

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT SERVICES</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>25 January 2022</b>	<b>CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>ALLISON THOMAS, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GROUP</b>	
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS01</b>

## 1. Recommendations

- 1.1. That the Committee notes the progress made in improving the environmental performance of the Council further to this Committee establishing a Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group in August 2018.
- 1.2. That the Committee notes the content of this report and approves that that the Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group is making good progress in delivering the environmental improvements contained within its terms of reference.

## 2. Purpose of the Report

- 2.1. To provide the Committee with details on the progress made by the Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group to co-ordinate the Council's work on improving environmental credentials and performance.

## 3. Detail

### **Background**

- 3.1. At a meeting of this Committee on 16 August 2018, approval was given for the establishment of a Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group ("the CESG"). The purpose of the CESG is to develop and implement measures that demonstrably improve the Council's environmental performance and support the delivery of the Council's strategic environmental objectives through a collaborative corporate approach.
- 3.2. Committee approved the terms of reference of the CESG and agreed to receive further reports on the Group's work programme.

### **Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group Activity**

- 3.3. The terms of reference approved by Committee directed the CESG to give priority to six work streams to improve the Council's environmental performance, namely:
  - To address issues arising from the **ISO14001 external accreditation** process;
  - To focus on reducing **Staff Travel** – core (miles driven by Council vehicles) and grey fleet miles (miles driven on Council business using employees' own transport);

- To reduce the Council's **Energy Consumption**;
- To improve the Council's **Water Management**;
- To improve the Council's internal **Waste Management**;
- To reduce the environmental impacts of Council contracts through greening the **Procurement** process.

3.4. Two further work streams were picked up by the Group during 2019;

- At Full Council on 27 June 2019 the Council declared a **Climate Emergency**.
- A request from members to explore opportunities to enhance **biodiversity** across the District.

### **ISO 14001 External Accreditation**

3.5. The Council has been certified to the ISO14001 international standard on environmental management for 12 years.

3.6. An annual surveillance audit was due to take place in late 2020 / early 2021, however this was delayed at the request of the external auditors due to many of their staff being on furlough during Covid.

3.7. Over the course of 2021 the Council was unable to establish mutually agreeable dates with the external auditors, primarily due to continued disruption by Covid during the spring and subsequently due to the challenges the auditing company was facing with catching up with its backlog of work.

3.8. A combined surveillance audit and re-certification audit was undertaken in late November and early December 2021.

3.9. The Council was successfully re-certified to ISO14001 at the end of the eight-day audit. The auditor identified six minor non-conformities and made an additional 12 observations which could improve the Council's environmental performance. All of these have either been addressed or are currently being closed out.

3.10. At the closeout meeting, the Lead Auditor praised the Council's overall approach to environmental management and the demonstrable improvements made since the last audit had taken place, commending the knowledge and commitment of staff to the Council's environmental performance.

### **Staff Travel**

3.11. The Council's first [Staff Travel Action Plan](#) was approved by this Committee on 25 November 2019.

3.12. The headline targets of the Plan are summarised in the following Table.

	<b>Baseline (2019)</b>	<b>2021 Target</b>	<b>2024 Target</b>
% of staff walking to work	3.7%	6.5%	15.0%
% of staff using public transport to work	1.9%		10.0%
% of staff cycling to work	0.6%	2.0%	10.0%

% of staff car sharing to work	2.2%	3.0%	10.0%
% of staff working flexibly	11.2%	15.0%	25.0%
<b>Total % of staff participating in sustainable travel to work</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>70.0%</b>

3.13. The Plan also set a target of **reducing the Council’s overall diesel consumption by 10% by 2024** and **reducing the miles travelled by Council staff for work (known as grey mileage) by 15% by 2024.**

3.14. The implementation of the Plan started in early 2020 along with the introduction of more robust processes across all Council services for gathering data to measure the performance targets.

