

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report of Director of Strategic Services

Author: Marieke van der Reijden, Head of Asset Management (Climate Change Lead)

Tel: 01483 444995

Email: marieke.van.der.reijden@guildford.gov.uk

Lead Councillor responsible: Jan Harwood

Tel: 07507 505363

Email: jan.harwood@guildford.gov.uk

Date: 25 August 2020

## **New Climate Change and Innovation Boards**

### **Executive Summary**

On 19 March 2019, the Executive approved a new Innovation Strategy for 2019-20 reflecting the dynamic and at times fast-changing nature of Innovation. The Strategy addressed the Council's Innovation theme of the Corporate Plan. It was developed, coordinated and managed by an existing Innovation Strategy Board to provide economic leadership to deliver sustainable and proportionate growth.

On 23 July 2019, the Council adopted a motion to declare a Climate Emergency. The creation of a separate Climate Change Task Group proposed within the Innovation Strategy for 2019-20 was subsumed into the creation of one board, the Climate Change and Innovation Board in August 2019. This Board would report to the Executive and have overall responsibility for:

- developing the Council's climate change strategy; and
- overseeing the delivery and carrying out of an ongoing review of the Council's Innovation Strategy 2019-20.

Since its first meeting in August 2019, the role of the CCIB has expanded and the Lead Councillor for Climate Change – who also has portfolio responsibility for innovation - would like to separate the board into two distinct functions, climate change and innovation to enable a more focussed working group for each of the two areas.

With the Executive's agreement, the Lead Councillor for Climate Change proposes the disbanding of the CCIB and the creation of two new executive working groups:

- i) Climate Change Board; and
- ii) Innovation Board.

## **Recommendation to the Executive**

- (1) That the existing Climate Change and Innovation Board be disbanded.
- (2) That two new working groups be established, namely the Climate Change Board and the Innovation Board.
- (3) That the terms of reference of each Board, including the respective memberships, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report be approved.

### Reason for Recommendation:

To facilitate a more focussed approach to this important work.

**Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To ask the Executive to consider the benefit of disbanding the Climate Change and Innovation Board (CCIB) and to appoint two new executive working groups; the Climate Change Board and Innovation Board. The Executive is asked to approve the draft terms of reference and appoint councillors and officers to each Board (see Appendices 1 and 2).

## **2. Strategic Priorities**

- 2.1 On 19 March 2019, the Executive approved a new Innovation Strategy for 2019-20 reflecting the dynamic and at times fast-changing nature of Innovation. This Strategy addressed the Council's Innovation theme of the Corporate Plan and was based on the three strategic priorities sitting beneath that theme, as follows:
  1. Facilitating smart places infrastructure across Guildford
  2. Guildford as the Innovators' location of choice
  3. Future Guildford - working to improve value for money and efficiency in Council services
- 2.2 On 23 July 2019, the Council adopted a motion to declare a Climate Emergency that included the following commitments:
  1. Working with partners across the Borough to evaluate and determine how and when Guildford Borough could become carbon neutral
  2. Working towards making the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030
  3. Establishing the necessary governance structures, investment plans and officer resources in order for the Council to build a strong foundation to deliver progressively ambitious carbon reductions across our operations
  4. Establishing a borough-wide Climate Change Partnership consisting of representatives from all stakeholders across all sectors

5. Developing, within 12 months, a clear action plan and timescale for being net-zero carbon across our Council operations, starting with a review of what has already been achieved and plans already instigated
  6. Delivering a joint Member-Officer training programme to enable a shared understanding of how to deliver the above, starting in September 2019
- 2.3 A list of draft priorities across the following four strategic themes, which included climate change and innovation within two of the Council's themes, was agreed by the Executive at its meeting on 21 January 2020 in preparation of a new Corporate Plan:
- Climate Change and Environment
  - Housing and Community
  - Economy and Regeneration
  - Improved Council

### **3. Background**

#### Climate Change and Innovation Board

- 3.1 The CCIB was created from what was previously the Innovation Strategy Board, which worked on 3 main themes set out in the approved Innovation Strategy for 2019-20.
- 3.2 A separate Climate Change Task Group was proposed within the Innovation Strategy, which was then subsumed into the creation of one board, the CCIB, which would report to the Executive and have overall responsibility for:
- developing the Council's climate change strategy; and
  - overseeing the delivery and carrying out of an ongoing review of the Council's Innovation Strategy 2019-20.
- 3.3 The CCIB was to have an oversight of the necessary actions in order to ensure that there is a co-ordinated effort across the Council and develop a strategy that puts the Council at the forefront of promoting measures that will facilitate and encourage the Borough to be carbon neutral, reduce levels of carbon emissions, and to respond to the declared Climate Emergency. It was also to take account of the Climate Change Framework, which was adopted as part of the Innovation Strategy 2019-20, giving careful thought to prioritisation and practical measures that can be achieved.
- 3.4 For innovation, the CCIB would continue to facilitate and encourage investment in digital and other Smart infrastructure in the Borough, further develop our key high growth sectors and promote Guildford as the Innovator's location of choice and early adopter of new technologies. This work was building on a proposal for a tri-partite Business-Council-University task group to move Guildford towards a Smart City culture, a new business-led Innovation Forum (to include relevant CCIB members) as set out in the Innovation Strategy Action and Delivery Plan.
- 3.5 Since August 2019, six meetings have taken place.

