Agenda Item 9

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2024

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE REPORT TO DECEMBER 2023

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the latest performance update on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the Council is responsible for delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan (2022-26). The Committee is asked to note this update.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The updates in this report reflect progress against the Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework within the Strategic Plan up to 2026, as well as the Environment and Waste performance framework and related high-level plans and strategies across the Council which inform the current performance framework and indicators in this report.

Background

3. This report highlights how a variety of Environment and Climate Change performance indicators are performing against the Council's key outcomes: 'Clean and Green' and 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure'.

4. The performance dashboards, appended to this report, include several indicators where the Council does not have direct control of delivery, such as air quality and river quality. The latter examples are within the scope of the Environment Strategy but are not directly delivered by the Council. They have been included to provide a greater oversight of the environment, inform policy making and help understand what life is like in Leicestershire. They include a mix of national and locally developed performance indicators. Measuring these may highlight areas for scrutiny of delivery by other Council departments, other agencies or the need for lobbying to influence Government policy and funding. It is expected that action by a range of agencies will improve a number of these metrics over time. Internal indicators, where the Council has the most control, are identified with an 'L' within the performance dashboards.

5. The Council monitors and assesses its performance by mainly considering its Direction of Travel (DOT), the Red Amber Green (RAG) rating, and quartile position when compared to other English county councils (where applicable).

6. The DOT arrows indicate an improvement or deterioration in performance compared to the previous result in the performance dashboards in the Appendix. Up arrows show an improvement in performance, down arrows show a decline in performance and horizontal arrows show no change. Grey empty circles mean that there is no update available. This may be due to the time taken to obtain data from third parties and calculate the results or because some indicators are updated less frequently, for example, annually.

7. The performance dashboards include information on the latest data against target (where relevant) which generates a RAG rating if applicable. Red indicates that close monitoring or significant action is required as the target is not or may not be achieved. Amber indicates that light touch monitoring is required as performance is currently not meeting the target or is set to miss the target by a narrow margin. Green indicates no additional action is required as the indicator is currently meeting the target or is on track to meet the target.

8. The Council's performance is benchmarked against 32 English county authorities which covers large, principally non-urban geographical areas. Where it is available, the performance dashboards within the Appendix indicate which quartile Leicestershire's performance falls into. The first quartile is defined as performance that falls within the top 25% of county councils. The fourth quartile is defined as performance that falls within the bottom 25% of county councils. The comparison quartiles are updated annually.

9. The frequency in which the indicators are reported varies as some are quarterly, others are annual, and some less frequent. Quarterly updates tend to have a data lag of one quarter or more. For clarity, the time-periods the data covers are contained in the performance dashboards in the Appendix.

Performance Update – latest data to December 2023

10. The quarterly performance dashboard shows Environment and Climate Change performance up to December 2023. Overall, there are 25 performance indicators included in this report which are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan outcomes. They are presented in the Environment and Climate Change performance dashboards within the Appendix. Where a DOT is available: seven show performance improvement, four had declined in performance and five remained the same as the previous update.

11. The latest position shows that seven KPIs are green (they have met the target or are on track), three are amber (performance is currently not meeting the target or is set to miss the target by a narrow margin) and two are rated red (where performance is currently not meeting the target or is set to miss the target).

12.   When compared to other English county councils, the Council has three indicators which are in the top quartile which include the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance rating C+ (new homes)', the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance rating C+ (existing homes)', and the 'Total fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population' (listed in the Appendix with a green first quartile position). The Council performs below average for nine indicators, within the third and fourth quartiles, listed in the Appendix.

13.   The following updates focus on the 16 indicators that have been updated by the end of December 2023 (Quarter Three).

Clean and Green

People act now to tackle climate change

14.   The Council monitors the energy efficiency of new and existing homes within the County in the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+' indicators. There are separate indicators for new build properties and existing properties.

