

Sefton Climate

Emergency Plan

What Sefton Council

are doing about

Climate Change

2025-2026

Annual Report





Foreword from Councillor Williams

2025 was another exceptionally hot year globally and expected to be among the top four warmest years since records began 176-years ago. We know that our changing climate will have impacts for us and our environment.

Sefton's elected councillors declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, alongside the UK Government declaring a climate emergency in May 2019. However, with so many other day to day pressures, it is easy to think we can put off action to move

away from using fossil fuels. We are now just over halfway through our plan to become net zero by 2030 and must continue to act.

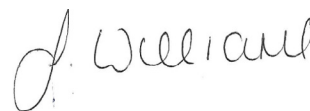
Since that declaration was made, Sefton have made great progress with a 43% overall reduction in Carbon emissions. This progress has slowed in 2025 with no significant change in our carbon footprint. This means there is still significant work to be done and opportunities to grasp.

Across the globe and within Sefton many are passionately working to protect our environment. In 2025, "Green Sefton" continued to work closely with thousands of dedicated volunteers to manage and protect over 6,500 hectares of parks, green spaces, and coastlines across the borough. Reducing emissions is also happening.

In early 2026, UK renewables broke multiple records, with wind providing over half of Britain's electricity during peak periods and solar hitting record generation highs. And in Sefton, solar investment in leisure centres ramped up in 2025/26, helping to keep electricity costs down and reduce carbon emissions.

I hope you will find this report informative and please consider registering for the quarterly climate newsletter so that you can be kept informed on what is happening in Sefton, as there is a lot going on.

Thank you.



Cllr Joanne Williams

Cabinet Member - Public Health and Wellbeing



Executive Summary

This climate annual report highlights the progress made and key projects completed during 2025-26, in-line with the climate emergency strategy and action plan.

This report covers the following key areas:

- Net zero targets: UK, Liverpool City Region (LCR) and Sefton Council
- Sefton Council's 2025-26 carbon footprint
- Key priorities achieved in 2025-26
- Other Council projects and LCR wide initiatives
- Challenges moving forward
- Priority actions for 2026-27
- Report conclusions

Introduction

In July 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and committed to taking decisive action to tackle climate change.

This annual report summarises emissions data from the Council's estate and operations, assesses progress towards its climate commitments, and highlights key initiatives delivered over the past year. It also outlines the Liverpool City Region's (LCR) net zero target and the projects supporting this goal.

The Council remains committed to achieving net zero by 2030 and progressing its action plan. Covering the period from April 2025 to March 2026 (Phase 2, Year 3 of the action plan), this report reviews achievements, details challenges and identifies priorities for the coming year to maintain momentum and accelerate climate action delivery.

Net Zero Targets

Net zero targets exist as a key tool to reduce emissions, but can also improve energy security and resilience, save money and support local jobs. Targets to reduce emissions from burning gas, oil and other fossil fuels exist at national, regional and local levels with many businesses and organisations setting their own targets.

By having a “Net zero” target, rather than an “absolute zero” target, means that any emissions that cannot be removed, will be offset by projects that will ‘soak up’ these emissions elsewhere, e.g. tree planting.

UK – 2050 Target

The UK government has a legally binding net zero by 2050 target with a clear framework for cutting emissions. The independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) provides evidence and guidance to support delivery.

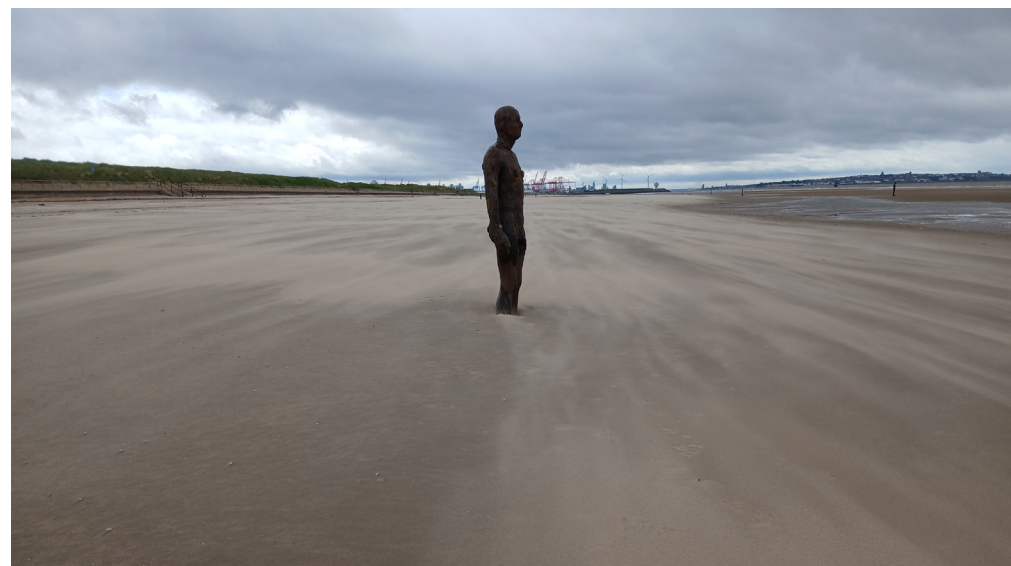
The target covers all greenhouse gases across the economy and is delivered through:

- Provisional carbon targets, including a commitment to reduce emissions by at least 68% by 2030, and by 81% by 2035, compared to 1990 levels.
- Interim carbon budgets, covering a 5-year period which are set by the CCC and legislated by Parliament.
- Sector strategies for energy, transport, buildings, industry and agriculture that set policy, funding priorities and delivery plans for decarbonisation.

