



Stockport CAN Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025

Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Context	2
2	CAN Progress 2024-25	4
2.1	Council CAN	4
2.2	Renewable Energy	6
2.3	Low Carbon Buildings	7
2.4	Sustainable Transport	11
2.5	Natural Environment	13
2.6	Climate Friendly Borough	15
3	CAN Forward Plans 2025- 2026	17
4	Appendix	18

1 Introduction

The following report outlines progress made at Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) in implementing the Climate Action Now (CAN) programme over the last financial year 2024-25. It focuses on projects completed or underway aligned to each of the core CAN programme workstreams.

A further piece of work undertaken this year has been to develop the next phase of the CAN Strategy. The initial CAN Strategy was designed to cover the period 2020-25 and was a strong starting point that enabled swift actions. In five years, we've reduced the council's greenhouse gas emissions by 33%. During this period, we have improved decision-making with data, boosted renewable energy generation, changed how we work within the council, and set up thriving engagement programmes with young people, communities, and businesses. However, we recognise that we need to reduce emissions faster to meet our target to be operationally net zero by 2030. 'Net zero' means to achieve a balance between the greenhouse gas emissions produced and the greenhouse gas emissions removed from the atmosphere. 'Operationally' refers to the activities the council is directly responsible for, such as heating and powering council buildings and fuel used in vehicles.

The UK government measures the levels of greenhouse gas emissions in every area of the country. This shows that emissions across the whole of Stockport, not just those the council is directly responsible for, have decreased by 45% since 2005. The main reason for this is that the UK doesn't burn coal to provide electricity anymore and has instead increased the amount of renewable and nuclear energy produced. Every year in Stockport just over a million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (tCO₂e) are emitted. Typically, a third of greenhouse gas emissions come from our transport, like vehicles, buses and trains. A third comes from the energy we use to heat and power our homes. Around a quarter comes from energy used by industry and the commercial sector, and the remainder comes from the public sector, waste management and agriculture. As with every area in the UK, emissions are not yet reducing at a rate they need to for Stockport to become carbon neutral by 2038.

We have laid the foundations for big projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions across Stockport in the coming years such as initiating the development of a town centre District Heat Network and helping to accelerate electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Projects such as these will help decarbonise the borough and provide economic, social and environmental benefits for across Stockport.

We've also laid the groundwork for nature-based actions, like flood and heatwave mitigation, meeting biodiversity net gain laws, forming a Local Nature Recovery Group, and supporting the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Given the current global outlook, it is clear action on adapting to the effects of climate change and seizing the positive opportunities presented by the renewable energy transition will be crucial to the well-being of our residents and businesses across Stockport. Now, more than ever, is the time to increase action and plan for the changes to come.

1.1 Context

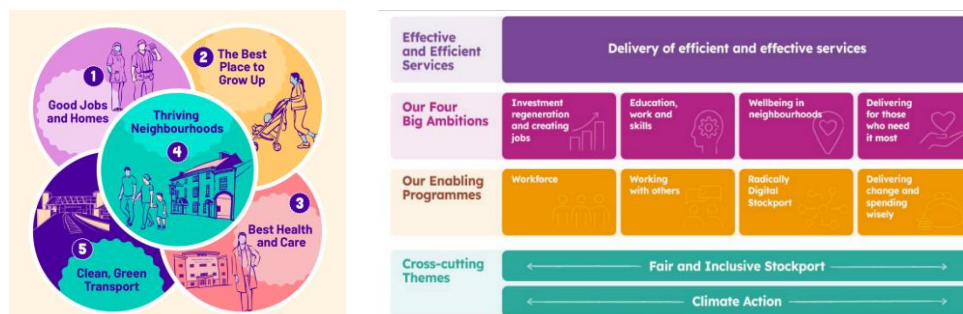
The first Stockport CAN Strategy was adopted in 2020 with cross party support and outlined a plan spanning 5 years. The initial strategy outlined actions to achieve carbon neutrality as a borough by 2038, in line with the collective Greater Manchester carbon neutral target.

Following this, the council pledged to reduce its operational emissions to net zero by 2030. These targets have formed the pillars of CAN delivery over the last 5 years.

With the current CAN Strategy reaching its end this year the next phase of the CAN strategy is being developed. The new CAN strategy for 2025-2030 will continue to set a clear path for the council to reach our target of being operationally net zero by 2030. It will set out how we continue to take a leading role in helping Stockport achieve carbon neutrality by 2038 and also how we will ensure council services and communities become more resilient to climate change. Reporting on progress will be provided through these CAN Annual Reports, annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions reports and the Portfolio Performance and Resource Agreement reports.

The One Stockport One Future plan is the next phase of our borough plan and was developed by the Council together with key partners and through engagement with Stockport resident. It, looks ahead to 2040 and the 5 big things we want to deliver to make Stockport the best place to live happy and healthy lives. The One Future plan recognises we must have a relentless focus on the biggest challenges facing our borough:

- Fair and Inclusive - Stockport is a great, diverse place to live, where everyone can thrive.
- Climate Action Now - Creating a green print for Stockport so it is a climate friendly place to live, work, play and invest.



The [Stockport Council Plan 2024-27](#) describes the key role the council plays in supporting this long-term vision of the borough; through the provision and delivery of key services that are essential to everyday life. The plan identifies Climate Action and Fair & Inclusive as the two cross-cutting themes that impact and shape everything the council does.

This report updates on work across the six key areas (Council CAN, Renewable Energy, Low Carbon Buildings, Sustainable Transport, Natural Environment and Climate Friendly Borough) and then outlines future plans.



2 CAN Progress 2024-25

2.1 Council CAN

Council CAN encompasses everything we do as a council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt our way of working to current, and future, climate change.

