

Minutes of the Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory

Committee

Malvern District Council Council Chamber

Friday, 4 November 2022, 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr John Raine (Chairman), Chris Atkins, Cllr Bronwen Behan, Sven Bosley, Prof Richard Bryant, Frank Hill, Georgie Hyde, Graeme Ker, Cllr Helen l'Anson, Cllr Scott Richardson Brown and Cllr Jack Satterthwaite

Also attended:

David Armitage, AONB Partnership Assistant Manager
Matthew Barker, (for Item 6) Carbon Reduction Project Officer
James Bisset, HC Ecology and Arboriculture Officer
Rachel Datlen, WCC Countryside Greenspace Manager
Paul Esrich, AONB Partnership Manager,
Kate Griffiths, Committee Officer

735 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies for absence had been received from Mike Wilkinson and James Hervey-Bathurst.
Graeme Ker, attended on behalf of Mr Hervey-Bathurst and would represent the Eastnor Estate.

736 Declaration of Interests

Chris Atkins declared an interest in that he is a Commoner on Castlemorton Common with grazing rights; he rents buildings and manages cattle on Bromesberrow Estate on Chase End Hill; he manages orchards in Colwall (Ballards), the Three Counties Showground, the Bromesberrow Estate and at Castlemorton and surroundings.

737 To elect a Chairman

Professor Bryant and Sven Bosley proposed and seconded John Raine for position of Chairman of the Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. As there were no other proposals, John Raine was elected as Chairman of the Committee for the next year.

738 To appoint a Vice Chairman

There were no proposals for Vice Chairman of the Committee. It was agreed that the position would remain vacant at the present time and would be considered at a future meeting.

739 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 8 April 2022 were considered to be an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

740 Tackling Climate Change in Malvern Hills District

Matthew Barker, Carbon Reduction Project Officer for Malvern and Wychavon District Councils, gave a presentation about tackling Climate Change.

Carbon Dioxide was at its highest recorded rate , which was accelerating global heating. The Climate Change Act of 2008 introduced a legal duty to reduce carbon emissions by 78% by 2035, and to get to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Action was being taken, but there were policy gaps and currently it was not expected that the next Carbon budget would be met.

Malvern Hills District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and were aiming for Destination Zero by January 2030. Other key measures were to grow the low carbon economy, increase renewable energy and increase carbon capture.

At present the sector producing the most carbon within the Malvern Hills area was the waste fleet, followed by Malvern Theatres and Malvern Splash. During Covid, carbon emissions had been reduced due to the closure of venues, but it had still not reached zero.

Work to offset carbon emissions included implementing a biodiversity strategy such as tree planting and meadow creation, as well as working with Partners on projects such as habitat restoration and carbon capture. Global warming was a local and global issue which was causing heatwaves, droughts, floods, increasing the risk of extinction for some species and effects on people's wellbeing. Mitigation was about making the impact of climate change less severe by reducing greenhouse gases, while adaptation was taking action to prevent or minimise the damage of climate change.

Matt suggested the AONB Partnership was able to work to introduce resilient practices such as only contributing to projects with climate positive aims and ensuring active travel was possible in the area. The Management Plan could take a role in increasing awareness of the issue and offering guidance.

It was suggested that the key risks and impacts to the AONB should be identified and then actions could be prioritised which had the biggest impact. Who was responsible for delivery and in what timeframes should be specified along with how actions would be monitored.

Committee Members discussed the subject and the following comments were made:

- It was confirmed that newer parts of the theatre buildings were more climate friendly but it was difficult to upgrade older parts of the building such as the heating system.
- The amount of carbon produced by the Theatres did not include brick production as that would be attributed to the business producing the bricks. Embodied carbon was not currently being considered in calculations.
- Five of Malvern's waste collections lorries had been converted to use Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, which was coming from waste sources. This was cheaper than buying new electric vehicles. It was agreed that there needed to be improved infrastructure and technology for waste vehicles, with increased range and quicker chargers before electric vehicles could be considered viable. When the waste fleet required new vehicles in 2030 the type of vehicle being used would be reconsidered.
- It was clarified that the data in the presentation was supplied by Central Government, so it was not possible to drill down into more local data.
- More needed to be done to help domestic households move towards carbon zero. More electric vehicles could make a difference, but they were expensive; and solar panels could take 7 or 8 years to give a financial return.
- Although not a traditional area of work for the AONB, it was recognised that the Partnership had a wider reach and including more meaningful measures about tackling climate change in the next Management Plan would be a positive step. It was suggested that climate change could become a regular item on JAC agendas in future. A focus within the AONB may be activities and practices that are climate friendly but which also meet other objectives such as biodiversity and landscape conservation and sustainable food production.

RESOLVED that the Chairman thanked Matthew for his presentation and agreed he should be invited back to a meeting in the future.

741 National Landscapes prospectus

Paul Esrich explained that the National Landscapes Prospectus had been produced by the National Association for AONBs. The Prospectus aimed to illustrate what AONB's landscape designations could look like and what they could offer society in the future.

In response to a query about whether all AONBs should be acting in the same way, for example changing their names, it was explained that the Glover Review had stated that there should be strengthened purposes, powers and resources for AONBs. A name change alone would not be seen as acceptable by the NAAONB.

RESOLVED that the report on the National Landscape Prospectus was noted.

742 **Review of 2019-2024 AONB Management Plan Review**

Paul Esrich explained that the MHAONB Management Plan needed to be reviewed every five years with the current plan due to be refreshed in 2023 and a revised plan published at the end of March 2024. However, due to the scale and scope of the rapidly evolving legislative, policy and management framework, Defra had given all AONB Partnerships the option of delaying the full review by a year and instead there would just be the requirement to carry out the lightest touch review to ensure compliance with the Countyside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Following the light touch review, if subsequent guidance suggested the management plan needed to be taken in a different direction that could be considered as part of the full review.

Members agreed that there were currently lots of changes taking place, for example, with the development of ELMS and new legal duties related to nature recovery. It was also recognised that farmers and other stakeholders in the area needed clarity about the future. Therefore, the JAC approved a one-year delay to the substantive review of the Management Plan and approved the indicative schedule set out for this work.

With regards to issues that could be flagged up in the light touch review the following points were mentioned:

- Growing visitor pressures and impacts
- The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain, and
- The emergence of local Nature Recovery Strategies.

RESOLVED that the Committee

- a) Approved the principle of delaying a substantive Management Plan review for one year**
- b) Approved the indicative revised schedule for AONB Management Plan production**
- c) Having previously reacquainted themselves with the current AONB Management Plan, highlighted and discussed any specific issues that it wished to raise which could be included in one page of text setting out its intentions for the next Management Plan, in particular concerning:**
 - **A vision**
 - **A Management Plan Structure**
 - **Partnership Objectives**

743 Farming in Protected Landscapes - Update

Paul Esrich gave an update on the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. Sash Warden remained the Project Officer, and FiPL funding for the current financial year had now been allocated.

Details were given regarding some of the projects that had been supported including:

- The brush seed harvester was proving to be a good investment as the cost of buying wildflower seed was expensive. Planning for areas which could be harvested and restored next year was underway.
- Eastnor Estate had received funding for toilets (particularly a disabled toilet) at the woodshed café as well as for tree planting and interpretation. This was one of the few locations in the area which offered greater access opportunities for all due to the tarmac path through the park.
- The last remaining Donkey Shed had been restored as a heritage and interpretation project and had received positive reviews from visitors.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report and raised and discussed any issues arising.

744 Information Items

The Committee noted the items for information.

Some items were highlighted for the Committee:

- The AONB Unit was currently recruiting for a Planning Officer which would be a joint post with Wye Valley AONB, to principally make comments on planning applications on behalf of the AONB, along with offering advice to applicants if needed. There had been a low level of applications for the post so far. The Chairman explained that the Malvern Hills District Council Planning Committee found comments from the AONB Unit to be useful and fair.
- The AONB Unit was looking for recommendations for website developers.
- Thanks were given to James Hervey-Bathurst for helping with the lighting of a beacon on the Herefordshire Beacon to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- An AONB wide landowners group event on deer management was due to take place shortly with the possibility of setting up a Deer Management Group.

RESOLVED that Members of the JAC noted the information report and would contact the AONB Unit if they wished to be involved in any consultations or to receive further information on any of the items.

745 Verbal Reports from Partners

Earth Heritage Trust

Prof Dick Bryant explained that the new Worcestershire Local Minerals Plan recognised the expertise of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust, noting that it required the Earth Heritage Trust to be consulted on all plans for extractions.

The Earth Heritage Trust was talking with the Malvern Spa Association about a possible Heritage Lottery Fund Application regarding safe water, tracking the pathways of springs and public engagement.

