



Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan

31st March 2021

Reviewed annually

To be read in conjunction with the Earley Town Plan

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Introduction from the Mayor of Earley

It is with excitement that I write this foreword. Climate change is the greatest threat to the world population we have seen. It is up to each one of us to contribute our part, however small. Much of this work, as briefly evidenced in the first lockdown, will also be a lasting benefit to nature, enabling many endangered species to have an opportunity to flourish.

I am delighted that all Earley Town Council members are supportive of this initiative, we are in this as a Town, as well as a Borough and Country. I would like to thank the Officers of Earley Town Council for their commitment to this work, as they are the people who will put these ideas and initiatives into operation, making them a reality. I would especially like to thank the Town Clerk, Jo Friend, and the Deputy Town Clerk, Emma Carroll, for all their hard work and support with this vital initiative.

If we can all work together to find ways to reduce carbon output, and so beat climate change, that must be the way forward. Earley Town Council has committed to play its part; I would ask that every one of us continues to do what we can to take positive steps in reducing our carbon output. Not only is this essential for each of us, it is essential for our children and the generations to come.

Cllr. David Hare.

Mayor of Earley

I Aims and Guiding Principles of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan

1.1 Aims

Earley Town Council aims to achieve a new, greener vision leading, wherever possible within its remit and resources, to quantifiable improvements in the lives of Earley residents.

Examples include: consumption, work, physical and mental health, travel, leisure, and access to green spaces.

Earley Town Council seeks to encourage residents to think about and act on the urgency of the Climate Emergency and how all our behaviours can affect the environment, residents, and the wider population.

1.2 Guiding Principles

1.2.1 Earley Town Council believes that the Climate Emergency is a vital issue. The Council will present residents with an ambitious and clear vision, confident in the knowledge that the science and a growing body of public opinion supports this stance.

1.2.2 Earley Town Council will always balance its duty to obtain best value and spend council taxpayers' money wisely. Environmental considerations will be a crucial part of the Council's way of working, with environmental benefits always considered against any significant financial expenditure.

1.2.3 Earley Town Council will seek meaningful public comment and input in the production, implementation and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan.

1.2.4 The Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan will be:

- Honest:
 - expressing how challenging actions and targets are;
 - that it requires a community effort to achieve these ambitious objectives; and
 - acknowledging that not all decisions, no matter how well justified, will be popular with all residents.

- SMART:
 - Adopting, implementing, and reporting progress using Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound descriptors wherever practicable, subject to the resources available to Earley Town Council.

- Realistic:
 - identifying those activities controlled by the Town Council;
 - the levers and resources available to the Town Council and residents; and
 - where actions rely on the engagement and support of other stakeholders.

1.2.5 Wherever practicable, Earley Town Council will take informed and coherent actions today to tackle the Climate Emergency, rather than postpone the same actions until tomorrow. Actions taken today can often be worth far more and may avoid the necessity for much larger actions to be undertaken later.

1.2.6 Where practicable, Earley Town Council will strive to lead by example.

1.2.7 The Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan will look for ‘win – wins’ and outcomes that bring added benefits above and beyond the direct benefits of tackling the Climate Emergency. This could include identifying and supporting micro-projects that can become beacons of good practice to support appropriate behavioural change.

1.2.8 The Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan will support the aims and objectives, and where practicable, contribute towards the fulfilment of the aims of the Wokingham Borough Climate Emergency Action Plan.

I) Key Activities

Earley Town Council understands the links between the activities described below, with the need to prioritise and sequence activities to achieve the most effective and efficient outcomes.

Earley Town Council will establish an initial (baseline) Annual Red Amber Green (RAG) rated reporting template as shown in Appendix 4. Whilst ambitious, it is hoped to achieve the initial report by 31st August 2021 when it will be provided to the Policy and Resources Committee for scrutiny.

1 Securing finance and practical support

Not all projects in the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan will cost Earley Town Council money. Some projects are expected to save money, and some could generate revenue.

Various sources of funding and practical help are available, including support for the crucial development process prior to submitting bids for project funding, or for projects that have already been defined.

1.1 Identify sources of technical and financial support, including grants and cost sharing, from the government, Wokingham Borough Council, charities and other external sources.

1.2 Actively consider ways that Earley Town Council’s share of Community Infrastructure Levy funds might be used to support the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan.

2 Earley Town Council facilities:

- 2.1 Identify and implement opportunities for reducing energy consumption.
- 2.2 Wherever practicable, switch all electricity and gas accounts to 100% renewable/green sources or carbon offset energy.
- 2.3 Commission an Energy Performance Certificate Advisor to suggest ways to improve ratings.
- 2.4 Ensure Display Energy Certificates / Energy Performance Certificates are prominently displayed in all Town Council buildings.
- 2.5 Develop and encourage people to follow 'Green Guidance' for Earley Town Council indoor and outdoor facilities that are hired and used by the public.
- 2.6 Transition fully, wherever practicable, to LED energy efficient lighting, including Earley Town Council owned streetlights.
- 2.7 Consider building ring-fenced reserves for the most costly environmental improvements, such as solar panels and retrofitting of council-owned buildings with high levels of insulation.
- 2.8 Explore opportunities for, benefits and costs of rainwater harvesting.

3 The 3 Rs – reduce, reuse, recycle

- 3.1 Reduce, wherever practicable, the amount of printing associated with Earley Town Council activities, through changes such as more effective electronic working and storage.
- 3.2 Reduce use of single-use plastics, including during Council meetings and functions.
- 3.4 Reuse, including a feasibility study for an Earley Share and Repair Café, similar to the Silverdale Bicycle Workshop, that could be based in one of the Town Council facilities.
- 3.5 Recycle, including investigating the practicality and financial costs of providing segregated litter bins (separating recyclables and non-recyclables) on Earley Town Council owned land and within Town Council facilities.

4 Replace petrol / diesel consuming equipment and vehicles, and provision of electric vehicle charging points

4.1 When due for replacement, wherever practicable, replace petrol consuming equipment, such as strimmer's, leaf blowers and chain saws, with battery powered alternatives.

4.2 When replacing petrol and diesel vehicles consider the options (including leasing) of electric and other less polluting alternatives.

4.3 Provide electric vehicle charging points in the Earley Town Council Car park for staff and Earley Town Council vehicles.

4.4 Investigate opportunities for the installation of electric vehicle charging points at other Earley Town Council owned or managed sites, such as at Sol Joel Park.

5 Procurement

5.1 Whenever relevant and practicable, secure an environmental policy from suppliers and contractors that evidences the steps and measures they are taking to tackle Climate Change within their business.

5.2 For all large tenders require a statement from bidders showing how their bid will support the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan.

6 Community engagement and behavioural change

Earley Town Council acknowledges that not everyone sees climate and the environment as priorities, let alone an emergency requiring immediate and coordinated action.

Notwithstanding, there are valuable opportunities to reach out to residents via areas of common interest such as traffic congestion, air pollution, flooding, and threats to open spaces, to encourage practical actions that residents can take to help address such matters.

6.1 Publicise the health and well-being benefits (including financial) to be gained from taking action on the Climate Emergency.

6.2 Publicise grants and other forms of help available to residents to help retrofit homes.

6.3 Maintain a dedicated page on the Earley Town Council website for all matters relating to its declaration of Climate Emergency.

6.4 Promote greater awareness of the Climate Emergency via noticeboards, signage on Earley Town Council vehicles, bus shelters and litter bins, including the actions that Earley residents can take to help tackle the Climate Emergency.

6.5 Consider a report from the Climate Emergency Working Group as a Standing Item at each Full Council meeting

6.6 Include Earley Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan as a Standing Item at the Annual Town Electors' Meetings.

6.7 Encourage and support others, including local schools and local businesses, in their contributions to tackling the Climate Emergency.

6.8 Support existing environmental groups that help protect and manage open spaces, such as the Earley Environmental Group, Save Our Ancient Riverside, and Friends of Highwood. Encourage the formation of similar groups for other open spaces.

