

HILLINGDON STRATEGIC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Environment, Housing and Regeneration
Officer Contact(s)	David Haygarth / Ian Thynne - Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services
Papers with report	Appendix 1 - The Draft Strategic Climate Change Plan Appendix 2 - Survey Questions Appendix 3 - Climate Change Action Plan Consultation (Charts)

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>The world's climate is changing due to increased levels of gases such as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Scientific research has demonstrated that carbon dioxide levels are higher than at any time in the past 650,000 years and this has resulted in a gradual warming of the world's climate.</p> <p>Uncontrolled climate change will lead to higher global temperatures, rising sea levels and more extreme, unpredictable weather conditions across the world. These events and their knock-on effects, such as drought and its impact on food production, or the flooding of coastal areas where many people live, will put hundreds of millions of lives at risk.</p> <p>Hillingdon Council is striving to be the greenest London Borough, to protect and enhance the environment, and to provide a brighter prospect for future generations. Over the last ten years the Council has made significant progress to reduce carbon emissions and has committed that it will be carbon neutral by 2030.</p> <p>To achieve this and other related climate goals, the Council created a draft strategic climate action plan, which underwent public consultation from March 29th for 12 weeks. Having now evaluated and consolidated feedback from the consultation, this report presents the adopted strategic action plan to achieve the 2030 target and associated corporate climate commitments.</p>
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objectives of: Our People, Our Natural Environment, Our Built Environment.
Financial Cost	There are no direct costs associated with the proposed Strategic Climate Action Change Plan, which can be managed within existing resources.

Relevant Select
Committee

Environment, Housing & Regeneration

Relevant Ward(s)

All Wards

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. **Notes the findings and positive response from a comprehensive consultation exercise which has informed the final Strategic Climate Action Plan;**
2. **Approves Hillingdon's Strategic Climate Action Plan for adoption;**
3. **Notes that officers will prepare operational plans to drive forward and fully implement the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan, with progress being regularly reported to Cabinet and;**
4. **Notes to undertake a review of this strategy in July 2024.**

Reasons for recommendation

- Recommendation 1 - Following a comprehensive 12-week public consultation, Hillingdon's draft Strategic Climate Change Plan is now fully informed by the views and ideas from residents, community groups, non-government organisations, commerce, industry, and other stakeholders. The consultation showed a very positive response from the public, whose views have led to three additional corporate climate commitments, two new themes, and more detailed suggestions now incorporated into the draft for adoption.
- Recommendation 2 – Cabinet approval of the strategic plan will commit the organisation to deliver the response needed to address the climate emergency declaration of 2020 and other internal climate related goals. It will enable the organisation to move forward, continuously improving environmental performance and reducing its own carbon emissions. This will inform and enable us to lead the community in tackling climate issues in a positive and beneficial way.
- Recommendation 3 – Officers can now identify and begin the service improvements, works and projects to deliver the plan using existing resources and budgets. Officers will also identify sources of low carbon funding to support any additional opportunities to go further and faster to reduce carbon emissions.
- Recommendation 4 – The strategic climate action plan will require review to assess its effectiveness and provide an opportunity to consider any improvements which support the council's objectives.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The option to take no action was not considered. To achieve the climate emergency declaration requires leadership from the Local Authority and targeted action working in partnership with residents, public sector organisations, community groups and businesses.

Comments from the previous Policy Overview Committee / new Select Committee

The following comments were submitted in support of the draft strategic plan by the previous Corporate Service, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee on 6th April 2021.

“The Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee welcomed the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan commenting that such a Plan was essential given the world’s changing climate and weather patterns.

The Committee noted that the Council aimed to be carbon neutral by 2030 and planned to achieve clean energy via the use of wind turbines, solar energy and energy supplied by the local and national grid. The use of fossil fuels would be reduced where possible and Carbon offsetting would be kept to a minimum. Members welcomed the public consultation and anticipated that Hillingdon residents would be actively engaged in shaping the plan. With regards to carbon offsetting, Members heard that alternatives to tree planting were being explored and a strategy was being developed in relation to this.”

In addition, the new Environment, Housing and Regeneration Select Committee convened on 8th June 2021 made the following comment in support of the draft strategic climate action plan.

“The Committee support the measures outlined within the proposed Action Plan to address climate change through the reduction of the Council’s carbon footprint. The Committee notes the actions previously taken that have resulted in significantly reduced emissions and is eager to see further successes as a result of the Plan’s approval and implementation.”