Malvern Hills Trust

Chris Atkins explained that the pressure on the Hills due to increased visitor numbers was enormous. There were difficulties with ridge line erosion but as the area could not be shut, actions were being taken to try to deter some behaviour such as cycling jumps and parking on verges.

The Trust had recently been successful in acquiring more land and management plans were being drawn up for these areas.

Tree planting had taken place which had involved a local school. Bracken rolling had taken place and Ash Dieback work was ongoing. If Ash Dieback was not dealt with promptly it could end up costing more to deal with, as it becomes more dangerous to remove the affected trees.

Worcestershire County Council

Rachel Datlen explained that the Council had plans to plant 38,000 more trees to help reduce carbon and would be creating 5 new woodlands on county council land around the County, although not within the AONB as the County Council owned land was not appropriate for woodland planting.

746 Dates of Future Meetings

The dates for 2023 were confirmed as:

- 28 April, 10am at **Mathon Parish Hall**
- 10 November, 10am at Malvern Hills District Council Chamber

The meeting ended at 11.55 am

Chairman

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DESTINATION ZERO

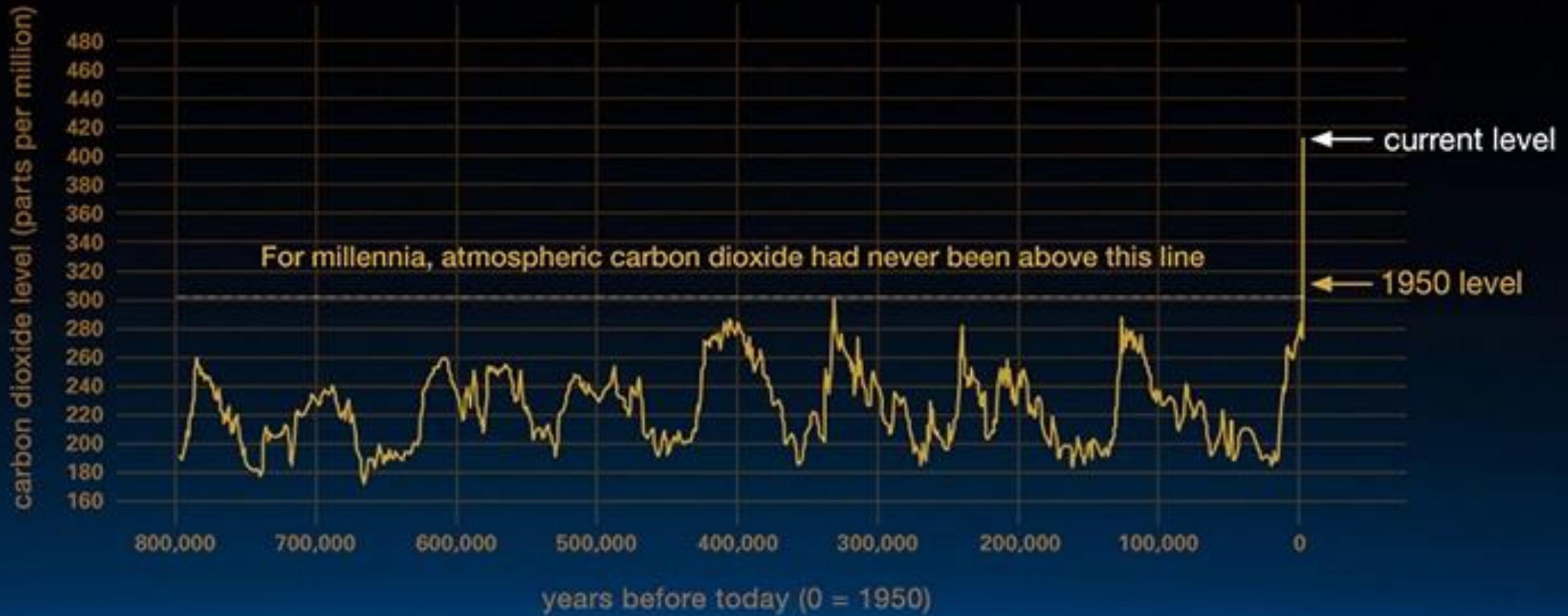
Creating a greener, more sustainable
Malvern Hills district

Matt Barker
Carbon Reduction
Projects Officer

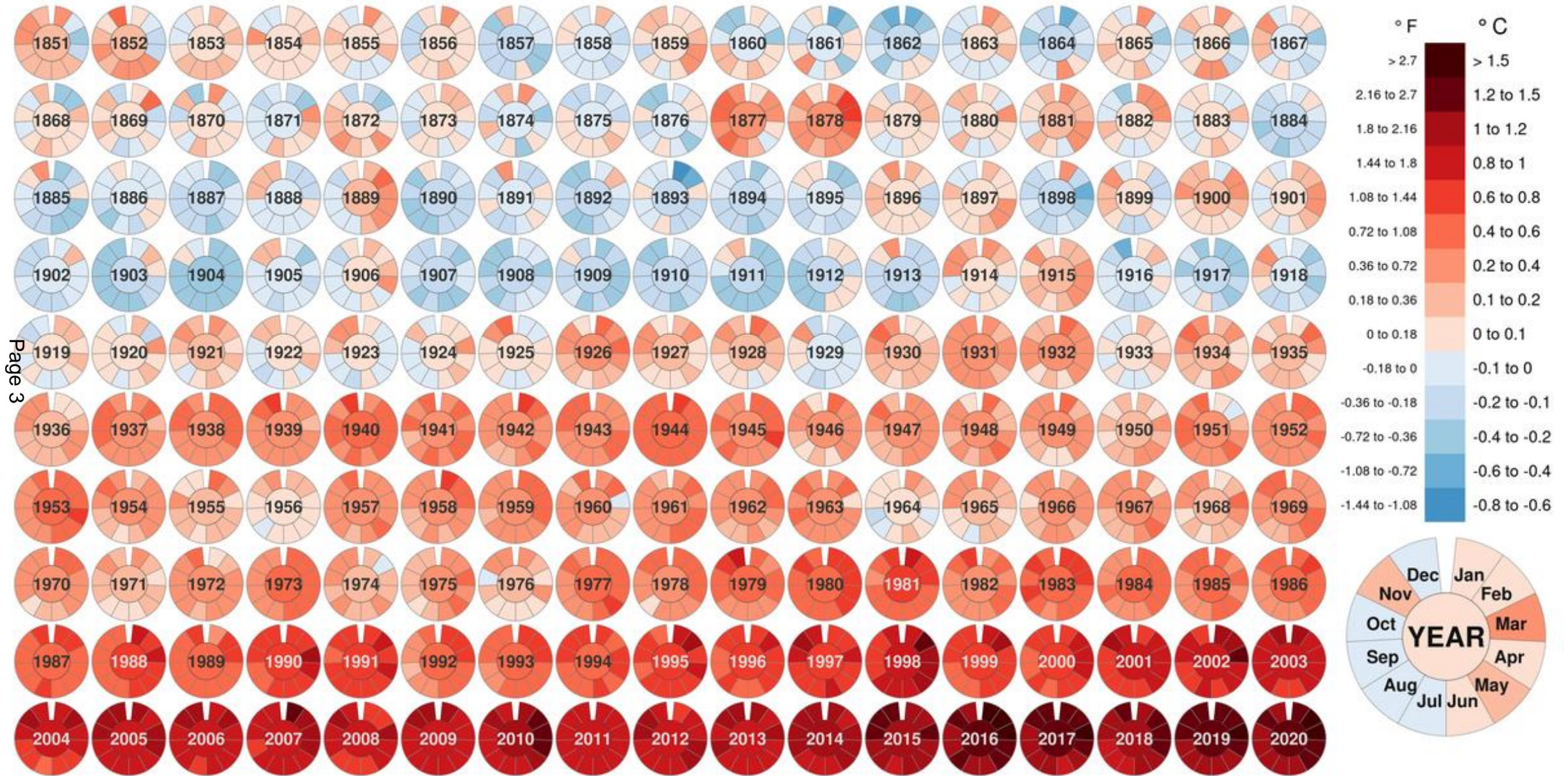
Malvern Hills &
Wychavon District
Councils

[Matthew.barker@
malvernhills.gov.uk](mailto:Matthew.barker@malvernhills.gov.uk)

