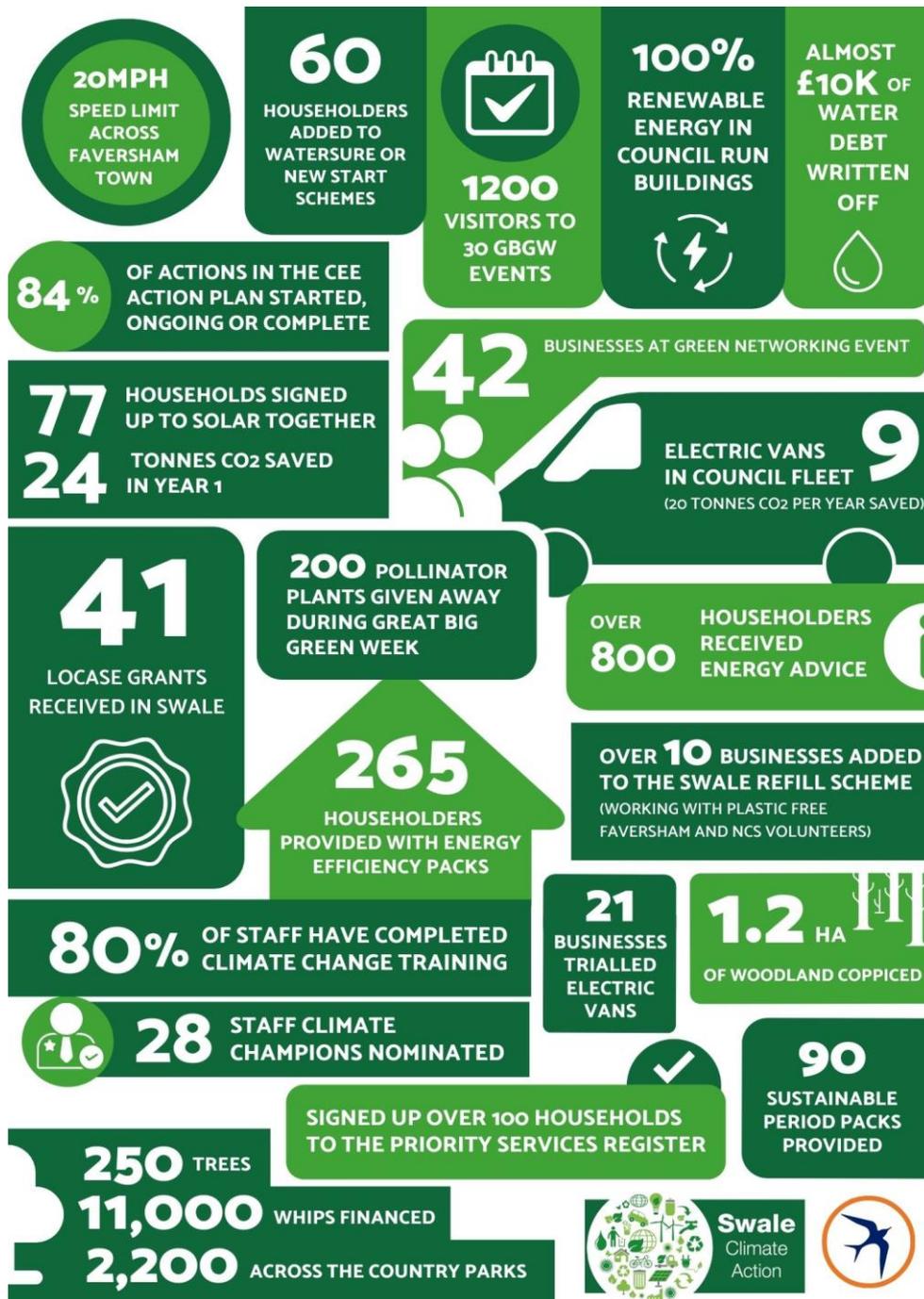




Annual Climate and Ecological Emergency Progress Report 2022



Swale Borough Council

Annual Climate and Ecological Emergency Progress Report 2022

Background

In June 2019 Swale Borough Council, in common with many other local authorities, passed a motion to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency.

Swale has some of the most ambitious targets in Kent and the UK, seeking to achieve net zero carbon for our own estate by 2025 and across the borough by 2030. Other Kent local authorities' target dates range from 2030 to 2050.

The motion included the provision of an annual report in January of each year.

This is the third annual report covering 2021's activities to address the emergency.

Despite most of the year being affected by COVID19 and the Council's operations changing dramatically, we have made considerable progress against the targets in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration.

The International UN Climate Conference – COP26 – was held in Glasgow during November. Swale Borough Council was represented by Cllr Valentine at meetings organised by UK100 – an alliance of the most climate ambitious local authorities in the UK. From a local government point of view, one of the most encouraging outcomes was to learn of the work done at a sub-national level by networks of cities, mayors and local authorities around the world. Many of the changes that will need to be made will be made at a local level. Swale Borough Council is part of a network of more than 1,000 cities and regions whose members have ambitious plans to cut carbon emissions and have committed to annual reporting of progress.

Achievements discussed in this report include:

A successful bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant Fund that will facilitate carbon reduction work in the Master's House in Sheerness. Most of our fleet vehicles have been replaced with EVs. Work on the waste contract is looking at alternative vehicles to the current contract and the new grounds maintenance contract starting on 15 January will see new electric vehicles and power tools used for the first time on this service.

The Special Projects Fund has funded projects which help to tackle the emergency. These include the appointment of a Climate and Ecological Emergency Project Officer, and the Fuel and Water Home Advice Service. The Improvement and Resilience Fund was created in 2021 and will be used in 2022 to fund LED lighting, tree planting, a car club, EV charging points and air quality measures.

We are working in partnership with KCC to explore and develop in more detail a package of measures to reduce traffic, improve flow and improve the vehicle fleet along the A2 to establish a clean air zone. We are working with schools close to AQMAs to promote sustainable travel and a schools education programme will be rolled out this year. Further air quality monitoring has been implemented. We have developed an air quality planning technical guide and trained planning officers. An anti-idling campaign has been rolled out with signage, staff training and the ability to issue fixed penalty notices for non-adherence.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

Via the Blueprint coalition we have lobbied central government for more powers and resources for local authorities to tackle the climate and ecological emergency. We lobbied our local MPs on the Environment Bill. We signed up to the Race to Zero and to date are the only Kent authority to have joined UK100 – a coalition of local authorities with ambitious climate emergency plans.

The Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration stated that we would “eliminate single-use plastic from council operations wherever possible” by 2021. A cross department audit of the council’s plastic use was undertaken and elimination or replacement of single use products is underway both in Swale House and across our estate.

A Fuel and Water Home Advice service has been developed as a way of reaching our more vulnerable residents to help them reduce bills and carbon emissions. The adviser was appointed in late 2020 and started to deliver the service in January 2021, albeit in a way different to first planned. The service has advised over 800 households across the borough on energy and water use. Late in 2021, with the backing of several members, the service has also taken on tackling period poverty with sustainable solutions.

A network of EV chargers has been installed in Council carparks. Charge points are available in Sittingbourne (Swallows and Swale House carparks, and the MSCP), Faversham (Central Car Park) and Sheerness (Rose Street car park). Despite car park use falling due to COVID19 the use of EV charge points has increased. Charge points for our own fleet have been installed and we are working on more installations across the borough. We require all new properties to have charge points.

The Planning Committee has successfully requested more renewable energy and energy-efficiency measures to be included in new developments. All new developments are encouraged to achieve a 50% saving in carbon emissions over current Building Regulations. The Local Plan will bring this down to net zero emissions by 2030. A guide for developers including examples of how the 50% reduction in carbon emissions can be achieved is available on the council’s website.

The Solar Together programme saw over 70 applications for solar PV installation -16 of these opted to also install battery storage. We continue to support community solar projects.

We successfully bid for £170,000 from the Forestry Commission for the Local Authority Tree Fund for the planting and subsequent maintenance of 11,000 whips and 250 standard trees. Sites for planting have been identified. We will plant in early 2022.

COVID19 has accelerated the move to virtual and hybrid meetings and new ways of working, resulting in business and commuting miles falling dramatically. However, other challenges have arisen, such as the increase in household waste as a result of more working from home.

Kent Wildlife Trust approached Swale to be their only local authority partner in Kent in their Wilder Carbon project. We are working with them and local landowners to explore offsetting opportunities.

Establishing a Baseline

To achieve our targets, we need to monitor the existing situation in both the Council and the borough as a whole. Latest figures on CO₂ emissions are released annually by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The latest figures give us the data until the end of 2019. Waste collection figures are similarly only updated to the end of the 2019/2020 financial year. Until the most update statistics are provided, we will not be able to understand the impact of the Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration in 2019.

As set out by the Tyndall Centre, Swale should aim for an annual emissions reduction of at least 13% per year and up to 25% in order to achieve our targets.

Energy Consumption and Emissions

Due to the nature of the types of businesses, Swale has always had higher energy consumption and carbon emissions from the commercial and industrial sector in comparison to other Kent districts (as seen in figure 1). The commercial and industrial sector are responsible for most of the carbon emissions in Swale. Emissions from this sector have reduced since a peak in 2010, which has contributed substantially to a reduction in the overall carbon emissions in the borough.

