



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

SIGNED OFF BY	Director of Place
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TO	Executive
DATE	Tuesday 28 July 2020
EXECUTIVE MEMBER	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services

KEY DECISION REQUIRED	Y
WARDS AFFECTED	(All Wards);

SUBJECT	Environmental Sustainability Strategy
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RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>(i) That the Executive recognises the need for urgent action on climate change and environmental sustainability issues</p> <p>(ii) That the Environmental Sustainability Strategy (Annex 1) and accompanying action plan and performance measures (Annexes 2 and 3) be approved for publication and implementation</p> <p>(iii) That the Head of Corporate Policy be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, to make any additional minor amendments to the Environmental Sustainability Strategy to ensure factual accuracy and clarity prior to publication</p> <p>(iv) That the Executive agrees to continue with the cross-party member task group to review and feed back on the implementation of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, and that progress in delivering the strategy will be reported annually.</p> <p>(v) That the Executive supports the overall approach within the recently adopted Surrey County Council Climate Change Strategy and commits to continue to work with the County Council and other Surrey boroughs and districts to develop a jointly owned action plan and achieve shared climate change objectives.</p>
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Approval of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy reflects the Council's recognition of the need for urgent action on climate change and environmental sustainability issues and explains how it will focus its activities and resources to deliver positive progress towards achieving national targets.

To deliver its climate change and environmental objectives the Council will need to work closely with a range of partners, including Surrey County Council and other Surrey boroughs and districts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council's new corporate plan, Reigate & Banstead 2025, commits the Council to operate in an environmentally responsible way, and explains that the Council will publish a new Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

On a related subject, in September 2019, Full Council referred a motion about climate change for consideration by the Executive. This motion suggested a number of action and workstreams that the Council should commit to in order to address the challenge of climate change.

An Environmental Sustainability Strategy ('ES Strategy') has now been prepared and is appended to this report. It also explains how the Council can help achieve positive change across the borough, working with residents, communities, businesses and other partners. It is supported by an action plan which explains the actions that the Council will take within its own sphere of responsibility to contribute towards environmental sustainability objectives.

This includes actions in relation to reducing energy usage and carbon emissions, the more efficient use of natural resources and enhancing the capacity and resilience of the natural environment. These reach across a wide range of Council services and activities, including facilities management, fleet, greenspaces, planning, communications, procurement and waste and recycling.

It is important to recognise that the agreement of the ES Strategy by the Executive will be one stage of a much longer process.

In order to deliver the ES Strategy, additional resources will be required, with provision having been made in the 2020/21 budget to start to implement the Strategy through creation of an earmarked Reserves of £0.250 million and allocation of funding for a staff resource. As with all Council activities, it will be important that in delivering the Strategy we continue to secure best value for local taxpayers. It should be noted that the Council's continuing response to the Covid-19 emergency (and to any subsequent waves) may impact on the resources available to deliver the action plan (staff and/or financial). The Action Plan will therefore be kept under regular review.

It is proposed that progress in delivering the ES Strategy be reported annually to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and that the cross-party task group continue to be used to review and feedback on progress. It will also be important that the Strategy itself is reviewed frequently to ensure that we continue to take account of local progress, the latest evidence, policy and technological advancements.

In April 2020, Surrey County Council endorsed its Climate Change Strategy and agreed to continue to engage with boroughs and districts with the intention of achieving joint endorsement across the 12 authorities. It is considered that further work is necessary to

finalise a joint action plan and agree individual authorities' contributions to Surrey-wide targets. However, the overarching objective of the Surrey Climate Change Strategy – the County becoming net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest – is consistent with the proposed Reigate & Banstead Environmental Sustainability Strategy ambition and should be supported.

