



Climate Change Policy

DRAFT

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The council is committed to tackling climate change.
- 1.2. Our policy on climate change sets out how we will address the council's carbon footprint, help to reduce the district's overall carbon footprint and act as a community leader to encourage others to tackle climate change.
- 1.3. The council recognises that all its functions and operations have an impact on the environment. The council will, therefore, reduce its impact on the local and global environment by demonstrating clear leadership and providing quality services, whilst tackling pollution, reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions and saving energy and water. The council will comply with all environmental and climate change legislation and statutory guidance and seek to follow best practice principles to fulfil its statutory environmental and climate change responsibilities.
- 1.4. As part of its commitment to acting sustainably and safeguarding the environment, the council will follow an informed approach to protect the environment and our outstanding natural surroundings. To mitigate and adapt to climate change we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, improve our resilience to future climate predictions, conserve our natural resources, enhance biodiversity and further improve the quality of life and the sense of well-being for all residents.
- 1.5. We will do this by working constructively with partners and stakeholders and by ensuring that in reaching properly balanced decisions, the full range of environmental aspects are considered over the short and long term.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. *Climate change* can be defined as:

“Climate change refers to a large-scale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures”.

“Climate change is the long-term shift in average weather patterns across the world. Since the mid-1800s, humans have contributed to the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air. This causes global temperatures to rise, resulting in long-term changes to the climate”.

- 2.2. A *carbon footprint* quantifies the amount of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of an individual, organization, or community.
- 2.3. *Greenhouse gases* are those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of thermal infrared radiation emitted by the

Earth's surface, the atmosphere itself, and by clouds. This property causes the greenhouse effect. Water vapour (H₂O), carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), methane (CH₄) and ozone (O₃) are the primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. Moreover, there are several entirely human-made greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, such as the halocarbons and other chlorine and bromine-containing substances. Besides CO₂, N₂O and CH₄, the Kyoto Protocol deals with the greenhouse gases sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs).

- 2.4. *Carbon dioxide* (CO₂) is a naturally occurring gas, also a by-product of burning fossil fuels from fossil carbon deposits, such as oil, gas and coal, of burning biomass and of land use changes and of industrial processes (e.g., cement production). It is the principal anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) that affects the Earth's radiative balance. It is the reference gas against which other greenhouse gases are measured. Carbon dioxide equivalent is recorded which expresses the impact of multiple greenhouse gases in terms of the amount of CO₂ that would result in the same amount of global warming (CO₂e).
- 2.5. *Anthropogenic* refers to what is caused or influenced by humans. When discussing climate change, it is often used to refer to emissions produced as a result of human activities e.g. anthropogenic climate change.
- 2.6. The *Committee on Climate Change* (CCC) is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008. Its purpose is to advise the UK Government and Devolved Administrations on emissions targets and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change.

3. Policy statement

- 3.1. It is this council's policy to proactively identify, understand, manage and review its level of greenhouse gas emissions to play its part in contributing towards achieving the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- 3.2. The council's corporate business plan sets out its priorities, objectives and broad direction of action that will implement its Climate Change Policy.
- 3.3. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier in the light of new guidance, to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of the council. The next review date is x 2023.

4. Scope

- 4.1. The policy covers the borough council's greenhouse gas emissions and its role as a community leader to influence the level of greenhouse gas emissions across the King's Lynn and West Norfolk district.

5. Aim(s)

5.1. The purpose of this Climate Change Policy is to state the council's climate change objectives and approach. The activities required to implement this policy are contained in the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

6. Objectives

6.1. Our objectives are:

6.1.1. Mitigation

- Work with Government, the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership and partners to contribute to the achievement of the target for carbon dioxide reduction set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Paris Agreement.
- Develop plans and support projects with our partners and local communities to progressively address the causes and the impacts of climate change, according to our local priorities, securing benefit for our communities.
- Declare, informed by appropriate audits, policy, strategy and action plans, a commitment to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the council's activities.
- Encourage all sectors in the district to mitigate against the impacts of climate change, to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.

