

Environment Strategy 2022-2025



Foreword



Cllr Chris Hossack

Leader of Brentwood Borough Council



Cllr Maria Pearson

Chair of Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee

The council's corporate strategy outlines the importance of **protecting our environment** as one of our five key priorities. We have committed in the corporate strategy to protect the space we all live in, but beyond our local commitment, there is our responsibility to act locally as part of a global effort in protecting the planet and reducing the harm inflicted on it by human activity.

The environmental agenda is expanding rapidly and the response to climate change becoming more urgent with many councils now setting targets for carbon neutrality as we

have done here in Brentwood. Not many years ago an environmental strategy would have outlined the things the council would need to do in order to tackle 'traditional problems' such as littering, fly tipping and unlawful development in the green belt. Now the agenda is much wider and we must gear up to tackle a broader range of issues, issues that demand new skills and additional resources.

Brentwood Borough Council is already underway on this journey: we have a carbon absorption plan that has already commenced; we have a plan to build on our electric

vehicle (EV) charging network; we actively incorporate renewable energy into our housing regeneration projects; and we have employed new staff that bring the knowledge and expertise required to tackle complex issues that require carbon literacy.

This strategy brings further detail to our corporate plan to ensure this council plays a vital role in neutralising carbon emissions, reducing waste, increasing recycling, preventing biodiversity loss and maintaining a clean environment.



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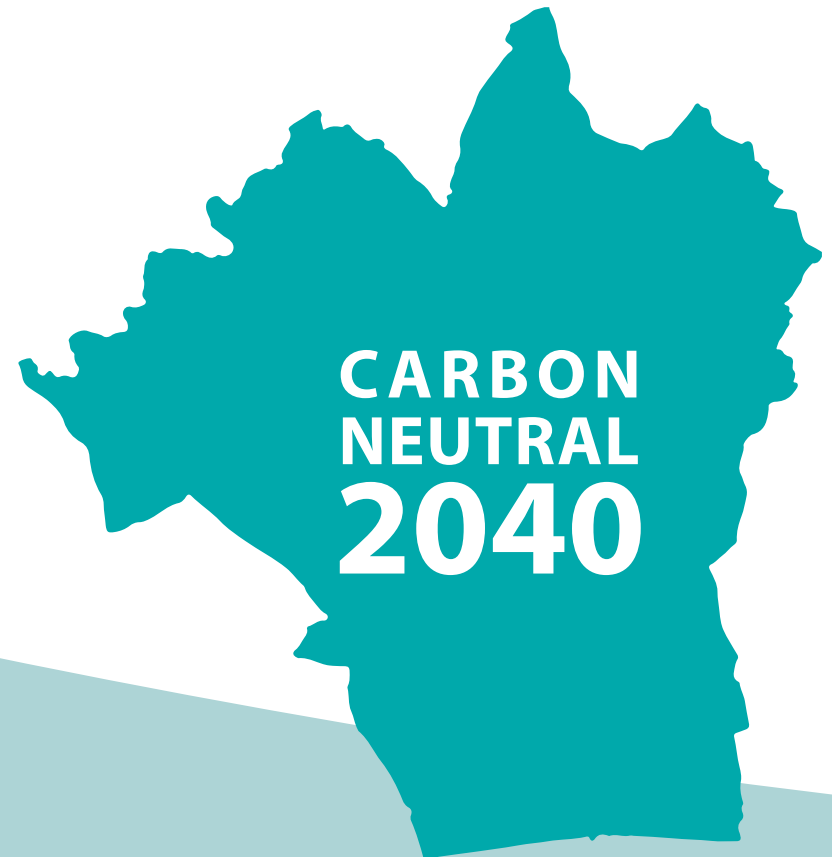


Introduction

The Climate Change Act (2008) highlighted the UK's aim to become carbon neutral by 2050. Brentwood Borough Council wants to do its bit and aims to be carbon neutral within its own activity by 2040, and borough-wide by 2050. The council has been action-orientated and has already made several steps to reduce its environmental impact including carbon emissions.

