

Information/Discussion Paper

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

29 February 2012

Climate Change Member Working Group

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

The purpose of this paper is to inform Committee members of the work of the climate change member working group and to put forward suggestions for future work.

2. Membership

Councillor Paul Wheeldon
Councillor Ian Bickerton
Councillor Helena McCloskey
Councillor Penny Hall

Jane Griffiths, Director Commissioning
Gill Morris, Climate Change & Sustainability Officer
Tom Mimmagh, Building Services Manager
Other officers attend the working group as required

3. Carbon reduction projects

The working group has received updates and supported work on a number of carbon reduction projects.

3.1 Electricity contract

The council's energy contract is due to be awarded on 1st March following an e-tendering exercise. Working group members have been invited to attend on the day and will be able to comment as part of the decision-making process. Members on the working group have done research outside of the meeting and shared some 'lessons learnt' from a similar exercise undertaken by Bristol City Council to help inform the process. The contract will be awarded for a period of two years, after which it is likely that purchasing will be made through GO, which should achieve greater efficiencies.

3.2 Voltage optimisation

The voltage optimisation device fitted to the wet side of Leisure@ is being taken out and re-fitted at the Town Hall (free of charge). Whilst the trial demonstrated that savings could be achieved, the device proved to be incompatible with the combined heat and power (CHP) unit at Leisure@ despite efforts by suppliers of both pieces of equipment to resolve the problems. Given the experience of some of the Members on the working group, they have offered to look at the reports produced as part of that process. The device will now be subject to a three month trial at the Town Hall before further devices are fitted.

3.3 Lighting replacement projects

Regent Arcade car park: following a lighting trial, suitable replacement LED lighting has been ordered for Regent Arcade car park and installation will be aligned with that of the new payment system. Costs have been kept down as a result of extensive research to find lamps that can be retrofitted into the existing system; initial visits by potential suppliers suggested the whole system would need to be replaced.

Pool hall lights: at the last working group meeting, members viewed a photograph of the most recent lighting trial, which clearly demonstrated the improved luminosity of the LED lamps fitted compared to the current lighting. It has taken some time to find these lamps; previous trials of other lamps had not achieved the brightness required. A business case will now be developed for the project, which has a payback period of less than two years.

Chandelier bulbs at Town Hall: lighting trials have so far been unsuccessful, but research to find appropriate bulbs is continuing.

3.4 Other projects

Mayor's car: an interim arrangement is in place to hire a car rather than using a leasing arrangement. The Mayor's workload varies through the year and the hire arrangement allows for the car to be handed back for periods of time. This arrangement also provides the flexibility for a more permanent solution to be found. The working group has asked for mileage figures to be provided at the next meeting to inform a discussion about the suitability of a hybrid car.

Replacement of cremators: the two new cremators have now been installed and will be fully commissioned by April.

Grosvenor Terrace car park: the building services team is looking at 'greening' this car park to make it more attractive and more sustainable. This could include improved lighting, rainwater harvesting and solar panels. The importance of this car park will increase when North Place and Portland Street are closed and other elements being considered include improved signage and access to the High Street, which is currently very unattractive.

Energy management: the level of energy consumption in the server room at the Municipal Offices remains an area of concern and members have asked officers to see if they can collect some benchmarking data from other organisations.

Renewable energy: the working group responded to the government consultation on the Feed-in Tariffs in an effort to maintain support for community solar power projects; this response was also supported by Cabinet.

3.5 Bridging the gap

Funding has been set aside in 2012/13 to support the implementation of the pool hall lights project and also to support installation of an evaporative cooling system in the server room (subject to satisfactory business cases). The funding has been allocated on an invest-to-save basis, to reduce revenue costs as well as carbon emissions, and the working group is keen to ensure that, as other potential projects are identified, they are also considered on this basis.

4. Update on work identified in previous working group report

In a previous written report, the working group identified a number of additional areas of work that they would like to receive information on.

4.1 Air quality

The working group received a presentation from the council's contaminated land officer about Cheltenham being declared an Air Quality Management Area and the council's obligations as a consequence. As a result, the issue was picked up by Environment O&S Committee and an officer/member steering group has now been formed.

4.2 Smarter travel plan

The working group received an update on the council's travel plan and, following a further update, expressed concern that capacity issues are severely limiting implementation. Members have asked the Director, Commissioning to liaise with the Director, Built Environment about the possibility of implementing some of the less resource intensive initiatives.

4.3 Climate change and biodiversity

The working group had a discussion with the parks development manager about the impact of climate change on Cheltenham's green spaces and biodiversity. No direct actions were identified, but the working group has been assured that the green space strategy group will continue to pick up issues relating to climate change and biodiversity.

4.4 Climate change adaptation

The Chair of the working group produced a short report outlining the potential impact of climate change on the council, the possible financial implications and some potential countermeasures. The working group then received an update on the work plan for climate change adaptation.

Comprehensive risk assessments, which were developed for each council division in 2010, are being revised to reflect the new structure. Services that are due to be commissioned (eg Ubico, GO, built environment) will receive a copy of their updated risk assessments to inform their response to climate change adaptation.

Commissioned services will be required to report on climate change adaptation as part of the monitoring and review process. For the services which have yet to be reviewed, the risk assessments will be updated with directors and any new risks added.

An annual report will be produced to summarise the work across the council on adapting to climate change and to identify challenges for the future.

5. Areas for future work

The working group will keep a watching brief on the activities outlined above and is keen to continue its work. However, members decided not to identify any future activities until it is clear whether the new scrutiny committee wishes the working group

to continue and, if so, whether the working group should maintain its current focus or adopt a different approach.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1** The working group requests that the Committee recommends the working group continues under the new scrutiny arrangements.

Background Papers

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Accountability	Councillor Roger Whyborn
Scrutiny Function	Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee