



Reigate & Banstead
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate

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| Signed off by | Head of Corporate Policy, Projects and Performance |
| Author | Denise Rowley, Sustainability Project Officer |
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| To | Overview and Scrutiny Committee Executive |
| Date | Thursday 7 September 2023 Thursday 14 September 2023 |
| Executive Member | Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability |

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|------------------------------|--------------|
| Key Decision Required | N |
| Wards Affected | (All Wards); |

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| Subject | Environmental Sustainability Strategy: Annual Report |
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| Recommendations |
| That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Notes the Environmental Sustainability Strategy progress report (Annex 1) and makes any observations to the Executive(ii) Agrees to request Democratic Services (in consultation with the O&S Chair and relevant Head of Service) to prepare a scoping report looking at establishing a time limited Scrutiny Panel for the forthcoming ES Strategy Review, to be considered at a future Committee meeting |
| That the Executive: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Agrees the Environmental Sustainability Strategy progress report (Annex 1) for publication on the Council website(ii) Agrees that officers commence a light touch review of the current Environmental Sustainability Strategy to ensure it remains up to date |
| Reasons for Recommendations |

To reiterate the Council's commitment to tackling climate change and sustainability issues, including in partnership with other public authorities; to enable us to provide regular progress reports and to ensure we remain proactive and agile in our response.

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the Council's progress in delivering its Environmental Sustainability Strategy ('the ES Strategy') and Action Plan since the 2021/22 Environmental Sustainability progress update (ES progress update). This report covers the year ending March 2023.

Since the last ES progress update, some progress has been made on actions across all themes within the Strategy, but action will need to accelerate to meet the net zero 2030 target.

This covering report summarises key elements of our progress, challenges, and next steps, with more detail about progress on specific actions provided in Annex 1 and a summary of commissioned external reports in Annex 2.

The report also outlines plans for a light-touch review of the current Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan to ensure that it remains up to date and reflects the latest baseline evidence and policy position.

Executive has authority to approve the above recommendations

Statutory Powers

1. Under the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has a duty to promote the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of its area. The Council also has related statutory duties around environmental health, waste, and planning.
2. The Climate Change Act 2008 and subsequent amendments¹ sets out much of the UK's policy response to climate change. The Environment Act 2021 provides the legal framework relating to environmental protection.

Background

3. In response to the growing climate challenge, the Government has set increasingly challenging targets to reduce greenhouse gases over the coming years, cumulating in a target for the country to become net zero by 2050.
4. Our own corporate plan, Reigate & Banstead 2025², commits the Council to reducing its own environmental impact, and supporting residents and businesses to do the same. The Environmental Sustainability ES Strategy³ adopted in 2020 provides more information about how the council will deliver on this objective.
5. The Council's activity on environmental sustainability focuses on two main elements; firstly how we become more sustainable as a Council, and secondly how we work

¹ [The Climate Change Act 2008 \(2050 Target Amendment\) Order 2019 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

² www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025

³ www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/sustainability

with other partners, our residents and businesses to make the borough more sustainable.

6. On the first of these, the Strategy sets out a target for the Council's operational CO_{2e} emissions to be reduced to net zero by 2030. For the second of these, the strategy includes a borough level target that aligns with the Government's national target of 2050. While the Council has the most direct control over its own operational emissions, these amount to around 0.2% of emissions within the borough; it is therefore important that we also support residents and businesses to take steps to tackle climate change and sustainability issues, and work with partner organisations to make progress. Further information about carbon targets is included later on in this report.
7. It is proposed to commence a light-touch review of the ES Strategy in Autumn 2023 to ensure that it remains up to date and reflects the latest data and evidence available to us. While this paper and Annex 1 report delivery against the current Strategy we have highlighted some specific elements that will form part of the review process.

Key Information

Progress

8. Detailed information about progress on initiatives outlined in the Action Plan for the year 2022/23 is set out in Annex 1. Some examples are provided below, structured around the four themes within the ES Strategy.
9. **Effective implementation:** This section of the Strategy covers 'cross cutting' issues such as resourcing, communications, planning, and partnership working'. Progress has included:
 - a. Continuing to deliver a wide range of communication-related activity, including updates to our webpages and articles in Borough News along with promotion of energy efficiency, water saving, training opportunities and general sustainability messages.
 - b. Delivery of sustainability messages at in-person events eg food clubs.
 - c. Ongoing engagement with a wide range of partner organisations including participating in a number of Surrey County Council working groups, Town and Parish Councils, local businesses, and community groups.
10. **Energy & carbon:** This section covers energy efficiency, renewable energy, and low carbon transport. Items of note from the past year have included:
 - a. Due to our current energy supplier going out of business, the energy the Council purchases reverted to a conventional (non-renewable) tariff for 2022/23. The Property team have now sourced a 100% renewable electricity tariff to commence in autumn 2023.
 - b. External consultants reported back on their carbon footprint verification, building audits, work mapping the trajectory to net zero scenarios, identifying supply chain emissions (scope 3) and assessing decarbonisation options for the fleet. These reports provide validation to our approach to net zero, will guide our work in 2023/24 planning building decarbonisation and collecting data to develop a

