

Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2026 Climate Change and Nature Recovery Progress Report

In February 2025, we adopted our Climate Change and Nature Recovery Strategy. This Strategy is an overarching document, which identifies our areas of focus when responding to the climate and biodiversity emergencies. These are:

- Leading by example to become a Net Zero Authority by 2030
- Working to decarbonise emission sources across the District, striving to reduce District wide emissions by 55% by 2030
- Delivering climate change adaptation measures, increasing the future resilience of the District
- Preserving and enhancing the District's natural environment, ensuring the recovery of nature

This Strategy was supported by a Delivery Plan, which identified the priority actions that we focused on delivering.

The following document sets out which of these actions we have successfully delivered, and where further progress is needed. Please note, due to the adoption date of the Strategy, this Delivery Plan provides progress made from October 2024 to March 2026. In future years, progress will be reported at the end of every financial year.

Key Takeaways

Of the 28 actions we committed to achieving, 25 are either completed, or progress is ongoing. In addition, we have progressed a further nine projects that were not identified in the original Delivery Plan.

Over the delivery period;

- Our net zero projects have resulted in a combined annual emissions reduction of 1,665 tonnes of CO₂e
- We have funded 32 community projects through the Community Climate and Nature Fund
- 21 of our officers and elected members have achieved Carbon Literate accreditation status
- We have relaunched our Local Climate Engagement scheme, to increase the range of support available to our Town and Parish Councils and community groups
- We have funded the planting of 21,000 trees on agricultural land through our Free Trees for Farmers scheme
- We have launched our Climate Resilient Stratford-on-Avon District scheme, providing an opportunity for ten organisations to have Climate Change Adaptation Action Plans produced on their behalf, and the provision of £10,000 in grant funding to begin to implement the Action Plan
- Over 750 trees and whips have been planted on our green spaces across the District
- We have made £50,000 of funding available for Town and Parish Councils for the purchase and planting of trees
- We have installed solar panels on the roofs of two of our leisure centres, and are in the process of installing them on the roofs of a further two
- We funded the first year of the Wilder Communities project, which saw just under 2,000 trees planted and just under a hectare of wildflower meadow created across the District

Net Zero Authority Progress

We said that we would deliver the following to progress our ambition of becoming a net zero authority:

What did we commit to achieving?	Did we achieve it?	Is the action complete?
Transition the fuel used in our refuse collection fleet from diesel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)	Yes	Yes
Install solar panels on the roof of Stratford Leisure Centre	Yes	Yes
Establish a funding model which would allow money saved from implementing sustainable measures to be reinvested into large scale renewable deployment across our estate	No	No – this action will roll over into the next Delivery Year
Investigate the potential of using a solar soft loan model to finance the installation of solar panels across our leisure portfolio	Yes	Yes – this was explored but ultimately, we were able to use grant funding in combination with our own reserves
Replace the windows at Elizabeth House with a more energy efficient alternative	This project will take more than one year to complete. We have successfully progressed this project, and it remains on track to be delivered within the originally stated timeframe	No – this action will continue to be prioritised for delivery in the next Delivery Year
Build an evidence base which will provide instruction as to our medium and low emitters throughout our estate and operations	Yes	No - this action will continue to be prioritised for delivery in the next Delivery Year where necessary
Become a bronze accredited Carbon Literate Organisation	Yes	Yes

In addition to the actions listed above, we also achieved the following:

What did we achieve?	Is the action complete?
We installed solar panels on the roof of Shipston Leisure Centre	Yes
Cabinet approval was granted for the installation of solar panels on Studley Leisure Centre	No – this project is currently progressing and will roll over into the next Delivery Year
Cabinet approval was granted for the installation of solar panels on Southam Leisure Centre	No – this project is currently progressing and will roll over into the next Delivery Year
Cabinet approval was granted for the installation of a solar panel car port in Stratford Leisure Centre car park	No – this project is currently progressing and will roll over into the next Delivery Year

Net Zero Authority Projects Impact

Solar Panels

We committed to installing solar panels on the roof of Stratford Leisure Centre. This project was completed in April 2025. In addition to this, we also installed solar panels on Shipston Leisure Centre.

