

# Environment Policy

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## 1. Mission Statement

The Authority is governed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 (the Park Act) and has a specific remit under this act which states the general duty of the Authority is:

“to develop improve, preserve and manage or to procure or arrange for the development, improvement, preservation and management of the park as a place for the occupation of leisure, recreation, sport, games or amusements or any similar activity, for the provision of nature reserves and for the provision and enjoyment of entertainments of any kind.”

For over fifty years, the Authority has been in the business of reclamation, remediation, biodiversity improvement, giving access to open space and preventing development (acquiring 5,000 acres) to develop the vision of a green lung.

The Authority produces a periodic business plan, which will link to and consider the Environment Policy along with other relevant documents including the Park Development Framework and our Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Authority recognises that the UK government and many local authorities have declared a climate emergency and has set a target date for the UK to meet net zero by 2050. The Authority also has a long term intention to meet net zero which it will develop targets to achieve through our strategy and action plan.

The Authority’s mission statement for how it will consider its future development and management from an environmental perspective given the current climate and biodiversity crisis under its remit through the Park Act and Business plans is set out below:

“The Authority will, in the context of its statutory remit, pursue best practice in environmental innovation for the design, delivery and management of its operation across its, open spaces, biodiversity and built facilities. It will support the UK Government and climate emergency agenda and is committed to its achieving a net zero position, working in partnership with various agencies and the Park’s many communities.”

The overarching aim of this policy is to follow the circular economy principles. A circular economy is based on three principles:

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep products and materials in use
- Regenerate natural systems



The Authority will keep these principles at the heart of its policy, strategy and action plan development and as initiatives develop the Authority will investigate improvement options and continually revisit these principles.

## 2. Background

### Why Develop a Policy?

The IPCC 2018 report on climate change found that meeting a 1.5°C target is still achievable, success is dependent on an ambitious international effort and an increase in investment. Exceeding the 1.5°C target would affect weather patterns, cause sea levels to rise further, create food and water shortages, and affect human security and economic growth. The special report Global Warming of 1.5°C (IPCC, 2018. Summary for Policymakers) shows that 420 million additional people will be exposed to extreme heat and up to 270 million additional people to water scarcity if global temperatures rise by 2°C, compared with a 1.5°C scenario. The world is now clearly in the midst of a climate and ecological emergency and there is now a unanimous consensus from the scientific community on the need for rapid action.

There is clear recognition that this challenge can only be overcome by taking urgent, radical action. This crisis is something that will have an effect on us all, and for some the impact of climate change is already being felt. The UK is committed to playing its full part in meeting the international target to limit the global average temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels by the year 2100, and aiming for 1.5°C, known as the Paris Agreement within the United Nations Framework on Climate Change.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro on 5 June 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993. The objective is to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and it is often seen as the key document regarding sustainable development.

The Convention developed three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity); the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.

It has two supplementary agreements, the Cartagena Protocol and Nagoya Protocol. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty governing the movements of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology from one country to another. The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity is another supplementary agreement to the CBD.

Whilst the Authority has no remit within the Park Act or legal obligation all organisations (including the Authority) have a moral duty to look at what they can do to support international, national, regional and London targets on climate change and biodiversity. Understanding climate risk and threats to biodiversity, in particular to our own operation, and what implications it may have to the public and our users is key to developing a robust policy and strategy for the Authority that contributes to the solution. There are many reports alongside the 2018 IPCC report and the CBD, which detail short, medium and long term risks. These have informed the development of this policy and are listed in section 9. The Authority needs to develop a policy and strategy that is resilient and can adapt to climate change and reverse biodiversity loss as it will seek to do all it can and as new technologies arise or new information unfolds, it will adapt as well as keeping the key aim of contributing to limiting global warming and improve biodiversity. However, the Authority recognises that most individual organisations cannot provide all of the solutions, as combating climate change and reversing biodiversity loss needs system-wide change that involves world leaders, governments, communities, businesses, individuals and stakeholders across all sectors of the economy, across the country and the wider world. This Policy will seek to adapt as these and other changes to how we live start to take shape. The reputation of the Authority is key and developing a policy and strategy seeking to support the current global issues on climate change and biodiversity will demonstrate that the Authority is seeking to play its part and contribute to the solution.

The scale and pace of change needed will require major investments, changes to the way in which we use and interact with energy and changes to how we live our lives and define success. It will also redefine how we manage and interact with our environment. Above all, it will involve a collective leadership and shared ambition to deal with this challenge head on.

