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Foreword

The climate challenges we face are no longer distant prospects; they are the reality of our present. As the **Cabinet Member for Environment**, I am pleased to introduce Babergh District Council's **Annual Climate Report** for the **Council's Carbon Reduction Management Plan**—our strategic roadmap to a sustainable, resilient, and carbon-neutral future.

Babergh is a district defined by its stunning natural landscapes, vibrant market towns, and a deep-rooted sense of community. We have a duty to protect this heritage. This plan isn't just a set of targets; it is a commitment to our residents, our businesses, and future generations that we lead by example.

Empowering Our Local Economy: Solar for Business

We recognise that the transition to net-zero is a journey we must take alongside our local business community. High energy costs and carbon targets can be daunting for any enterprise; that is why we are championing initiatives like **Solar for Business**. Through our partnership with West Suffolk Council, we are making it possible for local firms to have solar panels installed on their premises with **no upfront costs**. By generating clean, renewable energy on-site, businesses can benefit from lower electricity tariffs, improving their bottom line while significantly reducing their environmental impact. Whether it's rooftop solar or the pioneering solar carports we've pioneered at our leisure centres, we are committed to making renewable energy a practical reality for Babergh's economy.

Championing Youth Voices in Climate Action

We are committed to supporting young people as key partners in Babergh's sustainable future. Through initiatives such as the **Schools Green Skills Summit**, we give pupils the chance to develop practical green skills and share their ideas with local leaders. Feedback from the young people was unanimous in that the event had increased their knowledge and understanding of climate issues.

Our Strategy at a Glance

This management plan focuses on three core pillars to drive meaningful change:

- **Decarbonising Our Operations:** Transitioning our council fleet to ultra-low emission vehicles and upgrading our corporate buildings with renewable energy solutions.
- **Empowering Our Communities:** Supporting local green initiatives and providing the tools for residents to reduce their own environmental footprint.
- **Sustainable Growth:** Ensuring that new developments in the district meet high energy-efficiency standards and contribute to a circular economy.

The Path Forward

Achieving net-zero is an ambitious goal, and it will require more than just policy—it requires a shift in how we think, work, and live. While the Council will spearhead these initiatives, our success depends on the collective action of every stakeholder in the district.

The journey to a low-carbon Babergh is an opportunity to innovate, create green jobs, and improve the quality of life for everyone. I invite you to join us as we turn these plans into progress.



Cllr Helen Davies
Babergh District Council

Introduction:

This report sets out the key **climate, energy and sustainable transport activity delivered by Babergh District Councils over the 12-month period in 2025**. It provides an overview of progress made across council-led programmes, partnership projects and community-focused initiatives that support delivery of the councils' Climate Emergency commitments.

Over the past year, activity has focused on **moving from planning and feasibility into delivery**, strengthening internal capacity, securing external funding, and supporting residents, businesses and communities to reduce emissions and energy costs. The work summarised in this report reflects a balanced approach, combining infrastructure investment, advice and support programmes, behavioural change initiatives and organisational change.

The report is intended to provide a **clear and accessible overview of what has been delivered**, the outcomes achieved to date, and how this work is laying the foundations for further delivery in 2026 and beyond. Each section outlines the context for key projects, the activity undertaken during 2025, and the anticipated next steps, enabling progress to be understood alongside future direction.



Energy & Estates

Overview

Energy and estates activity focuses on **reducing emissions, improving energy efficiency and managing energy costs across council-owned buildings and infrastructure**. This work is central to meeting Climate Emergency commitments while also addressing financial pressures, asset condition, and long-term operational resilience.

During 2025, activity within this theme has concentrated on:

- Improving the performance of existing low-carbon infrastructure
- Supporting local renewable energy generation and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Strengthening energy monitoring and data-led decision-making
- Ensuring council energy assets deliver maximum environmental and financial value

The projects outlined below demonstrate a **shift from feasibility and planning into optimisation and delivery**, supported by external funding, technical expertise and improved internal capacity.

Heat Network Development and Optimisation

Project context

Shared heat networks play an important role in decarbonising heat across mixed-use and residential estates, particularly where individual low-carbon heating solutions are not viable. Ensuring these systems operate efficiently, reliably and affordably is critical for both carbon reduction and resident outcomes.

