

Climate and Nature Strategy 2025

Lewes District Council

Update Report 2024-25



Contents

Introduction	3
District wide action	3
Greenhouse gas emissions in Lewes district- up to 2023	7
Greenhouse gas report for council operations	11
Introduction	11
Statement of Organisational boundary approach and baseline recalculation policy	12
Lewes District Council’s Scope 1 & 2 Emissions 2024-25	13
Scope 1 & 2 trends- 2018/19 to 2024/25	15
Consumption trends	16
Scope 3 Emissions	19
Sustainable Council	20
Energy and the built environment	23
Sustainable travel and air quality.....	27
Biodiversity.....	32
Sustainable Food Systems	38
Reducing waste and litter.....	41
Community Wealth and Wellbeing.....	53
Glossary.....	57
Action Plan	58

Introduction

Welcome to our 2025 climate and nature strategy update. In this document you will find the most recent updates to the district and the councils carbon footprints as well as many examples of the wonderful projects that have been delivered over the last financial year. We also provide a brief look back over some of our achievements since we declared a climate emergency back in 2019.

This report is published at a time when the future of Lewes District Council, as a sovereign entity has been consulted upon and is now in the hands of government. Local Government Reorganisation and a politically volatile landscape has resulted in many questions on how climate action will be led nationally as well as at the local level. However, we remain committed to leaving a legacy of best practice approaches and setting the bar high with award winning projects, challenging targets and a clear strategy. We will continue to work with partners to deliver projects that bring a multitude of benefits to our communities, and will endeavour to lobby for adequate investment and support, and stronger climate duties.

We have once again had the hottest summer on record and record-breaking extreme weather appears to be coming the norm. We have experienced an increase in the number of hot days and periods of intense rain leading to heatwaves and increased risk of flooding. The 'State of the UK Climate in 2024' report also states that the sea level is rising faster here in the UK than the global average, as a coastal authority this naturally concerns us.

As a council we are progressing against our net zero target and have reduced our gross emissions by over 60% since baseline of 2018/19. We have achieved this by focusing on the decarbonisation of our fleet and we continue to progress work to decarbonise our social housing making the best use of central government grants, we are also taking steps to make our corporate and public buildings more energy efficient and subsequently decarbonise them as well. Despite all this work we are responsible for less than half a percent of the district's footprint, we can though influence much of it and support our partners and dedicated volunteers to make direct contributions to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This report would be nothing without them so we say thank you and commit to continue to help, advise and support for as long as we are able and will do everything in our power to ensure the progress that we have made is not lost in the face of re-organisation.

District wide action

Further district and community wide action is being co-ordinated by our partners across our strategic theme areas. A few examples of this work are provided below and many more case studies are included throughout this document under the action plan themes below.

Ouse Valley Climate Action (OVCA)



Ouse Valley Climate Action is a National Lottery-funded programme to support and enable community led climate action across the project area including the Lewes district. The project started in 2022 is coming to an end in October 2025 but will continue with its community groups and partners for a legacy year to October 2026.

Our core aims:

1. Net zero council by 2030
2. At least 30% of the district is well managed for nature and protected by 2030
3. The wider district is becoming resilient to climate change and district emissions are reducing

During the 2024-2025, one element of OVCA’s work involved working with Lewes District Council who also funded the Community Pitch, enabling the delivery of projects such for a forest garden by Friends of Group, turning underutilised space into an allotment area and wildflower meadow by a school, to helping improve access to cycling through shared user path. The Fund continues in another phase in autumn 2025. Wider OVCA provide training for projects, monitoring and evaluation, supporting community groups and partners develop and deliver their projects.

Going forward OVCA are collecting learning from their work with communities and partners to enable action to continue. Part of the focus is ensuring the OVCA tools and knowledge are accessible and shared for local community groups during the legacy year and beyond. The opportunity is to bring in new audiences who have not participated in the climate and nature conversation and its projects, ensure engagement tools increase the reach to underserved communities, and keep the flow of information with Towns and Parishes.

Using the Lewes District Partnership Event became a milestone with local community groups, and Towns and Parishes to begin the conversation. The networking opportunity provided a forum to share ideas and discuss the links with OVCA in the legacy year.



Greenhaves Network - The Sustainability of a community network

Support and capacity building to deliver Wilder Spaces, Seed Swap and Network events acting as a beacon for climate action in Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford. Upskilling and connecting residents in the Havens and growing through to Lewes and Ringmer.

During the 2024/25 Greenhaves have been finding new ways to get to our community. This has been achieved by swapping evening network meetings to day time drop ins, usually in a café setting. This enabled us to continue to bring together groups and individuals where we’ve shared with each other what we’re doing and issues we’re struggling with. This has proved popular. We also went on the road to various community events across the Network area, taking our seed collection with us to talk to the general public about wilding their gardens and introduce them to some of the groups within the Network where they could volunteer or learn more.

We’ve also run a number of family “wilder space” training events including butterflies and amphibians which have inspired younger members of the community to improve their own gardens. Collaboration has been a big part of our work this year, whether that be through partnership granting for events or providing venues for family workshops. Our thanks as always go to members of the network for their continued contributions. We are always reviewing how we operate because we recognise that wants and needs are changing rapidly as we all work together to fight the climate crisis, food poverty and loneliness in the community.



We're also privileged to have some great connections with experts in their field and collaboration with larger organisations such as Buglife, Froglife and Weald to Waves through the Knepp project.

www.Greenhavens.network



Sharing Skills CIC – Community

Our projects promote sustainability. We run a Repair cafe and community lunch, a preloved school uniform exchange, look after flowerbeds in the town centre, organise one off events such as the Sustainable Seaford Fair. This year we have been working with local secondary schools supporting them with their sustainability projects by working with the climate ambassadors to achieve an Eco Schools Green Flag award, creating a climate action plan, improving recycling, creating veg gardens and creating or improving habitats for biodiversity.

<https://www.sharingskills.co.uk/>



Lewes Climate Hub - a beacon for climate action



Lewes Climate Hub is located at Lewes House, a prominent and historic building on Lewes High Street owned by Lewes District Council (LDC). Using space leased by Community Energy Pathways, the Hub provides a public venue dedicated to climate and nature, and welcomes over 3,300 visitors a year.

Alongside a rolling programme of weekly displays, talks, workshops, people's assemblies and family activities, the Hub offers a welcome drop-in point for anyone wanting to talk about climate or environmental issues. It can signpost visitors to useful resources and projects to get involved in, including its 40 local 'partner groups'. One unexpected dividend of having a prominent physical space in town is the opportunity to inspire visitors from beyond Lewes. "We've had visitors from across the UK, but also Europe and America interested to see how they might set up a similar centre," says Juliet Oxborrow, a Lewes Climate Hub director. "Some have even come back for in-depth conversations about our approach and how it might help them."

To help volunteer groups learn from one another, the Hub hosted a one-day summit in June 2025 for community climate and sustainability organisations across Sussex and Surrey. "It was great to come together and share our successes and challenges and explore how we might work together in the future."



She adds: We'd love to see a network of climate hubs across the south east. A physical hub at the heart of a town helps to makes climate and nature action visible and accessible to all. It's great to be able to act as a beacon to others."



Seaford Environmental Alliance - Environmental actions at the SEA Hub

At SEA Hub we provide a physical high-street presence for environmental projects and organising.

Our Community Larder has become a fundamental part of the Hub, gaining a stream of regulars and attracting newcomers. Partnering with The Havens and UK Harvest we redistributed surplus food to the local community, reducing food waste while also helping our community with the cost of living as we operate on a basis of voluntary donations.

With the roll out of our Plastic Free Periods project to provide reusable sanitary products for free to women in our local community tackling both plastic pollution and period poverty, and the launch of our Baby Bank to make clothing for 0-5 year olds and baby equipment available for reuse, we are proud that the work we have been doing tackles both the environmental toll of waste and the financial pressures in our community.

Meanwhile our Climate Lending Library grew into a valuable resource, housing an extensive and wide-ranging collection of adult and children's environmental books.

Our Hub is a vibrant community space that supports many local groups by providing a space to meet, to organise, to share and to network. We have welcomed organisations that work to protect our wildlife, such as Swifts, Toads and Hedgehogs, to use the Hub to raise awareness. We love that our space gives home to groups such as the Climate Café and the Hope & Anger choir that exist to support our community emotionally and collectively. We value our partnership with Plastic Free Seaford, and are proud to have incubated various local groups including the award-winning Little Green Cinema.

During 2024-25, we were delighted to present a full programme hosting over 10 events and talks at the Hub, including the Wonderful World of Wildlife, Time to Break Free (From Plastic), Harfest! Celebrating Seasonal Bounty, and Let the Planet be your Valentine



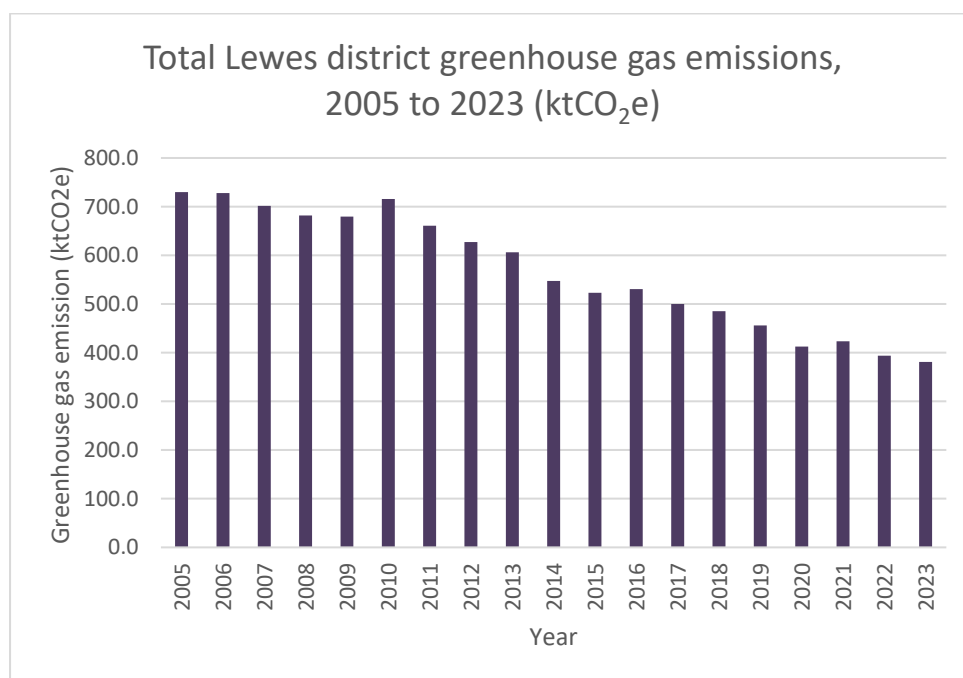
Greenhouse gas emissions in Lewes district- up to 2023

All data is taken from the [UK Local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2023](#).

Greenhouse gas emissions across the Lewes district continue to go down leading to a total of **380.9ktCO₂e** emitted in 2023, with **14.4ktCO₂e** of emissions absorbed by local land.

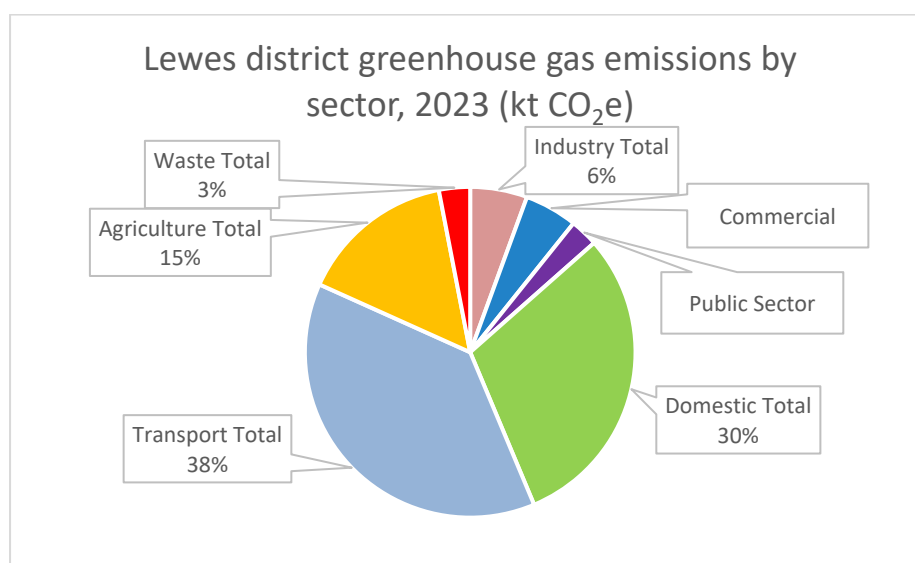
Since the baseline year of 2018, a 21.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions across the Lewes district has been achieved.

Graph 1. Total Lewes district greenhouse gas emissions, 2005 to 2023 (ktCO₂e).



The greenhouse gas emissions are from different sectors, Graph 2. The top three sources in 2023 continue to be from **transport (37%)**, domestic use of energy (29%), and agriculture (15%).

Graph 2. Lewes district greenhouse gas emissions by sector, 2023.



