

Bridport Town Council

Climate Emergency Action Plan 2019 – FIRST REVIEW 2023

Bridport Town Council responded quickly in 2019 to the emerging consensus that climate change had become a crisis that required emergency action. BTC declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and followed this up with a detailed Action Plan in October 2019 together with a dedicated budget for the climate emergency of £100,000.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2019 has guided BTC policies and actions for the last 4 years. A Climate Action Sub Committee has met regularly (monthly) to oversee delivery of the CE Action Plan and to ensure that the climate action budget was wisely invested in projects that benefitted the local community.

The CE Action Plan 2019 set out to:

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| GOAL 1 | To decarbonise and reduce the Town Council's carbon footprint; |
| GOAL 2 | To work towards making Bridport a Carbon Neutral Town by 2030; |
| GOAL 3 | To prepare Bridport for the impacts of climate change by developing greater community resilience. |

This review of the CE AP 2019 takes stock of actions to date. Which actions are now complete? Which actions need to continue or expand and what new actions need to be considered to better deliver on the three goals of the CE Action Plan?

The review is also an opportunity to consider what are the new priorities for action and how a plan for Bridport supports activity by government, by business and by individuals. The review needs to ask:

- Is the plan helping drive decarbonisation?
- Is the plan helping drive adaptation and resilience in response to a warming world. Including; fluvial, riverine and coastal flooding; sea level rise, water availability issues, temperature impacts and cascading impacts of triggered by multiple hazards at one or in close proximity?
- Whether to include actions that address the ecological crisis that is also being accelerated by climate change?
- How best to present and communicate BTC CE actions to a range of audiences?

This paper sets out:

- **Achievements of the CE AP 2019;**
- **Feedback from the online consultation on CE AP review;**
- **Response to Feedback, incl Capacity issues and**
- **Proposed structure for a revised CE AP 2023.**

Achievements of CE AP 2019

It is clear from the consultation feedback that merely having produced a CE AP in 2019 was well received and helped galvanise action across the town. Specific action with recognised outputs include:

- Energy champions training and community outreach programme;
- Design and installation of 22Kwh solar panels and 3 EV chargers at Plottingham Field;
- Retrofit works at Mountfield offices to improve energy efficiency;
- A 20% reduction in BTC carbon footprint over the last 4 years, notably on heating and electricity use.

"I imagine the CE AP has raised awareness and increased focus within BTC which is important and led to the success of various initiatives. I'm less confident that it has raised awareness in the community in general, outside those groups already involved in climate/ environmental matters."

Consultation response

CE AP Review Questionnaire feedback

- 85% respondents agreed that *Having a CE AP has driven actions in response to the climate crisis by the Town Council*;
- 50% respondents agreed that *Having a CE AP has supported actions in response to the climate crisis by the community and businesses*;
- 20% respondents didn't think that *Having a CE AP has helped push for actions in response to the climate crisis beyond Bridport*;
- 76% of respondents felt that the CE AP had *too little influence over actions of others*;
- 85% felt that the revised plan needed *More focused actions*;
- 72% felt that the revised plan needed to *focus on actions that support the local community with climate adaptation*.

Selected comments from respondents:

<i>The Town Council should be commended for taking actions that reduce its own carbon footprint and for support given to relevant local community groups and projects.</i>	<i>Most people seem to act as if they are unaware there is a climate emergency, and I am certain the majority of people in Bridport are unaware of the TC's CEAP and few will have read it. Work still to be done on citizen engagement.</i>
<i>I would like to see more focus on reaching the citizens who don't come to events but who might still be interested to learn more about the climate emergency and the likely consequences, and what they might be able to do in response.</i>	<i>The Action Plan has a lot of worthy aspirations, and this review will hopefully help to focus the actions we need to take. A lot of good work has been done or started, but it's a mammoth task, the biggest part of which is education. More ordinary people need to understand the perilous state we are in.</i>
<i>More prioritisation of actions would be supported, to focus on those things which will make a significant difference, and which should be achievable (even if some of them are challenging).</i>	<i>Useful to know what caused the lack of action or partial success in such aims as campaigning for a car free day or pushing for more solar panel installation. Sometimes it seems attributable to lack of funding but what are the blocks in other areas? If it's lack of personnel, is there a space for increased partnership with voluntary groups?</i>

