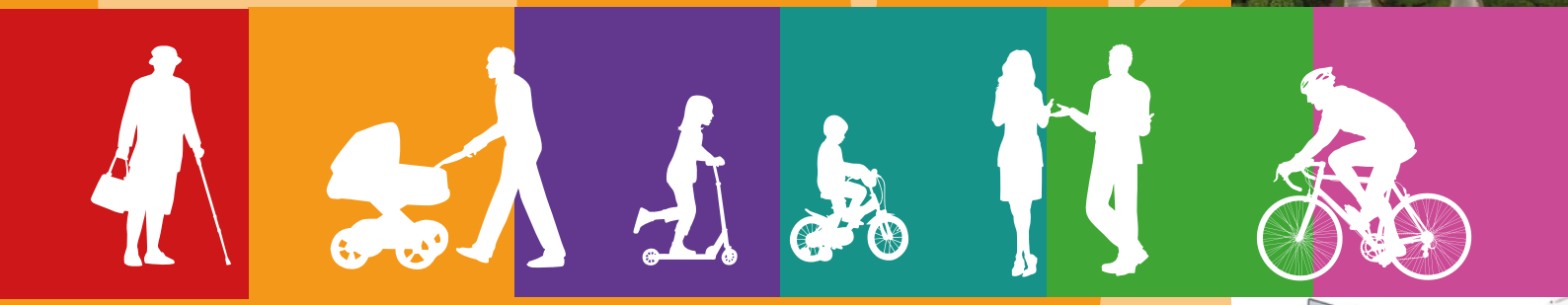
Environment Strategy

Annual Progress Report
(July 2022- July 2023)



West Berkshire Council

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Councillor Stuart Gourley
Executive Member for Climate Action,
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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 The importance of taking climate action is reinforced more and more as we witness extreme global weather events. Four of the hottest days on record globally occurred this year in July 2023 from 3rd - 6th July. The hottest of these was 6th July when the global average temperature reached an unprecedented 17.23°C[1]

"The truth is: the natural world is changing. And we are totally dependent on that world. It provides our food, water and air. It is the most precious thing we have and we need to defend it."
– Sir David Attenborough

1.2 On 2nd July 2019, West Berkshire Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency. As part of this commitment to act, we continue to work towards our target of achieving net zero carbon for Council activities by 2030 and to support, encourage and facilitate net zero across West Berkshire. We recognise that the task is significant and to achieve our ambitions everyone must work together.

1.3 Following the declaration and building on the work already underway, an Environment Strategy was written and published in July 2020. We published our inaugural annual report on delivery of the Environment Strategy in November 2021 and this report is our third annual report which highlights the actions, achievements and progress from July 2022 to July 2023. Our annual reports form part of our commitment within the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan to keep everyone informed, as well as to describe the measures we still need to take on our journey towards net zero.

1.4 This report compares the Council's baseline carbon footprint (from 2019/20) with the latest data for 2022/23. It also provides the most up to date published figures indicating the emissions occurring across the District of West Berkshire.

Explanations and meanings for a number of terms used in this document can be found in our glossary. The glossary was created following feedback during our public consultation in Spring 2021.

[1] https://theweek.com/in-depth/1021278/2023-extreme-weather

2. Background Information

2.1 The Environment Strategy, developed after an extensive period of consultation, describes the vision for West Berkshire's environment and specifically how the District needs to respond to climate change.

2.2 Our Environment Strategy Delivery Plan provides a framework of actions, projects and responsibilities to show how we are working to achieve the aims within the Environment Strategy. These actions have been categorised in accordance with the strategic objectives from the Environment Strategy, shown below:

2.3 We are committed to continuous improvement and it's important to note that the Delivery Plan, whilst building on the work from the past, will evolve as we develop partnerships and new opportunities for action arise. The Delivery Plan acts as a basis for us to work from. The plan will remain 'live' and be continuously developing between now and 2030.

2.4 As a direct result of the declaration of a climate emergency for West Berkshire an Environment Delivery Team was established to help to deliver and coordinate these actions as well as engage and work with residents, partners, schools, businesses and community groups.

2.5 To help monitor progress across the organisation an Environment Delivery Project Board meets regularly involving representatives from key service areas. Its role is to ensure the actions within the Delivery Plan are reported on regularly and progress is monitored accurately. As a direct result of regularly monitoring progress, the Council is able to deliver on its commitment to keep an up-to-date version of the Delivery Plan published on the website.

2.6 To strengthen the importance of climate action within the organisation and to add capacity to the management of this function, a new 'Climate Change Service' was created within the Environment Department in April 2023. The role of Service Lead – Climate Change is a new position and heads up the Climate Change Service, helping to provide a greater focus and to raise the profile of climate matters more widely.

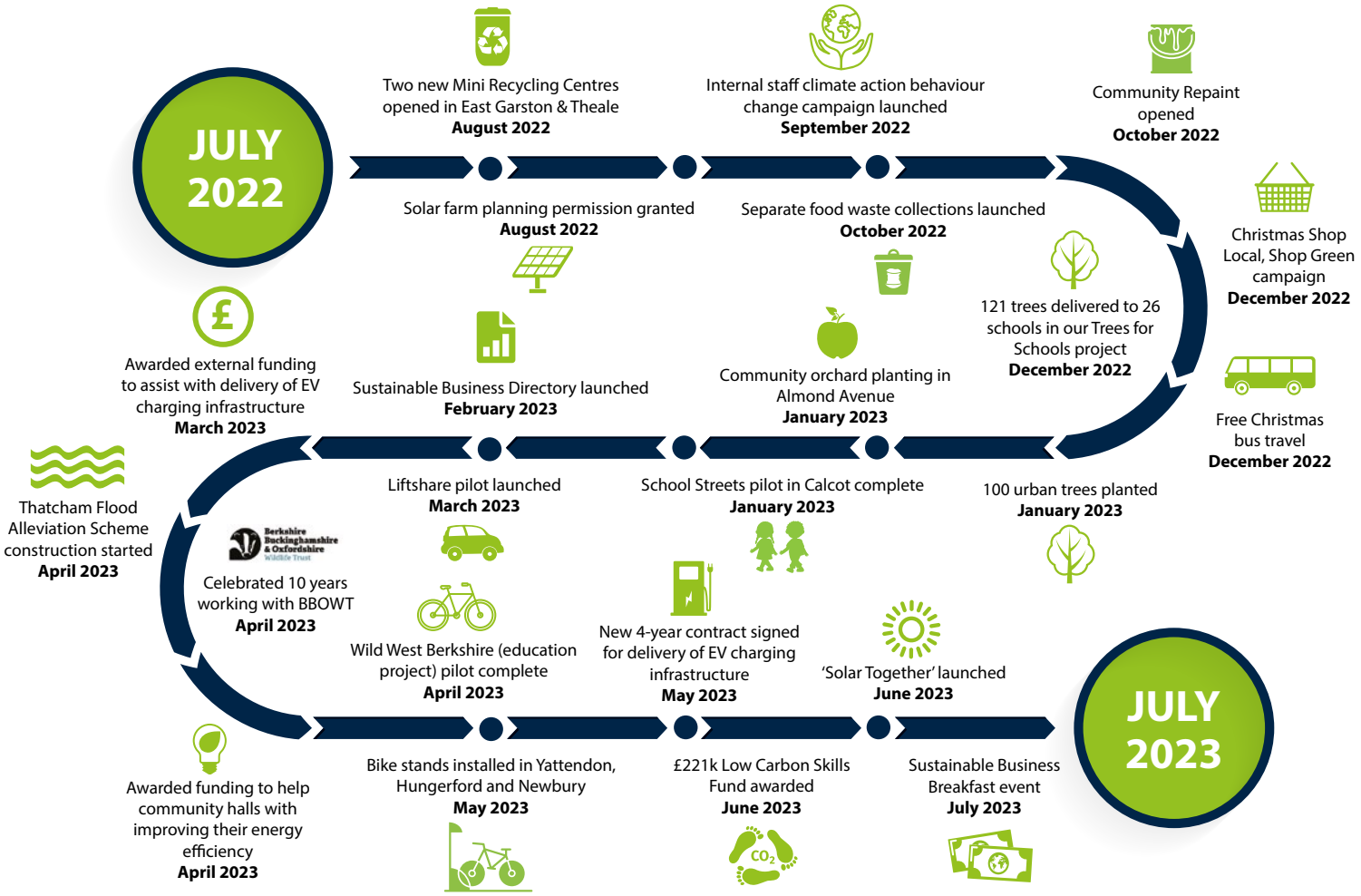
3. The Third Year - summary of actions and achievements

3.1 The third year of delivery of the Environment Strategy has seen wide ranging action and achievements across the Council and within the communities of West Berkshire. Figure 1 shows the highlights in our 'roadmap of the year'. Appendix A contains this roadmap alongside previous roadmaps used to communicate the highlights since our Environment Strategy was published in July 2020.

3.2 There have been some significant milestones achieved in projects over the year such as planning permission being granted for the Council's first solar farm, the launch of the separate food waste collections across the District and the awarding of a new contract to deliver electric vehicle charging infrastructure. A number of the projects demonstrate the focus the Council has on its customers by providing ways in which individuals, businesses and communities can take action to help reduce their environmental impact.

3.3 The roadmap is followed by details of actions and achievements against each strategic objective of the Environment Strategy, including case studies and a focus on what the communities in West Berkshire have been delivering.

