



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
TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2023 AT 7.00 PM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 6 March 2023

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 or participate in 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://youtube.com/live/X4MShlpZ28o?feature=share>

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.

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

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillors

Andy Croy (Chair)

Michael Firmager

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Chris Johnson (Vice-Chair)

Norman Jorgensen

David Cornish

Gregor Murray

Substitutes

Peter Dennis

Andrew Mickleburgh

Graham Howe

Alistair Neal

Pauline Jorgensen

Beth Rowland

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
10		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
11		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2023.	5 - 10
12		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
13		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME 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 www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
14		MEMBER QUESTIONS To answer any Member questions.	
15		CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN - LINK For information – the Climate Emergency Action Plan can be viewed here: https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/open-data/climate-emergency/	

16	None Specific	CARBON SAVINGS FROM WASTE COLLECTION PROPOSALS To consider an update on the carbon savings linked to proposed changes to the waste collection service.	To Follow
17	None Specific	BARKHAM SOLAR FARM UPDATE To consider an update on the Barkham Solar Farm Project.	To Follow
18	None Specific	SOLAR FARMS DELIVERY WITHIN THE CEAP To consider an update on the delivery of solar farms within the Climate Emergency Action Plan (in addition to the Barkham Solar Farm).	To Follow
19	None Specific	CLIMATE EMERGENCY DELIBERATIVE PROCESS To consider progress relating to the deliberative process linked to the Climate Emergency Action Plan.	To Follow
20	None Specific	WORK PROGRAMME To consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2023/24.	11 - 12
21	None Specific	ACTION TRACKER To consider the Action Tracker report.	13 - 14

CONTACT OFFICER

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 JANUARY 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.11 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Andy Croy (Chair), Michael Firmager, Chris Johnson (Vice-Chair), Norman Jorgensen and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Executive Members Present

Councillors: Sarah Kerr, Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services

Officers Present

Sabrina Chiaretti, Climate Emergency Project Officer

Andrew Collins, Climate Emergency Officer

Rhian Hayes, Assistant Director Economic Development and Growth

Callum Wernham, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Chris Johnson nominated Andy Croy to be elected Chair for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year. This was seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

RESOLVED That Andy Croy be elected Chair for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Alistair Neal nominated Chris Johnson to be appointed Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year. This was seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

RESOLVED That Chris Johnson be appointed Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year.

3 APOLOGIES

An Apology for absence was submitted from David Cornish. Alistair Neal attended the meeting as a substitute.

Gregor Murray attended the meeting virtually, meaning that he could participate in discussions but not vote.

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Andy Croy declared a personal interest on the grounds that he was on the Board of the Barkham Solar Farm project.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

6 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

7 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered their Terms of Reference, set out in agenda pages 5 to 10, as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

RESOLVED That the Terms of Reference be noted.

8 CLIMATE EMERGENCY POSITION PAPER

The Committee considered the climate emergency position paper, set out in agenda pages 11 to 14, which outlined the progress made in relation to the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP).

The report outlined a number of areas where positive action had been taken, including an increased rate of recycling across the Borough, multiple Council-owned assets undergoing energy efficient retrofitting, and over 15,000 trees having been planted. Upcoming areas of focus included costing of delivery of component elements of the CEAP, sustainable procurement considerations, and supporting individual Council teams to deliver upon the CEAP. A number of challenges were present, including financial pressures relating to the cost-of-living crisis, the cost of delivering the CEAP without a dedicated climate emergency budget, and the lack of Central Government support through grants or statutory powers for Local Authorities.

Sarah Kerr (Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services), Rhian Hayes (Assistant Director Economic Development and Growth), Andrew Collins (Climate Emergency Officer), and Sabrina Chiaretti (Climate Emergency Project Officer) attended the meeting to answer Member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and queries:

- Of the planned 190 electric vehicle charging points due to be installed, would these be fast or slow chargers? Executive Member response – A mix of infrastructure would be used, suited to the location where they were to be installed;
- What additional powers, devolved from Central Government, would help the Borough achieve carbon neutrality? Officer response – For significant change to occur, Central Government would need to empower local Authorities to implement additional climate emergency policies with associated funding and grants;
- What were the timescales for costing the delivery of component elements of the CEAP? Officer response – The work programme report was started each April, with the final version ready in the summer. Best estimate costings would hope to be presented in the summer of 2023;
- Were there any additional actions that could be taken over the next few months that would have a significant impact on reaching net zero emissions? Officer response – The key issue with delivering the CEAP was that it needed to be done via building partnerships. Encouraging people, either residents or businesses, as partners to make positive changes in their lives was one of the most cost effective ways to see real change in the Borough;
- Would new house and office builds within the Borough require higher environmental standards? Executive Member response – Building regulations were mainly responsible for the standards that developments were built to, and the update to standards in June 2022 were a step up to get people ready for full implementation in 2025. Even these standards would not require a passive design, though they would reduce emissions. Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) could encourage developers to exceed standards, but we could not mandate them to do so. An Individual Executive

Member Decision paper approved an interim Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement in December 2022, which would form part of the material decision making process when considering planning applications. By 2050, eighty-percent of the UK's housing stock will have been built pre-2021, which placed a greater emphasis on retrofitting properties. Changing people's behaviour was key, and informing people and helping them understand this issue was a major focus. The home decarbonisation service was hoped to be launched soon which would provide people with the information to implement some of these changes;

