

Berkhamsted Town Council
CLIMATE ACTION STEERING GROUP
Terms of Reference

Title:

The name of the group shall be: Climate Action Steering Group

Status:

This shall be a Steering Group of Berkhamsted Town Council and shall report to the Transport and Environment Committee (T&E). Steering Groups make recommendations to T&E and do not have executive decision-making powers.

These Terms of Reference were approved at the Transport and Environment Committee on 12 October 2020, ratified by Full Council on 23 November 2020 and last readopted by Full Council on 16 May 2022.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Climate Action Steering Group is to provide an overarching framework to guide this Council's actions in developing a zero-carbon community by 2030.

It will:

- Oversee and steer the work of the three-climate action working groups: Energy, Habitat and Travel.
- Provide leadership in order to achieve carbon neutrality in the community by 2030;
- Undertake practical measures within council powers to reduce the impact of the Council's activities on the environment;
- Work with all sectors of our community to publicise this declaration and develop initiatives and practical measures that will help our community towards achieving carbon neutrality;
- Call upon the Borough and Hertfordshire County Council systematically to review their services, planning regulations and Local Plans and implement measures to reduce their impact on the environment and climate breakdown;
- Call upon the Government to provide regulations and resources that will enable communities to meet the goal of carbon neutrality by 2030.

Budget:

Publicity spend from the existing BTC publicity budget with approval from the Town Clerk.

Small project spends, subject to the usual spending controls, from within the BTC budget to be approved by the Chair of the Steering Group, the Chair of F&P Committee and the Town Clerk.

Large project spend will require a business case and agreement to the budget and project proposals by F&P and noted by Full Council.

Membership:

- A minimum of three members of Berkhamsted Town Council who together have decision making authority within the Steering Group
- Members of the public/local interest groups etc may be co-opted at the discretion of the Council members. The reasons for appointment shall be documented by the Chair and noted in the minutes. The number of co-opted members cannot exceed the number of councillors.

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- Other member of the community and special interest groups may, at the discretion of the Chair, be invited to attend specific meetings and/or provide expert advice to the committee.
All members should comply with the standards set out in the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders.

Quorum:

The quorum of the group shall be half of the Steering Group which must include two Councillors.

Chair:

The Chair of the Steering Group shall be a Councillor appointed by the members of the group for the term of the Council year.

The Vice Chair shall be elected from by the Steering Group from its members. All other Committee working group members to be agreed by the Steering Group Chair.

Meetings:

Meetings should take place at least six times per annum. Usually on Mondays at 6:30pm, two weeks prior to a T&E Committee meeting (other Council meetings allowing).

Meetings to take place virtually until physical meetings in the Council Chamber are possible.

Notes from meetings should be circulated for discussion at the T & E Committee for approval and adoption as appropriate. approval of recommendations made and adoption by T&E Committee. If no meetings have taken place, a short summary of actions and activities will suffice.

Decision Making:

Steering groups do not have executive decision-making powers and as set out in Full Council minute FC 92/19 Steering Groups will make recommendations to T & E as the parent Committee.

Subject to the Council's Standing Orders, the Steering Group can make decisions on what to recommend to T & E within the parameters of the pre-approved 1 year and 3-year plans submitted to T&E for approval (subject to the budgetary constraints noted above). Decisions will be agreed by majority voting of Council members and in the event of a tied vote the Chair will have the final say.

All decisions will be noted by the Chair and advised in minutes of the meeting including a note of how the decision contributes to the Council's climate emergency objectives of reducing carbon and implementing climate and environmental mitigation.

Review of Terms of Reference

As the role and membership of the Steering Group evolves, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed and any recommended amendments made to the T & E Committee for approval.

JH 18/06/2020