Carbon Dioxide levels over 800,000 years



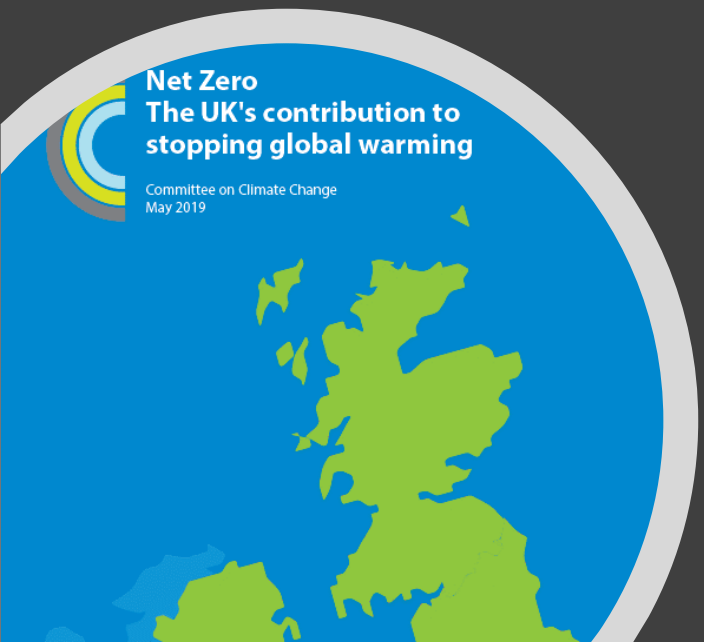
Monthly global mean temperature 1851 to 2020 (compared to 1850-1900 averages)



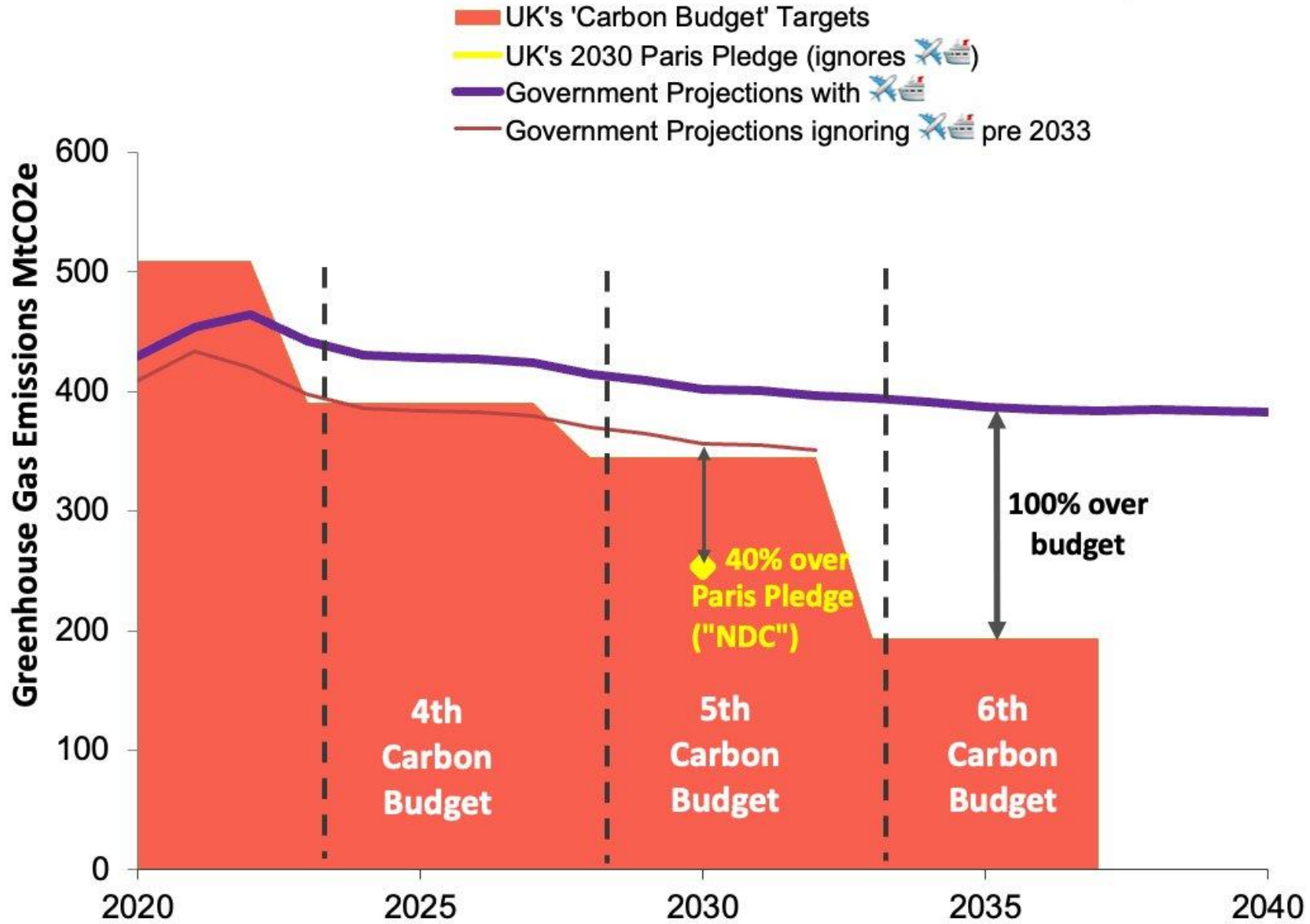
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- UK Climate Change Act – a legal duty to reduce emissions
- Cut emissions by 78% by 2035
- Achieve net-zero carbon emission by 2050



UK Government Projections vs Targets



Data source: BEIS Energy & Emissions Projections: 2021 - 2040

What are MHDC doing?

- Declared climate emergency – July 2019
 - Commitment to prepare a carbon reduction action plan
- Stakeholder engagement
 - MHDC Members & Staff
 - Town & Parish Councils
 - Community organisations
 - Statutory bodies etc
- DZ Plan adopted by MHDC in January 2020

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DESTINATION ZERO

Creating a greener, more sustainable Malvern Hills district

Vision: To lead Malvern Hills District to become carbon neutral as quickly as possible and by 2050 at the latest, with at least a 50% reduction in the district's carbon footprint by 2030.



**DESTINATION
ZERO**



Priority 1: Make Malvern Hills District Council's operations carbon neutral by 2030



Priority 2: Encourage low carbon development and design measures to improve resilience and adaptation to climate change



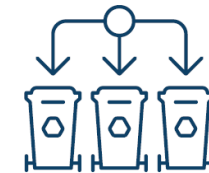
Priority 3: Improve the energy efficiency of homes across the district



Priority 4: Encourage low carbon travel



Priority 5: Support businesses to become more energy efficient



Priority 6: Reduce the amount of waste going for landfill or incineration from the district's households and businesses



Priority 7: Use tree planting, pollinator sites, wetlands, wildflower meadows and other natural measures to capture and store carbon

Key measures of success.....

