



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 July 2022

Subject	Review of the Council's Progress Following the Declaration of a Climate Emergency
Report by	Councillor James Mallinder Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
Supporting Officers	Andrew Jarvis Strategic Director Andrew.Jarvis@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Nick Khan Strategic Director Nick.Khan@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Paul Mackie Lead Officer, Environment & Climate Change Paul.Mackie@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Daniel Wareing Environmental Sustainability Officer Daniel.Wareing@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to:

- Examine the Council's progress following the declaration of a Climate Emergency.
- Provide the Scrutiny Committee with information to illustrate the achievements and challenges to date.
- Satisfy the Committee that all necessary action is being taken to meet our target.
- Illustrate to the Committee that all necessary action has at this point in time been taken to meet our target.

Options:

- Continue to focus on this key area of the Strategic Plan.
- Change the current Environment Programme Delivery Plan.

Recommendation:

That the Scrutiny Committee, having considered the information in this report, provides feedback on the Council's progress to date on addressing the climate emergency.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

This report has been prepared for the Scrutiny Committee. The Council is required by Law to discharge certain overview and scrutiny functions. These functions are an essential component of local democracy. Scrutiny Committees can contribute to the development of Council policies and also hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

East Suffolk Council Business Plan

Environmental:

The work covered in this report covers broad environmental issues of importance to East Suffolk Council.

1. Our commitment to become a carbon neutral authority by 2030 and responsibility for the carbon emissions produced by the Council in the course of its operations and services.
2. Our commitment to work with the other councils and other partners in the region towards the aspiration of making Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.
3. Waste reduction and management.
5. Environmental protection.
6. Enhance and protect biodiversity
7. Sustainable development.

Equalities and Diversity:

None

Financial:

The issues covered in this report have the potential to have a significant impact on the council's finances, depending on whether or not actions that address these issues to are addressed by existing budgets, with the potential for additional need for external funding to be sourced to address these issues.

Human Resources:

None

ICT:

None

Legal:

None

Risk:

The Council's Corporate Risk Register already identifies the issues addressed in this report as areas of corporate risk. These main areas of risk are:

1. Reputational; an inability to effectively meet our own carbon neutrality commitments could impact on the council's ability to engage effectively with those it needs to influence through leadership; in turn risking the wider prize of Suffolk-wide carbon neutrality.
2. Financial; an inability to tackle the council's consumption of energy in the course of its pursuit of carbon neutrality could mean that future financial benefits of reduced Grid dependency are not realised.

External Consultees:	None
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Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

How does this proposal support the priorities selected?

In the ESC Strategic Plan, the Council sets out its commitment to put the environment at the heart of everything we do. The environmental work delivered by Council and the resultant spending is has a direct impact on the local economy and the Council is increasingly engaging with businesses engaged in renewable and low carbon energy, sustainable development and wider environmental protection work. A number of our initiatives have supported or involved community groups, for example environmental promotion, biodiversity projects, tree planting, action on plastic. As further projects are delivered it is confidently predicted that there will be an increasing feeling of community pride in what has been delivered. Financial Sustainability is a key consideration in our work - some carbon saving changes requires investment but many also result in coincidental cost savings, for example, energy cost savings/income from solar power generation on council buildings and savings on chemical and grass cutting costs. The Council has also been supportive of the role digital technology can play in reducing carbon emission savings, for example, through the wider enablement of home working and video conferencing and the consequent reduction in travel. Our work on this strategic them is good example of collaborative working and that in the comparatively short time it has been working it has helped the delivery of the Council environment priorities significantly. This is expected to continue as further significant challenges arise, for example in helping to formulate the Council's response to the nation Resources and Waste Strategy.

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1	Background facts
1.1	<p data-bbox="300 315 1385 398">1. What were the Council's ambitions/target when declaring the Climate Emergency? (Net zero carbon emissions by 2030)</p> <p data-bbox="300 427 539 461">1.1a. Overview</p> <p data-bbox="300 490 1362 562">On 24 July 2019 (Full Council agenda item 9(a), the Council resolved unanimously to:</p> <ul data-bbox="300 607 1374 1189" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="300 607 730 640">▪ Declare a climate emergency.<li data-bbox="300 685 1362 835">▪ Set up a Cross Party Task Group, commencing by October 2019, to investigate ways to cut East Suffolk Council's carbon and harmful emissions on a spend to save basis, with ambition to make East Suffolk Council (including all buildings and services) carbon neutral by 2030.<li data-bbox="300 880 1369 992">▪ To work with Suffolk County Council and other partners across the county and region, including the LEP and the Public Sector Leaders, towards the aspiration of making the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.<li data-bbox="300 1037 1374 1189">▪ To work with the government to:<ul data-bbox="347 1077 1374 1189" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="347 1077 959 1111">▪ deliver its 25-year Environmental Plan, and<li data-bbox="347 1111 1374 1189">▪ increase the powers and resources available to local authorities in order to make the 2030 target easier to achieve. <p data-bbox="300 1234 1385 1305">The Environment Task Group was formed as a cross-party Task Group to deliver on this vision.</p> <p data-bbox="300 1350 1326 1500">It should be noted that ESC declared emergency to re-confirm our existing commitment to the environment and responding to climate change. This was further confirmed in the ESC strategic plan 2020-24 (adopted by Full Council in February 2020), which outlines our response to this challenge.</p> <p data-bbox="300 1545 1315 1657">The Council's strategic plan set out our vision to deliver the highest possible quality of life for everyone who lives, works in or visits the district. Within the theme of Caring for our Environment, the Council committed to:</p> <ul data-bbox="347 1680 1385 2022" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="347 1680 1326 1751">▪ Lead by example, seeking environmental benefit in everything we do, working with communities for biodiversity.<li data-bbox="347 1796 1326 1830">▪ Optimising the use digital solutions to reduce environmental impacts.<li data-bbox="347 1874 1150 1908">▪ Minimise waste, promote reuse and maximise recycling.<li data-bbox="347 1953 1385 2022">▪ Explore opportunities to invest in renewable energy solutions as a council and encourage others to do the same.

- **Use our influence and regulatory functions to protect our natural environment.**

The strategic plan recognised the interconnectivity between the five themes of the plan, with actions arising under each theme having the potential to contribute towards any or all of the other themes.

[ESC's climate action pages of our website](#) and [Environmental Guidance Note](#) provide a detailed overview of our response to the climate emergency and provides a range of useful and interactive guidance. The Environmental Guidance Note is included in appendix B.

Whilst the Environmental Guidance note is not a statutory document, it supports the vision of the Council and the existing measures already put in place by the Council and on a national scale, including commitment by the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Guidance Note provides simple, concise information on best practices for developers seeking to mitigate the impact of the building industry on climate change. The Guidance Note includes information on the measures implemented by East Suffolk Council.

1.1b. Our ambitions and targets

1.1b.i Overview

A common challenge for local authorities agreeing environment and climate strategies has been around establishing a baseline and realistic targets, given the broad scope of these themes and evolving data. It was therefore important that we:

- Established as good an understanding as possible of where we were starting from.
- Found out what we knew about our footprint and the gaps in our knowledge.
- Agreed a programme to reduce our carbon footprint and improve our environmental impact **in parallel** with ongoing research to better understand how to better measure and monitor these impacts.

This means that our delivery programme and measurement of our KPIs has continued to evolve as new information and approaches emerge.