Carbon neutrality is achieved when the concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere do not change, as any emissions are offset. The key to achieving carbon neutrality is to reduce our carbon footprint as much as possible, and offset any emissions. There are several environmental issues, which all link to climate change. These include energy use, waste management and biodiversity.

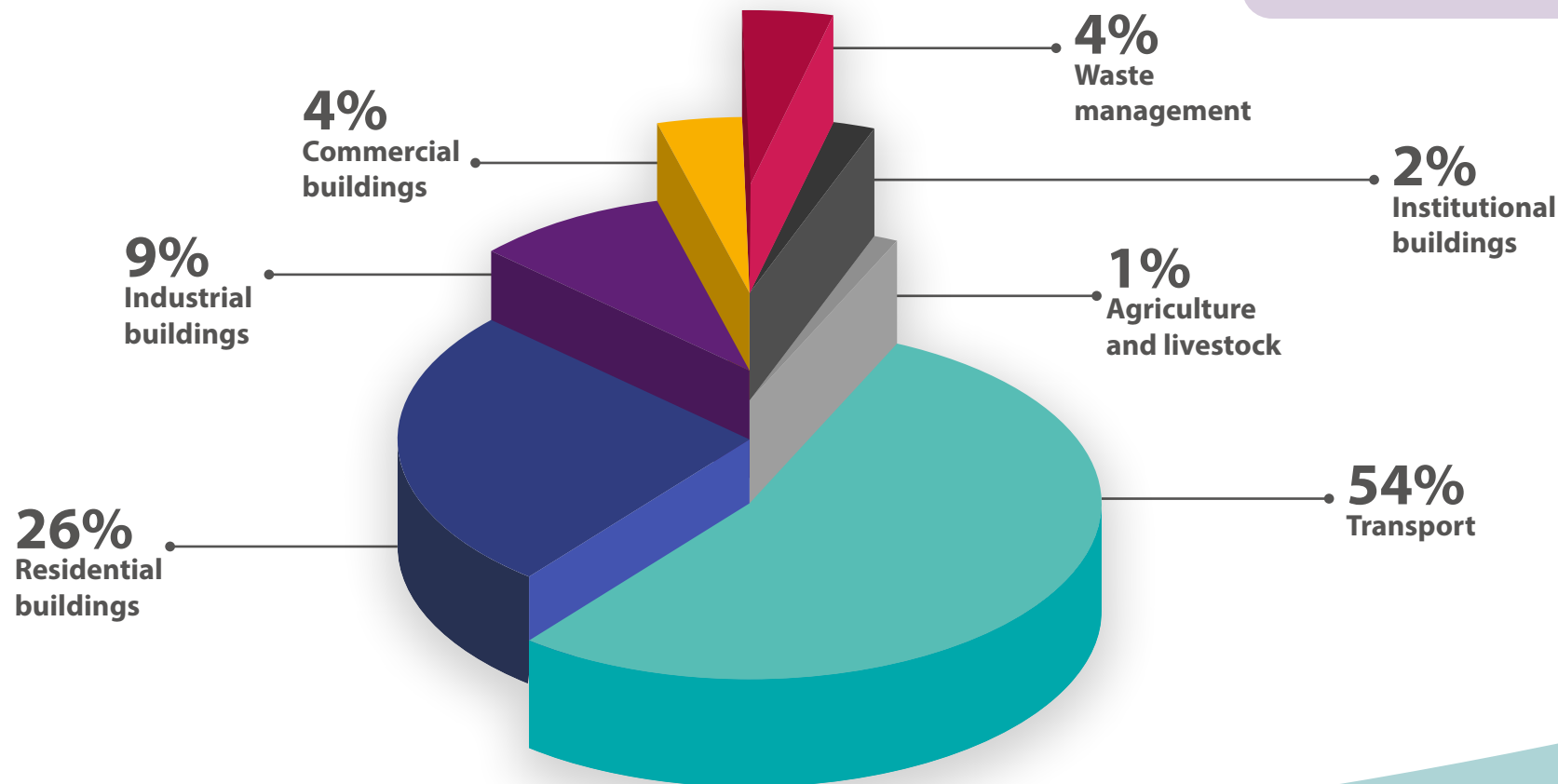
This plan identifies the key changes which need to be made to reduce Brentwood borough's carbon footprint and environmental impact. The baseline is currently being established, and KPIs will be used to calculate progress. The plan is a working document and will be reviewed on an annual basis.



