



Climate Change Strategy 2024

Foreword

The release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere through human activities has resulted in global warming and changes to our climate. The latest assessment from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports a 1.1 degree global temperature rise with unprecedented changes to the earth's climate systems and widespread adverse impacts such as more extreme weather events, damage to natural habitats and increased health problems. Greenhouse gas concentrations continue to rise and urgent action is required to cut emissions to avoid the most damaging climate change impacts.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is committed to playing its part to tackle climate change, both internally and through its influence in the wider community helping to create a more sustainable and resilient place to live. We have already taken action by securing grant funding for energy efficiency measures to homes, installing EV chargepoints and working with partners on projects such as installing solar panels and supporting community action to tackle climate change. This work can also bring wider co-benefits including better health and wellbeing, green jobs, reduced energy costs and nature recovery. There is clearly more to do and we recognise that where possible we need to accelerate climate action.

This Strategy provides a longer term road map for tackling climate change both internally and in the wider borough. Linking to existing policy and plans it sets out the Council's Vision, achievable Goals and Key Action Areas. It is important that the Council leads on climate action by decarbonising its own estate and operations, but it also has a role to influence and facilitate action on climate change in the wider community; however, it cannot control or lead in all aspects of this, particularly given the resource constraints of local government. We all have a responsibility to reduce our environmental impact, and for a fair transition those who are most vulnerable or least able to afford should be considered for support.

This living document will evolve and develop over time, to be amended and updated to reflect changing circumstances. Climate action will be prioritised through shorter term delivery plans, maximising the benefits from available resources and setting measurable goals. Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, but by co-ordinating action and working together we can be far more effective in managing and reducing its future impacts.

Cllr Ian Ridley

Chair Environment Working Group



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1 Introduction

1.1 Climate Change Challenge

Climate change is the long term changes to temperatures and weather patterns which can be natural, but the current increase in global average temperatures is mostly due to human activities from burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, releasing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere.

A 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C' was published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change) in October 2018. It found that we are already seeing the consequences of 1°C of global warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, among other changes. The report highlights a number of climate change impacts that could be avoided by limiting global warming to 1.5°C but that this requires rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050.

1.2 Net Zero definition

Cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible and offsetting the remaining hard to remove emissions through tree planting and land based PV for example.

1.3 Local Impacts

Climate risks are set to increase over time even if global warming is limited to 1.5°C and so not only is it vital to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) but we will also need to adapt to current and future effects of climate change so people and places are safer and more resilient, particularly for those who are more vulnerable.

Potential localised impacts of climate change include:

- Increased flood risk due to wetter winters and more frequent destructive storms
- Strain on water availability due to drier, longer summers
- Expectation that rain storms will be heavier and more prolonged. Where heavy rain cannot be absorbed fast enough by land this leads to localised flooding and potential flash floods
- Disruption to transport
- Overheating in houses and other buildings
- Damage to natural habitats
- Increased health issues

