

Climate Action Plan 2026 - 2027

TRANSFORMING CHERWELL



Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	03
<u>Climate Action Plan</u>	06

Introduction

Introduction

Climate change is already affecting communities across the world and the need to act has never been more important. While global progress is slow, it remains vital that the UK and Cherwell continue to transition to a net zero and more resilient future. The benefits of climate action go well beyond improving our resilience to climate change and reducing carbon emissions. It helps create warmer homes, cleaner and greener places, lower running costs for the Council and healthier, more resilient communities. The many benefits climate action can bring is why sustainability remains a core priority for Cherwell District Council and why it needs to be embedded across all our services and strategic decision making.

Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019, the Council has taken important steps, including developing a Climate Change Framework and commissioning detailed evidence bases to guide future priorities and activities.

The Climate Action Plan 2026-27 has been produced in close collaboration with all Cherwell District Council service areas and is authored by the Biodiversity and Climate Resilience Service, with support from Bioregional. The plan builds on the previous Climate Action Plan 2024-26 and is guided by the Climate Change Framework (2020).

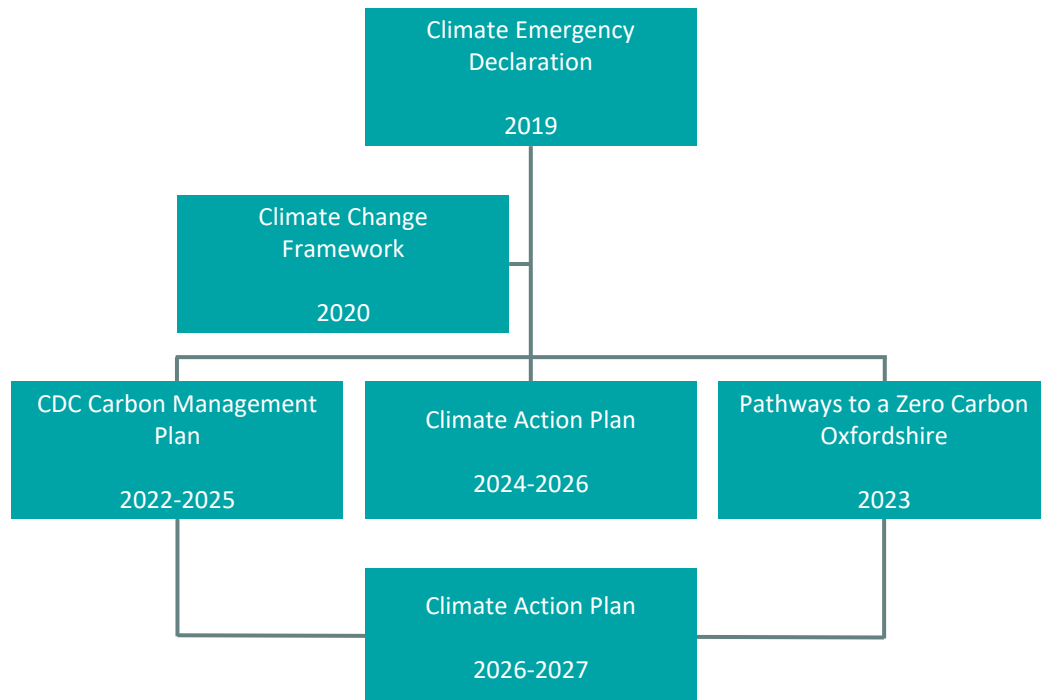
This document is an internal operational plan that sets out how the council will deliver commitments towards its net zero ambitions. Actions identified align to several significant county-wide initiatives in which Cherwell District Council is an active partner. Most notably, this plan supports Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO), which is endorsed by the Council and overseen by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.



