

Annual Environment and Climate Change Report 2024–2025

Report number	AAA/WS/24/xxx (to be completed by Democratic Services)
Report to and date(s)	Cabinet 22 July 2025
Cabinet member	Councillor Gerald Kelly Portfolio Holder for Governance and Regulatory Phone: 07968 396389 Email: gerald.kelly@westsuffolk.gov.uk
Lead officer	Alex Wilson Deputy Chief Executive Phone: 01284 757695 Email: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Decisions Plan: **Democratic Services only to input**

Wards impacted: **All wards**

Recommendation: **It is recommended that Cabinet:**

Approves for implementation the Environment and Climate Change Report 2024–2025, set out in this paper, in doing so, notes and agrees the Environmental Action Plan Update 2024-2025 and the Environmental Annual Statement 2024-2025 (set out in its Appendices A and B).

1. Background to this report

- 1.1 In 2019, West Suffolk Council set up an Environment and Climate Change Taskforce and declared both a climate and environmental emergency. That taskforce made recommendations to Cabinet and an action plan was agreed.
- 1.2 In June 2023, the Leader of the Council announced a new working group to review the existing action plan, and in particular to consider additional actions the council could take to support and encourage West Suffolk residents and businesses to address the climate and environmental challenge.
- 1.3 Since then, the working group has become the Environment and Sustainability Reference Group (ESRG), chaired by Councillor Julia Wakelam, which reviews the progress of key tasks and projects of the Environment and Climate Change Action Plan, the council's performance and Annual Environmental Statement. The work of the Council on environmental sustainability is also monitored by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.4 This report and its appendices comprise the suite of documents that the council produces annually to look back on its performance and identify new areas for action.
- 1.5 ESRG have approved this report and its appendices at its meeting on 10 July 2025. Their accompanying comments are set out in section 4 of this report.

2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approves for implementation this Environment and Climate Change Report for 2024–2025 and notes and agrees its appendices. The purpose of the documents is as follows:
- 2.2 **Covering report - Environment and Climate Change Report 2024-2025 –** This paper provides an overview and annual update on the Council's progress towards tackling the climate emergency and enhancing the local environment. It highlights achievements over the past year, including investment in renewable energy, biodiversity, sustainable transport, waste reduction, and community engagement. The report also outlines challenges and future priorities as the Council works towards its net zero target by 2039.
- 2.3 **Appendix A – Environment and Climate Change Action Plan Update.** This appendix provides a detailed summary of progress against the actions set out in West Suffolk Council's Environment and Climate Change Action Plan, and any current work programmes. It highlights achievements, ongoing work, and planned activity aligned to the council's strategic priorities on environmental sustainability and climate resilience. This update supports transparency and helps track delivery of commitments to reduce carbon emissions, protect natural resources, and enable communities to respond to climate challenges.
- 2.4 **Appendix B - Environmental Statement 2024-2025.** This appendix sets out West Suffolk Council's annual performance in managing its environmental impacts. It provides an overview of the council's operations and achievements in areas such as energy use, waste management, biodiversity, sustainable procurement and resulting carbon emissions. The statement reflects the council's

commitment to environmental stewardship and continuous improvement in supporting a greener, more sustainable West Suffolk.

- 2.5 **Appendix C - Infographic for Council's revised Net Zero target.** Following the Cabinet's adoption in May 2025 of a new full-costed timeline for achieving net zero, this appendix summarises that plan in a way which can be more widely communicated to internal and external stakeholders.

3. Environment and Climate Change Report 2024-2025

Context

- 3.1 In 2024–2025, West Suffolk Council continued its commitment to delivering meaningful action to address the climate emergency and enhance the local environment. Building on a strong track record, this year saw further investment in renewable energy, biodiversity, waste reduction, sustainable transport, and partnerships that support greener communities. And returns on those investments for taxpayers.
- 3.2 West Suffolk Council is proud to report ongoing progress in delivering the Environment and Climate Change Update Report, including improvements to local parks, new recycling initiatives, and expanded electric vehicle infrastructure. These achievements are made possible by working collaboratively across services, and with our communities and external partners.
- 3.3 This report highlights our work over the past year, reflecting both successes and continuing challenges as we progress towards our new target of net zero emissions by 2039.

