

Report to Neighbourhoods Select Committee



Date of meeting: 28th June 2016

Subject: Environmental Charter and Objectives

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Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- 1. (a) That the Neighbourhoods Select Committee considers the Environmental Charter and associated commitments and actions, attached at appendices 1 and 2 respectively, and recommends them to the Cabinet accordingly; and,**

(b) That an item be added to the Select Committee's Work Programme to receive an annual report on progress against the Action Plan.

Report:

1. The direction of the Council's future strategies on environmental issues was previously considered by the Council's Leadership Team on 11 November 2015 and the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee on 17 November 2015. The Select Committee agreed that a draft environmental charter and action plan should be developed, under the broad headings recommended by the Leadership Team, to replace the existing Climate Change Policy 2009. It was further agreed that this should be brought back to the Select Committee for 'comments and agreement'.
2. The outcome of these discussions was considered at the Green Working Party (GWP) on 7 December when it was agreed that the charter and action plan should be modelled on the 'Climate Local' methodology. This looks at various environmental commitments for a local authority and breaks them down into broad areas, such as Finance, Energy, the Natural Environment, etc. Within each area, suggestions are made for environmental commitments and associated actions.
3. The development of the charter and action plan was added as to the GWP's work programme accordingly. The draft Charter attached at Appendix 1 and the Commitments and Actions document attached at Appendix 2 are the final drafts from discussions that took place at meetings of the GWP and were signed off by the GWP on 7 June 2016. The documents follow the format of Climate Local methodology but are tailored to EFDC requirements.
4. The Environmental Charter is an overarching document to explain what we as EFDC (and the GWP) feel are our main commitments to the environment as the area leader. It is free from labels such as policy names to ensure that the document is inclusive enough to cover all areas of EFDC's operations.
5. The 'Commitments and Actions' is a document to demonstrate ways in which we are fulfilling our Charter. It is broken into three main headings with broad actions under each heading. The broad actions will then be supported by specific actions from the GWP work plan. Once actions have been completed they can be added to this document as a record of

what we have achieved. In this way the work plan can be the “working document” which changes, supporting the overall commitments and actions document.

6. The Council’s Management Board considered the documents at its meeting on 15 June and recommended some minor changes to the Environmental Charter which have been highlighted on the document in Appendix 1.

7. The Neighbourhoods Select Committee is recommended to consider and recommend these documents to the Cabinet and receive an annual report on progress against the Action Plan.

Reason for decision:

To provide information of the Environmental Charter and commitments/actions plan in accordance with the decision of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee on 17 November 2015.

Options considered and rejected: None as the Charter and associated documents have been developed in accordance with the express wish of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee on 11 November 2015.

Resource implications: None

Legal and Governance Implications: None

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications: The Environmental Charter and associated commitments action document state the Council’s high level aspirations with regard to climate change, tackling greenhouse gas emissions and sustainability and therefore has implications under the ‘safer, cleaner, greener’ agenda.

Consultation Undertaken: Consultation has taken place with the Council’s Leadership Team on 11 November 2015, The Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee on 17 November 2015 and the Green Working Party on 8 March and 6 June 2016. Comments have been taken into account in the development of the documents where appropriate.

Background Papers: Climate Local methodology (www.local.gov.uk/climate-local).

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management: No risks identified

Equality: The actions and commitments in the Environmental Charter will provide benefits fairly to everyone in our community regardless of protected characteristics.