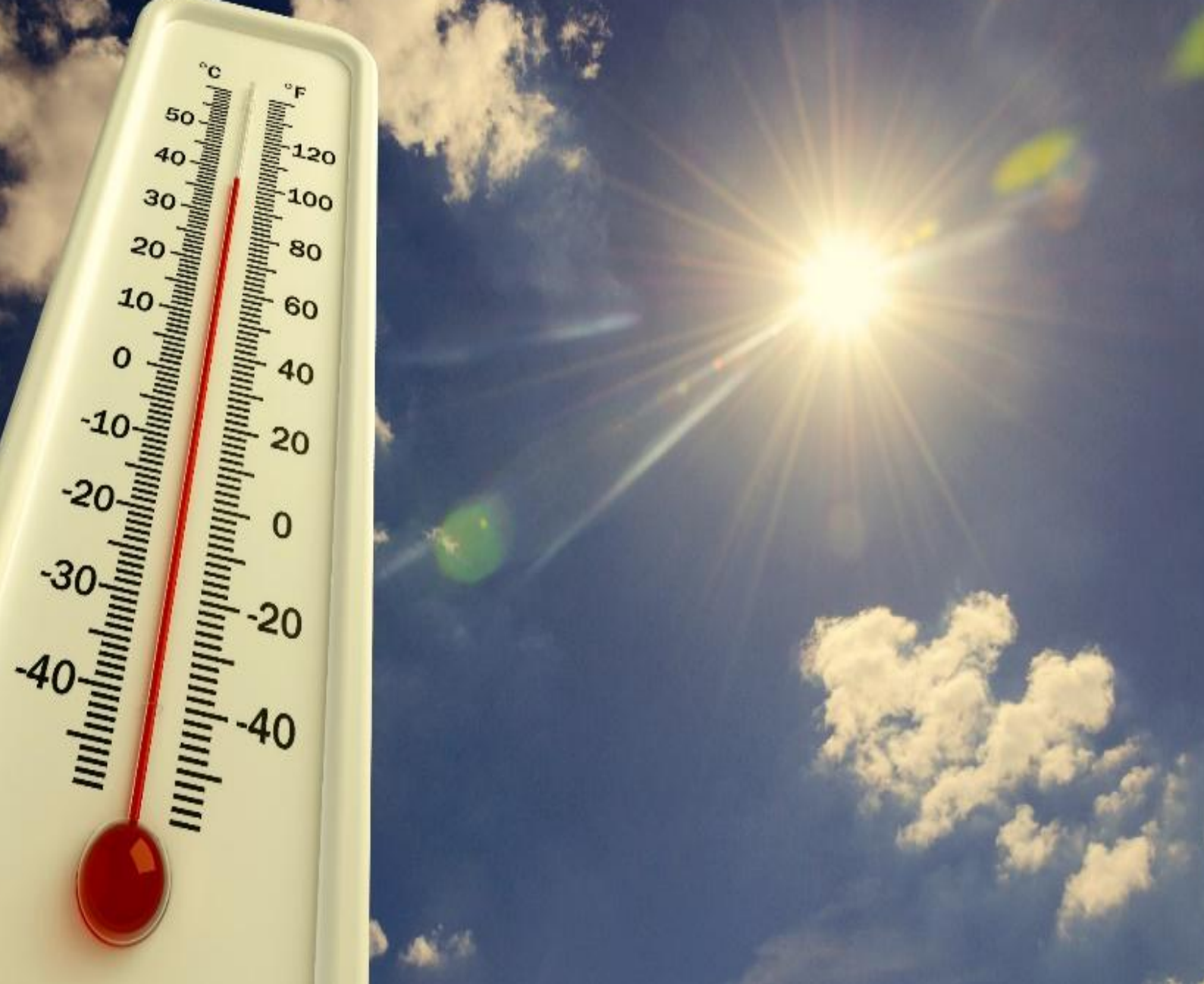




Derry City & Strabane District Council Climate & Sustainability Progress Report

2026



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin**

Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Destrack Cooncil



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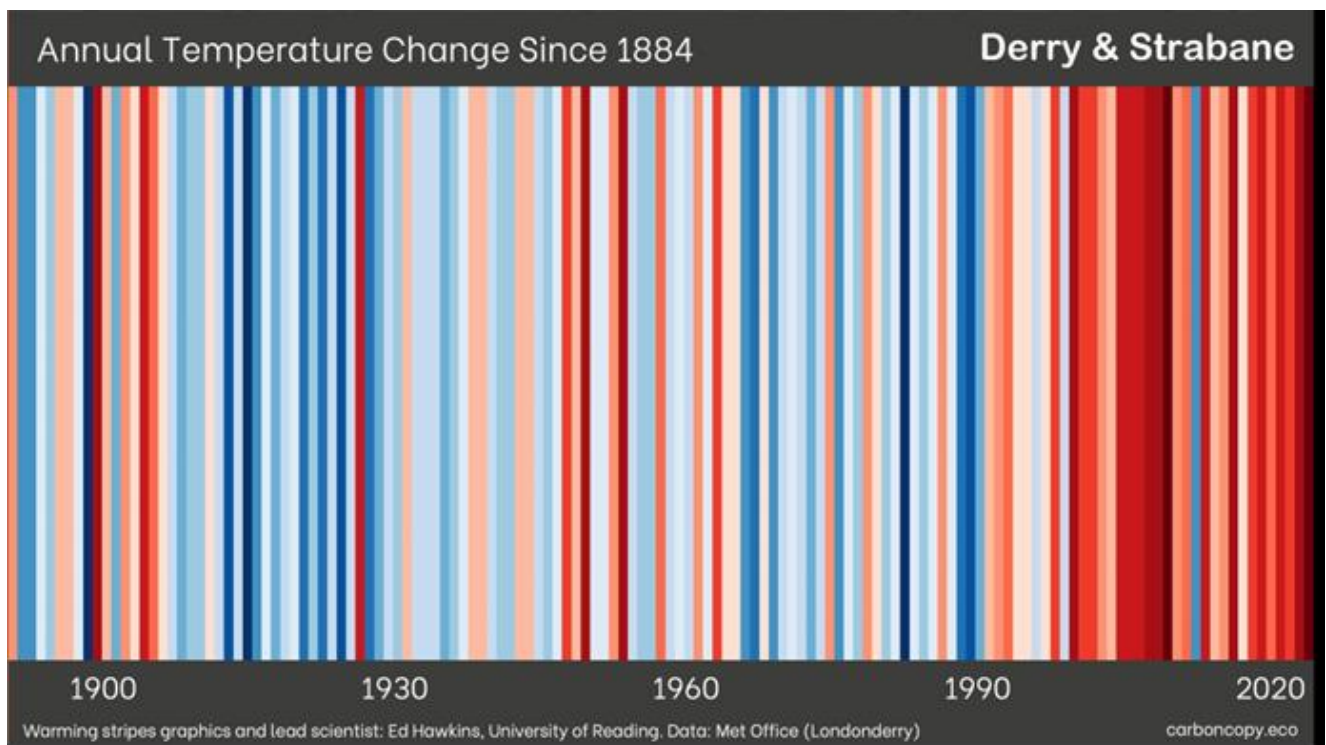
Introduction

Climate change, biodiversity loss and increasing pressure on our natural resources are among the greatest challenges facing communities today. Across Derry and Strabane we are already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate through more frequent severe weather events, flooding risks and changing environmental conditions.

At the same time, these challenges present opportunities. By investing in sustainable travel, nature recovery, renewable energy, climate resilience and local food systems, we can create healthier communities, support economic growth and improve quality of life for everyone.

While Derry City and Strabane District Council is currently developing its Climate Change Strategy 2026-2045 and associated Climate Action Plan, significant work is already underway across the Council and with our partners to reduce emissions, strengthen resilience, support biodiversity and empower local communities to take action.

This report highlights some of the progress made to date and sets the foundations for the next phase of climate action across our City & District.



