

Climate Change Board

Minutes

Wednesday, 20 September 2023

Present:

Cllr George Potter (Chairperson)

Cllr Amanda Creese

Cllr Catherine Houston

Cllr James Jones

Cllr Richard Mills

Cllr Jo Shaw

Cllr Catherine Anne Young

Ian Doyle, Joint Strategic Director, Transformation and Governance

Robin Taylor, Executive Head of Organisational Development

Nat Prodger, Climate Change Officer

Carrie Anderson, Democratic Services Officer (Secretary)

Stephanie Maynard, Communications Officer

Alastair Atkinson, GEF

Sam Peters, Zero Carbon Guildford

Action By

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Lead Councillor for Planning, Environment and Climate Change chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone. There was a round of introductions given the membership of the Board was greatly changed since the last meeting which was held prior to the local elections in May.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillor James Jones and Waverley Borough Councillor Steve Williams. Councillor Williams was the lead councillor for climate change at Waverley Borough Council (WBC). There would be closer liaison between the organisers of the CCB meetings at both councils in future to avoid running meetings simultaneously.

Robin Taylor and Ian Doyle left the meeting early to attend the Financial Recovery Working Group. Democratic Services would contact the University of Surrey to check if Prof. Nichol was still the correct contact.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes for the meeting held 29 March 2023 were approved as correct. There were no matters arising.

4. ROLE OF THE CCB

The Chairman confirmed that all of those present had received a copy of the recently revised and adopted terms of reference for the CCB which was a cross-party group with external representatives.

It was noted that the CCB as an Executive Working Group displayed more transparency than other such working groups as the approved CCB minutes were published in the public domain.

With regard to the TOR Cllr Young enquired how the biodiversity commitments would connect with Surrey County Council (SCC), especially the Nature Recovery Strategy and asked should the CCB TOR explicitly link to this work. The meeting heard that as a partner agency the council would link into this work.

The purpose of the CCB was to advise and inform the Executive and Council in particular with regard to the council's climate change action plan that had been adopted in March 2023. However, the Chairman invited members of the Board to be open with suggestions in regard to matters the Board might discuss.

The Chairman announced that he, as lead councillor need not chair the CCB meetings and asked those present if there were any interest in taking the role forward. The role of chair would need to show initiative to lead the Board to review the progress the council was making in this regard. The CCBs Action Tracker would be a key monitoring tool for the new chair. The Action Tracker would be standing agenda item for future meetings.

Cllr Young mentioned the matter of air quality, and locally idling car engines was a particular concern. Cllr Young asked what the Board's view on this was and noted there was an opportunity for Government funding to address air quality, amounting to £6m but the deadline was close. In addition, the DfT was making around £129m available with the first £25m prioritised for rural communities. There was currently a portfolio split on the Executive for air quality and climate change. Climate change was located in the Organisational Development section of the council, whilst air quality sat under regulatory services. However, the two service areas worked closely together and the Board might consider receiving an update from air quality officers at a future meeting or possibly to replicate the Overview and Scrutiny Committee where organisation heads were invited to update set out on an annual programme.

Cllr Mills raised the matter of short-lived climate pollutants, impacts and mitigations at town and city levels. It was noted that the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) set out carbon dioxide or carbon dioxide equivalent. So, such pollutants as water vapor, black carbon and methane were measured and reported as carbon dioxide equivalent.

The Chairman felt this was the right point in the meeting to look at the Action Tracker in more detail.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE CCAP

The CCO gave a background presentation setting out how the CCAP had been developed and current status. The slides would be circulated.

The CCAP was split into around 300 separate actions/sub-actions across the council. There was a key in place to prioritise those actions. There were 9 key focus areas. It was explained that the council had agreed the document would be a living plan. The entire document would be circulated to the Board following the meeting.

The Board made the following comments:

Regarding to the delay on addressing scope 3 emissions, It was important for the council have a position. Albeit there were still parameters to be set, other organisations were

addressing this matter in terms of setting out options and a pathway. It was acknowledged that Scope 3 would take a considerable time to break down and understand and thereafter to address. In response, the Board heard that this was an action in the CCAP and work was being undertaken with other Surrey councils in respect of scope 3 and an update would be submitted to the Board in due course.

The Board looked forward to receiving the Climate Emergency UK action scorecard since the CCAP had been adopted.

However, it was anticipated that scores would leave room for improvement such as making available a designated page on the council's website. It was also noted that the scoring was undertaken between councils rather than using the baseline of improvement from the previous year.

6. UPDATE ON PROGRESS SINCE LAST CCB MEETING

The Chairman explained that this meeting of the Board was necessarily covering a lot of background material to bring the new members up to speed.

The CCO explained the council's project management software which was called Verto. Since May, all of the actions of the CCAP had been integrated into Verto and a series of discussions with individual service leaders appropriate to the actions undertaken. Those discussions included ownership, feasibility and timescales.