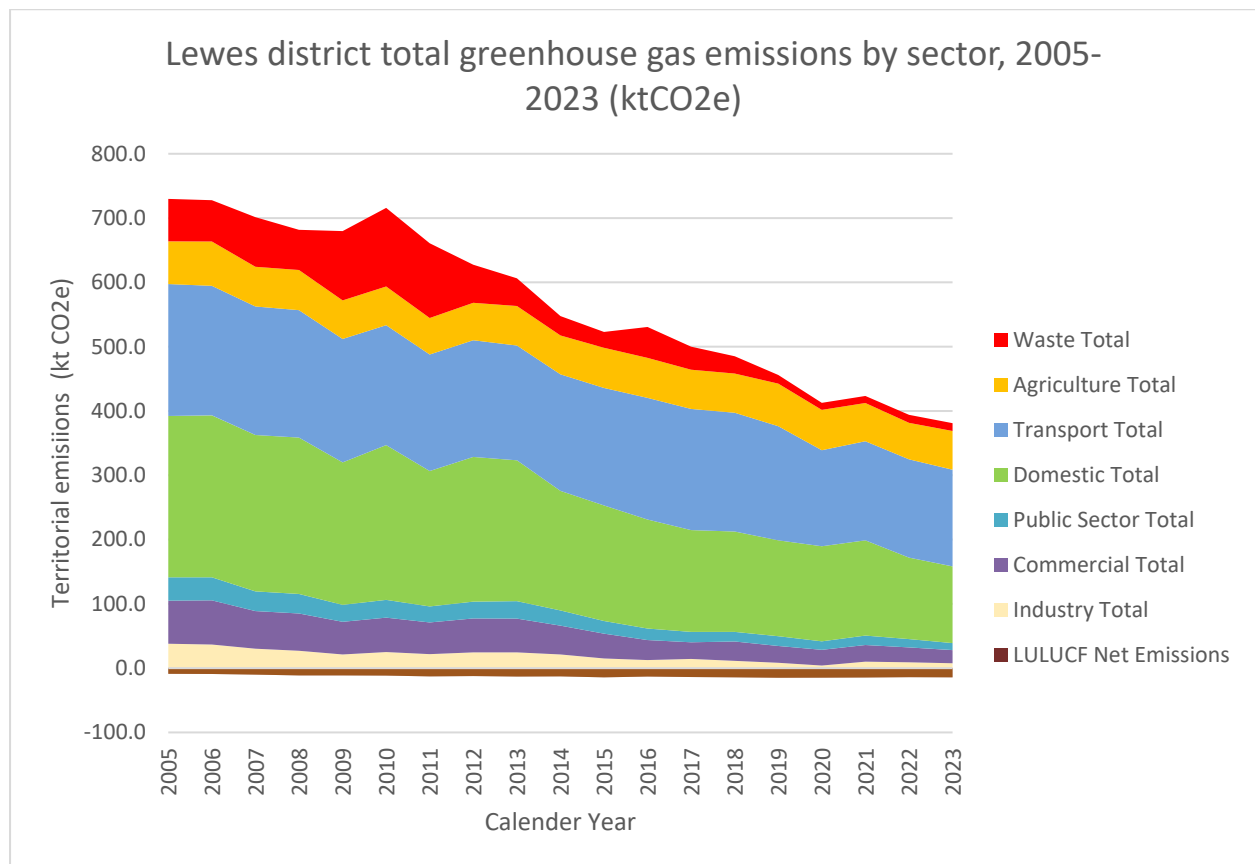
The two greatest sources of savings in five years from 2018 to 2023, Graph 3, have been from the transport sector reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 34.1ktCO₂e, and the domestic sector with a reduction of 36.8ktCO₂e in the same period. Within the total domestic sector gas consumption resulted in the greatest fall in emissions of 18.4ktCO₂e, during the five years, suggesting high energy costs have been causing reduced gas use for heating homes. The heating used can also be driven by annual weather patterns, measured in terms of heating degree days. In the UK the calculated heating degree days have fallen by nearly 10% from 2018 to 2023 this means that the weather is warming, which may in turn reduce gas consumption, as we do not need to heat our homes as much.

From 2022 to 2023, emissions from domestic sector electricity consumption were the greatest source of savings, with a reduction of 5ktCO₂e, influenced by an increase of renewable energy supply from the grid reaching a record 47.3% share in 2023. The direct role of electricity generated from renewables is reinforced by the closing of the last coal power station in September 2024.

Over the five years to 2023 Lewes district public, commercial and agricultural sector emissions have decreased, driven by their electricity use, together saving 9.7ktCO₂e from electricity emissions alone. The national trend of electricity supply including a greater share from renewable sources is accelerating the carbon reduction across the sectors.

The agricultural sector emissions include greenhouse gas emissions from soil, livestock and ‘other’ covering for example off-road transport for farming, as well as gas and electricity. In 2023 livestock contributed 37ktCO₂e of emissions to the agricultural sector, up by 7.3% from 2022. However, livestock sources in 2023 have returned to those of 2018. While agricultural soils have a steady decrease in emissions of 11.3% since 2018 indicating improved farming practices.

Graph 3. Lewes district greenhouse gas emissions by sector, 2005 to 2023.



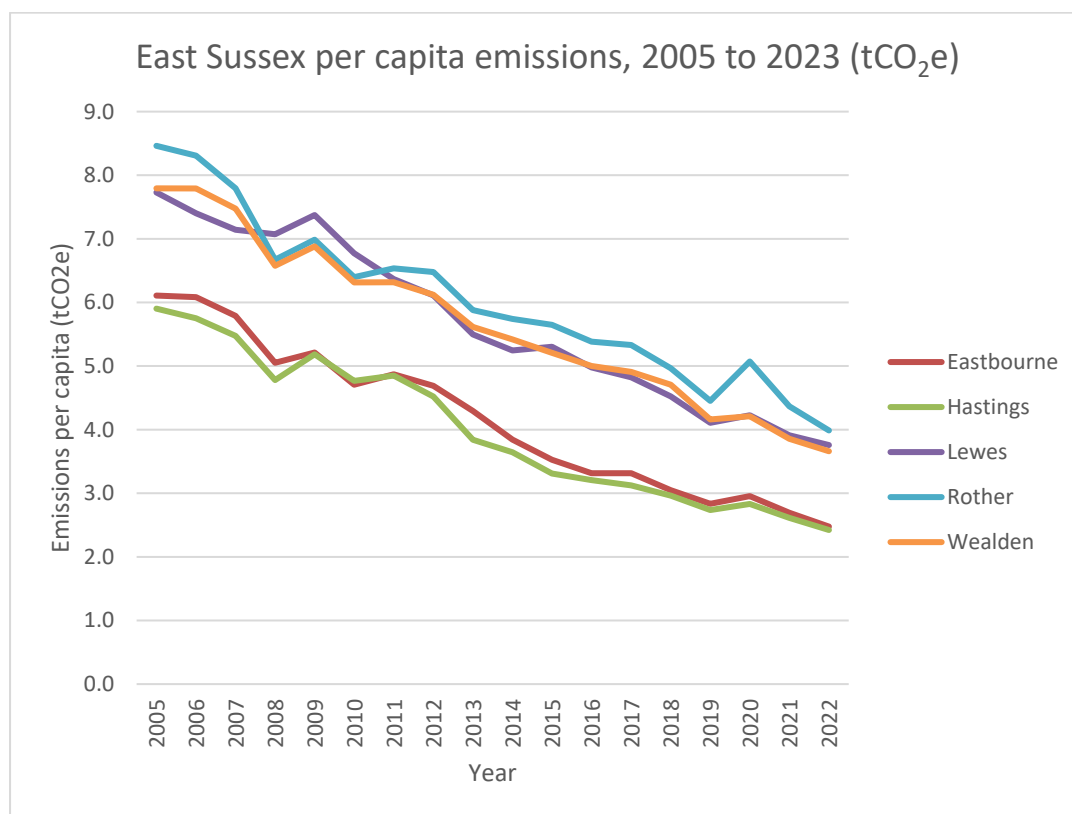
Lewes district per capita emissions in 2023 were 3.8tCO₂e, a decrease of 4% since 2022. However, since the 2018 baseline year, there has been a 22% reduction in the per capita emissions.

The per capita emissions across the districts and boroughs of East Sussex remain separate as shown in Graph 4. Lewes district alongside Wealden district and Rother district are three rural areas, with greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector representing their third highest source, Graph 5.

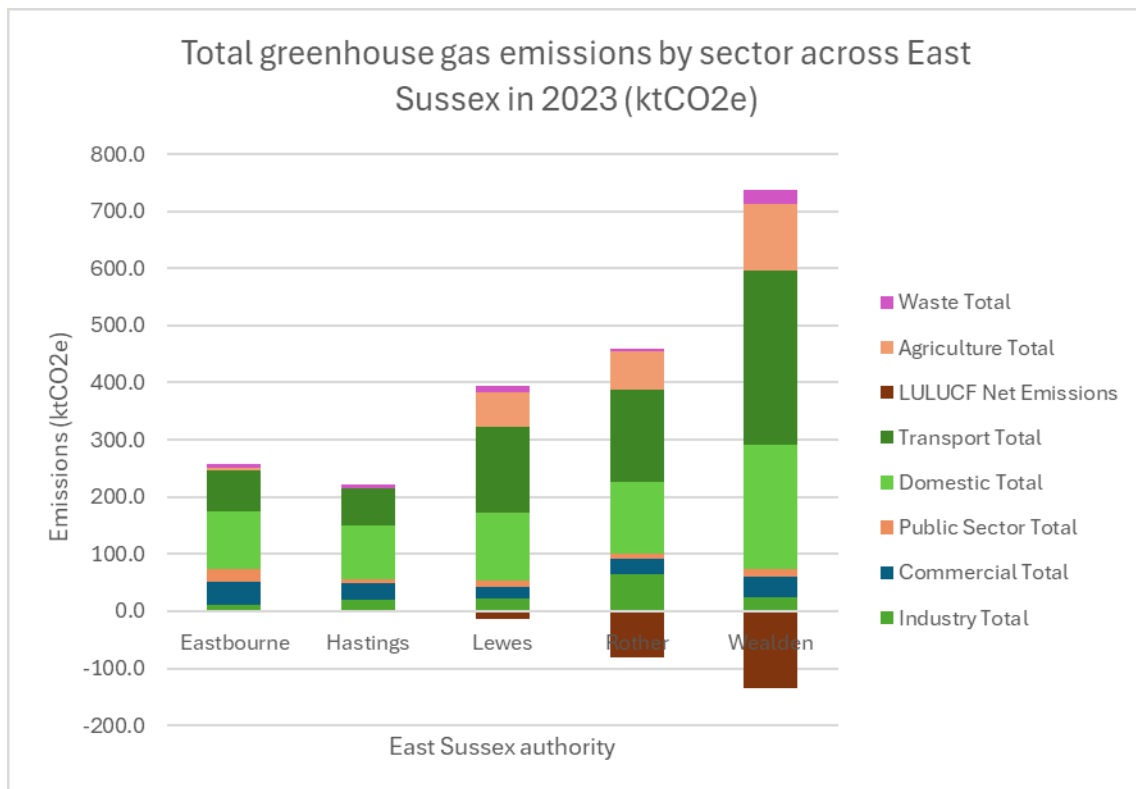
Meanwhile, Eastbourne and Hastings align in their per capita emission, both dense urban areas, with commercial sector emissions as their third highest source. In 2023, Eastbourne per capita emissions were 2.5tCO₂e and Hastings was 2.4tCO₂e.

However, all have domestic and transport emissions as their top two sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

Graph 4. East Sussex per capita emissions, 2005 to 2023.



Graph 5. Total greenhouse gas emissions



Greenhouse gas report for council operations

Introduction

To date we have calculated carbon emissions using the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol methodology and the appropriate annual conversion factors for each year issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial (BEIS), now Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). By using this method and these figures we have ensured that the organisational emissions we measure can be reported accurately every year to 2030 using a robust and reliable process.

Please review the [GHG Protocol guidance](#) for more information.

Our data and report here is set out using best practice from this document- [Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance \(2019\)](#)

Lewes District Council has used the 'operational control' approach to define the organisational boundary and to inform the emissions inventory boundary described in the table below.

Category	Description of emissions boundary	Data used in this analysis
Scope 1	Direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by Lewes District Council	*ESTIMATE- using actual metered gas data (for buildings where the Council pay the gas bills) for the period 01/01/2024 to 30/09/2024 plus- to provide a full year estimate the first 3 months of data have been repeated to provide an estimate for 12 months. *Litres of fuel consumed for fleet vehicles
Scope 2	Indirect emissions from the generation of energy purchased by Lewes District Council	*ESTIMATE- using actual metered electricity data (for buildings where the Council pay the electricity bills) for the period 01/01/2024 to 30/09/2024 plus- to provide a full year estimate the first 3 months of data have been repeated to provide an estimate for 12 months.
Scope 3	Indirect emissions that result from other activities that occur in the value chain, either upstream or downstream.	Data has varied but includes: staff mileage, water consumption, fuel consumed by some contractors (housing and parks)

The council is deemed to have operational control if it has full authority to introduce and implement its operating policies at the operation. This approach does not require the council to own the asset.

It should be noted that with regards to metered gas and electricity, all sites, regardless of who operates the site, have been considered to be in scope 1 or 2 if the council is responsible for paying the bills (even if these costs are re-charged) AND for maintaining the premises, for example the Marine Workshops. Where these conditions are not met the sites were reported within scope 3, for example Wave Leisure facilities.

Scope 1 and 2 emissions within the organisational boundary and are considered to be directly controllable by the Council.

Scope 3 spend analysis will be published once data is received to enable this calculation to take place.

