

Merton Council’s Draft Climate Engagement Strategy

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Chapter 1 – Setting the scene

Introduction

1.1. This strategy is for everyone in Merton and provides a framework for engagement mechanisms that will foster a partnership driven; inclusive; pragmatic and solutions-oriented approach to achieving Merton’s 2050 net zero target for the borough.

Why do we need one?

1.2. Addressing climate change is a complex problem. Merton’s emissions reporting indicates that the majority of emissions in the borough, are outside of the Council’s influence, or direct control¹ (See Fig.1). Meanwhile, the inclusion of the borough’s consumption-based emissions – The borough’s Scope 3 emissions² - into our reporting, would more than double the borough’s total carbon footprint from 663 ktCO₂e to an estimated at 1,079 ktCO₂e³.

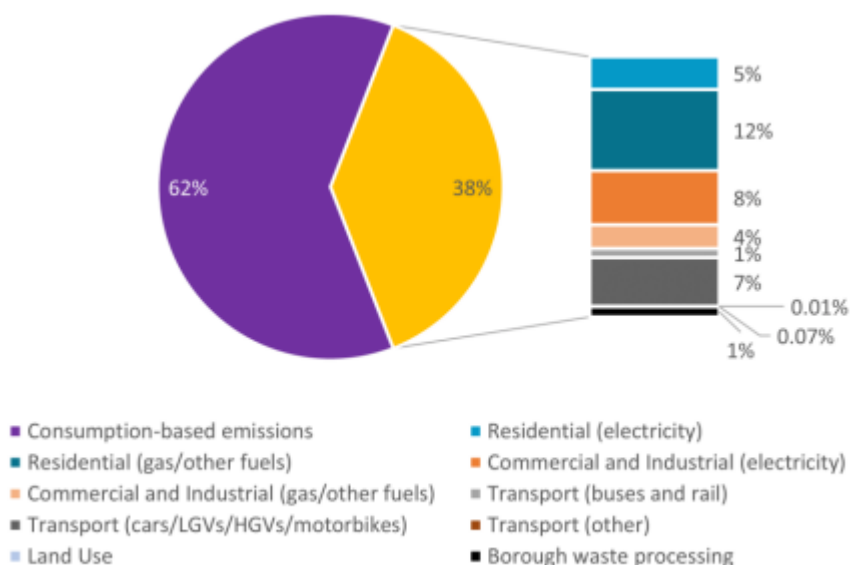


Figure 1. Borough emissions profile for 2019

1.3. Reducing emissions across the borough will require significant behaviour changes from Merton’s residents, businesses, communities and institutions, to drive sustainable consumption and enable

¹ Correct using most recent 2019 green-house gas emissions data and inventory report by Aether (2021) [Merton 2021 GHG inventory report FINAL.pdf](#)

² Scope 3 emissions are those that are produced along a full supply chain for any given product or service purchased or delivered in the borough, whether it’s food, clothing, communications, education, restaurants and hotels etc.

³ Correct using most recent 2019 green-house gas emissions data and inventory report by Aether (2021) [Merton 2021 GHG inventory report FINAL.pdf](#)

a transition to a low carbon economy for both goods and services in Merton. This is alongside the significant upgrades to buildings and transport infrastructure, which must occur to reduce Merton's direct emissions (Scope 1 & 2).

- 1.4. In a limited funding landscape, where the opportunity to reduce carbon emissions aligns closely with other priorities such as, the need to:
- Upgrade homes to protect residents from rising energy bills, ill health and a deepening cost of living crisis;
 - futureproof our local area (built and natural environment) against record temperatures and extreme weather events;
 - improve air quality and overall health through active and sustainable modes of transport and;
 - make the most of opportunities to develop a green economy and support the movement of residents into skilled, low carbon, or 'Green Jobs'^{4 5} that achieve this, engagement is essential.
- 1.5. A considered approach to climate engagement that sustains local partnership will stand a better chance of having multiple positive outcomes that go far beyond emissions reductions. These are known as co-benefits⁵.

Outcomes

- 1.6. The broad outcomes that we want to achieve through this engagement strategy are:

External

- local behaviour change by empowering everyone in Merton to connect with opportunities to live and work more sustainably.
- empowered communities and stakeholders who co-design and manage local projects, to deliver co-benefits, reduce carbon emissions and make progress to net zero.
- local support and sustained interest in solutions (infrastructural, digital, social, financial), that progress action towards net zero.

Internal

- to maximise the value of Council time, resources and funding to address shared priorities (e.g., those that improve health, create financial savings, improve resilience, lead to green job opportunities) and reduce carbon emissions.

⁴ [The challenges of defining a "green job" - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodologies/workingwithhrm/greenjobs)

⁵ Green Jobs Taskforce Report 2021

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1003570/gjtf-report.pdf

Guiding Principles

1.7. Our vision is that Merton is a net zero borough by 2050. Endorsed by our residents, this shared vision recognises the dangers of the climate emergency and the opportunities that a low carbon future can bring. With a long road ahead, it is important to set the guiding principles, which frame our approach to climate engagement.

