

Climate Local: Acting on Climate Change

Ward Councillor workbook

Workbook Questions

Section 1: The role of Councils

- a. What are the opportunities for showing leadership on climate change in your council area?
- Long term commitments on climate change and sustainability as demonstrated through [Woking 2050](#) and long term action plans.
 - Information and advice available on the web, including copies of the Strategy and Action Plan.
 - Councillor leadership and commitment as demonstrated through the cross-party Climate Change Working Group which has been in place since 2002 when the Strategy was first adopted.
 - Partnership working with local businesses and voluntary groups such as Action Surrey, Woking Chamber and LA21.
 - Supporting local initiatives that contribute to a sustainable Woking.
 - Signposting to information, advice and funding e.g. through Action Surrey.
 - Leading by example – Woking Borough Council has been recognised as a leader in this area of work e.g. Beacon Council for Tackling Climate Change; Promoting Sustainable Communities; Sustainable Energy.
 - Continued commitment to a sustainable Woking through a revised Strategy – Woking 2050.
 - Encouraging participation in schemes such as recycling; food waste collections; using sustainable transport.
 - Including requirements to support the Council's Woking 2050 objectives in the procurement of all major contracts.
- b. What ward-level priorities could council action to create low-carbon, climate-resilient communities help address?
- Priorities may vary depending on the location / demographic profile of the ward.
 - Action could include identifying vulnerable people that could be at risk of fuel poverty or heatwaves.
 - Supporting flood alleviation projects that could protect houses from flood events e.g. the flood alleviation works in the Hoe Valley.
 - Supporting new low-carbon development e.g. Brookwood Farm development.
 - Encourage uptake of energy efficiency and renewables by residents through Action Surrey. This would assist residents in making their homes more efficient and in reducing energy consumption and expenditure.
 - Encourage sustainable transport. Signpost residents and businesses to existing initiatives such as TravelSMART (SCC) – a Surrey County Council led programme that encourages all sustainable modes of transport and offers advice on journey planning; cycle infrastructure; cycle parking; electric vehicle charging etc as well as funding for local businesses to improve staff transport plans and facilities. More information is available at www.travelsmartsurrey.info
 - Support partnership projects e.g. through Action Surrey.
 - Reducing waste – encourage participation in the Council's waste collection initiatives to increase the percentage of waste diverted from landfill.

- Encouraging Residents Associations and special interest community groups to develop new initiatives and support existing projects that further the community based objectives of Woking 2050.
- c. What local organisations can you work with to help realise opportunities within your ward?
 - Action Surrey (web: www.actionsurrey.org or tel: 0800 783 2503)
 - LA21(web: www.wokingla21.wordpress.com)
 - TravelSmart (web: www.travelsmartsurrey.info)
 - Woking Chamber (web: www.wokingchamber.org.uk tel: 01483 729922)
 - Surrey Wildlife Trust (web: www.surreywildlifetrust.org)
 - Woking Association of Voluntary Service (website currently being updated)
 - Residents Associations (various contacts)
- d. What obstacles to action are there? How can they be overcome?
 - Funding. For local authorities: External funding can assist local authorities finance action across the Council estate and within the community. For residents: Action Surrey can advise on available funding streams.
 - Knowledge and know-how. There is lots of information available but sometimes it is difficult for the public to know how best to access it. The Council, with Action Surrey, can provide leadership and support by signposting to the relevant resources.
 - Resources – local authorities can work together to share expertise and pool resources e.g. waste contract through Amey; Action Surrey working with Local Authorities across Surrey.
 - Local opposition to sustainable infrastructure. Professional bodies and trade associations can be referenced to demonstrate benefits of sustainable development (e.g. energy, waste management and property infrastructure) and to answer concerns.
- e. What questions should I ask of my council decision-makers to help achieve change? Woking Borough Council is actively engaged in positively contributing to a more sustainable Woking. There is ongoing commitment from Members and Corporate Management Group.

Section 2: What are the opportunities?

- a. How will your local economy be affected by the changing climate?