6.1.2. Adaptation

- Encourage all sectors in the district to adapt to the likely impacts of climate change in addition to their mitigation efforts.
- Influence government on measures that help to address the local impact of climate change.
- Develop plans and support council projects that will improve adaptation on a district and council level. For instance, greater provisions for agile working, green and active travel, in response to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.

7. Local benefits of addressing climate change

7.1. The benefits of this policy will include:

- A reduction in energy usage and other utilities, thereby contributing towards the council's overall financial position.
- Development of new income streams, thereby contributing towards the council's overall financial position.
- Enhancements to the environmental quality of the borough, thereby improving local health and wellbeing.
- Improvements to the borough's housing stock that will help to address fuel poverty and improve climate change adaptability.

- Encouragement of active travel options that will contribute towards reduced traffic congestion, air pollution and improved health and wellbeing.
- Encouragement of good practice across the districts sectors.

8. Legal framework and relevant legislation

8.1. Climate Change Act 2008

8.1.1. The Climate Change Act 2008 is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. It requires that emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are reduced and that climate change risks are prepared for. The Act also establishes the framework to deliver on these requirements.

8.1.2. The Act supports the UK's commitment to urgent international action to tackle climate change.

8.1.3. Initially through the Climate Change Act, the UK government set a target to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to 80% lower than 1990 levels by 2050 and identified a path to get there. The Act also established the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) to ensure that emissions targets are evidence-based and independently assessed.

8.1.4. In addition, the Act requires the Government to assess the risks and opportunities from climate change for the UK, and to prepare for them. The CCC's Adaptation Sub-Committee advises on these climate change risks and assesses progress towards tackling them.

8.1.5. Updated in 2019, the Climate Change Act commits the UK government by law ensuring that the net UK carbon account for 2050 is at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline.

8.1.6. The Climate Change Act requires the government to set legally-binding 'carbon budgets' to act as steppingstones towards the 2050 target. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. Budgets must be set at least 12 years in advance to allow policymakers, businesses and individuals enough time to prepare.

8.1.7. The CCC advises on the appropriate level of each carbon budget. The budgets are designed to reflect a cost-effective way of achieving the UK's long-term climate change objectives.

8.1.8. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.

8.1.9. Once a carbon budget has been set, the Climate Change Act places an obligation on the Government to prepare policies to ensure the budget is met.

