



Basingstoke
and Deane

Priority action plan: Protecting and enhancing our environment



Introduction

This priority action plan sets out the actions that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will take to deliver on the Council Plan priority:

“Protecting and enhancing our environment”

This plan also includes the measures and targets that will be used to monitor the delivery of this priority over the financial year 2021 to 2022.

Sub-priorities

protecting and enhancing
our environment

Sub-priorities

- Responding to the climate emergency
- Becoming a zero carbon council by 2025
- Improving air quality
- Improving biodiversity
- Improving river and landscape quality

Executive commitments

Cabinet has identified the following executive commitments to achieve this priority:

- Climate Emergency
- Basingstoke Gateway Strategy £0.10 million 2020/21 and future years
- Borough Regeneration £0.25 million 2020/21
- The East of Basingstoke Natural Environment Masterplan £0.10 million 2021/22
- Hatch Warren and Beggarwood Biodiversity Improvement Zone
- Manydown Country Park.

COVID-19 adjustments to this priority

The national lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the daily behaviours of our residents and businesses.

From an environmental perspective, there were some benefits as people became more aware of their surroundings and interested in supporting local wildlife. The limitations on travel by car and public transport also reduced carbon emissions, improved air quality and led to more walking, cycling and working from home. Recovery plans have included changing road layouts to accommodate increased walking and cycling.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not changed the focus of this priority but it has increased awareness and it is important to capture these behaviour changes and build on them to achieve our environmental ambitions.

COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the council's finances, with the largest impact forecast to be in 2020/21 and an ongoing impact in later years, with the severity of this in terms of reduced income and increased costs depending on the depth and length of the recession that follows from the initial pandemic, lockdown and resulting actions.

Partnership activities

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council cannot protect and enhance the borough's environment on its own and local and national partners will be key to our success. The council will work with partners from many organisations, including the following, in order to achieve this priority:

- Environment Agency
- Hampshire County Council
- Natural Basingstoke
- Basingstoke Transition Network
- Basingstoke Low Carbon Group
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
- Urban & Civic
- The Wellcome Trust.

Responding to the climate emergency

Planning has a key role to play in supporting and enabling the transition to a low carbon future, with local policies encouraged to take a positive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. The council is keen to take a proactive approach to climate change and the Local Plan update provides an opportunity to positively influence the future of the borough through the provision of low carbon homes and infrastructure.

The government's Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) will set the framework for possible changes to services. This could include changes to the types of recycling material collected and changes to the frequency of residual waste collections. The next consultation on government proposals is anticipated in spring 2021.

Through Project Integra and working with other Hampshire authorities, we will continue to review materials collected via the kerbside collection service and likely implications of RWS for collection authorities and Hampshire's recycling infrastructure.

We are also continuing to promote the council's garden waste collection service and encouragement of home composting.

Actions

| Actions to achieve the sub-priority | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Adoption of a new climate change and air quality strategy | ✓ | | | |
| Creation of a climate change policy within the next Local Plan, including ambitious zero carbon and sustainability principles | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Creation of a climate change Supplementary Planning Document | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Local Plan Update to include strong policies to maintain, preserve and enhance trees, hedgerows and green space across the borough | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Organise an annual 'Tackling the Environment and Climate Emergency' meeting, hosted by the Community, Environment and Partnerships Committee | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Convene summit for local businesses to understand climate change and air quality issues and support development of their own actions | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Work with other business reps (e.g. FSB, BID, Chamber of Commerce, LEP) to develop net zero group for businesses for mutual challenge and support | ✓ | | | |
| Support for existing Low Carbon Energy Group, made up of local experts, to develop into Climate Commission to challenge and support the council and the wider borough to carbon neutrality | ✓ | | | |
| Use of Development Management service to improve energy efficiency and consider climate change in advance of updated planning guidance | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work with our local land owners to investigate and establish a community / regional authentic offset programme which businesses and communities can be a part of | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Develop a more robust resilience / adaptation plan, maximising the benefits of the natural environment in this area | ✓ | ✓ | | |

| Actions to achieve the sub-priority | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Develop plan to support private landlords in meeting Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). Appropriate enforcement action utilised where required | | ✓ | | |
| Develop further strategy for retrofit of domestic and commercial properties to reduce energy demand | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Promote and support rollout of low carbon heating, including investigating zero carbon hydrogen possibilities | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work with housing associations to improve social housing stock | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Develop strategy for improving energy efficiency of buildings that council leases out | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work with Hampshire County Council to reduce waste generation and increase recycling rates through education programmes including a review of the kerbside sort of recycling | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work as part of Project Integra to tackle food waste, including education programmes such as Love Food, Hate Waste, alongside consideration of food waste collection dependent on the government's waste strategy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Review of recycling bring sites with a view to reducing fly-tipping and carbon emissions | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work with housing associations and managing agents to improve facilities in communal areas and flatted properties to ensure less contamination and more recycling | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Engage with strategic infrastructure providers National Grid and SSE Networks to ensure borough is supporting national decarbonisation efforts and has sufficient capacity and investment for shift to low carbon electricity and electrification of heat and transport | ✓ | | | |
| Investigate potential to participate in energy innovation schemes as part of transition to smarter more flexible energy system | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Development of toolkit and guidance to help promote local and community climate emergency action and energy projects | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Enable renewable energy generation through policies in the Local Plan update | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| Actions to achieve the sub-priority | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Work with Hampshire County Council to reduce waste generation and increase recycling rates through education programmes | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work with Hampshire County Council to tackle food waste, including education programmes such as Love Food, Hate Waste, alongside consideration of food waste collection | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Promote 'buy local' to reduce goods mileage and support local businesses, including via a local e-commerce platform | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Measures and targets

| Measure | Baseline | 2021 to 2022 Target |
|---|------------------|------------------------|
| Increase (%) in household waste recycled (split by dry, garden waste & glass) | 30.47% (2019/20) | 27% |
| Kg of waste per household (monthly average per quarter) | 48.31 (2019/20) | <=49.43 |
| Project – climate change and green alternative investment programme | Green (2019/20) | On plan |
| Reduction (%) in emissions from scope 1, 2 and 3 | N/A | Year on year reduction |
| Increase (%) of properties that are allocated an EPC C rating or above | 68% (2019) | Year on year increase |
| Increase the number of renewable electricity installations | 2,177 (2019) | Year on year increase |

Becoming a zero carbon council by 2025

Becoming a zero carbon council by 2025 is a key priority and there are plans for new schemes to be brought forward to deliver our climate ambitions. Developing these schemes will be a focus for activity over the next four years.

Actions

Actions to achieve the sub-priority

| | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 100% of heating and electrical needs supplied by renewable sources | | | | ✓ |
| Add climate change considerations to committee and council reports and develop a climate change assessment to accompany reports | ✓ | | | |
| Replacement of council owned vehicles with low emission models | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Replacement of Hart shared service vehicles with low emission models | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work with waste services provider to increase efficiency throughout contract and continue to reduce emissions where possible including possible trial of electric refuse collection vehicles | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Developing new schemes to become a zero carbon council | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ensure that becoming a carbon neutral council and smarter ways of working (SWOW) agendas complement each other, including energy efficient and sustainable buildings and staff behaviours (including a 'green' return to work, limited printing, and efficient home working set up) | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Move council, committee and panel meetings to paperless agendas and content | | ✓ | | |
| Review HR policies to consider reduction in staff travel and promotion of sustainable working choices and ultra-low emission vehicles being used wherever possible | ✓ | ✓ | | |

| Actions to achieve the sub-priority | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Survey staff commuting and update staff travel plan, including increase in flexible working | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Develop new e-learning module for all council staff to increase awareness of climate change and personal actions to address, both at work and in home life | ✓ | | | |
| Work with waste services provider to increase efficiency throughout contract and continue to reduce emissions where possible | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Review suitability of council buildings/land for installation of renewable electricity generation | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Install LED lighting in Eastlands car park | ✓ | | | |
| Add climate change considerations to council service plans | ✓ | | | |
| Consider whole life carbon footprint of goods and reduce this in our procurement decisions, as part of the procurement strategy update and staff procurement training | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Reduce paper use amongst council officers | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Eliminate single-use plastics in council vending machines | ✓ | | | |
| Work with suppliers and contract providers to utilise local, natural offset as a last resort after carbon reduction, in support of procurement practices | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Work with contract provider to cost and explore powering leisure facilities using renewable energy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Undertake review of possible energy efficiency and reduction measures on council campus and other council operational buildings | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Work with development partners to ensure new council building development to be as energy efficient as a possible | ✓ | ✓ | | |

Measures and targets

| Measure | Baseline | 2021 to 2022 Target |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|
| Estimated carbon emissions reduction (%) in council's buildings and operations, through completed energy efficiency schemes | 0.16% (2019/20) | Year on year reduction |
| Reduction (%) in council energy expenditure - council offices | -31.91% (2019/20) | Year on year reduction |
| Reduction (%) in energy expenditure - other council owned property | 12.13% (2019/20) | Year on year reduction |
| Reduction in paper purchasing rates | N/A | Year on year reduction |

Improving air quality

The positive contribution clean air makes to health, wellbeing and the environment is well understood.

Air quality in the borough is good and has been monitored as part of the local authority review and assessment process since the mid 1990s. The main pollutant of concern locally and nationally in respect of health is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which primarily arises from the use of vehicles.

There are no Air Quality Management Areas in the borough that would legally require the council to draw up plans for improvements. However, the council is proactively taking action to improve local air quality, including actions to increase the use of electric vehicles and raising public awareness on the steps we can all take to reduce pollution.

The council recognises that decisions and strategy around transport, infrastructure and growth are key to achieving improvements in air quality.



Actions

Actions to achieve the sub-priority

| | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Monitor local air quality and undertake an annual review and take any action necessary to ensure air quality remains at good | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Continue with the Clean Air Basingstoke and Deane campaign to raise public awareness on how we can all take small steps to reduce air pollution | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Implement an anti-idling campaign, and implement FPN powers, to encourage motorists to switch off their engine when stationary | ✓ | | | |
| Work with HCC to support the my journey to school campaign, to encourage children and parents to use sustainable forms of transport when travelling to school | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Work with HCC and other partners to promote the National Clean Air Day | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Minimise the potential impact of developments on local air quality during the planning process | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Consider the creation of an air quality policy within the Local Plan update | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Review parking provision and rates, in order to promote lower emission vehicles into the town centre over more polluting vehicles | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Review taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to consider zero emission capable vehicles only | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Develop plan to educate and promote switch to electric vehicles, including electric vehicle event in the town centre | ✓ | | | |
| Work with public transport providers to electrify their fleet – work to secure inward investment/funding | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Increase charge points available on council sites for operational vehicles and staff, particularly required to enable electrification of operational vehicles | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Review the use of electric vehicles for the main core services within the waste contract – programme yet to be agreed | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Measures and targets

| Measure | Baseline | 2021 to 2022 Target |
|--|----------|------------------------|
| Increase in the number of borough operated electric vehicle chargers in the borough | 4 | 10 |
| Increase the number of schools participating in the 'my journey to school campaign' | TBC | TBC |
| Increase the % of taxi and private hire vehicles which meet the latest emission standards (Euro 6) | TBC | TBC |
| Ensure that local air pollution levels meet national standards and that there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the borough | Met | Met |
| Reduction (%) in average annual emissions in the borough | N/A | Year on year reduction |
| Increase (%) in the proportion of low carbon vehicles leased or purchased by the council | N/A | Year on year reduction |
| Reduction in 'grey fleet' mileage | N/A | Year on year reduction |
| Reduction in staff commuting mileage per head | N/A | Year on year reduction |
| Reduction in waste fleet mileage | N/A | Year on year reduction |
| Increase in proportion of electric buses in use in the borough | N/A | Year on year increase |
| Increase the number of zero emission capable taxis/private hire vehicles licensed in borough | N/A | Year on year increase |
| Increase the number of electric vehicles registered in the borough | N/A | Year on year increase |

Improving biodiversity

We want to be a leading authority on promoting biodiversity in the borough. Our commitment to this is evidenced through our team's award winning policy on delivering biodiversity net gains.

