

SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

THURSDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors P Alderson, N Buckley,
M Foster, J Garvani, S Hamilton, W Kidger,
J Lennox, M Shahzad, N Sharpe and
I Wilson

44 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals.

45 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information on the agenda.

46 Late Items

There were no late items.

47 Declarations of Interests

No declarations were made.

48 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Hussain and S Lay.

49 Minutes - 2 November 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

50 Hydrogen Compatible Infrastructure

The report of the Head of Democratic Services provided the context for a presentation about the development of hydrogen compatible infrastructure in the city and wider region.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Mark Danter, Acting Head of Hydrogen, Northern Gas Networks
- Neil Evans, Director of Resources

- Polly Cook, Chief Officer, Sustainable Energy and Air Quality
- Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Member
- Councillor Katie Dye, Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Mark Danter gave the Board a presentation which provided an update on the conversion of gas networks to be able to use hydrogen.

Issues highlighted included the following:

- Phase 1 of the project that looked at the safety aspects of using hydrogen.
- Phase 2 which considered use of the gas network.
- The next stage which would involve village trials and this would commence in 2025.
- There had been trials with purpose built properties that had prototype hydrogen boilers and appliances.
- There were proposals for a town pilot scheme that would commence from 2030 and this would serve between ten and twenty thousand meter points. The east side of Leeds had been identified as a potential site.
- Trial scheme of using blending hydrogen and natural gas – benefits included the continued use of existing appliances.

The Board were also addressed by Neil Evans, Polly Cook and Councillor Hayden. Issues highlighted included the following:

- Challenges to provide de-carbonised heat sources and whether hydrogen could be used.
- Methods of producing and storing hydrogen.
- Whether hydrogen could be used for commercial and industrial uses.
- Potential for using hydrogen in transport.
- Work with energy companies to develop local hydrogen infrastructure.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- The cost of using hydrogen was not yet known but research was being undertaken. Green energy had got cheaper as it became more available.
- It was now possible to make boilers that were convertible to use hydrogen and there was discussion with manufacturers to produce these. Current appliances were not capable of being adjusted for hydrogen use.
- The village trial would have an exit plan which included reverting back to natural gas or other forms of heating such as air pumps.
- Hydrogen was not seen as an overall solution to heating provision. Different methods were more suited to different types of property.
- Funding had been received from Ofgen towards the trial projects.

- There was some concern that energy costs would become more expensive to the consumer.
- Storage of hydrogen and use of hydrogen to produce electricity.
- There was a need to explore alternatives to the use of gas and hydrogen may not be the most cost effective solution across the whole country.
- The blend of using hydrogen with natural gas had a mix of 20% hydrogen. This was suitable for use with current domestic appliances and gave a 6.7% carbon saving.
- There would be a decision made by Government in 2023 as to whether blending would be used.
- There was ongoing work to repurpose as much of the existing gas infrastructure as possible. Old cast iron piping was being replaced with plastic which was compatible for hydrogen use.
- Use of green hydrogen – using electricity from sustainable sources for the provision of hydrogen.
- The initial two trial sites would be in Teesside and Humberside. Leeds would be later.
- An odorant would be added to hydrogen so any leaks could be detected by smell. Gas safety checks would be carried out on appliances and appliances would have added features such as flame failure devices which would cut the gas supply off.
- It was assumed that there would be some grant support available to consumers in areas that were to be converted to hydrogen.
- Requirements for re-training and upskilling for gas engineers was being considered.
- Storage for hydrogen – outskirts of areas and industrial areas would be considered suitable.
- The mains replacement programme was now in its twentieth year and was planned for completion in 2032.
- There would not be any negative environmental impacts with the production or use of hydrogen.
- An area near to Colton was currently being considered for the trial in East Leeds.

The Chair thanked those in attendance for this item.

RESOLVED – That the report and discussion be noted.

51 Local Plan Update

The report of the Director of City Development informed the Board of the update to the statutory Development Plan to help address the climate emergency, improve health and wellbeing and promote inclusive growth. Consultation was running from 24 October 2022 to 19 December 2022.

Martin Elliot, Head of Strategic Planning presented the report.

The following was highlighted:

Minutes approved at the meeting
held on Wednesday, 11th January, 2023

It was reported that the draft policies were currently at the formal stage of consultation before a revised plan would be submitted to the Secretary of State. The proposals would then be subject to public examination which would look at the soundness of the policies in line with national guidance. The Government was in the process of changes to planning guidance and regulation towards climate change.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- The Leeds Climate Commission had identified two main areas which were buildings and transport. There was a challenge to reduce people's reliance on cars and generate the infrastructure for public transport. There was a need to promote active travel and a desire to create twenty minute neighbourhoods where main facilities could be accessed within a ten minute walk.
- Government policy from 2025 would prevent new homes from having gas boilers. New council properties were already hydrogen compatible.
- Policy G4A: Green space improvement and new green space provision – the new proposals would clarify requirements for on and off site provision.
- Leeds City Station – access and connectivity to other sites around the city.
- Responses received to the consultation to date had been very positive including those from the development industry.
- It would not be able to make all neighbourhoods a twenty minute neighbourhoods. Many aspects were out of the control of planners such as location of shops and GP surgeries but the best places to identify future growth could be identified where new development was planned.
- Development of the White Rose forest including connectivity and regeneration of footpaths and other facilities.
- Health providers were consulted as part of the planning process including the development plan and planning applications.
- Transport – there was a strategic approach to try and encourage development in areas where there were public transport links. More effective consultation with developers was required with regards to public transport contributions.

RESOLVED – That the report and discussion be noted.

52 Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy Annual Report

This item was withdrawn prior to the meeting.

53 Work Schedule

Minutes approved at the meeting
held on Wednesday, 11th January, 2023

The report of the Head of Democratic Services presented the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED – That the report and work schedule be noted.

54 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 11 January 2023 at 10.30 a.m. Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.15 a.m.