

Climate Change Annual Report 2025

Foreword from the Leader of the Council

It is with great pleasure that I present to you our Climate Change Annual Report after a year in which we have continued to make significant strides in reducing this authority's carbon footprint and inspiring and encouraging others to do the same.

Members and officers across the council continue to consider climate change measures in everything we do in the knowledge we have a duty to our young people and future generations to leave them a cleaner, greener, borough.

The results of our efforts are shared within this report.

It's a joint effort, and much of what we have achieved could not have happened without your help.

For example, thanks to you, our recycling rates in Gravesham continues to rise. This year you have helped achieve a 12% increase in food waste recycling year-on-year, and you have recycled 1,179 tonnes of glass bottles and jars, a 101% increase on the previous year.

Since November 2023, when our Recycle Your Electricals project began in partnership with Material Focus, you have donated more than 51,400 small electrical items, weighing in at 45 tonnes via our small electrical recycling points.

As always, we continue to successfully bid for external funding for projects to reduce the burden on the council taxpayer of our climate change efforts.

We successfully bid for Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3 funding to install Air Source Heat Pumps and Solar PV to 240 of our council-owned homes, receiving a £2.1 million contribution to the £4.5 million project.

Thanks to that support, we have completed major retrofit works to 22 properties, including installing solar panels, air source heat pumps, and insulation upgrades. The average household produces six tonnes of CO₂ emissions, but these properties now only produce an average of 0.9 tonnes each. And it's saving our tenants money on their heating bills too.

Since December 2024, our vehicle fleet, including the HGVs that collect your recycling and household waste has been converted to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil. To date, a 26 tCO₂e reduction has been achieved between 2023-24 and 2024-25. The full impact of the transition will be fully reflected in 2025-26, the first full-year of running the fleet on 100% HVO fuel.

This work extends to our new-build homes too. New council-owned homes at St Columbas Close and Worcester Close will use ground source heat pumps for heating and hot water.

Working with residents across the borough through the Solar Together programme, 299 panels and 24 batteries have been installed on homes in the past year, resulting in an estimated reduction of 27,217 kg of carbon annually and 680 tonnes over a 25-year period.

And we practice what we preach: We are installing solar PV panels on the main roof of our Brookvale depot in Northfleet, aiming for an annual carbon reduction of 34 tonnes and ongoing energy cost savings.

These are just some of the projects of which we can all rightly be proud. You will find far more details within this report, which I commend to you.

Cllr John Burden
Leader of the Executive

Introduction

Last year in September, the Cabinet considered a report reflecting the achievements of the council and the borough in delivering carbon reduction initiatives since declaring the Climate emergency in 2019. The report also recognised the increasing challenges in delivering the council's target for decarbonising its own operations and the limited impact this will have on wider borough emissions, highlighting the opportunity to refocus resources and efforts on wider climate actions and their co-benefits to further the interests of the whole borough. Consequently, approval was given to develop a new Climate Strategy for the Council.

- 1.1. Post that, a consultation exercise was done to connect with our community to get their feedback and suggestions. Collectively, this material formed one of the crucial parts of the evidence base to be used in developing the council's new Climate Change Strategy.
- 1.2. The revised strategy was then presented at the Full Council meeting in June 2025 which was approved and has been adopted for the period 2025-2030. Post approval, a survey was conducted on our 'Go Vocal' platform to get feedback on the revised strategy.
- 1.3. On the basis of the new ambitions detailed in our newly adopted strategy along with analysis conducted on the DESNZ data, our existing strategies & policies and consultation responses, officers developed a new delivery plan under seven key workstreams:
 - Transport & Movement
 - Buildings & Energy Efficiency
 - Low carbon Business & Industry
 - Waste production & Resource consumption
 - Land Use & Biodiversity
 - Community Engagement & Green Skills
 - Council Assets & Fleet

To support our revised strategy, a new delivery plan was presented to our Members of the Climate Change Advisory Board in October which was approved. Our revised strategy and action plan has been published on the website. The Council will be focusing on the new action plan for 2025-2030 with a view to delivering our new ambitions as outlined in our revised strategy.

While the council revised its strategy and action plan during this year, it also continued to progress in the delivery of previously adopted actions to reduce carbon emissions across council operations, its housing stock, and the wider borough, but with an increased recognition of the value of the co-benefits from such activity to the health of its residents, making homes more affordable to heat, improving air quality, encouraging active travel and the contribution to the creation of new economic opportunities for business.

This report outlines the council's key initiatives for the past year which offers a transparent and public framework for how the council plans to achieve its operational net zero ambitions and collaborate with its tenants, borough residents, and businesses to lower emissions in its housing stock and the borough at large.

The report also highlights the most recent data from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) which indicates that the council's own carbon emissions, i.e. 1892.12 tCO₂e for the last financial year only account for around 0.53% of those across the Borough as a whole which is 353 KtCO₂e.

Carbon Reduction Actions during 2025

Our Climate Change Strategy marks the Council's commitment to tackling the challenge of climate change across the borough. It provides a framework for our actions aimed at reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change that are already happening to provide a better environment for future generations.

Adaptation to climate change is an essential component of our approach. This involves adjusting

processes, practices, and frameworks to minimise possible harm or take advantage of climate change opportunities.

In identifying the key Climate Change action priorities for the council and the Borough as a whole, it has been clear that there are some aspects for which the council has full control and others for which the council will need to work with others to instigate change to reduce emission levels.

The following highlights show progress made against each of these priority areas over the last year.

1. Improving the council-owned housing stock

The Council was successful with its bid submitted to DESNZ for Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3 at the end of 2024 to install Air Source Heat Pumps and Solar PV to 240 properties which are currently rated EPC D or lower, costing £4.5 million. The bid received £2.1 million and the remaining £2.4 million of this project will be co-funded by the Council.

The Council has carried out major retrofit works to 22 properties consisting of insulation upgrades, and installations of air source heat pumps and solar panels. Before the retrofitting work, each property had inefficient heating systems and was rated EPC D or lower; they are now rated EPC B or higher. The average household produces 6 tonnes of CO₂ emissions, but these properties now only produce 0.9 tonnes.

The council has submitted a BSR (Building Safety Regulator) application to install solar panels at 'The Hive' to power the communal area and are awaiting their response. This will include a 24.92kW system with battery storage.

The solar panel installation at Chinnery Court has been completed, which includes a 21.36 kW communal PV array with battery storage. Each flat also has its own PV array to reduce fuel consumption and bills, whilst also creating renewable energy. As part of wider works at Chinnery Court, an EV charger has been installed.

Since the installation of Solar PV in the communal area of Carl Ekman House, Chantry Court and Cleveland House, the systems have generated 61,046.79kW of electricity, with an average of 66.32% self-use rate. In total, the communal Solar PV systems have reduced carbon emissions by 43.29 tCO₂.

The installation of Solar panels has been completed, and Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) is in progress at Cleveland House. Each property has its own Solar PV Array, including the communal area to reduce fuel bills for both the residents and the council. Once all works are completed at Cleveland House, all properties should meet EPC rating A and be assessed at net zero. With a GSHP system installed, each property's annual CO₂ emissions are reduced by 99 tonnes and residents are expected to save £370 annually on their fuel bills.

The council now has 4x dual 22kW chargers installed in our housing estates, which are open to the public to use, generating income and encouraging and supporting EV ownership. To date, this has generated £896.32, and they have been used 67 times.

