



Penrith Town Council

CLIMATE STRATEGY
2024/25

Foreword

The rapidly warming climate and the collapse of biodiversity are interrelated, and potentially existential crises that humanity has brought upon itself. The crises are global, and ultimately, they require global action. But global action needs to be the sum of the actions of all of us starting in our own communities.

Individually and collectively across the world, we all contribute to the problem. It is incumbent, particularly on those of us who live in countries that have contributed most to the problems, to take responsibility for changing our relationship with our planet.

This requires change in every aspect of the way we live – how we build, how we travel, how we eat, how we produce food and goods, how we produce and consume energy, how much waste we create and how we manage it.

Legislation and action by governments and international institutions is obviously vital, but equally, to achieve the necessary transformation, so is local action by every individual and community.

Recognition of the crisis and the need for local action motivated Penrith Town Council to declare a climate emergency in May 2019 and implement an ambitious Climate Strategy to make Penrith carbon neutral by 2030.

This climate strategy has now been reviewed and updated with a number of strategic objectives being identified resulting in a more focussed and achievable strategy for the Council to implement.

We hope that through these achievable actions, we will be able to progress change from within the council to play a community leadership role on climate change issues including increasing awareness of Climate through taking action to understand and reduce our own emissions.

Councillor Doug Lawson, Chair of Penrith Town Council and Mayor of Penrith

Introduction

In May 2019, Penrith Town Council (the Council) declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency. In March 2020, the Council adopted the Climate Action Strategy outlining our ambition to set Penrith on its journey to carbon neutrality.

The Council established a Task and Finish Group to review its Climate Strategy which has resulted in this refreshed Strategy and Climate Action Plan.

This Strategy sets out the Council's strategic objectives relating to Climate Change along with a deliverable action plan.

The Council is committed to transforming Penrith into a cleaner and greener town which it believes it can achieve through playing a community leadership role on climate change issues. The strategic objectives of this Climate Strategy have been developed with this in mind.

Climate Change

The science of climate change is well established:

- Climate change is real and human activities are the main cause.
- The concentration of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere is directly linked to the average global temperature on Earth.
- The concentration has been rising steadily, and mean global temperatures along with it, since the time of the Industrial Revolution.
- The most abundant greenhouse gas, accounting for about two-thirds of greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO₂), is largely the product of burning fossil fuels.

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Effects and Impacts of Climate Change

In 2023, there have been over 38 days that were more than 1.5°C hotter than average – higher than any other year on record. (Natural History Museum)

Climate change has helped drive a fivefold increase in the number of weather-related disasters in the last 50 years. (World Meteorological Organisation)

Winters will be warmer and wetter. Summers will be warmer and drier. We'll have more extremes of weather, and they'll be more intense – with storm surges causing flooding, for example. These changes in our climate will have knock-on effects here in Cumbria. These are likely to include issues with food supply and water quality, loss of wildlife, impact on farming practices, and diseases. (Zero Carbon Cumbria)

What do we need to do to limit Global Warming and act on Climate Change?

To prevent warming beyond 1.5°C, we need to reduce emissions by 7.6% every year from this year to 2030. (EGR, 2019)

10 years ago, if countries had acted on this science, governments would have needed to reduce emissions by 3.3% each year. Every year we fail to act, the level of difficulty and cost to reduce emissions goes up. (EGR, 2019)

If we continue to emit carbon dioxide at current levels, we will exhaust that remaining 1.5°C carbon budget in just six years. (University of Leeds 2023)

Climate Change is a global crisis which requires global action. However, global action needs to be the sum of the actions of all of us starting in our own communities.

Penrith Town Council Strategic Objectives

The Council has reflected on the role it can play in the wider climate crisis and has identified five Strategic Objectives to help contribute to the fight against climate change.

The overriding aim of the Council's strategy remains to achieve carbon neutrality for Penrith by 2030. The longer-term aim would be to become carbon negative. These aims will be achieved by the delivery of the Strategic Objectives and a series of deliverable action plans. The council will foster collaboration with organisations and communities to achieve its aims.

We aim to:

- 1. Achieve carbon neutrality for Penrith Town Council**
- 2. Engage the community on climate action**
- 3. Conserve and enhance local biodiversity**
- 4. Promote low emission transportation options**
- 5. Increase the number of green projects in Penrith**

To achieve these strategic actions, a set of achievable actions has been identified under each objective. These actions will form an action plan for 2024/25.

These actions have been identified below:

1. Achieve carbon neutrality for Penrith Town Council

1.1 Commission a Carbon Audit of Penrith Town Council

Identify the baseline carbon footprint of Penrith Town Council and any resulting actions required arising from the audit.

1.2 Provide climate literacy training for all Councillors and Officers

Upskill and empower staff members and councillors on climate related issues.

1.3 Work to reduce consumption of paper and other resources

The Council uses less paper and colour printing, reduces its energy consumption and considers green travel options for council operations, to reduce mileage consumption.

1.4 Lobby the Cumbria Pension Fund to divest its Fossil Fuel Holdings

Considers whether to write to the Cumbria Pension Fund, through Westmorland and Furness Council asking it to divest its fossil fuel holdings.