Statement of Organisational boundary approach and baseline recalculation policy

Organisational boundary

The council will use the operational control approach with regards to its direct scope 1 and 2 emissions. This means that we include 100% of the direct greenhouse gas emissions from operations over which we have control. We do not include emissions from operations in which we have an interest but have no control.

With regards to indirect scope 3 emissions the council has some discretion over what it reports. If the council has an operational or a financial interest then the emissions shall be reported under scope 3 **where the data can be collected reliably.**

For example:

- Wave Leisure runs our leisure centres. We have an interest in these facilities but do not have full operational control as we have **OUTSOURCED** the service. **Scope 3**
- We own buildings but do not occupy them (we are the landlord). **Scope 3**
- We own a building and run a service from it. **Scope 1, 2 and 3**
- We lease a building and run a service from it. **Scope 1, 2 & 3**
- We have purchased some stationary supplies. **Scope 3**

Baseline recalculation policy

Retroactive recalculation of the base year emissions will be completed when changes occur that could compromise the consistency and relevance of emissions data.

We will recalculate for:

- changes in structure of the organisation
- significant changes in calculation methodology
 - improved emission factors
 - improved activity data
- discovery of significant errors or smaller errors that are collectively significant

We will use a significance threshold of 10% to trigger a recalculation.

We will not recalculate the baseline where the following applies:

- changes involving facilities that did not exist in the base year
- outsourcing/in sourcing of activities previously reported under a different scope
- organic growth or decline

Lewes District Council’s Scope 1 & 2 Emissions 2024-25

The table below is the formal annual emissions report for scope 1 and 2 sources of emissions for Lewes District Council. This report is our way of monitoring our progress to Net Zero by 2030 and is in a format suggested for use by the government. [Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance \(2019\)](#)

We have used the following data set for our 2024/25 carbon factors: [UK Government GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting June 2024](#)

It must be noted that this year the data for scope 1 and scope 2 is estimated. We unfortunately have not received adequate data from our supplier in time for the production of this report. We will update these figures with corrected data if it is received. Please review the emissions inventory boundary table above for details. To ensure this does not happen again Officers have developed a proforma of data requirements for procurement purposes, the contract is currently being procured for an April 2026 start.

	Current year 2024/25 (UK)	Comparison reporting (base) year 2018/19 (UK)
Scope 1 emissions		
Gas	347	360.5
Diesel	0	870.9
Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO)	10	0
Electricity generation from PV panels ¹	0	0
Scope 2 emissions		
Purchased Electricity (location based)- grid average	271	358.4
Total annual gross Scope 1 & 2 emissions (tCO₂e/year)	628	1590
Purchased green tariff electricity (market-based) ²	-271	0 ³
Total annual net Scope 1 & 2 emissions (tCO₂e/year)	357	1590

¹The council has solar PV panels on installed on offices, leisure centres and housing. During 24/25 approximately **1,308 MWh** for the reporting period, of which 100% was exported to the grid. Because we generate electricity we have to disclose the carbon emissions from this generation, as it is from PV we have zero emissions.

²The council purchased its electricity from npower 01/10/2020 up until 30/09/2024. We used their UK Business Renewable tariff. From 01/10/2024 the council purchased its electricity from Ecotricity. Both of these tariffs are REGO backed and fully compliant with WRI GHG Protocol Scope 2 Guidance. These tariffs enable us to reduce our emissions from the consumption of purchased electricity by 100% which equates to an estimated saving of 271 tonnes CO₂e per year.

³During 2018/19 the council purchased ‘brown’ standard grid electricity.

For information, the table below provides the energy consumption used to calculate above carbon emissions:

	Current year 2024/25	Comparison reporting (base) year 2018/19
<i>Gas</i>	<i>1,897,862 kWh (gross CV)</i>	<i>1,960,291 kWh (gross CV)</i>
<i>Diesel</i>	<i>Zero litres</i>	<i>332,527.75 litres</i>
<i>Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO)</i>	<i>289855 litres</i>	<i>0 litres</i>
<i>Electricity generation from PV panels¹</i>	<i>1,308,342 kWh</i>	<i>1,392,645 kWh (housing only)</i>
<i>Purchased Electricity</i>	<i>1,307,038 kWh</i>	<i>956,037 kWh</i>

The 2019 guidelines recommend organisations provide an ‘intensity’ ratio within their carbon reporting. Essentially this is an amount of carbon emissions assigned to a unit relevant to the organisation, this may be a unit of product, per member of staff or, as we and other local authorities have chosen to use, a per head of population figure. Our intensity ratio is below:

	Current year 2024/25	Comparison reporting (base) year 2018/19
Intensity ratio: tCO ₂ e (gross scope 1 & 2) per head of population ² of Lewes district	0.006 tonnes per resident	0.016 tonnes per resident

²[Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) [Estimates of the population for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland - Office for National Statistics](#)
myebtavlesenglandwales20112024 = 100,589 (2018)& 102,363 (2024)

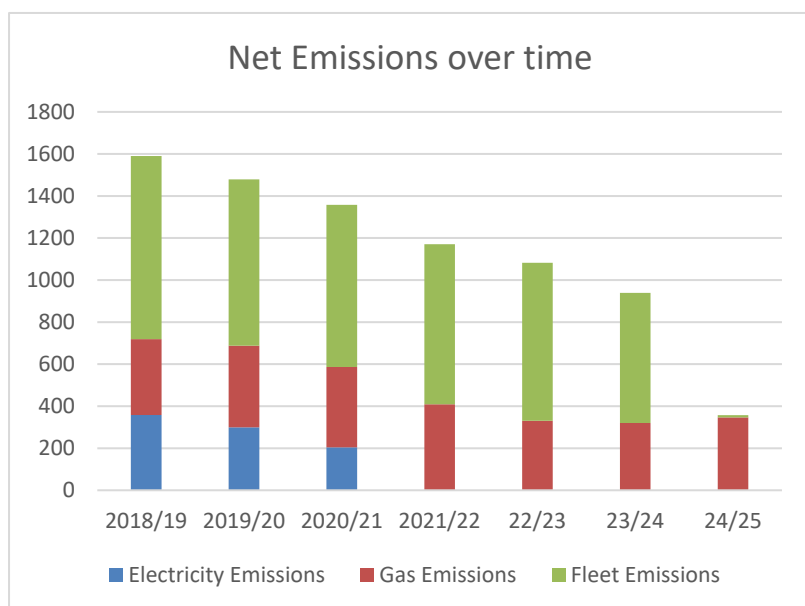
Scope 1 & 2 trends- 2018/19 to 2024/25

All trends and discussion this year are provisional due to estimated gas and electricity figures. This will be updated if possible. Fleet figures are accurate.

Net Emissions

As shown by graph 6 below the council's net carbon emissions have reduced by **77.5%** since 2018/19. This has been achieved through the procurement of certified 'good quality' green tariff electricity from October 2021, and by reducing fleet emissions by over 98%.

We acknowledge that by enabling homeworking the council has likely increased domestic emissions as our staff heat and power their homes more than they would have done otherwise. We have estimated this and included it in our scope 3 emissions as these emissions are no longer within our direct control.



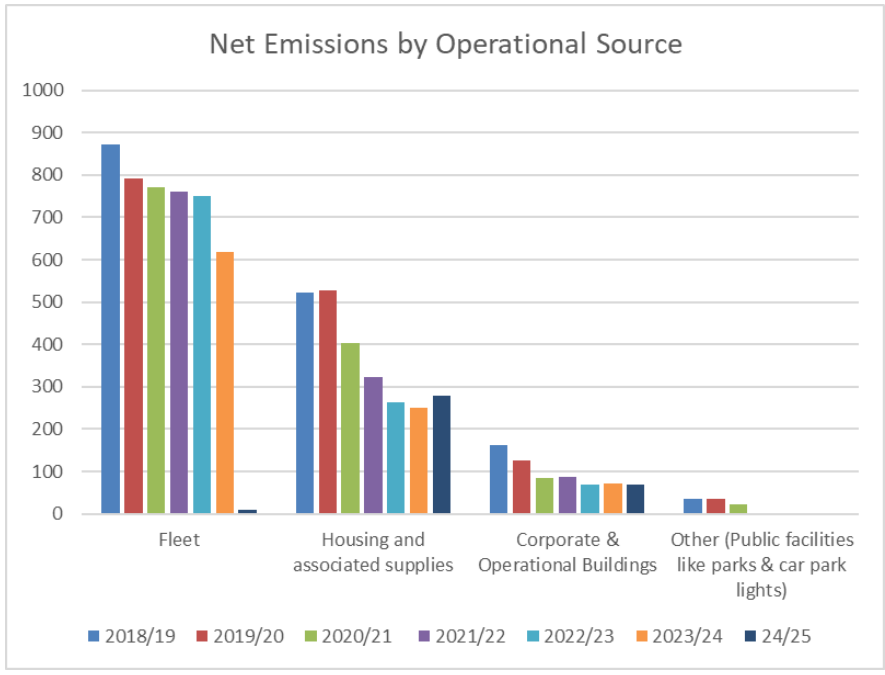
Graph 6. Council net emissions over time

Graph 7 describes our net carbon emissions by operational source.

Carbon emissions from fleet have now reduced by over 98% thanks to the conversion to HVO. HVO contributed just over 10 tonnes CO₂e in 24/25.

The Council's remaining net emissions are made up of 347 tonnes CO₂e from gas. 78% of this is attributable to communal housing supplies and the remaining 19% was used at corporate sites.

The 'other' category only consumes electricity, so under the net emissions graph it shows as zero emissions.



Graph 7. Net emissions by operational source

Consumption trends

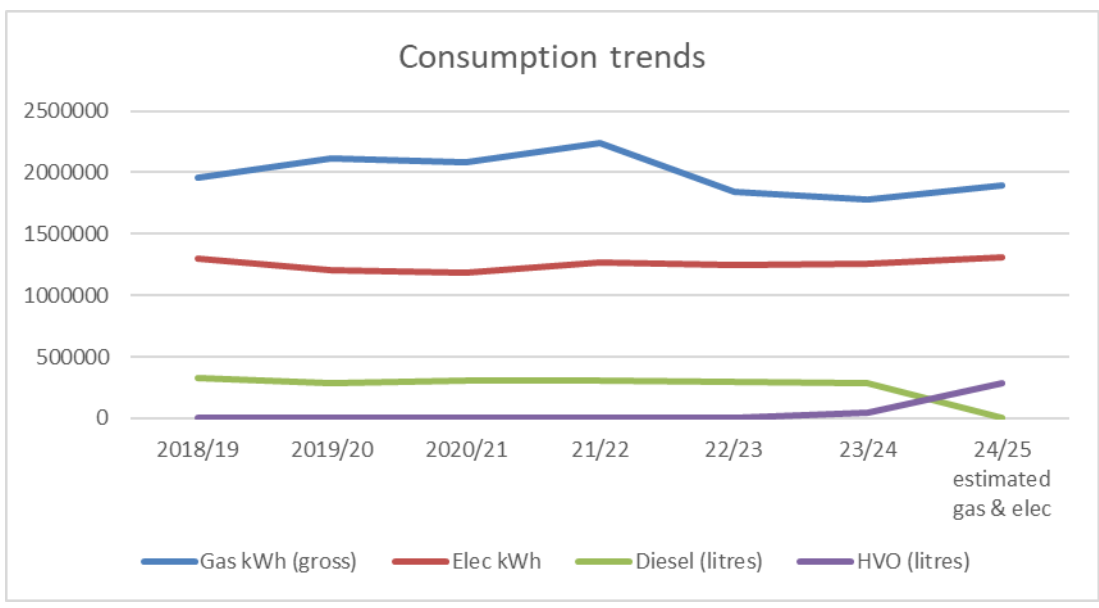
Graph 8 illustrates the consumption trend of gas, electricity and fuel. Reducing consumption should always be the first thing we do prior to decarbonisation measures as it reduces gross carbon emissions and potentially makes the work cheaper and easier.

Overall, since 2018/19 the council has enabled a reduction of 100% in diesel consumption (litres) through conversion to HVO. HVO is now plotted on the graph. We have consumed a similar amount of HVO fuel (litres) during 2024/25 as we did diesel previously.

Gas (kWh) consumption increased in 2024/25 when compared to the previous year though consumption was still lower than 2018/19.

An increase occurred in the consumption of electricity on the previous year.

Graph 8. Consumption trends



Progress against our gross emissions pathway

This has been plotted on graph 9 below. The Council is slightly above its target at 628 tonnes but has largely achieved its aim and met the first part of the pathways by reducing fleet emissions to near zero. What remains now is the hardest part, the full decarbonisation of gross electricity emissions through maximising efficiency, self-generation or Power Purchase Agreement's (PPA's), and the removal of gas for heating.

The council remains committed to pathway 4.

A reminder of the pathways is provided below:

Pathway 1-this is our business as usual (BAU) pathway. It assumes we will continue to use HVO and will consume the same amount as we did diesel. It assumes we will use the same amount of gas heating as we did in 2023/24 and that grid electricity will increase as our vehicle fleet is electrified (as per currently funded proposals increasing the number of EV vehicles from 12 to 19- correct as of 2024). We do not reduce emissions for use of a green electricity tariff.

Remaining emissions at 2030 = 594.9 tonnes CO₂e

Pathway 2-this pathway models for our replacement of gas heating with air source heat pumps. Reductions start in 2026/27 with half of our corporate buildings having the gas heating replaced (our smallest gas consumers), 2027/28 as all corporate buildings converted and one third of housing stock communal supplies. 2028/29 sees another third of housing stock communal supplies converted with the final third being completed in 2029/30. This phasing has been put forward because it is most likely that corporate buildings will be easiest to tackle if corporate budget or grants allow the financial resources to be found. Housing communal supplies are likely to be logistically more challenging as these are within our sheltered accommodation blocks.

