

## Great Big Green Week, Georgina Pacey, Local Plans Manager

### Synopsis of report:

This report gives the Committee information on the Great Big Green Week and its founder charity The Climate Coalition. Options for the Council's participation during the 2023 Great Big Green Week are presented.

### Recommendation(s):

#### Corporate Management Committee is asked to AGREE:

- 1. That the Council's approach to this year's Great Big Green Week should be in line with that presented in Option 4 of the Officer report;**
- 2. Officers should bring a 'For Information' Report back to Corporate Management Committee after the close of the 2023 Great Big Green Week to report on levels of participation.**

## 1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The Climate Coalition is the operating name of the Climate Movement – Registered Charity No. 1109973. The Climate Coalition's website claims that they are the UK's largest group of people dedicated to action against climate change. When including their sister organisations Stop Climate Chaos Cymru and Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, they are a group made up of over 130 organisations spanning nature, environment, international development, faith, community and women's groups - including the National Trust, the National Union of Students (NUS), WWF, Women's Institute, Islamic Relief and the RSPB- and have 22 million supporters.
- 1.2 The main purpose of the organisation is to influence decision makers by bringing people together across society to unify and amplify voices, showing the broad support for climate action across the UK. They aim to highlight all the things supporters want to protect from climate change, and to call on politicians to put aside their differences and commit to doing whatever is necessary to protect them. They work with a range of partners for example celebrities, sports teams and businesses to create change at all levels. They are led by a small central secretariat team working closely in partnership with the coalition members.
- 1.3 The Great Big Green Week is presented as a celebration of local action on climate change with the overarching aim of putting pressure on politicians to raise their ambition and champion action on climate change. The types of activities which take place vary greatly, and include bat walks, bake offs, festivals, concerts, litter picks, plastic free picnics, football matches, film screenings, bike rides, murals, MPs in Electric Vehicles (EVs), seaweed foraging and school projects. Events are mainly hosted by community members such as teachers, bus drivers, sport clubs, artists, builders, local groups, places of worship and others who care about climate change and wish to participate. National organisations, institutions, businesses and media outlets also join in, getting more people involved up and down the country.
- 1.4 The first Great Big Green Week took place between 18<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and was declared by the Climate Coalition at the time as the largest event for climate and nature ever seen in the UK. Across the country, over 5000 community-led

events, split between more than 200 Local Green Weeks (Great Big Green Week community hubs) celebrated how communities are taking action to tackle climate change, and encouraged others to get involved too. In Scotland, the Climate Fringe Week was hosted by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland.

- 1.5 The Great Big Green Week last year ran between 24<sup>th</sup> September and 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Across the country communities came together and over a quarter of a million people got involved, including national organisations, institutions, businesses and media outlets.
- 1.6 During the 2022 event, locally within the Borough, several community events were held, supported by individual councillors and linked to the Council's Runnymede Green Week. For example, St John's Church hosted their fifth annual 'eco-fayre'. This was a free family event with the theme of waste reduction. The Lyne Residents Association organised a litter pick event, with the aim to remove as much litter, debris, and dumped material as possible from the paths, verges, park and ditches around the village as possible. A separate two-hour litter pick was also organised in the Fairhaven area of Egham. As a local business, Leightons Opticians in Addlestone held a recycling drive for old glasses and contact lenses. Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL) also held an evening talk and Q and A session for students and the public with representatives from Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey County Council and Royal Holloway University sitting on the panel (this event was held a few weeks later than the official Great Big Green Week due to availability constraints). Information on the 2022 Great Big Green Week and links to the events were updated on to the Council's website and the Council's Communications team raised awareness of the Great Big Green Week and the events being run via regular Facebook and Twitter posts. Information was also distributed to community groups by the Council's Community Development team.

