



Bolton Climate Change Strategy

Annual Report
2022-2023

Bolton Climate Change Annual Report

2022-2023

1. Introduction

[Bolton's climate change strategy](#) was prepared by Bolton Council on behalf of the Bolton Active, Connected and Prosperous board, (the Bolton Vision Partnership,) and approved in September 2021.

The Partnership brings together organisations across Bolton including Bolton at Home, Bolton University, Bolton College, Bolton Community and Voluntary Service, NHS Bolton Foundation Trust and the council.

The climate change strategy includes 32 key performance indicators and has an associated delivery plan. Both are available on the [council website](#).

The Bolton Vision Partnership is also committed to producing an annual report so that people can see and understand some of the efforts by the Vision partners, businesses and organisations to tackle climate change.

This second [annual report](#) provides an overview of achievements during 2022-23 and highlights some priorities for the following year.

Achievements in 2022-2023

- Bolton's Fund awarded over £153,000 for climate change projects, totalling more than £194,000 since 2021.
- 3,556 small trees and 135 large trees planted.
- 178 tonnes of CO₂ saved by Bolton businesses.
- 130 local groups, involving 1,300 volunteers, regularly help look after Bolton's environment.
- £2 million awarded to Bolton at Home from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to retrofit and upgrade almost 200 properties.
- 49.5% of waste recycled in Bolton, well above the average for the UK.
- The University of Bolton is a finalist in the prestigious Green Gown awards.

2. Greater Manchester five-year environment plan

Bolton council works closely with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the other nine Greater Manchester local authorities.

Work on climate change is guided by the [Greater Manchester Five-Year Environment Plan](#).

The [plan's dashboard](#) tracks progress on the plan's targets for the whole of Greater Manchester and includes detailed information for Bolton.

How green is our borough?

- There are 27 publicly available EV charging points in Bolton.
- Three percent of Bolton is covered in trees, of which 9.7% is woodland.
- 54% of people have good access to gardens, parks and open access land.

- 58% of homes in Bolton are rated D to G on their Energy Performance Certificate, meaning they are not energy efficient.
- 23% of people in Bolton currently choose greener ways to commute, such as cycling, walking and public transport. Of those, 10% walk to work, 1% travel by bike and 11% use public transport.
- 134 schools in Bolton are affected by air pollution.

Source <https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/near-you/local-authority/bolton#overview>

3. Bolton's greenhouse gas emissions

Information about carbon emissions in all boroughs of the UK, including Bolton, is published every year by the [Department of Energy Security and Net Zero](#).

The figures are published every June and the most recent data available is from 2021.

Taking into account methane, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide, in 2021 Bolton produced greenhouse gases equivalent to 1.2 million tonnes of CO_{2e}.

These break down into:

- 35% from transport
- 34% from housing
- 17% from industrial and commercial activities
- 8% from waste
- 4% from the public sector

The borough's largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions are transport and the energy used in homes.

Bolton has similar emissions per head for transport compared with similar authorities across the UK. Transport emissions have been declining across Greater Manchester since 2005 (when national data became available) and is now just under 1,200 tonnes per year in Bolton. This excludes motorways and rail, as we have limited control or influence locally over these.

Homes in Bolton also produce a similar number of emissions per head as in other comparable areas around the UK and this has been falling. Homes in Bolton produce around 1,400 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Bolton have been reducing broadly in line with the national trend since 2005.

Nationally, greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 49.7% between 1990 and 2020.¹ This is largely due to the shift to cleaner electricity generation based on gas and renewables instead of coal, as well as falling demand for energy across homes, businesses and industry.

¹ Source [1990-2020 final emissions by Standard Industrial Classification \(Annex 2\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

4. Bolton Vision's greenhouse gas emissions

Bolton Vision is a partnership of organisations across Bolton including the council, Bolton at Home, Bolton University, Bolton Community and Voluntary Service, NHS Bolton Foundation Trust and others.

The Bolton climate change strategy sets out how the partnership is working together across the borough to act on climate change.

The strategy sets out the ambition for Bolton Council to reach net zero emissions by 2030 and it is important to recognise that this target is challenging.

The strategy also aims to encourage other organisations to adopt the same target. This requires action not just from the Bolton Vision partners, but also from the whole borough, including businesses, residents, schools, and community and voluntary organisations.

