

Annual Climate Conference

Highlight Report 2025

Huntingdonshire District Council proudly hosted its third Annual Climate Conference on 5th November 2025.

Over 120 people gathered to hear from a variety of keynote speakers, engage in workshops and attend question a panel of experts. There was a wide variety of stallholders from local energy companies to wildlife trusts, providing information, advice and giving out freebies – showcasing their work and contributions to the agenda. All of this kept in with this year’s theme: “Together for Tomorrow” and very much highlighted everyone’s commitment to tackling climate change.



Cllr Lara Davenport-Ray (Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce) and Michelle Sacks (HDC’s Chief Executive) opened the event with some key points:

- As a society, people are becoming more interested in how they can make a difference to climate change
- All HDC refuse vehicles are now powered by hydrotreated vegetable oil instead of standard diesel, which will reduce carbon emissions by 83% annually
- The Green Recovery Scheme has overseen 17 community projects. These build skills, increase social interactions, benefit physical and mental health and boost chances of employment
- Solar panel canopies have been installed in the car park at Burgess Hall in St Ives
- Everyone can make a difference no matter how small the action and local community efforts are key to successful action



Huntingdonshire Futures

The Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy is a long-term framework designed to shape the future of our district. It sets out a shared vision for creating thriving communities and sustainable opportunities across the district. At its core, the strategy focuses on understanding what matters most to residents, businesses, and stakeholders, and translating these priorities into actionable plans.

The strategy works collectively with partners and communities to champion and deliver key elements in the form of 5 key journeys: Pride in Place, Inclusive Economy, Health, Environmental Innovation and Travel.

With Environmental Innovation being one pillar of Huntingdonshire Futures, the annual climate conversation has become a platform to showcase progress on commitments such as reducing carbon emissions, enhancing green infrastructure and promoting active travel.

All five pillars of the strategy were reflected in the event:

Huntingdonshire FUTURES



Inclusive Economy: Warboys Community Centre spoke about the building of a £1.8 million net-zero community hub already being used by older residents, young people, community groups and businesses.



Pride in Place: the afternoon's panel discussion 'Connected by water' explored the necessity of a common language for combatting climate change and how nature-based solutions can be employed to assist water management.



Health Embedded: Stukeley Meadows Primary School demonstrated the effective link between school-based wellbeing (providing more time outdoors) and nature connection (creating sustainable planters and encouraging healthier behaviours at home).



Environmental Innovation: the event gave workshops on digital carbon footprints and highlighted current initiatives through circular economy and waste innovation.



Travel: Active travel to the event was encouraged. If attendees travelled by EV, public transport, walked or cycled they could enter a competition to win a goody bag of products sourced from local businesses.



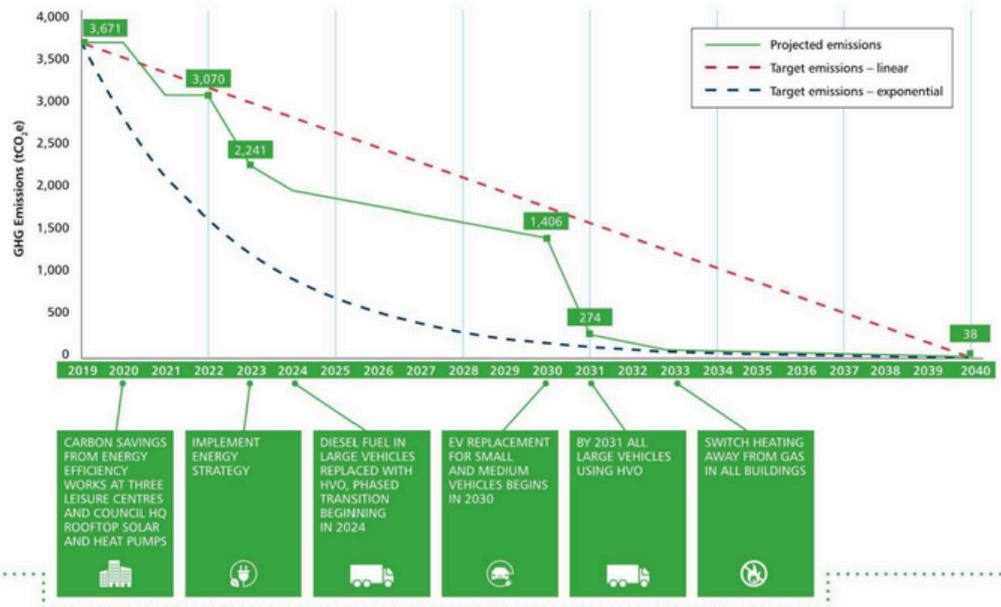
Our Pathway to Carbon Net Zero 2040

The red and blue show two target lines we could follow.