Scope 3 baseline. Along with further, more detailed, work being carried out on costings, it will feed into the Council's future capital programme

- c. Work has been ongoing trialling alternatives to fossil-fuel powered vehicles and equipment to inform future replacements, including investigating different fuel types such as HVO and hydrogen.
 - d. There have been delays in the SCC county-wide concession agreement for electric vehicle charge points on street, although a provider has now been appointed and we have provided initial views on priority locations for both on-and off-street charge points in the borough. Districts and Boroughs have the opportunity to access this agreement as a delivery partner for installations on our own land. However, at year end the necessary detail was still awaited so assessment of the suitability to join this scheme will be done in 2023/24. Land ownership legal issues are holding up completion of 6 additional charge points in Banstead Car Park, but work has been progressing positively on six additional charging points in Horley which will be available in 2023/24.
 - e. Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) phases 2 and 3 delivered retrofit measures such as insulation, on 63 of the most energy inefficient low-income households in the Borough.
 - f. After the successful bid of over £1.4m to Wave 1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (on behalf of Raven Housing Trust in Reigate & Banstead and Accent Housing in Surrey Heath borough), 26 Raven properties have had measures retrofitted in the Borough.
 - g. Ten businesses undertook our low carbon action plan training which resulted in actions likely to save energy and carbon, including production changes, digital footprint, supplier changes and smart metering.
 - h. Provision of direct energy efficiency advice to residents via face-to-face events at community groups, as well as developing capacity for the local energy reduction advice group Energy Action Reigate and Redhill by helping them find grants for their energy assessment service, delivered at 70 properties.
11. **Low impact consumption:** This section covers waste reduction, water efficiency and responsible sourcing. Progress has included:
- a. Roll-out of full kerbside recycling collection to flats continues.
 - b. The ongoing delay to publication of a plan to deliver the targets in the DEFRA Resource and Waste Strategy means that there are some question marks about what our waste and recycling service will look like in the future, which cannot be resolved until more information is available from Government.
 - c. In partnership with SES Water, water efficiency advice has been provided at ten events with 605 free water saving devices distributed.
12. **Natural environment:** This section covers tree planting, supporting biodiversity and reducing pollution. Progress has included:
- a. Increased planting of native and pollinator species on our land and cessation of peat use.

- b. The Greenspaces team is in discussions with community groups about community tree planting and have agreed in principle two locations in the Borough where a community group will plant, water and maintain trees on RBBC land.
 - c. Discussions continuing between the Sustainability and Greenspaces teams to develop a greenspaces and tree planting strategy, this has been delayed somewhat awaiting vacant posts to be filled.
13. Alongside this, the Sustainability Team continues to support managers and officers across the Council to understand environmental issues and identify opportunities to make a difference, ensuring that sustainable ways of working become embedded within the Council.

Borough Carbon Footprint

14. Data from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) (formerly BEIS, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) indicates that progress is being made on reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the borough (figure 1), there was a more significant fall in 2020 (likely due to reduced activity caused by the Covid19 lockdowns) with a rebound to the expected downward trajectory in 2021. This is the latest year for which DESNZ have published data, with 2022 figures not expected until June 2024. This trend is replicated across Surrey. It should be noted that domestic and transport emissions per head are higher in Reigate & Banstead than the national average (although lower than the Surrey average) (figure 2).

Figure 1: Borough level trend in greenhouse gas emissions (2005-2021, ktCO_{2e}) (source: DESNZ)

