



Signed off by	Head of Corporate Policy, Projects and Performance
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To	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Executive
Date	Thursday 12 September 2024 Thursday 19 September 2024
Executive Member	Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Leisure

Key Decision Required	N
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Subject	Environmental Sustainability Annual Report 2023/24

Recommendations
<p>That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>(i) Notes the Environmental Sustainability Strategy progress report (Annex 1) and makes any observations to the Executive</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <p>(ii) Agrees the Environmental Sustainability Strategy progress report (Annex 1) for publication on the Council website</p>
Reasons for Recommendations
To enable us to provide regular progress reports and to ensure we remain proactive and agile in our response.
Executive Summary
This report provides a summary of the Council's progress in delivering its 2020 Environmental Sustainability Strategy ("the ES Strategy") and Action Plan since the 2022/23 Environmental Sustainability Strategy progress update (ES progress update). This report

covers the year ending March 2024.

Since the last ES progress update, we undertook a review of the Strategy and an updated Strategy and Action Plan was approved by the Executive in March 2024 for implementation from April 2024 onwards. Against the actions of the 2020 Action Plan good progress has been made across all themes within the Strategy. However, action to decarbonise our operations is more limited, with data collection in some areas still presenting challenges. We therefore will need to accelerate to meet the net zero 2030 target.

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

Executive has authority to approve the above recommendations

Statutory Powers

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

Background

3. In response to the growing climate challenge, the Government has set increasingly challenging targets to reduce greenhouse gases over the coming years, cumulating in a target for the country to become net zero by 2050.
4. Our corporate plan, Reigate & Banstead 2025², commits the Council to reducing its own environmental impact, and supporting residents and businesses to do the same. The Environmental Sustainability (ES) Strategy³ adopted in 2020 was reviewed with stakeholders in 2023 and the revised ES Strategy with new action plan was adopted in March 2024.
5. The Council's activity on environmental sustainability focuses on two main elements; firstly how we become more sustainable as a Council, and secondly how we work with other partners, our residents and businesses to make the borough more sustainable.
6. On the first of these, the Strategy sets out a target for the Council's operational CO_{2e} emissions to be reduced to net zero by 2030. For the second of these, the strategy includes a borough level target that aligns with the Government's national target of 2050. While the Council has the most direct control over its own operational emissions, these amount to less than 1% of emissions within the borough; it is therefore important that we also support residents and businesses to take steps to tackle climate change and sustainability issues, and work with partner organisations

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

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

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

to make progress. Further information about carbon targets is included later in this report.

Key Information

Progress

7. Detailed information about progress on initiatives outlined in the original Action Plan for the year 2023/24 is set out in Annex 1. Some examples are provided below, structured around the four themes within the 2020 ES Strategy.
8. **Effective implementation:** This section of the Strategy covers 'cross cutting' issues such as resourcing, communications, planning, and partnership working. Progress has included:
 - a. Continuing to deliver a wide range of communication-related activity, including promotion of energy efficiency, water saving, smart meters and general sustainability messages at in-person events at community centres and residents' meetings.
 - b. Formation of a Staff Sustainability Network to work on issues collectively, help share corporate messages, cascade ideas up, deliver learning opportunities and support to make a tangible difference to the Council. The Network has helped to deliver drop-in information sessions for staff. The Sustainability team continue to promote sustainability messages to staff on the intranet, during the ES Strategy review process and by means of Bitesize Briefings.
 - c. Continuing engagement with a wide range of partner organisations including Town and Parish Councils, local business networks, and community groups such as Energy Action Reigate & Redhill, as well as participating in Surrey County Council (SCC) environmental topic working groups. We continue to promote energy efficiency schemes offered by the government and SCC.
 - d. Working with the new Procurement team, all service teams are encouraged to engage with the sustainability team early in the procurement process to ensure environmental sustainability is considered. With the Procurement team we delivered an introduction to sustainable procurement at a staff Bitesize Briefing.
9. **Energy & carbon:** This section covers energy minimisation and efficiency, renewable energy, and low carbon transport. Items of note from the past year have included:
 - a. The energy the Council purchases reverted to a conventional (non-renewable) tariff in 2022/23 when our energy supplier went out of business. We had to continue with this arrangement during the energy price rises into the current reporting year. The Property team sourced a renewable electricity tariff which started in October 2023, giving us half a year of renewable electricity.
 - b. Due to limited staff capacity and awaiting decisions on the future of key buildings, there has not been any progress on energy retrofits of our main buildings. However, the year did see installation of solar PV on Priory Park Pavilion (from CIL funding) and four of our new temporary and emergency accommodation properties (from third party funding). The accommodation solar (and in some cases a battery) not only reduces carbon emissions from energy consumption but benefits our tenants by reducing their electricity bills.

- c. Work has been ongoing trialling electric alternatives to fossil-fuel powered vehicles and mobile equipment to inform future replacements. Although the number of electric vehicles in the fleet did not increase, the percentage rose due to a few fossil-fuel vehicles not being replaced. Budget approval was given in 2023 for purchase of an electric refuse collection vehicle and this awaits confirmation of electrical capacity at the Depot and then the installation of a new chargepoint at the Depot to power it.
 - d. In December 2023 budget approval was given to running our fleet of refuse collection vehicles on the biofuel hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO). This is a 'drop-in' fuel requiring no adjustments to the fleet, and vehicles will start running on HVO in 2024/5 once a new tank is installed. It is recognised that HVO is not a long-term solution but a pragmatic interim solution whilst electrical capacity at the Depot is reviewed and the potential of Hydrogen continues to be explored. The EV fleet can only grow when we know that appropriate electric alternatives are fit for purpose to deliver our services and we have electrical capacity to allow new EV chargepoints to be installed.
 - e. There continue to be delays in the SCC county-wide concession agreement for electric vehicle charge points on-street, but we have provided initial views to SCC on priority locations for both on-and off-street charge points in the borough. Districts and Boroughs can access this agreement as a delivery partner for installations on our own land and this option continues to be reviewed alongside other solutions.
 - f. The Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) for low income off the gas grid homes delivered energy improvements to 12 homes, whilst 131 properties benefited from smaller energy efficiency measures via the Household Support Fund.
 - g. The second Solar Together group buying scheme was launched by SCC in June 2023 and resulted in 112 homes in the borough installing solar PV.
 - h. Provision of direct energy efficiency advice to residents via face-to-face events at community groups, as well as continuing to help local energy reduction advice group Energy Action Reigate and Redhill (EARR). EARR are now able to employ staff and, along with other community groups, contribute to the SCC-led Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) energy advice work.
 - i. Our Active Travel officer, part-funded by SCC and in partnership with Sustrans, has been working with six schools to deliver bike maintenance tuition, parent engagement and bike and scooter skills. Community projects have included partnerships with SCC, Growing Redhill and Govia Thameslink to deliver bike donations, Dr Bike and led-walk treasure hunts. Reach between July 2023 and end of March 2024 was 1915 people, and a small sample surveyed suggests that, of those who don't currently use active travel, 75% would consider it for journeys under 2 miles after their engagement with the Active Travel Officer, with 20% indicating they would consider active travel for journeys over 5 miles.
10. **Low impact consumption:** This section covers waste avoidance and reduction, water efficiency and responsible sourcing. Progress has included:
- a. Continued gradual roll-out of full kerbside recycling collection to flats, incorporating a further 400 properties this year.