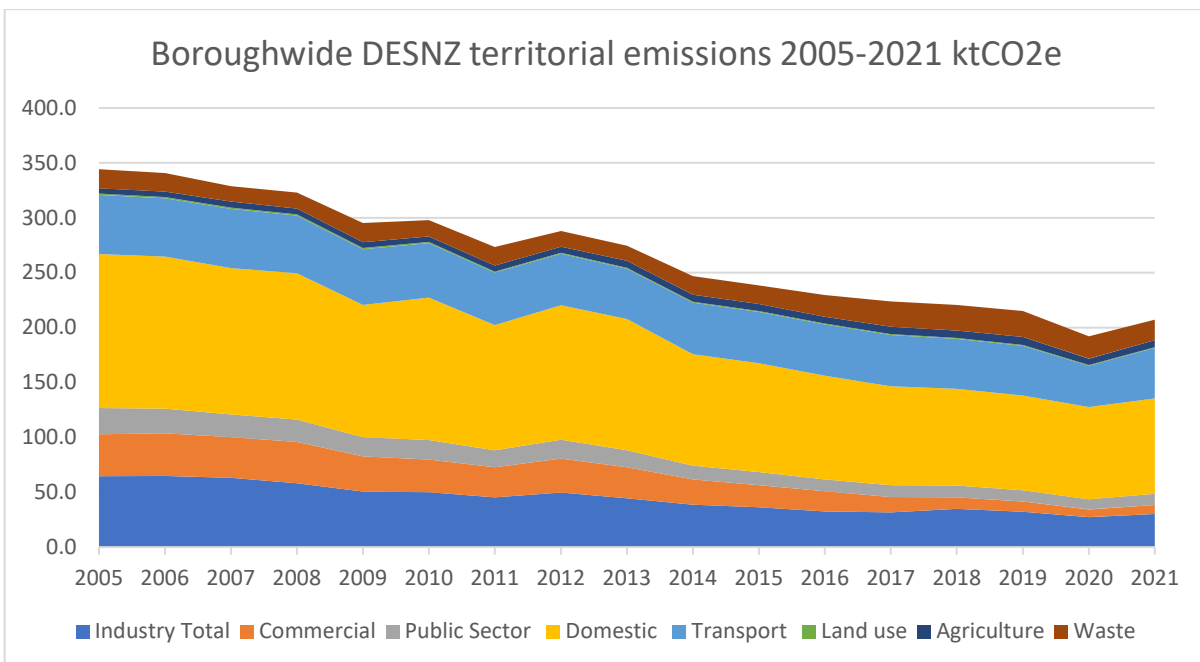
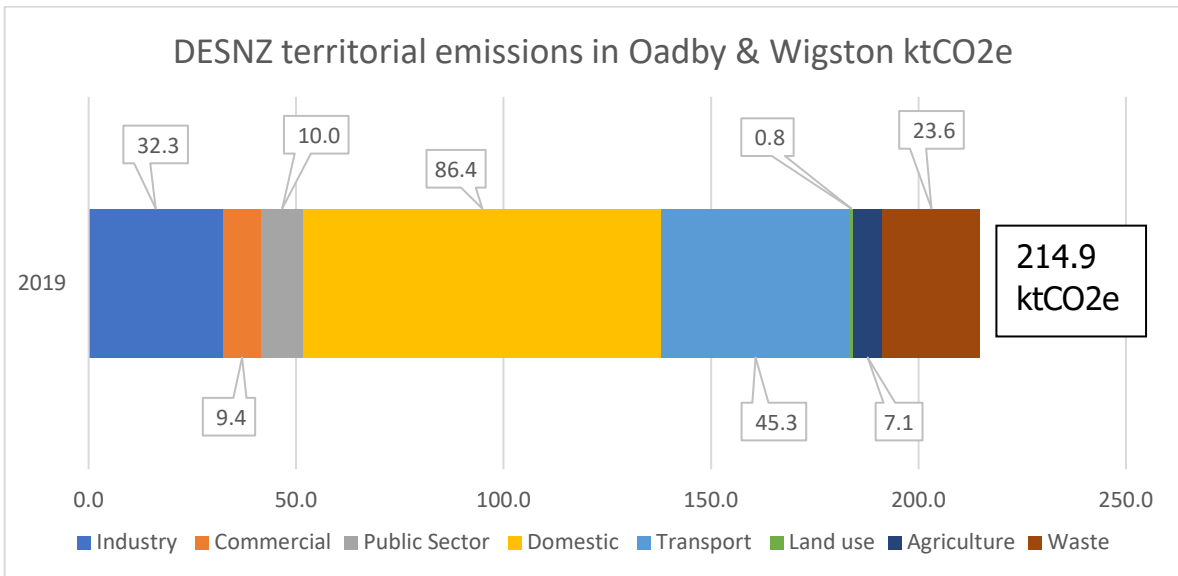
However, by taking action on climate change a range of economic, social and environmental **co-benefits** can be realised such as:

Saving money on energy	Creation of green jobs	Greater health & wellbeing
Community cohesion	Reduced air pollution	Increased biodiversity

1.4 Emissions and sources

The government publishes estimates for **local authority** territorial emissions annually which provide the most reliable and consistent breakdown of greenhouse gas emissions produced within the borough for carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and nitrous oxide.

