

Weston-super-Mare Town Council Draft Environmental Policy

The Town Council aims to run its business and its premises in such a way that it embraces, to the best possible effect, all relevant environmental matters to the benefit of the Town Council and local residents.

1. Statement of Policy

On Monday 16th September 2019 Weston-super-Mare Town Council resolved as follows: 'That Weston Town Council (WTC) continues to build on its clear environmental agenda by joining with North Somerset Council (NSC) in declaring a Climate Emergency, with the aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and taking what actions it can to mitigate the effects.'

2. Environmental Impacts

The specific adverse environmental impacts caused by the Town Council's operations are identified as:

1. Material consumption – office supplies, equipment and furniture;
2. Emissions from the use of energy in our buildings and fuel in transport
3. Waste Management – plastic, paper and other waste;
4. Management of chemicals used in Town Council premises and services.
5. Suppliers' environmental performance;

3. Objectives

- To reduce the effect of these adverse impacts, the Town Council will aim to reduce its net carbon footprint to zero by 2030 by embracing the following objectives:
- Minimise greenhouse gas emissions produced by Town Council activities;
- Minimise energy use and use sustainable energy wherever possible;
- Utilise fuel efficient vehicles wherever possible;
- Explore the use of electric or hybrid vehicles;
- Reduce waste and re-use material wherever possible;
- Minimise its material consumption and consider the full lifecycle impact of purchases – office supplies, equipment and furniture;
- Embrace recycling opportunities for re-used waste;
- Encourage Suppliers to raise their environmental performance;
- Encourage Staff to use public transport cycling or car-sharing schemes;
- Explore ways to support biodiversity in parks, open spaces and buildings.

3. Energy Management

The Town Council is committed to responsible energy management and will, where possible, promote energy efficiency throughout its operations by the following actions:

- Increase awareness of energy efficiency amongst employees;
- Recommend energy conservation technology where applicable (including insulation, low energy light bulbs, low water use toilets);
- Monitor heating controls;
- Encourage Staff to close windows and external doors in cold weather;
- Encourage Staff to switch off unnecessary lights;
- Encourage Staff to switch off computers, VDUs, printers and photocopiers when not in use;
- Explore the inclusion of solar panels or other sustainable electricity generation on Town Council premises;
- Explore the installation of an electrical vehicle fuel station;
- Explore the possibility of more energy efficient vehicles for staff.

4. Recycling and Conservation

- Recycled paper should be used wherever possible in products such as – letterheads, folders, compliment slips, business cards, photocopy paper, printed paper, envelopes and toilet rolls.
- In addition, waste paper should be minimised by the following:
- Avoiding purchase of rough paper/notebooks by keeping an identified stack of unwanted paper printed on one side only;
- Where appropriate, re-using paper already printed on one side, both by individuals and in photocopiers, fax machines and PC printers and maintaining a ready supply of such material;
- An external shredding facility will be used for all confidential documents. They provide a guarantee that the paper is all 100% recycled.
- Investigate the possibility of introducing recycling into Town Council offices.

5. Water Conservation

- Where possible we will have water meters installed; Where possible we will conserve water on Allotments and the Cemetery;
- Where possible we will utilise water butts fed by building downpipes as a non-drinking water source.

6. Chemicals and Cleaning Materials

- Cleaning fluids, polishes and glues, etc., to come from eco-friendly manufacturers where possible;
- Use of solvents, harmful to the environment, will be avoided.

7. Equipment

- Generally, new office and other equipment will be chosen from eco-friendly standards in materials, manufacturers, in use and for disposal.

- Petrol driven equipment such as strimmers and mowers will be replaced with electric equipment wherever possible.
- Explore the use of electric or hybrid vehicles by the Grounds Team

8. Local Sourcing

- Where possible, we will seek to minimise environmental damage caused through transportation of goods by sourcing materials locally. This also has the positive effect of supporting the local economy.
- Sourcing food and goods locally will be prioritised at trading facilities such as Weston Museum, the Blakehay Theatre and the VIC.

9. Biodiversity and Ecology

- Explore the implementation of wild flower meadows or rewilding to encourage biodiversity on Town Council sites.
- Avoid or minimise use of harmful chemicals such as insecticides and herbicides on Town Council Sites
- Where possible, compost waste vegetation.
- Promote environmentally friendly practices to allotment holders

10. Single Use Plastic

The Town Council supports and will continue to support the Surfers Against Sewage 'Plastic Free Community' award for Weston-super-Mare. The Town Council will continue to work towards the reduction and if possible elimination of the single use plastic from all its operations. To date the following steps have been taken at its facilities:

- **Blakehay Theatre**
Offers free water bottle refills; 2) Swapped to wooden stirrers; 3) Stopped selling water in plastic bottles; 4) Swapped to washable cups in the auditorium rather than plastic; 5) Removed plastic straws
- **Visitor Information Centre**
Offers water refill station; 2) Has stopped selling plastic bottles of water; 3) Offers reusable alternative for people to buy to use for water; 4) Removed plastic bags; 5) Encourages tourists to pick up litter; 6) Removed sandcastle flags with plastic poles
- **Weston Museum**
Uses only loose tea; 2) Switched to paper bags; 3) Refill station for bottles of water; 4) Compostable takeaway cups
- **Offices**
Weston-super-Mare Town Council offices will also adopt this plastic free initiative. No plastic cutlery or cups will be used, with all events and meetings provided with regular reusable crockery. Water refill stations will be used instead of plastic bottles.

11. Meeting Agendas

- Town Councillors will be encouraged to receive their meeting agendas and reports electronically and not to print them for meetings but instead bring electronic copies.
- Councillors will be sent all papers electronically as standard, and must request paper copies.
- Those members who do receive paper copies are only to do so for those committees that they sit on, papers for all other meetings are to be sent electronically.

12. Measurement and Monitoring

- The Council will research and adopt a suitable method of measuring and monitoring its carbon emissions.
- The Council will monitor and measure progress in reducing net carbon emissions and other actions at its Policy and Finance Committee, or a sub group thereof, with an annual report to the full Council.