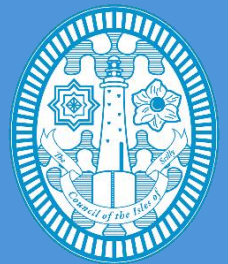




Council of the Isles of Scilly Annual Carbon Report, 2025



1. Introduction

Following the Five Islands Academy's 'Strike for Climate Action' in 2019, the Council of the Isles of Scilly unanimously declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to becoming a carbon -neutral organisation by 2030.

As part of its Corporate Plan, the Council set a target to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 75% relative to 2019 levels¹.

Through the 2015 Paris Agreement, world governments committed to curbing global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. In 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that global warming must not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change. Net zero is about reducing and removing greenhouse gases from across society.

The Council recognises it has a key role to play in reducing carbon emissions to improve the island's resilience and ability to adapt to a changing climate. In 2022, the Council adopted the [Climate Change Action Plan \(CCAP\)](#) and has since been actively working to reduce its own carbon footprint to accelerate action towards its 2030 net zero target.

As civic leader, major local employer and key partner within the local community, the Council is committed to addressing the interconnect challenges of net zero, climate adaptation and biodiversity loss.

This is the first Annual Carbon Report to be developed since adoption of the CCAP. It outlines the progress made so far and sets out the Council's priorities for the coming year.



Strike for Climate Action by the Five Island Academy Students, 2019.

¹ This footnote will be updated to show how far the Council has progressed towards its 'carbon neutral organisation by 2030' target in March 2022. Providing this value will give a better indication of the reduction to be achieved over the 4 year period'.

2. The Council's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Council is committed to delivering net-zero, and as so we must demonstrate leadership in tackling our organisation's emissions, as well those for the islands as a whole. Through the Environment Service team, we are monitoring and better able to report on the Council's greenhouse gas emissions annually.

The Council's Approach to Greenhouse Gas Accounting

The Council's approach is to use the [Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool](#) which has been developed by Local Partnerships, working with the Local Government Association (LGA). There is a two-year publication lag on reporting data due to data sources being available.

We categorise Council emissions into the following three scopes:

Scope 1 – includes our direct emissions, from the activities we have under our direct control, such as fossil fuel heating (oil and gas) and our petrol and diesel-powered fleet vehicles and equipment.

Scope 2 – our emissions specifically from electricity consumption from our buildings and streetlights.

Scope 3 – other 'indirect' emissions such as water consumption and business travel.

Whilst the Council has control over its direct emissions, it has little influence over its indirect emissions.

This section presents the Council's Scope 1, 2, and 3 carbon emissions from the baseline year 2019/2020 through to 2022/2023. While all scopes have been recorded, Scope 1 and 2 emissions are more straightforward to track, as they stem from activities directly under the Council's control. In contrast, Scope 3 emissions—those arising from sources not owned or directly managed by the Council—are more challenging to measure and quantify.

Despite these challenges, we have successfully gathered some Scope 3 data, particularly relating to staff travel, including inter-island boat journeys and mainland air and sea transport. Looking ahead, we are committed to improving how we capture and report Scope 3 emissions, ensuring they are a priority in our ongoing carbon monitoring efforts.

