NORWICH City Council

Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2026-2035

Setting the scope, targets, solutions, workstreams and actions required for a Climate Responsive Norwich

Policy

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1. Foreword

by Cllr Emma Hampton (Portfolio Holder for Climate and Environment)

This document, the *Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2026-2035* (hereafter 'the Programme'), brings together the council's adopted and developing climate and environmental strategies into a single comprehensive 10-year programme, reaffirming the council's ambition and commitment to address the climate and ecological emergencies.

It provides insight into the council's ambition, commitment and detailed action planning by setting out how the council will achieve net zero by 2030 and support the city's journey to net-zero by 2045, whilst improving lives, nature and ensuring resilience as the climate changes.

Councils are uniquely placed to lead and coordinate climate action for their communities and can ensure the associated benefits are realised including improved health and well-being, nature recovery and improved prosperity. In 2024, Norwich City Council published it's *'We Are Norwich'* community led plan. The plan includes *A Climate Responsive Norwich* as one of five key priorities. This document sets out how this priority will be delivered.

Since 2006, the council has reduced its operational emissions by 70%. We're currently delivering £27m worth of projects across our social housing to reduce emissions and fuel poverty, with a further £325m set aside for future decarbonisation and energy efficiency improvements, to 2045. In 2015, we became the first UK council to run a reverse public auction for solar panel systems which has seen more than 4,500 kW of solar capacity developed across the city by enabling homeowners and businesses to benefit from low group-purchase prices.

We've recently completed the installation of over six-hundred solar panels at Riverside Leisure Centre to significantly reduce energy costs, ensuring the long-term viability of this much valued community asset. City Hall was retrofitted with a heat pump in 2023 and millions of pounds invested in other decarbonisation initiatives since the council's first carbon management plan in 2006. In 2025 the council created a new Climate and Environment Directorate, to bring together the teams needed to further accelerate environmental commitments. The council has committed '*to consider the climate in everything we do'.*

The city's direct emissions have reduced by 60% since 2005 due to the combined efforts of residents, business and institutions. The council is delivering a £5m project to reduce fuel poverty and emissions in private sector homes, and is strategically planning to decarbonise the city by, for example, promoting a £100m citywide heat network for the city centre and East Norwich, and by ensuring the city's electrical networks are future-proofed

for heat pumps, solar systems and EV charging. The council's Local Plan requires all new developments to be supplied with sustainable energy.

Alongside this, the council has commenced pilot projects focused on biodiversity enhancement and has embarked on a new collaborative partnership through the 'NatureCityNorwich' project, to plan nature recovery across the city. The council recognises the need to protect and enhance its existing parks and nature spaces, as well as to create new habitat and improve public access to nature. Improving habitat has the important added benefit that it can remove carbon from the atmosphere.

Addressing the climate and nature emergencies can produce significant benefits for society, including improved equality and prosperity, air quality, health and well-being, affordable warmth and comfort, energy resilience and food and water security.

We are proud of our achievements to date but remain ambitious for the future, and this document sets out how we will deliver our climate targets. The council commits to lead and coordinate the city's response to climate change. To support this journey, the council will work alongside experts, key partners, institutions, residents and businesses to further develop and implement its ambitions. In doing so, we will help create a climate responsive, prosperous, fairer and future-proof Norwich.

Councillor Emma Hampton

Portfolio Holder for Climate and Environment

Adopted by Cabinet in January 2026

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2026-2035 (hereafter *'the Programme'*) details how the council will achieve its *Climate Responsive Norwich* priority, published in our 2024 '*We Are Norwich'* community-led plan. It plots a positive pathway through the climate and ecological emergencies whilst also acknowledging the challenges which lie ahead.

2.2 This document is by necessity detailed and technical. It is primarily written for key stakeholders to guide and inform the development of new climate action plans.

2.3 The Programme encompasses five areas of existing or developing strategic activity, including its existing Biodiversity and Sustainable Warmth Strategies and three new climate action plans for: (1) the city, (2) for the council's general operations and (3) for its housing operations. The Programme ensures climate action is joined up between the city and council's operations (including housing) and aims for social, ecological and economic benefits to be co-developed.

2.4 The city's direct emissions have reduced by 60% since 2005 and the council's by 70% since 2007/8. Analysis of emissions data shows very similar patterns for the city and for the council – buildings and transport form the majority of direct emissions and are therefore priorities for the plan. Workstreams to reduce indirect emissions, which arise from supply chain activity outside of the city's boundary, are included.

2.5 *Electrification* is the principal solution to decarbonising the city and council operations. It requires fossil fuels to be replaced with efficient and affordable grid electricity. Gas boilers will be replaced with (mainly) heat pumps and petrol and diesel transport replaced with electric vehicles. This approach decarbonises because the UK government has committed to decarbonise the UK's electricity systems by 2035.

2.6 The council has pledged to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 for council operations and aims for the city to be net zero by 2045. The Programme sets out a recognised approach giving guidance for categorising, measuring and reporting emissions, known as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Both the city's and council emissions are explained in detail regarding how they fit within either the 2030 or 2045 target.

2.7 The final three sections of this document set out the workstreams required to deliver the council's commitments for citywide climate action, the council's general operations (known as General Fund activity) and its housing operations (known as Housing Revenue Account activity). Each climate action plan includes timescales for developing, consulting upon and adopting the relevant plan.

3. Introduction, Aims and Targets

3.1 Climate change is a global challenge which requires both an international and local response. The planet has warmed by 1.5°C compared to preindustrial times and is predicted to reach 2°C by 2050. On our current warming trajectory, the planet will reach around 4°C by the end of this century. 3.5 billion people are highly vulnerable to climate change, with mass migration or mortality inevitable in the second half of this century, unless the causes of climate change can be effectively mitigated. Nature is being impacted too. Parts of the planet, and particularly the equatorial and tropical zones, will become increasingly unable to support biodiversity in each subsequent decade.

3.2 This challenge requires two principal responses. The first is to innovate, develop and implement affordable measures to quickly reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, and the second is to ensure communities and nature can adapt and remain resilient, as the inevitable impacts of climate change are increasingly felt.

3.3 This Programme plots a positive pathway through the climate and ecological emergencies, whilst also being realistic about the significant challenges which lie ahead. It ensures that our response to the climate and ecological emergencies also brings about fairer, healthier and more prosperous communities. The council's approach is to invest in, innovate and share practical and deliverable solutions to mitigating and adapting to climate change in such a way that social benefits are also realised.

3.4 The UK is legally committed to reducing 100% of its greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, to net zero. Net zero means any remaining emissions will be offset by removing emissions such as through tree planting, resulting in a net zero *impact* on the climate. The UK is also a signatory to the 2015 Paris Agreement which created a global target to limit warming to between 1.5 and 2.0°C; warming beyond 2.0°C is predicted to become increasingly catastrophic.

3.5 The Paris Agreement created a global carbon budgeting process which apportioned carbon emission budgets to the 200 or so countries subscribing to the agreement. If nations keep within their annual carbon budgets, then warming will be limited to 2.0°C. Budgets recognise the need for fairness, with developing countries being able to emit more than fully industrialised countries.

3.6 In recognition of the urgent need to reduce emissions, the council set a net zero target date for the emissions it can directly control of 2030, and 2045 for the city. Our approach is to reduce our own emissions and lead the city's emissions reduction in accordance with the Paris Agreement i.e. according to the city's portion of the UK's carbon budget.

4. Our Emissions and Solutions

4.1 Both the council and the city as a whole have an excellent track record in reducing carbon emissions. Figure 4.1 shows that the city's *territorial* emissions reduced by 60% between 2005 and 2023 (2023 is the latest data available). This reduction was achieved despite a 16% increase in population growth and economic growth of 75% over the same period. Territorial emissions result from the direct consumption of fossil fuels and electricity, and other land-based activities occurring *within* the city's boundary. Territorial emissions exclude, for example, emissions resulting from products and services paid for within the city boundary but produced outside of it; non-territorial emissions are known as *consumption* emissions.

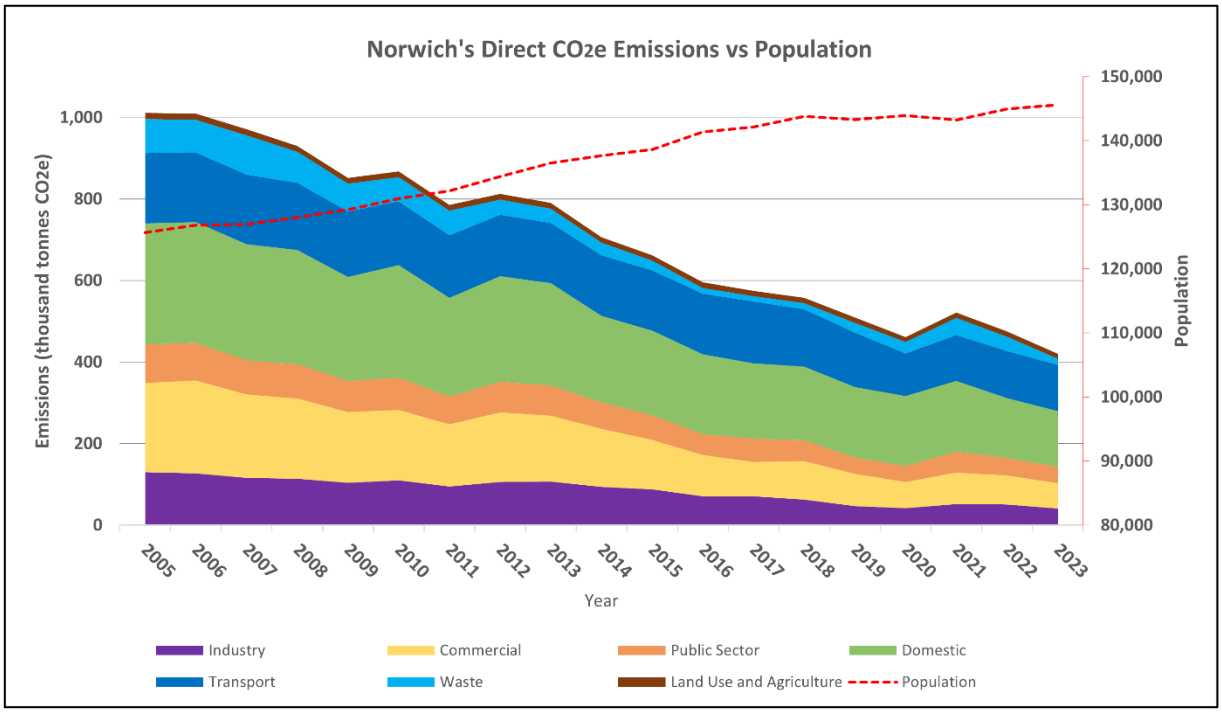

Figure 4.1

Norwich's direct CO2e emissions by sector and versus population growth

4.2 Figure 4.2 on the following page shows the generic greenhouse gas emission sources for the city, with buildings and transport being the highest emitters.

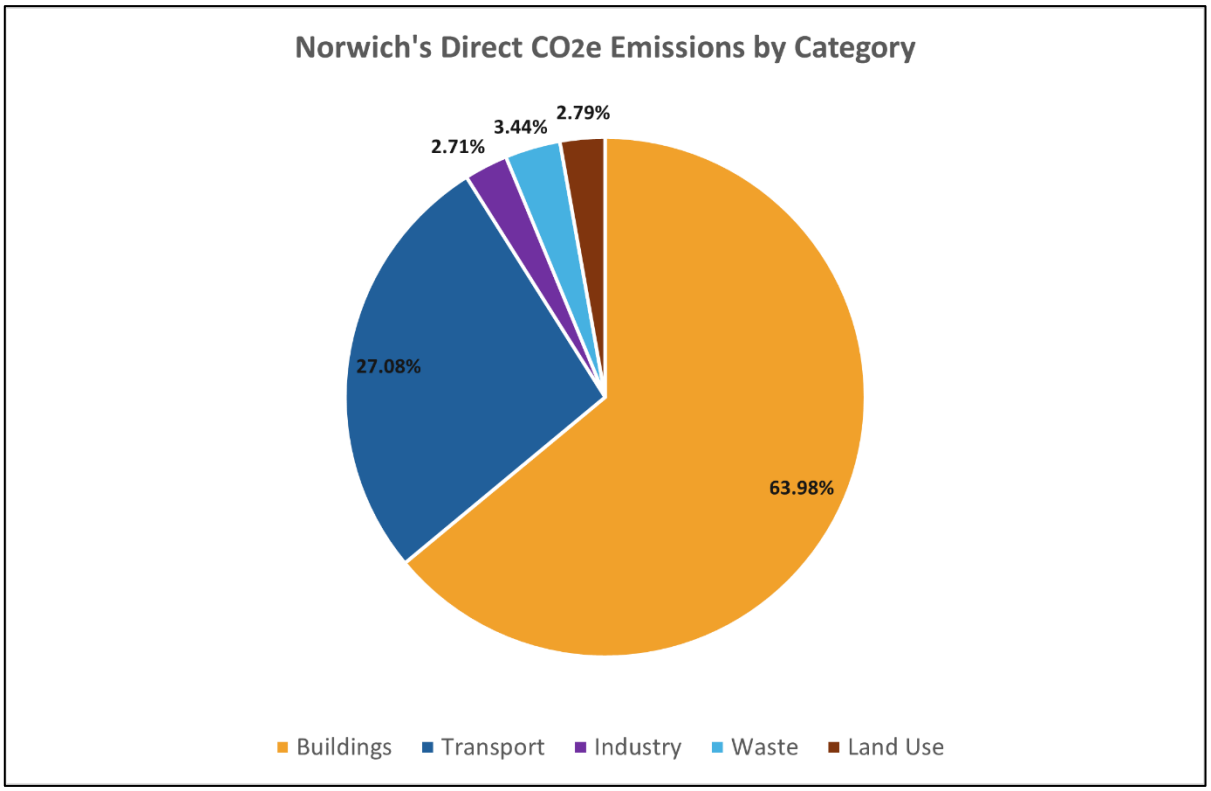

Figure 4.2
Norwich's direct CO2e emissions by source

4.3 Figure 4.3 shows the council's operational emissions have reduced by 70% since 2007/08, and Figure 4.4 shows our main emissions sources. These emissions include some indirect emissions such as from our city services contractors e.g. refuse collection, street cleaning, parks maintenance.

