

Environmental Sustainability Strategy **2015 – 2020**



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Foreword



I am pleased to introduce Colchester Borough Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy which provides information about our approach to environmental issues, and identifies what we are aiming to achieve over the next five years.

Colchester Borough Council (CBC) is leading the way in Environmental Sustainability and this has been achieved by working with partners and taking action beyond our statutory duties.

Whilst the strategy sets out the actions Colchester Borough Council will take, it also describes how we intend to work across the services using our resources to work with and influence partners and the private sector to help us achieve our strategic priorities.

Through the delivery of an action plan we will demonstrate how the Council is leading by example by working in a cost effective way, using resources wisely and reducing the environmental impact of our operations.

These are challenging times for local government. The new Environmental Sustainability Strategy will be delivered against a backdrop of a significant reduction in funding for local government. Colchester Borough Council has undergone a transformational review of its services and delivery, and working more sustainably will help us achieve reduction targets set for 2017 when the Council needs to demonstrate zero reliance on local government funding.

The increasing importance of environmental issues means that Colchester Borough Council has a key role to play at a local and regional level in promoting environmental sustainability.

This document should be viewed in conjunction with the Environmental Sustainability Evidence base and delivery plan.

Cllr Tim Young
Portfolio Holder responsible for Environmental Sustainability
Colchester Borough Council

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Introduction

This is Colchester's first Environmental Sustainability Strategy which has been developed to demonstrate how the Council continues to lead the way in environmental sustainability, as well as guide its staff and partners on how to work in the most effective and sustainable way. It sets out a challenging vision for the Council. It has been developed by a project team made up of key people across Colchester Borough Council and its partner organisations, all of whom are strongly committed to delivering local projects and services which work towards national, regional and local targets.

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy demonstrates our commitment to reducing the environmental impact of our core activities and services. The aim of this strategy is to build on the progress already made by the Council; meet key priorities; and set out our plan to work across the Council and with external partners to meet new challenges that we face in the future.

This new Environmental Sustainability Strategy recognises our achievements so far, and takes into account the Council's existing Climate Risk Assessment which provides predictions, risks and potential actions. The Climate Change Projections (outlined in the Essex County Council Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment 2010), and other key documents listed within the evidence base provides information for a realistic forecast and overview of the situation for Colchester. Based on this information, Colchester's Environmental Sustainability Strategy sets out priorities for a period of five years. Some of the projects identified in the delivery plan can be delivered with existing resources. Others will require the identification and approval of additional resources. Several projects will deliver efficiencies for the Council. In the current financial climate of reduced resources for the Council, the Council will need to look carefully at how it uses its financial resources to deliver this strategy.

Global research has shown that at least 50% of all carbon emissions come from buildings. We have 6,103 properties in our housing stock and 47 buildings which include offices and numerous operational sites (including a waste and recycling centre). Therefore, cutting carbon emissions from Council buildings, operations and services becomes our primary priority. Through the strategy delivery plan we will integrate and embed environmental sustainability into activities throughout the Council, and reduce the environmental impact of our operations as well as achieving better value for money for both the Council and our residents.

A reduction in our carbon footprint will also contribute towards the International Kyoto commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% against 1990 levels by 2050.

2. Our vision

Colchester will be a leading sustainable borough by:

- ▶ Demonstrating strong performance in tackling climate change
- ▶ Resource efficiency
- ▶ Environmental protection and enhancement (of both natural and built environments)
- ▶ Sustainable transport
- ▶ Quality of life for all, whilst respecting its special qualities and capacity for growth

3. Challenges

The Climate Change Risk Assessment, supported by our evidence base, found that we have some significant challenges to overcome in order to achieve our vision.

These include:

- ▶ Climate change and unsustainable resources
- ▶ Traffic congestion and air pollution
- ▶ The need to reduce waste and recycle more
- ▶ The risk of both flooding and water scarcity in a changing climate
- ▶ Loss of biodiversity

In addition to this we must recognise the special qualities and distinctiveness of Colchester and its coastline; this means specific challenges for Colchester Borough Council including:

- ▶ Ensuring that development to meet the demand for homes and jobs respects the special qualities and distinctiveness of Colchester
- ▶ Recognising that older buildings have cultural value to society and while their energy performance is sometimes lower than very energy efficient modern buildings they warrant protection and careful handling
- ▶ Protecting Marine Conservation Zones along Colchester's coastline, including the River Blackwater and surrounding areas, which provides a productive mosaic of habitats with Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designations