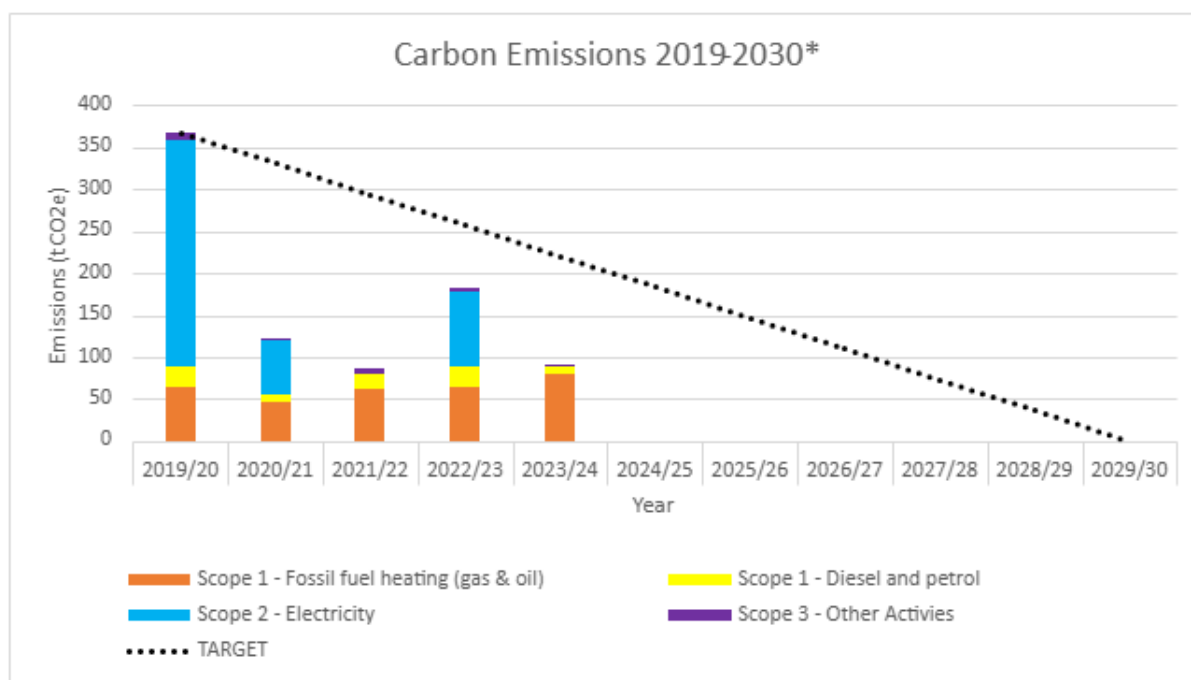
The table and graph below show the Council's Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions data, relative to the baseline year (2019/2020).

The Council is making excellent progress in tackling its own greenhouse gas emissions and is currently exceeding its target to meet its 2030 commitment with a -75% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

Most of the overall reduction in the Council's emissions is due to the Council moving to a zero-carbon energy tariff in 2023/2024.

Scope 1 emissions deriving from fossil fuel heating (gas and oil) is now the major contributor to the Council's carbon emissions. Moving forward, further investment in decarbonising our corporate estate will be necessary to accelerate the Council's journey towards reaching its 2030 net-zero target.

The Council will continue to improve its understanding of its Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions.



	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Scope 1 - Fossil fuel heating (gas & oil)	64.56	47.03	62.16	64.56	80.08
Scope 1 - Diesel and petrol	24.42	7.91	18.03	24.42	9.01
Scope 2 - Electricity	270.3	65.59	0	88.22	0.00
Scope 3 - Other Activities	8.47	1.8	6.2	4.59	0.53
% change from the baseline	0.00%	-66.74%	-76.51%	-50.57%	-75.63%
TARGET	367.75	330.975	294.2	257.425	220.65
TOTAL	367.75	122.33	86.39	181.79	89.62

3. Council's progress and achievements to date

Since the adoption of the Climate Change Action Plan in 2022, the Council has actively delivered a range of carbon reduction projects and sustainability initiatives. These efforts are aligned with the strategic actions outlined in the Climate Change Action Plan and demonstrate the Council's ongoing commitment to addressing climate change. This section highlights key activities and achievements that support the delivery of the Plan's objectives.

How we will work better together

The Council has made progress in embedding climate action across its operations. It has collated and reported on its Scope 1, 2, and 3 greenhouse gas emissions, providing a better understanding of its carbon footprint.

In support of sustainable operations, a Responsible Procurement Policy has been developed to ensure environmental considerations are embedded in purchasing decisions. Additionally, the Council has invested in staff learning and development by delivering climate change training through the Council's Learning Hub and supporting participation in Carbon Literacy training offered by the Local Government Association.

Through the [Isles of Scilly National Landscapes Partnership](#), and upcoming review of the Isles of Scilly National Landscape Management Plan, Council will ensure that objectives for the landscape on climate change align with the Council's direction of travel – ensuring we are all working collaboratively together to address the climate challenges we face.

The Council continues to collaborate closely with the [Isles of Scilly Community Venture \(IOSCV\) Community Interest Company](#) to advance initiatives such as food waste reduction and the development of the [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Area Energy Plan \(LAEP\)](#). This partnership working reflects our shared commitment to building a sustainable future for the islands, and we are actively exploring ways to strengthen our joint efforts in achieving these goals.

