



BLACKBURN
with
DARWEN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Blackburn with Darwen Borough
Council**

**Climate Change Strategy
2025 – 2028**

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Foreword from the Leader

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The strategy at a glance

Local climate risks and resilience

Blackburn with Darwen is already experiencing the effects of climate change. From record-breaking heatwaves and increased flooding, to rising energy costs and damage to nature and wildlife, the borough faces growing risks that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities. Climate change is no longer a distant threat – it's a local reality impacting health, infrastructure, nature, and livelihoods.

Despite these challenges, we have a unique opportunity to turn risk into resilience. Climate action can transform Blackburn with Darwen into a cleaner, greener, and fairer place to live. By investing in renewable energy, sustainable transport, nature restoration, and community engagement, we can reduce emissions, protect our environment, and build a borough that thrives in the face of change.

Climate action is the golden thread running through all four of our key missions, driving prosperity, opportunity, health, and resilience across the borough.

Our aims and objectives

The strategy is built around two core aims:

- Rapidly cut emissions to protect our communities and natural environment.
- Support our communities to build resilience to the effects of a changing climate.

To achieve these aims, we have focused our actions across five key objectives, each with targeted actions:

1. Lead with climate in mind
2. Protect our environment
3. Travel more sustainably
4. Build for a low carbon future
5. Engage and empower people

Delivering the strategy

This strategy will cover the period of 2025-2028, in line with anticipated local government reorganisation. Delivery will be coordinated through detailed action plans, overseen by the Climate Emergency Working Group. Progress will be tracked through annual public reports, with regular reviews and community consultation where appropriate to ensure transparency and responsiveness. This is a living strategy – designed to evolve with new insights, technologies, and opportunities.

The case for change

Climate change is no longer a distant threat – it’s a reality shaping our lives here and now in Blackburn with Darwen. The choices we make today will determine the kind of borough we leave for future generations. By understanding the challenges that we face and the opportunities ahead, we can work together to protect our communities, support nature, and build a fairer, more resilient future for everyone.

The challenge

In just a short space of time, human activity – especially the burning of polluting fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas – has caused our atmosphere to heat up much faster than it would naturally. This build-up of heat is disrupting our fragile weather systems, intensifying storms, prolonging dry spells, and increasing the risk of heavy rainfall. Ultimately, it’s throwing our seasons out of balance, making them harder to predict and more extreme.

These changes are no longer distant – they’re becoming a part of our everyday reality. Summer 2025 was the UK’s warmest on recordⁱ, and these records continue to be broken year after year. What was once considered exceptional is increasingly becoming typical.

Climate change is a global issue, but its impacts are felt locally. From rising energy bills to increased flooding, we’re already seeing the consequences in Blackburn with Darwen. And because we rely on global systems for our food and other goods and services, more extreme weather events abroad – like droughts, wildfires or crop failures – can quickly affect our supermarket shelves, our bills, and our daily lives.

We need to act now to help prevent further climate change, protect our communities, and build a more resilient, sustainable future for everyone.



Darwen Tower, image by Grant Robertson.

From risk to resilience

While the risks are real, so are the opportunities. Times of crisis often spark innovation – and now is our chance to take advantage of new technologies, growing green industries, and evolving ways of living and working to build a better future for ourselves and future generations. Climate action doesn't just reduce emissions; it helps us transform Blackburn with Darwen into a cleaner, greener, and fairer place to live.

Climate action improves our communities by:

- **Securing our energy supply:** We're shifting away from dirty, polluting fossil fuels and investing in cleaner, renewable energy like solar and wind. This helps cut energy bills, reduce our reliance on unstable global markets, and keep homes warmer and businesses more resilient.
- **Creating better travel:** We're improving public transport, expanding walking and cycling routes, and supporting the switch to electric vehicles. These changes connect communities, reduce air pollution, and support healthier lifestyles.
- **Growing green skills and jobs:** By supporting training and investing in green industries, we're creating new career paths for local people – from retrofitting homes to designing heat networks. This helps boost the local economy and create jobs that support the planet.
- **Protecting and restoring nature:** We're planting trees, restoring peatlands, and improving parks and rivers so that wildlife can thrive and people can enjoy cleaner, greener spaces. A healthy natural environment also helps reduce flood risk, store carbon, and support mental wellbeing.



Tree planting on Duttons Way.