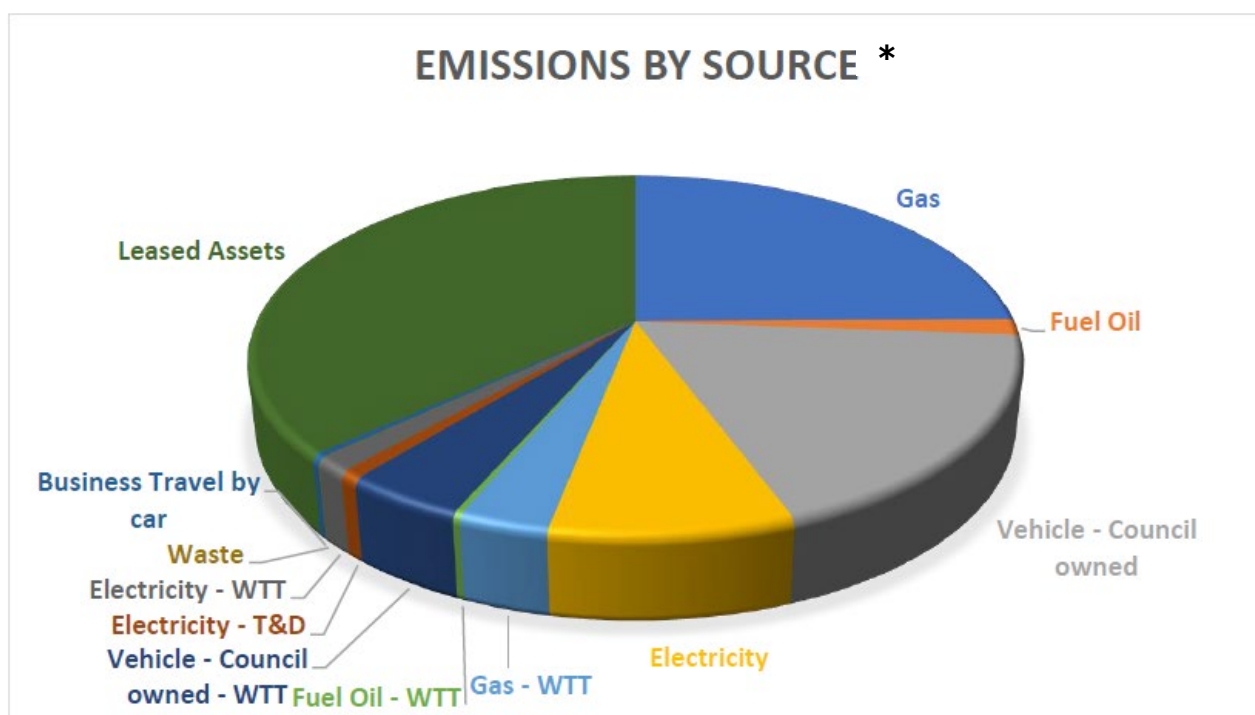
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero datasets estimated emissions in Oadby & Wigston for a 2019 (pre-covid) baseline year were **214.9 ktCO₂e**¹. Since 2005 emissions in the borough have declined from 344.3 ktCO₂e to 207.2 ktCO₂e in 2021. The rebound in emissions since 2020 follows the effects of the pandemic and a warmer than average winter.



¹ Emissions are calculated as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), which is a term used to combine the seven most threatening gases that have the highest Global Warming Potential. Kt or kiloton is equal to 1000 tons

The Council has been working with APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) Energy to produce a Climate Change Baseline Study for the reporting year April 2019 to March 2020 (pre-covid). The baseline study measures the **carbon footprint for Council operations** which can be used as a benchmark to record current emissions and to track performance against future emissions. It also provides a trajectory report to include decarbonisation scenarios and recommendations for net-zero.

