

ESSEX CLIMATE ACTION COMMISSION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

At Full Council on 14/05/19, the below motion was passed by Essex County Council:

'This Council recognises the stance that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste has taken in improving the use of renewable energy across the County Council estate and ensuring well maintained country parks which have won national recognition and help improve the health and wellbeing of those that use them. The new role of clean air champion and developing the Green Infrastructure initiative which will achieve long lasting environmental improvements across Essex are also positive moves.

The Administration however is mindful that more must be done to improve air quality and protecting natural resources to help improve the environment for future generations. Therefore, this Council supports and endorses the Administration's work so far and supports the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste in setting up a cross party group to investigate what further actions this Council can undertake across all its work with District/Borough/City Councils to reduce carbon emissions and promote the Green Infrastructure initiative to help improve the lives of all citizens in Essex.'

Following on from the above, at Full Council on 08/10/19, the Leader announced in his Executive Statement the formation of a formal independent cross-party commission, entitled the Essex Climate Action Commission.

While Essex County Council recognised the importance of declaring a climate emergency at the LGA General Assembly in July 2019, this is an initiative to take this further by committing to the development and delivery of a Climate Action Plan.

A strong focus on climate change and the environment will have economic benefits for Essex, as well as helping the global climate and improving the environment for citizens at the local level.

Purpose

Essex County Council aims to ensure that it has the best advice about what it can do to tackle climate change.

The purpose of the Essex Climate Action Commission is to:

- Year One: Identify ways in which ECC can mitigate the effects of climate change, improve air quality, reduce waste across Essex and increase the amount of green infrastructure and biodiversity in the county by drawing on in-house expertise, commissioning research and forming new external partnerships.
- Year Two: Explore how we attract investment in natural capital and low carbon growth. The Commission will be provided with regular updates on the status of the year one recommendations.

Detailed workplans for the Commission will be agreed by the Commission at the beginning of each year of activity. A workplan for the first year of the Commission can be found in Appendix B.

The Commission is invited to make recommendations to Essex County Council, for the Council to implement. Recommendations and policy suggestions should be transformative, but practical.

Recommendations should also note the roles of multiple partners across Essex, all of whom will have responsibilities and contributions to make in moving Essex to a net zero county.

The Commission may want to encourage other organisations, both within and outside the County of Essex, to implement change.

The Cabinet will consider all the Commission's recommendations and decide, having regard to the costs and benefits of implementing them.

Timeline

The Commission is to last initially for 2 years. The Commission will produce an interim report to Cabinet halfway through the first year of inception making a further report to Cabinet, complete with a set of recommendations, at the end of the first year on a net zero action plan for Essex.

In the second year, the Commission will monitor the implementation of the recommendations in year one and provide further advice and guidance on an investment plan for Essex as it moves to a sustainable, net zero economy.

Urgency, agility, quick-wins and reacting to changing circumstances

The nature of the climate crisis drives a sense of urgency for action. The current situation with Covid-19 clearly demonstrates how quickly life can change, for everyone. Commissioners should not feel constrained by the timeline described above; any current or future opportunities to 'lock in' behaviour change caused by external events, can and should be explored at the earliest opportunity. Recommendations should also be put forward for activities to be delivered, or lobbying activities to commence, in parallel with the first year of the Commission where consensus can be obtained, backed up by evidence based, sound research.

Membership

The membership of the Commission is set out in Annex A

Membership of the Commission is not expected to be static. New members may be invited to join the Commission to support the delivery of the best outcomes and recommendations. This will be in consultation with Commission members and agreed by the Chair.

As well as being supported by the Council, the Commission can seek advice from

Expert Witnesses, Sustainability Professionals and Observers to inform their activities.

The Council will consider funding external expert advisors on a case by case basis.

Quorum

Seven members, including the Chair, must be in present, either physically or virtually (via an online meeting), for the Commission to sit.

Secretariat

The Commission will be supported by a Secretariat, appointed for the duration of the Commission.

Meeting Frequency

The Commission will meet 9 times in the first year, timings to be agreed by the Commission. The Commission will then meet quarterly in the second year. Additionally, Commission members may undertake site visits to facilitate and/or enhance the process of gathering necessary evidence and information.

The Commission may form sub-groups that meet more regularly to explore specific themes/topics in more detail. However, due regard should be given to the interconnectivity between the areas of focussed analysis described in the work plan, and holistic, systems-based recommendations should be pursued.

Meetings of the Commission should take place online, however the Commission may convene in Essex or London from time to time if there is a specific reason to do so.

Meetings will be recorded for public dissemination. Commission members should note that all discussions in the main Commission meetings will, unless by exception to be agreed in advance by the Chair, be released into the public domain.

Advisory status

The Commission is a purely advisory body and has no decision-making powers. Formal decisions to implement any recommendations made by the Commission will be taken and actioned in accordance with the ECC Constitution.

