

# Climate Change Annual Progress Report

2022- 2023

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# Executive summary

This report provides an update on the progress that has been made on the Climate Change Corporate Programme over the past 12 months, covering the reporting period July 2022 to July 2023.

During the 12 months of this reporting period, Hampshire County Council has been through a significant restructure which has resulted in changes to how the Climate Change Programme is structured and delivered. The focus has been on ensuring that the County Council's role in climate change is clearly defined and re-prioritising our programmes and resources in line with this.


The report provides an update on:

- new priorities and focus for Hampshire County Council
- baseline emissions
- updates on key programmes within the Strategic Framework
- networks and partnerships
- communications and marketing
- engagement activities

The report also sets out the areas of focus for the next 12 months.

# Section one:

# Ensuring corporate awareness and accountability on climate change



## 1.1 New Focus on the Strategic Framework

The transfer of the Climate Change team to the Hampshire 2050 directorate provided an opportunity to review the existing internal arrangements for delivering against the Climate Change Strategy through the Action Plan and Strategic Framework.

The Climate Change Action Plan was developed as a way of embedding climate change into the DNA of the County Council. It did this by bringing together all the actions taking place across the whole of the County Council on climate mitigation and resilience.

Despite over 200 actions identified, it was recognised that this would not in itself deliver against the County Council's 2050 climate targets. The Strategic Framework was therefore developed alongside the Action Plan to bridge the significant gap between the Action Plan and meeting the targets set.

The Strategic Framework sets out the key significant programmes based on the highest sources of emissions and priority areas for resilience including transport, residential, energy generation and distribution, economy, infrastructure, environment, and public health.

The Strategic Framework can be seen as a more consolidated and prioritised strategic action plan; one which is corporately owned and delivered.

It has been two years since the Action Plan and the Strategic Framework were established. With regards to the Action Plan, actions are now part of business as usual and in many cases form part of directorate reporting processes. The Strategic Framework has also been established as the focus of the climate change activity that will deliver the biggest impacts.

In 2020, when the Action Plan and Strategic Framework were adopted, it was agreed that they would be reviewed annually as part of the annual reporting cycle, and any changes or updates would be incorporated as part of this. This was done to ensure that these documents remain fit for purpose and are 'living documents'.

In January 2023, following the restructure, the County Council's role in climate change was re-defined to reflect the need to ensure that its resources are used for maximum impact. In particular, where it doesn't have direct responsibility, there is a continued need to ensure clarity on the role and responsibility of the County Council across a complex stakeholder landscape, and in particular the role of leadership, advocacy, partnership working, and establishing the necessary frameworks and strategies.

In line with this, it was agreed that the Strategic Framework would be the main focus of the Climate Change Programme going forward, as it represents the key strategic priorities that will be essential to meeting our targets. As part of this, it was also agreed that reporting on the Action Plan would no longer form part of the annual reporting cycle, to ensure resources are focused on the Strategic Framework. This report therefore will not report on the Action Plan.

As the Strategic Framework will be the focus going forward, work is currently underway to ensure that the programmes within the Strategic Framework are fit for purpose and that there is better representation from across the County Council. For example, areas such as education, inclusion, and skills that are critical to tackling climate change will feature more prominently.

As a result of this re-prioritisation, engagement has also become a stronger focus this year. This report demonstrates the significant effort that has been put into developing this further.

The primary areas of focus for 2023 onwards are:

- working on the delivery of the outward-facing elements of the Strategic Framework
- focus on supporting our residents through behaviour change and building resilience
- continue to build on the strategic leadership, influencing, enabling, and advocacy role
- supporting corporate join-up and the embedding of climate change into business as usual across the County Council

## 1.2 Embedding climate change

### Climate change group

Key to embedding climate change across all services is the Climate Change Board.

During the initial months of the restructure, the Board was paused to allow for a review to ensure that it was still fit for purpose and aligned with the new corporate priorities.

In June 2023, the Board was renamed the Climate Change Group, and new membership and Terms of Reference were agreed. The Board's new role and responsibilities include:

- providing strategic oversight and guidance over the delivery of the climate change strategy through the Strategic Framework across the County Council
- taking ownership of the continued development and delivery of the Strategic Framework and cross-directorate working
- being accountable for and reporting on relevant directorate/service programmes within the Strategic Framework
- being accountable for embedding climate change across the directorates' services
- identifying opportunities to influence and lobby the government on key issues like funding and policy
- identifying opportunities from local, regional, or national agendas to support the delivery of the climate change strategy and Strategic Framework

Key areas discussed and proposed at the Climate Change Group have included:

- business case development for a retrofit programme
- development of an Environment Strategy
- a communications campaign to highlight the Year of Climate Resilience
- a partnership with The Retrofit Academy to deliver retrofit skills and training in Hampshire colleges
- further development of a Hampshire Community Energy Network
- developing an approach to engaging with young people on climate change
- developing a support pack for Hampshire County Council teams to embed climate change into their business as usual
- continuing support for the Solar Together scheme
- reintroducing collective green energy switching

## Climate Decision Tools

To ensure the County Council is held accountable and truly embracing climate change, a climate change impact assessment has been embedded as a mandatory part of our public-facing executive member decision reports since April 2021. This has ensured that services are working toward a common goal – our climate change targets. Two decision tools form the basis of the impact assessment. The climate adaptation decision tool allows staff to assess the vulnerability of their projects to climate change impacts, such as heatwaves and flooding, and the carbon mitigation tool allows staff to assess the emissions impact from their project.

Since the decision tools SharePoint site was created for staff, there have been 2,725 page views. Compared to previous years, there have been fewer questions about how the tools work, indicating that staff are more comfortable with using the tools to complete a climate change impact assessment.

An example of where the tools have been effectively used is the proposal to extend Bordon Infant and Junior schools. The adaptation tool was used to identify the areas where the building may be vulnerable, such as extreme weather events, and consider measures that could be put in place to improve the building's resilience to these events. These include high levels of insulation, natural ventilation in teaching spaces, and energy-efficient lighting and heating.

Another example is a transport proposal to support economic development in Andover. This report states that developers need to consider how transport networks can be retrofitted to strive towards carbon neutrality. This is also the case for the local walking and cycling infrastructure update report,

which stated that the tools showed they were not applicable whilst the infrastructure was being developed. However, once the infrastructure was implemented, it would reduce the use of carbon-based transport methods which is beneficial for tackling climate change.

The tools have been shared with all the Hampshire districts and borough councils, and we are currently supporting Winchester City Council to understand how to embed the climate change impact assessment within their decision-making process. There has also been interest from three County Councils who are keen to implement a similar process.

The Climate Change team continues to offer guidance to the directorates across the County Council. A lunchtime learning session on climate resilience and decision tools was delivered to Environment, Transport and Economy services on 22 September 2022. The session explored why it is important for Hampshire to be resilient to climate change and how services can consider resilience when they are creating project proposals. A lunchtime session was also held for Adults Services on 10 January 2023, which involved a presentation and question and answer session. The presentation focused on explaining the meaning of climate change resilience, how the adaptation decision tool works, and how this can be applied to projects. These lunchtime sessions are offered to any service/directorate that would like to have a refresher on how the tools are implemented within the climate change impact assessment.

## **New e-learning**

The Climate Change team began the development of an updated corporate e-learning on climate change to better reflect the embedded nature of climate change thinking in the County Council. The e-learning provides information on available resources, using the decision tools, and how to consider climate change and your role. The new e-learning is scheduled to be released in November 2023.

## **Support to teams across Hampshire County Council**

The Climate Change team has taken opportunities to provide briefings to staff at various internal meetings across the authority. A lunchtime learning session on the Year of Climate Resilience and a Hampshire Leaders Network event on progress to date were both impactful and well received. Two dedicated climate change workshops have also been supported by the team for Highways, Engineering & Implementation, and Adults' Health & Care.

