

# Spelthorne Borough Council Climate Change Strategy Progress Report 2024

## Key Terms

- Greenhouse Gas: GHG
- tCO<sub>2</sub>: tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>
- Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e): used to combine the seven most threatening gases that have the highest global warming potential
- IPCC: International Panel on Climate Change
- Scope emissions: Different categories of greenhouse gas emissions
- Net zero: In this document we are referring to Spelthorne's own target of Net Zero which includes only Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions
- UNSDGs: The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future. They address global challenges we face including climate change and environmental degradation, along with inequality, justice and more.

## The challenge we face

The climate crisis is the biggest challenge humanity has faced in generations. Climate is the long-term (usually at least 30 years) regional or global average temperature, humidity and rainfall patterns over seasons, years or decades. Climate change is when there has been a shift in these long-term average weather patterns. Although there are natural processes that can contribute to climate change such as cyclical ocean patterns and volcanic activity, the rapid increase in the Earth's temperature since the industrial revolution is unequivocally the result of human activity and is continuing at an unprecedented rate<sup>1</sup>. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions come from different activities and sectors such as energy use, land-use change, transport, industry and manufacturing, and lifestyle and patterns of consumption. These activities have contributed to large amounts of GHGs into the atmosphere, which have built up over time, creating a blanket in the atmosphere, helping to trap more heat. This has seen an increase in global surface temperatures of over 1°C<sup>2</sup>. Although 1°C may seem like a small amount of warming, even a fraction of a degree causes major changes in extremes, such as increases in the intensity and frequency of temperature and precipitation, as well as agricultural and ecological droughts<sup>3</sup>.

## What is the difference between weather and climate?

Weather: Short term changes in the atmosphere, e.g. what you wear day-to-day based on the weather forecast.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/what-is-climate-change/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_SYR\\_SPM.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGI\\_SPM\\_final.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM_final.pdf)

Climate: The average weather pattern over a longer period of time, e.g. what you keep in your wardrobe.

The Climate Change Committee's report "Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget", revealed that local authorities are directly responsible for between 2- 5% of a local area's emissions but influence over 33% of a local area's emissions and have many levers that can be used to deliver and influence wider local action to reduce emissions and prepare local areas for a changing climate. <sup>4</sup> Therefore, Spelthorne Borough Council has an important role in reducing the emissions of the whole of Spelthorne.

### **What is the difference between mitigation and adaptation?**

The two fundamental challenges that we face to help address climate change are mitigation and adaptation.

- **Mitigation:** Reducing the amount of GHG emissions we release into our atmosphere, to prevent further warming of our planet. For example, reducing fossil fuels and moving to renewable energy sources.
- **Adaptation:** Adjusting to the effects of climate change, reducing the risks and impacts of the effects of climate change that we are already experiencing and those that are predicted. For example, through altering our behaviour and preparing for extreme weather events through physical measures.

We recognise the importance of both mitigating and adapting to climate change. In doing so, we must respond to the climate impacts and risks that we are already facing, and to those that will worsen in the coming years.

### **The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

The United Nations and the international scientific community have identified the severe global human, environmental and economic threats that man-made climate change poses. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 provides a blueprint for people and the planet now and in the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership<sup>5</sup>. As a council we recognise the vital role to play in achieving the SDGs, and the wider co-benefits they embed. These are reflected in our 9 themes.

### **Our net zero journey so far**

Spelthorne Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency on the 14th of October 2020, publicly prioritising our commitment to tackling the climate crisis.