The partnership is working to put a figure on its total greenhouse gas emissions so that it can report on it and track the progress to net zero.

Directly, the organisations in the Bolton Vision partnership are responsible for less than five percent of the borough's total emissions, with the majority coming from heating and lighting buildings.

Indirectly, the organisations in the partnership can significantly influence Bolton's emissions through the services they provide, the goods and services they purchase and the decisions they make.

5. Progress on the Bolton climate change strategy

The following sections give an overview of progress in Bolton between September 2022 and September 2023 under each heading of the climate change strategy.

6. Governance and climate leadership

Bolton Vision's climate change delivery team is made up of representatives from the organisations in the partnership. It has continued to coordinate and raise awareness of climate change activity across Bolton.

The partnership has organised local environmental events and promoted regional, national and international campaigns such as [Cycle September](#), [Fairtrade Fortnight](#), [World Environment Day](#) and [Recycle Week](#).

Achievements

- [Bolton's Fund](#) awarded over £153,000 of grants for climate change projects over the last year, equating to more than £194,000 since 2021. This included inspiring projects such as supporting [Bolton Lads and Girls Club's](#) green champions, and [Cycle2Health's](#) project to refurbish unwanted bicycles and gift them to the community. See a full list of these [fantastic projects](#).

- With our partners, [City of Trees](#), we have planted 3,556 small trees (including 415 metres of hedges) and 135 larger trees on land owned by Bolton Council and Bolton at Home and in some of our schools.
- The Ephrata Church held a climate change event for ethnic minority communities in September 2023.
- Bolton's recycling rate is 49.5%, significantly better than the national average.
- We continued to support Fairtrade in Bolton, with the mayor hosting a Fairtrade coffee morning as part of the annual [Fairtrade Fortnight](#) campaign.
- Bolton Council and Bolton at Home continue to train their staff in [Carbon Literacy](#) and climate change awareness to enable them to make greener choices at work and at home.
- Bolton NHS Foundation Trust has grown its network of Green Champions and recently launched an NHS England sustainability e-learning module for staff.
- 56% of actions are complete in NHS Bolton's [Green Plan](#).
- After the success of the Youth Environment Summit in 2022, several of the schools that attended made changes, such as eco-clubs, recycling stations, electricity monitors, litter picks, gardening, and reusable cups at dinner.
- [Places for Everyone](#), the joint development plan for nine of the ten Greater Manchester districts, says that all new buildings will be net zero from the adoption of the plan in 2024.

Priorities for the next year

- Continue to promote environmental awareness days and campaigns.
- Continue to roll out carbon literacy and climate change training across the Bolton Vision partnership.
- Continue to work together as a partnership to deliver climate change projects in Bolton.

7. Homes, communities and wellbeing

In 2021, transport accounted for 35% of Bolton's carbon emissions.²

We continue to work with [Transport for Greater Manchester](#) to promote campaigns that encourage people to leave the car at home. Over the last year this has included the launch of the Bee Network - Greater Manchester's joined-up, London-style transport system.

Active travel schemes aim to make it easier for people to get around by walking or cycling. The map below shows the active travel schemes in Bolton town centre that have been completed, are under construction or are proposed.

The energy used in homes accounts for nearly 34% of all carbon emissions in Bolton.

To reduce the CO₂ emissions from homes, there needs to be a significant shift away from using fossil fuels like gas for heating. Without this, emissions from housing can only be reduced by about 50%.

² UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions - data.gov.uk

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is also essential. This will reduce the amount of fossil fuels used to heat our homes, cutting emissions as well as lowering heating bills and ensuring homes are warm and comfortable.

There are about 126,096 homes in Bolton. Of these, social housing makes up approximately 27,000 properties, housing about 60,000 residents.

Bolton Community Homes brings together the main social housing providers in Bolton and is responsible for most of the social housing in the borough. About 20% of Bolton households live in social housing, 65% of which is rated at Energy Performance Certificate C or better, putting them among the most energy efficient properties.

Bolton's largest social housing provider, Bolton at Home, maintains some 18,000 properties and supports its tenants in making their homes energy efficient through retrofit schemes, advice and support.

