



Renewable energy plan

Adopted by Woking Borough Council's Executive on 17 June 2021

Table of contents

1.0	Executive summary	2
2.0	Background and objectives.....	3
3.0	Local and national policy context.....	3
4.0	Surrey context	5
5.0	National picture	7
6.0	Energy hierarchy	8
7.0	Benefits and constraints of large scale renewables	9
8.0	Council estate baselines and targets for renewable energy	9
9.0	Borough baselines and targets for renewable energy	14
10.0	Funding for renewable energy technologies	16
11.0	Planning tools.....	17
12.0	Existing data and identification of sites	18
13.0	Public engagement and consultation	19
14.0	Actions, governance and review	20
15.0	Conclusion and next steps	20

1.0 Executive summary

Further to Woking Borough Council's climate and ecological emergency declaration, the council pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations. The resultant [Climate Emergency Action Plan \(CEAP\)](#) includes measures that will reduce (and eventually eliminate) the Council's carbon footprint. Priority actions include those that look to reduce emissions associated with energy used across the council's estate – the largest contributor to the corporate carbon footprint. However, the declaration goes beyond this and seeks borough wide carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest.

While reducing energy consumption and improving energy efficiency will continue to play a key part in this agenda, decarbonising our energy supply will contribute the largest gains in carbon reduction. A continuing ambition of the [Climate Change Working Group](#) is to consider the role of renewable energy technologies, including large scale wind and solar, in decarbonising the council and borough's energy supply. Set within supportive local and national policy frameworks, this plan includes a range of actions in order to move towards greater proportions of locally generated renewable energy.

The identification of potential sites for renewable energy technologies will help the council understand what can be achieved both corporately and more widely across the borough. Whilst it is not yet possible to identify the exact financial cost of delivering local renewables, it is acknowledged that significant investment will be required for some technologies and that innovative funding mechanisms will be essential given the tightening constraints on the public purse.

While the council can help mobilise local delivery of renewables, the scale and nature of the task will require the advocacy and support of the community. Public engagement and consultation will be essential to set what is required in the context of the wider needs of energy and environmental security and the commitment to achieve net zero carbon across Woking borough.

2.0 Background and objectives

On 25 July 2019, the council declared a climate and ecological emergency. This recognised the continued priority and commitment the borough gives to addressing climate change, both through mitigation and adaptation. The council pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations¹.

A Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) was developed and includes measures that will reduce (and eventually eliminate) the Council's carbon footprint. Priority actions include those that look to reduce emissions associated with energy used across the council's estate – the largest contributor to the corporate carbon footprint.

Reducing energy consumption and improving energy efficiency play a key part in this agenda. However, decarbonising our energy supply will contribute the largest gains in carbon reduction. The CEAP therefore includes a specific action to consider how large scale renewable energy technologies, notably wind and solar, could be funded and installed as a way to decarbonise the Council and borough's energy supply.

In March 2020 the council's Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) requested that a renewable energy plan be worked up, detailing how wind energy could be funded across the borough and how it could be complemented with solar energy.

This plan considers 10 key areas:

1. local and national policy context
2. the energy hierarchy
3. benefits and constraints of renewables
4. council estate baselines and targets for renewable energy
5. borough baselines and targets for renewable energy
6. funding mechanisms for renewable energy
7. planning tools
8. existing data and identification of potential sites
9. public engagement and consultation
10. conclusion and next steps.

A range of actions is proposed in order to move towards greater proportions of locally generated renewable energy. These actions also consider aspects of decarbonisation in order to aid the transition to net zero.

The CEAP and this plan are set in the context of a developing policy landscape both locally and nationally. This is explored in more detail in the following section.

3.0 Local and national policy context

The delivery of renewable energy projects across Woking borough would positively contribute to the council's [Woking 2050 strategy](#) objectives and its carbon neutral targets for 2030 as part of its climate emergency declaration and associated action plan.

¹ A definition of 'the council's estate' can be found at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/how-were-tackling-climate-change

The council has a number of existing policies and action plans that support or encourage the delivery of renewable energy. These are listed in figure 1. Likewise, [ThamesWey](#), the council's energy services company, is committed to deliver climate change and sustainability projects as stated in its business plan ([see section 3.2 of the 2020 Business Plan on the 'Governance' page of the website](#)), in furtherance of Woking 2050 and the CEAP. Action Surrey, mentioned below, is a part of ThamesWey.

Figure 1: Woking Borough Council's plans and policies that support renewable energy delivery

Policies or action plans	References that support renewable energy delivery
Woking 2050 strategy	<p>Theme 5: What the council is doing</p> <p>Action: Continue to work with partners to increase the proportion of renewable and sustainable energy consumption of Council owned buildings.</p> <p>Action: Through Action Surrey, encourage the adoption of energy efficiency measures and renewables to make Woking homes more efficient and more comfortable while also helping to tackle fuel poverty and reducing domestic carbon dioxide emissions.</p> <p>Please note: The significance of the year 2050 used in the strategy's title is tied to the national legislation in place at the time of its adoption. The UK's Climate Change Act sought to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 on the 1990 baseline. This was adopted as a local target at the time of the last revision of the Climate Change Strategy (September 2015). This national target has now been superseded by a pledge to reach net zero by 2050, which has also been adopted locally as part of the council's climate and ecological declaration.</p>
Climate emergency declaration and net zero targets	<p>The council pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations and by 2050 borough-wide (see the glossary at Appendix 1 of this plan).</p>
Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP)	<p>The CEAP plan includes measures that will help reduce and eventually eliminate the council's carbon footprint. This includes continuing to work with ThamesWey to decarbonise the energy supply for all council buildings and operations and eliminate emissions directly through the supply of renewable / sustainable power sources. The CEAP also includes an action to develop this plan for large scale renewable energy in Woking borough.</p>

Policies or action plans	References that support renewable energy delivery
Core Strategy	Encourage sustainable construction and development through the Core Strategy, which is the main document within the council's Development Plan for the area. It includes a spatial vision for the borough and covers strategic objectives focussed on the key issues and challenges facing the area.
Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document	The Climate Change SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It provides detailed guidance for the application of Policies CS22 'Sustainable construction' and CS23 'Renewable and low carbon energy generation' of the Core Strategy. It explains what developers need to do to meet the requirements of the above policies. It is an important document to help deliver the spatial vision and objectives of the Core Strategy, particularly in terms of leading the way in high quality sustainable development that minimises the adverse impacts of climate change.
Climate neutral checklist	In order to demonstrate compliance with the council's sustainable construction objectives in Policy CS22, all applications for new development should include a completed copy of the council's climate neutral checklist (with the exception of very minor developments such as minor exterior alterations). The checklist seeks to guide the design of new developments by taking into account sustainable construction and design issues in planning Policy CS22.
ThamesWey Sustainable Communities Ltd Business Plan	The business plan sets out the proposed priorities for ThamesWey Sustainable Communities Ltd (TSCL) for the period up to 2022. Its key aim is to assist the council with the delivery of objectives within the Woking 2050 strategy. The business plan references the council's climate and ecological emergency declaration – see section 5.8 of the TSCL.

4.0 Surrey context

As outlined above, Woking Borough Council has supportive policy frameworks for the delivery of such projects. The potential for local renewable energy projects should be considered in the wider geographical context. The emergence of Surrey County Council's own climate change strategy and related work streams also offer an opportunity to work collaboratively on such projects.

This section sets out what policies, targets and groups there are in Surrey currently, which could positively support the ambitions of this strategy.

Surrey County Council (SCC) adopted its [Climate Change Strategy](#) in spring 2020. It provides a joint framework for collaborative action on climate change across Surrey's local authorities and other partners. Its strategic priorities and accompanying actions are designed to deliver against its emissions reduction targets, identified through the creation of a science-based carbon neutral pathway led by the University of Leeds.

There are synergies between Woking Borough Council's own climate change and renewable energy ambitions and those of the county council. In particular, Surrey's targets include:

- Achieve net zero carbon local authorities that lead by example in promoting sustainable practices across their operations, estate and vehicles.
- Net zero carbon for Surrey local authorities' organisational emissions by 2030 or sooner.
- To support the national decarbonisation ambition by leading renewable energy generation expansion and bringing low carbon heating into Surrey homes through smart, decentralised systems.
- 15% of energy from solar photovoltaic (PV) by 2032.
- Expand renewable energy generation capacity across the county with a focus on solar photovoltaic (PV) installations as the greatest carbon reduction potential.
- Develop localised smart energy systems that focus on providing low carbon energy to local businesses and residents, whilst reducing costs.
- By 2022: Surrey County Council plans to develop a Surrey-wide Renewable Energy Strategy that explores potential opportunities for renewable energy, decentralised systems and low carbon heating systems, for example, heat pumps and combined heat and power (CHP).

Since March 2020, officers from all districts and boroughs in Surrey, plus the county council, have convened monthly through virtual meetings of the Surrey Climate Change Officers' Group. This has now come to replace the previous grouping known as the Surrey Energy and Sustainability Partnership and has proven to be a useful way of sharing knowledge in order to advance our common climate change goals. All local authorities within this group have formally acknowledged the climate situation and need for urgent action.

The Surrey Energy Partnership, coordinated by the University of Surrey, aims to accelerate the transition to clean, fair and sustainable energy across Surrey and beyond. The Partnership is an open and collaborative network for all organisations with an interest in (or impact on) clean, fair and sustainable energy. With a focus on delivering projects and action, the Surrey Energy Partnership links to national and regional strategies, while building on local and county-wide strengths. It has run a number of webinars and network sessions to engage organisations across the county.

Together, these elements provide a supportive framework through which renewable energy projects could be progressed.

5.0 National picture

In June 2019, the UK Government and the devolved administrations committed to a net zero target as recommended by the Climate Change Committee. This requires that the UK bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. This superseded the previous target of at least 80% reduction on 1990 levels.

Furthermore, in April 2021 the government announced that in line with a further recommendation by the Climate Change Committee, it will [reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels](#). This will be set out in the UK's sixth carbon budget and is set to be enshrined in law by the end of June 2021.

In November 2020, the government published its [10 Point Plan for a green industrial revolution](#). It comprises the following:

- Point 1: Advancing offshore wind
- Point 2: Driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen
- Point 3: Delivering new and advanced nuclear power
- Point 4: Accelerating the shift to zero emission vehicles
- Point 5: Green public transport, cycling and walking
- Point 6: Jet zero and green ships
- Point 7: Greener buildings
- Point 8: Investing in carbon capture, usage and storage
- Point 9: Protecting our natural environment
- Point 10: Green finance and innovation

The plan will mobilise £12 billion of government investment, and potentially three times as much from the private sector, to create and support up to 250,000 green jobs. “The cumulative effect of the plan will be to reduce UK emissions by 180 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂ e) between 2023 and 2032, equal to taking all of today's cars off the road for around two years.”

Building on the 10 Point Plan, the government published its [energy white paper 'Powering our Net Zero Future'](#) on 14 December 2020, addressing how the transformation of the UK's energy system will drive economic growth and job creation while reducing carbon emissions in line with the 2050 net zero target.

Decarbonising and electrifying our energy supplies is a key theme of the white paper, which is discussed in the Working context later in this plan. The white paper highlights the impact of 'retiring capacity' of fossil fuels, resulting in reduced overall energy supply as we simultaneously see significant increases in overall energy demand as we move to the electrification of vehicles and the replacement of gas for heating with clean electricity. This emphasises the need to deliver infrastructure changes to keep pace with demand.

The energy white paper does not plan for specific technology solutions or deployment at a particular scale or geographical level, such as there are no implicit targets for local renewable energy generation to be satisfied at the local authority level. However, the paper does envisage

future generation characteristics to be a mix of predominantly wind and solar. Given their intermittency, the paper goes on to highlight that these must be supplemented with nuclear, clean hydrogen, carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS), bioenergy, battery storage and electric heat pumps amongst other solutions.

