Environmental Sustainability Strategy

March 2024

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

Contents

Foreword (will be added prior to publication)

1. Introduction

1.1 The 2020 Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Our Corporate Plan, Reigate and Banstead 2025, explains our priorities for the next five years and how we will deliver services to those living, working and spending time in our borough. The Vision for the Plan includes 'being proactive about tackling climate change and reducing our environmental impact' and to achieve this the Plan committed to publish a new Environmental Sustainability Strategy to deliver the commitment to reducing our "own environmental impact and supporting local residents and businesses to do the same".

In 2020, we commissioned a consultant to develop an Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ES Strategy), which was then agreed by the Executive, published on our website and for which we provide annual progress updates. There was a commitment to regularly review the ES Strategy. This document is therefore an update to the 2020 ES Strategy as a result of a review of the 2020 document.

1.2 The Review

Since the ES Strategy was agreed in 2020, worldwide carbon emissions have continued to rise, biodiversity loss has accelerated[1] and the effects of climate change attributable to human activities have become more apparent.

This 2024 document updates the Strategy in light of the changes that have occurred since the original was written, including:

- The Covid19 pandemic starting in 2020, the associated lockdowns, and the return to a 'new normal' that has resulted from living with Covid.
- The ongoing change to working patterns that stemmed from Government encouragement to work from home where possible during the lockdowns and to avoid non-essential contact.
- Developments from national Government in policy, legislation and funding streams, for example the Environment Act 2021.
- The publication in 2020 of the Surrey County Council 'Greener Futures' Climate Change Strategy, and its supporting Delivery Plan which includes actions for the County Council and the eleven district and borough councils, as well as strategies and action plans from our neighbouring local authorities.
- Growth in our collective knowledge about the potential solutions to decarbonise Council buildings and vehicles.
- Technology has developed and prices for renewable technologies, such as solar photovoltaics, have fallen. In tandem with rising grid energy prices, this has substantially improved financial payback times.
- The publication in 2023 of the Surrey County Council Adaptation and Resilience Strategy, known as Surrey Adapt.

Progress has been made in achieving the objectives of the 2020 Strategy, with annual reports published on our website.

This review and revision of the Strategy will ensure we have the knowledge, tools and resources in place, and we are working on the correct actions to meet our vision, objectives and targets.

1.1.1 The Scope of the Review

The 2023-2024 review has considered the following:

- the 2020 ES Strategy document;
- addition of any new themes;

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[1] IPBES (2019): Summary for policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services | IPBES secretariat https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment page 14 paragraph 6.

- addition of any new objectives;
- review of any outstanding actions from the 2020 Action Plan (as updated in 2021);
- development of new actions;
- review of performance indicators.

The review has not changed:

- the target to get to net zero carbon by 2030 for the Council (scope 1 and 2 emissions);
- the aim to achieve net zero for scope 3 emissions as soon as possible after 2030
- the target to get to net zero carbon by 2050 for the borough;
- the vision statements that describe how a future Council and borough could look if the objectives are achieved;
- the four themes within the 2020 Strategy;
- the overall intention of the Strategy objectives, (however these were reviewed to determine if there was potential to combine objectives or reword to make the intention clearer).

1.3   The Scope of the Strategy

The ES Strategy covers two complementary areas – Council activities and activities within the wider borough. The scope of these two areas is summarised in Figure 1 below, with more detail in the following subsections.
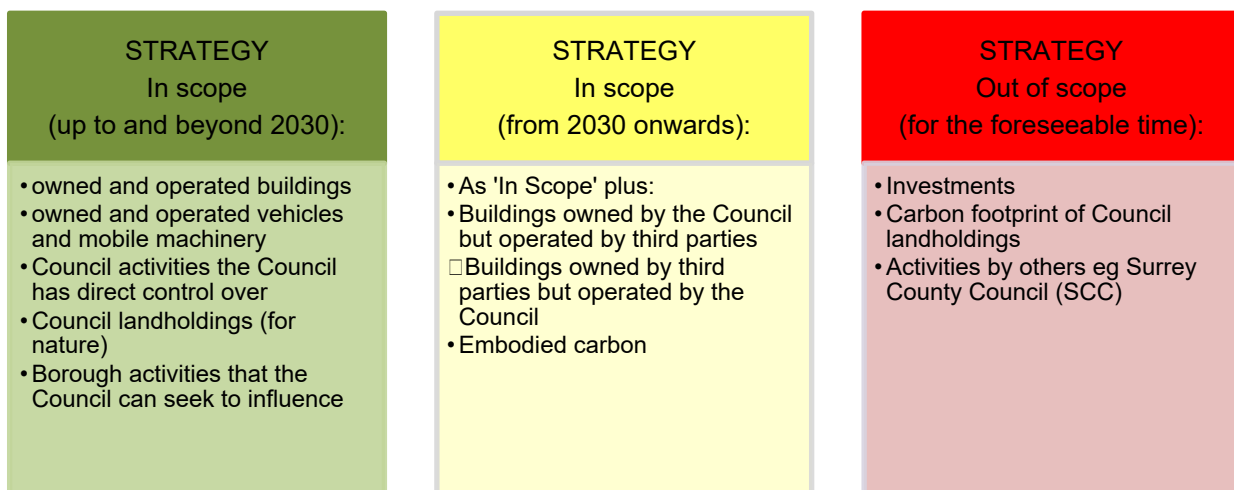
STRATEGY In scope (up to and beyond 2030):	STRATEGY In scope (from 2030 onwards):	STRATEGY Out of scope (for the foreseeable time):
• owned and operated buildings • owned and operated vehicles and mobile machinery • Council activities the Council has direct control over • Council landholdings (for nature) • Borough activities that the Council can seek to influence	• As 'In Scope' plus: • Buildings owned by the Council but operated by third parties ☐ Buildings owned by third parties but operated by the Council • Embodied carbon	• Investments • Carbon footprint of Council landholdings • Activities by others eg Surrey County Council (SCC)

Figure 1: Scope of the ES Strategy

1.3.1   Council activities

Council activities are those operations under the direct control of the Council:

- Owned and operated buildings. These comprise the Town Hall, Harlequin theatre, Earlswood Depot, the three community centres and various smaller buildings.
- Owned and operated vehicles and machinery. These comprise all road-going and non-road-going vehicles and machinery.
- Council activities that the Council has direct control over. These include activities of staff across all departments of the Council.
- Council landholdings are in scope in terms of improvements we can make for nature, biodiversity, water management and wellbeing, as are landholdings that we can use for the generation of renewable energy. Carbon sequestration may be a co-benefit of these activities, or we may take actions to improve carbon sequestration of the land, but we do not currently propose to estimate or measure the carbon of our landholdings for inclusion in our carbon footprint (see section 1.4 below). However, this will be kept under review as science and carbon

measurement methodologies develop.

1.3.2 Borough activities

Borough activities are those within the borough over which the Council has no direct control but which we can seek to influence through our work with residents, businesses, other public sector partners and local organisations. This includes the main emitters of carbon within the borough, that is transport and domestic buildings.

1.3.3 Activities currently out of scope but to be included from 2030

The following activities are currently outside the scope of the Strategy due to issues such as lack of data or contractual arrangements which we will aim to resolve. These activities will be kept under review with the aim that they will be bought into scope no later than 2030 via a future review of the Strategy. They include:

- Buildings owned by the Council but operated by third parties – there are opportunities to influence tenants as and when leases come up for renewal.
- Buildings owned by third parties but operated by the Council – there are opportunities to begin discussions with landlords about sustainability improvements that can be made.
- Embodied carbon – this is an area of much research and developing guidance by external bodies that we can look to use and implement once it is available. [2]

1.3.4 Activities outside of scope

Due to lack of data, complexity or not having control, the following activities remain outside the scope of the Strategy at present:

- Investments;
- Council landholdings (in respect of the carbon footprint);
- Activities under the control of others, for example Surrey County Council (SCC) are responsible for waste disposal, street lighting, highways, schools, libraries and social care.

1.4 The Scope of our Carbon Footprint

The Energy and Carbon theme of the Strategy is the principal mechanism for reducing the Council carbon footprint. As such, the scope of the carbon footprint is narrower than the scope of the ES Strategy.

The Council commits to becoming net zero for Scope 1 (direct) and Scope 2 (indirect – fuel) emissions by 2030 and for Scope 3 (indirect – suppliers) emissions as soon as possible thereafter. An explanation of carbon footprint scopes is presented in Section 3 and summarised in Figure 2 below.

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[2] See, for example, Embodied Carbon | UKGBC https://ukgbc.org/our-work/topics/advancing-net-zero/embodied-carbon/
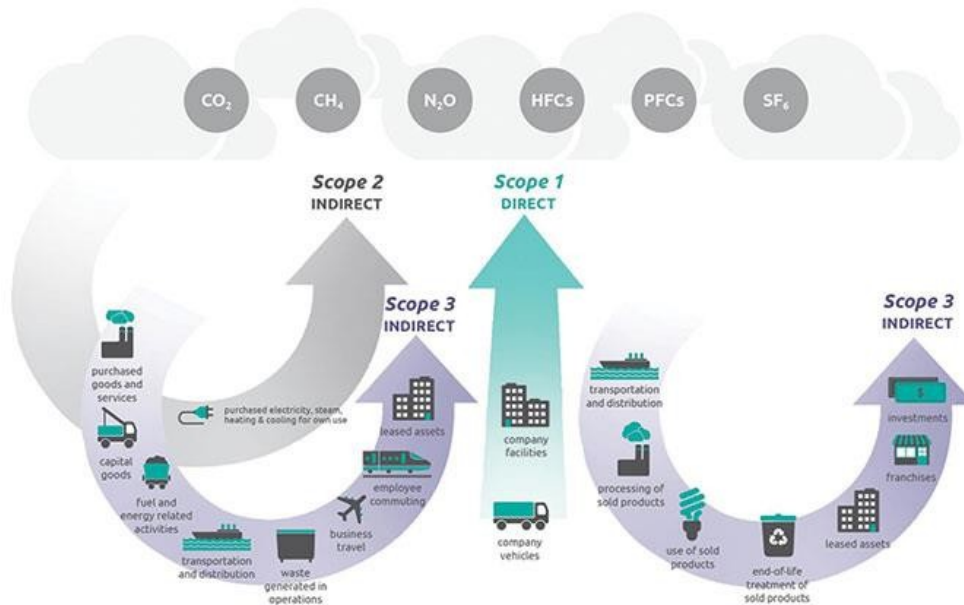
Figure 2 - Overview of Greenhouse Gas Protocol scope and emissions across the value chain. Source: GHG Protocol

Appendix 1 provides more detail on the scope of our 2030 target, what emissions will be included from 2030, and what operational areas are deemed to be out-of-scope – this is summarised in Figure 3 below.