2.1.1 Measuring and Monitoring Operational Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Our data-driven approach to the council's greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory allows us to identify and prioritise areas for interventions that aim to reduce GHG emissions, and through monitoring trends within the data we can examine the impact of these projects. Accurate, up-to-date and complete GHG data is essential for this process. This year, we have expanded the datasets available to us by collecting information on employee commuting and homeworking. As a result, we are now monitoring all sources of emissions that are included in our net zero by 2030 target boundary, enabling us to set data-driven GHG budgets. A full report detailing the council's GHG emissions from 2024-25 will be published in the autumn.

2.1.2 Setting a Science-Based Greenhouse Gas Reduction Pathway

This year we have developed a science-based GHG reduction pathway for council-wide emissions. This initiative sets out a blueprint of future GHG reduction interventions, such as the District Heat Network, and identifies remaining emissions that must be reduced or offset in order to meet our net zero by 2030 target. In future, we could use this to set budgets for different areas of the council which would function similarly to financial budgets, by limiting the amount of emissions each area can produce per project or per year.

2.1.3 Climate Change Training – Carbon Literacy

Carbon Literacy training empowers learners to understand climate change and take action to tackle it. Since April 2024, a total of 118 colleagues and Elected Members completed Carbon Literacy training with the CAN team. We offered bespoke courses tailored to specific teams within the council, such as our Streetworks and Public Health teams. We also continued to provide dedicated training for Councillors and to offer monthly training sessions for all other colleagues. The course consistently receives positive feedback from learners, such as the following quote from a Highways & Transport team member: “It was probably the most interesting course I have been on for some time – and one of the most useful.”

2.1.4 Greenfleet - Endeavour House Service Vehicles - Transitioning to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Fuel

We carried out a review of options for reducing GHG emissions from our fleet looking at Electric Vehicle (EV) and HVO fuel options. This review was undertaken for the fleet that is managed by the Totally Local Company (TLC). TLC identified that most existing service vehicles could be fuelled by HVO immediately - without a costly procurement exercise for new EV's or the creation of EV charging infrastructure. After trialling HVO fuel across several service areas, a new HVO fuel tank was installed at Endeavour House (where most fleet vehicles are based). This would enable a transition to HVO fuel to be used in TLC vehicles during 2025 and that all appropriate vehicles would changeover. 77% of service vehicles deploying from Endeavour House are now running on HVO fuel, with future vehicle procurement targeting the remaining 23%. The current changeover is projected to reduce CO2 emissions by 1500 tonnes per year.

2.1.5 SMBC best practice

Sharing and learning about best practice is key to improving the Council's performance to meet our climate targets. Some examples of how we are doing this include presenting at a Local Government Association Roundtable on Behaviour Change within Local Government Sustainability to help share the approaches we have developed around climate engagement and participation with residents and businesses. Stockport Council also collaborate at a Greater Manchester level with work on all levels of governance for the Green City Region Board & Partnership including the 5 Year Environment Plan. We also meet every quarter with climate officers across Greater Manchester to actively learn from one another's actions and approaches.

2.1.6 Developing a Carbon Assessment Tool for Infrastructure Projects

Large-scale infrastructure projects, such as improvements to roads, are typically carbon intensive. We have started work to develop an in-house carbon assessment tool tailored to our large-scale infrastructure projects, using the A34 Corridor Improvement programme as a pilot project to test and verify our methodology. Once complete, teams across the council will be able to use the tool to quantify GHGs from infrastructure projects and, crucially, identify improvements to plans that will reduce emissions from these projects.

2.1.7 Improving the Sustainability of Our Supply Chain

In 2023/24 the council, working with our procurement partner STAR, piloted the introduction of pass / fail questions to our procurement process for contracts above a 'find-a-tender' threshold. This new approach required businesses bidding for the biggest contracts to provide evidence that they have a credible plan in place to reduce their own GHG emissions by 2038. We also asked businesses we work with to provide data of the GHG emissions associated

with their contract with Stockport Council. This work is on-going and measuring monitoring of progress with this new approach will be reported via the Housing and Environment Portfolio Performance Resource Agreement & Reports.

The Council spends more than £300 million annually through its total supply chain, with supply chain emissions contributing a significant proportion of our GHG.

By collaborating with our suppliers to support environmentally friendly business practices, we aim to reduce emissions across the borough and showcase Stockport as a hub for innovative working and green investment. More ways in which we have supported Stockport-based businesses can be found in the 'Climate Friendly Borough' section of this report.

2.1.8 Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)

For the first time, Stockport Council have joined over 1,100 other governmental organisations worldwide in submitting to the CDP global disclosure system. The CDP system encourages organisations to disclose any risks, actions and opportunities on climate change, mitigation and adaptation. We are currently awaiting our results for the 2024 disclosure cycle, and we aim to continue to disclose annually going forward in order to measure actions and track progress against our targets.

2.1.9 Green Libraries Working Group

The Green Libraries Working Group continued to develop and deliver actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and utilise our libraries as community hubs. This year, the Bredbury Bookworms Garden was completed and successfully launched, a nature-themed story trail was launched in Alexandra Park next to Edgeley Library and engagement events like upcycling and seed planting attracted residents into library spaces. Please see the appendix for more information on this project.

2.2 Renewable Energy

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy use and generating more renewable energy are key to meeting our net zero and carbon neutrality targets. To that end, this key area of focus for the CAN programme aims to increase the amount of renewable energy generated in Stockport both directly through using council property and land, but also in partnership with public and private bodies. Below are some of the key areas of work being undertaken by the council to enhance renewable energy generation.

2.2.1 Developing a town centre District Heat Network

Stockport Council, the Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) and other anchor organisations, such as Stepping Hill hospital, are progressing opportunities presented by development in Stockport to accelerate the decarbonisation of the Stockport energy system at scale.

