

CLIMATE EMERGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE – CONSULTATIVE MEETING

MONDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor N Walshaw in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, N Buckley,
P Carlill, M Dobson, E Flint, A Forsaith,
A Garthwaite, C Hart-Brooke, H Hayden,
J Illingworth, M Shahzad, P Wadsworth and
P Wray

16 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies received.

17 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

18 Notes - 28th July 2021

RECOMMENDED – That the note of the meeting held 28th July 2021 be noted.

19 Open Forum

No matters were raised on this occasion.

20 Working Groups Update

The Chief Officer for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality, Polly Cook, provided an update to Members on the progress of the working groups to the Committee as follows:

- **Behaviour Change and Transport** – The group had not met since the last consultative meeting. At the next meeting, the group will focus on making public transport the most attractive mode of transport.
- **Biodiversity and Food** – At the most recent meeting, Members focused on the Low Carbon Food event taking place 29th September 2021 at Kirkgate Market, finalising each of the Council's commitments and action plan, to be presented at the event.
- **Planning, Buildings and Energy** – The group had not met since the last consultative meeting. At a future meeting, the group will continue work on the action taken in regard to the PAS 2035.
- **Finance** – The first finance working group meeting was held following discussions at the last Committee meeting. The meeting was attended

by Bankers Without Boundaries and Abundance, and Members discussed finance options presented previously in more detail. It was agreed that officers from across the Council will meet to identify a potential place-based scheme and look at alternative ways to invest, in preparation for opportunities for pilot projects.

21 Adapting Parks and Green Spaces for Climate Change

The Chief Officer (Parks and Countryside) submitted a report that provides illustrated examples of how parks and green spaces are already helping to address climate change issues and in doing so enhance the experience of people who visit. In particular, the ambitious plan to create 50 hectares of woodland each year over 25 years to 2045 on council land is highlighted along with the key benefits that this will bring.

The following were in attendance:

- Antony Stringwell, Recreational Development Officer, Parks and Countryside
- Simon Frosdick, Business Development Manager, Parks and Countryside
- Mike Kinnaird, Development Manager, Parks and Countryside

The Recreational Development Officer introduced the report, the key developments set out, their benefits in the following areas:

- Parks and green space management, including:
 - Relaxed mowing
 - Pollinator friendly habitats
 - Cemetery maintenance
- Parks and green space developments, including:
 - Investment opportunities
 - Ponds and wetlands
- Tree and woodland planting

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Relaxed mowing.* Whilst the benefits of relaxed mowing and wild flower meadows were recognised and supported by Members, it was requested that Members be provided with real time updates on relaxed mowing sites in their wards, noting that some sites have been subject to a significant number of complaints. In response, Members were advised that the team is currently working on a comprehensive communications plan for relaxed mowing across Leeds, which will be circulated to all members and published on website for residents and visitors. Members suggested that messaging boards across the city could also be used for communications around relaxed mowing and the environmental benefits.
- *A more sensitive approach to relaxed mowing on cemeteries.* Related to the above discussion, Members reported specific complaints in

relation to cemeteries. It was noted that a more sensitive approach is necessary for such an emotive topic, with clear communications to families of the Council's strategy.

- *Quality of trees planted.* Members provided examples of tree planting projects within their wards that had not been successful due to the small saplings becoming damaged in busy public areas, and were advised that the upcoming Leeds Local Plan Update will provide an opportunity to revisit policies relating to tree planting and wider climate emergency priorities. Members were also encouraged to contribute to the current Local Plan consultation.
- *Utilising grassland on housing estates across the city.* Members commented on the lack of access to green spaces in the most deprived inner-city wards of Leeds. Officers offered to circulate information relating to grassland mapping across the city to Members outside of the meeting. Related to this, Members stated that more investment is needed for developing green areas within Council owned housing estates, which could be utilised for biodiversity projects where appropriate. The Chair requested an update from Housing Leeds at a future meeting on this matter.
- *Use of harmful weed killers.* Members reported complaints from local residents around the careless application of harmful weed killers, such as Glyphosate, to grass in parks and roadside verges in Leeds. It was requested that a further update on this matter be provided at a future meeting.

RECOMMENDED –

- a) That the contents of the report, along with Members' comments, be noted.
- b) That the updates requested be added to the Committee's work programme.

22 COP26 and Climate Action Plan update

The Chief Officer (Sustainable Energy and Air Quality) submitted a report that introduced a presentation from the Chief Officer (Sustainable Energy and Air Quality) providing an update on what is happening locally in the lead up to COP26, the UN Climate Summit taking place in November 2021, along with an update on the development of the council's Climate Action Plan.

The following were in attendance:

- Polly Cook, Chief Officer for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality
- Paul Foster, Transport Planning Manager, City Development
- Helen Miller, Principal Planner, City Development

The Chief Officer delivered a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting several local events taking place to build momentum in the city and region in the lead up to COP26 in November, as well as examples of action taken as part of the council's commitment to the four goals of COP26.

The Chief Officer advised Members of the upcoming launch of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Action Plan in November 2021, and opportunities to contribute to the online public consultation taking place until 24th September 2021. The Chief Officer also outlined the progress to date in reaching the council's emissions targets and city-wide key aims. The Principle Planner then presented an update of the Leeds Local Plan Update and current scoping consultation focused on sustainability and carbon reduction. Finally, the Transport Planning Manager presented an update on the new transport strategy for Leeds, and the outcomes of the recent city-wide consultation.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Circular Economy*. It was requested that an item focused on 'reducing and reusing' be added to the agenda of a future meeting.
- *Composting food waste*. In response to a query, Members were advised that support and guidance for composting can be found on the LeedsByExample website and will be a key focus of the Low Carbon Lunch event hosted in partnership with FoodWise Leeds on 29th September 2021.
- *Freight and waterways*. Members noted the opportunities to utilise the canals and rivers in Leeds for freight purposes as opposed to large vehicles on roads and were advised that officers are working at a regional level to identify sustainable freight options, including the use of waterways.

RECOMMENDED –

- a) That the contents of the report, along with Members' comments, be noted.
- b) That the updates requested be added to the Committee's work programme.

23 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 1st November 2021 at 10.00 a.m.