



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **CLIMATE EMERGENCY OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in  
David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40  
1BN on **WEDNESDAY 4 JANUARY 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 22 December 2022

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent “critical friend” challenge and to work with the Council’s Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds.

Note: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting virtually, in line with the Council’s Constitution. If you wish to participate, either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be viewed live using the following link: [https://youtu.be/qyE\\_oifPwIQ](https://youtu.be/qyE_oifPwIQ)

This meeting may be filmed for inclusion on the Council’s website. Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council’s control.

<b>Our Vision</b>
<b><i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i></b>
<b>Enriching Lives</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.</li> <li>• Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone.</li> <li>• Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of.</li> <li>• Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.</li> </ul>
<b>Providing Safe and Strong Communities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.</li> <li>• Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care.</li> <li>• Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish.</li> <li>• Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.</li> </ul>
<b>Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future.</li> <li>• Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy.</li> <li>• Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity.</li> <li>• Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.</li> <li>• Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow.</li> <li>• Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.</li> <li>• Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.</li> </ul>
<b>Keeping the Borough Moving</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.</li> <li>• Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions.</li> <li>• Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure.</li> <li>• Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.</li> </ul>
<b>Changing the Way We Work for You</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be relentlessly customer focussed.</li> <li>• Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers.</li> <li>• Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.</li> <li>• Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Be the Best We Can Be</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice.</li> <li>• Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working.</li> <li>• Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business.</li> <li>• Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient.</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough.</li> <li>• Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.</li> </ul>

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### Councillors

David Cornish  
Chris Johnson  
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Andy Croy  
Norman Jorgensen

Michael Firmager  
Gregor Murray

### Substitutes

Peter Dennis  
Andrew Mickleburgh

Graham Howe  
Alistair Neal

Pauline Jorgensen  
Beth Rowland

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
1		<b>ELECTION OF CHAIR</b> To elect a Chair for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.	
2		<b>APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR</b> To appoint a Vice-Chair for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.	
3		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
4		<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest.	
5		<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this Committee.  Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to: <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a>	
6		<b>MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any Member questions.	
7		<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b> To confirm the Committee's Terms of Reference as	5 - 10

agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

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**CLIMATE EMERGENCY POSITION PAPER**

11 - 14

To consider a Position Paper on progress relating to the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan – the paper will assist the Committee in developing its work programme.

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**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To agree the date for the Committee's next meeting and to confirm the proposed dates for 2023/24.

**CONTACT OFFICER**

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# Agenda Item 7

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Terms of Reference</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 January 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Resources and Assets

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

An enhanced Overview and Scrutiny function which gives greater focus to the Scrutiny of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, which is a key issue for the Borough and a priority in the Council Plan 2020/24

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is requested to consider and comment on its Terms of Reference, as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. This is an issue of high importance for the Borough and its residents. In order to scrutinise the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Committee established the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group which produced two reports (2020 and 2021).

At its meeting on 5 October 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed to recommend to Council that a Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee be established. This recommendation was subsequently approved by full Council.

The report contains the proposed Terms of Reference for the new Committee (Annex A) for consideration by Members at the first meeting.

## **Background**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's terms of reference enable it to propose amendments to the composition of and terms of reference of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the Council on the basis of political proportionality (Paragraph 6.1.4 of the Council's Constitution).

Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. The Council is committed to playing as full a role as possible in reducing Borough's carbon footprint to be net carbon zero by 2030. The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan aims to:

- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions from transport;

- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions from domestic and business properties;
- Generate more renewable energy in the Borough (e.g. the Barkham solar farm);
- Create a Local Plan that specifies net zero construction and infrastructure;
- Increase levels of carbon sequestration in the Borough through greening the environment;
- Engage with young people and support sustainable schools;
- Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill;
- Encourage behaviour change amongst residents and businesses.

Following two successful Overview and Scrutiny Climate Emergency Task and Finish Groups (2020 and 2021) the Management Committee considered and approved a Member request for the establishment of a Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

**The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the Covid-19 crisis. It is, therefore, imperative that Council resources are focussed on the vulnerable and its highest priorities.**

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£2.5k (pro rata)	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£2.5k	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£2.5k	Yes	Revenue

### **Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

The role of Overview and Scrutiny Chair attracts a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2.5k per annum.

### **Cross-Council Implications**

The Climate Emergency Action Plan impacts across the Council's operations. It is included as a key risk in the Corporate Risk Register.

**Public Sector Equality Duty**

Due regard has been given to Council's Public Sector Equality Duty. The proposed Overview and Scrutiny Committee will scrutinise the impact of the Climate Emergency Action Plan on residents across the Borough, including residents with protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010. The aim is to achieve better/fairer outcomes and increased value for money for all residents.