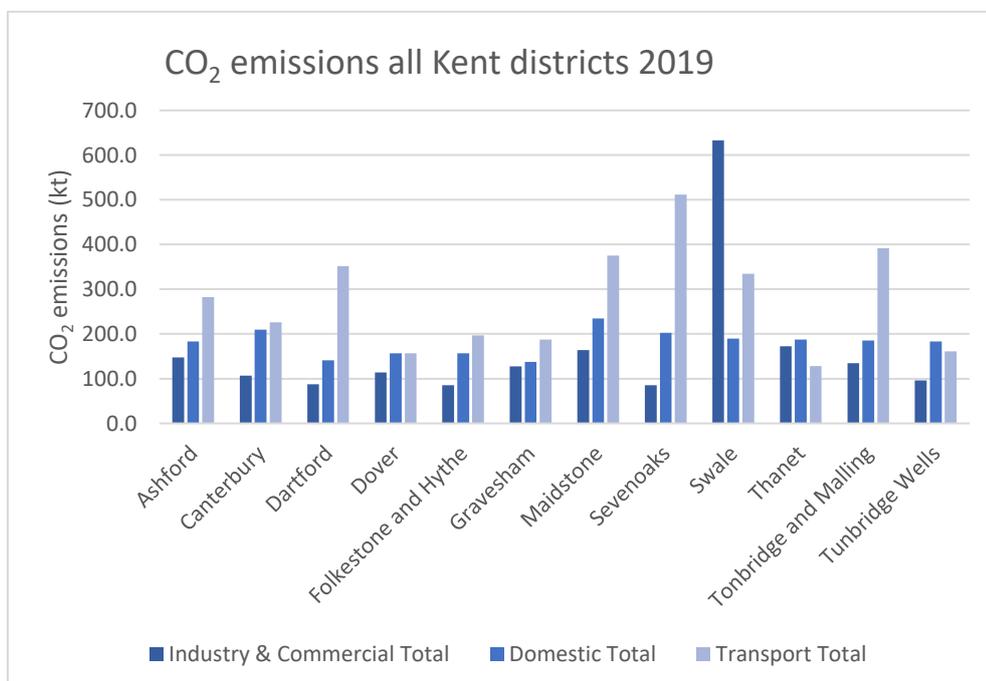


Figure 1 - Source BEIS

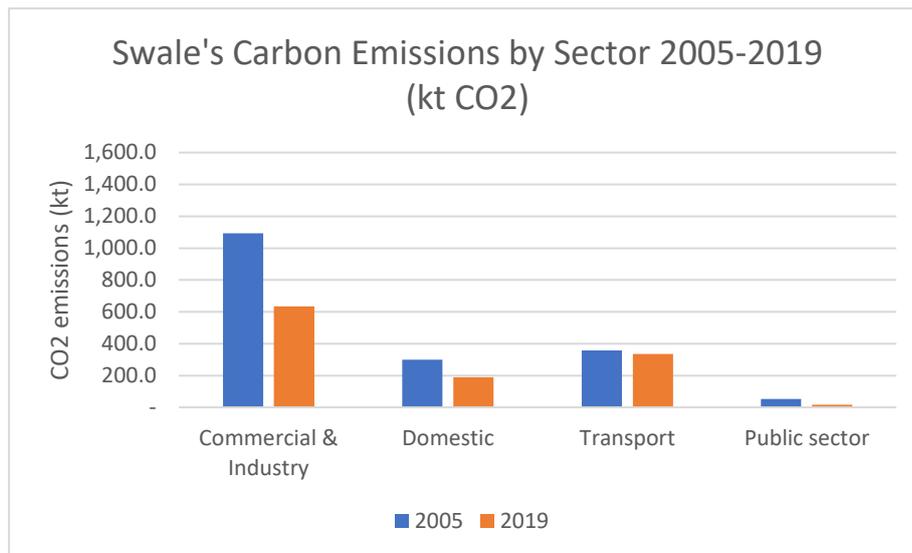


Figure 2 - Source BEIS

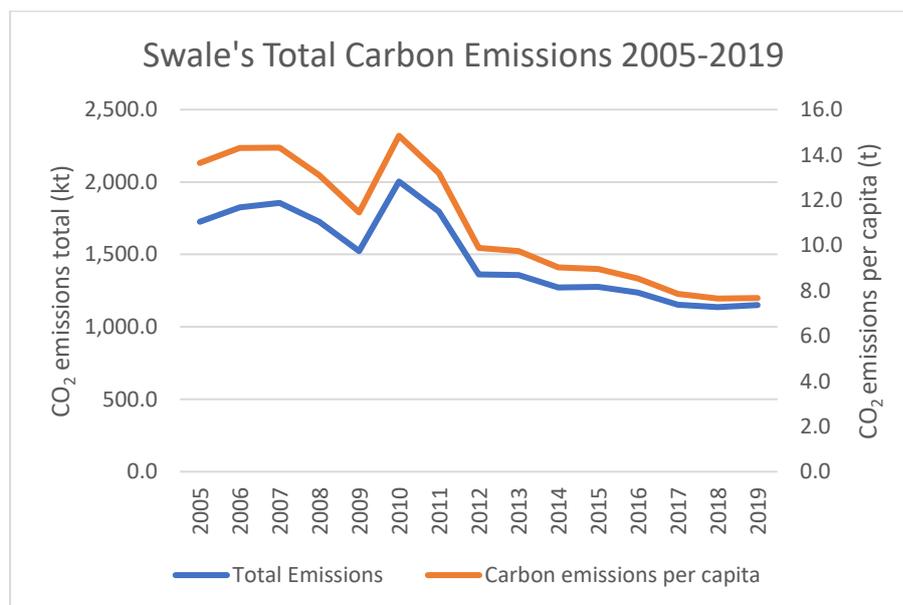


Figure 3 - Source BEIS

In Swale in 2019, 16% of emissions came from domestic properties, 29% from transport, and 55% are industrial and commercial emissions (see figure 2). Despite total emissions increasing slightly from 2018 to 2019, per capita emissions have remained the same due to an increase in population (figure 3) The total carbon emissions from the borough have generally decreased over time.

In figures 4, 5 and 6 below the legend of the y-axis on the left refers to emissions from Swale, the legend on the right refers to Kent.

Industrial and Commercial Sector

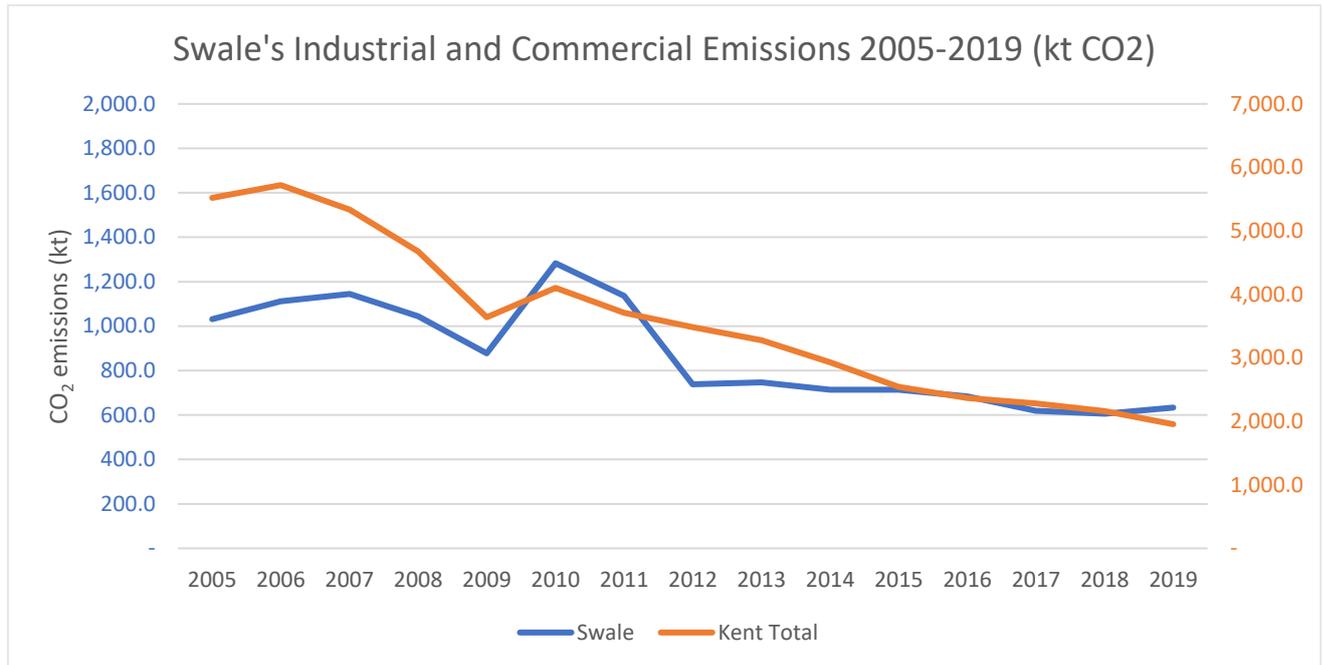


Figure 4 - Source BEIS

At both borough and county level there has been a decrease in emissions from industry. Within Swale’s industrial and commercial sector (figure 4) there has been a 38.6% decrease in CO₂ emissions between 2005-2019. Between 2018-2019 there was, however, a 4.52% increase in industrial and commercial CO₂ emissions.

Transport

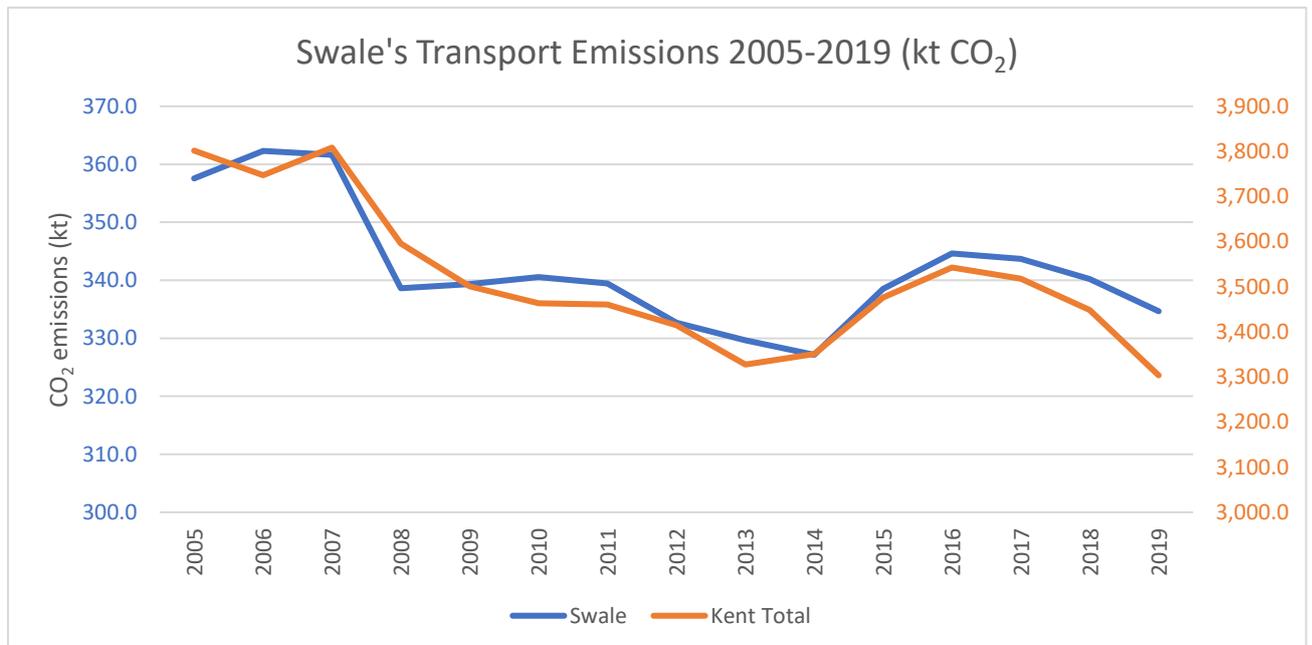


Figure 5 - Source BEIS

In Swale, transport emissions had fallen by 7% between 2005-2014, but rose again by 6% between 2014 and 2017. However, this has started to decrease again between 2017 and 2019, by 2.6% (as shown in figure 5), matching the trend across the county.

