

DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

2021 – 2030



FOREWORD

The climate crisis is one of the most significant issues to face our society, our environment and the planet. A global response is required to tackle it, at an international, national and local level - down to every individual. What happens next is up to us and we all need to play our part to manage our impact on Earth.



Councillor Wendy Schmitt,
Cabinet Member for
Environment

We declared a climate emergency in autumn 2019 to build on and step up the work the Council has already undertaken to reduce climate emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

Since the motion at Full Council we have been working with representatives from the community to develop a replacement strategy and action plan.

We must all now take every action possible to prevent local and global changes to the climate before it is too late. We are at the tipping point and it is everyone's responsibility to do whatever they can to help protect our precious planet for generations to come.

Our role as a Local Authority is to act as a community leader in work to tackle climate change at the local level, whilst also changing the way we deliver our services and working in partnership with local organisations, partners and the wider community to minimise our environmental impact by reducing waste, carbon and pollution.

INTRODUCTION

Our climate is changing. We have seen a rapid global rise in greenhouse gas emissions over the last 100 years and a trend towards increasing global average temperatures over the last century. As a result of the temperature increases, climatic events are increasing in severity, strength and regularity. The intensity and frequency of storms and rainfall, flooding and heatwaves is increasing.

Global temperatures are projected to continue rising, which is very likely to cause continued changes in weather patterns, rising sea levels and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. These temperature changes are reflected in the UK and illustrated in the graph below.

As a result of this weather, seasons will become more variable with summers becoming hotter and drier, creating drought conditions with implications for growing crops and food and pressure on water supplies, and milder and wetter autumn and winters, increasing flooding.

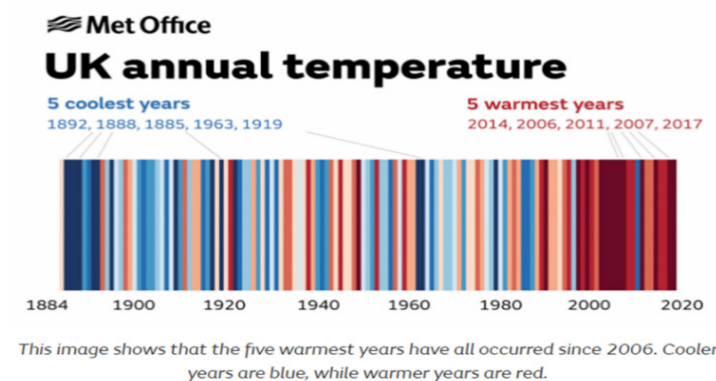
Changes to our climate will affect parts of our community and economy in different ways. For example, flooding may force residents and businesses out of their homes and premises or affect highways causing travel disruption.

The rural economy, including local agriculture may experience an impact on food yields and require different crop choices in our district.

There may also be less obvious indirect impacts on utilities. Power outages from increased storms could affect businesses, households and public services alike, causing disruption.

In 2015 the UK government joined 195 others from around the world and signed the Paris Agreement. The Agreement legally ratified a commitment to prevent average global temperature increasing by no more than 1.5 °C. In addition to the global agreement, the UK Government amended the Climate Change Act 2008 with a binding target of 'net zero' emissions by 2050.

The Environment Bill 2020 sets out some of the policy changes that the government is seeking to make to support the UK's climate change objectives. This has been extensively consulted on but has been introduced to government during a period of significant change and uncertainty through the COVID pandemic. There has been a delay in the progress of this bill through parliament, and it is currently programmed for agreement in November 2021.





The pandemic has also had a significant impact on society and it is not yet clear what the long term implications of this will be on travel, working styles, consumer behaviour and choices, housing and wider societal priorities. This is a developing picture at a national level and it is likely to affect where the most positive environmental impacts can be made.

Braintree District Council declared a Climate Change Emergency on 22 July 2019 and announced a target to be carbon neutral as a Council as far as practical by 2030, as well as supporting our communities to reduce the impacts of climate change across the Braintree District.

Building on our first strategy dated 2015, the Council has taken a different approach to developing this strategy, with more of an external district wide focus to enable all of us across the district to contribute towards its aims, objectives and actions. A Climate Change Working Group comprising of internal and external representatives was established to influence and contribute to shaping the key elements in the strategy and the Action Plan.

The group recognised the need to embrace national and local plans e.g. Environment Bill 2020 and Essex Climate Change Strategy and that with a flexible and partnership approach we can make the best use of our collective resources and data. The delay to the Environment Bill means that rather than the bill informing the district strategy as was originally intended, we will need to consult on the strategy based on our assumptions of the outcomes of the bill where possible and review when the bill has been agreed.

This strategy sets out the direction of travel to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. It will need to be reviewed and adapted over this time as the national and international agenda evolves. The strategy has also been developed to complement existing and emerging strategies that have significant overlap, including the Local Plan, District Growth Strategy, Corporate Strategy and Cycling Strategy.