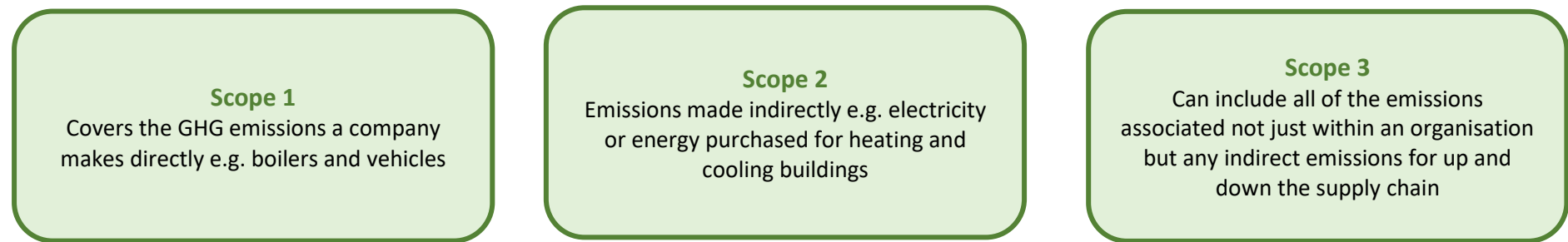
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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/local-authorities-and-the-sixth-carbon-budget/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

The strategy, which was adopted in 2022, was in response to the council declaring the climate emergency. This is the first progress report in which we will share our journey so far as we reach milestones in the actions that we set 2 years ago. The primary objective of the strategy is to help us reach Net Zero by 2030 through Scope 1 and 2 emissions, which is in line with Surrey County Council's Greener Futures Delivery Plan.

**Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions** are a way of categorising the different kind of carbon emissions created. The term first appeared in the Greenhouse Gas Protocol of 2001 and today, these scopes are the basis for mandatory GHG reporting in the UK.



Spelthorne Borough Council's target is to reach Net Zero Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030. Therefore, with only 6 years to go until the 2030 target, we must firstly prioritise these actions. Additionally, through the 9 key themes in the strategy we also address other key issues such as Scope 3 emissions, biodiversity, waste and more.

### **Spelthorne Borough Council's emissions**

It is important to note that emissions are calculated as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e), which is a term used to combine the seven most threatening greenhouse gases that have the highest global warming potential.

Table 1 shows our emissions for the baseline year of 2019/20 and the most recent year of recorded emissions (23/24). It is important to highlight that although electricity use has decreased, there has been an increase in both gas and vehicle emissions. The largest emissions come from our fleet, which will undoubtedly be our biggest challenge in reaching net zero by 2030. Investigations are currently ongoing to decarbonise the fleet and achieve the action which has a target year of 2029. Additionally, we are progressing work on reducing our gas and electricity consumption, by carrying out energy audits over the past 2 years, ahead of the action target year. This information will need to be used to inform future energy efficiency works.

Emissions Source	2019/20	2023/24
Council Vehicles (scope 1)	627	630
Natural Gas (scope 1)	228	353
Electricity (scope 2)	334	284
<b>Total</b>	<b>1189</b>	<b>1266</b>

Table 1 Carbon emissions by source for Spelthorne Borough Council's operations in 2019/20 and the most recent year 2023/24

Baseline Emissions	Over Baseline	Below Baseline
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### Surrey-wide partnerships

Spelthorne Borough Council recognises the advantages to be gained from working collaboratively. Consequently, Spelthorne Borough Council have been working closely with partners at all levels of governance within Surrey, and are actively working towards adopting joint approaches where possible. We support both the Surrey County Council's Climate Change Strategy<sup>6</sup> and Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy<sup>7</sup>.

### How is the climate crisis having an impact on Spelthorne?

Climate Change impacts the whole of society. Our climate has changed and will continue to change in the future, even with efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions. We are already experiencing the impacts from prior years, which are often felt most strongly by the most vulnerable. The past few decades have brought increasing climate risks and extreme weather events to the UK, including in Spelthorne. Some of the major impacts affecting our local areas are:

#### Heatwaves, drought and wildfires

- Drought: July 2022 was the driest on record in the South-East<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/climate-change-strategy>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/adaptation-and-resilience/adaptation-strategy>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/press-office/news/weather-and-climate/2022/driest-july-in-england-since-1935>

- Heat: Temperatures recently hit 40.2 at Heathrow on the hottest day on record<sup>9</sup>. Heatwaves are a risk to health, with many summer deaths among older people and the more vulnerable. Climate change will make hot spells more frequent and severe<sup>10</sup>.
- Wildfires: major incident declared by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service as wildfires took hold in July 2022.

