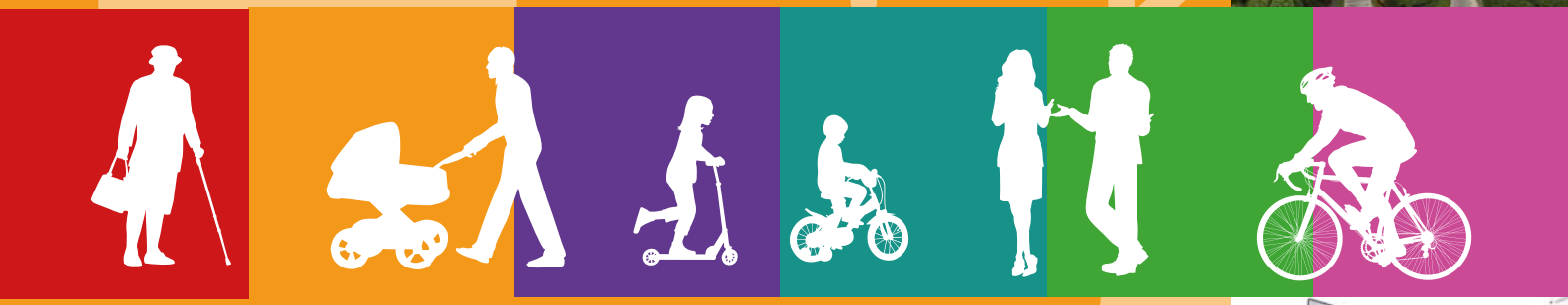
Environment Strategy

Annual Progress Report
(July 2023- July 2024)



West Berkshire Council

Foreword

At a global, national and local level, the climate change and ecological emergencies remain some of the most significant challenges we face.

As a Council, we are continuing to work hard to address these challenges. Since our last Annual Report, we have declared an 'ecological emergency' in West Berkshire and are strengthening our actions to address this. We are also making good progress towards reaching our Net Zero target by 2030 through delivering the projects in our Environment Strategy Delivery Plan.

As a Council, we are continuing to work hard to address these challenges. Since our last Annual Report, we have declared an 'ecological emergency' in West Berkshire and are strengthening our actions to address this. We are also making good progress towards reaching our Net Zero target by 2030 through delivering the projects in our Environment Strategy Delivery Plan.

This additional work, including the projects we will need to focus on in the next five years to help us reach Net Zero, is reported as part of a refreshed Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan. These have been developed in line with the Council Strategy. The refreshed Environment Strategy also incorporates the ecological emergency declaration and the actions the Council is taking to bring about nature recovery and enhancements.

Looking forward, I would like to highlight a few key areas of action and delivery that will have a positive impact in delivering our environmental work and reducing emissions both in relation to Council activities and across the District of West Berkshire as a whole:

- The process of reviewing the Local Plan has included the development of a number of ambitious policies which aim to support mitigating and adapting to Climate Change.
- We have been awarded funding from the Government to undertake nutrient mitigation projects which will support addressing the ecological emergency and unlock development in the River Lambourn catchment area.
- The publication of a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) in summer 2025 will outline the transport-related challenges and opportunities facing the district and provide an approach to help ensure a modern transport system is delivered for West Berkshire.

Over the forthcoming year work will begin on delivering our solar farm near Grazeley. We will continue our work with nature-based solutions supporting carbon sequestration, delivering Biodiversity Net Gain and responding to Nutrient Neutrality regulations within the River Lambourn catchment area. We will also continue the roll-out of electric vehicle charging points across the district and retrofit solar Photovoltaics (PVs) on our buildings.

As a Council, we need to ensure that we lead the way in tackling climate change and ecology issues over the coming months and years, but we can't do it alone. By working together, building strong partnerships and sharing best practice we can all continue to be successful together.

After 18 months now, as the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways, I continue to be humbled and inspired by the great work that individuals, parish and town councils, groups and communities are doing to help deliver a greener, cleaner West Berkshire. I am keen to continue listening and receiving ideas, improvements and feedback on how we approach, and mitigate Climate change, especially as we move closer to 2030. I look forward to continuing engaging with wider stakeholders across West Berkshire in the shape of business, parish and town councils, organisations and landowners to continue to improve our District.

"We are living at odds with the natural world - and it is buckling under the pressure of our actions…If we are to keep this planet liveable for our children and grandchildren, we must act urgently… We can and must change our relationship with the natural world. "

(Prince William quote from video message played at a Campaign for Nature event at the General Assembly of the United Nations, in New York 2024)

Councillor Stuart Gourley
Executive Member for Climate Action,
Recycling and Biodiversity

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1. Introduction

1.1 The importance of taking climate action is urgent as we witness more frequent, extreme global weather events. Summer 2024 was the Earth's warmest on record, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service [1].

1.2 ***'Every breath of air we take, every mouthful of food that we take, comes from the natural world. And if we damage the natural world, we damage ourselves.'*** – Sir David Attenborough [2]

1.3 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.

1.4 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, our fourth annual report, highlights the actions, achievements and progress from July 2023 to July 2024. An important development this year has been the declaration of an ecological emergency in October 2023.

1.5 Our annual reports form part of our commitment to keep everyone informed, as well as to describe the measures we still need to take on our journey towards net zero.

1.6 This report compares the Council's baseline carbon footprint (from 2019/20) with the latest data for 2023/24. 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 and is included as Appendix C.

[1] https://climate.copernicus.eu/
[2] https://ecoclubofficial.com/our-favorite-quotes-from-david-attenborough/

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. We are in the process of updating the Environment Strategy, building upon what we've learnt, to streamline the actions and focus on carbon reduction activities.

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. Please note that the way the Delivery Plan is organised is due to change shortly as part of refreshing the Strategy and more accurately reflecting the focus of our work.

2.3 We are committed to continuous improvement and are currently refocusing some actions in the Delivery Plan, to ensure our limited resources are used effectively. 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 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, the 'Climate Change Service' was created within the Environment Department in April 2023. The role of 'Service Lead for Climate Change' heads up the Climate Change Service, helping to provide a greater focus and to raise the profile of climate matters more widely.