### The Challenge

The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority recognises that the current balance between economics, climate change, sustainability, carbon reduction, biodiversity improvement and resource usage is a major challenge to all organisations and governments. It recognises that the field of environmental management is a constantly changing and developing subject and some organisations are only currently able to have a small impact due to the nature of their business. Some organisations also have the constraints of their core objectives, some of which will only be able to change as larger industries and governments make headway with many of the proposed changes to how the world operates.

The Authority will play its part in helping to tackle one of the significant challenges of our time: a changing climate, loss of biodiversity and overconsumption of resources. Much of the Authority's work involves activity such as improvements for biodiversity and provision of cycling and walking routes throughout the park. These contribute to nature recovery, reduced use of resources through greener travel, health and wellbeing, provision of nature improvement and biodiversity improvement projects as well as acting as a carbon sink in our green open spaces. These things will remain as core objectives and this policy should also recognise the value of this work and the Authority's remit in this area.

Many local authorities, governments and organisations have declared a climate emergency for which they are directing resource and activity to a range of initiatives ranging from provision of EV charging points, retro fitting their building portfolio with energy saving equipment or replacing vehicle fleets with Electric or HVO powered vehicles. All these initiatives are being implemented to try to slow down and reverse climate change. Other organisations are also seeking ways they can support action or change how they operate to contribute towards a reduction in climate change. Much has been made of reducing carbon emissions and the current aim for many is to become carbon neutral or net zero. This can be achieved in two ways – either reducing the carbon footprint or offsetting by investing in projects which reduce or remove carbon. Organisations will need to find what works for them and seek initiatives that deliver benefits for the climate whilst also ensuring they can remain viable as a business. However, environmental contribution is not just about carbon reduction or net zero. Restoring and protecting land for recreation and to benefit wildlife, managing land to conserve and enhance biodiversity, can be just as important and should be recognised. Biodiversity net gain will be something used in the

future and organisations can look at integrated approaches to create overall benefits this will also be a focus for the Authority as opportunities arise and we will work with partners to realise benefits in our managed land portfolio to ensure BNG is considered in all that we do.

The Authority is in a unique position in that part of its operation involves work which enhances biodiversity, protects land and develops resilient open spaces, which will contribute to a range of climate change objectives in the future. Part of its operation inevitably involves activity, which may create excess carbon emissions or use resources some of which will be difficult to reduce without stopping that activity, we will investigate these areas to reduce our impact.

We recognise many Local Authorities and similar organisations have declared a climate emergency and have set target dates to become carbon neutral or “net zero”. It is unclear yet how many of these plans and target dates are achievable and only time will tell if they will be successful. Some organisations are looking at contributing elements to support international or regional targets by smaller contributions such as net zero mobility or carbon zero new builds. To meet a target of full carbon neutral for the Authority as a whole we suspect would be difficult without offsetting or unless we offset our own enhancement activities in open spaces or BAP actions against venues and services.

This policy and associated strategy will seek to determine what can realistically be achieved as a meaningful contribution rather than seeking to aim for the unachievable. Rather than declaring an emergency and setting a date to become net zero our current aim is to support the international, national, regional and London effort to reduce global warming where we can. We will do this by investigating all the things we can change or improve to make our landholdings climate resilient, reduce our carbon footprint, investigating how we can improve biodiversity further, improving air quality, educate people, support ecosystem services, creating flood resilience, health and wellbeing. We will develop targeted actions under each area of operation and themes set out in Appendix 1 of this policy.

The actions

The Authority recognises it has a responsibility and needs to minimise the negative impacts on the environment and support the climate change emergency with the need to operate as an effective public body and the requirement to reduce the burden on the taxpayer. It acknowledges the contribution it can make to protecting and enhancing the land and buildings in its custody whilst being sensitive to environmental, economic and social considerations. The Authority is in a position to lead by example and educate others, in particular park users to develop awareness and behave in an environmentally responsible manner. The Authority will take this opportunity and policy to develop an integrated approach to its environment strategy and action plan.

It will seek to develop appropriate and specific solutions to the different types of sites, venues and open spaces that it owns and manages to meet improvements in the common themes under each area of operation which will be set out in a strategy and action plan. This Policy and the strategy will address options for contractors, leaseholders and other bodies operating within the Park and ensure a joined up approach to maximise the benefit.

The Policy aims are set out in more detail in section 3.

