

# Climate & Biodiversity



## Committee Objectives & Work Programme for the Municipal Year (2025-26)

### Proposed Committee Objectives for 2025/26

1. Develop and adopt a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy and detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan for the Council by October 2025.
2. Establish baseline carbon emissions for Council operations (Scope 1 and 2) and set specific, measurable reduction targets to achieve carbon neutrality by 2028.
3. Implement "Phase 1: Baseline Assessment and Strategy" and begin "Phase 2: Quick Wins, Operational Change and Community Support" from the Climate Emergency Action Plan Roadmap.
4. Oversee the management of the Council's Environmental Spaces with particular focus on biodiversity enhancement at Witney Lake and Country Park.
5. Provide effective oversight of the Council's tree stock management across the town to enhance carbon sequestration and biodiversity.
6. Develop partnerships with other local authorities, organizations, and community groups to promote collaborative climate action.
7. Promote community engagement and awareness of climate change and biodiversity issues through educational initiatives and outreach activities.
8. Ensure climate and biodiversity considerations are integrated into all Council operations and decision-making processes.

### Proposed Work Programme for 2025/26

The work programme for the 2025/26 municipal year will focus on the following key areas:

#### 1. Climate Change Strategy and Action Planning

- Establish a Climate Action Working Party to assist officers in drafting the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- Commission a full carbon audit of Council operations, estates, vehicle fleets, and supply chains.
- Develop and adopt a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy and detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan

- Set specific, measurable targets for carbon reduction with clear milestones.
- Establish regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

## **2. Operational Changes and Quick Wins**

- Arrange Carbon Literacy training for all staff and Councillors.
- Review and update the Council's Procurement Policy to prioritise local, low carbon suppliers.
- Review Events and Hiring Policy to integrate sustainability requirements.
- Conduct energy efficiency audits of Council buildings and develop retrofit plans.
- Review vehicle and machinery fleet for decarbonisation opportunities.
- Maintain 100% renewable energy procurement for Council buildings.
- Develop a climate action handbook for staff and Councillor induction.

## **3. Environmental Spaces Management**

- Review implementation of the Witney Lake and Country Park Management Plan 2024-2034
- Oversee the management of the Council's tree stock across the town.
- Support ongoing habitat enhancement projects including hedgerow management.
- Expand wildflower areas across Council-managed land.
- Review management regimes for all green spaces to enhance biodiversity.
- Support the implementation of community orchard projects.
- Develop winter tree planting programme.

## **4. Community Engagement and Partnership**

- Engage with Central Government, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and other stakeholders.
- Develop Council website climate action webpage.
- Plan community climate action events.
- Launch community consultation on climate priorities.
- Develop resources to support residents with home energy efficiency.

- Work with OCC and WODC on sustainable transport initiatives.
- Support renewable energy and community energy scheme development.

## **5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting**

- Conduct regular progress assessments against Action Plan
- Report to Full Council on implementation progress.
- Complete annual carbon emissions assessment
- Prepare annual climate action progress report.
- Identify areas requiring additional focus or resources.

