

Climate Change Strategy

2025 - 2030



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Introduction

Statement from the Leader of the council

Climate change is the greatest challenge that we and our future generations face. Having a profound effect on the environment and the ecosystems upon which life depends, it threatens our health, the supply chains we depend upon, and the places where we live. Although a global issue, these consequences will undoubtedly impact us here in Bracknell Forest too.



Flooding, storms and heatwaves, the likes of which we are already experiencing, will become more severe and more frequent. With hotter summers comes the increased risk of wildfires in our surrounding forests. A changing climate also endangers our biodiversity, bringing with it the threat of new invasive species and diseases to the UK. Furthermore, the impacts of climate change will bring repercussions for our economy and our food security. Action is crucial to prevent and mitigate these crises; but action also promises a future with more secure, cheaper energy, clean air, new jobs, and a flourishing natural environment.

As a matter that is incredibly important to me personally, I took the lead as the portfolio holder for climate change following my election as Leader of Bracknell Forest Council in May 2023. This desire to tackle climate change is something that I share with many others across both the council and the borough. Politically, there is strong cross-party consensus on the urgency and necessity for action, and in September 2023 Bracknell Forest Council declared a climate and biodiversity emergency and committed to achieving net-zero CO2 emissions as close to 2030 as possible. Over the past year we have taken a number of positive steps towards this goal, including the establishment of the Joint Climate Action Board (JCAB) which has brought representatives from local businesses, schools and community groups together with council officers and councillors to coordinate and drive forward activity in the borough.

This new Climate Change Strategy is a reflection of our ambition and commitment and outlines the council's vision and plans to accelerate our progress towards net-zero over the course of the next five years, as we look to decarbonise the activities of the council and support climate action across Bracknell Forest. We all have an important part to play in addressing climate change and protecting our planet for current and future generations. By working with the community, local businesses and neighbouring boroughs, we can transform and secure a positive future for Bracknell Forest. Together we can rapidly reduce our emissions in a way that is fair and financially responsible, enhance the quality of life in Bracknell Forest, and demonstrate leadership in local climate action.

Councillor Mary Temperton

Leader of Bracknell Forest Council



Chief Executive's introduction

Throughout my career in local government I have been committed to tackling climate change, and understand the important role that local authorities can – and need – to play in achieving the change that is required. We are uniquely placed to implement, effect and inspire action within our community, and facilitate this change in a way that is sustainable and delivers the wider social, health, economic and environmental benefits that climate action promises.



Mitigating and adapting to climate change needs to be at the heart of everything we do at Bracknell Forest Council not only because of our strategic position, but because it is in our interest and the interest of our residents. Extreme weather events and changes to our natural systems will have a profound effect on the operations of the council, whether through disruptions to essential services and supplies, increased cost pressures, or through damage to buildings and assets. However, climate action also supports us in achieving other key priorities of ours, beyond the ambition of addressing and adapting to the climate and biodiversity emergency. Reducing pollution, increasing the availability of green spaces and encouraging walking and cycling, for instance, aligns with our commitment to improve health and wellbeing. Developing energy efficient homes brings down energy bills and helps us to tackle fuel poverty, expanding and improving public transport increases mobility for everyone, and collective action enhances community cohesion.

Over the last few years we have made positive progress in confronting the challenge of climate change. Since 2023 we have hosted two Bracknell Forest Climate Change Summits welcoming attendees representing local businesses, community groups, schools and councils, launched the Joint Climate Action Board to accelerate collective action in the borough, and organised two climate change conferences for secondary schools and one for primary schools to empower the next generation. In transport we have rolled out electric vehicle charging points, accelerated the electrification of the council's fleet of cars and vans, and have encouraged active travel through both initiatives and infrastructure. As well as investing over £1million into energy efficiency upgrades and solar panel installations for our own buildings, we have supported Bracknell Forest residents to do the same, and have set ambitions to see homes within the borough becoming as energy efficient as possible. We are reducing waste going to landfill, supporting biodiversity, engaging with local businesses, and enabling our staff to learn more about climate change and what it is that we need to do.

As the Chief Executive of Bracknell Forest Council, I am delighted to present this Climate Change Strategy, which sets out our plan to build upon these achievements and accelerate climate action across both the council and the borough. Covering the period from 2025 to 2030, it will play a crucial role in guiding us to fulfil our commitment to reach net zero as close to 2030 as possible.

Susan Halliwell

Chief Executive of Bracknell Forest Council



Executive summary

This strategy sets out the work Bracknell Forest Council will do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Bracknell Forest and make progress towards net zero, as well as protecting the borough from the impacts of climate change. It has the following aims:

- 1 Council emissions:**
Reduce net council emissions to zero as close to 2030 as possible
- 2 Borough emissions:**
Support the reduction of net borough emissions to zero as close to 2030 as possible, including in the priority areas of:
 - A. Buildings and energy supply
 - B. Transport
 - C. Land and waste
- 3 Community engagement:**
Engage and empower residents and communities to take climate action
- 4 Adaption:**
Prepare for the impacts of climate change, including those:
 - A. On the council
 - B. On the borough
- 5 Green economy:**
Support the expansion of the green economy.



The following **key principles** will be embedded in all the work done to deliver on these aims:



A new action plan will be developed to underpin the strategy, incorporating and building on the actions in the strategy. The council will deliver this strategy in three phases:

Phase 1: Transition

1

Phase 2: Acceleration

2

Phase 3: Delivery

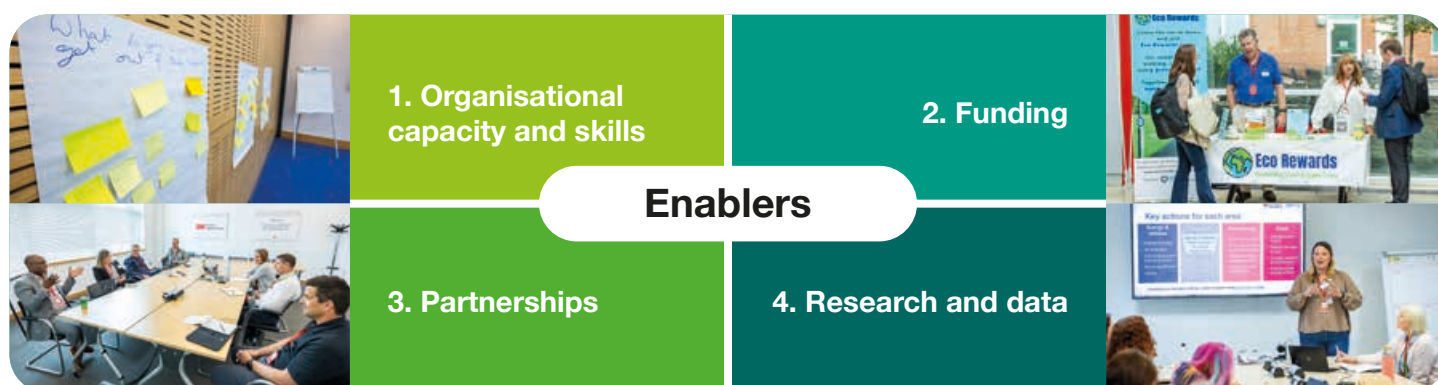
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(Mar 2025 - Mar 2026), which will focus on quick wins and enabling work such as planning, research, exploratory work and capacity and relationship-building.

(Mar 2026 - Mar 2027), which will focus on laying the groundwork for wider delivery by securing funding, designing and procuring schemes and running trials.

(Mar 2027 onwards), which will see the council deliver climate action at scale, both in its own operations and in support of borough-wide change.

Delivery will be underpinned by focusing on the following four enablers:



Context

Introduction to climate change

The climate of the Earth is changing, with temperatures rising across the planet in a process often referred to as global warming or heating. Scientists overwhelmingly agree that the reason for this change is the burning of fossil fuels by humans, alongside other activities which emit greenhouse gases¹.

Greenhouse gases are substances which make it harder for heat to escape from the surface of the Earth. This means that when we release more of these gases into the atmosphere, we receive more heat from the sun than we release to space, meaning that the Earth heats up. Hotter objects radiate more heat away, so the heating continues until the planet is radiating enough heat into space again to match the energy coming in from the sun².

Carbon dioxide, produced by burning fossil fuels and organic matter, is the most significant of these gases, but others such as methane also have a big impact. As long as we continue to increase the level of these gases in the atmosphere, the planet will continue to warm. To avoid further changes to the climate, we therefore need to reduce net emissions of these gases to zero. This is also known as reaching “net zero”³.

