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<b>TO</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>DATE</b>	9 December 2020
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Policy and Resources

<b>SUBJECT</b>	Environmental Sustainability Strategy
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## RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Committee consider the Environmental Sustainability Strategy and make any observations**
- (ii) That any observations be reported to the relevant Executive Member with a request that they be taken into account as the Strategy is implemented and through the annual reporting and review process**

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

In order that any comments from the Committee can be fed into ongoing work to progress the delivery of the agreed Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A commitment to produce a new Environmental Sustainability Strategy was included in the 'Reigate & Banstead 2025 corporate plan.

This covering paper provides a brief introduction to the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, including its scope and proposals for progress reporting.

This paper should be read in conjunction with the report presented to the Executive on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020, which includes more information about the Strategy and (as annexes) the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Action Plan and Performance Indicators.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Environmental Sustainability Strategy (the 'ES Strategy') was considered and approved by the Executive in July 2020. The Executive report and ES Strategy are available to Committee members on the website at: <https://reigate-banstead.gov.uk>

[banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1413&Ver=4](https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1413&Ver=4)

This covering report should be read in conjunction with that report.

2. Following the Executive meeting, a call-in request was made by some members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The call-in was considered by the Committee on 27 August 2020. The papers associated with the call-in are available at: <https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=1735&Ver=4>.
3. Having considered the call-in, the Committee resolved that the Executive's decision to approve the ES Strategy should be implemented without delay. At that meeting it was also clarified that the ES Strategy and Action Plan would come for scrutiny at Committee's December meeting.
4. Committee members may, in particular, wish to consider:
  - The level of ambition in the Strategy and the priority areas of focus within each theme (summarised in Table 1 of this report)
  - The climate change aims (outlined in para 12 of this report); and
  - The overall scope and ambition of the Action Plan (appended as Annex 2 to the July Executive report).

## BACKGROUND

5. The 2015-202 Corporate Plan did not include Environmental Sustainability or tackling climate change as a priority for the Council.
6. In preparing the new 2020-2025 corporate plan, 'Reigate & Banstead 2025'<sup>1</sup>, it was considered (based on public consultation as well as a review of local information and the wider policy context within which the Council operates) that a new objective on Environmental Sustainability should be included. This objective is to:  
*"Reduce our own environmental impact, support local residents to do the same, and make sure our activities increase the borough's resilience to the effects of climate change".*
7. Reigate & Banstead 2025 explains that, in working to achieve this objective, the Council would publish a new ES Strategy.
8. As such, work to prepare the new Strategy took place from autumn 2019 to spring 2020. This work was undertaken by consultants Waterman Infrastructure & Environment, and included the collation of information from the Council, review of options, and engagement with officers and members on strategy content.
9. The Executive agreed the Strategy in July 2020, along with confirmation that it recognises the need for urgent action on climate change and sustainability issues.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

10. The report provided to the Executive in July provides an overview of the content of the ES Strategy and members are referred to that report. Without repeating that content here, in summary:

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025](http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025)

- a. The ES Strategy is made up of three documents: the main strategy document, an action plan and a set of performance indicators.
- b. The Strategy, action plan and performance indicators are presented on the basis of three topic themes: Energy and Carbon, Low Impact Consumption, and the Natural Environment. There is also an overarching theme, 'Effective Implementation'.
- c. The main strategy document introduces each theme, defines the Council's 2050 vision for each topic theme, priority areas of focus within each theme and explains in general terms the ways in which the Council will seek to make progress towards achieving its vision.
- d. The Action Plan identifies objectives for each theme, and activities which the Council will undertake for each objective, with associated timeframes.
- e. For each of the priorities and topic objectives, performance indicators are defined, with targets or directions of travel and information about who has responsibility for implementation.

**Table 1: Strategy themes and priority areas of focus**

Strategy theme	Priority area of focus
Energy and carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy minimisation</li> <li>• Renewable energy</li> <li>• Low carbon transport</li> <li>• Embodied carbon</li> </ul>
Low impact consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste reduction</li> <li>• Water efficiency</li> <li>• Responsible sourcing</li> </ul>
Natural environment and biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological enhancement</li> <li>• Sustainable drainage</li> <li>• Environmental impact and pollution prevention</li> </ul>

### **Climate change aims**

11. Tackling climate change is an important element of the ES Strategy. This element is included within the Energy and Carbon theme, although actions within the other themes also contribute to addressing the climate challenge.
12. The ES Strategy sets out the Council's aims to:
  - a. Achieve carbon neutrality (as an organisation) across its scope 1 and 2 emissions<sup>2</sup> by 2030; and
  - b. Work with partners to achieve carbon neutrality across the Borough (in line with Government targets) by 2050.

### **Proposals for monitoring, reporting on progress and strategy review**

13. In approving the ES Strategy, the Executive agreed that progress in delivering the Strategy will be reported annually. The Executive report explains that this annual report will be made to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and placed on the Council website.

<sup>2</sup> See para 18 of the July Executive Report. Scope 1 covers emissions from the direct combustion of fuels (eg petrol, gas). Scope 2 covers emissions from purchased electricity.

14. For the avoidance of doubt, today's agenda item does not represent a formal annual progress report.
15. The July Executive report also explains that – as well as annual reporting – it will be important that the Strategy itself is regularly reviewed to take account of the local progress that has been made, the latest evidence, policy and technological advancements.
16. In practical terms, the annual reporting process will provide the opportunity to consider progress, and identify any new, updated or changing priorities or activities within the Action Plan. It is anticipated that the main Strategy document will be updated every three to five years.

#### **Cross party member group**

17. In July, the Executive agreed that a cross party member task group should continue to meet to review and provide feed back on the implementation of the ES Strategy.
18. The group met in November. Members received a progress update on various projects, and provided feedback to the Portfolio Holder and officers about how activity to deliver the ES Strategy should be prioritised. Outside of the meeting, group members have also been provided with email updates and invitations to input into the consideration of sustainability opportunities and challenges arising from Covid-19.
19. The group will meet approximately four times per year. As part of the formal annual reporting process (see para 15), the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be provided with a summary of the group's involvement.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Reigate & Banstead 2025: [www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025](http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025)
2. Report to Executive July 2020 (including Strategy annexes): <https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=137&MIId=1413&Ver=4>