

Climate Change

Strategic
Development
Framework



Forward

“Climate change is a huge issue which impacts all of us, both now and in the future. It is crucial that we take steps now to tackle climate change and its effects, so we can all look forward to a greener future for the county.”

“Since declaring a climate change emergency in 2019, we have made a firm commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This means not only working with our own staff to identify how we can achieve this, but also supporting our partners and communities to do their bit towards a greener future too.

“This framework builds on the work we have done so far, and sets out how we will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050”.

“Everyone can play their part in reducing our carbon emissions. This will take years, not months, but I am confident that with all of our services taking action, and through our work with partners and the wider community, we will be able to reach this target.”

County Councillor
Julia Jessel

Cabinet Member for Environment,
Infrastructure and Climate Change





Context & background

A 2018 report produced by The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that to limit global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, nations need to achieve net zero carbon emissions by around 2050.

In 2019, the UK became the first major economy to pass a law requiring the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. This means that the country needs to remove as much carbon from the atmosphere as it emits.

Following this, Staffordshire County Council members declared a Climate Change Emergency and made the commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

An All-Member Working Group was established to develop a list of actions and a Cabinet role, with specific responsibility for Climate Change, was appointed in July 2020. An annual action plan has been put in place identifying key priorities for action. By initially focussing on an action plan important issues can be tackled in a timely way as well as provide a strong foundation for the Strategic Framework. This Strategic Framework will build on previous strategies Hard Rain 1 (2005) and Hard Rain 2 (2007) and more recently Green Shoots in 2011, which contributed to substantial carbon emissions savings, through projects such as building energy efficiency, LED street lighting and a substantial reduction in staff mileage.

Staffordshire County Council Climate Change Vision

Staffordshire County Council will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In doing this we will enhance the quality of life and well-being for our residents and provide a sustainable economy for businesses.



