

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Monday, 13th January, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor N Walshaw in the Chair

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

33 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

34 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

35 Late Items

There were no formal late items. However, some supplementary information was published and circulated in relation to Item 9 - The Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury – September to November 2019 (Minute 41 refers.)

36 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

37 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K Groves, with no substitute in attendance.

38 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held 23 October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

39 Open Forum

A member of the public, Drusilla Long, addressed the Committee. Ms Long raised concerns regarding Council plans to build a Parkway Station and associated highway linkages to Leeds Bradford Airport and the impact of increased air travel on climate change. Ms Long then read out a statement on behalf of Nick Hodgkinson, also questioning the Council plans in relation to the Airport and suggesting that the Council defers the decision to build a rail station and highway linkages until air travel becomes carbon neutral. Mr Hodgkinson also repeated his request from the previous

meeting - 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.

A member of the public, Keith Whittaker, addressed the Committee. Mr Whittaker stated that the airport expansion is fundamentally incompatible with achieving zero carbon targets until or unless new technologies can make flying carbon neutral, and suggested that the Council should not facilitate additional surface access plans. Mr Whittaker repeated the request from Mr Hodgkinson in relation to advising the Chair of the Core Cities Group, and also urged the Committee to lobby central government to impose a frequent flyer levy.

A representative of Our Future Leeds, David Barns, addressed the Committee. In reference to the 7th January 2020 Executive Board report titled 'Climate Emergency Update', Mr Barns thanked officers and councillors for the steps taken so far to address the climate emergency. However, Mr Barns did not consider the action taken to be adequate in reducing carbon emissions at the rate required to meet the 2030 carbon neutral target. In reference to the 7th January 2020 Executive Board report titled 'Proposal for Woodland Creation', Mr Barns stated that although Our Future Leeds supports tree planting projects, it should be recognised that such projects should not be relied upon to offset aviation emissions, and are only valuable in addition to every other measure required.

Councillor M Shahzad arrived at 10:15 a.m. during discussion of this item.

40 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:

Biodiversity & Food Production

Members were advised that the group had considered methods to accelerate tree planting to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Input from external partners and officers from planning, asset management and parks and countryside has helped steer the debate and the group has established two key work streams:

- 1) A strategic piece of work to identify how to significantly increase canopy cover in the longer term (primarily through the White Rose Forest) and
- 2) Establishing a better process to let councillors and the community identify and lead smaller opportunities.

Planning, Buildings and Energy

To date, Members were advised that the group have considered the national planning policy context in relation to climate action, the existing supportive local policies and sustainable design guidance for Leeds, and the potential for these to be strengthened further. An outcome was noted as the emerging development of a training programme in this area for Plans Panel Members and relevant officers. The

group has also considered the current consultation by Government on energy efficiency standards in building regulations, and is feeding into the Council's imminent response, as well as key issues on which Government should be lobbied if net zero targets are to be met.

The working group has also called for the establishment of a Developer Forum, with the first meeting held on 17th December 2019, to help understand the industry's perspective and to promote examples of best practice and the business case for sustainable development.

Transport

Members were advised the transport working group had considered contribution of heavy goods vehicles to the city's emissions, with input from the Institute for transport Studies at the University of Leeds, to develop a set of high level transport principles.

41 The Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury - September to November 2019

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that introduced the Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury report and recommendations.

The Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury: Launch event report was published as supplementary information to the report.

The following were in attendance:

- Professor Andy Gouldson, Chair of Leeds Climate Commission and Citizens' Jury Oversight Panel
- Paul Chatterton, Project Manager of Citizens' Jury, Leeds Climate Commission

The representatives from Leeds Climate Commission provided Members with an overview following the completion of the Citizens' Jury project focused around carbon reduction, and showed a short film depicting members of the jury stating the recommendations and their expectations of organisations, including the Council. It was suggested that further jury projects could be facilitated, to focus other areas such as on climate resilience and / or 'greener' businesses, whilst nonetheless recognising that finance remains a considerable challenge with the total cost of the project amounting to £35k.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Communication strategies.* Members recognised the representative sample used, and queried the approach moving forward to reaching a diverse population of people in Leeds to ensure that the whole population is educated and informed around the cause and impact of climate change. Members were advised that the number of people who are sceptical of climate change is reducing due to the compelling scientific evidence base, but recognised that substantial resistance to prioritising the climate agenda continues.

Representatives present noted the reach of the Big Leeds Climate Conversation (BLCC), particularly for underrepresented groups, and suggested for more large scale communication and engagement Council-run projects to be organised.

- *Bus ownership models.* There was some discussion around the recommendation for bus ownership to be taken back within public control. In response to a comment about the political relevance of the recommendation, Members were advised that the recommendation was formulated and voted for unanimously by the jury following a number of presentations, which had all been made available online for transparency.
- *Housing retrofit.* Whilst recognising the need for privately owned and rented housing to be retrofitted to increase ensure energy efficiency and affordable warmth, as recommended by the jury, Members noted the financial support required from central government and challenges experienced during previous lobbying activities.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked members of the jury for their commitment and personal time dedicated to the project.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Citizens' Jury report and recommendations be noted;
- b) That the Committee incorporate responses to the Citizens' Jury recommendations into future reports, with the first response forming part of the report to Full Council on 25 March 2020.

42 Executive Board 7th January 2020 - Climate Emergency Update

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that introduced the Climate Emergency Update report submitted to the Executive Board meeting on 7th January 2020.

The following were in attendance:

- Polly Cook, Chief Officer for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality
- Chad Newton, Senior Communication and Marketing Officer, Resources and Housing

Officer present provided a presentation including a summary of the key findings of the Big Leeds Climate Conversation (BLCC), and the steps taken to address concerns raised by respondents as well as some of the matters raised by the Citizens' Jury as set out in the report.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Gender breakdown of survey respondents.* Members queried whether the higher response rate from women than men for the BLCC was a commonality of surveys generally. Members were informed that Council surveys usually receive higher responses from men, however also that some research

suggests that women are generally more concerned about the impact of climate change.

- *Volunteer tree planting.* In response to a query, Members were advised that a tree planting strategy was in the early stages of development, that would aim to enable private and public sector organisations to manage their own resource effectively. Members suggested that planting on road verges could be 'quick wins' for increasing biodiversity in the short term whilst larger schemes are developed.

In relation to the summary of asks for government to support the city in achieving its Net Zero Ambition, Members were asked to provide any amendments. It was suggested that a more specific eco-funding ask be formulated, with particular reference to reinvigorating microgeneration schemes.

RESOLVED – That the report and appendices, along with Members comments, be noted.

Councillor D Blackburn left the meeting at 12:15 p.m. during discussion of this item.

43 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place 10th March 2020 at 1.00 p.m.