

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Monday, 18th January, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor N Walshaw in the Chair

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

42 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

43 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

44 Late Items

There were no late items.

45 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

46 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

47 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held 22nd October and 15th December 2020 be approved as accurate records.

48 Open Forum

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

Three videos were submitted by the following children and young people in Leeds, highlighting action taken to address the climate emergency in school and beyond:

- 1) Robbie Strathdee
- 2) Woody Kadis Ross

3) Ava Garside

All three videos can be viewed [here](#).

49 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** – at the most recent meeting, the working group reviewed the Transport Strategy approved at Executive Board in December 2020.
- **Biodiversity and Food** – at the most recent meeting, the working group received updates in relation to a number of biodiversity projects taking place across the city, along with a presentation on the White Rose Forest Strategy approved at Executive Board in December 2020. Professor Lindsay Stringer from the University of York is scheduled to attend the next meeting to present soil management strategies, as requested by Members. At future meetings, the working group intend to invite representatives of the vertical farming community to explain the process in more detail, as well as focus on developing a food action plan for Leeds.
- **Planning, Buildings and Energy** – at the next meeting, the working group will receive progress updates on key projects across the city, including the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, domestic grants and European funding.

Members requested that the work programme for the Biodiversity and Food Working Group be updated to include focus on complementary planting arrangements for biodiversity and utilising local food production.

50 Children and Young People Climate Emergency Priorities

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report that advised Members of the ongoing work streams to engage with children and young people in Leeds in regards to the Climate Emergency, and presented a number of films/presentations created by school pupils highlighting their environmental priorities.

The following were in attendance:

- Steve Ruse, Lead Sustainable Schools Consultant, Children and Families, Leeds City Council
- Mr Andrew Nelson, Teacher at Richmond Hill Primary Academy
- Mary Mengstaeb, Year 5 pupil at Richmond Hill Primary Academy

The Lead Sustainable Schools Consultant introduced the report, highlighting activity to promote the climate emergency and engage with schools following the Leeds Youth Voice Summit on Climate for secondary schools in February 2020.

Mr Nelson and Mary Mengstaeb were welcomed by Members and invited to introduce the video submitted by Richmond Hill Primary Academy. Mr Nelson advised the Committee that Richmond Hill Primary Academy has undertaken a number of community based projects over the last 18 months in response to the GORSE Academies Trust commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2025, as presented in the video submitted and played at the meeting.

Members noted their thanks to the representatives from Richmond Hill Primary Academy for attending the meeting, and for their continued inspirational dedication to the climate emergency. Members were pleased to hear of their partnership with other Leeds based organisations such as Opera North, and projects to discourage idling vehicles around schools.

Two further schools, Strawberry Fields Primary School and Kirkstall St Stephen's Church of England Primary School, submitted videos that were played at the meeting. Unfortunately, representatives from the schools were unable to attend and so the videos were introduced by the Lead Sustainable Schools Consultant, who provided a brief overview of each video. Members thanked the schools for their contributions and highlighting the issues raised in the videos, noting particularly the impact of 'fast fashion' and the value of schemes to promote recycling and reusing school uniform, as well as introducing vegetarian and vegan meals to the school lunch menu and further ideas to reduce food waste and increase sustainability.

The Chief Officer (Sustainable Energy and Air Quality) presented the soon to be launched Climate emergency Toolkit for Young People in Leeds, to highlight examples of the resources and opportunities available to young people and schools across the city, as requested by attendees of the Youth Summit held in February 2020. Mr Nelson welcomed the launch of new resources for schools and suggested that further 'assembly ready' packages could be developed, such as a video designed for a whole school audience to encourage climate action, incorporating all of the ideas and resources included in the toolkit and examples of successful projects in other Leeds schools. Related to this, the Lead Sustainable Schools Consultant referred Members to the Climate Action Route Map (Appendix 2) for senior leaders in schools to develop their own programme of activities and integrate sustainability into the curriculum.

Members suggested that further opportunities to develop the offer and engage with schools could be achieved by working with the Children and Families Scrutiny Board, and Council teams working in partnership with the Leeds Climate Commission. Members also recognised the importance of the role of the Committee in regards to demonstrating the changes that have been made as a result of the submissions from schools, to maintain and further encourage the enthusiasm amongst young people to take ownership and tackle the climate emergency.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the three video films submitted by schools in Leeds be noted;

- b) That Members comments and suggestions, in regards to appropriate action with particular emphasis on developments that simultaneously address both the climate emergency and child poverty agendas, be noted;
- c) That the Committees' commendation of the important work taking place in the three schools be noted, and acknowledged in the form of a certificate for each participating school;
- d) That the further 'assembly style' resources, in addition to the resources presented at the meeting, be developed and made available on the Leeds by Example website to support other Leeds schools to follow the lead of the submitting schools in identifying their own environmental priorities;
- e) That the Committee will engage with Child Friendly Leeds Ambassadors at the next available opportunity.

51 Climate Emergency Toolkit for Young People in Leeds

The Chief Officer (Sustainable Energy and Air Quality) submitted a report that introduced a presentation of the new resource for children and young people in Leeds to access support and guidance on activity to support the climate emergency ambitions.

The Chair noted that the toolkit was presented at the previous item (Minute 50 refers).

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and presentation be noted.

52 West Yorkshire Pension Fund - Investment in the Fossil Fuel Industry

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that introduced a presentation to be delivered at the meeting, which sets out the policy position in regards to the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) and current investment in the fossil fuel industry.

Councillor Andrew Scopes delivered a PowerPoint presentation, setting out the background and legal requirements of the WYPF, the financial case for divestment in fossil fuels, and finally, a proposal for Members to support the following position statement:

'Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency, the Leeds City Council recognises the moral and financial risk of investing in fossil fuel companies and calls for the West Yorkshire Pension Fund to disinvest from fossil fuels in a planned way over a relatively short-period of time (not more than 3 years) and to invest this money in alternatives (such as green energy) that are expected to deliver sustainable returns over the long-term.'

Members welcomed the detailed presentation and made a number of comments, including:

- Members considered routes to engaging with other neighbouring local authorities on this matter and concluded that the Green Economy Panel at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority would be the most appropriate forum for

further discussion to take place. The Chair advised that he would correspond directly with the Chair of the Panel to identify a suitable date.

- Members suggested that the reference to 'moral' in the position statement be removed and replaced with 'environmental', to reflect the climate emergency.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Committee's support for the position statement as set out above be noted;
- b) That the matter be referred to the Executive Members to adopt as formal council position;
- c) That the Chair write to the Chair of the Green Economy Panel at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to request that this matter be discussed at a future meeting.

53 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 10th March 2021 at 2.00 p.m.