



**D O W N H A M
M A R K E T**

TOWN COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Date of Adoption: 27 February 2024

Revision – every three years or in line with changes in legislation

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Downham Market Town Council, (hereinafter referred to as the Council) is committed to supporting the creation of a sustainable community.
- 1.2 The UK Government has set a nationwide target to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, with a reduction to 68% levels by 2030, and a 78% reduction by 2035. [1]
- 1.3 The Council recognises the need to use its powers and influence to protect and improve the environment through good management, and by adopting best practice.
- 1.4 By adopting the Sustainability Policy, the Council is committed to reducing its own and the town's carbon footprint, and foster biodiversity.
- 1.5 The Council will work to integrate environmental considerations into its operational decisions and adopt greener alternatives where available.
- 1.6 Councillors and staff will be provided with information and training to enable them to perform their duties in a way that supports this policy and objectives.
- 1.7 The Council will make available reasonable budget and staffing resources to facilitate meeting these objectives.
- 1.8 The Council has adopted a Biodiversity Action Plan to support and achieve the aims of this policy.
- 1.9 The Council's Neighbourhood Plan Committee will take into account issues arising from climate change, maintaining biodiversity and the environment when developing the Neighbourhood Plan.

2. AIMS OF THIS POLICY

The aims of the Council's Sustainability Policy are:

- 2.1 To carry out work in an efficient way that minimises or eliminates its adverse impact on our environment, and minimises or eliminates the Council's contribution to climate change.
- 2.2 To promote the importance and value of protecting our environment and combatting climate change, in order to protect the quality of life of our community now and in the future.
- 2.3 To promote a sense of community and support residents in their efforts to improve

and protect our local environment. Furthermore, to minimise their environmental impact by cutting carbon, waste and pollution.

3. ENERGY USE & MANAGEMENT

The Council:

- 3.1 Aims to reducing its carbon footprint through energy efficiency throughout its operation to achieve becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3.2 Will contract to buy from renewable energy suppliers.
- 3.3 Aims to support the community to reduce Downham Market's carbon footprint with the goal to become a carbon-neutral town by 2050. Additionally, will consider allocating a grant to projects that aim to achieve this.
- 3.4 Aims to develop a policy for including carbon reduction criteria when selecting suppliers.
- 3.5 Will consider the installation of solar photovoltaic cells on Council buildings.
- 3.6 Will encourage staff to close windows and external doors when the heating is on.

4. SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Council will:

- 4.1 Develop a sustainable resource management strategy to reduce its carbon footprint, minimise its use of the earth's resources and choose reusable resources where practical.
- 4.2 Promote and encourage recycling across the town.
- 4.3 Use recycled paper products where feasible.
- 4.4 Minimise the amount of printing and minimise the amount of paper, using electronic communications where possible.
- 4.5 Endeavour to end the use of avoidable 'single use' plastics in and on the Council's property.
- 4.6 Develop a hierarchy of best practice, particularly for outdoor events and include wording on the standard booking form to encourage hirers to minimise or phase out the use of 'single use plastic'.
- 4.7 Promote water saving actions (like using water butts and toilet flushers that save water) and runoff water in concrete areas.
- 4.8 Observe its duty of care conscientiously with all its waste contracts.
- 4.9 Actively seek to minimise all forms of pollution generated from council operations and prevent where possible.

- 4.10 Actively seek to work with current groups, organisations and individuals already working in the town to assist and create a method of networking/support.

5. CONSERVATION & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Council will support and promote endeavours to:

- 5.1 Conserve, where possible, local natural habitats including but not limited to, trees, woodland, hedgerows, ponds, grassland.
- 5.2 Conserve and promote local biodiversity in all its activities, but particularly with regard to the management of its land, and where possible land adjacent to sensitive habitats and enhancing connectivity by preserving and creating wildlife corridors within the town.
- 5.3 Oppose the use of bee harming pesticides and herbicides and support growth of wildflowers on available spaces to encourage prosperity of bee and insect populations.
- 5.4 Support the principle of allotment provision.

6. SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The Council will:

- 6.1 Encourage councillors and staff to car-share where possible when a car journey must be made on Council business.
- 6.2 Ensure all Council vehicles are serviced and maintained to a high standard.
- 6.3 Look at energy efficient availability, if considering replacing a vehicle.
- 6.4 Promote and support the use of cycling, public footpaths and public transport.
- 6.5 Support initiatives to improve sustainable local transport options including frequent and reliable local bus services around town.
- 6.6 Support efforts to retain a vibrant high street and thereby reduce desire to travel to other towns for shopping and leisure.

7. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

The Council will actively seek:

- 7.1 To minimise environmental damage caused through the transportation of goods, by sourcing materials and services locally where practicable.
- 7.2 That all catering, including tea/coffee in the office, should, where practicable, be sourced from local, organic, fair trade or other recognised certification schemes.

- 7.3 That any timber or similar products used by the Council should be from (Forest Stewardship) FSC certified sources.

8. ENGAGEMENT, LOBBYING AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Council will:

- 8.1 Promote awareness of environmental issues within the community, and encourage sustainable practices.
- 8.2 Act as a voice for the local environment concerns to those agencies given the statutory powers to tackle problems.
- 8.3 Support local community groups to promote sustainable environmental practices and increased environmental awareness within the town.
- 8.4 Encourage and lobby other local authorities (King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council and Norfolk County Council) and the UK Government to deliver on their commitments regarding climate change, biodiversity and the environment.
- 8.5 Encourage local organisations to develop their own plans to address climate change.
- 8.6 Support initiatives to boost investment in infrastructure to enable Electric Vehicle (EV) charging which would boost the adoption of EVs by residents.

9. INFORMATION SHARING

The Council will:

- 9.1 Develop and maintain its knowledge of climate change issues, relevant local groups and initiatives and national government initiatives.
- 9.2 Promote the Council's environmental awareness and initiatives with the Borough and County Councils, nearby Town and Parish Councils and other official and unofficial bodies.
- 9.3 Share its knowledge and information within the Council and with residents, and promote its Sustainability Policy and Biodiversity Policy and its actions, events and initiatives to combat climate change and protect our environment.

10. MEASUREMENT

- 10.1 The success of the policy will be measured by:
- a) the completion of initiatives, tasks and actions identified within this policy, and,
 - b) where feasible, estimates of the reduction in carbon emissions by the Council and in the town. How these estimates could be made is yet to be determined, but it is noted that an initial estimate of carbon emissions for the town is available. [2]

11. REVIEW

11.1 This policy and its application will be subject to annual review and revised as necessary, to ensure that it continues to reflect the aims and objectives of the Council and promotes environmental improvement throughout the Council's operations.

11.2 Any changes to the policy will be brought to the attention of all stakeholders.

References

[1] HM Government Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, October 2021.

[2] Centre for Sustainable Energy Impact Tool: <https://impact-tool.org.uk/>

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