

Climate change action plan

Becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2040

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Version: 1.0 (published)

Last updated: March 2019

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Introduction

We've committed to aiming for net zero carbon in advance of the national target in 2050. This plan describes the actions we will take to consolidate and accelerate what we are already doing, identify and analyse gaps and to initiate a borough wide debate on the scale and pace of change that is required.

We've made significant progress in reducing carbon emissions in the recent years by:

- reducing energy use
- improving the energy efficiency of our corporate buildings and social housing stock
- investing in renewable technologies
- promoting sustainable transport in the borough and beyond

We've also influenced and encouraged action in the community through our longstanding fuel poverty agenda. However, to achieve the 2040 target we will have to go further.

The actions listed in our plan below set out the initial opportunities we've identified to reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon sequestration relating to the council's operations, but this is only a starting point.

We'll engage staff, contractors and anchor organizations in town and the entire community to expand the plan and the range of actions that help us to meet our target.

This plan does not describe how the borough as a whole will reach carbon neutrality. Along with our partners, residents and businesses, we all need to work together to achieve this broader goal.

Therefore we'll hold a citizen's assembly and process of stakeholder engagement to agree how we will achieve this ambition. However, we're already looking at how we can use our powers to help Luton transition to a low carbon future.

We're in the process of reviewing our Local Transport Plan and are about to start a review of the Local Plan. We anticipate that these plans will set out how we will:

- improve public transport
- improve walking and cycling infrastructure
- improve local environmental quality
- put electric vehicle infrastructure in place

Our Local Plan review will consider exacting environmental standards for new developments:

- by setting parameters for zero carbon development
- with significant improvements in air quality in the borough

In addition, the Local Transport Plan will be aiming to increase sustainable transport modes:

- through appropriate parking standards (including cycle parking) in new developments
- facilitating electric vehicle charging and car club provisions wherever possible

The impacts of these plans are not covered in detail here, but will be reflected in the borough wide carbon reduction plan that we will develop with residents, businesses and partners over the next year.

Action plans

This action plan describes the actions we'll take to reduce carbon emissions. It also includes actions relating to our governance, procurement and investment to improve the consideration given to the carbon impact of the decisions we make.

1. Council estate

Ref: 1.1

Action summary: Staff behaviour

Council team: Directors and managers at all levels

More information:

- Encourage and enable energy saving behaviour by all council staff and visitors.
- Agree advisory temperatures for all council offices (21C) during heating season to help manage staff and visitor expectations.
- Include carbon reduction commitment in all job descriptions.
- Discuss carbon reduction in check ins.

Comments: Support from HR.

Ref: 1.2

Action summary: Procurement and specifications

Council team: Procurement, contract and project managers

More information:

- Review council's procurement strategy to ensure low carbon lights and appliances are specified and procured.
- Start immediately specifying IoT lighting sensors as standard.
- Define and adopt 'whole life' costing of projects so that carbon and utility costs are considered together - not just initial capital cost.
- Review current Design and Build contracts to enable easier specification of carbon saving technologies.
- Specify integration of renewable energy such as solar thermal, PV or heat pumps in local authority owned buildings during refurbishment.
- Ensure that our social value framework also addresses climate change.

Comments: Specialist input from property and construction and building control teams.

Ref: 1.3

Action summary: Insulation and heating upgrades

Council team: Property and construction

More information:

- Continue to upgrade the insulation and heating systems of council buildings, taking advantage of interest free finance available.
- Review investment prioritisation criteria to include carbon targets.
- Review council buildings in relation to suitability for retrofit.

Ref: 1.4

Action summary: Street lighting

Council team: Highways

More information:

- Investigate and present options of switching street lighting to well-designed and well directed LED lights.

Comments: Already in the capital programme.

Ref: 1.5

Action summary: Green roofs

Council team: Property and Construction

More information:

- Consider green roofs and walls retrofit to existing council buildings.

Comments: Parks consultation and involvement re-maintenance.

Ref: 1.6

Action summary: Parks Operations

Council team: Parks

More information:

- Accelerate the current move to battery powered hand tools for maintenance operations.
- Consider parks building portfolio to be retrofitted/replaced with carbon neutral or Passivehaus standards using the adjacent open space to source the renewable energy.
- Consider provision of water harvesters and compost toilets at allotments and community gardens.
- Consider replacement bowling green surfaces with artificial grass to sustain the facilities and reduce maintenance using petrol/diesel machinery and water consumption.

