



Hampshire
County Council

Improvement and
Advisory Service

HIAS MOODLE OPEN RESOURCE

Climate Action Planning:

Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Nature

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Overview

This document contains...

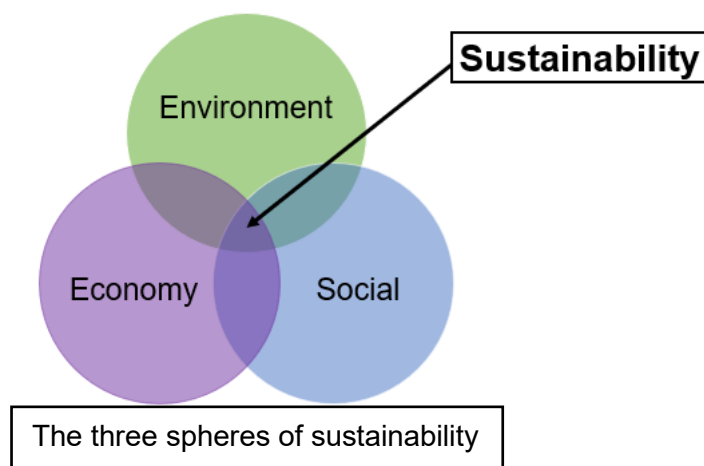
An introduction to climate action planning and guidance to help schools identify targeted areas for action in the biodiversity area of climate action planning.

Points to consider when using this resource

Information in this resource is current at time of publication but might be subject to change. This resource is one of four resources created for schools to support them in the four areas of climate action planning: decarbonisation, adaptation and resilience, encouraging biodiversity and climate education and green careers. Further resources will follow on the HIAS Climate Unity Moodle.

Sustainability and climate action

If something is sustainable, it can continue for a long period of time. A successful eco-system is sustainable – it manages and recycles resources effectively and is resilient against negative disturbances. Sustainability can be categorised into three spheres: social, economical and environmental sustainability and can be on a local, national and global scale. Some models also add a fourth area of human/cultural sustainability.



If we are sustainable, we are meeting our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. Climate action is a critical part of this. Through taking steps to combat climate change, we are helping safeguard the planet for future generations so they can live in a sustainable, resilient environment.

Climate Action is one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals <https://sdgs.un.org/> and is part of The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> adopted by all UN member states in 2015.

How does this link to schools?

The 2022 policy paper from the Department for Education (DfE) set an ambitious vision of the UK becoming the world's leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030 (DfE, 2022).

1. Excellence in education and skills for a changing world: preparing all young people for a world impacted by climate change through learning and practical experience.
2. Net zero: reducing direct and indirect emissions from education and care buildings, driving innovation to meet legislative targets and providing opportunities for children and young people to engage practically in the transition to net zero.
3. Resilience to climate change: adapting our education and care buildings and system to prepare for the effects of climate change.
4. A better environment for future generations: enhancing biodiversity, improving air quality and increasing access to, and connection with, nature in and around education and care settings.

The guidance breaks down the vision to provide five areas where schools and educators should focus:

1. Climate education – helping young people become global citizens by understanding climate change and appreciating nature.
2. Green skills and careers – teaching children the knowledge and skills for green jobs.
3. Educational estate and digital infrastructure – government to provide advice to support schools in achieving a green and sustainable education estate.
4. Operation and supply chains – co-ordination and leadership to introduce children and young people to more sustainable practices.
5. International – respond to international action and make a difference to young people all over the world.

