

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Monday, 27th November, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor K Dye in the Chair

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

13 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the inspection of documents.

14 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The agenda contained no exempt information.

15 Late Items

No late items of business were added to the agenda.

16 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Newton and Polly Cook, Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces.

18 Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED -

- a) That the minutes of the last formal meeting of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee held on 6th June 2023 be approved.
- b) That the meeting notes of the Consultative Meeting of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee held on 16th October 2023 be noted.

19 Open Forum

No matters were raised under the Open Forum item, however the Chair reported on discussions held with contributors to previous meetings, particularly on the Council's approach to consultation. With the agreement of the Committee, the Chair undertook to write to the Council's leadership team to highlight that all public consultations should be as inclusive and accessible to residents as possible.

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

- Hydro electricity
- Rooftop Gardens
- Zero Carbon Energy Markets

20 Working Groups Update

Communities & Business Engagement WG – Councillor Shahzad reported on discussions held with Emma Beverley, Leeds 2023, which focussed on the practical challenges faced in terms of keeping events sustainable, such as the use of generators, energy and Wi-Fi. Use of a temporary sustainable barn had been successful for an event on Woodhouse Moor and it would be re-used for future events. The availability of public transport was also identified as an issue and the WG felt that further discussions were needed on bespoke provision timed to support events in the city.

The WG had noted that Leeds City Council (LCC) had subscribed to Sustainable Arts in Leeds (SAIL) and Councillor Shahzad encouraged all arts organisations to join.

Food labelling to highlight the carbon impact of the food purchased was also discussed, noting that a trial would be implemented at the Temple Newsam House café with results to be analysed on completion.

Infrastructure, Planning & Building WG – Councillor Dye reported on discussions on the Home Upgrade Grant, where LCC had received funding to upgrade homes not currently connected to the gas network, and how to encourage uptake. Information would be provided to all Councillors on eligibility for the scheme in order to identify residents who may wish to participate.

Discussions also focussed on the Update to the Energy Act and the forward plan to identify future items of business.

It was noted that the 4 WG Chairs would meet in December to discuss the forward plan and Members were encouraged to feedback items of interest to The Committee Chair for inclusion.

Additionally, dates for the Economy & Finance and Biodiversity, Food & Waste WGs were being considered and invitations would be sent to all Councillors in due course.

RESOLVED – To note the updates provided.

21 Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) Update

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer Climate, Energy and Green Spaces, on the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) - a global non-profit that runs the world's environmental disclosure system for companies, cities, states and regions.

Since 2021, Leeds had submitted a public disclosure to CDP detailing the city's annual emissions, as well as the city's projects, programmes, and policies relating to climate change. On 14th November, CDP confirmed that Leeds was one of 119 cities to receive an 'A grade' in 2023. The 2023 submission to CDP was attached an appendix to the report.

The Chair highlighted that CDP was a worldwide initiative and welcomed the news that Leeds had retained its status as an A Grade city. In noting the volume and detail in the report, the Chair expressed thanks to the officers who provided the submission to CDP as it provided a superb summary of a huge amount of work taking place in Leeds.

The Committee noted that the full feedback from CDP would follow in due course which will report on those areas where improvements may be needed.

The Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Spaces commended the work of the CEGS team in compiling the submission, noting that the submission drew information across all council services. He reported that Leeds was one of the few councils to attain the A Grade two years in a row and was also reported to be the Council rated most likely to achieve net zero.

The Committee discussed the following comments:

- The cost of CDP.
- Benefits of having CDP and the weight it gives to Leeds' climate change work.
- Breakdown of CDP A grade cities throughout the world/mapping of their locations and having sight of the reports on other A grade cities to use as comparisons to show the measures they had implemented which may be of interest to Leeds.
- That the full CDP feedback report be brought to a future meeting and considered as a tool to determine the next steps to take and to inform where LCC makes investments/how funding can be drawn down to target hard to reach communities.

