

North Hertfordshire District Council Climate Change Strategy Proposed Actions 2021- 2026

Taking Action

Taking direct action to reduce the Council's carbon emissions

Enabling Carbon Savings

Ensuring that our policies enable citizens and businesses to reduce their emissions

Inspiring the Community

Encouraging citizens and businesses to take action to go further and faster in cutting carbon emissions



TAKING ACTION

Reducing the Council's own carbon emissions by targeting:

Council Buildings and Property

- Consider thoroughly, and ensure that new system installations are renewable electricity rather than gas-fired, where this is deemed the best option
- Consider replacing gas with electricity from renewable sources where appropriate
- Ensure no new buildings use gas-fired systems
- Explore use of heat pumps (ground source or air source) to provide heating as the technology develops
- Continue to identify ways to improve building energy management systems to reduce waste
- Improve building insulation and conduct lighting surveys to reduce energy outputs
- Increase incorporation of green clauses in leases and licenses for NHDC's property estate (e.g encouraging tenants to consider whole life carbon assessments when selecting construction methods or materials in their leased property)
- Build on the environmental, economic, and social sustainability principles presented in NHDC's Property Acquisition & Development Strategy when appraising prospective property acquisitions, to ensure pre-acquisition due diligence is comprehensive and not solely focused on financial drivers
- Explore and progress on-site generation of electricity from solar or wind
- Explore opportunities for the sustainable heating of swimming pools

Transport

- In accordance with the Council's 2019 resolution, continue replacing all future operational vehicles leased or purchased by the Council with Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) or zero emission vehicles until the last non-ULEV vehicle leases expire (2022); and encourage contractors to adopt similar measures
- Begin transitioning to zero emission vehicles as leases come up for expiry from 2025
- Reduce staff and Councillor business travel through use of Zoom and similar technologies as much as possible
- Reduce staff commuting through home working as much as practical
- Explore opportunities around low-emission refuse freighters
- Explore the creation of a 5-Year Plan to reduce emissions from the waste fleet



TAKING ACTION

Offsetting

- Quantify how much land we would need to plant trees on to offset 5% of the Council's 2019/20 carbon emissions, and work towards this goal as is feasible, both as area planting and single specimen planting
- Seek to retain and preserve scrub and woodland edges to protect trees and maintain natural boundaries to woodlands
- Where appropriate, change grass verge cutting regimes to allow more plant species to grow
- Create more wildflower areas across the district
- Seek to strengthen hedgerows and have them connect fragmented habitats

Explore options for the preparation of an evaluation, updated each year showing:

- Carbon savings that have been achieved since the 2019/20 baseline
- The savings identified to make progress towards the carbon neutral by 2030 target
- The savings still to be identified

Continue to consult with the public and with interest groups on strategies for achieving zero carbon emissions by 2030



ENABLING CARBON SAVINGS

- As part of the 'Sustainable North Hertfordshire' programme, work to develop and support policies that encourage electric vehicle use and other 'cleaner air' initiatives across the district, including:
 - Providing more electric car charging facilities in our car parks
 - Exploring the possibility of making it cheaper for zero emission vehicles to use Council car parks
 - Working with the County Council to improve the provision of on-street Electric Vehicle (EV) charging
 - Exploring the opportunities for a holistic approach to a town-wide Electric Vehicle strategy which will include all users and operators, both public and private
 - Working with other public and private entities/partners to improve provision of EV charging
 - Progressing the implementation of a better cycle network in North Herts, linking the district and beyond
 - Working with the relevant portfolio holders to prepare an annual Electric Vehicle Action Plan
- Further to the requirement for all new and replaced taxi vehicles to be ultra-low emissions from 2028, explore how we can support transitions to low emission vehicles before this date and to zero emission vehicles when the necessary infrastructure is in place
- Ensure that masterplans and planning applications for new development are designed around streets and routes for active travel (rather than cars) and create walkable neighbourhoods
- Explore how a Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) could encourage and provide guidance on how new development can use resources more efficiently, reduce carbon emissions, incorporate carbon sequestration measures, and adapt to climate change
- Introduce a standard within a Sustainability SPD to support more energy efficiency buildings to the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes
- Set out comprehensive planning guidance within a Sustainability SPD on reducing carbon emissions, adapting and mitigating climate change



ENABLING CARBON SAVINGS

- Require Passivhaus, BREEAM, or similar standards for all developments on land sold by the Council
- Explore how a Biodiversity SPD could help to provide a clear ecological network plan, further enhance and create new habitat (e.g. woodlands, grasslands, and hedgerows) within new development and on Council owned land as part of an offsetting strategy to deliver biodiversity net gain
- Update the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy to identify where new green spaces and corridors should be provided as part of new development to support further carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and flood and surface water management
- Signpost residents to funding for retrofitting of insulation, heating and energy reduction features to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes
- Lobby government to introduce more funding for retrofitting of insulation, heating and energy reduction features, for both privately-owned and social housing
- Work with the Herts Waste Partnership (HWP) to investigate how we could secure the use of anaerobic digestion to deal with food waste from 2024
- Ensure recycling and waste collection arrangements promote reduction and reuse
- Encourage and support community tree planting initiatives
- Explore opportunities for Solar schemes for residents, businesses, and community groups – such as those run by West Suffolk Council and South



INSPIRING THE COMMUNITY

- Enable residents to assess their carbon emissions, comparing them with the district and best practice
- Encourage residents to make behaviour changes by highlighting positive actions that can be taken, and informing them of more environmentally friendly options
- Encourage alternative models of working to reduce commuting levels across the district
- Promote zero carbon construction (timber buildings, offsetting of carbon, etc.)
- Run food waste awareness programmes
- Run waste reduction awareness programmes and continue to support community plastic free initiatives
- Explore opportunities for certification/awards for Green/Sustainable businesses
- Explore the possibility of tree planting awards
- Consult with the public to identify further means by which the Council can assist the residents and businesses of North Herts to achieve the target of zero emissions across the district by 2050
- Develop communications to raise awareness of the benefits of retrofitting of insulation, heating and energy reduction features, and the long-term cost-saving potential