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The world’s climate is changing due to increased levels of gases such as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. These 'greenhouse' gases occur naturally in the atmosphere, trapping heat that comes from the sun like the glass in a greenhouse. The 'greenhouse effect' is a natural occurrence and without it the Earth would be over 30 degrees cooler and uninhabitable.
2. However, due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal) and deforestation, concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are rising and making the natural greenhouse effect more pronounced, trapping more of the sun’s heat and resulting in a rise in the earth’s temperature. The main contributor to global warming is carbon dioxide.
3. Uncontrolled climate change will lead to higher global temperatures, rising sea levels and more extreme, unpredictable weather conditions across the world. These events and their

knock-on effects, such as drought and its impact on food production, or the flooding of coastal areas where many people live, will put hundreds of millions of lives at risk. This is already occurring in the developing world.

4. Hillingdon Council has made significant progress over the last ten years to reduce its carbon footprint through a range of activities such as the installation of lower energy lighting, cavity and loft installation in Council-owned buildings, the planting of thousands of trees and successful campaigns such as ‘no idling’ of vehicle engines outside schools. However, there is still more than can be achieved to reduce carbon emissions.
5. On 16th January 2020 at full Council, the London Borough of Hillingdon declared a climate emergency in recognition of the need to reduce carbon emissions further, and at a faster pace. To support this, the Council gave a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 and applied this target to its own operations.
6. Officers then developed a draft strategic climate action plan, which was presented to Cabinet in March 2021. The draft plan provided the framework to achieve the carbon neutral target, but also set out the Council’s ambitions for community leadership. These aims were set out as 3 Corporate Climate Commitments, with 7 themes of focus. Cabinet approved the draft and instructed officers to conduct a 12-week consultation, which closed on the 20th June.
7. Following the consultation officers evaluated the responses and three more corporate commitments were formulated. The existing and additional commitments are set out below.
 - Corporate Climate Commitment 1) To lead and inspire our residents, businesses and schools to reduce their own emissions – where we cannot directly control emissions, we intend to identify the opportunities to enable others to reduce theirs.
 - Corporate Climate Commitment 2) To become carbon neutral by 2030 – where we directly control emissions, we will invest in energy saving measures, onsite renewable power for and local carbon offsetting where needed.
 - Corporate Commitment 3) To achieve 100% clean energy across the Councils directly controlled services by 2030 – this involves the Council continually decarbonising our heating requirement and ensuring the energy supplying our assets come from clean sources, either nationally or locally generated.
 - **New** Corporate Commitment 4) To raise awareness and develop the potential of young people to respond to the challenge of the climate emergency – recognising the climate emergency as intra and inter-generational issue, the Council will engage young people to educate and raise awareness of the global challenge and the role of local action.
 - **New** Corporate Commitment 5) To enhance opportunities for biodiversity across the Borough, particularly in urban areas – applying the Councils management of green spaces, woodlands and wetlands in ways that enhance nature, while improving the climate.

- **New Corporate Commitment 6) To remain open to the opportunity to go further, to be innovative and creative to exceed the stated goals wherever possible.** - with a long-term target, the Council can also remain open to new ideas, projects, funding, and joint working to reduce our carbon emissions and benefit the community.
8. The amended plan retains seven themes of focus from the original draft. Following consultation, officers evaluated the responses and adjusted the 7 theme objectives to reflect, consolidate and incorporate the views of residents. This included two new themes being formulated and included. The existing and additional new themes are set out below.
- Theme 1) Community Leadership – the Council acting as community leader for the Borough to deliver actions to reduce carbon emissions, promoting energy efficiency awareness and access to grant funding for housing, schools and businesses.
 - Theme 2) The Council’s Own Operations – reducing our directly controlled carbon emissions and becoming carbon neutral by 2030 in day to day service delivery. Exploring ways to generate renewable energy, introduction of a green travel plan for staff and reducing the carbon impact of our contractors.
 - Theme 3) Building Better Places – using the local authority planning process to influence developments to higher standards of sustainability and design out carbon. Investigate and evaluate new planning policies that support sustainable transportation plans and the retention and replacement of trees during development.
 - Theme 4) Using Clean and Producing Green Energy – to ensure the energy the Council uses comes from renewable sources and to make changes to the heating of buildings to lower the consumption of energy and reduce carbon emissions. Where feasible, using our land resource and building assets to install small and large scale renewable power.
 - Theme 5) Waste Management – reducing the creation of and disposal of waste in our services and activities, and leading campaigns for residents to avoid producing waste, especially plastics, and encouraging residents to grow their own food, source from local markets and compost organic waste where possible.
 - Theme 6) Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation – Introducing changes to everyday activities and changes to the environment we live in, which help adapt to the changing climate and mitigate the effect of climate change. Typically, flood alleviation schemes, water efficiency schemes to store water, providing advice and encouragement to residents and businesses on the type of action they can take.
 - Theme 7) Carbon Offsetting – to put in place measures to compensate for carbon emissions which cannot be avoided in the short-term. Linking to theme 4, the Council will explore ways to produce a surplus of renewable power to offset its own fossil fuel emissions, then account for the carbon we offset through our tree planting, and also encourage in Borough investment for further offset schemes.