3.15. The onset of the pandemic had a seismic impact on staff travel behaviours. A further staff travel survey was carried out in summer 2021 and produced the following results based on a 75% response rate.

	Baseline (2019)	2021 Target	2024 Target	2021 Actual
% of staff walking to work	3.7%	6.5%	15.0%	11.6%
% of staff using public transport to work	1.9%		10.0%	
% of staff cycling to work	0.6%	2.0%	10.0%	1.2%
% of staff car sharing to work	2.2%	3.0%	10.0%	8%
% of staff working flexibly	11.2%	15.0%	25.0%	87%
<b>Total % of staff participating in sustainable travel to work</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>70.0%</b>	<b>87%</b>

3.16. In 2020/21, the overall carbon emissions resulting from the Council fleet vehicle miles was 836 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (equivalent tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>), compared to the baseline 2018/19 emissions of 722 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This 16% increase was a result of the increased workload of Operational Services fleet as it took on extra duties. This included adding a number of refuse trucks to the fleet and increased the number of collections compared to the 2018/19 baseline.

3.17. 2020/21, the carbon emissions resulting from the grey fleet mileage (staff business travel) was 27 tCO<sub>2</sub>e compared to the 2018/19 baseline of 54 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This halving of the carbon emissions is largely due to the pandemic and the technology innovation that enabled staff to engage with local residents and businesses through online meetings.

- 3.18. 2020/21 is acknowledged to be a highly unusual year and therefore monitoring of fleet fuel consumption and grey mileage will continue. A route optimisation project has commenced (detailed below) and will support the Council in delivering efficiencies in the performance of its operational fleet in the longer- term. In addition, early discussions are taking place with D2N2, the Local Enterprise Partnership with a view to the Council becoming an early adopter for hydrogen powered vehicles. The Committee will be further updated as discussion progress.
- 3.19. The Staff Travel Plan did not have any explicit targets set to reduce the amount of car miles travelled by staff getting into work. However, the staff travel survey identified that;
- 11 more staff are using electric or hybrid cars than in 2019.
  - 24 more staff do not travel to work by car and 11 more staff are car sharing than in 2019
  - Just under 70% of staff identified that they have been partially or fully working from home. Working from home through lockdown has seen an estimated 68% drop in carbon emissions resulting from the daily commute by Council staff.
- 3.20. The results of the Staff Travel Plan survey have been collated and fed into the agile working consultation process to shape the future delivery of services post Covid.

## **Energy**

- 3.21. In 2020, Corporate Property secured a new, three-year fixed price contract for energy supplies to all Council owned public buildings.
- 3.22. As well as delivering healthy savings at a fixed price, the new electricity contract is produced from 100% renewable, non-nuclear sources (wind, hydro, geo-thermal and solar), delivering on the Council's Corporate Plan Climate Emergency priorities.
- 3.23. In 2021, the carbon emissions resulting from the use of electricity across the main public buildings was 294 tCO<sub>2e</sub>, which is 37% lower than the 2018/19 baseline of 476 tCO<sub>2e</sub>.
- 3.24. In a similar trend, the carbon emissions from heating the public buildings (gas) were 472 tCO<sub>2e</sub> in 2020/21, compared to 811 tCO<sub>2e</sub> in the baseline year of 2018/19, showing a 42% reduction. These significant reductions in carbon emissions are a direct result of the pandemic, where the hybrid staff working model reduced the public building energy consumption significantly.
- 3.25. Appendix 1 to this report provides a graphical summary of energy use at South Derbyshire District Council's main operational centres. The trends in energy use over the past three years have been dominated by the impacts of Covid-19. Therefore, whilst the electricity and gas use show significant reductions over this timeframe they are presented for information only and officers do not believe that any firm conclusions about positive or negative trends can be drawn from the data.
- 3.26. More broadly, Housing Services commissioned further research into the energy efficiency of the Council's own housing stock. The Council engaged the assistance of Nottingham City Council to complete this work.
- 3.27. The outcomes of this research were reported at Housing and Community Services Committee on 30 September 2021, with 67.2% of the stock meeting an Energy Performance Certificate standard of C or better. It was approved that the results of this research would inform future reviews of the Council's Asset Management

Strategy and would be reflected within future programmes for investment in the improvement of the Council's Housing Stock. The research gave a clear recommendation that the Council adopts a 'fabric first' approach to stock improvement, focusing firstly on insulating roofs and floors and double-glazing improvements.