The CCC’s most recent progress report, published in June 2025, revealed that the UK’s emissions declined by approximately 3% in 2024 compared to the previous year.

The report acknowledges the significant progress in renewable energy generation and Electric Vehicle (EV) adoption, though improvements in the buildings and heavy industry sector remain limited.

Key recommendations from the report include improving home insulation and installing more heat pumps, rolling out EV charging infrastructure quicker, and strengthening accountability through clearer interim targets and improved monitoring.



Liverpool City Region – 2035 Target

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) has committed to reaching net zero by 2035. Six local authorities form part of this region:

- Halton
- St Helens
- Knowsley
- Liverpool
- Sefton
- Wirral

The region is already making significant progress, with city-wide emissions falling by 22% since 2019. This progress has been driven by the transition to cleaner local energy sources and the delivery of major projects.



In 2025-26, all LCR authorities worked alongside the LCR Combined Authority on several key initiatives, including:

- **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)** – £36 million of funding has been secured, unlocking over £40m for upgrading public buildings. The funding is being used to deliver major heating, insulation and solar improvements across leisure centres, town halls and other key buildings. Several public buildings have already been upgraded, with more projects underway as part of PSDS Phase 3c and Phase 4.
- **GB Energy Mayoral Renewables Fund** – £1.45 million is being invested to install 1,286 kW of solar PV across 14 public buildings. This will boost energy resilience, cut electricity costs and drive long-term carbon reductions.
- **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** – The plan aims to reverse decades of wildlife loss and improve access to green spaces, making nature and healthier neighbourhoods a reality for local communities.

Sefton Council – 2030 Target

In July 2019, Sefton Council declared a climate emergency and committed to reaching net zero by 2030 across its estates and operations.

This is an ambitious target and means the Council needs to drastically reduce emissions from its buildings, vehicles and day-to-day operations, and then offset any remaining unavoidable emissions through carbon reduction projects.

In December 2026, the Council added climate change to the Corporate Risk Register, with quarterly progress updates required.

Carbon Footprint of Sefton Council for 2025-26

Sefton Council track carbon emissions across three categories, called “scopes.” Breaking down emissions this way helps identify where the carbon emissions come from and demonstrates the scale of the challenge and the progress being made.

Sefton Council Emissions Breakdown:

Scope 1 – Direct Emissions

These are emissions the Council produces directly from burning fuel in vehicles and heating buildings.

Scope 2 – Emissions from Electricity

This covers the electricity the Council purchases and uses across buildings and operations. While the Council does not burn fuel directly, electricity generation produces carbon emissions. In April 2023, the Council switched to a clean electricity tariff, which has significantly reduced the overall emissions.

Scope 3 – Other Indirect Emissions

These are indirect emissions from day-to-day activities; the Council does not directly control but influences through its operations. This includes employee commuting and business travel.

The Council’s carbon emissions for 2025-26 were calculated based on data collected from the activities listed below:

- **Scope 1** – Council Buildings (Gas)
- **Scope 1** – Operational Fleet (Diesel)
- **Scope 2** – Council Buildings (*Electricity)
- **Scope 2** – Street Lighting (*Electricity)
- **Scope 3** – Home Working
- **Scope 3** – Staff Commute
- **Scope 3** – Business Travel

*On 1 April 2023, the Council switched to a 100% clean electricity tariff.



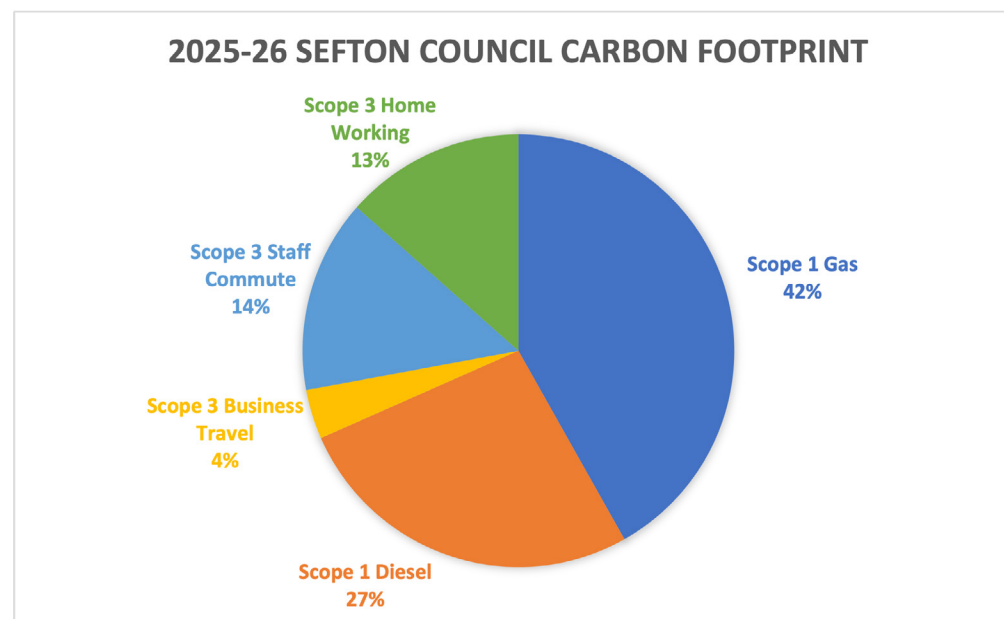
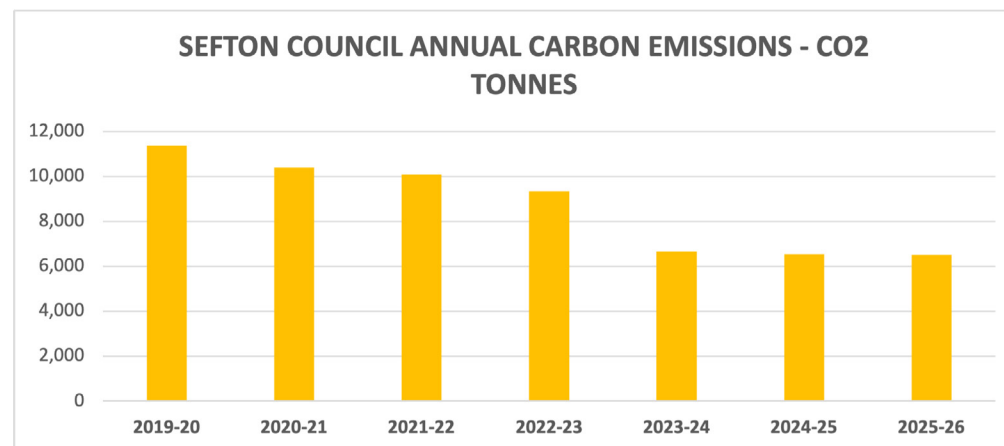
Annual Carbon Emissions