The golden thread between our core missions

Climate action is the golden thread that ties together everything we're working towards as a council. It directly connects our four key missions including:

- Supporting our mission to **foster a more prosperous borough where no one is left behind** by opening up opportunities in green industries and helping households reduce energy costs.
- Strengthening our commitment to **ensuring every child and young person can fulfil their potential** by creating healthier environments and future-proofed jobs.
- Directly delivering on our pledge to **tackle the climate emergency**.
- Helping us to build **healthier, happier, and safer communities** by improving air quality, protecting nature, and making our borough more resilient to extreme weather.



Blackburn with Darwen People's Jury on the Climate Crisis.

Our aims and objectives

This strategy replaces and updates our previous Climate Emergency Action Plans. Building on the progress we've made since declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019, and reflecting the voices of our communities, it updates previous versions and sets out new objectives to guide our response to climate change until 2028 – in line with anticipated local government reorganisation.

The strategy has two key aims:

- **Rapidly cut emissions to protect our communities and natural environment:** Enable everyone in Blackburn with Darwen to take practical steps – at home, at work, and in daily life – to rapidly cut emissions and limit the risks we face from a changing climate. By working together, we can safeguard our communities and create healthier, greener places for people and wildlife.

- **Support our communities to build resilience to the effects of a changing climate:** As the climate changes, we will work with our communities to make our borough more resilient – by preparing for extreme weather, supporting vulnerable people, and protecting local wildlife. This means adapting how we plan, build, and deliver services, so that people and nature can thrive now and in the future.

To achieve these aims, we have focused the strategy around five key objectives:

- 1. Lead with climate in mind:** Ensure every council decision – from procurement to investment – considers climate impacts and empowers staff to take the lead in creating a fairer, more sustainable future.
- 2. Protect our environment:** Look after our local green spaces, tackle food and waste, restore our peatlands and plant trees so nature can thrive, and people can enjoy cleaner, healthier surroundings.
- 3. Travel more sustainably:** Develop local infrastructure to encourage walking, cycling, public transport and electric vehicles to reduce pollution and make getting around safer and sustainable.
- 4. Build for a low carbon future:** Enable homes, buildings and new developments to be warmer, healthier, more energy-efficient and to take advantage of renewable energy.
- 5. Engage and empower people:** Connect with communities, businesses, schools and organisations to educate, collaborate and work together to tackle climate change.

The journey to a climate-ready Blackburn with Darwen starts with clear priorities and collective action. In the following sections, we'll explore each of our five key objectives – explaining why they matter, what we've achieved so far, and the practical steps we'll take next. Together, we can turn ambition into action and create a borough where people and nature thrive, now and for generations to come.

Objective 1: Lead with climate in mind

This objective is about embedding climate thinking into everything we do. From frontline services to strategic planning, every decision we make has the potential to support or hinder climate progress. By leading with climate in mind, we can unlock the full potential of the other objectives in this strategy – making this our number one priority.

Why climate action starts with leadership

A council-wide commitment

Climate leadership begins at home. As one of the council's four corporate missionsⁱⁱ, tackling climate change is a top priority – rooted in our 2019 Climate Emergency declarationⁱⁱⁱ that stated our commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030.

We are a large organisation, with over 3,000 staff working across a wide range of services and operations. If every team and leader were fully aware of how they can reduce emissions within their own areas of expertise, we could drive far greater climate action across Blackburn with Darwen than any single team working alone. Climate action is not the responsibility of one department – it must be embedded across the whole council.

Our influence

While local authorities typically produce only 2–5% of the emissions in their area, we have the potential to influence over a third of local emissions through our control over planning, transport, housing, procurement, and investment decisions^{iv}. By leading with climate in mind across all aspects of decision-making and service delivery, we can make a much bigger impact locally than if we focused solely on our own footprint.

This influence also extends to our powers to lobby the government and partners to influence climate policies in Blackburn with Darwen. This includes the Lancashire Combined County Authority, which aspires to support local clean energy, green jobs and low carbon infrastructure across the region^v. As a unitary authority, we have an important seat at the table for these discussions and a real opportunity to influence regional climate action.



Darwen Library.

