



# Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee Agenda

Date: Thursday 1 February 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF

## Membership:

B Chapple OBE (Chairman), R Carington (Vice-Chairman), P Brazier, M Caffrey, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, E Culverhouse, E Gemmell, S Guy, N Naylor, M Rand, L Sullivan, D Watson and A Wood

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<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>		
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>		
<b>3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>		<b>5 - 8</b>

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### **4 Public Questions**

Public Questions is an opportunity for people who live, work or study in Buckinghamshire to put a question to a Select Committee. The Committee will hear from members of the public who have submitted questions in advance relating to items on the agenda. The Cabinet Member, relevant key partners and responsible officers will be invited to respond.

Further information on how to register can be found here: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/get-involved-with-council-decisions/select-committees/>

#### **5 East West Rail**

**10:10**

**9 - 16**

The Committee will receive an update report on the East West Rail project and hear from representatives from East West Rail.

##### **Contributors:**

##### East West Rail Alliance

Mark Cuzner, Director

Jez Baldock, Deputy Director

##### East West Rail Company

Kate Campbell, Senior Communications Manager

##### Network Rail

Peter Hume, Joint Sponsor Lead

##### Buckinghamshire Council

Cllr Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport

Cllr Peter Martin, Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport – HS2/East West Rail

Dr Laura Leech, Head of Major Projects

Susan Browning, EWR Stakeholder & Team Leader

#### **6 Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Annual Progress Report**

**11:10**

**17 - 90**

To consider the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Annual Progress Report that was submitted to Cabinet on 14 November 2023. Also included is an update report on the electric vehicle on-street charging project in Wendover that Members requested.

**Contributors:**

Councillor Thomas Broom, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment

Councillor Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport

Steve Bambrick, Corporate Director for Planning Growth & Sustainability

Alexander Beckett, Energy & Climate Change Manager

Hannah Joyce, Head of Transport Strategy & Funding

**7 Active Travel and Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 12:00 91 - 100**

To consider a report on the delivery of Active Travel in Buckinghamshire and the development of the Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

**Contributors:**

Councillor Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport

Steve Bambrick, Corporate Director Planning Growth & Sustainability

Hannah Joyce, Head of Transport Strategy & Funding

Jonathan Fuller, Principal Transport Strategy Officer

**8 Work Programme 12:30 101 - 102**

The Select Committee will consider the upcoming work programme.

**9 Date of Next Meeting**  
Thursday 28 March at 10am.

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Chris Ward [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)  
01296 585807

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Agenda Item 3  
**Buckinghamshire Council**  
**Transport, Environment &  
Climate Change Select Committee**

## Minutes

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2023 IN THE PARALYMPIC ROOM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 10.51 AM**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

B Chapple OBE, R Carington, P Brazier, M Caffrey, M Collins, C Cornell, E Gemmell, S Guy, N Naylor, M Rand, D Watson and A Wood

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

S Broadbent, G Williams, D Barnes, P Martin, R Barker, N Beswick, L Vallis and C Ward

### Agenda Item

#### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor P Cooper.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Broadbent declared a personal interest as Chairman of the East West Main Line Partnership during Item 7 (Work Programme) when discussion referred to East West Rail attending TECC in February 2024.

#### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### 4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Two public questions had been received to be considered at the meeting and were answered by the Cabinet Member for Transport. The questions and answers would be appended to the minutes.

#### 5 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor S Broadbent, introduced the report to the Select Committee and noted the following in his introduction:

- The service, which transported around 7,500 children per day, 400 of which via the 'Spare Seat' scheme, had undergone a three-year service improvement journey. This had

led to policy and procedural changes including commercialising routes, simplifying the Spare Seat fee structure, introducing new payment methods and improving communication with parents. These improvements had reduced customer enquiry and complaint volume and improved enquiry and complaint response times.

- This was a statutory service that was dynamic and demand-led and involved close liaison with the Schools Admissions and Integrated SEND Teams regarding referrals.
- There were around 500 Personal Transport Budget (PTB) plans in place which had an important role to play in meeting children's travel needs in a flexible and cost-effective manner.
- In Buckinghamshire there had been a 79% increase in SEND transport costs since 2015 which reflected the overall national trend. The County Council Network (CCN) was working to collate the national cost pressures and feedback to Government.
- The service ensured best value for money where possible and reviewed SEND eligibility criteria and procurement options to check appropriate transport provision was in place. SEND transport cases had a 15-day resolution Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and the team had around 20 cases actively open throughout the year.

The following points were made during the Committee discussion:

- Historically SEND transport had been funded by Government however this had changed and was funded by the Local Authority general fund.
- It was challenging to apply an average cost per transport arrangement due to the range in costs associated with each individual's need. Appropriateness was deemed as the most important aspect in decision-making. The Cabinet Member gave examples of arrangements such as specialist transport provision with medical equipment on board or a carer. It was difficult to budget for need due to case complexity being unknown until the travel needs assessment was completed
- The Cabinet Member reiterated the CCN position of SEND transport costs increasing nationally which had been supported by the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) and the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers. (ATCO). Additionally, there had been an increase in Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) transfers.
- The legacy County Council had made provision for transport to grammar schools but this changed in 2012 to the statutory requirement of nearest suitable school; reverting this would cost millions of pounds.
- The Client Transport compliance team carried out checks that correctly trained staff were in place if they were required in a user's transport package.
- There was a requirement for home to school transport operators to meet the standards outlined in the contractual arrangements which included returns to indicate the vehicles and drivers being used. Compliance checks were also carried out with the Taxi Licensing Team based on spot-checks and intelligence reports. The team also worked with the Driver and Vehicles Standards Agency (DVSA) and Traffic Commissioners.
- The service was conscious that it was a high spend area for the Council and had carried out benchmarking with Oxfordshire, West Northamptonshire and Berkshire.
- Re-tendering exercises in 2021 had saved between £3-4m however this had been nullified by increased demand for transport. Some contracts had been handed back by operators and safeguards to the procurement framework were being considered when re-tendering to the provider market.

The Chairman noted the complexity of providing home to school transport and thanked the Cabinet Member for Transport and the officers for the report.

## **6 POLLUTION IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S RIVERS AND CHALK STREAMS: 12-MONTH PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Chairman of the Review Group, Councillor R Carington, introduced the update report and noted the following points:

- Members and the Scrutiny Officer were thanked for their work.
- Most of the recommendations had either been completed or working towards completion.
- It was positive that the Environment Agency had provided an update however it was disappointing that Thames Water and Anglian Water had not.

The following was noted during the Committee's discussion:

- Crews were continually working towards clearing gullies and as of 3 November 2023, 55,219 gullies had been cleared.
- The Scrutiny Officer was asked to chase up Anglian Water and Thames Water for their reports. These would be circulated to Members once received.

**Action: C Ward**

## **7 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman reminded Members that East West Rail would be attending February's meeting and that March's meeting would be HS2 only. A Member asked that the issue of diesel rolling stock be covered during the EWR item which was noted. The Cabinet Member for Transport advised that there had been a recent update to the EWR route (available here: <https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/Route-Update-Announcement/4c8cb5ea3b/Route-update-report.pdf>) and that the Council continued to lobby for the inclusion of the Aylesbury spur.

A Member requested that the Climate Change and Air Quality report at the next meeting include the outcome of on-street electric vehicle charging trials in Wendover.

## **8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 1 February 2024 at 10am.

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# Report to the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

**Date:** Thursday 01 February 2024

**Title:** **East West Rail Progress Report**

**Cabinet Member(s):** *Cllr Steven Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport*  
*Cllr Peter Martin, Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport (HS2/EWR)*

**Contact officer:** Susan Browning, EWR Team & Stakeholder Leader

## 1. Introduction

The fourth year of construction has seen continued activity in Buckinghamshire to deliver the East West Railway. The line has required the building of new highway bridges and new footway bridges as well as the remodelling of many existing bridges, significant earthworks, installation of permanent acoustic barriers, and the preparation of the site in Winslow for the new station and new carpark to be built.

Good progress has been made by the East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) throughout 2023 with highway bridges and footway bridges construction completed, construction of the Winslow station and track laying (rail and sleeper construction) well underway. Works during 2024 will focus on track construction completion, railway systems equipment installation completion, testing and commissioning, the construction of Winslow station carpark and completion of Winslow station and landscaping. The EWRA 'Infrastructure Ready' date is on target for end of 2024 and the East West Railway is planned to 'Enter into Service' during 2025.

## 2. Progress update

- 2.1 An update of the progress / construction of the project will be given by East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) during their presentation to the TECC Select Committee on the 01 February 2023.

### **3. Current key issues**

- 3.1 Buckinghamshire Council has taken steps throughout 2023 to assist and support local communities with mitigating the impacts of disruption caused by the East West Rail line being constructed through the north of the county, by ensuring EWR Alliance (EWRA) are being held to account and take any necessary action.
- 3.2 Current key issues include road closures, diversion routes and associated traffic management, road repairs, mud on the road, dust pollution impact, EWR interface with HS2 and potential delays, environmental impact and biodiversity net gain, the Aylesbury spur, diesel rolling stock, freight service and impacts, noise pollution and the railway 'entry into service' plans for passenger services.

#### **Road Closures and Traffic Management**

- 3.3 Road closures and temporary traffic lights are one of the most significant ongoing issues for the Council and impact on our communities. Lengthy road closures required by the project to enable construction works and long diversion routes are disruptive to the Buckinghamshire residents and businesses as they go about their daily lives.

The Council has challenged EWR Alliance (EWRA) on their applications for road closure permits working with EWRA to reduce the durations of the closures, stop simultaneous EWR road closures and improve the traffic flow to minimise the impact on the communities where possible. The Council has had to refuse some permits and has invested a significant amount of resource and time to work together with EWRA to find better and more workable solutions. Working together has led to improved outcomes to minimise disruption on communities.

- 3.4 Areas of concern for Councillors and communities have been around access for School Transport and ensuring that all EWRA road closures incorporate planned access for school transport and buses or provide alternative solutions. Also, concerns have been raised around the national infrastructure projects (both HS2 and EWR) planning to consider the essential requirement for maintaining access for emergency services.
- 3.5 Communities have voiced ongoing concerns regarding HGVs using non-permitted routes through rural villages and roads, and associated driver behaviour and speeding. In response, EWRA have significantly increased their briefings to drivers and monitoring.
- 3.6 Diversion routes have been put in place by EWRA for construction works and closed bridges. This has led to complaints from residents regarding increased traffic through

villages, increased journey times for commuters, and increased costs to residents and businesses following lengthy diversions.

- 3.7 Concerns have been raised by Councillors and businesses that the extensive EWRA road closures over the past 4 years have had a significant commercial impact on many north Buckinghamshire businesses. The Council requires EWR Company (EWR Co), Network Rail (NR), and EWRA where appropriate, to engage with the businesses and residents impacted by the project and assess and process their compensation claims as quickly as possible.

### **Road repairs**

- 3.8 Councillors and residents have been concerned by the deteriorating condition of the roads impacted by the East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) construction works. EWRA have multiple works Compounds situated in the North of Buckinghamshire and a significant number of HGV's using B roads and villages not designed for HGV traffic. This has caused significant damage and defects to our roads and verges.
- 3.9 The Council has been engaged in extensive discussions and commercial negotiations with EWRA to repair and reinstate our roads and verges. The permanent road repairs and reinstatement programme is dependent upon EWRA's compound demobilisation programme and significant reduction in HGV movements. EWRA have fully engaged with the Council in this process and are committed to repairing the roads. The Director of EWRA has agreed to a significant programme of permanent works which commenced at the end of 2022, continued throughout 2023 and will complete in 2024.

In the interim, during 2023 EWRA continued to undertake planned temporary repairs.

- 3.10 Permanent Repairs – the permanent road repairs and reinstatement programme commenced in Q4 2022 with Queen Catherine Road in Steeple Claydon and continued throughout 2023 with construction routes including Verney Road, Little Horwood Road, Sandhill Road, Ox Lane, Lenborough Road, Whaddon Road Newton Longville and Herds Hill completed. The programme of permanent repairs and reinstatement will complete during 2024.
- 3.11 Planned Temporary repairs – during 2023 a programme of planned temporary repairs was undertaken by EWRA in the interim to maintain road useability prior to permanent repairs taking place once HGV movements significantly reduced. The Council supported by stepping in where necessary to undertake emergency repairs to maintain road safety.

### **Mud on the Road**

- 3.12 Mud on Buckinghamshire roads generated by EWRA works and HGV movements in and out of their many works Compounds across North Buckinghamshire presents a significant issue on our highways and has been an ongoing problem. Mud on the road creates a risk to public safety and the Council is holding EWRA to account on this issue requesting updated mud monitoring and mitigation plans, reviews of equipment efficacy as well as driver behaviour.
- 3.13 EWRA have implemented additional equipment including wheel washers in all main compounds, and both HGV underframe manual jet washing as well as high pressure jet washing in key areas on sites. They are improving driver behaviour with a compulsory 'stand to examine inspection and clear for release' for all HGVs prior to leaving their compounds.

### **Ballast Dust Impact**

- 3.14 Excessive ballast dust generated by EWRA construction and track works along the line of route and from their Compounds (particularly at Winslow) has been a significant problem, particularly during the dry weather and summer months. Ballast dust presents a risk to public safety from the silica respirable particulates and the Council is holding EWRA to account on this issue requesting interventions and additional mitigation to protect the residents.
- 3.15 EWRA have implemented a track ballast dust suppression system, tractor and bowser suppression in highly affected areas, and in early summer 2023 an additional ballast dowsing gantry was installed at their main B3 Furze Lane Winslow Compound.

### **EWR/HS2 Interface and Potential Project Delays**

- 3.16 During 2023 the Council lobbied to ensure that the handover of civils works in the Calvert area to East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) from HS2 Ltd and their contractor EKFB happened on time. Any further delay to these works being undertaken by HS2 (on behalf of EWRA) could present a significant programme risk to the delivery of the East West Railway project and entry into service date.
- 3.17 The Council requested from both HS2 Ltd and their contractor EKFB on a number of occasions for a copy of the interface and handover documentation in order to understand the risks associated with the handover and mitigate any risk linked to the Council, in order to be able to facilitate the process to ensure the EWRA programme timings did not slip and result in on-going community impact. This documentation has yet to be provided by HS2.



- 3.18 Unfortunately, this risk did materialise with the final element of the works to be handed over from HS2 Ltd/EKFB to East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) being delayed from July until late November 2023.
- 3.19 East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) have managed to effectively reduce the knock-on impact of this HS2 Ltd/EKFB delay and mitigate where possible to minimise the overall impact on their programme. The EWR project will be infrastructure ready in Q4 2024.

### **Environmental Impact and Bio-Diversity Net Gain**

- 3.20 Vegetation removal has been part of the East West Rail construction works and has caused significant concern amongst communities and key stakeholders. To mitigate the environmental impact of these works the Council ecologists have carried out multiple checks during bird nesting season and action has been taken to protect hedges and trees by reworking some planned removals.
- 3.21 The Council has robustly challenged EWR Alliance (EWRA) on their vegetation removal programme and in response EWRA have planned their construction works wherever possible to minimise vegetation removal and reduce impact on the environment. The project is providing additional rurally sympathetic landscaping of 350,000 trees.
- 3.22 20 Ecological Compensation Sites (ECS) are being created by the project providing habitats for species including great crested newts, butterflies, bats, birds, badgers, otters and reptiles, with 150,000 new trees and plants. Additional
- 3.23 EWRA have a project bio-diversity net gain target of +10%. They are currently assessing how to deliver this throughout 2023 and 2024, and the Council requires Buckinghamshire to be a focal county for achieving this target.

### **The Aylesbury Spur**

- 3.24 Buckinghamshire Council continues to support the overall benefits of the project on the understanding that the East West Railway will include a rail link to Aylesbury. The facilitating infrastructure is currently being built and the Council continues to proactively lobby the Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail (NR), in conjunction with third parties such as EEH and EWMLP, to confirm that the necessary funding has been secured and the Aylesbury spur will proceed.

### **Diesel Rolling Stock**

- 3.25 EWR Company (EWR Co) has advised that the East West Railway service will commence in 2025 with diesel rolling stock. The Council and other key stakeholders including the local Members of Parliament are robustly challenging this position with the Department for Transport (DfT) and EWR Company (EWR Co), requesting alternative rolling stock solutions are considered for service launch including Bi-mode trains.

### **Noise Pollution**

- 3.26 Communities are concerned by potential noise pollution when the East West Railway enters into service in 2025. Particularly from passenger train and freight train movements which may operate late at night or in the early hours of the morning. Also, significant concerns have been raised by line-side residents regarding potential noise impact from the new Winslow Station public address system announcements.
- 3.27 EWRA installed permanent acoustic barriers in several key locations along the line of route including Verney Junction and Steeple Claydon early in the project delivery to protect the community during construction. The long-term purpose of these permanent acoustic barriers is to reduce noise levels for those living in close proximity to the line from the train service upon entry into service.

### **Freight Services and Impacts**

- 3.28 The East West Railway line is being built to accommodate freight as well as passenger movements. The Council and other key stakeholders are challenging Network Rail (NR) and EWR Company (EWR Co) to provide information to our communities on the likely scope of freight movements and importantly how this may increase over time.
- 3.29 Councillors and residents' concerns and questions to be answered by EWR Company (EWR Co) and Network Rail (NR) include: when will freight train movements begin on the EWR line; how many movements a day at the start and how will this increase over time; will movements run through the night and early hours of the morning; will the acoustic barriers put in place to mitigate noise pollution for line-side residents from passenger trains be effective against freight trains. EWR Co and NR are currently assessing these concerns and have advised they will revert with further information.

### **The EWR Line Entry into Service Plans for Passenger Services**

- 3.30 Councillors and residents are keen to understand the plans for the East West Railway line passenger service upon entry into service, including the service pattern and how

many passenger trains will run daily, both weekdays and weekends, along with train times. Network Rail (NR) have confirmed they are currently working through the specifics of the timetabling.