It is widely accepted that the changing climate will inevitably lead to more extremes in weather particularly in terms of the cold and the heat; and more frequent extreme weather events such as flooding, snow etc. The local economy will be affected by these events in particular through:

 - rising energy costs (both in terms of heating and cooling demands);
 - insurance claims through flood damage etc;
 - staff wellbeing affected by very cold or very hot weather;
 - adverse impacts on transportation of goods, customer visits and staff travel.
- b. How can the Council improve local resilience and support local businesses to plan for extreme weather?

Recognising the need to adapt to and prepare for changes in the climate is key to effectively dealing with and planning for extremes in weather.

The Council has strengthened its own resilience through the following:

- Energy security – protecting against rising energy costs and availability/supply issues through the use of renewable and sustainable energy technologies and incorporating energy and resource efficiency measures. Projects include photovoltaic and CHP installations across the Council estate; rolling maintenance programme of energy and water efficiency measures; identification of further improvements through contracts e.g. Honeywell and Skanska.
- In the event of extreme weather such as flooding, the Council can invoke its emergency planning protocols. The Council has various plans and procedures in place to ensure it is able to safeguard the wellbeing of its residents and to continue to deliver its core services. In the event of an incident spanning beyond Woking borough, the Council would work together with neighbouring local authorities and agencies as part of the Surrey Local Resilience Forum. Specific plans are established and tested in the event that they need to be invoked.
- Transport – during previous extreme weather events, in order to continue to carry out key services such as meals deliveries, the Council secured four by four vehicles from Enterprise Rent A Car Ltd in order to better reach vulnerable residents. Staff from across departments assisted the delivery service by providing extra drivers and 'buddies'.

The Council can support the resilience of local businesses and residents by:

- Providing advice and information to residents and businesses helping them to be prepared for extreme weather e.g. how to keep warm and well during the winter; how to cope with heatwaves; how to help vulnerable family / friends / neighbours.
- Signposting to existing resources e.g. Action Surrey (www.actionsurrey.org) and Surrey Local Resilience Forum (<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/emergency-planning/surreys-local-resilience-forum>).
- Identifying vulnerable people in affected areas.
- Building resilience to continue services such as meals deliveries in periods of extreme weather.
- Sharing learning with local businesses in order to help them prepare for extreme weather.
- Ensuring that planning applications for commercial premises adequately address the need for adaptability and resilience to a changing climate.

- c. What are the strengths, opportunities and natural advantages for developing the low carbon sector in your ward and the wider local area?
- Greater resilience against rising energy costs.
 - Alleviating pressures on health services by helping residents keep warm and well in winter.
 - Growth in the renewable energy sector both through purchasing technologies and supporting local companies in this field.
 - By cutting costs through saving energy and water, local businesses may find this helps them become more competitive.
 - Green credentials appeal to many consumers.
- d. What could you do to support low carbon activity in your ward?
- Signpost to existing information and advice on issues which support low carbon activity such as travel planning (www.travelsmartsurrey.info); how to reduce energy and water consumption (www.actionsurrey.info); encourage take up of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures (www.actionsurrey.info); encourage

participation in waste and recycling schemes (<http://www.woking.gov.uk/waste>). Implement some of the above advice and solutions into business and personal life and be prepared to share experiences with networks and individuals.

Section 3: Housing and Planning

- a. How will your local area be affected by the changing climate and what impacts could this have on local homes and businesses?
- Areas within the Borough that are susceptible to flooding (including properties and roads) have been identified and the Council's Emergency Plan outlines the response procedures.
 - Other issues which could affect local homes include fuel poverty (see section 5) and heatwaves.
 - Incorporating renewable energy technologies and energy and water efficiency measures can help tackle rising energy prices and enhance energy security - issues that could be experienced by both local homes and businesses.
- b. What policies are in place to:
- Ensure new development is low carbon?
 - Encourage renewable energy generation?
 - Ensure new development is resilient to climate impacts like flooding, heat wave, or reduced water availability?
 - Encourage existing buildings to be retrofitted with measures that cut carbon and increase resilience?
- The Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) covers all of these issues. The SPD provides detailed guidance for the application of Policies CS22 – Sustainable Construction and CS23 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation of the Core Strategy. They set high standards for sustainable construction and a positive framework for renewable projects. The SPD includes details on standards for new development; sustainable energy; design, materials and waste; sustainable transport; and adapting to climate change.
- c. How could you and the Council work with community organisations within the area to ensure communities are primed to take advantage of funding to install energy saving measures, for example support from energy companies for people on low incomes? Advice and support in accessing ECO funding is available for residents across Surrey from Action Surrey (web: www.actionsurrey.org or tel: 0800 783 2503).

