

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STREET SCENE and ENVIRONMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD**

**09 February 2021**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM**

**To outline the format for a proposed “Climate Change Forum” to establish wider engagement on climate change issues**

**1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 The Borough Council has an ambitious aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2030 and has recently adopted a Climate Change Strategy and Year 1 Action plan to support this. Members will be aware that consultants have been appointed to establish the carbon footprint of the Council and its operations and provide options to achieve net zero. Work on this is underway, with outcomes due to be reported to the next meeting of this committee.
- 1.1.2 It is recognised that significant challenges faced in relation to climate change are outside the remit of the Borough Council. We can however, work with others to learn more about their own plans and ideas for carbon reduction, how to inspire and motivate others to tackle the issues and to develop an open conversation with others working on these critical issues.
- 1.1.3 It is therefore proposed that a cross-agency Climate Change Forum is supported to help drive forward a response to the climate emergency. The Forum would also help coordinate climate action across Tonbridge and Malling.

**1.2 Membership and process of the proposed Climate Change Forum**

- 1.2.1 The Leader and Cabinet Member propose that the normal convention for political balance be set aside. It is therefore suggested that in addition to the Cabinet Member, there should be three Conservative Borough Councillors, and the Chairman will welcome a representative Borough Councillor from each political group. Representation from a variety of different sectors would also provide a wider understanding of the issues and opportunities across the borough. We would want to invite representatives from the following sectors:

- 4 x Conservative Borough Council Members (to include the Cabinet Member) and 1 x Borough Council representative from each remaining political group
- Kent County Council
- Parish Council (a representative able to feed back to all parishes via existing forums such as Parish Partnership Panel)
- Tonbridge Forum representative (not from the Borough Council)
- Local climate change/biodiversity interest groups
- Education sector
- Business sector
- Faith sector
- Voluntary & Community Sector
- Youth Forum representative
- East Malling Research

1.2.2 There may of course be additional groups or neighbourhood forums with a particular interest in climate change issues and we would be open to nominations. We can promote the group via the Council website and social media channels.

1.2.3 It is suggested that, at least in the interim period whilst the group is established, the Forum is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Environment Services. We will currently be looking to hold virtual meetings due to the current restrictions. This may however, be a preferable longer term option, given the wider carbon reduction benefits of reducing travel to meetings. Initially we will look to hold meetings every six months. The work of the Forum and any minutes of meetings, will be reported to this Committee and published on the Council's website.

### **1.3 Legal Implications**

1.3.1 None

### **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.4.1 There is no budget assigned to this Forum, but there will be costs associated with staff time.

### **1.5 Risk Assessment**

1.5.1 N/A

### **1.6 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.6.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **1.7 Policy Considerations**

- 1.7.1 Asset Management
- 1.7.2 Biodiversity & Sustainability
- 1.7.3 Business Continuity/Resilience
- 1.7.4 Climate Change
- 1.7.5 Communications
- 1.7.6 Community

## **1.8 Recommendations**

- 1.8.1 That Members **ENDORSE** the format of the proposed Climate Change Forum as outlined in the report.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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Chief Executive