

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN (2025-2029)

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Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Draft Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029

Summary

This report presents the Council's second Climate Change Action Plan and seeks support for its adoption.

The proposed 5-year plan covers the period from 2025 to 2029. It demonstrates the Council's continued commitment to tackling climate change and it sets out the actions that will move us closer towards achieving our 2035 carbon neutral target along with supporting Borough wide emissions reduction.

It follows the Council's first action plan, approved at its meeting on 20 January 2020, which comes to the end of its 5-year term in 2024.

The Plan reflects the work of the cross-party Member Working Group and the Officer Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group which were established to support its delivery.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve and adopt the Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029 set out in Appendix 1**

1 Reason for Recommendation

1.1 The Council has committed to tackling Climate Change and achieving carbon neutral operations by 2035. To achieve this target and its continued commitment the Council requires an up-to-date action plan.

1.2 The existing first Climate Change Action Plan, approved in 2020, is coming to the end of its 5-year term in 2024.

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- 1.3 Adopting the proposed second action plan, to cover the next 5-year period, ensures the Council has a clear agreed set of actions and framework for achieving its carbon neutral commitment.

2 Background

- 2.1 A cross party task and finish group was established to oversee the development of the Council's first Climate Change Action Plan. This was approved by this Committee and full Council on 20 January 2020 alongside the approval of the target that the Council would be carbon neutral by 2035.
- 2.2 Following the adoption of the Action Plan, an Environment & Sustainability Officer was appointed to facilitate the delivery of the plan. A cross party Members Working Group, and an officer level Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group (CCBAG) were then set up to support delivery of the actions.
- 2.3 Progress on the delivery of the plan has been reported annually to this Committee with the reports available and published on the Council's Climate Change webpages (www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/residents/climate-change). The latest annual report was provided to Committee on 23 January 2024.
- 2.4 The first action plan is now coming to the end of its 5-year term, and for the Council to have a clear plan for continuing to progress towards its climate change commitments a new action plan has been developed.
- 2.5 A final progress report on the delivery of the first action plan will be presented to the Committee in March 2025, to cover the progress achieved over the full 5-year term.

The Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029

- 2.6 The proposed second Climate Change Action Plan details 52 objectives to be delivered over the 5-year period from 2025 to 2029. The objectives support the Council's aim to be net carbon neutral by 2035 and the role the Council has to play in working with other public bodies and partners to improve the environmental sustainability of the Borough as a whole.
- 2.7 The objectives are split across 6 main themes, as agreed for the first action plan:
 - Theme 1 – Council Leadership and influencing others
 - Theme 2 – Council buildings and energy use
 - Theme 3 – Council transport & switching to lower polluting vehicles
 - Theme 4 – Improvements to the environment
 - Theme 5 – Tackling and minimising waste

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- Theme 6 – Use of technology & information systems

2.8 **Action Plan format:** A more comprehensive format has been proposed for the new action plan, to include additional information for each objective on:

- Performance indicators - included for all objectives to ensure progress can be clearly tracked and reported on. It is recognised that using quantitative measures is not appropriate for all actions and in some cases, reporting will need to take the form of a narrative description of progress.
- Council or Borough Impact – whether the objective will tackle the Council's own operational emissions or Borough wide emissions.
- Carbon Impact – an indication of the carbon reduction potential of the objective from high to low.
- Co-benefits – the additional benefits of delivering the objective, beyond carbon emissions reduction (i.e. improved air quality, financial savings, building capacity and skills).

2.9 **Action Plan content:** The new action plan includes:

- Objectives that have been carried forward from the previous plan where these had not been implemented (or not fully implemented) or where they had been identified for longer term delivery. For example, climate policy in the Draft Local Plan (action 1) and on-going climate change communications (action 4).
- Objectives that have been revised or updated from the previous plan to ensure continued relevance and deliverability. For example, action 21 having a clearer emphasis on the replacement of heating systems in our operational buildings and action 29 on developing a fleet strategy to support the work to move to zero emission vehicles.
- 17 new objectives that cover areas including staff awareness & training (action 5 & 16), local area retrofitting & green skills (action 8 & 14), Scope 3 emissions (action 12), climate adaptation and resilience (action 17), exploring funding pathways (action 15 & 24), considering options for carbon offsetting (action 43) and delivery of new plans and policy (action 33, 36 & 37).

How the Plan was developed

2.10 The development of the new action plan involved:

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- A comprehensive review of the existing action plan both in terms of its format and content. This identified actions that were implemented or due to be completed by December 2024; longer term or not yet complete and should be included in the new plan; no longer relevant or viable for reasons including legislation changes, technological advancements, improved understanding of carbon reducing measures or limited direct ability of the Council to deliver.
- A best practice review of existing local authority climate change action plans, including neighbouring boroughs, all Surrey borough councils, Surrey County Council and a selection of high performing Councils according to Climate Emergency UK's Council Climate Action Scorecards (<https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/>).
- Individual subject specific meetings with internal officers from Council departments and key partners.
- A workshop on the draft plan with officers on the Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Group and with the Member's Environment & Sustainability Working Group.

Future delivery

- 2.11 The delivery of the plan will continue to be supported by a cross party Members Environment & Sustainability Working Group (ESWG), and an officer level Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group (CCBAG).
- 2.12 Without adopting this second Climate Change Action Plan there will be no agreed plan, beyond 2024, for tackling Climate Change or achieving our 2035 carbon neutral target.
- 2.13 Subject to agreement of the new Climate Change Action Plan by the Committee, it will be published on the Council website. Annual progress reports will continue to be provided to this Committee.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 None arising from this report.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 There are no implications in terms of crime and disorder.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None arising from this report.

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3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None arising from this report.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None arising from this report.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The Action Plan includes information on the likely scale of budget and source of Council funding required for each action. For many of the initiatives identified, costs will be met by the relevant Council department through existing agreed revenue and/or capital budgets.

4.2 Where additional funding requirements are identified (for example, once further work has been undertaken to determine detailed costs for a particular project), these will be pursued either from external sources, or through the established internal procedure with a business case to be considered by the Strategy & Resources Committee.

4.3 In some cases, operational costs may be reduced leading to lower energy bills, either immediately or at the end of a payback period, which will be reflected in relevant business cases.

4.4 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Financial implications are included in the body of the report.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 None arising from this report.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- Green & Vibrant

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:**

6.3.1 Climate Change is key priority throughout the Action Plan with targets included to support reducing emissions throughout EEBC.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:**

6.4.1 Sustainability considered in all targets – positive implications only.

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6.5 **Partnerships:**

6.5.1 Surrey Environment Partnership; District & Borough Climate Change Officers Group (Surrey wide)

7 **Background papers**

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Environment Committee: Climate Change Action Plan – Progress Update 23 January 2024
- Environment & Safe Communities Committee: Climate Change Action Plan – Update & Review 24 January 2023
- Environment & Safe Communities Committee: Climate Change Action Plan - Update 25 January 2022
- Environment & Safe Communities Committee: Climate Change Action Plan Update 26 January 2021
- Full Council: Climate Change Action Plan 20 January 2020
- Environment & Safe Communities Committee: Climate Change Action Plan 20 January 2020

Other papers:

- Climate Change motion to full Council 23 July 2019