

COVENTRY

Climate Change Strategy

2024–2030



DRAFT



Coventry City Council

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Foreword – by Cllr J. O'Boyle

We are facing unprecedented environmental challenges that threaten the health and prosperity of our planet. Tackling this will require changes enormous in scale and scope, encompassing how electricity is generated, how people travel, how land is used and how buildings are heated.

While the challenges are significant, this is also a major opportunity to create positive change that can improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of our residents and create a greener, more prosperous vibrant future city.

Coventry City Council has an important role to play in addressing the causes and consequences of climate change. We must take action and be innovative to tackle climate change, support nature and build a green economy. We are also committed to create a more attractive greener city for everyone to enjoy.

This strategy is about people as well as the planet and recognises the need to address inequities where those families from the lowest incomes are facing the greatest challenges because of climate change. Coventry is committed to tackling its inequalities, which includes supporting those living in the lowest quality homes and suffering poor health, lack of access to green space, worse air quality, rising fuel costs and food prices. It's also about ensuring that the city is equipped with the right skills to ensure a just transition to a low carbon economy and that no one gets left behind.

The Council will lead and encourage city-wide action, alongside an independent Climate Change Board where we can represent the interests of residents and bring together stakeholders in the private, public and voluntary sectors to take action. These agencies have had an important role in developing this strategy. We will also continue to engage with residents and empower community organisations to develop projects and encourage behavioural change.

The sustainability and climate change agenda also provides the city with a major opportunity to become the country's leading centre for the Green Industrial Revolution, bringing new skills, jobs and investment. I am proud to spearhead this ambitious work where we are developing innovative solutions ranging from Greenpower Park to battery industrialisation, the UK's first Strategic Energy Partnership, an award-winning state-of-the-art materials recycling facility, Coventry Very Light Rail and a cycle-superhighway network.

This is just the beginning. This strategy focuses on how to create opportunities for the whole city working in partnership with others to address this spectrum of issues. We need everyone to play their part; as residents, businesses, educators and organisations, our action plan sets out what you can do to help drive positive change.

Cllr Jim O'Boyle

Cabinet Member Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change

Coventry's Independent Climate Change Board

I am proud to chair Coventry's Independent Climate Change Board, which I have done since its inception in 2021. We have seen the partnership grow from strength to strength during that short time. The board represents a huge breadth of expertise and passion for making a difference in Coventry, and a contribution to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

We represent a diverse group of almost thirty organisations that represent industry, public bodies, charities and voluntary groups all of whom have a part to play in tackling climate change. All members of the board and the organisations they represent share the same aims with regard to harnessing the opportunities of new technologies and ways of thinking that will impact positively on the climate crisis.

The Board and its Pathway Groups have been instrumental in helping to shape Coventry's Climate Change Strategy, which is an important step for the city in its efforts to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

We will help shape the city's vision and make key recommendations for how we can improve the environment in Coventry, and play our part in the global fight against the adverse effects of climate change.

We are committed to supporting the Council to implement the Strategy and Action Plan, which will endeavour to create new opportunities for all of the city, as well as engaging all our residents and organisations.

Taking bold action will help create a better future for everyone, and the Board and Pathway Groups will continue to have a key role in ensuring its success. I am most grateful to the members of the board for their work and to the organisations they represent.

Margot James

Former Executive Chair of WMG, responsible for the strategic direction and development of WMG, at the University of Warwick.

Prior to joining WMG Margot served as Minister of State for Digital and the Creative Industries and Member of Parliament for Stourbridge.

Coventry's Climate Change Strategy is an important step for the city in its efforts to tackle the climate and nature emergencies, taking bold action will help create a better future for everyone

Tackling the climate and natural emergencies are arguably two of the biggest challenges we face as a city, and globally. The Council recognise the importance of our role as a leader in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change in Coventry, however we cannot do this alone so in November 2021 the Council led the development of an Independent Climate Change Board Chaired

by Margot James, with Vice Chair Cllr Jim O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change.

The Board will oversee implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan, as well as continue to generate new ideas and opportunities, alongside establishing effective ways to engage and involve residents and organisations.



Figure 1 – The UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015)

The Board and this Strategy will deliver against the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which provides a holistic approach to tackling the climate and natural emergencies. To do this we have adopted (and tweaked) the principles of the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives Five Development Pathways. Pathway Groups are working as part of the Climate Change Board to identify priorities and opportunities to ensure we deliver lasting and meaningful change through the following goals which this Strategy seeks to address:



Adaptation and Resilience Pathway:

Reduce the impacts of extreme weather and climate change and enable quicker recovery through creating a more resilient city



Route to Net Zero Pathway:

Reduce carbon emissions across the city to support our transition to net zero, whilst benefiting local people and businesses through creating warmer homes, cheaper bills, cleaner air, new jobs and skills



Circular Economy Pathway:

Develop new models of production and consumption to reduce our reliance on natural resources



Nature Pathway:

Support nature recovery and create better access to green and blue space for wildlife to thrive and communities to enjoy



Fairer Green Future Pathway:

Ensuring a just transition for all

The work of the Climate Change Board and delivery of the Strategy is underpinned by a commitment to ensure a just transition. The impacts of climate change and measures taken to address it can affect communities disproportionately. All organisations represented on the Climate Change Board are committed to tackling the climate and nature emergencies in a way that helps to address existing inequalities and making sure new ones aren't created as a consequence of the action we take.

We have developed and adopted The Eight Principles for ensuring a Just Transition for Coventry:

1. We will draw on the expertise and lived experience of people living and working in affected sectors, industries, businesses and communities in planning for the future.
2. We will place our young people and the needs of more vulnerable citizens at the heart of our work toward a Just Transition.
3. We will use what we know already about the factors that impact on health and wellbeing in areas of deprivation in the city to ensure that addressing the impacts of climate change in these areas is prioritised.
4. All of our communication about the climate crisis will be clear and accessible.
5. Workers in the city will be supported in training/re-training for a greener future and the unemployed will be trained and supported to seize the job opportunities created by the newly emerging green technologies.
6. Communities will be empowered and supported to take climate and ecological action at a very local level.
7. We acknowledge that while individuals can take action, we do not all have equal power to bring about solutions.
8. We will stand in solidarity with those experiencing the worst climate and ecological impacts across the globe and recognise that our citizens are connected to and affected by these global impacts in a myriad of ways.

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The organisations involved in the Board and Pathway Groups have pledged their support to helping to deliver the city's Climate Change Strategy, which are set out below:



The Council would like to formally thank all of the organisations involved for their time, expertise and continued support.

1.0 Introduction

The climate and nature emergency are the single biggest threats facing humanity, but if tackled positively provides a huge opportunity to create a better future for people and the planet

- 1.1** Climate change is not a problem of the future, it is happening now. Temperatures are rising faster than any time since the Ice Age, and we are experiencing more seasonal fluctuation and extreme weather events. In Coventry we have experienced a number of flood incidents this year as a result of periods of intensive rainfall which led to flooding and damage to a significant number of properties, as well as disrupting the road and bus network. Human activity, which includes our dependency on fossil fuels and natural resources is driving up food and energy bills, creating water shortages, rising insurance premiums and worsening air quality which impacts on public health. It has also had a devastating impact on our natural environment, contributing to the rapid decline of species and depletion of habitats – which has resulted in 1 in 6 species in the UK being at risk of extinction.
- 1.2** Over 80% of respondents to the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy consultation told us they are 'concerned' or 'very concerned' about climate change. Many respondents told us the most important aspect of tackling climate change is to ensure a positive future for the next generation.
- 1.3** Whilst the challenges are significant, tackling them can bring about positive change and benefits for everyone, helping to address existing inequalities and improve the quality of life for all. This Strategy sets out just how factors such as economic growth, energy security, environmental protection and addressing climate change can be complementary and benefit us all.
- 1.4** There is already a huge amount happening in Coventry to tackle climate change:
- We have created a UK-first Strategic Energy Partnership with E.ON to help us decarbonise our city developing a 15 year programme which supports our net zero ambitions
 - We are developing Greenpower Park. With West Midlands Gigafactory as its anchor tenant, it will foster world-leading collaborations between industry, major academic institutions and other stakeholders to drive the UK's ambitions in leading the transition to a cleaner, more sustainable energy future
 - We are pioneering Coventry Very Light Rail, a net zero affordable battery powered tram system which will not only help to reduce carbon emissions but provide a comfortable hassle-free means of travel as an alternative to the car
 - Coventry will be the UK's first Electric Bus City by 2025 and we have the largest number of electric car charging points outside of London
 - We have launched a state-of-the-art Materials Recycling Facility 'Sherbourne Resource Park', the first of its kind in the UK, to support a growing circular economy
 - We are working with the Wildlife Trust, Severn Trent and the Environment Agency in opening up the river Sherbourne, providing benefits to nature and local communities
- 1.5** Whilst good progress has been made, we need to go much further. The Strategy has been developed by the city's Climate Change team, with input from other key service areas across the Council as well as from the city's Independent Climate Change Board and pathway groups, which have given invaluable expertise to shape our collective vision for tackling climate change in Coventry. The Strategy also reflects feedback from public consultation undertaken last year. A Net Zero Routemap has been developed for Coventry, which has also played a key part in helping to develop priority areas for action.

1.6 The Strategy provides a foundation for how we will work with partners, businesses, organisations and communities to address climate change. It recognises that the Council has a role as leader and enabler but recognises that we can't do this alone and citywide action is needed. The accompanying

Climate Change Action Plan sets out how the Strategy will be delivered and how success will be measured, this is intended to be a living document that will grow as new opportunities arise. Whilst the list of actions is extensive, a summary of the highest priority actions is tabled below:

Workstream/ Activity	Status	Delivery Organisation	Possible Partners	Delivery timescales
Adaptation & Resilience				
Coventry Climate Adaptation & Resilience Plan including detailed citywide risk assessment and action plan.	Already underway Plan has been developed and is being finalised	Coventry City Council	Climate Change Board Adaptation & Resilience Pathway Group (including Environment Agency and Severn Trent), WMCA, Defra, Met Office, Stakeholders across the city; Consultant support from CAG consulting, Sustainability West Midlands and Slingshot Solutions	Plan to be published 2024/25
Delivery of practical measures to support climate resilience Includes a network of sustainable urban drainage across the city, alongside green and blue space enhancements including rain gardens and river de-culverting.	Already Underway including Palmer Lane de-culverting and citywide sustainable urban drainage schemes	Coventry City Council	Climate Change Board Adaptation & Resilience Pathway Group including Severn Trent & Environment Agency; Nature Based Pathway Group inc Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Canal and Rivers Trust; Developers; WMCA.	2024–2030+
Nature				
Increase the amount of land used for nature conservation in Coventry Deliver the city's Local Nature Recovery Strategy through development of a network of green space & nature-based interventions to support nature recovery and improve access to nature	Early-stage development Local Nature Recovery Strategy is underway, being led by WMCA, interventions are being developed alongside this	Coventry City Council	Nature Based Pathway Group including Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency and Canal and Rivers Trust. Developers	Local Nature Recovery Strategy published 2025 Delivery of interventions 2024–2030+
Delivery of the city's Urban Forestry Strategy, planting 360,000 trees across the city – particularly targeting areas where there is less canopy coverage, including a mixture of street trees and woodland creation.	Already underway	Coventry City Council	Investors, landowners, local businesses, communities and individuals	2022–2032

Workstream/ Activity	Status	Delivery Organisation	Possible Partners	Delivery timescales
Route to Net Zero				
Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP) between CCC and EON, which is focusing on delivery of decarbonisation projects.	Already underway	Strategic Energy Partnership	Housing Associations, Electric Vehicle Charging Providers, Universities, other utility providers	2023–2038+
Increase citywide renewable energy generation and resilience of supply – this will require development of projects including ground-mounted solar farms, solar panels on rooftops and battery storage	Already underway	Council Coventry City Council	Strategic Energy Partnership, public and private sectors, businesses, residents	2024–2030+
Improve the energy efficiency and quality of the city's social housing stock	Already underway to date funding has been secured to retrofit over 2000 social homes, work ongoing to scale this	Coventry City Council & Citizen	Citizen Housing, Orbit, Midland Heart, Strategic Energy Partnership	2022–2030+
Support increase in retrofit of privately owned properties, including private rented below EPC C (approx. 100,000 homes)	Already underway Delivery of grant programmes which support retrofit measures for privately owned properties, alongside developing opportunities for green finance products to make retrofit more affordable for homeowners.	Coventry City Council	Homeowners, landlord associations, Strategic Energy Partnership, banks and building societies, universities	2024–2030+
Develop the city's first net zero neighbourhood which would also include wider net zero benefits (Inc. economies of scale with retrofit)	Early development Funding has been secured to develop initial plan	Coventry City Council	West Midlands Combined Authority, Strategic Energy Partnership, Local community	2024–2026
Delivery of the first Very Light Rail route in Coventry. This includes delivery of the initial city-centre based demonstrator route which will serve as a pilot, and if successful development of the first passenger route	In development Funding has been secured to start work on city demonstrator route in 2026	Coventry City Council	DfT, Transport for West Midlands, WMG and CVLR consortium	2026–2030+
Electrification of the city's bus fleet	Already Underway 140 Electric buses already delivered, with renewable EV charging infrastructure	Coventry City Council, National Express & Stagecoach	TfWM, DfT	2021–2025

Workstream/ Activity	Status	Delivery Organisation	Possible Partners	Delivery timescales
Continue to improve the walking and cycling infrastructure – this includes improved routes and better connectivity, cycle hire and storage and development of citywide walking and cycling improvement plan, alongside training provision	Already Underway Over 9km segregated cycleways delivered to date and further works underway; WM Cycle Hire scheme has expanded across city Installation of more cycle storage is continuing Cycle training for children and adults available	Coventry City Council	Transport for West Midlands, Sustrans, Beryl Bikes	2020–2030+
Development of mobility hubs across the city , providing secure electric charging for cars and e-bikes, with potential to power via renewable energy and supporting accessible charging solutions	Early development Funding secured and work underway to develop business cases for sites	Coventry City Council	Charge point providers, Transport for West Midlands	2025–2026
LED Upgrade – PFI Street Lighting. investing in energy efficient Street lighting LED technology, whilst giving a better quality of light and achieving a significant saving on energy consumption and carbon reduction (1200 tonnes per year).	Early development Business case developed Cabinet decision due 2024/25	Coventry City Council	Balfour Beatty	2025–2027
Commercial property energy efficiency improvements (MEES) – to find a means to enable us to make energy efficiency improvements to property that we own but do not pay the bills for	Already underway	Coventry City Council	Strategic Energy Partnership Charities Tenants Communities	2024–2030+
Develop strategy and action plan for decarbonisation of the Coventry Education Estate toward Net Zero by 2050. To meet or exceed the interim targets of 50% reduction by 2032 and 75% reduction by 2037 from a 2017 baseline.	Already underway Work underway to decarbonise schools using grant funding but needs to be significantly scaled up	Coventry City Council	All schools and educational institutions across Coventry, Department for Education, Strategic Energy Partnership other partners who can support with training and raising awareness	2024–2030+

Workstream/ Activity	Status	Delivery Organisation	Possible Partners	Delivery timescales
Circular Economy				
Increase household recycling through carrying out a number of targeted campaigns and behavioural change projects	Not yet commenced	Coventry City Council	Sherbourne Resource Park, WMCA, neighbouring authorities	2025–2030+
Increase the range of materials that can be recycled through household waste to boost citywide recycling rates and contribute to increasing the number of markets that recycled materials supply	Already underway Sherbourne Resource Park supports expanded range of recyclables & more high quality sorting	Coventry City Council	Sherbourne Resource Park, WMCA, neighbouring authorities, all households	2023–2030+
Coventry Connects digital recycling project involves donation of surplus digital equipment in the city which is refurbished and donated to communities and individuals to tackle digital exclusion and keep electronic waste out of landfill.	Already underway Over 3000 devices donated to date and external funding secured	Coventry City Council	WMG, local businesses and organisations, community organisations, voluntary organisations, charities	2023–2025 with plans to extend
Establishment of a construction waste re-use hub to reduce construction waste in Coventry (approx. 60% of total waste) and provide lower cost materials to traders and householders.	Early development	Coventry City Council	WMCA, social enterprises, construction sector	2025–2029+
Greenpower Park development of the West Midlands Gigafactory and UK Centre of Electrification to increase capacity and technology in battery manufacturing and recycling, providing up to 6000 local green jobs	In development Work ongoing to secure investors and tenants Infrastructure funding secured	Coventry City Council & Coventry Airport Ltd	Alliance group – West Midlands Combined Authority, Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council, Rugby Council, Warwick Manufacturing Group at University of Warwick, Coventry University and the Manufacturing Technology Centre.	2021–2030+

Workstream/ Activity	Status	Delivery Organisation	Possible Partners	Delivery timescales
Just Transition				
Development of a Just Transition Plan for Coventry – setting out key objectives and a framework for how a just transition in the city will be delivered	Early development	Coventry City Council	Fairer Green Future Pathway Group, local businesses and communities	2024–2026
Develop a Green Skills Roadmap for Coventry , to understand green skills gaps and training requirements, alongside sectors that will need to transition to support move to net zero	Early Development	Coventry City Council	Partners from public and private sectors, alongside education and training providers, WMCA	2024–2025
Delivery of Coventry's Air Quality Action Plan – measures include infrastructure improvements, greening and active travel measures, alongside targeted campaigns to encourage behaviour change	Already underway Work already undertaken includes cycleways and road improvements	Coventry City Council	WMCA, Defra	2020–2030+
Coventry Grows Programme pilot to create a network of community growing sites across the city to support food growing and wildlife, alongside improving food security.	Early development	Coventry City Council	E.ON, Grapevine, local businesses, landowners, Garden Organic, Team Springboard, Food Union, Coventry Growthers, Coventry Urban Eden, Coventry Allotments, Coventry University and other community groups	2025–2026+
Council Action				
Developing the Climate Change Team and wider Environmental and Energy Services to ensure there is appropriate resource , expertise and capacity and co-ordination within the organisation and build external support with partners to address any gaps	Already underway	Coventry City Council	Climate Change Board potential for secondments between partner organisations to build knowledge and capacity; Strategic Energy Partnership has provided extra resource	2024–2025
Strengthen Local Planning Policy to place greater requirements and expectations upon developers for sustainable development in Coventry to support delivery of the Climate Change Strategy	Already underway	Coventry City Council	Developers	2025–2041

2.0 Our Approach

Tackling climate change is an integral part of our One Coventry Plan

In 2022 the Council launched its One Coventry Plan.

