



DRAFT

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045

Cambridgeshire County Council's
Climate Change and Environment Strategy
2021

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Foreword

In 2021 the Joint Administration committed to putting climate change and bio-diversity at the heart of the Council's work and to be more ambitious than ever before about the work needed to tackle the climate and environmental crises. In line with this commitment, we are pleased to present our "Cambridgeshire Net Zero by 2045 emissions Strategy" which describes how we will deliver on our commitments and respond to the climate impact challenges we will need to face.

This is a strategy for action

Since the Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 the awareness and understanding of the risks we face from the impact of climate change has grown. The evidence is clear. It is important that we now transition quickly away from a focus on *what* the change is, to a focus on the *how*, and *how quickly* we make that change happen at the scale needed to avoid catastrophic impacts for all of us. This is a strategy for action that aims to help all of us answer the question about how we must tackle the climate emergency. It provides a framework to enable the inclusive, dynamic and large-scale change needed in Cambridgeshire in the coming years, whilst also ensuring we deliver on our commitments to you and build real momentum to drive forward change at the pace and scale needed.

This is a strategy for the long-term, and for uncertainty

The change needed to mitigate and adapt to the catastrophic impacts of a changing climate is unprecedented. Fundamentally we will need to change some of the traditional systems on which we all rely. How we live, work, shop, and travel (to name but a few) will change. We'll need to think about what it might take to transition away from 'growth at any cost' to develop a better collective understanding of what 'good growth' looks like for people, places and our planet. We have to acknowledge the critical importance of nature and bio-diversity in everything we do for human wellbeing, in a way we never have before.

We recognise we don't have all of the answers and that there is much that remains unknown as we write this. But we do know **it's not too late - yet**. We want to take the opportunity to shape the changes required before we no longer have a choice to do so. This strategy sets a high-level framework that will enable us to make progress at pace, manage uncertainty and allows us to focus on the long-term future in a way that is dynamic and adaptable. Short-term thinking will not get us on the right path.

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Foreword (2/2)

This Strategy shows that we are a Council that is 'open for business' when it comes to tackling the climate and biodiversity crises.

We recognise, and take seriously, the opportunity we have to provide much needed local leadership to tackling the climate crisis in Cambridgeshire. We are fully committed to a whole organisational approach to achieve a Net-Zero Council by 2030 , whilst also recognising this is a relatively small part of a much bigger picture. This Strategy is our commitment to working for and with people, communities, businesses and all political parties to deliver this ambition, setting the principles and providing a practical framework to guide creativity, collaboration and most importantly - urgent action across Cambridgeshire.

We want to hear from you about the actions you are already taking to reduce carbon emissions and protect our natural environment. This will help us to understand where we need to focus our efforts and where we need to explore solutions together. And we want to inspire, encourage and enable change at every level across our County.

To get in touch to tell us what you are doing please contact us via the details provided at the end of this Strategy, or via your local Member. Find your local member by searching our [website here](#).

Funding the climate crisis is not easy, but it is achievable

We know that investing in activity to tackle the climate crisis and stabilise our climate will initially feel costly, however we also know that **the costs and risks of inaction** will be much greater. Investing early will pay off for everyone as we avoid the worst impacts of the climate and create commercial advantage through a skilled low carbon workforce and new products and services for export.

We will need to use our policy powers and other levers to finance our local climate ambitions. Examples may include grants, green bonds, private investment and aligning our forthcoming net zero programme with government incentives and regulation to ensure we can secure the investment needed.



Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Purpose of this Strategy

Our ambition is for the county of Cambridgeshire to be net zero by 2045, and our goal to be a net zero Council by 2030 is a small but important part of that journey.

This Strategy describes how the Council will contribute to tackling the climate and biodiversity crises. It is designed to guide our action in the coming years, help individuals, partners, and businesses in Cambridgeshire understand what we are focusing on and why, and **support everyone to continue the positive action underway already and kick start important new action.**

The **evidence** we have tells us that the three most important opportunities we should focus on at this time for Cambridgeshire are to **reduce carbon emissions, support the development of resilient communities so that they can adapt to the impacts of climate change, and to support nature and biodiversity to thrive.** Focusing on these areas will deliver social, economic, environmental, and health benefits for people, businesses, and communities in Cambridgeshire.