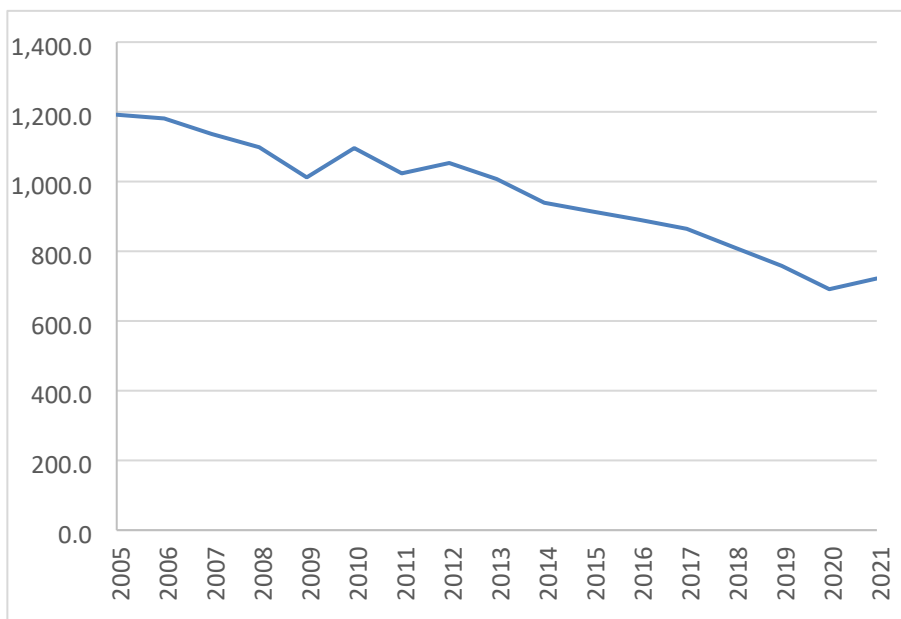
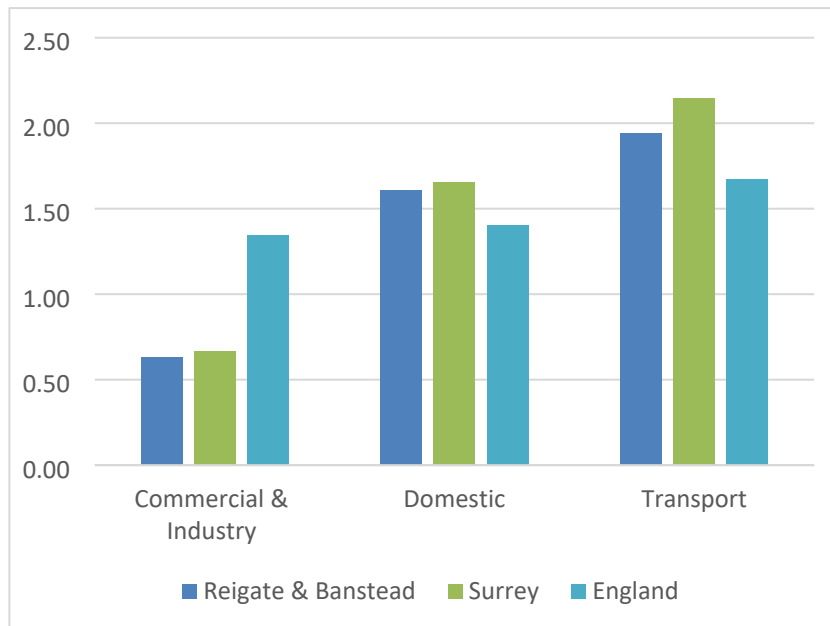


Figure 2: Borough greenhouse gas emissions per Capita (2021, ktCO_{2e}) (source: DESNZ)

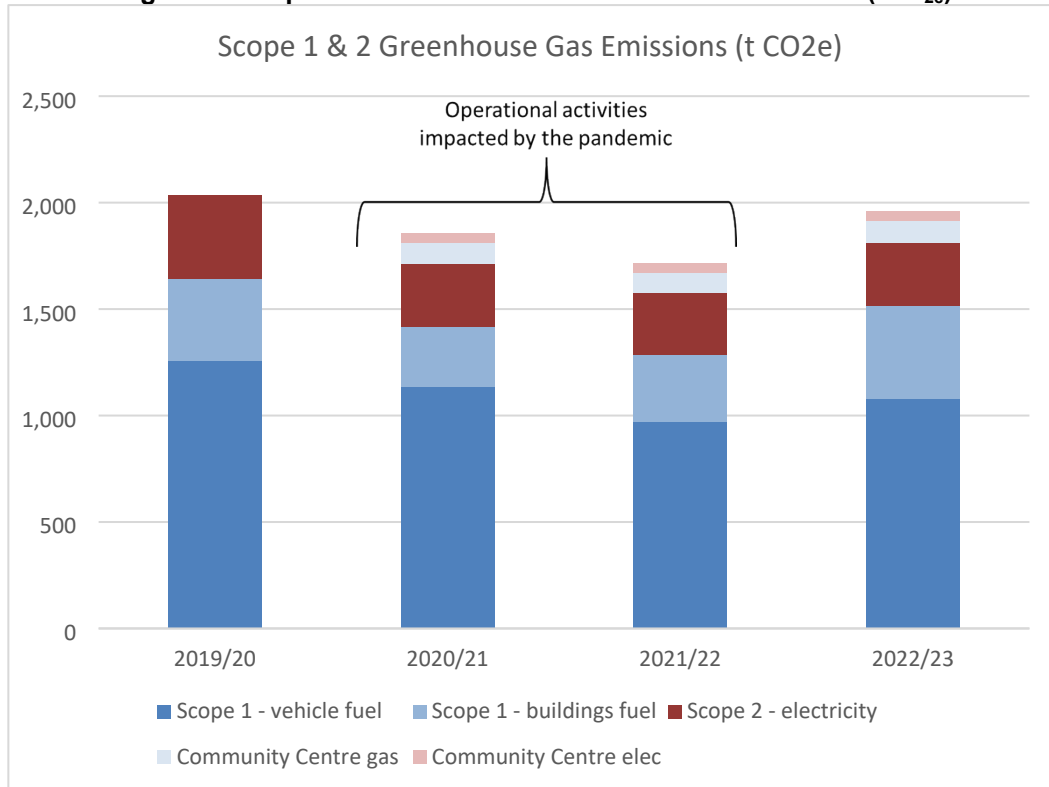


Council carbon footprint

15. The measured carbon footprint of the Council's operational emissions covers Scope 1 emissions (natural gas used in buildings and petrol and diesel used in vehicles and mobile equipment) and Scope 2 emissions (purchased electricity) only. The scope of the carbon footprint includes all Council owned vehicles and petrol-fuelled equipment along with Council owned and operated buildings identified at the time of Strategy publication (the Town Hall, Depot, Harlequin, Community Centres (from 2020), car parks and smaller buildings such as toilets, park pavilions, and the cemetery). It currently excludes buildings with more complicated owner / operator status such as the leisure centres, leased commercial assets and housing, however this will be reviewed during the proposed ES Strategy Review (See Next Steps).
16. Figure 3 shows the council's carbon footprint based on its operational emissions, with the year 2019/20 representing the baseline from which we will measure progress against our target of being net zero by 2030⁴. Community centres only returned to council operation in 2020. These are therefore indicated separately to show the additional emissions from these sites that were not present in the baseline year.

