

## CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2023

Present:

Councillor Catherine Houston (Chair)

Councillor Joanne Shaw (Co-Chair)

Councillor Amanda Creese

Councillor James Jones

Councillor Richard Mills

Councillor George Potter

Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith

Councillor Catherine Young

Councillor Steve Williams, Waverley Borough Council

Robin Taylor, Joint Executive Head of Organisational Development

Nat Prodger, Climate Change Officer

Carrie Anderson, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Alastair Atkinson, GEF

Ben McCallan, SCC

Martin Wiles, Head of Sustainability, University of Surrey

Sam Peters, Guildford Zero

#### Action By

#### 10. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Catherine Houston (Co-Chair) chaired the meeting. There was a round of introductions. Martin Wiles, Head of Sustainability was the new representative from the University of Surrey. All were welcomed.

#### 11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Ian Doyle, Joint Strategic Director for Transformation and Governance.

#### 12. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that any additional informal meetings of the Board would be convened on an ad-hoc basis and not to be programmed every other month as set out.

There were no further comments.

The minutes of the meeting held 20 September 2023 were approved.

**13. CCB ACTION TRACKER**

Nat  
Prodger

The previous decisions of the Board were set out in a tracker which was shared with the meeting.

The Board considered actions outstanding and those in progress. The Board was asked to consider if there were any actions that should be removed. It was recommended that those actions included on both the tracker and the adopted action plan should be removed from the tracker. The Board made the following comments:

- The climate change in-house video actions should be removed from the tracker list as it was no longer appropriate for the training to be delivered in-house due to capacity and resources.
- The provision of a strategic overview from the Local Economy Manager should be removed from the tracker list as this could be provided at any time and would more suitably sit within a new work programme, potentially as a 6-monthly event. The Board would need to be clear what it wanted to achieve in receiving such an update. This would need further discussion.
- The Board agreed a rolling work programme should be created which would set out the forthcoming agenda items and include routine updates from service areas.
- Given the level of content in the paper it was moved that the Board members consider the paper individually outside of the meeting and feedback to the CCO via email. The emails should be clearly labelled. Cllr Potter would send an email to all Board members through which they should send their responses. Thereafter, four members of the Board to include the CCO, Councillors Houston, Potter and Shaw would consider those responses. The default action would be to delete all of the actions in the tracker,

except where Board members found good reason to retain. This was due to the longevity of many actions listed which were largely legacy from the previous Board.

#### **14. CCB DIRECTION DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the discussion was for the Board to consider how it would wish to approach its work and make best use of its time.

The members made the following comments:

- Councillor Williams was in attendance and said that the Waverley Borough Council Board undertook monitoring of a progress report for its carbon neutrality action plan on an annual basis. The other meetings throughout the year took a more in-depth look at some of the more challenging actions within that plan, including interviewing relevant heads of service. It was suggested it might be beneficial for the Guildford Board to work in the same way given the collaboration between the two councils and shared senior officers.
- An annual update from Surrey County Council and the University was proposed. It was noted that SCC had recently produced a toolkit for local communities.
- A regular finance update would be welcome.
- That the Board's role, without micro-management, was to oversee the delivery of the action plan. It was noted that in the Board's terms of reference one of its functions was to act as a 'critical friend' and to provide oversight to the council as it worked towards achieving its objectives. In addition, the Board recognised its place in the wider community and there was a desire to spend some time interacting with external partners and stakeholders.
- There should be a means by which progress against targets in the action plan and/or priority work for this year could be measured. The schedule to attain net zero by 2030 should be clearly set out. If objectives or milestones were not being met then the role of the

Board should be to examine the challenges and to support the process to find solutions.

- The benefits of having external members sitting on the Board should help the council to be more outward looking and to be supportive of partners, business and communities to endeavour to reduce energy use.
- There was a commitment for the Board to publish an annual progress report setting out its findings. It was suggested the Board, as an Executive Working Group, should consider how its annual report could inform the Executive, Full Council and the community of those priority areas identified by the Board, the key achievements for the council to date and also the barriers to achieving so as to support positive decision making and supportive policy development.
- Once again, the need for a work programme was reiterated.
- It was suggested some climate objectives be listed as KPIs.
- It was imperative that the council develop a specific webpage to set out not only its own targets and achievements, but also to signpost local people to the resources available from Government and other key partners and organisations such as SCC, Zero, SALC and NALC etc.
- It was noted that WBC was developing a 'parish forum' for local councils to be able to exchange ideas and best practice, including climate change matters.
- It was suggested each of the six annual meetings of the Board might be themed to reflect its objectives with a least two focused purely on the achievements of the council itself as an organisation. Other meetings might be more focused on engagement and partnership working.
- It was suggested the informal meetings of the Board might look at more outward facing topics and to facilitate discussion about other matters such as looking at the

areas in which the council had not scored well recently.

- An update report should be on every agenda, but at least once a year there should be a focused session on delivery of the action plan to review priorities and identify blocks.
- Relevant Executive Heads of Service and portfolio holders would be invited to attend a Board meeting at least once a year to discuss delivery of the action plan.

## **15. PROGRESS UPDATE**

The CCO had recently delivered a presentation, 'Update on Climate Action Plan' to the Executive Briefing Group. This group was made up of the members of the Executive (Councillors) and the Corporate Management Board (CMB, senior officers).

A copy of the presentation was shared. It set out the council's carbon emissions since 2019; achievements to date including the progress made on delivery of the action plan since it was adopted in March this year; the prioritisation work undertaken by the Board at the informal October workshop and noted the pressures on further delivery given the financial position of the council.

The prioritised actions identified by the informal workshop group were included in the agenda pack for the Board. It was explained that this list had been shared and discussed with the council's Enterprise Portfolio Board (EPB) which comprised of CMB and other senior officers meeting with the purpose of looking at projects and programmes. The prioritised actions were very well received and there would be some business cases built in regard to some of the actions, notably in reducing emissions from the council's property assets. It was hoped there would be an update with regards to staffing resource at the next meeting off the CCB.

There was good news on the progress of a new webpage for climate change on the council's website. The anticipated obstacles had been unfounded and it was hoped the project would now progress quickly.

In regard to accessibility of the new website content, it was

explained that the council had its own accessibility guidance in place for documentation created by the council, but that it would work with external agencies to ensure as far as possible externally produced documents would follow either this guidance or Government guidance to ensure compliance with regulations.

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was reported that one of the outcomes of Surrey Climate Commission's contract with SCC was to create an online Forum for community groups, and one topic field for this would be parish councils. SCC Hoped to secure resource to help build parish climate action plans.

The Guildford Repair Cafe, located at the Hive, was seeking support either in terms of specialist volunteering (such as PAT testing) or simply by spreading the word about its work. It was suggested a mention might be made in the councils' waste leaflet that was circulated to every household. Contact details for the Repair Cafe were as follows:

Susi Brown  
Volunteer Co-ordinator  
Guildford Repair Cafè  
repair.cafe.guildford@gmail.com  
07306029410

There would a 2-hour training session open to every Guildford Borough councillor on the basics of climate change delivered by Surrey Learn.

SCC would make available to all GBC staff and councillors a climate change training module. This would be added to the action plan.

**17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

24 January 2024 2:30pm  
20 March 2024 2:30pm

There would be a discussion at the January meeting about running an informal insert session in February to discuss the

progress of the website.