The challenges we all face as a result of the climate and biodiversity crises are vast and require all of us to make positive change. This Strategy aims to both set out **how we as a Council will respond to this challenge** through our focus on the above priorities and is also designed **to be helpful to others seeking to collaborate and make positive change.**

We believe this Strategy can be **a mechanism to make the most of the opportunities we have as a collective, to reduce carbon emissions and protect our natural environment** for the good of all. Our proposed framework will help us and others take action, and is designed to be a dynamic document that further evolves as we move forward.

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Scope of Strategy

This Strategy document aims to:

Set out our **ambition**, and what we are trying to achieve

Remind us all of the impacts of inaction, and **why this Strategy matters for people, nature, communities and businesses**

Be clear about **the climate and environmental priorities** for Cambridgeshire, and for the Council

Be transparent about **how** we as the Council are intending to approach tackling the climate crisis:

- Our strategic approach
- The themes, principles and frameworks which will shape the action we will take
- Our key milestones for a **Net Zero Council by 2030**

Let everyone know how to **get in touch with us**

Provide easy access to supporting information that is relevant to tackling the climate crisis in Cambridgeshire.

Our Ambition: Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045

What do we need to achieve?

Our ambition is to deliver net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and support communities and our natural environment to adapt and thrive as the climate changes.



Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Our Strategic Approach

These are the things we need to do today, and the things that are important for future success



Net Zero County Council 2030

We commit to ensuring the County Council delivers on its target of net zero emissions. This means achieving net-zero for our direct emissions and halving indirect emissions through our supply chains by 2030. We will take a broad and long-term view of initiatives in order to deliver the most sustainable change possible and lead by example.



Driving change through collaboration

We want to work transparently and in partnership with other organisations, business and communities to support all sectors to reduce carbon emissions, benefit nature and take positive climate action. Aligning our efforts will bring greater impact for all of us.



Harnessing the power of our local communities

We will take a place-based approach to climate change. Local communities know their environment best and can identify solutions to local environmental challenges.. Harnessing the power of local communities and local networks will enable all of us to amplify impact and support a socially just transition to net zero.



Carbon literate Cambridgeshire

We will work to develop a county-wide understanding of carbon reduction so that people, communities and businesses have the knowledge they need to identify and act upon nature based and other opportunities for carbon reduction and doubling nature.



Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Our themes for action

Our Strategy is based on three themes that help us to frame our response, plans and actions

Mitigation

Actions we must take to prevent or reduce carbon emissions



Adaptation

Actions we must take to cope with the effects of the climate crisis

Natural Capital

Investing in and protecting our natural environment on which we all rely for health, well-being and wider benefits

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Our principles for action

How we will successfully manage our Strategy

Harness our unique position to **lead and facilitate** activity that contributes towards our ambition, across the Council and beyond

Focus on **strategic issues and opportunities**, recognising there is a need for us to **innovate** to achieve change

Use **evidence and insight** well to inform sustainable, **socially just** and financially sound decisions and plans

Embed the principles of a **circular economy** and ‘**do no harm**’ across Council business and the local system.

Commit to broad and deep **collaboration** across the public and private sectors, with residents, businesses, communities and universities, to drive change.

Build **understanding and engagement** within the Council and across partnerships and communities, **integrating** and **aligning** for impact.

Seek **challenge** to our Strategy, and accept that actions may need to **adapt** and change as new opportunities are identified

Have strong Council **governance**, **transparent** action plans and recognition that **investment** and **risk** must be managed in a context of uncertainty.

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Our principles in practice

Some examples of how our principles are and will be applied in practice



Leadership and collaboration

We will **build awareness** of the impacts of climate change in Cambridgeshire to help people, communities and businesses adapt

We will **work with local business** to support decarbonisation of commercial and industrial buildings and operations

We will **work with our communities** to provide support to develop and deliver community heat projects

We will **use the land we own** to deliver tree planting and other improvements to green space to maximise the carbon sequestration potential.

We will take **an active role on strategic projects** that deliver multiple benefits for the County such as Local Area Energy Planning, Future Fens and the Land Use Framework for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough



Strategic opportunities and innovation

We will **work with our suppliers** to improve environmental outcomes from the goods and services we buy

We will **use our purchasing power** to drive improvement through our supply chain by specifying more sustainable options for service delivery, replacing single use plastics (where appropriate) and develop **circular economy principles** within our services.