⁴ Based on scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, with a focus on achieving carbon neutrality including scope 3 emissions as soon as possible thereafter

Figure 3: Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions 2019/20-2022/23 (tCO_{2e})



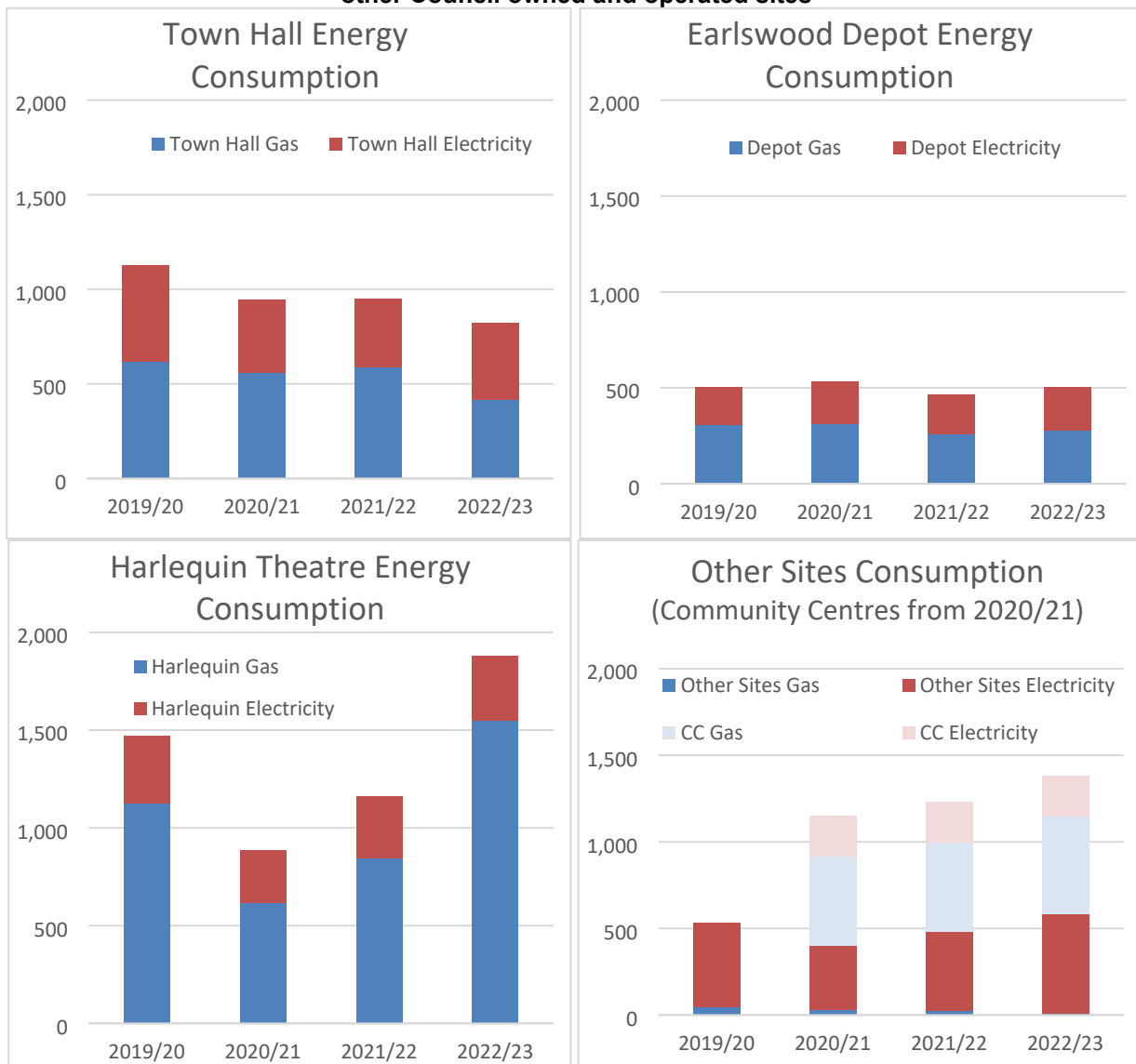
NOTE: Community centres returned to the Council in 2020/21 and their energy consumption is included in the carbon footprint for that year and onwards. We do not have a breakdown of their separate carbon emissions for 2020/21 and 2021/22 so they are presented here indicatively.

