

2020 ROUNDUP



GREEN COUNCILLORS AND CLIMATE ACTION

These are your highlights of the year. They focus on climate-specific work and so miss out much else that you are doing. They show a wide range of work and achievement by greens in power, green opposition groups, and sole councillors demonstrating the 'green in the room' effect. (If your story is missing...don't forget to send it in next year!)



BRIGHTON

(Greens in power since August)

Even before taking power Green councillors had won a study on reducing traffic in the city centre. Now in power, Greens will soon have findings and proposals about an ultra-low emission zone. In the Autumn Brighton hosted the first meeting of its Climate Assembly, also focusing on transport issues. Brighton has also held a youth assembly.

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BRISTOL

(Labour control, 11 greens)

Green councillors are celebrating this month after winning their motion that commits Bristol City to opposing Bristol Airport expansion, overturning the council's previous position.



Earlier in the year Bristol greens won a budget change to use unspent apprenticeship levy money on upskilling council workers for retrofit work.

BURGESS HILL

(Town council, 4 greens)

Circular and local economy wins with greens helping to get a repair cafe and a new monthly street market up and running.



DARLINGTON

(Tories biggest party, 2 Greens)

Green councillors have just won a vote to rescue the council's Climate Emergency Working Group that was being undermined by the Tory leadership.



FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE

(NOC, Tories biggest party, Greens second with 6)

Greens have secured a climate change budget of £5m plus the promise of being able to borrow another £5m. The council has also elected Green Councillor Lesley Whybrow to be Climate Change Portfolio Holder on the Cabinet.



Within Hythe a new 20mph zone has been delivered championed by Greens in the town council with support from our Kent County Councillor. The town council is also pushing ahead with a 1000+ tree planting scheme.

HEREFORDSHIRE

(Independent group + green alliance led)

The headline is a huge win against the £200m Hereford Western Bypass, with money now going to active travel and electric buses achieving the same congestion reduction! New high quality cycle paths and a borrow–bike scheme including e–bikes are on their way. Other achievements



include a council homes building programme ‘for the first time in a generation’ with plans for 2500 affordable net zero homes. Cabinet member Ellie Chowns has published a comprehensive **Carbon Management Plan** putting council emission on a path to net zero by 2030. The county will soon have its first Passivhaus primary school and there is a commitment to this standard for the future. In the pipeline are plans on waste, water and nature, plus a major retrofit scheme. Plans are framed both for climate action and for social justice.

LEWES

(Cooperative alliance with LibDems/
Labour/independents)

Highlights for Lewes Greens, achieved through partnership working, include their **Corporate Plan, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, Reimagining Lewes District Action Plan**, and soon-to-come planning guidance and sustainability checklist. Lewes Greens



are making their district a stand–out council for pushing a climate action programme linked with community wealth building and community action. They are pushing ahead with an innovative £500m decarbonisation programme for social housing, supporting community energy projects and helping develop nature–based climate solutions and natural flood management schemes.

Lewes District has a continuing reputation for active community engagement on climate action with Climate Forums, widespread planting initiatives, a Climate Hub, an Active Travel Hub etc, culminating in the new Ouse Valley Climate Action Resilience project; a suite of grassroots projects that will link with larger scale climate initiatives.

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MALVERN

(Democratic Alliance of Greens and Independents)

Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan '**Destination Zero**' approved in January. Land purchased for carbon sequestration projects. 'Carbon implications' assessment required for all reports. A full time Carbon Reduction Officer has been appointed, shared with Wychavon.

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Using the scrutiny function, Green assembly member Caroline Russell has exposed the near £2bn cost to Londoners of the climate damaging Silvertown Road Tunnel.



NORTH SOMERSET

(Independents biggest group; 3 greens)

This is the first district council to achieve **Bronze Carbon Literacy** Organisation status. It has also declared a nature emergency alongside the climate emergency. Despite being a small minority Greens have a place on the executive with Bridget Petty leading on waste management, having just brought the work back in-house because old contract was failing waste reduction and recycling targets, as well as supporting senior management in embedding carbon literacy. Green values are informing the Covid recovery planning.



PETERBOROUGH

(Conservative control, 2 greens)

Recently appointed a Principal Climate Change Officer. Greens are pushing for bold plans within the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group; with half day meetings looking at each sector: transport; energy; industry...