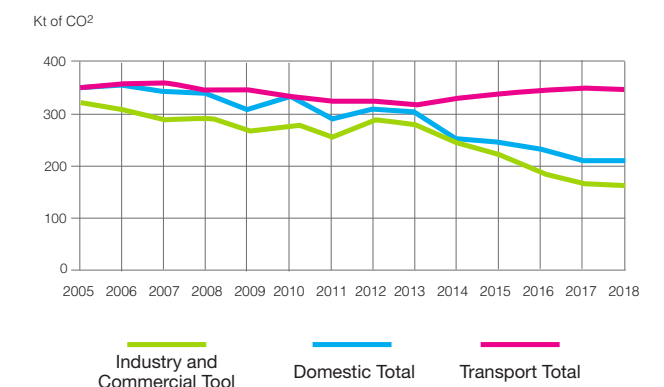


PROGRESS ON REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Since 2005, domestic and commercial carbon emissions have reduced in the district due to changes to vehicle fuel efficiency, domestic insulation, heating and lighting, energy efficiency improvements to industrial processes and the introduction of renewable energy.

The make-up of our carbon emissions gives us an understanding of where attention needs to be focussed to make the biggest impact.

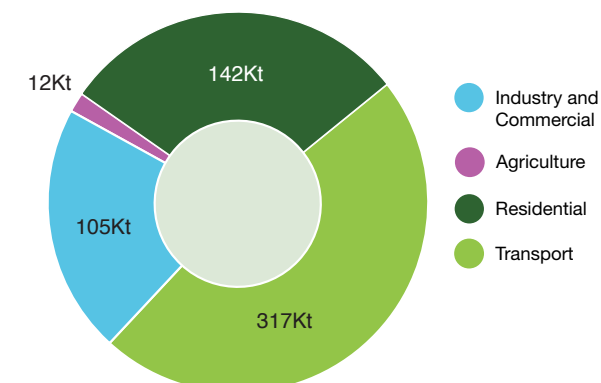
SOURCES OF DISTRICT EMISSIONS OF CO²



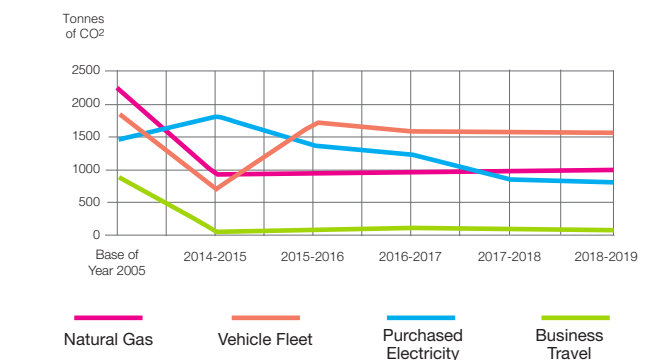
As part of the previous Climate Change Strategy and emission reduction targets, the Council has also recorded its own direct emissions (scope 1), those created from the energy it consumes (scope 2) and indirect emissions (scope 3).

DISTRICT WIDE SOURCES OF CO₂ EMISSIONS (KT CO₂)

The Government produces area based CO₂ emissions measured in Kilo Tonnes (Kt). This pie chart and graph show that in Braintree District, in order to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030, these would need to be a reduction of 576Kt of CO₂. Please see breakdown below.



BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CO₂ EMISSIONS





As a District Council we have been pro-active in delivering a range of initiatives and projects to mitigate the impacts of climate change across the district and reduce carbon emissions. These are some of the achievements:



ENERGY CONSERVATION

- Installed 8,700 energy saving measures including boilers, domestic solar installations, cavity wall and loft installation resulting in 1,000 tonnes of carbon saved.
- Through the Essex Energy Switch encouraged 150,000 residents to switch energy provider in their homes, saving customers £705,000.



TRANSPORT

- Installed electric car chargers in car parks across the district.
- Cycle scheme - 70 participants purchased bikes through the scheme.
- Provision of secure bike storage at Causeway House and Lakes Road.
- Provision of electric bike for staff use.
- Since 2015 we have saved 858 tonnes of CO² in business travel.



COUNCIL ASSETS AND OPERATIONS

- 0.5MW solar panels installed on local authority owned buildings generating £100k/pa combined income and saving 119 tonnes carbon offset through green electricity generation.
- Installed 30 secondary double glazed units, replaced 150 light bulbs and replaced gas boiler with an A rated replacement at Grade 2* listed Town Hall saving 15 tonnes of CO² emissions since 2014.
- Total Household Waste collected 2010-2020 571,455 tonnes.
- Total Household Waste recycled 2010-2020 301,939 tonnes.
- Total Percentage recycled 2010-2020 52.84%.
- Stopped use of 22,000 single use plastic cups per year within Council owned buildings.



RESOURCES

- Since 2005 1,252 tonnes of CO² have been saved through the reduction of our gas consumption.
- Since 2005 600 tonnes of CO² have been saved through the reduction of our electricity use.



