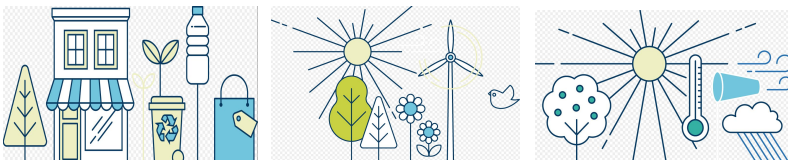


Sutton's Environment Strategy FAQ

Topic: Water Use

The council consulted on its Environment Strategy for eight weeks in August 2018. As well as answering the questions, participants were invited to provide comments. We received nearly 700 comments, all of which were reviewed and influenced the final draft of the strategy. A lot of the comments were very similar, and we have curated these comments into a comprehensive FAQ documents giving the answers for the public to view.



1. What are you doing to control water flow from Carshalton ponds?

The Council does not control water flow or water quality in Carshalton Ponds. That is the responsibility of the Environment Agency and there is a responsibility on Sutton and East Surrey Water Company to maintain a flow by artificial means during times of low flow. The priority is for Sutton and East Surrey Water to maintain the flow on the river, not to keep the level of water in the ponds topped up as the river is more important for wildlife. Sutton Council has a part to play in maintaining the ponds to ensure that water is not lost due to leakage. All of the various agencies discuss issues around the ponds as they arise to maintain the flow as far as possible, but at times of drought it is not always possible to keep the level of water in the pond to the usual level nor to maintain the water quality.

2. Personal water consumption is the water companies' problem, not the council's. Why has it been included in the strategy?

The environment strategy is for the whole borough, not just the council. In the action plans we reference who will lead on each of the actions required to deliver the targets. In this instance, SES Water will lead as the local water company. The council will support SES water in delivering these actions as we recognise the importance of reducing water consumption across the borough.

3. What are you doing to reduce surface water flooding?

The SuDS in Sutton's Schools project is currently underway. This involves the installation of sustainable drainage features at eight sites in the Hackbridge area. This will help reduce flooding here. Potential options to reduce surface water flooding in Worcester Park, Carshalton and Wallington are also being investigated.

4. Regularly maintain the existing rain water waste system from Carshalton park to Westcroft canal together with Thames Water. Maintain all water gates. Maintain all the water canals built in the 18th century to drain the water in rainy seasons. Please liaise and cooperate with heritage trust organisation such as Carshalton Water Tower.

The Carshalton Water Tower water flow enters the Wandle by Carshalton ponds not via the canals. The canals are maintained as part of the borough's flood alleviation infrastructure in discussion with the Environment Agency. Surface water sewers that link the various sections of canal are maintained by Thames Water. The sluice gates are now either fixed in the open or closed position and are not used in controlling water flow so there is no requirement to bring these into operational condition.

5. You allowed new housing on Richmond Green and 'alleviated' the problem of flooding with a balance pond which allows the flow of 9 litres before it is overwhelmed. What happens when that flow increases?

Alongside the pond there are additional attenuation features to manage surface water on site before it discharges into the River Wandle, including 113.0 m³ of permeable paving with modular subsurface storage, and 27.1 m² of additional permeable paving with modular sub-surface storage below floodplain compensation car park. Based on the proposed SuDS measures, the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and SuDs strategy for the site demonstrates that (i) total run-off from the 1 in 30 year storm event (88.2m²) can be contained on the site without further mitigation (ii) any flooding between the 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 (plus climate change) storm events will be safely contained on site with all runoff directed to subsurface storage beneath permeable pavements (iii) if flooding of external areas occurs – all ground floor levels are set to 300 mm above the 1 in 100 year (+CC) design flood level and gradients will be constructed across site to convey runoff either to SuDS measures or the Wandle; and (iv) any discharge to the Wandle is controlled by a hydrobrake.

6. Rain water storage should be compulsory requirement and enforced on all new developments.

Sutton's new Local Plan (February 2018) introduces a new requirement for all new developments within the borough to achieve 'greenfield' run-off rates and volumes for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year event. Meeting this target necessitates that appropriate rain water storage measures are included as part of the surface water drainage strategy serving the development site. This policy is strictly enforced by the Sutton's lead local flood authority (LLFA) officer and the council has introduced a drainage assessment form (DAF) to ensure that the proposed rain water storage measures hold a sufficient volume of runoff to meet the above greenfield standards.

7. You should ensure a better quality of drainage is used when front gardens are paved or re-paved.

The council agrees that it would always be desirable to ensure a better quality of drainage whenever front gardens are paved or re-paved. However any new or replacement paving, which consists of permeable block paving, gravel or porous asphalt, or where the rainwater is directed to a lawn or border to drain naturally is classed under the relevant legislation as 'permitted development' and therefore cannot be controlled through the council's planning policies. The council can only require a planning application where the proposal involves an area of greater than 5sqm and the material proposed is non-porous.