A. Positively and proactively communicating

1.8. Public engagement on climate change can (in part), be viewed as a challenge of communication. Residents must be aware of the action that Merton is taking to address climate change, whether that's in transport, planning, or public health and how it relates to their lives. Communicating this to highlight the co-benefits is important in helping to generate support for and sustain interest in local solutions and measures which have the added benefit of reducing carbon emissions.

1.9. Equally communications are useful for explaining the expansion of cycle hangars and on-street electric vehicle charging points; why the Council can't upgrade the energy efficiency of everyone's home in Merton; and why long-term National Government funding is so important for the larger transitions required to adapt buildings, our energy system, and transport infrastructure.

1.10. Communications will also play an important role in helping to promote local groups who are making a difference; activate social learning by telling experiences of residents who have succeeded in making their home, travel or lifestyle more sustainable; and signpost residents to local, or national grant funding opportunities, resources and networks which might support them in reducing their emissions (e.g., funding to upgrade the energy efficiency of your home).

B. Enabling greater participation

1.11. Overall climate risk is higher in east Merton⁶. East Merton is also where the largest proportion of residents from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds live. Meanwhile, nine neighbourhoods in the east of the borough fall within the top 20% most income-deprived in England.⁷ This means that financially vulnerable residents, and those from BAME backgrounds are likely to be disproportionately affected by climate change (both extreme heat and flood risk). Simultaneously, previous council consultations on climate change indicate that BAME residents have been underrepresented in discussions around climate change.

1.12. Addressing this imbalance to ensure a climate just transition is a priority and will guide this strategy, particularly the choice locations for certain climate engagement activities.

⁶ [Climate Risk Map | London City Hall](#)

⁷ [Exploring local income deprivation \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

Acknowledging this as a complex problem is also necessary in guiding the strategy, given the correlation between affluent communities and high emissions in west Merton, where the need for behavioural change interventions is highest.

- 1.13. Enabling greater participation also means effectively engaging with residents who are more likely to be digitally excluded, including; people with disabilities, older residents and people whose first language isn't English among other sub sections of the population.⁴
- 1.14. Ensuring that those likely to be most affected by the transition to net zero are engaged in the design and delivery of policies is essential.

C. Encouraging Action

- 1.15. There is a lot that Merton Council is already championing, funding, facilitating and leading to encourage community-led climate action in the borough. The establishment of and partnership with Merton's Climate Action Group⁸ is a testament to that. Since their inception in 2021, this resident volunteer group has co-designed multiple projects with us and supported local climate engagement events. This includes Merton Garden Streets, The Wheel and Energy Matters.
- 1.16. Through this engagement strategy, we hope to expand on the good work started with Merton's Climate Action Group, reaching new audiences that we haven't worked with before. Identifying local champions and supporting trusted messengers to increase the climate literacy of residents in their communities, stands a better chance of creating lasting culture change, than the Council implementing net zero policy and projects alone. At every opportunity we will continue to support local, community-led climate action to ensure that projects and programmes are delivered for residents, with and by residents.

D. Embracing complexity and uncertainty through continuous dialogue

- 1.17. Climate change is a complex challenge, where science and policy are constantly evolving. It means engaging with uncertainty, especially where viable options for climate action vary so widely. A local 'Human Systems Learning' approach⁹ to climate action, primed for continuous dialogue and learning, will enable us to trial experimental engagement options, enabling us to focus on the evolving needs of people in Merton.

Scope and Objectives

- 1.18. To reduce carbon emissions to net zero borough by 2050, engagement activities will be prioritised based on three tests:
 - Firstly, will they complement actions in Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan/ Climate Delivery Plan?
 - Secondly, will the engagement activities support or enable high impact emissions reductions?

⁸ [Climate change : Climate Action Group | Merton Council](#)

⁹ [7653 CPI - CGF Literature review ALL v4.indd \(centreforpublicimpact.org\)](#)

- Alternatively, will the engagement activities contribute to the development of a green economy, with an emphasis on Merton’s priority sectors¹⁰?

1.19. The ‘Local Authorities and 6th Carbon Budget’ report highlights the five engagement methods typically used by local authorities¹¹. The means of engagement and communication will vary based on the most impactful and efficient way of communicating with local stakeholders, for a particular project, or outreach activity.

1.20. However, much of this strategy will focus on involving, codesigning and empowering local stakeholders, as this will contribute most to activity that develops advocates for change, who can take their experience, amplify success and create change among their peers.