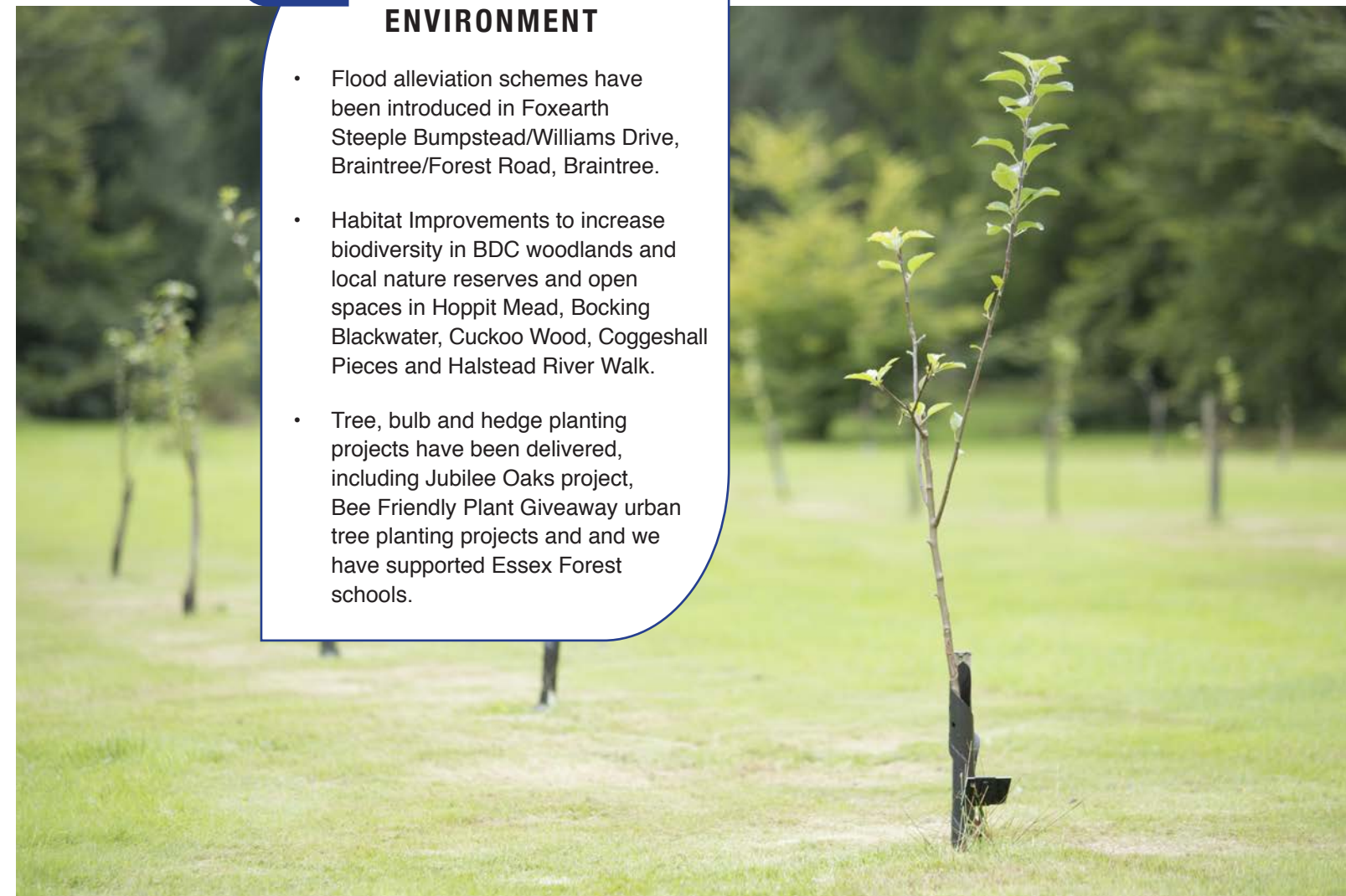
ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- More than 50% of parish councils have developed parish emergency plans.
- Multi-agency flood plan has been developed and Emergency Plans for severe weather are in place. Emergency plans for severe weather in place.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Flood alleviation schemes have been introduced in Foxearth Steeple Bumpstead/Williams Drive, Braintree/Forest Road, Braintree.
- Habitat Improvements to increase biodiversity in BDC woodlands and local nature reserves and open spaces in Hoppit Mead, Bocking Blackwater, Cuckoo Wood, Coggeshall Pieces and Halstead River Walk.
- Tree, bulb and hedge planting projects have been delivered, including Jubilee Oaks project, Bee Friendly Plant Giveaway urban tree planting projects and we have supported Essex Forest schools.



PURPOSE OF STRATEGY



THE PURPOSE OF OUR STRATEGY IS TO:

Support partners, residents, and local businesses to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030

Make Council activities carbon neutral as far as practical by 2030

Build resilient communities that adapt to the impacts of climate change

To successfully deliver the strategy the Council, the wider community and partners will all need to take a role in delivering the overall aims of the Strategy. Everyone has responsibilities and individual and collective contributions will help to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Some members of the group have participated in the Essex Climate Commission and are monitoring progress of the Environment Bill 2020, as our strategy will need to align to these to ensure maximum impact. At the time of drafting this strategy, both pieces of work are still in progress, and we need to be mindful of this when considering our action plans for delivery.

An initial investment of £500k has been made by the District Council to support the delivery of this strategy. Individual business cases will be required to approve funding for the various projects, with some being delivered in conjunction with partners which will attract external/new funding opportunities. This district wide strategy recognises the important contribution that everyone can make including our partners, communities and businesses.



THEMES AND PRIORITIES

A number of themes have emerged through the development of this strategy and each of these themes has key priorities that will support the delivery of our overall objectives.