Derry & Strabane Warming Stripes

At a Glance Progress Highlights 2025/26

Climate Leadership

- Climate Change Strategy 2027-2045 & Climate Action Plan under development
- Climate Commission established with over 40 members from 28 organisations

Research & Evidence

- Greenhouse Gas Baseline completed & Net Zero Carbon Roadmap developed
- Climate Risk & Opportunity Assessment completed
- Community Climate Conversations held & Climate Justice and Vulnerability Analysis

Climate Resilience

- Northern Ireland's first Local Authority Climate Adaptation Plan under review
- Community Resilience pilot completed
- Blueprint project delivered
- Sustainable Food
 - Bronze Sustainable Food Places Award achieved
 - Acorn Farm programme supporting local households & food growing
 - £5.6 million secured for Acorn Farm Sustainable Food Hub

Circular Economy

- Repair, reuse and circular economy partnerships expanded
- Sustainable event programmes delivered

Active Travel

- 100km of traffic-free routes delivered & 45km currently in development

Energy & Decarbonisation

- Solar PV and battery projects delivered & EV infrastructure programme progressing
- Green energy tariff secured
- Net Zero Decarbonising Strabane pilot advancing

Nature Recovery

- Green Infrastructure Plan implementation continuing
- Pollinator and biodiversity initiatives expanded
- Rights of Nature work progressing

Why Action Matters

The evidence for climate change is clear.

Northern Ireland is becoming warmer and wetter, with more frequent extreme weather events, increasing flood risks and more frequent periods of extreme heat. The last three years have all ranked among the UK's warmest on record.

Climate change is also closely linked to biodiversity loss, with species and habitats facing growing pressures across the UK and Ireland.

For Derry and Strabane, these changes affect our communities, infrastructure, economy, health and natural environment. They also highlight the importance of building resilience while reducing emissions and restoring nature.

Strategic Context

The most significant global climate target to date, is the Paris Agreement with a goal to prevent global average temperature rising above 1.5°C of pre-industrial levels. The UK legal framework is set down in the Climate Change Act 2008 for England, Wales and NI.

The first NI Climate Change Bill and subsequent Act was passed in 2022 establishing a Net Zero emissions target by 2050 and 46% methane reduction target by 2050. NI Departments are required to publish sectoral plans to meet targets with public bodies required to report on climate action, mitigation, risk, adaptation, policies and plans.

In addition, the need to consider climate and environmental considerations are included in a number of national and local policies and plans including the NI Green Growth Strategy, Northern Ireland Environment Strategy, Nature Positive 2030 and NI Energy Strategy.



Sustainability and environmental protection are strategically embedded within the City and District's Strategic Growth Plan and City Deal proposition with an emphasis on environmental wellbeing, circular economy and sustainability and inclusivity.

The Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan vision is to achieve; A thriving, prosperous and sustainable City and District with equality of opportunity for all.

Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan (Nov. 2017)



Climate Emergency Pledge, Commitments & Governance

Council declared a climate emergency in **July 2019** followed by the Climate Emergency Pledge.

Council undertakes to:

Ensure that all strategic and policy decisions and budgets will immediately fall are in line with the shift to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 while also ensuring that the Derry City and Strabane District Council area as far as practically possible is prepared for and resilient to the effects of climate change.

DCSDC Climate Pledge 2020

Governance

A cross departmental Climate Action Working Group and All Party Climate Emergency Working Group coordinate and oversee climate action.

Climate Screening – all policy and committee decisions are subject to climate change screening process which considers both adaptation and mitigation.

Commitments

Council have committed to the following national and international declarations:

- Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy
- Glasgow Food & Climate Change Declaration
- United Nations Race to Zero & Race to Resilience
- Rights of Nature
- Council currently report to the DAERA Public Body reporting platform for mitigation and adaptation actions

Building the Foundations for Climate Action

Developing Our Climate Change Strategy

During 2025 and 2026 the Council has focused on establishing the evidence, partnerships and governance arrangements needed to support long-term climate action.

The Climate Change Strategy 2026-2045 will provide the overarching framework for climate action across the district.

The Strategy will:

- Establish a long-term vision for a net zero and climate resilient district.
- Set strategic priorities and objectives.
- Align with the Council's Climate Emergency Pledge.
- Strengthen collaboration with communities, businesses and partner organisations.
- Support delivery of a fair and inclusive transition.

Supporting the Strategy, future Climate Action Plans will be delivered through rolling five-year implementation programmes.

Derry & Strabane Sustainability & Climate Commission

One of the most significant developments during the reporting period has been the establishment of the Derry & Strabane Sustainability & Climate Commission.