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. Under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, as a local planning authority, the Council must exercise its planning duties with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

BACKGROUND

Climate change

2. In December 2015, 195 countries (including the UK) adopted a legally binding global climate agreement. The agreement set out 4 key actions to avoid climate change and limit global warming. These include keeping global temperatures below 2°C above pre-industrial times (and, if possible, 1.5°C) and limiting the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by human activity to the same levels that trees, soil and the ocean can absorb naturally, at some point between 2050 and 2100.
3. In 2018, the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its special report concluding that to limit global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented action.
4. In 2019, the Government agreed an amendment to the 2008 Climate Change Act which committed it to bring all greenhouse gas emissions (including CO₂) to net zero by 2050 (that is, a 100% reduction from 1990 levels).

Corporate priorities

5. The Council's new corporate plan, Reigate & Banstead 2025¹, was adopted by the Council in January 2020. The plan commits the Council to operate in an environmentally responsible way. It includes a specific objective for the Council to:
"Reduce our own environmental impact, support local residents and businesses to do the same, and to make sure our activities increase the borough's resilience to the effects of climate change"
6. Reigate & Banstead 2025 further explains that the Council will review and update its plans and publish a new Environmental Sustainability Strategy. Recognising that the environmental challenges that the world faces extend beyond climate change (although that is a central consideration), the scope of the strategy was also intended to be wider.

¹ www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025

7. The Core Strategy and Development Management Plan together form the Local Plan for Reigate & Banstead. These documents include a range of policies that seek to promote development that is sustainable and respects and protects the environment.

Climate change motion

8. In September 2019, Cllr Ritter presented a motion to Full Council², proposing that the Council commit to:
- Declare a climate emergency that requires urgent action
 - Make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030 by putting in place a cross party working group to work towards this across all aspects of the Council's work and responsibilities and setting out a plan of action within six months, including clear targets and transparent reporting.
 - Ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with a shift to net-zero carbon by 2030
 - Work with, influence and inspire partners across the borough to help deliver this goal through all relevant strategies, plans and shared resources by developing a series of meetings, events and partner workshops; and
 - Request that the Council and partners take steps to proactively include young people in the process, ensuring that they have a voice in shaping the future.
9. In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the motion was referred to the Executive for consideration. A progress update was subsequently provided to the Executive in December 2019³.

Surrey Climate Change Strategy

10. In April 2020, Surrey County Council adopted its Climate Change Strategy⁴, which sets out the County Council's ambitions for working with second tier authorities (boroughs and districts) and other partners to put the county on the path to net zero emissions.
11. The overall ambition in the SCC Strategy – the county becoming net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest, and a reduction of organisational emissions to net zero by 2030 – should be supported. However, further work between the authorities is necessary in order to finalise a joint action plan and agree individual authorities' contributions to Surrey-wide targets. This need for ongoing work to refine proposals was recognised by the SCC Cabinet in agreeing the Strategy.

KEY INFORMATION

Environmental Sustainability Strategy

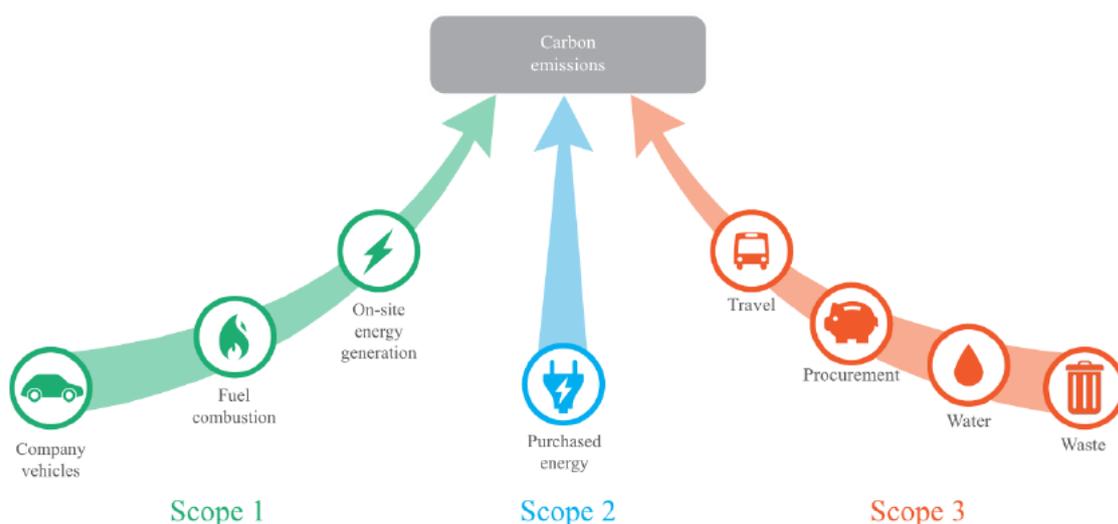
12. The proposed Environmental Sustainability Strategy ('the ES Strategy') is included at Annex 1.