(Cllr Carlisle joined the meeting at this point)

RESOLVED - To welcome the recognition of Leeds as one of 119 cities across the globe awarded an 'A grade' by international authority the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), for the second consecutive year.

(Councillor Rafique withdrew from the meeting for a short while at this point)

22 Director's Update - City Development

The Director of City Development, Martin Farrington, provided an update to the Committee on the work of the Department. The accompanying presentation focussed on the following key matters:

Economic Development.

- Climate Change was embedded at the heart of the Inclusive Growth Strategy (launched in September 2023) and the city's Innovation Vision to 'Stimulate innovation which drives and delivers measurable impact towards a healthier, greener and inclusive future for Leeds and the world'.
- The Destination Marketing and International Relations plan (approved by Executive Board in October 2022) sets out how the city will drive sustainable tourism.

- The Future Talent Plan focussed on developing green skills and providing pathways into green jobs along with upskilling/re-skilling the existing workforce to enter the burgeoning green job marketplace. It was reported that there were approximately 20,000 net zero jobs across 470 companies in Leeds.
- The update of the Leeds Local Plan will focus on net zero, renewable energy generation, flood management and green and blue infrastructure through work on the Flood Alleviation Scheme, District Heating Scheme, to deliver Net Zero Homes, Woodland Creation, delivery of Green Spaces and support for Electric vehicles.

Culture

- Sustainable Arts in Leeds (SAIL) is a not-for-profit member's network supporting more than 300 Cultural and Creative industries across Leeds to realise an ambition for a zero emissions/zero waste sector. Leeds Culture Trust works with SAIL as a core delivery partner for Leeds 2023 Sustainable Action Plan.
- LCC signed up to the "Eurocities – Lille Call to Action for low carbon and more inclusive culture" and is developing an action plan around climate and sustainability priorities.
- The Major Events Framework sets out the Council's commitment to ensure that all major events contribute towards the city's ambition to become net zero by 2030.

Planning and Sustainable Development

- The Local Plan Update will ensure that planning policies address the climate emergency, through focussing on net zero, renewable energy generation, flood management and green and blue infrastructure through work on the Flood Alleviation Scheme, District Heating Scheme, to deliver Net Zero Homes, Woodland Creation, delivery of Green Spaces and support for Electric vehicles.
- Consultation on an update of the separate Leeds Local Plan 2040 took place in 2023 and further consultation is anticipated in the summer of 2024 on detailed policies and development sites on housing, the spatial strategy, economic development, transport and connectivity.

Asset Management and Regeneration

- Aire Park is being brought forward to provide interconnected, biodiverse and climate resilient interlinked spaces.
- The "Our Spaces Strategy" adopted in March 2020 supports the delivery of all new greening proposals in the city and delivered key projects including the Playhouse Gardens and public spaces at the Corn Exchange and Cookridge Street.
- Housing Growth – 1900 new build proposals are being taken forward which include low carbon measures for the majority of the current council housing programme.

- The Sustainable Travel Gateway had created pedestrian priority outside the city station, cycle hub and segregated cycle lanes to promote an alternative to cars.
- The Directorate continued to work Estate Optimisation/Rationalisation to ensure full utilisation of the LCC estate or release surplus space.

The Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation, Gary Bartlett, provided a presentation on the work of the department in relation to the following:

- New governance arrangements to support the departmental response to the climate emergency through the establishment of a Climate Emergency Task Group to review and develop actions to deliver the pledge to “promote climate actions that also protect and restore nature and biodiversity”. The Task Group was supported by new initiatives to create Climate Champions and a Future Climate Leaders Group amongst staff.
- The Transport Strategy had been developed to tackle climate change, deliver inclusive growth and improve health & wellbeing and included targets to promote behavioural change.
- The Leeds Public Transport Infrastructure Programme had provided benefits in terms of improved public spaces, widened footways and enhanced cycle network. Better access to public transport and reduced road congestion had been achieved along with improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions. A consultation was due to be undertaken to assess residents views of “before and after” the implementation of the Programme.
- The Corporate Travel Plan will be refreshed and each Council department will be tasked with reviewing their own travel plan and how their staff travel around the city.

