

COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 2 FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR HUGGINS (CHAIRMAN OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD)

At its meeting on 13 January 2022 the Climate Change Board considered a report of the Climate Change Officer presenting the 2022 update of the Climate Change Strategy, for approval by Members for recommendation to Full Council.

UPDATED CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board approves the attached Climate Change Strategy and recommends to Full Council that it be adopted.

PART I MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD

UPDATED CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report by the Climate Change Officer seeking approval for the Climate Change Strategy to be approved and recommended to Full Council.

In answer to a Members question Officers advised that the report author had received input from various officers across the Council, there was no Member input into the draft report.

Members were advised that the strategy would need to be incorporated into the Policy Framework within the Constitution on its next update.

A Member commented that they felt the report was vague and weak, containing the barest minimum in order to be seen to be doing something, with no timescales, and needs tightening up.

A Member proposed an Amendment which was seconded.

Members were reminded that the Strategy was the aspiration not the action plan, and had been written in line with the agreed Framework.

A Member wished to allay the fears that Community and Youth Groups would not be listened to, and acknowledged that there were members of the community that were better informed on some matters than Members.

Members were disappointed that more young people had not come forward to join the Partnership, although they were advised that the Chair of the Partnership and the Principle of St Vincent's would be creating a working group from their pupils under the Partnership. There was hope that some other mechanism could be adopted to increase Youth engagement.

A Member wished to acknowledge the number of nature related initiatives already happening citing Grange Farm, the wild meadow programme and other eco systems in place.

A Member brought the Boards attention to Priority 10 within the strategy, and reminded them that the Draft Local Plan contained contingencies for protection of the natural environment.

The Board voted on the amendment:

Add at end:

- i) With Forewords by a representative from each Political Group, not just a representative of the Conservative Party, the Foreword wording to be provided by each Political Group Leader and not be subject to approval or amendment by members of another Political Group
- ii) With the addition of a Council commitment to the terms of the 'Nature

Emergency' motion from the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust which states:

We are in the middle of a nature crisis. Almost half of all UK wildlife is in long term decline and 15% of species are at risk of extinction. The climate emergency is only hastening this destruction of the natural environment, damaging habitats and disrupting ecosystems. Yet it is these very habitats that have the potential to lock up carbon and fight back against rising global temperatures. It is essential that we not only protect these spaces, but let them thrive - for the benefit of people, planet and nature.

As we recover from the COVID-19 crisis, the need for nature-rich green spaces where we live and work is clearer than ever and will help health, education and the economy build back stronger. We recognise that action must be taken now to remedy this and to put nature into recovery at a local level, in support of regional, national and international work to do the same.

This council resolves to:

1. Declare that we are experiencing a nature emergency, recognizing that:
 - a) Nature is in long term decline and urgent action must be taken to reverse this.
 - b) A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, prosperous society
 - c) The nature crisis and the climate emergency are intrinsically linked

RESOLVED: That the amendment was lost.

The Proposer felt that the amendment would have strengthened the document and no longer wished to be associated with it.

An Amendment was proposed and seconded.

A Member wanted to ensure that the Water companies would be included along with other utility companies.

The Board voted on the amendment:

Propose change to order and widen scope to specifically mention key organisations such as voluntary sector and utility companies to further highlight the breadth of key stakeholders needed to support change and our collective journey to net zero.

Engagement

Through community and individual action- The Council will encourage and enable individual and community action, helping address emissions and resilience measures over which the Council does not have direct control.

Through young people- the Council recognizes the long-term interest of young people, so it is exploring engagement preferences to ensure that these mechanisms are appropriate and effective.

Through business- The Council will seek to empower local business to build a green economy and not only adapt but be part of the solution and seek innovation. The Borough's Local Plan will have climate change at its centre with other strategies and policies aligning accordingly.

Through key organisations- The Council will work with the third sector, government bodies, education establishments, utility companies, housing associations, transport operators, strategic partnerships and other bodies that have the potential to make significant impact.

RESOLVED: That the Board agreed the amendment.

A Member was concerned that the endorsement or statement of intent had been included without the agreement of all Party Leaders.

Members were reminded that the inclusion of the endorsement or statement of intent had been included in the framework for the Climate Change strategy and been voted in favour for at the last Board meeting. Its purpose was as a statement to acknowledge Climate Change and the need to take action.

Members discussed the need for an amendment to remove the placeholder statement, but none was proposed.

RESOLVED: That the Board approved the Climate Change Strategy with the amendment and recommended to Full Council that it be adopted