

Report of	Assistant Director of Policy and Corporate	Author	Richard Clifford ☎ 507832
Title	Environmental Project Support Officer – recommendation from Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group made a recommendation to Cabinet that resources be made available for the recruitment of an Environmental Project Support Officer to support the work of the Group,

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 That the necessary resources be made available to support the work of the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 Additional resource would help the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Group deliver on its ambitious and important objectives.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The alternative option would be not to agree to the recommendation from the Task and Finish Group.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The all-party Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group was established following a decision by Cabinet at its meeting on 5 June 2019. At its meeting on 17 July the Full Council unanimously agreed a motion declaring a climate emergency, and agreeing to support Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group to consider the following actions:
- (a) Commission an environmental audit which identifies pollution hotspots, wildlife biodiversity and environmental health issues, and an urban impact assessment with an aim to identify areas of improvement across the borough.
 - (b) Consult expert opinions in the field, as appropriate.
 - (c) Collaborate with regional and neighbouring local authorities, as well as communities, to encourage practical measures to reduce emissions, reduce carbon footprints and develop community-based renewable energy projects.
 - (d) Encourage all sectors of the economy across the borough to take steps to reduce waste and become carbon neutral.
 - (e) Develop a roadmap for Colchester Borough Council to go carbon neutral by 2030.
 - (f) Report to Cabinet and Full Council within six months with an action plan setting out conservation and environmental sustainability goals to address targets by 2030; incorporating proposals on the investment implications of this proposed activity.
- 5.2 At its first meeting on 24 July 2019, the Group began to consider the scope of the work involved and its future work programme. It also considered issues related to resource capacity. In view of the importance of the issues under consideration, and the need to report to Council with an action plan within six months, and after considering the existing resources available within the Council, the Group requested that Cabinet should consider making additional resource available to support the delivery of the Task and Finish Group's objectives. Additional resource would support the planning and delivery of environmental and sustainability projects and support the policy work of the Group, including working with town and parish councils on these issues.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 There are no direct equality, diversity and human rights implications.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The work of the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group supports the following Strategic Plan priorities:-
- Growth – To ensure Colchester's growth is sustainable and bio-diversity is encouraged;
 - Responsibility – To encourage public and private sector organisations to act with greater environmental responsibility;
 - Opportunity – Create new opportunities for use of renewable energy sources and conservation of natural habitats;
 - Wellbeing – To enhance the wellbeing of residents through the promotion and protection of our natural environment, reducing practices with detrimental environmental and health outcomes.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There is currently no provision in the budget for additional resource, so it is proposed that the Group's activity in 2019/20 be delivered from within existing resources. Any additional resource should be considered as part of setting the Council's 2020/21 revenue budget.

9. Standard References

- 9.1 There are no consultation or publicity considerations; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.