- It was noted that the final climate emergency team member post was hoped to be filled by March 2023. This was the final post within the current budget envelope;
- Would WBC meet the 2030 goal of net-zero emissions? Executive Member response – The CEAP at present would not meet this goal, and it was already a significant challenge to deliver what was within the plan whilst further substantial actions would also need to be taken. The key to making progress towards this goal was increased partnership working;
- Were officers aware that utilising the Borough Design Code, which was currently being updated, could allow for enforcement of green initiatives? Officer response – This would be taken away and explored with planning officers;
- What were some examples of other Councils tackling the climate emergency particularly well? Executive Member and officer response – Different Councils were good at different things, and officers were constantly looking at examples of best practice. Wokingham was performing well, whilst Councils such as Nottingham and Bristol had large climate emergency teams with very good resourcing. Where possible, WBC tried to compare like with like, for example South Cambridgeshire had some different targets to WBC, however they had good examples of particular projects and initiatives;
- What differences would be seen if the climate emergency team had additional resources, in terms of meeting our net-zero ambitions? Officer response – Additional resourcing could mean that high-cost and high-impact schemes could be delivered quickly. The team currently had to weigh up priorities and deliver them in the most effective and efficient way possible;
- Did WBC encourage services which were outsourced to be environmentally friendly wherever possible, for example were cleaning services solvent and aerosol free? Executive Member and officer response – This was part of considerations when awarding contracts, and a more in-depth answer could be provided from officers who dealt with these negotiations. There were a multitude of contracts issued by the Council, and it was planned to assess these over time as part of the sustainable procurement process;
- It was noted that small schemes operated by the Council could more easily show people what the Council was trying to achieve, by working 'from the ground up';
- Would the Climate Emergency Engagement Officer's role include publicising the successes of the Council and encouraging residents to make lifestyle changes? Officer response – Their role would be to raise awareness of the work and actions

delivered by WBC in addition to providing information on the actions that residents could take;

- Of the 15,000 trees planted, approximately 5,000 of these were hedgerows. Would statistics such as these be more transparent in the future? Executive Member and officer response – The most recent CEAP had been amended to show that these trees were a mix of both trees and hedgerows. The Tree Strategy was currently out for consultation, and all residents and members were encouraged to get involved. A more detailed paper on our Tree Strategy could be requested by the Committee, if desired;
- It was noted that the 15,000 trees planted was the total number of trees planted across the Borough, by WBC and partners and businesses;
- It was noted that WBC could not achieve net-zero emissions by 2030 on its own, and it was crucial to work with partners, for example via delivery of tree and hedgerow planting, to achieve these ambitions.

The Committee raised a number of potential topics for future meetings, which were in summary:

- Ensuring that the Tree Strategy and tree planting projects were progressing;
- Scrutinising plans to manage traffic, congestion, and car emissions within the Borough;
- Exploring what local electricity providers were doing to improve the local network, in anticipation of higher electric vehicle uptake and usage;
- Scrutinising the home decarbonisation service – what would be included, what would it cost, and how would it be delivered;
- Monitoring the delivery and operation of WBC's solar farms;
- Ensuring that updated planning guidance made provisions for suitable environmentally friendly requirements, which were enforceable wherever possible;
- Reviewing recommendations from the 'Let's talk Climate' event;
- Understanding the impacts of behavioural change programmes;
- Understanding how we could work better as partners with the business community within the Borough to achieve net-zero ambitions;
- Reviewing the need and delivery of an energy strategy;
- Reviewing what changes had been made to the CEAP since recommendations from the two Climate Emergency Task and Finish Groups were presented;
- Assessing what had changed with relation to the CEAP since the last meeting of each Committee.

The Committee agreed that the Chair would liaise with officers to prioritise the above set of items, the first set of which would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Sarah Kerr, Rhian Hayes, Andrew Collins, and Sabrina Chiaretti be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) A written answer be provided as to whether WBC encouraged services which were outsourced to be environmentally friendly wherever possible;
- 3) The Chair liaise with officers to prioritise the potential set of items for consideration, the first set of which would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED That the next meeting of the Committee be held on 14 March 2023 at 7pm.

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CLIMATE EMERGENCY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2023/24 WORK PROGRAMME

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
23 May 2023	Task & Finish Group Recommendations	To review progress against the recommendations of the O&S Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group	Committee Request	Sabrina Chiaretti
	Traffic Reduction Targets	To scrutinise progress against the traffic reduction targets in the CEAP	Committee Request	Sabrina Chiaretti
	CEAP and the Local Plan Update	To examine how the CEAP is embedded in the Local Plan Update	Committee Request	Sabrina Chiaretti
	Retrofitting in the Community	To scrutinise progress against the retrofitting targets in the CEAP	Committee Request	Sabrina Chiaretti
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023/24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

11

Other Items Identified for Scrutiny

- Ensuring that the Borough Tree Strategy and tree planting projects are progressing;
- Scrutinising plans to manage traffic, congestion, and car emissions within the Borough;
- Exploring what local electricity providers are doing to improve the local network;
- Scrutinising the home decarbonisation service;
- Ensuring that updated planning guidance made provisions for suitable environmentally friendly requirements, which were enforceable wherever possible;
- Reviewing recommendations from the 'Let's talk Climate' event;
- Understanding how WBC could work better in partnership with the business community in order to achieve the net-zero ambition;
- Reviewing the need for and delivery of an energy strategy.

Climate Emergency O&S Committee – Action Tracker 2023/24

Climate Emergency O&S Committee – 4 January 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Climate Emergency Position Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential topics for future meetings – include in work programme• Written answer re outsourced services being environmentally friendly;• Discussion with Chair about Agenda for next meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed• Completed• Completed

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