4. What we have achieved so far

4.1 Services and Projects

We have already developed a number of services and projects across the Council which support environmental sustainability. These include, but are not restricted to:

- ▶ The Cycle Colchester Training and Events Programme
- ▶ Implementing a Transportation Policy linked to new development
- ▶ Colchester Travel Plan Club
- ▶ Colchester Station Travel Plan
- ▶ 'Better Town Centre' focussing on traffic reduction in the town centre
- ▶ Carbon Management Programme
- ▶ Energy Efficiency advice and guidance
- ▶ Food Waste trials and implementation across the borough
- ▶ Reduce, Reuse and Recycle activity
- ▶ Countryside and Country Parks service to protect and enhance local wildlife
- ▶ Working with Essex County Council to promote the Eco-schools project
- ▶ Working with Essex County Council on the Waste busters project, promoting recycling and reuse and composting
- ▶ 'Warm Homes' and projects to reduce fuel poverty
- ▶ Business Green Doctor Project
- ▶ Colchester Borough Council housing stock improvement programme
- ▶ Big Community Switch for residents to access cheaper energy bills
- ▶ Access to energy and tariff switching for Small Medium Enterprises (SME) via the Big Community Switch portal
- ▶ Local Community Zone Teams behaviour change work (such as recycle week)
- ▶ Private Sector Housing promotion of grants and use of enforcement powers
- ▶ Disseminating information from The Carbon Trust and Carbon Action Network (CAN) events
- ▶ Zone Warden Community engagement with regular 'coffee and chat' events to support more vulnerable residents with energy efficiency in the home
- ▶ Energy Efficiency training for frontline staff, local organisations and voluntary groups
- ▶ 3000 Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) completed on our own housing stock in 2014
- ▶ Installation of Photo-Voltaic (PV Solar) Panels on Colchester Borough Councils' housing stock
- ▶ Partnership event with En-form to deliver 'Green Open Homes' open day events

- ▶ Working with private landlords to support them in the provision of energy efficient housing for tenants
- ▶ Community projects focussing on reducing excess winter deaths and fuel poverty

The Council also recognises the importance of climate change mitigation which encompasses the actions being taken, and those that have been proposed in the delivery plan, to limit the magnitude and/or rate of long-term global warming on the borough. Examples of mitigation include switching to low-carbon energy sources in our own buildings and housing stock; reducing energy consumption; reducing car travel and promoting car share; 'reduce, reuse, recycle' and encouraging local community projects to engage in environmental sustainability including wood recycling and local food growing.

4.2 Reducing CO2 emissions

The Council has been recording CO2e emissions since 2006/7 (this is known as the baseline year). The total emissions in that baseline year were 10,150 tonnes of CO2. By 2013/14 we reduced our annual emissions to 6,313 tonnes of CO2.

In 2008 we signed up to the Local Authority Carbon Management (LACM) Programme and made a commitment to reduce our carbon emissions in Council buildings by 25% by the year 2012. The programme was successful and we exceeded our targets. By the end of LACM, in 2012, we measured that over 2,444 tonnes of CO2 had been prevented from being emitted by our operations into the atmosphere. This resulted in 133 tonnes more CO2 being saved than our target.



4. WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR

We achieved these carbon reductions by reducing our energy usage and installing multiple energy saving measures into each of our buildings, assessing which are cost effective and could be installed elsewhere. We also delivered more energy efficiency measures to our own commercial buildings and housing stock by installing Photo-Voltaic (PV Solar) Panels. We use more energy efficient vehicles and have converted the majority of the fleet to bio fuels. We have also replaced some maintenance and lease vehicles with electric vehicles, especially in locations such as our country parks.

We have worked to make Council sites and buildings more environmentally sound by carrying out viability studies to address problems associated with identified risks for our region.

4.3 Procurement

Our procurement process enables us to promote productive use of resources and materials. This involves integrating environmental considerations into all stages of the purchasing process from avoiding unnecessary purchases and identifying greener products, to the specifications we use for contracts. The Council recognises the significant benefits to sustainability and the local economy of procuring from local small businesses. We changed our Procurement Strategy in 2012 to make the process easier for local businesses to participate in the procurement process.

