

5 June 2019

Report of	Assistant Director of Policy and Corporate	Author	Richard Clifford ☎ 507832
Title	Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

1.1 At its meeting on 13 March an urgent item was raised by the Leader of the Council proposing a new Task and Finish Group focused on Conservation and Environmental Sustainability. It was agreed that the establishment of the Task and Finish Group be considered at the first meeting of the new municipal year. Therefore, this report seeks Cabinet's approval for some of the detailed arrangements for the Task and Finish Group, such as terms of reference and the political composition. Once these matters are agreed the Task and Finish Groups will be set up and a first meeting arranged.

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 To approve the terms of reference, political composition, and reporting timescales of the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group, as set out at paragraph 5.1 below.

2.2 To note Cabinet's preference for the first meeting to be held promptly in the municipal year 2019/20.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 In order for the Task and Finish Groups to begin work it is necessary for their terms of reference, political composition, and reporting timescales to be agreed. The appointment of the Chair is for the Task and Finish group to agree at its initial meeting.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 It would be possible to propose alternative terms of reference or a different political composition. However, it is felt that proposed terms of reference identify the key issues that need to be addressed. In terms of political composition, it is important that the Task and Finish Group is cross-party and membership therefore incorporates all political groups on the Council.

5. Background Information

5.1 Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group

The proposals for the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group are as follows:-

Terms of Reference:

To acknowledge our "Climate Emergency" and translate aspirations into actions.

To explore methods of conservation of natural habitats and bio-diversity, whether through adapting existing practices and places or creating new ecologically diverse environments with sustainable practices built in.

To encourage renewable energy generation and carbon footprint reduction in both the public and private sectors across the borough.

Membership:

The membership should be between 7-8 permanent Councillor members.

Guests and experts maybe invited to the Task and Finish Group as appropriate and agreed by members.

The political breakdown will be: Liberal Democrat 2, Labour 2, Conservative 2, Highwoods Independents 1, Green Party 1.

Chairperson: The appointment of the Chair is for the Task and Finish group to agree at its initial meeting.

Reporting timescales:

This group should report to Cabinet every 3-4 months. It may meet with greater frequency, as agreed by members.

5.2 The following members have been nominated as members of the Task and Finish Group: -

Councillor Peter Chillingworth (Conservative)
Councillor Mark Cory (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Robert Davidson (Conservative)
Councillor Mark Goacher (Green)
Councillor Mike Lilley (Labour)
Councillor Andrea Luxford Vaughan (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Beverley Oxford (Highwoods)
Councillor Lorcan Whitehead (Labour)

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

6.1 There are no direct equality, diversity and human rights implications. The Task and Finish groups will need to consider the equality, diversity and human rights implications of any proposals they make.

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 The Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group will support 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 are no direct financial implications. The resources for supporting the Task and Finish groups will be met from existing budgets. It will be for Cabinet to consider the financial implications of any proposals put forward by the Task and Finish group.

9. Standard References

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