

Brighton & Hove City Council
2030 Carbon Neutral Programme Annual Report 2022-23

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Introducing the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme

The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme has three strategic objectives:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Enhance biodiversity
- Adapt to climate change

In December 2018, Brighton & Hove City Council declared a climate and biodiversity emergency in a cross-party commitment. The council held a [Climate Assembly](#) and Youth Assembly on the topic of travel and transport in autumn 2020. Ongoing development of climate action work was brought together in the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme and approved by Policy & Resources Committee in March 2021.

This Annual Report documents progress on the Carbon Neutral Programme during 2022-23.

Governance and reporting

The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme is formally reported to the council's Transport & Sustainability Committee and an annual report produced. The City Environment, South Downs & the Sea Committee oversees progress on biodiversity.

The city council in 2022 achieved a positive [Carbon Disclosure Project](#) (CDP) score which found that the council has demonstrated best practice standards across adaptation and mitigation, has set ambitious goals, and made progress towards achieving those goals. The city's CDP score for 2023 is expected in Autumn 2023.

The Programme embeds climate action across many teams and projects in the council. Climate change training was introduced in 2022 to assist that culture shift for all staff, including Carbon Literacy training for senior leadership. Collaboration across departments adds value in developing service area action plans and is assisted by the council's Sustainability Team.

Find information and get involved

The 2030 Carbon Neutral [Programme](#) and Annual Reports are on the council's website. News stories on climate action and events in the city are regularly published on the council's website and social media in our [Climate Action Hub](#). Find out what individuals and communities can do to cut their own [carbon footprint](#) and [restore nature](#).

In 2022-23, BHCC's [Climate Conversations](#) website hosted open discussions and consultations on climate matters. Consultations on individual projects and strategies are held as work progresses and we want to ensure everyone can have their say and participate.

The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme in 2023-24

The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme will be updated in 2023-24 to enhance our strategic approach, increase collaboration, and help the council and the city progress towards our carbon neutral and biodiversity targets. We will continue to mainstream climate action across council Directorates and teams.

Key priorities for 2023-24 include:

- Develop Decarbonisation Pathways to drive strategic planning and prioritise most impactful actions towards carbon neutral target
- Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment to understand the local impacts of future climate change and prioritise actions to adapt and improve resilience
- Explore options for raising investment to deliver more local climate action projects.
- Develop evidence base for City Plan Part One review, to support new planning policies to cut carbon, enhance biodiversity, and adapt to climate change.
- Develop strategic climate partnerships focused on reducing carbon emissions, with businesses, major institutions and organisations
- As lead partner of The Living Coast Biosphere, work with partners to prepare our submission to UNESCO for the renewal of Biosphere status
- Continue to develop specific communications campaigns and lines of engagement with our communities and residents to share information and encourage positive behaviour change
- Enhance the social and economic co-benefits of climate action, such as tackling the cost-of-living crisis, and health benefits from clean air.

City climate action partnerships

BHCC's corporate carbon emissions are only a tiny fraction (around 2%) of the city as a whole, so collaboration with businesses, institutions, and communities is essential to reach our carbon neutral target. The council with community partners is exploring city climate action partnerships to build a collaborative city-wide response. Existing city partnerships already place greater emphasis on climate action.

Local partnerships working with BHCC on climate action

- [Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership](#): An independent group of over 50 individuals from private, public and voluntary sectors supporting the economic prosperity of the city

- [Brighton & Hove Food Partnership](#): A non-profit organisation helping people learn to cook, eat a healthy diet, grow their own food and waste less.
- Brighton Chamber of Commerce [Net Zero champions](#) for business
- [Circular Brighton & Hove](#): supporting the circular economy with local businesses
- City Management Board: Key public service decision-makers in the city, it aims to strengthen and focus delivery of services in Brighton & Hove.
- Downland Advisory Panel: wide local community and expert representation, advising on the implementation of the council's City Downland Whole Estate Plan
- [Greater Brighton City Region](#) brings together partners in an economic area from Crawley and Gatwick Airport in the north to Lewes and Seaford in the east and Bognor and Littlehampton in the west and supports innovation in a green economy.
- [Green Growth Platform](#): award-winning green business-innovation network on a mission to create robust, future-proof businesses that minimise their impact on the planet.
- [Hydrogen Sussex](#) brings together business, research, education and local government across Greater Brighton and Sussex to support development of a hydrogen economy
- NHS Sussex [Together to Zero](#) strategic forum – the five NHS Trusts in Sussex working together to cut carbon emissions from all aspects of the local service.
- [Our City Our World](#) – schools in Brighton & Hove working together to use the power of education to advance environmental literacy and social engagement towards a more equitable and sustainable future.
- [South Downs National Park Authority](#): key partner in managing our Downland Estate and access to the countryside, as well as planning authority for some areas
- [Sussex Local Nature Partnership](#): over 30 organisations working through partnership and collaboration to “protect and expand natural capital and everything it gives us”
- [The Aquifer Partnership](#) (TAP): Educating about water resources to ensure groundwater remains a sustainable resource for the future.
- [The Living Coast](#) Biosphere, a regional environmental partnership, one of only seven UNESCO designated International Biosphere Reserves in the UK, designated as a living laboratory for sustainable development.
- Transport for the South East Decarbonisation Forum: exploring ways to measure and promote reduction in carbon emissions from transport.
- Brighton & Hove Transport Partnership - supporting an integrated and accessible transport system that minimises damage to the environment and promotes sustainable and healthy travel choices
- University of Brighton and University of Sussex partner the council on climate research from hydrogen to neighbourhood homes retrofit, to the circular economy.
- [VisitBrighton](#): The official tourism organisation for city of Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove City Council membership of climate organisations

- UK100
- Race to Zero

Declarations & statements

The council is a signatory to the following campaigning declarations:

Nature & Climate Declaration (May 2022)

Right to Food campaign (March 2022)

Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration (November 2021)

Cities Race to Zero (September 2021)

