

# AIMING LOW: THE WAY TO NET ZERO

2021 TO 2030



SUMMARY

## WHAT IS NET ZERO?

We will be net zero when the amount of carbon dioxide we add to the atmosphere is no more than the amount we remove.

We recognise that there is a global climate and nature crisis.

We are committed to keeping global warming below the 1.5°C goal set in the Paris Agreement – the legally binding international pact on climate change.

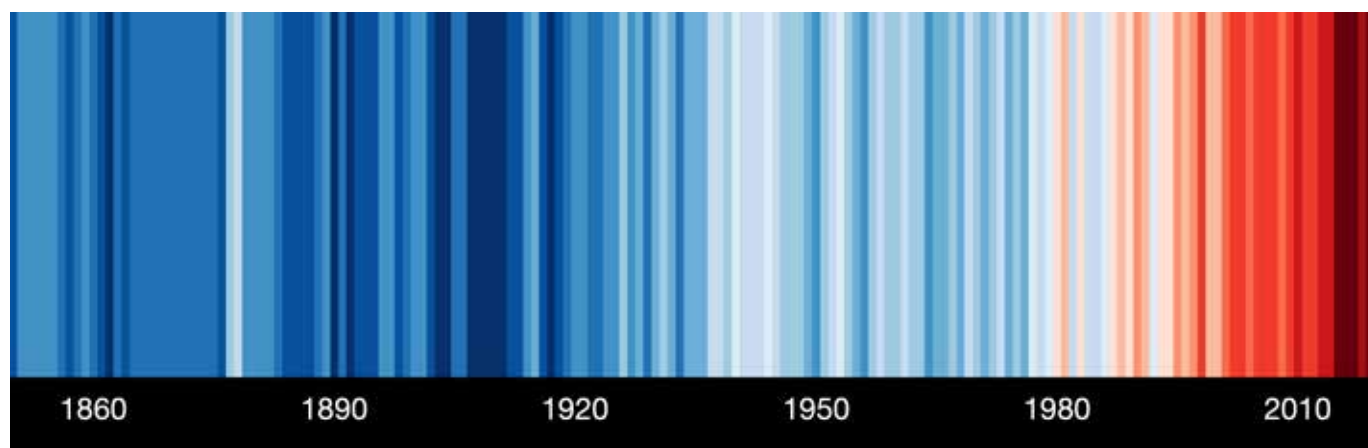
We are committed to incorporating climate action in our decision-making process to create fair and thriving communities for everyone.

We pledge to reach net zero by 2030, in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

We invite our partners – political, business and community leaders, statutory organisations, trade unions, civic societies, community groups and individuals – to join

us in recognising the climate emergency and helping us take science-based action to overcome it.

We invite everyone within the Staffordshire Moorlands to act today and adopt at least one measure to reduce their carbon footprint.



Title: Earth Warming Stripes 1850–2020, Ed Hawkins, University of Reading

### WHAT DO THE CLIMATE STRIPES MEAN?

Each stripe represents the average temperature for a single year, relative to the average temperature over the period as a whole. Shades of blue indicate cooler-than-average years, while red shows years that were hotter than average.



## INTRODUCTION

Climate change is the greatest threat to our future. It is a global problem that requires global solutions.

We need to change the old ways of heating, lighting and running our buildings and vehicles, and the goods and services that we buy, when providing important services for our communities.

Reducing our emissions is only a small part of the solution. We need to also come together as a district, so that all our residents, community groups and businesses are working together to respond to the emergency.

**“It comes down, I think, to us each taking responsibility for the personal choices in our everyday lives. That’s all any of us can be expected to do. And it is those everyday choices that add up.”**

Dr Jon Copley, University of Southampton

This document provides a summary of our climate change plan. It sets out the role we can play in responding to the climate crisis. This includes thinking about climate change when we make plans and deliver services, to working together with other organisations, promoting good ideas, and supporting our local people to get involved.

