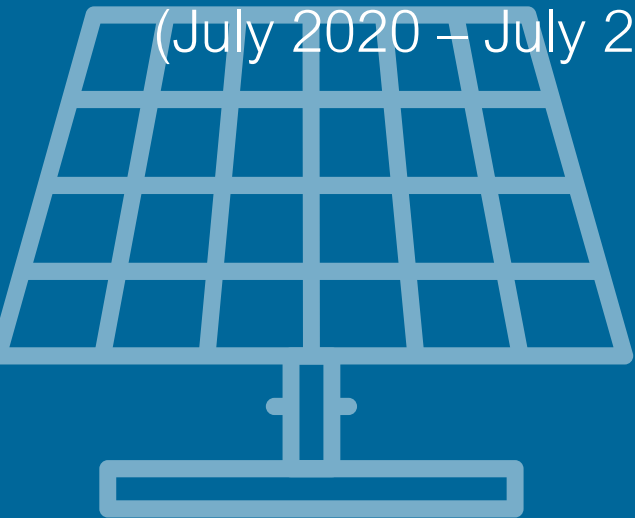


# Environment Strategy

Annual Progress Report  
(July 2020 – July 2021)



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The challenge we all face with regard to climate change is recognised across the globe, taking no action is not an option for any responsible organisation.

***We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it.” —President Obama***

- 1.2 On 2nd July 2019, West Berkshire Council (WBC) unanimously declared a **Climate Emergency**. As part of this commitment to act, we have set a target of **carbon neutrality** for the Council and the District by 2030. We recognise this is an ambitious target and we will need support from our partners and our communities in order to achieve it.
- 1.3 Following the declaration and building on the work already underway, an **Environment Strategy** was written and published in July 2020. This inaugural

annual report on delivery of the Environment Strategy will highlight the actions, achievements and progress from July 2020 to July 2021. It forms part of our commitment within the **Environment Strategy Delivery Plan** to keep everyone informed, as well as to describe the measures we still need to take on our journey towards carbon neutrality.

- 1.4 This report also compares the Council's **baseline carbon footprint** (from 2019/20) with the latest data for 2020/21 and provides the most up to date published figures indicating the emissions across West Berkshire District.

*Please note, words in bold can be found in our glossary along with a number of other useful terms. The glossary was created as a result of feedback received during our public consultation earlier this year (Spring 2021).*

## 2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Environment Strategy, developed after an extensive period of consultation, describes the vision for West Berkshire's environment and specifically how the District needs to respond to climate change.
- 2.2 Our Environment Strategy Delivery Plan provides a framework of actions, timescales and responsibilities to show how we intend to achieve the aims within the Environment Strategy. These actions have been categorised in accordance with the strategic objectives from the Environment Strategy: Carbon Neutral by 2030; Responsible Economic Growth; Healthy Communities; Resilient to Climate Change and Working with our Communities and Partners.
- 2.3 We are committed to continuous improvement and it's important to note that the Delivery Plan, whilst building on the work from the past, will evolve as we develop partnerships and new opportunities for action arise. The Delivery Plan will act as a basis for us to work from. With this in mind, the plan will remain 'live' and be continuously developing between now and 2030.
- 2.4 During this first year of the Environment Strategy, an Environment Delivery Team has been set up to help to deliver and coordinate these actions as well as engage and work with residents, partners, schools, businesses and community groups.
- 2.5 Figure 1 summarises the journey from the declaration of the climate emergency through to the approval of the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan. In addition, the Environment Delivery Project Board has been established involving representatives from key service areas. Its role is to ensure the actions within the Delivery Plan are reported on regularly and progress is monitored accurately.

2.6 Figure 1: The journey from Declaration to Delivery Plan



# 3. The First Year

## - summary of actions and achievements

3.1 The first year of delivery of the Environment Strategy has seen action across the Council and within the communities of West Berkshire. This has built upon previous work to improve the environment. Some projects have been delivered in full, others have been started and there has been an element

of establishing new groups and ways of working which will assist the journey towards being carbon neutral. Figure 2 provides a summary of the first year. This is followed by a 5 page summary of actions and achievements against each strategic objective of the Environment Strategy, including case studies.

