

Decarbonisation Pathway

Accelerating our journey towards net zero



Decarbonisation Pathway

Contents page

Part one: Accelerating net zero

Part two: Our net zero journey

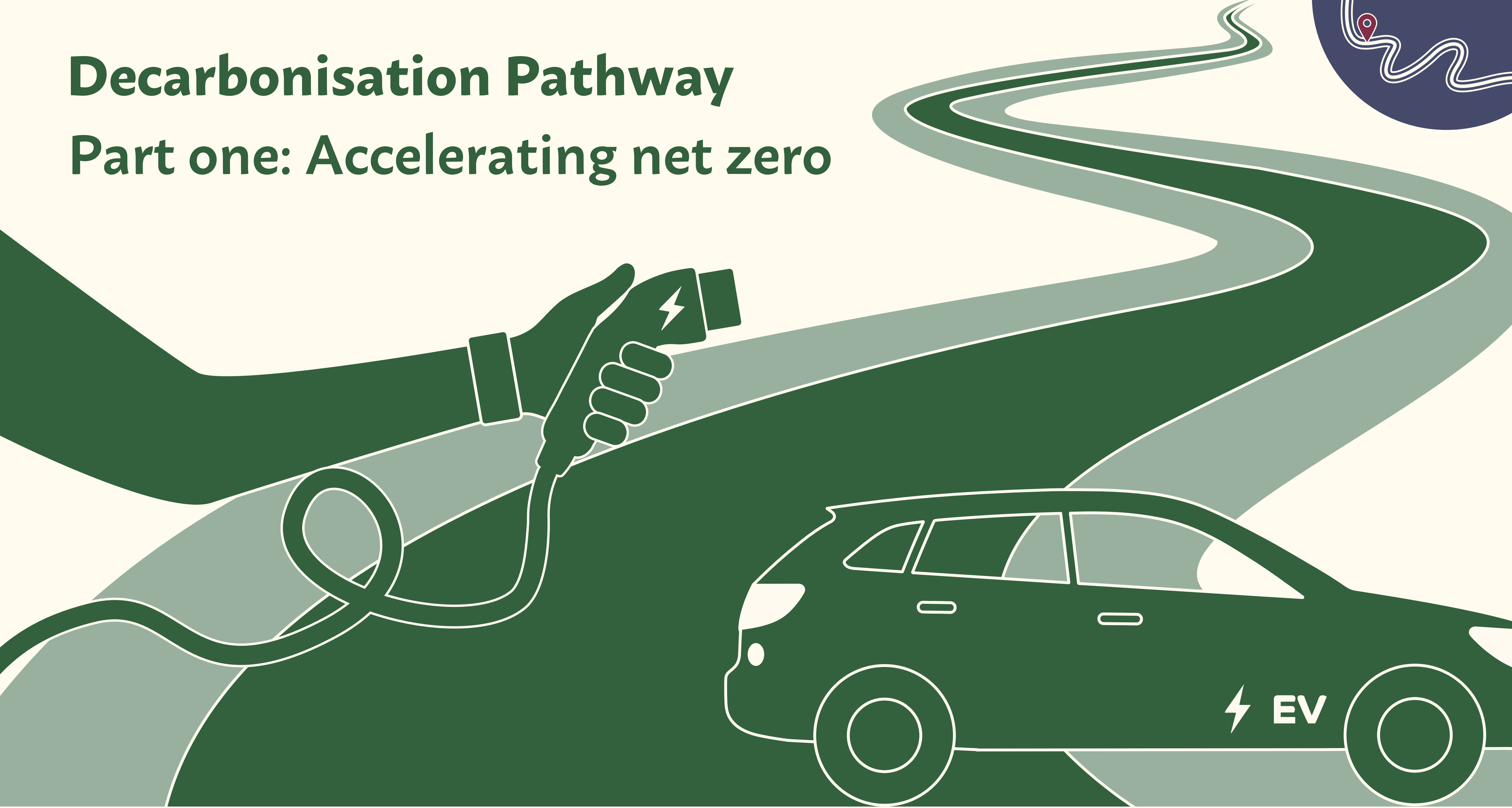
Part three: Carbon offsetting

Part four: Next steps



Decarbonisation Pathway

Part one: Accelerating net zero





Net zero: We made a commitment



We aim to achieve net zero because we made a clear public commitment to do so. Broadland District Council has been measuring its carbon emissions since 2018-19 and has a long-standing record of placing environmental considerations at the heart of its decision making.

In 2022, we strengthened this commitment by setting a target to achieve net zero by 2030, and in 2023 we declared a climate and biodiversity emergency.

We have remained true to our commitment through practical action. Since 2019, we have supported the planting of over 120,000 trees in the district, provided grant funding to support local nature recovery through the Future for Nature Fund, and purchased and manage Broadland Country Park. We have transitioned our major assets to renewable electricity tariffs, installed air source heat pumps at the Horizon Centre, and worked with Veolia to move the Council's refuse collection vehicles to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel.

These actions demonstrate our commitment to reducing emissions while delivering wider environmental benefits, and we plan to make even more progress by **accelerating our net zero target.**



Accelerating our net zero target

We aim to achieve net zero across Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 emissions by 2028. This is two years ahead of our original 2030 net zero target.

