

A Climate and Nature Strategy *for Stroud District*



December 2025

Foreword by Councillor Martin Percy, Chair of Environment Committee

I would like to thank everyone who responded to our consultation and contributed their time and thoughts to helping us create this new Climate and Nature Strategy for our district. We want this to be the start of a new collaboration with our communities and businesses to reduce our district's impact on climate and nature and prepare for the climate impacts we know are here and coming. Our new strategy is ambitious about increasing fairness, quality of life and creating a better present and future for everyone in the district.

We are clear about the council's own role in driving down carbon pollution and reducing our impacts on nature, including from the goods and services we buy, from our house building projects and our council's pension scheme. We are determined to show leadership, reducing our own emissions, but we will also enable and encourage others in the district to act too.

While we are decarbonising our society, we must ensure that the shift to a carbon-free economy is fair and equitable, recognising that both the impacts of climate change and the benefits of action are not evenly distributed. Achieving a just transition is a core part of this strategy and is embedded throughout all our work.

We are starting the work to prepare for a future where global temperatures could rise by 2 degrees Celsius with all the challenges that will bring. We are already seeing the impact of rising temperatures, increasing the frequency of heatwaves and intense rainfall that create rising food and insurance costs. We will put in place nature positive adaptation that protects the most vulnerable in our society.



We are expanding our ambition for nature restoration, and we will work on our own land and in partnership with farmers and other land managers towards the ambition to see 30% of all land and water in the district supporting nature recovery by 2030. The council already has a track record of working with nature to reduce flooding and we will continue to prioritise nature-based approaches to protect us from the impacts of climate change.

We are determined not only to meet our core objectives, but to create lasting change that will lead to warmer, healthier homes, cleaner air, flourishing wildlife and a circular, more resilient local economy.



Introduction

Stroud District Council was one of the first local authorities to declare both a climate and ecological emergency. The original [2030 Strategy](#) was our response to the declaration of those emergencies and was written to create a 10-year programme of work to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

Since 2020, the council has made good progress in reducing the emissions from our main buildings, retrofitting renewable energy installations and improving the energy efficiency of both our properties and to the housing owned by the council. We have made significant reductions to our own scope 1 and 2 emissions (emissions we have direct control over), but we now know that most emissions produced by the council sit within scope 3 (indirect emissions associated with goods or services we purchase, capital works and

pensions). We know that building new homes and infrastructure creates significant levels of carbon pollution. We want to ensure that our large capital projects reduce their carbon both during construction and whilst operational.

“We want to ensure that our large capital projects reduce their carbon both during construction and whilst operational”

Our weather is changing significantly. Globally 2023 was the warmest year in a series stretching back to 1850, according to the Met Office and the University of East Anglia. The [Met Office State of UK Climate Report 2024](#) confirms that October 2023 to March 2024 was the wettest winter half-year on record in the UK. [Provisional Met Office statistics](#) confirm that summer 2025 was officially the warmest summer on record for the UK. Analysis has also

shown that a summer as hot or hotter than 2025 is now 70 times more likely than it would be in a ‘natural’ climate with no human caused greenhouse gas emissions.





Introduction

The UK's mean temperature from 1 June to 31 August stands at 16.10°C, which is 1.51°C above the long-term meteorological average. This surpasses the previous record of 15.76°C, set in 2018, and pushes the summer of 1976 out of the top five warmest summers in a series dating back to 1884.

Across the globe, we are seeing intense heatwaves and extreme flood events. Extreme flooding in [Valencia in Spain](#) killed over 200 people in November 2024 and flash flooding in Texas in July 2025 killed over 130 people.

The changing climate is also impacting on the price of food. England suffered [its second worst harvest in 2025](#). The [Bank of England monetary Policy Report in August 2025](#) states that dry weather conditions are pushing up the production costs of beef and some dairy products in the UK and elsewhere. Prices for five foods that are sensitive to climate – [butter, beef, milk, coffee and chocolate](#) – have risen by an average of 15.6% over the past year, compared with just 2.8% for other food and drink.

The impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, increased storm intensity and rainfall, increased heat and more expensive food, are already impacting our communities in Stroud district. This updated strategy now has much more specific focus on the need to plan and implement adaptation.

[The State of Nature report 2023](#) confirms that nature is still seriously declining across England and other parts of the UK, a country that is already one of the most nature-depleted in the world. The data show that since 1970 UK species have declined by about 19% on average, and nearly 1 in 6 species (16.1%) are now threatened with extinction. [The State of Natural Capital England report 2024](#) shows that the functioning of nature or how it provides our clean water, clean air and food, is also declining,



meaning ecosystems are not working as well as they should be.

Whilst the 2030 strategy had a section on nature it did not include specific targets for nature recovery or link nature recovery with key sectors of the economy. This new strategy now includes an ambition for nature in the district.

The [Council's Plan](#), agreed in February 2025, describes the priorities for the council, including a review and update for the 2030 Strategy. The Council Plan sets the framework for our continuing work on climate and nature and this new strategy describes in more detail what we want to achieve for some of the objectives contained in the plan.

This updated strategy now takes account of new policy, legislation and funding on climate and nature issues, and new understanding and methodologies for carbon accounting. This allows the council to increase our emphasis on reducing scope 3 emissions and to establish specific ambitions for reducing carbon emissions. It also places far greater emphasis on restoring nature and also on what we need to do to adapt our district to the impacts of a changing climate.



Introduction

The outcomes we are trying to achieve

Many of the actions we need to put in place to slow down warming and reduce our impact on nature will improve our standard of living and make our society fairer. Implementing our strategy to tackle the nature and climate emergencies will help us to create a better quality of life for everyone. This will mean that:

- 1 *Our homes, workplaces and schools are comfortable, healthy and efficient.*
- 2 *We can afford the energy needed to live well and our energy system is fairer, resilient to shocks and not dependent on fossil fuels.*
- 3 *We can easily walk, cycle or use public transport if we choose to, and goods are safely transported through our communities without polluting our streets.*
- 4 *We have good jobs, and our businesses are thriving in a greener circular economy.*
- 5 *We produce less waste through sharing and repairing.*
- 6 *We can afford to eat well and sustainably, and our farmers have the capacity and resources to grow and produce sustainable food that helps restore nature.*
- 7 *Our towns and villages are protected from*

flooding, drought, heat and storms and feel resilient and connected to each other.

- 8 *We can build new houses and create new communities that help nature without damaging the climate.*
- 9 *We can see and hear that nature is recovering and healthy in the places we live and visit.*

This new climate and nature strategy puts people and quality of life at the heart of the process. All our work on climate and nature is aimed at achieving the outcomes above, as part of creating a better, fairer, greener, society. This is why we are putting the concept of a “Just Transition” at the heart of our strategy.

A just transition means that the benefits of moving towards a more sustainable future are shared widely and felt by those that have the most to lose from the effects of climate change or the transition to a low carbon economy. It means prioritising residents and business that will be more severely affected by the impacts of climate change or those who find it harder to change their ways of working because of the type of industry or business they own or work for.

How our new strategy is structured

To help us measure and report how well we are performing, and to make sure we link our activity to reducing carbon emissions, restoring nature and better adaptation to climate impacts, we have created four new high-level ambitions, structured around measurable new outcomes for carbon, nature and adaptation.

Reducing our impacts on climate and nature involves changing the way we work and live

so the core activity in this strategy is focussed around eleven themes that are based upon areas of society and the economy that are central to tackling the climate and nature emergencies.

For each theme, we have established a series of strategic objectives that describe the work we want to put in place to contribute to achieving the four ambitions and ultimately, the societal outcomes listed in the introduction.



Our Ambitions

Our ambitions for reducing carbon emissions, helping nature recovery and adapting to the impacts of climate change across the council and the wider district

Ambition 1: SDC will reduce its Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions to net zero by 2030 and will reduce its Scope 3 emissions to net zero by 2050 or sooner if possible.

Ambition 2: SDC will enable and encourage the district to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner if possible.

We have changed both the metric and the time scales for our emissions targets. The previous carbon neutral 2030 strategy did not create any specific emissions reductions targets, but instead was aiming to “do all in our power to help the district be Carbon Neutral by 2030”.

We are moving away from aiming for carbon neutrality and instead, working to achieve “net zero”, a more stringent and transparent measure. The Climate Change Committee defines net zero as, “all sources of emissions are reduced as close to zero as possible and that any emissions that cannot be avoided are compensated for by an equal amount of active removal of emissions from the atmosphere.”

Whilst the date of 2030 for achieving carbon neutrality was an important mechanism to galvanise action, achieving net zero emissions across all council activities and scopes will take much longer and will require deeper changes in the way the council and wider society operates. Achieving net zero across all council activities includes emitting almost zero carbon from building new homes, retrofitting and

maintaining older ones, building regeneration projects and from our pension’s investments. Achieving net zero across the district involves more structural changes to the sources of energy we use, requiring a significant shift to electrification for heating, transport and industrial processes.

Carbon emissions produced by organisations and society are grouped into three separate types to help identify the changes required to reduce them. We call these types “Scopes”. The National Grid and many other organisations define the different scopes as:

Scope 1 emissions:

Scope 1 covers emissions from sources that an organisation owns or controls directly – for example from burning fuel in our fleet of vehicles (if they’re not electrically-powered).

Scope 2 emissions:

Scope 2 are emissions that a company causes indirectly and come from where the energy it purchases and uses is produced. For example, the emissions caused when generating the electricity that we use in our buildings would fall into this category.

Scope 3 emissions:

Scope 3 encompasses emissions that are not produced by the company itself and are not the result of activities from assets owned or controlled by them, but by those that it’s indirectly responsible for up and down its value chain. An example of this is when we buy, use and dispose of products from suppliers. Scope 3 emissions include all sources not within the scope 1 and 2 boundaries.

Our Ambitions

Although the council can act relatively quickly on its own scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, we have much less influence on some of the most significant sources of emissions across our district. The council have verified that its electricity supply is now sourced from a renewable generation tariff from a supplier holding separate time based certification demonstrating the purchase of renewable energy.



Improvements in the methodology used to calculate emissions now allows us to more accurately report emissions generated from all our activities, including all procurement, capital projects and those generated from the council’s pensions holdings. This means that in our published [carbon accounts](#) for 2024, the council’s emissions appear to have significantly increased; the trend previously has been a year-on-year reduction in emissions,

so we are confident that this sudden spike can be attributed to our change in methodology allowing for more thorough reporting, rather than sudden increases in actual emissions reported on previously. It does however mean that the council is emitting more carbon than previously reported

To reflect this, the council will adopt an ambition to achieve net zero in our scope 1 and scope 2 emissions by 2030. Whilst this is still challenging, we believe that it is possible to achieve.

However, our analysis of council scope 3 emissions, and emissions in the wider district, demonstrates that it is highly unlikely we or the district would achieve net zero for either of those by 2030. Most businesses and economic activities generating emissions across the district, including those providing goods and services to the council, are likely to be aligned



2024 Carbon Accounts

Our Ambitions

with the Government target to achieve net zero by 2050. This means it would be very difficult for the council to work towards an earlier target.

District councils are very reliant on national policy, legislation and funding to bring down emissions across the wider district, (including the electrification of most heating, transport and manufacturing) and to some extent our scope 3 emissions. The council therefore proposes to align our own ambition to reduce our scope 3 emissions and the district wide ambition with the UK legally binding target to achieve net zero by 2050 or sooner if government policy or action makes that possible. As part of this ambition, if government creates intermediate carbon targets as part of the future carbon budgeting process, the council will also adopt and work towards achieving those intermediate targets.

The council has an important leadership role to play in reducing emissions and we will continue to encourage and enable our partners, residents, business and other public bodies to reduce their scope 3 emissions in line with the 2050 deadline or sooner. We will also be working closely with businesses through our procurement process to encourage and enable emissions reductions and improving our contractor requirements to drive innovation.

We expect that as other public authorities update their carbon accounts to utilise better methodologies, greater data availability and more transparency, many could come to similar conclusions as we have regarding existing 2030 targets and the challenges associated with achieving net zero by 2030 across all scopes. On our website, we have published a [carbon baseline summary](#), that provides more detail about the council and the district wide carbon emissions and the emissions reductions pathways needed to achieve net zero.

Ambition 3: SDC will work alongside landowners, partners and residents to support the ambition that at least 30% of all land and water in the district is managed for and supporting nature recovery by 2030.

This ambition reflects the international agreement signed by the UK at the UN Biodiversity Summit (COP 15) in 2022 to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 ([30by30](#)). SDC does not have access to all the necessary powers or incentive mechanisms to make this happen, but we can demonstrate our participation in relevant work, provide advocacy and ensure the management of our own land is counting towards this target. Our ambition is for the council to take an active role in both reversing nature's decline and in restoring it and to actively support landowners in the district to manage their land to contribute to this. As this is a national and international target, there is a powerful case for the council to publicly align our own ambition on nature and develop policy accordingly.

