

Epsom and Ewell adopts new Climate Action Plan

16 October 2024



Tuesday 15th October Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Environment Committee approved a new five year Climate Action Plan (2025-2029).

The Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to meet the Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2035. This second five-year plan builds upon the first Climate Change Action Plan, which ends in 2024, and introduces 52 key objectives across six main themes, aiming to reduce the Council's own carbon footprint and address Borough-wide emissions. The Plan also reflects input from cross-party groups and officers involved in climate change and biodiversity efforts.

The six themes include:

1. Council Leadership and Influencing Others: Focused on policy development, leadership, and collaboration with external partners to influence carbon reduction across the Borough.
2. Council Buildings and Energy Use: Aimed at reducing energy consumption in council-owned buildings and exploring renewable energy options such as solar panels and energy-efficient systems.
3. Transport: The plan includes strategies to reduce emissions from the Council's fleet and encourage electric vehicle infrastructure in public car parks and on streets.
4. Environmental Improvements: Objectives include increasing biodiversity, promoting local food production, and ensuring sustainable land management practices.
5. Waste Management: Targeting reductions in waste production and improving recycling rates across the Borough.
6. Technology and Information Systems: Leveraging data and new technologies to track carbon impacts and implement climate-smart solutions.

The plan incorporates specific performance indicators, financial costs, and the projected carbon impact for each objective, ensuring transparent monitoring of progress. Key initiatives include transitioning to a green fleet, enhancing energy efficiency in public buildings, supporting local energy projects, and promoting biodiversity and sustainable transport options. The plan stresses the importance of partnerships, particularly with Surrey County Council, to foster local and regional collaboration on environmental sustainability .

Here is a summary of ten interesting objectives from the 52 listed in the Climate Action Plan:

Local Plan Development: Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation into the Local Plan, focusing on low carbon design, energy-efficient buildings, sustainable transport, and environmental impact minimisation .

Green Procurement: Revise procurement policies to prioritise low-carbon products and services, thereby reducing the Council's total carbon footprint from supply chains .

Supplier Engagement: Identify the Council's most carbon-intensive suppliers and collaborate with them to reduce their emissions .

Energy Efficiency in Private Rentals: Support compliance with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in private rental properties, ensuring properties achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E or above .

Green Skills Development: Work with Surrey County Council to promote green careers and skills development, particularly in the areas of construction and retrofitting, to meet future workforce needs .

Tree Planting: Implement the Council's Tree Management Plan to increase tree cover in the borough, enhancing biodiversity and contributing to carbon sequestration .

Sustainable Energy Production: Explore options for larger-scale sustainable energy projects on Council-owned land, such as solar farms .

LED Lighting Replacement: Replace traditional lighting at Council assets, like Epsom Playhouse and Bourne Hall, with energy-efficient LED lighting .

Solar Energy Feasibility: Investigate the potential for installing solar panels, solar storage, and solar carports on Council-operated assets and land .

Government Funding for Green Projects: Actively pursue government and external funding opportunities for energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects across Council buildings .

These objectives exemplify the Council’s comprehensive approach to addressing climate change, focusing on reducing carbon emissions, enhancing energy efficiency, and fostering community engagement in sustainability efforts.