Table 1. Local Government Engagement Methods. Local Authorities and the 6th Carbon Budget. 2022

Table 2	Informing	Consulting	Involving	Co-design	Empowering
One way, information provision	Statutory consultations on already developed plans and proposals	Directly working with people to understand their views and needs e.g. Climate Commissions	Working together with people at a local level or interest groups to design solutions and projects	Handing over the power and co-creating schemes to tackle a problem or deliver a solution	

1.21. Following the first of the three tests, we have mapped the actions in the Council’s Climate Delivery Plan for Year 2, to see where engagement can add most value to the delivery of those actions. Building on the analysis of [Merton's Greenhouse Gas Inventory report for 2021](#) and having consulted with the Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Greenspaces and Climate, and Merton’s Climate Action Group the primary objectives of this engagement strategy will be to deliver engagement activities that:

- Enable residential and commercial emissions reductions. This means working to reduce energy demand and transition to low carbon technologies.
- Enable consumption-based emissions reductions. This means addressing resource efficiency and waste prevention.
- Enable and encourage the development of a green economy. This spans from education, to connecting residents with opportunities for skilled careers in the low carbon sector.
- Build the capacity of and empower local stakeholders to address climate change themselves.

¹⁰ See definition of a ‘green economy’ for London, in the Green Jobs and Skills in South London Report (2022), p.12 and p.16 <http://southlondonpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Green-Jobs-and-Skills-in-South-London-Final-Report-1.pdf>

¹¹ [Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

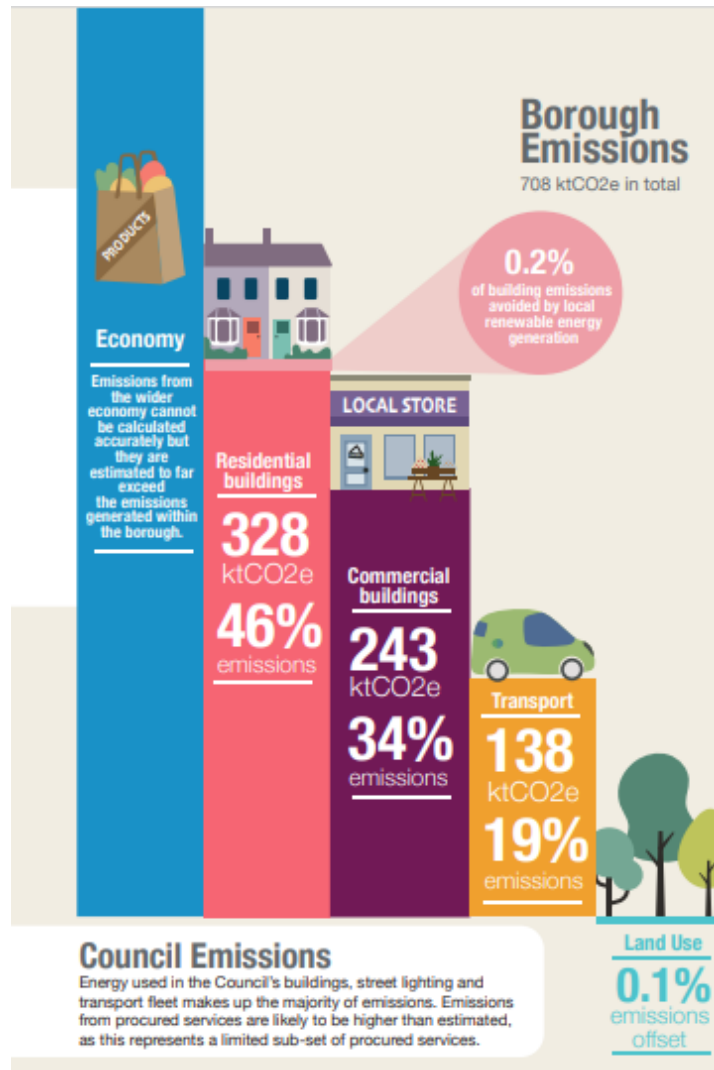


Figure 2. Infographic illustrating the borough's main emissions sources from Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan, 2020

- 1.22. This does not mean our support of active and sustainable transport initiatives, or initiatives to green the borough and improve biodiversity will stop, especially where local stakeholders are keen to drive change e.g., Merton Garden Streets. The mental and physical health benefits of active travel and community planting are well documented.
- 1.23. There is extensive engagement in these areas and, as set out in Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan, emissions are highest from buildings and the economy. Moving forwards, our approach to engagement on these topics will tie into existing council work around air quality; green spaces maintenance and enhancement; road safety; changes to transport infrastructure to enable use of electric vehicles; and campaigns such as Love Local.

Chapter 2 - Approach

Key stakeholders

1.24. Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan identifies long term actions required of residents, businesses, landlords and organisations to work towards Merton borough's net zero target.

Enabling this requires the engagement and participation of several key stakeholders:

- Businesses and the Private Sector
- Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations
- Other public sector organisations
- Schools, Colleges and Universities
- Residents
- Neighbouring Local Authorities, the Greater London Authority and Government.

1.25. Naturally these stakeholder groups can be broken down further, depending on specific aims of a project, or engagement activity.

