

Climate Emergency Working Group: Background and activities November 2020 – February 2021

Report from Councillor Caroline Smith:

At its meeting on the 25th November 2020, Council resolved to form a Climate Emergency Working Group, reporting to Full Council, to look at the creation of an Earley Town Council Climate Emergency Declaration and an accompanying series of deliverable actions. It was agreed by Council that membership would comprise: Cllrs. Caroline Smith, Marion Shaw, Clive Jones, Alison Newton, David Hare, Mike Smith and Andrew Mickleburgh.

Prior to the Working Group's first meeting on the 3rd February 2021, a draft Earley Town Council Declaration of Climate Emergency and a Draft Action Plan were circulated as discussion starters. Information about the Woodley Climate Emergency was circulated at the same time.

All Members of the Working Group attended the meeting on the 3rd February 2021. Cllr. Caroline Smith was elected as Chair. During the meeting the draft Earley Town Council Declaration of Climate Emergency was substantially re-amended. The structure of the draft Action Plan was also re-worked. The Working Group unanimously agreed that two recommendations would be made to the Council Meeting on the 17th February 2021.

All of these documents were sent back to all Members of the Working Group. Two very small further changes were suggested by one Member to the Declaration of Climate Emergency and recommendations to Council. These have been agreed to by the Working Group and incorporated in the recommendations to Council that form this Agenda Item.

A forward programme of work has been agreed by Members of the Working Group, that is anticipated should lead to submission of a Draft Earley Town Council Climate Emergency Action Plan to the Council Meeting on the 31st March.

Recommendations from the Climate Emergency Working Group for consideration at the 17th February 2021 Council Meeting.

Recommendation 1. That Council adopts the following Earley Town Council Declaration of Climate Emergency.

Earley Town Council Declaration of Climate Emergency

Preamble:

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report of November 2018 highlighted insufficient real progress towards capping global temperature rises to 1.5^{oC}.

Inaction will lead to an array of increasingly severe negative impacts, locally, nationally and globally.

Even a further half a degree rise would have catastrophic consequences, including, but not limited to: even greater frequency and severity of extreme weather events; further loss of biodiversity; and harms to human livelihoods and quality of life.

The IPCC set bold targets for significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to help address our Climate Emergency.

Thinking and acting locally has vital roles to play in helping to tackle this Climate Emergency.

Earley Town Council therefore commits to:

- declare a Climate Emergency in Earley.
- engage with Earley stakeholders to develop and implement an Earley Town Council Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- ensure that the Climate Emergency and related environmental issues are front and centre in Earley Town Council decision making.
- develop and implement realistic strategies and actions within the remit and capacity of Earley Town Council to help tackle the Climate Emergency.
- support local and wider initiatives to tackle the Climate Emergency.
- work with Wokingham Borough Council where relevant and practicable to support our joint ambition for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Recommendation 2. That Council:

- (i) Supports the Climate Emergency Working Group's ambition to present a Draft Earley Town Council Climate Emergency Action Plan for consideration at the Council meeting on the 31st March.
- (ii) After agreeing the Draft Action Plan, the Working Group will begin a 12-month period of significant and meaningful engagement with Earley stakeholders leading to the adoption of an Earley Town Council Climate Emergency Plan.