THE KEY THEMES OF THE STRATEGY ARE:

RESOURCES



ENERGY CONSERVATION



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



TRANSPORT



COUNCIL ASSETS AND OPERATIONS



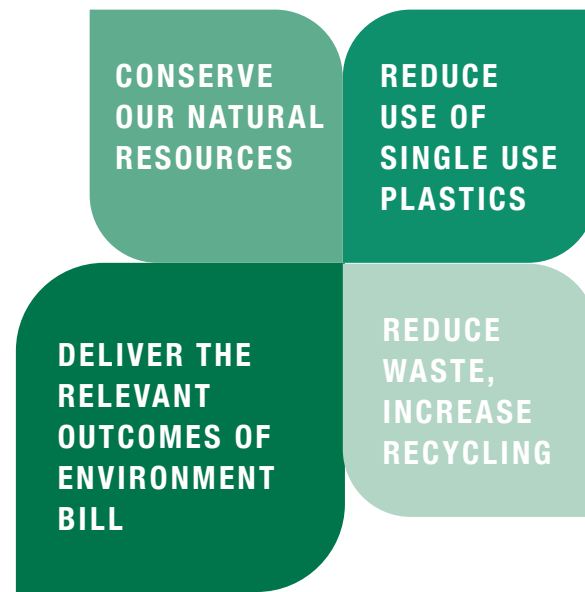
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE



THEME: RESOURCES



Whilst it may not currently be possible for all organisations to eliminate 100% of carbon emissions, this can be supplemented by high quality and verifiable carbon offsetting. This is an area that the Council could provide a role in facilitating between those organisations who want to invest in offsetting measures and those who have schemes and projects that provide an offsetting opportunity.

This will help develop new low-carbon income streams for carbon positive rural businesses that can offer surplus carbon credits generated from carbon sequestration* (e.g. following tree planting or land use activities) whilst also assisting local firms with unavoidable emissions to achieve net zero. We see offsets trading as an interim measure, and by 2050 we would anticipate that the necessity for carbon trading falls to an extremely low level due to technological advances allowing significant reductions in what is classed as an 'unavoidable' emission.

As a waste collection authority, our role in the reduce, reuse and recycling of materials gives us the opportunity to support consumers and businesses to make better choices about their purchasing and disposal options and this needs to form a core part of our engagement plan. There will be changes to the way that resources and waste are managed through the Environment Bill and this needs to be monitored over the months ahead to ensure speedy and effective implementation of the relevant parts of the bill when it is passed.

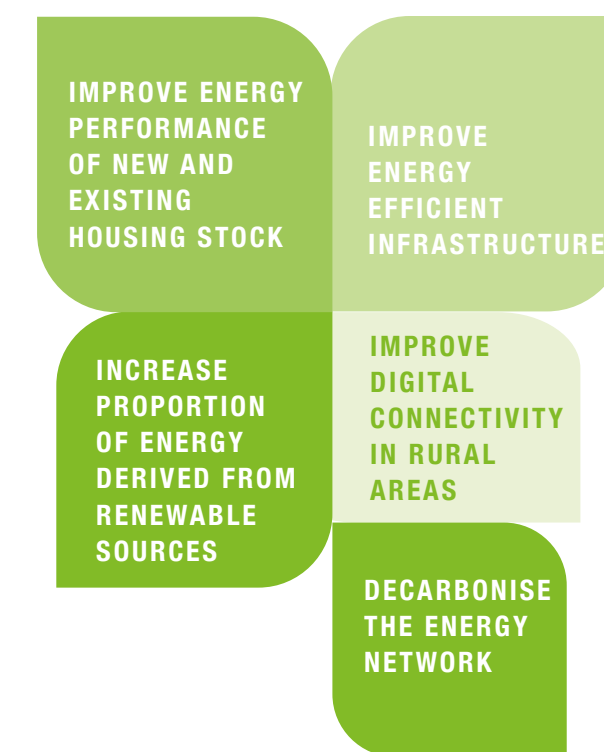
*Carbon sequestration - is the long-term removal, capture or sequestration of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to slow or reverse atmospheric CO₂ pollution and to mitigate global warming.

We must reduce our impact on the world's natural resources, with a focus on fair and sustainable consumption and production and reuse or repurposing where possible. We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by the production of goods and services and manage carefully the waste we produce.

We need to adapt and reduce our current consumption patterns, particularly our consumption of carbon-intensive products and activities and to re-use and repair items we already have rather than replace them.



THEME: ENERGY CONSERVATION



To support our district to conserve energy, a sustained engagement programme will be needed with households, landlords and businesses promoting practical ways to reduce energy used and find carbon neutral or reduced carbon alternatives for energy that is consumed.

There will also need to be engagement with low carbon generation and heating businesses to promote the district as an attractive operating environment with favourable opportunities for product development and trade.

Some measures will require funding and incentives for home and business owners which will require engagement at a national level to ensure that regulations, powers and subsidy regimes are provided to support the phase out of fossil fuel energy. There will be a need to increase awareness and encourage uptake of emerging technologies, supporting residents and businesses to access opportunities for funding.

Training will be needed to support new technology implementation, including installation, management and maintenance and associated activities. There is an opportunity to work with training providers, businesses and further education establishments to increase skills and attract businesses associated with this sector into the district.

The electricity network will need to be upgraded and operated more smartly to serve higher demand, local micro-generation and storage systems needs to be better integrated to the grid, or permitted to operate independently to the grid to reduce cost and deployment friction and encourage uptake.

The energy we use has a significant impact on our environment.