Our emissions

Although small compared to the borough, we do still have our own emissions to address at the same time as helping others. Our organisational footprint is mainly driven by our building energy use and the council vehicle fleet. While these emissions have been slowly decreasing since first measured, improvements in data and methodology changes mean comparisons over time are challenging. Crucially, we still lack data on procurement and material use – which could represent a significant portion of our footprint and a major opportunity for improvement. Data collection improvements are needed to understand the full picture of our footprint and target interventions.

Risks, challenges and opportunities

Beyond emissions, climate change presents real risks to our services and infrastructure. Extreme weather events can disrupt operations, damage important infrastructure like our roads and buildings, increase costs and ultimately impact the wellbeing of our residents. By embedding both emission reductions and resilience considerations into every decision, we can better prepare for these risks and reduce long-term costs.

We acknowledge that the council cannot influence all emissions across the borough, and that the impacts of climate change are already being felt on our doorstep. We have to balance many conflicting priorities including house building and the protection of our local green spaces, as well as the increasing budget restraints on our services. However, as the golden thread linking together our corporate missions, tackling these issues with climate in mind ensures that we build sustainable places for people and wildlife, invest in money-saving initiatives like renewable energy, provide new jobs and a healthier, greener and fairer environment for our communities.



Cycling in Lancashire.

Positive progress

We have already taken important steps to embed climate action across the council:

- Developed Climate Emergency Action Plans and established an internal budget for climate action.
- Set up the Climate Emergency Working Group to support delivery across all council directorates.
- Trained key officers in Carbon Literacy.
- Held a People's Jury in 2022, bringing together 32 diverse residents to shape recommendations for climate action.
- Introduced online training to help staff understand their role in tackling climate change.
- Received an A- score from the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), recognising our ambitious climate plans, community engagement, and commitment to reducing emissions.
- Secured funding for projects including building decarbonisation, green libraries, and heat network development.

Turning vision into action

To embed climate leadership across the council, we will:

- Introduce a formal means of reviewing the climate impact and co-benefits of council decisions.
- Review procurement practice and introduce systems to encourage climate-conscious suppliers.
- Roll out Carbon Literacy training to a wider range of staff, senior leaders and councillors.
- Review financial decisions to restrict funding to fossil fuels, explore local revenue opportunities, and secure more funding for climate action.
- Use our powers to lobby government and the Lancashire Combined County Authority for policies, funding and collaboration opportunities.
- Review all council strategies and policies to ensure they incorporate climate action where appropriate.
- Develop better systems to accurately capture our carbon footprint and regularly report on our progress.

Objective 2: Protect our environment

We want to look after our local green spaces, tackle food and waste, restore our peatlands, and plant trees – so that nature can thrive and people can enjoy cleaner, healthier surroundings. Protecting the environment is not just about preserving beauty, it's about safeguarding the systems that sustain life and build resilience for the future.



Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery.

Why nature needs our protection

An ecological emergency

Nature is the foundation of life. Every breath we take, every bite of food we eat, and every drop of water we drink depends on a healthy natural environment. When we harm nature, we harm ourselves – because our wellbeing, economy and future are all rooted in the ecosystems around us.

But our natural environment is under threat. Climate change is disrupting the balance between species and seasons, making it harder for plants and animals to survive. Long dry spells are increasing the risk of wildfires in our peatlands, while warm, wet conditions are fuelling the spread of fungal diseases like Ash dieback– affecting 80% of Ash trees across the borough. This is part of a wider national trend, with nearly 1 in 6 UK species now threatened with extinction^{vi}.

These changes are not just harming wildlife – they're weakening the ecosystems we all depend on. That's why protecting nature must be central to our climate response.

Everyday choices that impact nature

Our food and waste choices have a direct impact on the environment. Methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, is released when organic waste like food and garden waste decomposes in landfill. The production of food – especially red meat and dairy – also contributes significantly to emissions.

While most household waste in Blackburn with Darwen is sent to an Energy from Waste plant (avoiding landfill), incineration still releases carbon. And with one of the lowest recycling rates in the UK, we must do more to reduce waste and improve recycling. Our food waste pilot, now reaching 9,000 households, is a key step forward – ready to expand borough-wide in 2026.

Storing carbon

Land use and forestry are among the few sectors actively removing carbon from the atmosphere. Peatlands, in particular, are vital carbon sinks. Thanks to active restoration efforts – like those led by the Lancashire Peat Partnership – emissions from UK peatlands have fallen significantly^{vii}. This presents a major opportunity for Blackburn with Darwen, where peatland is abundant.

