



END OF YEAR UPDATE – ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE STRATEGY

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

31st March 2022

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Introduction

Background

The Council adopted its Environment and Climate Strategy in December 2020. The document set out targets across four main themes, Energy, Transport, Circular Economy and Natural Environment along with actions plans to guide our work. The council committed to produce an annual report outlining progress made against its actions and key targets in the strategy.

The Council has developed and started to deliver its strategy in difficult circumstances with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing much of the work to be undertaken virtually, with staff and the community unable to easily get together in person. This has forced us to adapt and embrace new technology, some of which will play an important role in future decarbonisation.

Delivery

Since adoption, The Council has put in place strong foundations for future delivery of its ambitious Strategy. It has significantly grown its Sustainability and Climate Change team to increase its capacity. The team is now made up of 8 officers covering the Council's energy contracts, carbon reduction programme, natural environment service, Lead Local Flood Authority duties and circular economy theme.

A focus of work has been conducting feasibility work to understand better where to invest to maximise our carbon reduction. This work has enabled the Council to secure significant funding to implement large carbon reduction projects in the next 12 months.

Much of the work undertaken has been in partnership with the community. Across all of the strategy themes we have sought to work with residents and other stakeholders. A good example of this has been the partnership with the 'Wild' groups, where the Council and the community have jointly developed a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Borough. We fully expect to build on that growing relationship to deliver more work together in the future.

One of the highlights of the year was a Family Tree planting day at the Council's Ockwells Nature Reserve. Approximately 250 people including a mix of age groups attended, planting over 800 trees. On the site, in total over the winter season, over 8000 trees have been planted and the Council is grateful to all those corporate and community volunteers that helped us achieve this.

Embedding Climate Action into the Council and the Borough

A major development across the year has been the creation of a Climate Partnership for the Borough. The partnership will help draw together all interested stakeholders to help deliver the scale of action needed to tackle the environment and climate emergency. The Council has agreed to provide £250,000/year for the next 3 years to help establish the partnership. The first meeting of the board will be held during Spring 2022 and the Council will look to work in close collaboration with the partnership going forward.

The Council has also made a statement it's in Corporate Plan 2021-26 that action on climate change and the natural environment is a clear priority. The Plan details many goals on environmental performance and work will continue to embed sustainability across all of the Council's functions and services including procurement and planning policy.

The Future

Looking ahead, the Council will be launching a collective solar purchasing scheme this Spring to help overcome some of the barriers to installing solar panels that residents have identified.

Utilising funding secured from central government, the Council will continue to support residents on low incomes, living in inefficient properties to undertake energy efficiency improvements to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.

Work will also begin to deliver the Biodiversity Action Plan (subject to it's approval by Cabinet) with the creation of a new lending library of field equipment at the Braywick Nature Centre to enable residents to undertake biodiversity surveys.

The strategy itself is a five year plan. Naturally this means that not all actions have been completed and, in some cases, have yet to be started. Whilst there is much work still to do, good progress has been over the last 12 months that has put the Council in a stronger position to deliver in the future.

Action Plan Progress Updates

The Council published action plans under each theme of its Environment and Climate Strategy. These were designed as a framework for the type of actions that would need to be achieved to enable the change required to tackle the environment and climate emergency. In this section, progress against those actions is set out with next steps to continue delivering the plan.

Its important to note that the Strategy covers the period to 2025 and therefore many of the actions may have seen little or no progress. At the same time, some actions may have been accelerated or seen more progress than was initially planned. The Council will continue to take advantage of opportunities as they arise and as is required to respond to events.

All actions will be completed by the 2025 deadline at the latest and the Council will work with the Climate Partnership to develop a new Environment and Climate Strategy for 2026 onwards.