## **New programme – embedding climate change across Hampshire County Council**

A new project to support every team in the County Council to embed climate change in their business as usual began development in July 2023. The project aims to provide resources to allow bespoke climate change solutions to be developed at the team level. Information and question prompts will allow teams to consider climate change in a workshop setting. Accountability for this process will sit with Climate Change Group representatives for each directorate.



# Section two: Baseline emissions update



## 2.1 Hampshire baseline emissions

Territorial emissions for the UK are estimated by central government, disaggregated by local authority area, and made publicly available online as the [local authority greenhouse gas emissions national statistics](#). There is a two-year lag in data released by the government, meaning this report refers to 2021 results. For a deeper insight into the data collection methodology, further caveats about the data, and our scope of influence, please see our [2022 emissions report](#).

Between 2019 and 2021 there was an overall reduction in Hampshire's territorial emissions of 7.3%, resulting in a cumulative reduction of 46% since 2005. Included in this figure is carbon sequestration, which was 0.5% higher in 2021 than in 2019.

While this data is a rough estimate of what is happening in Hampshire, it clearly shows the sectors that are responsible for the biggest share of emissions. This informs our approach to carbon mitigation and the major programmes of work that make up our Strategic Framework. A sectoral breakdown of emissions can be seen in the introduction to Section 2. A series of charts and graphs breaking down the data by sector and showing trends over time is available on the [climate change website](#).

## 2.2 Hampshire County Council's scope 1-3 emissions

The focus of the work of the Strategic Framework is on the Hampshire area which accounts for approximately 98% of the emissions, however, it is important that we continue to track our own scope 1-3 emissions.

This work is led by Universal Services and has a separate reporting cycle ([see our Greenhouse gas emissions page](#)).

# Section three: Progress on the Strategic Framework 2020-2025

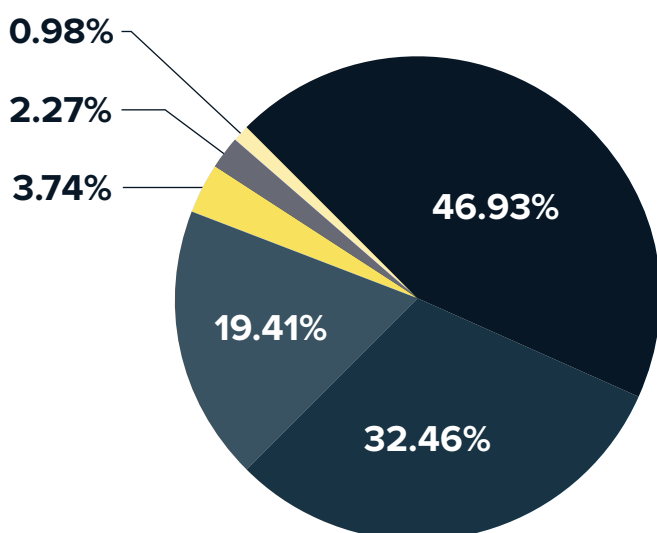
The Strategic Framework (Appendix 1) was developed to ensure that key programmes are being delivered to tackle the key sources of emissions and build resilience in priority areas.

This year the Strategic Framework becomes the main focus for the Climate Change Programme, as set out in Section 1, with the Action Plan now being seen as part of business as usual across the County Council.

The pie chart on this page shows the main sources of carbon emissions in Hampshire for 2021. This demonstrates where the

Strategic Framework needs to be focused – transport, residential, and industrial and commercial, with energy efficiency, generation and distribution being central to all emissions.

The Strategic Framework was focused initially on transport and residential emissions, as well as energy generation and distribution. Since 2021 there has been a growing focus on a green economy through work that has been done around retrofit alongside a new economic strategy. Further details of the programmes covering these priority areas are provided below and in Appendix 1.



**Carbon dioxide emissions 2021**



## 3.1 Residential emissions and resilience

As the pie chart on page 10 shows, residential emissions in 2021 accounted for almost 33% of the Hampshire area emissions.

The County Council recognises that our residents and our communities have a critical role to play in building resilience and reducing emissions in their own homes and through lifestyle choices, or as communities taking local action together. Community engagement is therefore a key component of our climate change work and significant progress on this has been made this year.

In July 2020 we launched four community projects to tackle this key area:

- The Greening Campaign
- Building a Community Energy Network
- Freephone Advice Line for Residents on Energy and Sustainability
- Solar Together Bulk Buying Scheme

Since 2021 work has also been ongoing to develop a business case for a Hampshire-wide retrofit scheme as one of the key solutions to residential emissions. Group energy switching was also trialled in 2023.

Progress on each project is provided within this section.

### The Greening Campaign

Hampshire County Council has been working with The Greening Campaign (GC) since 2020. The GC offers a blueprint for stimulating grassroots community engagement and behavioural change on climate change through a phased approach. More information about the GC can be found on [The Greening Campaign website](#).

In November 2021 the County Council was successfully awarded £200,000 from the Community Renewal Fund to continue the work with The Greening Campaign and Community Energy South. This funding ended in December 2022.

Thanks to a successful bid co-written by the GC and the Climate Change team, just under £500,000 of National Lottery funding was awarded to the GC in April 2023. The funding will enable a course of activity over three years, with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, the University of Southampton, a health consultant, and Garden Organic, to help communities work together to address climate change across different areas. The Climate Change team will be using some of the funding to provide strategic support, and the waste prevention team is devising a new waste prevention information and activity pack for communities.

This successful award was made possible by the piloting of phase 2 via the County Council-funded programme, and the subsequent delivery of the Community Renewal funded programme. The County Council-funded programme saw the development of the space for nature, health and wellbeing, and energy pillars. Community information and engagement packs were created for each pillar, and four communities were supported with the in-depth support of the expert partner organisations (in addition to a total of nine who started their journey with phase 1). 186 households used heat cameras to survey their homes and understand their energy efficiency/retrofit needs, with 34 individuals heat camera trained. A mapping walk to identify ways to make space for nature was carried out with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and a health consultant. This has resulted in pond and wildflower restoration. To ensure longevity for these communities, they will be offered the opportunity to continue as 'Wilder Communities' with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The Community Renewal funded programme awarded £82,000 to the GC, running from November 2021 to December 2022. 14 communities participated in phase 1, with four communities completing this by giving a climate change action card to each household and saving an estimated combined annual saving of £199,651, and an estimated 379.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> based upon taking carbon-saving actions at home such as line drying clothes instead of tumble drying.

For phase 2, 10 communities signed up across Winchester, New Forest, Basingstoke, East Hampshire, and Gosport. 14,307.10m<sup>2</sup> of land was improved as part of the Make Space for Nature pillar, surpassing the target. This included private gardens, church and school grounds, woodland, and pond restoration across the communities. Further, over 2,000 hours were spent on nature activities across the communities, including nature ID walks, mapping of community spaces, invertebrate spotting, and placing bee cards in their home windows, all delivered by the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Additionally, for the health and wellbeing pillar, talks, picnics, art competitions, and the establishment of a talking bench took place across communities. Finally, all the communities received advice sheets from The Sustainability Centre and put in place energy-saving hacks such as draught-proofing measures, as part of the energy pillar. Development of the webpages has also made it possible to reach more residents.

In summary, the GC continues to be a flagship community engagement programme for Hampshire, and the continued success with engaging communities and securing increasingly competitive funding streams demonstrates its value and capacity for longevity.

