

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

10th September 2019

CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING PARTY – PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH A CROSS-PARTY WORKING GROUP

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|------------------------------|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Guy Revans, Head of Environmental Services, Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Judith Willis, Head of Community Services |
| Ward(s) Affected | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted | N/A |
| Non-Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report sets out proposals for the establishment of a Cross Party Working Group on Climate Change, and asks Members to agree the proposed arrangements and terms of reference.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

1) a Cross Party Working Group on Climate Change be established in accordance with the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1;

and subject to the approval of recommendation (1) above

2) the Council appoint a Chair and Vice Chair of the Cross Party Working Group on Climate Change; and

3) the Council approve nominations from the political group leaders to the places on the Cross Party Working Group on Climate Change.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 There would be the cost of officer time that would be needed to support the working party.

3.2 Any proposals arising from the work of the group that might have financial implications outside of existing budgets, would require a business case and would need to go through the usual budget bid processes.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 As it is proposed that this should be an informal working group that advises the Executive Committee the political balance rules do not apply. However, it is proposed that the number of Members appointed to the group should reflect the Council's political balance.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 The issue of climate change was addressed at Full Council meeting that took place on 24th June 2019 when the Leader responded to a question from a member of the public on the issue and endorsed a call for the Council to declare a Climate Emergency. A full copy of the Leader's response as detailed in the minutes of the meeting is attached at Appendix 2 of this report.
- 3.5 As stated in the response to the question, the Council has already been proactive in looking at ways to reduce its carbon footprint, and there are many examples of steps the Council is already taking in this regard. That said, in light of the question to Council, and the current debate at a national level on the importance of addressing climate change, officers have been asked to review steps that could be taken to reduce emissions and to produce a Sustainability Action Plan.
- 3.6 Alongside this work it has been proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services that Members should establish a Cross Party Working Group on Climate Change. This report sets out proposals for the establishment of such a working party.
- 3.7 In summary the group would report to the Executive Committee in a similar manner to the Planning Advisory Panel. As a working party meetings would take place in private, but would be open for any Members to attend. It is proposed that the group should comprise 5 Members and it is suggested that it should be chaired by the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Climate Change, which is currently the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services.
- 3.8 Support for the working group would be provided by the Climate Change and Energy Support Officer and the Environmental Policy and Awareness Officer and administrative support would be provided by the Directorate Support team.
- 3.9 The role of the group would be to review and oversee the Sustainability Action Plan and to explore new proposals for measures that the Council could implement to reduce its carbon footprint. However, the working party would have no decision making powers and any recommendations arising from the group would be fed back to the Executive Committee for consideration.

- 3.10 During the Council meeting in June the Leader was asked a supplementary question with regard to the potential for the Council to engage with concerned residents about climate change. As it is proposed that the the group would be an informal cross-party working group the meetings of the group would take place in private. However, as part of the work of the group Members would be asked to consider whether to propose that the Council should undertake formal consultation in respect of relevant matters as and when considered appropriate. Any such proposals would be reported to the Executive Committee, meetings of which are held in public.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 No specific issues have been identified for the customer or in respect of equality and diversity implications.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No specific risks to the Council have been identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Draft Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 - Extract from the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 24th June 2019 containing the Leader's answer to the Question on Notice in respect of climate change.

AUTHORS OF REPORT

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