- b. Although the government published Simpler Recycling in October 2023, the legislation to implement was not enacted by March 2024. This means that progress on low impact consumption actions related to this has been delayed, but the Waste and Recycling team is now actively assessing how the new statutory requirements can be implemented across the borough.
 - c. Implementation of a recycling programme for the Nespresso capsules from the pay-as-you-go coffee machine at the Town Hall.
 - d. In partnership with SES Water, water efficiency advice has been provided at half a dozen events with a hundred free water saving devices distributed.
11. **Natural environment:** This section covers tree cover, landscape, supporting biodiversity and reducing pollution. Progress has included:
- a. A consultant was appointed to develop a Greenspaces Strategy during 2024/5 and the actions from that will help to deliver the ES Strategy natural environment objectives.
 - b. Research is starting on whether natural regrowth of ash trees removed due to Ash Dieback may be more successful than planting of new saplings.
 - c. On Council land, 71 trees were planted (including 46 by SCC), whilst 90 whips were planted by volunteers. In addition, 773m² additional pollinator and / or native species were added.
 - d. No peat was used during the year. 19 litres of glyphosate were used by injection for treatment of Japanese Knotweed, this is significantly less than previous years as maintenance of highway verges has returned to SCC.
 - e. The three-year rolling average indicates an overall slight reduction in air quality measurements, however it must be recognised that the preceding years included the later Covid lockdowns.
12. Alongside this, the Sustainability Team continues to support managers and officers across the Council to understand environmental issues and identify opportunities to make a difference, ensuring that sustainable ways of working become embedded within the Council.
13. **Strategy review:** During autumn 2023 a light-touch review of the ES Strategy was undertaken to ensure it remains up-to-date and reflects the latest data and evidence available to us. The review included workshops with all service areas that can deliver actions to support the Strategy. There were also engagement sessions with Members (including a time-limited O&S Scrutiny Panel), staff, the public and campaigning organisations.
14. The review retained the four themes of the Strategy, with the addition of Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience as a fifth and made some minor amendments to the objectives. A new Action Plan with performance indicators was developed by the service areas, co-ordinated by the Sustainability team, and progress on these actions will be reported in next year's annual report covering year 2024/25.
15. The Strategy document was updated to include more information on addressing Scope 3 emissions and offsetting any residual emissions, whilst outlining the challenges we face in achieving the Strategy objectives and the net zero targets.

Borough Carbon Footprint

16. Data from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) indicates that progress is being made on reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the borough (figure 1). There was a significant fall in 2020 (likely due to reduced activity caused by the Covid19 lockdowns) with a rebound to the expected downward trajectory in 2021, whilst 2022 shows a tiny fall from 2021. 2022 is the latest year for which DESNZ have published data, with 2023 figures not expected until June 2025. All districts and boroughs across Surrey are showing similar trends. It should be noted that domestic and transport emissions per head are higher in Reigate & Banstead than the national average (although lower than the Surrey average) (figure 2).

Figure 1: Borough level trend in all greenhouse gas emissions (2005-2022, ktCO_{2e}) (source: DESNZ)

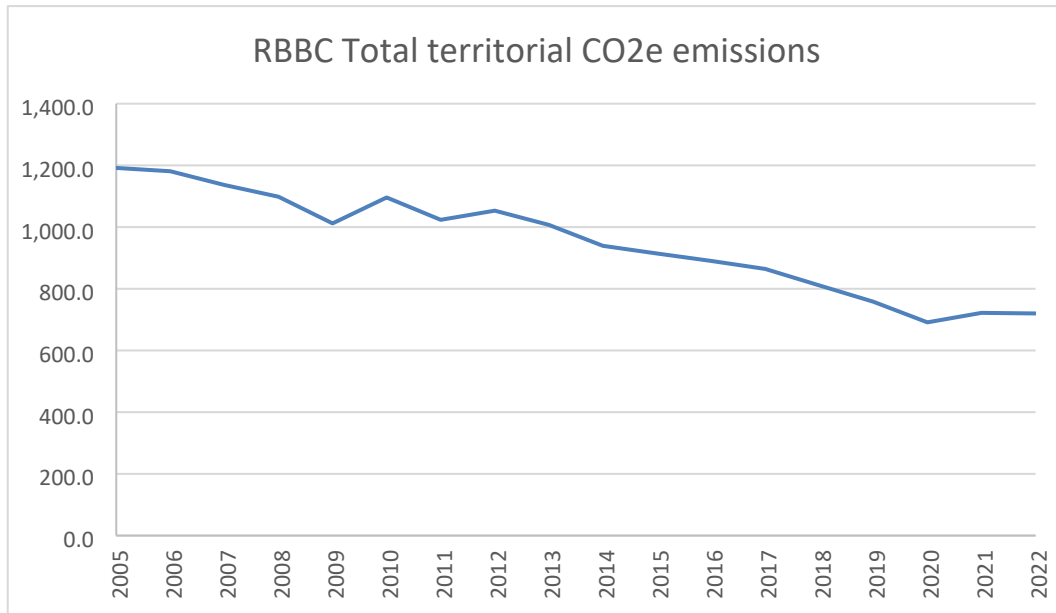


Figure 2: Borough greenhouse gas emissions per Capita (2022, ktCO_{2e}) (source: DESNZ)