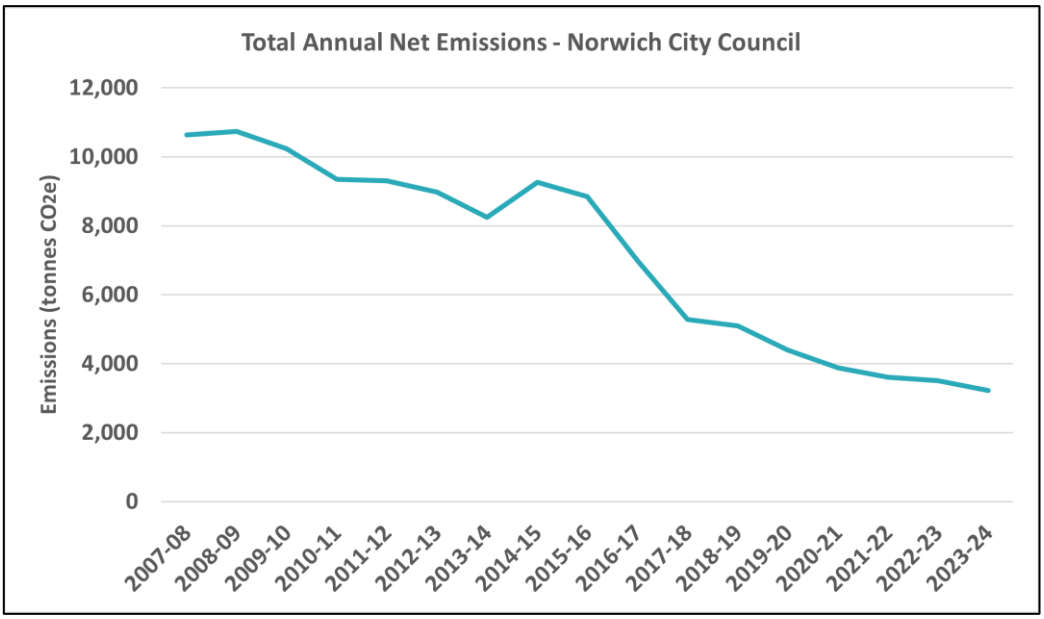

Figure 4.3

Norwich City Council's reduction in annual net CO2e emissions

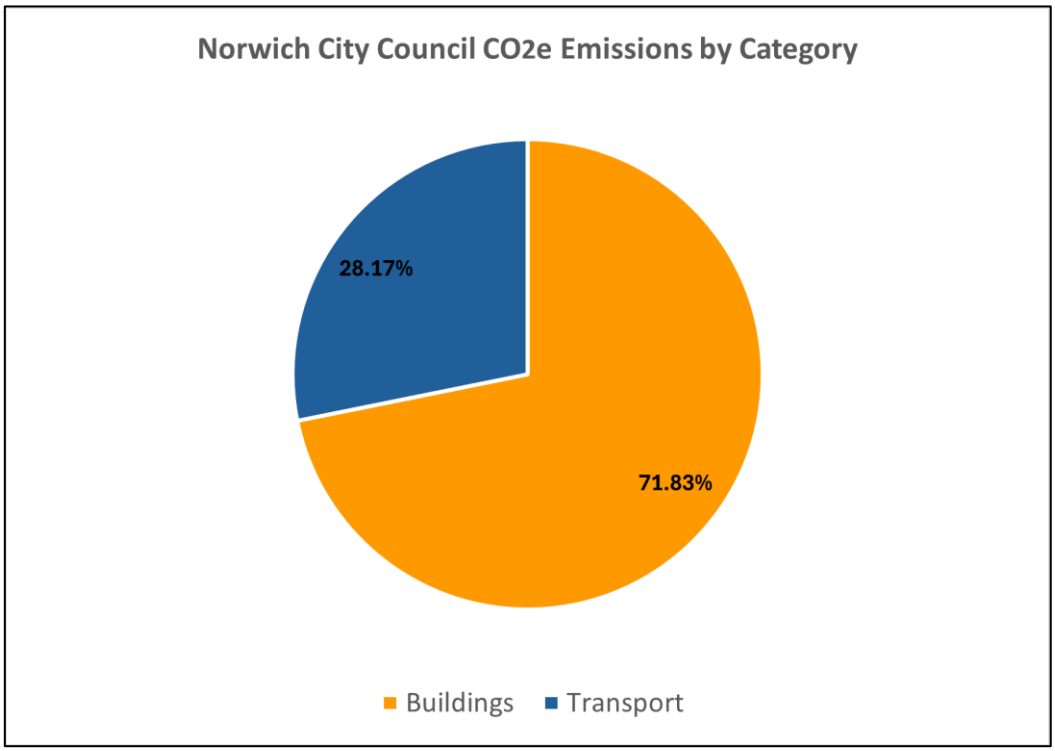

Figure 4.4

Norwich City Council's CO2e emissions by source (includes some indirect emissions)

4.4 The council's and city's direct emissions are very similar in that virtually all emissions come from buildings and transport. This means similar strategies and actions can be employed to reach net zero.

4.5 The approach adopted by the UK to reduce these emissions is known as *electrification*. Electrification replaces fossil fuel consumption with low carbon electricity, generated through wind, solar and nuclear power. For buildings, this means replacing gas boilers with efficient electric heating such as heat pumps and for transport it means replacing petrol and diesel-powered transport with electric vehicles. The UK government's aim is for our national electricity system to be net zero by 2035, which means all existing or new energy consumption which is electrified, becomes net zero by 2035.

4.6 In order to implement electrification *affordably*, and to realise some of the additional social benefits, electrification of both buildings and transport needs to be preceded with measures to first avoid energy use where possible (by doing things differently) and/or then reducing energy consumption through energy efficiency measures. For example, buildings need to become better insulated and motorised transport partly replaced with active and/or public transport. This approach also ensures our local and national electricity systems have sufficient capacity as we transition away from fossil fuels.

4.7 The graphs and paragraphs above mainly discuss direct emissions which are within the sphere of control of people, businesses and institutions (such as the council) within the city boundary. Although much harder to measure, the city's indirect emissions, resulting from the city's supply chains and transport etc., also need to be reduced to net zero. The general approach to reducing indirect emissions is similar to reducing direct emissions. An improved understanding of where emissions come from allows us to do things differently by either avoiding and/or reducing consumption and then by consuming responsibly. Responsible consumption in the context of the Programme means consuming products and services supplied by organisations who share our goals to become net zero, whilst also improving social outcomes.

5. Scope and Structure of the Programme

5.1 The *geographical* scope of this Programme is the administrative area managed by Norwich City Council, i.e. the district of Norwich. However, because significant parts of the city's *urban area* exist outside the borough of Norwich, in South Norfolk and Broadland, collaboration with neighbouring districts is key to maximising effectiveness of citywide climate action. Similarly, the Programme will integrate with countywide initiatives, such as programmes managed by Norfolk County Council, the proposed Combined Mayoral Authority and the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.

5.2 In the development and review of its climate action plans, the council is anticipating how they will need to change as a consequence of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The methods and actions set out within this Programme have been developed to be scalable when future local authority boundaries are confirmed.

5.3 The actions needed to achieve net zero broadly fall into two categories. They are either within the council's 'Scope of Control' or within its 'Scope of Influence'. The council can only directly control and mitigate emissions which arise from its own assets, activities and services. Where such a scope of control exists, the council will pursue decarbonisation in line with our 2030 net-zero target. Outside of our own operations, the council will positively influence decarbonisation within its administrative area. However, whilst the council has committed to lead and coordinate climate action in the city, achieving net-zero by 2045 will require the combined action of residents, businesses and institutions in the city. A more detailed approach to understanding and categorising emissions is set out below.

5.4 The significant scale, scope and nature of the Programme requires that it is broken down into a number of individual plans, to ensure the numerous actions of the Programme can be clearly defined, developed, managed, integrated and monitored.