Figure 1: Highlights of delivery of the Environment Strategy July 2022 – July 2023



CARBON NEUTRAL BY 2030

22% of actions complete

67% of actions in progress, on track

(Actions include short term, medium term and ongoing)

Assess solar renewable energy opportunities across WBC buildings and assets

Establish a carbon footprint baseline for WBC

Create a Local Area Energy Plan to understand opportunities

Assess Council land assets for the potential for a solar farm

Develop a climate change bond scheme

Develop and implement a social value policy

= Complete

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, click here.

Our progress so far:

- Plans to install renewable energy technologies across council assets is progressing, with up to 10 sites identified to receive solar PV by the end of March 2024.
- We have been busy refreshing our ULEV (Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle) Strategy to take into account improving technologies, ensuring our targets are achievable and ambitious.
- Work has started to design a programme of robust standardised audits of our building portfolio, to identify key criteria such as energy consumption profiles, thermal efficiency, levels of insulation, heating system condition and efficiency etc.
- A comprehensive log of ongoing and future consultations has been created to ensure we represent West Berkshire and 'green' interests.
- We are exploring a new methodology to ensure that all projects across the Council take carbon reduction and environmental considerations into account during the planning stage.
- The Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership (NSDP), established in 2021, is a partnership set up to develop how to use natural solutions within West Berkshire to enhance biodiversity and capture carbon. The aim is to establish a coordinated approach for utilising funding from biodiversity net gain, nutrient neutrality and carbon sequestration. We are currently working with BioCap Limited and the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) in developing a nature-based spatial plan and pilot project to support the work of the partnership. The spatial plan will assist in identifying opportunities across the district and will be particularly useful for project development and decision-making. As part of this work an outline business model for a Natural Capital Market is also being developed as an option to support local investment.
- The Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership (NSDP) is working with Sulham Estate located in the east of the district in the development of different types of habitat creation across the site. It is hoped that once the project has been established it will provide an insight into the opportunities for natural capital, such as Biodiversity Net Gain and Carbon Sequestration, which can be used to assist other landowners and the farming / agricultural communities in the future.
- We successfully provided free bus travel at certain periods over the past year, including World Car Free Day, Christmas, and Easter. The aim was to encourage residents to leave their cars at home and reduce their carbon footprint.
- We have pledged to undertake a second Community Municipal Investment scheme (climate bond) within the next 2 years, to help fund more of our environmental projects across the district.

CASE STUDY: Carbon Neutral by 2030: Expansion of on-street electric vehicle charging provision

WBC's Network Management Team are working hard to ensure that residents have access to enough on-street electric vehicle charging points. 36 charging points have already been installed, and this has encouraged residents to make the switch to electric vehicles as they know there are charging options available nearby.

In Autumn 2022, a Tender was issued for the provision of up to 250 on-street charge points throughout West Berkshire. A supplier has been selected and 20 charge points will be installed in the first phase of delivery in Autumn 2023.

This additional capability will benefit residents greatly by supporting access to reliable and fairly priced public charge points, whether they live in urban or rural parts of the District. WBC will take advantage of new technology and continued innovation in this area to ensure the best service for our residents.

RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

8% of actions complete

92% of actions in progress, on track

(Actions include short term, medium term and ongoing)

Our progress so far:

- Our Local Area Energy Plan has been developed and has started influencing our work, including refreshing of our Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy.
- A public consultation was undertaken February – March 2023 to gain feedback on our Local Transport Plan 4 Strategy (2024 – 2039). Once we have received further guidance on carbon reduction measures from DfT, this feedback will be used to assist in the development of new schemes and a final version of the Plan.
- The Environment Delivery Team has hosted 4 work experience placements in the last year, teaching students about how our team works collaboratively across the Council to deliver climate action.
- In October 2022, we sponsored and attended the Education Business Partnership Destination Expo at Newbury College, to help students find out more about local career options and discover how businesses were improving their carbon footprint.
- In February 2023, we launched a Sustainable Business Directory to help residents find local eco-friendly businesses. It also summarises the climate action being taken so other businesses can learn from them. Further business advice has also been added to our website.
- Over the last year we have held events for local businesses to provide support and advice for steps they can take to be greener. This has included a Green September business case study webinar (YouTube), a Sustainable Hospitality webinar in March 2023 (YouTube), and a Sustainable Business Networking event in July 2023.
- Our Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership (NSDP) has an important role to play in supporting farming and the agricultural communities to diversify their business practices to allow for opportunities to support addressing the climate and ecological emergencies. This is particularly evident in the development of an outline business model for a Natural Capital Market and the Pilot project currently underway with Sulham Estate. As well as our exciting work with the NSDP, the Environment Delivery team are working with colleagues in Economic Development to develop a Whole Estate Plan Framework and pilot project which will have sustainable development at its core (incorporating environmental, social and economic themes) meaning it will also support the farming and agricultural community to address climate change in their long-term development plans.
- The Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) has been drafted, and will be consulted on in the coming year.

- Reflect environmental aims with the Local Plan
- Develop and deliver action plan from Local Area Energy Plan
- Develop the next Local Transport Plan for the district
- Work with local Education providers to increase climate change awareness in schools
- Lobby for high environmental standards and engage with consultations
- Explore initiatives to incentivise good practice amongst our businesses
- Refresh the Highways Asset Management Plan taking into consideration the Environment Strategy

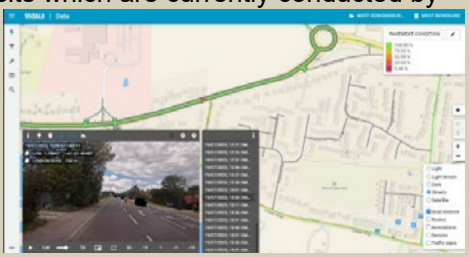
= In progress, on track

= Complete

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, click here.

CASE STUDY: Responsible Economic Growth: Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to monitor highways

WBC's Asset Management Team are currently trialling video survey and AI (Artificial Intelligence) software to collect asset data and assess the condition of the highways. This will allow us to capture multiple data sets simultaneously, therefore creating efficiencies by reducing the number of journeys and repeat visits which are currently conducted by individual officers using their vehicles.



This should allow us to keep the transport network flowing better by making earlier planned interventions and treatments to the highway network before bigger more urgent reactive problems arise. This helps to reduce our emissions and work more efficiently.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Develop the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Deliver Cycle Hubs in Theale and Newbury, and investigate further locations
- Continue to provide cycle training for children
- Pilot a 'School Streets' initiative
- Implement a new sustainable travel policy for staff
- Work with local businesses to promote sustainable travel by staff
- Encourage the take up of emerging sustainable transport technologies
- Increase the cycle storage capacity at all secondary schools
- Invest in walking and cycling routes and provide safety training

= In progress, on track

= Complete

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, click here.

16% of actions complete
88% of actions in progress, on track

(Actions include short term, medium term and ongoing)

Our progress so far:

- In January 2023, our Countryside team ran a public event to plant a Community Orchard in Almond Avenue, Newbury. 25 different varieties of fruit trees were planted and have since been maintained, including apples, pears, cherries and plums.
- Our pilot School Streets scheme in Calcot was a success and is now a permanent fixture outside the School during drop off/pick up times. We are hoping to pilot more of these schemes across the District.
- The amount of child cycle training we provide has doubled across West Berkshire and the variety of courses we offer has increased.
- We continue to have one of the highest levels of engagement across the country for Family Cycle Training Courses.
- Over the last year, we have provided free bus travel over special periods to encourage residents to leave their cars at home and use more sustainable modes of transport. This included World Car Free Day (22 September), Christmas weekends and Easter.
- In October 2022, we began hiring out our e-cargo bikes free of charge to local businesses as a way to encourage more sustainable travel options. This scheme has been very popular, with positive feedback being received from the businesses taking part.

CASE STUDY: Wild West Berkshire

West Berkshire Council teamed up with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to launch an innovative pilot project which made the links between the natural world and our own physical health as well as our mental wellbeing. The two pilot schools were The Willows Primary and Lambourn C of E Primary. The active intervention phase of the project began in September 2022, a total of 218 children took part.

Indoor work in the classroom was complemented by outside learning opportunities. Activities ranged from learning about eating seasonably to making mini bird feeders. It also helped to encourage children to make sustainable choices which are good for their health and the planet.

The project has received extremely positive feedback from students and teachers alike. For example, one teacher talked about the high percentage of children with special educational needs (SEN) in the class, and said, “I wish we could do more activities like this, because everyone can join in, everyone can get involved equally.” (Y4 teacher, Lambourn.) The project has also been featured on the BBC News.

RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

7% of actions complete

69% of actions in progress, on track

(Actions include short term, medium term and ongoing)

Our progress so far:

- Our Flood Risk Management Strategy has now been reviewed and updated, and has been adopted by the Council.
- Our Wild Verges project with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust is now in its final year. We have seen stunning displays over the last 3 years. A new Geographic Information System (GIS) layer will be produced from the surveys undertaken and we will receive a series of recommendations regarding the future management of the verges.
- In April 2023, we received a £6.3 million contribution from the Environment Agency to boost our flood defence projects planned for Lambourn, Thatcham and Newbury. The funding will see the completion of the north and east Thatcham flood alleviation projects, which will help to protect 110 properties. It will also enable the design of a flood alleviation scheme for the Memorial Fields in Thatcham, which will be delivered in 2024/25 to protect a further 180 Thatcham homes.
- In September 2022, we established a network of staff Eco Champions to help raise awareness within the Council ensure our activities align with the aims of the Environment Strategy.
- In September 2022, a new training module was launched for staff across the Council, covering the science of climate change and what staff can do to reduce their emissions.
- In July 2023, we began updating our flood advice for residents to include more climate change related guidance and impacts.