6.9 Continue to fully support the Earley Green Fair.

6.10 Actively participate in Third Party Events such as school and church fairs.

6.11 Seek to fulfil demand for allotments, community gardens and orchards where opportunities arise.

6.12 Promote an annual *Earley in Bloom* event that will include information about how residents can use their gardens to help tackle the Climate Emergency.

6.13 Encourage residents and local businesses to donate help, time, money and materials that can assist Earley Town Council and local groups to achieve the objectives of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan.

6.14 Encourage local groups to apply for Earley Town Council grants for activities that would help to achieve the objectives of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan.

6.15 Recognise, promote and celebrate publicly the achievements of residents, groups and local businesses undertaking activities that support the objectives of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan.

7 Green Spaces, including roadside verges and urban trees

7.1 Seek to protect all existing green spaces.

7.2 Protect and manage Earley Town Council owned land, including road verges, to increase biodiversity and drawdown carbon pollution to improve air quality.

7.3 Explore opportunities for planting more hedgerows on Earley Town Council owned land.

7.4 Increase tree planting on Earley Town Council land to enhance the tree canopy.

7.5 Encourage those responsible to ensure that the embodied carbon in trees that are felled or reduced through tree surgery is used for mulch, or in other ways that effectively return the trapped carbon to the soil.

7.6 Regularly review the Earley Town Council Trees Policy to ensure that it is consistent with best practice with respect to the Climate Emergency.

7.7 Maintain an inventory of trees that have been newly planted by Earley Town Council, supporting their growth and replenishing when necessary.

8 The Earley Town Plan

Ensure that wherever practicable the Town Plan responds appropriately to the Climate Emergency.

III) Next step: Promoting and protecting Earley's Natural Infrastructure

The natural infrastructure (or green infrastructure) refers to areas of land and ecosystems that are either naturally occurring or 'naturalised', and then intentionally managed to provide multiple benefits to the environment and human well-being.

Many of the actions in the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan will help to promote and protect Earley's natural infrastructure. However, Earley Town Council recognises that there are other measures not specifically related to addressing the Climate Emergency, such as creating wildlife corridors and use of private gardens to improve visual amenity, that are also hugely beneficial.

Recognising the importance of our Natural Infrastructure, Earley Town Council seeks, by 1st January 2022, to develop in consultation with Earley residents an Earley Natural Infrastructure Action Plan to work in harmony with the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Appendix 1: Context of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan

A1 Statement of the problem

A1.1 The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report of November 2018 highlighted insufficient real progress towards capping global temperature rises to 1.5° C.

Inaction will lead to an array of increasingly severe negative impacts, locally, nationally, and globally.

Even a further half a degree rise would have catastrophic consequences, including:

- even greater frequency and severity of extreme weather events;
- further loss of biodiversity; and
- harm to human livelihoods and quality of life.

The IPCC set bold targets for significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to help address our Global Climate Emergency.

Thinking and acting locally has a vital role to play in helping to tackle this Climate Emergency.

A1.2 In July 2019 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Members unanimously declared a Climate Emergency and committed the Council to play as full a role as possible to achieve a net zero carbon Wokingham Borough by 2030. WBC's Climate Emergency Action Plan can be viewed at [Climate emergency - Wokingham Borough Council](#) .

A1.3 On the 17th of February 2021, Earley Town Council, recognising the responsibilities and role that it has in relation to addressing the Climate Emergency, committed to:

- Declaring a Climate Emergency in Earley.
- Engaging with Earley stakeholders to develop and implement an Earley Town Council Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- Ensuring that the Climate Emergency and related environmental issues are front and centre in Earley Town Council decision making.
- Developing and implementing realistic strategies and actions within the remit and capacity of Earley Town Council to help tackle the Climate Emergency.
- Supporting local and wider initiatives to tackle the Climate Emergency.

- Working with Wokingham Borough Council where relevant and practicable to support our joint ambition for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030.

A2 Wokingham Borough carbon emissions profile

Comprehensive carbon emissions data specific to Earley is unavailable. Earley Town Council does not have the resources to produce this data but commits to track the carbon footprint of the Town Council's activities using a credible and accessible method, such as the Local Government Association Carbon Accounting Tool.