Measuring progress towards our 2030 carbon reduction target

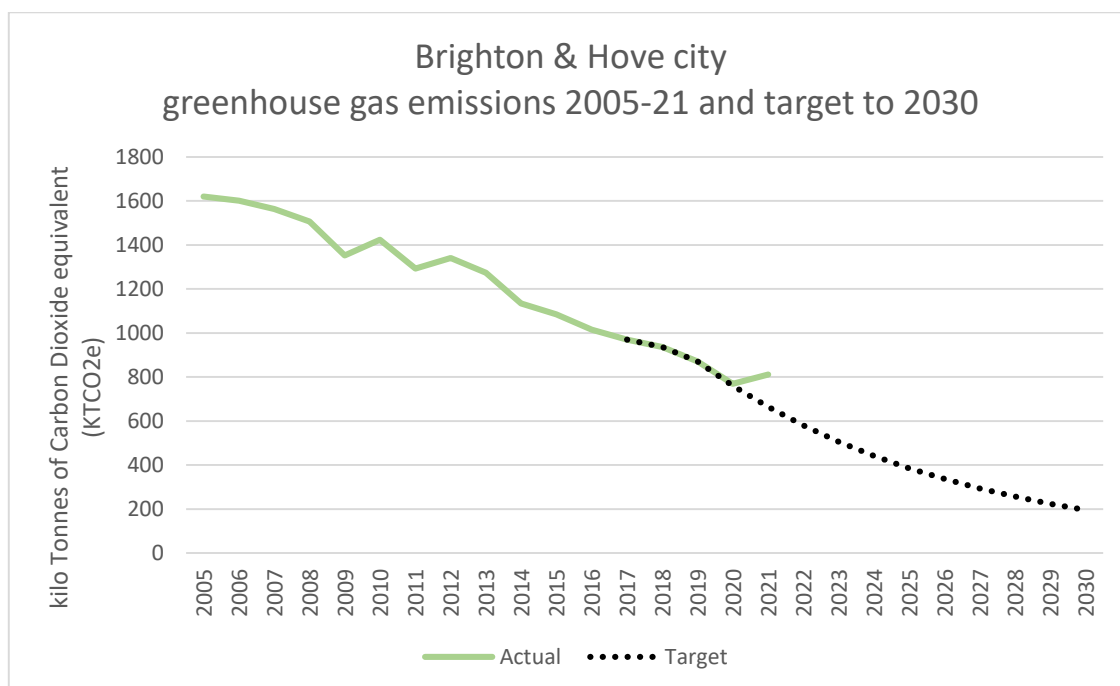
2030 Carbon Neutral Target

The council has set an ambitious target for the whole city to be carbon neutral by 2030. This Key Performance Indicator target requires greenhouse gas emissions for the whole city to fall by 12.7% annually from 2020 onwards. This is a science-based target, prepared by the [Tyndall Centre](#) for Climate Change, showing Brighton & Hove's fair contribution to keeping climate change within limits. Greenhouse gases include methane, nitrous oxide, and other gases as well as carbon dioxide.

This target includes greenhouse gas emissions from transport, housing, commercial buildings and agriculture; including emissions arising from gas, electricity, petrol / diesel and other fuels (also known as "Scope 1 and 2" emissions). It does not include "Scope 3" emissions from the goods and services consumed in the city but produced elsewhere, including most of our food, clothing, electronics, and construction materials (and likely to be greater than Scope 1 and 2 emissions). The council is investigating ways of measuring Scope 3 emissions.

Progress on target – whole city

Emissions of greenhouse gases for the whole city of Brighton & Hove were 812,000 tonnes in 2021. The emissions 'bounced back' by around 5% following 2020, when many restrictions on travel and economic activity were experienced due to the Covid pandemic. This Key Performance Indicator is reported annually to the council's Transport & Sustainability Committee.



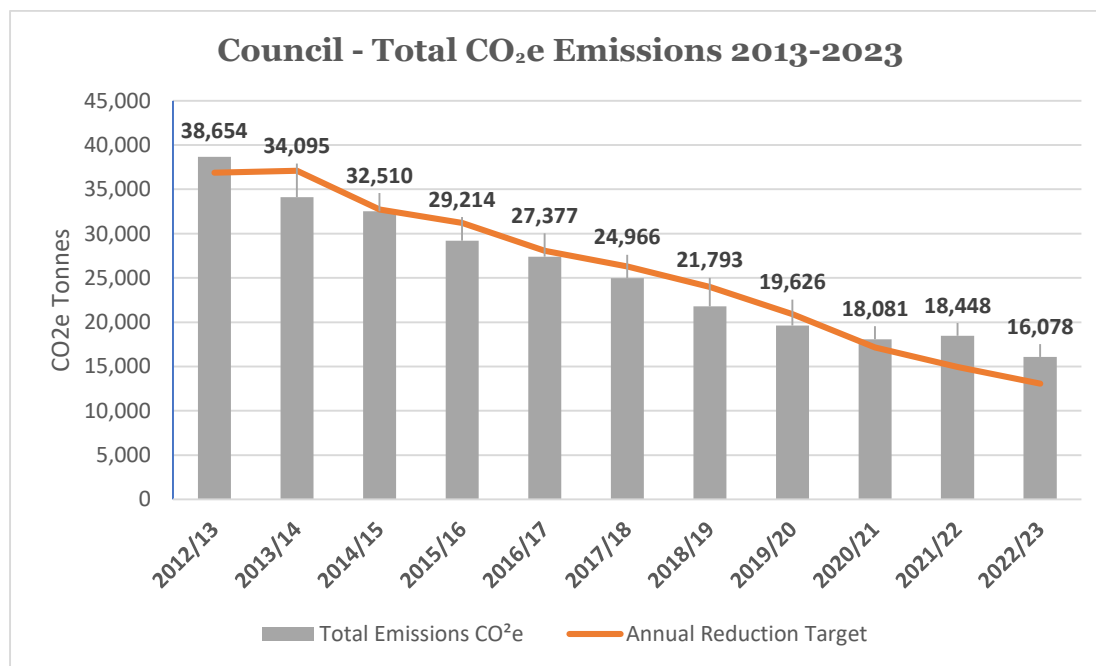
Since 2005, greenhouse gas emissions for the city have fallen by 809,000 tonnes or almost 50%. The largest reduction was from electricity, more renewable electricity from wind farms and solar power comes is added to the National Grid.

Brighton & Hove City Council's corporate carbon footprint

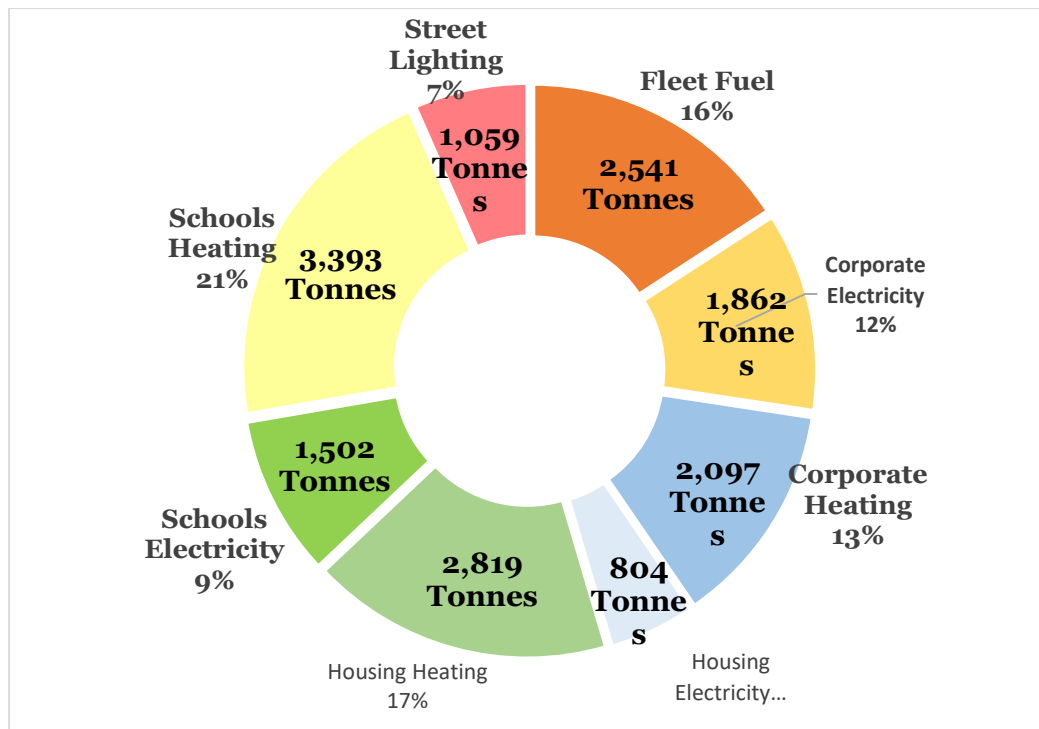
We measure emissions from the council's corporate estate and operations directly. Emissions are calculated using consumption of electricity and gas taken from utility supplier billing and meter readings, and the fuel consumption of our fleet of vehicles.