Tree planting also plays a role. While young trees capture less carbon than mature ones, planting and managing them now ensures long-term benefits. Our Tree and Woodland Strategy sets out ambitious targets for planting and maintaining new trees across the borough^{viii}, with the support of volunteer Tree Wardens.

A healthy environment builds resilience

Nature doesn't just store carbon – it helps us adapt to climate change. Woodlands, peatlands, and grasslands reduce flood risk, provide shade during heatwaves, and improve air quality. Investing in nature is one of the most cost-effective ways to build resilience across the borough.

Access to clean air, green spaces and healthy ecosystems should be a right, not a privilege. Protecting nature helps address inequalities and ensures that everyone, regardless of background, can benefit from a safe and healthy environment.



Avondale tree planting.

Positive progress

We've already taken important steps to protect and restore nature:

- Influenced the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (in our role as a 'supporting authority') and published our 'First Considerations' report on Biodiversity.
- Commenced restoration of peatlands with the Lancashire Peat Partnership and volunteer 'Bog Squads'.
- Grown sphagnum moss through the Greenhouse Project to support peatland recovery.
- Worked with Ribble Rivers Trust on natural flood management, including Riverbank Revival.
- Planted over 2,500 trees across the borough, between April 2024 and March 2025.
- Secured Community Orchard Grant funding for schools and organisations.
- Launched a food waste pilot reaching 9,000 households.
- Supported the Blackburn with Darwen Food Alliance, who are now working towards a Silver Award.
- Mobilised 2,221 volunteers to collect nearly 20,000 bags of rubbish since 2018.
- Issued 271 fixed penalty notices for fly tipping.
- Donated old council laptops and tablets to be reused at Blackburn Foodbank.
- Supported repair and reuse with The Making Rooms, which have restored over 100 council laptops so far.
- Improved local air quality (including revocation of all Air Quality Management Areas).

Next steps for action

To build on this progress, we will:

- Plant 30,000 trees across the borough by 2030, with support from volunteer Tree Wardens.
- Expand restoration of our local peatland at Aushaw Moss and Darwen Common, by planting sphagnum moss, building natural dams and enhancing biodiversity.
- Increase household recycling rates and improve data collection for targeted education campaigns.
- Promote sustainable food practices and reduce food waste.
- Publish Biodiversity Reports demonstrating action undertaken to drive the protection and enhancement of nature across the borough.
- Develop an Air Quality Strategy to further tackle pollution within the borough.
- Expand natural flood management projects around the borough.

Objective 3: Travel more sustainably

We're working to develop local services and infrastructure to encourage greater use of walking, cycling, public transport and electric vehicles – reducing pollution and making it safer and easier for people to get around in a more sustainable way.

Why sustainable travel matters

Transport emissions

Transport is the UK's highest-emitting sector, responsible for nearly a third of all greenhouse gas emissions^{ix}. In Blackburn with Darwen, transport emissions remain equally high, contributing significantly to our overall carbon footprint. Despite national efforts to reduce emissions, local figures have stayed the same, or even increased, over recent years.

This is partly due to lifestyle changes. More people are choosing to drive, even for short journeys, and the rise in ownership of larger, less efficient vehicles like SUVs is making the problem worse. Public transport options remain limited in many areas, making it harder for residents to choose low carbon alternatives. Within the borough, while the M65 motorway contributes to emissions, it is our minor and A roads that account for the majority. In addition, the age and efficiency of our taxi fleet further exacerbates poor air quality and contributes to local transport emissions.

Beyond electric vehicles

While switching to electric vehicles (EVs) is an important part of the solution, it's not enough on its own. EVs still require energy to produce and charge, and they don't address issues like congestion, road safety, or equitable access. That's why we need a coordinated approach – one that also prioritises walking, cycling and better public transport.



Using public transport to actively travel to work.

Wider benefits

Travelling more sustainably brings wider benefits too. It improves physical and mental health, makes our streets safer – especially for children walking to school – and helps people feel more connected to their communities. Cleaner air and quieter roads also contribute to a better quality of life for everyone.

Challenges and opportunities

We recognise that travel choices are personal, and the council cannot directly control how people move around. However, we can influence behaviour through policy, services and infrastructure, and partnerships. By working across departments like Highways and Public Health, we can create better opportunities for residents to travel more sustainably – whether that’s through better active travel routes, EV charging points, or improved public transport services.

