Moray Council Climate Change Strategy 2026-2036

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1. Foreword

Climate change is one of the defining challenges of our time. Its impacts are already tangible across Moray, from coastal erosion to more frequent extreme weather events. These are leading to increased pressure on our natural environment, regional infrastructure and Council services. As a Council, we have long recognised the urgency of this challenge, declaring a climate emergency in 2019 and a nature emergency in 2023. However, it is crucial that we are realistic about what we can achieve. Significant progress has been made to date, including a reduction of our recorded emissions by over 40% since 2017/18, but further action needs to be planned, funded, and progressed.

This updated Climate Change Strategy for 2026–2036 sets a path for the next decade. It is based on using the powers of the Council to help create a fair, healthy, resilient and sustainable place for all who live, work and invest in Moray.

Our approach is two-fold: mitigation: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by embedding low-carbon practice in Council operations, strengthening energy efficiency, fleet decarbonisation and renewable energy; and adaptation: building resilience in our communities, infrastructure and natural environment so that Moray is better prepared for the climate impacts already unfolding.

This Strategy aims to meet national targets, including working towards net zero emissions by 2045, while setting interim five-year carbon budgets to monitor our progress on this pathway. However, this is not something that Moray Council can do on its own. The funding environment we find ourselves in and our ability to lever in public and private sector funding will be key to delivering the actions required to meet national targets. The strategy adopts a path that reflects the financial reality the Council is in, but these plans are unachievable without appropriate funding.

Furthermore, Moray's success depends on partnerships across public services, businesses, community groups and residents. We encourage all communities and partners to continue collaborating with us to accelerate climate action and deliver the opportunities that a low-carbon transition brings for wellbeing, jobs and prosperity.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far and are confident that this Strategy will guide us toward a fairer, greener future for Moray. Together we can ensure that our beautiful region not only adapts to a changing climate but thrives in it.

Cllr Marc Macrae
Chair of Climate Change Working Group

Moray Council Climate Change Strategy 2026-36

Strategy on one page

Our **Statutory Duties**

Mitigation

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Adaptation

Help adapt to the changing climate

Sustainability

Act in a sustainable manner

Our **Principles**

Efficiency

Efficient use of existing resources

Preparedness

Develop projects for when funds available

Balance

Consider cost and carbon of projects

Collaboration

Work with partners to deliver the strategy

Looking **Back**

Total Council emissions for 2024-25
17055.6 tCO_2e

Decrease in emissions since baseline (2017-18)
41.3%

Framework for reporting on sustainable development actions agreed

Council's first report on climate adaptation produced and approved

Emissions reduced by diverting landfill to NESS EFW facility

Electricity generated from solar photovoltaic panels
53,616 kWh

Moray Coastal Change Adaptation Plans consulted on and approved

Moray Council has the third highest recycling rate in Scotland,

Nature Network defined and biodiversity works progressing

Looking **Forward**

Building Heat and Electricity	• Continue to install energy saving and renewable energy technologies on Council-owned buildings • Progress a 'fabric first' approach to building retrofit
Fleet and Travel	• Displace fossil fuel powered vehicles and plant with ULEV alternatives (as budgets allow) • Delivery North of Scotland Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund to provide more charging facilities
Waste	• Work with partners to progress projects to reduce waste through re-use and recycling
Operational Activities	• Embed climate change activity within relevant service plans and similar • Develop and deliver climate and nature emergency training for staff and elected members
Procurement	• Continue to deliver non-cash benefits such as through the procurement process • Deliver sustainable procurement guidance to officers
Sustainable Development	• Ensure sustainable development is included within Council decision making
Nature	• Deliver nature positive management plans for Council greenspace • Ensure that planning policy, guidance and decisions deliver positive effects for biodiversity
Adaptation	• Move towards the production of a Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) • Undertake annual benchmarking exercise
External Influence	• Support the development of a Moray-wide climate strategy • Embedding climate change into new place based, people centred, delivery focussed LDP
Just Transition	• Submit bids to the Just Transition Fund • Continue to engage with elected members, Moray MP's and MSP's and JCC

2. Introduction

The Council has statutory obligations to undertake climate action. To achieve net zero emissions by 2045 is a collective responsibility across local authorities and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a duty on all public bodies to act to deliver on the national carbon budgets.

Under the current legislation, Moray Council has three statutory duties:

- **Mitigation:** to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- **Adaptation:** to help Council services and communities adapt to the effects of a changing climate
- **Sustainability:** to act in a sustainable manner

In line with the Scottish Government's new carbon budgets, which replaced the previous interim targets, this strategy puts forward a series of four carbon budgets, each spanning five years. The budgets represent five-year average emissions targets, and are less prone to fluctuations, due to temporary circumstances, compared to the previous annual targets.

However, there is more to climate change than cutting carbon. Moray Council faces rising costs from climate impacts, especially weather-related impacts on infrastructure, coastal erosion, and wildfires. Adaptation work in this strategy aligns with the Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP3) objectives and seeks to progress the Council's understanding of the challenges ahead.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are interconnected. The degradation of ecosystems is both a consequence of and a contributor to climate change. As biodiversity declines, our capacity to adapt to a changing climate is weakened. This poses risks to key sectors in Moray such as forestry, food and drink, tourism, as well as public health. By recognising the urgency of the climate emergency and the nature emergency it is critical that works to tackle climate change are aligned with the Moray Council Biodiversity Strategy this is why both documents were developed and presented to the Council together.

3. Background

3.1. The Climate Emergency

The climate is changing faster than ever previously experienced. Scientists agree that greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the main reason for global temperature increases over the past 150 years[1] (Figure 1).

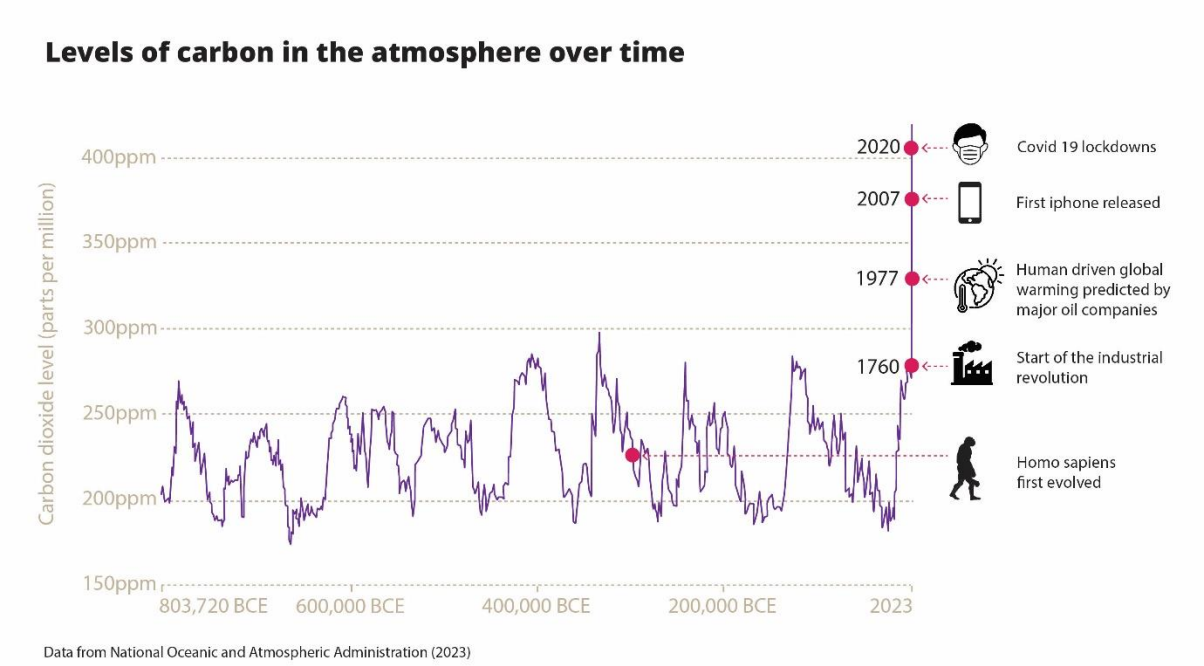

Figure 1: Global atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) concentration from 803,720 BCE to present day. Data from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2023).

Moray's climate is changing, and the impacts are already being felt as extreme weather events are increasing in frequency. These changes are projected to continue and intensify in the future creating pressure on local services including:

- Damage to infrastructure such as buildings, roads, railways and power supplies;
- Damage to ecosystems, water supplies and agricultural production;
- Disrupted food supply chains and increased costs driving up inflation; and
- Disproportionate health and economic effects on vulnerable people.

Coastal flooding and erosion is a high risk in Moray due to rising sea levels and storm surges leading to property damage, infrastructure disruption and loss of habitable land. Storms and wildfires already have a significant impact on Moray's woodland resources.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are inextricably linked. The rapid loss of nature is both a result and driver of climate change. Biodiversity loss will negatively impact our ability to adapt to a changing climate, with implications for the Moray food and drink sector, tourism sector, and overall health and wellbeing.

[1] IPCC (2021) Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis.

3.2. Moray Council Action to Date

Since the production of the Climate Change Strategy (2020-2030) there has been substantial progress and a greater understanding of the decarbonisation pathway the Council is on.

- **Mitigation:** The Council's emissions decreased by 41.3% since 2017-18 (*Figure 1*Figure 2). Emissions reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic but increased again as the Council resumed its usual working practices. The most significant annual decrease of 30.3% occurred in 2023/24, primarily due to improvements in the disposal of non-recyclable waste, which was previously sent to landfill but is now cleanly combusted to generate energy.
  Emissions from transport, building electricity and operational emissions have slightly decreased. However, building heat – now the largest source of emissions – has shown little significant change since 2017.

