

Local Climate and Nature Action Plan toolkit:

guidance for town and parish councils



Contents

Local Climate and Nature Action Plan toolkit	2
1. Introduction	2
2. The Climate and Nature Emergency	2
3. Why the climate crisis matters	2
4. Why we must tackle the climate and nature crisis at the same time	3
5. Why local action is so important for a global problem	3
6. Developing a Local Climate and Nature Action Plan	3
7. Create your community vision	10
8. Partnerships and stakeholders	10
9. Stakeholders	11
10. Communications	11
11. Ownership of land and buildings	12
12. Mapping	12
13. Funding	13
14. Further information	13
15. Submitting your Climate and Nature Action Plan	13
16. Contact	14
Appendix 1 – Year on year record of basic data example	15
Appendix 2 – Calculate your carbon emissions	16
Appendix 3 - Frampton Cotterell Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan	17
Web links – information and tools	18
Weblinks - funding	18

Local Climate and Nature Action Plan toolkit

1. Introduction

Town and parish councils have great opportunities to connect and engage with local people and businesses in climate and nature action as well as making changes to their own operations, land and buildings to support better outcomes for people and planet.

This toolkit has been developed to help your town or parish council to create a simple local **Climate and Nature Action Plan** for your organisation and community.

It will help identify your starting point as an organisation and community with the tools to plan your journey step-by-step, year-on-year to reduce your carbon emissions, prepare for the local impacts of a changing climate and protect and restore nature. This toolkit can be used alongside our Local Nature Action Plan toolkit.

In July 2019 South Gloucestershire Council pledged to provide the leadership to enable South Gloucestershire to become carbon neutral by 2030, to prepare for the local impacts of a changing climate and to protect and restore nature. See the council annual climate action plan at <u>www.southglos.gov.uk/climatechange</u>.

2. The Climate and Nature Emergency

Scientists are agreed that the earth is getting hotter, and we need to do something quickly.

Average global temperatures have now increased by 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels. This is mostly caused by humans burning fossil fuels for industry, transport, and domestic use.

The speed and scale of the temperature rise matters because it is causing big changes in global weather, sea level rise, rainfall patterns, plant and animal life, food production, water availability and human health. The amount of global heating which takes place now and in the future, depends on the total quantity of greenhouse gas pollution.

There are a number of different greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. Of these gases, carbon dioxide is the largest amount and is the gas we have most control over.

3. Why the climate crisis matters

The climate crisis is already having big impacts on the lives, health, and wellbeing of millions of people around the world.

The local impacts of a changing climate in South Gloucestershire may not yet be fully visible but they are increasingly going to affect us. These will include flooding, extreme weather events such as high temperatures, water shortages, food shortages, increased pests and diseases and disruption to services and infrastructure. Climate change will also impact on our mental and physical health and well-being.

We are living through a time described as the 6th Mass Extinction, with nature disappearing faster than ever before. Climate change isn't the only cause of nature decline, but it is one factor alongside pollution, pesticide use, changes in land use and habitat loss, invasive species, and direct exploitation such as over-fishing.

We are experiencing:

- Globally 60% decline in wild animals
- Nationally UK 95% declines in wildlife favourites like hedgehogs
- Locally South Gloucestershire 96% decline in swifts and starlings

You can find out more about the local, national and global impacts of the changing climate with our free <u>Climate and Nature Emergency online training module</u>.

4. Why we must tackle the climate and nature crisis at the same time

A healthy local natural environment can protect us from the worst local impacts of a changing climate by helping to reduce flooding, provide shade and wind buffering. We rely on nature for food, water, clean air and waste decomposition as well as supporting our mental health and well-being.

Natural environments like salt marshes, trees, peat bogs and oceans also capture and store carbon (carbon sinks), helping to reduce the amount released into the atmosphere.

For example: Where nature is degraded, it is harder to tackle the climate crisis without shading and cooling from trees and other vegetation. Take up of walking and cycling initiatives is greatly reduced in high temperatures and reliance on air conditioning in homes and cars increases, which in turn increases carbon emissions.

5. Why local action is so important for a global problem

The challenges of the climate and nature crisis need our support on all levels local, regional, national, and global level.