- **New** theme 8) Sustainable Transport – linking together the aims of our various teams to establish the bigger picture of our capability to promote and enable safer routes and infrastructure. Creating the environment which encourages our community to walk, cycle and switch to electric and hybrid vehicles.
- **New** theme 9) Transparency, Communications and Reporting – we must be open and clear about our targets, communicating our plans and results in a consistent and interactive way. Several operational plans with targets will underpin the strategic plan, and these will be made public in a clear and objective way.

Financial Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications associated with adoption of the Strategic Climate Action Plan or development of the operational action plans, with both being managed within existing resources.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

10. The strategic climate change action plan sets out the action the Council has taken to date to significantly reduce its own carbon emissions and the outline actions needed to be fully carbon neutral across the Borough by 2030. As well as having a beneficial effect on the global climate situation, these activities have helped keep energy costs down for the Council, as well as helping to improve local air quality and improve green spaces.
11. This plan means the Council will take action to continue reducing carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change. The plan brings together many strands of work and links them to a common goal, making our actions clearer to concerned residents. In particular, the leadership and engagement aspects will help residents, businesses, and communities to avoid disruption to day to day lives, and ensure the Borough is a cleaner and healthier place to live.

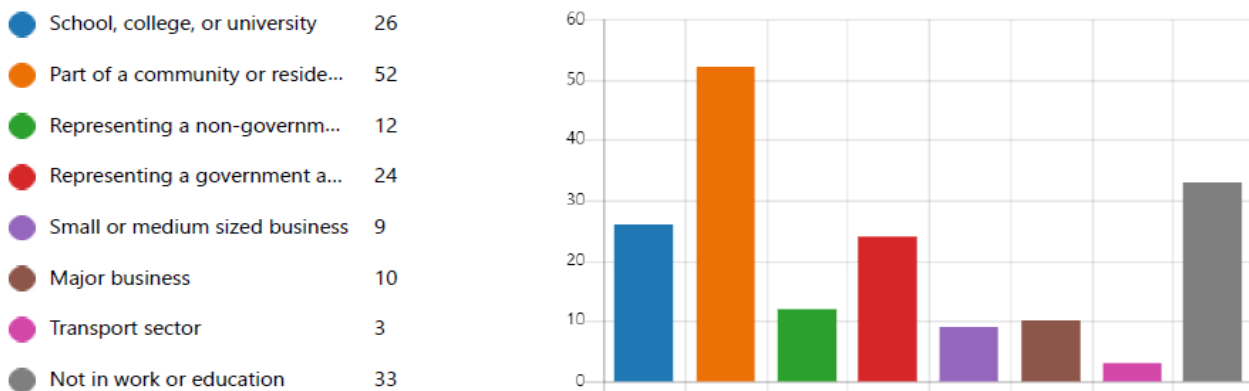
Consultation carried out or required

12. The draft strategic climate action plan public consultation was launched on 29th March 2021 and ran for 12 weeks, closing on 20th June. Community Engagement and the Communications Team supported the climate action plan consultation with a campaign designed to achieve the widest possible engagement during a period of COVID-19 lockdown.
13. An online survey was created and linked to a Council webpage, created specifically for the consultation. Key stakeholders were established and directly mailed with a link to the survey, while officers continued to raise awareness of the consultation through a series of media and public events. Also included were social media releases, a press release in

Hillingdon People, webinars for businesses and resident associations and a specially created Hillingdon school's climate change competition.

14. Given the importance of the climate emergency, officers also supported the Cabinet Member in specific virtual public engagement activities to help raise awareness of the plan. These included a COP 26 webinar with West London Business, a resident's association webinar and a virtual meeting with Heathrow Airport senior management, who also submitted a positive written response on the Council's plans. A detailed response was also received from the Hayes Town Partnership.
15. The Council aspired to wide public engagement from the residents and business survey, using a variety of methods to increase participation. It is important to note that despite a period of COVID-19 lockdown, Community Engagement officers reported a good response. The Council also responded to requests to improve the ability of residents to respond and created a climate emergency email address, linked to the consultation page. A postal address was also given, and residents were able to access and complete the survey at all Hillingdon libraries.
16. In total there were 169 responders to the online survey, who also provided an additional 487 specific comments on the plan. The comments were reviewed and considered by officers and where possible, integrated into the strategic plan. Many of the comments can be incorporated to the action plans the Council must now develop. Other comments were noted as forming part of other areas of work and will be forwarded to the relevant teams. Summary details are provided below, with a more detailed report from the Community Engagement team contained in appendices.
17. The response to our online survey, by sector is provided below:

1. Please tell us the sector which best describes your current setting.



Text truncated in the diagram legend reads as follows:

- Part of a community or residents' group,
- Representing a non-government agency or charity,
- Representing a government agency or authority.

