

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

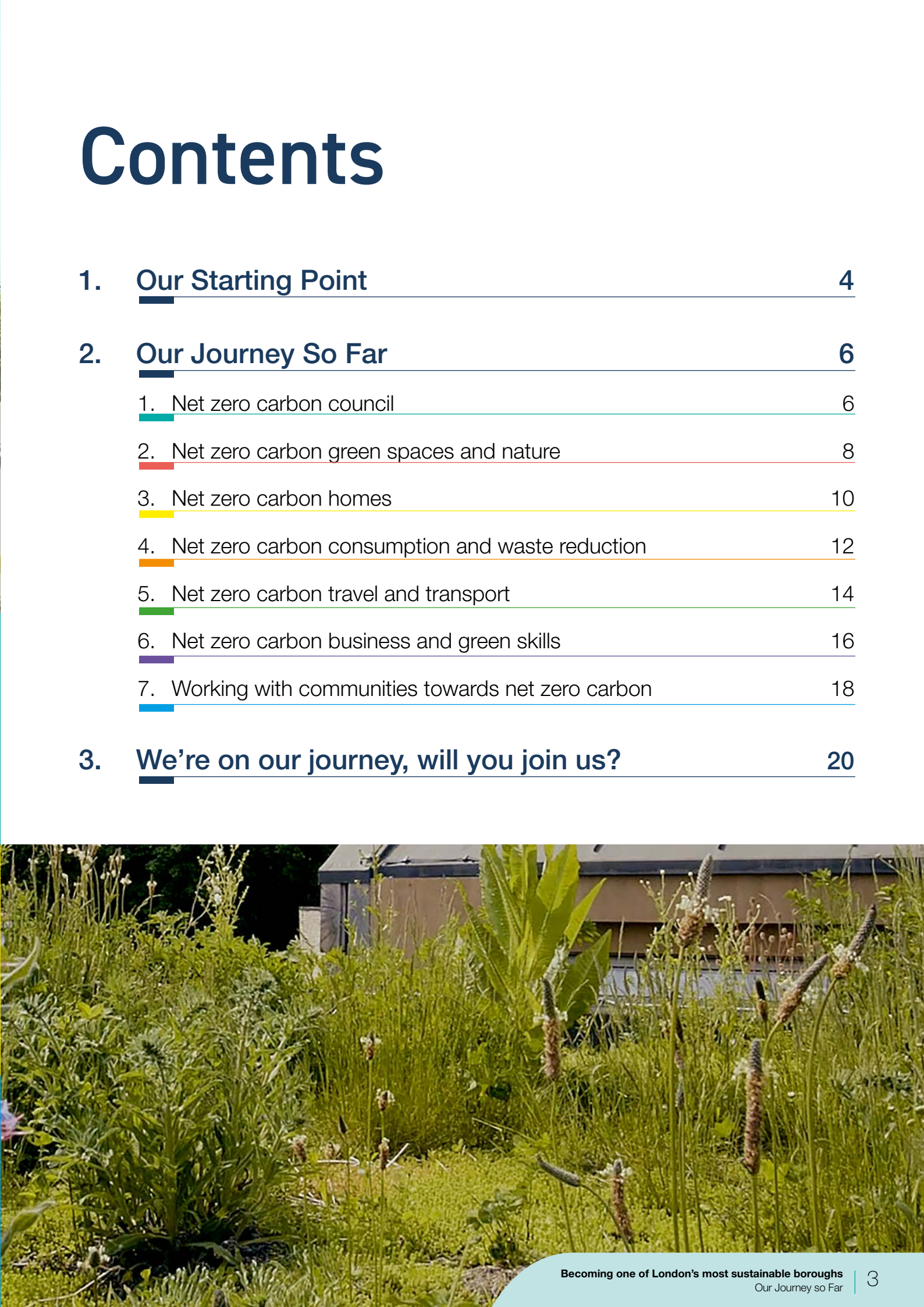
Becoming one of London's most sustainable boroughs



Caring for people, our places and the planet

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Our Starting Point

The Sustainability Story in Barnet

We are proud to present our first annual report; this document provides an overview of progress on our sustainability journey up to March 2024, showcasing some of the amazing work going on across the borough, and where we are on our journey.

