

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CLIMATE BIODIVERSITY CABINET PANEL: 10/07/24**

**CLIMATE OVERVIEW REPORT
MAIN AUTHOR: KELLY MURPHY**

1. Climate Emergency

- 1.1 In 2019, WHC declared a Climate emergency, along with over 75% of other local authorities in the UK.
- 1.2 As you know, we have updated our corporate plan to reflect the high priority of action on climate change within our organisation and demonstrate that mitigating and adapting to climate change is not an add on, it is a fundamental part in how we shape our borough now and in the future. The priorities are;
- Renewing our commitments to be a net zero Council by 2030 (and as a borough by 2050)
 - Stepping up climate change adaptation and mitigation measures
 - Leading by Example and encourage others to make positive change
 - Increasing and promoting biodiversity

2. Transition to Net Zero Strategy and Climate Action Plan

- 2.1 A new Transition to Net Zero Strategy has been written. It replaces the original climate change strategy and provides a clearer overall vision, demonstrating our ambitious pathway to be a net zero council by 2030 and as a borough by 2050.
- 2.2 Supporting the TTNZ strategy, we have the Climate Action Plan. The CAP outlines specific projects that will be required in order to achieve our net zero targets. The CAP is separated into various themes/ impact areas and includes information such as officer responsibilities, time frames, carbon reduction impacts, and co benefits.

3. Internal governance

- 3.1 A Climate Change Officer was appointed in July 2023 to coordinate the climate agenda and deliver specific projects for Welwyn Hatfield Council.

- 3.2 The Climate Officer Group was re-established, with new members invited and a new Terms of Reference created. (This is available in the supplementary documents pack).
- 3.3 The Climate Change Members Subgroup was changed to the Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel in 2023. The first meeting of which we are obviously attending today. The terms of reference is available in the supplementary documents pack.

4. Monitoring and Reporting

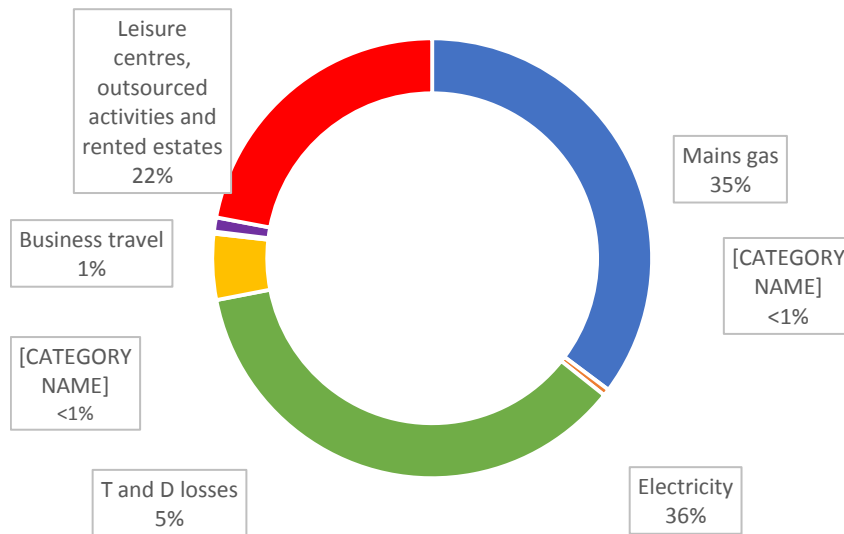
- 4.1 You simply cannot reduce what you don't measure. Therefore, we annually report our organisational and borough wide emissions.
- 4.2 **Organisational emissions in 2023/24 are as follows.**

Table 1 and figure 1 displays GHG emissions as a result of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council organisational activities during the financial period 2022/23.

Table 1 Organisational GHG emissions 2022/23

Emission source	2022-23 tCO2e	%
Scope 1 - Direct emissions		36
Mains gas	740.5	35
Company vehicles	10.6	1
Scope 2 - Indirect emissions		36
Electricity	762.5	36
Scope 3 - other indirect emissions		28
T and D losses	101.7	5
Grey fleet	21.7	1
Paper	3.3	<1
Business travel (taxi, tube and train)	0.1	<1
Leisure centres, rented estates, outsourced services	463	22
Total	2,104	100

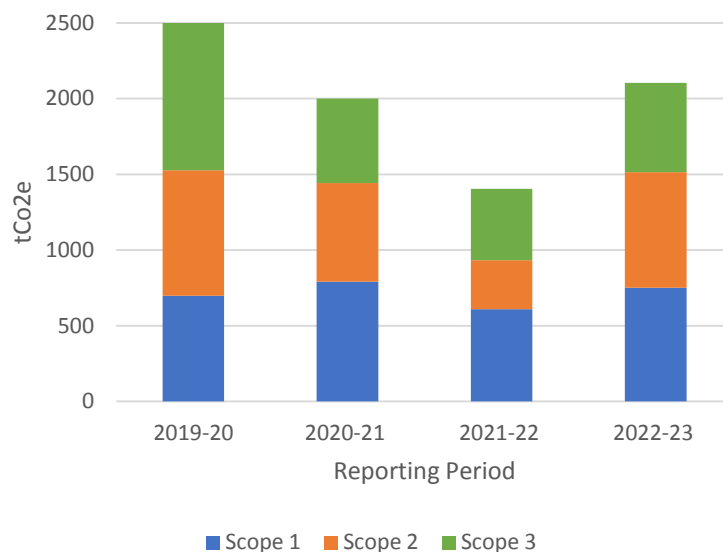
Figure 1 Organisational GHG emissions by emission source 2022/23



Emissions from electricity make up the largest proportion on emissions (36%), followed closely by mains gas (35%), leisure centres, outsourced services and rented estates (22%), transmission and distribution losses (5%) and business travel (1%). The remaining 1% of emissions are associated with purchased paper and company vehicles.

Figure 2 demonstrates annual change in emissions since 2019/20

Figure 2 Annual change in organisational emissions



There has been a 50% increase in organisational emissions since the previous reporting period (2021/22), however this is predominantly due to the impacts of the Covid -19 pandemic. Both 2020/21 and 2021/22 saw reduced

occupancy across the council's portfolio, which resulted in reduced energy use and lower emissions than usual in public buildings.

There has been a 16% reduction in overall emissions since the baseline year (2019/20), which is largely due to the decarbonisation of leisure buildings in scope 3.

A greenhouse gas assessment is only as good as the primary data collected, and therefore, as we transition to net zero we will strive to report more granularly, accurately and robustly to ensure what we report is representative of our organisational activities.

In future years, we will strengthen our data collection process and hope to include more scope 3 emission sources.

We are in the process of collecting data for the 2023/24 reporting period.

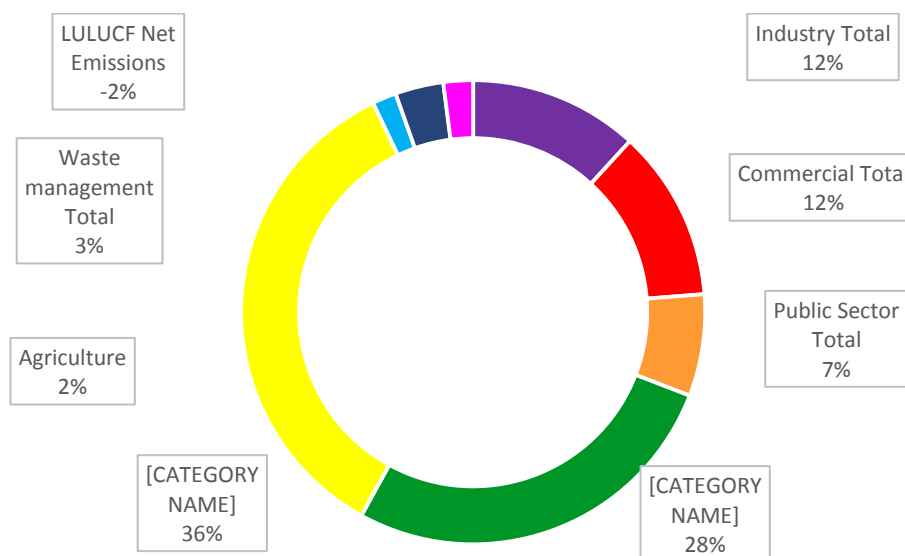
4.3 Boroughwide emissions in 2021 are as follows

The Department of Energy Security and Net Zero annually publish Green House Gas emissions data for all local authorities. (Please note the data is always 2 years behind due to the complexity of the data collection process).

The most recent data demonstrates that in 2021, Welwyn Hatfield Borough was responsible for 599.0 kt of Co2e

Figure 3 displays GHG emissions for the borough of Welwyn Hatfield for the Calendar year of 2021.

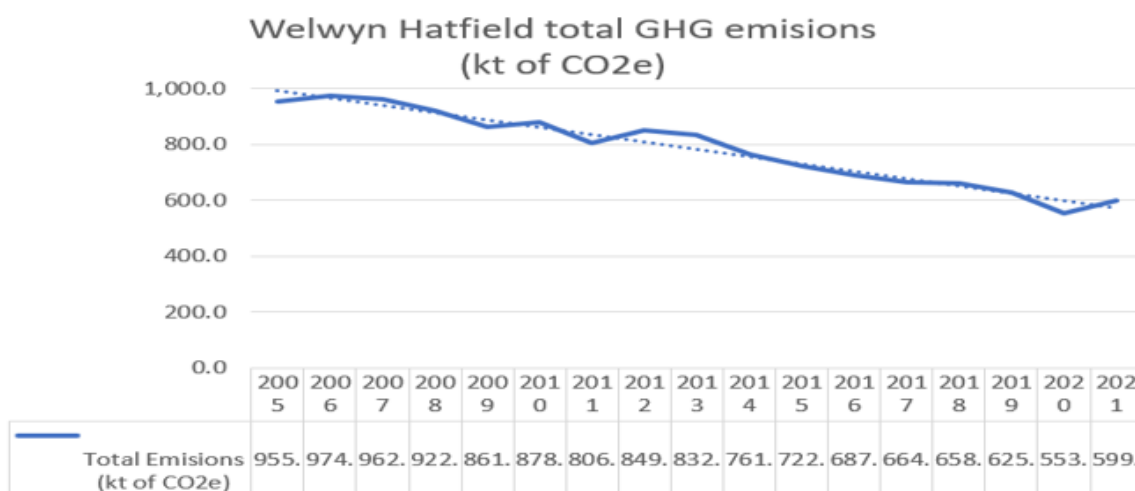
Figure 3 Boroughwide GHG emissions by emission source 2021