2. Ensuring sustainability in new housing developments

The St Columbas Close project, set to be completed in mid-2026, is utilising Kensa's ground source heat pump technology for heating and hot water, and is highly insulated in line with the Future Homes Standard. The project will provide 60 cycle storage spaces for 46 units. Furthermore, monitoring of on-site waste from the demolition of the buildings is being undertaken with a view to minimising waste to landfill.

Worcester Close will use air source heat pumps for heating and meet the Future Homes Standard. It is set to be completed in February 2026. A Building Performance Evaluation process will be conducted

for the six units completed in August 2024 to gather feedback on energy use and heating bills. The project will also offer six non-electric cycle spaces and three electric cycle stores for storage.

Two new projects in Gravesend, Lower Range Road and Milton Place have received planning consent. Lower Range Road will offer 14 secure cycle spaces for 14 2-bed flats, while Milton Place will provide 42 rack spaces and 12 rack spaces for 61 flats, with 15 private houses each having their own secure cycle store.

3. Supporting Businesses

At the end of May 2025, central government confirmed that the Development Consent Order (DCO) for a new Lower Thames Crossing would continue to progress and there is a focus on creating a skills offer relevant to Gravesham (for Apprentices and other 'new entrants', as well as the existing local workforce) that embeds sustainability into a whole range of disciplines, especially in technical areas where there is the greatest potential for impact.

With considerable input from Council's Planning team, support was provided by the economic development team to Britannia Refined Metals, who opened a new copper-recycling plant in Northfleet in October 2025 making a major contribution to UK-based circular economy efforts.

The Industry4Council for Kent and Medway, agreed at the end of October, to adopt a project plan for establishing a new workforce skills brokering entity that will have skills for 'environment sustainability' at its heart, driven by a mix of corporate social responsibility ambitions and compliance.

The Environmental Sustainability Award was presented for the first time in November 2025 with 27 applications, and it is anticipated that other 'good practice' case studies will be available post-Awards.

National Highways has also run carbon literacy and other bespoke training for supply chain businesses, to assist with the identification of carbon & good practice in reporting on savings at all levels of a project.

Council officers will be supporting partnership development, including via the Thames Estuary Partnership and other prospective partners undertaking decarbonisation-related work such as Innovate UK and their 'Net Zero Go' tool (especially where this might require a novel approach and/or external funding need).

4. Waste & Recycling Services

Over the summer of 2025, a campaign was conducted with Kent County Council to promote food waste recycling. The campaign included leaflets, free caddy liners, and stickering of refuse bins. Between June and September 2025, 2,277 food waste caddies were ordered by residents, an increase of 171% year-on-year. During the first two quarters, an additional 160 tonnes of food waste was collected, marking a 12% year-on-year rise, and households collected 3.4 kilograms more food waste per household. Advertising efforts included messaging on refuse collection vehicles.

Kerbside glass recycling began in Gravesham on July 1, 2024, to comply with 'Simpler Recycling' regulations. Since its launch, 1,179 tonnes of glass have been collected, with glass bottles and jars making up 16% of the dry mixed recycling in the borough, enhancing the Council's waste and recycling performance. We have also sought to promote correct recycling and kerbside glass recycling through advertising on the sides of our refuse collection vehicles (RCVs)

The 'Simpler Recycling' regulations requires the Council to deliver a full commercial waste recycling and food waste collection service to our business customers ahead of the 31st of March 2025 deadline. Previously, only weekly paper and cardboard collections were offered. As of February 2025, a new commingled dry mixed recycling service including paper, cardboard, plastics, glass, and metal has been introduced, alongside food waste collection by ReFood. These changes have resulted in reduced refuse and increased recycling leading to a £41,000 decrease in disposal costs. So far, 55

tonnes of commercial dry recycling and 8 tonnes of food waste have been collected. Total waste recycled has risen by 63% year-on-year, while refuse collected per premises has decreased by 431 kilograms (-16%). The Council is promoting the service through advertisements on RCVs and informational leaflets in business rates mailings.

Since November 2023, when Our “Recycle Your Electricals” project began in partnership with Material Focus, Gravesham residents and staff donated more than 51,400 small electrical items, weighing in at 45 tonnes via the small electrical recycling points. The total tonnage of electrical waste recycled increased by 26.4% during the project. Although the 12-month project has concluded, the small electrical bring banks will remain in place for residents to continue to recycle their electricals.

The Council continues to work to deliver a full recycling service to all flats and narrow access properties in the borough ahead of the 31st of March 2026 deadline for domestic properties. To date, the managing agents of more than 150 flatted developments in the borough have been contacted with information about how to become compliant ahead of the deadline. Currently, 67% of flats now have dry mixed recycling collections and 36% of flats have a weekly food waste collection.

Officers are working with the Gravesham Repair Cafe to promote their events by stickering the small electrical bins in order to encourage the repair of faulty items and minimise waste.

Between January 2022 and November 2025, 39 tonnes of items were reused, and 20 tonnes of CO2 were saved, with an average of 815 kilograms re-used monthly.

The Council continues to work with the Kent Resource Partnership to develop new recycling streams and to ensure current waste disposal routes are sustainable. We also continue to work with ‘third sector’ partners to develop new repair & re-use options to keep products and materials in circulation for as long as possible.

Lastly, the Waste Management Team has been shortlisted in the Local Authority Success category at the National Recycling Awards 2025 for their communications campaigns themed 'Gravesham Recycles' and 'Cleaner, Safer Streets,' embodying a holistic approach to waste management in Gravesham.

5. Biodiversity

The Council has successfully managed over 95% of its green waste through mulching, composting, and biomass initiatives, with a total of 4,193 tonnes collected over the past year. This reflects a 5.6% decrease from the prior year. Among the 1,760 tonnes of green waste collected, 90% is composted at Pepperhill landfill, while the remaining 10% is used for chippings. The horticultural department is collaborating with a local farmer to utilize 377 tonnes of grass cuttings as organic compost, enhancing carbon and nitrogen retention in the soil.

In accordance with required planning rules, a preliminary Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment was done and shared with management. After the Full Council approved the Biodiversity Duty - First Consideration Report in December 2024, a Biodiversity Strategy was developed which was presented to Full Council for adoption in October this year and it has been approved. The BNG, LNRS (Local Nature Recovery Strategy), and county strategy will all be taken into consideration as part of the effort to improve the borough's tree policy.

The Council is prioritising opportunities to integrate green infrastructure across its property estate, with a focus on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Hazells Farm is being used as a learning exercise to refine and formalise the application of BNG principles. While the UK's BNG infrastructure is still developing and the market size remains uncertain, the Council is positioning itself as an early adopter to capitalise on future opportunities. This work supports the Council's commitment to sustainability, biodiversity, and exploring innovative ways to enhance its estate for environmental and community benefit.

Following the launch of the North Kent Woods & Downs NNR, efforts are now focused on Camer Park and West Park to protect veteran and ancient trees. High community engagement is evident through planned events by the Green Community Hub, emphasising biodiversity, tree planting, and soft landscaping. Additionally, plans for wildflower growth habitats will involve public mapping and engagement. Recent community projects have included bulb planting, creating flower beds, and enhancing the Woodlands Park sensory garden in partnership with a local school, alongside seed harvesting for ecological self-propagation.

Despite the unsuccessful bid to partner with Trees for Cities, our dedication to strategic tree planting remains strong. We are integrating greener solutions in development projects and influencing planting locations through our involvement in the KCC Plan Tree group. The town centre regeneration plans are being revised to enhance green infrastructure and public spaces. We are implementing a cross-departmental program to plant three trees for each tree removed due to housing developments, supported by DEFRA funding to boost borough-wide canopy cover. This investment aims to enhance urban tree coverage and integrate green infrastructure into town centre regeneration.