- Review and update our Flood Risk Management Strategy with influence from the Environment Strategy
- Undertake feasibility assessment of highway verges for Wild Flower projects
- Work with partners to develop Natural Flood Management projects
- Reuse, recycle and compost at least 60% of municipal waste we handle by 2030
- Develop WBC staff training on carbon reduction and climate change
- Review our Sustainable Drainage policy to ensure it reflects the aims of the Environment Strategy
- Further reduce the frequency of hedgerow cutting in areas where this does not affect safety

= Complete

= In progress, on track

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, click here.

CASE STUDY: WBC staff climate training module.

In October 2022, the Environment Delivery Team launched an online training module for all WBC staff.

As a Council, we are committed to net zero by 2030. To reach this target our staff need to have a good level of knowledge on climate science. The training has allowed us to raise awareness of climate change and the importance of everyone working together, We want to ensure that staff have the relevant information to influence sustainability and reduce carbon emissions within their work remit, as well as the relevant information to reduce their personal carbon footprint.

The training includes modules on the science of climate change, causes, effects and what we as individuals can do to reduce our own impacts including: conscious consumption, sustainable travel, mindful eating, waste reduction and considering the energy hierarchy. Collectively, we can all make a positive impact.

WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS

Develop good communications to ensure our communities have the information they need

Use our website effectively to provide relevant and up to date information for the community

Develop strategic partnerships and affiliations with stakeholders and organisations

Separate food waste collections to all eligible households by 2025

The continuation of the provision of separate garden waste collections from households

Maximise the benefits of infrastructure investment through the Community Infrastructure Levy

Maximise the opportunities for reducing carbon emissions via Government funding for home owners

Work to reduce litter around West Berkshire and promote education and communication on the harmful impacts

= Complete

= In progress, on track

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, click here.

7% of actions complete
79% of actions in progress, on track

(Actions include short term, medium term and ongoing)

Our progress so far:

- We've increased the number of YouTube Live webinars we host throughout the year, giving residents the opportunity to ask Council officers questions directly. These have included our Waste Team Q&A in October 2022 and multiple Sustainable Businesses webinars.
- The Environment and Climate Change webpages on our Council website continue to be updated and provide information for residents.
- Over the year, our Waste Minimisation Officer has engaged around 775 students in schools and community groups across the district on the topic of reduce, reuse and recycle. The Waste Team also frequently visit libraries and have visited EduCafe, Newbury, to speak with residents and offer advice on recycling at home.
- As energy tariffs have recently become more competitive, in May 2023 we relaunched the Big Community Switch scheme aimed at finding residents the best energy deals. Run in partnership with iChoosr, over 2200 households this year have used the service to access 100% renewable electricity tariffs.
- In June 2023, we partnered with iChoosr to be part of the Solar Together scheme across Berkshire. The scheme is a solar panel and battery storage group-buying initiative enabling householders and small businesses to install Solar PV systems and batteries at a competitive price with a trustworthy, pre-vetted installer. During the registration stage, over 1200 people registered for more information.
- Both the Environment Delivery Team and the Waste Team have run staff litter picking events around the District, encouraging our staff to play their part in tidying up West Berkshire.
- In March 2023, we engaged with schools to help them take part in the Great Big School Clean run by Keep Britain Tidy. Aimed at educating students on the impacts of litter, it helped them understand the importance of looking after our natural environment.
- In March 2023 we supported the Great British Spring Clean initiative run by Keep Britain Tidy by lending litter pickers out to community groups across West Berkshire. We supported 14 groups in total for this event and continue to support groups throughout the year.
- In February 2023 we launched an anti-littering/fly tipping campaign this involved updated vehicle livery, bus stop advertisements, a press release, social media advertising and newspaper adverts going out.

CASE STUDY: Weekly Food Waste Collections Introduced

On 31st October 2022, the WBC Waste Team, in partnership with Veolia launched separate weekly food waste collections for households across West Berkshire. On 30th November 2022 the service was rolled out for properties with a communal bin store. This means all properties within West Berkshire no have a weekly food waste collection!

We have been collecting an average of approximately 75 tonnes of food waste from properties across the District. This is taken to our in vessel composting facility based in Padworth. Here the food waste is made into a soil conditioner used by local residents, landscapers and farmers.

So far from October 2022 through to May 2023 we have collected a total of over 2,400 tonnes of food waste! That is roughly the same weight as 200 double decker buses!

COMMUNITY CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL ACTION

HEAT Home Energy Show

Hungerford Environmental Action Team (HEAT) hosted a Home Energy show at Hungerford Town Hall in September, 2022.

One sixth of the UK's climate heating emissions come from running our homes, so HEAT are keen to help cut the carbon.

Around 500 members of the public attended to find out how they could heat their homes without costing the earth. Plenty of information was available on how to reduce the energy consumed by your home. The event hosted experts, advisors, companies and local residents with case studies to help attendees to draw up individual energy cost and carbon emissions reduction roadmaps.

Curridge Primary School are runners-up in conservation award

The children at Curridge Primary School were delighted to have been awarded second place in the Dorothy Morley Conservation Award and scooped a £500 prize!

Across the school, children were busy throughout the year with their 'Grow' project. They've planted wildlife friendly gardens; planted, cared for and harvested vegetables, flowers and herbs for cooking; and written letters to 10 Downing Street about climate change offering their ideas to improve the environment for everyone.

Open to all Berkshire Schools, the Dorothy Morley Conservation Award offers prizes of £1000 and £500 every two years, for the two best school projects that promote environmental conservation in its widest sense.

Green Weekend. In Spring 2023, lots of eco projects were celebrated in the Lambourn Valley during a 'Green Weekend'. This popular event showed ways to reduce your carbon footprint and protect our wonderful biodiversity. The weekend included a repair café, bat walk, eco church talks, EV home energy advice and a sustainable cookery demonstration. Visitors were encouraged to use sustainable transport.

Swap Shops 'Why not refresh your wardrobe, whilst doing your bit to reduce waste? Head along to the monthly Swap Shop, founded and run by local chef Breda Louise Glavin, at The Corn Exchange, Newbury.

COMMUNITY CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL ACTION

Students sponsor beehive

University Centre Newbury (UCN) students on the Higher Nationals in Graphic Design programme are helping biodiversity and raising awareness of the climate crisis in their local community by sponsoring a beehive.

Bees are a vital pollinator species, which are under threat from climate change. Approximately one third of all food production relies on bees, so they are vital to future food security,
Bees also support the diverse network of plant life across the district which can be referred to as green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is vital in the response to climate change. It helps reduce carbon dioxide (CO_2) by capturing and storing CO_2, allows us as humans to adapt to the effects of climate change, for example by reducing the urban heat island effect which cause urban areas to overheat and builds in a level of resilience to allow areas to 'bounce back' after an extreme weather event.

The sponsorship of the project was inspired by one of the coursework themes the students were studying 'Art, Design and Media's response to Climate Crisis'. There was also a visit from Adrian Doyle, local beekeeper at Hill House Honey in Great Shefford and Chairman of the Newbury Bee Keeping Society.
The talented graphic design students decided to host a series of sales selling their artwork, crafts, printed t-shirt designs and homemade baked goods.
All proceeds from the sales will go directly towards sponsoring a beehive, contributing to the maintenance and care of the bees, and supporting locally produced honey. The first fundraising sale was hosted at Newbury College on 7 March 2023, and the students raised an impressive £333.

Victoria Burden, Programme Leader Higher Nationals in Graphic Design, said: *"The students found Adrian's presentation fascinating and have been inspired to help fight climate change locally in whatever way they can. As a group, we discussed our thoughts on climate change and how we all felt powerless to help as individuals. With the students' ideas, this was a great opportunity to showcase their creative abilities and help contribute to a cause that affects us all."*

World Bee Day. The Nature Discovery Centre (NDC) celebrated World Bee Day by hosting the NDC Bee Day in collaboration with the Newbury & District Beekeepers Association and other bee enthusiasts. Dozens of people attended and there were a range of stalls and events including a live bee hive, children's activities and educational displays. Visitors were also encouraged to 'plant for pollinators' in their gardens.

Sovereign Housing Association's Community Development Team got planting for the spring

In October 2022, Sovereign's community development team gathered in Goldwell Park, Newbury to plant over 1,000 spring bulbs in amongst the existing trees at Lockdown Woods. Colleagues came from the Isle of Wight, Bristol, Dorset and Basingstoke to spend some time together in the autumn sunshine and support this environmental project.

Some of the trees which are part of the Lockdown Wood were planted by Sovereign and Ground Control back in 2020 and it felt only right that the team came together to plant bulbs to complete their involvement in this project.

The morning was organised by Rachel Peters, Community Development Officer, who was leaving Sovereign after 17 years. Rachel said: "It was a great way to spend time with my colleagues planting here today, and I look forward to seeing these bulbs come up in the spring. It will be a lovely reminder of my time at Sovereign and the wonderful colleagues I've worked with."

The bulbs, supplied by the Council's Countryside Team, included daffodils, hyacinth and crocus and will add a splash of colour to the area when they come up in the spring.

Plastic Blitz: 17-25 September 2022
80% of plastic waste pollution passes through our rivers, streams and ditches on its way to the sea…Let's Blitz it!

For the second year, West Berkshire Council supported the Plastic Blitz campaign run by Thames 21 Rivers Trust, to help clear up the harmful litter and plastic waste on land around our rivers and river catchment areas. The WBC Waste team were available to loan out litter picking kits and also to collect any rubbish from the community groups taking part.

