

Climate Change Strategy

HARLOW COUNCIL

Summary Version, 2025



What is Climate Change?

Climate Change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, but since the 1800s, **human activities** have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels (like coal, oil and gas), which produce **heat-trapping gases**.



Net Zero is the balance between the amount of **greenhouse gases** that's produced, and the amount removed from the atmosphere. It can be achieved through a combination of emission reduction and removal. The UK is committed to bringing all greenhouse gas emissions to **net zero by 2050**.

Why do we need a Climate Change Strategy?

In 2019, the council declared a **climate emergency**, which set out several climate change pledges. This was followed by an agreed target to hit **Net Zero by 2040** and the development of a **Carbon Reduction Plan** to reduce the council's own emissions.

To build on these pledges the council has developed a broader **Climate Change Strategy** for the town as a whole. The strategy sets out how the council can achieve Net Zero through its **own activities** and how it can influence the **wider community** and **local economy** to deliver reductions in emissions for the town.



The Climate Change Strategy outlines several **actions, projects and proposals**, some of which require further work to be developed. It also identifies difficult issues with delivering some of the actions. Below is a summary of the **seven key objectives**.

The full strategy document can be viewed online at <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/environment-and-animals/climate-and-sustainability> or by scanning this **QR code**.



Objective 1: Council buildings, land, vehicles and services

This objective focuses on the **council's operational buildings and vehicles** which it uses for providing services to the public (including HTS and other contracts). This section also looks at **improving staff ways of working** and how we interact and communicate with residents.



Suggested actions include: replacing as many council/HTS vehicles to electric, making engagement with residents more interactive and digital, planting more trees, council staff to travel and work more sustainably, improving the energy efficiency of council buildings (insulation, LED lighting, cladding).

Objective 2: Homes and the built environment

This objective focusses on how we will make **residential homes** and other **private buildings**, new and existing, more sustainable and energy efficient. Ensuring future homes are even **more sustainable**, both during their construction and through their lifetime, without relying on fossil fuels and unsustainable methods.

Suggested actions include: retrofitting council homes to make them more energy efficient, directing residents to information on retrofitting homes or installing renewable energy measures (heat pumps or solar panels), ensuring new homes are more sustainable (increased cycle parking, better biodiversity and improved drainage.)



Objective 3: Reduce, reuse and recycle

This objective considers how we **consume and use resources**, identifying ways to reduce waste, reuse resources and recycle. The responsibility of waste management is shared across many partners including the **Council and County Council. Businesses**

also have responsibility for how they minimise, recycle and dispose of waste.

Suggested actions include: replacing bins in public areas with mixed recycling bins, waste management plans submitted with planning applications, engagement activities with businesses and community on waste, recycling, reducing food waste, home composting, ensuring a sustainable waste collection contract is in place.

Objective 4: Stewardship of natural environment

A large majority of **green spaces in Harlow** are owned by the council, which therefore has control over their **maintenance and use**. As the local planning authority, the council can also manage how future green spaces are created and maintained and how they can contribute towards mitigating climate change and **increasing biodiversity**.



Suggested actions include: additional tree planting and reviewing the way the council/others maintain green spaces, introducing sustainable play equipment, preparing strategies to protect trees and opportunities for green spaces to grow wild, looking at measures to improve wetland and woodland areas.

Objective 5: Modal choice and sustainable transport

The aim of this objective is to provide a **viable sustainable transport system** for Harlow to support people who wish to choose buses, cycling and walking for journeys. This will help **reduce pollution, reach net zero targets, provide more reliable journeys and improve the health and wellbeing of residents**. This objective supports the Transport Strategy for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.



Suggested actions include: delivering walking and cycling improvement schemes, a new sustainable transport corridor system, electric charging points across council car parks/Harlow Innovation Park, improved bus station, engage with businesses to help understand and influence logistics and distribution and parking reviews.

Objective 6: Businesses and green economy

This objective aims to **support local businesses** wishing to become more sustainable especially **small to medium sized businesses** (less than 250 employees) which make up 99% in Harlow. Businesses should also consider the sustainable transport actions identified in Objective 5. It also considers **future green skills and jobs**.

Suggested actions include: the council continuing to support and engage with businesses and use its communication channels to sign-post businesses to available grants, support, up to date guidance, strengthen the skills offering for retrofit, Modern Methods of Construction and maintenance of net zero technology.

Objective 7: Influencing local community/partners and stakeholders

It is important that the council takes the lead in encouraging **communities, partners and stakeholders to reduce their emissions**. Actions set out in the strategy will aim to



establish **good practice** for what could be delivered across the district. There are lots of opportunities for the council to **champion net zero and sustainable projects**.

Suggested actions include: ensuring the council's buildings are as efficient and sustainable as they can be, become more carbon literate as an authority to support the community, develop policies that deliver sustainable and efficient buildings in the future and a network that supports cycling, walking and public transport.

Monitoring the Climate Change Strategy

The Climate Change Strategy will be reviewed **every five years** to ensure its effectiveness and to reflect any changes in **government legislation or guidance**, or any **changes/advances in technologies**.

Climate Change is an important component of the Council's corporate strategy which already monitors certain climate indicators. The Council will continue to **monitor its own emissions** from fuel and energy use and update the **Carbon Reduction Plan**.