Our journey began in earnest in May 2022, with the declaration of a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. This declaration took the first step in recognising the urgent action required to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss in Barnet, and the need to go further and faster than ever before, to foster a more social, economic and sustainable borough.

Through the creation of a dedicated sustainability team, to co-ordinate all the activities taking place across the council, we have set ambitious commitments and developed an evidence-led Sustainability Action Plan. This plan puts us on the path to delivering our targets of becoming a net zero council by 2030 and a net zero borough, as

soon as possible after this, but no later than 2042.

We recognise that we cannot deliver a net zero Barnet alone, and that we will have to work with neighbouring boroughs, the Mayor of London, agencies like TfL and others to get there. We also recognise there is much work happening across the organisation and by our partners and communities, which is often delivered as part of business-as-usual activities; all of which will impact on delivering against our ambitious targets.

Our next phase of work will be to facilitate and support partners, community groups, residents and businesses across the borough in working together to achieve these goals. We recognise the effects of climate change will be felt differently across Barnet, and that some communities and groups will be impacted to a greater degree than others. To ensure that our actions do not negatively impact these, our programme has also prioritised taking a climate equity approach, ensuring that our actions deliver

a just transition with fair outcomes across the borough, its neighbourhoods and communities.

As a result, we are now well on our journey to support Our Plan for Barnet in caring for our people, our places and the planet; by becoming one of London's most sustainable boroughs.



However, we know that the council alone can only do so much, and that achieving these targets will require the whole borough to work together, through the engagement and support of all our residents, communities, businesses and partners. In January 2023, together with the community, we launched the BarNET Zero Campaign, which sets out our vision and journey to becoming a more sustainable borough.

Alongside managing many other events and forums, we also delivered Barnet's first-ever Citizens Assembly by bringing together a representative sample of 60 residents from across the Borough, including 20 young people, to answer the question of 'how can we work together in becoming more sustainable now and in the future?'

Find out more about the citizen's assembly and its recommendations what we are doing and how you can join us

We have made significant progress on our journey to net zero; having been ranked in the top 18% of local authorities in the **Climate Emergency UK scorecards** last year, and we are proud of the accelerated pace of change and the progress we have made since May 2022, by reducing our carbon emissions, championing sustainability and raising awareness of the impact of changing climate on our environment, but we know there is much more to do.

We're on our journey... will you join us?

Our journey so far

Net zero carbon Council



Our ambition is to be a vocal climate leader that leads by example for our residents and communities and beyond; we have already made positive strides in reducing the council's carbon footprint, and by working with our partners and contractors to encourage them to operate more sustainably.

To embed sustainability at the heart of what we do we have launched a sustainability learning module for our

staff, encouraging staff to make more sustainable choices in their everyday lives and by reducing our emissions wherever we can by decarbonising our buildings.

We have also begun working with our suppliers to lower emissions in new and existing contracts and are refocusing our decision-making towards a more sustainable future that deliver, in the long-term, social and environmental benefits.

1.

To deliver on our ambitions, so far we've:

- Embedded sustainability commitments across emerging strategies, plans and policies, including the **Social Value Policy** to ensure that our procurements and contracts provide the largest environmental, social and economic benefits as possible.
- Begun to improve 36 schools and council buildings by installing air source heat pumps, solar panels, battery storage and LED lighting, which is expected to achieve a combined **estimated annual carbon saving of 1,040 tonnes**.
- Worked to prioritise and integrate sustainability across the organisation by publishing our sustainability learning module, offering carbon literacy training to our staff, as well as launching our Net Zero Decision Making Tool, which allows council officers to evaluate the impacts of their work on sustainability.
- Encouraged sustainable commuting as part of our emerging Staff Travel Plan, by installing bicycle sheds at our Colindale office and making our pool car fleet 100% hybrid.
- Improved office recycling across council buildings to reduce waste and help build a low carbon culture that empowers staff to support action to reduce emissions.



Donated 450 refurbished council laptops to residents and communities to encourage reuse of materials and increase digital inclusion and access to technology.

Net zero carbon green spaces and nature

2.



Barnet is a green borough, but our environment, and the variety of wildlife that inhabits it, is affected by our changing climate, from more frequent heat waves and flash floods to the loss of critical biodiversity that enriches and supports our place.