Three key priority areas were identified: based on feedback from citizens on issues more important to them:



2.1 The Climate Change Strategy is the Council's response to how it will tackle the causes and consequences of climate change, but it plays a significant role in assisting the delivery of all three goals.

Increase Economic Prosperity

- 2.2** The UK's Climate Change Committee estimates that the UK will need to invest £1.4 trillion between 2020 to 2050 to reach net zero. Reaching net zero will require significant changes right across the economy.
- 2.3** The UK's green economy grew by 9% in 2022–23, in contrast to 0.1% of the economy overall. The boom in green companies supported 765,000 jobs and production of £74bn in goods and services (source: Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit and Confederation of British Industry, 2024). Green jobs are on average better paid, more productive and hotspots of activity are taking place in some of the most deprived parts of the country, helping to improve living standards. Estimates suggest that growth in the green economy could grow to between 1.4 and 2.5 million jobs in total in the UK, but investment will be needed to develop skills and maximise opportunities for local people. Taking action to create a more climate resilient city will help to safeguard areas from economic loss.

2.4 Energy security is key to supporting economic growth. More renewable, locally generated energy supply will provide more resilient and lower cost energy and help to unlock barriers to development to ensure Coventry is a city that businesses want to invest in.

Tackling Inequalities

- 2.5** The green economy presents a significant opportunity for local people and businesses, however we must ensure that workers in 'carbon-heavy' industries don't get left behind in the shift to green jobs and skills. We also must ensure we provide the right training and skills to help local people access new green jobs.
- 2.6** There are a growing number of people in Coventry are living in food and fuel poverty. It is vital that as we strive to address this in a fair and just way, helping to lift people out of poverty, we ensure that those on the lowest incomes are not made worse off by any actions taken to address climate change.
- 2.7** People living in deprived neighbourhoods suffer higher levels of pollution and are more likely to suffer from respiratory illnesses. An inability to afford better insulation results in fuel poverty and exacerbates health conditions as well as increasing risk of suffering a range of long-term health conditions including cardio-vascular disease,

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respiratory illness, hypothermia and impacts on mental health. Over 22% of Coventry households are reported to be in fuel poverty. Retrofitting homes will directly address this, creating warmer homes and lower bills. Grant programmes target the most vulnerable households who can't afford to pay for these measures, to ensure those that most need support benefit.

- 2.8 20% of Coventry residents are living in food poverty. There is a rising number of food banks and lack of access to green space particularly in our most deprived areas which could be used for food growing. This is something the Strategy seeks to address through developing community growing sites, getting more out of our allotments and linking in with organisations such as the Coventry Food Network and local food banks.
- 2.9 A lack of accessibility to transport and digital connectivity can contribute to social exclusion. Compared to many other cities, Coventry has a higher percentage of the population that do not have access to a car. This places increasing importance on public

transport, walking and cycling to give access to opportunities. Improvements to our active travel network and new fleet of electric buses will be of great benefit to those who do not have access to a car. The Council is also working with partners to recycle and donate electronic equipment and offer training to combat digital exclusion.

- 2.10 Coventry is a proud diverse city, made up of communities of many different ethnic backgrounds, with over 100 languages spoken. Language could act as a barrier when accessing and having an awareness of services available, so it is important that we find ways of reaching all communities, allowing people to take positive action and ensuring they have access to key services and information relating to changes we are making in the city. This includes delivering information in different formats and languages and working with community leaders and faith groups to help cascade information.

Tackling Climate Change through the Five Pathways

3.0 Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience

Goal:

Reduce the impacts of extreme weather and climate change and enable quicker recovery through creating a more resilient city

Our Changing Weather Patterns

- 3.1 2023 was the world's warmest year on record and Europe is warming at twice the global rate, with record breaking temperatures in England reaching 40o C last summer which are set to become more common. The impacts of the changing climate are already being felt in many parts of the world, there has been an increase in droughts and famine, forest fires, tornadoes, hurricanes and major floods causing a significant loss of life, environmental and economic damage. Whilst we aim to limit global warming to 1.5o C, the evidence shows that we must be prepared for warming up to 4o C (UK Climate Risk Assessment).

- 3.2 Coventry is likely to experience warmer wetter winters, hotter drier summers and more intense rainfall and storms. During the 20th century the average annual temperature for the West Midlands rose by 0.6o C, the growing season lengthened by 30 days and our summers now are 37% drier on average than they were in 1995. Figure 2 below highlights an increasing frequency of rising temperatures over the last few decades.

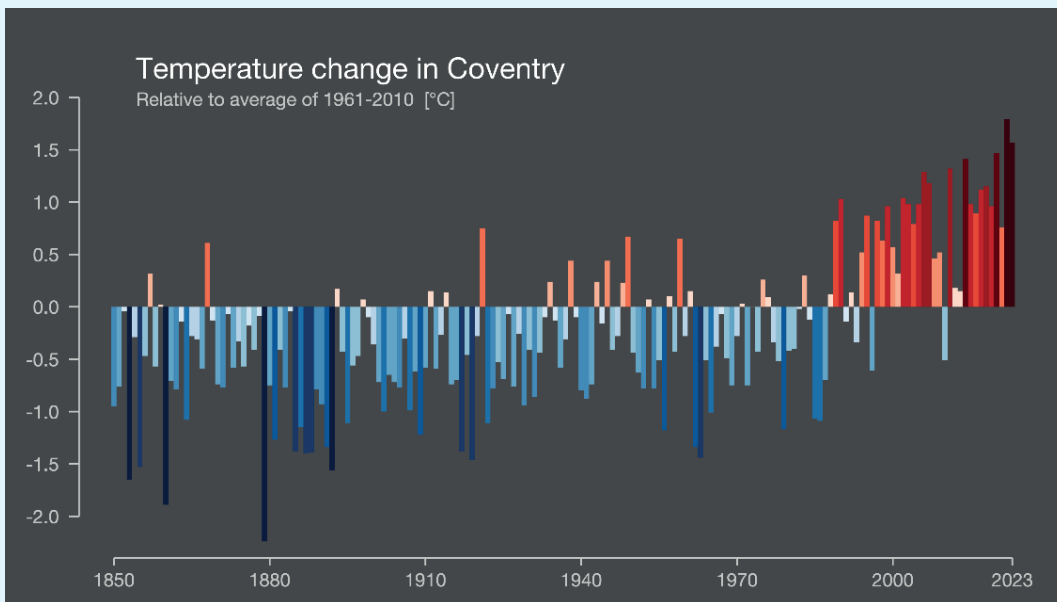


Figure 2 – How Temperature (°C) has changed in Coventry from 1850 – 2023 (Institute for Environmental Analytics, 2023)

3.3 The changes in weather patterns over the last 30 years are highlighted below. This illustrates that temperatures have risen across the whole country, and whilst some areas have become drier overall the majority of the country has become wetter.

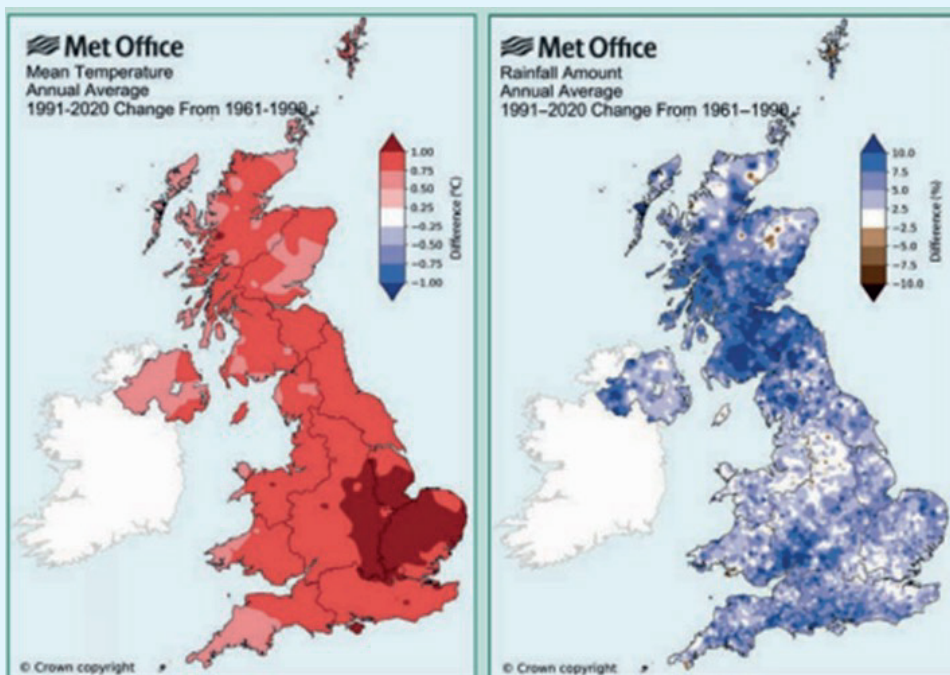


Figure 3 – UK Temperature and Rainfall Changes from 1991-2020, compared to a baseline from 1961-1990 (Met Office, 2020)

3.4 The result of these changes means that 10,560 properties in the city are currently identified at risk of flooding, which can have devastating impacts for communities and businesses and poses a risk of rising insurance premiums. 69 neighbourhoods within Coventry are considered high-risk in terms of vulnerability to periods of extreme heat, posing a serious risk to public health. We can also expect to see more storms and stronger winds, which

are a risk to property and trees. We are also vulnerable to the impacts of climate extremes experienced in other parts of the world, which could cause food and water shortages and drive prices up. Closer to home, periods of drought and pressure on our water supply infrastructure could threaten our drinking water supply which could have significant public health impacts.

- 3.5 The impacts of climate change could affect many areas of our lives, ranging from health, infrastructure, the environment and economy and are likely to most severely impact the most vulnerable in society. This is an important consideration for the wider work the city needs to undertake to address inequalities and deliver a 'Just Transition' and will help to inform where priority action takes place.
- 3.6 Future projections of the impact of climate change on our weather patterns have been developed by scientists looking at concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which directly affect temperature and weather systems. The following sections explore the recent trends and projected changes to our weather systems and likely local impacts, alongside actions we can take to mitigate against them.

Rainfall and Flood Risk

- 3.7 The West Midlands Climate Change Adaptation Plan identifies areas of flood risk for the region, the East of Coventry is shown to be a high-risk area for vulnerability to flooding and without intervention flooding incidents will increase. We know that prolonged periods of heavy rainfall are likely to become more frequent, which will put more parts of the city at risk without interventions being put in place to increase resilience.

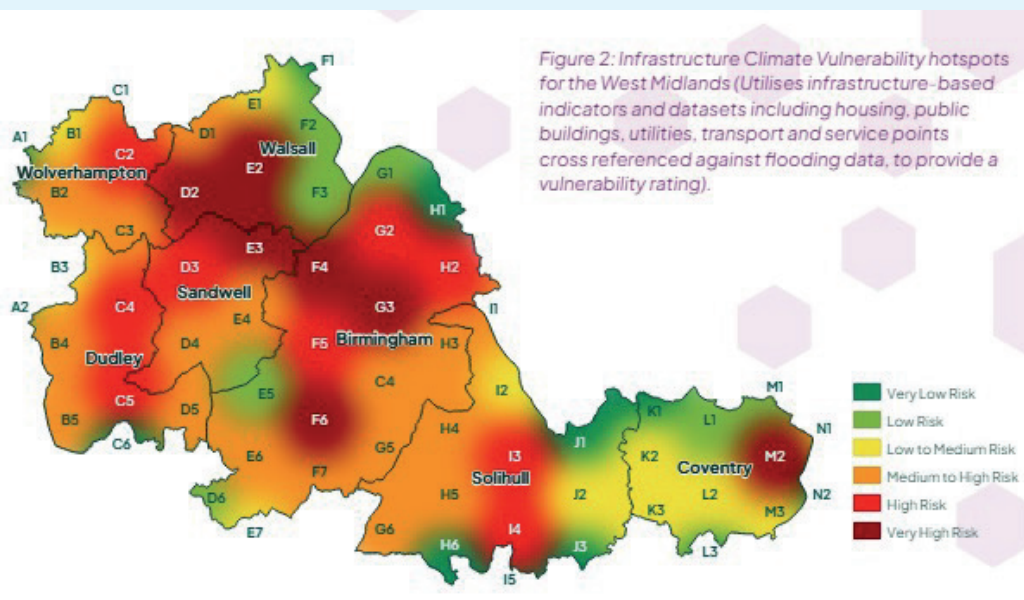


Figure 4 – Infrastructure Climate Vulnerability hotspots for the West Midlands (West Midlands Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2021–2026)

- 3.8 There are two main types of flooding with different levels of risk and impacts attached to them. Fluvial flooding is when a river overflows onto the floodplain following periods of sustained or intense rainfall. Surface water flooding occurs when the sewer and road drainage system is unable to cope with the high volumes of water from intense or prolonged rainfall.
- 3.9 The two main rivers that feed Coventry, the Sherbourne and Sowe have what is described as 'flashy' catchments, meaning these show a rapid response to rainfall. Flooding incidents are likely to arise with little warning, sometimes as little as 30 minutes resulting in limited time to implement emergency

measures and flood defences. Fortunately, the volumes of water involved are considerably less than long regional rivers so the flooding incident will be easier to recover from.

- 3.10 Coventry has an obligation to meet the goals of the Government's River basin management plans (2022) to protect and improve the quality of the water environment and to ensure consistency with the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England. The city has responded to this through the Coventry Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2022).

3.11 Flooding in urban areas like Coventry has been made worse by decades of development, paving over permeable surfaces and loss of green space, removing an important source of natural filtration which slows water entering the drainage network. The Council and its partners are working to take steps to address this, which includes collaboration with Severn Trent on flow separation projects to reduce the storm water in combined sewers with the use of retrofit sustainable urban drainage systems within highways, public realm and pocket parks throughout the city to help reduce sewage spills into Coventry's rivers.

3.12 There are aspirations to create a network of new natural green spaces throughout the city to support sustainable urban drainage and climate resilience alongside boosting biodiversity. Nature-based engineering solutions such as rain gardens and bio-swales can be delivered across neighbourhoods and involve creating shallow areas of ground

with soft landscaping that collect water run-off from surrounding areas. They provide a method of capturing rain and surface water and slowing down water run-off, filtering the water and utilising it to water plants and trees in the process. This reduces the strain on existing drainage infrastructure and the risk of surface water flooding by absorbing and slowing the flow of water. Detention basins are larger scale interventions that can serve as mini-wetland areas in urban environments, which are great for attracting wildlife.

Heat and Drought

3.13 The following graph illustrates the local projections for rising summer average temperature from the Meteorological Office. There is also an identified trend of more frequent and hotter summer heatwaves, which coupled as increased intensity of rainfall but overall reduced level of rain across the year presents significant risks to our city.

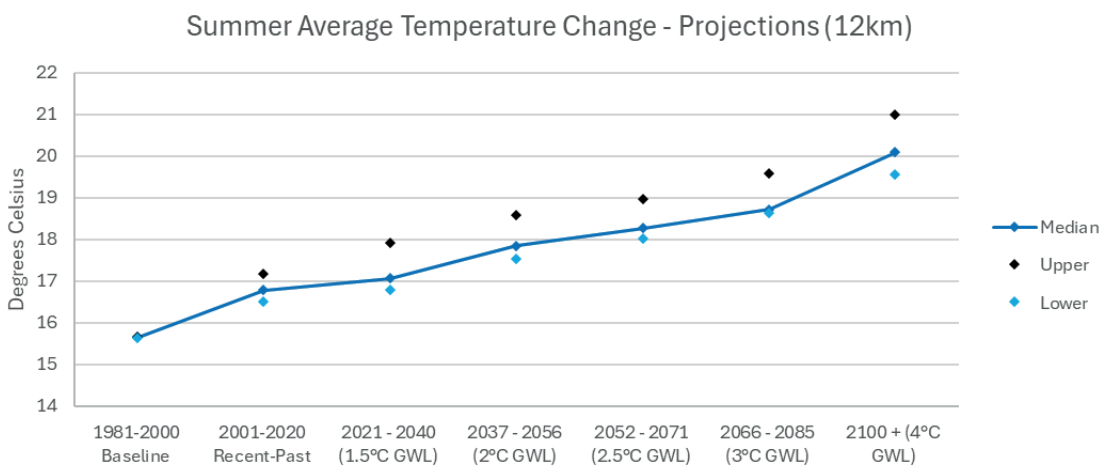


Figure 5 – Temperature change projections and ranges from 1981 to 2100 (Met Office)

3.14 We know that the density of concrete buildings and road surfaces in cities are absorbing and radiating heat creating what is referred to as an Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect where the city is considerably hotter than the surrounding countryside. The figure 6 below shows a marked difference in temperature within the city centre in comparison to the surrounding areas.

