

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Monday, 17th June, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor K Dye in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, E Bromley,
P Carlill, R Downes, N Harrington, A Rae,
M Rafique, A Rontree, M Shahzad,
P Stables and J Tudor

1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the inspection of documents.

2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The agenda contained no exempt information.

3 Late Items

No late items of business were added to the agenda.

4 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O Newton.

6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting, held on the 18th of March 2024, be approved as a true and correct record.

7 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The following matters arising were raised:

Minute 58 – Directors Update of Children and Families

The last three bullet points on page 8 on the Agenda referenced information regarding, social worker electric vehicle trials, school and other relevant sites climate adaptability plans, teacher workshops and best practise discussions, that was to be provided back to Members by the Directorate. Details on these matters had not yet been provided and were to be followed up.

Committee Membership

It was clarified that Councillor A Rontree had been appointed to replace Councillor J Bowden via a delegated decision notice. This had occurred after the Agenda had been distributed as Councillor J Bowden was referenced as a Member on the front sheet of the pack.

8 Open Forum

The Chair explained the procedure and requested Member's suggestions for groups of individuals who may provide future submissions to the Open Forum.

The following submission was raised under the Open Forum item.

Leeds Children's Mayor

A presentation was provided by the Leeds Children's Mayor, from Ireland Wood Primary School, which detailed his work on addressing the climate emergency. He had been involved in various initiatives at 27 events, projects and talks since his election which helped raise awareness to climate change. Incredible Edible workshops had been run from Ireland Wood Primary School to develop and encourage sustainable practises, with a focus on food production and composting. An apple tree had been planted at the school which was sentimental and a lasting gift as he was leaving for high school next year. Tree planting had been secured through a project with the Woodland Trust, community litter picks had been conducted and were proposed to take place twice a year and in May 2024 a walk to school week had received positive engagement and results with improvements to air quality. The small collective actions contributed to the wider picture and helped inspire others to initiate activity and do their bit, and also for people of all ages to be mindful of their environmental impact. As part of his manifesto, he had helped promote the Leeds By Example Toolkit, providing information of combatting climate change with actionable steps. Nowell Mount Community Centre had run a Support Winter Coat Campaign which the Leeds Children's Mayor had engaged with and met with hardworking volunteers; he had also represented CHORAL (Child Health Outcomes Research at Leeds) to provide better futures for young people. To spread awareness and research projects visits to Grime Dyke Primary School and Temple Newsam Farm had been made. A 'Running out of time' event had been supported by him and the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Spaces to raise awareness of the need for immediate action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Members were requested to share the climate action route map with other primary schools and in conclusion the Leeds Children's was proud of the progress and awareness he had raised but there was much more work to be done.

Members thanked the Leeds Children's Mayor for his presentation and all his support and success with the work that aligned to the Committee.

9 Overview of Climate Mitigation and Adaptation in Leeds

The report of the Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces (CEGS) introduced a presentation which gave the Committee an overview of carbon literacy and an insight into how the Council and wider city was addressing climate mitigation and climate adaptation, as well as the sectors and partnerships the Council engaged with.

The Chair noted that it was a pre-election period and the items for consideration by the Committee had been selected to limit political discussion whilst also providing a good overview of the Committee's remit for new Members.

Polly Cook, Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces, and Rachel Wainwright, Policy Officer, presented the report and highlighted the following information:

- Targets had been omitted from the report and presentation, in line with the politically conscious approach.