Previously awarded grants won by the council have funded technical and economic project development of a district heating network (DHN) powered by renewable and low carbon energy. This government-funded, detailed piece of work is bringing forward a heat network based on extracting heat from Stockport sewers using heat pumps to provide hot water for heating public buildings. This is pioneering decarbonisation work. A DHN of this size and scale could save more than 7,000 tonnes of carbon annually and make a major contribution to Stockport's climate ambitions.

A successful application to the Green Heat Network Fund in 2024 means that the scheme is now progressing to the final development stages of commercialisation and final business case. In October last year the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) chose Stockport as the only town in the country to participate in the Advanced Zoning Programme. This DESNZ funded programme helped secure additional funding for the proposed scheme and looks to help accelerate delivery and expansion of DHN schemes across the country.

2.2.2 Small scale district heating

During 2025 we partnered with Stockport Hydro to conduct a feasibility study on a small-scale heating network in Marple, around the new Marple Hub. This study, funded by the Community Energy Fund, is a pioneering approach to looking at how we can use local land and resources in a sustainable way to enable local decarbonisation projects. The outcomes of this study will be considered for that location and any similar opportunities that may arise.

2.2.3 Schools solar

This ongoing project with Greater Manchester Combined Authority, “Powering our Schools”, continues to promote solar onto school roofs and we are currently working with 9 schools in Stockport to facilitate installations.

2.2.4 Council buildings – solar

Further opportunities for installations on suitable buildings for solar installations are continuing. Preparing business cases and taking advantage of grant funding is the bedrock of our estates decarbonisation strategy and continues at pace. The pipeline of cases means that we are ready and prepared as future grant funding becomes available.

From 2010 onwards the council has installed a large portfolio of rooftop solar installations which are carefully monitored and maintained. In 2024, the building supporting one installation was to be demolished (Marple Library) as part of wider development. The existing solar installation was decommissioned and successfully relocated to a new site (Avondale Leisure Centre). This sustainable solution was possible due to the council’s maintenance and monitoring policy and allowed us to retain our renewable energy capacity. This efficiency means we can adopt the same approach for two schools that will be rebuilt under the National Schools rebuilding programme which have existing solar.

2.3 Low Carbon Buildings

Buildings are one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the borough. For the council, buildings make up 71% of the council’s operational greenhouse gas emissions. Work on this key workstream focuses on ways the council can ensure that buildings in Stockport are sustainably designed and powered. Along with decarbonisation work already outlined in the Council CAN section concerning our own civic estate, further actions undertaken this year to promote the low carbon-built environment across the borough are outlined below.

2.3.1 Developing a District Heat Network

Developing a low carbon District Heat Network is a key project in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from council buildings in the town centre that currently use gas heating. The project will further enable key partners to connect to the network, such as Stepping Hill Hospital. This project will be a game-changer for reducing emissions and increasing energy efficiency in Stockport.

The District Heat Network project was awarded £1m for commercialisation by the Green Heat Network Fund (GHNF). Pending the success of the commercialisation, the GHNF has also been awarded. Work on the district heat network is progressing as we enter the commercialisation process and procurement of a development and funding partner in the summer of 2025. A Greater Manchester district heat network vision/market engagement event will take place in Stockport on 13th May in collaboration with DESNZ (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero), AECOM, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and GM local authorities. The event will promote Stockport as a place to invest in renewable energy.

2.3.2 Heat Decarbonisation Studies

Heat decarbonisation studies provide a pipeline of opportunities ensuring we are ready for the next wave of investments and grant opportunities. Supported by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Public Building Retrofit Fund, feasibility studies on 4 buildings are being taken forward to design stage to prepare them for grant-supported decarbonisation projects. Readiness to proceed is the objective of this work.

We have also completed heat decarbonisation studies for key buildings that are slated to be connected to the District Heat Network (DHN). This will be used to ensure readiness for those buildings joining the DHN and will also support practical energy efficiency improvements on those buildings as they reach the stage of adaptation for connection. We are actively building on our successful approach to securing funding and will continue to use the reports to apply for grants (such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and the Swimming Pool Support Fund) to bolster the Stockport Estates decarbonisation programme.

2.3.3 Swimming Pool Support Fund – energy efficiency

The Swimming Pool Support Fund work to replace old air handling units at Romiley life leisure with modern heat pump driven units is ongoing. The project will save around 30 tonnes GHG emissions per year. Additionally, as part of the project a study is being carried out at Romiley to optimise energy use within the leisure centre. This study is in partnership with and sponsored by Sport England. It will be used to inform leisure centre operations around the country.

2.3.4 Stockport Homes Group – social housing

Stockport Homes Group (SHG), an arm's length management organisation wholly owned by Stockport Council, is responsible for managing the Council's housing stock. SHG continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency across its property portfolio, which is detailed below:

2.3.5 Renewable Energy Achievements

SHG has installed over 2,085 solar PV systems across its housing stock. In 2024/25, these systems:

- Saved approximately 2,131 tonnes of CO₂ emissions
- Delivered up to £500 in annual savings per household
- Generated around £1.6 million annually via the Feed-In Tariff (FIT)
- SHG operates 7 biomass-fuelled district heating schemes, which:
- Saved approximately 2,222 tonnes of CO₂ emissions
- Attracted around £400,000 funding through the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)

2.3.6 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)

In 2024/25, SHG delivered key improvements under Wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), installing a range of energy efficiency measures including, high-efficiency electric storage heaters, hot water cylinders, enhanced insulation and ventilation systems and solar PV systems.

To date, 27 properties have seen improvements in their EPC ratings as a result of this initiative. The project will continue into 2025/26 with upgrades to an additional 19 properties. Furthermore, SHG – participating in the Greater Manchester Consortium – has secured funding under SHDF Wave 3, with strategic planning for possible delivery options currently underway. This funding will run across multiple financial years.