² <https://reigate-bansteadintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=1415&Ver=4>

³ <https://reigate-bansteadintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1405&Ver=4>

⁴ <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/climate-change-strategy>

13. The ES Strategy has been prepared by consultants working for the Council and has included consideration of national and local policy, and evidence and information about Council facilities and the Council's day-to-day activities and services.
14. It focuses on taking action within the Council's own sphere of responsibility (across our own estate and services) but also on how the Council can help achieve positive change across the borough working with residents, businesses and partners such as Surrey County Council and the Surrey Environment Partnership.
15. The ES Strategy is supported by an Action Plan (Annex 2) and a series of performance indicators (Annex 3). Together these provide more detail about the activities that the Council will take, and how progress will be monitored. It should be noted that the Action Plan has been prepared based on the information about Council resources available at the time of writing. Although Environmental Sustainability is a clear corporate priority for the Council, our ability to deliver identified actions in the short term may be impacted by the continuing financial and staff resource pressures associated with our ongoing response to Covid-19.
16. Recognising the breadth of the challenge, the Strategy is structured around four themes. Within each theme, a number of objectives are identified in the strategy and associated actions set out in the Action Plan.
17. **Energy and carbon:** This section focuses on minimising energy use, using renewable energy and minimising carbon emissions generated by transport. Particular actions in this area will include (although are not limited to) introducing energy efficiency measures in Council buildings, promoting behaviour change to reduce overall energy use, procurement of energy from renewable sources, transitioning the Council's transport fleet to electric vehicles and promoting sustainable travel choices for both staff and residents⁵.
18. The strategy outlines that the Council will aim to achieve carbon neutrality (based on scope 1 and scope 2 emissions) by 2030 with a focus on achieving carbon neutrality including scope 3 emissions as soon as possible thereafter.



⁵ A number of the actions identified in this section relate to promoting the use of public transport. These actions will be kept under review and delivery will need to comply with continuing Government advice and guidance as to the use of trains and buses by the public.

(source: The Sustainability Exchange)

19. The Council is already making progress in this area, including moving to hybrid and electric pool cars and more efficient refuse vehicles, and putting in more electric vehicle charging points.
20. The carbon emissions directly under the control of the Council only represent a small proportion of these released within the borough, therefore it is important that the Council also considers how it can use its position to encourage behaviour change and the reduction of emissions by both residents and businesses (for example by reducing domestic energy consumption and moving to low carbon modes of transport).
21. **Low impact consumption:** As well as reducing energy use, the ES Strategy includes actions to reduce waste generation, use water more efficiently and source materials in a responsible way. This includes focusing on how products and materials can be reused rather than disposed of, continuing to work to make it easier for people to recycle and promoting low impact construction for new developments through our planning activities.
22. **Biodiversity and the natural environment:** Recognising that the natural environment is essential for maintaining a good quality of life, the ES Strategy includes a range of activities to protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment. Activities such as managing our greenspaces well, improving soft landscaping and tree cover and managing drainage in a sustainable way will all help improve our local environment and reduce flooding. At the same time, these measures will also deliver wider ranging benefits, for example, improving carbon storage, reducing air pollution, and reducing embodied carbon.
23. **Effective implementation:** This section identifies a number of overarching activities that will be needed to implement the other objectives in the ES Strategy, including:
 - a. Using the Council's planning powers to ensure that new developments are sustainable. In the short to medium term (until such time as the Local Plan is reviewed) this includes providing planning advice and guidance to developers and ensuring that relevant existing Local Plan policies are implemented.
 - b. Ensuring that the Council's procurement process allows for the selection of product and service suppliers that further the Council's sustainability objectives.
 - c. Recognising the role the Council can play in helping residents and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions, use resources more sustainably and protect the local environment. Central to this is how we use our communications channels, including the Council website and our social media activity.
 - d. Appointing a dedicated staff resource to work with teams across the Council to implement the ES Strategy; and
 - e. Working in partnership with other organisations, including Surrey County Council and the Surrey Environment Partnership and local community organisations to ensure a joined up approach to environmental sustainability, and to make the best use of the public sector resources that are available.
24. The ES Strategy and Action Plan will inform the work of relevant Council teams in delivering the activities within it. It is proposed that delivery of the Strategy (reporting on performance indicators and action plan progress) be reported on annually, both on the Council's website and to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