The following background section summaries the Council's ambitions/targets actions when declaring the Climate Emergency:

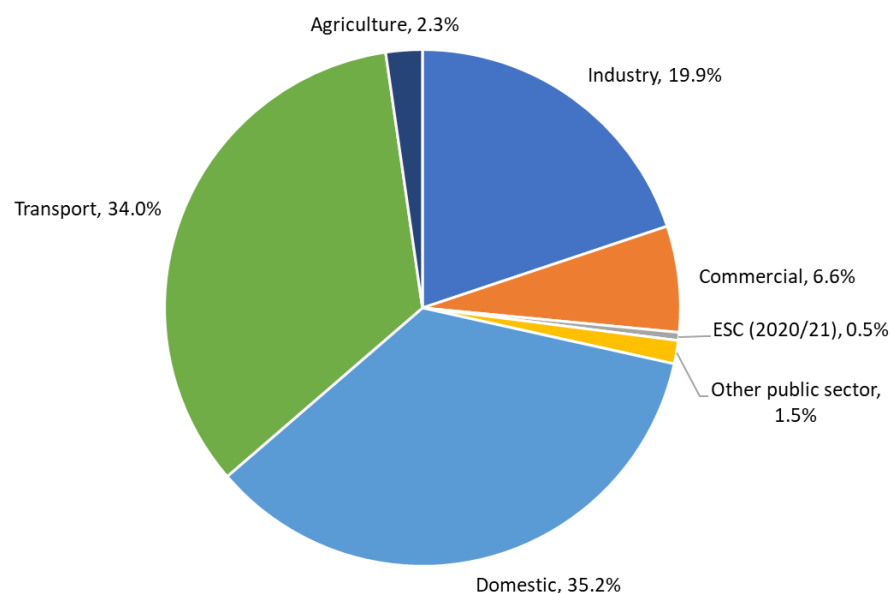
1.1b.ii Our net zero ambition:

- As we have pledged to become a carbon neutral council by 2030, which means we will look for environmental benefit in everything we do – this includes radical changes to our vehicle fleets and mileage usage, council buildings and new build housing stock to ensure they contribute to our carbon neutral aims. We will work with communities to establish opportunities for biodiversity and will promote digital solutions to minimise our carbon footprint.

- As ESC produces less than 1% of Suffolk's carbon emissions, our focus has been two-fold – working inward to reduce our emissions and the wider environmental impact of our activity and outward – engaging with etc engaging with the public and using our powers, duties and networks to encourage climate positive behaviours.
- ESC declared a climate emergency to reinforce our commitment to the environment. This commitment is reinforced by the environment being a key principle of the strategic plan, underpinning our work as an authority.
- Our focus on restoring nature and increasing biodiversity has also been a key area of work, as this plays a fundamental role in the response to climate change, so is closely interlinked.

As an illustration of why this wider focus is so important, the chart below illustrates the share of emissions between ESC and the other sectors (based on the HM Government CO₂ data for the calendar year 2020 [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020), with data for ESC's CO₂e corporate emissions for the financial year 2020/21). Based on this comparison the quantified emissions of the Council itself were less than 1% of the relevant territorial emissions of the district as a whole.

Figure 1: Percentage share of territorial emissions of those sectors within area of East Suffolk within sphere of influence of local authorities (total for calendar year of 2020 of 1012.8 kilotonnes CO₂)



1.1b.iii Renewable Energy within our own buildings:

- On-going planned maintenance programme to upgrade the energy efficiency of our HRA Housing stock
- Upgrades include installation of solar panels, external wall insulation and improvements to the thermal efficiency of properties

- A review of the planned maintenance programme.
- A Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for both new build and existing housing stock to be developed.
- All council led developments will consider the use of low carbon and sustainable materials when carrying out feasibility studies
- We will explore opportunities to install solar panels and electric charging points on our car park assets
- We will seek to improve the energy performance of our commercial estate

1.1b.iv Waste Collection:

- See section 2.1g for annual targets and progress on number of households in the district subscribing to the garden waste scheme; volume of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting; and volume of waste for energy production.

1.1b.v Low carbon energy:

- We will work with energy companies and communities to develop approaches to enhancing the environmental benefits of renewable energy
- We will guide and signpost related community schemes as local exemplars of good practice
- We will ensure mitigation and enhancement is properly coordinated for the benefit of the local environment

1.1b.vi Environmental Protection:

Our work in this service area is based on primary statutory duties, with the ambition to go above the minimum where appropriate, with externally imposed requirements, expressed in detail by government departments in the form of Statutory Guidance.

Areas which fall within the Environment theme:

- **Air Quality**
- **Contaminated Land**
- **Development Control Consultee**
- **Noise Control**
- **Pollution Prevention & Control**

Other areas of responsibility with Environmental Protection fall within the Communities theme.

1.1b.vii Community resilience:

- **Preparing our communities and businesses for climate resilience** - Engaging with communities and businesses about climate change and what it means for them based on best available evidence and monitoring.
- **A climate ready coast** - Developing planning and adaptation tools to support communities and businesses to adapt and become resilient- influence policy and ensure we allow for natural change including innovative technical solutions alongside traditional coastal management.
- **Building for a changing climate** - ensuring our procurement and construction approaches for our flood and coastal management activities meet high industry standards for the environment- reduce waste and

	<p>carbon, re-use and recycle materials, rely on local supply chains and support existing ESC policy on environmental and social values as a legacy of our work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investing in our people - Creating climate champions at Coastal Partnership East and develop our team to support environmental change and the ambitions of ESC and CPE Business Plans. <p>1.1b.viii Environmental Protection within Planning: Develop planning policies to ensure all new development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ respects its location ▪ advocates environmental net gain ▪ maximises its potential to make a positive impact to the area <p>Support communities in producing Neighbourhood Plans that will lead to an enhancement of the local environment.</p>
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2 Current position	
2.1	<p>2. Does the Council have an action plan? (What action has been done, is being done and will be done - including timescales)</p> <p>a. Overview</p> <p>In February 2020, the environment was established as a key pillar of the ESC strategic plan. The Environment Programme Delivery Plan was then developed to meet the priorities of the Strategic Plan, continually moving us forward in our aims and ambitions as an authority, covering all areas of our work.</p> <p>ESC has a programme of actions which outline our response to the climate and environment ambitions set out in the strategic plan's priority areas. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ P20: Lead by example We have pledged to become a carbon neutral council by 2030, which means we will look for environmental benefit in everything we do – this includes radical changes to our vehicle fleets and mileage usage, council buildings and new build housing stock to ensure they contribute to our carbon neutral aims. We will work with communities to establish opportunities for biodiversity and will promote digital solutions to minimise our carbon footprint. ▪ P21: Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling We will minimise waste generated throughout the district, encourage the reuse of materials and increase our recycling rates. ▪ P22: Renewable energy We will explore new ways of encouraging and investing in the use of renewable energy, both in terms of our own consumption as a council and the ways we can offer support to our residents and businesses as part of addressing climate change.

- **P23: Protection, education and influence**

We will use our influence at all levels, our regulatory functions and appropriate enforcement to protect our natural environment including our outstanding coastline. This includes working through our community and business partnerships to achieve environmental gain and establishing a network of environmental champions throughout the district.

As mentioned in section 1, ESC declared a climate emergency to reinforce our commitment to the environment and addressing climate change.

An independent review of our progress was conducted by the organisation Groundwork shortly after the declaration of a climate emergency. ESC set up the cross-party member Environment Task Group to consider the results of that independent review and to recommend future priorities for action on climate change, building on the progress that has already been achieved.

b. Progress to date and the ongoing programme

The Environment Programme Delivery Plan was developed and is driven by the Environment Theme delivery team, reporting to the Portfolio Holder sponsors on a regular basis and monitored by the ETG and Strategic Plan Delivery Board. The ETG also reports to quarterly to Cabinet on progress. It contains clear actions with timescales and details the service areas and officers responsible for driving these actions forward.

