

## Response to Climate Change Consultation – January 2020

### 1 Everyday, simple things everyone can do now to make a positive difference on climate change

#### 1.1 First change systems to change behaviour

Individual behaviour change is often limited due to the current options available. The relative cost and convenience for sustainable options is often prohibitive, worsened by the perverse incentives currently in place. People sometimes face a bewildering array of choices and incomplete or conflicting information about the most sustainable options. They are also bombarded with advertising for products and services that damage the climate. *Changing this situation is a prerequisite for individual behaviour change.*

To facilitate individuals to reduce their carbon footprints by altering their everyday choices, local government must play a leadership role, informing the public and changing the systems which constrain and influence individual choices. Over-arching system change is necessary to drive more sustainable behaviour by individuals, hence such measures will need to precede expectations of widespread individual behaviour change.

We urge the council to show leadership by changing its behaviour - in respect of direct emissions, but also policy alignment, procurement and the everyday behaviour of its own staff and elected representatives. Demonstrable commitment to rapidly develop the systems that will enable individuals to play their part is an important means of demonstrating to the public the importance of rapid and radical climate action: actions speak volumes.

Many incentives to change behaviour could be implemented quickly and at limited direct cost. Ward councillors could develop a detailed local plan for each ward to apply the recommendations below, working in consultation with local residents (an emergency ward meeting could be called for this purpose, including direct invites to consultation participants), residents' associations and community groups, and a local Citizen's Assembly. Each local plan could include measurable and dated targets and a commitment to regular and transparent reporting.

#### 1.2 Applying environmental psychology and 'nudge' to the climate problem

People look for cues about appropriate behaviour from their environment and from other people, especially people in positions of responsibility or authority. Social behaviour conforms to social norms; therefore, pro-environmental behaviour needs to be normalised. The Council can do this by influencing the physical environment people experience and by organising its own behaviour and services in such a way as to show that pro-environmental behaviour is expected. This will encourage people both consciously and subconsciously to act in a more sustainable way.

At present some of the ways in which the council operates and influences our surroundings, encourage behaviour that damages the environment. For example, the 'Alive After Five' program subsidises car parking but does not subsidise public transport (a perverse subsidy). This is not only an overt incentive to drive rather than travel by bus, but it also sends

an implied message (behavioural cue) that cars are good or desirable, driving is a positive activity that is encouraged, and that people who drive cars are rewarded, whereas public transport use is not encouraged or rewarded, so it cannot be 'good'.

People judge the importance and urgency of an issue by the prominence the topic is given and the language used about it. The Council can use language like "Climate Breakdown Consultation" rather than "Climate Change Consultation", as the former better reflects and communicates the Scientific consensus on the impact of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on the climate, and the urgency of this problem, as set out by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes (IPCC) reports and others.

"Tackling Climate Breakdown" could be a menu item at the top of the council website, alongside items like "services" "business" and "get involved". A banner advert immediately below these menu items would advertise consultations like this and future initiatives. Not only will this increased prominence produce additional awareness directly through people who would not have seen the information otherwise, it will also indicate the seriousness of this issue to those who might have come across the information anyway - because prominence communicates importance. Prominence on council advertisements on physical and electronic notice boards carries a similar message. Equally, the current lack of prominence implies that climate breakdown is not an urgent and extreme threat (despite the council acknowledging this in their climate emergency declaration). Thus, the council's choices in this regard act as a subconscious behavioural cue to website users and to receivers of advertising, indicating whether or not they should pay attention to climate breakdown and how concerned they should be about it.

We have seen these kinds of choices made by government dramatically impact on social norms around smoking, drink-driving and wearing car seatbelts in relatively recent times; as a result of changes in the language that government uses, prominence of messaging, and changes to the environment (e.g. smoking ban in pubs).

Not every initiative endorsed needs to be expected to incur a large impact on reducing emissions, as raising awareness and public 'mood' is valuable in itself and can benefit the overall ambitions of the city. Many of the suggestions below, will however not only have a significant overt effect, in enabling and supporting people to act in a more sustainable way, but will also act as behavioural cues to indicate that sustainable behaviour is what society expects and rewards; not doing them will send the opposite message; that society does not expect, respect, or reward sustainable behaviour.

### 1.3 Transforming transport to transform travel choices

Shortage of time and fixed working hours combined with a lack of regular, reliable and affordable public transport or safe walking and cycling options drives many people to use private vehicles to get children to and from school, and themselves to work. Prioritising investment and road space for public transport and active travel is key to enabling behaviour change. This could also include combined and capped smart-ticketing and countdown information for bus and metro. If travellers trying out a different mode have a more positive experience, long-term behaviour change is more likely to occur. As traffic volumes reduce, the safety of pedestrians and cyclists improves, leading to a positive feedback process. It is the council's responsibility to initiate this process by implementing up-front changes to the system.

All residential and school streets should be made 20 mph zones to improve the actual and perceived safety of cyclists and pedestrians. Speed limits must be regularly enforced (using cameras if necessary). Each ward could have a councillor co-ordinated community 'Speed Watch' group. Pavement parking should be banned in areas where it creates accessibility obstacles or where replacement on-street parking would lead to natural speed reductions due

to narrowing road-space. Pedestrianisation of the city centre should be increased, and car-free neighbourhood shopping streets should be phased in. Play streets closed to through-traffic in the evenings should be created in residential areas.

To shift the balance of cost and convenience away from private vehicles and towards cleaner transport, Alive After Five free evening parking must be scrapped immediately, to be replaced by charged parking with incrementally increasing cost and decreasing number of spaces. Residential parking permit fees must be incrementally increased, with higher charges for second vehicles. The revenue raised must be re-invested to subsidise public transport and to provide cycling infrastructure, including segregated lanes and widespread secure cycle parking (including hangars in residential streets and hireable lockers in the town centre and at Metro stations).

Immediate incentives to walking and cycling would be to alter pedestrian and cycle-crossing priorities to favour active travel over cars; reducing the maximum waiting time for pedestrians or bikes and avoiding people being forced to wait on (often narrow) traffic islands or in the middle of road junctions. Pedestrian crossings should be positioned according to 'desire lines' such that those travelling on foot are not forced to make detours to accommodate traffic.

Taxi, bus and council vehicle drivers should undertake cyclist awareness training organised by the council as part of the licencing process, and large employers could encourage their staff to partake also. A police-led education initiative could regularly target identified pedestrian/cyclist accident hot-spots, issuing warnings/enforcement on speeding and entry into cycle lanes, cycle boxes and junction boxes.

Electronic and physical advertising boards owned by the Council or on council property could advertise cycling proficiency training courses, the location of Park and Ride, and offer free advertising to Metro, bus, rail, cycle repair services, Co-Wheels and Zmove.

#### 1.4 Re-inventing the school run

Immediate solutions to incentivise reduced vehicle use on the school run include the provision of walking/cycling 'buses' (or low-emission school buses), potentially alongside organised lift-sharing schemes for semi-rural areas. Local councillors could work with every school in their ward to develop a school transport plan including community walking-bus schemes with trained and DBS-checked adult (e.g. parent) supervisors.

Compulsory and free cycling proficiency training for students could be given as part of the physical education curriculum. Ample secure, covered cycle parking facilities (for example with subsidy from schemes such as Park That Bike) are needed. Indoor cloakroom and locker facilities should be installed in which students' outdoor clothing and property can be securely left to avoid unnecessary baggage being carried during active commutes.