Domestic

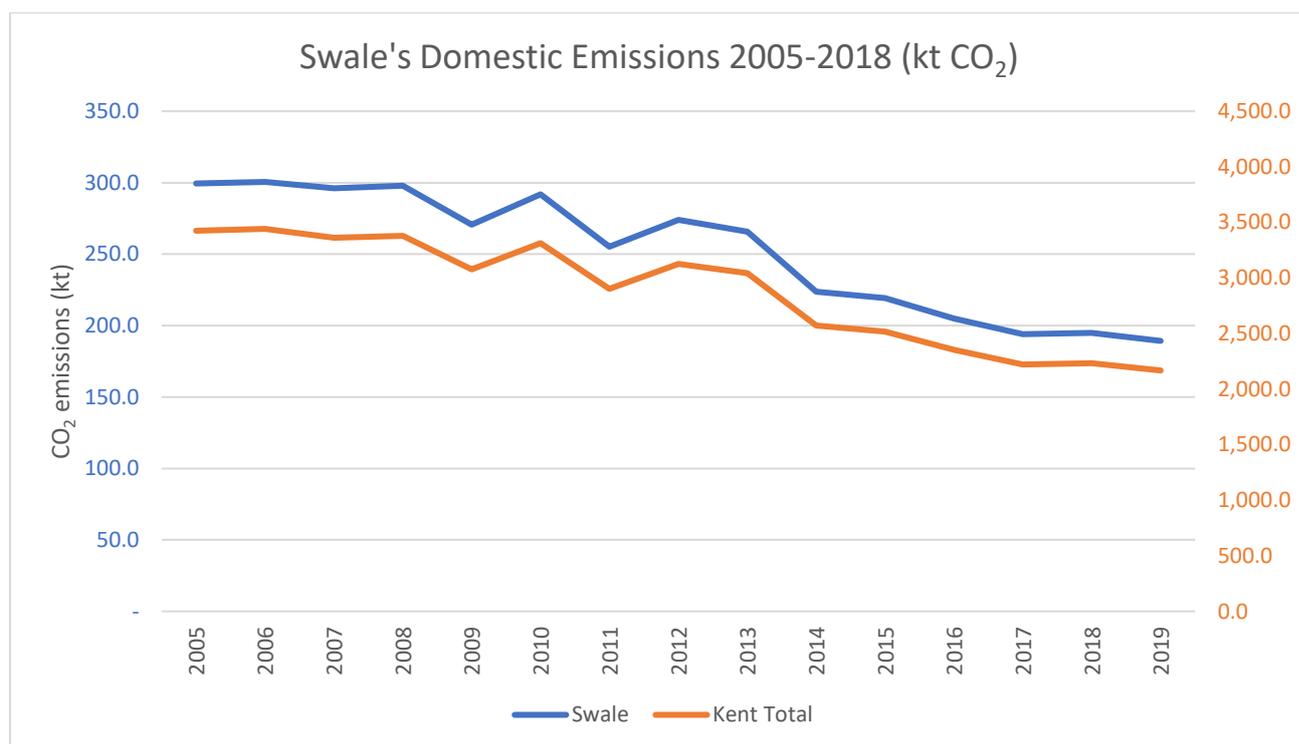


Figure 6 - Source BEIS

Swale’s domestic emissions (2019 figures) are the 4th highest in the County, with 67% resulting from domestic gas emissions, for which Swale also ranks 4th. Overall domestic emissions have decreased at a faster rate since 2013.

Overall, emissions across all sectors have been decreasing per capita – in 2005 per capita emissions were at 13.8 tonnes and have decreased to 7.7 tonnes in 2019.

Public Sector Emissions

The BEIS data for 2005-2019, published in 2021, now includes public sector emissions. Figure 7 shows Swale to have had some of the highest public sector emissions in Kent when compared to other districts. However, this has decreased significantly in recent years.

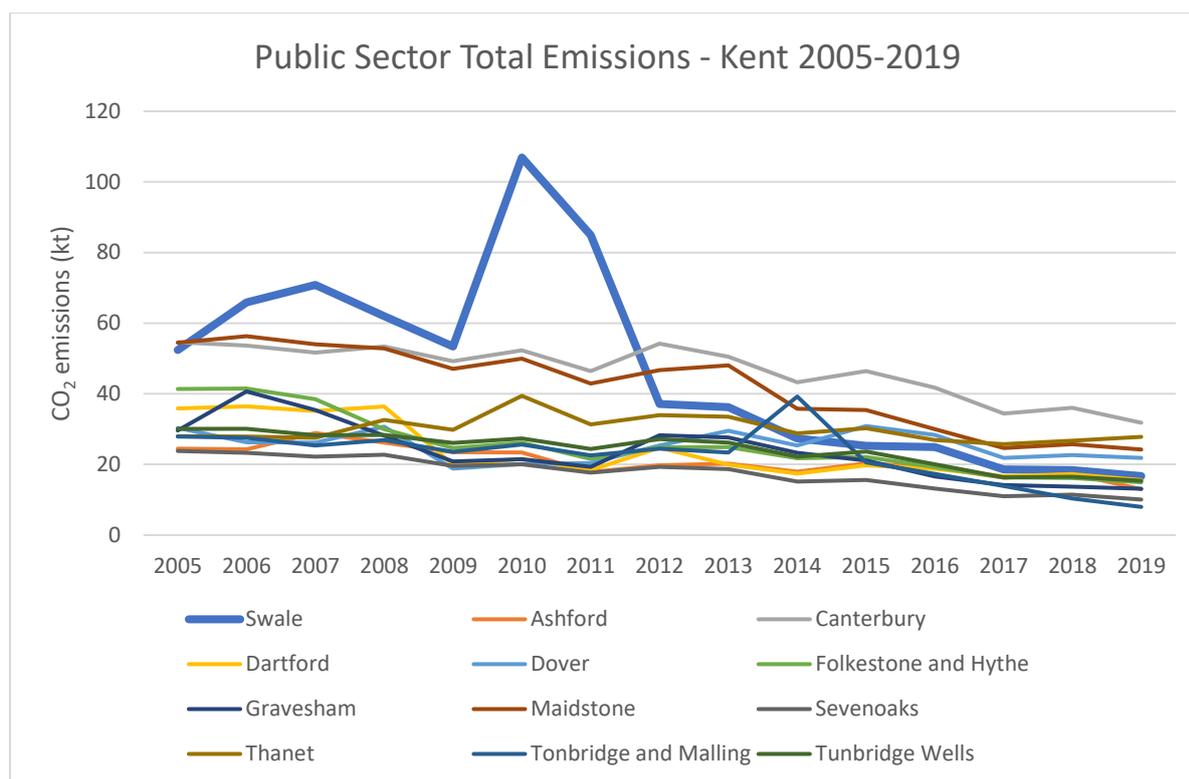


Figure 7 – Source BEIS

Renewable Energy

At the end of 2020 there were 1,825 installation sites producing renewable electricity in Swale, and 99.1% of these were photovoltaic. The majority of these were domestic roof top installations. In addition there are seven commercial solar PV sites, 10 onshore wind installations, three sites generating renewable energy from sewerage gas, or land fill gas, or municipal solid waste and one site generating energy from biomass. Swale also has two domestic wind installations.

These sites, plus offshore wind, provide a total capacity of 802MW of electricity 79% of this comes from offshore wind, and the rest comes from solar photovoltaics (8%), municipal solid waste (6%) onshore wind (4%), sewerage gas (<1%), landfill gas (<1%) and plant biomass (3%).

The Smart Export Guarantee came into force in January 2020, enabling domestic and small-scale renewable energy generators to be paid for energy fed into the grid.

The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is a government scheme that aims to encourage the uptake of renewable heat technologies amongst householders, communities, and businesses, through financial incentives for fitting technologies such as heat pumps, solar thermal water heating and biomass boilers.

Between April 2014 and July 2020, 140 domestic installations had been accredited for the RHI in Swale. The scheme is due to close in March 2022.

Household Waste

As the waste collection authority, we have targets to reduce the amount of residual waste collected and increase the proportion of materials sent for recycling and composting. However, with more people working from home due to Covid, this has been extremely challenging and like most waste collection authorities, Swale has seen an increase in household waste being collected (figure 9). However, when these figures are measured as Kg of residual waste per household, the borough of Swale compare favourably with others in the Mid-Kent waste partnership. The relative percentage of materials being recycled at the kerbside made a small improvement in 2020/21 when compared with the previous years' figures. In 2020/21 41.4% of materials placed out for collection were recycled. This is likely due to various campaigns undertaken to increase recycling and as a result, garden waste subscription figures have increased in the past year to over 20,000 customers.

A waste audit is planned through the Kent Resource Partnership for early 2022 where a sample of the contents of waste from residents' green bins can be assessed to identify where future campaigns are needed to improve on recycling statistics.

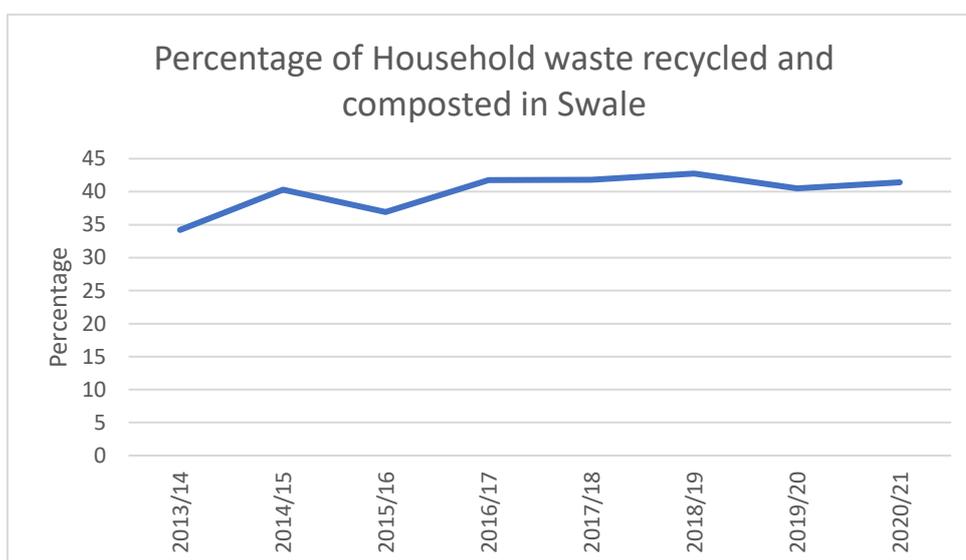


Figure 8 - Source KRP Annual Report

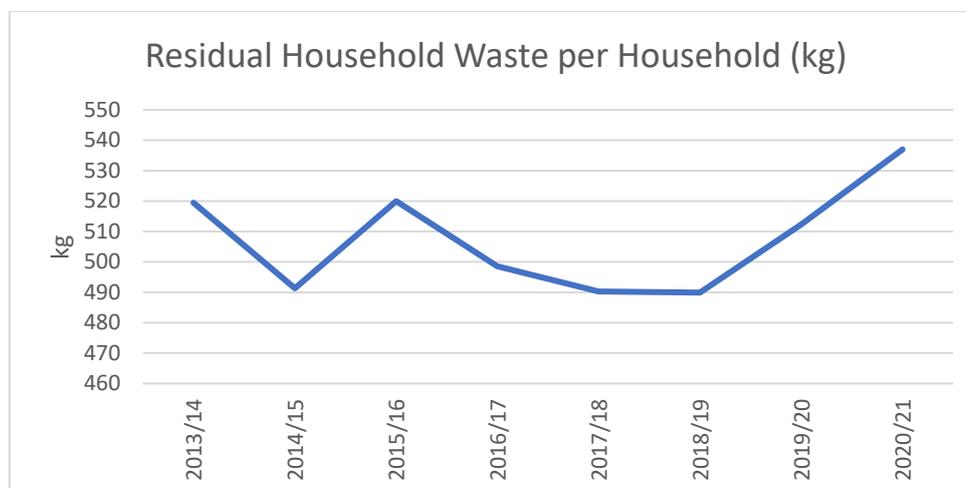


Figure 9 - Source KRP Annual Report

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

In the past year, Swale BC has been actively involved in government consultations that may impact upon the future of waste services considerably. Feedback has been given to the government on their Resources and Waste Strategy papers around consistent waste collections, Deposit Recycling Schemes and Extended Producer Responsibility. Improvements in these areas will significantly impact upon the waste and recycling created at the kerbside. At the time of writing, we are awaiting the outcomes of those consultations.