Activity delivered in 2025

- Secured Heat Network Efficiency Scheme (HNES) funding for optimisation studies at three Sheltered Heating Units (two in Babergh).
- Procured Chirpy Heat consultants to undertake detailed technical assessments, including on-site inspections and performance modelling.
- Completed preparatory data collection and planning, with site visits scheduled for January 2026.

Outcomes and benefits

- Improved understanding of system performance, heat losses and operational inefficiencies.
- Robust evidence-base to inform future capital investment and prioritisation.
- Potential to reduce carbon emissions, improve resident comfort and lower operating costs

Next steps

- Review consultant recommendations in early 2026.
- Prioritise optimisation measures and develop business cases for implementation.
- Seek funding to deliver improvements.

Low-Carbon Energy Infrastructure & Local Renewable Generation

Project context

While no new council-owned renewable installations were delivered during 2025, activity focused on supporting low-carbon energy infrastructure across the districts and ensuring existing council energy systems and EV charging infrastructure operate effectively. This enabling role supports wider decarbonisation while managing financial risk and maximising value from existing assets.

Activity delivered in 2025

Supporting local renewable energy generation

- Solar for Business programme engagement:
 - Babergh: 27 enquiries, 7 proposals issued, 4 progressed to legal stage, 14 did not proceed.
- Battery Box (Amp Energy) programme:
 - three installations constructed and progressing to operation.

EV charging infrastructure management

- Ongoing operational support for **100+ electric vehicle charge points** across council-owned sites.
- Fault resolution, monitoring, and liaison with operators to maintain reliability and user confidence.

Outcomes and benefits

- Increased local renewable energy capacity through privately funded installations.
- Improved reliability and performance of EV charging infrastructure.
- Strengthened local energy resilience and support for low-carbon transport.
- Foundations laid for future decarbonisation without requiring immediate capital investment.

Next steps (2026)

- Continue supporting Solar for Business enquiries and progression where schemes move forward.
- Monitor Battery Box installations as they become operational.
- Continue performance monitoring of EV infrastructure to inform future expansion and investment decisions.



EV Charger

Ongoing Energy Management and Estate Support

Activity delivered in 2025

- Closer working with the councils' energy broker (Vertas) to identify utility supplies relying on estimated readings and resolve data inaccuracies.
- Weekly monitoring of council-owned renewable energy assets to track performance and identify issues early.
- Awarded a solar panel cleaning contract to improve generation efficiency across installations.
- Provided technical and operational energy support for major sites including leisure centres and corporate buildings.

Outcomes and benefits

- Improved accuracy of energy billing and forecasting, ensuring budgets are neither overstated nor underspent and releasing funds for use elsewhere.
- Optimised renewable generation performance through proactive monitoring and maintenance.
- Better cost control, reduced operational risk, and increased confidence in energy data.

Next steps (2026)

- Maintain enhanced energy monitoring and broker engagement as standard practice.
- Review performance data to identify further optimisation opportunities across the estate.
- Continue proactive maintenance and performance management of renewable assets.

Community Energy & Local Action

Overview

Community Energy enables residents, volunteers, and councils to work together on local climate and energy projects. Initiatives range from behaviour-change campaigns ('Power Down') to renewable energy generation ('Power Up'), supporting energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, and keeping benefits within local communities.

In Babergh, Community Energy activity continues to grow:

- **3 active groups in Babergh:** Hadleigh HEAT, Heating Bildeston, Stour Power.
- Support provided via the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP) and Community Energy Pathways (CEP) programme.
- Councils currently provide **light-touch coordination**, focusing on enabling delivery, sharing expertise, and connecting groups to funding and resources.

This section highlights **key projects delivered in 2025**, outcomes achieved, and plans for future community energy support.

BMSDC Community Energy Network – Biannual Meetings

Meetings held: March and September 2025

Participants: Three active Community Energy groups in Babergh: Hadleigh HEAT, Heating Bildeston, Stour Power

Focus: Sharing best practice, overcoming operational challenges, and aligning activities with district Climate Emergency objectives.

Outcomes:

- Identified short- and medium-term actions to support local projects.
- Coordinated workshops, pilot projects, and community events.
- Strengthened collaboration between Community Energy groups, councils, and external partners.

Next Steps: Continue biannual meetings to maintain momentum, track action delivery, and provide councillor updates.

Babergh & Mid Suffolk Community Energy Development

Purpose: Work to provide a framework for Community Energy development across the districts.

