

**ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES UPDATE**  
**Councillor Irwin**  
**Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure**

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To update the cabinet on the progress of the environmental initiative agreed by Council in September 2019
- 1.2 To obtain agreement to proceed with the proposed actions.

**2 Recommendations/for decision**

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| 2.1 Cabinet is asked to agree the actions proposed in this report. |
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**3 Executive summary (if longer than 2 pages)**

- 3.1 The steering group, agreed the environmental initiatives would focus on five specific areas within Aylesbury Vale. These five areas were Community Orchards, Schools Competition, Enterprise Day, Climate Change Champions and Who Does What.
- 3.2 A project lead has been appointed to take overall responsibility for the project delivery of these five initiatives with direct input from officers and members within the Authority.
- 3.3 A number of meetings were held with officers and stakeholders to establish the key opportunities available under each heading. At this stage it was recognised that officer time was limited a focus was required on those identified areas that were most deliverable within timescales.
- 3.4 Officers are now actively working with a number of external stakeholders to facilitate the delivery of the Environmental Initiatives, partnerships with external parties were explored.
- 3.5 This report will be considered by the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee on 10 February 2020 and any views will be reported orally to Cabinet.

**4 Supporting information**

- 4.1 An area of focus from the steering group was for the facilitation of Community Orchards within the Vale.
- 4.2 Initial research indicated that there were a number of environmental improvement projects across the Vale and that restricting funding to Community Orchards may result in AVDC minimising the legacy that is created through this initiative.
- 4.3 To maximise the benefit across the Vale, a grants fund was considered the best method to support projects that provide an environmental benefit to local communities.
- 4.4 AVDC have reached an agreement with local charity Heart of Bucks to create an environmental fund, with Heart of Bucks fund matching by 50%. AVDC have committed £20,000, with £10,000 committed by Heart of Bucks, for community driven environmental projects within Aylesbury Vale.
- 4.5 Grants can be requested up to a value of £2,500. Larger funds can be provided with appropriate fund matching from the applicant.

- 4.6 Heart of Bucks will administer the fund and complete oversight of funds allocated. This will allow the fund to function independently beyond the life of the current Authority.
- 4.7 Two examples projects are being considered at this time and will be used to launch the fund to community groups within Aylesbury Vale. These will be selected by Cllr Irwin and Cllr Lyons as they are already actively involved with the scheme and activities within their communities.
- 4.8 The steering group believe that young people will play a significant role in reducing the environmental impact of schools and homes within the Vale. As such, two local students have been included in a number of discussions regarding the initiatives.
- 4.9 To fully engage young people an initiative has been agreed, in partnership with Heart of Bucks and Bucks County Council, to provide a schools grant scheme for environmental improvements within schools grounds or their surrounding areas.
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- 4.11 It was recognised at the original steering group meeting that businesses within the Vale need to play a significant role in the minimising their environmental impact if meaningful improvements are to be achieved.
- 4.12 The agreed approach was to host an Enterprise Day at the Gateway, inviting businesses that trade or operate within Aylesbury Vale to network with businesses that provide services which would reduce their impact on the local environment. This includes organisations like AVDC, providing services such as food waste management.
- 4.13 After researching the costs to host an event of this type it was decided that the initial concept would not be achievable within the constraints of the budget. At this time AVDC began researching events within the Vale to potentially enter into partnership with.
- 4.14 As part of this process AVDC made contact with Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) who recently launched the #netzerobucks campaign at their AGM. The campaign is focused on supporting businesses in reducing or offsetting their carbon footprint.
- 4.15 BBF hosted a Business Expo at the Gateway in 2019, with over 200 attendees. They are again hosting the Expo in 2020 and have doubled the number of businesses invited to attend. The Expo will be held on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- 4.16 The steering group believe that education and information must be at the forefront of the initiatives. This includes for Parish Councils, Members and Officers.
- 4.17 To provide this across the Vale it was agreed that a form of training would be required, providing candidates with information regarding the current climate emergency and the actions that can be taken on a local level to reduce or remove the impact of residents, visitors and businesses.
- 4.18 AVDC are currently in the process of contacting organisations that provide the level of training required to enable Parish Council and Members to best inform and support their local residents.

- 4.19 At this stage AVDC are gathering the information from these organisations and will be looking to finalise a partnership over the coming weeks. Once this has been secured the training timings will be finalised and communicated with the relevant stakeholders.
- 4.20 AVDC will be leading the marketing of each initiative, whilst working in partnership with the relevant stakeholders in each area. The AVDC Comms team are currently working on branding to ensure that a single message is shown across all the initiatives.

## **5 Options considered**

- 5.1 The initial all party member workshop considered a wide range of potential environmental actions, but these were reduced to those identified in 3.1 above after consideration of impact and resource requirements.

## **6 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 6.1 To ensure that work on the environmental initiative is progressing in the way agreed by Council in September 2019.

## **7 Resource implications**

- 7.1 The project began with a budget of £60,000 and has increased to £70,000 with the fund matching by Heart of Bucks. We are also hopeful of securing some funding from Bucks County Council which would increase the overall budget
- 7.2 £30,000, inclusive of Heart of Bucks matching, has been allocated to the Community Fund.
- 7.3 £15,000 has been allocated to the Schools Competition, and Buckinghamshire County Council are considering
- 7.4 £2,600 has been allocated for the sponsorship of the Business Expo, inclusive of our marketing costs on the day. With £2,400 allocated to marketing material aimed at businesses.
- 7.5 £20,000 remains within the budget and will be used to cover the costs for administering the initiatives, Climate Champion training and all marketing costs regarding each specific initiative. These costs are not yet finalised as training is currently being sourced and the marketing team are beginning the work to consider the communication strategy for each initiative.
- 7.6 Delivery of these initiatives will come within the original budget, with fund matching allowing AVDC to increase the available resource to local communities and school.