

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Council approves community engagement strategy for climate emergency

Residents and community groups from all backgrounds will be brought together by Wokingham Borough Council to share their thoughts on the best ways to tackle the climate emergency locally.

Wokingham Borough Council's decision-making executive approved plans to launch a community deliberative process last night, (28 October). The process will mean a wide range of people will be invited to shape the council's strategy for reducing the borough's carbon dioxide emissions to net-zero by 2030.

The council first set out this ambition in July 2019, when it formally declared a climate emergency, and has produced a comprehensive action plan which sets out the targets to be met and the actions required to achieve them.

However, the council cannot do this alone, so it wants to engage the community more closely by involving key stakeholders and as many residents as possible in the discussion.

These will help to identify the biggest challenges and obstacles to achieving net zero carbon and shape detailed proposals to overcome them, as well as identifying and sharing opportunities.

The community deliberative process, which will launch early next year and finish in September 2022, will be staged through two methods:

Deliberative peer groups will unite people from different sectors and backgrounds who may share similar experiences, challenges, and motivations for tackling climate change and will include young people, teachers, businesses, councillors, those involved in the voluntary sector and more.

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An online discussion will follow the recommendations made by the peer groups. These e-panels will open the conversation to a wider audience, allowing residents to comment on the recommendations and grade them based on how effective they believe they will be in meeting the borough's carbon and climate goals.

Cllr Laura Blumenthal, deputy executive member for equalities, poverty, the arts and climate emergency, said: "I'm delighted that our plans for a community deliberative process have been approved, to increase community involvement in how we tackle climate change. This will enable us to forge ahead with this phase of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

"We're doing all we can as a council to reduce carbon emissions, but we aren't able to do this by ourselves. Getting views and ideas from across the borough is a key step in ensuring we understand what matters to the wider community and how we can support businesses, groups and individuals in their own journeys towards lowering carbon emissions."

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Further information:

1. More from Cllr Laura Blumenthal, deputy executive member for equalities, poverty, the arts and climate emergency at laura.blumenthal@wokingham.gov.uk