

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny**  
Date: **4<sup>th</sup> November 2021**  
Title: **Climate Change and Biodiversity Task and Finish Group Recommendations**  
Portfolio Areas: **Cllr Tom Holway**  
Wards Affected: **All**  
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: **Cllr Dan Thomas** Role: **Chair of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group**

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That Overview and Scrutiny Panel agrees the recommendations from the Climate Change and Biodiversity Task and Finish Group

### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy and an updated Action Plan was developed and presented to the Council on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 which was then adopted. At the same meeting it was agreed that updated progress of the action plan would be provided on 6 monthly intervals.
- 1.2 The first 6 monthly update was provided to Overview and Scrutiny committee on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021. It was resolved that a Task and Finish Group be set up to consider the report of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 1.3 The Group was tasked to report back with any recommendations to the meeting of the Panel to be held on Thursday 4 November 2021.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 At Overview and Scrutiny committee on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, Members considered an update on the Councils Climate Change and Biodiversity action plan.
- 2.2 Members felt that the report provided on 1<sup>st</sup> July was so detailed and raised many questions meant that it could not be reviewed sufficiently in the time allowed, therefore it was proposed the setting up of a time limited Task and Finish Group would be beneficial and that it would then present its conclusions back to Overview and Scrutiny committee on 4<sup>th</sup> November.
- 2.3 Four meetings we subsequently arranged, one in July, one in September and two in October.

### **3. Outcomes/outputs**

- 3.1 The Climate Change task and finish group held its first meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July where the terms of reference was agreed, as well as the work programme. It was agreed that the second meeting would focus on an appraisal of identified goals and metrics and procedures to track. The third meeting would focus on Communications and Engagement where representatives from some community organisations would be invited to give a 10-minute presentation followed by discussion.
- 3.2 During the second meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, discussions took place over the importance of being able to measure and track, officers had indicated this was a straightforward exercise when measuring our own carbon footprint, but more of a challenge when it comes to outward-facing actions, recognising the challenge of tracking impacts around behaviour change for instance.
- 3.3 A new version of the action plan was presented which attempts to organise the actions into low to high impact as well as detailing whether SHDC has direct or indirect responsibility for the action whilst also listing key partners, at the same time acting as a data tracker to collate key information such as the districts Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the districts renewable energy capacity and the number of EV's registered in the area, to name a few. Members had expressed an interest in seeing a more visual representation of the plan where timelines can be better understood.
- 3.4 Discussion took place on the benefits of measuring and setting targets for our aim to work towards a net zero South Hams by 2050. Measuring this can be done by tracking locally derived data from national publications. However setting targets for areas we have little direct control over is a challenge.

- 3.5 The third meeting took place on 7th October, where the group heard from following organisations;
- a. Bioregional Learning Centre
  - b. Sustainable South Hams
  - c. South Dartmoor Community Energy
  - d. PL:21
  - e. Tresoc
  - f. Modbury Neighbourhood Plan Team/Wildlife Action Group
- 3.6 Each organisation presented for 10 minutes on how they could assist the District Council and vice versa. From the comments made by members and invitees at the end, it was clear that this was felt to be an extremely valuable session and that future collaboration should continue alongside noting some of the financial constraints community organisations operate under
- 3.7 The fourth meeting took place on 21<sup>st</sup> October to decide on the final set of actions to report to this Overview and Scrutiny Session.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Action Plan will continue to be worked on alongside delivery of the Councils new Corporate Strategy, Better Lives for All, where Climate Change and Biodiversity is a key theme. To take account of the work of the Task and Finish Group, its recommendations to the Councils Executive is as follows.
- a) The Action Plan should contain recognition of the finite carbon budget available to the District of South Hams as well as the organisation of South Hams District Council, and the consequential targets taken over 5 years that are relevant to all who live here. These targets should define the purpose and goals of the Action Plan together with the final version of the Devon Carbon Plan.
  - b) The targets and indicators should align with the Devon Carbon Plan and be monitored on an annual basis. The first review of the strategy (specifically its monitoring framework) should commence following the adoption of the Devon Carbon Plan to update the action plan with relevant actions from the Devon Carbon Plan, and where relevant, its governance and monitoring framework.
  - c) The Action Plan should continue to acknowledge that the Council has an important facilitation and coordination role in the community it serves and that it is uniquely placed to be actively bringing key local organisations together, working with them to resolve issues where it has the relevant powers and/or influence, helping to access funds

as the need arises, helping to create a common understanding of goals and timescales and working with groups to achieve them. In light of this, a review of the adopted funding model will take place with a view to ensuring that, within available budgets, support is available to enable community groups to undertake specific tasks, such as community engagement, as required by the Council's adopted CC&B strategy.

- d) In recognition of the role outlined in 3, the Council should setup a CC&B Community Partnership Group that brings together the range of expertise and energy to achieve the goals of the Action Plan. This could be established through a revision of, the current Community Forum. It is suggested that the six organisations that presented to this Task and Finish Group are invited to join the existing Community Forum members) along with relevant officers, any elected member, and the lead member for Climate Change and Biodiversity. A revised Terms of Reference will be agreed to set the context for the group with a rotating chair
- e) It is recognised that officer resources are limited, notwithstanding the remit of the Task and Finish Group, urgent consideration should be given to identify additional funds for CC&B and accessing other available funding streams to support our specialist Adam Williams either through recruitment or through employing relevant expertise.

## 5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 The overview & Scrutiny Panel is recommended to agree the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group as set out in 4.1 and recommend these to the Councils Executive in December 2021.

## 7. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		
Financial implications to include reference		The Climate Change and Biodiversity Earmarked Reserve, which has a balance of £480,000. £200,000 has been set aside for use through Crowdfunder, the recommendations will commit the

to value for money		Executive to review this, using some of this allocation for another fund mechanism alongside Crowdfunder
Risk		
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Wellbeing, Homes, Climate Change and Biodiversity
Equality and Diversity		No direct implications
Safeguarding		No direct implications
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No direct implications
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		The provision of energy efficiency measures will have a positive impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the households.
Other implications		