## **Building a Community Energy Network**

One of the major gaps in Hampshire is the limited amount of renewable energy generated in the county, which currently meets less than 8% of demand. Work in 2023 with the University of Southampton has shown that Hampshire's energy needs can be met with existing renewable energy technology, but that significant investment is required. While large utility-scale projects (predominantly solar and wind) will necessarily provide the bulk of Hampshire's future energy there is a significant opportunity for community energy to contribute and ensure the benefits are felt by Hampshire communities.

To enable and support the development of a **Community Energy Network** the Council launched a project with Community Energy South (CES) to develop a pathway to community energy in Hampshire.

Following the success of the Community Energy Pathways programme – funded in part by the County Council and in part by the Community Renewal Fund – to support five community energy groups, the County Council entered a two-year grant-funded programme with CES to maintain momentum. This phase started in March 2023 and aims to consolidate the work from phase one and ensure that momentum is maintained towards establishing self-sustaining community businesses that are no longer reliant on County Council support.

One of the main priorities of this programme is to support the groups in Hampshire to develop portfolios of community-owned renewable energy projects which the County Council can invest in through its Revolving Community Energy Fund. The recently announced Community Energy Fund for England will help overcome potential project barriers and speed up progress for future projects.

Progress to date against the key deliverables is as follows:

### **Broadening support**

A programme of work to accelerate the development of community energy has started with New Forest District Council. Discussions are ongoing with East Hampshire District Council, Energy Alton, and Energise South Downs about ways in which the district council can support community energy in the area. Additionally, proposals have been submitted to Rushmoor Borough Council and Hart District Council about the potential for developing community energy programmes in their areas and are pending decisions. All this activity reflects the interest from district and borough councils to support community energy as the wider community benefits are increasingly understood.

CES is also in regular discussions with the Net Zero Hubs to coordinate the support they can offer and have developed a relationship with Scottish, and Southern Electricity Networks (SEN) who is now a crucial partner in educating and upskilling the groups on feasibility assessment training.

## **Project development**

Since the start of the second phase of work, the priority has been supporting the most advanced groups (Test Source and Energise South Downs) to reach the share offer stage. Technical experts have been brought in to train the groups on the legal and technical requirements of progressing to this stage.

Progress has also been made with the Dioceses of Portsmouth and Winchester about the potential for community energy projects on their estates, as well as the Council working to support community energy projects on our school estate. The first such project is being developed with Energise South Downs as a pilot at Swanmore College.

## **Specialist funding**

CES has used its expertise to help groups secure funding from many different streams and has also been instrumental in lobbying central government, which has contributed to the launch of the new national Community Energy Fund.

In Hampshire, Loddon Community Energy secured £9,000 from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to cover a paid position. Energise South Downs secured £25,000 from Golden Acre, one of the UK's leading suppliers of global foods, as a development grant. CES is also in discussions with SSEN about maintaining a funding stream for Energy Alton to support local microbusinesses with their energy needs.

## **Developing advanced tools and training**

There are several technical, legal, and financial challenges facing communities seeking to launch an energy project. However, many of these challenges are common to all groups meaning tools and training can have a deep impact and cut costs.

Training sessions:

- 15 June on how to conduct feasibility assessments
- 20 July on the key legal processes, delivered by a leading community energy lawyer
- upcoming session on developing and delivering share offers (6 October 2023)

Tools:

- working with Spencer West LLP, a set of legal template documents has been made available free of charge to the groups in Hampshire, and discounted legal advice has been secured
- a financial model has been made available to all the groups with a follow-up scenario modelling session offered.

## **Regional steering group**

Crucial for sharing best practices, developing solutions to overcoming common barriers, and encouraging broader and deeper impact across the county, the steering group. Meeting bi-monthly, these are also opportunities to hear from sector experts and local stakeholders. The steering group remains an important cog in the smooth functioning of the burgeoning community energy network in Hampshire.

## Climate change/energy advice

For the last of the four projects, we have partnered with the **Environment Centre** (tEC) to provide free, trusted, and straightforward advice about climate change, energy, and sustainability over the phone and online. This project has proved invaluable during a period of high energy costs and a cost-of-living crisis as the number of people living in fuel poverty increased substantially between 2020 and 2023.

Progress since July 2022:

- the new **website** received 42,395 visitors in the 8 months since its launch in November 2022. This represents a 12-fold increase on the previous 12 months. Additionally, feedback on the usefulness and navigability of the website has been overwhelmingly positive
- 28 energy and climate-related blog posts have been added to the site providing timely information to help residents reduce their energy costs and environmental impact
- the new website can support a future retrofit one-stop-shop and tEC continues to express a commitment to providing this service when the retrofit scheme is ready.
- tEC continues to align with the County Council's climate change priorities and provides a vital service for residents, particularly those struggling with high energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis
- coordination between tEC, The Greening Campaign, and CES continues to produce excellent outcomes with shared expertise and training sessions being run by tEC for community groups involved in The Greening Campaign and community energy.

## Group buying energy schemes

Working with independent experts iChoosr, two schemes were run in 2022-23 to give residents the opportunity to save money on green energy. The first, Solar Together, brings together residents for the opportunity to get a market-beating deal on rooftop solar. The second, The Big Community Switch, unites customers looking to switch to green energy tariffs to negotiate market-beating fixed rates.

### Solar Together

Solar Together Hampshire is a unique group-buying scheme that enables residents to register at the same time for solar panels, to get competitive prices from pre-vetted installers.

Since 2021, two Solar Together schemes have been delivered in Hampshire. Over 2,100 households have received solar panels through the schemes, via the installation of 7,400kw of rooftop solar power, which can save an estimated 46,000 tonnes of carbon emissions. The 2022 scheme achieved a 15% average discount compared to the typical market price. The installs were managed by four installers: Infinity Renewables, HomeSmart, EE Renewables, and Fusion 8, each allocated to a specific section of Hampshire.

Due to the tangible outcomes of increased renewable energy generation and carbon savings, and a clear demand from our residents for us to operate this scheme (with the second Solar Together scheme resulting in 13,816 initial registrations and the webpage being the most viewed County Council climate change webpage with 6,316 unique views), a third scheme launched in August 2023.

## **The Big Community Switch**

Due to the turbulent energy market caused by the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, energy companies stopped offering fixed tariffs in 2022. This meant the planned energy switching scheme was put on hold. However, in June 2023 some providers began offering fixed tariffs again and iChoosr took the opportunity to test the market for group switching.

Running the scheme as a pilot, no paid promotion was used, though there was some organic marketing on County Council social media and internal Hants Headlines. Despite the limited promotion, 815 Hampshire residents registered for the reverse auction reflecting the continued appetite for better energy deals.

However, due to continued instability in the market, the winning bid from SO energy represented a very modest saving of £30 below the price cap meaning only 34 registrants decided to accept the offer, with most choosing to wait to see what the market does in the coming months.

In more stable energy markets, The Big Community Switch could be a powerful tool for getting more Hampshire residents on to renewable energy tariffs. The regular marketing and promotion of the scheme also helps to keep renewable energy in the public consciousness. Therefore, the County Council will continue to work with iChoosr on energy switching.

## **Hampshire-wide retrofit scheme**

Work by the New Economics Foundation into a green recovery for Hampshire identified retrofit as a key driver of both economic recovery and emissions reduction from the residential sector. Progress against this objective began in 2021 and has built momentum over the last two years to the point where a self-sustaining business model has been developed and is ready for implementation. The steps to this point are outlined on the following pages.