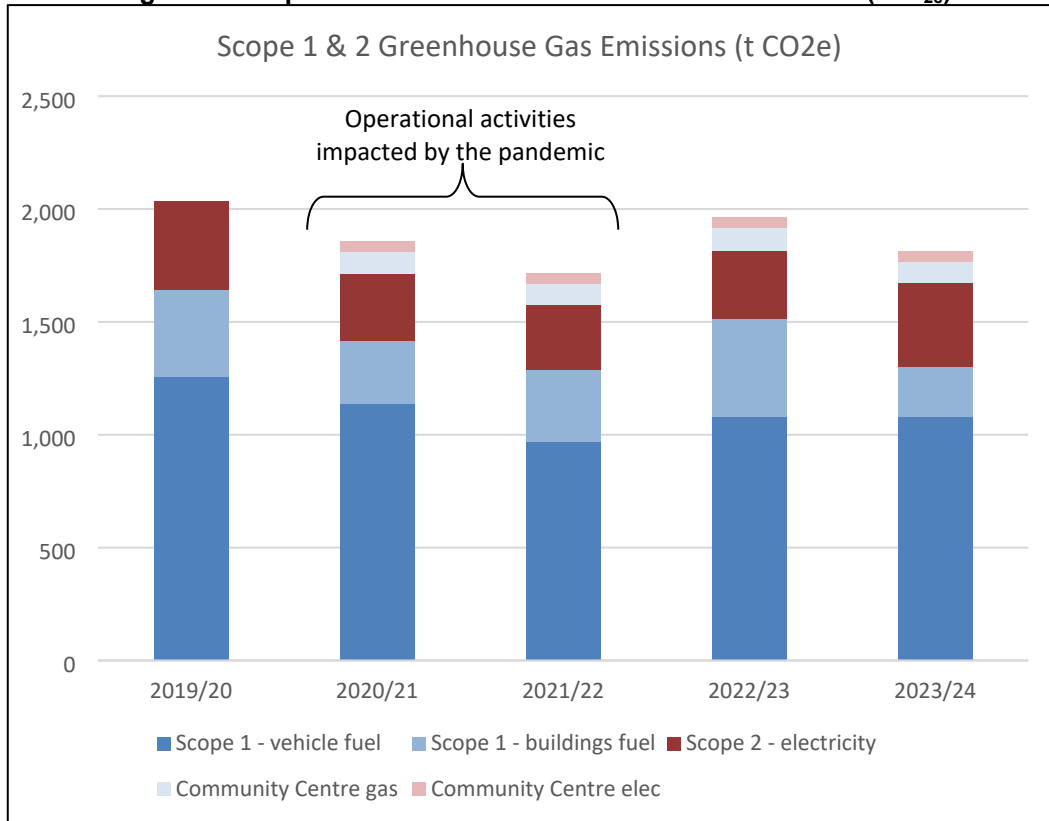


Council Carbon Footprint

17. The measured carbon footprint of the Council's operational emissions covers Scope 1 emissions (natural gas used in Council-owned buildings and petrol and diesel used in Council-owned fleet vehicles and mobile equipment) and Scope 2 emissions (purchased electricity) only. The scope of the carbon footprint includes all Council owned vehicles and petrol-fuelled equipment along with Council owned and operated buildings identified at the time of Strategy publication (the Town Hall, Depot, Harlequin, Community Centres (from 2020), car parks and smaller buildings such as toilets, park pavilions, and the cemetery).
18. The carbon footprint is calculated using consumption data (eg litres of diesel used) multiplied by the appropriate UK government conversion figure. We use the greenhouse gas accounting tool developed by Local Partnerships. We have accurate consumption data for the liquid fuel we use, however some of our natural gas and electricity consumption data is based on supplier estimated figures. The Scope 2 electricity figures presented here are for location-based electricity (ie grid average).
19. Figure 3 shows the council's carbon footprint based on its operational emissions (Scope 1 and 2), with the year 2019/20 representing the baseline from which we will measure progress against our target of being net zero by 2030⁴. Community centres only returned to council operation in 2020. These are therefore indicated separately to show the additional emissions from these sites that were not present in the baseline year.

⁴ Based on scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, with net zero scope 3 emissions as soon as possible thereafter

Figure 3: Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions 2019/20-2023/24 (tCO_{2e})



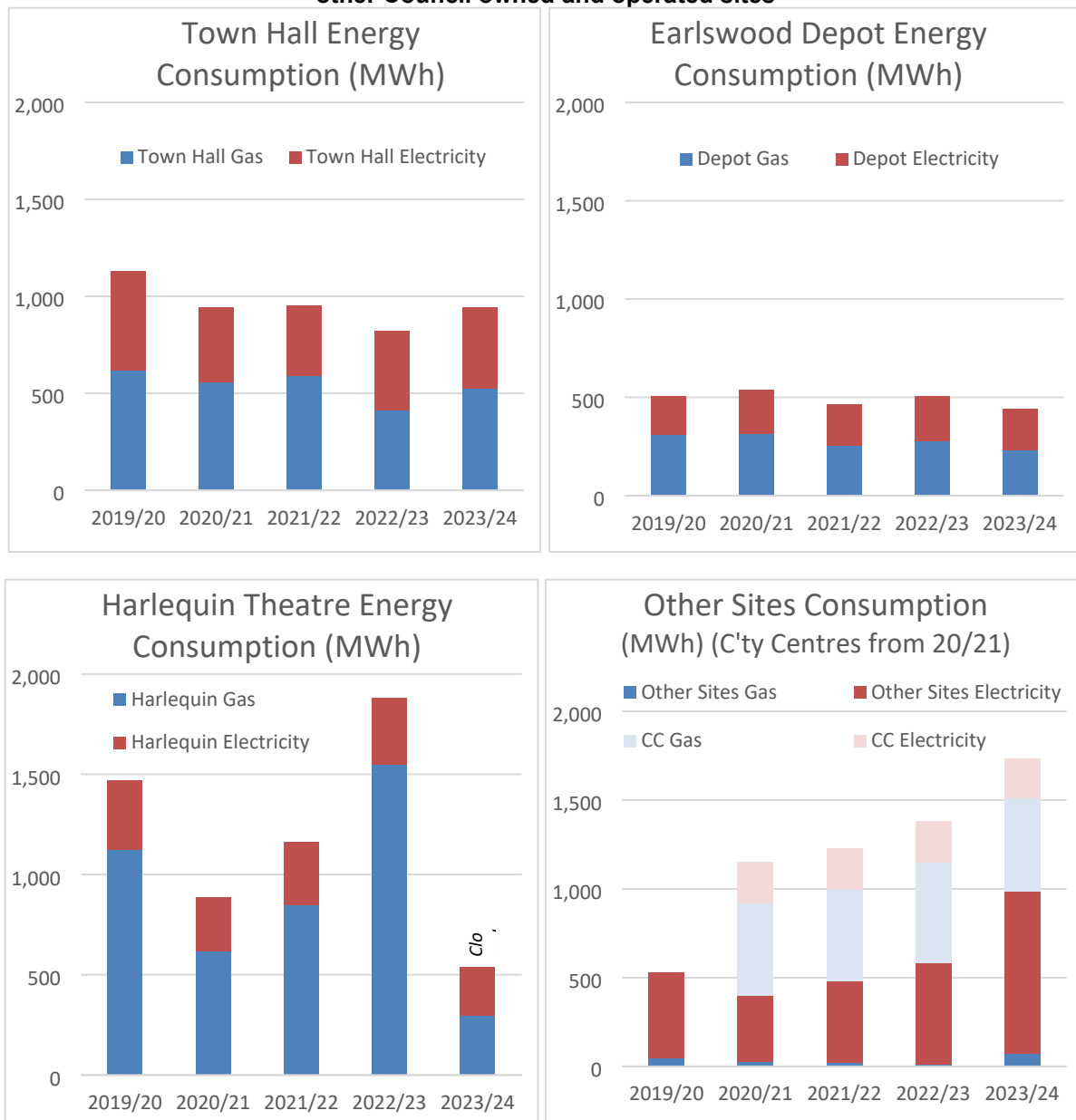
NOTE: Community centres returned to the Council in 2020/21 and their energy consumption is included in the carbon footprint for that year and onwards. We do not have a breakdown of their separate carbon emissions for 2020/21 and 2021/22 so they are presented here indicatively.

20. In October 2023 we reverted to a renewable electricity tariff, provided by Shell Energy and supported by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certificates. Between October 2023 and March 2024 this accounted for an estimated 1,179 MWh of electricity and avoided the emission of 244 tCO_{2e}. In line with UK government guidance on reporting, this is reported separately and is not reflected in the graph above. In future, when more solar PV is installed on owned and operated buildings and data is available, this solar renewable energy will be deducted from the footprint.
21. The graph shows the impact of the Covid lockdowns during 2020/21 and 2021/22, with data in subsequent years more typical of our activities.
22. Availability of accurate gas and electricity data remains an issue. Many of our sites require meter readings and with a new supplier much of the data is based on estimates of consumption. No data was provided at all for gas consumption in March 2024 so this has had to be estimated by averaging the previous 5 months consumption. Figures and the graph above should therefore be treated with a degree of caution.
23. **The buildings component of emissions:** The variability in energy consumption over time at the three main sites, as well as a collective of the remaining sites, is illustrated in Figure 4. Points to note include:
 - a. For 'other sites' the community centres were not included in the baseline carbon footprint as the Council only brought operations in house in 2020/21. Based on

consumption levels in 2022-23 these add an additional 104t CO_{2e} from gas consumption and 56t CO_{2e} from electricity consumption over and above the 2019/20 baseline.

- b. The Harlequin theatre closed in October 2023 due to the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RACC). Electricity consumption over the year was therefore similar to the Covid lockdown year 2020/21 thus lower than typical years such as the baseline year. The utility supplier provided no gas data for the site between October 2023 and March 2024 therefore the gas consumption figure for the Harlequin only covers the six months of summer and accounts for a significant reduction in total gas consumption compared to previous years. During winter the pantomime was relocated to a 'Big Top' in Memorial Park. Unfortunately it was not possible to run the Big Top from the existing electricity connection so a diesel generator was used and the fuel for this (which emitted 17 tCO_{2e}) this has been included within 'Scope 1 buildings fuel' on the graph above.
- c. Solar PV was installed on the Priory Park pavilion in autumn 2023. We do not yet have data to demonstrate the carbon reduction benefit of this installation.
- d. The large increase in electricity consumption across our 'other sites' may be related to estimated consumption figures from our new energy supplier rather than an actual increase in consumption. The data should therefore be treated with caution. We have half-hourly meter data for the Town Hall, Depot and Harlequin.
- e. As noted above, many of our sites are not on smart meters so figures are estimated and subject to occasional reconciliation which can distort the pattern of energy consumption. During the year the Property team investigated automatic metering for the main sites and installation is now expected during 2024/25. To allow accurate energy consumption data the Property team will also instigate annual meter readings for those sites on manual meters in the future.
- f. The conversion factor for electricity in 2023 was 7% higher than 2022, after several years when it had decreased. This higher conversion factor is due to an increase in natural gas use in the generation of electricity and a decrease in renewable generation in the UK. The gas conversion figure has remained relatively consistent since the baseline year.