Progress against actions

- 3.4 **Communities and Communication:** West Suffolk Council has significantly increased its communications and outreach efforts to support behavioural change, in recognition of the Committee on Climate Change's findings that 62 per cent of emissions reductions depend on individual and collective action. Campaigns including Food Waste Action Week, Global Recycling Day, Earth Day, and Compost Week were successfully delivered, with tailored messages and engagement activities.
- 3.5 Public education has been amplified through school visits, attendance at community events, and active social media promotion aligned with Suffolk Recycles and other collaborative platforms.
- 3.6 Following phase one which was focused on streetlights owned by town and parish councils, the Decarbonisation Initiatives Fund (DIF) was expanded in 2024–25, with a key aim of stimulating local conversations around energy saving and supporting community-led action. The popular compost giveaway at Brandon Country Park recorded record attendance, demonstrating strong public interest when outreach is effectively delivered. Business engagement also increased, particularly in preparation for new recycling legislation, with over 300 commercial customers now participating in food waste collections.

- 3.7 **Corporate action:** A revised Net Zero by 2039 target and fully costed trajectory was developed and integrated into operational and investment planning across the organisation (see Appendix C).
- 3.8 The council achieved a 21 per cent reduction in paper usage compared to the previous year and a 35 per cent reduction since 2018–2019. Major energy efficiency improvements were commenced at Bury leisure centre soon to be followed at Haverhill leisure centre, supported by £4.2 million in external funding and £600,000 in council investment. The package of works includes approved business cases to remove gas fuelled Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems from the leisure centres and replace with air source heat pumps, insulation, PV canopies, and upgraded building systems, which will make significant progress in building decarbonisation.
- 3.9 EV charging infrastructure was rolled out at depots and public sites, enabling, where possible, transition of the fleet to electric vehicles (EVs) as standard for new vehicle requests.
- 3.10 **Existing housing:** Alongside adopting its new Housing, Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy, West Suffolk Council supported the delivery of retrofit and energy efficiency advice through existing services and began exploring additional mechanisms for performance monitoring in the private and social housing sectors.
- 3.11 In partnership with the Council's housing company, Barley Homes, progress continued toward ensuring new developments meet or exceed enhanced sustainability standards within the emerging Local Plan framework. Through the Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme, residents were supported to improve the energy performance of their homes.
- 3.12 A new funding initiative, the Warm Home: Local Grant was launched working in collaboration with Suffolk-wide partners. Awareness of energy support schemes was raised through direct engagement and promotion of the government's heat pump grant programme, 'Warm and Fuzzy' campaign. Efforts have also been made to raise awareness of the plan to turn off the Radio Teleswitch Service, which will impact residents on older electric heating systems and promotes smart meter installation.
- 3.13 **Planning and regulatory:** The draft West Suffolk Local Plan progressed toward adoption (for consideration by councillors in July 2025) and includes dedicated climate change policies that ensures new development prioritises climate change resilience, mitigation and adaption. The local plan has taken a comprehensive approach to ensure proposals for development maximise the benefits of net zero design, renewable energy generation, biodiversity, green infrastructure, tree retention, sustainable drainage, and active travel. Planning and environment teams are collaborating to produce guidance for developers aligned with climate and sustainability policies.
- 3.14 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) training has been delivered to planning officers, and an ecologist has been appointed, with a new landscape architect post planned for late 2025. PAN (Planning Advice Note) usage is being monitored, and a checklist to support applicants on climate-resilient design is in

development. Collaboration continues with Suffolk County Council on active travel infrastructure and future sustainable transport mitigation plans.

