

Waverley Borough Council  
**Climate Change and  
Sustainability Strategy**

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## **Executive Summary**

This document is the third strategy document since 2010 aimed at carbon management, energy efficiency and sustainability. However, this plan needs to be seen in the context of the council's declaration of a climate emergency on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and the subsequent action plan detailing actions the council will take over the next ten years as we aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Waverley is a growing borough however, it is vital that transport, developments and businesses are sustainable to ensure that whilst meeting the needs of the current generation we do so without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Waverley's Carbon Management Plan 2011-2015 targeted a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 25% by 2015. This was superseded in 2015 by the Energy Efficient Plan 2015-2020 which targeted a 3% reduction in emissions year on year. A number of projects including the installation of energy efficient boilers, solar panels on the Burys, LED lighting in our office and in our car parks and introduction of pool cars were completed to contribute to that target. Overall between 2008 and 2014 there was an 8.5% reduction in carbon emissions. Since 2014 the increase in population and services provided by the Council have increased the total emissions.

Previously, there has been a number of challenges including limited budgets, lack of political commitment, changes in service delivery and data accuracy. However many lessons have been learnt. Waverley has now made a political and organizational commitment to embed carbon reduction into all we do, consider energy efficiency at the start of projects, identify opportunities and plan ahead and implement robust data collection.

## **Introduction**

The UK Climate Change Act 2008 sets a statutory target to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 1990 figures by 2050. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in their October 2018 report warned that it would take an international effort to limit global warming to 1.5°C. However humanity is falling far



target

short of the action necessary to limit warming to even 2°C. To fail would result in increasing episodes of large scale water and food shortages, widespread flooding, heat-related morbidity and large scale destruction of the natural world and its biodiversity. In May 2019, the UK Committee on Climate Change recommended that the UK Government respond by increasing their target to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Government has now adopted this target and on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 the House of Commons passed a motion declaring a national climate change emergency.

On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019, Waverley Borough Council (WBC) unanimously declared a Climate Emergency and committed itself to being carbon neutral by 2030 to help reduce the risk of temperatures rising in excess of 1.5°C. Whilst many solutions to climate change need to be tackled at a national or international level, all levels of government, communities, businesses and individuals have a role to play in addressing climate change. WBC has a key role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change – both as a community leader and through the services we provide. WBC will focus on ensuring that we are doing all we can to prevent climate change by reducing our emissions on our sites and in the services we provide; we will ensure our services are resilient and adaptable enough to respond to the impacts of climate change; and we will provide community leadership so that residents and businesses are able to get involved in preventing climate change rather than simply preparing for it.

This strategy replaces the Climate Change Strategy 2010:2020.

## **Vision**

Our vision is to:

- lead by example in our endeavours to reduce carbon emissions throughout Waverley by committing the council to become a carbon neutral council by 2030;
- promote action to move towards sustainability to businesses, community organisations, households and individuals across Waverley;
- mitigate the effect of climate change to avoid compromising the needs of future generations;
- work with partner organisations within Waverley and beyond in furtherance of these goals.

## **Aims**

The aim of this strategy is to provide an overarching framework to guide the Council in integrating and coordinating the principles of sustainability and the need to reduce carbon emissions across all its strategies, plans, policies and actions and, in turn, to influence and provide direction on sustainability issues to the businesses and residents of Waverley.

## **Climate Change and Sustainability**

The Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

For Waverley to be a sustainable council, it is important that we do all in our power to safeguard our environment for present and future generations and play our part in promoting biodiversity as well as making our contribution to preventing the extremely serious consequences of severe climate change through carbon reduction strategies.

Waverley Borough Council's challenge is to play its part in local, regional, national and international efforts to become carbon neutral and support the efforts of households, businesses and other local organisations in Waverley to do the same whilst, preparing for the possible impact of unavoidable climate change.

Climate change, however serious it might be, will affect the social, economic and environmental well-being of Waverley's communities and businesses

As a public sector organisation WBC has a responsibility to look after the local environment and the people in the borough, including those who are most vulnerable. The Council will therefore need to ensure that the services delivered avoid the worst impacts.