To conclude, the Director highlighted the work included within the Natural Flood Risk Management Scheme which was implemented in conjunction with the Environment Agency. The use of tree planting and soil management was critical to manage flood risk.

During the discussions the following matters were considered

- Connectivity between the bus and rails stations in the city centre and at the White Rose centre. The Committee noted that it was not practical to move the bus station nearer to City Station and the focus of the approach taken in the city was to improve the experience by creating better space for walking and cycling. It was confirmed that the White Rose station did have connectivity through to the White Rose bus station.
- Connectivity between the city centre and Leeds Bradford Airport via taxi and private hire and buses/trains.
- Information on “Planning for the Planet” and making space for community growing in developments would be provided to the Committee following the meeting.
- Feed Leeds would be addressed in the Local Plan and it was agreed that this would be raised with the team working on the Plan.
- The take-up of the use of Beryl Bikes would be considered at a Board meeting due to be held shortly and it was agreed that a report back would be provided to the Committee. It was noted that initial reactions to the scheme had been

favourable. In response to a query regarding a development in Aireborough that had showed an interest in installing Beryl Bikes, it was agreed that officers would respond directly to the Member following enquiries.

- In response to comments that a cultural change was needed to encourage take-up of car sharing, it was noted that the Council previously had a car sharing space but the issue would be raised to determine whether the scheme still existed.
- The role for Community Committees in the development of transport options in their localities. It was noted that the “Leeds Streets For All” consultation had commenced seeking residents views on the highways and transportation issues which impacted on them the most, and when funding became available, the findings would be addressed.

RESOLVED –

- a) To thank the Director and officers for their update and presentation
- b) To note the contents of the discussions and the measures being implemented by the City Development Directorate to tackle climate change.

23 Leeds Food Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces which provided an oversight of the Leeds Food Strategy.

Andrew White, Climate, Energy & Green Spaces team and Sonja Woodcock, Zest and Food Wise Leeds provided a presentation, highlighting the following issues to the Committee:

- The background to the development of the current Leeds Food Strategy which was launched in July 2023, as a partnership of Food Wise Leeds and Leeds City Council (Public Health, Financial Inclusion, Climate, Energy & Green Spaces teams). The Strategy has three missions which align with the three pillars of the Leeds Best City Ambition:
 - Mission 1: To improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the city through eating well.
 - Mission 2: To ensure we can all access affordable, nutritious food as part of a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant food economy.
 - Mission 3: To ensure the way Leeds produces, consumes, and disposes of food is fit for the future and supports our climate action plan.
- Each mission has its own objectives which reflect the what the Council can undertake and the areas where the Council will work in partnership. Each objective will be implemented differently in response to different parts of the city.
- The Strategy includes 42 actions and overall progress on the actions will be reported to Executive Board in Spring 2024.

During discussions the following issues were identified as matters to explore:

- A review of the food offer in leisure and cultural sites, such as vending machines in leisure centres, to ensure healthy options were more readily available and promoted. It was noted that the Public Health team had undertaken work on vending machines on the LCC estate and that the snacks offered were under a specific calorie level. It was felt that the initial focus for the council needed to be on the food the Council served and procured, however the discussion had identified a further challenge to follow up with procurers.

(M Shahzad and A Hannan withdrew from the meeting at this point)

- Further work with schools and colleges which did not buy food from the Council to encourage a broad offer of food for students was available. Anecdotal evidence showed that if students did not find something they wanted to eat at school/college, they would be likely to buy food from fast food/high street on the way home.
- Having more space to grow in the city centre and further discussions on the city's land use strategy.
- Work with the farming community to ensure they followed good employment practices, noting that the Strategy reflected on the broader aim for sustainable good places to work with. It was also noted that the team were working to build good relationship with the National Farmers Union.

The Committee noted the reported difficulties in implementing community composting schemes due to an issue with Waste Transfer Licences which community composting should be exempt from. This issue needs to be resolved to enable the project to flourish. Members lent their support to the initiative in order to encourage administration of the exemption.