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ROther

(Independent/LibDem/Labour cabinet)

Through partnership working sole Green Polly Gray has developed a walking and cycling policy to go to the county council. She has helped to win an Environment and Policy Manager post.



SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

(LibDem/Green partnership)

A new Corporate Plan places 'Protect and Restore our Natural World' and 'Action on Climate' front and centre, Local Plan policy has been pushed to ensure new builds are operationally carbon neutral by 2030, using the Oxford City example and CIL money is being redirected to develop green infrastructure. Planning for new council offices has prioritised 'exemplary' construction standards and access to public transport. Greens won a commitment to 2.5% ultra-low carbon investment within the pension fund. Planning committee greens have pushed developers to provide on street EV charging infrastructure. Green councillors have set up working parties to look at developing local retrofit skills and firms. Greens have used a Climate Emergency Action Committee to push for better across a range of policies.

ST ALBANS

(LibDem minority administration, 1 green)

In February sole Green councillor Simon Grover won unanimous backing for motion calling on the Hertfordshire Pension Fund to stop investing in fossil fuels. He also successfully lobbied for additional solar panels on a leisure centre – the council's primary electricity user – and won a switch to Ecotricity as the council's electricity provider. He has also helped move the council away from single party rule to a committee system.



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STROUD

(Cooperation agreement including Greens)

A district-wide carbon neutral 2030 Strategy is now out for public consultation. Community engagement is run through Transition Stroud with monthly Climate Action Network meetings including 17 parish and community Climate Action Groups.

A £1m plan to replace gas heating in the grade 1 listed council main offices with water source heat pumps from the local river. Working with Gloucestershire Energy Coop to replace storage radiators in sheltered housing with PV panels, batteries & ground source heat pumps. Over £1m won through LAD Green Homes Funds to insulate around 100 Park Homes and install 50 air source heat pumps.

In a trial scheme refuse vehicles are to be converted to electric rather than being sold on and replaced.

Funding – mostly from CIL – found for rewilding & tree planting schemes, cycle routes (despite not being a transport authority) and covered cycle parking.

Finally, cutting edge energy policies are included in the Local Plan going to inspectors next year.

SURREY

(Conservative control, 1 green)

Jonathan Essex works valiantly as our green voice, and has helped to produce a **Green New Deal for Gatwick!** Surrey is introducing electric and 'green hydrogen' buses with a £49m commitment to invest.



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SWALE

(Rainbow coalition including Greens)

Adopted an action plan in April 2020 and has now replaced nine diesel vans with electric vans, charged with renewable electricity, reducing emissions by 30 tonnes p.a.



TEWKESBURY

(Conservative led, 1 green)

Borough appointed part-time consultant is running a carbon audit and has a working group. Sole Green Councillor Caty Cody won anti-engine-idling signs and as a town councillor has been instrumental winning support for the Local Electricity Bill, for working towards **plastic-free town status**, supporting **No Mow May**, switching to renewable energy suppliers and to **Ecosia** as default search engine and rolling out use of the water **refill app**.



WYCHAVON

(Conservative control, 2 greens)

Facing a huge Tory majority a pragmatic involvement approach with the councils 'Intelligently Green' process has enabled greens to push for better, and Green councillor Ed Cohen is on a monitoring panel. Meanwhile town Councillor Julie Tucker has had a biodiversity win within Evesham with a public open space scheme tapping into Wildlife Trust Natural Recovery Networks project.



WYRE FOREST

(Conservative and Independants largest groups, 1 green)

Sole Green councillor Vicky Caulfield chairs a 'Green Advisory Panel', which makes recommendations to Cabinet based on the Ashden 31 Actions, including a solar farm, council buildings retrofit and EV charging. Vicky also won interest for a 'doughnut economics' approach to policy making and evaluation.





YORK

(LibDem green alliance; 21 LibDems, 4 greens)

Despite having only 4 councillors, greens hold 2 executive seats including deputy leader. Council is committed to zero carbon by 2030. Denise Craghill is now leading on the 5-year programme of building 600 new houses to Passivhaus standard (with 40% for affordable council or social housing) plus a £1m retrofit of 60 council houses. York is also piloting e-scooters.

Andy D'Agorne has overseen the implementation of a 'Low Traffic Neighbourhood' and the trial extension of the city centre pedestrian area. Despite the pandemic the city's Clean Air Zone is being implemented with most park and ride buses now operated by new electric double deck vehicles manufactured locally.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!