Sefton Council established its carbon emissions baseline in 2019-20 and has since reduced emissions by 4,854 tonnes of CO₂, achieving a 43% reduction overall.

Year-on-year progress has been consistent, with emissions declining annually over the past five years. However, momentum slowed in 2025-26, when the Council reduced emissions by only 16 tonnes of CO₂ – the smallest annual decrease since the net zero target was set, with no significant percentage reduction.

Carbon Emissions Breakdown for 2025-26

The Council's carbon footprint is primarily driven by gas usage (42%) and operational fleet emissions (diesel) (27%), with staff commute (14%), home working (13%) and business travel (4%) making up the remainder.



Gas and Electricity Performance

Gas Consumption (Scope 1)

Measured against the 2019-20 baseline, the Council has reduced gas emissions by 14%, with the past year delivering a 57 tonne reduction in CO2 emissions. This progress is evidenced by a 314,538 kWh reduction in consumption. While progress is visible, gas still remains the most significant source of carbon emissions (42%) and continued effort is required to decarbonise the building portfolio and transition from gas boilers to low carbon alternatives.

Electricity Consumption (Scope 2)

The Council has delivered substantial cuts in electricity consumption, achieving a 58% emissions decrease since 2019-20 – outperforming gas reductions. Over the last year, electricity emissions have fallen by 725 tonnes, energy demand declining by 1,870,264 kWh.

The borough-wide LED street lighting project accounts for the majority of the electricity reduction, with further savings from increased solar power use and the data centre moving to cloud-based services.

A turning point emerged in April 2023, when the Council opted to use 100% clean electricity. This transition allows authorities to declare electricity emissions as ‘zero’ under Scope 2 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. By way of comparison, the Council would have generated 1,872 tonnes of carbon emissions had it retained its previous electricity supply.

Operational Fleet (Scope 1)

The Council’s operational fleet, accounts for 27% of total carbon emissions, making it the second largest emissions source. However, this area presents a significant challenge, with fleet emissions rising by 3% over the past year and 15% since the 2019-20 baseline was established – a concerning upward trend.

Recognising this as a priority, the Council initiated work in this area during 2025-26. A Fleet Decarbonisation Planning Exercise is underway and will establish an initial roadmap covering short, medium and long term actions. This work will progress throughout 2026-27.

Staff Travel (Commute and Business) and Home Working (Scope 3)

In 2025-26, there were notable changes in emissions from staff related activities. Commuting emissions increased by 18%, now representing 14% of the overall carbon footprint, whilst home working emissions declined by 19% to account for 13% of total emissions. This reflects a shift towards a greater officer presence in the workplace. Staff business travel also escalated, up 24% compared to the previous year, now representing 4% of total emissions.

The Council is committed to understanding and managing the environmental impact of staff travel. Ongoing data monitoring and analysis will guide future strategy development, with a particular focus on promoting sustainable travel options, including public transport, cycling and walking.

Climate Action: Key Projects and Initiatives

We said, We did

The Council's 2025-26 key priorities were outlined in last year's annual report. All areas have progressed, as detailed below.

Fleet Decarbonisation Plan

Last year the Council advanced its work on fleet decarbonisation by undertaking an initial survey to create a roadmap to transition its vehicle fleet from diesel to low carbon alternatives. The fleet management team oversees 260+ vehicles from street sweepers to refuse collection vehicles (RCVs).

In partnership with an external organisation, Council officers are working to develop an initial fleet decarbonisation plan structured across three timeframes - short term (2026-27), medium term (2027-2030) and long term (2030+) actions.

A comprehensive report and presentation are being prepared, providing the foundation for future development and implementation, with work progressing in 2026-27.