This paper summarises the main areas of progress against the Plan to date and sets out our current priorities. The full Delivery Plan, which is regularly updated and reviewed monthly, is also available to view.

A summary of the Environment Programme Delivery Plan is shown in Appendix A.

It should be noted that, due to the urgency of responding to the climate emergency, to date our work has been focussed on action and delivering the programme, as opposed to investing our resources in developing further reports and documents.

The impacts of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we have needed to allocate and prioritise our resources accordingly, adding challenge to certain areas on the delivery programme. This also means that the data showing progress over the last two years represent an exceptional period.

This context is key when reviewing progress, as they have been some rapid progress against our net zero target which is expected to stabilise, plus also limitations to what we have been able to do in some other areas.

However, as we have a clear programme of actions underpinning our work as an authority plus have now appointed Paul Mackie as Lead Officer for Environment & Climate Change, we now have the resource to build on this work further.

Two key areas that Paul will lead is the development of a climate action plan that consolidates our work in this area, which will be supported by a mechanism to better track and manage our carbon footprint. Both of these tools will be developed in close collaboration with Members of the ETG and senior officers and put forward for consideration. However, it is intended that these will complement the existing delivery programme, which is already embedded across the Council's service areas.

c. Partnership working

As part of the climate emergency declaration, the council agreed to 'work with Suffolk County Council and other local authorities and partners across the county and region, including the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the public sector leaders, towards the aspiration of making the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030'.

As a result, ESC has been an active participant in a number of cross-authority working groups, which have led to a number of projects being delivered in our district. These groups include the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, Suffolk Climate, Energy & Environment Board and the Carbon Charter.

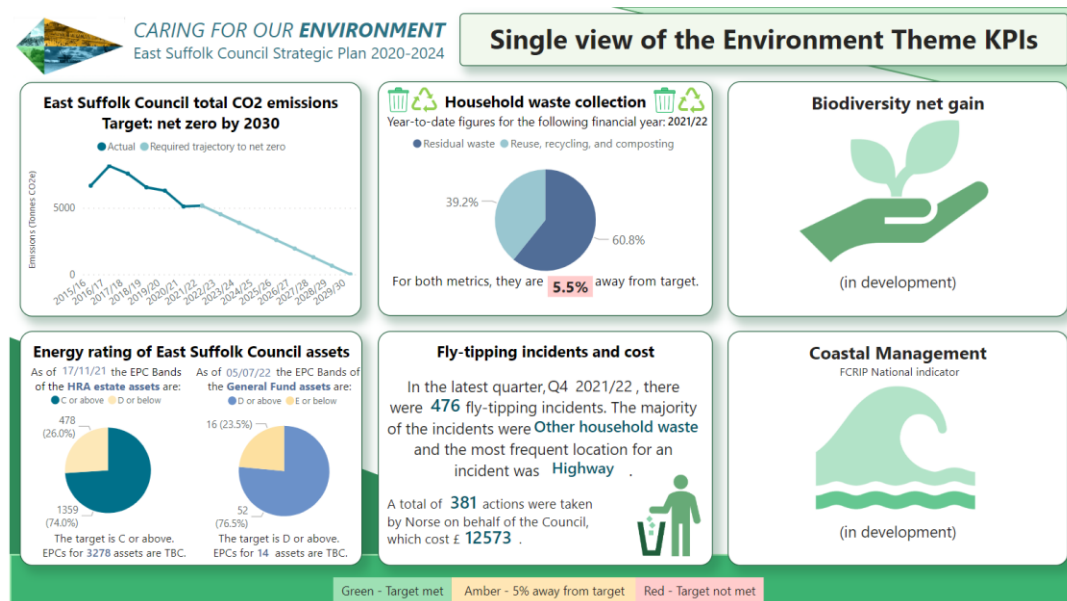
ESC continues to push other authorities to follow our lead and make meaningful change in the delivery of key services.

d. Strategic Plan Environment theme key performance indicators (KPIs)

The Environment Theme Delivery Team manages a dynamic dashboard that monitors progress against our environment KPIs. This is actively monitored and updated regularly. It also informs the regular updates to Members and senior officers.

A summary of the main sections of the KPIs dashboard is below, with progress outlined in each related area:

Environment theme KPI dashboard:



e. CO₂ emissions reduction progress

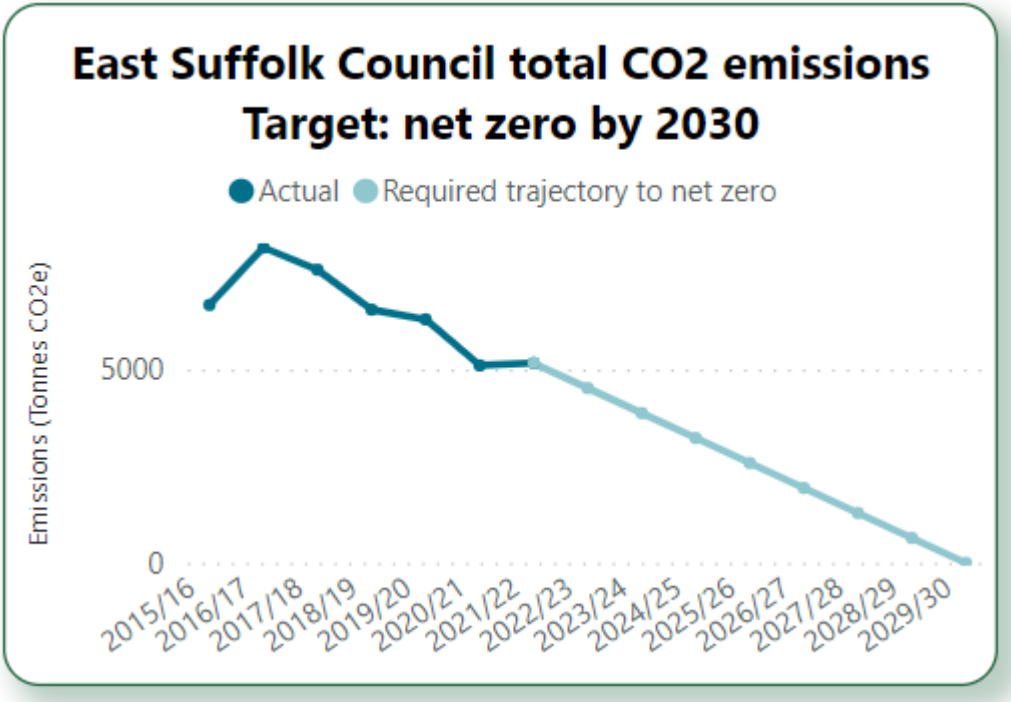
This section summarises our progress to date. See section 2.2 for a detailed summary of progress.

It should be noted that currently we track our 'known' emissions. Our understanding is continuing to evolve rapidly, as is the case for most local authorities tracking their emissions. Emissions are categorised as 'scope 1' (**Energy direct emissions**); 'scope 2' (**Energy indirect emissions**) and 'scope 3' emissions (**Other indirect emissions**) - see description in section 2.3. Scope 3 is typically challenging for all local authorities to understand and monitor, which means there are potential gaps in our data. This is an active and ongoing area of development.