You can find the full version of our plan at

[www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/  
ClimateChange](http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/ClimateChange)

‘Please support our plan, we will only be able to tackle the climate change and nature crisis if we work together. We need everyone to play their part – businesses, residents, community groups and visitors – to meet this challenge. Every action that we can take, no matter how small, can help. Let us all do what we can to respond to this global problem.’

**Cllr Joe Porter –**

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council



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The climate change plan sets out the first steps of our journey. We will update it over time to keep pace with new ideas and opportunities, and to respond to any new legislation, guidance, funding opportunities or challenges.

It's a long journey to becoming net zero, but we believe that we can get there if we work together.

# OUR CHALLENGE

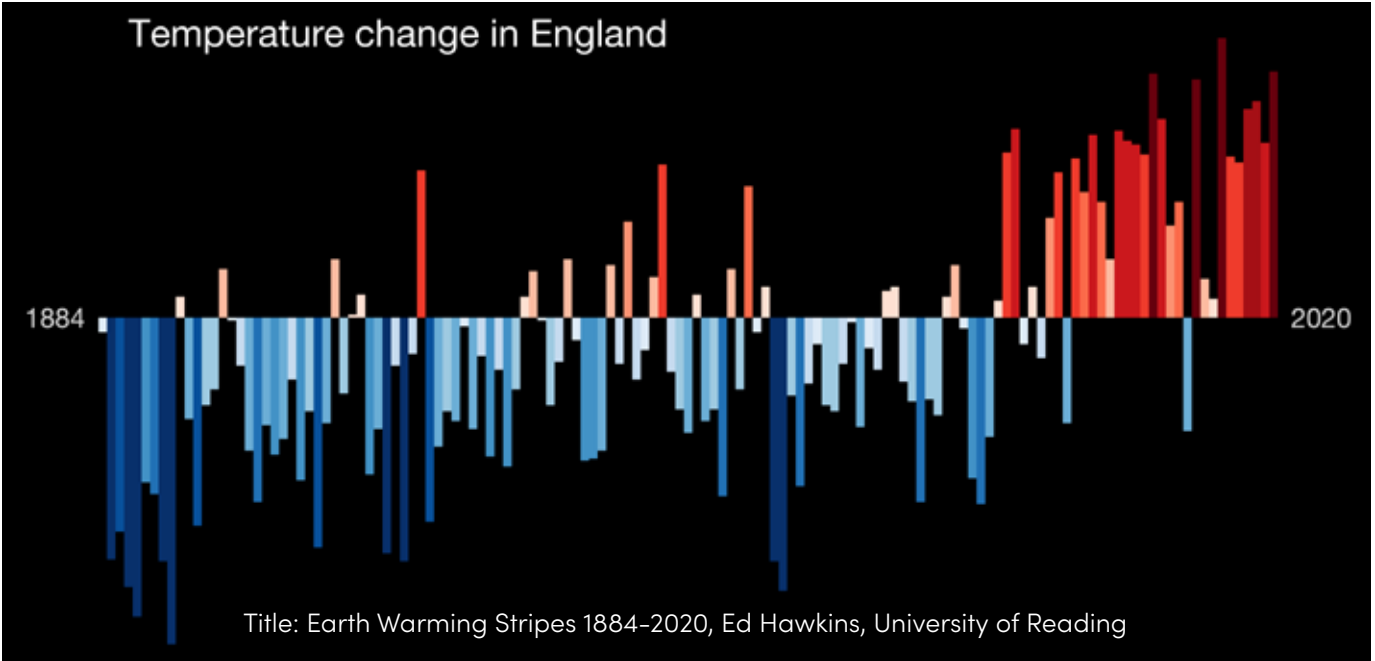
Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are released during many day-to-day activities, such as driving petrol cars or heating homes. They are also released by industry. We call these releases 'emissions'. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the most common GHG that is created by human activity, mainly from burning fossil fuels such as coal and gas. CO<sub>2</sub> tends to stay in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. Other greenhouse gases include methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O).