Sixty-two percent of Bolton households own their own properties and only 27% of these are rated at Energy Performance Certificate C or better³.

[Bolton Care and Repair](#) provides support and advice to homeowners in owner-occupied or privately rented homes to install energy efficiency measures such as new boilers, heating systems, windows, doors, insulation, draft exclusion and measures to prevent damp and mould.

The council's [Money Skills team](#) also offers free and impartial advice on energy efficiency.

The council and partners continue to promote national and regional energy support schemes such as Greater Manchester's [Your Home, Better.](#)

Achievements

- Bolton at Home secured a grant of £2 million from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This will contribute to a [£5 million scheme](#) to retrofit and upgrade almost 200 properties in Westhoughton that have an Energy Performance Certificate rating below C, delivering warm, energy-efficient homes, reducing carbon emissions and fuel bills, tackling fuel poverty and supporting green jobs.
- Over two hundred affordable warmth and energy efficiency measures were installed in Bolton's private sector and owner-occupied homes between April 2022 and April 2023.
- [Fifty zero emission buses](#) started running in Bolton, Wigan and Salford in September as part of the launch of the Bee Network, under Greater Manchester's plans to bring bus services back under local control.
- The [Let's Keep Bolton Moving](#) website was launched and brings together lots of information on active travel in Bolton such as walking, cycling and wheeling.

³ Energy efficiency of Housing, England and Wales, local authority districts - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

- [St Peters CE Primary School, Farnworth](#) has set up the first 'school street' in Bolton. School Streets limit access to vehicles at school pick-up and drop-off times during term time, reducing congestion and air pollution, and making it safer and easier for more pupils and their families to choose to walk, scoot or cycle to school.
- Approval was granted for the business case for phase 1 of the [Bolton Town Centre East active travel scheme](#), which will improve cycling and walking links to and around Bolton town centre.
- Two [bike libraries](#) have opened in Blackrod and Bolton town centre where people can borrow a bike instead of buying one.

Priorities for the next year

- Continue to promote energy efficiency schemes and support services including the Energy Company Obligation scheme, which launched in June 2023.
- Promote the recently launched [Greater Manchester Local Energy Demonstrator Scheme](#), which aims to streamline support for home energy efficiency improvements.
- Begin installing energy efficiency measures in Westhoughton as part of Bolton at Home's Social Housing Demonstrator retrofit scheme.
- Start work on the Bolton Town Centre East active travel scheme.
- Complete the Manchester Road active travel scheme to make it easier to walk and cycle.
- Start work on the first phase of the Farnworth [Streets for All](#) project. Streets for All projects aim to reduce traffic and road danger and improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport.
- Secure approval for the [Doffcocker active travel scheme](#), which will connect Doffcocker to Bolton town centre, including new cycle routes and a CYCLOPS junction. Work is due to start in 2024.
- Install [Be.EV electric charging points](#) for taxis and private hire vehicles in Eagle Street car park, Egerton Street car park in Farnworth and Back Willows Lane car park in Bolton.
- Reduce the amount of energy used by street lighting, which is the council's biggest user of electricity.
- Specify environmentally friendly methods of construction for the new homes built by Bolton Community Homes, including modular building. The resulting new homes will also be more energy efficient and cheaper to run.
- Retrofit existing properties owned by Bolton at Home up to a minimum energy performance rating of band C, saving energy and making homes warm and comfortable with low running costs.

8. Buildings, transport and operations

Over the last year, the organisations in the Bolton Vision partnership have been looking at ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their buildings and activities.

This includes things such as energy efficiency upgrades in buildings and schools, encouraging staff to cycle, walk or take public transport, and using planning and management decisions to look for ways to reduce emissions.

Bolton's climate change strategy also aims to provide opportunities to generate renewable energy, reduce waste and increase recycling.

Achievements

- Bolton council's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 21% since 2019, from 30,710 tonnes in 2019-2020 to 26,549 tonnes in 2022-2023.
- Bolton Council has been awarded over £11 million from the Green Heat Network Fund to develop a Bolton town centre heat network.
- [Ladybridge High School](#) featured on a video produced by [Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#) highlighting the benefits to the school of installing energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.
- The council has placed an order to replace another 19 refuse collection trucks, replacing older and less efficient vehicles.
- The council and local organisations created a social value partnership. This aims to maximise social value when delivering services, which means creating additional environmental and social benefits that have a positive impact on people and places in Bolton.
- In 2022-2023, the [Recycle4GM Community Fund in 2023](#) awarded a total of £220,000 to 22 local groups. One of those to benefit was the [Keep Daisy Hill Smiling and Walking project](#) in Daisy Hill and Westhoughton. The project is working with over 120 local families to reduce their household waste, such as toys, textiles, paper and plastics, and participate in a food waste prevention campaign.