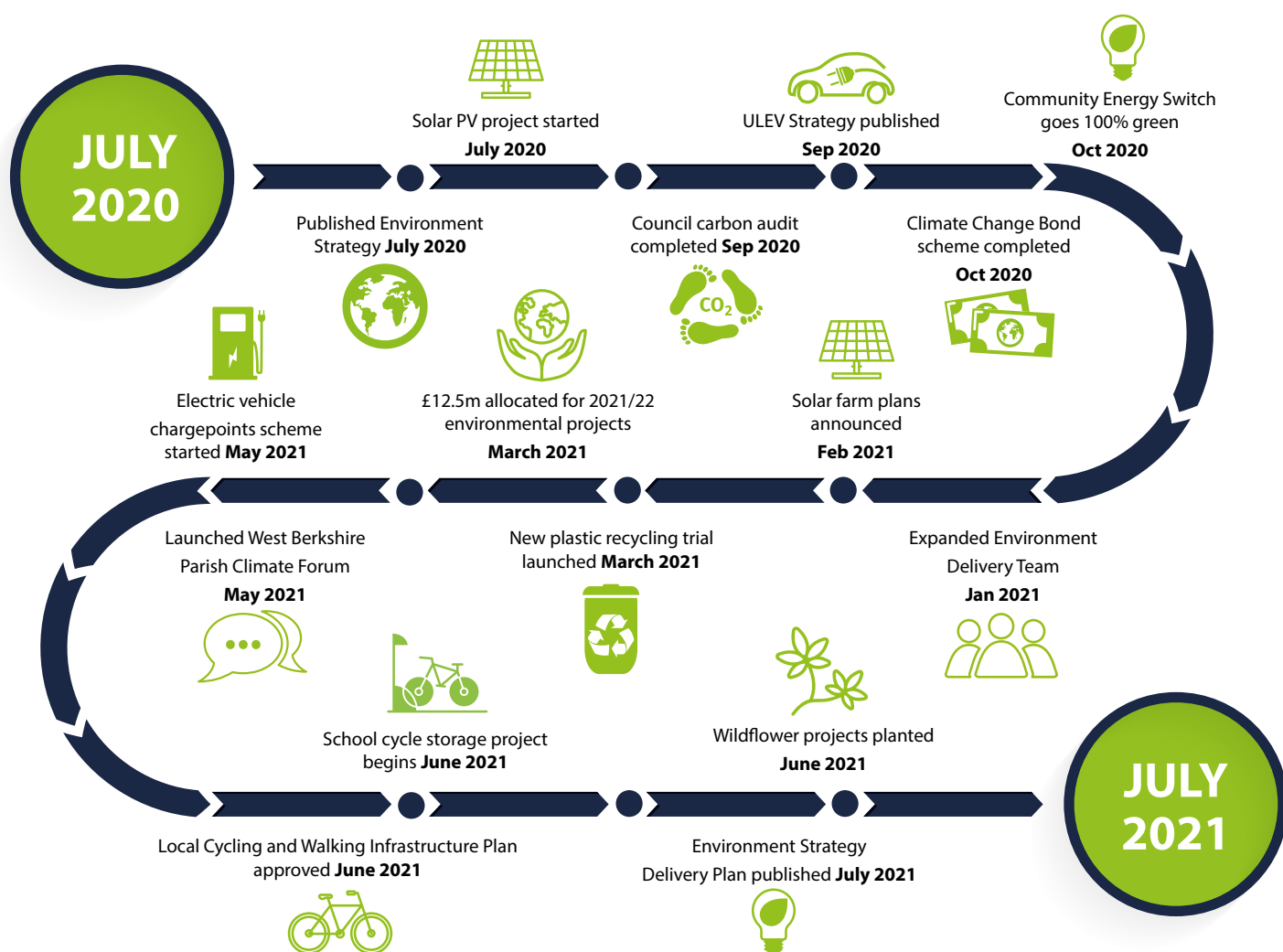


Figure 2: Environment Strategy Highlights July 2020 - July 2021

# CARBON NEUTRAL BY 2030



**67% of short term actions in progress, on track**

**22% of short term actions complete**

## Our progress so far:

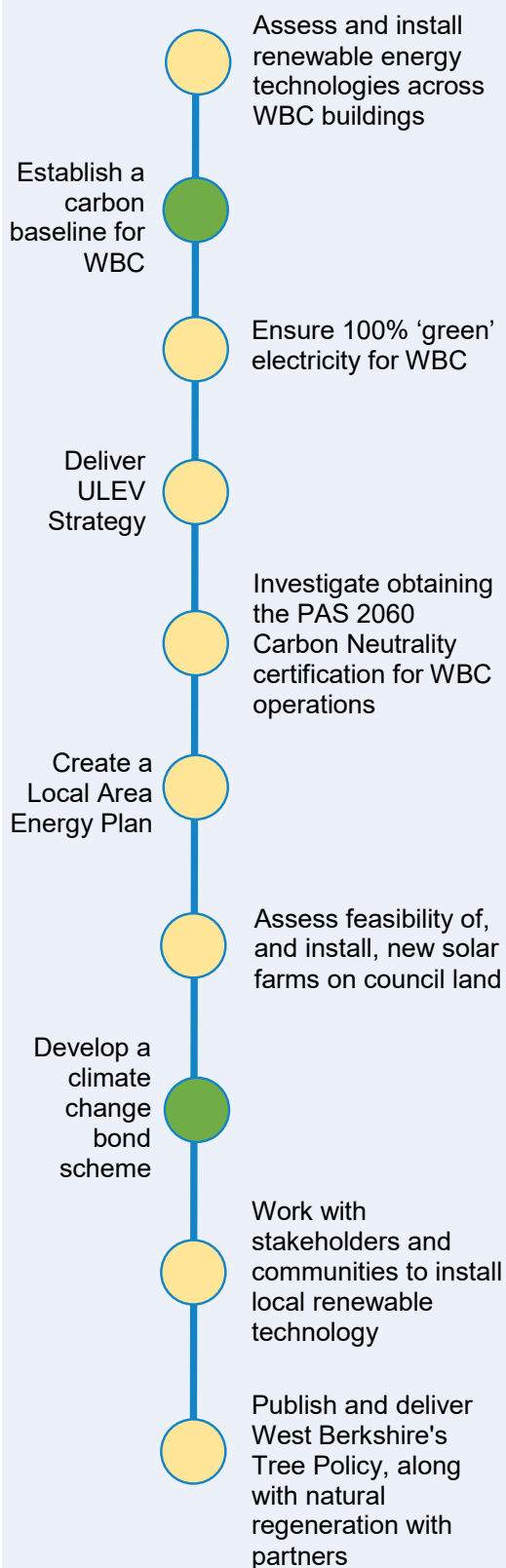
- Our carbon baseline was published in September 2020 and quantifies the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated by the Council's assets and activities, as well as the GHG emissions associated with the district as a whole. The baseline will work as a bench mark against which we will track progress going forward.
- In September 2020, we published our [Ultra Low Emission \(ULEV\) Strategy](#) and we have since begun implementing projects across the District. This includes installing charge points and starting to engage with the taxi trade regarding views on EVs. We will seek to improve the accessibility of charging infrastructure in future years.
- In March 2021, we announced plans for a [solar farm near Grazeley](#). Plans will see more than 45,000 solar panels installed on up to 75 acres of land we already own. This would generate enough electricity each year to power the equivalent of approximately 4,400 homes.
- In April 2021, the Council switched to a 'Blue' energy source, which is sourced from nuclear energy. Although nuclear is generally considered clean energy, we will be aiming to move to renewable energy as the sole source of our electricity as soon as we can.
- In July 2021, we engaged expertise to research and develop a Local Area Energy Plan. We have partnered with consultants WSP to help implement this project.
- In summer 2021, we developed a plan for a Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership with local expert organisations, aiming to deliver carbon sequestration and improve biodiversity in the District.
- We have formed a Social Value Policy Task Group and drafted a Social Value Policy. Once adopted it will be used in procuring goods and services and, along with bringing about social and economic benefits, will enhance the environmental benefits of the Council's work through seeking to work with those who are serious about reducing carbon and supporting environmental improvements in West Berkshire.