**It can be seen there is a bit of a kick up in the red line within modelling, this is due to reducing small gas supplies and replacing this with electricity (estimated COP3) and the assumed electricity increases due to electrification of the vehicle fleet (7 new EV's assumed by 2025/26 with no increase to end of 2030- though this is now likely to be underestimated for future years as the majority of the fleet will now transition- see page 27).*

Remaining emissions at 2030 = 604.9 tonnes CO₂e

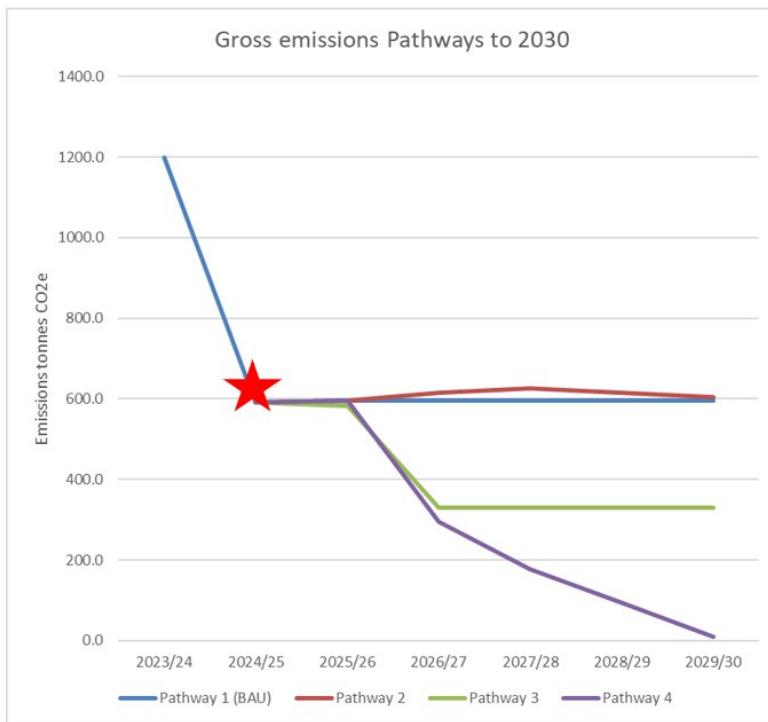
Pathway 3-this pathway does not remove our gas heating supply. It focuses on decarbonising electricity through either on-site generation or a PPA. A PPA is a power purchase agreement with a renewable generation source such as a solar farm. We have the opportunity to investigate the option of directly purchasing electricity when our contracts are renewed (and this is investigated each time for viability as standard). We continue to evaluate options for installing more solar panels on our building stock. This will contribute to lowering our consumption of purchased electricity regardless of source. This pathway assumes a 100% zero carbon source of electricity from 1 April 2026.

Remaining emissions at 2030 = 330.5 tonnes CO₂e

Pathway 4- this pathway is a combination of the positive steps outlined above so requires the continued use of HVO as per pathway 1, though another zero carbon fuel may be implemented, the stepped removal of gas heating as per pathway 2 and ensures zero carbon electricity is purchased or generated as per pathway 3.

Remaining emissions at 2030 = 10.5 tonnes CO₂e

Graph 9. Gross emissions pathways to 2030



Scope 3 Emissions

Our scope 3 (indirect) emissions are reported in the table below. For the first time we have included an estimate of emissions from our social housing stock and we have been able to back date this with data from 2023/24.

It will however continue to be an evolving area of reporting as we develop and introduce new methods to capture more data, implementation of the new sustainable procurement policy will further enable this as new contracts are procured and required to disclose carbon information. We had hoped to include some carbon emissions data based on our contract spend data for 2024/25 but there has been a delay in receiving the data- we will publish this data separately once we have it.

Source	Data source and conversion	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Electricity at leased out assets	Utilities consumption information plus T&D losses							80.0
Gas at leased out assets	Utilities consumption information plus WTT emissions							69.0
Council Electricity Transmission & Distribution losses	Utilities consumption information	30.5	25.5	23.4	23.8	22.0	22.5	23.9
Water use- supply & treatment	Direct from utility management company	N/A	13.9	19.5	9.6	5.3	8.9	4.1
Wave Leisure	Direct from consumption information (water, gas & elec)	953.5	945.0	365.5	763.0	705.0	666.5	797.5
Private Business Miles (staff and Cllrs)	Calculated using miles claimed and an average petrol car			28.4	20.0	22.6	22.0	19.8
Councillors- Taxis	'Regular Taxi km' based on spend (average costs)				0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public transport (staff and Cllrs)	Estimated km based on spend (rail assumed)			0.4	0.8	0.1	corrected figure - 0.8	1.3
Council Well to Tank (WTT) diesel fuel emissions	Based on actual consumption			185.3	184.8	179.0	150.0	0.0
Council WTT natural gas (gross)	Utilities consumption information			56.5	70.0	57.0	53.7	57.3
Council WTT Biodiesel HVO	Consumption						25.1	162.0
Grounds maintenance contract- fuel (consumption and WTT)	Data is no longer available due to contract ending and supplier refusing to provide data- 2023/24 figure has been used as estimate				83.8	86.5	59.5	59.5
Housing maintenance contract- fuel (consumption and WTT)						130.8	138.8	67.7
Homeworking							146.0	263.5
Social housing energy consumption (gas & elec)	Domestic total CO2e (2023 LA GHG estimates) / number of households (2021 census) x Number of council homes owned by Lewes DC = (119300t/43689)*3215 (119300t/43689)*3254						8779.1	8885.6
Total (tonnes)		984	984	679	1156	1208	10072	10342

Summary of progress against our targets

For more detail on the actions related to targets please refer to the action plan update.

Key to progress colour:

Blue	Completed
Green	On track
Amber	Potential issues or low risks requiring monitoring
Red	Significant issues or risks



Objectives:

- To meet Core Aim 1: Net zero and climate resilient council by 2030
- The Council provides visible leadership on climate action.
- Council services are prepared for and resilient to climate change impacts.
- Climate change and impact on nature is embedded in all council decision-making.
- Community Wealth principles are embedded within council processes (including procurement and use of assets)

Key achievements since 2020:

This action area was new to the 2024 strategy update. We have focussed on getting the new intake of Councillors, elected in 2023 trained to provide a good foundation in climate change understanding and have since updated our online staff training and provided a course on adaptation. Lunch and learn sessions have also been provided on specialist subjects like flooding.

Work has begun on adaptation and the council has fed into county wide risk assessment work.

Councillors have been very active lobbying on clean air and water and Officers continue to innovate and respond to challenges and opportunities.

Council emissions have reduced substantially, through the decarbonisation of our fleet and we have expanded our scope 3 reporting.

Council Targets:

Council target ref.	Target detail	Completion date	Action number	Progress
TSC1	Publish Procurement Strategy	Completed	SC3	Completed
TSC2	New decision-making process/tool determined and rolled out	March 2025- Delayed to Dec 2025	SC6	Tool has been found and is being developed/evaluated- due for approval and roll out in 2025/26
TSC3	Assess and determine key climate risks	New date- August 2026	SC4	Completed for 3 sites- more planned

				as part of wider project in 2026
TSC4	Develop adaptation strategies for key council buildings and land	December 2026	SC5	See TSC3
TSC5	Deliver a revised approach to measuring & reporting Scope 3 emissions	November 2025	SC9	Approach reviewed and expanded, to continue into next reporting year.

Performance Measures:

Council Annual Performance Measure	Methodology	Result
Annual corporate carbon emissions scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3	Scope 1 & 2 & 3 data collected, and calculation performed using DESNZ Greenhouse Gas Emission Factors for relevant year	Gross emissions Scope 1 = 357 ktCO ₂ e Scope 2 = 271 ktCO ₂ e Scope 3 = 10,342 ktCO ₂ e
Number of staff & councillors who have had climate awareness or related training	Recorded via online training portal and attendance at training sessions	24/25 = 21
Progress on Climate & Nature Action Plan	All actions to be scored annually using a RAG rating (red, amber, green) according to progress	81% of actions are currently reported as green (on track), 16% as amber (potential or low risks) and 0 are red (at high risk) 3 are new.



Case studies

The projects in this section correspond to action numbers: SC1, SC3, SC4 & 5,

Council publishes Sustainable Procurement Policy

The council has produced a Sustainable Procurement Policy outlining its approach to spending on goods and services in a way that is environmentally, socially and economically responsible. The policy was approved by Cabinet June 2024 here [Sustainable Procurement Policy - Appendix 1 \(lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk\)](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/sustainable-procurement-policy-appendix-1)

Implementation of the new policy should improve our scope 3 (indirect) emissions reporting as we can require information to be disclosed by our contractors on a regular basis.

Adaptation training

18 members of senior staff, including the senior leadership team, and Councillors, including Cabinet, from across the council attended 'Climate Literacy' training focussed on adaptation in early 2025. Attendees were briefed on climate change and its implications before being challenged to analyse their services and flag potential vulnerabilities to both the council and the district, feeding into strategic planning. Attendees found it extremely useful and the session has raised potential research projects for 25/26 and 26/27 and is informing the vulnerability and adaptation work currently underway.

Agenda

-  **Our current predicament**
Where we are
What we need to do
Where we're headed
-  **Climate change risks locally**
-  **Key policy interventions:**
Adaptation and mitigation
-  **Local climate action**

Why focus on adaptation?

- 1 Our adaptation efforts urgently need to catch up to risks we're already facing**

"We're off track against where we should be - and that's things like flood defences...in the summer are our cities ready for extreme heat? These basic things. We have to prepare our infrastructure for it. We have to prepare the economy for it. We have to prepare our homes for it."

"There are risks to our food yields, there are risks to where we can build safe homes for people, and risks to our towns and cities which are built on coastlines. These things are very obvious and we should be acting now to tackle them."

Emma Pinchbeck, Chief Executive, Climate Change Committee, December 2024
- 2 Softening of commitment to climate goals globally increases likelihood that will see more than 2C of warming this century?**



Energy and the built environment

Objectives:

- The district's emissions from buildings and construction have reduced
- Reduced emissions from council assets
- The district produces more green energy
- Residents, in particular those most vulnerable, can access advice, funding and practical sustainability measures
- Community Energy initiatives have been enabled and delivered

Council Key achievements since 2020:

- **77.5% reduction in net emissions from Council operations**
- Tenant engagement through 'Not Costing the Earth'
- Completed baseline social housing data in order to inform retrofit work
- Taken a lead role in the development of the regional retrofit market and produced a roadmap to zero carbon homes.
- Determined the need to spend £22 million to get all our social housing stock up to an EPC 'C'
- Gained grants totalling over to progress retrofitting work and get homes up to EPC 'B'
- In 2022 we reported we were on track to reduce emissions by 50% by 2025, we have beaten that and reduced gross emissions by over 60% (and net emissions by over 77%)
- 59% of homes in the district have an EPC of D or lower- this is a continuing improvement from 2021 when we reported 71% of homes were D or worse.(Reference: Open EPC data)
- Domestic PV installations have increased from 2350 (2018) to 3724 (2023) with generation capacity increasing from 14.6MW to 20.7MW in 2023 (reference: Renewable Energy by LA 2014-2023)

Council Targets:

Council target ref.	Target detail	Completion date	Action number	Progress
TEB1	80% reduction in council scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions (on 2018/19 baseline)	2030	EB1 EB2 EB3	77.5% reduction to date (net carbon emissions)
TEB2	50% reduction in council energy consumption (on 2018/19 baseline)	2030	EB1 EB2 EB3	2024/25 = 10.8% kWh reduction since 2018/19
TEB3	Homes in the district (all tenures) have an average EPC rating of 'B'	2030	EB7 EB8	Projects across all tenures active

TEB4	All Council homes to attain a minimum of EPC C by 2030, beginning with the retrofit of 267 council homes to reach minimum EPC C by 2025	2030 with 2025 milestone	EB7	Work underway
TEB5	Adoption of “New Homes Principles” for all new council housing	2024	EB	Completed 2024- new action within action plan to review by end of 2026
TEB6	Install solar PV at Seahaven Swim & Fitness Centre and estimate carbon saving	Date extended 2026	EB5	Feasibility being done in Summer 2025
TEB7	Electrification of the councils’ waste and recycling depot (through removal of mains gas) in Newhaven	2026	EB4	Underway
TEB8	Enable a retrofit loan scheme and invest at least £750,000	Date extended 2026	EB11 CW4	Delayed but in progress
TEB9	Support community partners to deliver energy advice to at least 2000 residents between 2023 to 2025	2025	EB12 EB16	Work underway
TEB10	Double local green energy capacity (on 2018 baseline)	2026	EB10 EB17	Investigating viability

Performance Measures:

Council Annual Performance Measure	Methodology	Result
Annual corporate carbon emissions scope 1, scope 2	Scope 1 & 2 data collected and determined using DESNZ Greenhouse Gas Emission Factors for relevant year	628 tCO ₂ e
Carbon emissions from domestic dwellings	DESNZ Local and regional CO ₂ emissions dataset (data is annually updated 2 years in arrears)	126.9 ktCO ₂ e (2022) 119.3 ktCO ₂ e (2023)
Green energy generation capacity	Renewable energy statistics- Renewable energy by Local Authority dataset- latest update	2018 (baseline) = 40.9 MW 2023 = 46.9 MW
% of LDC properties with an EPC of C or above	Housing asset database	71.30%, against a 70% target.
Average EPC rating of district housing stock	Most recent available download of EPC register	D (63 EPC score) (published 31 Jul 2025)



Case studies

The projects in this section correspond to action number: EB3, EB7, EB10, EB12, EB17

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.2 - Lewes District Council

(Image: Cllr. Mark Slater with Mrs Tozer in Cooksbridge and the team from CDS Electrical.)