Each school could be assisted (by ward Councillors) to host a termly event, as well as noticeboard/electronic noticeboard offering a swap-shop and sale of second-hand cycles, new safety equipment and subsidised bike 'health-checks' or minor repairs (e.g. in conjunction with social enterprise Recyk-y-Bike). The council could support local social enterprises or businesses (e.g. Recyk y'bike, Zmove or bike shops) to offer cycle trailers and child seats/carriages on short or long-term hire.

Habits formed in youth can last a lifetime. Therefore all young people under 18 in education should be issued free public transport passes through their schools and colleges. This would reduce the cost burden on families, encouraging children to travel to school on public transport or families to commute together to school and work using public transport.

Traffic free 'School Street' zones could be created and enforced around every school (including private schools). As an interim measure in more suburban or rural locations, local private businesses (for example nearby supermarkets/large retailers) could be encouraged to offer 'park and stride' car-parking if necessary due to initially-limited local public transport. This provision could be phased out over 3 years as adequate public transport is put in place. Schools' transport plans could include breakfast and after-school club provision to reduce the time pressure on combined school and workplace commuting.

### 1.5 Combatting commuter congestion

Subsidised or free public transport passes could be issued on a time-limited basis (one month pass minimum) to all Newcastle residents, encouraging them to trial public transport use and form new habits. A similar incentive could be used to promote public car-share schemes (e.g. Co-Wheels).

Councillors could work with all city employers with car-parking space to develop business transport plans that favour the use of public and active travel over private vehicles by staff, including offering secure cycle parking, changing, cloakroom and locker facilities (in shopping centres or the Grainger Market, such provision could be communal), and employee discounts on travel passes, cycling equipment (including e-bikes, folding bikes, cargo bikes and trailers as well as repair) and on carshare membership. Measures can be funded using incrementally-increasing workplace parking charges (beginning with larger employers) and parking-space reductions. Business transport plans should also seek to facilitate flexible-working to further reduce combined commuting time pressures.

Councillors could seek business sponsorship to extend the network of share-cars and of electric vehicle charging points in the city (for example, local EV sales/repair garages could be approached to sponsor chargepoints). This could include installing a charging point and carshare bay in supermarket and DIY store carparks, and in the workplace carparks of employers with 12 or more spaces.

### 1.6 Help people heat their homes sustainably

Each ward could be mapped for gaps in home insulation (e.g. using thermal imaging, smart meter data, EPC reports from landlords and letting agents), with advice letters going to households and registered landlords in problem areas providing clear information on improving energy efficiency, grants available, a shortlist of accredited retrofitters and contact information for additional advice (this could be in partnership with national organisations e.g. The Energy Saving Trust).

All council tax payers and registered landlords could receive simple information on home insulation, energy efficiency (as above) and renewable microgeneration installation (with approved installers and grant information) along with their council tax bills. Landlord registration (under Accreditation, HMO, Selective and Additional Licensing schemes) should include criteria to improve the EPC rating of the property.

Each council-run library and community centre could host an energy efficiency event twice annually to provide expert information on energy-saving, retrofitting and home renewable microgeneration.

Ward councillors could work with each school and community building in their ward to obtain grants to install solar panels and/or other renewable microgeneration (e.g. ground or air source heat pumps). Councillors could lead a community energy group in each ward to find a site for a community microgeneration scheme.

### 1.7 Avoid wasted recycling efforts – inform people what goes where

Recycling is frequently mis-sorted or contaminated due to a lack of clear understanding of what is and is not recyclable. Motivation to recycle ebbs when the public are not aware of where waste goes and fear their efforts may be in vain. To combat this, clearer information on what happens to waste and what happens to contaminated recycling could be included prominently on the council website. The clarity and prominence of information on recycling on the council website can be improved - “What can I recycle?”/“What goes in each bin?” could be more prominent links on the “environment and waste” and the “recycling” pages. This information could be presented on the website as infographics as well as in text. The recycling A-to-Z list could be colour coded so that it’s clearer what items fall into which category. Council bins should be clearly labelled, including a web address and QR code linking to up-to-date information on recycling, collection dates and household waste facilities/collections. An SMS/app/email reminder scheme could be set up and advertised to residents in ward newsletters and public notices, so that collections are observed, instructions reminded, and mis-sorting due to over-filled bins reduced.

Councillors could organise annual educational visits to each school in their ward. Information leaflets could be delivered to households along with council tax statements (including information about obtaining subsidised compost and bokashi bins). It should be made a condition of landlord licencing that adequate bin provision and information leaflets be provided at the start of a tenancy and at least annually thereafter.

Councillors in each ward could publicise (in ward newsletters, notice boards and social media) freecycle and community swapping forums and second-hand shops locally, as well as scrap merchants - organising a regular periodic collection round for their ward. Disposal of bulky items is currently free for car-owning households but there is a charge for each item for those without a vehicle - this charge must be dropped for regular fixed collection date.

Councillors could establish a food recycling programme in each ward, publicising existing services and creating local drop-off points and help-yourself shelves/fridges within council and community buildings.

### 1.8 Help people to grow plants and eat them

The council could identify spaces for tree-planting and bee-friendly planting within each ward and lead a community action group to provide training, equipment and workforce to plant and maintain these areas as pocket parks. Subsidised native wildflower seeds, saplings and nestboxes could be made available to residents (as per compost bins) to plant in their own gardens.

A city-wide ‘Meat-free Mondays’ initiative could be negotiated with schools, hospitals, and large employers. Ward councillors could map suppliers of local produce and veg box schemes and this be publicised (interactive map on the Council website and local notice boards), as

well as work with allotment groups and community gardens to arrange produce sales/swaps during harvest season, in addition to a seedbank for growers to donate or receive. Councillors could work with local schools to set up a vegetable patch and 'growing group', engage with community gardens, or adopt an allotment.

### 1.9 Leading by visible example

In keeping with the climate emergency declaration and sending a consistent message to the public, the council must oppose all new coal mining as well as oppose airport expansion in Newcastle, with the Development and Allocations Plan amended and/or superseding policies adopted accordingly.

Existing UK coal stocks held at power stations are more than enough to supply projected needs up until the planned phase-out of electricity generation from coal in 2025 (see [Friends of the Earth report](#) based on BEIS data). Aviation is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions, and aircraft burn more fossil fuel per passenger or ton-mile than other modes of transport. Expanding airports would cause induced-demand for additional flights, and undermines attempts to appeal for positive behaviour change across sectors. Emissions from Newcastle Airport ought additionally to be included within the city's carbon accounting. Rather than expanding air travel, the council could work with the North of Tyne Combined Authority and other neighbouring authorities to promote local tourism and to push for the re-instatement and expansion of passenger ferries from the North East to Scandinavia and continental Europe.

Removing investment from fossil fuel industries is critical to transitioning to a low-carbon society. Newcastle Council could ensure that all energy in council buildings is from renewable sources (for example, tariffs from suppliers such as Ecotricity). The Council could divest its own investments and that of the Tyne & Wear Pension fund. This includes ending its position as a share-holder in Newcastle Airport, which is a conflict of interest for decision-making. Such actions could set the stage for encouraging institutional and commercial operators to choose renewable energy tariffs and to divest their accounts and pensions, and for residents to follow this lead. Likewise, the council's choice of staff transport, vehicle fleets, procurement and waste-management in its own operations sets a visible precedent to public values.