4.4 Colchester's Comprehensive Climate Risk Assessment

In 2010 the Council carried out its own Comprehensive Climate Risk Assessment (CCRA) and identified a range of priorities as 'very high' risk; as a result an action plan was designed and the following key activities were completed:

- ▶ The Environment Agency & Essex County Council developed a county strategy for managing flood risk
- ▶ Anglian Water worked to ensure that building development was not permitted where drainage systems do not have the capacity to cope
- ▶ Anglian Water carried out an awareness campaign to educate the public about the need for reduced water usage and encouraged the planting of drought resistant gardens
- ▶ Our Planning Team worked to ensure residential development met the Code for Sustainable Homes Standards (minimum of level 3) and that non-residential development met the minimum BREEAM rating of 'very good'
- ▶ Colchester Borough Council also engaged and worked with Waterwise East to promote good practice in water efficiency

5. Context

5.1 National drivers and legislation

There are a number of key national and local drivers that have informed the development of this strategy. In addition to the key headings shown in this section a summary of drivers are provided with the Glossary (Section 10).

Housing and asset management:

- ▶ The Code for Sustainable Homes (Communities and Local Government 2008) is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes, although this is set to change, until further guidance is provided Colchester Borough Council continues to apply this as it aims to reduce carbon emissions and create Homes that are more sustainable
- ▶ Decent Homes Standard - In July 2000 the government released the green paper 'Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All'. This set out standards which all Council housing had to meet
- ▶ The government's 'Warmer Homes, Greener Homes' Strategy sets out plans to reduce carbon emissions in the housing sector



Health and well-being:

- ▶ The Public Health England Cold Weather Plan (CWP) 2013 - Provides us with 'the role of the Council', and the Warm Homes Healthy People (WHHP) evaluation document allows us to look at other Councils' 'lessons learned'
- ▶ The Public Health Outcomes Framework for England 2013 – 2016 identifies how Climate Change risks can impact on health, and how homes that are not meeting minimum standards mean an increased demand on the NHS
- ▶ The Climate Change Risk Assessment advises that climate change could have significant implications for the health and wellbeing of the UK population. There are implications for public health, the continuity of health and social care services both within the NHS and beyond, the resilience of local emergency services and the impact on the most socially vulnerable



Energy efficiency:

- ▶ Community Energy Strategy: 'People Powering Change' (January 2014) focuses on the benefits of community energy; maintaining energy security and tackling climate change
- ▶ DECC Policy: 'Helping Households to cut their energy bills'. Informs that smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters and are part of the government's plan to upgrade the UK's energy system

- ▶ DECC Policy: 'Reducing demand for energy from industry, business and the public sector.' Recognises the role the Council can play in supporting local businesses to reduce their carbon emissions
- ▶ DECC Policy: 'Supporting international action on climate change'. Links within the policy provide access to annual summary documents on international negotiations on climate change
- ▶ Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) are also leading the way with eight major renewable electricity projects, unveiled in 2014 as part of the government's world leading electricity reforms, with the intention of giving a massive boost to green growth and green jobs
- ▶ CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (Environment Agency 2010) formerly known as the Carbon Reduction Commitment - this is the UK's mandatory climate change and energy saving scheme. The scheme started in April 2010 and is administered by the Environment Agency. It is central to the UK's strategy for improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008

Climate Change:

- ▶ Defra: National Adaptation Programme - July 2013 saw the publication of the first National Adaptation Programme (NAP) as well as a Strategy for the second round of the Adaptation Reporting Power. The NAP sets out what Government, businesses and society are doing to become more climate ready. Colchester Borough Council is a member of the East of England Adaptation Network



Protecting the natural environment:

- ▶ The Biodiversity Duty - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 came into force on the 1st October 2006. Section 40 of the Act gives all public bodies a legal duty to consider biodiversity in their work
- ▶ The main source of legislation used to manage human activities in the seas of Europe is the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)



5.2 Local drivers

The Local Government Act 2000 gives the full Council responsibility for approving its policy framework and its budget. The key statutory elements of the Council's framework include the Local Transport Plan, the Local Plan and Licensing. The Colchester Local Plan guides the future growth and development of the Borough. The Local Plan is underpinned by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which tests the environmental, social and economic performance of policies and objectives against a set of sustainability objectives. A new Local Plan is currently being developed.

Changes are currently being proposed to the Council's statutory policy responsibilities under the Deregulation Bill.

A range of other plans and strategies are included in the Council's Policy Framework, either by government recommendation or as a matter of local choice. Environmental Sustainability is a key priority for Colchester Borough Council and is a cross cutting theme across a wide range of these strategies and policies, and will sit within the Council's Policy Framework.