The Committee also supported the suggestion that the draft report measuring the success of the Food Strategy actions be discussed by the Committee's WG prior to being presented to the Executive Board in Spring 2024.

RESOLVED -

- a) To note the contents of the report, particularly the three overlapping themes of Health & Wellbeing, Food Security & Economy, and Sustainability & Resilience.
- b) To note the progress made to date, as well as the longer term ambitions for partnership, engagement and policy alignment so that the Leeds Food Strategy delivers for the city.
- c) To support the communication, delivery and development of the Strategy by members of CEAC and additionally, the Committee's support for community composting be included as a call for action in a future Leeds Food Strategy Newsletter.

24 Update on the work of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission and Leeds Climate Commission

The Committee received a Briefing Report on the work of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission and the Leeds Climate Commission. The paper provided context to discussions on priorities for integrated climate actions

across the city and how the Commissions could effectively work with the Committee.

Rosa Foster, Co-Director, Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission and Amelia Duncan, Leeds Climate Commission Research Fellow, attended the meeting and provided a presentation which included the following matters:

- The first Climate Commission was established in 2017 in Leeds, recognising that the public/private and Third Sector needed to work in partnership to address climate change and had received funding to continue until 2030. 20 Climate Commissions (CC's) were now established nationwide.
- The Yorkshire & Humber CC (Y&H CC) was established in 2021 in response to regional flooding and was funded to continue to 2030. The Y&H CC aims to build a regional picture and evidence base and;
 - Mobilise existing capacity across all organisations to act on climate change,
 - Discuss the issues and develop a collective approach and response to national policy,
 - Focus on communities and engagement,
 - Establish a Public Affairs Group in 2024,
 - Review and analyse progress regularly.
- Referencing the Update from the Director of City Development (minute 22 above) it was reported that the Yorkshire Leaders Board had recently approved 8 planning principles which could be shared with the Committee following the meeting.
- The Leeds CC had undertaken a strategic review and refresh of its principles including specific pieces of work to independently evaluate progress on climate action in the city – to identify what has been successful, and what the city has struggled to achieve.
- The next steps for the Leeds CC were outlined as:
 - To convene, learn from the review and to facilitate the future approach,
 - To act as a catalyst and driver for change and collaboration
 - To publish the plans for next steps and appoint new commissioners in 2024.

During discussions, the following matters were considered:

- Recognition that not all residents used digital or social media outlets and some communities interested and active in climate change would not access the data to be published through Common Place. It was noted that the establishment of the Public Affairs Group would consider how to reach those communities. The roles of local networks such as schools and Neighbourhood Networks were highlighted as useful contacts.
- The importance of social/cultural work to build enthusiasm for climate change work. A suggestion was made that the Y&H CC could undertake an experimental campaign or mapping exercise on what is available in communities and to find ways to reach key people embedded in communities

to highlight the offer. The Committee was requested to consider the suggestion and provide information for the Y&H CC to consider.

- The importance of encouraging people to act confidently to tackle climate change. It was noted that young people can feel hopeless in the face of the enormity of the issue, but there was resilience and knowledge in communities to drive the change needed. The key was being able to tackle feelings of disenfranchisement and it was important to ensure positive messages and results were communicated to show how every small action can make a positive change, as much as the big strategy ideas.
- The work of the Climate Action Leeds groups was highlighted, such as the Seacroft group, and an invitation to attend local group meetings was accepted.
- Recognition that being part of the CC regional programme would be beneficial in terms of sharing best practice with partners; accessing other small networks and connecting with stakeholders; being able to link small local projects to the University resources and amplifying voices being able to respond to and lobby for national policy.

In conclusion, the Committee welcomed the offer for the Climate Commission representatives to report back to the Committee and/or its Working Groups in the future.

RESOLVED -

- a) To thank the attendees for their presentation
- b) To note the contents of the Briefing Report and views shared during discussions.

25 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Friday 15th December 2023 at 2.00 pm.