



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Ely Council declared a climate emergency in December 2019 and acknowledges that we must act now in order to: Reduce our carbon footprint; mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on the environment; to adapt to these effects; reverse them as far as possible; and exploit our natural capital in these efforts. Action needs to be taken quickly. The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council all have Climate Change Policies and Action Plans. The latter is using 3 parish councils plans as a basis of developing a template for all its parishes. City of Ely Council would therefore wish to ensure that its own policy and plans were consistent with all these. As part of this policy, we aim a dependent action plan for approval by the City of Ely Full Council by May 2022. Our aim is to become a carbon neutral council by 2030. The speed and scale of climate change is such that the level of change required to our energy markets, economy, legislation, and our behaviour, requires leadership and direction, on a local, national, and global level.

The City of Ely Council can offer: Support in petitioning the government to declare and act on the climate emergency; support to the local community to engage and take action; the provision of information and advocacy, through public meetings and events, social media, and the Council website; the building of a strong community identity to promote valuable skills and knowledge sharing' leadership by example; encouragement to the use of cycling to work by promoting safe cycling routes within the City and neighbouring parishes; and contribute to the improvement of cycling and walking opportunities within the City and beyond.

2. CARBON SOURCES

As carbon emissions come from many sources, we firstly need to identify these sources, then reduce or eliminate them. How we intend to tackle each of these sources is dealt with in Section 5 below and broken down to: 5.1 Energy Usage and Sources; 5.2 Transport and Travel; 5.3 Agriculture and Food; 5.4 Housing, Infrastructure, Home insulation; 5.5 Local Business; 5.6 Waste and Resources; 5.7 Environment and Land use. The top ten sources of greenhouse gases Are: 1. Burning fossil fuels to heat our houses and businesses, and fuel. Our use of fossil fuels accounts for nearly a third of global emissions 2. Transportation which accounts for nearly 15% of global climate change pollution 3. Manufacturing and construction 4. Unsustainable food systems 5. Burning other fuels such as wood 6. Industry. 7. Destruction of forests and woodland 8. Gas flares 9. Landfills, which produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas 10. The fashion industry.

3. BECOMING CARBON NEUTRAL

Firstly, the City of Ely Council will look to its own carbon footprint and of the parish, using widely available on-line tools that are consistent with those used by officers in our District, County and Combined Authority. Then, we will encourage residents to do the same in their own households. We recognise the need to change, as a community, to a more sustainable lifestyle, utilising power with maximum efficiency and getting it from renewable sources, reducing the number of petrol and diesel vehicles on the road, encouraging the changeover to electric vehicles, reducing waste and plastic consumption, and buying food from local sources, and developing natural capital. We will monitor both Government policy and the policy initiatives and plans employed by other councils to ensure best practice. We will use our plan is to inform and educate the residents of Ely, to support them in changing their behaviour and lifestyles to reduce carbon emissions, and to help build resilience against the adverse impact of climate change.

4. WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR

The City of Ely Council has acknowledged that we are in a state of climate emergency and we are in the process of developing our Action Plan. We have replaced our street lights with LED bulbs and will ensure that we use electricity from renewable sources. We are supporting the planting of trees, particularly as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative, and are increasing stocks and maintaining those trees on our own land. We are developing our green spaces, particularly at the cemetery with the development of a sensory garden and areas of rewilding. Our allotment association is greatly increasing the numbers and availability of allotments on land that we already lease, and as an integral part of new developments in Ely North. We have eliminated the council's use of single use plastics and have rationalised and reduced our consumption of paper. Our planning committees follow ECDC supplementary policy advice on sustainability and energy efficiency when commenting on any planning application within the parish. We have developed ways of hybrid working that are compatible with the legal framework governing our activities. We are building a relationship with likeminded organisations around us.

5. THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Within our action plan we propose the following actions to reduce the carbon emissions from the sources outlined in section 2:

5.1 Energy Usage and Sources.

The excess use of energy in our homes is a major challenge. Switching to a green energy supplier, better insulating our homes, and moving away from dependence on gas heating would make a significant step towards becoming carbon neutral. The City of Ely Council will: encourage residents and local businesses to change their behaviour to use energy most efficiently, adopt smart metering technology at the earliest opportunity consider their energy sources; endeavour to have all new builds in the City built to high environmental and energy efficient standards and sustainability (insulation, draught-proofing, efficient heating/cooling systems, water conservation and flood protection; promote the same standards to be applied to existing housing where possible; explore options for a local renewable energy sources; make local residents aware of government grants / initiatives to phase out natural gas in domestic use, and replace it with clean fuel sources on future builds (e.g. heat pumps).

5.2 Transport and Travel.

The City of Ely Council recognises the need for improved public transport system, and the provision of safe cycle routes and walkways. To reduce pollution from conventional cars, we also need to promote electric vehicles, look to install communal electric car charging points on parish council properties (taking advantage of government grant initiatives and commercial opportunities), and encourage car sharing by promoting car sharing bubbles. We will: Work with the local environment group to promote car share; install Electric Vehicle charging points, and encourage local businesses to do the same, working with the District Council for funding; engage with the County and the District Councils to create safe cycle paths and joined up cycle routes enabling residents to safely cycle to work; ensure that footpaths and walkways in the parish are safe for pedestrian; enhance Ely as a place with beautiful, accessible wild areas, some tiny, some larger, so that residents can enjoy this area for recreation and exercise

5.3 Agriculture and Food.

Current methods of the production and distribution of food in today's world is not sustainable. Products are flown over the globe by aeroplane, over-wrapped in single use plastic, and agricultural practices degrade the land and reduce capacity to store carbon, particularly an issue on Fenland soil. Intensive farming is linked to loss of wildlife, soil, and water pollution, and poor animal welfare. Our parish has a mixed topography and includes areas of special scientific interest, farmland and peatlands. Local farmers are working with the Combined Authority and or bodies such as the Wildlife Trust to try and find a way of mitigating damage and improving the sustainable use of these resources. We are therefore committed to: promoting locally grown produce and local restaurants to reduce the import of food, and vehicle usage; supporting the local farmers' market; encouraging eating habits that are best for the environment; keeping the allotments thriving to produce food locally and encourage healthy activity; working with and helping local farmers to maximise local food production and restore the carbon storage facility of our land.

5.4 Housing, Infrastructure and Home Insulation.

We will: ensure buildings are designed and constructed with energy conservation foremost, by working with local district council planning, housing developers, and local interest groups to ensure new housing areas provide energy efficient affordable housing; ensure all City council owned properties aim to have zero carbon footprint by 2030.

5.5 Local Business.

Local business is essential to minimising the need to travel to work by car. As a council, we will: support and promote local business; support and welcome provision for young people to work locally after education is complete; support the establishment of new local business; consider the establishment of a local Business Hub with appropriate internet and audio-visual facilities to support small and medium local businesses, small and home office workers and traders.

5.6 Waste and Resources.

The last century has seen a rise of material possessions. We need to consider where these have come from, what pollution was created in their making and delivery, where they go when discarded. As a council, we will work with the local environmental groups to: educate our parishioners through public awareness campaigns and local media; promote upcycling and recycling; promote the swapping and sharing of items rather than sending them to landfill; encourage reduced packaging in local businesses; encourage repair cafes and

recycling hubs; urge government and local council to enforce a higher level of resource recovery

5.7 Environment and Land Use.

Our local community are already working on improving the natural environment with tree planting campaigns and wild flowering. The City of Ely Council is committed to offering support and encouragement to these campaigns and driving further community work on improving our local land use and environment, such as a Community Orchard. To improve the local environment, we will: encourage the planting of trees in appropriate pre-defined and approved places; support restoration of disturbed wetlands and peat; continue to promote the creation and management of more green spaces, allotments, wildlife gardens, and community gardens. These actions will continue to encourage biodiversity of our flora and fauna, which in turn will protect our pollinators, which in turn will ensure a better local food supply.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

6.1 WHAT WE AIM TO DO SHORT TERM: establish the Council's carbon footprint; encourage parishioners to identify their own carbon footprints; continue to encourage tree planting, and maintain existing mature trees that are sited away from housing; install EV charging stations; encourage buying local produce; work with the community and local environmental groups; continue to liaise with the gardening and allotment group; lead by example, with the care of all our green spaces having carbon impact key in its design.

6.2 WHAT WE AIM TO DO MEDIUM TERM: support the building of 'green' homes in Ely and its villages; support a community car sharing scheme; explore possibilities for locally owned solar and wind turbine such as the project in Swaffham Prior; continue to reduce paper consumption; encourage further tree planting and wildflower conservation areas; work with all levels of local government to establish proper cycle routes from Ely to Cambridge, Soham and Newmarket; support better bus routes and more frequent services; ensure that any future City of Ely Council assets have climate change technology at the heart of any proposals.

6.3 WHAT WE AIM TO DO LONG TERM (BY 2030): to reach our aim of becoming carbon neutral, we will need to ensure: that our homes and businesses are made dramatically more energy efficient, with carbon-free heating sources, by promoting knowledge of Government Incentive schemes for insulation, boiler replacement with heat pumps, replacement double glazing for example; ensure 100% clean electricity and local renewable energy generation within the parish of Ely; ensure much less reliance on fossil fuel driven transport, with more transport sharing and an improved public transport infrastructure, and the provision of EV charging points on Council properties, in line with any funding opportunities from higher authorities; encourage healthier lifestyles based on locally grown food, more walking and cycling, and a sustainable local farming economy; ensure collaboration with local residents, businesses, farmers, and other environmental organisations.

7. EMERGENCY CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The City of Ely Council will work with help of relevant authorities to put in place Planning for Emergencies such as severe flooding and other climate-driven risks to the City. Like many other areas of the UK and East Anglia, we are threatened by extreme weather events.

As storms intensify, the City will be at risk of flooding from both excessive sudden rainfall and sea level rise. In our mitigation plans we will: for rainfall that exceeds storm-drain capacity, plan with County and District councils. All new housing should include planned rainwater harvesting. This will take water out of the drain system and also save it for food growing in drought seasons. Consultation with the local sewage works may help to show where the dangers lie locally. - For sea-level rise: all the above measures will help to minimise and delay this. - In case of sudden storm surges alongside rising sea levels, the City of Ely Council will need to flag up warning to our residents and local and national infrastructure to County planners working with other counties on sea defences, and, using realistic scientific forecasts for timing, plan evacuation centres for Ely residents who need to move to higher ground. Some planning for evacuees from other parts of the area may need to be started soon also.

8. CONCLUSION

The City of Ely Council is committed to reducing all of the above through education and providing the required infrastructure. The Ely Community need to mobilise in response to the climate emergency, and it is our responsibility and primary objective to offer leadership and lead by example.

This policy is to be reviewed annually.

Approved and adopted

18th December 2023

.....

Cllr R. Denness