2.3.7 York Street Estate – Heating Infrastructure Upgrades

In 2023/24, SHG secured funding from the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme to modernise the district heating system serving the York Street estate in Edgeley. The project, completed in 2024/25, involved the installation of Heating Interface Units (HIUs) in 227 properties and upgrades to site-wide pipework, control systems, and insulation. These improvements enhance system efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and return full control of heating usage and payment flexibility to residents.

2.3.8 Solar PV Re-roofing Programme

As part of the annual Planned Roofing Programme, SHG installed new solar PV systems on 110 suitable properties during 2024/25. This work will continue into 2025/26. Additionally, biodiversity is being supported through the inclusion of swift nesting boxes on qualifying properties.

2.3.9 Heating Upgrade Programme

Through its annual planned and responsive maintenance programme, SHG installed 542 new A-rated boilers in 2024/25. These boilers achieve a seasonal space heating energy efficiency rating exceeding 90%, reducing both tenant energy costs and carbon emissions.

2.3.10 Energy Team Impact Summary

The Energy Team at SHG provided support and advice to customers through over 1,650 emails and phone calls, leading to more than 350 home visits by the two Energy Solutions Advisors. The team has supported customers with:

- Fuel debt advice
- Impartial guidance on the best energy tariffs and suppliers
- Tips to maximise energy efficiency at home
- Help understanding energy bills
- Assistance with applications for financial support where eligible

2.3.11 Grant Schemes and Support for Home Improvements

Delivery of national grant schemes and offers has been progressed through partnership of the Greater Manchester Housing Retrofit Group. This has seen action through the following workstreams:

2.3.12 GMCA Retrofit Portal

Upgrades have been commissioned for the 'retrofit portal' which allows residents to [check their eligibility](#) for support to make home upgrades. The portal is a one-stop source of trusted information for people living in Greater Manchester, connecting residents to 'relevant-to-them' information about the ECO grant, Great British Insulation Scheme, Octopus Air Source Heat Pump offer and Your Home Better support.

2.3.13 ECO 4 Grant Scheme

Following a GMCA procurement, ImprovEasy was appointed contractor for delivery of the ECO4 grant scheme covering Stockport, Trafford and Manchester. Between April 2024 and March 2025, 364 households in Stockport received funded home improvements through the ECO 4 grant scheme. The total benefit of the measures was £2,621,000. The average annual energy bill saving for those households that participated is £573.92. The CO₂e saved was 1579.59 tonnes. As a result of this work, 60 jobs and 6 apprenticeships were supported by ImprovEasy.

2.3.14 Your Home Better

The GM wide programme '[Your Home, Better](#)' has been enhanced. The scheme helps provide advice around home improvements in terms of renewable energy options, energy efficiency and insulation (retrofit).

2.3.15 Feel The Benefit

In 24/25, Your Home Better (YHB) continued as delivery partner for the Feel The Benefit campaign, a Greater Manchester wide initiative launched on the 4th March 2024 as part of the Local Area Demonstrator Project.

This campaign aims to help residents better understand how upgrades can help make their homes greener, warmer, and cheaper to run, driving them to engage with the advice, support, and potentially even free or discounted upgrades. Stockport Council were one of three boroughs in Greater Manchester to include a Feel The Benefit flyer along with council tax mailout. Through the campaign residents are directed to utilise the 'retrofit portal' to [check their eligibility online on GMCA's eligibility checker](#), entering details about their home and circumstances to find out what support they might be eligible to receive.

2.3.16 Cheadle Eco-Business Park at Birdhall Lane

Cheadle Eco Business Park will see a council owned 7-acre industrial estate on Bird Hall Lane redeveloped into a sustainable eco-business park with a focus on sustainability in construction, operation and clean energy generation. Various construction methods are being considered which will cater for the maximisation of solar PV on the site as well as reducing embodied carbon in construction. This includes considering innovative construction methods such as the use of timber instead of steel for parts of the of the structure. Planning permission has been obtained, and work is scheduled to take place in 2025.

2.3.17 Decarbonising Dial Park Primary School

The successful investment into decarbonising Dial Park Primary School (to save around 55 tonnes of carbon per year) is now a case study for schools of a similar type. We continue to monitor its performance to build learning and best practice that can be applied to similar buildings.

2.4 Sustainable Transport

Transport accounts for around 40% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Stockport. We aim to reduce emissions from and transform our transport system by collaborating across teams in the council such as public health and highways while engaging with key partners and residents.

Implementing low carbon transport and more active travel options including the promotion of walking, cycling and the use of public transport within the borough and the wider Greater Manchester area are key. This is reflected in the One Stockport One Future plan which looks to improve transport options and connectivity while reducing traffic congestion.

The council is currently progressing three significant pieces of work under the Southern Gateway programme. These are to bring Metrolink to Stockport, improve Stockport Town Centre Railway Station and continue working with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to provide an improved franchised bus network in Stockport. We will work with TfGM and the GM Mayor's Office on these strategic, transformational initiatives and anticipate some positive announcements over the 2025/26 period.

2.4.1 Franchising and Electrification of Bus Fleets

The new bus franchise arrangements are in place as of January 2025. The process of reviewing the network for potential improvements will take place in summer 2025. The franchising means that there is public control of buses for the first time in a generation, providing an opportunity for investing in a more co-ordinated service and increasing use. As part of the franchise all buses in Stockport will be Euro 6 vehicles to enable the borough to meet its clean air obligations. Preparations to make electrification of the bus fleet feasible continue, with sites for a new depot being sought and scoped.

2.4.2 Stockport Station

Stockport's rail and wider public transport connectivity underpins the Council's regeneration strategy. For the town centre, Stockport Rail Station is key because it is located in the MDC area, providing public transport connectivity for the planned development of homes and businesses. In 2024/25 work continued developing proposals for the redevelopment of Stockport Railway Station and the associated business case. The business case is due to be completed in 2025, with a preferred option emerging following consultation in the 2025/26 period.

