

A Vision for a Sustainable Loughborough

What is a sustainable town?

Our vision is a town which meets the needs of everyone who lives here, provides the community with the resources to thrive, and does not exploit people, or the local and global environment in doing so. Loughborough has the potential to be a pioneer in creating a sustainable and successful town which would lead by example for the rest of the UK. Here is our vision:

1) Community at the heart of design.

The vision: We want to improve and expand community and civic spaces including, community halls, common rooms and green spaces. For example, in the permanent shop fronts of Loughborough there are empty shops that could be filled using creative and imaginative grants and incentive on the part of the County Council. We also want to use these spaces to encourage public participation in politics and planning. We believe that the public voice is essential to ensuring we have a sustainable town, which meets the needs of those living here. We want a community which actively engages with people living in Loughborough and involves them directly in designing a town for them.

Signs of our potential: We already have a sense of community which could be enhanced and expanded. We have markets selling local produce throughout the week, we also have a central park, Queen's Park, which is a very popular and well maintained park at the centre of the town. Access to such a varied green space within the town is rightly highly prized.

2) A sustainable economy.

The vision: We need to invest in job creation schemes to counteract the growing unemployment as a result of Covid-19. This should be achieved by providing rewarding local jobs which will benefit people, and the local environment. For example, creating jobs by investing in energy efficient housing renovation schemes, expanding renewable energy projects, and creating and improving cycling and walking infrastructure. We also want to enable more people the flexibility to work if they want to by providing more support for families. We want to expand affordable childcare, which is particularly important to ensuring women have equal access to the workforce, as often women take on the majority of the child care responsibilities.

Signs of our potential: Loughborough is well provisioned for eco friendly businesses We have three permanent stores catering to that market (two within the Carillon Court Shopping Centre and one on Market St) and one 'pop-up' stall every fortnight at the Saturday market. This gives ready access to cleaning supplies and pantry provisions for those looking to refill and reuse containers. There is evidently a public demand for environmentally friendly businesses and services.

3) Support local food produce.

The vision: We need to work with food producers and suppliers to ensure people can access local produce across Loughborough stores, businesses, schools and workplaces. For example, supermarkets can be supported to stock local produce, and schools can be supported to provide children with fresh local food. We will also support the development of spaces which allow people to grow their own fresh food and are places which build a sense of community, for example, allotments, community gardens and vegetable gardens.

Signs of our potential: We have a local market which provides excellent access to fresh fruit and vegetables as well as fish, meat, baked goods and plants among other items.

4) Sustainable transport.

The vision: We need permanent infrastructure for cycling, as well as public promotion of non-motorised transport. Although, in the current climate of the pandemic public transport use has fallen dramatically, we also need to improve the accessibility of public transport to ensure everyone can choose sustainable travel. We believe there is huge potential in Loughborough to develop a town of sustainable transport. The mayor of Paris has unveiled a plan for a “15 minute city” and although this idea is focused on making large cities livable, Loughborough is a very compact town we believe our town could implement the ideas behind the 15 minute city relatively easily.

Signs of our potential: We have a bus link from the villages around Loughborough into Loughborough, we also have cycle paths and pavements to facilitate walkers.