


Report Title	Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan - Annual Refresh		
Committee/Board	Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee		
Meeting Date	7 October 2021		
Chair	Councillor Manuel Abellan		
Report From	Spencer Palmer, Strategic Director, Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods		
Report Author(s)	Katrina Lloyd, Sustainability Manager 020 8770 6227		
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards		
Ambitious for Sutton priorities	Being Active Citizens Making Informed Choices Keeping People Safe		
Open/Exempt	Open		
Signed		Date	22 September 2021

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan set out Sutton's vision to be London's most sustainable borough and tackle the climate emergency by achieving net zero carbon emissions. It also supports the objectives of the council's Ambitious for Sutton and transformation programme.
- 1.2 Work since October 2020 has focused on:
- Securing funding, which has particularly focused on securing government grants for retrofitting properties with efficiency measures.
 - Progressing our understanding of what is needed to progress energy and decarbonisation plans, including for the council's assets.
 - Delivery of visible green initiatives, including on the go recycling, more cycle parking and the GreenSpace project.
- 1.3 This report provides an annual review of progress delivered in support of the targets and actions within the Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan. It also includes updates to the Climate Emergency Response Plan for the year ahead.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To agree the updated Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan.
- 2.2 To note the progress delivered during the last 12 months.

3 Background and Key Information

- 3.1 Sutton has a long standing history of taking ambitious action to tackle environmental issues having published its first environmental policy in the 1980s. The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, was a commitment of 196 members of the United Nations agreeing to take action to avoid the dangers of climate change and limit global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees. To further our commitment to tackling climate change in 2019 the council published a new Environment Strategy and declared a boroughwide climate emergency, committing to achieve net zero carbon emissions. Following a period of public engagement, the Environment Strategy was updated in 2020 to incorporate the Climate Emergency Response Plan.
- 3.2 The updated Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan committed to reporting annually against the delivery of actions within the plan. This report provides a summary of the progress made since October 2020 (year 2) as well as updating the plan for 2021/22. It incorporates new areas of focus as well as changes following the continued impact of COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted the delivery timescales for projects. New actions for 2021/22 include supporting residents to adapt to climate change, lobbying for walking and cycling improvements to the Transport for London Road Network, converting concrete lamp column stock to support a switch to LED lighting and facilities to enable future electric vehicle charging points.
- 3.3 The UK government has adopted a net zero target for 2050. A new Environment Bill is currently progressing through parliament and will set legally binding targets for tackling issues including air quality. It is anticipated that new requirements will support commitments within our Environment Strategy, for example the commitment to achieving biodiversity net gain. It is also acknowledged that new commitments are likely to be made during COP26, due to take place in November 2021. Our annual approach to reviewing the Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan enable Sutton to adapt to the national picture, whilst maintaining our local ambitions.
- 3.4 Delivery of the vision and targets is extremely ambitious and challenging for both the council and the wider borough. When producing the Climate Emergency Response Plan, the council recognised that action was required from all members of society. Success continues to require financial, legislative and regulatory support from the government as well as advancements in technology and radical behaviour change. The latest data indicates that the borough produced 564.4 kt CO₂ in 2019. The majority of emissions are from domestic (47.7%) and transport sources (28.9%). Delivery has focused on these areas and the updated Climate Emergency Response Plan reflects this.

3.5 The Climate Emergency Response Plan (Appendix A) has been updated to take account of progress during the last 12 months. The focus continues to be on the borough's commitment to net zero carbon and achieving multiple benefits for residents and the environment. Actions completed since 2020 include:

- Publication of a list of trees suitable for a range of locations that support biodiversity, to guide developers and residents when planting trees.
- Securing funding for transformational changes to create low-traffic neighbourhoods.
- A stock condition survey of Sutton Housing Partnership properties to further inform plans for energy efficiency and retrofit.
- Exploring the feasibility of establishing a 'library of things' borrowing service (or equivalent) for little-used items such as lawn mowers and sewing machines.
- Procuring fully renewable electricity for the council's buildings.
- Publication of an assets strategy that aligns council assets with delivery of the corporate plan, including the climate emergency and carbon reduction.

