

Climate Action & Nature Recovery Policy Development Advisory Group
7 SEPTEMBER 2023

Present: Councillors: Colette Blackburn (Chairman), Peter van der Borgh, Claudia Fisher, Chris Franke, Dennis Livingstone, Roger Noel, Josh Potts and John Trollope

Apologies: Councillors: Emma Beard, Malcolm Eastwood and Nick Grant

Also Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke, Mike Croker and Ruth Fletcher

7 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 5 July 2023 were received.

8 **WILDER HORSHAM DISTRICT**

The Environmental Coordination Manager at Horsham District Council and the Senior Landowner Advisor at Wilder Horsham District gave a presentation on Wilder Horsham District.

Wilder Horsham District was a five-year project between the Sussex Wildlife Trust and Horsham District Council, which began in October 2020. The purpose of the project was to improve biodiversity within the Horsham District.

The Wilder Horsham District team comprised a Senior Landowner Advisor, a Landowner Advisor and a Project Support Officer, supported by staff at Horsham District Council and the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

There were three project strands: organisational resilience, landscape resilience and community resilience.

Organisational resilience was the idea of ensuring that the principles of the project were embedded throughout the Council. This would be achieved through a number of measures including delivering talks to staff and briefing Members, reviewing the Council's plans and policies, and working with the Council's Parks and Countryside team in relation to the Council's landholdings.

Landscape resilience was linked to the Lawton principles of creating 'bigger, better, more and joined up' sites. This would be achieved through the creation of a Nature Recovery Network, which involved a number of elements including providing advice to landowners, partnering with other organisations to deliver projects such as the Adur River Restoration Project, and providing funding for projects through the Nature Recovery Award.

Community resilience would be achieved through community engagement. Some examples included delivering workshops to parish councils and working with community groups such as Wild About Warnham.

Following the presentation, the Senior Landowner Advisor took questions from Members.

ACTION:

- It was agreed that an update would be provided to Councillor Clarke in relation to a proposed project relating to the River Arun.

9 **DRAFT CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY**

The Environmental Coordination Manager gave a presentation on the progress with the draft Climate Action Strategy.

Members were reminded that the draft Strategy had been approved by Cabinet [for consultation] in March 2023, and that it related to emissions within the Horsham District as opposed to the Council's own emissions. Members were also reminded that the aim was for the Horsham District to be carbon neutral by 2050, and that the draft Strategy contained a 10-year action plan towards achieving this.

An online survey had been conducted between the end of June and the end of August 2023 in order to gain feedback on the draft Strategy from residents and community groups. The survey had been promoted extensively and the Environmental Coordination Manager expressed her thanks to the Council's Communications team in that regard. Members were provided with some of the initial results from the 758 responses that had been received.

Members were advised that there had been some gaps in the demographic groups that had responded to the survey. These included young people and working families. The Council was working with consultants to hold focus groups with a view to obtaining views from those groups.

An online survey for businesses had also opened on 4 September 2023 and would close on 13 October 2023. This survey sought to understand what the priorities of businesses were and whether there were any gaps in the draft Strategy; what actions businesses were taking; and what support businesses needed from the Council and the Council's partners.

The results of both surveys and the targeted engagement would be collated and provided to Members at the PDAG meeting in November.

The Environmental Coordination Manager stressed that, whilst the intention was that an updated Strategy would be presented to the PDAG and Cabinet in January 2024, some actions were being implemented in the meantime.

Following the presentation, Members had an opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

The Climate Change Support Officer agreed to provide targeted geographical data from the survey to parish councillors, should they wish to have it.

10 **HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CARBON EMISSIONS FOR 2022/23**

The Climate Change Support Officer gave a presentation on the Council's carbon emissions for 2022/23.

The Council aimed to achieve carbon neutrality in respect of its direct emissions by 2030 and in respect of its indirect emissions by 2050.

Members were provided with some preliminary statistics on the changes in the Council's carbon emissions to 2022/23. The data showed, amongst other things, that there had been a 61% reduction in the Council's gas, electricity and fleet emissions between 2019/20 and 2022/23.

Following the presentation, the Climate Change Support Officer and the Environmental Coordination Manager took questions from Members.

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

The Director of Communities updated Members with regard to a possible land acquisition ('Possible Purchase of Site C') that had been included in the Forward Plan. Further details would be provided at the Finance and Resources PDAG meeting on 18 September 2023, to which members of the Climate Action and Nature Recovery PDAG would be invited.

The meeting closed at 7.26 pm having commenced at 5.35 pm

CHAIRMAN