## CASE STUDY: Community Municipal Investment (CMI)

In July 2020, we launched the UK's first CMI (also known as Climate Bonds), offering a unique way to invest in West Berkshire's green projects. In October 2020, we achieved our goal of raising £1 million. Overall, 640 investors contributed nationwide, with 23% of total investment coming from District residents. [Read more here.](#)

The CMI has funded several of our environmental projects, including a £520k Solar PV project on 6 council facilities, including a school, leisure centre, care facility, and council offices. The remaining £0.5m has been used for a variety of schemes, such as:

- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Capital Improvements, e.g. our [Wild Verge project](#).
- Urban Tree Planting
- New footpaths and rural access schemes
- Active travel infrastructure improvements
- Tree planting and habitat creation as part of flood alleviation projects
- Energy efficiency upgrades for traffic signals and street lighting



= In progress, on track

= Complete

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, [click here.](#)

# RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC GROWTH



**100% of short term actions in progress, on track**

## Our progress so far:

- Work on developing the policies for the Local Plan Review has happened throughout the first year of the Environment Strategy and will continue with the Review representing the opportunity for high environmental standards to be set. We need new housing, new and improved infrastructure and facilities to be provided in a way that reflects the climate emergency.
- One of the grounds for fighting a significant planning appeal was the lack of carbon reduction measures and renewable energy generation on site. Whilst the outcome of the appeal is unknown there was a strong case put forward that the development should have done a lot more to address the climate crisis.
- Discussions have started in connection with the next Local Transport Plan (LTP) which will be key in reflecting the aims of the Environment Strategy and setting the local scene to support Government agendas such as the decarbonisation of transport. The LTP will link closely with the Local Plan Review.
- In order to influence policy and engage in relevant consultations, we have started discussions with the Countryside Climate Network and Coalition for the Energy Efficiency of Buildings. By becoming members of expert groups, we will be able to have a stronger voice over environmental concerns and be able to collaborate with others.
- During summer 2021, we began working with relevant stakeholders to relaunch the [Eco Schools programmes](#) in West Berkshire. We will be offering schools bespoke support to raise environmental awareness and reduce their carbon emissions.

## CASE STUDY: Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

Our HAMP provides guidance on the delivery of highway maintenance services, which considers the local environment.

As part of this, in July 2021 the Council's Highways Team, in conjunction with our contractor Volker Highways and our asphalt supplier Hansons, resurfaced a section of the A4.



This project was completed with carbon reduction in mind:

- The road was resurfaced using 'warm' asphalt comprising 8% recycled asphalt from old road schemes. This material is manufactured at lower temperatures and also saves 2.4 kg per tonne of carbon compared to conventional asphalt.
- Work was conducted overnight - fewer cars waiting in traffic causes less CO<sub>2</sub> as well as reduced disruption to residents
- The project used 2,800 tonnes which equates to a CO<sub>2</sub> saving of 6.72 tonnes
- We also trialled asphalt with 30% recycled materials for a small section of the road and will be using the results to influence what materials we use in the future to resurface the roads in the District.


Reflect environmental aims with the Local Plan

Develop the next Local Transport Plan for the district

Work with local Education providers to increase climate change awareness in schools


Lobby for high environmental standards and engage with consultations

Refresh the Highways Asset Management Plan taking into consideration the Environment Strategy

 = In progress, on track

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, [click here](#).



 = In progress, on track

 = Complete

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, [click here](#).