How we will heat and power things

The Council has installed 5 heat pumps in Council houses with funding provided from the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) and the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

Through a £20,000 Sport England Pool Support Fund grant, the Council installed a 11kW photo-voltaic (PV) panel array at Normandy Pool. The electricity generated by these panels will contribute towards heating the pool water and reduce oil consumption and carbon emissions of the facility.



Solar PV Panels at Normandy Pool

The Council is actively collaborating with Cornwall Council and local stakeholders on the development of the [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Area Energy Plan](#). This plan will examine how energy is consumed, supplied, and managed across the region. Its goal is to identify and recommend practical actions that will support the transition to a carbon-neutral future.

Planning and Development – how we will build our new homes

The Council continues to monitor sustainability measures delivered through local planning applications.

Through the Environment Act, 2021 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now a mandatory requirement on all developments (unless exempt) and applicants will need to deliver at least 10% net gain for nature. The aim is to build resilient networks for nature, with space for nature within development sites. The Local Planning Authority is working with key local landowners and managers to create a BNG offset unit offer locally.

The Council is currently monitoring the implementation of its [adopted Local Plan \(2015–2030\)](#) and is in the process of preparing the evidence base to support either a targeted revision of key policies or a full review of the plan. Once adopted, the updated plan will form part of the statutory development framework for the Isles of Scilly.

[The National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) sets out how the planning systems should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigate and adapting to climate change, with policies to support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure.

Transport – how we will move around

Council has implemented policy on staff travel within its Pay Policy Statement which details the expectations of staff to determine the most appropriate form of transport, taking into account the carbon emissions, total cost and travel time.

Council approved and adopted the [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\)](#) which details improvements to encourage more walking and cycling across the highway network as part of Council corporate objective to reduce the need for people to own a car.

With funding provided by [Active Travel England \(ATE\)](#), the Council has worked in consultation with the local community to develop concept designs for two high-priority improvement schemes: enhancements to the Dump Path (a key route to school) and upgrades to Hugh Street. These priorities were identified through the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) consultations. Future efforts are likely to focus on integrating these schemes to create a more cohesive and accessible highway network in Hugh Town, supporting safer and more sustainable travel by foot and bicycle.

[The Energy Saving Trust](#) conducted a review of the Council's vehicle fleet to support the transition away from fossil fuels. In response, Operational Services has implemented a vehicle replacement programme and, since 2022, has invested in three new electric vehicles. Additionally, two vehicles have been converted to run on Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a cleaner alternative to diesel. The programme includes plans to introduce more electric and HVO-compatible vehicles in 2025/2026, further supporting the Council's commitment to reducing transport-related emissions.



Operational Services Electric Vehicles



How we will protect our natural environment

Council has supported development of [the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\)](#), in collaboration with Cornwall Council and local partners. The LNRS identifies local priorities for nature's recovery across the islands to help tackle the ecological emergency.

Council has adopted policy on Managing Open Spaces and Highway Verges for Nature, which outlines how we aim to support biodiversity through our land management practices. This policy sets out our commitment to creating and maintaining spaces for nature across the areas we manage and maintain, helping to enhance the ecological value of our open spaces and roadside verges.

Council, as host authority and partner of the [Isles of Scilly National Landscape Partnership](#), continues to support delivery of the [Isles of Scilly National Landscape Management Plan](#) - working in partnership with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust (Delivery partner), the Duchy of Cornwall, Natural England and other local and regional partners to sustainably manage the island's terrestrial environment.



View from Samson

The island's National Landscape Management Plan is scheduled for review in 2025, with adoption by the Council expected in 2026. This updated plan will incorporate the UK Government's targets and outcomes for protected landscapes, aiming to drive positive change through the promotion of thriving plant and wildlife populations, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the enhancement of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and public engagement with the environment.

As the accountable body, the Council continues to play a key role in delivering the Defra-funded [Farming in Protected Landscapes \(FIPL\)](#) Programme. Since the scheme's launch in 2021, the Council has supported the allocation of approximately £192,614 in grant funding to farmers and growers across the islands. These grants have enabled the delivery of projects that contribute to the programme's themes: climate, nature, people, and place.