- 3.31 The EWR train service Operator has still not been formally announced and EWR Company (EWR Co) have advised this is imminent.

#### **4. Actions taken by Buckinghamshire Council to support residents in the construction of the line**

- 4.1 Over the course of the year Buckinghamshire Council has continued to assist residents, communities, and businesses with mitigating the impact of the construction of the East West Rail line by its continued investment (through Work in Kind) in funding dedicated officers to the EWR project to support communities to address the issues, including those set out above.
- 4.2 Additionally, Buckinghamshire Council fund two Marshalls to support residents with the construction of both HS2 and EWR. The Marshalls are on hand to go on site and investigate issues, meet face to face with residents, and raise concerns with works relating to both of the national rail infrastructure projects impacting the county.
- 4.3 Buckinghamshire Council has worked hard for our residents to support them with engagement. According to the recent National Audit Office (NAO) report “the EWR Company (EWR Co) still has more to do to respond to the concerns of local residents, some of which could be negatively affected by the project and are unhappy with how EWR Company (EWR Co) has engaged with them”.
- 4.4 The Council is working with the East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) to secure the necessary remuneration from the Alliance for permanent road repairs to be completed to align with their on-going construction activities and their compound demobilisation programme.
- 4.5 Additionally, the Council continues to proactively lobby the Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail (NR) to confirm that the necessary funding has been secured to deliver the link to Aylesbury and for the DfT to formally instruct works to commence as soon as possible.

#### **5. Your questions and views**

- 5.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. This can be done by telephone: 07795 478687 or email: [susan.browning@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:susan.browning@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).

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## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Annual Progress Report 2022-2023
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Cllr Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment
<b>Contact officer:</b>	<b>Steve Bambrick, David Johnson</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All
<b>Recommendations:</b>	1. NOTE the progress made in 2022-2023 against the aims, objectives and actions in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	Action 9 in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy commits the Council to 'Report annually on progress made against actions and reducing emissions'.  Addressing climate change and poor air quality is relevant to all Council Corporate Plan 2020-2025 priorities.

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report provides an update on the significant progress made against the aims, objectives, and actions set out in our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy within the second year following its adoption on 19th October 2021.
- 1.2 Details of 51 activities are provided, many of which address several actions in the Strategy. These have contributed to greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) decreasing by 7.73% from 2019 to 2021; nitrogen dioxide concentrations staying within the annual mean value in 2022 (apart from one location where new diffusion tube monitoring was established within the Friarage Road Air Quality Management Area in 2022); and, the Council's GHG emissions being 73.7% lower in '22/'23 compared to its emissions from 1990 (please see Appendix A).

- 1.3 The Council was responsible for 5,401 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (net emissions) in '22/'23. We have kept comfortably within the Council's carbon allocation for '22/'23 (6,953 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and are on track to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by at least 75% by 2030.

## **2. Summary of Climate Change & Air Quality Annual Progress Report**

- 2.1 Action 9 in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy commits the Council to 'Report annually on progress made against actions and reducing emissions' and addressing climate change and poor air quality is relevant to all Council Corporate Plan 2020-2025 priorities. The Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report (please see Appendix A) provides an update on the significant progress made against the aims, objectives, and actions set out in our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy within the second year following its adoption on 19th October 2021.

## **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 The option to not produce Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report was considered as not being viable due to the commitment to 'Report annually on progress made against actions and reducing emissions' (action 9 in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy).

## **4. Legal and financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications of this annual progress report.
- 4.2 In Tables 2 and 3 of Appendix A, the Progress Report document, the difference between the Council's "Gross" and "Net" emissions is shown as 1,747 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This difference is the result of the procurement by the Council of Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) backed electricity since October 2022.
- 4.3 The price difference between REGO backed electricity vs grid derived electricity is largely driven by the price of REGO certificates. [Renewable Exchange](#) provide an index tracking REGO certificate costs across their platform. While this may not be representative of all REGOs traded across the GB market, their August update showed an increase in REGO average price to [£6.41 for July 2023](#). This compares to a price of [£3.13 for July 2022 and £0.60 for July 2021](#). The upward trend has been caused by a number of factors, but may be slowing down as more domestic customers switch from renewable backed tariffs to the price cap standard variable tariffs.
- 4.4 If the Council were to require renewable tariff electricity in order to meet the seven year carbon budget and the price of REGO certificates were to significantly increase this could cause upward electricity price pressure for the Council. This is unlikely to

be a requirement for the first Carbon Budget through to 2027 but may be necessary to meet future carbon budgets.

## **5. Corporate implications**

5.1 Due to their negative impacts on health, natural and built environments, and the economy addressing climate change and poor air quality is relevant to all corporate plan priorities:

- Increasing prosperity
- Strengthening our communities
- Improving our environment
- Protecting the vulnerable

## **6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

6.1 As the annual progress report is relevant to all parts of Buckinghamshire, there has not been engagement with local councillors and community boards regarding its production.

## **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

7.1 Should the recommendation to approve Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report be agreed, the Report will be published online and promoted as part of the Bucks Climate Challenge communications campaign. The Communication Plan submitted alongside this document provides further detail.

## **8. Next steps and review**

8.1 Should the recommendation to approve Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report be agreed, the Report will be published online and promoted as part of the Bucks Climate Challenge communications campaign.

## **9. Background papers**

9.1 [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy](#) (approved by Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021)

9.2 [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021-22 Progress Report](#) (approved by Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022)

9.3 [Large Scale Tree Planting on Buckinghamshire Council Land Holding](#) (approved by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021)

- 9.4 [Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050 Motion](#) (at Full Council on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020)
- 9.5 [Buckinghamshire Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Action Plan 2022-27](#) (approved by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022)
- 9.6 Appendix A – Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Progress Report 2022-23
- 9.7 Appendix B – Communications Plan Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Progress Report 2022-23

## **10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email to [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).





Buckinghamshire Council

# Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy

2022 - 2023 Progress Report

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# Foreword

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It gives me great pleasure to present this update on our activities addressing climate change and air quality in Buckinghamshire over the past 12 months. From reading this report you will see that we have made progress across the whole spectrum; from nature based solutions such as large scale tree planting right through to initiating the prototype electrification of one of our refuse collection vehicles.

The year has seen what we believe to be a record level of tree planting across the County with over 145,000 trees in the ground. Planting at scale has seen three large woodlands created in Wing, Hazlemere and Amersham. At the same time, there has been plenty of community based tree planting happening from north (Bourton Park) to south (near Marlow) and right across Buckinghamshire. We are also delighted to host our first two "Tiny Forests", both embedded in and enjoyed by their communities.

Our officers and members have led our anti-idling campaign with grant funding from DEFRA enabling us to provide air quality toolkits to all 16 community boards. We were delighted to announce the contract award for the first upcycling of one of our refuse collection vehicles. It will be fully retrofitted with an all-electric drivetrain; by upcycling the vehicle we will save all of the embodied carbon in the rest of the vehicle.

Reporting on our own operational emissions shows that we are on track to meet our seven-year carbon budget. We are reporting a 73.4% reduction in emissions against our 1990 baseline; already well on our way to our 2030 target of 75%.

I hope you enjoy reading this report, highlighting the work we are undertaking on your behalf and for future generations and showcasing our local response to this global challenge.



**Councillor Gareth Williams**

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

# Introduction

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July 2023 saw extreme heat in North America, Europe and China, which research suggests would have been [extremely unlikely without climate change](#). In the UK, the Met Office report that the top [10 warmest years since 1884 have occurred since 2002](#).

Our second progress report since the adoption of our [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy](#) in 2021, comes at a time when the effects of climate change are becoming increasingly apparent in our local and global climatic systems. In light of these events, it is important to recognise the significant progress that the Council have made against the aims, objectives and actions set out within the strategy.

Annual reported emissions from the Council's own operations of 5,401 tCO<sub>2</sub>e show a reduction of 73.4% against our 1990 baseline. This is already close, in 2023, to achieving our target of a 75% reduction by 2030. On a county wide basis, where emissions are reported by the Office for National Statistics one year in arrears, the data for 2021-22 showed an increase over 2020/21 as the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and relaxing of restrictions led to an uptick in economic

activity. We will monitor the short term trend as emissions stabilise following the pandemic. It is important to observe that the long term trend from 2005 is for a steady decrease in area based emissions.

This year, the report highlights five key themes within our societal journey towards net zero carbon emissions. The Energy Transition will see our economy move from a centralised, fossil based energy system to a distributed system based upon renewable and low carbon sources of energy. Solar PV, whether at large scale or rooftop generation is one example of this. The Solar Together scheme has seen the equivalent of 2.1 MW of generating capacity installed across Bucks; reducing emissions and bills while also improving local resilience and energy security.

The de-carbonisation of transport is another area of focus for the Council, with our first refuse collection vehicle electrification project underway and anticipated to start operations in December. The newly electrified vehicle will reduce emissions of carbon and particulates on its route in Aylesbury. Our commitment to active travel has seen the completion of the new Platinum Park Way and a host of



projects have seen the successful trial of alternative modes of transport such as e-scooters, e-bikes and the pick me up bus service for High Wycombe.

Our commitment to a sustainable built environment is being demonstrated through sustainable policies in planning such as the requirement in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan for new development in Aylesbury to source 10% of their energy from renewable sources. The Sustainable Warmth Scheme, aimed at retrofitting poorly insulated households in low-income areas has resulted in 203 properties in Buckinghamshire receiving energy efficiency measures and is forecast to save over 250 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

As a Council, community is at the heart of our work and this is true of our climate change focussed activities. Recognising the importance of stakeholder based solutions to climate change the Climate Response Team have attended 21 events, including speaking at 5, and facilitated 12 community tree planting volunteer days. We have also met with 35 climate and environmental community groups to understand their ambitions and how we can support and empower communities to make local progress toward net zero.

One of the most significant areas of progress has been in the area of nature based solutions to climate change with the planting of over 145,000 trees across Buckinghamshire. A large new woodland has been created in Wing which will eventually include over 130,000 trees. There will be further planting at Wing this autumn to include volunteering opportunities and the creation of a community orchard. Two new woodlands were planted in Hazlemere and Amersham with over 14,000 trees planted at both sites. Community based tree planting has also been undertaken across Bucks, including welcoming our first two "Tiny Forests" at Princes Risborough Combined School and Bourton Park in Buckingham.

# Progress against targets

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The following section details the progress made against the aims and objectives of the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy.

## Progress against Aim 1:

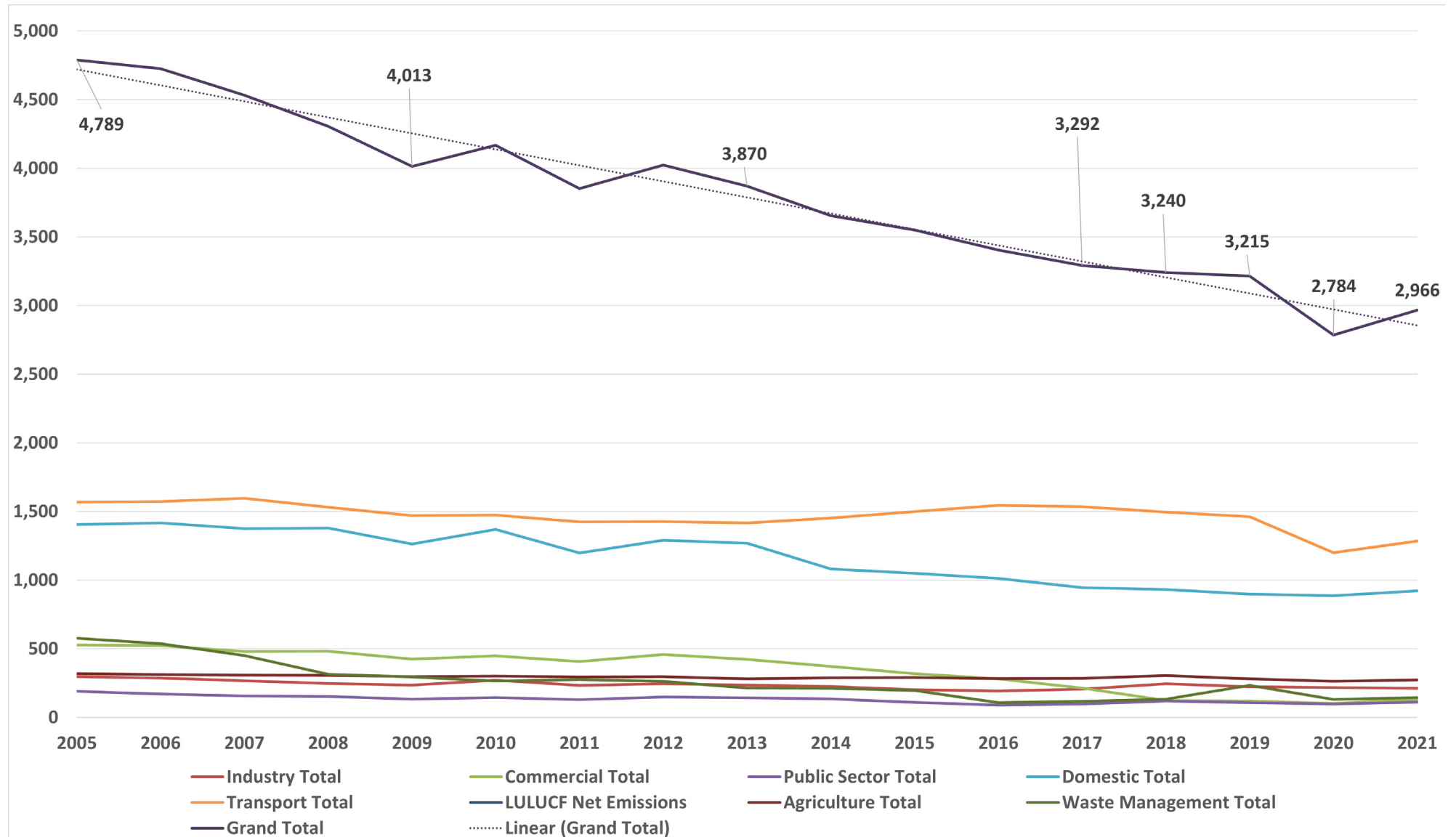
### **Work alongside national Government with the objective to achieve net zero carbon emissions for Buckinghamshire as a whole by 2050.**

Area greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are taken from the [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 2005-2021](#) and have been calculated using a generation based approach. These were published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on 29th June 2023 and the data is presented in Figure 1 – confirming that emissions from the area the Council serves are decreasing at an average rate of 2.8% per annum.

Emissions decreased significantly in 2020 largely due to restrictions on people and organisations' activities during the COVID pandemic - the first lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister on 23 March 2020. They increased in 2021 by 6.53% (related largely to an easing of restrictions and colder temperatures increasing the use of heating in buildings) but were 7.73% lower than 2019. The population grew by approximately 1.38% in the area between 2019 and 2021 and therefore per capita emissions fell by 0.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to 5.3 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per person.

Emissions generated from all source categories have decreased between 2005 and 2021 apart from waste management 'other' emissions which is influenced by population growth in the area. While emissions across most categories were higher in 2021 compared to 2020, emissions from industry continued to fall; and the amount of carbon emissions sequestered by grassland in the area increased. Levels of carbon emissions being sequestered by forested and grassland areas in Buckinghamshire have increased by an average rate of 0.57% per annum. Table 1 provides details of the carbon emissions produced by various sources in Buckinghamshire in 2021.

Figure 1 - Buckinghamshire Carbon Emissions (kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e) 2005-2021



**Table 1 - Buckinghamshire 2021 Carbon Emissions by Source**

Source	Annual Carbon Emissions (kilotonnes CO <sub>2</sub> )	% of Carbon Emissions
Industry Electricity	73.2	2.47%
Industry Gas	34.1	1.15%
Large Industrial Installations	0.6	0.02%
Industry 'Other'	104.3	3.52%
<b>Industry Total</b>	<b>212.2</b>	<b>7.15%</b>
Commercial Electricity	72.2	2.44%
Commercial Gas	56.3	1.90%
Commercial 'Other'	2.1	0.07%
<b>Commercial Total</b>	<b>130.7</b>	<b>4.41%</b>
Public Sector Electricity	38.7	1.31%
Public Sector Gas	72.0	2.43%
Public Sector 'Other'	0.9	0.03%
<b>Public Sector Total</b>	<b>111.7</b>	<b>3.77%</b>
Domestic Electricity	212.1	7.15%
Domestic Gas	607.3	20.47%
Domestic 'Other'	102.0	3.44%
<b>Domestic Total</b>	<b>921.4</b>	<b>31.06%</b>
Road Transport (A roads)	384.9	12.97%
Road Transport (Motorways)	559.8	18.87%
Road Transport (Minor roads)	270.8	9.13%
Diesel Railways	50.0	1.69%
Transport 'Other'	19.5	0.66%
<b>Transport Total</b>	<b>1,285.0</b>	<b>43.32%</b>



**Table 1 - Buckinghamshire 2021 Carbon Emissions by Source** *continued*

<b>Source</b>	<b>Annual Carbon Emissions (kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>)</b>	<b>% of Carbon Emissions</b>
Net Emissions: Forest Land	-124.4	-4.19%
Net Emissions: Cropland	39.5	1.33%
Net Emissions: Grassland	-46.3	-1.56%
Net Emissions: Wetland	0.0	0.00%
Net Emissions: Settlements	19.6	0.66%
Net Emissions: Harvested Wood Products	0.0	0.00%
Net Emissions: Indirect N <sub>2</sub> O	0.8	0.03%
<b>Land use, land-use change and forestry Total</b>	<b>-110.8</b>	<b>-3.74%</b>
Agriculture Electricity	14.3	0.48%
Agriculture Gas	18.1	0.61%
Agriculture 'Other'	23.5	0.79%
Agriculture Livestock	165.5	5.58%
Agriculture Soils	50.9	1.72%
<b>Agriculture Total</b>	<b>272.3</b>	<b>9.18%</b>
Landfill	124.2	4.19%
Waste Management 'Other'	19.7	0.66%
<b>Waste Management Total</b>	<b>143.8</b>	<b>4.85%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,966.2</b>	

**Progress against Objective A: Achieve net zero carbon emissions across council operations no later than 2050 and possibly before this, potentially by 2030, subject to resources.**

### Council Carbon Emissions 2022/23

We have calculated our own emissions for the period 2022-23 and the results are shown in table 2. In line with our reporting criteria, we include those emissions arising from the Council's operations such as the buildings and vehicles we operate or those associated with the transmission and distribution of electricity that the Council uses. Business travel emissions relate to staff and councillors travelling in their own vehicles where a mileage expense claim was made. Emissions from the use of public transport, such as train journeys, for work travel weren't captured as the data was not available. We have excluded emissions from our operations where our staff do not directly provide the service, for example waste collection vehicles operated around Wycombe, Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire areas.