Fossil fuels are non-renewable and the burning of fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide and other gases

into the air. This causes visible issues such as pollution as well as contributing towards global warming. Energy conservation is something that everyone can contribute to by limiting the amount of energy that they use as well as ensuring that as much of that energy as possible is derived from renewable sources.

Heating buildings and hot water currently accounts for nearly 40% of carbon emissions. This makes it the largest source of direct emissions. At least 65% of this heat is supplied by gas, 25% from oil and about 10% from electricity (including storage heating).



THEME: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

REDUCE THE CARBON IMPACT AND IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS

REDUCE ENERGY USE IN EXISTING HOUSING BY RETROFITTING ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES

REDUCE HOUSEHOLD WATER CONSUMPTION AND MAXIMISE INSTALLATION OF SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, WATER REUSE AND GREY WATER HARVESTING TECHNOLOGIES

IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS DESIGNED TO MINIMISE WASTE AND INCREASE RECYCLING.

One of the biggest priorities in the emerging Local Plan is the position of development. Locating this within walking and cycling distance of new infrastructure networks will enable residents to meet their everyday needs without long journeys.

I-Construct innovation hub, a brand new facility in Braintree, will support the transformation of buildings and skills upgrade and training for building contractors and technical advice for building owners on carbon neutral retrofit, water efficiency and climate resilience.

Retrofitting our existing homes will ensure our current buildings will have better energy and water performance, cutting water and heating demand and therefore carbon, and will support the target to eliminate fuel poverty and end the risk of anyone having to live in a cold home.

Engagement will be required with housing developers, households and businesses across the district to develop an awareness and understanding of modern construction, planning considerations and the implications of the Environment Bill. A particular focus will be required on those experiencing fuel poverty, with tailored support services and funding opportunities identified for home upgrades.

It will be important to engage and influence Government on the introduction of powers and regulations to drive high energy efficiency, water efficiency and climate resilience standards for existing building retrofit and tighten up the enforcement and pace of improvement in the domestic and non-domestic private rented sectors.

Reducing the carbon impact of our homes and ensuring that our communities are sustainable will be a major contributor to the reduction of our impact on the climate. Communities need to be designed to fit in with and enhance the environment, whilst creating a good place to live and improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

Between 2013 and 2033 the Council must build over 14,000 new homes, and the locations for these can be found in the new Local Plan. When the Environment Bill is enacted, it is likely that there will be a requirement for all new developments to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%.



THEME: TRANSPORT

PRIORITISE WALKING AND CYCLING

INCREASE CYCLE NETWORK WITH SEGREGATED CYCLE LANES

IMPROVE DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY TO REDUCE WORK TRAVEL DEMAND

PROMOTE ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

GROW ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING NETWORK AND INFRASTRUCTURE AREAS

We know that our transport system is vulnerable to future climate change flood events, impacts of high temperatures, through melting tarmac, or contorted railway tracks. By its nature, transport is a cross-boundary, how we work with other statutory undertakers and providers to consider this priority is critical in reducing our carbon emissions.

The number of vehicles on the roads needs to reduce, with more people using public transport, walking and cycling instead of using private cars. This would positively impact peoples' health due to reduced air pollution and an increase in exercise, as well as improved transport systems benefiting lower income households.

We also need to support government plans to phase out petrol and diesel powered vehicles, converting to electric for most vehicles and biogas or hydrogen for some larger vehicles like buses, lorries, tractors and other plant. A significant Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure will be required across the district, as well as an extensive cycle/walking network that is easy to use. As the district with the first all-electric forecourt in the country, we have a good example of what can be achieved.

Locating sustainable transport facilities near to work and homes will increase opportunity for people to choose alternative means of travel to a private car. Increasing the ability for people to work from home on a long term basis will reduce the need for journeys.

Sustainable transport not only delivers carbon neutrality but has other positive outcomes, including health, well-being and socio-economic benefits for people and for businesses. By ensuring our transport system is climate resilient, it will make the district more accessible and efficient for residents and businesses and visitors.



THEME: COUNCIL ASSETS AND OPERATIONS



IDENTIFYING AND INTRODUCING CARBON OFFSETTING SCHEMES

ADOPTING SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND

REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS OF COUNCIL SERVICES, FLEET AND ESTATE

As a Council we have implemented a large number of measures already, a number of which can be seen earlier in this strategy. We have reduced our carbon emissions and use of single use plastics as well as continued a sustained programme with staff and services to identify where they can make positive impacts, but to meet the target we have set we need to do more.

There will be a reliance on effective use of technology to enable this, particularly in relation to our transport and estate carbon impact. The size and nature of our district means that emerging technologies e.g. electric or hydrogen waste collection vehicles will need to be improved before they can be fully implemented.

There are a number of Councils and private sector operators in similar positions, so it will be important to understand where we can learn from each other and work together to deliver improvements.