The Commission brings together more than 40 members from 28 organisations representing:

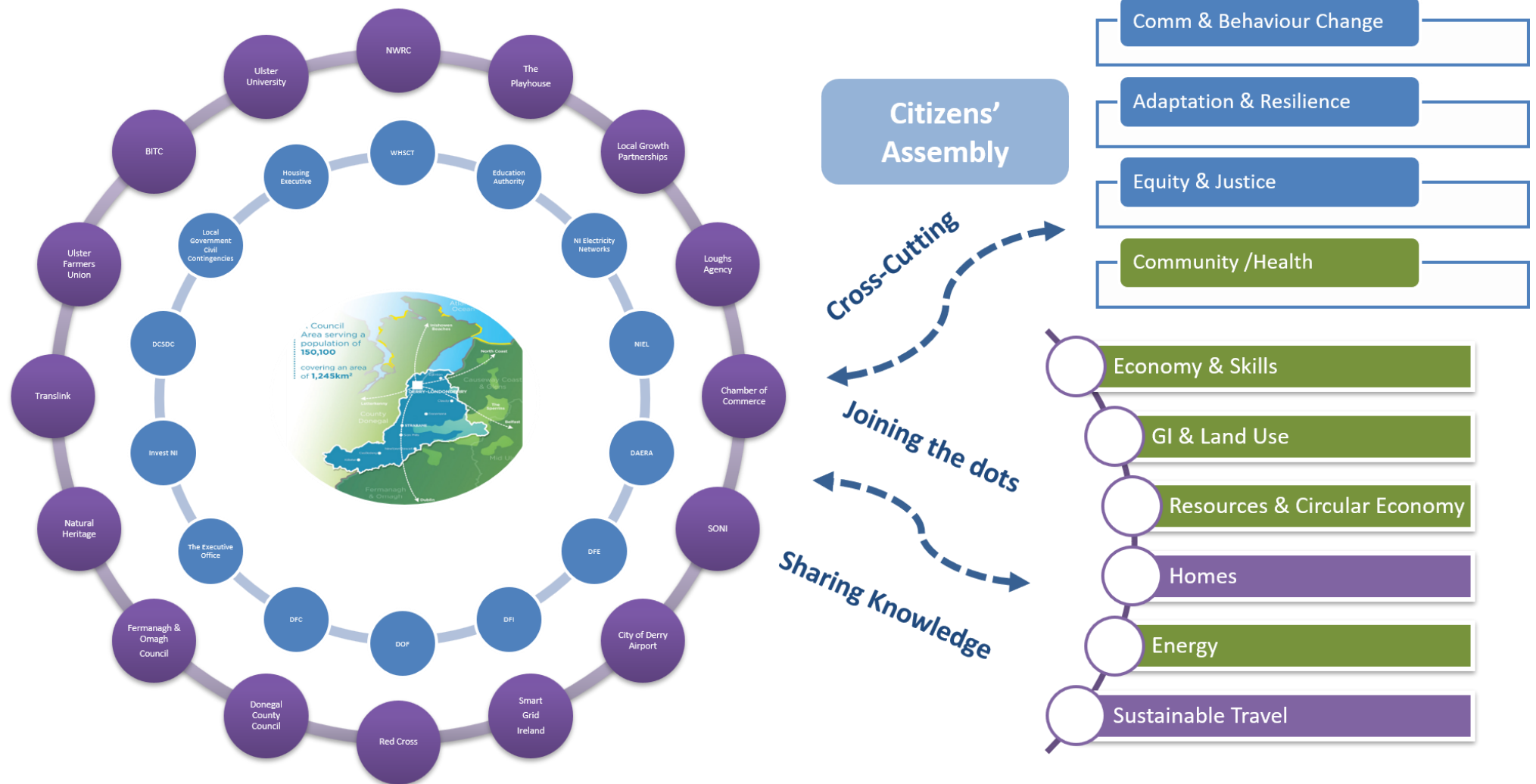
- Community and voluntary organisations
- Public sector partners
- Business and industry
- Education and research institutions
- Environmental organisations
- Health and wellbeing sectors

The Commission provides leadership, expertise and collaboration to help accelerate action across climate change, biodiversity and sustainability.