Priorities for the next year

- Produce a plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from heating for the Bolton NHS Foundation Trust by April 2024.
- Secure a private sector partner to deliver the Bolton town centre heat network by 2025.
- Promote the [Powering our Schools](#) scheme for schools that want to install solar panels.
- Investigate ways to reduce the amount of energy used by streetlighting in Bolton, which is a major demand for electricity.

9. Natural environment and climate change resilience

Nature recovery across Greater Manchester will be guided by a [Local Nature Recovery strategy](#).

The new plan will identify areas that are already important for nature and people, and find new opportunities to connect people to green spaces across Greater Manchester.

Nature recovery is being boosted by the £2.6m [Greater Manchester Green Spaces Fund](#), which opened in 2022 and funds community projects that improve local green spaces or create new ones where they are needed most.

Sixty-eight projects across Greater Manchester have so far received funding, including five in Bolton. In 2023, this included [Growing the Future](#), which aims to

increase opportunities for families to enjoy nature and outdoor activities, including growing food.

[The Wildflowers at Hall i' th' Wood project](#) also received funding to improve the biodiversity of the Hall i' th' Wood community garden.

Meanwhile, the £1.9m National Lottery Heritage Fund project at the [Smithills estate](#) has ended after six years. The project supported nature conservation and restoration while encouraging the diverse local community to get involved through volunteering, events, education and social enterprise.

Headline achievements included:

- Planting 130,000 native broadleaf trees
- Restoring 70 hectares of land
- Installing 25 natural flood management schemes at 11 locations
- Creating Walker Fold Gateway into the Smithills estate.

The planting of 130,000 trees will support carbon capture, help rain to be absorbed into the ground and slow the flow of water as part of the wider natural flood management work taking place across the estate, increasing Bolton's climate resilience.

Flooding is one of the highest risks to society and the risk is predicted to increase because of climate change. To mitigate this risk, many new developments are now required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems. These systems are designed to slowly release rainwater back into the environment, reducing the risk of flooding from large rainstorms.

Achievements

- Planning approval has been granted by Bolton Council that required sustainable drainage systems to be built in 66 major developments and 14 other developments.
- Construction of a £2.2m flood storage basin to protect 130 properties in Horwich town centre from flooding.
- Bolton and Bury Swifts is working with Bolton at Home and McCauls developers to create places for swifts to nest in a housing development in Breightmet.
- Bolton Green Umbrella has created an interactive [map](#) of the borough's green spaces.
- Red Moss in Horwich, which is owned by Bolton Council, will be restored by Lancashire Wildlife Trust after it secured funding from [Defra's peatland restoration project](#) to restore a total of 417 hectares of peatland. Restoring peatlands not only absorbs greenhouse gas emissions, but also creates vital wildlife habitats and reduces the risk of flooding.
- Invasive non-native plants were surveyed along the river Croal and its tributaries as part of a project run by Natural Course and the Irwell Catchment Partnership.
- Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam, which are harmful invasive species, were tackled on [Bradshaw Brook](#) by staff and volunteers from Bolton Conservation Volunteers, Bradshaw Brook Fly Fishing Club, Groundwork,

United Utilities and other local organisations. Funding for some of this work was provided by the Angling Trust Angling Improvement Fund and Natural Course.

- Bolton Green Umbrella continued to [support local environmental groups](#) and held a festival of community gardens and green spaces in July 2023.
- [Air pollution](#) continued to improve.