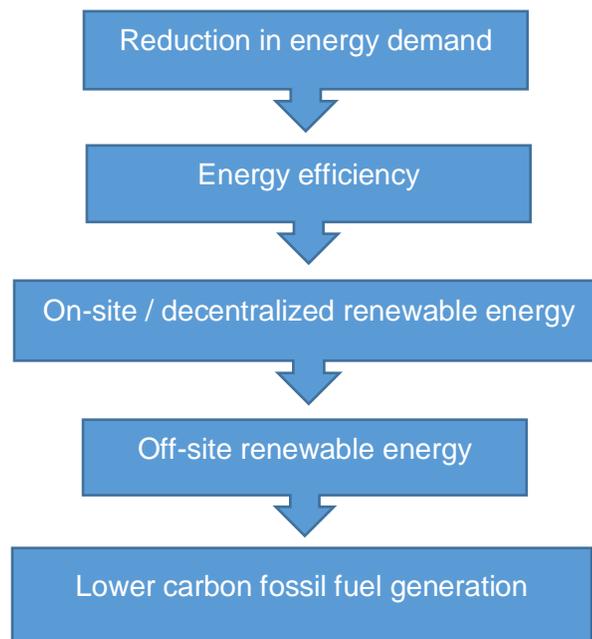
A Net Zero Strategy is also planned for 2021 setting out the pathway to a net zero economy. This will build on the 10 Point Plan and energy white paper and identify what is needed to achieve net zero at scale over the next 30 years, for example, in terms of skills, energy systems and behaviours.

The UK will host the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 with our partners Italy in November 2021 to bring together world leaders to commit to urgent global climate action².

6.0 Energy hierarchy

As the borough council embarks on a plan to accelerate renewable energy delivery, it is important to acknowledge the principles of an energy hierarchy. These are implicit in the existing climate change strategy – Woking 2050 – and the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) that accompanies the climate emergency declaration.

An energy hierarchy is pictured next. Its key principles are that before energy projects are pursued, consideration and action is first given to reducing energy demand and addressing energy efficiency measures within buildings. The council continues to maintain energy efficiency across its estate as part of ongoing planned maintenance. Furthermore, the energy performance of council owned properties is being highlighted as part of the CEAP objective to review display energy certificates (DECs) and energy performance certificates (EPCs) and plan to upgrade them where they fall below a 'C rating', where financially viable.



² <https://together-for-our-planet.ukcop26.org/>

The ongoing decarbonisation of the national grid will play a part in reducing carbon emissions associated with the council's energy use across its estate and operations. How and from where the council procures its energy will also contribute to decarbonisation at this level. Low carbon heating is referenced in the government's 10 Point Plan and the electrification of heat sources could also help further, powered from renewable sources.

However, while reducing energy demand, improving energy efficiency and national grid improvements will make a difference; local decarbonisation through borough and county level large scale renewable energy projects will be needed in order to accelerate carbon reductions in line with common net zero targets.

7.0 Benefits and constraints of large scale renewables

The benefits of large scale renewable energy delivery across Woking borough include:

- decarbonising local energy supplies
- contributing to low carbon reduction targets
- local renewable energy generation
- local investment and green recovery
- local energy security and resilience to uncertain energy prices and national grid disruption
- potential for community owned and/or community-led projects
- further demonstration of the council's environmental leadership

The possible constraints include:

- community and public opposition
- environmental designations and planning policy constraints
- availability and/or suitability of sites for large scale renewable energy projects
- funding
- inadequate infrastructure to support the technologies
- lack of local expertise
- sourcing of technologies.

8.0 Council estate baselines and targets for renewable energy

In determining how the council can accelerate renewable energy delivery across Woking borough it is necessary to establish a series of baselines and targets.

As per its climate emergency declaration, the council is targeting carbon neutrality across its own estate and operations by 2030.

The council's climate change strategy – Woking 2050 – states “Continue to work with partners to increase the proportion of renewable and sustainable energy consumption of council owned buildings.” To fulfil net zero by 2030, this target will need to become quantitative in its nature and will need to enable the elimination of emissions from current and expected energy consumption from corporate sites. Actions in furtherance of this target are included later in this section. It is worth noting here too that the council's climate and ecological emergency declaration uses a baseline of 2018/2019.

Corporate energy consumption

Each year the council publishes its greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) report, which states the council's energy consumption, business mileage and associated carbon emissions. The last available [report](#) covers 2019/2020. Headline figures are shown over:

Figure 2: Woking Borough Council's annual energy consumption by source

Energy consumption sources	Energy consumption : 2018/2019	Energy consumption : 2019/2020	Consumption difference (kWh/km)	Percentage change
Leisure pavilions - gas consumption (kWh)	183,465	208,325	+24,860	+13.6
Leisure pavilions - electricity consumption (kWh)	246,669	232,688	-13,981	-5.7
Residential sites and community sites - gas consumption (kWh)	14,717,210	15,907,118	+1,189,908	+8.1
Residential and community sites - electricity consumption (kWh)	1,938,313	1,739,113	-199,200	-10.3
Town centre sites - gas consumption (kWh)	3,063,346	2,407,324	-656,022	-21.4
Town centre sites - electricity consumption (kWh)	4,039,353	4,067,994	+28,641	+0.7
Woking park sites - gas consumption (kWh)	12,449,468	9,169,386	-3,280,082	-26.3
Woking park sites - electricity import (kWh)	1,007,646	907,109	-100,537	-10.0
Vehicles (km)	124,614	102,109	-22,505	-18.1

Figure 3: Woking Borough Council's annual greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) emissions by scope

Scope	2018/2019	2019/2020	Difference (kg CO2e)	Percentage change
1	5,684,396	5,133,551	-550,845	-9.69
2	2,046,651	1,775,629	- 271,022	-13.24
3	13,826	11,149	- 2,677	-19.36
All	7,744,872	6,920,329	- 824,544	-10.65

Scope 1 and 2 emissions are our largest carbon contributors, such as our electricity and gas usage. By tackling the source of energy the council will quickly achieve significant reductions in its carbon footprint.

Action 1: Source 100% of corporate electricity through renewable energy contracts (relating to Woking Borough Council's direct electricity use within its own buildings).

The council's electricity contract with SSE up to 1 October 2020 was not renewable however their standard fuel mix included 23% from renewable sources. From 1 October 2020, the council moved to an [energy contract with Opus Energy, which supplies 100% renewable electricity](#). This will have a significant impact on the carbon footprint associated with the council's grid electricity consumption. This action should be maintained going forward.

The current contract with Opus Energy runs until 30 September 2022. The carbon benefits of this new energy contract will begin to be captured in the 2020/2021 GHG report.