## 80% of short term actions in progress, on track

### Our progress so far:

- In January 2021, we launched a public consultation into the 'School Streets' initiative using funds from the Department for Transport Emergency Active Travel Fund. This scheme involves prohibiting vehicle movement on the roads outside a schools' main entrance at the start and end of the school day, helping to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and make it safer to walk, scoot or cycle to school. This consultation provided us with the opportunity to propose this scheme in Calcot. [Read more here](#). Linked with this, in March 2021, we were awarded a DEFRA Air Quality grant. One use of this funding is a project to change the behaviour of residents who drive by launching an anti-idling campaign. One focus will be around schools.
- In March 2021, a new cycle hub opened on the South side of Newbury Railway Station, with an additional hub opening on the North side of the Station later this year. In total, these cycle hubs can accommodate 300 bikes. They also offer a bike repair stand as well as the security of CCTV and motion sensor LED lighting to make it as convenient as possible for people who want to commute by bike and train.
- In June 2021, we approved our [Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) (LCWIP) which will provide a long term, strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements for the District. The plan covers Newbury and Thatcham as well as incorporating the LCWIP established for the eastern area settlements including Calcot, Pangbourne, Purley-on-Thames and Theale.
- Four of the key routes within the LCWIP are in the process of being designed, this work includes linking key cycling corridors. These will contribute to the coherent network of improved walking and cycling infrastructure within West Berkshire. We aim to make active travel in West Berkshire, safer and more accessible for adults and children.
- We have worked hard to continue providing road safety training, making the Road Rangers and Safer Steps programmes available online. We have delivered Covid-safe Bikeability cycle training for both school students and families. We also held public events, including our Cycle and Wellbeing event at Linear Park in July 2021, to encourage our residents to cycle more.

### CASE STUDY: Cycle Storage in our Schools

In June 2021, we used the allocated £140,000 from our Capital Budget to upgrade storage for bicycles at some of our schools. The Willink, The Downs, Denefield, Kennet, Little Heath, Westwood Farm, Calcot, and Hungerford all benefitted from the new secure and covered cycle storage units. We'll be approaching more schools shortly to roll out this offer to as many as possible.

Cycling is a great way to start the day, boosts wellbeing and helps the environment too. We hope the new storage will make this active travel choice easier, and will be complemented by our other active travel initiatives across the District.





# RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE



**100% of short term actions in progress, on track**

## Our progress so far:

- We have been working hard to update our current [Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) for the District to ensure that improving our resilience to climate change is a key driver of our work to protect our communities. We have drafted a new strategy for the time period 2021-2026 which was prepared ready for a public consultation.
- We have been working closely with our communities via our Flood Forums, these include Pang Valley, Lambourn Valley and Thatcham. We are maintaining close links with the Environment Agency to ensure the effective design and implementation of local flood defence schemes.
- We are in the early stages of discussing amendments to our Sustainable Drainage Systems policy to give more emphasise to creating developments that are able to cope with changes in climate (including heat and water shortages).
- At the end of March 2021, we opened four new recycling banks, in partnership with our waste contractor Veolia. This trial allows residents to recycle more plastic pots, tubs and trays which currently cannot be collected at kerbsides. This will help us assess how well the public engage with this scheme and to look into the continued availability of markets for these materials going forward. [Read more here](#).
- In summer 2021, we updated our Delivery Plan to specifically address heatwaves, as these are becoming more frequent. We will work in conjunction with our Public Health and Emergency Planning Teams to ensure our residents are well informed about heatwaves so they can take the necessary actions to protect themselves.

## CASE STUDY: Wildflowers and Wild Verges in West Berkshire

In March 2021, we began our wildflower project to enhance roundabouts and verges at three West Berkshire locations. The 'Tesco' roundabout on the A339 Sandleford Link, the roundabout on the junction of the A4/B4000 Stockcross Road, and the verge at Cow Lane in East Ilsley all benefitted from the laying of specialist wildflower turf.



The flowers bloomed from late spring producing a beautiful display! We also partnered with our local Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to run the [West Berkshire Wild Verge project](#). This involves improving biodiversity along these wild spaces and changing our approaches to verge maintenance, including verge and hedgerow cutting.

*“The wild flower planting on the Tesco Roundabout in Newbury is absolutely beautiful. I am very impressed with it. It cheers me up every time I drive past it. Thank you very much.”* West Berkshire Resident

Review and update our Flood Risk Management Strategy with influence from the Environment Strategy



Undertake feasibility assessment of highway verges for Wild Flower projects



Work with partners to develop Natural Flood Management projects



Reuse, recycle and compost at least 60% of municipal waste we handle by 2030




Review our Sustainable Drainage policy to ensure it reflects the aims of the Environment Strategy



Further reduce the frequency of hedgerow cutting in areas where this does not affect safety



 = In progress, on track

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, [click here](#).

# WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS



## 57% of short term actions in progress, on track

### Our progress so far:

- In January 2021, we expanded our Environment Delivery Team and as a result we have been able to improve access to environmental information on our website. We have also been busy setting up new public engagement projects.
- In February 2021, we started back up our monthly environment newsletter (after a short pilot in summer 2020). This keeps subscribers up to date on our projects across the District. [You can sign up here.](#) We have also explored new ways of improving our engagement, including utilising local media outlets, such as Newbury Weekly News, to reach more local residents.
- In March 2021, we ran a 6 week online survey to ask residents for their feedback on the [Delivery Plan](#). In total, 113 residents completed the survey. Over 96 percent of respondents agreed it was important that we are acting on environmental issues. We have also updated the Delivery Plan as a result of some of the suggestions, you can read more about them in the 'you asked, we did' section of this report.
- In May 2021, we established the West Berkshire Parish Climate Forum to improve our communications with our local communities. We meet regularly to discuss local work and how we can better support climate action. This forum has enabled us to launch new projects with our Parish and Town Councils, including the [Greening Campaign](#).
- In June 2021, we launched our Countryside Campaign encouraging everyone to enjoy our open spaces, respect other users, and to dispose of their rubbish correctly. The campaign aimed to ensure that our parks and open spaces were places residents could be proud of.
- Our Waste Team worked with local Town Councils to provide 'recycling on the go' litter bins for recycling plastic bottles and cans. They also installed new CCTV at selected fly tipping 'hotspots' to help reduce this blight on our communities.