Funding Opportunities

Over the last year, the Council has progressed work through several successful funding applications, including:

1. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – Phase 3c

Work to decarbonise Bootle Library, funded through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) is nearing completion in May/June 2026. The project has involved replacing the existing heating system with low carbon alternatives and enhancing overall energy efficiency through measures including LED lighting and insulation improvements. A reduction in carbon emissions from this project is expected to be delivered in 2026-27 and beyond.

2. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – Phase 4

In March 2025, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) successfully secured £30.5 million in PSDS funding to decarbonise and upgrade 30 buildings across the Liverpool City Region (LCR), with Sefton Council receiving over £5 million to upgrade several key buildings.

The work will upgrade building insulation and glazing, improve lighting, add solar PVs where possible, and install low carbon heating. A reduction in emissions from this work is expected in the coming years.

3. Mayoral Renewables Fund

The Mayoral Renewables Fund (MRF), launched by Great British Energy (GB Energy), provides funding for local renewable energy projects. Support has been secured for the following measures:

Meadows Leisure Centre

Since January 2026, Meadows Leisure Centre in Maghull has been equipped with an additional 108 kW solar array generating renewable electricity on site, supported by £90,000 in funding. The installation is projected to deliver carbon savings exceeding 12 tonnes per year.

Dunes Leisure Centre

Dunes Leisure Centre in Southport has been equipped with a 124 kW solar array from February 2026, producing renewable energy on site with £135,000 in funding provided. Carbon savings from the installation are expected to exceed 16 tonnes per year.

Additional funding of £60,420 secured in March 2026 will install a further 70 kW solar array, projected to save over 7 tonnes of carbon per year.

Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre

Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre in Crosby will be fitted with a 23 kW solar array to produce renewable energy on site, with £33,580 in funding secured in March 2026. Carbon savings are expected to exceed 3 tonnes per year.



Carbon Offsetting and Insetting

“Carbon Offsetting” compensates for carbon emissions by investing in projects that reduce or remove an equivalent amount, which can occur anywhere globally.

“Carbon Insetting” is a specific form of offsetting that occurs within the Council’s area of responsibility and is often preferred for its local, economic and health benefits with greater cost control.

The Council’s primary focus is reducing carbon emissions from corporate buildings and fleet operations. However, this alone will not achieve the net zero target, and offsetting/insetting will need to be considered through options including tree planting and wetland and saltmarsh restoration. Following discussions over the last year, a report recommending next steps for the Council will be finalised, with work progressing in 2026-27.

Communication and Engagement

Work in this area has progressed significantly over the last few years, including development of the climate ‘stamp’ logo and brand identity featuring climate stripes (shown across the top of each page) - a visual representation of temperature changes over time. This has been complemented by the creation of a climate microsite and quarterly climate newsletter, circulated to over 19,000 E-mails in the past year.

Promotional activity has grown considerably, with 21 social media posts achieving over 61,000 views. A comprehensive communications plan has also been prepared and will continue to be implemented in 2026-27.

Corporate Landlord Property Management Framework

Work with property services colleagues to embed climate-friendly policies into the corporate landlord property management framework has progressed, with a structure now in place. Work will continue in 2026-27.



Climate Newsletter

Sign up to our email newsletter to stay up to date on climate-related events, community schemes, the different projects we're working on, and much more!

Scan the QR below to sign up:



Sefton Council  sefton.gov.uk/climate



Carbon Reduction
Leadership
Innovation
Mobilisation
Adaptation
Transformation
Engagement and Education

Climate Action: Other Projects

In addition to the projects outlined, other initiatives in 2025-26 have advanced the strategy and action plan objectives, alongside the wider Liverpool City Region target.

The strategy and action plan are centred on seven key principles that collectively represent the C.L.I.M.A.T.E. acronym.

Carbon Reduction

LED Street Lighting Project

A £12.75 million invest to save initiative has delivered energy efficient LED street lighting across the borough since 2021, with 26,291 lanterns and heritage lanterns converted, 5,369 new replacement street lighting columns installed, and over 3,000 illuminated sign units, sign poles and bollards replaced or converted.

