

To: **Executive Member for the Environment**  
**21 June 2022**

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**Climate Change Strategy: Schools' Climate Change– funding support**  
**Executive Director of Delivery**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To propose start-up funding towards Bracknell Forest secondary schools to support climate change / biodiversity projects.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 **That the Executive Member for the Environment approves initial funding of £500 (£4,000 in total) per secondary school to support the development of their project ideas generated at the schools' climate change conference.**

**3 Reasons for Recommendation(S)**

- 3.1 To support the council's climate change strategy and action plan by encouraging direct actions within schools.

**4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 N/A

**5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The council's climate change strategy was adopted in January 2021. The strategy committed the council to achieve net zero by 2050 and sought to achieve its objective through four strategic pillars. Working with schools and young people is one of these pillars and therefore an area of strategic importance within the approach.
- 5.2 The strategy has two areas of focus, actions that are directly controlled by the council, but also on areas where the council acts as an enabler and influencer. The borough's successful, inaugural, schools' climate change conference takes forward our work in this second area of focus.
- 5.3 Our schools' climate change conference took place on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022, at Garth Hill College. Representatives from eight of our secondary schools attended this event. The event itself included presentations from a range of speakers including Greenpeace and Chris Packham, who provided the keynote speech to the event.
- 5.4 The schools in attendance were:
- Garth Hill College
  - Brakenhale
  - Kings Academy Binfield
  - Ranelagh
  - Easthampstead Park Community

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- Kennel Lane
- Edgbarrow
- Sandhurst

- 5.5 The conference provided a platform for workshop activities designed around enabling schools to think about practical ways in which they could contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change.
- 5.6 The workshop activities led to each school developing a specific idea or small-scale project that they could potentially take back to their school for further investigation and implementation. Projects included ideas to tackle food waste, improve biodiversity, grow vegetables, save energy and encourage sustainable transport.
- 5.7 The Executive Member for Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning, having reviewed the ideas put forward, has made a recommendation to the Executive Member for the Environment that funding be made available to each school, in order that these ideas can be taken forward. The proposal would see each school awarded initial funding of £500 (£4,000 in total).
- 5.8 In the 2021/22 budget, the council created a climate change revenue budget reserve, in order to fund green and climate mitigation projects. It is therefore proposed to use this reserve to provide this funding to the schools, in line with the council's overall strategy.
- 5.9 It is further proposed that the schools be given the opportunity in the next academic year to present the Executive Member for the Environment with a summary of their progress at what would be an annual Schools' climate change conference. Any schools showing real and measurable progress within their own project area should be offered the opportunity to bid for further funding as a follow up process, as long as there are sufficient resources in the reserve.

## **6 Consultation and Other Considerations**

### Legal Advice

- 6.1 The overarching legislative context of the Council's Climate change strategy is the Climate Change Act 2008. This Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. Local Authorities and schools have a significant role to play in the achievement of this goal.

### Financial Advice

- 6.2 A budget of £0.150m was included in the 2021/22 budget for climate change/carbon reduction initiatives, this was a one-off budget and was removed in 2022/23. The ongoing approach to achieve climate change objectives was to ensure all spending decisions incorporate climate change considerations in their implementation. New climate change initiatives will be considered via the invest to save scheme.

### Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 N/A

### Equalities Impact Assessment

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- 6.4 Each school adopts an EIA approach to their planning and delivery.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 The small-scale schools'-based projects will all contribute towards the council's overarching climate change strategy ambitions. There is minimal strategic risk within the proposal.

### Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to:

Reduce emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>

The Council believes that collectively the proposed projects will help to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 Healthy Environments is a cross cutting theme in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The physical environment is one of the wider determinants of health. Many of the ideas that schools had already thought about show the relationship with climate change and health and wellbeing. For example, promoting sustainable, active travel to improve physical activity, anti-idling and improving air quality and its impact on respiratory health and buying less food to reduce food waste. The school projects are likely to prompt young people to think about health and wellbeing as it is so intrinsically linked to climate change.

### Background Papers

None.

### Contacts for further information

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