### **Flooding, rainfall and water security**

- It is projected that the intensity of rain will increase, which means how heavy the rainfall is, when it occurs. In the summer, this could increase by up to 20% and in winter by 25%.
- Flooding: due to the rising level of the Thames due to sea level rises<sup>11</sup> as well as less frequent but heavier downpours (2014 and 2024 flooding events). By 2070 it is projected that we will meet twice the threshold of rainfall exceeding 30mm per hour, which signifies a flash flood alert.
- Water security: it has been estimated that the South-East will require an extra 110 million litres of water per day over the next 35 years<sup>12</sup> which could affect Spelthorne's reservoirs

### **Food security**

- Food security: Overall global warming of the planet is influencing weather patterns, causing heatwaves and droughts. This is having a detrimental knock-on effect on our food supply, with risk of crop failure, due to lack of water supplies, heat stress and increased prevalence of pests and diseases. Other extreme events such as flooding and severe storms can also damage food supplies.

### **Co-benefits of taking action against climate change**

The Council have a duty to take action to protect Spelthorne and the wider ecosystem for future generations. This is to ensure Spelthorne is a liveable thriving borough, and there are many co-benefits to acting. These include; decreasing fuel poverty and energy bills, improving air quality and green spaces and creating access to green skill jobs. Additionally, by adapting and planning for the risks of climate change, we can reduce Spelthorne's exposure to the costs of these risks, e.g.; flood damage to buildings, infrastructure and services.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/weather/learn-about/uk-past-events/interesting/2022/2022\\_03\\_july\\_heatwave.pdf](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/weather/learn-about/uk-past-events/interesting/2022/2022_03_july_heatwave.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/climate-change/climate-change-in-the-uk>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/nature-environment/environmental-studies/sea-level-rise-london-uk>

<sup>12</sup> <https://wrse.uk.engagementhq.com/our-regional-plan>

## **Our achievements so far**

Over the past 2 years we have been working towards accomplishing our actions and this section highlights some of our achievements to date. A full update of our key actions, with iterations, can be found in the Appendix. We will continue to monitor our progress and provide a progress report every 2 years.

## **Buildings and Operation**

### **Working towards a climate conscious culture**

SDGs: 13

#### **Carbon Literacy Training**

Embedding sustainability and creating an organisational shift is an important component to ensure a climate conscious culture. We began rolling out a carbon literacy training programme, through the Carbon Literacy Project, initially for all senior staff, including our Chief Executive Daniel Mouawad. We have since been providing training to all services, with over 25% of staff now trained. All attendees must make 2 significant carbon reduction pledges, relating to their area of work. This training helps to improve understanding, fosters action and new ideas and engages staff to deliver actions in the climate strategy. We are currently working towards achieving both Bronze and Silver Carbon Literacy Accreditation as an organisation.

### **Reducing energy**

SDGs: 7, 9, 11, 13

#### **Energy audits and EPC surveys**

As part of our commitment to reducing energy consumption in the Council's existing building stock, we are working towards improving energy efficiency, water efficiency and making low carbon and sustainable choices where possible. One of the first steps to ensuring these improvements are made is to identify the current conditions of the building stock, in relation to energy efficiency. We have completed 98% of EPC surveys for Council sites in the commercial portfolio, ahead of the target year of 2026. The next step will be to increase ratings for all properties to at least C rated. Energy audits on main Council operations and assets are also underway, with audits carried out at 9 sites.

