

A quick guide to the States of Guernsey's 2020-2050 Climate Change Policy Letter and Action Plan

Summary: What is the Climate Change Policy and Action Plan?

The Climate Change Policy 2020-2050 legislates the target objective for the island's emissions as set by the 2020-2050 Energy Policy, sets the scope of emissions to be included and the hierarchical approach to be applied to reduce emissions, in order to mitigate or compensate climate change impact.

The Climate Change Action Plan seeks to set out a number of actions and areas of focus to achieve the aims of the policy; this will evolve and be updated over time and as such it is a 'live' document.

This Action Plan captures the ongoing, existing and planned actions to reduce emissions, for the island to decarbonise and adapt to climate change. It is therefore transitional, and a 'snapshot in time' in a post-pandemic landscape.

This document summarises the 2020-2050 Climate Change Policy & Action Plan, highlights the key components of the policy and provides the context behind the policy and plan.

The full 2020-2050 Climate Change Policy and Action Plan can be read [here](#).

Key components of the policy



'**Net zero**' is a way to describe achieving a **balance** between the amount of 'greenhouse gas' emissions produced and the amount removed from the **atmosphere**.

A 'net zero' target tells everybody that it is important to improve **energy efficiencies** and **choose low emission** solutions for power, heating, cooling, travel, farming, waste management and manufacturing now and in the future. The target gives everybody time to plan and transition.

The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was created to provide government and policy makers all around the world with **regular scientific guidance on climate change**, its **implications and potential future risks**, as well as to put forward **adaptation and mitigation options**.



An **Advisory Body** could potentially be set up in Guernsey, to **help the government, businesses, organisations and the community** to better understand and take action to reduce emissions. **Understanding our place in the world** and what can be done to have an impact will require help and support that doesn't just come from the government. Action and changes needed to help slow down and stop rising temperatures will be **far reaching and widespread**. A **Citizen's Assembly** could help to support this and build on the great things that #GuernseyTogether has already achieved.



Regular Reporting will be carried out by the States, to show how actions have had an impact on reducing overall emissions. The emissions will be accounted for with internationally recognised measures – Scope 1 emissions (emissions from all activities that occur within Guernsey), Scope 2 emissions (imported electricity emissions) and Scope 3 emissions (relating to waste produced on-island and emissions from off-island travel) – and this will come into effect by the end of 2021. This will help Islanders understand the impact of what we continue to do and what we do next, as well as helping the States to keep improving the **Climate Change Action Plan** in the coming months and years.

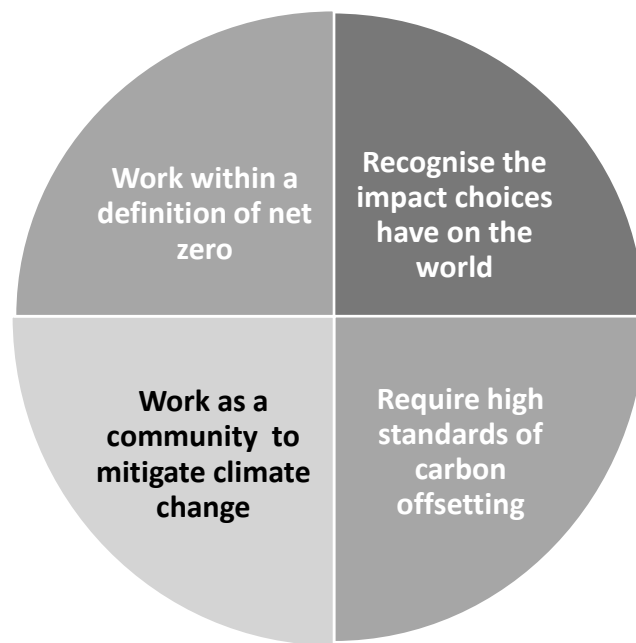


Figure 1. The four principles that all actions and initiatives will follow.

Actions and initiatives to reduce emissions will follow the four key **principles** illustrated in Figure 1 above, as well as following the ‘**Emissions Hierarchy**’ to **avoid, reduce, replace and offset** (Figure 2).

This will help guide the States of Guernsey, businesses, organisations and individuals so that everybody can play their part.