4. Update on the Council's carbon footprint

4.1 After the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, the Council worked on establishing a baseline for its own carbon footprint. This was reported for the period April 2019 – March 2020. A specialist contractor assisted in quantifying the **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** generated by the Council's assets and activities.

4.2 For the purposes of this report, we have defined the Council's **operational control** as a boundary to isolate our carbon emissions, therefore, if the Council has control of an asset, it has been included within our calculations.

4.3 Those GHG emissions that extend beyond our control are categorised in different scopes. The three scopes when considering emissions are as follows:

- **Scope 1 emissions** (aka direct) come from sources that are owned or controlled by the Council e.g. our vehicles,
- **Scope 2 emissions** (aka indirect) come from the generation of electricity/ heat etc. used in our buildings (for example, from the national grid)
- **Scope 3 emissions** (aka indirect) come from goods/ services that the Council utilises but are not directly responsible for, e.g. investments, activities of our contractors

4.4 It is mandatory to report on Scope 1 and 2 emissions and Scope 3 emissions are optional. We have included the Scope 3 emissions from our largest contracts (waste (Veolia), highways (Volker Highways) and our Leisure Centre operator (Parkwood for reporting year)).

4.5 As indicated above, West Berkshire Council's carbon reporting cycle aligns with the financial year, i.e., 1st April to 31st March, annually. Therefore, activity data within the period 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 has been used to update the carbon footprint and to compare against the baseline data.

4.6 Using the data available the Council's carbon emissions (or carbon footprint) are calculated using the following formula:

Activity Data x Emissions Factor = Emissions (tCO2e)

Activity data is data associated with West Berkshire Council's activities (e.g. diesel consumption in litres).

The emission factors are the amount of GHG emissions associated with the activity data (e.g. the emissions from the combustion of a litre of diesel).

tCO2e stands for **tonnes of CO2 equivalent** and is a metric measure that is used to compare emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their GWP **Global Warming Potential** by converting amounts of other gases to the equivalent amount of CO2. https://coolerfuture.com/en/blog/co2e

Table 1: West Berkshire Council's Carbon Footprint 2022/23 compared to baseline (2019/20)

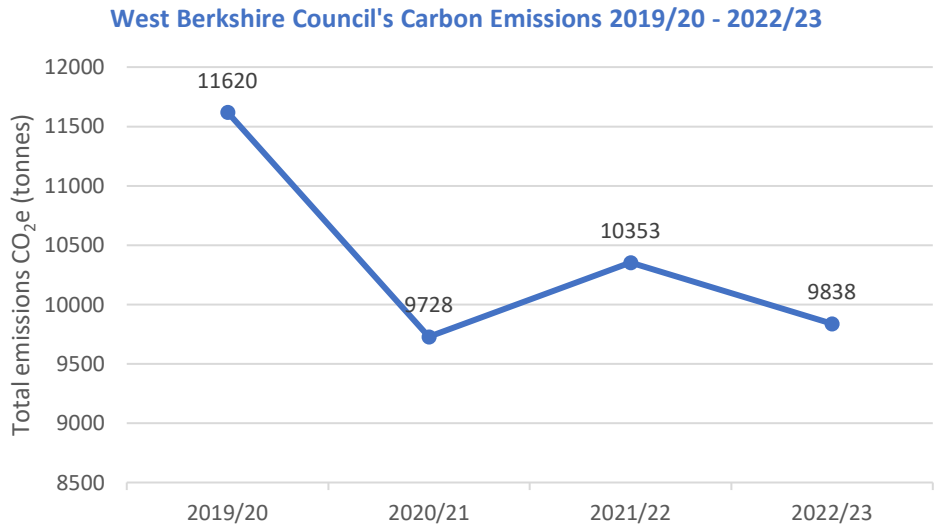
Emissions Scope	Emissions Source	2019/20 (Baseline)		2022/2023		difference CO_2e (tonnes) between baseline and 22/23	% difference between baseline and 22/23
		CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions	CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions		
1	Stationary Combustion (e.g. energy use	3,502.3	30.1%	3,164.8	32.2%	-337.6	-9.9%
	Mobile Combustion (e.g. vehicles)	290.6	2.5%	232.7	2.4%	-57.9	-19.9%
	Sewage Processing and Refrigerants	146.0	1.3%	124.3	1.3%	-21.7	-14.9%
	Total Scope 1	**3,939.0**	**33.9%**	**3,521.8**	**35.8%**	**-417.2**	**-10.6%**
2	Purchased electricity	3,495.8	30.1%	2,475.2	29.4%	-1020.5	-29.2%
	Total Scope 2	**3,495.8**	**30.1%**	**2,475.2**	**29.4%**	**-1020.5**	**-29.2%**
	**Blue EDF*	*N/A*		*868.0*	*10.6%*		
3	Contractor Emissions	2,574.7	22.2%	2,537.8	25.8%	-37.0	-1.4%
	Leisure Centres	1,228.9	10.6%	938.3	9.5%	-290.6	-23.6%
	Business Travel	381.2	3.3%	364.6	3.7%	-16.6	-4.4%
	Total Scope 3	**4,184.8**	**36.0%**	**3,840.7**	**39.0%**	**-344.1**	**-8.2%**
	All Scopes	11,619.6	100.0%	9,837.7	100.0%	-1781.9	-15.3%

* Alternative Scope 2 emissions total when Blue EDF tariff is taken into account.[2]

4.7 Table 1 shows the data for the 2019/20 baseline and the latest data for 2022/23. The percentage differences between these two positions are shown in the last column in the table. The overall position is that the latest 2022/23 figures show a 15% reduction in emissions from the baseline.

4.8 The year-on-year changes from the baseline through to 2022/23 are set out in the full data table in Appendix B. Figure 2 below shows a summary of the total emissions for each of the years from the baseline to current position.

Figure 2



[2] The figure in the row labelled 'Blue EDF' shows the emissions for scope 2 that would result if the carbon impact of the electricity used via our central energy contract was counted as 'zero'. For further information refer to the methodology review section in 4.13 ii)

4.9 As we described in our first annual report, the impact of the covid-19 pandemic was clearly seen in our carbon footprint figures for 2020/21. The initial significant reduction from the baseline was impacted by a number of council activities being 'paused' and the operation of buildings being affected by the national lockdown. As expected, once lockdown restrictions were lifted, many activities re-commenced and the 2021/22 emissions reflect this increase in activity. However, the emission levels did not get close to pre-covid levels and there remained a good reduction compared to the baseline. The graph shows that this year (2022/23) the Council's emissions have reduced to very close to the levels impacted by the covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. This demonstrates the Council's emissions are reducing and it is anticipated they will continue to progress in this direction with further impacts from future planned projects.

Review of carbon footprint reporting methodology

4.10 We are keen to be a Council that is open to learning, acknowledges best practice and updates approaches and methodologies to ensure we are reporting in the most suitable way. Therefore, the reporting protocol used for our carbon footprint assessment has been reviewed this year.

4.11 The baseline for the Council's carbon footprint was undertaken with the assistance of external specialist consultants, who helped guide the methodology to be used and created an electronic tool to record and calculate the Council's emissions. The methodology adopted was the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol as this was an internationally respected and common methodology (also used by ministerial departments).

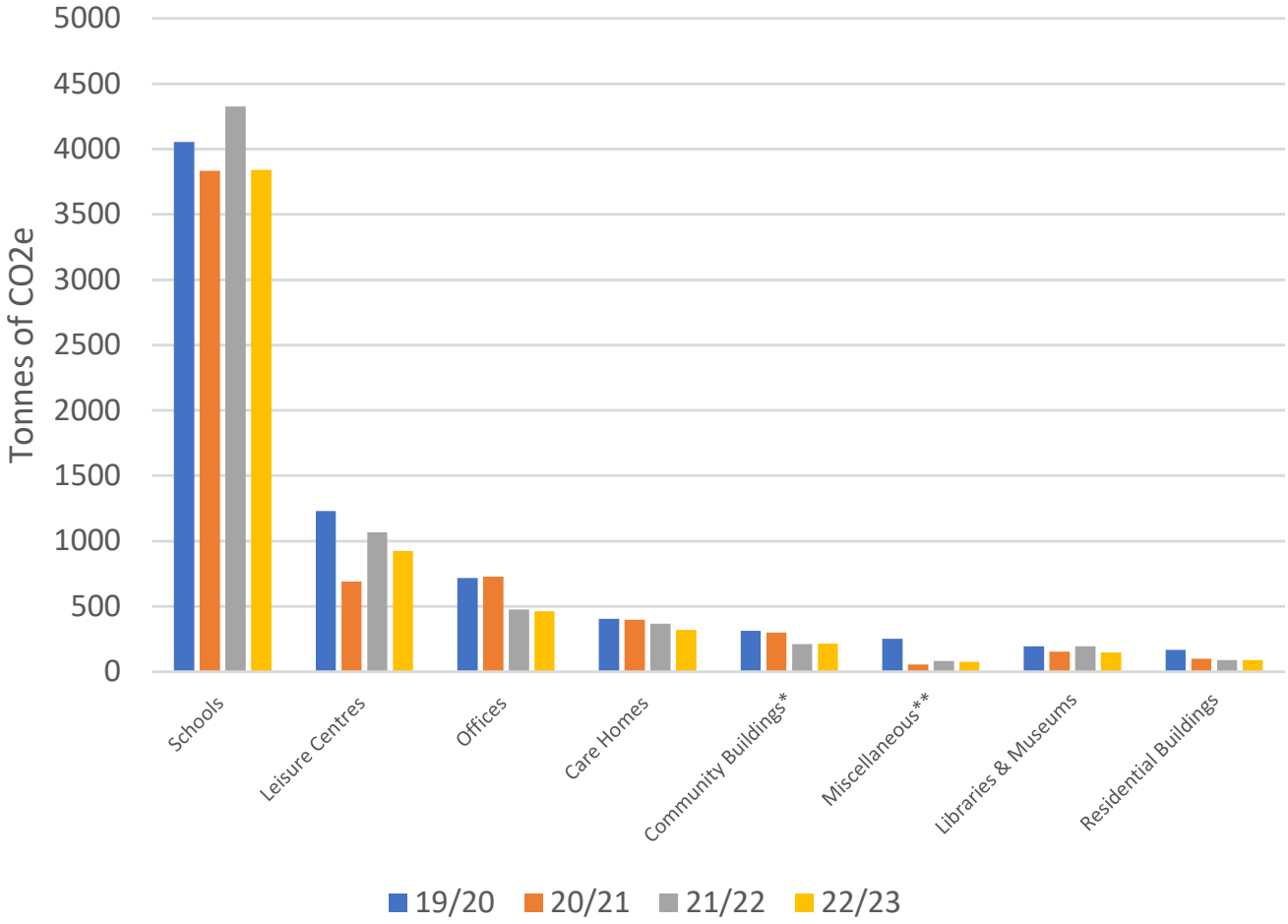
4.12 Part of the review included investigating the practices of other Local Authorities with regards to the reporting of their carbon footprints. We found that, because there is no definitive methodology that Local Authorities are instructed to follow, there were several variations in how each went about their carbon footprint accounting, largely determined by local interpretation of the available voluntary guidelines.

