

# CLIMATE CHANGE FACTSHEET

## 7. Advice for Parish and Town Councils



### Greening local decisions

#### A guide to empowering your Council

The declaration of the **Climate Emergency** by Local Authority Members has pushed Members of all political persuasions, and administrative staff within local councils to think more carefully about the **impacts of climate change**.

This factsheet gives you ideas and inspiration with which to engage your colleagues in your **parishes** and **towns** with **environmental action** you can take to set examples to the local community and lead by example.

#### TOWN COUNCILS LEADING THE WAY

It is within the gift of all Parish and Town **Clerks, staff and councillors** to make positive efforts to **reduce carbon** emissions in their towns and villages, starting with their **premises**.

A key part of this is getting the right advice and **support** when it matters, and getting the community involved.



With the help of environmental charity **Groundwork East**, Sudbury Town Council is **calculating its carbon footprint**, with a view to reducing it. As the saying goes, you cannot manage what you haven't measured, so seek advice and get the right tracking tools in place, along with a plan to **achieve zero carbon**.

If you need advice **contact Groundwork East** (see over).

#### IDEAS FOR ACTION

##### GREENER VILLAGE HALLS

Parishes with community buildings can make the most of these assets by retrofitting them with energy efficiency measures like insulation, and by installing microrenewables.

##### USING LAND MORE WISELY

If your council has land being underused, consider creating projects or spaces that can be used to grow food or fuel. Planting trees, as woodland or on allotment is a great way to absorb carbon and provide amenity spaces.

##### GREENING AGENDAS

Ensure council meetings include standing items on sustainability matters or the climate emergency. This gives members a regular opportunity to consider it in all contexts.

##### CHAMPION CLERKS

Can your Council Clerk be empowered to lead the green agenda? Can they be offered training on this or signposted to initiatives you know about or other green champions?

##### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

The community-led planning process is a brilliant opportunity for weaving the green agenda into the plans that are produced for your village or neighbourhood. Consult your community and ensure plans are sustainable.

**See Top Tops overleaf for more ideas...**



## CARBON SAVINGS IN GT BARTON

Supporting your village halls and community buildings to be more energy efficient is an excellent way to lead by example.

Whether they are managed by the council or a charity committee, **your support and guidance is crucial.**

With the dedication of a team of volunteers, Great Barton's 1950s village hall had a **new heat pump, solar panels and insulation** installed, achieving a saving of **4.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e** annually.

As custodian trustees for the hall a **supportive parish council** was key to making this happen.

Village Halls and Community Buildings in East and West Suffolk can receive a **free energy audit.**

Please contact Sarah Gill on 07720098980 or [sarah.gill@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:sarah.gill@groundwork.org.uk)

## GREENING PLACES THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

**Community Partnerships** are a new model within which councillors and communities can cooperate and "**bring ideas to life**", for the benefit of the place they live.

In East Suffolk, from January 2020, these solution-focused groups provide councillors with a way to **connect with constituents** through workshops.

See <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/community-partnerships>

A good example of this process can be seen in the **Kesgrave, Martlesham** and surrounding villages area. Here, the first **multi-agency workshop** identified "**environmental care/sustainable transport**" as the second of three key priorities, gaining 22 votes (only 4 fewer than the top priority of reducing social isolation). This highlights the potential for placing climate change and the environment firmly within **local agendas** using this process.



### What is my Council doing in response to the Climate Emergency declaration in 2019?

#### Suffolk County Council:

The Council is investigating ways to cut carbon and harmful emissions on a spend to save basis, with the ambition to make all council buildings, schools and services carbon neutral by 2030.

#### East Suffolk Council:

The climate emergency task group, which is made up of a cross-party group of members, is reviewing the recent climate emergency report it commissioned and is reporting quarterly to Cabinet on proposed actions. Updates are online: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/climate-change/east-suffolk-environment-task-group/>

#### West Suffolk Council:

The Council has set up a taskforce that has produced a road map of around 50 initiatives, agreed by the Cabinet, to build on their already successful work to reduce greenhouse emissions to net zero by 2030. You can read more online at: <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/protecting-our-environment/>

#### Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils:

In 2019 the Council set up a taskforce engaged with environmental experts to develop an action plan which was unanimously approved by Cabinet in 2020, forming the two councils' first Carbon Reduction Management Plan.

#### Ipswich Borough Council

The Borough has declared a climate emergency and produced a plan of action which Cabinet approved in 2020.

## Top tips for local councils

This is the 7th factsheet in a series of 7 aiming to inspire and empower action on climate change.

### Can you inspire and empower your local council colleagues to...

- Use their **Locality Budget** to green your community in innovative ways? Can you pool your fund with other Councillors and ask the greenest charities to **bid** for it?
- Have a **sustainability assessment** attached to any funds you give out, whether large or small?
- **Actively engage with local community groups** such as Transition Groups or green groups and use their expertise? And ask for their **input into local decisions**?
- Use the expertise of local specialist charities like **Groundwork East** to take more targeted action?

Whatever you can do as an individual, or as part of a local council will be worthwhile, so please use the contacts below.

## WHO TO CONTACT

Matt Hullis - Head of Environment Strategy (SCC)  
 David Walton - Programme Manager, SCCP:  
 Sarah Gill - Community & Business Energy Advisor, Groundwork:  
 Daniel Wareing - Environmental Sustainability Officer (ESC):  
 Andrew Oswald - Environment Officer (WSC):  
 James Buckingham - Environment Assistant Manager (BMSDC):  
 Mark Hunter - Operations Manager Major Capital Schemes (IBC):

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