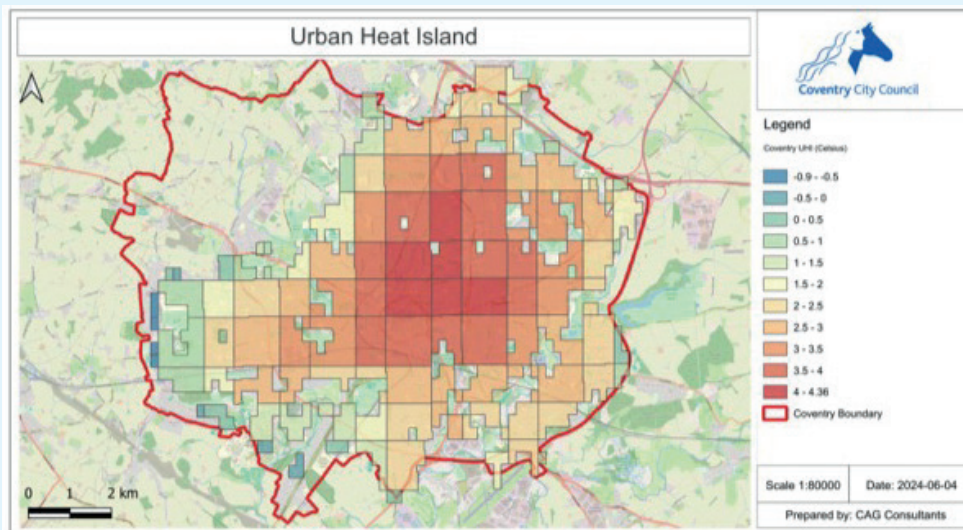


Figure 6 – Heat map of Coventry (CAG Consultants, 2024)

3.15 Coventry ranks 14th out of all English authorities for the number of neighbourhoods deemed high-risk from extreme heat. A University of Manchester Study (2022) identified 69 neighbourhoods across the city as most vulnerable to extreme heat that should be prioritised for climate change adaptation. Older people and young children fall into the most high-risk groups for heatwaves, but other factors including the amount of nearby green space, type of housing, access to health facilities and transport can also impact on the vulnerability of local communities. The health impacts of hotter periods could be exacerbated by water shortages, Coventry is in part of the country that is classed as seriously water stressed, adding to our risk exposure – particularly the impact on drinking water supply. We must involve communities in planning for climate change adaptation, prioritising those areas identified as most vulnerable to the impacts.

The role of nature in adaptation

3.16 Unpredictable seasons and extreme weather events are pushing UK wildlife out of sync, causing chaos for our natural ecosystems and contributing to wildlife decline. Prioritising nature-based interventions is important not only to create a more resilient city, but also to support nature recovery.

3.17 The use of natural vegetation and planting of trees helps to cool urban areas and reduce flood risk. This could include an ecologically sensitive approach through Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes (SUDs), with measures such as rain gardens and wetlands to hold water and slow the rate of flow into drains and sewers. This provides a natural filter that assists the improvement of water quality, reduces flood risk as well as supports habitats for wildlife. Increasing tree cover and green spaces across the city will have a significant impact in helping to create more attractive and climate resilient neighbourhoods, particularly in areas deemed most vulnerable.

3.18 We also need to consider more drought-resistant planting and tree species that can cope with hotter temperatures. This is going to be an increasingly difficult challenge, and we will need to ensure that new trees and plants are more climate resilient and consider tree pit designs and watering regimes to ensure they thrive.

3.19 Green roofs and living walls not only make buildings interesting and attractive but help to insulate buildings in winter and keep them cool in summer. Living walls can reduce the energy needed for air conditioning systems by as much as 33% as well as absorbing gaseous pollutants and buffering sound. We are already rolling these out in Coventry (figure 7) and are seeking to deliver more.



Figure 7 – Living Wall, Pepper Lane Coventry (2024)

Impacts upon infrastructure

- 3.20** The changing climate is impacting on our key infrastructure. Many of the city's 143,000 homes are not designed to cope with more extreme temperatures. We will need to work with communities to plan for this change and empower them to adapt their homes whenever possible. This is also a key concern for new developments, ensuring that homes are designed and built to be fit for the future which will be addressed by the Local Plan Review.
- 3.21** Climate change is already impacting on our transport network, with an increase in potholes and road failures as a result of extreme temperatures and heavier rainfall. To mitigate this, we need to consider the types of road surfacing used in the future which will be capable of withstanding increased temperature levels. Highways England is already adopting French standards where their road surfaces are subjected to higher surface temperatures. We are also used to seeing UK rail services impacted by extreme weather events, resulting in speed restrictions and cancellation of services. This is a key issue that Network Rail are addressing to create a more resilient rail network of the future (Climate change adaptation – Network Rail).

- 3.22** Extreme temperatures will put a strain on the city's digital infrastructure, which has the ability to significantly impact the delivery of essential services and business. Data Centres are normally designed to operate at upper temperatures from 35 to 38°C. They will need to be designed to adapt to cope with considerably higher temperatures.
- 3.23** Climate change also threatens our energy and water infrastructure, which could have big impacts on us all if outages occur. It's important that we have emergency systems in place to mitigate this. A local resilient energy supply will help to reduce our risk exposure, which could include more local renewables and energy stored in batteries to provide supply to meet demand and critical back up supply if national infrastructure fails.

Impacts upon health

- 3.24** Climatic impacts upon food production both locally and globally are affecting the availability and cost of fresh produce, with implications to health and wellbeing particularly for those living on lower incomes. There are particular risks around depletion of soil nutrient quality for growing as well as the working conditions for people and the safe storage of food in hotter temperatures. The need for local food production, such as community food growing initiatives will become increasingly important and to help us become more resilient as a city.
- 3.25** Rising temperatures will require adaptation of public buildings and workplaces to be equipped to deal with more extreme heat. This will be particularly important for more vulnerable members of the community, and require prioritisation of schools, NHS facilities and care homes. This is a chance to improve the quality of facilities across the city, as well as increase green spaces and trees, particularly for those areas identified as most at risk.
- 3.26** Temperature and humidity have a significant effect upon the incidence of gaseous pollutants (e.g. Nitrous Oxides and ground level Ozone) and their impact upon human health, particularly people who suffer from respiratory diseases like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). We will need smart systems in place to alert people who have such conditions by issuing warnings when the levels of pollutants exceed

certain levels where it may be safer for them to remain indoors. This is something that could be developed as part of our Smart City approach to increase use of on-street smart sensors such as on lighting columns, to provide real-time data on air quality.

3.27 Front line staff delivering services will be key to supporting the most vulnerable and training for these staff is really important as they may need to change the way they deliver a service to respond to extreme weather events.

3.28 The Government's Health Effects of Climate Change (HECC) Report in 2023 identifies projected climate change having a significantly increased risk to human health and increase vector-borne diseases (such as biting insects, mosquitos, midges, gnats, sand flies and ticks). This will result in the incidence of diseases currently known to tropical areas notably Dengue Fever and Zika Virus. This requires increased awareness amongst health practitioners and the public to look out for symptoms.

Impacts upon the Economy

3.29 On our current trajectory, the London School of Economics estimates the total cost of climate change damages to increase from the present 1.1% of GDP to 3.3% by 2050 and 7.4% by 2100.

3.30 The growing risks from climate change are likely to increase the costs of insurance premiums Insurance companies are likely to introduce certain protective measures for properties deemed at risk, all of which will in turn have a cost implication.

3.31 Climate change could impact on productivity, with people going off sick as a consequence of climate change or being delayed or prevented from getting to work as a result of disruption to transport services. This has the potential to generate significant economic losses and exacerbate the UK's existing challenges around productivity. To tackle this, we need to be more flexible in our ways of working, as well as adapting workplace environments to increase resilience.

3.32 There is a clear 'invest to save' case which will require significant investment to protect essential utilities e.g. water supply, energy and transport infrastructure from the impact of extreme climatic events or face higher costs down the line dealing with the impacts of lack of preparedness. This will require detailed planned priorities for investment, ensuring interventions respond to the short-, medium- and longer-term risks.

Planning for Climate Change Adaptation

3.33 We need to take steps to adapt to climate change and ensure communities, infrastructure and livelihoods aren't disrupted by increasingly frequent and severe shocks and prioritise action to ensure our approach involves and supports the city's most vulnerable communities in planning for their future. The Council will play a leading role in mobilising partner agencies and organisations in the development of an Adaptation and Resilience Plan for the city, alongside working with communities so that they are better prepared for events that cannot be prevented so they recover quicker. Our planning approach will aim to build back better, wherever possible.

3.34 As part of increasing our resilience we need to better understand our exposure to short, medium and long-term climate risks and identify practical measures to addressing them. We also need to be clear on the costs of being underprepared, as well as identifying the opportunities taking action presents to improve lives, deliver more robust infrastructure and help promote nature recovery.

3.35 West Midlands Combined Authority has already carried out a high-level study West Midlands Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2021–2026, which gives a useful regional overview. The developing Coventry Adaptation and Resilience Plan will build a better understanding of more localised risks and will develop a detailed action plan to support the city's long-term planning approach and complement the existing City Emergency Plan.

3.36 There are also challenges around planning policy, including land management and building design for new developments, as well as consideration for how existing buildings will need to be retrofitted. This was seen as lowest priority in the feedback to the draft Climate Change Strategy which could be due to a lack of understanding of the issues and risks, particularly as much of the work on adaptation and resilience focuses on future scenarios. There is a need to raise public awareness and to work with residents, businesses and organisations, particularly those located in areas that are the most vulnerable to the impacts.

Recommendations

3.37 Adapting to climate change and making communities more resilient is crucial in order to reduce our exposure to climate risks, and protect our communities, infrastructure and natural environment, and our economy. Recommendations for key action from the Adaptation and Resilience Pathway Group are:

- In order for Coventry to become more climate resilient there is a need for physical interventions, which could include changes to building design, materials used and nature-based solutions, alongside raising awareness of the issues and risks to ensure as a city we are more prepared to deal with incidents.
- Significant investment will be needed to support the city's efforts to adapt to climate change over time. Taking timely action in priority areas will create opportunities to improve the city for all, create more attractive neighbourhoods, healthier communities, support nature recovery and protect lives and livelihoods.
- This all needs to be brought together through the development of a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan. This will be used to underpin and influence Council policy documents going forward, including the Local Plan Review, citywide risk planning forums and embedded into operational service planning.



4.0 Route to Net Zero

Goal:

Reduce carbon emissions across the city to support our transition to net zero, whilst benefiting local people and businesses through creating warmer homes, cheaper bills, cleaner air, new jobs and skills

4.1 We have reduced our carbon emissions in Coventry by 48% (compared to 2000 levels) but have a long way to go to get to net zero. This pathway explores where we need to focus our efforts to decarbonise the city, and to ensure we maximise the benefits for and with local residents and businesses, as well as encourage investment into the city.

4.2 To better inform our priority areas for reducing emissions, the Council commissioned an independent Zero Carbon Routemap for Coventry.

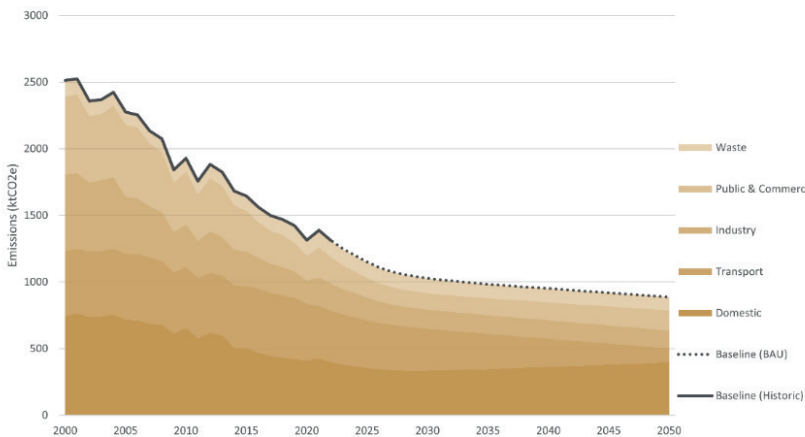


Figure 8 – Coventry's carbon footprint past, present and projected (Source: Coventry Net Zero Routemap, 2023)

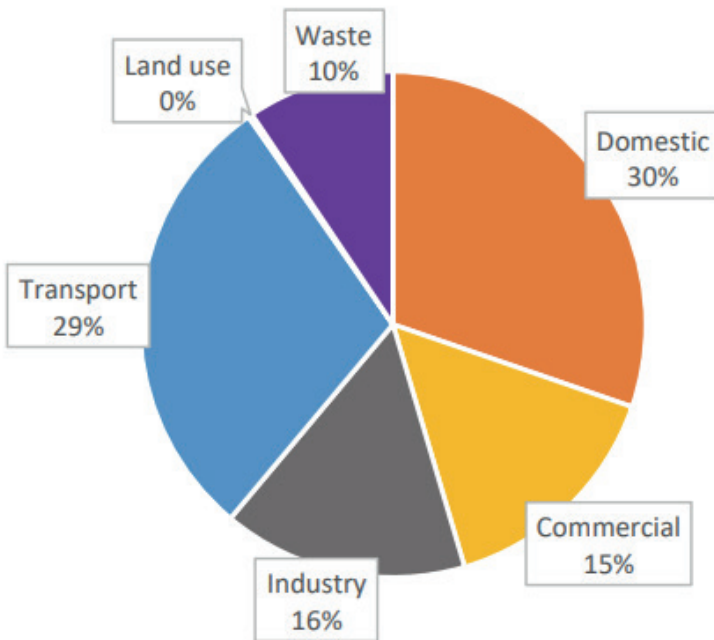


Figure 9 – Coventry's carbon footprint broken down by sector – scope 1 and 2 (Source: Coventry Net Zero Routemap, 2023)

Figure 8 shows Coventry's past, present and projected emissions. Domestic accounts for emissions from homes, whilst commercial accounts for emissions from commercial and public buildings. Figure 9 shows the current picture, broken down by sector. The Routemap tells us:

- Further reductions, assuming business as usual, will not reduce emissions in Coventry to net zero by 2050. The Routemap predicts Coventry's carbon footprint will be just 65% lower in 2050 than it was in 2000 unless action is taken.

- Homes and transport are the two biggest sources of emissions, followed by industry, commercial buildings and waste.
- An average Coventry household spends £2,813 a year on energy (inc. costs of transport based on 2023 estimates) and this is predicted to rise further.
- It estimated that citywide spend on energy in 2023 was £635m – but adopting widely available measures could save the city £327m a year and create significant new job opportunities.

Climate Action at a local, national and global level

4.3 The government's 2021 Net Zero Strategy sets out a series of policies and commitments designed to enable the UK to reach net zero by 2050. The timeline shows some of the key targets and milestones towards achieving net zero:



4.4 We are an ambitious and innovative city, and we will use this to drive action towards achieving net zero. There is already a huge amount happening in the city to reduce carbon emissions and support the aim of achieving net zero, which includes establishing a Strategic Energy Partnership.

Strategic Energy Partnership

4.5 The Council's partnership with E.ON has been established to support the city's journey to net zero, bringing together the public and private sectors to help find new ways to deliver cleaner, greener energy and help drive the local green economy that will bring jobs and skills to the city, across four key themes as set out in the partnership Strategic Business Plan:

- clean local energy
- jobs and skills
- innovation and scale
- community benefit

4.6 Social Value is an overarching principle and commitment of the partnership to ensure that through projects we improve outcomes, tackle inequalities and increase economic prosperity.

Example projects delivered in the first year include a domestic retrofit programme, roll out of more EV charges and supporting Council building decarbonisation, including schools.

4.7 A key piece of work during the partnership's first year has been the development of an energy masterplan for Coventry, which provides a strategic long term energy vision, reference point and prioritised pipeline of energy projects for the partnership to take forward. Focus will be on areas where the partnership can add most value. One of the main areas of focus will be heat decarbonisation of buildings.

4.8 There are huge potential investment opportunities in some of the larger scale projects and the related social value benefits will bring even more value into the city. Further updates on the energy masterplan, investment opportunities and related project delivery will be provided on the SEP webpages.

Homes

4.9 There are over 143,000 homes in the city, which account for approximately 30% of the city's emissions. This presents a huge opportunity to decarbonise which would lead to warmer more efficient homes, helping to reduce bills. It also provides a significant chance to grow the local economy through scaling up retrofit skills and building materials and installer supply chain capacity.

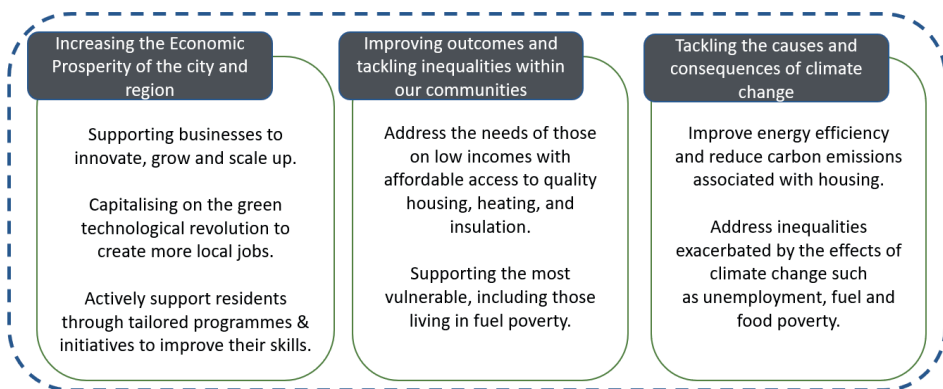


Figure 10 – Benefits of domestic retrofit on our economy, communities and climate

Scope of domestic retrofit programmes

4.10 The Routemap identified that a business-as-usual scenario will likely only reduce housing emissions by 0.2% by 2050. We are taking a proactive approach, working with partners to explore innovative solutions to this citywide challenge and have secured over £30m since 2022 to support domestic retrofit programmes in the city.