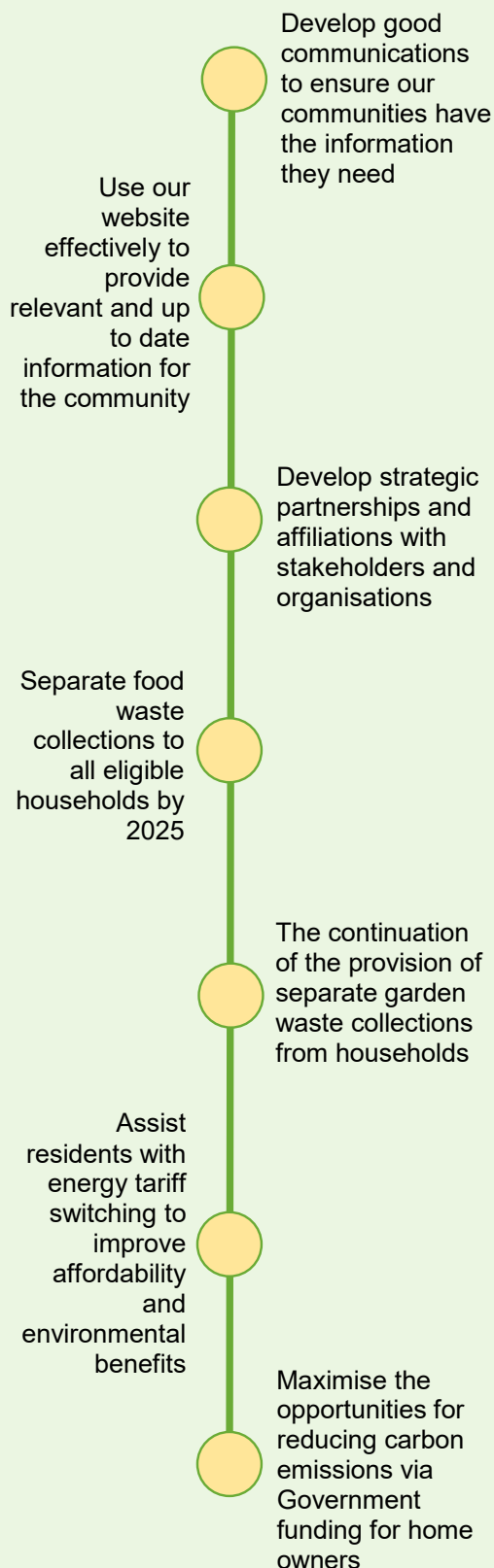
### CASE STUDY: Green Community Energy Switch

In October 2020, we launched a 'Community Switch' scheme for West Berkshire residents. The scheme works by negotiating more competitive energy prices for the group of residents who have registered their interest. Reputable energy firms then compete to be the provider and the lowest price wins.



Over 12,403 households across West Berkshire have registered with this scheme. In the May 2021 auction, residents who signed up were able to save an average of £270 per year against standard tariffs by switching supplier.

Not only does this benefit residents but it also helps reduce carbon emissions within the District, as all tariffs are 100% renewable. In May 2021, the estimated CO<sub>2</sub> savings from residents switching to renewable energy was 112 tonnes, the equivalent of 112 return flights from Paris to New York!



= In progress, on track

This list is a summary. To see our full list of actions, [click here.](#)

## 4. You asked....we did

4.1 During the Spring of 2021 the Council engaged with West Berkshire residents and communities as the Delivery Plan was developed. This engagement process resulted in a range of helpful suggestions to be put forward and also

gave the opportunity for questions to be asked. The following highlights some of those questions and sets out some answers or actions that have been taken as a result.

### *“Can you explain what the technical terms mean?”*

We have created a glossary of terms used throughout our Environment Strategy, Delivery Plan, and Annual Report. You can find it as an Appendix to this annual report and here on our website.

### *“Are you working with experts and environmental organisations?”*

We are already working on projects with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), for example we are working together on our [Wild Verges project](#). We are also seeking to work with BBOWT, Natural England and other local relevant organisations to form a Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership which will help implement projects using valuable local expertise. We are also looking to become members of the Countryside Climate Network as well as other expert organisations.

### *“How much are you expecting your actions in the Delivery Plan to cost?”*

It is very complex to estimate the total cost of the work needed to get us to carbon neutrality as some of the work is long term and budgets are set annually. However, we have been working with teams across the Council and are aiming to add an additional column into the Delivery Plan to show the estimated cost soon.

### *“Will you be calculating the carbon emission reductions for actions in the Delivery Plan?”*

Our aim has always been to measure carbon savings so we can monitor progress towards becoming carbon neutral. As this is a big project requiring experts, we decided that we would commission it at the same time as getting started on our own environmental work, so action wasn't being delayed. We are working with consultants on the anticipated carbon savings for relevant actions and this will be added as new information within the Delivery Plan soon.

