



Generic Environmental Policy Template

A tool for Town and Parish Councils to develop environmental policy(ies)

October 2020

Environment Service

Dear colleagues,

From the climate emergency to single use plastics to the decline of once common wildlife, environmental concerns are, quite rightly, pushing their way to the forefront of our minds. We've been hearing that many of you are keen to do the right thing but, as T&PCs, you don't all have the resources needed to develop your own environmental policies.

With this in mind, based on previous work done by Wadebridge Town Council and with the help of fellow CALC members, we've put together the 'Generic Environmental Policy Template'. This is a comprehensive spread of 'best' environment policies which can help local councils clarify position, promote action and secure good outcomes on key issues. The idea is that you use the template to pick and choose the policies which are relevant and/or priorities in your area and adapt them to create your own policy document.

We want to be clear that the Generic Environmental Policy Template should not be regarded as an instructions manual for devolved assets or, indeed, as a reflection of Cornwall Council's activities or policies to date. We recognise that Cornwall Council still has much to do to address the ecological emergency, and we also acknowledge the fantastic work going on locally in your wards to deliver environmental growth.

We hope that by working with you to share ideas, resources and expertise, together we can improve Cornwall's environment for people and for wildlife.

Best wishes,

Councillor Rob Nolan
Portfolio holder for Environment and Public Protection

Councillor Edwina Hannaford
Portfolio holder for Climate Change and Neighbourhoods

Generic Environmental Policy Template

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Section 1 - Introduction to the Generic Environmental Policy Template

1.1 This document provides a template to guide to those Town and Parish Councils (T&PCs) who wish to develop their own environmental policy (ies).

1.2 The template draws together an aspirational spread of 'best' environmental policies to help T&PCs clarify position, promote action, and secure positive outcomes on key environmental issues. It draws on the good work already developed by Wadebridge Town Council.

1.3 It is specifically for T&PCs who wish to develop their own policy response to environmental issues, but who may have limited capacity and/or technical expertise.

1.4 T&PCs can use the template to pick and choose whichever policies are relevant and/or priorities for their area.

1.5 T&PCs can use the suggested policies word for word - or amend as they see appropriate.

1.6 The template is for guidance only.

1.7 A separate document, the 'Generic Environmental Policy Template for Local Groups' is being developed to support partner organisations and community groups.

1.8 For further information about embedding environment and social considerations into council decision making, see the 'decision wheel' (pg. 18) at the end of Section 3.

Section 2 - The Generic Environmental Policy Template (an example document)

Set out as an 'example' Environmental Policy document, the following section is a template for individual environmental policies. T&PCs can use both the format and content (in part or in full) to develop their own policy document.



This symbol denotes where additional information can be found in Section 3

{COVER PAGE}

XXX INSERT NAME XXX

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL

XXX INSERT LOGO XXX

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Adopted at Full Council on: DATE

Minute Reference: XXXX

Policy Review Date: DATE

XXX INSERT NAME XXX
TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 XXXX Town/Parish Council recognises that a healthy environment is fundamental to the prosperity and wellbeing of our local community. The Council acknowledges that whilst our activities may have adverse effects on the environment, we can take steps to minimise those impacts.

1.2 The Council considers that the environment is important and will comply with and, where possible, exceed all environmental regulations, laws and codes of practice, as applicable.

1.3 The Council will make a positive contribution to environmental growth by protecting and enhancing the local and global environment.

2. AIMS OF POLICY

The aims of the XXX Town/Parish Council Environmental Policy are:

- To increase environmental growth across Town/Parish responsibilities and assets for the benefit of the local community.
- To promote the importance and value of a quality environment, and to support local people in their enjoyment of it.
- To carry out our work in an efficient way that minimises or eliminates its adverse impact on our environment.
- To promote the development of a Circular Economy

3. LIST OF POLICIES

i. CLIMATE CHANGE

The Town/Parish Council has declared a climate emergency (or will commit to a vote on) and pledges to be fully carbon neutral by 2030. We have/will set out plans for immediate and long-term actions to reach this goal which include:

- Encourage staff switch off electrical equipment and unnecessary lights when not in use
- Encourage staff to close windows and external doors when heating is on
- Encourage staff to minimise the use of electric heaters and fans
- Introduce phased replacement of LED bulbs in Council premises
- Introduce phased replacement of electrical equipment used on Council premises with products of maximum energy efficiency rating
- Switch to 100% renewable energy tariffs for electricity on Council premises
- Phased replacement of non-renewable heating sources (oil, gas fired systems) with renewables
- Invest in electric car charging points
- Retrofit buildings with energy saving measures (glazing, roof insulation)
- Introduce natural climate change solutions (such as tree planting and rewilding) on Council assets
- Undertake an audit of current Council emissions
- Agree measures to track the Council's carbon footprint over time

For those Councils which have voted against declaring a climate change emergency or may not be thinking about bringing a vote to Council in the near future, suggested policy wording could read:

'The Council understands the effects of climate change are potentially damaging to the local community and commits to minimising its own impact by undertaking measures (and include actions listed above).'