EPC	Number of Coventry Properties
A	137
B	7,620
C	36,781
D	75,560
E	20,336
F	2,111
G	363

Figure 11 – Overview of Energy Performance of Domestic Properties in Coventry. The data is from the 'Pathways' tool (Party Project and Core Logic). Pathways is an energy model of all housing in local authority areas, and built from open source EPC data, Ordnance Survey data and LiDAR topography data. The accuracy of the EPC data is often outdated, therefore these figures are more for an illustrative estimate rather than a complete and fully accurate record. The existing EPC data covers information for around 92k properties, meaning there's also a gap of approx. 50k properties that have had to be modelled.

4.11 There are a number of programmes we are working on to support retrofit of domestic properties, however this is challenging area with some key barriers to delivery. Part of the challenge is funding, the majority of households in the city aren't entitled to any grant for home energy upgrades and the outlay costs can be expensive with long payback periods. We are working to address this through exploring opportunities for green finance products and scaling programmes to make costs more affordable for householders. Another key challenge is that residents fear

the works could be disruptive; even when there is grant available to cover the costs there can be a lack of take up. We are working hard to try and debunk some of these concerns to help residents know exactly what to expect when it comes to their home being retrofitted and help sell the benefits which are a reduction in bills and a warmer home, alongside cutting carbon emissions. We want to work closely with communities and involve the public in this information campaign.

A business-as-usual scenario includes ongoing decarbonisation of grid electricity, a continuation of the background trends that are gradually improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock in Coventry and forecast growth in housing numbers in Coventry.

4.12 We are working in partnership with Citizen Housing as part of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2. This is a fabric-first scheme, focussing on improvements to insulation, glazing etc, which will lead to the improved energy efficiency of over 2,000 Citizen properties across the city, one of the largest schemes in the country. We will continue to work with social housing providers to speed up the scale of energy efficiency improvements with the aim of improving all social housing stock to an EPC band C by 2035, and all 'fuel poor' households by 2030. Currently the Strategic Energy Partnership is delivering the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 2, improving the energy efficiency of off-gas homes across the city. We are also working to maximise investment and uptake of ECO4, an obligation placed on energy companies to invest in domestic energy efficiency.



Figure 12 – Properties retrofitted in Coventry by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2

4.13 We will also support people in privately owned and privately rented properties to improve their energy efficiency and make residents aware of programmes which they could benefit from, through our 'Home Energy and Warmth' web pages and via involving affecting communities in planning for the future. This will be with the aim of supporting those who qualify for grant funded programmes. We will also devise programmes to support those who rent privately.

4.14 The Council are also working with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to develop a Net Zero Neighbourhood (NZN) in the city. The NZN will involve working closely with the local community to address energy needs at a more local level leading to warmer homes, installation of renewables such as solar PV, more low carbon/net zero transport options, and other measures including creation of more green space and trees. This will create more attractive neighbourhoods, help to lower energy bills, reduce air pollution and make streets more resilient to climate change. The NZN aims to attract finance, which could enable us to replicate NZN's across other areas of the city.

4.15 We are committed to developing green skills in the city to help local people access new green jobs. We have established a Green Skills Subgroup, a multi-organisational public-private sector team working with business to identify skills gaps and opportunities to support the city's transition to a low carbon economy and create jobs for the future.



Case Study

Collaboration to grow skills as part of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2

Collaboration on skills has also enabled skills training in the construction sector. Using the SHDF Wave 2 multi-year funding as a catalyst, Westdale Midlands Ltd has converted their Coventry-based office and warehouse into a bespoke facility for training unemployed people from Coventry. The Academy has been in operation since April 2023 and has been a useful enabler in developing the external wall insulation (EWI) supply-chain necessary for the growing scale of work to be conducted in the coming SHDF wave. The training academy is supported by Coventry College (who run 2-week bootcamps prior to those attending the academy), Citizen housing and the Council, demonstrating real collaborative working across the city.

4.16 The Council is currently undertaking its review of the city's Local Plan, which provides the opportunity for updated policies to reduce carbon emissions from new developments. This is an important chance to set the standard for sustainable new development and promote that that new buildings in the city are built to high environmental and energy standards and won't require retrofit in the future. Recommendations for the Local Plan Review include:

- A fabric first approach, ensuring all new buildings are well insulated.
- All new homes to be powered by renewable energy where viable, which includes rooftop solar.
- We will also ensure the use of energy to create the materials in the construction of buildings is considered when balancing out refurbishments against demolition and new build, alongside exploring innovative low carbon methods of construction.

Transport

4.17 Decarbonisation of transport is another priority, accounting for 27% of emissions across the city. The Routemap identifies that under business-as-usual, transport emissions are estimated to reduce by 73% by 2050. Significant efforts are required to go further to reach net zero.

4.18 Our Transport Strategy sets out plans to bring about a fundamental change in travel behaviour. Our aim is to encourage people to travel by active travel modes and public transport wherever they can, and to use an electric vehicle if they need to travel by car. Our role is to put the infrastructure in place to make this transition as easy as possible for local people. We are doing this through introducing:

- The first all-electric bus fleet in the country, by 2025, complemented by new on-demand bus services
- Significant improvements to walking and cycling across the city, including developing a network of segregated cycle routes, supported by increased training, hire bikes and storage facilities, introducing measures to create more attractive and safer streets

- A first-of-its-kind Very Light Rail system – a new form of mass transit, similar to trams seen in other cities but with smaller, electric-powered vehicles (see figure 13)
- Better accessibility to rail, including increasing station capacity, supporting the development of new local stations and increasing the frequency of services



Figure 13 – Coventry Very Light Rail Prototype (2023)

4.19 Recognising that some journeys will still need to be made by car, the Council is also encouraging residents to switch from petrol and diesel to electric. We have installed over 2000 charge points across the city, – the largest public electric vehicle charging infrastructure outside of London. Many of the charging points are on residential streets where households don't have driveways to install private chargers. and our Electric Charging Strategy sets out a range of measures to increase EV take up, including:

- Create super charging hubs and a multi-fuel hub, service station style facilities providing rapid charging/refuelling facilities for owners of zero emission vehicles
- Encourage local businesses to switch to electric vehicles via travel planning support and rental of EV cars and vans for trial periods
- Pilot innovative methods of electric vehicle charging, including static induction (wireless) charging and dynamic charging (charging of a moving vehicle). These technologies could help to support operators of larger, higher mileage vehicles to switch to zero emission alternatives, as well as provide more accessible charging to address equalities
- Piloting new ways to help residents charge electric vehicles at home using kerbo charge gullies to safely connect home chargers to kerbs via pavements, benefitting households without driveways.

We recognise that whilst EV infrastructure is important to support an uptake in EVs, this alone won't help households who cannot afford an electric car. We need to find ways to make EVs more affordable, which will involve working with private sector providers to expand the range of car club/car sharing services available to hire, as well as boost the second-hand EV market.

Business & Industry

- 4.20** The third key sector highlighted within the Routemap relates to businesses and it identifies that under a business-as-usual scenario, industrial emissions will go down by just 35% by 2050.
- 4.21** In 2023, there were 10,335 enterprises in Coventry, the majority of which are SMEs. There are significant benefits for businesses to decarbonise, lowering bills and improving profitability and sustainability, as well as marketability.
- 4.22** We recognise the significant challenges for businesses to decarbonise and are committed to supporting businesses of all sizes across the city. The Council run webinars, events and podcasts for the Green Business Network of over 3,500 businesses in the Coventry and Warwickshire sub region and is now expanding the Network with new categories of business from a wider geographical area.
- 4.23** We are delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), Decarbonisation Net Zero programme and the Business Energy Advice Service (BEAS) programme, helping small to medium sized businesses make energy and resource efficiency improvements.
- 4.24** We also work with businesses on travel planning to encourage active travel as well as promote the use of electric vehicles. This includes helping businesses implement EV charging points and working with them to promote commuter travel plans and car sharing schemes.
- 4.25** There is also opportunity to support business and industry decarbonisation through the Strategic Energy Partnership and working in partnership with key organisations such as the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub.

Energy Generation and Security

- 4.26** As part of the city's plan to decarbonise, we need to move towards more local renewable energy generation to reduce emissions and increase the resilience of our energy supply.
- 4.27** The Council owns one of the largest district heating systems in the Midlands, the Heatline network currently provides heat from waste to power council buildings and other major buildings in the city centre. There is scope to increase the buildings it supplies to maximise benefits, such as to the new City Centre South development. If we can minimise heat loss, and encourage heat exchange between neighbours, this could lower bills across homes and businesses.
- 4.28** The Council has been involved in a pilot programme to introduce legislation for Heat Network Zoning (HNZ) in England by no later than 2025. Zones will be designated geographic areas within which heat networks are expected to offer the lowest cost means of decarbonising heat for a significant number of buildings.
- 4.29** We must also continue to explore opportunities for the roll out of more renewable energy generation across existing buildings, such as rooftop solar. We need developers to include renewables as part of new buildings too and consider new ways to store energy locally through batteries to capture energy to supply local demand.
- 4.30** This will go a significant way to providing more clean local energy, but to meet demand it is essential that the city also secures more significant sources of renewable energy supply through measures such as solar schemes and large battery storage. These will need to be balanced with land use requirements and involve close community engagement.

The Council's Estate

4.31 Significant progress has been made towards the decarbonisation of Council buildings and since 2021, over £7m of energy projects have been funded, making Council buildings greener and costing us less to run. This has included the installation of Solar PV (see figure 14) insulation, LED lighting, air source heat pumps and battery storage, amongst other measures. Over 39% of energy used in Council buildings is from renewable sources, and in 2022–23, 16% was 'locally sourced' (district heat and solar PV).



Figure 14 – Solar panels on the roof of Central Library

4.32 The Council is currently working with Balfour Beatty on a project which will see streetlights across the city upgraded to energy efficient LED lighting, which will save 1200 tonnes of carbon every year, as well as improving lighting levels and safety, as well as reducing running costs.

4.33 As well as continuing to access funding to decarbonise its estate, the Council will work to establish ways of securing finance for independent organisations occupying Council owned buildings, this will help to reduce the energy costs for tenants and reduce carbon.

Recommendations

4.34 Whilst there are major challenges for Coventry in its decarbonisation and net zero journey, the opportunities are significant. It requires a city-wide approach with the Council, residents, community groups and businesses working together to achieve a shared vision. The Strategic Energy Partnership will have an important role to play, but so will all other organisations that operate in the city.

4.35 The city needs to be bold in its action, using innovation to try new methods and leveraging investment to allow delivery at scale and pace through initiatives to support the target of reducing emissions by 68% by 2030 and 100% by 2050.

4.36 The key areas we need to focus our efforts, supported by recommendations of the Route to Net Zero Pathway are:

- Supporting all housing tenure types with retrofit (including able to pay, willing to pay and fuel poor)
- Encouraging active travel and modal shift across the city to create lower carbon journeys, involving local communities in planning for these changes
- Work with key organisations to support businesses in their net zero journey
- Link with universities, schools and colleges to increase uptake and delivery of green skills.
- Work with invested organisations in the development of renewable energy solutions in the city.

4.39 In order to support the delivery of practical interventions we will need to ensure a focus on communication and public involvement, promoting behaviour change and engagement with climate change projects across the city.

5.0 Circular Economy

Goal: Develop new models of production and consumption to reduce our reliance on natural resources

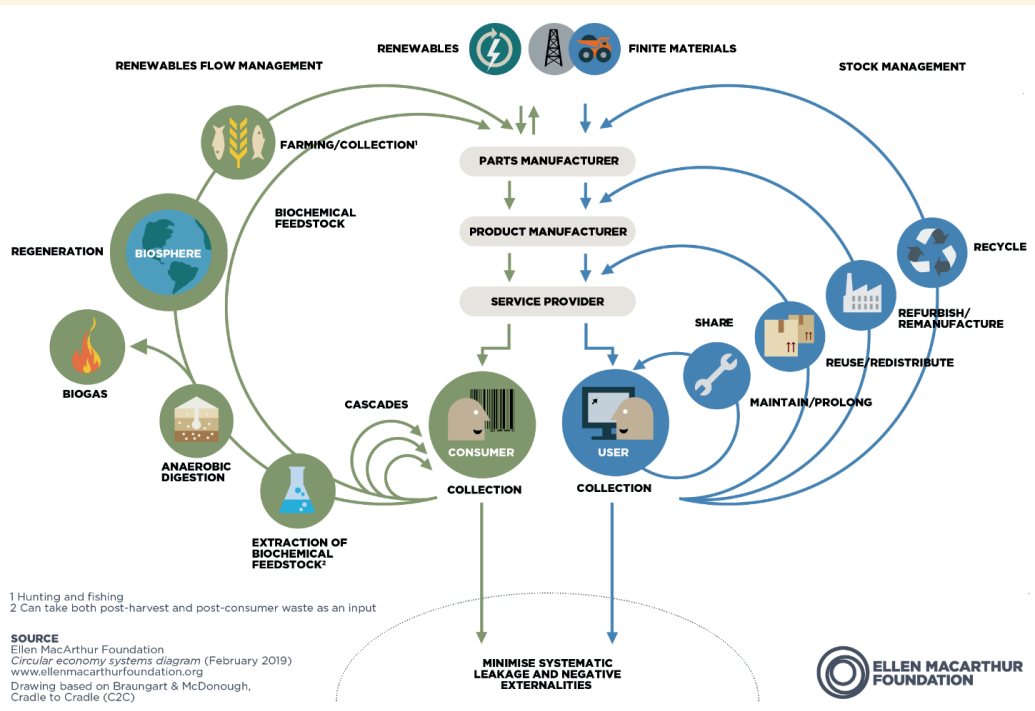


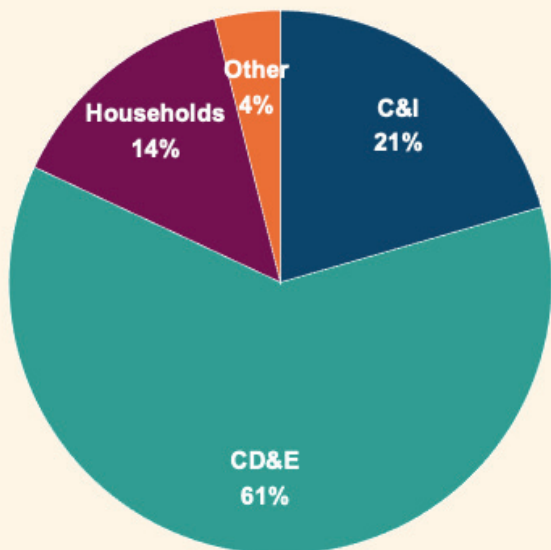
Figure 15 – Circular Economy Systems Diagram (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019)

5.1 A circular economy is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. In a circular economy, products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting. The circular economy tackles climate change and other global challenges, like biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution, by decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, as shown in figure 15. In our current economy, we take materials from the Earth, make products from them, and eventually throw them away as waste – the process is linear. In a circular economy, by contrast, we stop waste being produced in the first place.

5.2 Developing a circular economy is essential for climate change but these market changes will benefit businesses by reducing costs. A move to models involving sharing, renting and leasing as well as extending the life of products by promoting repair and re-use wherever possible will create new skills and local jobs.

5.3 Coventry has always been a centre for innovation, and we are keen to showcase new environmental technologies alongside developing new manufacturing techniques that will grow the circular economy, including:

- West Midlands Gigafactory will be located at Greenpower Park, with a focus on battery manufacturing and recycling;
- Sherbourne Resource Park, a newly opened state of the art recycling facility for household recycling;
- Finding innovative ways to re-use materials, such as recycling lighting columns as part of the proposed LED replacement scheme, reducing carbon and saving raw materials.



Key

CD&E Construction, Demolition & Excavation

C&I Commercial and Industrial

Households – domestic waste

Other – includes agricultural

Figure 16 – Waste generated in the UK, split by source (Defra, 2020)

5.4 The UK generated 191.2 million tonnes of total waste in 2020, with England responsible for 85% (162.8 million tonnes) of the UK total. As figure 16 shows, the most significant source is from construction, demolition and excavation (61%), followed by commercial and industrial waste (21%), household waste accounting for 14% of the total, whilst the 4% other waste includes sectors such as agriculture and forestry. The re-use/recycling rates for each sector varies, but there are challenges and opportunities in terms in creating a circular economy. We must transform our current system: how we manage resources, how we make and use products, and what we do with the materials afterwards. This will create a thriving circular economy that is good for people, business and the environment.

5.5 The UK Government’s Resource and Waste Strategy (2018) sets out long-term commitments and ambitions to eliminate avoidable waste by 2050, with a focus on prevention, achieved by adapting a waste hierarchy approach as shown in figure 17.

How can we develop a circular economy in Coventry?

5.7 Coventry is uniquely placed to take a leading role in showing the UK how to develop a vibrant circular economy, as home to the world’s first AI-powered Materials Recycling Facility at Sherbourne Resource Park. Opened in 2023 it uses state-of-the-art technology to process residential recycling in the most sustainable and efficient way possible. It serves eight local councils and their 1.5 million residents and is fully flexible and can respond to changes in waste patterns, policy and legislation. The use of specialist AI technology leads to higher volumes of quality materials being sold to market to support a growing circular economy, which along with the other credentials set out in figure 18 demonstrate the city is at the forefront of residential recycling facilities. This is a good example of where AI can be useful and helps to speed up processes beyond human capability. The application of AI needs to be considered more widely in the context of replacing workforce jobs as part of the work to deliver a just transition.



Figure 17 – Outline of the different circularity levels (Environmental Challenges, 2023)

Figure 18 – Sherbourne Recycling summary

5.8 Waste accounts for 10% of the city's emissions. We know that household waste alone generated 122,000 tonnes of waste in 23/24 – around 10 million bins. Only 34.2% of Coventry's household waste was recycled or composted last year, compared to 43.4% (2022, Defra) nationally. The city's recycling rate is comparable with many other similar sized cities in the UK. The majority of the remaining waste incinerated for energy

recovery, and a small minority sent to landfill. There is a huge chance for residents to play their part to divert waste for reuse, recycling and to create new products and generate new markets.

5.9 A typical breakdown of household waste is shown in figure 19. Many of the materials shown can either be re-used, recycled or composted.

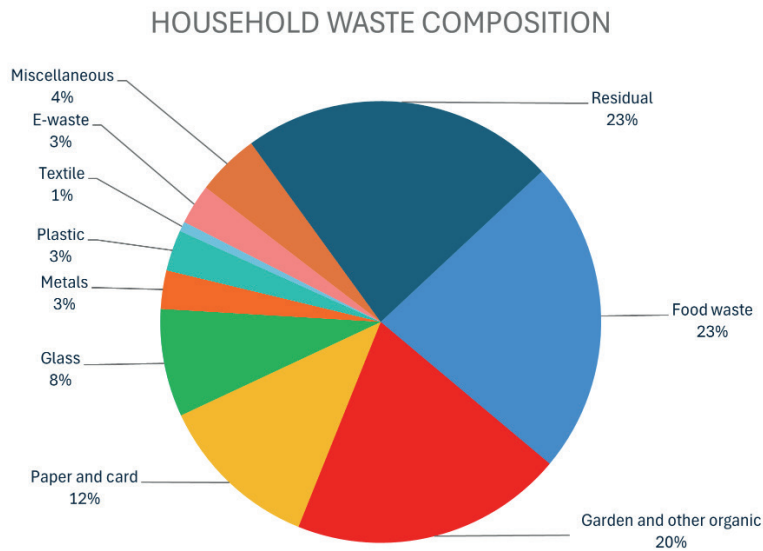


Figure 19– Breakdown of the total household waste composition in England 2022, collected by Local Authorities (Defra Statistics, 2024)

5.10 Action is needed in Coventry to increase recycling participation. The Council tries to make it as easy as possible for residents to recycle – people are not required to separate out the recyclables. But this has not translated to higher recycling rates so it's important to better understand the barriers to recycling experienced across the city and to involve the public in planning for the necessary change in behaviour.

5.11 Feedback to the consultation included requests to make recycling easier, including more clarity on what materials can be recycled or re-used and where to take it, alongside better access to household recycling facilities. People also raised the difficulty of storing recyclables in flats and high-rise apartments.

5.12 Involving communities in addressing this problem will help the Council understand the barriers to recycling and help increase the quality of recyclable materials and supply to the Materials Recycling Facility, directly helping to grow the circular economy.

Food Waste

5.13 Another important area to target is the collection of food waste. Government research on Food Waste in the UK reports that in 2021, total food waste in the UK amounted to 10.7 million tonnes. By weight, most food waste comes from households (60%), followed by farms (15%), manufacturing (13%) hospitality and food service (10%) and retail (2%). The value of the edible parts of household food waste (including waste to the sewer and home composting) in 2021 amounted to £17 billion. This is equivalent to £250 per person each year, or £1,000 for a family of four.

5.14 In Coventry just under 16% of household waste was composted last year. Government is providing funding to Local Authorities to introduce a weekly collection of food waste from households by March 2026. This will help to prevent contamination of other waste which could be usefully recycled and ensure food waste can be sent to anaerobic digestion facilities rather than landfill. This commitment is a really important step to tackle climate change as food waste releases gases including methane from its breakdown in landfill.

5.15 The volume of food waste collected in Coventry is currently low, which has been the case even before recent charges came into place for brown bin collection which potentially presents a barrier to increasing this. Evidence has shown that as people collect and separate out their food waste, they become increasingly aware of the levels of waste they produce, and they take steps to reduce their levels of waste by reducing unnecessary consumption and saving money. There are lots of resources available including cookbooks and websites with inventive recipes to use up whatever is left in the fridge, as well as cooking lessons offered at community centres. Action is also being taken by industry, with changes to packaging to help fresh food last longer switching to 'best before' and removing dates altogether on some products.

5.16 Only a small percentage of the city's household waste goes to landfill (1.8%). Like 49% of local authority waste in the UK, the majority of Coventry's non-recyclable waste is incinerated at a facility at Bar Road which was built in 1975 and serves four local authorities. It supplies heat to a number of buildings in the city via the Heatline network, including the Council estate, The Wave, Cathedral and will soon expand to provide heat to Coventry University campus. Options will need to be explored in terms of future waste management solutions in the city when the incinerator will need to be replaced (15–20 year's time), giving consideration to how this can best support the city's circular economy.

Commercial and Industrial Waste

5.17 Commercial waste provides an even greater opportunity for developing a circular economy. It is estimated that England generated 33.9 million tonnes of commercial and industrial (C&I) waste in 2021. The West Midlands Circular Economy Routemap recognises the very important role Coventry has to play, particularly in promoting the decarbonisation of the manufacturing sector, which will provide a major chance for the development of new products and services and support job creation.

5.18 Greenpower Park and the Gigafactory will grow the circular economy for battery manufacture and recycling and is expected to generate up to 6,000 new highly skilled jobs, as well as thousands more jobs in the supply chain.

5.19 Centres of Excellence in the West Midlands are carrying out research into the innovative management of waste and the potential to develop symbiotic relationships between companies, where one company's waste becomes another's raw material.

5.20 There are over 10,000 businesses in Coventry, the majority are small to medium enterprises. This is a huge untapped area of potential waste and resources that can be used more effectively to encourage a more circular approach. Figure 20 outlines the eight business cases that should compel businesses to adopt a more circular business model:

ACCELERATE GROWTH	ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS	MITIGATE RISK
<p>Gener8: Create additional revenue from existing products and services</p> <p>Innov8: Spur innovation of new products and services</p> <p>Moder8: Reduce operating costs</p>	<p>Captiv8: Enhance customer and employee relationships</p> <p>Differenti8: Distinguish from competition</p> <p>Integr8: Align corporate strategy with mission</p>	<p>Acclim8: Adapt business models and value chain relationships</p> <p>Insul8: Mitigate linear risk exposure</p>

Figure 20 – 8 Business Cases for the Circular Economy (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, n.d.)

5.21 Support is needed to help local businesses develop new models and encourage more partnership working and symbiosis. There are some inspirational case studies of businesses already doing this that others can learn from. Through the Decarbonisation Net Zero programme and the Business Energy Advice Service (BEAS) programmes, the Council is helping small and medium businesses achieve more efficient use of energy, water, and waste. Business Sustain also provide support to medium and larger businesses locally and across the country.

5.22 The Council has a strong working relationship with local Universities, working to enable local businesses to access specialist support and advice supporting innovation in green technologies.

- 5.23** There is no specific data held on commercial waste at a city level, this is something that needs to be addressed to help develop circular economy opportunities.

Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste

- 5.24** The construction, demolition and excavation sector are the largest producer of waste and is growing. There is an ongoing challenge to minimise the amount of waste being generated, improve productivity and reduce the environmental impacts of waste. Construction 2025 is a joint strategy between the British government and the construction industry setting out four key goals: reducing the initial and whole life costs of construction by 33%, reducing the time from inception to completion by 50%, reducing the greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment by 50%, and reducing the trade gap for construction products and materials by 50%.
- 5.25** There are a number of ways to we can take action to address this locally, through the design process, setting out procurement requirements to reduce construction waste at source and creating networks for re-use of surplus materials locally. We also need to explore innovative construction technologies, including modular buildings which can contribute to significant savings in waste.

Electrical Waste

- 5.26** The UK is responsible for 3.2% of the worlds electronic and electrical waste, often this waste can be kept in service through direct reuse or repair. The government is targeting zero e-waste to landfill by 2030. This is a particular area of interest for Coventry, where there is potential significant opportunity for business growth including Greenpower Park, which will be the first of its kind, offering an all-in-one solution for battery research, industrialisation, manufacturing, testing, recycling and electrified logistics designed to foster the UK's growing battery ecosystem.
- 5.27** Addressing electrical waste can also lead to wider socio-economic benefits as well as environmental as demonstrated by the #CovConnects project.
- 5.28** The improper disposal of laptops and other electronics leads to the loss of valuable materials like gold, copper, and aluminium, costing the UK over £370 million annually in lost resources. Going forward, Coventry holds a longer-term ambition to become the nation's leading city for waste electrical and electronic recycling.



Case Study

The #CovConnects Device Bank

The project has been developed through a partnership model between the Council, Warwick Manufacturing Group and organisations across Coventry to establish a citywide initiative, whereby end-of-use devices such as laptops, smartphones and tablets are donated by local organisations to be refurbished. In turn, the devices are gifted (following an application process) to members of the community who are digitally excluded.

We recognise that we need to have a supply of digital stock, to further support closing the city's digital divide. In 2020 alone, the UK generated approximately 24.9 million discarded mobile phones, highlighting the sheer scale of electronic waste resulting from the turnover of these devices. However, we know that we need to source our digital stock in an economically and environmentally friendly manner.

This is accompanied by training to help boost digital skills, which in turns helps residents as beneficiaries to access online tools and services, improving their wellbeing and quality of life. So far, the Device Bank has benefitted over 200 voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, Council and NHS services. Funding has been secured to further develop the project and build on its success.

Going forward, the project is exploring additional partnership opportunities to build the Device Bank. Other innovative ideas, such as holding more local repair cafes and digital waste amnesties, providing more opportunities and options for residents to get rid of e-waste in a socially beneficial way, are areas which #CovConnects hopes to explore more

Further Opportunities for Growth

- 5.1** The Council has an important role to play in supporting the development of a more circular economy in Coventry, through its purchasing power, its energy and waste management roles and work it does with businesses and organisations across the city. There is scope to include circularity criteria in contracts for future projects, alongside embodied carbon to encourage more suppliers to adopt a more circular approach to waste and energy. This is something that could be adopted by other organisations across the city.
- 5.2** A great example of this innovative approach to circularity being explored is looking at recycling old street lanterns across the city as part of the LED upgrade project. Through saving carbon by avoiding producing new lamps and recycling existing, 2.5 tonnes of various materials such as porcelain, Nickel, Aluminium, Stainless Steel, Copper, non-Ferrous Alloys and plastics, can all be avoided.
- 5.3** There is an opportunity to use the city's waste recycling facilities as a platform to form partnerships with material manufacturers to help ensure that responsible material recycling is managed as an end-to-end process and allow emissions reductions to be calculated at each stage. Partnerships like this are potentially unique in the UK and can support local and national business, keeping jobs in the UK and providing a market for circularity of material.
- 5.4** Heat zone networks are due to be rolled out as part of government legislation in 2025. This will require surplus heat to be captured from identified buildings across the city to supply those with demand. This will help to bring down energy bills and reduce energy wastage and carbon emissions.
- 5.5** There is significant scope to increase re-use and repair hubs in the city, where resources can be donated, exchanged or mended to be kept in circulation. There are a number of charities and social enterprises across the city which address the circular economy especially for those families on limited incomes who cannot afford to buy new goods and services. This includes furniture recycling, white goods repair, toy libraries, tool stores and also advisory services like Act On Energy. Support for the development of social enterprises in this sector will address the needs of those on

low incomes and keeps waste out of landfill. As part of this, we could explore how re-use and repair hubs could be developed as part of a meanwhile strategy for City Centre South.

Recommendations

- 5.6** Tackling waste in Coventry is essential to support the transition to net zero, as waste accounts for 10% of the city's emissions. Coventry is finding innovative new ways to tackle waste, and there are opportunities to open up more markets to support a circular economy, creating jobs, skills and new businesses to benefit local people. Key recommendations from the Circular Economy Pathway Group are:
- Corporations and businesses need to lead on reducing waste at source, through manufacturing, packaging and logistics. There is already significant support and expertise in the city to develop this to really benefit local businesses. The public sector has a role to play in ensuring that the circular economy is considered in procurement and promotes a more sustainable supply chain. Consumers can vote with their feet and opt for products with less packaging, as well as recycling and composting waste resulting in less waste going to the incinerator or landfill.
 - In Coventry we need to build on and expand already existing reuse / repair / recycle projects and encourage responsibility for reuse, repair, remanufacture and recycling. This must be supported by building partnerships, using local expertise, involving the public in the delivery of these initiatives and being driven by innovation to enable Coventry to provide a place for circular businesses to develop, helping to grow the local economy.
 - Coventry should aspire to be the nation's leading city for electronic and electrical waste recycling, which provides an opportunity to create new markets and support business growth. Support must continue to grow digital recycling within the city to prevent electronic waste being crushed. Keeping ICT equipment in service will also help to address digital inequality, improving access to digital information needed for essential services. Greenpower Park provides a unique opportunity to scale up the city's ambitions, particularly around battery manufacturing and recycling.

6.0 Nature

Goal:

Support nature recovery and create better access to green and blue space for wildlife to thrive and communities to enjoy

6.1 Climate change is directly contributing to the global decline in nature, resulting in a nature emergency and it will be impossible to address one aspect without the other. Species extinction is occurring at 1,000 times the pre-human rate, and the UK is one of the most nature depleted nations in the world, with one in six species at risk of extinction. For Coventry, we have seen impacts on species such as hedgehogs, water voles and swifts.

Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all animals and plants, including humans, other organisms and the habitats that support them. Ecosystem services are the direct and indirect contributions ecosystems provide for human life.

6.2 There are vital links between nature, our health, wealth and security, which presents huge value to our economy – a recent report by Natural England (2024) estimates the UK’s natural wealth is just over £1.5 trillion. This has been calculated based on the ecosystem services nature provides including fresh water, air and food, building materials, places for people to relax and mitigation of climate change. The benefits of nature are shown in figure 21 below:

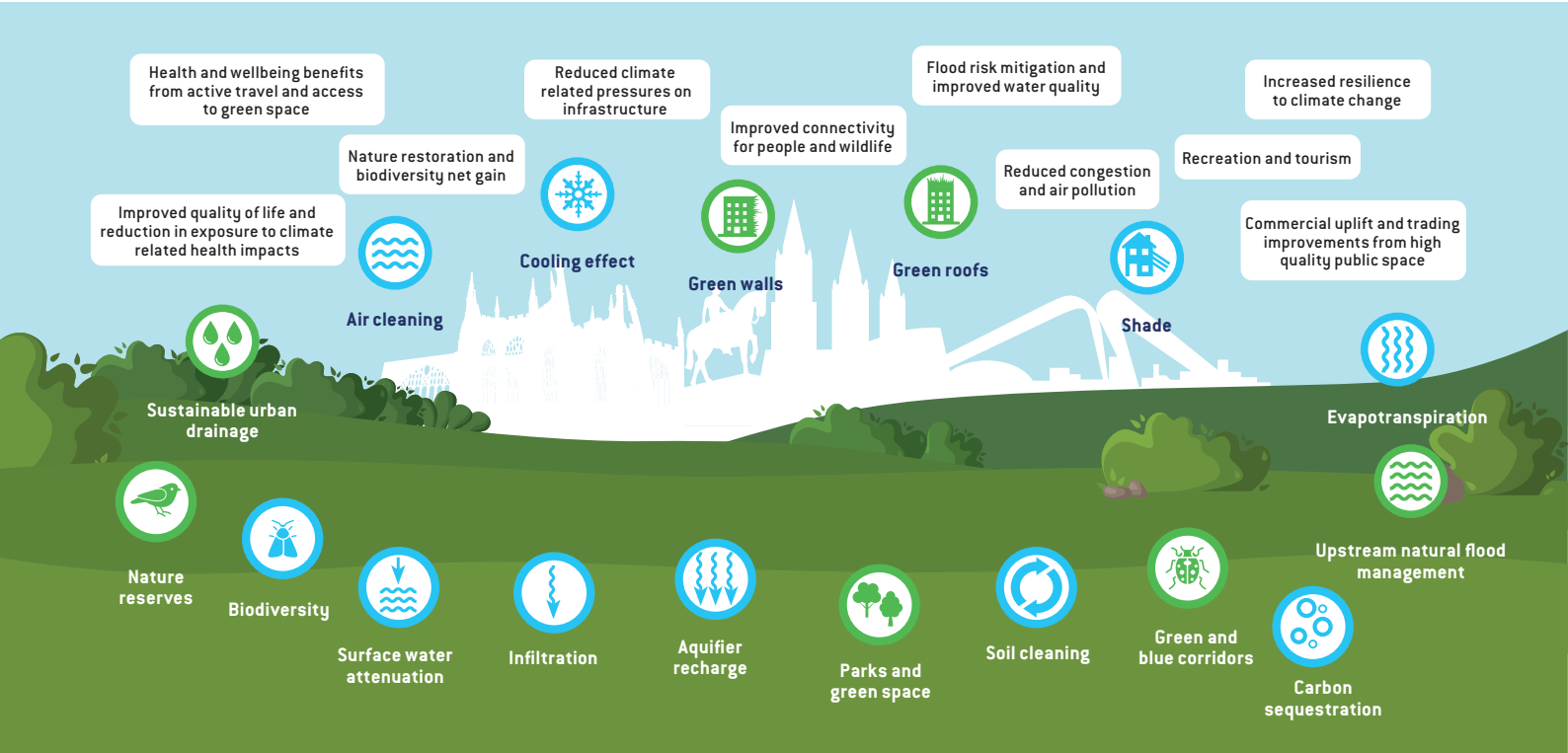


Figure 21 –The social and economic value of nature (Coventry City Council/West Midlands Local Investment in Natural Capital 2024)

36 Coventry's Climate Change Strategy 2024–2030

- 6.3** However, changes in land and sea use, exploitation of natural resources, global heating, rising pollution and the spread of invasive species are all contributing to a significant decline in biodiversity. Research by Green Finance Institute and University of Oxford (2024) has found that the damage to the natural environment is slowing the UK economy and could lead to a 12% reduction in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the future, larger than the impacts from the global financial crisis.
- 6.4** The UN Biodiversity Conference of the Parties 15 (COP15) agreed a set of goals to halt the extinction of threatened species and reverse nature loss with the effective recovery and conservation of habitats, with a critical target being to conserve and manage 30% of land, inland waters, coasts, and oceans by 2030. This goal is referred to as '30 by 30'. For Coventry, this currently stands at around 11% and a key challenge is to identify where the extra 19% (or 1874 hectares) is going to be found, given the city's urban geography and limitations on available land. This will require a step change in current land use planning, with far more focus on integrating nature in urban areas to support nature's recovery, alongside creation of new habitats and improving the quality of existing ones.
- 6.5** Although the 11% baseline is low, Coventry does contain many biodiverse rich areas including seven green flag world class urban green spaces, parks and University of Warwick campus. The city also has lots of parks, woodlands, river and canal corridors, allotments, street trees and private gardens, which link together to form part of a wider network of green and blue infrastructure. There is a significant challenge for us to better understand the habitats and biodiversity that exists across the city in order to protect and enhance them, as well as identify opportunities for creating more joined up green and blue corridors across the city.

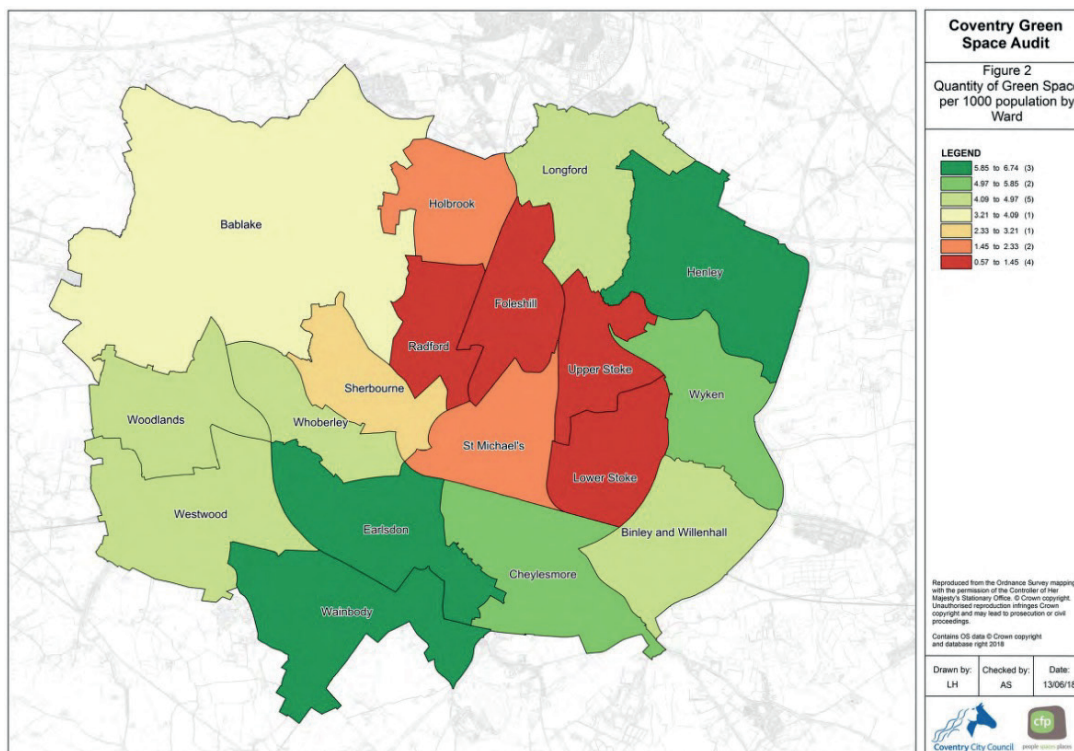


Figure 22 – Quantity of green space per 1000 population by ward, areas in hectares needed

- 6.6** However, there are big disparities in terms of green spaces across the city as illustrated in figure 22, with the wards highlighted in red being in some of the highest areas of green deprivation in the country. As a result, Coventry has been found to be one of the least green cities in England. An ENDS Green Cities Index 2023 survey out of 55 primary urban areas in England, ranked Coventry as the 54th greenest. This is backed up in the consultation, where local people told us they want to see better access to nature, more parks and open spaces and more trees to increase biodiversity, improve air quality and wellbeing. This presents a huge opportunity for taking citywide action.
- 6.7** Coventry isn't unique in terms of the extent and access to green space for a city of its size; this presents an opportunity for the UK's towns and cities to take action and finding innovative and creative ways to boost nature's recover. This will help to transform the look and feel of our city, and deliver widespread environmental, social and economic benefits. Restoring nature provides a solution to many of the challenges set out in this Strategy:

Integrating more spaces for nature and restoring habitats across Coventry will:



We need to balance enhancing existing green spaces to support nature, with introducing new ones including within urban areas that may be on smaller scales but support biodiversity alongside addressing green deprivation.

- 6.6** We also need to be realistic that Coventry is a densely populated urban area, with land in short supply. Whilst we will strive to deliver as much of this in the city boundary as possible, using Council-owned land and working with partners and land holders, it is likely that we will also need to explore opportunities outside the city, using Council owned land and working with neighbouring authorities and landowners.
- 6.7** Key challenges to tackling the nature emergency also relate to funding, skills, knowledge and resource. The benefits of investing in nature are becoming far better understood and the recent creation of a natural capital market provides huge opportunities to attract private investment to support local nature recovery, which will deliver practical interventions as well as increasing conservation management skills and capacity. Coventry needs to ensure preparedness to attract natural capital investment in local nature recovery going forwards.

Tackling climate change through nature

- 6.8** Nature-based solutions provide an important opportunity for carbon sequestration and offsetting. Restoring and creating carbon-capture habitats, is identified in the Net Zero Carbon Routemap as an increasingly important option in terms of offsetting carbon emissions, as per figure 23 below. The consultation feedback on the draft Climate Change Strategy showed that local people feel very strongly about trees and nature in the city and want to see more focus on conservation as well as creating new ones. Natural habitats ranging from trees, wetlands and wildflower meadows have multiple benefits – as well as absorbing carbon dioxide they contribute to their environment by providing the oxygen we breathe, improving air quality, provide shade and reduce temperatures, increase water filtration building resilience, preserve soil and support wildlife. Action needs to be taken now to restore habitats and create new ones, to enable them to develop and thrive to maximise carbon captured. Key to delivering this is ensuring that the right species of plants and trees are planted in the right place in order to thrive, alongside protecting and maintaining the city's existing habitats.

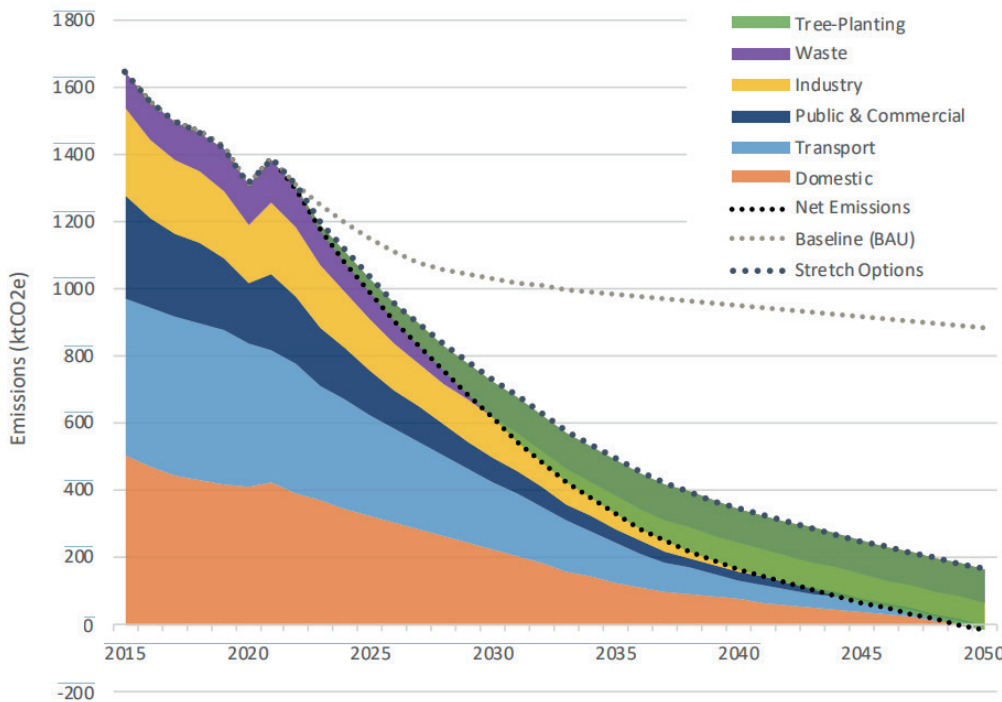


Figure 23 – Coventry's Carbon Reduction Potential; Stretch Options and Offsetting Potential (Net Zero Carbon Route Map, 2023)

The role of policy

- 6.9** There have been many approaches to managing and reversing biodiversity loss through global and national policies, perhaps most importantly the COP15 '30 by 30'.
- 6.10** The UK Environment Act's (2021) introduced a requirement for developments to contribute a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, which became a legal requirement in February 2024. Coventry, Warwickshire, and Solihull have required biodiversity net gain for several years, as supported by Coventry's Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document. This national legislation will expand upon our work by creating a national register of sites where offsite biodiversity net gain offsetting will be directed; this will result in the creation of new natural spaces in the city. Whilst it must be acknowledged that biodiversity net gain is triggered by loss of biodiversity as part of a development site and it will take time for new sites to establish, it provides a unique opportunity to improve the equitability of green space and biodiversity distribution across Coventry and help reverse current trends, particularly in areas of deprivation. We will work to find innovative ways to create Biodiversity Net Gain units to benefit enhancing our green spaces, alongside creating new ones, particularly in urban deprived areas.

- 6.11** The Council will explore whether our targets could be more ambitious, aiming for 20% biodiversity net gain instead of 10%. We will also consider integrating approaches more targeted at urban regeneration, such as the Urban Greening Factor and Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGST), to reduce green space deprivation and ensure everyone can access green space in a 5 minute walk from their doorstep. These ambitions should be influenced by a comprehensive baseline data set that explores issues such as the distribution of green space, habitat qualities and opportunities for new green and blue infrastructure. Opportunities for new green and blue infrastructure should emphasise creating community-led spaces, for example, urban growing areas like orchards, community gardens and outdoor education spaces. Policies and strategies should also reflect national guidance such as the Environmental Improvement Plan, Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework and DEFRA's Plan for Water.
- 6.12** The Environment Act 2021 also introduces Local Nature Recovery Strategies as a way to manage regional improvements in green infrastructure. In Coventry, this Strategy is led by the West Midlands Combined Authority and will build upon previous Local Biodiversity Action Plans produced by the Warwickshire, Solihull, and Coventry Local Nature Partnership. Local Nature Recovery

Strategies will agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where these priorities could be achieved.

- 6.13** Coventry's Local Plan 2011–2031 and its nature conservation policies must reflect the strengthened national legislation and the ever-increasing need to reverse biodiversity loss. We will pursue ambitious approaches to ecological enhancement, including mandating species-specific enhancements such as bird and bat boxes on all developments to encourage biodiversity as well as features designed to mitigate issues like flooding, pollution, and the urban heat island effect.
- 6.14** Coventry's Green Space Strategy 2019–2024 recognises and promotes the multi-functional nature of green spaces and aims to ensure that they are well managed and maintained, accessible and contribute to cross-cutting agendas. The revised Green Space Strategy 2025–2030 will give increased priority to enhancing and creating biodiversity in our open spaces and consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity alongside roads and cycle lanes, verges and on streets.
- 6.15** This is complemented by Coventry's Urban Forestry Strategy 2022–2032, which recognises the importance of urban trees and forests in serving an ecosystem services function and proposes to plant a tree for every citizen, amounting to 360,000 trees by 2032. These tree planting efforts will combine the rejuvenation and expansion of our existing woodlands to sequester carbon and create wild spaces for people and nature, with tree planting in green spaces and along streets in order to improve air quality, create shade and mitigate urban heat island effects. We will need to be innovative in our approach to increasing the number of street trees across the city, overcoming challenges around utilities and parking.
- 6.16** It is important that existing policies and strategies are joined up to support a robust and coordinated approach to local nature recovery, which translates to practical delivery of interventions across the city.

Planning for Nature's Recovery

- 6.17** To deliver at the scale required, we need to change our approach to how we use land to support local nature recovery. This will be developed via a Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan which could include areas given for habitat restoration and creation, biodiversity net gain, tree planting, rain gardens and flood management, identifying 'wildbelt' strategic locations for key links or corridors to support development of nature corridors. We are also keen to work with landowners, farmers as well as our residents and businesses to find ways of better supporting nature and developing new habitats.
- 6.18** We recognise that there are many competing land uses in Coventry, and this could serve as a constraint, but we need to rethink our approach to land use planning to ensure that nature recovery can co-exist with other land uses. We will explore how we can maximise opportunities to integrate nature across the city and create new habitats as part of new developments, including housing, industrial, transport and energy schemes and will seek to be innovative in our approach with an ambition to create exemplar projects for nature restoration. We will prioritise opportunities for restoring nature within the city boundary but will also explore how we can use land we own outside the city boundary to support reaching our 30% target, which could include larger re-wilding schemes.
- 6.19** The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will provide more detailed mapping that can be used to better understand our local habitats and opportunities for habitat restoration and creation. The Natural Capital Assessment Partnership (formerly the Habitat Biodiversity Audit) surveys habitats across Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, focusing on our Local Wildlife Sites which can support this, but we will need to be supplemented with rich data from across the whole city to develop a comprehensive strategy for enhancing biodiversity and providing habitats and natural places across Coventry. This will help us identify what interventions are required to support nature recovery and be fully costed in order to inform implementation plans.

Investing in Nature

6.20 Coventry is working with the West Midlands Combined Authority as one of four national pilot programmes focusing on Local Investment in Natural Capital. Part of this work will involve production of a Natural Capital Investment Prospectus, which will require development of a natural capital pipeline for the city, identifying opportunities for investment in ecosystem services. This could help to unlock ambitious landscape-scale rewilding projects which could provide a vital source of income to the Council through biodiversity net gain, carbon sequestration, natural capital units and tourism to help fund nature recovery, which includes creation and restoration of natural habitats as well as the resources to manage sites for long term conservation. This should be combined with improved accessibility to sites to ensure the benefits are felt by all across Coventry. This could include projects along the River Sowe, or in areas such as the Meriden Gap or the Coombe Abbey to Brandon Wood corridor.

Integrating Nature across the City

6.21 To boost nature across the city, we must work to conserve existing habitats alongside creating new ones. This means enhancing our existing green and blue spaces to support more nature-rich habitats and taking an innovative approach to find new ways of embedding nature in areas deprived of green space. Greening our urban areas is important to provide connectivity to enable greater movement of wildlife throughout the city, but has much wider benefits such as helping to address flooding, pollution, and urban heat issues as well as increase an area's sense of place, community, and wellbeing.

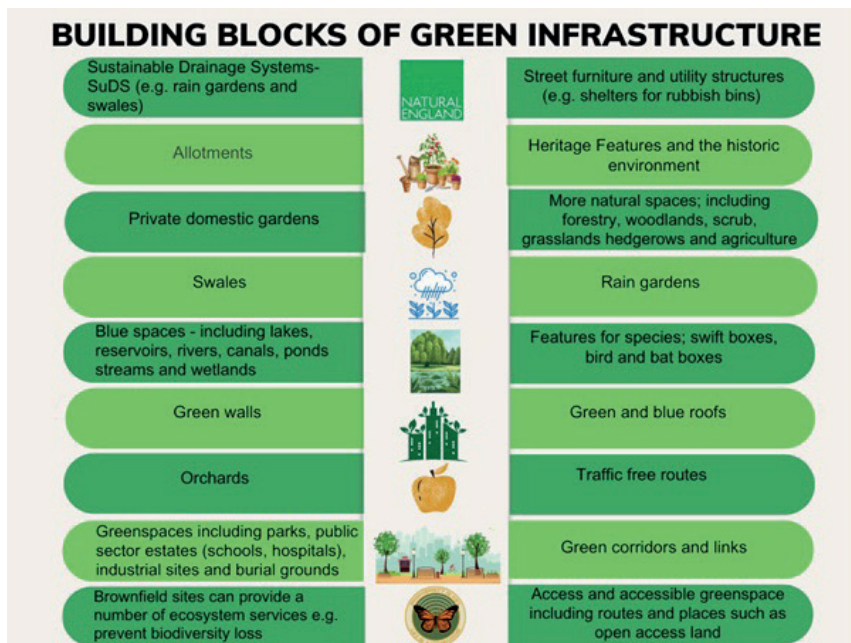


Figure 24 – Natural England Building Blocks of Green Infrastructure (2023)

6.22 Figure 24 demonstrates the different interventions that can be delivered to create green infrastructure in an urban setting, which are set out in more detail in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide 2023. We will work to deliver these measures in neighbourhoods across Coventry, developing pilots and identifying new ways of working to integrate nature into the fabric of our city.

6.23 There is a need to review the way areas are managed and maintained across the city in order to maximise wildlife. We need to increase capacity and specialist training and skills development for staff and volunteers to improve standards of conservation management to benefit wildlife. The management of amenity grassland presents opportunities to change grass mowing practices to create wildflower meadows to attract more wildlife and add colour and

variety to the urban landscape. Tree planting and careful development of new wetlands in parks can provide increased habitat diversity and a more interesting landscape for people to enjoy, encouraging interactions between people and nature. The Council already has a policy to use peat-free compost, but we need to work towards reducing and removing the use of herbicides and pesticides that can be damaging to wildlife.

- 6.24** Coventry is fortunate to have 45 allotments across the city, which are important habitats for wildlife providing food, shelter and breeding sites. The scope to make more use of this valuable network across the city presents a huge opportunity for boosting biodiversity, climate resilience and food security, as well as an important resource to communities to support well-being. There is scope to work more closely with the city's Allotment Association to make them more accessible and generate wider benefits. This could include creating more community group plots and linking up with the Food Network and local food banks to provide fresh seasonal produce to those most in need.
- 6.25** Our watercourses are an extremely valuable and often overlooked resource for ecology, climate resilience, and wellbeing. We must continue to tackle waste and pollution issues while enhancing these areas by de-culverting underground watercourses such as at Palmer Lane and Abbots Lane, improving river corridor habitats, and supporting flood risk management. The £3.4m Sherbourne Valley Project, led by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust in partnership with the Council and a number of other key organisations within the city could be replicated in other areas including the River Sowe, to improve water quality and flood management as well as improving access to nature for people in a deprived area.
- 6.26** The canal runs through the city, providing a unique green blue corridor. The Canals and River Trust is always working to improve biodiversity, whether that is through the use of coir rolls to create a soft vegetated bank, or planting fruit trees which will provide food for people and wildlife. There is an opportunity to connect Sustainable Urban Drainage to drain into the canal network and we continue to look at new ways to unlocking the potential for heating and cooling too.
- Working together for nature's recovery**
- 6.27** There are clear links between all of the themes in this Strategy. A coordinated approach which actively seeks ways to incorporate nature into all elements of our work and city planning will be vital.
- 6.28** To support this joined up approach, the Council have established an officer working group that captures both Green and Blue Infrastructure to ensure we are coordinated in our approach to planning and managing our green and blue space. The role of the group is to identify opportunities and develop ideas and projects to help enhance our green and blue space and maximise the benefits they generate for biodiversity, climate resilience and well-being. This work feeds into the Nature Based Pathway Group, where organisations such as Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Canal and River Trust, Environment Agency, Garden Organic and the city's universities are working with the Council to drive forward this agenda, projects and funding opportunities.
- 6.29** We have a long history of successful collaboration with organisations and communities, and we will build upon existing relationships with stakeholders to help develop projects that support local nature recovery. This includes small scale habitat protection and creation initiatives, to large scale projects such as the £3.5m River Sherbourne restoration project, led by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. We also want to work with businesses and organisations looking to invest in nature, whether that's through funding in our Natural Capital Prospectus or volunteer time to support projects on the ground.
- 6.30** We want to increase community involvement in managing and maintaining natural green spaces, this includes Friends of Parks groups, tree wardens and other conservation volunteers, as well as allotment holders and similar third-sector groups. Their work can help promote biodiversity and build pride in the quality and beauty of our open green spaces as well as creating opportunities to grow green jobs and provide training opportunities to help support a just transition.

Supporting nature at home

6.31 Local people can help support nature at home and in their local area. This is really important to help create wildlife corridors across the city and our residential areas have a huge role to play in this. There are a number of practical measures residents can take depending on space they have available, this could range from a balcony, window box or container filled with bee and butterfly friendly plants, installing a bee hotel, bird feeders and providing water for wildlife. Measures such as swift bricks and nest boxes provide important nesting space in urban areas to support bird and bat populations. For those with more outside space they could leave long areas of grass and plant wildflowers to support habitats and create small spaces in boundaries to help wildlife to move about gardens. Those with gardens could also consider what materials are used, with grass and gravel being better for planting supporting nature and climate resilience than paved areas. There are lots of useful resources to get more ideas and inspiration here:

#TeamWilder | Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Garden Organic – Discover organic growing



Recommendations

It is clear that investing in nature will deliver significant benefits to Coventry, not only boosting biodiversity but helping to tackle climate change, making the city more climate resilient, create more attractive neighbourhoods with better access to green space, benefiting our citizens and nature. The recommendations developed through the Nature Based Pathway Group are:

- To support the development of a Local Nature Recovery Plan for Coventry, a richer database needs to be developed of the city's land assets and potential nature conservation value, which includes a city-wide in-depth species and habitat survey
- In order to work towards '30 by 30', the city must focus on conserving existing habitats and creating new ones, and use natural capital as a tool to increase investment in nature and support conservation management of sites
- Develop new ways to integrate nature across the city, creating new corridors within urban areas and exploring opportunities for larger scale re-wilding projects which may involve working cross-border with other authorities and landowners, alongside partner organisations such as Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
- Improve habitats along river and canal corridors across the city, supporting initiatives to improve water quality and flood risk management
- Upskill staff and volunteers in the management of green spaces for nature, including developing training programmes which teach conservation management skills, which can be implemented in parks and areas of open space.

7.0 Fairer Green Future

Goal:

Ensuring a just transition for all

- 7.1** Tackling the climate and nature emergencies presents a huge opportunity to address current inequities improving the quality of life for all. However, without a considered approach this could have the opposite effect. We are facing a green industrial revolution moving away from fossil fuels, and this will impact on jobs and sectors. Coventry wants to ensure a just transition, so no one is left behind. This underpins the whole Strategy.
- 7.2** The Green Industrial Revolution provides considerable opportunities for future employment to offset potential jobs losses and to grow the local economy. Creating good quality, skilled jobs is an important way of reducing inequities. Net zero jobs are on average better paid, more productive and hotspots of activity are taking place in some of the most deprived parts of the country, helping to improve living standards in those areas. Growing these industries locally will increase economic prosperity, in order for local people to directly benefit they need to be equipped with the right skills, for this reason training and upskilling is really important to ensure we get the local benefits as part of a just transition.
- 7.3** The issue of a just transition also extends to the changes we are going to need to make to our everyday lives. We will need to improve the energy efficiency of homes, move towards low carbon travel, prioritise space for nature and food growing, and create more climate resilient infrastructure as part of our holistic approach in this Strategy. These all could contribute to tackling existing inequities in the city, resulting in lower bills, improved accessibility to facilities and green space and improved physical health and mental well-being. We need to involve communities and work with them to understand barriers or there is a risk that opportunities won't be felt by everyone, and existing social injustices could widen.
- 7.4** Issues relating to this pathway was where most feedback was received during the consultation, showing that local people are worried about being left behind.

Planning for a Just Transition

- 7.5** We need to better understand what a just transition looks like for Coventry, in order to plan for one. The Fairer Green Pathway Group commissioned an independent study to examine examples of best practice in overseeing the delivery of a Just Transition approach to sustainability. The Just Transition Report highlighted the need for all of the Pathways to acknowledge and identify practical solutions to ensure that inequities are addressed and that no one is excluded or disadvantaged because of an action or recommendation when driving forward changes to address sustainability and climate change.
- 7.6** We need an in-depth understanding of which sectors, jobs and communities in our city are likely to be affected, alongside the opportunities new sectors will bring and develop a route map to establish how we develop green skills and jobs to match growing demand. This will include considering how we can support sectors where there are likely to be job losses with training and skills to transition to new sectors.



Figure 25 – Making Transition Plans (Just Grantham Research Institute, 2022)

7.7 The success of this will rely on involvement of affected people across the city. As figure 25 shows, it is important to involve those impacted by the necessary changes brought about by our transition to net zero in planning for the future. This will require a fully coordinated approach, with collaborative working across sectors and communities to build support and develop a plan that is deliverable.

How a Just Transition can reduce existing inequalities and inequities in Coventry

7.8 The landmark Fair Society Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) 2010 outlined the scale of health inequalities in England and the actions required to reduce them. In response, Coventry became the first UK city to adopt Marmot City status in 2013 and set up the Coventry Marmot Partnership to strategically address inequalities. The city's environment impacts the health of our residents. Tackling the causes of climate change will help to improve environmental conditions, reduce inequity across the city, and improve health, wellbeing and quality of life for all.

7.9 It is important that we use existing research to help make evidence-based decisions and develop the evidence base in relation to the triple win of health, health equity and environmental sustainability through research collaborations with Coventry's Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC).

7.10 Transport accounts for 27% of emissions in Coventry but one in three households doesn't have access to a car, rising to one in two in more deprived areas. Although people living in more deprived areas have lower car ownership, the impact of cars and traffic in terms of noise and air pollution is worse in these areas. More positively, this also means that many households are already walking, cycling or using public transport as their main way of getting around the city – this presents an opportunity for shared knowledge and when we look at how to encourage others to consider other modes of travel over the car.

7.11 Coventry has the most electric charging points of any city outside of London, and whilst electric car use is slowly increasing, there needs to be a citywide drive to find ways to incentivise the uptake of electric vehicles and make them more affordable and accessible to residents and businesses. This could include introducing electric car clubs, supporting second hand markets to bring down costs, salary sacrifice and try before you buy schemes alongside a move to electric fleets. The Council is also seeking ways to improve access to charging points for households without a drive – which includes citywide on street charging points and a new Kerbo charging pilot using gully channels to connect chargers directly from homes to kerb.

- 7.12** In 2021 Coventry was named as one of 28 towns and cities in England where Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels in the atmosphere from cars and the burning of fossil fuels in wood stoves were forecast to exceed legal limits. The city has developed an Air Quality Action Plan, focusing on delivering infrastructure work which avoided the need for a charging zone which could have had a harmful impact on residents and businesses
- 7.13** Work is still needed to support households that use wood burning stoves, which are a significant source of local air pollution that can be harmful to health.
- 7.14** 22.2% or nearly 31,000 of Coventry households are in fuel poverty, based on 2022 data. This figure has increased by over 2% since 2020 due to the cost-of-living crisis and energy insecurity resulting in a significant rise in bills. The impact of living in cold, damp, poorly insulated homes can be really harmful to physical health and mental well-being. This can be addressed through home retrofit, where there is often grant funding targeted at low-income households helping people out of fuel poverty which can have a huge benefit to improving overall quality of life.
- 7.15** The Council provides an Affordable Warmth Programme, currently working with 'Act on Energy' a locally based charity to provide advice and support to households affected by fuel poverty. A vital area of work is to ensure the most vulnerable in society are involved in planning for the future and provided with practical advice and support for accessing funding from the Council and government retrofit grants.
- 7.16** There has been a slow uptake in retrofit grants, highlighting a significant challenge in gaining involvement from local residents and property owners in investing in energy efficiency measures, even when at no cost to the household. Coventry's Net Zero Carbon Routemap identified that six out of the top ten most effective measures for carbon reduction related to domestic retrofit so involving communities in addressing the retrofit challenge is a top priority and key to delivering a just transition.
- 7.17** Green spaces help to cool cities down, provide habitats for nature and are an important amenity for local people. Coventry has some of the highest areas of green deprivation in the country, as identified in a 2021 New Economics Foundation Study, which means that in some parts of the city people have poor or limited access to high quality green space. Action is needed to prioritise areas of the city which have the poorest access to quality green space and lowest levels of tree canopy cover and to involve local residents in planning for the greening of their areas.
- 7.18** Over 20% of the city is in food poverty, with a growing reliance on food banks and charities to provide support. The Council is a member of and works closely with the 'Coventry Food Network' whose Food Charter highlights the following principles for action:
- 1) proclaims the universal right to food
 - 2) promotes a community food culture
 - 3) enables food producing environments and reduces food waste
 - 4) supports ethical business and social enterprise
 - 5) works for food justice



- 7.19** Coventry was awarded Sustainable Food Places Status thanks to the number of ways it supports communities with a discounted food scheme, school holiday hunger projects, community cafés, social supermarkets, food growing projects and cooking programmes. This activity needs to be expanded particularly in deprived areas to provide more opportunities for local food growing, supplemented by training in gardening and cookery skills. This will help to provide more fresh seasonal produce to families who need it most.

Engaging and involving stakeholders

7.20 A just transition cannot be delivered without the involvement and support of those affected. The first step is people need to understand what a just transition is and what it could mean to them. We need to identify and work with affected stakeholders (which could be individuals, communities, workers, unions etc) to develop an understanding of the issues and opportunities that affect them and work collaboratively to identify action to be taken. This will require strong leadership, and the relevant skills and resource so that the Council and other stakeholders can involve the people of Coventry in planning for positive change.

Recommendations

To deliver a just transition we must acknowledge all inequalities and how the steps taken towards net zero can simultaneously increase equity across the city, ensuring no one is left behind. Whilst there are many existing challenges across the city, taking a just transition approach provides significant opportunity to address these and create a fairer, brighter future increasing quality of life for all. The Fairer Greener Pathway Group recommends:

- We need greater understanding of the sectors, industries, businesses and communities affected by the climate crisis and the city's transition to Net Zero by doing research to show us where and how we risk creating/worsening inequality and where the opportunities are for positively improving the lives of people in the city through climate action in the city.
- The drive, focus and co-ordination of efforts across the city to achieve a Just Transition for all must be ensured through adequate resourcing. This means finding the funds and/or the people with the time, capacity and skills to ensure that everyone in the city who wants to can work together to ensure a Just Transition, which should be overseen by the Council.
- The 'engagement' elements of the Coventry Climate Change Strategy must be delivered according to the 'eight principles for a just transition for Coventry'. Engagement must be with people in affected sectors, industries, businesses and communities, and must be creative and innovative in the ways that they are involved in the planning for a more sustainable future for the city.

8.0 Council Action

Changing the way we work to create a more sustainable city

- 8.1** Whilst the Council's carbon footprint as a proportion of the city is only 1%, the Net Zero Route map highlights the citywide picture and scale of the challenge ahead. We know that homes, transport and industry are responsible for the highest levels of carbon emissions and significant investment is needed to address this. It is not viable to expect this to be all publicly funded. However the Local Authority does have a key role as a leader to drive our response to this challenge and help develop wider opportunities and lever investment, which this section explores.
- 8.2** The Council has been working hard to improve its environmental credentials and reports performance annually through the globally recognised Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP).

Reporting helps a city demonstrate how it is acting on climate change and provides data to improve these actions year-on-year. The Council achieved an A- rating in 2023 (second highest score available), indicating strong leadership and having demonstrated best practice standards across climate change adaptation and mitigation, and recognising we have set ambitious goals and made good progress towards achieving these.

- 8.3** In the consultation for the draft Strategy, lots of people told us that they want to see the Council taking a leadership role and be more ambitious in terms of tackling climate change. The Council's policies can shape future development as set out in the figure over page:



Cultural Change of workforce

8.4 Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change is a core commitment in the Council's One Coventry Plan. In order to drive meaningful change, sustainability needs to be embedded at the heart of our working practices and become business as usual. Some recent changes include making Climate Change part of a Cabinet Member portfolio, and a Strategic Lead – Green Futures officer position has been created to help drive organisational change.

8.5 To create cultural change across the organisation, we need to ensure that staff and councillors are equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify opportunities and changes required to create more sustainable working practices. Training and development will be a key part of this and help support councillors and officers to become stronger advocates for sustainability.

- 8.6** The Council also has an important role identifying issues, barriers and proposing practical solutions to address and using its lobbying, campaigning and advocacy role at a regional, national and international level proposing new policies, practices, standards and frameworks which will help to build a more sustainable future.
- 8.7** The Council is committed to achieving more equality, diversity and inclusion in its workforce. A study commissioned by the Equality Trust, National Union of Students and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) revealed that in the UK only 3% of environmental professionals are from minority backgrounds and environment professionals are the second least diverse profession in the UK. The Climate Change and Sustainability Team will be actively exploring ways of attracting people from minority backgrounds.

