

Climate Change Board

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 20 March 2024

Present:

Councillor Catherine Houston (Chair)

Councillor Joanne Shaw

Councillor Amanda Creese

Councillor Richard Mills OBE

Councillor George Potter

Councillor Catherine Young

In attendance:

Robin Taylor, Executive Head of Service (Organisational Development)

Nat Prodger, Climate Change Officer

Alastair Atkinson, GEF

Ben McCallan, SCC

Martin Wiles, Head of Sustainability, University of Surrey

Carrie Anderson, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Guests:

Councillor Richard Lucas, Lead Councillor for Finance and Property

Richard Bates, Interim Joint Strategic Director for Finance (s.151)

Terena Plowright, Greening Campaign

Action By

28. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Councillor Catherine Houston, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table and online.

29. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sam Peters, Guildford Zero.

30. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January were confirmed as correct and there were no matters arising.

31. Action Tracker

The Action Tracker was noted. Completed actions should be removed. The mapping tool would be presented to a future

Nathaniel
Prodger

meeting of the Joint Management Team (JMT). There was no plan to present it at a meeting of Executive Briefing, although this could take place when the forthcoming CCB Annual Report was considered.

The font size should be reviewed prior to agenda publication.

32. CCO Update

The session with Board members and the Digital Team to develop the website had been successful. Final comments should be submitted by close on 21 March.

Nathaniel
Prodger

The Annual Carbon Report from APSE was expected to be received the week commencing 25 March.

The council was preparing to hold a public event on 9 June to celebrate Big Green Week. This would be similar to Car Free Day which was held in September. It was noted that public transport providers had not yet been engaged to partner with the council in regard to these events but that it would be a good idea to approach them on the matter. Ben was asked to explore an opportunity to raise this as SCC was the Transport Authority.

Ben
McCallan

A Comms plan would be drawn up for both events.

33. Partner Updates

The GEF was running some volunteering sessions at the Mount in regard to habitat biodiversity.

The Rosamund Community Garden was going strong.

SCC's approach to ash die-back at Newlands Corner had resulted in some felling which had caused concern, especially in regard to public access and safety. Ben would circulate a link to the SCC webinar and would connect with and Alastair outside of the meeting to discuss.

Ben
McCallan

SCC was running 3 workshops during May and June with 25 attendees each in regard to its Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Stakeholders would be invited. Districts/boroughs and community groups would be invited to 3 larger workshops in September. Ben would connect with Martin outside of the meeting in regard to the University's involvement.

Ben
McCallan

The Greener Futures programme would be looking at behaviour change with UNIS in mid-summer to promote pro-environmental and low-carbon behaviours. This would be

website based. SCC would be engaging with GBC and WBC in this regard during early April. Ben would liaise with Nat and Councillor Potter.

Ben
McCallan

Zero would be reopening at 168 High Street on Saturday 20th April and would include a National Repair Day event. Zero had attracted £350,000 of National Lottery Reaching Communities fund.

UNIS echoed the behaviour change work that was being conducted with SCC, the Institute and the fellows. Additional resource had been recruited to look at demand management and supply. Also, the University's Scope 3 emissions had been mapped and it was seeking to embed sustainability principles into its procurement process.

34. Finance Update

Councillor Richard Lucas, lead councillor for Finance and Property and Richard Bates, Interim Joint Strategic Director of Finance joined the meeting.

It was acknowledged that the council had undergone a challenging previous nine months financially. Now, work was underway to produce a new Corporate Plan and within that plan there would be a balance between maintaining a prudent financial approach and the council's carbon reduction commitments. It was explained there would be choices and trade-offs to be made.

When the previous Corporate Plan was written the council had only recently declared a climate emergency and also set out its ambition to reach net zero by 2023. Consequently, the details set out in the previous plan were relatively general. Since then, a comprehensive action plan had been written and adopted by the Executive. Moving forward, the council would be seeking to make the best use of available funds and, importantly, to seek external funding to progress the actions in the climate change action plan. The new Corporate Plan would be more specific in setting out the council's objectives and how those would be funded, albeit clearly there would be a process of prioritisation. Prioritised actions where the best returns could be realised had been agreed with the Joint Management Team (JMT). It was suggested the council may

benefit from drawing up a framework to assist with future prioritisation. The council was encouraged to leverage funds and to be bold. The first draft of the new Corporate Plan was expected in the next few weeks and final sign off and adoption by mid-July.

The Finance Team was working on a new Procurement Strategy with six or seven climate change action plan items to be addressed, including Scope 3 emissions. A draft strategy would be coming forward in the next three to four months. Last year WBC had implemented a Sustainable Procurement Policy, specifically to ensure all procurement decisions kept environmental priorities at the forefront and it was proposed GBC could do the same. The Board requested an update on this piece of work to be delivered this autumn. Carrie to add to the Work Programme

Carrie
Anderson

This September the council would be procuring its energy contract which was an opportunity to contribute to the council's overall carbon targets. It was noted that green energy choices were not always the most expensive, but it was important to reduce energy usage as well as to seek low carbon options. The Executive would be involved in fully evaluating all of the options when the time came to make a procurement decision in this regard.