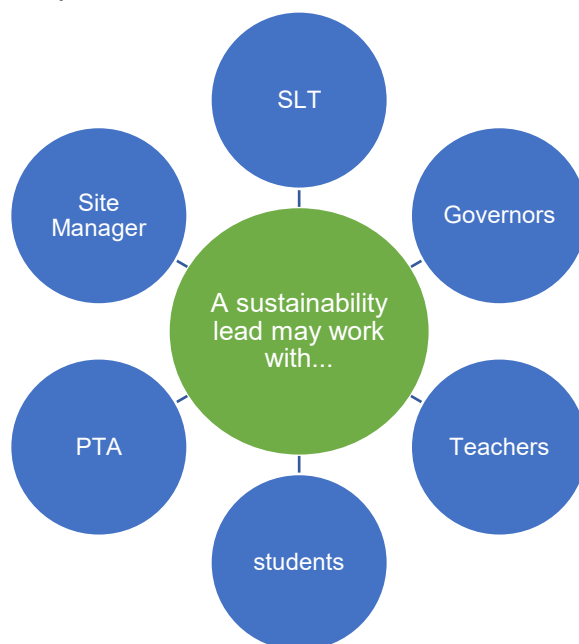
Source: Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy/sustainability-and-climate-change-a-strategy-for-the-education-and-childrens-services-systems)

This guidance is non-statutory but sets out a key initiative for all schools to have a nominated sustainability lead and a climate action plan in place for 2025.

What is a sustainability lead?

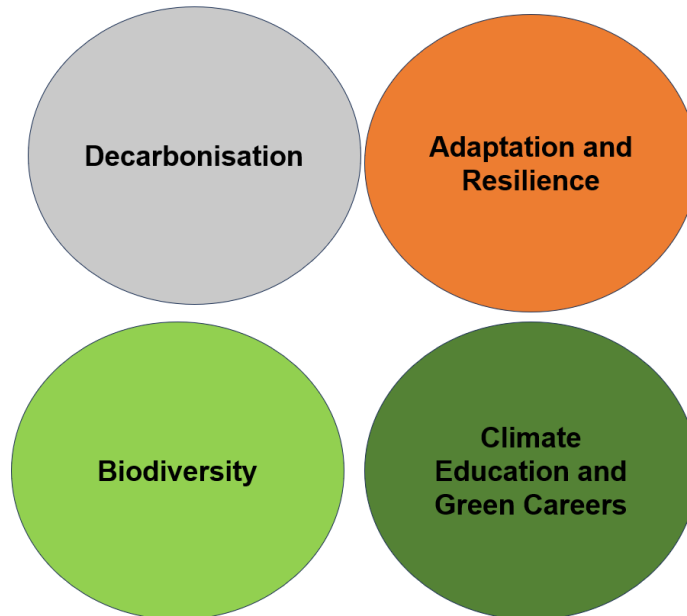
A sustainability lead is a co-ordinator and facilitator. They are a champion for climate action in the school and work with school leaders and stakeholders to create, develop and implement a climate action plan. Sustainability leads could be senior and middle leaders, teachers, estate managers or governors. There can also be more than one sustainability lead within a school as long as this is supportive of the implementation and impact of the climate action plan.

The climate action plan will involve a range of initiatives, and its successful implementation will require the active support of various stakeholders across the school community. Each stakeholder brings unique perspectives, skills, and experiences that can enrich the planning process and strengthen outcomes. Establishing a sustainability working group is an effective way to harness this collective expertise and foster collaboration toward shared environmental goals.



What is climate action planning?

A climate action plan is a document that helps schools outline actions to reduce their environmental impact and adapt to climate change. Climate action plans should cover the four following areas:



Source: Sustainability leadership and climate action plans in education - GOV.UK
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sustainability-leadership-and-climate-action-plans-in-education>)

This resource focuses on the **decarbonisation** aspect of climate action planning. It includes guiding questions to help settings assess their current carbon footprint and identify potential future actions to include in their climate action plans. Additionally, it offers useful links and contacts to further support schools during the climate action planning process.

There is currently no statutory template for a climate action plan. However, it may be helpful to structure it similarly to other strategic documents. The plan should include clearly defined, measurable actions, each with a specific timeframe. You may also wish to identify the staff members responsible for supporting and monitoring the successful implementation of each action. Organisations such as Let's Go Zero and Climate Ambassadors offer free templates schools may wish to use. Both organisations are funded by the DfE and have worked with many schools across Hampshire. See the following pages for links to these websites.

