



### INTRODUCTION

Chesham Town Council is committed to the creation of a sustainable community, balancing and integrating economic, social and environmental components. Developing a more sustainable community will benefit present-day residents and businesses, as well as future generations.

In 2004, the Corporate Environmental Advisory Centre (CEAC) conducted an environmental assessment of Chesham Town Council's main facilities in order to provide an overview of environmental issues affecting the Council. The CEAC advisor made a number of recommendations to enhance the Council's environmental performance, one of which was the development of an environmental policy. Further recommendations in the CEAC report are incorporated within this policy. A presentation to Council by Thames Valley Energy also emphasised the need for the Council to consider the environment in its activities.

### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The main pieces of relevant legislation are:

*The Water Act 2003.* This Act places a duty on all public bodies to take into account, where relevant, the desirability of conserving water supplied or to be supplied to premises.

*The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.* From 1 October 2006, every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

*Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006.* This Act gives specific powers to town and parish councils to tackle climate change. The Act places an obligation on town and parish councils to improve their energy efficiency.

*Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.* This Act extends the statutory offence of dropping litter and enables town and parish councils to authorise officers to serve fixed penalty notices for the litter offence under section 88 of the 1990 Environmental Protection Act; gives town and parish councils the power to issue fixed penalty notices for graffiti and fly-posting offences; and allows town and parish



councils to create offences relating to the control of dogs and replaces the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.

*Duty of Care (Waste).* The Duty of Care covers any business that produces or disposes of waste and requires the business to ensure that any waste produced is handled safely and in accordance with the law.

*Water Framework Directive.* The purpose of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater. The River Chess is covered by this directive, which requires all WFD water bodies to reach 'good ecological status' by 2027. In 2015 the status of the Chess was 'moderate'.

In addition, 150 countries, including the UK, endorsed *Agenda 21* at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 calls for local authorities to initiate Local Agenda 21 processes. Local Agenda 21 involves taking a partnership approach to develop an action plan for sustainable development at a local level.

It should also be noted that the *Bucks and Milton Keynes Biodiversity Action Plan* covers Chesham. The aim of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is to conserve and enhance the county's wildlife habitats and associated species as a contribution to conserving the diversity of life on earth. The most recent version of the plan "*Forward to 2020: Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Biodiversity Action Plan*" sets ambitious targets for increasing the area of priority habitats in the county by 2020 through habitat creation and restoration, e.g. 100 ha of lowland calcareous grassland and 100km of hedgerows. The Chess Valley is one of 23 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas where priority habitat creation work will be focused. The Plan acknowledges the role that town and parish councils have to play in the management of green spaces, and in promoting awareness and encouraging people to participate in local community initiatives for biodiversity.

## **POLICY COVERAGE**

This policy applies to all the land and properties that Chesham Town Council owns and land/properties that the Council manages or is responsible for.

Chesham Town Council encourages and supports those who manage facilities on its behalf to do so in an environmentally responsible manner.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

Chesham Town Council recognises that its activities will have some negative impacts on the environment. The aim of this policy is to establish broad objectives to enable the development of activities that will minimise negative effects on the general environment and also work towards enhancing and protecting Chesham's immediate



environs.

The Council will aim to improve its environmental performance and influence improvement in Chesham in the following ways:

- Use energy, natural resources and non-renewable resources efficiently and strive to minimise waste and pollution.
- Inform Chesham's residents of the Council's environmental activities and respond and react to feedback.
- Support individual behaviour change in Chesham's residents, leading by example and supporting environmentally friendly activities.
- Support local businesses in the adoption of low-impact practices.
- Manage its land using environmentally-friendly practices that will promote biodiversity and protect habitats.

## **SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS**

Chesham Town Council is committed to action in the following, specific areas:

### **Water**

Water will be used efficiently for Council activities and on Council premises.

In the Council's parks and green spaces planting schemes and technology that minimise the need for watering will be used, e.g. planting drought-resistant species and using mulches and water gel crystals.

The Council will continue to implement water-saving measures on its allotments, for example, encouraging tenants to reduce their water usage.

The Council acknowledges that the River Chess that runs through Chesham, as a chalk stream, is a globally rare habitat that is important for the characteristic wildlife of the Chilterns. The Council is committed to the conservation of this habitat and will continue to lead on the Impress the Chess project, the remit of which is conserving and restoring the River Chess that runs through Chesham. In turn, Impress the Chess will be an active partner of the River Chess Association, whose remit covers the entire river.

