

Joint Environment and Climate Change Agreement

Joint statement on environment and climate change

The parties to this agreement recognise that climate change and environmental concerns are among the most pressing concerns facing us all. These concerns have risen up the agenda rapidly in recent years. Stockport Council and Stockport LG UNISON are committed to developing a shared approach to addressing climate change and environmental issues through this agreement.

Stockport Council, as both an employer and as a Local Authority commits itself to 'leading by example' among staff and other stakeholders. Stockport Council will comply at all times with relevant environmental legislation and will work to influence the wider environmental agenda with the use of best practice and examples.

Stockport Council notes that energy prices have seen significant fluctuations in recent years partly as a consequence of uncertainty of supply, while there is some ambiguity over Government policy to reduce reliance on carbon-based energy sources and to promote energy efficiency.

With this in mind, Stockport Council aims to:

- reduce its carbon footprint through quantified and transparent annual targets
- work with staff, management and stakeholders on training and awareness raising
- work closely with Stockport LG UNISON to promote and encourage the just transition to a local low carbon economy, and have due regard for UNISON's corresponding objectives regionally and nationally

Stockport Council aims to be open and receptive to suggestions from staff and other stakeholders on how it can make better use of energy, reduce its environmental and carbon impact and improve its management of these areas and, in doing so, to reduce CO2 emissions via a carbon management plan in line with UK statutory (Climate Change Act 2008) and international obligations.

Stockport Council and Stockport LG UNISON will encourage managers, staff and union environmental representatives (UERS) to share responsibility for 'greening' the workplace. As part of this ongoing work and commitment, the parties will work together through constructive dialogue on how to achieve these goals.

The parties accept that the necessary changes will not happen all at once but the Council and Stockport LG UNISON commit to working together on a programme of continuous improvement, backed by regular monitoring of environmental impacts and issues, particularly carbon impacts.

The proposals formed within this agreement are not an exhaustive list and we will seek to develop this agreement further as our knowledge and experience grows.



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About this agreement

This agreement is between Stockport Council and Stockport LG UNISON. It covers all sites and applies to all full- and part-time employees and workers (including agency and temporary workers). The agreement will be reviewed annually.

This agreement does not supersede or take precedence over any existing negotiating procedures or staff-management arrangements other than those specified in this agreement unless specified and agreed in full by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) of Stockport Council.

The parties to this agreement agree that any individual grievance arising out of environmental matters shall be subject to the existing grievance procedures.

This agreement shall form an appendix to the existing staff handbook.

Terms of reference

The partners will work together to reach agreement on how the following aims can best be achieved:

Environmental impacts

Considering the environmental impacts of all the organisation's internal and external operational policies, to identify areas where action is needed to minimise environmental impact, in particular: addressing the issues of

- seeking convergence between any high-emission Council activities and Stockport UNISON's objective of seeking a just and equitable transition to a low-carbon economy, paying due regard to social and environmental needs.
- energy conservation, waste management, and the prevention of pollution.
- measuring the total 'carbon footprint' and seeking to reduce wastage, with time-bound targets for continual emissions reductions.
- ensuring that those purchasing equipment, heating, lighting, waste systems and other materials take full account of environmental impacts and particularly energy use and support the introduction of environmentally friendly technology.
- ensuring that those using equipment and systems seek to do so in a way that reduces excessive consumption of energy and materials and promotes re-use and recycling wherever possible.

More detailed areas of consideration are given below.

Environmental and carbon action plans

The partners will work together to identify projects for environmental improvement within and by the Council, which will form part of the Council's existing operational plans for carbon reduction. Where appropriate, work programmes will be developed in conjunction with expertise from local and national organisations and relevant trade bodies, building on existing recommendations where work has already been undertaken with such organisations.

Stockport LG UNISON will also be invited to comment on any externally facing sustainability action plans and policies that are aimed at other stakeholders (for example, customers).





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Employee engagement

The partners will ensure that all staff are involved in this initiative, by:

- circulating information on climate change and the corresponding need for an equitable and positive societal shift towards low-carbon lifestyles
- disseminating to staff all information on matters relating to 'greening Stockport Council'
- ensuring all staff are made aware of the environmental agreement and the work on these issues, including through the website, staff inductions and appropriate training courses and awareness-raising events
- feeding recommendations upwards to the senior management team and reporting back on outcomes.

Energy and environment audits

Staff will be supported to carry out green workplace audits using checklists from the *Go Green at Work* handbook, or organisations such as the Carbon Trust, and will incorporate the results of these audits into the Environmental and Carbon Action Plan (see above).

The parties agree that any analysis of environmental issues and impacts (for example, audits) will be undertaken with the full cooperation of all partners, and that such analysis will be solely for the purposes of environmental improvement. Any analysis will not be used in relation to other issues such as pay, performance appraisal, disciplinary procedures, etc.