- 3.28. At the same Committee it was approved that the results of the research would be used to support a bid for funding of £1million from "Wave 1" of the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Grant fund. If successful, this funding will improve the energy performance of the stock and enable tenants to directly reduce energy consumption.

### **Waste**

- 3.29. A new waste collection system ("waste hubs") was commissioned to improve collection and segregation of office waste streams from Council office activities. The implementation of the waste hubs has been delayed due to Covid-19, but will be progressed as circumstances develop in 2022.
- 3.30. Outside the scope of the Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group, this Committee has agreed in principle to bring changes to waste collection systems in order to meet the statutory target of >60% household waste recycled or composted and reducing the amount of residual waste collected. This followed a number of member workshops and committee meetings.
- 3.31. The plans will be introduced in conjunction with the measures the government will introduce as a result of the enactment of the Environment Act 2021 in November.
- 3.32. Operational Services have commissioned consultants to undertake a route optimisation project which has targeted a 12.5% reduction in fuel usage. The project commenced in July 2021 and is due for completion in January 2022. The Council have also purchased the route optimisation software, which will enable officers to continually keep collection routes optimised. Plans are also in place to utilise the software in other service areas.

### **Water**

- 3.33. During 2020, the Corporate Property Team reviewed the procurement of water supplies for the Council's portfolio of non-residential properties. Commercial water supplies were de-regularised in 2017 and as a result the Council inherited multiple suppliers to its various properties.
- 3.34. In 2020, these were merged into a single supplier, Castle Water, the UK's largest independent water supplier. This will help significantly streamline administration and generate cost savings of over £5,000 over three years.
- 3.35. The carbon emissions resulting from water usage also dropped. In 2020/21 the carbon emissions from water usage were 23 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, compared to the 2018/19 baseline of 27tCO<sub>2</sub>e, a 17% reduction.
- 3.36. Outside the scope of the Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group, the Council has adopted a new Corporate Plan performance indicator (ref E2.2A) relating to the percentage of new homes granted planning permission which meet non-statutory water conservation standards. This will have a positive influence on the water conservation standards of future homes across the District.

### **Procurement**

- 3.37. A new Procurement Strategy and Guidance Manual was approved in 2020 which included the Council's Corporate Plan environmental ambitions.
- 3.38. Work is ongoing to ensure that these ambitions are embedded in the procurement process. A Procurement Checklist for tender exercises encourages officers running the tendering process to give due consideration to environmental issues and template tender and contract documents offer the opportunity to include environmental clauses.
- 3.39. Officers have been working with the Council's procurement providers at NHS Chesterfield to seek to enhance its systems to capture social value environmental questions. The NHS is working on green plans during 2022 to see if it can support South Derbyshire's environmental aims, or to implement monitoring systems in order to manage the increase in volume of environmental data which will result from embedding increased environmental demands in the procurement process.
- 3.40. Additional work will be required to ensure that all staff procuring and managing contracts are able to monitor environmental performance of contractors and social value return.