25. In terms of carbon emissions, the actions in this Strategy explain how progress will be made to reduce the Council's scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions as well as helping reduce carbon emissions across the borough more generally. It is important to recognise that the agreement of this ES Strategy by the Executive is one stage of a much longer process. The strategy is based on information and evidence available at a point in time, and the tools and policy levers that the Council currently has available to it; with some of the activities identified requiring further investigation and the development of more detailed business plans before they can be implemented. In addition, national policy and the environmental sustainability industry will continue to evolve and develop. Therefore - as well as annual reporting - it will be important that the Strategy itself is also regularly reviewed to take account of the local progress that has been made, the latest evidence, policy and technological advancements.

Committee on Climate Change report, June 2020

26. Since the ES Strategy was prepared, the Committee on Climate Change (CoCC) has published its annual report to Parliament about reducing UK emissions⁶. As well as updating on progress, this report highlights the opportunity for climate considerations to be central to recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic.
27. As part of this Council's Covid-19 recovery work, consideration is being given to how to secure environmental benefits in relation to the Council's own operations as well as more widely within Reigate & Banstead (working with partners such as Surrey County Council).
28. The CoCC report also identified that there are still gaps in policy at a national level which limit the ability to make progress against national targets, for example policy in relation to existing residential and commercial building stocks. It urges the Government to make swift progress on ensuring the appropriate policy levers are in place.
29. As noted in paragraph 25 above, it will be important to keep our ES Strategy and Action Plan under review to reflect national policy and any new opportunities or responsibilities for local authorities that emerge in the coming years.

Climate change motion

30. The climate change motion, referred to the Executive for consideration, includes a suggestion that the Council should declare a climate emergency that requires urgent action. It also suggests a number of other actions and workstreams that the Council should commit to.
31. Commitment to action: As outlined above, the new corporate plan adopted in January 2020 already identifies the global climate challenge and the importance of the Council taking action in this area. As such, the Council has already made a clear commitment in this regard.
32. Targets and transparent reporting: The proposed ES Strategy, Action Plan and performance indicators explain how the Council will work towards carbon neutrality by 2030. In publishing the ES Strategy, the Council is committing to a positive plan of action, with performance indicators having been identified to allow progress to be measured and reported on. It is worth noting that both Reigate & Banstead 2025 and the ES Strategy take a more holistic approach to sustainability than the motion

⁶ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Reducing-UK-emissions-Progress-Report-to-Parliament-Committee-on-Cli..-002-1.pdf>

suggests, focusing on a wider range of environmental challenges and action than carbon and carbon emissions.