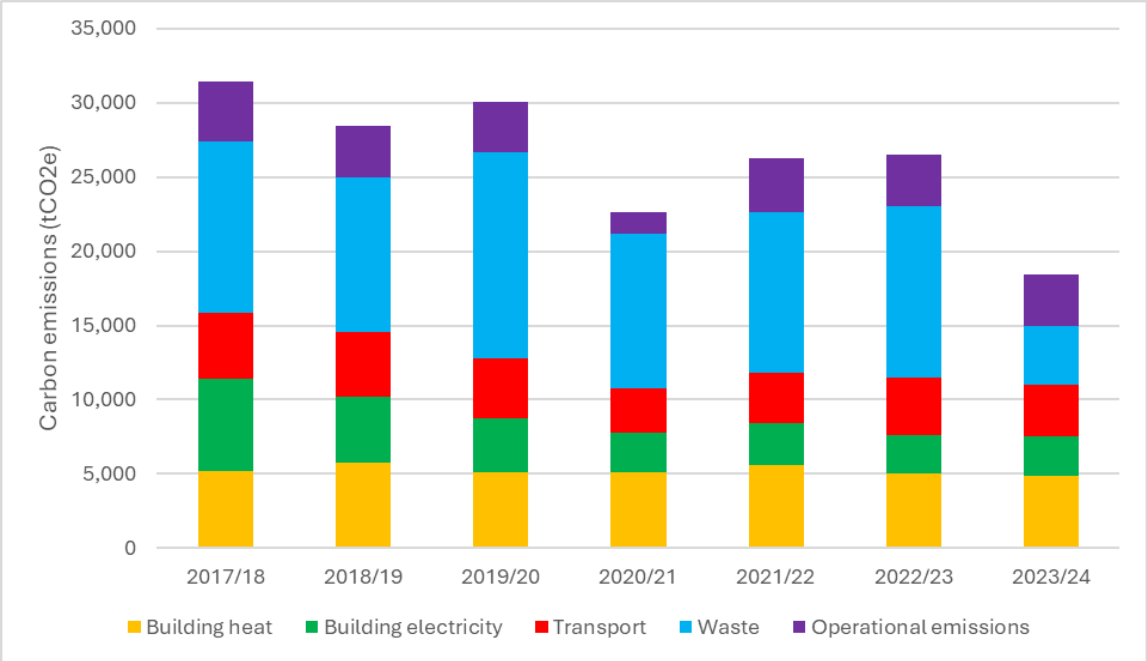

Figure 2: Reduction in recorded carbon emissions (tCO_2e) from Moray Council activities from 2017 to 2024

- **Adaptation:** The Council's first report on climate adaptation was produced, highlighting existing adaptation activity and areas for improvement. There remains limited understanding of the future costs of climate impacts, but greater awareness of some of the Council's vulnerabilities. Moray Coastal Change Adaptation Plans enable the Council to plan for, and react to, different scenarios as they are triggered.
- **Acting in the most sustainable way:** The Council agreed a Sustainable Development Statement in 2024 to demonstrate how it is progressing sustainable development as part of its Best Value duties. It included a clear framework for

monitoring and reporting on sustainable development actions, with measurable targets to track progress and demonstrate accountability.

Climate change action is included within the Moray Council Corporate Plan 2024 which sets out the council's corporate vision, values and priorities. Within the Corporate Plan it is recognised that the effects of climate change are a challenge for our communities and that achieving climate change targets will help support flourishing, healthy communities. Furthermore, it is highlighted that sustainability, environmental, climate change and biodiversity considerations are incorporated within existing projects and specifically considered in committee reports where appropriate.

Progressing climate change action is supported and implemented by a series of targeted policies, route maps and action plans which lay out the more granular detail for relevant assets, functions and activities. Therefore, the approach of Moray Council to climate change issues is set out in this Strategy and a suite of additional documents including:

- Zero Emission Fleet Replacement Strategy (2024)
- Biodiversity Strategy (2026)
- Local Development Plan and Local Place Plans (in production)
- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (2024)
- Coastal Adaptation Plan for Moray (2024)
- Regional Just Transition Plan
- Moray Climate and Nature Strategy (in development with Scottish Climate Information Service (SCIS) and Moray CAN)
- Community Wealth Building Strategy (2024)
- Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy (2024)
- Good Food Nation Strategy (in early stages of production)

4. Updating the Climate Change Strategy

The Climate Change Strategy (CCS) is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains relevant, aligned with current policies, and is on track to meet its goals. In April 2024, the Scottish Government replaced interim emissions targets with a system of carbon budgeting, while reaffirming its long-term target of achieving net zero by 2045.

The Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029 (SNAP3) sets out how public services should include adaptation actions in their activities, and this also needed to be incorporated within the CCS.

Although the previous Climate Change Plan and Route Map to Net Zero highlighted the need for accelerated action and greater resourcing to meet decarbonisation targets, the current rate of carbon reduction is insufficient for the Council to achieve net zero by 2030. Achieving this within current financial constraints is unlikely, although officers are working to secure additional external funding.

Therefore, in 2024 the Council agreed that its target of being net zero by 2030 was not achievable and an update to the CCS should align the Council with Scottish Government targets to be Net Zero by 2045. It was also decided that the CCS required updating to reflect progress made and the Council's evolving understanding of its climate change duties. In 2025, a member/officer working group was established to update the CCS and to collect information on appropriate actions, governance structures, and reporting processes.

Current Funding Constraints

The CCS already recognises the need for external funding to accelerate the pace of change. While external funding opportunities exist, the recent capital budget reductions (totalling £34.2M over the next 3 years) which were essential for financial sustainability significantly limit financial flexibility in the short term. As a result, capital-intensive actions must either be 'spend-to-save', linked to existing approved expenditure, or externally funded. As the Council continues to change and its roles adapt however, there are opportunities during this transformation to embed climate change considerations within the new structure and activities.

While the Council has successfully secured external funding for climate change projects, many available funding sources are challenging to access. Some are limited by annualised funding cycles, while other funding is offered in the form of loans. The Council has made efforts to work with partners to secure external funding, and this will continue.

With these funding issues in mind, the decarbonisation pathways for properties and fleet will be calculated by aggregating two separate strands:

1. What we are currently committed to doing with existing funding, what is achievable with spend-to-save, and what can be done by better use of existing resources and facilities.
2. What could also be delivered with external funding while recognising practical constraints on the number of projects which can be delivered and the staffing resources required to manage these projects.

Aggregating these two strands will show a timeline of what is achievable (current pathway) and what could be achievable (aspirational pathway) with sufficient external funds. This is shown in Figure *7* and is a continuation of the approach we have been using for our annual Route Map to net zero reports.

5. Principles underpinning the Climate Change Strategy

During the update, four principles have emerged which underpin the approach Moray Council will take to progress Climate Change actions during 2026-36. These principles attempt to progress climate change action while recognising the limitations created by current funding constraints. These principles are:

	**Efficiency**: Our initial focus is on reducing energy consumption, making efficient use of existing resources, and undertaking readily achievable projects where return on investment is highest and most cost-effective. If planned correctly, multiple benefits can be achieved from single interventions, particularly around natural solutions. By focusing on reducing energy consumption and making efficient use of existing resources, carbon emissions can be lowered when we are facing financial pressures. Implementing energy-efficient technologies and practices will reduce the corporate carbon footprint as well as save money.
	**Preparedness:** We will strategically develop projects to advance the Council's priorities, enhancing our ability to respond to collaboration, innovation, and external funding opportunities of benefit to Moray. We will develop a pipeline of projects that align with the Council's priorities including Climate Change and Just Transition such as renewable energy projects and sustainable infrastructure development. This will assist in applying for external funds to progress these priorities when funding is available
	**Balance:** Our investments will adopt a practical approach which considers ongoing revenue costs and the carbon-saving opportunity costs of projects. This will ensure that public funds are used responsibly for maximum impact. This includes investing in infrastructure that can withstand extreme weather events, and the adaptive pathway approach being delivered through the Coastal Change Adaptation Plans.
	**Collaboration:** We will engage with residents, the public sector, and industry to be responsive to new ideas and opportunities, encourage innovation and ensure that our actions promote a just transition for Moray. Services within the Council and residents should be partners in delivering climate change solutions. We will continue to work with small local suppliers to reduce their carbon footprint and bid for local contracts.

Creating a Climate Positive Culture

The Council's declaration of a climate and nature emergency places urgency on the pace and scope of its actions. This requires a culture which is supportive of achieving climate change goals. This includes:

- **Strong leadership:** Climate action is supported by elected members and the Council's corporate leadership team. They lead by example and are visibly involved in climate action initiatives and routinely engage in updates on the Council's progress to net zero.
- **Sufficient resources:** Securing external funding is essential to progress the ambition in the strategy. However, embedding actions within ongoing transformation of

services is also essential to ensure that the Council reduces costs and its impacts on the climate and nature.

- **Collective responsibility:** Ongoing communications promote the fact that that everyone at the Council has a responsibility to act sustainably in the interests of the Council and the environment.
- **Sustainable asset management:** Budget Managers have been tasked with embedding sustainable and climate change aspects within their asset management plans.
- **An empowering change culture:** The Council fosters a culture that encourages and supports innovative ideas for reducing emissions and wider impact on the environment.
- **Clear and transparent communication:** Communications around climate and nature should be clear and explain why action is being taken, to ensure understanding and promote behaviour change.
- **Knowledge and expertise:** In addition to its climate change officers, the Council recognises the importance of upskilling to achieve its targets. Training and development opportunities are created and provided for employees and elected members on the climate and nature emergency.
- **Robust targets, measurement and evaluation:** The Council's targets are measurable, and reporting mechanisms are transparent and improve over time. Where there is uncertainty, assumptions backed by expertise will be made and stated clearly to avoid understating the Council's climate and nature impacts.

6. Climate Change Duties

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a legal responsibility on a Local Authority that, in exercising its functions, the Council must act:

- in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets (i.e. **mitigation**)
- in the way best calculated to help deliver the **Adaptation** Programme
- in a way that it considers most **sustainable**

6.1. Mitigation

Scope of Corporate Emissions

As shown in *Figure 3*, emissions can be categorised in three Scopes:

Scope 1: emissions originating from sources directly within the Council's control, e.g. fuel use in vehicles or buildings (heating),
Scope 2: emissions originating from sources outside the Council's direct sphere of influence, but where they are the direct user of a good or service, e.g. electricity.
Scope 3: emissions originating from sources where the Council can influence but has no direct control, e.g. procurement of food for school catering, or staff commuting to work.

