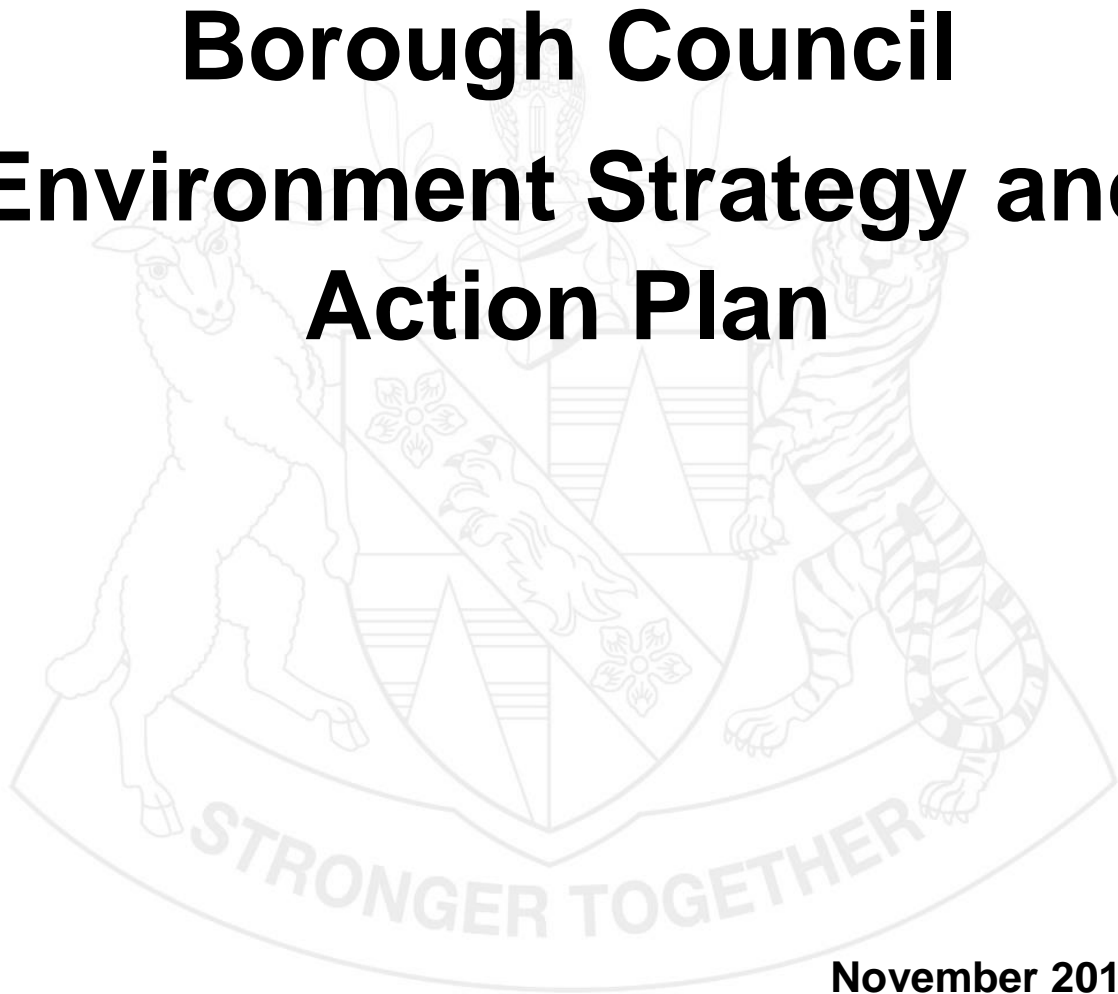


Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Environment Strategy and Action Plan



November 2019



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is committed to playing its part in responding to the growing evidence that urgent action is required to respond to global warming.
- 1.2 A '*Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*' was published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change) in October 2018. It found that we are already seeing the consequences of 1°C of global warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, among other changes. The report highlights a number of climate change impacts that could be avoided by limiting global warming to 1.5°C but that this requires rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050.
- 1.3 This Strategy and Action Plan sets out how Oadby and Wigston Borough Council will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions both in terms of actions that it can take as an organisation in its own right and in terms of the Council role in influencing local residents and businesses and encouraging a partnership approach involving a range of stakeholders.
- 1.4 The Council has established a cross party Environment Working Group which will seek to implement this Action Plan and co-ordinate the Council's response to Climate Change.