4.13 The outcomes from our review have caused two specific changes to the detail of our carbon emissions reporting. These are as follows:

i) In considering the details of the GHG protocol, it came to our attention that travel emissions associated with work journeys are classed as Scope 3 emissions. To date we have been reporting them under Scope 1. It does not affect the total emissions that have been reported for past years but the split of emissions across scopes should have been reported differently. Travel emissions for work journeys have therefore been reported as Scope 3 for 2022/23 and they have been correctly reported for the baseline year in Table 1 in order that comparisons between current data and the baseline position can be made.

ii) Unless there is additionality in terms of renewable energy generation resulting from the Council's actions, no reduction in emissions will be recorded for a zero carbon energy tariff. From 2021/22 onwards the Council has elected to have zero carbon electricity known as a 'blue' tariff. This provides electricity from clean nuclear sources. Nuclear power plants produce no greenhouse gas emissions during operation. During the review there appeared to be a consensus amongst Local Authorities that, where they had in place a zero carbon energy tariff, they were not formally claiming a reduction in their carbon footprint unless they complied with the principle of additionality. The overall emission figures for 2021/22 and 2022/23 (when we have been on a zero carbon tariff with EDF) are reported with standard emission factors applied as can be see in Appendix B. The level of emissions that would result if we did factor in a zero carbon source of electricity for that tariff and contract are also shown within the table for information but are not included in the calculation of the overall emissions.

Figure 3: Council emissions by asset type



The Council owns a significant number of buildings and other assets that all contribute to the organisation's carbon footprint. Figure 3 shows the changes in emissions in relation to the Council's assets reported by asset type. The significant collective impact that the schools in West Berkshire have on our carbon footprint should not be underestimated. This is why we are keen to embark on projects that tackle energy efficiency in schools and the delivery of renewable energy. Leisure centres are the next highest emitters, followed by Offices and care homes.

5. Update on the District's emissions

5.1 The carbon emissions for the District as a geographical area are reported using data published by the Government. Each year the Government provides data at local authority level which is 'per capita carbon dioxide emissions in tonnes'.

5.2 Two sets of data are produced – a 'full set' and a 'sub set'. Both sets of data report on the overall emissions from the following activities: transport, industry & commercial, domestic and agriculture. The 'sub set', however, removes data over which the local authority has no control. For example, in relation to transport, this would remove the travel associated with the strategic road network (M4 and A34) as these roads are managed by National Highways and not the Local Highway Authority.

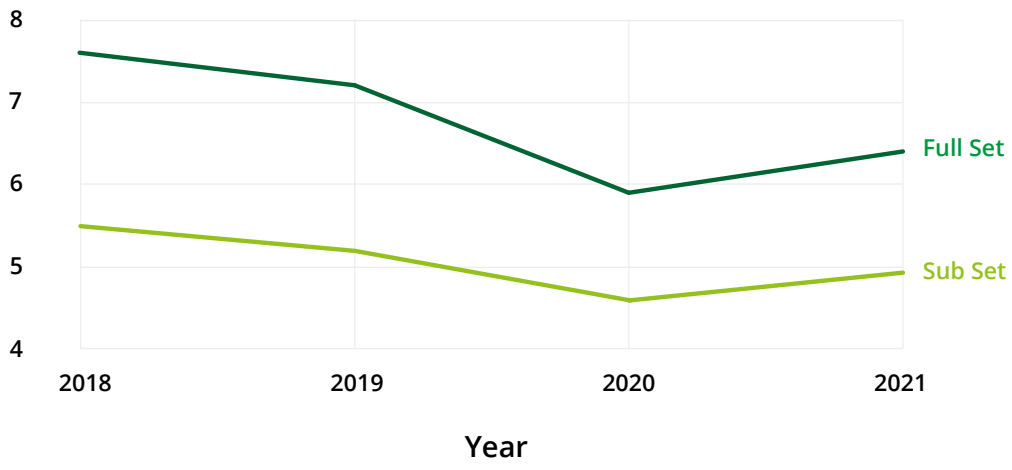
5.3 There is a 2 year period between when the emissions occur and when they are confirmed and reported by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero. Data is reported for each calendar year. The latest year for reporting is 2021. These figures are included in Table 2 and Figure 3 along with the three previous years.

5.4 When the 2020 figures were reported last year, it was highlighted that these reflected the dramatic changes in behaviour that the Covid19 pandemic and associated lockdown periods had caused. It was anticipated that the 2021 figures may well show an increase on those levels as new patterns of behaviour were created when the restrictions were lifted. The figures show this has been the case and there has

Table 2: Full Set and Sub Set Per Capita Carbon Dioxide emissions (tonnes) for West Berkshire

	Full Set	Sub Set
2018	7.6	5.5
2019	7.2	5.2
2020	5.9	4.6
2021	6.4	4.9

Figure 3 Full Set and Sub Set per capita carbon dioxide emissions (tonnes) for West Berkshire

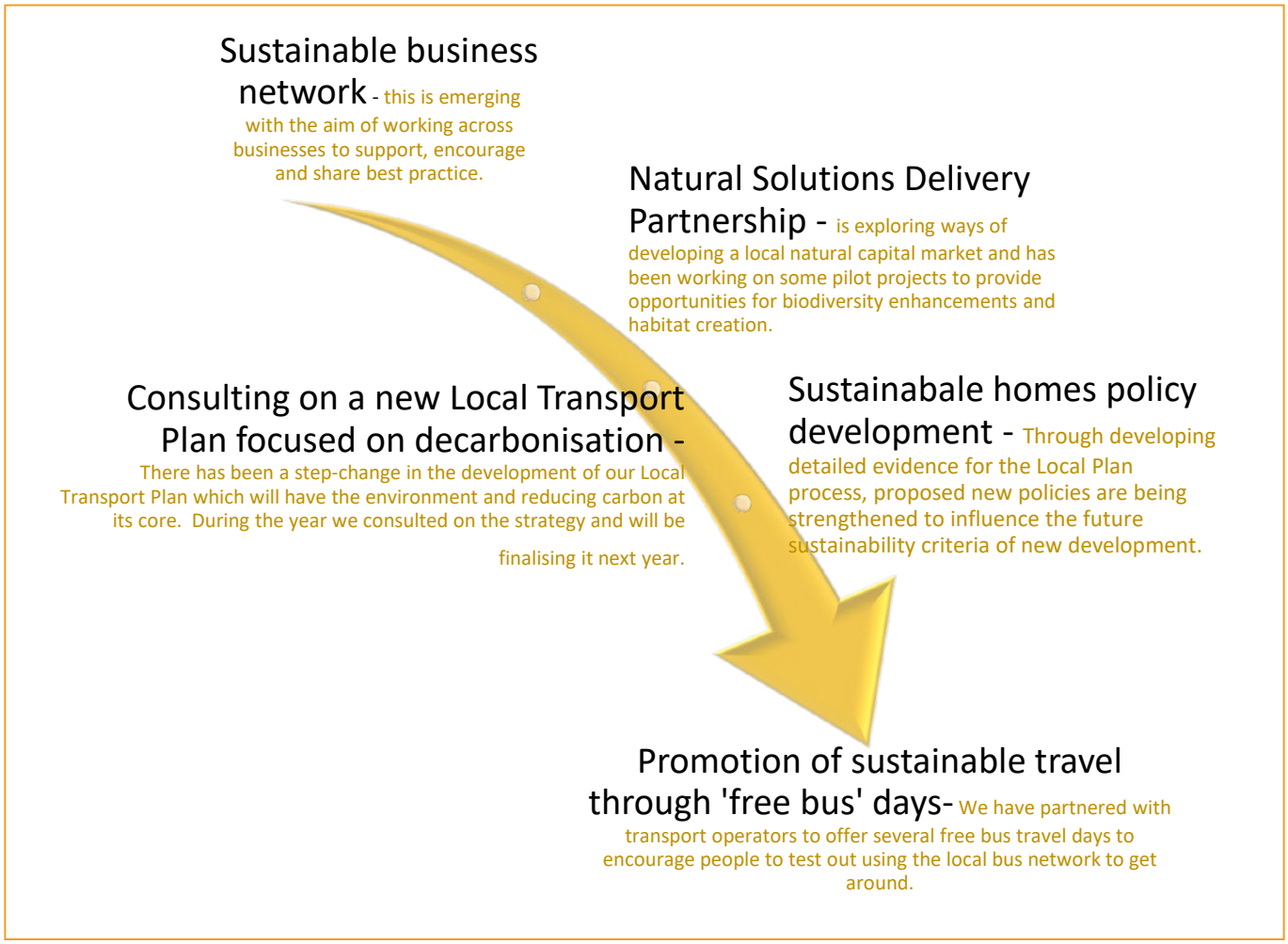


been an increase in emissions from 2020 to 2021. The increase has not taken the emissions figures back to pre-Covid levels and the overall trend is still one of a reduction in emissions for both the full set and the sub set of the data.

