

Tackling the Climate Emergency: the local authority's role

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Why local authorities are so important in tackling the EMERGENCY!

- The Climate Emergency is global, but local authorities have a crucial role to play in tackling it.
- Councils are substantial consumers of materials, energy and fuel
- They are owners of property and land and are often major landlords - Newham manages 16,000 council homes, dozens of community buildings and about 800 commercial properties
- They regulate development and are major investors through the pension funds



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Council responsibilities: Planning & Regeneration

- Local authorities are planning authorities for land use and building development
- This means they can set building standards (e.g. energy efficiency) for new developments
- They can require green spaces to be provided as part of new developments
- There are regulators of certain types of business that produce pollution



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Council responsibilities: Sustainable Transport

What can be done?

- Reducing congestion through transport planning improvements
- Promoting walking (e.g. travel to school) and cycling
- Introducing anti-idling regulations
- Purchasing and encouraging electric vehicles by providing more charging points (80 planned by Spring 2020)
- Closing streets to traffic (Play Streets)

Council responsibilities: Public Health

Councils have a range of statutory responsibilities relating to the health of the local community

- Tackling the causes of ill health - Air pollution now a major killer – 7 in every 100 deaths in Newham (highest in London), local hospitals see increasing respiratory problems - causes – Carbon-fuel vehicles, Blackwall Tunnel, City Airport, A406, in some wards epidemic of chronic Asthma in children
- Promote healthy eating, reducing food miles & food waste
- Raising public awareness and influencing behaviour

Other key council services

- Councils run sizeable vehicle fleets – need to move to EV's
- Refuse, waste and recycling – need to encourage much more recycling
- Green economic development is a priority for Newham - encouraging inward investment in new technologies – Royal Docks – Europe's 1st hub for green-tech innovation
- Green procurement



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So what is Newham's approach?

Newham declares a Climate Emergency!

- Take charge – demonstrate leadership!
- Newham Council declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019
- Motion adopts the national government target of:
 - Net zero emissions by 2050
 - Carbon neutral by 2030
 - Green Audit of all Council Service
 - Significantly improve Air Quality

A tall order?

Newham's Strategic Intent & Action Plan approach

- The council has agreed two strategic reports:
 - the first dealt with air quality
 - the second dealt with tackling the climate emergency more generally
- An Air Quality Action Plan has already been produced and a wider Climate Emergency action plan being developed for launch in new year.
- Annual Monitoring, reporting and live updating
- Council-wide communications strategy, **Newham Climate Now** developed with branding used across Council Service
- Services will be 'kite-marked' to monitor progress
- Micro-site dedicated to providing information

Further actions include...

- Move to renewable energy supplies in all our buildings
- Greening the borough - planting more trees - promoting greater biodiversity - taking action to conserve water
- Enabling and promoting electric transport with infrastructure and incentives
- Helping residents with free advice on how to adapt their own lifestyles and behaviour
- Offer affordable power & heating – Heat & Power Network – Islington’s Bunhill – 700 homes – Thamesway Energy owned by Woking Council – energy station offers cheaper heating to 200 homes – need to move to larger scale projects
- Extend local low emission/anti-idling schemes - support more sustainable travel
- Passivhaus building standards for all new builds!
- Divest and invest so Newham’s pension fund promotes green growth (London LA pension funds estimated at £37bn in 2017, of which nearly £2bn was in fossil fuels, though this is falling)
- **CREATE LOW CARBON AND CLIMATE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

Newham's communities: participation, engagement & empowerment

- Newham Climate Advisory group to scrutinise – experts & residents
- Mobilise community groups, faith organisations & voluntary sector
- Help community groups to develop and promote new initiatives using carbon offset funds – build the fund base
- Citizens Assembly approach to consultation and testing ideas
- Open Forums to provoke, educate and involve ordinary residents
- Annual review of Action Plan to involve community groups



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Limitations

- Cultural and lifestyle change promoted through national media/government
- Need for large-scale investments in solar power

•Funding!

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- And cuts to local authority budgets

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Q & A

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