

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2016

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONS

REVIEW OF CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report:

- To confirm the scope and establishment of a Task and Finish Group to advise Officers on the review, rationalisation and refresh of the East Herts Climate Change Action Plan.
- To discuss and agree the draft terms of reference of the Task and Finish Group, as outlined in **Essential Reference Paper ‘B’**.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY

(A)	Members indicate their preference for the scope of the review and confirm the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to advise Officers on the review, rationalisation and refresh of the East Herts Climate Change Action Plan; and
(B)	The draft terms of reference as outlined in Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ be agreed.

1.0 Background

1.1 Members may recall that the Council first adopted a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in December 2009. The Environment Scrutiny Committee asked at the time that progress towards the Action Plan should be reported to the Committee on an annual basis. At the last annual review in November 2015, the Committee resolved that following the successful implementation of many of the actions within the document that it would be timely for the whole Action Plan to be reviewed and refreshed at the date of the next annual review. It was further resolved that this process be informed by the establishment of a dedicated Task and Finish Group.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Council's Climate Change Action Plan was initially developed in 2009 following an extensive series of meetings of a member level Climate Change Task and Finish Group.
- 2.2 At the time members gathered evidence on both potential internal and external actions that could contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions arising from the operations of East Herts Council. The resultant Action Plan contained in excess of 100 actions mainly concentrating on carbon reduction opportunities within the Council's own estate.
- 2.3 The Plan has been reviewed annually by the Environment Scrutiny Committee and progress monitored. During the period almost all of the actions have been either implemented, investigated further pending adoption or rejected. In addition over the passage of time some actions have become surpassed by other initiatives or changes in service provision. Therefore following a detailed report on progress of the Action Plan which was presented to the meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2015, the Committee resolved that it was appropriate for the Action Plan to be reviewed and refreshed at the next annual review period. It was further resolved that this would be best carried out through the creation of a Task and Finish Group.
- 2.4 Climate Change remains a key issue at national and international level, with the UK government striving towards an agreed target in the Climate Change Act of an 80% cut in carbon emissions by 2050 (based on a 1990 baseline). This target being based on an appropriate UK contribution to global emission reductions consistent with limiting global temperature rise to around 2 degrees centigrade. Currently a reduction of 38% has been achieved. The Government has also set in law 4 carbon budgets, covering the period to 2027, to assist with the delivery of the national target. Local authorities are seen as important players in contributing towards the national objective, both in terms of reducing their own energy use but also with regards to their role as local service providers and policy makers. Greenhouse gas (carbon) emissions continue to be reported on an annual basis per district area.
- 2.5 Government policy recognises that it will become steadily more difficult to achieve UK progress in relation to carbon reduction, not

least given that the easier wins have been achieved first. For example domestic emissions will need to start to fall by 3% year on year in order to help meet the 80% reduction target. The Task and Finish Group may therefore consider it an appropriate opportunity to consider broader potential actions that affect the wider District rather than just mainly specific in-house local actions, which were the principal focus of the existing Action Plan. Members may also wish to consider how actions in other relevant policies of the Council have a bearing on climate change and local carbon reduction opportunities.

- 2.6 Given the wide ranging nature of activities that can relate to climate change and carbon reduction, Members are asked to give an indication of their preference for the extent of the review to be undertaken by the Task and Finish Group. For example if the wish is for a minimal review (based on the Council's own estate) then the Task and Finish Group may be able to complete its work within 4 weeks. This would potentially allow officers to report to Environment Scrutiny at its next meeting in early November. However, a more detailed review, also taking into consideration broader Council actions across the District, may be preferred. If this is the case the timescale will be a little longer and may necessitate presentation of the completed revised Action Plan at the Committee's first meeting in 2017. In both cases a relatively quick Task and Finish process is envisaged, likely based on up to 3 meetings.

As is usual, and dependent on agreed timescales and scope, it is hoped that it will be possible to take evidence and gather examples of best practice from a range of organisations, professionals, partner organisations and Officers.

- 2.7 A draft list of Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group is outlined in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report may be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

East Herts Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan – December 2009.
Tackling Climate Change – UK Committee on Climate Change – 2016.

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