The council project to decarbonise council homes is making a 'positive difference' as 267 properties across Lewes district are being retrofitted to improve energy performance and reduce carbon emissions. The sustainability improvements include solar PV, loft insulation, window and door upgrades, draughtproofing, wall insulation and air source heat pumps, and was made possible by a council investment of £2.7 million and a £2 million government grant. As a result, by March 2025 over 71% of all stock had already achieved an EPC Rating of C or above.



Solar Scheme Delivers Big Wins for Residents - Lewes District Council



Lewes District Council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions is showing real results thanks to its ongoing partnership with its electrical services provider. Within eight months, the provider installed solar panels and battery storage systems in homes across the district — and the benefits are already clear.

A system installed in December 2024 has already made a big impact. The household has generated a massive 2,340kWh of electricity to the middle of 2025. That's saved the household around £700 in energy costs* and reduced their carbon emissions by an impressive 2.03 tonnes.

One recent installation, completed on 25 July 2025, highlights just how effective the scheme can be. The property was fitted with a 3kW solar panel system and a 4kW battery. In under two weeks, it produced 88kWh of energy and reached an impressive 78.93% self-sufficiency.

What does that mean for the tenants?

- They're saving around £13 a week on electricity bills. *
- They've already helped cut 72.84kg of carbon emissions, reducing their environmental impact straight away.

What makes these results even more impressive is that they were achieved during a period of mostly cloudy and unsettled weather. With brighter, sunnier days the system is expected to perform even better — increasing clean energy production and helping the household save even more on their electricity bills.

*Based on electricity prices of 30p per kWh.

Leisure Centre decarbonisation and reopening of Ringmer Pool



The first phase of a £1m programme of decarbonisation measures have been installed at the leisure centres across the district reducing energy demand and improved comfort for the users.

Linking across departments the Council's Tourism and Culture Team secured further funding to enable the improvements at Seahaven Swim and Fitness Centre.

Installation of ultra-efficient pool circulation pumps and more efficient air handling units at Ringmer pool helped Ringmer pool get a positive start to its reopening in summer 2025.

Power Up to Power Down in the Ouse Valley - Ouse Valley Energy Services CIC (OVESCO)



OVESCO's Energy Advice service supports over 2,000 Lewes District residents annually. Funded initially by Citizen's Advice Energy Outreach and later through Lottery funding via Ouse Valley Climate Action, the service has grown from a volunteer-based team to paid Energy Champions. OVESCO now offers regular trusted support at food banks, community events, local fairs, and a twice-weekly drop-in in central Lewes, along with home visits for bill support and retrofit advice. The team also organises the annual Eco Open Houses, attracting over 650 visitors, and the Eco Extravaganza at Lewes Town Hall, returning in November.

OVCA funding enabled OVESCO to hire a technical manager, supporting Lewes District Council's heat decarbonisation studies for Lewes House and School House, and creating a decarbonisation plan for Peacehaven Town Council. OVESCO is advancing a pipeline of solar and storage projects, including



new installations at Holmansbridge Farm and feasibility work with Harveys Brewery, expanding on the 98kW community solar installed at their depot in 2011.

This work builds on OVESCO's experience managing 15 community rooftop solar sites and contributing to Meadow Blue Community Energy's 5MW solar farm. That experience led to the development of the 17MW Ouse Valley Solar Farm (OVSF), which has secured planning permission, land, and a grid offer. In 2025, OVESCO

progressed planning conditions and grid cost reductions, aiming for construction in 2027.

OVESCO also founded GetBikery, now a standalone CIC, promoting e-cargo bike use in Lewes and Newhaven.

www.ovesco.co.uk



Sustainable travel and air quality

Objectives:

- The council has a zero emission at tailpipe fleet
- Everyone has increased access to sustainable travel options and electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Air pollution is reduced to public health is improved

Council Targets:

Council target ref.	Target detail	Completion date	Action number	Progress
TST1	All council fleet to be zero carbon (at tailpipe)	2030	ST2 ST3	Waste fleet on track- Neighbourhood First & Housing being reviewed during 2025
TST2	Deliver air quality action plans for Lewes and Newhaven	2024	ST11	Plans were delayed whilst collating further information but due at Cabinet Nov 2025
TST3	Implement sustainable transport plans in new council housing developments	2024	ST7	Ongoing
TST4	New car club vehicles (including at least 1 EV) in coastal towns	2025	ST8	Evaluated for viability in summer 2025
TST5	Expand our provision of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging into at least one more car park	2025	ST5	Delay due to procurement for LEVI funding charging points

TST6	Decarbonise all small to medium sized fleet vehicles (non- waste and recycling fleet) by 2026	2026	ST2	
------	---	------	-----	--

Performance Measures:

Council Annual Performance Measure	Methodology	Result
Carbon emissions from the council's fleet	Fuel consumption or mileage records	10 tonnes CO ₂ e
Carbon emissions from the district's transport	DESNZ Local and regional CO ₂ emissions dataset (data is annually updated 2 years in arrears)	152.8 ktCO ₂ e (2022) 150.4 ktCO ₂ e (2023)
Number of sites with electric vehicle chargepoints active in the district	Council records and Zap Map	21 publicly accessible sites

Objectives:

- The council has a zero emission at tailpipe fleet
- Everyone has increased access to sustainable travel options and electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Air pollution is reduced so public health is improved

Council Key achievements since 2020:

- Over £102,000 gained in DfT grant for e-cargo bikes
- Council grants provided for community projects such as bike security
- Enabled car club vehicles to convert from petrol to electric
- Installed public EV chargers across 11 car parks
- Smashed our original 2020 target to reduce fleet direct fossil fuel use by 20% by 2025 by focussing on our big consumers- the Waste & Recycling (W&R) Fleet-

Waste & Recycling Fleet decarbonisation programme:

- Currently (as of the date this report is prepared- August 2025) there are 58 vehicles of which 32 are internal combustion engines (ICE) running on HVO, as an interim solution, and 26 are electric (45%).
- By swapping from diesel to HVO emissions have reduced to just 10 tonnes and fossil fuel use is zero.

Planned re-powering of W&R fleet from diesel engines to fully electric:

- By end of 2025 28 vehicles total, will be electric (48%)
- By end of 2026 41 will be electric (71%)
- By end of 2027 49 will be electric (85%)
- By end of 2028 53 will be electric, 3 ICE vehicles will remain (1 street vehicle, 1 depot JCB, 1 recycling vehicle) and 2 ICE vehicles will be removed from fleet-

95% of the W&R fleet will therefore be electric and zero emission at tailpipe by end of 2028

Our other fleet vehicles are as follows:

Neighbourhood First

- 14 vehicles of which 3 are electric and 11 are ICE running on HVO.
- Fleet review in progress

Homes First

- 4 ICE running on HVO
- All vehicles to be replaced with electric within next 12 months subject to final approval.

As of October 2025 35% of the whole Council fleet is electric.



Case studies

The projects in this section correspond to action numbers:
ST2, ST3, ST9

Lewes District Council - Driving down emissions with a UK first.

The council has taken delivery of six new fully electric vehicles that are cleansing the district's streets and making a significant contribution to the authority's 2030 net zero carbon target. Included in the new fleet is a first for the UK. A groundbreaking zero-emissions EV street sweeper – capable of a 200 km range per charge and carrying 5,000 litres of waste – is making its UK debut in Lewes district. The sweeper also carries 880 litres of water to reduce dust during the sweeping process and can pressure wash surfaces if required.



Alongside, Lewes District Council introduced a fleet of all-electric vehicles to collect food waste from homes across the district – another significant step towards its net zero carbon target.

The fleet of electric vehicles (EVs) for food waste collection and street cleaning operations is achieving

Carbon Reduction: Replacing diesel-powered vehicles with EVs for daily waste collection and street maintenance.

Air Quality Improvement: The switch to electric has helped reduce particulate matter and NOx emissions in residential areas, contributing to healthier communities.

Noise Pollution Reduction: Electric street sweepers and collection vehicles operate more quietly, improving quality of life in early-morning service areas.

Operational Efficiency: The EVs are equipped with smart route planning and energy-efficient systems, reducing fuel costs and increasing service reliability.

Community Impact: Residents have responded positively to the quieter, cleaner vehicles seeing practical, visible steps towards sustainability.

Next steps: the remainder of the fleet will be re-powered to electric- that is, we will recycle the bodies of the vehicles, remove the diesel engine and replace with fully electric powertrains and batteries.



Get Bikery CIC - Expanding Access and Tourism with Electric Cargo Bikes

Get Bikery specialises in providing electric cargo bikes for both households and businesses in Newhaven and Lewes town. Their services include hiring out bikes, facilitating local deliveries, and supporting valuable community initiatives such as food

bank deliveries.

Recognising the unique opportunity to connect people to the coast and countryside, Get Bikery chose to focus on creating a tourism product centred around our electric cargo bikes. The aim is to enable greater access to these natural areas using sustainable transport.

A key part of the project involves partnering with cultural and visitor destinations to develop packages that connect existing cycling routes and camping sites. These collaborations are designed to encourage more visitors to explore the region by bike.



Get Bikery worked with an intern from the University of Sussex to further develop marketing strategies. Efforts included promoting the benefits of electric cargo bikes on tourism platforms such as Visit Lewes and Experience Sussex.

To enhance the visitor experience, Get Bikery is developing 'Discovery Packages'. These packages feature a variety of offerings, including local cycling routes, picnic hampers sourced from local producers, and guided rides, providing new ways to discover the area.

www.getbikery.org





Biodiversity

Council target ref.	Target detail	Completion date	Action number	Progress
TB1	All major development achieving at least 20% biodiversity net gain	2030	B6	Subject to the adoption of the New Local Plan, this will be sought on all Major Developments.
TB2 (also linked to TWRS 1 & 2)	At least 2 high profile water and nature-based restoration projects progressed	2025	WRS1	Awarding winning Cockshut scheme complete. Continue feasibility and modelling downstream with Lewes District Council and Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust working together again on a project to restore Landport Brooks.
TB3	30% of LDC green spaces to be under active management for biodiversity by 2026	2026	B1	Investigating a GIS project to enable mapping to enable this to be quantified

Performance Measures:

Council Annual Performance Measure	Methodology	Result
% split of biodiversity net gain delivered (through the planning system): a) on-site within new developments; b) off-site locally and c) through the national credit system.	Council records	The developments with conditions to report Biodiversity Net Gain have not yet begun construction on site. When they begin, reporting will be captured over the required 30 year in a new online monitoring platform.
ktCO ₂ e sequestered by land	DESNZ Local and regional CO ₂ emissions dataset (data is annually updated 2 years in arrears)	14.2 ktCO ₂ e (2022) 14.4 ktCO ₂ e (2023)
Number of sites under active management for biodiversity	Council records and partner records	10 (as nature reserves)
Quantity of trees/hedgerows planted	Council records and partner records	In 2024/25, Lewes Urban Arboretum volunteers, (Trees Committee of Friends of Lewes), planted 39 mature street trees in

		verges in Lewes, and 50 hedge whips to make a short wildlife hedge at a local school. Gardening In Action planted 42 fruit trees on LDC land in February 2025. Wilder Ouse planted 353m of hedging across the catchment area including Lewes district.
Number of practical conservation/volunteering activities supported by the council	Council records	68 practical conservation volunteering activities were supported by LDC with volunteering groups.
Continued support provided to tree-planting partners such as Lewes Arboretum and Trees For Seaford.	Council records	LDC supported planting of 39 trees.

Objectives:

- Restored, resilient and joined up nature network
- UNESCO Biosphere designation is retained, and the area extended
- Meet the requirements of the Biodiversity Duty (Environment Act)

Council Key achievements since 2020:

- Supported and delivered exceptional nationally recognised and awarded work on natural flood management.
- The council has planted over 1000 trees and hedging plants and supported volunteer groups to plant many more
- Enhanced biodiversity through committed scheme of wildflower management which is now incorporated into our new Grounds Maintenance contract and reduced our use of bedding plants.
- Helped join up wildflower corridors and supported projects such as Bee Line
- Committed to pesticide free policy
- Maintained active presence and input into regional work such as Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Built good practice requirements into the specification for the new grounds maintenance contract.

Biodiversity Duty Reporting and Biodiversity Strategy

The council will use the Climate and Nature Action plan to monitor and report against the Biodiversity Duty. It also contains the actions that deliver on our 2021 Biodiversity Strategy that can be found here [Lewes Biodiversity Strategy - Appendix 1](#)



Case studies

The projects in this section correspond to action numbers:
B1, B8, B10

A mini forest has been planted in Telscombe with 32 types of trees

The planting follows the Miyawaki method in Chatsworth Park, which requires dense planting for animals to find a habitat and thrive.

They were planted in a circular formation, with 3 pathways leading to a central area which will be used for meeting, story telling and outdoor education. The trees will encourage more biodiversity in the park, and it will be a significant habitat for bats and birds when it matures.

The planting was completed by volunteers, 12 to 16 year old students mentored by Develop Outdoors CIC who operate a forest school in the park, along with pupils from Meridian Primary School.