The Council's carbon footprint of **1,651 tCO₂e** has been calculated using the best data that was available to the Council during the reporting year 2019/2020. A breakdown of emissions sources can be seen below:



*Emissions associated with the production, extraction, refining and transport of the fuel before their use are known as Well-to-tank (WTT), and Transmission and distribution (T&D) factors are used to report the emissions associated with electricity grid losses.

The biggest three emission sources for the council are

- Leased assets – leisure centres (37%)
- Gas consumption from Council owned and managed properties (25%)
- Fuel for Council owned vehicles (18%)

The total emissions from all sources are not known to date, including from the Council's housing stock, as it was not practically possible to accurately access this level of detail. The largest 'missing' contributor is likely to be from purchased goods and services, which is generally very difficult to gather data and calculate emissions for.

1.5 We are already taking action...

- Relocating the main Council Offices to Brocks Hill which should realise significant energy and cost savings due to the building's design standards and smaller size
- Promoting remote and agile working to reduce employee commuting
- Using Local Plan policies to promote higher levels of sustainability in development
- Encouraging local schools to sign up to active travel initiatives
- Introducing live streaming of Council meetings and facilitating the move to paperless committee meetings
- Securing grant funding for private sector housing to make energy efficiency improvements and install solar PV panels
- Using grant funding and Council investment to improve the energy efficiency of our Council housing stock.
- Exploring the use of electric vehicles for fleet and installing more EV chargepoints
- Campaigns for reducing waste
- Under the Treescapes Scheme the Council planted 1200 whips and 40 larger trees across the borough for 2022.

We collaborate with other Leicestershire Authorities on climate related projects under the Green Living Leicestershire partnership



1. With other key partners we have signed **The Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact** which stands as a statement of intent on the County's climate action pledges
2. A toolkit has been developed to help community groups to tackle climate change
3. We take part in the Solar Together group buying scheme which brings households in Oadby & Wigston together to get high-quality solar panels at a competitive price
4. Funding has been secured, to create a face-to-face service, to support hard to reach households across Leicestershire access trusted energy efficiency advice and grants
5. Funding is available for a leisure centre to go through an energy audit which will show what steps are needed to take the building to net zero
6. Funding has been secured to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the borough to support the transition to electric vehicles

1.6 Financial Risks and Implications

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is committed to playing its part in responding to the growing evidence that urgent action is required to respond to climate change. For our Climate Change Baseline Study a 2030 net zero trajectory was selected for discussion purposes; many other councils have a 2030 target for council assets and operations, and this report will allow for an evidence-based discussion on what is the best future course of action for the Council. The forecast capital cost to achieve the 2030 net zero goal under the recommended scenario is approximately £13.3million. The installation of heat pumps to buildings and the transition to electric vehicles involves significant capital costs, although there will likely be cheaper low carbon options available in the future.

Given the resource constraints of local government, and although we actively seek further funding and resources it is not always possible to accelerate climate actions and commit to all the actions needed to reduce emissions. The Council will determine decarbonisation actions in line with available resources and look to utilise further funding opportunities when they arise. We will continue to work with partners to call for the scaling up of the provision of climate finance from national government and other organisations to enable us to take the urgent steps required to tackle climate change during this critical decade.

1.7 Next Steps

Local Authorities are typically responsible for between 2-5% of local emissions directly. However, potentially they influence more than a third of emissions in their area through their policies and partnerships. This Strategy provides a longer term road map for tackling climate change both internally and in the wider borough. Linking to existing policy and plans it will set out the Council's Vision, achievable Goals and Key Action Areas, and given finite resources help prioritise climate action in future delivery plans. It will provide a framework to enable the Council to lead by example through its own decarbonisation actions, influence local reductions in emissions and shape the wider climate agenda through its policy, engagement and partnership work.



