

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

CARBON LITERACY COP26 CASE STUDY



BACKGROUND

In June 2019, Winchester City Council (WCC) declared a Climate Emergency and committed to the aim of making the activities of WCC carbon neutral by 2024, and the district of Winchester carbon neutral by 2030. The council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) sets out a comprehensive list of actions that will help address nearly all of the council's carbon emissions by 2024 and contribute to reducing emissions district-wide by 2030. One of the aims within the CNAP is to 'introduce a corporate staff training module on sustainability and reducing energy usage' so that all staff understand their role in helping the council meet its net-zero targets.

CARBON LITERACY TRAINING

AT WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Within the council, we now use Carbon Literacy training as the primary means of educating officers and members about sustainability, climate change, and carbon neutrality and engaging them in the shared goal.

OFFICER TRAINING

In early September 2020, WCC received formal approval from the Carbon Literacy Project (CLP) to run its own Carbon Literacy training course. Following approval, WCC was one of the first local authorities to pilot the Local Authorities Generic Staff Course later that month. There is a testimonial video on the CLP website from our Sustainability Officer, Naomi Wise, outlining her experience of delivering the initial pilot session to staff using this toolkit ([see here](#)). Since the initial pilot session in September 2020, we have hosted a further 10 Carbon Literacy training sessions with officers. The training is currently delivered in-house by members of the council's Sustainability team and supported by a growing team of Carbon Literate staff volunteers from various teams across the council. Each training session is led by two facilitators and delivered to a group size of 10-20 participants over two half-days on Microsoft Teams (due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19).

ELECTED MEMBER TRAINING

In July and August 2021, we delivered our first training session to our Elected Members using the Elected Members training toolkit. We delivered this training over 4 evenings instead of 2 half-days, as many elected members had other job commitments during the day. Each evening we covered one of the 4 training modules. The training was supported by the council's Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency who helped to present some of the training slides and facilitate the group activities.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

*As of October 2021

BRONZE

In February 2021, WCC was certified as a **BRONZE** Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO), currently one of only 11 councils in the UK to achieve this status.



100

25%

We have trained over 100 members of staff at the council, including several senior officers and members of our Executive Leadership Board. This equates to almost 25% of all council staff.

45

We have delivered training to half of our 45 elected members, and plan to host further training sessions for the remaining elected members who have not yet received the training.

Officers from neighbouring authorities, such as Gosport Borough Council, have attended our training sessions and have been subsequently certified as Carbon Literate. Many of these officers have gone on to develop and lead Carbon Literacy training within their own authorities.



As part of our contribution to Winchester Green Week 2020, we delivered a Carbon Literacy training course to a small group of external organisations and members of the public (e.g., Friends of the Earth, Winchester Business Improvement District).

POSITIVE FEEDBACK



The training was clear, informative, and engaging. It's left me with lots to think about on how I can do my bit towards resolving the current global climate crisis. If you haven't done it yet, I would recommend this course to everyone.

CAROL HUSSEY, TOURISM

Putting it simply, this was one of the best and frankly most important training seminars that I have had the privilege to attend in quite some time, including many expensive courses which have failed to meet expectations. I can only commend both trainers in their presentation style, tempo, and their engagement which was simply excellent. My grateful thanks to both.

DAVID INGRAM, SERVICE LEAD – PUBLIC PROTECTION

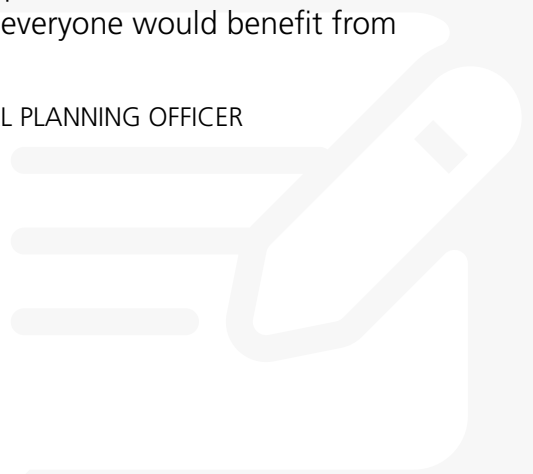
Two half-days well spent! It was really well run and was great to see the interest and enthusiasm from officers from across the Council that the training generated. I'm encouraging my ELB (Executive Leadership Board) colleagues to follow us and attend a future course.