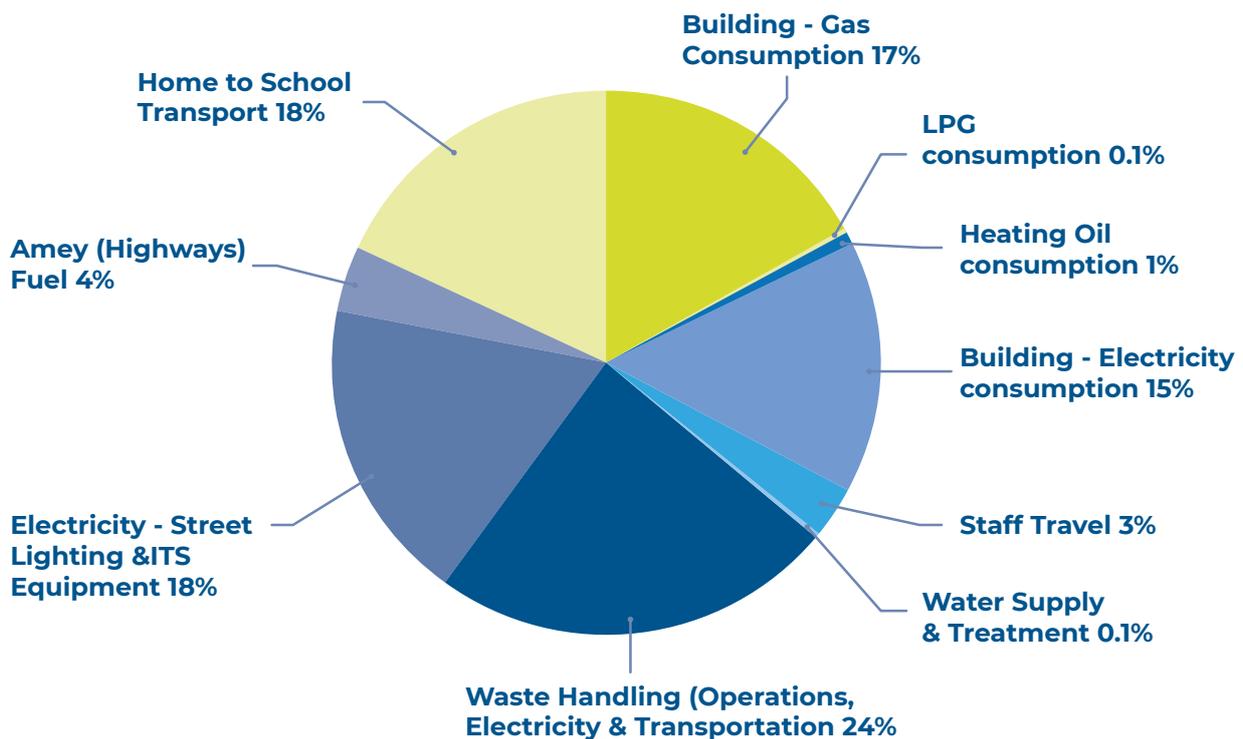
Staffordshire's climate change risks

For Staffordshire, climate change is likely to mean warmer wetter winters and hotter drier summers with more extreme weather events such as greater flooding and heatwaves. These changes are already being experienced, for example, in just 12 months between September 2019 – September 2020 the Council completed 70 formal flood investigations (an investigation being generally where 5 or more properties

flooded internally). The previous five years no more than 5 investigations were required in this period.

Each year the Council monitors its carbon emissions. Buildings, waste and transport are the highest emitters and reducing emissions from these areas are high priorities, which are highlighted in our Climate Change Action Plan.

Staffordshire County Council Carbon Emissions by Area of Operation from the 2018/2019 Financial Year



We want to reduce our carbon emissions as much as possible, although we recognise that several of our services will continue to produce some emissions. To achieve our net zero vision, we will investigate options for carbon sequestration (removing carbon from our atmosphere by, for example, planting more trees) where the carbon

emissions cannot be reasonably reduced any further.

To achieve a resilient county, we not only need to look at ways to reduce carbon emissions, but also to adapt to the changing climate. We will identify ways to better prepare for the changing climate and extreme weather events.

Key principles to achieving net zero

- Ensure all council services understand the need to reduce our carbon emissions and are committed to doing so.
- Be innovative, aspirational and positive leading by example.
- Be positive in our approach, embrace opportunities and build on our successes.
- Empower our staff and members to suggest solutions and commit to delivering the net zero target.
- Have transparent processes and make the best use of the resources we have.



Priority themes

We have set out five delivery themes to deliver our vision. As our zero carbon journey progresses, more priorities may be identified to allow us to achieve our net zero vision.