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and nature

Nature is everything around us – the plants, animals, landscapes, water and air that make up our world. Biodiversity means the incredible variety of life within nature, from different species and habitats to the diversity within each species. This variety keeps our environment healthy by providing clean air, fresh water, good soil and food. Biodiversity also helps our planet cope with challenges like climate change by making ecosystems stronger and more adaptable.

For schools, biodiversity is not just a topic to learn about – it is something to experience and protect. Schools can make a real difference by creating wildlife-friendly spaces such as gardens, ponds and hedgerows, reducing waste and planting native species. Outdoor lessons and nature projects help pupils see the impact of their actions and understand how caring for biodiversity supports a healthier planet. By taking these steps, schools show leadership in sustainability and give pupils the skills and values they need to shape a better future.

The guidance provided below is categorised into four distinct areas: first steps, plants, wildlife and fostering positive attitudes towards nature to assist schools in identifying targeted areas for action within the biodiversity area of climate action planning.

First Steps

Key questions to consider

- Where are the boundaries of your school site?
- What green areas do you already have on the school grounds?
- Where are the 'dead spaces' on the school site?
- What wildlife is present on the school site?
- What stakeholders of the school could support in enhancing biodiversity and nature?
- What would you like to achieve this year?
- What organisations could support you on your journey?

Initial steps schools could take

- Visit the National Education Nature Park and Royal Horticultural Society websites.
- Create a map of your school site to support you in future planning.
- Invite the students to conduct a survey of the different plants and wildlife species they observe on the school site.
- Consider your school's budget for improving biodiversity.
- Visit the National Education Nature Park Fundraising Guide (see link below).
- Set up a lunchtime or afterschool gardening club.
- Establish a team of volunteers of staff, parents and/or governors to help implement future actions.
- Consider the National Education Nature Park five-step process.

Useful links and contacts

www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/getting-started-package – National Education Nature Park website.

www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/finding-funding – National Education Nature Park Funding Guide.

www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening – Royal Horticultural Society website.

www.sustainabilitysupportforeducation.org.uk/biodiversity-and-nature – Sustainability Support for Education website.

www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/schools/ – website for north Hampshire schools.

www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/finding-local-help.

Plants

Key questions to consider

- What plants are suitable to be planted in the different areas of the school grounds?
- Where could planters be placed on the school site?
- Are there opportunities to create wildflower areas or sensory gardens?
- How could the children be involved in planting?
- What are the resources and knowledge needed to maintain planted areas?

Steps schools could take to protect and enhance the plant biodiversity

- Plant wildflowers, shrubs, and trees to support pollinators and wildlife.
- Create a sensory garden.
- Add planters to 'dead spaces' to create more green spaces.
- Plant herbs and seasonal fruit and vegetables to use in the school kitchen.
- Teach the eco-team/school gardening club the skills they need to look after the plants on the school site.
- Add indoor plants to classrooms.
- Approach local nurseries or gardening clubs for seed/plant donations and expertise.
- Work towards a RHS gardening award (see link on following page).
- Enquire about a free tree donation from the Woodland Trust (see link on following page).
- Stop mowing an area of grass at the school and create a flower rich grassland during the summer by planting wildflower seeds.
- Research and teach children how to be safe in the garden.
- Create spaces for outdoor learning.

Useful links and contacts

www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening/school-gardening-awards – RHS gardening awards information.

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/ – Woodland Trust website.

www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening/resources – RHS school resources website link.

www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/planting-purpose-package – Planting for Purpose resources on the National Education Nature Park website.

www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening/resources/getting-started/health-and-safety-in-the-garden – RHS guide to school gardening safety.

Wildlife

Key questions to consider

- What wildlife currently visits or lives in our school grounds?
- How can we make our grounds more wildlife-friendly?
- Are there safe spaces for wildlife to shelter and feed?
- How can we monitor and celebrate wildlife in our school?
- How could we encourage new species of wildlife to visit our school?
- How can children observe and interact with wildlife safely and respectfully?

