

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Loughton Town Council is committed to promoting a sustainable community in Loughton. It recognises that environmentally friendly policies will bring benefits to the whole town, through greener business practices, improvements to the natural setting, more sustainable development and a healthier lifestyle for all.

The Council will lead by example, using environmentally-friendly policies for its own premises and assets which will reduce the impact on the landscape. It recognises however, that changing to more sustainable practices may take time to achieve if council tax payers are not to be unduly burdened; in the longer term, greener policies mean reduced costs for all as well as a better environment.

Implementation

General

The Council will review the provisions of the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and, in the light of the powers they confer, make recommendations about how they should affect future decision-making.

The Council will discuss the Nottingham Declaration and consider whether it wishes to adopt and sign the Declaration.

Key Action areas

Energy Conservation

An energy audit of all Council premises and assets will be conducted and where possible measures introduced to reduce consumption, including the introduction of measures such as energy-efficient light bulbs and thermostats.

A review of the Council's energy tariffs will be undertaken with a view to changing to the most sustainable and environmentally friendly packages available.

The viability and cost-effectiveness of installing solar panels and other renewable power sources will be considered for all Council premises.

Environmental Management System

The Council will consider adopting an Environmental Management System (e.g. ISO14001) and benchmarking its environmental profile, adopting best practice where possible and using performance indicators (such as electricity consumption) to measure progress. These indicators would be made available to the public.

Green Spaces and Biodiversity

The Council will review grounds maintenance contracts to ensure unnecessary work is avoided and contractors follow optimum environmental practices.

The use of herbicides and pesticides will be reduced and grounds maintenance contractors required to avoid chemicals on the GB 'Red List' and EU 'Black List' as those create long-term persistent pollution problems, which would damage wildlife and plant life.

The Council will promote biodiversity through its work at the Willingale Road Local Nature Reserve and other green spaces.

Planning

The Council will make representations to the higher tiers of local authorities to ensure that proposed developments do not have an adverse environmental impact, .e.g. building in flood

plains or excessive water runoff from large areas of hard standing, and that they are built to sustainable standards with the least possible environmental impact as required by the Water Act 2003.

Sustainable Procurement

Procurement for the Council will be as sustainable as possible, using consumables with low environmental impact and recyclable items where these represent best value for money. Suppliers which themselves operate to environmentally-friendly standards will be preferred.

The Council will review its investment and banking policy and, whilst meeting its statutory duties, seek to invest ethically.

The Council will consider imposing conditions as part of its Financial Assistance Scheme such that organisations benefiting from the scheme are required to include environmentally friendly outcomes for their projects where relevant.

Transport

The Council will develop a staff and member travel plan, including a review of staff and member mileage allowances, with a view to promoting car-sharing, public transport use and cycling.

The Council will develop a vehicle purchasing policy specifically to consider buying electric or hybrid vehicles.

Waste Management

The Council will consider the adoption of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, looking to improve litter control in the town and reduce the amount of graffiti and flyposting.

The Council will introduce a recycling policy with a view to ensuring that its waste actually is recycled in an environmentally friendly way. It will actively seek to reduce the Council's residual waste. It will support and promote policies from other tiers of local government which encourage recycling.

The Council will review its use of paper with a view to restricting mailings to those required by statute, use e-mail where possible and maintaining digital archives.

Water Policy

Water usage at all Council facilities will be reviewed with a view to introducing conservation measures where appropriate. Businesses and residents will be encouraged to do likewise. The Council's contractors will be expected to minimise water use. Drought-resistant species will be considered for any new planting schemes.

Information on water reduction techniques will be provided to allotment tenants. Schemes to reduce the amount of water runoff and water pollution will be promoted so as to reduce the risk of flooding and habitat damage.

The Council will support environmentally sustainable management programmes and oppose development which will adversely affect our river systems such as Loughton Brook and Pyrles Brook.

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