### **Biodiversity**

- 3.41. On 21 January 2021, this Committee received a report on the outcomes of a pictorial wildflower planting pilot scheme at various gateway sites within the District and approved the continuation of this trial with amendments based on the lessons learned.
- 3.42. On 12 August, this Committee approved an Action Plan for Nature (APN) along with an Action Plan for Nature Work Programme.
- 3.43. The APN intends to ensure that the Council can take an integrated approach to delivering biodiversity enhancements across the District by:
- providing an assessment of baseline biodiversity within the District;
  - highlighting existing habitat networks and the District's key locations;
  - identifying strategic gaps in biodiversity provision;
  - proposing opportunities for habitat enhancement and creation, both strategically and spatially through modelling and stakeholder consultations;
  - identifying spatial priorities for habitat and species recovery;
  - outlining funding, community involvement, partnership and policy opportunities and highlighting any potential challenges.
- 3.44. The APN and associated work programme will help focus Council resources on those projects and locations which are likely to have the greatest benefits and will ensure that the Council can work productively both across Council Services and with external bodies to significantly improve biodiversity in the District and beyond.
- 3.45. In the longer term, the Environment Act will require the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy which will necessitate a comprehensive review of the APN.

### **Climate Emergency**

- 3.46. The Council's Climate Emergency states the intention to:

- Strive to make South Derbyshire District Council carbon neutral by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality across the geographical area of South Derbyshire before the Government target of 2050;
- Call on the UK Government to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target realistic;
- Work with partners across the District and region to deliver this goal through all relevant strategies.

3.47. The Council published its first Climate and Environment Action Plan in January 2020.

3.48. This Committee approved a first iteration of this Plan on 21 May 2021. The Council's Climate and Environment Action Plan 2021-30 ('The Action Plan') contains all of the key actions currently proposed to meet the Climate Emergency declaration.

3.49. The Action Plan has mapped a route to carbon neutral for South Derbyshire District Council activities by 2030. Not all of the funding to deliver this has yet been secured.

3.50. The Action Plan does not yet contain a route map to carbon neutral for the entire geographical district of South Derbyshire.

3.51. Further iterations of the Plan will be brought back to Committee over the course of the Corporate Plan lifetime.

3.52. The Council has made significant strides in enabling and directly delivering carbon reductions since the last Corporate Environmental Sustainability Group report in November 2019. In addition to those energy and biodiversity matters already mentioned earlier in this report these include:

#### **Enabling and Education**

- Appointing a Climate and Environment Officer with a specific brief to provide the Council with focus and direction on carbon reduction. The Officer is actively supporting all Council Services with the planning and delivery of their Climate and Environment Actions.
- Developing a new [SDDC Climate web page](#) to effectively communicate with residents, businesses, and community groups about the Council's Climate & Environment Strategy, plans, actions and progress and the projects we are delivering
- Delivering environmental awareness training to 82% of SDDC employees.
- Participating in community events in Swadlincote and Derby to promote public adoption of carbon reduction opportunities.
- Providing of an offer to all Parish Councils of support for carbon reduction aspirations and activities.

#### **Procurement**

- Revising the procurement tendering process to improve carbon neutral criteria within the scoring process.

#### **Energy and Transport**

- Creating and delivering a new "South Derbyshire Healthy Homes Assistance Fund" following a review of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy,
- Ensuring that 99.8% of private rented properties in the District meet new Energy Efficiency Regulations.
- Successfully bidding for £2,653,360 in funding to make energy improvements to the worst performing, low income, owner-occupied properties in South Derbyshire.

- Installing a further 16 electric vehicle charge-points in public car parks owned by South Derbyshire District Council to help promote the transition to electric car ownership.
- Recently successfully bidding for further electric vehicle charge-points to be installed in Hatton, Hilton and Melbourne.
- Completing a strategic review of all South Derbyshire District Council car parks and other car parks in public ownership to identify EV recharge point installation opportunities. This has led to further bids for EV recharge point installations.
- Procuring two new refuse collection vehicles fitted with electric tail lifts saving £1,500 in fuel and 3000kg of carbon per vehicle per year with a 20 decibel sound reduction.
- Continuing to procure electric rechargeable grounds maintenance equipment.
- Reviewing the Council's waste collection services with proposals approved to achieve the 60 per cent recycling and composting target in the Corporate Plan by 2024
- Introducing electric cars for use at Rosliston and by the Covid Marshal service.
- Commencing the implementation of route optimisation for Council fleet vehicles.

