

Report Title:	Climate Change Leadership
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Stimson, Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Climate Change and Parks & countryside
Meeting and Date:	30 September 2021
Responsible Officer(s):	Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth Andrew Durrant, Executive Director Place
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out proposals to set up an independent Climate Partnership within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The partnership would oversee the delivery of the Environment and Climate Strategy by bringing together private and public sector organisations as well as community groups. By utilising the knowledge and expertise of organisations across the Borough, it will better support delivery of the outcomes set out in the strategy as well as allowing the council to deliver on its own actions and commitments within the strategy.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Approves setting up a Borough Wide Climate Partnership and providing revenue funding support for the next three years.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Create a climate action network to oversee delivery of the Borough Environment and Climate Strategy This is the recommended option	The proposals have been developed based on a best practice review of other local authorities and will best support the delivery of the outcomes set out in the adopted Environment and Climate Strategy.
Set up a partnership without secretariat support with requirement for partners to provide in kind resources to manage the group. This is not recommended	Experience of similar organisations is that it is difficult to move actions forward and this leads to loss of momentum and interest from partners.

Option	Comments
<p>The council retain sole leadership responsibility for delivering the strategy</p> <p>This is not recommended</p>	<p>There is a risk that the council will be the sole focus of leadership on climate matters which will result in less action and direct leadership from across all sectors of the economy and across the broader community.</p>

- 2.1 The Environment and Climate Strategy was approved on 17 December 2020. This set out a commitment for the Royal Borough of Windsor to have net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest, with a trajectory of rapid decarbonisation over the next decade. The strategy is clear that this cannot be achieved by the Council in isolation and requires all of the Borough and Central Government to play their part.
- 2.2 The strategy set out proposals for a Stakeholder Advisory Board that would meet on a bimonthly basis to support monitoring and delivery of the strategy. This would be made up of key stakeholders covering each of the four strategic themes. It also committed to a review of other local authority governance and delivery models to ensure the proposals within the borough are fit for purpose.
- 2.3 A review of best practice has concluded that a new independent Climate Partnership should be set up. This group would work together to deliver the strategy and the outcomes within it. The council would play a key role in the network and would continue to deliver its own committed actions from the strategy itself. The network would provide a greater reach into businesses and communities and expertise to support the successful delivery of the strategy.

Current issues

- 2.4 Currently, the Council is seen as the focus for leadership, engagement and communication in relation to the Environment and Climate Strategy. Due to the limited capacity within the team, a significant amount of officer time is being spent on managing stakeholders and balancing competing interests from across the different themes and activity. This has also made it more difficult for the team to take forward its own actions and projects within the strategy.
- 2.5 The council ownership of the agenda makes it harder for the private sector, communities and private individuals to own the agenda across the borough. The strategy makes clear the importance that everyone takes action and works together to solve the problem. Therefore, moving away from a Council-led approach to an independent body will support delivery of the strategy.

Proposed structure

- 2.6 The partnership would be an independent organisation to research, create and co-ordinate delivery of the Environment and Climate Strategy. It would also develop and prepare the new strategy and action plan for 2025 onwards. It would be open for any individual, business or organisation to join and contribute to its work.
- 2.7 To support the work of the member organisation, there would be three roles created to form a secretariat function. This would include a new Partnership Director who would provide leadership and engagement with member

organisations. They would be responsible for the work programme. A programme manager with experience in sustainability and climate issues would be recruited to undertake the key strands of the work programme. The third role would be administrative support to organise and facilitate the meetings and operation of the partnership.

- 2.8 The partnership itself would have a three-tiered structure, with the executive providing a leadership role, the network providing a means of knowledge sharing and a community forum to provide broad and inclusive engagement:



- 2.9 The Executive would provide a leadership function for the partnership. Key aspects of their work would be:

- Creating future strategies and action plans
- Engaging local communities, businesses and organisations
- Leading local research and development of concepts, objectives and actions
- Monitoring delivery of partnership projects
- Reporting on whole borough performance against targets
- Reviewing progress against key targets
- Agreeing annual programme of partnership activity
- Challenge and support local business and organisations to act
- Prioritising and encouraging community actions

- 2.10 The network would provide an opportunity for knowledge sharing and best practice. Key aspects of their work would be:

- Coordinating research and ideas
- Sharing projects from their own organisations
- Discussing opportunities for funding
- Identifying opportunities for collaboration
- Leading on engagement and communication

- 2.11 The community forum would provide an opportunity to share progress and celebrate success. It is expected that it would focus on:
- Communicating progress on delivery of the strategy.
 - Generating ideas for new projects.
 - Enable likeminded individuals to meet and share best practice
 - To celebrate the success of projects, organisations and individuals across the Borough.
- 2.12 The partnership would be made up of a mixture of public sector, private sector and community organisations. These would be spread across the four strategic themes: energy, circular economy, natural environment and transport.