18. In addition, we wanted to know if responders lived or worked in Hillingdon.

2. Do you live or work in Hillingdon?

💡 Insights

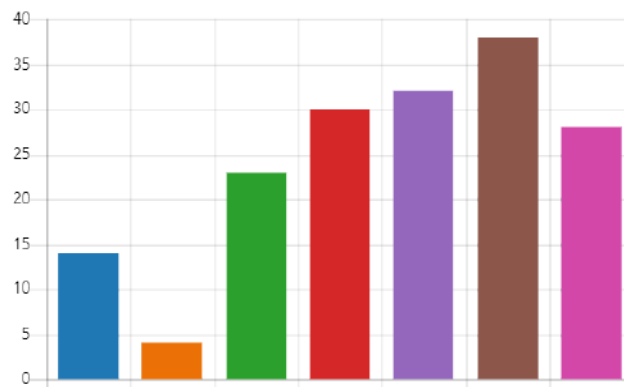
Live	99
Work	11
Both	54
Neither	5



19. Then, we wanted to understand the age profile of the people we had engaged with.

3. Please tell us your age group.

Under 18	14
18-24	4
25-34	23
35-44	30
45-54	32
55-64	38
65+	28



20. The climate emergency email address set up to receive more detailed and bespoke responses also proved helpful to our consultees. Several residents wrote in support of the Councils plans and offered further detailed ideas to improve the local area, with particular interest in trees, native wildflowers and the issues caused by major and minor developments in the Borough. Where possible, these ideas and suggestions will be incorporated into the detailed action plans for service delivery.

21. The Council also received responses from local organisations. Again, these perspectives are extremely useful and align either in the updated strategic climate action plan, or as more specific actions in the emerging action plans for service delivery. The Council is therefore grateful for and acknowledges the support, encouragement, and contributions from the following bodies.
- Canal and River Trust
 - Eastcote Conservation Panel
 - Eastcote Residents Association
 - Hayes Town Partnership
 - Heathrow Airport
 - Hillingdon Friends of the Earth
 - Hillingdon Green Party
 - Hillingdon Labour Group
 - Hillingdon Volunteer Group of London Wildlife Group
 - Ickenham Residents Association
 - Unison
22. The Council also engaged in greater depth with the Hillingdon Friends of the Earth (HFoE) Climate Action Group. This is a special focus group, formed in 2020 and part of the larger HFoE group established in Hillingdon over 30 years ago. The Councils lead climate officer met with representatives from this group, discussed the plan and invited a full response from HFoE. Following this, HFoE submitted a 54-page report, responding line by line to the Councils draft strategic plan. This element of the consultation has proved very helpful to officers and several HFoE ideas are now incorporated into the draft adopted strategic plan. As detailed action plans develop to support the strategy, officers will continue to refer to the HFoE report and undertake further engagement with the group to develop the specific themes and shape future Council actions.
23. Officers from different teams collaborated to undertake the first Hillingdon school's climate competition. This engagement asked children of all ages across the Borough to submit creative work, telling the Council how they felt about climate change. The work was facilitated by the School Travel and Road Safety Team, (STARS.) Using their extensive networks and contacts, the team were able to link the climate plan to a range of other activities they undertake. This also ties in with the TfL School Travel Plan programme allowing schools to gain accreditation status in this field. The competition launch, close and announcement of award dates all coincided with key environmental calendar dates of World Earth Day, World Environment Day and, Cleaner Air Day.
24. The consultation process demonstrated high levels of awareness, articulation, and engagement from the community. All the suggestions and ideas put forward were either noted or agreed or identified as potential for the nascent action plans referred to in the strategic plan. Where possible, agreed views were consolidated into the strategic climate action plan, which is now amended and included in the background papers.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

25. Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms that there are no direct financial implications associated with the draft Climate Action Plan. Following the public consultation and as specific projects are developed to meet the goals set out in the Action Plan, these will be fully costed and integrated into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Forecast and financial strategy as appropriate.

Legal

26. The Borough Solicitor advises that the Climate Action Plan sets out how the Council will discharge its obligations under the Climate Change Act 2008 to reduce carbon emissions etc. The Action Plan has been devised following a comprehensive public consultation with the draft plan having been amended to take account of the consultation feedback. The Borough Solicitor therefore confirms that there are no legal impediments to the Council adopting the Climate Change Action Plan.

Infrastructure / Asset Management

27. Not applicable at this stage.

Comments from other relevant service areas

28. Not applicable at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Cabinet report – draft Climate Change Action Plan for consultation – 18 March 2021](#)