Carbon Footprint (In scope from now to 2030 & beyond): Scope 1 - fuels	Carbon Footprint (In scope from now to 2030 & beyond): Scope 2 - electricity	Carbon Footprint (In scope from 2030 onwards): Scope 3 - suppliers
• natural gas from owned buildings • fuels used in owned and leased vehicles and mobile machinery (diesel and petrol, and any future fuels such as Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil HVO or Hydrogen)	• purchased electricity used in owned buildings • purchased electricity used in owned and leased vehicles • renewable energy generated on owned land / buildings	• purchased goods and services, including water consumption and treatment • business travel (mileage, public transport, hotels) • employee commuting • waste generated in operations (treatment and disposal) • upstream leased assets (where RBBC is tenant) • downstream leased assets (where RBBC is landlord, case-by-case as and when lease arrangements allow) • purchased electricity transmission and distribution (T&D)

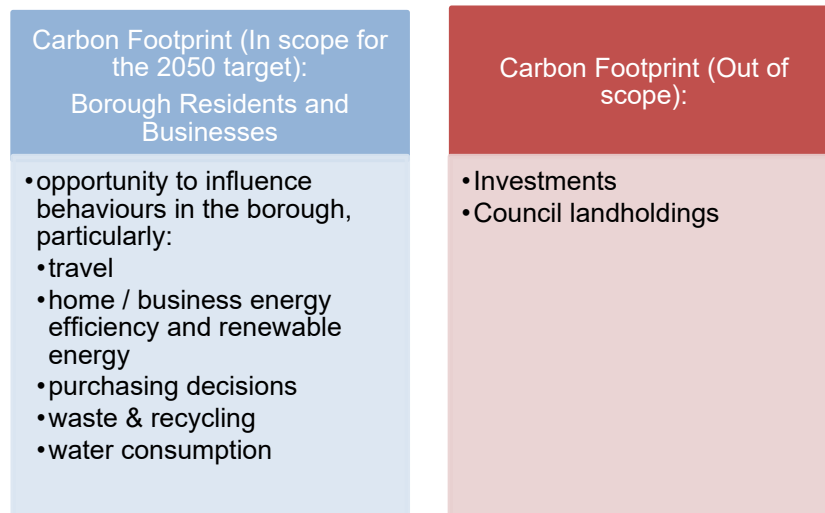| Carbon Footprint (In scope for the 2050 target): Borough Residents and Businesses	Carbon Footprint (Out of scope):
• opportunity to influence behaviours in the borough, particularly: • travel • home / business energy efficiency and renewable energy • purchasing decisions • waste & recycling • water consumption	• Investments • Council landholdings

Figure 3: Scope of the RBBC Carbon Footprint

1.5 Constraints to Delivering the Strategy

Progress has been made since the Strategy was published in 2020, however the next steps to deliver significant carbon reduction measures and nature improvement need some strategic decisions to allow progress. These decisions relate to:

- **The future of our key buildings**. Uncertainty over the future of our buildings[3] is delaying short term investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy and zero carbon heating systems that will decarbonise our built estate. Although it can be argued that these improvements should be made regardless of whether the building is to be retained or sold on, it is not financially or environmentally sensible to make improvements that may then need to be amended or removed if the future use of the building changes and it needs to be remodelled.
- **The layout of the Earlswood Depot**. To fully electrify our fleet, the Depot will need to be redesigned to create capacity for charging stations, or alternatively a new site may need to be identified and developed. There is space to install some solar generation and battery storage, but an enhanced grid connection is also likely to be required. A project to develop options is urgently required to allow the infrastructure to be in place such that the phased replacement proposed in the Fleet Replacement Strategy can be implemented.
- **Budget**. Although many decarbonisation measures will deliver savings once the original investment is made (eg energy efficiency measures, solar PV), during consultation for this Review, some concern has been expressed over the budgetary implications of including sustainability measures in new purchases, new builds, building refurbishments and during maintenance. This can be mitigated by ensuring project proposals include both 'business as usual' and sustainable options, developing robust business cases that take account of sustainability benefits, and having a commitment to a long-term sustainability budget.

Some further challenges and how these will be overcome are outlined in Section 9 below.

2. The Context

As part of our Corporate Plan for 2020-2025, we have committed to being proactive about tackling climate change and reducing the borough's environmental impacts. This includes reducing the Council's direct impact and supporting residents and businesses to do the same.

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[3] At the time of writing, the Harlequin Theatre is shut, but it remains in the carbon footprint baseline and Scope 1 and Scope 2 Harlequin activities that are undertaken elsewhere will be reported in the 2023/24 carbon footprint and annual report.

While the climate crisis is a global issue, the importance of each country taking action to limit greenhouse gas emissions cannot be underestimated. In response to the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass legislation to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

Achieving net zero will require a combination of conventional mitigation techniques - that is reducing energy and resources consumption in our buildings, infrastructure, industrial processes and our daily lives, and in parallel, a transition from carbon-emitting fossil fuels towards renewable sources of energy. There will always be however residual carbon emissions that will have to be compensated for through carbon removal technologies (e.g. reforestation, afforestation, carbon capture and storage).
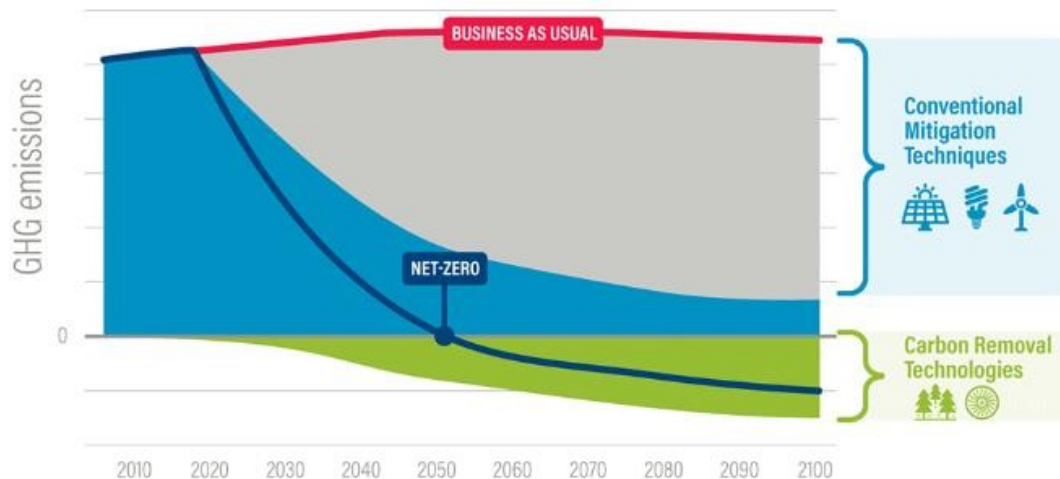

Figure 4 – Net Zero diagram – Source: World Resources Institute (WRI)

To support the Government in achieving net zero by 2050, we recognise that the role of local government is critical in helping to embed measures and support residents and businesses to make the necessary changes to meet this national legislation.

In addition to focusing on limiting actions and processes that contribute to the climate crisis, at the Council we have also considered our environmental impacts more broadly. Recent history has demonstrated that there is an increasing disconnect between society's consumption of natural resources (e.g. plants, air, water, soils, minerals) and ecosystem services (e.g. water and air purification, crop pollination and pest control) and the ability of our ecological and environmental systems to replenish themselves. Currently, UK consumption exceeds what can be produced (see Figure 11 in Section 4 below).

The challenges of embedding sustainability within our practices and then influencing the wider borough are wide ranging and summarised in more detail in Section 9 below. The scope of our ES Strategy has therefore been influenced by the areas of responsibility that we hold.

Surrey County Council (SCC) is responsible for issues such as transport, highways, schools and education and has developed its own Climate Change Strategy – Greener Futures. This is complimented with a Climate Change Delivery Plan[4], Local Transport Plan (LTP4)[5] and the Surrey Adapt Strategy[6]. We are committed to continuing to work closely with SCC and Surrey district and borough authorities to achieve shared climate change and environmental sustainability objectives, and the objectives and priorities within this Strategy reflect this.

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[4] Greener futures climate change delivery plan 2021 to 2025 - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)
https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/greener-futures-climate-change-delivery-plan-2021-to-2025
[5] Local Transport Plan (LTP4) - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk) https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/policies-plans-consultations/transport-plan
[6] Climate change adaptation and resilience - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)
https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/adaptation-and-resilience

Acknowledging the range and complexity of issues required to achieve sustainable development, the 2020 Strategy was broken down into three environmental themes and an overarching theme of effective implementation. The 2020 Strategy included climate change adaptation and resilience within the other themes, however we now believe that this needs greater emphasis and therefore include it in this 2024 update as a fourth environmental theme. Our themes are therefore:

1. Energy and carbon
2. Low impact consumption
3. Biodiversity and the natural environment
4. Climate adaptation and resilience (new)
5. Effective implementation

To support the delivery of the ES Strategy an Action Plan has also been developed for each of these themes to formalise how we intend to embed and achieve the Strategy. The Action Plan for the first version of the Strategy contained actions for the years 2020-21 through to 2023-24. This 2024 update contains actions for 2024-25 and going forward. The main focus of the Action Plan is the next three years, but longer term and ongoing actions are also included.

As part of each priority theme there are a range of key issues to ensure its successful realisation. Overarching objectives set out the Council's approach within each theme, with a number of actions identified for each objective.

Performance indicators have been developed to assist with monitoring progress against the objectives and evaluating the success of the actions. For this 2024 update, the performance indicators have been reviewed to ensure data is easily available and each indicator provides value to the reporting process.