Highlights:

- Defines current position of active and emerging groups.
- Identifies achievable actions within current officer capacity, including coordination, mapping, communications, and engagement support.
- Outlines optional enhanced ambition options, including additional staff and funding to accelerate renewable generation and retrofit initiatives.

Focus: Sustain current activity, build local capacity, enable volunteer engagement, and embed Community Energy into Net Zero delivery.

Next Steps: Formalise actions to go into the refreshed Carbon Reduction Management Plan

Thermal Imaging Camera Loan Scheme

Overview

During winter 2025, staff and residents were able to borrow infrared thermal imaging cameras to identify heat loss in homes and inform energy efficiency improvements. The scheme provided a hands-on, practical tool to engage households with retrofit and low-carbon solutions, enabling users to visually see where energy was escaping.

Engagement

- **15 loans** fully booked during the season, with participants surveying a range of property types, including detached, semi-detached, and terraced homes, as well as bungalows.
- Properties spanned a mix of ages, from pre-1900 builds to post-2012 homes, reflecting the diversity of the local housing stock.
- Users also surveyed homes of friends and family, amplifying the reach of the programme.

Impact & Outcomes

- The cameras **identified insulation gaps, drafts, and cold spots**, supporting prioritisation of interventions such as loft insulation, wall and floor insulation, window replacements, radiator reflector foil, and roof upgrades.
- Several participants reported acting on the findings, including installing or topping up loft insulation, repairing windows, or addressing chimney flue insulation.
- The visual nature of thermal imaging helped households **understand energy loss issues and focus resources effectively**, avoiding unnecessary or ineffective interventions.
- Participants rated the scheme highly: ease of booking, collection, return, and use of the device scored consistently 4-5/5.

Participant Feedback

- “The camera showed us that we were definitely losing heat through the older parts of our house, especially floors and walls. It gave us visual proof and highlighted that our skylight needed replacing.” - Helen Cufley
- “It helped me identify a blown double-glazed window pane and a cold roof over an extension, which we have now upgraded. The house is much warmer.” - Melanie Lee
- “The infrared camera quantified the poor chimney flue insulation. I now know where to focus for maximum benefit.” - John Dolby

Next Steps (2026)

- Continue the thermal imaging camera loan scheme in 2026 to maintain practical engagement with energy efficiency.
- Explore the inclusion of **before-and-after photos** to visually demonstrate improvements from interventions.
- Encourage follow-up actions and signposting to local retrofit and insulation schemes, including the Suffolk Loft Insulation Offer.
- Collect additional feedback to improve booking and device handling processes, ensuring high accessibility and usability for participants.

Partnerships and Support

- **Greater South-East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH):** Technical expertise, governance guidance, and access to Community Energy Fund.
- **Community Energy Pathways (CEP) & SCCP:** Support for local groups until March 2026, maintaining momentum and access to national funding streams.
- **Council Role:** Light-touch coordination and practical guidance, enabling groups to progress projects, access funding, and connect with stakeholders.

Household Energy Efficiency & Retrofit Support

In addition to community energy activity, residents were supported during 2025 to improve home energy efficiency through Suffolk-wide funded schemes and affordable finance options that the Council participates in. The Council also introduced a **Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO)** in August 2025, making it easier for owners of Grade II listed homes to install approved energy-efficient window measures without needing individual consent. Below are figures for the Babergh district delivery of Suffolk-wide schemes the Council supports and is a partner in:

Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2)

- 16 homes supported
- £282,154 secured for energy efficiency improvements

Warm Homes: Local Grant

- 12 referrals made
- 2 installations completed
- £27,636 delivered in measures

Lendology Interest-Free Home Energy Loans

- 23 loans approved
- £214,322 invested in home energy improvements

These programmes help residents reduce energy bills, improve comfort and lower carbon emissions while supporting fuel poverty objectives.

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) programme supports energy efficiency upgrades to council housing, improving comfort, reducing fuel costs and cutting carbon emissions. Delivery has continued through Wave 2.2 in partnership with Housing teams and delivery contractors.