8.2. Paris Agreement on Climate Change, 2015

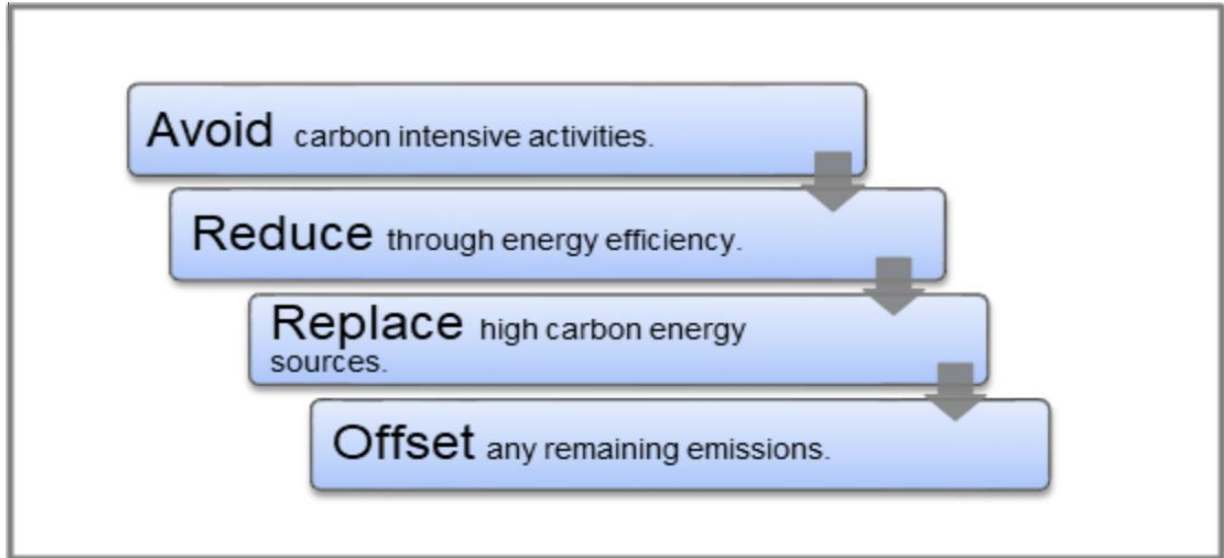
- 8.2.1. The Paris Climate Agreement aimed to reduce the emission of gases that contribute to global warming. The Paris Agreement set out to improve upon and replace the Kyoto Protocol, an earlier international treaty designed to curb the release of greenhouse gases. It entered into force on November 4, 2016 and has been signed by 197 countries and ratified by 185 as of January 2019.
- 8.2.2. The objective was a binding and universal agreement designed to limit greenhouse gas emissions to levels that would prevent global temperatures from increasing more than 2°C (3.6 °F) above the temperature benchmark set before the beginning of the Industrial Revolution (pre-industrial levels) and "endeavour to limit" them even more, to 1.5°C.
- 8.2.3. To limit the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by human activity to the same levels that trees, soil and oceans can absorb naturally, beginning at some point between 2050 and 2100.
- 8.2.4. To review each country's contribution to cutting emissions every five years so they scale up to the challenge.
- 8.2.5. For rich countries to help poorer nations by providing "climate finance" to adapt to climate change and switch to renewable energy.

9. Roles and responsibilities

- 9.1. Tackling climate change is all inclusive and every employee and member has a role to play. Specific roles and responsibilities are defined in the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

10. Climate change approach

- 10.1. To ensure it is effective, addressing climate change needs to be aligned with corporate aims, objectives and priorities. The council's approach to embedding climate change mitigation and adaptation is to create a culture that spreads best practice, identifies and communicates lessons learnt, and uses appropriate expertise.
- 10.2. This council will follow the below hierarchy in order to carry out its own emissions reduction tasks:



11. Climate change training

- 11.1. Climate change training will be provided to relevant officers with the aim of ensuring that they have the skills necessary to identify, appraise and control the risks associated with climate change for the services they provide and projects that they manage. Elected members will receive training on climate change so that they can consider the implications whilst engaged with council activities.
- 11.2. Climate change briefings will also be provided to all staff, with the goal of educating officers and facilitate a climate change conscious culture within the borough council.

12. Health implications

- 12.1. The climate change strategy is a key part of the council's policy and strategy framework and will contribute towards wider health policies through mitigation measures such as active travel.
- 12.2. This council can also learn from the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, and the measures used accordingly, such as active travel and greater options for agile working.

13. Equalities implications

- 13.1. The policy is considered to have no equalities implications.

14. Reference documents

- 14.1. The policy provides direction to the council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

15. Additional information or resources

15.1. The related Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will be found on InSite.

15.2. Further information can be obtained from Environmental Health.

16. Implementation/distribution

16.1. The policy will be distributed to senior managers and to all staff and members via Internal Affairs, the Members Bulletin and InSite.

Signed: _____ Lorraine Gore, Chief Executive

Date: _____

Signed: _____ Cllr B Long, Leader

Date: _____

Version control	Climate Change Policy			
Policy name				
Policy description	The climate change mitigation and adaptation approach described in this policy is key to informing future council activities.			
Responsible Officer	Dave Robson, Environmental Health Manager			
Version number	Date formally approved	Reason for update	Author	Review date
1	TBC	First version	D. Robson / G. Greaves / H. Saunders	TBC