With the support of The Tree Council and The Network Rail Community Fund, we were able to receive funding for a project to create a unique habitat and focal point for Chatsworth Park.



The project was community focused, created with eco councillors from Meridian Primary School, students of Develop Outdoors CIC, Telscombe Town Councillors and dozens of residents especially young people, all keen to be involved in an activity good for the environment and the climate.



Lewes Swift Supporters - A Swift-friendly Town for Nature Recovery

Monitoring Swifts and providing nest boxes to help expand existing Swift colonies.

Site visits to plan for, and install, nest boxes: 196 boxes installed to date.

Organising events, walks and talks, and using social media to raise awareness of the wonder of Swifts and the factors that contribute to their endangered status.

Sharing simple ideas that would enable everyone to contribute towards increasing biodiversity across the town.



Approaching Lewes Town Council, (September 2024), to achieve their formal approval of declaring Lewes as a “Swift-friendly Town”.

Partnership with Lewes Nature Mosaic and Lewes Climate Hub to involve a wider audience in our project.

Contacting Lewes and Sussex based community environmental groups and societies to gain their support for the initiative. Twenty groups responded: [https://e-](https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/lewes-a-swift-friendly-town/)



[voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/lewes-a-swift-friendly-town/](https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/lewes-a-swift-friendly-town/)

Planning and hosting a six-week season of events at Lewes Climate Hub to share specialist guidance towards actions that support biodiversity in May 2025.

<https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters>

The Growing Project - Friends of Sutton Downs (FoSD)

Friends of Sutton Downs Growing Project is creating nature-friendly spaces around Seaford Town’s Leisure Centre outdoor spaces with habitat improvements, pollinator planting, community orchard, hedgerow and community growing space. Fundamental to these is the development of schemes for water capture, conservation and management to mitigate the effects of climate change and skill-sharing to create educational growing spaces and resilient practices that engage the community in growing and harvesting food and understanding the value of nature in wellbeing.



The Growing Project run several initiatives and workshops to welcome wildlife as follows:

- Planting a Hazel Hedgerow
- Butterfly Border in the garden,
- Planted over a thousand Spring Bulbs
- Community Workshop building Bird Boxes, which was hosted by the Downs Leisure Centre and was well attended by 35 people, including young families and older members of the community.
- We've cared for our new trees in the orchard and around the site with watering and pruning [we planted a total of 35 trees, incl. a community orchard; 2023-24]
- Produced a colourful and fun Infographic Map of the Growing Project together with Illustrator Josie Swan; the new Map is displayed on the FoSD Noticeboard;
- The public facing FoSD Noticeboard_display, next to Downs Leisure Centre Café, to establish communication with centre/grounds users and visitors and local community, it now displays a QR code link to open the FoSD site

on *iNaturalist* and provides all-year-round representation of FoSD news and activity updates

- Regular FoSD Newsletter updates

www.friendsofsuttondowns.co.uk

<https://www.instagram.com/friendsofsuttondowns/>



Lewes – an arboretum town. - Trees Committee of Friends of Lewes, (Lewes Urban Arboretum Project)

Through the project Friends of Lewes restore the treescapes in the town of Lewes and engage residents and visitors in appreciation of the value of trees in improving climate resilience and biodiversity.



Planting, and then caring for, 37 mature street trees in the verges and open spaces in Lewes, mostly in response to request from residents. The trees are a mix of native and exotic trees, chosen for best resilience to extremes of weather caused by climate change.

Planting 40 native hedge whips, grown from seed at our own mini tree nursery, at a local primary school.



<https://friends-of-lewes.org.uk/natural-environment/lewes-urban-arboretum/>



Creation of vegetated shingle habitat plant display at the Marine Workshop

Following planting in early spring 2025 the front entrance of the Marine Workshop, Newhaven has been uplifted with a display of native vegetated shingle habitat plants. You can now see an array of Sea Kale, Vipers Bugloss, Sea Campion, Sea Thrift and Sea Holly depending on the season!



These beds were designed to bring awareness of our native and local plant species to our doorsteps.

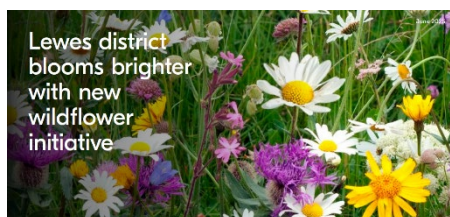


Vegetated shingle is found along the Sussex Coastline and is an internationally rare, fragile and vital habitat for local species, particularly insects and birds. Plants can cope with most inhospitable environments, being tolerant to high winds and sea spray. Hundreds of plants arrived this early spring and already thriving!

Lewes district blooms brighter with new wildflower initiative



Building upon several years of successful wildflower management, the council is trialling a diverse new mix of native British wildflowers in green spaces of varying sizes from large expanses in parks to smaller roadside areas, were planted in spring 2025. This year's initiative introduces a carefully selected blend of more than 25 annual and perennial native wildflower species. This long term



commitment aims to establish richer, more resilient wildflower areas that will significantly enhance their ecological value, particularly for pollinators such as bees and butterflies. The inclusion of perennial species will also contribute to a more sustainable and cost-effective approach to land management in the long run.

Lewes district wetland inspires UNESCO Biospheres across the country

Representatives from UNESCO Biospheres across the UK and Ireland toured Lewes district's new wetland to learn about the flagship project hailed for its biodiversity regeneration and enhanced flood resilience.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are designated learning places for sustainable development and include The Living Coast Unesco Biosphere – The Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere, which stretches from Newhaven to Shoreham-By-Sea.

Lewes District Council and Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, two of the partners involved in the project to realign the Cockshut chalk stream and create the 6.8 hectares of wetland in Lewes Brooks, hosted the tour on Wednesday (March 26).

The Cockshut Stream Restoration scooped two awards in the South Downs National Park 2024 Design Awards. Funding for the project was provided by South Downs National Park Authority, Veolia Environmental Trust and Lewes District Council.





Sustainable Food Systems

Objectives:

- We have increased sustainable food production
- We have a strategic food systems approach across the district
- We have enabled food resilience

Council Targets:

Council target ref.	Target detail	Completion date	Action number	Progress
TSF1	Deliver at least one sustainable food system project e.g. Capturing the Value of the Catch- This is a relevant target in 2 action areas	2026	SF1	Work is ongoing
TSF2	Work with Lewes District Food Partnership to achieve Sustainable Food Places Silver award by 2026	2026	SF6	

Performance Measures:

Council Annual Performance Measure	Methodology	Results
Number of orchard trees or other edible planting annually	Council & Partner records	On LDC land the following orchard tree were planted e.g. 7 trees at Landport Rec. Senior Play Area, 16 at Walmer Road Park, 20 at Bowden House School, 27 trees in Peacehaven.
Amount of food waste collected annually	Waste Data Flow records	1,124 tonnes

Council key achievements since 2020:

- Supported Lewes District Food Partnership to gain Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award
- Developed Community food growing policy enabling Homes First residents to apply to convert areas of land for food growing
- Provide regular updates for tenants on issues around meal planning, food storage and budget recipes to help save money and reduce waste
- Delivering the project 'Capturing the value of the catch' in Newhaven



Case studies

The projects in this section correspond to action numbers:
SF6 & 4



**BRIGHTON
PERMACULTURE
TRUST**

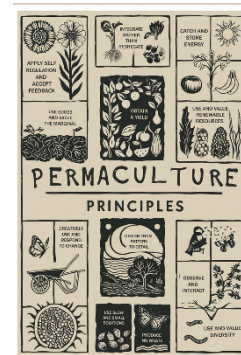
Brighton Permaculture Trust - A new community orchard in Seaford (at Walmer Road recreation ground)

Our Community Orchards Programme is all about encouraging growing, harvesting and eating local fruit.

In early 2025, Brighton Permaculture Trust planted a community orchard with 16 fruit trees at Walmer Road Rec in Seaford, in partnership with Lewes District Council and local community group Friends of Walmer Road Rec.

Becky Francomb, member of Friends of Walmer Road Rec, says: *“Our vision is to show this amazing open green space a little bit more love. For many years it’s been the centre of the housing estate here that was built after the war. It’s been used as a Rec but it’s not managed for nature and doesn’t provide a space for people to come together. So we thought there’s an opportunity here.”*

The local group worked with Brighton Permaculture Trust in 2024 to plan the community orchard. Brighton Permaculture Trust provided funding from the Forestry Commission’s Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf). Members of the local group helped to choose the fruit trees that were planted, with an expert steer from Brighton Permaculture Trust orchards worker Paul Wiggins.



Paul said: *“There has been real buy-in to this orchard project from the local community group right from the start. This has meant that it’s been easier to solve any challenges along the way, because there were already people living locally who had a stake in it. We had a great turnout for planting.”*

Now that the trees are in the ground, there are regular volunteer sessions to look after the trees as they get established, with the hope of bumper harvests in years to come. Lewes District Council are watering the trees. Volunteers from Friends of Walmer Road Rec are weeding, mulching, and checking for pests and diseases – all with continued support and advice from Brighton Permaculture Trust.



Lewes District Food Partnership

The mission of Lewes District Food Partnership (LDFP) is to build more equitable and sustainable local food systems by connecting communities and organisations. Since LDFP was founded in 2020, it has developed networks around emergency food provision, young people and schools, and community food projects.

LDFP’s approach to building better food systems responds to changes in the local and national contexts. It speaks to the interconnected challenges of cost-of-living, climate change and public health.

In 2024, some key milestones were achieved. The LDFP

- Launched 'Pinch Point' project, a collaboration to put residents at the centre of local support system reform.
- Launched the Dignity Toolkit at the Lewes District Food and Climate Summit
- Developed a three-year Food Strategy for Lewes District

[Guest Post: A day of local food and climate action at the Lewes District Food Summit - Lewes District Food Partnership](#)

[Lewes District Food Partnership Strategy 2025–2028: Building a good local food system - Lewes District Food Partnership](#)



Newhaven's new fish processing plant



CIC board members inside the plant. From left: Dave Guy, councillor Julie Carr, Leader of Lewes District Council Zoe Nicholson and Wendi Goodsell

by the Newhaven Fishing Community Interest Company (CIC), providing a focus on sustainable fish products and sustainable fishing techniques. Over £1 million from the Levelling Up Fund was allocated by Lewes District Council to deliver the facility.

Lewes District Council leader Cllr Zoe Nicholson said: "Providing these facilities close to the source not only enhances the efficiency and value of our local catch, but also unlocks the potential for growth into wider markets and bring in new customers."

Newhaven's fishing industry has been given a boost with the opening of a new fish processing plant.

The fishing community is now using the plant which operates from an industrial unit on the Oak Estate in New Road. It processes, prepares and stores their catch landed from boats nearby.

The project has been overseen



Reducing Waste and Litter

Objectives:

- Reduced waste
- Increased recycling rates
- Improved public realm
- Reuse and repair projects are encouraged

Council Targets:

Council target ref.	Target detail	Completion date	Action number	Progress
TRW1	Reduce waste from council offices by 50%	2030	RW2	
TRW2	District recycling rate increase to 55% (national target)	2025	RW3 RW4	45% 2024/25

Performance Measures:

Council Annual Performance Measure	Methodology	Result
Amount of waste collected in the district	Waste Data Flow records	33,235 tonnes
Amount of waste recycled in the district	Waste Data Flow records	14,872 tonnes
Amount of waste collected from offices	Council records	10,920 kg general waste and 7,178 kg recycling (maximum- estimated assuming full bins on weekly collection cycle)

Council key achievements since 2020:

- Maintained a community presence, attended events, provided recycling resources and workshops and supported local litter picking groups through the work of our committed Community Engagement and Recycling Officer.
- UK's first electric 10t street sweeper
- Provided grants for reusable wipes and nappies with local company Cheeky Wipes
- Implementation of live intelligence system to reduce recycling contamination



Case Studies

The projects in this section correspond to action numbers: RW4, RW5, RW7.

Huge rise in food waste collections

Huge rise in food waste collections Lewes District Council has seen an increase of almost 50% in the amount of household food waste taken to be composted.

From March to October 2023, the council took just under 497 tonnes of food waste to Woodlands, where the council partners with a composting facility. For the same period in 2024, this increased to 742 tonnes – a rise of 49.34%.

The council is encouraging even more residents to recycle their food waste using its free service. Visit lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/foodwaste



Neighbourhood First - Great British Spring Clean gets off to a flying start!

The Council's Neighbourhood First team lead community litter picks across the district as part of Keep Britain Tidy's, Great British Spring Clean. Volunteers joined and all the equipment was provided. In spring, the [Great British Spring Clean 2025](#) theme was environment belongs to everyone, and we all have

a role to play in tackling litter.

Many litter picking volunteers find 'retro rubbish' that was dropped many years ago but is still causing harm to our environment today, releasing greenhouse gases as it slowly breaks down in our soil and water.

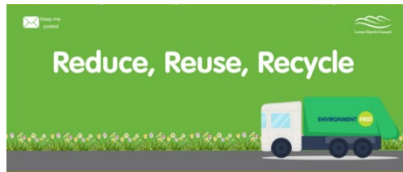
Across the Lewes district communities are set up doing regular litter picks and details can be found on the Lewes District Council webpage [Litter Picking - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils](#). New groups start like that in Newhaven Litter Pickers creating a further network of action across the district.