The full Action Plan is available at Appendix 1. Those actions that are likely to deliver significant progress on the Council's priorities are detailed in the following sections of this Strategy document.

3.   Energy and carbon

3.1   Overview

In June 2019 the Government amended the Climate Change Act 2008 and is now targeting a 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target which will be achieved through a combination of efficiency measures, renewable energy production and carbon sequestration (e.g. reforestation). This target would effectively mean that the UK will end its contribution to global emissions by 2050.

We are responding to this challenge by aiming to achieve net zero (based on Scopes 1 and 2 emissions - Figure 2) by 2030, against a 2019/20 baseline.

We aim to achieve net zero for scope 3 emissions as soon as possible after 2030.

It is worth highlighting that the carbon emissions directly under the control of the Council represent only about 0.2% of the emissions released within the borough (Table 1).

Definition of Scope 1,2, 3 emissions

Scope 1 includes direct emissions from the **combustion of fuels** by sources owned or controlled by the reporting organisation.

Scope 2 includes the emissions from the combustion of fuels to **generate electricity**, steam, heating, and cooling purchased and consumed by the reporting organisation.

Scope 3 includes all other **indirect emissions** that occur in an organisation's value chain.

This highlights the importance for us to also concentrate our efforts in influencing businesses and residents' behaviour and purchase patterns to adequately curb borough emissions. We will work in partnership with SCC and other key partners and stakeholders to achieve carbon neutrality across the borough by 2050.

It should also be recognised that early action to reduce emissions is preferable to delivering all the reductions

in 2029, as it reduces cumulative carbon emissions.

We are adopting the following definition of net zero for our operational emissions:
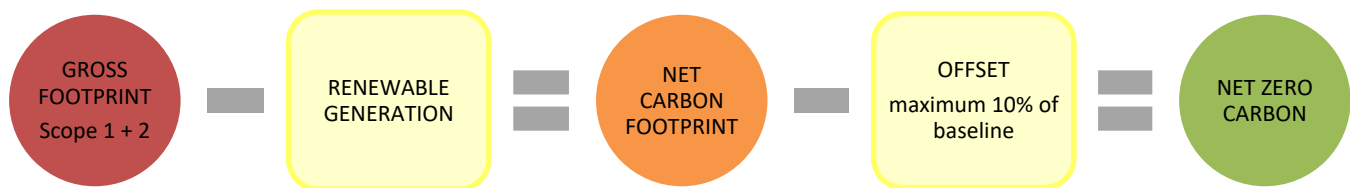

Figure 5: RBBC definition of net zero

The gross carbon footprint is derived from the in-scope emissions from our operational activities (see section 1.4 above). To calculate our net carbon footprint we will remove the emissions avoided from renewable electricity. We will reduce emissions as far as possible with an aim to have our residual net carbon footprint less than 10% of baseline by 2030. From this net carbon footprint we will offset the remainder using verified offsets (see Section 8.2 below) to achieve net zero carbon.

3.1.1 Annual greenhouse gas emissions

To demonstrate progress, a net zero target needs to refer to a baseline year. For us, the first year when we had an almost complete set of data from which to calculate our carbon footprint was the financial year 2019/20. Table 1 below indicates the verified greenhouse gas emissions from our operations in our baseline year, alongside Government estimates of territorial greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough[7]. This is updated from the 2020 Strategy to reflect the actual R&BBC baseline emissions (financial year 2019-20) and equivalent Borough-level estimates for the calendar year 2019.

Scope	Description	Annual carbon dioxide emissions	
		Council level (2019/20)	Borough level 2019 [8]
Scope 1	Fuel consumption (diesel)	1,241 tCO$_{2e}$	758,000tCO$_2$ ▪ Transport 46% ▪ Domestic (elec., gas, fuel) 31% ▪ Businesses (elec., gas, fuel) 23%
	Fuel consumption (petrol)	17 tCO$_{2e}$	
	Purchased gas	385 tCO$_{2e}$	
	Sub-total	**1,643 tCO$_{2e}$**	
Scope 2	Purchased electricity	393 tCO$_{2e}$ (2018)	
	Sub-total	**393 tCO$_{2e}$**	
Total Scope 1 & 2		**2,036 tCO$_{2e}$**	**758,000tCO$_2$**

Table 1 – Reigate and Banstead's estimated annual carbon emissions

The table and the graph below (Figure 6) illustrate that the carbon emissions over which we have direct control are tiny compared to the borough emissions, which we can work with residents, businesses and partners to influence.

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[7] BEIS / DESNZ figures are territorial emissions of CO2, CH4 and N20 (which form 97% of GHG emissions in the UK). Each year the entire time series, going back to 2005, is revised to take account of methodological improvements. Therefore future presentations of this data may be slightly different. Table 1 borough level emission figures are from the dataset released by the government on 6 July 2023.

[8] Figures based on BEIS - UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2017
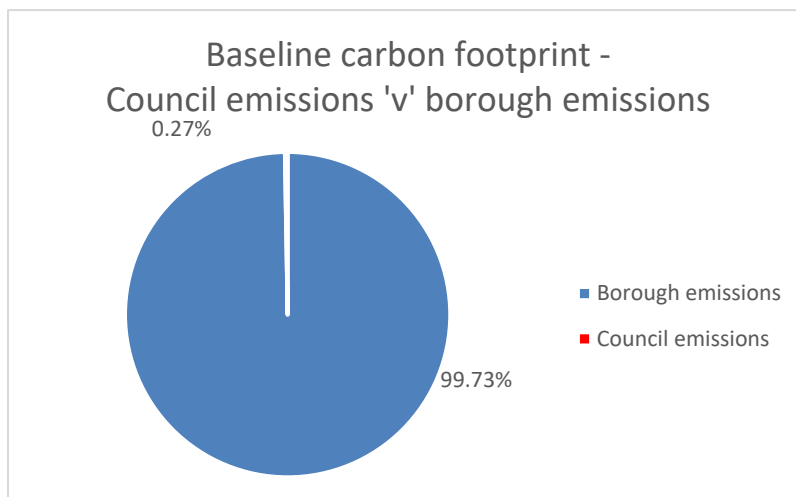
Figure 6: Comparison of the RBBC Carbon Footprint against the borough carbon footprint for the baseline year (note the borough data is for the calendar year, the Council data is for the financial year)

Figure 7 illustrates the relative changes in Council greenhouse gas emissions over time, from our baseline year 2019/20 to the most recent reporting year, 2022/23. During the years 2020/21 and 2021/22 our activities were affected by the lockdowns and restrictions associated with Covid19. Although refuse services continued, other activities were significantly affected. It is likely that the carbon footprint for 2022/23 is more representative of the 'new normal'. It should also be noted that due to the failure of one of the Council's energy providers and smaller sites not being on smart meters, energy data availability has been impacted.
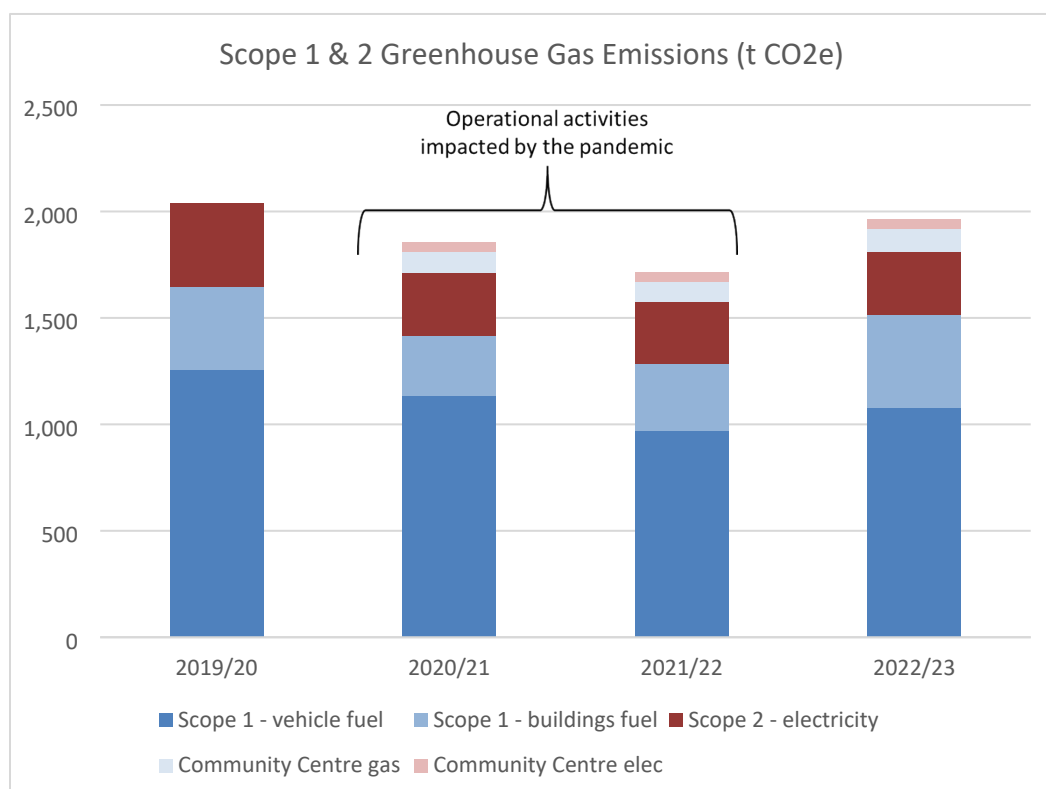

Figure 7: RBBC Carbon Footprint from 2019/20 to 2022/23. NOTE: Community centres returned to the Council in 2020/21 and their energy consumption is included in the carbon footprint for that year and onwards. We do not have a breakdown of their separate carbon emissions for 2020/21 and 2021/22 so they are presented here indicatively.

> **2050 Vision**
>
> - All Council's energy needs are met through renewable energy generated within the borough or through reputable green tariffs.
> - The entire Council's fleet is powered by clean energy (i.e. either electricity from renewables, biodiesel from organic waste or other clean fuels such as hydrogen).
> - All businesses and residents are generating their own renewable energy and/or have switched to a reputable green tariff.
> - All residents walk or cycle for short journeys, where possible. Residents have moved away from car ownership; they use public transport or a car-sharing system for longer journeys. Where private car remains a necessity, these run on 100% renewable energy.