Innovation and Partnerships

- 8.8** A key role for the Council is how we develop partnerships and empower change. This is an area that has been particularly successful for the Climate Change Board, where partnerships forged have helped drive opportunities and collaboration, and provided us with expertise to help develop our Strategy and Action Plan.
- 8.9** One of the biggest challenges that the Council is facing in terms of tackling climate change is capacity and resource. Whilst Coventry is fortunate to have a dedicated Climate Change team, we are limited in terms of people power, expertise and funding which is a barrier to delivering at scale and pace. However, what we do have is extensive local knowledge and assets. The Strategic Energy Partnership that the Council entered with E.ON in 2023 is a pioneering model and approach to addressing this challenge. This has effectively doubled the size of the climate change team and brings significant expertise and investment opportunities for net zero projects.
- 8.10** The state-of-the-art Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) that opened in 2023 was borne out of a need to address challenges around recycling, including rising costs, changing legislation and a volatile resale market. Coventry, alongside 7 other Local Authorities collaborated to form 'Sherbourne Recycling Ltd' to address these challenges. This innovative approach has resulted in creation of the most advanced MRF of its kind in the UK.
- 8.11** The Council has helped develop many other partnerships, including a 'Citywide Innovation Board' which brings together the public and private sector alongside academia to explore creative solutions to some of the city's challenges, including climate change and decarbonisation. Some of the exciting opportunities coming out of this work include exploring drone and autonomous technology, and the city is keen to trial new technologies and act as a living lab.

Driving change through Policy

- 8.12** The Climate Change Strategy is intended to help influence policy development by setting out the key areas we need to address to create a sustainable future city.
- 8.13** Perhaps the most influential policy to inform future development in Coventry is the 'Local Plan', a significant policy and land use planning document that dictates the nature of land uses and future development of buildings, infrastructure and the public realm. As part of the Local Plan Review process the Council is considering where it could place greater emphasis on specific policy areas – such as those which address a number of climate change and sustainability issues to help deliver our priorities across all five pathway areas.
- 8.14** It is also important that policy gap areas are addressed, such as introduction of an adaptation and resilience strategy which is a significant gap in current policy and will influence service delivery and operations. Also, we need to ensure that policies are consistent and joined up, which requires regular reviews to be undertaken to ensure that our collective policies reflect the ambitions and principles of the Climate Change Strategy and broader One Coventry Plan.

Sustainable Procurement and Social Value

- 8.15** The Council works with a very broad supply chain to purchase both goods and services. This is a great opportunity to encourage suppliers to take more action on climate change and sustainability, alongside social value.
- 8.16** The Council recently adopted a Social Value Framework and recent changes in legislation with the introduction of the National Policy Statement for national procurement under the Procurement Act (2023) strengthens the requirement to address environmental sustainability and climate change. There is opportunity to further strengthen procurement policy, ensuring that all five pathways are embedded so that suppliers support delivery of the Strategy.

Communication and Involvement

- 8.17** The feedback from the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy consultation contained a call for improved communication and engagement around climate change and related projects. The Council is developing an engagement plan for this, and already taking action in response to this through the publication of a new Climate Change Newsletter and more regular communications to help raise public awareness, be more transparent and build trust.
- 8.18** People also wanted to ensure that communications and engagement are inclusive and promote equality and diversity. This is something the Council are working hard to improve, offering materials in multiple languages and formats and supporting ways to address digital exclusion. The Council collected over 500 responses and 1855 comments and the report can be found here [Climate Change Strategy 2023 – 2030 consultation feedback executive summary – Coventry City Council](#). Whilst the feedback received was really valuable, the demographics of the responses received show there is more engagement work to do to involve key parts of the population, particularly in relation to low response rates from younger people and ethnically diverse communities.
- 8.19** Consultation on the Draft Climate Change Strategy was important to help understand the views of our communities across the city and how the Council can support and involve people in making positive changes. The exercise helped us to gather feedback on the Strategy and key themes within it and to understand resident and organisations' priorities as well as highlighting any gaps.
- 8.20** 81% of respondents to the Council's Climate Change survey are 'concerned' or 'very concerned' about climate change. People told us the most important aspect of tackling climate change is to ensure a positive future for the next generation.
- 8.21** It is important for us to understand what needs to be done to win the hearts and minds of the 19% of the respondents who don't consider sustainability and climate change to be an issue of concern. A number of comments from this group reflected some cynicism, with concerns about people's freedoms being reduced, scepticism of the science, a feeling that it is too vast an issue to worry about and that individuals can't make a difference when faced with major polluting countries and corporations. Some fed back that they had bigger worries related to the cost of living. The collective impact of 'a business-as-usual approach' from the 19% (which could be higher as it's likely people who don't consider climate change an issue are less likely to respond to a consultation on this issue) could be significant on the city and its ability to address the issues facing the population.
- 8.22** In order to engage those that feel apathy or disagree with climate science and the need for a Climate Change Strategy, the Council will need to look at ways to identify opportunities that will benefit people, regardless of whether they consider climate change an issue or not, and work in a transparent way to build trust and buy-in to projects.
- 8.23** The Climate Change Strategy cannot be delivered without citywide support and involving and empowering our communities is vital to create change. There is a need to build a closer working relationship with communities and the voluntary sector working at the neighbourhood level to help drive progressive action. It's very important that people don't feel like changes are being done to them and instead they can play a positive role in influencing change and being part of the journey.

8.24 An overarching Communications and Involvement Strategy will provide a template for all projects delivered through the Climate Change Action Plan. As part of this, the Council will consider a range of different tools for improving community engagement to ensure this aligns with our Just Transition principles. Communication will be clear and accessible and we will consider a range of creative and innovative ways to engage and work closely with community and faith leaders to get a broader reach into communities. We will seek to do more targeted engagement for under-represented groups, and use community panels to explore local issues and test ideas, using the arts and culture as a tool for engagement, alongside conducting research into market segmentation to help us better understand our communities, potential barriers to involvement, and ways to overcome these.

Recommendations

The Council has a leading role to play in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. We are being bold in our approach, but there is still a lot more to do. This requires wider organisational and cultural change, with the right levels of resource and knowledge in place to support the changes we need to make to lead from the front:

- Review the structure of the Council's Climate Change and Sustainability Team to ensure enough levels of resourcing, whilst increasing the equality, diversity and inclusivity of the workforce

- Develop and deliver climate change training to increase education and awareness and embed this knowledge into the delivery of services. Work across Council departments to help drive and develop policies that embed sustainability within all areas of the organisation
- Continue to be at the forefront of innovation, seeking out best practice, generating ideas, pursuing funding and research opportunities and forming consortiums and partnerships to tackle key challenges and pilot new technologies and initiatives in the city
- Build on existing partnerships and create new ones, using the Climate Change Board as a vehicle for bringing together key organisations to collectively work together to help deliver the Climate Change Strategy, monitor performance and continue to generate new ideas and opportunities
- Develop a Climate Change Communications and Involvement Strategy to be used as a template for all projects, incorporating monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure a consistent approach which is accessible and inclusive, providing opportunities for meaningful community engagement according to our Just Transition Principles.

9.0 Finance

9.1 This Strategy has big ambitions, but Coventry will need to find significant funds to deliver our vision. Part of the mix of opportunities for attracting funding and investment will include joint ventures in partnership with third parties including the private sector, local communities, higher education, private charitable trusts and foundations, which may unlock funding opportunities that the Council would otherwise be unable to access.

9.2 Green finance models are rapidly evolving, unlocking new finance and funding opportunities, and we will need to be creative and innovative in our approach to secure investment. There will be an increasing need to secure investment from the private sector and find innovative ways to raise funds. Not all projects in our action plan have yet been costed but the Net Zero Routemap provides a useful guide to the potential scale of investment required to achieve net zero by 2050.

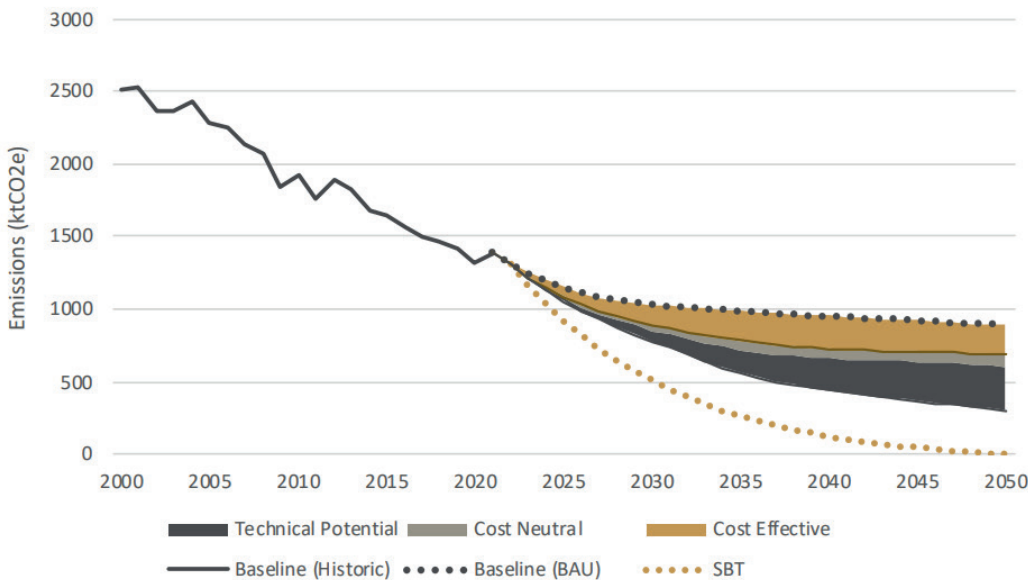


Figure 26 – Coventry's Carbon Reduction Potential Options (Net Zero Route Map, n.d.)

9.3 The Route Map independently assessed levels of investment required to achieve the necessary carbon reductions illustrated in figure 26, which are summarised below:

Option	Annual Investment Required (for 15 years)	Reduction in city's annual energy bill	Carbon reduction
Cost-effective	£53m	£114m	23%
Cost-neutral	£165m	£122m	32%
Technical potential	£654m	£185m	66%

9.4 The modelled actions illustrate that there is still a gap in reaching the 2050 target and the huge scale of investment needed. This gap will need to be addressed by future innovations and advances in technology. The introductions of taxation and financial incentives from the Government in future years may render more of the current technically viable options into more economically viable ones, especially if they create jobs and stimulate the economy. Carbon offsetting is also considered, which would require planting 44 million trees across the UK to close Coventry's gap to net zero! This illustrates that the scale of the challenge goes well beyond Coventry's boundary and will require leadership and investment in infrastructure at a national level to support the transition to net zero by 2050.

9.5 Whilst the huge investment costs are beyond any grant funding or resource the Council and city partners can access, it does demonstrate that there is an 'invest to save' case and wider benefits generated by a significant reduction in energy bills and job creation. This requires an approach to financial business case accounting which takes into account

the whole lifetime costings of investments and assets, and that considers the wider economic value to the city of the investment which can't be captured in direct returns. This must be developed further to also consider the costs of environmental impacts, to reflect fully the costs of the energy and materials used and their impacts in manufacture and construction the impacts during the lifetime of a product or building's use and the final costs of re-use and/or responsible recycling/disposal. We will be faced with choices that will need to account for the whole cost during the lifetime of an asset including an assessment of the costs of doing nothing.

9.6 The Council and partners will need to consider all environmental investment opportunities to work out not only the potential investment and levels of return, but also the delivery strategy to inform financing arrangements and benefit realisation. Opportunities may exist to reinvest financial returns from more commercially viable projects into less financially sustainable programmes to support delivery of measures where it is more difficult to attract finance.

9.7 It's vital that the Council develop collaborative partnerships to share the financial and delivery burden, such as the Strategic Energy Partnership with E.ON. The Council is keen to work with partners that can bring expertise to develop commercial business opportunities to deliver the necessary services and infrastructure to support a low carbon economy and delivery of the wider Strategy.

Funding Opportunities and Options

9.8 Both government grant and private sector investment will be required to support the transition to net zero. To date, Coventry has already benefitted from securing significant investment for domestic retrofit, public sector building decarbonisation and low carbon and active travel transport initiatives, which have helped to lever in further private match investment, but the scale of investment needs to increase significantly in order to deliver the scale of change required.

9.9 Bidding for government funding is often resource intensive and fiercely competitive, with no guarantee of success. This isn't helpful for building local market confidence as limits the ability to plan longer term programmes. Through the West Midlands Trailblazer Devolution Deal, funding will be awarded via a multi-year Single Settlement which seeks to simplify current funding arrangements and give more flexibility and longevity of funding that will benefit local authorities from 2025 onwards, which will be an important source of funding for the Action Plan.

9.10 The Council is working in partnership with WMCA on a strategic approach to secure investment for Coventry's socio-economic and environmental priorities through the Single Settlement. Through this, we have identified the key areas for investment for Coventry over the next 5+ years, with key priorities including securing new investment in and accelerating the growth of green industries and ensuring a "just transition" to net zero. This will include securing investment in energy and retrofit, circular economy, adaptation and resilience and nature, as well as developing the green skills within local businesses and the local workforce.

9.11 New financial and investment models will be key to supporting the mix of funding and securing investment going forwards. Coventry is fortunate that the West Midlands

Combined Authority is part of the Department for Net Zero and Energy Security's Low Carbon Accelerator Programme, which is bringing together a consortium of experts to develop blended finance models to support decarbonisation activity, which includes Net Zero Neighbourhoods.

9.12 The West Midlands Combined Authority has been selected as one of just four areas in the UK to deliver Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) programmes, which link to the Government's Green Finance Strategy (2023) to support a green industrial revolution and transition to a climate resilient, nature-positive, net-zero economy. The LINC programme seeks to enable the public sector (and their third sector partners) to become more market-facing with their nature-based projects and programmes and to attract private finance. The programme will help to build capacity, develop effective governance arrangements, and capability of local leaders and partner organisations.

9.13 It's essential that the Council has the resource, capacity and capability to ensure we are innovative in our approach to seeking investment opportunities and maximise the benefits from the evolving green finance markets, as well as continue to bid into grant funding opportunities. Also, there are lots of smaller grants available for communities, so it is important that community groups are given support with funding bids and that the Council and partners highlight and signpost funding opportunities.

9.14 The Council's own Treasury Management Strategy, which sets the framework for its own borrowing and investment activity, will need to consider and accommodate the Climate Change agenda, striking an appropriate balance between financial stewardship, return on investment and environmental benefit.

9.15 Part of the mix of opportunities for attracting funding and investment will include joint ventures in partnership with third parties including the private sector, local communities, higher education, private charitable trusts and foundations, which may unlock funding opportunities that the Council would otherwise be unable to access. Also, there are lots of smaller grants available for communities, so it is important that community groups are given support with funding bids and that the Council and partners highlight and signpost funding opportunities.

10.0 Monitoring Progress

How do we know what effect we are having and whether it is working?

10.1 Data collection will be important to inform the impact of implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan. Some of the key targets will include:

- The current interim target for net zero from the Covenant of Mayors is a minimum 55% reduction of 1990 levels by 2030 with a UK Government target now set for a 68% reduction and a 100% reduction of 1990 levels by 2050;
- Increasing the area of green space managed to protect nature across the city from 11% working towards 30% by 2030;
- Local accessible green space of at least 2ha within 300 metres of the doorstep of residents;
- Increase tree canopy cover across the city, striving to plant 360,000 trees by 2032;
- Increase rates in recycling up to at least national average 45%, striving to aim above this.

Further targets will be developed around key areas including adaptation and resilience and the green investment, jobs and skills.

10.2 It is important that the Council are transparent around the progress we are making as a city to tackle climate change. The Climate Action plan developed alongside the Strategy sets out the practical actions that the Council, as well as our partners, businesses and communities need to take to meet net zero and create a more sustainable future city. The city's Climate Change Board will help to hold it accountable. It is a live document, which will evolve to reflect the growing programme of activity around this agenda.

10.3 Progress on tackling the causes and consequences of climate change will be reported publicly in the Council's One Coventry Performance Indicators Report, which will identify whether targets and goals have been achieved or on track to do so, as many of the actions are longer term than a year.

10.4 The Action Plan, like the Strategy is divided into the five Pathways alongside a section on Council action. The actions include existing, planned and aspirational projects, looking over the short, medium and long term. It defines the delivery lead, alongside partners, potential funding and resource requirements and gives a priority rating to identify the highest impact projects. Whilst the Council is assigned the role of project lead on many of the actions, there are a number of projects that rely on others taking a lead or supporting role in delivery, which includes individuals, communities, businesses and organisations across the city, emphasising that action is required on a citywide level.

10.5 It is also important that we consider how pathways and projects in the action plan interconnect. There will be many instances where the delivery of one action impacts upon another. It is important to understand the relationships between the five pathways, and how some actions could benefit or potentially hinder another. We will aim to ensure activities across these different areas are closely monitored and encourage cross-partner and project working. Opportunities for actions in one area may also present new opportunities for other areas of activity, we will encourage this too.

10.6 We will continue to lead with strong governance to manage the action plan, with the city's Climate Change Board and pathway groups providing an important assurance role to support delivery.

11.0 Conclusion and next steps

- 11.1** This Strategy gives a comprehensive insight into the challenges and opportunities we collectively face in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. Whilst the challenges ahead are significant, taking positive action to address them brings about real opportunity to create a better future for our city and its residents. This is a fantastic chance for Coventry to make its mark on the global stage as an innovative, forward-thinking city capable of delivering meaningful change and leading the green industrial revolution. Everyone has a part to play and together we can create positive and lasting change to benefit the city now, and for future generations.
- 11.2** The city's Climate Change Board and pathway groups will continue to provide an independent role in steering the successful delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan and governance and resources at the Council will be organised to support successful delivery.
- 11.3** The Council and its partners will continue to lobby regional and national governments for change and support. We will seek out best practice from around the world, be bold and innovative in our approach and listen to feedback and reflect on lessons learnt.
- 11.4** We recognise that there is a huge amount to do, and it is important to be aspirational but practical about what can be achieved. We will work hard to raise finance, engage partners and work with communities and organisations across the city to help remove barriers, identify opportunities. We must also ensure we consider the risks and impacts of activities and take collective action to deliver a just transition as part of this.