We will explore **new funding models** to enable us and our partners to better consider environment in our decision making and invest public money well.



Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Our Net Zero Vision

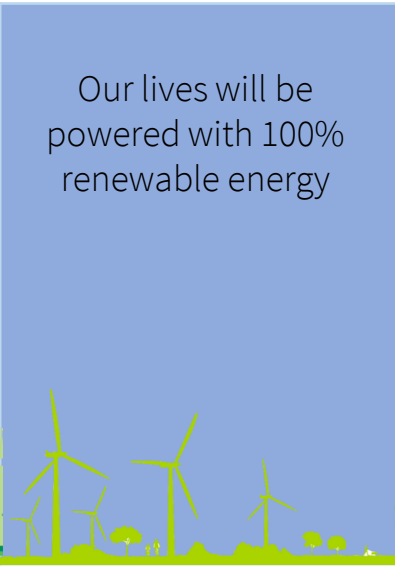
This is what our net zero future in Cambridgeshire can look like.

But it is only possible if all of us **work together** to achieve it

We will live in climate adapted and zero carbon homes



Our lives will be powered with 100% renewable energy



Our communities will be more resilient to the impacts of climate change and will have space for nature to thrive



Our health will be better, and we will have easy access to sustainable, local transport and green space



We will have a circular economy that provides access to affordable low and zero carbon products and services



Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Likely impacts of inaction

Why does the climate and environmental crisis matter for Cambridgeshire, and for the Council?

Impacts of inaction for people and health

- Damage to homes, assets & places
- Poorer health, either directly or indirectly through disruption, and issues like poor air quality
- Reduced food, energy and water security
- Fewer green spaces and natural environments for people to access and use
- Different communities will be able to cope differently with extreme weather events, Cambridgeshire is low lying, which can exacerbate economic, social and health inequalities
- Increased risk of severe flooding of homes and businesses
- Communities will be affected, and people will be permanently or temporarily displaced from their homes
- An increased burden placed on future generations to deal with the impact