3.2 Priorities

Under the energy and carbon section we have set a number of objectives under four key priorities:

Energy minimisation: Reduction of operational energy (regulated and unregulated) through efficiency measures (e.g. insulation, LEDs) and behaviour change.

Renewable energy: Generation of renewable energy locally, procurement of renewable energy through reputable green tariffs and working towards the elimination of fossil-fuel consumption.

Low carbon transport: Minimisation of transport emissions through reducing personal car travel, promoting electric vehicles, developing public transport and encouraging cycling and walking.

Embodied carbon: Reduction in embodied carbon in new infrastructure or building projects through lean engineering and construction techniques.

We will seek to reduce energy consumption first, and then obtain the remaining energy from low carbon sources.

In 2022/23, greenhouse gas emissions from operation of our main buildings formed 45% of our carbon footprint (up from 38% in the baseline due to a reduction in vehicle fuel consumption, an increase in gas consumption and the later

Progress:

Our fleet:
- 13 fossil-fuel vehicles replaced with low emission hybrids and EVs
- Installation of EV charging points in 3 Council car parks and at Council sites

Our buildings:
- Building energy audits conducted to guide retrofit activity
- One solar PV installation completed

Borough:
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund with Raven Housing to deliver solar PV on 26 properties
- Promoting grants and advice for residents on energy efficiency retrofits
- Supporting SME businesses to facilitate their net zero ambitions, and provided Carbon Literacy training

inclusion of our three community centres). Energy audits have identified opportunities to save energy, replace fossil-fuel heating systems and generate renewable energy, and these measures will be implemented as part of any planned upgrade and works on our assets (subject to decisions on future operational use of buildings). Whole-life cost analysis will form an integral part of the decision-making process as part of any procurement activities to ensure that any mechanical and electrical plant to be replaced are future-proofed moving away from like-for-like replacement if this isn't the best long-term strategy. Emphasis will be on transitioning from fossil-fuels to zero / low carbon technologies. We will continue to monitor the changing timetables for implementing the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for Council-owned housing and our commercial properties.

At the Council level, we switched to a renewable energy tariff for our electricity in 2023. When the contract comes up for renewal, we will explore options to also procure a renewable gas tariff as an interim measure while we work to reduce gas consumption.

The Council's fleet represented circa 55% of its carbon footprint in 2022/23 (down from 62% in the baseline). We will gradually replace our fleet with electrical vehicles and machinery as part of the scheduled fleet renewal programme where these are suitable and available, whilst also keeping other low emission fuels under consideration. To enable the infrastructure to be put in place for charging electric Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs), the RCV fleet will be run on renewable Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in the short-term. It is recognised that there are some sustainability concerns around the use of HVO and these concerns will be addressed by:

- ensuring the procurement process specifies responsibly sourced fuel
- time-limiting the use of HVO to allow installation of electrical charging infrastructure or maturation of other low emission fuel supplies

Use of HVO provides greenhouse gas reduction benefits and some limited local air quality benefits, however transition to electric vehicles powered by renewable electricity will virtually eliminate carbon emissions, eliminate tail-pipe emissions resulting in better air quality, reduce engine noise and we anticipate that this will also provide a pleasanter working environment for our RCV crews.

At the borough level, we will continue to work with residents and businesses to encourage them to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. We will also continue to promote grants and group-buying schemes to residents and businesses to enable them to reduce their energy consumption and decarbonise their buildings and vehicles. Borough level domestic carbon dioxide emissions per capita figures show that Reigate & Banstead residents consume more energy to run their homes than the average person in the rest of England (see Figure 8 below).There is therefore scope for us to concentrate efforts on energy efficiency and to enable a transition towards renewable energy purchase and generation across the borough. The 2020 ES Strategy proposed considering the suitability of developing community-owned renewable energy projects and exploring the possibility to negotiate preferential energy tariffs with reputable renewable energy providers for residents and businesses by teaming up with Surrey County Council – these actions were not progressed due to Covid and the 2022-23 energy price crisis and will be kept under consideration.
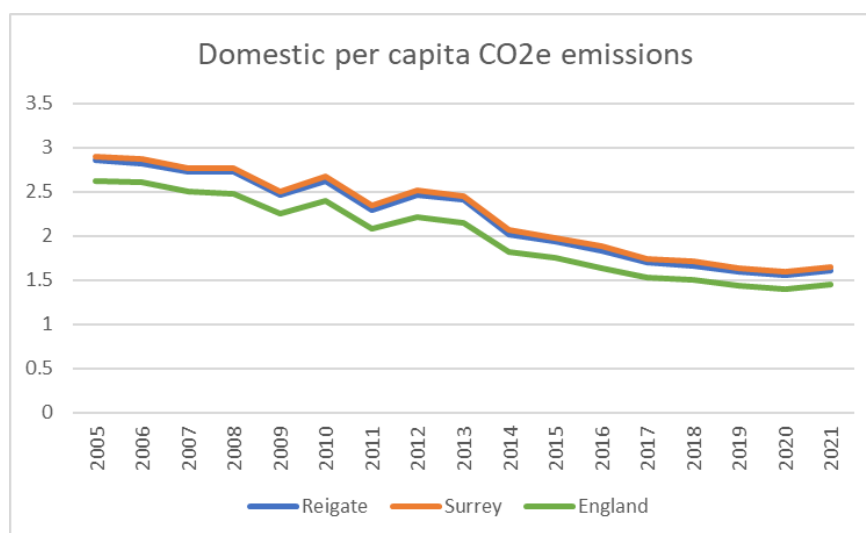
Figure 8 Domestic per capita greenhouse gas emissions (t CO2e) [9]

As indicated in Figure 9, transport emissions in the borough are above the national average so we will work with SCC to deliver the Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan (to deliver appropriate

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[9] Source: National Statistics, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021

infrastructure) and with local organisations to engage staff, residents and businesses in reducing personal car and business mileage by identifying low carbon alternatives.

Figure 9 Transport per capita greenhouse gas emissions (t CO2e) [10]
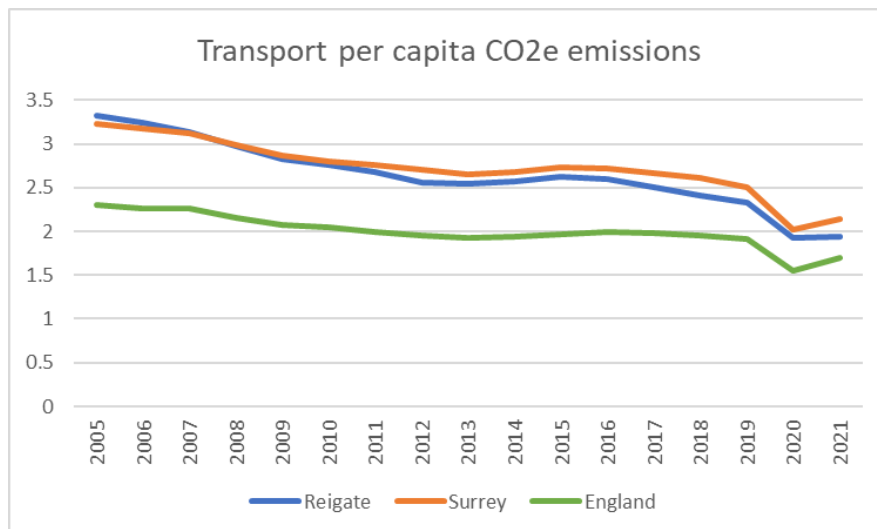
The measures to reduce greenhouse house gas (GHG) emissions associated with the Council and borough activities will have wider benefits beyond limiting contributions to the climate crisis. Initiatives around promoting active travel (e.g. walking and cycling) and reducing gas consumption will improve air quality and overall well-being, energy efficiency can make energy bills more affordable, and measures such as insulation can make a building more comfortable. The latter two issues are particularly important during the current (2023) cost-of-living issues.

Figures 8 and 9 above, and 10 below, show the borough greenhouse gas emissions from 2005-2021 (the latest dataset available) compared to emissions from the county of Surrey and nationally. Per capita emissions from industrial and commercial sources are lower in the borough than the national average due to the lack of heavy industry. We will engage with local businesses to seek to positively influence the trajectory of these emissions.
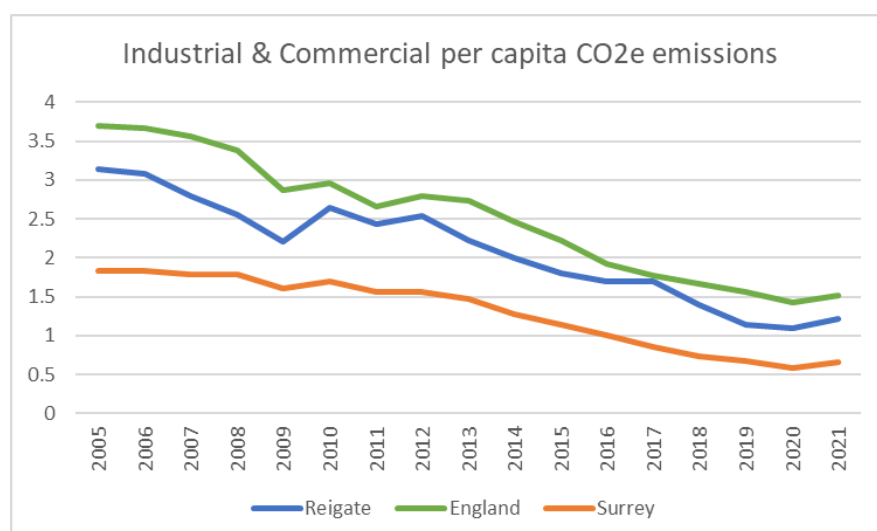
Figure 10 Industrial, commercial and other sources of greenhouse gas emissions per capita (t CO2e) [11]

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[10] Source: National Statistics, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021 (Table 1.1 emissions divided by annual population)