- During 2025/26 the Commission has:
 - ✓ Established thematic working groups.
 - ✓ Supported Community Climate Conversations.
 - ✓ Contributed to climate strategy development.
 - ✓ Strengthened regional and cross-sector partnerships.
 - ✓ Begun development of a place-based Climate Action and Investment Framework.

Figure 1 below shows the make-up of the Commission:

Derry & Strabane Sustainability & Climate Commission



Evidence, Research and Insight

Understanding Our Emissions

The Council completed a Greenhouse Gas Baseline and Net Zero Carbon Roadmap to better understand emissions across the district.

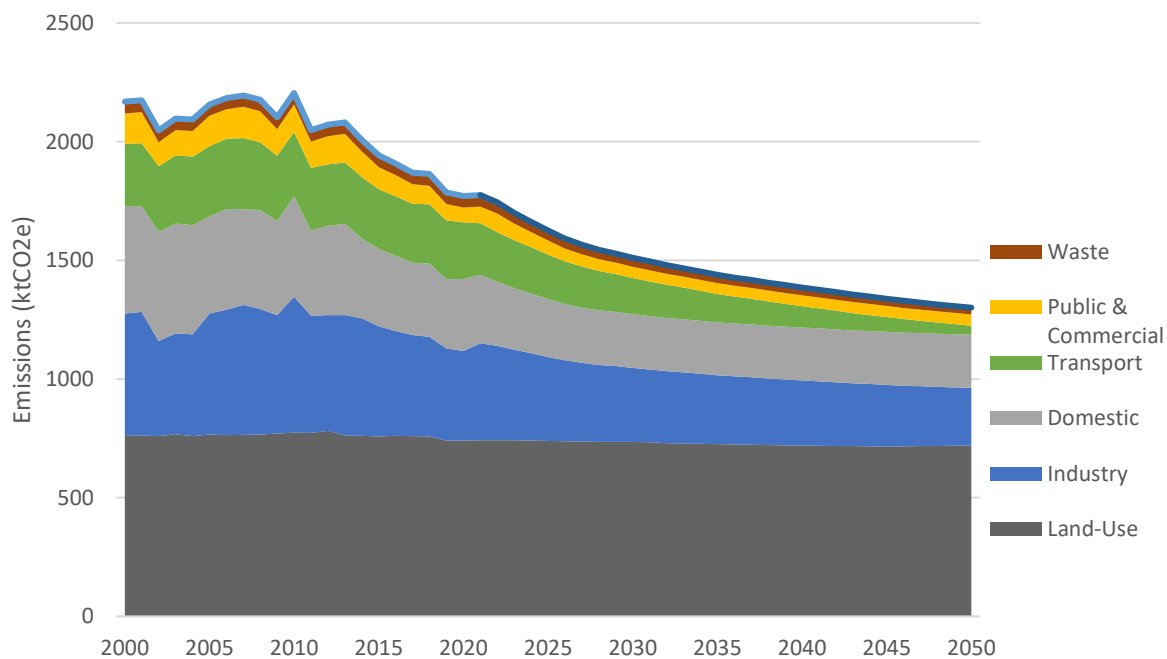
Greenhouse Gas Emission Baseline

Derry and Strabane's direct carbon footprint – comes from its use of fuels such as petrol, diesel and gas (also known as Scope 1 emissions) and from its use of electricity (Scope 2 emissions) and other territorial emissions. Emissions fell by 20% between 2000 and 2022 while total emissions were 1.7 kt CO₂e, in 2022 compared to 2.2 kt in 2000.

This substantial reduction stems from a mix of electricity decarbonization, gradual improvements in the efficiency of buildings and vehicles and structural changes in the economy, for example linked to the switch from manufacturing to higher-value production and services.

Figure 1: Derry and Strabane's Carbon Footprint - Past, Present and Projected ¹

(Direct Emissions - Scope 1 and 2)



Currently, 65% of all emissions from the region come from land-use and industry, with homes accounting for 15%, transport 12%, public and commercial buildings contributing 4%, and the waste sector emitting 3% of emission.