### **Understanding the baseline**

To make a case for retrofit on a county-wide scale, understanding the housing stock, its current performance, and what interventions would be required to decarbonise it were crucial starting points. Hampshire County Council, with partial funding from the Southwest Net Zero Hub and contributions from district and borough councils, commissioned a report into the housing stock in Hampshire and what it would take to get to net zero. The analysis (delivered by Parity Projects) provided detailed information on every home in the county but also generated two headline figures:

- £30 billion of total investment would be required to decarbonise every home
- 6,000 FTE jobs per year required by 2050 to deliver the necessary work

The mission was clear. That amount of money would never be funded through any government scheme and the number of people required to do the work would never exist without support and clear direction. The next step was to build enthusiasm and momentum with local stakeholders.



## Internal engagement

The scale and crosscutting nature of the retrofit challenge meant internal engagement and coordination were vital. A £30 billion impact on the local economy meant retrofit needed to be central to future economic planning, and thousands of jobs in specific trades meant a concerted effort would be required from the skills and education teams. The co-benefits of better housing would also reach into public health and adult and child social care. Several meetings and workshops were organised to share the facts, find commonalities, build momentum, and support parallel programmes. The primary outcome of this was the launch of a Skills for Retrofit programme in the Skills and Participation team.

## External engagement

Following an initial stakeholder mapping exercise, engagement with external stakeholders began in Summer 2022. Primary stakeholders included:

1. lower-tier authorities – ensuring the district, borough, and unitary councils in the county were aware of the baseline report and proposed direction of travel
2. “advocate” groups – using our existing networks to reach climate action groups, community energy groups, behaviour change groups, energy advice centres, universities, and others who could be advocates (or delivery partners) for a retrofit scheme, we ran a half-day session to workshop how best to involve these partners and design the scheme
3. supply chain – while difficult to get lots of representatives from the supply chain in the same room at the same time this engagement workshop provided a crucial voice to employers (with a particular focus on local SMEs). What they wanted to see

in a scheme and how they would like to be involved in the process were two crucial discussion points

4. colleges and training providers – building the supply chain starts in schools and colleges. An engagement event with internal skills colleagues, local colleges, LEPs, and private training providers helped get the ball rolling. The skills and participation team then took ownership of this workstream and entered a formal partnership with The Retrofit Academy (more below).

## Resident survey

Building on the evidence collected from the engagement workshops a simple online survey was sent to homeowners in Winchester and Fareham. (These districts ranked highest in Parity Projects analysis of house type, income bracket, and local supply chain activity). Using social media ads to target homeowners in a likely able-to-pay demographic we sought to understand what homeowners who were able to self-finance wanted from a scheme. The headline findings were:

- 80% thought more about their home’s energy use now than 12 months ago
- while cost was the main barrier, knowing what to do and where to start were also common
- 43% would like an end-to-end service (or one-stop-shop) and 62% would like some form of advice
- 80% would feel more confident if the scheme was backed by the County Council

## **Business case development and review**

Parity Projects developed a bespoke business case for an area-wide retrofit scheme based on a self-sustaining model that charges homeowners and contractors a small fee while providing whole-house plans and retrofit coordination. The model was based on the successful Cosy Homes Oxfordshire model but incorporated the local nuances uncovered through the engagement activities detailed above.

## **Further engagement and steps to launch**

A major stakeholder engagement event was convened in June 2023 with an outcome to establish a formal entity (consortium) to take the next steps towards implementation. The consortium will likely include district councils, advocate groups, and training providers. The group will then take on the responsibility of securing the startup funding. As of July 2023, an MOU was being developed and several funding streams were being investigated.

## **Skills for retrofit**

As mentioned above, the County Council entered into a partnership with The Retrofit Academy in July 2022. This partnership had two primary functions:

1. to increase local delivery of courses for retrofit skills including understanding retrofit, adviser, assessor, and co-ordinator (PAS 2035)
2. to deliver a supply chain report detailing the current state of retrofit skills in Hampshire

There was considerable interest from training providers in the area, but significant challenges around funding the courses remain. Much like supply and demand in delivering retrofit, there is the same dilemma in retrofit skills training with colleges hesitant to invest in new courses without the demand

from employers. Year two of the partnership began in July 2023 and aims to have courses running in at least two establishments in the coming academic year.

A supply chain report was finalised in May 2023 and reflected many of the challenges for delivering retrofit already mentioned. Of the 245 companies registered with the Federation of Master Builders only eight were registered with Trustmark as providing retrofit services. There are 28 retrofit assessors and only six retrofit coordinators currently certified in Hampshire. However, there are 40 companies providing heat pump installation.

## **Low-income households**

The County Council is not directly responsible for delivering central government energy efficiency schemes but works with partners who support low-income households. The Environment Centre supports low-income households to access government funding for retrofit measures as well as providing advice on energy saving and environmental protection. Upgrades to their website have allowed an expansion and improvement of this service.

## **Co-benefits and cross-sector working**

Several co-benefits to improving the energy efficiency of Hampshire homes are evident. Initial discussions at the Health and Wellbeing Board aim to agree on joint priorities between partners that both benefit health and mitigate climate change, including air quality, active travel, and healthy homes. Furthermore, a data-driven approach will be used to identify the most significant inequalities in relation to climate change.

## 3.2 Transport emissions and resilience

Transport is a large contributor of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Hampshire (47%) from mainly vehicle tailpipe emissions, with over 65% of this from private vehicle use, and therefore a key priority area for reduction.

The impact of climate change places increased pressure on the maintenance and resilience of our transport network, and without suitable adaptation and mitigation, will result in more frequent and severe disruption to the movement of people and goods.

The new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) will form the primary transport policy for Hampshire County Council to 2050.

LTP4 is aiming to reduce transport-related carbon emissions to net zero (neutrality) by 2050 with these key success factors:

- carbon emissions associated with the use of all transport modes (including the generation of energy to power them) virtually reduced to zero
- any remaining carbon emissions are offset by fully sustainable planting or carbon capture
- fewer vehicles, with higher levels of usage (to make the most efficient use of road space, and energy required to produce and run each vehicle)
- less travel overall

The draft LTP4 has been amended following scrutiny and analysis of consultation replies, however, the Department for Transport states they intend to issue new LTP4 guidance, including a carbon reduction tool which will need to be taken into account.

The County Council has been successful in making the case for successive rounds of funding for improving active travel infrastructure. We now have a programme of works underway to design and deliver new demonstration active travel schemes. These are a new generation of schemes being designed to new higher standards set by central government. Whilst these are only demonstration schemes, they are setting the standard for others to adopt, including developers, local planning authorities, and our own maintenance programmes.

The County Council is also embedding a new Healthy Streets Framework. To this end, over 100 staff who look after or improve our streets and spaces have been trained in how to apply the Framework. In practice, this will mean that as we or others make changes or maintain our roads, the framework can be used to help ensure the streets and spaces are easier to use by a range of users, and that a better balance is made that widens the choices people can make about what type of transport they feel comfortable using.

The County Council is also approaching the final year of delivering the Transforming Cities Programme in partnership with Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils. These will see physical improvements completed on a number of transport corridors accessing the two cities. Measures include walking and cycling schemes as well as bus priority measures and bus interchanges.

Post-Covid the County Council continues to use its bus budgets to keep as many bus routes going following a reduction in demand and income for bus operators. Without our support, it is likely the bus network would have shrunk significantly. Demand is now returning but to a lower base. It remains

likely that some customers, particularly those who felt most vulnerable to the virus or who continue to work from home, may not return on a regular basis. We are actively encouraging them and others to use the bus to help support and maintain services and have recently launched a campaign to do so which builds on the national £2 fare scheme.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan has also been adopted, alongside eight Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plans. Supplementary guidance documents are also being developed for Development Control and Master Planning to better integrate land use and transport planning.

In relation to electric vehicle infrastructure, a bid has been made for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding. Finally, reports for Farnborough and Andover have been approved which reprioritise spaces in favour of sustainable modes of travel.