[11] Source: National Statistics, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Key Actions:
- Implement building energy audit recommendations to deliver energy efficiency
- Continue to promote grants and group-buying schemes to residents and businesses to enable decarbonisation of borough buildings
- Install solar PV on roofs of suitable Council owned and operated buildings
- Continue to procure a renewable electricity tariff
- Convert RCV fleet to HVO as a transition fuel while investigating long-term options
- Continue fleet replacement programme with EV or other low carbon options
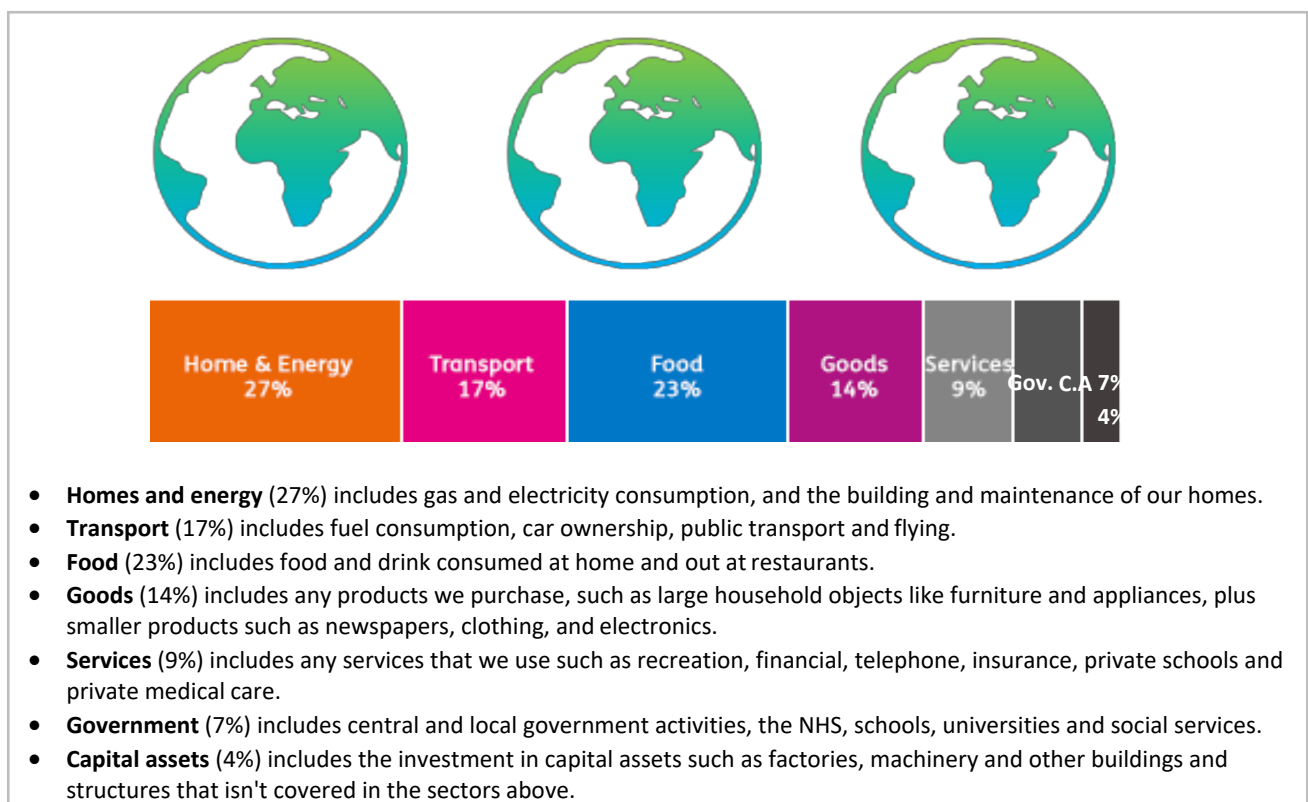- Working with SCC to promote active travel and uptake of low carbon transport
- Working with SCC to implement the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan to deliver improved active travel infrastructure

4. Low impact consumption

4.1 Overview

Living by consuming a fair share of the earth's resources is key to reduce environmental and social impacts associated with over-consumption. It requires us to reflect on our habits to make more informed decisions in our day-to-day activities with a view to consume more responsibly.

We currently deplete natural resources at an alarming rate, much faster than our ecosystems can replenish them. Studies show that an average UK resident requires 5.4gha of biologically productive land and water[12] to support its lifestyle. This means that if everyone on earth consumed as much as the average person in the UK, we would need the equivalent of three planets to support us, as shown in Figure 11 below.[13]

- **Homes and energy** (27%) includes gas and electricity consumption, and the building and maintenance of our homes.
- **Transport** (17%) includes fuel consumption, car ownership, public transport and flying.
- **Food** (23%) includes food and drink consumed at home and out at restaurants.
- **Goods** (14%) includes any products we purchase, such as large household objects like furniture and appliances, plus smaller products such as newspapers, clothing, and electronics.
- **Services** (9%) includes any services that we use such as recreation, financial, telephone, insurance, private schools and private medical care.
- **Government** (7%) includes central and local government activities, the NHS, schools, universities and social services.
- **Capital assets** (4%) includes the investment in capital assets such as factories, machinery and other buildings and structures that isn't covered in the sectors above.

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https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021 (Table 1.1 emissions divided by annual population)
[12] Biologically productive land and water is the required area to produce the goods we consume and to assimilate the wastes we generate: cropland, grazing land, fishing grounds, built-up land, forest area, and carbon demand on land.
[13] http://calculator.bioregional.com/findoutmore.php

Figure 11 – UK resident ecological footprint breakdown. Source: Bioregional

Challenges associated with consumption are demonstrated at a borough level. Provisional results for 2022/23 indicate residents in the borough collectively produced 52,508 tonnes of waste, a small decrease compared to the baseline 2019/20 of 52,766 tonnes, with the recycling rate remaining almost static at a provisional 54.2% in 2022/23 against 54.3% in 2019/20, although still putting the Council in the top 20% of local authority recycling rates.

In terms of water use, Reigate & Banstead borough falls into the SES Water supply area, where consumption has increased from 143.3 litres per person per day in the baseline year of 2019/20, to 150.8 litres per person per day in 2022/23[14].

The Council recognises its role in demonstrating leadership on these issues. As part of the review of our own activities we have considered measures to reduce our impacts through the more efficient management of our estate and the set-up of a responsible procurement process. We also propose to support initiatives to see improvements on a borough wide scale. We will continue to utilise the waste hierarchy (Reduce – Reuse – Recycle) to drive down consumption and waste generation.

2050 Vision

- The borough operates as part of a closed-loop system where residents consume only their fair share of the earth's resources.

- Circular economy principles underpin our manufacturing and industrial processes: waste is transformed into valuable resources and pollution is prevented.

- Residents and businesses recycle or compost as much as possible of their waste, and processing takes place as locally as possible.

- Water is viewed as a precious resource, and it is kept as close to its source as possible.

4.2 Priorities

Under the low impact consumption section, we have set a number of objectives under three key priorities:

Waste reduction: Minimisation of waste arisings through better procurement choices (e.g. longer-lasting or better quality products) and recycling unavoidable waste in local treatment facilities.

Water efficiency: Reduction of water consumption by promoting water efficiency to help alleviate water scarcity issues, and good water management to reduce flooding.

Responsible sourcing: Use of materials and products produced responsibly (i.e. not causing any environmental or social harm).

At the Council level, there is still work to do to quantify and reduce waste and implement alternatives to remaining single use plastics. As part of any planned refurbishment or upgrade of our assets, avenues to reduce water energy

Progress:

Our operations:
- Started to investigate types of Scope 3 emissions and options for data collection

- Rainwater collected from the Depot roof is used for landscape watering

Borough:
- Working in partnership with SES Water to distribute water saving devices to residents at events

- The borough recycling rate remains competitive at 54.2% in 2022/23.

- Increasing numbers of properties are signing up to the Green Waste collection scheme.

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[14] SES Water annual performance report | SES Water https://seswater.co.uk/about-us/publications/our-annual-performance-report

consumption (as well as energy consumption) will be pursued. In parallel, we will look to ensure that responsible sourcing is considered in all purchasing decisions and development of sustainable procurement procedures is an action carried forward from the first Strategy Action Plan.

In partnership with the Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP) there is work to do in communicating the implications of our food choices. Food waste is a big issue as the food needs to be grown, processed, transported, stored and disposed of – a commonly reported statistic is that if food waste was a country it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions in the world[15]. Producing food also puts pressure on land use, there are animal welfare issues, there is pollution from agriculture and certain food products have a high carbon intensity (for example meat, and particularly beef)[16]. Wasting food costs residents money and also requires the Council to collect the waste for disposal.

At borough level, the Council collects waste, dry mixed recyclables and food from borough households, with an optional charged garden waste service. The Council provides a Trade Waste option for businesses that currently offers collections of residual waste and paper / carboard for recycling. In October 2023, implementation targets associated with the Government's Resources & Waste Strategy were announced [17] and there is an action in the updated Strategy Action Plan to determine how to implement these new requirements. The requirement for all residential properties to receive a full recycling collection (including food waste) can be expected to increase the borough's domestic recycling rate, as around 5500 flats are currently unable to participate in kerbside recycling. The requirements for business recycling will also help deliver overall recycling objectives. We will continue to look for opportunities to reduce consumption and therefore reduce waste.

There is also a role for the Council to use its planning powers to encourage developers to reduce material consumption as part of their design, facilitate waste reduction during construction and increase water and energy efficiency levels during operation.

Key actions:
- Implement the requirements of the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy to increase borough recycling rates and reduce residual waste
- Work with SES Water to reduce consumption of mains water, and with the Refill scheme and other organisations to reduce packaging and single use plastics
- Replace the Council vehicle wash with a more efficient model
- Implement the procurement actions under the Effective Implementation theme

5. Natural environment and biodiversity

5.1 Overview

The natural environment is essential for human existence and for maintaining a good quality of life. It provides crucial ecosystem services which deliver fundamental requirements such as clean water, food, resources and services such as pollination, carbon storage, climate regulation, and natural protection from hazards such as flooding and erosion[18].