¹ Your Climate Strategy. A Net Zero Carbon Roadmap Analysis for Derry and Strabane District Area. DCSDC. April 2023

This evidence is helping identify where action is needed and provides an important foundation for future target setting and investment decisions.

Understanding Climate Risks

The Council has undertaken climate risk and opportunity assessments to better understand future challenges.

Key risks identified include:

- Flooding
- Severe storms
- Heatwaves
- Infrastructure disruption
- Biodiversity loss
- Risks to health and wellbeing

This work is helping ensure that future developments, infrastructure projects and services are designed to be climate resilient.

Listening to Our Communities

Through Community Climate Conversations, residents and stakeholders have been helping shape local climate priorities. These conversations have highlighted strong public interest in:

- Flood resilience
- Nature recovery
- Sustainable transport
- Energy affordability
- Food sustainability
- Community preparedness

The insights gathered are helping inform future strategy and action planning.

Projects

Active & Sustainable Travel

Council has developed with partners 100km of traffic free routes across the city and district. An additional 45km are under development with a further 120km of routes identified.



Sustainable Food System

Council is working across a portfolio of projects to deliver a sustainable food system for the city and district. These include:

- Acorn Farm I Can Grow Project

The 'I Can Grow' Project is funded by the National Lottery and led by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, delivered in partnership with DCSDC. The project seeks to increase the capacity of local people to grow and cook their own food alongside research into our local food systems, resilience and climate change.

- Sustainable Food Place

Derry City & Strabane is designated as a Sustainable Food Place (it's a member of the Sustainable Food Places network) and has won a Bronze Sustainable Food Places Award through its local partnership, the Acorn Food Network.

- Acorn Farm Hub

Council has been awarded £5.6m from the UK Government Levelling Up Fund to develop the Acorn Farm Sustainable Food Hub (£6.2m) which will see the development of Geodesic Domes, growing spaces and learning centres within St Columb's Park. The sustainable food hub will be an iconic eco-tourism and visitor destination as well as a focal point for local community climate action and food growing.



If you would like to find out more about Acorn Farm - - <https://acornfarmni.com/>

Blueprint

The BluePrint project engages flood-affected communities in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area, including the villages of Eglinton and Newtownstewart, in an artistic co-creation process to share their lived experiences related to flooding and climate adaptation.

The project features an All-Island learning exchange with Mayo and includes a creative co-creation toolkit to assist those working with communities on climate adaptation and flood resilience across Ireland. Funded by the Creative Climate Action fund, an initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme, the project partners include Derry City & Strabane District Council, the Playhouse in Derry, University College Cork, and Mayo County Council, with support from artist Sara Walmsley. Participants showcased their poetry at the Climate & Sustainability Conference in Oct 2024. **If you would like to find out more:** [BluePrint - MaREI](#)

Artitude

Council are partners in the National Lottery Funded Artitude project lead by the Playhouse.

This exciting community engagement project is grounded in the circular economy and uses the arts and creative practice to encourage behaviour change and challenge attitudes to waste, consumption and climate action.

The Playhouse are leading with partners from Northern Ireland Resources Network, Queens University Belfast, Repair & Share Foyle and Derry City and Strabane District Council to co-ordinate and deliver a programme of creative activities. For further information please visit: <https://www.derryplayhouse.co.uk/learning/artitude>

Using the arts & creative practice to strengthen the climate movement in the Northwest.

Bringing together activists to grow ideas through arts-led engagement. Engaging with the arts for joy and community care.

Green Clubs

The Green Clubs Project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a program managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and funded through Derry City and Strabane District Council's PEACEPLUS Local Co-Designed Action Plan. This initiative invites local clubs in the North West to apply for support in enhancing their sustainability practices.

The project will focus on raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and will involve leadership and capacity building, best-practice sharing, practical environmental initiatives, and the dissemination of a green club toolkit. The goal is to help clubs implement simple yet effective changes in their operations and facilities to achieve long-term environmental sustainability.



As key community anchors, local sports clubs can lead the way in ensuring that people of all ages benefit from the green transition. The programme is being delivered by North West Regional College in partnership with the DCSDC Green Infrastructure Team.