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

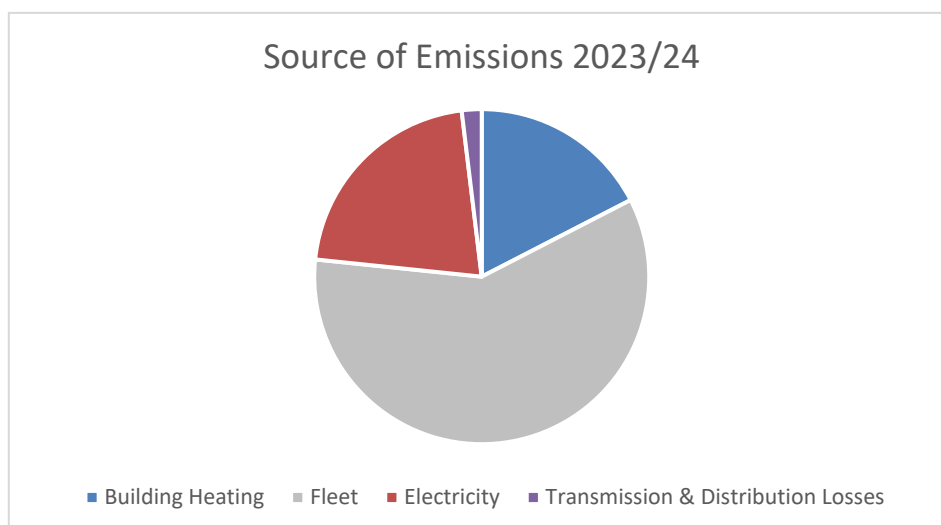


24. **The fleet component of emissions:** In terms of the fleet, fuel consumption and carbon emissions in 2023/24 remained consistent with 2022-23, with fuel consumption approximately 14% less than the baseline. No new electric vehicles joined the fleet during the year, but the sale of diesel vehicles marginally improved the percentage of the fleet that is hybrid or electric from 10 to 11%. Two measures were approved which should see a reduction in fleet carbon footprint in subsequent years (i) budget approval to switch the refuse fleet to HVO which provides a carbon footprint saving, and (ii) budget approval to purchase the first electric refuse collection vehicle.
25. **General:** As reported previously, while it should be noted that reductions in carbon emissions are expected to be non-linear with significant reductions achieved during years where major projects are delivered (eg replacing a gas boiler with an electric alternative or replacing vehicles with low emission versions), it is clear that ongoing

action to reduce emissions from our buildings and fleet is critical. This will include activity to reduce fuel and energy consumption (which are also likely to save money on fuel bills), move away from gas as a fuel source, and speed up delivery of renewable energy sources.

26. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of the Council's operational emissions. Transmission and distribution (T&D) losses represent emissions arising from energy lost in the distribution process from the generators and is out of the council's direct control (scope 3), although directly correlates to the amount of energy consumed from the national grid. T&D is included in the baseline carbon footprint but it does not form part of the Council's 2030 net zero target, as this only focuses on Scope 1 and 2. Despite this, T&D emissions should naturally reduce as we implement energy efficiency measures and on-site energy generation.

Figure 5: Council Source of Emissions (2023/24)



27. **Outside of Scopes:** We have also emitted 'outside of scopes' greenhouse gases that result from our use of biofuels. Currently this is limited to the diesel and petrol that we use in our vehicles which contain a percentage of biofuel, but in future will include the transition biofuel HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) which will start to fuel our refuse collection vehicles during 2024/25. It also includes a very small value for biofuel in the natural gas we use to heat our buildings. This is the first year that we have reported on our 'Outside of Scopes' emissions and we will continue to do this in future years in line with best practice which requires these emissions to be displayed separately from the organisation's total emissions. For 2023-24 this 'outside of scopes' value equates to 61tCO_{2e}.
28. **Scope 3:** The ES Strategy commits to reducing Scope 3 emissions as soon as possible after 2030. To recap, Scope 3 emissions include all other direct and indirect emissions that occur in the upstream and downstream activities of an organisation eg purchased goods and services, employee commuting, waste disposal. A full list of the Scope 3 emissions relevant to RBBC is presented in Table 1 below.
29. To demonstrate reductions we need to start collecting data to develop a baseline. During the year we undertook an assessment of Scope 3 (indirect) carbon emissions, based on historic data, and collected data for relevant Scope 3 categories to report on emissions for 2023-24. The estimated values are represented in Figure 6. The quality of data for each category is different and

therefore this is indicated in Table 1 below along with an assessment of our ability to influence reduction in each emission category. The 'ability to influence' summarises tactics that could be applied in principle. In reality, reductions will be easier / more cost effective in some areas than others and some initial prioritisation will therefore be needed. Figure 6 shows that estimated emissions from our purchases (items and services) form the largest component of our emissions, dwarfing even our direct and indirect operational emissions (Scopes 1 and 2). It must be noted that this is based on categorisation of spend data and broad-brush conversion factors. We will be reviewing this data to identify the largest contributors and then develop a plan.

Figure 6: Representation of the Scope 3 estimated values against Scopes 1 and 2 (2023/24)
(Scope 3 category numbers relate to the categories in column 1 of Table 1 below)

