

# Minutes



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## Climate Emergency Working Group – Meeting 6

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7<sup>th</sup> July 2020, 18:00-20:00

Zoom Meeting

**Present:** Working Group Secretariat

(**DoH**) Dominique Hill, LBM Climate Change Projects Officer

(**KH**) Katie Halter, LBM Climate Change Officer

Working Group Members

*Organisation or community group included when relevant*

(**AR**) Alice Rayner

(**DaH**) Daniel Holden, Conservatives

(**CC**) Cecily Church

(**FA**) Franki Appleton, Friends of the Earth Merton

(**JG**) Jenifer Gould, Liberal Democrats

(**KM**) Katie Meech

(**KG**) Kelly Gunnell, Haydon's Road North Community Group

(**LM**) Lily Marcel

(**MN**) Mehmood Naqshbandi

(**PM**) Pippa Maslin

(**RHJ**) Richard Hackforth Jones

(**R**) Rose, Young Resident

(**TC**) Toby Costin, Crew Energy

(**TW**) Tom Walsh, Sustainable Merton

Apologies received from:

(**TB**) Tobin Byers, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Item	Actions
<p><b>1. Update on the Climate Strategy and Action Plan from the Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apologies from TB who was unable to attend. <b>DoH</b> provided an update on TB's behalf:</li> <li>- The Climate Strategy and Action Plan was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny (O&amp;S) Commission two weeks ago. Ordinarily it would be the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel that would consider an item of this nature, but the thematic panels are not meeting at present due to COVID-19.</li> <li>- A big thank you to TW for saying a few words at the outset (and speaking a few times during the meeting) about the work of the Group.</li> <li>- Overall it was a very constructive debate, with a lot of interest and discussion about some of the challenges as we move towards implementation and the importance of communication and engagement across the borough. O&amp;S made a 'reference' back to Cabinet (which Cabinet will consider at the same time as it considers the Action Plan), which made four recommendations: embedding information on the 'climate impact' into every decision-making report in the same way that the impact on equalities legislation is; ensuring the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel has a role in overseeing the delivery of the Plan; ensuring we review the draft Local Plan whilst its adoption is being delayed to reflect the priorities of the Climate Action Plan within it; and encouraging and supporting the role of the voluntary sector and Sustainable Merton in encouraging individual action on climate change.</li> <li>- The Climate Action Plan will go to Cabinet on Monday evening (13<sup>th</sup> July 2020). The reference from scrutiny will be considered at the same time. The Plan ultimately requires approval by Full Council, so Cabinet is being asked to recommend that Full Council adopt it. Provided that it does, it will then go to the next available Full Council. (Cabinet meeting will also be streamed live should anyone wish to follow it.)</li> <li>- Provided Cabinet approves the Plan, our focus will then shift towards the delivery plan and implementation, including the communications</li> </ul>	

<p>and engagement strategy and successor to the CEWG that are being discussed this evening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TB tried to emphasise at scrutiny how invaluable the role of the CEWG has been, and how incredibly grateful he is that so many people with such passion and expertise have given up so much time to support this endeavour. The Plan is as much theirs as it is anyone's, and TB hopes they can see their work within it.</li> <li>- CEWG members are welcome to email TB if they have any questions on the process.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. CEWG representation at Cabinet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>PM</b> asked what representation at Cabinet would involve.</li> <li>- <b>DaH</b> explained that speakers generally only get 3 minutes and that it's unusual to get questions. DaH made a few suggestions of things that could be covered.</li> <li>- Members nominated PM to represent the CEWG at Cabinet. PM was happy to accept but suggested that other members should have the opportunity to volunteer for this as well if they wanted to. It was agreed that if anyone wanted to represent the group at Cabinet they should contact the secretariat by close of business on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July; otherwise PM would represent the CEWG.</li> </ul>	<p>CEWG members to contact the secretariat by close of business on 9<sup>th</sup> July if they want to represent the group at Cabinet.</p>
<p><b>3. Update on the collation of the CEWG's recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>LM</b> and <b>CC</b> updated the group on how they have collated all the CEWG recommendations for publication on the Council's website. The recommendations have been compiled in an Excel workbook with a different sheet for each work stream. Some of the recommendations have had to be slimmed down for consistency.</li> <li>- For the behaviour change section, it was assumed that the different thematic areas had incorporated their relevant behaviour change actions which for the most part they had.</li> <li>- LM and CC will circulate the spreadsheet to members so that they have an opportunity to comment/ feedback on their sections.</li> <li>- <b>PM</b> said a big thank you to CC and LM and noted the importance of capturing the detail which can't necessarily be captured in the high-level action</li> </ul>	