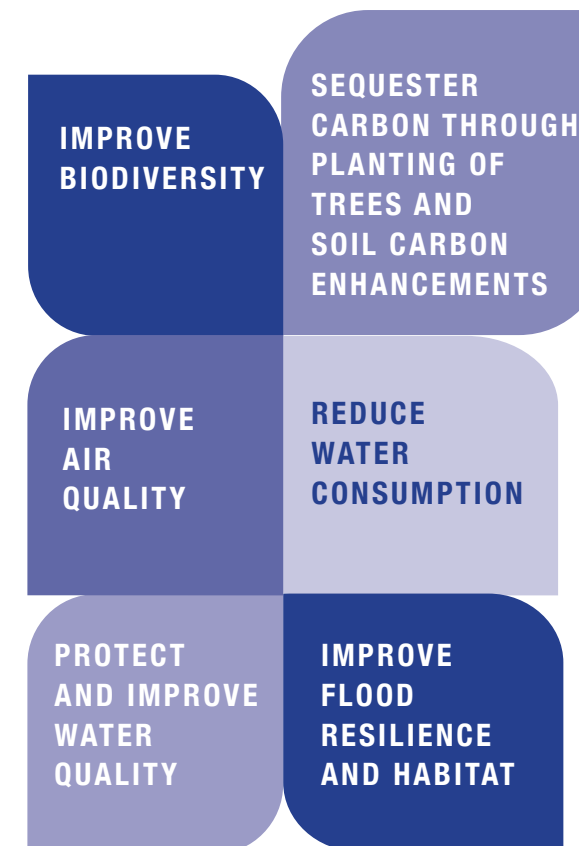
We will continue to engage with our staff, members and partners, on their ideas on how they can help contribute to reducing the impact of climate change.

We will need to develop new skills and create capacity within the organisation including technological knowledge in reducing carbon emissions, climate emergency training programmes for public services and their supply chains, covering both mitigation and adaptation. Reviewing and adapting our buildings and assets to ensure that carbon use across our estate can be minimised will continue to be a priority under this theme.

One of our core priorities is to mitigate our own impact as an organisation on the climate. We need to reduce our carbon emissions and the energy that we use, make what we do use renewable where we can and manage our services in a sustainable way.



THEME: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



Developing, protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and the natural environment will also help protect urban and rural environments against the impacts of climate change. Amongst other things, it will help improve surface drainage, reducing flood risk, storing and cleaning water and reducing the urban heat island effect. Climate change can spread pests, diseases and non-native invasive species so biological and environmental diversity provides a degree of resilience for natural systems.

We all need to limit the damage caused to natural habitats and wildlife by climate change, whilst also supporting opportunities for recovery and protection of species. Developing our green infrastructure, increasing the network of natural and semi-natural areas across the district, will increase the range of ecosystems in both rural and urban settings. The Local Plan sets out the allocation and protection of a range of open spaces and corridors to support this priority.

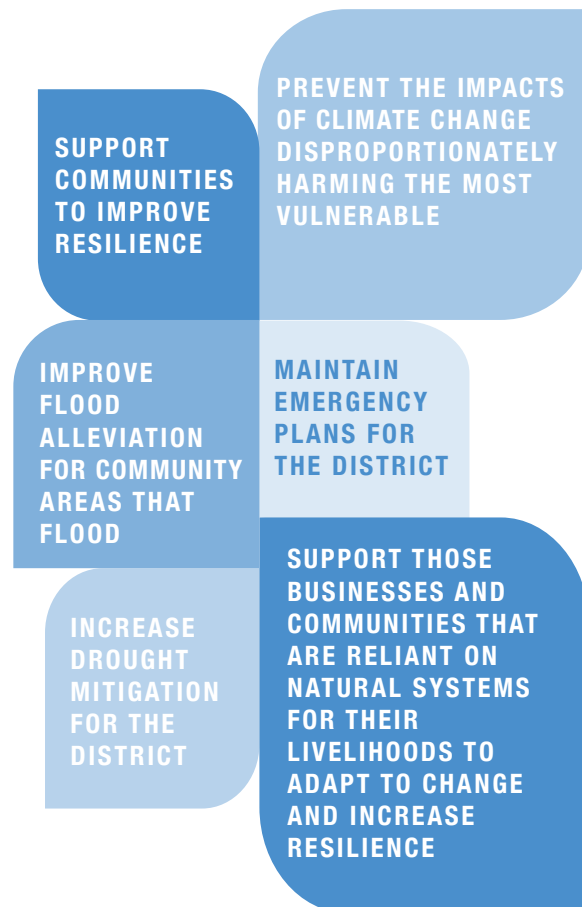
We will build on the already strong network of volunteers including our Green Heart Champions, Friends of groups, volunteer tree wardens and community groups, identifying Climate Change ambassadors and working with these individuals and groups to support them to make a difference to the place they live, enabling and empowering everyone to play their part.

Existing and new partnerships can support the implementation of changes to enhance our natural environment and help to implement the outcomes of the Environment Bill 2020, including any around Net Biodiversity Gain.

Protecting the natural environment is a priority that not only delivers benefits for climate change but will also impact positively on the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of residents. Access to green open spaces has been continually identified by our residents as one of their key priorities in making the district a good place to live.



THEME: ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE



Whilst the majority of our Climate Change Strategy focusses on mitigating the impact of climate change, we know that the climate is already changing and residents and businesses need support to adapt to this change.

In our Emergency and Resilience Planning role, we have a direct responsibility to consider how we can support and work with all of our communities.

A number of Parish and Town Councils have their own emergency plans to plan for and respond to events, and homeowners have put their own mitigation measures in place. We will need to continue the work we are already undertaking to provide emergency planning advice and support to town/parish councils with their own town/parish emergency plans.

Flooding has become an increased risk and it is important to continue working with the lead flooding agencies, to ensure that communities are protected from flooding as much as possible.