At a local level we have the most power to influence our surroundings. Many of the solutions to climate and nature problems such as reduced emissions and a healthy natural world can come from strong supportive communities with local services. Thinking and acting in a local setting is a good starting point.

Communities can also come together to act on regional, national, and global climate and nature issues.

6. Developing a Local Climate and Nature Action Plan

There are a few stages to developing a Local Climate and Nature Action Plan.

Develop a plan for your organisation – by looking at:

• **Carbon emissions**: town and parish council emissions include emissions from your buildings and transport, lighting etc.

- **Preparing for the local impacts of a changing climate**: look at your own estate and operations for ways to reduce impact and cost and protect staff.
- **Protect and restore nature:** identify your own land holdings where you can protect and restore nature (see Local Nature Action Plan toolkit).

Develop a plan for your area – by looking at:

- **Carbon emissions**: area-wide emissions include those from residents, from homes, businesses and organisations based in your area.
- **Preparing for the local area impacts of a changing climate:** look at steps to reduce flooding, local food growing, shading, and cooling areas etc.
- **Protect and restore nature**: identify land across your area, both what you own and what is owned by others, where you can protect and restore nature and engage residents. If your community has already produced a <u>Local Nature Action Plan</u>, this guide simply provides you with the climate focused side of the work.

Key steps overview:

Step 1: Measure your starting point

- Calculate your organisations' carbon emissions baseline (see Appendix 1),
- Calculate your area wide emissions baseline with <u>Impact | Community carbon</u> <u>calculator</u>
- Assess the likely local risks to your area from a changing climate using national and local information.

Step 2: Create a plan of prioritised actions for your organisation

- Identify priority actions such as insulating buildings, staff travel plan, shading and cooling measures
- Use the Local Nature Action Plan toolkit to develop the nature aspects of your plan
- Identify cost budget or funding needs,
- Permissions
- Carry out actions
- Review plan and data annually

Step 3: Create a plan of prioritised actions for your area

- Identify priority actions to reduce risks to your residents and area such as an energy efficiency information campaign, growing workshops, community renewables
- Use the Local Nature Action Plan Toolkit to develop the nature aspects of your plan
- Identify cost budget or funding needs
- Permissions
- Carry out actions
- Review plan and data annually

Step 1: Measure your starting point Calculate your starting emissions

Gather the following information:

- Annual energy use from your energy bills (electricity, gas and any other fuels)
- Transport and vehicle energy consumption from fuel receipts
- Renewable energy (annual generation) from annual statement
- Annual water use from water bills
- Waste (food, recyclable, non-recyclable) from your waste collection contractor
- **Contracted services emissions -** where organisations provide services to you then they will have their own carbon emissions and you can potentially influence them to reduce their emissions).

Each year you can plot your emissions on a graph to show the progress you are making as an organisation and as an area.

Record and plot your annual consumption information using the spreadsheet layout on Appendix 1.

Work out your emissions using the **Energy use and CO2** calculation worksheet on **Appendix 2**. This will help automatically generate a figure for the carbon emissions of your organisation. You will need to update the greenhouse gas conversion factor figures provided by government each year. If you need support to help you complete this spreadsheet email <u>climate.emergency@southglos.gov.uk.</u>

Assess the risks to your organisation from the local impacts of a changing climate - what is your organisation starting point?

Top climate risks in the UK:

- flooding and coastal change
- health and well-being from high temperatures
- water shortages
- natural capital (plant and animal life)
- food production and trade
- pests and diseases and invasive non-native species

How these may affect your organisation and local area

Geographical - are you in an increased risk area for flooding e.g. the coast, next to a river or densely urban?

Transport - is transport essential to deliver your services? Are any routes you rely on likely to be impacted by flooding etc?

Buildings - are your buildings exposed to excessive wind/ sun? well ventilated? insulated?

Staff - can they do their jobs remotely if necessary? do they need to work outdoors? What about extreme events – heat wave etc?

Service users – (are your service users more likely to be vulnerable to a changing climate? Elderly, young children (under 5), people with pre-existing health conditions?

Organisation likely risks from a changing climate example				
Risk relating to	Risk type	Details	Mitigation measure	Review impact
Geography, transport	Flooding	Town hall low lying and vulnerable to surface water flooding	Increase vegetation to absorb flood water	Fewer overflowing drains reports
Buildings, staff, and service users	Overheating	Village hall large south facing windows – no curtains/blinds. Heats up in summer and used regularly by toddler group.	Add in some form of shading such as shutters or blinds etc.	Average summer temperature in hall down by 2°C

Create your plan - Carbon emissions reduction plan for your town or parish council as an organisation

- Use your data and carbon emissions starting calculation to identify priority areas to reduce emissions for your organisation and operations e.g. energy efficiency, renewables and low carbon transport measures.
- Identify key activities that you will undertake each year and then measure your impact. You could split these activities up into short terms and longer-term measures.
- Larger measures that have cost implications may take time to plan and raise funds for such as replacement of heating systems for example.

Energy use

It is likely that any buildings you own will make up the bulk of your direct carbon emissions due to the energy you use to heat them. To tackle energy use in buildings, start by looking at approaches to reducing your use.

Heating and hot water use are generally the greatest sources of energy consumption in buildings.

No cost measures (some examples)

- Make sure you have accurate up-to-date meter readings for your energy bills (electricity and gas). This will help you work out how much energy you use over time you can divide the number of units by the number of days for an average daily rate.
- Adjust your thermostat heating needs to be 18°C for healthy adults and 21°C for young children, elderly people, and those with specific health conditions.
- Use your heating controls to set a timer for your heating and hot water. Hot water must be heated to a minimum 65°C to avoid the presence of legionella bacteria.
- Run 'Switch off' campaigns to remind people to switch off lighting and appliances.

Low-cost measures (some examples)

- Replace lighting with low energy lighting (LEDs)
- Insulate pipes
- Replace old appliances such as refrigerators and freezers this can be a trade-off between reducing energy consumption and not wasting a working appliance. If you have an old appliance, consider how to use it more efficiently before replacing it e.g., freezers work more efficiently if kept full.

Higher cost measures (some examples)

- Replace your space and hot water heating system*
- Renewable energy for your buildings solar panels and batteries, biomass boiler etc. It is worth enquiring about national grants and loan initiatives that can sometimes assist with these types of costs. Find out more at <u>Funding the Public Sector | Salix Finance</u>.

***Note:** it is advisable to seek an assessment of the whole building in terms of the current energy use and the energy use profile (what you need energy for and when). This will help identify what replacement systems may work best for your building overall. Some energy use surveyors will only provide a quote for the technology they install. A gas heating engineer will recommend a gas boiler, whereas a heat pump installer will recommend a heat pump.

A simple first step is to get a basic non-domestic energy assessment carried out on your building to provide an overall assessment of the space heating requirements, insulation levels etc.

Transport

No and low-cost measure (example)

• Reduce the number and length of journeys - can they be avoided or are there other low carbon ways to do these journeys?

Higher cost measures (examples)

- Provide cycling or walking facilities for staff journeys (if appropriate)
- Replace existing vehicles (cargo bike, switch petrol and diesel vehicles to EVs

Starting with no and low-cost measures will help reduce costs to your organisation. This is a great message to get more people to support and act on changes. Likewise, changes that bring multiple benefits to health and well-being and quality of life are great to prioritise.

Resilience to the local impacts of a changing climate

Use your starting climate resilience assessment to identify priority areas to increase your organisational climate resilience

No cost measures (examples)

- Use existing curtains/blinds to prevent heat being absorbed into the building in the summer and reduce energy use in the winter (close them half an hour before dusk)
- Consider service adjustments for summer/winter peaks or extreme weather events e.g. grounds maintenance staff to work earlier in the day during peak summer months etc

Low-cost measures (examples)

- Increase planting of vegetation including grasses, shrubs, plants, and trees for multiple benefits; to slow flooding and wind speed, provide cooling and shading, support biodiversity etc. the right plant or tree in the right place is key
- Add shutters to buildings

Higher-cost measures (examples)

- Install passive or sustainable ventilation system
- Replace concrete with permeable paving