Comments: Initial capital required.

2. Homes

Ref: 2.1

Action summary: Current council housing stock

Council team: BTS

More information:

- Consider in detail feasibility and cost of insulation upgrades/retrofit of all council- owned homes to EPC C.
- Develop a program of LED lighting installations in all communal areas.
- Consider installing heat pumps to communal areas of sheltered schemes.
- Consider non-gas heating solutions prior to statutory requirements coming into force.

Ref: 2.2

Action summary: Council led new build

Council team: Housing Strategy, BTS

More information:

- Consider requiring homes built on council land to be Passivhaus standard or similar.
- Consider district heating solutions and ensure this is tied into a wider plan for district heating to make plans viable.

Ref: 2.3

Action summary: Private housing

Council team: n/a

More information:

- Encourage/enable retrofit all existing owner-occupied housing stock to EPC level C or above by promoting existing assistance programs (eg LA Flex) and securing new funding streams.
- Enforce minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rental sector.

Ref: 2.4

Action summary: Local Plan review

Council team: Planning Strategy

More information:

- Investigate local conditions for requiring higher than current national energy efficiency standards for privately built new homes.
- Investigate district heating opportunities and enabling policies.

3. Transport

Ref: 3.1

Action summary: Sustainable transport

Council team: Strategy and sustainability, Highways

More information:

- Continue to encourage the use of public and active transport – cycling, walking and scooting.
- Ensure active travel is prioritised when designing local highway improvements.
- Introduce a Work Place Parking Levy to secure investment in sustainable transport.

Comments: STARS campaign extended till 2021.

Ref: 3.2

Action summary: Cycling

Council team: Strategy and Sustainability, Cycling team

More information:

- Investigate options to increase the number of cycling trainers and extend the cycling training provisions to secondary schools and adults.
- Continue engagement with the local Cycling Forum.
- Continue partnership working at regional (Cycle Hub East of England) and national level (Sustrans, Bikeability Trust).
- Investigate new funding mechanisms for cycle training and support for the award winning bicycle recycling scheme.

Ref: 3.3

Action summary: Congestion and air quality

Council team: Highways, Property and Construction, Planning

More information:

- Investigate options to discourage cars from the town centre and near schools.
- Consider the concept of urban/neighbourhood consolidation centres.

Comments:

- New town centre masterplan under development – sustainable travel and parking will be considered.
- TEZ near schools are investigated – funding bid to Defra submitted.

Ref: 3.4

Action summary: Car sharing

Council team: Strategy and Sustainability, Planning

More information:

- Continue promoting car sharing to business and council staff.
- Consider accelerating provisions of car clubs in the town centre and neighbourhood centres, in connection with new development, council offices or large employment hubs.

Ref: 3.5

Action summary: Electric vehicles

Council team: Highways

More information:

- Continue expanding EV charging provisions; investigate new partnership arrangements to accelerate delivery.
- Continue liaison with bus companies to provide electric and hybrid buses.

Ref: 3.6

Action summary: Local Plan

Council team: Strategic Planning

More information:

- Strengthen current policies to ensure car charging is considered when designing new developments (possibly part of microgrid too).
- Develop a comprehensive evidence base and consistent policies to address mobility poverty.

Ref: 3.7**Action summary:** Council fleet**Council team:** Transport**More information:**

- Investigate the transition of council fleet to electric vehicles, including school transport provisions.
- Investigate park fleet movement reduction by reintroduction of site base staff to District Parks.

Comments:

- Initial feasibility identified grid restrictions. Investigations are ongoing.
- Electric and hybrid vans are on trial.

Ref: 3.8**Action summary:** Taxis**Council team:** Licensing**More information:**

- Encourage all taxis to be electric.
- Continue to pursue funding opportunities and investigate new sources of funding to bridge the cost gap between a standard and electric vehicle.

Comments:

- One fully electric taxi in town since October.
- Designated rapid charging points in progress – $\frac{3}{4}$ expected in spring 2020.

Ref: 3.9**Action summary:** Active travel infrastructure**Council team:** Parks, Planning, Highways**More information:**

- Investigate and promote safer active travel routes through parks.
- Investigate feasibility of local cycle hubs in parks and leisure centers (eg Wardown, Leagrave, Hat Factory, Inspire).
- Investigate access improvements and active travel provisions as part of the River Lea Linear Park.