2 Environment Strategy: Vision

- 2.1 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is committed to making a positive impact to improve the environmental sustainability of the Borough.

3 Environment Strategy: Objectives

- 3.1 The Council has identified four key objectives that will focus the activities of this Action Plan in order to enable it to fulfil its Vision.
 - Reducing Emissions
 - Raising Awareness
 - Partnership Working
 - Volunteering

4 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024

- 4.1 The Council has a Corporate Plan which sets out the overarching context for the Borough up to 2024. The Corporate Vision is 'A Stronger Borough Together, Improving the Lives of our Communities' and it includes three Corporate Objectives:
- Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities
 - Growing the Borough Economically
 - Providing Excellent Services
- 4.2 The Corporate Plan details how these Corporate Objectives will be met and how success will be measured on an annual basis.
- 4.3 The Council will ensure a consistent approach between the implementation of the Corporate Plan and the Environment Strategy and Action Plan. Responding to Climate Change and reducing Carbon Emissions is essential in enabling the Corporate Vision and Corporate Objectives to be delivered. Therefore, the Environment Strategy and Action Plan will be taken into account in the implementation of the all of the actions contained in the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan is a living document and can be updated to include further environmental actions in its annual review.

5 Local Plan 2011-2031

- 5.1 The Borough Council adopted its Local Plan in April 2019 which sets out the approach to delivering the sustainable growth and development in the Borough. The Local Plan seeks to ensure that all new development within the Borough, whether it is new build or conversion, is required to illustrate the highest standards of design and construction. It requires all development to respect local history, character and vernacular, whilst incorporating measures to conserve energy, achieve sustainable energy generation and minimise waste. It requires a development to contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions; reducing flood risk, both existing and future; and, achieving sustainable waste management.
- 5.2 The Local Plan seeks to actively encourage travel planning, working from home, cycling, walking and access to fast, frequent and affordable public transport. Whilst encouraging the reduction of private car use, it seeks to improve the highway network within the Borough to ensure as reliable and free flowing movement of vehicular traffic as possible.

6 Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2018-2021

- 6.1 The Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment analyses the health needs of the population. It aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the local community and reduce inequalities for all ages. It forms a continuous process of strategic assessment and planning with the aim to develop local evidence-based priorities for commissioning which will improve the public's health and reduce inequalities.
- 6.2 The Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment includes a specific chapter dealing with Air Quality. This chapter specifically identifies the Borough of Oadby and Wigston as having high levels of 'outdoor environment' deprivation (based upon the levels of air quality and number of road traffic accidents) and a significantly worse (higher) rate than nationally of babies born with a low birth rate.

Action Plan

Objective: Reducing Emissions

RE1: Ensuring New Council Buildings are Energy Efficient

This action primarily relates to new build facilities although there may also be some opportunities to retro-fit existing buildings. There are opportunities to look at energy efficiency in relation to the Council Offices, any new build community centres and pavilions and any new build properties built to increase the Council's HRA housing stock. In relation to new build properties consideration will be given to ensuring that appropriate green space is provided for the benefit of residents. Where possible, consideration will be given to the use of solar panels.

Timescale: Dependent upon each specific project, however, the Corporate Plan requires certain schemes to be brought forward during 2020.

Cost: Dependent upon each specific project. However, payback will be a key consideration. In relation to a new build or making an addition to existing stock then the revenue savings for measures such as solar, water reclamation, green roofs etc, will need to be calculated within the business case as opposed to a traditional build.

Environmental Impact: It will reduce the impact that the Council's buildings have upon climate change. Local impact and contribution to national impact. Will take into account the following elements: energy and carbon dioxide emissions; water; materials; surface water run-off; waste; pollution; health and wellbeing; management; ecology.

How action effect change: This action will enable the Council to lead by example in terms of delivering energy efficient buildings.