The council had an energy map and was seeking a resource in the Assets team to measure and monitor the data. Nat should be involved in taking this forward.

Nat
Prodger

It was noted that Waverley Borough Council had secured £1.3m in Salix funding for Farnham Leisure Centre. There was an 'invest to save' programme in place across GBC where underspends could be used to submit external bids for additional funding. The creation of a new role of Fund Bidding Officer was recommended by the Board and was also supported by the JMT. This post was in the climate change action plan as a specific action.

The matter of the Surrey Pension Fund, which was also an action in the climate change action plan, would be taken up outside of the meeting by Richard Bates.

Richard
Bates

The Board reflected that it was important to remember the co-benefits of acting to reduce carbon such as the energy savings made by tenants when the council undertook property improvements. The council could act smartly by improving tenant housing and reducing emissions across the state. Nat would be progressing this as a strategic approach with Finance.

Nat
Prodger

The council had placed sustainability and climate change within Organisational Development as it was a key strategic element with an adopted action plan that spread across the whole council.

Separately, it was noted that one of the largest areas of greenspace in the borough was MoD land at Ash Ranges. It was anticipated that via the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, SCC would be engaging with all major landowning stakeholders including the MoD to attain a coordinated approach to biodiversity.

Nat would discuss golf course biodiversity with Cllr Lucas outside of the meeting.

Nat
Prodger

There was a discussion about the benefits of thermal imaging cameras in enabling householders to understand the energy efficiency of their homes. SCC was currently running a scheme in various locations around the county. Ben would pick up the topic with the appropriate officers and councillors outside of the meeting.

Ben
McCallan

In conclusion the Finance Team would be linking the Medium Term Financial Plan to the new Corporate Plan to deliver on as many of the climate actions as was possible.

35. Greening Campaign Presentation

The Chair welcomed Terena Plowright from the Greening Campaign who gave a presentation setting out the history of the campaign and how it collaborated with local communities today.

The Campaign had begun in Hampshire in 2007 in response to the climate emergency and was still largely based in Hampshire, although some work had been done with some

communities near Guildford in 2007. The thrust of the campaign was to engage with concerned ordinary people who did not know what to do about climate change, and to help them to organise into self-supporting local volunteer groups who made small, simple lifestyle changes encouraged others to the same. The background to the formation of the Greening Campaign can be found on the website:

[The Greening Campaign, engaging communities, climate change \(greening-campaign.org\)](http://greening-campaign.org)

Following the Covid pandemic health crisis and the energy crisis the campaign consulted with community groups and found that with people now had had other concerns such as the crisis in nature, the threat to habitats and biodiversity. There was a call for expert help from communities to provide education and a steer towards tackling these issues at a local level. Greening submitted a bid to the National Lottery for funding to develop and support initially 20 trial local groups in Hampshire and was successful. Thereafter National Lottery was secured to roll out the campaign across the county. The new campaign was based around five strategic 'pillars' which were Waste Prevention, Space for Nature, Health Impacts of Climate Change, Cycle of the Seed (Food) and Energy Efficient Warmer Homes. The expertise came from partnerships with Hampshire County Council, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Garden Organic. Monitoring and evaluation was undertaken by the University of Southampton. The focus of the work was to make local people feel empowered to make a difference in their homes, gardens and communities, not to focus on the global players over whom they felt they had no influence and to have fun doing it.

It was explained that to run the campaign in a local community would need at least a population of 400 households. Where smaller communities had been involved there had been a link up with another neighbourhood. The upper limit was 12-14,000 households. Any community larger than this would not be able to effect ownership of the programme. At the start, Greening was usually contacted by local people and then there would be a process of attracting and engaging more local volunteers via a public meeting to get the campaign going. After the public meeting, the

community volunteers would take ownership of the campaign locally.

The Board heard that the National Lottery had invited the Greening Campaign to reapply for funding to rollout the campaign across the southeast and also to include a climate adaptation package.

The campaign had experience of working with less-advantaged communities in Gosport and Eastleigh.

The Board thanked Terena Plowright for attending the meeting and for her presentation. There was a strong expression of interest in Guildford Brough Council working with the Greening Campaign going forward, and perhaps for Waverley Borough Council as well. The GBC Comms team should be involved going forward. Terena would be in contact with Nat once she had met with the National Lottery which was expected to take place the following week.

36. Work Programme

Energy use across the council's estate was the substantive item for the next Board meeting on 22 May. This would be with the exception of the Spectrum Leisure Centre as officers would most likely be unable to update at that stage as work was ongoing.

The council's APSE emissions report would also be discussed at the next meeting.

37. Dates of Future Meetings

38. AOB

Pride in Surrey would be running an event in Stoke Park this September and it was reported that nationally, the organisation is working towards carbon neutral events. The council would be seeking to produce a sustainability policy guidance for any third party running events on council property.

An annual calendar of sustainability events would be included on the new website. It would include national days as well as local events. The go-live date for the new website was still on track for April.