Section 4: Environment and Transport

- a. What impacts could the changing climate have on the natural environment in your ward including local parks and green spaces, coastlines and rivers?
- Heathland fire
 - Local flood risk
 - Opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity
- b. What local transport systems might be vulnerable to climate change in your area and what is being done to increase resilience?
- Extreme weather events such as flooding, snow, etc can impact on local transport systems. Resilience to these events is enhanced through Borough and County

preparations through Emergency Planning. Highways problems such as potholes can be exacerbated during extremes in temperatures.

- c. What are the main sources of transport emissions in your area and how are these changing? How could these emissions be cut?
- Transport emissions account for almost 20% of the Borough's emissions (Department of Energy and Climate Change 2015 statistics). The M25, M3 and A3 are within ten minutes' drive of Woking town centre.
 - Local authorities are required to undertake periodic reviews of local air quality to assess current levels of pollutants and review predicted future levels against government health based standards. Nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes are located throughout the borough and are changed on a monthly basis. The latest reports are available [here](#).
 - By encouraging residents to plan their journeys and consider sustainable modes of transport, road transport emissions could be reduced. TravelSMART offers a useful journey planner which shows journey details for different modes of transport across the county and beyond (www.travelsmartsurrey.info).
- d. How are you engaging with the council and the community to encourage cycling and walking?
- In March 2008, Woking became a cycle demonstration town. During the three year Cycle Woking initiative, Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council worked in partnership to deliver cycling (and walking) infrastructure projects and campaigns to deliver new facilities and enhance existing provisions across the Borough with £1.8m of government funding.
 - In 2012, Surrey County Council successfully bid for a further £18m of Department for Transport funding to deliver sustainable transport measures across the centres of Woking, Guildford, Redhill and Reigate. The TravelSMART programme improved and installed cycle lanes; invested in interactive and live travel information; and encouraged and supported more people in travelling sustainably. As well as working closely with borough and district councils, SCC worked with local businesses to help deliver infrastructure improvements and behaviour change schemes to assist in delivering staff travel plan benefits. More information is available at www.travelsmartsurrey.info.
 - Enterprise Rent A Car Ltd operates a car club in partnership with Woking Borough Council. Two low emission vehicles are available for hire by the public in the evenings and at the weekends. More details available [here](#).
 - The Council's Staff Transport Plan aims to encourage staff to utilise low emission vehicles and other sustainable means of transport in order to reduce CO2 equivalent emissions associated with staff travel to and for work. The Plan includes incentives to encourage walking and cycling. More details can be found at <http://ewokplus/business/strategy/hr/benefits/healthwell/transport/Pages/default.aspx>

Section 5: Health and Social Care

- a. How will your area be affected by the changing climate and what impact could this have on local health and health services? Are any health services or facilities particularly vulnerable?
- Vulnerable people more at risk during periods of extreme weather e.g. cold and heat; flooding.

- Fuel poverty and heatwaves are two issues which can negatively affect people in the Borough, particularly the elderly and the very young.
 - These issues can result in increased pressure on local health services and on Council services.
- b. Who is most vulnerable to extreme weather events in your ward? For example, are there older people's homes which may be vulnerable to increased flood-risk, heat waves or cold?
- In the event of extreme weather such as flooding or snow, vulnerable people in a particular area would be identified in order to ensure they are evacuated if required or that they receive the appropriate care and services.
 - Fuel poverty affects those who cannot afford to heat their home or who spend more than 10% of their household income on heating their property. It is anticipated that by 2030 as many as one in three households could be in fuel poverty.
 - Heatwaves can be particularly dangerous for the very young or the elderly.
- c. What impact could hotter temperatures have on local air quality and how could this affect local health?
- Local air quality could be adversely affected by hotter temperatures. More information on air quality monitoring can be found in section 4c.
 - Degradation in air quality could result in more incidences of respiratory illnesses. These could in turn impact upon local health services.
- d. How many households in your ward are in fuel poverty? What measures can be taken to reduce this number?
- There are two government definitions of fuel poverty. The most recent – the Low Income High Costs Indicator (LIHC) was adopted this year. Under the LIHC definition, a household is said to be in fuel poverty if:
- They have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level);
 - Were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Under the 10% definition, a household spends more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime (usually 21 degrees for the main living area and 18 degrees for other occupied rooms).