With a new street cleansing and waste collection contract due in October 2023, the draft specification highlights the aspirations of the Mid-Kent Waste Partnership to make improvements in reduced carbon emissions and a collection service that maximises recycling.

Swale Borough Council's response to the climate and ecological emergency

The Climate and Ecological Emergency was declared on 26 June 2019, shortly after the new coalition administration took office following the May 2019 local elections.

Our Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan was adopted by Cabinet on Earth Day - 22 April 2020. It was approved by Council in October 2020.

The full action plan can be found [here](#)¹. The Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan sets out the Council's strategy and identifies some enabling tools that are essential to progress across a wide range of areas. The plan then identifies a set of specific actions in the following areas: Council operations; Buildings and energy efficiency; Transport and air quality; Resource consumption and waste; Ecology and biodiversity; Resilience, adaptation and offsetting. This report reviews progress under each of these headings.

Enabling Tools – Cross Cutting Themes and Actions

Swale Borough Council recognises that there are cross-cutting actions needed to underpin the specific actions targeted at the particular causes of carbon emissions. The strategy set out in the Action Plan is based on an approach to Lead, Show, Support.

LEAD: We will lead by taking actions to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's own operations and to enhance biodiversity in the management of the Council's own estate.

SHOW: Use the council's improved operations and estate as beacon of good practice on the road to net zero.

SUPPORT: Assist businesses, organisations and residents to take their own actions and to build the capacity to move towards a low carbon economy in Swale.

¹ <https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Climate-Change-and-Ecological-Emergency/SBC%20CEE%20Action%20Plan%20Final%20with%20illustrations.pdf>



Swale Business Event, November 2021

This plan requires that actions which address the carbon footprint of the Council's own operations will be an early focus.

Table 1, below, sets out progress on the enabling actions identified in the Action Plan.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

Dept.	Action	Progress Dec 2021
1 Resources and HR	<p>Rolling out a climate change learning and development programme for staff to improve understanding of carbon and the wider environmental context. The skills programme will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base level training for all employees • Encouraging personal responsibility and roll out of a Green Champions Network. • More targeted/ intensive training for organisational decision-makers to enable them to adequately assess carbon impacts in their decisions 	<p>All staff briefings delivered; E-learning module developed and completed by 80% of staff; 28 Green Champions recruited and activities started. Carbon Literacy training developed and planned for Spring 2022.</p>
2 Resources	<p>Sharing our knowledge – we will provide capacity to share our learning and approaches with others, such as town and parish councils and community groups.</p>	<p>Talks given to Sittingbourne Rotary Club and Faversham Town Council. 30 events co-ordinated during Great Big Green Week in September in collaboration with 15 community organisations, with over 1200 people attending. With SBC funding MSEP is delivering Climate Change Education - 140 children reached. A full engagement report can be found at Appendix 1.</p>
3 Resources	<p>Promotion of low carbon food through council facilities and communication. Promotion of vegan and vegetarian diets using seasonal, local sources to support local food networks.</p>	<p>Largely on hold due to COVID. Business Event had vegan catering; Christmas tips given.</p>
4 Resources	<p>Identify and align to national days of action to reinforce the message of collective action.</p>	<p>Timetable drawn up and activities delivered in 2021. New timetable for 2022.</p>
5 Cabinet	<p>A special projects fund has been set up to fund projects including those to tackle the emergency.</p>	<p>Fund used to finance Carbon Trust report, Project Officer and Fuel and Water adviser. Improvement and Resilience Fund will be used in 2022 to fund LED lighting, tree planting, car club, EV charging points and Air Quality measures.</p>

Table 1

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

Ten High Priority Key Actions

In addition to the enabling tools, we selected ten actions to be classed as 'high priority' for 2021. They are shown in table 2 below and discussed under the theme headings which follow.

Action	Target date	Annual carbon reduction (tCO2e)	Progress Dec 2021
1 Retro-fit Swale House to cut carbon emissions (e.g. extra insulation, window replacement).	2025	186	Bid to Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund successful, however the funding will now be used for the Master's House in Sheerness. Major works tender for Swale House works opened 22 nd Nov, closing 31 st Jan 22.
2 Revise procurement strategy to embed the climate and ecological emergency into all procurement decisions.	2023	780	The new policy was adopted by Cabinet on 27th October. This new policy provides more emphasis on this topic and crucially require contractors to report back throughout contract terms on their achievement of targets. The Procurement officer has joined the procurement sub-group of the Kent Climate Change Network.
3 Tree planting on council land (target; 148,100 trees or 60 acres of woodland) to offset 20% of council emissions.	2025	1,481t offset of woodland	Open space survey undertaken and potential tree planting locations identified. Successful bid made to Forestry Commission via KCC for Local Authority Tree Fund funding for planting and subsequent maintenance of 11,000 whips and 250 standard trees for planting prior to end of March 2022. Currently undertaking procurement for supply of the trees and contractor to plant. Other additional tree planting also being undertaken within open spaces throughout borough. Two staff tree planting days in December resulted in almost 150 trees being planted. Other volunteers have planted 1100 trees this year (in country parks). A series of events took place on Faversham Rec to mark Tree Week.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

4	Improve facilities and incentives for walking and cycling.	2030	Large	<p>The Transport Strategy is progressing – timeline parallel to local plan Faversham LCWIP to be completed in the next few months. There is interest in developing LCWIPs in Sittingbourne & Sheerness.</p> <p>An update report on the progress of the Swale Cycling and Walking Guidance Statement 2018-2022 was taken to the Environment, Health and Wellbeing Committee on the 20 October 2021. The report also started to ask the questions which will inform the next version of the Guidance Statement.</p> <p>The Linking Coast to Downs project team has continued to develop the cycling and walking routes. Two of the routes have been agreed. Consultation has continued with landowners and relevant parish councils to identify any issues. The Sittingbourne route has almost been finalised, subject to the agreement of a final stage to connect the route to Milton Creek Country Park. The team are also looking at the capital spend for the project and investigating possible locations for improvements such as cycle racks.</p> <p>Cabinet also agreed to the recruitment of an Active Travel Co-ordinator on an 18-month fixed term appointment to support this work area.</p> <p>Consultation on active travel solutions undertaken.</p>
5	Increase engagement with staff to roll out learning about the climate & ecological emergency.	Short		<p>E learning module developed and completed by almost 80% of staff. Other Kent LAs interested in using.</p> <p>Green Champions recruited across the council and activities started.</p> <p>Regular intranet messages and days of action.</p>
6	Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions and improve ecology and biodiversity.	Medium	Medium	<p>Promotion of business fleet decarbonisation and work-place car chargers ongoing. Energy improvement grant signposting ongoing via e-bulletin for businesses.</p> <p>24 Swale businesses have trialled commercial EVs under the Kent REV scheme and 3 have subsequently taken up loans to purchase EVs.</p> <p>41 Swale Businesses have received LoCASE grants</p> <p>In November we held a business event to launch our Clean Growth Grant scheme and raise awareness of COP26. 42 Businesses attended. 50 businesses applied for grants worth over £400k</p> <p>Refill Scheme promoted to and supported by businesses.</p>

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

7	Set up an offset fund to enable off-site offsetting within the borough.	Short	Large	Working with Kent Wildlife Trust under their Wilder Carbon project to explore offsetting possibilities with local landowners
8	Decrease the amount of household waste collected and increase proportion of material that goes to recycling or composting.	Short	Medium	<p>Provisional Q2 weights for residual waste per household is 126kg (which is below target of 132kg).</p> <p>Work has recommenced to investigate food collections as a viable option for Marine Town, Sheerness. Pumpkin bins were put out around the borough after Halloween to encourage people to recycle their pumpkins.</p> <p>SBC are working with Kent Resource Partnership and Recoup on a Plastics Campaign to improve the public's understanding of Plastics Recycling.</p> <p>By Dec 21 garden waste bin subscribers had risen to 20128 from 17796 in Jan 21, an increase of 13%.</p> <p>Recycling messaging regularly shared via social media and quarterly magazine.</p>
9	Ensure LED lighting is fitted across the council estate, including parks and open spaces.	2023	19	LED roll out complete in Swale House. A full survey of all our lighting assets in Swale, both within our open spaces and within our off-street car parks undertaken. Some car park lighting units already upgraded to LED, so will not require any work. The Improvement and Resilience fund has allocated £70,000 for replacement of standard bulbs for LEDs. Currently preparing tender specification and prioritising locations based on 1) no surrounding light provision, 2) immediate column issues and 3) those with high footfall.
10	Improve air quality, focussing on AQMAs along the A2 and the setting up of an EV car-club.	Short	Small	<p>Anti-idling campaign approved by Cabinet. FPNs developed and frontline staff trained. Signage in place outside schools and taxi ranks. Taxi drivers regularly reminded via newsletters</p> <p>20mph zone in Faversham developed by FTC & KCC and trial ongoing.</p> <p>Clean Air Zone feasibility study and options appraisal completed. Working with KCC to explore delivery.</p> <p>School programme developed and due to start in January 2022</p>

Table 2

Progress against all actions can be found here https://swale.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/408594/All-Action-Progress-for-Annual-Report-22-public-A.pdf

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

The graph below gives an indication of overall progress. With the targets for Council operations by 2025 and Borough by 2030 this shows a good level of progress. The following pages summarise the key achievements over the year in each of the areas of the action plan.

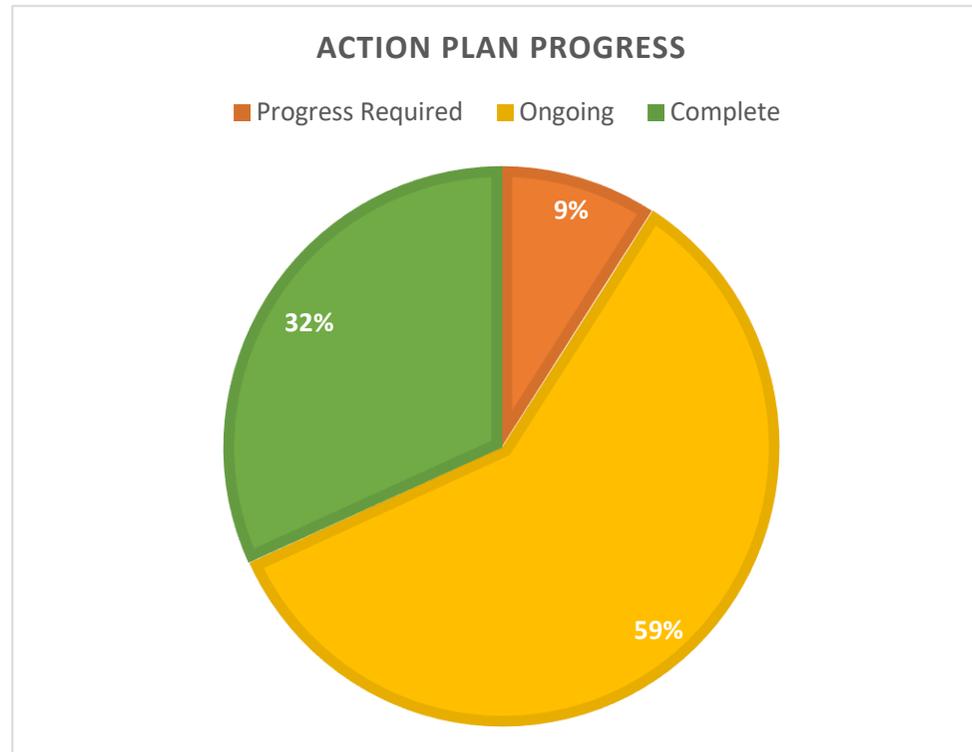


Figure 10 – Progress at December 2021

Council Operations

The Carbon Trust was appointed to undertake carbon foot-printing and baselining of our own estate and to propose steps to achieve carbon net zero across council operations by 2025.

The report was completed in early 2020 - the full version of which can be found [here](#)². To reach the target of carbon neutrality by 2025, it was identified that the Council must reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions by approximately 68 tCO₂e per year, and scope 3 emissions by 994 tCO₂e per year.

Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy. Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the Council, including both upstream and downstream emissions. This equates to a 14% reduction in emissions year on year to achieve the target.

The Carbon Trust made several recommendations for our buildings and contracts which we have already fulfilled, such as the electrification of our fleet - 9 electric vehicles are now in use, saving almost 20 tonnes of CO₂ each year. The Mayor's car is now an EV, as is the Staying Put Handyman's van and an EV pool car will shortly be available to staff. The parking wardens' two vehicles are electric vehicles.



Our EV fleet and charging points, Swale House January 2021

² <https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Climate-Change-and-Ecological-Emergency/Carbon-Trust-Report-on-Swales-Carbon-Footprint.pdf>

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

A working group has been set up to examine options for the new waste contract which will start in 2023. The Carbon Trust report showed that about half of the council's carbon footprint arises from the waste contract. Ways in which the impact of the waste collections on carbon emissions and air quality may be reduced is under consideration by the working group. The specification for the new waste contract has highlighted the desire for reducing carbon emissions and as the process progresses, industry will be invited to advise how this may be achievable.

The Council has recently retendered for its ground's maintenance service. The new contract starts 15 January 2022. The winning tender bid has included a number of improvements which will be fully detailed in next year's plan, however as a summary it includes electric vehicles for supervisor and litter collection vehicles, electric handheld power tools, a commitment to the steady reduction and then complete elimination of the use of pesticides over the five-year contract and consideration of increased biodiversity and varied maintenance regimes including more wildlife areas.

The tender is now out for the refurbishment of Swale House and contractors are expected to be appointed in Spring 2022.

The bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant Fund was successful and this will be used in the Masters House refurbishment which is due to start in Spring 2022.

Swale House now has LED lighting throughout. A full survey of all of our lighting assets in Swale, both within our open spaces and within our off-street car parks has been undertaken. Plans are being drawn up to upgrade to LED any lighting units that have not already been converted. LEDs consume up to 70% less energy.

Swale House and other buildings under our control now have both 100% renewable electricity supplies and bio-methane gas supplies.

Buildings and Energy Efficiency

The next Local Plan is being prepared and incorporates actions for buildings and energy efficiency set out in the Action Plan. Already, new housing developments are encouraged to reduce carbon emissions by 50% more than required in the current Building Regulations. Guidance has been published to illustrate how developers can achieve the reduction. Applicants are signposted towards this information when seeking pre-application advice.

We are working with the Kent Wildlife Trust to explore offsetting options for both our own estate and new developments. Where the carbon emissions of a development cannot be reduced, the developer would make a payment into the fund to enable the carbon emissions to be offset elsewhere in the Borough. The carbon price will be set to allow onsite carbon reduction to provide the lower cost option, to encourage carbon emissions to be avoided rather than offset.

A scheme to encourage householders to fit solar PV, Solar Together, has run throughout 2021 with 77 households signing up, 14 of these have also chosen to install battery storage and 3 households with existing solar have signed up for retrofitted

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

battery storage. Installations so far (29) result in an estimated 26.5 tonnes CO₂ reduction in year 1. Another round will be run in 2022.

We pledged through the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration to take steps to avoid any adverse impacts on our most vulnerable residents. After a delay due to COVID19, Children and Families were able to roll out the Fuel and Water Adviser service from January. The service is available to vulnerable residents across the borough, albeit in a different way to originally planned. This year 265 householders have been provided with energy efficiency packs. Over 800 householders received energy advice or fuel and water saving items. Almost £10,000 of water debt was written off vulnerable householders' water accounts. Sixty householders were added to WaterSure or New start schemes and over 100 households were signed up to the Priority Services Register.



Energy and Water efficiency products and information distributed by our Fuel and Water Adviser

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

Towards the end of 2021 it became evident that period poverty was affecting many Swale households. The Fuel and Water Adviser, supported by Cabinet members for the Climate Emergency and Health and Wellbeing, has taken this on board and has developed 'Swale Sisters' - a project that not only supports those in period poverty but educates around reusable sanitary products, thus reducing waste and pollution. So far this year, over 100 packs have been given out saving up to 5kg of CO₂ per person per annum. It is anticipated that at least 900 packs will be given out in 2022.

Transport and Air Quality

Swale Borough Council's 2018 Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in September 2019, identifying key strategic and local measures targeted to improve air quality within all five of its declared AQMAs.

A new Air Quality Management Area for the Keycol Hill (AQMA 7) and an amendment to St Paul's Street to include particulates (AQMA 4) were declared by Swale Borough Council in October 2020.

The Council commissioned two projects to gather evidence and identify the sources of particulates contributing to the increase of PM10 at the St Paul's Street air quality monitoring station. The results are feeding into an Air Quality Action Plan which identifies targeted measures to improve air quality at St Paul's Street.

One of the key strategic measures is the introduction of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) along the length of the A2 within the borough. A feasibility study to assess the costs and air quality benefits of a CAZ was been undertaken by independent consultants Ricardo. The study includes baseline air quality modelling, the development of potential mitigation options and appraisal of these options using an indicative cost benefit analysis. The findings were published in December 2020 following Cabinet approval. Work is ongoing with KCC to deliver the CAZ.

We are working with primary schools (Ospringe, Newington and Lower Halstow), and KCC to support adoption and improvement of smarter travel plans for the schools. This links to our Clean Air for Schools scheme. A Kent wide bid to Defra's Air Quality Grant Scheme for an education package was successful and the package was developed and trialled in 2021. It is expected to go live in January 2022.

We have established an anti-idling campaign, initially around school sites, from which it can be expanded. This has been approved by the Cabinet. Paperwork for fixed penalty notices have been approved and frontline staff trained. Signage is in place outside schools. Four schools have had targeted visits to date, with good adherence by residents when questioned and no need for penalties to be issued. A list of hotspots has been drawn up to visit next year.



Anti-idling sign opposite Davington Primary School

The Planning Policy team has incorporated an air quality policy into the emerging Local Plan.

Faversham now has a town-wide 20 mph speed limit, which will help to improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions, improve road safety and encourage more journeys to be made by walking and cycling. Surrounding villages are considering similar schemes.

Staff cycle storage and showering facilities have been improved and the limit for the cycle to work scheme has been raised to £2000 to permit the purchase of e-bikes. In 2021 five employees took advantage of the scheme and it will remain open throughout 2022.

Resource Consumption and Waste

Wherever possible, use of single-use plastics has been eliminated in Swale House and across our estate. Cleaning product packing has been changed. Drinks machines using plastic sachets have been removed. Vending machine – both food and drink – contracts were not renewed. Biodegradable tree guards are being used for tree and hedge planting in the council's country parks.

Following a cross departmental audit of plastic use 143 plastic items were found to be in use 88 of which could be classed as 'single-use'. The most prevalent were bottles,

bags and pens. Teams are introducing recyclable and non-single-use items, running down existing stocks first. The full report on this can be found at appendix 2.

Work is ongoing to decrease the amount of household waste collected by promoting each separate method of recycling and to increase the amount of garden and food waste collected for compost. We are also working to reduce contamination of recycling that leads to rejected loads, for example through working with the Kent Resource Partnership on a county-wide education/communication programme. Bin stickers with recycling messages have been rolled out across the Borough.



Blue bin sticker



Green bin sticker

Bin stickers placed on bins throughout the Borough

Via social media and press releases, we are signposting residents to recycling facilities for products that cannot be recycled in the kerbside collections.

Community litter picks have been supported when COVID restrictions have permitted activities. Measures have been taken to reduce the amount of plastic litter in the sea. We are working with KCC to reduce the export abroad of recyclables and maintain the low levels of Swale waste that goes to landfill.

We are promoting the reduced use of single-use plastic in partnership with Plastic-Free Faversham and Plastic-Free Sheerness. Events were held across the borough during Great Big Green Week with 30 events and over 1000 attendees, including a theatre workshop for children highlighting the dangers of plastic in the oceans.



The whale on Faversham Rec which highlighted the dangers of plastics in our oceans during Great Big Green Week

Feedback on the week can be found in Appendix 3.

We are promoting improved recycling of commercial waste with businesses across the Borough via our business ebulletin. Collection of dry recycling and food waste has been introduced for Swale House where previously it was all dealt with as one waste stream. We can now recycle coffee cups, crisp packets, pens and blister packs.

We supported the Faversham Clothes Swap in December 2021 and are working with schools on textile recycling schemes.

