

Climate Change Working Group

Terms of Reference June 2024

1. Background

On 13 February 2020, the Council declared a climate emergency and agreed to develop its own climate change action plan, with targets to cut environmental impact and steps to become carbon neutral by 2030.

A new approach is being developed to draw up a practical, deliverable action plan, which will need to reflect the Council's resources (staffing and financial) and ability to deliver.

2. Purpose

The task and finish group will focus on agreeing the Council's approach to climate change.

The Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) is not a decision making body. It is a forum for councillors and officers to exchange and debate ideas, invite guest speakers to disseminate technical knowledge, inform and develop recommendations to the Council's policy committees and work towards the achievement of the objectives below.

The CCWG will recommend any decision to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

The CCWG will operate in accordance with Standing Order 21 of the Council's constitution.

3. Objectives of the task and finish group are to:

- Review and agree the Council's Climate Change Strategy and action plan, including prioritisation of actions and identification of timescales for delivery.
- Inform the development of the annual climate change action plan update report to Strategy and Resources Committee.
- Set clear expectations about the delivery and achievement of net zero for the Council
- Discuss and be up to date with any key issues or policy changes to achieve the Council's climate objectives and any recommendations to be taken to the Council's policy committees.
- Identify and monitor appropriate funding opportunities and make recommendations through governance structures where necessary or support officers to undertake any bids or projects.
- Support the engagement of residents, businesses and community groups across the district to work towards becoming carbon neutral.

4. Membership

Membership was agreed by the Strategy and Resources to consist of two representatives from the Residents' Alliance, Liberal Democrats, Conservatives and one from the Independent Group.

A Chair shall be elected at the working group's first meeting of the municipal year.

Membership can be expanded on agreement of the Strategy & Resources Committee. Members can nominate substitutions at meetings if necessary. Attendance and participation by members who are not members of the CCWG is at the discretion of the chair, but they shall not be able to vote or propose/second a motion.

External representatives can also be invited to join the group subject to approval of the chair, to offer specialist advice or support.

Any member of the working group may propose issues for discussion.

Officers will attend to support the working group as necessary.

All members are expected to conduct discussions in a polite and respectful manner.

5. Membership

As of May 2024 the members are:

Participant	Group / Role
Councillor Ian Booth	Residents' Alliance
Councillor Peter Damesick	Residents' Alliance
Councillor Ben Horne	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Sarah Sowambur	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Ankita Sharma	Conservatives
Councillor Lewis Sharp	Conservatives
Councillor Jeremy Pursehouse	Independent Group
Giuseppina Valenza	Head of Policy and Communications
Gaye O'Brien	Policy and Sustainability Specialist

6. Frequency of meetings

Meetings will take place at least once a quarter for up to two hours, with a hybrid approach so representatives can participate in person or remotely via MS Teams.

7. Conflict of interest

All members will be asked to declare any conflict of interest before joining and in relation to any discussion item.

8. Confidentiality

Formal minutes of the meetings will only record key issues and points, rather than a detailed transcript of the discussions.

To enable open discussions of sensitive issues, some items may be discussed under strict confidentiality requirements, where participants may not disclose the nature or content of the discussion.

Papers and minutes may not be shared with anyone who is not a member without prior consent of the Chair.

By accepting membership of the working group, all members agree to the confidentiality requirements of membership.

9. Update

The terms of reference will be reviewed and if necessary, updated on an annual basis.