

Report to: **Executive**

Date: **28 June 2023**

Title: **Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Panel and Support for Sustainable South Hams**

Portfolio Area: **Climate Change – Cllr John McKay**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That the Executive is RECOMMENDED that:**

- 1. A Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Panel, chaired by the Executive Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity and comprising expert representatives from the wider community is established with immediate effect;**
- 2. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Strategy and Governance in consultation with the Executive Lead for Climate Change and Biodiversity to set the Terms of Reference and membership of the Advisory Group; and**
- 3. A grant of £40,000 from the Climate Change and Biodiversity Earmarked Reserve be awarded to Sustainable South Hams to continue their District wide work supporting the Council's declaration of a climate change and biodiversity emergency.**

#### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Council declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency on 25 July 2019.
- 1.2 Following the elections in May 2023 and formation of the new political administration, the Council now needs to begin developing its priorities for the next four years.
- 1.3 In line with the ambition set out in the new administration's manifesto and its clear commitment to tackling the Climate and Biodiversity emergency, it is proposed to form a new Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Group.

- 1.4 It is further proposed to continue to financially support the district wide work of Sustainable South Hams in supporting the Council's declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Following the declaration of a Climate Change and Biodiversity emergency in 2019, the Council subsequently adopted its Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2.2 The adopted strategy and actions delivered to date have primarily focussed on reducing the Council's organisational carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity on its own land.
- 2.3 Following a Task and Finish Group review, a report was considered by the Executive on 2 December 2021 that asked that:
  - £100,000 of the £200,000 dedicated to Crowdfunder and the small direct cash grants be set aside to fund projects targeted to accelerate the delivery of the Council's adopted Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan (as set out in the published agenda report); and
  - the Director of Strategy and Governance, in consultation with the lead Executive Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity and the Leader of Council, be delegated authority to decide the outcomes of future fund applications.
- 2.4 These recommendations were subsequently approved by the Executive (Minute E.71/21(a) refers) and, in accordance with these decisions, a grant of £22,500 was awarded to Sustainable South Hams (SSH) in April 2022.

## **3. Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Panel**

- 3.1 The Council will undertake a full review of the strategy and its adopted aims and to help inform this process and move forward as quickly as possible, it is proposed to set up a Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Panel ('The Panel').
- 3.2 The Panel will be made up of a limited number, in the order of six, members of the wider community with the relevant expertise and influence (all on a voluntary basis). The Panel will be chaired by the Executive Lead for Climate Change and Biodiversity and be supported by the Director of Strategy and Governance and the Principal Climate Change Officer.
- 3.3 The purpose of the new Panel will be to use specialist and expert knowledge to provide practical support to the Council's, and the wider communities, Climate Change and Biodiversity ambitions, helping to develop district wide projects that will have the biggest influence on carbon emissions.

3.4 It is proposed that the Panel is properly constituted, and minutes are made available to the public through the website and via circulation to interested parties.

#### 4. Proposed Way Forward

4.1 It is proposed that the Panel is constituted at the earliest opportunity and commences it's work quickly.

4.2 In addition, further work is proposed to develop and/or work with an existing community-based forum building on the work presently underway with Sustainable South Hams and to extend the financial support for SSH by awarding a grant of £40K from the Climate Change and Biodiversity earmarked reserve.

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	This report includes an overview of process in developing the strategy.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	A grant of £40,000 from the Council's Climate Change earmarked reserved will be awarded to Sustainable South Hams to support the work of the Council.
Risk	Y	None
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Climate Change and Biodiversity
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	This report directly supports the Council's commitment to tackling climate change and increasing biodiversity.
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity		None as a direct implication of this report
Safeguarding		None as a direct implication of this report
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None as a direct implication of this report
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None as a direct implication of this report
Other implications		

#### Appendices:

None

#### Background Documents:

None