Step 2: Create a plan of prioritised actions for your organisation

Climate a	Climate and Nature Action Plan – town and parish council organisational plan				
Year	Carbon emissions reduction	Adaptation	Nature	Total cost	Outcomes:
2023/24	Switch off campaign (Cost: £)	Fit water saving tap fittings in all council owned buildings (Cost: Free from water company)	Install swift boxes on Town Hall (Cost: £)		Emissions reduced by X Recorded flooding damage X Biodiversity increased X
2024/25	Replace lighting with LEDs (Cost: £)	Fit blinds in council office (Cost: £)	Plant bee friendly plants in main flowerbeds (Cost: £)		
2025/26	Replace heating system (end of life): Cost: To raise £)	Replace hard standing with permeable paving (Cost: £)	Green roof on village hall. (Cost: £)		

Step 3: Create a plan of prioritised actions for your area

Use your carbon emissions calculation for your area to identify priority local areas for action e.g. for housing energy use promote local energy advice services.

Use your climate resilience assessment to identify priority areas to increase the resilience of your area to the local impacts of a changing climate e.g. increase shading and cooling measures in local children's playgrounds, increase vegetation on the high street to reduce flooding.

Climate	Climate and Nature Action Plan – Local Area Plan example				
Year	Carbon emissions reduction	Adaptation	Nature	Total cost	Outcomes
2023/24	Promote Warm and Well Energy Advice line (Cost: £) Promote local lift sharing scheme	Plant trees and shrubs in locations requiring additional shade (Cost: £)	Plant bee and insect friendly shrubs (Cost: £)		Emissions reduced by X Recorded flooding damage X Biodiversity increased X
2024/25	Work with community group on local draught proofing service (Cost: £)	Maintain new plants/trees	Develop a new community orchard		
2025/26	Support community solar scheme Cost: To raise £)	Identify and stock a local resilience centre – a location in the community where people can safely go in extreme weather conditions.	Offer growing workshops for residents to learn how to grow vegetables at home.		

7. Create your community vision

Ask your community what changes they would like to see for climate and nature and include them in your plan (if appropriate).

- Provide a notice board and suggestions box
- Develop a picture of the changes you would like to see in your community
- This will help people to swap ideas and to see how they can be involved in these changes to shape the community for good

Example from the Ashden co-benefits toolkit:



8. Partnerships and stakeholders

It is important to have the right support to help you deliver your action plan. Form a small partnership group with key local organisations such as:

- Neighbouring town and parish councils
- In Bloom groups
- Friends of groups
- Sports clubs
- Climate action groups
- Ecological action groups

- Local business
- Resident groups
- Youth groups: scouts, guides, youth clubs
- Local faith groups
- South Gloucestershire Council
- Local nature groups

Include possible partnerships and contacts involved in creating your plan.

Organisation	Role	Key Contact	Telephone	Email
Mothers Union	Outreach			
Local Climate Action Group	Coordinate growing workshops			
Heating and renewables Consultancy	Advice and installation renewables			

Keep the partnership group small, bring on those most able to offer support and advice (remember this is an action plan). Operate as a sub-group to your Town or Parish Council to avoid the need to set up a new committee

9. Stakeholders

To make your action plan successful, you will need to carefully consider who your stakeholders are and the level of interaction you will need with them. Stakeholders are people who have an interest or concern in the plan, so it is important to identify and engage with them to help support your action plan. Use a stakeholder mapping tool to help you understand the level of effort/interaction you need for each of your stakeholders. This will also help to manage your workload.

Example stakeholders

- Town or parish councils
- Ward councillors
- Residents in your area and neighbouring areas
- People who use your buildings, or other sites
- Local businesses
- Special interest groups
- Schools and parents

10. Communications

Communication is probably one of the most important things to consider when designing your Climate and Nature Action Plan. It is important to have a clear plan in place for who will be the main contact, how they will be contacted and who they will keep informed.

To bring people on board with change they must know what the change is and why it has been proposed. Stakeholders must know at the earliest stage so you can bring them along on the change journey with you. A clear communications plan can help people feel involved and prevent a lot of worry through the change.