This new strategy supports work to implement strategy delivery and action plans, and contributes to the following key local plans, strategies and policies:

- ▶ The Colchester Borough Council 2012-15 Strategic Plan sets out the Council's local vision to be cleaner and greener, and includes a commitment to promote sustainability and reduce congestion, as well as reducing, reusing and recycling our waste. The plan sets out how the Council will play its part in making Colchester a place where people want to live, learn, work and visit. This plan is currently being reviewed
- ▶ Allotment Strategy – Colchester Borough Council runs 19 allotment sites within the borough with over 1104 plots. The strategy sets out the Council's approach to enabling people to access these sites and promoting the wider benefits of growing your own food and keeping fit
- ▶ Colchester Parks and Green Space Strategy This strategy considers how opportunities can be taken to ensure economic growth is linked to sustainable communities with better quality environment for residents and visitors to Colchester. The strategy seeks to ensure Colchester has well designed green spaces that people want to use and respect
- ▶ Housing Strategy - We are currently developing a new Housing Strategy for Colchester. The strategy sets out our plans for the future for housing and related services
- ▶ Tree Policy - covers the management of all trees on Council owned land and those trees currently managed by Colchester Borough Council as part of agency agreements with other organisations and public bodies in the Borough
- ▶ Air Quality Management (LAQM) – Local authorities have a statutory duty to monitor and report on Air Quality within the area. The reporting aspect of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) consists of Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) which is done every three years. A new Low Emissions Strategy is also being drafted by Colchester Borough Council for 2015/16
- ▶ Environmental Protection addresses a wide range of issues across the borough including drainage, air quality, pollution, water quality and public health
- ▶ The Management Plan for Castle Park, High Woods Country Park and Local Nature Reserves seek to enhance wildlife habitat, encouraging and preserving flora and fauna
- ▶ The Council is responsible for producing the Colchester Development Plan which guides the future growth and development of the Borough. The Focused Review of the Local Plan is underpinned by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which tested the environmental, social and economic performance of the Focused Review policies against a set of sustainability objectives
- ▶ There are a wide range of evidence base documents that help to shape Planning Policy; these are regularly updated and available to view on the Council's website
- ▶ Financial Assistance Policy – provides access to small home improvement loans to enable installation of energy efficiency measures. It is subject to review at present and therefore not available online to view. This link will be updated once the review is completed



- ▶ Street Care Strategy and Improvement Plan focuses on improving the quality of the environment, achieved by improving litter standards, removing the blight of abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, graffiti and fly-posting, improving feelings of safety and security and engendering a sense of care and respect for the place in which people live, work and visit.
- ▶ The Local Transport Plan focuses on an efficient, effective and sustainable integrated multi-modal transport network with identified measures put in place to accommodate the transport needs of Colchester.
- ▶ Genetically Modified Crops Policy sets out how the Council will monitor and review the potential hazard GM Crops pose to residents of the borough and the local environment
- ▶ Waste Strategy addresses how Colchester will deal with its waste in the future
- ▶ Street Services SPD addresses effective waste management and recycling in new development
- ▶ Sustainable Construction SPD works to improve the sustainability of new buildings
- ▶ Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD addresses sustainable transport and cycling provision
- ▶ Procurement Strategy promotes long-term sustainability by reducing the carbon footprint through our supply chain

The Council regularly develops, refreshes and replaces strategies, policies and plans. Now this strategy is adopted it will play an important part in the work that we do as a Council, it will be a key consideration when policies and strategies are under review. It will assist other service areas to consider the impacts of their work on the environment.

6. Our Environmental Sustainability Priorities

In order to achieve our environmental sustainability vision, we have identified 2 strategic priorities:

Strategic Priority 1 'Community Leadership' by reducing the environmental impact of Colchester Borough Council's Buildings, Services and Operations

Key Objectives:

- ▶ Meet targets in CO2 reduction
- ▶ Show community leadership by making further commitments to reduce carbon emissions
- ▶ Embed green procurement
- ▶ Reduce energy use
- ▶ Assess opportunities for saving water
- ▶ Support our staff to be greener
- ▶ Improve our housing stock
- ▶ Improve recycling performance

Strategic Priority 2 'Building resilient communities' by working with Colchester's Residents, Businesses and Third Sector Organisations.

