

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE

Head of Service:	Justin Turvey, Head of Place Development
Report Author	Mark Rachwal
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	Climate Change Action Plan Progress update 2024

Summary

This report provides an annual update and a 5-year overview on the progress of the Council's first Climate Change Action Plan.

The Council approved its first climate change action plan at its meeting on 20 January 2020, along with a commitment to achieving net carbon neutral operations by 2035. The plan was agreed as a living document that would be updated and reviewed annually.

Progress has been made in the delivery of actions over the past year and a full update of the Action Plan is set out in Appendix 1.

Figures for 2023/24 show that the Council has reduced its own operational emissions by 16% since 2019/20.

The first action plan reached the end of its term on 31 December 2024 and has been succeeded by the Council's second Climate Change Action Plan (2025-2029), adopted on 15 October 2024.

Work will continue during 2025 to deliver, monitor and review the second Climate Change Action Plan.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Consider and note the progress made on the delivery of the Council's first Climate Change Action Plan over the past year and over its 5-year term**

Environment Committee

17 March 2025

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 This report outlines the progress over the past year (2024) in delivering the Council's first Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP).
- 1.2 The report also highlights the key progress made over the full 5-year term of the plan.
- 1.3 The plan was agreed as a living document that would be updated and reviewed annually, as a minimum.
- 1.4 The first action plan reached the end of its 5-year term on 31 December 2024 and has been succeeded by the Council's second CCAP (2025-2029).

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 The first Climate Change Action Plan detailed objectives to be completed over a 5-year period in order to combat climate change. The Council aims to be net carbon neutral by 2035 and this is proposed through a number of themes:
 - Theme 1 - Council Leadership and influencing others
 - Theme 2 – Improvements to the environment
 - Theme 3 - Council buildings and energy use
 - Theme 4 - Tackling and minimising waste
 - Theme 5 - Council transport & switching to lower polluting vehicles
 - Theme 6 - Use of technology & information system
- 2.3 An annual update on the actions has been provided to the Committee each year since the plan was approved in January 2020.
- 2.4 This will be the final progress update for the first action plan as it came to the end of its term in 2024. This update therefore covers both progress over the past year and key achievements over the full 5-year term of the plan.
- 2.5 The Council's second Climate Change Action Plan, to cover the 5-year period from 2025 to 2029, was developed and adopted by this Committee in 2024.

Environment Committee

17 March 2025

- 2.6 The delivery of the plan is supported by a cross-party Members Environment & Sustainability Working Group (ESWG) and an officer level Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group (CCBAG).

3 Annual progress update on Climate Change Action Plan

3.1 Work continued to progress during 2024 on delivering the actions within the CCAP. 18 actions are now complete, 41 actions are continuing to be implemented/on-going and 2 actions are no longer relevant. The annex of the CCAP sets out further actions, originally included within the main plan, which are outside of the direct control of the Council. For these actions the Council seeks to support delivery, where possible.

3.2 In 2024, some of the key achievements include:

- £595k of external funding secured to deliver carbon saving projects including:
 - Installation of solar panels at Bourne Hall. Completed in Nov 2024 with expected annual savings of 9 tonnes of carbon emissions (tCO₂e).
 - The development of a Heat Decarbonisation Plan for Bourne Hall. Completed in January 2025.
 - The installation of a 177kWp solar PV system on the roof of the Rainbow Leisure Centre. Completed in February 2025 with expected annual savings of 29tCO₂e.
 - Partial funding for the replacement of windows at Bourne Hall with double glazing. Due to be delivered in 2025.
 - The planting of 2,610 new trees on Council land. Being delivered over the 2024/25 winter planting season.
- LED lighting replacement programme completed for Council operated streetlighting. Expected annual carbon savings of 6tCO₂e.
- Installation of a voltage optimiser at Epsom Playhouse. Expected annual carbon savings of 2tCO₂e.
- Replacement of 3 Meals-at-Home vehicles with electric & installation of 3 electric charge points for charging at Longmead Wellbeing Centre.

- Ongoing support and promotion of Surrey wide consortium schemes, including home energy grants and a third round of Solar Together. 85 home energy efficiency measures installed in the past year, 38 home energy surveys conducted under the HEAT scheme and provisionally 79 households proceeding with solar together installations.

