

Please note that by law this meeting can be filmed, audio-recorded, photographed or reported electronically by the use of social media by anyone attending. This does not apply to any part of the meeting that is held in private session.

Please ask for:
Democratic Services
democracy@welhat.gov.uk

7 January 2025

Dear Councillor

You are requested to attend a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CLIMATE BIODIVERSITY CABINET PANEL to be held on Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE

**A G E N D A
P A R T 1**

1. APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTION OF MEMBERS

2. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2024.

3. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 9

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

Up to thirty minutes will be made available for questions from members of the public on issues relating to the work of the Committee and to receive any petitions.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE REPORT (Pages 3 - 10)

Report of the Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)

7. HCCSP PRESENTATION (Pages 11 - 20)

To receive a presentation on the HCCSP annual event and Lara Workshop

8. CLIMATE AND NATURE BILL (Pages 21 - 36)

Report of the Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)

9. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Panel is asked to resolve: That under Section 100(A)(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for item 11 (if any) on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) and Paragraph 4 (consultations or negotiations relating to labour relations) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended). In resolving to exclude the public in respect of the exempt information, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

PART 2

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF A CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT NATURE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>Circulation:</u> | Councillors | R.Lass | G.Moore |
| | | L.Crofton | S.Thusu |
| | | H.Goldwater (Chair) | J.Weston (Vice-Chairman) |
| | | R.Grewal | |

Senior Management Team
Press and Public (except Part II Items)

If you require any further information about this Agenda please contact Democratic Services, Governance Services on or email – democracy@welhat.gov.uk

Part I

Item No.

Main author: Kelly Murphy

Executive Member: Cllr Max Holloway

All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CLIMATE BIODIVERSITY CABINET PANEL – 15 JANUARY 2025
REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESIDENT SERVICES AND CLIMATE
CHANGE)

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE REPORT

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report outlines progress being made regarding WHC’s corporate priority on ‘Action on Climate’.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members note the progress of specific projects/actions within the Climate Action Plan, which is the main tool used to monitor our pathway to net zero as an organisation (2030) and as a borough (2050) and note the wider co-benefits of such actions.

3.0 Explanation

3.1 It is important to monitor progress as we transition to net zero. Key updates against the Councils’ action plan are provided in the Climate Change update report as shown in appendix A.

Implications

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

5. Financial Implication(s)

5.1 There will be no immediate financial implications associated with providing this climate update report.

6. Risk Management Implications

6.1 There are no immediate risk management implications associated with providing this climate update report.

7. Communication implications

7.1 There are no communication implications associated with providing this climate update report.

8. Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

8.1 There are likely to be no security and terrorism implications associated with providing this climate update report.

9. Procurement Implication(s)

9.1 There are likely to be no procurement implications associated with providing this climate update report.

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

10.1 As per above in section 3.

11. Human Resources Implication(s)

11.1 There are likely to be no HR implications associated with providing this climate update report.

12. Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

12.1 There are likely to be no health and wellbeing implications associated with providing this climate update report.

13. Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 Outlining progress in relation to projects/action from the climate action plan relates to the corporate priorities in the following ways;

- Action on climate change
 - Renew our commitments to be a net zero Council by 2030 (and as a borough by 2050)
 - Step up climate change adaptation and mitigation measures
 - Lead by Example and encourage others to make positive change
 - Increase and promote biodiversity

Projects being delivered are in support of our net zero targets and address climate mitigation and/or adaptation.

14. Equalities and Diversity

14.1 There are likely to be no equalities and diversity implications associated with providing this climate update report.

Name of author: Kelly Murphy
Title: Climate Change Officer

Date: 13.12.24

Appendix A - Climate Change Update Report

15th January 2025



Photo credit – Robin Kersey

Prepared by the Climate Change Officer

Email: climatechange@welhat.gov.uk

1. Introduction

In line with our Transition to Net Zero Strategy, it is important to monitor progress being within the specific impact areas.

The Climate Action Plan has approximately 100 actions designed to help deliver the aims of the TTNZS.

Key updates are provided for a number of actions within the CAP.

2. Progress

2.1 Actions 95 and 96 – regarding carbon literacy training

- During the last meeting in November, funding was approved to create a bespoke climate awareness training for staff, members and residents. Having tailored it to our council and our own climate aspirations, we tested it with members and staff and some residents (thank you to all the guinea pigs), and we are now ready to launch it at the end of this month.
- Please keep your eyes peeled for the link which will be located on the WelwynHatfield Climate Hub, on the One WelwynHatfield website.
- The training will be promoted internally via the CORE newsletter and promote to residents via social media posts and a press release.
- We are always happy to hear feedback, because of course, we are all on this journey together, so we are encouraging people to please email climatechange@welhat.gov.uk if they have any comments on the training.

2.2 Action 4 – Relating to funding that isn't directly aimed at local authorities

- We were successful in a Museum Development South East Green Grant.
- We were awarded £4,964 to replace all the lighting at the Roman Bathhouse with LED's.
- This will take place in early 2025 whilst the Museum is closed for the winter.
- As LED lights are more efficient than old fluorescent lighting, we should see a reduction in emissions from this building, which will help us on our pathway to net zero.

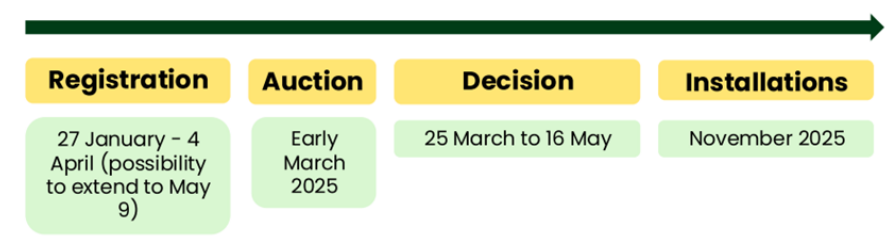
- We are very grateful to MDSE, as the funding has enabled us to upgrade the lighting in both our Museums. (With Mill Green lighting being upgraded last year), which we would otherwise have not been able to do.

2.3 Action 5 – regarding seeking and promoting schemes around the borough

- We received statistics from the Solar Together Second Cohort. Our borough installed £187,270 of solar panels and batteries, which equates to 19,841 kg of carbon savings per year moving forward.

| Community | Total paid | Total installations | Number of panels installed | Total mw installed | Installed Co2 reduction kg | Estimated co2 reduction 25 years kg | Total investment | Number of batteries installed | Total mWh installed battery |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Total | 949 | 514 | 5191 | 2.12 | 417409 | 10435214 | 4481798 | 455 | 3.04 |
| St Albans | 227 | 122 | 1,241 | 0.5 | 96,266 | 2,406,662 | 1,107,257 | 110 | 0.77 |
| North Herts | 185 | 104 | 1,021 | 0.41 | 78,971 | 1,974,286 | 863,427 | 83 | 0.57 |
| Dacorum | 146 | 91 | 1,012 | 0.41 | 77,174 | 1,929,358 | 864,448 | 80 | 0.58 |
| East Herts | 141 | 68 | 684 | 0.28 | 61,410 | 1,535,255 | 560,304 | 63 | 0.36 |
| Stevenage | 45 | 30 | 333 | 0.13 | 21,829 | 545,725 | 286,959 | 28 | 0.2 |
| Welwyn | 35 | 21 | 220 | 0.09 | 19,841 | 496,018 | 187,270 | 21 | 0.13 |
| Broxbourne | 37 | 23 | 236 | 0.1 | 18,963 | 474,079 | 193,193 | 22 | 0.13 |
| Watford | 40 | 20 | 170 | 0.07 | 16,586 | 414,645 | 156,158 | 19 | 0.11 |
| Three Rivers | 47 | 20 | 154 | 0.06 | 14,246 | 356,152 | 151,772 | 17 | 0.12 |
| Hertsmere | 46 | 15 | 120 | 0.05 | 12,121 | 303,035 | 111,010 | 12 | 0.07 |
| Welhat % of total | 102.2 | 133.3 | 128.3 | 120.0 | 117.5 | 117.5 | 136.7 | 141.7 | 171.4 |

- The combination of the first and second cohort, since 2022 has seen 68 households and businesses in our borough have 802 panels installed with an estimated carbon saving of 57,193kg.
- Across the whole of Hertfordshire, there has been 1,665 installations, resulting in 6.2MW energy generation and over £17 million in private investment in renewables. This will contribute to over 29,900 tonnes of carbon reduction in the County over the guaranteed lifetime of the systems installed.
- The third cohort will be launching this month, with letters being sent to all households in the borough. Registration of interest will be open from 27th January until 4th April (with a possible extension until 9th May), installations will take place in November 2025.



2.4 Action 20 - regarding the WENTA programme

- This programme, which was approved at the end of 2023, has had approximately 52 sign ups out of the possible 100
- To help promote this scheme, we attended the most recent Meet Your Business Neighbour – Growing Together Event on Thursday 5th December at the Dutch Marketplace in Hatfield.
- We had a presentation from the Head of Net Zero and Advice Team at WENTA to explain the programme and the help being offered to SME's in Welwyn Hatfield.
- The second presenter from Beehive Green, a local business, who has recent experience of being involved with WENTA, was unable to attend, so she kindly recorded a video that was streamed on the night. It highlighted the benefits she has found from her recent experience and showcased some of the great sustainable initiatives she has been able to implement as a result of taking part in the programme.
- We also heard from Welwyn Hatfield's procurement manager to explain our tendering process and provide information about our sustainable procurement appendix in the procurement and commercial strategy and how being environmentally friendly can help you win contracts.
- We also featured the initiative in the One Welwyn Hatfield magazine that was published last November.

2.5 Action 16 – regarding working with partners in education.

- Promotion of Net Zero Go Campaign. As a reminder, the campaign is designed to help educational settings become net zero and encourage sustainable practises. In addition to this, education providers can sign up to have a climate action advisor visit their setting and create a bespoke climate action plan; for free.
- Welwyn Hatfield signed up to support this campaign last year, but, despite efforts, as of yet there has not been much uptake.
- To try increase uptake, our Council have organised an online webinar session with Let's Go Zero. Designed to explain what is being offered, hear from a school who has already benefitted from the campaign and have a Q&A session.
- To widen the impact, we have engaged officers within HCCSP, to promote the event within the other 9 districts and boroughs and try rally interest throughout Hertfordshire.

- We will update on how this goes at the next CBCP meeting, but in the meantime, please do promote this online event to your contacts involved in education.

2.6 Action 35 – regarding opportunity for additional tree planting around the borough

Residents who signed up to the “Your tree our future” initiative collected their trees or hedgerow packs on Saturday 7th December, despite storm Darragh’s best efforts to deter them. Approximately 11,000 trees were collected in the wind and rain.

3. Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership

3.1 HCCSP in person event

To be covered in another item on the agenda

3.2 Other updates

Work continues to progress in the following areas;

- Local Nature Recovery Strategy – This work continues to progress, being led by HCC. Nothing new to update.
- Local Area Retrofit accelerator – Two out of the three work shops have been delivered. The mission statement is the only thing confirmed at this stage, so more information will be provided when available.
- Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure – Documents still going through approval process. More information will be provided when available.
- Offsetting. HCCSP continues to work with the University of Hertfordshire to research and develop a robust and credible approach to offsetting in Hertfordshire.