## 2 Larger-scale projects, new ways of delivering services, new initiatives, and investment that could be done in the medium-to long-term

Our submission in this section provides more detail, straddling three overarching themes

1. Prevention, attempting to reduce the pressures creating climate breakdown and, as possible, other ecological crises at the same times;
2. Adaptation, accepting that significant deterioration has already taken place and more is likely in the near future, with a consequent need to enable the city of Newcastle to cope as best possible with those changes;
3. Regeneration: promoting repair, recycling, restoration, and overall renewal, including, in the case of biodiversity, measures of so-called 'rewilding'

**In one word: resilience.**

### Introduction – Putting climate change in context

Newcastle Green Party regards the climate emergency as the all-important and all-pervading issue of our times – as the Canadian writer and activist Naomi Klein has put it, [“this changes everything”](#). However the disruption of climatic patterns by human activity is only one aspect of a much wider malaise, a comprehensive ecological ‘crunch’, caused by an unsustainably heavy [human ecological footprint](#). This is not only undermining the very viability of human society but also fast accelerating the extinction of non-human species (the ‘sixth mass extinction’). Symptomatically, so-called [‘human overshoot day’](#) is coming earlier every year and, in 2019, it fell on July 29, the earliest ever.

This context matters, because considering carbon reduction strategies without it can have perverse outcomes, that aggravate other threats to our planet and biodiversity: examples include large-scale biofuel monocultures, huge dams for hydroelectricity or ‘low-carbon’ nuclear power plants (far from benign in carbon terms, when assessed as an entire fuel cycle).

Furthermore, the package of policies must be proportionate to the scale and urgency of the crisis. We must have sufficiently high ambitions, ones set by the science not by perceptions of what is supposedly realistic at any moment. Measures that will take, say, 30 years (a 2050 deadline) will fatally amount to far too little far too late. We must also work with readily available technologies, ones already deployed or that can be quickly put in place. It is dangerous to assume technological breakthroughs lie ‘just around the corner’ or place faith on technologies whose safety and viability on sufficient scale have not been demonstrated.

### Introduction – ‘Business as usual’ is not an option

The critical challenge is, in any case, demand reduction: using less land, energy and material resources, generating less waste, reducing transport needs – not switching to alternative sources of supply to match *current* patterns of demand. We cannot, for example, merely switch from fossil-fuel energy sources to renewable energy sources, and expect to continue current levels of energy consumption, let alone to grow our energy demands.

In developing appropriate policy, we must reject the myth of ‘decoupling’, namely that there can be on-going economic growth without increases in ecological costs, including extra greenhouse gas emissions. Our vision is that of steady-state economics, working within

biophysical and social limits to growth, achieving prosperity and well-being without economic growth.

### Introduction – the role of local government in tackling the crisis

Recent history has many examples of how the Council can make our climate crisis worse. Examples include one of the biggest ‘grabs’ of Green Belt land for greenfield site developments on the edge of the city. The city’s development plans, specifically the ‘One Core Strategy’, have encouraged large-scale sprawl characterised by new estates that are largely car dependent. The dominant building standards and site layouts have been inadequate when set against best practice. Other mistakes include large scale tree felling at Woosington Woods, Fenham allotments and elsewhere and a failure to make the most in ecological terms of the city’s surviving green space.

Council administrations have routinely pursued out-dated notions of developments in terms of new shopping malls and office complexes, plus tourist spectacles. There has also been a rash of grandiose road schemes, actual and proposed, the latter typified by the original plan for the Blue House roundabout south of Gosforth – a plan focussed on creating ‘smooth’ traffic flows, at the cost of encouraging more traffic, thereby recreating the original problem as well as increasing carbon emissions.

Current schemes — widening of the A1, the expansion plans at Newcastle airport, the rash of car-dependent housing estates on the northern and western edges of the city, plans for the East Pilgrim Street Quadrant, ‘Alive After Five’ free car parking, the ‘Whey Aye’ Wheel and more— will have to be abandoned or radically revised.

Yet there are also real opportunities in areas such as the [Forth Yards](#) for truly innovative and climate-positive schemes. Some individual council policies and plans such as cycling promotion and Blakett Street pedestrianisation represent good starts that can be built upon. We welcome the District Energy project at the Helix while the existence of the Metro system and still functioning local railway lines are major assets to build upon. The conversion of the empty Eagle Star office block at the Regent Centre to flats also points to another way forward. The planting scheme outside the nearby Gosforth Civil Hall shows what can be done when there is the will to improve the public realm.

### Proposals

We have broken down our proposals into a number of areas:

1. Public awareness-raising and engagement;
2. School education;
3. Transport: private vehicles, delivery vans, taxis, public transport, parking, street lighting
4. Energy;
5. Waste management and recycling
6. Land Use Planning and development control, including flood prevention;



7. Housing: standards, location and site design;
8. City Centre redevelopment plans;
9. Neighbourhoods and suburban 'retrofitting';
10. Food and diet;
11. Green spaces, including tree cover;
12. Local economy;
13. Local democracy.

## 2.1 Public Awareness Raising and Engagement

We take the public with us by speaking loudly and proudly about the benefits that can be gained from taking action on the climate crisis. Talking about the improved bus services, walking and cycling infrastructure that can improve physical and mental health should be at the centre of all of these proposals. Talking directly to how these changes can improve people's lives, will help build momentum to agree these changes.

We need to understand what motivates people to live greener lives and look at what obstacles people face, helping people think about how to choose to overcome these obstacles in order to have the cleaner air, more connected neighbourhoods, and access to nature and wildlife that evidence shows leads to improved wellbeing.

People ultimately want to feel respected, connected, secure and safe with access to power that lets them make changes in our lives.

Hopefully, it should go without saying that public engagement is critical. Indeed, it is hard to imagine any successful climate programme without it, not just full engagement but also transparency and accountability. Yet we would stress the responsibility of government bodies to give a proper lead. Councils have a big influence on public understanding of the climate emergency and individual actions that can help reduce the danger.

### Action

We propose:

1. A rolling programme is planned to hold such sessions around the city in suburban centres such as local libraries and shopping malls as well as in central locations such as the Grainger Market, Central Library and possibly an Eldon Square concourse, a Metro station and the Central Station.
2. A special edition of 'City News' to be distributed to all households
3. A city-wide network of neighbourhood initiatives in the manner of 'Greening Wingrove'
4. Internal training in climate issues for all council staff
5. A 'Newcastle Declares' set of pledges for businesses to cut emissions, with ward councillors encouraging sign-ups. Enrolled businesses would receive regular supporting information, and an annual award would recognise exceptional progress in cutting emissions.
6. A parallel 'Newcastle Declares' commitment for members of the public would include pledges to reduce their personal carbon footprint. Those who sign the online pledge will then receive themed monthly emails giving information and advice.

7. Electronic notice boards on council land should be used for public information and education about the climate crisis, Newcastle's future vision to become a net zero city by 2030, and initiatives and advice to achieve this – including promoting initiatives introduced under this strategy.
8. The council should support the North of Tyne Accredited Climate Change Teachers initiative (for example organising central training provision), offering additional climate training events for youth leaders and support workers employed by the council and by community groups and voluntary organisations.

We would stress the need for cross-party work within the council on the matter.

#### Examples

EU: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/campaign\\_mobile.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/campaign_mobile.pdf)

Sweden (the example is about another issue but could be adapted for the climate emergency, albeit with far more emphasis on the positive, stressing opportunities for a generally better way of living):

<https://www.dinsakerhet.se/siteassets/dinsakerhet.se/broschyren-om-krisen-eller-kriget-kommer/om-krisen-eller-kriget-kommer---engelska.pdf>

## 2.2 School education and development work

The role of Local Authorities in the education system has of course been much diminished. That said, the council could still work with governing bodies and senior school staff to get climate-related issues, not least personal lifestyle changes on the curriculum and at assemblies. School meals can be reformed accordingly, with far more emphasis on plant-based menus, not only healthier at a personal level but also far more sustainable in climate and other ecological ways.

