



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —

COUNCIL PLAN

for the Forest of Dean District Council

2024-2028

Responding to the Climate & Nature Emergency
for a Fairer Greener Forest





Our response to the Climate and Nature Emergency

We strive to meet our current needs while taking into account the needs of the **Forest's future generations.**

Introduction

This plan for the Forest of Dean District Council is more than simply a strategy document; it is a commitment to the people who live here, to our natural environment and to future generations. It is our local response to the worldwide climate and nature emergency.

The plan will help us outline a path to create thriving communities, decarbonising, protecting nature and fostering a sustainable local economy.

We aim to do everything in the most environmentally sustainable manner possible. It is a comprehensive plan which addresses the need for urgent action, involving our residents and ensuring financial sustainability and value for money.

Embodying the values of **engagement, inclusion and kindness**, this plan aims to mitigate the impacts of climate breakdown and the collapse of nature and to transform our district into a model of environmental stewardship and community resilience.





Our core Council values are engagement, inclusion and kindness

ENGAGEMENT

will foster a sense of community ownership, encouraging active participation and collaboration.



KINDNESS will inform the way we work together, creating a supportive and empathetic environment where everyone is valued and respected. The well-being of our council staff is a key priority.

INCLUSION


will guide our efforts to address the needs of all people in the Forest, ensuring no one is left behind in our pursuit of a sustainable future.



Our underlying principles guide the way we work for you

1

SOCIAL VALUE: to improve the well-being of our residents.




2

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: to ensure all voices are heard and form part of the decision-making process.



3

VALUE FOR MONEY: to ensure our resources are used as responsibly and efficiently as possible.



4

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: to support climate and nature emergency initiatives without compromising the Council's fiscal health.





PRIORITY 1

Thriving Communities

Our objective is to foster resilient and inclusive communities that are motivated and competent to adapt to the challenges and opportunities posed by the **climate and nature emergencies**.

Strategies:

Community Empowerment

Encourage partnership and community-led initiatives that promote community cohesion, sustainable living, biodiversity and environmental education. Where funding permits, provide resources, training and support, empowering people to take active roles in climate action.

Communication and Engagement

Target our resources to build appreciation of the enormity of the climate and nature emergency and an understanding that we must implement radical solutions or suffer the catastrophic consequences of inaction. This will be delivered through an ongoing programme aimed at local press, social and other media.



PRIORITY 1

Thriving Communities cont.

Infrastructure

Secure investment in green spaces and sustainable, affordable housing, with an active travel infrastructure to enhance the quality of life. Champion a better digital infrastructure and foster partnerships with local businesses and organisations to develop local projects such as community food production, biodiversity enhancement, property insulation and retrofit.

Social Equity

Prioritise vulnerable and marginalised communities in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. Ensure that access to resources, information and opportunities is equitable and addresses specific needs.

Community Well-being

Encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own and everyone's health and wellbeing. Help facilitate access to leisure and cultural activities to promote fun and healthy lifestyles for all ages.





PRIORITY 2

Decarbonisation and nature recovery

Our objective is to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Forest of Dean and to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Strategies:

Renewable Energy Transition

Encourage investment in renewable energy projects such as wind, solar, hydroelectric power and battery storage. Collaborate with energy providers, landowners, businesses, and communities to accelerate the transition to clean energy sources, with the overall aim of making the Forest energy self-sufficient.

Energy Efficiency

Reduce energy demand and encourage energy efficient practices across public facilities, businesses and households. Adopt a 'fabric-first' policy and, where possible, provide incentives, education and training to encourage energy-efficient technologies, leading to reduced consumption, household bills and emissions. Encourage retrofitting of insulation to older properties.



PRIORITY 2

Decarbonisation and nature recovery cont.

Transport Transformation

Promote public transport, cycling and walking by improving infrastructure and offering incentives for eco-friendly commuting. Support the electrification of public transport and promote the adoption of electric vehicles by expanding charging infrastructure. Encourage the reduction of commuter travel via remote working where appropriate.

Food Resilience

Work with our farming community and other producers and retailers in the Forest's food economy to encourage the expansion of local food production for local consumption. Develop and provide opportunities for residents to learn food growing skills and identify sites for individual and community gardens as required.

Nature Recovery

Working with Forestry England, the Wildlife Trust and our other partners, protect and enhance our biodiversity and natural environment, including our woodlands, meadows and rivers. Investigate opportunities for re-wilding where appropriate.





PRIORITY 3

Sustainable Economy

Objective is to foster economic prosperity while ensuring environmental sustainability and social well-being.

Strategies:

Circular Economy

Work with local businesses and industry to keep as much as possible of the value generated by local production and retail within the Forest. Promote the circular economy by encouraging reduction of waste, recycling, reuse and composting where these activities make good carbon sense. Seek to ensure that the polluter pays principle applies and obtains climate justice throughout the Forest.

Business Support

Provide financial incentives, grants and technical assistance to businesses, especially those adopting eco-friendly practices. Foster a supportive environment for sustainable start-ups and enterprises that aim to create employment opportunities while preserving the natural environment. Support businesses to improve their energy efficiency and transition to renewable energy.



