

Sustainability Survey

Research Report

January to February 2024



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Summary

Background

In January 2024, the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted a survey of all councils to identify the key issues they are facing in delivering sustainability in their local area as well as the progress being made. A total of 96 responses were received from individual local authorities, resulting in a final response rate of 30 per cent.

Key Findings

- A vast majority of respondents were aware of the LGA Sustainability E-bulletin (96 per cent), sustainability masterclasses (95 per cent) and Green Virtual Event Series (95 per cent) to at least a small extent.
- The areas where respondents could most benefit from LGA expertise and skills development were educating the public or changing public behaviour (69 per cent), low carbon procurement (69 per cent) and adaptation and resilience to changing climates (68 per cent).
- The forms of LGA support which most respondents could benefit from were sector specific good practice on scope 3 emissions (78 per cent) and workshops or training (75 per cent).
- The main challenges to securing the needed sustainability expertise and skills were short-term funding necessitating 12-month contracts (51 per cent), difficulty finding candidates with the required skills (44 per cent) and inability to compete with other employers in terms of salaries (41 per cent).
- The vast majority (92 per cent) of respondents were already measuring their authority's own scope 1 and 2 emissions, with 35 per cent measuring their authority's scope 3 emissions, 52 per cent measuring their local area's scope 1 and 2 emissions, and 15 per cent measuring their area's scope 3 emissions.
- The methods or tools used most often to arrive at their authority's latest carbon emissions were their own council's tool (37 per cent) and the LGA and Local Partnerships Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool (33 per cent).
- The methods or tools used most often to arrive at their area's latest carbon emissions were the BEIS National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (52 per cent), external consultancy (16 per cent) and the SCATTER tool (16 per cent).
- The most common frequency of local authorities publishing their carbon baseline was annually (69 per cent), with two per cent publishing their baseline more often than annually, and 20 per cent publishing their baseline less often than annually.
- Almost all (97 per cent of) respondents had set an official target for becoming carbon net zero – this consisted of 58 per cent who had set a

target for both the authority itself and its local area, 31 per cent who had set a target for just the authority itself, and eight per cent who had set a target for just their local area.

- Large majorities of respondents reported having an executive council member with a lead role on sustainability (81 per cent) and an agreed and up to date climate change, sustainability and/or net zero strategy (84 per cent, with 81 per cent of these including both mitigation and adaptation).
- Three per cent of those with sustainability strategies had secured all of the resources required to implement it.
- A large majority of respondents (83 per cent) reported that their authority's local area had been affected by a climate related incident in the last five years.

Introduction

In January 2024, the LGA conducted an online survey of all councils to help the LGA understand the key issues councils are facing and the progress being made, as well as informing our support work. The survey gathered the views of respondents with regard to the specific types of support councils could benefit from, the range of mitigation and adaptation project areas that authorities have delivered in the last 10 years, and the main challenges they face in securing the required expertise and skills in their sustainability work.

Methodology

The online survey was open between 8 January and 16 February 2024 as an online unique form sent to the Heads of Sustainability, Environment or Climate Change. A total of 96 responses were received from individual local authorities, resulting in a final response rate of 30 per cent.

The responses to this survey have been weighted to be better representative of all single-tier and county councils in England. The number provided for the base for the tables refers to the actual (unweighted) number of respondents who answered each question.

The full set of survey questions is included in Annex A for information.

In addition, the following points should be noted about the research methodology:

- Please note that the bases from which percentages were calculated vary throughout the survey, as not all respondents were shown all questions, and all questions were optional, meaning that some respondents chose not to answer them.
- Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole per cent.
- Where the response base is less than 50, care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore where this is the case in this report, absolute numbers are reported alongside the percentage values.

Response rates

As Table 1 shows, by council type, the response rate was highest from county councils (38 per cent) and lowest from Unitary Authorities (27 per cent).

Table 1: Response rate by council type

	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate
County	21	8	38%
London Borough	33	12	36%
Metropolitan District	36	10	28%
Unitary Authority	63	17	27%
District	164	49	30%
Total	317	96	30%

Regionally, as shown in Table 2, the response rate was highest from the Yorkshire and the Humber (40 per cent) and lowest from the North East (8 per cent).

Table 2: Response rate by region

	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate
East	50	18	36%
East Midlands	39	11	28%
Greater London	33	12	36%
North East	12	1	8%
North West	36	9	25%
South East	70	23	33%
South West	29	7	24%
West Midlands	33	9	27%
Yorkshire and the Humber	15	6	40%
Total	317	96	61%

Full Results

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

LGA forms of support

Respondents were asked to what extent they were aware of specific forms of support around sustainability that the LGA provides. The three forms of support that respondents were most aware of were the LGA Sustainability E-bulletin (96 per cent to at least a small extent), the LGA Sustainability Masterclasses including carbon literacy (95 per cent to at least a small extent) and the LGA Green Virtual Event Series (95 per cent to at least a small extent). The three forms of support that respondents were not at all aware of were Action Learning Sets (49 per cent), The LGA Sustainability Action Group (30 per cent) and Sustainability in Council Services (29 per cent). The results for this question are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: To what extent are you aware of the following forms of support around sustainability that the LGA provides?