We estimate that the percentage of land currently managed primarily for nature in the district is 5%. This currently includes all statutory and non-statutory designated conservation sites (Commons, Severn Estuary etc) and is based on the government guidance already available. The council will keep the methodology used to estimate the % of land managed for nature consistent with Government published guidance and principles. It currently excludes farmland managed for both food production and nature, but the council expects future guidance to include land of this type.



Our Ambitions

Ambition 4: By 2030, SDC will be implementing an adaptation plan to protect nature, residents, business and infrastructure from the impacts of 2 degrees Celsius warming and have assessed the risks from 4 degrees.



This new strategy recognises that our climate is already changing rapidly, creating challenges and impacts to our everyday lives, our businesses and our natural environment and that lack of rapid action has both immediate and far reaching, serious consequences. This ambition is designed to quantify the level of climate risk that the district should prepare for and create and begin implementing a plan for adaptation by 2030. This will assist the council in attracting funding for new projects and demonstrates our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable residents, services and infrastructure from the increasing levels of

damage and disruption we are seeing from climate driven hazards.

We know that the consequences and impacts of climate change are starting to be felt across society and that we need to put in place accelerated adaptation and planning to reduce those impacts. This updated strategy therefore includes greater emphasis on adaptation and specific strategic objectives for planning, increasing resilience, and interventions that will help reduce and manage some of the main impacts that climate change is likely to bring.

New Ambitions Summary

Ambition 1	SDC will reduce its Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions to net zero by 2030 and will reduce its Scope 3 emissions to net zero by 2050 or sooner if possible.
Ambition 2	SDC will enable and encourage the district to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner if possible.
Ambition 3	SDC will work alongside landowners, partners and residents to support the ambition that at least 30% of all land and water in the district is managed for and supporting nature recovery by 2030.
Ambition 4	By 2030, SDC will be implementing an adaptation plan to protect nature, residents, business and infrastructure from the impacts of 2 degrees Celsius warming and have assessed the risks from 4 degrees.



Implementation

Implementing the strategy

Where the action to achieve an objective is directly within the operational scope of the council, the council will continue to be an exemplar, acting on our own emissions and impacts to nature and adapting our own estate and operations to reduce the impacts of climate hazards on our service provision. Through our services, policies and projects we will demonstrate leadership, working in partnership to achieve ecosystem restoration, nature recovery, a just transition to net zero and protecting people from climate impacts.



To help achieve the ambitions and objectives outlined in the strategy that rely more upon actions from others, the council will need to work in partnership with a wide range of other organisations, town and parish councils, businesses and community groups and of course residents. In those areas of work, the council will act as an enabler and encourage good practice and work. We will do this by bringing together diverse groups with shared objectives, by incentivising with grants and funding and by publicising and sharing good work going on within the district.

For each of the strategic objectives, we have identified whether the council will primarily act as an exemplar (exe), undertaking work ourselves. As an enabler (enb), bringing together the right partners to undertake work or providing funding to them. Or as an encourager (enc), advocating and using our influence to make changes happen.

We will act as an Exemplar

Joining up all parts of the council under a common mission, investing in our own property and changing our policies and practices.



To help others in the district tackle their challenges we will use our land and buildings to demonstrate how things can be achieved and how new technologies can be applied.

We will be an Enabler and play our part as a partner

We will act as a focal point for diverse groups to come together. In partnerships and through consultation we will identify shared benefits and the initiatives to achieve them. We will focus on making the most of our strategic relationships and provide or signpost to funding and expertise.

We will Encourage & actively promote good practice

The council will be looking for chances to increase our advocacy to those with the relevant powers or funding. We will be active in our communications and use a variety of ways to engage, advise and inform the district to help everyone get involved.



Implementation

Delivering and funding actions

Our [Council Plan](#), agreed in February 2025, describes the priorities for the council for the next four years, including an action to revise and implement our Climate and Nature Strategy. The Council Plan sets the framework for all the council's work, including our continuing work on climate and nature. The strategic objectives established for each theme are linked to the council plan and describe in more detail how and what we want to achieve.

The council's budget is determined and agreed annually to implement the council plan. Each year the different services across the council will identify actions they can implement to deliver the council plan and the strategic objectives of this climate and nature strategy aligned to their work areas.

Achieving some of the strategic objectives and the ambitions is likely to involve significant upfront investment, but some of the elements of the strategy are likely to be cost-neutral or cost-saving over time. For example, the council uses vehicles to deliver a range of services, and as these near the end of their operational life, we will switch from fossil fuel powered to Electric Vehicles. The cost of installing additional chargers is likely to be offset by the reduced cost of fuelling those vehicles. The council will be actively seeking to reduce the carbon emissions from our procurement of goods and services, but as more of the wider economy becomes electrified and carbon free, the scope 3 emissions from our goods and services will also reduce without the need to specifically seek lower carbon options.

The council's core annual funding is not sufficient to achieve all the ambitions and strategic objectives identified in this strategy.



That will require securing additional external funding and working through and within partnerships and other organisations that have access to different funding and powers.

Achieving many of the objectives will require funding and actions from other sources and organisations, including central government. For example, the council has successfully attracted over £14m of funding to improve the quality and energy efficiency of our council houses and we have estimated it will cost about a further £10M to bring all council houses to a minimum EPC of C. We have also been successful in attracting twelve years of flood funding to implement the Stroud Valleys Natural Flood Management scheme.

Philanthropic institutions and other public bodies and agencies also provide grants or have core funding for areas of activity outside the direct scope of the council. For example, funding to manage landscape scale nature restoration or funding to encourage private homeowners to take up energy efficiency and boiler upgrade grants. Much of the council's work will include applying for and encouraging others to apply for funding of this type. Additional capital funding from a range of sources will be needed to make further changes to our property and estates and to assist residents, partners and businesses to make the changes needed to their properties to reduce emissions, reduce impacts on nature and to adapt to increased climate impacts.

Powers to lead and direct actions are sometimes held by other organisations and public bodies. In these cases, the council will act as an advocate to improve service provision and make the case for climate and nature action. For example, providing and improving public transport.





Implementation



Monitoring and Reporting Progress

To enable us to communicate our progress on implementing this strategy, the council will develop a monitoring plan that will allow us to keep track of our progress and share that with the community on an annual basis.

The council already publishes an annual carbon account and alongside this, we will publish an annual report showing progress on achieving the nature and adaptation ambitions and how we are implementing actions to contribute to achieving the strategic objectives for each theme.

Principles underpinning our work

How we implement our climate and nature strategy is an important part of what we are seeking to achieve. There are two broad principles underpinning our work. The first is that we want to implement action in ways that support our community and achieve a fairer more equitable or just transition.

The second is that we will always favour and work towards nature-based solutions to achieve our objectives. Nature-based solutions allow us to address both the causes and impacts of climate change through actions for nature recovery.

We recognise that these two crises must be addressed together, and we also know that the impacts of climate change and nature depletion will at first disproportionately affect our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.



That is why we are establishing a new Climate and Nature Partnership for the district, to bring together key partners and organisations that have roles and responsibilities for implementing action on climate and nature and can help the council achieve the district ambitions.

The council is also actively working to develop a new Community Municipal Investment mechanism to raise additional borrowed capital funding to implement specific actions that provide longer term economic and societal benefits. Specifically, the council is looking at the feasibility of using additional capital raised through this mechanism to install car park solar canopies at some of the districts car parks for buildings and facilities where there is a significant demand for electricity.



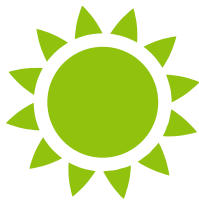
Implementation

What is a Just Transition?

Protecting the most vulnerable from impacts of climate change

The council will implement work and try to influence others to ensure that it prioritises the protection of those who are most at risk and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. For example, research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that the extent to which individuals can cope with climate change impacts is influenced by the interaction between personal factors (e.g. health, age), social factors (e.g. income, neighbourhood cohesion, isolation), and environmental factors (e.g. building quality, green space).

People over the age of 75, very young people and people with chronic or severe illnesses are most at risk. Climate change means heat waves are likely to become more common and during hot weather there is a risk of developing heat exhaustion, heatstroke and respiratory problems. Many excess deaths during heatwaves are among older people; their temperature regulation processes are less efficient, making them less able to cope with extreme temperature. Older people may also be more likely to experience effects such as dehydration and the worsening of existing health problems during heatwaves. Examples of how the council might support this include making sure any adaptation plans and actions recognise and take account of the age of residents.



Creating a greener economy in a fairer way

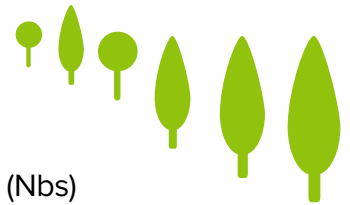
Whilst moving the economy to a greener more sustainable model, the council will support workers and communities, especially those in high carbon industries, by ensuring that

the wider economy is electrified as quickly as possible and by creating and supporting good quality jobs in a cleaner and greener economy. This includes opportunities for people to retrain and develop new skills or adapt existing skills. Examples of this include re-training for electricians and plumbers to install heat pumps, or re-training agricultural contractors to install natural flood management.

A just transition will support our social and economic well-being, protecting the most vulnerable and supporting those who need to find different jobs or develop new skills.

The council will use the tools it has at its disposal to support this, such as Equality Impact Assessments, the Climate and Nature decision-making tool, and measuring and favouring social value in our procurement.

What are Nature based solutions?



Nature-based solutions (Nbs) are simply methods of restoring natural habitats or providing space for nature's recovery in places and ways that can reduce a range of other environmental impacts and can provide additional benefits for health and wellbeing and local economies. They can be as simple as planting trees to provide shade or using nature to reduce flooding.

They are crucial tools for both adapting to climate impacts and helping to mitigate climate change in the first place. They are often much cheaper than engineered solutions and provide a cost-effective way to reduce climate risks and reduce vulnerability to impacts like flooding and coastal erosion, whilst at the same time, helping nature to recover.



Implementation

They can also improve overall community well-being, for example by providing more green spaces in urban areas, improving both the attractiveness of an area and providing an important function to society.

The skills needed to implement nature-based solutions can also create job opportunities and support local economies if they are implemented in partnership with local communities and landowners and utilise the local contracting workforce.

The council understands that not all climate related impacts can be solved by nature-based

approaches, and it will use and implement engineered solutions if nature-based approaches cannot achieve all the desired outcome or are not feasible in a particular circumstance. Many engineered approaches use a hybrid of natural and non-natural systems and technology to achieve their objectives. For example, sustainable drainage systems will often make use of both natural and engineered flow pathways for storing, filtering and slowing down water to reduce flood risk.

The council will investigate and use nature-based approaches first, to their full potential, before reaching for engineered solutions.

Examples of Nature-based solutions we want to encourage and enable in our district and the benefits they can provide

River and floodplain restoration, by implementing natural flood management techniques will increase biodiversity and protect against flooding and droughts.

Coastal wetlands such as saltmarsh can help store carbon and reduce erosion and flood risk.

Wetlands and woodlands act as natural sponges, absorbing and storing water during heavy rainfall, reducing the risk of flooding and reducing pollution.

Increasing urban tree cover and green spaces can play a vital role in providing shade, regulating temperature and reducing surface water flooding.

Promoting sustainable land management practices and restoring habitats can improve soils, which support increased biodiversity and will also act as a sponge.

Recreating and restoring wetlands to improve water quality, reduce flood risks, and support biodiversity, potentially by reintroducing Beavers.



Themes of the Strategy

The themes are the key topics or sectors of society and the economy in which the council needs to work to achieve our outcomes and the four ambitions we have established. They represent the parts of the economy, the natural environment and society that have most influence either directly or indirectly on carbon emissions, impacts to nature and adapting to climate related impacts. The council has a greater or lesser role in influencing some of these, depending upon how closely they match areas of core service delivery. The themes of the strategy are:

Nature



The council has a range of statutory duties and responsibilities for nature through a variety of legislation, however, we are seeking to go much further in the protection and restoration of nature within the district. This means our ambitions for nature in this strategy seek to go beyond those direct legal responsibilities and are about how we manage our own land, the impacts of our procurement and our role influencing others in the management of their land.

Adaptation



The council has an important role to play in adaptation planning to enable us to protect people, communities and infrastructure from climate impacts. Adaptation is woven into most of the other themes, but we have created a specific theme for adaptation planning and resilience to reflect the importance of this.

Buildings



We need to change the way we build homes and communities, ensuring new buildings will produce zero emissions when occupied, have low embedded carbon in their structures and are better adapted to withstand the impacts of climate change, including floods, storms and droughts.