Action 1 should apply to all corporate Woking Borough Council occupied properties, including housing properties that are not supplied by ThamesWey Energy.

A separate action relates to council owned and leased out commercial properties. There are over 550 such properties owned by the council and as such could contribute significant carbon savings through their choice of energy supplier. As there is no direct control of the energy contracts in buildings not operated or occupied by Woking Borough Council, the action can first encourage landlords, and commercial and not for profit tenants, to adopt renewable energy contracts.

Going forward the council should stipulate within new and renewed tenancy agreements that the tenant must choose a renewable tariff in line with the council's climate emergency declaration.

Action 2: Encourage landlords of council owned properties to change to renewable electricity supplies by the end of 2022.

Action 3: From 31 January 2022, all new and renewed tenancy agreements for council owned commercial properties must stipulate the use of a renewable electricity supplier and tariff.

In 2019/2020, the council's gas consumption was 27,692,153 kWh of the total 34,639,057 kWh energy consumption (including electrical energy) by the council (see figure 2). This equated to 80% of total energy consumption.

Natural gas remains the primary fuel source for ThamesWey Energy's combined heat and power network – the key supplier to many council owned and other town centre premises – for the production of heating, cooling and electricity production. In 2019/2020, ThamesWey-supplied energy accounted for 60.8% of the council's GHG footprint as reported in the GHG report. See figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Greenhouse gas emissions by source (2019/2020)

Source	2019/2020 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (kg CO2e)	Percentage of total CO2e
Vehicle usage	11,149	0.2%
Freedom leisure pavilions	97,776	1.4%
NVH	2,603,471	37.6%
ThamesWey-supplied	4,207,933	60.8%
All	6,920,329	100%

Therefore, between grid gas supplies and ThamesWey Energy supplies, replacing gas with low carbon heating and cooling sources could see significant decreases in the council’s carbon footprint. As well as helping to secure our ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030, this would also reduce reliance on natural gas and enhance energy security.

The council’s CEAP already includes the following action: “Collaborative work with ThamesWey to deliver on carbon reduction goals, for example, decarbonising the energy supply for all council buildings and operations and eliminate emissions directly through the supply of renewable and sustainable power sources.”

Progress on the various projects that focus on the decarbonisation of ThamesWey energy networks is ongoing. This includes expansion of the CHP network and exploration of viable low carbon heating sources.

ThamesWey’s new Poole Road energy centre is due for completion in spring 2021. The combined heat and power energy centre will supply the new Hilton Hotel, retail stores and residential towers at the Victoria Square development. [Updates on the energy centre can be found on the Thameswey news page.](#)

Furthermore, hydraulic and techno-economic modelling of the district heating networks in Woking Town Centre is underway in collaboration with consultants WSP.

The hydraulic modelling seeks to understand the size of network extension necessary to supply new town centre developments from Poole Road, with an added scenario of creating an interconnection between this new network and the existing network supplied from Victoria Way. This interconnection would significantly aid the decarbonisation of buildings connected to this network by reducing the network temperatures, leading to an increase in both the efficiency and range of renewable heating technologies that could be utilised.

The techno-economic modelling will consider the different blends of heating technologies to use, which will deliver the best outcomes in terms of efficiency, emissions, diversity, cost and other variables over the next 25 years. This will inform ThamesWey’s selection of plant equipment to bolster capacity at Poole Road, which will supply further new town centre developments as they come through.

When considering CHP fuel sources and the potential to transition from natural gas to renewable sources, there are key influencing factors to take into account. Ahead of renewable biofuel/hydrogen CHP becoming commercially available, the application of renewable heat technology that already exists (such as, heat pumps supplied with renewable grid electricity) to generate heat (and/or cooling) only, will be more viable. ThamesWey has considered possible targets linked to the carbon intensity of heat supplied, however this is a complex matter, partly dictated by the national grid carbon intensity, over which local networks have no control.

Another major determinant of the pace of decarbonisation that can be achieved is the growth of the local network: both the speed at which developments come through and how likely they are to connect. This has a direct influence on the speed at which the network grows and reaches capacity. A growing network would enable greater opportunities for replacement of generators with renewable sources, creating a stronger financial case to upgrade to larger, renewable units. With this in mind, council policies can be influential in achieving both the council and ThamesWey’s mutual carbon reduction goals.

This in part can be supported through local and national planning policy tools (see section 11) but again is outside of ThamesWey’s direct scope of control, which makes developing fixed targets difficult to determine with regards renewable heat from the CHP network.

Action 4: ThamesWey to continue to explore renewable heat generators to supplement and replace natural gas fired generation plant. Incorporation of renewable generators to begin by 2026, where effective technical solutions and suitable opportunities in plant replacement cycles, exist.

Action 5: Evaluate the costs of a green gas contract for supplies not met through ThamesWey.

Current electricity contract arrangements mean that 100% of our grid-supplied electricity is from renewable sources (see section 8). However, this plan looks to increase the proportion of energy derived from local renewable generation.

As recorded in the council’s greenhouse gas emissions report 2019/2020, electricity generated by council owned solar PV totalled 323,398 kWh. See figure 5.

Figure 5: Solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation by site

Sites	2018/19 (kWh)	2019/20 (kWh)	% change
Residential sites	261,077	235,947	-9.6
Town centre sites	94,255	87,450	-7.2
Total	355,331	323,398	-9.0

As a proportion of total electricity consumption, PV generation equated to 4.65% in 2019/2020. Existing actions within Woking 2050 and the CEAP encourage further delivery of local renewables provision:

- Continue to work with partners to increase the proportion of renewable and sustainable energy consumption of council owned buildings (Woking 2050)

- Continue to work with ThamesWey to decarbonise the energy supply for all council buildings and operations and eliminate emissions directly through the supply of renewable / sustainable power sources (CEAP)
- Increase amount of installed photovoltaics (PV) on Woking Borough Council owned buildings (CEAP)
- Large scale renewable energy: that a large scale renewable energy plan be worked up as soon as practically possible, detailing how wind energy could be funded across the borough and how it could be complemented with solar energy (CEAP).
- In order to deliver against the climate and ecological declaration; the associated targets within the CEAP; and to reach net zero, these actions have now been developed further to include measurable targets and dates (SMART actions).