To date, 5,322 whips and 23 standard trees have been planted. These efforts reflect the Council's commitment to enhancing green spaces and promoting biodiversity within the community.

6. Supporting Residents

For the fourth year in a row, the council participated and promoted the Solar Together scheme. The resident group-buying platform for PV panels, battery storage, and EV (Electric Vehicle) charging stations has been in high demand since its launch and has helped many Kent region homeowners reduce their energy expenses and carbon emissions.

A total of 26 residents have installed 299 solar panels, 24 batteries, 2 retrofit battery storage, and 2 Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) since Phase Four was introduced last year. Over a period of 25 years, this amounts to an approximate removal of 680 tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Phase Five was launched in March this year and the scheme was promoted through social media platforms, direct mail, posters, flyers, etc. So far, 373 installations have been completed within Kent, including 10 from Gravesham and rest of the installations are in progress due to completed next year.

The Council supported 'DFG Heating grants' to support residents with energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating measures. The Council was able to assist six residents from the private housing sector to improve the energy efficiency of their homes using various insulation measures and green energy while also improving their health and welfare.

The council continued to use its position as a community leader to promote initiatives intended to support residents in making changes, including 'electrical, commercial, and food waste recycling' and 'Green World Recycling Limited' which recycles textiles, shoes, and clothes. Other schemes like 'Gravesham repair cafe', 'Street Champions', active travel, free bike check-up & repairs and more were also promoted throughout the year through social media platforms and newsletters.

Our 'Street Champions' scheme attracted 830 active volunteers across the borough who pledged to 'adopt' 428 streets, parks and alleyways. Between January & November 2025, our Street Champions have collected 4,341 sacks of litter (395 per month) and have been on 2,310 litter picks (210 per month).

The Council is collaborating with community members, groups, businesses, and stakeholders to improve the perception of Gravesham as a desirable place to live, work, visit, and invest. In the first 15 months of the 'Cleaner, Safer Streets' campaign, 464 sacks of litter were collected, and 120 fly-tipped items were removed. Additionally, the number of Street Champions has risen by 165, and campaign signage has been displayed in 57 locations throughout the borough.

The Council work with colleagues from other public sector organisations in Kent as part of the Kent

and Medway Environment Group and the Kent Climate Change Network to share best practices and identify common areas of interest for collaborative working.

The Council continues to update residents with available schemes, grants, energy-saving advice and more through our social media platforms and newsletters.

7. Supporting Schools

A Council Officer attended Cobham Primary School on 2nd December 2024 and spoke to more than 200 students about waste, recycling and litter.

As part of the consultation process for the updated climate change strategy, the Council met 'Gravesham Youth Council' on 10th December 2024 to talk about climate change, which was attended by 8 students from St George, Mayfield Grammar, and Northfleet School for Girls.

In June 2025, a talk was delivered on recycling and litter to approximately 200 students at Istead Rise Primary School and later delivered the same talk to approximately 25 pupils at an after-school club - Riverview Girl Guides.

Preparations are also being made to put signage up outside all entrances/exits to schools in the borough with anti-littering messaging, via our 'Cleaner, Safer Streets' campaign.

8. Implementing plans to decarbonise the vehicle fleet

Since December 2024, the diesel-fuelled vans and HGVs in the fleet have been fuelled with a blend of 25% HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) and 75% white diesel. The phased introduction of HVO was completed in April and since then the entire fleet is running on 100% HVO fuel. To date, a 25.7 tCO₂e reduction has been achieved between 2023-24 and 2024-25. The full impact of the transition will be fully reflected in 2025-26, the first full-year of running the fleet on 100% HVO fuel.

9. Cygnet Leisure Centre

Decarbonisation works under the Capital Element of the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund continue to progress; pool covers have been installed and works to the Air Handling Unit (AHU) are continuing with an indicative completion date of November 2025.

In addition to carbon savings of 533 kgCO₂e, energy reports generated by DESCO indicate financial savings of circa £36,000 annually on gas and electricity costs.

10. Cascades Leisure Centre

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) relating to Levelling Up Funding and a Cabinet Members decision to proceed with the project took place in June 2025. The council has recently entered into a Pre Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with Wilmott Dixon and works on site are due to commence imminently. In addition to responding to the health and wellbeing needs of the community, the permitted building shows indicative levels of carbon emissions approximately 13 times lower than the existing building and has an estimated EPC rating of A, compared to the B, almost C rating of the current Cascades Leisure Centre

11. Brookvale Depot

The proposal to install solar PV panels on the main roof at Brookvale has progressed following approval from Management Team and procurement options will now be explored for the project. The installation of panels here is expected to result in an annual carbon reduction of 34 tonnes and 1,020 tonnes over a period of 30 years. It is estimated to have an annual saving of £31,000 on electricity costs to the Council.

12. 'Free up the Floor' project

Under the Council's hybrid working policy, office floors were not consistently occupied as staff attended on different days. To optimise use of space, employees were consolidated from two floors onto one, enabling the release of the third floor in the civic centre for a new tenant.

This consolidation reduces energy demand by lowering requirements for heating, cooling, and lighting, thereby cutting associated emissions. It also enhances building efficiency by maximising utilisation and avoiding the need for additional premises. In doing so, the Council advances its sustainability objectives while ensuring responsible management of our resources.

13. Promoting Active Travel within the workforce

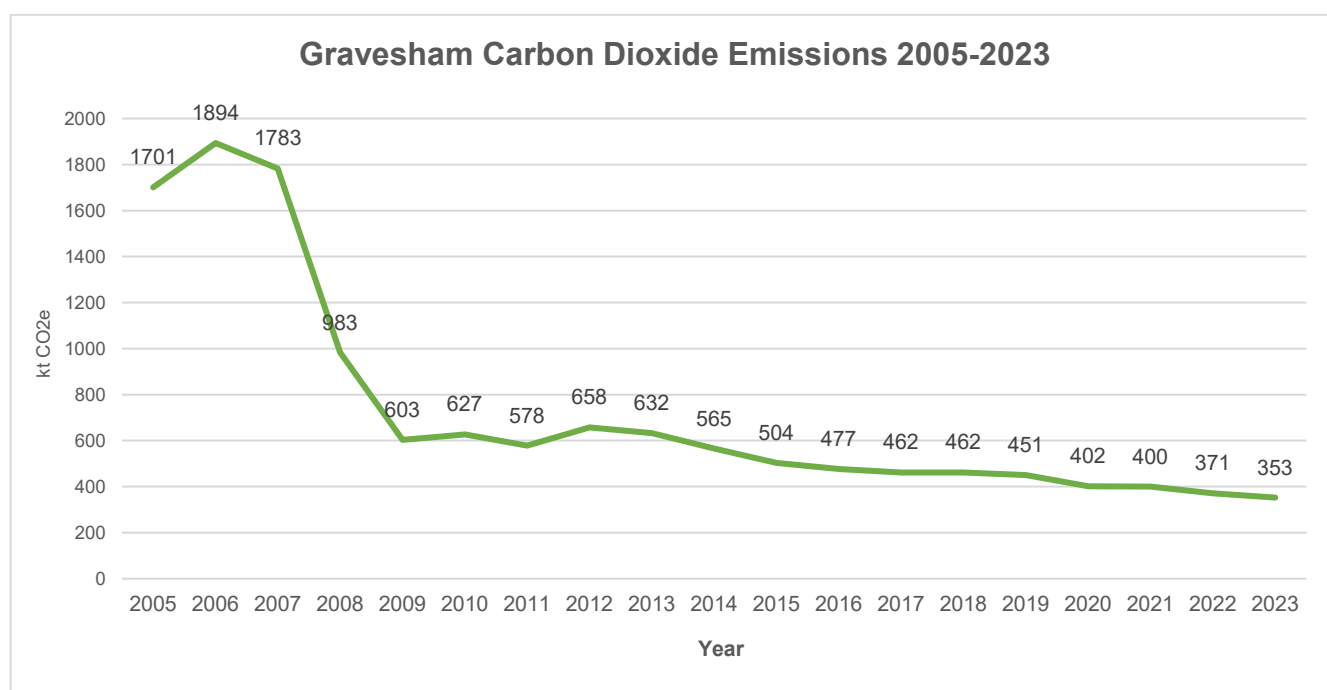
Since the implementation of this scheme, i.e. from May 2023, there have been 25 successful applications for 'Cycle to Work' scheme and 7 successful applications for 'Electric Vehicle (EV) Salary Sacrifice Scheme' which was launched last year. All the current alternative sustainable travel arrangements and initiatives continue to be promoted to staff. An evaluation survey will be conducted to assess the scheme and identify areas for future expansions or changes.

Update on Borough and Council Emissions

1. Borough Emissions

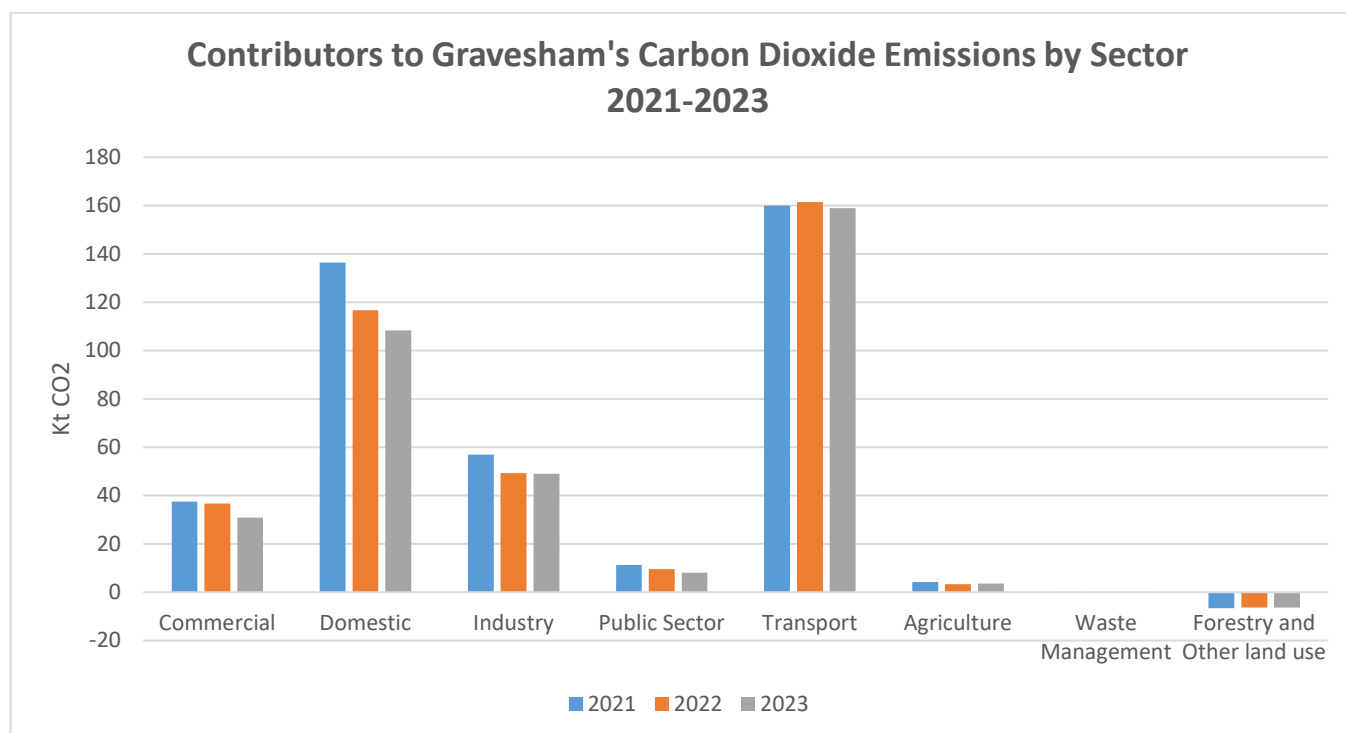
Data on local and regional end-user carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions is collated annually by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to provide a nationally consistent evidence base for greenhouse gas emissions which lags by two years due to the amount of data used to compile the statistics. The latest data for 2023 was published in July 2025 and shows a continuing decrease in CO₂ emissions within Gravesham.

The method of calculating the data is constantly being refined to provide the most accurate picture possible. It is not unusual for previous years information to be updated, and the figures used in previous reports to be revised. The Council will always use the latest available data when reporting, including any updated data for previous years, to ensure all data is consistent and using the same methodology.

