

CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 23RD JANUARY, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor K Dye in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, D Blackburn,
J Bowden, P Carlill, C Hart-Brooke,
H Hayden, D Jenkins, M Shahzad,
P Truswell, J Tudor and P Wadsworth

31 Apologies for Absence

The Committee received apologies from Councillor Garthwaite and Councillor Buckley. Councillor Thomson sent apologies, and Councillor Jenkins attended as her substitute.

32 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33 Notes of the Previous Meetings

RECOMMENDED: The notes of the previous Consultative Meetings of Members of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee held on 28th November 2022 and 12th December 2022 were agreed as correct records.

34 Open Forum

There were two submissions to the Open Forum, made in writing ahead of the meeting.

Environmental Considerations of Planning Decisions

The first submission was regarding the lack of environmental consideration given to planning decisions in a recent development within their local area, and the need for local needs to be met to reduce car emissions. As the next meeting of the Infrastructure working group was due to discuss the Local Plan Update, the Committee agreed to discuss this issue in greater depth there.

Plastic Free Fields

The second submission was from the group Plastic Free Fields Leeds, a group of community members from south and east Leeds. The group's submission was regarding the installation of plastic sports grounds on natural spaces in Leeds. The submission explained the impact that black crumb can have on both animals and humans. The Committee agreed to raise concerns about the issue of black crumb surfacing with Sports England.

RECOMMENDED: That the issues raised be noted and referred to relevant Directorates for consideration.

35 Working Groups Update

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Date Not Specified

The Chairs of the Working Groups (WG) provided updates on progress made since the meeting of the Committee held on 28th November 2022.

Biodiversity, Food & Waste: The topic of the last WG was Circular economy with guest speakers Rob Greenland of Zero Waste Leeds and Cat Hyde from Seagulls Reuse. The discussion focused on how these concepts can be better applied both within the council and in communications to residents. Updates on this work will be provided to the working group

Infrastructure, Planning & Building: The WG had received an update on the Net Zero housing plan. There were discussions regarding the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities Better Homes hub and the retrofit hub. An interactive map to showcase work in this area has been developed, and the group discussed how accessibility and engagement work could ensure that the tool was useful for the public to use in case of the tool being made public. The Committee noted some relevant mapping on the Leeds Live website. The Local Plan Update and green jobs were also discussed.

There have been proposals for new national guidelines to phase out gas boilers. The WG will receive a full briefing note at the next session, where a fuller conversation will take place.

The WG intended to distribute information about the Eco Plus government scheme within their wards. The scheme will provide low cost measures within houses to improve energy efficiency.

Community & Business Engagement: The WG examined how businesses can be supported. A number of schemes were examined including sustainable and active travel, smaller business schemes, climate ready plans as well as communication. The Committee noted the availability of the schemes would be communicated to local businesses.

RECOMMENDED: That the verbal updates from the working groups be noted.

36 **Director's Update**

The Director of City Development, Martin Farrington, provided an update to the Committee regarding how the Directorate has responded to the Climate Emergency. This was a part of a year long programme of visits to the Committee by each of the Leeds City Council's Directors.

The City Development directorate includes the service areas of asset management & regeneration, culture & economy, highways & transportation, planning & sustainable development and operations; and Active Leeds.

Some of the key work undertaken within the City Development Directorate included;

Economy & Culture

There has been work to integrate the climate emergency agenda into economic development within the city. The Inclusive Growth Strategy refresh, which has a prominent focus on environmental issues was presented to the Committee in November 2022 by the Head of Economic Policy. The strategy will have an emphasis on climate change and mitigation.

Leeds Innovation Vision has developed partnerships across the city to support business adaptation to net zero.

The Destination Marketing and International Relations plan (approved by Executive Board in October 2022) has laid out a strategy for ensuring sustainability within the hotel sector, whilst promoting the city as a tourist destination.

The Sustainable Arts in Leeds (SAIL) has been funded by Leeds City Council as a not-for-profit member's network to help deliver the Net Zero carbon emission and Zero Waste ambitions within the cultural and creative industries.

The Leeds 2023 Year of Culture will have its Sustainable Action Plan monitored over the course of the year. Highlights include a sustainable music event planned for the summer. The programme will explore the theme of climate change and sustainability and continue to exchange best practice with key international partners.

Green Skills

The Future Talent Plan launched in September 2022 and has recruited a green skills lead. The lead will map existing and future needs of the sector to identify gaps within provision. The series of ambitions contained in the plan will support people to develop and maintain the skills required for economic and environmental resilience within the city.

As part of the mayoral pledge to create green jobs for unemployed people, there have been a number of Gainshare funded programmes, working with Leeds City College, Leeds College of Building, LCC Sustainable Energy, businesses, WYCA and skills providers to develop skills provision in the city.