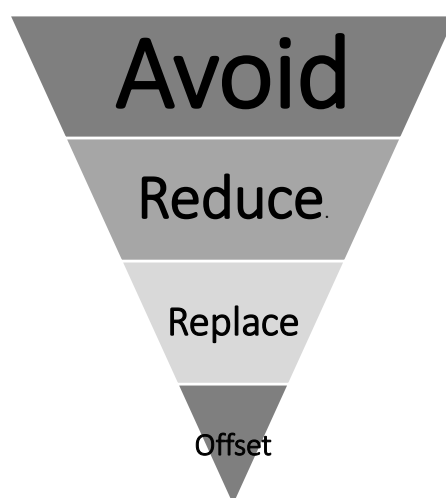


Figure 2. Visual representation of the ‘Emissions Hierarchy’. Actions at the top must be explored and carried out wherever possible before moving down to the next rung, and so on.

The Context

There is a lot of scientific evidence and data that shows how human activity since the industrial revolution, from about 1850 onwards, has caused **at least 1 degree of global warming already**.

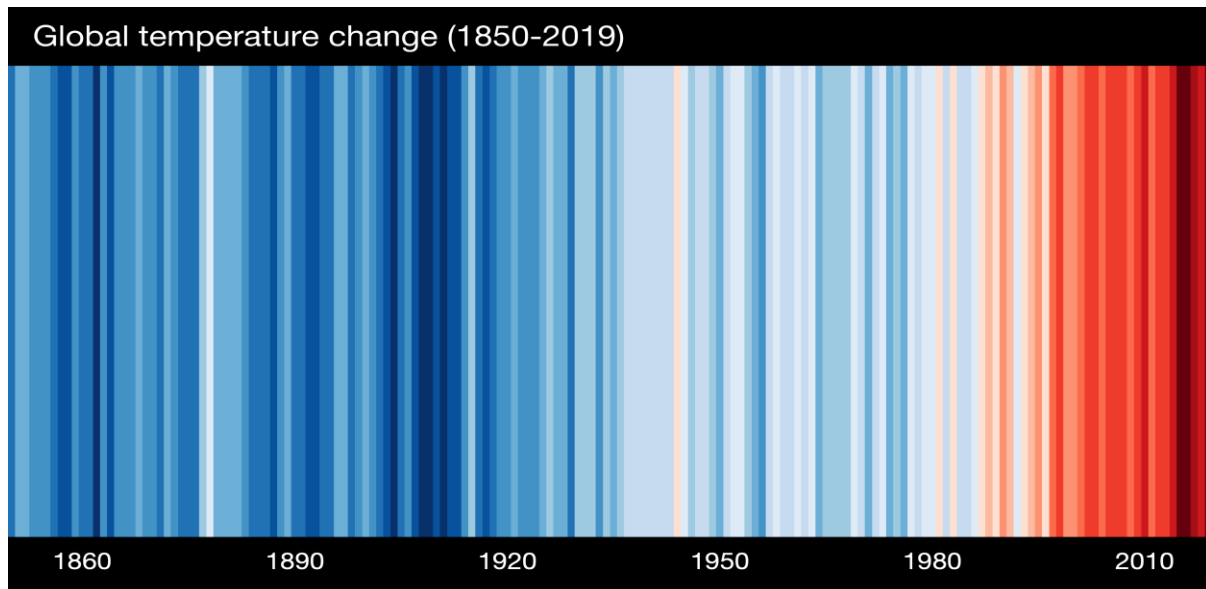


Figure 3. Heat map of global temperature change from years 1850-2019. Dark blue = coldest, dark red = hottest.

Source: <https://showyourstripes.info/>

The 'warming stripe' graphics tell a simple and visual story of this science – it has used data from multiple global organisations to show how **the world is getting hotter**. The stripes turn from mainly blue to mainly red in more recent years, illustrating the rise in temperature (Figure 3). The graphics are specifically designed to be as simple as possible, and to start conversations about the warming world and the risks of climate change.

The '**greenhouse effect**' is a natural process that occurs when gases in the Earth's atmosphere trap the Sun's heat, just like the glass roof of a greenhouse. Some gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), trap heat more than others -. This process is illustrated in Figure 4.