According to the Association for the Conservation of Energy, over 80 per cent of heating used in UK homes, businesses and industry is produced by burning fossil fuels, and over a third of the UK's carbon emissions come from the energy used to produce heat. Britain tops the fuel poverty table for Western Europe, with some five million UK households, or 19.2 per cent of the total, now affected.

The key factors behind fuel poverty are:

- The energy efficiency of the property (and therefore the energy required to heat and power the home);
- The cost of energy; and
- Household income.

The latest fuel poverty statistics for Woking Borough for 2015 (published by DECC in June 2017) show that 7.7% of Woking households are in fuel poverty.

Further data on fuel poverty is available [here](#).

Section 6: Finance

- a. What are the opportunities to save your Council money (and reduce carbon emissions) by becoming more energy, water and resource efficient?

Energy and resource efficiency are practices that have been adopted by the Council. Targets to reduce energy consumption and increase use of renewables are embedded within Woking 2050. The Council produces an annual report on its greenhouse gas emissions across its own estate. This report highlights where greenhouse gas emissions through energy use or business mileage have decreased or increased over the last reporting period. The latest report is available at <https://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/Greeninitiatives/ghg1617>

Display Energy Certificates (DECs) – The Council is required to produce DECs for buildings with a total useful floor area over 500m². DECs show the actual energy use of a building, the operational rating, and help the public see the energy efficiency of a building. Usage is based on energy consumption as recorded by gas, electricity and other meters. Organisations are required to display these DECs visible to the public. Further information can be found at <https://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/Greeninitiatives/wbcdecs>

- b. What are the opportunities for boosting income through local energy generation or other environmental infrastructure?

- **Direct cost savings** through energy and water efficiency and waste minimisation measures. Many measures have been installed across Council buildings.
- **Pooling resources** – by working in partnership with others we can share services and expertise; reduce costs and maximise outputs. All Surrey district and boroughs have signed a 3 year contract with Action Surrey (part of the Thameswey Group) to encourage the take up of energy saving and renewable energy technologies by residents across the county. For further information visit www.actionsurrey.org.
- The Council can help protect itself, and its residents and local businesses, from **future costs**. E.g. flood alleviation works at Hoe Valley <https://www.woking.gov.uk/business/casestudies/hoevalley>
- **Local Job Creation**. Development of local energy generation or other environmental infrastructure may have the added benefit of creating jobs and developing expertise within the locality.

- c. Is your Council planning now to reduce costs of future climate impacts in your ward and the wider area? Are planning policies in place to reduce the cost of future flood events and reduce insurance costs?

Many of the schemes outlined in previous sections are long term in their outlook and will assist in reducing the costs of future climate impacts both for the Council, and for residents.

The Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document outlines the Council's Planning Policies with regard to encouraging sustainable development incorporating

renewables, sustainable construction practices and building resilience and adapting to a changing climate such as flooding, passive heating and cooling. It outlines the application of policies CS22 Sustainable Construction and CS23 Renewable and low carbon energy generation. For further information see section 3 and visit <http://www.woking2027.info/supplementary/climatechangespd>

As outlined in sections 3 and 6, Action Surrey assists residents across the Borough (and the county) to take up energy efficiency measures and renewables.

The Hoe Valley scheme saw major investment in flood defence and flood alleviation works to protect almost 200 homes from future flooding events. See section 6b.

Further reading

Climate Change Strategy / Woking 2050 Update Reports

For further information on projects implemented by the Council, the update reports produced for each Climate Change Working Group meeting provide a useful summary of latest developments. These are available on Shikari.

Council Web Resources

There is a variety of resources available online about the various energy and environmental schemes and projects implemented by the Council. A selection of links is shown below:

<http://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/waste>

<http://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/climate>

<http://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/climate/Greeninitiatives>

<http://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/climate/Greeninitiatives/wbcdecs>