15.   The latest data shows that 99% of new homes are energy efficient (energy performance certificate rating C+) in Quarter Two (2023/24), compared to existing homes of which only 55% were rated as energy efficient. The energy efficiency performance for new homes had remained static since the previous quarter compared to existing homes that had seen a very minor improvement in performance (1.2 percentage points). Comparisons with other English county councils for 2022/23 show that both the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance certificate rating C+' for new and existing homes fall within the first (top) quartile, showing better comparative performance.

16.   The improvement from the third quartile (2021/22) to the first quartile (2022/23) for existing homes is likely to have been affected by a myriad of factors, including the significant rise in the cost-of-living and energy bills which is likely to have been a factor for people to improve their homes insultation. The Council's Warm Homes initiatives such as the Green Living Leicestershire scheme may have also contributed to this improvement. The latter helps prioritise Leicestershire residents with low incomes to go green, reduce costs and tackle climate change through fully funded home improvements, including loft and wall insulation, solar panels, heat pumps and new efficient windows and doors. Working alongside other types of incentives from other agencies, such as Age UK, Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL) and district councils, are also likely to have played a role in supporting people to better insulate their homes through information and advice on grants and initiatives available.

17.   The latest results for the 'Percentage of staff who say the Council is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact (post-training survey)', remained relatively static at 90% for Quarter Four 2022/23.

Nature and local environment are valued, protected, and enhanced

18.   The 'Hectares of LCC land in better management for nature' was updated in 2022/23 and has seen an additional 10 hectares of land in better management for nature since 2021/22. This indicator was calculated for the first time in 2021/22 and is based on the best available data of the amount of Council land that is in better management for nature. Namely, there is a conscious decision to manage the land with nature in mind.

19.   The percentage of suitable Council land in better management for nature remained the same as the previous update at 97% for 2022/23. This is the above figure presented as a percentage of the total amount of suitable Council land.

20.   Leicestershire is one of the least wooded areas of the country, currently with only around 6% woodland, which is well below the national average of 10% for England. As a major landowner in Leicestershire, the Council has identified areas of its own landholdings where trees, woodlands and hedgerows can be planted to increase overall tree coverage. The Council made a pledge for an 'ambitious project to plant 700,000 trees' by 2032, which is the equivalent of one for every resident of Leicestershire. This equates to 70,000 trees planted each year. To help achieve this pledge, the Tree Management Strategy and Planting Action Plan was updated in 2021 to ensure delivery of the pledge over a 10-year period. The latest tree planting provisional update shows that 356,011 trees have been planted by the Council and its partners up to December 2023 (for 2023/24), since July 2021, and has greatly exceeded its cumulative target of 140,000 for 2023/24. This is just over half of its 2032 target, showing excellent performance. A detailed Tree Management Strategy Annual update was provided to this Committee in November 2023.

Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way

21.   The 'Percentage of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling or composting' remained similar to the previous quarter at 42% for Quarter One 2023/24 (data is two quarters in arrears) and missed its 45% target, resulting in an amber rating. It lies within the third quartile position (2021/22) compared to other English county councils. This indicator has had relatively static performance over the past year at 42%. It is likely this was affected by the summer 2022 heatwave and reduced green waste tonnages. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, this typically tended to hover around 48% from January 2015 to December 2019 (the quarterly position was 46% in December 2019). Results in Quarter One perform worse than the pre-pandemic position. The Council adopted the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy in April 2023 which includes a pledge to put in place collection systems to contribute towards the future national target of 65% recycling by 2035.

22. The 'Annual percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill (former NI 193)' met its target of 30% (rated green). There was a slight decrease (2.4%) in waste landfilled from 24% in Quarter Four 2022/23 to 21% in Quarter One 2023/24 showing an improvement in performance. Since the same time last year (24%), there has been a steady decline in waste sent to landfill (and an increase in waste sent to energy from waste) resulting in an improvement in performance. When compared to other English county councils, this indicator remained in the fourth (bottom) quartile in 2021/22. In order to achieve an average position when compared to the other English county councils, performance would have to meet a more challenging 7% landfill rate. Through the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy, the Council is committed to reducing waste to landfill to less than 5% by 2025, well in advance of the national target of 10% by 2030. The new energy from waste contract started in April 2023 and it is expected that this will result in the amount of municipal waste being sent to landfill falling significantly further in 2023/24.