3.6 The Climate Emergency Response Plan continues to be presented in three parts and highlights where funding and action is needed from national government or the Mayor of London to achieve Sutton's environmental aims. The three sections cover:

- actions deliverable through Council services;
- changes to the Council's direct operations and buildings; and
- actions the Council can do to encourage action by others.

Year 2: Delivery of the Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan

3.7 Quarterly progress reports have been published throughout the year on the council's website, summarising progress delivered since quarter 3 2021/22.¹ Key achievements are detailed below.

Cleaner Air

3.8 Delivery of the cleaner air chapter is undertaken via the Council's Air Quality Action Plan, a statutory document, monitored annually. It supports improvements in health as well as the environment and reducing borough emissions.

3.9 Activity undertaken during the year includes the installation of cycle parking facilities across the borough, a boroughwide consultation on a new Sustainable Transport Strategy and a £29.5m bid to the governments 'Levelling Up' fund to extend the railway between Sutton and Belmont stations, improving access for those visiting the London Cancer Hub.

A greener borough

3.10 Studies have shown that access to green space is important for our physical and mental health as well as improving the environment and creating habitats for species. Funding

¹ <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/climate>

has been allocated through the Council's Ambitious for Sutton Transformation Programme to improve access to green spaces in the borough and improve resilience to climate change. Seven locations have been identified and a consultation launched in August 2021 to determine the most suitable location to implement an initial scheme. At the time of writing this report, the areas with most support were Sutton Town Centre, Wallington and Wrythe Green. A full analysis of the consultation responses will take place to determine the priority areas for improvements as well as the measures delivered.

- 3.11 Other action undertaken during the year includes the continuation of tree planting activities and funding bids. Supporting our ambition to plant 2,000 trees per year, applications have been prepared for the councils' My Neighbourhood Fund (Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy), the government Forestry Commission's Urban Tree Challenge and the Local Authority Treescapes Fund. If successful tree planting for these schemes will commence in late autumn 2021.
- 3.12 Sutton Nature Conservation Volunteers continue to provide support to maintain and improve the borough's biodiversity. During 2020/21 they provided 708.56 days of time which equated to £51,175 of in-kind support. The biodiversity education programme was affected by the pandemic, however the total number of children attending biodiversity education events during 2020/21 was 1,378 along with a total of 927 adults.
- 3.13 The Council continues to monitor and advise on the creation of new wildlife habitat through the restoration of Beddington Farmlands. Delivery of this green infrastructure supports the vision for more than half of Sutton's space to be green space as well as delivering on the targets and focus areas within the Greener Borough chapter of the strategy.

Achieving net zero carbon

- 3.14 Council carbon emissions are published annually in the Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Directors report. This incorporates emissions arising from scopes one, two and three. Scope one emissions include those arising from either directly owned or controlled sources such as buildings. Scope two emissions include indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, heating and cooling systems. Scope three emissions are all other direct emissions that occur in the council's supply chain. The latest data available for the council is for the period 2019/20 and indicates total net GHG emissions were 8,612 tonnes CO₂e which is 50% lower than the 2008/09 baseline.
- 3.15 Borough carbon emissions are reported annually by the Government, with a 2 year data delay. The latest data, for the period 2007 - 2019 indicates that total borough CO₂ emissions have decreased from 894.2kt CO₂ in 2008 to 564.4kt CO₂ in 2019, a reduction of 33.4%. Emissions per capita have also decreased 41.3% since 2007. In total, 4.6t CO₂ per capita was produced in 2007 which reduced to 2.7t CO₂ in 2019. Public sector emissions account for 5% of the total borough emissions, with the council estimated to be responsible for 3% of borough emissions. Despite only having direct responsibility for a small percentage of borough emissions, the council can influence wider borough

emissions through its own policies, working with residents and local businesses and lobbying for investment in decarbonisation, including by government and the private sector.