The Council will prepare for extreme weather events including: increased temperatures with risks to health from heat waves, increased risk of wild fires, greater pressure on water resources, surface water and fluvial flooding and damage to existing natural habitats.



Many of the Council's services are likely to be impacted by the predicted increase in magnitude of weather events and the Council will now begin planning how to incorporate resilience building to maintain future service provision. By future proofing our services the council will aim to avoid increasing common costs in relation to extreme weather events such as service downtime or damage to physical resources.

## Objectives

The Council as a consumer of resources, a service provider and a community leader, has a key role in leading Waverley's communities towards



sustainable and lower carbon lifestyles and enabling moves to adopt them. As outlined above, in September 2019 WBC declared a Climate Emergency and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

To meet this objective the Council will:

- take into account the potential impact on the climate and the environment in all Council decisions. This will be embedded in strategic decision making, budgets, approaches to planning decisions and through updates to policy and guidelines;
- require as part of the procurement process that the environmental impact of service provision is considered alongside financial and ethical considerations. This should include, steps to be taken to minimize/offset the carbon impact and ensure that 100% renewable energy and low or zero carbon technologies are used where possible;
- aim to reduce its dependence on fossil fuel energy by incorporating efficient and low carbon technologies in the council owned properties and fleet;
- actively encourage all Councillors, Officers and Services to work with other services, contractors, businesses and residents to reduce their emissions;



- consider carbon offsetting to mitigate carbon emissions that cannot be avoided.
- produce a Climate Emergency Action Plan to guide the route to carbon neutrality, modifying the actions as appropriate in order to keep on track with the year-on-year targets for carbon reduction.

### **National Context**

In 2008 the UK passed the Climate Change Act which committed the UK to lower their net UK carbon account for greenhouse gases by at least 80% of the 1990 baseline by 2050. In 2019 the Climate Change Act's targets were revised setting a new target of net-zero emissions by 2050.

### **Local Context**

On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 WBC noted the urgency to respond to climate change and agreed the following:

- Waverley Borough Council declares a 'Climate Emergency' that requires urgent action.
- Waverley Borough Council aims to become carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions, and will take a leadership role to achieve this working with other councils, including town and parish councils within the borough.
- Waverley Borough Council recognises that the achievement of the target will require central government to provide the powers, funding and other resources to achieve the target and therefore calls on the government to provide such powers, funding and other resources as appropriate to facilitate achieving the 2030 target.
- Officers are required to provide to the Executive, within six months of the date of this decision, a report on the actions the Council can take to address these issues together with an action plan, specifying year on year milestones and metrics to show progress towards achieving the goal of carbon neutrality by 2030 noting any additional costs that might be involved.

WBC have been reporting their emissions since 2008 as required by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC). Through initiatives identified in our Carbon Management Plan 2010-2015 and Energy Efficiency Plan 2015-2020 WBC were successful in reducing our emissions per capita. However due to a growing number of residents and houses in the borough, the addition of the garden waste collection and increase in footfall to our Leisure Centre's our absolute emissions are now equal to those in 2008.

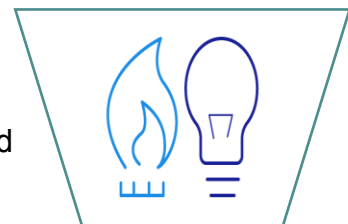
### Action Plan Scope

The Climate Emergency Action Plan targets the main contributors to carbon emissions and air pollution whilst preparing for the effects of climate changes.

The Council will use the data collected as part of the statutory greenhouse gas reports for 2015/16 (the last year with full data) and the social housing figure from June 2016 as our baseline figures. This equates to a total of 19,964 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

WBC will measure its own carbon emissions from:

- The gas and electricity used in our owned and managed buildings
- The gas and electricity in Council's outsourced properties
- Gas and Electricity used in our Leisure Centres
- The use of pool cars
- Business Travel where possible
- Contractors' Travel
- Waverley will measure the emissions from Social Housing based on the reduced EPC or reduced SAP figure. This is a measure of the energy efficiency of the property and not the lifestyle of the tenant.



The Council will also be monitoring the emissions produced by the whole of Waverley Borough as reported by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. For 2016 the net emissions for the whole of Waverley were 560,000 tonnes<sup>1</sup> of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Waverley will measure the level of residual waste collected in the borough as well as the recycling rates.