**Climate Emergency – The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham borough by 2030**

The proposed Overview and Scrutiny Committee will support this aim by providing "critical friend" challenge and support for the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

**List of Background Papers**

WBC Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group reports (2020 and 2021)

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<b>Telephone No</b> 0118 974 6000	<b>Email</b> neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk
<b>Date</b> 21 December 2022	<b>Version No.</b> 1

## **Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Terms of Reference**

### **1. Role of the Committee**

The role of the Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be to scrutinise, review and assist with policy development relating to:

- a) the Council's commitment to play as full a role as possible to reduce the Borough's carbon footprint to be Net Zero by 2030;
- b) implementation of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, including the annual progress report to Council;
- c) progress against recommendations, agreed by the Executive, from the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself;
- d) examples of Climate Emergency "best practice" from other local authorities and public/private sector organisations.

### **2. Terms of Reference**

In carrying out its role the Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee will:

- a) review and/or scrutinise the decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions under its remit;
- b) monitor and review performance indicators related to Council services within the remit of the Committee and question the relevant Executive Member/s and senior Officers thereon, reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee where necessary;
- c) review those areas, within the remit of the Committee, included in the Climate Emergency Action Plan, Council Plan and other Plans and Policies where targets are not being met or progress is slow;
- d) conduct scrutiny reviews or projects of a service specific nature or within the remit of the Committee, including those which are cross-cutting or corporate-wide, as may be allocated by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee from the corporately agreed work programme, including the preparation of reports and recommendations for consideration by the Executive;
- e) at the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, undertake Policy Development and Review functions as set out in Rule 6.1.3;
- f) at the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, investigate matters of concern referred to it by the Executive, Council or Council Committees;



- g) at the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, investigate matters of concern referred to it by Non-Executive Members of the Council, Corporate Leadership Team, members of the public, or external organisations, including the consideration of requests made as a “Councillor Call for Action” as defined in Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Localism Act 2011;
- h) at the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, review Executive decisions within the remit of the Committee which have been “called-in”;
- i) constitute and appoint to Task and Finish Groups as necessary.

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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Position Paper</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 04 January 2022
<b>WARD</b>	(All Wards);
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Service Manager, Climate Emergency – Sabrina Chiaretti

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Climate change poses a significant threat to our community. Increasing temperatures and more extreme weather events have negative consequences on every member of our community, and disproportionately affect those that are most socially vulnerable. Tackling climate change, by minimising the emissions from our operations and infrastructure, whilst adapting to the impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing in the borough will have positive implications on the economy, health and quality of life of our community.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee notes the progress made against the delivery of Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), and upcoming areas of focus and relative challenges.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

### **Background**

In July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council members unanimously declared a climate emergency. The declaration set out the commitment to play as full a role as possible in achieving a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

Subsequently, the council published its first Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), establishing eight key priority areas to mitigate carbon emissions. The priority areas are:

1. Transport
2. Renewable energy generation
3. Retrofitting and new developments
4. Carbon sequestration
5. Schools
6. Waste & Recycling
7. Engagement and Behaviour change
8. Council-own actions and Procurement

The Climate Emergency Action Plan aligns with the following priorities set out in the Council Plan:

- Enjoying a clean and green borough. This includes becoming net zero carbon but also providing parks and green spaces
- Keeping the borough moving. This includes encouraging active and sustainable transport modes

- Delivering the right homes in the right places. This include supporting the provision of sustainable, quality homes.
- Enriching lives. This includes encouraging more people to be involved in volunteering and community activity, taking pride in their community and looking after their own wellbeing where possible and that of their families and neighbours.

## Analysis

The latest CEAP progress report was approved by Council in September 2022. In the latest progress report, the emission trajectory has been aligned to the expected emissions of the borough by 2030. As a result, the CEAP actions are now estimated to save 214.72 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e emissions, but there will still be a shortfall of 264.27 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. So, delivering all CEAP actions will not result in a carbon neutral borough by 2030. This demonstrates the scale of the challenge. It also outlines the importance of a whole society ownership, as well as central government leadership - with devolution of statutory powers, and provision of significant funding – to enable us to reach carbon neutrality by 2030.

Since the previous progress report, a number of actions have been successfully progressed and delivered significant carbon savings, including:

- Retrofitting of multiple Council assets, including Dinton Activity Centre, Woodley Library, Carnival hub and 75 London Road
- Delivery of several carbon sequestration projects, with 15,000 trees planted across the borough
- Increase in recycling from 50 to 54%
- Improvement of the EV infrastructure, with 176 active sockets installed and a further 190 planned
- Over 1500 households been supported through the Help to Heat scheme

There continue to remain actions that need progressing. These are listed below, and they will be key priorities for the Climate Emergency team throughout 2023.

