

Chigwell Parish Council

Environmental and Climate Change Policy

Adopted Date: 28 August 2025

Next Review Due: August 2026

1. Purpose and Commitment

Chigwell Parish Council recognises the climate and ecological emergencies as defining challenges of our time. This policy sets out our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, improving sustainability in Council operations and working with the community and partners to protect and enhance our local environment. The Council is committed to promoting environmental sustainability and tackling climate change within our parish. We will protect the local environment, reduce carbon emissions and encourage sustainable practices to ensure that Chigwell remains a healthy and vibrant place to live, work and visit. The Council will lead by example in adopting environmentally responsible practices across its assets and services while supporting and encouraging residents, businesses and organisations to do the same.

2. Carbon Reduction and Climate Action

The Council will encourage residents and local businesses to use carbon footprint calculators to understand and reduce their environmental impact. Emissions from Council activities will be minimised through reduced travel, use of digital meetings where appropriate and promotion of low emission transport. Staff will be supported in sustainable travel choices through access to cycling schemes, public transport incentives and charging facilities for electric vehicles.

3. Energy Conservation and Efficiency

The Council will carry out regular audits of its buildings and assets to identify opportunities to reduce energy use. Energy efficient lighting, insulation and heating systems will be installed where practical. The feasibility of generating renewable energy on Council property will be explored and tariffs will be regularly reviewed to ensure both sustainability and value for money.

4. Buildings and Construction

The Council will prioritise refurbishment and repurposing of existing buildings over demolition. Sustainable and low carbon materials will be used wherever possible. Concrete use will be reduced in favour of permeable and low embodied carbon alternatives. Design will maximise natural shading, ventilation and passive methods to reduce reliance on mechanical cooling.

5. Sustainable Procurement

Procurement by the Council will favour sustainable, recyclable and low impact materials. Contractors and suppliers will be expected to meet ethical, environmental and low carbon standards.

6. Waste and Water Management

The Council will reduce paper use and encourage digital communication wherever possible. Single use plastics will not be permitted in Council activities or premises. Plastic flowers and non biodegradable decorations will not be allowed in cemeteries. Water saving will be promoted through drought tolerant planting in public spaces and advice for allotment holders on efficient water use.

7. Land Use, Biodiversity and Green Spaces

The Council will protect Green Belt land from inappropriate development and support policies that preserve its ecological and landscape value. It will enhance biodiversity by improving low diversity green spaces through planting and habitat restoration. The use of herbicides and biocides will be

prohibited on Council managed land and the Council will encourage other authorities to follow the same approach. Cemeteries will be managed using electric tools and chemical free methods. Natural burial materials will be encouraged, biodegradable memorials will be considered and planting will support pollinators.

8. Planning and Development

The Council will work with planning authorities to promote low carbon and sustainable development. The retention and improvement of existing buildings will be supported over demolition. New development should reduce embodied carbon, integrate renewable energy and use energy efficient technologies. Developments will be encouraged to promote biodiversity, active travel and sustainable drainage.

9. Transport and Council Operations

The Council will reduce travel emissions by holding digital meetings where appropriate and promoting shared or low emission travel. Maintenance operations will transition to electric powered tools and vehicles. The Council will support the installation of charging points for electric vehicles across the parish.

10. Community Engagement and Education

Residents will be encouraged to take part in environmental initiatives through awareness campaigns, workshops and events. Local volunteering projects will be supported and coordinated. The Council will build partnerships with schools, businesses and community organisations to strengthen collective action on climate and environmental issues.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Council and progress will be reported publicly. Updates will set out targets achieved, actions taken and future priorities. The policy will be strengthened and adapted in response to new evidence, technologies and community needs.