Since installation, the solar panels on Stratford Leisure Centre have generated 156 MWh of electricity.

Since installation, the solar panels on Shipston Leisure Centre have generated 70.1 MWh of electricity.

Combined, these projects have resulted in an annual emissions saving of 43 tonnes CO₂e.

HVO Fuel

HVO has now been used in the Council's waste collection fleet for 17 months. This has resulted in a total emissions saving of 2,298 tonnes CO₂e.

Evidence Base Feasibility Reports for Medium and Low Emission Sources

Reports on the following decarbonisation and renewable energy measures have been produced:

- The replacement of windows at Elizabeth House
- The installation of a solar car port canopy with a supporting battery system at Stratford Leisure Centre
- The installation of a hydro weir system at Lucy's Mill. Please note, this was seen as a less favourable option for delivery then the solar car port system and will not be progressed

Carbon Literate Organisation

As of March 2026, 21 Council officers and members have undertaken Carbon Literacy training and been accredited as Carbon Literate. In addition to this, we have also put steps in place to be accredited as a Bronze accredited Carbon Literate Organisation. We expect that this accreditation will be finalised by the end of March 2026.

Low Carbon District Progress

We said that we would deliver the following to progress our ambition of decarbonising emission sources across the District:

What did we commit to achieving?	Did we achieve it?	Is the action complete?
Continue to offer our E-cargo fleet for free hire to community and charity groups, businesses, and Town and Parish Councils. As part of this, we will increase the communications around the scheme and use the scheme as the basis for conversations around the need for low carbon transport	Yes	No, this scheme runs continuously and will continue to be offered in the next Delivery Year
Agree the approach for installing electric-vehicle charge points in Council owned car parks, and rollout the installation of charge points	Yes	The approach is agreed; however, we are still progressing our electric vehicle charge point programme
Ensure active travel routes are embedded as a consideration as the South Warwickshire Local Plan progresses	Yes	No, this will remain to be a consideration as the Local Plan progresses and will therefore be included in future Delivery Plans
Continue to distribute energy efficiency focused grants on behalf of Central Government for the retrofit of existing homes	Yes	No, we will continue to distribute energy efficiency grants as they become available

Continue to deliver of the Local Climate Engagement Scheme	Yes	No, this scheme runs continuously and will continue to be offered in the next Delivery Year
Deliver the second round of the Community Climate Change Fund	Yes	Yes
Develop a programme of support for the able-to-pay market to support homeowners interested in installing solar panels	No	No, the service provider that we were planning on using to deliver this item has stopped operating. Therefore, this action will be included in future Delivery Plans
Continue to support the delivery of the Canal Quarter District Heat Network	Yes	No, this project will take multiple years to deliver. It will therefore be included in future Delivery Plans
Work with the County Council and other District and Borough Councils to explore the production of a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for the District	Yes	No, the LAEP is still being developed and will therefore be included in future Delivery Plans
Continue to work with the County Council to distribute Warwickshire Business Energy Advice Service (WBEAS) grants to businesses seeking to increase their energy efficiency	Yes	Yes

In addition to the actions listed above, we also achieved the following:

What did we achieve?	Is the action complete?
We opened the third round of the Community Climate Change and Nature Recovery Fund	No – we chose to open the fund for a full year, with application assessment sessions every quarter. There is one more assessment session in this round

Low Carbon Projects Impact

E-Cargo Fleet

Four E-Cargo bikes were hired out. Two bikes were used by the NHS, one by the Upper Lighthorne Community Champion, and one by a Council elected member.

Central Government Energy Efficiency Grants

Since April 2024, we have delivered 215 housing grants to improve the energy efficiency of homes across the District.

Local Climate Engagement Scheme

In 2025, we decided to relaunch our Local Climate Engagement (LCE) Scheme due to a lack of uptake of the schemes previously being offered. Rather than being focused solely on supporting community groups to engage with their residents over sustainability, it is now a broader programme of support. Community groups can now contact us through the LCE scheme to receive support in the delivery of any sustainability focused projects. Since relaunching the LCE, we have:

- Delivered an LCE Event. In October 2025, we ran the first annual LCE event. The event aimed to provide community groups with guidance to deliver their own biodiversity or climate change focused projects.
- Developed an LCE website. The website includes resources, a calendar of events, and case studies on the types of projects that can be delivered by community groups. The website will be published by the end of March 2026.