Ecology and Biodiversity

A baseline audit of our existing trees has been undertaken. An open space survey has also been undertaken and potential tree planting locations have been identified. We prepared and submitted via KCC, a successful bid to the Forestry Commission Local Authority Tree Fund for planting and subsequent maintenance of 11,000 whips and 250 standard trees for planting prior to end of March 2022. We are currently undertaking procurement for supply of trees and a contractor to plant them.

Staff had two opportunities to undertake planting at Church Marshes resulting in almost 150 trees being planted. Other volunteers have planted 1100 trees this year



Tree Planting at Milton Creek

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

Machine bulb planting took place at Trots Hall Gardens in Sittingbourne. Two hundred square metres of bulbs and seed mix were added to the open space to improve the area for residents, increase biodiversity and provide a green corridor for pollinating insects. We are promoting projects that encourage pollinators including KCC's Plan Bee and Get Swale Growing.

We are reducing our use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer and encouraging the use of compost from food waste recycling. This year for the first time we gave away 3 tonnes, or 150 bags, of compost to householders. We hope to repeat this annually as it really highlights the circular economy of using our food waste collected in Swale as compost to promote tree and plant growth.

The renewed grounds maintenance contract also included increased provisions to reduce fertilisers, pesticides and weed killers, as well as a commitment to replace vehicles and tools with electric models from year 1.

Unfortunately, the Environment Grant scheme for communities was suspended during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID19. The scheme reopened for applications in November 2021 and we hope to make grants early in 2022.

Developers are being encouraged to leave gaps in garden walls and fences for hedgehogs. Warning stickers from the Hedgehog Preservation Society have been added to trimmers and other heavy machinery used by SBC contractors, Blenwood. Operatives have also been made more aware of the need to protect wildlife through training talks.



Hedgehog awareness sticker on Blenwood machinery

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

This year 1.2 ha of coppicing occurred in Perry Wood. This brings work in line with the management plan. All the timber has been used for fencing locally. Coppicing enhances biodiversity, allowing wildflowers and insects to thrive as light reaches the woodland floor.

Via the Green Grid we have supported Trees for Farms and Faversham Tree Week.

The recently drafted Local Plan includes policies to improve development outcomes with support for access and recreation, green spaces, biodiversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation. There are policies to ensure the installation and maintenance of landscaping in new developments to contribute to biodiversity net gain via suitable conditions or Section 106 agreements. We have gone beyond the Government requirement of a 10% biodiversity net gain and are seeking a net gain of 20%.

We were approached in 2021 by the Kent Wildlife Trust to be their only Kent local authority partner in their Wilder Carbon Project which is investigating both offsetting and biodiversity net gain. We are working with them and a local landowner to explore offsetting opportunities for our own estate initially and then to broaden the offer to developers

Energy Generation and Storage

We are signposting residents and businesses through communicating the benefits of installing energy storage with grid balancing capability.

Permission has been granted, by the Secretary of State, for the Cleve Hill Solar Park. This will consist of 800,000 solar panles over an area of approximately 360 hectares on the Graveney Marshes. It will have the capacity to generate 350MW of electricity and will have 700MW of battery storage.

The Local Plan draft includes policy on renewable technology at micro and macro levels.



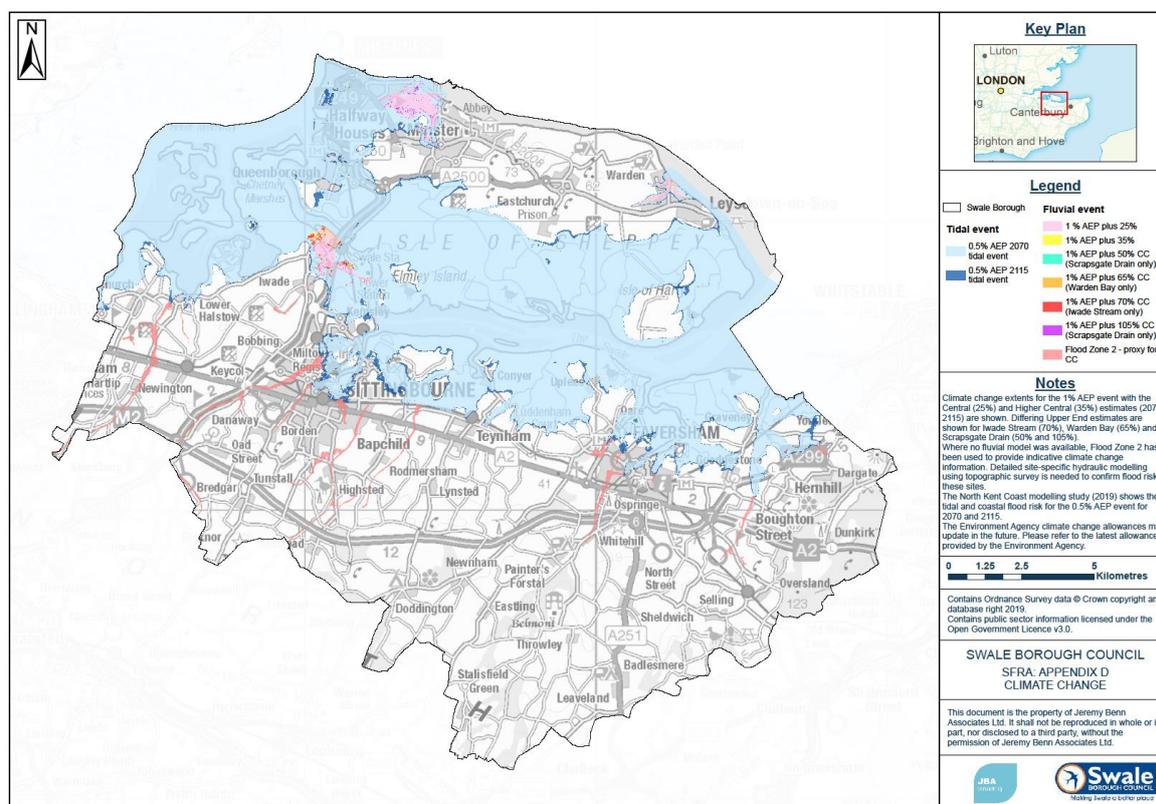
A community owned 5MW solar farm near Iwade that uses profits to support community projects

Resilience, Adaptation and Offsetting

The draft Local Plan includes policy on climate change adaptation.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments have been undertaken and the Local Plan will reflect the level of current and future flood risk, and development in flood risk areas will be avoided.

The Local Plan will provide for linking habitat restoration and creation to improve access, flood protection and water quality, and the installation and maintenance of green infrastructure via suitable conditions or Section 106 agreements in subsequent developments.



Potential flooding in Swale

We regularly update the Emergency Plan for the borough in partnership with the County Council and make sure everyone is able to access the information they need to assess any risk to their lives, livelihoods, health and prosperity posed by flooding and coastal erosion.

We bring the public, private and third sectors together to work with communities and individuals to reduce the risk of harm – particularly those in vulnerable areas. We have supported communities in the development of their localised emergency and flood plans. We advertise the Environment Agency run awareness weeks.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

We are working with the Environment Agency, KCC and the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board to manage flood risk and coastal erosion as appropriate across the Borough.

COVID19

At the start of 2020 we could not have anticipated the effect COVID19 would have on all our lives. We had anticipated a return to some sort of normality in 2021, however COVID19 has dominated this year too with Swale House only opening to the public from mid-November. Staff have embraced the new ways of working.

While COVID19 has delayed some actions, there have been some positive impacts. We have moved far more rapidly than expected into the use of virtual and hybrid meetings. All councillors now have dedicated SBC laptops and online council meetings have been a success.

Home working and hybrid working has largely proved to be effective, meaning that business and commuting miles have fallen dramatically. The challenge we now face is to be aware of actions that may need to be taken to prevent a return to 'pre-pandemic' working habits. The recovery from COVID19 does, however, provide a good opportunity to encourage behaviour change towards the goals set in the action plan.

Looking forward

We have revisited our Action Plan and identified the top 10 actions to prioritise for 2022 – eight retained from 2021 and two new ones.

In 2022 we are focussing our activities on the retro-fit of Swale House and the Master's House, planting 11,000 trees funded by the Local Authority Tree Fund, progressing the new waste contract to include carbon savings, further engagement with businesses to promote LoCase grants and the uptake of EVs, developing the Clean Air Zone measures with KCC, implementing a car club in Faversham, rolling out carbon literacy training to staff and replacing SBC owned outdoor lighting with LEDs.

They are detailed in table 3 below.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

2022 Top 10 Priority Actions

Action	Action Owner	Target date	Annual carbon reduction (tCO2e)	Measures of Success	
1	Retro-fit Swale House and the Master's House to cut carbon emissions	Property	2025	186	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender completed and evaluated Major works completed on Swale House and carbon savings assessed Increased energy efficiency
2	Develop, adopt and implement an EV strategy	Environment and Leisure	2022	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EV Strategy presented for public consultation and adopted Strategy shared with stakeholders Installation of additional charge points in car parks in areas with high on-street demand
3	Tree planting on council land (target; 148,100 trees or 60 acres of woodland) to offset 20% of council emissions.	Environment and Leisure	2025	1,481t offset of woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress made against tree planting targets Other planting opportunities investigated (e.g. hedgerows, saltmarsh etc) Work completed with stakeholders and other landowners to identify further sites to plant Engagement work conducted with residents, schools and groups to increase understanding of the importance of trees
4	Improve facilities and incentives for walking and cycling.	ECS ,Planning Air Quality	2030	Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint active travel coordinator Develop LCWIPs in Sittingbourne & Sheerness – use LCWIPs across borough to apply for infrastructure funding Linking Coasts to Downs routes finalised and advertised Installation of cycle racks Bike Hire scheme investigated
5	Increase engagement with staff to roll out learning about the	HR, Environment and Leisure	Short		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Champions activities progressed, measured through behaviour change across teams Carbon Literacy training delivered, and Carbon Literacy Organisation certification investigated

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

	climate & ecological emergency. Review of staff business travel				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff business travel review complete
6	Support businesses to reduce carbon emissions and improve ecology and biodiversity.	ECS	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased installation of work-place chargers measured across the borough • Increased number of businesses engaging with the council to receive support on decarbonisation measures • Continuation of high levels of Kent REVS participants from Swale, with case studies written up for those that made a permanent switch to EV • Measure success of Clean Growth Grant and share best practice/case study examples
7	Set up an offset fund to enable off-site offsetting within the borough.	Planning/CEE	Short	Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete pilot offsetting project with KWT/SELEP • Set a price of carbon/write off-setting policy for developers • Continue relationship with landowners identified via KWT/SELEP project for potential offsetting of SBC estate emissions
8	Establish and promote a car club in Faversham.	Environment and Leisure	2022	small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Club introduced and advertised in Spring 2022 • Advantages (carbon and cost savings) advertised to residents and encouraged to join • Further campaigns completed dependent on uptake levels • Usage monitored across car club lifetime
9	Ensure LED lighting is fitted across the council parks and open spaces.	Environment and Leisure	2023	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LED lighting installed across the estate, prioritising most in demand areas • Carbon and cost savings captured and promoted to parish councils and other stakeholders to encourage installation of LED lighting
10	Improve air quality, focusing on AQMAs along the A2 and the establishment of a Clean Air Zone	Air Quality	Short	Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue conversations with the Highways Authority around measures for a Clean Air Zone • Increase number of schools engaged with on anti-idling campaign and active travel • 20mph zones investigated in other areas

Table 3

Conclusion

The latest data available show that during 2019 carbon emissions in Swale fell by just 2%. The science-led target is for a minimum reduction of 13% year-on-year. This comparison shows just how significant the change that is required. In due course the government data may show a significant fall in carbon emissions in Swale during 2020 and 2021, due to the lockdown and other restrictions required to reduce the spread of COVID19. Hopefully, both 2020 and 2021 will be highly unusual years. The challenge will be to retain and build on the best adaptations that have contributed to a reduction in carbon emissions while facilitating and improving our everyday lives (e.g. video conferencing technology, good broadband, more journeys made by walking and cycling, supporting local businesses).

