



REPORT of NET ZERO AND AIR QUALITY WORKING GROUP

to
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
2 OCTOBER 2025

REVISED 'OUR HOME, OUR FUTURE' CLIMATE STRATEGY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Member approval for publication of the revised '*Our Home, Our Future*' Climate Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2028 (CSAP), which sets out a deliverable, evidence-based approach to achieving net zero emissions across Council operations by 2050 and supporting wider District-level climate action. **APPENDIX 1.**

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee approves the revised 'Our Home, Our Future' Climate Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2028 (**APPENDIX 1**), including the projects set out in the Climate Action Plan (CAP) section (pages 120 – 132 of this agenda pack).

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 sets a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, supported by national policies aimed at reducing emissions across key sectors. Essex County Council (ECC) has also adopted the 2050 target, encouraging local authorities to align. In response to national and local recognition of the climate emergency, Maldon District Council (the Council) declared a Climate Emergency in 2021 and set a more ambitious target to achieve operational net zero by 2030.
- 3.1.2 To support this commitment, the Council adopted a Climate Action Strategy on 11 November 2021, setting out five pledges and more than 60 actions.
- 3.1.3 A strategic review in 2024, driven by the Net Zero and Air Quality Working Group and presented to the Council in December 2024, concluded that the 2030 target was no longer achievable. This was due to several challenges, including high upfront costs for decarbonising fleet and buildings, the need for rapid large-scale action, limited low-carbon options, and reliance on national policy developments.
- 3.1.4 As a result, the Council realigned its target with national and county ambitions, aiming for net zero by 2050, or sooner where practicable. These constraints showed that the original 2030 target could not be met within existing resources, prompting the development of a revised Strategy and Action Plan focused on a more realistic and deliverable pathway.

- 3.1.5 The revised CSAP and supporting reports have been overseen by the Net Zero and Air Quality Working Group.

3.2 Summary of the Strategy

- 3.2.1 This revised CSAP (**APPENDIX 1**) builds on the Council's 2021 Climate Action Strategy, reaffirming existing commitments while incorporating the ambitions set out in the Climate Emergency Statement (December 2024), including:
- a) To develop a Climate Action Strategy that enables the transition to a carbon neutral District and a net zero Council as quickly as practicably possible—and no later than 2050—considering available resources and emerging technologies.
 - b) To support and collaborate with relevant agencies in working towards a net zero Maldon District, including its towns and parishes, within the agreed timeframe.
 - c) To influence, inspire, and engage with partners across all sectors to help achieve climate goals through aligned strategies, plans, and shared resources.
 - d) To ensure young people are meaningfully involved in the process, providing them with a voice in shaping the future of their communities.
- 3.2.2 The CSAP sets out a coordinated, evidence-led approach to climate action, focusing on high-impact emissions reduction, strong governance, partnership working, and integration of climate goals across Council operations. It is grounded in a clear understanding of where emissions originate and where reductions will have the greatest impact.
- 3.2.3 It includes details on both the Council's operational emissions baseline and the wider District emissions profile. These inform the Council's carbon reduction pathways, with key sources such as building energy use, contractor travel, and fleet emissions highlighting the need for targeted action.
- 3.2.4 While robust baseline data exists for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, the CSAP acknowledges the need to improve measurement and reporting of Scope 3 emissions, such as those from procurement, leased assets, and contractor activities. Addressing these gaps will require improved data collection, cross-service collaboration, and better supplier engagement.
- 3.2.5 Delivery of the strategy is structured around five Climate Impact Areas (set out below), which provide a targeted framework for reducing emissions and driving measurable progress.
1. **Energy** – Improving the efficiency of Council-owned assets, promoting low-carbon energy, and supporting community energy schemes.
 2. **Travel and Transport** – Encouraging modal shift, fleet decarbonisation, and expanding EV infrastructure.
 3. **Adaptation and Climate Resilience** – Enhancing flood protection, biodiversity, and green infrastructure.
 4. **Preservation of Resources** – Promoting the circular economy, improving waste and water management.
 5. **Sustainable Working** – Embedding carbon-conscious operations, procurement, and digital transformation.