Impact from human activity through pollution, habitat loss and fragmentation has caused stress to the natural environment, accelerated during the Industrial Revolution and continues to this day. This presents a

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[15] Food waste is responsible for 6% of global greenhouse gas emissions - Our World in Data https://ourworldindata.org/food-waste-emissions and Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles | North America | UNEP - UN Environment Programme https://www.unep.org/regions/north-america/regional-initiatives/promoting-sustainable-lifestyles#:~:text=Globally%2C%20if%20food%20waste%20could,3.3%20billion%20tons%20of%20CO2.

[16] 'How bad are bananas?' by Mike Berners Lee (2020), suggests a portion of protein from peas causes the emission of 1/100th of greenhouse gases compared to a portion of protein from beef (he references beef from cattle raised on deforested land so beef from the UK will have a lower carbon footprint).

[17] Government response - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling-in-england/outcome/government-response

[18] IPBES (2019): Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services https://ipbes.net/system/tdf/ipbes_global_assessment_report_summary_for_policymakers.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=35329&mc_cid=4df044f04d&mc_eid=%5bUNIQID%5d&mc_cid=4df044f04d&mc_eid=2754a8280b

substantial risk to the future of the UK's native wildlife and also to the crucial ecosystem services they provide (these are services the natural environment provides that benefit people)[19]. Future climate change is only likely to accelerate current rates of decline and loss of ecosystem function[20] as the natural ability of species and ecosystems to adjust and adapt is reduced.

Access to greenspaces, parks and gardens play an important role in our health and well-being. A 2019 Government report stated that across the UK 65% of people had visited the natural environment at least once a week[21], which rose to 69% by March 2023[22]. The importance of maintaining a healthy natural environment cannot therefore be understated.

The borough of Reigate & Banstead is fortunate to benefit from a rich and varied natural environment. Table 2 shows this includes four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Wildlife sites (eg 53 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance SNCI) and the Surrey Hills National Landscape (formerly an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) with 69% of the borough designated as metropolitan Green Belt, a figure unchanged since the baseline in 2019/20[23].

Designation	Type of designation	Area (ha)	% of borough
Green Belt	National, Policy	8,888ha	69%
Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	National, Landscape	1,549	12%
Area of Great Landscape Value	Local, Landscape	4,740	37%
Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation	International, Biodiversity	450	3%
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	National, Biodiversity	796	6%
Sites of Nature Conservation Importance	Local, Biodiversity	1,172	9.1%
Ancient Woodland	National, Biodiversity	597	4.6%

Table 2: The extent of policy and environmental designations in Reigate and Banstead in 2019 (from the RBBC Development Management Plan – Green Infrastructure Strategy, August 2017).

The Council owns approximately 1250 hectares of countryside, including internationally rare lowland heath and chalk grassland. This includes three Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) at Banstead Woods, Reigate Heath and Earlswood Common[24].

2050 Vision

- Nature forms an integral part of our urban environment.

- New developments include parks or recreational spaces that have been designed to benefit wildlife and contribute to residents' overall well-being.

- Our drainage systems are designed to respect the natural water cycle, provide valuable habitat to wildlife and deliver amenity benefits where possible.

- Permeable paving solutions have replaced hard surfaces wherever possible.

- Harmful products that have a detrimental impact on our ecosystems or our health are not used.

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[19] An introductory guide to valuing ecosystem services - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[20] UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017: Evidence Report, Chapter 3: Natural environment and natural assets
[21] Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment – The national survey on people and the natural environment. Headline report 2019, September 2019, Natural England.
[22] Adults' Year 3 Annual Report (April 2022 - March 2023) (Official Statistics) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-data-tables-and-publications-from-adults-survey-year-3-april-2022-march-2023-official-statistics/adults-year-3-annual-report-april-2022-march-2023-official-statistics (Chart 2.2)
[23] RBBC Environment and Sustainability Monitor Data Report 31 March 2019 and 31 March 2022. Sourced from: https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20088/planning_policy/1102/plan_monitoring/8
[24] https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20082/countryside_management/77/special_greenspaces

5.2   Priorities

Under this natural environment and biodiversity section we have set a number of objectives under three key priorities:

Ecological enhancement: Improvement of the tree and soft landscaping cover to create and maintain habitats that are of benefit to wildlife.

Sustainable drainage systems: Use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to reduce flooding and the embodied carbon of drainage infrastructure whilst providing biodiversity and amenity benefits.

Environmental impact and pollution prevention: Avoid negative impacts to the wider environment i.e. pollution and habitat loss resulting from Council's activities (including procurement) and from activities in the wider borough (eg transport impacting on air quality).

At Council level the importance of the natural assets within the borough and the need to protect and enhance these assets has been recognised. As part of this work the Council has developed a 'Green Infrastructure Strategy'[25] (currently under revision) which seeks to make the most of the green infrastructure network that runs through the borough and beyond. The Strategy acknowledges the threat to the green infrastructure network from the competing needs to provide housing and employment land.

Progress:

Our landholdings:
- Created new natural meadows by relaxing grass cutting during the cutting season
- Peat-free planters, hanging baskets and barrier baskets
- Converting some flower beds from annual to perennial planting

Borough:
- SCC planted approx. 6600 trees in the borough in 2022/23 as part of their 1.2 million tree target
- Developed a Community Tree Planting guide and helped support local tree planting schemes
- Provided website pages with advice on improving biodiversity at home

The priorities focus on maintaining and improving the most significant elements of the existing green infrastructure network in the borough and exploring ways to increase the size and connectivity of the network through new development and regeneration projects. Developing a Greenspaces Strategy and a Tree Strategy will provide the framework to make improvements across the Council's own estate and are key natural environment actions.

Urban trees are also important. The Action Plan contains broader measures around planning for new development (including Council development) which will provide guidance for incorporating urban trees. Trees on highways, which may be in urban or rural areas, are the responsibility of Surrey County Council, who have a scheme[26] to identify new locations for highway trees.

SCC are developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)[27] to identify locations to improve nature and provide other environmental benefits (such as carbon sequestration, flood regulation and access to nature rich spaces). This will also link with the new planning requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) which aims to ensure habitat for wildlife is left in a better state than it was before development. We are working closely with SCC to develop the LNRS.

Measures to increase soft landscaping and tree cover can have wide ranging environmental benefits which will also contribute to the achievement of other objectives within this Strategy, including:
- A reduction in carbon emissions (one large tree consumes circa 20.3 $kgCO_2e$ in a year)
- A reduction in air pollution (trees can remove pollutants such as nitrous oxide and particulate matter

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[25] Reigate and Banstead Borough Council 'Green Infrastructure Strategy', August 2017 http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/file/3600/green_infrastructure_strategy_and_action_plan
[26] Planting trees on the highway - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk) https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/permits-and-licences/planting-trees
[27] Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk) https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lnrs

from the atmosphere)
- A reduction in water scarcity
- Flood alleviation from slowed runoff rates and natural floodwater storage
- A reduction in urban heat island effect

Reducing impacts to the environment from pollution is part of the day-to-day work of the Council's Environmental Health team, including those statutory nuisances like noise and light pollution, as well as delivery of actions within the local Air Quality Action Plan and Strategy. Larger scale activities are regulated by the Environment Agency. There are opportunities to further review Council activities for opportunities to limit negative impacts on the environment, for example in operation of the cemetery and regulating events on Council land.

Key actions:
- Prepare and implement the Council Greenspaces and Tree Strategies
- Support community tree planting and wildlife measure initiatives
- Continue to maintain watercourses on the Council estate and work with SCC and the EA on flood mitigation projects
- Deliver the Council Air Quality Action Plan and Strategy

6.   Climate Adaptation and Resilience

6.1   Overview

When our original ES Strategy was published in 2020, climate adaptation and resilience was incorporated as a cross-cutting issue that would appear across all themes. This approach was considered appropriate at the time, however the rapidity with which the climate is changing suggests that this would be better recognised as a theme in itself, acknowledging that there may be stand-alone actions as well as actions related to the other Strategy themes.

Adaptation is the actions we take to survive in the actual or expected climate, whilst resilience is our capacity to cope with shocks and to recover from their impacts[28]. For the Council, adaptation may be ensuring appropriate drainage to prevent flooding, or planting trees to cool urban areas. Climate resilience is a multi-dimensional approach to prepare, respond and recover from the impacts of climatic events and may involve system-level changes.

Summer 2022 saw record-breaking temperatures which resulted in an unprecedented number of heat-related deaths, drownings, wildfire incidents and significant infrastructure disruption in the UK[29], and human-induced climate change made these temperatures at least ten times more likely than without human-induced climate change[30].

Globally, 2023 has seen unprecedented levels of wildfires from Greece to Canada, and ocean and Antarctic temperatures higher than usual. July 2023 saw extreme heat in North America, Europe and China, leading to heat deaths, hospitalisations and negative impacts on crops. These heat events are becoming more frequent (approx. once every 5-15 years) but without human induced climate change these events would have been extremely rare (approx. once every 250 years in China)[31].

The Climate Change Act 2008 requires the UK to produce a Climate Change Risk Assessment (to identify risks) with a National Adaptation Programme (to address the risks) every five years. Adaptation is also

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[28] What is the difference between climate change adaptation and resilience? - Grantham Research Institute on climate change and the environment (lse.ac.uk) https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/what-is-the-difference-between-climate-change-adaptation-and-resilience/
[29] Progress in adapting to climate change - 2023 Report to Parliament - Climate Change Committee (theccc.org.uk)
[30] Without human-caused climate change temperatures of 40°C in the UK would have been extremely
[31] Extreme heat in North America, Europe and China in July 2023 made much more likely by climate change – World Weather Attribution

embedded in the 25 Year Environment Plan.

The independent Climate Change Committee advises the UK Government on emissions targets and the progress being made in reducing GHG emissions and preparing and adapting to the impacts of climate change. It advises that "The UK must adapt to a minimum average global temperature rise of between 1.5 and 2°C for the period 2050 – 2100 and consider the risks up to a 4⁰C warming scenario"[32].

Surrey County Council has recently adopted Surrey Adapt – the Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy[33]. This sets out how SCC proposes to respond to the hazards, risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities posed by climate change impacts for the period 2023-2028, working with partner organisations including district and borough authorities. A more detailed action plan is to be developed in 2024.