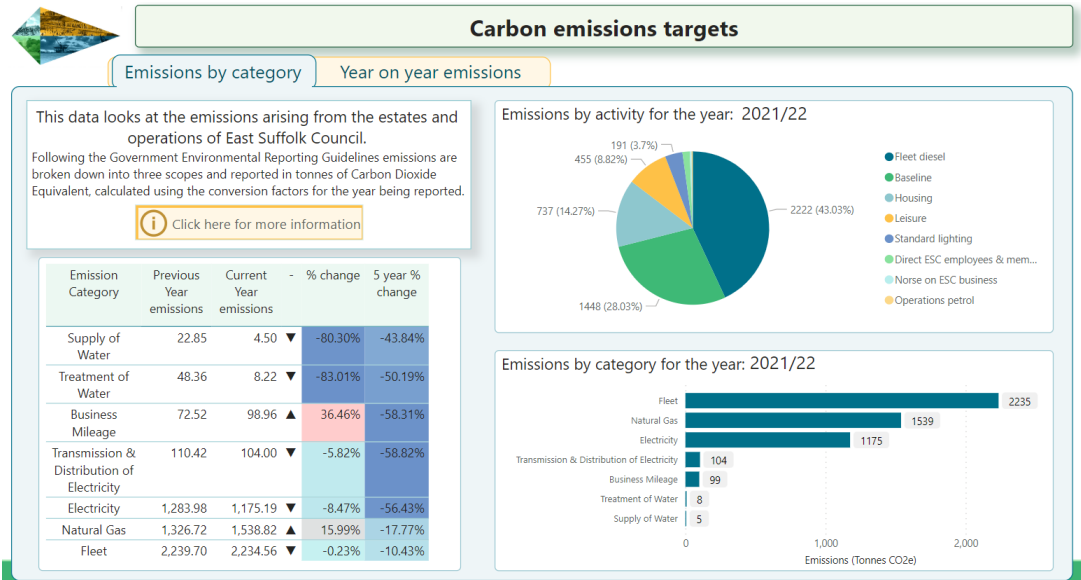
As indicated, our trajectory remains broadly on track, but as outlined in section 2.2 the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in large reductions on some areas. This means that we expect to see some stabilisation of this trajectory.

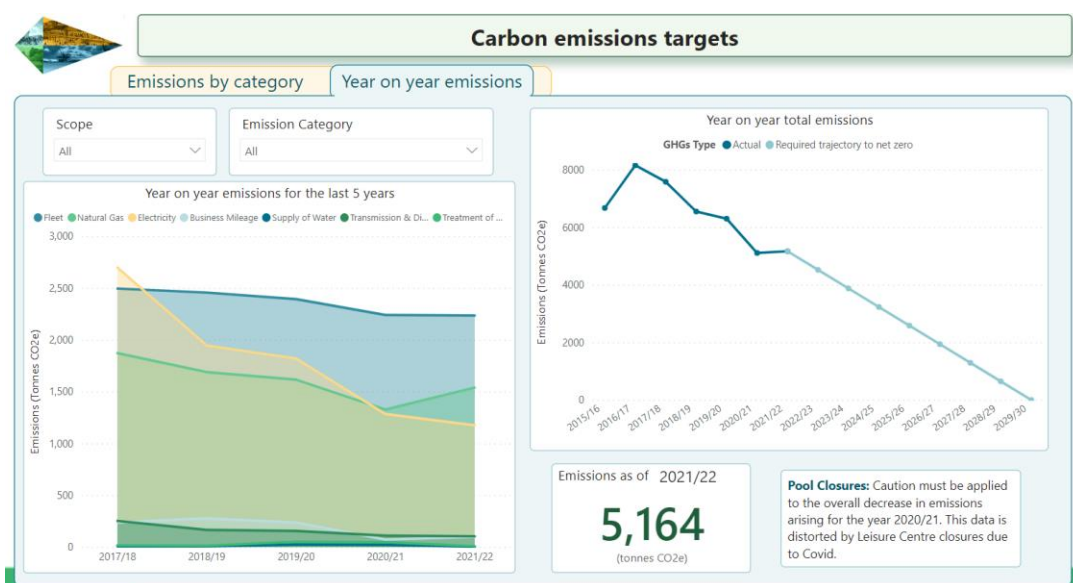
As our understanding of our footprint continues to develop and new approaches emerge around what we include in our emissions reporting, there may be future impacts on our trajectory – we will continue to report on this progress on a very regular basis and our dynamic dashboard remains open to view on the ESC intranet.

This chart shows the equivalent of our target ‘carbon budget’ on an annual basis that will enable us to remain on a trajectory towards net zero emissions (see section 2.3 for commentary on this data):

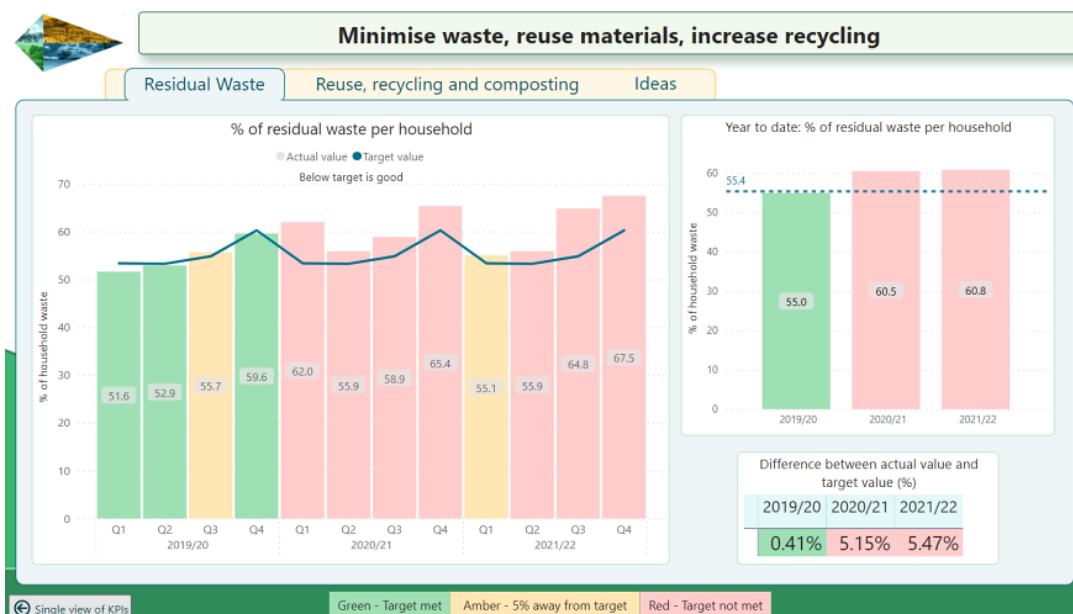


These dashboards show our known carbon emissions:





f. The RAW (Recycling & Waste) dashboards summarise our progress against these targets.



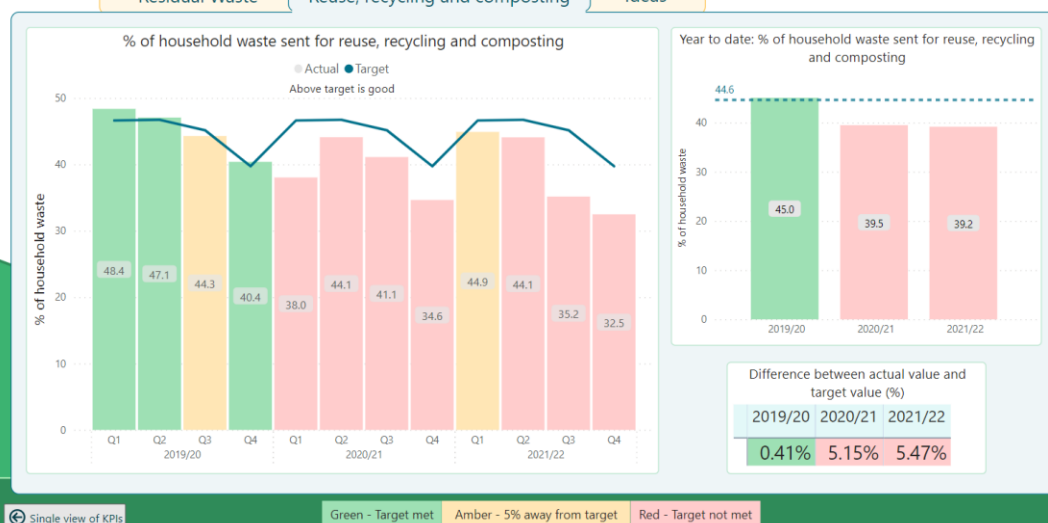


Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling

Residual Waste

Reuse, recycling and composting

Ideas



Our progress on waste can also be summarised as follows:

