

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Wednesday, 23rd October, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor N Walshaw in the Chair

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

22 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

23 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

24 Late Items

There were no late items.

25 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Anderson, K Groves and P Wray. Councillor P Carlill was in attendance as substitute.

27 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held 25th September 2019 be approved as an accurate record, subject to the inclusion of the following (Minute 20):

‘Members were advised that offsetting activities were not included in models’

Matters Arising

Minute 16 – In response to a query, Members were informed that the Big Leeds Climate Conversation had been extended to take place until 30th November 2019.

Minute 20 – The Chair confirmed that the Chief Executive of Leeds Bradford Airport would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee, to respond to questions submitted by Members.

28 Open Forum

Two youth activists from Horsforth High School, Robbie Strathdee and Anna Turton, addressed the Committee. Members were advised of the growing number of young people who experience eco-anxiety, along with the demand for climate change to be explored in schools and incorporated into existing subjects. The speakers requested that the Committee focus on schools and education for one meeting or more, and produce an action plan of how the council will help schools across Leeds respond to the climate crisis.

A representative of Extinction Rebellion, Ian Coatman, addressed the Committee. Members were advised that Extinction Rebellion were calling for a 2025 carbon neutral target, as opposed to the Council's ambition to become a carbon neutral city by 2030. Mr Coatman requested a list of practical measures that have or intend to reduce the Leeds carbon footprint, a list of practical actions made by the Committee, and further information detailing the position of the city's carbon emissions.

A representative of Extinction Rebellion, Andy Walker, addressed the Committee on behalf of Nick Hodgkinson. Mr Hodgkinson felt that Minute 20 did not accurately reflect the discussion at the meeting with regard to the subject matter. Mr Hodgkinson asked for the Committee to recommend to Councillor Blake that she initiate discussions with the Core Cities Group to impose an immediate moratorium on all regional airport expansions.

29 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 focused on business travel, particularly on how to change patterns within the city and the support available. At future meetings, the group plan to look at the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for transport and the lobbying approach for powers and funding.

Biodiversity

The group have been considering how to ensure a more holistic and strategic approach for activity, including the development of a database to collate and map all requests for biodiversity projects. Members were informed that analysis had been undertaken of new woodland in Leeds, along with how offers for additional tree planting from local businesses are utilised and managed.

Planning

An update was provided later in the meeting (Minute 30 refers).

30 Climate Emergency and Planning

The Chief Planning Officer submitted a report that set out the role of the planning system in mitigating and adapting to climate change. The report provides background on the current national and local policy framework, largely provided by the Leeds Local Plan and sets out the work programme for how planning can help achieve the Council's ambitious targets by 2030.

The following were in attendance:

- David Feeney, Chief Planning Officer, City Development
- Martin Elliot, Head of Strategic Planning, City Development

The Chief Planning Officer introduced the report and provided more detail around the five key objectives that will form the initial focus of the Planning, Energy and Building Working Group (PEBWG).

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *National policy and guidance.* Members were advised that national planning policy pre-dates all climate emergency declarations. The Chair agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to seek a review of the National Planning Policy Framework, along with clear and consistent guidance for developers and decision makers.
- *Emergency decision making.* Members suggested that emergency decision making powers should be granted to reflect the urgent situation and enable immediate responses.
- *Sharing best practice.* Members recognised that ultimately revised national policy is required to compel developers to produce more eco-friendly homes, however, it was suggested that the Council has a role in encouraging conversation and competition between developers, to ensure that being carbon efficient is simply known as 'good planning'. Members were assured that as per 'objective 1', good practice will be celebrated through a variety of forums as set out in the report.
- *Plans Panel report template.* It was suggested that the Plans Panel report template be amended to include a 'climate emergency' section, to further embed consideration of climate issues into the decision making process.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Chair writes to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to seek a review of the National Planning Policy Framework with respect to all matters related to climate emergency, and that this results in clear and consistent guidance for developers and decision makers;
- b) That the contents of the report be noted.

31 December Submission to Executive Board

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that introduced a presentation to the Committee on the Climate Emergency update report to be submitted to Executive Board on 18 December 2019.

Polly Cook (Chief Officer for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality, Leeds City Council) provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee on the areas of progress to be covered within the Executive Board report, including progress updates on the following areas of work:

- Projects to support cultural change;
- Commissioning of deep dive energy audits in Council buildings;
- The expansion of the district heating network;
- The grey fleet work stream switch to energy efficient vehicles, and encouraging active travel and corporate metro cards;
- Analysis of responses to the Big Leeds Climate Conversation and Leeds data from the WWF carbon footprint calculator;
- Ongoing business engagement activity;
- Youth engagement with the Leeds Youth Council.

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

32 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place 13th January 2020 at 10 a.m.

The meeting ended at 15:35 p.m.