- 3.15 **Environment and biodiversity:** The council successfully retained its Green Flag status for six major parks and nature reserves and implemented improvements based on previous judges' feedback. The Council also supported local In-Bloom groups with their environmental campaigns which resulted in two of the districts towns (Brandon and Bury St Edmunds) being put forward to the national In-bloom finals, which are scheduled to be judged in the summer of 2025.
- 3.16 Funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund was utilised to deliver environmental improvements in Brandon, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket. In Newmarket the Yellow Brick Road path was extended to provide improved access along the watercourse to better link disparate areas of green spaces.
- 3.17 Habitat and biodiversity improvements were made through the relandscaping of certain green spaces, the reviewing of maintenance regimes and the planting of black poplars. By improving public access to green space, we enable more people to better appreciate their local environment. A new wildlife area was created at Nowton Park in partnership with volunteers and schools, enhancing community learning and biodiversity. The Council, in partnership with the Bury Water Meadows Group, have been working to improve the management of No Man's Meadow and the Crankles with a view to optimising the biodiversity value of the wider area and implementing traditional grassland and wetland management practices. A new task was scoped to improve waterway cleanliness and management, and future projects are being identified under this theme.
- 3.18 **Carbon emissions:** Carbon emissions have remained broadly stable, with a marginal increase this year. However, they continue to sit significantly below pre-pandemic levels. The full breakdown and trend analysis can be found in the Environmental Statement (Appendix B) but a summary is as follows:
- Total emissions up 1.1 per cent compared to 2019–2020
 - Renewable energy generation up 75 per cent compared to 2019–2020, due to new solar PV installations
 - Owned fleet emissions down 14 per cent compared to 2019–2020, as further EVs were adopted
 - Business travel emissions down 49 per cent compared to 2019–2020, with continued hybrid working and promotion of sustainable travel
 - Water consumption down 3.8 per cent compared to 2019–2020 across council buildings
 - Recycling rate at 70 per cent, a 3 per cent drop compared to 2019–2020, likely due to contamination and changing material streams
 - Waste generated at West Suffolk House down 66 per cent compared to 2019–2020
 - Six Green Flag parks maintained, with additional enhancements for biodiversity and access

- Public EV chargers installed by WSC can now support 84 EVs charging simultaneously, including new units at Parkway and Guineas car parks
- Energy delivered via WSC EV chargers powered over 468,000 miles
- 148 trees and over 800 whips planted across the district, including the planting of endangered black poplars during National Tree Planting Week

3.19 West Suffolk Council continues to track its carbon emissions against its long-term carbon budget to ensure it remains on course to meet its net zero target by 2039. The carbon budget sets out the maximum cumulative emissions allowable from council operations to remain within a trajectory consistent with limiting global warming in line with national commitments. In 2024–2025, while emissions showed a slight increase of 1.1 percent compared to the previous year, the council remains within its cumulative budget, due in part to sustained reductions since 2019–2020 and significant decarbonisation measures implemented this year. These include upgrades to heating systems, expansion of renewable energy installations, and reduced use of fossil-fuel-powered fleet vehicles. The revised net zero pathway developed this year will further refine budget forecasting and inform annual decision-making, helping ensure that all operational areas contribute proportionately to carbon reduction.

3.20 The carbon budget periods are:

Revised operational carbon budget periods (to 2039)

Period	Annual emissions ceiling (tCO ₂ e)	Cumulative budget (tCO ₂ e)
April 2020 – March 2024	4,675	18,700
April 2024 – March 2028	2,484	9,936
April 2028 – March 2033	1,500	7,500
April 2033 – March 2036	750	2,250
April 2036 – March 2039	250	750
April 2039 onwards	Net zero (0 tCO ₂ e)	

3.21 These budget bands are structured to reflect a decreasing emissions profile, supporting both the council’s planned capital interventions and the expected carbon savings from retrofitting, renewable energy expansion, and fleet electrification.

3.22 The shift from the original 2030 net zero deadline to 2039 allows for a more realistic and phased delivery, considering operational and financial constraints while still aligning with broader UK carbon reduction goals.