The Upstream, Mid-Stream, Down-Stream Framework

1.26. Campaigns and communications - otherwise known as downstream interventions - can be effective for changing individual attitudes and behaviours. However, the Council acknowledges that relying on individual choice can only be so effective, while current norms e.g., infrastructure, regulation, policy, price, and inconvenience make low-carbon choices hard.

1.27. Mid-stream initiatives are those that will create an enabling environment for sustainable choices to be made, while up-stream initiatives are those that align businesses, voluntary and community sector organisations and institutions with net zero.

1.28. The next part of this strategy will outline the main mechanisms for engagement which acknowledge the need for a combination of up-stream, mid-stream and down-stream interventions¹².

1.29. For our key stakeholders, these interventions are those that the Council can most positively influence to support a borough-wide transition to net zero, given the spheres of influence that we have as a local authority and even though most borough emissions are outside the direct control of the Council.

¹² [Net Zero: principles for successful behaviour change initiatives](#). 2021. Authored by Kristina Londakova, Toby Park, Jake Reynolds, Saul Wodak.

1. Up-stream - Involving and aligning businesses, institutions and the voluntary and community sector with net zero.

A. Leading by example and collaborating on major transitions

- 1.30. The council has set an organisational target to achieve net zero by 2030. To achieve a net zero borough by 2050, every business, organisation and institution should also be working to reduce their organisational emissions. This means collaborating to achieve major transitions across Merton's building stock, our modes of transport and our economy.
- 1.31. Being in the dark about the progress of your peers towards net zero can risk duplicating, or misdirecting efforts, which is why partnership working is essential. Due to the council's existing role in service delivery and our extensive local connections to businesses, the voluntary sector and higher education institutions, the council has an important role to play in facilitating discussion with key partner organisations in the borough to support the transition to net zero.
- 1.32. These discussions will give oversight to the whole climate agenda in Merton, serve to share knowledge and access industry expertise, showcase local best practices, build confidence among local partners and open opportunities for collaboration between partners to reduce emissions and realise co-benefits.

Key Mechanisms

- Revitalise the environmental arm of the Sustainable Communities Transport Partnership (SCTP) to support local businesses and organisations in their transition to net zero.
- Continue to work with the four other boroughs in the South London Partnership (Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth), to maximise opportunities for collaboration across the sub-region.
- Work to develop a 'Green Schools Programme' including a climate charter and network to support schools on their transition to net zero.

Progress and Next Steps

- The first session of the new Environment and Climate Subgroup of the SCTP was held on 21st July 2022. Thematic sessions of the new sub-group will bring local partners, including housing associations, charities, the Chamber of Commerce, subject matter experts, different council teams, business improvement districts and community groups together to look at opportunities for action. Quarterly thematic meetings will align with the four key themes of Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan: buildings and energy, greening Merton, green economy, and transport. Namely the group will seek to:
 - To support and promote the objectives of Merton's Climate Strategy & Action Plan
 - To support businesses and organisations in developing more environmentally sustainable ways of operating particularly in relation to buildings, energy and transport
 - To support the growth of a green economy in Merton
 - To support businesses and organisations in growing the borough's green canopy

- To promote a cleaner environment and reduce waste consigned to landfill
 - To review actions on energy, air quality and food as key themes in the environment agenda
- In August 2022, the South London Zero Waste Map was launched to provide residents with a convenient way to find their nearest refill businesses, repair services, second-hand shops, recycling centres and drop-off points, and mending workshops. We continue to work closely with the South London Partnership to address shared environmental challenges for our residents.



Figure 3. Zero Waste Map Logo

- 36 primary schools, three secondary schools and four special schools are maintained by the council, while 15 primary and secondary schools are run independently. As of April 2022, schools are being challenged by the Government’s [Sustainability and Climate Strategy for Education and Children’s Services](#) to become world leaders in sustainability and climate by 2030.

With significant financial constraints on schools and constraints on the capacity of educators, embedding learning on climate change, decarbonising buildings and supporting the development of green skills for green careers will be a significant challenge.

Following the success of Merton’s second School’s Climate Conference in November 2022 and with the endorsement of teachers who attended, the council will look to develop a Green Schools Charter and a Green Schools Network. This will support teachers in sharing best practice and resources and support schools to advance their responsibilities regarding climate education, supporting students into green careers and decarbonising the school estate.



Figure 4. Poster to promote Schools Climate Conference 2022

B. Incentivising low carbon businesses

- 1.33. Large fiscal incentives from National Government were and are still required to encourage businesses to begin the transition to a) low carbon operations and b) offering low carbon goods and services.
- 1.34. Examples of existing incentives include the tax relief and exemptions that business can receive through buying energy-efficient technology for their operations,¹³ workplace charging schemes for businesses to receive a discount on the cost of purchasing and installing electric vehicle chargepoints¹⁴, or levies that are applied to businesses to encourage them to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁵
- 1.35. In Merton there are 12,500 registered businesses, 89% of those employing less than 9 people¹⁶. This means micro businesses make up most of the borough's commercial sector. With limited capacity, most business owners might struggle to prioritise their environmental performance. However, there are huge opportunities to save money by doing so, especially in relation to reducing energy demand. In 2021, participants of the Mayor's Climate Challenge saved **on average £8300** over 9 months, by accessing free energy advice and support.