2 Strategic Framework

2.1 Overarching Context

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024

Responding to climate change and reducing carbon emissions is essential in enabling the existing corporate objectives to be delivered. The new Corporate Strategy will be a living document and will be updated to include environmental actions and any additional actions in its annual review. However, a new Vision has been created by Members and has been in place since July 2022.

The vision is 'our borough, the place to be'. The purpose is to provide a sustainable Council by listening, being engaged, and putting the customers first enabling us to focus on local needs and priorities.

Contained within the vision are five strategic objectives:-

- Our Council
- Our communities
- Our economy
- Our environment
- Our partners

Of particular importance to this strategy is 'Our environment' where the Council commits to

- To ensure that we are a carbon conscious borough
- To be seen to be 'green'

2.2 National and International Context

Paris Agreement 2015 (COP21)

The Paris Agreement is an International Treaty on Climate Change signed by the UK government and is an ambitious deal to reduce carbon emissions, recognizing that accelerated action is required to limit global temperature rises to 1.5°C.

UK government Climate Change Act 2008 (Amended 2019)

The UK has legally binding targets to reach net-zero by 2050 to end its contribution to global warming and cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.

2.3 Local Context

Local Plan 2011-2031

The Borough Council adopted its Local Plan in April 2019 which sets out the approach to delivering the sustainable growth and development in the borough. The Local Plan requires a development to contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions; reducing flood risk, both existing and future; and, achieving sustainable waste management. It seeks to actively encourage travel planning, working from home, cycling, walking and access to fast, frequent and affordable public transport. Whilst encouraging the reduction of private car use, it seeks to improve the highway network within the borough to ensure as reliable and free flowing movement of vehicular traffic as possible.

Environment Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023

This Strategy and Action Plan sets out how Oadby and Wigston Borough Council contributes towards reducing carbon emissions both in terms of actions that it can take as an organisation in its own right and in terms of the Council's role in influencing local residents and businesses and encouraging a partnership approach involving a range of stakeholders.

Following consultation with Senior Leadership and Members of the Environment Working Group it was agreed to review this document and develop a Strategy and Action Plan to have a stronger focus on climate change and reducing carbon emissions.

Net Zero Carbon Emissions Trajectory for Oadby & Wigston Borough Council 2023

The Council has been working with APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) Energy to produce a 2019/20 Climate Change Baseline Study to measure the carbon footprint for Council operations and to provide a trajectory report to include decarbonisation scenarios and recommendations for net-zero.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Medium Financial Term Strategy provides the financial strategic framework and approach to achieve long term financial sustainability whilst delivering the organisational priorities. Oadby and Wigston is facing significant challenges in terms of its financial sustainability and therefore is limited in the resources available to deliver the climate change agenda. The Council will need to seek opportunities to deliver the climate change agenda by bidding and accessing available funding sources and by considering and maximising on opportunities to support the climate change agenda when taking all decisions. Examples of where this has been achieved to date include accessing the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, moving to new offices which have reduced our carbon footprint, and securing grant funding for the installation of EV Chargepoints.

Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy and Action Plan from 2023

This strategy sets out Leicestershire County Council's approach to delivering its ambitions to work with others to achieve net zero carbon emissions in Leicestershire by 2045 or before. It's accompanied with an action plan which demonstrates the actions the County Council will lead on and those where they ask and influence others to deliver action, including district and borough councils.

Green Living Leicestershire

This is a partnership between Leicestershire Authorities including Oadby & Wigston Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council to deliver projects supporting sustainability and net zero. Co-ordinated planning and action between organisations on climate change is crucial to achieve maximum impact and reduce duplication and gaps in climate action.

The Council signed the **Leicestershire Climate & Nature Pact in 2023** agreeing to the core requirements to include the need to act quickly on reducing the impacts of climate change, reducing carbon emissions to net zero, halting ecological decline, supporting climate recovery, and working together to deliver effective action on climate change.