Key Objectives:

- ▶ Support local communities to help them to become more resilient to climate change
- ▶ Align our own strategies to enable a collaborative approach with external partners
- ▶ Develop, create and promote opportunities for environmental understanding, to help retain rural skills and grow the local green economy
- ▶ Identify sources of grant and match funding
- ▶ Create opportunities to reduce energy costs and use in our communities
- ▶ Identify opportunities to deliver sustainable transport
- ▶ Increase the number of warmer, greener homes
- ▶ Encourage residents and businesses to access information about environmental sustainability online
- ▶ Work to reduce fuel poverty
- ▶ Engage with partner agencies that could support us in the delivery of sustainability projects
- ▶ Support activities and projects that meet the 'buy local' agenda to keep trade local

6.1 Strategic Priority 1: Community Leadership

To achieve this we will:

6.1.1 Reduce the environmental impact of Colchester Borough Council's Buildings, Services and Operations

As outlined within the Delivery Plan, we will:

- ▶ Meet targets in CO2 reduction
- ▶ Show community leadership by making further commitments to reduce carbon emissions
- ▶ Reduce CO2 emissions from all Council buildings, operations and services by operating a carbon management plan
- ▶ Embed green procurement by making informed choices about the way we buy products and services. Partners and suppliers are required to minimise the amount of construction waste going to landfill
- ▶ Look at opportunities to reduce energy use in our own buildings by monitoring the effectiveness where energy efficiency measures have been installed and applying this method to other locations
- ▶ Monitor our transport use
- ▶ Access opportunities for rain harvesting and grey water collection systems for Council buildings and operations.
- ▶ Make recycling easier, particularly for people living in flats
- ▶ Make improvements to our housing stock to make them more energy efficient and reduce fuel poverty



6.1.2 Support our staff

As outlined within the Delivery Plan, we will:

- ▶ Work with staff to raise awareness of energy usage and encourage carbon footprint ownership
- ▶ Ensure consistency between initiatives for staff and residents, and encourage actions which can be applied at home or at work
- ▶ Create a 'carbon reduction culture' working with both new and existing staff to help them understand environmental issues and take ownership of their own work and home environments
- ▶ Encourage staff to think about how to reduce waste and save energy

6.2 Strategic Priority 2: Building resilient communities

To achieve this we will:

6.2.1 Work with Colchester's residents, businesses and third sector organisations

As outlined within the Delivery Plan, we will:

- ▶ Support local communities to help them become resilient to climate change
- ▶ Align our strategies to enable a collaborative approach with external partners to achieve environmental sustainability
- ▶ Develop, create and promote opportunities for enhancement of environmental understanding, which will help retain rural skills and grow the local green economy
- ▶ Identify sources of grant and match funding
- ▶ Look at opportunities to reduce costs and save energy in our communities
- ▶ Identify opportunities to deliver sustainable transport
- ▶ Ensure environmental sustainability information is available online to promote self-service
- ▶ Inform and encourage behaviour change which will help to build the resilience of communities
- ▶ Encourage people to make more informed choices and understand the environmental impact decisions made will have on Colchester's future

6. OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

6.2.2 Support for residents

As outlined within the Delivery Plan, we will:

- ▶ Support residents to reduce energy usage which will positively impact on their efforts to reduce CO2 emissions
- ▶ Provide information and advice to local communities so that new community groups will emerge to address local issues
- ▶ Work in partnership to deliver community events to enable residents to learn from the experience of community champions
- ▶ Work collaboratively with the third sector to deliver projects which help to build resilient communities
- ▶ Reduce the number of tenants who live in fuel poverty by making improvements to the Councils own housing stock
- ▶ Take a multi-agency approach to reduce fuel poverty amongst owner-occupiers



7. Equality and Diversity

Equality and Diversity is a key cross-cutting theme identified in our delivery plan. Equality and diversity issues have been considered as part of the development of our Environmental Sustainability Strategy through carrying out an equality impact assessment (EQIA).



8. Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategy

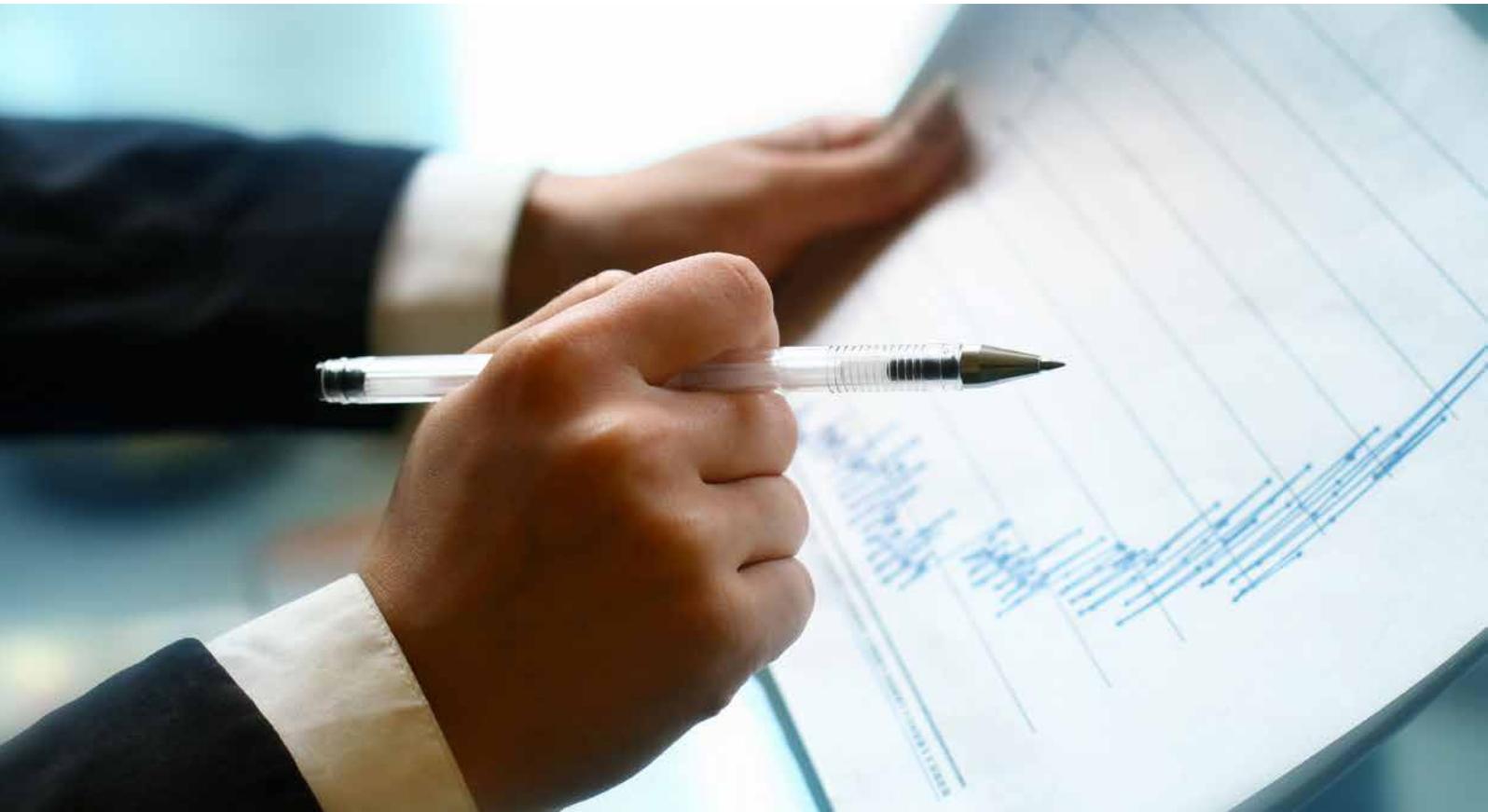
This strategy represents a challenging vision for the Council.

To ensure that the key priorities are delivered a delivery plan has been developed which is available to download on the website. It outlines the actions to be carried out over the next five years;

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy will be reviewed and progress against the delivery plan will be monitored. The delivery plan will be updated annually and a progress report will be published on the Council's website.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy will be communicated as widely as possible. Some of the ways in which we will do this are to:

- ▶ Develop a robust Communications Plan to communicate the Delivery Plan
- ▶ Align internal strategies when under review
- ▶ Involve partners to align actions with their work and strategies



9. Glossary

9.1 The Nottingham Declaration

In February 2007 Colchester Borough Council signed the Nottingham Declaration (NDC) on Climate Change. The NDC is a tool to secure commitment from UK Councils to tackle the causes and effects of climate change. Installing energy efficiency measures enables us to reduce our CO2 emissions and improving access to energy efficiency advice helps us to improve social and economic problems such as fuel poverty and support local business.

Objectives laid out in the NDC included:

- ▶ On-going work to reduce the Council's carbon footprint
- ▶ Become a community leader
- ▶ Deliver sustainable services
- ▶ Use our powers through better procurement, private sector housing and spatial policy

Targets outlined within the Nottingham Declaration

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) required that we act on issues around climate change. The Council chose from 25 priorities from the National Performance Indicators set out by Government.