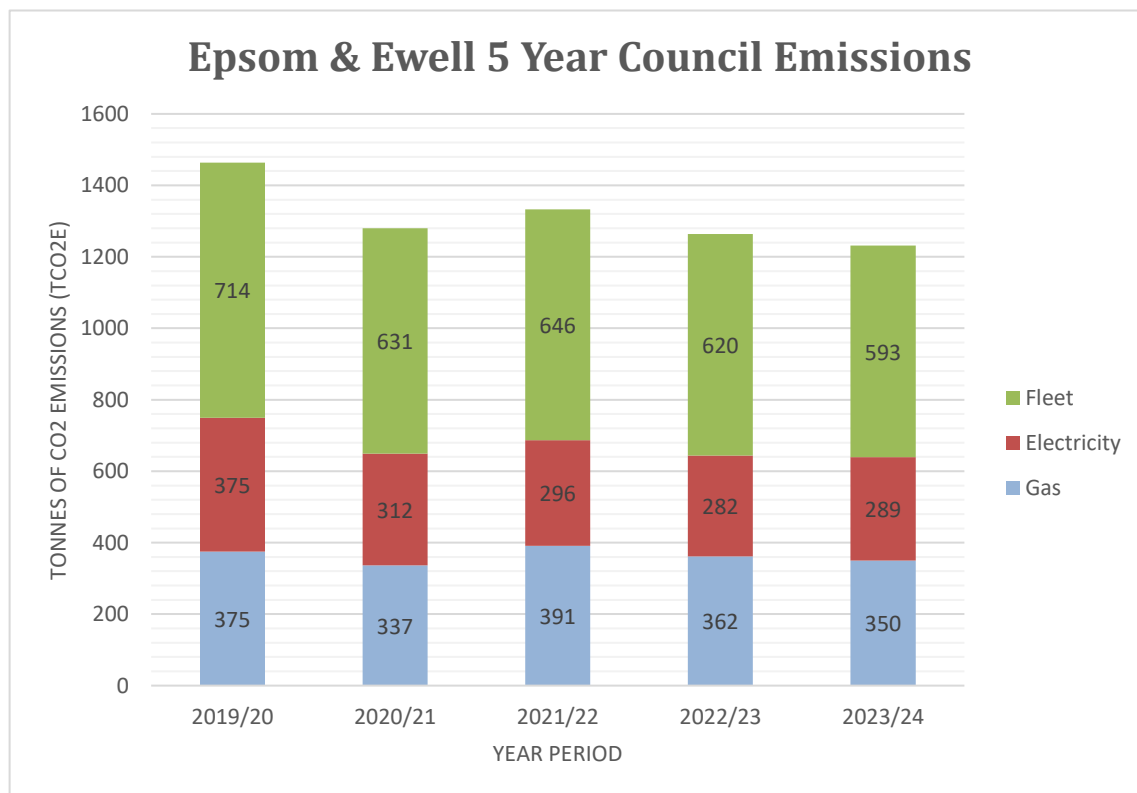
3.3 A full update on the progress of each action in the CCAP is set out in Appendix 1.

4 Progress towards Council emissions target

4.1 The Council's CO₂ baseline data was determined for 2019/20 and covered direct operational buildings energy consumption and fleet activities. The baseline emissions were calculated as 1,464 tonnes of CO₂ (tCO₂e).

4.2 For the 2023/24 period the Council's operational emissions have been calculated as 1,233tCO₂e. This shows a 16% reduction (232tCO₂e) in Council emissions since 2019/20.

4.3 A summary of the progress from 2019/20 to 2023/24 is shown in the figure below:



Environment Committee

17 March 2025

- 4.4 There has been a year-on-year reduction in the Council's carbon emissions, except for between the periods of 2020/21 to 2021/22 which were a reflection of a change in the way people worked and the restricted service provision due to restrictions under Covid19.
- 4.5 It is also important to recognise that the electricity grid (National Grid) has been progressively decarbonising with an increasing proportion of energy generation coming from renewables. This has contributed to approximately 38% of our emissions reductions to date.
- 4.6 Whilst the Council's emissions have continued to reduce year on year, we are currently slightly behind target for achieving our 2035 target. However, planned schemes, as detailed in section 3 of this report and within the action plan update in Appendix 1, have the potential to make a significant contribution to reducing our emissions in the next couple of years and bring us back on track. This includes the Solar PV installation and windows replacement at Bourne Hall, feasibility work being conducted into options for replacing the heating system at Bourne Hall and the planned move of the Council to East Street.