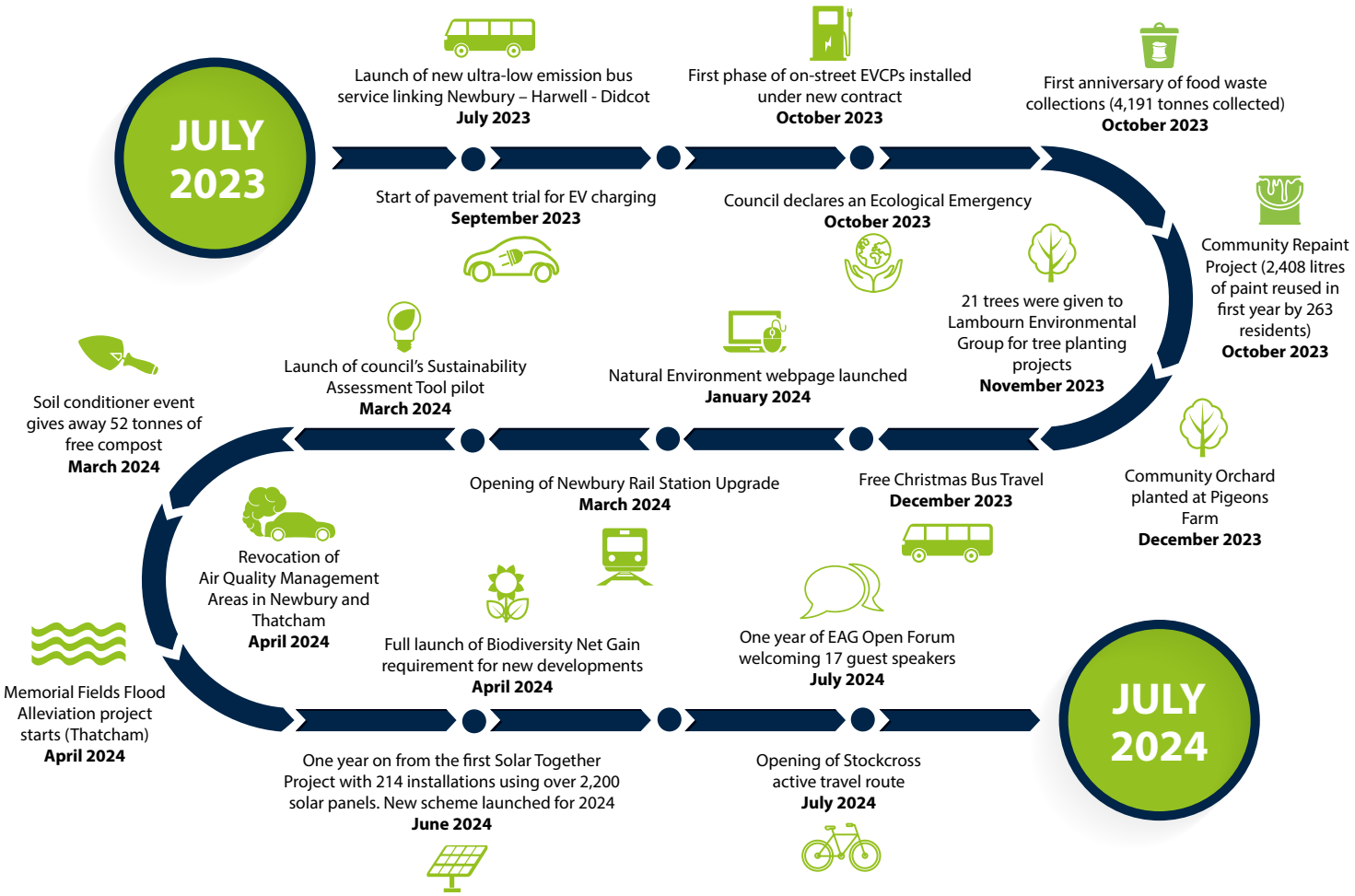
3. The Fourth Year - summary of actions and achievements

3.1 The fourth 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 the launch of Biodiversity Net Gain requirements for new developments, which requires developers to ensure there is a measurable improvement (10%) to wildlife habitats than there was prior to development. This will help protect precious habitats within West Berkshire.

3.3 The roadmap is followed by details of actions and achievements against each strategic objective of the Environment Strategy, including further information on what has been happening during the year.

Figure 1: Highlights of delivery of the Environment Strategy July 2023 – July 2024



Carbon Neutral by 2030

NB. We have updated our terminology to Net Zero by 2030 and this will be reflected in our updated Environment Strategy. The 2030 date relates to the target for Council emissions whilst we will also engage in actions that help to reduce and influence district emissions. This section includes activities that reduce carbon emissions for West Berkshire as a district, as well as West Berkshire Council as an organisation.

Kerbo Charge system launches

West Berkshire residents now have the opportunity to charge their EVs easily from their homes, even if they don't have a driveway! After a successful trial, the Council approved the use of the innovative Kerbo Charge system across the district. This initiative will not only revolutionise how residents can charge their EVs from home, but it will also help reduce CO2 emissions in West Berkshire and improve air quality. Another big benefit is that once it's installed, residents can save an average of £1,715 a year (compared to solely using rapid chargers).

Here's how it works: when a resident wants to charge their car, residents simply insert their charging cable into the channel, and the specially designed lid closes behind it like a zip, eliminating unsightly and hazardous cables stretching across footpaths. This provides increased safety by removing trip hazards from trailing cables.

The channel is slim and shallow making installation quick with minimal impact on the existing footway. It is made of PVC which has a significantly lower carbon footprint than aluminium, has a life expectancy of over 100 years, and will not be targeted by metal thieves.

Solar Together

Solar Together Berkshire

In 2023, our West Berkshire community embraced green energy through the Solar Together Berkshire initiative, run by ICHoosr and West Berkshire Council.

More than a quarter of all carbon emissions comes from households, which means our homes play a crucial role in achieving net zero. Switching to solar photovoltaic (PV) energy is an excellent way to reduce carbon emissions and decrease electricity bills.

With 214 rooftop solar installations completed, totalling 0.92 MW of panels, we've reduced the district's carbon footprint by 178.4 tonnes per year. 85% of participants opted for battery storage, highlighting the community's commitment to energy independence. Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the scheme, reflected in an impressive 86% overall approval rating.

Solar Together Berkshire 2023 was a shining success and this motivated us to keep the momentum going and deliver the same opportunities in 2024 to move to a more sustainable future.

Heat Decarbonisation Plans

In July 2023, the Council was awarded Low Carbon Skills Funding to be able to undertake building heating system audits for 5 of its buildings and the creation of individual building specific Heat Decarbonisation Plans (HDPs). This project included undertaking more detailed technical surveys for 1 of the 5 buildings to enable a future capital funding bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in October 2024. The HDPs were completed in March 2024 and are being used to better understand how the Council can reduce its heating associated carbon emissions.

Building on the previous success in Phase 4 of the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF), the Council was successful in its application for further grant funding under Phase 5 of the LCSF. This funding, awarded in June 2024, will be used over the coming year to create a heat decarbonisation strategy for 13 of the Council's buildings, and an 'Investment Grade' technical design Heat Decarbonisation Plan for one of the Council's Primary Schools.