### **Climate Change Resilience**

- Promoting and administering approximately £100,000 spend of government grant towards a Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme for all properties flooded in South Derbyshire as a result of Storm Ciara and Dennis in February 2020.

### **Business Engagement**

- Undertaking one to one engagement with early adopter local businesses to promote transition to low carbon business practices. To date 22 businesses have been visited to promote and support the transition to low carbon emissions.
- Creating a simple carbon emission audit template to support businesses understand their carbon footprint.
- Establishing a decarbonisation section in the Council's monthly Business Newsletter to support the understanding of transitioning business sectors to low carbon emissions.

3.53. Since the approval of the Climate and Environment Action Plan, work has progressed on calculating the Council's Scope 3 carbon emissions based on annual supplier spend data (suppliers who spend over £50k annually with SDDC) and using the Government's Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Department's carbon coefficients for each relevant supplier spend sector.

3.54. Scope 3 emissions are those which are produced as the result of activities from assets not owned or controlled by the reporting organisation, but that the organisation indirectly impacts in its value chain. Scope 3 emission sources include emissions both upstream and downstream of the organisation's activities

3.55. Based on the calculations to date:

- The 2018/19 Scope 3 Baseline for SDDC = 6138.945 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- The 2019/20 Scope 3 carbon emissions for SDDC = 6091.38 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- The 2020/21 Scope 3 carbon emissions for SDDC = 8045.46 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This increase is due to a large single spend with Highways England in 2021 and an increase in spend with Novus Construction.

3.56. Monitoring of the delivery of the actions contained in the Plan has been embedded in the Corporate Plan Performance Framework since April 2020 which is reported to this Committee.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 Beneficial impacts - Improved environmental performance could lead to potential cost savings e.g. transition from fossil fuels to electric / hydrogen. Any spend to save opportunities which are identified will need to be the subject of a business case and will need to meet the financial procedural rules of the Council.

4.2 The work of the Group has better positioned the Council to make successful bids for external funding to support the Council's environmental ambitions.

4.3 Adverse impacts – As reported to Finance and Management Committee on 10 June 2021, the total additional cost of including decarbonisation of all the 'Transformation Actions' contained in the Climate and Environment Action Plan is estimated to be in the range £5.6 to 6.8million. In addition, the cost of the smaller 'Service Plan Actions' in the Climate and Environment Action Plan is estimated to be £315k and 3,350 employee hours.

4.4 In his commentary on the Climate and Environment Action Plan the Council's Chief Finance (Section 151) Officer has stated "*As it currently stands, the Council will be reliant on external funding and grants to meet its carbon reduction targets*".

#### **5. Corporate Implications**

##### **Employment Implications**

5.1 Beneficial. The proposals will improve the reputation of the Council and make South Derbyshire District Council an even more desirable employer to work for.

##### **Legal Implications**

5.2 None.

##### **Corporate Plan Implications**

5.3 The proposals align with the 'Our Environment' key priority and in particular with the key aims of "Strive to make South Derbyshire District Council carbon neutral by 2030" and "Work with residents, businesses and partners to reduce their carbon footprint".

##### **Risk Impact**

5.4 The proposals will have a beneficial mitigating action against the corporate risk of "Managing the environmental impact of incidents across the District".

#### **6. Community Impact**

##### **Consultation**

6.1 A number of the activities have been the subject of internal staff consultations, such as through the staff travel planning survey and Staff Travel Group, the Biodiversity Working Group and the Employee forum.

6.2 To date there has been relatively limited consultation outside the Council. However, external consultations will progress in relation to matters such as the Local Plan and the Climate and Emergency Action Plan, subject to the necessary Committee approvals.

### **Equality and Diversity Impact**

6.3 None.

### **Social Value Impact**

6.4 Beneficial.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

6.5 Beneficial.

## **7. Conclusions**

7.1 The retention of ISO14001 certification and the Climate Emergency declaration has signalled the clear commitment of the Council to build and improve on its previous environmental performance.