In the two and a half years since the Climate and Ecological Emergency was declared, Swale has made good progress in what have been, extremely unusual and challenging circumstances. We remain a leader in Kent in both our ambition and achievement. Highlights include electrification of the SBC vehicle fleet, improved infrastructure of electric vehicle charging across the borough, the very successful Great Big Green Week and the Clean Growth Grant launch event.

It is always the case that the first reductions made to carbon emissions are the easiest to make. Substantial year-on-year cuts will become increasingly difficult. Our challenge is to ensure that the impetus continues in order to meet our targets.

Appendix 1 - Climate and Ecological Emergency Communication and Engagement 2021

Days of Action: A range of ‘days of action’ and information campaigns were conducted across a range of social media and communications channels for public information, as well as via internal communications with staff, throughout the year. These included;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veganuary • Keep Warm through Winter 20/21 • World Wetland Day • International Day of Women & Girls in Science • Inside Swale - Spring 2021 • International Day of Forests • WRAP - Food Waste • Earth Day • Compost Giveaway • Love Your Clothes • Inside Swale - Summer 2021 Clean Air Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Refill Day • Sustainable Transport Survey • Plastic Free July • FTC Summer Youth Engagement Days • Inside Swale - Autumn 2021 • Great Big Green Week • Bike to School Week • COP26 - Clean Growth Grant Launch • COP26 - Issues & Actions • LATF/Winter Tree Planting • Inside Swale - Winter 2021
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Staff Engagement: to correspond with public information sharing, tips have also been shared with staff via the intranet and weekly bulletin to help colleagues reduce their own carbon footprint. COP26 provided a good opportunity to engage staff through competitions.

Events: Through attending and hosting events, we spoke to over **2,600** residents about Swale’s response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency. This included:

- Webinar with University Students for International Day of Women and Girls in Science (15)
- Earth Day webinar for Swale secondary school students (20, including recording views)
- Engagement stands at Faversham Town Council Youth Summer Fun Days (approx. 1300 attendees)
- 30 events across Great Big Green Week (1277)
- Presentation and quiz with Swale Youth Forum (30)
- Clean Growth Grant Launch and networking event (52)

Inside Swale: every edition of the quarterly magazine included an article advertising the Fuel and Water Home Advice service, as well as tips for saving energy and water at home. Most editions also included a waste related feature, and an update on recent climate change projects. Inside Swale is delivered to over **62,400** households.

Visit Swale: Blogs have been written and shared via Visit Swale where the ‘day of action’ relates to a local attraction or business, for example celebrating local nature

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

reserves via World Wetland Day. In total, CEE blogs posted to Visit Swale have received **801** site visits. Subsequent Facebook posts reached **1,188** people.

SBC Facebook: There were 52 total posts relating to environmental campaigns on the SBC Facebook page, equating to 9.5% of all posts this year. The most popular post topics include (in order):

- Biodiversity
- Electric vehicles
- Recycling tips
- Tree planting
- FWHA information

The total reach for all these posts was **286,111**, with **300,922** total impressions. Engagement totalled at 5,900, averaging at 303 engagements per post.

SBC Twitter: There were 58 total tweets relating to environmental campaigns on the SBC Facebook page, equating to 10.7% of all posts this year. The most popular post topics include (in order):

- Tree planting
- Biodiversity
- Electric vehicles
- Recycling/reuse statistics
- FWHA information

The total reach for all these posts was **65,505** and engagement totalled at **2,604**, averaging 45 engagements per tweet.

Swale Means Business: The business focused branch of SBC social media channels also supported campaigns aimed at this audience. This included Refill Day 2021 (**2,573** reached) and promotion of the Clean Growth Grants (**477** reached). Messaging and updates have also been included in the bulletin reaching over **2,000** Swale businesses.

Fuel and Water Home Adviser: The FWHA manages a dedicated Facebook page for the service. Average post reach is **1,574**, with an average of 28 engagements per post.

A strand of this service, Swale Sisters (sustainable period support), has predominantly reached its clients via Facebook. The average reach for these posts is **2,374**, with 67 engagements and 30 link clicks per post.

Appendix 2 Elimination of Single-Use Plastics

1. Background

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council set the target to “Eliminate single-use plastic from council operations wherever possible” when declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019. This has been included in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan, published in April 2020.
- 1.2 Single-use plastics constitute plastic products or materials that are disposed of by the user before the plastic has come to the end of its life, even if it may be recyclable. Plastics take up to 1,000 years to decompose. When plastics do break up, they eventually become microplastics which make their ways into our waterways, ecosystem and food chains. There is already strong evidence of micro-plastics in areas such as Faversham Creek.
- 1.3 Single-use plastics, especially small items like straws, bags, and cutlery, are traditionally hard to recycle because they fall into the crevices of recycling machinery and therefore not often accepted by recycling centres.
- 1.4 Although many plastics can be recycled in Swale, they are primarily made from fossil fuel-based chemicals. Reducing plastic use is the most effective means of avoiding both high levels of waste and the impacts of production, including transport and processing materials to create items that are used for a short amount of time.
- 1.5 Switching to sustainable, reusable plastic alternatives could bring financial benefits to the council. Despite potentially higher initial expenditure, reusable products reduce the cost of repurchasing items over time.
- 1.6 Waste production within Swale House by council staff and other occupants is approximately 53,000kg per year (358 kg of waste per employee), almost 60% of this is unrecycled waste.

2. Progress So Far

- 2.1 The Facilities team has already made considerable achievements in reducing single-use plastics within Council operations. This has included:
 - Removing coffee machines containing plastic sachets
 - Switching to use dissolvable sachets for cleaning products where possible to reduce the number of plastic bottles used – where this is not possible larger product bottles are purchased in place of a higher number of smaller ones
 - Removing the necessity to replace black bin liners everyday
 - Planning to use glasses in office meetings rather than plastic bottles and cups when returning to work at Swale House, when it is safe to do so
 - Taking the decision to not renew the contracts for drinks and vending machines
 - Working in partnership with D S Smith Papermill to ensure disposable hot drink cups are collected and recycled adequately. Many paper cups contain a plastic lining that cannot be removed in most recycling processes

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

- D S Smith has also recently funded the purchase of 2500 WhiptecBio tree guards and bamboo canes to replace traditional plastic alternatives
- Alternatives to plastic packaged stationary are also being considered

2.2 As part of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan (2020), the revised procurement strategy has included additional emphasis on sustainability, including waste and plastic usage. This includes the following:

2.2.1 *Best endeavours should be made to applying its principles to procurement policies and processes covering goods and works as well as services. However, we recognise this may not be possible in all contracts as there may be a need to balance the cost of these with the cost of other priorities.*

2.2.2 *It is recognised that procurement has a vital role in furthering sustainable development, through our procurement of goods, services and works. Therefore, all procurement decisions should consider and where possible embed the climate and ecological emergency.*

2.2.3 The recognition to embed the climate and ecological emergency in all procurement decisions also includes commitments for the council to stive to:

- *Educate, train and encourage staff to review their consumption of goods and services, reduce usage and adopt usage of more environmentally friendly products.*
- *Consider the costs and benefits of environmentally-friendly goods and services including minimising 'procurement miles' to help reduce the Council's carbon footprint.*
- *Where such exact specification is not possible, enable suppliers to submit offers for environmentally friendly alternatives.*
- *Continue to improve the levels of recycling, reduced usage, bulk delivery and better packaging.*

2.2.4 These targets should encompass education and awareness around single-use plastics as one of the main products to avoid, in order to achieve the council's target.

3. Plastic Audit

3.1 In March 2021, department managers across the council were requested to complete a 'plastic audit' for their team. This request included guidance on the issue of single-use plastic, however requested that all plastics were recorded, due to the often subjective nature of determining single-use plastics. This also enabled a fuller picture of the use and recycling levels of plastics across the organisation.

3.2 The audit response form collected the below information:

Item

Purpose and use description

Quantity used – please specify within a time frame that is relative to the item if possible

Cost per unit

Length of time used – the form suggests: 'disposed of immediately' e.g. packaging; 'used until no longer needed' e.g. plastic bottle used until empty; and

'used until end of life' e.g. a plastic container that is used until the plastic breaks. If the usage does not fit into the suggested categories, please provide a more appropriate response.

Recyclable – yes/no/unsure. If possible, please describe whether efforts are made to recycle this plastic, or if it is disposed of with other general waste.

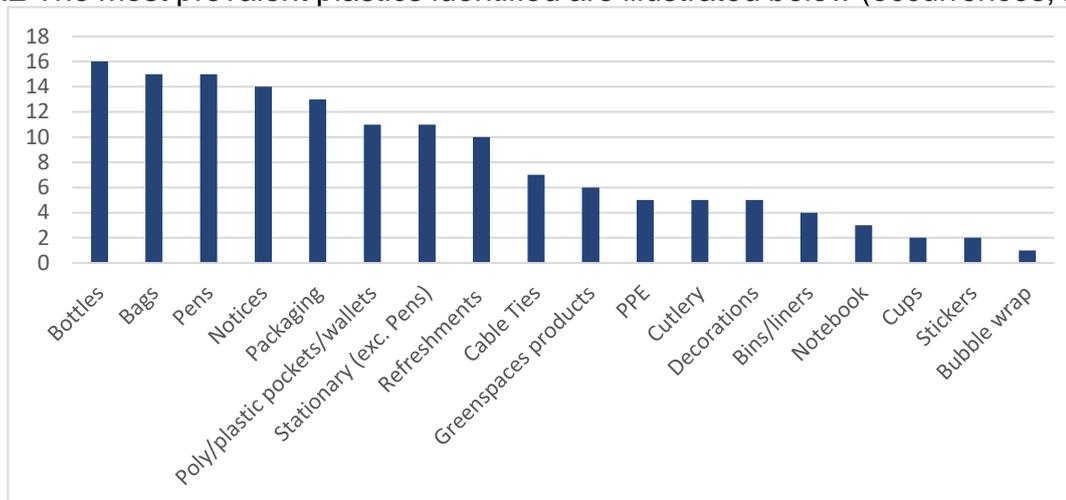
Alternatives – if you are aware of alternatives available for the plastics identified, please provide information, including the cost if you know it.

