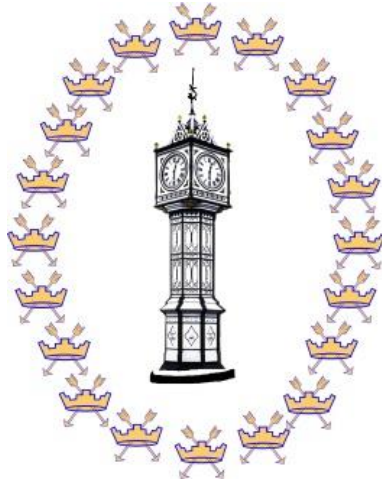


DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

DATE & MEETING IMPLEMENTED	FULL COUNCIL 8/10/2019	
DATE OF REVIEW	OCTOBER 2022	
SIGNED	Cllr Hayes, Mayor	

Downham Market Town Council

Environmental Policy

INTRODUCTION

Downham Market Town Council (The Council) is committed to the creation of a sustainable community, balancing and integrating economic, social and environmental components. Developing a more sustainable community will benefit present-day residents and businesses, as well as future generations.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The main pieces of relevant legislation are:

The Water Act 2003. This Act places a duty on all public bodies to take into account, where relevant, the desirability of conserving water supplied or to be supplied to premises.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. From 1 October 2006, every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006. This Act gives specific powers to town and parish councils to tackle climate change. The Act places an obligation on town and parish councils to improve their energy efficiency.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. This Act extends the statutory offence of dropping litter and enables town and parish councils to authorise officers to serve fixed penalty notices for the litter offence under section 88 of the 1990 Environmental Protection Act; gives town and parish councils the power to issue fixed penalty notices for graffiti and fly-posting offences; and allows town and parish councils to create offences relating to the control of dogs and replaces the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996. Duty of Care (Waste). The Duty of Care covers any business that produces or disposes of waste and requires the business to ensure that any waste produced is handled safely and in accordance with the law.

Water Framework Directive. The purpose of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater.

In addition, 150 countries, including the UK, endorsed Agenda 21 at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 calls for local authorities to initiate Local Agenda 21 processes. Local Agenda 21 involves taking a partnership approach to develop an action plan for sustainable development at a local level.

It should also be noted that Norfolk County Council have a Biodiversity Action Plan although most references within it are to other parts of Norfolk. However the Borough Council of King's Lynn and

West Norfolk also have a plan and I feel we should be involving ourselves more in what is being done in our area.

This Plan acknowledges the role that town and parish councils have to play in the management of green spaces, and in promoting awareness and encouraging people to participate in local community initiatives for biodiversity.

POLICY COVERAGE

This policy applies to all the activities that the Council carry out and the land and properties that the Council owns and any land/properties that the Council manages or is responsible for.

The Council encourages and supports those who manage facilities on its behalf to do so in an environmentally responsible manner.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Council recognises that its activities will have some negative impacts on the environment. The aim of this policy is to establish broad objectives to enable the development of activities that will minimise negative effects on the general environment and also work towards enhancing and protecting Downham Market's immediate environs.

The Council will aim to improve its environmental performance and influence improvement in Downham Market in the following ways:

- Use energy, natural resources and non-renewable resources efficiently and strive to minimise waste and pollution.
- Inform Downham Market's residents of the Council's environmental activities and respond and react to feedback.
- Support individual behaviour change in Downham Market's residents, leading by example and supporting environmentally friendly activities.
- Support local businesses in the adoption of low-impact practices.
- Manage its land using environmentally-friendly practices that will promote biodiversity and protect habitats.

SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

The Council is committed to action in the following, specific areas:

Water

Water will be used efficiently for Council activities and on Council premises. In the areas which are cultivated planting schemes and technology that minimise the need for watering will be used, e.g. planting drought-resistant species and using mulches and water gel crystals.

The Council will continue to implement water-saving measures on its allotments, for example, encouraging tenants to reduce their water usage.

The Council's planning group will consider issues of water use, water run-off and water pollution when making recommendations on planning applications. The Council will support the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)¹ in new developments and redevelopments to reduce flooding risks, manage storm-water, minimise diffuse pollution from surface water runoff and help maintain groundwater levels.

Development

The Planning Committee will also consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when commenting on planning applications in Downham Market and also when developing or redeveloping any of its own buildings.

The Council will involve itself in consultations relating to the Local Planning Authority's Local Plans. The Council will lobby on the need for developing sustainable drainage in Downham Market necessitated by the town's particular topography and urban development, in order to counteract flash flooding.