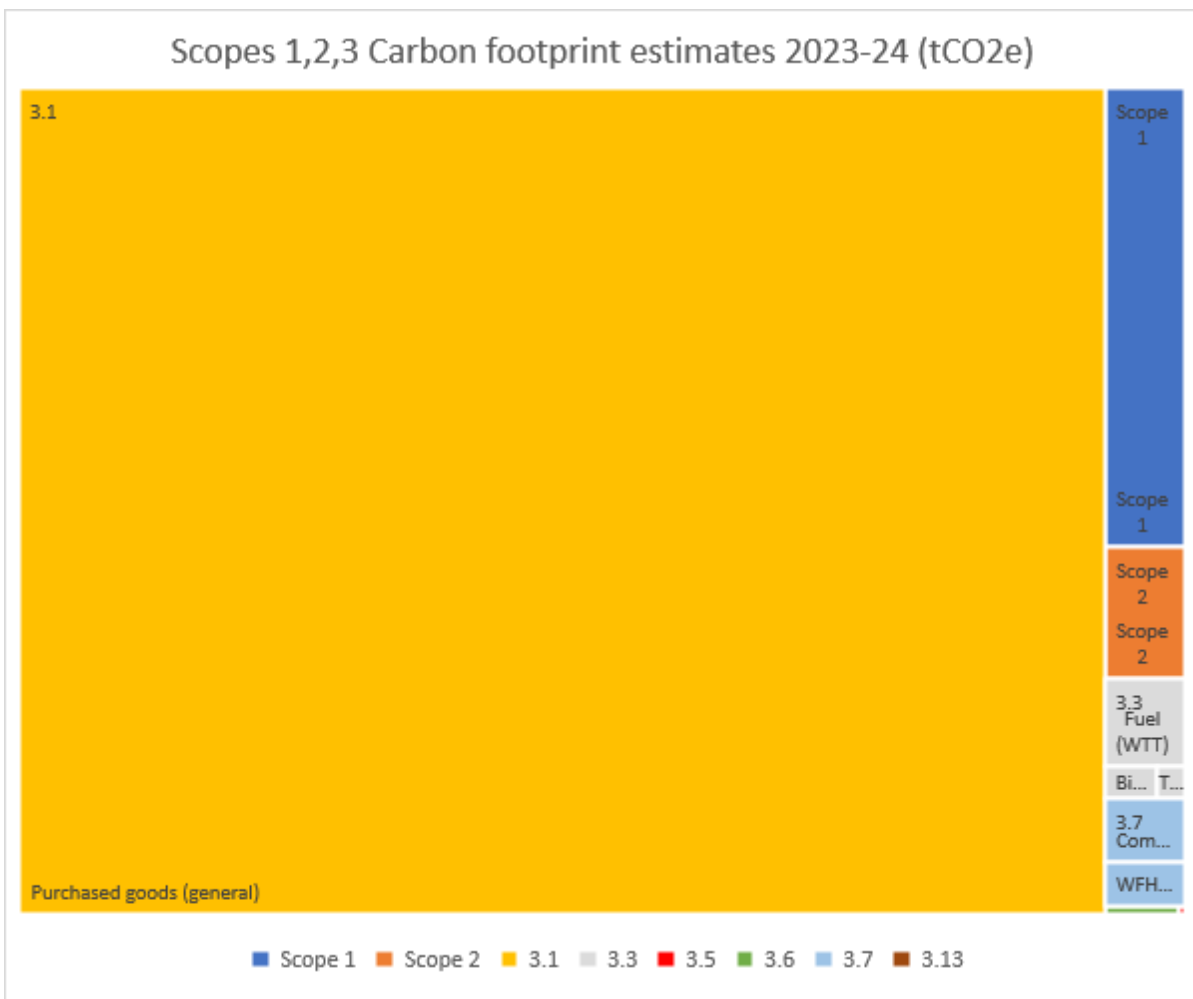


Table 1: Indication of the quality and ability to reduce the different scope 3 categories for which data has been estimated in 2023/24

Scope 3 Category	Accuracy of calculation	Ability to reduce?
3.1 Purchased goods (general)	Low (based on spend categorisation)	Yes, but need supplier specific data, and incorporate requirements into contracts

3.1 Purchased goods (water consumption and treatment) Water delivery through mains supply network and water returned to the sewerage system through mains drains	Medium (estimated meters)	Yes, by reducing water consumption and installing water efficiency measures
3.3 Electricity Transmission & Distribution (T&D) Energy loss during electricity transfer from power plant to purchasing organisation	Medium (estimated meters)	Yes, by reducing electricity
3.3 Fuel (Well to tank WTT) Upstream emissions from extraction, refining and transport of fuel to point of use	High (known fuel use)	Yes, by reducing fuel use
3.5 Waste Emissions from end-of-life disposal of different wastes	Low (estimated waste volumes)	Yes, but need waste quantities from waste collection contractor
3.6 Business travel (public transport expenses) Travel for work in assets not owned or directly operated by the organisation eg public transport	Medium (distances estimated from expense claims)	Yes, by doing more virtual meetings
3.6 Business travel (mileage expenses) Travel for work in assets not owned or directly operated by the organisation eg cars owned by employees	High (mileage expense claims)	Yes, by doing more virtual meetings / using pool EVs
3.7 Staff commuting Travel to/from work by staff	Medium (survey data)	Yes, ability to influence and provide incentives
3.7 Staff working from home Emissions from staff working from home (eg heating, lighting, equipment use)	Medium (survey data)	Yes, ability to influence
3.13 Downstream leased assets	No data	Yes, during refurbishments and working with tenants

Challenges

30. The following challenges have inhibited significant progress in delivering actions and reducing the Council's carbon emissions: Further information about addressing these challenges is provided in the 'Next Steps' section.
 - a. The legislation and policy impacts section below references challenges from the Simpler Recycling legislation and awaiting the action plan for the [Surrey Adapt](#) climate adaptation strategy.
 - b. Progress on reducing energy consumption in our buildings continues to be delayed, principally due to competing resources on the Council's Property team

which manages and maintains our buildings. Absence of detailed energy data to identify where energy losses are and to calculate a more accurate carbon footprint is also an issue.

- c. Further electrification of the Depot-based fleet will be difficult with the current layout and needs an understanding of the electrical grid capacity. A plan to investigate capacity and options planned for 2023/4 did not proceed. This will be given priority in 2024/25, including to confirm if there is sufficient capacity to install a new chargepoint for one electric refuse collection vehicle (for which funding was approved in late 2023).
- d. We will also keep a watching brief on issues that may cause us future challenges, such as funding, government policy and engagement.