Council emissions were 16,078 Tonnes in 2022-23, a tiny fraction of city carbon emissions – around 2% of the total.

Council emissions have reduced by 58% over the last 10 years, with a reduction of 12.8% between 2021-2 and 2022-3. In particular, emissions from electricity consumption have fallen by 73% in the last decade and are likely to be minimal by the 2030 target date (less than 10% of current).



Council - Total CO₂e Emissions 2022/23 by service



Measuring carbon savings from our actions

It is not always possible to measure the impact on carbon emissions from our actions. Where possible we have included a note of carbon savings in this report. In 2022-23, a rigorous [assessment of carbon savings](#) from projects funded through the council's Carbon Neutral Fund was carried out, indicating 9836.5 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) forecast savings for 24 carbon-reduction projects

Travel and Transport

Local Transport Plan

The council's 2030 transport vision, key outcomes and principles is the 'direction of travel' for the [Local Transport Plan](#) for the city. The key principles underpinning the proposed strategy are: Reduce the need to travel; Shift how people travel; and Clean vehicle travel. The priority areas for investment and intervention are:

- Create an inclusive and integrated transport system
- Develop safe and well-maintained streets and places that encourage and enable active travel
- Increase public transport use
- Reduce the need for car ownership and car use
- Promote and facilitate the use of low and zero emission vehicles
- Promote and use technology to reduce and manage travel

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

In March 2022 the council approved its first [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) to plan strategically for active travel network infrastructure improvements. It will ensure the city is well placed to bid for future funding opportunities; incorporate cycling and walking into new developments, and secure improvements through the planning process; promote active travel and ensure a comprehensive network for everyday active travel journeys in the city and the countryside. Consultation will be carried out on the detailed designs of cycling and walking infrastructure schemes as they are taken forward.

Increase use of public transport

Brighton & Hove benefits from a nationally recognised bus network. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the city saw a sustained increase in bus use and had the highest number of bus trips per head amongst English local authorities outside of London. A contributor to this has been the Quality Bus Partnership between the council, operators and bus users, which the National Bus Strategy cites as a success. The council and operators have a strong track record of working through the partnership to deliver improvements to bus services.

In January 2023 the Council entered into a legal agreement, the Enhanced Partnership, to secure around £27 million to invest over 3 years up to 31 March 2025. This funding is expected to be invested in additional bus priority measures; new lower fares and simpler ticketing (focused on younger and older people); and enhancements to less frequent bus services which are financially supported by the council. The [Enhanced Partnership](#) is the mechanism for delivering the EP Schemes and Measures, which includes agreement from all the bus operators within the Brighton and Hove EP area.

Brighton & Hove Buses continues its journey towards a zero-carbon fleet with the introduction of hybrid electric buses, cutting emissions through the city centre to

improve air quality. There has been further investment into the bus network, introducing more bus shelters, real-time bus stops and schemes to reduce bus journey times. The Big Lemon bus company has been planning a fully electric fleet and ran a fully zero-emissions electric bus service on all its public bus routes for the first time in June 2022 (on Clean Air Day).

Electric Vehicle Charge Points

The [council](#) continues to grow our [electric vehicle charging points network](#) and is now one of the top five leading councils in the country. To date 353 public chargers have been installed in the city and are operational. Independent research by Field Dynamics and Zap Map shows that 77% of residents with no off-street parking, now live within 5 minutes' walk of a public charger.

In 2022 three on-street rapid taxi hubs with 18 rapid charging bays (with 6 for public use) were installed and are now operational, with another added in 2023. These can fully charge most electric vehicles within an hour.

There is a steady increase in monthly usage for all charger types. The 250 lamp post chargers in the city which provide overnight charging are increasingly popular with electric vehicle drivers with twice as many charging sessions compared to the previous year. The public charging network recently passed the milestone of delivering over 1 million kilowatt hours of charging annually.

Assuming continued growth in EV take-up and public charger usage (in line with UK Power Networks predictions and the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' strategy), and continued decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, we estimate that the city's existing public charging network will prevent over 40,000 tonnes CO₂e being emitted between 2019 and 2030. This estimate is likely conservative as, both rapid hubs and residential chargers are powered by 100% renewable energy. The council has a programme of submitting bids for government funding to increase the number of charge points on the public network.

This year the council is rolling out 100 more 'exclusive recharging only' parking bays. In January 2023 we received committee approval for the second phase of procurement of public charge points. This will add a minimum of 600 lamp post chargers, 250 fast chargers and 100 rapid chargers to the public network.

To improve the accessibility of EV chargers, the council has been working with our charge point operator EB Charging and Disabled Motoring UK who have provided valuable insights about all the different charge points in the city from a disabled car user's perspective. A bid for Innovate UK research funding has been successful and, with our partners, the council aims to develop a fully accessible charge point with a prototype booking system.

Climate-friendly travel for business

Engaging with local businesses and organisations includes encouraging them to use and switch to electric cargo ([eCargo](#)) bikes for deliveries of goods and services. To do this the council leased eCargo bikes to 5 local SMEs, 2 council teams and an urban logistics company with funding from the Department for Transport's eCargo Bike Grant Fund. As of February 2022, 18,000 miles had been travelled by the local businesses making deliveries around the city with the eCargo bikes the council leased to them, and 6.9 tonnes of CO₂e saved since the project started in 2020.

A second, expanded phase of the scheme aims to lease eCargo bikes to an additional 12 SMEs with funding from the council's Carbon Neutral Fund.

In addition to eCargo leasing, the council supports SMEs to acquire their own eCargo bikes, and provides impartial advice, free rider training and marketing opportunities. Through the Capability and Ambition Fund, the council also provides subsidy to local businesses that trial a local eCargo delivery service. To date, 26 small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have taken up our subsidy offer to switch to eCargo.

Bikeshare

A new Bikeshare framework concession contract was awarded to Bikeshare operator Beryl in December 2022 following a full retender process. Beryl is in the process of soft launching a scheme which will expand by 30 Sept 2023 to provide city wide coverage with a fleet of 780 bikes and provide at least 96 hubs by Spring 2024. The fleet will be 60% electric pedal assist, 40% pedal only. The Framework allows for call offs by other authorities in the Southeast of England, and for call offs to establish parallel schemes under one 'Beryl BTN Bike Hire' brand in Worthing Borough, Adur District and Lewes District Council areas. This would allow frictionless customer journeys across the city's neighbouring authority boundaries, increasing the potential for fewer vehicle journeys into and through the city.

The co-benefits of this scheme were estimated and monetised using the Department for Transport's Travel Analysis Guidance Databook. The scheme is expected to yield 'High Value for Money' as a result of time benefits and Health and Absenteeism benefits for users, as well as benefits to non-users such as reduced accidents, congestion, noise, and air pollution.

Council fleet

The council aims to have a zero-carbon fleet by 2030, including refuse vehicles and maintenance vans, phasing out petrol and diesel engine vehicles. Around 11.7% of the fleet has already been switched to electric vehicles. Since 2022 the council has brought in 56 electric vehicles and 4 [electric HGVs](#), with a further five on order. Rather than replace newer HGVs, the council seeks to convert these to electric or hydrogen.

Decarbonising the council's fleet also required a £408,000 investment in charging infrastructure at the Hollingdean Depot, including an upgrade to the nearby substation via UK Power Networks. This investment was funded through the council's internal Carbon Neutral Fund. The new substation and chargers were successfully installed in June 2022 with chargers installed in November 2022. The service now has the ability to charge 30 car/van size vehicles and 14 HGV's overnight, with a rapid charger for daytime charging.