Role of the council

- 2.13 The council will play a full and active role in the partnership. It is expected that there would be at least one councillor and senior officer on the Partnership Executive and as a core funder the Council would have an enhanced role.
- 2.14 The delivery, scrutiny and assurance of the Council's action plan to reduce emissions would be fully integrated within the existing council governance. For example, capital funding would be reviewed by the Capital Review Board and approved by full Council. Both the council and the Climate Partnership could be scrutinised through the overview and scrutiny process.
- 2.15 Based on the proposed structure, the cross-party climate steering group would be disbanded, having fulfilled its original purpose. This would allow the environment and climate strategy to be fully integrated within the council structures.
- 2.16 The council will continue to deliver its own ambitious carbon reduction targets as well as the actions set out in the strategy that relate to its own operations and functions, including developing and delivering the strategy to reduce transport emissions and enhancing biodiversity through its parks and open spaces.

Next steps

- 2.17 Initial discussions with key partners across the borough suggest there is strong support for setting up the partnership and an appetite to work together. If the proposals are approved then the council's team would formally approach partners to join the partnership and start the recruitment process for the secretariat team.
- 2.18 The recruitment would be led by the Climate Partnership Executive, which would include the council. The intent would be to have the partnership in place close to the start of the next financial year.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The RBWM Climate Partnership will be a critical element in delivering the Environment and Climate Strategy, helping the council's own team to focus on delivery of its own projects and giving a broader base of leadership. The key steps in setting up the partnership will be to recruit member organisations to the executive and to recruit the secretariat roles.

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Set up Climate Partnership Executive.	After 30 th November 2021	By 30 th November 2021	By 31st October 2021	N/A	30 th November 2021
Recruit secretariat roles	After 1 st March 2022	By 1 st March 2022	By 1 st February 2022	N/A	1 st March 2022
Full Launch of Climate Partnership	After 1 st May 2022	By 1 st May 2022	By 1 st April 2022	N/A	1 st May 2022

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Climate Partnership be supported by a secretariat of three full-time posts that would manage the group and its programme. This is expected to include a Climate Partnership Director, Programme Manager and Administrative support.
- 4.2 It is estimated that this would require funding of around £250,000 per year for the first three years. After this it is expected that the partnership will need to be self-funding. The Executive, working with the secretariat, will need to determine a sustainable long-term funding model. This is expected to be through contributions from member organisations and exploiting external funding opportunities.
- 4.3 The additional funding will need to be included in the budget from 2022/23 and would need to be considered as part of the Council's priorities within the budget as a whole. It may be possible to offset some of this revenue funding through contributions collected as part of the carbon offset fund, which is set out with the council's Interim Sustainability Position Statement, and its successor supplementary planning document. However, at this stage the level of contributions that could be collected over the next three years are not known.

Table 3: Financial impact of report's recommendations

REVENUE COSTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Additional total	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Reduction	£0	£0	£0
Net Impact	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The RBWM Climate Partnership will be a separate legal entity and therefore there are no specific legal implications for the council. The council will need to continue to meet its own legal obligations in relation to the Environment and Climate Strategy, for example any obligations set through the Environment Act

(when it comes into force) and any other future obligations placed on it by existing and future legislation.

- 5.2 The most appropriate form of the organisation, such as a community interest company, will need to be reviewed and determined by members of the partnership executive and appropriate governance and assurance processes will need to be put in place.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risk	Level of uncontrolled risk	Controls	Level of controlled risk
Lack of interest or commitment from private sector partners	Medium	Initial engagement demonstrates an interest and commitment from a number of key partners.	Low
The partnership remains unfunded post	High	Initial funding from the council to enable the group to become established and demonstrate its value.	Medium

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 Equalities. A screening assessment has been undertaken and has not identified any potential negative impacts at this stage. The council will continue to play a key role in the climate action network. Any projects that the council takes forward as part of the network will make appropriate consideration of our obligations under the Equalities Act.
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability. The climate network will increase engagement and involvement of key public and private sector organisations in the delivery of the Borough's Environment and Climate Strategy. Therefore, it is expected to have a positive impact on delivery of the key outcomes within the strategy.
- 7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. Setting up the partnership will not create any new data protection or GDPR issues for the Council. The partnership would need to set up appropriate processes to manage any issues that arise. If it collects or retains personal information then it would need to make sure that there are appropriate processes and policies in place for managing these issues. A Data Protection Impact Assessment will be undertaken before the formal formation of the Partnership, to identify any issues.

8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 8.1 The full implementation stages are set out in table 5.

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
30 th November 2021	Recruit initial members of the Partnership Executive
1 st March 2022	Recruit secretariat roles
1 st May 2022	Formal formation of the RBWM Climate Partnership

9. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputy)</i>			
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	06/09/21	16/09/21
Emma Duncan	Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	06/09/21	08/09/21
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	06/09/21	
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	06/09/21	
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	06/09/21	08/09/21
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Duncan Sharkey	Chief Executive	06/09/21	
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	06/09/21	06/09/21
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Children's Services	06/09/21	
Hilary Hall	Executive Director of Adults, Health and Housing	06/09/21	08/09/21

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Climate Change, Parks & Countryside.	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan: August 2021	No	No

Report Author: Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth