

Appendix 5 - The Council's Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive 2030 targets

1. The Council declared a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency in July 2019 which committed the Council to become Net Carbon Zero by 2030. Subsequently the [Climate and Ecological Change Strategy](#) (CECS) was approved in February 2021 with the Net Carbon Zero by 2030 Goal and what that means in terms of carbon emission reduction and carbon sequestration increase.
2. Net Carbon Zero means the total carbon emissions (from Council buildings, fleet, waste generated in operations, business travel, staff commuting, street lighting) being equal to the total carbon absorbed by the land owned/leased in and managed by the Council by 31st March 2030. In 2019/20 the Council's carbon emissions were: 16,448 tonnes. In 2019/20 the Council's carbon sequestration was: 2,418 tonnes. Therefore, Net Carbon Zero position is: 14,030 tonnes. The goal is to reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon sequestration to get that Net Carbon Zero position to zero.
3. Whilst the Council is committed to going as far and as fast as we can to reduce the Council's carbon emissions, it is not possible to reduce the Council's carbon emissions to zero (from Council buildings, fleet, waste generated in operations, business travel, staff commuting, street lighting). Therefore, we need to increase carbon sequestration to offset the emissions we are unable to reduce/remove. The achievement pathway estimates carbon sequestration will need to increase by 4,911 tonnes to a figure of 7,329 tonnes by 2030 to meet our Net Carbon Zero goal.
4. Land eligible to be counted within the Council's carbon sequestration figures includes: land the Council owns and manages and land the Council leases from others and manages. Note: land the Council owns but then leases out to others to manage e.g. tenanted agricultural estate, cannot be included.
5. The Council is pursuing a multifaceted approach to achieving that additional carbon sequestration tonnage required including:

- a) Improving the accuracy of our carbon sequestration data including the accounting of carbon from Council owned urban trees;
 - b) Increasing the carbon sequestration value of our existing freehold/leasehold land that we manage;
 - c) Protecting our existing green spaces as much as we can from development where appropriate;
 - d) Maximising on opportunities to convert brown field sites where appropriate into woodland and/or grassland (depending on suitability);
 - e) Maximising on opportunities to bring land leased out back into Council management where appropriate and convert to woodland (if not already) or keep as grassland (depending on suitability); and
 - f) Seeking acquisition opportunities, freehold and leasehold, and convert to woodland (if not already) or keep as grassland (depending on suitability).
6. Approaches a) to e) listed above will not be enough to meet our carbon sequestration target of 7,329 tonnes by 2030; acquisition, freehold or leasehold, is required and due to the nature of the market and the time window in which to achieve target means that options for acquisition will need to be considered every year for the 9 years up to 2030.
7. In addition, to achieve Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 requires the Council to increase the amount of land it owns/leases and manages that is in the highest categories of species richness by at least 13% compared to 2019/20 baseline.
8. The carbon sequestration target and the species richness target as part of the Ecologically Positive Council goal are complementary. Mixed broadleaved and yew woodland is the second highest species richness category and this woodland can be created in a way that contains a mosaic of grassland and scrub patches increasing the diversity of species and ecological niches these sites contain, whilst complying with the UK Land Inventory Definition for land to be classified as forestland as follows:

- a. the land parcel must be
 - i. minimum area of 0.1 hectares;
 - ii. minimum width of 20 metres;
 - iii. tree crown cover of at least 20 per cent, or the potential to achieve it; and
 - iv. minimum height of 2 metres, or the potential to achieve it.