The amount of greenhouse gases released from human activity has increased sharply since the Industrial Revolution, and especially in recent decades.

Most emissions in the Staffordshire Moorlands in 2018 came from buildings (61%), road transport (19%) and livestock (22%).)

Greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is now at its highest level in several million years, and research shows that the heat trapped by this and other

greenhouse gases is increasing the average global temperature. This is called global warming.



Climate change is changes in global weather patterns, driven by global warming.

- The 21st century has so far been warmer than the past three centuries.
- In 2020, figures for temperature, rainfall and sunshine were in the top 10 highest on record – the first time this has happened in a single year.
- All of the UK's top 10 warmest years on record have occurred since 2002.
- Seven of the 10 wettest years on record have happened since 1998. Heatwaves are now 30 times more likely to happen in the UK due to climate change.
- Winter storms are at least 40% more likely because of climate change.



- The sea level around the UK coastline has risen by 16.5 cm since the start of the 20th century.
- The sea level is currently increasing at a rate of 3mm per year.
- Just under half of people in the Staffordshire Moorlands say that they are very concerned about climate change. (This is similar to the figure from across the whole of the UK.)
- People in the Staffordshire Moorlands say that they are most concerned about environmental damage, loss of animals, plants, habitats and biodiversity, disease and extinction of species.
- Over six in 10 people across the UK think that climate change is already having an effect in the UK.



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## A GLOBAL PROBLEM – LOCAL EFFECTS

- Extreme weather increases the risk of flooding and damage to the transport network. For example, the River Churnet burst its banks in several areas in 2019, leading to flooding of an industrial estate, golf course and other areas, and services provided by Churnet Valley Railway being suspended. Surface water also blocked several major roads throughout the district.
- Increasing temperatures and severe weather arising as a result of climate change will directly and indirectly result in habitats being damaged or lost, and increase the vulnerability of animals and plants. Sphagnum moss is especially susceptible to environmental changes and could become extinct if there are severe climate changes. Sphagnum moss has an important role in forming peat bogs which host many ecosystems. By 2080, climate change may result in the loss of moorland birds, such as merlin and golden plover, from the Dark Peak.
- Drier conditions may result in rivers and streams becoming increasingly affected by the seasons and at risk of drying up, and increase the risk of losing ponds altogether, especially dew ponds. The danger of wildfires also increases as peat soils dry out and woodlands suffer from summer droughts. In the summer of 2018, major fires broke out in the Thorncliffe and Roaches area of the district. Residents were evacuated and it is estimated that the Roaches fire released over 11,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), equivalent to running 1,426 homes for one year.



## OUR APPROACH

### OUR VISION

**Staffordshire Moorlands will become carbon neutral by 2030.**

Local authorities are considered to have influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas and are believed to be responsible for between 2% and 5% of local emissions. For the Staffordshire Moorlands, the local authorities are Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Staffordshire County Council, and the Peak District National Park Authority.

**“More than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level. Many of these decisions depend on having supporting infrastructure and systems in place. Local authorities have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas.”**

Climate Change Committee, Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget, December 2020