Housing and Parks Departments also received £211,600 total funding to install rapid and fast chargers at locations across the city where there is greatest operational demand for the two services.

Investment in highway infrastructure

The council is investing in the ongoing transition in transport and travel use by providing infrastructure that makes active, sustainable, and low emission travel more attractive options for people. Projects include infrastructure to expand zero emission transport; improvements to roads; maintenance schemes such as surface renewal or repairs to drainage; and repairing uneven pavements. This work has been delivered jointly with City Parks to support the street tree planting programme.

For example, works to improve safety and accessibility in Portland Road have been completed, by combining council funds with a S106 developer contribution to provide a more comprehensive scheme. The Carbon Neutral Fund has funded innovative low carbon works to extend the lifetime of concrete roads in Bevendean. These works mean fewer potholes for all road users, particularly important in areas which have high bus patronage.

Lighting replacement programmes

Street lighting upgrade (2017 – ongoing)

Since 2017, the Invest to Save programme has been [upgrading 18,000 lanterns](#) across Brighton, Hove and Portslade, fitting them with new low-carbon LED lights. More than 9 out of 10 of the city's lanterns have been replaced with work continuing to fit the rest with LED lights.

The programme has cut electricity use by 43% up to March 2023. Over the same period, carbon emissions have fallen to 1,056 tonnes CO_{2e}, a reduction of over 73%. The completed scheme will require less maintenance and reduce the city's energy bills by several hundred thousand pounds per year.

In addition to reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions, 80-90% of the materials used in the manufacture of all replacement lanterns (by weight) comes from recycled sources.

Traffic Signal Carbon Reduction Programme (2022/23)

The Traffic Signal Carbon Reduction Programme started in 2022 to replace traffic signal heads of 18 signals sites and their halogen bulbs with LEDs, with funding from the council's Carbon Neutral Fund. Replacing the heads in addition to the bulbs significantly reduces (87% less) the electricity used for the city's traffic signals, as well as the number of signal faults and vehicle journeys required to maintain them. By May 2023, traffic signal heads had been replaced at 8 sites, with 10 more sites planned for 2023/24.

Public toilets refurbishment programme (2022/2023)

Phase 1 of the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme was delivered over late 2022 and early 2023. Four sites were refurbished across the city. Site refurbishments included LED lighting replacements and installation of passive infrared (PIR) sensors, installation of sensor operated taps to limit water consumption, and replacement of hot water cylinders with low energy consumption cylinders with funding from the council's Carbon Neutral Fund.

LED replacements at sports and leisure facilities (2021 - 2023)

The council has replaced existing luminaires with LEDs in two sports halls (Portslade Sports Centre and Stanley Deason Leisure Centre), floodlights at one astroturf (Stanley Deason Leisure Centre), and floodlights at one outside tennis court facility (Withdean Sports Complex) with funding from the council's Carbon Neutral Fund and other internal sources. The last works were completed in August 2023. Not only do these LED replacements contribute to citywide CO_{2e} savings, they also help improve the financial sustainability of sports and leisure facilities.

Air quality

Poor air quality and inhalation of pollutants has negative impacts on everyone's health, with potentially serious consequences for vulnerable individuals, families and at a population level. As well as tiny particulates of air pollution, vehicles also emit carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas which contributes to climate change.

A full review of air quality in the city was published in 2021 in the [Air Quality Annual Status Report](#). We are working towards increasing the amount of air pollution monitoring in Brighton & Hove with additional real-time sensors, some funded by the council's Carbon Neutral Fund. An [Air Quality Action Plan](#) was published in 2022, with actions to improve air quality by: increase active travel; encourage and support uptake of ultra-low and zero exhaust vehicles; monitoring and public awareness; reduce emissions from building, new developments, energy production and construction sites. Brighton & Hove Buses have invested in 54 hybrid buses which are powered by electricity and zero emission when they travel through the city centre and Air Quality Management Areas.

Energy

The Council is working to reduce carbon emissions within its own corporate operations and property.

Corporate renewable electricity

All the electricity purchased for the council's energy supply has been 100% covered by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) since April 2020. This allows the council to report our emissions as 'zero' under Scope 2 of the Greenhouse Gas protocol. However we still provide carbon emission figures alongside this. The supply of REGOs continues in 2023. This highlights the council's support for additional renewable generation capacity in the UK energy mix.

Energy efficiency and low carbon heat upgrades – Corporate estate

Greenhouse gas emissions from energy consumed by the council's corporate estate (including civic offices, schools, social care buildings, etc.) fell 20% between 2020 and 2023, saving 1,495 tonnes CO₂e. This reduction is owed to continued decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, and council interventions. To date the council has installed Solar PV systems across 10 corporate sites, generating 403,495 kWh of renewable electricity annually, saving £38,630 in electricity bills each year and an estimated 406.5 tonnes of CO₂e over the next 20 years.

To date Solar PV systems have been installed across 9 school sites, generating 147,365 kWh renewable energy annually, saving £27,996 in electricity bills each year, and 148.5 tonnes of CO₂e over the next 20 years.

The Solar PV Framework, facilitated by Community Energy providers BEC and BHESCo, is currently providing 20 schools with renewable energy. The total Solar PV installed to date has an annual generating capacity of 700,627 kWh, saving £66,221 in electricity bills each year and 705.8 tonnes of CO₂e over the next 20 years.

Energy audits are underway beginning with the council's most energy-intensive buildings. These audits are needed to develop more detailed business cases that will provide a pipeline of energy efficiency projects ranked based on greenhouse gas emissions saved per pound of investment. A provisional list of projects, including both corporate and schools projects, has been worked up using high level business cases from recent energy audits.

Since 2021, carbon reduction projects related to the corporate estate have received an investment of more than £1.4m from the council's Carbon Neutral Fund. On 24 February 2022 Budget Council agreed to ring-fence an additional £3.5 million in funding from the council's £14 million Carbon Neutral Fund (2022 - 2024) to

decarbonise the council's estate. The Energy & Water Property Team at BHCC are also preparing bids for the next round of Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. Comprehensive energy audits of 20 schools have been prepared.

The council has also invested £100,000 from the Carbon Neutral Fund in measures to monitor and improve water efficiency. Improvements made to six sites in 2022/23 have resulted in an approximate daily saving of 49,000 litres per day, which is equivalent to a cost saving of £5,200 per month.

Hydrogen Sussex

The council takes a leading role in [Hydrogen Sussex](#), the coordinating body working on practical and strategic projects with Greater Brighton and stakeholders to promote and support a hydrogen economy across the city-region. In July 2023 Hydrogen Sussex launched a Hydrogen Strategy for the region, highlighting the strengths in academic research and advanced engineering, and the ongoing work of Ricardo, Shoreham Port and Brighton & Hove Buses to generate and use hydrogen locally.

Waste

Preventing waste and managing waste responsibly

Long-term projects are being delivered through the 'managing waste responsibly' and waste minimisation projects to increase reuse, repair and recycling.

The council has banned single-use BBQs in public spaces such as the seafront and parks, with effect from July 2022. Fixed penalty notices can now be issued where offences occur.

On-the-go recycling has been installed along the city's seafronts and in some parks, including Wish Park and Stanmer Park. The council is developing plans to roll out further on-the-go recycling containers in city centre locations, as well as in more parks across the city.