### *“How will you be keeping residents and local communities updated?”*

You can keep updated on our environmental work and projects across the District by signing up to our monthly [environment newsletter here](#). To improve community engagement, we have established the West Berkshire Parish Climate Forum, where we regularly meet to discuss how we can support local climate action. We have also improved engagement with local media outlets, such as Newbury Weekly News, to reach more local residents.

### *“What are you doing to make it easier for electric vehicle drivers?”*

There are already a number of electric vehicle charge points across the District. Some are on residential streets to assist those with no off-street parking and some are being delivered in public car parks. [You can find out more here](#). The new charge points installed in a number of car parks in early summer 2021 will be available to use in early December 2021. If you have suggestions for suitable locations please email [EV@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:EV@westberks.gov.uk) to let us know your thoughts. Our [Ultra Low Emission Strategy](#) also lays out our aims for the coming years and includes a list of all charging points in West Berkshire correct at September 2020.

### *“What are you doing to improve water quality?”*

In West Berkshire, the water is monitored and managed by Thames Water and the Environment Agency. In response to your questions, we have added in a new action to our Delivery Plan aiming to work in conjunction with these organisations to protect our blue spaces.

### *“As our climate is changing, why haven’t you included anything about heatwaves?”*

It is important that we prepare for changes in extreme weather events as a result of climate change. The Council does take action and provide good information for residents around heatwaves. The Environment Strategy provides a further opportunity to strengthen this and make the clear link with climate change. Therefore, we have now added the following new action into our Delivery Plan: ‘Work in conjunction with Public Health and Emergency Planning to use new opportunities to publicise information around Heatwaves’.

### *“How will your environmental targets impact planning and developers?”*

Having environmental targets in place is one thing, but we need to make sure they are implemented across the Council. Planning and Developers can be impacted through suitable policies being included in our Local Plan Review. We have also committed to providing training for planners on carbon reduction measures that they can deliver through their work.

### *“How can I find out more information on your actions in the Delivery Plan?”*

We have added webpage links into our Delivery Plan where suitable so you can find out more about particular projects. We will be sure to keep adding links as projects are started.

### *“You haven’t mentioned litter, what are you doing to tackle this?”*

Although West Berkshire ranks highly in public surveys on litter, we understand we can always do more. We have therefore added a new action into the Delivery Plan aiming to reduce litter and promote education on the impacts of littering.

# 5. Update on the Council's carbon footprint

- 5.1 An early action following the approval of the Environment Strategy was to establish the Council's own carbon footprint. A specialist contractor was hired to assist in quantifying the **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** generated by:
- The Council's assets (e.g. buildings) and
  - The Council's activities (e.g. business travel),
- 5.2 For the purposes of this report, we have defined the Council's **operational control** as a boundary to isolate our carbon emissions, therefore, if the Council has control of an asset, then it has been included within our calculations.
- 5.3 Those GHG emissions that extend beyond our control are categorised in different scopes. These are as follows:
- **Scope 1 emissions** (aka direct) come from sources that are owned or controlled by the Council e.g. our vehicles
  - **Scope 2 emissions** (aka indirect) come from the consumption of electricity etc. used in our buildings
  - **Scope 3 emissions** (aka indirect) come from goods/ other indirect services that the Council utilises but are not directly responsible for, e.g. investments, activities of our contractors
- 5.4 It is mandatory to report on Scope 1 and 2 emissions and Scope 3 emissions are optional. As part of the Council's Scope 3 emissions, we have included the Scope 1 and 2 emissions from our largest contractors (by contract value) in delivering the Waste and Highways Service Contracts within West Berkshire.

- 5.5 West Berkshire Council's carbon reporting cycle aligns with the financial year, i.e. 1st April to 31st March, annually. Therefore, activity data within the period 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020 was collected for the initial calculation of the Council's annual carbon emissions in order to form a baseline. To ensure consistency the financial year will be used on an annual basis for collection of data and comparisons will be made against the baseline to track progress. This first annual report provides data for 2020/21 so that a comparison can be made for the first year.
- 5.6 Using the data available the Council's carbon emissions (or carbon footprint) are calculated using the following formula:

**ACTIVITY DATA X EMISSIONS FACTOR = EMISSIONS (TCO2E)**

- Activity data is data associated with West Berkshire Council's activities (e.g. diesel consumption in litres).
- The emission factors are the amount of GHG emissions associated with the activity data (e.g. the emissions from the combustion of a litre of diesel).
- CO<sub>2</sub>e stands for **tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent** and is a metric measure that is used to compare emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their GWP **Global Warming Potential** by converting amounts of other gases to the equivalent amount of CO<sub>2</sub>.