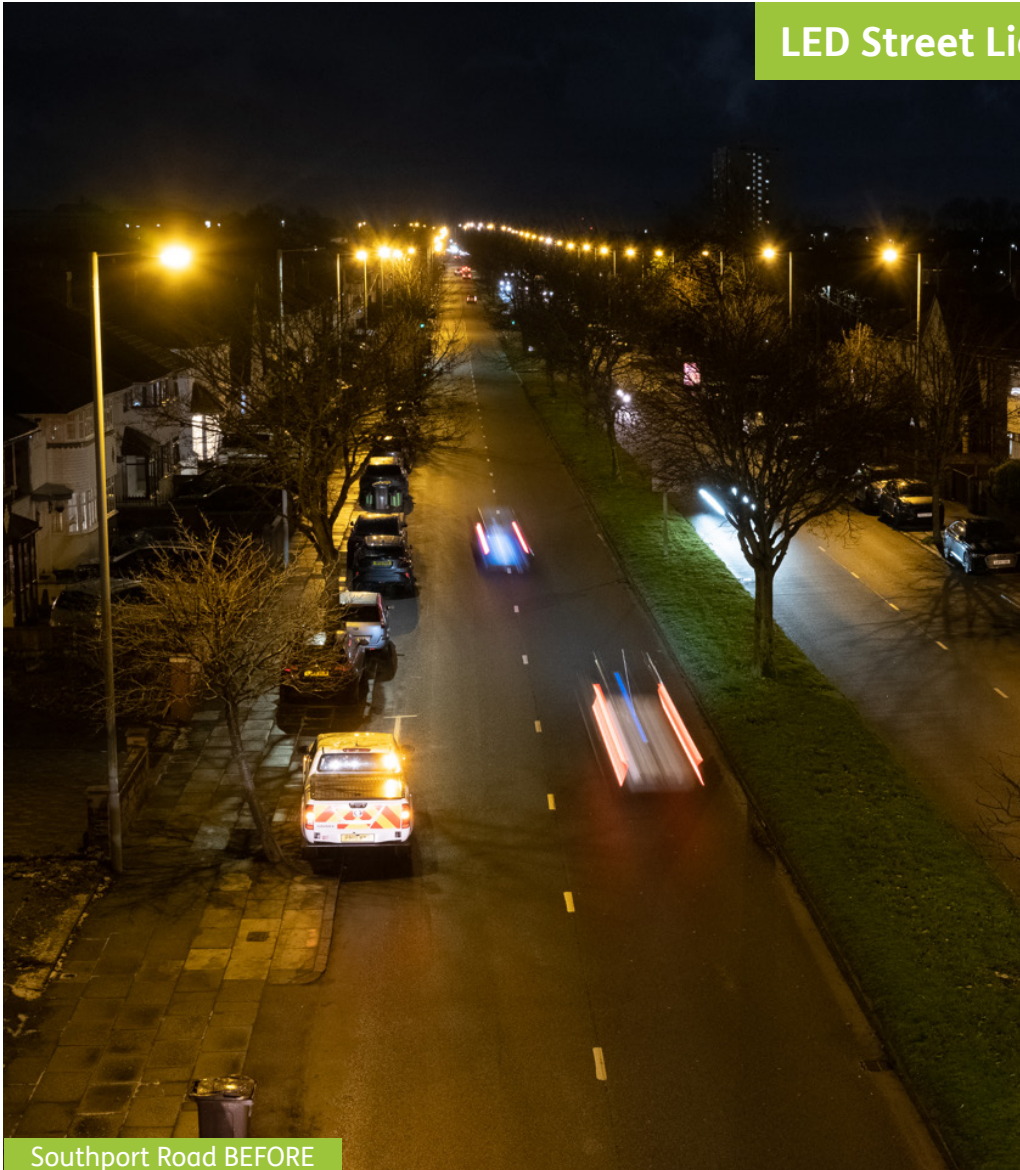
The project has achieved savings of just under 25 million kWh and over 5,200 tonnes of carbon emissions since 2021, with completion expected shortly.

Solar Together LCR Project

The Solar Together project, coordinated by the LCR Combined Authority, offers residents competitive quotes for solar panel and battery storage installation.

In 2025-26, 156 solar PV systems and 152 battery units were installed across the region, with 36 solar PVs and 37 battery units installed in Sefton.

LED Street Lighting Project



Southport Road BEFORE



Southport Road AFTER

Bereavement Services

This key Council service has improved energy efficiency through significant operational changes, including reduced power consumption and shorter operating times for key machinery. Additional measures such as switching off lights across two chapels and turning off televisions outside of service hours have further reduced electricity consumption.

Leadership

Sandway Homes

Sandway Homes, Sefton Council's housing development company, continues to set a standard for local developers with all open market plots achieving Grade A energy performance ratings.

Each new home features energy efficient boilers, electric vehicle (EV) charging points and solar PV rooftop panels that generate renewable electricity. These features demonstrate Sandway Homes' commitment to environmental responsibility whilst offering homeowners potential savings on energy bills.

LCR Community Environment Fund

The LCR Community Environment Fund, launched in 2022, has championed numerous local environmental projects including community gardens, beekeeping and growing initiatives.

The Young Green Briton Challenge, supported by the Community Environment Fund with a £15,000 investment, engaged over 800 young people from LCR schools in designing and implementing climate action ideas. Educational workshops and Dragon's Den-style pitches identified promising projects to advance to the national final.

Kings Leadership Academy in Bootle went on to win a national award for their 'Bouncepadz' invention, which uses kinetic energy to convert footsteps into electricity in high traffic areas.

The prize fund will help students to scale and develop the concept further.

Please see article below for the LCR Community Environment Fund.

<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/news/innovative-liverpool-city-region-schoolchildren-scoop-national-award-for-environment-project>



Climate Emergency eLearning Training Module

The Energy and Environmental Management team first introduced a Climate Emergency eLearning module in 2021, delivering it to 3,575 officers.

An updated training package was launched on 5 January 2026, with 1,059 officers completing the mandatory course during the first quarter of the year. The training is designed to prepare officers to effectively support and champion the Council's climate goals.

Climate Emergency Report Authors Training

Climate change considerations are embedded in all Cabinet and Council decisions through a dedicated 'Climate Implications' assessment. To date, training has been delivered to 146 officers to ensure they can complete this assessment effectively. Further improvements will be made to the training in 2026-27.

Innovation

SPARK (Supporting Projects, Accelerating Readiness & Knowledge) Fund

The Council secured £20,000 from the SPARK fund, established by the Northwest Net Zero hub. This investment funded the development of four decarbonisation plans focusing on improved insulation, low carbon heating and renewable electricity generation such as solar PV. The proposed recommendations could reduce carbon emissions by around 300 tonnes. The findings were showcased at a Lancaster University event in March 2026.