23. The 'Total household waste per household (kg)' declined in performance slightly as waste increased from 939kg in Quarter Four 2022/23 to 954kg in Quarter One 2023/24 (data is two quarters in arrears), a 1.6% decrease in performance. Although since the same time last year performance had improved by 4.2% (from 996kg in Quarter One 2022/23 and met its target (that required a year-on-year decrease)). In comparison to other English county councils, Leicestershire's performance was slightly below average as it is in the third quartile for 2021/22.

24. The 'Tonnes of waste produced from LCC sites' saw a 5% improvement in performance as waste decreased from 263 tonnes in Quarter Three 2022/23 to 250 tonnes in Quarter Four 2022/23. This indicator has met its 387 tonnes target and performs better than its pre-Covid-19 pandemic rate, which was typically 482 tonnes between January 2015 and December 2019. This might reflect the building occupancy levels settling down during this period.

25. The 'Percentage of waste recycled from LCC sites (non-operational)' declined in performance (4%) from 55% in Quarter Three 2022/23 to 51% in Quarter Four 2022/23 and missed its target of 64% resulting in a red RAG rating. Recycling peaked in Quarter One 2022/23 but has been declining since. The latest data performs worse than the pre-pandemic rate which was typically 58% between January 2015 and December 2019. This may be due to changes in occupancy, lighter packaging materials, less paper use, and the removal of office composting at County Hall.

The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly

26. Following the Government's decision to ban sales of new and diesel cars nationally by 2035, as part of its UK Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (published in March 2022), the Government predicts that a minimum of 300,000 public charging points will be needed nationally by 2030 to meet expected demand. In order to help decarbonise transport and contribute to the Council's own net zero ambitions for the County, the Council continues to support residents in switching to electric vehicles. The 'Electric vehicle

charging locations per 100,000 population' improved in performance by 10%, from 42/100,000 in Quarter One 2023/24 to 47/100,000 in Quarter Two 2023/24. This represents a 24% increase since the same period last year when the figure was 38/100,000 which indicates an improvement in the sectors infrastructure supporting more sustainable alternatives over the year. In terms of comparison with other counties, Leicestershire is in the fourth quartile (bottom) for 2023 (the same as in 2022).

27. So far, the Council has:

a) Installed electric vehicle (EV) charge points at Council's Park and Ride sites.
b) Secured almost £1m of the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Pilot funding along with four other local authorities and Midlands Connect. It is expected that this support from the Government will attract additional private sector investment, with cumulative funds being used to deliver up to 100 new public on-street charge points across the County, with rollout from Autumn 2024.
c) Carried out a countywide EV consultation survey between the start of October and the end of November 2023, providing an opportunity for current and future EV owners to tell the Council about their charging habits and potential charging concerns.

28. Future Council plans regarding EV involve:

a) Analysing the results of the Council's countywide EV survey. Feedback from the survey will provide the Council with a better understanding of the demand for EV charging across the County and this will help the Council start to plan a network of public charge points that works for Leicestershire's communities.
b) Providing further opportunities for residents to provide feedback on future charge point locations.
c) Continuing to work with Midlands Connect and other local authorities to bid for further LEVI funding, which would bring hundreds more public EV charge points to Leicestershire and help meet the needs of the growing EV market.
d) Continuing to consider opportunities to introduce public charge points within the Council's Country Parks and additional charge points at the Council's Park and Ride sites.
e) Working with the district councils, businesses, and other parties to help develop a countywide EV infrastructure strategy. This will define the role of the County Council and evaluate options for a public charging point network, in on- and off-street locations; for example, in residential areas, supermarkets, shopping centres and public car parks.
f) Carrying out a review of the Council's own fleet vehicles identifying opportunities to transition to low emission vehicles and provide the necessary charging infrastructure, where this is practicable and cost effective.
g) Reviewing the EV schemes that other authorities have introduced, or are currently piloting, to learn from their experiences.

h) Taking opportunities to press the Government to set out a national approach and standards for EV charging infrastructure, which is appropriately funded.

