

Agenda Item 10.

TITLE	Appointment of Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 May 2023
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Overview and Scrutiny provides an independent “critical friend” challenge to the Executive, whilst working with the Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. Submission of recommendations for improvement to the Executive, on issues of particular importance, is an example of good governance.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee appoint 5 Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group for the 2023/24 Municipal Year from the Membership of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee or wider Overview and Scrutiny Membership.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report seeks appointment of 5 Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group. The Group’s Terms of Reference are appended as Annex A to this report.

Background

The Active Travel Task and Finish Group was formed by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 6 March 2023. The Group are requested to assess the Locally Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) on a 6-monthly basis and to scrutinise specific schemes prior to consultation.

The Group have reviewed the first stage of the Reading Road Active Travel Scheme via a Teams meeting on 30 March 2023.

Analysis of Issues

The Active Travel Task and Finish Group will likely be required to meet periodically for a number of years, assessing developments to the LCWIP and scrutinising detailed design proposals for specific projects as and when bids were submitted. Whilst the core Group will assess the LCWIP on a 6-monthly basis, relevant Ward Members and Town and Parish Council representatives will be included in meetings relating to detailed design of specific schemes prior to public consultation.

Periodic updates from the Group will be presented to the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, detailing their review of any changes to the LCWIP in addition to their overview and scrutiny of specific proposed schemes. Any specific recommendations to the Executive which require a report will be agreed by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Suggestions and alterations relating to specific schemes, where the Group (including Ward Members and Town and Parish Council representatives) were fully supportive in addition to highways officers and the Executive Member are proposed to amend scheme proposals directly for expediency purposes, with a summary update provided to the Committee at a later date.

It has previously been suggested that the Group should be renamed from a Task and Finish Group, as the Group would not be concluding their work for some time. At present, Overview and Scrutiny Committees are only allowed to appoint to "Task and Finish Groups" via the constitution and their Terms of Reference.

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)	£0	Yes	R
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	R
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	R

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
The administration of the Active Travel task and Finish Group would necessitate officer time, which can be delivered via existing resourcing.

Cross-Council Implications
The Active Travel Task and Finish Group will allow for scrutiny input into design proposals for major Active Travel schemes alongside local Ward Members and representatives from relevant Town and Parish Councils, prior to public consultation.

Public Sector Equality Duty
Due regard has been given to WBC’s duties under the Equality Act.

Climate Emergency – <i>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</i>
There are no negative impacts associated with appointment of Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group on WBC’s declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
Formation of Active Travel Task and Finish Group Report – 6 March 2023, Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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