Rainwater Gardens

As part of a targeted Northwest initiative, United Utilities (UU) rainwater management team have been installing rainwater gardens in schools, free of charge. Three installations in Sefton were completed in 2025-26 (Hatton Hill Primary, Holy Spirit Primary & English Martyrs Primary), with a further six scheduled for 2026-27. The gardens slow water flow during heavy rain and reduce flood risk locally.



**North West
Net Zero Hub**

25th March 2026
Sparking Net Zero

SPARK - Supporting Projects Accelerating Readiness & Knowledge

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

Technical Feasibility

Carbon Savings:
Potential 300 tonnes
annually

Funding Allocated:
£20k



This project is to produce 4 new Heat Decarbonisation Plans, for key Sefton buildings. The sites are Magdalen House (head office), Cambridge Road Adult Education centre, Christ the King High and Netherton Moss primary. They're chosen because they are high energy consumers, with end of life heating systems. The proposed HDPs would provide a plan for improving building fabric & low carbon heating systems. Decarbonisation of key buildings, and thus HDPs, form a key element of the Council's net zero strategy and risk losing out on possible large scale funding for capital works if a HDP isn't in place.



Community Gardens

Community gardens at Sefton's Bootle, Crosby and Formby libraries have become successful hubs for outdoor activities, volunteer opportunities and environmental learning. Each garden operates on sustainability principles and support local ecosystems.

Formby library was the first library in the UK to install bee hives, which now thrive and support local ecology.

Bootle's 'Sentinel beehive' is monitored by the Environment Agency to detect for imported environmental contaminants.

Crosby's garden has earned a gold medal from Sefton in Bloom, a certificate of achievement from Green Sefton and an RHS level 5 (Distinction) award for environmental sustainability and community engagement.

External funding has been secured to deliver climate change activities at the three sites in 2026-27.



Mobilisation

Healthy Green Homes

The Healthy Green Homes team (formerly the Affordable Warmth team) supports vulnerable Sefton residents in reducing energy bills, creating warmer homes and tackling fuel poverty. This work supports the LCR net zero target through energy efficient heating system upgrades, improved insulation and behaviour change.

Key achievements over the last year include:

- Securing £185,000 in funding to directly support 111 households through heating repairs, replacements and safety checks.
- Hosted and attended 13 events directly engaging with 361 people on retrofit, energy efficiency and fuel poverty.
- Delivered two Keep Warm Keep Well events with Sefton Opera, reaching 160 residents and supporting over 100 people at a disability event in partnership with the Job Centre.
- Distributed over 400 winter warm packs and other energy saving measures across the borough through food pantries, Keep Warm Keep Well events and Riverside Housing Association residents.
- Processed 205 ECO Flex referrals, enabling residents to access grant funding for renewable technologies, heating and insulation.

Following receiving funding from the National Lottery Community Fund (£866,548 awarded over five years), the team recruited four members to deliver the Sefton Climate and Retrofit Action Plan (SCRAP). This funding is part of the Climate Action Fund – a £100 million decade long initiative supporting UK communities on climate action, aligned with the National Lottery Community Fund's 2030 strategy mission: "It starts with community."

The team is also establishing community groups in partnership with Zero Carbon Liverpool and building on existing relationships with Sefton Community Learning Centre to deliver green sector qualifications and employment pathways, particularly in construction.



Environmental Support for Businesses in Sefton

InvestSefton supports local businesses in reducing carbon emissions and improving environmental performance as part of the Council's wider climate emergency response. The team also led development of the Sefton Economic Strategy (SES) 2026-2028, which incorporates net zero/low carbon and sustainable travel objectives with key performance indicators.

InvestSefton has delivered business events and workshops across the borough, including a Sustainability Workshop in Southport (40 attendees) and a Good Growth event in Crosby (20 businesses in attendance). Both events provided practical guidance on sustainable, profitable business practices through low carbon assessments and good growth principles.

The team maintains partnerships with a number of organisations including Edge Hill University and LJMU Eco-Innovatory Centre, working closely on a number of initiatives and providing managed referrals for Sefton businesses. Recent funding support includes Plaza Community Cinema in Waterloo, which upgraded its main screen projector, achieving an annual carbon saving of 7,193 kg.

Adaptation

Green Sefton

Natural environments play a critical role in Sefton's decarbonisation efforts. Landscapes absorb and store carbon, tackling climate change while improving air quality and reducing flood risk – particularly important for a coastal borough. Preserving and enhancing these ecosystems also promotes biodiversity, supports sustainable land use and provides community recreational spaces.

Over the last year, Green Sefton has made progress in several key areas:

- Expanded community engagement in Hightown and Crosby to assess awareness of climate change and potential coastal impacts.
- Continued coastline monitoring through the Northwest Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme to track landform and habitat changes, evaluate storm event impacts and inform understanding of future coastal evolution.
- Evaluated nature-based solutions within parks and green spaces to manage surface water flood risk and deliver wider environmental benefits.
- Planted 726 standard trees, bringing the total to 8,309 since 2019-20.

Climate Adaptation Risk Registers

Climate change has been added to the Council's Corporate Risk Register, placing greater responsibility on all service areas to consider any risks to their services from a changing climate.

Over the past year, officers have been equipped with support to aid their risk assessment work, including tailored workshops, a detailed guidance document for individual service areas, a high-level presentation and risk assessment template.

This work is ongoing; progress will be reviewed in October 2026.