Links to Corporate Plan: GBE5 To have finalised proposals for the redevelopment of at least one town centre site; GBE6 To have finalised proposals for the delivery of a new doctors surgery in South Wigston

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have completed a costed Conservation Plan of Bushloe House by end of December 2019

To have reviewed the HRA Business Plan by the end of March 2021 and in doing so, commenced an appraisal of options to improve the energy efficiency of the Council's Housing Stock

To consider viable options to integrate energy efficient measures in new developments brought forward through regeneration projects - ongoing

RE2: Encouraging Sustainable Transport

This action relates to providing opportunities for the use of sustainable transport. This includes:

- negotiation and liaison with developers in the consideration of planning applications
- installation of electric car charging points in town centres/car parks
- taking opportunities to get involved with and influence long term transport proposals through the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan
- encouraging the use of the Grand Union Canal towpath by cyclists
- keeping a watching brief on the introduction of a Clean Air Zone in Leicester and influencing with regard to and potential impacts upon the Borough
- Reducing the environmental impact of transport within our borough by adopting responsible practices and policies around staff travel and ensuring our IT provision supports home working, teleconferencing and paperless meetings
- Live streaming of Council meetings to enable residents to view Council business from home rather than having to travel to attend
- Introducing a staged reduction of the age of vehicles that are licensed with the aim of ensuring that all vehicles are Euro Standard 6 compliant

Timescale: Short, medium to long term dependent upon each specific project

Cost: Dependent upon each specific project. With the exception of the footbridge at Ervins lock it is anticipated that costs will either be staff costs, funded by grants or Section 106 Contributions

Environmental Impact: It will reduce the impact of harmful transport related emissions into the atmosphere. Local impact and contribution to national impact

How action effect change: This action relates to policy and practice employed by the Council and influencing policy and practice of partners.

Links to Corporate Plan: BPE11 Install footbridge at Ervins Lock

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To introduce a bicycle pool for Council staff to use when undertaking site visits by the end of March 2021

To develop specific proposals for the introduction of electric car charging points in town centres/car parks by the end of December 2020

To have introduced live streaming of Council meetings by the end of March 2021

To have met the first stage in the reduction of the age of vehicles that are licensed with the aim of ensuring that all vehicles are Euro Standard 6 compliant

To have investigated potential to review the Council's staff car loan scheme to encourage purchase of low emission vehicles by the end of March 2020

To have reviewed the Public Realm Supplementary Planning Document by March 2021

RE3: Ensuring Council Vehicles are Energy Efficient

This action primarily relates to the purchase of new vehicles for the Depot. Consideration is given to the purchase of those vehicles which have low emissions and improved fuel efficiency. Alternative powered vehicles (electric / bio fuel etc.) will also be considered on a case by case basis, as new technology develops and improves. The supplier of our current fleet of refuse vehicles is in the process of improving the development of an electric option and although this is currently considered to be not economically or practically viable at present it will be a major consideration in our next round of purchasing should it be found to be effective and within the budget allocation.

Timescale: New replacement vehicles required will be purchased when the current vehicles are approximately 7 years old. Consideration of electric vehicles is dependent on the development of these new vehicles and infrastructure being in place.

Cost: This is dependent upon each specific vehicle required. However vehicles with the best power supply / emissions will be a priority.

Environment Impact: The local impact will include reduced emissions/ pollution, and improved health and wellbeing.

How action effects change: This action, particularly the future consideration of alternative powered vehicles, will showcase the Council as an authority committed to reducing emissions, as well as a providing a positive contribution to the national impact.

Links to Corporate Plan: BPE22 To keep our environment as clean as possible

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To introduce Miles per Gallon (mpg) targets across the Council's fleet of vehicles to ensure that they are used in the most efficient manner possible by April 2020

RE4: Develop an Energy Performance Certificate Strategy for all Council Housing Properties

We measure the performance of our homes using a SAP score (standard assessment procedure). SAP scores are banded into EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings for homes, and an EPC certificate is produced each time an assessment is carried out. This action will establish our performance baseline for all properties; develop an Energy/Environmental Strategy for council homes and estates; develop road maps for each property archetype, to understand how to achieve long term targets most cost effectively; agree an Energy Investment Plan incorporated within an overall HRA Asset Management Strategy for 2020-2025. In addition, our investment programme to maximise the energy efficiency and

effectiveness of the heating and hot water services to each of our homes requires the renewal of boilers that are 15 or more years old and where necessary the associated heating systems.