RICHARD BOTHAM, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR: SERVICES



I just wanted to pass on how impressed I was with your delivery of the Carbon Literacy training last week. The programme was fantastic, and really did impress upon me the need for significant action, both personally and professionally. You managed the various streams of information and interactive activities very well despite the virtual format which is no mean feat. I think everyone would benefit from doing the training.

BRIGID TAYLOR, PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER





FUTURE PLANS FOR CARBON LITERACY TRAINING

In order to truly embed Carbon Literacy within the culture of the council, we have the ambition to move beyond Bronze CLO towards Silver, Gold, and Platinum accreditation, and to train as many of our staff in Carbon Literacy as possible. We believe that progressively moving from one award to another provides an effective way to demonstrate measurable progress, retain momentum in our Carbon Literacy training programme, and increase our Carbon Literacy profile as we celebrate success at each stage. We have created an infographic which outlines the timescales by which we plan to achieve each step towards Platinum CLO accreditation (see below). We are currently working on achieving Silver CLO accreditation and are on course to achieve this by the end of 2021.



Throughout 2022, Carbon Literacy training will continue to be used within WCC as the primary means of educating staff and members about sustainability, climate change, and carbon neutrality. We will continue to roll out our in-house Carbon Literacy training to all staff and members that have not yet been trained and certified as Carbon Literate. It is the council's goal to train and certify as many of our staff and members in Carbon Literacy as possible. This is because we believe a council-wide adoption of Carbon Literacy will help build the culture of the council into one that is heavily motivated and invested in placing carbon neutrality at the forefront of all that it does. Carbon Literacy will also encourage staff to become more invested in supporting ambitious policies to reduce carbon, and to take lessons they have learnt beyond the office and into the wider community.

Although our priority thus far has been on officer and member training, we would like to begin expanding our public training delivery to other organisations and community leaders. To do this we will offer our support with developing the Carbon Literacy 'Community Leader' toolkit and eventually pilot this in 2022.



IMPORTANCE OF CARBON LITERACY TRAINING WITHIN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Several local authorities declared climate emergency – many setting climate action plans and setting carbon reduction/net-zero targets. In order to truly achieve net-zero targets, there is a need to embed carbon neutrality into the internal policy, culture, and behaviour of the council. Such transformative changes across the entire council will only be possible by engaging the hearts and minds of all those who work within the council.

In order to achieve this, local authorities need to ensure that all staff and councillors understand the causes of climate change, potential actions for mitigation and adaptation, and the role that the council can play. The unique selling points of Carbon Literacy training compared to other training courses is that:

- It moves beyond simply educating the workforce – the Carbon Literacy training course moves beyond simply educating the workforce about Carbon Neutrality and climate change – it also encourages trainees to put their knowledge into action both within their personal and professional lives. After the training course, participants are required to complete an Action Plan where they must commit to both a significant individual and group action to reduce their carbon footprint. From our experience, Carbon Literacy also encourages staff to become more invested in supporting ambitious policies to reduce carbon and to take lessons they have learnt beyond the office and into the wider community. There aren't many courses out there which offer this same action-focused training approach.
- Tailored to local authority context – the toolkits that the Carbon Literacy Project provides are created for councils and designed by councils. The toolkits have also been piloted by councils to ensure that they are useful and relevant for training use within local authorities. The materials contained within the toolkits are extremely valuable for council officers and members and are continually updated.
- Inexpensive training option – all toolkits can be accessed free of charge. Some training courses can be quite pricey, but the only cost for Carbon Literacy training is £10 pp to cover the cost of marking the action plans and certifying learners. Training can also be delivered in-house without the need to pay for officers and members to attend external training courses, which provides an inexpensive option for councils.
- Relatively easy to expand the number of trainers – once an officer is certified as Carbon Literate, they too can go on to deliver the training and become a trainer. No further training costs or certifications are required to become a trainer, so it is much easier to build a pool of volunteer staff to support with the delivery of the training.
- Networking - as well as supporting the development of staff, Carbon Literacy also provides an essential networking opportunity for current and new members of staff, particularly given the current increase in homeworking. The in-house training format is interactive and provides an opportunity to build team cohesion amongst staff. For some, Carbon Literacy training may even be their first time working with officers from different departments across the council.

CONTACTS

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