Our natural environment and green spaces play a critical role in our efforts to adapt to these changes, helping to address issues such as the urban heat island effect, and acting as natural flood prevention. If we are to respond to these challenges, protecting and expanding our green spaces is the first step in doing so.

To deliver on our ambitions, so far we've:

- Embedded sustainability commitments across emerging Council strategies, plans and policies, including the **Tree Policy 2023-28's** goal of planting 5,000 trees – which will add to the 690 tons of CO2 that our park and street trees remove annually.
- Embarked on delivering a new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Plan for Barnet, which seeks to improve and enhance our greenspaces and biodiversity.

- Launched our **"Trees for Streets"** scheme to encourage residents and businesses to support our journey by sponsoring a tree on their doorstep, or in one of Barnet's parks, which has led to 98 trees sponsored already. To support this, we've also published our interactive community **tree portal** to give residents information about all trees in Barnet and provides opportunities to submit an enquiry about a particular tree from the map.

- Improved and created new woodland areas, such as Basing Hill Park, Finchley Square, and the Barnet Memorial Woodland; planting over 500 trees and 75 shrubs throughout the borough to prevent flooding, sequester carbon and improve biodiversity. This is in addition to the 1,200 trees we planted in 2023-24 in support of our tree planting programme.



Converted close to **100% of our streetlights** to smarter, energy efficient LEDs, **lowering emissions, and reducing the effects of light pollution on our environment and biodiversity.**

- Taken our new Flood Risk Management Strategy **2023-29** through to approval. It identifies projects including Action for Silk Stream (2021-2027) which are aimed to help to address flood risk as well as act a biodiverse wildlife habitat; and promotes the sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) scheme at Halliwick Recreation Ground which aims to store storm water during heavy rain reducing the risk of flooding to nearby properties and highways.



Greening our Borough
BarNet Zero video

Net zero carbon homes

3.



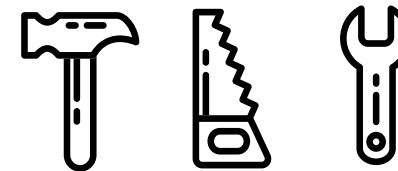
Our homes provide the foundations of a safe, secure and nurturing environment, in which we can grow and thrive. They are also one of the biggest challenges and barriers to reaching a sustainable future, with the London Energy and Greenhouse Gas Inventory (LEGGI) in 2021 recognising that 65% of carbon emissions in Barnet are associated with the energy use within buildings, with over two-thirds of these related to providing power for the 165,000 residential homes in the borough.

Our ambition is to ensure that those that live, study, and work in the borough do so in warmer, healthier, and more energy efficient buildings, whilst ensuring that new developments are future-proofed to meet increasing targets and are resilient to further changes to Barnet's environment.

We want to lead by example, ensuring that council homes and buildings are energy efficient to deliver net zero by 2030, whilst creating more healthy and comfortable living spaces and workplaces that enable our people to grow and thrive for many years to come.

To deliver on our ambitions, so far we've:

- Embedded sustainability commitments across emerging Council strategies, plans and policies, including the [Council's new Housing Strategy 2023-28](#) to ensure safe and sustainable Council homes for residents.
- Worked with partners to accelerate retrofit in the private housing sector with 68 mixed-tenure homes receiving boiler and insulation improvements, saving an estimated 67 tons of CO2 emissions annually alongside reducing energy costs and creating warmer homes.



Worked with our partner Barnet Homes, who have led works for

600 council homes to have received home upgrade works

so far, with energy saving measures including insulation and glazing, to reduce energy costs and create a warmer and more comfortable environment for residents; with plans in place for up to 200 homes to be retrofitted in 2024/25.

- Been working together with developers and partners to incorporate sustainable design principles into new build schemes, as well as improving existing buildings, and are investigating commercial and technical solutions to help private and social housing retrofit works; using the learnings for future development and growth in the borough.
- Supported a [West London Local Area Energy Plan](#), with other Local Authorities across West London, to present energy use and identify opportunities to deliver more efficient heating throughout the borough.
- Started work to install district heating and cooling for **6,700 homes in the Brent Cross Cricklewood Regeneration Area** (in partnership with Vattenfall and Related Argent), the largest all electric heating scheme in the UK, which will provide more efficient and lower cost energy.
- Completed a whole—house retrofit pilot of a caretaker's residence, which has delivered a warmer and healthier home for the tenant that should be cheaper to heat. The learnings from the pilot are being published online as part of the BarNET Zero campaign to provide residents with practical and impartial advice and information to help with retrofitting.