Community Climate Change and Nature Recovery Fund – Rounds Two and Three

Following the success of the first round of the Community Climate Change Fund, we widened the scope of the fund to include biodiversity projects. In addition, we continued to accept climate change adaptation focused projects. Therefore, the delivery of this fund now supports three of our four areas of focus outlined at the beginning of this document. A chapter detailing the geographic spread and the nature of the projects funded through this scheme is included later in this document.

Climate Resilient District Progress

We said that we would deliver the following to achieve our ambition of increasing the climate resilience of the District:

What did we commit to achieving?	Did we achieve it?	Is the action complete?
Develop a programme that incorporated the consideration of the impacts of climate change into internal business continuity plans and corporate risk assessments	No	No, this item will be prioritized for delivery in the next delivery year
Develop a programme that identified which communities will be most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in the future	Yes	Yes
Work with communities and partners to increase local food growing opportunities	Yes	No, we will continue to identify opportunities to increase local food growing opportunities in future delivery years
Work with a partner organisation to develop a programme which would help businesses adapt to climate change through the provision of advice and support and signposting to grant funding	This item has been expanded and is currently in the process of being delivered. This falls within our “Climate Resilient Stratford-on-Avon District” scheme	No
Roll out a climate change adaptation training programme to staff and members	An approach has been agreed for the delivery of this training	No, this item will continue to be delivered in future delivery years

In addition to the actions listed above, we also achieved the following:

What did we achieve?	Is the action complete?
We launched our climate change adaptation programme, “A Climate Resilient Stratford-on-Avon”. As of March 2026, this programme is open for Expressions of Interest	No, this action will be completed in the next delivery year.

Climate Resilient Project Impacts

Local Food Growing

Over the past Delivery Year, the following food growing opportunities have been supported:

- The awarding of £5,426 to Escape Arts to deliver a project which included two new accessible community growing spaces.
- Two communities were supported to plant fruit trees through the Free Trees for Town and Parish Councils programme.

Enhancing the Natural Environment

We said that we would deliver the following to achieve our ambition of enhancing the natural environment of the District:

What did we commit to achieving?	Did we achieve it?	Is the action complete?
Deliver the contents of the Stratford-Upon-Avon Local Nature Reserve Framework Landscape Ecological Management Plan	Yes	No, the Management Plan runs for thirty years. This item will therefore continue to be delivered in future delivery years
Continue to identify areas suitable for ecological enhancement on our parks and open spaces	Yes	No, enhancing our sites for ecology is a continuous process that will continue to be delivered over time. This item will therefore continue to be delivered in future delivery years
Explore registering other Council owned Nature Reserves as BNG receptor sites	Yes	No, this is an ongoing programme. This item will therefore continue to be delivered in future delivery years
Work with Town and Parish Councils to enhance understanding of how they can manage their land for nature	Yes	No, this is an ongoing programme. This item will therefore continue to be delivered in future delivery years
Deliver Round Two of the Free Trees for Farmers scheme in partnership with the Heart of England Forest	Yes	Yes
Continue to work with the Heart of England Forest to deliver the Tree Call to Action Project	Yes	Yes

In addition to the actions listed above, we also achieved the following:

What did we achieve?	Is the action complete?
We delivered a third round of the Free Trees for Farmers scheme in partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust	Yes
We supported Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's Wilder Communities project through the provision of £20,000 grant funding	Yes
We made £50,000 available for Town and Parish Councils to purchase trees to plant on their land	No – this is an ongoing grant

Natural Environment Project Impacts

The Management of Stratford-Upon-Avon Local Nature Reserve Ecological Management Plan

Management of the site has been delivered in line with the Ecological Management Plan. Measures that have been undertaken on the site to support this include:

- The management of wetland habitat through the removal of dominant species
- The management of grassland to increase its quality, including the removal of dominant species
- The management of trees to create age and structural diversity within the woodland
- The planting of over 100 whips to increase tree cover
- The removal of tree guards where necessary