This means that if we continue with activities which produce these gases, we will need to remove an equivalent amount of them from the atmosphere. There is currently no method of removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere at the scale which would be needed to compensate for emissions at current levels. This means that to reduce net emissions at the speed we need to, we will need to make large reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases.

The impacts of climate change on people, society and nature around the world will include⁴:

- sea level rises and increased flood risk
- more and worse extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, which may cause damage or harm people
- biodiversity loss and species extinction
- risks to food and water security
- spread of pests and diseases to new areas.

Climate change poses a significant risk to the Bracknell Forest and its residents. However, the impacts of climate change will be felt most severely in less economically developed areas of the world, which also have less capacity to respond. This makes reducing our emissions even more urgent.

1 [Scientific Consensus](#), NASA, accessed 13/06/2024

2 [The Basics of Climate Change](#), The Royal Society, accessed 13/06/2024

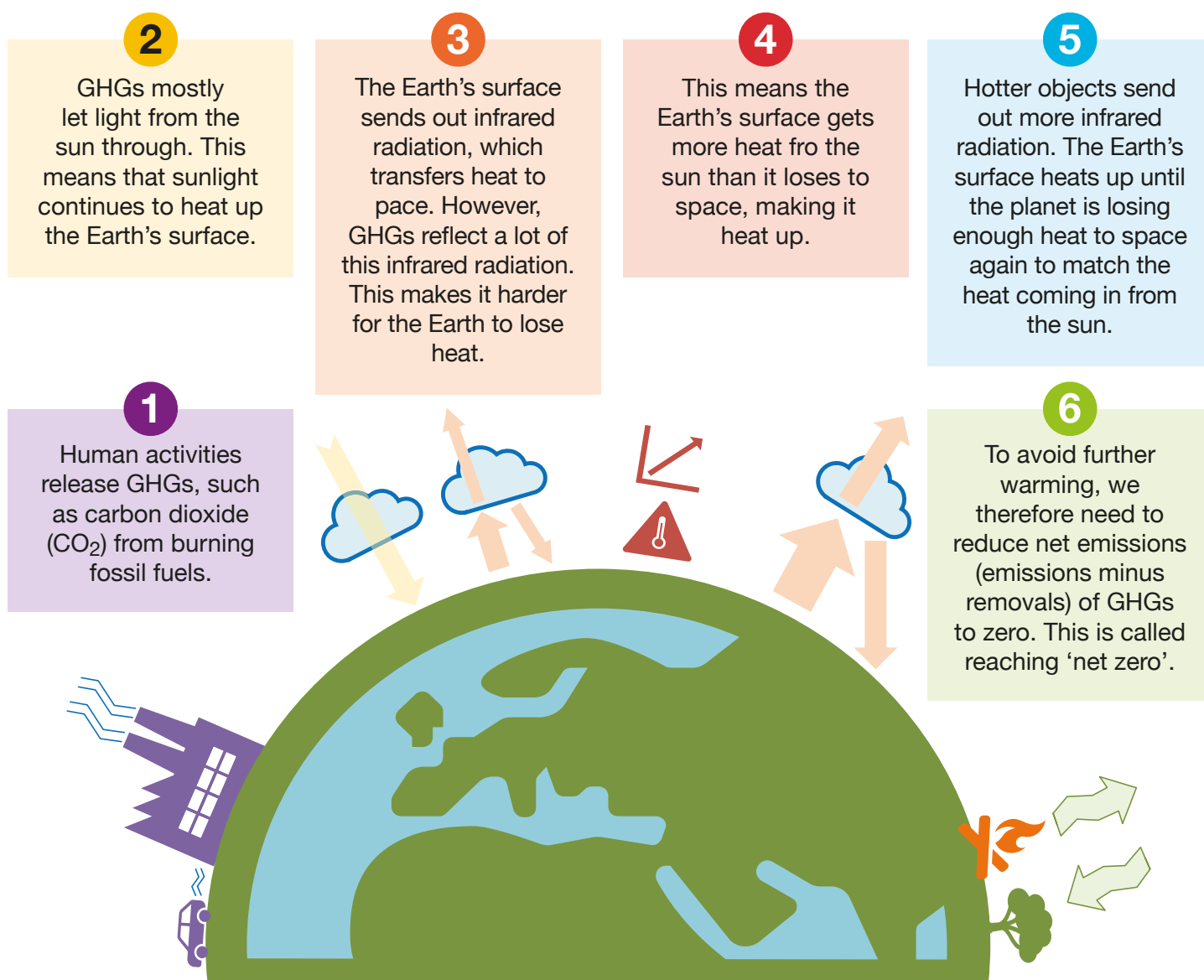
3 [What is net zero and how are the UK and other countries doing?](#), BBC, 2023

4 [Effects of climate change](#), Met Office, accessed 13/06/2024



The Paris Agreement, signed in 2015, is a key international agreement on climate change. It commits us to limiting global temperature increases to well below 2°C, while pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C.⁵ The UN's Sustainable Development Goals also have a climate focus, with goal 13 being "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts"⁶. In the UK, national legislation commits us to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 and reducing emissions by 78% by 2035 (compared to 1990)⁷.

This strategy has been developed based on in-depth research and engagement focusing on Bracknell Forest, and has had input from councillors, council staff and residents. Its focus is reducing emissions so that Bracknell Forest reaches net zero as soon as possible, and preparing for the effects of climate change on the borough so that it is protected and ready to respond.



⁵ [The Paris Agreement](#), UNFCCC, accessed 13/06/2024

⁶ [Goal 13](#), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed 13/06/2024

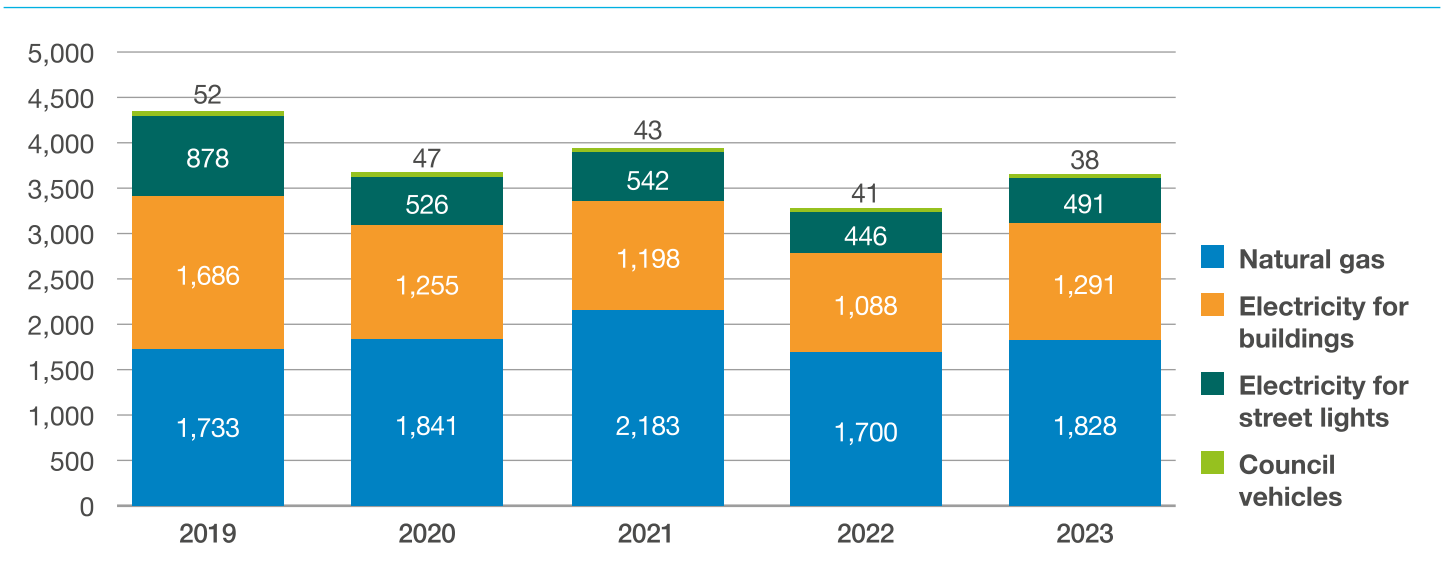
⁷ [UK enshrines new target in law to slash emissions by 78% by 2035](#), UK Government, 2021

Bracknell Forest’s contribution to climate change

Bracknell Forest Council

Bracknell Forest Council is responsible for emissions from a range of sources. The graph below shows how emissions from energy use in its buildings and fuel use in its vehicles (referred to as scope 1 and 2 emissions) break down and the changes over time⁸:

Bracknell Forest Council scope 1 and 2 emissons over time (tCO₂e)



In addition to this, the council is indirectly responsible for causing emissions elsewhere, from sources it does not control directly. These are known as scope 3 emissions. These are more difficult to measure, but major sources of scope 3 emissions are likely to include the following⁹:

Production and transportation of purchased goods and services

Emissions from assets leased out

Delivery of outsourced services

Staff travel, commuting and home working

Investments

Disposal of the organisation's waste

⁸ Note that because different greenhouse gases have different lifespans in the atmosphere and different impacts on warming, it is standard practice to summarise emissions of different gases by comparing their impact to that of carbon dioxide – hence the use of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) when measuring emissions.