Action 6: Council owned properties and landholdings to be considered for solar PV and/or wind in 2021 to increase local renewable energy generation; reduce reliance on grid electricity; and support national decarbonisation targets.

Pending consideration of the suitability of Council owned properties / landholdings, the Climate Change Working Group supports an aspirational target for the council to increase the proportion of electricity supplied by PV (and other renewables) from its current amount (4.9%) to 15% by 2030 to demonstrate its ambition for net zero and local decarbonisation. This aspiration will later be verified by the viability of buildings and assets, and of course funding mechanisms, to deliver extra renewables capacity.

Action 7: 15% of corporate electricity demand to be met from local renewable energy generation (PV; solar thermal; ground source heat pumps; wind etc.) by 2030.³

9.0 Borough baselines and targets for renewable energy

The importance of securing local renewable energy generation is magnified when considering electricity consumption across the wider borough. Woking Borough Council’s electrical energy consumption (see figure 2) equates only to 4% of the borough’s domestic electricity sales. See figure 6.

Figure 6: [Domestic electricity sales](#) in GWh, 2018 (source: BEIS, December 2019)

Borough	Domestic electricity sales in GWh (2018)
Woking	179
Elmbridge	275
Epsom and Ewell	128
Guildford	249

³ It is important to note that the existing evidence base for the Core Strategy (dated 2010) found limited unconstrained areas of the borough suitable for wind energy infrastructure – see www.woking2027.info/ldfresearch/ccdr/ceeb.pdf. This was also supported by the RPS wind energy study conducted in 2007 (see section 10 of this document). However, the Core Strategy’s evidence base concluded there is good potential for PV.

Borough	Domestic electricity sales in GWh (2018)
Mole Valley	171
Reigate and Banstead	252
Runnymede	152
Spelthorne	166
Surrey Heath	156
Tandridge	169
Waverley	247

According to [Ofgem](#), 19% of UK electricity supplies (Quarter two 2020) from the national grid were derived from wind and solar.

The UK’s energy white paper seeks to significantly increase this proportion, reducing UK emissions by 180 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂ e) between 2023 and 2032: “Decarbonising the energy system over the next thirty years means replacing – as far as it is possible to do so – fossil fuels with clean energy technologies such as renewables, nuclear and hydrogen.” The paper goes on to state that the UK will require a four-fold increase in clean electricity.

Surrey County Council’s Climate Change Strategy states that in 2018, Surrey’s districts and boroughs had a combined total capacity of only 82.6 MW of renewable energy installed, from 11,271 sites, over 70% of which was from solar photovoltaics (PV). More can be done through delivery of local renewable energy generation.

Figure 7 shows Woking borough’s renewable electricity generation by number of sites and capacity. Photovoltaics are the sole type of renewable energy technology recorded.

Figure 7: Renewable electricity in Woking borough, 2019 (source: BEIS, [Renewable electricity by local authority area](#), September 2020)

Renewable energy	Capacity
Number of PV installations	966
Installed capacity	5.5 MW
Generation	5,191 MWh

Using figures 6 and 7, local photovoltaic generation in Woking can be calculated as just 2.9% of the total domestic electricity sales. Although renewables account for one fifth of the national grid’s electricity supply, this local indicative figure accentuates the scale of delivery needed as we move forward to 2030 and beyond in meeting our climate emergency declaration.

As highlighted in section 8, the identification of potential council owned buildings and landholdings will help the council understand what can be achieved with large scale renewables to meet not only its corporate energy needs but also more widely in the borough. It will also determine next steps in terms of viability and further feasibility work required.

Pending these details, it is suggested that the council set an aspirational target to double the borough’s installed capacity of renewables from 5.5MW to 11MW by 2030 to demonstrate its ambition for net zero and local decarbonisation. This aspiration should be later verified by assessment findings in terms of viability of buildings and assets, and of course funding mechanisms, to deliver extra renewables capacity.

The role of planning in promoting the take up of renewables will also be key in bringing forward new sites at both a development scale and household level in order to increase the number of installations and installed capacity borough wide. However, caution is needed as constraints to delivery may be encountered through prevailing prescriptive national planning policy requirements. This is discussed further in section 11. Community renewable energy projects will also be important in achieving local generation at scale.

Action 8: Renewable energy capacity in Woking borough to be doubled from 5.5MW in 2019 to 11MW by 2030.

10.0 Funding for renewable energy technologies

As stated in the previous section, community renewable energy projects will be key to increasing renewable energy capacity at scale. Central to their delivery will be the ability to fund such schemes.

At a time of increasing financial pressures, innovative funding mechanisms will be needed to deliver schemes that engage the community along the way to achieve our borough wide aspirations. Local authority contributions to such schemes will be minimal, if available at all, so central and regional government grants, private investment, and community funds will be essential.

The economic challenge of accelerating delivery of renewables is highlighted in the government's energy white paper:

“Delivering this transition will require billions of pounds of investment in clean energy infrastructure or new low-carbon technologies, and a major shift away from spending in fossil fuels. As set out in the National Infrastructure Strategy, delivering this volume of private investment will require multiple policy levers and the right market frameworks to encourage competition and drive down costs. This challenge is set against the backdrop of an economy which has been hit by the largest recession in 300 years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Crowdfunding and community municipal bonds have gained press coverage recently as a tool for local authorities to raise capital for investment in energy projects and green / social infrastructure. Abundance Investments – an organisation that specialises in community municipal bonds - is a regulated crowdfunding platform that raised £4.5 million for Swindon Borough Council for investment in renewables. The scheme requires a £5 minimum deposit; is low risk, low return; and bonds are issued directly by the local authority to the public via Abundance's platform. West Berkshire Council recently raised £1 million through a 1.2% five year bond to fund solar PV on council owned buildings. It was a successful scheme with a high take up of 640 investors despite launching during lockdown. This finance model enables local authorities to bring residents on board with plans giving them a real part to play in the project and its benefits for the future environment. The schemes referenced could offer interesting models to consider in identifying the roll out of renewable energy in the borough.