¹³ [Environmental taxes, reliefs and schemes for businesses: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

¹⁴ [Workplace Charging Scheme: guidance for applicants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

¹⁵ [Environmental taxes, reliefs and schemes for businesses: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

¹⁶ Merton Business Review [Merton report IM.pdf \(londoncouncils.gov.uk\)](https://londoncouncils.gov.uk)

- 1.36. Due to the emissions impact from Merton's commercial base and the rising operating costs of businesses, there is a need to explore barriers to improving resource and energy efficiency, to encourage businesses to participate in existing schemes, and to develop new support programmes in Merton.

Key Mechanisms

- Develop a business retrofit support scheme to help businesses in Merton decarbonise and save on their energy bills.
- Coordinating a programme of work across the circular economy, green businesses, green skills and jobs.
- Work with Merton's Chamber of Commerce, University Partners, Business Improvement Districts and BIG (Business, Innovation, Growth) South London to run events and pilot programmes of work to encourage businesses to take up low carbon technologies, retrofit their premises and address resource efficiency.
- Explore options for regular business communications to share best practice through case studies and grant funding opportunities and events.

Progress and Next Steps

- £2million was awarded by Cabinet in June 2022 for the progression of work towards achieving the council's net zero targets (2030 and 2050). The council are aware of the need for more business support given the end of covid support packages and increasing energy bills. Funding has been allocated to develop a business retrofit support scheme, from the £2million awarded by Cabinet.
- In Merton, 22% of jobs will be significantly affected by the transition to a low carbon economy, with half of those jobs requiring upskilling and the other half being in higher demand¹⁷. Meanwhile businesses need support to reduce their energy bills and become more resource efficient. Facilitating the development of a local green economy in Merton is a huge challenge, so we are allocating some of the £2million awarded by Cabinet to employ a member of staff to lead on this programme of work in Merton.
- Working with Wimbledon Business Improvement District and Merton Chamber of Commerce, in 2023 the council will support in delivering an in person retrofit and refurbishment event, to connect businesses with support to reduce emissions and save money. This will act as a test case, to determine if businesses value and benefit from this type of direct engagement and could expand to other Business Improvement Districts or town centres or business areas.
- We are also one of 12 Local Authorities across the country to secure funding from the [Net Zero Innovation Programme](#) (NZIP). From January to June 2023, we will be working with University College London (UCL) and The Wheel to establish a pilot project investigating how small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) on our highstreets can aggregate waste and become more

¹⁷ Robins, N., Gouldson, A., Irwin, W. and Sudmant, A., 2019. Investing in a just transition in the UK How investors can integrate social impact and place-based financing into climate strategies. London School of Economics. Available from <<https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Investing-in-a-just-transition-in-the-UK.pdf>

resource efficient. By engaging with SMEs, [The project](#) will also investigate opportunities for reducing the energy usage of local SMEs, which will help with our commitment to support residents through the cost-of-living crisis.

- The council issue a monthly Climate Action Newsletter (9314 subscribers¹⁸), where we inform residents of the latest news, grant funding opportunities, events and support to encourage climate action. To encourage action among our business community we will dedicate one slot per issue to SME climate action. We have also recently launched our [business support for cost of living and climate action](#) webpage. Where appropriate we will also contribute to the council's regular Business Newsletter and establish a profile on the Merton Local app to highlight events targeted at businesses and residents.

C. Aligning businesses, the market and organisations with net zero

- 1.37. Local authorities can help align markets and institutions with net zero through our purchasing power and by attaching requirements to the distribution of council grant funding. The council deliver tens of millions in services for our residents every year. Over the last six years the council have also distributed approximately £70million in grant funding¹⁹ to some of the 700 voluntary and community sector organisations (VCSOs) in Merton, as well as faith groups and charities. Some of this, such as the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy, expressly asks bidders to follow guiding principles such as 'Building a sustainable future'.
- 1.38. Encouraging and working with our suppliers is essential to reducing our supply chain emissions (Scope 3) and becoming a net zero council by 2030. Meanwhile, working with the VCSOs, faith groups and charities will support Merton's ambition of being a net zero borough by 2050.

Key Mechanisms

- To develop and implement an approach to quantifying and reducing the council's Scope 3 carbon emissions, by working with council suppliers and contractors.
- To investigate options to attach sustainability, or carbon reduction criteria to grant funds awarded by the Council.
- To systematically reach out to Faith Groups, Charities and Voluntary Community Sector Organisations to empower them to reduce emissions as an organisation and enable climate action among their respective audiences.