5.5 Figure 5.1 below illustrates the activity structure of the Programme.

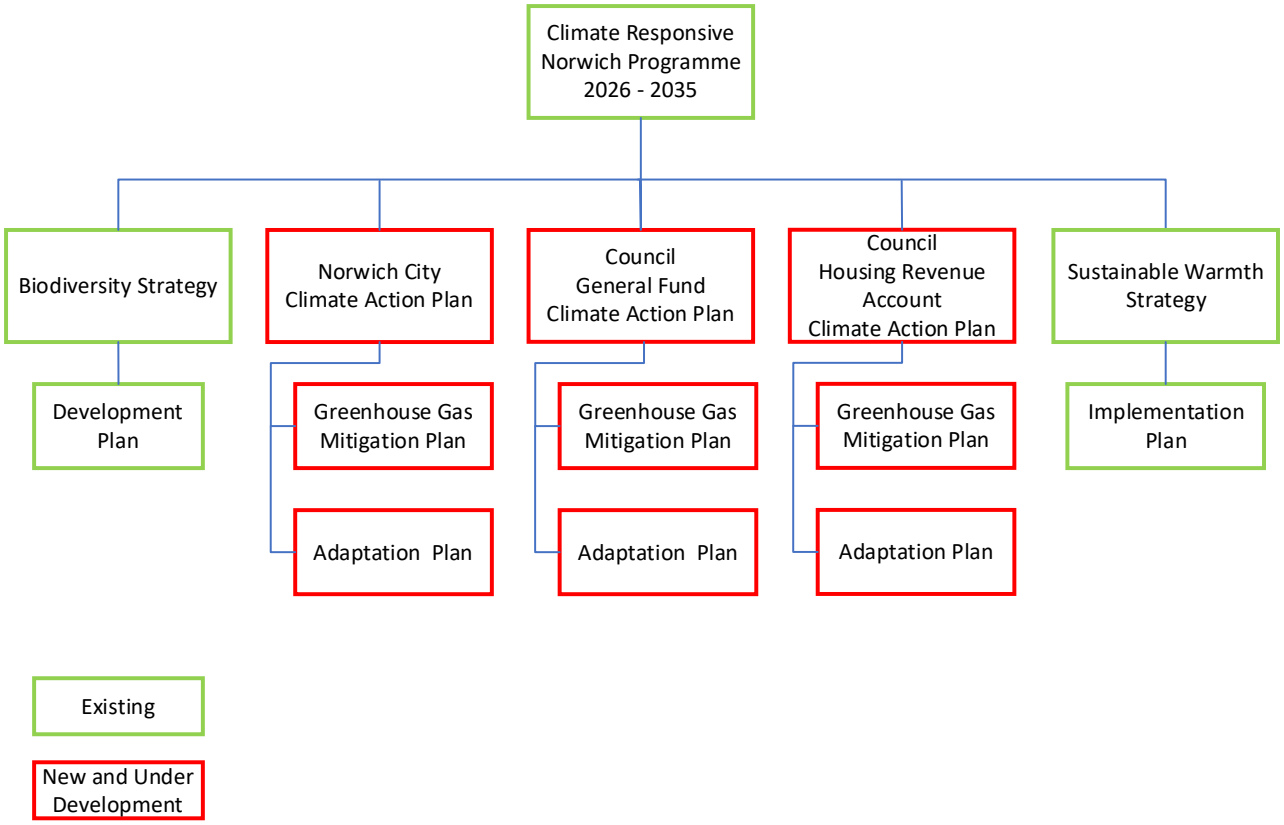

Figure 5.1

The activity structure of the Climate Responsive Norwich Programme

5.6 With regards Figure 5.1, the *Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2026-2035* brings together 5 areas of strategic activity to ensure joined up and successful implementation; the Programme is described by this document. This Programme document sets out the common context, scope and workstreams required to deliver the Climate Responsive Norwich priority.

5.7 The Programme's five main areas of strategic activity:

1) The existing Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Development Plan;

2) A new climate action plan for the city, i.e. a net zero pathway plan for Norwich;

3) A new climate action plan for the council's general operations (known as the council's *General Fund* activity);

4) A new climate action plan for the council's housing operations (known as Housing Revenue Account (HRA) account activity); and

5) An updated Sustainable (affordable) Warmth Strategy and Implementation Plan.

5.8 This document informs the development of three new climate action plans, an updated Sustainable Warmth Action Plan, and describes how the council's existing Biodiversity Strategy is integrated into the Programme.

5.9 A Climate Action Plan, in the context of this Programme includes:

a) A greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation plan (i.e. a carbon reduction plan), which includes both reducing *and* removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere; and

b) An adaptation plan to ensure resilience and prosperity is maintained as the climate changes.

Each of these plans comprise numerous individual tasks, initiatives and outputs which are detailed in Sections 8, 9 and 10 below.

5.10 As noted in Section 5.7 above, the Biodiversity Strategy has already been adopted and an updated Sustainable (affordable) Warmth Strategy will reiterate the council's provisions for tackling fuel poverty and has considerable overlap with climate action, because improving homes to reduce emissions also reduces cost and improves living conditions. The next five sections of this document therefore focus on the *new* climate action plans of the Programme, as follows:

a) Section 6 sets out a framework of common thematic action areas for the three new strategies to help break down and navigate the actions;

b) Section 7 provides background information regarding how emissions are categorised and aligned with either the council's 2030 target or the city's 2045 target;

c) Section 8 outlines the Climate Action Plan for *Norwich city;*

d) Section 9 outlines the Climate Action Plan for *Norwich City Council's operations (General Fund);* and

e) Section 10 outlines the Climate Action Plan for *Norwich City Council's housing (Housing Revenue Account)*.

6. The Programme's Workstream Areas

6.1 The following thematic workstream areas have been developed to provide a framework to categorise and organise the actions required for the three new climate action plans of the Programme:

a) *Leadership and Coordination* – includes governance and target setting;

b) *Finance* – actions to create capital budgets to pay for the transition;

c) *Communities* – which communities to engage with, enable and how;

d) *Homes and/or Buildings* (including public, commercial and industrial buildings) – actions to affordably electrify buildings;

e) Infrastructure – how infrastructure needs to change to enable electrification;

f) *Transport* – actions to affordably electrify transport and promote active travel;

g) *Waste* – how to reduce emissions from waste, and

h) *Land Use and Emissions Removal* – how to reduce emissions from land management and how to remove emissions from the atmosphere through planting vegetation

All of the actions required to achieve net zero emissions fall within these workstream areas, which assist with navigation, structure and communication of the plans.

7. A Common Approach to Understanding Emissions and Targets

7.1 Common protocols for categorising and measuring emissions are applied across the three new climate action plans. The protocol adopted for the city's emissions is commonly known as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol for Cities (aka the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Inventories) and the protocol for the council's emissions is known as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP – for organisations). Both are highly regarded international standards used by national and local governments and private and third sector organisations. These protocols do not set targets per se, but they give guidance about how to define and categorise emissions, so emissions can be measured and reported in a standardised way.

7.2 For both cities and for organisations, the Greenhouse Gas Protocol categorises emissions as either Scope 1, 2, or 3 according to how directly the emissions are created by end users of energy, or the benefits derived from the energy use, as follows:

Scope 1 emissions are those caused by an organisation/city by directly burning fossil fuels and utilising the resultant energy. Scope 1 is summarised by "the fossil fuels are burned by us, and the energy is used by us." For example, this includes fossil fuels used in an organisation's fleet vehicles, or gas burned directly in boilers which heats its buildings.

Scope 2 emissions are those where fossil fuels are burnt by another organisation/elsewhere but where the organisation/city directly utilises the *resultant* energy. Scope 2 is summarised by "the fossil fuels are burned elsewhere, but the energy is used by us." Scope 2 emissions usually result from consuming grid supplied electricity i.e. where the fossil fuels are burned in a remote power plant, but the final energy is consumed within an organisation's buildings/or within the city. Another example of Scope 2 emissions is where heat is consumed via a district heating network, from a remote energy centre.

Scope 3 emissions include all those which do not meet the definition of Scopes 1 and 2. They are indirect emissions which underpin an organisation's/city's functions but do not relate to fossil fuels or energy directly used by the organisation/city. Scope 3 is summarised by "the fossil fuels are burned elsewhere, and the energy is used elsewhere, but the benefit created supports our functions or services." For organisations, this includes 15 sub-categories of emissions such as employee commuting, business travel, new buildings and procured goods and services.

