

POLICY

ESG (Environment, Social, Governance)

What is in the Policy?

Ware Town Council (WTC) have introduced an ESG policy to guide it in its operations. The policy is supported by several actions and activities, the progress against which will be reported annually.

Date Adopted

11 Sept 2023

Review Date

May 2026

For more information please contact: info@waretowncouncil.gov.uk / 01920 460316

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The policy is supported by several actions and activities, the progress against which will be reported annually.

Environment

Energy Usage and Efficiency (F&P)

We will reduce our energy usage, all energy used will be sustainably sourced.

Waste Reduction and Recycling (F&P)

We will work on the basis of

Reduce – the amount of waste we send to landfill.

Reuse – items before replacing them.

Recycle – wherever possible.

Biodiversity (C&E)

We will promote biodiversity in all areas controlled by WTC and those areas that we have influence.

We will encourage wilded areas.

Carbon Footprint Reduction (F&P/C&E)

We will be carbon neutral by 2030, we will use carbon offsetting to cover any overage based on our targets and will include this in our financial budget.

Carbon Footprint Reduction in Our Communities (C&E)

We will lead by example by providing information and guidance to our communities to facilitate reduced carbon output.

Pollution (C&E)

We will encourage modes of transport that are less polluting. We will adhere to rules and guidelines to avoid polluting rivers and water courses.

Water Management (F&P)

We will introduce water reduction measures at all our facilities and seek options for rainwater harvesting. We will ensure that water is safe for the use that it is intended.

Sustainable Transport (C&E)

We will be an advocate and work with others to provide access to safe, affordable safe accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, reducing pollution at an affordable cost.

Plastic Usage (F&P)

We will eliminate the use of single use plastics in all our organisations and reduce the use of other plastics. We will encourage the same practices with contractors and suppliers.

New and Refurbished Buildings (WTC)

When developing new buildings or adopting ones that we own the freehold we will consider energy efficiency, water waste management and the passive environmental impact of transporting materials as part of the design. Our sites will aim to have the latest environmental standards and will have solar panels, recycled water, top grade insulation and PIR sensors to minimise energy use.

Society

Fair Pay and the Living Wage (F&P/HR)

All employees will receive pay and benefits based on market forces for the locality, we will become a 'Living Wage' employer.

Training and Development (F&P/HR)

All new employees will receive induction training including health and safety, GDPR and other specific training relevant to the role. Employees requiring specific training will be supported in line with the training policy to provide individual support and support for the wider organization. All employees will receive an annual appraisal where training needs will be identified. The Town Clerk will achieve 18 CPD pa. Members are expected to complete training commensurate with their role.

Wellbeing (All)

We will promote the emotional and physical wellbeing of employees, ensuring practical support and the management of workload is properly resourced.

Employee Benefits (F&P/HR)

We will provide a range of employee benefits including local government pension to aid recruitment and retention.

Other benefits include.

- Agile and home working
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Cycle to work scheme
- Free parking
- Lido usage
- EV charging use

Workplace Health and Safety (All)

We will ensure that our facilities are safe for employees, visitors, customers, and tenants. Our staff will be provided with appropriate training to meet their job role related to health and safety. Specialist advice will be maintained via a specialist consultant.

Community Engagement in Decision Making (C&E)

We will engage with the community in decisions that impact on them, to support the building of sustainable cohesive communities with improved outcomes, supported by our community engagement policy. We will recognize excellence in our communities by the Freedom of Ware awards and the annual town council award scheme.

Responsible Supply Chain Partnerships (F&P)

Where we can source locally and achieve value for money this will guide our procurement.

We will endeavour to procure products and services that meet the following requirements.

- Supply chain traceability and transparency
- Fair labour / work conditions
- Supply chain sustainability initiatives
- Responsible sourcing and procurement
- Sustainability assurances and verification

We recognize for an organisation of our size that the research to achieve the above requirements must be proportionate.

Encourage Diversity (WTC)

Members and officers fully support diversity and inclusion in the organization, it is against our policy (and the law) to discriminate on the grounds of any protected characteristics. We encourage applications for Councillor vacancies and employment from all suitably qualified people regardless of their background or lifestyle. Anybody that claims to have been discriminated will have their case investigated independently.

Bullying and Harassment (WTC)

We will create and maintain a safe organisation, free from bullying, intimidation, and harassment. We will actively support the Civility and Respect programme introduced by SLCC and NALC and will encourage those in the organisation to highlight areas where we are not achieving our aims. We will support members and officers where members of the public exhibit unacceptable behaviours.

Data Privacy / Cyber Security (F&P/HR)

We will ensure the correct use of the data we hold and will be mindful of the information we share. Systems and processes will be used that help us meet our aims including Cyber Security audit authentication.

Youth Engagement (C&E)

We aim to build meaningful relationships with young people aged 10-21 years old (or up to 25 years if they have physical or learning difficulties). We will do this through youth clubs, multi-sport sessions and in partnership with voluntary, statutory and community groups.

Healthy Living (C&E)

We will encourage a healthy lifestyle to our residents and colleagues, through a programme of communications and subsidised events.

Governance

Governance and Compliance (F&P)

We will comply with all financial and legal requirements for the operation of WTC and associated organisations. This will be achieved by adherence to rules and policies approved by WTC and associated organisations.

Current grade 9/10.

Supporting evidence

A qualified clerk

Gold Level Local Council Award Accreditation

A competent and qualified internal auditor

Any issue raised by the internal auditor are shared with the F&P committee and appropriate actions taken.

The council are in agreement via the approval of the Statement of Internal Controls that the council operations are well run with no cause for concern

There are no significant areas of concern raised by the external auditor

We have a system for regular policy reviews

We have a risk management scheme that is update annually

We have adequate insurance for our organisation

Our reserves management is aligned with our risk management and guidance for local councils

Further action

Nor further action identified at this stage.

Risk Management (F&P)

We will meet our requirements for financial and other risk management, including the assessment of risk for those projects with a value greater than £25K. The purpose of which is to anticipate, quantify and manage business risk reporting to Full Council or an appropriate committee those items that are highly likely to occur or will have a high impact.

Ethical Business Practice (F&P/HR)

We will adhere to the seven principles of business ethics.

- Accountability
- Care and respect
- Honesty
- Healthy competition
- Loyalty
- Transparency
- Respect for the rule of law

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest (WTC)

We will maintain a register of declarable interests and ensure that members and officers are aware of their obligations through training and information sharing.

Accounting Integrity and Practices (F&P)

We will ensure that the integrity of our accounting practices meets both the requirements of our Anti-fraud and corruption policy and that any data provided is trustworthy to enable improved business decisions.

Investments (F&P)

We will seek to achieve the best return on investment vs risk in organisations with an ESG rating higher than 70. We will not invest in organisations that have fossil fuels as part of their portfolio of investments.

Decision Making and Leadership (WTC)

We will scope the information that is required to inform our decision making, and measure against KPIs issued in a timely manner supported by efficient processes. We will encourage a leadership style that is aligned with our organisational values.

Grant Income and Distribution (F&P)

We will seek grant income and other income for all projects with a value greater than £50K. We will offer grants to local organisations that support the aspirations of our grant policy.

Partnership Working (WTC)

We will create partnerships with individuals, organisations and other tiers of government with a shared interest. We will do this to ensure our communities receive high quality joined up outcomes.

Review Summary:

Date	Update
11 th September 2023	Adopted