

**RECOMMENDATION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP –**

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

**Executive Summary**

On 25 July 2019, the Council declared a ‘climate emergency’. This recognises the continued priority the Borough gives to addressing global climate change, including biodiversity and habitat losses, through strong local commitment and most importantly actions. The Council has pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations, to accelerate efforts in this regard.

At its meeting on 26 September 2019, the Climate Change Working Group received a discussion paper (attached at Appendix 1) that set out the meaning of carbon neutrality and the implications in terms of the Council’s own pledge. To achieve the stated target, the Council needs to be able to accurately measure and account for all emissions associated with its estate and operations. The report recommended options for a baseline year from which to record emissions reductions. It also recommended a definition of what should constitute the Council’s estate and operations.

**Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

**RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That**

- (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 (as set out in paragraph 3.8 of the Climate Change Working Group Report at Appendix 1) - be adopted;
- (iii) the Climate Change Working Group’s recommended baseline year of 2018/19 for monitoring emissions be adopted;

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- (iv) in the longer term, the Council will develop plans for borough-wide emissions and adaptation actions to address the climate and 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.

### **Reasons for Decision**

Reason: The report outlines factors that are required to accurately measure the Council's continued progress towards carbon neutrality.

The items above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

**Background Papers:** None.

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**Date Published:** 2 October 2019

## **Recommendation from Climate Change Working Group – Climate Emergency**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 On 25 July 2019, the Council declared a ‘climate emergency’. This recognises the continued priority the Borough gives to addressing global climate change, including biodiversity and habitat losses, through strong local commitment and most importantly actions. The Council pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 26 September 2019, the Climate Change Working Group made four recommendations that are essential to monitoring progress in achieving the target of the Council’s estate and operations becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and Borough-wide by 2050.

### **2.0 Definitions and baselines**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 26 September 2019, the Climate Change Working Group received a discussion paper that set out the meaning of carbon neutrality and the implications of the Council’s own pledge (attached at Appendix 1). To achieve the stated target, the Council needs to be able to accurately measure and account for emissions associated with its estate and operations. The report recommended options for a baseline year from which to record emissions reductions and a definition of what should constitute the Council’s estate and operations.
- 2.2 The Climate Change Working Group discussed and agreed its recommendations to the Executive on these three points. The Group also agreed that, after developing the Council’s leadership to carbon neutrality of its estate and operations by 2030, the Council will work as far as is practicable towards Borough-wide carbon neutrality by 2050.
- 2.3 The Working Group recognised that, whilst working to meet these targets, the scale of the Council’s estate and operations will vary over time. For example, as property assets are purchased or sold. Such changes will affect the Council’s total annual greenhouse gas emissions and so these will be made clear when reporting, to ensure the emission additions/deductions associated with these changes are not counted when monitoring CO<sub>2</sub> changes on Woking’s journey towards carbon neutrality. The Executive is requested to make these recommendations to Council.
- 2.4 In furtherance of the pledge towards Borough-wide carbon neutrality by 2050, the Climate Change Working Group recognised the Council’s commitment to developing a well-integrated community with a sustainable transport system which connects people to jobs, services and community facilities whilst minimising impacts on the environment. The Working Group recognised that parking and the promotion of alternative modes of sustainable transport is a key component of this particularly with regard to Woking Town Centre. The Council’s Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) notes trends in reducing car ownership levels and the increasing use of public transport. It also notes that the Town Centre enjoys easy access to a wide variety of other transport means, employment opportunities and alternative parking arrangements. The Parking Standards SPD states that on-site parking provision below the minimum standard will be considered where fully justified and evidenced. The Climate Change Working Group feels that given access to alternatives to the private car, zero parking for Town Centre developments can be justified and should be supported by the Planning Committee going forward.
- 2.5 In new developments the Climate Change Working Group considers that occupiers be encouraged to participate in the Town Centre car club scheme, with automatic free enrolment for the first year for residential properties.

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### **3.0 Implications**

#### Financial

- 3.1 There will be costs associated with meeting the carbon neutral targets as set out in this report. The implications and funding will be considered in due course as detailed proposals are developed.

#### Human Resource/Training and Development

- 3.2 There are no human resource / training and development implications associated with this report.

#### Community Safety

- 3.3 There are no community safety implications associated with this report.

#### Risk Management

- 3.4 There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

#### Sustainability

- 3.5 This report outlines some initial decisions that are required to be made in order to embark on the target to become carbon neutral. As outlined in Appendix 1, achieving and maintaining carbon neutrality would bring an end to the Council's own contribution to climate change.

#### Equalities

- 3.6 There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

#### Safeguarding

- 3.7 There are no safeguarding implications associated with this report.

### **4.0 Consultations**

- 4.1 The Climate Change Working Group was consulted at its meeting on 26 September 2019.

REPORT ENDS