The Authority recognises that it has a number of distinct areas of activity and operation. These can be divided into five main areas of operation as set out in Appendix 1:

- 1 - New Construction and Projects**
- 2 - Open Spaces Management**
- 3 - Facilities Management**
- 4 - Events**
- 5 - Corporate**

Open Spaces and their activities in the main tend to contribute to positive environmental activity (climate change mitigation, biodiversity enhancements and habitat protection). New



builds can use technology to deliver carbon neutral builds but these are often cost prohibitive or difficult to implement to truly achieve a neutral build. We are committed to reviewing new technology on every project and build as part of our business case to deliver more sustainable and greener construction. The venues contribute in many positive ways for example to the health agenda, social cohesion and towards much of the remit of the Park Act. It is a fact this part of our operation contributes to energy use, travel and resource use, as do many elements of the events we run along with our corporate activity and these are necessary to deliver our provision of sporting and leisure activity we have been proud to deliver over the past fifty years. The Authority does need to deliver its broad remit and this policy and supporting strategy will seek to construct a framework which outlines the most effective actions each theme can take to maximise its contribution to the environmental crisis. Although there may be some individual constraints the overall aim and the Authority's Environmental vision is to make improvements that support the effort to reduce climate change. We will also seek to balance out the negative impacts against the positive ones to demonstrate our overall value and understand our true effects on the world whilst providing a world class leisure destination for sport and nature.

The Authority owns assets which are leased to, managed/operated by a third party who will have their own requirements, environmental standards or policies. The Authority will require all third party organisations have their own environment policy in place, which is acceptable to the Authority. Whilst the Authority cannot impose its own standards onto other organisations it will however through its procurement process seek to ensure that all operators meet or exceed our own standards of environmental practice. Operators will be required to provide data and monitoring on a range of KPIs as set out in each contract.

The Authority uses a large number of other contractors for a wide variety of contracts from design and delivery projects through to standard operational maintenance and repair works. As part of the general procurement process the Authority will ensure all contractors have a good standard of environmental practice or an appropriate environment policy in place.

Customers, visitors and regular park users can also play a part and the Authority will demonstrate good practice, lead by example and provide information and interpretation via its website and onsite to engage with people about how it is supporting environmental measures.

This policy and the framework set out in Appendix 1 will link to an overall strategy that the Authority will adopt. The strategy will be a working document and develop specific activity and actions within each theme and a range of common threads to maximise the contribution to the climate emergency. We will become as environmentally supportive as possible in our own actions and in influencing the actions of third party operators and contractors.

#### Environment Group

The strategy will be steered by an "Environment Group" and specific working groups convened from relevant Authority officers reporting back to Members. The group should seek to champion the policy and strategy including developing ownership and cooperation from specific areas that will be required to deliver the strategy. This will develop a "Golden Thread" running through the organisation which is committed to supporting the objective of ensuring our operations contribute towards the international objective of limiting climate change.

### **3. Policy Aims**

The Authority will undertake all environmental actions and initiatives that it reasonably can to address the climate emergency relevant to the achievement of the vision within its remit. It will work on areas of sustainability and new technologies to support the Policy, Strategy and any associated action plans.

The following list of policy aims is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on an annual basis by an “Environment Group” as to how we will continue to develop actions to maximise our environmental action:

#### Organisation Policy Aims

- Recognise the climate emergency and biodiversity loss
- Follow the principle of the Circular Economy (see glossary)
- Follow the five business areas to develop a strategy under each theme as set out in Appendix 1
- Within the five business areas, develop and ensure appropriate and achievable environmental objectives and actions and targets are set.
- Review new technology and initiatives through an “Environment Group” which will meet once a quarter to develop and progress the strategy and action plan.
- Consider the environmental implications and opportunities of policies, projects, decisions and working practices.
- Identify environmental risks, prioritise and manage these in an appropriate and timely way.
- Mitigate the impacts of past land uses and activities, in particular remediating contaminated land where possible.
- Manage our operations (directly and through contractors) in ways that are environmentally sustainable and economically feasible.
- Meet or exceed all the environmental legislation that relates to the Authority and suppliers/contractors.
- Ensure the environmental impacts of goods and services are considered within our procurement decisions.
- Raise and maintain environmental awareness amongst staff with appropriate training and awareness activity.
- Develop a set of targets and measures to effectively monitor our environmental performance
- Develop a baseline of performance in 2022/23 and seek areas for improvement with stretch targets
- Work on public awareness of what we are doing and how the public can contribute

## 4. Responsibilities

All Authority staff are responsible for considering the impact on the environment of any action or activity. Senior Management Team and an Environment Group are responsible for the overview, monitoring and evaluation of the Environment Policy and any subsequent strategy and action plan.

