

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Friday, 17th July, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor N Walshaw in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, J Bentley,
D Blackburn, N Buckley, P Carlill,
A Garthwaite, J Illingworth, M Midgley,
L Mulherin, M Shahzad, P Wadsworth and
P Wray

In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed Councillor P Carlill as a new Member of the Committee as approved at the Council meeting on 15th July 2020, replacing Councillor K Groves due to her commitments at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

3 Late Items

There were no late items.

4 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

5 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2020 be approved as a correct record.

7 Open Forum

Members of the public were asked to submit a video recording of their open forum submission in advance of the meeting.

A video was submitted by Our Future Leeds, which can be viewed [here](#). The Chair read out a brief introduction to the video, which sets out the 10 ideas for how to create a sustainable, liveable, safe and socially just Leeds by 2030.

The ten ideas are:

1. Changing our roads
2. 15 minute neighbourhoods
3. A network of community hubs
4. More local greenspaces
5. Warm affordable homes for all
6. Neighbourhood assemblies
7. Security for Leeds workers
8. A Leeds COVID Recovery fund
9. A socially useful economy
10. Measuring what matters

More information on the 10 ideas as set out in the video can be found [here](#).

8 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:

Transport – The working group has held one remote meeting, focused on the active transport schemes that had been introduced as a result of COVID-19, as well as the Council’s response to the ‘Decarbonising Transport’ report recently published by the Department for Transport (DfT). Members requested that the working group also considers partnership work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) at a future meeting.

The Chief Officer advised Members that meetings of the Biodiversity and Food Production working group and the Planning, Buildings and Energy working group, will resume in September 2020.

9 Setting the Scene - Environmental Impact of Covid-19

The Chief Officer for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality (Polly Cook), and the Head of Economic Policy (Fiona Bolam), delivered a PowerPoint presentation that set out some of the environmental impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic at a national and local level. Some of the key trends were highlighted as follows:

- Fuel sales have decreased nationally between March and May 2020, which is a trend mirrored locally. The pandemic also provided an opportunity to provide key Council services using the electric fleet of vehicles, further reducing the Council’s fuel usage.
- Prior to ‘lockdown’ in February 2020, the average concentration of NO₂ ug/m³ had begun to decrease and this trend has continued throughout the ‘lockdown’ period.

- Sharp drops in two way 24 hour traffic at the beginning of lockdown, which began to increase towards the end of May 2020 but remain significantly lower than levels in 2019.
- Reduction in UK electricity demand of between 12% and 21%, with a slight increase in domestic consumption.
- No coal has been burnt for electricity in the UK since 9th April 2020, with renewables delivering around half of all energy generation.
- The pandemic has served to speed up trends that were already evident in the economy, highlighting the need to adapt ways of working to recover and providing an opportunity for green recovery.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the presentation be noted.

10 Green Recovery

The Chief Officer for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality (Polly Cook), and the Head of Economic Policy (Fiona Bolam), delivered a PowerPoint presentation that sets out the Council's plans for green economic recovery in Leeds, following the outbreak of Covid-19. Necessary considerations and key opportunities were highlighted as follows:

- Lessons learned from the global financial crisis in 2009, including avoiding carbon-intensive investments which would 'lock-in' future climate change, as well as the creation of 'any jobs', which then fail to address poor productivity and leads to increasing inequality.
- The vulnerability of Yorkshire to the risks of an unjust transition with a high concentration of foundation industries, but also an opportunity in that 11.3% of workers have skills that match future jobs, which is higher than the national average.
- Environment and carbon reduction are key focuses within the economic recovery plan for West Yorkshire, and will also be central to the Leeds economic recovery approach, in line with the Council's three pillars as set out in the Best Council Plan – Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing, and Tackling the Climate Emergency.
- Plans to build on the investment priorities put forward by the Committee on Climate Change – low carbon retrofits, energy systems, tree planting schemes, active travel initiatives, and moving towards a circular economy.
- The Local Government Association (LGA) have predicted that demand for 'green jobs' will accelerate massively across the North of England, with Leeds likely to be among the strongest cities in the UK in creating jobs to support greener industries.
- The wider opportunities for change as a result of the pandemic, including the move towards digitalisation, remote working and shift in transport patterns.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Clean Air Charging Zone (CAZ)*. In response to a query, Members were advised that delays to implementation are due to ongoing discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) around the limits

and modelling. Related to this, Members were advised that all eligible and approved grant applicants will receive funding despite the delay.

- *Roll-out of full fibre.* With the shift towards working from home, Members noted the importance of fast and secure broadband. Members were advised that the schedule for the roll-out of full fibre would be reported back at future meeting.
- *Supporting retail.* Members sought more information on the steps taken to support high-street retail, and were advised that work is underway to explore an app based solution to give confidence to shoppers visiting the city centre by providing data on busy areas and available parking.
- *The role of planning and supporting change in the building sector.* Members highlighted the necessity of engaging with the building sector, and encouraging investment into sustainable practice and materials. Chair noted his intention to write the Secretary of State on behalf of the Committee to seek further support to drive change locally.
- *Devolution.* Members were advised that the West Yorkshire devolution deal is likely to provide further opportunities for innovation. The Chair suggested that a collective response of the Committee to the ongoing consultation on devolution be submitted.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Chair writes to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to seek clarity and support on the future role of local authority planning and building regulations.
- b) That the Committee respond to the West Yorkshire Devolution consultation.
- c) That the contents of the presentation, along with Members comments, be noted.

11 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 22 September 2020 at 3:30 p.m.