Timescale: Short term – deliver EPC actions by May 2020. Boiler replacement programme 2019-20: 290 properties at an estimated cost of £435,000; 2020-23: 310 properties at an estimated cost of £465,000; 2023-29: 300 properties at an estimated cost of £450,000

Cost: Any costs associated with EPC work are already budgeted for. For boiler replacement programme see above

Environmental Impact: Local impact and contribution to national impact

How action effect change: This action relates to policy and practice employed by the Council.

Links to Corporate Plan: Providing Excellent Services.

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have delivered EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) actions by May 2020

To have replaced boilers in 290 properties by the end of March 2020

To have replaced boilers in 310 properties by the end of March 2023

RE5: Reduce the Use of Paper and Plastics

We will do this by:

- Continuing our transformation work to migrate paper processes to an electronic capability through the use of the Electronic Documents and Records Management System
- Replacing internal paper transactions and processes with online forms
- Introducing responsible printing protocols, reducing the amount of printing or printing efficiently where it is required
- Increasing the number of customer transactions that can be done on line
- Introduction of e-billing for both Council Tax and Business Rates for the Council's 25,000 paying customers, each of which currently requires at least one piece of written correspondence per year
- Making Committees paperless –this will achieve a reduction of over 50,000 sheets of Committee papers printed annually
- Reviewing all opportunities to stop or reduce the use of plastics

Timescale: This work is in progress and will continue. For e-billing for both Council Tax and Business Rates we will aim to go live before the start of the 2021/22 annual billing process

Cost: Officer time. For e-billing a new module(s) for the Academy IT system will be required with both capital and revenue implications. However, this is an invest to save situation and ongoing savings will accrue.

Environment Impact: The production and use of paper and plastics has a number of adverse effects on the environment and is significant due to the amount. This action will allow the Council to reduce its carbon footprint by reducing fossil fuelled energy use such as electricity and reduce paper and plastic usage.

How action effects change: These initiatives support existing national and global campaigns encouraging responsible reduction of paper and plastic usage and reducing travel where alternative ways to conducting business can be implemented. This action relates to policy and practice employed by the Council, however will require buy-in from tax payers and as a result full impact will take place over a number of years.

Links to Corporate Plan: PES 6 Average time taken to process Benefit Claims; PES7 Average time taken to process change in circumstances; PES8 The number of online transactions submitted by residents will increase; PES17 Facilitate the Migration to Paperless Committees; PES25 Council Tax Collection Rate; PES26 NNDR Collection Rate; PES27 Reduce Former Years Arrears for Council Tax; PES28 Reduce Former YEARS Arrears for NNDR; PES29 – Reduce outstanding HB overpayments; PES32 Redesign the way our services work to ensure effective working practices; PES33 Migrate paper processes generally to electronic cabability; PES 36 Continue to improve value for money at the Council

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have facilitated the move to paperless Committees by March 2020

To have eliminated the use of plastic cups by March 2020

RE6: Reducing the Overall Council Carbon Footprint at the Main Council Offices

We will do this by:

- Reviewing desktop computer and printing equipment to ensure that the Council is using the most energy efficient equipment using the lowest voltage suitable
- Reviewing Homeworking policy – Expand the homeworking arrangements of Council Staff with the view of moving services off site. There are many areas across the authority which do not require or at least lend themselves to not having a permanent office base

Timescale: Medium Term – Start immediately survey of all equipment and review of homeworking policy. A pilot scheme could be considered for 2020/21

Cost: Dependent on initial survey and will require commitment to a capital budget

Environmental Impact: Reduce the consumption of fossil fuel Electricity

How action effects change: Will require advice and extra resources from the Council's ICT contractor

Links to Corporate Plan: PES32 Redesign the way our services work to ensure effective working practices

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have completed a homeworking pilot scheme by March 2021

RE7: Develop a Procurement Strategy to Maximise Use of Sustainable Materials

The Council will develop and rewrite its procurement strategy to maximise the use of supplies made from only sustainable sources. We will do this by:

- Reviewing both Gas and Electricity tariffs that the Council uses to make sure that we are always on the most 'green tariff' available.
- Investigate the use of electric vehicles to carry out services for example fully electric refuse vehicles which are not only cleaner to environment but quieter creating less disturbance at early hours of the day.
- Ensuring that our tenders for major refurbishment/new build contractors require contractors to meet high environmental standards by achieving ISO14001 Environmental Management.