- **Costing the delivery of the CEAP.** The next iteration of the progress report will include costing against each action, as well as a timeline for implementation. This will help the Council to optimise resources and funding use.
- **Climate change adaptation.** The Council does not have a plan to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Climate change is already affecting the borough's operations and infrastructure. It is key that the Council starts planning for future impacts to minimise the negative consequences on our community, as well as on our operations and finances. Work will begin in early 2023 to assess the current and predicted risks that climate change poses to the borough.
- **The delivery of the Procurement actions in the CEAP** did not start until November 2022, due to staffing issues. The Climate Emergency Team are now working with the Procurement team to include sustainable procurement considerations in the current procurement processes, and ensure officers take into account climate considerations from project inception.
- **Providing a support function in the delivery of the CEAP actions** the Climate Emergency Team continues to work closely with all Council's teams to deliver carbon-reduction projects. Projects that the team has led on, or been closely involved in, across 2022, include a £300k application to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 to bring social houses to an EPC C rating; and the launch of the Council's Reusable Period Product Scheme. Climate change impacts

all areas of work of the Council, and so achieving carbon neutrality requires a Council-wide effort. Whilst the climate emergency team leads on the delivery of the CEAP, it is key that all departments take ownership of their actions and strive to minimise the carbon emissions from their projects.

- **Engagement and participation from community on actions.** The community deliberative process, which included a number of peer group sessions along with a resident e-panel, was hosted in 2022. The results will be available after a further phase of information gathering. The Climate Emergency Team are currently recruiting for an Engagement Officer. The Officer will be responsible for completing the community deliberative process, as well as driving internal and external engagement around all CEAP actions – working closely with our comms team – and drafting a behaviour change and engagement plan. The Climate Emergency newsletter has recently been revamped, with new, fresh content added to it and the opportunity for climate-conscious residents and organisations to feature on it. The Council has received positive feedback on it, 100 new people have now subscribed to the newsletter, and the average opening rate has increased from 50% to 60%.

The delivery of the actions is challenged by the current unprecedented financial pressure that the Council is facing. The delivery of the CEAP actions is a responsibility of each department. In light of the recent financial challenges, there is a risk that climate change considerations are not given enough weight through strategies and in decision-making, particularly if they bear a financial cost to the departments. In addition, the Climate Emergency Team does not currently have an allocated budget. Therefore, delivering any actions that are not currently included in the CEAP, or that require support from external consultancies, remains a challenge. This includes the drafting of a full Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

The capacity of the Climate Emergency Team across 2022 has been limited, due to staff changes. At present, the Climate Emergency Team includes the Climate Emergency Service Manager, and the Specialist Climate Emergency Officer. The limited capacity of the team across 2022 has affected the progresses in the delivery of the CEAP. In early 2023, the team will onboard a Climate Emergency Project Officer, with responsibilities for transport, building decarbonisation and adaptation, as well as a Climate Emergency Engagement Officer. A fully resourced team should be in place by March 2023, with positive implications on the delivery of the Council's climate ambitions.

As highlighted above, the Council alone, without additional support, cannot achieve carbon neutrality. To support the Council effort to reach the 2030 target, more help is needed from Central Government with devolution of statutory powers, and provision of additional funding. Throughout 2023, we will continue to apply to relevant government grant schemes when available, and strive to support national policy changes that provide more powers to Local Authorities to address the climate emergency.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	NA	NA	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NA	NA	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NA	NA	

### **Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

Costing the delivery of the actions included in the Climate Emergency Action Plan is a priority for the coming months. We aim to include detailed costing against each CEAP actions in the next iteration of the CEAP Progress Report.

**Cross-Council Implications** Addressing the climate emergency through the delivery of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan supports a range of Council priorities and areas of work. These include: access to clean and green spaces, promotion of sustainable and active travel modes, provision of sustainable and quality homes, improving the health and quality of life of our community. Addressing the climate emergency requires commitment from all Council departments.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

Yes, Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken into account. Climate changes affects every member of our community, particularly the most vulnerable people. Tackling the climate emergency, minimising emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change will have positive impacts on the health and quality of life of our residents.

**Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030***

Addressing the climate emergency through delivery of the CEAP will ensure the borough plays as full of a role as possible in achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

### **List of Background Papers**

Wokingham Borough Council Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 (3<sup>rd</sup>) progress report

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