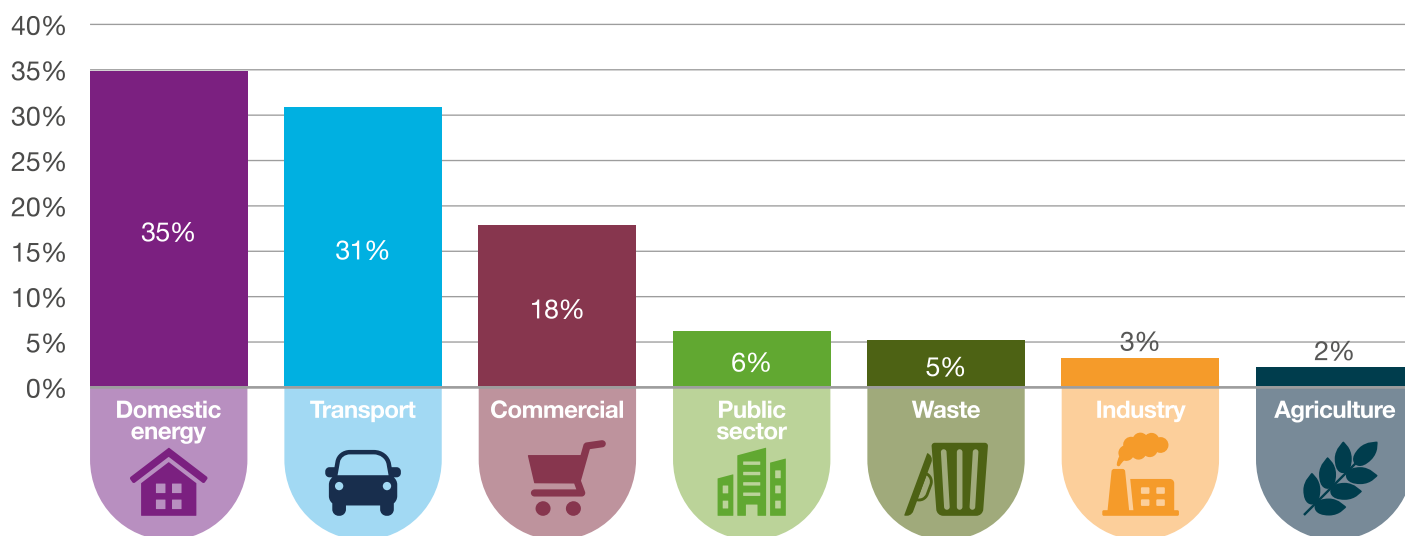
⁹ What are Scope 3 emissions and why do they matter?, The Carbon Trust, accessed 13/06/2024



Bracknell Forest as a borough

In 2022, Bracknell Forest's territorial emissions (those produced due to activities taking place in the borough) were 410 ktCO₂e (3.2 tCO₂e per person)¹⁰. These break down as shown by the graph below.

As this shows, electricity and gas use in buildings and transport are by far the most significant contributors to this footprint. Domestic housing and road transport account for the majority of these emissions respectively. Negative contributions from land use – mainly from forests – are not shown but are around 19 ktCO₂e.



Bracknell Forest's residents

In 2021, Bracknell Forest residents were responsible for a total of 1,354 ktCO₂e of emissions¹¹. There is a large overlap with borough emissions, for example in domestic heating and personal transport. However, this footprint covers additional categories, including emissions from:

- the goods and services residents buy
- investment (such as construction) in the borough
- the delivery of government services which residents depend on.

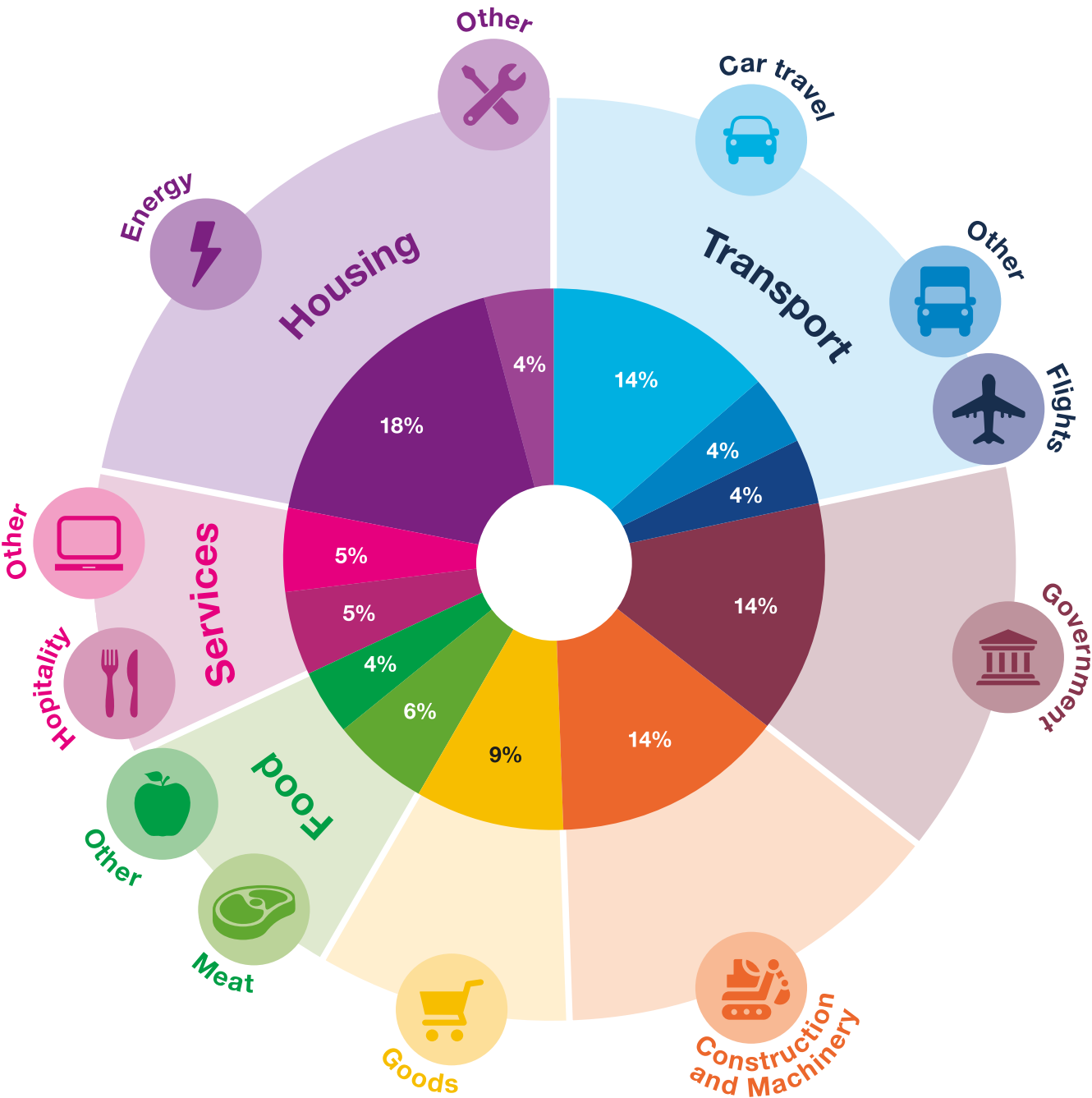
Unlike territorial emissions it does not include emissions in the borough not connected with residents (such as those from local businesses).

It is important to track these emissions as well as territorial emissions because the activities of residents cause emissions to take place elsewhere. This can be outside Bracknell Forest or even the UK, so focusing solely on territorial emissions would miss a large part of Bracknell Forest's impacts as a place.

¹⁰ 2005 to 2022 UK local and regional greenhouse gas emissions, UK Government, 27 June 2024. These cover the emissions released within the boundaries of the local authority itself, as well as emissions associated with generating electricity, producing and processing fuel and disposing of waste which is used or generated in the area. Net emissions removal from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) are not shown on the graph. 2022 is the most recent year for which this data is available.