17. The graph shows a downward trend in carbon emissions since the baseline year for those emissions included within the baseline, and a slight downward trend (although lesser reduction) when community centre emissions are included. However, there has been an uptick in emissions since last year.
18. During the years 2020/21 and 2021/22 our activities were affected by the lockdowns and restrictions associated with Covid19, which began with a request to stop non-essential contract on 16 March 2020 and the national lockdown legally came into force on 26 March 2020. Although refuse services continued, other activities were significantly affected - community centres were shut and the Harlequin was repurposed as a food bank and support hub, whilst staff predominantly worked from home with many supporting Covid-related activities. Although the first lockdown was lifted in June 2020, significant restrictions remained, and further national lockdowns occurred in winter 2020/21 with a phased lockdown exit from March to July 2021. Remaining government restrictions (for example on travel and isolation) were only lifted in Spring 2022, which is likely to explain the uptick in emissions for this current reporting year. It is also likely that the carbon footprint for 2022/23 is more representative of the 'new normal'.
19. It should also be noted that due to the failure of one of the Council's energy providers during the reporting period, data availability has been impacted – this is an issue that multiple councils have experienced and that we have been working to rectify, however has meant that figures for gas usage have had to be extrapolated from the partial data that is currently available. In addition, it must be noted that many of our sites are not on smart meters so gas measurements are estimated and subject to

occasional reconciliation. Figures should therefore be treated with a degree of caution.

20. **The buildings component of emissions:** The variability in energy consumption over time at the three main sites, as well as a collective of the remaining sites, is illustrated in Figure 4. Points to note include:
- a. For 'other sites' the community centres were not included in the baseline carbon footprint as the Council only brought operations in house in 2020/21. Based on consumption levels in 2022-23 these add an additional 104t CO_{2e} from gas consumption and 56t CO_{2e} from electricity consumption.
 - b. The Harlequin by its nature has a high energy utilisation due to its size and hours of operation and as such it represents a higher percentage of energy use compared to our other operational buildings. Noting the caveats about data availability in para 19 above and the fact that the facility was likely most impacted by lockdowns, for 2022/23 gas consumption has increased against baseline (equating to estimated 78t CO_{2e} compared with the Harlequin carbon emissions from gas in the baseline year). Work is underway to ascertain the reasons for this increase, determine how it can be addressed in the immediate term, and understand longer-term options available to better manage energy use at this facility.
 - c. Many of our sites are not on smart meters so figures are estimated and subject to occasional reconciliation which can distort the pattern of energy consumption. The Property team is investigating the roll out of automatic metering across the main sites which will allow accurate energy consumption data in future whilst allowing analysis of where energy is being consumed which will allow any unusual patterns to be identified, investigated and rectified in order to reduce energy consumption.

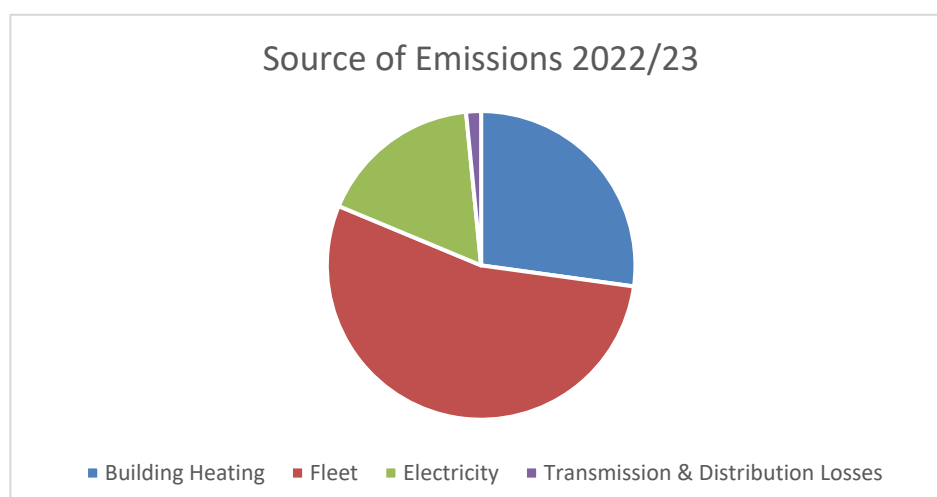
Figure 4: Gas and electricity consumption (MWh) at the Council’s main operational sites and all other Council owned and operated sites



21. **The fleet component of emissions:** In terms of the fleet, 2022-23 sees approximately 14% reduction in fuel consumption compared to the baseline, which is likely to be partially attributable to the installation of electric lifting gear on the refuse collection vehicles and partly the transition to EVs for those suitable vehicles that have reached end-of-life.
22. While it should be noted that reductions in carbon emissions are expected to be non-linear with significant reductions achieved during years where major projects are delivered (eg replacing a gas boiler with an electric alternative or replacing a number of vehicles with low emission versions), it is clear that ongoing action to reduce emissions from our buildings and fleet will be critical. This will include activity to reduce fuel and energy consumption (which are also likely to save money on fuel bills), move away from gas as a fuel source, and speed up delivery of renewable energy sources.
23. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of the Council's operational emissions⁵. Transmission and distribution (T&D) losses represent emissions arising from energy lost in the

distribution process from the generators and is out of the council's direct control (scope 3), although directly correlates to the amount of energy consumed from the national grid. T&D is included in the baseline carbon footprint but it does not form part of the Council's 2030 net zero target, as this only focuses on Scope 1 and 2. Despite this, T&D emissions should naturally reduce as we implement energy efficiency measures and alternative energy sources. As noted above, the Council's electricity usage (currently 17%) will be on a renewable tariff from Autumn 2023.

