

# 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)

<b>Contact</b> Neil Carr	<b>Service</b> Resources and Assets
<b>Telephone No</b> 0118 974 6000	<b>Email</b> neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk
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## **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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