¹¹ Local Authority Consumption Accounts (LACA), Owen, 2024 – 2021 is the most recent year for which this data is available.

The graph below shows how these emissions break down:



Actions which reduce emissions

There are many sources of emissions and so many actions needed to reach net zero. However, actions in the three areas below will form themes across many topic areas and stakeholders:

Decarbonising buildings

Emissions from buildings can be reduced by doing the following:

- reducing heat loss so that less energy is needed to keep buildings warm – for example by improving floor, wall and roof insulation, installing double or triple glazing and draught-proofing
- installing heating systems which don't emit carbon – such as heat pumps (which use electricity) or district heating networks
- not using any other equipment which burns fossil fuels – for example, using electric hobs rather than gas
- using energy-efficient equipment such as LED lighting
- generating renewable power onsite to cover the building's remaining energy use, for example with rooftop solar panels, or purchasing power through a renewable electricity tariff.

Reducing transport emissions

Emissions from transport can be reduced through measures such as:

- reducing the need to travel in the first place or the distance people need to travel, for example through home working and providing services locally
- increasing the use of active travel (walking and cycling), which do not lead to significant emissions
- increasing use of public transport such as buses and trains, which reduce emissions as they are more efficient per person and may be easier to electrify
- using low or zero emissions vehicles – for example electric vehicles or vehicles which run on hydrogen or biofuel
- reducing the need for freight transport, for example by not buying unnecessary goods and by identifying opportunities to consolidate deliveries
- reducing flying, which has a particularly high emissions footprint.

Goods and waste

Emissions from buying goods and disposing of waste can be reduced by:










- buying products with lower emissions footprints (for example, buying less meat and more vegetables)
- reducing waste by not buying unnecessary goods and re-using items where possible
- ensuring that waste is recycled or composted wherever possible, rather than going into general waste which will be burned or buried
- avoiding any biodegradable material going into landfill, where it will release the potent greenhouse gas methane as it decomposes
- building a circular economy, which means buying products made from recycled or renewable materials rather than new resources and borrowing or leasing items where possible rather than buying and then disposing of them.



Climate impacts

Climate change will threaten Bracknell Forest’s ecosystems, economy and the health and lives of residents. This means that local and global action to reduce emissions and minimise the impact of climate change will be vital.

However, regardless of this Bracknell Forest will experience some warming and there is a risk of significant warming if emissions are not limited at the global scale. The table below shows what the impact could be on the local climate at different levels of global heating¹:

Local impacts	Now	At 2°C	At 4°C
Maximum temperatures	 35.8°C	 37.7°C	 43°C
Average rainfall (days per month in summer)	 8	 7	 5
Maximum rainfall (rainiest summer day)	 44mm	 54mm	 50mm

The climate hazard wheel below shows what impacts this could have for the borough²:



¹ Based on data from [What will climate change look like in your area?](#), BBC, 2022
² Based on applying national research, particularly the [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment](#), to the local area



Risks this will create to the council and the borough include:

Risks to the borough		Risks to Bracknell Forest Council	
	Injuries and risks to health		Reputational risks
	Poor physical and mental health		Staff health impacts
	Disruption of services and transport		Staff transport disruption
	Food shortages		Service delivery disruption
	Economic damage and job losses		Increased costs and supply shortages
	Damage to buildings and infrastructure		Damage to buildings and assets
	Harm to local ecosystem		Pressure on relevant council teams



Framework

Key principles

These key principles will underpin all of the council's climate activities. They will make sure that the council delivers effective climate action which supports all residents and communities.



Making sure the journey to net zero is fair to everyone.

This transition needs to be inclusive of every community in Bracknell Forest and not unfairly disadvantage anyone – this is known as a “just transition”. Climate change will worsen many inequalities already present in the borough, so the council will need to support equity and representation in its activities. If people are expected to make a difficult or expensive change or meet new requirements, they should be offered support to compensate for this wherever possible.



Making sure climate action delivers other benefits, where possible.

There are many ways in which climate action can benefit residents, businesses and ecosystems (“co-benefits”). Council activities will be most effective if they can make these links and deliver on multiple priorities at the same time. The impacts of climate action on other council priorities will need to be mitigated where possible.



Harnessing innovation and technological development.

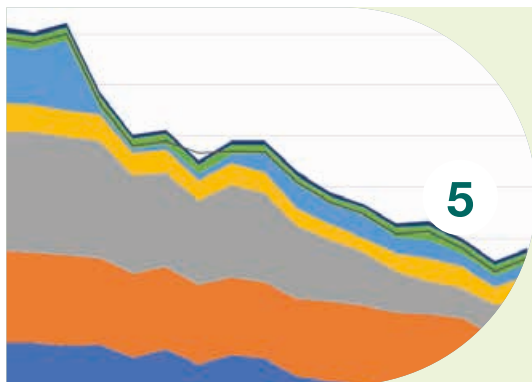
As technology advances, new and better opportunities to decarbonise the borough will become available. The council will remain abreast of these changes so it can take advantage of progress and will aim to foster an innovative spirit to tackling climate change in the borough.





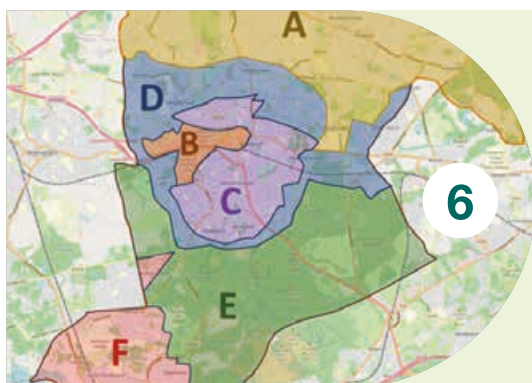
Working with and supporting others.

Climate change is not a problem that the council or any other organisation can solve alone, so to increase impact it will collaborate with key partners and local organisations and facilitate partnerships. It will aim to bring together all of Bracknell Forest to tackle this challenge as a community, and to co-produce and co-deliver climate action with others where possible.



Making financially responsible decisions based on evidence.

The council (and its partners) have limited financial resources. To make sure it uses these to the greatest possible effect, it will need to prioritise actions which will do the most to achieve climate aims and design projects so that they have the greatest chance of success.



Focusing on the needs and priorities of Bracknell Forest.

The council is accountable to our residents and needs to deliver for the local area. Its focus will therefore be on reducing the emissions and building the resilience of the borough, and it will take account of the different needs and characteristics of different areas of the borough.



Tackling climate change collectively as an organisation.

Teams across the council oversee and are responsible for carbon-intensive activities, and the impacts of climate change will affect every part of our operations. Tackling the issue will be the responsibility of all council staff and services, not just a few specialised teams.

Specific considerations relevant to the key principles are listed under each strategy aim, and the four enablers in the delivery section of this strategy.



Links to current strategies

Climate change is identified as a key priority in the Council Plan for the 2023-2027 period, with the following ambition for the borough:

- “ There is collective action to address and adapt to the climate and biodiversity emergency. We will measure this by:
- Increasing the correct use of recycling.
 - Increasing the average energy efficiency rating of the housing stock in the borough.
 - A reduction in borough emissions.
 - Increasing the installation of public electric vehicle charge points.
 - Increasing new trees being supported to independent growth.
- ”

This Climate Change Strategy will make sure the council achieves this ambition as well as supporting many of the other ambitions in the plan.

This strategy will also be supported by, and help to deliver on, key priorities in other council strategies and services including the following:

- **The 2024 to 2034 Economic Strategy**, which has the following vision:

- “ By 2034, a growing and resilient economy that matches the best in Berkshire, supports, attracts, and retains high-quality businesses, promotes sustainable growth in clean and green, knowledge-based industries, and provides economic opportunity with good, secure jobs for our people who will have the skills to succeed.
- ”

Climate action will be central to achieving these aims.

- **The 2025 to 2037 Local Transport Plan**, which reflects crucial links to decarbonisation in its vision:

- “ To develop a sustainable and resilient transport network that reduces carbon, provides choice and access for all in a safe and healthy environment, making Bracknell Forest a desirable place to live, work and grow.
- ”

This is supported by a range of sub-documents for specific areas including the EV charging infrastructure and walking and cycling strategies.