- **Scope 1 emissions** are the direct emissions from sources we own or control, such as natural gas used in temporary accommodation, diesel used in council-owned vehicles, and heating oil previously used at Frettenham Depot before refurbishment.
- **Scope 2 emissions** come from the electricity we purchase. Following the move of most assets onto 100% renewable tariffs by 2024–25, the Broadland Food Innovation Centre is now the only asset contributing to Scope 2 emissions and will be the sole contributor in the 2025–26 report.
- **Scope 3 emissions** include all other indirect emissions, such as contracted services, staff and member travel, waste from buildings, water and sewage, electricity transmission losses, and ‘well-to-tank’ emissions. These emissions are the most difficult to reduce as they are largely outside our direct control.

We will achieve net zero by significantly reducing emissions from our baseline year wherever possible. **We have already achieved substantial emissions reductions across all three scopes, reducing Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 77%, and Scope 3 emissions by 72% from the baseline year.**

2025

Net zero
2028

Why net zero matters



Because we have a duty

Achieving net zero is important in the context of national policy. The UK Government has a legally binding target to reach net zero by 2050 (Climate Change Act 2008 (2019 Amendment)), and as a local authority we want to show how this can be delivered in practical ways.

Because we are at risk

Climate change already presents real risks for Broadland and Norfolk. As the driest region in the UK, we face increasing pressure from drought, water shortages and heatwaves. Norfolk's low-lying geography also makes it vulnerable to sea level rise and saltwater entering watercourses, threatening farmland, freshwater habitats and water supplies, while hotter, drier summers increase the risk of wildfires. These impacts affect residents, infrastructure and local wildlife, making emissions reduction essential.

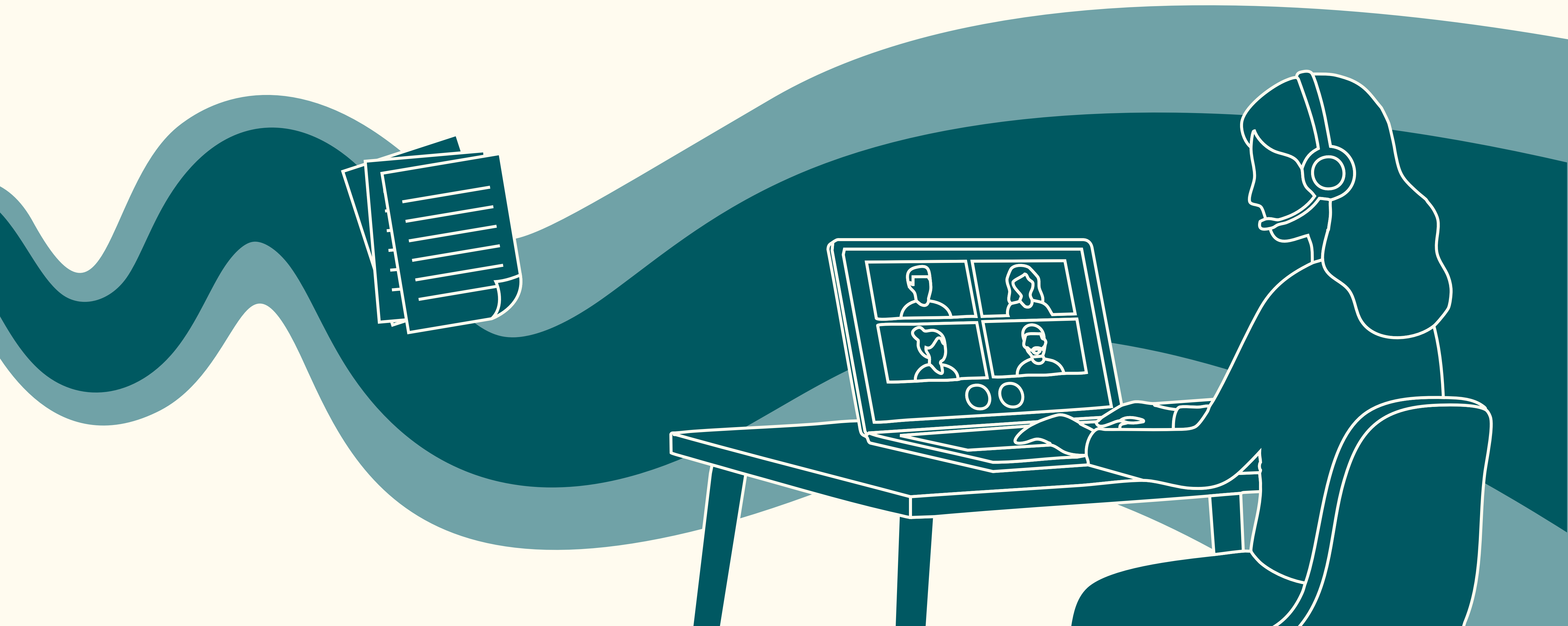
Because it improves local lives

Lower-emission approaches deliver immediate local benefits. Using HVO fuel in refuse collection vehicles means cleaner air in our towns and villages. Compared to standard diesel, HVO produces fewer harmful exhaust fumes, helping to improve air quality where people live and work. Upgrading our temporary accommodation with solar panels and heat pumps provides reliable, on-site heating and electricity, reduces reliance on gas and imported energy, and delivers cleaner air, more efficient homes, and greater energy security for our tenants.