3.23 The next five-year period (2024–2028) remains critical: with the current emissions (~4,934 tCO₂e) still double the allowable budget, the carbon trajectory will require significant drops from 2025–2026 onward to stay within the cumulative allowance.

- 3.24 For the year 2024–2025, the council remains in the second period of the carbon budget, which allows for a steady annual emissions rate of 2,484 tCO₂e. Current estimated emissions for this period are approximately 4,934 tCO₂e, indicating that emissions remain above the previous target trajectory required to meet net zero by 2030.
- 3.25 While this represents a slight decrease of around 0.9 percent from 2023–2024 levels, the data highlights that emissions continue to come from the leisure centres which the council owns. The decarbonisation of key leisure sites, including Bury and Haverhill Leisure Centres, began in 2024–25 following the successful award of £4.2 million in government funding, which will support the installation of low-carbon heating systems, solar canopies, insulation, and upgraded controls. These improvements are expected to have a substantial impact from 2025–26 onwards. Until then, the council remains above its interim carbon budget, and continued investment will be needed through the Net Zero Investment Fund to bring emissions in line with the targeted reductions.
- 3.26 The introduction of Simpler Recycling is expected to play a significant role in supporting West Suffolk Council's progress towards environmental resilience and improving overall recycling performance. By standardising what materials can be recycled across England, Simpler Recycling will reduce confusion for residents and increase the quantity and quality of recyclable materials collected at the kerbside. From 2026, the scheme will introduce weekly food waste collections and harmonised dry recycling, enable more efficient processing and reduce contamination levels. For West Suffolk, this transition will help divert more waste from energy recovery, thereby lowering the council's emissions from waste handling and treatment. Additionally, the move to twin-stream collections will improve operational efficiency and align with the council's climate commitments by encouraging behavioural change and reducing carbon emissions associated with waste disposal. Preparations already underway, including communications campaigns and commercial engagement, will ensure that the system shift delivers both environmental and operational benefits
- 3.27 **Council's wider contribution:** The council makes wider contributions to local carbon reduction in addition to what it is doing with its own assets. For example, its Decarbonisation Initiatives Fund, running the Solar for Business scheme or delivering domestic retrofit programmes such as Homes Upgrade Grant (HUG) and Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD). These cannot be included in our own net zero performance. However, it is worth highlighting that, through its own direct actions, the council is estimated to have already prevented at least another 7,000 tonnes of carbon a year from entering the atmosphere via its 'off-site' renewable energy investments, grant schemes, etc. to put this into perspective the council's annual carbon emissions are approximately 5,000 tonnes of carbon per year.

Key successes at West Suffolk

3.28 Housing

Retrofit Support and Funding: West Suffolk Council continued to promote the Warm Homes Suffolk Loan (Lendology) and actively signposted residents to national schemes, including the £7,500 government heat pump grant under the Warm and Fuzzy campaign.

- **Barley Homes Sustainability Commitment:** Through its housing company, Barley Homes, the council progressed plans to meet enhanced local plan and building regulation standards, with the ambition of becoming an environmental exemplar.
- **Housing Strategy Alignment:** Work continued to embed retrofit and decarbonisation priorities into the council's new Housing Strategy.

3.29 Communities and communication

- **High-impact Public Campaigns:** West Suffolk took part in national and local awareness weeks, including Food Waste Action Week, Earth Day, Compost Week, and Global Recycling Day, reaching broad audiences across multiple channels.
- **Recycling on the Go:** Launched 24 new public recycling bins in partnership with Hubbub and McDonald's, promoting on-the-go recycling of bottles and cans in Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Mildenhall, and Haverhill.
- **Strong Volunteer Involvement:** Over 400 volunteers took part in the Great British Spring Clean, and the council supported over 350 litter-picking kits for ongoing community use.
- **Record-breaking Compost Giveaway:** Delivered the best-attended compost event to date at Brandon Country Park, raising awareness of circular resource use and food waste reduction.