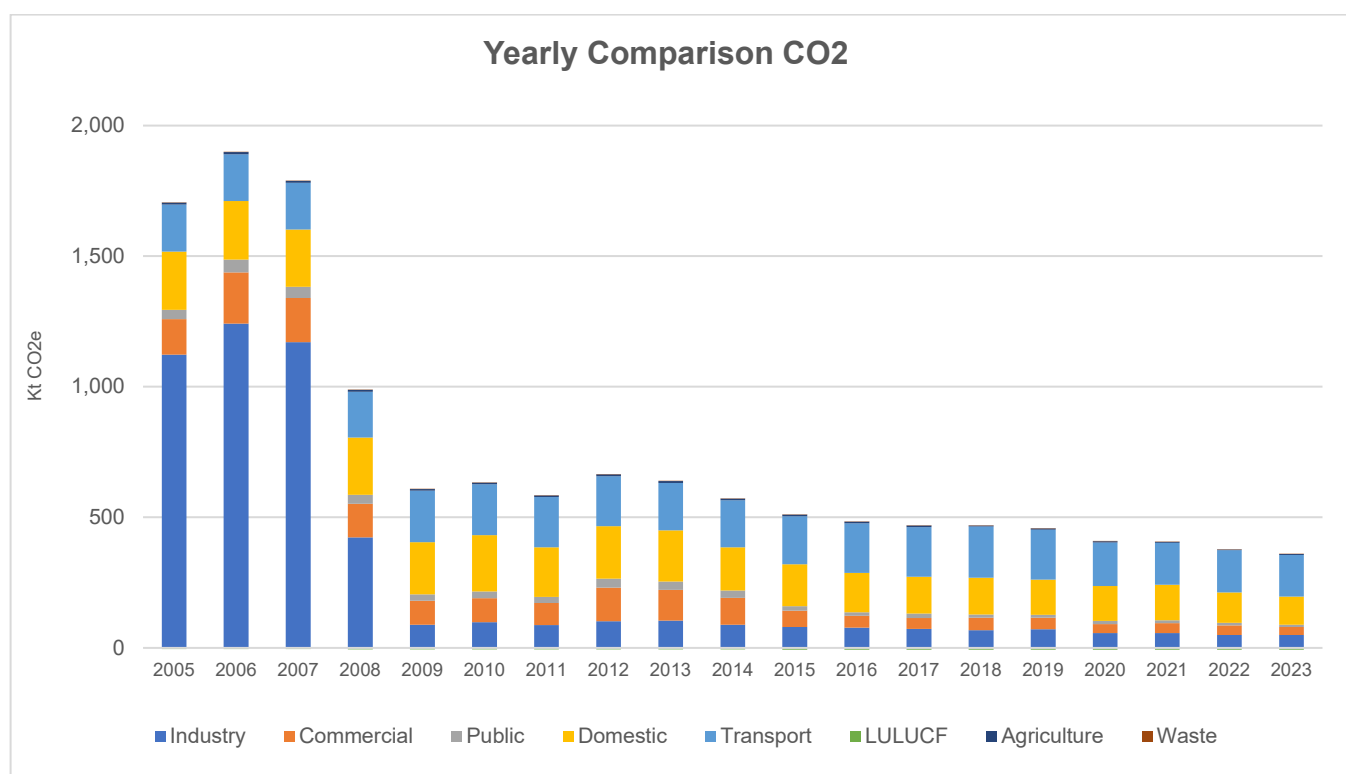


Source: [The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#)

The emissions data for the borough from each sector from the years 2020 to 2023 are displayed in the graph below.

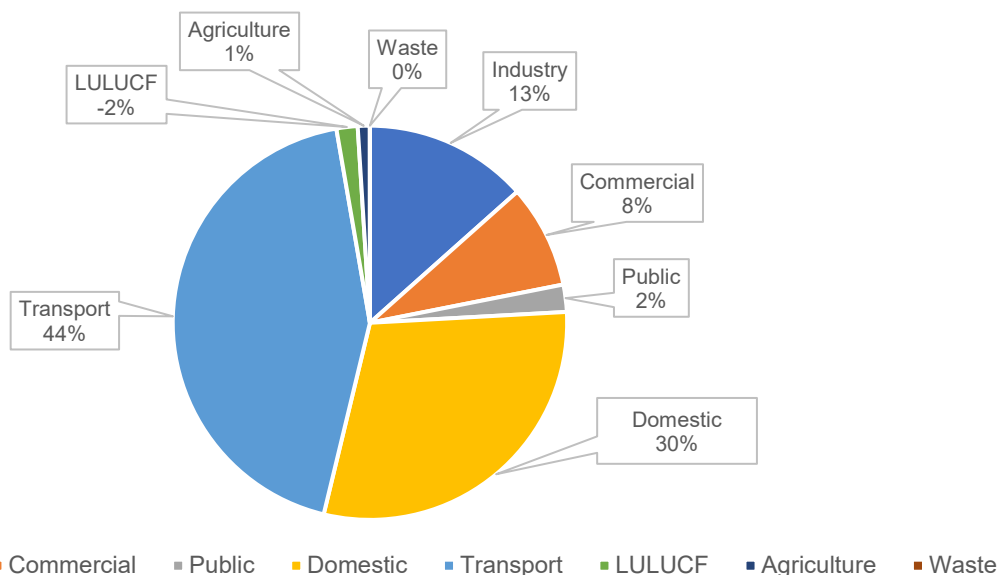


A yearly comparison of all sectors from 2005 to 2023 is provided below.



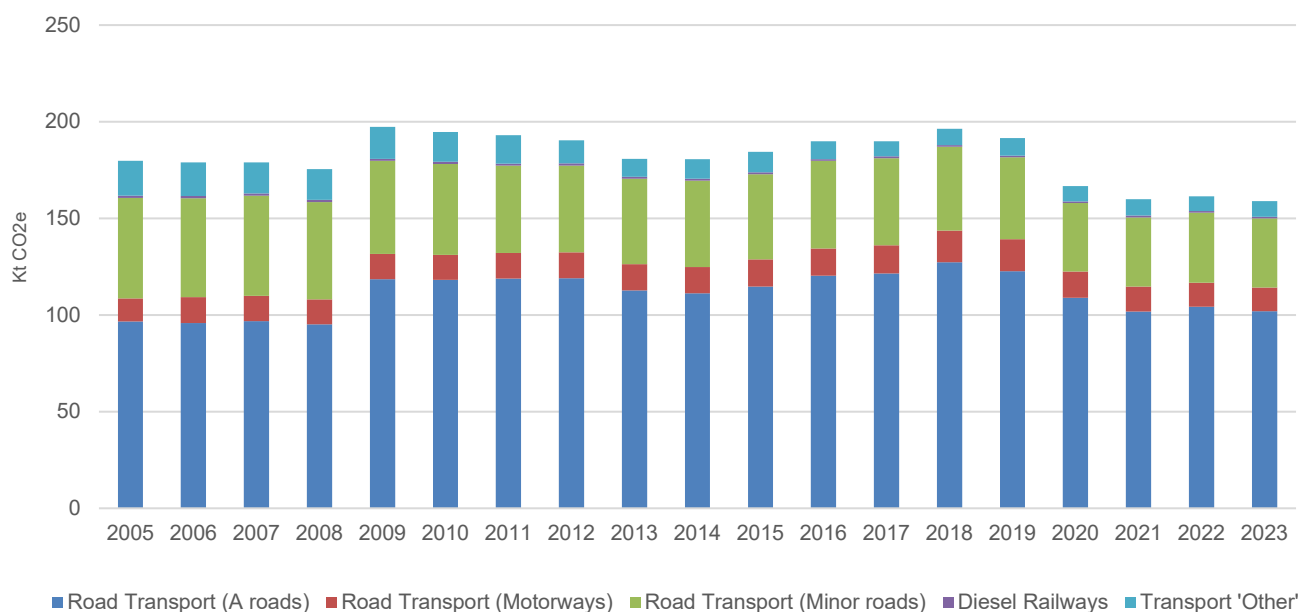
The two largest areas for emissions within the borough remains the same as previous years and those are Transport (44%) and Domestic Properties (30%), followed by Industry (13%) and Commercial (8%) sectors.