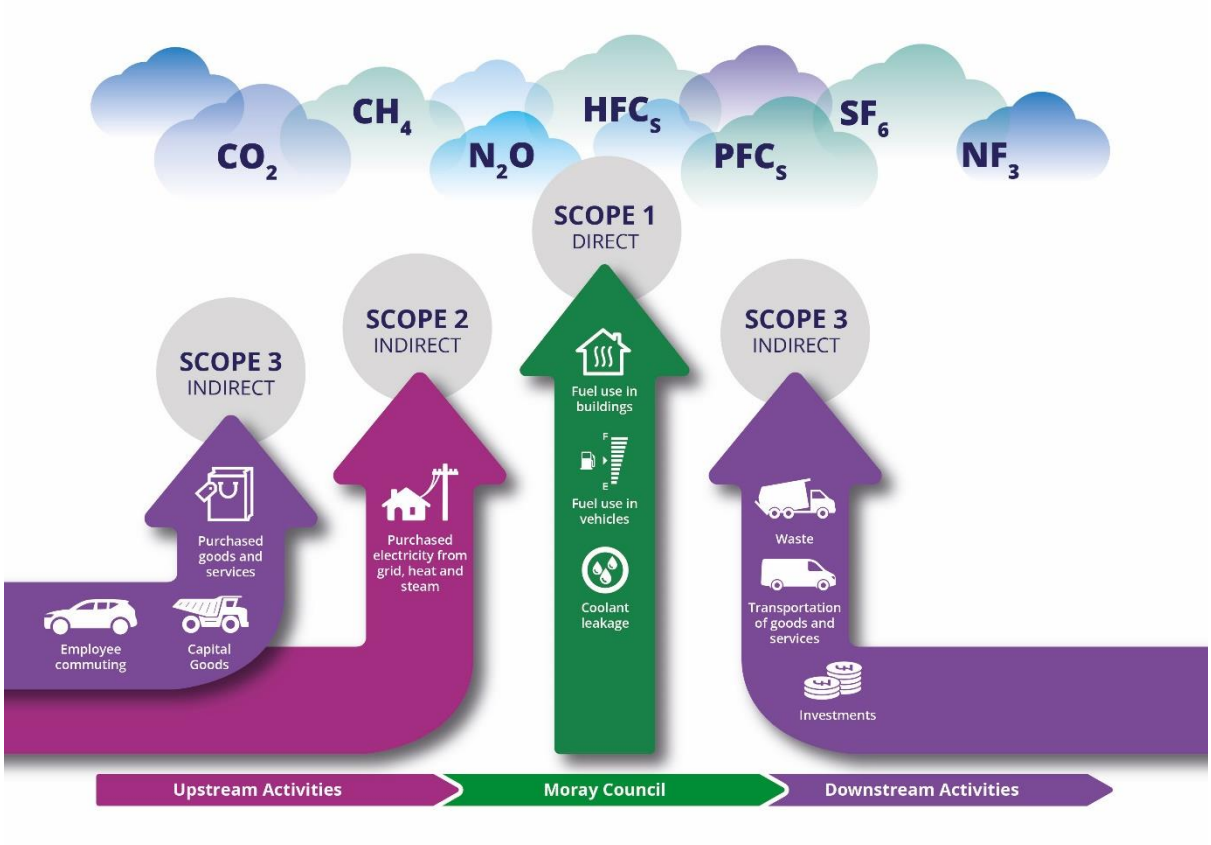

Figure 3: Emissions scope classification for Moray Council activities

The Council has a statutory duty to report on all Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and all Scope 3 emissions from relevant and significant areas of the organisation's indirect

emissions. Calculating scope 3 emissions involves a greater level of uncertainty, both in the emissions themselves, and the level of responsibility for them.

While all scope 1 and 2 emissions are included, the scope 3 emissions included are limited to street lighting, business travel, corporate and municipal waste, water treatment, staff commuting and homeworking. This is shown in *Figure 4*. Other large scope 3 emissions which are not calculated include embodied carbon in purchased goods and services, and emissions from Council housing. Both these areas would be difficult to calculate and the work to reduce these are progressing without the need to calculate emissions savings. These include reducing the climate impact of procurement and retrofitting Council housing.

Emissions by area, source, and scope		
Building heat	Natural gas	1
	Fuel oil / Kerosene	1
	Biomass	1
	Purchased heat and steam	2
Building electricity	Primary schools and nurseries	2
	Secondary schools	2
	Unmetered electricity	2
	Offices	2
	Community facilities	2
	Residential homes and day centres	2
	Sports facilities	2
	Industrial	2
	Other	2
Fleet	Diesel	1
	Petrol	1
	Gas oil	1
	Electric vehicles	2
	Hybrid vehicles	1 & 2
	Marine fuel oil	1
Waste	Landfill gas	3
	Municipal refuse to landfill / energy from waste plant	3
	Commercial, industrial and clinical waste	3
	Recycling and composting	3
Operational activities	Outdoor spaces	3
	Commuting emissions	3
	Homeworking emissions	3
	Water supply and treatment	3
	Corporate travel	3

Figure 4: Emissions included in carbon calculations by area, source and scope

Baselining our emissions

Calculating a baseline of emissions helps to determine the level of intervention needed to achieve net zero carbon emissions, and to allow progress to be monitored. The Council's carbon emissions from 2017/18 are used as a baseline for emissions because this was the earliest year that had a comprehensive return of emissions to the Scottish Government.

Staff commuting emissions and estimates for homeworking have only been recorded since 2022/23. To ensure consistency with the current scope of reporting, estimated historical emissions in this category have been added to the baseline using known assumptions of the workforce size and staff transport modes. This means the 2017/18 baseline is 31,480 tCO_2e.

Current emissions

The latest carbon emission data (2024/25) is shown in *Figure 5*

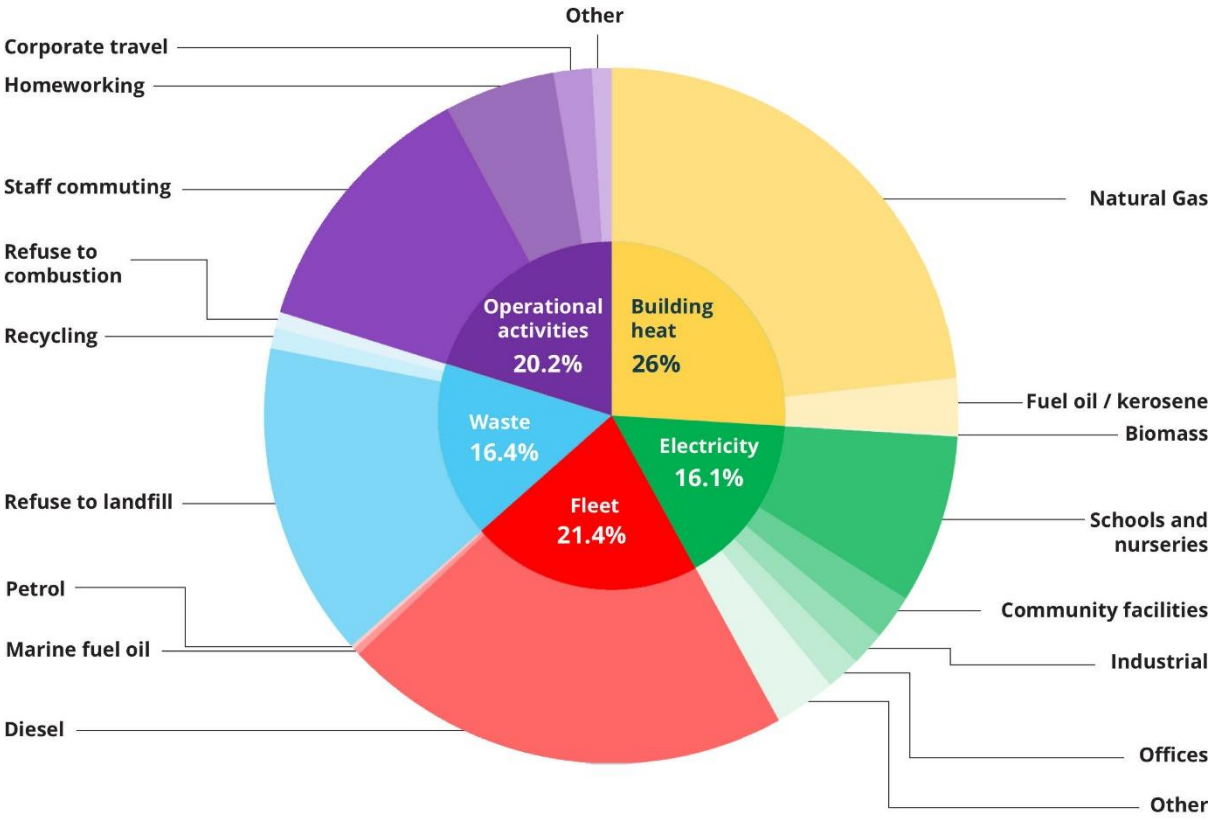

Figure 5: Emissions by source 2024/25

The areas of building heat and fleet are the largest areas of emissions for Moray Council and among the most difficult to reduce. Relevant strategies on these areas recognise current national decarbonisation targets and strive to achieve these whenever possible.

Setting Emissions Targets

The Council uses a carbon management hierarchy approach to prioritise its targets and necessary actions (Figure 6). This approach prioritises the avoidance of carbon emissions to deliver lasting change. Where avoidance of emissions is not possible then they should be reduced through service efficiencies or redesign. Removal of emissions is required where further reductions cannot be achieved.

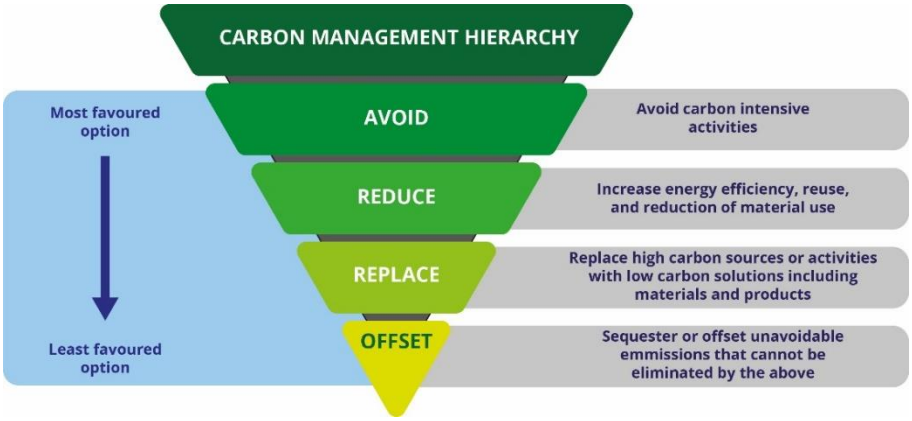

Figure 6: Moray Council carbon management hierarchy

For example, actions might look like:

- **AVOID:** Enable home working to avoid commuting.
- **REDUCE:** Reduce energy use in buildings through smart timing solutions.
- **REPLACE:** Decarbonisation of our fleet by replacing diesel vehicles with electric alternatives.
- **OFFSET:** Plant an area of woodland on Council land to offset unavoidable emissions.