<p>plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>KH</b> added thanks to everyone and agreed that the detail should feed into the development of the delivery plan.</li> <li>- <b>DoH</b> added a big thank you to CC for all her work on the visuals for the Climate Strategy and Action Plan which have really brought it to life.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Discussion: Opportunity to feed back on the operation of the Climate Emergency Working Group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>DoH</b> invited the group to feedback on the Climate Emergency Working Group (CEWG) process, particularly around the following three questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o What members would have liked to have seen more of?</li> <li>o What members would have liked to have seen less of?</li> <li>o Whether this should be the last formal CEWG meeting?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>PM</b> – Noted that there could have been a greater willingness from some officers and councillors to actively engage in the process (despite the election and COVID-19). Highlighted the work that the group has done since September.</li> <li>- Would have liked to have seen the members that left the group/ didn't actively engage being replaced.</li> <li>- Would have liked to have seen more representation from community groups and societies such as the Merton Cycling Campaign and Merton Chamber of commerce as part of the CEWG.</li> <li>- Couldn't say whether it should be the last formal CEWG meeting but noted that the group would likely meet again in another format if it was the last meeting.</li> <li>- <b>CC</b> – Echoed PM's thoughts. Thought there was quite a good balance of meetings and a level of involvement which worked well. Is glad that the group has been able to continue remotely despite COVID-19.</li> <li>- Would have liked a bit more clarity at the start as to what the aim was. Was helpful when the aims became clearer as the work progressed.</li> <li>- Suggested having an informal meeting when the</li> </ul>	

Climate Strategy and Action Plan is published.

- **MN** – Would have liked there to have been a better mechanism for engaging with council officers. He felt members were left to their own devices to engage with council officers.
- Future meetings – thinks there is every reason for this forum to continue as there is still work to do but added that there might be an opportunity to expand and change the format.
- **DaH** – Thought there was the right balance of meetings and that the workstreams worked well. Didn't like Slack as couldn't engage well with it. Liked the workshop in February and the opportunity it provided to engage with more people. Found it difficult to engage with other officers but thought it was a positive process overall.
- **AR** – Agreed with CC that it would have been helpful to have clearer targeted aims at the start to make the best use of the time available.
- Thought that this should be the last meeting in this format as the group has completed its overall aim of informing the action plan.
- **FA** – Agreed with other comments regarding what she would have liked to have seen more of and having clearer aims. Added that it wasn't clear how much work members were expected to feed in and the parameters of what the group had to deliver.
- For members who hadn't done this type of engagement with councils before it would have been helpful to get a matrix of the different potential contacts at the council and what their roles are to be better equipped to engage with Council staff.
- Really enjoyed the workshop in February – suggested organising a 2-day workshop in the future to have more time to discuss issues in more depth. Agreed that this might be the end of this part of the journey but that the work needs to continue.
- **R** – Liked the workshop. Suggested wider community engagement and publicity of how people can get involved.
- **TC** – Would have liked to have seen more tools to help the CEWG members in this process. Would

like to see a databank providing information on buildings and energy, trees, etc.