If there is any additional information you would like to provide regarding the identified plastic, please include this at the end of the table.

3.2 The outcome of the audit has been instrumental to recognising the level of single-use plastics being used across the council. Where plastics may not be single-use, recycling levels are still incredibly low, indicating the carbon footprint of our plastic usage.

3.2.1 The audit produced a list of 143 different plastic items used by the council. 88 of these can be classed as single

3.2.2 The most prevalent plastics identified are illustrated below (occurrences, not



quantities):

3.2.5 Other headline statistics include:

- 28% of plastics 'disposed of immediately'
- 34% of plastics 'used until no longer needed'
- Of 36% of the plastics identified, the respondent did not know if they were recyclable, and 44% unsure if they were recycled at all
- 43% of plastics being used are not recycled (only 13% are being recycled)

4. Staff Engagement

4.1 One outcome of the Single-Use Plastic Audit is the establishment of 'Climate and Ecological Emergency Champions' across each department in the council. This group has been brought together with the long-term aim of increasing engagement and understanding of the CEE, but also to share information about short-term targets such as the elimination of single-use plastics. 23 members of staff have been nominated or volunteered for the role and attended the first meeting in

November 2021. This provided an opportunity to share the results of the single-use plastic audit and task the 'CEE Champions' with raising this issue at their next team meeting. Staff will be able to feed back at the next quarterly meeting. Many attendees provided suggestions and conversation on this issue, indicating that it may be a successful strategy for eliminating single-use plastics 'from the ground up'.

Progress has been made to create a central recycling point for single-use plastics that cannot be recycled through mainstream recycling e.g. pens and blister-packs. CEE Champions have volunteered to promote this, as well as volunteer to take these items to local drop-off points on behalf of the council.

4.2 To utilise the outcome of the audit, work has been undertaken to identify plastic-free swaps or changes to ways of working to help eliminate single-use plastics where possible. This is a time intensive task, however individual conversations with teams have commenced to find solutions specific to their plastic consumption and demands.

4.2.1 The Greenspaces Activities Co-ordinator has indicated that since learning about the issue of single-use plastics they have purchased a pop-up garden bin, as well as being donated 2 builders' bags. When working with volunteers, these are being reused instead of single-use black sacks to dispose of garden waste. They are also investigating the purchase of biodegradable black bin bags for circumstances in which the re-usable alternatives are not sufficient. We are currently undertaking a cost comparison exercise. A conscious effort is being made to ensure bedding/planting trays and pots are returned to be reused or donated to volunteer groups.

4.2.2 Since completing the audit, the Head of Finance has advised that they have arranged to provide plastic pay point cards which are now biodegradable, and only order pens made from recyclable plastic.

4.2.3 The Mid-Kent Environmental Health Service has engaged well on this issue, requesting the details of alternative cable ties and evidence bags. We are working to find suitable replacements.

5. Potential carbon savings

5.1 Due to many of the item quantities being estimates or unknown, it is incredibly hard to quantify the exact weight of single-use plastics, and therefore the carbon saving potential of their elimination. However, two examples have been used to quantify the scale of the problem:

- The number of pens recorded (527) equates to 20kg CO₂ – 66 miles of driving³
- The number of plastic bags recorded (approx. 19,000) equate to 3800kg CO₂ – 12,666 miles of driving

³ The carbon footprint of plastic (LDPE or PET, polyethylene) is about 6 kg CO₂ per 1 kg of plastic, or 1 kg CO₂ per 5 plastic bags

5.2 Reducing just the number of plastic pens and bags used, could have a carbon saving of 3.8 tonnes of CO₂ emissions. Other savings include:

- Recycling 1 tonne of plastic bottles saves 1.5 tonnes of carbon
- Recycling uses just 12% of the energy required to create new plastic

6. Next steps

6.1 It is imperative that plastic-free 'alternatives' are not imposed on teams. Those on the ground know what will work best for them or where alternatives may affect service delivery. It is therefore important to work with teams to ensure the right alternative is chosen, or an alternative method is devised rather than removing a product completely. Recommendations to achieve the aim of eliminating single-use plastics include:

- Increasing education about recyclable materials across staff (aiming to achieve via the CEE Champions and work
- Preventing a return to high levels of stationary use with the return to the office (currently attending the New Ways of Working Steering Group). Centralised stationary purchase would also be advisable to reduce the likelihood of non-biodegradable or recycled plastic items being purchased, or high levels of plastic stationary being purchased unnecessarily.
- Reduction in single-use plastics via stationary contract and other upcoming procurement exercises
- Increased centralised recycling options e.g. collection of used pens in Swale House for Teracycle scheme
- Biodegradable options prioritised for events e.g. cutlery and decorations
- Continue to work with teams to identify easy swaps and improve recycling rates
- Urgent work needed on plastic bags etc to reach single-use plastic elimination target by end of 2021

6.2 Likely challenges to the elimination of single-use plastics include:

- Current necessary requirement to use PEE. The single-use nature of these items is important to keep staff safe from Covid-19. A Teracycle PPE box is being investigated.
- Packaging and other items that cannot be avoided from higher up in a supply chain. Teams are being advised to place pressure on their supply chains where possible.
- Items susceptible to vandalism e.g. cable ties
- Higher cost of biodegradable direct swaps
- Potential higher carbon footprint of some biodegradable swaps – there are mixed views on the processes used to create some biodegradable options. Additionally, a locally sourced plastic item may have lower air miles than an alternative.
- Higher cost of items and time taken to work with and educate staff. As a large organisation, there is no way to 'gatekeep' items being purchased, nor the imperative to do so when teams must focus on maintaining tight budgets.

7 Conclusion

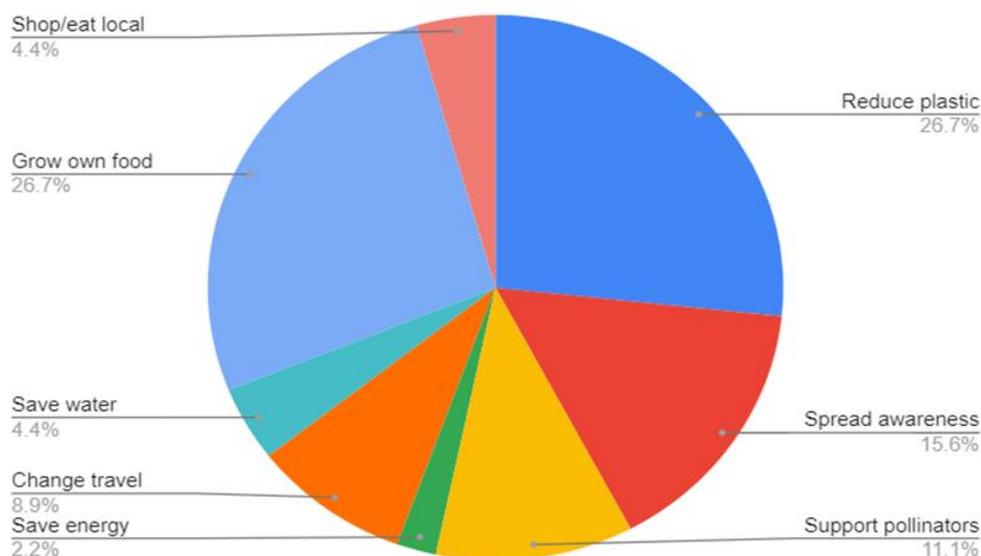
7.1 At present, considerable progress has been made towards the target of eliminating single-use plastics, however the magnitude and complexity of the problem creates barriers. The current Covid-19 circumstances perpetuates the problem, both through the necessary of single-use items, as well as remote working conditions distancing the CEE team from the rest of the council to be able to engage effectively on the issue. Increased engagement across the council on the climate and ecological emergency is being actively taken help to convince staff of the urgency of the issue and the moral imperative to take action.

Appendix 3

Great Big Green Week 2021 Feedback

No. of events	30		
No. of attendees	1277		
Expected vs actual attendees (from organisers)	40% said more than expected	35% same as expected	21% less than expected
No. of Cllrs attended	8		

Event Attendee Feedback				
How did you hear about the event?	50% event organisers	14% word of mouth	16% social media	8% Inside Swale
How much did you enjoy the event (1-5)?	90% = 5	10% = 4		
Did you learn something about the CEE you did not know before?	70% = Yes	30% = No		
What action will you take as a result?				



Comments:

- "It was great to meet new people who cared about the environment" - *MSEP Beach Clean*
- "Thank you for supporting us. From small beginnings I think great things will grow in terms of generating a 'can do' positive approach to the crisis rather than dwelling on the doom and gloom" - *Lynsted Community Kitchen Garden*

Climate and Ecological Emergency Annual Report 2022

- "It was an excellent sharing and learning experience whilst being good outdoor exercise too." - *Walk, Talk, Draw Event Attendee*
- "I felt it was a success - at least, there was no emergency to deal with! The show was brilliant and absolutely captivated the audience, both adults and children. It was perfect in the setting of the recreation ground and I felt it helped to reach out to local people. Also I was very pleased that we found a way to generate power using a renewable energy source, rather than hiring a dirty fuels generator, which was so appropriate for GBGW" - *Whale in a Plastic Ocean*
- "We met many of the volunteers who were full of enthusiasm for the project. It just shows how a community project can benefit society as a whole - reducing carbon footprint, producing and eating local produce, recycling of materials, improving mental health are just a few of the benefits that spring to mind. The project organisers and team are open to all ideas, embracing new concepts and adapting to the demands and restrictions of today's society." - *Lynsted Community Kitchen Garden Event Attendee*
- "We are pleased with the level of engagement in the interactive materials we had at the event, offering personal and political actions people can take, and the positive conversations we had, also social media coverage and support from other organisations, so it was good as a launch for our longer-term climate campaigning leading to COP26" - *FOE RISE Exhibition*
- "It was such a positive and fun day. All the volunteers really enjoyed themselves and it was so lovely meeting some of the local residents who want to take part and keep their beaches clean." - *The Big Local Big Beach Clean*
- "I will be talking to people in my local area about setting up a similar project" - *Lynsted Community Kitchen Garden Event Attendee*

 30 events

 1277 attendees

 200 pollinator friendly plants given away

 2 mayors & 6 councillors in attendance

 1 incredible talk from [Mark Maslin](#)

 10+ bags of litter collected

 15 boot bird boxes made

 4 areas cleared/planted for wildlife

 1 giant sperm whale on Faversham Rec

 70% learnt something about the climate and ecological emergency they didn't know before

 150 mutant flowers made (because we all use 150 plastic bottles a year on average!)