A project in collaboration with Keep Britain Tidy is underway, focusing on student residents. The objective is to engage with a cohort of students not reached before in private rented accommodation to explore the barriers to waste management and recycling in Brighton & Hove and how this sits within a national picture.

In 2022/23 the council commissioned several in-person events on household recycling and food, electronic equipment and textile waste prevention, with funding from the EU Interreg BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy project. This project also funded a 'Make Materials Matter' challenge on the BetterPoints app, which rewarded over 500 Brighton & Hove residents for their reuse, repair, share, upskilling, and recycling activities. The challenge was also used to share locally specific information for waste prevention, and to help residents discover and locate circular economy services near them (e.g. rental services, repair shops, and zero waste stores).

Composting

Continuing to grow the community composting scheme: new schemes have been introduced at Bedford Square, Adelaide Crescent, Woodingdean, Queen's Park, Wish Park and Hollingdean Community Centre; 10 additional composters have been provided at existing sites; and 16 worn out composters have been replaced at existing sites. As of May 2023, there were 51 open schemes and 5 pending.

Reducing landfill

The council has an exceptionally low amount of waste sent to landfill, just over 1%. The city's residual waste is sent to the energy recovery facility at Newhaven and generates electricity for 25,000 homes.

The council, in partnership with East Sussex County Council and Veolia, continues to explore options for introducing a food waste collection service and increasing the type of materials collected for recycling.

Built Environment

New council housing

The council has investigated and is undertaking two newbuild projects piloting Whole Life Carbon Assessments in new council homes to estimate and measure their impact on greenhouse gas emissions during construction and in use. This includes the award-winning Victoria Road housing development, completed in 2023 (Unlock Net Zero “Building/development of the year – housing association/local authority”). All new build council housing developments will undertake Whole Life Carbon Assessments, with four sites currently undertaking early-stage Whole Life Carbon emissions estimates as part of design development. One of the main outcomes will be homes with better insulation and low carbon heating systems. These high-quality new homes will cost more to build, but the new council tenants will benefit from lower energy bills.

BHCC’s updated New Homes Design Specification outlines the brief for building new council housing. It includes requirements for a circular economy evaluation to identify ways to reuse materials and avoid and reduce waste, and reusing materials at the end of their lifespan.

In September 2022 the council agreed the New Build Housing Sustainability [Policy](#), which sets ambitious targets for energy use, embodied carbon, and water use, following the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge.

A landscape-led approach to projects will support incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and meeting biodiversity net gains in developments. These changes will reduce habitat destruction and carbon emissions which are a consequence of construction.

Planning

Brighton & Hove City Council’s planning policies promote sustainable buildings which are energy efficient and include renewable energy and biodiversity, supporting carbon neutral targets, within the limits of national planning advice. Carbon neutral new buildings are promoted with developers, architects and agents, raised in pre-application discussions to encourage consideration during early stages of the design process.

[City Plan Part Two](#) extends and strengthens existing planning policies for sustainable development and was adopted in October 2022. Key policies include:

- DM18 embed circular economy principles
- DM22 seeks retention of and planting of trees within landscape design
- DM33 promotes sustainable and active travel

- DM37 protects and enhances biodiversity including measurable Biodiversity Net Gain
- DM43 requires the design and layout of all new buildings, car parking and hard standing, to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- DM44 strengthens requirements for energy efficiency and renewable energy
- DM45 encourages developers to seek community energy partners
- DM46 encourages developers to install low-carbon heat networks or communal heating systems

City Plan Part One Review (BHCC's main development planning policies) commenced in 2022 and is researching a new evidence base that will help to support strengthened requirements for energy efficiency, carbon emissions, circular economy and sustainability.

Planning Guidance

New guidance on sustainability was created to supplement planning policies and BHCC's existing suite of guidance on topics such as biodiversity, swift boxes, and Sustainable Urban Drainage.

- [Biodiversity and Nature Conservation SPD](#) was adopted 2022. Sets out detailed guidance for achieving biodiversity improvement and Biodiversity Net Gain in new development.
- Interim guidance on [Heritage and Sustainability](#) published April 2022 sets out practical guidance for achieving sustainability measures where development impacts heritage assets.

Energy efficient homes

Council Housing

At 2022, BHCC owned and managed over 11,000 domestic dwellings. Recognising the substantive retrofit potential of its own housing stock, BHCC is working towards its own target of achieving an average SAP rating between 81 (EPC B) and 92 (EPC A) by 2030. Improving the energy efficiency of housing is not only a necessary step towards carbon neutrality, it also helps to reduce tenants' energy bills, tackle fuel poverty and ill-health linked to cold homes, reduce maintenance & repairs costs, and strengthen local energy security.

A range of sustainability and energy projects are being carried out across council homes.

There has been significant investment in upgrading gas boilers to A-rated appliances and 99% are now A-rated. The council has also trialled the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps in some housing stock, replacing inefficient electric heating systems.

Solar panels have been installed on 400 council homes and the aim is to add panels to 1,000 more council homes over the next 3 years.

There have been improvements in the EPC ratings of our council homes and an energy plan will prioritise measures to improve properties with low energy performance ratings of D to F.

A new Sustainability and Energy team set up earlier this year in housing is working on these and other projects.

Private Housing

Support for private households, tenants and landlords to make improvements to homes has continued throughout 2022-23 with a focus on vulnerable residents, tackling cold homes and high fuel bills.

- The Warm Safe Homes grant continues to support people and families in fuel poverty by providing energy efficiency measures to help manage energy bills and reduce emissions. The council made an extra £600,000 available for these grants in 2022, in addition to £400,000 agreed in 2021. The grant is available for homeowners and private tenants on low incomes to fund improvements such as cavity wall and loft insulation, installation of energy efficient windows and doors, more efficient heating and hot water systems, and installation of heat pumps, where appropriate.
- We worked with Brighton & Hove Energy Services Coop (BHESCO), to provide Home Energy Surveys that will provide specialist reports detailing a properties current energy state and suggested improvements. We continued to offer advice and the installation of small energy saving measures (via Brighton & Hove Energy Services Coop - BHESCO). Additional funding enabled us to expand the scheme into 2022-23.
- The national Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) scheme provides a free advice service helping people keep warm and reduce their energy bills. Including installing free energy saving kit in homes, check eligibility for insulation or a new boiler, give practical advice on heating systems and saving energy and arrange free money advice
- Developing a new Brighton & Hove Warmer Homes Programme to help people carry out energy improvements to privately owned and rented housing in the city. Details of the scheme are still being finalised, but the proposal is for the programme to provide support for owner occupiers and private renters in homes with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below, and a household income of less than £30,000 a year.
- Following a successful bid for the governments 'Sustainable Warmth' competition to fund improvements to private sector homes for households with low income and low EPC rated homes the 'Warmer Homes consortium' was launched in May 2022, running throughout 2022-23.

support is available for eligible households to pay for energy improvements through a Warmer Homes consortium. This funding runs until March 2023, The Warmer Homes funding is particularly looking to help households living in low energy performance homes not heated by mains gas. This could mean that the home is heated by electricity, liquid petroleum gas (LPG), or heating oil. The funding aims to support homes that are heated with electric, LPG or oil by offering low-carbon energy alternatives, contributing to both the government's fuel poverty targets and the UK's commitment to meet the net zero target by 2050.

- Over 700 privately rented properties that fell below the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards were identified in 2022. Property owners are initially being contacted with information, and an enforcement process will be followed if necessary.