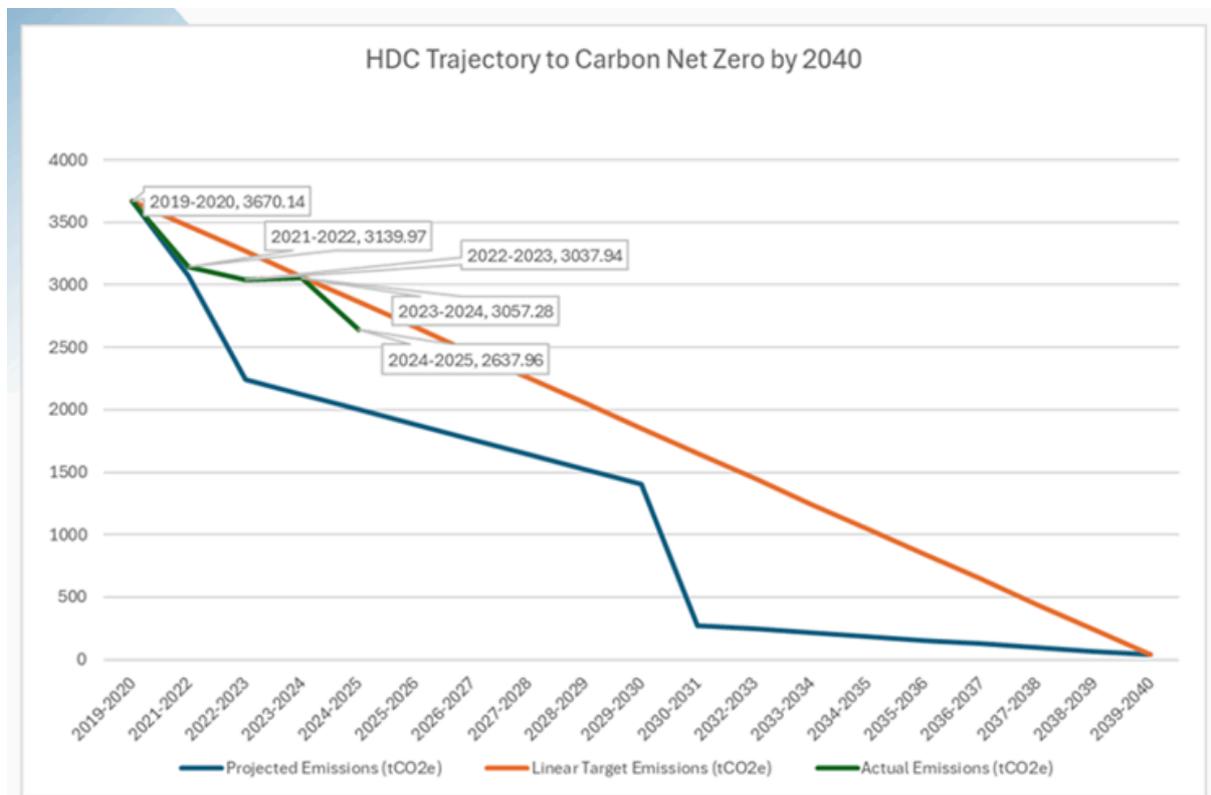
Green shows the impact of the changes we expect to make through our current action plan to reduce emissions, based on what is currently known about improving technology.

Our action plan will be revisited annually, if opportunities arise that improve the business case for action, we will reduce our carbon emissions earlier.

Carbon Pathway Scenarios to 2040



Source: [Climate Strategy](#)



Speakers, Workshop and Panel Discussion Summaries



“Farming now - the challenge of crops, countryside, climate and community”



David Felce, Midloe Grange Farm

David explained how he has adapted his farm to meet the challenging needs of crops, countryside, climate and community. A recipient of the Rawcliffe Bridge Sustainability Award 2025, he linked environment and farming through a long term ‘integrated farm management’ approach. He spoke not only about the importance of environmental but also financial sustainability. The key takeaway: communicate, manage and monitor!



