



Carbon Reduction in the Cultural and Creative Sector In North Somerset

We've outlined here the background to our policy for carbon reduction across the council and how you, as a cultural or creative organisation, might implement environmentally sustainable outcomes in your work and organisation.

The Climate Change Act 2008

There are now legal requirements concerning carbon emissions. The Climate Change Act was passed in the UK in November 2008 which sets out emission reduction targets that the UK must comply with legally. The Act committed the UK to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, compared to 1990 levels. However, this target was made more ambitious in 2019 when the UK became the first major economy to commit to a 'net zero' target. The new target requires the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

The Act also provides a system of carbon budgeting, to help the UK meet its targets through a series of five-year carbon budgets. Local authorities have a critical role to play in achieving local emissions reductions, including in the transport and housing sectors where the opportunities and challenges for decarbonisation will vary according to local circumstances.

North Somerset Council's role in Carbon Reduction

North Somerset Council declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019 and part of that motion included reporting to Council every six months on progress. In November 2019, the council published the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan and in February last year, the Corporate Plan 2020-24 choosing the term 'greener' as one of three key themes. This means that the council will include climate change as a deciding factor in all policy and strategy decisions going forward.

North Somerset aims to be a carbon neutral council and a carbon neutral area by 2030. Amongst its many actions the council will:

- Take a leadership role across the area to encourage, support and enable others to reduce their carbon emissions
- 'Carbon proof' all future strategies and policies and ensure mitigations
- Aim for all our own new commercial space to be zero carbon or net carbon plus
- Encourage residents to consider 100% renewable energy and support access to grant funding where available



In supporting the local economy the council recognises that our recovery needs to be sustainable, supporting low carbon activities and the green economy. Taking its leadership role means influencing others, be they local communities, businesses, partnership organisations, suppliers or networks.

What does this mean for the cultural and creative industries in North Somerset?

Like most activities, cultural and creative industries have an impact on the environment, but we recognise that the environmental challenges facing the sector are diverse and complex, reflecting the wide spectrum of activities undertaken.

The council aims to support cultural and creative industries in reducing their environmental impacts and carbon footprint and have sustainable behaviours embedded in their organisations and their work, with the additional cost reductions that this can often bring. Other environmental impacts besides carbon emissions are also important. Some aspects of resource use and waste streams can be measured in terms of their equivalent carbon emissions, others can nonetheless be monitored and reduced.

The influence of cultural and creative industries

The cultural and creative industries influence the wider public through their communication of ideas, emotions and values. Indeed, this influence is seen by many as the unique and distinctive contribution that these sectors make to addressing the troubling environmental changes taking place, and the risks we face. We are keen, then, to see how the sector uses its influence, through the work they produce and present, through the way in which they operate and through their communication with their audiences, networks, and partners.

Measuring impact – What you can do

1. Develop an Environmental Policy

Measuring and reporting carbon emissions and other environmental impacts is the essential first step to reducing them. To put these measures in place organisations first need to agree on what will be measured and how and developing an Environmental Policy will provide the framework for this.



Julie's Bicycle, a London based charity that supports the creative community to act on climate change and environmental sustainability, has worked with Arts Council England to inspire environmental action across the arts and cultural sector. They have developed guidelines for developing an environmental policy and action plan, together with a template.

[Env Policy Action Plan Guidelines 2017 JB.pdf](#)

[Environmental Policy and Action Plan Creation template - no branding.pdf](#)

There is also a webinar that can be viewed to help creative businesses in drawing up Environmental and Gender & Equality statements. It was co-hosted by Cornwall's Cultivator Climate and Sustainability Hive (CLASH) and held on 15th October 2020. <https://tevi.co.uk/sustainability-planning-for-creatives-writing-an-environmental-statement/>

2. Work out your carbon footprint

The action plan will include measuring consumption of energy, water, waste use and travel, known as direct impacts. These measurements can then be fed into carbon calculator software to work out your carbon footprint which is measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). A carbon footprint can also include indirect impacts such as supplier and customer based emissions and tracking impacts across the entire value chain of a product or service.

Julie's Bicycle has developed a free carbon calculator developed specifically for arts and cultural sector which allows organisations to calculate the carbon footprint of their activities including building use, productions, tours and festivals.

<https://juliesbicycle.com/reporting/>

There are also some free calculators, mainly to calculate your personal footprint such as that produced by Carbon Footprint Ltd:

<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

3. Test your consumption against industry benchmarks

Julie's Bicycle has also developed a set of benchmarks to help organisations compare their environmental performance against the industry average for performing arts buildings, museums/galleries, offices and outdoor events. All benchmarks have been developed using data collected by Julie's Bicycle through Creative Green certifications, Creative IG Tool accounts and partner organisations from across the cultural sector.

<https://juliesbicycle.com/resource-benchmarks/>



Case studies

Here's what a few of our local creative organisations have been doing to reduce their carbon footprint.

Culture Weston: Running sustainable events during Covid.

<https://www.vision2025.org.uk/news-1/interview-with-paula-birtwhistle>

Arcadia Spectacular: Environmental policy.

<https://www.arcdiaspectacular.com/our-environmental-policy>

Fineline lighting at Shambala Festival:

<https://www.vision2025.org.uk/case-studies-index/fineline-lighting-at-shambala-festival>

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