Air quality is measured independently and can be found on Waverley's website.<sup>2</sup> The Air Quality Action Plan<sup>3</sup> aims to reduce air pollution emissions but also greenhouse gases.

Waverley will also move towards its carbon neutral objective in terms of indirect emissions by implementing a Single Use Plastic Policy and Biodiversity Policy both of which will contribute to the carbon neutral strategy and further protect the environment.

#### **The Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and how it fits with other strategies**

The Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy is an overarching framework bringing together existing areas of work.

Biodiversity Policy	Electric Vehicle Strategy
Tree Planting Policy	Green Spaces Strategy
Air Quality Action Plan	Contaminated Land Strategy
Pesticides Policy	

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/812142/2005-17\\_UK\\_local\\_and\\_regional\\_CO2\\_emissions\\_tables.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812142/2005-17_UK_local_and_regional_CO2_emissions_tables.xlsx)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.waverley.gov.uk/monitoring-air-quality>

<sup>3</sup> [Air Quality Action Plan](#).

## Implementation

The implementation of the strategy and action plan will take place from 2020. The strategy and the actions to deliver the strategy will be reviewed annually to monitor the progress and identify new and emerging priorities. Results will be published on the WBC website.

Climate change mitigation is about using energy and fuel more efficiently and in turn gives scope for financial savings. Implementing carbon reductions will certainly have an associated up front cost to the Council but the cost of adapting later far outweighs this cost.

The Council will seek to use various capital funds available to deliver infrastructure and investment based actions around climate change, including CIL, SALIX, external grants and any other funding streams available.

Business cases will be developed for all activities within the action plan. These will be prioritized by Management Board and Executive and funding sought, where necessary, in order to deliver on the strategy within the agreed timescales.

The Council will also develop communication initiatives around climate change to increase awareness and promote the take up of new approaches.

## Year on Year Targets

Carbon reduction will be reviewed and targets set subject to the information provided by Leeds University, WBC GHG reports and Council Social Housing model. These targets and the results from the previous year will be presented to the September Environment O&S and the October Executive.

## Climate Resilience

Climate Change is likely to lead to an increase in extreme weather patterns.



Winters are expected to be wetter with high intensity rainfall over prolonged periods of time leading to surface water, groundwater and fluvial flooding. Summers will be hotter and drier which could result in droughts and an increased the risk of wildfires.

A more resilient Borough:

Waverley is aware that resilience can be increased during both the disaster preparedness phases and the disaster response phases. In the same way that we maintain a state of preparedness for other events and catastrophes we would otherwise wish to avoid, we shall continue to make contingency plans for events arising from the failure of world governments to act to heed the warnings of climate scientists

At a Local Authority level, resilience can be increased through the following means: planning, multi-agency working, risk assessing, identification of vulnerable people, warning and informing and facilitating the action of the local public to protect themselves.



To mitigate the risk from flooding WBC will work with the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council (SCC) through the flood risk partnership board to ensure area within Waverley which have a high frequency flooding receive the protection to reduce this.

Waverley sees the benefits of natural flood risk management during the preparedness phases. This management system has been proven by other projects across the UK as not only an effected way of slowing run-off and fluvial flow rates, but also proved that emission heavy, hard engineering is not always necessary.

Mitigating the risk of drought and wildfires means WBC working with Public Health England (PHE), the NHS and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). PHE currently provides guidance on drought action and WBC will be looking to them to lead on diagnosing the medical impacts on residents of extreme heat. WBC will be able to play a key role in communicating with residents how to protect themselves from extreme heat. SFRS and the County Council will be consulted on what measures WBC can help facilitate in order to prevent fire and increase awareness and education on wildfire.

The Civil Contingencies Act (2004) ensures that this Council will continue to invest and engage in emergency planning and resilience building as per its statutory duty. By working with the Surrey Local Resilience Forum, Waverley will have access to all stakeholders working to build resilience to extreme weather events.

A more resilient Council:

Waverley acknowledges that larger magnitude weather events will cause disruption at a higher level than seen before, resulting in a need for assurance that the Council can continue to function during such periods.