## Resilient highway network

A highway resilience network map has been developed and published. The main aim of a resilient network is to maintain economic activity and access to key services during extreme weather and other disruptive events through prioritised and targeted maintenance.

The highway asset dataset is being developed further, such as the gully sensor project to improve service efficiency with better scheduling, fewer journeys, and reduced carbon. The web self-service flood form has also been updated, which can help prioritise planned schemes and inform routine programmes. Further, data is being added regarding urban and rural grass verges to inform decisions on frequencies of cutting.

A road surfacing guide review is now complete which guides the selection of surfacing materials and processes for highway maintenance works allowing engineers to specify safe, durable, and environmentally appropriate options.

Appropriate design standards for new cap infrastructure have also been developed. They are intended to provide resilient designs specifying appropriate materials, balancing cost and quality to minimise long-term maintenance costs. The commuted sum policy, implemented from 1 July, in particular aims to encourage the adoption of new sustainable developments and highway improvements by promoting the use of durable and sustainable materials.

### 3.3 Energy generation and distribution

Energy in the Hampshire-wide context is a complex and challenging area in which the County Council has no direct responsibility. While the National Grid aims to be carbon neutral by 2038 there is growing recognition that this will not be achieved without localised interventions and planning.

It is also clear that this would be best achieved through local open energy systems that enable all ‘community’ stakeholders to participate in a full range of trading opportunities. Although this will be a significant challenge, it also presents opportunities for local ‘green’ investment, skills capacity growth, and wider socio-economic co-benefits such as improved air quality and associated health. Ensuring that these opportunities are realised through decarbonising national and local energy systems requires a systemic approach to a future energy strategy.

It is against this background that the County Council is seeking to create a distinctive approach to green economic recovery which seeks to prioritise inclusivity, quality of life, and standard of living as critical components for prosperity and economic growth.

In the last 12 months, central government has been promoting the concept of Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs). This is currently a weakly defined concept without clear goals, templates, or delivery mechanisms. There is also a lack of clarity on who is responsible for producing an LAEP, with regional Net Zero Hubs, Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), and all tiers of local government potentially having an important role. No resource has been made available for the development of an LAEP making all parties wary of over-commitment.

Nonetheless, the County Council has been proactive in two key areas:

1. developing the evidence base needed to understand the energy system in Hampshire, what future generation potential looks like, and what challenges we face in decarbonising our energy
2. engaging with the key stakeholders to lay the groundwork for an LAEP and ensure that all parties are on the same page

#### Hampshire energy evidence and research to date

In January 2022, the University of Southampton (a member of the Climate Change Expert Forum) produced a review of the current energy landscape in the wider Hampshire area. The report’s three headline findings were:

1. average domestic electricity consumption was found to be higher in rural areas and lower in cities. Without large intervention in rural areas to incentivise increasing energy efficiency and new technologies such as heat pumps, this difference is only set to increase
2. areas of deprivation were found to have lower gas consumption; this suggests that to reduce the gas consumption of the area the focus needs to be on the more affluent or ‘able-to-pay’ market
3. there is no correlation between the percentage of over 65s and the percentage of households living in fuel poverty suggesting that those living in fuel poverty are younger

Subsequently, in January 2023 the University of Southampton began work on two further pieces of work to understand the future potential of renewable energy generation in Hampshire and the technical and economic constraints to delivering change.

A report into the renewable energy potential in Hampshire made clear that the technical potential to meet our energy needs is abundant. However, this technical potential does not account for several constraining factors, including grid capacity. A second report is due later in 2023 and will analyse the capability of the grid to absorb increased renewable generation and the costs associated with upgrading infrastructure, which are likely to be widespread and substantial.

### **Engagement and groundwork**

As well as working with the University of Southampton to understand the current energy landscape and the potential future makeup of a decarbonised energy system in Hampshire, continued engagement with key stakeholders has ensured the topic has remained on the agenda. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and formerly the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have continued to consult on the best way forward suggesting that local authority involvement will be a key factor of any LAEP. It is also clear that the DESNZ-funded Net Zero Hubs and the DNOs will be crucial partners in developing a future LAEP.

With regards to the Net Zero Hubs, which are currently based on Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) geography meaning Hampshire is divided between the Greater Southeast Hub and the Southwest Hub, County Council officers sit on steering groups and have attended board meetings and project development workshops. This early and frequent engagement has allowed Hampshire to be closely aligned with the Hubs as they develop their offer.

The DNO in Hampshire, SSEN, will be a key driver of change in the energy network. It has therefore been vital that our views on how the energy system is decarbonised and how Hampshire residents will benefit are communicated. Regular communication with SSEN, often in partnership with the Net Zero Hubs has helped align our agendas. However, there is still much more to do, and ensuring the DNO is engaged in LAEP development is a priority.

Finally, ensuring that the various strands of energy work are coordinated has been an ongoing priority. Working with community energy groups, the Environment Centre, The Greening Campaign, the University of Southampton, the Net Zero Hubs, the DNO, central government, district and borough councils, local unitary authorities, Parity Projects, local climate advocacy groups, and local industry (such as ExxonMobil at Fawley) is a key part of this and aligns with the role of the County Council to provide leadership, share information, create effective networks, and support others to take action.

## 3.4 Business and green economy

### Retrofit

The focus of the retrofit programme set out in Section 3.1 will not only tackle residential emissions but will also have a significant impact on Hampshire's green economy.

The [business case](#) developed as part of the retrofit programme demonstrates the potential to create approximately 6,000 full equivalent time jobs per year (2022 to 2050).

General builders would make up about 26% of this workforce, with the rest made up of more specialist tradespeople, e.g., insulation specialists (32%). The work that is needed to reach net zero in retrofit is the equivalent of 173,000 trade years. [See the summary for headlines here.](#)

### Other skills for a green economy

The County Council is now using the government's flagship [Skills Bootcamps](#) programme to directly commission a range of training courses in low carbon construction, retrofit, and green transport skills to meet the identified needs of the sectors. This will also give local people the opportunity to develop their skills and directly access employment opportunities. Over 200 courses will be delivered by local providers in this financial year, with an ambition to extend the scope and reach of the programme in future years subject to funding.

The County Council has been working with Hampshire and Surrey Chambers of Commerce to develop Local Skills Improvement Plans which work with employers to identify skills gaps and support the local provider network to develop their provision to address these needs. These [reports](#) have been instrumental in helping us to better understand the breadth and depth of the skills needed to support the low carbon economy in our area and to focus future investment through the Local Skills Improvement Fund.

Additionally, a multi-million-pound investment from the Department for Education's Strategic Development Fund (SDF), the predecessor to the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF), has been used to support the development of a green skills infrastructure across the county.

## Economic strategy

The County Council's [Economic Strategy](#) recognises the importance of protecting the environment as the economy grows, highlighting the importance of sustainable economic growth that protects the county's natural assets. Work is currently underway on the development of an Action Plan to support the Strategy and the Environment and Climate Change has been identified as a key theme that needs to be considered across all programmes.

Over the past year, Economic Development has been working with partner organisations to deliver on their climate change ambitions, including supporting Enterprise M3 LEP with their Jet Zero cluster, and understanding the sector's strengths and challenges, and where there are opportunities for achieving net zero in the aviation sector. Further to this, is the work with the Farnborough Airport Consortium around Future Flight, where the County Council has joint-hosted round table events to connect businesses within the supply chain to discuss future needs of the aviation industry, greening its supply chain as well as operations.

Support for organisations and businesses continues outside of established networks, with the Economic Development team working with partners such as the LEPs, freeports, and membership organisations around their climate change and environment agendas and understanding where further support and enabling can be delivered to support their goals in supporting business decarbonise.