	LGA Sustainability E-bulletin	LGA Sustainability Masterclasses including carbon literacy	LGA Green Virtual Event Series e.g. housing retrofit, community	Sustainability Case Studies	LGA and Local Partnerships Greenhouse Gas Accounting	The LGA Sustainability Webpage Support Hub	The Climate Emergency Knowledge Hub	Roundtables e.g. Community Engagement	Sustainability in Council Services	The LGA Sustainability Action Group	Action Learning Sets
To at least a small extent	96	95	95	93	93	89	87	81	71	70	51
To a great extent	53	30	28	24	43	17	27	10	14	17	3
To a moderate extent	29	35	45	44	36	40	38	30	27	24	19
To a small extent	15	30	23	25	14	39	22	41	30	29	29
Not at all	4	5	5	7	7	11	13	19	29	30	49

Unweighted base: All respondents (93).

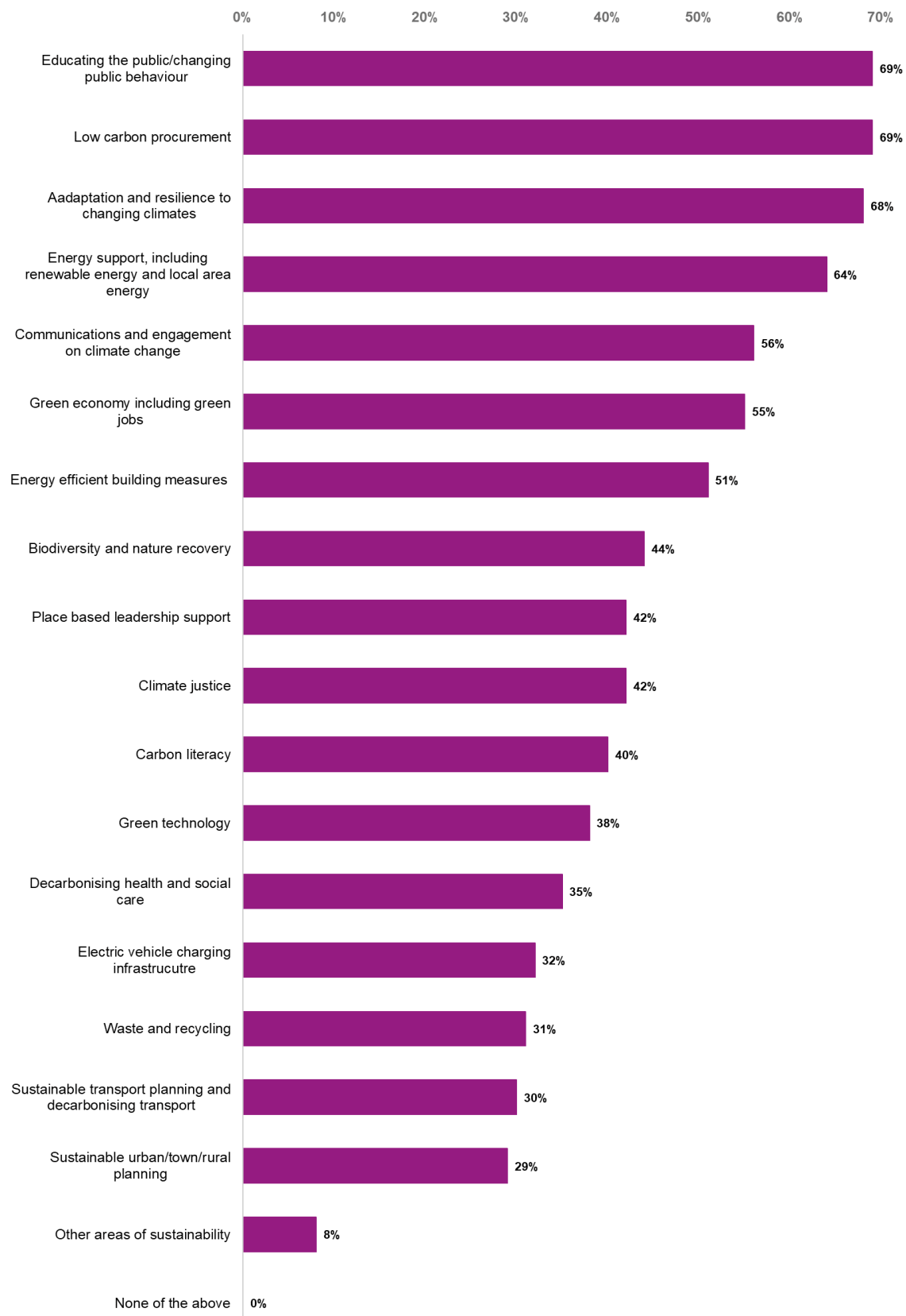
Respondents were then asked in which areas, if any, their authority could benefit from expertise and skills development delivered by the LGA. The three areas that respondents selected the most were “educating the public/changing public behaviour” (69 per cent), ‘low carbon procurement’ (69 per cent) and “adaptation and resilience to changing climates” (68 per cent). No respondents said they would not benefit from support in any of the specified areas. The results for this question can be seen in Table 4 and Figure 1.

