

Building a Sustainable Community



Sustainability is about integrating and balancing the often competing economic, social and environmental needs of the area. It involves thinking about the future, caring for the environment, improving quality of life and encouraging greater community participation.

Working towards sustainability is part of the Woking Borough Council corporate commitment. The Council has developed a series of policies and procedures, including the Climate

Change Strategy and a sustainability checklist, which helps to move this agenda forward.



The Climate Change Strategy for Woking

Woking has adopted a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy on a scale that is likely to meet the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution targets of 60% reduction of CO₂ equivalent emissions by 2050 and 80% by 2100.

The strategy covers the whole spectrum of the Borough's energy uses: power, heat, water, waste disposal and transport for local authority, home and business users. Sustainability issues are at the heart of this strategy. The strategy also sets out a number of measures that will enable the Borough to adapt more successfully to changes in our climate.

The Woking Sustainability Checklist

Developed in partnership with the active Local Agenda 21 Group, the checklist encompasses the main themes of sustainable development.

1. Minimise resource use and waste.
2. Minimise pollution.
3. Accentuate biodiversity and access to the natural environment.
4. Encourage a strong and diverse local economy.
5. Encourage employment opportunities with good working conditions.
6. Meet local needs locally.
7. Promote good physical and mental health and treat poor health.
8. Promote equality in health.
9. Encourage opportunities for education and information.
10. Encourage personal safety and property security.
11. Access to affordable, balanced diet.
12. Provision of appropriate housing.
13. Access to transport that does not rely on the car.
14. Access to informal leisure opportunities.
15. Encourage opportunities to be part of the local community.
16. Accentuate features which contribute to Woking's pride of place.
17. Encourage opportunities for decision making.
18. Promote equality.

Sustainable development is a cross-cutting issue which looks to all areas of the Council to play their part in meeting the Council's corporate objectives. There is a small team of Officers who are able to

advise and give information on sustainability issues where appropriate.



The Borough Council can effect sustainability in two main ways. Firstly by the services it provides and promotes and secondly by the behaviour and practice of its staff while at work. In order to assist staff in improving the Council's own sustainability performance, many schemes have been introduced.

Some examples of what is being done

From an environmental perspective Woking Borough Council is widely recognised as being the most energy efficient local authority in the country. In 2000, Woking was granted the Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of its groundbreaking approach to sustainability - Woking is the only local authority honoured with Britain's most coveted industry award. This award was gained in respect of its Energy Services activities in the development of local Sustainable Community Energy Systems.

It has introduced a comprehensive recycling scheme for its own waste and has a detailed policy on purchasing. In October 2000, Woking Borough Council introduced its own Staff Travel Plan for Council staff. Proposals such as car sharing, encouraging cycling and working from home are designed to result in a measurable reduction in the number of journeys and miles undertaken by officers and reduce vehicle usage by at least 10% over 5 years, in turn reducing CO₂ equivalent emissions. This is to be revised under the Climate Change Strategy to include all Council owned vehicles and vehicles on Council business to be low carbon by 2010/11.



A key issue facing not just Woking Borough but all local authorities, is that of fast filling landfill sites. In an effort to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill sites, the Council is seeking to achieve an integrated holistic approach to waste management. The strategy includes: waste prevention and reduction education programmes; material reclamation facilities (MRFs); anaerobic digestion; the thermal treatment of gasification; and fuel cell CHP technology. The strategy seeks to achieve a state of Zero Waste while increasing recycling and recovery targets and importantly, reducing waste sent to landfill.