7.2 The Corporate Plan 2020-24 contains a strong environmental content with a range of new performance measures which reflect the original concerns of members. This provides assurance that environmental issues will remain central to the Council's development over the Corporate Plan period.

## **8. Background Papers**

[Environment and Development Services Committee, 16 August 2018.](#)

[Environment and Development Services Committee, 17 April 2019.](#)

[Environment and Development Services Committee, 15 August 2019.](#)

[Environment and Development Services Committee, 12 November 2020.](#)

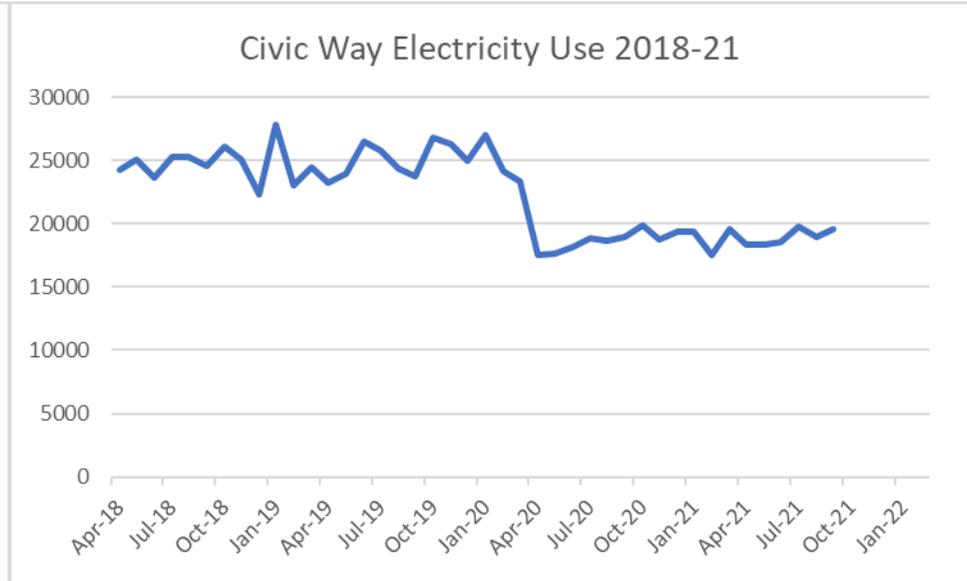
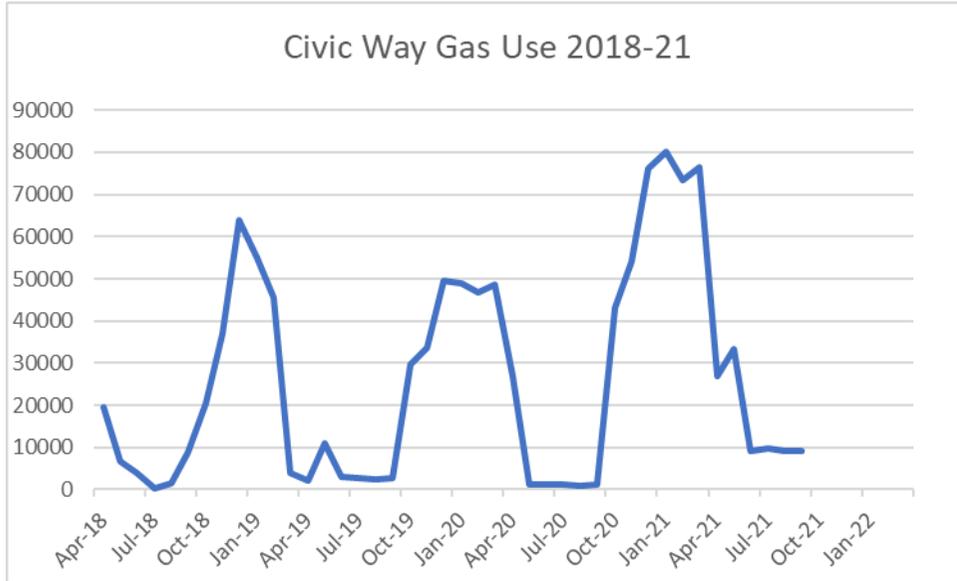
[Staff Travel Plan](#)