<i>The last focus seems a bit 'un' focused because whether we're talking about transport, solar panels or recycling, it's all about reducing emissions. Or else enabling the community to understand the urgency of reducing them. Polls indicate that the majority of the public are worried by climate change and want to take action but are unsure how and/or can't afford to - electric cars being a case in point.</i>	<i>Having declared a CE puts the council in league with others who claim to understand the immensity of the problem and this also then pressures the council to act. Many actions are impossible or impractical, but the council needs to continue to record and proclaim this disability putting continuing pressure on Dorset Council and the Government (and sometimes the public). The problems faced are unprecedented and will not be achieved without this pressure.</i>
<i>We have to do everything we can and urgently. Somehow this sense of urgency, but given with hope, needs to be understood by everyone.</i>	<i>I do respect and thank BTC for putting the time and energy into this.</i>

Revising the Bridport CE AP

BTC did the right thing in quickly declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019 and has done more than many small councils to practically push for transition. A significant budget of £100k was allocated by BTC specifically to kick start de carbonisation of the Councils own operation and provide leadership to others in the town.

Town Council Carbon Footprint calculation 2019-23

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Gas (Kwh)	101,266	115,203	82,595	65,424
Electricity (Kwh)	76,954	66,815	45,061	44,628
Fuel diesel (litres)	3,842	5,222	9,352	7,483.20
Fuel Petrol (litres)	1,398	923	860	341.09
Fuel Aspen (litres)				400
Water use (cubic metres)				2,674
Total Carbon Emissions Tonnes CO2 e	53.01	53.40	51	41.64
% Heating	35	40	30	29
% Electricity	37	29	19	21
% Fuels	26	28	50	48
% Water				1

Polls indicate that the majority of the public are worried by climate change and want to take action but are unsure how and/or can't afford to - electric cars being a case in point. Respondents to the CE AP consultation are concerned and fearful about the future and feel that progress on de carbonisation in Bridport and beyond has been too slow. Their concerns are compounded by UK government policies and actions are failing to deliver the long term, structural changes that will be required to safeguard communities from the chaotic consequences of a warming world.

The Committee on Climate Change, in their Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget report, stated that *"More than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level. Many of these*

decisions depend on having supporting infrastructure and systems in place. Local authorities have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas."

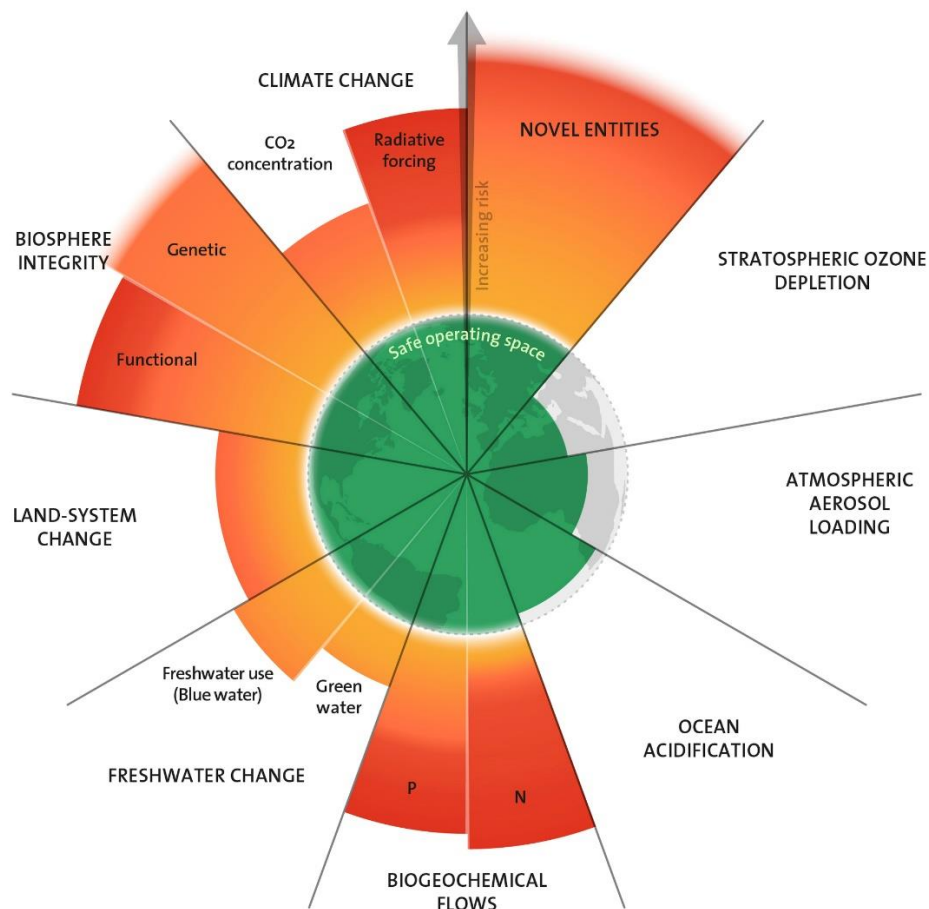
Climate science has got stronger as to the present and current dangers of global warming. We have all become familiar with a news agenda reporting floods, wildfires, and exceptional heat.

Under emissions in line with current pledges under the Paris Agreement (known as Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs), global warming is expected to surpass 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, even if these pledges are supplemented with very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of mitigation after 2030 (*high confidence*). This increased action would need to achieve net zero CO₂ emissions in less than 15 years. Even if this is achieved, temperatures would only be expected to remain below the 1.5°C threshold if the actual geophysical response ends up being towards the low end of the currently estimated uncertainty range.

From: IPCC report on impacts of 1.5 degrees of warming see: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

Planetary Boundaries Assessment 2023

- Human activity affects the Earth's climate and ecosystems more than ever which risks the stability of the entire planet;
- For the first time ever all nine planetary boundaries have been assessed;
- Six of the boundaries are now transgressed.



Credit: "Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, based on analysis in Richardson et al 2023"

*"We have heard from businesses that economic opportunities are being missed today because of weaknesses in the UK's investment environment – whether that be skills shortages or inconsistent policy commitment. **Moving quickly must include spending money.** We know that investing in net zero today will be cheaper than delaying, as well as increasing the economic and climate benefits. Analysis suggests that delaying action by ten years could mean UK debt could be 23% of GDP higher in 2050, doubling the fiscal cost of achieving net zero and not capitalising on economies of scale".*

From: Independent Review of Net Zero – Govt report:

"A focus on our role as citizens can create a virtuous circle between on the one hand government policy that enables behaviour change at scale, and on the other, engaging hearts and minds to increase demand for that policy. It also allows the development of policy that works the first time round, and for all sections of society".

"We also know that there are big differences in how easy it is for various groups of people to change their behaviour - differences in the travel infrastructure that exists in communities, differences in the ability to pay where the cost of making 'green choices' is higher or frontloaded, or differences in short-term personal and family pressures that are inevitably put before considering the impact of climate change on our longer term well-being. Without engaging these people in policy development and implementation, policies are unlikely to work for them. Without an informed and engaged public, our world-leading net zero goals risk either being downgraded to placate a vocal and unrepresentative minority of the population, or not delivered as planned".

From: Orr, R. and Powell, D. (2023) Towards a UK public engagement strategy on climate change. Oxford: Climate Outreach

It is increasingly likely that we will need to deal with a much warmer world, probably as much as + 2 degrees by mid century. With every degree of warming the climate impacts and risk escalate.

The consultation responses we have received align with national climate bodies in concluding that it is imperative, if we are to avoid chaotic climate breakdown, to accelerate the pace of transition to net zero and massively increase the scale of action.

Capacity issue

A recurring issue raised by respondents to the CE AP 2019 review was around capacity to push through with climate mitigation and adaptation. This referred to the capacity of BTC, the capacity of civil society to respond and the lack of funding to take the 'right' actions at the individual and local community level.

The cost-of-living crisis has been a setback for many people wanting to take action to address the climate and nature crisis. With energy and food inflation impacting household budgets, the sense from the consultation feedback is one of families stretched to breaking point making ends meet with little spare time or cash to make significant changes to food, energy and carbon budgets.