- The CEGS department held responsibility for developing climate policy and delivery for the Council, as well as engaging with other departments and seeking improvements to climate action work. It was noted that Directors attend the Committee over the year to provide updates on relevant progress.
- It was outlined that mitigation and adaptability were correlated counterparts, with mitigation focused on ending Leeds' contribution to climate change and reliance of fossil fuels and adaptation was to reduce impacts of future climate hazards.
- The Carbon Disclosure Project was noted to be a useful international, independent review of the action in Leeds, with a score provided to benchmark and compare results and share ideas with other core cities and organisation. Leeds had proudly received an A rating; however, the criteria changed each year to encourage improvements and there was greater focus on adaptability methods.
- Relevant partners that CEGS engaged with were noted as Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, Climate Action Leeds, University of Leeds, Place-Based Climate Action Network and Leeds Beckett University. Achieving net zero and creating sound adaptability plans required a multiagency approach.
- Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission and Leeds Climate Commission were noted to be good engagement forums, bringing in businesses and relevant stakeholders such as utility companies, allowing information to be shared to encourage large scale and efficient action.
- Climate Action Leeds was community led, linked to the University of Leeds, and encouraged localised community action through the Hubs and the organisation had previously provided Open Forum submissions.
- Public sector organisations were outlined to have the biggest initial impact against climate change, with them being large energy consumers across the city and also holding influence.
- Links to core cities allowed better understanding of the impacts of Government policy, alongside work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) allowed a collaborative approach to create a bigger difference and share best practises.
- The three scopes of emissions were explained as; 1 being direct from owned or controlled sources, 2 being indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy and 3 being indirect upstream and downstream emissions that occur through procurement in the value chain of a reporting company. Business travel and employee mileage would also be scope 3.
- The understanding and measuring of scope 3 were globally underdeveloped and emerging data suggested that it could make up 80-90% of an organisation's emissions.
- Emissions data for Leeds was divided into sectors of domestic, transport, commercial and public sector, industry, waste management and agriculture, forestry and land usage. Reductions in domestic, transport and commercial and public sector emissions relied heavily on the decarbonisation of the grid.
- The work on district heating networks and Leeds PIPES had been significant which was connected to the energy from waste and the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility, with generated heat piped around the city, heating buildings

and displacing gas. Retrofitting buildings to connect to Leeds PIPES was easier than other comparable environmentally friendly heating infrastructure.

- Major investments had been made for district heating network development with approximately half of the £62 million secured through various grant sources. It was still at an early stage with around 20% of available heat utilised, however, expansion plans were in motion, particularly into South Leeds.
- The policy network for district heating was progressing, with policies that mandated connection planned by 2025. Leeds PIPES was, so far, an 8 year flagship project, at its fourth stage, and Members were invited for a tour of the relevant infrastructure.
- The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme had been successful with around £40 million of funding secured in the first round, allowing improvements in energy efficiency for leisure centres and schools, utilising efficiency technologies such as solar panels and air source heat pumps, as well as connections to Leeds PIPES. The primary focus of the scheme was to decarbonise heat to reduce reliance on gas, balancing improvements with cost effectiveness. A challenge was noted with the funding bid process and criteria changes occurring.
- There had been a significant increase for electric vehicles (EV) usage, a graph was shown that displayed the uptake in registered plug-in EV vehicles within the Council. The number of charge points, including rapid EV charge points, in Leeds was in line with UK averages. Work to increase the number of charge points, assist people without off street parking and ways to secure and allocate more funding were ongoing.
- Successes were noted in social housing retrofitting, the Council had committed to investing £100million into retrofitting Council houses in March 2021, £60million had been delivered as of November 2023 and the full amount of investment was on track to be delivered by 2025.
- External wall insulation and ground source heat pumps had been installed at social housing tower blocks, allowing better sources of heat which used to rely on the storage of heat which had been difficult for consumers to determine expected usage requirements. Work with landlords to create energy efficient investments had been beneficial, economically, environmentally and socially.
- There were four general aims for adaptation action, to prevent hazards, protect the city from harm and damage, prepare to respond effectively and the ability to recover after an event. Each approach held different costs and benefits and a balance was needed between them.
- Climate risks in Leeds were categorized into four hazards, heat, floods, drought and cascading impacts. Cascading impacts were explained as factors to consider that occur outside of the city, such as weather impacting food production.
- Reflection on the impact the 2015 Boxing Day floods which had occurred in Kirkstall led to better preparation methods. The Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme (LFAS) was comprised of two phases using both natural and engineered management measures.
- Approximately £200million had been invested in LFAS and since its initiation, it had been used nine times, which was more than originally projected. To date 512,000 trees had been planted as a natural defence. Approximately

4000 homes and 1000 businesses were protected against a 1-in-200 year flooding event by the scheme.

