



Blaby District Council  
**CLIMATE CHANGE**  
**STRATEGY**  
2020 – 2030

## Foreword

Today we face a global climate emergency which requires us to think beyond 'business as usual'. But while central governments must play a vital role we recognise that many of the solutions will happen at the local level. As a district we need to act now to reduce direct and indirect carbon emissions to net zero.



We need to prepare and adapt to deal with the inevitable impacts of climate change. We recognise that achieving our vision will not be easy. There are entrenched market and wider forces that will support existing fossil-fuel dependent, consumption-based systems. We will need to show strong leadership to create opportunities for all to participate in the benefits of change with its costs shared fairly.

Climate change increases the likelihood of extreme weather events, including floods, droughts and heatwaves and the health impacts are likely to be significant. In recent years there have been increasing public calls for action on climate change and the environment, be that in terms of reducing the use of single use plastics, improving air quality, encouraging the use of low emissions vehicles and/or improving energy efficiency.

Now more than ever we must look forward rather than aiming to get back to normal and be ready to take the opportunities emerging from a 'green recovery'. The collective response to Covid 19 has demonstrated our ability to take significant and far reaching steps to tackle a global threat. It's shown us how we can innovate and deliver our services differently. We will use what we've learnt from the pandemic to inform our climate strategy and action plan going forward. The lockdown has brought about significant benefits to air quality and the environment and has demonstrated how behaviours can be dramatically changed through effective communication and leadership. We will take advantage of these and use this window of opportunity to shape our response to the climate emergency.

We have an exciting opportunity to address the challenge of climate change whilst also reducing inequalities, delivering sustainable new homes, creating a district with more green spaces, places for our children to play, cleaner air, jobs and opportunities for all. This is a complex problem. We know that no single organisation can deliver the scale and pace of change we need alone. We will engage widely to understand how we can work together to achieve the ambitions set out in this strategy. However, this does not mean that any organisation or individual should wait for a plan to be shared. This strategy gives Blaby District a focus and direction and provides the framework within which we can each take responsibility and work together to transform the district.

**Cllr Terry Richardson**, Leader Blaby District Council

**Cllr Sharon Coe**, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Regulatory Services.





# Introduction

The science on the climate and ecological emergency is clear; we need urgent action to reduce our carbon emissions to limit the global temperature rise to below 1.5°C and reverse habitat and biodiversity loss. Action must be taken to protect and improve the environment and tackle climate change at a global, national and local level. Blaby District Council is committed to reducing the impact of its own activities and ensuring the district as a whole is resilient to the effects of climate change. The Council will work both internally and with others to mitigate climate change by reducing our emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>e and support and empower communities to adapt to the effects of changes in weather patterns. We will help to deliver sustainable development and behaviour change across the district by fostering links between the environment, people and the economy.

## This is a climate strategy for Blaby District to respond to both:

**MITIGATION:** the causes of climate change, for example, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving carbon sinks (forests, oceans and future technology); and

**ADAPTATION:** addressing the potential impacts of climate change, for example, actions to adapt to floods, storms or heatwaves and ongoing stresses such as sea level rise and increasing urban heat.

It is essential that we address both climate mitigation and adaptation together as an integrated response as no single option is sufficient by itself. This will allow us to identify interdependencies, be more efficient and minimise risk. The world is rapidly changing and there is uncertainty over what the future will look like. Climate change is likely to impact the district directly through local extreme weather events and through changes further afield which may impact the district indirectly by impacting the economy and the supply of goods and services such as food or public services. We need to plan for, adapt to and build our resilience against these future risks in a way that provides wider co-benefits so that, no matter what the future looks like, our district will be better for our citizens.

We are committed to minimising the environmental impacts of our own activities. Aiming to achieve 100% clean energy across our buildings and services and ensuring that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with our ambition for the council's own activities to be carbon neutral by 2030. Though the environment is a priority in its own right, environmental issues are cross cutting and hence this strategy will also support outcomes in the four other areas:



**ECONOMY:**  
Help create a sustainable and vibrant economy that works for all

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING:**  
Provide affordable, energy efficient homes for our diverse and changing population.

**HEALTH & WELL-BEING:**  
Promote the co-benefits of reducing emissions on the health and wellbeing of our communities and work with others to deliver the public health agenda.