Table 4: In what areas, if any, could your authority benefit from expertise and skills development delivered by the LGA?

	Per cent
Educating the public/changing public behaviour	69
Low carbon procurement	69
Adaptation and resilience to changing climates	68
Energy support, including renewable energy and local area energy planning	64
Communications and engagement on climate change	56
Green economy including green jobs	55
Energy efficient building measures	51
Biodiversity and nature recovery	44
Place based leadership support	42
Climate justice	42
Carbon literacy	40
Green technology	38
Decarbonising health and social care	35
Electric vehicle charging infrastructure	32
Waste and recycling	31
Sustainable transport planning and decarbonising	30
Sustainable urban/town/rural planning	29
Other areas of sustainability action (please specify)	8
None of the above	0

Unweighted base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Figure 1: In what areas, if any, could your authority benefit from expertise and skills development delivered by the LGA?



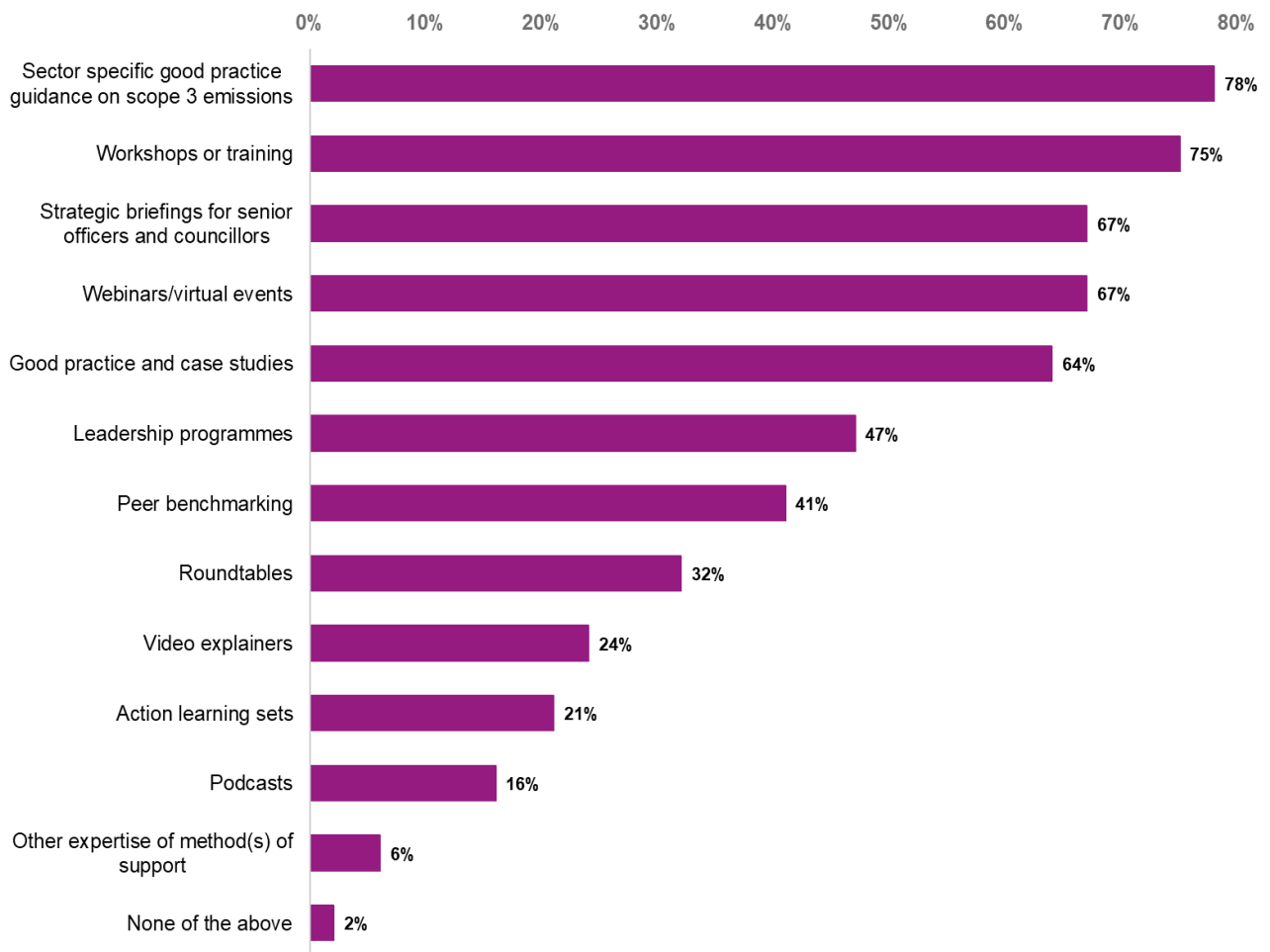
Respondents were then asked in which areas, if any, their authority could benefit from specific types of support delivered by the LGA. The four areas that respondents selected the most frequently were “sector specific good practice guidance on scope 3 emissions (78 per cent), “workshops or training” (75 per cent), “strategic briefings for senior officers and councillors” (67 per cent) and “webinars/virtual events” (67 per cent). The results for this question can be seen in Table 5 and Figure 2.