Decarbonisation Pathway

Part two: Our net zero journey so far



How we define net zero



When we talk about net zero, we mean taking direct action to lower our emissions across the services we manage. This includes installing solar panels on our buildings, transitioning our vehicles to electric, and removing gas boilers from our housing stock where possible. Offsetting is reserved only for those emissions which are hard to remove.

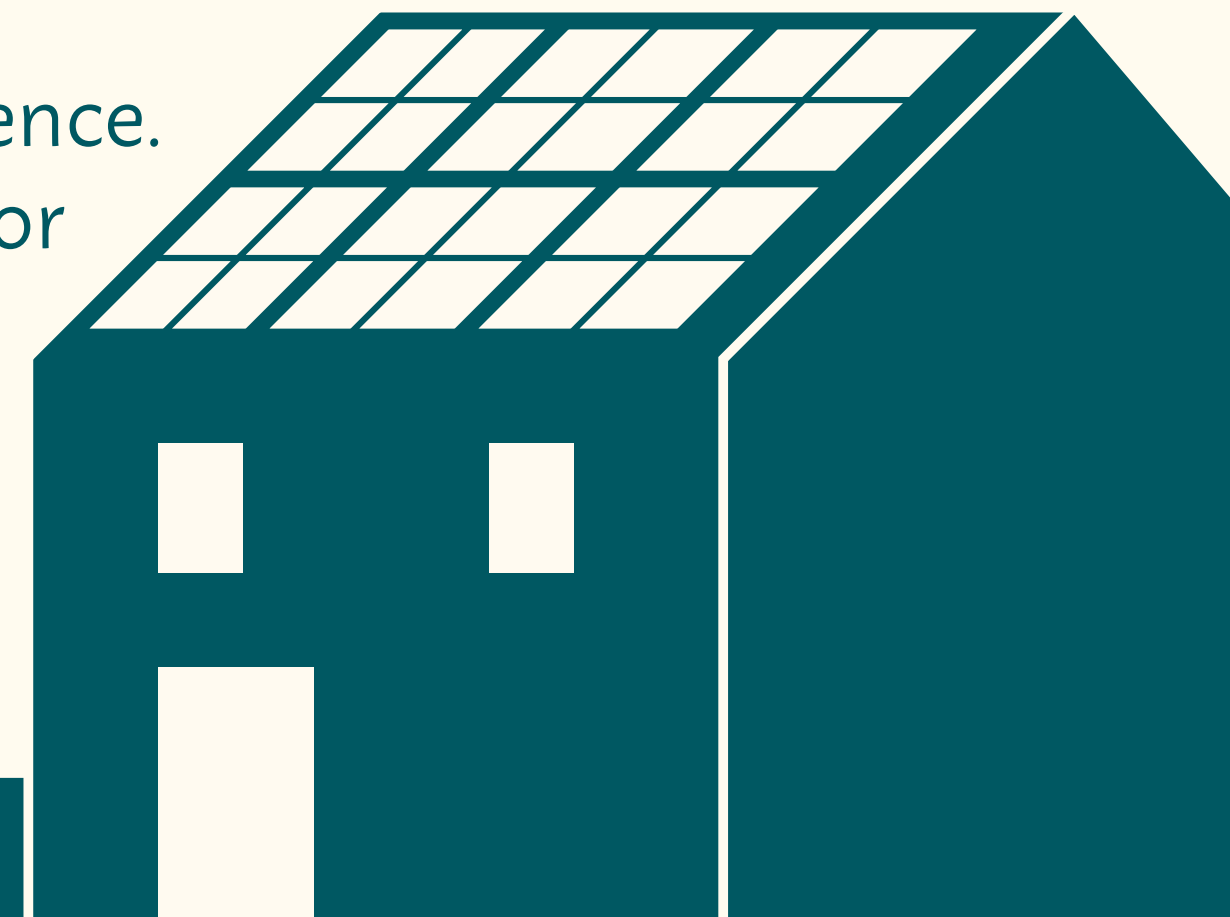
How we measure emissions

We measure our emissions in line with the internationally recognised Greenhouse Gas Protocol. This includes Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions, which we report separately. While we do not measure every single activity in our Scope 3 emissions, we do include emissions from our largest contracts, such as our waste collection service managed by Veolia.

Unlike many organisations we also measure “well-to-tank” emissions, which account for the carbon released in producing and transporting fuels before they reach our vehicles. Including well-to-tank emissions significantly increases our reported footprint; however, this approach reflects best practice and was adopted in 2023-24 following recommendations from Groundwork East, who independently audited our emissions reporting process.

Why we do not measure everything

Some emission data is difficult to capture reliably, so we focus on areas where we have good intelligence. For example, we do not currently measure the downstream emissions from all external consultants or contractors. Similarly, we do not yet include IT equipment in our foot printing, although we plan to incorporate this in future years. That said, all IT equipment is recycled or reused, and all our servers are in buildings we own, which are already included in our emissions reporting.





