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## **Climate Action & Nature Recovery Policy Development Advisory Group** **4 JANUARY 2024**

Present: Councillors: Colette Blackburn (Chair), Emma Beard, Claudia Fisher, Roger Noel, Josh Potts and John Trollope

Apologies: Councillors: Chris Franke and Dennis Livingstone

Absent: Councillors: Peter van der Borgh and Nick Grant

Also Present: Paul Clarke, Mike Croker, Joan Grech, Jonathan Taylor and Martin Boffey

### 15 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 were received.

### 16 **DEVELOPMENT OF "WILDWAYS" ACROSS HORSHAM TOWN**

The Parks & Countryside Manager gave a presentation in relation to the development of "Wildways" across Horsham town. Horsham District Council (HDC) had been approached by Horsham Green Spaces Forum to develop wildlife corridors to support the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network.

The presentation gave an overview of the proposed "Wildways", and the strategies that were being explored. The communications strategy was detailed, which included liaison with the parish councils and the promotion of the benefits of the scheme. The progress of the scheme would be monitored, and public feedback would be sought.

Members discussed the opportunity to work with schools in the area. It was confirmed that the Horsham Green Spaces Forum had plans to liaise with West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) in relation to schools, as well as verges on the "Wildways" routes.

Members raised concerns about safety and visibility on the Highways. It was confirmed that a mown strip will be maintained next to paths to ensure safety. There would be few places where there may be visibility issues for road users, and this would be monitored. Concerns were also raised regarding the impact on residents with allergies, as well as grass seeds in the ears and paws of dogs. It was noted that the mown strip would reduce the risk of these adverse effects.

It was raised that the WSSCC Pollinator Strategy had expired, and Officers advised that contact with WSSCC regarding the use of pesticides was being re-established. Members were advised that a review of the pesticides used by HDC would be undertaken, as part of the draft Green Space Strategy. This

strategy would be considered at a future meeting of the Policy Development Advisory Group.

Members asked whether there could also be an increase in the number of insects, with a negative impact on residents. Officers advised that it was not anticipated that the number of invertebrates would increase dramatically.

17 **CHANGES TO THE DRAFT CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY**

The Head of Sustainability and Green Spaces gave a presentation on the Climate Action Strategy and the outcomes of the consultation. It was highlighted that no significant gaps in the strategy had been identified, however additional issues had arisen. As a result of the consultation, changes were proposed to the strategy in relation to land use, with particular reference to water consumption, flood risk and improving water quality. Further changes were proposed in relation to transport, buildings and energy, and waste. Feedback was received that residents and businesses needed more information, and as such, an information and behaviour change campaign would be launched, to further build on work being undertaken. An annual progress report would be produced, and a biennial review and update of the Strategy would take place.

Members asked whether there were costs associated with the delivery of the strategy. Officers confirmed that there would be some costs, which were included in the 2024/25 budget, however there would be a focus on identifying finance mechanisms and partnership working to enable the delivery and implementation of the strategy.

Members welcomed the emphasis on sustainable farming practices and highlighted the issues surrounding largescale plant agriculture, which could have an impact when looking at meat-free diets. Officers confirmed that work would be undertaken to also consider the importance of nature recovery.

18 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE CLIMATE ACTION & NATURE RECOVERY PORTFOLIO**

It was noted that there were no items on the forward plan for the Climate Action & Nature Recovery portfolio.

*The meeting closed at 6.35 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

**CHAIRMAN**

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