Circular Economy

Objectives	Action	Measure of success	Progress towards goal/deadline	Next steps
KEY ACTION: Review household waste collection regime to deliver increases in recycling		Increase household recycling to 50% by 2025 moving us to top 100 performing councils in the country	50% target was achieved in 2020/21. The impact of COVID-19 is likely to have had an impact with overall domestic waste also increasing.	Monitor the waste data as Covid-19 related restrictions ease whilst continuing efforts to increase education on household recycling.
Improve recycling rates	Increase availability of recycling facilities	Host a mini specialist recycling service point as a trial by 2022	A desk-based needs study has been conducted and the borough is already hosting many specialist recycling facilities.	Create an online interactive map to improve awareness of existing facilities.
	Increase awareness of Royal Borough recycling facilities	Obtain statistically significant baseline data on awareness levels Broaden our outreach work through event attendance, mailout communications and social media promotion	Efforts to recycle have been promoted through the resident's newsletter. A survey is planned for 2022.	Create and distribute the survey.
	Avoid food waste incineration by promoting uptake of the food waste collection service	10% increase in the food waste collection service by 2025	Baseline has been developed.	Continue to promote.
Encourage waste avoidance and material reuse through our services and operations	Reduce single use plastic usage in our own estate	Adopt a single-use plastics strategy based on the draft being developed by Plastic Free Windsor	SUP has been adopted. Actions have been allocated to officer and community groups. Progress is being tracked to understand the impact.	Monitoring and evaluation of the first year, with close contact to those involved in each action.

	Investigate the feasibility of a material reuse shop associated with the recycling and waste site	Prepare a feasibility study and business case	Not yet started.	
	Provide opportunities for people to grow their own food	Review existing land and allotments policy and identify opportunities to increase availability	There is a current 6-10 year waiting period for allotment space.	Promote land-sharing initiatives such as lend and tend.
Champion waste reduction in the wider community	Champion material re-use initiatives	Implement a trial repair café hosting at least three events as soon as pandemic restrictions allow Support existing school swap shops and enable three new ones to be created	The council provided kickstart funding for the Repair Café in Maidenhead. Success was evaluated and further funding was agreed to ensure financial sustainability.	Work with Repair Café to help secure further external funding.
	Support plastic free refillable shops and other plastic free schemes	Promotion in resident communications Pop-up space provided in community buildings	Promotion for events taking place in Maidenhead Library was completed as requested by Filling Good. The council supported the events that took place in 2021.	Assess the success and provide support for future events.
	Work with businesses to encourage reuse throughout their operations	Identify high impact sectors and develop an innovative support package by 2023	Not yet started.	Work with the Climate Partnership to jointly deliver

	Encourage more plant-based food and promote buying local and seasonally	New campaign including a food section in resident communications Partner with local suppliers to promote sustainable food production and education	In collaboration with community partners, the council are looking to identify areas where plant-based eating can be encouraged throughout the community.	Begin rolling out ideas alongside Veg-N and other departments in the council such as public health.
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Energy

Objectives	Action	Measure of success	Progress towards goal/deadline	Next steps
KEY ACTION: Engage with residents/businesses on reducing building carbon emissions and review planning policy to improve the energy efficiency of new builds		See below for engaging residents/businesses measures of success Prepare a new supplementary planning document (SPD to incentivise the building of net zero carbon emission buildings		
Reduce energy demand	Facilitate energy efficiency improvements in domestic private premises	Year-on-year improvement in Heat the Home Counties funding uptake Minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector enforced using energy performance certificates (EPCs) Increased take-up of flexible home improvement loans	Significant funding has been secured from central government to deliver energy efficiency improvements in homes with around £1.3 million allocated for delivery in 2022/23.	The Council will promote the scheme in the Borough to ensure uptake and will work closely with Greater South East Energy Hub to delivery installations.
	Reduce energy demand across buildings and assets we own and operate	Conduct a review of the strategic opportunities for reducing energy demand across the built estate Reduce energy emissions in buildings we own and manage by 50% by 2025 , in line with the Tyndall Centre decarbonisation trajectory	External funding has allowed low carbon feasibility studies to be conducted across 45 Council owned buildings. External funding secured to upgrade lighting to LED in 12 Council buildings. Installation of automated meter readers across all Council water supplies to identify possible leaks and improve utility management.	Complete the feasibility reports and develop pipeline of projects Deliver £2 million of heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency upgrades in schools as part of the PSDS Phase 3 funding. Utilise the water meter data effectively to ensure water inefficiencies and leaks are identified quickly.