2.4.3 Developing business case for Metrolink

Building on the high-level Roundtable in December 2023, securing commitment to investing in Stockport's Railway Station and Metrolink to reaffirm Stockport's status as the Southern Gateway for Greater Manchester, the council continues to work with TfGM on promoting Metrolink to Stockport as part of its Next Stop Stockport campaign.

TfGM's officers are working with Network Rail and council officers and have agreed a funding package and approach on the replacement of Greek Street Road over the rail bridge to safeguard future potential Metrolink/tram train routes. Work on replacing the bridge began on the 31st March 2025. This enables us to further highlight Stockport's commitment to Metrolink in the borough.

2.4.4 Cheadle Rail Station

Work continues on developing the detailed design for the new railway station. Planning permission has been achieved for the rail station and the necessary rail modelling to understand service to the station has been completed. The service to the station is now under

negotiation between the train operating companies, TfGM and the Department for Transport. The expectation is that the work will be on site by 2026/27.

2.4.5 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI)

Stockport is working with Be.EV to deliver the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging in council car parks for residents and visitors. 4 sites have been delivered providing 16 charging bays and five further sites will be in place during 2025. Total investment in new public EV charging infrastructure provided by this partnership is almost £2m to date.

Working with TfGM, new Taxi and Private Hire Car charging bays in New Bridge Lane Carpark, Torkington Park Carpark and Lomas Street, Edgeley were installed.

Work is ongoing to develop future sites for the Be.EV partnership and to work with TfGM to develop and deliver the bid for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding to address the needs of residents without driveways to charge their cars.

2.4.6 Walking and Cycling Opportunities

Delivery of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, Active Travel Schemes and Mayor's Challenge Fund schemes have provided:

- Improvements around Greek Street Roundabout and for Edgeley Walking and Cycling routes.
- Improved bridleway in Ladybrook Valley between Bramhall Park Road and Ladybridge Road.
- Delivery of a Romiley to Stockport walking and cycling route avoiding busy roads to allow active travel for residents in Romiley and Bredbury Green, and also the Heatons Cycle link in Heaton Mersey common.

There have also been many 'activation' events and activities including Stockport interchange guided walks and cycle rides, Dr Bike – bike maintenance, a children's poster competition with local schools and the opportunity to try accessible bikes in Viaduct Park. All activation works for the Heaton Moor Road and Dale Street crossings are now complete.

Work with the Community Rail Partnership included 'wellbeing walks' leader and volunteer leaders training, production of quarterly walks programmes which provide detail about walks with bus and rail as start and end points, and mapping support for the Community Rail Partnership's activities such as the Steel Cotton Rail Trail.

The Walking & Cycling Forum meets twice a year to discuss projects, proposals and challenges relating to walking and cycling in the borough. The attendees are also invited to participate in consultation activities. The Disability Stockport Transport and Access Forum's meet monthly to discuss a wide range of transport related needs.

2.4.7 Clean air near schools - School Streets and Turn It Off campaigns

Work related to clean air near schools in 2024-25 has included the "Turn It Off" campaign to encouraging parents/ guardians and visitors to turn off their engines when stopping near the school. The 'School Streets' programme continues which looks at limiting traffic around schools at certain times of the day. There are currently four 'School Streets' in the borough, which have all had their Traffic Regulation Orders made permanent. In 2025/26 there is further funding expected to support 'School Streets' in the borough.

2.4.8 LED Investment Programme for Streetlighting

The LED programme is currently in its final year of delivery and remains on course with a predicted £2.5m spend in 2025/26. The programme has resulted in a 52% drop in consumption and a 62% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 2017/18. For 2024/25 this translates as avoided costs of around £2m, which more than offsets the 2024/25 cost of borrowing to fund the investment.

2.4.9 On The Way Play SK (OTWP SK)

On The Way Play SK – a collaboration led by Civic and Social, with Stockport Council and Timberplay – won a national placemaking award for ‘child-friendly place’ at the Pineapples, part of the Developer and Festival of Place. This pilot project in Edgeley aimed to create child-friendly places, encourage active travel, and build social connections.

The resulting schemes - A Child’s Eye View and Portable Playtime – have been in place in Edgeley since March 2024. They have brought play to Castle Street, with giant snails, bears and tic tac toe for children to interact with. And have introduced colourful and playful prompts, positioned at children’s eye height, around walking and wheeling routes around Edgeley and up to the Interchange. These prompts encourage children (and adults!) to be playful, to hop, skip, jump or dance, to take notice of their surroundings and to have fun as they walk or wheel. Over 1000 residents from 19 community organisations and schools, 15 businesses, 12 public events were part of co-developing the project. With pupils from Lark Hill and Our Lady’s Primary schools playing a key part of designing the project.

2.5 Natural Environment

This aspect of the CAN strategy focuses on a 10-year plan to enhance biodiversity and increase ‘green canopy’ across the borough, with nearly 25,000 trees planted through the plan to date. The introduction of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation in early 2024 is also a key driver for the Natural Environment workstream.

2.5.1 Woodlands, Orchards and Meadows

1,184 individual trees and 250 fruit trees were planted between December 2024 – March 2025. The Council’s tree planting initiative aims to significantly increase Stockport’s tree cover as part of our climate action strategy.

The orchard planting and meadow enhancement initiatives were designed to create new green spaces and support community engagement. We are currently working on enhancing the existing orchards and meadows and establishing new ones across the borough.

2.5.2 Friends of Parks

The Friends of Parks Groups working in Stockport are hugely valuable in improving the quality of local parks and providing activities to encourage footfall. Activities include regular tidy days and litter picks, planting projects and maintenance works with community fun days or activities, encouraging local people to visit their park. Friends of Parks and volunteer groups, along with our contractors and external partners, have increased the boroughs tree canopy along highways, parks and greenspaces. Volunteers who have previously attended training through ‘The Orchard Project’ have continued to participate in various activities and undertaken pruning and additional planting to ensure that our existing orchards continue to flourish.

