



CABINET

Tuesday 3 September 2019

EAST SUFFOLK ENVIRONMENT TASK GROUP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval to establish an East Suffolk Environment Task Group, with cross party representation, on agreed terms of reference, which will report to Cabinet.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	

Wards Affected:	All
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Cabinet Member:	CLlr James Mallinder Cabinet Member for the Environment
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Supporting Officer:	Phil Gore Head of Environmental Services & Port Health Tel: 01394 444286 Email address: phil.gore@east Suffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 24 July 2019 (Full Council agenda item 9(a)), after considering a notice of motion about climate change, the Council resolved unanimously to:

Declare a climate emergency

Set up a Cross Party Task Group, commencing by October 2019, to investigate ways to cut East Suffolk Council's carbon and harmful emissions on a spend to save basis, with ambition to make East Suffolk Council (including all buildings and services) carbon neutral by 2030. The Cross Party Task Group will report on their progress on a quarterly basis.

To work with Suffolk County Council and other partners across the county and region, including the LEP and the Public Sector Leaders, towards the aspiration of making the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.

To work with the government to:

a) deliver its 25 year Environmental Plan and

b) increase the powers and resources available to local authorities in order to make the 2030 target easier to achieve.

2 EAST SUFFOLK ENVIRONMENT TASK GROUP

- 2.1 "The implementation of Environmental Policy" is something for which the Cabinet has responsibility. See item 25 on the list of services and functions within the Cabinet's responsibilities on page 32 of the Council's Constitution. Therefore, it is appropriate that the Task Group be set up by Cabinet, and report back to it.

- 2.2 It is proposed that the Task Group be comprised of nine elected members, being seven from the Conservative, one from the GLI Group and one Labour member. The Task Group will meet at least every quarter but potentially more frequently than that in the early stages of its work. Task Groups are not formal meetings of the Council and do not usually meet in public. The meetings of the Task Group will be internal to the Council, will be chaired by the Cabinet Member for the Environment and, at the Chairman's discretion, some of the meetings will be open to all members of the Council to attend, particularly those to which outside speakers have been invited, to ensure wide engagement across the organisation. The meetings will be an opportunity to hear from external experts on a wide range of environmental matters including climate change, to allow discussion and debate around the Council's response. From this information, research and review, the Task Group will formulate recommendations which will be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

- 2.3 The Terms of Reference for the Task Group are set out in Appendix A to this report.

- 2.4 At its first meeting, the Task Group will draw up a work programme of priority areas for consideration. It will also receive a report on the results of an external review of the Council's own carbon emissions which is currently being undertaken.

- 2.5 The Council has an important community leadership role to play regarding the climate change agenda. Already, it has a good community network, the Greenprint Forum, by which it has gained community support and the ability to take local action. East Suffolk's new Community Partnerships will be a further opportunity to gain widespread support for the climate change agenda across east Suffolk; by encouraging small changes at a local level we can make a big difference.

- 2.6 For some areas of the climate change agenda, the Council has direct responsibility and control. For others, the Council will need to work with partners, across the county and region. This includes working with the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, which the

Council has been a member of since 2007, to help it achieve the biggest environmental impacts, and to influence others, including government.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 3.1 The Council's current Business Plan sets out our vision to maintain and sustainably improve the quality of life for everyone growing up in, living in, working in and visiting east Suffolk.
- 3.2 Within this overarching vision, there are three key strategic themes. Firstly, that of enabling communities, and specifically supporting communities to look after their land, food, water, energy, services, jobs and housing. Secondly, within the economic growth theme, the Council is committed to encouraging and supporting sustainable growth. Thirdly, in terms of financial self-sufficiency, the climate change agenda offers opportunities for the Council to reduce its costs and carbon emissions, by improving energy efficiency and looking at clean energy generation.
- 3.3 A review of the Business Plan is scheduled in October 2019 and, as a result, the environment is likely to feature more prominently. The creation of an East Suffolk Environment Task Group will help the Council to prioritise activities which protect and maintain our environment, and to monitor progress on the Council's commitment to provide carbon neutral services by 2030.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The only direct financial implications arising from these proposals are the administrative costs associated with running the Task Group. These costs can be absorbed within existing budgets. Any recommendations arising from the work of the Task Group which might give rise to additional costs will be referred to Cabinet, with a full business case, for approval.
- 4.2 The Chairman of the Task Group will report directly to Cabinet about the work being carried out, with quarterly up-dates.

5 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this proposal.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 No external consultation required for the setting up of this Task Group.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Council resolved, at its meeting on 24 July 2019, to set up an Environmental Task Group, therefore, no other options have been considered.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 To establish an East Suffolk Environment Task Group as recommended by Council on 24 July 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet approves;-

- a) the establishment of a cross party East Suffolk Environment Task Group of nine Members, being seven from the Conservative Group, one from the GLI Group and one from the Labour Group.
- b) the terms of reference for the East Suffolk Environmental Task Group, as set out in Appendix A.

APPENDICES	
Appendix A	East Suffolk Environment Task Group – Terms of Reference

East Suffolk Environment Task Group

Terms of Reference

The East Suffolk Environment Task Group (the Task Group) will consist of nine members (seven Conservatives, one GLI and one Labour).

The terms of reference for the Task Group are:

- I. To make recommendations to Cabinet on areas for improvement following the review of existing policies which impact on the environment and to identify and make recommendations on developing new environmental policies, where required, which will help to protect and enhance the environment.
- II. To recommend to Cabinet appropriate action plans and targets to help deliver the Council's environmental ambitions, including becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- III. To consider and comment on the business case for investment and project delivery plans developed as part of the environment action plan before consideration by Cabinet.
- IV. To monitor progress with delivering the action plans and achieving targets and report on progress to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- V. To consider government consultation documents relating to environmental matters and assist Cabinet in formulating its response.
- VI. For members of the Task Group to act as Environmental Champions for the East Suffolk Council and their parish councils, leading by example and advocating for good environmental stewardship.
- VII. To identify areas for further research and invite presentations, workshops and discussions with experts in a wide range of environmental issues, as appropriate, to help inform the Council's policies and action plans.
- VIII. To consider the best way of engaging with key partners of the Council on environmental issues
- IX. To consider and help formulate a communication strategy to promote the Council's activities relating to environmental issues.