Introduction

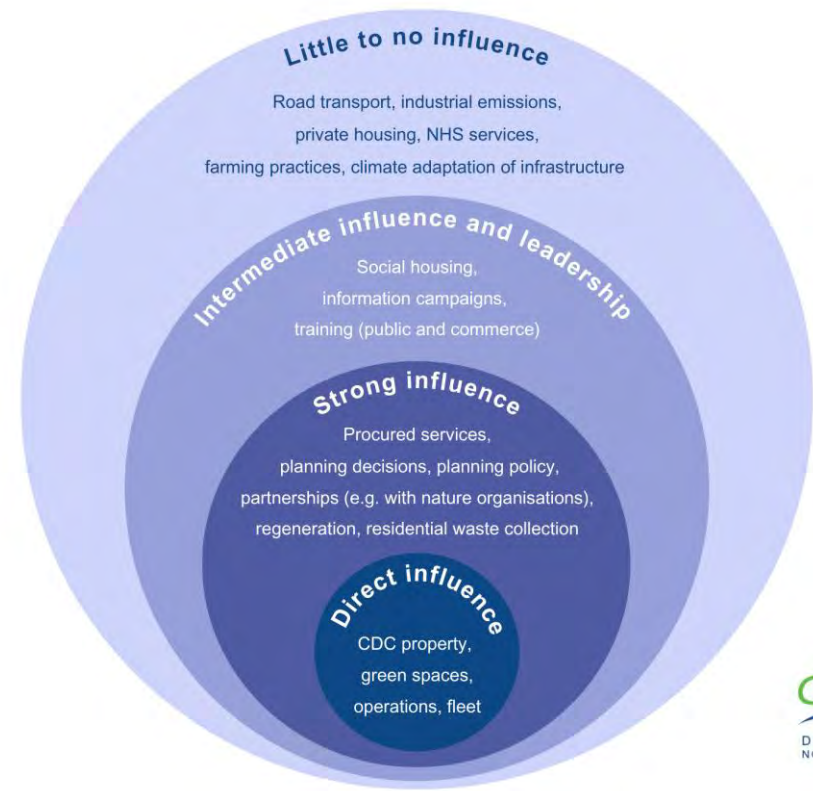
The Climate Action Plan 2026-27 is informed by the following key Cherwell District Council documents:

- Climate Action Plan 2024-26
- Climate Action Framework 2020
- Carbon Management Plan 2022-2025
- District Carbon Pathways and Roadmap to Net-Zero Report (2025)
- Commercial and Industrial Emissions Report (2025)
- Internal Emissions Pathway Report (2025)
- Fleet and Depot Decarbonisation Review (2025)



The Council’s ability to influence emissions varies across its activities. The diagram (below) illustrates the areas where the Council has strong, moderate or limited influence over carbon emission reduction, helping to guide priorities and deliver effective impact.

A wide range of actions across many sources of emissions are included within this plan. Some of the most important actions will not directly reduce emissions but are essential to enable future activity or access to funding.



Climate Action Plan

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan 2026-27 is based on 14 goals which support the Council's net-zero ambitions:

Cherwell District Council

1.	Reduce emissions from council buildings to net zero by 2030
2.	Reduce emissions from council fleet to net zero by 2030
3.	Reduce emissions from staff business mileage to net zero by 2030
4.	Reduce the environmental impact of wider council activities (e.g. procurement and staff commuting)
5.	Ensure robust governance and monitoring

Cherwell District

6.	Ensure local planning supports biodiversity and climate resilience
7.	Support emissions reductions from transport
8.	Support emissions reductions from housing
9.	Support emissions reductions from businesses
10.	Support emissions reductions from waste and resource use
11.	Support the local, low-carbon energy transition
12.	Support climate resilience and adaptation
13.	Support biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery
14.	Work in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders

The following key defines 'carbon saving potential' classifications for Cherwell District Council actions.

- Enable = No direct emissions reduction but enables other or future activity.
- Low = Training and engagement that may lead to others to act.
- Medium = Activity which will lead to quantifiable emissions reduction but is limited to influencing overall council emissions.
- High = Significant opportunity to tackle a key source of emissions reported in the Council's annual Greenhouse Gas Report.