5 Key progress during 5-year term of Climate Change Action Plan

- 5.1 The Council's first Climate Change Action Plan came to the end of its term on 31 December 2024 and over the course of its 5-year term a considerable amount of progress has been achieved.
- 5.2 The annual progress updates, including for this past year (Appendix 1), have set out in detail the key progress made against each action, and our overall progress towards our 2035 target.
- 5.3 In addition to the latest progress update key achievements delivered during the plans 5-year term can be highlighted as below:
 - 16% overall reduction in Council operational emissions.
 - £2m leveraged towards climate change projects at Epsom & Ewell including:
 - £1m of secured external grant funding.
 - £425k of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding.
 - £610k of Capital funding.
 - 90kWp of solar PV installed on Council buildings.
 - 10 energy & cost saving retrofit schemes delivered across Council operated assets (e.g. LED lighting replacement and secondary window glazing).

Environment Committee

17 March 2025

- 11 feasibility surveys conducted on Council buildings identifying opportunities for energy saving/generation schemes.
- 4 fleet vehicles changed to electric/hybrid and 3 EV charge points installed to charge them.
- 14 public EV charge points installed in Council owned car parks.
- 200+ Comms posts on Climate Change themes.
- Support for resident & local business focussed schemes that have led to:
 - 138 households installing rooftop Solar PV.
 - 225 energy efficiency measures being implemented in residential homes.
 - 38 home energy surveys conducted by community energy champions.
 - 12 home upgrades to more energy efficient boilers.
 - 4 Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) claiming grants for decarbonisation measures.
- 8 public drinking fountains installed in the Borough.
- 27 additional cycle racks added to the Marketplace.
- 2,385 households added to the food waste collection service.
- 2,089 households supported with interventions to improve the dry mixed recycling service (i.e. reusable bags to store DMR inside, improved signage, apertured lids for recycling bins).
- Climate Change incorporated as a key consideration in the Corporate Plan, Council committee reports, the Capital investment programme, Asset Management Plan and all key Council policies/plans.
- Adoption of plans and policies to support the CCAP including: a Tree Management Plan; Taxi Emissions Policy; Climate Change Communications Plan and the second Climate Change Action Plan.

5.4 Work will continue during 2025 to deliver, monitor and review the second Climate Change Action Plan.

6 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

Environment Committee

17 March 2025

6.1 Equality Impact Assessment

6.1.1 None arising from this report

6.2 Crime & Disorder

6.2.1 There are no implications in terms of crime and disorder

6.3 Safeguarding

6.3.1 None arising from this report

6.4 Dependencies

6.4.1 None arising from this report

6.5 Other

6.5.1 None arising from this report

7 Financial Implications

7.1 Where future initiatives which have a budgetary implication not included in the Environment Committee budget, they will be reported and considered by the Strategy & Resources Committee in accordance with financial regulations.

7.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 None arising from this report

8.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

9 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

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

- Green & Vibrant and supports the delivery of the Four Year Plan

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

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

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

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

9.4.1 Sustainability considered in all targets – positive implications only

Environment Committee

17 March 2025

9.5 **Partnerships:**

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

10 **Background papers**

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

Previous reports:

- Env Committee: Climate Change Action Plan (2025-2029) – 15 October 2024
- Env Committee: Climate Change Action Plan – Progress Update 23 January 2024
- E&SC Committee: Climate Change Action Plan – Update & Review 24 January 2023
- E&SC Committee: Climate Change Action Plan - Update 25 January 2022
- E&SC Committee: Climate Change Action Plan Update 26 January 2021
- Full Council Climate Change Action Plan 20 January 2020

Other papers:

- Climate Change motion to full Council 23 July 2019