

Slough's Climate Change Strategy Vision

Vision

Slough Borough Council has set a stretch target of borough-wide carbon neutrality by 2030, with an objective target of 2040.

The UK Government has set a legally binding target of Net Zero by 2050, with emissions needing to have been reduced by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.

1. Scientific Context

In October 2018 the UNFCCC Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a 1.5°C Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.¹ The report found that to limit warming to 1.5°C requires major and immediate transformation. The scale of the required low-carbon transition is unprecedented. Emissions must decline globally by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 and will need to reach net-zero around mid-century. The report found that everyone; countries, cities, the private sector, individuals will need to strengthen their action without delay.

A further landmark report was published in May 2019 highlighting the decline of nature, of which climate change is contributing to, and the need for societal transformative change.² The report, released by the UNEP Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), was the most comprehensive assessment of its kind and found that; *'Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history — and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely'*.

2. Local Effect

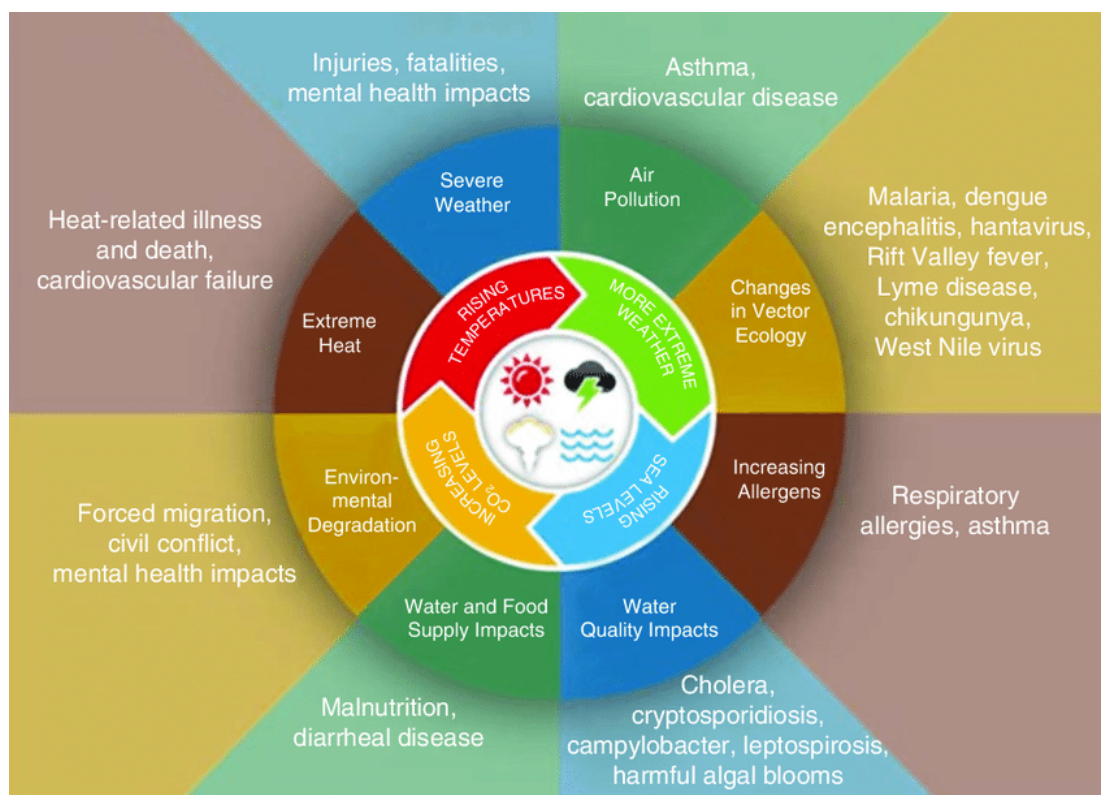
Slough Borough Council (SBC) acknowledges that climate change is the single biggest threat to humanity and has obligations to protect its residents from the impact of climate change at a local and regional level.

Currently, the effects of climate change are manifest at a local level with excess rainfall, local flooding, and excess heat events. These impacts can give rise to a threat to life, damage to health, damage to property, loss of income and impacts on mental wellbeing. These events are set to increase in frequency and intensity. We must act now.

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Special Report – Global Warming of 1.5°C, 2019: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

² Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Report, 2019: <https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>

The figure below illustrates the projected impacts of climate change on health and mental wellbeing.³



3. SBC Climate Change Motion

On 23rd July 2019, Slough Borough Council passed a Motion on Climate Change. The motion is as follows:

Climate Change Motion⁴

This Council notes the UK Government and Local Government Association's declaration of a national 'climate emergency', recognises that there is a growing urgency for national and international action to combat climate change, and commits to developing a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan that will address the causes and consequences of climate change in Slough by tackling 5 key objectives:

- *Reducing emissions from our estate and operations*
- *Reducing energy consumption and emissions by promoting energy efficiency measures, sustainable construction, renewable energy sources, and behaviour change*

³ Patel, V., D. Chisholm., T. Dua, R. Laxminarayan, and M. E. Medina-Mora, editors. 2015. Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use Disorders. Disease Control Priorities, third edition, volume 4. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0426-7. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO

⁴ Slough Borough Council's Climate Change Motion, 23/07/2019: <http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/g6332/Printed%20minutes%2023rd-Jul-2019%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

- *Reducing emissions from transport by promoting sustainable transport, reducing car travel and traffic congestion, and encouraging behaviour change*
- *Reducing consumption of resources, increasing recycling and reducing waste*
- *Supporting council services, residents and businesses to adapt to the impacts of climate change.*

This motion acts as a response to the climate and ecological crisis that we are facing and recognises the need for urgent action.