- 3.16 Projects delivered during the year to reduce CO₂ emissions include Solar Together London, a collective purchasing scheme for residents interested in purchasing solar panels or battery storage for their homes and the installation of LED lighting at a number of council properties. Work to develop a stock condition survey of the council's social housing has also been undertaken and will be used to inform plans to retrofit the estate to support the net zero ambitions. The council has also switched its own energy consumption to 100% renewable energy.
- 3.17 The council recommissioned its support to vulnerable residents at risk of fuel poverty, providing advice and support as well as referrals to grants and home improvements where appropriate. Over the course of 2021/22 the provider will support over 300 residents. The support focuses on improving the energy efficiency of properties, helping to reduce the environmental impact of the property as well as the cost of heating the home, increasing comfort for the resident.

Creating a Circular Economy

- 3.18 The council has published two online maps to help residents find places to reuse or repair items rather than disposing of them. The repair map was launched at the end of 2020 and was highlighted by the GLA as best practice in their review of all London borough Reduction and Recycling Plans.
- 3.19 Work has taken place to encourage residents to recycle their waste wherever possible. This has included the introduction of new on the go recycling points in the Sutton Town Centre and smart bins which compact the waste and recycling, reducing the frequency of collection. In June 2021, the council joined the Terracycle biscuit and snack recycling programme, providing a recycle point in Sutton Central Library for biscuit and cracker wrappers to be recycled.

Tackling climate change

- 3.20 The council procures a school meals service on behalf of 27 mainly primary schools in the borough. Measures have been put in place to minimise the environmental impact of the school meals provided, including a weekly 'meat free Monday'. Vegan and vegetarian options are also provided throughout the week and 'added plant power' dishes joined the menu in Summer 2021. These dishes have a 50% reduction in meat which is substituted for plant based products.
- 3.21 The council supplies and maintains the catering equipment including ovens in 27 school kitchens. A trial is taking place in a number of schools to remove end of life gas ovens and replace them with electric equipment. Monitoring will take place to ascertain the

contribution towards a reduction in CO₂ emissions.

4 Benefits to Sutton and its Residents

4.1 Delivery of the Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency response plan will enable everyone in the borough to benefit from:

- cleaner air and quieter, safer and more active streets;
- high quality green spaces and enhanced biodiversity;
- increased physical activity;
- reduced fuel bills and renewable energy;
- fewer people living in damp, poorly ventilated and / or overheated homes;
- more reuse and recycling;
- more businesses adopting sustainable business practices and
- increased local preparedness and resilience to climate change.

4.2 The council alone cannot deliver the ambitions of the strategy and plan and this will require behaviour change and support from everyone who lives, works or studies in the borough, both individually and at an organisational level. The council will work to support this and facilitate or enable action where possible.

5 Implications

5.1 Actions contained within the Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan have been developed to support the international goal of preventing global temperature rise of 1.5°C. This will help to protect residents from the worst effects of climate change including extreme weather events such as excess deaths from overheating and heat waves, disruption caused by flooding; and the loss of biodiversity on which human existence depends. Failure to do this would have substantial longer term financial impacts on the council.

Equalities implications

5.2 There are no material equalities implications resulting from the recommendations of this report. As the specific projects are developed on the basis of this strategy, full equality impact assessments will be undertaken to ensure that due consideration is given to protected characteristics.

6 Finance and Legal Commentary

Finance Comment

- 6.1 This report is providing an update on the progress made in support of the targets and actions within the Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan. It is expected that the progress update will benefit the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's activities through providing greater transparency and public accountability for performance and encouraging and supporting measures to improve performance. The Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan will be delivered using a combination of existing budgets and use of external funding.

Legal Comment

- 6.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7 Appendices and Background Documents

7.1 Appendices

Appendix Letter	Appendix Title
A	Climate Emergency Response Plan

7.2 Background Documents

Date of Expiry	Background Document
N/A	N/A

8 Consultations

Consultees	Yes/No	Officer	Date of Comments
Finance	Yes	Ramesh Teelock Strategic Finance Business Partner	07/09/2021
Legal	Yes	Tracy Swan Head of Law, Property, Planning and Employment	07/09/2021
EQIA	No	N/A	N/A