Legislation and Policy Impacts

31. During 2023/24 the following had the potential to impact on our ability to achieve the Environmental Sustainability Strategy priorities:
 - a. The government announced their response to the Resources and Waste Strategy for England as Simpler Recycling in October 2023. This introduces mandatory domestic food waste collections and more comprehensive trade waste recycling. The impacts of these plans will be assessed during 2024/25 but may result in an increase in vehicle fuel consumption.
 - b. From January 2024, developers in England are required to deliver 10% 'biodiversity net gain' when building new housing, industry or commercial developments. This has the potential to deliver borough nature improvements.
 - c. SCC published their climate adaptation strategy 'Surrey Adapt' in autumn 2023 which is strong on partnership working. We await the accompanying action plan for details.
 - d. In September 2023 the government rolled back on some of its earlier commitments, such as delaying the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by five years to 2035, however it did increase the boiler upgrade grant for households wishing to replace their gas boilers.
32. Since the end of the reporting year, there have been other changes that are likely to impact on our ability to achieve the ES Strategy priorities:
 - a. Changed priorities for the new government.
 - b. Legislation to implement Simpler Recycling will be laid and come into force.

Next Steps

33. As well as setting out progress on, and challenges associated with, 2023/24 actions Annex 1 presents progress on earlier ongoing actions and explains the next steps in relation to these actions. Work is also starting for delivery of the objectives outlined in the revised Action Plan for the years from 2024/25 (progress on which will be reported in the next annual report).
34. **Fleet:**
 - a. **Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil:** HVO is a type of biofuel created using waste products and is a drop-in fossil-free alternative to mineral diesel that reduces carbon emissions. A business case was developed and an uplift to revenue

budget was approved in late 2023 to use HVO in our refuse vehicle fleet. The necessary infrastructure (a new fuel tank) and the procurement process for the fuel will proceed in summer 2024 with a hope to have the refuse collection fleet running on HVO during Q3 2024/25. This could achieve a reduction of around 24% of the Council's total carbon emissions in the interim whilst the infrastructure for transitioning the whole fleet to low carbon (eg electric or hydrogen) is designed and installed.

- b. **Electric or hydrogen vehicles:** As reported last year, when existing vehicles come up for renewal, our fleet replacement strategy is that these should be replaced with low carbon alternatives where possible, recognising that not all vehicles in our fleet currently have alternatives available which are cost effective or able to deliver the required tasks. One key constraint is the electrical capacity to allow further charging infrastructure at Earlswood Depot. As this is a significant investment, the purchase of these vehicles will be subject to approval of a business case for growth in the capital programme. To inform purchase decisions alternatively fuelled vehicles and equipment continue to be trialled across relevant service areas.
- c. **Borough electric vehicles:** Six additional charging points in Horley Central Car Park are due to be installed in Q2 2024/25. A pre-market engagement exercise is being conducted with the Procurement team in early summer 2024 to ascertain the best option for delivering more EV charging infrastructure across the Borough.

35. **Buildings:**

- a. **Energy management:** The Property team have been investigating options for sub-metering with a solution planned to be implemented in 2024/25. Such metering can identify energy inefficiencies and early estimates suggest that energy management, such as sub-metering, could initially deliver in the region of 43tCO_{2e} per year carbon savings.
- b. **Solar PV:** As previously reported, £0.430 million of funding has been secured via strategic CIL towards solar PV on 9 Council buildings including the Town Hall, Depot, Harlequin and three Community Centres. Overall, it has been estimated that this has the potential to deliver a carbon reduction of 57t CO_{2e} per year. As well as carbon savings, this will reduce energy bills and benefit the Council's revenue budget. There may be technical constraints on some buildings which limit the ability to install solar PV, and feasibility work continues to investigate this. Where preparatory works are needed that come at an additional cost, installation may need to be aligned with the agreed capital programme for maintenance if this work cannot be brought forward sooner.

Funding was secured from a third-party funding source and a further three temporary or emergency accommodation properties due to benefit from a solar installation during 2024/25 - these could deliver an estimated carbon saving of 0.5tCO_{2e} per property per year. An application will be made for funding in 2024/25 for a further five homes, along with heat pumps at two of the properties as demonstrator / case study projects.

- c. **Other building upgrades:** We have previously reported that a range of other building upgrades are also needed to our operational buildings including measures to improve energy efficiency and transition away from gas use. It is

important that these are scheduled carefully to minimise installation costs and avoid abortive works (such as installing measures that then need to be removed due to (for example) building refurbishment).

An initial focus will be on measures for which Strategic CIL funding has been secured at Banstead and Woodhatch Community Centres (with measures at Horley Community Centre being incorporated as part of a wider renovation project). Funding of £0.370 million has been secured to deliver measures such as better building energy management technology, anti-glare film, LED lighting and more energy efficient heating. Across the two properties these have the potential to reduce carbon emissions by around 70tCO_{2e} per year. Feasibility work continues to gain detailed costings. The works at the two community centres are now planned for 2025/26.

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

36. As outlined in the 2022/23 report, using HVO in our refuse collection vehicles, coupled with energy management system improvements, upgrades to the two community centres mentioned above, and the installation of solar PV are estimated to generate carbon savings of 660tCO_{2e} per year (equivalent to 31% of 2019/20 baseline). Switching to more low carbon vehicles and other building retrofit works will further build on this.
37. **Sustainable Procurement:** Sustainable procurement is an important element in securing future reductions in our supply chain emissions. During 2023/24 interim capacity in the Procurement team enabled the corporate strategic procurement review to begin and the Sustainability Team are inputting into the review. The new corporate approach will ensure that we are able to proactively use procurement as a positive tool to contribute to sustainability objectives. The Sustainability team now works with procuring teams to confirm any sustainability requirements for relevant purchases.
38. **Greenspaces and tree planting:** Well managed greenspaces play an important role in increasing biodiversity, improving air quality and carbon sequestration, and tree-planting in appropriate areas can increase this further. A Greenspaces Strategy will be prepared during 2024/25 which will explain in more detail how the Council's greenspaces will be managed to enhance this capability in the coming years. Where additional funding or resources are required to deliver additional activities, this will be progressed via the annual budget setting process. The Council has also commissioned assessments to determine the feasibility of using Council-owned land as habitat banks to provide additional biodiversity net gain.
39. **Waste and Resources:** The Waste and Recycling team will be working throughout 2024/25 on plans to implement the government's Simpler Recycling scheme. This will affect food and garden waste at domestic properties and require businesses to have a full recycling service (including food). The latter will reduce waste and increase recycling at our premises (part of our Scope 3 emissions) which currently only recycle paper. The whole package of measures should help to increase the borough recycling rate and reduce waste quantities in the borough. Depending on

the implementation strategy adopted by the Waste and Recycling team, more vehicles and more fuel may be required to deliver the service, and this has the potential to increase our resource consumption and carbon footprint.