- Thought the process could have been a bit more prescriptive about what we wanted to achieve.
- Suggested changing the structure of the meetings. Thought there was too much review of what has already happened and process rather than discussing ideas. Suggested there should be more of a thematic focus – getting everyone's ideas on each workstream.
- Suggested that the CEWG should end here and move onto another format.
- **KG** – Agreed with others' comments. Generally worked well but would have liked more opportunity to work with each other and to get to know each other. Acknowledged that this was made difficult due to COVID-19.
- Recommended having slightly longer meetings and brainstorming together; and getting specialist speakers in. Wasn't able to make it to the workshop.
- Would have been helpful understanding what other councils were doing from the start and how the work the group was doing fed into the wider picture.
- **RHJ** – Would have liked more facilitated interaction with officers and access to data. Recognised that this is a new process for people. Would have liked to get more steer on who the best people to speak to are. Would have liked to have more detailed/ in-depth conversations with officers.
- Thought it should be the last formal CEWG meeting. Suggested making the implementation group bigger, less formal and more collaborative.
- **LM** – Really liked the workshop and the youth engagement elements throughout the process and during the workshop. LM thought it took a bit of time to arrange meetings with other officers but thought that the climate change officers gave a good steer as to which officers to engage with.
- Suggested that it would have been good to hear from Aether early on in the process and to have a template for recommendations from the start.
- It would have been good to cover 2 or 3 themes in each meeting to have time to go into more detail.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Agreed that the implementation stage might require a different format.</li><li>- <b>KM</b> – Agreed with others’ comments. Thought that overall the process worked well and that it’s been great working with the climate change officers and other CEWG members. It would have been good to get more engagement from other officers and councillors. KM didn’t always feel that other officers were enthusiastic or understood the purpose of the meetings, and that the importance of this work hadn’t sufficiently been driven from the top down within the council. Suggested that it would have been good to pair officers with workstreams to give them some responsibility in this. Highlighted challenges with timings and availability for meetings due to members’ and staff’s other commitments. Would have found it useful to understand how a council works and how this work fits into the wider London context.</li><li>- Was conscious of criticism in the community given the slow timescales – would have been good to provide some oversight on what has been done since the declaration.</li><li>- Would be good to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o get more representation from organisations and have more than one representative from organisations to ensure consistent engagement;</li><li>o have more opportunities to get to know each other and have longer meetings to achieve more; and</li><li>o learn from other councils and boroughs – sharing more information with other local authorities.</li></ul></li><li>- Suggested keeping the CEWG going until the next group is set up – to keep oversight of the process.</li><li>- <b>TW</b> (<i>added after the meeting as TW was unable to re-join the call</i>) – Noted that the group was set the task with no blueprint because it was new territory, but that political leadership is still wanting, so it was not possible for the CEWG to have a better steer at the beginning of the process.</li><li>- Thought the workshop was a very important part of the journey. Partly because of the numbers of</li></ul>	
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<p>people who attended. Suggested that something similar should happen once a year and to grow the attendee-ship. This will help business and organisations to see that Merton is a serious partner in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Thanks from <b>KH</b> for honest feedback as that will help incrementally improve the engagement. This was a very new way of working for the council. Reiterated that as a council we got a lot out of the process from the level of scrutiny it provided and the high quality set of recommendations which were founded on very good evidence and expertise.</li></ul>	
<p><b>5. Discussion: Views on options to develop an implementation group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>KH</b> provided a quick overview of the paper which considered 4 options for implementation [see attached paper].</li><li>- Highlighted 2 key reasons why external stakeholders should be involved in implementation:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o 1. Ensuring that there is sufficient transparency and community input in the council process.</li><li>o 2. Bringing the community along with us and instigating action on the borough target for actions that are outside the council's control.</li></ul></li><li>- The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee has already recommended to Cabinet that Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel has a role in overseeing the delivery of the Plan.</li><li>- The main function would be to generate genuine officer engagement and mutual problem solving with the community.</li><li>- Highlighted the biodiversity group that has organically formed with members of the working group, the community and the Council over the last few weeks, and just submitted a bid to the Neighbourhood CIL fund.</li><li>- <b>KG</b> agreed that involvement in the biodiversity group has been positive and works quite well with members putting their heads together to solve problems.</li><li>- <b>KH</b> highlighted that this is what the implementation group would want to emulate</li></ul>	



across the thematic areas.

- **KM** enquired regarding the steering group option (option 1) and how the Merton Partnership structure works.
- **KH** explained how the Merton Partnership works with the council through the SCTP and its sub-groups.
- **KM** noted that Option 4 – community action group – puts ownership and responsibility in the community, not the council. Wants to ensure that there is still engagement from council officers.
- **KM** gave an overview of the Merton Residents Transport Group which has involved lots of local engagement. The group is working to support and pressure the council into getting things done in response to COVID-19 and the implications of reduced uptake of public transport. Have had good officer and council representation at the first 4 meetings with council officers providing updates and residents providing input. The group has been able to collate a lot of information from the community between meetings. Have got 100 people (including councillors from every party) involved. Have found it helpful to have the council reporting to the group every week to find out how they can help. Recognises the resourcing pressures of this approach and doesn't want to create frustration between council staff and the community as a result.
- **TC** – Noted that Option 1 is the process we currently have. Option 2 could result in delays in order to get everyone up to speed. Doesn't like Option 3. Thinks it's really important to make sure there is broad outreach to deliver borough actions outside the council's control and doesn't think this option would achieve that. Thinks Option 4 is the best option and that community groups have an important role to play.
- **PM** – Agreed that she prefers Option 4 as this provides openness and flexibility. Is also open to Option 2; likes the random selection of this approach and potential to engage with more people that you might not otherwise reach.
- **FA** – Agreed that Option 4 is the preferred option.
- But also likes the approach of the citizen's assembly (Option 2) to get more people involved.

There might be a use for this approach for specific projects or questions – useful opportunity to engage with a wider group than those who would automatically volunteer for this kind of work.