7.3 Applying the principles of the GHGP to the council's net zero targets results in the following targets being set.

7.4 The council's 2030 target applies to:

a) Scope 1 and 2 emissions, which includes gas and electricity consumed by the council's administrative and operational buildings and for fleet road fuel consumption.

b) Scope 3 emissions which, although not directly controlled by the council, can be strongly influenced including emissions from business travel, grey fleet (private vehicles not owned by the council but used for business purposes), employee commuting, home working, operational waste and other fuel and energy related activities known as 'well to tank[i]' and 'transmission and distribution[ii]' emissions.

7.5 Exclusions from the 2030 target include the council's social housing district and communal energy schemes. For these schemes, the council buys wholesale gas and electricity and recharges it to tenants and leaseholders. According to the detailed terms of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, the resulting emissions technically fall within the council's Scope 1 and 2 emissions.

However, the council has estimated the cost of decarbonising communal and district energy schemes to be around £60m, and achieving this within the 2030 target would be both unaffordable to the HRA Business Plan (by 2030) and impractical to deliver in this timescale. The decarbonisation of communal and district heating schemes has therefore been placed within the 2045 net zero target, with provisions in the long-term HRA Business Plan supporting delivery of this.

7.6 The council's remaining Scope 3 emission categories fall within the city's 2045 target, including emissions from:

i. Procurement of goods, services and capital works;

ii. Use of general needs and sheltered housing;

iii. Use of leased buildings;

iv. Use of car parks, and

v. Demolition and disposal of council assets.

7.7 The same approach to emissions target setting (as set out above in paragraphs 7.4 and 7.6), applies to Norwich City Services Ltd, because they are wholly owned by the council.

7.8 The table below summarises which emissions categories fall within each target date.

2030 Net Zero Target	2045 Net Zero Target
Council Scope 1 and 2 emissions for operational and administrative buildings	City Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions
Council Scope 3 emissions including:	Council Scope 1 & 2 emissions including:
• Business travel	• Council communal and district energy schemes
• Grey fleet	Council Scope 3 emissions including:
• Employee commuting	• Procured goods, services
• Operational waste	• Capital works
• Well to tank for petrol and diesel vehicles	• General needs housing
• Transmission and distribution of electricity	• Leased investment buildings
	• Use of car parks
	• Investments

Table 7.1
Target for Each Greenhouse Gas Protocol Emission Category

7.9 Although the city's Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions fall within the 2045 target, organisations within the city are of course able to set their own net zero target before (or after this date). The Programme aims to encourage and enable residents and organisations within the city to achieve net zero as soon as possible.

7.10 Both the 2030 and 2045 targets require immediate action. When targeting resources, the council recognises that the city's emissions are larger than its social housing, which in turn is larger than its operational emissions. Therefore, the council will target resources to deliver emission reductions across the three new climate action plans proportionately.

7.11 This approach to defining emissions informs the activity summarised below for the climate action plans for the city, the council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account related activity decarbonisation.

8. A Climate Action Plan for Norwich City

8.1 The paragraphs below summarise the workstreams and actions required to develop and implement the citywide Climate Action Plan. During the subsequent development of this plan, which will set out the strategic and tactical action required to decarbonise the city by 2045, the full scope of objectives and detail of activities will be established and agreed.

8.2 The plan is broadly divided into two sections, one relating to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) mitigation i.e. carbon reduction and removal, and the second relating to adaptation to the changing climate. Due to the level of detail required for each plan, they will be published separately, with the mitigation plan to be published first.

8.3 The principal outcomes of the plan are to reduce the city's GHG emissions by 81% by 2035 compared to a 1990 baseline, in accordance with the UK's Seventh Carbon Budget, and have net zero GHG emissions by 2045.

8.4 The largest emission sources in the city are from the domestic (housing) and transport sectors. Therefore, these are priority sectors for GHG mitigation.

8.5 Regarding GHG mitigation, the following actions will be undertaken by the council to enable net zero emissions across the city by 2045.

8.6 Leadership and Coordination

a) The council will provide effective leadership by:

i. Overseeing the development, delivery, monitoring, review and reporting of the plan;

ii. Measuring and reporting progress to both internal stakeholders (e.g. Executive Leadership Team and Members) and external stakeholders by means of the council's corporate reporting framework;

iii. Convening and leading new stakeholder groups where necessary;

iv. Using its influence and capacity for communication and engagement;

v. Using its estate as a *living laboratory* to develop and test solutions;

vi. Aligning its assets with the plan;

vii. Identifying opportunities and pursuing co-benefits such as improved health, well-being and economic activity;

viii. Using its planning and regulatory powers, including adopting planning policies and procedures to support net-zero; and

ix. Lobbying central government for sufficient levels of support, improved legislation and improved national planning policies, where necessary.

b) Engage, collaborate with and coordinate stakeholders including Norwich Climate Commission, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, regional and local government, UK Government and the communities of Norwich including residents, businesses and institutions, to develop and implement the plan.

c) Establish an approach to target setting, measurement and reporting for territorial emissions, aligned to national targets and based on the Greenhouse Gas Protocol for Cities, for all sectors including:

i. Industry;
ii. Commerce;
iii. Public sector;
iv. Domestic;
v. Road transport;
vi. Land use and land use change and forestry, and
vii. Waste.

8.7 Finance

a) Explore the use of funding sources available to local government to invest in initiatives to accelerate the plan, including funds potentially from:

i. Public Works Loan Board;
ii. National Wealth Fund; and
iii. The council's own reserves

b) Work with private sector stakeholders to help promote, to communities, new finance products specifically aimed at retrofitting and low carbon solutions including:

i. Municipal loans;
ii. Integrated retrofit finance;
iii. Green mortgages;
iv. Green rental agreements; and
v. Property linked finance

c) Facilitate private sector funded and operated initiatives;

d) Bid for funding and manage subsequent projects to accelerate the strategy;

e) Support Norwich businesses and institutions to bid for funding; and

f) Lobby central government for increased levels of action and funding.

8.8 Communities

a) Ensure people and communities are at the heart of the plan;

b) Enable communities to act for themselves;

c) Ensure the plan delivers equitable and affordable access to warmth and electricity;

d) Ensure the plan increases community wealth and resilience through community ownership of renewable energy assets;

e) Ensure the plan includes the role of sustainable food production to mitigate and adapt to climate change and promote well-being;

f) Work with stakeholders to develop and implement a behaviour change programme to bring about an effective shift in the GHG emitting behaviours of communities in the city;

g) Promote the growth of the local low carbon economy to create quality jobs and prosperity for the communities of Norwich; and

h) Develop a communications and engagement plan to improve climate literacy and deliver the aims of the plan through residential communities, community energy groups, and business communities including the BID and anchor institutions network.

8.9 Buildings

Retrofitting of existing buildings of all sectors, which entails widescale energy efficiency improvements such as improving insulation, the installation of heat pumps, or connection of buildings to low carbon heat networks, and the installation of photovoltaic (PV) solar systems. The council will work with stakeholders to develop a retrofit plan for Norwich, which includes:

a) The creation of a retrofit taskforce for the city to bring together cross-sector stakeholders with specific interests in accelerating and coordinating retrofitting action in the city;

b) The development of a digital retrofit hub where communities can access resources to enable and accelerate retrofitting including information and

advice, finance and funding, trusted contractors and a community of other service users;

c) The mobilisation of community energy groups;

d) Coordinated bidding for funds for retrofit acceleration projects;

e) Initial mobilisation of residents ‘able to pay’ for retrofitting, to accelerate the growth of the local supply chain;

f) Working with Norfolk County Council to promote the development of a local retrofit training academy to increase the capacity and capability of local and regional retrofit contractors;

g) Ensuring that new buildings are constructed with decarbonised heating from the outset and in consideration of whole life energy requirements, in line with the Greater Norwich Local Plan; and

h) Using the council’s relevant regulatory and enforcement powers to assist the strategy.