Programme Impact (Wave 2.2 Delivery)

Post-delivery evaluation across Babergh and Mid Suffolk has identified significant performance improvements in upgraded homes:

- **Average EPC improvement:** +15 points

Highest uplift: 54 points (F25 → B84)

- **Average space heating demand reduction:** 19%

Best case: 57% reduction

- **Average airtightness improvement: 21%**

Best case: 64% improvement

- **Average carbon emissions reduction: 45%**

Best case: 83% reduction (7 tCO₂e/year → 1.1 tCO₂e/year)

These improvements demonstrate the effectiveness of whole-house retrofit in reducing energy demand, improving thermal performance and lowering household emissions.

Note: Wave 2.2 delivery runs until 31 March 2026. Performance data reflects programme outcomes and may include a small proportion of works completed in early 2026 where separation by calendar year is not possible.

Outcomes & Benefits

- Warmer, healthier homes with improved thermal comfort
- Reduced energy demand and lower heating costs for tenants
- Significant carbon emissions reductions supporting climate targets
- Improved building fabric performance and long-term housing quality

2025 Activity

- Continued delivery of SHDF Wave 2.2 improvements to council housing
- Collaboration with Housing teams and Equans to monitor performance and resident outcomes
- Initial discussions with Procurement to strengthen social value requirements in future retrofit contracts

Next Steps

- Complete Wave 2.2 delivery and capture full programme outcomes
- Obtain district-level delivery and carbon savings data for future reporting
- Strengthen social value requirements within retrofit procurement
- Align resident engagement with wider community energy and advice activity

Sustainable Travel

Overview

Babergh is committed to reducing transport-related emissions, improving air quality, and enhancing accessibility for residents. Over the past 12 months, the council has delivered a range of initiatives supporting **active travel, e-mobility, and rural connectivity**, including **e-bike hire, walking and cycling infrastructure improvements, EV charging expansion, and rural transport schemes**. These projects complement the council's Net Zero objectives and provide tangible benefits for residents and businesses.

E-Bike Hire – Eezybike Pods

- Solar powered pods operational pods in Sudbury and Lavenham, enabling people to hire an e-bike for emission free travel and to encourage modal shift to low carbon transport options
- Good engagement across both sites with regular uptake; council contribution (to subsidise the rental costs for users) reduces year on year
- Expansion opportunities being explored; potential for funding from Freeport East for another pod at Shotley Marina.



Sudbury Eezy bike launch

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

- 8 schemes completed: 1 more underway/under construction. 4 more have secured funding. A further 3 have been developed into concept designs.
- Much of this work is enhancements and upgrades to legal status' of parts of the Public Rights of Way network, which has enabled – for example - new connecting routes around and between Acton, Chilton, Great Waldingfield.
- Suffolk LCWIP Liaison Group established to share progress and overcome barriers.

EV Infrastructure - Plug in Suffolk

- Work ongoing to expand EV infrastructure across Babergh in partnership with Suffolk County Council.
- The district council facilitates installations on council-owned land and housing neighbourhoods through lease agreements.
- Approximately 70 installations are being explored across the district, with up to 30 potentially located on district council land.
- Installations provide a modest ongoing income stream while supporting the transition to low-carbon transport.

Rural Transport

- Continue to support our community transport operators with practical, operational support and funding opportunities.
- Work with parishes and partners to access SCC's Bus Service Improvement Plan funding to secure new bus routes and timetable enhancements, as well as capital improvements to bus stops and stations.

Schools, Skills & Engagement

Overview

The council is committed to engaging young people in climate action, sustainable careers, and energy awareness. School-based initiatives provide practical learning opportunities, promote green skills, and build leadership capabilities while supporting local Net Zero ambitions. In 2025, the focus was on the **Schools Green Skills Summit**, alongside wider youth engagement events, ensuring students gain practical experience, explore climate solutions, and connect with local businesses delivering green innovation.

Schools Green Skills Summit 2025

Date & Venue: 10 October 2025 - Royal Hospital School

Attendance: 85 students from 10 schools across Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Year Groups: Year 8 & 9

Aims:

- Strengthen climate learning, leadership, and awareness of green careers
- Empower students to tackle real-world climate challenges
- Build partnerships between schools, councils, and local businesses

Activities:

- **COP-style Climate Negotiations:** Students debated climate justice, emissions reduction, and climate finance, then voted on actions.
- **Climate Question Time:** Panel of councillors and industry experts answered student questions on local climate action and green careers.
- **Green Skills Careers Fair:** 13 local organisations showcased careers in engineering, construction, energy, food sustainability, waste management, and digital technology.
- **Student Action Planning:** Schools identified priorities for follow-up projects within their communities.