### **Action Surrey**

Research by the Committee on Climate Change<sup>13</sup> showed that 40% of the UK's carbon emissions come from households, with almost half of these from heating. Working alongside Action Surrey<sup>14</sup>, we are able to offer grants and energy advice to residents. The Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 3 (LAD3)

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.actionsurrey.org/>

for on-gas homes and the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1 (HUG1) for off-gas homes, commenced in October 2022 and installation for the HUG1 and LAD3 phases ended in April 2023 and September 2023 retrospectively. These schemes provided a total of 58 measures worth the value of £258,971.78 for HUG1 and £174,192.08 for LAD3.

We are now working with Action Surrey to deliver HUG2 across the borough which will continue to help residents in delivering energy efficiency measures. Since this scheme has started the installs have created savings of 3.62 tonnes of CO2 from installed measures.

### **Key focus action points for the next 2 years**

- Explore and develop renewable energy opportunities across the borough
- Achieve Silver Carbon Literacy Accreditation

## **Transport**

UN SDGs: 3, 9, 11, 13

The transport sector contributes towards a large proportion of global GHG emissions, and this is also reflected in our internal emissions, with the fleet making up the majority of the Council's emissions. Although Surrey County Council are the highways authority within Spelthorne, we still have a responsibility to reduce the emissions that come from our own fleet, and try to influence transport within the borough.

### **Spelthorne's Fleet**

#### **Current Electric Vehicles**

##### **Electric fleet vehicles:**

- Small Van Used for litter picking, flytips, site visits & emergencies
- Small Van Used for maintaining public toilets at parks
- 2 Medium Cars Used for Pool Car
- 2 Mopeds
- Minibus Used for Spelthorne Accessible Transport

##### **Chargers:**

- 1 dual socket chargepoint at the depot
- 1 dual socket chargepoint at the nursery
- 4 dual socket chargepoint at Knowle Green Offices

### **EV strategy**

The uptake and transition to EV vehicles is an important component of reaching Net Zero in the transport sector. Our EV strategy<sup>15</sup> was adopted in 2023, after being developed in response to the climate change strategy, outlining key actions to improve and develop EV infrastructure throughout the borough. There are government targets at both national and local level that encourage the uptake of EVs as a means of climate change mitigation and to improve air quality in urban environments. This strategy builds upon these ambitions in analysing and addressing specific needs depending on location and demands.

### **Key focus action points for the next 2 years**

- Transition the council fleet to meet the net zero emissions target – preparations need to be put in place before the target year of 2029
- Work on Phase 2 and 3 of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

## **Finance**

UN SDGs: 10, 13

### **Ensuring sustainable procurement**

The climate change and sustainability officers now sit on Procurement Board to advise any future procurement projects of how to make more sustainable choices also reviewed our procurement procedure to ensure environment and sustainability implications are considered during each stage of procurement.

### **ESG Policy**

A policy has now been put in place to divert investment from fossil fuels and climate destructive industries towards sustainable investments. We are working towards a 2027 implementation, which is in line with the target year in the action plan.

### **Key focus action points for the next 2 years**

- Update action to create a sustainable procurement policy and provide training for officers
- Work and partner with other local authorities, regional bodies and public sector institutions to attract investment and grant funding

## **Sustainable Development**

UN SDGs: 3, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/21504/Electric-Vehicle-Infrastructure-Strategy-2023-2030>



### **Low carbon leisure facilities**

We are in the process of completing the first 'wet and dry' Passivhaus accredited leisure facility in the UK, which is on track to be finished in 2024. This state-of-the-art facility uses 60% less energy than a standard leisure centre, designed to meet stringent Passivhaus criteria. Spelthorne were also successful in our bid to Sports England Funding for energy efficiency measures at Sunbury Leisure Centre, being awarded £994,883.

### **Integrating sustainable development into the planning process**

The built environment is a major contributor towards carbon emissions, therefore has a major role to play in ensuring environmental standards are achieved and working towards meeting net zero targets. The Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document<sup>16</sup> (SPD) was adopted in April 2024 after a consultation period of the document. This planning document is now in use and was prepared to build upon and provide detailed guidance to applicants on how to implement current and future climate related planning policy.

