource for retrofit schemes. This includes the BRE Stock Condition Database which identifies properties with poor energy efficiency, benefit data and SODA-linked Dataset Service which pulls in health data.
Scope methods to better utilise data.	Scope methods to better utilise data to support the improvement and retrofit of current homes and buildings in West Suffolk.

4. Planning and Regulation Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Update
4.1. Maximise application of planning policy to encourage higher performance in new build.	
Develop the climate emergency and sustainable development strategic policy for the new local plan.	Ongoing: West Suffolk Council's Local Plan finished main modifications on 15 April. West Suffolk Council hope to adopt the new local plan in July 2025. The strategic planning team and environment team are working together to produce supporting guidance in relation to the climate change policies in the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan. This guidance will be published at the time of the adoption of the local plan.
Promote Planning Advisory Note (to encourage higher	Complete: Planning advisory note is complete and monitoring is ongoing.

Task	Update
performance in new build) to officers and developers. Monitor usage, evaluate and seek feedback.	
Develop a checklist to accompany planning applications	Ongoing: The strategic planning team and environment team are working together to produce supporting guidance in relation to the climate change policies in the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan. This guidance will be published at the time of the adoption of the local plan.
Continue to explore and monitor opportunities to require more stringent building standards than the national standard to ensure efficient buildings in advance of next local plan	Ongoing: The strategic planning team and environment team will continue to work together post adoption of the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan, in preparation for a new local plan.
4.2. Through the local plan process, address the challenge of protecting and enhancing biodiversity while providing growth.	
On a continuing basis, ensure the skills in the Planning team are up to date in respect of natural capital, ecosystem services and in particular Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity Net-Gain (BNG).	Ongoing: Planning team undertakes regular training as required. Mandatory BNG is now in force and training is ongoing for officers. We will continue to monitor the impacts of the new requirements in terms of resourcing.
Review resources necessary to monitor adherence with planning policy and permissions to ensure agreed biodiversity and landscape improvements are implemented.	Ongoing: The ecologist post has recently been appointed within the team. In addition, a landscape architect post has been created and will be advertised later in 2025.
Work with partners and developers to encourage sustainable tree retention and increase canopy cover.	Ongoing: The emerging local plan includes policies in relation to trees, in relation to their retention, increase in canopy cover and developments to provide new planting

Task	Update
Land usage	
Scope and explore more efficient land usage – specifically investigate the possibility of building higher in order to maximise efficiency of space in building.	Ongoing: The emerging local plan allocates land for development and has considered density and best use of land. More detailed work would be carried out on a site-by-site basis through a Masterplan process and through pre-app discussions, taking into account local context and other planning policies. In addition, Design Code work could include an assessment of density and building heights across the district, which is being looked into by the Planning Policy Team.
Climate adaption plans	
Look to develop and adopt climate adaptation plans to ensure that new buildings are able to deal with the effects of climate change – such as flooding and its cumulative impact.	Ongoing: The emerging local plan includes policies relating to climate change adaptations. Officers will continue to monitor progress following the adoption of the local plan and in preparation for a new local plan.
Facilitate and improve active travel	
Continue to develop planning approaches related to active travel.	The emerging local plan contains a number of policies in relation to active and sustainable travel. West Suffolk and Suffolk County Council are working together to produce guidance to support the local plan. Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk's aim is to promote and deliver sustainable transport mitigation measures over physical highway mitigation. SCC have advised that its work on the Bury East West Cycle Route is still currently paused.

5. Corporate Action Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Update
5.1. Environmental management systems	
Review environmental management system in March every year to ensure completeness.	Ongoing: The environmental management system and methodology for carbon reporting will be updated in accordance with the revised net zero by 2039 trajectory if adopted by Cabinet.
Work with all building users to reduce paper consumption by 5 per cent each year, to be measured in March.	Ongoing: In 2024-25, 652,026 pages were printed. This is a 21 per cent decrease from 2023-24 and is 35 per cent lower than 2018-19.