Offsetting 'unavoidable' emissions through offsetting schemes should be considered as a last resort in target setting. Offsetting significant levels of carbon is discouraged as large-scale offsets are not sustainable and guidance makes clear that public bodies are required to reduce emissions as much as possible before considering offsets.

In terms of Local Authority corporate emission reduction targets, the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties guidance is that Local Authorities should, as best practice, align to national targets; and could show greater ambition where this is felt to be achievable. Therefore, an overall net zero target for scopes 1 and 2 should be no later than 2045, earlier where possible.

The advantages of meeting Net zero targets are more than just about decarbonisation. The reduction of fossil fuel use and climate changing gasses includes wider linked objectives of improved air quality, and improved health and wellbeing. However, with a limited budget to enact change, it is important that actions are proportionate and balanced to ensure that budget is dispersed around all areas of Council operations.

Carbon Projections and Targets

Our current carbon reduction pathway is made up of what we are currently committed to doing with existing funding, what is achievable with spend to save, and what can be done by better use of existing resources and facilities. This is shown in Figure 7 and is located within a range of emissions profiles from a restricted approach where our emissions only reduce due to external changes (such as electricity grid decarbonisation), to an aspirational approach which illustrates what could be delivered with external funding - while recognising practical constraints on the numbers of projects which can be delivered and the staff resources required to manage these projects.

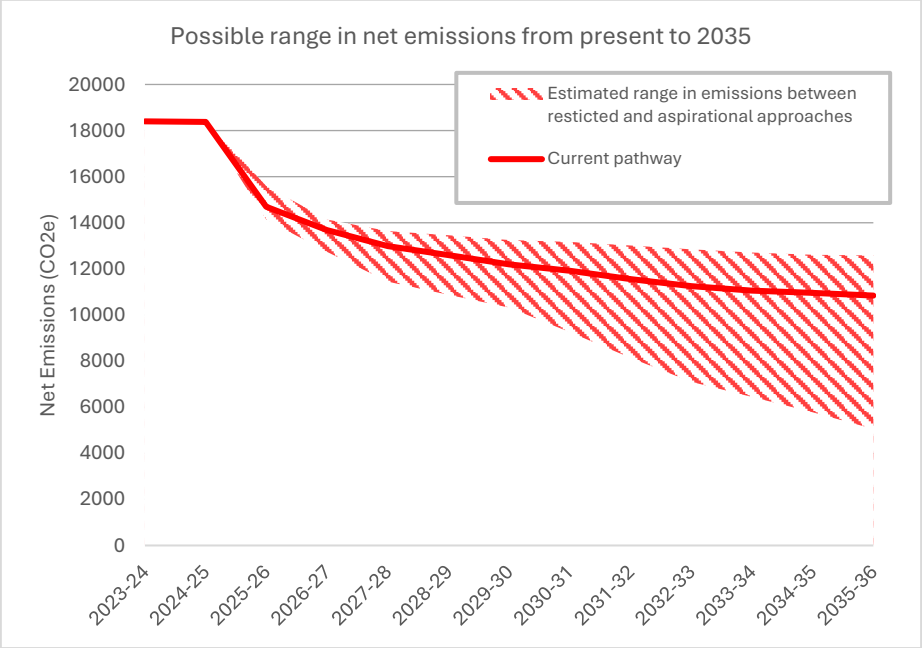

Figure 7: Possible range of net emissions

The current pathway flattens after 2031 because there are fewer projects which the Council is committed to progress. However, the graph shows that there is the ability to develop new projects and decarbonise at a greater pace if external funding is secured.

Interim Carbon Budgets

The Scottish Government has replaced interim targets with 5 year carbon budgets. This strategy takes a similar approach by putting forward a series of four carbon budgets for the Council, each spanning five years (Figure 8). The budgets represent five-year average targets for emissions, which are less prone to fluctuations due to temporary circumstances such as seasonal variations. The assumptions for our current pathway are included in carbon budget 1 (2025-30). To reach net zero by 2045 we need to be on the target pathway which, as Figure 8 shows, means that we need to progress additional plans at pace to reduce our emissions from building heat and from fleet if savings are to be realised during CB2 (2030-35).

The necessary reductions to meet carbon budget 3 (2035-40) is greater because of the expected timeframes for decarbonising transport and heating which anticipate

accelerated decarbonisation at a later stage when low and zero emissions technologies become more established and cost effective.

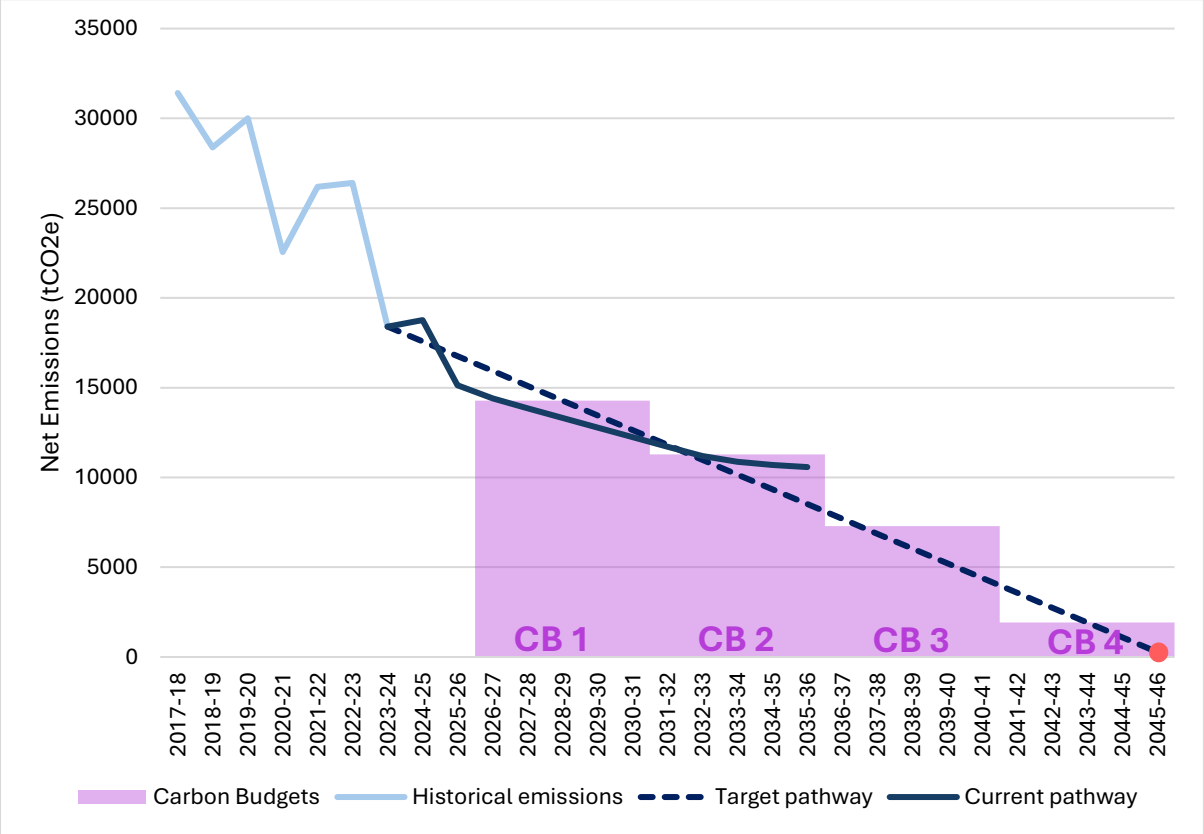

Figure 8: Proposed carbon budgets and current emissions pathway

Emissions Reductions in Each Carbon Budget

Different areas of the Council's operations will progress towards net-zero at differing rates. Figure 9 and 10 illustrate the expected distribution of carbon savings across the four carbon budgets. The assumptions and targets making up the budgets are as follows:

Carbon Budget 1: 2025-2030

Most reductions to date have come from diverting previously landfilled non-recyclable waste to the NESS Energy from Waste (EfW) facility (Figure 9). Most of the remaining carbon savings from waste are expected to be realised in the first budget period. While EfW reduces our emissions from damaging landfill of resources, recycling of waste is preferable to burning resources. As the landfill sites have now closed, further savings in emissions from waste must be obtained by means of improved waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

Transport emissions are not expected to reduce significantly within the first carbon budget, but continuing the EV replacement of diesel fleet cars and light vehicles when they reach the end of their planned working lifespan will help to lower emissions. However, there is no budget for in the current capital plan so a spend to save case will have to be made.

Plans in place to reduce electricity usage through efficiencies, reducing the corporate estate, progressing solar projects, and grid decarbonisation will see reductions in emissions from building electricity. In addition, current plans to replace the heating system in some school buildings, new energy efficient buildings, and insulation projects across school estate will see a moderate reduction in emissions from building heat in the first carbon budget.

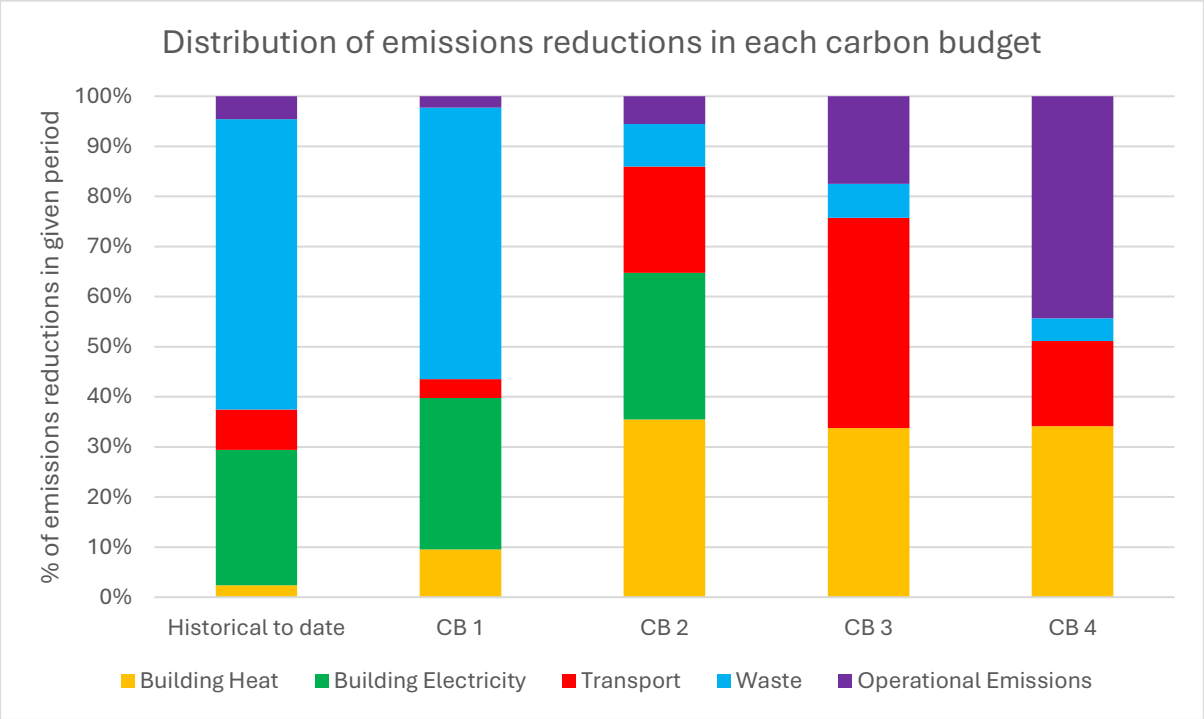

Figure 9: Breakdown of emissions reduction by type in each carbon budget

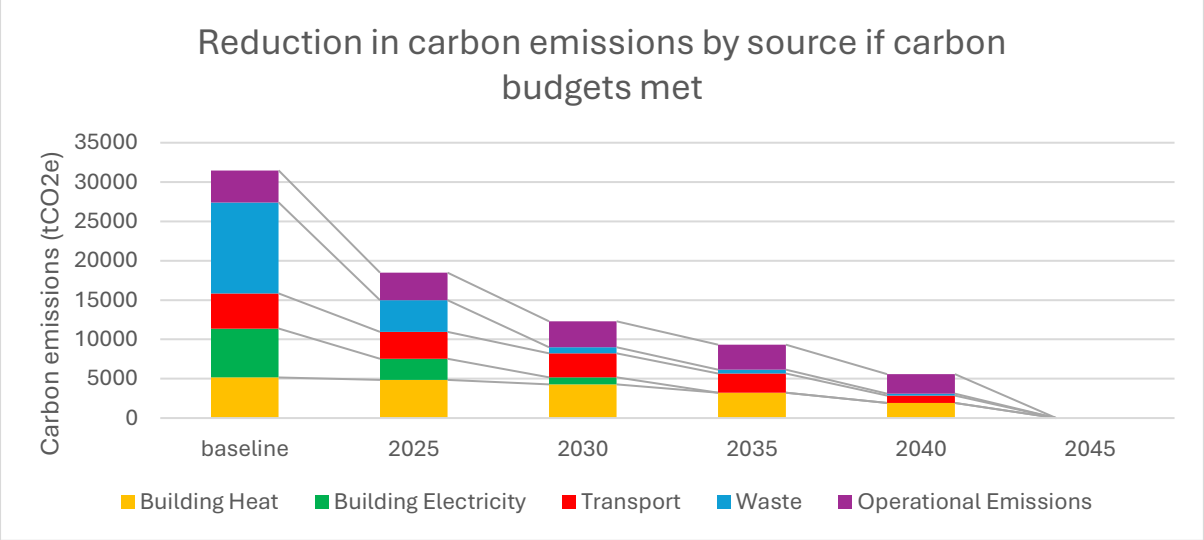

Figure 10: Reduction in carbon emissions from each carbon budget

Carbon Budget 2: 2030-2035

Government plans to decarbonise the electricity grid mean that despite increasing requirements for electricity to power sustainable heating and transport solutions,

emissions from our electricity consumption are expected to reach near zero in our second carbon budget.

The nature of the Council's large and diverse property portfolio requires a steady, consistent approach to decarbonising heating sources. The reductions in carbon for building heat during carbon budgets 2-4 rely on installing and retrofitting low or zero emissions heating systems in place of current fossil fuel boilers as these boilers reach the end of their operating lives. To decarbonise the heating systems of corporate buildings by 2045 would require around 10 buildings to upgrade their heating systems each year.

Decarbonised heat networks as a solution for heating is likely to include public buildings because they have relatively high heat requirements. If such heat networks proceed, they will take time to develop, and it is expected that these should start to come into operation during 2030-2035.

Decarbonisation of fleet vehicles should accelerate during 2030-2035 as low emissions technologies become more available and cost effective. The change will be gradual as the heaviest vehicles which use most fuel will be the most difficult to decarbonise.

Reducing some operating emissions such as commuting and home working are challenging as these are not in direct control of the Council however, we can influence these, and these will reduce in line with national practices as individuals change to electric heating and vehicles. It is assumed that these will slowly reduce during 2030-2035 with more substantial reductions after 2035.

Carbon Budget 3: 2035-2040

The Council's operating emissions mostly consist of staff commuting and home working. Making progress in this area requires changes in the modes and vehicles used for commuting and on societal shift to electric transport and heating solutions. This is expected to significantly lag behind areas which the Council has direct control over. For this reason, reductions in operating emissions are most likely to be realised in later budgets. Use of EVs and decarbonised heating solutions by staff are expected to become more commonplace during 2035-40

As the cost of electricity for heating becomes more favourable compared to gas then the pace of changing building heating from gas to electricity is expected to increase.

During 2035-2040 the market for low emission heavy vehicles is expected to become more mature meaning it would be easier to replace these vehicles with low emission alternatives.

Carbon Budget 4: 2040-2045

The last carbon budget will see the most difficult to decarbonise buildings, vehicles and operational emissions reduce. As the market for low emission transport and heating solutions expand, more staff emissions for commuting and home working will continue to reduce. It will be more cost effective for hard-to-treat buildings to transition to

electric heating or heat networks, and diesel vehicles will need to be phased out at the end of their life with cost efficient alternatives.

In summary, to stay within the interim carbon budgets and reach net zero by 2045 the council will have to progress the following activities within each budget:

	CB1 2025-30	CB2 2030-35	CB3 2035-40	CB4 2040-45
Building Heat	Continue progressing insulation and fabric first projects. Pilot heating and retrofit projects in schools delivered. New replacement energy efficient schools	50 buildings will have to upgrade their heating systems during this 5 year period. This will require an average of 10 buildings to implement changes per annum. Heat Networks in operation	Each year 10 buildings to upgrade their heating systems	Each year 10 buildings to upgrade their heating systems
Building Electricity	Most productive solar projects progressed. Reduction in size of corporate estate	Continuing efficiencies. Continuing decarbonisation of national grid.	Continuing decarbonisation of national grid	Continuing decarbonisation of national grid
Fleet	Continue roll out of EV for light vehicles	Continue roll out of EV for light vehicles and start to move heavy fleet over to alternatives.	Market matures so converting heavy fleet is cheaper.	Remaining hard to treat vehicles transitioned at the end of their working lives.
Waste	Move from landfill to EfW	Recycling and reduction of waste	Recycling and reduction of waste	Recycling and reduction of waste
Operational Activities	Commuting and homeworking emissions slowly reduce in line with national shifts to lower emission heating and transport.	Commuting and homeworking emissions continue to reduce through lower emission heating and transport.	Lower emission heating and transport is more common as the prices reduce and technology matures	Lower emission heating and transport is more common as the prices continues to reduce and technology matures

6.2. Adaptation

Climate impacts on the Council

Moray Council is already seeing rising costs from climate impacts and with the world heating up faster than scientists predicted, the costs are only set to rise.

Of immediate concern for the Council are the impacts on infrastructure. Investment in flood defence has prevented millions of pounds worth of damage over the last ten years, but climate impacts such as more frequent heavy rainfall after droughts will increase the risk of events like flash flooding and landslides which can cause damage to buildings, roads, bridges and other infrastructure which it is responsible for. Rising sea levels and storms will exacerbate coastal erosion, threatening coastal communities and infrastructure. Coastal erosion will inevitably lead to a managed retreat in some cases.

Supporting vulnerable people will become more difficult. Because UK buildings were not generally designed for extreme temperatures, there will be a greater risk to vulnerable people during events such as heatwaves or winter storms which cause power cuts. The elderly, young children, and those with underlying medical conditions or reduced mobility will be most affected. The increase in milder, wetter winters will increase the health risks associated with damp and mould, also affecting people who are already vulnerable the most, especially those in rented accommodation or on low incomes.

The range of services disrupted by the impacts of extreme weather (heat and storms) also includes the closure of schools and leisure facilities, halting of housing and road repairs, and delayed homecare visits. Extreme weather is also placing greater pressure on communications, enquiry and complaints services as well as the Incident Management Team who co-ordinate emergency responses.

Procurement is also affected by global system disruptions, for example through rising costs and low supply of certain goods when other regions experience more intense climate impacts than we do. Climate driven competition for resources also exacerbates regional conflicts that can disrupt supply chains and prices.

The Climate Change Committee report recommends the UK adapt to a minimum global temperature rise of 2^{o}C while considering the risks of warming up to 4^{o}C. If global emissions fail to decrease, the UK could experience temperature rises by 2080-2100 that would severely limit the impact of adaptive measures, increasing the risks to public health, economic damage, and biodiversity destruction.

National Context

The current national adaptation programme, SNAP 3, covers 2024-2029 and aims to meet the following outcomes:

- **Nature connects** across our land, settlements, coasts and seas
- **Communities** are creating climate-resilient, healthy and equitable places
- **Public services** are collaborating in effective and inclusive adaptation action
- **Economies and industries** are adapting and realising opportunities in our Just Transition

- **Scotland's international role** supports climate justice and enhanced global action on climate adaptation

SNAP 3 has a strong focus on cross-cutting policies, reflecting the need to work together to achieve meaningful change and make use of available resources (Figure 11). National Planning Framework 4 is a good example of where this is already in practice, with action to address climate change and nature loss woven throughout the policies. Other policy links include Just Transition plans, flood resilience, biodiversity strategy, health and social care, the Learning Estate Investment Programme, and Sustainable Procurement Duty.

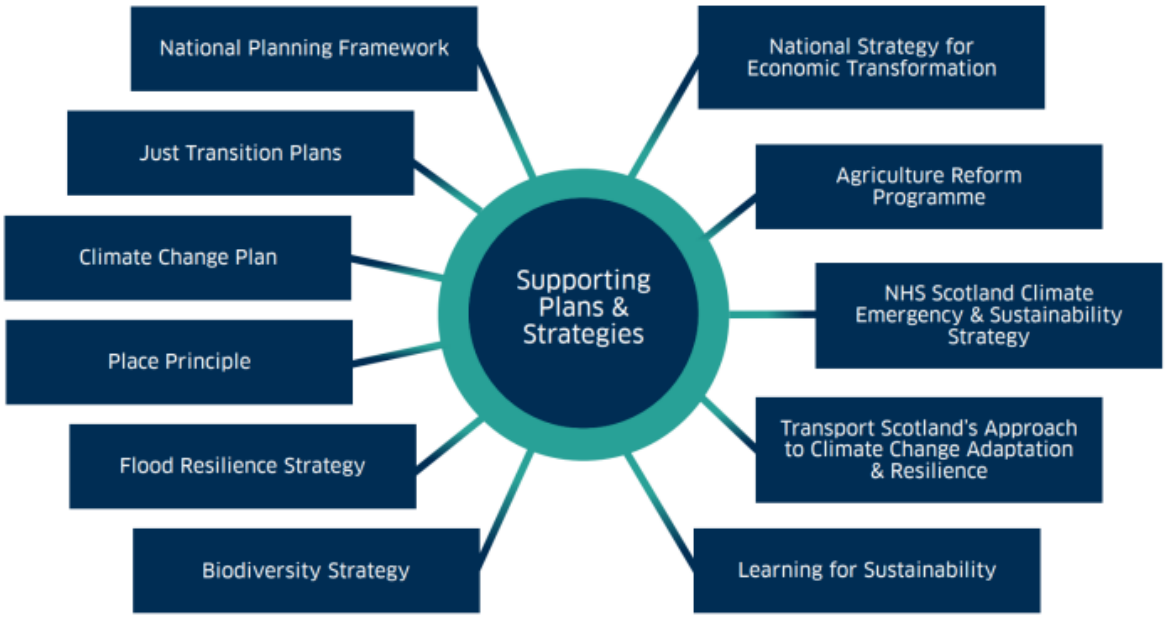

Figure 11: Scottish Government plans and strategies critical to delivering inclusive and effective adaptation action during the Adaptation Plan five-year implementation period (SNAP 3 2024-2029)

Many SNAP3 objectives are expected to be delivered by local authorities. At a corporate level, the below objectives highlight the need for risk assessments and adaptation action to be delivered:

Objective PS1: "Providers of public services have the governance, culture, skills and resources for and are collaborating in effective and inclusive adaptation action."

Objective PS2: "People can access the public services they need; and critical assets, systems and networks are resilient to the impacts of the changing climate."

Other objectives falling directly under the Council's responsibilities include:

- Nature Networks
- Local Place Plans
- Coastal Change Adaptation Plans
- Working in collaboration
- Transport and Road infrastructure resilience

Adaptation Work to Date

The 2020 Climate Change Strategy highlighted the need for the Council to be prepared for climate impacts but did not set out any adaptation actions. This does not mean that adaptation has not been progressing, but that it has not always reported collectively.

Since 2023 the Council has been using resources developed by the Scottish Government's Adaptation Scotland programme to support public bodies to prepare for and build resilience to climate impacts. An initial benchmarking exercise was carried out to gather data on existing adaptation activity across the organisation and to highlight gaps and opportunities. The benchmarking report found that adaptation is well advanced in some key service areas. However, on a corporate level the organisation is in the very early stages of preparing for climate impacts.

The Council's most significant contribution to the national adaptation programme is through the innovative pathway approach now being used to develop new flood and coastal erosion plans. This will enable the Council to plan for, and react to, different scenarios as they are triggered.

Other adaptation action the Council is taking includes the production of the Local Development Plan 2027 that will incorporate NPF4's emphasis on the climate and nature emergencies, support local place planning and deliver Moray's Nature Network. The Council is also supporting communities to produce resilience plans.

The Council is adapting in many other areas that are often absorbed as business-as-usual changes. However, this can mask the cumulative, or chronic, increase in costs and staff time. To begin to address this gap, a Local Climate Impacts Profile for the period 2018 to 2023 has been produced. This is an awareness raising tool, building evidence on what risks the Council faces from climate impacts by examining previous extreme weather events. The exercise was limited by available records and staff capacity but does provide a snapshot of climate impact over recent years to support decision making going forward. and suggests actions to take the next steps as a climate ready organisation.

Vision for a Climate Ready Council

An integrated approach to adaptation will deliver deeper and more sustainable changes that also support corporate priorities. Collaborative working across services will ensure that planning around service delivery takes account of possible climate change impacts and that low cost, shared solutions are taken advantage of.

A co-ordinated approach to adaptation across policy areas will contribute to improving social outcomes and reducing costs through addressing issues such as poor health, inequality, child poverty and educational attainment. Buildings will be adapted to cope with extreme weather, and strong resilience and emergency planning systems are in place.

Young people stand to risk the most from climate impacts and will be supported to develop the skills they will need to adapt and respond to the changing climate as well as have opportunities and motivation to stay in Moray.

Nature-based solutions are recognised to be cost-effective, long lasting and multi benefit and are expected to be a significant growth area. Securing investment for nature-based solutions will help our economy, communities and natural environment be resilient and safe in response to climate change.

Regional collaboration will be developed that will support communities and businesses to understand climate risk and take collective action to adapt.

6.3. Acting in the most sustainable way

Sustainable development is commonly defined as securing a balance of social, economic, and environmental wellbeing in the impact of activities and decisions and seeking to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Council is committed to embedding sustainability across all areas of its work in line with its statutory duties and strategic priorities. This commitment is reflected in its alignment with the National Performance Framework (Figure 12), Best Value requirements, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

Figure 12: Sustainable development embedded within the National Performance Framework.

In 2024, the Council adopted a Sustainable Development Statement to formalise its approach and demonstrate how sustainable development is being advanced as part of its Best Value responsibilities. The statement sets out a framework for monitoring and reporting on progress, including the use of measurable targets to support transparency and accountability.

Progress to date includes the integration of sustainable development reporting into key performance reporting structures, including Quarterly Performance Reports, the Annual Corporate Plan Report, and the Public Performance Report. This ensures that sustainability considerations are routinely reflected in the Council's ongoing performance evaluation.

The Council is also exploring shared priorities and actions through its participation in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) review, progressing this work via a Moray Economic Partnership (MEP) subgroup. This partnership-based approach supports a collaborative effort towards achieving local and regional sustainability aspirations.

The Sustainable Development Statement outlines the Council's goals and objectives, which are closely aligned with national priorities, the National Performance Framework outcomes, and the UN SDGs. These objectives are intended to guide the Council's

long-term planning and day-to-day operations, ensuring that sustainability is a core consideration in all areas of service delivery.

To act in the most sustainable way, the Council recognises the importance of embedding sustainable development principles into all decision-making processes. This includes resource allocation, procurement, project planning, and service design, with a strong emphasis on long-term resilience and community wellbeing.

Cross-departmental collaboration is being promoted to further embed these principles across the organisation. Key tools supporting this include the Council's procurement strategy, guidance on assessing the impacts of committee papers, and the Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) process for projects and mandates, all of which are either in place or in active development.

The Sustainable Development Statement will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect evolving best practices, changes in legislation, and the changing needs of communities. This process will be aligned with the Council's annual Climate Change Plan and Route Map to Net Zero reporting, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with evolving wider climate and sustainability goals.

7. Delivery of the Strategy

To deliver the Climate Change Strategy requires progress from every area of the Council. The tables below show what the overall goals of the strategy are. These contain lists of actions and how the success of the goal will be measured. The actions were developed while recognising the principles (Section 5) underpinning the strategy, the carbon budgets (Section 6.1), and the financial constraints the Council is under.

Building Heat and Electricity

Reducing carbon emissions from building heat and electricity will adopt a fabric first approach. This means energy-efficient measures like improved insulation and heating controls upgrades will be carried out to reduce overall heating demand. Then heating systems will be changed to alternatives such as heat pumps to eliminate emissions from fossil fuels.

Reduced heat and electricity consumption	
We will	**How to measure success**
Increase building user awareness of ways to reduce energy use and save utility costs	• Year on year reduction in energy usage within property portfolio • % of employees working from home
Continue to install LEDs and energy saving devices	
Promote Smarter Working	

More energy produced by renewables	
We will	**How to measure success**
Investigate feasibility of renewable energy potential across the Council's property portfolio, and potential for connection to a heat network	• Capacity (kW) of energy generation installed
Install renewable energy technologies on Council-owned buildings and land	

Reduced building carbon output and increased energy efficiency	
We will	**How to measure success**
Progress a 'fabric first' approach to building retrofit	• Reduction in carbon emissions from corporate and learning estate • % of buildings that have a non-carbon burning heat source • % of Council houses achieving EPC C or are as energy efficient as practically possible
Identify opportunities for 'Heating and Power' refurbishment of school estate to be implemented in the next 10 years.	
Replacement of carbon-based heating systems when feasible	
Achieve Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) for all Council housing	

Fleet and Travel

The Council approved a Zero Emissions Fleet Replacement Strategy in April 2024, outlining its approach to meeting government targets by replacing fossil fuel-powered vehicles with low-emission alternatives. The primary objective is to implement a practical fleet replacement program within the available budget, ensuring that the Council meets government targets to the greatest extent possible. However, budget constraints makes this difficult to progress at present unless a spend to save case can be made. Simultaneously, efforts will be made to develop opportunities for the use of HVO and hydrogen within the fleet to facilitate a smooth transition to these alternatives if they are commercially viable. The Zero Emission Fleet Replacement Strategy is currently under review.

Other objectives relating to transport include reducing council emissions from commuting and supporting wider emissions reductions from public and schools.

