

Guildford adopts ambitious climate change plan

At a meeting of the Executive last night (23 February), councillors adopted the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). This is Guildford Borough Council's response to the declaration of a climate emergency we made in 2019. It builds on the actions we have already taken, reinforces our commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2030 and lays out the framework for how to achieve it.

The CCAP outlines goals to reduce the Council's own carbon emissions, which account for 1% of all borough emissions, alongside ways we can achieve them. It includes targets for improving air quality, preserving wildlife habitat and restoring biodiversity.

The plan recognises our role in supporting and enabling action on climate change, biodiversity and air quality across the borough as a whole. We will form partnerships to empower community groups, individuals, and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Lead Councillor for Climate Change, Cllr George Potter, said:

"Since declaring the climate emergency we have been working hard to identify and reduce our emissions. Adopting the Climate Change Action Plan is a major milestone in our journey to carbon neutrality.

"We recognise this will not be easy and we do not have all the answers. We are facing the biggest threat to our existence ever and have limited powers, resources and finances to make the changes necessary. This is why we have declared an emergency. Because an emergency requires us to make an extraordinary effort.

"We are aware we cannot achieve net zero for the borough as a whole on our own. Because of this our plan recognises our role as a community leader, and we will work with others to educate and empower everyone to play their part in reducing carbon emissions.

"We acknowledge many of the impacts of climate change are already here to stay. So we will focus on helping communities and businesses to adapt to climate impacts, and work to restore wildlife and our natural environment.

"The next stage of our plan is to start conversations with, and listen to, our communities and businesses. We want to work with residents to enable us all to live and work more sustainably and bring everyone in our towns and villages on this journey with us.

"We owe it to future generations to play our part in the face of the climate crisis, and we are determined to succeed."

View the meeting of the Executive and read the Climate Change Action Plan.

To find out how to help, sign up for updates and information at ClimateChange@guildford.gov.uk