Progress and Next Steps

- A review of the council's approach to procurement was undertaken during the development of the council's Social Value Toolkit in 2021. Positive environmental outcomes and their indicators, (including the 'reduced carbon footprint of business', 'reduced packaging' and 'increased biodiversity') were included in the toolkit. Contractors are required to consider how they will achieve positive environmental outcomes when they bid for work with the council.

¹⁸ Figure correct as of 4th December 2022

¹⁹ [Funding for community projects | Merton Council](#)

Besides adapting council procurement documentation to strengthen carbon requirements, drastically reducing carbon emissions will require a broader and more detailed approach including:

- a) Commitments from suppliers to reduce their carbon impact.
- b) Procurement-specific carbon literacy training for contract managers and commissioners across the council.
- c) Engagement with suppliers to baseline and report direct carbon emissions associated with the services they provide in Merton.
- d) Engagement with suppliers to substitute certain products, or services to reduce carbon.

Working through every council contract is a large, long-term piece of work, with some progress already made on the schools catering contract, the highways maintenance contract and the green spaces maintenance contract. The council are actively working with the London Responsible Procurement Network, on their Carbon Working Group, to develop a pan-London approach to working with suppliers to reduce the carbon emissions of council contracts. In 2023 the council is looking to employ a new member of staff to progress this programme of work and to support contract managers and commissioners across the council.

- Working with Merton's Climate Action Group, we will explore opportunities to develop a Net Zero Enablers Programme, starting with VCSOs, Faith Groups and Charities. The objective of this programme is to engage with local stakeholders to build their capacity for climate action. This might include educating them on how and why they should reduce their organisational emissions, while enabling them to become advocates for change, who can encourage climate action among the residents who trust and use their services.

This programme may also support VCSOs, faith groups and charities in adapting to any future carbon requirements that are attached to council grants.

2. Mid-stream – Creating an enabling environment to progress net zero through involvement, codesign and empowerment

A. Make the low carbon choice easy

- 1.39. Decades of research suggests that changing, or adapting the environment (e.g., financial, social, digital, and infrastructural conditions) is effective (over attitudinal or knowledge-based factors) in shaping behaviour. For this reason, action on climate change should seek to follow the EAST

framework: Is what we are asking residents to do easy; attractive; social and timely?²⁰ . In other words, which behaviours are cheap, convenient, socially normative and accessible?

1.40. At a local authority level, there are ways we can enable climate action by addressing parts of the EAST Framework.

Key Mechanisms

- To make climate action easier and more accessible for residents by optimising the use of public (and potentially private) spaces.
- To make climate action more convenient for residents by adapting our services to support behavioural change towards net zero.

Progress and Next Steps

- We have 7 fantastic libraries, 6 community centres and 54 parks/recreational grounds spread across the borough. Some of these spaces are already being used to make climate action more accessible, by hosting events and enabling residents to connect with opportunities to live and work more sustainably.

The newly refurbished Canons House and Grounds in Mitcham²¹ is the perfect example. Used to host the Canons Summer Fair in June 2022, a cycle cinema in September 2022 and a variety of community upcycling and repair workshops throughout Autumn 2022, the council are bringing climate action to residents in East Merton (in alignment with our guiding principles). This enabled residents to discover grant funding opportunities such as the Mayor's Warmer Homes Programme, receive free bike maintenance to encourage active travel, participate in repair workshops, access energy efficiency support, engage with opportunities to green the borough through community planting and discover amazing local organisations helping residents tackle the cost of living and climate emergencies. Canons House will also have low-cost spaces for community organisations to rent from £25 per hour, as well as opportunities to trial the community spaces for free.

The council will continue to explore options to use our own estate to run activities which enable residents to discover and participate in climate action. The council will also investigate options to set up a network of 'Climate Hubs' with the private sector, VCSOs and potentially schools,

²⁰ [EAST – Four simply ways to apply behavioural insights](#). 2014. Authored by Owain Service, Michael Hallsworth, David Halpern, Felicity Algate, Rory Gallagher, Sam Nguyen, Simon Ruda, Michael Sanders with Marcos Pelenu, Alex Gyani, Hugo Harper, Joanne Reinhard & Elspeth Kirkman.

²¹ Canons House & Grounds is a £4.4 million project made possible thanks to The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund. The project is being undertaken by Merton Council with support from many community groups. Ongoing programmes of work at Canons are already delivering on the priorities outlined in this strategy, as well as lottery objectives.

that act as locations to hold climate action events e.g., low carbon technology demonstrations, repair cafes and much more.

Figure 5. Repairers learning how to fix textiles, as part of the Wheel's Circular Economy Hub at Canons Summer Fair June, 2022



Figure 6. Dundonald Primary School Children's Climate Artwork, at Canons Summer Fair, June 2022



Figure 7. Canons Summer Fair Flyer



Figure 8. Merton's Climate Action Group and Climate Change Officers engaging with residents during Canons Summer Fair, June 2022

- At Merton, we operate or commission hundreds of different services for residents from health and wellbeing support to trading standards. Parks to planning. This means we can think about how we leverage our statutory duties to enable climate action. Beginning in February 2023, we are embarking upon a carbon literacy training programme for staff and councilors.