## 2. **Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended**

- 2.1 This year, the Great Big Green Week will run from 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June and is hoping to build on the successes of the previous two years. The Climate Coalition are calling for events within local communities that will celebrate how they are taking action to tackle climate change, and they encourage others to get involved too.
- 2.2 There are various options for how the Council could get involved in this year's Great Big Green Week. These options are set out below:

### Option 1: Support and promote

- 2.3 The Council supports and promotes the Great Big Green Week by encouraging uptake and participation by residents and local community groups. For example, local sports clubs, environmental groups, schools, local businesses, youth groups, faith groups, as well as any other organisations or individuals who may have an interest in tackling climate change. Closer to the week's start date, the Council could collate a list of local events based on details provided by the groups participating and advertise and promote them to residents. This could be done via posters/banners and sharing information and links to the Great Big Green Week's website via social media, newsletters and using the Council's website. A comprehensive comms pack is available from The Climate Coalition.

### Option 2: Support, promote and co-ordinate

- 2.4 The Council supports the Great Big Green Week as described in Option 1 above. However, in addition, the Council effectively becomes the co-ordinator of a 'Runnymede Great Big Green Week' by registering it on the Great Big Green Week website as an overarching Borough based event. Local groups wishing to participate would then be able to tag Runnymede Great Big Green Week when they sign up their events taking place in the Borough. The events will be automatically pulled together as one big event for Runnymede on the Great Big Green Week website. If local groups sign up separately and do not tag the Council's banner, officers can still search the Great Big Green Week website via post code and contact those groups to see if they want to fall under the Runnymede Borough Great Big Green Week.

Option 3: Support, promote, co-ordinate and provide assistance

- 2.5 The Council support the Great Big Green Week as in Option 2 above but additionally look to provide support where practical and within our remit if approached by local groups or residents who would like to put on an event. For example, providing licences for events.
- 2.6 For the avoidance of doubt, Council support will be subject to the usual application processes. All requests will be subject to evaluation and some requests may have to be declined.

Option 4: Support, promote, co-ordinate, provide assistance and participate

- 2.7 This option would build on option 3 above, but would also see the Council running its own series of events during the course of the week with the aims of:
- Bringing together and engaging with our residents (including our young people) and businesses on the important issue of climate change;
  - Celebrating local climate change initiatives and encouraging more people and organisations to develop their own initiatives;
  - Raising the profile of the Council's response to climate change;
  - Providing useful information and signposting other relevant organisations to give people the tools they need to help the Borough transition to net zero carbon by 2050.
- 2.8 If the Committee supports the officer recommendation to pursue option 4, further discussions would then be had with local councillors and stakeholders about the number and types of events which would be run by the Council during the Great Big Great Week. However, it is considered possible that three events could be organised; one with young people, one with local businesses and a general event for local people. Officers within the Planning Policy and Climate Change teams would also commence discussions with the Council's Communications in order to progress work to support the activities described under options 1, 2 and 3.

**3. Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 Positive participation in the Great Big Green Week will support three of the Council's adopted corporate strategies:

The Climate Change Strategy:

Strategic Objective 3 – Positively engage with residents, businesses, community groups, national and local government and universities to share information and encourage positive behavioural change to adapt to or mitigate climate change.

From Runnymede's 2030 climate vision – *'To work with our communities and businesses to create a sustainable living environment where people can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987). To support the international climate change response to limit global warming to a 1.5 degrees centigrade temperature increase while simultaneously delivering a prosperous, caring, healthier borough where people are valued and cared for and where strong communities pull together'*.

#### The Empowering Communities Strategy:

- Priority 2 - Listening to residents;
- Priority 3 – Enabling communities to help themselves;
- Priority 4 - Enabling communities to take control of services or plans for their areas;
- Priority 5 – Advocacy: standing up and pressing Government and other organisations to meet Runnymede residents' priorities.

#### The Economic Development Strategy:

- Priority 6 – Developing a low carbon economy: Encourage businesses to be more sustainable and develop the low carbon circular economy. This priority states that, *'As far as possible, the Council will adopt and promote the principles of the Circular Economy (take, make, use, reuse, reuse) and decouple from the Linear Economy (take, make, use, throw) to minimise Carbon Emissions and waste, reduce environmental damage and increase biodiversity and health. The Council will work with Surrey, the Enterprise M3 LEP and Royal Holloway University of London to increase take up from local businesses of grants, business support and access to knowledge transfer programmes to encourage businesses to be more sustainable'*.

#### **4. Resource and finance implications**

- 4.1 The resource implications will vary depending on which of the options described in section 2 the Committee wishes to take forward. If the recommended option 4 is agreed, a sub team will be created from across various Council departments to progress the project. This will include officers from the Planning Policy and Climate Change teams, as well as officers from the Economic Development and Communications teams. However, input from other departments is also likely to be necessary to support preparation for the Great Big Green Week including Environmental Services, as well as other service areas who may wish to showcase the work that they are doing to support the Council's transition to net zero during the course of the week.
- 4.2 A budget of £10,000 is proposed to fund the Council led events described under option 4 and this money will be vired across from existing budget.

#### **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 The legal implications associated with the Great Big Green Week project would be regularly assessed as the proposals are developed over the coming months.

#### **6. Equality implications**

- 6.1 The Council has a Public Sector Duty under the Equalities Act 2020 to have due regard to the need to:
- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a Protected Characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share those characteristics;

in relation to the 9 'Protected Characteristics' stated within the Act.

- 6.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening has been prepared to support option 4. This highlights the anticipated positive impacts on protected characteristics through the provision of inclusive events which bring together the Borough's communities. This should help to integrate and bring together people from different backgrounds and with different protected characteristics in the fight against climate change. Equalities implications will continue to be reassessed throughout the development of the events with further assessment being carried out as necessary with the support of the Council's Equalities Group.

## 7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

- 7.1 Whichever of the options described in section 2 of this report is supported by the Committee, the implications for environmental/sustainability and biodiversity are considered to be positive by getting involved in this key event which aims to celebrate local initiatives which have been developed to tackle climate change, by raising awareness of this important issue and encouraging others to get involved.

## 8. **Other implications (where applicable)**

- 8.1 Subject to the option chosen by the Committee, there may be further implications which Officers need to consider and report back on.

## 9. **Timetable for Implementation**

- 9.1 An indicative timetable for preparation for this year's Green Big Green Week is set out as follows (if Option 4 is agreed):

**March:** Establish officer group to coordinate the activities for the Great Big Green Week. Development of possible event ideas for discussion with Members including collating information on costings. Registration of a 'Runnymede Great Big Green Week'. Communications team to begin early messaging to residents and community groups regarding how to take part, set up and register their own events. Create a dedicated page on the Council's website containing similar details. Develop Communications Strategy for the GBGW and promotion of our own events.

**Late March/early April:** Discussion of potential event ideas with Members with preferred approaches being chosen. Agreement of the Communications Strategy with Members.

**April/May:** Preparation for events, raising awareness and promotion of the Great Big Green Week by Members, the Council's Communications Team and other service areas as appropriate to residents, businesses and local community groups. For example, sports clubs, youth groups, faith groups, environmental groups, local

businesses, schools and any other organisations or individuals who might wish to participate. Promotion and collation of events taking place.

**June:** Ongoing coordination and oversight of participation, promotion and support. Events held between 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June as part of the Great Big Green Week.

## 10. **Conclusions**

- 10.1 This report sets out the various approaches that the Council could take in terms of its level of participation in the 2023 Great Big Green Week. Officers recommend that the Committee agrees option 4 which would see the Council support and promote the Great Big Week, as well support local groups who wish to run their own events. In addition, it is proposed that the Council runs its own events to demonstrate the Council's commitment to climate change action and to maximise participation from the Borough's businesses and communities.
- 10.2 It is recommended that Officers bring a 'For Information' report back through Corporate Management Committee after the Great Big Green Week so the levels of participation can be reported on.

### **Background papers**