Key Outcomes:

- Students improved teamwork, negotiation, and communication skills
- Increased awareness of local green career opportunities
- Stronger partnerships between councils, schools, and local businesses
- Reinforced councils' commitment to climate education and youth engagement



Schools Summit 2025 – COP debate

Wider Schools & Youth Engagement

- **Youth Climate Conference (Sustainable Suffolk):** Councillors and staff attended alongside six Babergh & Mid Suffolk schools, supporting youth-led climate discussions and practical project workshops.
- **Sustainability in Education Conference Suffolk:** Officers participated with local teachers to share best practice and promote climate education across school networks.

Next Steps & Future Plans:

- **Schools Green Skills Summit 2026:** Planning underway to expand participation, activities, and business engagement.
- **Follow-up support:** Encourage schools to implement action plans and track progress on climate initiatives.
- **Business & careers links:** Strengthen relationships with sponsors and exhibitors to increase student exposure to green skills pathways.
- Maintain the summit as a flagship youth climate engagement programme for Babergh & Mid Suffolk.

Supporting Businesses to Decarbonise

Overview

Supporting local businesses to reduce emissions, manage energy costs, and invest in low-carbon technologies is a key part of delivering the councils' Climate Emergency commitments. During 2025, activity focused on **practical, funded support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**, helping businesses move from awareness to action through audits, grant funding, and targeted advice. This work supports economic resilience, reduces operational costs for businesses, and contributes to measurable carbon savings across Babergh.

Net Zero Innovation Fund

Project Overview:

The Net Zero Innovation Fund provides capital support to help local businesses invest in low-carbon technologies, energy efficiency, and innovative decarbonisation measures.

2025 Activity:

- **4 businesses funded** across the districts
- **4 additional projects in the pipeline**, with the fund now fully allocated
- Projects supported a range of energy and carbon reduction measures, aligned with business needs

Outcomes:

- Enabled early-stage investment in decarbonisation projects that may not otherwise have proceeded
- Supported innovation and demonstration of low-carbon solutions within the local economy

Next Steps (2026):

- Monitor delivery and performance of funded projects
- Capture case studies and lessons learned to inform future funding rounds
- Explore options to secure additional funding to reopen or expand the programme

Business Funding Advice & Support

Project Overview:

To complement grant funding, councils provided tailored advice to help businesses identify and access external finance for decarbonisation projects.

2025 Activity:

- Funding surgeries delivered to support businesses exploring low-carbon investment
- Bespoke support provided through **Grantfinder**, **Funding4Suffolk**, and the **Suffolk Funders Network**

Outcomes:

- Improved awareness of available funding routes
- Increased confidence among businesses to progress decarbonisation projects
- Reduced barriers to accessing complex funding landscapes

Next Steps:

- Continue signposting businesses to relevant funding opportunities
- Strengthen links between audits, grant funding, and external finance
- Align business support more closely with emerging national programmes

Business Energy & Carbon Audits (Groundwork East, 2025)

Project Overview:

In partnership with Groundwork East, the councils delivered a programme of **remote business energy and carbon audits**, targeting SMEs and community organisations.

2025 Activity:

- **5 audits completed**
- Each organisation received a tailored **Carbon Reduction Plan** outlining practical next steps

Key Findings & Potential Impact:

- Potential **annual greenhouse gas** savings:
 - **37.5 tCO₂e**
- Potential **annual financial** savings:
 - **£25,080**

Measures Identified:

- LED lighting upgrades
- Improved heating controls and zoning
- Insulation and fabric improvements
- Operational and behavioural changes
- Adoption of low-carbon technologies

Next Steps:

- Support audited businesses to move from recommendations to implementation
- Link audit outcomes to available grant funding and finance options
- Track delivery where possible to evidence real carbon and cost savings

Embedding Climate Considerations into Business Engagement

Procurement & Supply Chain:

- Environmental criteria embedded into council procurement processes
- **10% social value weighting** applied to tenders over £25k, with environmental responses actively evaluated
- Encourages suppliers and contractors to demonstrate low-carbon practices and innovation

Next Steps:

- Continue strengthening environmental expectations in procurement
- Improve guidance for suppliers on how to meet climate-related criteria
- Use procurement as a lever to influence wider supply-chain decarbonisation

Carbon Charter Engagement

Overview:

The councils support the **Carbon Charter**, a countywide scheme encouraging businesses to measure, reduce, and report carbon emissions.