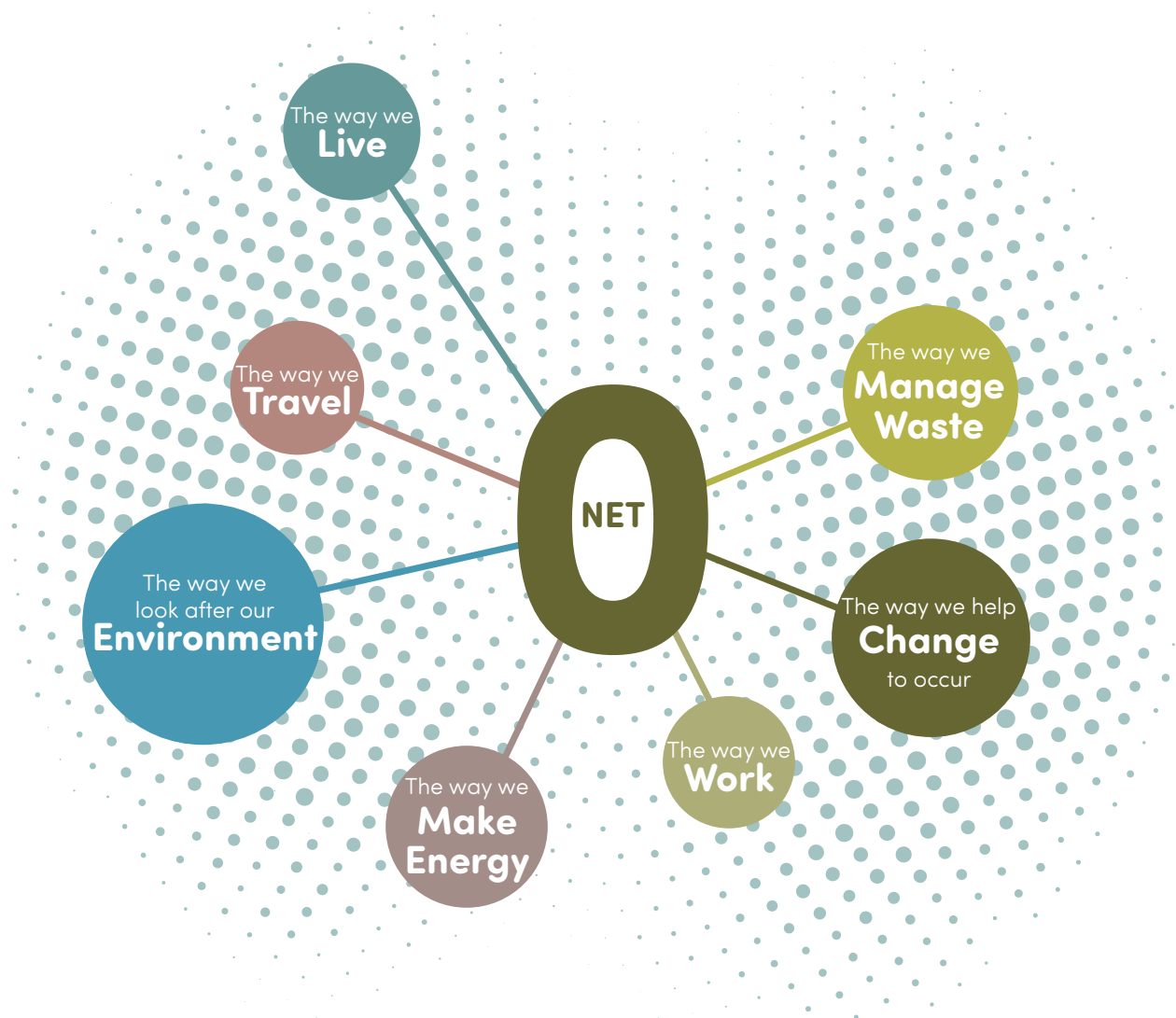
This means that we all have a part to play in tackling climate change. We think that part of our role as a district council is to encourage people, businesses and other organisations to do what they can to reduce their carbon footprint, and to make it easier, if we can, for those changes to happen..

## OUR MISSION

Encouraging people, businesses and other organisations to do everything they can to reduce their carbon footprint and making it easier, where we can, for those changes to happen.

We believe that we can become net zero if we focus our actions on our '7 ways to Net Zero', as set out in our full climate change plan.