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HCCSP Annual Event & Lara Workshop

19th November 2024



Purpose of the Conference

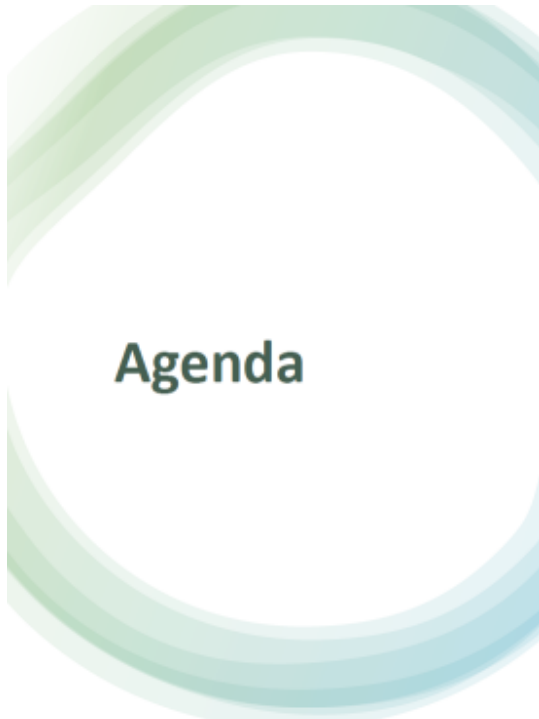
Brought together key stakeholders: officers, councillors, financial providers, housing, and charity organisations.

Objectives:

- **Review sustainability achievements in Hertfordshire.**
- **Refine the vision and next steps for the LARA pilot scheme.**



Map of the Day



| | |
|-------|---|
| 10am | Introduction and Welcome by Cllr Simon Speller |
| 10.25 | Keynote address by Emma Fletcher, Octopus Energy |
| 10.45 | Local Area Retrofit Accelerator Workshop Begins |
| 11.15 | Refreshment break |
| 11.30 | LARA Workshop Activities |
| 12.45 | Lunch break and networking |
| 1.45 | LARA Workshop Activities |
| 2.50 | Break |
| 3.00 | LARA Workshop Activities |
| 3.30 | Closing remarks by Julie Greaves and Cllr Simon Speller |
| 4.00 | Close |



HCCSP Achievements

- **£6M LEVI funding secured** + 1,840 EV charge point to be installed
- HCCSP has enhanced Hertfordshire's sustainability profile nationwide through:
 - Participation in **7 events and conferences**.
 - Conducting **4 consultations and feedback sessions**.
 - Maintaining strong partnerships with organizations like **WasteAware, NHS, and HIPP**.
- **Adaptation Strategic Action Plan** published (October 2024)
- **Solar Together scheme:**
 - 1,665 installations,
 - 29,900 tonnes of CO₂ reduction
 - £17 M of private investments not renewables
- Engaged **300+ stakeholders** in Local Nature Recovery consultations.



Speakers

Updates on:

- **Solar Together scheme progress**
- Financial insights from **Watford's retrofitting strategy**.
- **Greener Herts**
- **Super Homes**
- **Retrofit Skills Development**



Octopus Energy

Octopus energy - are a tech company leading the green energy revolution.

1. **Swaffham prior heating project.** Is the first off oil village.
2. Aim to shift from **static to decentralised energy system**, but offering next generation tariffs and energy projects, i.e. zero bills
3. **Zero Bills home initiatives** – heat pumps, solar panels, batteries
4. **Community Projects:** Investment in local wind turbines and renewable energy projects, with discounts for local residents.
5. **Future Initiatives:** Plans for zonal pricing and communal low-carbon tech assets in housing developments.



LARA Progress

- Reintroduced Pilot Scheme (October 2024 – January 2025).
- **Vision:** Homes fit for now and the future.
- **Mission:** Retrofitting homes to protect the environment, improve health and reduce fuel poverty, support local jobs and combat climate change.
- *(Mission still under revision for January workshop.)*

Working Groups

- Vision Group: Refined vision and mission.
- Procurement Group: Practical strategies for impactful retrofitting procurement.
- Governance Group: Leadership, accountability, and regular updates for the Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy.
- Shared Understanding Group: Identified knowledge gaps and prioritised a shared SWOT analysis.



LARA Progress 2

Retrofit Scheme SWOT Analysis

- Reviewed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- Confirmed earlier findings and identified:
 - New Weaknesses
 - Emerging Opportunities

Collaboration Exercise

- Interactive Retrofitting Challenge:
 - Simulated real-world decision-making, teamwork, and resource management.
- Key Lessons:
 - Decisions must be fast and high-quality.
 - Collaboration and communication are critical.
 - Financial prioritisation is essential.



Next Steps

The next LARA workshop is scheduled for January.

Ongoing work planned for refining the program visions and building stronger frameworks for collaboration.



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Part I

Item No.

Main author: Kelly Murphy

Executive Member: Cllr Max Holloway

All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CLIMATE BIODIVERSITY CABINET PANEL – 15 JANUARY 2025
REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESIDENT SERVICES AND CLIMATE
CHANGE)

WEWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – COUNCIL SUPPORT OF THE CLIMATE AND NATURE (CAN) BILL

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report outlines the proposal of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill 2024.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council supports the Climate and Nature Bill.

3.0 Explanation

3.1 Five out of ten local authorities within Hertfordshire have already signed up.

3.2 Approximately 374 district/borough/parish councils have already signed up across the UK.

3.2 The Climate and Nature (CAN) Bill is a legally-binding mission statement which will ensure policy and action on the climate and nature crisis is science-led and people-oriented.

3.3 The UK led the world with the Climate Change Act of 2008, and did so again with its commitment to Net Zero by 2050. In both cases, other countries followed the UK's lead. The CAN Bill would set a gold standard for other developed nations. By passing it, UK politicians would help inspire positive action across the world.

3.4 Regarding emissions; the UK's current targets are far from sufficient for 1.5°C—a target that is now more urgent than ever, as the door is closing on the chance of keeping temperatures close to the Paris Agreement pledge. The Government policy announcements aimed to tackle the Delivery Gap, but the Ambition Gap remains.

3.5 Regarding nature; the most recent State of Nature Report confirms that “Overall, the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries globally due to human activity, with less than half of its biodiversity remaining”.

- 3.6 It is critical that we tackle the interconnected climate and nature crises together.
- 3.7 If made law the CAN Bill would ensure that the UK:
- Creates a joined-up plan—the crises in climate and nature are deeply intertwined, requiring a plan that considers both together.
 - Cuts emissions in line with 1.5°C—ensuring UK emissions are reduced rapidly, for the last chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C.
 - Not only halts, but also reverses the decline in nature—setting nature measurably on the path to recovery by 2030.
 - Takes responsibility for our overseas footprint—both emissions and ecological.
 - Prioritises nature in decision-making and ends fossil fuel production and imports as rapidly as possible.
 - Ensures no-one is left behind—through fairness provisions.
 - Involves the public—giving people a say in finding a fair way forward through a Climate & Nature Assembly, an essential tool for bringing the public along with the unprecedented pace of change required.
- 3.8 The CAN sets out four main clauses: a target for climate, a target for nature, accounting for the UK’s footprints (both emissions and ecological footprints) and fairness involving the public. More information on these can be found in appendix A.

Implications

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There will be no legal implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill.

5. Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 There will be no immediate financial implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill. Existing financial implications relating to our corporate priority on Action on climate Change and subsequent net zero and biodiversity commitments have already been considered.
- 5.2 The bill requires the government to set out a strategy within 12 months of the Act passing. It is unknown at this stage whether the strategy would lay additional requirements on Local Government. Any such implications would be considered at the appropriate time and fed back through government consultation on the strategy. The Government has included financial provisions for costs of implementing the Act. This may be utilised to support Local Government if there are increased burdens, which we anticipate would be considered once a strategy has been proposed by the Government.

6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 There will be no risk management implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill.

7. Communication

- 7.1 There are minor communication implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill; we may want to promote our support via a press release, promote on the climate hub and disseminate internally to staff.

8. Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 8.1 There will be no security and terrorism implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill.

9. Procurement Implication(s)

- 9.1 There will be no procurement implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill.

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 10.1 We are not on track to meet the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as emission cuts are insufficient.
- 10.2 We have no chance of limiting warming to anywhere near safe levels unless we protect and restore nature; particularly the critical ecosystems that support life and store huge amounts of carbon, such as peatlands, woodlands, seas and wetlands, as well as rivers and soils.
- 10.3 We need to increase ambition and encourage others to do the same in an equitable way.
- 10.4 Welwyn Hatfield Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, has net zero targets for the council and for the borough and has a corporate objective to improve biodiversity. Supporting of the CAN bill will reaffirm our climate and nature commitments and ensure we are helping to lead the way on this global challenge.

11. Human Resources Implication(s)

- 11.1 There will be no human resources implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill.

12. Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

- 12.1 There will be no health and wellbeing implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill.

13. Link to Corporate Priorities

- 13.1 The support of the Climate and Nature Bill aligns with every single one of our objectives within the 'Action on Climate Change' corporate priority.
- Renew our commitments to be a net zero Council by 2030 and borough by 2050

- step up climate change adaptation and mitigation measures
- Lead by example and encourage others to make positive change
- Increase and promote biodiversity

14. Equalities and Diversity

14.1 There will be no equalities and diversity implications as a result of supporting the Climate and Nature Bill.

Name of author: Kelly Murphy

Title: Climate Change Officer

Date: 3.1.25

Climate and Nature Bill

Zero Hour briefing for MPs ahead of the CAN Bill's 21 March 2024 re-introduction

[Key proposals](#)

[Fundamental principles](#)

[Key clauses in the CAN Bill](#)

[Climate target](#)

[Nature target](#)

[Accounting for the UK's footprints](#)

[Emissions footprint](#)

[Ecological footprint](#)

[Fairness and involving the public](#)

[CAN Bill benefits](#)

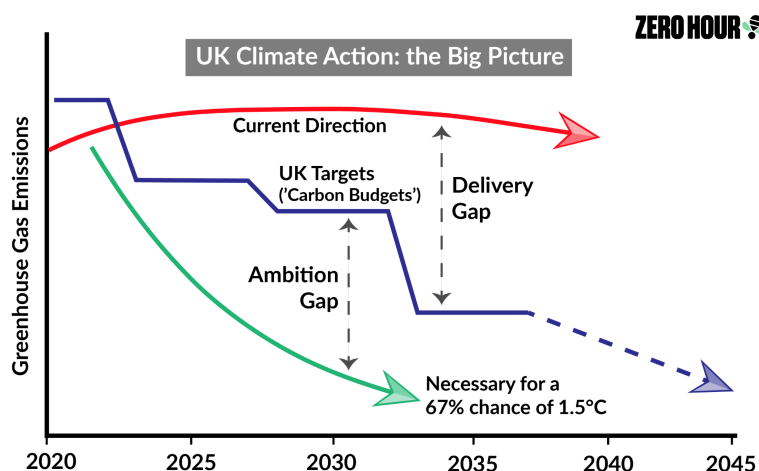
[Appendix](#)

Introduction

The Climate and Nature (CAN) Bill is a legally-binding mission statement which will ensure policy and action on the climate and nature crisis is science-led and people-oriented.

The UK led the world with the Climate Change Act of 2008, and did so again with its commitment to Net Zero by 2050. In both cases, other countries followed our lead. The CAN Bill would set a gold standard for other developed nations. By passing it, UK politicians would help inspire positive action across the world.