The CCAP was broken down into 9 areas; then broken down into overview actions and allocated a timescale. The overview actions were further broken into sub-actions. As work on the actions commenced the plan was populated with more information. The actions were colour coded; those in green were active and under way; those in blue were already completed; grey indicated the work had not yet commenced. It was noted that the CCO did not have a team of officers.

One of the completed actions was to have published on the council's intranet a list of all available funding opportunities available to all services in regard to climate change mitigation. Also, completed was embedding the issue into core council values and reporting on climate change impact and mitigation

in every committee report.

Procurement was a key in-house service team.

Coupled with the engagement of services was the development of the CCAP itself in terms of it continuing to reflect new evidence and technologies or the addition of new actions.

The CCAP development work set out partnerships with other stakeholders in regard to ownership of certain actions, there were notably key relationships with Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council.

Impacts of the actions were set out in terms of carbon impacts, scopes 1,2 and/or 3, air quality, biodiversity and also the impact of the actions on the council's governance. These actions could be scrutinised in detail in the way the CCAP was being utilised and developed.

The most substantial issue for implementation of the CCAP was said to be organisational communication. During the CCO connection with services, it transpired that some CCAP priorities and certain plan items had already been achieved/implemented in some instances. Achievements and best practice were not being shared across teams. There was generally a good awareness of the issues and an energy amongst officers to engage. To address this the CCO was putting together a centralised network of officer 'Climate Champions' to communicate across the organisation.

The Board made the following comments:

- The CCAP and development work was praised for its detail and scope including the addition of co-benefits.
- Cllr Houston offered time to work with the CCO to develop the Climate Champions network and across the organisation communications.
- Cllr Shaw was a 'Greener Futures Champion' for SCC where a call for volunteers had been made. The CCO would be meeting with the Corporate Management Board

shortly to discuss such a proposal for GBC.

7. SHORTLISTING OF PRIORITY ACTIONS FROM CCAP BY THE BOARD

The Chairman set out the task for the Board. It was desirable to select a shortlist of actions from the CCAP that the Board could suggest as priorities for the Executive. The Board was specifically asked to look at actions/projects to which it could lend its support and expertise.

As a starting point, a long list had been identified before the meeting by the Chairman and the CCO. The long list set out those actions with a high financial cost and/or a high impact in terms of mitigation/reducing carbon and were deliverable by the council itself. The identified actions were either achievements in themselves or 'enabling' actions which would allow the council to progress and achieve more e.g., budget development and recruitment of a Utilities Officer. There were also governance actions that would embed good practice across the organisation. Finally, there was a desire to include an action for all services to report annually to the Executive on progress delivering the CCAP.

The Board made the following comments/observations:

- The decarbonisation of the website was on the CCAP but was not included on the long list. Nevertheless, Board members suggested a presence on the website of the CCAP and showcasing the work being undertaken by the council was important.
- It was noted that the CCB and the Executive were the governance for the council's CCAP, providing monitoring, advice and oversight.
- That the financial structure for delivery of the CCAP was not yet in place.
- There was not currently a means of factoring in carbon benefit in place for the council. This would need to be discussed and agreed by the Executive. It was noted that the CCO was invited to view tenders over a certain

cost threshold and provide advice on matters of environmental impact alongside a climate change consultant.

The Board concurred that consideration of the drafted long list of actions demanded more time than had been allocated in the current meeting. Consequently, an informal workshop would be arranged at a date in the near future when members had more time to digest the proposals, discuss with one another and arrive at their recommendations. It was suggested that Alastair Atkinson attend the workshop to act as a facilitator and guide. The Democratic Services Officer would canvass for an agreeable date.

CA

In addition, it was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would canvass for dates for regular informal workshop-style meetings for the Board every other month i.e., the month during which the Board did not meet formally.

CA

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Website

In regard to the matter of the proposed webpage for the council's climate change actions that had been raised earlier in the meeting the CCO shared his vision for the design.

The Board suggested the page might have links to local climate change groups.

The CCO would be meeting with the council's Web Team to progress.

NP

Car Free Day

Guildford's Car Free Day (CFD) would take place on Sunday 24 September. Board members were encouraged to attend and to experience the wealth of stalls and information showcasing air quality, biodiversity and climate change from a number of organisations. These included the University of Surrey, that would be showing award winning animations in the Electric Theatre. The event was smaller than the previous year due to road closure permissions. The entire event this year would be funded from Government funding sources and not by the

council.

The Board suggested that next year the energy arising the Car Free Day might leverage additional activity, possibly in a further commitment to modal shift for a period either side of the day itself. For example, GEF would be encouraging people to give up one journey a week following CFD.

CCB Chair

Cllr Potter had received two expressions of interest from Board members in regard to taking up the role of Chair going forward. The Board would be notified of the outcome.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The CCB would meet formally on the following dates:

15 November 2023, 2:30pm, Room 2 and via Teams

25 January 2024, 2:30pm, Room 6 and via Teams

20 March 2024, 2:30pm, Room 6 and via Teams

Bi-monthly informal meeting dates would be canvassed.