“Sustainability starts at school”



Chris Daly, Stukeley Meadows Primary School

Despite the challenges of a demanding curriculum, Chris has designed a programme of work to promote sustainability that fits into, and complements, every stage of the national curriculum.

The children are empowered to create healthy and sustainable changes both at school and at home through activities including meal planning and gardening.

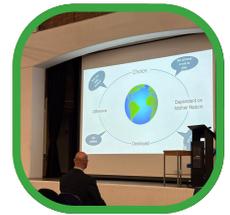
The creation of sustainable planters has reduced flooding on the school site, and children are able to spend more time outdoors, engaging with nature and improving their wellbeing.





“Community, social value, futures and a building”

Julie Drummond, Warboys Parish Council



Julie explained the vision to develop an environmentally friendly, futureproof and net zero community centre, which would reduce the carbon footprint of Warboys Parish Council and boost social value.

In spite of a myriad of challenges, the new £1.8m Warboys Community Centre opened in October 2025. There are 30 solar panels, water sustainability solutions, a mechanical heat recovery unit and EV charging points.

The community has already shown great interest with it already being put to use for activities by older residents, young people, community groups and businesses.



“Waste minimisation explained: food waste and beyond!”

Heidi Field, Waste Minimisation Officer, HDC



Heidi detailed the work HDC currently does to minimise waste across Huntingdonshire including using social media and public information campaigns.

Around 50% of resident waste is recycled currently. Initiatives to support this include reusable nappies, home composters, repair cafes, community litter picks, reduced cost reusable sanitary products, and work with schools and property management companies.

In 2026, there will be new weekly food waste collections, and all households will be provided with food waste caddies. This will be used to generate electricity and fertiliser.





“The Hidden Emissions of our Clicks: unpacking your digital carbon footprint”



Nick Massey - Biodiversity Project Manager, HDC

This workshop was a real eye-opener, revealing just how significant our digital carbon footprints are - did you know that emissions from digital activity rival those of air travel?

One striking fact was about dark data: information stored online but never used. Astonishingly, this accounts for around 50% of our digital carbon footprint.

In small breakout groups, the audience explored practical ways to reduce these footprints through positive actions in homes, businesses, schools and even at a national level.

The session sparked meaningful conversations about how we can change our habits and move toward a more digitally sustainable future.



“Connected by water: aligning priorities for a resilient District”



Chaired by Cllr Lara Davenport-Ray, this panel welcomed contributions from Nick Massey (HDC), Clara Todd (Water Sensitive Cambridgeshire), Kathryn Reading (Flood Risk, CCC) and Katie Teesdale-Ward (Anglian Water) to explore the role of water as a precious, valuable and finite resource.

Water underpins a climate resilient future in Huntingdonshire and the dissemination of information to raise awareness about this is critical to success. Working with landowners, young people and communities will be central to this response.

The key important points included the need to: develop an action plan; understand where flooding occurs; promote that natural flood defences can help increase biodiversity; be clear that saving water saves money; using a common vocabulary to describe water management; and considering the potential inherent “rights of our rivers”.



Stallholders, Contacts, Key Information and Links

HDC would like to extend their thanks to the following stallholders who attend the event:

- Greater South East Net Zero Hub
- PECT
- Macbrook Gas
- Brimstone Energy
- HDC's Economic Development and Local Plan team
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Friends of Holt Island
- Centre for Climate Engagement - Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge
- St Ives Repair Café
- St Ives Eco Action
- HDC's Waste and Fleet teams
- HDC Parks, Countryside and Open Spaces teams
- Wild About Huntingdon
- Wildlife Trust
- One Leisure - Active Lifestyles

Further useful information can be found in these links:

- [HDC Climate Webpage](#)
- [HDC Waste Page](#)
- [HDC Active Lifestyles](#)
- [HDC Local Plan](#)
- [Invest in Huntingdonshire](#)
- [Huntingdonshire Futures](#)

Lastly, are you interested in borrowing a thermal imaging camera? Do you have any suggestions of what HDC can do to combat climate change further? Would you like us to come and talk at an event or Parish meeting?

Please email: placeandclimate@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Our incredible visual illustrations were provided by Beatrice Baumgartner-Cohen. Her website is [here](#)

