



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee  
14 January 2020  
Agenda Item 8

Key Decision [~~Yes~~/No]

Ward(s) Affected: All

**A Climate Assembly for Adur & Worthing**

**Report by the Director for Digital & Resources**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To set out Adur & Worthing Councils' strong commitment to tackling climate change locally, outlining progress so far, including community engagement activities
- 1.2. To propose the establishment of a Climate Assembly in 2020/21, to create a robust, independent and representative engagement approach with our local communities on climate change and ecological issues.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Joint Strategic Committee:
  - 2.1.1. Note the strong progress made with the climate change agenda the Councils declared a climate emergency.
  - 2.1.2. Agree to establish a Climate Assembly in 2020/21, funded from the Business Development budget at a cost of £42,000

for Worthing Borough Council and £28,000 for Adur District Council

### 3. Background and context

- 3.1. In July 2019, both Adur and Worthing Councils declared a climate emergency, significantly strengthening the commitment to sustainability already made in the Councils' strategy Platforms for Our Places 2016-19.
- 3.2. Since July, significant work has been undertaken to develop a strong response to climate change. The Councils promised to deliver a carbon reduction plan by January 2020, providing a clear strategy to reach carbon neutrality by 2030. That plan was reported to Joint Strategic Committee in December 2019, earlier than scheduled, and work is underway across the work streams identified.
- 3.3. At the Joint Strategic Committee in December 2019, SustainableAW, the councils' place-based strategic framework was presented and approved. Four additional areas were added to the already successful approach: shared leadership, climate resilience, food, land use/planning. The framework is published at: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/sustainable-aw/>.
- 3.4. The new framework provides a way for the Councils to develop area level responses to climate change and the environment working *with* communities, partner organisations and businesses. The framework shows council commitments against ten themes, while also providing space for area based commitments to be developed through engagement and co-production with the community during 2020.
- 3.5. The Councils have already undertaken significant engagement with communities and groups, and have identified a positive, shared appetite for further collaboration. A community event on "Food, Land and Learning in October was well received, Council Members and officers have met for discussions with a number of groups, and we are actively working on **Zero2030**, a large event in March 2020 in collaboration with Worthing Climate Action Network and Transition

Towns Worthing.

- 3.6. The Councils aim to go even further however, in seeking the views of the community as we develop a shared response to the climate emergency.
- 3.7. Citizens assemblies are panels of people selected to be representative of the community, and are run as deliberative forums, making recommendations to elected members, councils, partner organisations, countries and citizens. Their use primarily by local authorities is growing and there have been several assemblies run on climate change so far around the country.
- 3.8. Assemblies are set up to reflect gender, age, ethnicity, social background and geographical location, helping broaden debate and garner views much more widely than from the 'usual suspects'. They also, through carefully designed deliberative processes, support the development of more useful, in depth and well considered proposals compared to some more traditional consultations.
- 3.9. Assemblies are careful to put the trade-offs faced by decision makers in front of members of the public, and ask them to produce workable recommendations, drawing on the expert evidence presented to them and facilitated opportunities to debate and deliberate.
- 3.10. It is recommended that Adur & Worthing Councils establish a Climate Assembly that is not a one-off event, but a series of 6 events over the course of the year 2020 and into 2021, providing an effective way to engage local people in climate change and ecological issues over a suitable time period. In this way, the area level actions needed for Sustainable AW across the ten themes can be meaningfully explored with and by the community.
- 3.11. Setting up an Assembly - selecting participants, designing and running the events, supporting the group to develop proposals and recommendations requires specific skills and experience. And it is also crucial that the Assembly is impartially run and has independence from the Councils. Participants should experience the councils as a key stakeholder rather than "in control" of things, or with a particular agenda or slant. An experienced third party organisation is needed to achieve this, along with the establishment of an independent advisory group to oversee design and implementation. The advisory group

would work to ensure that assembly participants are presented with factually accurate, comprehensive, balanced and unbiased information.

- 3.12. The Councils have therefore progressed a procurement exercise to identify a suitable third party organisation to support Adur & Worthing in establishing a robust, independent and effective Climate Assembly which will run during 2020 for six (day) events during 2020, beginning in the spring/early summer after a period of set up and design. There has been strong interest, with 8 suppliers submitting proposals.
- 3.13. Should Joint Strategic Committee approve the recommendation to procure third party support, it will therefore be possible to move to contract award quickly.