There are also opportunities to look at the gaps left in the funding landscape to support climate change development of business post-LOCASE and the Leader EU-funded programmes. Economic Development advised Enterprise M3 LEP on the criteria and themes for the latest round of the Future Fund where achieving Net Zero by 2050 and green skills are significant themes for the programme.

The County Council also plays an active role as a member of The Solent Cluster and a signatory to the Solent Cluster Charter. The Solent Cluster represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to affect real change in energy production and consumption. It brings together a wide group of members focused on the decarbonisation of businesses and industry in the southern region and beyond.

The Solent Cluster represents a collaboration of industry leaders, global organisations, universities, and local government, all working together to create a low carbon future that will benefit the local economy, the region, and the UK. See the project plan for more details.

Within the sector focus for the Business Growth Team, Environment and Net Zero has been highlighted as a key sector to support and enable through its work, and the team is investigating the opportunities in this area to specifically support businesses in achieving their ambitions.



## 3.5 Natural environment

The natural and built environments face a plethora of opportunities, challenges, and changes associated with climate change, and other human pressures, that are interconnected, dynamic, and complex. The following paragraphs set out some of the actions that the County Council is taking to address these.

The Hampshire 2050 Commission of Inquiry identified that Hampshire's natural environment is a significant and valued asset, helping Hampshire to be an attractive and prosperous place to live, work, and visit.

Work is ongoing through a newly formed Strategic Natural Environment Working Group, bringing together key stakeholders across the County Council to ensure that the wide range of activities taking place around the natural environment are brought together to maximise effort and avoid duplication. Areas covered include external partnerships and boards, biodiversity net gain and local nature recovery strategy, water and coast, and commercial and green finance.

The County Council has recently started work on a Local Nature Recovery Strategy following its appointment by the Secretary of State as the responsible authority pursuant to Section 105 of the Environment Act 2021.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are an important part of an ambitious package of measures introduced by the Environment Act to reverse nature's decline. These include Environmental Improvement Plans, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Sites Strategies, and conservation covenants.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be used to channel investment into local

priorities for protection and enhancement, such as the Environment Land Management Scheme; map areas of opportunity for the use of 'nature-based solutions' to wider environmental problems like flooding and climate change mitigation; guide mandatory biodiversity net gain investments; and provide a source of evidence for local planning authorities to help them understand the locations which are important for conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

The LNRS will link to several of the County Council's existing strategies, including the Public Health Strategy, Economic Strategy, Strategic Asset Management Plan, and Hampshire 2050 Vision, along with the emerging Environment Strategy. It will therefore have reach across the organisation.

Early work has commenced across the County Council on how the LNRS is to be prepared, and initial stakeholder engagement has taken place. The work will now be developed under the leadership of the Director of Hampshire 2050 working across the County Council and in partnership with stakeholders, with the Strategy to be presented to Cabinet for approval in approximately 18 months' time.

[Find out more here.](#)

Other areas of the work taking place within the working group include:

- understanding the potential for all County Council landholdings to meet Biodiversity Net Gain and mitigation requirements
- developing a coastal asset strategy (2050) to understand risks
- explore green finance opportunities in relation to nature recovery

The Hampshire Forest Partnership has also been launched (December 2022) which aims to encourage tree planting across Hampshire, give advice and guidance on planting the right trees in the right places, share the positive ways tree planting helps the environment, and give communities what they need to get involved in tree planting activities.

The Hampshire Forest Partnership's aims align with the County Council's Tree Strategy which was published in 2020.

[Find out more about the initiative here.](#)

Participation in the Environmental Land Management Convenor Partnership has continued, alongside being a member and contributor at the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership, and South East Nature Partnership.

### 3.6 Waste and circular economy

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated changes in public behaviour had a negative impact in terms of both recycling and landfill diversion performance across Hampshire as residents spent more time at home and disposed of more waste through their kerbside bins. Further behavioural changes have affected the composition of waste (more packaging from home deliveries, fewer newspapers, etc.), which continues to challenge the waste management system.

In addition, the delivery of the Environment Act has been delayed by COVID-19, and the current deadline nationally has been pushed back to 2025. Despite these impacts, significant work has been undertaken to deliver long-term projects that will deliver a step change in performance in terms of waste for Hampshire.

Hampshire remains on track to deliver on the Environment Act with planning permission secured for a new Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Eastleigh to sort the new container mix. The district and borough councils are working towards introducing a twin-stream collection service to complement this infrastructure investment.

Implementation of statutory food waste collections has also been delayed; currently, only 3 of 13 waste collection authorities in Hampshire collect food separately. The Project Integra Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy has been updated and all partners are working towards developing a new legally binding Inter-Authority Agreement.

The Smart Living waste prevention programme remains high profile with key strands focusing on food waste, composting, furniture reuse, reusable nappies, and, from 2023, textiles (fast fashion). The Waste Prevention Grant Fund has now supported more than 100 projects countywide to help their communities reduce waste.

## 3.7 Buildings and infrastructure and public health

Under the Environment Act 2021, from November 2023, it will be mandatory for the majority of developments in England to deliver a biodiversity net gain (BNG) of 10% at the developer's costs. There has been a partial update about this within the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan, with a consultation planned for late 2023.

Local Planning Authorities have been preparing for changes in the building regulations, including energy efficiency of properties, ventilation, and ensuring buildings don't overheat. These changes are stop-gap measures to improve energy efficiency in housing regulations ahead of the Future Homes and Buildings Standards introduction in 2025, which will require more significant cuts to carbon emissions.

Winchester City Council has consulted on future-proofed local plan policy which exceeds building regulations to achieve a net zero carbon target. The impact on scheme viability of these standards, combined with increased building costs, should be monitored across Hampshire.

With regards to public health considerations, action on climate change and health through spatial planning and placemaking is embedded into the 'Healthier Communities' theme of the [Health and Wellbeing Board](#).

Following a series of workshops with the Town and Country Planning Association, an air quality group has been set up with districts and boroughs to look at the planning response to air quality. The new Hampshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment includes a chapter on place, with spatial mapping of air quality, heat vulnerability index, and residential properties at risk of flooding.

The Planning Data & Research team is analysing trends, such as dwelling heating types and travel to work choices, alongside understanding whether energy efficiency plays a part in the motivation to purchase a new property.

### Flood and water management

As the Lead Local Flood Authority, the County Council has continued to engage with Local Planning Authorities as the statutory consultee for surface water management on major developments.

The [Hampshire Strategic Flood and Water Management Board](#) has been relaunched, and new catchment plans have been published. The County Council has supported the preparation of a draft joint Leadership Statement for key stakeholders to promote improved surface water management and responded to regional and national consultations including on water standards, water resources, Catchment Basin Management Plans, and Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans.

The Flood and Water Management team is also working with the Environment Agency on a two-year pilot programme for Property Flood Resilience.

# Section four:

# 2022's 'Year of Climate Resilience'



Hampshire County Council has a target to be resilient to a 2-degree Celsius temperature rise by 2050 (whilst still aligning with the Paris Agreement of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees and having a target to be carbon neutral by 2050). The County Council is unique in having such a target for climate change resilience.

In recognition of the importance of building resilience, the County Council declared 2022 the “Year of Climate Resilience”. This was an opportunity for the County Council to increase awareness of the importance of resilience, and promote our unique approach and the actions we are taking to build resilience.

Through the work delivered in 2022, the climate change website has been updated to include dedicated resources on resilience. This includes videos and infographics created to highlight the excellent work already underway across the organisation – see the [climate change website](#). Most of this work was reported on in the last annual report.

Since July 2022, further work has been undertaken on raising awareness of resilience. A case study has been published by Ashden and Friends of the Earth showcasing [how Hampshire is prioritising climate adaptation and resilience](#). This led to a presentation at Ashden’s national [Learning Out Loud event](#) as part of London Climate Action Week, which in turn has led to further engagement with other councils and has raised the profile of local climate adaptation and Hampshire’s leading role in this area.