#### Examples

New Zealand: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/13/new-zealand-schools-to-teach-students-about-climate-crisis-activism-and-eco-anxiety>

With school-based projects in fields such as solar energy, energy conservation, 'walk-to-school', waste reduction, schoolyard greening such as:

[https://letschangetherules.org/map/schools-energy-coop?mc\\_cid=b59c36ac4d&mc\\_eid=ae925fe16d](https://letschangetherules.org/map/schools-energy-coop?mc_cid=b59c36ac4d&mc_eid=ae925fe16d)

<http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/School/Energy-Guides/A-Whole-School-Approach.pdf>

<https://educationbusinessuk.net/features/energy-saving-tips-sustainable-schools>

<https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/primary-pathway/ten-topics/waste/>

<https://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/school-gardens-zb0z10zkon>

<http://www.growingschools.org.uk/Resources/Downloads/RHS-Gardening-in-Schools.pdf>

<https://www.plantbasednews.org/lifestyle/70-british-children-want-more-vegan-veggie-school-meals>

<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/about-us/our-work-in-action?q=walk+to+school>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-estate-management-for-schools-tools/tips-to-reduce-energy-and-water-use-in-schools>

## 2.3. Transport

Transport is responsible for around 30% of the city's emissions, most of those from road transport. We recommend that the council follow the **Avoid-Shift-Improve** approach

promoted by the Sustainable Urban Transport Partnership:

<https://www.sutp.org/en/>

Unsustainable transport policies are at the heart of so many problems, not just greenhouse gas emissions of which the transport sector is now the largest emitter. Past policies have led to intolerable levels of air pollution, congestion, and noise. Then there is the toll of death and injury from accidents on the roads. Transport infrastructure carve apart local communities and destroy vital wildlife corridors. It is a system that is enormously expensive to maintain.

### 2.3.1 'Avoid' Strategies

Avoid strategies look to reduce travel demand through more walkable neighbourhoods, better urban planning and careful thought about the location of jobs, homes, and services. Shift strategies try to enable (note: not encourage but genuinely enable) people to move to low-carbon modes, and Improve strategies aim to ensure that any journeys that do need a vehicle are as energy efficient as possible.

It is also important that new housing is built to enable journeys to be minimised - this means ensuring local services, shops, and schools are included within walking distance of housing, but also that jobs are located with or near residential developments. The recent Transport for New Homes report (<http://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/transport-for-new-homes-summary-web.pdf>) and survey by UCL (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-51179688>) shows how new housing developments like Newcastle Great Park (surveyed in both pieces of work) are trapping residents in car-dependent lifestyles.

There are approaches adopted in both the UK and overseas to avoid this problem. A number of European cities have embraced car-free developments, where residential areas of as many as 5000 people are constructed without provision for car parking. A list of car-free housing schemes is available here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_car-free\\_places](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_car-free_places) and a review here: <https://worldcarfree.net/conference/2010/presentations/MarkusHeller-CarfreeDevelopmentsInEurope.pdf>

Such things can be made possible by changing planning policy to remove the minimum number of car parking spaces that must be provided in new developments. We suggested exactly this during the consultation around Newcastle's Development Allocation Plan. This can include both residential and non-residential developments, as shown by the new IKEA store in Vienna: <https://www.dezeen.com/2020/01/23/ikea-vienna-westbahnhof-car-free-store/>

### 2.3.2 'Shift' Strategies

Many cities have already implemented a number of Shift strategies. Shift strategies involve making lower-carbon modes more attractive to use, but not entirely precluding the use of the private car. The city of Groningen, Newcastle's twin city in the Netherlands, began replanning its centre in the 1970s to make driving very difficult and, as a result, walking and cycling very easy. Despite protests from local businesses, the result was to increase footfall, make the streets safer, and ensure walking in the city centre is pleasant and simple. This shows that offering carrots isn't enough on its own, but sticks must be employed to make the private car as less attractive option for short, inner-city journeys. Note: accessing the centre of Groningen by car is still possible, but it is slow and difficult. This means those who *need* to drive (e.g. local residents, those with disabilities) can still do so, but not at the expense of a safe environment for those walking or cycling.

The Belgian city of Ghent (population similar to Newcastle's) has recently followed the same blueprint, making it impossible to drive through the city centre, and giving over space to those walking or cycling. The move has brought a number of benefits, including cleaner air, quieter streets, and more socialising:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/20/the-streets-are-more-alive-ghent-readers-on-a-car-free-city-centre>

Closer to home, UK cities are now following the same path.

- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/20/how-a-belgian-port-city-inspired-birminghams-car-free-ambitions>
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/car-free-cities-pedestrianisation-cycling-driverless-vehicles-york-oslo-birmingham-a9299856.html>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/26/city-enters-end-of-road-for-cars-brighton-bristol-york>

The first Shift that needs to be made is to active travel (i.e. walking and cycling). Manchester is demonstrating how this can be done through its Bee Network (<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/28/manchester-cycle-network-plan-could-be-national-blueprint-says-burnham>) of paths and cycleways. It is very cheap to build active travel networks compared with the cost of road expansion to cope with the same demand for journeys. Such networks would also allow the transport of freight by cargobikes, like with Z-move in Newcastle. Obviously other European cities (particularly in the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark) have demonstrated how active travel can be prioritised to encourage modal shift.

The next Shift must be to public transport, which in Newcastle will mean bus, Metro, and train services. Newcastle clearly has limited powers over these services but can work in partnership with other authorities and provides to ensure the public transport offer is attractive, convenient, safe, affordable, and reliable. Again, restricting private car use, through car parking charges, road-space reallocation, or bus gates, can reduce traffic congestion and make public transport a more attractive alternative. Carrots and sticks are needed, and Nottingham's Workplace Parking Levy (which is currently being implemented in Scottish cities) shows how revenue can be generated for public transport schemes at the same time as making driving less attractive.

Along with levies, restricting road-space for private cars, especially where it is used as a rat-run in a residential neighbourhood, is an essential part of the Shift away from car-dependence. Within Newcastle, an example of a road closure which has been proved to be essential for the safety and wellbeing of local residents is the proposed closure of Salter's Bridge in Gosforth, which Greens strongly support.

Actions to Shift people to public transport can also have positive benefits on air quality, equity, and efficient use of road space. There are economic measures that are beyond the council's remit unilaterally but that could be achieved in partnership with public transport providers, for example the expansion of park and ride sites, the implementation of a zero emission zone (as in Oxford), free public transport days (already implemented in many French and Belgian cities), and reallocation of road space to bus priority lanes.

We are aware that currently there is little space in the city centre for expanding bus provision, however the use of land around East Pilgrim Street could be re-evaluated for this purpose. Instead we may need to look at bringing our shops, workplaces and public services to our communities and suburbs. Ending 'alive after five' free parking in the city centre,

investing in a greener public transport system and walking/cycling infrastructure between city and suburbs are all key to making this happen.

In addition to passenger transport, low-carbon freight transport must also be considered. Clearly, transporting freight into the city centre in large, diesel-powered HGVs is not sustainable. The council should pursue the Freight Consolidation Centre plan included in the air quality strategy for the city, with locations for the transfer of freight to lightweight and electric delivery vehicles. Such a centre should also be linked to safe cycle infrastructure to allow the delivery of goods by cargo bikes, as is being pioneered in the city by Z-move. Again, other European cities have demonstrated the use of cargo bikes to deliver small consignments in urban areas.

