

**CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, 9TH MARCH, 2022

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,
N Walshaw and P Wray

10 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12 Notes of the Previous Meeting

RECOMMENDED – That the note of the consultative meeting held 17 January 2022 be noted.

13 Climate Adaptation Update

The Chief Officer (Sustainable Energy and Air Quality) submitted a report that introduced a presentation on the council's ongoing work to support climate adaptation.

The following were in attendance:

- Jonathan Moxon, Flood Risk Manager, Leeds City Council
- Rosa Foster, Environment Planning & Engagement Manager, Environment Agency
- Richard Emmott, Director of Corporate Affairs, Yorkshire Water

Representatives delivered presentations on the individual perspectives on adaptation across the three organisations and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, and how they work in partnership to support the city's resilience to the current, potential and expected impacts of climate change. Members were also advised that the council's draft Adaptation and Resilience Plan is currently being developed and will be brought back to Executive Board in July 2022.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- Members noted that rivers do not respect the boundaries of any particular city and that mitigation efforts in one area may have knock on effects for other areas and sought assurance that local authorities work together across regions to ensure that flood schemes are integrated. Members were advised that there is a well-established statutory framework, within which the Environment Agency have a strategic oversight of flood risk and work at regional and sub regional level with partners on a whole catchment basis. Related to this, it was also noted that there will soon be a requirement for the three main water companies across the north to collaborate on future water supply.
- Members highlighted the importance of soil health in future adaptation planning, as well as the potential for harvesting rainwater for water supply in retrofit planning. It was confirmed that both matters are being discussed as part of the Local Plan update. Members were also reminded that the Local Plan update workshops being held later in the month are open to all members and will provide opportunity to raise such matters.
- Members were supportive of the constructive and accessible approach taken to the presentations delivered and future communications for adaptation and resilience.

RECOMMENDED – That the contents of the report, along with members comments, be noted.

14 Executive Board 9th February 2022 - Climate Emergency Annual Report

The Chief Officer (Sustainable Energy and Air Quality) submitted a report that introduced the Climate Emergency Annual Report considered at the Executive Board meeting on 9th February 2022.

The Chief Officer delivered a presentation, highlighting the key areas covered by the annual update report, including an overview of the recently agreed energy strategy, new guidance being developed for new builds and the upcoming food strategy.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- Members queried whether schemes to support council employees to switch to electric vehicles are readily available or in progress. Members were advised that existing car lease scheme, which has several electric vehicle options, is available to all council employees, and that a trial of an electric vehicle pool scheme for use during working hours will be launched shortly.
- In recognition of the importance of engaging with the public, it was suggested that a social media infographic be developed for elected members to share to encourage sign-up to the climate newsletter.
- Members requested an update on the plan for electric vehicle charging across the city, specifically in recognition of the significant amount of terraced housing without off street parking. The Chief Officer advised

that teams are working to develop a 'hub' approach to charging, whereby charging points are installed within the locality, for example in car parks or within a cul-de-sac. Leeds have also recently been announced as a partner on the government's geo-spatial programme, which will support mapping of charging points locally.

- The challenge of addressing the retrofit need across the private rented sector, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas of Leeds, was noted.

RECOMMENDED – That the contents of the report, along with members comments, be noted.

15 Open Forum

Members of the public were invited to submit a question / statement in advance of the meeting.

Two submissions were received. The first submission from the Clean Air Alliance was read out to the committee as follows:

'I represent the Clean Air Alliance in asking that there be an alternative 'festival' on 5th November/ Bonfire Night, since the format we've grown up with leaves us with polluted air. Whilst appreciating that risk assessments are in place, there is no consideration of the longer-term health of attendees, including Council staff, or local residents. The community bonfires in 2020 and 2021 were cancelled due to Covid, but we understand that air quality had not been considered. Covid has caused a break in the tradition for many people and 2022 would be a good time to review the whole issue.

The results of research carried out by the University of Leeds, which makes sombre reading, indicating that dioxins may stay in the air for up to 2 weeks. We know that respiratory clinicians in Leeds hospitals are concerned about the damage which smoke and particulates from bonfires cause to health, particularly with the cumulative impact of covid.

Whilst acknowledging that the Council 'puts on a good show', we know that Councillors regularly receive complaints from constituents forced to stay at home on that night, because of the noise and smoke of fireworks, inconsiderate parking, breathing difficulties and large crowds, whilst many people affected do not complain. The events exclude sections of the community, - they are a no-go area for many with mobility issues, and for families with young children due to tightly packed crowds and the difficulty children have seeing the displays.

Also of concern is the state of the parks afterwards where the bonfires have been held. The litter is picked up by Council staff and volunteers and whilst the grass does grow again, it's an effort and a Council cost which needn't happen.

Since signing up to Climate Emergency measures, many Councils are now looking at alternatives to bonfires and fireworks, e.g. Ashbourne, Bideford, Edinburgh, London, Newcastle, Norwich - all of which have had laser light shows, plus London and Edinburgh using drones too with spectacular success.

Perhaps 5th November/Bonfire Night could be combined with the hugely successful Light Night, with imaginative 'bonfire' and 'fireworks' displays. Gradually, more districts could be included, and use iconic buildings as the backdrop, such as Kirkstall Abbey, Temple Newsam, Guiseley/Yeadon/Morley/Wetherby Town Halls, Hunslet Library, Royal Armouries. Since the displays would be spread over a whole evening, not just whilst the fire burns or the fireworks are let off, people would be spread out too, creating more revenue-generating possibilities for the Council from food, drinks and other vendors.

It's likely that many residents who have bought fireworks and watched bonfires over the years could not explain the origin of this British custom, and I guess for the remainder, the origins are of no significance anymore. We ask for your assurance that this event be brought up-to-date for the environment and to be inclusive for all residents.'

The second submission was received from Climate Action Leeds, a video that provided an update on the Leeds Doughnut project and invited Members to the project launch event on 28th April 2022.

16 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** – At the most recent meeting, Members received a presentation on the Vision Zero Strategy and the E-Bike Hire Scheme, and took away some comments from members to feed into the broader consultation. Planning colleagues will host a workshop to discuss the approach to 20 minute neighbourhoods across the city.
- **Biodiversity and Food** – This group had not met since the last meeting, but at the next meeting will discuss the National Food Strategy from a sustainability perspective and how the Leeds strategy can address some of the issues raised.
- **Planning, Buildings and Energy** – At the January 2022 meeting, the group focused on energy strategy in relation to the Council's activities and energy consumption. Members were briefed on the market position for energy prices and on the Council's approach to forward purchasing its gas and electricity. The main areas of focus for the strategy in terms of reducing consumption, becoming more energy efficient and increasing the level of energy sourced from renewables and low-carbon technologies were

discussed, as well as carbon reductions achieved to date and those expected to be secured through planned measures. The March 2022 meeting will be used to engage Members in a Local Plan Update policy workshop.

The Chief Officer advised that the next meeting of the finance working group had been delayed due to capacity issues.

17 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.