5.5 Continuous action is needed across the District to reduce emissions and the Council recognises its role in encouraging and influencing communities, businesses and residents as well as ensuring the policies and plans it sets align with carbon reduction aims. Actions within the Delivery Plan highlight the need to work with businesses, local communities and landowners and farmers to help all those who live and work in West Berkshire to have a positive impact and help to address the climate crisis.

5.6 It is recognised that there is a huge amount to be achieved but with collective action progress can be made. Some examples of the steps taken this year by the Council to help make a difference to the District's journey towards net zero can be seen in figure 4.

Figure 4 District's journey towards net zero



6. Looking ahead

6.1 The time period which this annual report covers is mainly when the Conservative Administration were leading the Council. Since the local elections in May 2023, the Council has had a new Liberal Democrat Administration. This part of the report, therefore, seeks to look ahead to the priorities and goals that will drive action in the coming years.

6.2 One of the priorities of the new Council Strategy, is to tackle the climate and ecological emergency. The Council updated its declaration of a climate emergency on 5th October to include and recognise the ecological emergency and to update some of the terminology used. Other changes and actions have been put in place since May are:

- The establishment of the new Environment Advisory Group Open Forum enabling more people to join in the discussions around how we can take action to deliver our Environment Strategy.
- Enhanced community communications and engagement around boosting food waste collections
- The launch of the Green Hub – a place to gather a range of climate project information and resources, share best practices and find out what is happening across the District.

6.3 As we look ahead there is a great deal of action coming up and projects that will enter their delivery phases. Here is a taster of some of the work that you can expect us to be reporting on next year in our annual report:

- Improving on the assessment of sustainability impacts of Council decisions. We are exploring ways in which we can deliver this and raise the sustainability credentials of all our projects and decisions.
- The Environment Strategy and its Delivery Plan will be updated to reflect the new ecological emergency and the new Council Strategy. The Delivery Plan will be prioritised to give greater focus and ensure we are using our limited resources to deliver the most effective projects.
- Biodiversity Net Gain implementation will become mandatory early in July 2024 and the Council will seek to help make this transition as easy as possible.
- We will play our part to help develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Berkshire.
- We will further develop our Green Hub in response to feedback and seek to improve its value to local communities, businesses and residents.
- In terms of our capital investment, we will be concentrating on reducing carbon emissions from our estate with a priority of looking at how we work with schools. Figure 3 in this report demonstrates how important it is to tackle emissions from our schools. We will be developing Heat Decarbonisation Plans for some of the highest emitters and rolling out the installation of rooftop solar PV.
- Further capital investment will see the delivery of more charging points for electric vehicles as we support our residents and businesses to make the transition and decarbonise their travel.

7. Conclusion

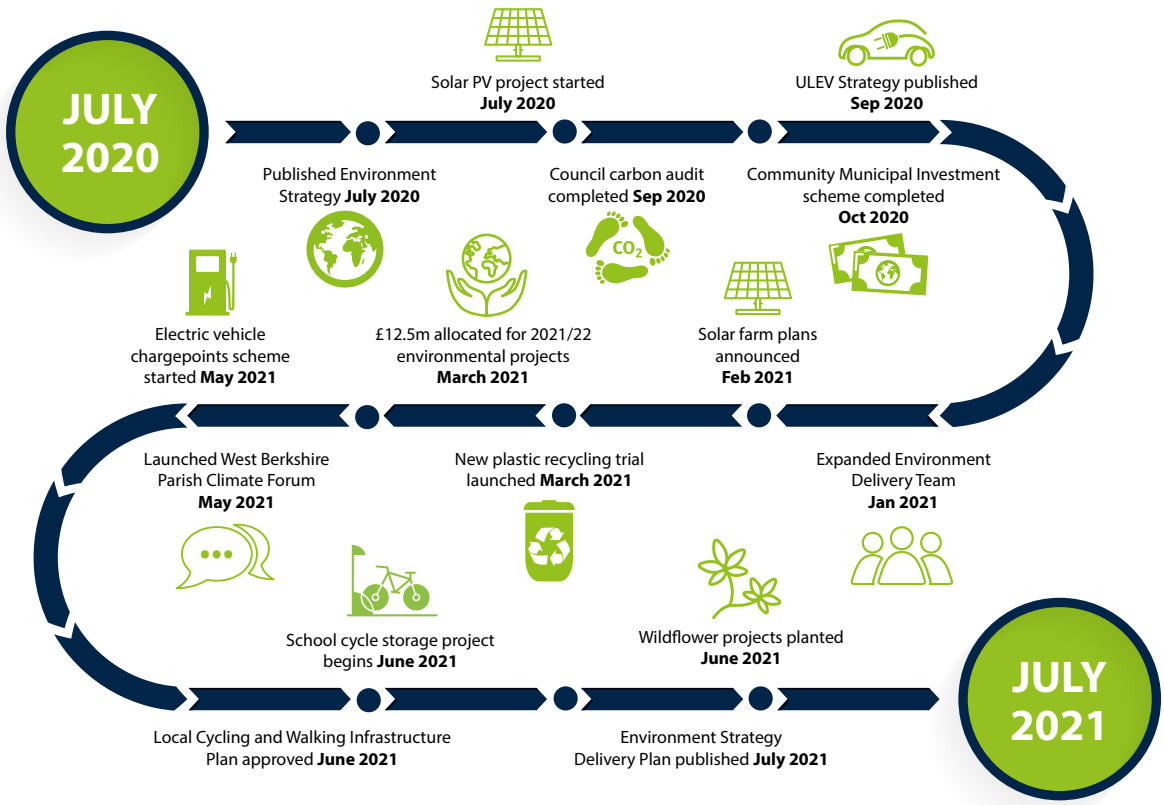
7.1 This third year of delivering our Environment Strategy has been another busy one. Activities have been varied with project delivery, establishment of new ideas and processes, bidding for external funding and background planning work for large projects soon to be launched.

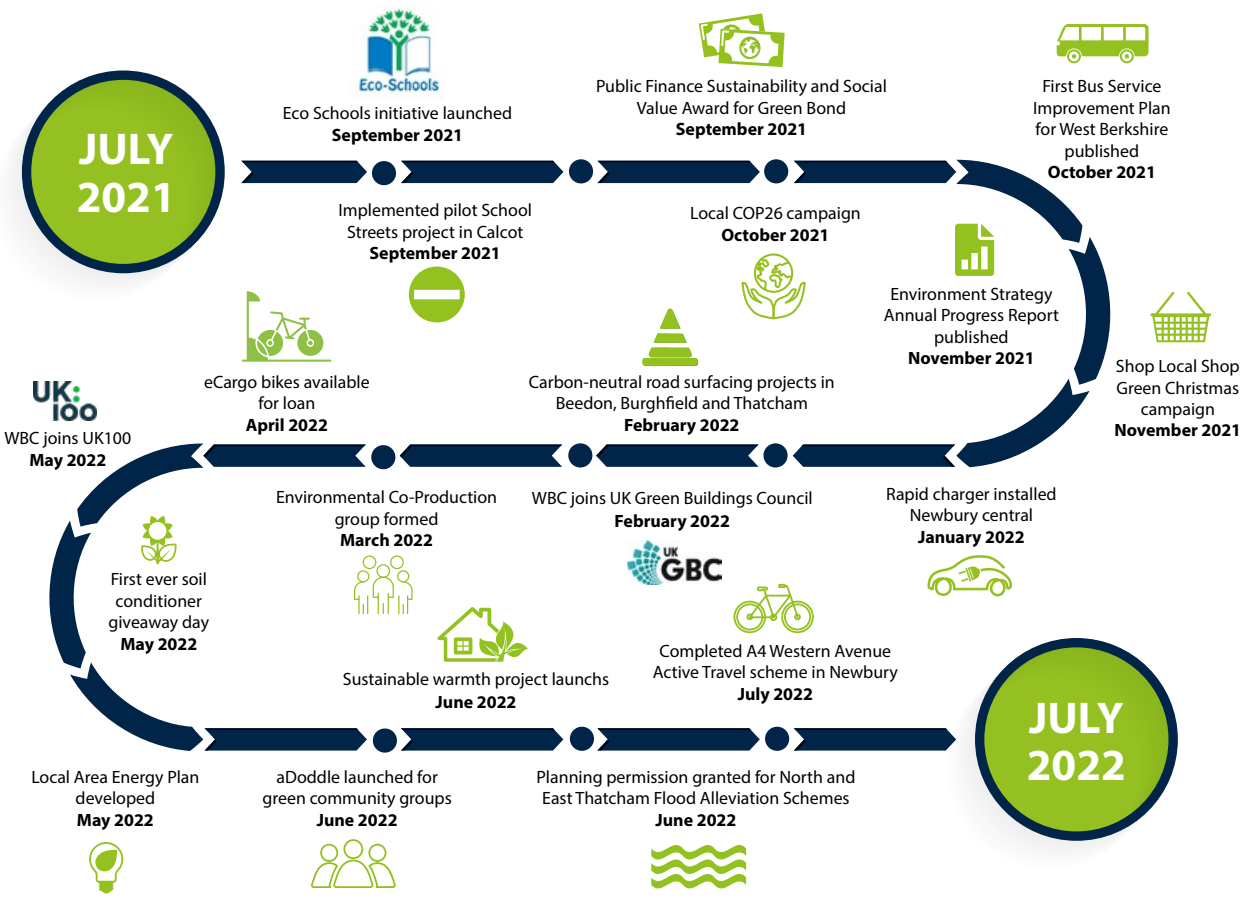
7.2 We have sought to engage with businesses, Parish and Town Councils, community groups and landowners. More of this engagement and working together will be needed in the coming year as we journey on the path towards net zero and support each other along the way.

