



# **Buckinghamshire Council Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy: Executive Summary**

---

Last updated: 29 January 2021

Version: 1

Online version: [HYPERLINK](#)

---

# Why we need a Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy

Humans have increased the amount of (greenhouse) gases in our atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, that trap heat from the Sun. This is causing our planet to warm and the permanent ice on it to melt. Sea levels are rising, our summers are becoming hotter and drier, and our winters are getting wetter. Climate Change is affecting us all.

Major sources of greenhouse gases are also the main sources of other emissions to air that are harmful to health (e.g. transport). The burning of fuels (such as gas, petrol or diesel) is an activity at these sources that pollutes the air. There are several areas in Buckinghamshire where levels of nitrogen dioxide are above a UK objective for this pollutant. This has resulted in special measures being introduced for these [Air Quality Management Areas](#) (AQMAs).

Further to the [Council Motion](#) that was passed, our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy has been produced to address these significant environmental issues.

## **Our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy Aims and Objectives are to:**

- **achieve net zero carbon emissions for Buckinghamshire as a whole by 2050**
- **achieve net zero carbon emissions for the council no later than 2050, potentially as early as 2030**
- **to improve air quality across Buckinghamshire**

## What the Council has already achieved

The council has existed in its current form since April 2020. Work undertaken by 5 predecessor councils has reduced carbon emissions from 15,117 tonnes per year in 2009 to 8,983 in 2018.

**We have reduced our carbon emissions by over 6,000 tonnes a year between 2009 and 2018. We have achieved this in part because we have:**

- **upgraded over 22,000 streetlights to highly efficient LEDs**

- **installed solar panels at 15 of our sites to produce zero carbon electricity**
- **improved the energy efficiency of our buildings through better insulation, lighting upgrades and improved heating systems**

## **Our carbon reduction targets**

We have set ourselves the goal of reducing our carbon emissions to net-zero no later than 2050. In addition, we are establishing milestone targets for 2030 and 2040. We have aligned these with the UK's national baseline of 1990 in order to aid comparison of carbon reduction levels.

**Compared to our estimated 1990 carbon emissions, we will:**

- **reduce our carbon emissions by at least 75% by 2030**
- **reduce our carbon emissions by at least 90% by 2040**
- **reach net zero carbon emissions no later than 2050**

The UK's national target is to reach net zero carbon emission by 2050 with an interim target of achieving a 68% reduction by 2030, based on 1990 emission levels.

To make our carbon reduction targets comparable, we have also used 1990 as the year to base or reduction targets on. To do this, it is necessary to estimate our emissions for 1990 as we do not have emissions data from this year<sup>1</sup>.

Compared to our 2018/19 baseline, our emissions reductions targets are to reduce our carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve an 80% reduction by 2040.

## **What the Council will do**

The council has direct control over emissions from its operations but has less influence elsewhere (e.g. from homes and businesses). In shaping our response, we recognise the different roles we must therefore take on to reduce emissions across Buckinghamshire.

---

<sup>1</sup> Data gathered during the carbon audit covered emissions back to 2009 – we have assumed that energy usage (i.e. in kilowatt hours) was the same in 1990 as 2009, updating electricity emission with the emissions factor from 1990.

**A £5 million Climate Change Fund has been established to support continued emissions reductions, including funding tree planting, energy efficiency and renewable generation projects.**

The actions we've identified to help reduce emissions cover a wide range of activities of the council and from across Buckinghamshire, including emission reductions from buildings, waste, transportation and purchased goods and services.

**Our key actions to reduce carbon emissions are to:**

- **plant over 500,000 trees in Buckinghamshire.**
- **generate more renewable energy and improve energy efficiency.**
- **reduce emissions from our vehicles.**
- **improve infrastructure for active travel and electric vehicles.**
- **encourage environmentally sustainable behaviour.**
- **work with partners, communities and suppliers to support emissions reductions.**

## **Who is involved**

Everyone! All of us affect and are affected by climate change and air quality. The aims of the strategy will only be achieved if we work together. There are even opportunities for all of us to [benefit financially from taking action](#). We do recognise the role the UK Government plays in setting laws, and creating grants and guidance, and the need to raise awareness.

**Our key communication activities are to:**

- **report regularly on our progress**
- **raise public awareness of climate change and air quality issues, and how we can all make a difference**
- **work with central government to ensure we have the funding and tools to reduce emissions locally**