The Council's Lead Member for Environment, Environmental Services, and Climate Change represents the authority on the steering group for the *Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS)* Landscape Recovery project, Small is Beautiful. This initiative is designed to support farmers and land managers in adopting nature-friendly practices, with the overarching goal of restoring and enhancing the natural environment across the islands. Through this leadership role, the Council helps shape strategic direction and ensures local priorities are reflected in the project's delivery.

Waste & Recycling – how we will reduce waste and increase recycling and reuse

The Council has continued to see positive progress in local recycling performance, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the community, our waste and recycling teams, and local contractors. Recycling rates across the islands rose from 40% in 2023–2024 to 42.9% in 2024–2025—marking the highest rate recorded to date across St Agnes, Bryher, St Martin’s, and St Mary’s.

In addition, the volume of materials retained on-island for reuse—including rubble, garden waste, and glass bottles and jars—reached a record high of 356 tonnes in 2024–2025. This represents a 28.5% increase from the previous year and means the Council has once again met its target of a 15% increase in on-island reuse of materials by 2025.

The Council has also made significant efforts in reducing residual waste sent for disposal, achieving a 21.3% reduction. This surpasses the 15% reduction target set in the [Council’s Waste Reduction Strategy](#) for 2025.

Through the [Waste and Resources Action Programme \(WRAP\)](#) Council commissioned a fully funded study on collection and processing options for green and food waste to help understand future service requirements, a project which we are working with local partners to further progress.

Since March 2025, the Council has enhanced recycling practices across the islands by introducing segregated recycling for both households and businesses, alongside a new commercial waste service. As part of this improvement, the Council has invested in a new kerbside sort recycling vehicle. This investment not only supports current recycling efforts and makes the service more sustainable but also prepares the Council to expand its recycling services in the future—such as through the collection of food waste in line with the Waste Reduction Strategy.



 **recycle for Scilly**

Adaptation – how we will adapt in the future

The Council successfully secured £8.1 million in grant funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Environment Agency to deliver the *Climate Adaptation Scilly* project. This initiative focuses on enhancing the islands' resilience to climate change. To date, key works have included the installation of upgraded sea defences on St Mary's and the off-islands, aimed at protecting vulnerable infrastructure and natural habitats from coastal flooding and erosion. Additionally, rainwater harvesting tanks have been provided to local businesses to support sustainable water management.



Porthloo Rock Armour Sea Defences, St Mary's

As part of this project, the Council adopted the Isles of Scilly Resilient Island Strategy which provides the framework to empower individuals, communities and organisations to reduce the risk from the physical impacts of climate change across the islands.

The Council has actively contributed to the refresh of the Shoreline Management Plan and the second round of the National Flood Risk Assessments (NaFRA2). In addition, the Council is preparing to adopt its revised *Local Flood Risk Management Strategy* in 2025, following a period of public consultation.

As part of its commitment to building long-term resilience, the Council has also created a new role through a “grow our own” approach, successfully appointing a Trainee Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCERM) Officer. This apprenticeship opportunity strengthens the capacity of the Environment Service and supports the Council's priorities to protect island communities from the impacts of sea-level rise and future flooding.

The Isles of Scilly Fire Service has undertaken training on managing drought-related fires in partnership with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust to protect our important habitats such as our heathlands and maritime grasslands. The Fire Service acquired new equipment for use across the islands which will allow firefighters to access more inaccessible areas to help protect vulnerable habitats and wildlife from wildfires.



Firefighters training with new equipment to manage wildfires.

Community – how we will support and communicate to our local community.

The Council worked to develop *Sustainable Scilly Project Week* with the Five Islands Academy and supported the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust with the *Festival of Nature*, with funding received from the Arts Council. The Environment Service team received an award for its contributions towards the island's sustainability.

Through the National Landscape Partnership, the Council collaborated with partners to re-establish the local *Farmers and Growers Initiative*, hosted by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust. This initiative provides support to farmers and land managers across the islands, helping to rebuild capacity and strengthen relationships within the agricultural community. This groundwork was instrumental in paving the way for the successful bid to the ELMS Landscape Recovery Scheme.

In addition, the Council played a key role in hosting and promoting the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Sustainability Awards (CSA) locally. The awards celebrated the achievements of local businesses, with several entries and winners from the islands, highlighting the community's commitment to sustainability and innovation.