Borough-wide emissions

Using data provided by SCATTER (scattercities.com), it was established that an approximate carbon footprint for Brentwood Borough was 593647.09 tCO₂e, pre-pandemic.

tCO₂e refers to tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents, a unit that summarises all greenhouse gas emissions as one figure.



Transport



Transportation is the largest carbon emitter within the borough. This is largely due to the A127 and A12 and due to our proximity to the M25, as well as our rail links to London. Technology is constantly evolving, with biofuels, electric and hydrogen powered vehicles expected to become the norm in the future.

54% contribution of total carbon emissions in the borough



232,631 tonnes of CO2e emitted in 2018

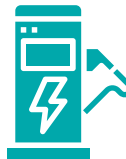


Car club launched in 2021



EV pilot successfully deployed 2021

Three phases of EV installation



Action

In order to support the change in transportation technologies and reduce emissions from transport in the borough, the council aims to:

- Roll out 'Phase 1' of 20 EV charging points to be deployed in 2022/23
- Support a Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan to ensure people can safely navigate the borough in a healthy and conveniently efficient way
- Promote and challenge residents to improve fuel efficiency through roadshows 4 times per year
- Work with Essex County Council (ECC) to implement their plans for sustainable transport
- Continue to support transport pilot initiatives such as e-scooters
- Work towards expanding car clubs
- Invest in new fleet vehicles powered by alternatives to fossil fuels



Air quality



The majority of pollutants impacting air quality are sourced from transport. When fuel is burnt, there are several waste products emitted into the air such as nitrogen dioxide. This reduces the quality of air, and can be hazardous to both human and environmental health.



**Three
air quality
management
areas**



**No limits
exceeded in
2020**



**35 monitoring
sites across the
borough**

Action

In order to ensure air quality in the borough remains at a healthy level, the council aims to:

- Collaborating with partners, we will continue to review and assess air quality in key areas of Brentwood, using measurement data to predict changes in the coming years and inform strategic decisions that will enable us to meet national air quality objectives
- Work with ECC and local schools to introduce measures to reduce nitrogen dioxide concentrations around schools
- Consider the introduction of green buffers along stretches of main road with higher levels of pollutants
- Encourage the use of low emission and no emission vehicles through the expansion of supporting infrastructure such as EV charging points
- Encourage schools to take part in “walk to school week” and other campaigns which can improve both air quality and the health of children

Built environment



The built environment is crucial for society to grow; however buildings require energy to build and run, and as such have a high carbon footprint.



Planning
approved for

61 Passivhaus
social houses

Housing stock of
2,500

£749k
funding secured to improve
energy efficiency of social housing
and low income households



Action

In order to reduce the carbon footprint of current and future buildings within the borough, the council aims to:

- Signpost residents to enable them to apply for government schemes which provide financial support in the decarbonisation of residential properties including HUGS (Home Upgrade Grant Scheme) and LADS (Local Authority Decarbonisation Scheme) programmes
- Implement a Local Development Plan to put policies in place covering sustainability and the environmental impact of new developments
- Work with developers to ensure new builds have minimum impact on environment during both construction (short term) and operational phases (long term)
- Ensure that all council developments maximise sustainable transport links, healthy living and the creation of outdoor usable space
- Ensure the council is involved with and engaged in the work of environmental and community groups
- Strive to deliver class-leading low carbon infrastructure for all council buildings including social housing

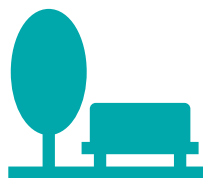
Natural environment



The natural environment can help reduce the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through processes including photosynthesis and carbon storage. Biodiversity is also threatened by climate change and so it is important that we protect the natural environment.