Figure 5: Council Source of Emissions (2021/22)



External Reviews

24. During 2022-23, external consultants were commissioned to review a number of aspects of the ES Strategy, and in particular the work to deliver net zero carbon by 2030. These are summarised briefly below, with further detail in Annex 2.
 - a. **Baseline Validation Report** – this report reviewed and validated data used to create the carbon baseline of 2019/20 and the data for the first year of reporting 2020/21. The report included found the data was substantially correct, with only minor adjustments required. These amendments increased the baseline carbon footprint to 2,069t CO₂e and the 2020/21 footprint to 1,885t CO₂e.
 - b. **Building Energy Audits** – audits were conducted at six main sites and two multi-storey car parks to identify costed opportunities to reduce energy consumption, to transition from fossil fuels to low / zero carbon heating and to install renewable energy generation.
 - c. **Scope 3 emissions** – these emissions are not part of the 2030 target but are targeted for “as soon as possible thereafter”. Scope 3 emissions are indirect emissions (those outside of direct control) typically those from suppliers, staff commuting, non-RBBC vehicle travel (eg public transport), water, waste, and leased assets.
 - d. **Net Zero Trajectory** – this report looked at scenarios and developed a trajectory of carbon reductions for each scenario. Assuming an ‘accelerated path,’ forecast emissions in 2030 would be 452t CO₂e (or a 77% reduction on baseline).

⁵ Based on information gathered across Council services

Additional actions were proposed to reduce this further, including bringing forward the timeline for vehicle decarbonisation.

- e. **Fleet Review** – this report reviewed the Council vehicle fleet to determine which of these could be replaced with electric equivalents and whether there are viable hydrogen alternatives for larger vehicles. Implications for carbon and costs were considered on a whole-life basis.

Challenges

- 25. The following challenges have inhibited significant progress in delivering actions and reducing the Council's carbon emissions: Further information about addressing these challenges is provided in the 'Next Steps' section.
 - a. Progress on reducing energy consumption in our buildings has been delayed for a number of reasons, including lack of capacity in the Property team, lack of detailed energy data to identify where energy losses are, and a need to develop detailed costs for the building energy efficiency measures identified in the Building Energy Audits.
 - b. A sustainable procurement policy is critical for embedding sustainable practices, but there has been no progress on this due to the lack of resources in the Procurement team.
 - c. Further electrification of the Depot-based fleet will be difficult with the current layout and needs an understanding of the electrical grid capacity. A plan to investigate capacity and options will be implemented in 2023/4.
 - d. A vacancy in the Sustainability team for 7 months reduced capacity to progress actions, whilst vacancies in the Greenspaces team have delayed the Tree Strategy and the Greenspaces Strategy. Offers have been made and these roles will be filled in 2023.

Next Steps

- 26. As well as setting out progress on, and challenges associated with, 2022/23 actions, Annex 1 presents progress on earlier ongoing actions and explains the next steps in relation to these actions. Work is also starting for delivery of the objectives outlined in the Action Plan for 2023/24 (progress on which will be reported in the next annual report), and a summary is also presented in Annex 1.

27. Fleet:

- a. **Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil:** HVO is a type of biofuel created using waste products such as used cooking oil. Sometimes known as renewable diesel, it is a fossil fuel-free alternative to mineral diesel. All 28 of the Council's 26 tonne Refuse Collection Vehicles have been confirmed as being compatible with HVO without any modification. This element of the fleet is responsible for around 650t CO_{2e} emissions every year and equates to over 30% of all Council CO_{2e} emissions.

Assuming a 76% reduction in CO_{2e} from switching to HVO, a reduction of around 490t CO_{2e} per year could be achieved, 24% of the Council's total CO_{2e} emissions. This is a significant reduction that could be implemented almost immediately as a transition fuel whilst the infrastructure for transitioning the whole fleet to low carbon (eg electric or hydrogen) is designed and installed. A business case is currently being prepared. As HVO is more costly than diesel, moving to this fuel

would require approval of revenue budget (and potentially capital programme growth) as part of service & financial planning for 2024/5.

- b. **Electric or hydrogen vehicles:** As existing vehicles come up for renewal, our fleet replacement strategy is that these should be replaced with low carbon alternatives where possible, recognising that not all vehicles in our fleet currently have alternatives available which are cost effective or able to deliver the required tasks, and that there remain some questions about at-scale EV charging capacity at the depot. As this is a significant investment, the purchase of these vehicles will be subject to approval of a business case for growth in the capital programme. To inform purchase decisions alternatively fuelled vehicles continue to be trialled across relevant service areas.