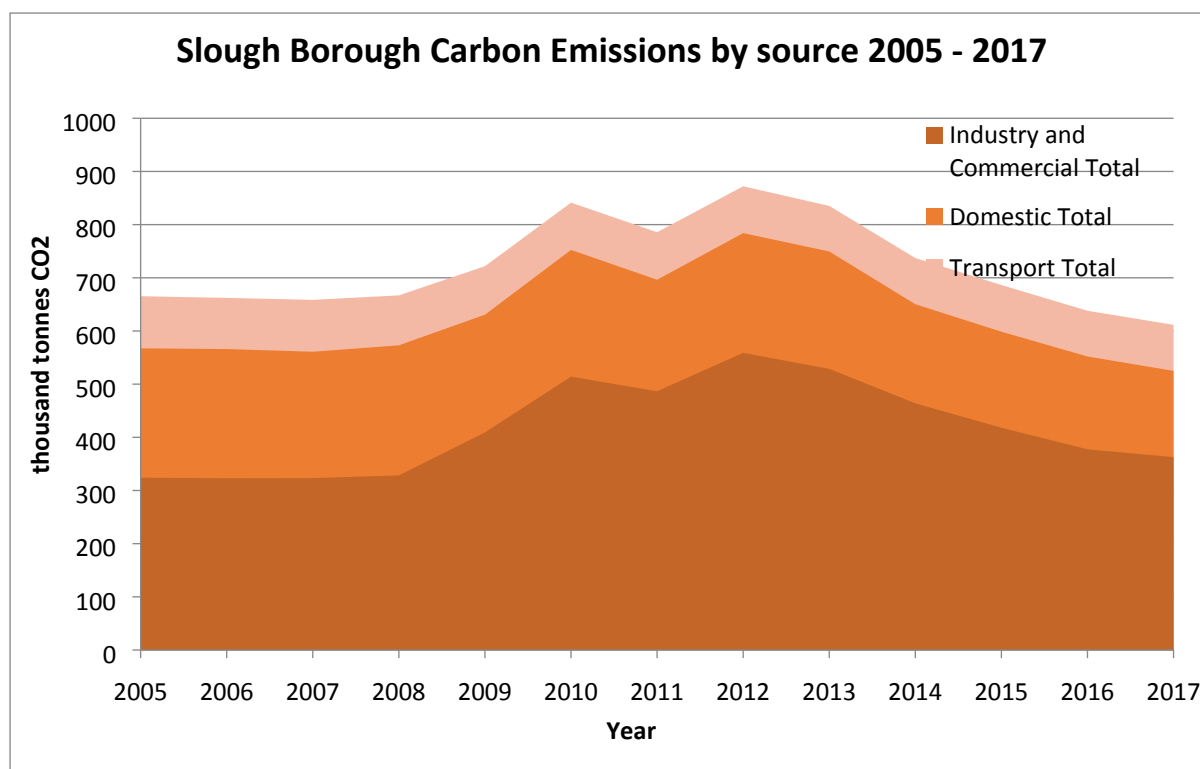
4. Slough's Carbon Emissions

Regarding the town of Slough's own contribution to the crisis, projected data from the UK Government for 2017 showed there were 744.3 thousand tonnes of CO₂ being emitted in the borough.⁵ Of this 60.1% came from Industry and Commercial sources, 21.8% came from Domestic sources and 28.5% came from Transport. This data is reflected in the graph below dating back to 2005.

It should be noted that unusually Slough is host to numerous data centres due to its strategic location. These buildings have a very high energy demand that exceeds that of transport and the domestic sector within the borough due to the requirement for cooling. This is a key factor differentiating the emissions profile of Slough from other towns.

It is clear that to be able to tackle borough wide emissions, the Council will need collaboration, cooperation and co-ordination with our local businesses, schools, NHS trusts, landlords, transport operators and communities.

⁵ BEIS, UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017>



Slough Borough Council's direct contribution to this total is minor. Based on the last available figures and the projected data provided by BEIS, Slough Borough Council's activities account for approximately 2% of the borough wide carbon emissions.

