

## CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Tuesday 13 June 2023

**Title:** **Committee Objectives and Work Programme for the Municipal Year**

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk/CEO – Sharon Groth

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### BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to consider this Committee's objectives/priorities. This will enable the Town Clerk and her Officers to draw up a manageable programme of works, which will ensure the necessary resources are available and can be deployed appropriately.

She has also taken the opportunity to update Councillors on the Open Spaces Strategy Action Plan for areas under the responsibility of this Committee.

### CURRENT SITUATION

Whilst this Committee leads on Climate and Biodiversity projects, the theory crosses over into everything the Council does, provides or maintains, to try and meet its target of carbon neutrality by 2028.

- ✓ Its has signed up to green utilities for gas and electric where possible;
- ✓ Brought the grounds maintenance contract in house to enable the Council to procure greener vehicles and equipment, have better control over grass cutting and maintenance to better promote biodiversity on its land;
- ✓ Set aside funding for electric vehicles;
- ✓ Employed a full time Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer who can focus on improving the biodiversity on Council land and in the lake;
- ✓ Created and maintain the Tiny Forest;
- ✓ Increased the number of allotments;
- ✓ Set aside funding for making its buildings more energy efficient;
- ✓ Involved with the LCWIP – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and 20 mph consultations.

There are Earmarked Reserves (EMR) which have been accumulated over several years:

Earmarked Reserve 366 – Climate/Biodiversity the balance of this EMR currently stands at £68,050 which is made up of £23,050 set aside for biodiversity and bank stabilisation works around the lake; and £45,000 for Climate initiatives and making the Council's building energy efficient.

The Operations Manager has commissioned EPC ratings for the Town Hall, Langdale Hall and Burwell Hall.

There is also an Earmarked Reserve 372 – Burwell Hall Heating System set aside £30,000 to replace the gas boiler which was discussed at the recent Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee.

The Council has an Earmarked Reserve 370 – Electric Vehicles which currently stands at £29,200 but there is an electric van on order.

**The RFO has provided a comprehensive Finance Report at a separate agenda item, and explains the two cost centres under direct control of this committee.**

### **Other Budget Lines Under Indirect Control – for information**

#### 4066/402 – Replacement Trees:

It is Council policy that any trees which must be removed are replaced and therefore the necessary funding needs to be in place to fulfil its objective. A budget line of £8,000 has been set in 23/24.

#### 4067/402 – Tree Survey:

The Council has a rolling programme of surveying its tree stock – which is a requirement for insurance purposes. Within the budget for 23/24 there is also provision for OSS-PO3 Draw up and adopt a comprehensive arboriculture plan.

## **OPEN SPACES STRATEGY ACTION PLAN**

Appendix A provides an extract from the adopted OSS relating to this Committees responsibilities.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make about its facilities and services it operates.

## **RISK**

In decision making Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

When considering its priorities, the committee should be mindful of all resources – financial as well as human resources – and the competing demands from other Committees. There needs to be a clear programme of works to ensure that the council is realistic in what it can achieve in the next 12 months. Failure to have a plan could result in wasted resources and undeliverable projects.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications are detailed above.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the Committees objectives/priorities for the coming municipal year.