Borough wide emissions by Sector

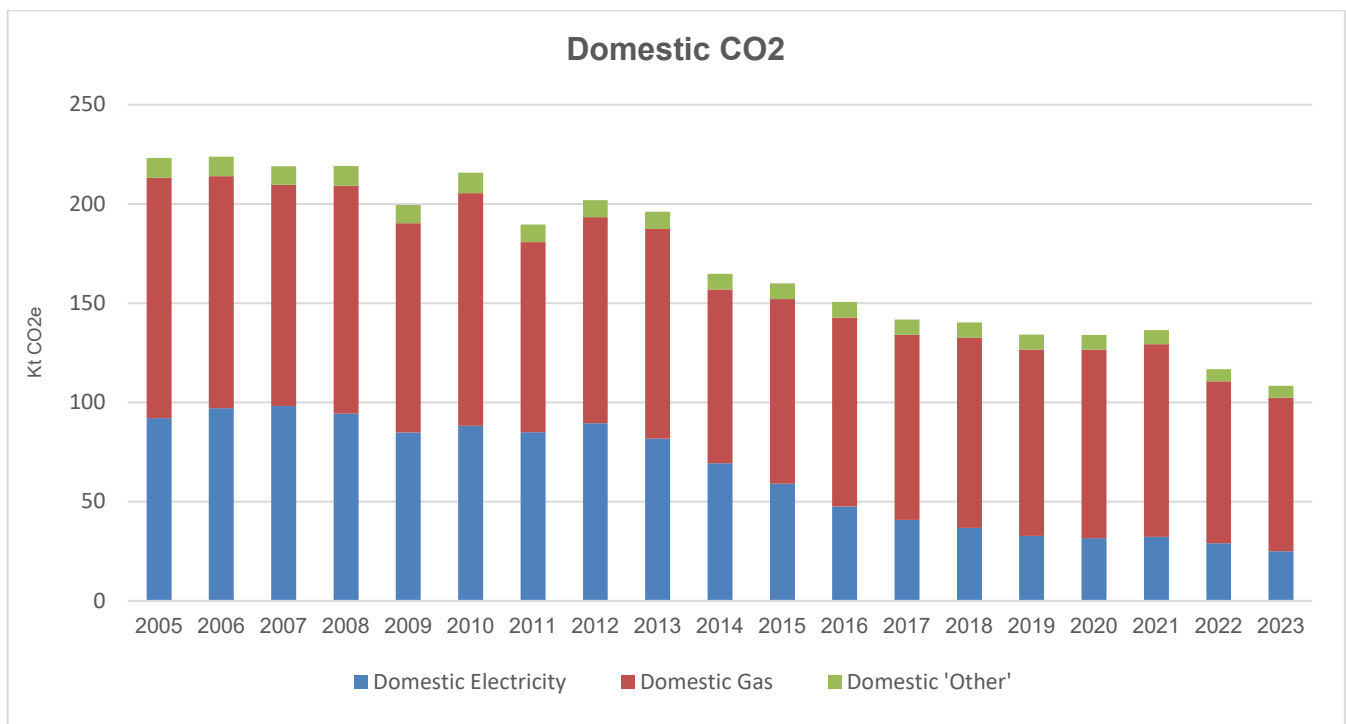


Within the transport category, the largest contributor to emissions is A roads, which includes the A2 carrying through traffic which does not originate or terminate within the borough. DESNZ only consider Motorways and Diesel Railways outside of our sphere of influence. Future emissions from our A roads are anticipated to increase in tandem with the Lower Thames Crossing project, as more traffic passes through the borough to access the tunnel.

Transport CO2

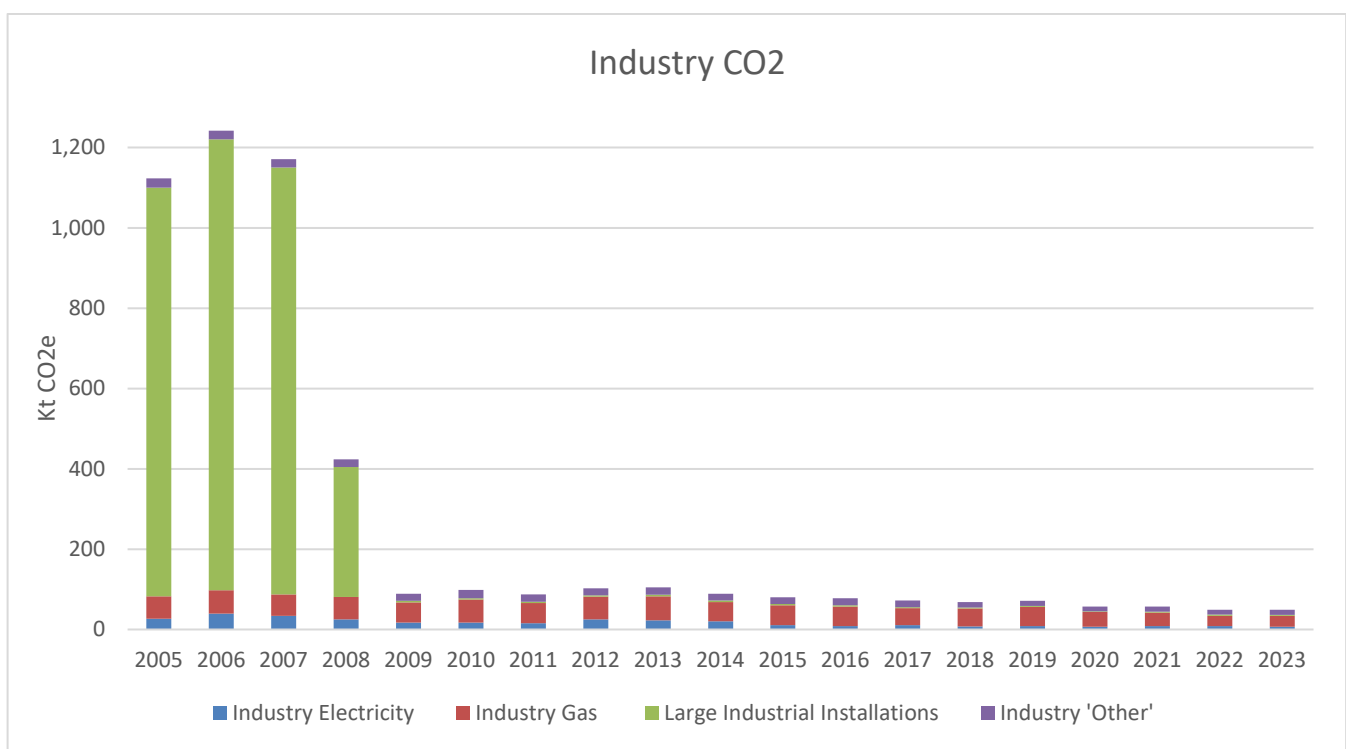


The Domestic CO2 emissions are dominated by the use of gas. This highlights that the most effective way to decarbonise our social housing stock and the wider private stock is to move to heating solutions that do not use fossil fuels. The downward trend in domestic electricity emissions will largely be driven by the decarbonisation of the electric grid by the use of renewables rather than a result of reduced consumption.