- A cross agency climate adaptation workshop was held in 2022, which had been continued with internal services to understand integrating climate adaptation, as well as continued partnership working. Adapting mindset, considerations and heatwave checklists were also outlined as appropriate measures.
- The CDP accreditation was a useful audit to track progression of adaptation work, as well as the Global Destination Sustainability Index which determines and compares sustainability practises.
- There were a diverse range of options and projects being developed and progress had been overall good, however, there was still work to be done to improve the resilience of Leeds to climate change.

During discussions the Committee discussed the following:

- It was confirmed that the net zero target applied to Leeds as a city and not just the local authority. The target was also focused on scope 1 and 2 emissions as it was created against available data at the time. It was also noted that the target was also to apply to Leeds and Bradford Airport buildings but not aeroplane emissions.
- The target for Leeds was net zero by 2030, which was considered ambitious. Other authority's targets varied from 2030 to 2038, with the WYCA target being 2038.
- Some opposition to the data and approach to combatting climate change was noted, with people previously attending the Committee's Open Forum on this matter. Schemes that contributed to net zero also held additional benefits, which needed to be clearly communicated.
- There was not yet any capacity pressure for EV and charging point provision, further data on charging point take up was agreed to be provided back to Members.
- Extreme cold had not been identified as a major risk within the UK, however, data gathering for other adverse weather events, such as storms, was ongoing any may be identified as risks to adapt to in the future.
- The 512,000 trees referenced in the LFAS were not all within Leeds, with many planted upstream in the Aire Valley, closer to river sources. A target to plant 50 hectares of trees each year in Leeds was also noted.
- The 1-in-100 and 1-in-200 year flood model approach was potentially outdated, based on previous data, further details were to be confirmed by a relevant officer working in flood risk management. Members noted this figure may need to be reviewed and it was outlined that flood risk was to be a future agenda item considered by the Committee.
- Clarification on the 1-in-100/200 flood risk model was outlined as the model being based on previous data and did not scale further risk than at the point of conception. A new model of 1-in-200+climate change was sometimes used to account for additional changes.
- The approach of the Committee and the CEGS service for addressing the issue of misinformation surrounding climate change was queried, as well as guidance for critical thinking and verification of information. In response it was outlined that the Council was a trusted brand and all information in the public

domain had been scrutinised and determined to be accurate. This matter was considered beyond the issue of climate and was to be referred to the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board for information regarding the communications process.

- Funding for Climate Action Leeds was secured for one more year out of the three year programme; how the organisation and Hubs would continue to operate and be properly funded was queried. Climate Action Leeds had sent out a survey to display the impact of their work to support their submission for additional funding.
- Paying staff for car mileage was considered necessary to meet work quotas and allow essential work, however, grey fleet mileage had significantly decreased since the pandemic and remote working was implemented where possible.
- With only 20% of available heat utilised as part of the district heating network, it was outlined that this was expected to grow as the scheme developed and was dependant on peak heat demand patterns through the seasons. Other cities that did not have the same waste processes to utilise would be able to use a variety of other processes, such as industrial, and also Leeds had alternative sources too.
- It was agreed that data for the current number of businesses that were connected to the district heating network was to be provided back to Members.
- There were funding inconsistencies for the process for retrofitting housing noted, however, this was largely due to factors of challenging criteria changes but positive influence on Government policy was sought.
- As people were subject to hose pipe bans when utility companies had been identified to having high levels of wasted water, stakeholders were to be influenced to implement best practise and to value resources. It was noted that the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board may be able to look into this issue, alongside water pollution.
- The rollout plans for Leeds PIPES were ongoing with 15 current customers over 53 buildings. The figure for the customers on the waiting list was to be provided back to Members, but the overall expected take up was difficult to approximate given the factors of scoping heat demand although some larger connections were expected soon.
- Flood risk management plans for the River Wharf were to be explored later in the year when flood risk was an item considered by the Committee. There was a flood wall in Otley which was considered to potentially need extending.
- An annual report for air quality was to be developed, with year-on-year improvements noted. Greater focus on indoor air quality was emerging and a conference with medical professionals had been held to discuss advice for patients, greener routes and public medical alerts. It was requested that air quality study would also cover outer areas of Leeds.
- The Chair provided further information for new Committee Members, noting that there was a rolling programme for Council service Directors to attend meetings and this year they were requested to focus on procurement, linking to scope 3 emissions, as well as adaptation plans.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the information presented in the meeting in preparation for the commencing of the 2024/25 work programme, be considered.
- b) That the report, along with Members comments, be noted.