Solar Together Sussex

Solar Together is a group-buying scheme that delivers cheaper installation of solar panels and battery storage systems for able-to-pay households including home owners and landlords. It is managed by West Sussex County Council, working with agents iChoosr, on behalf of 9 councils in Sussex, including Brighton & Hove City Council. The registrations for the 3rd round of this scheme was open in April and May 2023. In this period, over 8,000 households and 186 SMEs registered interest in the scheme. Compared to previous rounds, we are seeing a higher percentage of customers opting to install a battery with their PV system.

Environment, Biodiversity, Food, Agriculture

Biodiversity

The Brighton & Hove Local [Biodiversity Action Plan](#) is the background of the City's important habitats and species. It forms the basis for work under the Environment Act 2021, such as developing a Local Nature Strategy/ Nature Recovery Network in partnership with a wide range of local organisations, mapping habitats and green spaces, and introducing measurable Biodiversity Net Gain planning [guidance](#).

City Parks

The council continues to replace and extend tree cover in Brighton & Hove, whilst diversifying woodland to ensure the long-term sustainability of the city's tree stock (including a strategy to manage ash die-back) and maximise opportunities to increase biodiversity. In 2022/23, 70 street trees and 224 woodland trees were planted with funding from the council's Carbon Neutral Fund and the Forestry Commission Treescapes Fund. The Carbon Neutral Funding will enable the planting of an additional 100-150 street trees and between 200 and 250 woodland/parks trees in 2023/24.

An additional £150,000 of Carbon Neutral Funding was made available to trial innovative street tree pit drainage systems in 2022 and 2023 to reduce local flood risk.

[Wilder Verges](#): The council is undertaking a three-year verge management pilot of reduced mowing for small, grass areas to manage them as natural green spaces to encourage biodiversity and nature. We are trialling changes to [verge management](#) through reduced cutting regimes, with safeguards for visibility and accessibility, and this has resulted in significant increases in biodiversity in these areas. There are also direct carbon savings from less machine usage, and benefits from increased vegetative structure to better absorb carbon and pollutants.

[Wilding Waterhall](#) is working to 'wild' a former Brighton & Hove City Council Golf Course, to restore fragile chalk grassland and improve habitats for multiple species whilst offering a unique opportunity for local residents and visitors to learn more about our internationally important local environment.

This project is being led by Brighton & Hove City Council working closely with many local groups such as The Friends of Waterhall. Wilding Waterhall is part of a bigger project across the South Downs called Changing Chalk, and has been awarded [National Lottery](#) funding to deliver the project over 4 years, alongside Countryside Stewardship funding from Defra and funding from the council's Carbon Neutral Fund. Wilding Waterhall is working with local volunteers to survey the site to create a biodiversity baseline. This will support site monitoring in the future by showing what positive or negative biodiversity impacts are caused by changes in management technique. 2023/24 works include continued restoration of species-rich grassland, the development of waymark trails, and the creation of a second dew pond.

Coastal habitat at Black Rock

The council worked with environmental partners and local residents to improve and extend [coastal vegetated shingle habitat](#) at Black Rock in compensation for the loss of a Local Wildlife Site. Almost 1,000 young plants were grown by Kew Gardens Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst and include *Crambe maritima* (sea kale), *Glaucium flavum* (yellow-horned poppy) and *Solanum dulcamara* (bittersweet), and are now well established. Wildlife surveys of the area have recently identified a rare jumping spider for the first time in the UK.

City Downland Estate Plan (CDEP)

The City Downland Estate is owned by the council and farmed by tenant farmers. The council's 100-year action plan, the City Downland Estate Plan was agreed in early 2023. The vision of the CDEP is *"A rejuvenated City Downland Estate [that] will be carbon negative and climate resilient, its biodiverse grassland landscape fully restored and teeming with wildlife. The estate will be a leader in sustainable farming, where local food production will flourish..."* Two key objectives are to reverse the loss of biodiversity on the estate, and to work towards (and beyond) carbon net zero.

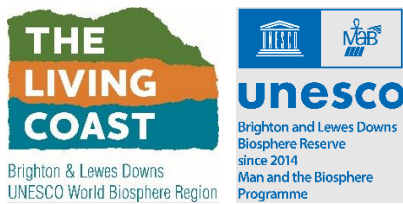
The Downland Advisory Panel advises on the plan's implementation. This is made up of tenant farmers, stakeholder organisations (such as the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, South Downs National Park Authority and Sussex Wildlife Trust) and community organisations such as the Brighton Downs Alliance, as well as councillors.

The council works closely with our tenant farmers, many of whom are in environmental stewardship, encouraging good farming practice which contributes to the council's carbon neutral target, in addition to improving biodiversity and ground water quality. The council has worked over the years with the South Downs National Park, Natural England, Southern Water, the University of Brighton, the Environment Agency, and other organisations, farmers and stakeholders in groundwater projects, particularly The Aquifer Partnership, seeking to reduce nitrate and ammonia inputs and encourage sustainable farming practices.

Soil health and carbon sequestration

The council continues to explore measures for protecting and enhancing biodiversity, working towards restoring depleted soils, species-rich chalk grassland landscapes and natural farming methods, alongside carbon capture and carbon neutrality.

Alongside this, the council is working to reduce chemical inputs into the environment and has already phased out pesticide use on all public land looked after by our environment and housing teams, except for high-risk invasive species with no effective alternative.



The Living Coast

[The Living Coast](#) Biosphere brings partners together from across the region to enable sustainable and innovative socio-economic development, with a focus on restoring and enhancing the resilience of our natural environment, nature connection and awareness. The natural environment provides all the resources required for all life to thrive and is the springboard for all human activity. The Biosphere partnership continued to deliver a programme of sustainability and cultural actions as well as preparing our formal application to UNESCO to be redesignated as a World Biosphere Region in 2024.

Food

Brighton & Hove City Council is working towards a healthier, more sustainable food system; one which reduces food poverty, supports local food businesses and reduces the environmental impact of the way in which we produce, consume and dispose of our food.

The council has an extensive [programme](#) of sustainable food actions together with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP). This supports a collaborative and city-wide effort to create a healthy, sustainable, and fair food system, and to use food to bring together community, farming and environmental interests on land management.

A wide range of activities took place in 2022, with our strong networks of organisations collaborating in the city-wide effort, with campaigns for a more plant-based diet, less single-use plastics, reducing food waste and increasing local food growing, and tackling food poverty. [Brighton & Hove Food Strategy Action Plan 2018 to 2023](#) combines the ecological transition with social justice. In 2022 there was a particular emphasis on the cost-of-living crisis and emergency food provision.

Brighton & Hove City Council's [Good Food Standards](#) are the council's standards for purchasing food and catering services. They are applied to all food and catering contracts and concessions. Property and estates, nurseries, schools and events are providing monitoring information.

In 2022 the Greater Brighton Economic Board approved a report investigating existing policy and partnerships in the Greater Brighton city region. The next phase of the work will be to explore how partners can coordinate action and progress on a fairer food system, collaborating with businesses, education and food partnerships, and creating investment plans.

Land Use Plus

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership were successful with their funding application to the Esme Fairbairn Foundation, for the [‘Land Use Plus’ project](#). As well as working with the council on the City Downland Estate Plan, the Land Use Plus project will explore landscape scale nature friendly agriculture on the chalk grassland surrounding Brighton & Hove, help farmers find local routes to market and improve access to local food in the area for all.

Food Waste

The Brighton & Hove Food Partnership includes Community Composting, Surplus Food Network and Flavour projects, who are pioneers in reducing food waste.