Planning applications will need to demonstrate how they have considered the guidance in this SPD as part of their design.

### **Key focus action points for the next 2 years**

- Develop a Green Infrastructure strategy to support the Local Plan
- To ensure the planning development management team are suitably trained to implement the climate change SPD

## **Economy**

UN SDGs: 8, 9, 10, 13

### **Supporting businesses in the net zero transition**

The **LoCASE** grant funding programme has been a successful scheme for local SMEs, enabling environmental training for businesses to implement energy efficiency measures. This programme closed in December 2023 and the final data for Spelthorne was:

- 28 SMEs approved
- 23 claimed grant worth £190,580.67
- 188.03 annual tCO<sub>2</sub>e saved

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/SPD>

An additional programme **SustainSpelthorne**<sup>17</sup>, funded by UK Government, is now underway, helping to support businesses reduce business costs and carbon. The programme, supported by Place Support Partnership, can offer advice on futureproofing businesses, sustainable waste services and provide business energy audits.

### **Key focus action points for the next 2 years**

- A new grant scheme will take over LoCASE, which will help continue our action of providing support to local businesses on their journey to becoming more sustainable. The **Business Decarbonisation Loan**<sup>18</sup> will be launching for small and medium enterprises and charities, in the first week of September 2024. The first stage involves having a decarbonisation assessment, to help identify projects which will prepare businesses to apply for a loan.

## **Waste**

SDGs: 11, 12, 13

Waste is something that as an individual we have a large part to play in reducing. One of the biggest waste products we have is food. One third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted<sup>19</sup>, and food production contributes to climate change and biodiversity loss.

### **Paper Reduction**

We have introduced the Hybrid Mail service to reduce our paper based postal delivery needs. Hybrid mail assists in reducing the amount of transportation needed, with consolidated mailings meaning fewer miles driven for delivery. It also substantially reduces paper wastage, with suppliers able to manage acquisition and storage, therefore the council are reducing printing and ordering of consumables, paper and envelopes.

### **Food waste**

One of our actions in the strategy looked at improving access to food waste services. Since publication of the strategy in 2022, we have seen an increase in tonnage of our food collection and have been improving access to the service by introducing properties where it was not previously provided, namely flats. All of our food waste goes to the anaerobic digester at Charlton Lane, where it creates electricity and inert compost, providing an additional benefit.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://sustainspelthorne.com/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/businesses/grant-programmes/business-decarbonisation-and-green-economy-development-loan>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.wwf.org.uk/reduce-waste>

The Government's simpler recycling plans will see the introduction of food waste rolled out to all domestic properties by 2026 which will also support our goals of tackling both waste and climate change.

### **Key focus action points for the next 2 years**

- To promote and support the principles of circular economy through projects such as repurposing old bikes. This project is in early discussions as part of the newly formed Coordinated Approach to Cycling group, made up from internal officers, Surrey County Council officers, community groups and councillors.

## **Communities**

SDGS: 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13

### **Climate Action at a local level**

Although there is a focus on the Council's internal emissions, we also recognise the importance of community action. We have continued to work alongside community groups to deliver on the ground projects, as well as continuing to offer schemes that can help engage and promote climate action amongst our residents.

### **Food for our Future**

Food is a major determinant of our health outcomes and is a significant contributor of GHG to our atmosphere. Around 14.5% of all GHGs globally comes from meat and dairy production<sup>20</sup>. As part of the Net Zero Innovation Programme, Talking Tree, the Open University and Spelthorne Borough Council worked together on a community-led project with the purpose of facilitating discussion and engaging residents in climate projects that they would like to see activated in Spelthorne. In January 2023 with 6 workshops, and an average of 32 people in each session, the group identified community food growing and rewilding a key project to deliver.