**Table 1: West Berkshire Council's Carbon Footprint 2019/20 to 2020/21**

Emissions Scope	Emissions Source	2019/20		2020/21:		difference CO <sub>2</sub> e (tonnes)	% difference from 19/20 to 20/21
		CO <sub>2</sub> e (tonnes)	% of total emissions	CO <sub>2</sub> e (tonnes)	% of total emissions		
1	Stationary Combustion (e.g. energy use)	3,502	30%	3,219	33%	-283	-8
	Mobile Combustion (e.g. vehicles)	664	6%	354	4%	-310	-47
	Sewage Processing	38	0%	38	0%	0	0
	Refrigerants	108	1%	82	1%	-26	-24
	<b>Total Scope 1</b>	<b>4,312</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>3,693</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>-619</b>	<b>-14</b>
2	Purchased electricity	3,496	30%	2947	30%	-549	-16
	<b>Total Scope 2</b>	<b>3,496</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>2,947</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>-549</b>	<b>-16</b>
3	Contractor Emissions	2,575	22%	2397	25%	-178	-7
	Leisure Centres	1,229	11%	691	7%	-538	-44
	Business Travel	8	0%	0	0%	-8	100
	<b>Total Scope 3</b>	<b>3,811</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>3,089</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>-722</b>	<b>-19</b>
<b>All Scopes</b>		<b>11,620</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,729</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,891</b>	<b>16</b>

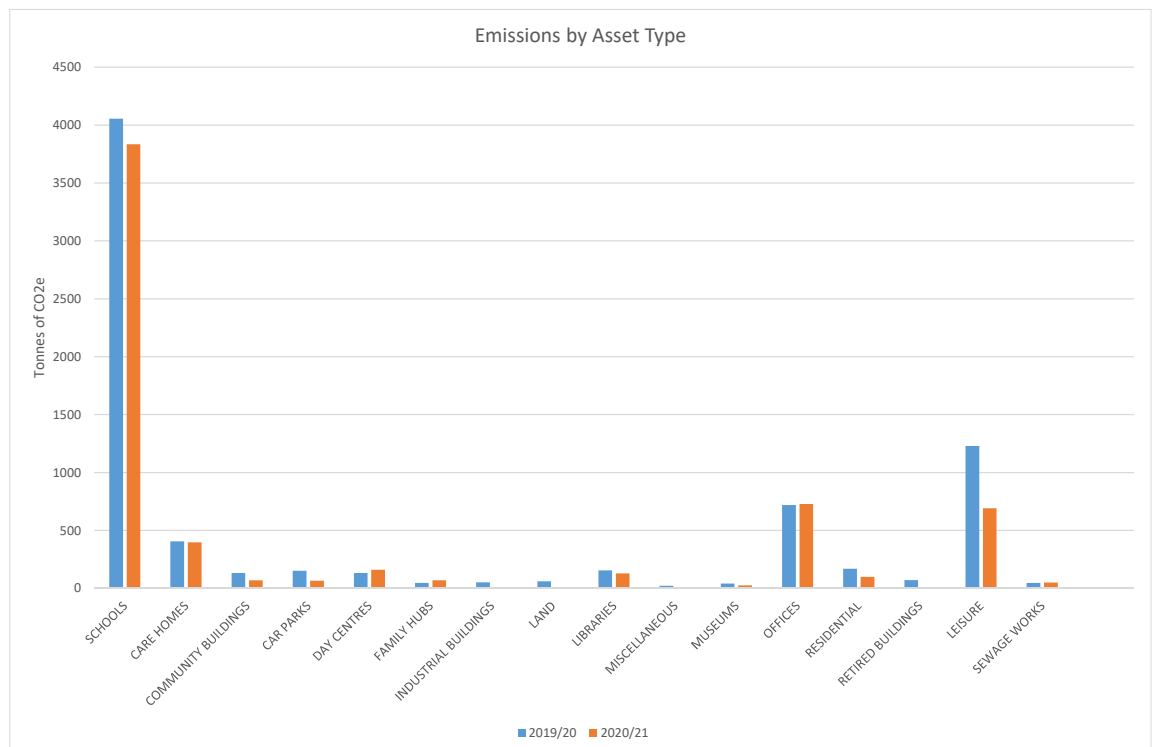
5.7 Table 1 shows the data for the 2019/20 baseline and data for 2020/21 with the percentage differences calculated for each scope.

5.8 As can be seen from the table above, the overall reduction in the Council's carbon footprint from 2019/20 to 2020/21 is 16%. Figure 3 below shows

the changes in emissions in relation to the Council's assets reported by asset type.

5.9 Most of the changes shown in figure 3 have been reductions in CO<sub>2</sub>e between 2019/20 and 2020/21. Given the time of disruption due to COVID-19 that this covers, it is not a surprise that there has

**Figure 3: Change in carbon emissions by asset type 2019/20 – 2020/21**



been a reduction in carbon emissions. Some examples are described below:

- Emissions from schools has decreased by 222 tonnes, most likely due to the periods of lockdown when schools were either closed or operating in a minimal way compared to normal with just children of key workers in attendance.
- Community buildings have also seen a reduction (63 tonnes) which is likely to have been impacted in a similar way with activities and clubs not operating during the lockdown periods.
- Leisure Centres were also impacted severely and the reduction in emissions for these was 538 tonnes.
- Care homes are an asset that had to continue to function throughout the lockdowns – there was still a reduction of 9 tonnes for this asset type.

5.10 Currently, we don't have all the necessary evidence to effectively differentiate between reductions that resulted from our carbon reduction activities and those that happened from other changes due to COVID-19.

5.11 An asset type which saw an increase in CO<sub>2</sub>e was 'offices'. Whilst the Council offices remained functioning for a skeleton of staff from when the first lockdown was announced, most staff were not using the offices so this result is surprising and required some further investigation. The additional ventilation of the buildings needed to help protect those staff in the office would have made the buildings less efficient. Also, the largest of the Council's office buildings at Market Street had a problem with the water heating which took a while to fix. During this time an immersion heater was used which is not

an efficient way to heat water and would have had a negative impact on carbon.