How we define net zero (continued)

Our approach to offsetting

Offsetting will only be used for emissions that are hard to abate, such as well-to-tank emissions, and only as a last resort. Where offsetting is appropriate, we will prioritise local, nature-based projects that align with our Biodiversity Strategy. This ensures that any CO₂e we offset not only mitigates emissions but also enhances Norfolk's natural environment, improving habitats for native species while sequestering carbon locally.

Verification and assurance

Our emissions process has undergone independent verification. Groundwork East audited our methodology last year, and we implemented all their recommendations. Moving forward, as we accelerate our net zero target, we will re-verify our emissions to ensure we continue to align with best practise.

Integrity of our process

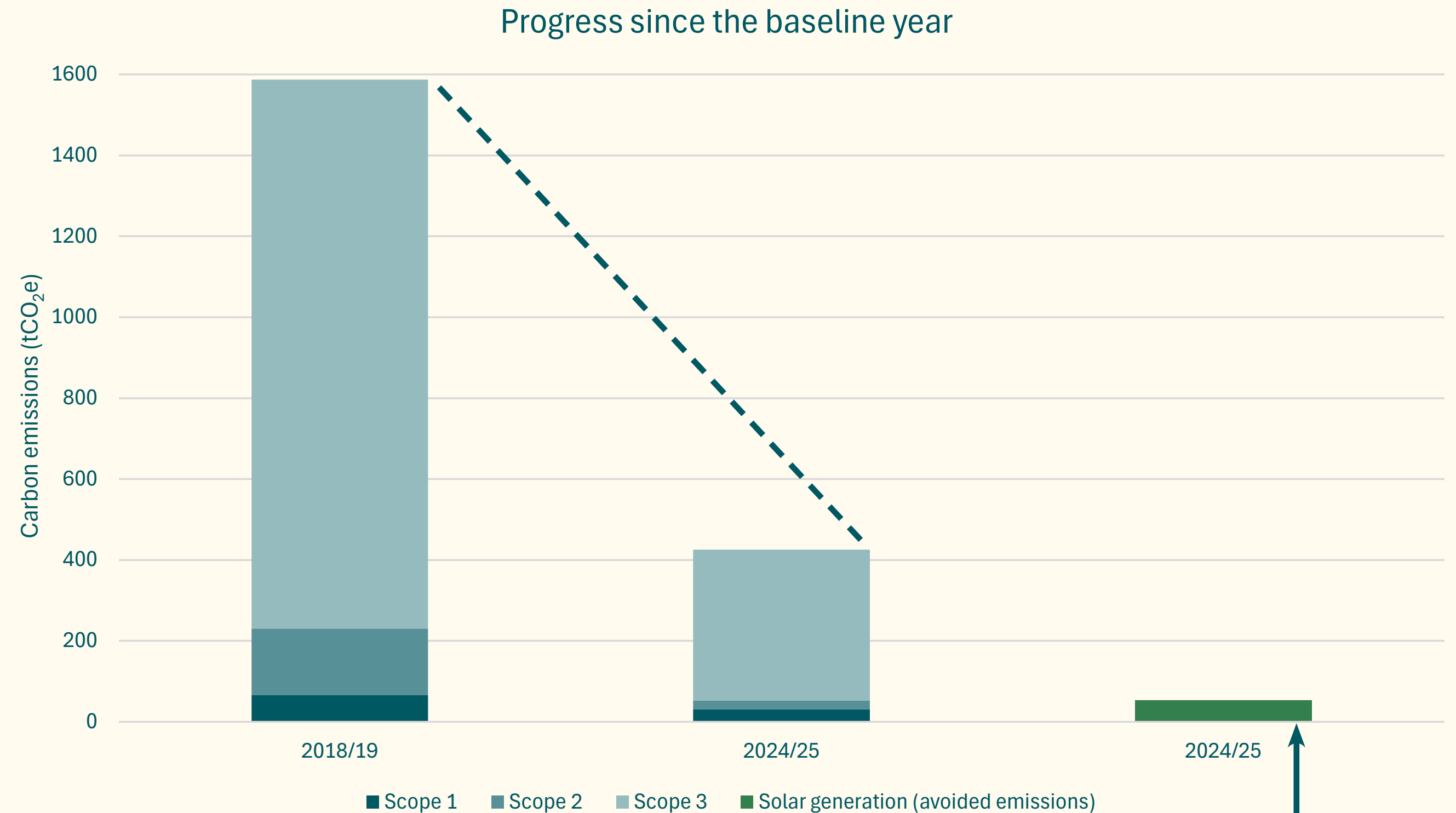
We maintain high integrity in our emissions reporting. We follow the Greenhouse Gas Protocol consistently and include all emissions for which we have reliable data. By reporting well-to-tank emissions, publishing our figures annually, and making all historic reports publicly available online, we continue to ensure transparency and credibility.

The progress we have made

Broadland District Council has been measuring its carbon emissions since the 2018-19 baseline year. Since then, we have achieved a 73% reduction in our carbon footprint, a clear sign of steady, meaningful progress in our drive towards net zero.

