

CLIMATE STRATEGY

Progress Report

October 2026



1. Purpose

This report provides a short update on progress in delivering the Council's Climate Strategy Action Plan (attached). The focus is on the short term actions.

It highlights activity already underway, key achievements and areas where work is being integrated into wider Council programmes to support effective and sustainable delivery.

2. Context

Despite undertaking a recruitment process the Council has not had a Climate Programme Manager in place since June 2026. There are no plans to readvertise this post at the minute. In the short term, the climate strategy commitment will be shared by all council staff supported by our Programme Management Team. Each service area will be responsible for making impactful changes towards delivery of the Council's climate commitments.

3. Overall progress

The Action Plan contains 40 actions across five thematic priorities:

- Energy efficiency and consumption
- Renewable energy generation
- Low carbon transport
- Climate adaptation and mitigation
- Natural capital and green solutions

Early progress demonstrates that climate considerations are increasingly being embedded within mainstream Council activity rather than being treated as a standalone programme. Work is progressing through property and engineering activity, procurement reform, corporate planning, transport policy and emissions monitoring.

Progress at a glance

Practical decarbonisation projects are progressing, climate commitments are embedded in the Council Plan, baseline emissions data has been obtained, and environmental requirements are being built into procurement reform.

4. Key areas of progress

Decarbonising Council buildings and renewable energy

Planning applications will be submitted soon for decarbonisation schemes at Wavelengths and West Craven Leisure Centre. Potential solar opportunities have also been identified at Nelson Town Hall, No. 1 Market Street, Fleet Street Depot, Walton Lane Community Centre and Clayton Street Units. Funding is required for feasibility studies, with discussions taking place with GB Energy about possible funding sources. This is developing a practical pipeline of projects to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions from Council assets.

Cleaner transport

Taxi vehicle requirements have moved from an age-based limit to a requirement for vehicles to meet the Euro 6 standard. This is a practical step towards reducing emissions associated with local transport.

Embedding climate within procurement

Climate considerations are being incorporated into the wider procurement improvement programme. The review of environmental and procurement policies is being aligned with the Procurement Governance, Policy and Compliance workstream, enabling relevant environmental requirements to be considered through the Procurement Policy refresh and established governance arrangements.

Net zero procurement requirements are also being aligned with the Social Value and Responsible Sourcing workstream. Planned activity through 2027 and into January 2028 includes procurement pipeline mapping, standard clauses and thresholds, pilot procurements, supplier monitoring arrangements, training and rollout. This creates a route to move climate commitments into day-to-day purchasing and commissioning practice.

Climate embedded within the Council Plan

Climate commitments have been included in the Council Plan 2026-28 under Priority 2: Proud and Connected Communities and Places. This strengthens corporate visibility and accountability for delivery.

Establishing the emissions baseline

Baseline emissions data has now been obtained. A report setting out the findings is due to be considered by the Executive and subsequently by the Climate Emergency Working Group. Establishing the baseline provides an important foundation for measuring future performance and demonstrating reductions.

5. What the progress tells us

From strategy to practical projects

Decarbonisation proposals and identified solar opportunities show that the council is developing tangible interventions across its estate.

Embedding climate across the organisation

Climate considerations are increasingly connected with corporate planning, procurement, transport and asset management, helping to make climate responsibility part of normal council business.

Building the evidence for future delivery

Baseline emissions data and developing procurement requirements provide stronger foundations for measuring progress and demonstrating impact.

6. Next steps

1. Progress feasibility and funding options for identified solar and estate decarbonisation opportunities.
2. Progress the Wavelengths and West Craven Leisure Centre proposals following the planning process.
3. Complete emissions reporting and use the baseline to support future performance monitoring.
4. Embed environmental considerations through the Procurement Policy refresh.
5. Progress the longer-term Responsible Sourcing and net zero procurement programme.
6. Continue developing activity across renewable energy, sustainable transport, community and business engagement, and nature-based solutions.
7. Strengthen performance reporting against Action Plan KPIs so future reports demonstrate both completed activity and measurable environmental outcomes.