3.30 Planning and regulation

- **Progress on local plan adoption:** The emerging West Suffolk Local Plan, which includes strong climate and biodiversity policies, completed its modifications stage and is due to be considered for adoption in July 2025.
- **Biodiversity net gain (BNG) implementation:** Council officers received training and began implementation of mandatory BNG requirements, with support from the newly appointed ecologist.
- **Developer guidance:** Planning and Environment teams collaborated to produce new climate adaptation and design guidance, aligned with the Local Plan and future sustainable development ambitions.
- **Design policy integration:** Climate and green infrastructure requirements were further embedded into planning checklists, with additional landscape architecture capacity being introduced in 2025.
- **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) development:** West Suffolk Council took part in helping shape and develop the LNRS.

3.31 Corporate action

- **Net Zero Trajectory and Investment Plan:** Developed a revised and fully costed net zero by 2039 trajectory, identifying all council buildings using fossil fuel heating and programming them for low-carbon replacements.

- Public sector decarbonisation funding: Secured a total of £4.2m from central government for energy efficiency works at key leisure sites — a major contribution to corporate emissions reduction.
- Energy savings in council operations: Paper consumption dropped by 21 per cent year-on-year and 35 per cent compared to 2018–2019; new business cases were scoped for replacing gas and CHP systems in two leisure centres. Renewable energy generation up 75 per cent compared to 2019–2020, due to new solar PV installations on council owned buildings.
- Fleet and charging expansion: EV infrastructure was expanded to include 19 new depot charging sockets, enabling greater use of EVs across fleet services.
- Solar for Business: Continued investment into roof mounted solar installation. In total there are now 110 installations with an installed capacity of 8.5MW, generating 750,000kWh of renewable electricity a year. The scheme has now been rolled out across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.
- Decarbonisation Initiative Fund 2: £225,000 has been allocated to fund energy efficiency upgrades to community buildings across West Suffolk. 29 applications were received for a range of measures including solar, batteries, insulation and heat pumps. With a match fund requirement, the fund should facilitate investment of over £500,000 into energy saving measures.
- UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) £17 million loan facility to West Suffolk Council to deliver a programme of net zero projects, including building decarbonisation, solar installations and electric vehicle fleet upgrades. The UKIB loan will help West Suffolk Council to decarbonise both its own operations and those of its business community, using a model that has potential to be replicated by other local authorities across the UK. The innovative portfolio approach will enable West Suffolk to finance a number of smaller net zero interventions below UKIB's £5 million loan size that are collectively both financially sustainable and environmentally impactful

3.32 Environment and biodiversity

- Six Green Flag Awards retained: Maintained national recognition for six parks and nature reserves, including Nowton Park, Abbey Gardens, and Aspal Close Nature Reserve.
- Wildlife and habitat improvements: Developed new wildlife gardens at Nowton Park and Nowton Nursery, used by local schools and nurseries, featuring pollinator plants, recycled-material bug hotels, and ponds for amphibians.
- Community tree planting: Planted Black Poplars during National Tree Planting Week — a rare and endangered native species — as part of the Suffolk clone bank project.
- Water Meadows Collaboration: Advanced traditional grassland and wetland management at No Man's Meadows and the Crankles, in partnership with

Bury Water Meadows Group, enhancing biodiversity in town-centre green corridors.