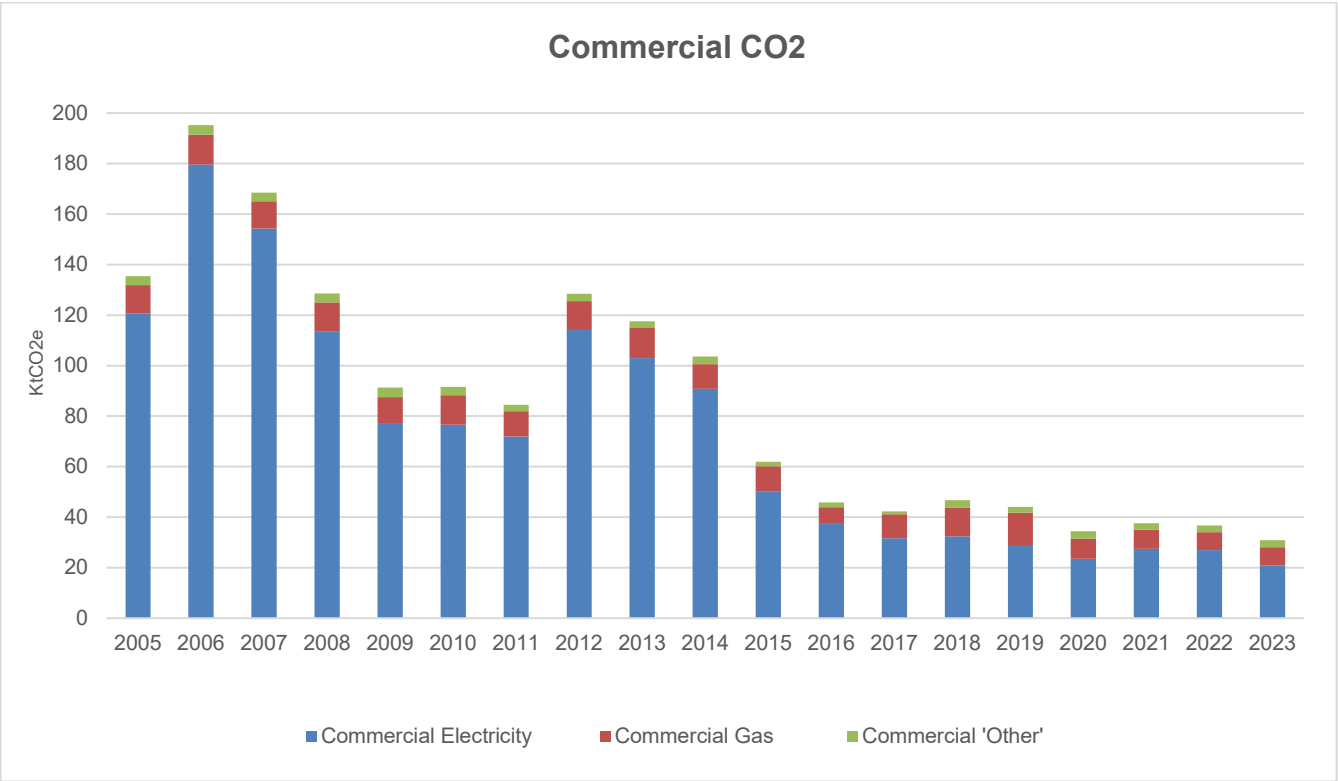


The CO2 emissions for Industry in the borough are now dominated by gas usage. The only industrial emitter in the borough for 2023 is Kimberly Clark. Kimberly-Clark has been working on their [sustainability target](#) and have recently announced a £125m contract with two hydrogen facilities to reduce natural gas usage in its production line, set to be operational in 2027. The facilities, near existing plants, are expected to result in a 50% reduction in natural gas consumption across UK production lines, replacing fossil-fuel gas used for toilet and facial tissue manufacturing.

Kimberly-Clark has achieved an absolute reduction in operational (Scope 1 and 2) GHG emissions of 40.9% towards its goal of a 50% reduction by 2030, and a 10.4% energy efficiency improvement over its 2015 baseline.



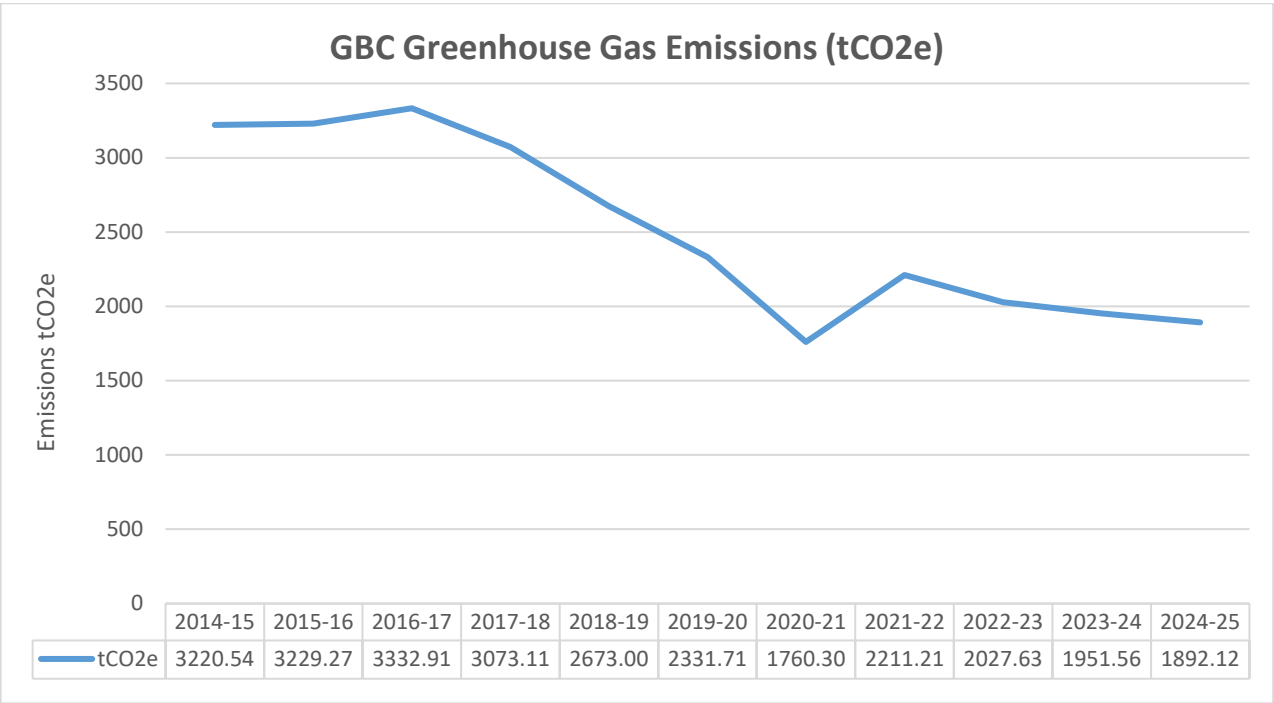
Commercial CO2 emissions are dominated by electricity usage. The use of solar PV on commercial buildings or shared solar farms could be an effective way to reduce emissions and costs for local businesses.



2. Council Operational Emissions

Since 2021 the council continued to progress activity to drive long-term, sustainable reductions in emissions across its own estate.

The council has measured incremental change in the level of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from its own GBC operations since 2014-15:



The Council's total gross greenhouse gas emissions continue to be recorded against the three specific 'scopes' for categorising the emissions:

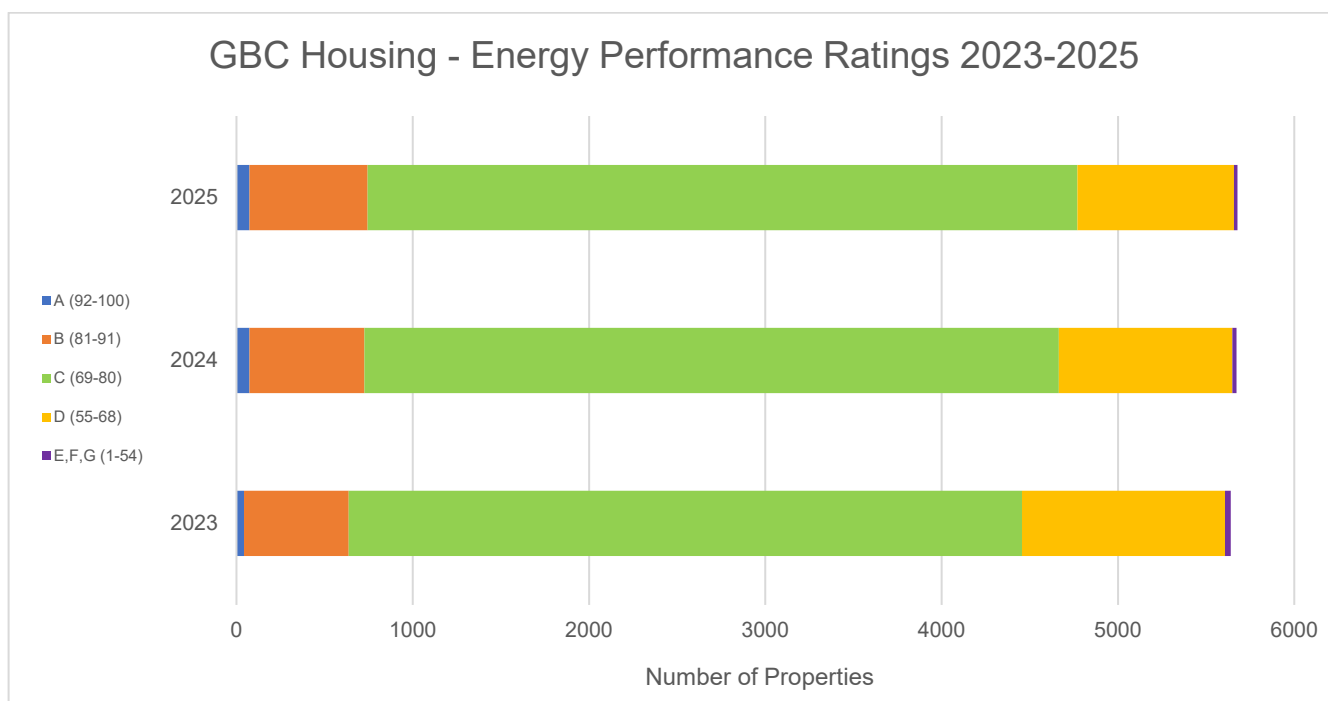
- **Scope 1** – All Direct Emissions from the activities of an organisation or under their control. Including fuel combustion on sites such as gas boilers, fleet vehicles and air-conditioning leaks.
- **Scope 2** – Indirect Emissions from electricity purchased and used by the organisation. Emissions are created during the production of the energy and eventually used by the organisation.
- **Scope 3** – All Other Indirect Emissions from activities of the organisation, occurring from sources that they do not own or control.