Timescale: Deliver during 2020/21

Cost: The review of the procurement strategy would be carried out in house by officers. Sustainably sources purchases will be delivered from existing budgets and future capital programmes.

How action effects change: This will require considerable officer time to review current procurement practices and the sustained support from members and SLT together with commitment from officers to carry out the new strategy

Links to Corporate Plan: PES32 Redesign the way our services work to ensure effective working practices

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have the new Procurement Strategy in place by the end of March 2021

Objective: Raising Awareness

RA1: Raising Awareness of Initiatives and Opportunities to Support and Encourage a Cleaner Environment for our Residents

We will do this by increasing awareness amongst our staff, councillors, residents, businesses, contractors, partners, community, stakeholders and voluntary groups through initiatives including training and providing environmental learning opportunities to embed a culture of responsibility to work in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

Timescale: Short Term

Cost: Officer time and possible budget allocation for materials.

Environment Impact: Increasing awareness will encourage responsible practises to improve the air quality in the Borough

How action effects change: This initiative supports existing national and global campaigns to promote better awareness of environmental issues

Links to Corporate Plan: Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities

Short Term Actions/KPIs

We will include regular articles in the Council's Letterbox publication - ongoing

RA2: Raising Awareness of Initiatives and Opportunities to Improve Air Quality

We will install an Air Quality Monitoring Station at Blaby Road/Station Road junction in order to Monitor NOx Levels and Provide Evidence for Declaration of Air Quality Management Area. The Council recognises the link between improved air quality and health and wellbeing and the benefits in order to reduce imbalances across the Borough. We will investigate opportunities to promote this via Clean Air initiatives in the Borough.

Timescale: Short term - Current municipal year before mid-May 2020

Cost: £25,000 provided by S106 monies

Environment Impact: If monitoring indicates that an Air Quality Management Area needs to be declared the Council will put together a plan to improve the air quality - a Local Air Quality Action Plan.

How action effects change: This action will enable the Council to lead by example in terms of improving air quality. The Council will work with partners under the auspices of the Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2018-2021 to

improve the health and wellbeing of the local community and reduce inequalities for all ages.

Links to Corporate Plan: BPE20 We will ensure installation and activation of Air Quality Monitoring Station in Blaby Road, South Wigston

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have installed an Air Quality Monitoring Station at Blaby Road/Station Road junction by the end of May 2020

To have considered opportunities to use the public wifi equipment in town centres as a means of also monitoring air quality by the end of March 2021

RA3: Provide Educational Opportunities Relating to Engaging with Nature

Educating the next generation about the life cycles of plants and animals, wildlife habitats, woodlands, wildflower meadows and ponds is important to the Borough Council. This action provides educational opportunities, by working with specialist instructors to deliver a range of experiences to school pupils and visitors to the Borough, for example, Brocks Hill County Park. Activities include pond dipping, mini beast hunts and den building.

Timescale: This important action is on-going.

Cost: Utilising the local leisure provider to deliver educational opportunities with no cost to the Local Authority.

Environment Impact: The aim is to up-skill the next generation in order to conserve and enhance the range of habitats and their associated species to ensure that the Borough's parks retain their ecological value into the future.

How action effects change: This action will influence policy and practice of local partners who utilise the Borough's parks for educational activities – e.g. schools/community groups who will take the learning back into their classroom environment.

Links to Corporate Plan: Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have provided 1000 educational opportunities to individuals by the end of March 2020

RA4: Manage our Parks to Protect the Countryside, Preserve the Local Landscape and Nurture Wildlife

The Parks in the Borough provide a range of opportunities for visitors to enjoy the countryside, including wildlife watching, recreation, wild play and exercise.

Timescale: Short Term. In terms of Brocks Hill, the overarching management plan runs from 2018 – 2022, when it will be reviewed and updated.

Cost: The cost to deliver this action is officer time as well as access to the current budget allocation. Possible additional budget allocation required for materials.

Environment Impact: The aim is to conserve and enhance the range of habitats and their associated species to ensure the Borough's Parks retain their ecological value into the future.

How action effects change: This action will influence policy and practice of local partners such as schools and community groups who utilise the Borough's Parks.