Union environmental reps (UERs)

Stockport Council recognises that union reps play a key role in encouraging employee and community engagement in climate change, energy and environmental initiatives, and so help develop good practice in energy and resource use within Stockport Council and the wider Borough, in line with this agreement.

UERs may broadly support the implementation of Stockport Council's environmental policies, mindful of global contexts demanding socially and environmentally just transition to a low-carbon economy.

This agreement allocates reasonable time, in discussion with managers, to carry out their duties in relation to environmental issues, including attending meetings with management, and with the union, on green issues.





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Environmental issues to be considered

The parties shall jointly consider what action needs to be taken to address the following areas.

Energy use

The partners undertake to work together towards:

- ensuring purchases meet the latest energy and environmental standards, are sourced from suppliers with good employment and environmental standards, and are easy and safe to use
- ensuring eco-options are enabled and staff are trained on using equipment in an eco-friendly way
- ensuring equipment is regularly serviced, and clearly labelled with energy ratings / the amount of energy it uses / whether it can be turned off
- exploring automatic options like motion sensor lights in low-use areas, and automatic power down of PCs after working hours, which are popular with staff and increasingly widely implemented - they are also often recommended in Carbon Trust expert surveys
- ensuring all lighting is sustainable and energy efficient
- ensuring building management systems (BMSs) are optimised for efficient energy use, for example in the timing and local and/or thermostatic control of heating and cooling systems
- the sourcing of electricity from a 'green tariff'
- where appropriate, on-site renewable alternatives in particular solar water heating and combined heat and power (CHP)
- particularly encouraging energy-saving measures in those aspects of the operation that are most energy intensive.

Recycling and resource use

The partners undertake to work together towards:

- provision of localised recycling facilities at department or office level, including composting
- continually seeking ways to minimise the use of resources including energy, equipment and goods such as non-recycled raw materials including paper and packaging, and disposable items, particularly when new systems, practices or locations are introduced.
- purchasing supplies from sustainable sources - i.e. sources that are local where possible, accredited under a formal environmental management system.
- increasing the purchase of supplies that are reused, re-usable, recycled or recyclable (in that order of priority).
- working with suppliers and partner organisations to obtain the lowest environmental impact
- considering the toxicity of products and the health impacts on the workers producing them, before purchasing.
- consulting with staff before any major purchasing decisions such as changes to layout, equipment or systems which may have resource use implications and could result in wastage if changes need to be re-done or undone.
- Environmental considerations will be given due regard when decisions are made to move, refurbish or improve access to premises, including all regional and satellite offices. Where Stockport Council is a tenant rather than a building owner, it will work with the landlords to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account.
- using outside or community agencies for old or redundant equipment.
- implementing low-cost water saving initiatives and investigating payback times and feasibility of larger-scale water saving measures such as low-flush toilets.





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Food

The partners undertake to work together towards:

- providing catering options that are locally sourced, and not over-packaged or over processed (which is very carbon intensive) but where possible are freshly prepared.
- gaining access to food that involves less intensive farming methods.
- ensuring staff have access to facilities that enable them to prepare drinks and snacks in an environmentally friendly way rather than relying on drinks and snacks in disposable packaging (for example, drinking water taps, washing-up facilities for mugs).

Transport

The partners undertake to work together in full consultation with the JNC towards:

- support more sustainable staff travel modes e.g. car sharing, cycling, walking and public transport.
- the provision of work cycling incentives such as a mileage allowance and tax-free bicycle purchase scheme for work use.
- reducing the impact of the 'grey fleet', both essential and casual car users, in relation both to commuting and work journeys such as through the introduction of low emission pool cars.
- reducing the need to travel by encouraging the use of technology and flexible working.
- discouraging the use of air travel, particularly for short-haul journeys within the UK/Northern Europe.

Carbon Literacy

“An awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions on an individual, community and organisational basis.”

The partners undertake to work together towards embedding awareness of the climate impacts of everyday actions, recognising that the project lays a foundation for green-collar skills and grows demand for low carbon goods and services. The partners understand the scale of impacts locally and globally that will result from unmitigated climate change, and will encourage associated discussion and action within the workplace and wider community in order to reduce this.

There has been a regional and national focus on proposed shale gas fracking, with Stockport LG UNISON actively promoting the hazards and short-termism associated with this source of energy in the UK, in line with wider TUC resolutions. The partners would seek to achieve a consensual view on fracking and then, if achieved, jointly publicise it.

A Greener workplace

The partners will undertake to work together to explore the opportunities for the use of plants both inside and outside the working environment (such as 'green roofs') to improve CO2 absorption, air quality, flood risks, natural shading and cooling, biodiversity, and a more pleasant working environment.