Reduce

Council's own GHG emissions to net-zero

Reduce

district-wide GHG emissions towards net-zero

Grow

size of the low carbon economy

Increase

the amount of renewable energy generated

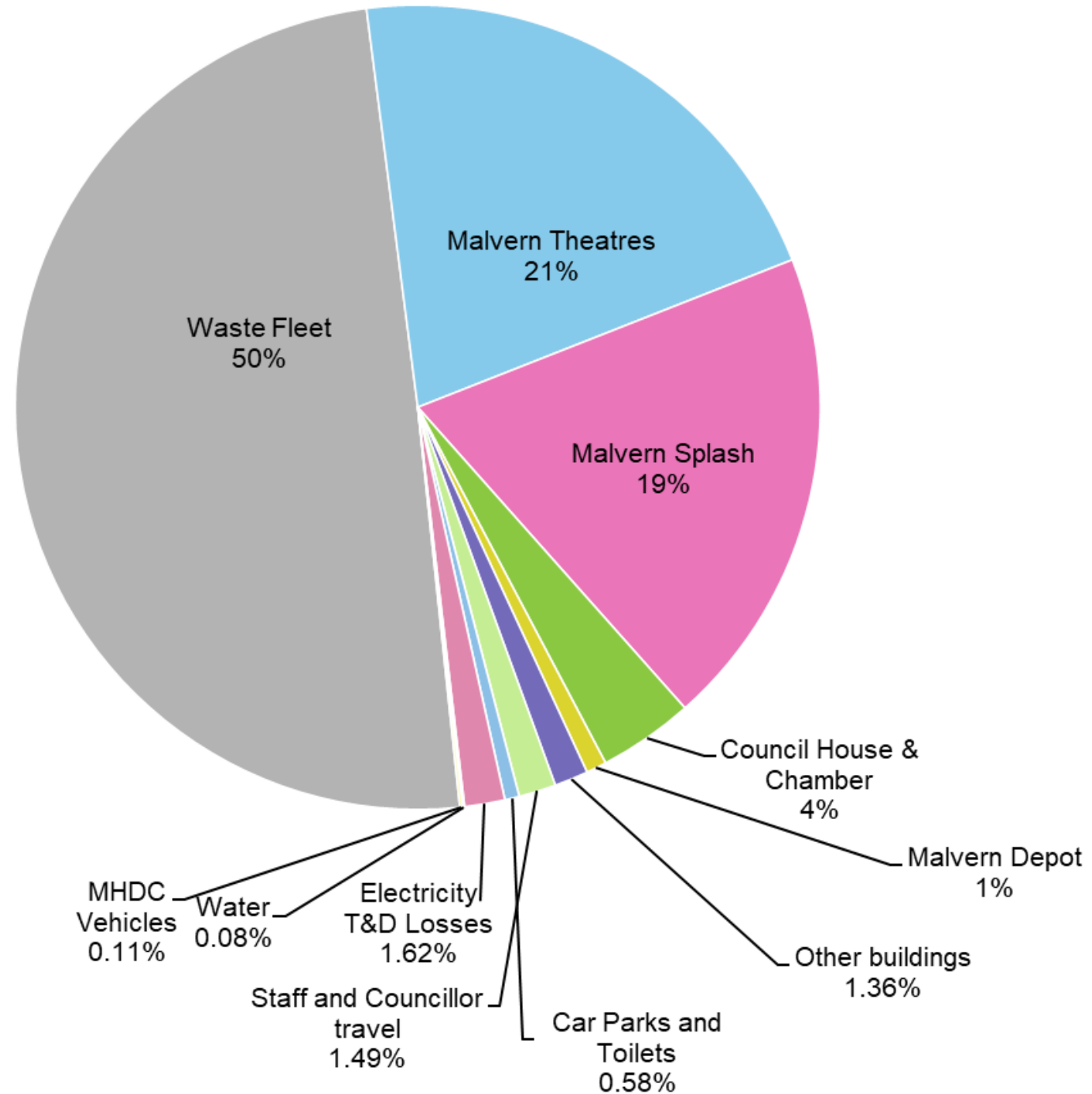
Increase

the amount of carbon captured through Council action

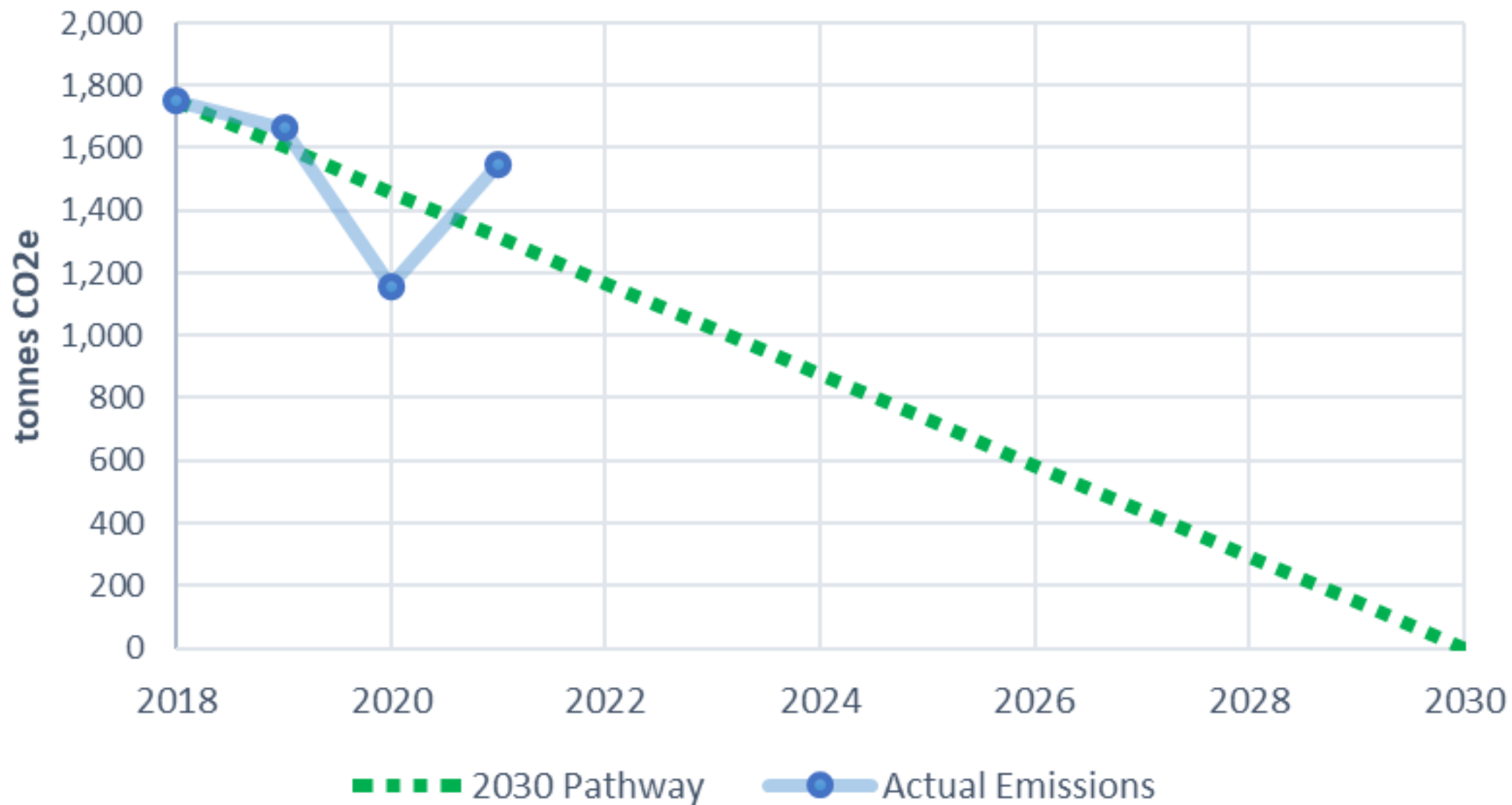


