

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 23 August 2022

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: Establishment of Climate Change & Sustainability Forum

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval for the establishment of a cross-party Climate Change & Sustainability Forum.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council approves the establishment of a Climate Change & Sustainability Forum with a remit as set out in this report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Council declared a Climate Emergency that requires urgent action to make all Council services net zero carbon as soon as possible and in any case by 2045. The Council has also committed to work with its communities and partners towards making East Lothian a carbon neutral county. Sustainability is embedded within the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2019-2024 with the commitment to continue to reduce the environmental impact of East Lothian Council service provision.
- 3.2 The Council has committed to adapt to climate change and make all Council services 'net zero' as soon as reasonably practicable or in any case by 2045. Progress has been made by the Council over recent years and in 2021, despite the challenges of the pandemic, and the rapid growth in population and housing in East Lothian, the Council managed to reduce its emissions in 2020/21 by 6.4% compared to the previous year. However, as COP 26 made evident, countries and local authorities need to be more ambitious and focus even more strongly on delivering their net zero targets and cross party political oversight alongside collaboration with partners from local groups to governments will be vital.

- 3.3 Asset rationalisation is a key transformational work-stream within both the approved Council Budget and the Climate Change Strategy action plan. Opportunities exist post pandemic to rationalise our building assets to support new ways of working and operating that are efficient and effective, reducing expenditure and generating capital receipts.
- 3.4 The proposed membership of the Forum is as follows:
- Green Party Member (Chair)
 - Council Leader
 - Depute Leader
 - Cabinet Spokesperson for Housing & Property Maintenance
 - Leader of the Opposition
 - Leader of the Conservative Group
- 3.4.1 The Forum will be supported and attended by Members of the Council Management team as appropriate.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the remit of the Forum will be:
- To provide political oversight and ownership of the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy, Asset Management arrangements and asset rationalisation by officers
 - To ensure strategic budget decisions taken by Council are aligned with achievable delivery objectives
- 3.6 The Forum will meet at a frequency to be agreed at the first meeting. It will not form part of the Council's formal Scheme of Administration.
- 3.7 Agenda items of business are envisaged to include:
- Progress against the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan
 - Progress against the delivery of the General Services Capital Plan
 - Learning Estate Review Implementation
 - Asset Rationalisation progress update
 - Capital Receipts and Surplus Assets Review
 - Community use of Assets / Asset Transfer
 - Common Good - Asset Management Strategy
 - Progress against the delivery of the Housing Capital Plan

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The establishment of this Forum will ensure there is cross party political oversight of the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy and asset management arrangements including specifically progress on asset rationalisation.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – None
6.2 Personnel – None
6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

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DATE	8 August 2022