While we cannot control how residents travel, we can take direct action on our own vehicle fleet. This includes electrifying our own vehicles, providing EV pool cars to staff travelling around the borough, and exploring ways to reduce help staff travel to work more sustainably. We recognise that this transition will require a significant upfront investment, and that current EV technology is not yet suitable for larger vehicles like bin lorries. A phased approach will be needed, alongside consideration of alternative low-emission options. Despite these challenges, electrifying our fleet presents a clear opportunity to lead by example and demonstrate our commitment to cleaner, more sustainable transport.



Walking Darwen Moor.

Positive progress

We've already taken steps to support sustainable travel:

- Developed a new draft Local Transport Plan (LTP4), in partnership with Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Council. This will provide the strategic policy framework for investment in more sustainable travel across the County.
- Adopted local modal strategies such as the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), Bus Network Review, and Bus Service Improvement Plan to set local priorities.
- Expanded the total of EVs to approximately 10% of the council's fleet.
- Secured >£6m in Government funding for the design and delivery of highest priority active travel schemes such as the South East Blackburn network.
- Adopted an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy, and secured resource to deliver an investment programme for on-street charge points
- Commenced feasibility work on improvements to the frequency of rail services and rail station infrastructure.



Cycling in the borough.

Next steps for action

To build on this momentum, we will:

- Contribute to the completion and adoption of the new LTP4 and Implementation Plan to confirm the long-term strategic priorities for transport policy and investment
- Develop business cases for local, strategic transport schemes and secure funding from the new Lancashire Combined County Authority for their delivery
- Adopt a Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (including an update to local Parking Standards) to provide further guidance on the application of policies in the adopted Local Plan
- Review taxi and private hire policies to ensure vehicles meet modern emissions standards.
- Deliver a workplace travel plan to support council staff to undertake their commute and business mileage more sustainably.
- Significantly improve access to on-street EV charging options for residents.
- Further electrify the council fleet and explore alternatives for larger vehicles.
- Improve public transport by increasing its reliability, affordability, and coverage.
- Implement active travel programmes and schemes to support walking, cycling, and wheeling.
- Work with schools to promote school-safe streets and walking routes.
- Support and encourage organisations to undertake travel surveys and prepare organisational travel plans.

Objective 4: Build for a low carbon future

We want to enable homes, buildings, and new developments to be warmer, healthier, and more energy-efficient – while taking full advantage of renewable energy. Buildings are central to our climate response, not only because of the emissions they produce, but also because of the opportunities they offer to improve lives and reduce costs.



Cathedral Quarter.

Why buildings are key to the climate

Building emissions

Buildings are one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions in the UK, accounting for around 20% of total emissions^{vii}, largely due to heating systems powered by fossil fuels like gas. In Blackburn with Darwen, emissions from buildings – particularly council-owned assets – remain high. While electricity use is increasingly cleaner (with over 50% of UK electricity generated from renewables in 2024^x), gas remains a major source of emissions and poor indoor air quality.

To meet our climate goals, we must transition away from gas and towards low carbon alternatives such as heat pumps, shared heat networks, and solar panels. These technologies not only reduce emissions but also improve indoor air quality and reduce exposure to pollutants.

Adapting to new extremes

Climate adaptation is also essential. Many homes and buildings in the borough were not designed to withstand the extremes we're now facing – hotter summers, wetter winters, and

more frequent storms. Poor ventilation and insulation are contributing to issues like damp and mould, which can have serious health impacts, especially for vulnerable residents.

Wider benefits of low carbon buildings

Improving the energy efficiency of buildings brings a wide range of benefits. Warmer homes reduce the risk of illness and help tackle fuel poverty, which places significant pressure on the NHS. Lower energy bills benefit households and businesses alike, while community energy schemes can help generate local power and keep money circulating within the borough.

There are also major opportunities to upskill the local workforce. Retrofitting homes, installing renewable technologies, and designing low carbon buildings are all growing sectors – but there are gaps in the market. By investing in green skills, we can create jobs that support local businesses and residents alike.



A warm family home with a smart meter. Credit: Liz Seabrook / Nesta / Climate Visuals.

Our influence and role

While we can't control every building in the borough, we can shape the conditions that make low carbon choices easier. Through planning policy, we can influence the design of new developments and support residents to install renewable energy or EV charging infrastructure – even where off-street parking is limited.

