

Terms of Reference

Climate and Environment Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)

1. Purpose

The Climate and Environment Working Group is a sub-group of the Scrutiny Committee, established to support the Committee in carrying out its responsibilities by reviewing climate and environmental policies, decisions and performance. It monitors progress against strategies, projects and action plans and contribute to the development and scrutiny of new initiatives in response to the Council's climate and net zero carbon commitments.

2. Status

The Working Group is an informal, non-decision-making body created by the Scrutiny Committee. It operates under the authority of the Committee and report its findings and recommendations for formal consideration.

3. Scope of Work

The Climate and Environment Working Group will:

- Review implementation of the Council's climate and environmental strategies
- Monitor progress against carbon reduction targets and other environmental performance indicators
- Examine the delivery of decisions and projects related to sustainability, biodiversity, energy efficiency, waste and air quality
- Provide input on new or revised environmental policies and initiatives
- Support the Council on improving environmental outcomes

4. Membership

Membership will be set by the Scrutiny Committee and drawn from all non-executive members. It will not be required to reflect the Council's make up. The Climate and Environment Working Group will comprise four councillors or up to one member from each political group.

The quorum shall be 2 members. Substitution will be allowed.

5. Chairing

The Chair shall be elected by the Scrutiny Committee at the first meeting of the municipal year, or at the time of the group's formation.

The Chair will be responsible for leading meetings and reporting the Group's findings and recommendations back to the Scrutiny Committee. They may also be invited to present these outcomes to the Cabinet.

In the absence of the Chair, members present shall elect an acting chair for that meeting.

6. Meetings and ways of working

- The Scrutiny Committee will commission and scope the work of the Climate and Environment Working Group and therefore has final agreement on its recommendations.
- The agenda will be issued in advance, however the usual requirement for 7 days' notice do not apply.
- Meetings will be held 5 times each year. Additional meetings must be approved by the Monitoring Officer.
- Members are expected to review papers in advance and contribute constructively to discussions with a focus on evidence-based scrutiny.
- Meetings are not legally required to be held in-person and are not subject to the Local Government Act 1972 requirement to be held in public.

7. Attendees

Officers or cabinet members shall attend the meetings from time to time where their attendance is required as a result of an item on the agenda.

Directors and Company Secretaries of Council-owned companies may be invited to attend meetings for businesses relating to their companies.

External guests or other members of the council may be invited to meetings where their input is required to inform the work of the Working Group.

8. Access to information

Members of the Climate and Environment Working Group will have access to relevant papers, including those concerning Council-owned companies. It may request additional information as necessary to support its work.

9. Confidentiality

Meetings and agendas of the Working Group may involve the consideration of information that is personal, confidential or commercially sensitive. All such information must be treated confidential by those in attendance unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer, following a request to share information outside of the meeting.

10. Relationship with Scrutiny

The Climate and Environment Working Group supports the broader work of the Scrutiny committee. It acts in an advisory and investigative capacity, with its outputs feeding into the formal scrutiny process via reports and recommendations for the Committee's consideration.