2.5.3 Partnership Working

Working with partner organisations has helped pay for work on the natural environment workstream. Some examples of partnership work around the natural environment has been with City of Trees around urban tree planting, with the Kindling Trust who provide the council with saplings, George Cox Ltd who assisted in delivery of tree planting along the A555 bypass, and Wilmott Dixon for planting within Marple Memorial Park.

A workshop run by City of Trees to identify tree planting opportunities in the run up to the planting season in 2024-25 involved all areas of the council's place and regeneration teams. This led to new planting opportunities and funding which expanded the council's natural environment delivery.

2.5.4 Natural flood risk management

Following the flooding event during the new year period a section 19 statutory report is underway expected to be published later in 2025. Undertaking such measures is a crucial aspect of the council's response to flooding together with work to utilise nature for effective flood risk management. Utilising nature for flood risk management also has a co-benefit of helping address the biodiversity crisis. There are many examples undertaken by the council of this kind of work, details of which can be found in the appendix. However, some of the main action centres around collaboration and partnership work with United Utilities, the Environment Agency and Mersey Rivers Trust. Development of emergency flood plans for the reservoirs in Compstall and Reddish Vale have also been progressed.

Work on the GM Integrated Water Management Plan will be crucial to how GM builds climate resilience. Utilising nature for this is instrumental and we are closely working in collaboration with partners across GM to develop ideas and steering solutions for roll out in Stockport. The work this year has particularly focussed on enabling development and active travel schemes such as the A6 Cluster (Black Brook in Heaton Chapel), A34 Improvements (managing highway water more sustainably) and Stockport MDC and town centre (re-thinking of water infrastructure implementation).

The Council has contributed to and promoted the implementation of the Streets for All Guide from Greater Manchester and particular sections in relation to highway drainage and how that can be managed more naturally meaning more sustainable drainage for highways resulting in reduced flooding and river pollution.

2.5.5 Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery

The cross-party Local Nature Recovery Members Group, established in 23-24, has been instrumental in shaping how the approach to nature recovery is being developed.

Collaborative work has continued with GMCA through engagement with the GM Local Nature Recovery Group. Through this collaboration we have contributed to the development of the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy which went out to consultation in February this year and will be adopted by GMCA in 2025.

Work on developing a strategy for utilising Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation for the creation of habitat banks across council owned land has continued. This complex work involves various multi-disciplinary teams across the council including legal, financial, ecology and planning colleagues. Developing the best options for delivering on BNG legislation will be central to future work on nature-based solutions for climate change and addressing nature recovery. This also includes collaboration with GMCA and Local Authorities to establish the best way to roll-out BNG legislation for the benefit of nature across the region.

2.5.6 Recycling & Waste

Stockport residents continue to reduce waste going into the black bin via recycling options. Less waste arising in black bins means a reduction in financial costs arising from waste charges and reduces environmental impacts. The performance on this measure (residual waste arising) is consistently the best in GM and in the top 10 nationally. Residents are achieving great success in their recycling effort – Stockport is the best metropolitan borough in the UK for recycling performance.

Residents' behaviour remains vital in reducing waste arising and promoting recycling. The council continues to work closely with GMCA to progress these aims and influence residents and businesses behaviour.

2.6 Climate Friendly Borough

The council is committed to leading and supporting borough-wide efforts to achieve the 2038 target, using its civic leadership as a catalyst to drive change and action across all sectors. Our Climate Friendly Borough programme empowers young people, communities, and businesses to take climate action. Stockport's engagement approach has gained national recognition, with other councils replicating our Youth Climate Assemblies as a best practice example.

2.6.1 CAN Fund

Two community funding schemes were open between March 2024 and February 2025 which awarded £55,657 of support for community-led projects. See the appendix for further details about specific projects.

2.6.2 Support for schools and young people

The projects below detail support for schools and young people in the year 2024/25:

2.6.3 *Schools and Youth Climate Assemblies*

In this project, young people take part in climate action and democracy lessons within their own classrooms before leading a youth debate with other schools in the Council Chambers at Stockport Town Hall.

In 2024-25, over 1900 young people engaged with the project through lessons, workshops, youth summits, and the Town Hall debates. 72 young people representing 41 schools and colleges took part in debates in March and voted to support an action for composting food waste at schools to use in school gardens or to feed wildlife in bug hotels around school. This winning idea was submitted by Cale Green primary school.

2.6.4 *Responding to the Schools and Youth Climate Assembly vote*

In 2024, young people voted in favour of the idea to "set up more swap shops, recycling bins, and compost areas" - a winning proposal jointly submitted by St Mary's Primary in Reddish and Cale Green Primary. In response, the council, in partnership with the Cherry Tree Project, launched 'Reloved: Uniforms for All', a borough-wide initiative that will collect and redistribute pre-loved school uniforms to families, launching in 2025. To support wider action, the council also developed easy-to-use, accessible teaching resources on setting up swap shops and compost areas, along with guidance on reducing, reusing, and recycling.

2.6.5 Youth Alliance Summit

The 2025 Stockport LISTEN Youth Summit focused on Mental Health and Wellbeing. Young people, from 15 high schools and colleges, voiced climate concerns, including impacts on animal habitats, extreme weather, and rising sea levels. They called for reducing car use, promoting electric vehicles, supporting renewable energy, and increasing recycling. Education on climate issues and school-based changes were also stressed. Insights will inform future strategies for supporting young people in Stockport.

2.6.6 Support with meeting Department for Education sustainability requirements

Schools are being asked by the Department for Education to appoint a Sustainability Lead and develop a Climate Action Plan by 2025, integrating sustainability into their operations, curriculum, and culture. Stockport Schools Climate Assemblies help by providing funding opportunities, resources, and guidance. Next year, a teacher support network will be added to facilitate collaboration, share best practices, and build confidence in achieving sustainability goals.