8.10 Infrastructure

The development of the infrastructure necessary for transition. The council will coordinate stakeholders, investors, system developers and operators to promote:

a) The development of a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) to determine the future energy infrastructure requirements for all sectors of the city. The LAEP will explore energy scenarios including the reduction and potential cessation of the use of mains gas for heating and industrial processes, improving building energy efficiency and the increase in electricity consumption for heat pumps and transport, and the increase in solar generation and battery storage. The LAEP will be developed collaboratively with Norfolk County Council and UK Power Networks;

b) The development of low carbon district and community heating schemes to provide heating where individual heat pumps are not feasible or affordable;

c) The development of infrastructure delivered by community energy groups;

d) The development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure including on-street charging in the higher density parts of the city; and

e) Hydrogen infrastructure for specific applications such as transport and industrial processes.

8.11 Transport

The council will work with stakeholders to promote:

a) Reduced emissions from road transport by promoting localisation of essential services and reduced reliance on new roads;

b) Improved, integrated and electrified public transport;

c) Increased active travel and infrastructure to facilitate it, including for “last mile” micro distribution;

d) Reduced vehicle speed zones;

e) The provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure;

f) Zero emission freight deliveries;

g) Pedestrianisation of areas where appropriate; and

h) Support for car-free housing development where appropriate.

8.12 Waste

The council will work with stakeholders to enable:

a) Increased recycling rates across all sectors, in line with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021;

b) The introduction and growth of circular economy practices;

c) Reduced waste generation by promoting responsible consumption in the domestic and commercial sectors; and

d) Reduced waste generation by increasing resource sharing, repair and reuse in the domestic and commercial sectors.

8.13 Land Use and Emissions Removal

The council will work with stakeholders to enable:

a) An improved understanding of land use emissions and reduction opportunities in the city;

b) Reduced emissions as part of parks and open space management;

c) Avoiding tree loss as far as practicable, and planting replacement trees where unavoidable;

d) Emissions capture through local and non-local sequestration of carbon by soil and vegetation, integrating with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement; and

e) Establish a citywide carbon removal scheme which can be subscribed to voluntarily by all residents and communities in the city.

8.14 Norwich City Adaptation Plan

The following actions will be undertaken by the council to enable the city to thrive and remain resilient as the climate changes:

a) Receive advice from and collaborate with Norwich Climate Commission and other expert advisors to develop adaptation workstreams, where appropriate;

b) Engage, collaborate with and coordinate stakeholders including Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, regional and local government actors, UK Government and the communities of Norwich to develop and implement the adaptation plan.

c) The Adaptation Plan shall consider social, biodiversity and economic risks relating to:

- Increasing heat and humidity stress;
- Changes to rainfall patterns including increased periods of drought and deluges;
- Potential for increased severity of other weather events including wind and cold weather;
- Food security;
- Water security; and
- Increasing migration

8.15 Development and Delivery Timescale of Plans

The GHG mitigation plan, which is known as a Net Zero Pathway for Norwich, has been in development during 2025 and is expected to be publicly consulted upon in March 2026 and will be brought forward for approval during the summer of 2026.

The Adaptation Plan is being researched, and will be publicly consulted upon and brought forward for approval by the end of the 2026/27 financial year.

9. A Climate Action Plan for Council Operations

9.1 The paragraphs below summarise the workstreams and actions required to develop and implement this plan, applying to the council's operations, also referred to as *General Fund* (hereafter 'GF') related activity. During the subsequent detailed development of this plan, the full scope of activities will be established and agreed.

9.2 The plan is broadly divided into two sections, one relating to GHG mitigation i.e. carbon reduction and removal, and the second relating to adaptation to ensure resilience of council services. The plans will be published in a single document.

9.3 GHG mitigation, targets for this plan vary according to the type of emissions. This is because as set out above, some of the emissions fall within the council's 2030 target and some fall within the 2045 citywide target. Emissions falling within the 2045 target shall be subject to an interim target to reduce by 81% by 2035 (aligned to the UK carbon budget process).

9.4 The following actions will be undertaken by the council to enable net zero emissions according to the relevant targets.

9.5 Leadership and Coordination

The following actions will be undertaken by the council:

a) Collaborate with other local authorities and experts, as necessary, to inform and develop the plan;

b) Establish a governance panel comprising senior leaders and officers of the council and the development of measurement, review and reporting processes;

c) Measure and report progress to both internal stakeholders (e.g. Executive Leadership Team and Members) and external stakeholders by means of the council's corporate reporting framework;

d) Embed the plan's objectives throughout General Fund service areas integrating them as necessary with decision making processes, strategy and plan renewals and as part of the ongoing business of the council; and

e) Measure, categorise and report emissions according to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol according to the targets set out above.

9.6 Finance

This action area includes funding and procurement, and requires the council to:

a) Develop a procurement strategy in collaboration with its supply chain aligned to an 81% reduction in emissions by 2035 and net zero by 2045;

b) Understand the phased cost of decarbonisation by undertaking surveys and feasibility studies for assets and initiatives;

c) Develop an internal carbon price (ICP) mechanism to assist in making objective investment and spending decisions;

d) Include the cost of decarbonisation into its capital programme and asset management strategy to test affordability;

e) Develop business cases where investment opportunities exist;

f) Bid for external funding to meet the objectives of the strategy;

g) Pursue innovative funding approaches such as municipal loans;

h) Pursue partnerships with the private sector;

i) Understand climate related risks and opportunities relating to revenue budgets; and

j) Lobby central government for increased funding where necessary.

9.7 Communities

This action area relates to the staff, volunteers, contractors and members of the council, and includes:

a) Implement climate literacy training for the council community;

b) Empower the council community to be part of the development of the plan and central to its delivery;

c) Develop approaches which align the council's communications, engagement and events to the plan;

d) Identify and pursue co-benefits such as improved health and well-being for the council community, through active travel for example; and

e) Promote efficient resource use behaviours.

9.8 Buildings

General Fund operational buildings result in Scope 1 and 2 (i.e. direct) emissions and so are aligned to the 2030 net zero target:

a) Procure and consume 100% renewable electricity;

b) Reduce emissions from existing operational buildings by implementing a retrofit programme including rationalisation of buildings, promoting behaviour change, improving energy system efficiency and controls, improving building fabric insulation and ventilation systems;

c) Develop a programme of solar PV and heat pump system installations on an investment basis across its estate, exploring finance and off-take arrangements including rent-a-roof schemes and peer to peer energy trading;

d) Avoid the use of gas for new buildings, refurbishments and boiler replacements for existing buildings, and employ renewable energy heating solutions, and

e) Provide advice, guidance and efficient office equipment to minimise homeworking emissions.

For general fund investment buildings, which result in *indirect* emissions and so are aligned to the 2045 target:

f) Existing commercial investment buildings – develop a retrofit plan aligned to the asset management programme to electrify buildings;

g) Align the council's car park management strategy to the aims of the Programme, by increasing the availability of electric vehicle charge points;

h) Measure and report construction related emissions from any council housebuilding activity and investment partnerships, and develop approaches to decarbonise housebuilding in both the construction and occupational phase of development; and

i) Develop specifications for new build projects which reduce the embodied emissions of construction, promote carbon sequestration in new building fabric and avoid the use of fossil fuels.