**DELIVERY:**  
Provide value for money to our taxpayers and high quality services to our customers.

## Scope and Purpose

The scope of the strategy covers both the Council's own operations and also where it has control and influence within Blaby District. It recognises that the Council has different levels of control and influence in managing and protecting the environment, minimising its environmental impacts and meeting the challenges and opportunities of a changing climate. The scope includes:

- The legal and statutory duties that we must fulfil regarding the environment and the national response to climate change.
- What we need to do to embed environmental sustainability into the effective and efficient running of council services and ensure we consider the impact on the climate of every decision we make.
- What we need to do to fulfil our leadership role in a way that recognises and minimises environmental impacts, improves the health and wellbeing of people and contributes to the sustainable economic development of the district.
- Engagement with the community – businesses, organisations, charities and people. It is recognised that new forms of partnership, collaboration and engagement are needed to deliver this ambitious but necessary agenda.

The strategy also recognises the environmental issues that affect the Council and its ability to provide services, meet its obligations and above all **keep the district safe**. The most significant issue is that of the changing climate and the related impacts, such as an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms, flooding and heat-waves, prolonged cold periods and changes in the number of pests and diseases.

**Going forward, the environment will continue to be one of the Council's key priorities. Helping the community minimise its carbon footprint, adapt to the changing climate and continue to improve recycling rates while supporting our priorities for the district as set out in the Blaby Plan:**

*live*

Strong, healthy, safe, sustainable communities where the most vulnerable are supported.

*work*

A thriving, prosperous, innovative local economy with a skilled and healthy workforce contributing to the local community.

*visit*

A strong leisure and tourism sector and well maintained and accessible attractions available in the local area encourage visitors to the district.



# Overarching Aims –

Defines what we want to achieve from the strategy

## 1 CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and the impacts of climate change

- Significantly reduce our carbon emissions by increasing the use of renewable energy, reducing the demand for energy and protecting and enhancing carbon sinks.
- Ensure the Council's own activities are carbon neutral by **2030** and, in line with Climate Change Act 2008, work with partners and the community to support the district in its aspiration to be Carbon Neutral by 2050, if not earlier.
- Support initiatives that help communities to adapt to the changing climate and more frequent adverse weather.
- Collaborate with other local authorities to share best practice and ensure the best opportunities for enabling communities to make the move to low emissions vehicles and technologies.
- Define a Carbon Budget for Blaby District to provide understanding and clarity over the level of emission reductions that are necessary.



## 2 Protecting the Environment

- Create space for nature and improve biodiversity. Work with partners and communities to protect, conserve and enhance our district's high quality green infrastructure and connecting wildlife populations through green corridors.
- Work with communities to provide ecological, economic, health and social benefits through natural solutions. Improving our parks, open spaces and public rights of ways.
- Encourage environmentally sensitive development through good planning policies and approaches to listed buildings and the effective application of building regulations, to protect, conserve and enhance our district's high quality built environment and distinctive heritage.

## 3 Travel and Transport

- Reduce the environmental impact of travel and transport across the district, recognising that this is the biggest green house gas emitting activity in the district.
- Actively support the development of a sustainable travel network. Based on significant shifts in the mode of travel to active transport (walking and cycling), promoting the use of public transport and developing electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Improve air quality by complementing and supporting transport policy that promotes cycling and other healthy and sustainable travel options.

## 4 Waste and Resources – Moving to a Circular Economy

- Minimise waste by applying the waste hierarchy in the priority order of: **REDUCE, RE-USE, RECYCLE**; with the goal of eliminating waste.
- Support the development of a low carbon circular economy which employs reuse, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling to create a close-loop system. Minimising the use of resource inputs and the creation of waste, pollution and carbon emissions.
- Reduce our resource requirements and make more sustainable use of the resources consumed.
- Address emerging resource security/ scarcity issues in the future.



## 6 Behaviour Change and Education

- Demonstrate and promote environmental good practice to show community leadership.
- Through effective leadership the Council will seek to influence and empower communities, businesses, schools and residents to take ownership, exchange ideas and develop initiatives to bring about change.