	Incentivise developers to build zero carbon buildings and reduce water demand in line with Thames Water recommendations	Prepare a new supplementary planning document (SPD) in 2021 based on best practice to support these targets	Work has started with Officers from across the Council towards developing the SPD.	Work to continue with an expected completion of Autumn 2022.
	Incentivise developers to refurbish existing buildings to zero carbon home standard and reduce water demand in line with Thames Water recommendations	Prepare a new supplementary planning document (SPD) in 2021 based on best practice to support these targets		Work to continue with an expected completion of Autumn 2022.
Decarbonising supply	Encourage businesses and industry to decarbonise their energy supply and reduce emissions	Engage with the Chamber of Commerce and set up a forum for collaboration with the private sector in 2021	The Climate Partnership will be made up of both private and public sector organisations and will be a forum to collaborate,	Launch Climate Partnership during Spring 2022.
	Engage housing associations around a programme of retrofitting homes with low carbon heating/power solutions	Monitoring framework to be included in the council's annual monitoring report	There have been positive meetings with both Abri and Housing Solutions looking at how to access the social housing decarbonisation fund.	Continue collaboration with social housing providers especially around social housing decarbonisation funding
	Encourage carbon intensive (e.g. oil) heated homes to adopt lower carbon alternatives	Host an outreach workshop to encourage the most carbon intensively heated homes to adopt lower carbon alternatives	Not yet started.	Explore opportunities to link workshop with available funding to deliver energy efficiency improvements.

Increase renewable energy generation	Scope decentralised energy (e.g. solar, heat networks, heat pumps) potential across the borough	Scope renewable generation potential in the borough in 2021	Funding secured from government to undertake heat mapping analysis of the Borough. Consultant has been appointed and work is underway.	Review outputs of project and identify key opportunities to progress further.
	Incentivise renewable energy uptake among Royal Borough residents and businesses	Work with residents, businesses, and community organisations such as MaidEnergy to implement a collective solar purchasing scheme in 2021	Contract signed with provider with launch planned for when weather begins to improve in Spring 2022.	Successfully launch the scheme during Spring 2022
	Increase requirement for renewables generation in new build	Prepare new guidance on renewables requirements through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2021	Work has started with Officers from across the Council working towards developing the SPD.	Work to continue with an expected completion of Autumn 2022.

Natural Environment

Objectives	Action	Measure of success	Progress towards goal/deadline	Next steps
KEY ACTION: Create a biodiversity action plan (BAP) for the borough		To have a biodiversity action plan (BAP) by June 2021	The Council has worked closely with community groups and local wildlife organisations. The scope and detail has increased since the start of the project and therefore publication of the BAP will be during winter 2022.	Implement recommendations of the BAP.
Protect and enhance our natural environment	Work with partners to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and establish a Nature Recovery Network	Carry out preliminary mapping work by 2021	The Council has worked closely with TVERC on their Nature Recovery Strategy data readiness project	Begin work to deliver the LNRS.
	Identify opportunities for rewilding on sites we manage for nature conservation	Identify potential sites and objectives including biodiversity improvement targets by 2022	Areas of Ockwells/Thriftwood Park and Battlemead Common have been identified for rewilding.	Implement areas identified as appropriate. Continue to identify further areas across the Council's estate.
	Continue and extend the council's new mowing regime on roadside verges for the benefit of wildflowers	Extend scheme by 100% by 2024	12 verges were being managed for wildlife at the start of the project. We have added a further 3 to the scheme this year.	A minimum of a further 3 verges will be added to the scheme during 2022/23.
	Develop a biodiversity baseline and metrics for the borough as part of the biodiversity action plan	Agree baseline measures and metrics by June 2021	Baseline measures have been included in the BAP where available.	The best available data has been included in the BAP but further data will be collected to improve knowledge of biodiversity in the Borough.