9.9 Infrastructure

This action area is an enabler of emissions reduction for direct and/or indirect emissions.

a) Use the council's buildings to promote the development of low carbon heat networks in the city, by being early adopters;

b) Develop building and ground mounted solar systems where an investment case exists and consider taking part in the Norwich Solar System[iii] virtual trading scheme and/or other innovative offtake arrangements that benefit the council and city;

c) Ensure the electrical infrastructure of operational buildings is sufficient for the electrification of heat and transport; and

d) Develop smart metering and control systems across the council's estate.

9.10 Transport

This action area results in direct emissions and includes the following initiatives which comprise a transport plan:

a) Reduce emissions from the council's fleet vehicles by avoiding then reducing the need for fleet vehicles, such as by promoting active travel, then electrifying the fleet and installing charging infrastructure, powered by 100% renewable electricity;

b) Reduce emissions from the council's grey fleet[iv] by avoiding then reducing the need for grey fleet, and providing staff with a tax efficient route to active travel and electric vehicle ownership;

c) Reduce emissions from the council's use of taxis by procuring low carbon taxi services;

d) Reduce emissions from the council's contracted Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) fleet, by exploring lower carbon fuels and electrification; and

e) Promote sustainable transport for business travel.

9.11 Waste

This action area includes emissions generated by the council's general operations but excludes emissions from the end-of-life treatment of waste which are managed by Norfolk County Council.

a) Procure citywide waste collection and transport services aligned to the citywide target;

b) Measure and reduce emissions produced by waste from council operational buildings and activity according to the 2030 net zero target; and

c) Cease procuring single-use plastics by 2030 or earlier.

9.12 Land Use and Emissions Removal

Emissions from land use are a fraction of the total emissions produced by the council's general operations. Land use however, both locally and non-locally, provides opportunity to remove carbon from the atmosphere e.g. by planting trees and improving soil organic carbon content. This action area includes:

a) Reduce emissions from land use activities in the council's parks, open spaces and management of land around operational buildings; and

b) Develop a carbon removal strategy to balance emissions to achieve net zero. The removal strategy will be co-developed with the Biodiversity

Strategy Action Programme so that co-benefits between carbon removal by nature-based solutions bring about improvements in biodiversity.

9.13 General Fund Adaptation Plan

The following actions will be undertaken by the council to ensure its general fund services and assets remain resilient as the climate changes:

a) Receive advice from and collaborate with Norwich Climate Commission and other expert advisors to develop the plan work items, where appropriate;

b) Engage, collaborate with and coordinate stakeholders including Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, regional and local government actors, UK Government and the staff and supplier community of the council to implement the adaptation plan.

9.14 Development and Delivery Timescale of Plans

The council's GHG mitigation plan will be developed during 2026 and is expected to be publicly consulted upon in the Autumn of 2026 and brought forward for approval by the end of December 2026.

The Adaptation Plan is, at the time of writing this document, being researched and it will be included in the GHG mitigation plan.

10. A Climate Action Plan for Council Homes

10.1 The paragraphs below summarise the workstreams and actions required to develop and implement this plan, which apply to the council's social housing, also referred to as the *Housing Revenue Account* (hereafter 'HRA') activity of the council. During the subsequent detailed development of this plan, the full scope of actions will be established and agreed.

10.2 The plan is broadly divided into two sections, one pertaining to carbon reduction and removal, and the second to adaptation to ensure resilience of council housing services. They will be published in a single document.

10.3 GHG mitigation within HRA climate action, such as decarbonising housing, mostly aligns to the targets set for the city (81% by 2035 and 100% by 2045) whereas administrative and office-based activity aligns with the council's 2030 targets.

10.4 The following actions will be undertaken by the council to enable net zero emissions according to the targets set.

10.5 Leadership and Coordination

The following actions will be undertaken by the council:

a) Collaborate with other Registered Housing Providers and experts, as necessary, to inform and develop the plan;

b) A governance panel shall be established to manage, measure, review and report HRA plan activity;

c) Measure and report progress to both internal stakeholders (e.g. Executive Leadership Team and Members) and external stakeholders by means of the council's corporate reporting framework;

d) Manage office-based administrative emissions of HRA activity according to the same arrangements for office-based GF activity, with administrative emissions from HRA activity being accounted for separately to GF emissions;

e) Embed the plan throughout HRA service areas integrating them as necessary with decision making processes, strategy and plan renewals and as part of ongoing business; and

f) Measure, categorise and report GHG emissions according to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

10.6 Finance

This action area includes funding and procurement and requires the HRA to:

a) Estimate the phased cost of decarbonisation by undertaking surveys and studies for assets and initiatives;

b) Build the cost of decarbonisation into the HRA business plan and capital programme;

c) Develop an internal carbon price (ICP) mechanism to assist in making objective investment and spending decisions for new build social housing;

d) Develop business cases where investment opportunities exist;

e) Bid for external funding to meet the objectives of the plan;

f) Pursue innovative funding approaches;

g) Pursue partnerships with the private sector;

h) Understand the opportunities and risks to revenue budgets; and

i) Lobby central government for increased funding where necessary.

10.7 Communities

This action area relates to the tenant and leaseholder communities and includes:

a) Engage the tenant and leaseholder communities to promote the Programme to improve comfort, reduce energy consumption and cost, reduce fuel poverty and emissions.

10.8 Buildings

HRA buildings include sheltered and general needs social housing. Both sheltered housing and general housing fall within the 2045 target. However, the council has a target to get its housing to EPC Band C by 2030, which contributes significantly to delivering the 2045 target.

The following workstreams will be progressed:

a) Develop a retrofit ‘roadmap’ plan which details how homes will be decarbonised including for voids and planned works.

b) Procure and consume 100% renewable electricity for landlord electricity supplies;

c) Develop and implement a retrofit programme to reach EPC Band C by 2030 and decarbonise by 2045, including:

i. Rationalisation of buildings;

ii. Improving building energy system efficiency and controls;

iii. Improving building fabric insulation and ventilation systems;

iv. Replacing gas boilers with renewable heating solutions such as heat pumps or by connecting buildings to low carbon heat networks. Houses will receive individual heat pumps or radiant heating and flats will be connected to low carbon heat networks or radiant heating, and

v. Installing solar PV systems on suitable properties.

d) Avoid the use of gas for new buildings, refurbishments and boiler replacements where possible, in accordance with this plan.

e) Develop technical specifications for retrofit and new build projects which consider whole life carbon performance of construction products and systems.

10.9 Infrastructure

a) Rationalise and decommission, or decarbonise the council's 29 existing heat networks which serve around 2,000 properties. Where existing heat networks can be decommissioned they will be replaced with affordable individual electrified heating solutions, e.g. heat pumps;

b) Develop new low carbon heating solutions for flats, which comprise roughly half the estate. It is envisaged that a significant expansion of new low carbon heat networks will take place and radiant heating solutions to a lesser degree. For properties in flats currently served with individual gas boilers, it will be necessary to replace end of life gas boilers with new gas boilers, until new heat network systems are implemented;

c) Use social housing to promote the development of low carbon heat networks in the city, by being early adopters;

d) Ensure the electrical infrastructure of HRA buildings is sufficient for the electrification of heat and transport; and

e) Develop smart metering and control systems across the HRA estate.

10.10 Transport

This action area includes the following initiatives:

a) Reduce emissions from HRA fleet vehicles by avoiding then reducing the need for fleet vehicles, such as by promoting active travel, then electrifying the fleet and installing charging infrastructure, powered by 100% renewable electricity.

b) Develop electric vehicle charge infrastructure in the social housing estate for the use of council tenants and residents and visitors.

10.11 Waste

This action area includes emissions generated by HRA operations.

a) Measure and record the emissions produced by waste from HRA facilities management activity; and

b) Cease procuring single-use plastics by 2030 or earlier.

