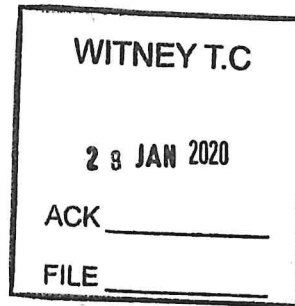


Councillor David Harvey  
Cabinet Member for Climate Change  
West Oxfordshire District Council

**Council Offices**  
Woodgreen,  
WITNEY,  
Oxfordshire,  
OX28 1NB  
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Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Mrs Sharon Groth  
Town Clerk  
Witney Town Council, Town Hall  
Market Square  
Witney, Oxon  
OX28 6AG  
Your ref: H11

### West Oxfordshire District Council, Housing Stock Carbon Footprint

Dear Mrs Groth,

Thank you for your letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and for your comments. I am glad to hear that Witney Town Council have developed a sub-committee to progress their local commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2028 and look forward to hearing further news on how you are progressing. As a shared objective for many local councils, town and parish councils, I look forward to working with you in our response to the climate and ecological emergency.

In reply to your letter, I would like to reassure you that the issue of housing standards and retrofit is encapsulated within our plans for Climate Action in West Oxfordshire. We have identified a number of work streams to deliver our commitment, and are shaping a structure for this to enable informed decisions to be made on future resource and funding allocation.

Firstly, the District Council will be developing plans to ensure we deliver on our own commitment to becoming a carbon neutral Council by 2030. We are already working across Oxfordshire with partner Councils at both Member level and Senior Officer level to ensure collaboration and joint working on this at every opportunity.

Secondly, West Oxfordshire District Council will be looking beyond the Council's own operations and looking District wide to ensure that energy and carbon reduction; water conservation and flood risk; air quality; biodiversity and green infrastructure, sustainable transport are all issues considered within the framework of a wider Strategy. It is within this Strategy, we will develop targeted action for the raising and implementation of standards for sustainable design within new homes. In fact, only this week I submitted a letter of support in response to Government's consultation on the Future Homes Standard from 2025 and AD L 2020 changes, urging Government to bring forward the date of the Future Homes Standard to ensure the highest of standards are implemented by Government nationally and at the earliest opportunity.

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**WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

In addition to this, we will develop planning policies and guidance to ensure the exemplary design of new homes is a priority across our strategic sites. For example, exemplary sustainable design is an important feature of the Area Action Plan taking shape for the Cotswolds Garden Village.

With regard to the retrofitting of existing housing stock and support to improve the energy efficiency of private homes, the Council currently provide a revenue stream to the National Energy Foundation (NEF) which provides support to residents in West Oxfordshire under their 'Better Housing, Better Health' scheme and offers callers a 'warm and well assessment' and advice on measures and grants available to make home improvements. We have identified that with an estimated 22,000 fuel-poor households across Oxfordshire, initiatives such as this offer the Council further potential in the future. The NEF are established in their field and offer links to existing partnerships such as the Local Energy Advice Programme (LEAP) who carry out, on behalf of NEF, house visits where this need has been identified. The NEF currently targets the provision of advice to 80 households per year within the District. With additional funding, and a capital budget, the NEF would be in a position to help residents in fuel poverty to install energy-efficiency measures. The NEF estimates that 10% of residents they currently assist over the phone in the District would benefit from a capital funding contribution for home improvements.

The above is one example of a project and partnership relationship that currently exists and has the potential to deliver further positive action with support from the Council and in response to the climate and ecological emergency. Maximising and building on existing relationships and projects such as this will be key in us identifying resource, mobilising action and engaging with local residents and community groups to address the impacts of climate change.

Please be reassured that existing housing stock and measures to improve energy efficiency through retrofit will be fully explored in order to deliver the best outcome for West Oxfordshire's residents. We anticipate a large number of initiatives and options will emerge through the consultation and shaping of a Strategy, so steps taken to improve the energy efficiency of private houses will be considered through this process.

I look forward to remaining in touch with you on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Harvey'.

Councillor David Harvey  
Cabinet Member for Climate Change  
West Oxfordshire District Council

cc. Councillor James Mills, Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council  
cc. Councillor Steve Good, Cabinet Member for Communities & Housing