- **The 2022 to 2026 Health and Wellbeing Strategy.** This has priorities that can be supported by climate action, or will be put at risk by climate change, such as:
 - Support[ing] emotional and physical health from birth to adulthood
 - Promot[ing] mental health
 - Keep[ing] residents safe from infectious diseases
 - Improv[ing] years lived with good health and happiness
- The recently updated **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**, which aims to support local biodiversity, green spaces and wildlife over the next five years and includes a range of objectives relevant to climate adaptation and mitigation from nature and land use perspectives.
- **The 2024 to 2037 Bracknell Forest Local Plan**, which helps ensure future development can be directed to the most sustainable locations, reducing the need to travel by car, and also includes policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Other priorities, including:
 - financial hardship work, which aims to tackle the significant income disparities present in the borough and support the financial independence of disadvantaged residents
 - action to improve sustainable transport links in the borough and tackle air pollution, which presents a threat to the health of residents
 - meeting legal duties to manage flood risk, conduct emergency planning, prevent homelessness and protect and promote the welfare of children.









Co-benefits of climate action

The table below shows the co-benefits of climate action the council aims to achieve for the borough:

	Co-benefit	Explanation
	Financial resilience and reduced poverty	Many interventions which reduce energy or resource use (and thus emissions) will also save residents money, protecting those facing deprivation.
	Health	Many climate-positive actions – for example active travel or moving to a climate-friendly diet – also have health benefits.
	Economy and employment	The green economy could grow Bracknell Forest's economic base and offer new, secure jobs for residents.
	Inward investment	Climate action could raise Bracknell Forest's profile, helping local businesses and sites to attract investment.
	Education	Integrating climate change into education can encourage people to support others and the natural environment, empower them to take action and give them key green skills.
	Biodiversity	Interventions to remove carbon and protect against the impacts of climate change often involve planting trees or creating spaces for nature, which also benefits biodiversity.
	Equity and inclusion	Working together to enable a just transition can foster inclusion of different groups and communities. Climate change impacts disadvantaged and vulnerable people in particular, so climate action is key to demonstrating a commitment to equity.
	Reduced resource use	Reducing consumption can reduce emissions but also help to conserve scarce natural resources such as water.



	Co-benefit	Explanation
	Air quality	Reducing burning of fossil fuels reduces air pollution, which can help reduce the risk of respiratory illness.
	Water quality	Reducing chemical use reduces emissions and protects water quality. For example, fertilisers can release nitrous oxides, which act as greenhouse gases but also harm water ecosystems.
	Reduced waste	Reducing waste sent to landfill helps avoid a range of environmental impacts as well as reducing emissions.
	Reduced congestion	Increasing the use of active travel and public transport can reduce congestion on roads as well as emissions.
	Community cohesion	Bringing a diverse range of residents together to tackle climate change will help form community links, reduce isolation and empower people to drive local change.
	Local food production	Action to increase availability of sustainable, local food can give residents the opportunity to be involved in food production and support local farms and agriculture.

Delivering on climate change objectives will also have co-benefits for the council, such as supporting council finances, recruitment and retention, service resilience and partnership working. These benefits are explored further in the delivery section.

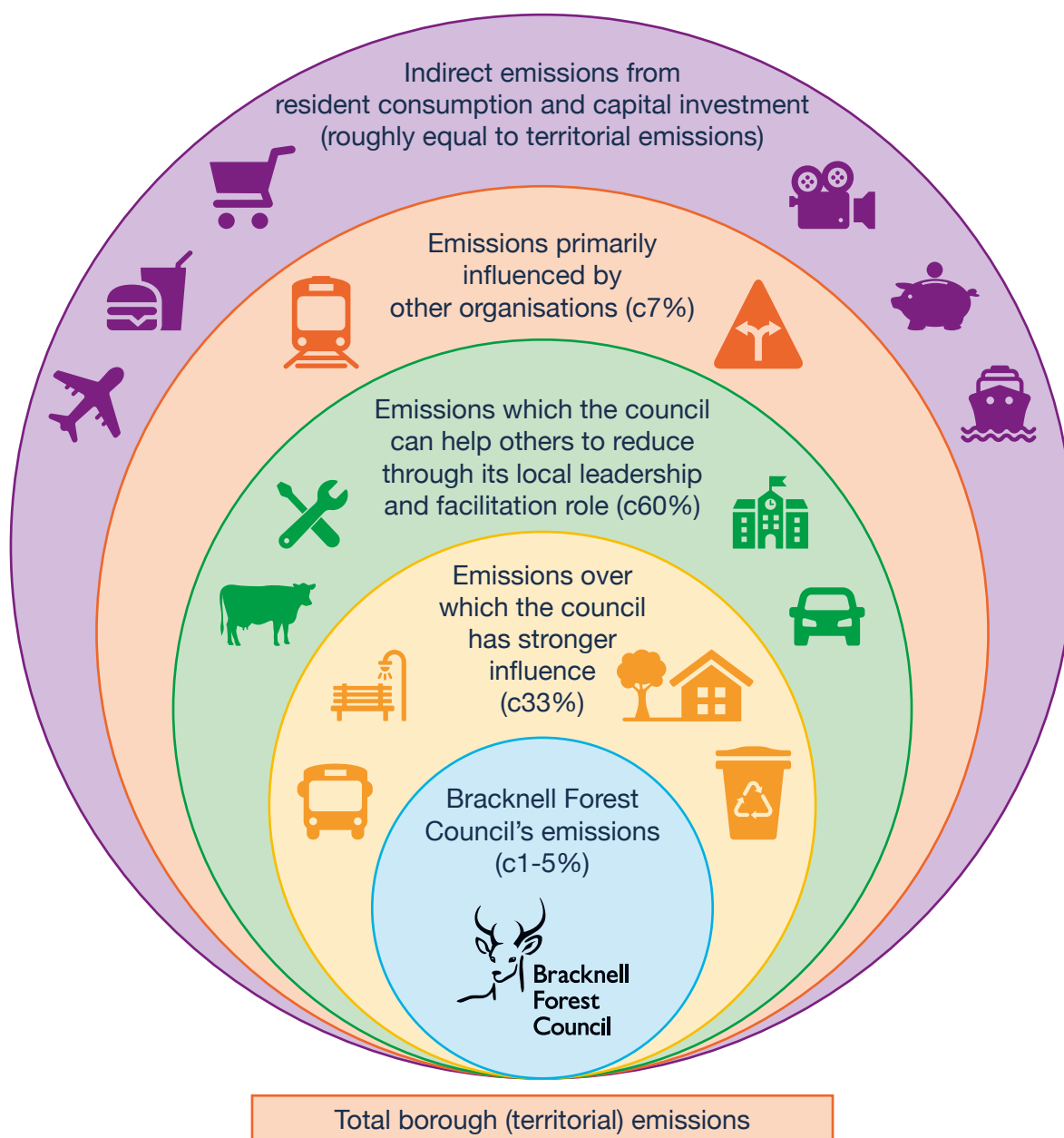


How the council can influence emissions

The council is ultimately responsible for its own emissions footprint, but it can also support wider emissions reduction in Bracknell Forest. This reflects the council's role in local leadership, regulation, facilitation, service delivery and place-shaping.

The information below shows the varying levels of influence the council has over different emissions sources and which activities will help to tackle them. This shows how the council will need to play different roles to effectively tackle climate change.

Levels of influence:



Actions to reduce emissions at different levels of influence:

Council emissions	Investing in council assets
	Considering climate in procurement
Stronger influence	Considering climate when setting regulation and policy, such as planning rules
	Delivering place-shaping actions, such as through regeneration and economic development schemes
Helping others	Showcasing and enabling good practice
	Providing targeted support
	Facilitating and bringing others together to collaborate
Primary influence elsewhere	Lobbying national government and other key organisations
Consumption emissions	Informing and engaging with stakeholders

Different actions will also be relevant at other levels of influence. This table shows the level at which they are most relevant.



Aims and objectives

1 Reduce net council emissions to zero as close to 2030 as possible

Things the council has already done:

- Invested over £1million in energy efficiency upgrades to buildings, installed solar panels on around 20 council sites and moved streetlighting to LEDs.
- Transitioned a portion of the council's fleet to EVs.
- Introduced a Social Value Policy for procurement with a range of climate measures.
- Developed a ten-point climate action plan with highways contractor Ringway.