For CBC five of these priorities related to climate change:

- ▶ CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations
- ▶ Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area
- ▶ Planning to adapt to climate change
- ▶ Air quality and primary PM10 emissions reduction
- ▶ Improved local biodiversity proportion of local sites with positive conservation management

9.2 Climate Local

The LGA Climate Local commitment offers the Council a 'next step' approach to this on-going commitment to reduce our CO2 emissions, and is considered by Local Government to be a succession to the Nottingham Declaration. It offers a framework that can reflect local priorities and opportunities for action, and supports Councils' efforts both to reduce carbon emissions, and to improve their resilience to the anticipated changes in the climate.

9.3 Covenant of Mayors

The Covenant of Mayors is the mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources on their territories. By their commitment, Covenant signatories aim to meet and exceed the European Union 20% CO₂ reduction objective by 2020.

9.4 The Transition Network

The Transition Network is made up of towns and cities planning for a low energy future in response to the challenge of peak oil and climate change.

More information can be found on <http://www.transitionnetwork.org>

Transition groups and organisations like them adapt to their own local circumstances in order to engage a significant proportion of the people in their community. A number of groups in Colchester have emerged over recent years, including Transition Wivenhoe and Green Energy Nayland, both focusing on finding local solutions.

9.5 HECA Reporting

Guidance issued by DECC in July 2012, under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA), required all English authorities with housing responsibilities to prepare a report by 31 March 2013 setting out the energy conservation measures that the authority considers practical, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area.

The guidance under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) for English local authorities with housing responsibilities was published on 26 July 2012. It sets out requirements for those authorities to report on the measures they propose to take to significantly improve the energy efficiency of all the residential accommodation in their area.

DECC and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have also published *Improving Energy Efficiency in Buildings: 'Resources for Local Authorities'*. It is a resource for local authority personnel who are involved in climate change mitigation in the built environment to support the planning and delivery of projects. It brings together and categorises tools, models, knowledge, case studies and datasets which can be used and adapted at local levels to meet local authority needs.

A copy of Colchester Borough Council's HECA Report is available to view online.

9.6 Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)

Buildings in the UK are responsible for almost 50% of energy consumption and carbon emissions. Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and Display Energy Certificates (DECs) give buildings energy efficiency ratings between A and G with recommendations for improvements.

EPCs are required for a new building or existing building which is being sold or leased – a fine can be issued if this certificate is not produced when requested.

DECs are required for public buildings over 1000m² and the certificate must be displayed – a fine can be issued if this certificate is not displayed or produced when requested. Colchester Town Hall and Leisure World Colchester require this certificate and it must be reviewed annually or subject to major alternations or improvements. These are provided by our energy management company.