For more information including examples of local climate action plans, see Section 3

ii. NATURE & WILDLIFE

The Town/Parish Council is committed to increasing opportunities for nature to thrive on the assets it owns or manages. Environmental growth will be achieved by:

- Protecting and enhancing the quality and extent of the natural environment in XXXX
- Supporting the conservation of trees, hedgerows, ponds, streams and coastal habitats
- Managing Council assets (including public rights of way, coastal areas, play areas, playing fields, and verges) in a manner that protects and increases biodiversity
- Introducing environmental growth opportunities and activities, as appropriate, on Council assets
- Banning the release of balloon/sky lantern from Council land and events



For more information about funding, environmental growth actions and the St.Piran virtual map, see Section 3

iii. PESTICIDE USE

The Town/Parish Council will cease/is committed to phasing out the use of pesticides on assets we own or manage (with the exception of use for the control of Schedule 9 plants under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, such as Japanese Knotweed, or where it is used to reduce material risks to asset integrity).



For further guidance on going pesticide free, go to Section 3

iv. SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The Town/Parish Council will:

- Promote and support modern working practices, such as remote working, amongst staff and councillors
- Encourage members and officers to car-share, where possible, when a car journey must be made on Council business
- Promote and support the use of cycling, public footpaths and public transport
- Ensure all Council vehicles are serviced and maintained to a high standard
- The use of electric powered vehicles will be pursued where this is a workable alternative



For information on sustainable travel, see Section 3

v. WATER MANAGEMENT

The Town/Parish Council is committed to responsible water management and conservation throughout its operations, which include:

- Encouraging staff, allotment holders and hirers to use water efficiently on Council premises
- Where possible, utilising water butts as a non-drinking water source
- Ensuring staff and users are aware of which materials can be disposed of in waste water
- Promoting and supporting natural solutions to reduce/reuse surface water run-off in the Town/Parish



For information on which items can be safely disposed of down the drain, see Section 3

vi. WASTE & RECYCLING

The Town/Parish Council will:

- Keep waste to a minimum by preventing, reusing, recycling or recovering waste
- Ensure waste is sorted, stored and disposed of appropriately
- Cease use of single-use plastics on Council premises and events
- Recycle all recyclable waste generated at Council premises and events
- Promote and encourage recycling across the Town/Parish
- Use recyclable, compostable and/or recycled products on Council premises
- Reduce the production of non-recyclable resources such as laminated or plastic based publicity material
- Minimise the amount of printing and minimise the amount of waste paper
- Observe our duty of care conscientiously within our waste contracts
- Utilise electronic communications; councillors to use an opt-in scheme for printing paper documents
- Minimise pollution and prevent where possible (including light, noise, solids, liquids and chemicals)
- Use composting facilities at relevant operated amenities including allotments and cemeteries



For more information about recycling in Cornwall, see Section 3

vii. DEVELOPMENT

The Town/Parish Council will:

- Support planning applications where the applicant can demonstrate biodiversity net gain

- Be mindful of Policy Statements set out in Cornwall's Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2) (*for coastal authorities*)



For information about biodiversity net gain and SMP2, see Section 3

viii. RESPONSIBLE & SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

The Town/Parish Council will:

- Source materials and services locally so long as the requirements for value for money and quality are met
- Ensure that catering produce, including tea/coffee in offices, is plant-based and sourced from local, organic, fair trade (or other recognised certification schemes)
- Ensure that timber, or similar products, used by the Council will be from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified sources
- Ensure that consumables used on Council premises (such as cleaning products and inks) are eco-friendly
- Ensure that procurement of goods and services are weighted appropriately to encourage local suppliers thereby promoting the Circular Economy



For information about sustainable procurement, see Section 3

ix. AWARENESS, LOBBYING & PARTNERSHIPS

The Town/Parish Council will:

- Promote awareness of, and information about, environmental issues within the community
- Support, and act as a voice for, local environmental concerns within the community

- Ensure that all individuals involved in the organisation (including contractors) are aware of their responsibilities in implementing this environmental policy
- Work with partners, where appropriate, to increase environmental growth within the Town/Parish

x. ENERGY USE

The Town/Parish Council will:

- Undertake an audit of its existing energy use
- Produce a plan on how the Council's energy use can be reduced
- Procure energy from sustainable sources
- Maximise use of wind and solar energy on its premises
- Promote use of renewable energy in the Town/Parish



For information about switching to green energy and reducing energy use, see Section 3

xi. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The Town/Parish Council will:

- Undertake an audit of the materials and services used by the Council
- Develop policies that encourage the development of a Circular Economy in the Town/Parish
- Promote and encourage the use of local suppliers in procurement policies



For information about the circular economy, see Section 3

4. REVIEW

This policy and its application will be subject to annual review to ensure that it continues to reflect the aims and objectives of XXX Council and promotes continuous environmental improvement throughout the Council's operations.

Section 3 – Supplementary information



CLIMATE

In response to declaring a climate emergency, Cornwall Council has produced its **Climate Change Action Plan**, found here;

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/40176082/climate-change-action-plan.pdf>

For an excellent example of an adopted **local climate action plan**, see Helston's here;

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/41106932/helston-climate-action-plan-september-2019.pdf>

For a short video about **nature climate solutions**;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9mjbzqqA_M&feature=emb_title

To find out about Forest for Cornwall (F4C) **funding for support community-based projects** that help to increase the tree canopy cover in Cornwall, see;

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/forest-for-cornwall>

For information about undertaking a **carbon footprint calculation**, see;

<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/carbon-footprinting-guide>



NATURE & WILDLIFE

Cornwall Council's Grow Nature Toolkit has a specific area for **T&PCs wanting to know more about environmental growth** – find out more here;

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/grow-nature/get-involved/town-and-parish-councils/>

For simple ideas about **how your local council can do more for nature**, follow the link below to the 'St. Piran virtual map';

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/40529159/environmental-growth-ideas-for-parishes.pdf>

For information about **funding for local nature projects**, see;

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/grow-nature/funding/>



PESTICIDE USE

Cornwall Council's Grow Nature toolkit has **an area dedicated to helping T&PCs go pesticide free** here;

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/grow-nature/about/alternatives-to-pesticides/>

For step-by-step **guidance for local authorities looking to go pesticide-free** see;

https://issuu.com/pan-uk/docs/pft_a_toolkit_for_local_authorities?e=28041656/43992989



SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

For a charity's perspective about **supporting car-free travel**;

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/>



WATER MANAGEMENT

South West Water runs several **campaigns to use reduce water loss, increase efficiency and protect Cornwall's rivers and seas**. You could use their 'Top Tips', 'Think-sink' and 'Love your loo' resources to educate staff and local users;

<https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/save-water/top-tips/>

<https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/advice-and-services/your-wastewater/think-sink>

<https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/advice-and-services/your-wastewater/love-your-loo>



WASTE & RECYCLING

Materials such as paper, cardboard, furniture, household metals and plastics, glass, electrical equipment, batteries, aerosols, green waste are collected by recycling services in Cornwall. **Household recyclate** is collected as part of Cornwall Council's domestic recycling service – your residents can find out more, including what can (and can't) be recycled here;

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/>

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/recycling-collections/find-out-what-goes-in-each-container/>

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/28556127/plastics-recycling-poster-web.pdf>

Some wastes which aren't collected by the kerbside scheme can still be recycled at retail outlets, recycling banks and at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC), see; <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/household-waste-and-recycling-centres/>

However, **waste and recyclate generated by T&PCs will be collected by licensed commercial waste companies**. The range of items recycled, and where they end up, depends on the service offered by your individual provider; <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/commercial-waste/>



DEVELOPMENT

For more information about **biodiversity net gain** in Cornwall see; <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/planning-policy-guidance/biodiversity-net-gain/>

Cornwall's Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) is here; <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/countryside/estuaries-rivers-and-wetlands/flood-risk/coastal-erosion-and-shoreline-management/shoreline-management-plans/shoreline-management-plan-2011-smp2/SMP2>



RESPONSIBLE & SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

For some **key questions on sustainable procurement** see; <https://atwork.wwf.ca/five-sustainability-questions-for-procurement-professionals/>



