

PROPOSED SCRUTINY REVIEW - ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Presented by the Head of Projects and Funding Delivery

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting of 18 November 2021 the Scrutiny Committee agreed, subject to Executive Committee approval, that the focus of its next Scrutiny Review would be the Authority's Environmental Policy and Strategy. A new Environmental Policy should recognise the unique nature of the Authority and the areas that may contribute to environmental protection and enhancement, whilst identifying other areas which may be detrimental. A revised approach should also seek to show innovation, allowing meaningful contributions to the climate change agenda in the context of the Authority's statutory remit. Exploring if net zero is achievable without carbon offsetting for the Authority should also be considered within the context of the Authority's statutory remit and consideration given to a target timeframe.

RECOMMENDATION

Members approve: (1) the focus of the next Scrutiny Review be Environmental Policy as per the scope set out in paragraph 6 of this report.

BACKGROUND

1 For the benefit of new Members, it should be noted that the Scrutiny Committee was formed in 2009 following a review of the Authority's governance. It is a Committee formed under the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 and not in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in local authorities which derive from the Local Government Act 2000. The Authority has set the following terms of reference for this committee:

- To review performance and to scrutinise the activities of the Authority.
- To make recommendations to the Executive Committee.
- To take evidence from officers of the Authority, interest groups, individuals, and make recommendations to the Executive Committee and Authority for policy change and review the performance of outside bodies.
- To consider issues referred by the Executive Committee where the views of external bodies/persons may contribute, take evidence and report to the Executive Committee and Authority.
- To consider any item to be considered by the Executive Committee (except items of urgent business) before the item is considered by the Executive Committee if required by the Chairman of the Scrutiny

- Committee. The relevant report to the Executive Committee will be available to the Scrutiny Committee.
- To have regard to the need to avoid duplicating the work of the Audit Committee and Task & Finish Panels/Groups when considering subjects for scrutiny.
- 2 The previous Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting of 21 November 2019 that the next Scrutiny Review would be the Authority's office accommodation. However, this review was not progressed due to the pandemic and the subsequent cancellation of meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.
 - 3 Given recent and ongoing changes in ways of working and delivering services, e.g., mobile/home/remote working and the forthcoming change to the nature and size of services provided directly by the Authority with the commencement of the new Leisure Services Contract in April 2022, the accommodation review should be deferred.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

- 4 The Authority adopted an Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Policy Statement in 2001 which was replaced in January 2012 with an Environment Strategy (Paper A/4137/12). Although many of the principles of the adopted strategy remain valid it is outdated and does not reflect current legislation and policy context. The Authority is therefore in the position of not having a modern or relevant Environmental Policy, Strategy or Action Plan.
- 5 The Authority is very different to a Local Authority in terms of service provision and the responsibility it has. It is also important to understand that half of the activity the Authority delivers is through the open spaces and potentially contributes towards biodiversity net gain, sustainability and carbon sink/sequestration. However, the other half of its delivery (through the venues) involves activities that do not contribute to environmental improvement and in some areas are probably detrimental, in terms of a high carbon footprint. This is not to say that the Authority should not be doing these things, but it may wish to consider in any Environmental Policy or Strategy how or if these adverse impacts are mitigated or offset. The Authority will need to consider a different approach to other organisations due to its unique and statutory remit.

SCOPE OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

- 6 The following terms of reference are suggested to scope the review.
 - To review a draft Environmental Policy.
 - To review the outdated Strategy.
 - Within the new policy to assess the different elements of the Authority's operations and their environmental impact.
 - To develop a bespoke flexible fit for purpose Environmental Policy from the proposed draft taking into consideration the different elements of the Authority's operations.
 - To review and identify meaningful measures to demonstrate environmental performance for the Authority scorecard.
 - To review if/how the Authority could achieve net zero and within what time frame.
 - Review how the policy might consider the environmental implications and opportunities of other policies, projects, decisions and working practices.
 - To identify environmental risks and prioritise and manage these in an

- appropriate and timely way.
- How the Authority might raise and maintain environmental awareness amongst staff.
- To review the requirement of any strategy or action plan which may come out of this work using the current strategy as a base line.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7 There are currently no environmental implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8 There are currently no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 11 There are potentially some risk management implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report which may lead to reputational damage if the Authority is seen to not be working to an agreed Environmental Policy.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 12 There are no equality implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

Author: Paul Roper, 01992 709 845, proper@leevalleypark.org.uk

BACKGROUND REPORTS

None

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Authority	E/234/11 A/4137/12	Environment Strategy Draft Environment Strategy	24 November 2011 26 January 2012
Executive Authority	E/234/12 E/399/15	Contaminated Land Strategy Contaminated Land Strategy	20 September 2012 26 March 2015
Authority Scrutiny	A/4208/15 S/59/21	Contaminated Land Strategy Scrutiny Scoping Review – Environmental Policy	30 April 2015 18 November 2021

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