3.33 Performance benchmarking – 2025 Council Climate Scorecard

- 'Climate scorecards' are published once every two years by Climate Emergency UK a voluntary organisation. The scorecards are designed to evaluate all councils on their actions taken to reach net zero emissions and the assessment consists of 93 questions or less, depending on council type, across seven different sections, created in consultation with over 90 different organisations and individuals.
- In 2025, West Suffolk Council achieved an overall climate score of 47 per cent, representing a one per cent improvement on its 2023 performance. This placed the council joint 11th in the UK and notably above the national and regional average for district councils, both of which stood at 35 per cent.
- The council's strongest performance was in the Buildings and Heating category, where it scored 89 per cent—a substantial 34 percentage point increase from 2023 and the highest score nationally among all UK district councils. This reflects the council's significant investment in the decarbonisation of its estate, including major improvements planned for the leisure centres and recent renewable energy installations.
- Other areas of improvement included:
 - biodiversity: up four percentage points to 64 per cent
 - collaboration and engagement: up three percentage points to 61 per cent
 - governance and finance: up two percentage points to 43 per cent.
- While performance in transport (27 per cent) and waste reduction and food (8 per cent) remained consistent, the planning and land use score decreased. This drop is likely due to the transitional period as the council moves toward adoption of the new West Suffolk Local Plan in summer 2025, which will include strengthened policies on climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable development. Having a current and up-to-date local plan is a major contribution to sustainability since it gives the council the scope to regulate where development takes place and put in place the infrastructure required to support it.
- The results demonstrate steady overall progress and confirm that West Suffolk Council continues to lead in specific areas of climate action while recognising the need for further improvements in integrated planning and waste policy implementation. Recognising the value of this third-party scrutiny, we will also continue to offer to assist Climate Emergency UK in the ongoing development of their methodology ahead of the next assessment.

Potential new actions

- 3.34 As work has progressed against the action plan, new opportunities or areas for development have been identified by the Environment and Sustainability

Reference Group (ESRG). Some of these actions will support the wider reduction in emissions across West Suffolk, while others focus on the council's own operations and emissions and will contribute to the accelerating carbon reduction to meet the trajectory to net zero.

- 3.35 The council, like all councils in Suffolk, will also continue to contribute to the work of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, and the delivery of the [Sustainable Suffolk - Suffolk Climate Emergency Action Plan](#). For that reason, this update does not propose new actions which would duplicate those existing collaborative actions.
- 3.36 Listed below are suggested new actions it is recommended are included in the action plan, incorporating learning from the Performance Benchmarking – 2025 Council Climate Scorecard:

Communities and communication

- a. Continue to deliver compost giveaways and plastic reduction campaigns as part of national events such as Plastic Free July, Zero Waste Week, and World Refill Day.
- b. Focus on communications with communities and businesses to ensure successful implementation and adoption of Simpler Recycling.
- c. Implement and promote new electrical recycling banks where practicable, funded by Material Focus, across West Suffolk for small domestic appliances.
- d. Explore ways to prevent or reduce single use plastics at events hosted on council land or in council venues. And explore introducing a requirement for event organisers using council-managed venues to provide information on their own environmental commitments, particularly actions to reduce single-use plastics (for example reusable cup refill schemes).
- e. Continue to ensure residents have ongoing opportunities to shape and influence the delivery of the Environment and Climate Change Action Plan.
- f. Ensure relevant climate-related communications clearly highlight how the council is engaging with communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- g. Seek to reduce food waste through initiatives such as Simpler Recycling, Feel Good Suffolk and the council's Building Resilience and Nutrition fund (BRAN)
- h. Complete an equalities impact assessment for the Environment and Climate Change Action Plan to ensure fair and inclusive delivery.

Corporate action and governance

- i. Continue to aim to develop decarbonise remaining sites using Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems specifically Newmarket leisure centre followed by Mildenhall Hub once existing supplier contracts expire or equipment fails or sites become eligible for funding support.

- j. Ensure the council's own and any collaborative commitments to tackling climate change continue to be central in key strategic documents, such as the medium-term financial strategy, and specific operational documents, such as procurement policies.
- k. Keep under review how climate implications are currently considered in the development of all policies and projects.

Environment and biodiversity

- l. Seek sites for the planting of the first of the 5,000 trees on council land included in the new net zero plan.
- m. In partnership with local interest groups build on the existing work to improve the district's river corridors and neighbouring meadows.
- n. Implement further habitat enhancements on sites identified in previous Suffolk Wildlife Trust habitat surveys, focusing on council-owned open spaces not subject to Green Flag assessment.
- o. Strengthen delivery of Suffolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including new council-led contributions and land management trials.

Housing

- p. Continue to deliver improvements in energy efficiency particularly focusing on low-income households, vulnerable residents and those in fuel poverty in West Suffolk.