28. **Buildings:**

- a. **Energy management:** Options are currently being explored to improve energy management across the Council's operational buildings. One of the challenges of operating in large buildings and across a large operational estate is managing how energy is used and collecting data to understand where savings can be made. Early estimates are that sub-metering (for example) could initially deliver in the region of 43tCO_{2e} per year carbon savings.
- b. **Solar PV:** £0.430 million of funding has been secured via strategic CIL towards solar PV on 9 Council buildings including the Town Hall, Depot, Harlequin and three Community Centres. Overall, it has been estimated that this has the potential to deliver a carbon reduction of 57t CO_{2e} per year. As well as carbon savings, this will reduce energy bills and benefit the Council's revenue budget. Planning permission has recently been secured for the first of these, at Priory Park Pavilion, with the intention being to progress with other installations in a phased manner. It should be noted that due to construction cost increases additional funding may be required to deliver solar PV at all of the identified properties. Where possible this will be funded from the existing Environmental Sustainability Projects capital allocation, however if that is not possible and other funding cannot be found, the scale of the installations may need to be reduced. There may be technical constraints on some buildings which limit the ability to install solar PV, and feasibility work is underway to investigate this. Where preparatory works are needed that come at an additional cost, installation may need to be aligned with the agreed capital programme for maintenance if this work cannot be brought forward sooner.

Outside the scope of the CIL scheme, options are also being explored to install solar PV on the new temporary and emergency accommodation units that are being purchased by the Council. Funding is being sought from a third party funding source – if successful this could deliver an estimated carbon saving of 0.5t CO_{2e} per property per year.

- c. **Other building upgrades:** A range of other building upgrades are also needed to our operational buildings including measures to improve energy efficiency and transition away from gas use. It is important that these are scheduled carefully to minimise installation costs and avoid abortive works (for example installing measures that then need to be removed due to (for example) building refurbishment).

An initial focus will be on measures for which Strategic CIL funding has been secured at Banstead and Woodhatch Community Centres (with measures at Horley Community Centre being incorporated as part of a wider renovation project). Funding of £0.370 million has been secured to deliver measures such as better building energy management technology, anti-glare film, LED lighting and more energy efficient heating. Across the two properties these have the potential to reduce carbon emissions by in the region of 70t CO_{2e} per year. Feasibility work is underway to gain detailed costings, however as with solar PV, it should be noted that due to construction cost increases additional funding may be required to deliver all measures both properties, and there may be preparatory works that come at an additional cost. The route for securing any additional funding needed will be determined once detailed costings are available. Options include to use the ES projects capital allocation, seeking third party funding, phasing works to align with scheduled maintenance activity (and associated capital programme allocation), growth requests or reducing the scale of intervention.

Sustainability upgrades to other council buildings will be planned in either as part of the ongoing maintenance programme, or once plans for their longer-term use are firmed up. Funding for these upgrades will be included in future reviews of the council's capital programme or brought forward as standalone funding requests supported by business cases for approval.

29. Using HVO in our refuse collection vehicles, coupled with energy management system improvements, upgrades to the two community centres mentioned above, and the installation of solar PV are estimated to generate carbon savings of 660t CO_{2e} per year (equivalent to 31% of 2019/20 baseline). Switching to more low carbon vehicles and other building retrofit works will further build on this.
30. **Sustainable Procurement:** Sustainable procurement is an important element in securing future reductions in our supply chain emissions. Interim capacity has now been secured in the Procurement team to enable the corporate strategic procurement review to begin – this will include looking at ethical and sustainable procurement, and the Sustainability Team will input into the review. The new corporate approach will ensure that we are able to proactively use procurement as a positive tool to contribute to sustainability objectives
31. **Greenspaces and tree planting:** Well managed greenspaces play an important role in carbon sequestration, and tree-planting in appropriate areas can increase this further. Work is currently underway to prepare a Greenspaces Strategy, which will explain in more detail how the Council's greenspaces will be managed to enhance this capability in the coming years. Where additional funding or resources are required to deliver additional activities, this will be progressed via the annual budget setting process. The Council has also commissioned assessments to determine the feasibility of using Council-owned land as habitat banks to provide additional biodiversity net gain.

Reviewing the Strategy

32. As noted in para 7, a Strategy Review will be undertaken in 2023/24 to reflect progress and build on the collective knowledge gained since the Strategy was drafted in 2020, whilst reflecting the changing legislative, technical and policy landscape. This will be a light-touch review, retaining the vision, objectives, and net zero targets

whilst developing new short- and medium-term actions to deliver the objectives, and updating the Strategy with relevant new information.

33. The review will:
- a. Review and confirm the scope of the Council's net zero target and what data collection activities would be necessary to extend the scope to include assets not currently covered
 - b. Review the objectives and any outstanding actions from the current strategy
 - c. Develop a new suite of measurable actions for the short term (1-3 years) with some less specific actions for the medium term (3-5 years) along with any necessary longer-term actions that may develop in light of legislation or technological improvements
 - d. Review performance indicators and include the development of a new standard reporting template
 - e. Provide more information about addressing scope 3 emissions and about offsetting any residual emissions; and
 - f. Consider in more detail the need to develop resilience and adapt to a changing climate
34. To inform the review, consultation will be undertaken with relevant Council service areas, partner organisations and community representatives, and elected Members, including via a time-limited O&S Scrutiny Panel.

