

**Climate Change Working Group meeting notes**

Meeting held on 18 March 2021, virtually via Zoom

# 1. Climate Emergency Action Plan

The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) update report summarised further progress against priority actions identified for 2020/21 between November 2020 and March 2021. Highlights included:

* The Council’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions report for 2019/20 has been completed and published. It recorded an 11% reduction in emissions compared to 2018/19 (which is also the baseline year for the Council’s climate and ecological emergency declaration). [The report is available to view on Woking Borough Council's website](http://www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/sustainability-data).
* Joint Waste Solutions is working to establish a methodology for monitoring emissions from Surrey councils’ waste collection services. Monitoring will take account of energy and water consumption from buildings associated with waste collection activities as well as fuel consumption from waste collection vehicles.
* Planet Woking hosted its second live webinar on the theme of The Great Outdoors on 2 February 2021. The event included expert speakers from Surrey Wildlife Trust, Surrey Countryside Partnerships, RHS Wisley and local conservationist Pete Bickford. A recording of the webinar is available on the events page of the [Planet Woking website](https://planetwoking.co.uk/).
* Officers noted an email signature statement used by Natural England: “In an effort to reduce Natural England’s carbon footprint, I will, whenever possible avoid traveling to meetings and attend via audio, video or web conferencing”. The Working Group supported this by way of holding future meetings virtually. This method reduces business travel and associated carbon emissions.

[CEAP updates are available to view on Woking Borough Council’s website](http://www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-emergency-action-plan).

# 2. 31 Climate Actions Ashden Report Analysis

Following a request from Woking Environment Action (WE Act), an appraisal was presented on how the Council is performing against Ashden’s 31 Climate Actions.

More information about Ashden – an environmental charity – is available on its website at www.ashden.org, together with a full list of recommended climate actions, carbon savings and costs.

Details of WBC’s progress was summarised along with a RAG (red, amber, green) indicator giving a quick reference guide on progress made in each area.

It was encouraging to find that the themes and actions suggested by Ashden are broadly reflected in the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan, Natural Woking and Woking 2027 planning policies.

The majority of actions were assessed to have green or amber indicators showing well-established or in progress activity. The appraisal had been a useful exercise to ‘sense check’ the Council’s policies and ensure we continue to consider a variety of ways to deliver climate action.

# 3. Future of Planet Woking

Planet Woking was launched on 24 September 2020. Its purpose is threefold:

* To share what the Council had been doing to date to address climate change and sustainability locally;
* To raise awareness about what the Council was doing to meet its carbon neutral targets; and
* Inspire local people to get involved and make, or continue to make, changes to live a greener and more sustainable life.

A report was presented outlining the many activities undertaken so far. Community engagement is at the heart of the programme which is demonstrated through the continuing reach of its case studies, webinars and social media communications.

The initial funded phase of Planet Woking will come to an end in July 2021. Although it will remain an established brand and framework through which the Council can continue to promote and share its climate change and sustainability projects, options were presented to the Working Group for its lasting profile and growth.

Mindful of budgetary constraints, officers plan to build on the resources put together so far and do all that is possible in-house. However, there are aspects that would benefit from continued financial support in order to sustain the momentum and exposure established so far, particularly in relation to social and digital media reach which is highly effective in engaging the public.

Three possible packages of financial support were presented to the Working Group. It was recommended to the Executive that funding be identified in this financial year and then through the next available Investment Programme to deliver financial support over a two year period from July 2021 to July 2023 at a cost of £66,000 excl. VAT.

The Executive will consider the proposal at its meeting on 17 June 2021.

# 4. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2019/20

The group received The Greenhouse Gas Emission’s report for 2019/20. It was noted that WBC’s greenhouse gas emissions had decreased by almost 11% between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

[The updated report is available on Woking Borough Council’s website](http://www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/sustainability-data).

# 5. Large Scale Renewable Energy Plan

Energy use is the Council’s biggest contributor to its carbon footprint and so priority actions within the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) look to reduce consumption and improve energy efficiency. However, decarbonising our energy supply will contribute the largest gains in carbon reduction.

As such, a continuing ambition of the Climate Change Working Group is to consider the role of large scale renewable energy technologies, notably wind and solar, in decarbonising the Council and borough’s energy supply.

To progress this, a draft Large Scale Renewable Energy Plan was presented for consideration. It suggests a range of actions to facilitate the Council’s next steps to transition to net zero, through achieving greater proportions of locally generated renewable energy and decarbonisation of our local energy supplies.

The Plan was supported by the Working Group and recommended for adoption by the Executive at its next meeting on 17 June 2021.

# 6. Natural Woking progress update

An update on delivery of the Natural Woking biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy action plan 2020 to 2022 was presented. It was noted that despite covid-19 affecting some areas of the action plan, it had been reported that continued progress had been made during the period of October 2020 through to March 2021.

It was highlighted that ponds in Westfield Common had improved in terms of their suitability to support Great Crested Newts, in.

Woking Biodiversity Group (WBG) volunteers worked on a number of WBC sites across the borough. Despite the challenges over the past year, WBG still managed much good work when able to do so.

The living wall at Dukes Court in Woking Town Centre is now complete, as well as the green roof to the site's new restaurant facility. In addition, design details were currently being considered by the Planning Service for the extensive living green wall and green roof planned for the new Red Shoppers' Car Park.

# 7. Action Surrey update

During this quarter, Action Surrey had helped four households in Woking to install energy efficiency improvements at a total cost of £18,628, resulting in an estimated CO2 saving of 3.32 tonnes/year.

The Green Jump Surrey project continues to be the main focus for the Action Surrey currently (see below).

# 8. ThamesWey update

The Green Jump Surrey project aims to support 600 households across the Surrey consortium to save money on their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions.

A further £3 million had been awarded to allow the Green Jump Surrey project to be expanded and extended until September 2021.

The eligibility criteria under this new Phase 1B have been broadened to include EPC band D rated properties and also take into consideration local housing costs. Solar photovoltaics can also be funded for eligible households under phase 1B. [Residents are encouraged to find out more via the Action Surrey website](http://www.actionsurrey.org).

## Middle Walk green roof and walls

ThamesWey is enhancing local biodiversity with the installation of a green roof and green living walls at Middle Walk. Installation is expected to be completed over the next few weeks.

## Sheerwater Regeneration

The Sheerwater Regeneration project has progressed well in recent months, with the new Leisure Centre nearing completion and the first residential ‘Purple’ phase also at an advanced stage.

[ThamesWey has published an interactive story map which available on the ThamesWey website](http://www.thamesweygroup.co.uk/sheerwaterstorymap).

## ThamesWey’s wider activities

Construction of ThamesWey’s new energy centre in Poole Road has passed several key milestones in recent months. The orange flue stacks and large thermal stores have been installed and drone footage showing construction is available on the [ThamesWey website](https://www.thamesweygroup.co.uk/).

ThamesWey’s was successful in a recent application under the Government’s Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund for the connection of Export House and Midas House to the Poole Road Energy Centre and for associated remedial energy efficiency improvement works.