29. The 'Electric vehicle ownership – Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population' improved in performance by 8% as ownership increased from 170/10,000 in Quarter One 2023/24 to 183/10,000 in Quarter Two 2023/24. This has increased by 51% since the same period last year, which was 121/10,000. It continues to demonstrate a notable shift of people moving from fossil-fuelled vehicles to more sustainable electric alternatives. However, Leicestershire remains in the third quartile (below average) when compared to other counties for 2023. The percentage of licensed ULEVs of all licensed vehicles in the County is approximately 2.5% in Quarter Two 2023/24, which is just above the East Midlands rate of 2.4% for the same period.

30. The 'Amount of renewable energy generated as a % of consumption' declined in performance slightly (4%) from 15% in Quarter Three 2022/23 to 11% in Quarter Four 2022/23. This internal KPI has not yet met its target of 28% resulting in a red RAG rating. Solar photovoltaic output increased in 2022/23 due to new arrays coming on stream. However, biomass heat output was limited by works to install upgrades, and there were some mechanical and supply chain issues. Gas consumption was also relatively high, further decreasing the percentage of energy from renewable sources.

31. The 'Total LCC greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (gross)' has decreased during 2022/23 by 7% since the previous year, down to 9,395 tCO_2e (tonnes (t)) of carbon dioxide (CO_2) equivalent (e) in 2022/23, showing an improvement in performance over the year (internal indicator). It has met its refreshed target as the latest results are fewer than 11,690 tCO_2e, resulting in a green RAG rating. Emission reductions were seen across all major sources, except business travel which continues to see some bounce back in emissions. Emissions remain lower than pre Covid-19 pandemic levels, which were on average 21,010 tCO_2e from January 2015 to December 2019 (and 12,366 tCO_2e in December 2019). Recent performance is an improvement on this. The Council's Greenhouse Gas Report 2021-22, presented to this Committee in January 2024, provided a comprehensive update on emissions, progress against the Council's net zero targets and identified positive actions to sustain improvements.

32. The 'Total business miles claimed ('000s of miles)' declined in performance due to a 3% increase in claims since the previous quarter as business miles increased from 4,220,000 miles in Quarter Three 2022/23 to 4,340,000 miles in Quarter Four 2022/23. This internal indicator has met its 5,518,000 target, resulting in a green RAG rating. There was a 9% rise in mileage claims compared to the same time last year (Quarter Four 2021/22) as services continued to adjust after the pandemic. Mileage has continued to rise steadily by small amounts throughout 2022/23. However, compared to the pre-pandemic levels (6,172,100 miles on average between January 2015 to December 2019), recent performance is much better.

Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth

33. The 'NO$_2$ exceedances for Leicestershire' indicator includes the number of times nitrogen dioxide (NO$_2$) has exceeded the annual mean air quality objective of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. NO$_2$ is a gas that is mainly produced during the combustion of fossil fuels. It is published by district councils in their Air Quality Annual Status Reports. There are no new updates to this indicator for Quarter One as these are only updated annually. The reported four exceedances for 2022 had shown worse performance than in 2021 when there had been no NO$_2$ exceedances.