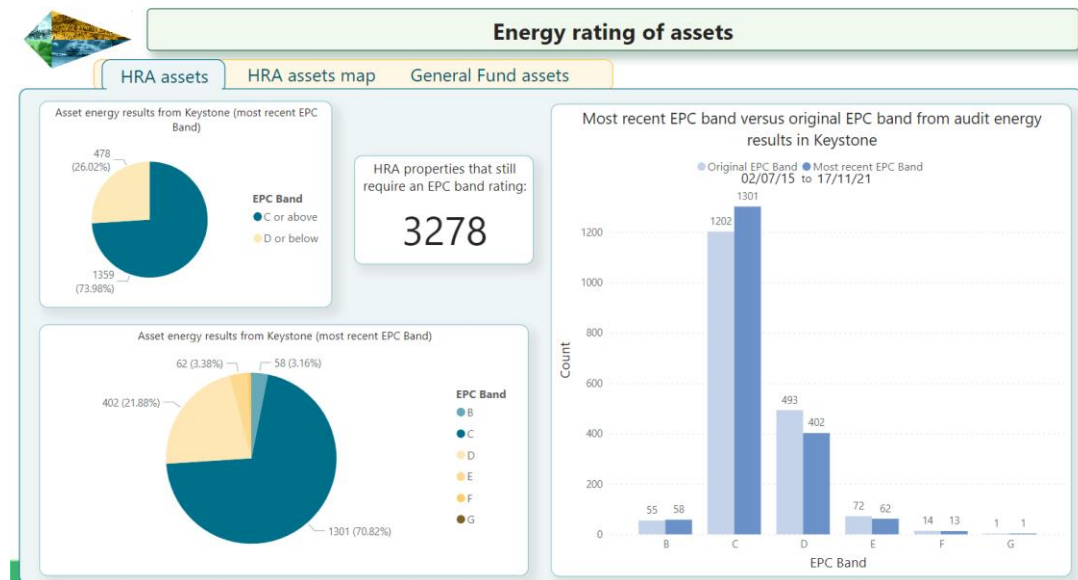
	2019/20 (kg)	2020/21 (kg)	2021/22 (kg)	
NI191 - kg residual waste/household.				
Target	460.29	460.29	460.29	As detailed on ESC Performance reports
Actual	459.33	510.96	510.40	
NI192 - %age household waste collected by ESC that is recycled (blue bin) or composted (garden waste bin).				
Target	44.62%	44.62%	44.62%	As detailed on ESC Performance reports
Actual	44.86%	39.85%	40.50%	

Garden waste subscriptions are as follows:

Date	No. of bins	No. of households	
Mar-19	60,750	58,750	Estimated – this includes the first year for Coastal & the highest annual subscriptions
Mar-20	58,422	56,476	(From Service resumption notifications after Covid-19 suspension)
Mar-21	60,291	58,165	Actual subscribers as started to take full listings at month end for Dec 2020
Mar-22	59,647	57,188	

g. The HRA assets energy rating dashboard summarises progress in this area.

Active work is continuing to calculate the EPC bans for the remaining HRA properties (see section 2.3 for further information):



2.2

Managing the risks

There are a number of key risks related to our response to the environment and climate change themes. These are outlined in detail in the corporate risk register, which is actively managed and reviewed on a regular basis. These are summarised below:

CORPORATE RISK: Incident management-flood risk	Potential of flooding and tidal surges both in the short-term and the long-term, particularly as ESC has a large coastline. More frequent flooding and tidal surges due to climate change.	Red
CORPORATE RISK: High profile or major coastal erosion or coastal incident	Major erosion, slip or tidal surge event	Red
CORPORATE RISK: Failure to develop adaptation measures leading to unmanaged loss of properties from coastal erosion and wider blight of communities.	Potential loss of circa 3,000 properties due to erosion by 2105. There are a number of properties at immediate risk with further properties being lost in the short, medium and long term.	Red

	CORPORATE RISK: For Lowestoft ONLY Failure to protect people and properties against flooding / tidal surges	As CPE has large coastline flooding remains a constant and significant risk. Continues to be long term risk and remains a high concern for CPE and nationally.	Amber
	CORPORATE RISK: Failure to control escalating cost of waste collection/ services	Unable to effectively manage waste service due to costs of recycling significantly rising and / or value of recyclables falling, increase in staff costs, disposal of materials increasing resulting in £1/2 million increase which ESC have little/no control over.	Amber
	CORPORATE RISK: Failure to effectively manage and monitor Climate Change	Unable to effectively meet commitments identified within Climate Change Action Plan including not achieving key milestones resulting in Council not meeting its own carbon emissions target; not effectively contributing to objectives of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, and not effectively encouraging communities, businesses and individuals to mitigate their own contribution to, and adapt to climate change. Not able to meet aspiration to become carbon neutral by 2030. Unable to achieve environment priorities identified in East Suffolk Strategic Plan.	Amber
2.3	3. How are we measuring progress against the 2030 target date and the impact of actions within the plan? <p>The Council conducts its own internal account, or Annual Greenhouse Gas (AGHG) Report, of the emissions arising from its own operations and estates, in accordance with the Government's "Environmental Reporting Guidelines" (Environmental reporting guidelines: including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting requirements - GOV.UK www.gov.uk)</p> <p>In the course of collating our AGHG Report, the Council's emissions are recorded and categorised according to scope, which the Government defines as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scope 1 (Direct energy emissions): Emissions from activities owned or controlled by our organisation that release emissions into the atmosphere. They are direct emissions and in relation to ESC these include fuel (petrol and diesel) consumed by the Council's fleet, and natural gas consumed by the Council's built assets, where the Council is responsible for purchasing the fuel (this excludes the general HRA stock of council houses). ▪ Scope 2 (Energy indirect emissions): Emissions released into the atmosphere associated with your consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling. These are indirect emissions that are a 		

consequence of the organisation's activities but which occur at sources we do not own or control and in relation to ESC this covers electricity purchased from the Grid to power our built assets, where the Council is responsible for purchasing the electricity (this excludes the general HRA stock of council houses).

- **Scope 3 (Other indirect emissions):** Emissions that are a consequence of our actions, which occur at sources which we do not own or control and which are not classified as scope 2 emissions. In relation to ESC these include losses (through transmission and distribution) of electricity consumed by the Council's built assets; mileage incurred by staff and members using their own vehicles; and the supply and treatment of water consumed by the Council's built assets. (Scope 3 emissions associated with the general HR stock of council houses not included.)