Transformation

Domestic Retrofit

The Warm Homes Local Grant (WH:LG) scheme is a three-year domestic energy efficiency and low-carbon heating initiative funded by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). The scheme supports vulnerable residents at risk of fuel poverty to enhance their home's energy performance.

The Council's Retrofit team launched the scheme in 2025-26, completing energy efficiency improvements to 57 homes during the first year, installing loft and cavity wall insulation, storage heaters and solar PVs.



Low Carbon Transport Strategy

In August 2025, the Council issued a Low Carbon Transport Strategy Position Statement, reflecting its ongoing commitment to tackling transport-related climate challenges.

The following areas have seen progress over the past year:

1. Healthy Places and Active Travel

The Council has delivered active travel schemes including “Les Transformations de Southport,” Maritime Corridor (Bootle), Southport Eastern Access and the A59 Corridor as part of wider highways delivery.

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) sets out strategic routes and investment priorities for active travel across the borough. The plan will support funding applications to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) for improvements to paths,

roads and crossing points, promoting healthier and greener travel choices.

The LCRCA has secured five-year Transport for City Regions (TCR) funding from 2027 to 2032, with a dedicated ‘LCWIP Delivery’ allocation to develop prioritised routes identified during public consultation.

LCWIP delivery will comprise both large and small-scale improvements. A ‘walk improvement package’ will include footway, pedestrian crossing and residential traffic safety measures to support safe access to schools, local amenities and green spaces. Cycle parking – both secure facilities and bicycle racks will be distributed across the borough.

Larger schemes will focus on junctions and corridors aligned with Sefton’s growth ambitions and road safety concerns, including the A565 near Formby and the A59 in Maghull.



2. School Streets and Neighbourhoods Programme

The Council is delivering the School Streets and Neighbourhoods Programme in partnership with schools, local communities and key stakeholders to make walking, wheeling and cycling safer and more accessible for children.

Projects to date include trials in Bootle and Norwood (Southport). The Council is currently working with multiple primary and secondary schools across the borough and will expand the programme over the next 12 months.



3. E-Mobility and Electric Vehicles

Sefton Council has approved an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy to deliver an accessible public charging network across the borough. The strategy includes plans for community charging hubs in car parks and leisure centres, on-street charging trials (lamp posts and columns) and cross-pavement solutions.

Funding has been secured through the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) via the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund and Electric Vehicle Pavement Channels grant.

The Council will work with the LCRC to deliver publicly accessible charge points and develop cross-pavement trials. This includes embedding new highways processes and permissions across existing teams. Charge Point Operators are being procured, with delivery expected to commence from autumn/winter 2026 and throughout 2027.

4. Construction and Embedded Carbon

Work has been completed on a methodology to assess the carbon impacts of highways and trial schemes in Sefton.

5. Landscaping, Maintenance and Drainage

The Transport and Highways Infrastructure team has worked with the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) and Green Sefton to draft a Greenways Strategy outlining the approach to greenways that support nature and enhance biodiversity across the borough.

The strategy identifies key corridors where management practices will be revised to maximise nature recovery through revised mowing regimes, installing rainwater gardens, establishing wildflower beds, planting hedges and trees along transport corridors and creating habitat 'stepping stones' across smaller open spaces to enable wildlife movement throughout the urban area.

Engagement and Education

School Engagement

In 2025-26, schools received support through the Council's Eco Savers programme, which provides practical guidance and resources primarily to help reduce utility use on site but to also support or signpost on other environmental issues and strengthen sustainability.

- The Council completed 12 bespoke energy and environmental audits across the borough, identifying opportunities to reduce gas and water consumption, heat loss and energy waste. Several schools implemented immediate heating control adjustments, and benchmarking support enabled schools to compare performance with similar establishments nationally.
- A thermal imaging survey at St Nicholas Primary School, Waterloo highlighted key areas of heat loss and cost improvement opportunities.
- The Eco Savers League was relaunched, with over 25% of schools participating in creative pupil-led energy, water and biodiversity initiatives.
- Over 80% of schools completed Climate Action plans and 95% identified a sustainability lead.
- Officers delivered five assemblies and workshops, including a session for SEND pupils, and provided governor and senior leader training through a borough-wide session attended by 15-20 participants.
- Schools received support through the Autumn Utility Saving Campaign, with approximately 15% receiving printed posters and visual prompts.

- Two editions of the Big Green Envelope newsletter were distributed, alongside posters and support materials.
- The Council supported United Utilities in engaging schools on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and provided water-related support to selected sites.
- Heat Decarbonisation Plans were completed for Netherton Moss Primary School and Christ the King High School. A number of schools have also been identified as candidates for future solar PV installation, with preparation work underway to support future funding applications.



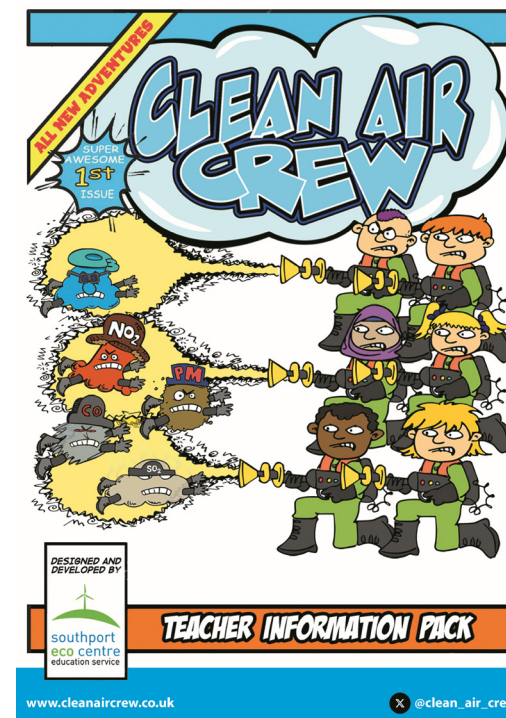
Eco Centre

The Eco Centre is an award-winning educational facility providing hands-on learning opportunities for young people across the Liverpool City Region, aligned with national curriculum objectives. In 2025-26, over 3,000 children visited the centre.

