

Norfolk County Council



► Climate Strategy Summary

It is beyond any reasonable doubt that climate change is taking place and its effects are starting to be felt, including here in Norfolk. Governments, businesses and individuals across the world are recognising the need to step forward and take action now.

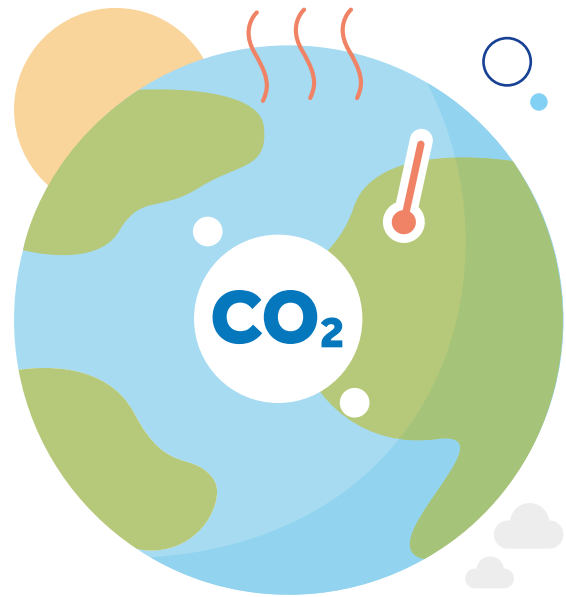
What we do today can make a huge difference to protect our communities and natural places from the impacts of climate change, but also enable us to seize the real opportunities arising from the green economy. As a local authority, Norfolk County Council can help shape local climate action in a way that reflects the unique characteristics and priorities of Norfolk. Our new Climate Strategy outlines how we seek to do this.

► What is climate change and net zero?

Climate change refers to the changes in weather patterns across the world being driven by global warming.

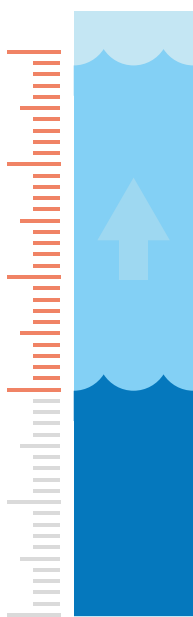
The world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history. This is due the huge amounts of greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels like oil, coal and gas. Carbon dioxide (often referred to simply as carbon) is the most significant greenhouse gas.

Net zero means not contributing to climate change by not adding to the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This means reducing greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible, and then compensating for remaining emissions through things like tree planting that take carbon out of the atmosphere.



► What are the impacts of climate change?

It is estimated that human activities have caused 1°C of global warming since pre-industrial times and this is likely to reach 1.5°C by 2050. While this does not sound like a big change, even small changes to global temperatures bring big shifts in weather patterns with significant impacts for people and nature. These include:



Global sea-level has risen by about **20cm** since the start of the 20th century, putting strain on coastal communities.



The last six years have been the six warmest on record globally. This has led to more frequent heatwaves, droughts and wildfires in most regions.

Climate change is leading to increasingly irreversible losses in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Extreme rainfall and related flooding has intensified, bringing damage to homes and infrastructure.



► What are the future impacts of climate change?

Due to the emissions already 'locked in' to the atmosphere, the UK's climate will continue to change as global temperatures increase. By 2050 these could include:



UK's average winter could be around 1°C warmer than it was over 1981-2000 and around 5% wetter with higher intensity of winter rainfall

An average summer could be around 1.5°C warmer than it was on average over 1981- 2000 and around 10% drier by 2050

A summer as hot and dry as 2022 could occur every other year

Sea levels could be up to 10 - 30cm higher than over 1981- 2000



► Our commitment to tackling climate change

In 2019, the UK became the first major economy to pass laws to end its contribution to climate change by bringing all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.



That same year, here at Norfolk County Council we made two ambitious commitments in support of the UK's climate action:

1. To achieve net zero carbon emission on our estate by 2030
2. To work collectively, with regional partners, towards carbon neutrality within our wider areas, also by 2030

► Our 7 Focus areas

1. Our estate

We are committed to making our estate net zero by 2030. Our estate emissions include those from our buildings, streetlights and vehicle fleet.

2. Indirect emissions

Our indirect (also known as 'scope 3') emissions represent our organisation's wider carbon footprint that we have influence over but which is outside of our direct control. This includes the carbon resulting from our supply chain, the companies we own, the buildings we lease, and staff travel, among other aspects.



3. County-wide emissions

This focus area steps back to address the bigger picture of how the council can support county-wide carbon reduction within transport, building and planning, commercial and industrial sector, energy, digital solutions and connectivity, waste and the circular economy.

4. Promoting a green economy

Net zero is the growth opportunity of the 21st Century, with over a million jobs likely to be in England's low carbon industries by 2050. It is vital that Norfolk grasps the opportunities for jobs and business growth that the green economy will offer. Our priority here is to help Norfolk to get equipped with the skills to harness these opportunities and establish the county as a sustainable tourism destination.



5. Adapting to climate change

We are already starting to feel the impacts of climate change and the risks to Norfolk's communities and natural places are set to intensify over the coming decades. As a council, we must ensure that the vital local services we provide are resilient in the face of climate hazards, and that we support the resilience of Norfolk's communities to the risks brought by flooding and extreme heat among others.

6. Space for nature to recover and grow

Norfolk is a county of diverse and unique landscapes, some of which are recognised as internationally important wildlife havens. However, many species are in decline with climate change only making this worse. Our priority here is to support nature recovery across the county and harness its potential for storing carbon and flood protection.

7. Engage and Collaborate

Norfolk County Council is one piece of a much larger puzzle in bringing about clean growth and climate resilience across Norfolk. A priority is using our position to help bring together the business, academic, public and community sectors towards taking action on climate change. Through collaboration and partnership we can help ensure Norfolk remains a thriving, resilient place for both current and future generations.

Find out more

To read our full Climate Change Strategy, or to find out more about the projects in Norfolk that are helping to reduce our carbon footprint visit the [Norfolk County Council website](#).