3 Strategic vision

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council will play its part in taking the urgent action required to tackle climate change, both internally and through its influence in the wider community, helping to create a more sustainable and resilient place to live.

3.1 Goals to achieve the vision

We will

1. lead by example to decarbonise Council operations and commit to accelerate and take decisive action on climate change
2. contribute towards reducing carbon emissions to net zero in the wider community by 2050 (or earlier) through our role in influencing local residents and businesses and encouraging a partnership approach involving a range of stakeholders
3. work with others to reduce the impact of climate change by adapting to its present and future consequences

3.2 Principles to enable delivery

Leadership – we will play our part in tackling climate change

Collaboration and Engagement – we will work with others to reduce the wider borough's emissions

Fair Transition – climate action should be fairly delivered

Access Funding - priority should be given to climate action that offers good value

Optimise co-benefits - climate action should secure wider co-benefits

Evidence based – we need to learn from successful approaches used elsewhere

3.3 Key areas for climate action

Buildings and Energy – support energy efficiency, low carbon heat and renewable energy actions; and help create a climate resilient built environment

Transport – encourage and support sustainable transport alternatives

Resources and Waste – support action to move towards a more circular economy by using our resources better and reducing waste

Local Economy – working with businesses and partners to collectively reduce our environmental impact

Communities – facilitate residents and communities to take local action to tackle climate change

Nature and Land Use – help protect and enhance natural landscapes and wildlife to support biodiversity, carbon storage and climate resilience

3.4 Principles

A set of principles will enable the delivery of this strategy by the Council so that climate action is fair, evidence based, good value and involves a collective effort to secure wider benefits for the local community.

Leadership	Collaboration and Engagement	Fair Transition
<p>As a local authority we have a leadership role to play and will take action to raise awareness of climate change across the organisation and reduce carbon emissions from our own assets and operations</p>	<p>Tackling climate change cannot be done alone and we have a role in working locally to reduce the wider borough's emissions, engaging with and supporting local residents, organisations and businesses, and working in partnership with a range of stakeholders</p>	<p>Everyone will be impacted by climate change and so all voices should be heard, including young people. The benefits of climate action should be shared widely and those who are most vulnerable or least able to afford should be considered for support</p>
Access Funding	Optimise Co-benefits	Evidence Based
<p>Priority should be given to climate action that offers good value and provides wider benefits. We will look to access funding from government and other sources to further deliver on climate action and call upon</p>	<p>Climate action should secure wider co-benefits to include health and wellbeing, green jobs, reduced energy costs and nature recovery. This will increase support for action and involve us working across the council and with partners to think strategically and long term</p>	<p>We need to focus our resources on delivering climate actions that will have maximum impact by implementing successful approaches used elsewhere such as following the Emissions Mitigation Hierarchy. We will make connections and share and learn from others, including being aware of new technologies</p>

4 Key Areas for Action

Action	Objectives
<p>Buildings and Energy (BE)</p> <p>Aim to support energy efficiency, low carbon heat and renewable energy actions; and help create a climate resilient built environment</p> <p>Domestic and public, sectors contributed approximately 97 kt CO₂e (47%) of the borough's emissions in 2021 with those in and around the home being the highest proportion at around 87 kt CO₂e (42%). As the national grid has decarbonised over time domestic emissions have fallen, however to reach net-zero it is important to address energy efficiency in buildings, install low carbon heat and increase renewable energy. Furthermore we should make changes to our homes and buildings adapting them to changing climate impacts including overheating and flooding</p>	<p>BE1 Secure funding and work with others to deliver retrofit programmes to increase energy performance of homes across the borough</p> <p>BE2 Decarbonise buildings through energy efficiency measures and low carbon heat projects</p> <p>BE3 Enforce private rented Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards regulations</p> <p>BE4 Work with others and engage people to help them understand what decarbonisation measures are required in their home</p> <p>BE5 Support planning policy to reduce emissions from buildings and infrastructure and mitigate current and future climate risks</p> <p>BE6 Work collaboratively to plan for and increase renewable energy generation and storage</p>
<p>Transport (TP)</p> <p>Aim to encourage and support sustainable and resilient transport alternatives</p> <p>Transport accounts for a significant proportion of the borough's emissions estimated at 46 kt CO₂e (22%) in 2021. The majority of these emissions are from road transport on minor roads. Emissions have declined over time but remain high, and so increasing take-up of low carbon transport alternatives including active travel and transition to electric vehicles should be a priority. Furthermore, new transport infrastructure should take account of climate change impacts such as increased flooding</p>	<p>TP1 Support planning policy to reduce the need to travel by car for essential services and to help reduce congestion</p> <p>TP2 Support and promote walking, cycling (including e-bikes), shared and public transport options</p> <p>TP3 Work with others to plan for and install electric vehicle infrastructure</p> <p>TP4 Encourage and support the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles</p> <p>TP5 Support opportunities to deliver goods more sustainably</p> <p>TP6 Support planning policy to increase resilience in transport networks</p>