Total gross greenhouse gas emissions for Scope 1, 2 and 3 for the last financial year (2024-25) was **1892.12 tCO₂e** (tons of carbon dioxide equivalent – taking account of methane and nitrous oxide as well as carbon dioxide emissions). The Council has been able to maintain a stable position in its emissions levels during the year as we continue to develop and progress plans to decarbonise our operating facilities which account for the majority of our operational greenhouse gas emissions.

3. GBC Housing Stock Emissions

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are required in the UK to provide a prospective owner or tenant with information on the energy performance of a building and recommendations for improvement. EPCs for homes use an A-G rating scale based on the modelled energy bill costs of running the building. As per new EPC Regulations, all existing council-owned homes are to meet EPC Band C or better by 2030, where practical, cost-effective, and affordable.

The graph below shows the improvement in energy performance for the council's social housing stock between 2023 and 2025.



The graph demonstrates that planned council activity during the year had a significant impact on improving the energy efficiency of its housing stock since the strategy was adopted in the year 2021; the proportion of homes with an EPC Rating of C or above is at 84%, up from 79% in 2023.

Future Carbon Pressure

The borough of Gravesham continues to see a number of nationally significant infrastructure projects in the area as well as experiencing, like the rest of the world, the global impact of Climate Change.

1. Local Future Pressures

The detailed examination of the Lower Thames Crossing concluded on 20 December 2023, with the Examining Authority subsequently submitting their recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport. The Secretary of State officially granted the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the project in March 2025.

With the planning consent now in place, the project has moved from the examination phase to the pre-construction and delivery phase. While the Council maintained its objection to the location of the crossing throughout the examination, the granting of the DCO establishes the legal framework for the project's construction. Consequently, the Council's focus has shifted to ensuring that National Highways and their delivery partners strictly adhere to the Requirements (planning conditions) and Section 106 Agreements designed to protect the Borough.

Through the examination process, the Council successfully secured specific mitigations to offset detrimental impacts on Gravesham's residents, businesses, and environment. The Council is now actively fulfilling its role to discharge relevant requirements and monitor compliance to ensure the promised mitigations are delivered effectively and disruption to the Borough is minimised.

2. Global Future Pressures

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established in 1988 and is the United Nations body for assessing the science relating to climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is currently in its Seventh Assessment Report (AR7) cycle formally beginning in July 2023 and the report is expected to be released in late 2029. The report will be the Synthesis Report and will also produce three Working Group contributions to the report.

At its Forty-third Session in Nairobi, Kenya, (11-13 April 2016), the Panel determined that the seventh assessment cycle will include a Special Report on Climate Change and Cities and new methodology reports which are expected in 2027. The Special Report will be developed under the joint scientific leadership of Working Groups I, II and III with support from the Working Group II Technical Support Unit.

At the IPCC's 63rd Plenary session in Lima, Peru, in October of this year, member governments reached an agreement on the scientific content of the 2027 Methodology Report on Carbon Dioxide Removal Technologies, Carbon Capture Utilisation, and Storage. The Panel also approved the 2026 workplan for the Working Groups that contributed to the Seventh Assessment Report, with work starting in December 2025 in Paris. The contributions will focus on climate change's physical science basis, impacts, adaptation, vulnerability, and mitigation.

Key deliverables in 2026

- **Transport & Movement** - In collaboration with KCC and other partners, Council will focus on delivering awareness programmes, campaigns and projects to encourage residents, business, schools and wider community groups to use alternative greener and sustainable travel options to reduce emissions and also be cost-effective.
- **Ensuring sustainability in new housing developments** - Development schemes will be designed to meet energy efficiency standards, preparing for the Future Homes Standard. Renewable energy technology will be used and building fabric solutions will be optimised where possible. Thermal imaging will be used during defects liability to ensure thermal insulation quality and on-site environmental best practices will also be promoted.

- **Business Engagement** - Engaging with key local businesses and networks to increase options to share decarbonisation opportunities, learn from others, celebrate good practices in reducing business environmental footprints and promote business trading in the Low Carbon Environmental Goods or Services sectors.
- **Garden Waste Service Review** - A full review of the garden waste service is planned with a view to identifying further efficiencies, benchmarking our charges, and considering a garden permit scheme to minimise lost subscription income.
- **Commercial Clinical Waste Service** - In February 2024, the Council transitioned our domestic clinical waste service in-house and now see an opportunity to extend this service to commercial clients, including care homes, GP surgeries, medical practices, and funeral homes. We plan to reach out to 97 identified businesses in the borough to inform them of their legal obligations, our service proposal, and potential pricing.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** - To develop a Biodiversity Action Plan, develop appropriate monitoring and management protocols for sites and where appropriate, credit purchase schemes. To create educational programmes and establish volunteer programmes to include biodiversity workshops.
- **Tree Planting** - Future initiatives will involve hedgerow planting and continued protection of healthy veteran trees. These efforts emphasize the Council's commitment to enhancing green spaces, fostering biodiversity, and creating opportunities for communities to connect with nature.
- **Resident Support** - Continuing to provide support to eligible private sector households in making their homes more energy efficient through different schemes such as Warm Homes Local Grant and DFG Heating Grants.
- **Council Housing stock improvement** - To improve energy efficiency of 240 council-owned properties with installation of Solar PV and Air Source Heat Pump through the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3 grant.

The Council will commence a program of heating improvements and retrofit installations to properties not meeting funding requirements with an aim to raise the ratings of the remaining housing stock to meet EPC C. This approach will improve fuel bills, heating efficiency, energy efficiency, and the risk of mould and dampness over a number of years. Additionally, we will establish a plan for all properties to meet EPC C by 2030.

- **Decarbonising Operational Buildings** - Progressing plans to seek funds to decarbonise the Council's operational buildings.

The actions set out will continue to be progressed and monitored both through the council's internal officer working groups and the Climate Change Advisory Board which will report directly to Cabinet.