Work is also progressing with the Insights & Engagement and Corporate Marketing teams to create a bank of creatives that can be delivered at pivotal moments throughout the year to offer home resilience tips. Aimed mostly at those aged over 34, a light-hearted theme relating to ‘Keeping up with the Jones’ was used, with a character learning from their neighbours about what actions they can take at home to build resilience.

A series of digital adverts to Hampshire audiences have been delivered covering flood risk, giving wildlife a helping hand in your garden, home insulation, and saving water. All adverts [linked to a landing page](#), offering a series of 'easy' options alongside a 'more dedicated' action for each season. For example, collecting water with a water butt, getting solar panels through the Solar Together scheme to be prepared for 'when it's a scorcher', or adding to your loft insulation to be prepared for 'when it's arctic outside'.

Across Google, our adverts generated just under 600,000 views and over 2,300 clicks. On Facebook, more than 350,000 were additionally reached. These creatives can now be re-used in the future to continue to increase awareness of resilience.



# Section five:

# Progress on networks and partnerships



## 5.1 Expert Forum

22 organisations are now members of the **Expert Forum** (up from 18 in 2022), with the recent addition of Southern Water, Action Hampshire, Hampshire CVS Network, and the Hampshire Rural Forum. The Expert Forum was chaired by Councillor Warwick (Executive Member for Climate Change and Sustainability) until the end of 2022 and will reconvene when new political chairmanship is agreed.

The Forum provides two primary functions:

1. to give expert and representative feedback to help guide the County Council's climate change action
2. to support the dissemination and promotion of the County Council's community-facing activities to create wider and deeper impacts

The forum is not just about discussion, below are examples of key outcomes from this Forum:

- Data analysis and review. The County Council transitioned from using a bespoke baseline data set established in partnership with the Carbon Trust in 2020 to a baseline extracted from national government greenhouse gas emissions data. The Forum provided expertise and analysis to help shape the new baseline (detailed in the Baseline Emissions section of this report).
- Work with the University of Southampton on three pieces of work to help establish an evidence base for a future energy strategy.
- The Forum has been key to the ongoing development of a retrofit scheme for Hampshire and will be instrumental in the delivery of a future scheme.

## 5.2 National and regional networks

The County Council continues to engage and work with a wide range of national networks including:

- UK100
- County Councils Network
- Defra's Local Adaptation Advisory Panel
- Southeast Climate Alliance
- Local Government Association's Climate Action Group
- Association of Directors for Planning, Environment and Transport.

These networks have provided opportunities to showcase the work the County Council is leading on through presentations, blog posts, or case studies – to date these have highlighted the Decision Tools, the community projects, the evolving retrofit business plan, Hampshire's energy landscape, and the Solar Together scheme. These networks also provide invaluable opportunities to learn from and exchange best practices in key areas such as energy, green finance, and procurement.

## 5.3 Local partnerships

Engagement with our district and borough partners is critical to ensuring a comprehensive approach to climate change across the Hampshire area. Engagement takes place through sector-specific groups (e.g., Project Integra, Tree Officer Group etc.) where climate change is becoming more and more of a focus.

There are a number of officer-led **working groups** that meet to collaborate on joint projects and initiatives and share actions and best practice on climate change and sustainability. These include:

- Hampshire Climate Change Officers Group – made up of all the districts, boroughs, and unitaries including Southampton, Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight. Its main focus is climate change – more recently delivering against the Climate Emergency declarations.
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Planning Officers Group Sustainable Design Subgroup – includes representatives from Local Authorities and aims to share best practices and promote and inform sustainability through planning.
- Public Sector Sustainable Development Group – looks at wider sustainability issues and includes organisations such as the NHS, MoD, and Fire Service, along with national parks, Solent University, and the Universities of Winchester, Southampton, and Portsmouth respectively. Hampshire Energy Efficiency Partnership – includes energy, sustainability, and housing officers from Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils, Isle of Wight Council, and district councils within Hampshire and is more focused on energy.

These groups are critical for sharing information on issues, projects, funding, and opportunities for collaboration. Areas where these groups have been invaluable include:

- the promotion of Solar Together
- the development of the retrofit business case
- the development of the evidence base for an energy strategy
- the dissemination of the climate change decision tools and procurement guidance

These groups have also acted as a conduit for the dissemination of other County Council programmes, including LTP4, the Minerals and Waste Plan, and the Tree Strategy.



# Section six: Progress on communications, marketing, and resident engagement

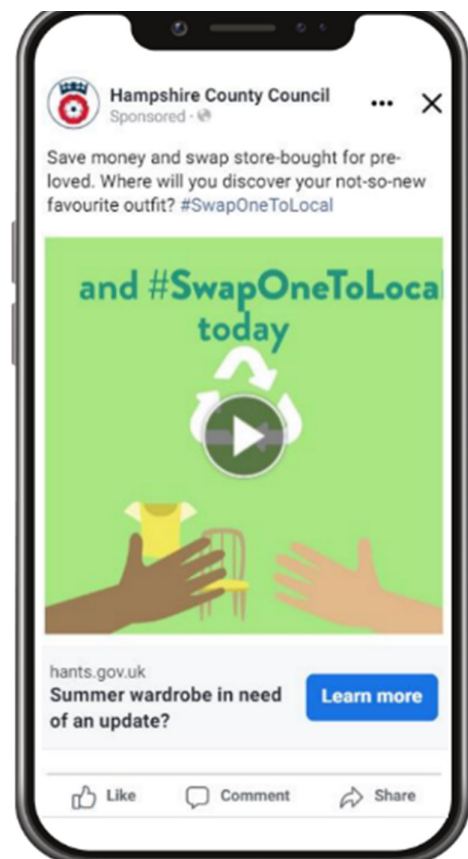
## 6.1 Insights-led behavioural change

A significant part of our behavioural change communications to residents continues to be insight-led. As well as the resilience campaign mentioned in Section 3, other resident-facing campaigns have been run.

### Swap One To Local

The Swap One To Local campaign was first launched in 2020 in response to the easing of lockdown restrictions, by encouraging some of the more positive actions for climate change that had emerged, such as swapping an international holiday for a local one.

This year we ran a second phase which focused on swapping out new items for second-hand. The Corporate Marketing team narrowed the audience to 18 to 24-year-olds to measure the level of youth engagement and used engaging headlines such as 'summer wardrobe in need of an update?' Just under 20,000 were reached, with 816 clicking through to [our webpage](#).



## 6.2 Climate change website

Between July 2022 and June 2023, there have been 19,113 unique views of the climate change [webpages](#). The Climate Change team, with Corporate Marketing, continue to update the webpages with new content. For example, to coincide with the resilience campaigns, a new webpage, 'make your home resilient to climate change' has been created.

Over the last year, this page has received 1,713 unique views with the average time spent on the page being 3m 41s. Corporate Marketing is currently undertaking an audit of the climate change webpages to improve navigation, freshen the style, and consolidate content further.

Other webpages from across the organisation are linked to the website, to demonstrate the work happening across the County Council on climate change, and to provide residents with the resources to act themselves.

## 6.3 Climate change newsletter

Over the last year, four email newsletters have been created, spanning Hampshire County Council updates, community news and national news, on climate change. The newsletters' main function has been encouraging sign-ups to our live schemes, such as Solar Together or The Greening Campaign, as well as raising awareness about topics such energy-saving via The Environment Centre's advice line.