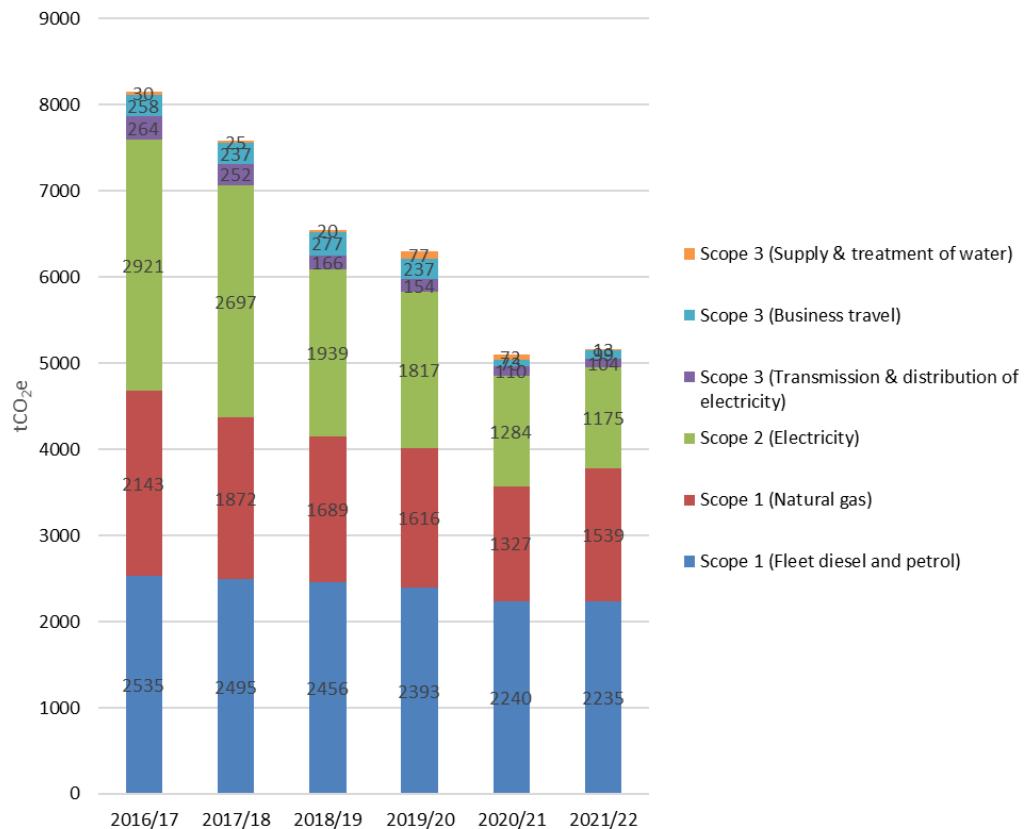
For all local authorities, 3 emissions in particular are challenging to measure, baseline and monitor. We have completed large pieces of work to better understand these streams and continue to improve our understanding as new data and measurement techniques emerge. This means that we do not yet have a good understanding of our impact in some areas, in particular the general HRA stock of council houses which the Council owns, but whose energy usage is controlled by our tenants, but we are continuing to actively work on this. It should be noted that as our understanding of the emissions of the Council improves and the scope of our data capture expands, our emissions baseline will be subject to increase accordingly. When this data is available, it will be recorded and be able to be viewed in the appropriate location.

This report accounts for emissions in terms of tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e), calculated using the conversion factors ([Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2020](#) - GOV.UK www.gov.uk) supplied by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which are updated by BEIS on an annual basis. The appropriate conversion factors are applied to the relevant unit of activity (for example each litre of diesel consumed by the fleet or each kWh of electricity consumed by built assets). CO₂e is a universal unit of measurement to indicate the combined global warming potential (GWP) of all relevant Greenhouse Gases actually emitted, expressed in terms of the GWP of one unit of CO₂.

The Council's AGHG Report enables the Council to understand and monitor the emissions arising through its own assets and operations over time, and has the potential to be used to continually target actions to further reduce its emissions in accordance with its ambition stated under its Declaration of the Climate Emergency made on 24 July 2019 to make East Suffolk Council carbon neutral by 2030 ([Our climate commitment » East Suffolk Council](#)). Following that Declaration, an independent audit of ESC's internal AGHG Reports for each of the three previous financial years was conducted by Groundwork East who validated our data recording and methodology.

The chart below illustrates the trajectory of the Council's corporate emissions over the past 6 financial years to 2021/22.

Figure 2. Annual total emissions in current scope of Annual Greenhouse Gas Report arising from activities of the Council 2016/17 to 2021/22 (Tonnes of CO₂e)

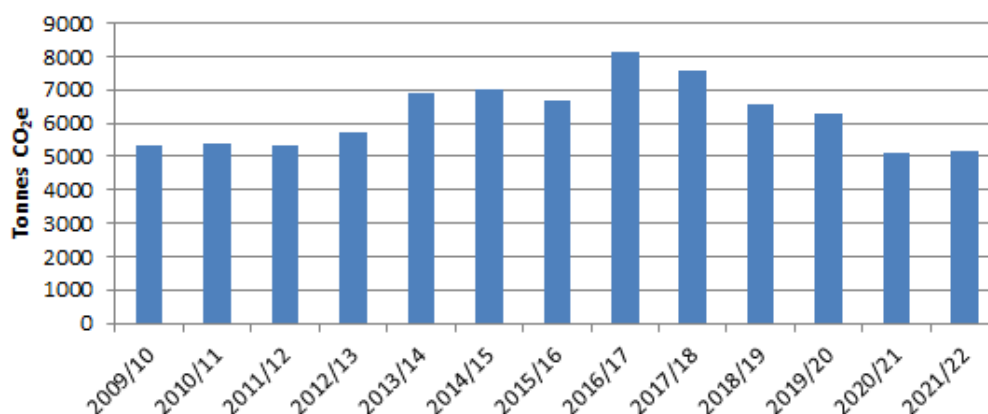


The reduction in emissions can be attributed to the following major factors:

- The continued decarbonisation of electricity through the UK National Grid which has been progressively producing more electricity from renewables, and also from gas-fired power stations, which have lower emissions than the coal fired power stations they have been replacing.
- An ongoing programme of refurbishment of the Council's leisure centres to reduce their reliance on energy from the grid. This has included the retrofit of energy efficiency and improvement measures such as LED lighting, new heating and ventilation, new air conditioning, and (at Leiston) a new heat exchanger in the swimming pool; and the installation of energy generating systems on site including a new Combined Heat and Power Unit at Waveney Valley, a new 24.75kWp solar PV array at Deben Pool, and a new 8.32kWp solar PV array at Leiston.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As well as improving the energy performance of facilities following completions of works, the refurbishments of the sites required their full or partial closure. The five main leisure centres are major consumers of energy, so any closure will lead to a significant decrease in the Council's emissions. ▪ It should be anticipated that as 58.2% of the reduction in the Council's emissions in 2020/21 from the previous year was due to the closure for 9 months of all 6 leisure centres (in compliance with Government instructions to control the spread of Covid-19), energy consumption and therefore emissions will return to around pre-pandemic levels following the resumption of normal operations as social distancing restrictions ease. ▪ In 2020/21, a steep reduction in emissions resulting from business mileage was observed, falling 69.4% from the previous year. Social distancing requirements due to the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the widespread adoption of remote meeting technologies to replace business meetings that would typically have taken place in person pre-Covid. Whilst it can be expected that business mileage will increase in 2021/22 in part as social distancing restrictions ease it is anticipated that the use of remote meeting technology will be embedded to reduce significantly those business meetings that can be conducted in this way. <p>The AGHG report, and the historical data contained within these reports, has the potential to allow us to monitor the impact of actions intended to reduce the Council's emissions. Some caution must be applied however when interpreting the Reports, as the overall picture is a complex one. It should be noted that efforts to improve data capture and reporting are ongoing, and as additional sources of emissions are identified over the time the overall scope of the report has expanded and may expand further over time. As a consequence of any expansion in scope, baseline emissions are therefore subject to increase accordingly.</p> <p>Furthermore, factors such as the acquisition and disposal of assets, temporary closures of assets, improvements of assets, and changes to the usage of assets, add to the complexity of the overall picture. Externalities beyond the control of the Council, for example Covid and associated restrictions on activities, and variations from year to year in weather conditions which influence rates of energy consumption in our buildings, further add to the complexity.</p>
2.4	<p>4. Have we made sufficient progress to date?</p> <p>As outlined above, ESC is making good progress across all environment and climate change KPIs, particularly on our fleet, leisure assets and staff mileage. We are making good progress on our journey to net zero and working collaboratively across the county (and beyond) to enable communities and other organisations to do the same. This is despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing local authority funding issues and delays with a number of key national policies that will support the delivery of our programme.</p>

Annual emissions arising from activities of the council 2009/10 to 2021/22 (Tonnes of CO₂e)



Emissions in 2019/20 were 6295 tCO₂e. Our latest emissions figure of 5164 tCO₂e for 21/22 is 18% lower than it was in 19/20.