We can also lead by example. By decarbonising our own buildings and investing in renewable energy, we show what's possible and build trust in the transition. We're working with partners to improve grid capacity and energy storage, and we're helping residents access free trusted energy saving advice and grants through council-funded schemes like [Cosy Homes in Lancashire](#)^{xi} and [Greener Homes in Lancashire](#)^{xii}.

Positive progress

We've already made important strides in building for a low carbon future:

- Made climate change a core priority in our new Local Plan.
- Adopted a Climate Impact Framework (CIF) Supplementary Planning Document, ensuring new developments reduce emissions and withstand climate impacts, and transparency of decision making.
- Progressed the feasibility work for a Heat Network project in Blackburn town centre, to deliver sustainable energy to key council and partner sites.
- Commenced a programme of feasibility work looking at increasing renewable energy generation across the Borough (on both public and private sites)
- Partnered with both Cosy Homes in Lancashire and Greener Homes in Lancashire to provide free energy saving advice and grant support for residents and landlords.
- Delivered significant decarbonisation projects on several council buildings through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, and prepared further decarbonisation plans from the Low Carbon Skills Fund.
- Working closely with the electricity sector to improve grid storage and capacity for the borough.
- Promoted local Community Energy schemes and grant opportunities.

Next steps for action

To accelerate progress, we will:

- Strengthen planning related policy, guidance and masterplans to support sustainable development.
- Progress the development of a large-scale Heat Network in Blackburn, in collaboration with key partners.
- Encourage and support the rollout of renewable energy in homes, schools and businesses.
- Encourage and support the creation of new local Community Energy projects.
- Expand provision of trusted advice and support to help residents make their homes more energy-efficient and take advantage of renewable energy opportunities.
- Explore the potential to create local demonstrator homes, showcasing energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.
- Decarbonise key council assets by improving energy efficiency and switching to renewable energy.
- Work with partners to improve grid capacity, explore energy storage, and remove connection barriers.

Objective 5: Engage and empower people

We want to connect with communities, businesses, schools, and organisations to educate, collaborate, and work together to tackle climate change. Climate action is not just about infrastructure and policy – it’s about people. Everyone has a role to play, and empowering individuals is key to building a fairer, greener future.

Why everyone has a role to play

Insight from the People’s Jury

The top recommendation from Blackburn with Darwen’s People’s Jury on Climate Change was clear – everyone should be educated on why change is needed, what can be done, and what the benefits will be^{xiii}. They recognised how they benefited from the detailed sessions with experts to help them understand the full context of climate change and want to ensure others benefit from the same.

This highlights a perception gap, where the majority of people support action on climate, but believe others don’t^{xiv}. This disconnect can lead to silence, inaction, and missed opportunities for collective progress. We need to help spread the message and show businesses, decision-makers and each other that we want to see low carbon products, policies and solutions for climate change.



Blackburn with Darwen People’s Jury on the Climate Crisis.

Our influence

As a council, we have a responsibility to inform and educate our residents, communities and businesses on the key matters that relate to them. Many residents simply don’t know what actions they can take to help. We have the tools available to provide clear, accessible guidance to raise awareness of risks, promote opportunities, address misinformation and encourage collective action across the borough. By making climate action relatable and achievable, we can turn concern into action.

The wider benefits of engagement

Empowering people to act on climate change has a ripple effect across every other objective in this strategy. It supports environmental protection, encourages sustainable travel, improves homes and buildings, and strengthens community resilience. It also helps address climate anxiety, which is increasingly affecting young people and vulnerable groups.

By tackling misinformation and uncertainty, we can build confidence in what is possible. Community energy schemes, for example, allow residents to take control of their energy use and benefit from local renewable generation. For businesses, knowledge is power – helping them identify risks, build resilience, and seize opportunities in the green economy.

Schools play a vital role too. We have a responsibility to support them, and an increasing number are asking for help. Our Environmental Education Team is working to deliver outreach and resources, while collaborating with our Youth Forum ensures young people’s voices are heard in climate decision-making.