The Council's Development Control Committee will consider issues of water use, water run-off and water pollution when making recommendations on planning applications. The Council will support the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)<sup>1</sup> in new developments and redevelopments to reduce flooding risks, manage storm-water, minimise diffuse pollution from surface water runoff and help maintain groundwater levels.



## **Development**

The Council's Development Control Committee will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when commenting on planning applications in Chesham and also when developing or redeveloping any of its own buildings. The Council will lead on consultations relating to the Local Planning Authority's Local Plans.

The Council will lobby on the need for developing sustainable drainage in Chesham, necessitated by the town's particular topography and urban development, in order to counteract flash flooding.

The Council will also press for the use of planning obligations (section 106 agreements) to promote sustainable development and mitigate environmental impacts resulting from developments.

## **Climate Change and Energy Conservation**

The Council will monitor its energy use and improve upon energy efficiency within its buildings by adopting energy-saving measures, e.g. purchasing electrical equipment with good energy ratings. The Council will increase awareness of energy efficiency amongst employees and encourage energy-conserving behaviour, e.g. switching off lights that aren't needed and switching off equipment rather than using standby.

In the longer term, the Council will investigate the feasibility of sustainable supplies of energy to power its premises.

## **Waste**

The Council will minimise its waste production wherever possible, by reducing, repairing and reusing resources, and by recycling the waste its activities produce, where facilities exist. Rubbish will be disposed of safely, following the correct procedures, and only licensed contractors will be used to deal with hazardous wastes.

The Council will incorporate the possibility of pollution in its risk assessment procedure and will use this system to minimise the risks and implement mitigation strategies.

## **Urban Environment**

Using the powers delegated from Buckinghamshire County Council as part of 'Devolved Services' initiative, the Town Council will work both directly, and with Town Partners, to undertake specific highways works that contribute to the improvement of the town environment. These include issuing hedge-trimming notices, graffiti removal and clearing fly-posted signs.

The Council will address and control instances of noise pollution that fall within its remit.



The Council will also look to engage with the District Council specifically in regard to the powers accorded to it through the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, to implement fixed penalty notices for littering, graffiti and fly-posting, and the creation of offences relating to dog fouling where appropriate in the town.

The Council will work with relevant Town Partners on the issue of town centre regeneration.

### **Transport**

The Council will continue to encourage sustainable transport systems, promoting public transport and non-polluting modes of transport within the town, such as cycling and walking. The Council will support the Walkers Are Welcome project as part of this. As traffic congestion can significantly reduce air quality, which directly impacts upon human health, the Council will also press other tiers of government for the alleviation of traffic congestion within Chesham.

As a long-term goal, the Council will investigate sustainable, minimally polluting forms of fuel for its vehicles.

### **Biodiversity and Green Spaces**

The Council will, wherever possible, consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in all its activities, but particularly with regard to land management. The Council will seek to manage green spaces in a manner that promotes and protects biodiversity. This includes the management of invasive plants on its land and using planting schemes that exclude species known to be invasive in the SE of England. The Council's Chemicals in Open Spaces policy commits the Council to using pesticides in an environmentally responsible manner and to identifying environmentally-friendly alternatives.

The Council is committed to providing information (where appropriate) or providing a signposting facility to the relevant authorities, to assist Chesham landowners in the control of invasive species, environmentally sensitive land management and biodiversity conservation.

The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance the quality of Chesham's natural environment and open spaces, e.g. by the implementation of the Lowndes Park Management Plan. The Council aims to make open space accessible wherever possible.

The Council will continue to promote the use of its allotments as a source of local food, helping to reduce the food miles consumed by Chesham residents.

The Council will look to create bylaws if these are required to protect and conserve its green spaces.

The Council will organise biodiversity audits on its land where this can assist in the



development of environmentally-sensitive management plans.

### **Sustainable Procurement**

Council procurement is continually assessed for sustainability implications, with the intention of purchasing renewable/recycled, environmentally low-impact and recyclable materials, so long as the requirements for value for money and quality are met. The Council will purchase from companies that have environmental management systems in place if possible.