Decarbonising Council fleet	
We will	**How to measure success**
Displace fossil fuel powered vehicles and plant with ULEV alternatives (as budgets allow)	• % of low energy vehicles in fleet • Reduction in fossil fuel consumption
Trial HVO fuel in diesel fleet vehicles	
Monitor progress on hydrogen suitability for fleet vehicles	
Develop Ashgrove depot as a green hub	

Actions and opportunities to reduce commuting emissions	
We will	**How to measure success**
Promote active travel for Moray Council employees	• Council Travel Plan survey • Take up of ULEV salary sacrifice scheme
Monitor uptake of ultra-low emission vehicle (ULEV) salary sacrifice scheme for employees	

Facilitating emissions reduction from travel	
We will	**How to measure success**
Complete delivery of North of Scotland Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund to provide more public EV charging facilities in Moray	• Number and type of public EV chargers in Moray • % of pupils using active travel • Number of schools with travel plans
Organise bicycle maintenance sessions and led rides for staff	
Parking management around schools and supporting modal shift from vehicles to active travel	

Waste

Moray's municipal waste is treated at the NESS Energy from Waste facility in Aberdeen, an energy from waste facility capable of processing 150,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste every year, generating electricity which is sent to the national grid.

Reduction in residual waste	
We will	**How to measure success**
Work with Zero Waste Scotland and third sector partners to progress projects to reduce waste through re-use and recycling	• Increased recycling rates • Increased reuse rate • Reduction in overall waste volume

Operational Activities

Due to the overarching nature of climate change and how it impacts on all aspects of the council's operation, co-operation and input has been sought across all services to discuss and agree key actions.

Reduced emissions from operational actions	
We will	**How to measure success**
Support homeworkers to reduce their emissions through relevant advice and practical assistance	• Sources of advice and guidance made available and up to date

Increased awareness of actions and opportunities to tackle climate change	
We will	**How to measure success**
Develop and deliver climate and nature emergency training for staff and elected members	• Training delivered to key target groups • How Good is our School (HGIOS) positive scores of very good/excellent- for Learning for Sustainability and outdoor learning measures
Update climate change awareness training as part of the employee induction process	
Increase opportunities for learning about climate change and nature within the curriculum. Improve the quality of outdoor learning and play spaces.	
Support the development of knowledge and skills across departments – newsletters and informal engagement etc	

Integrate climate considerations in decision making	
We will	**How to measure success**
Applying low carbon objectives as a factor in all investment decisions in relation to budgets and the Capital Plan	• Climate change actions included in relevant service plans • Routemap to Net Zero document is updated annually • Climate Change Strategy is updated every 5 years • Use of Climate Change guidance in the mandate decision making process
Embed main CC Actions within relevant service plans and similar to ensure they are developed and progressed by service area	
Ensuring the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan are living documents and remain fresh and valid until 2035	
Review climate change and biodiversity assessment of committee papers.	
Continue to develop climate change guidance for the mandate decision process	
Contribute to the work of Scottish Climate Intelligence Service (SCIS) and ClimateView	
Incorporate climate risks into the corporate risk register	

Procurement and Investment

In accordance with the sustainable procurement duty, the Council's Procurement Strategy sets out how the Council will use procurement to contribute to the global climate emergency. Additionally, the Council is required to report progress in its annual procurement report and how procurement policies and activity has contributed to compliance with climate change duties.

The Scottish Government sustainable procurement tools are available to officers, and can support buyers to embed climate objectives into procurement activities through identifying and addressing opportunities to optimise the economic, social and environmental outcomes of procurement activities.

Maximise opportunities for climate action through procurement	
We will	**How to measure success**
Continue to deliver and record non-cash benefits such as sustainability, climate change and community wealth building through the procurement process.	• Actions in Council's procurement strategy • Information from Council's annual procurement report
Deliver sustainable procurement guidance to officers	

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is an approach to development that balances different needs against an awareness of the environmental, social and economic limitations we face as a society.

Embed sustainable development into daily service delivery	
We will	**How to measure success**
Ensure sustainable development is included within Council decision making	• Community involvement in CCS and Area Wide Climate Change Strategy • Performance indicators reported with Corporate Plans
Identify any further sustainable development gaps	
Consider and embed community views on sustainable development	

Nature, Biodiversity and Carbon Sequestration

The Council's first Biodiversity Strategy brings together the many areas of nature which Moray Council impacts on, influences, or benefits from and sets out the key issues to be addressed as the Council delivers its statutory Biodiversity Duty. Expectations for local authorities have been set out in the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan published in 2024.

Maximise opportunities to sequester carbon within existing Council assets	
We will	**How to measure success**
Progress and monitor carbon sequestration opportunities on Council land holdings	• Indicative carbon offsetting plan developed

Promote nature recovery on Council land	
We will	**How to measure success**
Produce and deliver nature positive management plans for Council greenspace	• Actions delivered within management plans (incl existing) • Number of management plans in place to improve biodiversity, and sites in good ecological condition. • Training delivered to operators
Maintain the biodiversity benefits of living lawns and wildflower program, and seek to expand it	
Increase urban canopy cover and other nature-based solutions to climate risk, providing multiple benefits to communities and developing nature networks.	

Nature recovery through policy and partnerships	
We will	**How to measure success**
Ensure that planning policy, guidance and decisions deliver positive effects for biodiversity	• Local planning policy in place • Spatially defined Nature Network in place
Identify and deliver a Moray Nature Network	

Work with communities and partners to progress biodiversity actions at the local level	
We will	**How to measure success**
Facilitate the development of skills and knowledge to protect and restore biodiversity in Moray	• North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP) action plan delivery
Help facilitate community connections with nature	

Adaptation

Adaptation is about responding to the changes that we have seen in Scotland's climate over the last few decades and preparing for the challenges and opportunities that we will face as our climate changes.

Increase understanding of climate risk	
We will	**How to measure success**
Create and maintain a climate impacts log	• Include summary of log in annual report • Number of towns with mapping complete • Training delivered (No. of sessions/staff) • CCRA completed
Produce climate risk and nature-based solution maps for larger towns	
Embed adaptation within climate training and mainstreaming	
Move towards the production of a Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)	

Align adaptation activities with Council's priorities	
We will	**How to measure success**
Align adaptation activities with Council's priorities.	• Number of Council priorities and service plans referring to adaptation and climate risk

Deliver and monitor adaptation action	
We will	**How to measure success**
Undertake annual benchmarking exercise	• Incorporate adaptation guidance into climate change guidance for developers • Measure proxies for adaptation works as per SNAP3 eg nature network, No. of local place plans, roads maintenance etc • Flood Risk Management Plan and Coastal Change Adaptation actions delivered (3 yearly) • Adaptation activity included in annual routemap report
Implement flooding and coastal risk action plans	
Incorporate adaptation into the LDP	
Implement a Moray Nature Network	
Embed adaptation in the delivery of other council activities, where appropriate	

Work collaboratively with partners to progress adaptation action	
We will	**How to measure success**
Encourage communities to consider climate risk and adaptation	• Number of resilience plans in place

External Influence

Through our varied functions and influence, Moray Council can have a wide and significant influence on emissions and climate action far beyond our organisational boundaries. This section identifies these functions and influences.

Develop skills and the economy	
We will	**How to measure success**
Increasing provision of relevant skills and knowledge for a greener economy to support delivery of the Moray Apprenticeship Strategy	• Number of engagements with businesses
Support the planning and delivery of awareness raising events for businesses to transition to a green economy	
Joining support networks to assist the progress of climate change action	

Enabling the community to understand and act on climate change	
We will	**How to measure success**
Consulting community groups and residents about climate action and delivering the Climate Change Strategy	• Continued and regular meetings with Moray CAN, with actions arising followed up promptly • Moray-wide climate strategy created • Number of engagement activities undertaken to promote active travel • Number of houses benefitting from scheme / funding achieved
Support the work of Moray CAN	
Engaging with communities to facilitate renewable energy projects	
Support the development of a Moray-wide climate strategy	
Support the reporting of area wide emissions and actions	
Promoting the Active Travel Strategy	
Continuing the Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES: ABS)	

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) are local authority area-wide plans and priorities for systematically improving the energy efficiency of buildings and decarbonising heat.

Delivering the LHEES Delivery Plan	
We will	**How to measure success**
Improving the energy efficiency of buildings while supporting a wellbeing economy, and a Just Transition	• LHEES Updates with appropriate PIs
Decarbonising building heat sources including supporting heat networks while tackling fuel poverty and improving health	

Moray Council and HIE developed a Hydrogen Strategy and Action Plan which explores the use of green hydrogen. Moray Council recognises that hydrogen could have a role in providing an alternative to fossil fuels.

Delivering the Moray Hydrogen Strategy	
We will	**How to measure success**
Continue to develop relationships with key partners and adjacent Councils.	• Number of hydrogen opportunities progressed in Moray • Hydrogen pilot progressed
Develop a hydrogen fleet pilot when availability of hydrogen and suitable vehicles make this practical.	

The planning system in Scotland is designed to manage land use and development, ensuring sustainable growth while balancing community needs and environmental protection. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is a long-term strategic plan for Scotland which outlines the national strategy for land use and development over the next 20 years.

Strategic planning which reflects the climate and nature emergency	
We will	**How to measure success**
Implementing NPF4 policies relating to the climate and nature crises	• Strategies in place and delivering change
Developing a Regional Spatial Strategy	
Embedding climate change into new place based, people centred, delivery focussed LDP.	
Developing 20-minute neighbourhood concepts for Moray's main towns and embedding within the next Local Development Plan	
Promoting and supporting brownfield over greenfield development	
Deliver Moray Growth Deal Housing Mix Delivery project	
Update climate change guidance for planning applications in line with national guidance	

Just Transition

Moray faces significant economic, environmental and demographic challenges, but also extraordinary opportunities. Offshore renewables, nature restoration, community energy, low-carbon housing, and green enterprise investment draw on the region's strengths and can secure long term benefits for local people.

Develop skills and the economy	
We will	**How to measure success**
Prepare to submit the bid to the Just Transition Fund.	• Funding bid developed and submitted
Continue to engage with elected members, Moray MP's and MSP's and JCC.	

8. Ownership and Governance of the Strategy

The public sector has a critical role in helping Scotland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, make a just transition to a low carbon economy and prepare for the future climate. Strong governance, leadership and commitment within the public sector is vital to ensure that Scotland meets its targets and commitments.

Roles and Responsibilities

Setting out clear responsibilities will help to integrate climate change considerations into day-to-day Council business.

- Political leadership and accountability for the Council's climate agenda shall rest with the Chair of the relevant Committee, in accordance with the Council decision of December 2024. The **Chair of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee** is responsible for providing strategic direction, overseeing the development and implementation of climate-related policies and strategies, ensuring climate considerations are integrated into Council decision-making, monitoring progress against agreed objectives and commitments, and leading the Committee's scrutiny and prioritisation of resources required to deliver the Council's climate ambitions.