#### **4. Running the Climate Assembly**

- 4.1. The selected third party organisation will be responsible for:
  - 4.1.1. Organising the assembly events
  - 4.1.2. Setting up and guiding the independent advisory group
  - 4.1.3. Linking the Climate Assembly to other actions taking place at the Councils and across the area
  - 4.1.4. Ensuring a governance pathway is mapped to ensure the Councils are able to respond to the outputs and recommendations of the assembly.
  - 4.1.5. Integrating the science associated with climate change in an accessible way with a focus on both the individual action and systemic changes needed
  - 4.1.6. Supporting the Councils to scope an appropriately sized question/challenge for deliberation by Assembly members.
- 4.2. The preferred organisation, once awarded the contract, will ensure the Climate Assembly has tangible outcomes which support the areas of Adur and Worthing to take collective action towards averting climate change and biodiversity loss.

#### **5. Climate Assembly timeline**

- 5.1. It is envisaged that the Climate Assembly will take place over six days in 2020 and early 2021, with the first events being held in the late Spring/early Summer.

5.2. There will be several key stages to prepare for the Climate Assembly, as detailed below:

- 5.2.1. **Inception and co-design** - workshops with key stakeholders from the Councils and local communities to scope the process and ensure widespread understanding and ownership
- 5.2.2. **Running the Climate Assemblies** - these will take place over six dates in 2020/21
- 5.2.3. **Review** - assessing the outputs/learning and feeding them into tangible actions to take forward

## 6. Communications and Engagement

6.1. We plan to engage relevant stakeholders as part of the *Zero2030* Climate Conference to map what is currently taking place in our area, and take the opportunity to discuss and explore the Climate Assembly approach.

6.2. The Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly will engage with the wider community through:

- 6.2.1. Further stakeholder meetings to gather evidence of what is currently taking place in the area to be considered by participants
- 6.2.2. Publishing evidence reviewed by the Climate Assembly and its recommendations through a website and via digital communications
- 6.2.3. Live streaming of expert evidence at the Assemblies
- 6.2.4. Including updates on Climate Assembly work in the new quarterly magazine, SustainableAW planned for launch in the spring

6.3. Additionally, it is envisaged that key 'lived experience' experts are part of the process, presenting to the assembly from their personal narrative and local perspectives (such as young people in Adur and Worthing).

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. The cost of setting up and running the Climate Assembly over six days, including the establishment of the advisory group and digital website and streaming facilities is estimated at £48,000 for Worthing Borough Council and £28,000 for Adur District Council
- 7.2. These costs will also include
  - 7.2.1. Participant recruitment (demographic stratification and random sampling), registration and onboarding (e.g. accessibility needs etc)
  - 7.2.2. Honorarium payment and travel expenses to assembly members
  - 7.2.3. Travel expenses for identified experts
- 7.3. The cost of the assembly will be funded from the Business Development budget.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 8.2. Section 1 of the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 provides that every statutory provision conferring or imposing a function on a local authority confers powers on the local authority to enter into a contract with another person for the provision or making available of assets or services, or both (whether or not together with goods) for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the local authority.
- 8.3. The Council will need to ensure compliance with its Contract Standing Orders prior to the award of the contract to the third party organisation appointed to establish the Climate Assembly in accordance with paragraph 3.12 of this report.
- 8.4. The Climate Assembly will be a consultative body and will not have any decision-making powers and all decisions arising from its recommendations will need to be taken in accordance with the Council's decision-making processes set out in the Constitution.

**Background Papers**

December JSC - SustainableAW

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

- An area based approach to climate change will be strongly advanced by the creation of a Climate Assembly, and encourage businesses to engage with the agenda, and with better coordination. There may well be opportunities identified that support transition to a green economy, such as aggregated offsetting, shared investment in local renewable energy systems etc.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

- The creation of a deliberative Assembly process for Climate Change will help generate stronger connections between different parts of the community given that participant selection will be representative. This process may well provide learning and an approach that can be applied to other complex issues locally

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

- The assembly process has equality and representation at its heart, and will use statistically sound techniques to ensure a fair membership

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

- Matter considered and no issues identified

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

- Matter considered and no issues identified

### **3. Environmental**

- This is the core purpose of the project, to focus on concrete actions to improve the environment at an area level.

### **4. Governance**

- This proposal is fully aligned to the councils Platforms for Our Places strategy
- Specific proposals will be developed on the pathway from the Climate Assembly into the councils decision making processes.