The Surrey Adapt report contains projections for what Surrey weather is likely to be in 2080 and these projections are summarised in the graphics below:
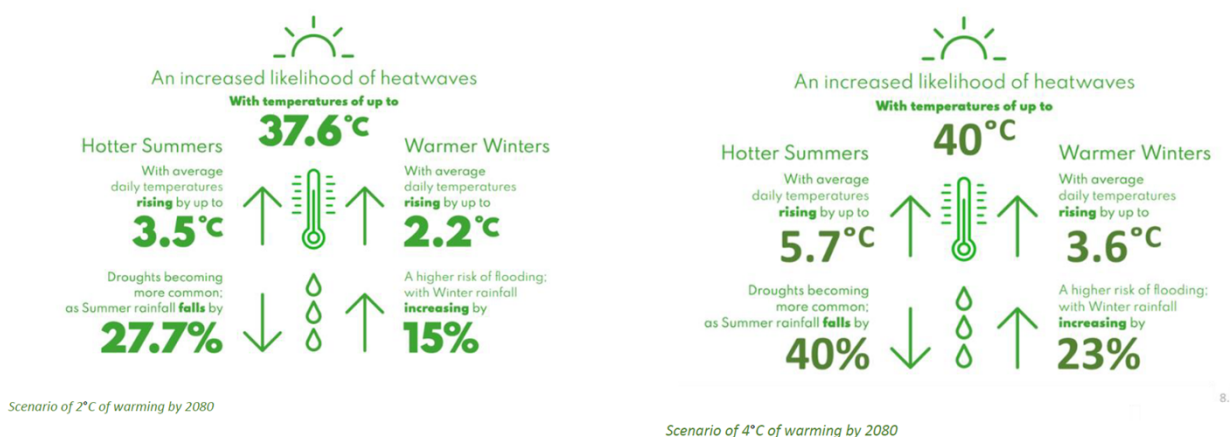

Figure 12: Projections for Surrey weather in 2080 (from draft Surrey Adapt report, SCC 2023)

Under both scenarios presented above it is likely that summers will become hotter and drier, making drought (and the risk of wildfires) more likely, whilst winters will be wetter and stormier. Rainfall is likely to be more intense leading to flooding.

The Council has an Emergency Planning team who - working with the Surrey Local Resilience Forum - will take the lead, with support from the Sustainability team, in reviewing climate risks and communicating these to service areas (who can implement appropriate plans and adaptation measures) and to borough residents and businesses.

2050 Vision

- Council buildings and services are prepared for and resilient to future climate predictions.
- Urban trees provide shade and cooling.
- Buildings utilise water storage devices; gardens and parks contain climate resilient plants.
- Flood risk from heavier rainfall has been reduced by implementation of sustainable drainage solutions, more trees and flood alleviation schemes.
- Some Council buildings are available as Cool and Warm Hubs (depending on season) for use by residents.
- Homes and business buildings are adapted to future climate, with shading, ventilation and flood protection measures, and adaptation is planned into all new buildings and retrofits.

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[32] https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Independent-Assessment-of-UK-Climate-Risk-Advice-to-Govt-for-CCRA3-CCC.pdf

[33] Surrey County Council (2023) Surrey Adapt: Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/adaptation-strategy/_nocache .

6.2   Priorities

Under the climate adaptation and resilience section we have set one objective:

Adapting to Climate Change: accelerate adaptation and develop resilience for the predicted future climate

In assessments of climate adaptation and resilience, all sectors of the community must be considered. Climate impacts are likely to impact the vulnerable in society most, so actions taken must ensure social equity.

At Council level, climate change is recognised as a risk on the Strategic Risk Register. Projects should record how the changing climate may impact delivery and operation and should record the measures taken to adapt to the future climate. Service teams must review operations and take appropriate measures to ensure services can continue to be delivered in the future climate.

At a borough level, the Council will work with SCC on relevant actions from Surrey Adapt, whilst ensuring adequate communications with residents and businesses.

Progress:

Our processes:
- Recognition of the importance of adaptation and resilience and including it as a new theme in the ES Strategy
- Inclusion as a risk on the Council Strategic Risk Register
- Developed a household emergency plan
- Business continuity plans for extreme weather events

Borough:
- Supporting SCC 'Surrey Adapt: The Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy'
- Incorporation of adaption measures in Climate Change and Sustainable Construction SPD

Key Actions:
- Ensure climate change risks are embedded across the organisation, including understanding the borough's flood and wildfire risk.
- Develop appropriate communications for residents and businesses
- Continue working in partnership with SCC and other local Districts and boroughs

7. Effective implementation

A series of overarching and supporting measures are needed to achieve the objectives set out in this Strategy and to implement the Action Plan.

7.1 Capacity-building, Communications and Engagement, Training, and Partnership Working

We know that we have an important role in encouraging businesses and residents within the borough to support actions which address the climate crisis and environmental sustainability. Recognising the importance of providing easily accessible and digestible information as part of this process, the original Action Plan proposed that an online central information resource be developed – this has been created and is kept up to date to benefit residents, businesses and other audiences[34].

The success of the objectives outlined within the Action Plan will be reliant on support from communication campaigns to help aid the understanding of sustainability issues across the borough and within the Council, and to encourage behaviour change. The Council will therefore ensure that, where applicable, actions are supported by the dissemination of appropriate materials. As appropriate, information from other partner organisations, like SCC, will be shared and promoted too.

Progress:

Our processes:
- Produced a climate change and sustainable construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Delivered training opportunities for staff and Council members
- Developed a set of sustainability webpages for residents and businesses
- Implementing a sustainability communications plan
- Produce annual Strategy progress reports

Borough:
- Continuing to work with partners across the voluntary, community, private and public sectors to share learnings, access funding and develop projects

Engagement activities within the Council now include training for staff and councillors, sustainability drop-in sessions and a Staff Sustainability Network for interested staff members and these will continue and will be expanded as appropriate.

Engagement activities within the borough are wide-ranging and include attendance at events, business forums, and speaking with residents and resident's groups, and these will continue and grow as necessary.

There is also substantial engagement with Surrey County Council and our neighbouring local authorities at officer and Member level (eg via the Greener Futures Partnership Steering Group), whilst promotion of SCC grant schemes and other partner initiatives forms a central part of the borough engagement activities.

We have worked in partnership with Raven Housing, other housing providers and with other local authorities to gain Government funding for decarbonisation measures for borough housing. We work with SES Water to spread water efficiency messages and distribute free water saving devices. We are working with energy providers, both in terms of the local distribution network operator (DNO) and the local community energy sector and with local organisation to plant trees and hedgerows. We will continue to look for new ways to work with partners to deliver environmental sustainability and carbon reduction activities.

7.2 Planning policies

When considering the UK Government's target of achieving net zero carbon by 2050 it is clear that planning policy will have a crucial role in supporting the transition towards achieving this, as well as in adapting our borough to the changing climate. In light of the UK target, the Council recognises the impracticalities of continuing to grant planning permission for developments which are planned and built in a way that will

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[34] Environmental sustainability and climate change

require retrofitting in the near future.

As part of the Council's strategy to address the climate crisis and improve sustainability at a borough wide level there is an intention to focus on how the current planning policies and processes can be used to help deliver environmental sustainability across Reigate & Banstead, within the framework provided by national legislation and policy. This will include review of the Local Plan policies, including to help facilitate our ES Strategy objectives as part of the next review process (commencing in 2023/24).

7.3   Procurement

Procurement is key to influencing change beyond the areas under our direct control. A number of objectives across all overarching environmental themes of the Strategy relate to products and services being supplied to the Council by third party providers/suppliers. In order to ensure that we select suppliers/providers with the right level of products and expertise to deliver this ES Strategy, changes to the internal procurement procedures will be required - this action is carried forward from the previous Action Plan.

It is proposed to include sustainability within a wider review of the procurement process that will also consider social impacts. Procurement documents will be updated to ensure that the objectives of the Action Plan relative to the service which is being tendered are reflected.

In parallel, the Council will develop general implementation guidance on key topics (e.g. embodied carbon) and consider training methods to facilitate uptake and ensure consistency in terms of implementation across different companies/suppliers. We will need to review whether we should provide training to key suppliers too.

The Council procures food to serve to the public at the community centres and the Harlequin theatre, whilst there are vending machines at Council offices and the Depot. There are opportunities to deliver environmental and financial savings by consolidating our approach and reviewing the environmental impacts of the food offered.

7.4   Resources and Governance

The appointment of a dedicated sustainability resource has been essential in ensuring the delivery of the Strategy Action Plan to date. It is not sole responsibility of the Council's Environmental Sustainability Team to implement all measures within the Action Plan, rather its role is to guide and support the relevant Council departments in delivering their sustainability objectives in conjunction with other key stakeholders where applicable. The Council's ES Team currently has 1.8FTE officers, one with a focus on Council activities, and one focusing on engagement with the wider borough and partner organisations who can deliver borough-wide environmental improvements.

To achieve the objectives of this Strategy, staff resources in other teams will also be required to work to deliver the actions in the Strategy Action Plan. It is important that an understanding and commitment to sustainability is embedded across the Council so that it is recognised that every Council employee has a role to play in delivering the Strategy. A key action will therefore be to review HR policies and procedures to incorporate sustainability where possible.

To effectively deliver the Strategy, financial resources will also be required, and identified via the annual budget setting process or stand-alone funding bids. Wherever appropriate, sources of external funding will be pursued.

In terms of governance, it is proposed to review processes to ensure sustainability is given consideration both upfront (as proposals and projects are developed) and at key decision points.

7.5   Monitoring and Reporting

As part of the implementation of the ES Strategy it will be crucial to ensure that all objectives of the associated Action Plan are monitored. This will assist in understanding where measures have been successful and to identify where improvements to the implementation approach may be required.

Performance indicators have been reviewed, and the new performance indicators are presented in the Action Plan.

A Sustainability Steering Group, comprised of Heads of Services and other key officers with responsibility for Council-related operations that have environmental impact, meets quarterly to review activities and consider progress on the ES Strategy. This group receives updates on progress from service areas and has the opportunity to consider complementary or conflicting projects and identify and resolve blockers.   This Group has also provided an overview function for this first ES Strategy Review.