	Increase tree cover in the Royal Borough to sequester carbon dioxide emissions. Create a new woodland and tree management strategy in 2021 to support our tree cover, carbon sequestration and wider biodiversity ambitions	Maximise the potential for tree planting on council owned land (plant at least 15,000 trees by 2025) and the carbon sequestering potential of these newly planted trees. Look to run joint schemes with private landowners	13,400 trees have been planted at Ockwells Nature Reserve across the 20/21 and 21/22 planting seasons. All schools have been offered trees for their sites during winter 21/22 to celebrate the Queen's Green Canopy event. Every ward in the Borough will have a tree planted in it during winter 21/22 to celebrate the Queen's Green Canopy event.	Further tree planting opportunities will be identified across Council owned sites.
Green our towns and urban areas	Work with developers to provide green infrastructure in new town centre developments	Ensure all new town centre development provides some form of green infrastructure in any public realm	Work has started with Officers from across the Council working towards developing the SPD.	Work to continue with an expected completion of Autumn 2022.
	Deliver the biodiversity net gain requirement for developers through the planning system	Create a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain through the planning system	Following adoption of the Environment Act, this is now a legal requirement.	Complete.
	Increase biodiversity in public owned open spaces such as parks and cemeteries	Integrate biodiversity improvement metrics into the borough BAP	There are a number of actions included in the BAP that relate to improving biodiversity in publicly owned open spaces.	Implement actions included in the BAP.
Increase awareness of biodiversity	Provide biodiversity training to planning officers	Ensure planning officers have been provided with biodiversity training by the end of 2021	Planning officers have received some training on biodiversity issues	Council will explore making general sustainability training mandatory for all officers.

	Set up biodiversity and climate education sessions at Braywick Nature reserve	Run training sessions for local businesses and education sessions for local schools	Local businesses participate in the conservation management of RBWM sites including Braywick LNR annually. 1200 children from local schools have participated in environmental education sessions at Braywick Nature Centre during summer 2021.	Trials of sessions covering not just the natural environment but wider sustainability issues will be undertaken during Autumn 2022 to understand demand.
	Offer conservation volunteering and awareness training for council employees and partners	Increase volunteer programme participation by 20%	An extensive corporate and community volunteering programme already exists. Numbers involved has now been baselined.	The Council will better promote opportunities for volunteering so that more people can participate. More events will be held such as a BioBlitz, WaterBlitz and Nature Festival.
	Encourage wildlife friendly gardening	Better support existing schemes run by community organisations	Support for these schemes is listed in the BAP	Engage with 'Wild' groups to understand what support the Council can provide.
	Engage with landowners, especially those who have a significant influence over biodiversity in the borough	Carry out engagement with the ten largest landowners in the borough	Support for this action is listed in the BAP.	Identify landowners and develop resources to use for engagement.

Transport

Objectives	Action	Measure of success	Progress towards goal/deadline	Next steps
KEY ACTION: To prepare a new Local Transport Plan that demonstrates our contribution to meeting boroughwide carbon reduction targets		To prepare a new Draft Local Transport Plan by 2021	BSIP and LWIP documents have been drafted and form key pillars of the new LTP.	Work for the LTP has been programmed for financial year 2022/23 with new guidance expected in the Autumn.
Transform transport and digital infrastructure to reduce the need for travel	As part of development planning, identify opportunities to reduce the need to travel in new 'growth areas	To ensure site promoters have developed plans for 'growth areas' including Ascot, Maidenhead Town Centre and South West Maidenhead	Transport and infrastructure team inputting into the new SW Maidenhead SPD to ensure sustainable transport principles built in from the start.	Adopt the SW Maidenhead SPD and develop proposals for Ascot High Street through a new Capital Project in 2022/23.
	Facilitate roll out of digital infrastructure in the borough to enable flexible working	Identify partners to provide 5G and superfast broadband	RBWM working with other Local Authorities and LEP on a Pan-Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group Board	Digital Infrastructure Strategy planned for 2022/23 to facilitate outcomes in the Corporate Plan.
	Trial Smart City concepts in the Royal Borough	To have implemented a trial by December 2023	TVLEP sponsoring LoRaWAN network rolled out across the borough alongside the rest of Berkshire.	Determine further trials
Create infrastructure to shift journeys to low/ zero carbon modes e.g. cycling, public transport	Remove barriers to walking and cycling through delivery of the 2018-2028 Cycle Action Plan	Delivery of the Cycling Action Plan 2018-2028 schemes and put in place a system for residents to make suggestions e.g. for 20mph zones	Translating the CAP into an LCWIP for adoption in 2022. Increases focus on walking and will facilitate future bids to DfT.	LCWIP will provide pipeline of schemes to improve walking and cycling and the Capital Programme has £1.5M for investment in 2022/23 for the development and delivery of projects.

	Reduce transport emissions at sensitive locations to improve air pollution and encourage walking/ cycling	No 'idling' zones outside schools investigated by April 2021 . Achieve the National Air Quality Objective (AQO) across all Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)	Pilot projects undertaken looking at signage and behaviour change at several school sites across the Borough.	Behaviour change programmes being developed jointly with Public Health team. Air quality improving across the AQMA locations in RBWM, although post pandemic data will need to be reviewed.
	Investigate options for demand responsive transport in the borough and implement a trial through external funding	To have prepared a funding bid to Government in the next available bus funding opportunity	BSIP adopted by council at end of October and plans for an Enhanced Partnership are in place ready to be adopted. Bus network review being undertaken to identify opportunities for DRT.	Investigate funding sources such as developer contributions to bring forward a trial following completion of the Bus Network Review.
	Launch a car sharing scheme for the Royal Borough	Provide a recommendation for a Royal Borough borough-wide scheme by December 2022 in line with the redevelopment of Maidenhead	Scheme has launched with 1 car now located on St Ives Road, Maidenhead.	Opportunities to expand scheme as development completes will be sought. Formal policy to be developed through new LTP.
Invest in zero emission vehicle infrastructure	Increase electric vehicle charging capability and explore cycle charging in the Royal Borough	Identify a partner and funding model and roll out charging point infrastructure required to meet carbon reduction targets. Monitor progress through the council's annual monitoring report Parking supplementary planning document (SPD) to be adopted setting out standards for electric vehicle	Pilot projects in Windsor and Maidenhead in Place to inform new EV Implementation Plan. Market Engagement with operators completed in February and March 2022 to inform strategy development.	EV implementation Plan to be developed in 2022/23 in line with Corporate Plan Goal. New SPD will set out EV parking standards to be prepared by the end of the year.

		charging in new developments		
	Set new emissions standards for taxis and buses	Incorporated as part of the new Local Transport Plan	Planned for 2022/23	Will form part of LTP in 2022/23

Progress against targets

Borough Emissions

The Council has set a science-based target for carbon reduction using the Tyndall Centre's recommendations. In line with the Council's climate emergency declaration, the date for the Borough to be net-zero is 2050 however in addition to that headline goal, there are ambitious reduction targets set for each 5-year period.

The Council uses government published data to measure the Borough's progress against its stated targets. These are published annually with the latest data covering 2019, the year the Council declared a climate emergency.

In 2019, the total CO₂ emissions from the Borough (within the local authority scope) were 630ktCO₂. This is a 6.1% decrease compared to the same measure in 2017. This compares favourably to other local authorities in Berkshire where the average is a 5.1% reduction over the same period.

The Tyndall Centre state in their report that, "To stay within the recommended carbon budget Windsor and Maidenhead will, from 2020 onwards, need to achieve average mitigation rates of CO₂ from energy of around -13.1% per year."

Whilst the Borough has made year on year reductions in its emissions, they clearly need to be accelerated to ensure we meet the 13.1% reduction as recommended by the Tyndall Centre. The Council's plans to meet this challenge through the formation of its Climate Partnership which is detailed later in this report.