Planning and regulation

- q. Continue to provide training for planning and regulatory teams on biodiversity net gain, carbon literacy, and active travel design, particularly aligned to local plan delivery.
- r. To implement the climate change policies in the newly adopted West Suffolk Local Plan. Including the preparation and publication of the Climate Change Guidance Note and detail around what developers are required to submit with a planning application.

4. Alternative options that have been considered

- 4.1 An alternative option would be to not record or report on our environmental achievements and progress. However, this approach would conflict with West Suffolk Council's strategic priorities and our commitment to transparency and accountability. It would also fail to meet our reporting duties to inform stakeholders, partners, and residents about the council's actions to address climate change and protect the environment.
- 4.2 In relation to climate change generally, there is no 'do nothing' option. The ESG is aware of national and international reports and events, in particular the reports of the [Climate Change Committee](#).

5. Consultation and engagement undertaken

- 5.1 The Environment and Sustainability Reference Group (ESRG) has been consulted on the development of this report and the proposed updates to the Environment and Climate Change Action Plan. The ESRG has provided input on emerging priorities, progress reporting, and potential new actions to ensure alignment with the council's strategic goals. Broader engagement with communities, businesses, and partner organisations has been built into the delivery of specific actions and is referenced within the proposals section and supporting appendices.
- 5.2 At its meeting on 10 July 2025, the ESRG highlighted the following issues to Cabinet as part of their consideration of the report:
- a. The importance of tackling the issue of food waste from production through to consumption (new action 7 refers).
 - b. The need to focus on the recycling of small electricals (existing action).
 - c. The impact on carbon emissions of not currently having a household recycling centre in Newmarket (for discussion with Suffolk County Council)
 - d. The vital importance of retrofitting homes for energy efficiency, and promoting this work within communities and with partners (existing action)

Seeking to ensure current building standards are implemented in new homes being built under earlier planning consents (existing actions and new action 18).

6. Risks associated with the proposals

- 6.2 National policy changes may impact the delivery of local actions, requiring adjustments to timelines or scope. Officers will monitor legislative developments and adapt plans accordingly.
- 6.3 There is an ongoing risk that the resources required to implement the actions will not be available. However, this risk will be monitored by the ESRG and officers, with any opportunities for securing external resources monitored and pursued as appropriate, and Cabinet advised of any serious delays in implementation or resource requirements.

7. Implications arising from the proposals

- 7.1 Financial - There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Where individual projects require new investment which is not covered by existing budgets this will be a separate business case or report.
- 7.2 Legal compliance - No implications.
- 7.3 Personal data processing - No implications.
- 7.4 Equalities (including impacts on families and communities) - A large number of activities in the plan are specifically targeted at families and communities, for instance those relating to housing. The reference group expect that equality impacts should be positive because of their work, however this would need to

be subject to further assessment based on each action and of the plan as a whole (see proposed action 8).

- 7.5 Crime and disorder – No implications.
- 7.6 Safeguarding – No implications.
- 7.7 Environment or sustainability – By definition, the recommendations will have a positive impact on the environment and sustainability.
- 7.8 HR or staffing - No implications from this report; further activity may require additional staff to support, and this will be subject to business cases or separate requests.
- 7.9 Changes to existing policies – No implications from this update itself, but changes to policies (for example local plan) are referenced in the report.
- 7.10 External organisations (such as businesses, community groups) - potential partner organisations that will need to be involved with implementing recommendations. Officers therefore maintain a dialogue with partner organisations.

8. Appendices referenced in this report

- 8.1 Appendix A - Environment and Climate Change Action Plan Update
- 8.2 Appendix B – Environmental Annual Statement 2024-2025
- 8.3 Appendix C - Infographic for council’s revised net zero target

9. Background documents associated with this report

- 9.1 2023-2024 report to Cabinet - [CAB/WS/24/038](#) – 23 July 2024 (this report also contains links to earlier years’ reports)
- 9.2 Achieving Net Zero, report to Cabinet [CAB/WS/25/019](#) – 20 May 2025