The UK's current targets are far from sufficient for 1.5°C—a target that is now more urgent than ever, as the door is closing on the chance of keeping temperatures close to the Paris Agreement pledge. The Government policy announcements aimed to tackle the Delivery Gap, but the Ambition Gap remains. And scientists warn that the UK is not even on track to meet these weak targets. Furthermore, it is critical that we tackle the interconnected climate and nature crises together.



We have no chance of limiting warming to anywhere near safe levels unless we protect and actively restore nature; particularly the critical ecosystems that support life and store huge amounts of carbon, such as peatlands, woodlands, seas and wetlands, as well as our rivers and soils.

Updated 6 June 2024

Our [Ambition Gap report](#), reviewed and endorsed by leading scientists, sets out in more depth the void between current legislation and the red lines dictated by the latest science. The framework set out in the CAN Bill, however, would lock the science into law and ensure the UK is doing its real fair share to maintain a liveable planet.

Key proposals

If made law the CAN Bill would ensure that the UK:

- Creates a joined-up plan—the crises in climate and nature are deeply intertwined, requiring a plan that considers both together.
- Cuts emissions in line with 1.5°C—ensuring UK emissions are reduced rapidly, for the last chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C.
- Not only halts, but also reverses the decline in nature—setting nature measurably on the path to recovery by 2030.
- Takes responsibility for our overseas footprint—both emissions and ecological.
- Prioritises nature in decision-making, and ends fossil fuel production and imports as rapidly as possible.
- Ensures no-one is left behind—through fairness provisions.
- Involves the public—giving people a say in finding a fair way forward through a Climate & Nature Assembly, an essential tool for bringing the public along with the unprecedented pace of change required.

Fundamental principles

After passing the CAN Bill, the Government must develop a strategy, in consultation with the public via a ‘Climate & Nature Assembly’. The strategy must follow the following fundamental principles:

1. Limit the UK’s total CO₂ emissions to no more than its proportionate share of the [IPCC’s](#) remaining global carbon budget, for a 67% chance of limiting heating to 1.5°C.
2. Reduce CO₂ emissions caused in the manufacture of the goods we import, in line with UK territorial emissions.
3. Reduce the UK’s emissions of methane and other greenhouse gases, at rates consistent with the last chance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C.
4. Ensure the end of the exploration, extraction, export and import of fossil fuels by the UK as rapidly as possible.

5. Ensure that steps taken to mitigate emissions minimise damage to ecosystems, food and water availability, and human health, as far as possible.
 6. Restore and expand natural ecosystems, and enhance the management of cultivated ecosystems, to protect and enhance biodiversity.
 7. Include the [Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy](#) so that any development or activity that threatens nature uses this framework to prioritise the protection of nature.
 8. Address the UK's entire ecological footprint at home and overseas by accounting for and monitoring the impacts on human health and the destruction of nature; through the production and consumption of goods and services and all related activity including financing, the extraction of raw materials and waste production.
-

Is 1.5°C still achievable?

Governments have left it far too late to address climate change. Long-term average warming is now close to 1.5°C, and the Earth experienced its first full year where the global average temperature exceeded 1.5°C, the highest level in 125,000 years. Uncertainties in the complex climate system mean it's difficult to determine exactly when we are likely to cross 1.5°C. And there is an ongoing scientific debate concerning the possibility that warming may in fact have accelerated. It may be several years before that debate is settled. But it only serves to undermine the nature of the emergency we're facing, and the urgent need to implement immediate and deep cuts in the burning of fossil fuels and fundamental change in the way we use our land.

While the stats and data comes in, global leaders must respond now in all urgency. It is important to keep stating that we need to cut emissions as fast as possible, and put a plan into place for land use change and the restoration of nature to cope with the devastating impacts—now. In 2020 the Climate Change Committee said: “The UK's net-zero target will not be met without changes in how we use our land. Those changes must start now.”

Key clauses in the CAN Bill

The Bill leads with two overarching targets, one for climate and the other for nature.

1. Climate target

This target would ensure that the UK:

1 (2) (a) reduces its overall contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions to net zero at a rate consistent with—

(i) limiting the global mean temperature rise to 1.5°C versus pre-industrial levels;

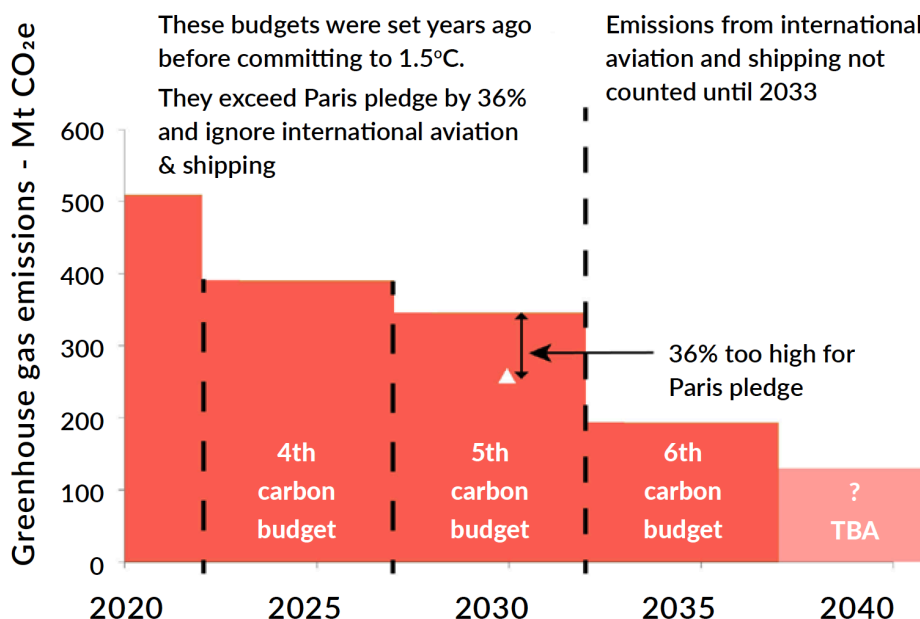
(ii) fulfilling its obligations and commitments under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, taking into account the United Kingdom's and other countries' common but differentiated responsibilities, and respective capabilities, considering national circumstances;

Why do we need a new climate target?