- **AR** – Thought that a citizen’s assembly could get unwieldy for the whole action plan but could potentially work for specific projects. Option 4 is her preference and thinks this will be the approach which actually gets things done.
- **KM** – Agreed that Option 4 will get things done but also highlighted the importance of continuing outreach into the community so that it’s not always the same people getting involved. Reiterated the potential benefits of having a citizen’s assembly approach for specific questions to get more people involved and informed.
- **TC** – Suggested that the engagement could be done by community groups joining together. Didn’t necessarily agree that a citizen’s assembly is the only way to do that. Thinks there is benefit in getting community groups involved as they could do a lot to bring funding in to take action.
- **KM** - Noted that the groups in Merton are smaller and fewer people tend to get involved. Thinks it’s important to engage with people beyond these groups.
- **R** – Highlighted that there is a good opportunity coming out of COVID-19 lockdown to flag how people can change their lives in response to the Climate Emergency as they have in response to COVID-19.
- **MN** – Agreed with R but has also noticed that there is more backlash against environmental messaging as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown so thinks we need to find the right forum to communicate and progress – otherwise there is a risk of being held up.
- **DaH** – Preferred Option 1. Thought that the group should be carefully selected and have council buy-in. Didn’t like Option 2. Option 4 made him nervous. Flagged that there may be backlash from within the council if they aren’t brought on board in the process.
- **PA** – Agreed that an action group would need to be carefully set up to avoid resentment from

<p>councillors and council officers. Noted that the format needs to ensure representation from different parts of the community and ensure that everybody feels valued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>KH</b> noted that there are a range of officer responsibilities and resource limitations within the council, and that climate change work generally goes beyond their normal remit, so it will take a bit of time to get buy-in from everyone. Will need to showcase good examples.</li> <li>- <b>PM</b> – Thanked the climate change team for their work on engaging with other council officers.</li> <li>- <b>FA</b> – Noted that the benefit of Option 4 and forming an un-elected group is that these are the people who will need to be making changes and delivering the 2050 target.</li> <li>- <b>KM</b> - Highlighted the Merton mutual aid group which has formed in response to COVID-19 has become a parallel structure to the existing voluntary and council structure. Suggested that we could go through this network to see if they want to be involved in the implementation of the Climate Strategy and Action Plan.</li> <li>- <b>TW</b> (<i>added after the meeting as TW was unable to re-join</i>) – Suggested that moving forward, we should combine options 1 and 4 – a panel that monitors the success of the activity/ addresses any problems, and a hands-on approach to problem solving. COVID-19 has increased people’s need for a green recovery increasing the likelihood of success.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6. Discussion: Draft communications strategy and Group members input:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>KH</b> introduced and provided an overview of the draft communications plan [please see attached paper]. Suggested setting up a separate meeting to refine the messages and identify potentially delivery partners.</li> <li>- Looking to work with the Community Plan and the Merton Partnership. Will be engaging with the comms team on it as well.</li> <li>- <b>AR</b> – Liked the proposed seasonal approach. Would like to be involved in developing in the messaging.</li> <li>- <b>CC</b> – Thought it looks good, liked the themes and would like to be involved. Would like to have a</li> </ul>	

<p>launch event to get community groups involved if possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>FA</b> – Thought it looks good and would love to be involved.</li> <li>- <b>KM</b> – Would like to be involved on the stakeholder side.</li> <li>- <b>PM</b> – Would like to be involved on the stakeholder side. Would like to think that more stakeholders would become increasingly willing to share this messaging.</li> <li>- <b>R</b> – Liked the approach of sharing information gradually so as not to overload people, and suggested sharing the material through schools as well.</li> <li>- <b>DaH</b> – Liked it and suggested involving partners like Sustainable Merton and schools to reach more people. Thought it would be good to have a launch event if possible as well.</li> <li>- <b>TC</b> – Thought it looks great. Will think about whether there are any more seasonal ideas (e.g. Eco-week in schools in January and February).</li> <li>- <b>KM</b> – Recommended rewarding people for taking up the activities – e.g. engaging with local businesses to provide incentives.</li> <li>- <b>TW</b> (<i>added after the meeting as TW was unable to re-join the call</i>) – Would like to have a launch and gather physically so suggested waiting until after COVID-19 for that. Liked the links to the months. Suggested moving tree planting theme from September to October. December – Green Christmas. Would like to be involved in developing the comms moving forward.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. Closing Remarks from Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>DoH</b> closed the meeting with a massive thank you to everyone for all their input, time and energy into the Group. It's great to see that there is enthusiasm from the group to continue to be involved and the secretariat will be in touch regarding the comms plan.</li> <li>- The group agreed that the next meeting would be an informal meeting to develop the comms elements and move into the implementation phase.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>END</b></p>	