

26 September 2019

Summary of the Climate Change Working Group Meeting, which was held on 26 September 2019.

1. Climate Emergency

The Council declared a 'Climate Emergency' on 25 July 2019. This recognised the continued priority the Council provides in addressing climate change, both in terms of mitigation and adaptation. The statement will require the acceleration of our existing Woking 2050 Action Plan.

The Council has committed to become neutral by 2030, by reducing to zero, any greenhouse emissions associated within its own estate and operations. Any remaining emissions that cannot be avoided, the Council will offset through projects such as tree planting, habitat regeneration and maintaining trade renewable energy. A detailed plan is being prepared.

Following consideration of various options the Group recommended to the Executive meeting on the 10 October 2019 the following recommendations:

- (i) The Climate Change Working Group's recommended public definition of carbon neutrality, set out below, be adopted and published on the Council's website:

"On 25 July 2019, the Council pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030. It will reduce to zero any greenhouse emissions associated with its own estate and operations. Where any remaining emissions cannot be avoided, the Council will offset these through projects such as tree planting and maintain trade in renewable energy, thereby eliminating its contribution to climate change";
- (ii) The Climate Change Working Group's recommended definition of the Council's estate and operations – comprising all Council owned assets – be adopted;
- (iii) The Climate Change Working Group's recommended baseline year of 2018/29 for monitoring emissions be adopted;
- (iv) In the longer term, the Council will develop plans for borough-wide emissions and adaptation actions to address the climate change ecological emergency, in so far as it is able to influence activities beyond its direct control, with the aim of carbon neutrality by 2050; and
- (v) The Planning Committee, having regard to the Parking Standards Supplementary Document, be requested to exercise its discretion wherever possible to permit zero or minimal parking provision in Woking town Centre developments.

2. Local Action 21

The group also received proposals put forward by Woking Local Action 21.

The ensuing discussion was wide ranging and included tree planting, town centre parking, online guidance published by Friends of the Earth, zero emission buildings and light pollution.

The group were thanked for their suggestions considered.

3. Natural Woking

The group received an update of the Natural Woking delivery over the last six months.

Progress updates covered projects including the Great Crested Newt pilot, wild flowers and the Town Twinning Sign featuring swift nesting chambers and bat roosts.

The Working Group noted the progress and agreed a rolling action plan for the years 2019/20 – 2021/22.

4. Action Surrey

It was highlighted that during the quarter period reported, Action Surrey had assisted 20 householders in Woking to install energy efficiency improvements, at a total cost of £17,319.00 which resulted in an estimated CO₂ saving of 15 tonnes/year. Between April – June 2019, it was noted that 52 installations had been carried out across Surrey, with 20 houses reported in Woking.

Surrey Council and partnering District and Borough local authorities will continue to work together in order to deliver ECO Flex in their areas.

Energy Company Obligation: ECO3

A proposal was presented to the June 2019 meeting of the Surrey Energy and Sustainability Partnership (SESP) regarding the opportunity offered under the ECO3 of funding for social housing premises. Social housing with an EPC rating of E, F and G would access funding to install loft and wall insulation measures including first-time central heating users. It was noted that social housing had been exempt from ECO Flex, which would not impact on the number of residents supported through the ECO Flex.

Qualifying criteria for the funding was shared and the Action Surrey network of installers, would have access to the funding. Action Surrey aims to work closely with each Borough and District over the next few months to start identifying eligible households.

Broken Boilers Project

It was reported that the total value of works across Surrey in Quarter 1 equated to £29,860 and the associated estimated carbon saving is 7.5 CO₂ tonnes per year. It was noted that 23 households had received a new boiler.

5. Thameswey Update

Plastic-free Market Walk

Customers were encouraged to bring their own re-useable food containers which could result in receiving a discount when purchasing food. A campaign was launched with the slogan “please choose to reuse”.

Swifts in Woking

A 100 nest boxes were built through workshops and some supportive residents would also be provided with boxes to install on their properties if desired. Thameswey will continue to contribute to the project through installations of swift bricks in suitable developments.

Build a Habitat Competition

Thameswey launched a competition on 23 September 2019 for local primary school aged children to build a home in their garden for native wildlife of their choice. Entry is via submission of a photo and brief description of the habitat including explanations of why they have chosen that animal. The winning prize is a one-year family membership to the Royal Horticultural Society Wisley Gardens.

Thameswey Wider Activities

Thameswey has submitted a planning application for the development to include green walls, for the flats above Wolsey Place on Middle Walk.

6. AOB

Discussions ensued on a new proposal to run a twelve month #WeAreWoking-led environmental campaign to be launched at the end of the year. The campaign would focus on promoting our environmental credentials, not only within the Borough but extending it regionally and beyond. The campaign would provide opportunity to raise awareness and encourage participation in projects Woking are involved in, towards achieving a greener future. This would include working with all parts of the community and linked to the key themes of Woking 2050.

The Group were advised that it was the first year anniversary of Refill Woking. It was noted that 31 now participate in the Town Centre Scheme. Officers set up a complementary scheme in West Byfleet mid September with five retailers signing up.

It was noted that Affinity Water had just announced considering introducing temporary restrictions on water use (known as hosepipe bans) in spring 2020, following three years of lower than average expected rainfall.

Please see useful Affinity link to help householders reduce water usage:
<https://www.savewatersavemoney.co.uk/>