Council Emissions

The Council's own emissions for its buildings and operations make up less than 1% of the carbon emissions from the Borough. It is important to manage those emissions to reduce our environmental impact as an organisation, reduce costs to ensure value for money to residents as well as provide leadership on the climate agenda within the Borough.

In the Environment and Climate Strategy, we detail the Council's carbon emissions in Appendix 1 as 4,585tCO₂e for the financial year 2018/19.

In 2020/21, Council emissions from the equivalent scope totalled 3903tCO₂e resulting in nearly a 15% reduction over those two years. There was a significant reduction in carbon emissions from electricity consumption however an increase in gas consumption overall.

During 2021/21, the pandemic had a big impact on the way we operated as an organisation and energy consumption patterns were consequently impacted by that. The Council adapted quickly to the situation and most of its buildings remained open although there was a large drop in occupancy resulting in a reduction of electricity usage.

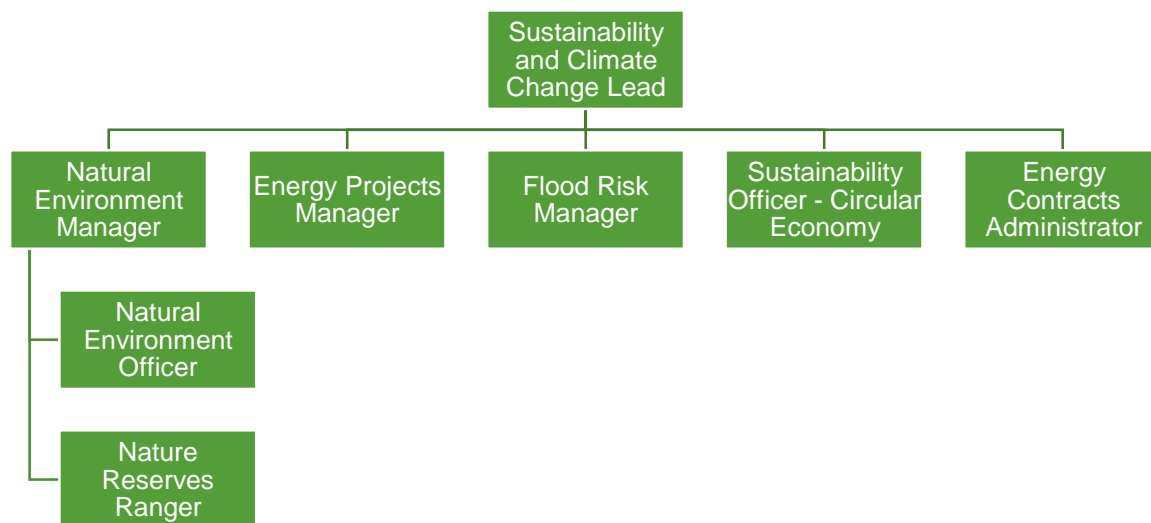
In terms of gas, two main factors combined to drive up consumption. The winter of 2020/21 was significantly colder than the two previous winters (based on degree day data) which resulted in increased gas consumption. In addition, government guidance around providing ventilation to schools and offices meant that more windows and doors would have been left open than normal.

The Council continues to invest in its buildings as well embracing new ways or working through improved IT facilities. We expect a further reduction in emissions next year that should keep us on track to hit our own organisational emissions target.

Funding and Resourcing

Team Structure

The Council recognised that to deliver on its environment and climate objectives, it would need to increase the size of its Sustainability and Climate Change Team. Over the past 12 months, the team has more than doubled in size from 3 officers to 8 now working within the team. New roles created include an Energy Projects Manager, Sustainability Officer, Natural Environment Officer and Nature Reserves Ranger.



The Sustainability and Climate Change Team sit within the wider Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth service and there has been strong collaboration with other areas of the service such as on transport policy and town centre management.

