

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Friday, 15th December, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor K Dye in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, J Bowden,
P Carlill, E Carlisle, M Foster, A Hannan,
N Harrington, A McCluskey, M Rafique,
M Shahzad, E Thomson and J Tudor

26 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the inspection of documents.

27 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The agenda contained no exempt information.

28 Late Items

No late items of business were added to the agenda.

29 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

30 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Downes and Councillor O Newton.

31 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee noted amendments to the minutes of the meeting held 27th November 2023:

Minute 19 Open Forum – to be amended to reflect that the Chair reported on discussions held with contributors to previous meetings, particularly on the approach to consultation. With the agreement of the Committee, the Chair undertook to write to senior officers and leadership team to highlight that all public consultations are as inclusive and accessible to residents as possible.

The Chair also reported that responses had been sent to contributors to the October 2023 meeting Open Forum on the following issues:

- Hydro electricity
- Roof top Gardens
- Zero Carbon Energy Markets

Minute 22 Directors Update – the phrase ‘It was confirmed that the White Rose station did have connectivity through to the bus station’ be amended to read “*It was confirmed that the White Rose station did have connectivity through to the White Rose bus station.*”

RESOLVED – That, subject to the amendments above, the minutes of the meeting held 27th November 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

32 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The following matters arising were raised:

Minute 20 Working Groups Update - Dates had been confirmed for all working groups with Members encouraged to attend:
Biodiversity, Food and Waste – 29th January 2024,
Economy and Finance - 30th January 2024,
Community and Business Engagement – 5th February 2024,
Planning and Buildings – 6th February 2024.

Minute 22 Directors Update – With the Leeds car sharing scheme having ceased, it was noted the West Yorkshire scheme still existed. An update on the West Yorkshire scheme was usually contained within the Transport Strategy Committee Annual Report which was to be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

Minute 24 Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission and Leeds Climate Commission – The Committee noted that a Ward Member for Killingbeck and Seacroft will make contact with the representatives of the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission to seek their attendance at the next Climate Action Seacroft Community Forum.

33 Open Forum

No matters were raised under the Open Forum item.

34 Climate Emergency Advisory Committee Annual Report

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Climate, Energy and Green Spaces) presenting the annual update on the work of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and its working groups.

The report included the draft Annual Report to Council attached at Appendix 1 and a schedule of the Open Forum submissions considered by CEAC and the Council's response attached at Appendix 2.

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

- The report captured the work and impact of the Committee and associated working groups and did not cover every aspect of work involving climate initiatives enacted by the Council.
- The key themes were policy development, project delivery and engagement with the public, partners and stakeholders.
- The Open Forum had been beneficial and led to practical outcomes such as research into the effects of rubber crumb and developing best practise for engagement with the public.
- The four working groups had been effective in directing policy and assisting in shaping provision and public feedback for projects such as the Community Hubs.

During discussions the Committee discussed the following:

- It was noted there was little reference to the work on lobbying and making requests to outside bodies in the report. In response, it was thought this had been reflected but further work on the report was proposed to sufficiently reflect this.
- A synopsis of lobbying and request to outside bodies was noted to be contained on page 26 at point 3.1.6, however, specific examples of this work were to be included in the report.
- To avoid confusion between this report and an additional annual report that was due for submission to the Executive Board, it was noted that, the contents of this report originated from Members of the Committee and would be useful if content of the report due for Executive Board were available. In response it was outlined that the report to Executive Board had been delayed until September 2024 in order to be linked to the Carbon Disclosure Project and a link to this report could be included for context.
- To demonstrate the success of the Council's approach, to be net zero carbon by 2030, it was noted that this was to be included in the annual report for the Executive Board and current data stated a 63% reduction in carbon since 2005.
- It was noted that the report reflected some difficulties engaging with diverse communities and options to improve this were to be explored, particularly within areas of deprivation as actively having the time, capacity and facilities to address climate impact was more regularly associated with affluence. This was to be a topic raised at a working groups chairs meeting.
- As a further method to engage with residents, including text on ongoing climate initiatives and the impacts in Leeds, was proposed for letters that were sent out regarding elections. It was noted that Council tax bills and the Leeds by example website had previously been utilised to promote certain topics, however, depending on context and priorities the intention was not to overload residents with information on multiple subjects.
- A message of thanks was extended to all Committee Members, the working groups and all contributors to the report, noting, the city was making progress but had a long way to go.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and the work of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee throughout the 2022/23 and 2023/24 (to date) municipal year, along with Members comments, be noted.

(Councillor B Anderson left the meeting at the end of this item)

35 Community Climate Grants Update

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Climate, Energy and Green Spaces) which provided an update on the progress of the community climate grants fund, which is a West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) funded project providing funding of up to £50,000 for community projects that reduce carbon and have a positive impact on equalities and/or deprivation.

