

Part I

Item No.

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Executive Member: Cllr Max Holloway

All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CLIMATE BIODIVERSITY CABINET PANEL – 6 NOVEMBER 2024  
REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESIDENT SERVICES AND CLIMATE  
CHANGE)

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE –CLIMATE AND  
SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 We have targets to be net zero as an organisation by 2030 and as a borough by 2050.
- 1.2 We cannot achieve these targets unless everyone is on board and plays their part; everyone must be aware of the main issues and understand how and what they can do to make the difference.
- 1.3 'Action on climate change' is a corporate priority. Our Members and Staff must be aware of related issues as we are to take this priority seriously and meet its objectives.
- 1.4 The key purpose of this training is to equip employees, Councillors and residents with the awareness needed to fully contribute - in both their working and personal lives - towards the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel approve a supplementary estimate of £3,650 for the purchase and implementation of climate and sustainability training, to be funded from the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 We declared a climate emergency in 2019 and have targets to be net zero as an organisation by 2030 and as a borough by 2050. Climate awareness training will help us meet these two targets by making Members, Staff and residents aware of the issues and how they can play their part.
- 3.2 We have a new corporate priority which specifies 'Action on Climate'. Raising awareness about key climate issues both internally and externally around the borough will help us meet all the objectives within this priority area.

- 3.3 The council has a corporate learning system, and we will be adding the climate awareness training to this system in the form of a SCORM file for staff and Members' use. We also believe awareness for residents is key, so the training will also be made available to residents through a link on the Climate Hub, which takes the learner to a hosted platform. (The training will contain the same content; however, the residential training will not have a pass or fail functions as it is not mandatory for them.
- 3.4 The training will be suitable for Members, staff, and for the price plan we have chosen, 500 residents as a starting point. If uptake is high, we can expand this and additional cost.
- 3.5 The training will be hosted by Meritec Ltd and very easy to access.
- 3.6 We can ensure we tailor it to cover not only our Corporate Priority on 'Action on Climate, our strategy and climate action plan, but also our CORE values.
- 3.7 The online course has the following functionalities.
- Customisable content to showcase an authority's own strategy, action plan and other specific content e.g. WHBC's Carbon Footprint Calculator (Climate Hero)
  - Are interactive to retain learner interest
  - Are mobile friendly for access anytime/anywhere on any device
  - Have a duration of circa. 40 minutes (for LAs) and 20 minutes (for residents)
  - Are easy to set up and access
  - The course has a variety of exercises to confirm learner understanding and these (and other content) can be fixed to ensure mandatory completion. Hosted versions of the courses also enable access to a management dashboard to monitor learner activity and their feedback.
- 3.7 Meritec believes that the training can provide a quality addition to the council's overall learning pathway and a timely return on investment. In particular, specific benefits include:
- Cost savings - from reduced energy consumption and waste by employees following their fuller participation in delivery of the council's climate change action plan
  - Increased external investment – from widely demonstrating (to the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership and to other funding bodies) the council's commitment to ethical practices and sustainability
  - Reduced training costs – from the cost-effective delivery of quality learning for all council employees, Members and residents

- Measurable contributions to Net Zero targets – from cultivating an informed and engaged community that actively participate in the broader sustainability agenda.

## **Implications**

### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 No legal implications arise from the proposals which are set out within this report.

### **5. Financial Implication(s)**

- 5.1 The Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel, have delegated authority to approve the use of the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve in consultation with the Section 151 Officer. The Section 151 Officer has approved this report and the recommendations being made to the panel.

### **6. Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 There will be no risks associated with the introduction of tailored climate awareness training. There is a risk of not meeting net zero targets if members, staff and residents are not aware of the main climate issues and do not understand the part they must play.

### **7. Communication**

- 7.1 There will be an element of communication involvement to roll out this training. Firstly, internally through internal communication channels such as CORE news and secondly, externally to encourage residents to sign up.

### **8. Security & Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 8.1 There are no security and terrorism implications relating to climate awareness training.

### **9. Procurement Implication(s)**

- 9.1 The procurement of the training has been undertaken in line with the councils Contract Standing Orders, and will be awarded to Meritic Limited.

### **10. Climate Change Implication(s)**

- 10.1 The introduction of this climate awareness training will ensure staff are aware of climate related issue and understand how they can help mitigate this global issue. They will learn how their small actions can make a difference and help us meet our corporate net zero targets. They will also learn more about our Transition to Net Zero Strategy and Climate Action Plan.

### **11. Human Resources Implication(s)**

11.1 The HR team will lead on importing the staff training into the councils corporate e-learning software, communicating training availability to staff, and reporting to the management team around the uptake of the training by employees

## **12. Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)**

12.1 Small behavioural changes identified in the training will have a co benefit of having a positive impact on health and wellbeing. Leading more sustainable lives often means being more active and healthier and connecting with nature which is better for both physical and mental health.

## **13. Link to Corporate Priorities**

13.1 The subject of this report is linked to one of the Council's 5 Priorities, in the following ways;

'Action on Climate'

- Renew our commitment to be a net zero council by 2030 (and as a borough by 2050)
- Step up climate adaptation and mitigation measures
- Lead by example and encourage others to make positive change
- Improve biodiversity

Improving Members, staff and residents understanding of key climate related issues will mean they are more equipped to make more positive sustainable lifestyle choice.

Also, the training will highlight our 'Action on Climate' corporate priority, Transition to Net Zero Strategy and Climate Action Plan, which will promote our climate aspirations and ensure everyone is on the same page, and knows where we are, where we want to be and how we aim to get there.

## **14. Equalities and Diversity**

14.1 An EqIA was not completed because this training does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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**Date: 16.10.24**