To deliver on our ambitions, so far we've:

- Embedded sustainability commitments across emerging Council strategies, plans and policies, including the Council's new Recycling and Waste **Reduction Plan 2023-25** to outline how we will help residents in reducing waste and increase recycling across the borough.
- Completed a neighbourhood flats pilot project to trial waste interventions to increase recycling rates and reduce food waste. The findings from this trial are now being analysed. These will assist the wider weekly food waste collection service due to be implemented by April 2026.
- Rolled out a **free Community Skip service** across the borough (447 individual skip locations as of March 2024); helping to avoid unnecessary waste and reduce the risk of fly-tipping, with bicycles, children's toys, clothing and textiles, and wooden furniture separated for reuse.
- Supported residents across the borough by educating them on good recycling habits, with a number of projects including the North London Waste Authority's "Together We Recycle" campaign across the borough in 2023, and more locally, the "Bring it Barnet campaign" in East Finchley.
- Worked together with our communities to publish our **Food Plan 2022-27**, to present our vision for how we will support healthy and sustainable eating and lifestyles.



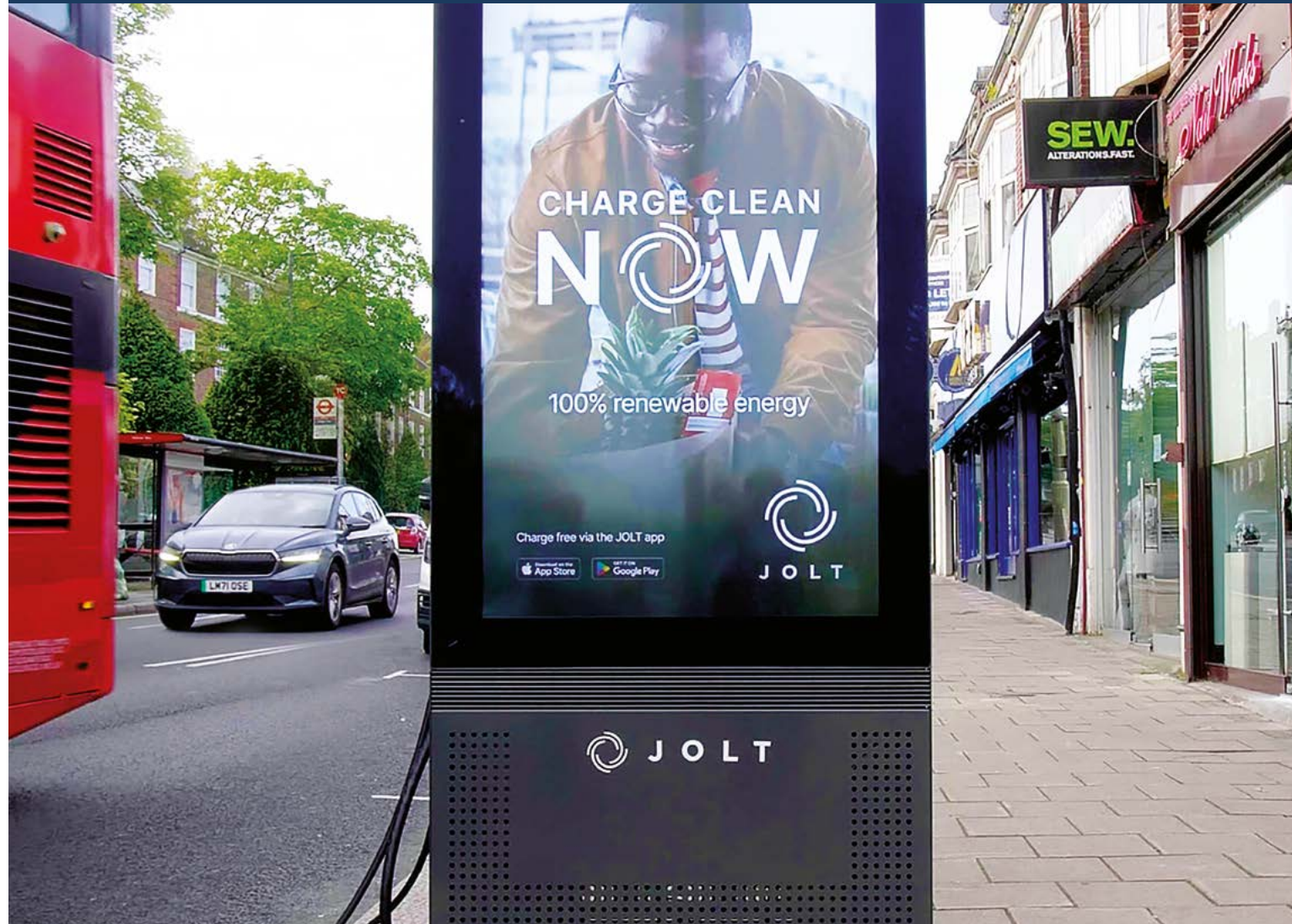
Partnered with a local school and **funded 12 food growing sessions**, one nutrition session and one cooking session for 10 families as part of "Grow-Cook-Share"; educating children and young people around healthier and more sustainable eating and lifestyle habits.

