

CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2023

Present:

Councillor George Potter (Chairman)
Councillor Diana Jones
Councillor Paul Spooner
Councillor Deborah Seabrook
Councillor Catherine Young

In attendance:

Alistair Atkinson, Guildford Environmental Forum
Francesca Castelo, Economic Policy Officer
Ian Doyle, Joint Strategic Director: Transformation & Governance
Debbie Hickman, GBC Comms
Ben McCallan, SCC and Guildford Zero
Prof. Bob Nichol (UNIS)
Nat Prodger, Climate Change Officer
Robin Taylor, Executive Head of Service: Organisational Development
Fotini Vickers, Sustainability Manager, Waverley Borough Council
Carrie Anderson, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Action By

32. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Prof. Bob Nichol (UNIS) who had joined the meeting for the first time.

The Chairman explained that, with regard to the respective lead councillors and lead officers, reciprocal invitations had been exchanged between Guildford and Waverley Borough Council's Climate Change Boards to sit in attendance.

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Marieke van der Reijden, Joint Executive Head of Service for Property and Assets and Waverley Borough Councillor Steve Williams (Climate Change Lead).

34. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November were agreed as correct. The approved minutes would be published on the Council's website. There were no matters arising.

35. ACTION TRACKER

Unfortunately, due the global Microsoft outage, the Board was unable to view the Action Tracker on the Teams site. The Action Tracker would be circulated with the draft minutes.

Carrie
Anderson

36. GUILDFORD CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The action plan had been presented to the Corporate Management Board (CMB) the previous week. It had been acknowledged by CMB that the action plan was ambitious and covered business and activity across the entire Council. Officers working on transformation and organisational change would begin to embed the action plan working alongside service leads following adoption. It was clear that funding was not available immediately for certain actions but that funding would become available over time and the Council needed to be ready to take advantage of those opportunities. It was noted that the list of actions would be subject to modification and development over time in the form of a 'living document'. CMB was supportive of the action plan overall.

Nat
Prodger

Since the Board last reviewed the action plan there had been some amendments to the action plan following additional feedback from service areas. Social housing would be working to a different timescale to the Council's overall 2030 deadline due to Government funding streams which would become available according to the national emissions deadline of 2050. The Council's ambition was that all housing stock would have a minimum EPC rating of C by 2035 or 2030 for 'fuel poor' residences.

It was noted that the Council was in the process of reviewing its economic strategy and within the revised draft document there was a section named 'Planet' which set out how the Council might mitigate its economic activity by taking environmental action. The economic strategy also had an action plan which would coordinate with and develop alongside the climate change action plan. Both actions plans were described as 'living documents'.

The APSE estimated overall cost of £58 million for the Council to reduce its emissions to only offsetting measures was subject to much variability. Data from other councils had been used to arrive at the total figure and a more realistic projection should be properly costed. Presently, there were some budgeted actions such as the purchase of EV dustcarts, but no further specific funding allocation had been made by the Council so far. It would be the responsibility of individual service areas to take forward allocated actions within

existing budgets. Salix ¹ funding was suggested as one option for the council. This funding became available in phases but there were not any current opportunities from this source. It was expected that Surrey County Council were likely to receive some direct funding for the rural economy and supporting business which could include grants or loans for energy efficiencies. It was suggested that the Council might prioritise the actions in the plan those which would have the most impact and co-benefits to fund those first i.e. improving greenspace which would also make improvements to residents health and well-being.

The draft report and action plan would be considered privately by the Executive / Management Liaison Group the following week, prior to submission to Joint Executive Advisory Board meeting on 13 February which would be a meeting open for the public to join. Thereafter, the Executive would consider the action plan for adoption on 23 February. It was suggested that the action plan might be considered by full Council, although constitutionally the proper adoption route was via the Executive. The Executive might refer the action plan to full Council if that was its wish.

37. REVISIT ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION

The Climate Change Officer shared a revised draft of the climate emergency declaration with the Board.

Nat
Prodger

In reflection of the comments made by the Board on 30 November, it was proposed that Scopes 1 and 2 emissions be included in the original declaration deadline of 2030. Scope 3 emissions however, would require an extended deadline as there was not yet a methodology in place for calculating or influencing Scope 3. Although APSE had identified the Council's Scope 3 emissions to a degree, it was suggested that a dedicated consultant might be contracted to work with the Council's procurement team to review practice and further understand any constraints regarding Scope 3. It was suggested that Scope 3 emissions could be split into two groups – the Council's own emissions and those of the Council's supply chain. This might help in addressing Scope 3 overall.