The following table shows our 2022/23 emissions broken down into key components and reported on a gross basis:

**Table 2 - Buckinghamshire Council's Carbon Emissions (Gross)**

Activity	2022/23 Annual Carbon Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	% of Annual Emissions
<b>Buildings - Gas Consumption</b>	2,046	29%
<b>Buildings - Electricity Consumption (Gross)</b>	1,668	23%
<b>Street Lighting - Electricity Consumption (Gross)</b>	1,528	21%
<b>Council Fleet</b>	931	13%
<b>Business Travel</b>	681	10%
<b>Transmission and Distribution</b>	294	4%
<b>Total (Gross)</b>	<b>7,148</b>	

Our total gross emissions for the reporting period were 7,148 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

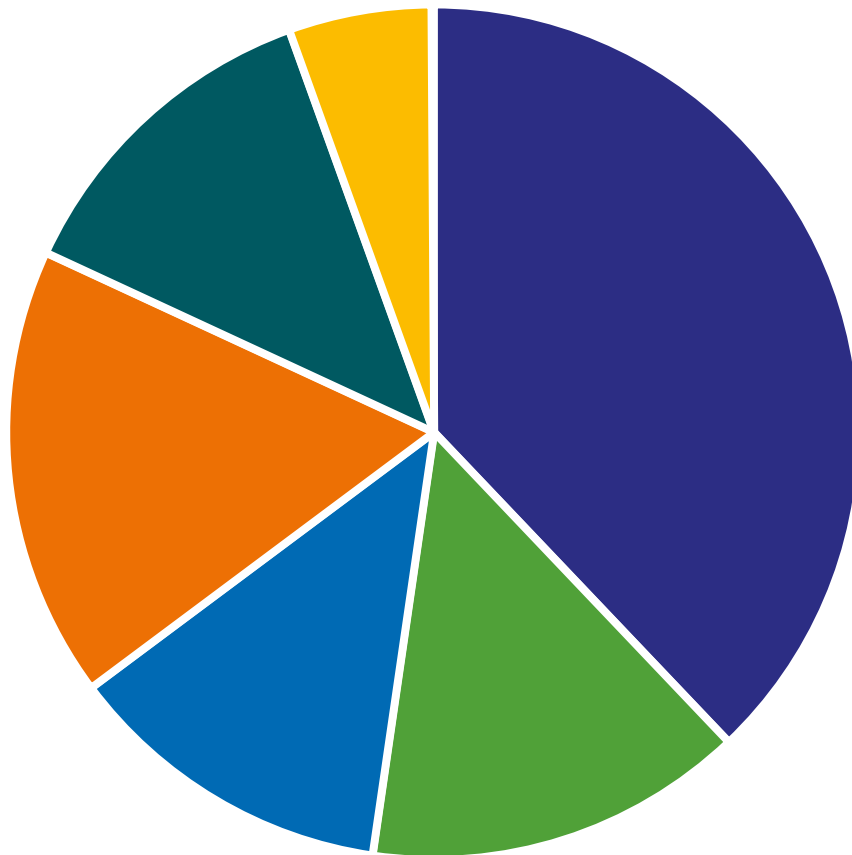
From October 2022 we have purchased our electricity using a 100% renewable tariff, fully backed by Renewable Electricity Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certificates. This has resulted in a substantial reduction in the emissions associated with electricity use due to the lower carbon intensity of the renewable tariff. In line with guidance and our commitment to transparency, we are reporting our "Gross" (shown previous page) and "Net" (shown right) emissions separately in the following table.

The net emissions for 2022/23 are 5,401 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. From this point on in the report, we will be referring only to "Net" emissions.

**Table 3 - Buckinghamshire Council's Carbon Emissions (Net)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2022/23 Annual Carbon Emissions (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	<b>% of Annual Emissions</b>
<b>Buildings - Gas Consumption</b>	2046	37.9%
<b>Buildings - Electricity Consumption (Net)</b>	778	14.4%
<b>Street Lighting - Electricity Consumption (Net)</b>	673	12.5%
<b>Council Fleet (Non EV)</b>	924	17.1%
<b>Fleet (EV) (Net)</b>	5	0.1%
<b>Business Travel</b>	681	12.6%
<b>Transmission and Distribution</b>	294	5.4%
<b>Total (Net)</b>	<b>5,401</b>	

**Figure 2 - Chart showing Council emissions broken down on a net basis**



- Buildings - Gas Consumption
- Buildings - Electricity Consumption
- Street Lighting - Electricity Consumption
- Council Fleet
- Business Travel
- Transmission and Distribution



**The most significant source of emissions on a net basis is gas consumption for buildings representing almost 38% of the total, while the second largest source of emissions is the Council's non-electrified fleet.**

## Carbon Budget

On our journey to Net Zero Carbon by 2050 we have several way markers to ensure that we remain on track. Compared to our **1990 baseline of 20,550 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq** we will:

- Reduce our annual carbon emissions **by at least 75% by 2030, to no more than 5,137.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq**
- Reduce our annual carbon emissions **by at least 90% by 2040, to no more than 2,055 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq**
- Reach **net zero carbon emissions by 2050**
- For 2023 we are reporting a **reduction in emissions of 73.7%** as compared to our 1990 emissions, this compares favourably with and indicates that we are **on track to achieve our target** of a 75% reduction by 2030.
- We also set out a Carbon Budget for the seven year period from 2020-21 to 2026-27, in Table 5 of our Climate Change Strategy, with indicative **annual allocations and a total budget of 51,139 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**. The two graphs below show both the cumulative total against our seven year budget and annual totals against allocations:

Figure 3 - Remaining and used carbon budget

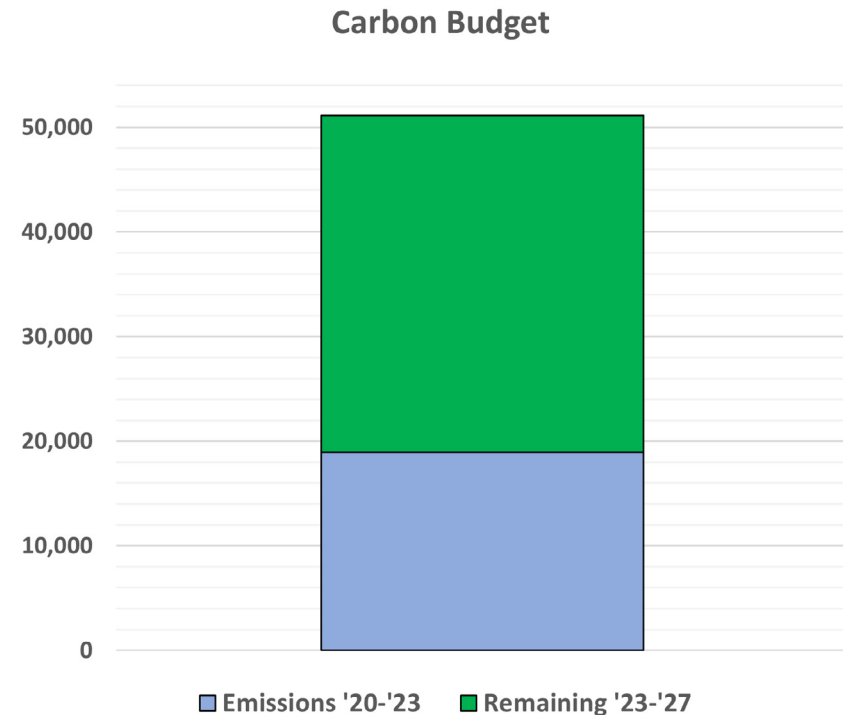
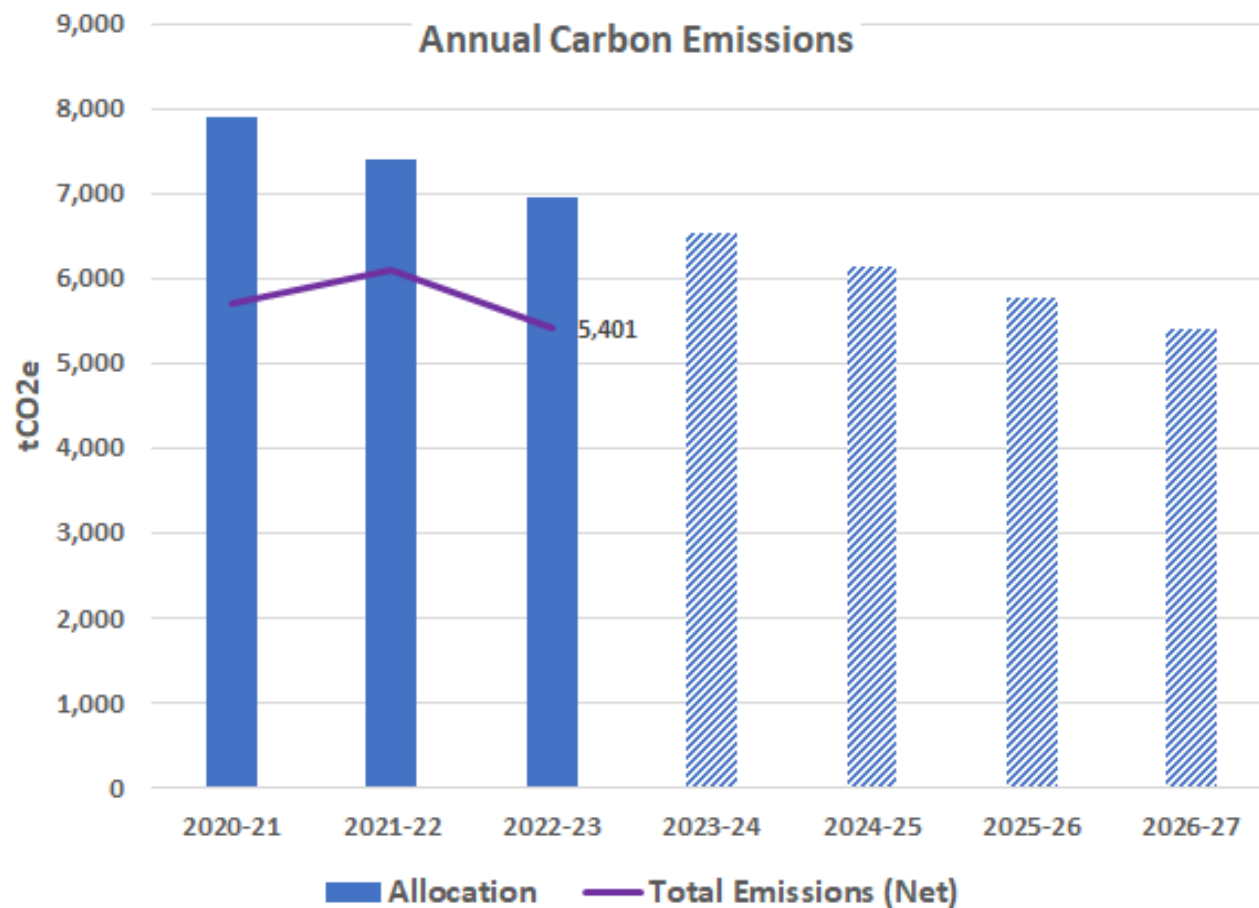


Figure 4 - Annual carbon emissions and allocations



Although we have seen an increase in gross emissions for 2022/23, this is consistent with the area wide trend referred to under Aim 1, emissions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 were both severely affected by the Covid pandemic. As shown left, we have seen a marked decrease in our net emissions for the reporting period 2022/23. This has been significantly driven by the procurement of low carbon electricity since October 2022.

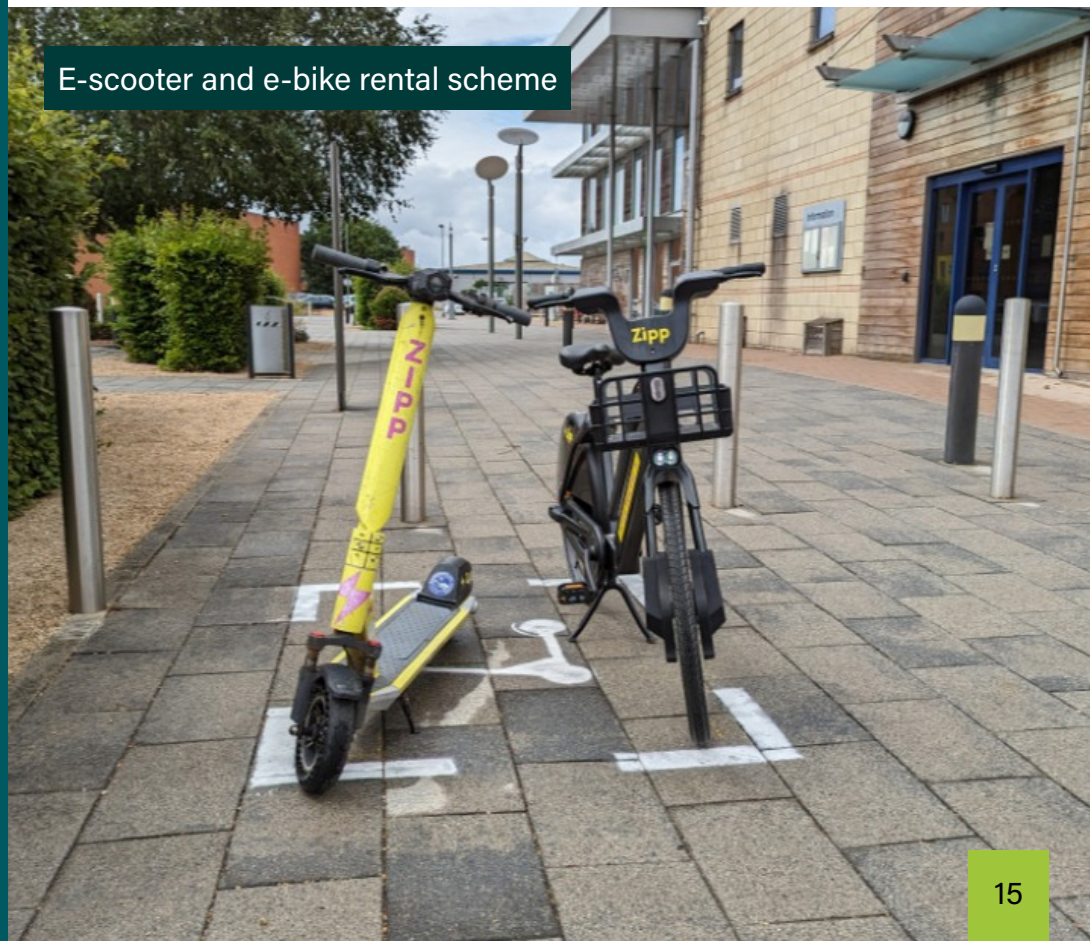


## Progress against Objective B: Support communities to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

- As a Council we work with a range of different stakeholders to enable communities to make progress towards a net zero future. Here are just a few highlights of our work in this area:
- Local Authority Treescapes Fund Round 2 award of £184k secured for community tree planting across Buckinghamshire
- Working with Buckinghamshire Community Energy to progress the Wendover Wharf Road Campus Decarbonisation project
- Introducing more and better quality active travel routes (e.g. the recently opened [Platinum Park Way](#))
- Establishing e-scooter and e-bike rental schemes
- Promoting a solar PV system group-purchasing (Solar Together) scheme for resident and small business owner occupiers



E-scooter and e-bike rental scheme





- Working with the [Greater South East Net Zero Hub](#) to deliver the Sustainable Warmth Scheme to bring energy efficiency and low carbon measures to over 200 homes in Bucks
- Providing information and advice to businesses through Low Carbon Workspaces
- Establishing a quarterly Climate Change Newsletter with a potential reach of up to 4,000 readers
- Encouraging individuals to adopt more environmentally friendly behaviours via the AWorld app
- The Climate Response Team have attended 21 events, including speaking at 5 and facilitating 12 community tree planting volunteer days
- We have met with 35 climate and environmental community groups to understand their ambitions and how we can support and foster community activity across the Council

Further details are provided in the 'Activities against Actions' section, look out for the symbol indicating stakeholder based work throughout the report:



Climate Response Team are joined by Cllr Mimi Harker at the Princes Risborough Family Fun Day





## Progress against Aim 2:

### Progress against Aim 2: Improve air quality across Buckinghamshire pursuant to achieving national air quality objectives