Task	Update
Work with HR (and possibly Suffolk County Council) to update the West Suffolk House green travel plan.	Ongoing: The Green Travel Plan is going into consultation in May 2025, the survey has been scheduled to be sent out to WSC Staff.
5.5 Reduce energy consumption from all sites	
Reduce energy consumption from all sites.	Ongoing: Analysis will be published in the 2024-25 environmental statement.
New task: Scope the process to take council buildings off gas.	A paper is being presented to Environment and Sustainability Reference Group (ESRG) and Cabinet containing details of the suggested new net zero trajectory baselined against achieving net zero by 2039. This includes estimated costs and carbon savings for all projects required for WSC to meet net zero, broken down into 5-year periods to give a rough timeline for when the projects could be completed. As part of this work, all remaining buildings with fossil fuel heating within the council's estate have been identified with a view to programming low carbon heating replacements (for example air source heat pumps). Adoption of the new trajectory does not constitute approval of any new interventions required to deliver the net zero target – these will need to be approved separately by councillors after consideration of business cases, and in the context of other priorities and available budgets. However, the target provides a tool which can be used to monitor the council's progress to net zero and support decision-making.
Develop a business case to end the use of combined heat and power (CHPs) in all council leisure centres to be ready for the first of the current contract end dates in 2028 and/or align with the current refurbishment project for Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre.	Complete: The council has been awarded £4.2million Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding to decarbonise Bury and Haverhill leisure centres. This is a national scheme run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and delivered by Salix. This funding will be supported with £600,000 from the council's decarbonisation fund. Each site will receive several measures including solar PV canopies, insulation, building management system upgrades, air source heat pumps and some new glazing for the Bury St Edmunds site.
5.6. Continued professional development of driving staff	
Consider using a driving efficiency metric within drivers personal development reviews (PDRs) to encourage more fuel efficient and safe driving.	Ongoing: New monitoring system introduced in March 2023 continues to be monitored, and some driving events are being highlighted to drivers on an ongoing basis. This will be expanded as more trucks have the same technology upon replacement. We will also explore an investment in a trial of additional telemetry in a couple of HGVs that could enable further fuel savings. Depending on the outcome this could be expanded to other vehicles or parts of the fleet.

Task	Update
	Route optimisation is carried out regularly to ensure that routes are efficient and minimise carbon emissions.
Continued professional development of driving staff.	Ongoing: Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) training is carried out annually. Training is mandatory for Vocational drivers. 35 hours of training must be undertaken over five years that can be split into five seven-hour modules. Training is ongoing yearly. All modules are Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training (JAUPT) approved, and we endeavour to select modules that are interesting and engaging to our driving staff. The driver CPC training will take place in June and July 2024.
5.7. Alternative fuel vehicles	
Review of alternative fuel vehicles as part of vehicle procurement process.	Complete - closed After lengthy deliberations regarding hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) a decision was made to suspend any switch to HVO as it is not viable.
5.8. Fleet Management ensure that council invests in appropriate ultra-low emissions vehicles (ULEV).	
Require all who request new fleet vehicles to review their needs. The default position is now ULEV and a case must be made if ICE is required.	Ongoing: The council is making decisions to replace diesel or petrol vehicles with EV alternatives, wherever viable. As with our buildings, the default position initially explored is electric, and a case has to be made to retain petrol or diesel (as was the case for the new freighters required for Simpler Recycling).
Continued trials of alternative technologies for commercial vehicles, such as road sweepers.	Ongoing: The council took delivery of second EV precinct sweeper, which is based in Bury St Edmunds area – the sweeper has EV graphics identical to our previous Haverhill machine.
Explore options for using EVs within the (Vertas) pool car service and ensure that the number of vehicles is suitable to meet service demand.	Complete: Vertas pool cars are now electric.
EV charging at depots.	Ongoing: A combination of fast and rapid EV charging infrastructure at WSOH (12 sockets), Haverhill (6 sockets) depot and Mildenhall depot and unit (1 socket) have been installed to enable smaller fleet vehicles to transition to EV. Full details in the press release: Driving the future: West Suffolk Council's new electric fleet and charging infrastructure Next steps will be to review charging requirements for larger fleet vehicles such as eRCVs
New task: Explore costs, opportunities, and implications for a	Investigation to include EV waste freighter(s) to cover town collection route(s), recognising limitations of technology in longer rural routes.