There is also a risk that climate change will impact disproportionately on the most vulnerable in our society including long term health impacts and fuel poverty, increasing inequalities. We need to work across partners and communities to identify and mitigate these impacts where we can.

The Essex Resilience Forum and the development of community based partnerships, can enable more efficient resource use and share the costs and risks and reduce system vulnerabilities in a way that is focused on protecting provision of services to the most vulnerable.



DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

This strategy sets out the Council's community wide shared priorities for almost a decade of transformative climate action.

Braintree District Council, The Braintree District Climate Change Working Group and the Essex Climate Commission are bringing partners together to provide collective leadership on climate change.

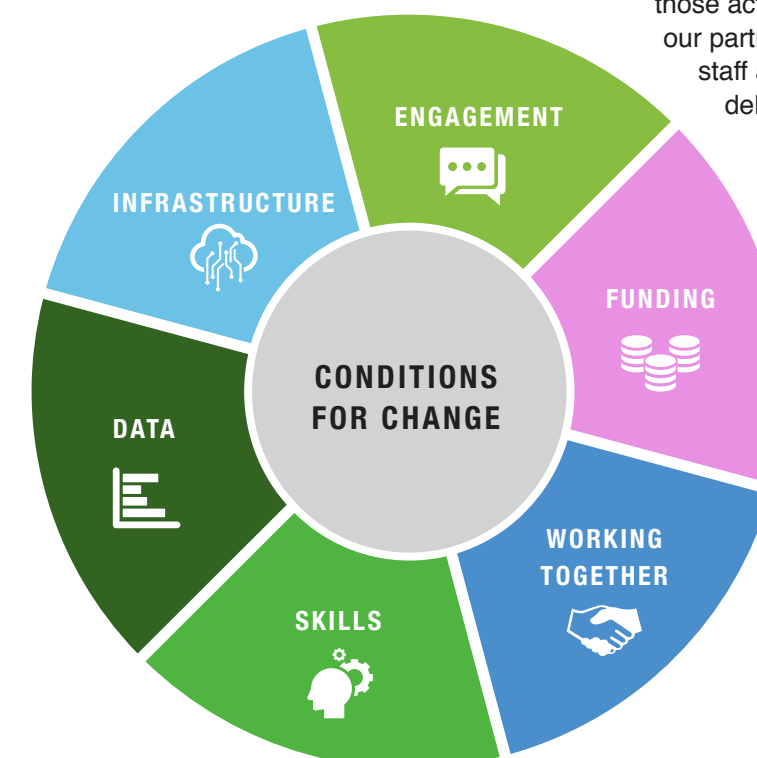
Many people and businesses are already taking action individually, in communities or through various networks. This will need to continue and scale up. People's individual actions, are extremely important, both in direct emissions reduction and in bringing about the changes we need to achieve our goals.



In order to maintain governance, accountability, support and coordination within wider networks, the Braintree District Climate Change Working Group will continue to provide direction and maintain an overview of the delivery of the strategy. They will also contribute to and support the development of the Action Plan. In respect of those actions to be delivered by others including our partners it is essential there are sufficient staff and financial resources available to deliver actions.

The pace and scale of change for us to deliver the aims and objectives of this strategy by 2030 requires a step change to the previous work undertaken by the Council and its partners as well as our communities.

The following conditions for change have been highlighted throughout our strategy and will need to be developed to ensure successful delivery of our objectives.



ENGAGEMENT

Many people are already taking action as individuals and communities, and they support changes which would help them to reduce carbon emissions. We need to continue to support our communities to engage, feel empowered and to have the tools, capacity and the opportunity to contribute to the overall climate change objectives.

To ensure that the changes are fair and socially encompassing, unintended negative consequences must be minimised so that change is accessible and possible for all.

In order to support and enable further individual and community action, development of a communication and engagement plan with buy-in from all delivery partners will be essential. This must include plans to ensure that we reflect the views of a wide range of groups. We will also develop approaches to engage with harder to reach groups and our urban and rural communities.



Much work has already taken place at individual and community level. We will work with all partners who have declared, or want to declare, a climate emergency or made public climate change commitments to support them to develop plans.

FUNDING



To achieve the objectives of this strategy, substantial investment will be needed at an international, national and local level, particularly in relation to infrastructure projects and long term programmes, such as the move away from fossil fuel heating systems and investment in sustainable transport solutions.

Expenditure in carbon reduction can often deliver savings which will help to demonstrate effective business cases for change. As a District Council, we can seek out and identify innovative and collaborative ways to finance climate change programmes and investment and support partners who require investment to realise projects that will contribute towards objectives. More widely, people and businesses across the district can influence funding through personal spending choices and collectively there will be a need to engage nationally with government and business to support wide scale investment into the green economy.

WORKING TOGETHER

To ensure that we can make the maximum impact, we all need to work together. The District Council will need to deliver the actions and set an example, whilst engaging at a local level with residents, businesses, community groups and others to ensure that they feel empowered and able to play their part. At the same time, we will all need to influence others at a local and national level to create the right laws, policies and programmes that support this.

Climate Change response is happening alongside other key priorities that need to be delivered, including sustainable economic growth, community resilience and connectivity. This strategy needs to address the interconnectivity of these priorities and seek to find ways to achieve the combined objectives.

