From Subroto Chatterjee, Billion Trees

**Engine idling which is quite common and unnecessary and what is council doing to increase awareness on it?**

As part of the Sustainable Elmbridge communications programme, we launched a campaign called #IdleFreeElmbridge to raise awareness of the issues and risks engine idling poses.

Part of this campaign included anti-idling banners put up around the borough outside interested schools. Visual digital content was also shared on social media for other organisations to show their support.

School educational sessions and assemblies took place to further education children of the engine idling impacts to pass on to parents idling outside the school.

We are now moving on to phase 2 of the campaign with a focus on businesses. We are working on what this will look like considering how best to reach businesses and encourage behaviour change amongst their employees and drivers. Requesting businesses to making pledges and education packs for the staff are a couple of ideas so far.

From Rupert, FoE member and WEAct Group

**There is increasing evidence that long term air pollution exposure has a link to acquiring dementia as well as developing dementia after a stroke. This research was from a U.K. Biobank project looking at a healthy cohort of 40-69 year olds 2023.**   **Will Elmbridge be guiding developers and renovators that wood burners and car idling at schools/roads have a contributing factor to local air pollution?**

Throughout January we have delivered a campaign leading up to national ‘clean air night’ which is being led by Global Action and Surrey Air Alliance at the end of January (yesterday/24th January).

Developers, renovators and residents have guidance on our main website around the impacts of wood burning and best practice measures based on DEFRA’s policy guidance. The 'Clean Air Night' campaign includes encouraging best practice and awareness of burning as a contributing factor to air pollution and climate change through social media content, and promotion of the Clean Air Night webinar. The council also support the DEFRA Burn Better Campaign.

We also have an Air Quality Action Plan which runs to 2026 outlining actions to improve air quality in Elmbridge. One of the delivered items was a wood burning stove animation promoting approved wood burning stoves and burning of approved products.

DEFRA focus is on particulates, particularly from domestic burning. They estimate domestic burning nationally accounts for 27% of PM2.5 emissions in 2021. Priority 2 within the Elmbridge Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is to reach the former WHO recommended level of an annual mean level 10µg/m3 for PM2.5 through a range of interventions by 2030. New ambitious UK exposure targets set for PM2.5, 10µg/m3 by 2040 with a population exposure reduction of 35% compared to 2019 levels. Interim target or 12µg/m3 and population reduction of 22% by 2028. Over the past 5 years SCC Travel Smart Team & SAA have worked on projects around air quality and schools, some DEFRA air quality grant funded this including idling outside schools.

Similar to our previous response, work has been done around the behaviour change relating to the harmful impacts of car-idling.

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﻿Questions from Nick Davis, Chair of GE

**Who is responsible for healthy travel within the council - both councillor and officer?**

Within Elmbridge Borough Council liaising on active travel falls under the parameters of the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Sustainability.

As a two-tier authority, responsibilities lie between Surrey County Council and Elmbridge Borough Council.

Surrey County Council is responsible for transport infrastructure services including public transport and Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans and the Elmbridge Borough Council are responsible for behaviour change including our employee’s commuting methods and business travel as part of our scope 3 emissions, and the overall goal for carbon neutrality.

**In moving towards Carbon Zero in 2030 (council) and 2050 (borough) what metrics are you using to show that each year you move close to your goal?**

As a Council our metrics are set out within the Carbon Management and Reduction Plan 2030 which is based on reducing our emissions from our baseline figures. These are outlined on our website, andwe are currently reviewing the format of the CMRP.

Each action has an estimated carbon saving and estimated timeframe to complete, we then monitor this closely and update based on % of the project complete. For example, how many of the green fleet have been electrified based on the target amount.

For the 2050 borough target, this year we hope to do some further engagement work with residents and stakeholders to put together a borough plan/strategy. We want to make sure that we hear from a variety of the population on the matter and set out a clear structure with clear actions. We aim to have continued collaboration with you and others that we have met when moving forward with creating this plan.

**What actions are you taking to ensure the reduction in single use plastics?** (on behalf of Thames Ditton Foundation)

We are currently working on a Single Use Plastic Policy. This will have commitments and consequent actions internally for employees, processes including procurement and events. It will also address external actions including campaigns and external engagement projects. Once it has been agreed it will be publicised.