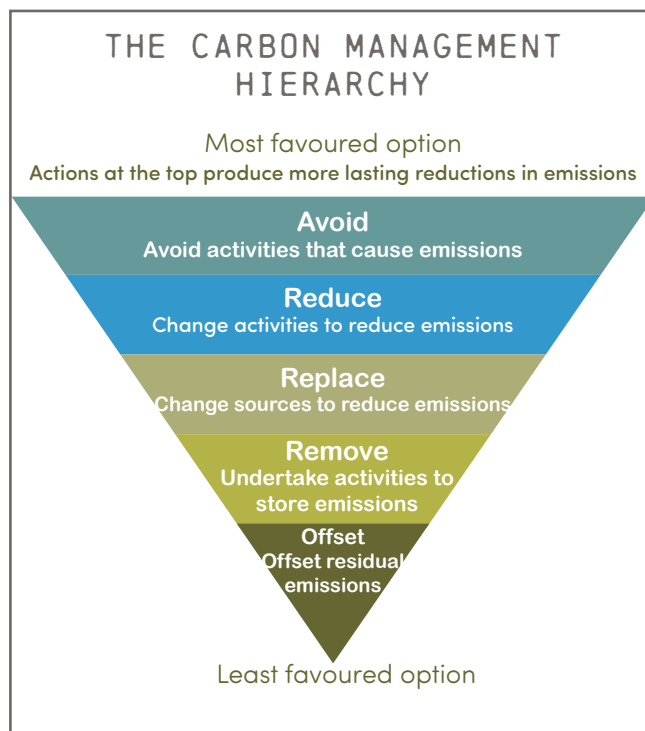
- The way we live
- The way we travel
- The way we work
- The way we make energy
- The way we look after our environment
- The way we manage waste
- The way we can help change to occur.



Some of the actions that we can take to tackle climate change are better than others at producing longer lasting reductions in emissions, as shown in the Carbon Management Hierarchy opposite, which is taken from our climate change plan. In line with the hierarchy, we will look at ways of avoiding emissions before we think about removing or offsetting. (Offsetting means taking other steps – such as planting trees or paying for a wind turbine – that cancel out the emissions we produce).

We know that climate change is a ‘grand challenge’ but it also presents opportunities, including the opportunity to:

- improve people’s health and well-being through active travel and cleaner air
- use nature-based solutions to improve people’s quality of life



- tackle deprivation by addressing food and fuel poverty
- improve our natural environment by protecting and expanding green spaces, and
- delivering economic growth and creating jobs.

These opportunities are often referred to as the co-benefits of tackling climate change. We will look for opportunities to deliver co-benefits wherever possible.

# OUR VALUES

We will do the following.

- Put climate change at the heart of our decision-making.
- Base our decisions on science and best practice wherever possible.
- Promote awareness of climate change and the best practices for responding to it.
- Create a framework to enable people and organisations to take action to tackle climate change.
- Focus our actions on areas that are under our control and where we can have the greatest impact, while aiming to influence the behaviour or actions of others.
- Focus our efforts on delivering the actions set out in our climate change plan while also taking advantage of any opportunities to apply for funding

to support local action to respond to the climate and nature crisis.

- Identify and take advantages of the co-benefits of addressing the climate and nature crisis, such as improving physical health and mental well-being, achieving economic growth and reducing poverty.
- Support the voluntary and community sector to deliver community-led projects and activities.
- When responding to climate change, give priority to the needs of vulnerable groups who are most at risk from the adverse effects of climate change, including food and fuel poverty, and lack of access to green space.
- Put climate action at the centre of our decision-making to create fair and thriving communities for everyone.

- Make fairness a core principle and try to make sure that the benefits of acting on climate change are shared widely, and that the costs do not burden those who are least able to pay or whose livelihoods are most at risk as the economy changes.

# OUR STRATEGY

We will use our powers and influence, and apply the Carbon Management Hierarchy, as we focus on our 7 Ways to Net Zero and look for opportunities to deliver co-benefits.