We are establishing a Biodiversity Improvement Zone (BIZ) that will cover the whole of one of the borough's wards. Our intention is to roll BIZ's out to other wards where appropriate in the borough.

Our gateway project will also contribute to biodiversity by creating wildflower meadows that will provide habitat for local wildlife, recognising that all parts of the borough can play their part and that biodiversity is integral to our communities.

Where areas that are important for biodiversity are already established, we will be proactive about protecting them, including seeking further protected designations where possible.



Actions

Actions to achieve the sub-priority

| | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Manydown country park - engagement with local groups to develop ideas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Manydown country park – development of plans to deliver biodiversity net gains | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Green infrastructure strategy – to deliver actions within strategy and provide an annual update report to the Environment Planning and Housing committee | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| To develop the East of Basingstoke Natural Environment Masterplan | | ✓ | | |
| To deliver the Biodiversity Improvement Zone pilot in Hatch Warren and Beggarwood | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Ensure that all existing LNRs are managed in such a condition to retain their status. Plan to declare an additional LNR by April 2022 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Finalise 'Wilder Basingstoke and Deane' project in order to deliver focussed biodiversity improvements in identified areas of the borough | ✓ | | | |
| Ensure that the council's obligations in relation to the management of the North Wessex Downs AONB are delivered as part of the Partnership Agreement | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Plan and implement alterations, provisions and resources needed to adhere to the new Environment Bill | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Green initiatives | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

Measures and targets

| Measure | Baseline | 2021 to 2022 Target |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Maintain the percentage of the borough land area covered by priority habitats | 13.6% (8,644 hectares) (2018/19) | 13.6% |
| Maintain the percentage of the borough covered by ancient woodland | 7.5% | 7.5% |
| Biodiversity net gains delivered on new developments | N/A | 100% |
| Increase in the amount (ha) of council open spaces managed for biodiversity interest | 45.15 | >45.15 |

Improving river and landscape quality

The borough's network of parks, open spaces and habitats provide an important resource for people, wildlife and plants and is integral to the health and quality of all. The broad approach to ensuring that existing areas are managed appropriately, and that sufficient provision is provided within new areas of development is set out within the council's Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Some of this work straddles the 'Improving Biodiversity' aim, with projects such as the pilot Biodiversity Improvement Zone, the East Basingstoke Natural Environment Management Plan and the Country Park at Manydown. These also contribute to an improved quality of landscape providing facilities for users and making the borough an attractive place to be in.

Improvements to the quality of the landscape will cover a wide range of projects, from the development and delivery of projects funded by s106 contributions that enhance parks and open spaces including play areas, skate parks, green gyms, seating, tree and shrub planting, allotments and access improvements. Within some of the older existing areas of the borough, Environmental Improvement Schemes will provide improvements that improve the quality of the landscape providing new tree and shrub planting, fencing, seating to reinvigorate outdoor spaces.

The quality of the landscape will also be supported by the management of over 85,000 trees and over 100 hectares of woodland that the council owns, along with more discrete improvements contained within management plans for parks and open spaces.



Actions

| Actions to achieve the sub-priority | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Deliver new allotments for the local community every two years | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Deliver allotment improvements | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Open space improvements (section 106) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Improve accuracy of data on council green space ownership and use this to refine calculations for carbon absorption rates | ✓ | | | |
| Replacement of the footbridge in Eastrop Park | | ✓ | | |
| Develop environmental renewal schemes | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Identify suitable green spaces and enhance management to improve carbon lock up, whether through change in management approach or conversion in use | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Measures and targets

| Measure | Baseline | 2021 to 2022 Target |
|--|----------|---------------------|
| Maintain the number of trees under council management | 80,000 | 80,000 |
| Complete tree inspections within four wards per annum and supervise contractors undertaking any required works, in order that the council has all wards inspected on a 5 yearly rota by 2024 | Achieved | Achieved |

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