Destination Zero Annual Update 2021/22

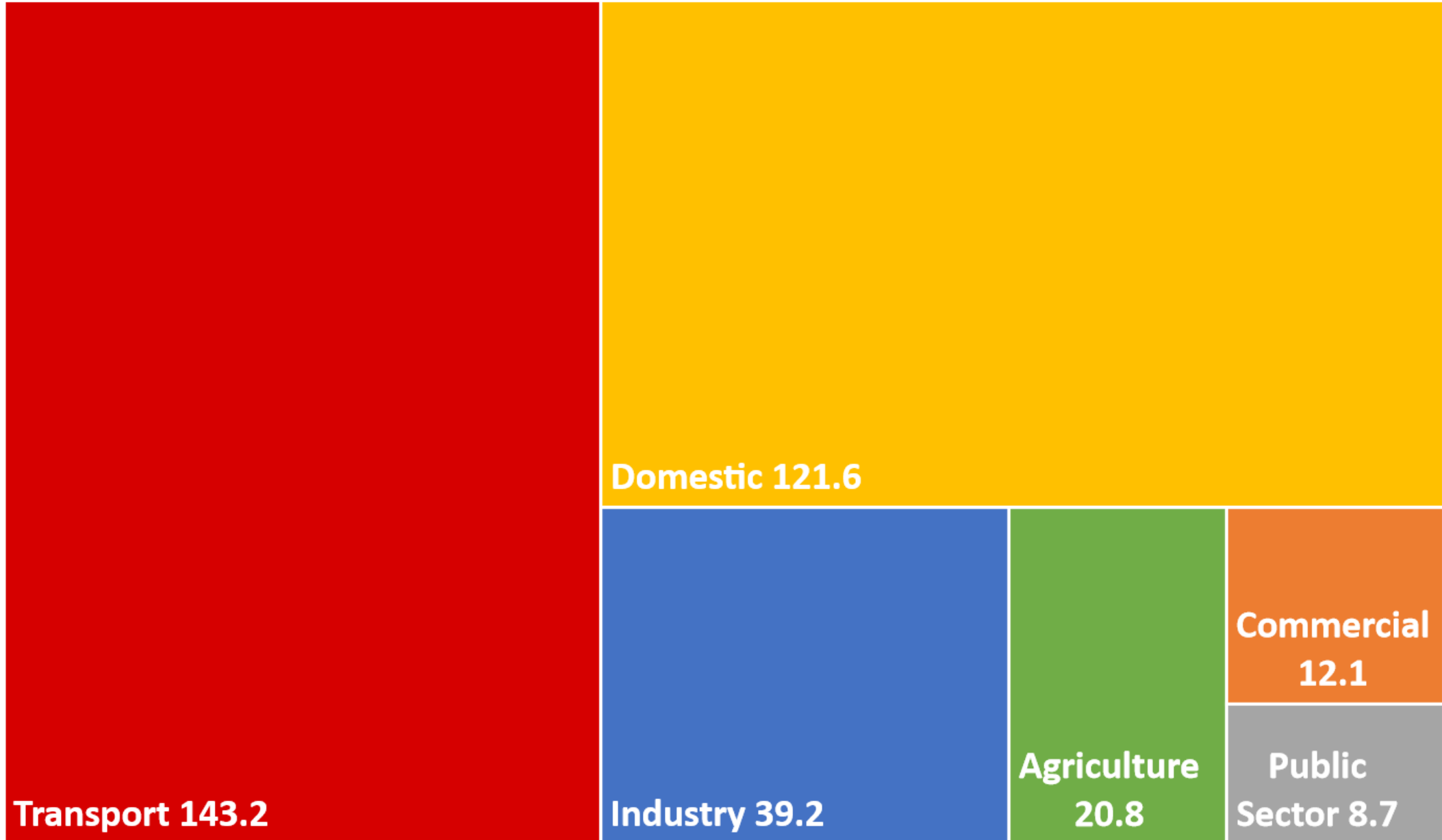
MHDC Carbon Emissions 2021/22



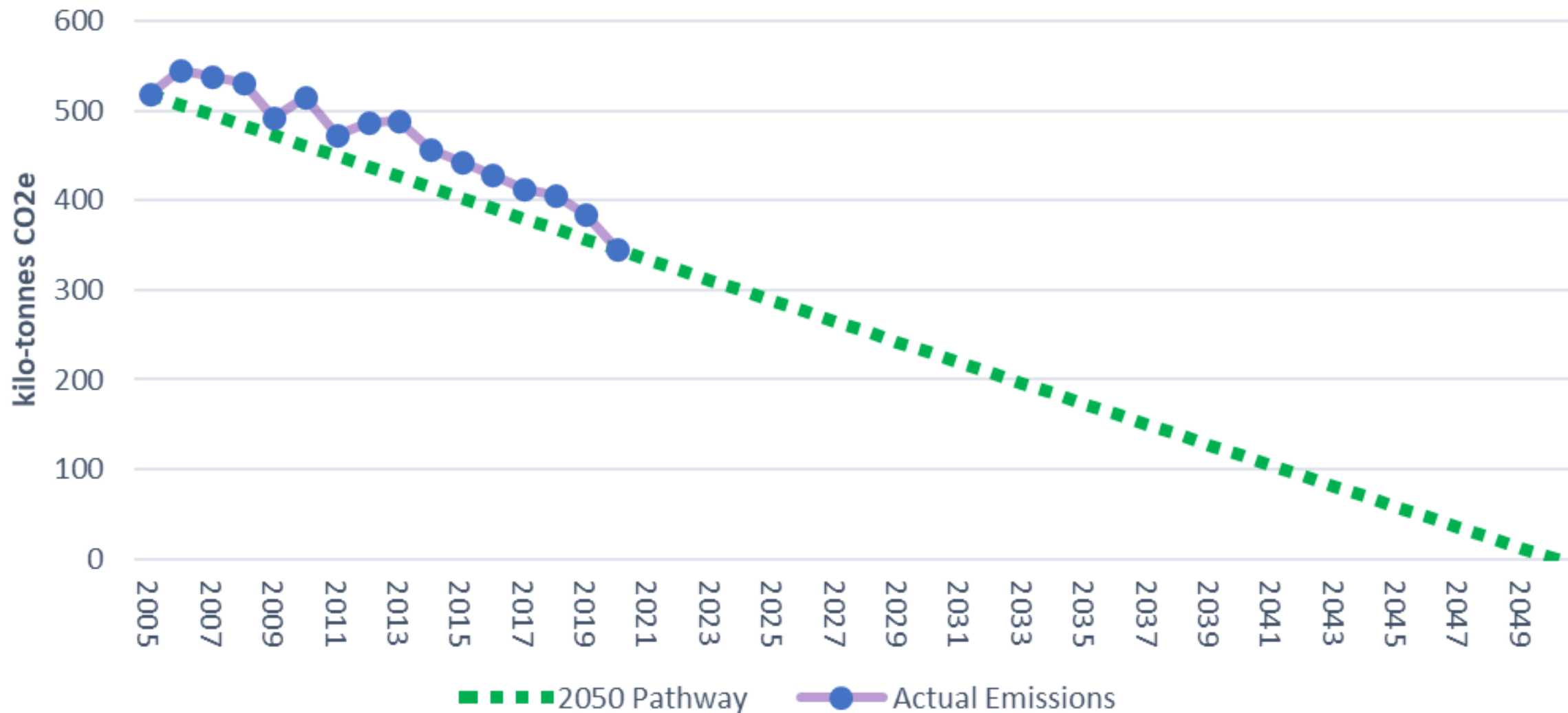
Net-zero pathway to 2030 for MHDC's own emissions



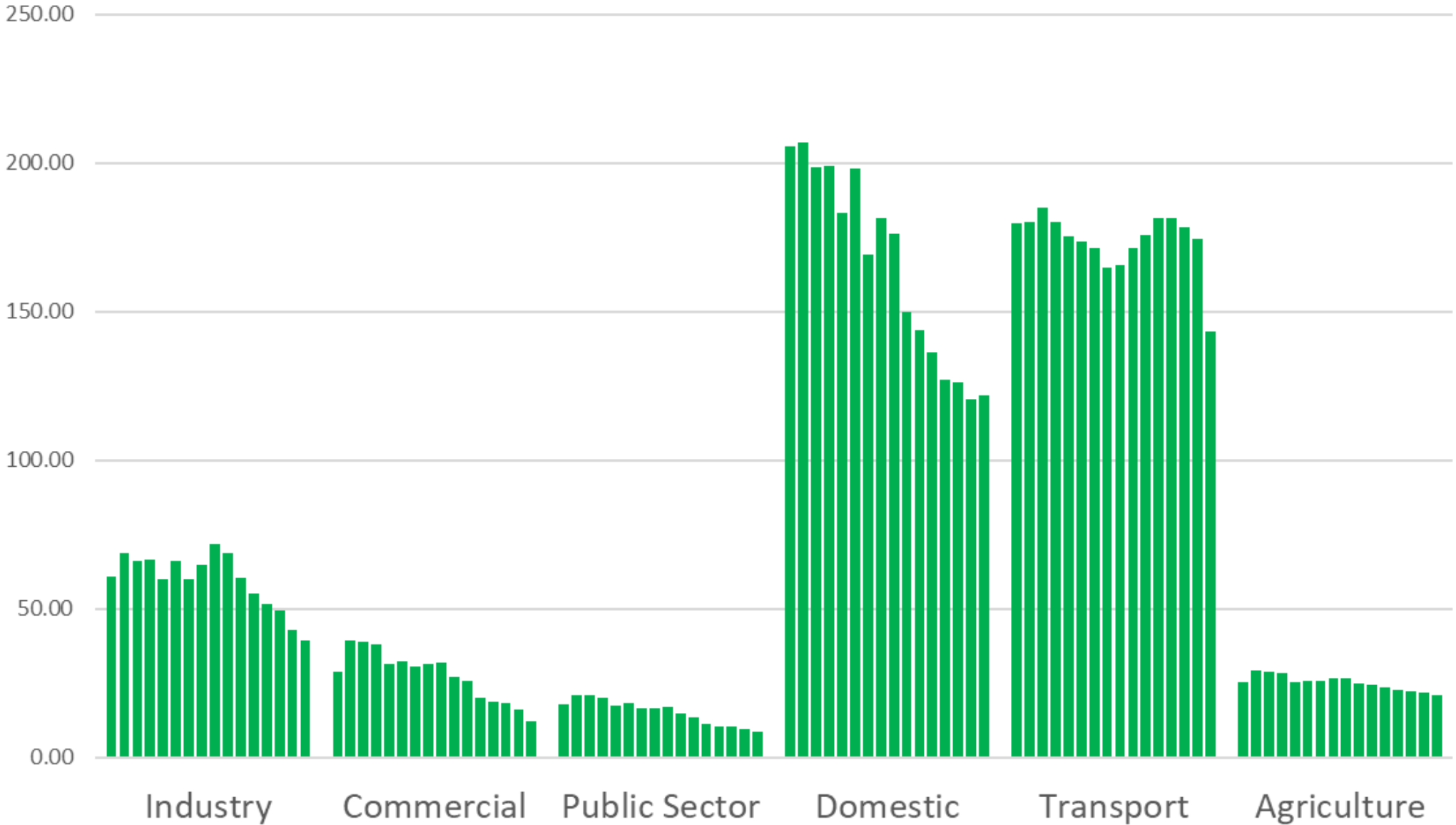
Malvern Hills district - CO2e emissions by sector 2020