Table 5: In what areas, if any, could your authority benefit from expertise and skills development delivered by the LGA?

	Per cent
Sector specific good practice guidance on scope 3	78
Workshops or training	75
Strategic briefings for senior officers and councillors	67
Webinars/virtual events	67
Good practice and case studies	64
Leadership programmes	47
Peer benchmarking	41
Roundtables	32
Video explainers	24
Action learning sets	21
Podcasts	16
Other expertise of method(s) of support (please specify)	6
None of the above	2

Unweighted base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Figure 2: In what areas, if any, could your authority benefit from specific types of support delivered by the LGA?



Main challenges

Respondents were then asked what the main challenges were to securing the needed expertise and skills in sustainability work. Just over half (51 per cent) selected short-term funding necessitating 12-month contracts. Just over two fifths selected difficulty finding candidates with the required skills (44 per cent), with a further 41 per cent selecting the inability to compete with other employers in the terms of salaries. Just under two-fifths of respondents (38 per cent) said that difficulty upskilling current staff capacity was one of the main challenges, whilst a further 37 per cent selected uncertainty as to which areas in need of further development should be prioritised. Just over a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) selected uncertainty as to what expertise and skills should be prioritised. A fifth of respondents (21 per cent) answered “other”, whilst no respondents said there were no challenges to securing the needed expertise and skills. Eight per cent of respondents were unsure. The results for this question can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: What would you say are the main challenges to securing the needed expertise and skills in sustainability work?

	Response rate
Short-term funding necessitating 12-month contracts	51%
Difficulty finding candidates with the required skills	44%
Inability to compete with other employers in terms of salaries	41%
Difficulty upskilling current staff capacity	38%
Uncertainty as to which areas in need of further development should be prioritised	37%
Uncertainty as to what expertise and skills should be prioritised	27%
Other (please specify below)	21%
No challenges	0%
Don't know	8%

Unweighted base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Measuring carbon emissions

Respondents were asked if their authority, or authority's local area, were or were not currently measuring their carbon emissions of different scopes. Scope 1 emissions represent those generated directly by an organisation, whereas Scope 2 are those produced by the production of the energy it uses, and Scope 3 are those within its wider influence and control.

In terms of "your authority – scope 1 and 2", 92 per cent of respondents said it was already measured. Five per cent of respondents said it wasn't, but that they had plans to measure it in development whilst four per cent were unsure. In terms of "your authority – scope 3", 35 per cent of respondents said it was already measured whilst 46 per cent said it wasn't, but that there were plans to measure in development. Sixteen per cent said it wasn't measured and they had no current plans to develop measures yet, whilst four per cent of respondents were unsure.

In terms of “your authority’s local area – scope 1 and 2”, 52 per cent of respondents said it was already measured. Fifteen per cent of respondents said it wasn’t, but they have plans to measure it in development whilst 24 per cent said it wasn’t measured and have no current plans to develop measures yet. Nine per cent of respondents were unsure. In terms of “your authority’s local area – scope 3”, 15 per cent of respondents said it was already measured. Twenty per cent of respondents said it wasn’t, but they have plans to measure it in development whilst 52 per cent said it wasn’t measured and have no current plans to develop measures yet. Thirteen per cent of respondents were unsure. The results for this are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Is your authority currently measuring, or not measuring, the carbon emissions of the following?