5. Council Plans and Strategies to deal with carbon emissions

Achieving carbon neutrality for Slough Borough Council's operations will be accomplished with the delivery of existing plans such as the Carbon Management Plan 2020-2030 and the Low Emission Strategy 2018-2025. Slough's new borough wide target date for carbon neutrality aligns with other strategic objectives such as Slough's 2040 Vision. The upcoming renewed Local Plan will also promote low carbon development in the borough. Additionally, new strategies such as the emerging Transport Infrastructure Plan, Local Transport Plan 4 and new Air Quality Plan will focus on transport emission reduction and modal shift contributing to reducing the borough's emissions.

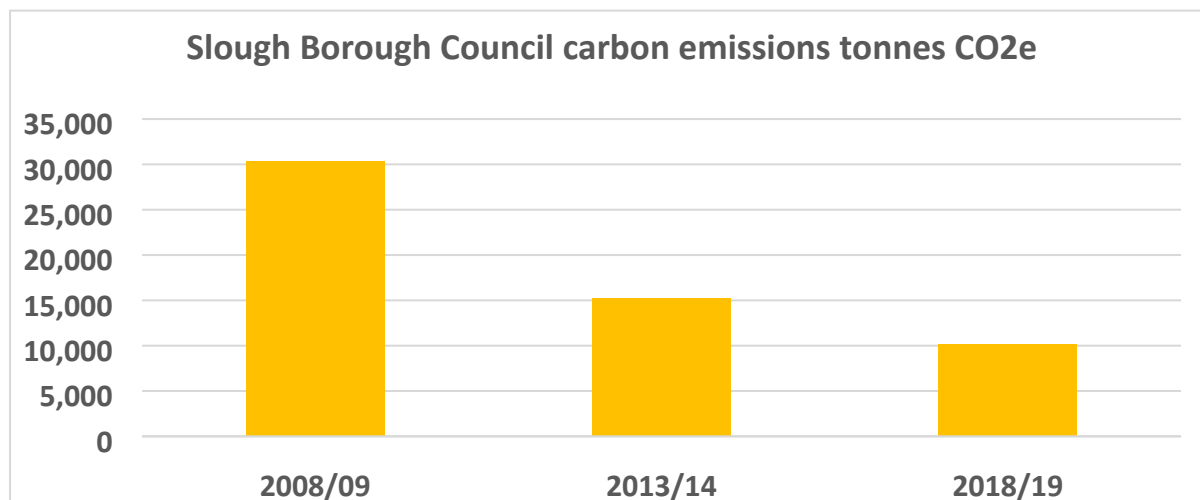
6. Leading by example, Slough Borough Council's approach to own emissions

Slough Borough Council has just published its new Carbon Management Plan 2020-2030. This plan oversees the council's own estate and operations and has set a target of carbon neutrality by 2030.

This plan addresses the first key objective of Councils' Climate Change Motion.

- *Reducing emissions from our estate and operations*

The Council has already made significant progress on its journey to reducing its own corporate carbon emissions. Between 2008/09 and 2013/14 a 49% reduction was achieved, followed by a 33% reduction by 2018/19 relative to 2013/14.



There are a number of programmes that are contributing to achieving these objectives and reducing the council's carbon footprint which include:

- **The RE:FIT Programme:** An energy efficiency and renewable energy refurbishment programme of council owned buildings. The programme is designed to reduce energy consumption by at least 20% reducing carbon emissions and energy costs. The first phase is annually saving SBC £28,000 and 138 tonnes of CO₂.
- **Fleet Challenge:** A project with the aim of decarbonising SBC's fleet by promoting low emission vehicles while reducing revenue expenditure from mileage claims. Still in the pilot phase the scheme has saved £16,700 and avoided 8 tonnes of CO₂ compared to SBC's average grey fleet.
- **LED Street Lights:** This project included the replacement of street lighting with more efficient LED bulbs which has significantly reduced energy costs and associated carbon emissions. Emissions from street lighting were 2,657 tonnes CO₂e in 2014/15 and fell 58% to 1,112 tonnes CO₂e in 2017/18.
- **Upton Court Park Jubilee Wood forest:** As opposed to reducing carbon emissions this forestry project draws down carbon that can be used as a form of carbon offset. Initiated in 2013, the woodland has sequestered 3 tonnes of CO₂. As the woodland growth accelerates with age this is forecast to reach over 700 tonnes after 25 years and over 1,300 tonnes after 50 years.

7. SBC Approach to borough wide decarbonisation

Slough Borough Council has recently formed the Environmental Strategic Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, which is tasked with overseeing the strategic delivery of the council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and other environmental programmes.

To develop the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan the council is liaising with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure that the broadest possible spectrum of insight is included. It is clear the majority of carbon emissions come from the commercial and industrial sectors and we will need to obtain their firm commitment to reducing their carbon emissions.

A series of workshops will be hosted by the council which will provide an opportunity to discuss targets and proposed strategies to achieve reductions in carbon emissions. The council is currently reaching out to local businesses to find participants. The council has also already engaged with local residents concerning environmental issues as part of the consultations for Slough's 2040 Vision.

A strategy document will be delivered alongside an action plan that will outline the council's required actions to take the borough towards carbon neutrality. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will be published later in 2021.