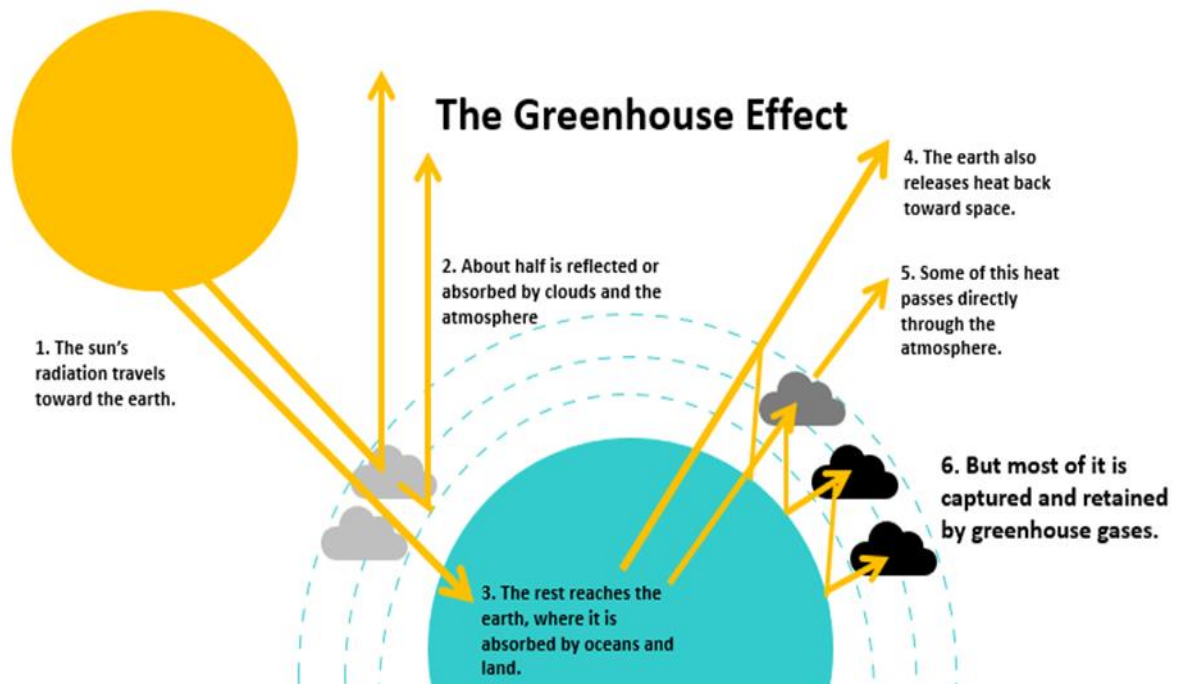


Figure 4. Diagram of the 'Greenhouse Effect'.

These heat-trapping gases are called 'greenhouse gases' and they **are released into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels** to heat and power our buildings and homes, driving petrol/diesel cars, from landfills and cattle farming and in some refrigeration/air conditioning systems (Figure 5). In the context of climate change, these gases are referred to as 'emissions'.

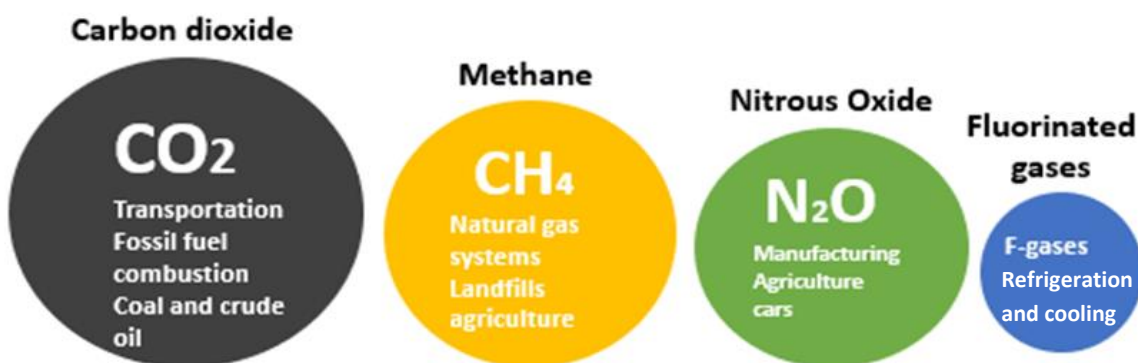


Figure 5. Examples of human activities that produce different greenhouse gases. Order of gases is illustrative of their current contribution to climate change.