The Council will ban the use, by the Council or its contractors, of certain specified environmentally damaging products where an alternative product or method is available. These products are:

- Ozone depleting chemicals
- Tropical hardwood that is not certified independently as coming from a well-managed forest
- Pesticides on the UK 'Red List' and EC 'Black List'<sup>2</sup>

The use of peat for soil amelioration will be avoided wherever possible.

Sourcing materials locally, where feasible, will reduce carbon emissions resulting from transporting produce. The Council will promote local produce and products within the community as appropriate, which will have the additional positive effect of supporting the local economy. As part of this, the Council works in partnership with Transition Town Chesham to organise the monthly Local Produce Markets.

The Council will continue to support Chesham's Fairtrade status, as part of its commitment to global environmental issues. Fairtrade production standards encourage sustainable agriculture and protection of the environment. The Fairtrade social premium, a payment that producer groups receive in addition to the Fairtrade price is often invested in environmental projects.

### **Awareness, Lobbying & Partnerships**

The Council will promote awareness of, and information on, environmental issues within the community. It will act as a voice for local environmental concerns to those agencies given statutory powers to tackle problems.

The Council will continue to engage in partnership working with the local community, organisations and other tiers of local government in partnerships on conservation projects. The Council will also support other groups involved in environmental work in the town, including the Chesham Environmental Group, Impress the Chess, the Chesham Society, the Chiltern Society, the Friends of Chesham Cemetery, the Friends of Lowndes Park, Friends of St Mary's Church, Chesham in Bloom, Chesham Allotments Group, Walkers Are Welcome, Chesham and District Natural History Group and Transition Town Chesham.



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## APPENDIX: SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

### 1. Sustainable Urban Drainage

Drainage from roads, industrial and residential areas are all sources of diffuse pollution for watercourses. Unattenuated run-off from development increases the risk of flooding from the receiving watercourse and can damage the river habitat. It will also decrease the amount of water soaking into the ground, decreasing the water available for abstraction and in the Chesham area, reduce the traditional source of water feeding the River Chess. The run-off contains a range of contaminants including oil, organic matter and toxic metals, which means that urban rivers can often be severely degraded.

The environmental impact can be minimised through good design and practice. There are a range of flexible design options that can be tailored to particular sites, known as Sustainable Drainage Systems, which reduce the impact of surface water discharges on rivers and groundwaters. The Environment Agency believes that SUDS should be included in all developments at the earliest possible stage and they encourage the inclusion of SUDS by local planning authorities in strategic and local plans.

### 2. Pesticides on the UK 'Red List' and EC 'Black List'

In 1989, the Department of the Environment compiled the 'Red List' of chemicals as part of a policy to reduce environmental pollution. The list was developed by considering factors such as the toxicity, persistence and bioaccumulation characteristics of each compound. The list is added to over time. The current list is as follows:

#### Insecticides/Acaricides

Aldrin  
Azinphos-methyl  
DDT, DDD, DDE  
Dichlorvos  
Dieldrin  
Endosulfan  
Endrin  
Fenitrothion  
Gamma-HCH (lindane)  
Malathion

#### Fungicides

Hexachlorobenzene  
Tributyltin compounds (also algicidal)  
Mercury compounds  
Triphenyltin compounds





### Herbicides

Atrazine  
Simazine  
Trifluralin

### General

Cadmium compounds  
1,2-Dichloroethane  
Hexachlorobutadiene  
Pentachlorophenol  
Polychlorinated biphenyls  
Trichlorobenzene

The following pesticides are on the priority list of candidates under consideration for addition to the 'Red List' and should therefore be avoided if possible:

### Insecticides/Acaricides

Azinphos-ethyl  
Demeton-O  
Dimethoate  
Fenthion  
Mevinphos  
Parathion

### Fungicides

Biphenyl

### Herbicides

Chloroacetic acid  
2,4-D  
Linuron  
Pyrazon

### Nematicides

1,3-Dichloropropene

EU Directive 76/464/EEC aims to protect aquatic environments from pollution. The EU 'Black List' is a list of classes of the most harmful chemicals attached to this directive. Again, the list is based on the toxicity, persistence and bioaccumulation characteristics of the chemicals. The Directive aims to eradicate pollution by chemicals on this list. Pesticides belong to the following classes of compound on the list:

1. Organohalogen compounds and substances that may form such compounds in the aquatic environment.



2. Organophosphorus compounds

3. Organotin compounds

4. Substances proven to have carcinogenic properties in or via the aquatic environment

5. Mercury and its compounds.