40. **Resourcing:** Budget has been approved for a new Sustainability Manager role to help manage and deliver more sustainability projects and provide more support to key teams. The new Manager is now in post; capacity needs in the Property Team are also being explored.

Options

41. The Executive has the following options:
42. Option (a): Agree the ES Strategy Progress Update at Annex 1. This option is recommended as it enables us to publish a formal report on progress, ensuring transparency in relation to our continuing activity to lead local action to tackle climate change and other sustainability issues.
43. Option (b): Do not agree the ES Strategy Progress Update for publication. This option is not recommended as it is important that we publicly report our progress on a topic that is of increasing local interest.

Legal Implications

44. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, however it is noted that any review of the Council's procurement strategy presents an opportunity to ensure sustainability is considered in future procurement activities, whilst the actions taken by the Council to implement the legislation associated with Simpler Recycling could increase borough recycling levels but may increase fuel consumption.

Financial Implications

45. Budgetary provision for the implementation of the ES Strategy currently comprises:
- An annual revenue budget allocation for one permanent Sustainability Manager, and one Sustainability Project Officer. A second Sustainability Project Officer post is currently funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant.
 - £146,000 in an earmarked Environmental Sustainability Reserve, which is currently being used to contribute to the cost of other sustainability workstreams; and
 - £250,000 initial allocation in the approved Capital Programme that is available for investment in environmental sustainability improvements for Council assets.
46. For many of the initiatives in the existing and revised Action Plans, costs will be met by the relevant Council department (for example, Fleet, Property etc), with the sustainability budgets serving to provide 'top up' or match funding. As noted above, strategic CIL funding has also been secured and Property and Fleet rolling capital programmes factor in some sustainability measures. External funding opportunities are pursued wherever possible, with previous success in securing government funding to benefit the borough from the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Fund and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

47. Where additional funding requirements are identified, these will be pursued in the usual way. In some cases, operational costs may be lower by investment in sustainability measures (for example energy efficiency measures leading to lower energy bills or renewables generation producing 'free' electricity once the capital costs are paid back), which will be reflected in relevant business case. It is expected that costs associated with a business-as-usual approach will increase over time (for example, fossil fuel prices, taxes on polluting vehicles, recovery costs associated with extreme weather events and ultimately carbon taxes), whilst there is increasing recognition that the cost of climate inaction are likely to be higher than the costs associated with the net zero transition.
48. Statutory obligations may also emerge for local councils via Government interventions which may introduce additional financial burdens on the Council.

Equalities Implications

49. We have a statutory duty to consider and demonstrate this in all our decisions.
50. Opportunities for positive impact exist, for example:
 - a. In relation to domestic retrofit, where the current focus on tackling the hardest to heat homes first will benefit vulnerable residents from protected characteristic groups living in those homes, by reducing energy bills and improving living conditions.
 - b. In relation to activity around climate change adaptation, it is widely recognised that extreme weather events are likely to impact the most vulnerable in our communities to the greatest extent. Any support and advice that the Council can provide about how to adapt and stay safe will be beneficial.
51. In relation to these opportunities, the Equality Impact Assessment of the updated ES Strategy and Action Plan highlights the importance of ensuring that information is provided in a manner that is accessible to those with protected characteristics. We have a statutory duty to consider and demonstrate this in all our decisions.

Communication Implications

52. A communications plan has been developed to support the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, covering both internal and external communications.
53. The revised Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan will be available on our website, along with a plain English summary page
54. Annex 1 will be published on our website as our fourth annual report and will be supported with some associated communications activity.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

55. Overall, implementation of the ES Strategy will have a positive environmental impact across the borough as well as contributing to global sustainability and climate objectives. It will continue to be important that the full range of potential environmental impacts of projects within the Strategy are considered to avoid or mitigate any unnecessary negative environmental consequences, whilst assessing and recording any associated co-benefits (environmental and other).

56. Work will continue to improve the Council's access to appropriate data so that the direct impact of our activities can be measured and reported.

Risk Management Considerations

57. The risks arising from a changing climate (expected to be hotter, drier summers and wetter, warmer winters and more frequent and intense weather extremes) are recognised as a corporate strategic risk, reported on quarterly. The ES Strategy Review included climate adaptation and resilience as an additional theme along with associated actions.
58. The risks for individual projects within the ES Strategy action plan will be considered on a case-by-case basis using the Council's established project management framework. This will include considering operational risks in relation to existing Council activities, financial risks and health and safety considerations, and should consider the risks of inaction.

Procurement/Contract Management and Subsidy Considerations

59. Any procurement that is necessary to deliver the Strategy (or projects that deliver specific actions in the Action Plan) will be undertaken with the Procurement team in compliance with relevant legislation.
60. As noted above, the Sustainability Team is able to provide advice and assistance to Procuring Officers across the Council to ensure we maximise the sustainability benefits of the goods and services we procure.

Other Implications

61. It is not currently envisaged that there will be Human Rights or Crime and Disorder implications from this annual report or delivery of the ES Strategy.
62. Delivery of the ES Strategy requires input from many areas of the Council and this will be factored into annual business plans.
63. There may be FOI requests in relation to the ES Strategy and progress in delivering that and progress towards net zero. This report and the accompanying annex will be published on the website.

Consultation

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

Policy Framework

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

Background Powers

1. Corporate Plan 2025 - [https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20205/plans and policies/280/reigate and banstead 2025](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20205/plans_and_policies/280/reigate_and_banstead_2025)
2. Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2020 - [reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020)
3. Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2020 - [reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020)
4. Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Performance Indicators - [reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2064/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2020)
5. Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024 [reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2449/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2024](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/2449/environmental_sustainability_strategy_2024)
6. Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2024 [reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/file/7370/environmental_sustainability_strategy_action_plan_2024](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/file/7370/environmental_sustainability_strategy_action_plan_2024)