The Ecological Enhancement of our Land

Trees have been planted across our green spaces in line with the below:

- 69 trees at Clopton Estate
- 550 whips at Clopton Estate
- 10 trees a Cottage Lane Rec

- 24 trees across other areas of SDC owned land

Working with Town and Parish Councils to Enhance their Understanding of Managing Land for Nature

Our Free Trees for Town and Parish Councils scheme, Local Climate Engagement Scheme, and the Community Climate and Nature Fund are all considered as delivery mechanisms for this action. The impacts of each are:

- We included a biodiversity workshop at our annual LCE event in October
- We provided funding for free trees for the following Town and Parish Councils:
 - 16 trees for Bidford on Avon
 - 80 trees for Henley in Arden
 - 4 trees for Ilmington
 - 36 trees for Southam
 - 20 trees for welford
- The following projects with a focus on biodiversity have been supported through the Community Climate and Nature Fund:
 - Upper Lighthorne Parish Council was supported to increase the local hedgehog populations
 - Shipston on stour Town Council was supported to increase biodiversity at Cornmill Meadows
 - Henley-in-Arden Parish Council was supported to deliver their project “Henley Buzz and Bloom – creating colour, habitat, and heritage for Henley”
 - Alcester Town Council was supported to deliver habitat improvements along the River Arrow
 - Alcester Town Council was supported to rewild community green spaces

Free Trees for Farmers – Round Two and Three

13,000 trees were given to farmers to be planted on agricultural land in Round Two.

8,000 trees were given to farmers to be planted on agricultural land in Round Three.

Trees Call to Action Project in Partnership with Heart of England Forest

41,734 trees were planted across the District because of this project.

Wilder Communities – Year One

The Wilder Communities scheme has resulted in the planting of:

- Approximately 2,000 trees
- Just under a hectare of wildflowers

Sites that have been ecologically enhanced through the scheme include schools, Parish Council land, a church, and allotments.

Community Climate and Nature Fund Progress

In the second round of the CCNF we awarded £55,863 worth of funding. Projects that we funded were:

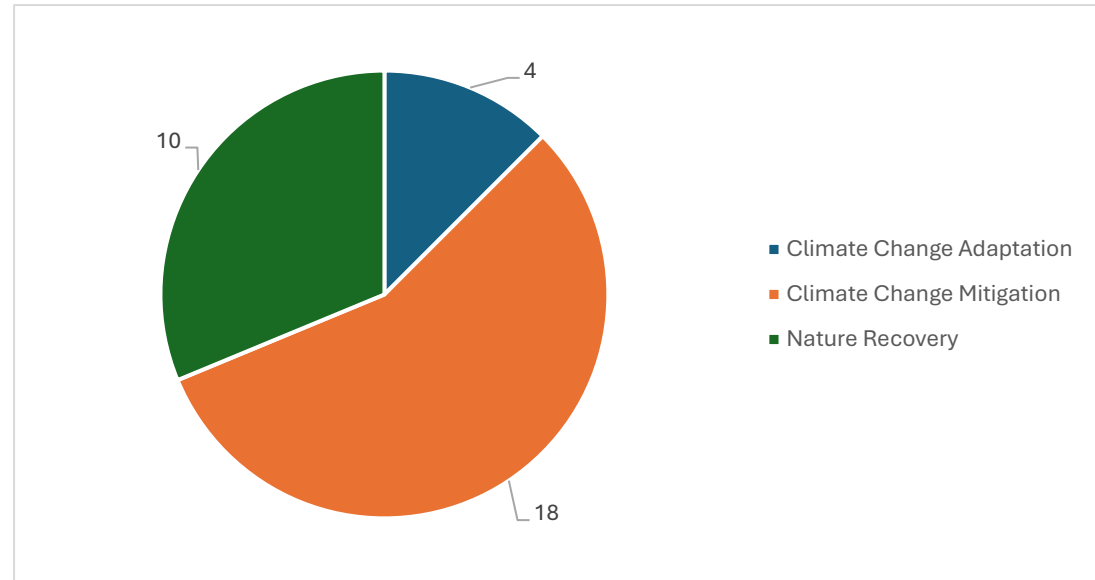
- £1,042 to Upper Lighthorne Parish Council to increase the local hedgehog population
- £4,980 to the Bear Pit Theatre to upgrade their stage lighting to from tungsten to LEDs
- £1,392 to Tiddington Village Residents Association to for water quality monitoring and improvement in the River Avon
- £9,850 to Kineton Village Hall for the insulation of the village hall
- £6,000 to Ilmington Community Shop for the installation of solar panels
- £7,750 to Stockton Village Hall Committee for the installation of solar panels and battery storage installation
- £4,790 to the Shakespeare Hospice for LED lighting upgrade at Avenue Farm site
- £4,370 to Warwickshire Rural Hub for the creation of an online hub for the South Warwickshire Area Network for wildlife (SWAN)
- £1,620 to Shipston on Stour Town Council to increase biodiversity at Cornmill Meadows
- £1,085 to Stratford Sports Club for the installation of SmartCellar technology
- £2,152 to Tysoe Village Hall Trust for the installation of destratification fans at the Village Hall
- £5,426 to Escape Arts for the provision of sustainable cooking workshops, two new accessible community growing spaces, and the installation of a rainwater harvesting system