In order to adapt to increased weather events in both frequency and magnitude Waverley must ensure its business continuity practices adapt to increase its ability to cope with downtime. Through the creation of a business continuity, management system Waverley is able to calculate the minimum level of service it can provide with certain staffing and infrastructure available.

This will involve encouraging flexible working and remove a reliance on systems and infrastructure which can easily be impacted by weather events. The result should be an organisation that can adapt and through planning, has multiple ways of continuing a certain level of service, no matter the event type.



## **Air Quality**

Air quality and climate change are closely interrelated with many common air pollutants. The Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to check local air quality against objectives set to protect human health. Where the objective is exceeded an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is declared.

There are two AQMAs (Farnham and Godalming) in WBC's area due to traffic causing annual average nitrogen dioxide levels to exceed the air quality objective at relevant receptors.

The main sources of air pollution in Waverley include:

- Road transport; private vehicles, public transport, taxi's and private hire vehicles, HGVs (delivery and service vehicles)
- Buildings; heating and cooling of homes and workplaces
- Construction; dust and emissions from construction and demolition activities including non-road mobile machinery
- Wood burning, such as garden waste bonfires and domestic wood burning (open fireplaces and stoves)

## **Travel**

Transport was the largest emitting sector of Waverley greenhouse gas emissions in 2016. Whilst the Council has less control over public transport as those responsibilities are with the national government and SCC, WBC will take action within



its own powers in support of electrification and hydrogen alternatives and more sustainable transport while lobbying SCC and government as appropriate.

WBC can however, influence the reduction of emissions directly by:

- encouraging council staff to look at alternative ways of travelling to work based on a Transport Impact Hierarchy;
- working with towns and parishes and our neighbouring councils to increase the number of cycle paths in key areas across the borough;
- reducing business travel by adopting a range of infrastructure and behavioural changes;
- asking contractors to contribute to the carbon neutral goal when they update their business plans and ensure that climate resilience is built into their forward plans;
- promoting taxi drivers transitioning to more energy efficient cars and electric vehicles as well as changing licensing requirements as appropriate;
- encouraging drivers in Waverley to switch to electric vehicles and other low emission vehicles by the roll out its own EV chargers and any alternative energy sources that subsequently become available across the borough in our car parks, developments and leisure centres and lobbying large businesses to install workplace chargers;
- requiring the provision of EV chargers for new developments through the planning process;
- ensuring that planning powers are used as far as is possible to promote sustainability.

### **Buildings and Energy Efficiency**

The Council will carry out energy audits to identify opportunities for energy conservation, efficiencies and cost savings. The audits will





enable the Council to develop energy investment strategies for its facilities. Long term plans will be developed to reduce emissions and improve the energy efficiency when retrofitting Council owned properties and look to building carbon neutral new homes.

The role out of LED lighting will continue in our properties and car parks where suitable and an electric vehicle charger infrastructure will be expanded across key car parks, on council owned developments and in a joint pilot with SCC on residential streets.

## **Waste**

WBC will embed reduce, reuse, recycle into everything Waverley does around waste. There will be campaigns aimed at residents, businesses and schools to



encourage an overall reduction in waste. To support the efforts to recycle WBC will expand their kerbside collections to include textiles and WEEE. Within the council offices a Single Use Plastic policy will aim to remove all single use plastic from our operations by 2023.

Working with SCC and our contractors WBC will ensure waste and recycling operations are conducted in the most sustainable way and look for opportunities to reduce emissions.

## **Renewable Energy**

WBC will look at ways to increase renewable energy generation and use both on its own properties and in its planning process. WBC will optimise the opportunity to install solar panels on Council owned properties and the work with Planning to encourage the uptake of renewable energy on new developments.

## **Countryside and Biodiversity**

WBC will improve and protect the biodiversity and ecology of their green spaces and protect them against the negative impacts of climate change. Tree planting and biodiversity policies will be prepared and delivered to ensure they are considered both in policy and practice across the Council's services.

Across the borough existing trees will be protected and sustainable tree planting expanded for the sequestering and storing of carbon.



## **Planning Policy**

WBC Planning Department through their processes will use the planning legislation, Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents to ensure developments are sustainable, energy efficient, use renewable energy and passivhaus standards where possible.