Energy



Changing the way we use and generate energy in our homes, commercial buildings and public buildings is a key way that the council can influence emissions in the district and support the ambition to achieve net zero, for our own estate, but also in the wider district. How we generate and use energy is fundamental to reducing carbon emissions and can also have direct effects on nature. Through its strategic planning functions, the council can have an influence over longer term energy demand and context in the district.

Business, Jobs and Circular Economy



The wider economy and how it functions are essential to reducing impacts on the climate and on nature. The council is keen to influence the creation of a well-being focussed economy that can provide for everyone in our district within planetary boundaries, ensuring that the district achieves net zero emissions by 2050. There are many economic opportunities arising from the need to create a low carbon, low nature impact economy.



Themes of the Strategy

Resources and Consumption



Reducing the amount of waste generated and handled by society will reduce the demand for virgin materials and reduce the amount of energy required to collect, and process that waste.

Mobility and Transport



How we move around, the types of vehicles and availability of alternatives ways of travelling all influence the direct emissions in the district. According to data from the [Department for Energy and Net Zero](#), transport accounts nationally for approximately 26% of all domestic emissions, so reducing emissions from transport is an extremely important part of any plan to achieve net zero.

Just Transition and Community



Creating a fair or just transition through our climate and nature work is a core principle of what we want to do and how we want to work. It means making sure that we do not disadvantage anyone or leave anyone behind in the shift to a net zero economy. To reflect the importance of this, the focus is on creating jobs and building skills to work in a green economy, ensuring our economic strategy is aligned with a just transition and creating a way for our communities and partners to work with the council.

Governance, Planning and Decision making



All decisions made by the Council on spending and policy have the potential to increase or reduce carbon emissions and impacts to nature. How we make those decisions, and the information used to make them are key areas of council activity. Alongside this, the Local Plan created by the council is probably the most important way the council can influence emissions and plan future adaptation to climate impacts in the wider district.

Food and Farming



Food security and the resilience of the food system will be under pressure from a changing climate and changes in food prices will also likely be a primary way we experience climate impacts. Flooding and drought will have significant impacts on farmers and their ability to produce many staple crops. Increasing the amount of food we produce locally and making sure we waste less food will help us to overcome some of those impacts and will form an important part of adaptation.

Water, Rivers and Coast



The primary way that most of us will initially experience and feel the impacts of climate change is through changes to water, rivers and the sea. A warmer climate increases the amount of water in the atmosphere, leading to increased intensity of rainfall leading to increased flood risk. This will impact both our communities and the natural water environment. Sea level rise in the Severn Estuary will continue in the medium term irrespective of emissions reductions. We may also experience more drought and dry conditions.



Strategic Objectives

For each theme in the strategy, we have developed several strategic objectives.

These strategic objectives describe what we are aiming to achieve for each of the themes and have been co-produced with input from across all services and district councillors and consultation with residents and partners. As described in an earlier section, achieving many of the strategic objectives will require working in partnership with other public bodies, residents, Town and Parish Councils, charities, community groups and businesses.

The [Council Plan](#) describes the priorities for the council and sets the framework for our continuing work on climate and nature. The strategic objectives in the following sections describe in more detail what we want to achieve.

The strategic objectives reflect work that the council can undertake, whether this is through our role as an enabler or an encourager of others or setting an example in the work we undertake ourselves. It is important to understand however that the strategic objectives may not describe everything that needs to happen across the district to achieve net zero, nature recovery and adaptation across the whole of the economy and wider society. There are many other changes needed to achieve those aims.

As described earlier each strategic objective identifies whether the work of the council in that objective is primarily as being an Exemplar (exe), Enabler (enb), an Encourager (enc) or sometimes a combination of these.





Nature



“We can see and hear that nature is recovering and healthy in the places we live and visit”.

Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Lead the transition to net zero carbon emissions and nature’s recovery in the district;
- Build the district’s nature recovery network;
- Ensure Council-managed open spaces are increasing in biodiversity and contributing effectively to nature’s recover;
- Promote sustainable development by balancing new housing, transport and employment requirements with the necessary infrastructure and environmental protection for the district;

The council fully supports the national ambition to achieve 30% of all land and water in the district being managed for nature’s recovery by 2030. “Nature recovery” simply means putting in place changes or action to help restore, manage or protect wildlife that has been lost or impacted because of human activity in the past or present

We will use government guidance to identify what types of land management and land can count towards meeting this target. We will work alongside organisations such as Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and the WWT, all of which are landowners and active in working with farmers for nature recovery in the district, to determine where the council can add most value to their important work.



For example, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust work with landowners beyond their nature reserves within [Nature Recovery](#) zones to create larger areas of wildlife friendly management to support the species on their reserves. The National Trust are working locally on their [Stroud Landscape Project](#) to restore wildlife rich meadows and woodlands and create wildlife corridors between nature rich areas. The WWT are working with farmers and partners to restore and create floodplain wetlands alongside the River Severn as part of the [Eelscapes](#) project

Many farmers and landowners in the district are part of farming schemes designed specifically to allow nature's recovery alongside the production of food and the council will also work with others to further support those farmers that transition to more nature friendly farming and land management.

Whilst designated and protected conservation sites are an important component of the 30by30 target, the work of our partners and of farmers involved in nature friendly farming schemes is equally essential.

The Stroud district is fortunate to host an incredible range of habitats and species, including wildflower rich grasslands, ancient Beech woodlands, rare limestone springs, streams and rivers and of course one of the largest and most significant estuaries in the country.



The natural habitats are a mosaic of diverse and ecologically significant landscapes, many of which have legal protection for their nature importance for wildflower grasslands, woodlands and wetlands, with numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), National Nature

Reserves (NNR) and many locally important wildlife sites.

The council already has a range of statutory duties and responsibilities for nature through a variety of legislation, most of which are clustered around our interactions with protected areas or protected habitats and species through the development management and planning system. For example, the council is actively involved in helping to manage impacts on the SACs by implementing Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRAs) and mitigation strategies through our strategic planning and development management work.



The council manages Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) schemes to reduce recreational pressure on sensitive SACs like Rodborough Common and the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods.

For the Severn Estuary, the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) coordinates cross-boundary management. This includes input from Stroud District Council, Natural England, the Environment Agency, and others to ensure consistent protection of this important estuarine habitat.

However, our ambitions for nature in this strategy seek to go beyond those direct legal responsibilities and are about how we manage our own land, our role influencing others in the management of theirs, but also about reducing the impacts to nature from the goods and services we buy and working with nature to help reduce the impacts of climate change.

Our strategic objectives for nature are:



Nature

N01 **Contribute to the creation and implementation of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and use that to create a Stroud District Local Nature Recovery Plan (exe)**

Contributing to the creation and implementation of the [Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(GLNRS\)](#) is essential to ensure local priorities, ecological knowledge, and community values are embedded in the county-wide vision for nature recovery. By actively participating in the GLNRS, Stroud district can align its environmental goals with broader regional objectives. This involvement provides a strong foundation for developing a Stroud District Local Nature Recovery Plan, that will identify actions to implement the county wide strategy in our district.

The council is also implementing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regulations, requiring new developments to leave nature in a measurably better state than before. While the natural environment around Stroud faces pressures from development and climate change, there is a strong local commitment to ecological restoration and sustainable land management.

N02 **Manage Council owned land to maximise biodiversity and nature creating high quality habitats (exe)**

The council has responsibility for the management of some important areas of land and habitats, such as Selsley common, but it also owns and manages many areas of park and multiuse green space. We are already implementing [No Mow May](#), changing the management of grasslands around our housing and implementing better tree management.



Managing council owned land to maximise biodiversity and create high-quality habitats is a vital step in tackling the nature and climate emergencies at a local level. These public spaces offer a unique opportunity to directly restore ecosystems, support pollinators, and provide safe havens for wildlife, all while enhancing the beauty and resilience of our communities.

N03 **Eliminate routine pesticide use on council owned land and encourage other public bodies and managers of amenity, green and public space to eliminate routine pesticide use on theirs (exe, enc)**

The council has committed to reviewing and potentially eliminating routine pesticide use on its own land, limiting its use only to tackle invasive non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed or Giant Hogweed. Eliminating routine pesticide use by other public bodies and those managing parks, green spaces, and other public areas is crucial for protecting both biodiversity and public health and the council will advocate strongly for this to happen. Pesticides can harm pollinators like bees and butterflies, contaminate soil and water, and disrupt the delicate balance of local ecosystems.



Nature

N04 Ensure the new Local Plan for Stroud district fully supports nature recovery and prioritises the use of nature-based solutions (exe)

Developing a new Local Plan that supports nature recovery is essential for shaping a future where people and nature can thrive together. As our towns and communities grow, we have a unique opportunity to design spaces that protect and restore wildlife habitats, connect green corridors, and build resilience to climate change. A nature-friendly plan that goes beyond statutory obligations, strongly advocating for building with nature standards on new developments, such as green corridors, swift boxes, hedgehog corridors, sustainable drainage systems and urban tree cover, ensures that new developments contribute positively to the environment and benefit from the protection from climate impacts that nature can provide. There are already fantastic toolkits and guidance published that the council can draw upon to create policies to prioritise the use of nature based solutions, including the [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) published by Natural England and the [Building with Nature](#) Green Infrastructure Standard. (This strategic objective links to GPD04)

N05 Develop a method to measure and reduce embedded impacts to nature in procurement of goods and services (exe)

Developing a method to measure and reduce the hidden, or 'embedded', impacts on nature in the procurement of goods and services is a crucial step toward more sustainable and responsible decision-making. Every product or service we buy, from office supplies to construction materials, has a footprint that can

affect ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural resources, often far beyond our local area. By understanding and reducing these impacts, we can make choices that support nature recovery not just in Stroud district, but globally. This approach helps ensure that public spending reflects our environmental values, encourages greener supply chains, and sets a positive example for businesses and communities alike.

N06 Support and work with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust in its work to reintroduce locally extinct species to the district, including wild Beaver populations to the catchment of the River Frome and River Cam (enb)

Supporting Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust in [reintroducing wild beaver populations to the Rivers Frome](#)



and Cam is a powerful way to enhance nature recovery in Stroud District. Beavers are known as 'ecosystem engineers', they create wetlands, slow down water flow, and improve water quality, which helps reduce flooding and supports a wide range of wildlife. Their presence can boost biodiversity, create natural carbon sinks, and reduce flood risk, which fits well with the Stroud valleys natural flood management scheme. This will also offer opportunities for community involvement, education, and eco-tourism, helping people reconnect with nature while contributing to a healthier, more vibrant local environment. The council will also support the reintroduction of other locally extinct species if we have the resources, expertise and ability to do so. (This work links with strategic objectives WRC01 and WRC02).



Nature

N07 **Develop community engagement and education programmes to enable residents and local organisations to help deliver nature recovery and wilder habitat creation (enb)**

The work to recover nature needs our communities and residents to be engaged and active. Gardens are a fantastic opportunity to increase biodiversity, and many other nature recovery projects need volunteers to make them happen. The council will prioritise engagement with local groups, residents and town and parish councils to enable them to take their own action.

Nature Strategic Objectives

N01	Contribute to the creation and implementation of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and use that to create a Stroud District Local Nature Recovery Plan (exe)
N02	Manage Council owned land to maximise biodiversity and nature creating high quality habitats (exe)
N03	Eliminate routine pesticide use on council owned land and encourage other public bodies and managers of amenity, green and public space to eliminate routine pesticide use on theirs (exe, enc)
N04	Ensure the new Local Plan for Stroud district fully supports nature recovery and prioritises the use of nature-based solutions (exe)
N05	Develop a method to measure and reduce embedded impacts to nature in procurement of goods and services (exe)
N06	Support and work with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust in its work to reintroduce locally extinct species to the district, including wild Beaver populations to the catchment of the River Frome and River Cam (enb)
N07	Develop community engagement and education programmes to enable residents to help deliver nature recovery and wilder habitat creation (enb)



Adaptation

“Our towns and villages are protected from flooding, heat and storms and feel resilient and connected to each other”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Ensure the district is prepared for the changes expected from the climate crisis
- Build the district’s nature recovery network;
- Lead the transition to net zero carbon emissions and nature’s recovery in the district;

The impacts of climate change include greater intensity and frequency of rainfall, leading to increased flooding, prolonged heatwaves that lead to an increase in deaths, increased risk of drought and increased storminess. The government’s Climate Change Committee published a [Climate Change Risk Assessment](#) in 2023 providing the Committee’s statutory advice to Government on priorities for the forthcoming national adaptation plans and wider action. More than 60 risks and opportunities have been identified by the Climate Change Committee, fundamental to every aspect of life in the district, covering our natural environment, our health, our homes, the infrastructure on which we rely, and the economy.