Regeneration

The Our Spaces Strategy key strategic document was adopted in March 2020 to support the delivery of new greening proposals. Green spaces developed include Aire Park, Playhouse Gardens, Meadow Lane, Corn Exchange, Wellington Place, Cookridge Street, Sovereign Square and David Oluwale Bridge and City Square.

Housing Growth

The specifications for the 1200 new build homes programme included the delivery of new homes with no gas boilers with some including Electric Vehicle charging points. Technologies utilised have included Air source and Ground Source Heat Pumps and solar PV panels. The programme has delivered it's first set of homes to be granted an EPC A rating.

Highways & Transportation

The Director noted that the following item on the agenda was regarding Mass Transit, as well as new governance arrangements within this area. This included the establishment of a Climate Emergency Task Group, creation of a Climate Emergency Officer role and a Climate Adaptation Plan. The Council aim is for Leeds to be a city where people do not need to own cars.

Following the presentation, the Director and Members of the Committee discussed the following details.

Carbon reduction will be factored into not only large-scale projects and contracts. A series of frameworks for smaller contracts have been developed to ensure that this work is embedded across the supply chain.

There was discussion regarding the carbon benefits of improving existing council buildings against replacing them, such as at leisure centres. The Fearnville Leisure centre was cited as an example of a building which needs replacing entirely.

The timescales for new build social housing programme were noted as being over a five-year period with further details to be provided.

Further detail on the greening of the city centre were provided, as part of a long-term strategic approach. The priorities were identified as being the quality, quantity and distribution of green spaces. This provided the basis for works such as those around the former Tetley Brewery, including the David Oluwale bridge and Aire Park.

The Committee discussed the prospect of congestion charges being introduced, with the current Council position being stated of there being no current plans to introduce this.

The Committee noted that one of the benefits for cities with mass transit systems is that the revenue created can be invested in the bus system should any surpluses from the fair-box arise.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee thanked the Director for attending the Committee and noted the verbal update.

37 West Yorkshire Mass Transit Update

The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation which provided a briefing regarding the Climate Emergency planning of the West Yorkshire Mass Transit Programme. The Programme is being promoted by West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), with Leeds City Council (LCC) as a strategic partner. The report included details of the background and the LCC response to the statutory consultation, 'West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision 2040'.

The Committee received a presentation on the Programme by Director of Mass Transit at WYCA, Kevin Murray, and LCC Officer Sabby Khaira, Programme Executive Manager of Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme. The presentation briefed the Committee on the current position of the Programme. The Programme has been involved in a number of consultations, alongside the West Yorkshire Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, alongside strategies for a number of transport options including rail, bus, walking, cycling, future mobility and case for change reports. Together these propose a meaningful alternative to car ownership, helping Leeds towards the 2030 deadline to achieve Net Zero Carbon.

The Vision has the following emphasis;

- 1) Focus on public good: people & prosperity
- 2) Evidence led development
- 3) Bold and ambitious investment for future generations

The intention is that for short journeys the default option will be walking or cycling. Buses will remain the heart of the transport system and rail will provide connectivity between centres. The new Mass Transit system will fill gaps within the current provision and compliment the other modes of transport.

The four design principles referenced are;

- 1) People first
- 2) Environmental responsibility
- 3) Better connected
- 4) Celebrating West Yorkshire

The Vision intends to build environmental responsibility into the work by considering biodiversity, the natural landscape and placemaking of the West Yorkshire region.

The Committee discussed a number of issues relating to the Vision, focusing on the environmental aspects of the proposals.

Route planning priorities were discussed, and it was noted that there is balance between prioritising areas with low car ownership and areas with high car ownership and congestion. The intention is to implement routes in the most high demand areas to begin with, learning lessons from cities such as Manchester where the focus was on the simpler areas to implement mass transit, with the more complicated areas developed later on. The Committee considered the impact that a city centre focus has on carbon emissions, such as reducing length travel routes, ease of movement and making public transport an attractive alternative to car ownership. The Committee's views on route planning were noted.

The Committee requested information on the ownership and operation of the Vision, with the likely model being for the system to be publicly run and largely publicly funded, but some potential for private funding may be a part of the funding solution.

The Committee discussed future-proofing, and the need to focus on technology which is deliverable within the short term, whilst allowing developing technology to be integrated when feasible.

The Committee noted that the Net Zero ambition is for 2030, whilst the Mass Transit completion target is 2040.

RESOLVED: The Committee thanked Officers from Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and noted the contents of the report, in conjunction with the report published under agenda item 14 from the Leeds City Council Executive Board meeting held on the 14th December 2022 titled 'West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision 2040 Consultation - LCC Response'.

38 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

RESOLVED: The Committee noted that the date and time of the next meeting is 20th March 2023 at 1.00pm.