Loughton Town Council

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

(THIS POLICY SUPERSEDES THE ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Loughton Town Council (LTC) is committed to promoting a sustainable community in Loughton. It recognises that a healthy environment is fundamental to the prosperity and wellbeing of the whole town. The Council acknowledges that whilst our activities may have adverse effects on the environment, we can take steps to minimise those impacts. This policy builds on our previous policy in this area and reflects the long-term nature of tackling environmental issues. Improving our environment is an investment in the town and can mean reduced costs in the future.

1.2 The Council considers that the environment is important and will comply with and, where possible, exceed all environmental regulations, laws and codes of practice, as applicable.

1.3 The Council will ensure it engages with initiatives from the higher tiers of local authorities to provide local input and maximise opportunities for local benefit.

1.4 The Council will make a positive contribution to nature recovery by protecting and enhancing the local and global environment.

1.5 Loughton Town Council will continue to 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.

2. AIMS OF POLICY

The aims of this Council's Environmental Policy are:

- To increase environmental growth across our Council's responsibilities and assets for the benefit of the local community.
- To promote the importance and value of a quality environment, and to support local people in their enjoyment of it.
- To carry out our work in an efficient way that minimises or eliminates its adverse impact on our environment.
- To promote the development of a Circular Economy

3. LIST OF POLICIES

3.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

This Council notes the declaration of a climate emergency by Epping Forest District Council (in 1999) and the target with Essex County Council, through their Climate Action Plan, for our area to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Council understands the

effects of climate change are potentially damaging to the local community and commits to minimising its own impact by undertaking measures including: -

- Encourage staff switch off electrical equipment and unnecessary lights when not in use
- Encourage staff to close windows and external doors when heating is on
- Encourage staff to minimise the use of electric heaters and fans
- Introduce phased replacement of LED bulbs in Council premises
- Introduce phased replacement of electrical equipment used on Council premises with products of maximum energy efficiency rating
- Where possible, switch to 100% renewable energy tariffs for electricity on Council premises
- Phased replacement of non-renewable heating sources (oil, gas fired systems) with renewables
- Investigate investing in electric car charging points
- Retrofit buildings with energy saving measures (glazing, roof insulation)
- Introduce natural climate change solutions (such as tree planting and rewilding) on Council assets
- Undertake an audit of current Council emissions
- Agree measures to track the Council's carbon footprint over time
- Share details of our community carbon footprint and ways to address it

3.2 NATURE & WILDLIFE

This Council is committed to increasing opportunities for nature to thrive on the assets it owns or manages. Nature recovery will be achieved by:

- Protecting and enhancing the quality and extent of the natural environment in Loughton
- Reflecting the particular concern for trees as a feature of our town through a review of the Loughton Community Tree strategy (2012) to identify areas for attention over the coming five years
- Managing Council assets (including play areas, playing fields, and cemeteries) in a manner that protects and increases biodiversity. This will include exploring use of the APSE(Association of Public Service Excellence) ten point plan "to make space for nature" in Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards.
- Seeking to achieve the Bee Friendly Award for the town working with schools, allotment societies, local beekeepers and other interested community groups to support pollinators
- Engaging the user community of Roding Valley Recreation Ground, Willingale Road Local Nature Reserve and other green spaces to identify opportunities to support nature and wildlife with their participation

3.3 PESTICIDE USE

This Council is committed to reducing the use of pesticides on assets we own or manage (with the exception of use for the control of Schedule 9 plants under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, such as Japanese Knotweed, or where it is used to reduce material risks to asset integrity) in line with the UK Pesticides National Action Plan 2025.

3.4 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Where possible, this Council will:

- Promote and support modern working practices, such as remote working, amongst staff and councillors
- Encourage members and officers to car-share, where possible, when a car journey must be made on Council business
- Promote and support active travel (cycling and walking) and public transport – improving air quality for all while supporting individuals health / wellbeing
- Ensure all Council vehicles are serviced and maintained to a high standard
- Continue to use electric and hybrid powered vehicles where workable

3.5 WATER MANAGEMENT

This Council is committed to responsible water management and conservation throughout its operations, which include: - Encouraging staff, allotment holders and hirers to use water efficiently on Council premises

- Where possible, utilising water butts as a non-drinking water source. Encourage allotment holders to take up the Essex CC water butt scheme
- Ensuring staff and users are aware of which materials can be disposed of in wastewater
- Promoting and supporting natural solutions to reduce/reuse surface water run-off in the Town through planning and spaces we manage to reduce the risk of flooding and habitat damage

3.6 WASTE & RECYCLING

This Council will:

- Keep waste to a minimum by preventing, reusing, recycling or recovering waste
- Ensure waste is sorted, stored and disposed of appropriately
- Encourage reusable rather than single use plastics on Council premises and events
- Recycle all recyclable waste generated at Council premises and events
- Promote and encourage recycling across the Town
- Use recyclable, compostable and/or recycled products on Council premises

- Reduce the production of non-recyclable resources such as laminated or plastic based publicity material
- Minimise the amount of printing and minimise the amount of wastepaper
- Observe our duty of care conscientiously within our waste contracts
- Utilise electronic communications; councillors to use an opt-in scheme for printing paper documents
- Minimise pollution and prevent where possible (including light, noise, solids, liquids and chemicals)
- Use composting facilities at relevant operated amenities including allotments and cemeteries
- Continue to support and seek to further grow the Loughton Wombles

3.7 DEVELOPMENT

Where possible, this Council will:

- Support planning applications where the applicant can demonstrate biodiversity net gain
- Make representations to the higher tiers of local authorities to ensure that proposed developments do not have an adverse environmental impact
- Continue to take particular concern for applications relating to trees in our Town

3.8 RESPONSIBLE & SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

Where possible, this Council will:

- Source materials and services locally so long as the requirements for value for money and quality are met
- Ensure that catering produce is predominantly plant-based and sourced from local, organic, fair trade (or other recognised certification schemes)
- Ensure that timber, or similar products, used by the Council will be from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified sources
- Ensure that consumables used on Council premises (such as cleaning products and inks) are eco-friendly with low environmental impact
- Ensure that procurement of goods and services are weighted appropriately to encourage local suppliers thereby promoting the Circular Economy

3.9 AWARENESS, LOBBYING & PARTNERSHIPS

This Council will:

- Promote awareness of, and information about, environmental issues within the community
- Support, and act as a voice for, local environmental concerns within the community

- Ensure that all individuals involved in the organisation (including contractors) are aware of their responsibilities in implementing this environmental policy
- Work with partners, where appropriate, to increase environmental growth within the Town

3.10 ENERGY USE

This Council will:

- Undertake an audit of its existing energy use
- Produce a plan on how the Council's energy use can be reduced
- Procure energy from sustainable sources
- Seek to advance plans to generate electricity via solar installations on our properties

3.11 CIRCULAR ECONOMY

This Council will:

- Undertake an audit of the materials and services used by the Council
- Develop policies that encourage the development of a Circular Economy in the Town
- Promote and encourage the use of local suppliers in procurement policies

4. REVIEW

This policy and its application will be subject to review to ensure that it continues to reflect the aims and objectives of Loughton Town Council and promotes continuous environmental improvement throughout the Council's operations.