	Your authority - scope 1 and 2	Your authority - scope 3	Your authority's local area - scope 1 and 2	Your authority's local area - scope 3
Yes, already measured	92%	35%	52%	15%
No, but plans to measure in development	5%	46%	15%	20%
No, and no current plans to develop measures yet	0%	16%	24%	52%
Don't know	4%	4%	9%	13%

Base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Respondents who said they measured their authority’s carbon emissions for scope 1 and 2 or scope 3 were then asked which method or tool they used. Almost two-fifths (37 per cent) said they used their own council’s tool. A third of respondents (33 per cent) said they use the LGA and Local Partnerships Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool whilst just under a fifth (19 per cent) said they used an external consultancy. A further 7 per cent of respondents answered “other”, whilst 37 per cent were unsure. The results for this question are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Which method or tool did you use to arrive at your authority's latest carbon emissions?

	Response rate
Your own council's tool	37%
LGA and Local Partnerships Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool	33%
External consultancy	19%
Other	7%
Don't know	37%

Base: all respondents who answered this question (88 respondents).

Respondents who said they were currently measuring their authority's local area carbon emissions for scope 1 and 2 or scope 3 were then asked what method or tool they used. Just over half of respondents (52 per cent) said they used the BEIS National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory. A further 16 per cent answered either external consultancy or the SCATTER tool. Eight per cent of respondents said they used their own council's tool, whilst six per cent answered other. Two per cent of respondents were unsure. The results for this question are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Which method or tool did you use to arrive at your area's latest carbon emissions?

	Response rate
BEIS National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory	52%
External consultancy	16%
SCATTER tool	16%
Your own council's tool	8%
Other	6%
Don't know	2%

Base: all respondents who answered this question (52 respondents).

Respondents were then asked how often their authority publishes their carbon baseline. Two per cent of respondents answered more often than annually. The majority of respondents (69 per cent) said they published it annually with a further fifth (20 per cent) saying less often than annually. Three per cent of respondents answered never whilst six per cent of respondents were unsure. The results for this are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: How often does your authority publish its carbon baseline?

	Response rate
More often than annually	2%
Annually	69%
Less often than annually	20%
Never	3%
Don't know	6%

Base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Respondents were asked whether their authority had set an official target for becoming carbon net zero. Almost three-fifths of respondents (58 per cent) said their authority had set an official target for both the authority itself and for the area as a whole. Just under a third (31 per cent) said they had for just the authority itself, with eight per cent saying they had for just the area as a whole. Two per cent of respondents said their authority had not set an official target for becoming carbon net zero whilst one per cent of respondents were unsure. The results for this question are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Has your authority set an official target for becoming carbon net zero?

	Response rate
Yes, for the authority itself and the area as a whole	58%
Yes, for the authority itself	31%
Yes, for the area as a whole	8%
No	2%
Don't know	1%

Base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Respondents were then asked if their authority had an executive council member whose portfolio specifies a lead role on sustainability. Just over four-fifths of respondents (81 per cent) said they did whilst 16 per cent said they did not. Three per cent were unsure. The results for this are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Is there an executive council member of your authority whose portfolio specifies a lead role on sustainability?

	Response rate
Yes	81%
No	16%
Don't know	3%

Base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Sustainability strategy

Respondents were asked if their authority has an agreed and up to date climate change, sustainability or net zero strategy. Over four-fifths of respondents (84 per cent) said their authority already had one that was being delivered. Five per cent said they had one that had been completed but not yet delivered. Four per cent said they did not have one but that it was currently in development, whilst a further four

per cent said they did not have one, but were planning to produce one. Three per cent of respondents said they did not have one and have no plans to produce one yet, whilst one per cent of respondents were unsure. The results for this question are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Does your authority have an agreed and up to date climate change/sustainability/net zero strategy?

	Response rate
Yes, already being delivered	84%
Yes, completed but not yet being delivered	5%
No, but currently in development	4%
No, but planning to produce one	4%
No, and no current plans to produce one yet	3%
Don't know	1%

Base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Respondents who had a strategy, had one in development or were planning to produce one, were then asked if their climate change, sustainability or net zero strategy covers, or would cover, mitigation, adaptation or both. Around four-fifths of respondents said it would cover both mitigation and adaptation. Just under a fifth (16 per cent) said it would cover mitigation only with no respondents saying it would cover adaptation only. Three per cent were unsure. The results for this are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Does or will the climate change/sustainability/net zero strategy cover mitigation, adaptation, or both?

	Response rate
Both mitigation and adaptation	81%
Mitigation only	16%
Adaptation only	0%
Don't know	3%

Base: all respondents who answered this question (92 respondents).

Respondents were asked whether their authority has specific financial and/or staffing resources that had already been secured to implement the strategy. Three per cent of respondents said their authority had all the resources required to implement it, whilst the majority of respondents (87 per cent) said their authority had some of the resources required to implement it. Eight per cent said their authority did not have specific financial and/or staffing resources to implement the strategy. Two per cent were unsure. The results for this question are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Does your authority have specific financial and/or staffing resources that have already been secured to implement the strategy?