Stakeholder communications plan example				
Stakeholder	Objectives (action)	Message content	Delivery method	Timeline
Residents	Get more residents growing their own food	Simple tips for growing food at home.	Local News	Spring- Summer
Village hall user groups	Reduce energy consumption in the hall	Switch off campaign	Stickers and posters in the town hall Email to groups	September- March

11. Ownership of land and buildings

Some of the activities you want to influence will require actions on buildings and land in your area. To make these changes you will need to identify where you have the greatest influence.

Keep it simple and accurately map town or parish council ownership, South Gloucestershire Council ownership and private ownership.

- Town or parish council ownership is high influence target more effort here first
- South Gloucestershire Council ownership is medium influence target efforts gradually
- Private ownership (residents, businesses etc.) is **low influence** not a high priority to start with, but you can target communications to enable change here.

Start with your HIGH influence ownership such as town or parish council owned buildings and land.

If you are unsure what land your town and parish council own or lease:

- Speak with your clerk and ex-members of your council
- Check your legal documents for deeds, leases and conveyances
- Use land registry searches

12. Mapping

Create your Climate and Nature Map on a free mapping service like Google My Maps.

You can use it to identify land ownership, add photos of key features such as trees or benches and input data about how land is managed or will be managed.

The map can be freely shared with residents and other stakeholders to investigate and send you comments and feedback.

Create a baseline map showing your:

- Key buildings
- Public transport links
- Growing spaces
- Sustainable businesses
- Add in your nature map see Local Nature Action Plan toolkit

13. Funding

There are local funding opportunities from:

- Member awarded funding (MAF)
- Community benefit money from nearby developments like solar farms and waste transfer stations such as <u>SUEZ Communities Trust</u>
- <u>Community Infrastructure Levy</u> (CIL)
- <u>S106</u> (off site open space contributions secured through the planning process)
- Sponsorship by residents or business sponsor a tree, pond or square metre of meadow
- External grant funders
- Developers still on nearby development sites
- Public sector decarbonisation funding <u>Funding the Public Sector | Salix Finance</u>
- Find charitable foundations who may support your initiative Find a Funder

Some specific examples include:

- The Ashden Trust
- <u>The Asda Foundation transforming communities and improving lives</u>

14. Further information

Friends of the Earth – suggested actions for town and parish councils - <u>20 actions parish</u> and town councils can take on the climate and nature emergency

<u>Ashden co-benefits toolkit</u> – explains all the social, health and economic benefits that can come from action on the climate and nature crisis. Whilst it is aimed at local authorities, the information can be used at a more local level.

Town and parish councils in South Gloucestershire taking action

15. Submitting your Climate and Nature Action Plan

Once you have completed your draft Climate and Nature Action Plan, you can submit it to the Climate Emergency Team at <u>Climate.Emergency@southglos.gov.uk</u>. The team will review it for you and send any feedback. Depending on workload this could take up to four weeks.

Once your Climate and Nature Action Plan is underway, let us know how you are getting on with an annual update. This document is not a statutory document, it is a guide to help you take action if you choose to do so.

Remember, even the best laid plans may need to change. Make sure your plan is achievable and flexible by starting with small steps that you can learn and build on.

You don't need to achieve everything in the first year, so take a staged approach and spread the work across a realistic timeline.

16. Contact

Climate.Emergency@southglos.gov.uk

We are here to help you achieve your vision for nature where you are. Our resources are limited but we will try to respond to all queries as fast as possible.

Appendix 1 – Year on year record of basic data example

Use this table in a spreadsheet to record your year on year basic energy use data and track your progress.

If you would like us to send you the spreadsheet, email <u>Climate.Emergency@southglos.gov.uk.</u>

Year on Year record of basic data

[Name of town or parish council]		
Annual bill period: [Year]	Annual electricity consumption (Kwh)	Annual gas consumption (Kwh)
Town/parish council buildings		
Name	kwh	kwh
Name	kwh	kwh
Fleet		
Diesel van	ltrs	
Petrol car	ltrs	
Business mileage paid	Mileage	
Renewable Energy Generation		
Solar panels	kwhs generated	
Water consumption * You could also record and monitor this if you wish to	o do so.	
	ltrs	
EXAMPLE:		
Made up town council - 2018/2019	Annual Electricity Consumption (Kwh)	Annual Gas Consumption (Kwh)
Town council buildings	22,747 kwh	N/A
Playing Fields	5,748kwh	N/A
Cemetery	901kwh	N/A

Appendix 2 – Calculate your carbon emissions

Use the table below in a spreadsheet to work out your carbon emissions. Each year you can add in 3 new columns for the next years data. You will need to look up the latest carbon emissions factors for each fuel, record the number of units of energy used and then carry out the Co2 carbon emissions calculation.