Key objectives:

- 1 Reduce energy and water use in council buildings
- 2 Decarbonise the council estate by using renewable energy sources and replacing equipment which uses oil or gas
- 3 Phase out fossil fuel vehicles in our and our contractors' fleets
- 4 Support sustainable staff travel
- 5 Reduce emissions from the goods and services the council buys or outsources
- 6 Reduce emissions from council investments – make sure investments don't support fossil fuels and are used to invest in local decarbonisation where possible

Priority actions:

- A1. Create and implement a Decarbonisation Plan to show how the council will reduce its energy use and make sure the estate reaches net zero
- A2. Replace all cars and small vans in the council and contractors' fleets with electric vehicles, and consider zero or lower emissions options for larger vehicles
- A3. Update the council's Travel Plan to build in more support for sustainable travel, and trial schemes to support staff such as EV leasing or more pool EVs they can borrow



- A4. Engage with major contractors and suppliers to create plans to reduce emissions linked to council purchases
- A5. Integrate climate requirements into procurement processes and contracts, introducing more stringent requirements over time (with support for small suppliers)

Embedding the principles:

Co-benefits:

- **Council finances** – by enabling savings on energy bills
- **Air quality** – by reducing pollution from the council's road vehicles
- **Staff health** – by encouraging more active travel to work

Monitoring:

- Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions
- Energy, water and fossil fuel use across the estate and fleet
- EPC ratings and Display Energy Certificates across the estate
- Waste generated and recycling rates across council sites
- Proportion of staff commuting and travelling using public transport or active travel
- Take-up of support offered to staff e.g. EV leasing schemes



② Support the reduction of net borough emissions to zero as close to 2030 as possible

A. Buildings and energy supply

Things the council has already done:

- Launched the Solar Together joint procurement scheme for solar panels, which helped 135 households install panels in its first year of operation.
- Introduced a new Local Plan, which sets the rules by which planning applications are judged in the borough, with a new climate change policy.
- Directly funded or delivered government funding for improvements to homes through schemes such as Warm Safe and Well (15 homes upgraded in financial year 2023/24).



Key objectives:

- 1 Support an increase in renewable energy generation within the borough
- 2 Help to make local grid infrastructure fit for the future
- 3 Encourage a reduction in emissions from domestic and commercial buildings
- 4 Make sure new buildings meet high energy efficiency and emissions standards
- 5 Promote use of sustainable materials and construction methods for new buildings

Priority actions:

- B1. Investigate local renewable energy schemes to invest in
- B2. Investigate developing a Local Area Energy Plan, to identify infrastructure upgrades needed
- B3. Facilitate private sector investment in opportunities like renewable energy and retrofit, and explore innovative funding models and joint procurement schemes
- B4. Deliver direct grant support for those who are unable to afford upgrades themselves, and for whom alternative funding models aren't suitable
- B5. Develop an advice service, or free or subsidised energy audits, to help residents, businesses and other organisations identify ways to save energy and reduce emissions
- B6. Work to improve the standard of new development in the borough through planning policies and by applying high standards in all construction the council is involved in (including in relation to embodied emissions), and explore options for construction waste recycling



- B7.** Investigate opportunities for district heating in the borough, particularly around the centre of Bracknell and the business areas, and for re-using waste heat

Embedding the principles:

Just transition:

Upfront costs of investments in energy activities and improvements will be a barrier for many people with limited financial means, so specific, targeted support and innovative funding models will be needed to ensure they can be included.

Those in rental accommodation will not have direct control over changes to their homes, so engagement with landlords will also be needed.

Co-benefits:

- **Financial resilience** – by reducing residents' energy bills
- **Economy and employment** – by providing good, secure jobs in renewable energy and retrofit
- **Air quality** – by reducing numbers of fuel-burning appliances like gas boilers
- **Biodiversity** – by ensuring that development schemes implement Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) principles wherever possible

Monitoring:

- Territorial emissions linked to building energy use
- The Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings of buildings in the borough
- generation capacity of large-scale renewable energy installations
- in the Annual Monitoring Report for the Bracknell Forest Local Plan for policies:
 - LP27 (Climate change)
 - LP33 (Flood risk)
 - LP55 (Sustainable construction)
 - LP56 (Renewable and low carbon energy)
 - LP57 (Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS))
- Any future metrics identified on embodied emissions



B. Transport

Things the council has already done:

- Launched the Eco Rewards scheme to give people an incentive to walk and cycle, which has seen over 500,000 miles of sustainable travel logged.
- Supported buses through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), including more frequent services to Heatherwood Hospital and Sunday services to the town centre.
- Provided Bikeability cycling training to over 8,000 school pupils since 2011.
- Installed almost 50 fast and rapid EV charge points across council car parks.



Key objectives:

- 1 Make sure residents are able to access the services they need in their local area
- 2 Support an increase in the use of public transport and active travel
- 3 Investigate better management of freight vehicle movements on Bracknell Forest's road network
- 4 Enable a transition to low or zero emissions vehicles in the borough

Priority actions:

- C1. Improve local infrastructure as well as personal and road safety in the borough to enable more residents to walk and cycle
- C2. Work with public transport providers to explore service improvements, new delivery models such as demand-responsive transport (DRT) and electrification opportunities
- C3. Support the roll-out of EV charging across the borough
- C4. Investigate innovative models to help residents access EVs, such as car clubs
- C5. Investigate actions to incentivise public transport and active travel, such as pedestrianisation, school streets or neighbourhood traffic calming schemes
- C6. Support local businesses and organisations to reduce emissions from their vehicles, develop shared logistics arrangements or hubs and install more delivery lockers

Embedding the principles:

Just transition:

Upfront costs of electric vehicles and lack of access to off-street parking where residents can charge from home will be a barrier to EV uptake for many people with limited financial means. They may require further support and their needs must be considered when developing charging infrastructure.



Changes to travel arrangements and networks will need to be tailored to avoid negative impacts on people with disabilities, or on specific local areas (for example, changes in car routes moving air pollution to areas facing deprivation).

Co-benefits:

- **Reducing congestion** – by improving alternatives to driving so that traffic on local roads falls
- **Residents' health** – by increasing active travel such as walking and cycling
- **Air quality** – by reducing vehicles on local roads and raising the proportion of EVs

Monitoring:

- Territorial emissions linked to transport
- Levels of traffic in the borough
- Data on use of buses, railways and active travel in the borough
- Numbers of electric vehicles owned by residents, and EV chargepoints in the borough
- Average distances from homes to key services
- Air quality monitoring data
- Registered taxis/taxi licenses which are for EVs or lower emissions vehicles



C. Land and waste

Things the council has already done:

- Planted thousands of trees across the borough
- Implemented the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement for new development, which requires a net gain in biodiversity of at least 10% (preferably onsite)
- Rolled out food waste collections to all houses and many flats across the borough, dramatically reducing emissions from waste



Key objectives:

- 1 Drive a reduction in waste generated locally
- 2 Plant trees, green the borough and encourage others to do likewise, prioritising native species and habitat connectivity
- 3 Increase recycling and composting rates so that less waste goes into general waste
- 4 Reduce emissions from waste disposal, including by reducing landfill rates

Priority actions:

- D1.** Establish funding and support for tree-planting on council and private land
- D2.** Support development of varied, healthy local habitats and green corridors to boost biodiversity
- D3.** Reduce biodegradable waste to landfill, with the aim of eliminating it
- D4.** Expand the range of materials residents can recycle, especially at kerbside

Embedding the principles:

Just transition:

Greening activities offer opportunities for ensuring equitable access to green space across the borough.

Co-benefits:

- **Reduced waste** – by increasing levels of recycling and composting
- **Biodiversity** – by increasing tree planting and creating new woodland
- **Health** – by improving provision of attractive local green space

Monitoring:

- Territorial emissions linked to land use and waste
- Waste disposal statistics for residential waste, including the total amount of waste, the recycling percentage and the breakdown of disposal methods
- Trees planted and supported to independence in the borough
- Biodiversity Action Plan indicators on habitat condition and enhancement



③ Engage and empower residents and communities to take climate action

Things the council has already done:

- Run its Little Changes, Big Impact social media campaign, and published information for residents and schools on our website.
- Organised schools' conferences to engage and inform pupils about climate change.
- Supported the development of Bracknell Forest Community Climate Action (BFCCA), a councillor and volunteer-led local organisation co-ordinating and driving action across the borough



Key objectives:

- 1 Give residents information on climate risks, their influence and the benefits of climate action, enabling them to make informed choices
- 2 Include all local communities in climate action and make sure they have input to the council's activities, which should be co-produced where possible
- 3 Enable residents to reduce emissions in different areas of their lives, and take emissions into account when making decisions
- 4 Raise awareness of the advantages of a balanced and sustainable diet with less meat, and of reducing flying
- 5 Support people to reduce their energy use by changing their behaviour
- 6 Support the development of local community climate and energy initiatives

Priority actions:

- E1. Collaborate with and provide support to the BFCCA to help it run events, develop and move its projects forward
- E2. Provide targeted support for community groups to tackle climate change, such as small grants or match funding, advice and toolkits, and launch a community climate partners scheme for ongoing engagement
- E3. Create or support climate hubs for resident engagement as well as repair cafés, swap schemes and libraries of things
- E4. Develop a communications and engagement plan and conduct a long-term, targeted communications and events campaign
- E5. Create a residents' panel which reflects the make-up and diverse views of the community to inform and, where appropriate, co-produce comms and interventions



- E6. Conduct targeted outreach, including the use of Making Every Contact Count (MECC) approaches, and tap into existing community groups and council schemes
- E7. Create a climate champions scheme in collaboration with local voluntary groups to support resident volunteering on climate change initiatives
- E8. Work with schools to educate and engage pupils on climate change

Embedding the principles:

Just transition:

Different communities and individuals around the borough will have different needs, face different climate impacts and will be interested in climate change for different reasons. Our communications and engagement work will need to understand and reflect these to ensure nobody faces barriers to participation.