  The **Climate Champion** is a distinct elected member role appointed in accordance with the Council Champion arrangements. The role is to act as an advocate for climate action and sustainability, promote awareness and understanding of the Council's climate ambitions, encourage the sharing of good practice across the Council and its communities, support engagement with residents, partners and stakeholders, maintain constructive links with relevant officers, committees and external organisations, and help communicate the Council's climate objectives and achievements.

  The **Chair of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee** and the **Climate Champion** shall work collaboratively to support the achievement of the Council's climate objectives, recognising that responsibility for strategic leadership, policy oversight, and accountability rests with the Committee Chair, while the Climate Champion's role is focused on advocacy, engagement, and awareness-raising.

- The **Executive Director Economy, Enterprise & Operations** will provide officer leadership at Corporate Leadership Team level and have responsibility to promote the CCS at Corporate and Community Planning level.

- The **Head of Growth, Planning & Climate** will be the lead officer for co-ordination and management of the Strategy internally within the Council.

- Due to the wide scope of climate change and climate change related activities, **Heads of Service** will have responsibility and accountability for climate change actions and targets within their service area. The delivery of CCS actions may be delegated to third tier managers to ensure that day to day management responsibilities are clear and that delegated decision making is undertaken at the appropriate level.

- **Climate Change Officers** will support progress in the implementation and monitoring of the Climate Change Strategy and associated works, provide leadership, specialist input, and reporting on statutory duties.
- **All members, managers and staff** will share responsibility for implementing the strategy through relevant actions within the Action Plan and ensuring that Council policies, decisions, projects and procurement are delivered in line with the priorities in the Strategy.

Mainstreaming Climate in Decision Making

This aims to integrate climate change within decision-making and financial planning so the Council will develop a process whereby the 'climate change question' and 'sustainability question' is routinely asked as part of the decision-making process.

We will **embed main CC Actions within relevant service plans and similar** to ensure they are developed and progressed by service area (target of June 2026). This will give greater focus on CC actions with clearer reporting and will help to ensure CC actions evolve and continue to be relevant.

The **Climate Change Board** has the role of overseeing the progress of actions from the CCS, mainstreaming Climate Change and being a sounding board on climate change issues. Issues where a sounding board is required will be run past Strategic Leadership Forum and the chair will consider extending the members invited for those items as has been the case in the past. The Board will also receive presentations on climate change aspects and be a "critical friend" discussing proposals and considering climate change impacts of projects early in their development. Membership of the Board to include Heads of Service and officers as appropriate.

Mainstreaming **Climate Change Training** with the aim to increase staff knowledge and understanding of the climate and biodiversity crises and the Council's role and response. Training capacity has been reduced but it was raised that training is fundamental to mainstreaming climate change issues across the Council. In addition to continuing to develop the online module created as part of staff inductions, there may be capacity to deliver bespoke training based on service needs (maximum 2 a year with current resources) and refresh resources available on the website and Interchange. The need for climate change training for Heads of Service and Executive Directors has been identified. If resources allow, the climate change team intend to develop a training session for Heads of Service and Executive Directors with support and input from Moray based organisations and other LAs. There will also be informal engagement opportunities created such as lunch and learns, e-newsletters and lunchtime catch ups.

Climate Considerations in Decision Making

It is essential, if public bodies are to be compliant with their obligations under the 2009 Act, that the climate change duties are a part of decision making; and that the thought process behind the decision can be clearly demonstrated and explained.

Project and Mandate Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA)- update guidance which sets out how climate impacts should be considered within projects mandate / OBC / FBC stages. Methodology to include process of including carbon as part of the Growth Deal process.

Climate Change and Biodiversity Assessment for Committee Papers – evaluate the climate change impacts section of committee papers and assess whether current guidance is drawing out required information in reports effectively. If required develop training for officers completing this section in committee reports. If the Integrated Impacts Assessment (IIA) process is reviewed, then climate change and sustainability could be included in any wider system.

Monitoring and Reporting

Outcome measures have been identified for all actions which are proposed to be the primary method for monitoring progress on climate change objectives and targets. These actions and indicators will be reviewed by the **Climate Change Board** to monitor progress on actions for the lifespan of the strategy.

An annual Route Map to Net Zero report will continue to be presented to **Council**. This will set out our latest annual emissions, report on progress of the CCS actions, and evaluate our progress to our 2045 and interim targets.

Statutory reporting under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 on Public Bodies Climate Change Duties also requires annual progress reports be submitted to **Scottish Government** in November of each year.

Quality Assurance and Audit

To ensure the Strategy remains relevant and accounts for ongoing national policy development, it will be subject to **review at 5-year intervals**. Any updates will be approved by Council.

The annual **Route Map to Net Zero** will evaluate the progress to interim targets and highlight issues if the targets are not likely to be met.

9. Glossary

Active travel	Journeys made by modes of transport that are fully or partially people-powered, irrespective of the purpose of the journey. It includes walking, people using wheelchairs, cycling (including e-bikes) to name a few.
Adaptation	Adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.
Baseline	Historical period specified for the purpose of comparing greenhouse gas emissions.
Biodiversity	The variability among living organisms from all sources, including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems (UN 1992).
Carbon	Umbrella term used to describe all of the greenhouse gases.
Carbon dioxide (CO_2)	A naturally occurring gas, CO_2 is also a by-product of burning fossil fuels (such as oil, gas and coal), of burning biomass, of land-use changes and of industrial processes (e.g., cement production). It is the principal anthropogenic greenhouse gas that affects the Earth's radiative balance.
Carbon neutrality	See net zero.
Carbon sequestration	A process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in solid or liquid form.
Circular economy	A circular economy is one in which resources are kept in use for as long as possible.
Climate action	Efforts taken to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
Climate change	The state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.
Climate emergency	A situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.
Co-benefits	The positive effects that a policy or measure aimed at one objective might have on other objectives, thereby increasing the total benefits for society or the environment. Co-benefits are often subject to uncertainty and depend on local circumstances and implementation practices, among other factors. Co-benefits are also referred to as ancillary benefits.
Direct emissions	Emissions directly under the organisation's control.
Drought	A prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water.
Flood	The overflowing of the normal confines of a stream or other body of water, or the accumulation of water over areas that are not normally submerged. Floods include river (fluvial) floods, flash floods, urban floods, pluvial floods, sewer floods and coastal floods.
Green jobs	Employment opportunities that contribute to environmental sustainability.

Green recovery	The transition to a more sustainable and resilient economy following a crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, that prioritises investment in low carbon technologies, sustainable infrastructure and job creation in environmentally friendly sectors.
Greenhouse gas emissions	Any gas that contributes to the greenhouse effect by absorbing infrared radiation in the atmosphere.
heatwave	A heatwave is an extended period of hot weather relative to the expected conditions of the area at that time of year. In Moray, a heatwave event is defined as at least three consecutive days with daily maximum temperatures meeting or exceeding 25°C.
Indirect emissions	Emissions outside the organisation's control but over which it has an influence.
Insetting	The process of offsetting carbon emissions by sequestering carbon within the organisation's own landholdings.
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. A scientific body established by the United Nations to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the state of climate science and the potential impacts of climate change, as well as strategies for mitigation and adaptation.
Just transition	Designing policies in a way that ensures the benefits of climate action are shared widely, while the costs do not unfairly burden those least able to pay, or whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly at risk as the economy shifts and changes.
Mitigation	A human intervention to reduce emissions or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.
Nature emergency	The rapidly worsening state of the natural world, including the loss of biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, and the threat of ecological collapse, caused by human activities such as habitat destruction, pollution and climate change.
Nature network	A network which connects together nature-rich sites, including restoration areas and other environmental projects, through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors, and stepping-stones.
Net zero	Net zero emissions are achieved when anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals over a specified period.
Offsetting	The practice of compensating for carbon emissions by funding projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions outside of the organisation's own landholdings.
Renewable energy	Energy derived from natural sources that are replenished at a higher rate than they are consumed.
Sustainable development	Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
tCO_2e	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. A metric measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global-warming potential (GWP), by converting amounts of other gases to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide with the same global warming potential.
Wildfire	Any uncontrolled vegetation fire which requires a decision, or action, regarding suppression.

10. Statutory Obligations

Moray Council has a statutory obligation to undertake climate action and support the Scotland wide goal of achieving net zero by 2045. Key national policies and strategies include:

- **Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009** places a duty on all public bodies to act to deliver on the national climate change targets. Under this legislation, Moray Council has three main duties:
    - **Mitigation**: To contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions
    - **Adaptation**: To help Moray adapt to the changing climate
    - **Sustainability**: To act in a sustainable manner
- **Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015** requires the Council to report on compliance with these duties annually in accordance with the and subsequent amendments.
- **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) 2023** considers carbon, climate change and biodiversity by incorporating the national climate change targets into the local planning system to promote sustainable development.
- **The Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021** aims to regulate and support the development of heat networks. Heat networks distribute heat from a central source to multiple buildings, reducing the need for individual heating systems and promoting energy efficiency. The Council is required to undertake assessments of the potential for heat networks in Moray and develop plans to promote their use.
- **The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022** requires the Council to develop plans to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in buildings across Moray, to support the transition to net zero.
- **The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004** aims to protect and conserve biodiversity and natural habitats. It places a duty on the Council to consider biodiversity in its decision-making processes and to promote the conservation of local habitats and species.
- **The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019** aims to promote sustainable transport and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector. It has provided councils with greater powers to implement Low Emission Zones and improve active travel infrastructure.
- **Scottish National Adaptation Plan 3 (SNAP 3) 2024-29** sets out how Scotland will adapt to the risks identified in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment. The plan includes actions that fall under the Council's responsibility, and those it has a supportive role in addressing.
- **Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan 2024** commits to halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and to restoring and regenerating nature by 2045. The plan includes stronger guidance as to how the Council is expected to meet its Biodiversity Duty.
- **The Civil Contingencies Act (2004)** requires the Council to assess the risk of emergencies occurring and maintain plans to ensure that services continue to be delivered in the event of an emergency. Severe weather and climate change are linked to emergencies that may result in wide impacts ranging from serious environmental damage to loss of life.

- **The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009** requires the Council to implement and maintain flood protection actions and prepare local flood risk management plans. The Council is the lead authority for the Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Plan District and works with partners to deliver the plan.

In addition, climate change is increasingly being embedded in in all government policies ranging from infrastructure delivery to energy policy, and these are likely to influence the Council's work moving forward.