Internal Funding

The Council allocated £165,000 of capital funding specifically for climate projects in its budget for 2021/22. The team have delivered a variety of projects utilising this funding including,

- Installation of automated meter readers on all water supplies to better identify leaks quickly and improve overall management of water
- New interpretation boards at Battlemead and Braywick to ensure visitors to the sites have opportunities to learn about the natural environment
- Creation of 3 waymarked trails across the Nature Reserve to provide guided walks to visitors
- Biodiversity enhancements at Kidwells Park

- Pond enhancements at Oaken Grove, Oakley Green Cemetery, Braywick Leisure Centre and Kidwells Park.

In addition to the Council's revenue budgets for supporting the Sustainability and Climate Change teams work directly, a further £250,000 has been allocated for the next three years to support the Climate Partnership as it establishes itself. This will allow the partnership to recruit support roles to enable climate and environment action.

External Funding

The Council has been successful in securing significant external funding to deliver environmental improvements both across its estate and more broadly across the Borough. Some highlights over the last 18 months include;

Low Carbon Skills Fund Phase 2 - £128,000 to undertake heat decarbonisation plans across 31 Council owned buildings including schools, libraries and offices

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 1 - £205,000 to upgrade lighting across 12 Council owned buildings including Maidenhead Library, Tinkers Lane and schools.

Public Sector Decarbonisation Phase 3 - £1.56 million for the installation of heat pumps, PV, insulation and controls at 5 schools during 2022/23.

Heat Network Delivery Unit & EU City Facility Fund - £70,000 (combined) for a heat mapping study across the Borough to identify opportunities to roll out low carbon heat networks.

LAD2 - £383,000 for low carbon heat technologies and insulation for private residential homes in the Borough for delivery during Spring 2022.

LAD3/Sustainable Warmth - £1.3 million for low carbon heat technologies and insulation for private residential homes in the Borough for delivery in 2022/23.

Outlook for 2022

Biodiversity Action Plan / Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Council has drafted a new Biodiversity Action Plan in collaboration with local Wild community groups. This will be submitted for approval early 2022 and implementation will begin immediately. To enable the successful delivery of the plan, the Council has recruited a new natural Environment Officer and Nature Reserves Ranger to provide additional support to the team based out of Braywick Nature Centre.

In addition, the Council will be developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.

Climate Partnership

The Council has acknowledged that to achieve the targets it has set out, there will need to be a broad partnership of residents, community groups and organisations involved. As part of its 2022/23 budget, £250,000 has been allocated to form an independent Climate Partnership for the Borough. By utilising the knowledge and expertise of organisations across the borough, the partnership will better support delivery of the outcomes set out in the strategy as well as supporting the council to deliver on its own actions and commitments.

The Council will play an active role in the Partnership both supporting its initial creation as well as through ongoing support. The council will also continue to deliver its own ambitious carbon reduction targets as well as the actions set out in the strategy that relate to its own operations and functions. This includes developing and delivering the strategy to reduce transport emissions and enhancing biodiversity through its parks and open spaces.

Solar Together

The Council included a target in its E&C Strategy to increase renewable generation in the Borough by ten-fold by 2025. A key technology for enabling this increase is solar photovoltaics panels. Whilst its recognised there is great interest in solar within the Borough, we understand that residents aren't always clear on how to go about the process and choosing a supplier that can be relied on. To overcome this, The Council has been working with Solar Together to launch a collective solar purchasing scheme that will invite all residents to participate. The aim is to use collective purchasing to ensure a competitive price whilst also providing residents with confidence that they are using a supplier that has gone through certain checks.

The launch of the scheme is due during Spring 2022.

Residential Energy Efficiency / Fuel Poverty

The Council has secured significant funding to improve the energy efficiency of properties in the Borough where the residents are on low incomes. These households are at risk of fuel poverty which has very significant knock on impacts for health and wellbeing. There have been challenges during 2021 in securing skilled labour and materials to roll out the scheme however with further funding secured for 2022/23, we expect to be able to accelerate the work, working with colleagues at the Greater South East Energy Hub.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Utilising Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) funding, the Council will install 29 new on-street charging points across the Borough by the end of March 2022. The Council will be developing an Electric Vehicles Charging Strategy during 2022/23 to ensure roll out of new EV charging points is done in a planned and successful way.