The consultation throws up serious questions about capacity to respond - What is the realistic level of intervention in net zero transition that should be expected from a Town Council? What is the best way in which BTC can support community resilience? Through existing groups? Through education programmes?

There are many local groups with huge amounts of knowledge and skills and longstanding involvement in community issues but who need financial support to carry on/expand the work they do. Relying on volunteers to apply for funding as well as carry out their activities leads to overwhelm and burn-out.

Consultation response

In terms of budgets and regulation BTC has limited powers, leverage or influence on de carbonisation beyond sticking to our commitment to be a net zero organisation by 2030. As a responsible public body BTC recognises a duty to cut greenhouse gas emissions, prepare for the impacts of climate change, act sustainably and report annually on how actions have been taken to comply with these duties. – Established a CE AP Sub Committee to drive BTC response to CE.

All actions in the revised CE AP 2023 should pass the SMART test; specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based.

When we talk about public engagement, we mean ‘full spectrum’ public engagement that has six elements, tools, or disciplines:

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| • climate change education |
| • public awareness |
| • training |
| • public participation (including in decision-making) |
| • public access to information |
| • international cooperation on these issues |

Toward a revised CE AP 2023

Taking into consideration all feedback from the consultation on the current CE AP propose that BTC produce a more focused CE AP in 2023 with emphasis given to supporting our community to adapt to the inevitable impacts of a changing climate. To achieve this shift in emphasis we propose that the CE AP 2023 be given a new structure under the following headings:

- **Emissions reduction;**
- **Resilient, socially inclusive and healthy communities;**
- **Ecological emergency and**
- **Circular economy.**

CLIMATE MITIGATION - EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Reducing levels of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) is the main purpose of a Climate Emergency Action Plan. The revised CE AP should continue to pursue net zero ambitions for the Town Council as an organisation – continuing energy saving investment in buildings, switching to electric vehicles, and taking opportunities to generate renewable energy. By setting an emissions reduction target to be a net zero organisation by 2030 and sharing experiences about the net zero journey, BTC is assuming a leadership role for businesses and community.

PROPOSED EMISSIONS MITIGATION ACTIONS FOR CE AP 2023:

- Actions to reduce organisational energy demand through; continued energy efficiency works, switching to low energy/ electric options for energy use;
- Actions to generate or purchase renewable energy;
- Supporting community initiatives to drive emissions reduction from surface travel, buildings and land use. For example, support for measure to reduce traffic, drive the switch to low carbon travel options, push for retro fit of poor performing homes, and promoting low carbon farming.

Place-Based Climate Action Network (PCAN) review of local authorities' climate action (2021) found that climate adaptation received less focus, only mentioned in less than 12% of council's climate emergency declarations. Both mitigation and adaptation are crucial to include in any CE Action Plan.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION - RESILIENT, SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE and HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The effects of climate change do not and will not affect all our communities equally. The revised CE AP must leave no-one behind and support those most vulnerable in our community. Taking action to decarbonise has the co-benefit of increasing equity and social cohesion. These co-benefits include reducing fuel poverty, improving air quality, improving access to green spaces and creating jobs. The revised CE AP must commit BTC to view all future decisions through a 'climate emergency lens'.

The revised CE AP must include an equalities impact assessment. For example: older people are at most risk of extreme heat and cold. People living in deprived areas have less access to green space and are more likely to experience the urban heat island effect. Tenants are less able to change their homes to adapt to climate change. The revised CE AP 2023 should prioritise actions that support communities that are most vulnerable to climate impacts.

PROPOSED EMISSIONS ADAPTATION ACTIONS FOR CE AP 2023

- Continuing the energy champions programme with a focus on reducing energy costs;
- Producing and supporting delivery of a Bridport Food Security Plan;
- Seeking investment to pilot a Bridport Learners Hub with emphasis on net zero skills/ job related training;
- Supporting and developing Flood Wardens scheme;
- Investing in green spaces and walking trails that are accessible from all areas of the town.