## 5. Legal Considerations

There is a range of environmental legislation the Authority is required to adhere to, from simple acts within planning applications through to work undertaken in the open spaces. As an organisation we have a duty and it is our policy to keep abreast of changes in legislation and ensure we are compliant at all times.

## 6. Relevant Policy & Procedures

Environment Strategy and Action Plan  
Corporate Travel Policy  
Training and Development Policy  
Flexible Benefits Statement  
New Ways of Working Policy Statement

## 7. Monitoring & Evaluation

A set of KPIs specifically relating to the effectiveness of our environmental performance will be developed to check if we are meeting targets that we set in our strategy.

The strategy will identify a range of measures which we will develop a baseline in year one (2022/23) then monitor on an ongoing basis through agreed KPIs to identify areas for improvement under each theme and strategy thread. The effectiveness of this policy will be measured against the targets set within the strategy and ongoing monitoring of the environmental KPIs for the Authority.

The implementation of this policy informs the day to day operation of all officers and the discharge of their duties.

The policy will be rolled out via Compass for all staff and via staff training. The policy will also be available on the Lee Valley Visit and Authority Corporate web sites.

## 8. Glossary of Terms

Some of the terminology used in this document may be unfamiliar so this glossary has been attached to clarify some new terminology.

### **IPCC**

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

### **CBD**

Convention on Biological Diversity

### **KPIs**

Key Performance Indicators

### **Net zero**

To reach Net zero the basic principle requires reduction of carbon emissions as far as possible **before** considering offsetting.

### **Carbon neutrality**

This is slightly different to Net zero and can be reached **through offsetting alone**.

### **Circular Economy**

A circular economy is based on three principles, 1) design out waste and pollution, 2) keep products and materials in use, 3) regenerate natural systems

### **Ecosystem Services**

This is the many and varied benefits to people that are provided by the natural environment and healthy ecosystems. It can include things like flood defence by soft landscaping rather than hard landscaping, plants for pollination or carbon capture projects – e.g. tree planting projects which also help exchange CO<sub>2</sub> for oxygen.

### **BNG**

Biodiversity net gain

### **BAP**

Biodiversity Action Plan

## 9. Appendices and References

There are several references and documents which have informed this policy:

**IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers.**

In: Global warming of 1.5°C.

## **COP24 Special Report Health and Climate**

Change World Health Organisation 2018

## **Net Zero The UK's contribution to stopping global warming**

Committee on Climate Change May 2019

## **East Herts Environment and Infrastructure Service Plan 2021-2026**

## **Enfield Physical and Environmental Security Policy 2020**

## **Essex Environmental Statement - Essex County Council 2021**

## **Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy 2020**

## **Sustainable Hertfordshire Action Plan 2020**

## **What Do Londoners Think About Climate Change? Results from London Council's 2020 climate change polling**

## **London Councils Joint Statement on Climate Change March 2020**

## **Mayor of London - London Environment Strategy 2018**

## **Tower Hamlets Net Zero Carbon Plan 2020**

## **London Legacy Development Corporation Environmental Sustainability Report 2019/20**

## **Waltham Forest Climate Change Strategy 2008**

## **Understanding Climate Risk – Buro Hapold LLDC report May 2021**

## **LLDC Board meeting 31 January 2023 - Sustainability Update (agenda item 11)**

# **Appendix 1 – Areas of Operation and Common Themes**

## **Authority Areas of Operation**

The focus is on five sub divisions which are key areas of operation as set out in the Authority's Environment Policy and carried through to the Strategy and Action Plan they are:

- 1 - New Construction and Projects**
- 2 - Open Spaces Management**
- 3 - Facilities Management**
- 4 - Events**
- 5 - Corporate**

## **Common Themes**

Under each area of operation we have identified a list of common environmental themes that can be measured and improved upon. The aims and measures have been grouped under common themes. Two areas, Procurement and Communications will be considered separately as elements under our corporate area of operation but are not common themes across all.

- Travel
- Organisational Resource use (paper, supplies etc.)
- Machinery
- Water usage and quality
- Energy usage
- Waste management
- Property and Land use (including contaminated land)
- Biodiversity and nature improvement

- Learning
- Sustainable Design + Build
- Procurement – (Corporate)
- Communications – (Corporate)

These themes will be carried through to the strategy, developed along with actions to take forward. As business plans are reviewed and technologies develop there may be further additions under each broad theme.