2 Sites of Special
Scientific Interest



16 Parks and open spaces
in Brentwood borough



Plans to plant
16,000
trees in Hutton
Country Park
2022/23

Assist with the
planting of
250,000
trees as part of the
Thames Gateway Project

Action

To support this, the council aims to:

- Plant wildflowers in council flower beds to encourage an increase in biodiversity
- Identify and implement mowing schemes that enable ecosystems to thrive where practical
- Encourage new developments to include design features beneficial to biodiversity such as the use of Bee Bricks, green walls and roofs and managing undeveloped space
- Implement tree planting and management programmes across the borough, including residential road tree planting and restoration
- Develop and implement management plans for council-owned country parks and green spaces
- Promote the benefits of the natural environment to schools, residents and businesses
- Actively promote partnership working to improve the natural environment, through environmental action days and tree planting initiatives
- Continue implementation of initiatives to combat the issue of littering and fly tipping, reducing the impact on wildlife

Waste



With a population of 76,550, Brentwood produces waste from a range of sources. All waste management involves energy, and so often releases carbon emissions, contributing to climate change. Brentwood Borough Council is a waste collection authority, and so only has direct control over the collection of waste. It is Essex County Council who is the Waste Planning Authority.



5.5 million kerbside waste and recycling collections per year

New recycling scheme separating waste introduced August 2020



Reduced the amount of contamination in waste collected



Action

In order to reduce the carbon footprint generated by waste collected in the borough, the council aims to:

- Provide communication campaigns, such as workshops, to reduce waste
- Provide communication campaigns, such as workshops, to increase recycling rates
- Work with ECC to change residual waste disposal to a lower emitting form, such as energy recovery
- Seek methods that reduce the carbon output by the council related to the waste collection service
- Aim to be in the top quartile for recycling rates in Essex
- Incorporate a minimal waste focus for council procurements

Energy



Currently, the majority of energy consumed is generated from non-renewable sources including fossil fuels. The combustion of fossil fuels emits carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, increasing the greenhouse gas effect and causing climate change. New technologies are making renewable energy sources readily available, which either do not emit carbon, or are considered carbon neutral.



All electricity for council buildings is on a green tariff and considered carbon neutral



Senior Leadership Team training in carbon literacy in February 2022

Action

In order to reduce energy consumption and help increase renewable energy infrastructure, the council aims to:

- Introduce on-site renewable electricity generation, where possible, on council buildings
- Ensure all electrical equipment in council buildings is of energy efficiency grade B or above by 2040
- Train all council staff to be energy efficient by 2025, including new starters
- Train senior management to be carbon literate by end of 2022
- Provide workshops and resources for residents and local businesses on how to save energy
- Consider the merits of renewable energy opportunities within the borough

Behavioural changes



The council only has direct control over 2-5% of emissions from the borough, but has the capability to influence up to a third of the population.



50
local businesses
signed up to BEBA
in January 2022

91% of businesses surveyed are actively seeking to reduce their environmental impact

52% of businesses surveyed would like to learn more about sustainability



Council emissions equate to only 2% of the borough's total emissions

Action

In order to ensure that the borough target of becoming carbon neutral by 2050 is met, the council will influence behaviour by:

- Use the Brentwood Environmental Business Alliance (BEBA) to educate and encourage local businesses to reduce their environmental impact
- Encourage schools within the borough to become eco-schools
- Deliver quarterly workshops and campaigns for local residents on a range of subjects designed to reduce their environmental impact
- Attend public events to promote sustainable behaviours (energy, waste, biodiversity)
- Continue to work with National Enforcement Solutions to deter flytipping and littering
- Provide community engagement and support campaigns including the Great British Spring Clean to reduce levels of litter
- Educate public on harm to wildlife from irresponsible disposal of litter