The council is planning to take a more active role in helping identify the key climate related risks in the district and to develop an adaptation plan that can be used as by other planning documents and strategies to prioritise investment and action.

Preparation and adaptation are a key part of protecting the districts future economy and standard of living. Upgrading our buildings and public infrastructure will reduce the damages from climate impacts and improve the sustainability and productivity of important sectors such as agriculture and forestry. The increased demand for adaptation measures will increase the opportunities for skilled jobs in construction, and design (Key link to strategic objective BCE02).



Adaptation

Our strategic objectives for adaptation are:

AD01 Quantify risk to areas, communities and infrastructure across the district from impacts caused by 2 degrees increase in global temperatures and estimate the effects of 4 degrees increase (exe)

The council will undertake a climate change risk assessment for the district to identify and quantify the key risks to our communities, natural environment and infrastructure, based on both 2 and 4 degrees celsius of warming. The risk assessment will be used to create an adaptation plan for the district.

AD02 Establish and implement an adaptation plan that builds resilience and reduce risks to the most vulnerable people, areas and infrastructure in an equitable way (exe)

The council will create an adaptation plan to inform a new Local Plan and to prioritise policies and actions for the council, residents and partners to prepare for and reduce the impacts of 2 degrees centigrade of warming.

Climate adaptation planning means identifying places for actions that protect us against and help us to adapt to the impacts of climate change. This includes reacting to the changes we have seen already, as well as preparing for what will happen in the future. Many adaptation measures need to happen at the local level, so the County, District, Parish and Town Councils, and a wide range of public bodies each have a role to play. The adaptation plan will identify opportunities to deploy and use nature-based solutions to reduce risk wherever possible but will also identify engineered approaches if natural approaches aren't feasible.

Examples of adaptation measures our plan will identify may include promoting land management that is more resistant to drought and practicing regenerative agriculture, rain water capture, storage and use, making structural changes to buildings to withstand greater intensity of storms, adding tree canopy cover to urban areas to create natural shade and reduce the impact of extreme weather like floods and heat waves by creating green space and removing hard impermeable surfaces in urban areas. The council's Stroud valleys natural flood management work is an example of a nature-based adaptation measure with multiple benefits to nature and people.

We will also prioritise actions in the plan that lead to or promote more equitable outcomes for those most impacted by climate change. This might mean prioritising actions that can protect the most vulnerable residents first.

AD03 Ensure the Local Plan maximises the potential to help existing and new communities adapt to all climate risks (exe)

Creating strong policies in the local development plan is the primary way that the council can influence future development and ensure it is resilient to the impacts of climate change. A new local plan will have adaptation embedded throughout and identify policies and opportunities to ensure that new developments are able to withstand a minimum of 2 degrees centigrade warming and buildings that are intended to last for decades are adapted to 4 degrees temperature increase. These policies will ensure that new housing and infrastructure do not require retrofitting to keep their occupants safe. (This links to strategic objective GPD04).



Adaptation

AD04 Maximise the use of the public estate to reduce risks by reducing areas of hard impermeable surface, installing more sustainable drainage systems and planting trees to create shade in urban areas (exe, enb, enc)

The council will use the public estate in its ownership and encourage other public bodies to use their estates to reduce risks to the public and residents wherever possible. This mean working alongside public body partners to identify opportunities where they can install measures such as sustainable drainage systems, or plant more trees, to reduce risk. Many adaptation measures will require sufficient space to implement, and the public estate provides a good opportunity to act at the pace and scale needed.

AD05 Support partners and affected communities to plan for and adapt to sea level rise along the Severn Estuary (enb)

Some impacts of climate change will continue to be felt even when emissions of greenhouse gases are reduced. The key one affecting Stroud district is the sea level rise within the Severn Estuary. Projections indicate a rise of 20-30 cm by 2050 and 30-40 cm by 2080, significantly impacting coastal flood risk. The estuary's unique geography, including high tidal ranges and low-lying topography, makes it particularly vulnerable to storm surges and coastal erosion, with significant potential impacts to communities living and working alongside the estuary. The council aims to support work with partners and affected communities to plan for and adapt to that sea level rise. New [research](#) from the Met Office shows that sea levels in the estuary could rise significantly higher than this over the next 200 years.

Adaptation Strategic Objectives

AD01	Quantify risk to areas, communities and infrastructure across the district from impacts caused by 2 degrees increase in global temperatures and estimate the effects of 4 degrees increase (exe)
AD02	Establish and implement an adaptation plan that builds resilience and reduce risks to the most vulnerable people, areas and infrastructure in an equitable way (exe)
AD03	Ensure the Local Development Plan/Spatial Strategy maximises the potential to help existing and new communities adapt to all climate risks (exe)
AD04	Maximise the use of the public estate to reduce risks by reducing areas of hard impermeable surface, retrofitting SuDs and using trees to create shade in urban areas (exe, enb, enc)
AD05	Support partners and affected communities to plan for and adapt to sea level rise along the Severn Estuary (enb)



Buildings

“Our homes, workplaces and schools are comfortable, healthy and efficient”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Deliver affordable homes through our own new homes programme
- Support residents living in privately owned and rented accommodation to live in safe, sustainable and good quality homes
- Develop partnerships, provide advice and support local action to make homes in the district more sustainable
- Ensure the district is prepared for the changes expected from the climate crisis
- Provide good quality, safe and fit for purpose council homes, ensuring tenants can live well

According to the [Climate Change Committee](#), direct greenhouse gas emissions from buildings constitute around 17% of the UK total. This is mostly from burning fossil fuels to provide heating. When indirect emissions are added, this brings the total to about 23%. Changing the way we use and generate energy in our homes, commercial buildings and public buildings is a key way that the council can influence emissions in the district and support the ambition to achieve net

zero, for our own estate, but also in the wider district. The council can do this in several ways; by working to improve the energy efficiency of our own social housing, both existing and future houses; by helping those residents who are disadvantaged, vulnerable or in fuel poverty to improve their energy efficiency and reduce their heating bills; by making it easier for private house holders to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon emissions generated from their own homes.



Buildings

Changing the way homes and buildings are constructed, using new and innovative materials and techniques can also reduce their embedded carbon emissions.

B01 **Ensure a new local plan for Stroud district requires all new build residential, public and if possible, commercial developments, in the district to be built to operationally net zero emissions standards using a combination of renewable energy and construction innovations that also reduce embedded carbon and nature impacts (exe)**

Creating strong policies in the local plan is the primary way that the council can influence future development and ensure that new homes and buildings generate zero emissions from their occupation and use (subject to national policy). We can also incentivise the use of innovative construction techniques and materials with much lower embedded carbon, (for example re-using reclaimed materials, favouring natural materials and low carbon cement) and require additions such as EV chargers.



The council is currently still planning to build new council owned houses for our residents. We want to design and build good quality, sustainable, dynamic, energy efficient homes that are consistent with our climate and nature recovery commitments.

The new homes will be built to provide energy efficiency, good space standards, flexibility, adaptability and safety with the aim of enabling people to live in their homes as independently as possible for as long as possible as their needs change.

Each new home where possible will be built to Building Regulations Part M4(2) or Part M4(3) and will meet Nationally Described Space Standards.

The specification for new builds will aim to help the council achieve our climate and nature commitments and will be based on a fabric first approach with further specification items added to achieve a minimum SAP rating of 86, which equates to an EPC rating of A and which has been estimated would deliver a reduction on carbon emissions on Part L in the Building Regulations of 31%.



As the council house building programme progresses and each time a new scheme is tendered, a review of the specification will be undertaken. Because technology, the market, government subsidies, and building regulations are all developing quickly a review of each scheme spec will allow to move to greater energy efficiency and address any requirements set out in future changes to the Building Regulations, the Future Homes Standards and the policies that are finally adopted in the Local Plan.

(This strategic objective links to GPD04 and WRC04)

B02 **All existing SDC social housing to be adapted and retrofitted to achieve a minimum EPC C by 2030 (exe)**

As a social landlord, we are required to use Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) as the primary benchmark for assessing the energy performance of our housing stock. This is in line with UK government regulations and is essential for compliance with current and





Buildings



forthcoming standards such as the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) and the Decent Homes Standard. EPC ratings also underpin the eligibility for government-funded retrofit programmes, including the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

We recognise, however, that EPCs were originally designed to provide a general indication of energy efficiency and running costs for prospective tenants and buyers, not as a comprehensive retrofit planning tool. As such we are actively monitoring proposed reforms to the EPC framework, including the introduction of multiple performance metrics, such as fabric efficiency, heating system integration and, smart readiness, which all would aim to improve accuracy and better align EPCs with net-zero objectives.

In the meantime, while EPCs remain a regulatory requirement and a gateway to funding, we continue to supplement them with additional energy data sources, on-site surveys, and real-world performance monitoring to ensure our energy efficiency strategies are robust, fair, and future-proof.

Alongside planned improvements work for our council houses, such as roof replacements, kitchen and bathroom upgrades, we have also prioritised “retrofit” measures, or improvements aimed at improving energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, and making our homes warmer and more comfortable in winter and cooler in the summer.

The key outcomes of our retrofit programmes to date include:

- Achieving a minimum of EPC Band C for all homes
- Targeting a space heating demand of less than 90kWh/m²
- Reducing fuel poverty
- Lowering the carbon footprint of our housing stock

The Council has been successful in all four funding bids we have made to the Government’s Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF -now called the [Warm Homes : Social Housing Fund](#)). Through this initiative, we have secured £9 million in grant funding. Most recently, in March 2025, we were awarded over £5 million in Wave 3 of the scheme.

The Council owns approximately 5,000 homes, with 450 properties receiving works through the SHDF projects so far, and a further minimum of 500 properties planned to receive retrofit works through the Wave 3 scheme.

Since the beginning of 2023, we have increased the proportion of our housing stock rated EPC C or above from 28.56% to 47.3%. Over the same period, our average SAP rating has improved from D63 to C69, already meeting our 2030 target five years ahead of schedule.

We are now aiming to bring all our housing stock up to a minimum of EPC C, where



Buildings

feasible, by 2030. This means just over half of our homes still require upgrades. While many of these will involve relatively minor works, such as loft insulation top-ups, others will require more extensive interventions.

Retrofitting our social housing stock, of which 21% is of pre-1949 construction, presents complex interventions, including:

- External and cavity wall insulation
- Loft insulation
- Ventilation upgrades
- Window and door replacements
- Heating system replacements

These upgrades must be tailored to each property's age, structure, and condition to ensure they meet both the technical requirements and the needs of our tenants.



Retrofit work can also be disruptive, sometimes requiring temporary relocation or inconvenience to daily life for our tenants. Managing tenant expectations and minimising disruption is a logistical challenge that we continue to address within our programmes.

To help the council deliver this work, we have created and funded two new posts. Firstly, an Energy and Carbon Officer, playing a key function to improve energy efficiency in our homes, reducing carbon emissions, and supporting tenants in managing energy use and costs. This position will also play a key part in our role as consortium lead with social housing partners across Gloucestershire, for our part funded retrofit projects, as well as continual analysis of our energy and carbon emissions data across our stock, to form future programmes.

Secondly, an Energy Tenant Liaison Officer, playing a key role in supporting the delivery



of our domestic retrofit and planned works programmes. This vital position ensures tenants are fully informed, supported, and engaged throughout our planned works process, helping to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance living conditions. This role will also work to collate important tenant feedback, which will further support us in shaping our current and future projects, with tenants at the centre of what we deliver. As described in other parts of the strategy, here is a national shortage of skilled retrofit professionals, both in project coordination and among qualified installers, which can delay delivery and increase project costs. (This links to strategic objective BCE02)

Finally, these programmes require substantial capital investment. While we are proud of our success in securing SHDF funding, continued support from Central Government and alignment with national policy will be crucial in maintaining the momentum we have so far achieved and wish to continue with in future retrofit projects to achieve our future targets.

In November 2024, we undertook a review of the remaining works required to our housing stock to bring every property to a minimum EPC C Rating, where possible. The estimated figure is c£10m, but this depends upon the approach taken to replacement of heating systems. Replacing all heating systems (where required) with Heat Pumps, will mean costs far greater than £10m. We are currently undertaking a review of our Housing Services Energy Strategy, set to be published in 2026, which will outline our approach to new heating system installations.



Buildings

B03 Council (non-housing) property and estate to be adapted or retrofitted to become operationally net zero emissions by 2030 (exe)

The council has been an early adopter of air and water source heat pumps to replace gas boilers in several of our large buildings. Water Source Heat Pumps now provide the heating for our main office at [Ebley Mill and also at Brimscombe Mill](#), and air source heat pumps have also replaced gas boilers at Stratford Park Leisure Centre, The Museum in the Park and at The Pulse Leisure Centre in Dursley. The funding for these installations came from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (SALIX), with the council also adding additional funding. These installations mean a significant proportion of the council’s heating needs are now met from electricity and since the council have verified that its electricity supply is now sourced from a renewable generation tariff from a supplier holding separate time based certification demonstrating the purchase of renewable energy, we know the emissions from

our heating requirements have already declined significantly.