Below are some of the weaknesses with the UK’s current targets. For a comprehensive list, please refer to Zero Hour’s [Ambition Gap report](#).

Out of date and incomplete

Some of our targets are almost 13 years old, set before scientists fully understood the dangers of exceeding 1.5°C, and before the UK adopted its net zero by 2050 target. They ignore international aviation and shipping until 2033, as well as blue carbon, which is being released from marine environments due to activities like industrial fishing. Current targets also ignore almost 40% of the UK’s emissions by not accounting for all of our imported emissions (as outlined on page 6, below).



No specific targets for methane and other non-CO2 warming gases

Methane is responsible for a huge 0.5°C of the 1.2°C of warming seen to date. But the current UK strategy sets no individual targets for methane or other non-CO2 warming

Updated 6 June 2024

gases. Instead, these gases are bundled into a single metric, ‘Greenhouse Gases’, expressed in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e).

But these other greenhouse gases affect the climate very differently to CO₂, and grouping them together like this misrepresents the impact of powerful short-lived warming gases like methane. Methane only lasts in the atmosphere for around 12 years, yet its heating impact, when incorporated into the combined ‘Greenhouse Gases’ metric, is treated as if it is spread evenly over 100 years. This seriously underestimates the impact of methane over the near term, during which it is vital to avoid crossing tipping points like the melting of large ice sheets, or the loss of the Amazon Rainforest.

The CAN Bill will require individual targets be set for methane and the two other main greenhouse gases, nitrous oxide and f-gases ([see clause 2\(3\)\(c\)](#)).

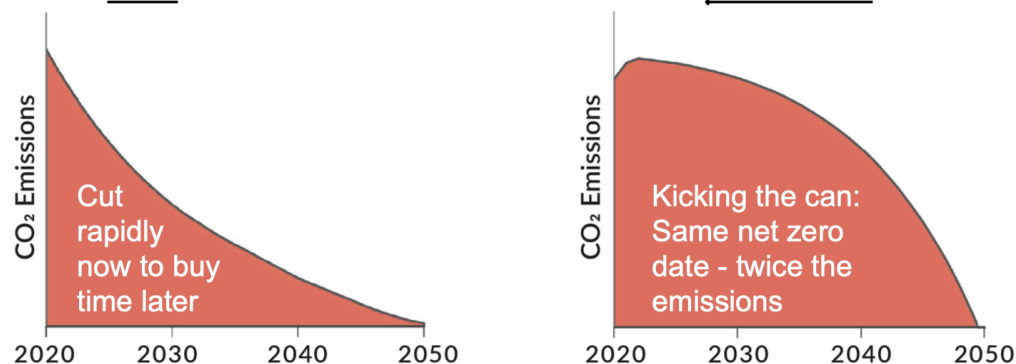
Too many promises for the future, and not enough action now

The UK’s current strategy is heavily focused on the relatively distant net zero date of 2050. Perhaps partly as a consequence, far too few people understand that it’s cumulative emissions that matter—not target milestone dates. That is because global heating is proportional to cumulative emissions. And the Government is taking far too little action to reduce emissions now, instead gambling on speculative technology to deliver big cuts tomorrow.

But people do understand the concept of working to a budget. That’s one of the key benefits of switching over to a system of linking the UK targets to our share of the remaining carbon budget. It matches more closely to the principle of how CO₂ works on the atmosphere—i.e. it accumulates and so we need to build an understanding that every tonne matters.

The CAN Bill will embed this concept of a finite carbon budget into law and lead us to take much stronger action in areas like cutting wasteful emissions and moving more quickly on renewables (e.g. onshore wind).

It’s not when we reach net zero that matters - it’s the path we take



2. Nature target

This target would ensure that the UK:

1 (2) (b) halts and reverses its overall contribution to the degradation and loss of nature in the United Kingdom and overseas by—

(i) increasing the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, populations, habitats and ecosystems so that by 2030 and measured against a baseline of 2020, nature is visibly and measurably on the path of recovery;

(ii) fulfilling its obligations under the UNCBD and its protocols and the commitments set out in the Leaders' Pledge for Nature;

(iii) following the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Why do we need a new nature target?

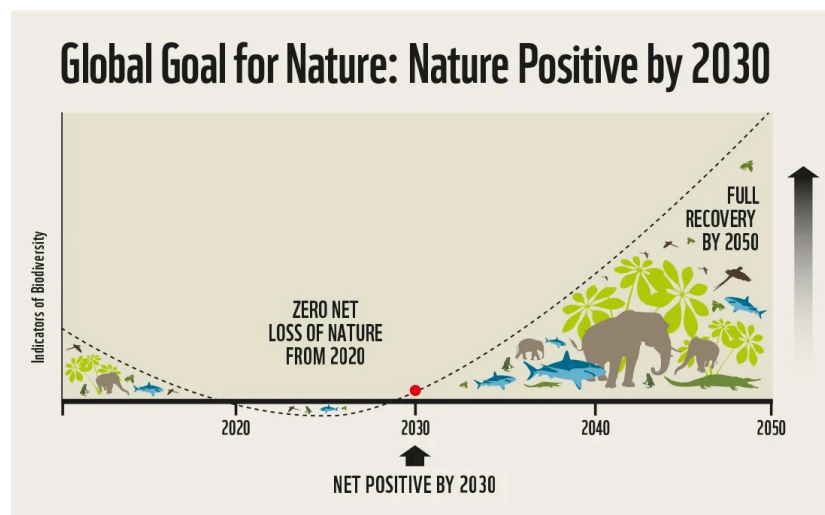
Joined up approach

The natural world is complex and the role it plays in regulating the climate is often overlooked. Protecting critical ecosystems that contain large stores of irrecoverable carbon, such as forests, peatlands, wetlands and the ocean, must take equal priority with cutting emissions. This is essential if we are to avoid tipping points that may lead to the large-scale release of carbon, resulting in catastrophic heating. Cuts in emissions from fossil fuels are only half the solution.