Young people will be more affected by climate change. Therefore, the revised CE AP should work harder to engage with, and support young people take actions to be more resilient. This will ensure our young people are empowered to shape the world they will grow old in. To give young people the tools to be resilient in a less climate stable future the revised CEAP should include:

- **Education and outreach to help** local communities come to terms with the climate crisis and the actions needed to address it.
- Use language that portrays the urgency of the climate emergency.
- Offer free carbon literacy training materials to community groups to support conversations and practical steps to action.
- Create a community ecosystem that is resilient and responsive to climate and social injustice.

Through the revised CE AP BTC hopes to develop its leadership role; finding and implementing creative solutions to challenges identified at a community level and responding to them collectively. For example, a Bridport 'Think and Do' programme could connect and activate the community through pop ups, events, exhibitions, webinars and projects designed, led and run by committed individuals. This would take place in partnership with Dorset Council, residents, schools, businesses, and the whole community.

INCLUDING THE ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

The climate and ecological emergencies are intertwined. The revised CE AP should work harder to recognise and respond to the impact climate change and human activities are having on biodiversity and nature. The revised CE AP should include more nature-based solutions to help with climate mitigation and adaptation.

PROPOSED NATURE BASED ACTIONS FOR CE AP 2023

- Supporting tree planting and re wilding initiatives in the Bridport Area;
- Supporting creating a 30m nature buffer alongside rivers and stream through Bridport;
- Addressing chemical pollution – Policy ban on Herbicide/ pesticide use on BTC landholdings;
- Supporting species recovery – dippers/ swifts/ water Voles etc;
- Adopting an environmental standards policy for all procurement and tenancy leases;
- Supporting water quality monitoring schemes;
- Plastic free.

SUMMARY OF CO-BENEFITS OF ACTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

ECONOMIC	SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
Clean and inclusive growth in the local economy	Improved air quality	Reduced flood risk (coastal, pluvial and fluvial)
Low carbon technologies	Lower living costs	Improved access to greenspace and nature
High quality employment	More active, outdoor lifestyles	Improved and enhanced biodiversity and habitats
Improved productivity	Healthier diets	Improved land management
Diversification to more sustainable markets	Fuel poverty alleviated	Cleaner air
Reduced heat & energy costs	Less demand on health services	Cleaner water
Increased energy security	Improved mental health	Greater water security
Reduced imported fuels and materials	Fewer work and school days missed	Carbon sequestration in all habitats
Reduced congestion	Fewer premature deaths	Less risk of heatwaves and extreme weather events
Reduced costs from flood & extreme events	Warmer, healthier homes	Less waste/less resource use
Reduced waste	Quieter, safer streets	Reduced/reverse species decline
A circular economy	Improved community cohesion	
	Better work/life balance	
	Less waste	

From: "Toward a Climate Resilient Somerset – Summary" 2023

EMPHASISING TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The revised CE AP should include specific policies designed to promote transition toward a circular economy - A circular economy is a regenerative system which reuses materials rather than following the 'take-make-waste' linear model. BTC will take steps to develop a circular economy for their own operations and to encourage the development of a circular economy in the wider area through new procurement policies.

SEE TABLE OF PROPOSED CE AP ACTION FOR 2023- 2025

Many of the actions included in the revised CE AP Action Plan 2023-2025 require BTC to work with partners in a range of supporting roles. The type and level of support required from BTC will need to be determined on a project-by-project basis. The Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee will be consulted should CE AP actions require significant financial contributions or expenditure.

CLIMATE MITIGATION - EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Action Proposed 2023	Measure	Responsibility	Priority
Improve energy efficiency and de carbonise energy supply			
Support 'climate smart' initiatives where the outcomes encourage the community to reduce, reuse, repair, and recycle products.	Number of schemes/planning applications supported	Planning Committee Town Clerk	
Support community scale energy conservation measures, including retro-fit, where local support and viability has been demonstrated.	Number of schemes/planning applications supported	Planning Committee Town Clerk	
Work with Dorset Community Energy and others to promote community and commercial renewable installations in Bridport and support roll out of Energy Local Bridport to more households.	Number of renewable installations completed Increase in number of Energy Local Bridport members	Environment and Social Well Being Committee Energy Champions	
Work with Magna Housing to promote retro fit energy conservation of the social rented sector in Bridport.	Number of retrofit installations completed Number of Magna Housing residents joining Energy Local Bridport	Environment and Social Well Being Committee Energy Champions	
Support national campaigns for low carbon building standards to be mandatory.	Evidence of input to campaigns/ lobbying	Planning Committee Town Clerk	