2025 Position:

- Babergh: **15** businesses signed up

Next Steps (2026):

- Promote the scheme alongside audits and funding support
- Use Carbon Charter engagement as a pathway into deeper decarbonisation support

Key Outcomes - 2025

- Direct financial and carbon savings identified for local businesses
- Practical decarbonisation measures progressed through grants and audits
- Climate considerations embedded into business engagement and procurement
- Strong foundations established for scaling business support in future years

Organisational capacity, governance & leadership

Overview

Strong internal governance, skills, and leadership are essential to delivering the council's Climate Emergency commitments. During 2025, Babergh focused on **embedding climate awareness across services**, strengthening data-driven decision-making, and building the **internal capacity needed to move from strategy into delivery**. This work ensures climate considerations are no longer isolated within specialist teams, but are increasingly **mainstreamed into everyday decision-making, service delivery, and corporate governance**.

Climate Change Champions Network

Overview:

The Climate Change Champions Network provides a cross-council mechanism for embedding climate awareness, sharing knowledge, and supporting service-level delivery of climate action.

2025 Activity:

- Network expanded to **18 Champions**, representing the majority of council service areas
- **Bi-monthly meetings** held to share progress, challenges, and emerging opportunities
- Champions supported to develop climate literacy and act as advocates within their teams

Key Focus Areas:

- Translating corporate climate objectives into service-level actions
- Sharing best practice and lessons learned across departments
- Supporting behaviour change and awareness among colleagues

Outcomes:

- Improved consistency of climate messaging across services
- Increased confidence among officers to consider climate impacts in their work
- Stronger cross-service collaboration on climate-related projects

Next Steps (2026):

- Support Champions to become **accredited Carbon Literacy Trainers**, enabling in-house delivery of training
- Expand Champion representation to remaining service areas
- Strengthen the link between Champions and service planning cycles to support measurable delivery

Case Study

Tereza Fairbairn - Risk Management Lead

'I am a Climate Champion and recently completed the Carbon Literacy course, where I was tasked with developing both an individual pledge and a team pledge. Following this, I proposed that the Strategic Policy team adopt a collective climate commitment, which was fully supported. Together, we developed a written team pledge that has now been embedded within our service plan, ensuring that every team member includes a climate-related objective within their personal development plan. As Risk Manager, my individual pledge focuses on reviewing and strengthening the climate-related risks incorporated into our strategic and operational risk registers, a piece of work scheduled to take place following the update of the service plans in 2026.'

Embedding Climate into Governance & Decision-Making

Overview:

The councils continued to strengthen governance arrangements to ensure climate considerations are systematically embedded into decision-making, procurement, and asset management.

2025 Activity:

- Development of a **Power BI energy monitoring platform** to improve visibility of energy consumption and generation across the council estate.
- Increased scrutiny of **energy billing, asset performance, and consumption trends**.
- Climate and environmental considerations increasingly integrated into procurement processes and service delivery.

Outcomes:

- Improved visibility of energy performance across council assets
- Earlier identification of inefficiencies and optimisation opportunities
- Climate considerations increasingly factored into procurement decisions and business cases
- **Both councils improved their scores in the Climate Emergency UK Scorecards**, reflecting progress in governance, transparency, and delivery

Next Steps:

- Continue development of Power BI reporting to support monitoring and decision-making.
- Embed climate impact considerations more consistently into reports and business cases
- Establish an Environmental Programme Board for coordination and oversight
- Use performance data to inform investment prioritisation and capital planning

Building Capacity & Leadership for Delivery

Overview:

To support delivery at scale, internal capacity and leadership were strengthened in 2025 through targeted recruitment, ensuring both strategic oversight and operational delivery capability.

