

TITLE	Climate Emergency – Deliberative Process Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Service Manager, Climate Emergency – Sabrina Chiaretti
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Residents Services – Cllr Sarah Kerr

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Climate change affects every member of our community, particularly the most vulnerable people. Tackling the climate emergency and reducing the Council's and Borough's carbon emissions will have positive impacts on the environment, and on the health and quality of life of our residents.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes and comments on the progresses made against the Community Deliberative Process that was run in 2022 and the steps required to complete this programme of work.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Background

This paper presents an update on the Community Deliberative Process conducted in 2022, where the community was invited to discuss ideas for a net zero borough, the barriers to the achievement of this, and the solutions to address them.

In October 2021, a motion was passed that proposed the Council hosted a Community Deliberative Process for climate change. The aim of the process was to engage our Community in building a vision for what Wokingham would be like if carbon neutrality was reached.

Two pieces of work have been carried out since then:

1. A number of deliberative peer group sessions, conducted between March and April 2022
2. A residents' e-panel (online survey) conducted in September 2022

An additional phase of work is needed to complete this process. This paper discusses the results of the peer group sessions and the residents' e-panel, and the next steps required to complete this process and define a net zero vision for the borough.

Analysis

A. Peer group sessions

A series of peer group deliberative discussions was carried out across four weeks in March and April 2022. The sessions were facilitated by not-for-profit organisation “The Consultation Institute”. 60 self-selecting participants were involved, with representatives from the following groups: clerks of parish councils, council officers, pupils from both primary and secondary schools, residents, teachers and voluntary/community-sector groups.

During the sessions, the participants were prompted to address two questions:

1. How life in a net zero Wokingham Borough will be different in terms of our homes, travel, work, leisure time and the way we source food, goods and services?
2. How Wokingham Borough Council can engage the community on issues around consumption emissions, and what measures can be introduced to target and increase awareness of these emissions amongst residents?

The process encouraged participants to become immersed in the climate issue, taking into account existing projects, policies and barriers, and propose solutions to address barriers to the net zero transition.

Two key outputs were produced:

1. A report, where participants highlighted what a net zero borough would look like.
2. A list of 21 possibility statements with suggestions on barriers and solutions to a net zero borough. These covered four main themes: Energy & Homes, Travel, Waste & Recycling, Behaviour change & Consumption emissions.

These 21 possibility statements formed the basis for the residents’ e-panel.

B. Residents’ e-panel

The next step of the Community Deliberative Process was a residents’ e-panel (online survey), aimed at engaging the community more widely to understand the barriers to solutions suggested by the peer group sessions. This was conducted through the Wokingham Borough Engage platform and was live for five weeks in late August and September 2022. The survey was aimed at current and prospective residents and commuters. The survey was split into the same four themes highlighted above: Energy & Homes, Travel, Waste & Recycling, Behaviour change & Consumption emissions. 140 survey responses were collected. The survey provided further insights into the motivations and barriers that our community faces when making daily decisions which impact their carbon footprint.

Next steps

The results of the peer group sessions and residents e-panel have been useful in finding out the motivations and the barriers that residents face when making sustainable decisions. We have discovered which issues our residents care about and where they are willing to

make change and take action. There is now a need to combine the findings from the peer group sessions and residents e-panel and form a vision for a net zero borough.

The newly appointed Engagement Officer within the Climate Emergency team will be responsible for combining the results of the various elements of work of the Community Deliberative Process and sharing them with relevant stakeholders. The information gathered from the sessions and e-panel will be shared with relevant teams within the Council, including Transport, Energy, Planning, Procurement, to ensure collaboration in the drafting of future policies and programmes, including the next CEAP progress report. The findings will also be circulated amongst our community using a series of visuals, designed in a format that summarises information in an engaging, user-friendly and visually attractive way. The visuals will be used to maximise engagement around our net zero priorities.

To ensure the findings are captured properly within the fourth CEAP progress report, it is proposed that the report is submitted to Executive in September 2022, rather than July 2022. The extra time is key to enable the Climate Emergency Team to incorporate the findings from the Deliberative Process within the report, and for the Committee to review the report, and have any comments incorporated in it.

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)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£13,000	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The total funding allocated to the Deliberative Process Update was £46,000 as per the paper submitted to Executive in October 2021 titled “Community Deliberative Process for the Climate Emergency Proposal”. £13,000 remains allocated to this element of work.

Cross-Council Implications

Through the peer group sessions and residents’ e-panel, the Council has received several suggestions to transition our energy, transport and other emission sources to net zero. The suggestions will be incorporated into the next CEAP progress report, and discussed with the relevant departments to ensure they are reflected in their work programmes.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Yes, Public Sector Equality Duty has been considered. The CEAP and the paper “Community Deliberative Process for the Climate Emergency” have been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. Climate changes affects every member of our community, particularly the most vulnerable people. The suggestions proposed through the peer group sessions and residents’ e-panel and the resulting vision for a net zero borough will take into account EDI themes and we will ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is taken into account when including those recommendations in existing plans and policies.

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*

The Community Deliberative Process is a key element of the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan. It has been an opportunity to find out more about the issues that our residents care about, and investigate solutions to address those, including a vision for a net zero borough. We will

List of background papers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appendix A - Peer Group Summary Report.pdf 2. Appendix B - Dream Stage Outputs.pdf 3. Appendix C - residents e-panel outcomes.pdf

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