

Environment and Sustainability Policy

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Document History

Adopted by Council – 4 March 2025

Reviewed & Adopted -

1. Introduction

1.1 The Town Council is committed to the creation of a sustainable community but recognises that some of its activities will have a negative impact on the environment.

1.2 The aim of this policy is to establish broad objectives and ensure that the Council is continually striving to reduce its impact on the environment and tackle climate change whilst delivering services for the community.

1.3 This policy applies across all Council operations and there shall be a requirement for the environmental impact of proposed actions to be assessed.

2. Aim

2.1 These guidelines aim to provide Councillors and employees with information to carry out work in an efficient way that minimises or eliminates its adverse impacts on our environment, in order to assist in combatting climate change. To support our community in its enjoyment of our local environment and to promote the importance of protecting the environment for Gainsborough residents.

3. Definition

3.1 Environmental relates to the natural world and the impact of human activity on its condition.

3.2 Sustainability is the practice of using resources in a way that can continue indefinitely without harming the environment or individuals.

3.3 Environmental sustainability is our responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect global ecosystems to support health and wellbeing for current and future generations. It involves preserving natural resources so that future generations can enjoy the benefits they bring, balancing the use of these resources with their availability.

4. Mission statement

4.1 Gainsborough Town Council recognises that it has a responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and, where possible, continually improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our operating methods. We will encourage suppliers and other stakeholders to do the same.

4.2 The issues generally addressed by this policy include (but are not limited to) air and water pollution, waste management, biodiversity protection, and the preservation of natural resources for future generations.

5. Objectives

To reduce the effect of these adverse impacts, the Town Council will aim to reduce its net carbon footprint 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

6. Legislation

The Town Council will aim to meet or, where possible, exceed all the environmental legislation that relates to the UK and set standards which are more stringent than the legal minimum.

7. Responsibilities

- All staff and Councillors will be expected to take measures to minimise environment impact through simple measures.
- The Council will ensure that environmental issues are integrated into the planning and decision-making process.
- The Council will have regard for both the natural and built environments and will strive to protect and where possible enhance them.
- The Council will ensure its operations minimise pollution of land, water and air.

8. Environmental Objectives

These objectives set out what the Council will do to minimise its impact on the environment.

Water Management and Conservation:

- Where possible we will have water meters installed
- Where possible we will conserve water maximising the use of water butts on Allotments, the General Cemetery and Richmond Park
- Where possible we will utilise water butts fed by building downpipes as a non-drinking water source
- In the Council's Parks and Open Spaces, planting schemes and technology that minimise the need for watering will be used. We will continue to implement water-saving measures where possible.
- We will make every effort to use water efficiently and avoid pollutants entering the drainage system. Including purchasing only environmentally friendly cleaning products.

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
- Maximise the use of electronic communication and information storage as an alternative to paper
- Explore the installation of an electrical vehicle fuel station
- Explore the possibility of more energy efficient vehicles for staff

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
- Minimise waste production wherever possible, by reducing, repairing and reusing resources and by recycling the waste. Rubbish will be disposed of safely, following the correct procedures and only licensed contractors will be used to deal with hazardous waste.
- Implement measures to reduce the volume of waste generated and increase the proportion of that waste which is recycled.
- Utilise used, reclaimed or recycled materials wherever appropriate and possible.

In addition, wastepaper 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 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

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

Single Use Plastic:

- The Town Council will continue to work towards the reduction and, if possible, elimination of the single use plastic from all its operations.
- The Town Council offices will adopt a plastic free initiative. No plastic cutlery or cups will be used, with all events and meetings provided with regular reusable crockery.

Biodiversity and Ecology:

- Protect and enhance the quality of Gainsborough's natural environment and open spaces
- Support the conservation of trees, hedgerows, ponds and streams
- Explore the implementation of wildflower 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
- Manage green spaces in a manner that promotes and protects biodiversity. Ensure its planning schemes are predominantly pollinator friendly perennial flowers. This includes the management of invasive plants on our land and using planting schemes that exclude species known to be invasive.
- Promote environmentally friendly practices to allotment plot-holders

Transportation and 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
- When purchasing new vehicles and equipment, energy efficient and environmentally friendly options such as electric fuelled vehicles will be considered; to reduce the number of vehicles, machinery and equipment that rely on fossil fuels.
- reduce the need to travel, restricting to necessity trips only.
- promote the use of travel alternatives such as e-mail or video/phone conferencing.
- Promote and support the use of public transport, cycling and walking
- Support and encourage contractors and suppliers to minimise their impacts on the environment.

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.

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

Planning Applications:

- Gainsborough Town Council will continue to work in partnership with West Lindsey District Council to preserve and enhance the built environment and will make appropriate representations through the planning process to influence the innovation of sustainable future development, which is in-keeping with the local identity and does not compromise existing structures of historical importance to the town.
- The Council will promote the use of brownfield sites as potential development areas to the Local Planning Authority and Developers, wherever this is practicable before greenfield sites are considered.

Awareness, Lobbying and Partnerships:

- Encourage partner organisations to meet these environmental objectives
- Promote the awareness of environmental issues within the community
- Support and initiate projects which contribute towards meeting these environmental objectives across the wider community

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 to the full Council.
- This policy will be reviewed every four years (or earlier if required by changes to legislation or additional documentation) and amended as necessary based on good practice or evidence taken forward.