Actions

- Reduce CO₂
- Support biodiversity
- Reduce waste

Category		Objective	Year
Transport	●	Roll out 'Phase 1' of 20 EV charging points to be deployed in 2022/23	2023
	●	Promote and challenge residents to improve fuel efficiency through roadshows 4 times per year	Ongoing
Air quality		Continue to collaborate with partners to review and assess air quality in key areas of Brentwood, using measurement data to predict changes in the coming years and inform strategic decisions that will enable us to meet national air quality objectives	Ongoing
Built environment	●	Strive for class-leading low carbon buildings for all council buildings including social housing	Ongoing
	●	Signpost residents to enable them to apply for government schemes which provide financial support in the decarbonisation of residential properties	Ongoing
Natural environment	● ●	Implement tree planting and management programmes across the borough, including residential road tree planting and restoration	Ongoing
	● ● ●	Actively promote partnership working to improve the natural environment, for instance through environmental action days and tree planting initiatives	Ongoing
Waste	●	Provide communication campaigns, such as workshops, to reduce waste	Ongoing
	●	Provide communication campaigns, such as workshops, to increase recycling rates	Ongoing
	●	Aim to be in the top quartile for recycling rates in Essex	2025
Energy	●	Ensure all electrical equipment in council buildings is of energy efficiency grade B or above by 2040	2040
	●	Train all council staff to be energy efficient by 2025, including new starters	2025
	●	Train senior management to be carbon literate by end of 2022	2022
Behavioural changes	● ● ●	Deliver quarterly workshops and campaigns for local residents on a range of subjects designed to reduce their environmental impact	Ongoing
	● ● ●	Use the Brentwood Environmental Business Alliance (BEBA) to educate and encourage local businesses to reduce their environmental impact	Ongoing

Tree planting strategy Partners and funding

Month	Location	Quantity
Mar-22	Ingrave - Middle Road	40
Mar-22	Holly Trees School	250
Mar-22	Hutton Polo Field	20
Mar-22	Hutton - Goodwood Avenue	5
Mar-22	Hutton - Tennyson Avenue	5
Oct-22	Warley Country Park	3,000
Oct-22	Warley - St Johns Avenue	5
Nov-22	Kimpton Avenue	5
Nov-22	Shenfield High Street	5
Mar-23	Hutton Poplars	800
Oct-22 - Dec-23	Hutton Country Park	16,000
By 2025	Hole Farm, Great Warley	250,000
Total trees planted by 2025		270,135

Brentwood Borough Council will be working with a range of partners to ensure actions are completed and appropriate funding identified, including but not limited to:

- Essex County Council
- Parish councils
- CORE (CO₂ Reduction Essex)
- Essex Climate Commission
- Greater South East Energy Hub
- Thames Chase
- Thames Gateway
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)
- Lower Thames Crossing
- Forestry England



Key performance indicators

These are the key performance indicators which will be used to calculate the progress of the strategy, measured in the appropriate units.



Category	KPI
Transport	% reduction in transport CO ₂ emissions from 2018 levels
Built environment	% reduction in domestic CO ₂ emissions from 2018 levels
	% reduction in commercial and industrial CO ₂ emissions from 2018 levels
Natural environment	Number of trees planted per year
Waste	% reduction of CO ₂ e emissions from 2018 levels
	% of waste recycled, reused or composted
	Waste production per average household per year
Energy	Total electricity generated from renewable energy projects
Air quality	% reduction in nitrogen oxide levels
Behavioural changes	Number of businesses committed to reducing their environmental impact through working with BEBA



Next steps

Our full strategy plan report is being produced and will include our baseline data and targets for both council and borough-wide. This will be subject to consultation and should be published in 2022.

This strategy plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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