

CLIMATE CHANGE ROUTE MAP

CITIZENS ASSEMBLY – PROJECT INITIATION/SCOPING

1. PURPOSE OF PROJECT

The Council has committed to the establishment of a Citizens Assembly as a key engagement tool, a sounding board, and as an integral element of our CCRM governance. Our aim is twofold: first, to create a deliberative and collaborative space in which the public inform our climate decisions and policy, and second, to encourage co-governance of our approach, particularly in relation to the just transition to a green economy.

This proposal is to design, develop, facilitate/manage and report on a Citizens' Assembly for the Scottish Borders.

2. BACKGROUND

A Citizens Assembly will provide a network for communication, development of good practice, peer support and skills development in both climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. A Citizens Assembly will be the central mechanism for the Council to work collectively with citizens and businesses to secure the actions required to achieve a Net Zero region by 2045. Such a structure will also facilitate the development and delivery of educational and awareness raising campaigns which will help to refocus expectations across the area on a collective response to the climate crisis, which results in fundamental changes in the functioning of partners across the Scottish Borders.

This paper sets out the requirement and justification for the establishment of an Assembly, and provides options and opportunities to ensure the highest quality outputs are achieved to help to address the Council's requirement to establish a broadly based and diverse Citizens' Assembly.

The intention is that an Assembly will bring together representatives from across the area, harnessing the skills, experience and innovation present within our communities to inform and influence the action required for the Scottish Borders to meet the national target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. A fully representative Assembly will encompass the needs, interests and suggestions of individuals and communities.

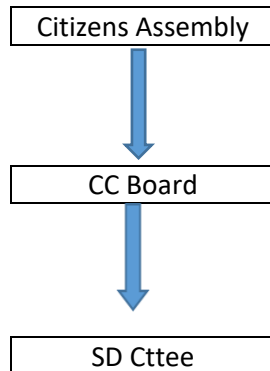
The establishment process for an Assembly will ensure a fully representative body of circa 35-55 citizens, who are geographically, demographically and socially and economically representative of the Scottish Borders population.

The Council already facilitates a 'Peoples Panel' to gauge opinions and circulate information on Council and national and local partner proposals, changes to services, etc. Consideration has been given to the option to use this current panel of around 270 individuals as a Citizens Climate Assembly. However, this option has been discounted because:

- Available data on the makeup of the panel (demography, socio economic profiles, etc.) is very limited and it is unlikely that it would provide a solid basis for a fully representative group
- Use of the panel facility has been very sporadic therefore it is not possible to tell how engaged/responsive members are
- The perceived need is for a new and dynamic structure and the existing structure would therefore be inadequate.

3. PROJECT GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

Overall responsibility for the facilitation and management of a Citizens Assembly would sit with the Council, reporting on the activity, issues raised and addressed, proposals, good practice, accessing local opinions and expertise. This would be reported to the Climate Change Board and then to the Sustainable Development Committee.



It also anticipated that representatives of the Assembly will sit on the High Level Advisory Group (HLAG) to be established to provide external oversight and review of the CCRM and to consider additional interventions required to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2045, or sooner. The scale of representation will be explored in dialogue with the HLAG and the Assembly.

4. PROJECT DEFINITION

The proposal is to procure external support for the establishment and facilitation/management of a Citizens Climate Assembly for 12 months. A key output of this work would be to provide a clear set of recommendations for the continued functioning of an effective Assembly, allowing the Council to forward plan and allocate the required resources. Potential external expertise is available from community engagement and communications consultants such as the Community Chartering Network (currently contracted to D&G Council) <https://www.communitychartering.org/>

5. BUSINESS CASE

A similar procurement exercise undertaken by Dumfries & Galloway Council recently had a budget allocation of £50k, this is to establish and facilitate a Climate Assembly for 12 months. The D&G commission was set out as *'The appointed Contractor will design, develop, facilitate and report on a Citizens' Panel for Dumfries and Galloway and provide options and opportunities to ensure the highest quality outputs are achieved to help to address the Council's requirement to establish a broad based and diverse Citizens' Panel, which will bring together representatives from across our region, harnessing the skills, experience and innovation our people possess to inform and influence the action we will take as a council'*.

The specification for this has been assessed by SBC officers and it is felt that to undertake a similar process would also incur costs of this level. If external support was not resourced by adequate budget, the establishment and running of an Assembly would require to be done 'in house'. At this point, without the recruitment of a Climate Change Officer, it would not be possible to deliver this piece of work within our current staff capacity.

6. PROJECT COSTS

As noted above, the anticipated costs to procure appropriate external support are circa £50,000 for the establishment and running of an Assembly for 12 months, it is proposed that the funding for this is accessed budget availability from delayed recruitments to the suite of Community Empowerment posts.

7. TIMESCALE

Proposed timescale to be agreed with Procurement Services –

- Project scoping and specification – early Oct- early Nov 21
- Issue ITT – early Nov 21
- Contract award – late Nov 21
- Project period – Jan-Dec 22 including reporting, assessment, recommendations for next steps.

8. RISKS AND ISSUES

Risk	Mitigation
That ITT is not successful and procurement cannot proceed	Review ITT (using feedback if available) and re-issue
That ITT proceeds but tenders are not of adequate quality or within budget	Review ITT (using feedback if available) and re-issue
That recruitment to and interest in Assembly is insufficient and cannot proceed	Review timescales for project delivery and realign to allow increased focus on recruitment.
That Assembly is established but members are not committed and membership dwindles	Review timescales for project delivery and realign to allow increased focus on induction/ support for Assembly members.
That views and suggestions from Assembly are limited, impractical, or inappropriate	Review project outputs to assess need for altered communications/training for members.
That political commitment to take on board suggestions reduces efficacy and purpose of Assembly	Identify need for increased engagement with local Elected Members.
That the Council and HLAG partners are not fully committed to provide resources to support the functioning of the Assembly and that the influence and opportunity provided by the Assembly is undermined.	Engage support from local Elected Members and senior officials to encourage commitment from partners.