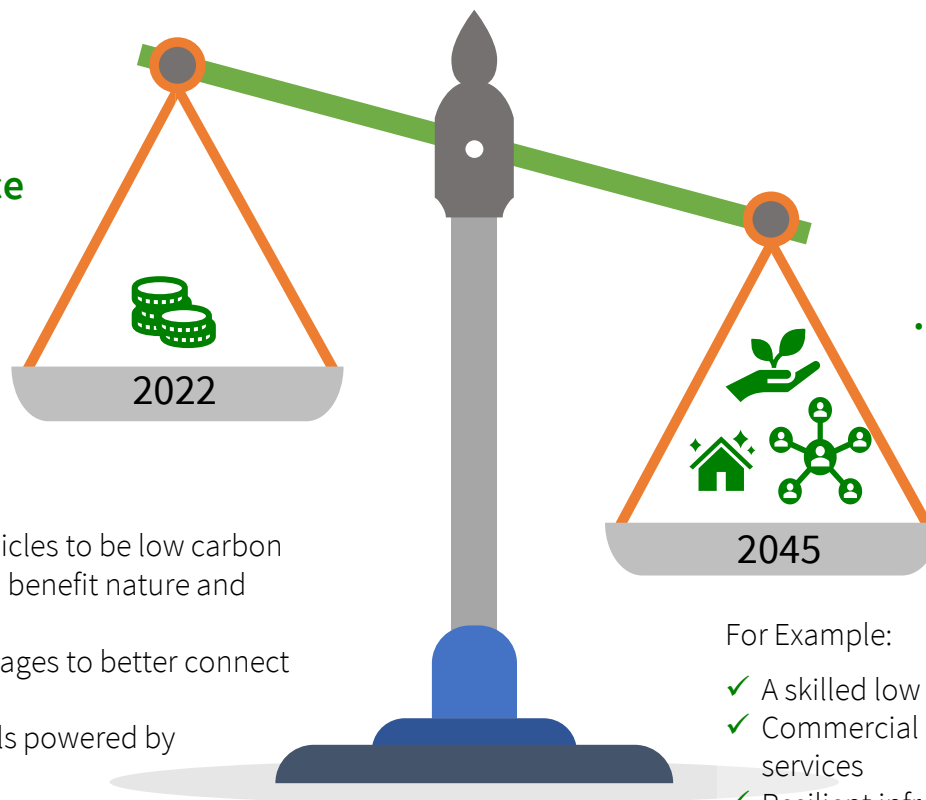
Impacts of inaction on the economy

- Increased cost of living
- Damage to local infrastructure, buildings and assets
- Disrupted livelihoods from extreme weather events
- Higher future costs of adaptation
- Transport and industry disruption which result in supply chain issues and risks to food supply and higher costs due to scarcity
- Agricultural disruption/loss of valuable farmland to rising water levels
- Increased need for public services
- Lower economic growth, with impacts on areas like employment
- Poorer health and damage to infrastructure could mean disruption to employment and reduced productivity for businesses
- Civil unrest as living costs and access to resources reduce with greater wealth disparity

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Quality of Life

By investing and acting today, quality of life for every Cambridgeshire citizen can be improved

Early Investment to reduce carbon emissions will...



...lead to greater benefits to our community

For Example:

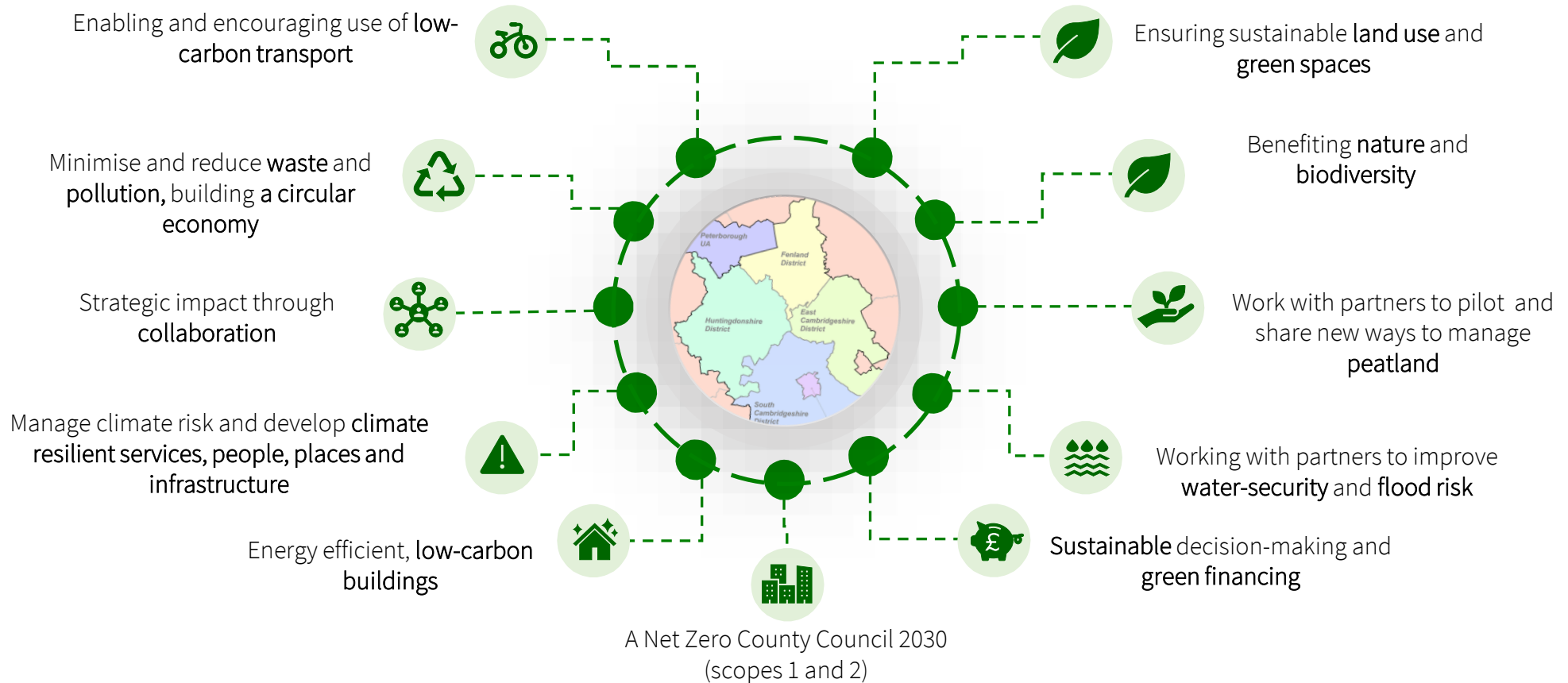
- ✓ Upgrading our buildings and vehicles to be low carbon
- ✓ Change our land use practices to benefit nature and sequester carbon
- ✓ Improve cycle paths between villages to better connect rural communities
- ✓ Build energy efficient new schools powered by renewables