APPENDIX A – COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

| Name | Organisation | Position |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| John Randall (Chair) | Peer in the House of Lords / Former MP | Previously Climate Change Adviser to Theresa May's Government |
| Daniel (Co-chair Young person) | Young Essex Assembly | Elected Climate Rep (age 14) |
| Prajwal (Co-chair Young person) | Young Essex Assembly | Elected Climate Rep (age 17) |
| Prof. Jules Pretty | University of Essex | Professor of Environment & Society |
| Prof. Graham Underwood | University of Essex | Professor of Life Sciences |
| Professor Aled Jones | Anglia Ruskin University | Director of Global Sustainability Institute |
| Professor P R Hobson | Writtle College | Professor in Biodiversity Conservation & Sustainability |
| Dr Simon Lyster | Northumbrian Water Group (they own Essex and Suffolk Water) | Non-executive director |
| Professor Jacqueline McGlade | United Nations Environment Programme | Chief Scientist |
| Toddington Harper | Gridserve | CEO |
| Prof. Adam Read | Chartered Institute of Waste Managers | Junior Vice President |
| Ian Davidson | Tendring District Council | Chief Executive (representing North Essex Districts) |
| Jonathan Stephenson | Brentwood District Council | Chief Executive (representing South Essex Districts) |
| John Lippe | Ford | Director - City Engagement |
| Right Revd Roger Morris | Church of England | Bishop of Colchester |
| Rob Pilley | Media - BBC | Director of Spy in the Wild / other high-profile wildlife programmes |
| Cllr Peter Davey | Representing the EALC (Parish Councils) | Chairman of the EALC Executive Committee |
| Natalie Chapman | Freight Transport Association | Environmental representative |
| John Henry | Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust | Director of Specialist Services |
| Cllr Simon Walsh | Essex County Council | Conservative Member (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action) |
| Cllr Robert Mitchell | Essex County Council | Conservative Member (Deputy to Cabinet Member for Highways) |
| Cllr Sue Lissimore | Essex County Council | Conservative Member |
| Cllr Anne Turrell | Essex County Council | Liberal Democrat Member |
| Cllr James Abbott | Essex County Council | Green Party Member (representing the NAG - non-aligned group) |
| Cllr Ivan Henderson | Essex County Council | Labour Member (Leader of the Labour Group) |
| Mark Carroll | Essex County Council | Executive Director for Place and Public Health |
| Rob Wise | National Farmers Union | NFU Environment Advisor |
| Catherine Cameron | Agulhas Applied Knowledge | Director |
| Name | Organisation | Position |

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Dr Laura Mansell-Thomas | Ingleton Wood | Partner |
| Jo Roberts | Wilderness Foundation | Chief Executive Officer |
| Heather Hilburn | Thames Estuary Partnership | Executive Director |
| Dr Poone Yazdanpanah | Writtle University College | Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture & Garden Design |
| Julia Crear | Living Streets | Interim Chief Executive |
| Peta Denham | Environment Agency | Flood and Coastal Risk Manager |
| Chloe Rose | RSPB | Senior Conservation Officer |
| Victoria Hills | The Royal Town Planning Institute | Chief Executive |
| Jillian Anable | Leeds University | Professor of Transport and Energy, Institute for Transport Studies |

APPENDIX B – YEAR 1 WORKPLAN

1. The Commission will consider 6 core areas of focussed analysis in the first year:
 - a. Adapting to an Already Changing Climate
 - b. Transport
 - c. The Built Environment
 - d. Energy
 - e. Land Use, Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity
 - f. Community Engagement
2. The Commission will appoint sponsors for each focussed analysis area following the inaugural meeting.
3. In advance of the scheduled meeting on each topic the following work items will be produced:
 - a. A review of current practise in Essex County Council and, as far as possible, from other stakeholders.
 - b. A report on current challenges, best practise and case studies in this core area.
 - c. A suggested expert(s) and or organisation(s) to present evidence at the meeting if appropriate
 - d. A draft set of recommendations to present to the Commission meeting.
4. The sponsor(s) will work with the ECC secretariat to produce the focussed analysis material, agree expert witnesses, if required, and draft recommendations for discussion at each focussed analysis meeting.
5. At the scheduled focus meeting, the prepared material will be reviewed, expert witnesses called, and the draft recommendations discussed, amended and finalised.
6. These sets of recommendations will form the core of the interim and final report for year one. The sponsors will work together to address cross-cutting issues, recognising that the areas of focussed analysis are connected and often interdependent, and recommendations need to consider the system as a whole.
7. Additional sub-meetings and site visits can be arranged to discuss matters more fully outside the core Commission meetings as required.
8. The first nine meetings are as follows:
 - **Inaugural meeting**
 - agree ToR, workplan and timetable,
 - nominate sponsors for each deep dive
 - Presentation on ECC
 - Presentation on what ECC are already doing to tackle climate change.
 - **Focussed analysis 1: Adapting to a Changing Climate:**
 - Government Committee on Climate Change presentation on adaptation and resilience challenges for Essex.
 - Presentation on ECC flood management
 - **Focussed analysis 2: Transport**
 - **Focussed analysis 3: Built Environment**

- **Review work to date**
 - Agree interim report
- **Focussed analysis 4: Energy**
- **Focussed analysis 5: Land Use and Green Infrastructure**
- **Focussed analysis 6: Community Engagement**
- **Review overall findings**
 - discuss final Year 1 report for net zero Essex
 - Agree a launch plan
 - Agree workplan for Year 2
- **Launch Year 1 report for net zero Essex**