The council is looking at the feasibility of adding further solar car parking canopies to the car park in Stratford Park, to add to those already on the roof, to supply the additional electricity needed for the heat pumps. We will continue to make use of Government grants and schemes to continue the decarbonisation of our estate and to maximise the generation of roof top solar wherever possible.

B04 Council property, estate and car parks are adapted and resilient to the impacts of 2c warming by 2035 and we will understand the impacts of 4c warming (exe)

As part of our adaptation planning work, we will be ensuring that we start the work to make our estate as resilient and adapted to climate impacts as it can be, to ensure our operations and tenants are protected from climate impacts such as flooding, heat and storm damage. For example, we will review car parks in the district to see what opportunities exist to reduce excess run-off using sustainable drainage interventions.

Buildings Strategic Objectives

B01	Ensure a new local plan for Stroud district requires all new build residential, public and if possible, commercial developments, in the district to be built to operationally net zero emissions standards using a combination of renewable energy and construction innovations that also reduce embedded carbon and nature impacts (exe)
B02	All existing SDC social housing to be adapted and retrofitted to achieve a minimum EPC C by 2030 (exe)
B03	Council (non-housing) property and estate to be adapted or retrofitted to become operationally net zero emissions by 2030 (exe)
B04	Council property, estate and car parks are adapted and resilient to the impacts of 2c warming by 2035 and we will understand the impacts of 4c warming (exe)



Energy

“We can afford the energy needed to live well and our energy system is fairer, resilient to shocks and not dependent on fossil fuels”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Support community wealth building and community ownership
- Support community and locally led renewable energy initiatives to accelerate the transition to a net zero district
- Support the delivery of key regeneration sites across the district by enabling and influencing significant infrastructure projects and investments

The council strongly supports the shift to renewable forms of energy generation and the electrification of the energy system. This shift is fundamental to the transition to a low carbon economy and reducing emissions from manufacturing and other energy intensive industries.

Electrification of the energy system will significantly reduce price volatility of energy. According to government, which published the UK’s [7th Carbon budget and Clean energy Plan](#) in October 2025, households are currently paying 75% more for gas than they were prior to

the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and in a market where gas prices still determine the price of electricity, this is a key driver of high energy bills. Locally, according to the Severn Wye Energy Agency, [Stroud has experienced one of the highest percentage increases in average bill costs](#), with a 129% rise from October 2022 to May 2024. On average, homes spend more than 6% of household income on bills, and this is likely to rise (based on an average household income of £32,300).

Ensuring fair access to energy that is affordable is a key element of a just transition, alongside



insulation measures that reduce energy demand and make it easier to keep homes comfortable all year round in both winter and summer.

E01 Encourage greater renewable energy generation that is fair and equitable and involves the community (enc, enb)

The council is a strong advocate for mandating community benefits from renewable energy schemes in the district. The government [consulted on mandatory community](#) benefits to be delivered as part of renewable energy schemes and the council supports that proposal. Communities hosting renewable energy schemes should benefit directly from them, potentially in direct cash terms or through indirect in-kind benefits. This approach works well in many other countries and introducing a mandatory approach would guarantee that communities can share in the social and economic benefits of our energy transition.

There is also an opportunity for shared ownership schemes, and the council encourages renewable energy developers to investigate shared ownership models.

The council also supports direct community ownership of renewable energy schemes and is a member of the Stroud area community energy network, the countywide Community Energy Forum, and Community Energy England. We actively promote and facilitate greater involvement from the community in energy planning and renewable energy work and will continue to do this.

E02 Public buildings and car parks to be used for generating renewable energy (exe, enc)

Some of the council’s own estate is already used to generate renewable energy through use of roof top solar panels. Council buildings, including Ebley Mill, Stratford Park Leisure Centre, the Pulse Leisure Centre and Brimscombe Port Mill also use low carbon air- and water-source heat pumps to provide heating for buildings.



The council is looking at the feasibility of adding further solar car parking canopies to the car park in Stratford Park, to add to those already on the roof, to supply the additional electricity needed for the heat pumps. We are also working with the [South West Net Zero Hub](#) to look at the feasibility of using our car parks at the Pulse and Ebley Mill, to generate solar energy using car park canopies too. We will continue to make use of Government grants and schemes to continue the decarbonisation of our estate and to maximise the generation of roof top solar wherever possible.

We will work with Parish and Town Councils and other public bodies to help them investigate the feasibility of renewable energy schemes on their property. (Links to strategic objective B03)

E03 Ensure all council tenants, private homeowners and tenants, business and commercial property owners have the knowledge and support to reduce their energy use and costs by as much as possible (exe, enb)

The council is committed to ensuring that tenants of our houses can keep their energy bills as low as possible. A large part of this is through the direct improvements described in strategic objective B02. Bringing all our tenants houses up to a minimum of EPC C by 2030 will





keep energy bills lower. A key element of this current funding is that we can use it to install renewable energy onto our homes and to replace gas boilers with air source heat pumps. The council is employing a specialist adviser who will be able to help tenants manage and reduce their energy bills.

For private householders, the council provides a variety of support and advice. The council is a founder member and key participant of the [Warm and Well](#) consortium in Gloucestershire. Running since 2001 and delivered by the [Severn Wye Energy Agency](#) (SWEA), the [Warm and Well scheme](#) aims to improve energy efficiency in the home and reduce the risk of fuel poverty and associated health problems by:

- Raising public awareness of energy efficiency and fuel poverty;
- Providing specific and appropriate advice by telephone, referrals from partner organisations and engagement at events;
- Delivering home visits to vulnerable customers that include an energy survey and bespoke advice report; and
- Making referrals to grant and discount schemes

In 2024/25, the Warm and Well Scheme supported 525 homes to become more energy efficient, with estimated lifetime money savings of £339,000 for those households and lifetime carbon emissions savings of approx' 1700t.

The council is working with the Centre for Energy Equality that have developed the [Fairer Warmth platform](#). The app developed by them will signpost users to personalised advice and guidance on how to lower their energy bills and to grants and support available to them.

For households that want detailed and home specific energy advice and a plan for how to lower their energy bills and carbon emissions, the council has entered into a partnership with a company called [Furbnow](#) to create a One Stop Shop for home energy efficiency upgrades.



Furbnow can manage the entire retrofit project from start to finish - beginning with an initial assessment of a property which includes a paid for home survey to help create a personalised energy plan, through to designing energy efficiency improvements, selecting and managing trusted contractors, and ensuring high-quality installation.

Energy Strategic Objectives

E01	Encourage greater renewable energy generation that is fair and equitable and maximises community involvement (enc, enb)
E02	Public buildings and car parks to be used for generating renewable energy (exe, enc)
E03	Ensure all council tenants, private homeowners and tenants, business and commercial property owners have the knowledge and support to reduce their energy use and costs by as much as possible (exe, enb)





Business, Jobs and Circular Economy

“We have good jobs, and our businesses are thriving in a greener circular economy”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Lead the transition to net zero carbon emissions and nature’s recovery in the district
- Continue to build a more sustainable and inclusive local economy
- Support community wealth building and community ownership
- Support community and locally led renewable energy initiatives to accelerate the transition to a net zero district
- Be an ambassador for climate conscious start-ups and existing businesses
- Promote Stroud district as a sustainable tourism and visitor destination
- Promote sustainable development by balancing new housing, transport and employment requirements with the necessary infrastructure and environmental protection for the district

The council seeks to influence the creation of a well-being economy that can provide for everyone in our district within planetary boundaries. A well-being economy is designed to service the interests of people and planet, not the other way round. A wellbeing economy provides dignity, purpose, fairness, allows participation and allows nature to thrive.

We have an opportunity to build on the reputation of the district as a leader on adopting green and renewable technologies and opinions to further grow those elements of our economy, including the natural assets of the district such as the Cotswold Protected Landscape and Conservation sites.

BCE01 The council’s economic development strategy will encourage and facilitate our local economy to achieve net zero by 2050 (exe)

The council’s current [Economic Development Strategy](#) strongly supports our green sector and advocates for the decarbonisation of industry and business. It focuses on ways to encourage new green businesses into the district. Alongside the other local authorities in the county, we provide funding for the Stroud and Gloucestershire Growth Hubs to ensure net zero specialists are available for 121 meetings and workshops for existing businesses to



Business, Jobs and Circular Economy

find out how to transition to net zero working practices. The council has recently developed and introduced a new Social Value Tool to encourage and incentivise suppliers of goods and services to the Council to reduce their carbon emissions. The tool has been developed so that the higher the value of the contract, the more social value the council will expect from that award. Smaller awards with local business are not expected to have detailed carbon reduction plans in place and the tool also values other social benefits that smaller local suppliers that are able to demonstrate.

Part of the support we have provided is through the council's UK Shared Prosperity Funding and the Rural England Prosperity Grants we've issued. These funds have supported businesses and community organisations to take up working practices and update infrastructure that improve their carbon footprint and transition to practices that enable decarbonisation across the whole district. With limited grants and interest free loans available for businesses, we want to ensure that future funding and grants are aligned with our net zero ambitions. (links to strategic objectives GPD02 and N04).

BCE02 We will encourage and support growth in the [Low carbon and renewable energy economy](#) and increase green jobs, skills and capacity in the district's workforce, including skills needed to help achieve net zero, help nature recover and to help the district adapt to climate impacts (enc, enb)

Like other parts of the Country, Stroud district has seen an increase over the last decade in the green sector, with a particular focus on green technologies, in particular innovative ways to save, generate and utilise energy. The

UK Government currently defines green sector businesses as those involved in low-carbon heat and energy; alternative fuels; energy efficient products; low carbon services and low emission vehicles and infrastructure. According to the [Office for National Statistics](#), the low carbon economy and renewable energy sectors of the economy are growing faster than any other part of the national economy.

As a local authority with the commitment to protect and enhance our natural assets, we are proactively looking to green businesses to set up locally, providing residents with access to greener jobs.



One of the barriers to this is the shortage of the right skills and ensuring re-training opportunities are available is a key element of a just transition. The council is currently working closely with stakeholders to ensure the sector has access to the required skillset, considering the needs of specialist areas within low carbon energy and energy efficient products. With our support, the South Gloucestershire and Stroud College recently opened a Green Skills Centre at their Berkeley Vale centre, to train young people in retrofit and low carbon heating installation. We are also part-funding a Green Skills coordinator, working with Climate Leadership Gloucestershire to work with industry and training providers to identify and plug key green skills gaps in the County. We are also keen to see an increase in provision of training and education to enable the district to implement and use nature-based solutions, to help nature recovery and to support farmers and land managers to move to more regenerative, nature friendly food production. (see strategic objective FF01). Our Stroud valleys natural flood management scheme has worked with over 60 landowners and 20 contractors, many of whom have developed



Business, Jobs and Circular Economy

skills in installing and building nature-based solutions approaches that are transferable to other types of work.

The council also supports the University of Gloucestershire with a Nature Based Solutions module for their students, and we will actively seek further opportunities to support existing educational institutions and organisations in the development of skills and training to grow this type of work in the district.



BCE03 We will encourage and support growth in Stroud's nature-based economy (enc, enb)

The Stroud district has a significant untapped potential to generate and grow our nature-based economy. Organisations such as [Rewilding Britain](#) have carried out research on the potential for nature recovery and rewilding to generate employment opportunities and grow skills and capacity in nature based jobs. Our district already has extensive protected woodlands, wildflower rich grasslands and commons, and one of the country's largest estuaries that need ongoing skilled management. Our district is also home to the national office for one of the UK's most significant nature charities, the [WWT](#), employing over 70 people at the centre which welcomes over 200,000 visitors per year. Restoring and managing nature requires a skilled and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics educated workforce and can generate significant revenue and investment.

There is also an opportunity to promote the district's natural environment to further develop our sustainable tourism economy and the council will work with partners to actively promote this.

BCE04 We will support a circular economy by promoting and encouraging reuse, refill and repair across the district and investigate the use of other regulatory and financial measures to achieve this (enc, enb) (links to strategic objective RC03)

The council works with [Transition Stroud](#), providing core funding for them to continue their work, which includes setting up and organising repair cafes in different parts of the district. However, to make a difference to the amount of waste generated, this provision will need to be increased. Some of the same barriers around skills and capacity also currently act to limit the provision of this service, and this service is currently completely reliant on the Voluntary Community Social Enterprise sector and is therefore extremely vulnerable to shortfalls in funding and changing priorities.