The revised declaration now included reference to biodiversity and air quality which had also been included in the action plan itself. Members of the Board welcomed the expanded remit and it was acknowledged that there would need to be strong engagement with partners in these areas. Ben McCallan reported that the Global Centre for Clean Air Research (UNIS) would use £40,000 in funding for urban greening and biodiversity projects at Sandfield

¹ **Salix Finance** is wholly owned by the Government and operates as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), under the sponsorship of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). It is the delivery body for the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) and the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF).

Primary School ² in collaboration with Zero Carbon Guildford and parents of the pupils. In addition, Surrey Wildlife Trust had commissioned a report for SCC on urban biodiversity opportunity areas ³. Ben would liaise with Nat and Robin to arrange for appropriate GBC input into those two pieces of work.

Ben
McCallan

The Chairman confirmed with the Board that the revised declaration would sit within the action plan and would be received by the Executive as the Council's current interpretation and response to the climate emergency. It was not necessary for the revised declaration to be taken back to full Council for any further endorsement.

38. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME DISCUSSION FOR THE CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD

The Chairman explained that by the time the Board next met on 29 March it was expected that the Executive would have adopted the action plan. Consequently, the Board should consider its future role and how it would proceed to review and support the implementation of the actions. This might include periodically inviting Executive Heads of Service to provide updates and discuss successes and any challenges or obstacles. In addition, the Chairman proposed that in future the Board might convene in-depth information sessions on particular action plan topics such as solar energy generation, the biodiversity crisis or decarbonising the Council's housing stock. Such sessions would inform and develop the Board as an expert knowledge hub to enhance its advice to the Executive. It was suggested such in-depth sessions might take place every other board meeting. The Chairman took comments on those proposals.

Members were supportive of the way forward outlined by the Chairman and suggested in-depth sessions on community engagement and exploring funding channels. But it was emphasised that such in-depth studies should only be undertaken by the Board to further the implementation of the action plan. With regard to community involvement, it was important that the Council act in a leadership role, not only by example but to seek to bring residents with it on the journey. Changes to services or actions taken by the Council to fulfil its objectives with regard to climate change would need to be clearly explained so that the public, as council taxpayers, could understand the reasoning behind it. Since the Council was estimated to be responsible for around just 1.1% of emissions across the borough, public engagement and communications was a major pillar of the action plan and it was important that those policies were developed promptly.

It was noted that the collaboration with Waverley Borough Council

² [£40,000 Secured for Sandfield Primary Urban Greening \(zerocarbonguildford.org\)](https://www.zerocarbonguildford.org/)

³ [Biodiversity Opportunity Areas | Surrey Wildlife Trust](https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org/)

offered key opportunities to cooperate and work jointly, not only in terms of funding objectives, but to lend weight to negotiations with other stakeholders, including SCC and Government.

The Joint Strategic Director for Governance and Transformation welcomed all suggestions and observed that the action plan would be filtered according to those actions that were easiest to achieve in terms of financial costs and resources, which would be undertaken first, ranking to those which required the greatest levels of funding and transition. The in-depth sessions could inform and provide learning for the Council from the expertise and experience of partner organisations who had already undertaken change, hopefully providing a future way forward for the most challenging of tasks in the action plan. The Board stressed there should be no waste of officer resource.

The Chairman proposed that there should be an in-depth session at the next meeting of the Board to consider community engagement to include input from the local economy and parish council sources. Comms would be invited to give a presentation. It was suggested a representative from Experience Guildford be invited to attend. SCC had presented to the Board previously and set out a plan for local engagement work. The Board heard the climate change team at SCC was currently small and capacity limited, however some engagement work with regard to energy and biodiversity was taking place in West Horsley and Albury. It was expected that SCC would be contacting districts and boroughs in the next month in regard to communications with local residents. The Chairman asked Ben McCallan to contact him directly with regard to Shalford Parish Council.

Debbie
Hickman

Ben
McCallan

Officers would review the action plan to filter and distil those actions reliant upon both community and partner engagement so as to provide a clear picture of the strands of work that required focus. A meeting would be held with the Chairman to discuss the outcome in advance of the next meeting and a list on invitees drawn up.

Nat
Prodger

Probably the clearest climate change and air quality issue for residents of Guildford and Waverley was transport. Overall, there was a need for a communications channel between the Borough Council and SCC that did not duplicate or conflict. It was suggested the SCC Partnerships Team might be engaged on this matter, but officers from all three councils would meet to determine a way forward and report back to the Board in March.

Ben
McCallan
Robin
Taylor

It was suggested that the CCO would present to the Parish Clerks liaison meeting planned for March to inform on the development and progress of the action plan and to consult on what the parishes would like to see the Council doing with regard to climate change. It was noted that parishes were at varying degrees of considering climate change. There should be a separate

Nat
Prodger

Nat
Prodger

conversation in advance between the Chairman, CCO and Cllr Young.

39. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for the Board to consider.

40. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was Wednesday 29 March at 10:30am via Teams.