To achieve a fair transition and make change affordable for all we will need systemic market changes. This will require barriers to change to be addressed and initiate a shift in favour of climate mitigation and adaptation interventions.



SKILLS



The Green economy creates a great opportunity to increase employment. We need to support everyone to be able to make choices which reduce carbon emissions or increase climate resilience. We also need to transform the way in which our decisions are made, empowering everyone with the skills, knowledge and capacity to support the implementation of climate friendly initiatives.

In particular, we recognise that the skills and capacity in the construction industry to deliver the scale and pace required. We need to make sure we support the uptake of solutions that support our local economy and businesses.

We need the right skills and resources. We also need to enable effective ways of connecting our skilled workforce with those with a demand for skills. To do this we will seek out and support innovation and share best practice with wider networks, emphasising the importance of investment in schemes like I-Construct. It will also be important to link with Further Education providers, including Colchester Institute who are likely to deliver much of the training required in the construction and technology sector.

We need to integrate training and the requirements for carbon neutral and climate resilient related knowledge into Further Education, apprenticeships and job roles across all of our priority areas. There will also be a need for ongoing carbon literacy training for local authority officers and staff in other organisations to ensure that those delivering services and taking decisions have the most up to date knowledge and information to support them to understand the climate impact of their services.

DATA



Evidence and validation will be required to Evidence and validation will be required to develop our action plans to ensure that we invest in the most effective actions to achieve carbon neutrality and climate resilience. Without good data we cannot be sure we are focusing on the key issues and it is difficult to measure our progress. Therefore we need to establish baselines and set targets to allow monitoring and evaluation to take place.

Some of the national data has a significant time lag until we receive it, which will require us to identify other data sources to support our monitoring and decision making.

We want to be able to share knowledge and data with other local authorities and partner organisations to share our understanding and learning from both successes and opportunities for improvement. Given the urgency of the challenge, we need to work with our current data and evidence, then adapt our approach as we learn more. For some priorities we have good data and knowledge about the challenge and the actions which are needed, others we need to explore more.

We need to make sure we have the right data and information to support the decisions that will support action. We also need to know more about regional climate scenarios so that we can plan using the most up to date climate projections. A key priority to support the delivery of this strategy will be development of an impact assessment tool to identify, capture, monitor and report the impacts of climate change in our District.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Successful delivery of the strategy will be reliant on infrastructure. The way that infrastructure is managed and maintained will be important in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Aligned to this, will be investment in new or updated infrastructure, in terms of heat, electricity and transport, to meet our strategic goals. Walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, as well as charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, or other zero carbon fuels will support a number of priorities set out in the strategy.

Infrastructure can protect homes and businesses from flooding. This includes grey infrastructure, such as flood walls and rain water storage, but also where natural solutions such as leaky dams and reinstated flood plains could be implemented to support flood protection while providing urban cooling, environmental and health and wellbeing benefits. We will need to develop our ICT and communications infrastructure to enable the use of technologies.

We will need to support UKPN to understand future local demand for electricity and to develop a clear plan for investing in upgrades required to the electricity distribution grid. Continued engagement with ECC and Environment Agency on flood defence projects, development with ECC of countywide plan for electric vehicle charging and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure will be important. We will also need to continue to work with developers to implement flood mitigation technology and green infrastructure in developments.



ACTION PLAN

The action plan will follow and be informed by the consultation on the strategy and will build on the reductions in district emissions that have already been achieved in partnership with Government, regional agencies, local businesses, organisations and communities and residents and our determination to tackle the climate emergency by 2030.

The action plan will set out work stream actions by Braintree DC and partners, including work by community groups and will be regularly reviewed to stay abreast of changes in emissions, external influences such as national policy and legislation, and the measures available.

The plan will have measures to deliver wider sustainable development, provide sustainable transport infrastructure, improve air quality, protect biodiversity and habitats and promote and improve environmental stewardship, reduce fuel poverty and improve the standard of housing.

Actions will link into other strategies including the District Growth Strategy and further develop the green economy in the district through the development of new green sector skills and jobs, and will link to our livewell programme to improve health and adapt to the impacts of climate change with stronger, more resilient, communities.

Projects will be reviewed through a business case process to ensure value for money, significant carbon saving and ability to deliver sustainable change.

DRAFT

MEASURING AND MONITORING

For the Braintree District to become zero carbon and climate resilient, progress must be measured.

Carbon emissions across the district are currently calculated each year by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy who release local authority wide carbon emissions data (there is always a two-year lag in the publication of each year's data e.g. 2020 data will not be published until 2022).

Therefore this strategy will require other outcome and output measures to monitor the success of interventions to determine which actions offer best value for money and provide the widest co-benefits in a timely manner.

We already have an organisation baseline provided by the annual carbon reduction monitoring reports. The council also maintains its Emergency and Business Continuity Plans. We will continue to monitor progress against this evidence base.

We will develop performance measures for mitigation and resilience action covering both outputs (what is delivered through actions) and outcomes (the difference made by the outputs).

Some actions such as biodiversity improvement, adaptation measures or education engagement campaigns are essential to change behaviours and mind sets, but it is difficult to measure the direct contribution these make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions or improving the natural environment. For these interventions, qualitative outputs and outcomes will be a primary means of measurement.

As actions are reviewed through business cases, measurement of benefits will be considered and following completion of the consultation process, the initial action plan will contain corresponding measures of success.