Links to Corporate Plan: Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have reviewed the Brocks Hill Management Plan to come into effect from April 2022

Objective: Partnership Working

PW1: Increase Tree Planting

The primary benefits of trees are that the process greatly contributes to producing the oxygen that we and all other animals need to breathe and sustain life. It is well documented that trees reduce the amount of storm water runoff, which reduces erosion and pollution in our waterways and may reduce the effects of flooding which are projected to become more intense with the progress of climate change. Many species of wildlife depend on trees for habitat. Trees provide food, protection, and homes for many birds, insects and mammals. In the short term (before May 2020) we will complete digital mapping of all council owned property and land; assess OWBC land usage, identifying constraints and opportunities; engage the Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and The Tree Council to ascertain the most appropriate funding available. In the medium term (before March 2023) we will implement new and improved landscape management programme for maximum tree and meadow grass coverage – Climate change, carbon neutral, air quality, flood risk, pollinator's.

Timescale: See above

Cost: There are a number of grant schemes available that we will seek funding from including The Countryside Stewardship (CS) Woodland Creation Grant (WCG) and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF)

Environmental Impact: Local impact and contribution to national impact

How action effect change: This action relates to policy and practice employed by the Council and will also rely on support from local stakeholder initiatives.

Links to Corporate Plan: BPE19 Through the implementation of parks, open spaces, play areas and tree strategies we will have an organised approach to delivery across the Borough.

Short Term Actions/KPIs

Complete digital mapping of all council owned property and land; assess OWBC land usage, identifying constraints and opportunities; engage the Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and The Tree Council to ascertain the most appropriate funding available by May 2020.

PW2: Promote the Leicester Low Carbon Transport Accelerator

Grants are available up to a maximum of £10,000 for the purchase of new taxi vehicles. The Scheme can provide up to 40% of the difference between the cost of an Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle and the cost of the usual replacement in grant support (subject to a maximum cap). The scheme is managed by Leicester City Council and part-funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Scheme requires a Full Application form to be completed. Grant funding is provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and available to Taxis operating across the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership Area. In the medium term the Council intends to carry out a review of its Vehicle Licencing Policy with a view to bringing in a staged reduction of the age of vehicles that are licensed aimed at ensuring that all vehicles are Euro Standard 6 compliant.

Timescale: Short Term. The Council has already promoted the scheme to all taxi operators within the Borough.

Cost: Staff time - making information and application packs available.

Environmental Impact: Local impact and contribution to national impact

How action effect change: This action relates to policy and practice at a European level and employed at a local level.

Links to Corporate Plan: Growing the Borough Economically

Short Term Actions/KPIs

Promotion of the scheme to all taxi operators within the Borough - achieved.

PW3: Manage Flood Planning and Response

This action relates to working with Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR) on countywide partnership plans, including flood planning and response, now and into the future. Not only to provide an early and appropriate multi-agency response to a flood or potential flooding incident, but to continue to be proactive in mapping critical infrastructure at risk of flooding and identifying new areas at risk, as a result of climate change. Training provided to officers and regular exercising of the locality plan will enable the authority to be prepared.

Timescale: New Incident Plan template will be available by the end of October 2019. This plan will incorporate the locality flood plan towards the end of the year, to ensure all information is available in the same document.

Cost: The Council provides a contribution to the Resilience Partnership for their expertise and ongoing advice. County-wide training and exercise is provided free of charge. The purchase of additional sandbags will be based on the mapping of new identified areas at risk and the need to increase current stocks.

Environment Impact: Flooding impacts on individuals, businesses and communities and has a social economic and environmental consequence. By mapping new areas that are identified 'at risk', the Council together with the LLR Partnership will continue to raise awareness through campaigns to encourage home owners and businesses to put in place contingency plans.

How action effects change: By working with LLR and the Environment Agency to identify new hotspots, the Council will work with stakeholders to address areas of concern.

Links to Corporate Plan: Building, Protecting and Empowering communities

Short Term Actions/KPIs

Incident Plan/Locality Flood Plan to be complete by the end of March 2020

PW4: Encourage Schools to take up Sustainable Travel Initiatives

This action relates to working with our Leisure Contractor Everyone Active, as well as the School Sports Partnership and Leicestershire County Council. The aim is to encourage more schools to take up sustainable travel initiatives e.g. to walk or cycle to school. Active travel will help reduce the number of people using their cars to travel short distances, and reduce pollution levels, particularly at school drop-off and pick-up times. This will in turn encourage more people to think about their wellbeing and the importance of walking and being more physically active to improve their health.