This large decrease can be partly attributed to:

- The transition to HVO fuel in our Refuse Collection fleet
- The installation of Air Source Heat Pumps in our main office building at the Horizon Centre
- The use of 100% renewable energy tariffs across our main assets



In 2024-2025, the solar photo voltaic system at the Horizon Centre generated over 250 mega watt hours of renewable energy, equivalent to **53 tonnes** of avoided CO₂e emissions.



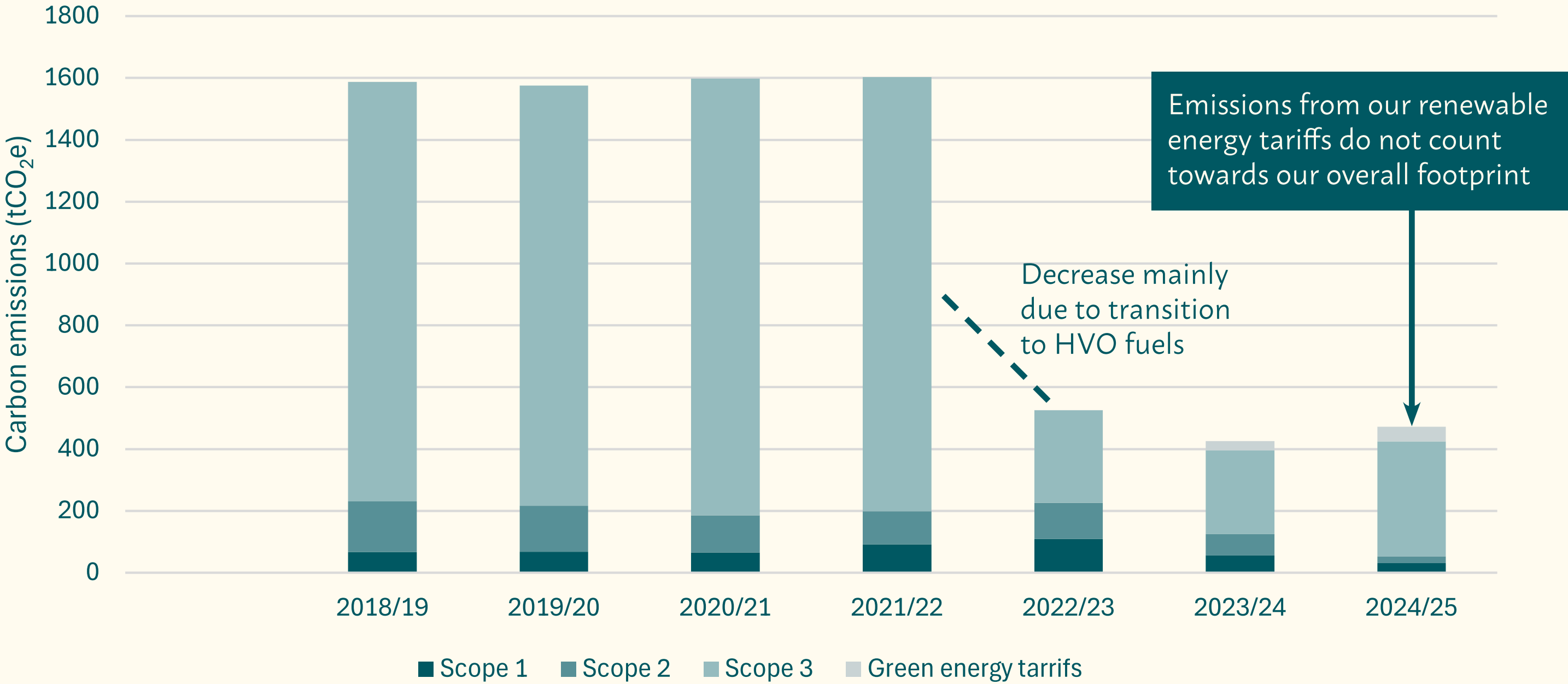
Our progress since the baseline year

Our emissions have been consistently trending downward since we began reporting in 2018-19.

The small rise between 2023-24 and 2024-25 footprint reflects updated conversion factors published by the Department for Energy Security and net zero, rather than any change in our underlying performance.

Our annual reporting process gives a clear, transparent view of our progress and enables us to anticipate how our future carbon footprint may evolve in line with the activities we undertake as a Council.