Cherwell District Council Actions

Area	Action ID	Action	Emissions Area	Goal Supported	Carbon Saving Potential	KPI
Council	1	Develop and implement a comprehensive EV charging management framework, covering maintenance, monitoring, management and use.	Fleet	2,7	Enable	Framework approved; training rolled out; kWh used in EVs
Council	2	Complete the roll out of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) to replace diesel use in hard to electrify fleet vehicles.	Fleet	2	High	No. vehicles on HVO; Litres used
Council	3	Review and plan for infrastructure requirements for future EV transition, including fleet depots, network supply upgrade needs and innovative options to overcome grid constraints.	Fleet	2	Enable	Delivery plan agreed
Council	4	Evaluate opportunities for renewable energy across the Council's estate (land and property), including how community energy could support delivery.	Property	1,11	High	No. of opportunities being explored
Council	5	Improve council energy performance by appointing specialist support for utility bill management and contract procurement.	Property	1	Medium	Specialist appointed
Council	6	Identify opportunities to improve energy management through enhancing building management systems.	Property	1	Medium	No. opportunities identified
Council	7	Continue to transition council buildings and leisure facilities to low carbon operations, including delivery of the Capital Works Programme (e.g. Spiceball Leisure Centre Solar PV Wall), switch to low carbon heating sources (e.g. removal of radiant gas heaters), integrate energy-saving measures into routine maintenance and identify building level requirements to meet net zero operations.	Property	1	High	No. of new energy-saving measures/projects complete; Requirements identified
Council	8	Undertake a review to explore opportunities to enhance biodiversity and nature recovery across the Council's estate (land and property) to comply with Biodiversity Duty, support delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and offer potential for local carbon sequestration.	Property	13	Enable	Review complete
Council	9	Review cycling facilities/infrastructure at council owned/controlled properties to ensure adequacy and explore opportunities for funding where required.	Staff	3,4	Low	Review complete

Cherwell District Council Actions

Area	Action ID	Action	Emissions Area	Goal Supported	Carbon Saving Potential	KPI
Council	10	Complete an assessment of council business mileage and staff commuting emissions sources to explore options for decarbonisation.	Staff	3,4,7	High	Review complete
Council	11	Develop and deliver an internal staff awareness and behaviour change campaign that supports sustainable workplace behaviours (e.g. commuting, waste, energy). To include considerations for providing Environmental Awareness e-learning to all staff.	Staff	3,4	Low	No. Viva Engage posts; No. events/communications and reach
Council	12	Consider sustainability requirements (e.g. use of electric vehicles and tools) within the tender specification for the landscape maintenance contract (1st April 2027).	Procurement	4	Medium	New requirements in tender
Council	13	Undertake an assessment of selective procurement activities, including review of upcoming renewals/tenders, engagement with high emission contractors and options for decarbonisation.	Procurement	4	High	Review complete
Council	14	Explore options for reducing waste and improving circular resource management across council services, including operational, collection and construction activities.	Waste/Resources	4,10	High	Review complete
Council	15	Improve data collection for the Council's greenhouse gas reporting, including aligning to the GHG Protocol Standard and consider in-house delivery.	Governance & Monitoring	All	Enable	Review complete
Council	16	Begin to develop a Council Climate Resilience Risk Register to identify high-risk service areas and the actions required to mitigate risk now and in the future.	Governance & Monitoring	5,12	Enable	No. risks identified
Council	17	Embed climate resilience considerations into all service plans and routinely apply the Carbon Impact Assessment Tool to support informed decision making.	Governance & Monitoring	All	Enable	% of Service Plans with climate actions; No. of CIA completed
Council	18	Develop a multi-year strategy and delivery plan for future council climate action activities, to accompany the annual progress update to Executive.	Governance & Monitoring	All	Enable	Strategy and plan complete
Council	19	Identify and secure funding opportunities to support Cherwell's biodiversity and climate resilience ambitions, including innovative solutions and grant funding.	Funding	All	Enable	No. funding bids; funding secured