Co-benefits:

- **Residents' health** – by promoting balanced diets with less red meat¹
- **Equity and Inclusion** – by highlighting links to climate change and raising awareness
- **Education** – by boosting climate outreach in schools and to young people and residents
- **Community cohesion** – by giving residents new forums to connect with each other

Working with others:

Co-operation with community groups, schools and others will be key to delivering on the objectives under this aim, and these activities will also help to embed a collaborative approach across all of the council's climate activities.

Monitoring:

- Consumption emissions
- Engagement with communications and schemes (including from different groups)
- Results of resident surveys
- Qualitative feedback from partners and stakeholders



¹ Cutting red meat-for a longer life, Harvard Health Publishing, 2012



4 Prepare for the impacts of climate change

A. On the council

Things the council has already done:

- Added climate change to its Strategic Risk Register
- Made changes to the management of parks, for example by considering climate impacts when deciding what to plant
- Invested in IT systems and developed procedures to allow service delivery to continue using remote working, even if staff can't come to the office



Key objectives:

- 1 Minimise the risk of disruption to council services and make contingency plans
- 2 Prepare for inflation as a result of climate change
- 3 Protect staff, buildings and assets from the effects of climate change
- 4 Minimise harm to plants and wildlife in parks and on the council estate
- 5 Prepare for disruption to the supply chains the council depends on

Priority actions:

- F1.** Develop a council climate change risk assessment and a detailed mitigation plan
- F2.** Include climate risks and contingencies, and resulting pressures on specific teams, in the budget-setting process, service risk registers and the Strategic Risk Register, and make plans to ensure service continuity
- F3.** Make sure council buildings and insurance policies are adapted for climate change
- F4.** Work with suppliers to keep costs low and improve climate resilience, and include climate-related risks in procurement processes
- F5.** Make plans to protect staff from extreme weather and new diseases and provide support for mental and physical health

Embedding the principles:

Co-benefits:

- **Service resilience** – by making sure the council is well-prepared for a range of emergencies
- **Biodiversity** – by protecting plants and wildlife from climate change
- **Staff health** – by making sure that staff health and wellbeing continues to be supported

Monitoring:

- Suitable metrics are to be identified through the risk assessment (action F1 above).



B. On the borough

Things the council has already done:

- Included policies in the new Local Plan to prevent development in areas which will be at high flood risk and promote Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Created plans to deal with a range of emergency scenarios and produced advice for the public and businesses through the Joint Emergency Planning Unit (run jointly with West Berkshire and Windsor and Maidenhead councils)



Key objectives:

- 1 Protect residents and buildings from the effects of climate change wherever possible
- 2 Mitigate the risk of wildfires and water shortages, and protect ecosystems
- 3 Help the borough prepare for disruption to utilities and essential services
- 4 Strengthen food security and local food production to reduce risk of food shortages
- 5 Prevent or mitigate harm to the local economy from climate change
- 6 Support residents facing financial hardship caused by climate change

Priority actions:

- G1. Conduct a climate change risk assessment for Bracknell Forest as a place (ideally as part of a cross-Berkshire assessment), and create a plan to mitigate identified risks
- G2. Upgrade local drainage and flood prevention infrastructure, and prepare the road network for climate impacts
- G3. Conduct focused work with vulnerable residents to improve their resilience, and be ready to deploy extra support to keep them safe in emergencies
- G4. Support and encourage local production of sustainable food

Embedding the principles:

Just transition:

People who are already facing disadvantage or marginalisation will often be at greater risk of climate impacts, so our adaptation work will need to be sensitive to the different needs and risk profiles of different groups.

Co-benefits:

- **Equity and inclusion** – by helping protect vulnerable residents from climate impacts
- **Local agriculture** – by involving people in food production and promoting local food
- **Financial resilience** – by tackling deprivation and supporting residents facing hardship

Monitoring:

- Suitable metrics are to be identified through the risk assessment (action G1 above).



5 Support the expansion of the green economy

Things the council has already done:

- Launched a climate change section in its business newsletter to keep subscribers up to date on upcoming challenges and opportunities
- Supported the Bracknell Business Improvement District (BID) in its initiatives to help its members reduce energy use and bills, including providing speakers for events

Key objectives:

- 1 Support businesses to access capital for green investments and remain competitive
- 2 Support businesses and organisations to engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities and move to low carbon technology, processes and practices
- 3 Provide businesses and organisations with the information and tools they need to act on climate change
- 4 Support the development of local infrastructure and buildings for green business
- 5 Support the development of skills needed for the green economy locally
- 6 Strengthen the circular economy locally

Priority actions:

- H1.** Explore incentives for businesses to act, such as business rates reductions
- H2.** Create an advice service for businesses, and produce guides, toolkits and templates
- H3.** Explore the development of a local climate pledge or accreditation for businesses
- H4.** Explore targeted support, such as grants, trials of green options or joint procurement
- H5.** Promote Bracknell Forest as a location for green business, and support green start-ups
- H6.** Support work experience, internships, apprenticeships and recruitment in the green economy, and work with education providers to make sure suitable courses are available

Embedding the principles:

Co-benefits:

- Inward investment – by helping Bracknell Forest raise its profile as a green business location
- Economy and employment – by harnessing opportunities from the net zero transition

Innovation:

By supporting and working with businesses at the forefront of the green economy, the council will be able to stay abreast of and respond to technological developments.



Monitoring:

- Engagement with council communications and initiatives
- Numbers of green businesses based in the borough
- Numbers of green jobs
- Emissions from commerce, agriculture and industry



Delivery

Phasing

The council will deliver this strategy in three phases between now and 2030:

Phase 1: Transition (March 2025 to March 2026)

This phase will focus on quick wins and enabling work which needs to be completed for the rest of the strategy to move forward. This will include expanding capacity, developing staff, further research and evidence gathering, creating detailed plans, building partnerships and investigating more complex actions to trial in phase 2.

1

Phase 2: Acceleration (March 2026 to March 2027)

This will lay the groundwork for the delivery of large-scale actions in the final phase, including by developing business cases, completing procurement and co-design processes, and conducting small-scale trials to demonstrate feasibility of phase 3 actions. Where possible, implementation of simpler actions will begin.

2

Phase 3: Delivery (March 2027 onwards)

This phase will see the council deliver on most of the objectives in the strategy. With enhanced capacity as an organisation and with the groundwork in place, it will be able to deliver climate action at scale, both in its own operations and in support of borough-wide change.

3

A delivery plan for each phase will be created before it begins to show the activities the council will look to undertake and the funding it will make available during it, as well as actions for consideration in future phases.



Enabler 1: Organisational capacity and skills

The council can only deliver on its climate objectives with the active support and participation of staff across the organisation. It will need to make sure that climate action is embedded and its workforce has the skills necessary to tackle the different aspects of this challenge.

