



East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

# Our Climate and Nature Top 20 Actions for 2024

At East Cambridgeshire District Council, we are committed to delivering a cleaner, greener East Cambridgeshire. Every June, we set ourselves a new set of Top 20 Actions which we aim to achieve over the coming 12 months. Each action will help the natural environment, help reduce our contribution to climate change or help everyone to adapt to a changing climate. For more information and progress on these action, please visit our website at [www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/climate-change-and-nature](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/climate-change-and-nature).

## Highlights of 2023/2024

### Bring Back Nature

Awarded more than £60,000 towards 18 community nature projects across East Cambridgeshire, delivering new ponds, tree planting, hedgerow planting, bird and bat box installations, churchyard restoration, wildflower sowing and much more!

Following a public vote, committed to the long-term recovery of hedgehogs in the district.

Gave away 75 oak trees to 21 communities to mark the King's Coronation and 75th birthday.

Set up a Biodiversity Net Gain system in our planning department, meaning all new development must now deliver a gain for nature as part of their planning applications.

### Reducing our Carbon Emissions

Commenced the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel in all our refuse collection vehicles from April 2024. HVO fuel has the potential to more than halve the council's entire carbon emissions.

Reduced the amount of paper we use by more than a third! That's a whopping 250,000 less sheets of paper used. If stacked up, it would exceed the height of four adult giraffes standing on top of each other!

Reduced our electricity bill by nearly £14,000 and saved over 7 tonnes of carbon emissions in the first year of operating our newly installed solar panels at our business start up office building at E-Space North, Littleport.

Achieved Investors in the Environment silver accreditation, and moved into the national top 20% of best rated district councils for climate action.

Commenced carbon literacy training for all staff.

### Adapting to a changing climate

Continued to support households with advice and tips to reduce energy use and adapt/retrofit their homes. For more information visit [www.actiononenergycambs.org/](http://www.actiononenergycambs.org/).

Adjusted how we manage our parks and open spaces, including winter grass cutting and being prepared for hot summers.

## In 2024/2025 our Top 20 Actions are (in summary)

- 1 A new 'Hedges for Hedgehogs' campaign with free native hedgerow plants given away to local communities.
- 2 Further hedgehog recovery support including grants, training for landowners and new planning policy.
- 3 Extending the successful Pride of Place grant application scheme to the end of October 2024, giving 100% grant support to even more communities for open space and nature led projects in our district.
- 4 We will work with local residents to create an accessible one-acre (0.5 ha) woodland in Bottisham.
- 5 Further nature improvements in our parks and open spaces, including grass cutting and wildflowers.
- 6 Deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) via the planning system, including creation of large scale 'habitat banks'.
- 7 Publish long term nature recovery plans via the creation of a Cambridgeshire-wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 8 We will deliver a Trees and Woodlands strategy.
- 9 We will create a 'butterfly mound' in one of public parks, constructed and seeded to attract butterflies and pollinators, with the design chosen via a poll.
- 10 Make our Phase 3, Arbour Square, Ely development as nature friendly as possible, including measures for hedgehogs, swifts, native planting and water saving.
- 11 Move substantially all our Refuse Collection Vehicles to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel, which has at least an 80% reduction in carbon emissions compared with regular diesel.
- 12 Install solar panels on the roof of the Hive swimming pool, aiming to save at least 5 tonnes of CO2e emissions and save over £10,000 in annual running costs.
- 13 We will consider options for including environmental considerations when revising the council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 14 Continue to deliver Carbon Literacy training for all staff at the council.
- 15 Continue to provide support and advice to residents who want to undertake energy efficiency improvements in their homes. This includes £1.5m of Home Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG2) funding for spend across East Cambridgeshire.
- 16 'Water, water everywhere (then) not a drop to drink'; we will commence a water resilience campaign to help all of us be prepared to the dual threat of 'water, water everywhere in winter, but then not a drop to drink in summer'.
- 17 Reduce water use in our own office buildings, aiming for a 10% reduction by June 2025.
- 18 Deadly Top Twenty! A public campaign to spot the top 20 most unwanted, damaging and deadly invasive species in the district, and informing residents what they could do to help.
- 19 Let's Adapt Together. We will arrange community events and boost our engagement work as we foster a coming together to tackle the issues of climate change, nature recovery and adapting to a changing climate. £5,000 set aside for local community engagement activities.
- 20 We will engage with businesses and investors to help them thrive on our journey to a greener, cleaner East Cambridgeshire.