The [Surplus Food Network](#) is an ever-growing alliance of organisations tackling food waste by working with suppliers to distribute surplus to people in need in Brighton, Hove and surrounding areas. Membership of the network includes FareShare Sussex, the Real Junk Food Project Brighton, Sussex Homeless Support, the Sussex Gleaning Network, UKHarvest and is coordinated by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership. The Network saved 1,982 tonnes of food from being wasted in 2022, feeding over 5,000 people a week and saving 7,493 tonnes of CO₂e emissions.

[Sussex Surplus](#) is a pilot social enterprise from the charity Feedback taking fresh and surplus food in danger of being wasted and transforming it into long-life products and tasty meals that can then be sold wholesale to independent shops.

Food Use Places

A successful bid to the National Lottery Climate Action Fund supports the [Food Use Places](#) project which began in 2022 in 12 community locations in Brighton. The vision of Food Use Places is to become champions of food use rather than places that manage food waste. It brings together circular economy and community approaches to reduce food and packaging waste and increase composting.

Communication and engagement

The climate and biodiversity emergency is interlinked with the everyday concerns of people in the city – from the cost of energy, food and travel, to clean air and the power of nature to improve wellbeing.

There is a wealth of positive action happening, led and co-ordinated by communities, businesses and individuals in the city. We want to build on this work, capture its impact and bring a more strategic and focussed approach to communications and engagement, to accelerate change. The Communications and Engagement Strategy outlines the approach we'll take as a council to communicate and engage the city on climate action. The council's

During 2022 the council took part in UK100's national Local Climate Engagement coaching programme. The council puts this training into practice on the co-design of projects to engage on climate and biodiversity.

Encouraging sustainable travel

School Streets

Brighton & Hove is delivering a city-wide School Streets programme to all eligible infant, primary and junior schools. [School Streets](#) support the safe movement of children and families travelling to and from school by creating an environment that enables and encourages more walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting.

The School Streets programme aims to implement schemes at 3-6 school site per year, with strong community support. The latest School Street was introduced at Aldrington CE Primary in May 2023, bringing the total count of School Streets in operation to ten, with two more projected to launch in September 2023.

The council actively seeks opportunities to enhance biodiversity within School Street schemes. In coordination with the council's Our City Our World programme, pupils at [Westdene Primary School](#) renamed a newly created wildlife area 'Westdene Mini South Downs'. The pupils designed beautiful artwork for the information board, and helped plant out over 100 native, locally-sourced chalk plants on World Soil Day. The newly reclaimed area, which was previously tarmacked roadway, has had a chalk bank, and stag beetle loggery created, alongside trees planted following the introduction of the Schools Streets scheme. The area now provides habitats and homes to help support insects and wildlife, as well as be a new space for local residents and the school to enjoy and learn from all year round.

Move for Change

'Move for Change', powered by the BetterPoints app, launched in 2021 to encourage and reward residents and employees for walking, cycling, and using public transport. Residents and commuters to Brighton & Hove can earn points to be redeemed for

discounts and vouchers at local shops. They can also be donated to support local charities.

The Better Points dashboard provides the carbon emissions avoided by users taking part in the Move for Change challenge. At June 2023, 3,883 people were taking part in the challenge. They have travelled 9,006,430 miles using sustainable travel modes and avoided 905 tonnes of CO₂e.

Move for Change offered extra points for [Car Free Day 2022](#) and a prize draw. Other Car Free Day events included an eCargo exhibition event, School Streets taster session, free Coastal Biodiversity Healthwalk, free Dr Bike repairs, library exhibitions on active travel, and free bus travel to the Downs on the 'Breeze Buses', which resulted in a doubling of passenger numbers.

Engaging staff and teams across the council

In 2022 the council launched climate e-learning for staff and intensive Carbon Literacy® training for senior managers and are inviting them to make personal action plans to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency at work. As of 06 July 2023, 1082 staff had completed the trainings, with excellent feedback. The trainings continue to be delivered in 2023.

In 2023 the council ran two Circular Economy trainings for senior managers and a Circular Economy specification-writing masterclass for council buyers and commissioners working in housing construction and maintenance to reduce the resource- and carbon-intensity of council services.

As well as publishing regular news updates and information pages (e.g. sustainable hybrid working guidance) through the intranet and internal bulletins, the council created an open forum using Microsoft Teams for people in the council to share ideas, experiences, news, training and events about what they can do to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency at work. The council also made the Ecosia sustainable search engine available for employees to use.

Taken together, these actions are helping raise awareness and promote climate action at work, both on an individual and project level.

Jobs, Education & Skills

The education sector and young people are vital partners and have a long-term commitment to climate education and sustainability.

Environmental education in schools – Our City Our World

The Our City Our World schools programme has been co-developed with schools through engagement events with headteachers, governors, lead teachers and business managers. Over the last year, 47 of the city's schools have been involved in the programme. Brighton & Hove is the first local authority to develop a wholistic climate change programme for schools and this is receiving much interest locally and nationally.

Climate actions from schools 2022-23 include:

- (i) Increased knowledge of climate change through integration of key knowledge and skills into all curriculum areas;
- (ii) Biodiversity - Rewilding school grounds, developing a pollinator network throughout the city, training teachers in outdoor learning;
- (iii) Water - Completion of 2 SuDs in Schools schemes with additional 2 proposed;
- (iv) Waste - Waste reduction through a refill shop pilot at a primary school (<https://www.ourcityourworld.co.uk/news/refill-shop-opens-at-goldstone-primary/>), clothes and other item exchanges, and delivery of the 10-week Circular Economy module (see BLUEPRINT update below);
- (v) Energy - Solar or Schools; Use of Energy Sparks to identify;
- (vi) Food – food waste audits and trial of in-vessel composting, enabling the composting of raw and cooked food on-site
- (vii) Transport – priority of local school trips using sustainable transport, school trips by bike, bike train energy reduction opportunities.

During the 2022/23 academic year, B&H schools also benefited from a Circular Economy schools pilot, part of the EDRF-funded 'BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy' project. In the first phase of the pilot, participating schools learned about the relevance of circular approaches for supporting climate action through workshops covering specific materials and waste streams with dedicated input from city circular experts – see this [video](#) summary.

In the [second phase](#) of the Circular Economy schools pilot, a local Circular Economy expert created a 10-week online module with educational content tailored to Brighton & Hove, to give pupils the opportunity to learn about the Circular Economy already active in their city.

Further Education, Skills & Jobs

Local Skills Improvement Plan

The Sussex Chamber of Commerce's [Local Skills Improvement Plan](#) is working across East and West Sussex and the city of Brighton & Hove, to become a focal point for innovative education and skills development. It will identify green jobs, including non-green jobs in green industries (for example an accountant working for a wind farm) and green jobs in non-green industries. Together these provide valuable information for recruitment, businesses, education providers and careers support.

Green apprenticeships

The council's Pre-employment and Apprenticeship Manager will identify and monitor green apprenticeships. Current apprenticeships will be enhanced to ensure that they meet the needs of the employers within the growing green economy. New apprenticeships will be created to reflect new occupations to meet the challenge to reach net carbon zero.