For Example:

- ✓ A skilled low carbon workforce
- ✓ Commercial edge in development of new products and services
- ✓ Resilient infrastructure that works in adverse weather
- ✓ Increased land productivity
- ✓ Cleaner air and less pollution
- ✓ Accessible green spaces we enjoy and where nature thrives

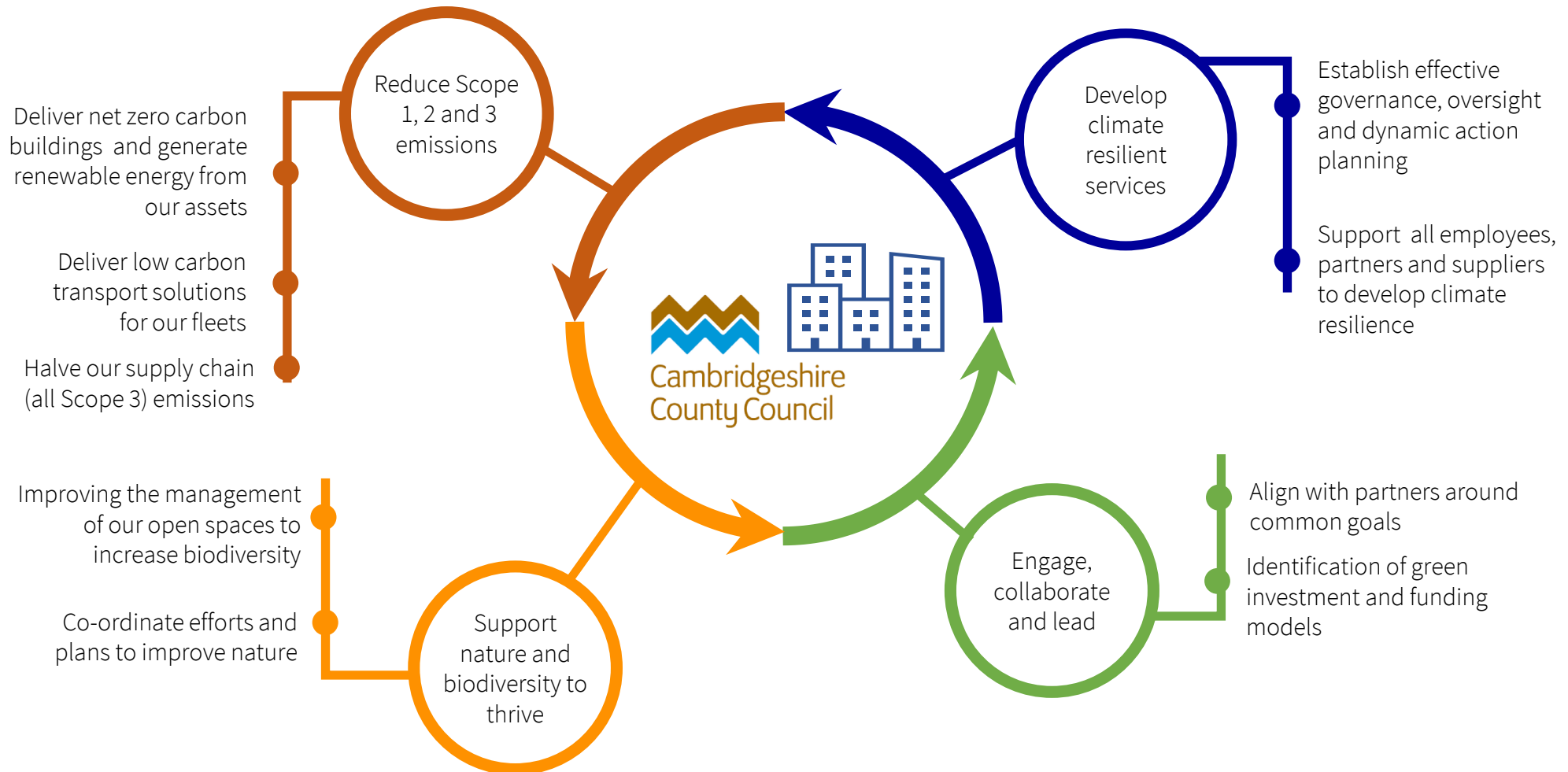
Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: A Net Zero Area by 2045