Cherwell District Actions

Area	Action ID	Action	Emissions Area	Goal Supported	KPI
District	20	Leverage existing partnerships to strengthen collaboration with neighbouring authorities and local partners to strengthen joint communication and engagement with residents and businesses on climate and biodiversity action e.g. Climate Action Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership.	Communications & Engagement	All	No. joint campaigns run, No. communications issued
District	21	Celebrate and promote climate and biodiversity projects delivered by the council and local partners, showcasing their positive impact and inspiring further action across the district.	Communications & Engagement	All	No. activities identified and promoted
District	22	Provide clear, ongoing support to residents and communities to reduce waste, recycle and use resources wisely, including water saving, home composting, food waste and low carbon diet advice and initiatives.	Communications & Engagement	10	No. of engagements e.g. No. posts, events and reach
District	23	Promote low carbon travel and energy advice and opportunities across the district by encouraging car sharing, active travel and energy-saving measures in homes and workplaces.	Communications & Engagement	7,8,11	No. of engagements e.g. No. posts, events and reach
District	24	Work with local partners to produce a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for Cherwell and the wider county.	Evidence	All	Plan complete
District	25	Work collaboratively with partners and internal service areas to identify opportunities to deliver local energy transition opportunities identified through the Local Area Energy Plan for Cherwell.	Evidence	All	No. opportunities identified/in development
District	26	Identify how local planning (e.g. supporting neighbourhood plans) can strengthen biodiversity and climate resilience using an evidence-led approach (e.g. Local Area Energy Planning), to enable low-carbon infrastructure and design, nature recovery and local renewable energy.	Planning	6	No. opportunities identified
District	27	Integrate climate resilience and nature positive approaches into key planning projects (e.g. NW Bicester Eco-Town and Banbury masterplan).	Planning	All	No. opportunities identified
District	28	Ensure Oxfordshire-wide transport and connectivity priorities are embedded into Cherwell's local strategy and plans, including integration of LCWIP into the Council's Infrastructure Schedule.	Transport	7	No. schemes integrated or supported

Cherwell District Actions

Area	Action ID	Action	Emissions Area	Goal Supported	KPI
District	29	Strengthen EV charging provision across Cherwell, including on council owned and controlled sites (e.g. LEVI), supporting partnership work (Oxfordshire EV infrastructure strategy) and ensuring new and re-developments enhance EV charging capacity.	Transport	7	No. EV chargers
District	30	Improve understanding of the Council's residential assets to identify opportunities for decarbonisation and funding.	Household	8	Review complete
District	31	Work with local partners to deliver existing and new opportunities to support household energy efficiency improvements (e.g. Warm Homes, Heat Pump Ready, Home Improvement Loans).	Household	8,14	No. of schemes supported
District	32	Continue to enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) to encourage landlords to comply with minimum energy efficiency requirements.	Household	8	No. MEES enforcement interventions
District	33	Begin to work with local colleges, training providers and employers to grow the district's green skills pipeline (e.g. EV maintenance, heat pump installation), alongside create apprenticeship and training opportunities through s106 skills plans and social value commitments.	Business	9,14	Partners identified; No. training/apprenticeship opportunities
District	34	Explore opportunities for Cherwell focussed business support and networks to help organisations access resources, tools, grants and guidance (e.g. carbon assessments, action plans, energy efficiency).	Business	9	No. opportunities identified
District	35	Work with agricultural and rural stakeholders to identify opportunities that enhance biodiversity and climate resilience (e.g. sustainable land management, flood risk alleviation, carbon sequestration and nature recovery).	Agriculture	12,13,14	No. opportunities being explored
District	36	Support community groups and parish councils in best practice and advice, including council support for community energy projects across Cherwell to maximise incoming funding opportunities from GB Energy and the Local Power Plan.	Community	All	No. of groups/projects supported
District	37	Work with local partners to enhance biodiversity across Cherwell by supporting collaborative plans (e.g. Oxfordshire Nature Finance Strategy, Local Nature Recovery Strategy) and understand the Council's role in emerging opportunities.	Biodiversity	13,14	No. projects identified or underway

Image credits: cover – Cherwell District Council.
Additional image credits: [Kyle Bushnell](#) via Unsplash;
Images by Russell / Alamy, zstockphoto via Canva.