2. Engage the community on climate action

2.1 Produce a newsletter on climate change issues

A quarterly newsletter themed around specific climate related issues.

2.2 Identify, promote and make available educational material and training opportunities for use by communities.

Upskill and empower communities on climate change issues.

2.3 Develop options for a Climate Change Hub

Identify the feasibility of a Climate Change Hub in Penrith.

3. Conserve and enhance local biodiversity

3.1 Protect, restore and promote natural habitats and green spaces within Penrith

Ensure the protection of green spaces and natural habitats in the possession of Penrith Town Council and as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2 Collaborate with local organisations to enhance conservation

Co-operate with partners to deliver conservation projects in the town.

3.3 Approve a Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan

Have the Council adopt a Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan at a meeting of Full Council.

4. Promote low emission transportation options

4.1 Lobby for public transportation improvements and expanded services

Work in partnership with organisations to deliver transportation improvements and expanded services.

4.2 Lobby for incentives for the use of electric vehicles (e.g. free parking)

Work in partnership with organisations and write to central government to lobby for incentives.

Work in partnership with appropriate organisations to increase the electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

4.3 Support and promote sustainable community transport schemes

Develop a policy and action plan for supporting sustainable and community transport schemes.

5. Increase the number of green projects in Penrith

5.1 Promote the Council's Grant Fund for green and climate projects

To support green and climate focused projects through the Council's established grant fund.

5.2 Create a "Green" Award for Businesses

Work in partnership with Cumbria Chamber of Commerce to sponsor a new Green Award as part of the annual Chamber of Trade Stars of Business Awards.

5.3 Promote and develop new Penrith Town Council green projects

Identify and promote walking routes around Penrith.

Support the implementation of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Invite ideas for and develop green projects.

5.4 Conduct a climate vulnerability assessment to identify at-risk areas

Identify and share data and information with the public and partners.

This Strategy and Action Plan will be regularly reviewed by the Council's Communities Committee. The Council will aim to develop a series of key performance indicators to enable the strategy to be monitored for its impact.

The Council's Communities Committee will receive regular progress reports on the delivery of the annual action plan.

The Climate Strategy and action plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

The Council has approved a budget of £15,000 for the financial year 2024-25 to deliver its Climate Strategy. The Council may further seek to identify grants and external funding.

Penrith Town Council Climate Strategy Action Plan April 2024 – March 2025

Strategic Objective: Achieve carbon neutrality for Penrith Town Council					
Plan Ref	Project	Timescale	Budget	Partners	Progress
1.1	Commission a Carbon Audit of Penrith Town Council	July 2024	£1,000	-	
1.2	Provide climate literacy training for all Councillors and Officers	July 2024	£850	CALC / CAFS	
1.3	Work to reduce consumption of paper and other resources.	March 2025	Nil	-	
1.4	Lobby the Cumbria Pension Fund to divest its Fossil Fuel Holdings.	May 2024	Nil	PACT	
Strategic Objective: Engage the community on climate actions					
2.1	Produce a quarterly newsletter themed on climate related issues. (May, Aug, Nov, Feb) Themes to include: Energy Saving Tips, Community Groups & Green Spaces, Carbon Footprint and Transport.	Quarterly	£500	-	
2.2	Identify, promote and make available educational material and training opportunities for use by communities – catalogue existing resources.	September 2024	Nil	-	
2.3	Identify the feasibility of a Climate Change Hub in Penrith and undertake consultation.	September 2024	Nil	-	
Strategic Objective: Conserve and enhance local biodiversity					
3.1	Ensure the protection of green spaces and natural habitats in the possession of Penrith Town Council and as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan	June 2024	Nil	-	
3.3	Have the Council adopt a Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan at a meeting of Full Council.	May 2024	Nil	-	

Penrith Town Council Climate Strategy Action Plan April 2024 – March 2025

Strategic Objective: Promote low emission transportation options					
Plan Ref	Project	Timescale	Budget	Partners	Impact
4.2	<p>Lobby for incentives for the use of electric vehicles.</p> <p>Work in partnership with organisations and write to central government to lobby for incentives.</p> <p>Work in partnership with appropriate organisations to investigate the increase the electric vehicle charging infrastructure.</p>	January 2025	Nil	W&F / industry	
4.3	Develop a policy and action plan for supporting sustainable and community transport schemes.	November 2024	Nil	Transport Providers	
Strategic Objective: Increase the number of green projects in Penrith					
5.1	Promote the Council's Grant Fund for green and climate projects	Ongoing	Nil	-	
5.3	Promote and develop new Penrith Town Council green projects.				
	<p>Identify and promote walking routes around Penrith.</p> <p>Invite ideas for and develop green projects.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p>September 2024</p>	<p>£1,500</p> <p>Nil*</p>	<p>-</p> <p>-</p>	
5.4	Conduct a climate vulnerability assessment to identify at-risk areas	January 2025	-	-	
*Projects and ideas presented may require budget. All new projects to be agreed by Committee or Council					