Strategic priorities for change for Cambridgeshire to be net zero by 2045



Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: a Net Zero County Council by 2030

To deliver net zero by 2030, the Council will deliver against these priorities



Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Financing the change

Where will funding come from to deliver our ambitions?

National Policy

- National Policy & Legislative change e.g. Regulation, Grants, finance incentives
- Mobilising private finance investments into low carbon infrastructure

Net Zero Area Target

- Combined Authority powers to raise finance for low carbon and green infrastructure
- Local Authority powers to raise finance for climate risk management e.g. flood management
- Strategic partnerships to attract and leverage private finance e.g. housing companies; banks
- Contributions from planning, growth and development to help reduce carbon emissions

The Council's Scope 3 Emissions

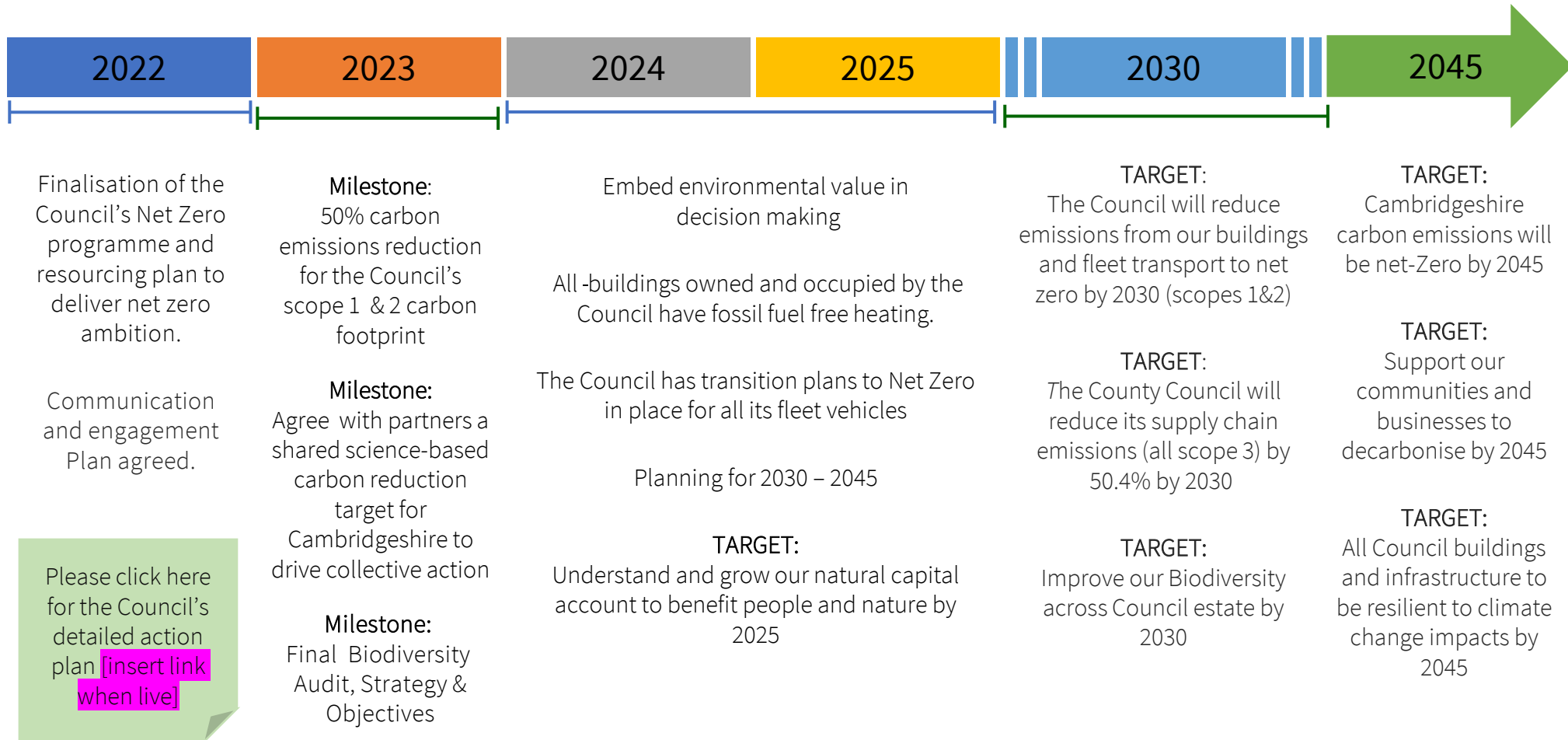
- CCC procurement strategy : pushing the market to make carbon reductions in service delivery
- Policy and strategy incentives e.g., Biodiversity Net Gain, collaborating on projects
- Scoping of a Cambridgeshire Decarbonisation Fund to support businesses and communities
- Community and business projects that leverage in private investment and grant contributions