Carbon emission factors are provided by the government – e.g. the figures from 2022 are <u>here</u>.

If you would like us to send you the spreadsheet, email Climate.Emergency@southglos.gov.uk.

Fill in the boxes highlighted in yellow with your or	wn data. Details	given are examp	oles only.
	2021/22		
Town council buildings [year]	Emission factor*	Energy usage no. of units	Co2 emissions (Kg CO ² e) = emissions factor x no. of units of energy
Building – town council			
KWh gas (Scope 1)	0.18387		0.00
KWh oil (Scope 1)			
KWh electricity (Scope 2)	0.23314	18,819	4,387.46
Building name - Playing Fields/Cemetery			
KWh gas (Scope 1)	0.18387		0.00
KWh oil (Scope 1)			
KWh electricity (Scope 2)	0.23314	10,325	2,407.17
Total buildings			6,794.63
Fleet vehicles			
Litres Fleet Vehicles Petrol (Scope 1)	2.16802		0.00
Litres Fleet Vehicles Diesel (Scope 1)	2.54603		0.00
Litres Fleet Vehicles Gas Oil (Scope 1)	2.75776		0.00
Electric vehicles mileage	0.23314		
Business mileage paid (Scope 3)	0.28276		0.00
Transmission & distribution losses from electricity	0.02005	29,144	584.34
Total global GHG emissions (kg CO²e) = KgCO ² e totals from buildings + fleet + losses from electricity			7,378.97
Tonnes CO2e = Total global GHG emissions/1000			7.38

Appendix 3 - Frampton Cotterell Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan

Frampton Cotterell Parish Council have completed their Local Climate and Nature Action Plan for 2021-2024. You can see the full document at <u>2021-Local-Climate-and-Nature-Action-Plan-1.pdf</u>



Web links - information and tools

Local nature Action Plan toolkit (South Gloucestershire Council)

<u>Climate Emergency Action Plan (South Gloucestershire Council)</u> <u>http://www.southglos.gov.uk/climatechange</u>

The Big Switch (South Gloucestershire Council)

https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/energy-and-climate-change/the-bigswitch

Online Climate and Nature Emergency training module (South Gloucestershire Council) - https://rise.articulate.com/share/9QiA4S0YBjYOAofoNGOey94j-z-NVTgT

Town and parish councils taking action (South Gloucestershire Council) https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/climate-emergency-community-engagement

Community carbon footprint calculator (Impact) - https://impact-tool.org.uk/

Friends of the Earth - <u>https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/reports/20-actions-parish-and-town-councils-can-take-climate-and-nature-emergency</u>

<u>Carbon emission factors</u> - <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2021</u>

Ashden Trust - https://ashdentrust.org.uk/

Ashden Cobenefits Toolkit - https://cobenefits-toolkit.ashden.org/

Land registry searches - https://www.gov.uk/search-property-information-land-registry

Google My Maps - https://www.google.com/maps/about/mymaps/

Weblinks - funding

<u>Section 106 funding (South Gloucestershire Council)</u> <u>https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/section-106-funding-to-support-outdoor-sports-provision-for-children-and-young-people</u>

Suez Communities Trust - https://www.suezcommunitiestrust.org.uk/

Enovert Community Trust Funding - https://www.enovert.co.uk/enovert-communitytrust/funding/

Find a funder - https://www.getgrants.org.uk/funding-finder/

The Asda Foundation - https://www.asdafoundation.org/

Funding the public sector (Salix) - https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/Salix_Funding

Member Awarded Funding (South Gloucestershire Council)

https://www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/grants/community-grants/memberawarded-funding/

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (South Gloucestershire Council) https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/community-infrastructure-levy-cil