Priorities for the next year

- Bolton Green Umbrella is creating a calendar of green volunteering opportunities to promote to Bolton businesses.
- City of Trees plans to plant 11.48 hectares of new woodland and hedgerow plus 146 standard trees in Bolton on land owned by the council, schools, housing associations and private landowners.
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust will deliver nature recovery projects as part of the Greater Manchester Wetlands programme.
- Bolton Green Umbrella and partners will use £50k of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding awarded to Bolton to develop greenspace projects in the borough.
- Include 'swift bricks' on Rumworth school to provide places where swifts can nest.
- Protect 78 properties from flooding by delivering two flood prevention schemes with a total value of £354k.

10. Skills for a sustainable future

Green technologies can generate jobs, fuel the green recovery and build a low carbon economy.

However, not enough people in the UK have the skills needed to work in jobs emerging in the environment sector or help us move to a more sustainable economy. According to [LinkedIn's Global Green Skills Report 2023](#), only one in eight British workers have green skills compared to one in seven workers in France and one in six in Germany.

It is vital that employers invest in green skills for their staff now if these opportunities are to benefit Bolton.

The [Green Skills Academy](#) in Trafford Park provides opportunities for people across Greater Manchester to gain the knowledge and skills to secure a job in the green jobs sector.

Achievements

- The Woodland Trust has created many opportunities for people to learn new skills through the £1.9m National Lottery Heritage Fund project at the Smithills Estate. Headline achievements include:
 - 82 active volunteers
 - 184 community events
 - 13,900 attendees at all events
 - 6250 social media followers
 - 80 community groups engaged
 - 11 social enterprises using the estate

- 2 new community interest companies established
- 8 people employed by social enterprises
- Bolton at Home has trained 45 of its skilled trades people to fit and maintain renewable energy technologies.
- The University of Bolton is a finalist in the Student Engagement category of the prestigious [Green Gown awards](#).
- Future Furnishings, a project to give used furniture a new lease of life, was delivered by Bolton Council, Bolton University and Bolton at Home. Fashion students at Bolton University upcycle furniture left behind when tenants leave properties owned by social housing provider Bolton at Home.
- In conjunction with the University of Salford, the [Bolton Food Waste Study](#) was launched in Horwich. Eight community leaders have been recruited to encourage 200 residents to take part in a survey of household food waste.

Priorities for the next year

- Expand the Future Furnishings project to promote more upcycling and skill sharing and highlight sustainability initiatives in Bolton.
- Complete research into resident's attitudes to food waste and develop ways to reduce food waste in Horwich as part of Bolton's food waste study.

11. Employability, entrepreneurship and innovation

Greater Manchester's green technologies and services sector could be worth £67.5m to the local economy, according to a report by [Green economy](#).

Last year, [Bee Net Zero](#) provided tailored environmental support to Greater Manchester's businesses including a free multiday course called Journey to Net Zero, plus frequent free events and webinars.

[Business Bolton](#) continues to support Bolton businesses on behalf of Bee Net Zero and the Greater Manchester Growth Hub. The [Proper Good](#) programme for social enterprises continues to support social enterprises in Bolton.

Achievements

- Greater Manchester's Green Growth team continued to support small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bolton. Between September 2022 and September 2023:
 - 15 Bolton SMEs engaged with the support
 - 7 Bolton SMEs were assisted (min 12 hours support)
 - 8 Bolton SMEs registered for the Journey To Net Zero programme
 - 177.6 tonnes of emissions were saved by Bolton SMEs through resource efficiency support.
 - £114,390.42 was saved by Bolton SMEs through resource efficiency support.
 - 10 Bolton SMEs accessed resource efficiency grants with a total value of £20,934.
 - Bolton Community and Voluntary Service and the Proper Good Support programme provided a wide range of support to social enterprises.

Priorities for the next year

- The Greater Manchester Business School at Bolton University will hold a net zero business conference in Bolton in summer 2024.
- The Proper Good support programme will be offering 'sustainability check ups' to support social enterprises to become more sustainable.
- Continue to progress the Greenworks project, with work on site expected to start in 2025.

12. What's next?

This second annual report aims to update people on the many projects taking place across Bolton to tackle climate change.

While it is impossible to capture everything, we hope it provides a helpful insight into some of the successes across the borough, as well as the priorities and actions for the Bolton Vision partnership and others who are working on climate change.

This annual report covers September 2022 to September 2023. Instead, from next year we intend to bring it in line with many other reporting cycles by matching it with the financial year (April 2024 to April 2025).

The next annual report will therefore be published in late spring 2025.