Climate change accelerates biodiversity loss. At the same time, biodiversity loss exacerbates climate change, degrading nature's capacity to absorb and store carbon and adapt to the impacts of global heating. Other than the Climate and Nature Bill, there is currently no other proposed or actual legislation that addresses the two sides of the coin together in an integrated approach.

Halt and reverse

The Environment Act (2021) introduced a “species abundance target” to halt the decline in the abundance of species, by 2030. But as one of the world's most nature-depleted nations, scientists are calling for much more ambition, to halt and reverse the decline of nature—the target found in the CAN Bill. The CAN Bill has a holistic nature target that would increase “the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, populations, habitats and ecosystems so that by 2030, and measured against a baseline of 2020, nature is visibly and measurably on the path of recovery.”



The UK does have a longer term target to halt “the decline in our wildlife populations” by 2042 and to increase species populations by 10% on 2030 levels. But the Wildlife and Countryside Link warns that in the absence of concrete plans to address the current rate of decline, the state of nature is on course to worsen considerably by 2030. This risks pushing ecosystems beyond dangerous points from which they may not be able to recover.

The CAN Bill’s nature target aligns with the international commitment to halt and reverse the destruction of nature by 2030 that the UK has signed up to at the UN Biodiversity Summit—CBD COP15—in 2022. Therefore the Bill would be enforcing this agreement by placing it into national legislation.

Prioritising the protection of nature

According to the first report published by the new Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) in May 2022, key UK ecosystems are close to tipping points. The OEP’s chief insights officer, Simon Brockington, identified some of the key causes of degradation, including seabed trawling, which destroys the integrity of the ecosystem, and the pollution of farmland and rivers with fertilisers and livestock manure.

The Bill invokes the [Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy](#) (clause 2.(3)(g)) so that any development or activity that threatens nature uses this framework to prioritise the protection of nature. It also accounts for the UK’s entire impact on human health and the destruction of nature, at home and overseas; through the production and consumption of goods and services and all related activity including financing, the extraction of raw materials and waste production.

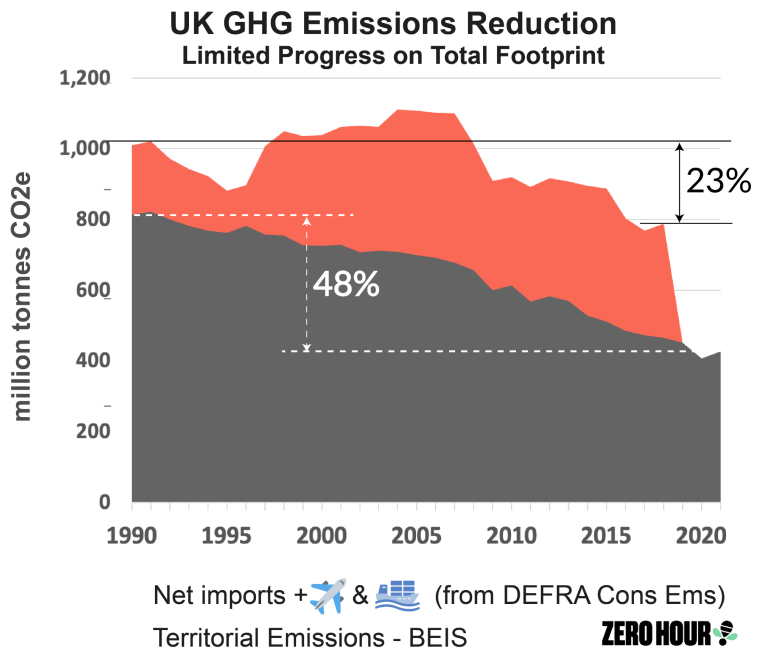
3. Accounting for the UK’s emissions and ecological footprints

Emissions footprint

The CAN Bill calls on the UK to account for emissions created outside the UK via our consumption by:

2 (3) (b) reducing emissions of carbon dioxide in respect of imports to the United Kingdom, at the same percentage rate each year as the annual reduction of the United Kingdom’s emissions of carbon dioxide

The UK has done well to reduce its territorial GHG emissions by 48% since 1990, i.e. those that occur within our geographic borders. But that picture changes when we include the emissions caused in the manufacture of our imports, and our share of international and aviation emissions. This is a major issue for the UK as the [largest net importer of CO2 emissions](#) in the G7.



In total, our carbon footprint has only fallen by 23% since 1990. That’s less than 1% a year - a long way from the “[rapid far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society](#)” called for by the IPCC. On the positive side, there is now much more awareness that ignoring imports isn’t a sustainable position. Companies and cities take responsibility for their scope 3 emissions. It is time that countries did too.

Ecological footprint

A priority for all governments in developed countries must be to stabilise the world's critical carbon sinks and stores—the ‘global safety net’ of ecosystems such as tropical forests, peatlands, and the ocean. Many of these are also the richest remaining areas for biodiversity, which is critical to keeping them functioning and preventing the loss of irrecoverable carbon.