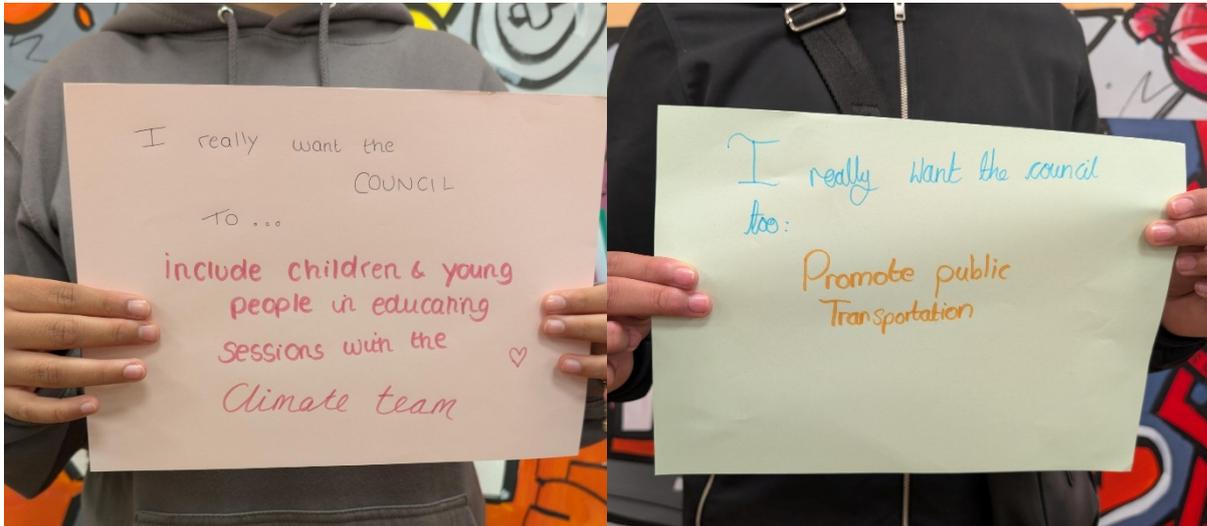
Tree planting with Capita.

Positive progress

We’ve already taken meaningful steps to engage and empower people:

- Held a People’s Jury in 2022, bringing together 32 diverse residents to shape recommendations for council climate action.
- Developed the Blackburn with Darwen Climate Community with local partners, to accelerate the borough’s response to the climate emergency.
- Selected as one of the first three UK organisations to join the Green Library Hubs programme, receiving £86,000 over three years to support environmental learning.
- Launched the 1° C Challenge, helping residents save up to £100 on their energy bills through small changes^{xv}.

- Worked with the East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce to support businesses in building climate resilience.
- Collaborated with the Youth Forum to ensure young people’s ideas are considered in climate decision-making.
- Celebrated local environmental efforts through the Community Volunteer Awards, led by Blackburn with Darwen CVS.



Requests from Blackburn with Darwen Youth Forum.

Next steps for action

To build on this momentum, we will:

- Support climate action schemes within the community, such as the Green Libraries project.
- Build strategic partnerships with major stakeholders to help achieve our broader climate goals.
- Work with Public Health to help residents understand and prepare for extreme weather, including heatwaves and cold spells.
- Develop a Communications Strategy to raise awareness and inspire climate action throughout the borough.
- Support schools and young people to take climate action through outreach and education.
- Work with businesses to deliver advice and support, create a charter to showcase best practice and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Create staff guidance and competitions to encourage sustainable behaviour within the council.

Delivering our strategy

This Climate Change strategy sets out our long-term vision. It is a living strategy, one that should evolve with new opportunities, technologies, and insights. We will publish annual progress reports to maintain transparency and accountability, and the strategy itself will be formally reviewed after no longer than three years.

Delivery will be managed and monitored through a more detailed Climate Change Action Plan, structured around each of the five objectives. The action plan will guide our work across departments and with partners, ensuring that progress is coordinated, measurable, and responsive to local needs.

To oversee delivery of the strategy and action plan, the council's Climate Emergency Working Group will meet regularly to review progress, share updates, and address challenges. Where appropriate for specific projects or initiatives, we will consult with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to shape delivery and ensure our actions reflect local needs.

We recognise that challenges such as budget pressures and lack of powers may affect delivery in some areas, but we remain committed to adapting and finding solutions to these wherever possible.

We already have regular reporting cycles around energy monitoring and carbon emissions for the organisation. This monitoring will be embedded into the Climate Change Strategy monitoring, helping us track emissions, assess impact, and refine our approach as we go.



Blackburn Cathedral.

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