There is still much to do, but ESC's ambitious programme that is embedded across the authority's service areas, supported by new inbound national policies (such as biodiversity net gain via the Planning system) will enable this work to continue at pace.

Our approach is proactive, not reactive - we are doing everything we can with our resources available. We continue to strive to do more, particularly around how we can use our position to work with others in our District and beyond to deliver positive change. NetZero Leiston is an excellent example of how ESC can support community programmes to help enable wider, tangible change.

We have and are investing more effort into addressing our carbon emissions. As a result of this progress, we are also finding out more about what we are emitting and we are also working on the wider linked climate change issues - coastal management for example. We are doing so in an increasingly unstable time with rising costs and supply issues. A potential risk therefore is that the Council may going to need to focus more attention and resource on this issue to enable us to stay on track on our journey towards net zero emissions.

As an ambitious Council supporting our residents, we need to be careful to reflect on the services we provide against the resulting carbon emissions. It can be misleading to look only at the isolated carbon output of ESC, but this must be in the context of the essential services we provide to our community.

An update on progress will be presented at the August SPDB meeting. In the interim, some highlights of our progress are summarised below:

- **Our fleet:** ESC and East Suffolk Norse (ESN) is now operating around 50% of the vehicle fleet on HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel – reaching a key

milestone. The first delivery of HVO took place at Ufford and Waveney Depot in June. HVO offers up to 90% reduction to net CO₂ emissions.

This is an important step on our journey to use a more sustainable and renewable diesel alternative for our fleet, in addition to our fleet of electric vehicles. A procurement of 14 refuse collection vehicles (RCV's) was carried out to replace older vehicles that cannot take HVO fuel. These are now in service and the RCV fleet has been using HVO fuel since 6 June 2022.

- **Waste:** Waste and recycling services continues to put the environment first with 99% going to energy reproduction and recycling - not landfill. There is also a continuous program of education of what can be recycled, reduction in food waste and how to buy local.
- **Energy efficiency of our HRA stock:** In line with ESC's ambition to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, the wider housing team are assessing the councils existing housing assets. Data driven decision making is assisting in preparing detailed programmes of work to ensure Council homes positively contribute towards this ambition whilst also provide truly sustainable and affordable homes for our tenants.

A programme of work is in place for existing HRA stock in the form of an overarching workstream to 'Deliver a more sustainable HRA portfolio', as listed in the Strategic Plan. The purpose of this programme is to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock, alongside reducing the carbon impact of new and existing homes to collectively provide a more sustainable housing portfolio. There will be several spin-off projects associated with tenant engagement, upskilling of the work force and stock management the umbrella of 'Developing and more sustainable HRA portfolio.

Although ESC was unsuccessful in securing funding for a 'Green Building Specification / Design guide' project (that would be used across all council led housing developments with specific minimum energy Efficiency standards (MEES) for new build), preliminary work has been completed new officer posts mean that we can remobilise this work shortly, if supported.

- **Progressive Planning policy:**
Underpinning the delivery of the Environment Theme, Local Plan policies are in place across East Suffolk. The Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was also adopted by East Suffolk Council on 5th April 2022. The SPD provides guidance on the implementation of policies relating to sustainable construction in the East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan policies. The SPD provides information on a range of topics including energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, and use of materials.

In addition, a number of Neighbourhood Plans include relevant policies such as the designation of Local Green Space.

These LP/NP policies support the delivery of the Environment Theme priorities through planning applications and decisions, enforcement and support to regeneration projects and initiatives.

ESC also has a number of Planning and the environment guides available related to Design and conservation, ecology, trees and landscape.

The former Deben High School project will be an exemplar for progressive environmental approaches to new development, including Passivhaus buildings providing a high level of occupant comfort while using very little energy for heating and cooling, alongside the development incorporating multiple green spaces.

- **Hydrogen Strategy:**

The Council's vision is to establish itself as the regional and potentially national hub for the generation, distribution, innovation, and adoption of low carbon hydrogen as part of the collective ambition of the private and public sector to achieve net zero by 2030.

The hydrogen development forum continues to expand including local demand and supply side stakeholders SZC, SPR, Hutchinson Ports, ABP, Conrad Energy, Hynamics, Windcat.

Notably, Conrad Energy are the first organisation in our district (and we believe region) to receive planning permission and commence construction on a hydrogen development project, located adjacent to the Gulliver Turbine.

- **Protection, education, influence:**

The ETG and Greenprint Forum jointly commenced lobbying of government departments on aligning action on the environment as part of the recovery from Covid and providing local councils with the framework and resources to deliver on environmental commitments.

Supporting the continued mass implementation of Quiet lane through a project part funded by ESC and supported by the Community Partnerships to promote active and sustainable travel.

- **Coastal resilience:**

Significant erosion pressures for several of our coastal communities and have been exploring short term and longer term options co-created with local communities at very high erosion risk ESC has been successful in attracting £8.4M to develop adaptive and resilient approaches across Suffolk and Norfolk - our response to climate change at the coast will be at the heart of all we do.

- **Leisure:**

We have engineered sustainability into Waveney Valley Leisure Centre, Leiston Leisure Centre and Deben Leisure Centre through solar panels,

combined heat and power units and electric charging points.

- **Agile working:**

A key principle underpinning the Council's approach to hybrid working is that our new working culture will be designed with the environment at its heart which reflects one of the key themes within the Strategic Plan. The blending of virtual and physical workspaces is intended to help reduce the Council's indirect carbon footprint which includes reductions in emissions from travel and reducing waste, particularly from plastic and paper.

In 2021, an internal survey, completed by 74% of our workforce, enquired about their current working patterns and circumstances and their patterns and commuting habits prior to Covid to enable us to gauge the impact of our changed working arrangements.

Taking into account the emissions offset from the office to the home environment as a result of many staff needing to heat and light a home that would otherwise have been empty, alongside the effect of, for many members of staff, the elimination of the commute, it was estimated that there was an overall net reduction in emissions relating to the commute and working environment of 66%, in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20.

- **Air Quality:**

The ESC Air Quality Strategy was adopted in 2021 and illustrates how residents and commercial enterprise have a key role to play. We aspire to surpass statutory requirements and believe clean air is a right for every East Suffolk resident.

The Environmental Protection Team have recently recruited an Air Quality Technical Officer on a fixed term 1-year contract to review and update the Council's Air Quality Strategy and assist with technical aspects of the Council's legal obligations with regard to Local Air Quality Management.

- **Nature and biodiversity net gain**

100 Conservation Areas created (areas of not cutting land) to promote biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions, support wildlife. Reduced mowing policy extended to closed churchyards and cemeteries in 2021/22. Reduction of 45% in use of herbicide spraying across land managed by ESC.



2.4

5. What would be the impact of having the ‘environmental and green’ spend and impacts in the budget on an annual basis?

‘Environmental and green’ spend is currently outlined within the respective service area budgets and activities are reported annually to the SPDB. The impacts of this investment are actively monitored by the ETG and through the Environment theme KPI dashboard outlined in this paper.