Community Resilience: Prepare, Adapt, Strengthen

Derry City and Strabane District Council completed a pilot on Community Resilience supported by the Regional Local Government Civil Contingencies team and aligned with a similar pilot being delivered by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. The pilot, entitled “Community Resilience: Prepare, Adapt, Strengthen”, aimed to strengthen existing Community Resilience Groups (CRGs), embed community resilience into relevant Local Government workstreams and broaden the remit of the Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG). Council teams continue to work closely with wider NI resilience teams to support community resilience to climate impacts.

Research Projects

DCSD is also involved in an EPA Transboundary Climate Risk research project led by the University of Maynooth and the TaLX project lead by Climate Ireland, Climate NI and Adaptation Scotland – this includes the development of an adaptation and resilience capability model and assessment for place based climate adaptation projects. Council has also contributed to a number of climate change reports and publications including the National Economic and Social Council All Island Climate & Biodiversity research programme, UK Climate Change Risk Assessment and inclusion of a chapter in Creating Resilience Futures book published in 2022.

Waste & Circular Economy Initiatives

Strategic Approach

In 2018, Derry City & Strabane District Council, in partnership with Zero Waste NW, launched a Zero Waste Circular Economy Strategy featuring 37 policy actions across six themes. The strategy aims to move waste management up the hierarchy, retain resources in use, and grow the regional economy through circular practices. Strong progress has been made across all themes through collaboration within Council and with local stakeholders.

In 2021, the Council became the first municipality in Ireland to receive Zero Waste City Region designation from Zero Waste Europe, marking the start of its journey toward full zero waste certification. This designation serves as both a framework and a recognition tool for local zero waste leadership.

Key Initiatives and Achievements

- **Sustainable Events:**

Created internal circular economy working groups on energy, climate, waste, and event management. At the Foyle Maritime Festival, sustainable actions included a deposit return scheme, biodegradable food containers, waste segregation with “waste champions”, and the first clothes swap shop with *Keep NI Beautiful*.

- **Food Circularity & Tourism:**

At the Slow Food Festival, Council teams showcased how food waste is recycled into compost used across the Council estate. The Legenderry Food Network promotes local, sustainable food and drink while celebrating regional heritage.

- **Sustainable Sporting Events:**

Half marathon events reduced waste via segregated stations, reusable beakers, paperless registration, and recycled-material runner packs. These efforts gained regional media attention and enhanced the city’s sustainable tourism profile.

- **Reuse & Skills Development:**

Partnership with New2You Reuse Centre, a community-focused social enterprise that rescues, refurbishes, and sells pre-loved furniture and electrical items, promoting sustainability and reducing waste. It offers workshops and courses in upcycling skills as well as free community drop-in sessions. Council also promotes the work of Life Cycles a community-driven initiative in Derry that rescues and refurbishes discarded bicycles, offering affordable cycling options and repair training to local residents.

- **Digital Inclusion:**

During COVID-19, a Laptop Donation Scheme repurposed 400 laptops for children in digital poverty, in partnership with local and regional organizations.

- **Digital Innovation & Engagement:**

Through the EMERGREEN Project, the Council developed chatbot technology, a waste app, and a new recycling website, boosting public access to sustainability information and enhancing the region’s digital sustainability image.

- **Communication & Awareness**

The Council has dedicated resources to marketing and communications, delivering several successful awareness campaigns in collaboration with internal and external partners. Initiatives such as the “Happy Nappy” and “Say No to Waste” campaigns have highlighted waste prevention and sustainable living. Recent campaigns have particularly targeted waste prevention in food, textiles, and white goods, further strengthening public engagement in the circular economy.

- **Collaboration**

Partnership working has been central to their success, involving DAERA, Keep NI Beautiful, NI Reuse Network, Repair Share Foyle, Northern Ireland Resource Network the Fashion & Textile Hub, Zero Waste NW, New2You, community groups, and local businesses.

Energy Projects

DCSDC has implemented a range of energy and sustainability initiatives across multiple projects. These include installing solar PV, battery storage, and smart heating systems in community and council buildings to achieve energy savings of 10–40%, deploying cloud-based energy monitoring, and upgrading building management systems. Derry participates in Horizon 2020’s Stardust Smart Cities project to explore district heating and other decarbonisation strategies. Other initiatives focus on renewable energy in rural areas, smart grids, and virtual power plants, while energy efficiency programs aim to improve EPC ratings and reduce carbon emissions. DCSDC also leads EV infrastructure efforts through the NI EV Council Consortium, securing funding for residential charge points and exploring rapid charging hubs. Additionally, work is underway to develop a Regional Energy Agency with Donegal County Council.