### 2.3.3 'Improve' Strategies

The final Improve part of the strategy for decarbonising transport includes electrifying vehicles and improving efficiency. This could be achieved by increasing car occupancy rates through things like car sharing websites. There is potential for a more rapid uptake of alternative technologies, such as electric or hydrogen-powered vehicles, in fleets than in private vehicles. This will be more effective if public transport is more widely used than private vehicles but such a transition will still be too slow if left to technological fixes alone, hence the need focus on Avoid and Shift strategies before Improve.

Taxis, buses, and car club vehicles could all be switched to electric or hydrogen power in shorter timescales. There are already viable vehicles for hackney cabs and electric buses are already being deployed in Newcastle. Such moves may need to be supported by subsidies, something that could be generated from clean air charges or a Workplace Parking Levy.

### 2.3.4 Further examples of best practice from elsewhere

#### General

- <https://civitas.eu/sites/default/files/CARAVEL%20D5%20-%20pt%206%20krakow.pdf>
- <https://malmo.se/Nice-to-know-about-Malmo/Sustainable-Malmo-/Sustainable-Lifestyle/Mobility.html>

#### Free or low cost public transport:

- <http://urmi.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/URMI-2017-FARE-FREE-PUBLIC-TRANSPORT-IN-TALLINN.pdf>
- <https://www.france24.com/en/20190831-france-dunkirk-free-transportation-bus-success-climate-cities>
- <https://freepublictransport.info>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/09/vienna-euro-a-day-public-transport-berlin-365-annual-ticket>

#### Bus priority

- <https://www.eltis.org/discover/case-studies/bus-priority-system-toulouse-france>
- <https://www.eltis.org/discover/case-studies/bus-priority-system-malmsweden>

#### Car-free, 'no car days', and low emission zones:

- Oslo: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/19/travel/oslo-restricts-cars-in-city-center.html>
- Madrid: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-46403397>

- Paris: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-pollution/paris-bans-up-to-60-of-its-cars-as-heatwave-worsens-pollution-idUSKCN1TS2Z0>
- Athens: <https://www.thenationalherald.com/179962/anti-pollution-traffic-restrictions-resume-central-athens/>
- Madrid: <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2018/05/madrid-spain-car-ban-city-center/561155/>
- Brighton: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-51198491>
- Birmingham: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/birmingham-private-cars-city-centre-air-pollution-climate-change-public-transport-a9281786.html>
- York: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-50957470>

#### Zero emission zones and diesel bans

- Oxford <https://cherwell.org/2020/01/19/oxford-to-launch-uks-first-zero-emissions-zone-in-december/>
- Bristol: <https://news.sky.com/story/bristol-bans-diesel-cars-from-2021-in-bid-to-improve-air-quality-11855120>
- Paris: <https://phys.org/news/2019-07-paris-clamps-older-diesel-cars.html>

#### Electric cabs:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/aug/16/dundee-green-revolution-charging-hubs-electric-cabs-scotland>

#### Cycling provision:

- <https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Running-out-of-Road-June-2018.pdf>

#### Car-free developments:

- Edinburgh: <https://ogilviej.wordpress.com/a-car-free-environment/>
- Glasgow: [https://www.urbanrealm.com/news/8379/A\\_former\\_garage\\_gives\\_ground\\_to\\_50\\_car-free\\_Govanhill\\_homes.html](https://www.urbanrealm.com/news/8379/A_former_garage_gives_ground_to_50_car-free_Govanhill_homes.html)

#### Large-scale car usage reduction plans:

- Helsinki: <https://www.fastcompany.com/3039819/in-2050-you-might-want-to-be-living-in-helsinki>

#### Congestion charges and other pricing mechanisms:

- <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7109/56a9aa17de016429f37dc918e96221100e80.pdf>
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15568318.2013.821006>

#### Workplace travel plans:

- <https://www.york.ac.uk/about/sustainability/what-you-can-do/sustainable-travel/>
- [https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/Smarter\\_Choices\\_Changing\\_The\\_Way\\_We\\_Travel\\_chapter3.pdf](https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/Smarter_Choices_Changing_The_Way_We_Travel_chapter3.pdf)
- <https://healthierworkplacewa.com.au/media/2295/travelsmart-workplace-ideas.pdf>

#### The 'Walkable City'

- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/sep/19/what-would-a-truly-walkable-city-look-like>
- <https://www.citylab.com/solutions/2012/12/10-techniques-making-cities-more-walkable/4047/>

- <https://www.eltis.org/resources/case-studies/pedestrianisation-ljubljana-city-centre>
- <https://www.citylab.com/environment/2019/05/brussels-car-free-traffic-congestion-pedestrian-boulevards/588451/>

## 2.4 Energy supply and demand

There are many ways in which to reduce greenhouse gas generation from the city's energy consumption whilst making consumers less dependent on inherently vulnerable and finite energy sources, cutting many forms of pollution and reducing fuel poverty. Indeed, there is real scope for a 'democratisation' of energy, taking power out of the hands of excessively powerful (and often heavily subsidised) energy corporations.

Action

We propose :

1. Creation of council owned not-for-profit energy company
2. Major programme of retrofitting to reduce energy consumption on all council properties
3. Roll-out of photovoltaic installations, ground source heat pumps and energy storage systems as part of building refurbishment and new build programmes (see below).
4. Council policy of buying 100% renewable energy for its own use
5. Moratorium on buying new fossil fuelled vehicles for the council with rolling programme to replace all council vehicles with electric ones.
6. Programme to cut carbon emissions and light pollution associated with street and other lighting.
7. Learn lessons from Warm Zones programmes, e.g. Kirklees, Yorkshire.

Examples of good practice elsewhere:

General:

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-51151032>
- <https://www.ecowatch.com/climate-friendly-heating-renewable-energy-2644898231.html>
- <https://energypost.eu/how-rapidly-can-we-transition-to-100-renewable-electricity/>
- <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aad965> (energy conservation and efficiency)

Funding of energy schemes:

- <https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/local-authority-energy-collaboration/apse-energy-events/past-events/warrington-day/>

Community Energy Cooperatives and local energy companies:

- [https://energy4all.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/E4A\\_Brochure.pdf](https://energy4all.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/E4A_Brochure.pdf)
- <https://www.localenergy.scot/projects-and-case-studies/case-studies/community-benefits/fintry-renewable-energy/>
- <https://www.grimsbycommunityenergy.org>
- <https://www.shoreham-port.co.uk/Solar-Energy-Supply>
- <https://www.bwce.coop>
- <https://letschangetherules.org/map/energise-barnsley>
- <https://goodlocaleconomies.cles.org.uk/government/energy/set-up-an-energy-company/>
- <https://www.bristol-energy.co.uk>
- <https://robinhoodenergy.co.uk>
- <https://www.cleanenergywire.org/factsheets/small-powerful-germanys-municipal-utilities>

Council energy conservation programmes:

- <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/delivering-services/pdf/warmzone-process-executive-summary.pdf>

District heating:

- [https://www.c40.org/case\\_studies/98-of-copenhagen-city-heating-supplied-by-waste-heat](https://www.c40.org/case_studies/98-of-copenhagen-city-heating-supplied-by-waste-heat)

Council solar energy production, heat networks and storage:

- [https://www.solarpowerportal.co.uk/news/council\\_owned\\_solar\\_farm\\_surpasses\\_generation\\_targets\\_records\\_highest\\_income](https://www.solarpowerportal.co.uk/news/council_owned_solar_farm_surpasses_generation_targets_records_highest_income)
- <https://www.islington.gov.uk/energy-and-pollution/energy/bunhill-heat-network>
- [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1049/41m\\_project\\_to\\_support\\_oxford\\_on\\_journey\\_to\\_zero\\_carbon](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1049/41m_project_to_support_oxford_on_journey_to_zero_carbon)

Street lighting:

- <https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/impressive-ways-reduce-light-pollution.php>
- <https://eponline.com/articles/2019/12/06/european-union-adopts-new-guidance-to-reduce-light-pollution.aspx>
- <https://www.itv.com/news/border/update/2016-02-24/moffat-named-europes-first-dark-sky-town/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/aug/22/night-fight-light-pollution>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/26/toulouse-heat-sensitive-lampposts>
- <https://www.buildup.eu/en/news/three-german-towns-are-cutting-energy-costs-and-carbon-emissions-street-lights-demand>
- <https://www.signify.com/en-gb/our-company/news/press-releases/2018/20180605-going-bats-dutch-town-is-first-in-world-to-install-bat-friendly-led-street-lights>

## 2.5 Waste Management and Recycling

A proper waste and recycling policy addresses not just the carbon impacts of waste and resource usage (for instance, recycled paper produces about 25% fewer total emissions than conventional paper), but also benefits our neighbourhoods in cleaner streets, and our oceans in reduced plastic waste.

At the heart of such a policy must be making a reality of the waste hierarchy (Reduction, Reuse, Recycling and composting, Recovery, Landfill).

The top priority is waste Reduction – measures to help reduce waste volumes include:

1. Encouraging reduced consumption (not relying on new shopping districts to regenerate our city, ending advertising of consumer goods on council buildings and public places, supporting a wider cultural mix in our city centre and neighbourhood economies)
2. Targets and incentives based on residual waste per household
3. Separate domestic Food Waste collections have been shown to reduce waste overall.

The second priority is Reuse:

4. Incentives to recognise and support ultra-local reuse initiatives (small businesses, community groups, facebook reuse groups at neighbourhood level)
5. “Reuse malls” to showcase reuse and repair, supporting small businesses in the sector as well as encouraging shopping for second-hand goods and diverting usable products from landfill.

Recycling initiatives are the third priority:



6. Focus on Quality rather than Quantity to avoid contamination and achieve long-term financial sustainability
7. Collect materials separated at source (on the doorstep), cutting out the need for a Materials Recovery Facility, combining collections with a food waste service, and encouraging residents to think more deeply about the material they are throwing out
8. Extensive engagement programme, working face to face not just by literature or flyers, to ensure quality and consistency in recycling collections
9. Selling collected items direct to local markets.

Focusing on lower priorities, especially Recovery of energy from waste via incineration or pyrolysis, is a disincentive to reduction and recycling due to the nature of the technologies and markets concerned. These are not sustainable options.

Here is a [major area for job growth](#).

Other actions include:

1. Phasing out of use within council and by contractors and suppliers of single use plastics
2. Phasing out incineration as an option
3. Promote the *Plastic Free* initiatives.
4. Introduce a network of public water fountains for free refills.
5. Invest in the most up-to-date waste management and recycling systems.

Examples:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/41461>

<https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/zero-waste-vancouver.aspx>

<https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/about-us/corporate-plan>

<https://www.triplepundit.com/story/2013/belgium-hosts-europes-best-recycling-and-prevention-program/55266>

[https://zerowasteurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/zero\\_waste\\_europe\\_cs6\\_gipuzkoa\\_en.pdf](https://zerowasteurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/zero_waste_europe_cs6_gipuzkoa_en.pdf)

[https://zerowastecities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/zero\\_waste\\_europe\\_cs5\\_ljubljana\\_en.pdf](https://zerowastecities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/zero_waste_europe_cs5_ljubljana_en.pdf)

[https://www.c40.org/case\\_studies/c40-good-practice-guides-new-york-city-zero-waste-nyc](https://www.c40.org/case_studies/c40-good-practice-guides-new-york-city-zero-waste-nyc)

More general:

<https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/Zero-waste-strategies-toward-carbon-neutrality.pdf>

<https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/friday-fun-how-create-tomorrow-s-green-cities-today-s-garbage/1050616/>

<https://www.willshees.co.uk/interactive-recycling-map/>

## 2.6 Land Use Planning

Action

We propose :

1. Planning permission to favour redevelopments on the sites which provide for start-up businesses by enabling low cost facilities in cooperative clusters, plus businesses operating from integrated home/work locations.
2. Presumption in favour of extensions and small new buildings that enable working from home and/or micro-businesses.
3. Enforcement and extension of controls to stop 'concrete creep' to preserve permeable areas as well as wildlife habitat
4. Tree planting to reduce flood risks
5. Promoting city centres as a cultural hub rather than chasing the profits from business rates. We could be encouraging shops, amenities, workplaces to be in the neighbourhoods where people live. Focus on supporting the neglected communities – Walker, Newbiggin Hall, etc. Could participatory budgeting play a part here or Section 106 money?
6. Similar to above there is also the idea of Suburban Retrofitting which is about improving current neighbourhoods to be ecologically sensitive and sustainable.
7. The council could use the powers available to them – e.g. enforcing planning regulations, ensuring gardens can't be paved over, energy-efficiency requirements of homes and public buildings, public transport, pavement parking.
8. Reconsider plans for commercial and luxury hotel site at East Pilgrim Street/Whey Aye and other controversial developments and instead look at opportunities for the development of a bus station, a cultural site, parks, ecologically beneficial developments.

Examples:

- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/218798/adapt-localcouncilguide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/218798/adapt-localcouncilguide.pdf) (case studies)
- [https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/13/500000-tree-planting-project-helped-yorkshire-town-miss-winter-floods?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/13/500000-tree-planting-project-helped-yorkshire-town-miss-winter-floods?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

## 2.7 Housing

Action

We propose :

1. Revision of Core Strategy to set high energy performance standards for all new-build housing, with examples set from new buildings and conversion on council buildings council-owned plan.
2. Adopt *Passivhaus* standards for all new builds, whether public or private. Encourage local co-housing and community housing projects that are tailored to local needs (there are many good examples). We need to stop the increase in wood-burning stoves and in the use of household solvents.
3. Provide advice and subsidy for retrofitting insulation in old houses, and for the replacement of gas boilers. Stimulate innovation in this area.

Examples:

- <https://www.ukgbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/UK-GBC-Aldersgate-Energy-Efficiency-Briefing.pdf>
- <https://www.ukgbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Driving-sustainability-in-new-homes-UKGBC-resource-July-2018-v4.pdf>
- <https://www.ukgbc.org/ukgbc-work/sustainability-standards-new-homes/>
- <https://www.trentbasin.co.uk>

- <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/knowledge-landing-page/norwich-council-estate-named-uks-best-new-building-2019-riba-stirling-prize-winner>
- <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/eco-friendly-homes-millennials-housing-market/48708/>

Funding possibility:

- <https://greaterbirminghamchambers.com/latest-news/news/2017/4/26/45m-housing-investment-secured-through-brummie-bonds/>

## 2.8 City Centre and Inner City Redevelopment Plans

We advocate a major presumption in favour of the sustainable redevelopment of the existing built-up area. We want a vibrant, attractive city centre, with a strong cultural life that appeals to all social groups. It will be a zone where walking is safe and pleasant and where there are plenty of opportunities to “stand (and sit) and stare” without having to spend lots of money. It will be leafy with many ‘green walls’ and ‘green roofs’. There will be plenty of affordable provision for smaller businesses including artisan producers as well as much more accommodation downtown.