We aim to work further with Transition Stroud and other repair, refill, lending and borrowing initiatives and projects in the district, to explore ways to significantly expand this provision and make it less vulnerable to short term funding constraints. The council will also explore ways the council can support repair and refill business to grow and expand their provision.

BCE05 Stroud District Council financial investments and holdings will achieve an Environmental Social Governance rating of A or above (average) and no individual holding shall fall below a rating of BBB, and we will advocate to accelerate the reduction in the climate and nature impacts from the council's pension holdings (exe, enc)



Business, Jobs and Circular Economy

The council already has an ethical investment policy that will shortly be reviewed and updated. We already avoid direct investment or borrowing activities with organisations whose core activities include Fossil Fuel extraction and combustion, Armaments – weapon systems, Gambling, Pornography, Tobacco and Pay-day loans

The council seeks to directly invest in organisations or financial products whose core focus includes renewable energy, green investment products, social housing, nature and investments that align with our council plan.

We employ an independent auditor to scrutinise our investments and give them an ESG rating (Environmental, Social and Governance). We aim for them to be ESG rated (A or above) and certainly no lower than yellow (BBB) for

any individual holding and have established a Strategic Objective to reflect this aim.

On pensions, the council is part of the larger Gloucestershire Local Government Pension scheme, which is itself part of a larger series of pensions holdings managed by the [Brunel Pension Partnership](#). As part of our commitment to transparency on our pensions, we have published the carbon emissions generated from the council’s pension holdings as part of our scope 3 carbon accounts. Stroud District Council has and will continue to advocate for the accelerated reduction in the [carbon weighting](#) of Gloucestershire’s Pension Fund (via the Brunel Pension Partnership and its successor), and for increased investment in renewable energy, social housing, nature recovery and other investment opportunities compatible with our Council Plan.

Business, Jobs & Circular Economy Strategic Objectives

BCE01	The Councils economic development strategy will encourage and facilitate our local economy to achieve net zero by 2050 (enc, enb)
BCE02	We will encourage and support growth in the Low carbon and renewable energy economy and increase green jobs, skills and capacity in the district’s workforce, including skills needed to help achieve net zero, help nature recover and to help the district adapt to climate impacts (enc, enb)
BCE03	We will encourage and support growth in Stroud’s nature-based economy (enc, enb)
BCE04	We will support a circular economy by promoting and encouraging reuse, refill and repair across the district and investigate the use of other regulatory and financial measures to achieve this (exe, enc, enb)
BCE05	Stroud District Council financial investments and holdings will achieve an Environmental Social Governance rating of A or above (average) and no individual holding shall fall below a rating of BBB, and we will advocate to accelerate the reduction in the climate and nature impacts from the council’s pension holdings (exe, enc)



Resources and Consumption



“We produce less waste through sharing and repairing”

Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Reduce the quantity of resources discarded as waste and minimise its environmental impact
- Promote Stroud district as a sustainable tourism and visitor destination

Stroud District Council, as a Waste Collection Authority (WCA) plays a vital role in delivering kerbside collection services to residents. However, these operations also contribute to carbon emissions—both through fleet activity and the treatment of collected materials.

Waste and litter are a blight on communities, something well recognised in the work undertaken by the Stroud District Council Litter and Clean Environment Member Champion. Projects to engage stakeholders and work collaboratively both within the district and with partners across the county will continue, with an aim to reduce litter accumulations locally.

Recycling litter is an aspiration, but contamination remains a limiting factor. Usage

of existing recycling litter bins will be monitored with numbers increased, when there is greater confidence that usable recycling material can be secured.

RC01 The total residual waste collected per household will decrease by 5% by 2030 (enc, enb)

In line with the waste hierarchy, reducing consumption remains our primary goal, thereby minimising the volume of kerbside waste. National legislation, including [Extended Producer Responsibility](#) and the upcoming deposit return scheme (scheduled for October 2027), is expected to further reduce the weight of recyclable materials collected.



Resources and Consumption

Stroud District Council has been a leader in waste reduction, having adopted restricted-capacity residual waste bins ahead of national trends. This approach not only limits residual waste tonnage but also encourages residents to make full use of recycling services. As a result, SDC consistently ranks among the top performers in recycling rates and sending the least amount of residual waste for treatment.



[National 2023/24 statistics](#) rank SDC and its residents as the fourth best performing Waste Collection Authority for minimising residual waste per household (previously National Indicator NI191).

If achieved, the strategy objective of further reducing this measure by five percent will see the council’s performance sitting within the top three nationally for residual waste reduction.

This target is assumed with minimal kerbside scheme change. Whilst an introduction of small electrical recycling is planned for 2026, the primary driver will need to be a reliance on enhanced resident engagement.

Note: the target excludes the waste taken in person by residents to the county recycling centres.

Further step change improvement in recycling and waste minimisation could be possible, though this would require more intrusive regime change, particularly an exploration of less regular residual waste collections.

RC02 Per household carbon emissions from waste collection vehicles will reduce annually (exe)

The vehicles used to collect waste and recycling in the district emit significant quantities of carbon pollution. This is the key reason why our scope 1 emissions appear to have risen. We previously counted these vehicle emissions as scope 3, but after discussions with other district councils in Gloucestershire, we have decided to move these into scope 1 to be consistent. SDC has already made substantial progress in reducing the carbon footprint of its fleet. Route optimisation software has been in use for several years, helping to reduce mileage. In 2024, this was enhanced with in-cab software that enables real-time task allocation, further minimising unnecessary journeys.

To support the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), six EV charge points have been installed at our vehicle depot in Gossington, with six more planned for 2025/26. Currently, three EVs are in operation—including an 18-tonne industrial street sweeper—with three more expected by summer 2025. Additional orders are scheduled for 2025/26 to fully utilise the charging infrastructure.



Looking ahead, further investment will be needed to expand this transition. One option under consideration is installing photovoltaic (solar) panels on the depot’s transfer station roof, potentially paired with battery storage for overnight charging.

Challenges and Transitional Strategy

While smaller fleet vehicles are well-suited to electrification, larger vehicles—such as fully laden refuse collection trucks—face challenges due to the district’s hilly topography. As technology evolves, the council will continue to assess options to maintain service standards. A transitional fleet strategy, approved by the [Environment Committee in March 2023](#), is guiding this process.



Resources and Consumption

As part of this strategy, the council began using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in April 2025. HVO can reduce carbon emissions by up to 80% without requiring engine modifications. The council is working with Ubico to ensure the fuel is responsibly sourced.

To complement this, driver behaviour software is being introduced to identify inefficient driving practices. This initiative supports both environmental goals and cost savings.

RC03 Single use materials will be eradicated from council use and in events on council owned land by 2030 (exe)

Stroud District Council already encourages event organisers to look at ways to reduce plastic waste. There is a national ban preventing mobile food units serving prepared food to customers in single-use polystyrene food and drinks containers and providing customers with single-use plastic cutlery or drink stirrers. The council will look at ways we can end the use of all single use materials in events that are held on public land, including the feasibility of a central provision of plates, bowls and cutlery for festivals and events in the district that include food stalls.

Procurement practices will continue to be reviewed and improved to ensure all services are mindful of reducing resource consumption when buying products and services. Where possible, this will form part of the overall evaluation, driving improvements from contractors.

RC04 Encourage and enable private and community composting schemes (enb, enc)

Home composting is a fantastic way of reducing your home waste and creating a valuable product. The council fully supports home composting. Our [waste wizard](#) site provides advice and signposts residents to information about what can be composted at home and where to find the right advice and equipment to start home [composting](#). The council has also provided match funding through our [Stroud Funding Platform](#) for the Brimscombe and Thrupp Community Composting scheme and we will support other proposals for community composting proposals. The Gloucestershire Recycles website has provided a [guide to community composting](#) to those wanting to develop a similar project.

Resources and Consumption Strategic Objectives

RC01	The total residual waste collected per household will decrease by 5% by 2030 (enc, enb)
RC02	Per household carbon emissions from waste collection vehicles will reduce annually (exe)
RC03	Single use materials will be eradicated from Council use and in events on council owned land by 2030 (exe)
RC04	Encourage and enable private and community composting schemes (enb, enc)



Mobility and Transport

“We can easily walk, cycle or use public transport if we choose to and goods are safely transported through our communities without polluting our streets”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Reduce the impact of transport on the environment, by working in partnership and leading by example
- Increase connectivity and mobility innovation across the district

According to data from the [Department for Energy and Net Zero](#), transport accounts nationally for approximately 26% of all domestic emissions, so reducing emissions from transport is an extremely important part of any plan to achieve net zero.

Stroud District Council is not a Transport or Highways Authority, and our ability to influence those emissions sits primarily within our powers to promote, fund and support active travel, to create policies within a local plan that reduce reliance on private cars and promote designs that encourage easier active travel choices for new communities.

We published a [Sustainable Transport Strategy](#) in 2019 with a Vision to “Enable mobility for all, prioritising sustainable and low carbon modes of transport, allowing healthy and prosperous communities and economy to thrive, whilst continuing to be an environmentally responsible district”.

MT01 Support a shift towards active modes of travel using all available policy and support means at our disposal to make it easier to choose (enb, enc)

Stroud District Council began a [Walking and Cycling promotion programme](#) in 2017 with the aim to invest in walking and cycling projects



Mobility and Transport

throughout the district and encourage a modal shift to active travel. The first project was the resurfacing and widening of the Stroud to Nailsworth multi-user path which is now a well-used and popular route for both walkers and cyclists. Since its inception, the project has invested close to £1.5 million in walking and cycling projects.

Since 2021, a diverse array of projects has benefited from funding, from the resurfacing of local footpaths and installation of bike repair stations to large scale feasibility and design studies on strategic active travel routes. A scheme providing free bike stands to local businesses and organisations has proved particularly successful and has been expanded due to high demand.

The project requires close alignment with Gloucestershire County Council as the local highway authority, and in particular the Local Transport Plan and the relevant Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Local groups and Parish and Town Councils play an important role by identifying local walking and cycling projects for potential investment. Many residents have told the council that road safety is a key barrier to increasing cycling and walking, and the council will look at what improvements particularly on this might be needed and advocate for increased investment in safety measures for cycling and walking.



We want to continue this work and taking the project forward requires continued support and capital funding. The council will continue to provide funding for this work and support GCC and local groups however, while the council can continue to contribute towards feasibility and design of strategic routes, funding for their

implementation remains the biggest barrier to creating a strategic walking and cycling network in the district.

MT02 Ensure the new local plan for Stroud district contains strong policies to reduce car dominance, promote active travel and increase the use and provision of public transport (exe)

As the local planning authority, the council can influence active travel through developing the right policies in our local plan. Current adopted policy recognises the importance of active travel and identifies some key routes which potential new development must incorporate. We will ensure that future adopted planning policy documents continue and strengthen this work, and that new developments are sited where they have easy access to existing bus/train routes and within a short distance to active travel corridors.

Stroud District Council is not a public transport authority but our [Sustainable Transport Strategy](#) identifies a range of local plan policy and practical interventions for both bus and rail to ensure better access and ease of use for those who need to or choose to use public transport.

MT03 All council and partner fleet vehicles powered by zero or low carbon technologies by 2030 (exe)

To achieve net zero in our scope 1 and scope 2 emissions by 2030, the council will replace all existing petrol- and diesel-powered non-waste fleet vehicles with EVs as and when those vehicles come to the end of their operational use and need replacing. This will also require the installation of new charging facilities at our offices, leisure and independent living centres.



Mobility and Transport

Strategic objective RC02 describes how we will reduce emissions from waste fleet vehicles.

MT04 All district car parks to have electric vehicle charge points to meet ongoing increase in demand and encourage highways authority and businesses to install on street and workplace charging (exe, enc)

In March 2023 our Environment Committee approved the introduction of electric vehicle charge points in several SDC owned car parks. Charge points in seven car parks, spread geographically throughout the district, have been commissioned. The charge points are predominantly in place to serve local communities, allowing residents to transition to EV, even without access to a private driveway.

The offer reflects and complements the ‘on street’ rollout being managed by Gloucestershire County Council. Usage data

will be monitored in the coming months and years to determine the suitability of any further rollout. We will be working with the County Council and suppliers, with the aim of increasing the available of EV charge points in our car parks on other sites around the district.



The [Government](#) is currently proposing to make it much easier for householders to install their own cross-pavement charging gullies and for renters to request EV charging points at their properties from landlords. As these proposed changes to planning regulations become clearer, the council will ensure they are implemented and well publicised across the district as part of the work on this strategic objective.

As part of this strategic objective, we will explore whether supporting EV car clubs with commercial suppliers is a viable option within the district.