4. Power generation

Ref: 4.1

Action summary: Solar PV (photovoltaics)

Council team: Property and Construction

More information:

- Investigate setting up a council PV company to install all possible council properties and any willing private properties. Council to fund the investment and charge a competitive electricity rate to consumers.
- Investigate provisions of large solar farms.

Comments:

- Large initial investment required and included in the capital programme.
- Number of options considered in the past. Current proposals linked major developments – DART, Bartlett Square, Vauxhall, and airport.

Ref: 4.2

Action summary: Battery storage

Council team: Property and Construction, Housing

More information:

- Investigate opportunities for community battery storage hubs so all power from the solar PV is stored and used from the storage. Especially during the night.

Ref: 4.3

Action summary: Microgrids

Council team: Property and Construction, Housing

More information:

- Investigate use of microgrids when installing PV.

Ref: 4.4

Action summary: Local Plan

Council team: Planning Strategy

More information:

- Identify areas suitable for renewable energy in the Local Plan.

5. Waste and recycling

Ref: 5.1

Action summary: Waste reduction

Council team: Waste team

More information:

- Drive reduction in household waste in 'black bin' by 5kg per capita per annum through a mixture of targeted campaigns and incentives/disincentives.
- Aim to prevent household food waste generation by 10kg per annum.

Ref: 5.2

Action summary: Recycling

Council team: Waste team

More information:

- Continue recycling awareness campaigns.

Ref: 5.3

Action summary: Staff

Council team: Directors and managers

More information:

- Continue drive to reduce paper requirements for meetings and in correspondence with the public.

6. Land use and biodiversity

Ref: 6.1

Action summary: Trees

Council team: Parks, Property, Highways

More information:

- Investigate targeted and safe increase of tree cover on council owned land and local streets.

Ref: 6.2

Action summary: Biodiversity

Council team: Parks

More information:

- Test public acceptability of relaxing mowing regimes to promote more natural grassland/meadows to increase biodiversity.

- Investigate feasible options to eliminate the use of herbicides through implementation of more biodiversity- friendly methods and cultural weed management programme. • Requires effective marketing and explicit Member support.

Comments: Ideally dedicated officer support.

Ref: 6.3

Action summary: Biodiversity

Council team: Highways

More information:

- Introduce further wilding of highway verges in line with Plantlife recommendations.

7. Influencing others

Ref: 7.1

Action summary: Consolidate business action

Council team: Economic Regeneration

More information:

- Consider setting up location based business cluster to explore cross- sector cooperation and efficiencies.
- Review support mechanisms to SME to access funds and expertise on carbon reduction through SEMLEP.

Ref: 7.2

Action summary: Schools

Council team: Property and Construction, Children Services

More information:

- Encourage schools to take up invest to save opportunities, especially in relation to advance lighting sensors.
- Explore opportunities for curriculum enrichment on climate change and carbon reduction agenda.

Ref: 7.3

Action summary: Supply chain

Council team: Procurement

More information:

- Review current arrangements for encouragement of supply chain to reduce carbon.

Ref: 7.4

Action summary: Green spaces

Council team: Parks

More information:

- Introduce a scheme to encourage others to grow food/pollinators on council land by granting a licence to occupy.

Comments: Commencing in Jan 2020.

8. Raising funds

Ref: 8.1

Action summary: Workplace parking levy

Council team: Highways

More information:

- Introduce a workplace car parking levy and/or similar initiative to fund sustainable transport.

Comments:

- Feasibility study ongoing. Recommendations expected in early 2020.
- Scheme would take up to three years to implement.

Ref: 8.2

Action summary: S 106

Council team:

More information:

- Investigate creating a local community carbon offsetting mechanism to channel funds for local energy efficiency measures.

Comments: Potential contributions from easyjet, Airport, large businesses.

Ref: 8.3

Action summary: Carbon offsetting

More information:

- Investigate creating a local community carbon offsetting mechanism to channel funds for local energy efficiency measures.

Comments: Potential contributions from easyjet, Airport, large businesses.

Ref: 8.4

Action summary: Democratic process

More information:

- Review of the council's Integrated Impact Assessment and ensuring that climate change is taken in to account in decision making.

9. Climate change adaptation

Ref: 9.1

Action summary: Flood risk

Council team: Flood Risk team

More information:

- Investigate flood risk to and specific resilience measures of all council buildings and schools.
- Raise awareness of flood risk and available assistance.
- Strengthen partnership working with the Environment Agency and water companies to deliver flood mitigation schemes.