

MINUTES OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

12 March 2024

PRESENT:

Members of the Working Group: Councillors Picker (Chair), Harrington, Ms Livesey and Roodhouse.

Officers: Dan Green (Deputy Chief Executive), Tom Kittendorf (Chief Officer – Leisure and Wellbeing), Nicola Smith (Chief Officer – Growth and Investment), Alan Carr (Sustainability West Midlands).

36. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 February were not included in the agenda pack.

AGREED THAT – the minutes of the meeting held on 29 February be circulated following the meeting.

37. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor Rabin.

38. CLIMATE RISK AND ADAPTION PROJECT

Alan Carr (Sustainability West Midlands (SWM)) shared a presentation explaining a background to climate adaptation. This included a headline summary of national impacts of climate change and how adaptation was essential to protect the Council's assets: buildings, businesses, environment, people and society.

The presentation provided an overview of the interventions that may be required on a national scale, including hard interventions, quick wins and nature-based solutions. The group were given an overview of the current project, detailing work relating to a risk assessment for Rugby Borough, followed by an adaptation plan.

Alan Carr set out the methodology that would be applied to this project and what the key outputs of the project will be.

AGREED THAT –

- (1) the group noted the importance of meaningful engagement / consultation and would further consider how this could best be achieved,
- (2) the group noted the importance of ensuring action was progressed at pace following receipt of the report,
- (3) the Deputy Chief Executive would arrange the circulation of the presentation slides with the minutes,

- (4) the Deputy Chief Executive would put SWM in contact with Town Centre Regeneration Public Realm Consultants.

39. NATURE CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Chief Officer – Growth and Investment, introduced the project which had been commissioned by WCC and delivered in partnership with District and Borough Councils, together with Solihull and Coventry. The project looked at the opportunities which surround biodiversity net gain.

The Chief Officer – Growth and Investment, had circulated some background papers relating to the strategy to give members of the Working Group some insight into the project.

AGREED THAT –

- (1) the group noted that all partners had agreed that the project would be taken to decision makers after the elections and,
- (2) the group noted the importance of ensuring that the benefits of biodiversity net gain are achieved locally and any strategy must be led by this principle.

40. RYTON GARDEN ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

The Chief Officer – Leisure and Wellbeing, introduced a proposal for a partnership with Garden Organic and how some of their work could be implemented in Rugby. This would support community education, master gardening, organic growing etc.

AGREED THAT - the group supported the progression and commissioning of the initial proposal with further consideration to be given to the elements regarding open space management.

41. WILDFLOWER PLANTING – HIGHWAY VERGES

The Chief Officer – Leisure and Wellbeing, introduced a project which sought to introduce new wildflowers to further areas of the Borough (potentially 8 key sites).

Planting/ seeding could occur over the next two weeks and would therefore be in place for this year's growing season.

AGREED THAT –

- (1) the group supported the progression of the proposal and,
- (2) the group requested a further briefing note from the Chief Officer – Leisure and Wellbeing regarding broader changes in planting regimes.

42. CLIMATE EVENTS UPDATE

The group discussed two potential events:

- A Community Event: Presenting findings of risk and adaptation project.

- A Business Engagement Event: following Economic Development Strategy consultations.

The Chief Officer – Leisure and Wellbeing noted the opportunity to link the event with the Britain in Bloom presentation and awards.

AGREED THAT - Cllr Livesey would work with the Deputy Chief Executive on developing the proposals with the initial focus being on a community event in June / July.

43. STANDING ITEMS

There were none.

Any other business

Climate Impact Assessment – the amended Climate Impact Assessment form was approved.

AGREED THAT -

- (1) the group should meet in April if there were items of business to consider and,
- (2) a date should be agreed electronically which can be cancelled if not required. The 3 -10 April to be avoided.

CHAIR