9.7 ECO & Green Deal

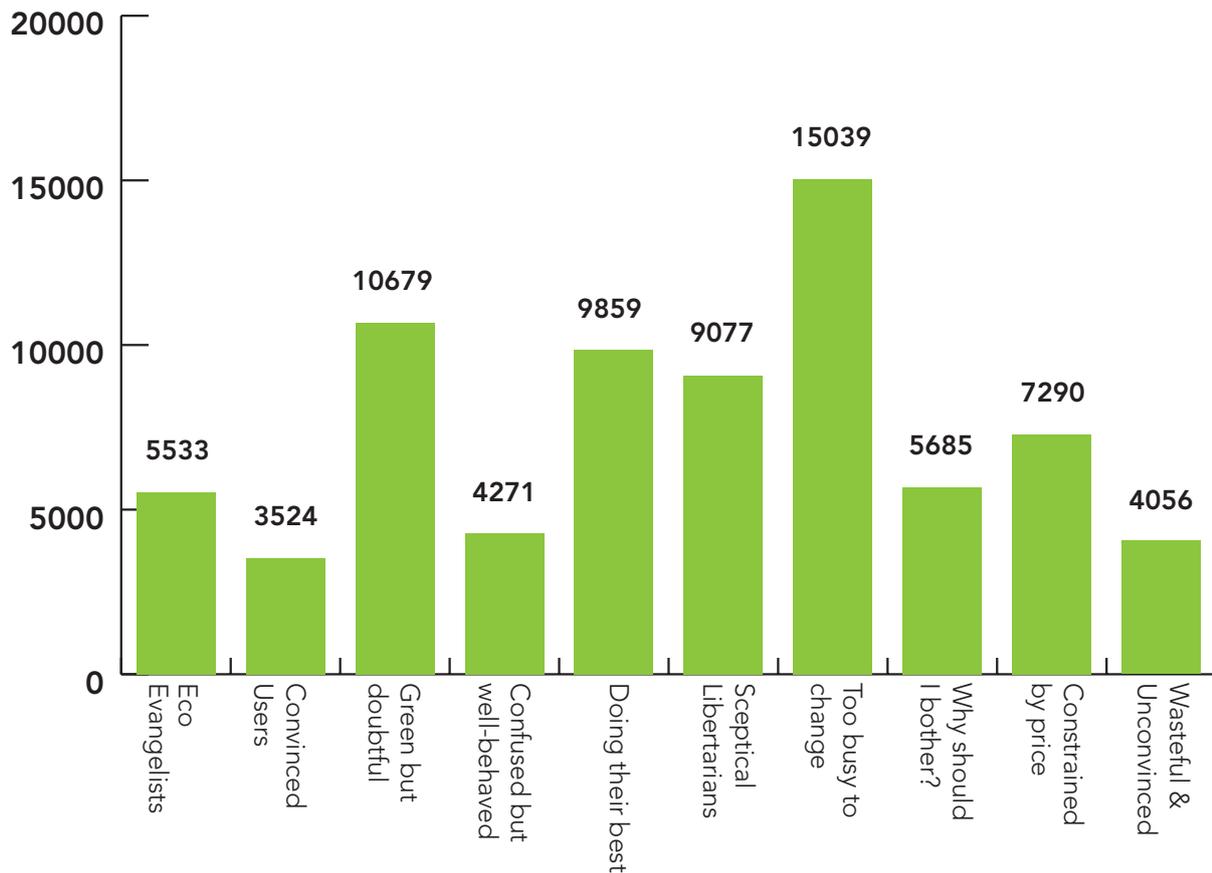
The Government states that both Green Deal and ECO are designed to reduce carbon emissions from the domestic and non-domestic building stock which is essential if the UK is to meet its statutory domestic carbon budgets.

ECO was introduced in January 2013, with targets to be met by 31st March 2015, delivery of these initial ambitious targets have been extended to March 2017, with the scheme proposed to run up until at least 2022.

In March 2014, when the Government carried out consultation on 'The future of ECO' the proposals made for ECO were intended to increase the flexibility of the scheme and lower overhead costs associated with its implementation. The proposals within the consultation suggested extending ECO with a new provision for support to enable delivery of carbon-saving energy efficiency measures, such as insulation, which will alleviate the risk of fuel poverty. CBC joined forces with the HECA East Group to develop a response to the consultation (with Councils from Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk taking part). The consultation recognised the importance of access to accurate and timely cost information to ensure consumers can better understand the schemes available to them, and concluded that the scheme needed to be extended so that targets for delivery provided longer term certainty.

The Green Deal Home Improvement Fund was a new incentive active between June - July 2014 offering a new incentive to claim back up to £7,600 towards energy efficiency improvements such as solid wall insulation, heating and glazing. Further funding rounds are expected and the Council has a designated area on the website so up to date information can be quickly disseminated when updates for residents are available.

9.8 Green Aware Reporting



Data source: Mosaic household classifications and Mosaic public sector data

We are able to drill down by street and postcode to analyse household types, and their inclination towards green issues. An example of the type of analysis we can provide is shown in the table above.

9.9 Biodiversity Duty

Defra provides guidance for public authorities on implementing the Biodiversity Duty. Public authorities have a key role to play in the conservation of biodiversity because the Duty is relevant to a wide variety of public authority functions and services. The guidance aims to help all staff to have regard to biodiversity in undertaking their work, and to inform senior executives about the opportunities to take account of biodiversity at corporate level.

The guidance draws on a wide range of information sources that provide advice on different activities and functions of public sector organisations. The guidance is intended to assist public authorities in meeting the Biodiversity Duty but it does not provide a definitive interpretation of legislation or provide exhaustive recommendations for conserving biodiversity.

10. Membership

Colchester Borough Council is a member of the following groups:

- ▶ Carbon Action Network (CAN)
- ▶ Carbon Reduction Officers Essex (CO2RE)
- ▶ UK Homes Energy Conservation Association (UK HECA)
- ▶ The Essex Resilience Forum
- ▶ Eastern Homes Energy Officers Network (E-HEON)
- ▶ National Energy Action (NEA)