- 3.2.6 An iterative roadmap to 2050 outlines phased carbon reduction pathways and measurable milestones within a flexible framework that can adapt to emerging technologies, policy changes, and funding opportunities.
- 3.2.7 The CSAP also recognises the growing network of climate action groups across the Maldon District, whose grassroot efforts are driving local change. Building on this momentum, the Council will continue working with residents, schools, businesses, and community organisations to co-develop initiatives, raise awareness, and support long-term behaviour change. Engagement will be delivered through trusted platforms.
- 3.2.8 Finally, the CSAP aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and complements other strategies where climate, nature, and community outcomes can be jointly achieved.

3.3 Implementation and Monitoring

- 3.3.1 Developed with input from Council departments, the CAP outlines prioritised, practical actions across key themes to support the District's transition to net zero. Each action is costed, timebound, aligned with service plans, and linked to corporate priorities.
- 3.3.2 Progress will be reported quarterly through Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting to the Council's Performance, Governance and Audit Committee and shared with the Net Zero and Air Quality Working Group. The CAP will be reviewed and updated annually to allow for adjustments based on new information, changing policies, and resource availability. Updates will also be published on the Council's website to keep residents and partners informed and engaged.
- 3.3.3 The Plan also identifies actions the Council can deliver independently or in partnership, building on existing relationships with statutory bodies, local agencies, and regional groups such as Essex County Council, the North Essex Climate Change Partnership, and the Greater South East Net Zero Hub.
- 3.3.4 In parallel, officers will continue to strengthen engagement with self-governing, climate-focused community groups, as well as Town and Parish Councils, to support locally led action and amplify impact across the District.
- 3.3.5 Covering the period from 2025 to 2028, the CSAP aligns with the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) timeline and is designed as a living document—flexible and responsive to changes in Council operations, local priorities, and technological developments.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The revised Strategy and Action Plan reaffirm the Council's commitment to meaningful climate action through a more realistic, evidence-based approach. It provides a stronger foundation for accountability, collaboration, and a more sustainable path to achieving net zero emissions—both operationally and across the wider District.
- 4.2 Serving as a framework for climate leadership, the CAS ensures climate and nature considerations are embedded across Council decision-making and investment. It evaluates the Council's current position and identifies local opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Strategy presents a clear roadmap for reducing

emissions, enhancing resilience, and protecting natural resources across Maldon District.

- 4.3 As LGR progresses, the Council remains committed to adapting and collaborating with emerging strategic authorities to ensure climate action remains a central priority.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 - 2028

5.1 Supporting our communities

- 5.1.1 The strategy addresses climate vulnerabilities, supports behaviour change, and empowers local groups.

5.2 Investing in our District

- 5.2.1 Climate investments improve infrastructure and resilience, supporting sustainable growth.

5.3 Growing our economy

- 5.3.1 Supports low-carbon industries, green jobs, and local business energy efficiency.

5.4 Protecting our environment

- 5.4.1 Central to the strategy through emissions reduction, flood risk mitigation, and resource conservation.

5.5 Delivering good quality services.

- 5.5.1 Builds sustainability into Council services through procurement, fleet, and operations.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Positive long-term impacts through improved air quality, public health, services, and resilience. Some actions may involve service changes.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The Strategy aims to ensure inclusive engagement and avoid disproportionate impacts. Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment at **APPENDIX 2**.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – Supports long-term climate risk mitigation and legislative compliance.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Most short-term actions to be delivered within existing budgets; external funding will be pursued for capital projects.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Delivery will be supported through staff training, cross-team working, and strategic partnerships.
- (vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation** – The Strategy supports collaborative working and positions Maldon District Council for alignment with emerging governance arrangements.

Background Papers:

APPENDIX A – Revised Our Home Our Future Climate Strategy and Climate Action Plan 2025–2028

APPENDIX B – *Our Home, Our Future*' Climate Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2028
Equality Impact Assessment

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