Mobility and Transport Strategic Objectives

MT01	Support a shift towards active modes of travel using all available policy and support means at our disposal to make it easier to choose (enc, enb)
MT02	Ensure the new local plan for Stroud district contains strong policies to reduce car dominance, promote active travel and increase the use and provision of public transport (exe)
MT03	All council and partner fleet vehicles powered by zero or low carbon technologies by 2030 (exe)
MT04	All district car parks to have electric vehicle charge points to meet ongoing increase in demand and encourage highways authority and businesses to install on street and workplace charging (exe, enc)



Just Transition and Community

“We can afford the energy needed to live well and our energy system is fairer, resilient to shocks and not dependent on fossil fuels”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Work to always champion equality, diversity, inclusion and equity in everything that we do
- Continue to build a more sustainable and inclusive local economy
- Support community wealth building and community ownership

A just transition means that the benefits of moving towards a more sustainable future are shared widely and felt by those that have the most to lose from the effects of climate change. It also means prioritising residents and business that will be more severely affected by the impacts of climate change and will those who find it harder to change their ways of working because of the type of industry or business they own or work for. Many of the other themes in the strategy contain strategic objectives that are designed to bring about a just transition, and the objectives in this theme are designed to reinforce some of those.

At the same time, the council is seeking to involve as many people as possible, businesses and organisations in the wider community in the work of achieving a net zero, climate adapted, nature rich district and to develop a wide range of engagement and communications methods to support local climate and nature action.

JTC01 Establish a climate and nature partnership to maximise the district’s potential in climate and nature action. (exe)

The council strongly supports community partners to build capacity so implement climate



Just Transition and Community



and nature action in the district. For example, we were a founding member of the [2030 Community Engagement Board](#) where partners shared best practise and knowledge, we provide core and project funding to Transition Stroud in recognition of the strength of its grassroots climate action. We recognise that the scale of the future challenge to achieve net zero, restore nature and adapt our communities to the impact of climate change requires a new and concerted partnership approach.

If widely supported in consultation with communities and partners, we will establish and provide support for a new Climate and Nature Partnership for the District, to bring together key public bodies, Town and Parish councils, those representing Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises, businesses and representatives from the existing 2030 Community Engagement Board. The Climate and Nature Partnership will provide a way of adding value to existing individual efforts and work and bring together potential collaborators in initiatives. It will utilise the strengths of different organisations working together to achieve common aims and objectives.

The council has a long history of providing support and working with organisations, community hubs and partners who are well placed to achieve specific outcomes.

JTC02 Our economic development work and our adaptation plan will support the principles of a just transition and prioritise the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable residents in our district (exe)

The changes to our economy and society that will be needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change should be positively felt by all those who live and work in the district. The council is committed to ensuring that our economic development work supports a just transition by prioritising training and skills development and the creation of good quality green jobs.

The council supports the building and retention of skills through apprenticeships and partnering with local education providers on green skills, such as South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, that was able to access £450k of [Strategic Economic Development Funding](#) for their green skills centre at Berkeley Green.

We know that climate change impacts can exacerbate existing societal inequalities and will especially affect those who are most vulnerable such as those living with health conditions, lower-income households, and older people, and younger people who have a greater stake in the future. For example, according to [advice from the NHS](#), heatwaves are most likely to severely affect the elderly and those with existing cardiovascular health issues and the very young. In our adaptation plan, we will identify risks to those most vulnerable and the places they live





Just Transition and Community

so that actions to reduce the impacts can be prioritised. The council will use Equality Impact Assessments as part of specific project and policy proposals so that benefits and challenges for different parts of society are anticipated and mitigated. (This strategic objective links to BCE02 & AD02).

JTC03 Develop a climate and nature communications, engagement and culture plan that is consistent, inspirational and rooted through local groups (exe)

A comprehensive communications strategy will support local climate action, inspire more sustainable choices, and promote the community benefits of the council's own Climate and Nature Action. It can also alert residents to climate impacts at times of drought,

flooding and heatwaves and signpost to advice and guidance to reduce the impacts on vulnerable people.

The councils [Culture Strategy](#) was approved in late 2024. And developed in consultation with community groups and arts & culture organisations in 2023 & 2024. It provides an overview of the strong and dynamic cultural landscape in our district and sets out the need to invest and support access and reach new audiences. It provides a series of recommendations, which identify specific themes for development and support around the theme of Creativity, Climate and Nature. The council will support a wide range of creative activity that inspires residents and helps us to understand and better tell the story of how we can transition to a low carbon, nature rich future.

Just Transition and Community Strategic Objectives

JTC01	Establish a climate and nature partnership to maximise the district's potential in climate and nature action (exe)
JTC02	Our economic development work and our adaptation plan will support the principles of a just transition and prioritise the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable residents in our district (exe)
JTC03	Develop a climate and nature communications, engagement and culture plan that is consistent, inspirational and rooted through local groups (exe)



Governance, Planning and Decision making

“We can build new houses and create new communities that help nature without damaging the climate”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Lead the transition to net zero carbon emissions and nature’s recovery in the district
- Work to always champion equality, diversity, inclusion and equity in everything that we do
- Promote sustainable development by balancing new housing, transport

and employment requirements with the necessary infrastructure and environmental protection for the district

- Proactively use data and insight to inform decision making and ensure equality and social value is embedded in the way we work

All decisions made by the council on spending and policy have the potential to increase or reduce carbon emissions and impacts to nature. How we make those decisions, and the information used to make them are key areas of council activity. Alongside this, the Local Plan created by the council is probably the most important way the council can influence emissions and plan future adaptation to climate impacts in the wider district.

GPD01 Establish a methodology to report on and reduce the scope 3 emissions from the works, goods and services the council buys from outside suppliers (ex)

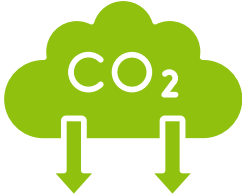
The council has made significant progress reducing its direct emissions arising from burning of fuels such as petrol and gas ((scope 1 emissions) and continues to implement reductions through replacement of gas boilers



Governance, Planning and Decision making

with greener alternatives, such as air source heat pumps. We now calculate our scope 2 emissions as net zero because we have verified that the electricity we pay for is directly supplied by renewable technologies with appropriate and traceable certificates of origin.

We currently use industry-standard spend-based methodologies to account for our scope 3 emissions. With time, and as methodologies and tools improve, we hope to refine this process to give us more accurate data that will also include better calculation of the embodied carbon in house building and other major capital projects.



GPD02 Ensure key suppliers of goods, services and works to the council have carbon reduction plans that include trajectory of reductions to reach net zero by 2050 (exe)

The most significant sources of carbon emissions generated by the council arise from the goods and services procured as part of our service delivery, from the capital projects implemented by the Council and from the pension holdings managed on behalf of the Council by the Gloucestershire Local Government Pension Scheme. These are all scope 3 emissions.

Reducing the scope 3 emissions from our procurement system is vital if the council and wider district is to achieve net zero by 2050 and we want to work with key suppliers of goods and services to the council to ensure they are supported in a continuous journey to reduce their emissions and the impact they have on nature. Key suppliers are organisations providing strategically important services to the

council that help keep our services to the public running smoothly.

To accelerate the reduction in our scope 3 emissions, we have created a social, value tool for our procurement system that incentivises social, equalities and carbon reduction. The primary aim of this Social Value Policy is to ensure that our spending and procurement practices generate wider social, economic, and environmental benefits. This means considering not just the cost of a contract but also its potential to improve the lives of individuals and communities, boost the local economy, and promote sustainable practices. The tool will help us to work proportionately with key suppliers to incentivise them to demonstrate they are implementing a plan to reduce their carbon emissions and other environmental impacts. Sole traders and smaller value contractors will not have to demonstrate social value to ensure smaller local businesses are not discouraged from bidding for work with the council.

We will use a combination of the social value tool and Contract terms to influence and reduce our scope 3 emissions.

GPD03 Create and implement a climate and nature decision making tool for use in all strategy, major projects and decisions taken by the council (exe)

The council takes many other decisions in addition to procurement on both projects and policies that have potential impacts on both the climate and nature emergencies. Whilst we currently assess some direct environmental implications of those decisions, the council does not carry out any consistent or quantitative assessment that provides elected Councillors with the information and data needed to take those wider climate and nature implications into



Governance, Planning and Decision making

account when considering their decisions on both spending and policies.

This is a potential weakness in how we understand and reduce the wider environmental impacts of our decisions and policies, so to address this, we will develop a climate and nature assessment tool, that would be used in advance of key decisions being taken. The tool will allow the estimation of the likely scale and consequence of environmental impacts arising from decisions, covering likely carbon emissions, impacts to soil and water, impacts on natural habitats and species and generation of waste. These likely impacts will then be weighed against any social benefits arising from that decision.

Several councils across the country are already using similar tools to help them quantify likely impacts and take climate and nature impacts into account, and we will most likely base our tool and thresholds for environmental impacts on those already established. An example of a similar approach can be seen in use by [Cheltenham Borough Council](#) and [Cornwall County Council](#).

The tool is designed to inform and support democratic decision making not replace it.

GPD04 Ensure the new Local Plan for Stroud district contains policies consistent with achieving net zero by 2050, provides the framework for adapting to 2 degrees warming and restores nature (exe)

The strategic planning system is one of the most important tools and ways that the council can influence the way new development can reduce emissions in the district but also help to create the type of development that is resilient to protects our communities from the impacts

of climate change. [The Town and Country Planning Association](#) have produced a key report outlining how councils can utilise the existing strategic planning system to reduce emissions and create resilient and adapted communities. We intend to use their recommendations as a basis for how we will build climate and nature into any new development plan for the district.



The Government is currently developing new legislation that will fundamentally change the way councils develop and deliver local and strategic development plans for their area. Whatever the outcome of that change process, Stroud District Council will put tackling the climate and nature emergencies at the centre of any new development plans (Strategic and Local) that cover our district. We understand how vital strategic planning is to secure our objectives – both directly, through facilitating the extension of renewable energy generation, and strategically, through practical nature-based solutions and design actions that can promote sustainable travel, urban cooling, or natural flood defence. We recognise how many of the actions necessary to tackle the climate crisis are also key in creating healthy, ecologically rich, prosperous and beautiful places for us and for future generations.

It is vitally important that any local or strategic development plans that cover our district are focussed on reducing emissions from housing and commercial developments and on adapting those new developments to climate impacts. This is simply because the impacts of flooding, overheating and other consequences of climate change stand in the way of everything else we want to achieve in terms of the creation of vibrant communities and a sustainable and just society.



Governance, Planning and Decision making

If new strategic development plans do not have achieving net zero and adapting to impacts at their core, the impacts of climate change will continue to be significantly felt by the most vulnerable and those least able to respond. We aim to ensure that any new strategic plan will put tackling the climate crisis is at the heart of the vision for the future of our communities.

Where you see reference to the Local Plan in other themes of this strategy, it is because we want to particularly emphasise future policy and aims for a new local plan on that theme. This strategic objective encompasses the aims of all the other relevant ones in this strategy.

GPD05 Develop robust monitoring methods to measure and report on the implementation of the Climate and nature strategy (exe)

To enable us to communicate our progress on implementing this strategy, the Council will develop a robust monitoring plan that will allow us to keep track of our progress and share that with the community. The council will produce an annual report showing progress with our four Ambitions for carbon emissions, adaptation and nature.

In addition, each relevant service in the Council will develop annual actions and work that contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives, and we will monitor and report on what actions have been implemented to achieve these strategic objectives.

Governance, Planning and Decision-making Strategic Objectives

GPD01	Establish a methodology to report on and reduce the scope 3 emissions from the works, goods and services the council buys from outside suppliers (exe)
GPD02	Ensure key suppliers of goods, services and works to the council have carbon reduction plans that include trajectory of reductions to reach net zero by 2050 (exe)
GPD03	Create and implement a climate and nature decision making tool for use in all strategy, major projects and decisions taken by the Council (exe)
GPD04	Ensure the new Local Plan for Stroud district contains policies consistent with achieving net zero by 2050, provides the framework for adapting to 2 degrees warming and restores nature (exe)
GPD05	Develop robust monitoring methods to measure and report on the implementation of the Climate and nature strategy (exe)





Food and Farming

“We can afford to eat well and sustainably, and our farmers have the capacity and resources to grow and produce sustainable food that helps restore nature”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Enable the development of regenerative farming and land management
- Reduce the quantity of resources discarded as waste and minimise its environmental impact
- Reduce health inequalities in the district through a strategic and evidence-led approach

Food security and the resilience of the food system will be under pressure from a changing climate and changes in food prices will also likely be a primary way we experience climate impacts. Flooding and drought will have significant impacts on farmers and their ability to produce many staple crops. Increasing the amount of food we produce locally and making sure we waste less food will help us to overcome some of those impacts and will form an important part of adaptation.

The changing climate is impacting the price of food. England suffered its [second worst harvest in 2025](#), The [Bank of England monetary Policy Report in August 2025](#) states that dry weather conditions are pushing up the production costs of beef and some dairy products in the UK and elsewhere, as cows must be fed silage earlier in the year due to less grass growth.