10.12 Land Use and Emissions Removal

Emissions from land use are a fraction of the total emissions produced by HRA operations. Land use however, both locally and non-locally, provides opportunity to remove carbon from the atmosphere e.g. by planting trees and improving soil. This action area includes:

a) Reduce emissions from land around HRA buildings by improved management techniques, realising co-benefits with nature recovery; and

b) Develop a carbon removal strategy for HRA operations to reduce net emissions and improve biodiversity.

10.13 HRA Adaptation and Resilience Plan

The following workstreams will be progressed by the council to ensure its HRA services and assets remain resilient as the climate changes.

a) Analyse *services* provided by the HRA to determine the level of risk posed by the predicted impacts and develop risk mitigation approaches aligned to the council's risk management framework.

b) Analyse *assets* managed by the HRA to determine the level of risk posed by the predicted impacts and develop risk mitigation approaches aligned to the council's risk management framework.

10.14 Development and Delivery Timescale of Plans

The housing GHG mitigation plan has been in development during 2025 and is expected to be publicly consulted upon in the summer of 2026 and adopted by the end of December 2026.

The Adaptation Plan is, at the time of writing this document, being researched and it will be included in the GHG mitigation plan.

11. Glossary

Adaptation

Adjusting systems, communities, and infrastructure to withstand the impacts of climate change (e.g., flood defences, heat-resilient housing).

Biodiversity

The variety of plant and animal life in a given area, essential for ecosystem health, resilience and well-being.

Biodiversity Strategy

Norwich City Council's adopted plan to protect, enhance, and restore habitats and species across the city.

Business travel

Journeys made by employees for work purposes, contributing to Scope 3 emissions when the transport fuel is not purchased directly by the council.

Capital works

Substantial improvements, renovations or construction that increase an asset's value or extend its life.

Carbon budget

The maximum amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted while staying within agreed climate targets (e.g., Paris Agreement).

Carbon dioxide (CO_2)

A greenhouse gas produced mainly by burning fossil fuels; the primary driver of climate change.

Circular economy

An economic model focused on reducing waste and reusing, repairing, or recycling materials to keep resources in use longer.

Citywide

Refers to initiatives or targets that apply across the entire city of Norwich, not just council operations.

Climate change

Long-term shifts in global or regional climate patterns, largely driven by human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate literacy

Understanding the causes, impacts, and solutions to climate change, enabling informed decision-making.

Combined Mayoral Authority (CMA)

Regional governance body with devolved powers over transport, housing, and climate programmes. A Norfolk & Suffolk CMA is expected to be created by 2028.

Community energy

Local energy projects owned or managed by communities, often focused on renewable energy, to reduce emissions and increase resilience.

Communal heating

A system for distributing heat to a number of dwellings generated in a centralised location within one building, through a system of insulated pipes for heating requirements such as space heating and hot water.

Consumption emissions

Emissions from goods and services consumed locally but produced elsewhere (outside the geographical boundary).

Decarbonisation

Reducing carbon emissions from energy, transport, housing, and other sectors, often through electrification and efficiency.

Devolution

Transfer of powers from central government to local or regional authorities.

Direct emissions

Emissions produced within the city boundary or by council-controlled activities (also known as Scope 1 and 2 emissions).

District heating

A system for distributing heat generated in a centralised location to several buildings through a system of insulated pipes for heating requirements such as space heating and hot water. Also known as a ‘heat network’.

Electric vehicles (EV)

Cars, vans, or buses powered by electricity instead of petrol or diesel.

Electrification

Replacing fossil fuel use with electricity from low-carbon sources (e.g., heat pumps, EVs powered by low carbon grid electricity).

Emissions

Release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from human activities.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

A rating system showing the energy efficiency of a building, required for property sales and rentals.

Fossil fuels

Coal, oil, and natural gas—non-renewable energy sources that emit greenhouse gases when burned.

General Fund (GF)

Council's budget for general operations and services, excluding housing.

General needs housing

Council housing designed for independent individuals or families that do not require specialised support, with energy bills managed by tenants.

Green mortgage

A loan product offering better terms for energy-efficient homes.

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs)

Gases (CO_2, methane, nitrous oxide, etc.) that trap heat in the atmosphere and drive climate change.

Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP)

International standard for measuring and reporting emissions, used by organisations and cities.

Grey fleet

Private vehicles used by employees for business purposes, contributing to Scope 3 emissions.

Heat network

A centralised system distributing heat to multiple buildings via insulated pipes.

Heat pump

An efficient electric heating system that transfers heat from air, ground, or water into buildings.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Council's budget for managing and maintaining social housing.

Indirect emissions

Emissions outside direct control but linked to activities (e.g., supply chains, commuting).

Internal Carbon Price (ICP)

A financial value assigned to emissions within an organisation to guide investment and decision-making.

Leased investment buildings

Council-owned commercial buildings leased to third-party tenants.

Living laboratory

An experimental space or initiative to bring together various stakeholders to design and test solutions in real world environments.

Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)

Strategic plan for energy infrastructure at local level, aligning with net zero goals.

Local authority

Government body responsible for local services and policies (e.g., Norwich City Council).

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Restructuring of local government boundaries or responsibilities.

Mitigation

Actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change.

Municipal loan

Borrowing by a council from communities to fund public projects, such as climate initiatives.

Net Zero

Balancing greenhouse gas emissions with greenhouse gas sequestration, so that net impact on the climate is nil.

Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL)

Council-owned company delivering services such as waste collection and parks maintenance.

Operational waste

Refuse generated by the council's administrative and service delivery functions, e.g. waste from City Hall, operational waste excludes citywide refuse collection.

Paris Agreement

Global treaty dating from 2015, committing nations to limit global warming to 1.5–2°C above pre-industrial average temperature levels.

Photovoltaic (PV)

Solar panels that convert sunlight directly into electricity.

Renewable energy

Energy from sources that naturally replenish (e.g., wind, solar, hydro).

Resilience

Ability of communities and systems to withstand and recover from climate impacts.

Retrofit

Upgrading existing buildings to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions.

Reverse Public Auction

A procurement method where a buyer sets the terms and conditions for a contract, and multiple sellers compete to offer the lowest price

Scope 1

Direct emissions from owned/controlled sources (e.g., council fleet fuel, gas boilers).

Scope 2

Indirect emissions from purchased energy (e.g., grid electricity).

Scope 3

Other indirect emissions (e.g., supply chains, staff commuting, waste).

Scope of Control

Emissions the council can directly manage (e.g., from its buildings, vehicle fleet).

Scope of Influence

Emissions the council can influence but not directly control (e.g., citywide housing, businesses).

Sequestration

Capturing and storing carbon, often through vegetation or soil. Also referred to as ‘carbon removal’.

Sheltered housing

Council-owned housing for older adults or individuals needing support, offering a balance of independence and assistance, with energy supplied by the council.

Sustainable Warmth Strategy

The Council's affordable warmth plan to reduce fuel poverty by improving energy efficiency in homes, lowering costs, and ensuring comfortable living conditions.

Territorial emissions

Emissions produced within the city boundary (e.g., fuel use, electricity).

Transmission and distribution

Scope 3 Emissions associated with transmission and distribution of power through the electricity grid between the point of generation and point of end use.

UK Power Networks

The local Distribution Network Operator (DNO) company managing electricity distribution networks in parts of the UK, including Norwich.

Well to tank

Scope 3 Emissions from extracting, refining, and transporting fuels before they are used.

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[i] *Well to tank* emissions are the emission created by the drilling, refining and transport of road fuels to the point of sale.

[ii] *Transmission and distribution* emissions result from losses in electrical infrastructure between generators and the point of use in buildings

[iii] An initiative of the Business Improvement District (BID).

[iv] Grey fleet comprises the vehicles owned by staff and used for work, paid through expenses claims.