Transport was the largest emissions source in 2021 (36%), followed by domestic energy use (28%), commercial energy use and Industrial energy use (both 12%), public sector (7%), waste management (2%) and agriculture (2%). Land use, Land use change and forestry resulted in carbon sequestration of 2%.

Figure 4 demonstrates the annual change in emissions since 2005.

Figure 4 annual change in boroughwide emissions



There has been a steady decline (37% decrease) in emissions since the baseline year of 2005. There was a slight increase from 2020 to 2021, however both 2020 and 2021 have been affected by the Covid -19 pandemic. 2021 emissions did not exceed pre pandemic levels.

5. Recent Projects to Note

5.1 Energy - Commercial

- We were awarded £2.3 million in phase 1 of the Public sector decarbonisation scheme to install heat pump, PV, etc in Campus East, Campus West, and the Hatfield Swim centre.
- Share Museum East funding provided £3,000 (match funded by WHC) to replace all lighting in Mill Green Museum.

5.2 Energy - Domestic

- In phase 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, we were awarded £2.8 million to retrofit some of our poorest performing social homes.
- We are in the midst of a programme to replace all communal lighting in social housing blocks of flats with LED's and motor detectors.
- Hertfordshire Solar Together (an opportunity for residents to buy solar panels for their privately owned homes at a cheaper price due to bulk buyer power) has been run the past two years with nearly 1,000 residents in Welwyn Hatfield signing up to the scheme.

5.3 Community engagement.

- We launched a Climate action survey to gain a better understanding of current levels of climate action in the borough and understand more about peoples' motivations. As a result of the responses, we have created the WHC Climate Hub; a one stop shop for everything climate related in the borough. It aims to signpost people to funding and volunteering opportunities, provide details of various local community eco groups, highlight good news stories, showcase progress meaning made around the borough.
- We have hosted a week of environmentally friendly events during the Great Big Green Week. This included two clothes swaps, a seed swap, a reusable nappy talk, a rags to rugs workshop, a mindful art class, a medicinal plant workshop and a Dr Bike repair and service pop up shop.

5.4 Transport

- A part of the ORCS funding, we have installed over 196 off street Electric vehicle charge points around the borough, meaning Welwyn Hatfield has one of the highest rates of EV charge points per 100,000 people in the East of England (as of August 2023)
- We ran a staff travel survey in November 2023 and created a new up to date sustainable travel plan for Campus East and Campus West.

5.5 Biodiversity

- Your Tree our Future initiative has been run over the last two years. In total we have given away over 20,000 trees to residents to plant on their privately owned land. The initiative is run by Hertfordshire County Council and is set to run for one more year.

- Welwyn Hatfield was awarded Tree City of the World recognition for 5 consecutive years. The global scheme celebrates and promotes places that create green space in urban areas and Welwyn Hatfield has yet again joined 170 cities recognised across 21 countries.
- In line with Government legislation the council has started to implement Biodiversity Net Gain on development sites. BNG is designed to ensure that biodiversity is improved by 10%, providing a larger or better-quality natural habitat post development.
- Danesbury Park and Singlers March Landscape Management Plans updated at the start of this year.
- We ran a biodiversity photography competition to encourage residents to get out into nature and highlight the biodiversity in our borough.

5.6 Waste

- Welwyn Hatfield are part of Hertfordshire WasteAware; partnership of county, district and borough councils working together to reduce, reuse and recycle Hertfordshire's waste. Various campaigns are run throughout the year, focusing on areas such as fly tipping, food waste and promoting reusable products.
- The annual compost giveaway proved to be hugely popular once again. Last month we gave away 10 tonnes.
 - Welwyn Hatfield has seen a 12.4% decline in total household waste (2015/16 to 2022/23)
 - Welwyn Hatfield has seen a 5.4% increase in recycling and composting rate (2014/15 to 2021/22)

5.7 Adaptation

- We have conducted a Climate Change Risk Assessment to identify climate related risks to all service areas. We have noted current control measures in place to mitigate these risks and have embedded future actions to reduce risk further into our service plans and operational risk register. There is also an overarching adaptation strategic risk.

6. Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership

6.1 HCCSP is a strategic group which acts as the lead partnership organisation for partners to collaborate and identify joint work programmes on environmental, climate change and wider sustainability issues.

It consists of County, the 10 districts/borough and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

It has representation by a member and an officer from every local authority and meets roughly every 6 weeks.

There are 6 subgroups with specific focus areas and individual strategic action plans, namely; carbon, biodiversity, behavioural change, transport, water and adaptation.