From ‘WoT Trees’

﻿**Will the Council consider undertaking a ‘Carbon Emission and Bio-Diversity Impact Assessment’ of all future Community Impact Levy (CIL) funding applications: with officers recommending that funding is not approved when it would be used for projects that run counter to Surrey County Council’s Climate Change Strategy?**

The Council provides CIL funding at two levels - Strategic & Local.

Strategic CIL Projects tend to be large-scale in nature and those that require planning permission from either the Borough or County Council. For example, the construction or extension of a new community hall or school, or the construction / improvement to a road, cycle path or our wider public realm. As part of the planning process, these projects / schemes would have been considered against the relevant planning policies including those which consider the impact on biodiversity and seek to respond to the climate emergency by minimising carbon emissions. CIL is awarded subject to ensuring that the required planning permissions are in place so, when we award CIL to a project, we know it has been assessed against these important points and considered acceptable. Furthermore, Building Regulations (Part L) also ensures that buildings are design and built to be more energy efficient.

Local CIL Projects sometimes also require planning permission and therefore some would have also been assessed through the planning process as just outlined. Nevertheless, on the application form a question asks - has the project been assessed regarding sustainability and in consideration of climate change and carbon reduction?

- If applicable, please include examples of how your project mitigates (if any) negative climate change and sustainability impacts. In addition, please outline how your project may help to adapt to the effects of climate change.

**Similarly will you commit to requiring proof of genuine community consultation in such applications?**

All applicants for CIL funding are asked to set out the level of community support for their project.

This is often evidenced by:

- letters of support from community groups, residents and other relevant organisations such as Sport England, the Scouts and Girlguiding;

- third party funding to the project from for example, the school PTA, County Councillors through Your Fund Surrey, or contributions from local fundraising activities; and

- responses from initial consultation that has been undertaken by the applicant.

As representatives of their local communities, our Councillors when making a decision on whether to award funding to a project, are also in a position to be able to provide commentary at the meeting of the Local Spending Boards on the level of support from the wider community and any initial engagement undertaken.

Questions included in the application process:

Q.17 What evidence is there of support from the community

**Note: We have in mind the felling of trees in Walton High Street, a Surrey County Council proposal, which was given £190,000 CIL funding support by Elmbridge with no obvious community consultation]**

The proposal submitted by the County Council for CIL funding highlighted that safety concerns had been raised from residents and representatives from the school (Walton Oak Primary) and that following discussions at the Elmbridge Local Committee, support had been given to undertake investigative works.

In drawing up the scheme, the County Council engaged again with the Local Committee and the Walton Business Improvement District (BID) prior to a public consultation for the scheme in Summer 2022 in the form of the formal, legal consultation process that is carried out prior to these kinds of works being constructed on the public highway.

Both the Borough and County Council are aware of the public reaction to the works in the High Street.

On their ‘Surrey Says’ Engagement Hub, information on the Walton High Street Pedestrian Safety Improvements is included with the County Council highlighting that the timing and communication around the project could have been better. It is stated that their procedures will be updated to take these issues into consideration when planning any such work in the future.

Seeking to address the concerns raised, the Elmbridge Borough Council has committed £15,000 to support a greening strategy for Walton on Thames town centre. Working with a range of stakeholders, the study will seek to find the best town centre locations for future greening projects, improve the look and feel of the public realm and increase the sustainability of Walton town centre.

Questions from Cloth Club Elmbridge

**What marketing support can we have from the council? Specifically targeting baby change spaces in local businesses, nappy bins.**

We are in the process of creating a Climate Community Fund for 2024-2025, which will support our community groups and charities, and could be used to aid in funding education projects/marketing if the organisation is a charity/community group and not registered as a business.

If you are registered as a business -

- Any new business or start up that has been in operation can apply for up to £1000 to help with one off costs such as marketing, purchasing of equipment or anything that would help the business to start operating in Elmbridge. [See Start up Boost](https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/business/support-businesses/elmbridge-start-boost)

- If external businesses wanted to understand the make-up of our centres to develop a marketing plan then the available business rate database can be found via: [Elmbridge Business Rates Database](https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/business-rates/business-rates-information/business-rates-datasets)

- Elmbridge has two Business Improvement Districts that work on behalf of the town and village centres businesses in [Walton](https://www.lovewalton.co.uk/) and [Cobham](https://www.onecobham.com/).

**Would you consider mirroring the £50 Nappy Vouchers offered to residents like Kingston and other councils?**

Whilst we do not deliver this programme, we will explore ways in how we can support your incentive scheme/programme through the Climate Community Fund.