8. Why are you installing drinking fountains?

The provision of water fountains supports our aim to reduce single use plastic. Providing access to free tap water means people can fill a reusable water bottle rather than buying a bottle of water. Bottles of water are usually sold in plastic containers which are used once and then thrown away. The water is also often transported long distances, increasing emissions.

9. Set up water points in the town so people can fill up water bottles rather than buying water.

We are seeking funding to install water fountains across the borough in places such as town centres so people can refill bottles. We also want to establish a refill project (<https://refill.org.uk/>) so that people can fill up their water bottles at local cafes, leisure centres etc.

10. Why have you included targets to reduce water consumption, surely it should be about making water companies fix their leaks in the system, this would have a greater impact on water reduction.

Water conservation needs to be led by both residents and the water companies. We will work with SES water to ensure leaks are fixed, but everyone in the borough has their own role to play in ensuring water is used efficiently. We will be promoting actions which residents and businesses can take to save water and money.

11. Water is a basic necessity, why are you trying to restrict people's access when everyone's needs are different.

We won't be restricting people's access to water as we recognise it is vital to life. We will be encouraging everyone to use it as efficiently as possible. Despite the UK's reputation for rain, on average the south east of England has less water per person than Morocco (Hubbub #Tapchat campaign). This is due to both low rainfall (we receive 50% less rain than the rest of the UK) as well as a highly dense population (lots of people living in a small area). This means we need to use the water we have in the most efficient way possible.

12. Water is needed for the greener borough targets, surely the water reduction targets are contradictory?

We want to encourage people to use water in the most efficient way possible. One of the best ways to reduce water while maintaining green spaces is through the use of a water butt. Where possible we will encourage residents to install water butts or rainwater harvesting.

13. More work needs to be done to prevent flooding e.g. ensuring gully cleansing takes place so that the drains can cope with heavy rainfall rather than getting blocked.

Gully grates are cleaned as part of the street cleaning contract with Veolia. The expectation is to clear and ensure any debris/detritus is cleared during street sweeping. In addition, the gully pots for all 16000 should be cleaned once every 2 years. If any blockages/damage is observed during this cleaning it should be reported back to the council for rectification.

Gullies identified in roads throughout the borough as part of the flood risk plan for the authority receive more regular cleaning (once every quarter).

14. The water companies should fix the water leaks and pass on the savings to the customer.

We will encourage the local water supply company SES water to ensure leaks are fixed, however we do not have any control over how they manage their savings.

If you have a water meter installed, any savings or water efficiency measures taken at your home will be reflected in your bills as you are only charged for the water you use.

15. Households should be encouraged to use water butts and grey water for watering gardens. Sutton council officers should give advice on drought resistant planting and to think of alternatives to the lawns.

We agree with this recommendation and these actions have been included in the strategy.

16. The water consumption figures are not ambitious enough. Everyone should be on a water meter.

We will encourage people to install a water meter. We cannot enforce this, but will encourage all residents to install one as research shows that it both helps reduce water consumption and residents can save money on their bills.

17. I agree with the water-saving targets, however the single most impactful way to reduce water usage is to consume less meat/animal products. Why is this not included in the strategy?

Going meat free has both health and environmental benefits. We will seek to raise awareness of ways in which water is used so that people can make an informed choice about actions they can take to reduce their impact on the environment, include going meat free. Other actions we will seek to encourage are installing water butts so that people can grow their own fruit and vegetables.

18. I live in the borough but my water provider isn't SES, it's Thames Water. Please make sure you work with all providers so that nobody is excluded.

Yes, we will seek to work with all water providers. SES is named in the strategy as they service the majority of households.

19. How can you keep areas cooler?

We have targets to increase the number of trees planted in the borough. This is a great example of how we can also provide cooler and shaded areas for people in times of high temperatures.

20. Make water butts available with low cost conversion to fill butts from existing downpipes that at present deliver rainwater to soakaways.

We will advise people of measures that they can take to save water and money such as installing a water butt. Where available we will apply for funding to supply resources such as water butts.

21. Work with SES to reduce water hardness so that appliances last longer in hard water areas rather than end up in landfill earlier than they need to.

This is a great example of where people can take action at home. Purchasing a water softener will help to reduce the impact of the hard water we receive in the borough.

22. Using a gully sucker on the borough's drains would help. However building a bigger drainage system under Wallington railway bridge did nothing to stop flooding in a heavy rainfall!

A study of potential options to alleviate the flooding at Wallington bridge is ongoing.