Greener Sussex – skills development

FE Sussex, a collaborative partnership between eight Sussex further education colleges, was awarded £7m Department for Education Strategic Development Funding for [Greener Sussex](#) to improve green industry, technology and skills locally. Greener Sussex is investing more than £7M in new learning resources, staff training, employer updating and student awareness raising across Sussex. The project comprises five strands, two of which are managed by colleges in Brighton & Hove:

- Carbon Literacy - Brighton, Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College ([BHASVIC](#)) –
- [Electric Vehicle Technologies](#) - Greater Brighton Metropolitan College – six hybrid and electric vehicle technology training centres of excellence across Sussex.
- Alternative Energies & Hydrogen Technologies - Chichester College
- Decarbonisation Academies - East Sussex College Group
- Zero Carbon Land Management - Plumpton College

Circular Economy

Transitioning to a circular economy is a key part of the solution to tackle climate change as 45% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the extraction, processing and production of goods and growing food. It also tackles the biodiversity crisis, as keeping products and materials in use for longer reduces the need for newly mined materials, a major cause of global habitat loss.

Circular Economy Routemap and Action Plan

The [Circular Economy](#) Routemap and Action Plan were approved by the Policy & Resources Committee in May 2022. Progress against specific deliverables is monitored by an advisory Oversight Board, which includes representatives from the University of Brighton and Sussex University, Circular Brighton & Hove, Greater Brighton and the city's Economic Partnership.

Adapting to climate change

Climate adaptation is about managing or avoiding the risks that climate change will bring. The most significant climate hazards faced by Brighton & Hove are biodiversity loss linking directly to food security; heat stress; drought and water stress; urban and coastal flooding; storms and heavy precipitation; air, soil and water pollution. Brighton & Hove is already experiencing more heatwaves, wetter winters and windier conditions.

Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

A Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment was commissioned in 2022-23. This will report in Autumn 2023 and provide a baseline assessment to identify the areas and communities of the city most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and where methods of adaptation would be best implemented.

To prepare for extreme weather, the council's civil contingencies team produces a major incident plan which is reviewed annually.

Protection against coastal erosion and flood risk

As the coast protection authority, Brighton & Hove City Council has adopted the Brighton Marina to River Adur Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management [Strategy](#) to provide protection for the next 100 years.

In partnership with Adur District Council and Shoreham Port Authority, the scheme is being paid for from a series of centrally funded packages set out by the Government, to construct new flood and coastal defences. The scheme is repairing and strengthening floods walls and defences where necessary and installing some new timber groynes.

Groundwater and surface water flooding

In 2021 the City Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, commissioned a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and a Surface Water Management Plan. These plans identify locations where flooding is of concern. The next step is a feasibility study to look at the most appropriate measures to manage flood risk. Carbon emissions will be considered in the feasibility study as part of the option appraisal process.

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs)

In 2024 the council will deliver a sustainable drainage implementation plan to supplement surface water management activities to protect the properties and businesses of the city from surface water and extreme weather events, reduce contamination of the city's aquifer, and create habitats that enhance local biodiversity.

To date, the council has invested £240,000 from the Carbon Neutral Fund to realise Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) across four sites in Brighton & Hove

(Preston Park, Eldred Avenue, Norton Road and Wild Park). This internal investment was leveraged to attract external funding from Highways England and the Environment Agency to cover development costs.

Like the other three schemes, the SuDS scheme at Wild Park will create an attractive natural landscape. It will be designed around several shallow planted basins – or ‘rainscapes’ - that can hold water during heavy rainfall, and which help to reduce pollution and improve the area for people and nature. The Wild Park Rainscape will be linked to a rainscape project in Moulsecoomb Primary School.

The project was initiated by [TAP](#), a partnership between the South Downs National Park Authority, the Environment Agency, Southern Water and Brighton & Hove City Council, working together with the Brighton and Lewes Downs UNESCO Biosphere (The Living Coast) to protect the aquifer, which is the source of all our drinking water in the city.

Carden Avenue SUDs

The design for the Carden Avenue SUDs scheme mimics natural systems in which gravity and landform remove excess rainwater flow to reduce the risk of flooding to affected properties and contamination of the city’s aquifer. The project was part-funded through a Interreg 2 Seas programme (SCAPE). Construction works on Phase 1 were completed in 2020 and Phase 2 completed in 2022. This approach has been successful in storing excess run-off and diverting it away from vulnerable properties.

Carbon Offsetting

Brighton & Hove City Council recognises that offsetting carbon emissions is likely necessary to meet our carbon target, ideally nature-based solutions like habitat restoration, tree planting and woodland creation. We want to make sure that the local environment and communities benefit from any offsetting investment aligning to restore biodiversity and overlapping with nature's recovery – so we seek solutions within the council's geographical boundary or supply chain. The council does not purchase any carbon offset credits and there is at present no offsetting framework that we recommend to local businesses and developers.

In 2022, the council investigated the carbon-saving potential of projects funded by the Carbon Neutral Fund. We completed a detailed study of carbon savings from project including renewable energy for our parks equipment and vehicles, efficient LED lighting in sports facilities, and low-carbon restoration of failing road surfaces. Sussex Local Nature Partnership is also investigating the potential of natural habitats for carbon sequestration.

Brighton & Hove City Council is considering the potential of [Authority-Based Insetting](#) – an alternative to traditional offsetting. This framework aims to make more carbon removal projects happen locally; to enable better reporting of carbon reduction; to provide financial incentives and increase collaboration. This framework may be more of an engagement tool than a way of stimulating large-scale investment.

The Sussex Kelp Restoration Project may hold some exciting opportunities for carbon sequestration. At this stage there is still much research being undertaken to further our understanding on its importance and potential, and its wider role in adapting to climate change.

Procurement

The goods and services that the council procures from contractors and suppliers are likely to be the largest part of our corporate carbon footprint. Although the council cannot directly control emissions and environmental actions by suppliers and contractors, we can influence this through our procurement policies.

Following committee approval in 2022, the council is using a new Environmentally Sustainable procurement policy to maximise positive outcomes from our contracts. Collaborating with Orbis partners East Sussex and Surrey County Council, the new policy focuses on 4 areas: 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation', 'Prevention of Pollution', 'Sustainable Resource Use and Consumption' and 'Protection of Biodiversity'. This policy gives the council's suppliers the information they need to meet our 2030 Carbon Neutral requirements. It ensures environmental sustainability is embedded at the earliest stages of commissioning and procurement decision making. It also sets out a robust approach to data collection and reporting of supplier emissions throughout supply chains.

Progress to date:

- Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy agreed across Orbis partners, supporting commissioners to include carbon emission reduction and social value requirements in tender documents
- New specification-writing tool developed to strengthen environmentally sustainable requirements included in our tenders.
- Circular Economy specification-writing masterclass delivered to built environment contract managers, buyers and commissioners.

Financing climate action

Capital funding and grant funding

The majority of the council's financing for actions in the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme are sourced from general capital and revenue funding – for example improving energy efficiency in our council housing.

The council also actively applies for significant sums from external grant funding; recent successful awards include:

- Electric Vehicle chargepoints (Office for Zero Emission Vehicles)
- Local Climate Engagement coaching (UK100)

Brighton & Hove City Council's Carbon Neutral Fund

The council has allocated capital funding for the [Carbon Neutral Fund](#) which supports in-house projects that advance the strategic objectives of the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme: reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing biodiversity, and adapting to climate change. At [March 2023](#) over £20 million had been allocated to projects and a rigorous assessment of carbon savings from the projects carried out. This Annual Report notes where projects were funded by the Carbon Neutral Fund.

Pension fund

The city council's pension fund is managed by East Sussex County Council Pension Board. The East Sussex Pension Fund now reports annually on its exposure to fossil fuel investments and considers the risks to its investment from the effects of climate change.