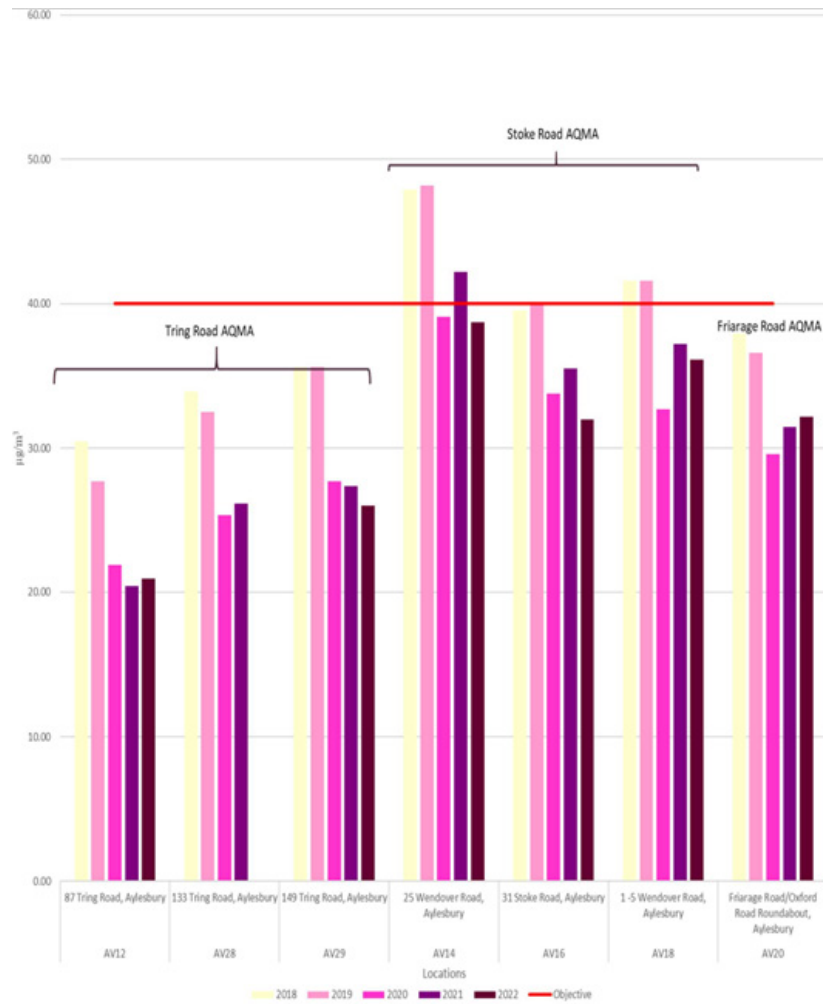
There has been a consistent reduction in recorded levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) at most monitoring locations for the last five years (2018 - 2022) (please see figures 5-8). In 2022, there was a general decrease in concentrations recorded at most monitoring locations with a few exceptions. Although some locations did see a slight increase in concentrations in 2022 when compared to 2021 data, it is noted that the concentrations have not returned to those levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022, air quality monitoring showed there was only one exceedance of the annual mean National Air Quality Objective for NO<sub>2</sub> within Buckinghamshire. This was a new monitoring location added in 2022 located within the Friarage Road Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Aylesbury.

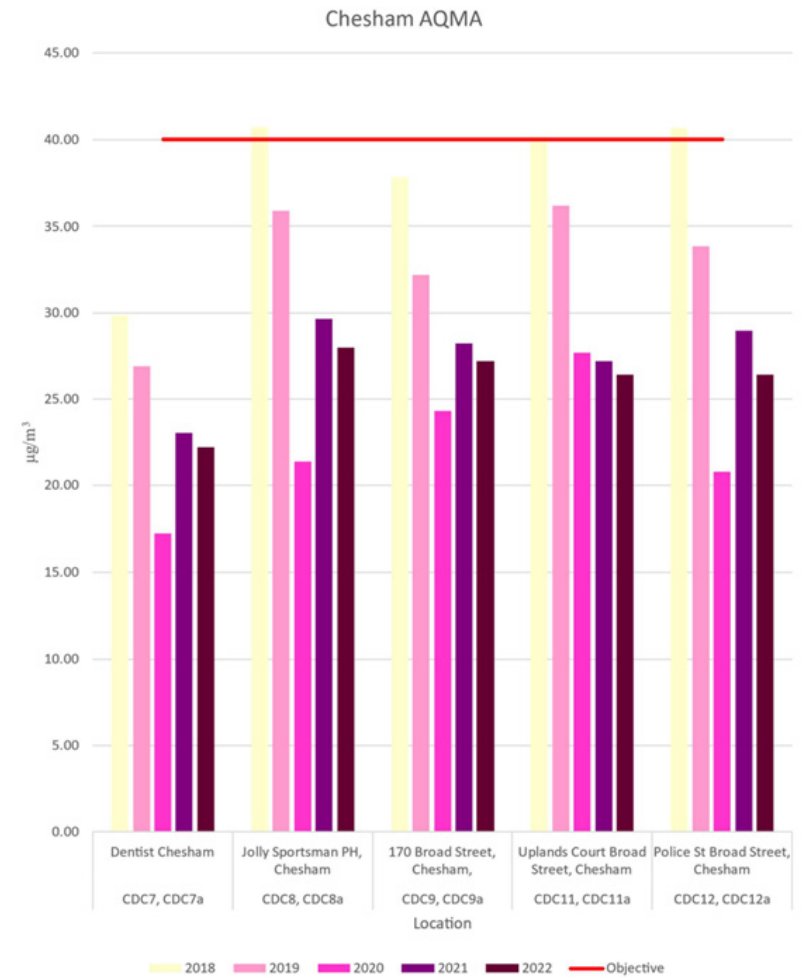
Monitoring completed in the Tring Road AQMA over the last five years has shown that concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> have consistently been below the annual mean objective level of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The trends for all AQMAs since 2018 follow from page 18 - 19.



**Figure 5 - Trends in annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (Aylesbury Area AQMAs)**

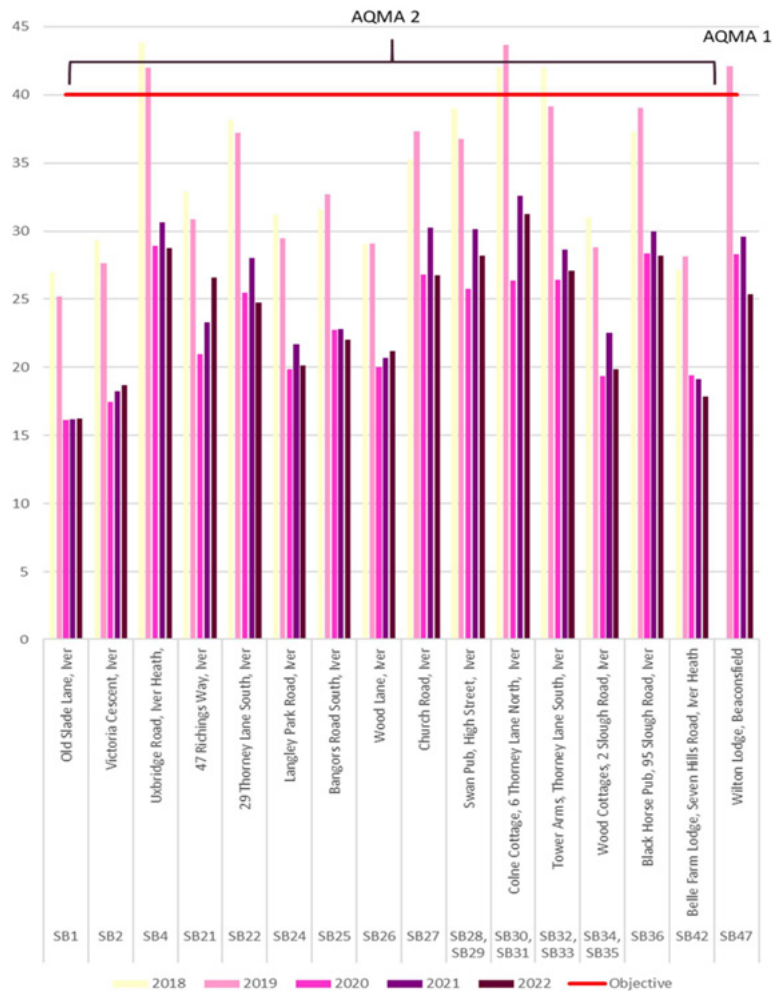


**Figure 6 - Trends in annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (Chesham AQMAs)**

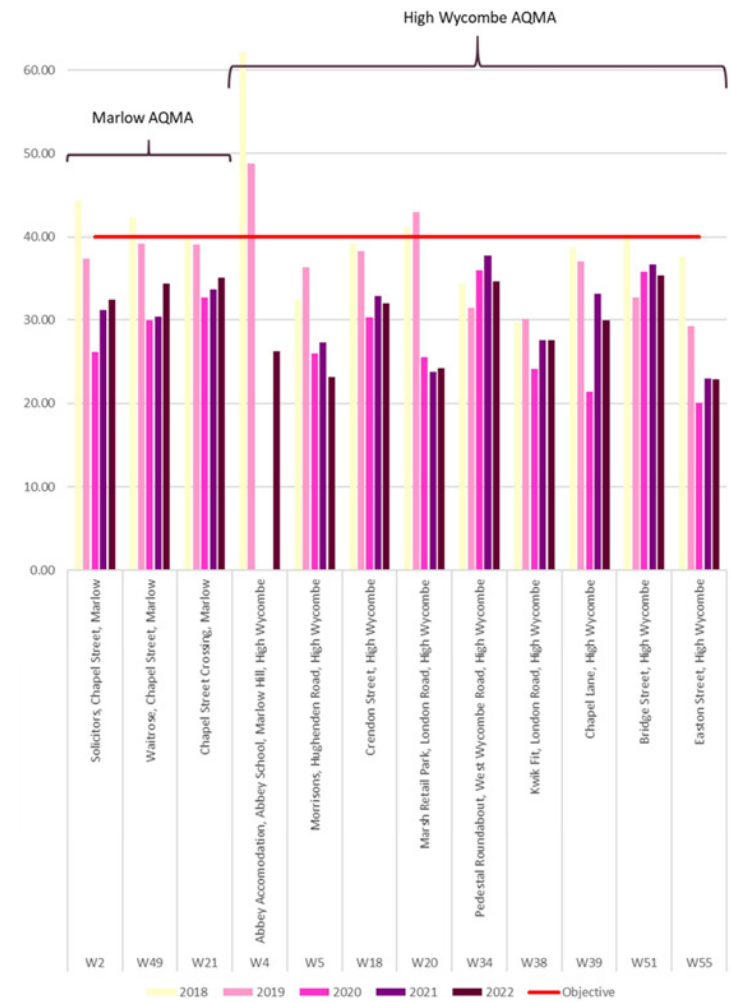


N.B. Results from new monitoring locations set up in January 2022 have not been included in the graphs. The following figures show the results for the Chesham and South Bucks AQMAs:

**Figure 7 - Trends in annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (South Bucks AQMAs)**



**Figure 8 - Trends in annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (Wycombe Area AQMAs)**



The following shows the data for the Wycombe Area AQMAs. There is a period without data for 2021/22; diffusion tube W4 at Abbey Accommodation was not accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Monitoring has resumed in 2022.



## **Progress against Objective C: Reduce emissions to air from all council operations.**

As mentioned in the progress made against objective C there has been a 20.4% reduction on a gross basis and a 41.5% reduction on a net basis of the Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to our emissions from '18/'19. Compared to our baseline emissions from 1990 we have seen a reduction of 65% on a Gross basis. Similar reductions have been achieved regarding emissions of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and other air pollutants.

## **Progress against Objective D: Reduce human exposure to harmful levels of air pollution.**

As there has been a consistent reduction in recorded levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) at most monitoring locations for the last five years (2018 - 2022) (please see graphs 2-7) and annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at most recorded locations are below the National Air Quality Objective (the exception being a new monitoring location for 2022 within the Friarage Road AQMA in Aylesbury) human health will generally benefit. The Council's Strategic Environmental Protection Team continues to provide comments on planning applications regarding the air quality impacts of proposed developments with the aim of mitigating human exposure to harmful levels of air pollution.



# Activity against actions

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## Table 4 - The Five Themes

Where a specific action or area of work is especially relevant to one or more of these themes, you will see the icons above. You will also find “Insight” boxes throughout the report, explaining how a specific action being reported is relevant to the highlighted theme.

## The Energy Transition



## De-carbonisation of Transport



## The Built Environment



## Stakeholder Based Solutions



## Nature Based Solutions



# Governance and Management

## Response to Defra's consultation on the draft revised national Air Quality Strategy (re Action 1)

Defra carried out a national consultation from 11th to 21st April 2023 to seek views on the revised draft Air Quality Strategy, to which Buckinghamshire Council issued a response.

The revised Strategy sets out the actions the government expects local authorities to take in support of achieving our long-term air quality goals, including Defra's ambitious new PM2.5 targets. It provides a framework to enable local authorities to make the best use of their powers and deliver for their communities. The Council's Strategic Environmental Protection Team provided a detailed response to the consultation.

## Researching a Carbon offsetting fund and options (Re Actions 2 and 11)

The Climate Response Team have been looking into the options available for carbon offsetting, such as sequestration by tree planting to generate Woodland Carbon Units which can be used to offset emissions from the Council's own operations (see Actions 13 and 14).

## Interdepartmental Working Groups (re Action 3)

A total of seven interdepartmental working groups have been created since the adoption of the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy.







## The Council Land Tree Planting

Programme Board oversees the programme of works to plant 543,000 trees on Council Land by the end of the 2031 planting season. During the current reporting period over 145,000 trees have been planted.



## Domestic Retrofit Programme

This Board meets on a bi-monthly basis and includes representatives from Climate Change, Energy Management, Environmental Health, Communications, Regulatory Services and Housing. It is concerned with emissions mitigation and climate change adaptation initiatives for domestic properties across all tenures and receives reports from relevant initiatives such as Better Housing Better Health and the Sustainable Warmth Scheme.



## Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Working Group

The Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Working Group deals with matters related to public, Council fleet and staff electric vehicle charging. Included are representatives from Parking Services, Transport Strategy, Air Quality, Energy Management, Waste Management, Highways, Property & Assets, and Climate Response Teams to name just a few! During this reporting period the group have met 6 times, serving as an opportunity to co-ordinate existing EV infrastructure work across the Council. It has facilitated closer collaboration on the Wendover EVCI and in-pavement cable channel trial, which is currently open to expressions of interest from residents. The Group has also contributed to the submission of our Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund expression of interest and will continue to drive the wider deployment of EV infrastructure through LEVI and other schemes.





## Council Estate and Climate Change



The Council Estate and Climate Change Board oversees initiatives to reduce emissions from and enhance the resilience of (regarding climate change) the Council's estate (and includes representatives from Property and Assets, Climate Response, and Energy Management Teams).



## Cost of living

In September 2022 the Council started a programme to coordinate a response to the cost of living crisis - to ensure that residents can keep warm, have sufficient food and essentials for themselves and their families, and know where to find support if required (such as the Energy Doctor scheme). This is a cross-council effort involving various service areas: Service Improvement; Communications; Community Support; Energy and Climate Change; Culture, Sport and Leisure; Revenues and Benefits; Community Boards; Public Health; and Human Resources and Organisational Development.





## Staff Climate Change Network

The Staff Climate Change Network is led and facilitated by Nick Graham, Service Director for Legal & Democratic Services, demonstrating the commitment to climate change across senior levels of our organisation. With over 266 officers signed up to the mailing list, the network has met four times during the reporting period. The purpose of the network is twofold: 1) To raise awareness internally of climate change activities within the council, whereby the network are regularly briefed on work such as the tree planting programme and domestic energy efficiency projects and; 2) To promote behavioural change and encourage the sharing of ideas and best practice across the Council. A meeting in July prompted helpful discussion about sustainability and recycling along with questions about opportunities for staff to participate in tree planting activities coming up in the next planting season.



## Fleet De-carbonisation Co-ordination Group



July 2023 saw the adoption of Terms of Reference for the Fleet De-carbonisation Co-ordination Group. Featuring representatives from across the Council's fleet operations, this group will focus on identifying the optimum approach to reducing, and eventually eliminating, the carbon emissions associated with our own fleet vehicles. In the very first meeting, Officers agreed to work on the development of a strategy to determine the best way of achieving this.

# Monitoring and Reporting

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## Council Emissions

### Automatic Meter Reading Rollout - Update (re Action 7)

An Automated Meter Reading (AMR) meter captures and transmits accurate meter readings to energy suppliers on a monthly basis, with some meters reporting far more often (e.g. every half hour). This provides consumers, such as the Council, with far more granular data which helps improve the monitoring and analyses of gas and electricity consumption across our estate. We have been managing a roll out of AMR meters across our gas and electricity supplies to enable the realisation of these benefits. Another advantage is that the AMR's reduce the burden of taking manual meter readings, saving valuable officer time which can be invested in other areas of work. Finally, the AMR meters eliminate the need for estimating energy consumption which improves billing accuracy and data accuracy for carbon emissions reporting (see Objective A). Of the 401 non-half hourly (not automatic) electricity meters that are AMR compatible, 295 have been upgraded to AMR. Of our 275 gas meters, 245 have been upgraded, representing 89% of the total.



## County-wide Emissions

### 'Clean Up Our Air' initiative (re Actions 8, 16 & 59)

The Council's Strategic Environmental Protection Team, in conjunction with Spelthorne Borough Council and Ricardo, was awarded a grant of £91,273 from Defra's Air Quality Grant in 2021/22 to create air quality toolkits which will be provided to each community board area within Buckinghamshire. To coincide with Clean Air Day on 15th June, Buckinghamshire launched a new initiative called 'Clean Up Our Air'

The air quality toolkits provide participating Community Boards with materials to enable them, local schools and organisations to carry out campaigns and to raise awareness of local air quality issues. Included will be access to the use of one air quality sensor per community board area, campaign materials, advice, and toolkits on how to run campaigns.

The results from the sensors will help to illustrate and monitor the impact of campaigns carried out during the year. The toolkits will also improve participants' knowledge about air quality and educate on what steps individuals can take to reduce their exposure to air pollution.

The team have also been attending community board meetings to introduce the 'Clean Up Our Air' initiative.

Installation of Airly Air Quality Sensor at Millbrook Combined School, High Wycombe



Officers, Councillors and Community Board Members at Juniper Hill School, Flackwell Heath



To learn more about the Clean Up Our Air Initiative and Air Quality please visit [Buckinghamshire Council's Air Quality webpage](#).

## NO<sub>2</sub> Diffusion Tube Monitoring Locations Review (re Action 8)

In December 2022 the NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tube monitoring locations present throughout the county were reviewed. This is completed annually to establish if any additional monitoring points are required where there is the potential for breaches of the national air quality objectives to occur. This may be following significant developments such as new housing or new road schemes within the county or from an increase in observed levels of traffic.

The diffusion tube monitoring data collected is also reviewed. Where significant data exists to show there are low levels of pollution present and that there will be no breaches in the national air quality objectives, that monitoring may be closed, and the diffusion tube moved to a new monitoring location. A map showing the NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tube monitoring locations can be found on the [air quality pages of our website](#).

## Air Quality Annual Status Report (re Action 9)

The submission of an Annual Status Report (ASR) is a statutory requirement under the Local Air Quality Management Framework as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995) and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents. The report provides an annual review of air quality, the results of all air quality monitoring undertaken and outlines the actions the council has taken in the previous calendar year to improve air quality within the county.

The latest Annual Status Report (ASR) for Buckinghamshire was submitted to Defra on 30th June 2023. The report is available to view on the [air quality pages of our website](#).





# The Council's Emissions

## Implementation of Telematics & monthly league tables to encourage economical driving (Re Action 10)

Telematic systems providing digital feedback to drivers on the efficiency of their driving, such as pointing out when braking too hard, have been fitted on the majority of waste collection vehicles in the North Waste Service. Additionally, monthly league tables are published internally to recognise the most economical drivers, which further incentivises behavioural change leading to reduced emissions.



## Council Land Tree Planting Programme: Creation of two new woodlands at Bury Farm and Grange Farm (re Action 13)

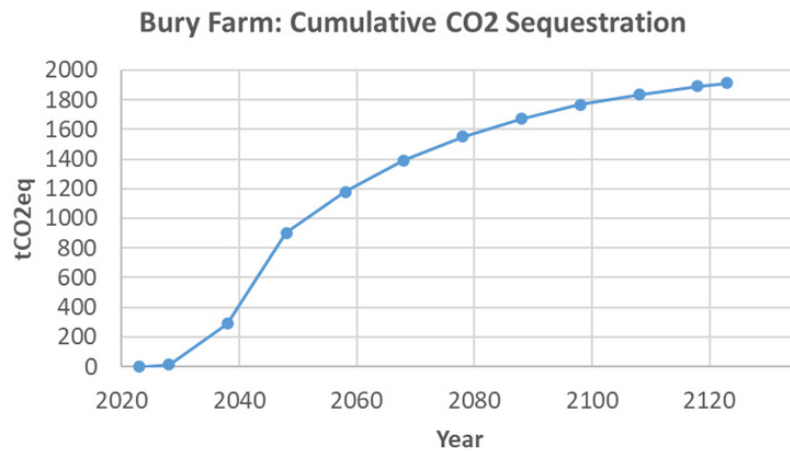
Over 33,000 trees were planted on Council land in the 2022-2023 planting season through our contractor planting model. Two new woodlands were created with 14,300 trees planted at Bury Farm and 14,700 trees planted at Grange Farm. A volunteer planting day was organised at Grange Farm in conjunction with Chiltern Rangers, one of our key partners. Despite the inclement weather the event was a great success

with local Councillors, Cabinet Members, Officers from the Climate Response Team ably assisted by willing volunteer students and teachers from a nearby school coming together to plant some of the site and enjoy time in nature.

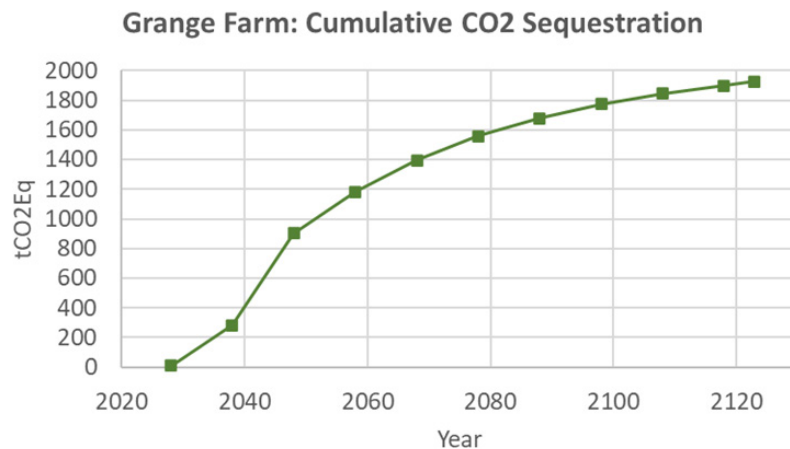


Volunteer planting day at Grange Farm, Hazlemere

Both sites are registered with the [Land Carbon Registry](#) which provides independent quality assurance for UK based woodland creation projects. The WCUs will be used to offset the Council's own emissions as part of our commitment to reaching net zero carbon for our own operations by 2050 (see Aim 1, Objective A). The following figures show the cumulative sequestration of both sites forecast over the next century:



**Figure 7: Cumulative carbon sequestration for Bury Farm (top) and Grange Farm (below)**



## Forestry England Partnership: Wing Wood Community Woodland (re Action 13)

The Council were only the second local authority in England to enter into a partnership with Forestry England under the Forestry England Woodland Partnership Scheme, signing a lease leading to the creation of a new 51Ha community woodland near Wing. Planting for this site is already underway and over 110,000 trees are already in the ground. Completion of the 132,000 tree site featuring a community orchard and areas of wetland to increase biodiversity is anticipated in the 23/24 planting season.



The Council and Forestry England meet at Wing Wood



The Council continues to manage the maintenance of the Billet Field site at Black Park Country Park in the south of the County, where new EV charging infrastructure has also been installed this year.

The latest forecasts indicate that a total of 15,354 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq will be sequestered through to 2124. This includes 411 tCO<sub>2</sub>e at Billet Field, 1914 and 1925 tCO<sub>2</sub>e from Bury Farm and Grange Farm respectively and a remarkable 10,984 tCO<sub>2</sub>e at Wing Wood.

Following on from the successful application to the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) for Billet Field, reported last year, of £28,380 we are delighted to report that a further £105,000 and £110,000 were secured from EWCO for Bury Farm and Grange Farm respectively.



## Insight #1: Nature Based Solutions and Tree Planting

According to the World Economic Forum, Nature Based Solutions refers to activities that “protect, manage and restore ecosystems to address socio-environmental challenges”. Woodland creation, such as the Council’s own tree planting programme, achieves this in myriad ways: The trees planted will sequester carbon, removing it from the atmosphere, as they grow; The new woodlands will restore woodland habitat fostering bio-diversity and can provide benefits to the local climate through for example greater water retention to prevent flooding and naturally manage rainfall.



## Blue and Green Infrastructure on Council Land (Re Action 14)

Within the Council Land Tree Planting Programme (see Action 13 above), the Woodland Creation Design Plan for Grange Farm includes work to restore a pond on site. This will include vegetation management to reduce shading and de-silting, with a grassland margin maintained to conserve habitat and deter access by dogs. There will also be a 4m buffer around the pond where no tree planting will take place. Once accessible by the public, the walk through the woodland will take visitors around the edge of the pond area. The location of the pond is shown in the following figure:

Figure 9: Plan view of Grange Farm showing location of pond that will be restored as part of the Grange Farm establishment





# Behaviour

## Guidance on climate change and sustainability for procurement (re Action 15)

The Climate Response Team engage with services to provide advice on the procurement of goods and services with regard to climate change and sustainability matters. One example of this was the provision of guidance to Leisure Services. Organic cotton workwear has also been procured for Domestic Resource Efficiency Officers.

## Climate Change Awareness and Carbon Literacy Training (re Action 16)

Since adoption of the CCAQS a total of 24 Officers and Members have received and completed Carbon Literacy Training with an external organisation certified by the Carbon Literacy Project. In June 2023 Buckinghamshire Council attended the annual Carbon Literacy Project Awards to celebrate our certification as a Bronze tier Carbon Literate Organisation.

Training sessions for a further 30 individuals have been booked and an Officer will undergo masterclass training, equipping them to deliver training in-house to our members and staff.



## Internal Communications and Behaviour Change (re Action 16)

The Council have encouraged staff to adopt more sustainable behaviours through a variety of means including:

- Staff Vlog about reducing single use plastic consumption (see Action 60) (July 2023)
- Promotion of two new e-bike schemes launched in Bucks via the Council wide weekly update newsletter (July 2023)
- A range of tips to reduce food waste including a competition with prizes during Food Waste Action Week (March 2023)
- Promotion of the Cycle to Work Scheme “Get cycling this Spring” (Feb. 2023)
- Two part staff blog about sustainable fashion and how to “buy new sustainably” (Nov – Dec 2022)
- Volunteering opportunities for tree planting promoted by internal newsletter (October 2022)

You can  
*reduce waste*



Sustainable fashion blog

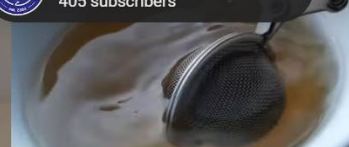


Cycle to Work Scheme

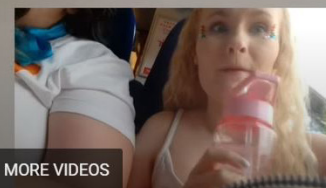


Buckinghamshire Council  
405 subscribers

Millie



Copy link



Staff Vlog - Millie's journey one year later reducing single-use plastic

MORE VIDEOS



0:11 / 3:02



YouTube





# The Council's Operational Estate

## Operational Buildings

### Transition to Cloud Based Servers (re Action 17)

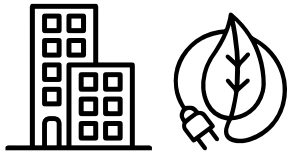
We reported last year upon the replacement of over 260 of our traditional on-site computer servers with the Microsoft 'Azure' Cloud service. Moving these out of sites in Aylesbury, Amersham and Wycombe to more energy efficient servers based in the cloud saved 156 tonnes of carbon during the previous reporting period. This, and other benefits associated with the [Microsoft Azure platform](#) are estimated to be up to [98% more carbon efficient than on-premises solutions](#).



## Insight #2: Renewables and The Energy Transition

The Energy Transition refers to the switch from a centralised, fossil fuel based energy system to a distributed, renewables based energy system which is essential to reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. The roll out of renewables at a range of scales, from rooftop solar to large scale wind parks in the North Sea, will play a crucial role in enabling the move to electrify heat (through eg. heat pumps) and transport. The entire system will undergo enormous change over the next decades and Buckinghamshire Council works closely with for example our electricity distribution companies to enable this change.





## Sustainable Energy Measures Feasibility and Assessment Study (Re Action 17)

The following Council buildings have been subject to surveys by an external consultant to assess the feasibility of a wide range of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures:

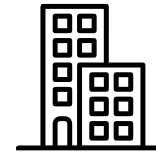
- Aylesbury Day Opportunity Centre
- Aylesbury Family Time Service
- Burnham Day Opportunity Centre
- Castlefield Family Centre
- Chesham Library
- Hazelmere Library

The range of measures included:

- Air Source Heat Pump for domestic hot water and space heating
- Fabric insulation
- Improved zoning, controls and implementation of a building management system (BMS)
- Solar PV and Battery installation
- Lighting and controls

All measures were assessed with respect to their capital costs, projected energy, carbon emission and financial savings, payback periods, and abatement cost (in terms of pounds invested per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> saved.)

Initial conclusions suggest that solar PV may offer the optimum combination of carbon saving and cost savings.



## Kingsbrook Secondary School Embodied & Operational Carbon Savings (Re Action 18)

[Kingsbrook Secondary School](#) opened to accept its first students for the 2022/23 academic year. This new build represents a flagship project within Buckinghamshire and included state of the art principles and technology to minimise both the embodied and operation carbon emissions associated with the school.



Image of Kingsbrook Secondary School

The architects and contractors who designed and built Kingsbrook Secondary School were tasked by Buckinghamshire Council's Commissioning Team, supported by colleagues from Strategic Infrastructure and the Housing Infrastructure Fund, with developing a building that would have low carbon credentials. A wide range of measures were implemented including optimising the layout of the school for maximum solar gain (natural heating from the sun), the highest levels of insulation, leading edge energy efficiency controls and low carbon heating measures such as air source heat pumps. Additionally, design features such as re-engineering the structural frame to allow for a lighter steel construction and the use of pad, instead of pile foundations.

The results are impressive. The embodied carbon from the stage 3 design was 817 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup>, as compared to an average of 1000 kg/CO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> for a typical educational building. The Energy Strategy deployed for minimising operational emissions for the building forecasts annual emissions of 103.1 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/annum versus a regulation baseline level of 173.0 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/annum, a saving of up to 69.9 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/annum. This could save as much as 1747.5 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> over the next 25 years.



### Insight #3: The Built Environment and Embodied Carbon

“Embodied” or “Capital” carbon refers to all of the carbon (or equivalent GHG) emissions that arise during the fabrication, construction and/or manufacturing of a product or other infrastructure. For example, a new building may require a significant amount of concrete to be poured to establish its foundations, but concrete production is a carbon intensive process, accounting for **around 8% of global emissions**. These emissions are known as “embodied”, as they result from the creation or “embodiment” of the product or building. Among the many measures at Kingsbrook Secondary School, reinforced concrete and traditional pre-cast concrete were replaced with hollow-core slabs, reducing the amount required and minimising the embodied carbon.





# Transport

## Internal Communications and Staff Travel (re Action 22)

Internal emails to staff this year have included items on:

- Volunteering opportunities for tree planting, highlighting the work performed by volunteers from Planning, Growth and Sustainability regarding the tree planting at Platinum Park Way
- The benefits of the Cycle to Work Scheme
- Inviting staff to contribute to the High Wycombe Transport Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) consultation
- Posts encouraging staff to consider walking or cycling to work

## Travel for Work Purposes

### Upcycling and Electrifying a Refuse Collection Vehicle (re Action 24)

Following the award to the Council from Defra [of an Air Quality Grant of £578,000 to upcycle and electrify a refuse collection vehicle \(RCV\) procurement of a supplier for the contract for the retrofit](#) work has been awarded to [Lunaz Applied Technologies Ltd.](#) Delivery of the upcycled vehicle is expected before the end of 2023. It is anticipated that the zero tailpipe emissions RCV will travel 412 miles a week on collection routes in the north of Aylesbury, including roads in three air quality management areas. It's forecast that over 10 tonnes of greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>e), 69 kgs of oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and half a kilo of particulate matter emissions will be saved per year.



Buckinghamshire Council social media post from June 2023, announcing the up-cycling of an RCV.

## **Family Time Services' New Electric Vehicles (EV) and EV Charging Infrastructure (re Action 24)**

Since the installation of the fleet electric vehicle charging points at the Family Time Services' sites in High Wycombe and Aylesbury, two battery electric multi-purpose vehicles have been used for operations to transport families throughout the County. During this period, it is estimated that the vehicles have resulted in GHG emission savings of 2.04 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e over a 12 month period, compared with the diesel vehicles previously used. There have also been air quality benefits, with reductions of carbon monoxide (by 10.99 kgs), oxides of nitrogen (by 1.76 kgs) and airborne particulate matter (by 0.10 kgs) per annum.

## **New Fleet Vehicles on Order (re Action 24)**

Buckinghamshire Council is moving to electrify its fleet and has ordered 8 electric vans to replace the diesel vans currently used for operations. With assistance from the Council's Fleet Management team, six battery electric vans will be delivered to the Highways Team, along with one vehicle each for the Crematoria & Cemeteries Service and the South Waste & Street Scene Service.

## **New Fleet Vehicle & Charging Infrastructure for Country Parks Service (re Action 24)**

A new electric vehicle has been delivered for the Country Parks Service at Black Country Park. This will be used to travel between country parts across the County and replaces the use of a Diesel pick up. The requisite charging infrastructure has also been installed.

## **Commuting and Working from Home**

### **Work Smart (re Actions 26 and 46)**

The "Work Smart" practices, reported upon in last year's Progress Report, continue - allowing Council operatives to work from home, where operationally feasible, approximately 60% of the time. This has been enabled by IT systems and hardware that allow for effective remote working, such as Microsoft Teams. Managers decide on how best to balance the home/office working patterns of teams to ensure that required performance standards can be met while social and environmental benefits can still be realised.

# Suppliers and Partners

## Partners

### Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) Round 2 (re Action 27)

Buckinghamshire Council secured £184k from the 2022/23 [Local Authority Treescapes Fund \(LATF\)](#) Round 2. The bid this year included partners from across Buckinghamshire including:

- Earthwatch LLP & Princes Risborough Combined School
- Dorneywood Scout Camp
- Releaf Marlow
- Earthwatch LLP & Buckingham Town Council
- Longridge Activity Centre
- Transport for Bucks

These organisations planted almost 1,500 trees across the County. Our first “Tiny Forests” in Bucks were created as part of this work. These were established in line with the [“Miyawaki” Method](#) - packing 600 trees into an area no bigger than a tennis court. The dense planting helps accelerate tree growth (and therefore achieves greater biodiversity and carbon sequestration rate improvements sooner), while their small size allows for these forests to be planted in urban areas – allowing for much needed exposure to nature in our towns and cities. The first tiny forest was planted by students and volunteers at Princes Risborough Combined School.