Spelthorne Borough Council were successful in receiving grant funding from DLUC (Shared Prosperity Fund), enabling the project to progress. With the name Incredible Edible Spelthorne registered on the Incredible Edible Network<sup>21</sup>, multiple local growing projects have been established, with more in the process of being set up.

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<sup>20</sup> [www.foa.org/news/story/en/item/197623/icode/](http://www.foa.org/news/story/en/item/197623/icode/)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.incredibleedible.org.uk/find-a-group/incredible-edible-spelthorne/>

The following are the initial locations for incredible edible Spelthorne:

- Staines Railway Station, Gresham Road (Staines)
- Saxon Primary School (Shepperton)
- Our Lady of the Rosary Primary School (Staines)

The aim of these spaces is to increase access to healthy, seasonal, local produce, and to educate and enhance skills. Additional measures have been integrated into sites where possible, such as planting trees, hedgerows and wildflowers to increase biodiversity. This work would not be possible without the support and on the ground work from Talking Tree volunteers, highlighting the importance of relationships with local groups.

### **Turning sunlight into energy**

As part of our collaboration with Surrey County Council, we are continuing with our campaign Solar Together with iChoosr. Solar Together is a group buying scheme, where residents can come together with others in the community to invest in solar panels with optional battery storage and electric vehicle (EV) charge points. Solar panel systems allow clean renewable energy generation at home, reducing carbon emissions and reducing reliance on the National Grid.

Phases 1 and 2 are now complete, and we are currently working on Phase 3<sup>22</sup>.

#### **Breakdown of PV installations by district since 2021:**

<b># Total installations</b>	<b>78</b>
<b># Panels installed</b>	<b>865</b>
<b>Installed CO2 reduction Kg (year 1)</b>	<b>62,205</b>
<b>Estimated CO2 Reduction Kg (25 years)</b>	<b>1,555,123</b>
<b>Total investment</b>	<b>£647,592</b>

#### **Breakdown of retrofit storage (adding storage to an existing PV installation) since 2021:**

<b>Total Paid</b>	<b>6</b>
<b># Total installations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total investment</b>	<b>£18,541</b>

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<sup>22</sup> <https://solartogether.co.uk/surrey/landing>

### **Empowering the future generation**

Each year Spelthorne runs the 'Action Speaks Louder' conference for primary school children, led by environmentalist Phil Williams. This full day workshop covers a range of topics including the climate emergency, waste, deforestation, pollution, fast fashion, food miles and more! The children are encouraged to think about the causes and impact of environmental challenges being faces around the world, and work with their peers to problem solve and present their ideas to the other schools.

"I knew the planet was in trouble, but I now know what I can do to help" Hawkedale Primary School Student 2023

"If we don't respect the world now, how do we think the world will sustain us in the future!" Primary School Student 2024

### **Key focus action points for the next 2 years:**

- Continue to promote and provide support for residents to access energy efficiency and fuel poverty grant schemes
- Work with social housing providers to accelerate low carbon measures for social housing

## **Biodiversity**

SDGS: 9, 11, 13, 15

### **The power of nature**

Climate change has already altered ecosystems all around the world, which has led to a decrease in species, habitat and overall biodiversity loss. Nature can be a powerful tool for both mitigation and adaptation against climate change<sup>23</sup>. In terms of mitigation, nature-based solutions such as restoring and protecting ecosystems, can help to absorb and store carbon from the atmosphere. By enhancing ecosystems and planting species such as trees, this can help support societies adapt to increasing climate hazards such as flooding and sea level rise, which act as a natural defence and reduce surface run off.

### **Managing our natural environment**

We are continuing to progress with our sustainable management practices within our green and open spaces. This includes not using any herbicides on council meadows, leaving logs on site where appropriate to encourage biodiversity and have compost piles and bug hotels across the borough.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.iucn.org/our-work/topic/nature-based-solutions-climate>

## **Biodiversity Net Gain**

Earlier this year we saw the new planning requirement come in for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). BNG is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before<sup>24</sup>, by requiring development to have a positive 'net gain' impact by at least 10%. Spelthorne is currently working towards preparing offsite habitat banks to provide units that can be secured within the borough. We have carried out biodiversity baseline surveys at 3 sites and are progressing with the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans for those sites.