Beyond the education visit programme, the team has developed the Clean Air Crew resource, a teaching toolkit addressing air quality issues and health impacts. Sefton is leading this initiative, with interest from local authorities across the country.

The team has supported schools in developing Climate Action Plans, a Department of Education requirement, encouraging school-wide engagement and pupil leadership to enhance social value.

The immersive education exhibit in the Hive, Bootle Shopping Centre has recently been updated based on user feedback, reflecting the importance of community input.



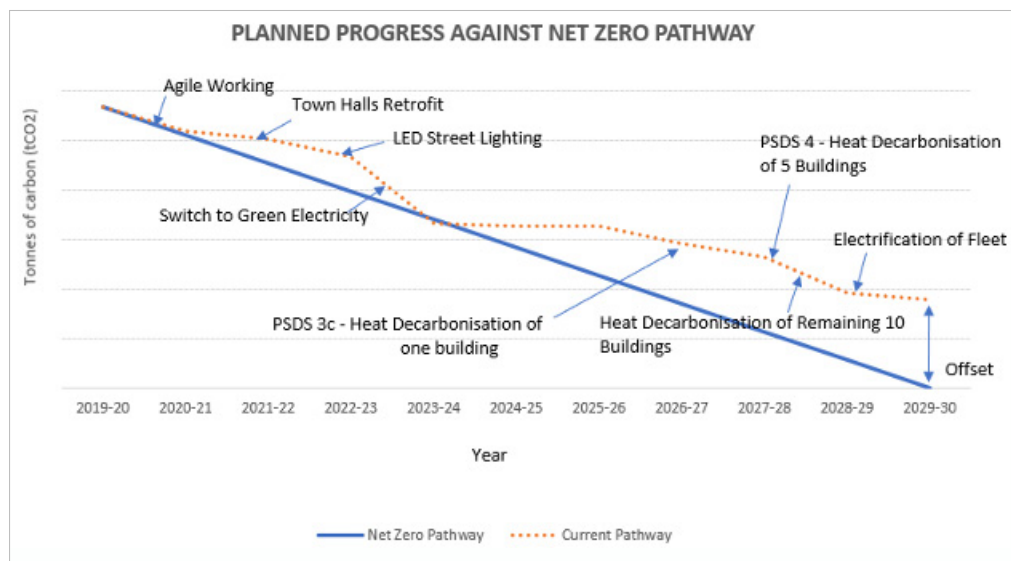
Challenges

The Council achieved a significant 41% reduction in carbon emissions in the first four years since the baseline was set, primarily through switching to a clean electricity tariff. Progress has since slowed, with only a 2% reduction in 2024-25 and no significant reduction in 2025-26. This plateau reflects the increasing difficulty of decarbonising remaining emissions and the need for continued action.

The graph shows the pathway to net zero carbon emissions by 2030 (blue line) against current progress (red dotted line). The trajectory reflects the latest emissions data. It outlines completed work and planned projects, including decarbonising remaining buildings and moving to electric and low carbon vehicles, and any remaining emissions that need offsetting by 2030.

Limited Council budgets remain a significant barrier to delivering key climate projects at the pace required to reach net zero by 2030. External funding is essential to progress decarbonisation initiatives, particularly for capital-intensive projects such as fleet electrification and retrofitting buildings. However, securing this funding remains competitive and challenging. The Council will look for innovative solutions and work in partnership with others to address this.

Collaboration with the LCRCA is vital to identifying joint opportunities and accessing regional and national funding.



Priorities for 2026-27

The Council has made notable progress in implementing the climate emergency strategy and Council action plan, while supporting the wider LCR net zero target, as evidenced by the activities and projects detailed throughout this report.

The main objectives for 2026-27 are to:

- Build on last year's progress around fleet decarbonisation through a coordinated approach focusing on short term (2026-27), medium term (2027-2030) and long term (2030+) actions.
- Explore offsetting and insetting opportunities to strengthen the Council's progress towards net zero.
- Oversee project delivery under Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 4.
- Continue to explore new funding opportunities.
- Refresh and develop the Council's Climate Emergency Report Author training.



Conclusions

Sefton Council has made significant progress in reducing its carbon footprint, cutting carbon emissions by 4,854 tonnes since establishing its baseline in 2019-20, which represents an impressive 43% reduction overall. This achievement has been driven primarily by the Council's strategic decision to procure clean electricity, demonstrating the effectiveness of transitioning to renewable energy sources.

Building on this momentum, the Council has secured funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) for Phase 3c and 4, which is anticipated to generate additional emission reductions and futureproof the Council's key buildings in the years ahead.

While these findings are encouraging, the Council recognises that substantial work remains to achieve net zero by 2030. Phase 3 (2027-2030) of the action plan will require funding from many sources and innovation to deliver the necessary investment and work needed to meet the target.

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