ENERGY USE

For tips about how to **reduce energy use and switching suppliers**, see; <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change/switching-green-energy-cheaper> <https://inews.co.uk/news/environment/how-to-reduce-your-energy-consumption-50-simple-ways-to-cut-bills-and-reduce-emissions-264785>



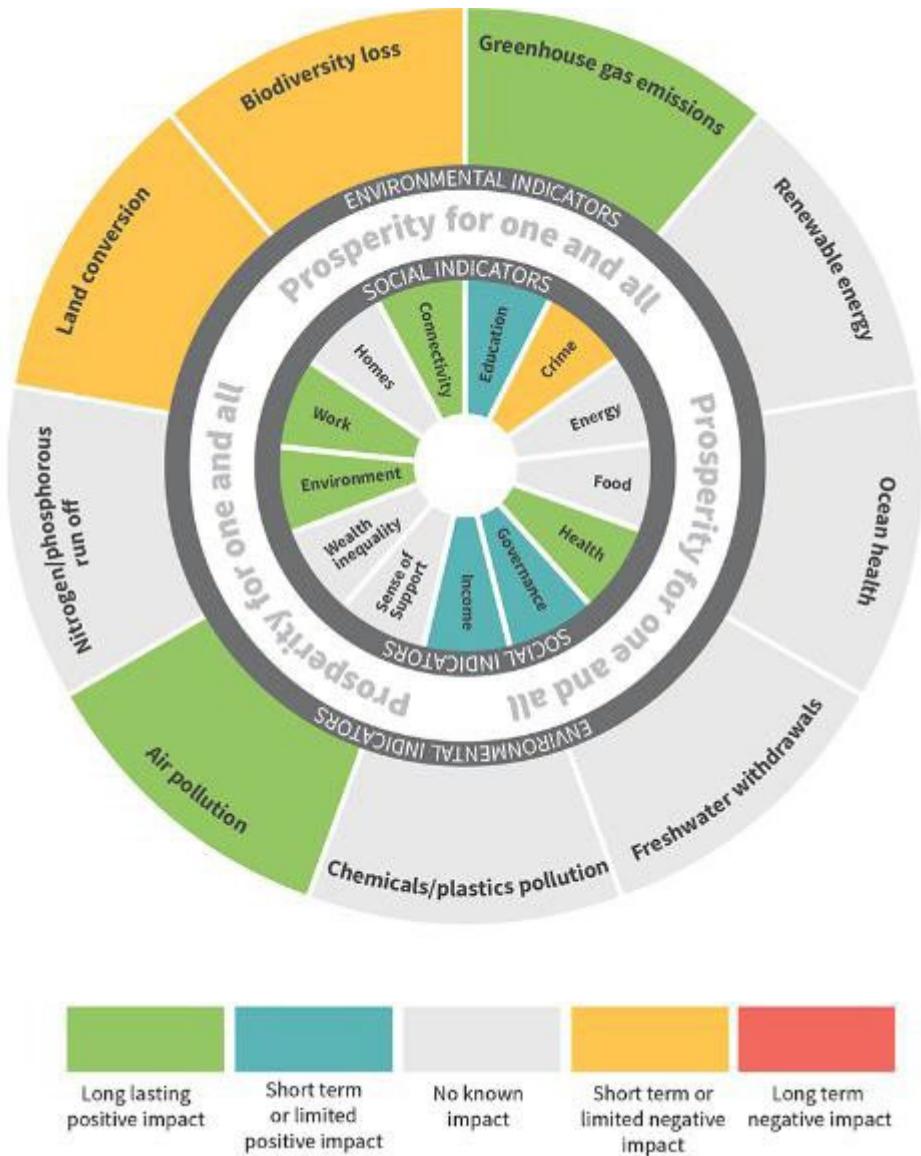
CIRCULAR ECONOMY

For an introduction to the **circular economy** see;

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/about-us/about/wrap-and-circular-economy>

*EMBEDDING ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING INTO COUNCIL OPERATIONS

A new tool, based on the [Kate Raworth Doughnut Economics model](#), can help local authorities with decision-making. The wheel below, which is used by Cornwall Council's cabinet, helps to show how projects and decisions affect the environment and people. For further information, follow this [link](#).



For any queries relating to environmental growth, please contact Cornwall Council's Environmental Growth Team at grow-nature@cornwall.gov.uk
