

London Borough of Barnet
2 Bristol Avenue,
Colindale,
London, NW9 4EW
21 June 2022
Our ref: 8290930

Thank you for your request received on 19 May 2022, for the following information:

We write as part of a national research project being undertaken by universities throughout the UK and being led by the Environmental Law Foundation (ELF). The research is exploring the work in tackling climate change and the need to significantly cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It builds on the work throughout 2021 which was drawn together in the report: Climate Emergency Declaration Research London (City University, October 2021, CED Research London). The regional report fed into the national ELF report: Local urgency on the Climate Emergency? A review of local authority Climate Emergency Declarations and supporting action across the UK (ELF, Oct 2021, www.elflaw.org).

Both reports highlighted the achievements in supporting climate emergency declarations made by a large number of local authorities.

This second year of research is focusing on local government decision-making (and, in particular, in land use planning) alongside community engagement. These two areas are seen as critical in helping to secure carbon reduction and recognises the need for public bodies to take action in addition to reducing their own GHG emissions.

We have carried out some preliminary research into how Barnet is tackling the climate emergency and note that the Council has not yet declared a climate emergency and the only information generally available was that Barnet was supporting the first London Climate Action Plan in 2019; some three years ago.

In the light of our research we have set out questions which we would be grateful if you could provide in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

1. As a preliminary question we would be grateful if you could confirm the present status of any climate action plan or strategy that is being progressed by the Council. Please provide details of the achievements to date in the Council reducing its own emissions and any action to work to reduce GHG emissions in the Barnet area. .

In particular, we would be grateful if you could provide us with a copy of any net-zero plan that the Council has and confirm what carbon reduction targets it sets and what are the Council's achievements to date in meeting these targets.

In relation to land use planning:

2. Please confirm (a) the question of the climate emergency is being expressly mentioned in the Local Plan, and (b) if so, when the Council intends to adopt the new Local Plan. We note that the Barnet Climate Action Group (BCAG)

made representations to the emerging Local Plan in August 2021 and would be interested as to the present position in terms of the local plan.

3. Please provide a note of all planning applications in the last 2 years that have been refused primarily on the basis of climate change concerns.

4. Please provide details of all planning application in the last 2 years have been granted because they will or should be securing significant carbon reduction in the locality and the wider world.

In relation to community engagement:

5. Please confirm whether the Council is working with community groups/organisations in the locality on climate change policies (e.g. the BCAG) or adopted any associated plans or strategies in that regard.

6. Please provide details of any other local community action your Council has taken in relation to any plans and commitments relating to any Climate Emergency Declaration it may be considering.

7. In the Council's opinion, is there any additional support from central government that could assist local authorities in meeting their carbon neutral targets?

We have processed this request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Response

The Council holds the information requested and the answers to your questions are below.

1. As a preliminary question we would be grateful if you could confirm the present status of any climate action plan or strategy that is being progressed by the Council. Please provide details of the achievements to date in the Council reducing its own emissions and any action to work to reduce GHG emissions in the Barnet area. .

In particular, we would be grateful if you could provide us with a copy of any net-zero plan that the Council has and confirm what carbon reduction targets it sets and what are the Council's achievements to date in meeting these targets.

Barnet Council's Sustainability Strategy Framework was unanimously approved by Policy & Resources Committee in December 2021, and can be found via the following link:

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s69067/Sustainability%20Strategy%20Framework.pdf>

It lays the groundwork for the Sustainability Strategy by defining our net zero ambitions, setting some commitments and detailing the next steps for the development of the strategy.

In relation to land use planning:

2. Please confirm (a) the question of the climate emergency is being expressly mentioned in the Local Plan, and (b) if so, when the Council intends to adopt the new Local Plan. We note that the Barnet Climate Action Group (BCAG) made representations to the emerging Local Plan in August 2021 and would be interested as to the present position in terms of the local plan.

A Modification to the Local Plan will highlight the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the Council intends to adopt it in Mid 2023.

3. Please provide a note of all planning applications in the last 2 years that have been refused primarily on the basis of climate change concerns.

N/A

4. Please provide details of all planning application in the last 2 years have been granted because they will or should be securing significant carbon reduction in the locality and the wider world.

N/A

In relation to community engagement:

5. Please confirm whether the Council is working with community groups/organisations in the locality on climate change policies (e.g. the BCAG) or adopted any associated plans or strategies in that regard.

The Council has committed to the formation of a Citizens Assembly to inform the development of its Sustainability Strategy. This will look to involve a wide range of Barnet residents and stakeholders

6. Please provide details of any other local community action your Council has taken in relation to any plans and commitments relating to any Climate Emergency Declaration it may be considering.

Engagement was undertaken in March 2022 with residents, businesses, and community and interest groups to understand the feelings of the community. The results of this engagement will be presented to Committee later in the year.

7. In the Council's opinion, is there any additional support from central government that could assist local authorities in meeting their carbon neutral targets?

Further funding will be required to meet our net zero targets. It is also important that this is supported with the relevant legislation.

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for

direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Records & Information Management Service, Assurance Group, London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.