# OUR CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN

The following diagram provides a summary of our climate change plan. You can read the full plan on our website at

[www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/ClimateChange](http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/ClimateChange)

1 The Way We	2 The Way We	3 The Way We	4 The Way We	5 The Way We	6 The Way We	7 The Way We Can
Live	Travel	Work	Make Energy	Look After Our Environment	Manage Waste	Help Change to Occur
Actions						
Support new buildings to be energy efficient and minimise emissions	Reduce emissions from Council vehicles	Reduce emissions from Council buildings	Look at generating green energy for Council buildings	Increase tree cover and improve nature	Reduce carbon emissions from our waste and recycling service	Consider Climate Change in all Council decisions and policies
Tackle fuel poverty and reduce emissions from homes	Support sustainable travel and development	Switch to green energy	Promote the use of renewable energy	Protect and extend the existing green infrastructure	Encourage recycling and the green initiatives	Provide Councillors and staff members with appropriate skills and training
	Support the increased use of EV vehicles	Buy low carbon products and services		Reduce the risk from flooding	Support community initiatives designed to reduce, recycle and repurpose waste	Promote climate change projects
	Encourage people to make journeys by walking or cycling	Support the green economy		Work in partnership with our communities, including the most vulnerable		Encourage community climate change and nature projects
		Support the development of a circular economy				Work with Parish Councils
		Help businesses to get advice and support				Involve and engage our communities and create a more inclusive society
		Encourage Council staff to adopt energy saving/low carbon				Lobby for change

## WHAT CAN I DO?

You can help to stop the climate and nature crisis, and make a difference right away, by taking one or more of the actions listed below. This isn't a list of everything that you can do, and some might not be possible for you, but we hope it gives you some ideas.

### FOOD

- Reduce the amount of food you waste.
- Only buy what you need and eat what you buy.
- Avoid food that is transported by plane.
- Buy local food and support the local economy.
- Don't leave the house without a reusable cup.





## ELECTRICITY

- Take simple steps that cost nothing – turn lights off, hang washing out to dry, wash clothes at a lower temperature and keep showers short.
- Wear a jumper rather than turning the heating up, turn the thermostat down and turn radiators off in empty rooms (if you can do so without risking your health)
- If you can afford to invest in your home, prioritise the things that have the biggest impact – insulation (starting with draughtproofing, then insulating the loft and walls), replacement windows, smart heating (efficient boilers, remote central-heating systems), and solar panels or heat pumps.
- Think about buying electricity from a green energy provider that uses customers' money to fund additional renewable power.
- Ask for help if you are struggling to keep warm. You can get help from the company that supplies your gas and electricity, us or Citizens Advice. You can also contact Beat the Cold for advice and to check if you are eligible for any grants or insulation measures.

## TRANSPORT

- Aim to fly less and support your local economy by holidaying in the UK ('staycations').
- Cut car emissions by walking, cycling, using public transport, car sharing or working from home.
- Consider buying an electric or plug-in hybrid if you can (but only if you need a new car).



## PURCHASES

- Buy less.
- Buy local.
- Buy wisely. Think about where things come from and the working conditions of the people who made them.
- Buy high-quality things where you can and make them last.
- Buy things that can be repaired rather than replaced, and sell or give away things when you have finished with them.
- Choose the most energy-efficient appliances (such as fridges, freezers and washing machines).

## INVESTMENTS

- Use any money you have to help create the future you want to see.
- Look at options for investing in pensions and saving schemes that don't support fossil fuel companies, and prioritise those that invest in the things we urgently need, such as renewables and reforestation.

## DO ALL YOU CAN

- Put a plan in place and work your way through it.

## ADOPT THE FIVE RS

- Refuse – say no to the stuff that you don't need and becomes instant waste.
- Reduce – think about what you actually need, how much you need, and how long it will last.

- Reuse – can you reuse or repair it before throwing stuff away?

- Recycle – aim for products that can be recycled and then put them in the correct bin.

- Rot – how about composting?





## THE FINAL WORD

"We are at a unique stage in our history. Never before have we had such an awareness of what we are doing to the planet, and never before have we had the power to do something about that. Surely we all have a responsibility to care for our Blue Planet. The future of humanity and indeed, all life on earth, now depends on us."

David Attenborough, "Our Blue Planet"

