



Town Clerk: Caroline Leet

EDENBRIDGE
TOWN COUNCIL

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Policy

Adopted by full Council 07 September 2026

*To be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains current and effective.
Any updates will be communicated to all council members and employees*

Introduction

Edenbridge Town Council recognises that climate change presents environmental, social and economic challenges and that all levels of local government have a role to play in reducing environmental impacts and supporting more sustainable and resilient communities.

The Council recognises that, while its direct influence is relatively small, it can make a positive contribution through the management of its land, buildings and other assets; the delivery of its services; procurement and purchasing decisions; and by working with residents, community organisations and partner authorities.

The Council seeks to take a practical and proportionate approach, building environmental considerations into its day-to-day operations and future decision making whilst balancing its responsibilities for service delivery, public safety, accessibility, financial sustainability and the effective management of public resources.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to responding positively to climate change and improving environmental sustainability.
- Provide a strategic framework for considering climate and environmental impacts in Council activities, services and projects.
- Reduce energy and resource consumption where reasonably practicable.
- Encourage sustainable use and management of Council assets and resources.
- Support climate resilience and adaptation where relevant to the Council's functions.
- Encourage community awareness and involvement in environmental matters.
- Complement the Council's Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Policy and supporting environmental policies.
- Encourage continual improvement through practical, proportionate and affordable measures.

Policy Statement

Edenbridge Town Council will, wherever reasonably practicable:

- Seek to reduce the environmental impact of its own operations.
- Use energy, water and other natural resources responsibly.
- Consider energy efficiency and environmental performance when maintaining, improving or replacing Council assets.
- Minimise waste and encourage reuse and recycling.
- Consider environmental sustainability as part of procurement and purchasing decisions, alongside cost, quality, suitability and best value.
- Consider opportunities to reduce emissions associated with Council operations and activities.
- Take account of changing environmental and climatic conditions when managing its land, buildings and infrastructure.
- Work with other authorities, organisations and the community to support appropriate local environmental initiatives.
- Promote awareness of environmental and climate-related issues where relevant to the Council and its community.
- Comply with relevant environmental legislation and recognised good practice.

The Council recognises that environmental considerations must be balanced alongside its wider statutory responsibilities, operational requirements and its responsibility for the prudent management of public finances. In considering environmental initiatives, the Council will have regard to affordability, value for money, whole-life costs and the potential impact on Council resources and the Precept.

Where appropriate, the Council will seek opportunities for external funding, grants and partnership funding to support environmental improvements and initiatives, particularly where these can reduce the financial impact on the Council and its taxpayers.

1. Delivering Environmental Sustainability

1.1 Energy and Council Buildings

The Council will seek opportunities to improve the energy efficiency and environmental performance of the buildings and facilities it owns and manages.

Existing initiatives include:

- Solar photovoltaic panels installed on two Council buildings.
- Investment in modern, energy-efficient heating and hot water systems at the Sports Pavilion.
- Replacement of internal lighting with energy-efficient LED technology where appropriate.
- Consideration of energy efficiency and environmental performance when undertaking building maintenance, refurbishment and improvement projects.

When planning future capital works or replacing equipment, the Council will consider opportunities to reduce energy consumption and improve environmental performance where these are practical, affordable and appropriate for the asset concerned, taking account where relevant of whole-life costs and potential future savings.

1.2 Street Lighting and Infrastructure

The Council manages its street lighting through a long-term asset replacement programme.

Older street lighting columns and equipment are progressively replaced, including the use of energy-efficient LED lanterns. Part-night lighting is used where appropriate, balancing energy efficiency with public safety and operational requirements.

Environmental sustainability will continue to be considered when infrastructure is renewed or improved.

1.3 Transport, Vehicles and Equipment

The Council will seek opportunities to reduce the environmental impact associated with its vehicles, machinery and equipment whilst ensuring that equipment remains suitable for operational requirements.

Current measures include the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel for the Council's tractor and Kubota grounds maintenance vehicles, together with the introduction of electric

grounds maintenance equipment, such as hedge cutters, where these are suitable for operational use.

When vehicles, machinery and equipment require replacement, the Council will consider lower-emission, electric and alternative technologies available at that time, taking account of operational suitability, infrastructure requirements, whole-life costs and available resources.

The Council will also support appropriate opportunities for more sustainable and lower-emission travel where these are within its powers and resources and appropriate to the needs of the town.

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

The Council recognises the increasing role of electric vehicles and the importance of appropriate charging infrastructure in supporting the transition to lower-emission transport.

The Council has sought to support the provision of electric vehicle charging facilities within Edenbridge, recognising that its direct ability to provide infrastructure is principally limited to land and car parks within its ownership or control.

Through Kent County Council's Kent Smarter Travel Scheme, the Council arranged for three Council-owned car parks to be assessed for their suitability for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Following these assessments, Market Yard Car Park and the Recreation Ground Pavilion car park were identified as suitable locations. Four electric vehicle charging points were subsequently installed at Market Yard Car Park in 2023.

The Council will continue to consider opportunities to extend electric vehicle charging provision at suitable Council-owned locations, including the Recreation Ground and Mowhurst car parks, subject to feasibility, available funding and operational considerations. It will seek external funding opportunities where appropriate and will support the development of additional charging infrastructure elsewhere within the town where suitable opportunities arise and this is within the Council's role and resources.

1.4 Waste and Resource Management

The Council seeks to minimise waste and make responsible use of materials and natural resources.

It will apply the principles of reducing consumption, reusing materials and recycling wherever reasonably practicable, with appropriate disposal used where other options are unavailable.

The Council will continue to consider opportunities to:

- Reduce unnecessary consumption
- Reuse materials and equipment
- Recycle appropriate waste streams
- Reuse green waste, woodchip and other materials where suitable
- Reduce unnecessary use of water and other natural resources
- Avoid unnecessary single-use products where practical

Detailed arrangements for waste arising from Council activities are set out in the Council's Waste Management Policy.

1.5 Procurement and Purchasing

Environmental considerations will be taken into account, where relevant and proportionate, when the Council purchases goods and services or appoints contractors.

This may include consideration of:

- Energy and resource efficiency
- Durability and whole-life use
- Opportunities for reuse or recycling
- Sustainable sourcing
- Transportation and delivery
- Environmental standards and working practices
- Local sourcing where appropriate

Environmental considerations will form part of the Council's overall assessment and will be balanced with quality, suitability, availability, procurement requirements and the Council's duty to secure value for money.

1.6 Climate Resilience and Adaptation

The Council recognises that responding to climate change is not solely about reducing emissions but also about considering how changing weather patterns and environmental conditions may affect Council services, land and assets.

Where relevant, the Council will consider resilience to issues such as:

- Extreme heat and prolonged dry weather
- Heavy rainfall and surface water
- Storms and high winds
- Increased fire risk
- Impacts on trees, planting and habitats
- Changing maintenance requirements

These considerations will be incorporated, where reasonably practicable, into asset management, grounds maintenance, planting, improvement works and future projects.

2. Biodiversity and Nature Recovery

The Council recognises the close relationship between climate change, environmental sustainability and the protection and recovery of nature.

The management of habitats, trees, woodland, planting and biodiversity on Council-owned and managed land is addressed through the Council's **Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Policy** and supporting operational policies.

The Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Policy and this Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Policy together form the Council's overarching environmental framework.

3. Working with the Community

The Council recognises that responding to climate change and protecting the local environment requires action not only through its own operations but also through partnership and community involvement.

The Council will seek, where appropriate and proportionate, to:

- Use its website, social media, newsletters and other communication channels to share information about relevant environmental initiatives and Council activities.
- Encourage community participation in environmental and sustainability initiatives.
- Support local organisations, volunteers, schools, businesses and other public bodies where appropriate opportunities arise.
- Support and promote practical local initiatives which encourage biodiversity, sustainable living, waste reduction, recycling, active travel or other environmental benefits.
- Consult or engage with the community where significant Council projects have environmental implications.
- Promote and celebrate relevant local environmental achievements and good practice.
- Signpost residents to relevant schemes, information and opportunities provided by other organisations.

The Council recognises that its role is primarily to lead through its own operations, use its local influence and facilitate community action, rather than duplicate environmental services and responsibilities delivered by principal authorities and other organisations.

4. Working in Partnership

Many matters relating to climate change, transport, waste, planning, energy and environmental protection fall wholly or partly within the responsibilities of other public bodies.

The Council will therefore seek to work constructively with Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council, their successor unitary authority or authorities, and other relevant organisations and agencies where their functions or expertise can support environmental improvements within Edenbridge.

Where appropriate, the Council may also use consultations and other opportunities to represent the interests of Edenbridge and advocate for infrastructure, services and investment which support a sustainable and resilient town.

5. Supporting Policies

This policy should be read alongside the Council's **Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Policy** and the following supporting operational policies:

- Vegetation Management and Bonfire Policy
- Waste Management Policy
- Weed Management Policy

Together, these policies provide the framework through which the Council seeks to reduce its environmental impact, support biodiversity and nature recovery, manage its land and resources responsibly and promote sustainable working practices.

6. Future Commitments

The Council will continue to:

- Identify practical opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of its buildings and assets.
- Consider lower-emission technologies when vehicles, machinery and equipment require replacement.
- Reduce waste and make responsible use of natural resources.
- Consider environmental sustainability when planning capital projects and significant asset improvements.
- Consider climate resilience when managing Council land, buildings and infrastructure.
- Support appropriate local environmental initiatives and community involvement.
- Communicate relevant environmental activities and achievements to the community.
- Consider opportunities to expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure at suitable Council-owned locations and support wider provision within the town where appropriate.
- Work with partner authorities and organisations where this can support environmental improvements.
- Review its practices as technologies, opportunities and recognised good practice develop.

The Council's approach will be one of continual improvement, recognising that measures must be achievable, proportionate and financially sustainable.

7. Monitoring and Review

Progress in delivering this policy will be demonstrated through the Council's ongoing management of its buildings, land and infrastructure; implementation of its supporting policies; delivery of relevant projects and asset replacement programmes; and consideration of environmental sustainability as part of relevant Council decisions.

Where appropriate, significant environmental initiatives and achievements will be reported through Council meetings, the Council's website, newsletters, social media or other community communications.

This policy will aim to be reviewed every three years by the Finance and Governance Committee, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, technology or Council practice.