Responsible Economic Growth

Newbury station redevelopment complete

The redevelopment of Newbury station is now complete with three business growth units offering new employment opportunities for the town. These units will become available from autumn 2025 when all utilities will be connected, and this unique location can be promoted to support local business.

The Engine Shed Business Growth Units will help support Newbury's economic development and form part of a wider transformation of the station which has included new customer facilities, new ticket gates, a multi-storey car park, cycle hubs and improved pedestrian access.

Work to transform the station started in 2018 with the installation of a footbridge with lifts,

two new cycle hubs adding 300 cycle spaces, and forecourt works.

Completion of station building works on the north side followed, with seven new ticket gates - five in the ticketing area and two for crowd relief - an open-plan ticket area, enlarged waiting room, café and toilets.

The south side station building has also been enlarged to enable relocation of staff offices, while a new, enlarged canopy with a heritage look has been provided to house seven new ticket gates and a ticket vending machine, giving customers and staff better shielding from adverse weather.

West Berkshire Council has worked closely with Great Western Railway, Berkshire LEP, Network Rail and Grainger Plc to provide an enhanced customer experience. The Council secured significant investment in the project via Berkshire LEP's allocation of government's Local Growth Fund.

This major project delivering numerous customer benefits is hoped to facilitate and encourage more people to leave their car at home and choose to travel more sustainably. Rail travel creates 10 times less carbon emissions per passenger than the equivalent car journey.

Hectors Way link road complete

The new Kings Road link road, called Hectors Way has been completed. This was part of the Sterling Gardens development in Newbury and is a significant infrastructure achievement.

Funded primarily by a grant from the Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and delivered in partnership with Nelson Land Ltd, the developer of the site, this project marks a major milestone.

This will improve local air quality by reducing queuing traffic, improve access to the industrial site and has also addressed the growing need for housing by providing affordable housing for residents.

Healthy Communities

School travel

Our pilot 'School Streets' scheme in Calcot was a success and is now a permanent fixture outside the school during drop off and pick up times. In January 2024, an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) camera was introduced to enhance compliance with the restrictions, resulting in a 62% reduction in vehicle movements during the restricted period providing a safer area for those wishing to walk or cycle to school. Francis Baily became our second School Streets scheme, modelled on the Calcot pilot and installed in September 2023. Following a six-month consultation period, this scheme will now be made permanent, with an ANPR camera to follow. Future schemes are being considered, including at Springfield School.

The amount of child cycle training we provide has doubled across West Berkshire and the variety of courses we offer has increased. We have an ambition to train 80% of our students and hope to welcome more instructors soon.

We have introduced a new Scooter Heroes programme for infant schools, this aims to encourage younger pupils to scoot to school. The programme includes safety, spatial awareness and pavement etiquette.

All these elements work towards our net zero target and encourages active travel from a young age.

New Active Travel Counters

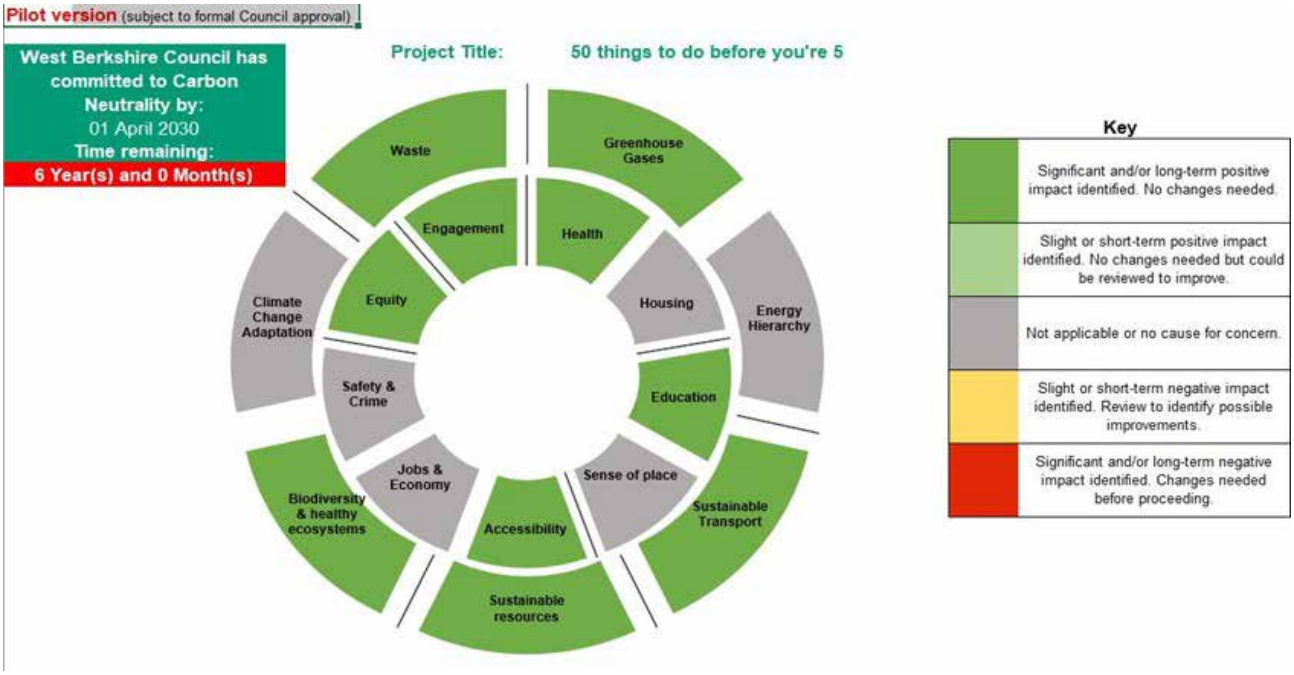
Using grant funding from Active Travel England, West Berkshire Council has introduced new active travel counters.

The two portable devices use radar to differentiate between and anonymously count, pedestrians and cyclists.

The anonymous count data is transmitted to a system that allows reports to be easily produced. The data will be used to inform proposals for additional or adapted active travel routes.

Encouraging and enabling active travel fits with the Council Strategy priority of tackling the climate and ecological emergency, by offering many residents an alternative for some or all of their local, shorter-distance journeys.

Resilient to Climate Change



Council introduces Sustainability Assessment Tool

In April 2024, the Council began a new pilot project to commission the use of a 'Sustainability Assessment Tool' (SAT). The tool, for internal use only, supports all five of the Council's Strategic priorities as detailed in the Council Strategy and aims to make West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous with thriving communities and services we are proud of.

Whilst relevant to all the strategic priorities, the tool focuses on the priority of 'Tackling the climate and ecological emergencies' along with supporting socio-economic and health and wellbeing outcomes. Topics including biodiversity, sustainable transport and waste are covered in the SAT, along with education, safety and crime and housing.

By using the tool, Council Officers are prompted to consider the wide range of possible impacts that a proposed project, policy or event will have on environmental and socio-economic criteria. It is hoped that completing the assessment tool will highlight areas of potential cross-Council working and maximise effective use of resources and budget.

Teams from across the Council took part in the pilot, from those in Adult Social Care and colleagues delivering Early Years Services to officers working on sustainable travel and our public rights of way network.

By answering a series of set questions, Officers were able to assess the positive areas of their proposals but also areas where improvement might be possible with the help of a clear Red Amber Green (RAG) summary report provided at the end of the tool.

Example SAT shown - the existing '50 things to do before you're 5' app, commissioned by the Early Years Team.

Flood Prevention

From early January to late March 2024 West Berkshire suffered from flooding, during which time a significant number of villages across West Berkshire were affected as a result of Storms Henk, Isha, and Jocelyn. West Berkshire Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, commissioned a Section 19 Flood Investigation as a result of flooding across the region.

The majority of the flooding occurred from 5th January, at the time of Storm Henk. However, areas of West Berkshire remained

inundated for varying lengths of time, due to Storms Isha and Jocelyn encouraging further flooding. In total, approximately 210 properties experienced a form of flooding as a result of the 2024 flood event. Of these, approximately 77 properties experienced internal flooding and approximately 133 properties experienced external flooding. Flooding resulted from multiple sources, such as fluvial, groundwater, sewer, and surface water, creating a complex network of issues. An investigation into the causes, mechanisms, consequences, and responses associated with the 2024 flood event has been completed and can be seen here. This has involved discussions with local flood wardens and affected residents, site visits to the flooded locations, analysis of hydrology data, consultation with risk management authorities, and the review of data gathered by West Berkshire Council, such as questionnaires and photographic evidence.

Following the flood events the government announced a number of grants that residents and businesses could apply for if they had been impacted by the flooding. The main criteria of the aid offered by central government is that properties must have flooded internally between 2nd and 12th January. To date £120,450.80 of grant funding has been distributed to West Berkshire residents and businesses following the flooding.

In addition to the above, the Council has continued with its programme of flood alleviation schemes around Thatcham with the completion of the North and East Thatcham Flood Alleviation Schemes and the commencement of the Memorial Fields project, which is the final project in the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan. Once complete the plan will help protect 1200 properties in Thatcham from the effects of climate change.

Working with our Communities and Partners

Waste Reduction and Recycling

- Over the year, our Waste Minimisation Officer has engaged around 315 residents in schools and community groups across the district on the topic of reduce, reuse and recycle. Our two soil conditioner give-away events this year saw over 900 residents in attendance with 85.5 tonnes of soil conditioner given away.
- In March 2024 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 8 groups in total for this event and continue to support groups throughout the year. This has included another 22 groups over the course of the year.
- In June 2024 we introduced coffee pod recycling at both of our household waste recycling centres. All the pods collected by Podback are recycled in the UK

Community Climate and Ecological Action

Adder Connections

Greenham and Crookham Commons, managed by Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) on behalf of West Berkshire Council, are home to two distinct populations of adders.

Adders are an indicator species and are important within the food chain as they are both predator and prey.

After radio tracking revealed that the groups were not mixing, as they were unable to cross Old Thornford Road which divides the commons, two tunnels were created underneath the road to encourage movement.

With small groups of adders at risk of extinction in England, Adder Connections, a first-of-its-kind project for the UK, aims to form a larger local population to make them more resistant to potential threats such as disease. The project has received a grant from Natural England's Species Recovery Programme and will form a best-practice case study. Further radio tracking and camera traps will be employed to monitor the tunnel usage, and the results will have significant implications for similar future projects across the country.

Work Experience opportunities

The Environment Department has hosted 6 work experience students in the last year, teaching students about how we work collaboratively across the Council to deliver climate action.

Almond Avenue orchard

The Almond Avenue orchard has been a great success and is providing an array of fruit trees. The apple trees are thriving and provide a great source of food for our declining pollinators, as well as an abundance of fruit.

Newbury and Thatcham Repair Cafés

Newbury and Thatcham Repair Café held its first event in February 2024, with the support of donations and grants from West Berkshire Council, Thatcham Town Council and Greenham Trust.

From February 2024 through to July 2024, the Repair Café held 6 events, at monthly intervals, where volunteers repair (for free) a wide variety of broken household and garden items, and restore cherished family objects including a phonograph, several teddy bears, costume jewellery and ornaments. During that time, the remarkable and dedicated team of volunteers saved over 300 items from going to waste-processing or landfill – a total of over 700kg in weight.

The Repair Café continues to offer monthly events alternating between venues in both Newbury and Thatcham.

Newbury Community Resource Centre

The Newbury Community Resource Centre is a local charity which provides reused furniture for local people in need and offers opportunities for volunteering, work experience and training. It also helps the environment by reusing furniture and other items such as washing machines.

Between July 2023 and July 2024, they had over 144,083 customer visits and…

- Reused 77,100 household items
- 15,523 donations of furniture and household goods received
- 4,212 household collection of donated goods completed
- 3,160 deliveries of furniture to people's homes
- 3,835 electrical items tested and repaired
- 659 tonnes of furniture, appliances and other bulky items reused and recycled

Environment Advisory Group Open Forum

At the end of July 2023, the first Open Forum of the Environment Advisory Group was held. These sessions have continued approximately every 2 months and are available to watch on the Council's YouTube Channel. They provide the opportunity for exploring interesting environmental topics, hearing from experts and interest groups and learning about action happening in West Berkshire or further afield from which we can learn and be inspired. As the name suggests, the forum is open to anyone to attend either in person or online and acts as a way in which we can engage with each other as we journey together on the road to tackling our declared climate and ecological emergencies.

Better Bus travel!

Multiple Bus service improvements have been made over the course of the year, due to the fact we were awarded funding from HM Government after the submission of a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). This improves connections to jobs and retail opportunities for residents and cuts the number of private cars on the road. Local Bus Operators have been supportive.

Increased Recycling

Earlier this year, WBC hired a new waste and recycling contractor called Hills Waste Solutions for our corporate sites.

As a result of the change, 19 sites have requested updates to their collections which has resulted in 25 additional food waste bins and 25 extra mixed recycling bins.

West Berkshire Wild Verges

West Berkshire Wild Verges was a collaborative project between BBOWT and West Berkshire Council that ran from March 2021 until March 2024.

The project recruited a large team of volunteers who surveyed the rural verges of West Berkshire. We wanted to get a clearer picture of the state of our verges including their potential for growing wildflowers.

With more than 1,700km of rural road verges under our stewardship, we are keen to use them to make space for nature, boost biodiversity and help connect fragmented habitats.

Therefore, we'll be using the information gathered to help explore opportunities and ways in which we can manage these verges more effectively.

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 with Scope 3 emissions being optional. We have included the Scope 3 emissions from our largest contracts (waste (Veolia), highways (Volker Highways) and our Leisure Centre operator (Everyone Active 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 2023 – 31st March 2024 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)

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 Global Warming Potential (GWP) by converting amounts of other gases to the equivalent amount of CO2 [3].

[3] https://coolerfuture.com/en/blog/co2e

Table 1: West Berkshire Council's Carbon Footprint 2023/24 compared to baseline (2019/20)

Emissions Scope	Emissions Source	2019/20 (Baseline)		2023/2024		difference CO_2e (tonnes) between baseline and 23/24	% difference between baseline and 23/24
		CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions	CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions		
1	Stationary Combustion (e.g. energy use)	3,502.3	30.1%	2953.1	32.7%	-549.2	-15.7%
	Mobile Combustion (e.g. vehicles)	290.6	2.5%	218.4	2.4%	-72.2	-24.8%
	Sewage Processing and Refrigerants	146.0	1.3%	124.2	1.4%	-21.8	-14.9%
	Total Scope 1	**3,939.0**	**33.9%**	**3295.8**	**36.5%**	**-643.23**	**-16.3%**
2	Purchased electricity	3,495.8	30.1%	2,529.4	28%	-966.5	-27.7%
	Total Scope 2	**3,495.8**	**30.1%**	**2,529.4**	**28%**	**-966.5**	**-27.7%**
3	Contractor Emissions	2,574.7	22.2%	2,010.23	22.3%	-564.5	-21.9%
	Leisure Centres	1,228.9	10.6%	865.54	9.6%	-363.4	-29.6%
	Business Travel	381.2	3.3%	325.0	3.6%	-56.2	-14.8%
	Total Scope 3	**4,184.8**	**36.0%**	**3,200.7**	**35.5%**	**-984.1**	**-23.5%**
	All Scopes	11,619.6	100.0%	9,025.9	100.0%	-2593.7	-22.3%

4.7 Table 1 shows the data for the 2019/20 baseline and the latest data for 2023/24. The percentage differences between these two positions are shown in the last column in the table. The overall position is that the latest 2023/24 figures show a 22% reduction in emissions from the baseline.

4.8 The year-on-year changes from the baseline through to 2023/24 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: West Berkshire Carbon Emissions 2019/20 – 2023/24

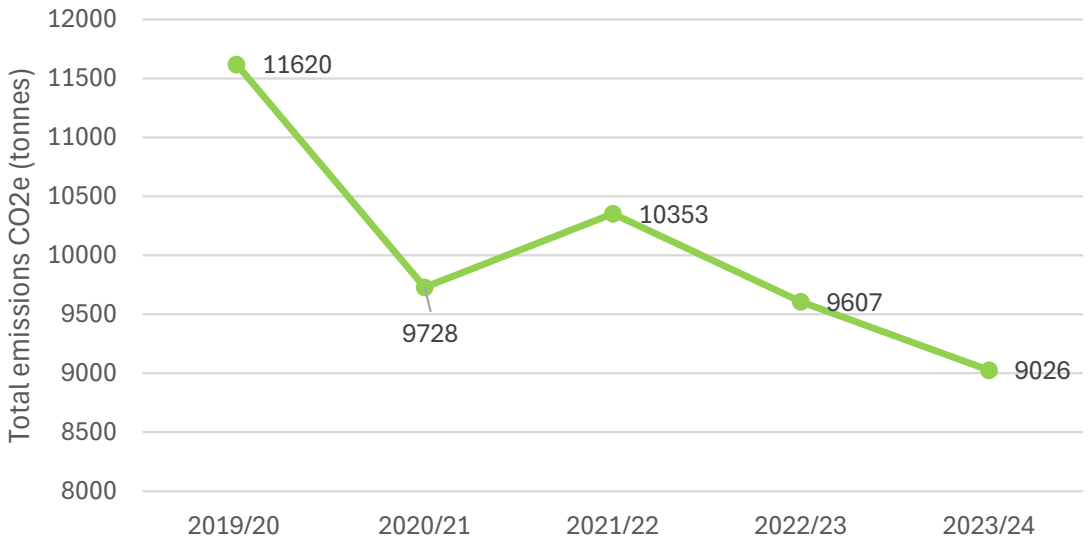
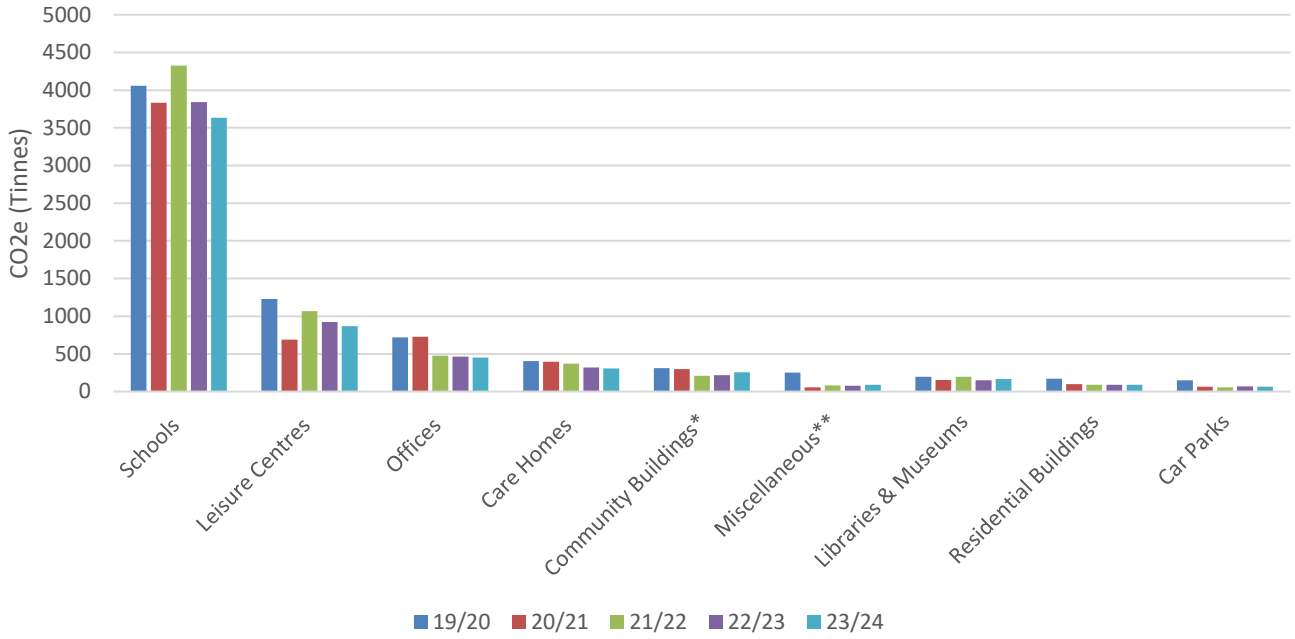


Figure 3: Council emissions by asset type 2019/20 – 2023/24



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 (2023/24), like last year, the Council's emissions have reduced to below the levels impacted by the covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, highlighting that the Council's emissions are reducing based on action it is taking. Since reporting began in 2019/20, the Council has reduced its emissions by 22% overall. It is anticipated they will continue to progress on this path as new projects and actions are brought forward.

4.10 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. However schools have seen a reduction from last year and are now having less impact than was recorded in the covid-impacted period. This is owing to factors such as a reduction in usage as a result of behaviour change and energy efficiency and renewable technology improvements. 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 2022. These figures are included in Table 2 and Figure 4 along with previous years since we started reporting in our Environment Strategy and Annual Progress Reports.

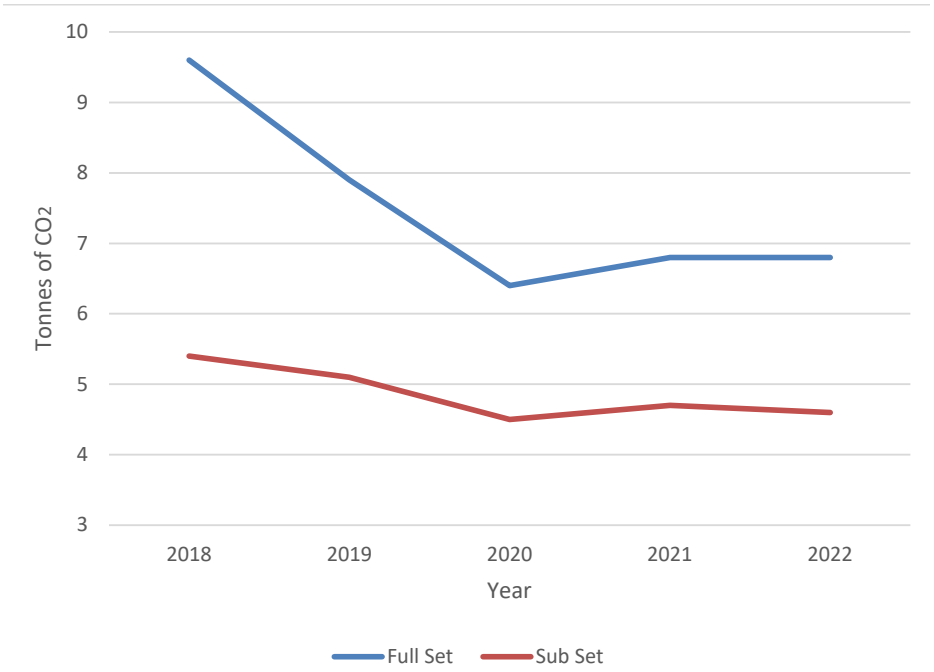
5.4 When the 2020 figures were reported, it was highlighted that these reflected the dramatic changes in behaviour that the Covid19 pandemic and associated lockdown periods had caused. The 2022 figures show a similar pattern to the 2021 figures when lockdown restrictions were lifted and new patterns of behaviour were created leading to an increase in emissions. The emissions in 2022 broadly remain the same as 2021 with a small decrease in the subset figures. The recent projects and carbon reduction activities being delivered in and by our communities will feed into more recent years for which data is not yet published

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 and ecological emergencies. Policies within the adopted and emerging Local Plans also have an important role to play in carbon reduction across the District.

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

	Full Set	Sub Set
2018	9.6	5.4
2019	7.9	5.1
2020	6.4	4.5
2021	6.8	4.7
2022	6.8	4.6

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



5.6 It is recognised that there is a huge amount to be achieved but with collective action progress can be made. The challenge is to press ahead with greater working together and innovative ideas to deliver a more sustainable future across the District.

6. Conclusion and looking ahead

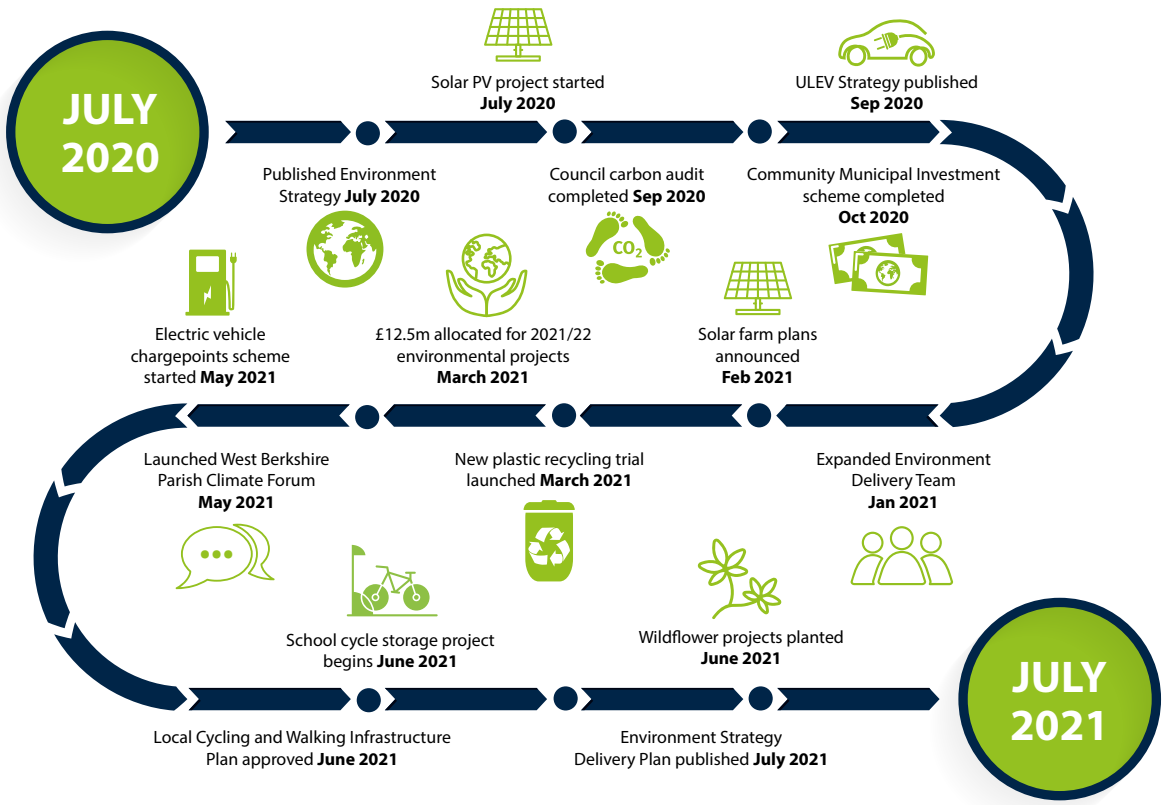
6.1 This fourth year of delivering our Environment Strategy has been another busy one. Activities have been varied with project delivery, establishment of new ideas and processes, bidding for external funding and background planning work for large projects to be launched in future years.