Key Appointments in 2025:

- **Head of Service - Climate Change and Nature Recovery**
 - Provides strategic leadership across climate mitigation, adaptation, and nature recovery
 - Coordinates climate action across services and external partners
 - Strengthens alignment between policy, delivery, and governance
- **Energy & Carbon Officer**
 - Supports day-to-day energy management and performance monitoring
 - Leads on data analysis, reporting, and carbon reduction initiatives across council operations
 - Plays a key role in identifying and delivering operational decarbonisation opportunities

Outcomes:

- Improved capacity to move from planning and feasibility into delivery
- Clearer ownership of climate workstreams across the organisation
- Stronger coordination between corporate, operational, and community-facing activity

Next Steps:

- Ensure clear performance reporting and accountability for delivery
- Assess future capacity requirements in light of programme growth, funding opportunities, and local government reorganisation

Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme

The Electric Vehicle (EV) Salary Sacrifice Scheme supports staff to transition to ultra-low-emission vehicles, reducing transport emissions while also improving affordability and access to cleaner transport options. The scheme forms part of the councils' wider approach to leading by example on decarbonisation and supporting sustainable behaviours across the organisation. The scheme includes both new and pre-owned electric vehicles and is delivered in partnership with Octopus Electric Vehicles, who also provide ongoing carbon impact reporting.

Babergh District Council

Uptake to date

- 4 pre-owned electric vehicles in use, with 1 additional vehicle on order
- 11 new electric vehicles in use, with 7 additional vehicles on order

Carbon impact

- Carbon savings achieved to date: **10.73 tonnes of CO₂**
- Projected carbon savings if all vehicles are retained for the full lease period: **91.06 tonnes of CO₂**

Outcomes and benefits

- Tangible reduction in staff-related transport emissions
- Increased visibility of low-carbon leadership across the organisation
- Supports staff with cost-effective access to electric vehicles
- Contributes to wider district-wide decarbonisation goals

Next Steps (2026)

- Continue to promote the EV Salary Sacrifice Scheme to increase staff uptake
- Monitor participation and carbon savings annually through Octopus reporting
- Explore alignment with wider sustainable travel initiatives, including EV charging infrastructure and pool vehicle strategies
- Use the scheme as a case study for embedding climate action into organisational policies and staff benefits

Embedding Climate and Nature Recovery into the workplace

Opportunities have been identified for how the Council can further support existing and future employees throughout recruitment, induction and their work journey to consider climate change and take action at work and home.

Prospective job applicants can learn more about how climate and nature recovery is embedded across the councils via our **Jobs & Careers page**:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/climate-change-and-nature-recovery>

This page highlights:

- Our climate and nature recovery commitments
- How every role contributes to sustainability, whether office-based, community-focused, or frontline
- Resources and inspiration for embedding climate action into daily work

Next Steps (2026)

- Promote the Jobs & Careers page internally to raise awareness among current staff
- Encourage managers to use guidance for considering climate change in recruitment and staff development
- Update content annually to reflect new programmes, training, and climate achievements

Our Priorities for 2026

Babergh District council remains committed to tackling climate change and working towards Net Zero by 2030. Delivery in 2026 will focus on practical action, partnership working and embedding climate considerations across council operations and community activity.

Council Housing & Sheltered Accommodation

- Work with Housing services and partners to improve energy efficiency across sheltered and council housing.
- Support retrofit and low-carbon heating improvements where funding opportunities arise.
- Ensure residents are supported to reduce energy costs and improve comfort.

Leisure Centres & Contracted Facilities

- Work collaboratively with leisure operators to optimise energy efficiency and reduce emissions.
- Monitor performance of existing energy systems and identify opportunities to reduce fossil fuel dependency.
- Encourage operational improvements and behavioural energy savings.

Retrofit & Energy Efficiency

- Maximise uptake of Warm Homes funding and other retrofit schemes.
- Strengthen partnership working to support large-scale retrofit delivery.

Community Energy & Local Action

- Support community energy groups.
- Promote local energy projects and community-led climate action.
- Continue partnership work to explore future community energy opportunities.

Supporting Businesses to Decarbonise

- Provide advice, funding signposting and technical support to help businesses reduce energy use and emissions.
- Support implementation of recommendations from energy audits.
- Encourage participation in initiatives such as the Carbon Charter.

Sustainable Transport

- Support delivery of Electric Vehicle infrastructure and active travel improvements.
- Promote low-carbon travel options and behaviour change.
- Work with partners to improve rural transport accessibility and sustainability.

Council Operations & Procurement

- Continue improving energy monitoring and performance management across council assets.
- Embed climate and environmental considerations into procurement and decision-making.
- Use data and governance processes to prioritise emissions reduction.

Staff Engagement & Organisational Culture

- Support staff to adopt sustainable working practices.
- Embed climate and nature recovery responsibilities within roles and service delivery.
- Promote initiatives that help staff reduce emissions at work and at home.