2.6.7 Support for Businesses

Our Climate Action Business Forum engaged 165 people from over 100 businesses through events and training. Speakers and workshops at forum events included Where the Light Gets In, British Business Bank on Green Finance at Hursts Accountants and many more. In addition, our partnership with Green Economy (part of the Growth Company) has supported businesses across Stockport with topics from tackling carbon footprints to investing in green tech. 82 local Stockport businesses got a boost on their journey to Net Zero, five joined the *Journey to Net Zero* training, twelve developed action plans, and nine completed technical projects to overcome major carbon-reducing barriers. Seven businesses now have clear carbon-cutting targets, three have signed on as Sustainability Champions, and another seven have put money into green technologies. Meanwhile, 140 were referred to Bee Net Zero for extra support.

2.6.8 Support for Communities

The Stockport Green Network is a space for residents and members of voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise groups to come together around climate and environmental action.

During this reporting year, 1,118 engagements, across 5 events and involving 88 groups have acted as part of the network. The number of groups the council have engaged has increased significantly, in thanks partly to the CAN Fund and Stockport CAN Summit.

The second 'Greenstock', a community fun day set up by the Stockport Green Network, saw over 800 people attending and 62 volunteers leading the event at the Kindling Trust's Woodbank Community Food Hub.

This year the network has begun to transition into community leadership. The council will continue to support the network, working with the group and listening to how they want to proceed. They have also decided to organise Greenstock which will take place on Saturday 21st June at Woodbank Community Food Hub.

2.6.9 Resilience 4 Communities

Stockport was selected as a focus area for Greater Manchester's three-year Resilience 4 Cities (R4C) initiative. The program, involving the GM Resilience Unit, Resilient Cities Network, ZZurich Foundation, and Zurich Insurance, aims to understand climate risks

and build community resilience in Edgeley. It includes £100k for resilience initiatives, with a focus on the impact of prolonged heatwaves.

In 2024-25, community research in Stockport included 270 household surveys, 12 key informant surveys, 3 focus groups, and 13 community events. This led to the idea of creating a resilience hub in Park View. The 'What If?' space was activated from August to September 2024 by a community asset development worker. The program, curated by Civic & Social and supported by Life Leisure CIC, engaged over 700 local residents and involved 54 community volunteers and 28 Stockport8 team members, contributing over 320 volunteer hours.

Following the success of the summer pilot, the What If? space is being further developed to harness support from the Resilient Cities Network, social value from the Stockport8 development and to develop community leadership to become Stockport's first resilience hub for community and climate. The Resilience Hub aims to transform Park View into a vibrant, community-driven space anchored in climate resilience and social cohesion.

2.6.10 Stockport CAN Summit

The CAN Summit took place in November with 140 people attending in person and online with the aim of celebrating and growing climate action across the borough. Young people's voices were highlighted at this year's summit with students from St Winifred's Primary School who addressed the audience on food waste and its impact on climate. Workshops captured attendees' views on climate, health and inequalities, approaches to climate and nature action in Stockport and how to promote green skills in teach and the construction sector.

2.6.11 Stockport Food Partnership

The Council continued to support the Stockport Food Partnership to improve the local food system, focusing on education, food waste, food insecurity, and growing spaces. This year we hosted partnership meetings and ran a workshop at the CAN Summit, developing ideas like 'A Plot on Every Block.' Nearly 80 community growing sites were [mapped](#) and promoted. The Council also helped a University of Manchester student create a Theory of Change model for food education. In April, it secured funding for a part-time Food Partnership Coordinator, with Re:Dish as the host organisation and support provided by Council teams including CAN, Public Health, and Anti-Poverty.

3 CAN Forward Plans 2025- 2026

The next 5-year CAN Strategy will be launched in 2025. With a renewed approach emphasising nature-based solutions for building resilience across the borough, it will also help address the biodiversity crisis, as declared by the council in 2022. This renewed approach will mean putting nature at the heart of climate action which will in turn help local nature recovery.

A further tenant of the new CAN Strategy will be to build resilience and adaptation for council services and across the borough to combat the negative effects of future climate change. This will underpin the existing key workstreams alongside nature-based solutions.

One of the biggest planned infrastructure projects for the borough, the Stockport town centre district heat network, will be a key focus for the coming year with plans to bring the scheme to fruition being undertaken. This, alongside the potential expansion of the MDC in to the east of the town centre will mean huge economic investment for the borough bringing high skilled,

high paying jobs for residents. A focus on expanding the use of and generation of renewable energy within Stockport will also bring other benefits including cleaner air, reducing GHG emissions, increased social value and energy security.

Accessing funding for restoring and enhancing nature across the borough will also be another key focus. Utilising the BNG legislation to create offsite BNG units for development in Stockport, if utilised strategically, could not only help local nature recovery but also provide nature-based solutions for building climate change resilience. Working with public and private landowners to utilise land for flood alleviation will help unlock town centre development opportunities and create nature corridors that will aid the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

4 Appendix

Within this appendix is further detail with regards to natural flood risk management projects, details of individual CAN Funded projects and further detail about the Green Libraries Working Group.

4.1.1 Natural flood risk management

Development of emergency flood plans for the reservoirs in Compstall and Reddish Vale have been progressed, alongside collaboration with United Utilities (UU), the Environment Agency (EA) and Mersey Rivers Trust on studies and flood mitigation schemes including the creation of 'leaky dams' and swales projects.