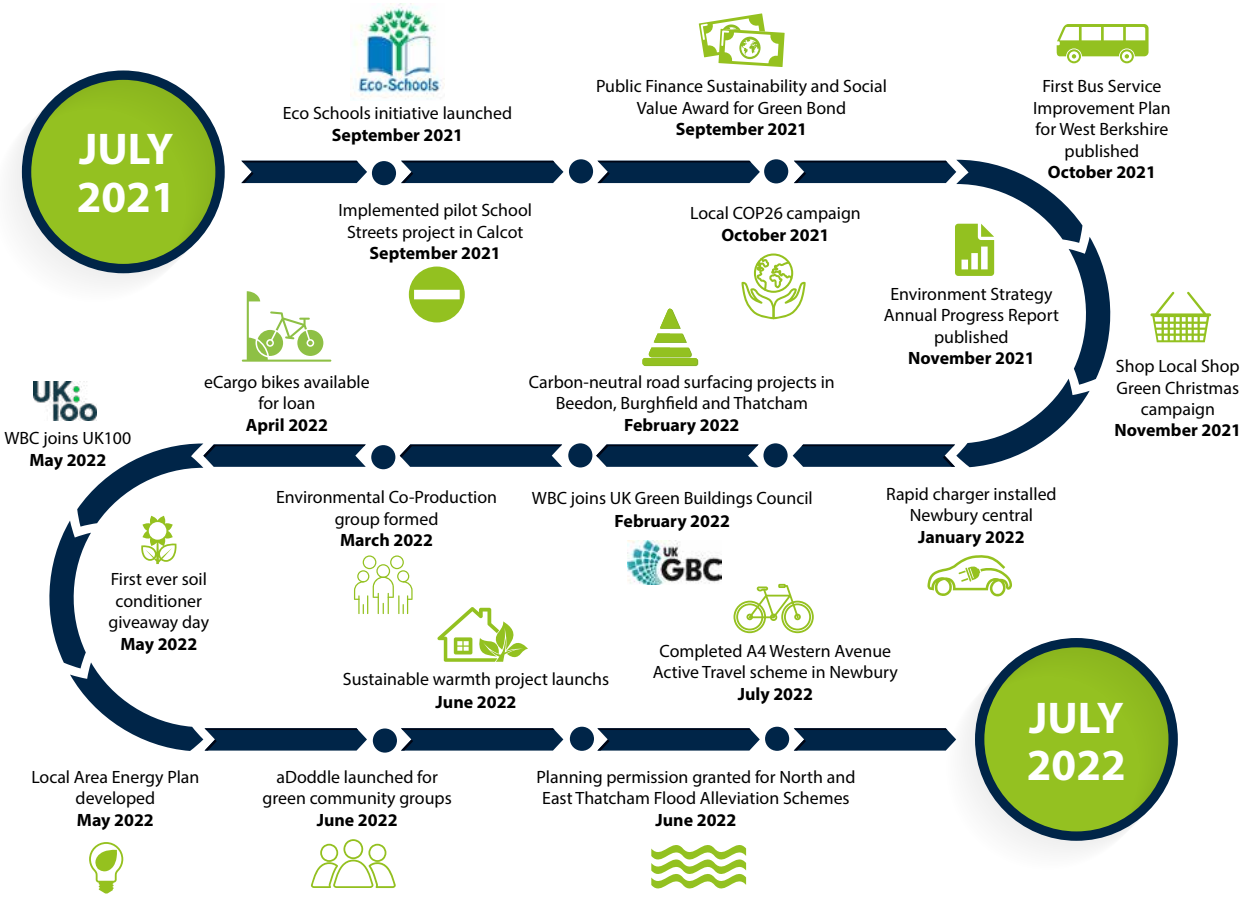
6.2 We have sought to engage with businesses, Parish and Town Councils, community groups and landowners. We aim to share all we know so that there is easy access to any projects, funding or initiatives that will benefit members of the West Berkshire community. This is key as we all work together and journey on the pathway to net zero.