Action	Objectives
<p>Local Economy (LE)</p> <p>Aim to work with businesses and partners to collectively reduce our environmental impact</p> <p>The borough’s industrial and commercial emissions in 2021 are around 38kt CO₂e (19%). Industrial and commercial emissions have increased since 2020 due to the rebound effect since the pandemic, however, over the long term they have declined. Businesses with support have an important role to play in tackling climate change. This includes the sharing of best practise and fostering active environments to increase cycling and walking. Achieving net zero will also bring new economic opportunities with investment in the low carbon sector creating green jobs</p>	<p>LE1 Work with others to support new business opportunities and jobs in the green economy</p> <p>LE2 Facilitate the sharing of best business practice, including creative industries, on reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change</p> <p>LE3 Address supply chain sustainability to reduce the carbon footprint of goods and services</p> <p>LE4 Work with partners to investigate new ways to capture and store carbon</p>
<p>Resources and Waste (RW)</p> <p>Aim to support action to move towards a more circular economy by using our resources better and reducing waste</p> <p>Emissions resulting from waste produced in the borough are estimated at approximately 20 kt CO₂ (9%) in 2021 with significant proportion being methane from landfill. There is a need to use our resources better, reduce waste and keep materials circulating in the economy for as long as possible. This will reduce carbon emissions and help create more resilience places</p>	<p>RW1 Support and work with others to deliver the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy which aims to prevent waste and keep resources in circulation for as long as possible, through reuse, repair and recycling</p> <p>RW2 Consider electrification of Council refuse collection vehicles and the installation of required charging infrastructure</p> <p>RW3 Consider the frequency of the Council’s refuse and recycling collection service</p> <p>RW4 Raise awareness of the waste hierarchy and support initiatives, including new behaviour change approaches, to increase recycling, reuse and prevent waste</p> <p>RW5 Support and encourage people to grow their own food and buy more local seasonal produce</p> <p>RW6 Encourage residents, businesses to reduce water consumption and support water efficient new homes</p>

Action	Objectives
<p>Communities (CM)</p> <p>Aim to facilitate residents and communities to take local action to tackle climate change</p> <p>Climate change impacts us all and we all have a part to play in reducing carbon emissions. This includes lifestyle choices and action taken by local community groups to create better places to live. People need to feel engaged and supported to make sustainable choices so that changes are informed, impactful, long-lasting and fair</p>	<p>CM1 Explore opportunities to increase training, education and events to raise awareness of climate change</p> <p>CM2 To support and develop tools and guidance to help communities and local groups work together to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change</p> <p>CM3 Share information on local businesses to encourage residents to “shop local”</p>
Action	Objectives
<p>Nature and Land Use (NL)</p> <p>Aim to help protect and enhance natural landscape and wildlife to support biodiversity, carbon storage and climate resilience</p> <p>Tree cover and grassland has resulted in emission removals across the borough. Although the borough is net-gain in land use greenhouse gas emissions, this has decreased over time to 0.8 Kt CO₂e in 2021 due to changes in settlement land use. Nature recovery is vital in our efforts to tackle climate change. The borough is a compact and a predominately urban area but there are opportunities to increase tree planting and improve biodiversity to increase carbon storage, create connected green spaces and support climate resilience</p>	<p>NL1 Work with others to deliver nature recovery actions including increased tree planting and carbon storage</p> <p>NL2 Support planning policy to protect and enhance the natural environment securing the best possible net gain outcomes</p> <p>NL3 Promote the use of nature based solutions and connected green spaces to secure wider benefits including increased biodiversity and climate resilience</p> <p>NL4 Support local groups to engage with and improve nature and biodiversity</p>