Background Papers

Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework and Strategic Plan 2022-2026
https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2022/7/13/LCC-Strategic-Plan-2022-26.pdf

Environment Strategy 2018-30
https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2020/7/13/Environment-Strategy-2018-2030-delivering-a-better-future.pdf

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2022-23
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s180731/Appendix%20B%20-%20LCC%20Greenhouse%20Gas%20Report.pdf

Tree Management Strategy 2020-2025
https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2021/2/16/Tree-Management-Strategy-2020-2025.pdf

Tree Management Strategy Annual Update 2023
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s179317/Tree%20Management%20Strategy%20Annual%20Update.pdf

Improving Air Quality and Health across Leicestershire 2020- 2024: a multiagency partnership for joint action
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s157169/Appendix%20A%20Air%20Quality%20and%20Health%20Action%20Plan.pdf

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equality Implications

34. There are no specific equality implications to note as part of this performance report.

Human Rights Implications

35.   There are no human rights implications arising from this performance report.

Appendix

Strategic Plan Performance Dashboards by Outcomes covering Environment and Climate Change Performance to December 2023
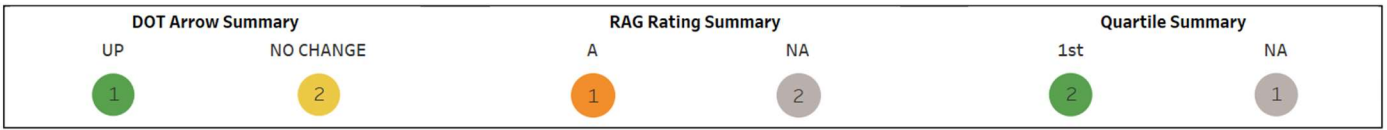
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Appendix – Environment & Climate Change Performance December 2023

Clean & Green

Environment & Transport KPI Performance Dashboard (Info)

DOT Arrow Summary		RAG Rating Summary		Quartile Summary	
UP	NO CHANGE	A	NA	1st	NA
1	2	1	2	2	1

Outcome	All	Branch	All
Sub Outcome	People act now to tackle clima..	Countywide/LCC	All

Search Indicator
All

Indicator (* = Statutory Returns)	Latest Data	Period	Prev. Data	Perform. DOT	Target (Yearly)	RAG	Quartiles	Previous Updates	C/L
% domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+ (new)	99	Q2 2023/24	98.9	→		NA	1st 2022/23		C
% domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+ (existing)	54.8	Q2 2023/24	53.6	↑		NA	1st 2022/23		C
% of LCC staff who say LCC is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact (post-training survey)	89.8	Q4 2022/23	90	→	90	A	NA		L

Environment & Transport KPI Performance Dashboard (Info)

DOT Arrow Summary			RAG Rating Summary		Quartile Summary
UP	NO CHANGE	NO UPDATE	G	NA	NA
1	2	2	1	4	5
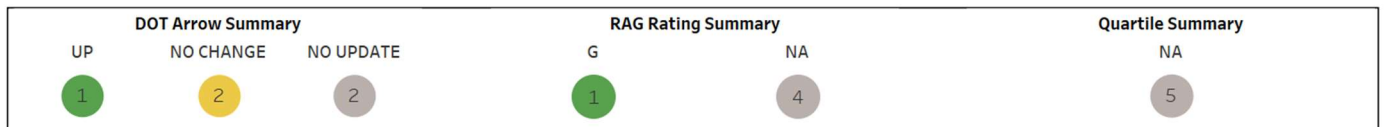
Outcome	All	Branch	All
Sub Outcome	Nature and local environment ..	Countywide/LCC	All

Search Indicator
All

Indicator (* = Statutory Returns)	Latest Data	Period	Prev. Data	Perform. DOT	Target (Yearly)	RAG	Quartiles	Previous Updates	C/L
Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) are in good ecological status (%)	9.4	2019	0.67	○		NA	NA		C
Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) are in good chemical status (%)	0	2019	99.6	○		NA	NA		C
Hectares of LCC land in better management for nature	3,854	2022/23	3,844	→		NA	NA		L
Percentage of suitable LCC land in better management for nature	97	2022/23	97	→		NA	NA		L
Tree planting	356,011	Up to Dec 2023	248,707	↑	140,000	G	NA		L