JOIN THE GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN
FROM 21 MARCH TO 6 APRIL 2025 

Lewes District Council promotes Repair cafes

Repair Cafes are free meeting places and they're all about repairing things together. You'll find expert volunteers with repair skills in all kinds of fields. Including clothes, furniture,



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle | Spring 2025

electrical appliances, bicycles, toys and much

more. Across the Lewes district there are existing and emerging Repair Cafes with Lewes District Council one of the avenues for their promotion, such as the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle | Spring 2025 newsletter. There are Repair Cafes for example hosted in Seaford, Newhaven, Lewes, Chailey, and Ringmer.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle | October 2024

Environment First team hit the airwaves!

Reaching audiences across the district in different ways, Lewes District Council's Environment First team joined the 'Community People with Kathy Harding' Seaford FM radio show in October 2024 to discuss community recycling, including the what, how, and where of recycling, as well as volunteer litter picking and up-coming community workshops and talks.





Water, Rivers and Seas

Objectives:

We will support and encourage the responsible authorities, stakeholder communities, landowners and others in their efforts to:

- mitigate the risk posed by a changing coast
- support communities to be resilient to flooding
- manage waterways and improve water quality
- preserve our water resources

Council Targets:

Council target ref.	Target detail	Completion date	Action number	Progress
Natural Flood Management:				
TWRS1 (and linked to TB2)	Deliver 3 partnership projects, winter 2024/25, to hold water and help reduce flood risk	2025	WRS1 WRS3	Natural Flood Management Delivery in the Bevern Sub-catchment, Longford Sub-catchment, and Hoath Wood and the Meeching Valley – Newhaven.
TWRS2 (and linked to TB2)	Deliver a programme of work through our partners for the medium term 2025 – 2028 to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -help reduce flood risk -improve drought resilience -provide natural mechanisms for improving water quality, and -provide blue/green corridors for nature recovery 	2028	WRS1 WRS3	Work across the Winterbourne, Cockshut and Landport Brooks.
Sea Defences:				
TWRS3	Survey 3 km sea defences in spring every year	Annually	WRS2	
TWRS4	Undertake necessary repairs in late summer / autumn as required by above	Annually	WRS2	

Performance Measures:

Council Annual Performance Measure	Methodology	Result
Number of natural flood management projects delivered through our collaborative partnership approach	Council & Partner records	Wilder Ouse = 79 Leaky dams, 16 ponds & scrapes
Continue to monitor manage and repair our sea defences in accordance with the shoreline management plan	Council records	DEFRA via the national Team at the EA commenced a Refresh of the Shoreline Management Plans. LDC actively engaged with the process and the development of the new National Coastal Erosion Maps. Ongoing targeted feasibility and works being implemented.

Council key achievements since 2020:

This action area, and the health of our sea and waterways, links intrinsically with biodiversity so key achievements in this area may also be key achievements for biodiversity as well.

- What started as the successful Sussex Flow Initiative has expanded and become the Wilder Ouse project. This has showcased partnership working between the council, Woodland Trust, Environment Agency and Sussex Wildlife Trust, working with landowners and local people it has created and investigated natural features that slow and store water in the landscape to help reduce flood peaks. It has delivered multiple benefits for people and wildlife as well as demonstrating how natural flood management can reduce flooding.
- The council has delivered the Cockshut Restoration project, an award winning natural flood management project with a new project being investigated downstream during 2025.
- The Cabinet Member for Climate, Nature and Food Systems is also the Council's water champion, has played an active part in the regional Southern Water Stakeholder Group including meeting with Minister Emma Hardie, and has convened a joint workshop at which the district council, SE water, Southern Water and Ofwat agreed on new approaches to engagement going forward and to revisit plans to extract water from the Ouse to fill the proposed new Arlington reservoir.
- Following a council motion passed two years ago, the council has supported a rights of river approach and adopted a River charter working with 'Love Our Ouse' - this has generated national interest.



Case studies

The projects in this section correspond to action numbers:
WRS1, WRS2, WRS3, 4 & 5



Cockshut Restoration Project scoops more awards

The project, a partnership between Lewes District Council, the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust (OART), and the Lewes Railway Land Wildlife Trust, was recognised for its outstanding achievements in landscape, ecology, and its positive impact on the South Downs.

The collaborative efforts behind the Cockshut Restoration Project were celebrated receiving three prestigious accolades at the Sussex Heritage Trust Awards 2025.

It involved the realignment of the Cockshut chalk stream and the creation of six hectares of wetland within Lewes Brooks, which is now a vital habitat for a wide array of wildlife, including herons, kingfishers, egrets, and many species of dragonflies, as well as a popular spot for local residents to enjoy nature.

The scheme received the Landscape and Gardens Award, the ECO Award, and the South Downs Award, adding to its previous honours including the South Downs National Park 2024 Design Awards for Landscape and the coveted People's Choice Award.

Judges praised the Cockshut Restoration Project for its 'remarkable creation of a chalk stream wetland with community, council and water management teams,' noting it as a 'superb landscaping of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) being validated by breeding wildfowl, transient wildlife populations and local people walking with interest in the biodiversity of their project'. They added it was 'a model project in managing a process to maximise diversity'.

They commended its embrace of natural processes, such as 'managed flooding for carbon capture,' and lauded its 'collaborative approach, engaging community, council, and conservation partners,' as setting 'a powerful precedent for nature-led design and climate resilience in challenging environments.'

Funding for the project was provided by South Downs National Park Authority, Veolia Environmental Trust and Lewes District Council.

Project Partners



[THE COCKSHUT STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT](https://www.cockshutstream.org/) <https://www.cockshutstream.org/>

Collaborative working to secure future drinking water for Lewes, Eastbourne and Newhaven



More than 20 stakeholders across the Newhaven, Lewes and Eastbourne area came together on 15 October for an open discussion about where drinking water will come from in the future.

Set against a backdrop of an increasing population, climate change and changes to how everyone uses water, new water sources are needed to ensure communities can continue to be supplied

with drinking water during dry periods from 2030.

The meeting held by South East Water, Southern Water and Lewes District Council, involved regulators, local authorities and environmental organisations, with everyone signing up to be part of future conversations to identify the best way to solve this challenging issue.

Council champions 'pioneering' Rights of River Charter to protect 'landmark waterway'



In response to widespread concern about the health of our rivers and seas, Lewes District Council has taken a significant step forward in protecting the River Ouse.

The council has been working closely with local groups and residents to champion a new set of fundamental rights for the

river.

This 'Rights of River Charter' recognises that the River Ouse deserves to be healthy and free from pollution. Developed in strong collaboration with Love Our Ouse and other community organisations, the Charter outlines eight key rights for the river including the right to be free from pollution, its vital role in supporting all life, and its right to a thriving natural environment.

To help shape the Charter, Love Our Ouse ran a programme of consultation events including community mapping sessions and public workshops along the river, to gather the views and ideas of local people.

The council is committed to improving the health of district waterways and has worked with partners such as Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust for many years. This new Charter builds on that work, strengthening the protection of the River Ouse for future generations and reflecting the care in our community for waterways across Lewes district.

"This pioneering Charter is the result of collaboration involving numerous working partners, each with a shared purpose and determination to enshrine the importance of the River Ouse for generations to come. It is a very proud moment for me and many others to celebrate this Charter for a landmark waterway that has such resonance and influence in Lewes district, and I hope that our council's support will mark another step on the journey to change the conversation, so that one day

a change in the law will mean the interests of nature are fully recognised.” Councillor Emily O’Brien, Cabinet Member for Nature, Climate and Food Systems

Our Rivers - Biosphere partners meet to celebrate local rivers and plans for expanding the biosphere



The quarterly event in October 2024 was held following The Living Coast's recent unveiling of plans to increase in size to include over half a million residents.

It has been a designated UNESCO Biosphere since 2014, stretching from Shoreham to Newhaven, and from the South Downs to the sea. The

biospheres are places of international best practice, promoting sustainable development in nature conservation, cultural diversity and economic development.

Now, the partnership is looking to expand the biosphere over the next decade from over 330,000 residents to nearly 550,000, embracing all of Adur & Worthing, Lewes district, and Brighton & Hove, bringing in Seaford in the east and Goring in the west.

In addition, The Living Coast 10-year periodic review was delivered and after consultation endorsed by strategic stakeholders. The report has been submitted to UNESCO to formally review the functions as a Biosphere. In the interim The Partnership is starting to implement the new strategic recommendations. [The-Living-Coast-UNESCO-Biosphere-10-Year-Progress-Report-Forward-looking-Sept24.pdf](#)

<https://thelivingcoast.org.uk/>



Love our Ouse - Winterbourne Festival

Love our Ouse and many local partners delivered the Winterbourne Festival on the 1st to the 9th March 2025 to celebrate, learn and act for the rare chalk stream that flows through Lewes. The Festival comprised a variety of community events drawing upon the stream's rich heritage, ecology and

source of creative inspiration. Around a 1000 people connected with the stream across 9 events spanning talks, exhibitions, guided walks, workshops and a film screening.

All events were designed to enable increased learning and connection with the stream. Events were interactive, participatory and invited local experts to share knowledge and expertise.

Community mapping encouraged people to consider their own relationship with the stream as well as explore the stream in the context of the Charter of Rights for the River Ouse.

A popular community litter pick provided means for people to do something tangible to improve the river's health.

Welcoming the Winterbourne school project was led by a local theatrical company with support. The project was participatory and collaborative by design where children were fully involved in all stages of the play, resulting in a sharing with friends and family plus creation of an audio recording of their performance.

Publication of printed Winterbourne Poetry books featuring bespoke original poems with screen print illustrations created by local artists. Copies have been gifted to local community settings, the rest are available for purchase.

A short educational film was made as a means to document the festival, provide means to learn about the stream and promote restoration plans.

This is the first festival created on behalf of the stream marking significant progress in civic appreciation, awareness and focussed activity for its health.



Sussex Bay - Building the Future of Sussex Bay Together

Sussex Bay's first full year has been defined by rapid growth, collaboration, and tangible action towards our mission: restoring nature across 100 miles of Sussex coastline so that people, nature, and the economy can thrive together.

Officially launched in June 2024 to over 450 people at Brighton Dome, we unveiled the UK's first Blue Natural Capital Lab - a pioneering platform designed to unlock £50 million in ethical funding for marine recovery by 2050.

By March 2025, £1.2 million had already been pledged, supporting projects such as the Sussex Dolphin Project, Worthing's Fishing Net Reuse and Recycling scheme, University of Sussex marine research, the restoration of the Windsor Lawns rotunda for local fishers, and our landmark Ocean Literacy Survey.

The Ocean Literacy Survey, conducted with Natural England, Defra, and BMG Research, engaged over 1,800 residents and revealed strong public concern for the marine environment, alongside recognition of its mental and physical health benefits. These insights will inform targeted engagement to strengthen community support for marine restoration.

Community engagement has been central to our approach: from STEM/STEAM partnerships with the Royal Institution, to developing a "blue natural curriculum" with Weald to Waves, to participating in inclusive events such as the Brighton Bash Carnival. Our communications reach has expanded rapidly, with over 500 daily website visitors, 1,500+ newsletter subscribers, and strong engagement among 18–24-year-olds via social media.

Funding success this year includes major grants from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Rewilding Britain, Natural England, Innovate UK, Novo Foundation, and others. Over 90 organisations have also contributed expertise pro bono.

This year has laid the foundation for long-term marine recovery - guided by our Blueprint for Seascape Recovery, rooted in science, powered by partnerships, and driven by the communities of Sussex Bay.

The Rain Garden (as part of The Growing Project) - Friends of Sutton Downs (FoSD)



The Rain Garden has evolved into a key component of *The Growing Project* with the aim to focus on water management, sustainability and resilience.

An aim of the *Rain Garden Project* is to create and develop a working retrofitting model for public and residential buildings that demonstrates what could be done to conserve rainwater as a valuable resource, which would otherwise just 'flow down the drain'.

Water conservation as part of The Growing Project

The system consists of two sections: three Rain Planters; (a) one with two large water storage tanks, and (b) two Rain Planters connected to the Rain Garden area. It has been designed to capture rain from two large roof sections of the Leisure Centre via gutter down pipes, diverted into the Rain Planters, with overflow pipes connecting into a drainpipe beneath the tarmac flowing into the soak-away *Rain Garden* with a specially selected plant habitat on the edge of the playing field.

At each stage of its journey the rainwater will nourish plants that support biodiversity before seeping into the ground. By the time it reaches the water table it will have been filtered through layers of soil, shingle, clay, more soil... instead of water that runs off tarmac and roofs carrying pollution straight into the drains, sewers and into rivers and sea.

The Rain Garden at the Downs has evolved through several development stages and is currently developing Phase II. We developed a custom-made (experimental) live data monitoring system, which measures the amount of rainfall water being diverted through into the rain garden system. Step by step we are in the process to develop *The Rain Garden* as a model that works and can be retrofitted both to public and residential buildings or installed for new dwellings demonstrating both conservation and management of rainwater and to contribute to increase biodiversity. We are aiming to inspire and motivate to make a difference to manage water sustainably - our most valuable resource.