We oppose conventional developments of the kind that have marred so many city centres. Many are as ugly and devoid of human scale as they are energy- and resource-intensive. Some are already crumbling due to deficient build quality. We oppose suburban sprawl not least because of farmland and wildlife habitat it devours as well as the expensive utilities provision, long commuting with its attendant congestion, time wasted and pollution, including significantly increased CO2 emissions. Many of these edge-of-town developments are little more than dormitory suburbs devoid of the infrastructure that creates convivial neighbourhoods.

Examples

- Paris: <https://ensia.com/articles/paris-is-building-the-eco-community-of-the-future-right-now-heres-how/>
- Copenhagen: <https://www.dezeen.com/2020/01/13/faelledby-henning-larsen-copenhagen-timber-neighbourhood-architecture/> (there are criticisms of the site chosen but we cite it because of the creativity of the plan)

### ‘Smart tourism’

Tourism in Newcastle has been too associated with ‘hen’ and ‘stag’ parties, a ‘party city’ and with special ‘spectacle’ events. Both brings unsustainable with noise, litter and, especially the former, sometimes drunken violence. Associated travel often involves significant amounts of car usage, with attendant problems of air pollutants and CO2 emissions. Some streets, such as Osborne Road, have been given over to hotels at the expense of local neighbourhoods. There are more sustainable forms of tourism eg

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpYijinZlPo&feature=youtu.be>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWONjtEhgRw&feature=youtu.be>

## 2.9 Neighbourhoods and suburban retrofitting

We need to put the suburbs not just the city centre and major transport thoroughfares on a much more sustainable footing, with action to revitalise local high streets and generally make localities cleaner, safer, healthier and socially integrated, true communities with far more facilities within walking distance.

Action

We propose :

1. Neighbourhood plans to develop well-designed and energy-efficient buildings, including retrofitting, following BREEAM 'Excellent' standards, with siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain, use of high quality and thermal efficient building materials, measures such as loft and wall insulation, and appropriate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as PV panels.
2. A goal of twenty minute neighbourhoods with regularly used resources within a twenty minute walk
3. Extensive traffic calming measures, including 20 mph zones and more residents parking schemes plus expansion of local 'streets for people' schemes
4. More 'pocket parks' across all suburbs
5. Trial schemes to popularise 'edible landscapes', replacing lawn monocultures with vegetables, herbs and fruit trees, including community gardens (in manner of Jesmond community orchard)
6. Neighbourhood car-sharing schemes

Examples

Area wide schemes:

- Bristol Old Market Quarter:  
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/403537/OMQNDP+made+version+WEB.pdf/ace7011a-3647-4c5a-8489-fe975a0355ca>

Retrofitting:

- <https://www.youtube.com/embed/1DTDYbAA89w?autoplay=1&rel=0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/embed/AdebEsPwJUg?autoplay=1&rel=0>

Revitalisation of local high streets:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/01/high-streets-saved-debenhams-close-stores>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/mar/29/high-street-closed-betting-shops-york-back-from-dead>
- <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf>

20 minute neighbourhoods:

- <https://www.citymetric.com/transport/could-20-minute-neighbourhoods-help-get-us-zero-carbon-future-4873>
- <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-for-melbourne/plan-melbourne/20-minute-neighbourhoods>
- <https://www.eugene-or.gov/1216/What-is-a-20-Minute-Neighborhood>

Low traffic neighbourhoods:

- <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3844/lcc021-low-traffic-neighbourhoods-detail-v9.pdf>

Pocket parks:

- <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/about-us/our-work-in-action/campaigning-for-parklets>

## 2.10 Food and diet

Food production is a [major contributor to the climate emergency](#) and can cause deforestation, wetland drainage, pesticide contamination, soil erosion, water pollution, wildlife extinction, cruelty to farm animals to obesity and many other avoidable forms of ill health. It is heavily subsidised by the public purse Yet it also offers great scope not just for more sustainable farming but also the provision of healthier, tastier and often cheaper foodstuffs (once all costs of contemporary food systems are taken into account, most not reflected in retail prices but paid elsewhere).

#### Action

We propose :

1. Work with local businesses to hold routine meat-free days in their canteens with same policy for council properties
2. Scoping exercise to identify more sites for allotments
3. Planning presumption against more 'fast food' outlets

Examples:

- <http://thegreenvillage.co.uk/articles/incredible-edible-a-community-growing-revolution>
- <https://www.physicalactivityandnutritionwales.org.uk/growing-food-and-farming/>

### 2.11 Green spaces and tree cover

There are great opportunities to not just protect but also enrich biodiversity, promote public health as well as expand 'natural carbon capture' as part of climate action.

We should be planting hundreds of thousands of trees, working with organisations like The Woodland Trust and neighbourhood groups at ward level to green the little spaces between (e.g. one resident undertakes the greening of one square meter of concrete or waste ground).

The Town Moor, a unique example of urban common land, could become a green lung and major wildlife corridor. It should be considered for the centre-piece of an ambitious project to make Newcastle a City in a Forest, 50% green (cf London).

Look everywhere for good projects and practices, both big and small eg. The *National Trust's* Rhossili project 'The Vile'. There, the introduction of medieval field patterns, with banks and hedgerows enclosing arable and flower crops, has seen a huge increase in the number and variety of insects and other wildlife.

#### Action

We propose :

1. Major tree planting programme across the city
2. Work with local business to create 'green walls and 'green roofs' on their buildings (in manner of Marks and Spencer on Northumberland Street), with similar schemes for council properties
3. Negotiation with Freemen of the City for ecological regeneration of Town Moor, again including major planting and possibly revival of the 1962 lake plan.
4. Negotiation with Parks Trust to introduce ecologically appropriate planting and grounds maintenance regimes, with plenty of land set aside for wildlife habitat
5. Roadsides should be planted with pollution-absorbing shrubs and small trees, and banks and verges left unmown and unmanaged wherever possible.
6. Phase out of toxic sprays for weed control on pavements etc. Use of glyphosate and other pesticides should be stopped.
7. We need to co-operate with the other more rural councils in the North East to reduce the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and the production of ammonia in farming. (Ammonia is reactive with the NOX from cars that produces particulates.)
8. Seek to promote a change in land-use towards habitat restoration - planting forests, protecting moors, restoring the wetlands and bogs that lock in carbon.
9. Network of 'pocket parks'

## Examples

One of the best sources of for a variety of city level biodiversity-related initiatives is:

- <https://www.biophiliccities.org>

See also:

- <https://naturvation.eu/nbs/hamburg/green-network-hamburg>
- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/protecting-trees-and-woods/campaign-with-us/campaign-in-your-community/neighbourhood-planning/>
- <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/health-benefits-of-street-trees/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/aug/15/treeconomics-street-trees-cities-sheffield-itree>
- [https://www.walkable.org/download/22\\_benefits.pdf](https://www.walkable.org/download/22_benefits.pdf)
- <https://www.inherit.eu/pocket-parks/>
- <https://www.irishnews.com/lifestyle/2019/02/16/news/take-on-nature-plan-to-plant-one-million-trees-in-belfast-takes-root-1552301/>
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/milan-trees-air-quality-pollution-climate-change-stefano-boeri-vertical-forest-italy-a8674906.html>