Funding secured or not required to action

Requires new funding to action

Requires action by others and new funding to action

Drive emissions reduction from surface travel, buildings and land use

Work with Dorset Council to extend/ improve cycle/ walking network (see BANP policies and plans) - Prioritise a new Foundry Lea cycle/walking link.	Km of new or upgraded cycling/ walking infrastructure installed	Planning Committee Town Surveyor	
Support installation of rapid charging electric car points where local support or viability has been demonstrated.	Number of new ev chargers installed	Planning Committee Town Surveyor	
Collaborate with other town and parish councils to exert pressure on Dorset Council to provide and promote increased public transport as a viable alternative to private car use.	Improved public transport routes/ frequency/ timetables.	Planning Committee Town Clerk	
Lobby national government for funding for rural areas to support improved public transport.	Evidence of input to campaigns/ lobbying.	Planning Committee Town Clerk	
Work with Wessex Community Assets and local Community Land Trusts to support low carbon solutions for social housing, including retrofit and new build.	Number of social housing schemes completed	Planning Committee Town Clerk	
Support development of a Fibre Hub in Bridport as a fabrication Workspace for locally sourced bio materials.	New fabrication workspace created Volume of bio material grown and processed	Environment and Social Well Being Committee Community Projects Manager	
Introduce a clause to future proof high environmental performance/ sustainability in any agreement about land use or long term contract with suppliers.	Environmental standard incorporated into leases/ procurement	Finance and General Purposes Committee Town Surveyor	

Funding secured or not required to action

Requires new funding to action

Requires action by others and new funding to action

CLIMATE ADAPTATION - RESILIENT, SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE and HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Support the piloting of the Bridport Learning Hub to drive skills and training required for net zero transition.

Number of learners supported
Number of training events delivered

Environment and Social Well Being Committee
Community Projects Manager

Support recruitment and training of volunteer flood wardens to better respond to flood events and educate residents about water.

Number of volunteer wardens recruited
Number of training sessions run

Environment and Social Well Being Committee
Community Projects Manager

Support delivery of the Bridport Food Security Plan - land under horticultural production, new food enterprises, stronger local food supply chains.

Ha of new horticulture production
Number of new food enterprise start ups

Environment and Social Well Being Committee
Community Projects Manager

Education and Awareness

Support community energy champions to help drive behavioural change around energy use and generation.

Number of community energy champions
Number of energy champion run training events

Environment and Social Well Being Committee
Community Projects Manager

Establish a Bridport think and do initiative that provides support to community led climate/ ecological projects - a variation on BTC grant focused solely on climate action.

Number of climate emergency community projects funded

Environment and Social Well Being Committee
Community Projects Manager

Funding secured or not required to action

Requires new funding to action

Requires action by others and new funding to action

THE ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

Support Bridport Tree Group and others to increase tree cover in and around the town and deliver the Bridport Tree Plan.	Number of trees planted pa	Environment and Social Well Being Committee
Work with Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset AONB and others to support landscape scale nature recovery in and around Bridport.	Ha land under long term nature recovery management	Community Projects Manager
Greenspace management plans to prioritise nature.	Ha of land managed for wildlife	Environment and Social Well Being Committee
Support establishment, training and operation of water quality monitoring of river Brit and Asker.	Number of volunteer trained and sites monitored	Community Projects Manager

TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Actively support a shift in the way we think about and use materials and start to build a circular economy — eliminating waste by reusing, refurbishing, recycling, and recirculating for as long as possible. It offers more durability to consumers, reduces waste and pollution, and helps to regenerate nature.	Amend BTC procurement policies to favour keeping products circulating in use longer. Prioritise durability, recyclability, and reuse. Only use recycleable packaging and demand similar from BTC suppliers - using packaging made from mono-material plastics, bioplastics, and paper.	Full Council All Staff
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Funding secured or not required to action

Requires new funding to action

Requires action by others and new funding to action