



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Date Approved: 25 February 2026
Review Date: February 2028

Introduction

Public expectation with regard to the environment and sustainability has increased to the point where it is essential that Local Councils adopt the principles of sustainability in all areas of operation or where the council has influence to ensure environmental responsibilities and quality of life is maintained. Ledbury, a historic market town, is committed to protecting and enhancing its natural environment for current and future generations. Recognising the vital role that a healthy environment plays in residents' wellbeing, social cohesion, economic vitality, and biodiversity, Ledbury Town Council pledges to integrate sustainable practices into all aspects of its activities.

Our Vision

To create a resilient, environmentally responsible, and vibrant community that values and actively preserves the natural beauty, biodiversity, and cultural heritage of Ledbury and its surroundings.

1. Commitment and Principles

- I. Behave responsibly towards the environment in all Council activities.
- II. Lead by example in promoting sustainable practices within the community.
- III. Engage residents, local organisations, and stakeholders in sustainability initiatives.
- IV. Monitor progress through clear, achievable goals with defined actions.

2. Legal and Policy Framework

Ledbury Town Council recognises its responsibilities under relevant legislation, including, but not limited to:

- i. The Water Act 2003 – conserving water supply and usage.
- ii. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 – conserving biodiversity.
- iii. The Climate Change Act 2008 and subsequent policies – reducing carbon emissions.
- iv. The Environment Bill and local planning policies – promoting sustainable development.
- v. The Water Framework Directive – ensuring the health of the River Leadon reaches 'good ecological status' by 2027.

3. Strategic Environmental Actions

a) Water Conservation and River Protection

- i. Promote efficient water use in Council facilities and community spaces.
- ii. Support sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in new developments to reduce flooding and pollution of the River Leadon.
- iii. Collaborate with local environmental groups.
- iv. Encourage riparian buffer zones and discharge of riparian responsibilities along the Leadon to prevent erosion and filter pollutants.
- v. Encourage residents and businesses to adopt water-saving measures.

b) Sustainable Development and Planning

- i. Advocate for sustainable land use in planning applications, prioritising green spaces and biodiversity.
- ii. Support the Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan's policies on conservation and sustainable growth.
- iii. Lobby for the integration of green infrastructure, such as permeable surfaces and tree planting, in new developments to manage stormwater and enhance biodiversity.
- iv. Ensure all Council-led projects and property developments incorporate sustainability criteria.

c) Climate Change and Energy Use

- i. Commit to reducing the Council's carbon footprint by improving energy efficiency in buildings and operations.
- ii. Promote community awareness campaigns on energy conservation and sustainable living.
- iii. Transition Council vehicles towards electric or other low-emission alternatives where feasible.
- iv. Conduct basic energy audits of Council buildings to identify quick wins to reduce energy consumption.
- v. Apply for grants or funding opportunities that support renewable energy installations for small public bodies.
- vi. Consider climate change resilience when planning new projects or community infrastructure, such as flood defences or green spaces that can absorb heavy rainfall.

d) Waste Management and Pollution Reduction

- i. Support local community groups Ledbury in highlighting and supporting their work where possible.
- ii. Continue to support local schemes with others as part of a waste reduction campaign.
- iii. Ensure safe disposal of hazardous waste and support initiatives to reduce single-use plastics.
- iv. Organise regular litter picks to maintain a clean environment. Equip volunteers with gloves, bags, and recycling bins, and involve local schools and community groups.
- v. Encourage residents to donate or exchange items through community swaps or “freecycle” schemes or to make use of the donations bins situated around the town.
- vi. Avoid using single-use plastics at Council events, meetings, and offices—opt for reusable cups, plates, and cutlery.
- vii. Promote awareness within the community about the impacts of single-use plastics and encourage local businesses to reduce their use.
- viii. Encourage staff to print only when necessary and use double-sided printing.
- ix. Use digital documentation and communication to reduce paper use.
- x. Provide recycling bins for paper, plastics, and batteries in Council offices.
- xi. Provide information about composting at home, especially for organic waste, which reduces landfill waste and methane emissions.
- xii. Where possible, purchase office supplies, cleaning products, and equipment that have eco-labels or certifications (e.g., FSC, PEFC, Green Seal).
- xiii. Implement policies to minimise unnecessary outdoor lighting and noise, especially during evening events or in public spaces.
- xiv. Inform and encourage the community on the importance of reducing light pollution for wildlife and energy conservation.

e) Green Spaces and Biodiversity

- i. Encourage planting of native wildflower meadows in parks, verges, and open spaces to support bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.
- ii. Install bee hotels, insect boxes, or wildflower planting schemes on Council land.

- iii. Work with local schools, community groups, and residents to develop small wildlife gardens or pocket parks.
- iv. Protect and enhance existing green spaces, including parks, designated wildlife corridors, verges, and the riverbanks.
- v. Support community-led green space and biodiversity projects.
- vi. Establish a Biodiversity Action Plan involving local schools, groups, and residents.
- vii. Use “leave areas wild” schemes, especially in less trafficked or less visible spaces.
- viii. Run / support educational programmes, nature walks, or volunteer days focused on local ecology and conservation.
- ix. Encourage local engagement in citizen science and wildlife survey projects.

f) Transport and Community Engagement

- i. Encourage walking and cycling for short journeys within the town through the development and promotion of safe, accessible footpaths and cycle routes.
- ii. Inform and encourage residents on sustainable travel choices and the benefits of low-impact transportation.
- iii. Support community walks, promoting local footpath maps, and installing wayfinding signage through the PROW Scheme.
- iv. Continue to work with local bus and train providers to improve service information, timetabling, and accessibility for residents, especially for those with mobility challenges.
- v. Support awareness campaigns highlighting the environmental and health benefits of active travel and public transport.

g) Sustainable Procurement

- i. Actively seek out local businesses and producers to supply goods and services to the council, to reduce transportation emissions.
- ii. Avoid single-use plastics and encourage suppliers to do the same.
- iii. Develop a preferred supplier list that includes local, eco-friendly, and ethically responsible vendors.
- iv. Opt for products made from recycled or biodegradable materials, such as recycled paper, biodegradable cleaning agents, and refillable stationery.

- v. Where possible, support Fairtrade certified products for tea, coffee, and other consumables used at Council meetings and events.

h) Community Engagement

Actively promote environmental awareness through talks, workshops, and guest speakers at community events.

4. Monitoring, Reporting, and Review

- i. Establish measurable targets.
- ii. Regularly review progress through audits, community feedback, and environmental indicators.
- iii. Publish annual sustainability reports to maintain transparency and accountability.
- iv. Include Environmental and Sustainability section in all covering reports to council.
- v. Update the policy every three years to reflect new challenges, opportunities, and legislative requirements.

5. Community Involvement and Partnerships

- i. Engage residents through awareness campaigns, workshops, and volunteering opportunities.
- ii. Collaborate with local schools, businesses, and voluntary groups to promote sustainability.
- iii. Partner with organisations to promote and deliver environmental and sustainability objectives.
- iv. Support community-led environmental projects.

Aims and objectives

Ledbury Town Council is dedicated to embedding sustainability into its core functions and working collaboratively to protect the broader environment. Together, we aim to build a resilient, thriving town that values its natural heritage and leads by example in environmental stewardship.