Prices for five foods that are sensitive to climate – [butter, beef, milk, coffee and chocolate](#) – have risen by an average of 15.6% over the past year, compared with just 2.8% for other food and drink

The [national food strategy](#) published summer 2021 is clear that ‘without addressing the emissions of the food system, it will not be possible to meet our climate change obligations. In 2021, the [Government published](#) a UK Food Security Report. The report states that climate change, climate variability and biodiversity loss all threaten the long-term security of global food production. It concluded that climate change and biodiversity loss were among the biggest medium to long term risks to UK domestic food production, alongside other factors, including soil degradation and water quality. For example, the report noted [UK wheat yields dropped by 40% in 2020 as a result of heavy rainfall and droughts](#).



Food and Farming

Regenerative production can contribute to reducing climate risks, by for example, increase soil organic matter that can hold more water within the soil and reduce compaction that leads to run off.

FF01 Support farmers to transition to regenerative and nature friendly agriculture across the district (enc, enb)

As a local council, although our powers and funding are not directly aimed at incentivising changes to farm management, we can play a role in supporting farmers to transition to regenerative agriculture across the district. We can do this by providing targeted information about what changes are needed and the benefits of that change. In some circumstances we may be able to provide capital financial assistance, especially where the changes being made can be directly beneficial other objectives. For example, we have provided grants and funding to farms to make changes to their management, supporting sustainable land stewardship that provides direct reductions in flood risk. We know that improving soil health and structure can increase water storage and retention, reducing surface water run-off and flooding of roads.

A transition is vital for improving soil health, enhancing biodiversity, increasing resilience to climate change, and securing long-term food production. By facilitating access to training, grants for regenerative practices, and local markets for sustainably produced food, we can empower farmers to adopt methods that restore ecosystems while strengthening the local economy. Supporting this shift not only aligns with our environmental and climate goals but also fosters a healthier, more resilient rural community.



FF02 Support access to land, allotments, orchards and other resources to increase the amount of affordable food grown and sold locally by farmers, community groups, business start-ups and residents (enc, enb)

We will also support local producers and growers to continue to or start to increase the amount of food sold locally. A survey and report by [Landwise](#) carried out in 2021, identified a lack of allotment sites across the district, and estimated the demand for sites to be approximately double the current number available. The council does not directly own or manage allotment sites itself, as those are mostly owned by Town and Parish Council's, but we administer various funds and grants that could potentially be used to support and secure growers. For example, [Common Soil](#) on the edge of Stroud, successfully obtained funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund administered by the council. We will aim to ensure that any future funding opportunities are communicated and able to be used for the purposes of buying land for local food production and /or securing existing business or community groups to enable them to supply more food locally. We fully understand and support the benefits of locally grown, sustainable affordable food.

Supporting access to land and other essential resources to increase the amount of food grown and sold locally brings a wide range of benefits to the community, economy, and environment. By empowering farmers, community groups, business start-ups, and residents to cultivate local produce, councils can strengthen food security, reduce carbon emissions from transportation, and promote healthier diets through fresher, seasonal food.



Food and Farming

This approach also fosters local enterprise, creates green jobs, and revitalizes underused or derelict land. Moreover, it builds community resilience and cohesion by encouraging collaboration, skill-sharing, and a stronger connection between people and the land. Investing in local food systems is a strategic step toward a more sustainable, inclusive, and self-reliant district.

FF03 Increase the amount of food available to people that would otherwise be thrown away or wasted (enc)

Most of us do not realise how much food waste we produce. The most common foods wasted are bread, salads, fresh fruit /vegetables and drinks. On average family’s waste £60 per month by throwing away unwanted food items. For example, 24 million whole slices of bread are thrown away every day. A campaign by [WRAP](#) (Waste and Resources Action Programme) helped to reduce food waste by 21% between 2007 and 2012. Stroud District Council introduced food waste collections for residents in 2016. You can read more about [what happens to your food waste on our website](#). You can also find suggestions for what steps individual households can take to [reduce the amount of food wasted](#).

As part of our Cost-of-Living response the council has been working with the network of Community Hubs since 2021 to increase access to food through community cafes and pantries. This includes Hubs who are distributing surplus food and donations to communities. This work will continue to be supported by Household Support Funding.

The Gloucestershire Gleaning pilot began in Stroud through the [NoSH Hubs](#) Food Coordinator to link farmers and food producers with excess produce to community groups who can harvest, store and re-distribute to communities. Phase two of the gleaning project will develop in 2025 with support from UK Shared Prosperity Funding and Household Support Funding.

In 2026, the new council Health Inequalities Strategy will develop an action plan to improve access to affordable and nutritious food across Stroud District. This will involve the partners already working on our Cost-of-Living response and Gleaning.

The council works with and provides support to Community Hubs that are working hard to provide food to those who need it, and part of this work is to provide high quality food that has been gleaned from farms and suppliers that would otherwise be throwing it away.

Food & Farming Strategic Objectives

FF01	Support farmers to transition to regenerative and nature friendly agriculture across the district (enc, enb)
FF02	Support access to land, allotments, orchards and other resources to increase the amount of affordable food grown and sold locally by farmers, community groups, business start-ups and residents (enc, enb)
FF03	Increase the amount of food available to people that would otherwise be thrown away or wasted (enc)



Water, Rivers and the Coast

“Our towns and villages are protected from flooding, drought, heat and storms and feel resilient and connected to each other”



Linked Council Plan Objectives

- Build the district’s Nature Recovery Network
- Promote sustainable development by balancing new housing, transport and employment requirements with the necessary infrastructure and environmental protection for the district
- Ensure Council-managed open spaces are increasing in biodiversity and contributing effectively to nature’s recovery
- Ensure the district is prepared for the changes expected from the climate crisis

The primary way that most of us will initially experience and feel the impacts of climate change is through changes to water, rivers and the sea. A hotter climate increases the amount of water in the atmosphere, leading to increased flood risk. This will impact both our communities and the natural water environment. Sea level rise in the Severn Estuary will continue in the medium to longer term irrespective of emissions reductions. We may also experience more drought and dry conditions. Warmer weather is likely to increase the impacts of pollution from sewage and other pollutants.

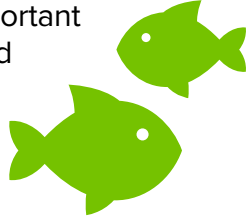
WRC01 Help achieve the objectives of the Wilder Frome Vision adopted by the Severn Vale Catchment Partnership, and extend the principles of the vision to all rivers and streams in the district (enc, enb)

Stroud District Council has joined together with a partnership of organisations working to manage and protect the River Frome, to form The Wilder Frome Forum. That forum has produced a [Wilder Frome Vision](#) and the council will play a full part in making that vision come to life.



Water, Rivers and the Coast

The vision aims to protect important species, such as White Clawed Crayfish, and supports the return of species that would originally have lived in the catchment, including Beavers and Salmon. The way we manage water and protect and restore our districts springs, flushes, streams and rivers, is fundamental to the recovery of nature and reducing the impacts of climate change on nature and on people.



We are supporting [Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust](#) in its plan to reintroduce wild Beavers to areas of the Stroud Valleys (See N 06) and is working with the [Severn Rivers Trust](#) to restore migration routes through the River. To assist with this, we recently funded a feasibility study to produce an outline design to build a fish pass on the weir at Ebley Mill. Other weirs and obstacles to fish migration are being worked on by the forum's partners. The council intends to contribute fully to achieving the aims and the vision of the Wilder Frome Forum and extending the principles of the vision to all the other rivers and streams in the district.

Working with the Forum, we will continue to use our powers within the planning system, our advocacy and continue to work in partnership with other public and voluntary organisations to restore and improve the health of all rivers and streams in the district, advocating for reduced pollution from all sources, sewage, roads and agricultural.

As part of our work on the vision, we will explore the benefits of recognising the [“Rights of the Rivers”](#) in the district, an approach that has been trialled in other parts of the UK and in other countries.

WRC02 Continue and extend our natural flood management work throughout all areas of the district where reducing flood risk from rivers and streams is a priority (exe, enb)

Since its inception, the [Stroud Valleys natural flood management programme](#) has implemented over 1100 measures to slow flows and restore nature across the catchment of the River Frome, worked with over 60 landowners and farmers and worked with film maker Antony Lyons, local artist Joe Magee and local poet Adam Horovitz to produce engagement material to explain the reasons and the benefits of the work.

The council intends to continue the Stroud valleys natural flood management scheme and, in the future, extend it to all catchments of the district where it would be beneficial. [Gloucestershire County Council](#) have now established a countywide natural flood management programme to implement the approach across the other districts in Gloucestershire, and the council will be working alongside the County Council to maximise the benefits from our joint work.



WRC03 Increase resilience to surface water flood risk caused by climate change in our towns and villages by implementing a programme of retrofitted sustainable drainage in the district's urban centres and communities (exe, enb)

As climate change impacts continue to materialise in coming years, a range of ecological, hydrological, and habitat impacts can be anticipated. Climate change resilience



Water, Rivers and the Coast

will therefore be woven into all planned interventions and work will take account of the latest data and evidence. We want to extend the approach we have taken in rural areas of the district to our built environment, which includes the retrofit and use sustainable drainage and nature-based approaches to reducing surface water flood risk in the district's towns and villages. (Retrofitting simply means the adding new technology or features to an existing structure or building). Replacing hard surfaces with more permeable ones will allow water to soak into the ground and slow down the rate at which it is drained back into the stream and rivers. This in turn will reduce the volume of pollutants being washed from our roads and buildings into the district's waterways.

As described earlier, wherever possible, Nature-based Solutions (NbS) will be at the heart of our work.

WRC04 Ensure the new Local Plan for Stroud district contains policies that encourage development that protects and restore springs, streams and rivers and requires the sustainable collection, use and discharging of rainwater water to improve water quality and reduce risk and impacts of drought (exe)

As described earlier, the new Local Plan for Stroud district will be the main way that the council can influence new developments and ensure they are as resilient as possible and adapted to future climates, providing national planning policy reform allows this. We need to ensure new developments respect and protect springs and natural water features that are unique to the Stroud district. It also includes ensuring a requirement for sustainable water management is built into any future



local development plan policies to ensure the protection and stewardship of water. Sustainable water management includes the capturing, harvesting, use and disposal of rainwater within the home and potentially the reuse of grey water in new developments. This will be vital as we experience more intense and frequent rainfall but also to increase resilience to droughts.

WRC05 Work in partnership to mitigate the increase in flood risk from rivers and the sea caused by climate change throughout the district, prioritising nature-based solutions to reduce risk from rapid response catchments and rising sea levels (exe, enc, enb)

Despite our continued work to reduce flood risk in the district by changing land use and



Water, Rivers and the Coast

implementing nature-based approaches, flood risk from rivers and the Severn Estuary are likely to increase. The council works closely with Gloucestershire County Council, the Environment Agency and the Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board to plan for, manage and reduce that risk. GCC are currently reviewing and updating the [Gloucestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#), which aims to reduce flood risk from surface waters, smaller rivers and Groundwater Springs and the council will work closely with them to identify priority actions across the district. Flood risk in the district's main rivers and from the Severn Estuary, is managed by the Environment

Agency, and the council will work closely with them to identify priority actions to reduce flood risk from both of those sources.

Flood risk from the sea and coastal erosion are managed through the [Shoreline Management Planning](#) (SMP) process. SMPs are non-statutory plans that rely on the statutory planning process to help their implementation. Stroud's new Local Plan will consider the relevant SMP for our district and the recommended policies for relevant parts of the estuary. As coastal defences reach the end of their serviceable life they will need to be replaced and, in some cases, set back or realigned.

Water, Rivers and Coast Strategic Objectives

WRC01	Achieve the objectives of the Wilder Frome Vision adopted by the Severn Vale Catchment Partnership, and extend the principles of the vision to all rivers and streams in the district (enc, enb)
WRC02	Continue and extend our natural flood management work throughout all areas of the district where reducing flood risk from rivers and streams is a priority. (exe)
WRC03	Increase resilience to surface water flood risk caused by climate change in our towns and villages by implementing a programme of retrofitted sustainable drainage in the district's urban centres and communities (exe, enc)
WRC04	Ensure the new Local Plan for Stroud district contains policies that encourage development that protects and restore springs, streams and rivers and sustainable collection, use and discharging of rainwater water to improve water quality and reduce risk and impacts of drought (exe)
WRC05	Work in partnership to mitigate the increase in flood risk from rivers and the sea caused by climate change throughout the district, prioritising nature-based solutions to reduce risk from rapid response catchments and rising sea levels (exe, enc, enb)

A Climate and Nature Strategy *for* Stroud District

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