Task	Update
mixed freighter fleet.	
5.9. Continue to work with Facilities Maintenance provider (VERSE) to ensure that in cafes and kiosks: 1. single use plastics is minimalised or not used at all 2. they provide tap water free on request and advertise this service 3. products are locally sourced where possible and food choices promote sustainability.	
West Stow Visitor Centre – Engage with café operator and ask them to introduce waste management actions with staff.	Ongoing: Everything is plastic free apart from bottled water at Brandon County Park due to the environmental area and customers wanting a screw top. Over the next year, alternatives will be investigated, though these will likely be more expensive and could potentially put off customers. However, Brandon County Park has a water fountain on the outside of the café, which is readily used by visitors for refilling their own water vessel. Everything else within the offer is biodegradable or recyclable as per all Vertas sites. Tap water is available and given out upon request in both Café West and Brandon County Park.
5.10. Install renewable energy systems when replacing or maintaining West Suffolk Council assets	
Install renewable energy systems when replacing or maintaining West Suffolk Council assets.	Ongoing: When we replace asbestos cement roofs on industrial units, we always consider fitting solar panels onto the new roof. At the Abbey Gardens and Newmarket Guineas toilets we removed the gas boilers and replaced with electric heat pumps. Gas boilers are routinely removed and replaced with heat pumps in our residential properties. We have installed solar PV on 13 WSC owned buildings in 24.25. The combined size of these installs is 351kWp with an annual generation of 315,000kWh.

Completed tasks

Communities and Communications Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Completed task update
Travel and transport partnership working	
Support Suffolk-wide air quality monitoring pilot with a view to finding opportunities to improve air quality in hotspot areas and gain greater insight into particulate pollution.	Complete
Raise awareness and promote actions taken by WSC and communities.	

Task	Completed task update
Create communications plan.	Complete

Existing Housing Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Completed task update
By working with partners explore how they wish to improve the energy efficiency of homes.	
Establish the commitment to Decent Home Standard (DHS) or higher energy performance homes.	Complete
Establish regular monitoring of performance. Number of rented homes identified against those brought up to standard.	Complete
Establish regular monitoring of performance. Number of rented homes identified against those brought up to standard.	
Improve housing through funding and regulation	Complete: Establish regular monitoring of performance. Number of rented homes identified against those brought up to standard.

Planning and Regulation Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Completed task update
Through the local plan process, address the challenge of protecting and enhancing biodiversity while providing growth.	
Investigate and develop a new local plan tree strategy.	Complete
Maximise application of planning policy to encourage higher performance in new build.	
Promote PAN to officers and developers. Monitor usage, evaluate and seek feedback.	Complete: PAN is complete and monitoring is ongoing.

Corporate Action Workstream

Strategic actions

Task	Completed task update
Environmental management systems	
Introduce new measures to the council's quarterly performance report.	Complete

Task	Completed task update
Learning from Covid - Encourage all council teams to consider and review their ways of working.	
Seek to increase office recycling provision supported with clear signage and comms in place for September 2023.	Complete
Include reference and link to net zero ambition in job adverts for new staff. Have this in place for all posts by August 2023.	Complete
Make sure that environmental impacts are considered when making key decisions from September 2023.	Complete
Environmental management systems.	
Introduce a suitable water consumption metric to compare building performance	Complete
Reduce energy consumption from all sites.	
Develop a business case to end the use of combined heat and power (CHPs) in all council leisure centres to be ready for the first of the current contract end dates in 2028 and/or align with the current refurbishment project for Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre.	Complete: The council has been awarded £4.2m Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding to decarbonise Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill leisure centres. This is a national scheme run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and delivered by Salix. This funding will be supported with £600k from the council's decarbonisation fund. Each site will receive several measures including solar PV canopies, insulation, building management system upgrades, air source heat pumps and some new glazing for the Bury St Edmunds site.
Explore options for using EVs within the (Vertas) pool car service and ensure that the number of vehicles is suitable to meet service demand.	Complete: Vertas pool cars are now electric.
Ensure that Cafe West are disposing of waste in most sustainable way.	Complete
Alternative fuel vehicles	
Review of alternative fuel vehicles as part of vehicle procurement process.	Complete – Reviewed alternative vehicles as part of the Net Zero Trajectory Report