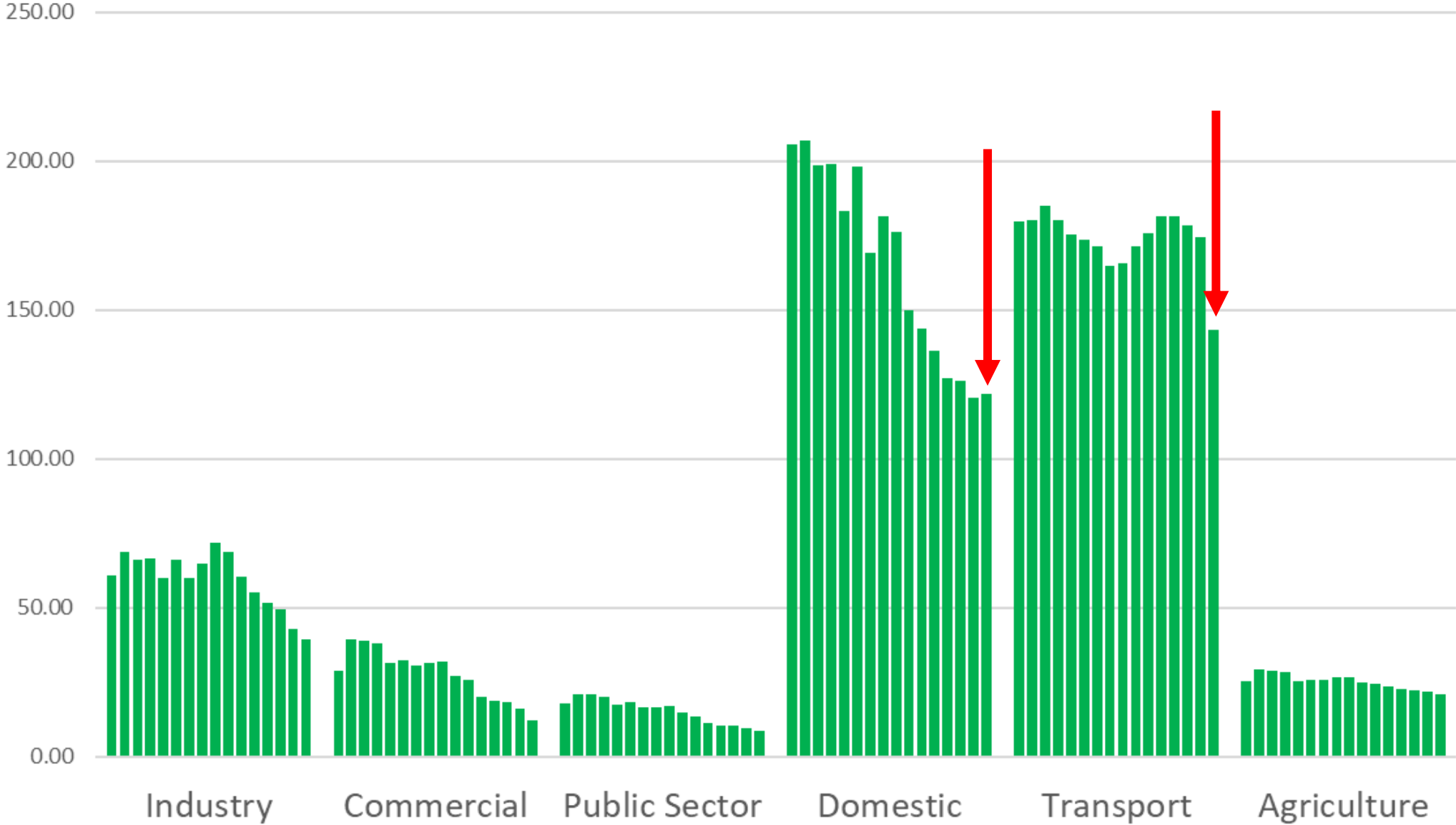
Net-zero pathway to 2050 for Malvern Hills District emissions (within the scope of influence of Local Authorities)



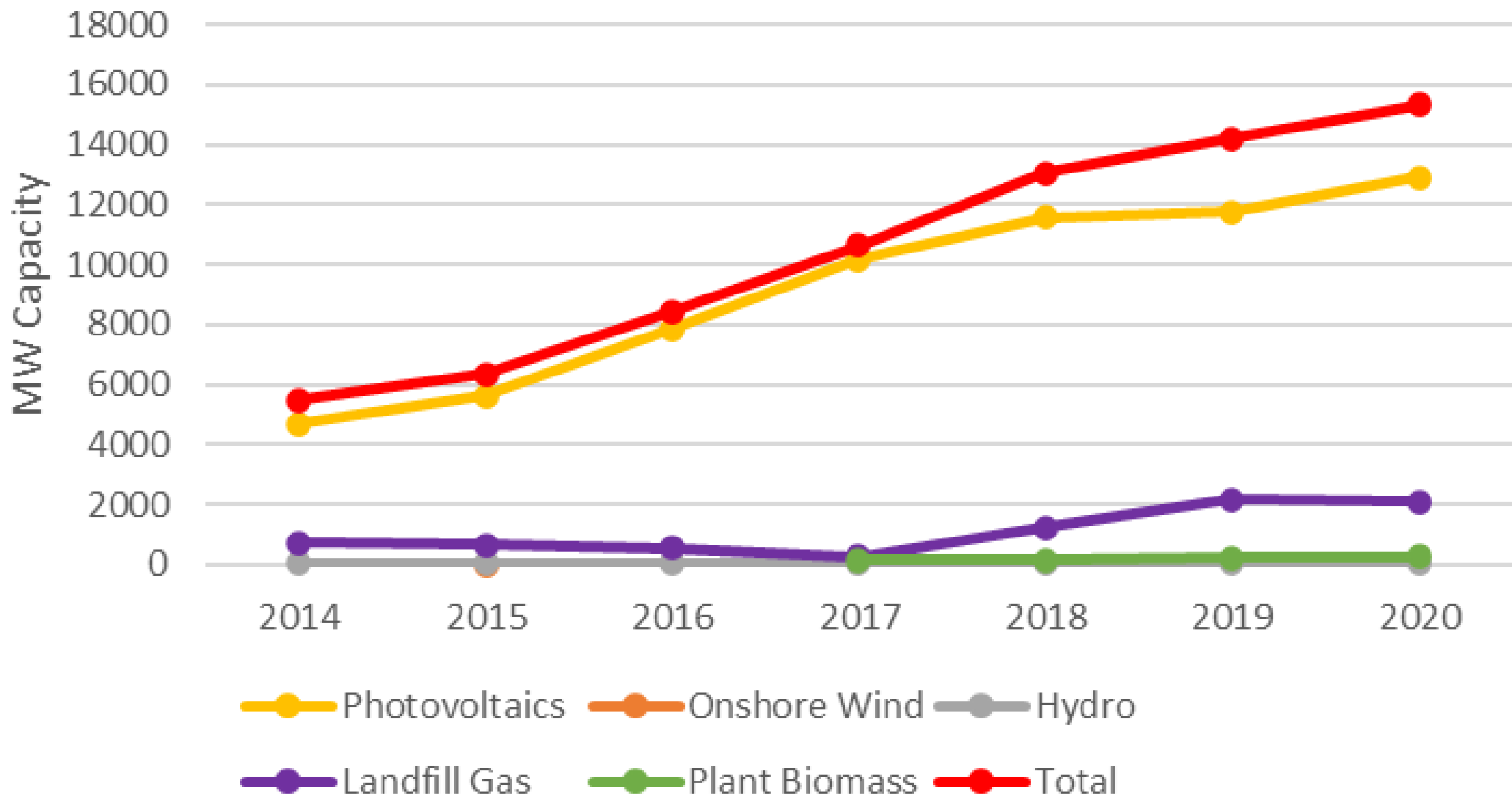
CO2e emission by sector from 2005 to 2020



CO2e emission by sector from 2005 to 2020



Renewable energy generation in Malvern Hills District



Priority 7 - Use tree planting, pollinator sites, wetlands, wildflower meadows and other natural measures to capture and store carbon