33. Establishing a cross party task group: A cross party task group has already been established and has input into the development of the proposed ES Strategy at Annex 1. Strategy preparation is only the first stage of a much longer process of implementation. It is therefore recommended that the task group should have an ongoing remit, to review and feedback on the implementation of the ES Strategy. This would be in addition to annual progress reporting to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
34. Funding carbon reduction activities: To assist in the delivery of the ES Strategy, the 2020/21 budget includes revenue funding for a dedicated staff resource to work with teams across the Council to deliver the strategy, as well as a new dedicated Environmental Sustainability Reserve to fund activities identified in the Strategy. It should also be noted that in some instances it may also be possible to use other funding sources (for example, third party funding, or Community Infrastructure Levy to fund associated infrastructure projects). However, as highlighted above, it is also the case that some financial and staff resources remain directed to the Covid-19 response, and that the ongoing impact of this crisis may impact on the delivery of the Action Plan. That said, there are also a number of opportunities arising from the pandemic in relation to enhancing the future sustainability of the borough (see below).
35. The role of planning: The Council's Core Strategy includes policies in relation to sustainable development and sustainable construction and Development Management Plan policies introduce requirements in relation to (amongst other things) sustainable transport, electric charging points, renewable energy generation, and green infrastructure. As noted above, the ES Strategy recognises the positive role that the planning system can play in promoting a shift to carbon neutrality and includes a number of associated actions.
36. Working with partners, residents and particularly young people: Reigate & Banstead 2025 was developed in consultation with partners, local interest groups and residents (including the Youth Council). As reported to the Executive in December 2019, there was considerable public engagement in the consultation and support for the plan's environmental sustainability objective. Suggestions made through the public consultation have helped inform the development of the ES Strategy and the actions within it.
37. Both Reigate & Banstead 2025 and the ES Strategy recognise the necessity of partnership working to deliver corporate objectives. In addition to partnership working with public sector agencies, in implementing the Strategy consideration will be given to how to proactively involve communities and residents across the borough in specific projects and activities.
38. **Recommended response to the motion:** Taking into account the above, it is recommended that the Executive take the following actions in relation to the motion:
 - a. Reiterate that the Council recognises the need for action on climate change and environmental sustainability issues
 - b. Agree the ES Strategy; and

- c. Note the continuing role of the cross-party member task group to review and feedback on the implementation of the ES Strategy, and that progress in delivering the strategy will be reported annually.

OPTIONS

39. The following options are available to the Executive:
40. Option 1: Approve the Environmental Sustainability Strategy at Annex 1. This option is recommended. Having an updated Strategy is an objective in the recently-adopted Reigate & Banstead 2025, and allows the Council to set out the positive action it will take in relation to environmental sustainability and climate change.
41. Option 2: Request that amendments be made to the Environmental Sustainability Strategy at Annex 1 before it is approved. This option is not recommended as it could result in delay to the Council starting to implement its programme of positive action in this area. As noted above, the proposed monitoring and review process will help ensure that the Council's activities in this area continue to take account of emerging evidence, policy and technological advancements.
42. Option 3: Do not approve an Environmental Sustainability Strategy. This option is not recommended as it would not be consistent with the Council's commitments in Reigate & Banstead 2025.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

43. No legal implications have been identified in relation to the report recommendations or arising from the ES Strategy or activities identified within it.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

44. Implementing the ES Strategy will have financial implications. In addition to the financial implications outlined below, the impact of the Council's Covid-19 response must be recognised, as set out elsewhere in this report.
45. Some of the activities in the Strategy will be funded through the existing revenue budget, for example, where these relate to ensuring that products or services already provided by third parties are procured with a greater emphasis on sustainability in the future.
46. Other aspects of the ES Strategy will require additional funding.
47. As noted above, to assist in the delivery of the ES Strategy, the 2020/21 budget includes revenue funding for a dedicated staff resource to work with teams across the Council to deliver the strategy, as well as a new earmarked Environmental Sustainability Reserve of £0.250 million to fund associated activities.
48. Some of the activities in the ES Strategy will require further investigation and the development of more detailed business plans before they can be implemented. For more complex projects, it will be important that the costs, benefits, deliverability and viability of different options are properly considered to ensure that best value for taxpayers continues to be secured. Any proposals for additional budget growth in 2021/22 onwards will be considered as part of the annual service and financial planning process.