In May 2025, we opened the third round of our Community Climate and Nature Fund. For the third round, we increased the budget of the scheme from £50,000, to £150,000, and amended how the scheme runs. It is now open all year round, with applications being assessed once a quarter. This removed the constraint of a deadline, meaning interested organisations could apply when convenient. As of March 2026, three appraisal sessions have taken place. Projects, and the funding provided, that have been supported in Round Three so far are:

- £5,985 to Harbury Scout Group to install solar panels on the roof of their scout hut
- £5,990 to Forest of Hearts to support a nature enhancement project at the Garden of Arden
- £10,000 to Friends of Henley CIC to install solar panels on the roof of the Station Bar in Henley in Arden
- £7,369.44 to Snitterfield Playing Fields to install solar panels, battery storage and inverter on their new Pavillion
- £5,041 to Stockton Village Hall to install new double-glazed windows and roof insulation

- £8,210 to Stockton FCC to improve drainage and resilience of their nine football pitches
- £10,000 to Welford on Avon Bowls Club to install solar panels on their club roof, as well as the installation of battery storage
- £4,033 to Hoppers Land Wood Trust to restore and plant on the 0.6ha Hoppers Lane Wood site
- £5,530 to Henley-in-Arden Parish Council to deliver their project titled: “Henley Buzz and Bloom – Creating Colour, Habitat, and Heritage for Henley”
- £3,104 to Tysoe Tennis Club to upgrade the club’s floodlighting to LED
- £6,000 to Henley Memorial Hall to install three air source heat pumps throughout the hall
- £6,000 to Kineton Village Hall Association to install two air source heat pumps in their hall
- £750 to Alcester Town Council to deliver low cost, nature-based interventions to support habitat recovery along the River Arrow
- £3,900 to Ilmington to Parish Council to deliver a pond restoration project
- £8,000 to Compton Verney House Charity to install a large air source heat pump at Compton Verney’s Learning Centre
- £2,400 to Pillerton Priors Village Hall to install a battery storage system to complement their existing solar panels
- £1,234 to Bearley Parish Council to finish the upgrade of their village streetlighting to LED
- £4,715 to Tysoe Village Hall to install a battery storage system to complement their existing solar panels
- £10,000 to Alcester Town Council to fund a number of biodiversity related initiatives, including the rewilding of community green spaces, the enhancement of hedgehog habitats, and community engagement events
- £7,600 to Bidford Parish Council to enable the continued provision of the Bidford Community Fridge and Café

The fund aims to fund a variety of projects. The graph opposite shows the number of climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation, and nature recovery projects that have been supported through the second and third round of the CCNF.



Another key consideration of the CCNF is to ensure that projects supported by the scheme are located across the District. The map opposite shows the location of each project that has been supported by the fund. Please note, this map shows projects supported by all rounds of the fund. The red points represent projects supported in Round One, the yellow points represent projects supported in Round Two, and the blue points represent projects supported in Round Three.