Broadland District Council
Annual carbon footprints

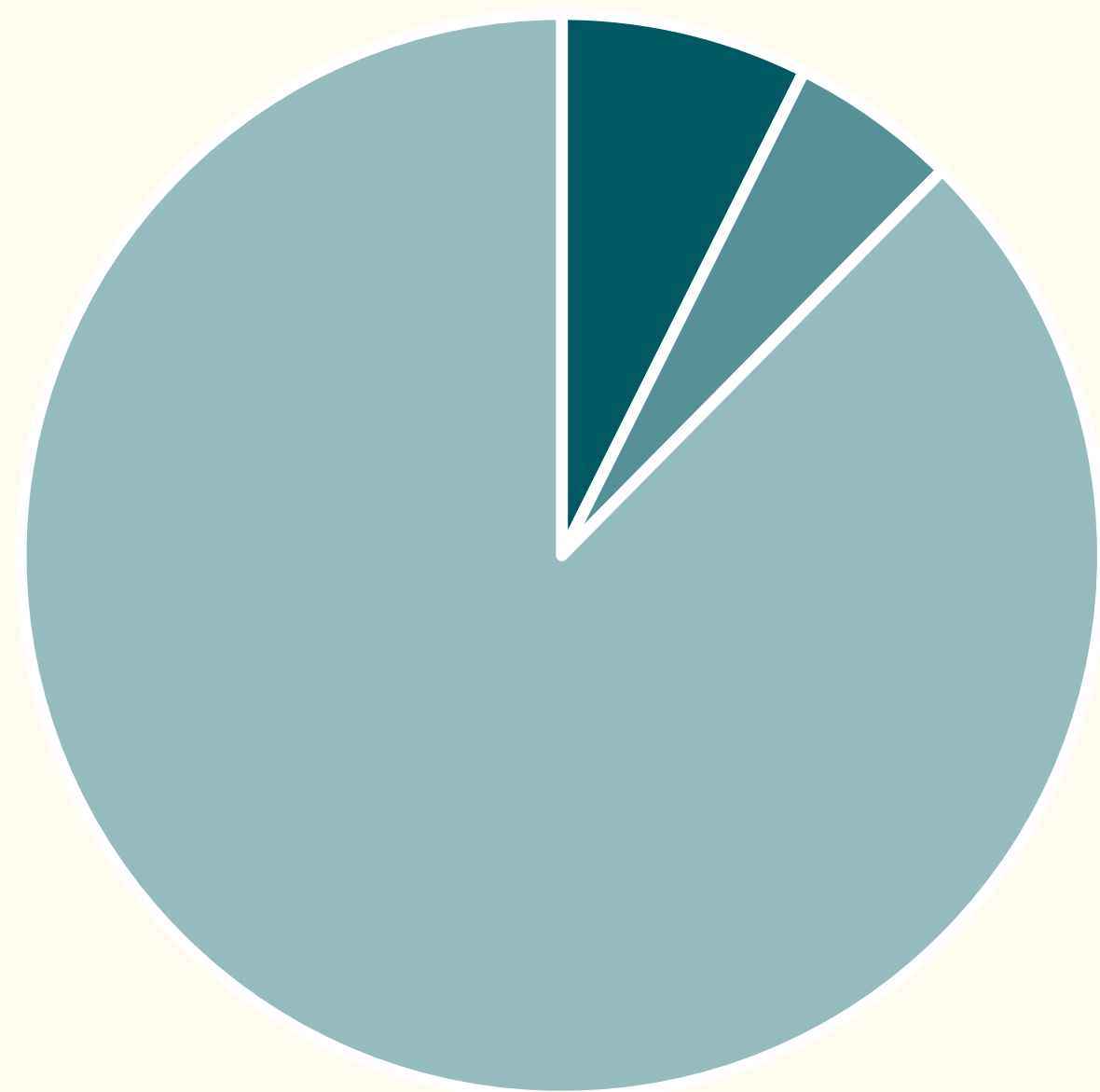


	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Carbon Footprint tCO ₂ e	1587.11	1575.48	1597.51	1603.17	525.59	395.37	425.58

Breakdown of our most recent carbon footprint



2024/25 carbon footprint



■ Scope 1 ■ Scope 2 ■ Scope 3

Our Scope 1 emissions (31 tCO₂e in 2024/25) are very low, accounting for 7.3% of our total remaining carbon footprint. These emissions arise from the use of diesel in some council-owned vans and from gas-fired central heating systems within parts of our temporary accommodation housing stock.

The majority of our assets are supplied on 100% renewable electricity tariffs. As a result, emissions associated with electricity consumption in these buildings do not contribute to our net carbon footprint. Emissions from electricity use in buildings that are not on a renewable tariff are included within our Scope 2 emissions, which account for 5% of the total remaining footprint.

The majority of our overall carbon footprint is made up of Scope 3 emissions, primarily 'well-to-tank' emissions (65%). These relate to the extraction, refining and transportation of the liquid fuels used on site, mainly natural gas, diesel and HVO fuel.

The remaining Scope 3 emissions include staff and member business travel (8.3%), electricity transmission and distribution losses (6.1%), and HVO fuel use (3.9%).

Decarbonisation Pathway

Part three: Carbon offsetting



An integrity-led approach to carbon offsetting

To achieve net zero by 2028, we will seek to reduce our remaining emissions through carbon offsetting.

We recognise, however, that carbon offsetting is not without controversy. It can be misused as a form of greenwashing where it substitutes for, rather than complements, genuine emissions reduction. Risks are highest where non-accredited schemes are used, where credits lack additionality and permanence, or where the environmental benefits are unclear. Even within accredited voluntary carbon markets, the quality and outcomes of projects can vary significantly.

For these reasons, our approach to offsetting is deliberately cautious, transparent, and integrity-led. Offsetting is not viewed as a primary solution, but as a last resort for residual emissions that cannot currently be reduced through technically, or economically viable measures. This approach aligns with UK best practice and wider guidance on responsible participation in voluntary carbon markets.