PRIORITY 3

Sustainable Economy cont.

Workforce Skills

Work with Hartpury University, schools, colleges and training centres to help develop a Forest workforce with the skills required to adapt to our changing world.

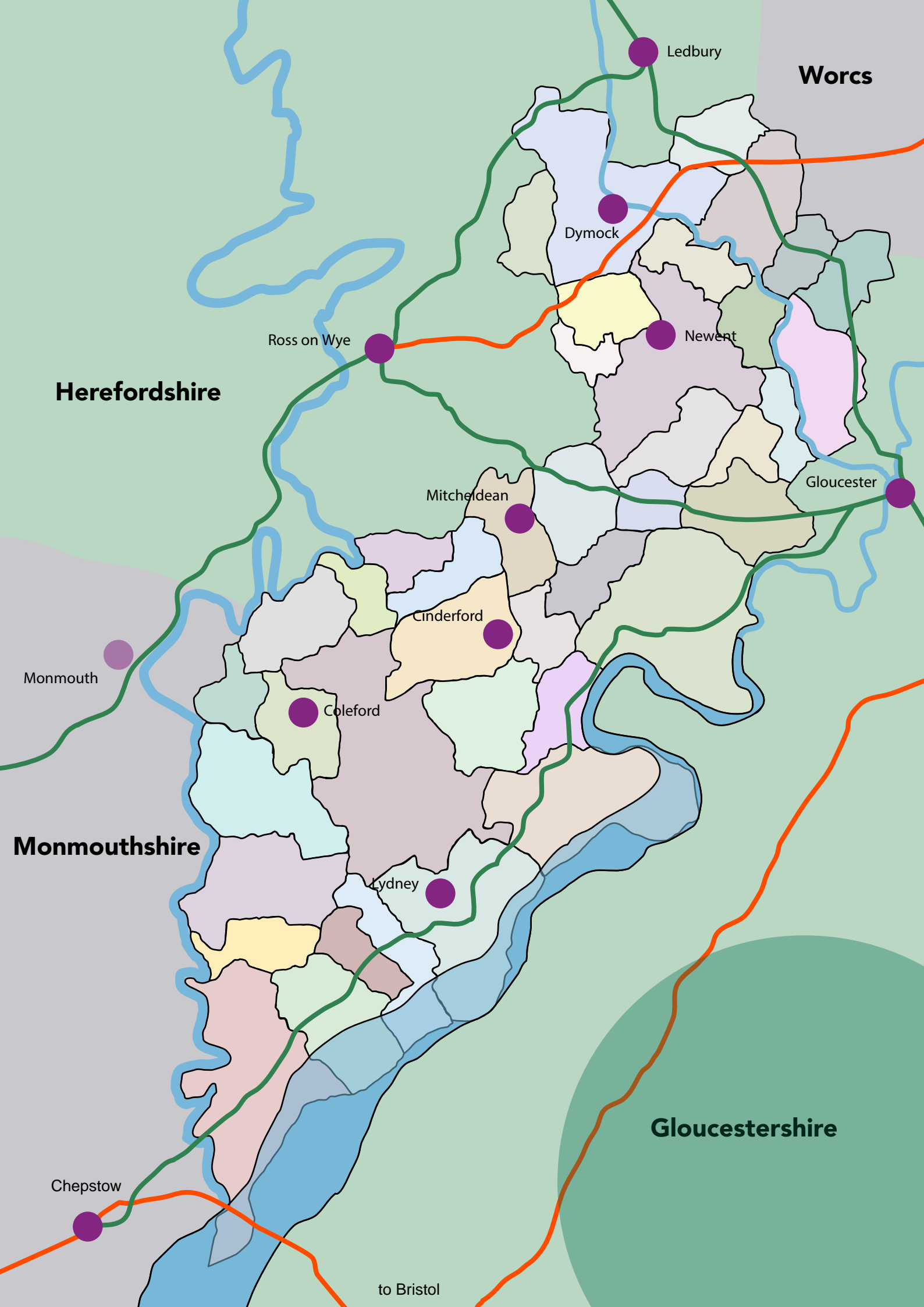
Natural Capital Preservation

Continue to explore the best ways of reconciling the protection of biodiversity with its sustainable use. Partner with conservation organisations, researchers and local communities to safeguard natural capital, ensuring the long-term sustainability of our environment and economy.

Sustainable Towns

Improve the resilience of our Forest towns and villages to plan for a future where we use less energy and are better adapted to the impacts of climate change and the nature emergency.





Worcs

Herefordshire

Monmouthshire

Gloucestershire

Ledbury

Dymock

Newent

Ross on Wye

Gloucester

Mitcheldean

Cinderford

Monmouth

Coleford

Lydney

Chepstow

to Bristol



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —

for a Fairer Greener Forest

Forest of Dean District Council
High Street, Coleford GL16 8HG

Tel: 01594 810000

For more detailed information go to: www.fdean.gov.uk