This will enable staff to embed sustainability across our services and adapt the ways that residents engage with our services, making processes easier and simpler to navigate that support net zero, or enable staff to signpost residents to more relevant support.

On the customer/citizen interface, this has already started, by embedding [cost of living and climate action support](#) on our business webpages, by embedding sustainability advice in requests for [street parties and play streets](#) and by embedding home energy efficiency support in council cost of living events.

Starting with a web review the council will explore which council services are accessed most by residents, to guide how we systematically adapt our services to enable climate action (in keeping with our three climate action engagement tests, see the Scope and Objectives section 1.18).

B. Leverage social norms

- 1.41. Actions drive beliefs. This means that people learn and adapt their behaviour, based on what their peers are doing, otherwise known as social learning.
- 1.42. By building on the 'social' part of the EAST framework, we can better promote sustainable lifestyles and new ways of operating, by highlighting the 'green' experiences of residents and businesses in the borough.
- 1.43. Taking a 'Human Learning Systems' approach to climate action and engagement, it's also an opportunity to be transparent about what works, what doesn't and why. This means keeping open a continuous dialogue and process to enable learning and adaptation.
- 1.44. Doing this through existing local forums and groups will be crucial to success, as it is far easier and more convenient for residents to tap into forums that they already use and trust.

Key Mechanisms

- To make climate action socially normative, by developing case studies to highlight the opportunities and challenges from living or operating more sustainably.
- To identify and utilise existing forums to engage with residents from different audiences about the wide-ranging pathways to and benefits of living more sustainably.

Progress and next steps

- Working with the council, Merton's Climate Action Group is developing local case studies to highlight best practice, and the multiple co-benefits of climate action, to everyone in Merton. Moving forwards, the council will investigate opportunities to make this a focal point of climate outreach and engagement in Merton.
- Since March 2022, the council has participated in various existing deliberative forums to engage with residents on climate action (see Appendix 1). This serves three functions:
 - I. To showcase to residents what the council are doing to address climate change
 - II. To create a space for residents to learn about local climate action and empower them to organise their own community carbon reduction projects.
 - III. To connect residents with local opportunities to reduce emissions and live more sustainably.
- Merton's Climate Action Group has also participated in several local events and forums to begin conversations with local partners about how they can transition to net zero and inspire climate action. These forums and events include:

- An interfaith week event
- A BAME Voice Black History Month Event
- Cost of Living Library Events

Appendix 2 illustrates the proposed forward plan for 2023, which includes a breakdown of the audiences we propose to engage with over the next year to enable climate action.

3. Down Stream – encouraging action and building public support by informing

A. Building public support through a fair and positive narrative

- 1.45. Public engagement on climate change is considered (in part) to be a challenge of communication.²² Needing to frame messages to align with different audience values and identities, using trusted messengers, relevance to evolving situations (e.g., cost-of living, recovery from Covid-19, local and national events), and the means of communication, are all important considerations.
- 1.46. Although conveying new information is often not enough to change behaviour (see section 2B, Leveraging Social Norms), local campaigns can help build a narrative for climate action which is fair and highlights the many co-benefits of climate action. This may also help in building a public mandate for action, for local policy changes and projects which progress action towards net zero.
- 1.47. Examples of local climate action (see intervention 5 above) may inform local campaigns, which aim to change individual attitudes, choices and actions. Generally based around a clear and simple ask, campaigns will appeal to individuals to behave differently.

Key mechanisms

- Work with the council’s communications team to design climate engagement and communications guidance, which encompass 2050 net zero badging, messaging, trusted messengers, and key communications channels.
- Work with the communications team to develop two targeted, data and evidence-based campaigns that align with key climate ambitions and one broadcast social media awareness campaign.

Progress and next steps

- In spring 2022, Merton’s Climate Action Group co-designed its own branding, to provide a visual presence for their work and projects.

²² [7653 CPI - CGF Literature review ALL v4.indd \(centreforpublicimpact.org\)](#)

- Next steps will be to build on the design of Merton’s Climate Strategy and Action Plan, which was put together by a talented local resident. This branding will come to represent the council’s work towards net zero by 2050, across all thematic areas of our Climate Strategy and Action Plan.



Figure 9. Merton's Climate Action Group Logo



Figure 10. Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan badging artwork

- Since the council declared a Climate Emergency, we have contributed to several awareness-raising social media campaigns, usually attached to particular regional, national and international climate events. Over the last year, this has included Green Careers Week, London Climate Action Week and COP 27. You can see the full list in Appendix 1.