Other funding sources could include:

- Central government grant schemes. In September 2020, the government announced the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. The £1 billion scheme offered grants for public sector bodies towards up to 100% of the costs of capital energy-saving projects. However the tight timeframes for the fund favoured "shovel ready" schemes and has since been oversubscribed. It is widely anticipated that further funding streams will be released, particularly in light of the government's 10 Point Plan and energy white paper (the latter mentions its extension for a further year).
- UK Government Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) – a source for local authority borrowing, subject to UK Treasury debt management principles of acceptable risk to the public purse and the prudential code.
- Regional funds such as [Local Enterprise Partnership](#).
- [Salix Energy Efficiency Loan schemes](#).
- [Microgeneration Certification Scheme \(MCS\) Charitable Foundation](#).

Woking Borough Council would benefit from feasibility work to identify possible schemes that could be ready to submit when further funds are made available.

The [Greater South East Energy Hub](#) (GSEEH) works with public sector organisations and their stakeholders to support the development and financing of local energy projects. Their expertise could be beneficial in identifying sources of funding for renewables projects

Officers are in contact with GSEEH and Abundance to explore potential funding streams and finance mechanisms in furtherance of this Plan's ambitions and those of the wider CEAP.

11.0 Planning tools

Planning Policy is a key tool in enabling the delivery of renewable energy projects across Woking borough. As detailed in section 4, the council's existing Development Plan is supportive of renewable energy schemes. An objective of the Core Strategy is to lead the way in high quality sustainable development that minimises the adverse impacts of climate change, including through maximising opportunities for implementing renewable energy technologies. Policy CS23 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation) of the Core Strategy is designed to help deliver this objective. It states:

"The council recognises significant progress needs to be made if national targets for the generation of renewable energy are to be met and encourages the development of stand-alone renewable energy installations in the borough. All proposals will be considered on their individual merits with regard to scale, location, technology type and cumulative impact on the surrounding area. The council particularly encourages applications from community-based and community-owned projects."

The Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document gives detailed guidance for the application of Policy CS23, including advice for prospective applications for medium and large scale renewable energy applications. This is scheduled for review during 2021.

At the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure where adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily. It encourages the identification of suitable areas in local plans where this would help secure development of energy infrastructure, and highlights the importance of local community backing. National planning policy is supported by extensive renewable and low carbon energy planning practice guidance (PPG)⁴, setting out planning considerations for various technologies, and how local planning authorities and communities can develop positive strategies to promote their delivery. As stated within the PPG, extensive evidence is required to support the identification of potential sites for renewable energy infrastructure.

Local planning authorities are responsible for renewable and low carbon energy development of 50 megawatts or less installed capacity (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Development over 50 megawatts capacity is currently considered by the Secretary of State for Energy under the Planning Act 2008 and the local planning authority is a statutory consultee. The energy National Policy Statements (NPS) provide a basis on which the Secretary of State can make decisions on applications for development consent. The Energy White Paper seeks to review the existing energy NPS which may impact on existing planning policy frameworks to ensure their ability to deliver the infrastructure changes needed to meet net zero:

“The suite of energy NPS establish the need for new energy infrastructure and set out a framework for the consideration of applications for development consent. We have decided that it is appropriate to review the NPS, to ensure that they reflect the policies set out in this white paper and that we continue to have a planning policy framework which can deliver the investment required to build the infrastructure needed for the transition to net zero. Work on this review will start immediately, with the aim of designating updated NPS by the end of 2021.”

The planning practice guidance states that it is the government's intention to amend legislation so that all applications for onshore wind energy development are handled by local planning authorities.

Action 9: Update the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document with a view to adoption in early 2022 to reflect national policy and guidance updates, and progress with local initiatives, which have a bearing on the application of policies CS22 and CS23 of the Core Strategy.

As well as the Core Strategy, neighbourhood plans can play a key role in delivering development that has the backing of local communities. Neighbourhood plans can provide an opportunity for communities to plan for community-led renewable energy developments. The updated Climate Change SPD will aim to provide more detailed guidance to assist those producing neighbourhood plans to also look at developing a community energy plan to underpin their emerging policies.

12.0 Existing data and identification of sites

In 2007, ThamesWey Energy commissioned RPS to undertake a feasibility study on wind energy in Woking borough. The aim of the study was to identify two or three locations within the

⁴ www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy#developing-a-strategy-for-renewable-and-low-carbon-energy

borough boundary of potential suitability for the development of wind turbines, taking account of such factors as environmental, planning, site access and wind resource issues.

Analysis identified a 'long list' of potentially suitable locations for which desk and field-based research on environmental and planning issues was undertaken. This long list was reviewed against technical feasibility criteria. Each site was assessed against criteria concerning absolute areas of constraint (for example, conservation areas, historic buildings), possible areas of constraint (for example, flood events, aerodrome notification areas, proximity to motorway or overhead electricity cables) and possible areas of opportunity (for example, areas safeguarded for development, land owned by the council).

Although the study concluded that there was potential to further explore the viability of wind energy in some limited sites in the borough, these would need to be subject to further assessment including ecological studies; habitat surveys; background noise measurements and wind monitoring (due to the urban location) and consultation with National Air Traffic Services (NATS) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) with regards to aviation considerations.

Given the age of the study, its conclusions need to be reviewed for consideration as part of this Plan. As well as changes in the landscape of the borough, wind technology has evolved considerably over the last 14 years. This plan also advocates greater proportions of locally generated renewable energy through a range of technologies not just large scale wind. The GSEEH (see section 10) is reviewing the study's findings in this context.

As stated in section 8, the identification of potential council owned buildings and landholdings will help the council understand what can be achieved with (large scale) renewables more broadly. This will determine next steps in terms of viability and further feasibility work required. Sites will also be considered in the context of other aspects of sustainability work being undertaken by the council and its partners as well as potential constraints, as mentioned elsewhere in this plan.

13.0 Public engagement and consultation

Whilst the council can help mobilise local delivery of renewables projects, the scale and nature of the task will require community engagement and support.

This will be an opportunity to emphasise links between what needs to be achieved to reduce carbon emissions and fostering public acceptance of renewable energy as part of this equation. The public, and potentially investment by local business, will play a vital role in enabling delivery and roll out of projects.

[Planet Woking](#) is the natural platform through which to build on communications around renewable energy to help raise awareness and strengthen community understanding and engagement with the borough's climate emergency declaration and how renewables factor within this plan.