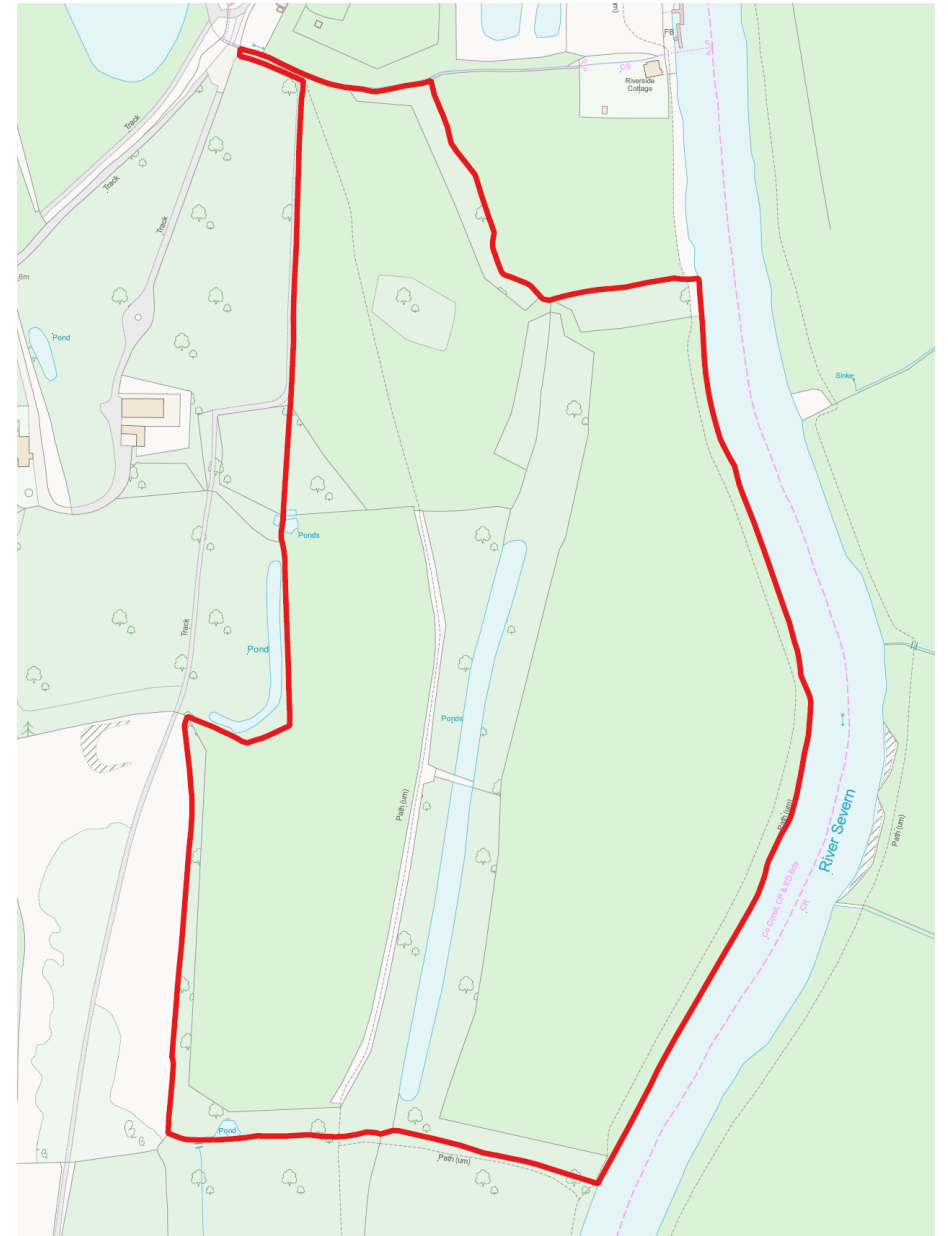
- Identify council owned land suitable for habitat restoration, including tree planting and other forms of carbon capture
- Implement the restoration and enhancement of the land at Hallow for biodiversity/habitat improvement and carbon sequestration
- Work with parish councils, partners and other landowners to encourage habitat restoration and creation projects and other forms of carbon capture on land they own

Priority 7 - Use tree planting, pollinator sites, wetlands, wildflower meadows and other natural measures to capture and store carbon

- Implement priority conservation objectives featured in the Biodiversity Action Plan and work with partners across Worcestershire to restore and enhance species, habitats and their connectivity through Nature Recovery Networks
- Reduce the cutting of verges (not at the cost of highway safety) and open spaces to protect wildflowers
- Explore more sustainable options for disposing of green waste from our own activities/land

Land at Hallow

- MHDC purchased in 2020 – 18ha of degraded arable land
- Restore species-rich flood meadow and fen
- Improve overall biodiversity of the site and specific habitats
 - Seasonal wetlands, wildflower meadows, hedgerow planting, reseeded grassland
- Soil carbon sampling to track sequestration as a result of site restoration
- Improving water quality and alleviating flooding
- Improved visitor accessibility



UK CLIMATE PROJECTIONS

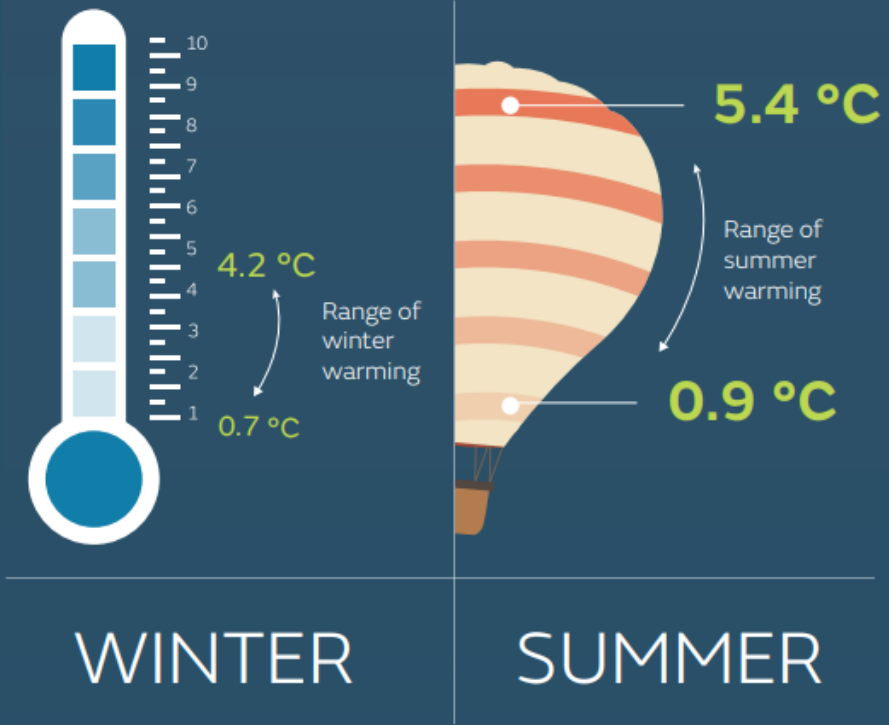
Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

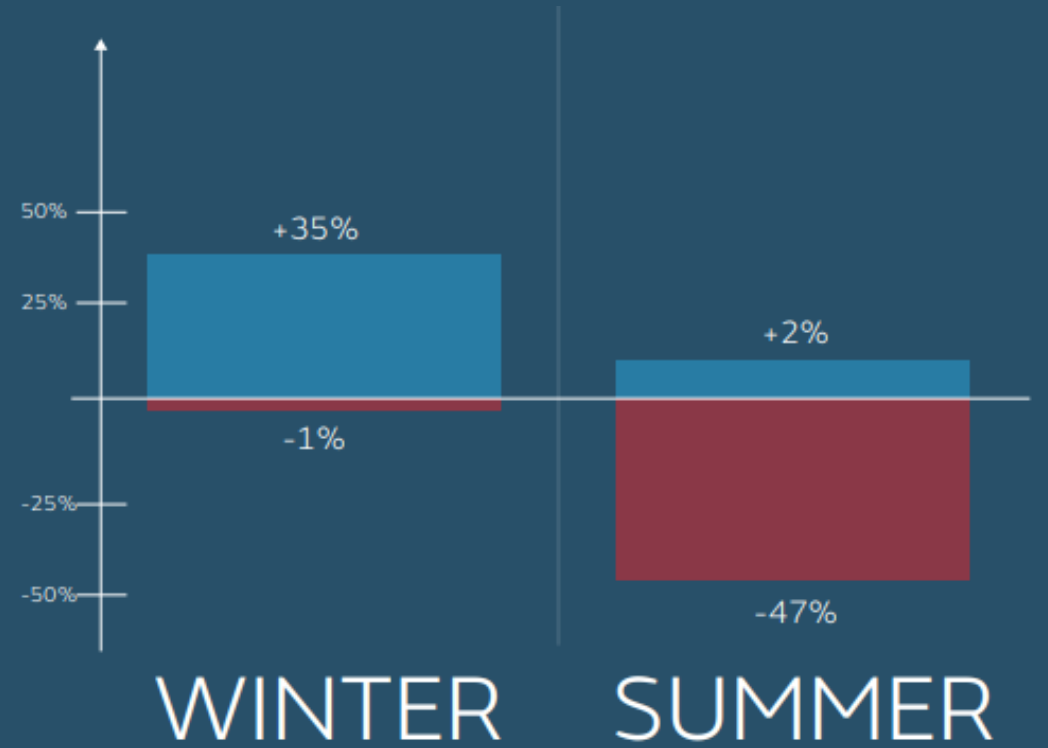
Met Office Hadley Centre

Environment Agency

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Warmer winters and summers



Wetter winters and drier summers

Flooding...



Evesham 2007



Pershore 2019



Upton 2014



Tenbury 2020

Heatwaves...