Options

35. The Executive has the following options:
36. Recommendation 1:
- Option (a): Agree the ES Strategy Progress Update at Annex 1. This option is recommended as it enables us to publish a formal report on progress, ensuring transparency in relation to our continuing activity to lead local action to tackle climate change and other sustainability issues.
- Option (b): Do not agree the ES Strategy Progress Update for publication. This option is not recommended as it is important that we publicly report our progress on a topic that is of increasing local interest.
37. Recommendation 2:
- Option (a): Agree to progress a light touch review of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy. This option is recommended as it enables us to review the ES Strategy allowing for updated actions to deliver local environmental improvements and deliver the Strategy target and objectives.
- Option (b): Do not agree to progress the review This option is not recommended as a review of the ES Strategy is needed to ensure it reflects developments since it was written.

Legal Implications

38. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, however it is noted that any review of the Council's procurement strategy presents an opportunity to ensure sustainability is taken into account in future procurement activities.

Financial Implications

39. Budgetary provision for the implementation of the ES Strategy currently comprises:
- An annual revenue budget allocation for one permanent Sustainability Project Officer. A second Sustainability Project Officer post is currently funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant
 - £146,000 in an earmarked Environmental Sustainability Reserve, which is currently being used to contribute to the cost of other sustainability workstreams; and
 - £250,000 initial allocation in the approved Capital Programme that is available for investment in environmental sustainability improvements for Council assets.
40. For many of the initiatives in the Action Plan, costs will be met by the relevant Council department (for example, Fleet, Facilities etc), with the sustainability budgets serving to provide 'top up' or match funding. As noted above, strategic CIL funding has also been secured. Work is underway to update rolling capital programmes in relation to both property and fleet, factoring in sustainability measures. External funding opportunities are pursued wherever possible, with previous success in securing government funding to benefit the borough from the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Fund and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
41. Where additional funding requirements are identified, these will be pursued in the usual way. In some cases, operational costs may be lower by investment in sustainability measures (for example energy efficiency measures leading to lower energy bills or renewables generation producing 'free' electricity once the capital costs are paid back), which will be reflected in relevant business case. It is expected that costs associated with a business-as-usual approach will increase over time (for example, fossil fuel prices, taxes on polluting vehicles, recovery costs associated with extreme weather events and ultimately carbon taxes), whilst there is increasing recognition that the cost of climate inaction are likely to be higher than the costs associated with the net zero transition.
42. Statutory obligations may also emerge for local councils via Government interventions which may introduce additional financial burdens on the Council.

Equalities Implications

43. We have a statutory duty to consider and demonstrate this in all our decisions.
44. Opportunities for positive impact exist, specifically:
- a. In relation to domestic retrofit, where the current focus on tackling the hardest to heat homes first will benefit vulnerable residents from protected characteristic groups living in those homes, by reducing energy bills and improving living conditions.
 - b. In relation to activity around climate change adaption, it is widely recognised that extreme weather events are likely to impact the most vulnerable in our

communities to the greatest extent. Any support and advice that the Council can provide about how to adapt and stay safe will be beneficial.

45. In relation to these opportunities, the Equality Impact Assessment highlights the importance of ensuring that information is provided in a manner that is accessible to those with protected characteristics. We have a statutory duty to consider and demonstrate this in all of our decisions.

Communication Implications

46. A communications plan has been developed to support the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, covering both internal and external communications.
47. Annex 1 will be published on our website as our third annual report and will be supported with some associated communications activity.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

48. Overall, implementation of the ES Strategy will have a positive environmental impact across the borough as well as contributing to global sustainability and climate objectives. It will continue to be important that the full range of potential environmental impacts of projects within the Strategy are considered to avoid or mitigate any unnecessary negative environmental consequences, whilst assessing and recording any associated co-benefits (environmental and other).
49. Work will continue to improve the Council's access to appropriate data so that the direct impact of our activities can be measured and reported

Risk Management Considerations

50. The risks arising from a changing climate (expected to be hotter, drier summers and wetter, warmer winters and more frequent and intense weather extremes) are recognised as a corporate strategic risk, reported on quarterly. The ES Strategy Review will provide an opportunity to consider the need for any additional actions to prepare and / or adapt to climate predictions.
51. The risks for individual projects within the ES Strategy action plan will be considered on a case-by-case basis using the Council's established project management framework. This will include considering operational risks in relation to existing Council activities, financial risks and health and safety considerations.

Consultation

52. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is being invited to make observations on the Annual Report to the Executive. Any observations will be provided to the Executive by way of draft O&S minutes or a verbal report.

Policy Framework

53. The Environmental Sustainability Strategy provides more detail about the Corporate Plan objectives and commitments on environmental sustainability will be delivered.

Background Powers

1. Reigate & Banstead 2025 (Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025) - [https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20205/plans and policies/280/reigate and banstead 2025](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20205/plans_and_policies/280/reigate_and_banstead_2025)
2. Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Strategy - https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020
3. Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Action Plan - https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020
4. Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Performance Indicators - https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020