City Deal – Smart Energy Pilot – Net Zero Decarbonising Strabane

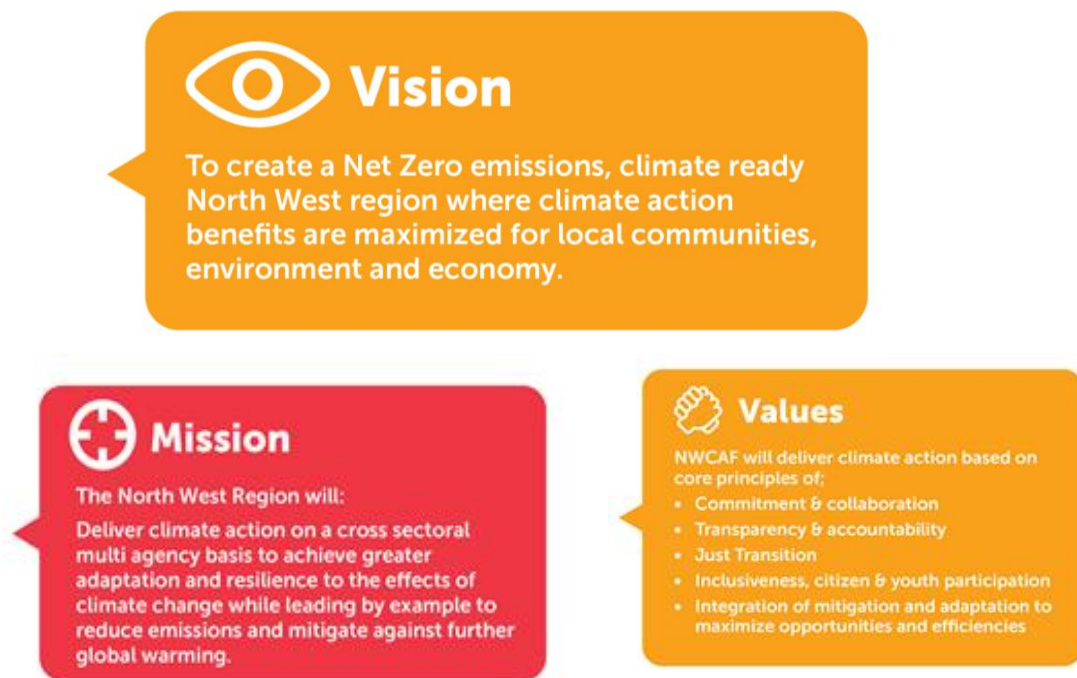
The Net Zero Decarbonising Strabane pilot aims to create a smart energy system for homes, businesses, and public buildings. Using Strabane town centre as a “living lab,” it will test new technologies that generate, store, distribute, and predict energy more efficiently, showing how different energy sources can work together on a larger scale.

Cross Border & North West Region Climate Action

DCSDC recognises that climate change transcends local boundaries and borders and is working in partnership with Donegal County Council to address the climate emergency.

This includes the development of the Regional Energy Strategy, Green Transformation Statement and North West Climate Action Framework.

North West Climate Action Framework



North West Regional Energy Strategy

Derry City and Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council are collaborating through the North West Regional Energy Strategy to decarbonise energy systems and aim for net zero carbon emissions by 2045. Key initiatives include a Shared Island-funded feasibility study to retrofit 56 public buildings across decarbonisation zones, with tailored energy efficiency, behaviour change, and renewable measures for 30 priority buildings. Through the EU Cities Facility (EUCF), the councils received €60,000 to develop sustainable energy investment projects, focusing on large-scale retrofits with heat pumps, electrifying transport (EV fleets, chargers, e-bike schemes), and upgrading non-residential buildings. To support these efforts, a Retrofit and Heat-Pump Academy under the Peace Plus Programme will address skills gaps in green construction, boosting productivity, employment, and cross-border labour mobility.