[Staff Travel Action Plan](#)

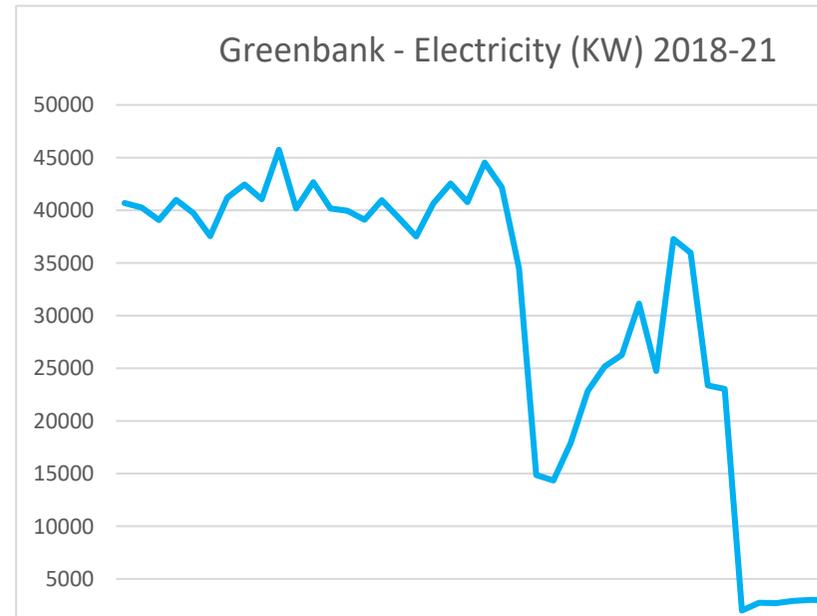
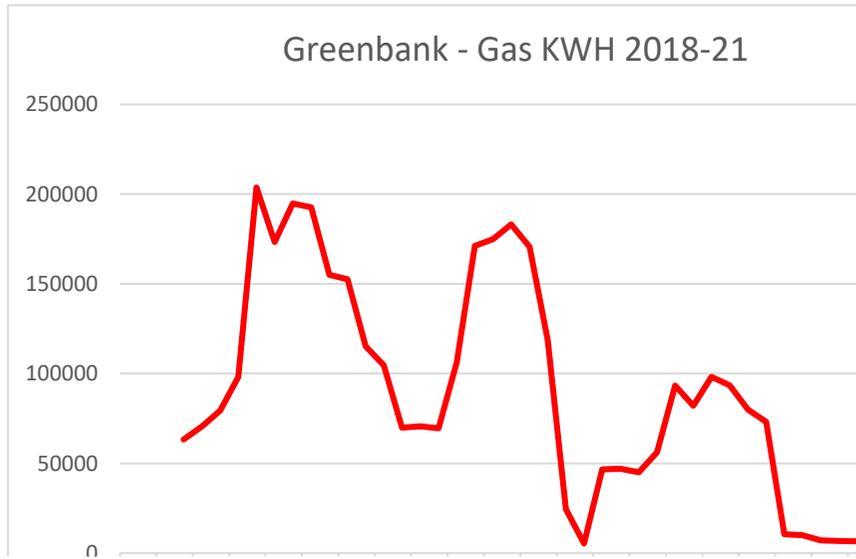
[Climate and Environment Strategy 2021-30](#)

## Appendix 1 – Recent Trends in Monthly Energy Consumption

### Civic Way Offices



## Greenbank Leisure Centre



## Etwall Leisure Centre