## **Wildflowers**

Allowing wildflower meadows to prosper offers several advantages including increased diversity which attracts insects and invertebrates. Wildflowers are not only key in helping nature to thrive but can help fight against climate change by capturing and storing carbon. We have moved to a more sustainable seed mix which is 100% native and UK sourced.

- 2 new meadows at Long Lane rec and Stanwell Moor Rec
- Cedars and Hawke Park (Sunbury) were rotavated and re-seeded and are now fully in bloom

## **Key focus action points for the next 2 years**

- **Our own Tiny Forests:** An exciting project is underway, having applied for grant funding from the Local Authority Treescape Fund to implement 3 Tiny Forests<sup>25</sup> within the borough. If successful in our bid, we will be progressing with planting these dense, fast-growing, miniature woodlands which will help connect people with nature, provide rich habitat to support urban wildlife and mitigate impacts from climate change.

## **Adaptation**

SDGs: 9, 10, 11, 13

### **Flood resilience for now and the future**

The River Thames Scheme (RTS), designed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, is a circa £0.75bn flood alleviation scheme protecting 11,000 homes, 1,600 businesses and roads, rail, power, and water from the worst effects of flooding with anticipated opportunities for Carbon sequestration and enhanced biodiversity. The formal consultation commenced in January 2024 with SBC officers involved across numerous departments.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://cieem.net/i-am/current-projects/biodiversity-net-gain/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://tinyforest.earthwatch.org.uk/>

### **Collaborating with our neighbours**

One of our actions to be completed by 2023 was to work with Surrey County Council and feed into their adaptation and resilience strategy<sup>26</sup>, which has now been adopted. We will continue working alongside our neighbours in any opportunity that arises to help with adaptation measures cross borough. As part of our Tiny Forests bid, we have collaborated with Runneymede Borough Council. If successful in this bid, it will also work as an adaptation measure, providing shading and natural flood relief.

### **Key focus action points for the next 2 years**

- Communicate climate risks including flood, heat, fire, and drought to residents and explain the actions they can take
- We will continue collaborating with local universities and educational institutions to understand and prepare for future climate scenarios

## **Working towards achieving future successes**

### **Prioritising Actions**

We will continue working towards achieving the key tasks in our action plan, which supports the Council in embracing sustainability and reaching our net zero target. With 6 years until 2030 we will need to primarily prioritise the actions that will help us achieve net zero. This progress report has identified that priorities will need to be on reducing our emissions from the fleet and our buildings, namely actions 4 and 19. If these actions are addressed potential carbon savings could be significant for reaching our net zero target.

The Climate Change Strategy is co-ordinated and monitored by the Climate Change Officers. The action plan and projects to achieve the Council's Strategic Objectives are owned and delivered by all service areas.

### **Gaps and challenges**

To meet the challenges set out in this strategy we need considerable and consistent central government financial and policy leadership to tackle the environmental and climate crisis. Local councils are in a vulnerable position, given greater community needs after the pandemic, cost of living crisis and ongoing financial uncertainty. We will continue to maximise the use of any opportunities to bid for funding, working with key partners such as Surrey County Council and educational institutions to deliver multi-year projects.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/adaptation-and-resilience/adaptation-strategy>

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provide a clear endorsement of changing the social and cultural behaviours to accelerate climate action and impact. This work relies upon local governments working hand in hand with individuals, communities and businesses to shift lifestyles and decision making.

Following this review (September 2024) the climate change strategy will be reviewed on a 2 yearly basis to ensure that the council is on track to meet its net zero emission target and as an accurate record of progress towards this target. The next review will be published in the latter half of 2026.