We partnered for the second year in a row with Releaf Marlow, who planted trees across a range of sites in their locality including two sites on Farmland. A second tiny forest was also planted at Bourton Park, near Buckingham, by volunteers including local councillors from Buckingham Town Council:



## HS2 Tree Giveaway Day (Re Action 27)

The Council received 1,000 trees from HS2 Ltd in May 2022. These were cared for by [Chiltern Rangers](#) who kept them in good shape throughout the dry summer. The Climate Response Team organised a “tree giveaway day”, in conjunction with Chiltern Rangers, where over 20 groups from across the county collected the trees for onward planting. Several were parish councils, alongside other organisations such as the [Lindengate Charity](#) and [Hogshaw Farm](#). Chiltern Rangers also received several hundred trees for onward planting as part of their vital work in the county.



## Tree planting along Platinum Park Way (Re Action 27)

Funded by Buckinghamshire Council, 4,000 trees and shrubs were planted along the recently opened Platinum Park Way active travel route (see Action 42 for further details). Over a period of two weeks, volunteers from the Council and community came together in spite of the cold weather to carry out the planting in conjunction with Chiltern Rangers.



## Wharf Road Decarbonisation Project, Wendover (Action 27)

Buckinghamshire Community Energy (BCE) have been developing a project to decarbonise the Wharf Road Campus in Wendover, which includes seven buildings: John Colet School, John Hampden School, Wendover Junior School, Wendover Swimming Pool, Wendover Youth Centre, Wendover Memorial Hall and Little Acorns Kindergarten. Following a feasibility study in 2021, Buckinghamshire Council has been supporting BCE to progress the project which will focus on installations of solar PV in its first phase.

This is a community energy model whereby the community group attains a lease from the freeholder to put solar PV onto buildings which are funded through a share offer from the local community. The community group then installs and maintains the solar PV while the building user receives cheaper electricity.

The Council has been working to develop an internal process which will create space for community energy projects on council assets. This will both support the Council's net zero targets and build capacity of community energy organisations in the County. The strategic significance of this project is to develop a flourishing community energy community in Buckinghamshire to support decarbonised, resilient energy systems.



## Schools and Academies

### School Travel Plan Success (re Action 28)

The Council's Travel to School team provides advice to schools on travelling sustainably. While their primary focus is to encourage active travel and reduce the number of car journeys to school altogether, they also provide information on anti-idling. Information is provided in newsletters and to schools in the course of working with them on their [school travel plans](#).

The team also deliver initiatives such as the Footsteps training scheme, bikeability and balanceability training, and Walk Once a Week (WOW) incentive scheme. In December 2022, Buckinghamshire Council came [1<sup>st</sup> in the Modeshift STARS \(Sustainable Travel Accreditation and Recognition for Schools\) scheme league table](#) for the county with the council having the highest percentage of schools with a sustainable travel plan. There are a total of 64 accredited school travel plans across the county with three of the schools achieving platinum status.

### Ad-hoc Support for Schools (re Action 29)

Ad hoc support for schools from the Council's Energy and Climate Change Team continues. In addition to several webinars, forms, and processes being provided to help matters in relation energy contracts, information about the [additional capital funding provided by the Department for Education to improve school energy efficiency](#) and a guidance regarding energy efficiency measures in schools was published on SchoolsWeb in January and February 2023.

The Energy Management Team have also provided advice to schools on how to reduce their energy usage, whether gas or electricity.

### Lease & Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Solar for Schools at Spinfield School, Marlow (re Action 29)

In early 2022 the Council completed a lease and corresponding Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with an organisation called [Solar for Schools](#) at Spinfield School near Marlow. Solar for Schools has subsequently installed 122 solar PV panels at the site with a maximum output of 50kWp. Generation from the system can meet up to 43% of the school's electricity needs. Over 25 years the installation is

forecast to save the school over £37,000 and reduce emissions by 217 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. The amount of electricity generated and carbon saved from the project can be checked by [visiting the Solar for Schools website](#).

The Council are excited to be working on further similar schemes that are already in the pipeline.

## The Council's Investment Estate

### HQube Development Wins RICS Award (Re Action 30)

[In 2022 the HQube project in High Wycombe won an award from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors](#). The 12 industrial/business units: incorporate repurposed shipping containers; include roof-mounted solar PV systems on every roof (ranging from 2.1 - 2.7 kWp) and north roof lights to help maximise use of natural light; and have sanitaryware and fittings that help contribute to a 40% improvement in water efficiency against required standards. 6 electric vehicle charging points and external LED lighting have been installed at the site in addition to storage spaces for up to 60 bicycles.

## Suppliers

### Gas and Electricity Supplies

#### Purchased Electricity from Renewable Sources (re Action 33)

As of 1 October 2022, the Council has purchased electricity which is 100% backed by REGO certificates, certifying it as being generated from a renewable source. The reduced carbon emissions are reported as a net figure in the emissions tables.



The HQube project, High Wycombe

# County-wide

## Transportation

### New and Innovative Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (re Action 42)

The Council have received £70,200 to support installation of in-pavement cable channels and around 10 EV lamppost chargepoints in Wendover.

### Completion of Platinum Way in Aylesbury (re Action 42)

In May 2023 the Platinum Way was launched which aims to promote active travel and to reduce environmental impacts. The upgrade was possible due to £1.4 million funding from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund.

Formally the Emerald Way, The Platinum Way features an array of enhancements aimed at improving safety, accessibility, and the overall user experience. This includes quieter road routing, wider footways, clearer signage, additional lighting, more accessible curbs, and three new parallel road crossings which give priority to Platinum Way users over road traffic. Emphasising walking, wheeling and cycling, the Platinum Way aims to foster public health and

reduce congestion. The route, stretching from the Town Centre to Aylesbury Vale Parkway railway station offers users seamless connections to the Waddesdon Greenway and access to local attractions like Waddesdon Manor.



Chairman Dev Dhillon and Cabinet Member for Transport Steven Broadbent at the launch of the Platinum Way



## Completion of Aylesbury Canal Towpath (re. Action 42)

The Aylesbury Arm, a spur of the Grand Union Canal, has [seen a significant improvement in its towpath condition, thanks to an £800k investment](#). The towpath improvements are on the section between locks 15 and 16, resulting in improved conditions for walking, cycling and wheeling.

The Aylesbury Arm canal towpath improvements which have been made possible thanks to a £621,846 grant from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) from Homes England and £178,154 of funding from Section 106 developer contributions, are part of wider plans for active travel improvements in Aylesbury and form a main spine route between the town centre and the new developments of Kingsbrook and Woodlands.

Improvements for walking, cycling and wheeling include widening the towpath to 7 feet, resurfacing the towpath, improving accessibility onto the towpath and installing new signs along the route.

The improvements aim to encourage active travel, improve people's health, and reduce carbon and air pollution.



Rob Butler MP opening the upgraded Aylesbury Canal Towpath



Cllr Steven Broadbent, Cllr Martin Tett and Rob Butler MP



## Electric Scooters (re Action 44)

Buckinghamshire Council, as part of the Department for Transport (DfT) trials, have implemented an [Electric Scooter rental trial](#) to help support a 'green' alternative to local travel that is convenient, clean, and affordable. E-scooters can also reduce reliance on car trips, reduce congestion and improve air quality.

The trial has been extended by the Department for Transport until May 2024 and is currently taking place in Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Princes Risborough. Estimates suggest that the scheme saves 28.9 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq per month across Aylesbury (19 tCO<sub>2</sub>e), High Wycombe (9.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and Princes Risborough (0.4tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

## Launch of Electric Bike Hire Scheme (re Action 44)

[Two electric bike \(e-bike\) hire schemes were launched](#) in Aylesbury and High Wycombe in July 2023. Twenty-five e-bikes will be available for public hire across the towns through the Zipp Mobility app, the same app used for the e-scooters.

The Zipp e-bike trial provides a new sustainable travel option for residents and visitors to the towns. The pedal-assist bikes will make cycling more accessible, helping people get around town in an affordable and eco-friendly way. The addition of e-bikes to our existing e-scooter offering, means that people now have a choice of which wheels they want to use for commuting or leisure trips.

The trial scheme will be evaluated in the coming months to assess the viability of making e-bike hire a permanent feature in the towns.





## 'Pick Me Up' Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Service (re. Action 44)

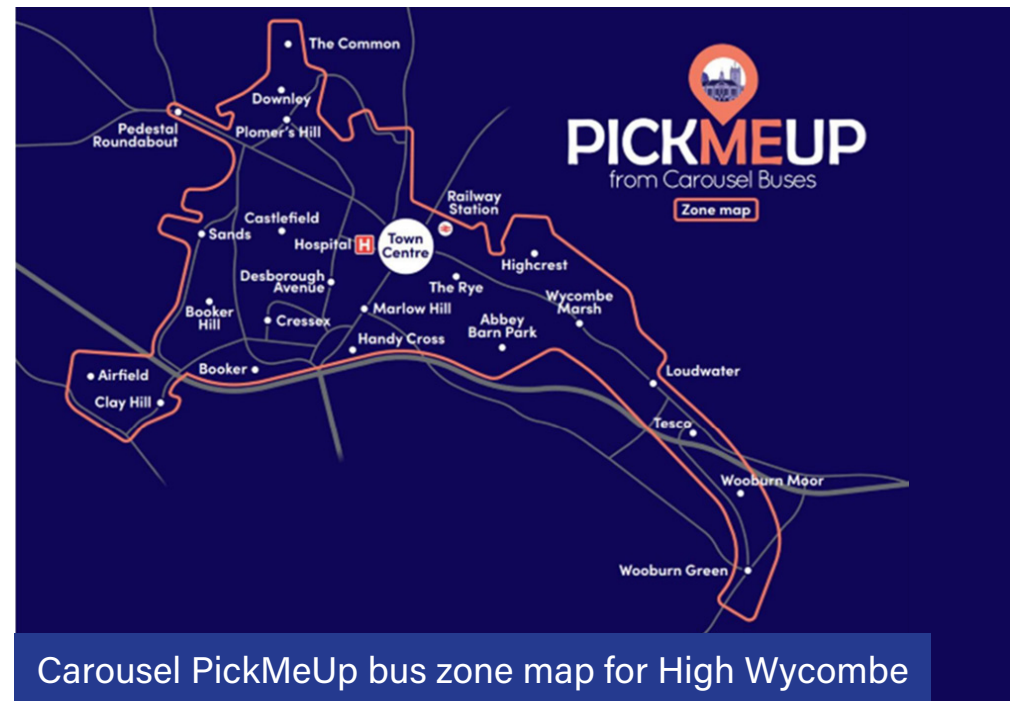
Buckinghamshire Council and Carousel Buses have launched a new 'demand responsive transport' (DRT) service in and around High Wycombe. Described as a cross between a bus and taxi service, the new DRT service comes as part of a pilot scheme funded by the Government's Rural Mobility Fund. The new service will run for the next 3 years, with scope to run for longer if the pilot is successful.

Sitting under Carousel's 'PickMeUp' brand, the Wycombe pilot will serve several communities, including Booker, Daws Hill, Wooburn Green, Wycombe Marsh, Loudwater and Downley. These either have a limited bus service or a route which only serves part of the community.

Users will be able to book one of the five fully accessible minibuses to collect them from one of the 500+ pickup points – also known as 'virtual bus stops' – out and about in the local area. Buses can be booked in advance of a trip via the app, through which you can also pay for your ticket and track your bus in real time.



The Carousel PickMeUp Bus



Carousel PickMeUp bus zone map for High Wycombe

## Upgrading of traffic signals at Stoke Road Gyratory, Aylesbury (re Action 47)

Since reporting on this project in last year's progress report the upgrading of the traffic light signals at the Stoke Road gyratory was [completed in February 2023](#). The project involved the installation of new 'intelligent' traffic lights to improve traffic flow at the Aylesbury gyratory, using some of the latest technology to reduce congestion and make the busy junction safer for all users.

By responding as needed to traffic flow, the system helps to reduce congestion and avoid potential build ups, keeping traffic moving as freely as possible. For example, on clear roads the system will minimise delays by changing lights more frequently and where there is congestion in a particular area, the lights can adjust to get more traffic away from that location.

Cllr Steven Broadbent and Rob Butler MP visiting the newly installed intelligent traffic lights at Aylesbury gyratory



As part of the scheme a new signalised pedestrian crossing has also been installed on the Wendover Road, adjacent to the police station, leading to the existing central refuge island. This new crossing provides a safer and more convenient way for pedestrians, including many school children, to get across the busy route. The £500,000 funding also covered some resurfacing work on the Wendover Road.

The Gyratory junction forms the Stoke Road Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and it's anticipated that these upgrading works will also benefit air quality in the local area.



# Buildings and Developments

## Housing

### Sustainable Warmth and Home Upgrade Grant (re Actions 52 and 53)

£4.97m was secured through the Sustainable Warmth scheme to provide energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades in both eligible on and off-gas grid homes. Funding was awarded following submission of a consortium bid with the Greater South East Net Zero Hub and the scheme was delivered by City Energy (as the Managing Agent). The government grant funding supported the installation of 261 retrofit measures in 203 properties in Buckinghamshire. The installation of the energy efficiency measures is anticipated to result in a reduction of over 250 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>/year.

The Home Upgrade Grant 2 will follow the Sustainable Warmth scheme. The Council has secured £576k which will support energy performance improvements in off-gas grid homes up until March 2025. The scheme will be largely managed by the Greater South East Net Zero Hub.



## Energy Doctor scheme (re Action 53)

An 'Energy Doctor' scheme (Domestic Resource Efficiency Service) was approved by Cabinet on 5 January 2023. Just under £2 million has been allocated to support the initiative until the end of March 2025 from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Energy Doctors (Domestic Resource Efficiency Officers) have been visiting eligible homes (since 5 April 2023) to:

- Identify whether households are paying too much for their energy and/or water (benchmarked against average prices and taking into account legislation relating to energy and water supplies);
- Provide advice on support available (including funding and grants) to assist with the implementation of resource efficiency measures;
- Suggest appropriate behavioural and control changes that can help reduce resource consumption; and
- Implement suitable low cost easy retrofit resource efficiency (LCERRE) measures such as draught proofing (for windows, doors, letterboxes, and chimneys), hot water cylinder insulation jackets, reflective radiator panels, secondary glazing film, portable solar generators, electricity consumption monitors, thermometer cards, and LED lights.

## Energy Doctors (Domestic Resource Efficiency Officers)





Over 400 visits will be made by the Energy Doctors and it's estimated that the scheme will reduce carbon emissions in the area by 300 tonnes per year. It's estimated that the visits made so far are helping people save over £100 on their energy bills per year on average. New energy and water saving measures will be provided by the Service in 2023 that will provide even better cost and carbon savings for residents.

### **Buckinghamshire Solar Together Scheme (re Action 53)**

A Buckinghamshire Solar Together scheme was launched in May 2022, with the aim of helping residents and small business owner-occupiers interested in installing solar PV and battery storage. [Solar Together is a group buying initiative run by iChoosr](#), which may result in savings of up to 30% less than those typically provided by the market.

During the 2022/23 Solar Together scheme a total of 584 installations have been confirmed including a total of 5,356 solar PV panels. This is equivalent to an additional peak generating capacity of 2.1MW being installed in Buckinghamshire, increasing household's energy security and reducing emissions and bills at the same time. Over a period of 25 years, it is projected that this will result in

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions of as much as 9,600 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>eq. Additionally, a further 463 batteries have been installed to allow the storage of the electricity generated for later consumption, alongside 44 EV chargepoints. Anybody installing solar panels across Buckinghamshire can benefit from the [Government's Smart Export Guarantee \(SEG\), which sets a minimum price for electricity exported back to the grid.](#)





# Economy

## Supporting the Local Green Economy (re Action 55)

The Council is working closely with UK Power Networks, Homes England, Ofgem and the Dept. for Energy Security and Net Zero to bring forward significant investment to upgrade the electricity grid in Aylesbury. The additional capacity will be needed to enable provision for the electrification of domestic heating and transport, supporting the green economy by allowing for new and existing homes to become more sustainable.

Following an invitation to quote (ITQ) procurement process [Lighting and Mains Power Solutions Ltd](#), a local supplier, was awarded the contract to supply LED light bulbs for the 'Energy Doctor' scheme. They will be supplying 7790 LED lightbulbs per annum over a two year contract (which can be extended for a further three years, in one year extension periods). The procurement exercise will save the scheme just under £4,000 per year.

The majority of products used for LCERRE measures are from suppliers based in England and most of them also manufacture the products e.g. Technical Converters Ltd (regarding reflective radiator panels), Allmand-Smith Ltd t/a Stormguard (regarding door and window draught exclusion and secondary glazing products); Create Studios (regarding magnetic letterbox draught excluders); Good Life Innovations Ltd (regarding the thermometer cards); and Chimney Balloon Ltd. Procurement from these companies is a contribution to the UK's green economy.



Zero Waste Map -  
[recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk/zerowastemap](https://recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk/zerowastemap)

## Low Carbon Workspaces (re Action 56)

Low Carbon Workspaces helped business to reach their net zero goals through grant funding for projects at commercial premises that reduce carbon emissions. Projects which lower on-site carbon emissions, reduce energy usage, or divert waste from landfill were supported by the scheme, which closed in June 2023 after allocating over £3.3m in funding to over 900 projects, saving 5,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and £2.25m per year. The scheme ran across Beds, Herts & Bucks as well as Berkshire and Northamptonshire.