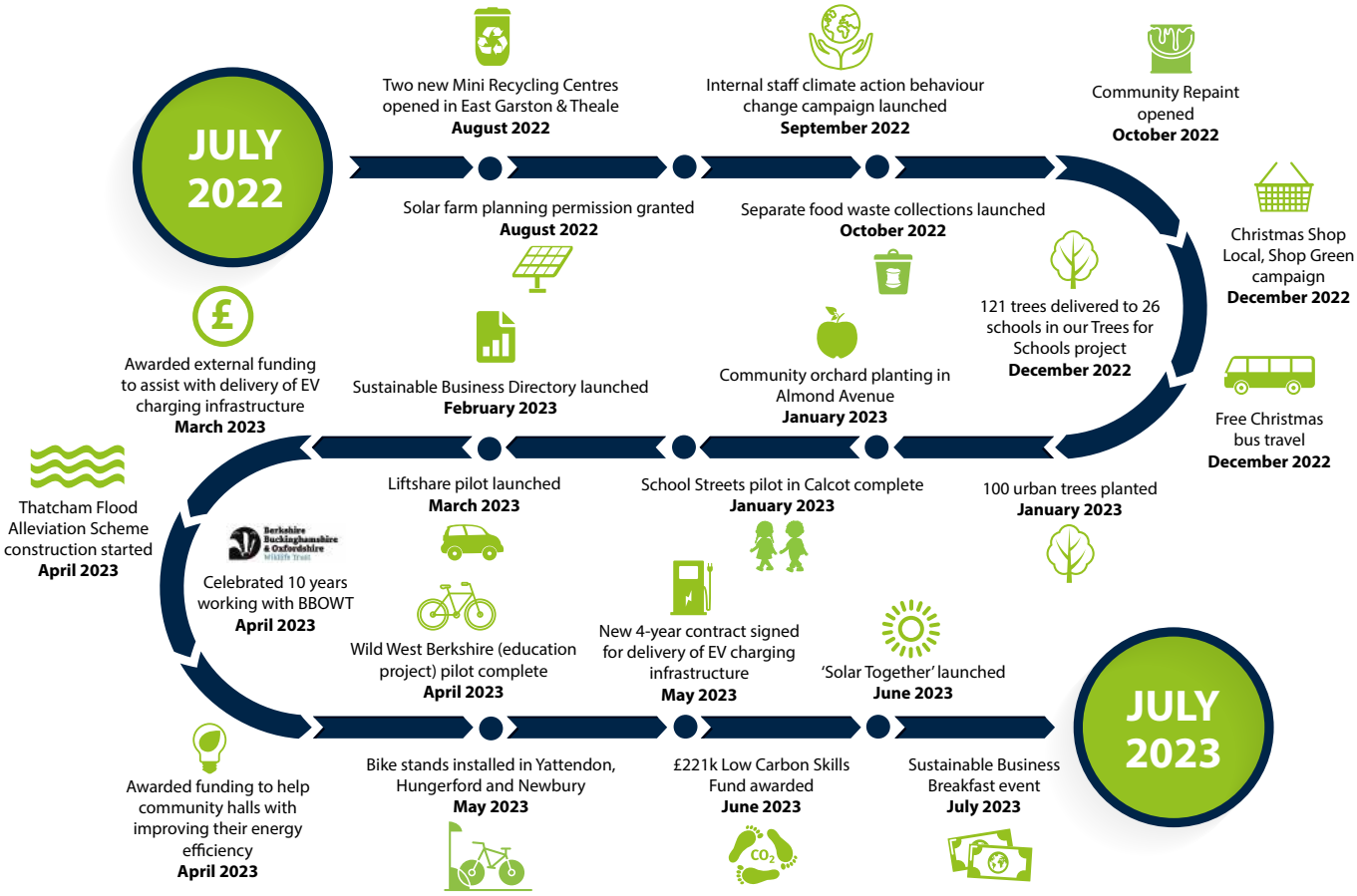
6.3 There is a wealth of great 'climate action' happening across the district with many organisations leading by example. We have been pleased to add the Environment Advisory Group Open Forum to the ways in which we can engage, share information and facilitate discussion. We also try and share relevant 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.

6.4 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 and reach the half way mark of 2025, we will look to refresh the Environment Strategy. This will aim to be more focused, have a streamlined Delivery Plan and add detail to our pathway to net zero plans.

Appendix A - 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
Solar farm planning permission granted
August 2022
Separate food waste collections launched
October 2022
Christmas Shop Local, Shop Green campaign
December 2022
Awarded external funding to assist with delivery of EV charging infrastructure
March 2023
Sustainable Business Directory launched
February 2023
Community orchard planting in Almond Avenue
January 2023
121 trees delivered to 26 schools in our Trees for Schools project
December 2022
Free Christmas bus travel
December 2022
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 2023/24. 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		2023/2024	
		CO_2e (tonnes)	% of total emissions	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%	2953.1	32.7%
	Mobile Combustion (e.g. vehicles)	**290.64	2.5%	353.9	3.6%	552.9	5.3%	232.73	2.4%	218.4	2.4%
	Sewage Processing	38.33	0.3%	38.3	0.4%	15.7	0.2%	15.68	0.2%	124.2	1.4%
	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%**	**3295.8**	**36.5%**
2	Purchased electricity	3,495.76	30.1%	2,946.6	30.3%	2,643.4	25.5%	2,475.21	29.4%	2,529.4	28%
	Total Scope 2	**3,495.76**	**30.1%**	**2,946.6**	**30.3%**	**2,643.4**	**25.5%**	**2,475.21**	**29.4%**	**2,529.4**	**28%**
3	Contractor Emissions	2,574.72	22.2%	2,397.0	24.6%	2,359.3	22.8%	2,537.77	25.8%	2,010.23	22.3%
	Leisure Centres	1,228.93	10.6%	691.3	7.1%	1,066.3	10.3%	938.34	9.5%	865.54	9.6%
	Business Travel	**381.17	3.3%	0.3	0.0%	8.4	0.1%	364.56	3.7%	325.0	3.6%
	Total Scope 3	**4,184.82**	**36.0%**	**3,088.6**	**31.7%**	**3,433.9**	**33.2%**	**3,840.67**	**39.0%**	**3,200.7**	**35.5%**
	All Scopes	11619.588	100.0%	9,728.2	100.0%	10,353.4	100.0%	9,837.68	100.0%	9,025.9	100.0%

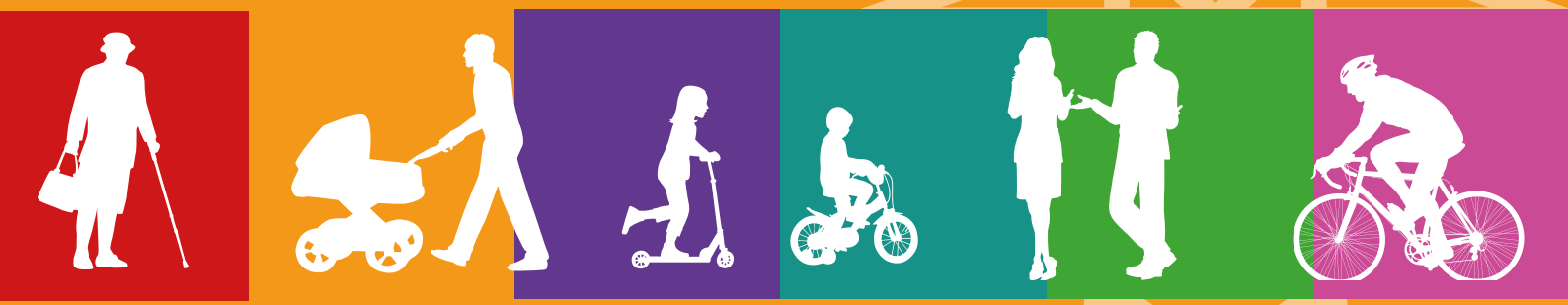
Appendix C – Glossary

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.
	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 CO2 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.
	North Wessex Downs National Landscape (previously AONB)	Area of countryside designated for conservation in recognition of its national importance.
	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 CO2, 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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