5.12 There are areas of the Delivery Plan for the Environment Strategy that focus on the Council's assets and improving energy efficiency, updating heating systems and generating renewable energy. This needs to be a priority for the Council to reduce its carbon impact. Projects can be complex and take time but with each one comes additional learning which will enable the speed of delivery of future projects to be accelerated.

## 6. Update on the District's emissions

- 6.1 The carbon emissions for the District as a geographical area are reported using data published by the Government. Each year the Government provides data at local authority level which is 'per capita carbon dioxide emissions in tonnes'. They produce two sets of this data – a 'full set' and a 'sub set'. Both sets of data report on the overall emissions from the following activities: transport, industry & commercial, domestic and agriculture. The 'sub-set', however, removes data over which the local authority has no control. For example, in relation to transport this would remove the travel associated with the strategic road network (M4 and A34) as these roads are managed by National Highways (formerly Highways England) and not the Local Highway Authority.
- 6.2 At the time that the Environment Strategy was written the latest figures from government were for 2017 and therefore formed our baseline figure for the District. Table 2 shows this baseline for the full set and sub set data along with figures for 2018 and 2019 which are now available.
- 6.3 The reduction in emissions for the full set is nearly 8% from 2017 through to 2019 with a corresponding 5% reduction for the sub set of data. This data will not reflect any impact of COVID-19 due to it being for a period not affected by the pandemic.
- 6.4 Greater action is needed across the District to reduce emissions and the Council recognises its role in encouraging action and influencing communities, businesses and residents as well as ensuring the policies and plans it sets align carbon reduction aims. Actions within the Delivery Plan highlight the need to work with businesses, local communities and landowners and farmers to help all those who live and work in West Berkshire to have a positive impact and help to address the climate crisis. Further work in these areas will be progressed as we continue on this journey towards net zero.

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

	Full Set	Sub Set
2017	7.9	5.7
2018	7.7	5.6
2019	7.3	5.4



# 7. Conclusion

7.1 The first year of delivery for the Environment Strategy has seen teams established and expanded, processes put in place for governance and monitoring and the development of the Delivery Plan. The good work that was already in full flow has continued and new actions and projects have been added with some already complete. All of this has happened against a backdrop of national lockdowns and local action to help deal with the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. It has not been a 'usual' year!

7.2 This next period of recovery and renewal presents opportunities for the Council to help communities and businesses to focus on a green recovery which will be more sustainable for all. It also presents an opportunity for reflection and change within the Council as an organisation to build on the learning from COVID-19 and the way in which staff and practices have had to adapt. This should help to further reduce the Council's carbon footprint and enable the organisation to support others and draw on its own experiences and learning.

# Glossary

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

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

	<b>Economic Development Board</b>	Newly formed Economic Board which will oversee the Economic Development Strategy, implementing an action plan to fulfil its objectives.
<b>EU ETS</b>	<b>European Union Emissions Trading System</b>	The first and largest greenhouse gas emissions trading system in the world. It works on a 'cap and trade' principle where allowances are set. Allowances are auctioned off or allocated for free. Emitters must ensure they have enough allowances to meet their emissions or purchase more. Those who reduce their emissions and have spare allowances can sell off their credits.
<b>GWP</b>	<b>Global Warming Potential</b>	The potential of a Greenhouse Gas to trap additional heat in the atmosphere relative to Carbon dioxide. Specifically, it is a measure of how much energy the emissions of 1 tonne of a gas will absorb over a given period of time, relative to the emissions of 1 tonne of carbon dioxide. The larger the GWP, the more that gas warms the Earth compared to CO <sub>2</sub> over that time period.
	<b>Green energy</b>	Definitions would usually mean the gas or electricity were from 100% renewable sources.
<b>GHG</b>	<b>Greenhouse gases</b>	Gases in the atmosphere that absorb and re-emit heat. They occur naturally in the Earth's atmosphere but human activity increases these, leading to increased warming and climate change.
<b>GDP</b>	<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>	The total monetary/market value of the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period.
	<b>Health and Wellbeing Board</b>	A partnership that brings together West Berkshire's leaders of the health and social care system.
<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	A measurable value/outcome to gauge how well an organisation is meeting its key objectives.
<b>LULUCF</b>	<b>Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry</b>	A greenhouse gas sector defined by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
<b>LCWIP</b>	<b>Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Programme</b>	Sets out the Council's long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks
	<b>Local Plan</b>	The plan is part of the overall Development Plan for West Berkshire, setting out our local planning policies.
<b>LTP</b>	<b>Local Transport Plan</b>	Aims to deliver effective transport solutions for all by increasing choice and minimising congestion.
<b>NAEI</b>	<b>National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory</b>	The Inventory is compiled by Ricardo. It is the standard reference inventory for the UK and includes emission estimates for a wide range of important pollutants.
	<b>Nature Recovery Plan</b>	The plan defines the objectives and key actions required to improve biodiversity and wildlife in the district
	<b>Net zero</b>	There is no commonly agreed definition. However it is the intention that the activities of the Council should result in no net impact on the climate from greenhouse gas emissions.
	<b>Per capita</b>	The district's emissions divided by the number of people to give a value per person. This can be useful in comparing other areas of differing population size.

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