## 2.12 Local economy

Action

We propose :

1. Focus on economic 'localisation' and rebuilding a 'local economy' to cut transportation, create more secure jobs, and [recycle monies within the city](#)
2. Procurement policies that prioritise sustainability criteria rather than misleading measures of 'value for money'
3. Support (planning permissions and seed funding) for locally owned small and medium enterprises

Examples

- <https://cles.org.uk/publications/how-we-built-community-wealth-in-preston-achievements-and-lessons/>
- <https://goodlocaleconomies.cles.org.uk/government/a-thriving-local-economy/build-a-foundational-economy/>
- <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/investnewarksherwood/support/financialsupport/>
- <https://newstartmag.co.uk/articles/how-to-set-up-a-local-bank/>
- <https://www.centreforcities.org/reader/funding-financing-inclusive-growth-cities/reviewing-funding-finance-options-available-city-combined-authorities/4-use-municipal-bonds-birmingham-warrington/>

## 2.13 Local democracy

We realise that councils have been very hamstrung by the removal of certain powers, by severe financial problems and by general resource shortages, including personnel. We are further mindful of statutory obligations that councils must honour. In the immediate future, circumstances sometimes push councils to compete against other areas, not least for customer football and council tax paying residents, leading to policies that contradict climate and other sustainability goals.

We recognise, then, various constraints on council action. In some cases, the following proposals concern specific actions the council could and should take. In others we recognise

that substantial changes would be necessary to the legal and fiscal framework before certain large-scale actions could be undertaken.

That said, Newcastle city council can work with other councils to lobby parliament and national government for necessary reforms. Furthermore, councils still retain considerable scope to put their own 'house' in order, setting a good example (actions regarding council properties, etc) as well as to encourage positive change across local organisations and amongst residents of the city by sheer exhortation.

Councils are further constrained by public opinion and the mandate they are given at election time. However, councils also have wider and longer-term responsibilities that go beyond the current balance of local opinion (often divided and in any case changing) and the election cycle. That is why we put public engagement at the top of our focal points below. We argue that councils have to give a lead building a critical mass of support for the desired changes. Few plans are likely to please everyone and often schemes that are initially unpopular become accepted as right and proper (there are many examples from the field of health promotion and road safety, for example).

There will be unavoidable inconvenience and perhaps serious disruption, including short-term job losses (though with longer term major gains). For that reason, our final proposal concerns the launch of a 'transition fund' to help specific businesses and households that are particularly adversely affected. Obviously, there would have to be robust criteria as well as real transparency and accountability regarding its allocation of financial support.

The Green Party advocates a democratic transformation in local government, to move away from the cabinet-led 'strong leader' model to the committee model with greater public involvement. We welcome the plans being made in Sheffield to take their council in this direction.

Special structures must be created to ensure that climate emergency measures are undertaken with due speed and prioritisation, with full monitoring of progress and with powers to stop other council bodies pursuing policies that contradict the programme.

We propose a special council climate commission, headed by senior council figures, with all necessary support staff and other resources, ones commensurate to the gravity and urgency of the climate crisis.

Examples

<https://www.leedsclimate.org.uk/about-leeds-climate-commission>

### **Appendix One: Some statutory platforms as the basis for action**

Several barriers have been noted above. There is, for example, the current government's 'Clean Growth Strategy'. Before that there was the 2008 Climate Change Act. The 2004 Planning Act (amended 2008) required local councils to contribute to the prevention and mitigation of climate change (the innocuous term popular at the time).

Newcastle has suffered from significant flooding events, the occurrence of which can be related to climate. The 2010 Flood and Water Management Act requires due consideration of flood risks. Planning at a neighbourhood level has become more significant since the 2011 Localism Act and the 2017 Neighbourhood Planning Act, opening the door to action at that level on matters such as energy and 'green infrastructure'.

Such platforms go well beyond the planning system per se. Thus the 2012 Health and Social Care Act created responsibilities regarding public health, something very much at risk from

climate breakdown (heat waves, floods, fires, increased incidence of respiratory diseases spread of new diseases, power failures, increased mental stress. It is not clear post-Brexit what will be the status of EU directives but, to date, they have set legally binding limits with regards to air pollution. The Energy Act of 2016 set minimum energy standards for the private rented sector which councils are obligated to enforce.

It is beholden for local councils who take their responsibilities seriously to act upon such legal duties

The planning framework for local government action is outlined here:

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=fd66dbe5-2b88-4acf-b927-256a82db9abe>

### **Appendix Two: Some sample city action plans**

Vancouver, Canada: <https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/climate-emergency-response.aspx>

Portland, USA: <https://beta.portland.gov/climate-action/history-and-key-documents-climate-planning-and-action-portland>

New York City, USA: <https://onenyc.cityofnewyork.us>

Minneapolis, USA: <https://minneapolis2040.com/goals/climate-change-resilience/>

San Francisco, USA:

[https://sfenvironment.org/sites/default/files/fliers/files/sfe\\_focus\\_2030\\_report\\_july2019.pdf](https://sfenvironment.org/sites/default/files/fliers/files/sfe_focus_2030_report_july2019.pdf)

Barcelona, Spain: [https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Barcelona-s-Climate-Action-Plan-2018-2030?language=en\\_US](https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Barcelona-s-Climate-Action-Plan-2018-2030?language=en_US)

Paris, France:

<https://cdn.paris.fr/paris/2019/07/24/1a706797eac9982aec6b767c56449240.pdf> See also:

[https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2020/01/paris-municipal-election-anne-hidalgo-green-proposal-](https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2020/01/paris-municipal-election-anne-hidalgo-green-proposal-housing/604975/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheAtlanticCities+%28CityLab%29&utm_content=FeedBurner)

[housing/604975/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+TheAtlanticCities+%28CityLab%29&utm\\_content=FeedBurner](https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2020/01/paris-municipal-election-anne-hidalgo-green-proposal-housing/604975/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheAtlanticCities+%28CityLab%29&utm_content=FeedBurner)

Reykjavik, Iceland:

[https://reykjavik.is/sites/default/files/reykjavik\\_action\\_plan\\_carbon\\_neutral\\_by\\_2040\\_2.pdf](https://reykjavik.is/sites/default/files/reykjavik_action_plan_carbon_neutral_by_2040_2.pdf)

It might be noted how often American cities feature in the vanguard of climate action. They are, of course, sited in a country whose national political leadership is, at the time of writing, rather hostile to such measures, surely an inspiring example of what can still be done in discouraging circumstances

Some other ones can be found here:

<https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/climate-emergency-campaign>

<https://www.cdp.net/en/cities/cities-scores>

<https://www.c2es.org/content/city-climate-policy/>

There is a good digest of local government activity in Finland here

[http://www.hiilineutraalisuomi.fi/en-US/Canemure/Subprojects/Subprojects\(50143\)](http://www.hiilineutraalisuomi.fi/en-US/Canemure/Subprojects/Subprojects(50143))

Scotland seems to be generally ahead of England:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-51191239>

Some English examples:

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/cn2028>



<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/news-archive/here-is-how-stroud-district-council-is-working-towards-a-carbon-neutral-district-by-2030>

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20062/carbon\\_reduction\\_and\\_energy\\_saving](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20062/carbon_reduction_and_energy_saving)

[https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20468/sustainability\\_and\\_climate\\_change/1437/climate\\_emergency\\_declaration](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20468/sustainability_and_climate_change/1437/climate_emergency_declaration)