10 Climate Emergency Advisory Committee 2024/25 Forward Plan

The report of the Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces set out the meeting schedule for the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year and proposed that each meeting would progress one (or more) of the key climate change mitigation and adaptation themes as identified in the attached work programme.

Polly Cook, Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces, presented the report and highlighted the following information:

- The proposed items of business contained in the forward plan focused on a mix of topics across mitigation and adaptation, as well as outward and inward looking discussions and points of influence.
- Member's views, comments and amendments to the schedule were sought, including providing any topics and submissions for the Open Forum and Director's updates.

During the discussions the following matters were considered:

- In order to address alternative views on climate change from external groups or individuals, it was suggested that a private sub-group meeting may be appropriate to address varied views, perception, misinformation concerns and confirming evidence which led the Council to conclude on specific policies. In response there was discussion as to whether this met with the aims and outcomes of the Committee, given its role to advise the Executive Board and entering re-discussion for the Committee's direction may be time intensive with limited results for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Some support for the private sub-group approach was outlined as the more accurate information provided was beneficial for society so people can make more informed decisions and develop an understanding for individual responsibility and misinformation.
- A session on scrutiny of information and communication may be of use to Members in order to provide correct information to the public to support the Committee's beliefs and pledges, as well as to disprove misinformation through evidence based conclusions.
- It was proposed and agreed that one of the working groups could cover communication and engagement to address common concerns and encourage carbon literacy.
- It was agreed that an item regarding air quality across the district of Leeds be added to the forward plan, this was also to include discussions on air quality issues stemming from Leeds and Bradford Airport.
- It was confirmed that discussions of pesticide use were relevant to, and were to be included in, the tree planting and maintenance update that had been scheduled.
- Further collaborative work with relevant organisations, such as WYCA and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, was suggested in order to streamline work and share learning and practise. The forward plan had allowed for topics that covered internal and external impact and it was noted

that the Chair sat on a WYCA Climate, Energy and Environment Committee, which fed into the Committee's plans and discussions.

- The WYCA transport plan scoping consultation had been paused during the pre-election period, but when the results had been published, the contents were relevant to the Leeds transport plans, with substantial funding expected to be provided by WYCA. This was also to be linked to air quality and outer area provision.
- Consideration of food security and cascading effects were proposed, along with the effects climate change had on local food production schemes. This was to be researched in order to understand the Committee's remit of influence.
- The workshops were a good arena for private discussion and the invites were extended to all Leeds City Councillors; the more in attendance allowed for a better use of time and a wider scope of discussion.
- The Chair noted that meetings would regularly be 3-hour sessions. Members noted that some experienced clashes or short timeframes between other meeting commitments and may require some administrative changes which the Chair was open to discuss.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the proposed meeting schedule for the municipal year contained in Appendix 1, be considered.
- b) That the report, along with Members comments, be noted.

11 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Monday 22nd July 2024 at 2.00 pm – this meeting was to be held in person and form a formal meeting rather than a Consultative Meeting, as originally proposed, as agreed by the Chair.