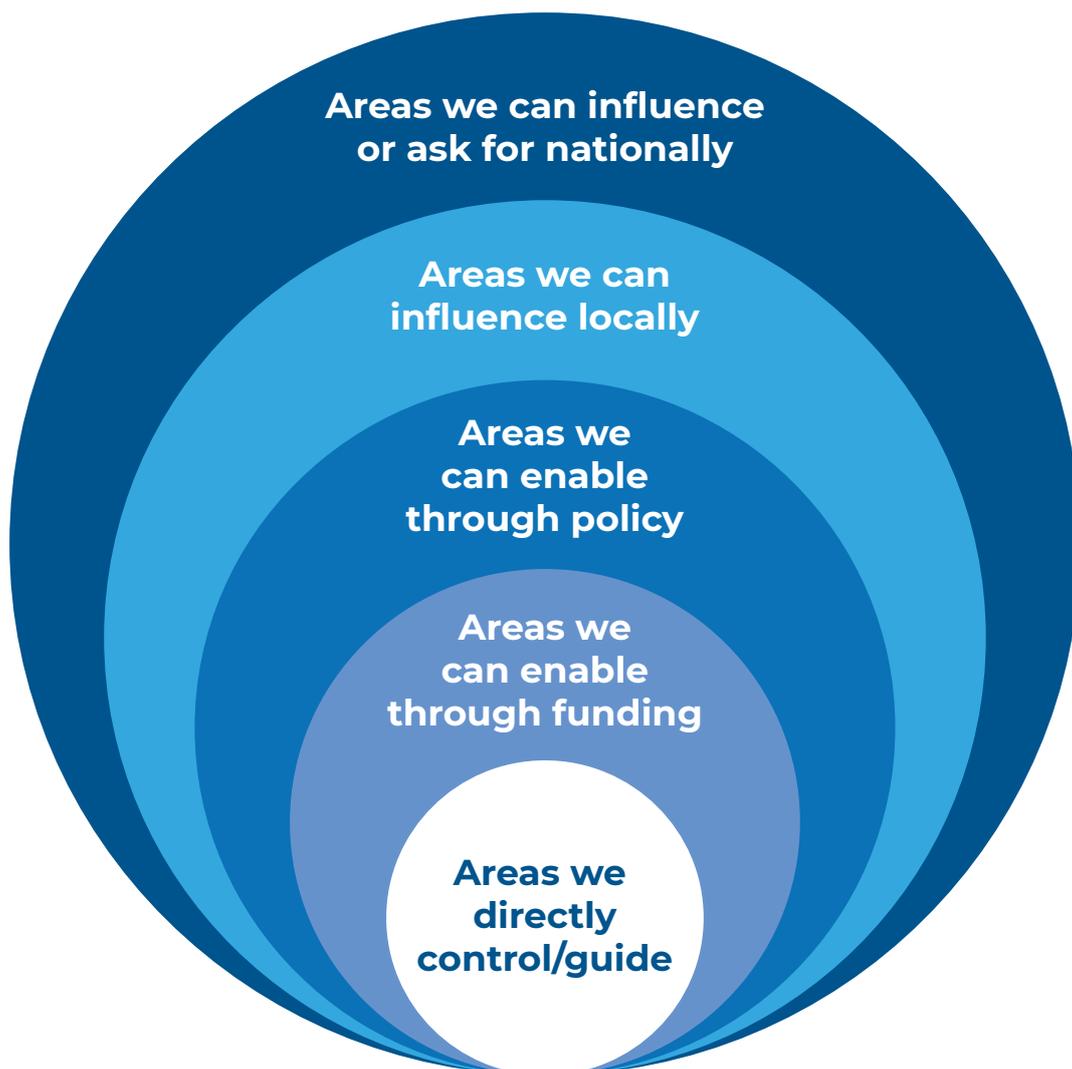


Opportunities and levels of influence

All services will need to play a significant role to achieve the net zero vision. It will require leadership at multiple levels, new ways of thinking and the ability of decision makers to connect with others, working towards joint solutions.

To achieve the vision, we will prioritise the carbon emissions which the council has direct control over and the greatest degree of influence.

The county council can have varying influence over other carbon emissions that occur within the council area. We therefore want to work with our partners and the wider community, to ensure we are considering all the areas we can influence to get a truly countywide approach to reducing carbon emissions.



Our approach to delivery

Our vision cannot be achieved through one decision or investment. Change will be required over a number of years and requires us to be flexible so we can respond to new opportunities.

All our services will take action and we will work with partners where possible to reduce Staffordshire's wider carbon emissions.

Working internally

we will:

- Ensure our approach is based firmly on facts and figures, especially the annual carbon emissions reporting.
- Prioritise where to focus our efforts on activities where we have the most effective control or influence.
- Make sure all internal strategies and policies reflect our climate change vision
- Ensure that our actions follow consultation and agreement with elected members
- Make sure our outwardly focused strategies reflect the vision, and encourage our partners and communities to do the same wherever possible
- Ensure any potential impacts on climate and the environment are considered and reflected in our decision making and reporting

Working with partners and our community

we will:

- Seek out opportunities to work with partners and the local community to encourage the climate change agenda, and support any local improvements.
- Give people the skills they need to drive the climate change agenda forward.
- We will encourage and support the transition of the Green Economy within Staffordshire.





Reviewing our progress

Carbon Emissions will be monitored each year to track our progress to net zero and be used to inform the annual climate change action plan. Our performance, achievements and areas for improvement will be summarised each year through an annual report.

These annual reports will also highlight the ongoing work across Staffordshire to reduce carbon emissions.

Plans, performance and strategies will be regularly reviewed as we monitor progress and as new technology and innovative ideas are identified.

Sign off: *Julia Jessel*

Date: 17.02.2021