	Response rate
Yes, all of the resources required to implement it	3%
Yes, some of the resources required to implement it	87%
No	8%
Don't know	2%

Base: all respondents who answered this question (92 respondents).

Sustainability project areas

Respondents were asked which mitigation project areas their authority had delivered in the last 10 years, were delivering at the time of completing the survey, or had plans to deliver in the future. In terms of energy mitigation project areas, 47 per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Sixty-three per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Thirty per cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years, with a further 23 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. One per cent said they had not delivered any energy mitigation project areas and have no current plans to do so yet. Five per cent were unsure.

In terms of transport mitigation project areas, 36 per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Sixty-three per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Thirty-one per cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years, with a further 24 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. Five per cent were unsure.

In terms of housing mitigation project areas, 39 per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Fifty-eight per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Twenty-six per cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years, with a further 27 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. Two per cent said they had not delivered any housing mitigation project areas, and had no current plans to do so yet. Ten per cent were unsure.

In terms of divestment from companies posing environmental risk, six per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Fourteen per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Six per cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years with a further 14 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. Thirty-three per cent said they had not delivered any housing mitigation project areas and had no current plans to do so yet. Thirty-nine per cent were unsure. The results for these are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Which, if any, of the following mitigation project areas has your authority delivered in the last ten years, is delivering currently, or has plans to deliver in future?

	Have previously delivered in the last 10 years	Delivering currently	Plan to deliver in the next two years	Plan to deliver in the longer term	Have not delivered and have no current plans to deliver	Don't know
Energy	47%	63%	30%	23%	1%	5%
Transport	36%	63%	31%	24%	0%	5%
Housing	39%	58%	26%	27%	2%	10%
Divestment from companies posing environmental risk	6%	14%	6%	14%	33%	39%

Base: all respondents who answered this question (91 respondents).

Climate incidents

Respondents were then asked whether their authority's local area had been affected by a climate related incident in the last five years. Just over four-fifths (83 per cent) said yes, whilst seven per cent said no. Ten per cent of respondents were unsure. The results for this question are shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Has your authority's local area been affected by a climate related incident in the last five years?

	Response rate
Yes	83%
No	7%
Don't know	10%

Base: all respondents (96 respondents).

Respondents who said that their local area had been affected by climate related incidents were asked to briefly describe the nature and consequences of these

incidents. Their responses to this question fell into the following themes, sorted from those most commonly mentioned to those mentioned least often.

Types of climate related incidents:

- Flooding, including coastal, river and other forms of flooding, mentioned by far the most often
- Heatwaves and other forms of excessive heat
- Storms
- Fires, including building fires, forest fires and wildfires
- Water shortages and drought
- Increased frequency and intensity of rainfall
- Coastal erosion
- Strong winds
- Stress on animal habitats
- Crop shortages
- Landslides

Consequences of these incidents:

- Damage to residences
- Damage to commercial and/or industrial properties
- Damage to roads and infrastructure
- Housing evacuation and displacement of residences
- Disruption to council services and projects
- Damage to schools and community centres
- Causing and exacerbating health issues, particularly among the elderly
- Travel and transport disruption
- Danger to life and excess deaths above usual expected levels
- Damage to blue and green infrastructure
- Damage to village and town centres
- Reduced biodiversity
- Water insecurity
- Collapse of bridges and weirs
- Property and equipment catching fire
- Food shortages
- Loss of homes
- Long-term closure of council buildings
- Reduced economic productivity
- Overheating in buildings
- Damage to coastal defences

Respondents were asked which adaptation project areas their authority had delivered in the last 10 years, was delivering at the time of completing the survey, or had plans to deliver in the future. In terms of flooding adaptation project areas, 34 per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Fifty per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Twenty-five per

cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years with a further 30 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. Five per cent were unsure.

In terms of heat adaptation project areas, seven per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Nineteen per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Eighteen per cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years with a further 45 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. Fifteen per cent said they have not delivered any heat adaptation project areas and had no current plans to do so yet. Eighteen per cent were unsure.

In terms of retrofitting (housing) adaptation project areas, 33 per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Fifty per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years with a further 31 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. Six per cent said they had not delivered any retrofitting (housing) mitigation project areas and had no current plans to do so yet. Ten per cent were unsure.

In terms of wildlife protection and biodiversity project areas, 34 per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Sixty-four per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Forty-two per cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years, with a further 25 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. Four per cent were unsure. The results for these are shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Which, if any, of the following adaptation project areas has your authority delivered in the last ten years, is delivering currently, or has plans to deliver in future?