How we treat waste, from the food we don't eat, to the household goods we no longer need, has a massive impact on our planet. A key principle of sustainability is not taking more from the environment than we can replenish.

We are working towards this by making our waste infrastructure greener, helping our businesses reduce waste, enabling our residents to sustainably dispose of food waste and to recycle old and unwanted goods for free.

Net zero carbon travel and transport

5.



Transport is about more than getting from A to B. How we travel impacts on our environment, our health and our quality of life. People who live, work or study in Barnet need access to safe, sustainable and healthy transport options.

We are committed to supporting this ambition by improving our walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, supporting the move to electric vehicles through an ambitious programme to roll out charge-points across the borough, improving our air quality, and ensuring that

our residents know about sustainable travel options and the benefits of using them.

Each year, transport in Barnet produces over 650 million tonnes of CO2, making up around 37% of all our carbon emissions. Almost all of these emissions, over 99%, are through road transport, with over 64% coming from the M1 and A roads, and 71% coming from trips neither starting nor finishing in Barnet. We will need to work with our residents, other boroughs, the Mayor of London and with Transport for London, if we are to move towards a sustainable transport future.

To deliver on our ambitions, so far we've:

- Embedded sustainability commitments across emerging Council strategies, plans and policies, including the Council's new **Air Quality Action Plan 2023-28** which outlines how we will improve air quality across the borough.
- Completed studies to inform the development of the new Transport Strategy, including a Transport Decarbonisation Study, which provides an evidence base about Barnet's travel and transport emissions, and provides options for the borough to reduce emissions across the transport network; a study of options to improve orbital bus services, and a cycle network development.
- **Launched six school streets across the borough**, enabling safer journeys for children travelling to and from school and reducing the surrounding air pollution through encouraging active travel methods, with more planned during 2024/25.
- Worked with schools and other partners across the borough, to organise events to raise awareness of Clean Air Days (joining the Mayor's Anti-Idling Campaign in 2022) and World Car Free day to encourage cleaner and active travel methods.



Installed over **1200** electric vehicle charge points across the borough since 2021, with **a further 500-1000 charge points to be installed** to support the transition to low emission vehicles.

- Continued our work with other West London boroughs to make the case for the West London Orbital rail scheme that would fill in a gap in the public transport network, linking Hendon, Cricklewood and Brent Cross West with destinations in Brent, Ealing and Hounslow
- Supported the opening of the brand-new **Brent Cross West Station**, which will allow Barnet residents access to sustainable public transport and help drive the borough towards its ambition of a net zero transport future.



To deliver on our ambitions, so far we've:

- Partnered with education providers, boroughs and other partners to cultivate Barnet's green skills sector and support local businesses, such as running workshops for local businesses around retrofit.
- Supported our partners in getting Barnet residents into green skills industry, such as 2econd Chance who has worked with 20 trainees, teaching them how to refurbish electronic machines such as laptops for reuse in the green circular economy.
- Worked towards the opening of a Green Skills Centre in the borough this summer, providing vital training for our residents as we transition towards green jobs and a more sustainable borough.
- Actively promoted 3 green skills courses launched this year and encouraged Barnet residents to participate.
- Worked towards providing a carbon audit and carbon reduction action plan for up to 50 businesses in North Finchley. We'll provide expert, one-to-one advice and micro grants to help local businesses fund the transition towards net zero; and create a town centre green economy network to help businesses do more together and connect them with other Barnet initiatives like the Barnet Food Plan.