Opportunities may also be available through the [Big Conversation](#) and Residents' Panel. The Woking Residents' Panel will also provide people who live in the borough with ongoing opportunities to shape the borough's future, by acting as a sounding board for future initiatives.

Community energy projects such as those referenced in section 10 would also provide an opportunity for further direct public engagement and ownership, underlining that the community has a key part to play in the net zero solution.

This plan will therefore also require public engagement and consultation to be undertaken as it develops, to set the task in context of the wider needs of energy and environmental security and the commitment to achieve net zero across Woking borough.

Action 10: Summaries of key documents such as the government’s 10 Point Plan and energy white paper to be added to the Planet Woking website to raise awareness of renewable energy technologies and their role in achieving net zero.

Action 11: Case studies and articles to be added to the Planet Woking website around renewable energy technologies and their role in achieving net zero.

Action 12: A public engagement plan to be developed in line with the key delivery milestones of this plan.

14.0 Actions, governance and review

This plan includes a number of actions relating to how large scale renewable energy technologies, notably wind and solar, could be funded and installed as a way to decarbonise the council and borough’s energy supply. These are summarised in Appendix 2.

The actions are also included in the wider CEAP which is reviewed on a quarterly basis with updates reported to the Climate Change Working Group.

Governance and monitoring of this Plan will be conducted through the Climate Change Working Group.

15.0 Conclusion and next steps

Further to its climate and ecological emergency declaration, the council has pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations. The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) includes measures that will reduce (and eventually eliminate) the council’s carbon footprint. Priority actions include those that look to reduce emissions associated with energy used across the council’s estate – the largest contributor to the corporate carbon footprint. However, the declaration goes beyond this and seeks borough wide carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest.

While reducing energy consumption and improving energy efficiency will continue to play a key part in this agenda, decarbonising our energy supply will contribute the largest gains in carbon reduction.

A continuing ambition of the Climate Change Working Group is to consider the role renewable energy technologies, including large scale wind and solar, in decarbonising the council and borough’s energy supply.

This plan includes a range of actions to facilitate next steps towards achieving greater proportions of locally generated renewable energy. In conclusion, the essential key factors are:

- policy framework
- political will
- site availability
- funding mechanisms
- public engagement and consultation.

The plan confirms the policy frameworks exist at both the local⁵ and national level for the pursuit of renewable energy and assert its significance in achieving net zero. The political will is confirmed by the continuing ambition of the Climate Change Working Group in this agenda. The identification and potential viability of council owned sites will be further explored as the actions within this plan are taken forward. This will help the council understand what can be achieved with large scale renewables to meet not only its corporate energy needs but also more widely in the borough and determine next steps in terms of viability and further feasibility work.

Whilst it is not yet possible to identify the exact financial cost of delivering renewables across the borough, it is acknowledged that significant investment will be required and that innovative funding mechanisms will be essential given the tightening constraints on the public purse. Engagement with experts in this area will help identify possible funding avenues and initial steps are recorded in the Plan's actions.

While the council can help mobilise local delivery of renewables, the scale and nature of the task will require community engagement and support, as outlined in section 13. This would include proof of community support in determining any future planning application for large scale renewable energy infrastructure. The plan will also require public engagement and consultation to be undertaken as it develops, to set the task in the context of the wider needs of energy and environmental security and the commitment to achieve net zero across Woking borough.

Plan contact details

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⁵ However, it must be noted that local planning policy poses some barriers due to current lack of land allocated for renewables in the borough's Development Plan. Viability assessments on the potential for large scale renewable energy technologies may be able to contribute towards the evidence base for future plan-making purposes.

Appendix 1: Glossary

Glossary terms	Definition of terms
Action Surrey	Action Surrey is an impartial energy advice service through which Surrey residents can access a network of trusted, local and experienced installers for various energy saving measures, such as loft insulation, cavity and solid wall insulation, energy efficient boilers, LED lighting, solar panels and more.
Adaptation	The action or process of recognising inevitable changes and adapting to them.
Battery storage	Battery energy storage systems are rechargeable battery systems that store energy from solar arrays or the electric grid and provide that energy to a home or business.
Biodiversity	Biological diversity – or biodiversity – is the term given to the variety of life on Earth. It is the variety within and between all species of plants, animals and micro-organisms and the ecosystems within which they live and interact. (WWF)
Bioenergy	A form of renewable energy that is derived from recently living organic materials known as biomass, which can be used to produce transportation fuels, heat, electricity, and products.
Carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS)	The process of capturing and storing carbon dioxide (CO ₂) before it is released into the atmosphere.
Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO ₂ e)	A metric measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global-warming potential, by converting amounts of other gases to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide with the same global warming potential.
Carbon neutral	Making or resulting in no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The aim is to prevent the release of large quantities of CO ₂ into the atmosphere from heavy industry. It is a potential means of mitigating the contribution to climate change.
Clean electricity	Also known as green electricity or green energy, clean electricity is electrical power produced by methods that use renewable energy resources (i.e. those that can be replenished) and do not cause pollution or emissions.
Clean hydrogen	Hydrogen can be produced via electrolysis from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind or tidal power. Hydrogen fuel is a zero carbon fuel burned with oxygen. It can be used in fuel cells or internal combustion engines such as cars and buses.
Climate Change Committee	The UK's independent climate advisory body. See www.theccc.org.uk/ .