Environment & Transport KPI Performance Dashboard Info

DOT Arrow Summary				RAG Rating Summary				Quartile Summary			
UP	NO CHANGE	DOWN	NO UPDATE	G	A	R	NA	1st	3rd	4th	NA
2	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	3

Outcome All **Branch** All

Sub Outcome Resources are used in an envir.. **Countywide/LCC** All

Search Indicator All

Indicator (* = Statutory Returns)	Latest Data	Period	Prev. Data	Perform. DOT	Target (Yearly)	RAG	Quartiles	Previous Updates	C/L
* % of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling, composting etc. (former NI192)	42.4	Q1 2023/24	41.56	→	45	A	3rd 2021/22		C
* Annual percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill (former NI 193)	21.3	Q1 2023/24	23.68	↑	30	G	4th 2021/22		C
* Total household waste per household (kg)	954.1	Q1 2023/24	939.4	↓		G	3rd 2021/22		C
Tonnes of waste produced from LCC sites	250	Q4 2022/23	262.9	↑	387.3	G	NA		L
% waste recycled from LCC sites (non-operational)	51.2	Q4 2022/23	54.8	↓	64	R	NA		L
Total fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population	5.6	2021/22	8.6	○		NA	1st 2021/22		C
LCC Environmental risks managed	2	2022/23	3	○	0	A	NA		L

Environment & Transport KPI Performance Dashboard (Info)

	DOT Arrow Summary			RAG Rating Summary			Quartile Summary		
	UP	DOWN	NO UPDATE	G	R	NA	3rd	4th	NA
	3	2	4	3	1	5	4	2	3

Outcome All
Sub Outcome The economy and infrastructur..

Branch Environment & Waste
Countywide/LCC All

Search Indicator
All

Indicator (* = Statutory Returns)	Latest Data	Period	Prev. Data	Perform. DOT	Target (Yearly)	RAG	Quartiles	Previous Updates	C/L
Electric vehicle charging location per 100,000 population	46.5	Q2 2023/24	42.2	⬆		NA	4th 2023		C
Electric vehicle ownership - Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population	183.4	Q2 2023/24	169.8	⬆		NA	3rd 2023		C
Renewable electricity generated in the area (MWh)	355,263	2022	326,582	◯		NA	3rd 2022		C
Renewable electricity capacity in the area (MW)	340.2	2022	333.4	◯		NA	3rd 2022		C
Amount of renewable energy generated as a % of consumption	10.9	Q4 2022/23	14.5	⬇	27.8	R	NA		L
PM2.5 Air pollution fine particulate matter (μg/m³)	7.7	2022	7.7	◯		NA	4th 2021		C
Carbon emissions per capita (in LA influence)	4.6	2021	4.3	◯	4.7	G	3rd 2021		C
Total LCC GHG emissions	9,395	2022/23	10,089	⬆	11,690	G	NA		L
Total Business miles claimed ('000s of miles)	4,340	Q4 2022/23	4,220	⬇	5,518	G	NA		L

Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

Environment & Transport KPI Performance Dashboard (Info)

	DOT Arrow Summary	RAG Rating Summary	Quartile Summary
	NO UPDATE	NA	NA
	1	1	1

Outcome Strong Economy, Transport an..
Sub Outcome All

Branch Environment & Waste
Countywide/LCC All

Search Indicator
All

Indicator (* = Statutory Returns)	Latest Data	Period	Prev. Data	Perform. DOT	Target (Yearly)	RAG	Quartiles	Previous Updates	C/L
NO2 exceedances for Leicestershire	4	2022	0	◯		NA	NA		C

Data notes

In order to ensure comparisons are unbiased and insightful the following indicators are used in deriving annual quartile positions as part of the Council's corporate benchmarking approach. These indicators use published statistics from the relevant government departmental (e.g., Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) and the Office of National Statistics population data.

Renewable electricity generated within LA area (MWh per 1000 households)

Renewable electricity capacity within LA area (MW per 10k households)