
Report to: North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool

Date: 7 October 2019

Subject: **Climate Emergency Evidence Base**

Author(s): Noel Collings, Policy Officer

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To gain approval for the allocation of £100,000 from the North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool for the project Climate Emergency Evidence Base, to be managed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority in consultation with the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP.

2 Information

- 2.1 There are increasingly urgent calls at an international, national and local level to address the impacts of climate change and to set ambitious emission reduction targets.
- 2.2 The catalyst for these urgent calls was the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (Paris Agreement) which set out the need to keep global temperature rise to well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to keep the rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- 2.3 The Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) further enhanced the need to act, setting out the impacts of global warming above 1.5°C.
- 2.4 In light of the Paris Agreement and IPCC Special Report and the need to address the impacts of climate change, a large number of local authorities across the country have declared climate emergencies, including 9 of the 13 local authorities that make up North and West Yorkshire. The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Combined Authority) has also declared a climate emergency. The UK Government has also declared a climate emergency.

National, regional and local targets

- 2.5 The UK Government has recently strengthened its emission reduction target enshrined in the Climate Change Act. The Act now requires the UK to be net-

zero¹ greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (the previous target was an 80 percent reduction in emissions by 2050).

- 2.6 The Leeds City Region has strengthened its emission reduction target, and several local authorities have set their own emission reduction targets e.g. Leeds and York (zero-carbon by 2030).

Climate Emergency Evidence Base

- 2.7 Addressing the climate emergency will require all sectors and society to reduce emissions to virtually zero. In order to deliver change at the pace and scale which is necessary, there is a need to increase knowledge, understanding and capacity across North and West Yorkshire.
- 2.8 As such there is a clear need to provide support and assistance to local authorities to enable them to begin to deliver against their climate emergencies and various targets.
- 2.9 The Climate Emergency Evidence Base ask to the Business Rates Pool for North and West Yorkshire would:
- Act to strengthen regional and local understanding of where local authorities should be focussing their resources to achieve the largest emission savings.
 - Facilitate the delivery of interventions which will enable local authorities to address the climate emergency.
 - Enable delivery to be accelerated in line with the urgency of needing to act.
- 2.10 The project would utilise £100,000 of Business Rates Pool funding for consultancy work to help local authorities to make decisions and implement interventions that would address the climate emergency.
- 2.11 The project would also enable a collaborative approach to be taken to addressing the climate emergency across North and West Yorkshire, achieving economies of scale and maximising the efficiency of the existing collective resource.
- 2.12 While subject to further consultation with local authorities, the initial options for work to be funded through this project are:
- North and West Yorkshire Emission Reduction Pathways
 - Large-Scale Solar PV Constraints Study

¹ Net-zero requires deep reductions in emissions, with any remaining sources offset by removals of emissions from the atmosphere e.g. by afforestation. Net emissions, after accounting for removals, must be reduced by 100 percent, to zero.

- Public Sector as Market Makers, including procurement guidance and mechanisms
 - Local Authority emission baselines and interventions
 - Tree Planting and Peatland Recovery Project Pipeline
- 2.13 Each of the proposed projects outlined above would help to support delivery against the climate emergency, whether this is through the development of a more robust evidence base on which to base decisions, or the identification of interventions that could be implemented by local authorities.
- 2.14 £100,000 will not fund all of the projects fully. Therefore Members of the Pool are asked to indicate which of the projects should be prioritised. Officers will then work to refine the preferred proposals.
- 2.15 More details on the proposal can be found in **Appendix 1**.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To approve the allocation of £100,000 from the North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for the North and West Yorkshire Climate Emergency Evidence Base.
- 3.2 To express any preferences for prioritising the proposed projects in the event that the funding is insufficient for all of them.
- 3.3 To endorse the proposed governance arrangements outlined in Appendix 1.

4 Appendices

Appendix 1 – North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool 2019-20
Proforma – Climate Emergency Evidence Base.