

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - 19 AUGUST 2020

PART I - DELEGATED

6. REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM (CED)

1 Summary

1.1 This report presents to Committee a draft revised terms of reference for the Environmental Forum for agreement following the community consultation on the proposed changes.

2 Details

2.1 The current terms of reference of the Council's Environmental Forum were agreed on 4 September 1990 by the then Environmental Committee (Minute EX37/90 refers). They are attached in Appendix 1.

2.2 Standard audit practice should require all terms of reference to be reviewed regularly. The terms of reference have not been reviewed since they were written in 1990. In future it is proposed that the terms of reference will be reviewed every two years.

2.3 Officers have reviewed the terms of reference in light of the Climate Change Emergency declared by Council in 2019, and the agreed framework for the development of the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The proposed new terms of reference are attached in Appendix 2.

2.4 An on-line 'Survey Monkey' survey was promoted – via social media, on the TRDC website, Neighbourhood Watch email, Councillors' resident contacts and schools.

2.5 Between **17 and 31 July 2020**, the following survey responses were completed:

Adults: 726 responses

Children: 36 responses

2.6 We devised two surveys tailored to adults and young people to ensure that we were consulting widely with the community. The children's responses are lower but do support the results for the adult survey which did have a good response rate, more details can be found in Appendix 3.

2.7 The Committee is asked to comment on the proposed new terms of reference following amendments highlight below as a result of the consultation.

2.8 The consultation showed:

- The **vast majority of all respondents** (children and adults) **agreed with the strategies** laid out in the terms of reference, including a production of a cycling and walking plan and maintaining top place for recycling in the County.
- The **vast majority** (children and adults) **agreed with the objectives** set out to achieve the strategies, including: **inclusivity, partnership work, acting as a voice of Three Rivers' communities and consulting with the community and local businesses.**

- The **vast majority** (children and adults) agreed with these further objectives set out to achieve the strategies, including: **considering government guidance, support partner organisations, promotes sustainability, raise awareness and advise regarding the potential impact of climate change, identify and increase biodiversity, together with championing a better and more resilient natural environment in Three Rivers**
- The vast majority (children and adults) agreed with the following **considerations for the meetings:**
 - Open and honest
 - Meet at least 3 times a year
 - Held virtually, to reduce carbon, through less travel, plus more accessible
 - Face to face meetings just for workshops or to demonstrate something (e.g. a new cycle track)
 - Open to the public, advertised and broadcast
 - All members will have equal rights and representation
 - The meetings' dates will be agreed in advance

The main comments raised surrounded the following points:

- Ensuring green belt and AONB are protected from developers (22 mentions)
- Tackling the raw sewage, from Thames Water, in the River Chess (5 mentions)
- Ensuring recycling is deposited effectively, to recycling plants that adhere to the Council's environmental policies (4 mentions)
- Lobby for more products to be able to be recycled (e.g. soft plastic)
- Lobby for manufacturers to use less soft plastic and more recyclable and/or compostable packaging
- Ensure new builds are carbon neutral
- Access to meetings: ensure that those without internet access can attend/put forward their thoughts to the forum (4 mentions)

2.9 For further details from the summary please see Appendix 3

2.10 As a result the terms of reference are broadly supported by the community consultation with the following amendment.

- The Environmental Forum will meet at least three times a year. It may wish to hold extra meetings or workshops as required. Meetings will be held virtually using conferencing facilities by default, as this reduces carbon through less travel, and is more accessible. The forum will support members to access these meetings virtually where there may be difficulties.

2.11 Following agreement of the revised terms of reference by Leisure and Environment Committee they will be presented at the next Environmental Forum on 4 November 2020.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 To ensure that the terms of reference of the Environmental Forum are regularly reviewed.

3.2 To ensure that the terms of reference of the Environmental Forum reflect Council Policy and Strategy on Climate Change and facilitate the delivery of related action plans.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets. The relevant policy is entitled the Corporate Framework 2020-2023 and was agreed by Council on 25 February 2020.