## 5 Sustainable Communities

- Zero carbon homes. Ensure the construction of truly sustainable, lifelong housing with an ambition for all new homes to meet the 'Passivhaus' standard or equivalent, achieving very high levels of energy efficiency, incorporating on-site renewable energy and using modern methods of construction.
- Support residents to be more resource efficient in terms of energy and water use through the support and promotion of retrofitting schemes, to enhance the efficiency of homes and their energy systems. Therefore reducing the cost of running a home and tackling fuel poverty.
- Provide housing that enables more sustainable access to local services, green spaces, transport and employment and minimises and/or mitigates the impact of developments on the natural environment; and
- Work with communities to create, protect and manage local green infrastructure, increase biodiversity and provide accessible environments that people can enjoy, which positively contribute to their good health and well-being.



This strategy is not a static document and provides a framework on which to take forward actions to 2030. These will be set out and delivered in our Action Plan which will identify short, medium and long term actions and set annual targets for carbon emission reductions. It will be reviewed and reported on each year, thus allowing us to respond to changes in knowledge, legislation and policy, technology and the market and take advantage of these opportunities as the world around us evolves.



# Supporting Evidence

There is national and international evidence that supports the need to act to improve, enhance and protect the environment.

**CLIMATE CHANGE ACT 2008** – this sets out legally binding greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets of at least 100% by 2050 against the 1990 baseline.

**PARIS AGREEMENT 2015** – requires countries to work together in limiting global temperature rise to below 2 degrees as recognised by the IPCC to limit the risks and impacts of climate change.

**CLEAN AIR STRATEGY 2019** – outlines how the Government intends to tackle all forms of air pollution to ensure cleaner air to breathe and protecting nature whilst boosting the economy.

**CLEAN GROWTH STRATEGY 2017** – this strategy underlines the role that local government has in delivering and supporting a low carbon society.

**GLOBAL WARMING OF 1.50C (2018)** - A special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

**IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON** – The Grantham Institute Briefing paper no.31 March 2019 Co-benefits of climate change mitigation in the UK: What issues are the UK public concerned about and how can action on climate change help to address them?

**OUR WASTE, OUR RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND 2018** – sets out how the Government intends to preserve the stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy and tackling waste crime. It is also their blueprint for eliminating avoidable plastic waste.

**STATE OF NATURE REPORT 2019** – this report pools the best available data on the UK's biodiversity, with a focus on the trends in species as the key evidence of how nature is faring. In addition to assessing the state of nature it also reviewed the pressures acting upon nature, and the conservation response being made to counter these pressures, in order to give a rounded view of the UK's nature in 2019.

**REDUCING UK EMISSIONS** – 2019 Progress Report to Parliament - The Committee on Climate Change. This is the Committee's annual report to Parliament, assessing progress in reducing UK emissions over the past year. It finds that UK action to curb greenhouse gas emissions is lagging behind what is needed to meet legally-binding emissions targets. Since June 2018, Government has delivered only 1 of 25 critical policies needed to get emissions reductions back on track.

**UK GOVERNMENT 25 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN 2018:** Promotes the use and management of land in a sustainable manner, the enhancement and recovery of landscapes and the connection of people with the environment to promote health and wellbeing. It also promotes an increase in resource efficiency and a reduction in pollution and waste, securing a clean, productive and biologically diverse sea and ocean and protection and improvement of the global environment. It identifies that one of the key ways this will be implemented and achieved is through better local planning and more effective partnerships.

## GLOSSARY

**PASSIVHAUS STANDARD:** 'Passivhaus buildings provide a high level of occupant comfort while using very little energy for heating and cooling. They are built with meticulous attention to detail and rigorous design and construction according to principles developed by the Passivhaus Institute in Germany, and can be certified through an exacting quality assurance process'.  
[www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/what\\_is\\_passivhaus.php](http://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/what_is_passivhaus.php)

**CARBON SINK:** A carbon sink is any natural reservoir that absorbs more carbon than it releases, and thereby lowers the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Globally, the two most important carbon sinks are vegetation and the ocean. Public awareness of the significance of carbon sinks has grown since passage of the Kyoto Protocol, which promotes their use as a form of carbon offset.

**CO<sub>2</sub>e:** Carbon dioxide equivalence; this includes all greenhouse gasses converted into the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide

**IPCC:** Intergovernmental panel on climate change.

## CONTACT US

This document can be made available on request in other languages and formats (large print, Braille or on audio tape) by contacting:

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