In 24-25, Stockport Council have worked with the Mersey Rivers Trust to deliver the following projects and activities:

- Bruntwood Park: Working with volunteers to maintain the leaky dams and clear debris in the watercourse to ensure the ongoing reduction in downstream flooding and slowing of the flow in the watercourse to reduce footpath erosion
- Lower Fold, Marple Bridge: maintenance of leaky dams by removing silt build ups behind the dams to allow water to pass through at times of normal flow
- Hazel Grove Golf Course: installation of leaky dams on a tributary of the Poise Brook to slow the flow of water into Poise Brook. Monitoring of water levels in the Poise Brook on the golf course before installing leaky dams to ensure dams are best placed to contribute to flood reduction
- Bramhall Park: with Environment Agency (EA) funding, developing a scheme to enhance the biodiversity and ecology of the Ladybrook through Bramhall Park by modification of barriers to fish passage and creation of secondary channel and wet woodland. The EA have provided further funding in 2025/26 to support implementation of the scheme.
- Happy Valley Nature Reserve: design of a scheme to create a wet woodland basin to reduce flood risk downstream. Funding is being sought from the Environment Agency for implementation of the scheme in 2025/26.
- Carr Wood: Participation in annual bioblitz (community biodiversity surveying)
- Micker/Norbury Brook: Training of Citizen Scientists from Friends Of groups in geomorphological surveying of the watercourse, and amphibian surveying and identification.

Mersey Rivers Trust received a £517k donation to spend on improving the River Tame. The River Tame Working Group (which includes representatives from Stockport Council) has identified a range of projects to be delivered over the next 5 years, including: re-establishing

the wetland and improving the ecological condition of the fishing ponds at Reddish Vale; managing invasive non-native vegetation along the Tame river corridor; conducting a baseline ecological survey of the whole of the Tame river corridor; delivering a community arts project focused on the Tame; and installing large woody debris to improve fish habitats.

Mersey Rivers Trust also received funding from the Water Restoration Fund for a preliminary study for the creation of a bypass channel around Harrison's Weir in Reddish Vale Country Park to enable fish passage upstream.

Led by EA and UU pilot projects to focus on the River Tame, Micker / Ladybrook and Poise Brook were established this year and these will continue for several years. The council secured funding from the Northwest Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) under their 'Local Levy' programme to deliver:

- Romiley Flood Mitigation Project. Investigating mechanisms and potential mitigation schemes and working to advise golf clubs on water management
- Poise Brook Catchment. Working with the EA as lead to model and develop schemes ideas
- Micker Brook Place Based Pilot Project. Working with UU and partners to consider and collaborate on river environment measures and to bid for schemes

Improvements for Micker Brook at Brookfields Park and Broadway continue. Leaky dams were installed for Poise Brook at Torkington Park, Hazel Grove. Work is planned around Hazel Grove Golf Club and Woodbank Park, Offerton (subject to bid funding). The Council has worked with the National Trust to secure funding for water management in Lyme Park to slow water flows going into Stockport. We are actively working with UU to consider pilot projects for UU's Sustainable Rainwater Fund that focuses on taking water out of sewer networks.

4.1.2 CAN Fund Projects

The CAN Catalyst Fund supported larger projects that enabled ambitious community climate action. There are 9 projects that have been funded by the CAN Catalyst Fund:

- Architects For Action supports the 2nd Heald Green Guides to retrofit their community space to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions all whilst engaging their local community
- Design @ The OU will see academics at the Open University working together with Stockport's community-based youth groups to track the outcomes of taking high-impact climate actions
- The community based at Heaton Norris Community Centre aims to reduce their environmental impact by promoting community clothes swap shops, introducing a new bike repair scheme and halving waste produced by the centre
- Climate Action For Schools, a programme run by Manchester Environmental Education Network (MEEN) ran an in-depth climate action educational programme with primary schools across Stockport
- Pursuing Individual Excellence (PIE) worked with three Stockport high schools to engage students in high-impact social action projects which saw young people enacting real change within school at at home
- St Chad's Eco Group aim to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the Guywood Centre by retrofitting the centre's lighting, all while engaging with the wider community and promoting climate action to the centre's users

- St Winifred's Caritas Team will kickstart a Refill station on school premises for its pupils, their families and the wider community
- Stockport Women Warriors by Groundwork Greater Manchester is a 12-week programme teaching young girls practical cooking skills with a focus on sustainability and reducing the carbon footprint of their food
- Sustainable Living Romiley are piloting an innovative project to promote sustainable water drainage and to reduce local flood risk

The CAN Seed Fund supported community-led projects delivered at a ward level via Area Committees. There were 26 projects funded through the CAN Seed Fund, including:

- A community bike repair scheme in Reddish to encourage active travel
- An energy audit for a church in Bredbury to help them reduce their energy bills
- A community food growing space for refugees and asylum seekers in Offerton
- Low carbon food and activities for a community event in the Town Centre

4.1.3 Green Libraries Working Group

Our Bredbury Community Garden Project secured £8,000 on transforming a disused, inaccessible concrete space, into a fully accessible community garden, where residents will be able to spend time and relax. Residents co-developed the designs and volunteers were integral to the delivery of the community garden. Fundamental to the project was support from VCFSE groups with Sustainable Living Romiley helping to lead the project and additional volunteers from groups like Seeding the Change. The project drew on fantastic social value support from George Cox Ltd who were invaluable in clearing the ground and laying surfaces. Volunteers from across the area and the NHS team helped to create the garden.

This project culminated in an incredibly successful launch event attended by elected members, local ward members, Mayor, local MP and key partners who were all instrumental in delivery of the project.

Libraries launched the co-designed Seasons of Stories Story Trail at Alexandra Park and Edgeley Library. Through funding from Libraries Connected and Culture Nature, a trail of 18 signs telling a nature theme story guiding families around the park and to the library was created. Libraries displayed their partnership skills in delivering this project with CAN Team, Neighborhood team, Marple Men in Sheds and Friends of Alexandra Park.

The launch day saw over 50 families join library staff for the walk and outdoor craft. This project ensured residents explore the beautiful park, spotting the variety of nature and leading to the library.

Bredbury Library hosted a seed planting and t-shirt upcycling activity as part of the on-going Bredbury Community Bookworms Garden Club. Over 65 residents called in to learn more about the importance of nature and recycling.