Our carbon offsetting principles



Principle one: Offsetting only unavoidable residual emissions

Our first principle is that carbon offsetting will only be used for emissions that we cannot reasonably eliminate through direct action. Priority will always be given to emissions reduction measures such as energy efficiency improvements, electrification, air source heat pumps, and on-site renewable generation. Offsetting will therefore be limited to genuinely hard-to-abate emissions, for example certain “well-to-tank” emissions associated with fuel supply chains, where there are currently no straightforward or cost-effective alternatives available.

Principle two: Quality projects with expert oversight

Where offsetting is used, we will only purchase credits from high-quality, credible projects. This will include credits generated through recognised and accredited schemes, or projects that can be robustly assessed against recognised integrity criteria, including additionality, permanence, and verification. To ensure this integrity, we will work alongside:

- **Norfolk Environmental Credits** as a potential delivery partner;
- **Asher Minns at the University of East Anglia, Executive Director of the Tyndall Centre** for Climate Change Research as an independent advisor providing academic and scientific oversight; and
- **The Wending Beck Exemplar Project** which is a large-scale nature recovery initiative in Norfolk, bringing together farmers, conservation organisations and local stakeholders to restore habitats, improve water quality, enhance biodiversity, and deliver climate benefits through land-use change.



Our carbon offsetting principles (continued)

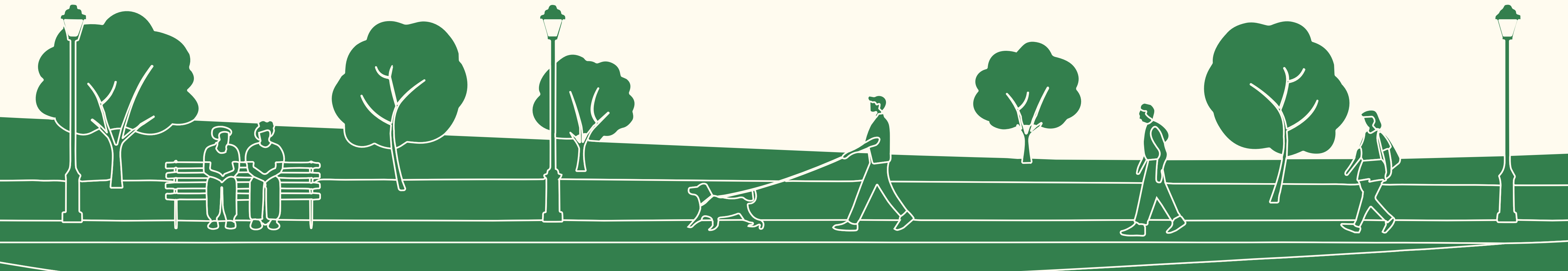


Principle three: Locally focused and aligned with biodiversity recovery

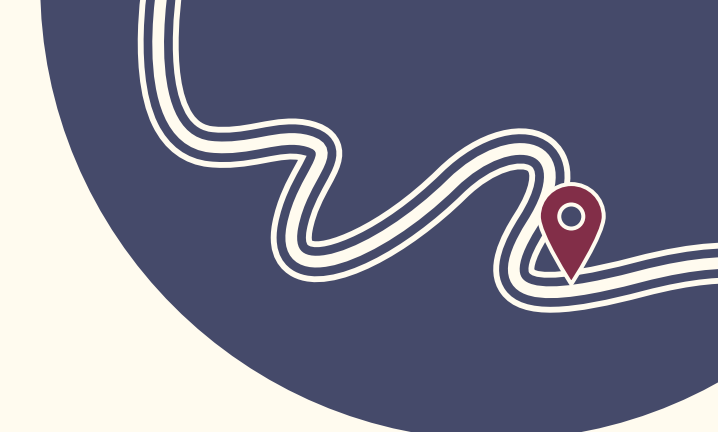
Our preference is to offset emissions locally, ideally within Broadland, and where this is not possible, elsewhere within Norfolk. This place-based approach ensures that climate action delivers tangible co-benefits for nature, communities, and ecosystems within our area.

By prioritising local offsets, we directly support Priority Two of Broadland's Biodiversity Strategy, which focuses on enhancing biodiversity on land outside our direct ownership or management.

Where offsetting cannot be delivered within Broadland, and must take place elsewhere in Norfolk, we aim to be guided by national and local policy drivers, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This ensures that any investment delivers more than a carbon offset alone, supporting high-quality, well-governed biodiversity and nature-based projects that extend our positive environmental impact across Norfolk.



Decision making hierarchy



To be considered, a project must align with the principles previously outlined and meet all essential criteria.