Launched the BarNET ZERO pledge in March 2024 as a way for businesses, charities and community organizations to make a public commitment to do their part in tackling climate change and becoming more sustainable.

A changing climate won't just impact the way we live and travel, but also the ways in which we work and do business. We recognise the need for businesses and individuals to adapt and learn the new skills needed for the changing landscape and are supporting residents and communities with this transition by

enabling and facilitating access to green skills, training and jobs.

Businesses have a key part to play in our journey, so we are working with local enterprises to integrate sustainable practices; working toward enabling a thriving and green economy.

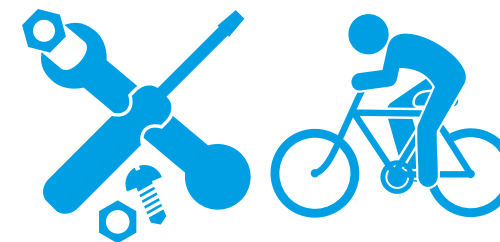


Becoming a net zero borough by 2042 will take a collective effort, it is not one we can deliver alone and will only be achievable if we work together. In order to deliver on our ambition of becoming one of London's most sustainable boroughs we are putting residents, communities and businesses at the heart of our delivery; keeping those who live, work or study in the borough engaged, informed, and involved in everything we do.

To deliver on our ambitions, so far we've:

- Run our Citizens' and Young Peoples' Assemblies on Climate Change and Biodiversity, involving 60 residents aged 12-90 who answered the question 'how do we work together to make Barnet more sustainable, now and in the future'; presenting 20 recommendations to the council for consideration. With Community Action Groups having been established to help deliver these as part of our response to the recommendations.

- Launched the BarNET ZERO Challenge in collaboration with external partners. Aimed at those who live, work or study in the borough, the challenge looked for innovative ideas to deliver the recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly. The challenge received over initial 100 ideas, with winning ideas receiving up to £5000 and a chance to join NatWest's Business Accelerator Programme. The results are being announced in June 2024.



Worked with partners during the Great Big Green Week in 2022 to **provide NHS staff free cycle repairs and maintenance**; as well as shine a light on community and voluntary group activities that are helping build a more sustainable borough.

- The Barnet Education Learning Service has worked with teachers and students to celebrate initiatives from schools across the borough

and showcase the importance of sustainability and protecting the environment. A School Strategy is being developed to focus on how we can work together with schools across the borough; this is due to be published in Autumn 2024.

- Supported community groups with the establishment of the **Barnet Carbon Reduction Crowdfund**, a £50k fund open to community groups in Barnet for projects that reduce carbon emissions alongside delivering other benefits to the community.
- Supported Eco Show and Tell with a funding application, successfully receiving support to deliver Barnet's first-ever Sharing Space; this community-led initiative is a place where residents can join together to share ideas, skills, and food; creating a circular economy, and connected, resilient communities; the programme will run for 12-weeks through the spring and Summer of 2024.
- Worked with Middlesex University to launch Minibeasts of Barnet. This is an education programme for children under 5 years aimed to develop their sense of belonging and responsibility by giving them a voice and involving them in the publication of books focussed on the natural environment.

We're on our journey, will you join us?

We are proud of the distance we've travelled since declaring a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency in May 2022. Working across the organisation, with our partners, communities and businesses, we've accelerated our progress towards becoming one of London's most sustainable boroughs. In working together, we have been able to go from strength to strength, both by building upon past successes such as Barnet's electric vehicle

charging schemes, and via striking new ground with projects such as our Citizen's Assemblies.

We recognise there is much more to do, and we can only do that if we work together across the borough and wider; join us on our journey.

To find out more about what you can do to join us on our journey and keep up-to-date on sustainability related news, activities and initiatives, [click here](#).



Caring for people, our places and the planet