- Groundbreaking new research published in the journal [Lancet Planetary Health](#) establishes that the EU and the UK are responsible for 25% of global ecological damage.
- The UK has an extremely high food emissions economy, responsible for [35% of emissions](#) because it imports around 50% of its food. To compound this, more than 50% of UK household food purchases are ultra-processed, compared to 14% for France and 13% for Italy.

Updated 6 June 2024

We eat an astonishing 79 million ready meals each week. Ultra-processed foods and livestock production use large quantities of water and vast amounts of just a few commodities, such as meat and seafood, soy, palm oil, and wheat. Our diet leaves our economy highly dependent on these commodities and exposed to supply disruption, causing shortages and price rises, as shown by the wheat shortage due to the war in Ukraine and pressure from climate change in India and Canada.

The large-scale production of these commodities causes widespread ecological damage, with beef, soy and palm oil particularly associated with global deforestation. The JNCC has begun work on estimating the global environmental impacts of UK consumption, producing its first report in October 2021.

- Exponential growth in the production of unsustainable foods is driving large-scale emissions and ecological breakdown.
- This poses risks to public health, food security and the stability of Earth’s critical carbon stores. It is also inequitable.
- Developed countries use more than three quarters of the world’s farmland to feed livestock, while over 2 billion people have insufficient access to safe and nutritious food.
- Richer nations are stripping natural resources from poorer nations—such as land, minerals, forests, water, and marine resources—hampering their ability to develop sustainably and to protect the critical ecosystems that all countries depend upon.

According to the Lancet report, resource consumption in the UK and among the other largest consumers must be reduced by around 70%. The WWF concurs: “we must reduce the UK’s environmental footprint by three-quarters by 2030 to help the world stay within planetary limits”. The European Parliament also calls for binding targets to reduce resource footprints by 2030 and bring them within planetary boundaries by 2050. The WWF report [Thriving Within our Planetary Means](#) shows that the UK’s overseas land footprint for just seven commodities takes up a land area almost equal to the size of the UK itself.

There is no doubt that reducing our global footprint presents governments with huge challenges. But a Nature Positive Economy can create significant opportunities and benefits, generating new jobs, innovations and wider economic gains. The Government’s Net Zero Strategy recognises the need for a circular economy, but mainly in the context of energy saving and waste reduction. It does not commit to addressing the extent to which we are depleting domestic and global natural resources.

4. Fairness and involving the public

Leaving no-one behind in the transition to a green economy

It is important to ensure that sections of society are not left behind in the rapid transition away from fossil fuels—both for moral reasons but also out of economic national interest. That is why the Bill contains the following measures:

- The Government’s strategy must include financial support and retraining to enable people to transition from working in high emissions and high impact industries to new jobs in the low carbon economy.
- The strategy must be designed to ensure a positive and fair impact on local communities with high levels of deprivation.

Building consensus

The IPCC has warned that limiting heating to 1.5°C will require “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”. And the fact that we are already starting to hit dangerous temperature increases, means that it is even more essential that we cut emissions as rapidly as possible. Achieving a broad public consensus on the way forward will be essential in rising to this challenge. So it is vital that the British public is fully informed about, and feels consulted on, the changes needed—rather than having the sense that changes are being imposed in a top down way.

- That’s why the Climate and Nature Bill includes a temporary Climate and Nature Assembly to advise Parliament on the emergency strategy.
- The Assembly will be made up of ordinary citizens, randomly selected to represent all sections of society.
- It will hear evidence from a wide range of experts, deliberate on the options, and make recommendations on a strategy which will be debated in Parliament.
- The Secretary of State must include in the strategy all recommendations by the Assembly that have the support of 66% or more of its members, where those recommendations are also jointly proposed by Government advisory committees: the Climate Change Committee and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

The Assembly will not override our democracy. Parliament will remain sovereign at all times and has to vote on the Secretary of State’s strategy. But it will provide visible democratic legitimacy for the far-reaching changes that are required to tackle the climate and nature crisis. It will provide robust support for ministers communicating changes to the public, which will inevitably be challenging for some. A robust example of such an assembly was [Climate Assembly UK](#), which was established by several Select Committees in 2019 to help them understand public preferences on how to tackle climate change.

Developing a strategy: The Climate and Nature Assembly process

1. Government must present an emergency strategy to Parliament within 12 months of passing the CAN Bill, with annual interim targets to help us stay on track.
2. Formation of a Climate & Nature Assembly, made up of a representative group of randomly selected UK citizens must commence within 3 months of passing the Bill.
3. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) must produce a review for the Government, listing proposed measures for inclusion in the strategy. It must include all recommendations of the Climate & Nature Assembly which have more than 66% support, unless there are exceptional and compelling reasons why not, which must then be stated in order that MPs can have final say.
4. The Secretary of State must include all recommendations from the Climate & Nature Assembly with more than 66% support **and backed by the CCC and JNCC**.
5. The CCC and JNCC must report annually on progress against targets, and if we are not on track, the Secretary of State must revise the strategy or explain to Parliament why a revision is not necessary.
6. If the Government fails to deliver a strategy that meets the Bill's objectives and fundamental principles, breaching the duties imposed by the Bill, the Government can be challenged in the High Court through judicial review.

Devolution

The CAN Bill proposes a UK-wide, co-operative approach between all UK Administrations, via a process that respects matters of devolved legislative competence. As some climate (i.e. energy) and environmental matters are devolved issues, and the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament/Government, Welsh Parliament/Government, and Northern Ireland Assembly/Executive, the measures in the strategy relating to devolved matters require approval from these Devolved Administrations (see, [clause 5](#)).

In addition, the joined-up strategy proposed by the CAN Bill will be developed with the input of citizens—representative of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland—ensuring that the voices of citizens across the UK nations are taken into account, as part of co-creating the strategy.

