

## **A small change to Kingston's planning permissions could make a big difference to local energy consumption – and you can help**

Despite the benefits of carrying out energy-efficiency improvements to the rest of a house when having major extension work carried out ([see more on this here](#)), just sending homeowners and their agents a leaflet urging them to do so does not make me confident of any great success. The difficulty is that even if householders can afford an extension, extra energy efficiency improvements cost an additional amount of money which most are unwilling to spend. If everyone were required by regulation to do so when contemplating major extension work, it would become accepted, though government action is currently unlikely. (You could lobby your MP about this, and I am confident that Ed Davey and Sarah Olney, the MPs for Kingston and Richmond Park, would support this initiative.)

One step to ensure that more low-carbon domestic retrofits occurred in Kingston would be if our Council were to make planning permission for major extensions to a property conditional on the completed project achieving an EPC rating of B, with a draft certificate submitted by the home owner prior to starting work and the final certificate supplied on completion to discharge the planning condition. I am not proposing that the smaller single storey rear extensions which make up the vast majority of applications would be required to make the same energy-efficiency improvements, as the costs are more likely to be difficult for homeowners to bear.

Please [contact me](#) if you would like to help make this action on energy-efficiency and climate change happen, and would be prepared to contact your local councillors to support such a proposal. With a Liberal Democrat Council, we should be pushing at an open door!

*Patrick Manwell BA DipArch RIBA, May 2020*

[See how to contact MPs and Councillors here](#)