The Council's Scope 1 / 2 Emissions

- Council budget – fund key roles to facilitate change, invest to save business cases to cut emissions
- Winning Government competitions and other Grants to access funding

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: a Net Zero Council by 2030

Key targets the Council will need to work towards in order to ensure we are on track for carbon reductions and improving nature



Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: A Strategy for action

How we envisage this Strategy being useful to the Council and other organisations

As a mirror...

to ourselves, our organisations and our communities on what we do and our impacts

As a mission...

for what is possible within Cambridgeshire that we can contribute to.

To mobilise...

everyone to take positive climate action and collaborate widely

As a map...

of some of the existing policies and initiatives that are already taking our County in the direction we want to go.

As a mindset...

that allows us to turn ambitions and targets into reality.

As a method to connect and align...

all of our work and efforts for a low carbon future for Cambridgeshire

To build momentum...

through working with communities, businesses and partners on shared actions.

To monitor...

how and where the County is making progress on the agenda

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: A Strategy for action

The things we need to think about (example questions)

	Mitigate Prevent or reduce carbon emissions	Adapt Actions we must take to cope with the impacts of climate change	Natural Capital Invest in and protect the natural environment
A Net Zero (on Scopes 1&2) Council by 2030	What are the things we can do that prevent and / or reduce carbon emissions?	How will existing services need to change to support people, communities and businesses with the impacts of climate change?	What can we learn from nature? How can we adapt or align what we already do to protect natural capital?
Harnessing the power of place	What would it look like if Cambridgeshire as a place respected the health of the whole planet in our collective purchasing and waste?	What do communities need to cope with the effects of climate change? How will communities be changed by the impacts of climate change?	What if Cambridgeshire as a place were as generous and resilient as our natural environment?
Carbon literate Cambridgeshire	What is needed to encourage, promote and enable climate innovation in Cambridgeshire?	How might we create spaces for people, communities and businesses to come together, learn and develop ideas?	How might we use levers for change to enable the application of carbon literate learning across the County (i.e. within Education)?
Driving change through collaboration	What are the things we need to know, understand and collaborate around to ensure there is a just transition to net zero in Cambridgeshire?	What does successful systems leadership look like for net zero Cambridgeshire? How do relationships across Cambridgeshire look?	How could our landscapes, greenscapes, pavements & rooftops be designed to sequester as much carbon dioxide as a forest?

Net Zero Cambridgeshire 2045: Further Information

Links to relevant documents and key contacts

Policy Context

[Link to Cambridgeshire County Council's Think Communities website](#)

[Link to Cambridgeshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[Link to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate](#)

[Link to the Council's Equality Strategy 2018 - 2022](#)

Additional Information

Further information on our approach and steps you could take can be found on our website:

[Link to Climate Change, Energy & Environment pages on our website](#)

Supporting documents

[Link to Climate Change & Environment Strategy: Supporting Document](#)

[Link to Net Zero and Improving Nature Programme and Resourcing strategy \(due March 2022\)](#)

[Community and Engagement Plan](#)

[Link to the live 'action plan' to help identify the types of positive actions we are taking](#)

[Link to the Council's Annual Carbon Footprint Reports](#)

Talk to Us!

If you would like to find out more information or discuss anything relating to this Strategy please contact:

climate.change@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
(not yet active)