## Environment, Land and Water

### Environment Agency Supported Flood Risk Management Projects (re Action 57)

Flood risk management projects ongoing with Environment Agency support and funding include those in Marlow (Newt Ditch), and Property Flood Resilience (PFR) packages for property owners, and Willows estate in Aylesbury. Feasibility studies are underway to determine if there are viable options for a business case in Sands (High Wycombe), Hughenden (High Wycombe), West Marlow, Gawcott and Tingewick. Natural Flood Management projects are ongoing in and around Buckingham and Winslow areas.



### AWorld App (re Actions 58 and 60)

On 22 April 2022 (Earth Day) Buckinghamshire Council became the first local authority in the UK to run a campaign through the AWorld app. AWorld is the official platform in support of ActNow, the United Nations campaign for individual action on climate change and sustainability. The app guides users towards living sustainably. It does this by showing people how much energy or water they can save by making small changes to their daily lives and creating new habits – such as putting the washing machine in eco wash mode or unplugging a charger as soon as a mobile phone is fully charged.

It's estimated that 14,466 kgs of CO<sub>2</sub>, 1.11m litres of water and 5346 kWhs of electricity were saved so far as a result of environmentally friendly actions taken and recorded as part of the campaign in 2022.

# Health and Communications

## Monitoring Personal Exposure to Air Quality Pollutants (re. Action 59)

On Clean Air Day 15 June 2023, Ricardo, in conjunction with Buckinghamshire Council, used air quality sensors to undertake monitoring between The Gateway Office and the Walton Street Office in Aylesbury. Two different routes were walked, one along Gatehouse and Friarage Roads [through the Friarage Road Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)], and one on quieter back roads and through White Hill Park. The aim was to investigate how changing your route may affect the quality of the air you breathe. The initial data obtained showed a significant difference in exposure to nitrogen dioxide between the two routes, see graph below.

The data obtained is currently being processed and validated and once available will be used to illustrate how people can manage their own exposure to air quality pollutants simply by altering the routes they walk. The findings will also be promoted to internal staff and to the community through the 'Clean Up Our Air' initiative.

**Ricardo Air Quality**  
@RicardoAirQ

For #cleanairday, our team is monitoring in Aylesbury with a Praxis Cube and a camera. We're investigating how changing your route may affect the quality of the air you breathe. Follow the team's progress in this thread!

@BucksCouncil @SouthCoastSci @brianstacey @Ricardo\_AEA



9:27 AM · Jun 15, 2023 · 1,093 Views

**Ricardo Air Quality**  
@RicardoAirQ

This plot for nitrogen dioxide shows the difference in exposure when walking on quiet streets (10:10 to 10:35) and walking along the A41 (10:35 to 11:00). #CleanAirDay #AirQuality



You and 5 others



## National Tree Week Campaign (Re Action 60)

During National Tree Week (26 Nov. to 4 Dec. 2022) we ran a focussed media campaign to celebrate and raise awareness of the vital role that trees play in our eco-system. This included social media highlighting our "Tree Giveaway Day" (see Action 27 for further detail), and an opportunity for volunteers to help plant trees and shrubs along the Platinum Park Way. The campaign concluded with a video published on social media to highlight all the events of a packed schedule and raise awareness of the Bucks Climate Challenge:



**Buckinghamshire Council**  
@BucksCouncil

As [#NationalTreeWeek](#) draws to a close, we want to thank everyone involved with our programme of tree-planting. This short video reminds us why continuing to work towards our [#BucksTreeMission](#) & [#BucksClimateChallenge](#) is so important:



youtube.com  
Bucks Climate Challenge

7:20 pm · 4 Dec 2022

Tweet from @BucksCouncil

## Have yourself a "Green" Christmas (re Action 60)

The Council ran a campaign promoting a "Green Christmas" through social media channels. A series of "top tips" were shared over a three week period in November and December 2022. The advice was also featured in a 2-page spread within the "Hiya Bucks" magazine.



**Buckinghamshire Recycles**

26 December 2022 · 🌐

We hope you all had a lovely Christmas, how ever you spent your day. Who's ready for the aftermath?! Don't forget to save what you can to reuse, whether that be big bits of wrapping paper, tags (save writing them again next year!), cards (to make into tags), ribbons, bows or even empty chocolate tubs to store items in until next year!



👍 3

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

## #EarthDay 2023 (Re Action 60)

A series of posts were placed in social media to mark Earth Day 2023 (22 April). These highlighted the annual theme “Invest in Our Planet”, our commitment to plant 543,000 trees in a decade, the 30% increase in public charge points across car parks in Bucks and our commitment to encouraging active travel through local cycling and walking infrastructure, to name but a few!



The total number of impressions, across all platforms, from the four posts celebrating earth day was over 25,000.

## #NetZeroWeek and Plastic Free July Social Media Campaign (re Action 60)

To mark NetZeroWeek and the first week of Plastic Free July, Millie reprised her role from last year, sharing a series of Vlogs (Video Blogs) about her journey reducing single-use plastic in her day to day life – picking up a journey we reported on in last year’s Progress Report:



We also highlighted the launch of two new e-bike schemes in Buckinghamshire and celebrated our Bronze Carbon Literacy Award. Over the whole of NetZeroWeek, our posts made a total of 30,000 impressions across all platforms - X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and Instagram.



Buckinghamshire Council

# Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy

2022 - 2023 Progress Report



## Report to Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Update on Wendover Electric Vehicle (EV) Demonstration Town project</b>
<b>Author:</b>	Rupert Zierler, Principal Transport Strategy Officer
<b>For Information:</b>	<b>To note progress with delivery of the Wendover EV Demonstration Town project, which includes in- pavement cable channels for home EV charging, and on- street EV chargepoints.</b>

### Background

- 1.1 The number of EVs on our roads is rapidly increasing, with nearly 1 million EVs on our roads as of November 2023<sup>1</sup>. To meet the growing demand for public chargepoints, and to address the aims of our EV Action Plan<sup>2</sup> and Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy<sup>3</sup>, the Council secured £70k external funding to trial in-pavement cable channels and public EV chargepoints in Wendover, as an ‘EV Demonstration Town’ project<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.2 This trial is supported by £70k funding from the 2022/3 Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure<sup>5</sup> (LEVI) ‘pilot’ fund, as well as £23k Wendover & Villages Community Board funding.

<sup>1</sup> Zap-Map EV statistics, November 2023: <https://www.zap-map.com/ev-stats/ev-market#:~:text=How%20many%20electric%20cars%20are,growth%20of%2040%25%20on%202021>.

<sup>2</sup> Buckinghamshire Electric Vehicle Action Plan 2022-2027: <https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s43677/Appendix%204%20Electric%20Vehicle%20EV%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/climate-change-and-sustainability/how-were-responding-to-climate-change/the-climate-change-and-air-quality-strategy>

<sup>4</sup> Scheme details on Buckinghamshire Council website: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/parking/electric-vehicles/wendover-electric-vehicle-charging-trial/>

- 1.3 A Wendover EV Working Group has been established which meets once per month, and includes local Members, Parish Council representatives and a local interest group 'Climate Action Wendover', who raised the initial request for Community Board funding in 2022.

## **2. In-pavement cable channels**

- 2.1 In-pavement cable channels offer a means for homeowners without access to a driveway to charge their EV at home, without trailing cables causing an obstruction to pedestrians (see Figure 1).
- 2.2 Following an application process for Wendover residents which took place in early 2023, we will be installing three of these channels outside participating homes. Following a four-quote competitive procurement process, Oxford Delivery Services (ODS) scored highest based on quality and were selected to install their 'Gul-e'<sup>6</sup> product at these sites. Installation at the sites was initially planned for on or around 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024, however this has been delayed by ODS as a result of emergency works caused by flooding within Oxfordshire. Confirmation of re-scheduled installation dates at each of the sites is expected imminently. As part of this contract, the first 10 channels will be installed free-of-charge by ODS. To make the best use of this offer, it is intended that a second application process will be opened later this year to encourage further uptake and increase the number of households involved in the trial (later channels will cost £754 each, plus any administration costs for the Council).
- 2.3 Participants have been encouraged to consult the Gul-e user manual before use to ensure the cables are laid correctly in the channels to avoid any trips or falls by the general public. In terms of liability, participants have been made aware that an adequate insurance policy is required to cover them in the event that they mislay their cables that could cause injury to the general public. Participants have been asked to show proof of insurance.
- 2.4 Participants have also been made aware that there are no parking restrictions in place outside their homes and therefore other residents are allowed to park next to the channel if they wish to do so.

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<sup>5</sup> Local electric vehicle infrastructure fund: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/grants-and-loans/local-electric-vehicle-infrastructure-scheme/>

<sup>6</sup> Gul-e: <https://gul-e.co.uk/>

### 3. On-street EV chargepoints

- 3.1 To complement the in-pavement cable channel trial, we are planning to install 10 on-street lamppost- or bollard-style 'slow' (3kW) public chargepoints. An example of an on-street chargepoint from supplier Char.gy is shown in Figure 2, however other types of chargepoints and suppliers are available. The choice of a lamppost or bollard mounting will depend on the position of the lamppost from which power is to be drawn; if the lamppost is to the rear of the pavement, a bollard mounting the chargepoint will be installed toward the roadside, to prevent obstruction to pedestrians.
- 3.2 An initial list of 42 potential installation locations (i.e. lampposts) was put forward by the Wendover EV Working Group. Preferred sites have been determined based on physical suitability, stated preferences from local stakeholders including the Parish Council, and likely future demand (as assessed by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles' 'NEVIS' tool).
- 3.3 A shortlisting exercise was undertaken by Buckinghamshire Council and resulted in 12 locations identified as suitable locations, which include sites in Wendover Parish Council's priority areas of Castle Park, Tring Road, Town Centre, Witchell and Princess Mary Gate.
- 3.4 As recommended in the EV Action Plan<sup>7</sup>, using lessons learnt from the early introductions of on street chargers in Buckinghamshire, future on street charging points should be supported with EV only bay markings and accompanying Traffic Regulation Order. This can be accommodated within the existing budget, and a consultation process would also be required which would take up to three months to complete. It would also result in the extension or removal of the existing parking restrictions in the two Town Centre locations identified in Figure 3. A maximum one hour stay currently applies at these locations, however as these will be slow 3-6kW chargepoints, a much longer stay will be required to ensure a suitable charge for the vehicle. It is important to note that there is no guarantee that, after a consultation period, stakeholders would be willing to have the restrictions lifted. TROs will have been put in place for a locally-significant reason at the request of residents, for example to stop people parking there who then get the train to London for the day.
- 3.5 In case the selected service provider deems any of these 12 locations are unsuitable following site visits, a reserve list of nine alternative locations will also be provided (Figure 4). Offering these reserve lampposts will help to ensure that we are able to

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<sup>7</sup> Buckinghamshire Electric Vehicle Action Plan 2022-2027:  
<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s43677/Appendix%204%20Electric%20Vehicle%20EV%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

meet our original aim for 10 chargepoints. The remaining locations provided by the Wendover EV Working Group were not shortlisted due to safety concerns, parking conflicts with local residents' private parking or potential obstruction to traffic flows. Additionally, areas with relatively good access to off-street private car parking were given lower priority.

- 3.6 To date, there has been no feedback received from the Wendover EV Working Group on the proposed 12 locations. The procurement of these chargepoints will commence once the preferred installation locations (i.e. lampposts) have been agreed with the Wendover EV Working Group.

#### **4. Next steps and review**

- 4.1 Several factors have caused delays to the programme, including unanticipated steps in the legal process for channel installation, understanding the required permissions, and awaiting feedback from external partners regarding site selection.
- 4.2 Once installed, the in-pavement cable channels will be in place for a trial period of two years, during which time we will gather user feedback. If these initial sites are successful, we plan to extend the trial to additional participants within Wendover.
- 4.3 For the on-street chargepoints, following site identification, we aim to procure suppliers and deliver these by Summer 2024.
- 4.4 A separate document containing frequently asked questions has been submitted as an Appendix to this report.





Figure 1 – ODS 'Gul-e' in-pavement cable channels (source: <https://gul-e.co.uk/>)



Figure 2 – Example on-street chargepoint from supplier Char.gy (source: <https://char.gy/>)

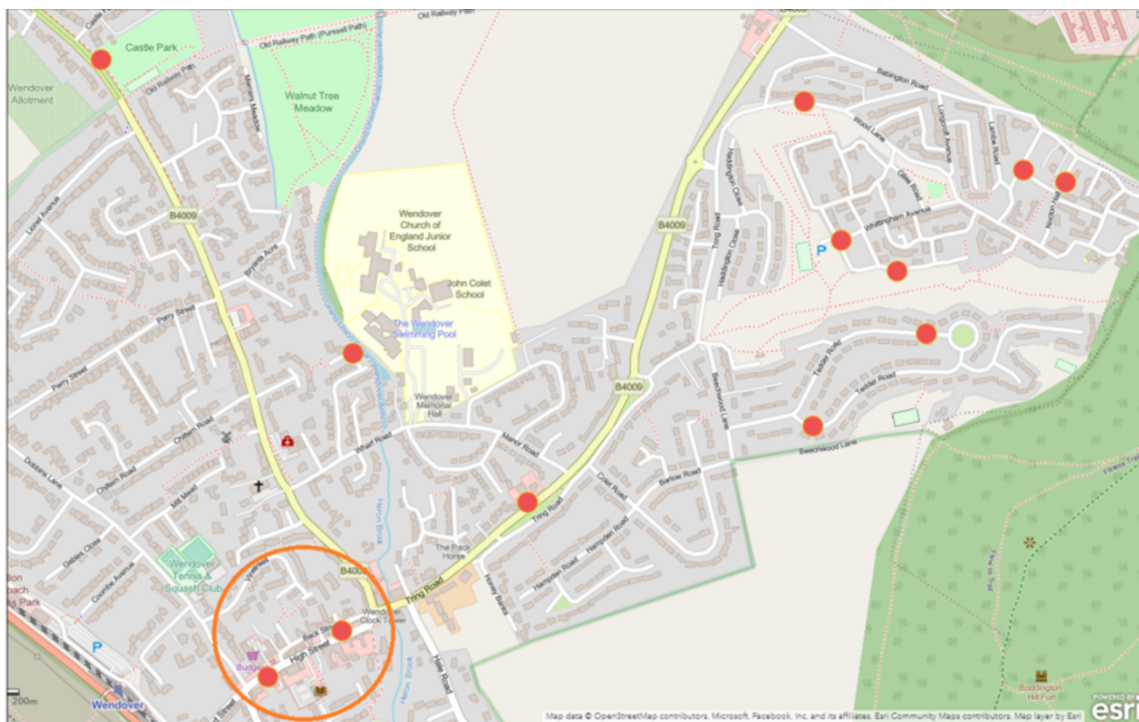
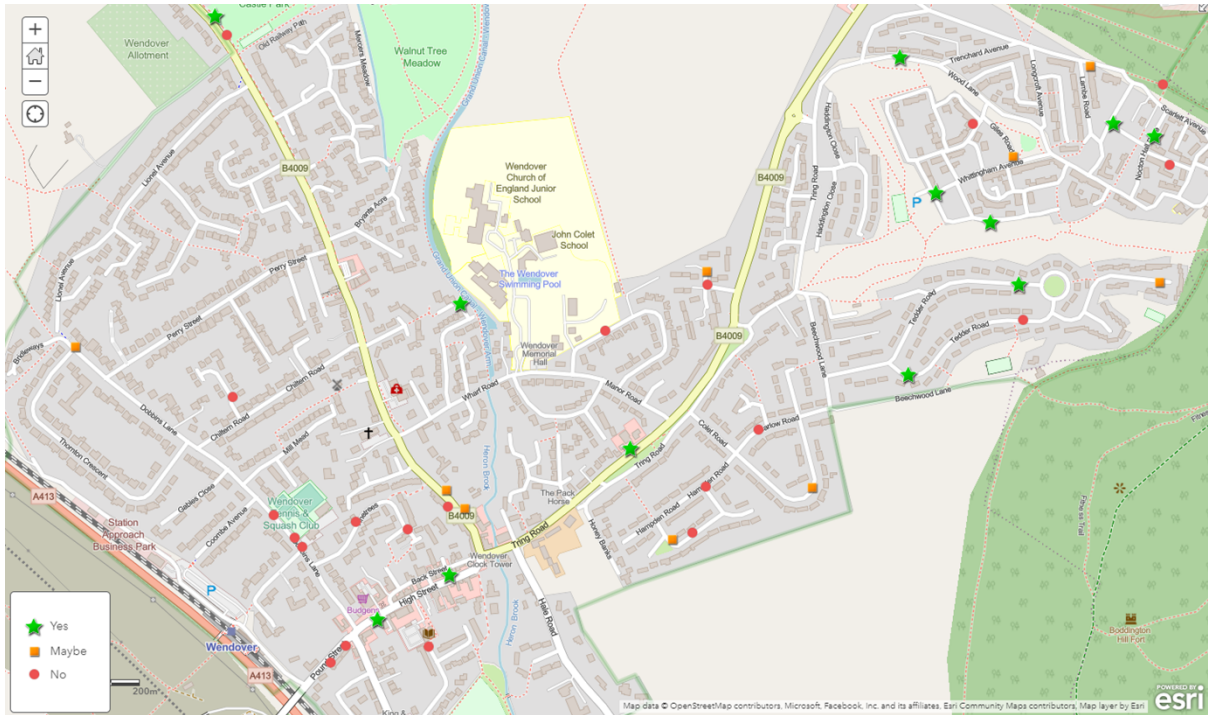


Figure 3 – Priority list of 12 potential lamppost chargepoint locations, highlighting two Town Centre locations with existing TROs.