4.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators.

Sustainable Environment

4.2.1 We will produce and deliver a Climate Change Strategy and action plan.

4.2.2 We will deliver and implement a Cycling and Walking Strategy

4.2.3 We will seek to maintain our position as the highest recycling authority in Hertfordshire.

4.3 The impact of the recommendations on this/these performance indicator(s) is:

4.3.1 To assist in the delivery of the performance indicators through the continued engagement of the community, voluntary sector, public sector partners, and local business in the Council's Climate Change Strategy work.

5 Financial, Legal, Community Safety, and Customer Services Centre Implications

5.1 None specific.

6 Equal Opportunities Implications

6.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required? The proposed consultation mechanism will engage a representative sample of the local population meeting the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty to assess and detrimental impact of the proposed terms of reference.	No

7 Staffing Implications

7.1 Three Rivers District Council will continue to administer and support the Environmental forum.

8 Environmental Implications

8.1 Having an effective and strategically focussed Environmental Forum will assist the Council in delivering the target of becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030.

9 Communications and Website Implications

9.1 The new terms of reference will be communicated with the Environmental Forum and available for public to see on the website.

10 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

10.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

10.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Community Partnerships Unit service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
The terms of reference remain out of date if not updated	The Environmental Forum is not focussed on the Council's Objectives for Climate Change. Internal audit finds fault in the governance of the Environmental Forum not being regularly reviewed.	Consultation takes place on the revised terms of reference. The terms of reference are then reviewed on an annual basis.	Tolerate	2
The Council fails to engage stakeholders in the Climate Change agenda	The Council Fails to Make progress on the Climate Change Strategy and action plan.	Terms of reference are updated to focus the environmental forum on the Climate Change Strategy	Tolerate	2

The Council fails to engage stakeholders in the Cycling and Walking agenda	The Council fails to make progress on its Cycling and Walking Strategy.	Terms of reference are updated to focus the environmental forum on the Cycling and Walking Strategy	Tolerate	2
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10.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- Remote	Low	High	Very High	Very High
	4	8	12	16
	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	3	6	9	12
	Low	Low	Medium	High
2	4	6	8	
Low	Low	Low	Low	
1	2	3	4	
Impact				
Low -----> Unacceptable				

Impact Score

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

10.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Corporate Framework and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

11 Recommendation

- 11.1 That Committee considers and approves the proposed new terms of reference for the Environmental Forum to improve the quality of the environment and support the climate change agenda for the people of Three Rivers.

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Data Quality

Data sources:

Environmental Committee minutes 1990.

Corporate Framework 2020-2023.

Data checked by: Alison Mirpuri

Data rating: Tick

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	X

Background Papers

[Corporate Framework 2020-23](#)

Environmental Committee minutes 1990.

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Environmental Forum Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 – Revised Environmental Forum Terms of Reference

Appendix 3 – Environmental Forum Terms of Reference Consultation Summary Report

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING PARTY

Set out below is an extract from the minutes of the Environmental Committee, 4 September 1990, outlining the terms of reference of the Environmental Working party (Minute EC37/90 refers).

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the Terms of Reference for the Environmental Working Party be as follows:-
 - (i) In co-operation with relevant voluntary groups, to consider and recommend to the appropriate Standing Committees policies for the promotion of the environmental objectives already agreed by the Council -

good environmental planning practice
reduction of pollution
discouragement of litter
encouragement of recycling
 - (ii) To propose specific initiatives, targets and plans some Council-led some to be organised by voluntary organisations, for furthering these objectives with detailed programmes, costings and timescales;
 - (iii) To evaluate specific proposals from Standing Committees, Parish Councils and other outside bodies;
 - (iv) That in pursuance of the first objective (the promotion of good environmental planning) the Working Party be the first contact for consultation on the policy papers already commissioned by the Council;

THREE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Terms of Reference July 2020

Version 2.2

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1. Purpose of the Environmental Forum

The Environmental Forum works to improve the quality of the environment and support the climate change agenda for the people of Three Rivers by working in partnership to create a better place to live, work and visit.

The Environmental Forum provides an opportunity for organisations, charities, community groups and residents to hear what others are doing in Three Rivers to tackle climate change, improve and maintain the environment. The Forum also provides an opportunity to develop joint initiatives and collaborate.

The Forum can also support the development and act as a consultee for the purpose of developing new Council or Partnership Strategies for Three Rivers such as the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy.

The Environmental Forum will invite speakers who will cover topics that are relevant to the purpose of the Forum

The forum is not a decision making body or formal council committee. The Council host the environmental forum and provide administration to the forum.

2. Objectives of the Environmental Forum

In order to achieve the above, the Environmental Forum will:

- a) Be an **inclusive body** of organisations / groups, representative of different sectors and areas in Three Rivers, which have a focus in the district.
- b) Work in **partnership** where possible to improve the environment and tackle climate change.
- c) **Provide leadership** and act as a voice for the people and communities of Three Rivers.
- d) **Consult and engage** with citizens, residents, community representatives and local businesses in a meaningful and inclusive manner, ensuring that choice, access and equality are available to all.
- e) Ensure that its activities are in line with government guidance, and **complement the work of countywide partnerships including the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Forum.**
- f) Promote sustainability, provide advice and expertise and raise awareness and understanding of the potential impacts of climate change in Three Rivers.
- g) Identify and encourage measures to retain and increase biodiversity across Three Rivers by through providing advice, sharing expertise and raising awareness and understanding.
- h) Champion a better and more resilient natural environment in Three Rivers.

3. Meetings

- Meetings and the work of the Environmental Forum will be open and transparent. The meetings will be serviced by officers of Three Rivers District Council, and agendas and minutes published on the website of Three Rivers District Council.
- The Environmental Forum will meet at least three times a year. It may wish to hold extra meetings or workshops as required. Meetings will be held virtually using conferencing facilities by default, as this reduces carbon through less travel, and is more accessible. The forum will support members to access these meetings virtually where there may be difficulties.
- Physical meetings may be held if the forum need to undertake a workshops or where there is considered a purpose in the community e.g. to test out a cycle track, to go on a health walk, to do some work on a conservation area.
- Meetings will be open to the public, advertised and broadcast so that as wide a possible audience can engage in the work of the Forum.
- All members will have equal rights and representation. To ensure this, partners may send substitutes from their organisation.
- The meetings dates will be agreed in advance and will be arranged and supported by Three Rivers District Council.

4. Position of Chair of the Environmental Forum

- a) The Chair of the Environmental Forum shall be a Councillor who is appointed at Annual Council.
- b) The role of the Chair will be to:
 - Lead and inspire the Environmental Forum.
 - Promote the development and learning of the Environmental Forum
 - Promote a common sense of purpose and consensus.
 - Resolve conflict and promote problem solving.
 - Be the link with the supporting Officer Group from the council.
 - Ensure the forum remains relevant and topical.

5. The role of Environmental Forum members

- Contribute to the work of the forum by contributing to the discussion of the forum and raising awareness of best practice as well as raising issues in the community.
- Maintain knowledge of emerging policy and best practice in their area of responsibility.
- Identify resources – financial and other, which can be pooled.
- Attend forum meetings on a regular basis.
- Report and communicate arrangements of the work of the Environmental Forum within their respective organisations and networks.
- Be aware of cross-cutting issues and be responsive to the needs of socially excluded or disadvantaged groups.
- To respect the dignity, diversity and human rights of all members of the forum, the Council, supporting staff and the public.

6. Financial Procedures

There are currently no financial implications for the forum. Three Rivers District Council provide the administrative support including hosting the meetings. Should the forum be allocated funds for use by the Council or secure external funding these will be subject to the Financial Standing Orders and Procedures of Three Rivers District Council and reported through the Annual Accounts of Three Rivers District Council.

7. Review of the Terms of Reference

Three Rivers District Council will review the terms of reference every two years.