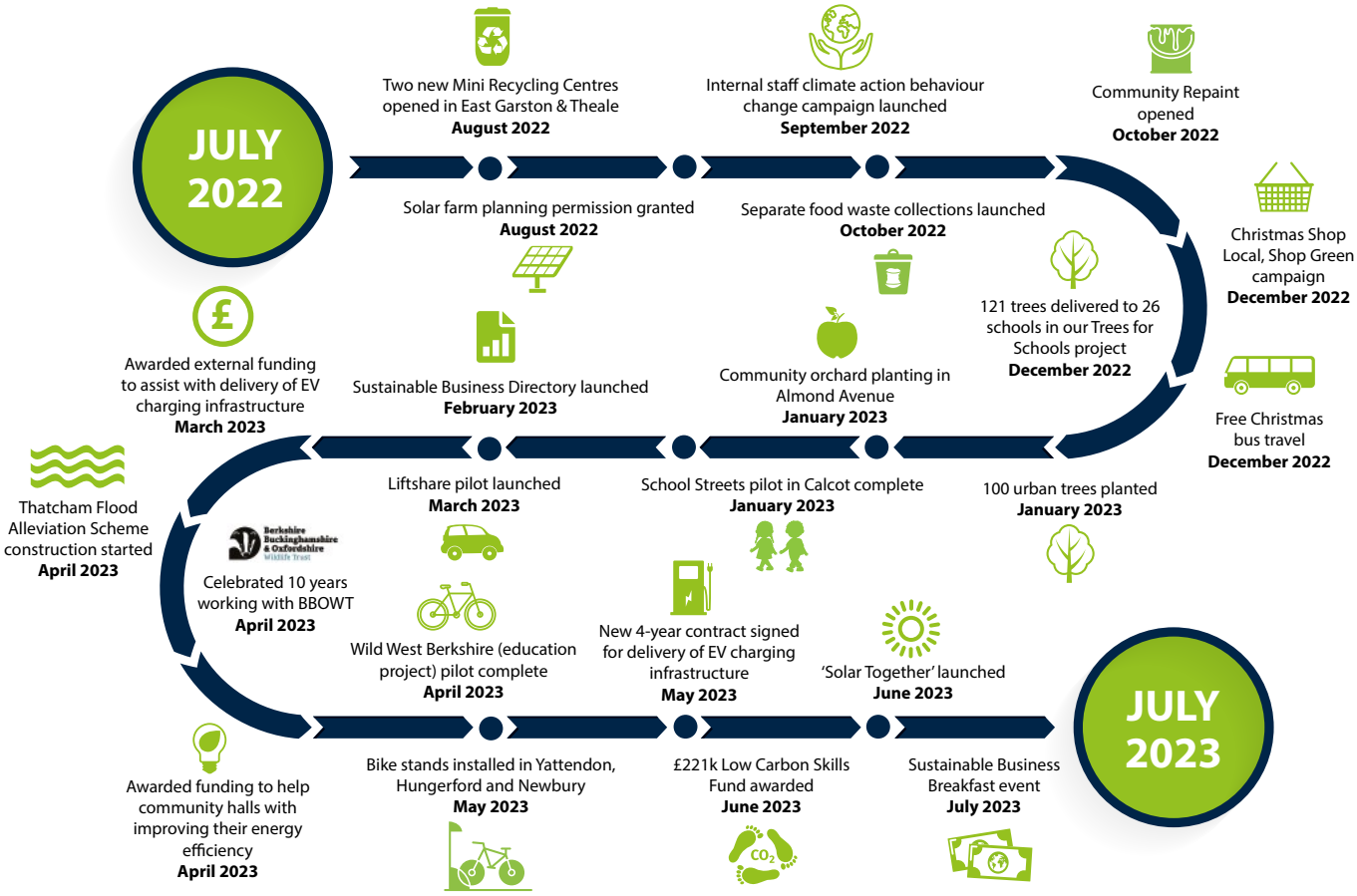
7.3 There is a wealth of great 'climate action' happening across the District with many organisations leading by example. We try and share relevant news to inspire and encourage others through our Environment Newsletter published each month and our Blogs. Let us know if you have anything to share via these publications.

7.4 We have spent some time looking back at the past year and hope that some of the projects and community delivery you have read about will inspire you As we look forward, there is plenty of action to come which we look forward to reporting on in detail in next year's annual progress report.

Appendix 1 - Roadmaps






JULY 2022
Two new Mini Recycling Centres opened in East Garston & Theale
August 2022
Internal staff climate action behaviour change campaign launched
September 2022
Community Repaint opened
October 2022
Christmas Shop Local, Shop Green campaign
December 2022
Free Christmas bus travel
December 2022
121 trees delivered to 26 schools in our Trees for Schools project
December 2022
Separate food waste collections launched
October 2022
Solar farm planning permission granted
August 2022
Community orchard planting in Almond Avenue
January 2023
Sustainable Business Directory launched
February 2023
Awarded external funding to assist with delivery of EV charging infrastructure
March 2023
Thatcham Flood Alleviation Scheme construction started
April 2023
Liftshare pilot launched
March 2023
School Streets pilot in Calcot complete
January 2023
100 urban trees planted
January 2023
Celebrated 10 years working with BBOWT
April 2023
Wild West Berkshire (education project) pilot complete
April 2023
New 4-year contract signed for delivery of EV charging infrastructure
May 2023
'Solar Together' launched
June 2023
JULY 2023
Awarded funding to help community halls with improving their energy efficiency
April 2023
Bike stands installed in Yattendon, Hungerford and Newbury
May 2023
£221k Low Carbon Skills Fund awarded
June 2023
Sustainable Business Breakfast event
July 2023

Appendix B – Full Carbon Footprint Data Table

The table below shows the annual emissions data for West Berkshire Council's activities (Scope 1, 2 and 3). It covers the period from 2019/20 (baseline year) through to 2022/23. Figure 2 in section 4.8 of the main report represents the total emissions data from this table in a graph.

Emissions Scope	Emissions Source	2019/20 (Baseline)		2020/2021		2021/2022		2022/2023	
		CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions	CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions	CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions	CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions
1	Stationary Combustion (e.g. energy use	3,502.34	30.1%	3,219.1	33.1%	3,586.2	34.6%	3,164.79	32.2%
	Mobile Combustion (e.g. vehicles)	**290.64	2.5%	353.9	3.6%	552.9	5.3%	232.73	2.4%
	Sewage Processing	38.33	0.3%	38.3	0.4%	15.7	0.2%	15.68	0.2%
	Refrigerants	107.71	0.9%	81.9	0.8%	121.2	1.2%	108.61	1.1%
	Total Scope 1	**3,939.01**	**33.9%**	**3,693.1**	**38.0%**	**4,276.1**	**41.3%**	**3,521.80**	**35.8%**
2	Purchased electricity	3,495.76	30.1%	2,946.6	30.3%	2,643.4	25.5%	2,475.21	29.4%
	Total Scope 2	**3,495.76**	**30.1%**	**2,946.6**	**30.3%**	**2,643.4**	**25.5%**	**2,475.21**	**29.4%**
	**Blue EDF*	*N/A*				*420.0*		*867.98*	
3	Contractor Emissions	2,574.72	22.2%	2,397.0	24.6%	2,359.3	22.8%	2,537.77	25.8%
	Leisure Centres	1,228.93	10.6%	691.3	7.1%	1,066.3	10.3%	938.34	9.5%
	Business Travel	**381.17	3.3%	0.3	0.0%	8.4	0.1%	364.56	3.7%
	Total Scope 3	**4,184.82**	**36.0%**	**3,088.6**	**31.7%**	**3,433.9**	**33.2%**	**3,840.67**	**39.0%**
	All Scopes	11619.588	100.0%	9,728.2	100.0%	10,353.4	100.0%	9,837.68	100.0%

* The figures in the row labelled 'Blue EDF' show the emissions for scope 2 that would result for the year if the carbon impact of the electricity used via our central energy contract was counted as 'zero'. The Blue EDF tariff provides electricity from clean nuclear sources. Nuclear power plants produce no greenhouse gas emissions during operation. For the reasons set out in Section 4 of the main report, the Council will continue to use the general emissions factor for electricity purchased from the national grid but will show these alternative scope 2 figures for information.