**Figure 4 – Suitability of potential lamppost chargepoint locations. ‘Yes’ indicates shortlisted priority sites for lamppost/bollard-mounted chargepoints. ‘Maybe’ indicates sites held in reserve. ‘No’ indicates sites not shortlisted or held as reserve options.**

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## FAQ: Wendover EV Charging

## **What are in-pavement cable channels?**

Just under 25% of households in Britain do not have access to off-street parking, meaning that their options for electric vehicle (EV) charging are limited to place-based solutions such as charging at work or business carparks. Whilst these options do work for some EV owners, charging at home is the most popular solution (75% of EV drivers). For those without off-street parking, in-pavement cable channels provide a means of safely connecting your home charger to your car parked in the road, without presenting a tripping hazard to other pavement users. Homeowners with in-pavement cable channels are required to consult the user manual to ensure the cables are laid correctly in the channels, and have an adequate insurance policy in place to cover you in the event that you mislay your cables that could cause injury to the general public.

## **Can I trail my EV charging cable across the pavement without a cable channel?**

No. Buckinghamshire Council does not allow cables to trail across the pavement, as this would constitute a safety hazard.

## **How do cable channels work?**

If you have a home EV charger installed, or are allowed to have one installed, pavement cable channels provide a safe means for the homeowner to run their charger from their home to electric vehicles. Cables can be laid into the channel from above, avoiding a need to feed cables through from either end of the channel. They also have a detachable cover which seals in the cable and contents of the channel.

## **Does having a cable channel mean that the parking space is now designated for my household?**

No. Installing a cable channel outside your home does not designate the adjacent parking space solely for your use. Additionally, any type of vehicle that was able to park on that section of street previously will still be able to do so.

## **What if someone is blocking my charging space?**

If you cannot park in front of your house and your charger no longer safely reaches your vehicle, please use Zap Map to identify nearby publicly-accessible chargers:

<https://www.zap-map.com/>

## **Can my charging cable be stolen?**

Some home chargers have the ability to lock the charging cable to the device. When not in use, residents are expected to remove their charging cables from the channels for safety and security. Cutting charging cables is risky for potential theft as they are electrically live.

## **Can someone else use my EV charger if I am not in my parking space?**

By removing your charger from the cable channel, you can prevent other EV users from attempting to charge using your cable. Some home chargers also have the ability to only charge certain devices or plug socket types, or lock charging behind a password at the wall-mounted end.

## **Can the cable channels be damaged by weather?**

Unlike some drainage channels, the cable channel installed in the pavement is not always open at the surface. They will have covers ensuring that debris and dirt does not enter. Rainwater may enter but the channel from either end, but these will be sloped to prevent still water from gathering and freezing.

## **How can I make sure that I can regularly park outside my home to charge?**

Some previous cable channel schemes have self-organised community group chat forums, e.g. on Facebook or Whatsapp. This offers a potential solution for helping neighbours or other users know when you'll need to use your parking space. We suggest making contact with other people who may be using the space to set one of these up.

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## Report to Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee

<b>Date:</b>	1 February 2024
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Active Travel and Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Cllr Steven Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Hannah Joyce, Head of Transport Strategy & Funding
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	None specific
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>To note the updates on the delivery of active travel in Buckinghamshire and on the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP</b>

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This paper summarises the Council’s approach to the delivery of active travel infrastructure and initiatives in Buckinghamshire, highlighting examples of recently delivered schemes.
- 1.2 This paper also provides an overview of the work underway to develop a Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) that will outline a high-level future cycling, walking, and wheeling network across Buckinghamshire.
- 1.3 Relevant background information to this topic area is included in reports previously presented to this Select Committee, including an overview of opportunities and challenges for active travel in Buckinghamshire (March 2021) and an explanation of the Council’s approach to delivering transport schemes, including active travel infrastructure (March 2022).
- 1.4 Whilst not featured in this paper, the Council also delivers ongoing travel planning initiatives with schools, businesses and development sites to encourage active and sustainable travel.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 'Active travel' refers to journeys made by active modes, including walking, cycling and wheeling. 'Wheeling' includes wheeled mobilities, such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters and adapted cycles.
- 2.2 Nationally, increased emphasis has been placed on active travel in recent years, with increased funding provision for infrastructure alongside higher technical design standards (including Local Transport Note 1/20) that local authorities are asked to follow to access national government funding. Buckinghamshire Council is reliant on seeking and securing external funding and building relationships with partners to enable the delivery of active travel infrastructure.
- 2.3 A new national inspectorate and funding body, Active Travel England (ATE), was established in 2022. Alongside providing support to local authorities, ATE administer government capital and revenue funding for active travel, informed by assessments of local authorities' performance. As of June 2023, ATE is also statutory consultee on all planning applications for developments equal to or exceeding 150 housing units, 7,5000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, or areas of 5 hectares.
- 2.4 In 2022, ATE carried out the first national assessment of local authorities' active travel capabilities, resulting in local authorities being awarded a Level rating (using a 0-4 scale, with 4 being the highest rating). Local authorities outside of London completed a self-assessment of factors including local leadership, network plans and delivery record. Following moderation by ATE, Buckinghamshire Council was awarded a Level 2 rating, defined as '*Strong local leadership, with clear plans that form the basis of an emerging network with a few elements in place*'.
- 2.5 During 2023, the Council secured over £875k of funding through successful applications to ATE. This ringfenced funding has supported the development of future active travel infrastructure schemes, including in Buckingham and High Wycombe, as well as the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP and the promotion and monitoring of recently delivered active travel infrastructure.
- 2.6 To develop and deliver active travel infrastructure, the Council works in close partnership with national and local stakeholders, including funding bodies, landowners, charitable organisations, residents and volunteer groups, Buckinghamshire Council members, Town/Parish Councils and neighbouring local authorities.
- 2.7 In early 2024, supported by external funding, the Council has delivered workshops for Buckinghamshire Council members and relevant Council officers. During these workshops, the Council's approach to active travel and future plans were discussed, alongside examples of good practice.

### 3. Active Travel

3.1 Since the previous report on active travel presented to the Select Committee in March 2022, the following active travel infrastructure schemes have been delivered in Buckinghamshire:

- **St Peter's Greenway:** Off-road rural link connecting Berryfields and Buckingham Park developments in Aylesbury. Named St Peter's Way as the route runs past the remains of St Peter's Church. Includes solar stud lighting, resting places and planting, with over 3,400 hedgerow plants and trees planted by over 200 volunteers. Scheme funded by the Department for Transport and developer funding contributions, and delivered under budget.
- **Platinum Way:** Upgrades to the former Emerald Way, now providing a continuous connection between Aylesbury town centre and Aylesbury Vale Parkway rail station via Prebendal Farm, Haydon Hill and Fairford Leys. Includes new and re-routed sections, 3 parallel crossing points and cycle parking facilities. Scheme funded by the Department for Transport. Community artwork and over 4,000 hedgerow plants and trees planted by over 300 volunteers, in conjunction with Chiltern Rangers.
- **Canal Towpath Improvements:** Extension and width and surfacing upgrades to the Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal towpath, providing a connection between Aylesbury town centre and the Kingsbrook development. Scheme funded through the Aylesbury Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) programme and developer funding contributions. Similar improvements to the Wendover Arm canal towpath are being undertaken by partner organisations.
- **Waddesdon Greenway School Link:** 800m extension to the Waddesdon Greenway with solar stud lighting, providing a connection to Waddesdon schools and village centre, avoiding the A41. Waddesdon Parish Council and Haddenham & Waddesdon Community Board are due to create a community orchard along the route in 2024.

3.2 Whilst the above infrastructure schemes provide point-to-point connectivity, it is important that the Council designs infrastructure that is flexible and able to support a range of users and journey types and lengths, including where active travel modes are used for the 'first or 'last' mile. This highlights the importance of integrating active travel infrastructure with wider transport infrastructure and networks.

3.3 The following features are key considerations for the Council in the design and design and delivery of active travel infrastructure that is inclusive and attractive:

- **Benches and seating** – to allow people to rest on their journeys and extend the distance they are comfortable travelling;
- **Lighting** – providing lighting can increase a sense of personal security and helps support year-round utility journeys. Depending on the location and circumstances, options include low-level lighting on bollards, solar-powered studs, lighting only between certain times, or installations activated by the presence of people walking, wheeling or cycling;
- **Tree, planting and greening**– to provide shade and shelter and enhance the attractiveness of routes;
- **Wayfinding** – clear and consistent signs and road markings help people navigate and can include destination and distance information;
- **Litter bins** – to encourage the responsible disposal of litter and waste;
- **Cycle parking** – that is secure, well located and caters for all users.

3.4 To encourage local ownership and usage, new and improved active travel infrastructure in Buckinghamshire is promoted through community events and campaigns. For the recently delivered infrastructure detailed in section 3.1, opportunities for community participation have included tree planting initiatives and launch events, which have enabled residents to find out about the new infrastructure, have their bike repaired or registered, and access wider council initiatives (such as travel planning and public health campaigns). Alongside this, promotional campaigns have included targeted engagement with local schools and businesses in the vicinity, alongside mapping and social media messaging.

3.5 Using data counters, the Council collects data on active travel journeys at a selection of locations around the county. As standard practice, data counters are being installed as part of the delivery of new active travel infrastructure. The Council has a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in place, which monitors the average daily cycling count per active cycle counter per day and data trends are reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. As part of the preparation of Local Transport Plan 5, the Council will be reviewing and updating monitoring and evaluation processes, and this will consider active travel.

3.6 The maintenance of highway assets, including active travel infrastructure, is a challenge for local authorities. Ringfenced capital funding from government is often available for infrastructure, but funding is much scarcer for ongoing maintenance or repairs to existing infrastructure. The Council is advocating for greater funds for maintenance of its expanding active travel infrastructure network. For new infrastructure, in some cases, community involvement and support from partner organisations and businesses may assist with some elements of maintenance, such as looking after planting or keeping infrastructure clear of obstruction.



- 3.7 Looking ahead, the Council has a range of active travel infrastructure schemes at varying stages of development across Buckinghamshire. These schemes will be subject to further investigation and local engagement as they progress.
- 3.8 In parallel, the Council is progressing its vision for the Buckinghamshire Greenway, a flagship active travel route across Buckinghamshire, forming a north-south spine running from Brackley and Silverstone in the north to the Colne Valley in the south. The Greenway has been split into discrete route sections to enable progressive delivery as and when necessary funding and consents are secured. The first section of the Greenway to be delivered in 2018 was the Waddesdon Greenway, with the section between Wendover Dean and Great Missenden to follow in 2024. This route section is currently being delivered by Sustrans in partnership with the Council and the Chiltern Society.
- 3.9 The Buckinghamshire Greenway will form the core spine of the forthcoming Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) that will set out the Council's priorities for improved active travel connectivity between settlements across Buckinghamshire.

#### **4. LCWIPs**

- 4.1 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are evidence-based long term plans that identify cycling, walking, and wheeling improvements at the local level. 'Wheeling' refers to adapted cycle, wheelchair and mobility scooter users.
- 4.2 LCWIPs can be produced at differing geographical scales but commonly contain:
- A proposed network of walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure for further investigation and development;
  - A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment;
  - A report explaining the process followed and analysis underpinning the LCWIP.
- 4.3 The development of LCWIPs by local authorities is recommended by national government and the LCWIP process is supported by national technical guidance<sup>1</sup>. LCWIPs enable local authorities and partner organisations to take an informed network-based approach to planning and delivering active travel infrastructure. They provide an evidence base that can support funding applications and guide investment decisions. LCWIPs are key tools in setting out a local authorities' priorities for further investigation, However, it is important to note that an LCWIP does not provide or guarantee funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport (2017), Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans Technical Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-technical-guidance-and-tools>

4.4 In Buckinghamshire, the following town-level LCWIPs have been, or are in the process of being, produced. Each LCWIP outlines proposed town-wide networks and links to surrounding settlements.

- **Aylesbury Garden Town:** Produced in 2019 in support of the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan. A refresh of the LCWIP is currently in progress.
- **Buckingham:** The walking and cycling network identified in the Buckingham Transport Strategy (2017) has recently been transferred into an LCWIP 'lite'.
- **High Wycombe:** Developed alongside the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and adopted by Cabinet in January 2024.

In addition, a **Chesham** LCWIP is being developed locally. Whilst this work is being led by Chesham Town Council, a draft of the Chesham LCWIP has been shared and considered as part of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP.

## 5. Buckinghamshire LCWIP

5.1 Acknowledging that there is not currently an overarching LCWIP providing coverage across Buckinghamshire's wider geography, the purpose of developing a Buckinghamshire LCWIP is to define priorities for a future walking, cycling and wheeling network across Buckinghamshire. This will provide an evidence base to support the emerging Local Transport Plan 5 and Local Plan for Buckinghamshire.

5.2 The proposed LCWIP network is to be formed of a series of priority inter-settlement links that are likely to have user demand and are aligned with local priorities. These inter-settlement links are referred to as 'corridors'. Where relevant, consideration is to be given to 'cross-border' links into neighbouring authority areas close to the county border, which generate travel demand into and out of Buckinghamshire.

5.3 Work on the Buckinghamshire LCWIP commenced in 2022. Data analysis and engagement has been carried out at the Community Board level, with input sought from Buckinghamshire Council members and Community Boards.

- Data analysis and mapping has been used to identify key destinations and gauge likely demand levels. Destination types considered include employment, education, public transport hubs and networks, town and village facilities, leisure and visitor attractions and neighbouring authority areas. Analysis has considered the likely scale of trips by active travel which could be enabled between journey origin and destination locations if infrastructure was in place.
- Stages of engagement have been carried out with Buckinghamshire Council members and Community Boards, firstly to present the data analysis and understand local aspirations for active travel infrastructure improvements. Secondly, through workshops with Buckinghamshire Council members, to

determine the priority aspirations to be included in the proposed Buckinghamshire LCWIP network.

- 5.4 This approach has ensured that the proposed Buckinghamshire LCWIP network will provide geographical coverage. The overall proposed network is to be formed of indicative straight lines between communities, incorporating the following:
- The proposed Buckinghamshire Greenway network spine;
  - Towns covered by LCWIPs and the inter-settlement corridors they identify;
  - Priority inter-settlement corridors identified through the Buckinghamshire LCWIP process.
- 5.5 The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will not define exact interventions for individual corridors, reflecting that many are at an early concept stage. Each corridor will require further investigation, following the publication of the LCWIP, to determine the exact nature and scale of interventions required. This work will be informed by a technical design note that draws on relevant national and local guidance. This includes Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) and Inclusive Mobility.
- 5.6 During the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP, a high volume of local aspirations have been identified. Aspirations that are not proposed to be included in the LCWIP network are to be captured on supplementary plans. Whilst not forming part of the proposed LCWIP network, the aspirations are being recorded for reference and potential input into any future localised studies.

## **6. Legal and financial implications**

- 6.1 The Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008) requires all Local Transport Authorities to publish statutory plans, known as Local Transport Plans, setting out their policies to promote and encourage safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport in their area and for the implementation of those policies, to review, maintain and improve all aspects of local transport. The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will support the Council's emerging Local Transport Plan 5, as well as the future Buckinghamshire Local Plan, and is key to accessing funding opportunities for local walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure initiatives. However, it must be stated that funding availability and the delivery of infrastructure is not guaranteed.

### **4a Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment**

- 6.2 The Director has read and approved the report.

### **4b Section 151 Officer comment**

- 6.3 The Director has read and approved the report.

## 7. Corporate implications

7.1 The delivery of active travel infrastructure and the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP align with the following Corporate Plan priorities and supports progress on a range of wider Council objectives:

- **Strengthening our communities:** The delivery of active travel infrastructure contributes towards healthy and well-connected communities, increasing opportunities for increased physical activity, with associated health and wellbeing benefits.
- **Improving our environment:** The development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP is listed as a key action against this corporate priority: *'Promote the benefits and improve the attractiveness of walking, cycling and wheeling as a realistic alternative for short local trips through the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Buckinghamshire'*. In addition, the delivery of active travel infrastructure supports progress on the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy action number 42.
- **Increasing prosperity:** The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will sit alongside new and emerging planning, transport, visitor economy and regeneration strategies. The ongoing delivery of an increased walking, cycling and wheeling network has potential to support local economies and strengthen the local visitor economy.

## 8. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

8.1 Local councillors and Community Boards have been engaged throughout the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP and are engaged during the development and delivery of active travel infrastructure projects in their area.

## 9. Next steps and review

9.1 The draft Buckinghamshire LCWIP is proposed to progress to public consultation in Spring/Summer 2024 (dates to be confirmed).

9.2 Subject to the outcomes of public consultation and adoption, the Buckinghamshire LCWIP would be integrated appropriately with the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP5) and Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, currently in development, in order to achieve an overarching strategic approach for the county.

9.3 The Buckinghamshire LCWIP would provide a medium-long term strategy. Individual corridors identified in the LCWIP would be subject to further investigation and engagement to determine their specific requirements, with delivery subject to prioritisation and funding availability.



9.4 In line with national LCWIP guidance, the Buckinghamshire LCWIP would be a 'live' policy document that could be periodically reviewed and updated in future.

## **10. Background papers**

10.1 None.

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## Select Committee Work Programmes 2023/24

**Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee** (Chairman: Bill Chapple OBE, Scrutiny officer: Chris Ward)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
1 February 2024	East West Rail	To receive an update on the project.	Dr Laura Leech Susan Browning	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin EWR Reps
	Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy: Annual Review	The Committee will annually review the strategy following its adoption on 19 October 2021.  An update on the EV on-street parking trials in Wendover will also be included.	Steve Bambrick Darran Eggleton Alexander Beckett David Johnson  Hannah Joyce Rebecca Dengler-Jones	Thomas Broom  Steve Broadbent
	Active Travel and Buckinghamshire Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	The report will provide an update on active travel infrastructure projects and the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP. The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will identify and develop a strategic network for walking, wheeling and cycling (active travel) between and through settlements across the County.	Steve Bambrick Hannah Joyce Jonathan Fuller	Steve Broadbent
28 March 2024	HS2	To receive an update on the project	Dr Laura Leech	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin HS2 Reps

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