

Sustainability Strategy Summary

Background

Watford Council has a long history of committing to climate change initiatives and delivering projects supporting carbon reduction. On 9th July 2019 Watford's elected councillors voted in favour of declaring a climate emergency and have pledged to do everything in their power to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030.

Aims

Watford's Sustainability Strategy 2020-24 has an ambition broader than reducing carbon emissions. Our strategy makes the case for action under each of six strands: Leading by example; People power; Reducing energy usage and emissions; Improving transport and air quality; Reducing waste; and Nature restoration. In terms of carbon emissions, our aim is to work towards our target of achieving borough-wide net zero CO2 emissions by 2030.¹

Key actions

Our strategy is supported by a detailed action plan with the following key components:

Leading by example <ul style="list-style-type: none">Integrate sustainability into council business plans	People power <ul style="list-style-type: none">Work with communities on an engagement programmeLobby government
Reducing energy use and emissions <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lead by example to ensure buildings in council influence are as sustainable as possibleEnsure Local Plan is sufficiently ambitious around sustainabilityEnable and encourage community-wide emission reduction	Improving transport and air quality <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lead by example on low carbon travelReview and reset sustainable transport projects in the light of covidDeliver public campaigns to improve air quality
Reducing waste <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lead by example to reduce council wasteIncrease Watford's recycling rates	Nature restoration <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lead by example to create biodiversity on council-owned assetsWork with communities and partners to increase climate resilience and water efficiency

¹ Based on [Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy \(BEIS\)](#) estimates of Industrial and Commercial; Domestic; and Transport end-user carbon dioxide emissions

Delivery

In order to deliver on the strategy, the council has established a Sustainability Forum that brings together councillors and officers, supported by a cross-service Sustainability Board which reports on progress. However, the council cannot deliver the Sustainability Strategy in isolation. People Power is a key part of our strategy and the council is committed to working with communities and businesses. Please contact us on sustainability@watford.gov.uk to collaborate.

Tracking progress

To track progress towards our target of achieving net zero CO2 emissions we are using borough wide emissions as measured annually by the [Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy \(BEIS\)](#). Three categories from estimates of end-user carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions are considered within the scope of local authority influence: Industrial and Commercial; Domestic; and Transport. This information is published nationally two years in arrears.

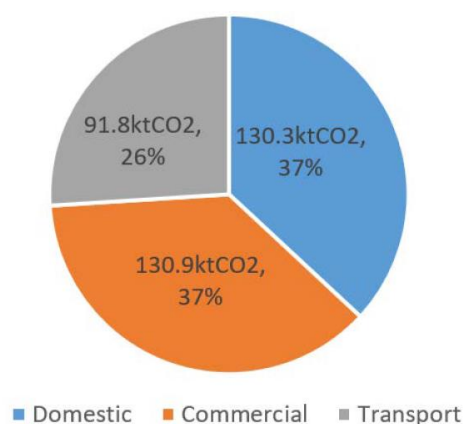


Figure 3: Emissions within the influence of Watford Borough Council (ktCO₂)

The council is also tracking progress against the action plan and is integrating sustainability into council-wide business plans.

Progress so far

The strategy includes examples of Watford's progress to date. This includes:

- External Wall Insulation Programmes - By insulating 730 properties, between January 2009 and December 2018, the council has saved 986 tonnes of CO2 emission per annum whilst saving residents £220,000 in heating bills and the N.H.S £2,880,000 in societal costs.
- Beryl Bikes – Launched in 2020, this is the first council bike share scheme in Hertfordshire, helping to reduce road traffic, CO2 emissions and air pollution. When fully rolled out it will comprise up to 200 pedal bikes and 100 e-bikes at 70 locations across the borough.
- Demand Rapid Transport –Seven small fifteen-seater buses from ArrivaClick will provide a flexible bus service that responds to demand from passengers. Due to launch in 2020.
- Electric vehicle infrastructure – There are currently EV chargers in ten council-owned locations, with chargers planned for six more sites and a further five sites identified.
- 'Travel Watford' app – Launched in 2020, this brings together all of Watford's transport options to help people choose the best options based on cost, waiting time and environmental impact.
- Food waste – the council plans to introduce a weekly separate food waste collection in 2020 and to reduce the general black bin waste to bi-weekly. Research shows that around 70% of

household waste can be recycled and, to help improve recycling rates, 248 out of 326 local authorities (76%) across England now collect residual waste fortnightly or less frequently.

- Rediscovering the river Colne – A 10-year project launched in 2019 that aims to bring eight different sections of the River Colne into the public realm and attract back the original biodiversity of the river and its banks including plants, fish, birds and insects and other species.