Glossary terms	Definition of terms
Climate Change Working Group	<p>The climate change working group is a cross political party group of Woking Borough Council which was established in March 2003 to discuss sustainability and environmental issues in the borough.</p> <p>The working group reviews and directs implementation of Woking 2050, the council's climate change strategy, and Natural Woking, its biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy.</p>
Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP)	The CEAP identifies actions to be taken by the council in order to eliminate our contribution to climate change in line with our climate and ecological emergency declaration.
Combined heat and power (CHP) network/district heating networks	A highly efficient process that captures and utilises the heat that is a by-product of the electricity generation process. By generating heat and power simultaneously, CHP can reduce carbon emissions by up to 30% compared to the separate means of conventional generation via a boiler and power station. The CHP network refers to a smaller 'grid' of properties to which energy from the CHP plant is supplied. The limited extent of the network reduces transmission losses.
Council estate and operations	The council's own estate and operations covers all our owned assets to reflect the responsibility and influence that we have in terms of the carbon footprint associated with all buildings in its ownership.
Decarbonisation	The process of removing or reducing carbon dioxide (CO ₂) output.
Development plan	Includes adopted local plans (such as Woking's Core Strategy), neighbourhood plans, spatial development strategies and any regional strategy policies that remain in force.
Display energy certificates (DECs)	DECs are designed to show the energy performance of public buildings. They use a scale that runs from 'A' to 'G' - 'A' being the most efficient and 'G' being the least.
Energy performance certificates (EPCs)	An energy performance certificate (EPC) measures the energy efficiency of a property on a scale of A-G. Energy Performance Certificates were introduced in England and Wales in 2007 and are a legal requirement for a building to be sold, let or constructed. Once obtained, an EPC is valid for 10 years.
Green infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities (NPPF).

Glossary terms	Definition of terms
Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)	Gases in the earth's atmosphere that absorb and emit radiation. This process is considered a fundamental cause of the greenhouse effect. The primary greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Greenhouse gases greatly affect the temperature of the Earth.
Ground source heat pump (GSHP)	Ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) use pipes that are buried in the garden to extract heat from the ground. This heat can then be used to heat radiators, underfloor or warm air heating systems and hot water in your home.
Heat pumps	A device that transfers heat from a source (such as the heat of the soil in the garden) to another location (like the hot water system of a house).
Low carbon technologies	Low and zero carbon technology is the term given to technologies that emit low levels of CO2 emissions, or no next CO2 emissions.
Mitigation	Efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases.
National Grid	The system operator of Great Britain's electricity and gas supply. This includes England, Scotland and Wales. It is the company that manages the network and distribution of electricity and gas that powers all our homes and businesses.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local people and their Councils can produce their own, distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.
Neighbourhood plan	A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area.
Net zero	Net zero means that the UK's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be equal to or less than the emissions the UK removed from the environment.
Renewable	In terms of resources, those that are renewable are not limited in availability. Their source will never run out. Coal and gas are finite resources as their stocks are exhaustible. Wind is renewable as it will forever be available.
Resilience	In the context of this plan we consider community resilience and our duty to ensure the community is able to withstand, and recover quickly from, an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare or the environment.
Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions	Scope 1 – All direct emissions from the activities of an organisation or under their control. Including fuel

Glossary terms	Definition of terms
	<p>combustion on site such as gas boilers, fleet vehicles and air-conditioning leaks.</p> <p>Scope 2 – Indirect Emissions from electricity purchased and used by the organisation. Emissions are created during the production of the energy and eventually used by the organisation.</p> <p>Scope 3 – All Other Indirect Emissions from activities of the organisation, occurring from sources that they do not own or control. These are usually the greatest share of the carbon footprint, covering emissions associated with business travel, procurement, waste and water.</p>
Solar photovoltaics (PV)	Special cells that generate a small electric current in sunlight are linked together to form photovoltaic (PV) panels. Photovoltaic means electricity from light, and the process converts solar electrical energy.
Solar thermal	The term 'solar thermal' is used to describe a system where the energy from the sun is harvested to be used for its heat. Solar thermal systems differ from solar photovoltaics, which convert sunlight directly into electricity.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on particular issues, such as climate change. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions, but are not part of the development plan.
Sustainable	This can refer to development or the use of a resource – its use or existence must be able to be continued without being detrimental to the environment, or endangering the resource for its use by future generations.
ThamesWey / ThamesWey Sustainable Communities Ltd (TSCL)	<p>The council established ThamesWey Limited in 1999 to make long-term energy and environmental project investments in support of what subsequently became the council's Climate Change Strategy.</p> <p>ThamesWey Sustainable Communities provides customer services and administration for all ThamesWey companies, as well as provide technical, strategic and project management services to both public and private sector clients in the fields of sustainable energy, energy efficiency and energy services company (ESCO) development.</p>

Glossary terms	Definition of terms
	Further information is available at www.ThamesWeygroup.co.uk

Appendix 2: Summary of actions

	Action	By When	Responsibility
1	Source 100% of corporate electricity through renewable energy contracts.	2021 and ongoing	Procurement / Building Services
2	Encourage landlords of council owned properties to change to renewable electricity supplies by the end of 2022.	2022	Estates Management
3	From 31 January 2022, all new and renewed tenancy agreements for council owned commercial properties must stipulate the use of a renewable electricity supplier / tariff.	2022	Estates Management
4	ThamesWey to continue to explore renewable heat generators to supplement and replace natural gas fired generation plant. Incorporation of renewable generators to begin by 2026, where effective technical solutions and suitable opportunities in plant replacement cycles, exist.	2025 to 2030	ThamesWey
5	Evaluate the costs of a green gas contract for supplies not met through ThamesWey.	2023	Procurement / Building Services
6	Council owned properties / landholdings to be considered for PV / wind in 2021 to increase local renewable energy generation; reduce reliance on grid electricity; and support national decarbonisation targets.	2021	Estates Management / Green Infrastructure / ThamesWey
7	15% of corporate electricity demand to be met from local renewable energy generation (PV; solar thermal; GSHP; wind etc) by 2030.	2030	Estates Management / Green Infrastructure / ThamesWey
8	Renewable energy capacity in Woking borough to be doubled from 5.5MW in 2019 to 11MW by 2030.	2030	Estates Management / Green Infrastructure / ThamesWey
9	Update the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document with a view to adoption in early 2022 to reflect national policy and guidance updates, and progress with local initiatives, which have a bearing on the application of policies CS22 and CS23 of the Core Strategy.	2021	Planning Policy
10	Summaries of key documents such as the government's 10 Point Plan and energy white paper to be added to the Planet Woking website to raise awareness of renewable energy technologies and their role in achieving net zero.	2021	Green Infrastructure
11	Case studies and articles to be added to the Planet Woking website around renewable energy technologies and their role in achieving net zero.	2021	Green Infrastructure

	Action	By When	Responsibility
12	A public engagement plan to be developed in line with the key delivery milestones of this plan.	2021/22	Green Infrastructure in liaison with Marketing Communications