The Council has also established an informal Cross Party Member Sustainability Group to review and feedback on the implementation of the Strategy.

A report on progress is presented to the Council Executive annually, and each report is available on the website[35]. A new template will be developed to assist in future progress reporting.

The ES Strategy will be kept under review to ensure that the Council's activities continue to take account of national policies, commitments and technological changes. This version 2 is the first review of the Strategy to do this. It is intended that Version 2 should be reviewed in 2027.

Key Actions:
- Update and continue to deliver internal and external communication plans
- Continue to cultivate partnerships and work with partners to deliver projects
- Consider the climate crisis, decarbonisation and other environmental sustainability objectives in the Local Plan Review
- Develop a Sustainable Procurement Statement or Policy and associated training and guidance
- Develop a Corporate Development framework to embed environmental sustainability measures into all Council building projects
- Review Council project documentation, decision-making and governance to ensure environmental sustainability is given due consideration
- Review effective options for the future offsetting of residual Council carbon emissions

8.   Preparing for 2030

8.1   Scope 3

The Strategy sets a net zero target of 2030 for Scope 1 and 2 Council operation greenhouse gas emissions with an aim to get Scope 3 emissions (see box) to net zero as soon as possible thereafter (as explained in Section 3.1 above). In order to be in a position to deliver actions and report on progress on Scope 3 there are preparations that will need to be made prior to 2030, such as ensuring the Council has mechanisms in place to obtain data from suppliers so a Scope 3 baseline can be developed and establishing a procedure for ongoing reporting.

For our leased assets, preparing for Scope 3 reporting now will give the Council the opportunity to start discussions with leaseholders about the types of actions they may be able to take, either alone or in partnership with the Council. The Council also has the opportunity to review the conditions of any leases or licences that come up for renewal or reletting to include a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency.

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[35] Our approach to environmental sustainability

For purchases, an initial approach will be to estimate the carbon impact from a year of purchases to prioritise the most significant emissions. Sustainable procurement, and training Council purchasers, alongside engagement with suppliers will be key to driving down emissions from the supply chain.

In terms of business travel and commuting, data will be collected to guide behaviour change and a review of HR policies will be conducted to incentivise lower carbon travel methods.

For waste generated within our operations, we need to estimate waste generation and work towards collection of accurate data. Education and messaging to prevent waste and to maximise recycling will also be key.

Regular readings of water meters will allow accurate data collection for calculation of emissions for water consumption and treatment, and again, education and messaging will be key to reduce water use.

We already have data for purchased electricity so can calculate the transmission and distribution (T&D) emissions. These will decrease as our consumption of grid electricity decreases due to efficiency measures.

Carbon Footprint (In scope from 2030 onwards):
Scope 3 - suppliers

- purchased goods and services, including water consumption and treatment
- business travel (mileage, public transport, hotels)
- employee commuting
- waste generated in operations (treatment and disposal)
- upstream leased assets (where RBBC is tenant)
- downstream leased assets (where RBBC is landlord, case-by-case as and when lease arrangements allow)
- purchased electricity transmission and distribution (T&D)

8.2   Offsetting

The aim of our net zero target is to reduce emissions as far as possible. It is recognised that there are likely to be some obstinate emissions that we are unable to eliminate and, in line with best practice, we will endeavour to ensure these are less than 10% of baseline by 2030.

One of the actions of this revised Strategy is to research and develop a credible offsetting strategy for these residual emissions. It is important that we plan ahead so that we are able to implement effective offsetting from 2030. Questions that will be considered as part of this action include:

- Review of the Oxford Offsetting Principles[36] to guide the project.
- Whether it is more effective to invest in installing renewable energy, over and above what the Council consumes, as an offsetting mechanism
- Whether it is more effective to develop nature-based carbon offsetting on the Council's own land, and if so, should this be done by Council services or in partnership with other organisations
- What organisation(s) should the Council partner with if offsetting is to be outsourced
- Partnership opportunities if offsetting on Council land
- What type of projects should be supported
- How much will each option cost
- When the Council will need to begin investing in any offset scheme in order to realise the carbon reductions. This is particularly important for nature-based carbon removals where carbon takes time to be sequestered and a tree doesn't remove carbon from the atmosphere at an equal rate through its lifetime.
- Whether there are any forthcoming or predicted guidance or regulatory changes that will affect the offsetting strategy
- As the aspiration is to be net zero for Scope 3 emissions as soon as possible after 2030, when the Council will implement Scope 3 offsetting

It must be recognised that any offsetting strategy may need to evolve over time due to the different timescales associated with different opportunities.

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[36] The Oxford Offsetting Principles | Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment

9. Challenges and Opportunities

9.1 Opportunities

There are many opportunities arising from achieving the Vision of this Strategy. Co-benefits will arise when the action to deliver an objective in one theme, also delivers on objectives for another theme, whilst some actions will have non-environmental benefits too. Co-benefits and opportunities include:

- **Financial** – Energy efficiency measures reduce energy consumption thereby lowering energy bills as well as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Renewable energy sources provide low GHG emissions and 'free' electricity once the initial investment is paid back. Early action on climate adaptation is more cost-effective than delayed action.
- **Improved health** – measures to reduce GHG emissions from transport generally reduce air pollution by reducing exhaust emissions, whilst active travel options can play a part in increasing activity levels which lead to better health and wellbeing.
- **Less pollution** - measures to reduce GHG emissions from transport generally reduce air pollution by reducing exhaust emissions, uptake of active travel methods (rather than the use of private vehicles) will also reduce particulate pollution from car tyres, and electric heating and cooking will improve indoor air quality compared to using gas.
- **Building comfort** – better insulated buildings are generally less draughty and more comfortable, being warmer in winter and cooler in summer, with lower energy costs for occupants. Installing green roofs and walls can insulate a building as well as improving nature and air quality.
- **Improving wildlife** – adding trees, hedgerows, green roofs and walls, and wildflower meadows improves local wildlife whilst vegetation also absorbs pollutants and urban trees provide shade and cooling.
- **Reducing flood risk** – installing SUDS, creating ponds and planting trees can reduce run-off from intense rainfall, thereby reducing flood risk and these actions can also benefit wildlife.

9.2 Challenges

In common with most organisations, and particularly other local authorities, there are challenges to achieving net zero, particularly by 2030. Key challenges that are inhibiting our decarbonisation efforts are described in Section 2.5 above and repeated in the 'Challenges specific to us' point below. Sharing learning with our neighbouring authorities and utilising best practice from other organisations are the types of actions we can take to help overcome these challenges.

- **Unique challenges** – each of our buildings is one-of-a-kind in the borough and we have many task-specific vehicles and machinery that we will need to decarbonise, requiring bespoke solutions for each. However, other local authorities are facing the same situation so we can share our learnings to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'. We can also learn from commercial operators, for example for our theatre and for our refuse fleet.
- **Fossil fuel use** – to achieve net zero without significant offsetting we need to transition our buildings away from using natural gas. We are developing a programme of works and budgets to achieve this, that recognise the unique challenges in each building, for example the listed, historic nature of the Town Hall.
- **Resourcing** – Council budgets are stretched. We will consider whole-life costs to demonstrate the value from all decarbonisation activities.
- **Skills** – the country is facing a skills shortage for the design and installation of decarbonisation technologies. SCC is developing a work programme around skills, commercial organisations are training their staff in the installation of low carbon heating systems and there are Government initiatives in 'green' training and apprenticeships which will slowly reduce the skills gap.
- **Involvement of communities** – improving the environment of the borough cannot be done by the Council alone so residents, businesses and organisations will need to contribute. Generally, people are engaged with environmental issues, but they lead busy lives in which they may not have capacity to take this on, whilst businesses need guidance to take advantage of the commercial benefits that

can accrue from having a more sustainable outlook. For areas like walking and cycling (highways) and what happens to our waste we are reliant on SCC. To help with local delivery we will continue to engage with the local community and our partners, with particular focus on the benefits that taking sustainability action can have, over and above the specific environmental improvements.

- **Competing priorities** – true for the Council, but particularly for local businesses and residents, the cost-of-living crisis can affect the priority that is given to environmental initiatives. Communicating the financial benefits of decarbonisation measures (such as insulation and renewable energy) and the wider benefits of environmental initiatives with the local community and members will help keep a high profile for environmental issues.
- **Electrical grid capacity** – the ability to install EV charging and renewable energy is dependent on approval from the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and may require costly grid upgrades. To try to manage this we are holding early engagement with our local DNO.
- **Legislation and policy** – there is still some uncertainty in national policy (for example, whether hydrogen will play a big part in domestic and commercial heating) and associated legislation, and there have been delays to key policy (for example the outcomes of the Resources and Waste Strategy).
- **Technology** – much of the technology necessary to decarbonise our buildings and fleet is established but may be less well known or tested in the UK. Seeing these technologies in action in other local authorities or trialling equipment can help dispel doubts and concerns around reliability and durability.
- **Survival of tree planting** – ensuring sufficient watering of new planting, both for Council planting and for that done by community groups, is critical for newly planted trees and hedgerows to survive, and there is a requirement for ongoing investment in maintenance to ensure planting remains healthy. Options such as natural regeneration will be explored.
- **Organisational capacity** – unlike many larger organisations, but in common with other district and borough Councils, many delivery areas are dependent on small teams who are dealing with multiple workstreams. If staff leave, or corporate priorities change, this can delay implementation of sustainability actions.
- Challenges specific to us:
  - **Electrical capacity, space and layout at the Depot** – electrification of the refuse fleet is likely to require investment in increased electrical capacity. Space at the Depot is also constrained and there may need to be work to change the layout to optimise the available land.
  - **Uncertainty about building futures** – clarity is needed on future operational use patterns at a number of buildings which is holding back the design of and investment in energy efficiency measures and renewable energy solutions.
  - **Data** – to report on, and communicate, our progress it is important that we have robust and comprehensive data sets. More work is required, for example, to collect accurate energy data for our buildings. A programme of building sub-metering is proposed; and we will explore options to streamline data collection and presentation of data relating to this Strategy.