Figure 10. Green Careers Week Social Media Post

Reaching new and hardly reached audiences in Merton to enable greater participation will require campaigns and communications that go beyond social media broadcasts. Current council campaigns indicate that only 3-10% of website traffic is generated by social media, while e-newsletters and direct mail outs perform far better.

The difference in effectiveness of social media and e-newsletter engagements is evident from the communications around green careers week. The table below represents the difference in link clicks between five social media posts and one Merton e-newsletter release.

Table 2. Table highlighting social media link clicks, compared to e-newsletter link clicks for communications to promote Green Careers Week

	Twitter	Facebook	Merton E-News
Total link clicks	6	3	113

Moving forward, the council will focus its climate communications on channels that are likely to yield better engagement with our given target audience. This means a reduced focus on social media broadcasts.

Chapter 3 - Governance, Funding & Monitoring

Governance

- 1.48. This strategy will be refreshed every four years to account for any changes in resident priorities. This will also allow us to adapt our engagement activities to account for national policy changes and funding updates.
- 1.49. Responsibility is delegated to the Cabinet Member for Local Environment, Green Spaces and Climate, and the Director for Environment, Civic Pride and Climate to approve specific projects, engagement activities and communications, which are derived from this strategy.
- 1.50. Where proposed activities tie with adjoining strategies and portfolios, the relevant Director and Cabinet Member will also be consulted. This strategy will naturally follow the council's obligations regarding procurement and contract procedure rules.

Monitoring

- 1.51. Projects, engagement activities and communications derived from this strategy will be reported on annually through Merton's Climate Delivery Plan, under either:
 - 'Workstream 8: Communication, outreach and LBM corporate procedure',
 - or mapped to the most relevant alternative workstream e.g., a campaign on improving the energy efficiency of homes would fit under Workstream 2: Retrofit of the residential and non-residential building stock.
- 1.52. Success will be measured on a project-specific basis using indicators relevant to that project, though that detail is not included in this strategy's remit. Some high-level engagement and communications metrics are suggested below.
- 1.53. Engagement
 - Total number of attendees, or participants
 - Total number of new, return, or lost attendees, or participants
 - Number of positive testimonials and content of those testimonials e.g., self-reported behavioural changes.
 - Improvements in awareness, or understanding through baseline and follow up surveys
 - Improvements in participation from diverse, low-income households, or your desired target audience.
- 1.54. Communications
 - Reach
 - Unique clicks and total clicks
 - Unique opens and total opens
 - Views

- Referrals to website through tracked links

Funding

1.55. To deliver climate projects and engagement activities, opportunities to bid for external grant funding will always be considered first e.g., grants from Government, the Greater London Authority, businesses and charitable organisations.

1.56. Internally, a Climate Outreach budget of £100,000 has been ringfenced from the £2million Climate Change Fund, allocated by Cabinet in June 2022. This Climate Outreach budget is specifically to support in the delivery of:

- work derived from and in alignment with this climate engagement strategy and
- work that progresses action towards our net zero by 2050 borough target.

Glossary

- Green Jobs - employment in an activity that directly contributes to, or indirectly supports, the achievement of the UK's net zero emissions target and helps mitigate climate risks from the [Green Jobs Task Force Report 2021](#).
- Green Economy – an economy that supports the achievement of the UK's net zero emissions target and helps mitigate climate risks.
- Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) - The gases that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere, an excess of which are increasing global average temperatures i.e., global warming. In the context of this action plan, it usually refers to carbon dioxide but can also refer to other gases such as methane.
- Co-benefits – the positive effects that a policy or measure aimed at one objective might have on other objectives... co-benefits are also referred to as ancillary benefits - [The Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC](#).
- Decarbonise, or Decarbonisation - The process of removing all energy sources that produce carbon emissions from the energy grid.
- A Just Transition - A Just Transition means greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind - [from the International Labour Organisation](#)
- Circular economy - A circular economy. It is based on three principles, driven by design: eliminate waste and pollution, circulate products and materials (at their highest value), and regenerate nature. decouples economic activity from the consumption of finite resources – from the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#).
- Procurement - The process of acquiring goods and services, which a Council chooses not to run internally, through fair and competitive bidding processes in an open market.
- Scope 1 emissions - Direct emissions that occur from activities such as burning gas in boilers to heat homes and businesses or petrol/diesel vehicle emissions.
- Scope 2 emissions - Direct emissions that occur from activities such as burning gas in boilers to heat homes and businesses or petrol/diesel vehicle emissions.
- Scope 3 emissions - Indirect emissions that are related to an organisation's, or borough's activities, but occurring from sources not owned or controlled by them e.g., Purchased goods and services.

Acronyms

- MCSAP – Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan
- BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups
- CDP – Climate Delivery Plan
- SCTP – Sustainable Communities Transport Partnership
- SME - Small to medium-sized enterprise, a company with no more than 500 employees.
- VCSOs – Voluntary and community sector organisations

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Internal and external engagement and communications activities since January 2022.
- Appendix 2 – Proposed near and mid-term engagement and communications activities

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