5 Delivering the Strategy

5.1 Delivery Plans

The Climate Change Strategy sets out the strategic direction for climate action in Oadby and Wigston and what we want to achieve, focusing in particular on the major changes required. It will be underpinned by policies and **delivery plans** to measure progress. A number of specific climate initiatives described in the strategy are already ongoing, are in development or planned. The delivery plans will include a programme of projects **prioritising** action as set out within the principles of this strategy to help achieve the council's climate goals.

Although the Council will provide leadership on climate action we all have a role to play in tackling climate change. The Council will use its powers to influence and facilitate action on climate change in the wider community but it cannot control or lead in all aspects of this. Internally this means avoiding the position where a single person or team is considered the sole area of responsibility and knowledge for this agenda

5.2 Communication

The Council will engage all its communication channels to support and encourage climate action in Oadby & Wigston. These include but are not limited to press releases, virtual newsletters, the Council website and social media. Email subscribers can also sign up to receive communication on environmental topics such as recycling and waste.

5.3 Governance Structure

The Council has established a cross party Working Group which reports to the Service Delivery Committee and will seek to implement this Action Plan and co-ordinate the Council's response to Climate Change.

5.4 Monitoring and Reporting

The Climate Change Strategy will be a key consideration of the Council's decision making process and how it delivers its services. It will evolve over time to be amended and updated to reflect changing circumstances such as government policy, climate science, new technology and following evaluation of climate change initiatives. The long term goals will be reviewed every 5 years.

We will provide a progress report on the Action Plan and update annually to the Service Delivery Committee to subsequently be published on the Council's climate change webpage.

The Council will track changes in greenhouse gas emissions from a pre-covid baseline year of 2019/20 and will use annual statistics published by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to calculate local authority territorial (production) emissions for:

- Domestic, commercial, industrial and public buildings
- Road and rail transport
- Waste management
- Agriculture
- Land use, land use changes and forestry

For measuring carbon reduction internally the council will use the LGA Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool developed by Local Partnerships with the aim of calculating at least scope 1 and 2 emission sources² every 2 years.

²The council's carbon footprint is categorised into scopes, which cover -

- Scope 1 – includes fuel burnt on site such as gas and emissions from vehicles
- Scope 2 – indirect emissions associated with purchased electricity
- Scope 3 – Other indirect emissions such as from leased assets, and goods and services

6 Glossary

Adapting – changing the way we do things to respond to current and future climate change impacts

Biodiversity – the variety of life such as plants and animals in an area

Carbon footprint – the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced from our actions

Carbon storage – the amount of carbon stored for example in the wood of the tree, removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere

Climate change - the long term changes to temperatures and weather patterns

Decarbonise – reducing carbon footprint from operations

Emissions - from burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, releasing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere.

Global warming - the current increase in global average temperatures mostly due to human activities from burning fossil fuels

Mitigation - doing everything we can to cut emissions

Nature recovery – enhancing the natural environment for wildlife and people

Net Zero - cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible and offsetting the remaining hard to remove emissions through tree planting and land based PV for example.

Resilient – being able to cope and recover more easily from climate change impacts

Sustainable – places and communities that are greener, healthier, safer and more prosperous