Farmers and Growers Walk and Talk

Regional and national conversations

Council is represented at regional forums to support local authority action on climate change. Most notably is through the [Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly \(DCIoS\) Climate Impacts Group \(CIG\)](#) which aims to coordinate regional action on climate adaptation, preparing communities and organisations for a changing climate, and improving resilience across the region.

The [DCIoS Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) will help communities and organisations across the Southwest better understand the risks their area might face in the future, as climate change increasingly affects the UK. The group has also produced a number of [resources](#) to support people take action for climate adaptation and prepare for climate impacts.

4. Progressing Climate Action

Key Challenges

When the Council of the Isles of Scilly declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, it did so with approximately 300 other Local Authorities, with many also pledging to be net-zero by 2030.

2030 is fast approaching and although the Council is exceeding its target to meeting net zero by 2030, there are many barriers to overcome to ensure we get there.

The Carbon Trust has identified that key challenges facing Local Authorities to deliver on net-zero include:

- **Governance** – lack of consistency, coherent leadership. Climate Action needs to be mainstreamed to continue support.
- **Target setting** – targets set lack evidence base and knowledge of what these targets mean in reality. Is the timeline realistic and what budget is required to deliver.
- **Uncertain Scope** – clarity regarding emissions sources.
- **Understanding and integrating adaptation** – this is acute on the Isles of Scilly because of the island's vulnerability to rising sea-levels in particular. Mitigation measures, such as those to get us to net-zero, tend to take precedence as they represent quick wins. The Carbon Trust also note a lack of expertise on adaptation within Local Authorities, with little evidence available at the right scale.

Progress Summary and the Need for Continued Action

The Council has made excellent progress in reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, achieving a 75% reduction since the baseline year of 2019–2020. However, to meet the ambitious net zero target by 2030, further action is essential. A key priority is the development and delivery of a fully costed decarbonisation plan for the Council's buildings and corporate estate, which is critical to reducing Scope 1 emissions.

Without funding investment and implementation of this plan, the Council risks falling off track. Projections indicate that by 2027–2028, the Council will be off target for achieving net zero if Scope 1 emissions are not adequately addressed. With only five years remaining, urgent and sustained action is required to stay on course to meet the target.

In addition, it will require a new approach to managing, funding, procuring and devising services and taking action to support people and businesses to take up low-carbon solutions.

The Council is currently facing significant budgetary pressures, and there is no dedicated core funding from Government available to support climate change and net zero delivery. Looking ahead, it is unlikely that internal budgets will be allocated to this area in the short to medium term.

There is growing uncertainty amongst Council's nationwide about the lack of uncertainty around how local effort fits into the national net-zero plan. According to the Local Government Association, eight in ten Councils have low confidence the UK will achieve net zero homes, travel and energy by 2050.

It is worth noting that many Councils are acknowledging the challenges in reaching net-zero by 2030. Indeed, some local authorities have already started to consider delaying targets to 2040.

It is important that Council remains realistic and transparent about what is achievable, and Council can do this, for example, through its Corporate Plan review.

The Council has strengthened its understanding of organisational carbon emissions and remains committed to ongoing improvement in monitoring and reporting. Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions will continue to be tracked, with annual carbon reports presented to Full Council. These reports will also be made publicly available to ensure transparency and accountability in the Council's journey toward net zero.

The Council remains committed to delivering the initiatives and activities outlined in the Climate Change Action Plan. This will be achieved through continued collaboration with relevant Council departments and services, as well as with our local and regional partners and the wider community. Together, we will work to drive meaningful progress toward a more sustainable and climate-resilient future for the islands.

The Council will continue to actively seek funding to support climate change, nature recovery, and net zero initiatives. We will prioritise opportunities that deliver multiple co-benefits—such as improved health and wellbeing, energy-efficient homes, and community resilience—and implement them where practical. In addition, we are committed to exploring new and innovative approaches to enhance delivery and ensure long-term impact.

With the appointment of a new Trainee Environment and Sustainability Officer, the Council will build on its existing engagement efforts by working closely with the community and stakeholders to co-develop a *Framework for Climate Action*. We aim to host tailored events and engagement sessions, and to explore more effective ways of collaborating with our partners. These efforts will help strengthen local resilience and support the successful delivery of climate and sustainability outcomes across the islands.