The Council will also press for the use of planning obligations (section 106 agreements) to promote sustainable development and mitigate environmental impacts resulting from developments. Climate Change and Energy Conservation

Climate Change and Sustainability

The Council will monitor its energy use and improve upon energy efficiency within its buildings by adopting energy-saving measures, e.g. purchasing electrical equipment with good energy ratings. The Council will increase awareness of energy efficiency amongst employees and encourage energy-conserving behaviour, e.g. switching off lights that aren't needed and switching off equipment rather than using standby. In the longer term, the Council will investigate the feasibility of sustainable supplies of energy to power its premises.

Waste

The Council will minimise its waste production wherever possible, by reducing, repairing and reusing resources, and by recycling the waste its activities produce, where facilities exist. Rubbish will be disposed of safely, following the correct procedures, and only licensed contractors will be used to deal with hazardous waste.

The Council will incorporate the possibility of pollution in its risk assessment procedure and will use this system to minimise the risks and implement mitigation strategies.

Urban Environment

The Council will consult with the County Council/Borough Council to see if it can take control of certain local actions; namely to undertake specific highways works that contribute to the improvement of the town environment. These could include issuing hedge-trimming notices, graffiti removal and clearing fly-posted signs, addressing and controlling instances of noise pollution that fall within its remit.

The Council will also look to engage with the District Council specifically in regard to the powers accorded to it through the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, to implement fixed penalty notices for littering, graffiti and fly-posting, and the creation of offences relating to dog fouling where appropriate in the town.

The Council will encourage the setting up of Town Partnerships on the issue of town centre regeneration.

Transport

The Council will continue to encourage sustainable transport systems, promoting public transport and non-polluting modes of transport within the town, such as cycling and walking. The Council will

support the Walkers Are Welcome project as part of this. As traffic congestion can significantly reduce air quality, which directly impacts upon human health, the Council will also press other tiers of government for the alleviation of traffic congestion within Downham Market. As a long-term goal, the Council will investigate sustainable, minimally polluting forms of fuel for its vehicle.

Biodiversity and Green Spaces

The Council will, wherever possible, consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in all its activities, but particularly with regard to land management. The Council will seek to manage green spaces in a manner that promotes and protects biodiversity. This includes the management of invasive plants on its land and using planting schemes that exclude species known to be invasive in West Norfolk. The Council's Chemicals in Open Spaces policy commits the Council to using pesticides in an environmentally responsible manner and to identifying environmentally-friendly alternatives.

The Council is committed to providing information (where appropriate) or providing a signposting facility to the relevant authorities, to assist Downham landowners in the control of invasive species, environmentally sensitive land management and biodiversity conservation.

The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance the quality of Downham Market's natural environment and open spaces. The Council aims to make open space accessible wherever possible. The Council will continue to promote the use of its allotments as a source of local food, helping to reduce the food miles consumed by Downham residents. The Council will look to create bylaws if these are required to protect and conserve its green spaces e.g. The Willows Nature Reserve and the Jubilee Community Centre Playing Fields.

Sustainable Procurement

Council procurement will be assessed for sustainability implications, with the intention of purchasing renewable/recycled, environmentally low-impact and recyclable materials, so long as the requirements for value for money and quality are met. The Council will purchase from companies that have environmental management systems in place if possible.

The Council will ban the use, by the Council or its contractors, of certain specified environmentally damaging products where an alternative product or method is available.

These products are:

- Ozone depleting chemicals
- Tropical hardwood that is not certified independently as coming from a well- managed forest
- Pesticides on the UK 'Red List' and EC 'Black List'2

The use of peat for soil amelioration will be avoided wherever possible.

Sourcing materials locally, where feasible, will reduce carbon emissions resulting from transporting produce. The Council will promote local produce and products within the community as appropriate, which will have the additional positive effect of supporting the local economy. Fairtrade production standards encourage sustainable agriculture and protection of the environment. The Fairtrade social

premium, a payment that producer groups receive in addition to the Fairtrade price is often invested in environmental projects.

Awareness, Lobbying & Partnerships

The Council will promote awareness of, and information on, environmental issues within the community. It will act as a voice for local environmental concerns to those agencies given statutory powers to tackle problems. The Council will continue to engage in partnership working with the local community, organisations and other tiers of local government in partnerships on conservation projects. The Council will also support other groups involved in environmental work in the town.