Drought

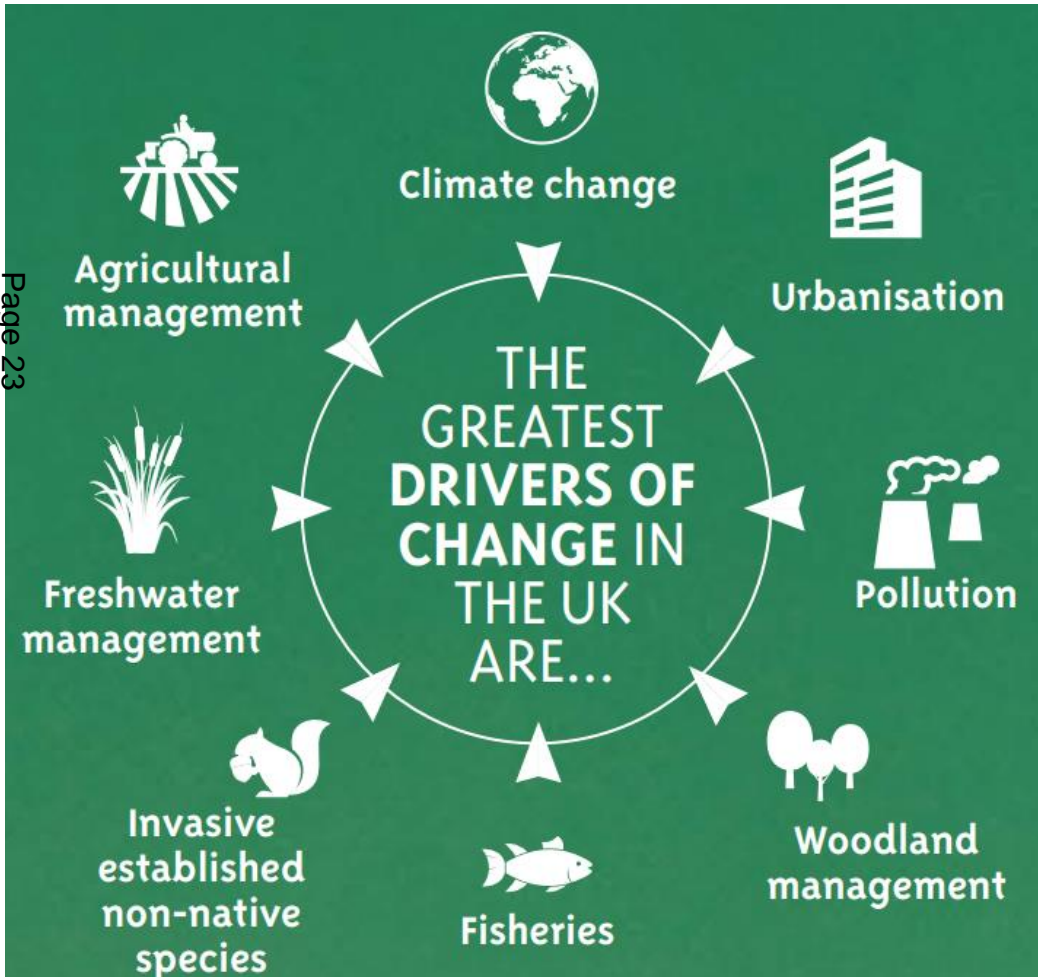


Wildfire



Ecological Emergency

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THE UK'S BIODIVERSITY IS DECLINING



15%

of species are threatened with **extinction** from Great Britain



133

of 8431 assessed have already become extinct from Great Britain

SINCE 1970...

More species have seen their **populations decrease** than increase:

41%

have decreased

33%

little change

26%

have increased



What are the biggest impacts/risks to the AONB?

Effects on the health and wellbeing of people

Flooding

Drought and heatwaves

Damage to buildings and infrastructure

Wildfires

Erosion, landslip and loss of soil

Effects on crops, livestock and forestry

Changes to habitats and species

Pollution of watercourses

It's about mitigation and adaptation....

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Mitigation - making the impacts of climate change less severe by preventing or reducing the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Adaptation - anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage they can cause

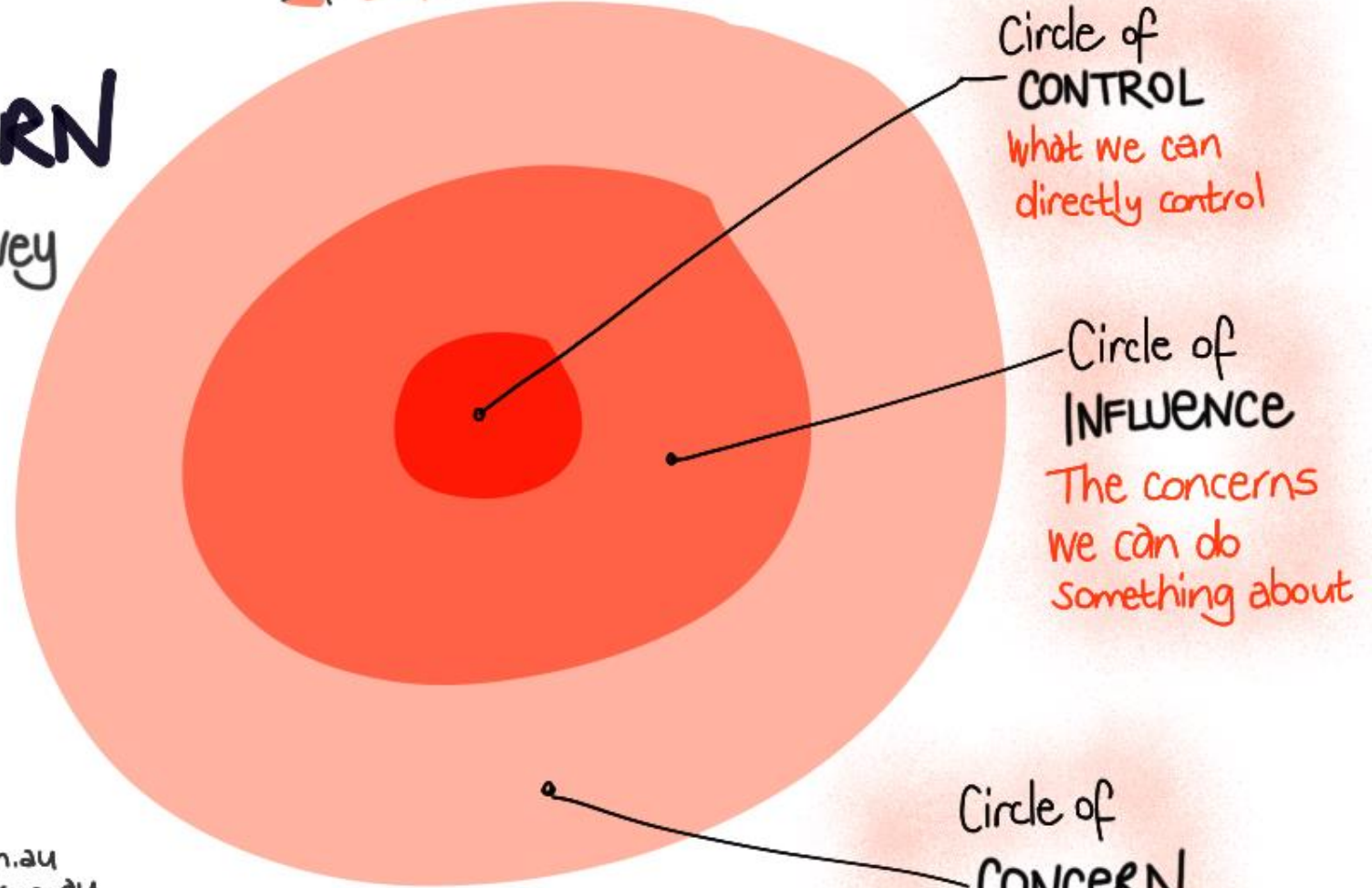
What are the control/influences of the AONB Partnership?

- Management of land partners own e.g. Malvern Hills trust
 - Working with partners to ensure climate resilient practices – mitigation/adaptation
- AONB Management Plan
 - Greater recognition and guidance on climate change?
- Grants and funding – only contributing to climate positive aims
- Active travel – provision of bike infrastructure, walking/cycling signposting

CIRCLE of CONCERN

by Stephen Covey

We need to focus our energies on what we can control + influence!



Circle of CONTROL
What we can directly control

Circle of INFLUENCE
The concerns we can do something about

Circle of CONCERN
Wide range of concerns

What we cannot control or influence we need to LET GO of!

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DRAWING

Planning for action on climate change....

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- Make the public commitment to tackle climate change
- Identify and prioritise actions:
 - Where are the key risks and impacts to the AONB
 - Actions where you have control or strong influence
 - Have the biggest impacts
 - Timeframes – short/medium/long
- Specify who will be responsible for delivery
 - Which partners are necessary?
 - Resources?
- What will be the monitoring and measures of progress?



Thank You!

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