Timescale: Working with the School Sport Partnership during term-time and with the leisure contractor as an ongoing action – utilising the range of local and national campaigns.

Cost: This action will help towards the reduction in pollution levels, particularly at peak travel times. It will improve participant's health and wellbeing including mental health.

Environment Impact: Working to increase the number of people being more active and utilising other forms of travel, will help to improve air quality.

How action effects change: This action will require support from local stakeholders, particularly Borough schools and engagement from residents.

Links to Corporate Plan: Building, Protecting and Empowering communities

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have worked with 10 schools to introduce new sustainable transport initiatives by the end of March 2021

PW5: Formally Designate Brocks Hill Country Park as a Local Natural Reserve

OWBC is working with Natural England to formally designate Brocks Hill Country Park as a Local Natural Reserve. This has many benefits including retaining the countryside and natural open space of the Green Wedge, where Brocks Hill is an essential link.

Timescale: This matter is on the Agenda for approval at September's Service Delivery Committee. Once approved this will deliver long term benefits for the residents of O&W.

Cost: The only cost to implement this action is officer time, as well as Volunteer assistance during conservation tasks in order to continue to improve and enhance the Country Park.

Environment Impact: It will provide protection of the habitats and biodiversity, and will promote Brocks Hill as an area for recreation and enjoyment for local people and visitors from outside the Borough for years to come.

How action effects change: This action, sanctioned by OWBC, will prevent the land from being used for development purposes.

Links to Corporate Plan: Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have received formal designation from Natural England by December 2020

Objective: Volunteering

VO1: Improve the Environmental Quality of the Council's Housing Estates

This action relates to developing community cohesion to improve the environmental quality of the Council housing estates and to develop a sense of pride in tenants' appreciation of their immediate environment. The proposal is to encourage local community groups to extend their remit to include the Council's housing estates and to work with residents over initiatives which may include tree planting, creation and planning up of borders, planters and improvements to street furniture with a view to a contribution to the Britain on Bloom competition. Awards could be offered to tenants. Also possibility to link to a campaign against fly tipping on the Council's estates and improving recycling and bin areas on estates to encourage more recycling.

Timescale: Short term – deliver during 2020

Cost: The Council would need to set aside a small amount of funding to finance this initiative, although sponsorship could also be sought.

Environmental Impact: Local impact – enhanced quality of the Council's housing estates, improve wellbeing of tenants

How action effect change: This action will require support from local stakeholder initiatives, particularly local community groups. It will also require close working with and support from the Operations section who are currently responsible for grounds maintenance at the Council's estates

Links to Corporate Plan: BPE22 To keep our environment as clean as possible

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have community groups established with the aim of improving environmental quality of the Council's housing estates by the end of March 2021

VO2: To Increase the Number of Volunteers to Improve the Environment

Volunteers add value to the important work across the Borough's Town Centres and natural green and open spaces. This ranges from getting important messages out to residents about recycling, to clearing litter from our Town Centres. Volunteers and particularly community champions are well placed to engage with their communities to make a difference, whilst providing volunteers with a positive experience which develops new skills and heightens a sense of wellbeing. The Council will aim to bring together initiatives currently underway, for example in relation to reducing the use of plastics.

Timescale: The aim is to recruit further Volunteers in the short-term, before May 2020.

Cost: Utilising local Volunteers, who give their time freely, provides no additional costs to the Local Authority.

Environment Impact: This action will continue to improve the local area by using volunteers to get the message out about the importance of recycling, to assist with clearing litter from our Town Centres, as well as helping to protect habitats and the biodiversity of the local area, through conservation work.

How action effects change: This action will support local stakeholder initiatives and influence the practice of local partners. The Council will aim to work closely with voluntary and charitable organisations in the Borough.

Links to Corporate Plan: BPE7 Increase the number of volunteers the Council recruits to assist with improving the Borough

Short Term Actions/KPIs

To have a volunteering strategy/policy in place by the end of March 2020

To have started the process of recruiting volunteers by the end of May 2020