	Have previously delivered in the last 10 years	Delivering currently	Plan to deliver in the next two years	Plan to deliver in the longer term	Have not delivered and have no current plans to deliver	Don't know
Flooding	34%	50%	25%	30%	0%	10%
Heat	7%	19%	18%	45%	15%	18%
Retrofitting (housing)	33%	50%	28%	31%	6%	10%
Wildlife protection and biodiversity	34%	64%	42%	25%	0%	4%

Base: all respondents who answered this question (92 respondents).

Further sustainability issues

Respondents were asked if there were any further issues relating to their authority's sustainability situation that could be helpful to share. The responses they provided fell into the following themes, ordered from those most frequently mentioned to those mentioned least often:

- Highlighting an overall severe lack of the funding required to undertake significant action in the realm of sustainability, as well as the issues caused by over-competitive funding resulting in inequalities in resources between councils
- Emphasising the need for regional partnerships, as well as collaboration with other sectors
- Difficulties arising from the fact that climate change is not a statutory duty, and thus is difficult to prioritise. Several respondents requested for climate change activities to become a statutory duty in future
- Further difficulties arising from the small teams and lack of people resources necessary to make a difference to sustainability issues
- Suggestions that climate change should be built into all council service areas and priorities, rather than being siloed in a single team and among a small number of staff members
- A need for increased home retrofits, including the investment and resources needed to prepare homes to be suitable for retrofit
- Reflection on the need for mass behaviour change to make a difference in an issue as large-scale as climate change
- The need for changed patterns and behaviours in travel and transport
- The value of supporting community energy initiatives
- The need for additional capital funding to replace outdated council vehicles and heating systems with more sustainable alternatives
- The difficulty of getting buy-in from senior officers for some sustainability projects
- The difficult choices caused by funding pressures as to what should be prioritised
- The need to better demonstrate the impact of climate-related issues on core council services, to increase commitment to sustainability projects among funders and decision-makers
- The need for improved knowledge, learning and information sharing on sustainable procurement
- Issues arising from sustainability projects only being supported when it is politically advantageous
- Data quality issues weakening actionable insights regarding emissions and other sustainability concerns
- Doubts raised regarding the effectiveness of climate change actions and strategies, and a suggestion that resources might be better spent on concrete climate-related actions
- The centrality of planning policy among the climate-related issues which district councils are able to influence

- The need for increased support for new developments of zero carbon homes
- The need for a stronger position on biodiversity and natural recovery
- The need for a uniform methodology in carbon emissions reporting
- The need for cross-party support on sustainability issues among council members and other politicians
- A call for the LGA to be proactive in speaking for councils and calling for investment and policy support for local government in this area

Annex A: Questionnaire

2024 Sustainability Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page. Use the 'previous' button at the bottom of the page if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.

If you stop before completing the return, you can come back to this page using the link supplied in the email and you will be able to continue where you left off. To ensure your answers have been saved, click on the 'next' button at the bottom of the page that you were working on before exiting.

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our [privacy statement](#). We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

If you would like to see an overview of the questions before completing the survey online, you can access a PDF here: [Sustainability Survey](#).

Across the country, councils are taking urgent actions in their local areas to address sustainability and to deliver carbon reduction and adaptation targets. The Local Government Association is committed to supporting councils in this area, and this survey will help us to understand the key issues councils are facing and the progress being made, as well as informing our support work.

By completing this survey, you are helping us to:

- Promote and celebrate the sustainability successes of councils
- Provide help and support to your council where it is needed
- Produce an overview of what councils across the sector are doing to tackle sustainability.

Note. This survey makes use of the terms "sustainability", "mitigation" and "adaptation". For the purpose of this survey, the meaning of these terms is as follows:

- Sustainability is the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level. In this context, we mean the avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance.
- Mitigation measures are those actions that are taken to reduce and curb greenhouse gas emissions (for example, renewable energy).
- Adaptation measures are based on reducing vulnerability to the effects of climate change (for example, flood defences).

Please amend the details we have on record if necessary.

If you are responding on behalf of more than one authority please note this in the 'authority' box below, but please check with us first whether a separate return is needed for each authority.

Name

Authority

Job title

Email address

To what extent are you aware of the following forms of support around sustainability that the LGA provides?

You can find out more about the LGA's Sustainability Sector Support by clicking on this link: [Sustainability hub | Local Government Association](#)

Scale points:

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all

Statements:

- LGA and Local Partnerships Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool Suite
- LGA Green Virtual Event Series e.g. housing retrofit, community engagement and LGA conference
- LGA Sustainability E-bulletin
- The Climate Emergency Knowledge Hub
- Sustainability Case Studies
- The LGA Sustainability Webpage Support Hub
- Sustainability in Council Services
- LGA Sustainability Masterclasses including carbon literacy
- Roundtables e.g. Community Engagement
- The LGA Sustainability Action Group
- Action Learning Sets
- Other (please specify below)

In what areas, if any, could your authority benefit from expertise and skills development delivered by the LGA?