** As part of the review of the methodology used for calculating the Council's carbon footprint (see section 4), it was clear that to follow GHG protocols, work related journeys undertaken by staff should be included in Scope 3 and not Scope 1. The data for 2022/23 has therefore been presented in this way and the baseline figures for Scopes 1 and 3 have also been re-visited in order to provide the comparison needed for Table 1 in section 4.7.

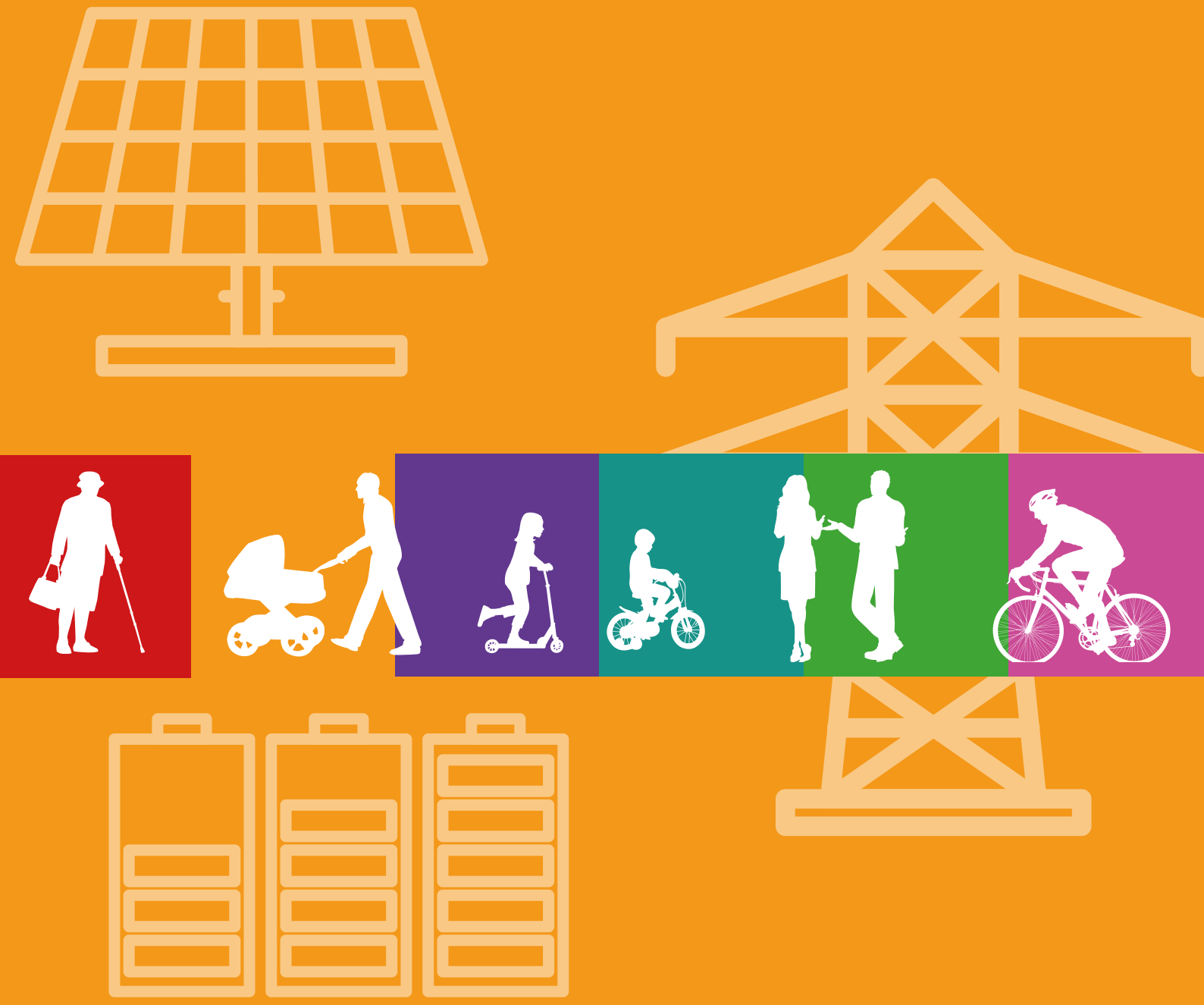
Glossary

This glossary provides an explanation of terms used in this annual report along with some additional terms which may also be of general interest relating to climate change and our environment.

Abbreviation	Term	Explanation
	Anaerobic Digestion	A process in which organic matter is broken down by micro-organisms in an oxygen free 'tank' to produce fuels.
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Area of countryside designated for conservation in recognition of its national importance.
	Baseline	A fixed point of reference used as a starting point for comparison purposes.
	Biodiversity	The variety of plant and animal life.
	Carbon budget	The maximum amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted over a certain period.
CCS	Carbon capture and storage	Trapping carbon at its emission source, and then storing it long term.
CO2e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent	A term used to describe different greenhouse gases in a common unit. For any greenhouse gases and their amount, it is the amount of carbon dioxide which would have the equivalent warming impact.
	Carbon footprint/carbon audit	The total greenhouse gas emissions caused by a person/event/organisation/product, expressed as the carbon dioxide equivalent.
	Carbon neutral/ carbon neutrality	Balancing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by offsetting, or removing from the atmosphere, an equivalent amount of carbon for the amount produced.
	Climate change	The long-term shift in the planets weather patterns and temperatures.
CCA	Climate Change Act 2008	Provides the framework for the UK's climate change policy
	Climate Change Bonds	Fixed income bonds, linked to climate change solutions.
	Climate Emergency Declaration	The Declarations vary for each organisation. The Council's Declaration is set out in the Introduction section of the Environment Strategy.
	CO2 emissions within the scope of influence of Local Authorities	The UK produces a breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions by Local Authority area as a subset of its annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions. The emissions deemed to be within the scope of Local Authorities exclude large industrial sites, railways, motorways and land-use.
CCC	Committee on Climate Change	Independent body to advise the government on climate change.
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	A charge which can be levied on new developments within the Local Authority's area. It helps deliver required infrastructure.
	Delivery Plan	The Council's plan on how the objectives of the Environment Strategy will be achieved.

	Economic Development Board	Newly formed Economic Board which will oversee the Economic Development Strategy, implementing an action plan to fulfil its objectives.
EU ETS	European Union Emissions Trading System	The first and largest greenhouse gas emissions trading system in the world. It works on a 'cap and trade' principle where allowances are set. Allowances are auctioned off or allocated for free. Emitters must ensure they have enough allowances to meet their emissions or purchase more. Those who reduce their emissions and have spare allowances can sell off their credits.
GWP	Global Warming Potential	The potential of a Greenhouse Gas to trap additional heat in the atmosphere relative to Carbon dioxide. Specifically, it is a measure of how much energy the emissions of 1 tonne of a gas will absorb over a given period of time, relative to the emissions of 1 tonne of carbon dioxide. The larger the GWP, the more that gas warms the Earth compared to CO_2 over that time period.
	Green energy	Definitions would usually mean the gas or electricity were from 100% renewable sources.
GHG	Greenhouse gases	Gases in the atmosphere that absorb and re-emit heat. They occur naturally in the Earth's atmosphere but human activity increases these, leading to increased warming and climate change.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	The total monetary/market value of the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period.
	Health and Wellbeing Board	A partnership that brings together West Berkshire's leaders of the health and social care system.
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators	A measurable value/outcome to gauge how well an organisation is meeting its key objectives.
LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry	A greenhouse gas sector defined by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
LCWIP	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Programme	Sets out the Council's long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks
	Local Plan	The plan is part of the overall Development Plan for West Berkshire, setting out our local planning policies.
LTP	Local Transport Plan	Aims to deliver effective transport solutions for all by increasing choice and minimising congestion.
NAEI	National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory	The Inventory is compiled by Ricardo. It is the standard reference inventory for the UK and includes emission estimates for a wide range of important pollutants.
	Nature Recovery Plan	The plan defines the objectives and key actions required to improve biodiversity and wildlife in the district
	Net zero / Net zero carbon	Making changes to reduce carbon or GHG emissions to the lowest amount – and offsetting as a last resort to reach an overall net position of zero carbon.
	Per capita	The district's emissions divided by the number of people to give a value per person. This can be useful in comparing other areas of differing population size.

	Operational Control	A method of providing a boundary for an organisation to isolate its carbon emissions. This method describes where an organisation has functional operational control of an asset it will be included in calculations.
	Scope 1 Emissions	aka direct emissions, come from sources that are owned or controlled by an organisation, e.g. vehicles
	Scope 2 Emissions	(aka Energy indirect) come from the consumption of electricity used in an organisation's buildings
	Scope 3 Emissions	(aka other indirect) emissions come from goods/ services that an organisation utilise but are not directly responsible for e.g. investments.
SME	Small medium enterprises	Small or medium businesses are generally defined as businesses with less than 250 employees.
SuDs	Sustainable drainage systems	Systems designed to manage the drainage of surface water.
	Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership	An organisation bringing together business, public sector, education and community together to drive the local economy.
	Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum	A Forum to help prepare, respond and recover from emergency incidents.
	The National Adaptation Programme	This sets out the actions that the UK government and others will take over the next five-yearly cycle to adapt to the challenged of climate change.
ULEV	Ultra low emission vehicle	A vehicle that emits no more than 75g/km CO_2, based on the NEDC test, at the tailpipe. This includes pure electric, hydrogen, range-extender and plug in hybrid vehicles.
	Whole life carbon	The emissions created for every stage of an item/ buildings production, use and disposal.



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