

# **Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Climate Change Strategy**

**February 2023**

<b>Scope:</b>	This strategy sets out the Council's approach to the borough wide agenda for Climate Change and applies to staff and councilors of the council.
<b>Effective Date:</b>	February 2023
<b>Review Date:</b>	January 2025
<b>Author:</b>	Service Manager (Asset Management, Building Repairs and Climate Change)
<b>Policy Owned by:</b>	Service Director (Property Repairs and Climate Change)
<b>Statute:</b>	N/A

## 1. Scope

- 1.1 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Councils' (WHBC) Climate Strategy has been developed to take into account the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 and the subsequent Net Zero target by 2030.
- 1.2 The aim of this strategy is to reduce carbon emissions within the Borough as well as ensuring that Welwyn Hatfield are well prepared in dealing with the effects that Climate Change will pose to each and every person.
- 1.3 WHBC have taken a thorough, evidence-based approach in implementing this strategy using national research and data whilst also commissioning our own reviews to ensure the strategy is fit for purpose and will assist in fulfilling our objectives.
- 1.4 This strategy will ensure that WHBC plays its part in what is a global effort to counter the effects of Global Warming and to put in place effective mitigative measures.

## 2. Strategy

2.1 The strategy objectives will be achieved by:

- **Reducing carbon emissions from our own estate and operations to net zero by 2030, or a justification for a later date if the review finds this unachievable**

We understand that the decarbonisation of our operational buildings will play a large part in achieving our 2030 target. This is coupled with achieving the UK Government's 2050 target of meeting Net Zero for our housing stock too.

WHBC has always looked to reduce energy costs where possible and this must continue to be at the forefront of our minds to achieve both monetary savings as well as carbon reduction.

Through funding sources such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) the council will continue to carry out worthwhile projects to meet the Net Zero target. Whilst the target for 2030 is ambitious, and goes further than the declarations set by the UK Government, WHBC understands the importance of rapid action and through setting these objectives will be a beacon of light to assist in empowerment across the Borough.

- **To comply with statutory obligations to mitigate and adapt to climate change**

There is a statutory obligation (Climate Change Act 2008) on councils to prepare for and minimise the longer-term impacts of climate change.

WHBC have carried out schemes which have already made positive steps towards reducing the Carbon Baseline, many of these schemes carried out within existing budgets.

Whilst the subject of Climate Change is a constantly evolving, the focus of the Climate Change Action Plan (CAP) will also naturally evolve, especially where new statutory duties arise. Many of these will require support, guidance and leadership from the UK Government and changes to national strategy and policy. These will undoubtedly require new sources of funding to be secured, or existing sources of funding to be made more flexible to support schemes that fall within the category of climate change.

WHBC will meet all statutory obligations to assist with the global effort of tackling Climate Change.

- **To work with, support, encourage and engage residents, communities, businesses and other partners in initiatives to reduce carbon emissions**

To achieve our objectives we will need to support all residents, businesses and organisation within the borough. To deliver fundamental and lasting changes, we must encourage, empower and enable our residents, local businesses and wider community to take personal decisions that reduce their own carbon footprints and help us meet our goals.

The council will continue to provide information through the main website and where possible, direct residents and businesses in ways to reduce their carbon footprint through available grants and schemes.

- **To embed climate change mitigation and adaptation into our plans, strategies and policies**

There is a statutory obligation (Climate Change Act 2008) on councils to prepare for and minimise the longer-term impacts of climate change. This is reinforced by expectations for community resilience and business continuity by residents and businesses.

Climate Change implications will be considered in all decision making by committees in relation to our plans, strategies and policies.

As a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) WHBC will continue to plan mitigation measures to cope with the identified risks set out in the UK Government Climate Change Risk Assessment and forms part of the National Adaptation Programme strategy.

