



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

Biodiversity Duty Policy

Public authorities must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This means that by 1st January 2024 the Council must consider what action to take for biodiversity, agree policies and objectives. These must be reconsidered within five years.¹

Okehampton Town Council is committed to supporting the long-term environmental, cultural and economic health and vitality of the town.

This policy is linked to the Climate Change and Biodiversity section of Okehampton Town Council's Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

Thriving plants and wildlife

- Using native and sustainably sourced trees when planting
- Creating dedicated spaces for wildlife
- Leaving some dead wood safely in place in woodlands to provide additional habitat.
- Maintaining planted trees to give them the best chance of survival.
- Reducing the use of herbicides, pesticides, peat, and water.
- Implementing measures to prevent the spread of invasive species and plant disease.
- Creating more joined up space for nature on land – protecting land and increasing interconnections to boost natural resilience.

Clean air

- Promote the use of greener transport alternatives.
- Review planning policies and proposals affecting the Parish and their likely environmental impacts and respond as appropriate.
- Safety for all road users, including pedestrians, especially around issues of speeding vehicles, HGVs, and air pollution.
- When considering new-build planning applications the Council should require housing and business properties to function as carbon neutral either from the outset, or in the very near future, with a clear plan based upon sustainable energy use, and re-use of existing materials, as JLP and NPPF directs.

Clean and plentiful water

- Not planting species that are heavily water dependent.

Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides

- Ensuring chemicals are safely used and managed – recognising that chemicals are an important part of our everyday life, manage any risks posed by, and to continue to phase out the most harmful and persistent pollutants in favour of safer and more sustainable alternatives.
- The risks and impacts of pesticides - reducing their impacts on human health and the environment, while ensuring pests and pesticide resistance can be managed effectively.

¹ Complying with the biodiversity duty - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty>

- Request environmental policy statements from contractors, where appropriate.

Maximises our resources, minimise our waste.

- Council events will try and minimise the use of non-recyclable products.
- Compostable materials will be used where possible.
- At the end of events waste will be recycled where possible.
- The council will minimise waste and only cater for approximate attendance. Unused food will be frozen, if possible, to be used for the next event.
- Seek to conserve resources wherever practicable.
- Reduce waste in its daily operations, particularly single use plastic.
- Be committed to recycling.

Using resources from nature sustainably

- Encourage environmental initiatives and engage residents in environmental projects and issues.
- Planting more trees is critical to achieving net zero, providing more habitat.
- Shifting to more sustainable supply chains- the council will consider the carbon footprint of items it orders and prefer suppliers who are Climate Pledge Friendly

Mitigating and adapting to climate change

- Follow the amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework to make sure that all sources of flood risk, including future flood risk, are considered in planning. This should mean that any new development is safe for its lifetime and that it does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- Environmental enhancements such as tree planting can reduce the impact of extreme heat.

Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards

- Mitigate surface water flooding by making recommending use of sustainable drainage systems in new developments.
- Supporting sharing best practice and innovative approaches at a local level
- Encouraging residents to be aware of their risk of flooding including those risks change with a changing climate.
- To promote awareness of wildfires and how to prevent them.
- To promote take up of flood warning service.

Enhancing biosecurity

- Build and install nest boxes for birds, bats and other animals.
- Encouraging the addition of green walls or roofs to existing or new buildings.
- Plant native trees and shrubs
- Plant wildflowers for pollinators
- Habitats for protected species.
- Value green spaces within the Parish, such as Simmons Park and protect them for future generations.
- Encourage environmental initiatives and engage residents in environmental projects and issues.
- Tackling invasive non-native species – to protect native species and the ecosystems that rely on them.
- Protecting and enhancing animal and plant health

Enhancing beauty heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

- The character, identity and rural setting of the Parish.

- Conserve and enhance the natural, geological and cultural diversity of our landscapes, and protect our historic and natural environment for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.
- Nature for wellbeing – connecting with nature as a way of improving physical and mental health.
- Continue to monitor our footpaths to ensure they can be enjoyed by as many people as possible.