**Would you consider an incentive scheme for local nurseries and childminders? Along with co-funding an education event.**

We are in the process of creating a Climate Community Fund for 2024-2025, which will support our community groups and charities, and could be used to aid in funding education projects/marketing if the organisation is a charity/community group and not registered as a business.

If you are registered as a business -

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Question from the team at the Walton-on-Thames Repair Cafe

**The Walton on Thames Repair Café is in the fortunate position of having a chargeless hire agreement with the Walton Centre for the Community to deliver it's bimonthly ‘free of charge’ repair services to Elmbridge residents. This has come about with the support of the Centre Manager.** **However, how would other green groups supporting the carbon reduction agenda in Elmbridge access the Borough Council spaces?  Especially now that hiring is done through a central portal and not at the discretion of the Centre Managers?**

Our customer operations team have been operating the booking system for hiring rooms in our centres for some time now. The team liaise with the Centre Manager before agreeing a new booking and that includes agreeing the hiring fees. We do offer reduced rates to hirers, charities and some council initiatives. If you have a particular service you would like to bring to a centre please speak to the Centre Manager who can liaise with the Head of Service.

**Is there a pathway to access these spaces free of charge? Or a way the Climate Change Programme could support green agenda 'hire' applications?**

Our hiring fees are an important income that help with the sustainability of the community centres to provide services that support our residents. This is reflected in our hiring fees which are dependent on the service being offered. If you have a service or initiative you would like to bring forward speak to the Centre Manager who can liaise with the Head of Service.

**Another difficulty facing un-funded, ‘grass roots’ community organisations is the requirement to have Public Liability Insurance to 'hire' space at the Centres for the Community - for 'hires' that are meetings, could the council's own insurance not be sufficient to cover these activities?**

Even if only for a meeting, groups need to have a hiring agreement in place, Public Liability Insurance, a signed a fire evacuation procedure and provided a risk assessment. Otherwise, the expectation is that the centre staff are responsible for all activities and safe evacuation of the group.

From Diane Ewart local gardener

**When does EBC expect Zero Carbon credentials from its suppliers or at least within the bounds of current technology?**

We are currently developing a Sustainable Procurement Strategy, including introducing a new software package, which will be implemented next year (2024-25).

**There is, in my opinion, too many proposals for tree planting, and not enough about other, more sustainable and easy to manage, options such as hedge planting.   Will the Council look at options, in addition to trees, for greening and carbon capture?**

**(I’ve seen trees die and be replanted repeatedly in the same spot, trees planted at the wrong time of year, trees planted which due to their size need watering throughout the first year - which is not sustainable)**

In addition to the tree planting on our Greenspace sites we also undertake rewilding, bulb planting, plant small areas of native wildflower meadows and ensure areas of scrub and habitat piles are left and created.

We have a considerable number of formal (we currently cut around 9000 linear meters per annum) and informal hedges in our greenspaces with limited space to include many more. This is after considerations of public safety, sight lines and establishment costs. In addition to this as the majority of our greenspaces are formal sites any new hedges would require maintenance which would be at additional cost to the Council. However, where possible and suitable we will encourage and support the planting of new hedges.

**To what extent is the EBC Climate Programme team working with Green Spaces to develop sustainable and environmentally positive green spaces?**

Our council teams work closely together and are delivering projects within our biodiversity and ecology programme of work which aims to support, protect and enhance biodiversity and ecology in the borough. This includes green spaces, as well as other service areas including the published Development Management Advice note for Biodiversity and Nature and the Countryside strategy.

For peoples’ own green spaces, we are also working to encourage sustainable and biodiverse spaces through engagement with residents. In the past this has included tree planting days, social media campaigns and educational articles on how to make our garden biodiverse tailored to also include residents without outdoor spaces.

Moving forward we will run campaigns over National Tree week, Earth Day, National Children’s Gardening Week. Also, we had keep Elmbridge Tidy campaign where there was on the spot fining being implemented to residents caught littering.

From Sandra Buck, Elmbridge XR

**How are Elmbridge Borough Council using their purchasing power when contracting supplies of goods and services for the borough to ensure contractors commit to aligning with the Carbon Management and Reduction plan adopted by EBC?**

We are currently developing a Sustainable Procurement Strategy and software package where metrics will be put in place to measure this. This will be implemented next year (2024-25).

**Can you give examples of this in action?**

**How are contractors progress being measured post awarding of contracts?**

Both as above.