Adaptations will assist in overcoming the climate variables predicted for Hertfordshire which include:

- Wetter winters and drier summers with greater potential for extreme rainfall events
- Warmer winters and hotter summers with greater potential for

- heatwaves
- Increase in humidity
- Reduction in snow fall during winter
- Potential for more intense storms

Supplemental, follow up strategies will be developed as part of the ongoing climate agenda and as direct result of the developed projects within the CAP.

- **To reduce carbon emissions across the borough by promoting energy efficiency measures, sustainable construction, renewable energy, sustainable transport and behavioural change**

It is clear that behavioural change is required across all sectors to reduce the negative impacts on our climate based by everyday living, as a result of this we all need to play our part in making conscious decisions to change all aspects of our lives.

We will engage with households, landlords, businesses and the wider public sector to promote clean, carbon neutral alternatives fossil fuel heating (gas, oil, LPG, etc.), insulation and heating controls.

Click the link below to see what you can do to help with tackling Climate Change

<https://one.welhat.gov.uk/climatechange>

### **3. Climate Action Plan (CAP)**

- 3.1 As part of the development of this strategy, the CAP has been updated and designed to identify a wide-ranging type of action that WHBC will need to investigate, implement and manage in order for the Net Zero target to be achieved.
- 3.2 The CAP will form part of an ongoing target to reduce the carbon emissions of WHBC and therefore is not a final plan, the actions contained should not be viewed as a definitive list. It should not be considered that all of the CAP actions will be delivered, we continue to assess the viability to ensure projects with high carbon reduction and value for money are achieved.
- 3.3 Going further than carbon reduction our CAP will continue to develop ongoing actions which will look at areas that include:
  - Waste / Recycling
  - Biodiversity
  - Procurement of Services
  - Housing and Planning
  - Adaptations to tackle the changing climate

- Business and Economic Development
- Transport

Click the link below to view the Summarised CAP.

<https://www.welhat.gov.uk/downloads/file/478/summary-climate-change-action-plan>

#### **4. Resourcing**

- 4.1 To lead a change in how we tackle Climate Change, WHBC has appointed a team to ensure objectives are delivered. This includes a Director leading the strategy, supported by a Service Manager and a dedicated Climate Change Officer who will liaise with all internal and external teams to oversee the CAP and provide direction and leadership.
- 4.2 This team will be accountable for representation across all wider climate groups as well as the internal Climate Officer Group, which is key to the collaborative approach required to meet our objectives.
- 4.3 As such an important issue, we expect consideration to Climate Change to become part of everyone's day to day work, and officer groups will be formed as appropriate to oversee key projects.

#### **5. Governance and Decision Making**

- 5.1 An officer group, chaired by the Climate Change Service Manager will oversee and co-ordinate all key activities agreed in the member approved Action Plan.
- 5.2 All Committee reports, Executive Member Decisions and documented Officer decisions will include a section on Climate Change impacts.
- 5.3 The Climate Change Sub Group, who have overview of all climate related activities at WHBC will review and make decisions on recommendations from officers. They have delegated authority to approve spend from the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve.

#### **6. Training**

- 6.1 All Managers involved in decision making throughout the organisation, and those responsible for the management of Climate Change, will be provided with relevant training.
- 6.2 Refresher training will be provided on a biennial cycle.
- 6.3 Member training will be provided to those responsible for decision making in relation to Climate Change.
- 6.4 Wider training needs will be identified and scheduled as part of the general Member Development Programme as required.

## 7. Relevant Legislation and Literature

United Nations 1992 Rio 'Earth Summit'

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 1988

The United Nations Climate Change Conferences and the Kyoto Protocol

The UK Climate Change Act 2008

Conference of the Parties (COP) 21; Paris Agreement 2015

## 8. Version History

<b>Version no.</b>	1.0	<b>Date effective:</b>	February 2023
<b>Full / partial review?</b>	Full		
<b>Brief summary of changes:</b>	Climate Strategy implementation		
<b>Staff consultation (teams):</b>	Senior Management Team		
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