Steps schools could take to protect and enhance the wildlife biodiversity

- Install a nest box and webcam on the school site so children can witness the eggs hatching.
- Make a bird feeder and hang it from trees on the school site.
- Build a bug hotel.
- Build a hedgehog house and create hedgehog highways.
- Create a log pile or pyramid to encourage different insects to the school site.
- Create a pond or water feature if feasible.
- Leave some areas 'wild' to encourage natural habitats.
- Create a footprint tunnel to track wild visitors to the school (see link on following page).
- Create a dead hedge to create habitats for wildlife.

Useful links and contacts

www.hiwwt.org.uk/wilder-schools – Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust website.

www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/AFI%20Guide%20FINAL_0.pdf – a guide to encouraging insect life from The Wildlife Trust.

www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/feed-the-birds;
www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/makes/bird-feeder – bird feeder craft examples.

www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening/resources/planet-friendly/make-a-bug-hotel; www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/build-a-bug-hotel – build a bug hotel example ideas.

www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/build-a-hedgehog-house;
www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home – building a hedgehog house guidance.

www.rhs.org.uk/ponds/wildlife-ponds – a wildlife pond guide from the RHS.

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6TYuYG9WmfWLbeeTQG14ojpejzipTE4G – a collection of video guides from the RSPB including how to make a micro pond, bat box and toad and frog house.

<https://mammal.org.uk/blog/mammal-monitoring-methods-footprint-tunnels> – how to create a footprint tunnel guide.

www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/build-a-dead-hedge-for-wildlife – building a dead hedge guide.

www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening/resources/planet-friendly/composting-for-schools – composting guide for schools.

Fostering Positive Attitudes Towards Nature

Key questions to consider

- How do you teach and talk about nature and biodiversity?
- Are students given regular opportunities to experience nature?
- How can nature appreciation be embedded across different subjects?
- How can you celebrate and share your biodiversity efforts?
- How could experiencing nature support SMSC development at your school?
- How is stewardship represented in Religious Education?
- How could you teach children to reuse and recycle in craft associated with nature?
- How are children taught to be responsible and respectful in nature?

Steps schools could take to foster positive attitudes towards nature

- Teach the students about the different species and habitats we have in Hampshire.
- Link caring for nature to your school values and discuss in assemblies/collective worship.
- Participate in the RSPB Big School's Birdwatch (see link on following page).
- Create further opportunities for outdoor learning and utilise the school site.
- Engage in geography fieldwork or science investigations in green spaces.

- Capture nature through art, music and dance.
- Invite the students to design an animal habitat.
- Ask students to design and create resources to enhance and protect nature and biodiversity.
- Encourage students to bring wellies and appropriate raincoats into school so they can access the outdoors in wet as well as dry conditions.
- Engage in the Habitat Heroes National Education Nature Park activity and celebrate the achievement with the students.
- Explore the activities on the National Education Nature Park website (EYFS-KS5).

Useful links and contacts

www.hiwwt.org.uk/wilder-schools – Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust website.

www.hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-information-and-advice – information about Hampshire species and habitats.

www.booksfortopics.com/booklists/topics/geography/environmental-sustainability/ – a list of picture books about making positive changes and caring for the environment.

www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/resources – National Education Nature Park resources.

www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/get-ready-for-big-schools-birdwatch – RSPB Big School's Birdwatch information.

www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/hilliergardens/learn – website for Sir Harold Hillier Gardens.

<https://ltl.org.uk/primary/#lesson-ideas> – Learning Through Landscapes outdoor learning activities for primary students.

<https://ltl.org.uk/secondary/#lesson-ideas> – Learning Through Landscapes outdoor learning activities for secondary students.

www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/resource/habitat-heroes – Habitat Heroes mapping activity.

www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/resource/celebrate-habitat-heroes – Habitat Heroes certificates.

www.froglife.org/education-resources/ – online resources to help children learn about UK reptile and amphibian species.

www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/Hoverfly%20Hero%20booklet.pdf – Be a Hoverfly Hero leaflet.

Climate Unity

emma.groves@hants.gov.uk – HIAS lead advisor for sustainability.

For further details on the full range of services available please contact us using the following email:

htlcdev@hants.gov.uk

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