George Munson, Senior Project Manager, outlined the following information to Members:

- When compiling the report, the assessment process for the determination of climate grants was ongoing. The outcome for grants had been provisionally determined at the time of the meeting but as the bidders had not been notified, specifics were not reported.
- Members views on the process for engagement on seeking community climate grant applications, for the second wave, were sought.
- The community climate grant funding originated from WYCA and was to be allocated to community proposals for greener, cleaner and climate ready neighbourhoods and must target one of the four priority areas – a. *Green and climate ready nature solutions*, b. *Healthy affordable and efficient buildings*, c. *Local, clean and renewable energy* and d. *Walking, cycling and public transport*.
- Bids had to evidence how the project reduced carbon, helped tackle deprivation and inequality, and projects were to be completed by December 2024.
- £544,000 was available for community and voluntary sector organisations, with an open application process. The first wave of the application process had closed on the 3rd of November 2023.
- 29 bids had been received for the first wave, with 9 being provisionally approved, which were predominantly larger bids, totalling £285,231.
- The main reasons for non-successful bids were outlined as insufficient evidence for build costs, staffing costs and general finances, as well as weak targets to measure outcomes. It was noted the capacity for some organisations to provide all the required information raised difficulties and there were some bids that may be approved on receipt of further clarification.
- There were several fundamentally good ideas which lacked fulfilment of all required criteria.
- The forecast was that there will be around £265,000 available for the second wave of bids, with an additional £100,000 comprising a reserve pot, and a lottery bid anticipated by WYCA. The second wave and the announcement of successful bids was aimed to be completed before Purdah.
- Four options were proposed for the second round of the process, which were, 1. to run a fully open process, 2. offer bids to previous applicants only, 3. invite applications from underrepresented groups and areas only or 4. a combination of options 2 and 3.

During the discussions the following matters were considered:

- There had been one bid for a transport project, however, it had not been approved for funding.
- As there were no applications received from groups or organisations from specific Wards, with particular reference to some more deprived Wards, it was noted the second wave of bids could prioritise this.
- The requirement for an application to demonstrate a positive impact on an area of high deprivation or reduce inequality was queried as it may exclude some groups residing in more affluent Wards from the process. It was outlined the criteria had been a requirement set by WYCA.

- It was noted there was approximately a 50/50 split on the approved applications that demonstrated a positive impact on area of high deprivation versus reductions in inequality. The process had some barriers to accessibility and applicability, but no specific Ward or organisation was excluded.
- As there had been some difficulties for some organisation applying, mainly due to time and resources, it was suggested the Localities team could provide assistance with forms and requirements, given their close working relationship with third sector and voluntary organisations.
- It was clarified that the process had been simplified within the context of the set requirements from WYCA and assistance had been provided by the service. The majority of applications that were unsuccessful was due to omission of finance requirements. For the second wave, further guidance regarding the minimum standards and feedback to unsuccessfully bidders were to be provided.
- There had been some detail regarding diversity and whom the applicant organisation represented on the application form. More information on the diversity of applicants was to be provided back to Members.
- With the expiration of the funding grants noted as December 2024, option 1 for an open process was proposed for the second wave given the time constraints and the wish to apply all available funding.
- Option 1 was also noted to provide the opportunity for organisations from less represented Wards to apply, with information regarding the process and requirements available as early as possible to promote fairness.
- The benefits of option 4 were noted as, support for unsuccessful bids will allow already developed plans access to funding and then provide a good opportunity for underrepresented groups and areas to apply. Some concern regarding the scope of available information during wave one was raised.
- A proposal to mix all options was discussed, for a full open process that prioritised options 2 and 3. This was proposed to address concerns regarding the potential for funds to be left over if previous bidders were unsuccessful again whilst allowing new bids to come forward.
- In order to support previous bidders to resubmit their applications, the service could tailor guidance and create an easier bid writing process for smaller climate groups. The climate action hubs were outlined to be an appropriate venue to engage and offer this support. An offer to review bids before the submission deadline was available.
- To encourage bid submissions across all Wards, the notion of prioritising previous bidders may raise issues as it was difficult to predict or assume what will come forward for wave two. All applications should be judged on their own merits, in line with the set criteria.
- Examples of suitable projects from the four priority area options could be provided for organisations to increase the number of bid applications. In response, it was noted the four options were determined by WYCA and a short set of examples were to be devised and included in the provided guidance.
- It was confirmed that the list of applications listed as Ward percentages, detailed on page 33 at point 8 of the report, was the total number of bids received and not what is likely to be approved.

- Once the successful bids were known to Members it will better reflect what projects were to be implemented across the city and which Wards were underrepresented, allowing a more informed decision as to which options was preferred. The results from wave one were agreed to be published once all bidders had been formally contacted.
- The Committee proposed to write to all Councillors to assist in identifying groups that may engage with the process and have the capacity to submit beneficial bids for funding, including guidance and direction to support.
- The application process was proposed to be taken as an item to Community Committee meetings, which covered all 33 Wards within the Leeds district. Difficulties for this were raised due to the urgent time constraints to apply funding but all Community Committee chairs were to be sent a letter to consult with the Members, appointed community Champions and Localities Officers.
- In summary, the Committee's preferred option for the second wave of the bidding process was for an open process with support offered for previous bidders and underrepresented areas or groups. A scoring system was an option for the determination of priority bids.

RESOLVED – That the update on community climate grants and Members comments on the process for distributing additional funding made available for a second funding wave, be noted.

36 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Monday 22nd January 2024 at 10.00 am