- 3.6 At the October 2019 meeting the members agreed to establish sub-groups to pursue the following climate change topics in priority order:
- Planning
  - Transportation
  - Trees and green spaces
  - Procurement
  - Waste
- 3.7 The first three were accomplished, with the CCIB members receiving presentations on these topics.
- 3.8 The Board also received regular updates from lead with items brought to the meeting covering the following four areas:
- Innovation – Rural
  - Innovation – Businesses
  - Climate Change – Energy
  - Climate Change – Waste, Vehicles and Transport
- 3.9 Community engagement featured regularly in board member discussions and whether this would be best managed in the form of a climate change partnership, business-led innovation forum or youth forum. The Board agreed that consideration needed to be given to how to engage with the wider community and develop suitable partnerships and suggested that they build on existing arrangements.
- 3.10 An update of the work of the CCIB is due to be reviewed at the next Place-making and Innovation Executive Advisory Board meeting on 7 September 2020.

#### Proposed new Climate Change Board and Innovation Board

- 3.11 Over recent months the function of the Board has expanded, and the lead councillor feels it would be beneficial to separate the board into two distinct boards, climate change and innovation, to enable a more focussed agenda for each of the two areas.
- 3.12 The Executive is being asked to consider the establishment of two new boards, one for Climate Change and one for Innovation. In accordance with the Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, the Executive may appoint the working groups for such purposes as they shall specify and shall determine:
- (i) the terms of reference of each Board
  - (ii) the number of councillors on each Board
  - (iii) whether each Board should be cross-party, and
  - (iv) the time for which each Board is expected to operate.

- 3.13 New draft terms of reference for each Board are provided at Appendices 1 (Climate Change Board) and 2 (Innovation Board). These outline the main aims and objectives and how the boards will run. Each group will take forward the work previously covered by the CCIB with a particular focus on the following key priorities:

Climate Change Board (Appendix 1)

- 1) **Energy** – Energy supply and performance
- 2) **Infrastructure** – Planning and low carbon infrastructure
- 3) **Businesses and communities** – Engagement and education

Innovation Board (Appendix 2)

- 1) **Smart City Infrastructure** – Including improving full fibre connectivity
- 2) **Economic growth (Sector Development)** – With a primary focus on Digital Games and Digital Health but also supporting lead partners with other high growth sectors such as cyber security and space
- 3) **Service Delivery** – Encouraging collaboration with the local technology ecosystem through the establishment of an Innovation Forum

- 3.14 The Executive may appoint individual councillors to each Board or ask political group leaders to nominate councillors for membership in accordance with the number of seats each political group has been allocated to the Board.

- 3.15 In consultation with the Leader and the lead councillor, the councillors considered for nomination are included in the draft Terms of Reference.

- 3.16 The terms of reference also propose that membership of each Board includes officers or persons from outside the authority that the Executive may consider appropriate to appoint in an advisory capacity only.

#### **4. Consultations**

- 4.1 The Lead Councillor with portfolio responsibility for climate change and innovation has been consulted, together with the Leader, and both agree with the recommendations of this report.

#### **5. Key Risks**

- 5.1 The opportunity exists to take forward and develop the work already undertaken by the CCIB and use this for work continuing under the two new boards for climate change and innovation.

- 5.2 There is a risk that the Council could overcommit resources to achieve the commitments in these two key areas of climate change and innovation.

Consideration also needs to be given to prioritise delivery of the Council's Recovery Plan and whether adequate resources exist to deliver expectations of the Board. Through careful consideration of what measures and actions are reasonable and most effective for the Council to take, recognising officer commitments and resources, officers will be best placed to manage this risk.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 No immediate financial implications.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 No legal implications apply.

## **8. Human Resource Implications**

8.1 No HR implications apply.

## **9. Equality and Diversity Implications**

9.1 This duty has been considered in the context of this report and it has been concluded that there are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

## **10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

10.1 This Council declared a climate emergency and passed a motion confirming its commitment to reducing carbon emissions on 23 July 2019. The recommended actions will help towards tackling the problem across the borough and county.

## **11. Summary of Options**

11.1 The Executive has two options, which are:

1. To split the CCIB into the two new boards as recommended or
2. To make no change to the CCIB (not recommended).

## **12. Conclusion**

12.1 Climate change and innovation remain strategic themes for the Council. The Innovation Strategy 2019-20 outlines key priorities for the Council to improve digital infrastructure and promote economic development and innovation across the borough. The Council's pledge towards a reduction in carbon emissions continues.

12.2 The CCIB was set up to push forward improvements and actions in these two areas. However, there is more that can be done and the work of the proposed two new boards will be more focussed and higher achieving in seeking solutions to address both innovation and climate change locally, regionally and where possible, nationally.

12.3 Officers propose the Executive endorses the recommendation to support the appointment of two new boards, a new Climate Change Board and an Innovation Board in accordance with their newly formed memberships and terms of references.

**13. Background Papers**

None

**14. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Climate Change Board – Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: Innovation Board – Terms of Reference