Things the council has already done:

- Created an e-learning package for staff to introduce them to climate issues
- Enabled the creation of an Officer Climate Network, which connects staff interested in the issue from across the council and lets them share knowledge and experiences



Key objectives:

- 1 Build staff confidence in discussing climate change and advocating for its importance
- 2 Make sure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to tackle climate change
- 3 Make sure that council teams have the resources and support to deliver climate action
- 4 Make sure governance processes reflect the importance of climate
- 5 Engage and co-deliver climate action with teams across the council

Priority actions:

11. Offer suitable training to all council staff to build general carbon literacy and, where relevant, develop the specialist skills some teams will need
12. Increase the capacity of the climate team so that it can provide other teams with appropriate support
13. Build an increased focus on climate change into internal processes, including service planning and budget-setting for both revenue and capital budgets

Co-benefit:

- **Recruitment and retention** – by enhancing the council's reputation and creating opportunities for staff

Monitoring:

- Responses to climate-related questions on staff surveys
- Levels of engagement with training and initiatives
- Climate change information and actions included in budgets and service plans
- Use of tools such as the council's Integrated Assessment Tool, which includes climate impacts

Principles supported: Two (2) and seven (7)



Enabler 2: Funding

Many of the actions in this strategy and the action plan to follow will require extra resource, funding or investment. The council will not be able to cover all of this from its own resources and will need to use a range of funding streams including:

1. The council's revenue and capital budgets.
2. The climate change strategic reserve
3. Borrowing
4. Grant funding
5. Corporate sponsorship
6. Private sector investment
7. A Local Climate Bond, giving residents a chance to invest in local projects
8. Insetting, or offsetting in the local area, to attract funding from organisations looking to offset their own emissions
9. Section 106, travel plan and/or carbon offset funding from developers

Things the council has already done:

- Obtained funding from the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to help decarbonise the council estate
- Obtained a grant from South Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund to expand the Eco Rewards scheme

Key objectives:

- 1 Secure the funding needed to deliver council objectives
- 2 Make sure the climate change team has the skills and capacity to support other teams
- 3 Maximise the impact of spending from residents and other local, regional and national organisations on tackling climate change

Priority actions:

- J1. Create project pipelines for different areas to identify and develop business cases for projects which can support delivery of the strategy
- J2. Produce a framework for the identification of suitable forms of finance for different projects, and for delivering finance through different means
- J3. Identify suitable projects to support delivery of a Local Climate Bond
- J4. Explore the possibility of a joint venture with an energy or other private sector company to deliver investment in climate action, perhaps at Berkshire-wide level

Co-benefit:

- **Council finances** – by building the capacity of the organisation to seek external funding



Monitoring:

- Level of external funding raised
- Progress towards the funding needed to decarbonise the council and deliver the net zero transition across the borough
- Proportion of competitive grant funding applications that are successful

Principle supported: Five (5)



Enabler 3: Partnerships

Climate action in Bracknell Forest will only succeed if everyone collaborates to drive it forward, as the council cannot deliver net zero or protect the borough alone. As a trusted partner with links across the local area, the council is well-placed to drive wider action.

The council will need to work with a range of key stakeholders including:

1. Residents
2. Businesses
3. Schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College
4. Public sector partners, for example local NHS trusts and Thames Valley Police
5. Regional bodies such as the Berkshire Prosperity Board, which brings together the six Berkshire authorities, and the Local Resilience Forum
6. Charities and the voluntary sector
7. Community and faith groups
8. Parish and town councils
9. Utility and service providers, for example transport, water and electricity providers
10. National government, government departments and local MPs
11. National bodies such as the Environment Agency
12. Nearby universities
13. Supporting bodies such as the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH)



Aims 3 and 5 above link to this enabler by setting out how the council will engage with and support residents, local organisations and businesses. This section focuses on partnership working more generally.

Things the council has already done:

- Set up the Joint Climate Action Board (JCAB), a collaborative body bringing together representatives from all sectors of the local economy and community which leads the activities of the BFCCA
- Organised two borough-wide climate summits to bring representatives of local organisations together to learn from each other and discuss joint action
- Collaborated with neighbouring local councils on climate activities, such as a workshop for a local charity delivered jointly with Wokingham Borough Council

Key objectives:

- 1 Embed partnership working and co-delivery in climate activities
- 2 Take opportunities to deliver climate action at scale by working with neighbouring authorities, the Berkshire Prosperity Board and regional organisations
- 3 Engage with local utility and service providers to ensure the borough has the infrastructure it needs
- 4 Secure and maximise the benefits of external support to advance climate activities



Priority actions:

- K1.** Co-deliver climate action with the BFCCA or other local partners wherever possible
- K2.** Support the creation and implementation of a Community Climate Emergency Strategy by the BFCCA to provide a framework for local collaboration
- K3.** Identify and explore potential opportunities for joint delivery of climate activities at regional level
- K4.** Develop detailed guides to outline:
 - a.** What is needed from national government to deliver this strategy
 - b.** How the Berkshire Prosperity Board and regional partners can help deliver this strategy
 - c.** How local partners, including schools, can help deliver this strategy
 - d.** How local organisations such as parish and town councils, charities and community groups can help deliver this strategy
 - e.** How residents can help deliver this strategy
- K5.** Engage with external bodies such as the Local Government Association and the Greater South East Net Zero Hub to make full use of their support

Co-benefit:

- **Partnership working** – by forging new links and embedding this approach across the council

Monitoring:

- Feedback from council teams and external organisations
- External engagement with the strategy
- Proportion of activities co-delivered or delivered at regional level

Principle supported: Four (4)

Enabler 4: Research and data

Things the council has already done:

- Improved its collection of emissions data over time to improve and expand the scope of its calculated carbon footprint
- Attended events and forums such as the Local Government Association's Sustainability Action Forum to learn from other councils and embed best practice in its climate activities

Key objectives:

- 1 Embed best practice into climate activities to maximise impact
- 2 Evaluate climate activities on an ongoing basis to identify improvements
- 3 Develop robust datasets and modelling on emissions and climate impacts to underpin effective action and pathway development and ensure value for money
- 4 Conduct in-depth research and engagement to understand the local picture and tailor climate action to Bracknell Forest and its local areas and communities
- 5 Use and trial innovative technologies and approaches, learning from research and trials ongoing elsewhere
- 6 Share learning from our activities with the sector to raise our profile

Priority actions:

- L1.** Measure the council's scope 3 emissions footprint and continue to make improvements to emissions data quality
- L2.** Develop partnerships with local universities to benefit from their academic expertise
- L3.** Publish and promote case studies of our successes and learning points

Co-benefits:

- Data availability – as some data collected may also be helpful for other teams

Monitoring:

- Quality and range of data held by the team, and success in filling any gaps identified
- Case studies shared with the sector and feedback received

Principles supported: Three (3), five (5) and six (6)



Other council strategies

Significant elements of this strategy will need to be delivered through other strategies and programmes, such as:

1. Sustainable construction guidance for developers on how they can achieve the policies contained in the new Local Plan and meet council climate objectives, which should include reference to:
 - a. Reducing energy and water use by building to the highest possible standards
 - b. Generating renewable energy onsite
 - c. Using low emissions forms of heating and cooking
 - d. Ensuring developments are fit for the future
 - e. Using sustainable construction methods and materials
2. Incorporation of requirements linked to these principles in any future Local Plan Review (as national planning rules permit). This will require the council to gather suitable evidence ahead of time to justify imposing higher standards.
3. The Assets and Neighbourhood Regeneration Business Change Programme and the Asset Management Strategy, which together can support delivery of the following priorities:
 - a. Decarbonisation of all properties which will remain in the corporate estate, and preparation of the estate for climate impacts
 - b. Delivery of neighbourhood regeneration schemes which provide local services and reduce the need to travel
 - c. Construction of all new buildings for the council estate, on council land and through council regeneration ventures to the highest standards
 - d. Delivery of local infrastructure to support emissions reduction
4. The new Communities Strategy, currently under development, which will focus on community-building, resilience and cohesion. By including a focus on climate mitigation and adaptation, this can help to deliver the resident engagement objectives of the Climate Change Strategy and maximise synergies between the two programmes.

Priority actions:

- M1.** Make sure that these plans and strategies are delivered in line with the requirements above, with climate action a key thread running through them.
- M1.** Develop guidance for staff on embedding the aims of this strategy into future strategies and plans



Governance and review

An action plan will be developed in collaboration with teams across the council to deliver this strategy. Actions in the plan will be clear about responsibility, timescales for delivery, costs, funding sources and targets.

Projects will be identified and prioritised for inclusion in the action plan. To allow the selection of a spread of projects across the themes and aims, and the consideration of qualitative factors, the final choices will be based on the judgement of officers and councillors.

A new Climate Change Officers' Board will be created to scrutinise delivery of the action plan, replacing the current Officers' Board. Composed of senior council officers and subject matter experts, it will meet quarterly to scrutinise progress on the action plan, and to monitor associated expenditure.

The review process for the strategy and action plan will be as follows:

1. Each quarter a progress report on the delivery of the action plan will be compiled and scrutinised by the Climate Change Officers' Board and then shared with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change. A half-year summary will be provided to the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet.
2. Each year an annual report on achievements and progress will be provided to full Council and published online.

Updates on progress will be presented to the JCAB, the councillor climate working group and other key forums as required or requested. The council will also join or participate in and reflect on the results of benchmarking and reporting schemes where appropriate.

