

QPCC Environmental Policy

Context

Queen's Park Community Council (QPCC) aims to promote a strong sense of community and increase the quality of life for all residents of (and visitors to) Queen's Park. Our vision is of a neighbourhood that has a strong sense of community; a place where people of all ages, cultures, religious and social backgrounds live, work and socialise together.

Since its inception in 2014, QPCC has been committed to protecting and enhancing the environment in and around Queen's Park.

In October 2021 the council commissioned officers to complete an environmental audit on the operations of the council which included an emissions calculation and a number of recommendations to minimise environmental impact and reduce emissions. One recommendation from this audit was the development of an environmental policy which summarised the council's position and set out a number of good practices.

Aims

The aims of QPCC's Environmental Policy are:

- To ensure that the council operates in a way which minimizes or, where possible, removes entirely any negative impact on the environment.
- To promote the importance of our local and global environment and support local residents and businesses to enjoy it.
- To ensure consideration is given to the environment by all councillors, employees and contractors conducting business and activities on behalf of QPCC.

Policies

1. The Climate Emergency

- 1.1 The GLA's climate risk map identifies Queen's Park as being at the highest level for overall climate risk in London. This increases the likelihood of both flooding and extreme heat and has a negative impact on the ability of residents to prepare for and respond to each.
- 1.2 In 2020 councillors voted unanimously to declare a climate emergency and pledged to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for council operations by May 2022. In 2021 this target was updated to include a net-zero emissions pledge for the ward as a whole by 2040 (in line with Westminster Council's target for the borough). This pledge will pave the way for decarbonisation in the ward, protecting residents and businesses from the negative effects of heating.
- 1.3 In March 2021 the Climate Emergency Working Group was established— with four councillors, two officers and one member of the public in its membership —to oversee progress on these targets and pursue projects addressing the climate emergency in Queen's Park. The membership of all working groups are open to all residents and councillors. The working group reports to the Place Committee, meetings for which are open to the public.
- 1.4 In October 2021, as part of an environmental audit of the council's activities, an emissions calculation was completed for the 2019/20 municipal year in accordance with ISO Standard 14064-1 (2018) methodology. This year was chosen as the base year as it was the most recent year before the council's operations were disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The council released an estimated 0.76 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (t CO_{2e}) during this period.
- 1.5 This calculation is based only on the energy consumption at the Beethoven Centre where the QPCC office is based and does not account for any other activities. This is due to reporting boundaries (it was not possible to obtain accurate figures from contractors or events in this period). This means it is likely that the actual emissions total for the council is considerably higher.

- 1.6 In order to reach our net-zero target the council will focus firstly on reduction and offset projects within the ward and then certified carbon credits for any residual emissions. All carbon credits will be bought from offset schemes based in the UK, with preference given to those most local and with co-benefits, for example enhancing biodiversity or education opportunities.
- 1.7 The calculated figure does not fully represent the emissions of the council. In order to account for emissions that may not be included in the calculation the council will commit to offsetting five times the calculated amount each year.
- 1.8 QPCC will investigate projects which can mitigate the negative impacts of global heating in the ward as well as projects which will reduce emissions of the council.

2. Open Spaces

- 2.1 QPCC is committed to ensuring open spaces in the ward are managed in a way which both maximises their potential for community use and increases opportunities for nature to thrive.
- 2.2 Shared Public Space is deficient in Queen's Park. It only has 4.4% of shared green space in comparison with the average for Westminster of 22%.
- 2.3 Queen's Park is not on the 'areas of deficiency' register. The reason for this is that all of the houses in The Queen's Park Estate Conservation Area, and many of those on the Victorian / Edwardian terraces, have private gardens. This means Queen's Park has 20% of its land area in private gardens whereas the average for Westminster is only 8%. These gardens are only accessible to the residents of those properties..
- 2.4 The remainder of the ward is made up of the post-war Mozart, Queen's Park Court and Avenues Gardens estates. For these residents, where private outdoor space is limited, access to high quality, multi-use, shared space is essential for both physical and mental wellbeing.

- 2.5 QPCC has a contract with Hammersmith Community Gardening Association (HCGA) to run weekly community gardening sessions in Queen's Park Gardens, encouraging local participation in the natural environment.
- 2.6 QPCC will investigate any unused open space in the ward and attempt to bring it into community use in a manner that protects and increases biodiversity.
- 2.7 There are a number of shared food growing spaces in the ward. Policy 4 of the [Queen's Park Neighbourhood Plan](#) protects these from development. QPCC will seek out and investigate new sites for community food growing in the ward.

3. Sustainable Travel

- 3.1 QPCC is committed to encouraging active (walking or cycling) and sustainable travel within the ward and will pursue projects and activities which will encourage this.
- 3.2 Councillors, residents and staff are encouraged to use active or public transport when on council business.
- 3.4 The Queen's Park Voice— a quarterly newsletter produced and delivered by the council —is delivered on foot by a number of volunteers.
- 3.5 All contractors are asked to use sustainable travel when on council business.

4. Responsible and Sustainable Procurement

- 4.1 Due consideration will be made to the environmental impact of projects and activities during planning.
- 4.2 All contractors will be expected to minimise their environmental impact (e.g through use of sustainable transport). Environmental impact will be given due consideration when selecting contractors.

5. Office Use

- 5.1 Projects for decarbonisation of QPCC's current/future office space will be investigated and pursued where feasible.

- 5.2 100% recycled paper should be used for all printing needs.
- 5.3 All appliances should be switched off at the mains when not in use.
- 5.4 Central heating should be set to the lowest setting whenever the office is unoccupied.

6. Planning

- 6.1 The [Queen's Park Neighbourhood Plan](#) was developed by QPCC following consultation with residents. It set's out the council's position on a number of planning matters and was adopted following a successful referendum in October 2021.
- 6.2 The Planning Working Group uses this document alongside the Westminster City Plan and London Plan to comment on all planning applications in the ward on behalf of the council.
- 6.3 It sets out the need for development proposals to: exhibit exemplary sustainable design with high standard of environmental performance (Policy 5), encourage sustainable transport through the provision of secure cycle storage (Policy 6), and support measures which provide improved pedestrian access (Policy 7).

7. Monitoring

- 7.1 The environmental audit including emissions calculation will be reviewed and updated annually, where data is available. This will be overseen by the Climate Emergency Working Group.
- 7.2 This policy will be reviewed and re-adopted each year at the annual meeting of the Council in May.

8. References

1. [Cornwall Council Example Environmental Policy for Parish Councils](#)
2. [Friends of the Earth – 20 actions parish and town councils can take on the climate and nature emergency](#)
3. [GLA Sustainability Policy](#)
4. [Westminster City Council Environment Policy](#)
5. [Queen's Park Neighbourhood Plan](#)