In addition, environmental indicators are a core part of the ESC report template, therefore considered and taken into account in every recommendation put forward to Cabinet and Fully Council. Members and officers are also trained to take these key themes into account as part of their processes.

Potentially, an additional layer of reporting could be put in place to categorise ‘environmental and green’ spend across the authority. However, this would have a very broad scope and the resource deployed would need to be considered alongside other priority actions in the programme. We would also need to be comfortable that this would help deliver additional measurable beneficial environment and climate outcomes, as opposed to another reporting exercise.

It should be noted that expenditure on climate and environment actions is and should be embedded across our service areas and not separated out. This means that reducing our impact on the climate and environment is a key part of our day-to-day activities. This means that we are not looking for cheap wins, we are focussed on a delivering a long-term positive legacy and encouraging behaviour shift in others by demonstrating leadership.

	<p>We have worked hard not to increase specific budgets but instead to allocate funds in ways that consider the environment, meaning that this embedded approach is generally cost neutral. As a result, the environment is a key part of the decision process, not a separate component or external factor. It is also an ongoing, long-term process which is an intrinsic part of how we operate as an organisation, fully embedded in how we work.</p>
2.5	<p>6. How do we prioritise environmental themes such as biodiversity, retro-fit and energy efficiency etc?</p> <p>The prioritisation of actions is driven by the strategic plan. The strategic plan's four priorities are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead by example. 2. Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling. 3. Renewable Energy. 4. Protection, Education and Influence. <p>The strategic plan details indicators to enable us to track progress and know if we are delivering on these priorities.</p> <p>For example, in the case of the indicator 'Positive direction towards Carbon Neutral targets', the Council has prioritised those actions from its known sources of emission that would give the most rapid and largest returns – namely decarbonising the fleet, increasing renewable energy generation and reducing energy consumption at its leisure assets. Further gains have been made by moving to an agile hybrid working pattern, made more possible because of the changes required to adapt to Covid and lock down.</p> <p>Other examples include the Passivhaus development in Felixstowe and the low carbon properties planned for Lowestoft, alongside two retro-fit trials. There are also the biodiversity projects driven by the strategic plan, such as the 40 biodiversity conservation areas identified in 2019/20 (resulting in reduced grass cutting and associated works) with 100 further sites in 2021/22.</p> <p>The individual projects and workstreams needed to deliver these priorities are set out in the Environment Theme delivery programme (see appendix a) with progress monitored by the Environment Theme Working Group, ETG and Cabinet.</p> <p>It should be noted that, at present, the majority of environmental themes are being delivered at once, as opposed to prioritised and delivered in sequence. Certain actions, such as those around biodiversity net gain from new development are in development in anticipation of new inbound policy. Other actions, such as accelerating the delivery of electric charging infrastructure, is partly driven by the timetable of central government grants.</p> <p>As mentioned in section 1, as ESC produces less than 1% of Suffolk's carbon emissions, our outward facing is of key importance. This means that biodiversity is an important emphasis, alongside engaging with the public and using our powers, duties and networks to encourage climate positive behaviours.</p>

	<p>Demonstrating our climate and environmental leadership in a visible way is therefore a core focus of our programme. Change can be uncomfortable to those we work with and sometimes involve challenging conversations, but we are approaching this engagement with courage and positivity, to show the benefits that can be delivered for our communities.</p> <p>Wide scale and public demonstrator projects continue to be key to delivering demonstrating this leadership. These include the conversion of our fleet to HVO, waste reduction and recycling initiatives plus our 'mind the weeds, we're feeding the bees' projects, which help pilot and showcase positive actions for others to emulate.</p>
2.6	<p>7. What are other Councils who have declared an emergency doing? (benchmark)</p> <p>Although most local authorities have now declared a climate emergency, there is a large variation between how they are responding. District councils, in which we would look to for reference, vary significantly in their district's emissions profile, alongside geographic and socio-economic variations. For example, ESC is situated in one of the driest regions of the UK, with one of Europe's fastest eroding coastlines, which presents a unique set of issues. This means it is both challenging and potentially counterproductive to benchmark progress. It may not offer useful insights on if ESC is responding in-line with others.</p> <p>However, when reviewing other local authorities' responses, it is clear that ESC is significantly ahead of the curve in its strategic approach. In particular, instead of producing a separate climate action plan, addressing climate and environmental challenges is a key pillar of our strategic plan. This pillar is supported by our key performance indicators and Environment Theme delivery programme. Our response is monitored and driven forward by a strong governance structure comprised of officer and Member groups. The core of this approach has been embedded in our strategy since 2019.</p> <p>In addition, ESC has been a very active collaborator with local authorities across Suffolk and is an active participant in a number of county and regional delivery groups. These include the Suffolk Climate Change, Environment and Energy Board and Suffolk Climate Emergency Programme. This is a fundamental part of our response, as addressing a macro challenge such as climate change requires effective partnership working across sectors.</p> <p>Therefore, we are showing leadership in our response, as our work is embedded in our day-to-day operations and a core part of our planning. An example is the inclusion of the environmental considerations in our standard reporting template, such as this paper.</p> <p>As a result, we have not needed to produce a separate climate action plan to date due to our strategic environment theme action plan already being embedded in the delivery of the ESC strategy. Therefore, we have focussed on delivering</p>

	<p>positive and rapid action, alongside gathering data to better understand our climate and environmental footprint. As a result, we are now in a position to set out our next phase of work in a climate action plan that consolidates our achievements, current workstreams and proposed next phase of workstreams.</p> <p>Addressing the climate emergency requires ongoing, long-term process, as opposed to a focus only on hitting specific short-term milestones. Success on this journey also requires us to take into account the wider council performance on this theme, and deliver a sustainable programme of positive, measurable outcomes.</p> <p>ESC prides itself in being a council of action. When it comes to delivering on our climate and environmental aspirations, we also accept that we can't do everything at once, due to the scope of the challenge. But this means that can we focus on what we can and biggest impact. We are living our purpose, with the environment embedded across the organisation. Consistency is key and we will continue to make sure we maintain a long -term focus.</p>
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3 How to address current situation

3.1	<p>The key approach to address the current situation is to continue with the Environment theme delivery programme workstreams. This will ensure that we are delivering on the aspirations of the strategic plan and continue on our journey towards net zero.</p> <p>There are further activities for us to consider, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carbon Neutral target: Accelerate efforts to understand our Scope 2 and 3 emissions; produce a costed plan for the actions required to achieve net zero for Scope 1 emissions. 2. Decarbonising our space and water heating at our leisure centres. 3. Identify the carbon impact of introducing the RAWs.
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4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	<p>The environment and responding to the climate emergency continues to be a key pillar of the Council's strategic plan. Due to its importance, we will continue to give regular updates on the Council's work to address the climate emergency - these will be provided to Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee, the SPDB and other key groups where appropriate.</p> <p>As the need to react to climate challenges continue, the Environment Programme Delivery Plan will continue to play a significant role. This is a broad and significant challenge for all Local Authorities, which can only be addressed through open, active and productive collaboration, both internally and with key partner</p>
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	<p>organisations. On its own, East Suffolk cannot solve the challenge but can play an important role in finding solutions.</p> <p>The recommendation to the Committee to consider the progress to date and offer feedback is put forward with the aim of ensuring we are delivering on the ambitions set out in the Council's strategic plan. This will help ensure we are responding to both the challenges and opportunities for our communities.</p>
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Appendices

Appendices:	
Appendix A	Environment Theme Programme summary
Appendix B	ESC Environmental Guidance Note
Appendix C	Air Quality Strategy

Background reference papers:
None.