

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 November 2019

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Climate Emergency Cross-Party Working Group Update

Final Decision-Maker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Lead Member(s)	Councillor Jane March – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development (provisional) (Councillor Matthew Bailey – Portfolio Holder for Sustainability)
Lead Officer/Author	Paul Taylor – Director of Change and Development
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

That the report be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Full Council	17 July 2019
Working Party meeting	24 October 2019
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	18 November 2019

Tunbridge Wells Committee Report, version: March 2019

Climate Emergency Cross-Party Working Group Update

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Working Group is an informal group consisting of representatives from the various political parties. It has no decision making powers but was established to consider ways to achieve the purpose set by Full Council. It may make recommendations to the relevant decision makers as appropriate.
 - 1.2 This report provides a 'for information' update on progress.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Full Council on 17 July 2019 resolved as follows:

“Tunbridge Wells Borough Council recognises the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence pointing to man-made climate change and the harmful impacts this is having on natural habitats and ecosystems, biodiversity and our lives in general. It notes the early work undertaken to date by the Council including efforts to promote active travel, increase recycling and the reduction of plastic usage in the Town Hall but understands it needs to do more. It recognises that it has a responsibility to take a firm lead on reducing the council's and the wider borough's carbon emissions and in furtherance of this responsibility agrees to:

- Declare its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies;
- Set up a climate cross party task force to start a dedicated report within the fiscal year with actions that it needs to take to address this emergency including how the wider community including businesses, organisations and individuals can be encouraged to make their own contributions to meeting a goal to make the Borough carbon neutral by 2030. This report will include a plan to conduct a green audit of all council services to ensure that weight is given to the environmental and sustainability impact as well as cost and which will inform the next iteration of the Council's five year plan;
- Ensure that forthcoming plans and strategies (including the Local Plan and the next iteration of the Five-Year Plan) set out ways in which the Council can make its contribution to reduce carbon emissions, the degradation of the environment and combating climate change by agreeing an ambition to make the Council's operations carbon neutral by 2030;
- Lobby central government to provide additional resources and to grant the necessary freedoms to deliver the above; and

- Take steps with partners to proactively include young people in the process, ensuring that they have a voice in shaping the future by setting up a Citizen's Assembly as a way of also involving residents and businesses in the process as Climate change will have implications for generations to come."
- 2.2 Following said resolution, political group leaders appointed members to sit on the working group. The agreed membership is as follows:
- Councillor March – Chairman (provisional)
 - Councillor Bailey – Conservative Group
 - Councillor Morton – Liberal Democrat Group
 - Councillor Warne – Tunbridge Wells Alliance Group
 - Councillor Everitt – Labour Group
- 2.3 The working group is supported by relevant officers at the request of the working group.
- 2.4 The working group has no decision making powers but can advise and make recommendations to the relevant decision maker as appropriate.

Work of the working group

- 2.5 The cross party member working group met on Monday 24 October to set out the initial actions towards achieving the Council's target.
- 2.6 The following actions were agreed:
- Set up a regular Advisory Panel and agree a set of Terms of Reference.
 - Start on a timetable for completing a Green Audit and setting actions that feed into the 5-Year Plan, Local Plan and the budget cycle.
 - Actions would be separated into those the Borough Council could implement and those that the Council could influence.
 - An engagement and communication strategy would be developed.
 - A Citizens' Assembly would be investigated.
 - A number of experts and speakers would be identified to help inform the working group.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The report is for information and may be noted.
- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has no power to impose anything on the working party but may take its own action, if it so wishes.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To note the report. The working party is an effective method to implement the will of Council and therefore no alternative action is recommended at this time.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The report is a 'for information' update as to the work of the working party and has not been subject to outside consultation.
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6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal including Human Rights Act	This report is for information and does not propose any policy changes which could result in cross-cutting implications at this time.	Mark O'Callaghan, Scrutiny and Engagement Officer 27 September 2019
Finance and other resources		
Staffing establishment		
Risk Management		
Data Protection		
Environment and Sustainability		
Community Safety		
Health and Safety		
Health and Wellbeing		
Equalities		

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with, and form part of, the report:

- None
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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None