In early May 2023, the advert promoting water butt use, as part of the message to increase resilience to heatwaves, was promoted for the second time. This time it encouraged residents to sign up for the climate change newsletter for a chance to win a water butt. This strategy reaped excellent results, with over 1,000 new subscribers, nearly 4,000 website visits, and 31.2% clicking on the webpage and entering the competition. Overall, the climate change newsletter receives an above-average engagement rate for a newsletter, with 60% of subscribers on average opening the e-newsletter.

## 6.4 Youth engagement

On behalf of the Climate Change team, the Insight and Engagement team has been exploring youth engagement within the context of climate change. While we recognise that young people are not going to be the biggest emitters of CO2 in absolute terms, there is a need to include and engage them as they can cut emissions in many areas today and carry these behaviours forward into the future, where they will be making decisions about larger actions.

To inform effective strategy for encouraging climate action in younger people, we wished to:

- understand which actions younger people are willing to take, what impact these could have, and how best to encourage action, covered here
- understand the language and channels to approach younger people effectively
- encourage future intentions for impactful climate actions e.g. renewable energy, transport choices
- inform an effective strategy to encourage actions by younger people

Two workshops with 17, 18 to 24-year-olds were delivered in July 2023 in Eastleigh and Basingstoke. There was an even gender split, with six participants from ethnic minority backgrounds, and a mix of urban/suburban and rural participants. The workshops showed that youths are keen to understand what they can do and are willing to be challenged with new actions or possibilities. It's also clear that the youth audience preferred being presented with a range of actions, recognising that no one action works for everybody, and having a reward, whether social or financial, is a strong incentive for action. A sense of connectedness, with the feeling that others are acting too, is important for building a sense of momentum and showing the progress that has been made, such as by the County Council, can help to combat cynicism. The workshops revealed that 18 to 24-year-olds may not have received any information about the actions they can take for climate change since school and college. Therefore, there's a need to engage and inform this audience once they leave education through their most used channels – TikTok and other social media platforms.

Insights from this work will inform new methods and campaigns for engaging a younger audience in Hampshire about climate change and ways they can make a difference.

## 6.5 Engaging with under 16s

While engaging with young adults is a new piece of work, Children's Services has been engaging children at school and through other networks for some time. The Climate Unity Project was established in 2021, and the 2022 iteration expanded to include 17 indoor and outdoor public spaces across Hampshire County Council, aiming to capture the community's perspectives on climate issues through art.

The Southampton Gallery feature' schools' work and schools did additional pieces that were exhibited across the county in public spaces alongside other contributions from community groups across Hampshire. Artwork comprised of circular work using recycled materials to be symbolic of the planet and ideas about eternity and inclusion. The number of public spaces that exhibited the artwork meant that the reach of the project was far wider than in the previous year.

In July 2023 a Climate Unity Conference was held, which offered children and young people the opportunity to work alongside their peers from across the county and to engage in a series of workshops to develop their understanding of climate and environmental issues. These workshops included:

- Finalstraw Foundation – plastic waste in our oceans
- David Shepard Wildlife Trust – biodiversity and animal conservation
- Hampshire Wildlife Trust – carbon capture
- Stewardship in RE – common themes that unite us across the world's major faiths/ belief systems.

The County Council also delivered a keynote presentation to the schools in attendance to help them feel connected to the wider strategy.

# Section seven:

# Summary of partner engagement and advocacy activities

As most major sources of emissions are beyond the control of the County Council, a primary function of the Climate Change team is to influence, advocate for, and facilitate action by others. A dense programme of engagement activities reflects this priority with representation at major events, contributions to case studies, blog articles, and numerous in-person and online presentations supporting partners and residents with their climate activities

Highlights include:

## External presentations

- keynote presentation at the Climate Unity Youth Conference, July 2023
- speaker at University of Southampton 3rd International Conference on Evolving Cities, July 2022
- speaker at The National Retrofit Hub: Finance Working Group, July 2023
- speaker at Ashden: Learning Out Loud, June 2023
- speaker at a Utility Week conference on Retrofit, June 2023
- speaker at Action Hampshire's Together for Our Planet Launch event, September 2022

## Events

- the New Forest Show: three days of direct engagement with over 350 residents
- retrofit business case stakeholder event attended by over 60 people, representing organisations from up and down the retrofit supply chain with expressions of interest for further engagement from over 25 attendees
- Planet Petersfield: Engaged with families and local green groups
- a Parish Engagement event to promote ways for parishes to become involved in climate action. Attended by over 50 parish representatives

## External engagement

- Extensive influencing around the key themes of the Strategic Framework includes engagement with:
- UK Power Network on the development of a Local Area Energy Planning tool
- ExxonMobil on the Solent Cluster Hydrogen Strategy
- Net Zero Hub Board on future projects
- National Energy Foundation and leading social housing providers on retrofit
- The Hampshire CVS network on the Together for Our Planet Programme
- UK Infrastructure Bank and Green Finance Institute on retrofit and green finance opportunities

## Case studies, blog posts, and awards

Several opportunities to promote the County Council's work include:

- winning the **Regen Green Energy Award** for Public Sector Local Leadership.
- a **case study** for Ashden into the County Council's Year of Climate Resilience
- a **case study** for the LGA on how to develop a retrofit scheme for private residents

# Section eight: Summary and next steps



Overall good progress is being made on the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy through the various activities and programmes outlined in this annual report.

Within the Strategic Framework, there is a clear progress on key strategic programmes such as transport, residential emissions and energy.

Engagement has become a strong focus for the work this year and this report clearly demonstrates the significant effort that has been put into both developing this further but also in engaging with residents and partners, through the community projects, networks and partnerships and the very successful insights-led campaigns and the broader engagement programmes.

## 2023-2024

The primary focus for 2023 onwards is:

- Working on the delivery of the outward facing elements of the Strategic Framework.
- Focus on supporting our residents through behaviour change and building resilience.
- Continue to build on the strategic leadership, influencing, enabling and advocacy role.
- Supporting corporate join-up and the embedding of climate change into business as usual across the organisation.

Based on the research and analysis undertaken over the last 24 months the key areas identified as priorities going forward continue to be residential emissions, energy, behaviour change and engagement.

Work over the next 12 months will continue to focus on these areas specifically through:

### **Energy**

- Continue to reduce energy consumption through behaviour change by supporting the installation of solar panels, batteries and air source heat pumps targeted at the able to pay market.
- Continue to provide trusted advice to residents on a range of issues including government-funded schemes for low-income households, energy efficiency, and behaviour and lifestyle change.
- Continue to support the progression of community energy groups towards energy generation schemes.
- Use the evolving evidence base with University of Southampton to work with and engage network operators, Net Zero Hubs, district/borough councils and other key stakeholders to make progress towards an energy strategy (or Local Area Energy Plan) that can provide the framework for future generations; including distribution; efficiency; guidance for future programmes and investments by all key stakeholders in the Hampshire area to meet the Net Zero target.

### **Retrofit**

- Continue to work on finding a suitable and sustainable delivery mechanism for the Hampshire-wide retrofit business case.

### **Behaviour Change**

- Continue to support communities in Hampshire to engage on climate change actions from efficiency to local community renewable energy generation and behaviour/lifestyle changes through existing programmes like the Greening Campaign, Community Energy, Solar Together and new programmes like Energy Switching.

### **Engagement**

- Continue to deliver targeted insight-led communications and marketing campaigns.
- Progress the youth engagement work.
- Explore opportunities for other ways to engage “seldom heard” communities.
- Continue to prioritise engagement activities to influence, advocate for, and facilitate action by others through programmes of engagement activities such as representation at major events, contributions to case studies and blog articles and in-person and online presentations.

### **Finance and Funding**

- Continue to develop a better understanding of the commercial opportunities available through Green Finance.
- Continue to explore new and innovative funding opportunities.