Please select all that apply.

- Place based leadership support
- Biodiversity and nature recovery
- Carbon literacy
- Adaptation and resilience to changing climates
- Low carbon procurement
- Energy support, including renewable energy and local area energy planning
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Energy efficient building measures
- Green economy including green jobs
- Communications and engagement on climate change
- Educating the public/changing public behaviour
- Sustainable urban/town/rural planning
- Sustainable transport planning and decarbonising transport
- Climate justice
- Decarbonising health and social care
- Waste and recycling
- Green technology
- Other areas of sustainability action (please specify below)
- None of the above

In what areas, if any, could your authority benefit from specific types of support delivered by the LGA?

Please select all that apply.

- Good practice and case studies
- Sector specific good practice guidance on scope 3 emissions
- Peer benchmarking
- Leadership programmes
- Action learning sets
- Podcasts
- Video explainers
- Workshops or training
- Webinars/virtual events
- Strategic briefings for senior officers and councillors
- Roundtables
- Other expertise of method(s) of support (please specify below)
- None of the above

What would you say are the main challenges to securing the needed expertise and skills in sustainability work?

Please select all that apply.

- Short-term funding necessitating 12-month contracts
- Inability to compete with other employers in terms of salaries
- Difficulty finding candidates with the required skills
- Difficulty upskilling current staff capacity
- Uncertainty as to which areas in need of further development should be prioritised
- Uncertainty as to what expertise and skills should be prioritised
- Other (please specify below)
- No challenges
- Don't know

Is your authority currently measuring, or not measuring, the carbon emissions of the following?

Scale points:

- Yes, already measured
- No, but plans to measure in development
- No, and no current plans to develop measures yet
- Don't know

Statements:

- Your authority - scope 1 and 2
- Your authority - scope 3
- Your authority's local area - scope 1 and 2
- Your authority's local area - scope 3

Which method or tool did you use to arrive at your **authority's** latest carbon emissions?

- LGA and Local Partnerships Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool
- Your own council's tool
- External consultancy
- Other (please specify below)
- Don't know

Which method or tool did you use to arrive at your **area's** latest carbon emissions?

- SCATTER tool
- BEIS National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory
- Your own council's tool
- External consultancy
- Other (please specify below)
- Don't know

How often does your authority publish its carbon baseline?

- More often than annually
- Annually
- Less often than annually
- Never
- Don't know

Has your authority set an official target for becoming carbon net zero?

- Yes, for the authority itself
- Yes, for the area as a whole
- Yes, for the authority itself and the area as a whole
- No
- Don't know

Is there an executive council member of your authority whose portfolio specifies a lead role on sustainability?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Does your authority have an agreed and up to date climate change/sustainability/net zero strategy?

- Yes, already being delivered
- Yes, completed but not yet being delivered
- No, but currently in development
- No, but planning to produce one
- No, and no current plans to produce one yet
- Don't know

Does or will the climate change/sustainability/net zero strategy cover mitigation, adaptation, or both?

- Both mitigation and adaptation
- Mitigation only
- Adaptation only
- Don't know

Does your authority have specific financial and/or staffing resources that have **already been secured** to implement the strategy?

- Yes, all of the resources required to implement it
- Yes, some of the resources required to implement it
- No
- Don't know

Please provide an approximate percentage breakdown of the sources providing the funding **already secured** to implement your authority's strategy.

- Government grants
- Core funding
- Reserves
- Private investment
- Loans
- Crowdsourcing
- Other funding sources

Which, if any, of the following **mitigation** project areas has your authority delivered in the last ten years, is delivering currently, or has plans to deliver in future?

You may select more than one response for each project area.

Options:

- Have previously delivered in the last ten years
- Delivering currently
- Plan to deliver in the next two years
- Plan to deliver in the longer term
- Have not delivered and have no current plans to deliver yet
- Don't know

Statements:

- Energy
- Transport
- Housing
- Divestment from companies posing environmental risk
- Other mitigation projects (please specify below)

Has your authority's local area been affected by a climate related incident in the last five years?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please briefly describe the nature and consequences of the climate related incident(s).

Which, if any, of the following **adaptation** project areas has your authority delivered in the last ten years, is delivering currently, or has plans to deliver in the next ten years?

Statements:

- Energy
- Transport
- Housing
- Divestment from companies posing environmental risk
- Other mitigation projects (please specify below)

Statements:

- Flooding
- Heat
- Retrofitting (housing)
- Wildlife protection and biodiversity
- Other adaptation projects (please specify below)

Are there any further issues relating to your authority's sustainability situation that could be helpful to share?



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