A **short reel** illustrating early stages of **The Rain Garden** at the Downs:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7B-sZWqNoZ/?igsh=MTBoOHdsNTV4cWNhMQ==>

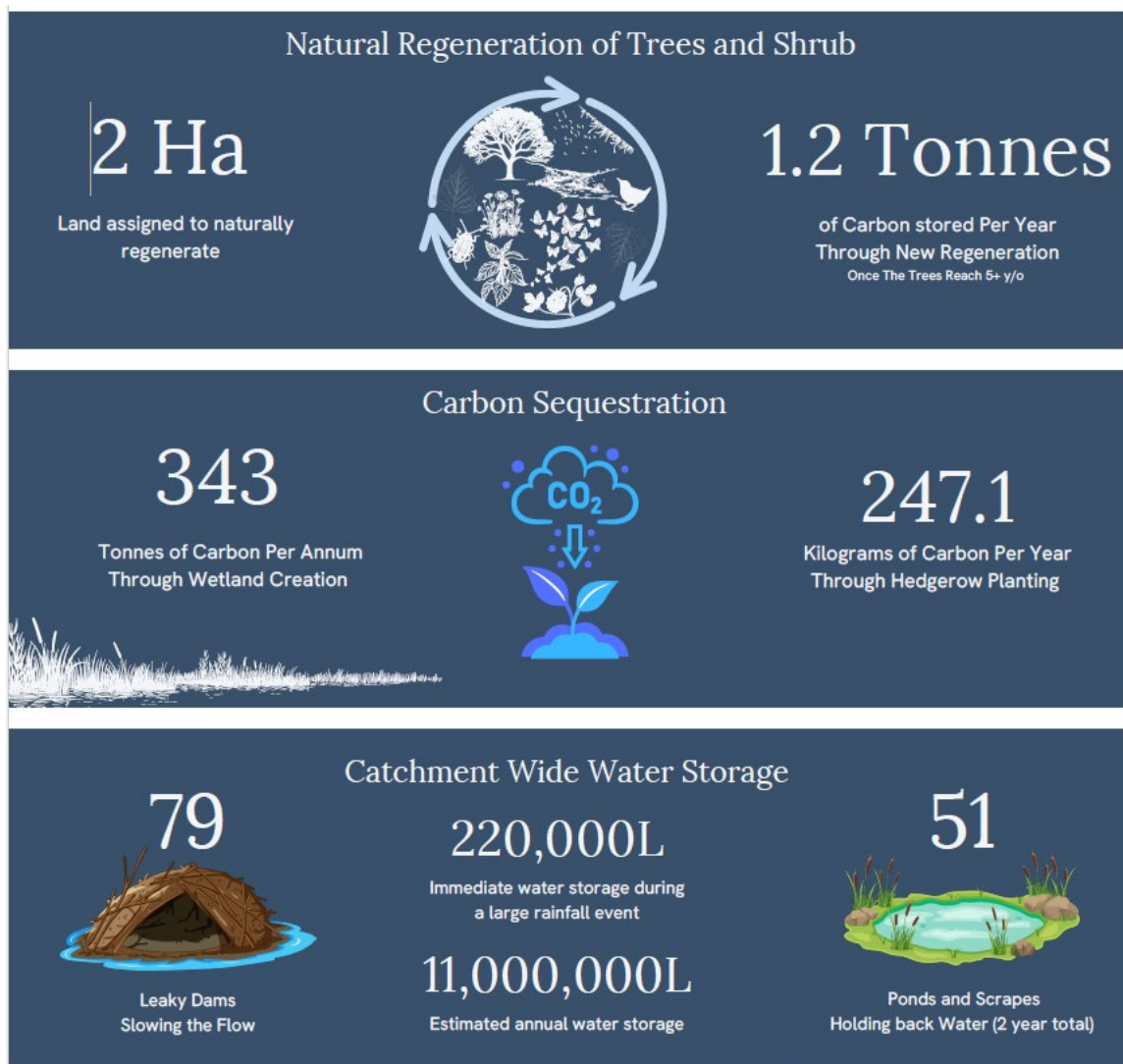
Wilder Ouse Project – Success locally and across the catchment

Wilder Ouse is a partnership project working across the Ouse River catchment to deliver Nature-based solutions and create a Nature Recovery Network. Experts work with communities and landowners to help people and wildlife by restoring ecological connectivity, ecosystems and building climate resilience. The project is hosted by Sussex Wildlife Trust, and supported by the Ouse and Adur River Trust, the Woodland Trust, the Environment Agency, Lewes District Council and Wealden Council.



The achievements across the catchment are summarised and with specific examples within the Lewes district.

The annual report for 2024/25 highlights another year of successful actions.



Locally the Wilder Ouse Project saw a significant increase in demand this year from landowners and community groups interested in working to help nature recovery at a landscape scale. More people are asking for help to use nature-based solutions to facilitate carbon capture, increase biodiversity and enhance natural capital services such as natural flood management. These include to deliver solutions that create space for water and slow its flow during heavy rainfall.

Sites in Lewes district with interventions in 2024/25 included Brandness Gallery, Chailey Common, Hamsey Primary School, Middleton Estate, The Brooks, Wapsbourne Manor Farm, and Wilding Farm Cottage.



In BRADNESS GALLERY - Barcombe: Wilder Ouse delivered the de-silting of one large pond, created new island with improvements to the hazel hurdling and chestnut posts surrounding the vegetated island, removal invasive species, and planted 50 native hedgerow shrubs to replace laurel hedge, plus created three hibernacula on site, using locally sourced materials.

CHAILEY COMMON - Red House & Romany Ridge: In addition to the interventions for leaky dams, workshops were held with children where they learnt how to 'behave like beavers', building personal and climate resilience.

HAMSEY PRIMARY SCHOOL – Hamsey: Pond restoration works including tree shear, 50% de-silt, rotten infrastructure removal and vegetation clearance.

MIDDLETON ESTATE – Westmeston: Ouse Valley de-silted and restored two ponds (one woodland, one field). In addition, wildflower seed were sown in one acre of a five-acre field.

THE BROOKS – Piddinghoe: Is a strategic site with improvements to manage the site for breeding wildfowl and waders, as well as to increase water quality and natural flood management impacts.

WAPSBOURNE MANOR FARM – Uckfield: As part of work on creating leaky dams, the Wilder Ouse team worked successfully with the landowner to deliver the work on site and agree help in the future.

WILDING FARM COTTAGE – Chailey: Created an interconnected system of three scrapes and ditches with subsequent brush bundles in place. In addition, had 20 brush bundles donated to the project.



Community Wealth and Wellbeing

Objectives:

- A Just Transition is fully embedded in the district.
- There is a local skilled workforce to fulfil roles in the green and nature economy
- Community Groups are supported as partners to achieve this strategy
- Sustainable council aims have been achieved
- Locally owned and socially minded enterprises have been enabled

Council Targets:

Council target ref.	Target detail	Completion date	Action number	Progress
TCW1	Increase in proportion of procurement spend going to local companies	Annual	CW1	Regional spend (ie in and around Sussex) has increased from 59% last year to 65% this year. Spend in district has decreased slightly from 25% to 24%.
TCW2	Increase in social value achieved through council contracts	Annual	CW1	
TCW3 (also linked to TSF1)	Deliver at least one sustainable food system (Capturing the Value of the Catch) – This is a relevant target in 2 action areas	2026	SF1	Work ongoing

Performance Measures:

Council Annual Performance Measure	Methodology	Results
Improvement in Thriving Places Index Score	www.thrivingplacesindex.org/	Lewes 2024/25 summary scores: are 5.37 local conditions, 7.77 for equality, 4.91 for sustainability. They have updated their methods in 2024/25 release so cannot be compared to previous figures. Lewes which had all green scores, but now one green two amber.

Council key achievements since 2020:

- Alternative funding models explored, with the council remaining open to these where they work financially.
- The council has DOUBLED its local spend between 2020-2024 to over £10million

- ‘Capturing the Catch’ project is working to stimulate the Newhaven fishing industry.
- Development of the Marine Workshops into a shared space with art and education spaces as well as a blue/green hub for those working in the nature and ocean spheres.



Case studies

The projects in this section correspond to action numbers:
CW3, ST10

‘Capturing the Value of the Catch’ for Newhaven



Lewes District Council is delivering on commitments to its successful £12.6m bid for Levelling Up Fund focused on regenerating Newhaven’s fishing industry, covering three core interventions:

- **Catch:** providing two new fishing landing stages at Newhaven Port to accommodate up to 16 small fishing vessels, with a view to increasing the proportion of catch landed in Newhaven.
- **Process:** purchasing Unit 7, Oak Estate, New Road and refurbishing to create a Centre for Seafood Excellence, offering a commercial fish market and training opportunities for local residents.
- **Retain:** construction of a new destination fish restaurant at West Beach, alongside new community facilities, that will draw visitors to the town and support active pursuits through new leisure provision.

The Council has completed repurposing of the industrial unit on the Oak Estate in New Road to a new Centre for Seafood Processing, opened in early 2025. With construction of the restaurant at West Beach will begin in January 2026, creating a destination point in Newhaven, attracting visitors and providing a boost to the local economy.

Charleston in Lewes



Promoting community wealth and wellbeing has been a priority in Lewes District Council's work over the last 5 years. One of the ways we have realised this approach has been through making use of council buildings and resources to support arts and culture which has enhanced our local economy.

The council leased its offices in the centre of Lewes to Charleston Trust, an arts & heritage organisation focused on the Bloomsbury Group

in Sussex. The initial lease was for 5 years for an exhibition space, café and education and training facilities. However, an economic impact assessment has been carried out and subsequently a decision has been made in March 2025 by Cabinet to grant a 25 year lease to the Charleston Trust based on the benefits already demonstrated but also support the trust's vision for the gallery to become a permanent national gallery which, in partnership with other galleries in the country, could display the most important Bloomsbury Works and other works of national significance in Sussex.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Nicholson said "The granting of a longer lease is fundamentally important if the team at Charleston is to establish partnerships with Tate, the V&A, and National Portrait Gallery, attract more external investment, and open a national gallery in Lewes - an incredibly exciting prospect and one that would undoubtedly generate an even greater number of visitors to the town and support more jobs for local people."

In terms of the impact on the local economy and spending in the town's businesses, over 100,000 people have visited Charleston in Lewes since September 2023 to experience work by Picasso, Modigliani, Lee Miller, and Grayson Perry, among many others displayed at the gallery. A survey found that nearly two-thirds of visitors combined their visit with other activities in Lewes, and nearly half visited restaurants, bars, shops, markets, or other cultural venues.

Over a five-year period, Charleston in Lewes is projected to attract over 560,000 visitors, generating an annual average of £4 million in town wide economic benefits and creating 56 jobs. As cultural tourism is less impacted by seasonal fluctuations, these benefits and visitor spending patterns would support the town's high street and wider economy during the off-peak periods.

Cllr Nicholson said "As well as the wonderful cultural contribution and hugely welcome economic impact on our town, it is the far-reaching and highly significant collaboration between Charleston in Lewes and East Sussex College Group that has really brought the council's ambition for our partnership to life.

Young people and their education and training are central to so much of what Charleston in Lewes has become, and that relationship will only continue to evolve and develop. It was no surprise recently that Ofsted inspectors praised the creative skills programme, something that 800 students will enjoy over the coming year.

I'm also delighted that over 2,000 residents have taken part in workshops, teachers from 22 schools have participated in artist-led training programmes and 41% of visitors have visited for free or benefitted from concessions, such as a monthly weekend Pay What You Can day and free entrance for all under-18s."

Artwave Festival

The council also funds a festival of artists and makers in the Lewes District. Every year hundreds of creatives exhibit in Lewes, Seaford, Newhaven and the surrounding villages.

The event gives art lovers the chance to discover new work, meet artists and makers, and buy directly from them. Last year, Artwave featured the work of more than 1,000 artists and makers across 163



exhibitions, generating over £333,000 in total income for them. The diverse work on show included jewellery, painting, sculpture, printmaking, textiles, ceramics, metalwork and photography.

The festival is accessible to all members of the community, ranging from locations accessible via public transport, free-to-visit exhibition, and accessible venues.

Eco Homes open house and gardens is integral to the festival and flows alongside the trails.

It is estimated that more than 53,000 people visited over the three weeks of the 2024 festival, which has run since 1993. As well as being a popular annual event for residents, the flagship visual arts festival funded by Lewes District Council is a gateway for people from farther afield to discover and enjoy Lewes district - with the average visitor spending just under £40 on non-artwork items such as food, drink, shopping and accommodation.

According to a report by Artwave organisers, an impressive 98% of visitors in 2024 expressed their intention to return to the festival in the future, highlighting the event's strong appeal.

The 2025 festival runs from September 6 to 21. More information is available at the website <https://www.artwavefestival.org/>

Glossary

BAU	Business as Usual
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Please note: BEIS existed until 2023 when it was split to form the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CIC	Community Interest Company
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
COP	coefficient of performance
COVID	Coronavirus disease
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
DESNZ	Department For Energy Security & Net Zero
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
ESCC	East Sussex County Council
EV	Electric Vehicle
EVCP	Electric Vehicle Charging Point
FC	Football Club
GHG	Greenhouse Gas emissions
GIA	Gardening in Action
HVO	Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil
kg	kilogram
ktCO ₂ e	kilo tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents, represented as ktCO ₂ e
kW	kiloWatt
kWh	kilowatt hour
LDC	Lewes District Council (the council)
LNRC	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
LNRCs	Local Nature Recovery Strategies
LOO	Love Our Ouse
LULUCF	Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry – carbon removed from the atmosphere
MHVR ventilation	Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery
MW	MegaWatt
MWh	Mega Watt hour
NGO	Non-government organisation
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
PV	Photovoltaics panels
RAG	Red, Amber, Green – used to measure progress where Green is Complete, Amber is On track, and Red is At risk.
REGO	Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin
SDNP	South Downs National Park

tCO ₂ e	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents, represented as tCO ₂ e
UKGBC	UK Green Building Council
UKSPF	United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund
UNA	United Nations Association Climate & Oceans Youth Cabinet
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WRI GHG Protocol	World Resource Greenhouse Gas Protocol