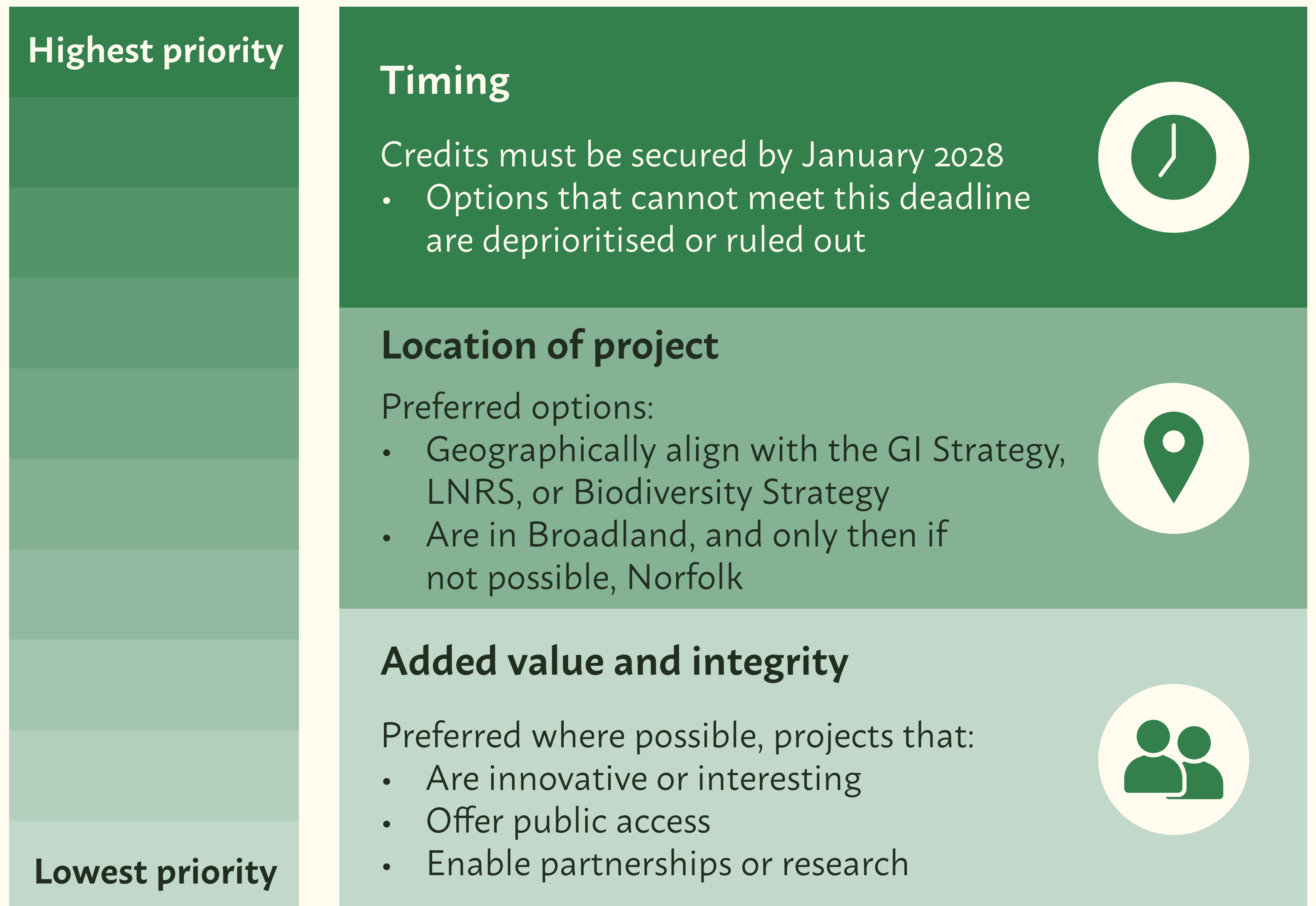
- a credible and legitimate carbon offset scheme

And be:

- located in Broadland, or Norfolk.

Projects that do not meet all of these criteria will not be taken forward.

Where these criteria are met, the following hierarchy will be applied to support the decision-making process.



Decarbonisation Pathway

Part four: Next steps





Our next steps



We aim to achieve net zero because we said we would.

We will continue to strengthen our understanding of remaining emissions through ongoing research and data gathering. While HVO has a role in the short term, we recognise it is not a long-term solution, and our vehicle fleet will ultimately need to transition to electric alternatives. To support this, we will trial an electric refuse collection vehicle to assess its performance over longer routes, while also continuing to explore emerging options such as hydrogen fuel cells.

For any new temporary accommodation that is purchased, we will carry out surveys to understand how these buildings can be decarbonised, with the aim of securing funding to deliver these improvements. We will continue to measure and report our emissions annually, ensuring transparency and clarity in our progress towards net zero.

Beyond net zero

Beyond emissions reduction, we remain fully committed to delivering our Climate Change, Environment and Delivery Plan, alongside a wider programme of projects that extends beyond our Scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions. We will also continue to deliver, monitor and report on our Biodiversity Strategy, ensuring that Broadland District Council is an exemplar across the full breadth of environmental activity.

The pathway to net zero

Transitioning our vehicle fleet by replacing handyperson vehicles with electric alternatives. This will reduce our Scope 1 emissions from our 2024-2025 footprint by further a 19%.

Trialing electric refuse vehicles to test their suitability on long rural routes.



Collaborating with Asher Minns at the University of East Anglia and Norfolk Environmental Credits to explore local, high-quality solutions for residual or hard-to-abate emissions.

Decarbonising our temporary accommodation by replacing gas boilers with air source heat pumps and solar will reduce our Scope 1 emissions from the 2024-2025 footprint by a further 78%.

Having our emissions independently audited to ensure our net zero approach is credible and aligned with established standards.

Carrying out further decarbonisation surveys on all newly purchased units.