49. Opportunities to secure third party funding, or match funding to deliver the activities within the ES Strategy will also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

50. We have a statutory duty to consider the equalities implications of all the Council's decisions. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is appended as a background paper.
51. The Assessment does not identify any negative impacts on protected characteristic groups resulting from the ES Strategy. It identifies that, in particular, the actions identified in relation to promoting walking and cycling could have positive benefits.
52. It also highlights that it will be important to give consideration to ensuring that communications activities in relation to (or arising from) the strategy is accessible to all, for example by considering a range of different communications channels.
53. Equality issues will also be considered as detailed business cases for projects within the ES Strategy are developed in more detail using the Council's project management framework.

COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS

54. The ES Strategy recognises that the Council has an important role to play in helping residents and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions and live more sustainably.
55. The ES Strategy proposes that an on-line web resource be included on the Council's website to assist residents and businesses to do this. This would be accompanied by promotion through our other communication channels and communications campaigns; including:
- a. Ensuring senior management support for the strategy to encourage awareness and ownership by staff and to help them champion behaviour change.
 - b. Demonstrating to partners, residents, businesses and visitors that the Council is leading by example.
 - c. Developing an overarching communications plan, along with key messaging, to educate and inspire residents, visitors and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions, use resources more sustainably and protect the local environment.
 - d. Developing and delivering targeted behaviour change campaigns, in support of specific elements of the ES Strategy. These campaigns will be based on data, resident insight and research, have clearly defined objectives, require dedicated resources, follow a clear agreed strategy and be subject to stringent evaluation.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

56. The implementation of the ES Strategy is anticipated to have positive impacts in relation to environmental considerations and delivery of corporate objectives. Consultation undertaken on Reigate & Banstead 2025 confirms that (in general) residents consider that the Council has a role to play in environmental sustainability and addressing climate change.
57. The risks of individual projects within the ES Strategy action plan will need to 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.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

58. Human resources: The ES Strategy highlights the need to appoint a dedicated sustainability resource (officer) to ensure the its successful delivery. Revenue funding for this post is included in the 2020/21 budget agreed by Full Council earlier this year.
59. As some Council services remain fully or partially deployed dealing with the Covid-19 emergency response/recovery, it will be important that the staff resources available to implement the ES Strategy are kept under review.
60. Environmental: Overall, the impacts of the ES Strategy will have a positive environmental impact across the borough as well as contributing to global sustainability and climate objectives. However, it will be important that the full range of potential environmental impacts of projects within the strategy are considered as detailed proposals are developed, in order to avoid or mitigate any unintended negative environmental consequences.
61. The national response to Covid-19 has brought notable related environmental changes, with reductions in traffic and associated improvements in air quality, and increased usage of our greenspaces. At the same time, flytipping has increased along with general littering of public spaces as lockdown starts to be lifted, and current Government advice is for people to avoid the use of public transport if at all possible.
62. It therefore remains important that the Borough Council works with the County Council and other partners to identify measures to facilitate and embed positive behaviours (particularly with respect of travel).

CONSULTATION

63. Public consultation was undertaken to inform the development of Reigate & Banstead 2025, and suggestions raised through this process have helped inform the development of the ES Strategy.
64. Councillor involvement in development of the emerging ES Strategy has included:
 - a. A member briefing event in late October 2019
 - b. Informal discussion of the emerging strategy with Executive members
 - c. Discussion of the emerging strategy with a cross-party member task group
 - d. Sharing the draft strategy with all councillors for review / comment
 - e. A member briefing event in early March 2020.
65. As noted above, in implementing the strategy consideration will be given to how to proactively involve communities and residents across the borough in specific projects and activities.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

66. Reigate & Banstead 2025 commits the Council to publish an ES Strategy and to seek to reduce waste and emissions across the Council's estate, assets and activities and use natural resources more efficiently. The Strategy at Annex 1 explains how the Council will achieve this.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Reigate & Banstead 2025: www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025