The June 2020 Wokingham Borough Climate Emergency Action Plan reported that Wokingham Borough's carbon footprint has been calculated to create a baseline of carbon dioxide emissions. Based on government data Wokingham Borough's carbon footprint in 2017 was 580.9 ktCO₂e. This is comprised of transport emissions (31.4%), emissions from the industrial and commercial sector (26.6%), and domestic sector emissions (44%).

The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change at the University of Manchester concluded in its November 2020 report that, "To stay within the recommended carbon budget (required to achieve net zero carbon by 2030) Wokingham will, from 2020 onwards, need to achieve average mitigation rates of CO₂ from energy of around -13.1% per year."

[Local and Regional Implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement on Climate Change \(manchester.ac.uk\)](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/tyndall-centre-for-climate-change/local-and-regional-implications-of-the-united-nations-paris-agreement-on-climate-change/)

Earley Town Council commits to working with our residents, other stakeholders and Wokingham Borough Council to achieve this.

Appendix 2: Long-term impact and lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic

A2.1 Earley Town Council recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic has shown how constrained activity can temporarily reduce emissions. Whilst the reductions are not long-lasting or deep enough to make a hugely significant difference, the pandemic has shown that there is a capacity for behavioural change. Therefore, Earley Town Council will seek to encourage permanent changes.

A2.2 Earley Town Council believes that a green recovery and reconfiguration is vital to tackle the Climate Emergency.

Locally this includes:

- supporting active travel – safe cycling and walking;
- promoting local goods and services, such as local grocery provision;
- recognising the importance of access to and use of local green spaces for well-being; and
- promoting environmentally friendly improvements to housing.

Appendix 3: Governance of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan

A3.1 Where practicable, Councillors and Officers will be expected to identify whether their recommendations help, hinder, or have no impact tackling the Climate Emergency.

A3.2 A five member Climate Emergency Working Group will be established and sit under the Policy and Resources Committee. The Climate Emergency Working Group's Terms of Reference will include:

A3.2.1 Developing SMART Environmental targets wherever this is possible within the resources available to Earley Town Council.

A3.2.2 Establishing procedures for involving residents and other key stakeholders in the ongoing development, monitoring and implementation of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan and reporting back to the Policy and Resources Committee at least twice yearly.

A3.2.3 Ensuring mechanisms are in place to ensure that Earley Town Council staff and Councillors know the content of the Earley Climate Emergency Action Plan, their individual roles and responsibilities to support the Plan, and ways in which to have ongoing and meaningful opportunities for input and feedback.

A3.2.4 Overseeing the development, implementation and ongoing production of Red Amber Green RAG-rated 'live' progress reports for the Policy and Resources Committee, Council and Annual Electors' Meeting as per the example in Appendix 4.

Appendix 4: Partial sample of an annual RAG rated reporting template.

Tasks	Targets	Outcomes to date	RAG rating
Securing finance and support			
Identify sources of technical and financial support, including grants and cost sharing, from WBC, the government, charities, and other external sources.	1) To maintain a relevant database of finance and other help available. 2) To submit carefully targeted, robust, and successful proposals for assistance.	Both of these are yet to begin.	
Actively consider how the Town Council's CIL funds may be effectively deployed to support the ECEAP.	Ensure that wherever appropriate addressing the Climate Emergency is factored into decisions regarding the use of CIL.	Has been actively considered at Council Meetings discussing CIL on the *****. ETC is contributing from CIL money to WBC flood mitigation proposals along the Loddon River; opted against WBC requests for money from CIL to install electric vehicle charging points. Add URLs to relevant minutes.	
ETC facilities			
Identify and implement opportunities for reducing energy consumption.	1) Complete an audit identifying potential areas for energy savings. 2) To demonstrate a reduction in total energy consumption in the first full and each subsequent year.	1) Aims to be completed by 1 st October 2021. 2) Total energy consumption will be calculated for 1 st April 2021 and on the same date each subsequent year.	
Switch all energy accounts to 100% renewable and / or carbon offset sourced energy.	1) Switching of energy accounts when the current contracts end.		