

CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 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,
O Newton, M Rafique, M Shahzad and
E Thomson

9 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tudor.

10 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

11 Late Items

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda however the Committee had received supplementary information entitled "Update on the Net-Zero Homes Plan - Facilitating Domestic Air Source Heat Pump Installation" in respect of Agenda Item 7 - Facilitating Domestic Air Source Heat Pump Installation.

12 Notes of the Previous Meeting

RECOMMENDED – To agree the notes of the previous consultative meeting held 5th July 2023 as a correct record.

13 Directors Update - Director of Strategy and Resources

The Director of Strategy and Resources, Mariana Pexton, provided an update and presentation to the Committee on how the Directorate continues to respond to the Climate Emergency through the work of individual Service areas. Although responsibility for the Net Zero agenda had moved to the Communities, Housing & Environment (CHE) Directorate, Strategy and Resources maintained a focus on working against climate change through organisational leadership and co-ordinated professional services to support colleagues and delivery of a wide range of front line services to the public.

The Committee received an update on each of the Service areas within the Directorate, which included the following:

Legal & Democratic Services and Financial Services – provide advice and guidance on major developments, ensure meetings and decisions are made in line with the Council's Net Zero ambitions, advise on Capital and Revenue schemes and ensure schemes are sighted on the Net Zero ambition.

Procurement – ensures procurement processes include sustainability and social value.

Integrated Digital Services (IDS) – instigated the move to Cloud Storage which had a significant impact on the Councils footprint, ensure partners also have strong Net Zero credentials, work to rationalise the software applications utilised by Leeds City Council (LCC), reduce infrastructure and recycle hardware/kit.

Human Resources and Shared Services – to continue to develop the Carbon Literacy Strategy training and to review the Grey Fleet car use policy which commenced prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strategy and Performance – facilitated the LCC Climate Adaptation and Resilience workshop in December 2022 which led to preparedness for the 2023 heatwave.

Civic Enterprise Leeds (CEL) – with 3000 staff, the service had perhaps the most opportunities to drive carbon reduction:

- Cleaning/Facilities Management/Passenger Transport – using technology to aid efficient routing and a fleet of electric vehicles.
- Leeds Building Services – procurement is focused on sustainability and officers are trained to operate new technology.
- Fleet Services – 24% of the fleet is electric and procurement of electric refuse vehicles.
- Catering Leeds – A service of 1000 staff, providing meals to schools and residential placements which now include ‘meat free days’ and plant based food alternatives.

During discussions with Members, the following matters were considered:

- Electric vehicle charging for people with Motability vehicles living in LCC accommodation – this fell within the remit of CHE, but work was ongoing to review the LCC estate.
- Electric vehicle charging points had been installed at the homes of 21 LCC staff to charge the electric vehicles they used for work.
- Concerns regarding the impact of wood burners in smoke free zones.
- Leeds Anchors involvement in the procurement sub group with a focus on net zero.
- Consideration on how to progress the Carbon literacy training throughout LCC.
- The Committee was keen to be involved in any future review of the Corporate Travel Plan and grey fleet policy and it was agreed that this issue would be considered by a CEAC Working Group during 2024.

RECOMMENDED:

- a) The Committee thanked the Director for attending the Committee and providing an update.
- b) To note the contents of the discussions on the presentation and update.

14 **Open Forum**

Zero Carbon Energy Markets – Mr J Illingworth provided the Committee with an overview of areas of concern which he felt hindered the city’s zero carbon ambition:

- The impact of high demand in dense residential areas, such as issues connecting high-rise blocks to ground-source pumps.

- Issues relating to the use of hot and cold Heat Networks and how problems could be reduced if each individual heat pump serving one property is networked with the other local pumps, so spreading the load more evenly.
- Water-source heat pumps and the likelihood that the practice of pumping water from the coast or estuaries will extend further inland leading to competition for water stores and increases in land value on well-connected sites.
- The future of the Leeds PIPES scheme and the limitations of the scheme in delivering the Net Zero ambition.

RECOMMENDED - The Committee thanked Mr Illingworth for his attendance and noted the contents of the presentation.

15 Working Groups Update

The Chairs of the Working Groups (WG) provided an update on the progress of the working groups since the last Committee meeting:

Economy & Finance – Councillor Carlill provided an overview of discussions held on the Climate Finance report presented to the July Executive Board.

The WG also identified future items for consideration which included:

- sustainable procurement,
- discussions with LCC financial partners,
- an update on skills, specifically on whether the workforce had the appropriate skills to support delivery of net zero.

Biodiversity, Food & Waste – Councillor Anderson provided highlights of discussions on community growing which had identified that the city did not have a consistent approach to recording how land is used or mapping of LCC assets. The WG supported the introduction of a standard agreement for use between community groups/external organisations for the use of land and/or assets. The WG also identified the following matters for future consideration:

- the need for improved communications for local residents to better explain the measures being taken by the Council to achieve net zero,
- Consideration of how surplus home grown produce could be acquired and distributed to areas of need,
- Whether Community Infrastructure Levy funding could be used to acquire land for allotment use,
- Consideration of a “share my garden” initiative.

RECOMMENDED: That the verbal updates from the CEAC Working Groups be noted.

16 Update on the Net Zero Homes Plan - Facilitating Domestic Air Source Heat Pump Installation

The Committee received a discussion paper and associated supplementary document to support discussions on the Net Zero Homes Plan which aims to insulate homes, install low carbon heating systems and retro-fit renewables in homes.

In providing the Committee with a presentation, George Munson, Senior Project Manager, Sustainable Energy and Air Quality (SEAQ) Team highlighted the work currently being undertaken by the SEAQ Team with partners:

- By the end of 2023, the partnership established between Octopus Energy, Lloyds and Leeds City Council aimed to create a one stop shop for the 'able to pay' sector.
- Over time, and with the support of Green Homes Finance Accelerator, creating a property linked finance product to provide a means to invest in homes without the need for upfront costs.
- Engaging and motivating people to choose low carbon retrofits.
- Upscaling area renewal investment, using social housing investment to kick start work on all tenures in neighbouring homes.
- Improving the planning framework and engaging with the industry to ensure new homes reach net zero standards.
- Zoning the city, to indicate the most suitable fabric investments and heating solutions by neighbourhood.
- Expanding green jobs, skills and supply chains to meet demand.

The presentation also highlighted the following:

- Residents were encouraged to install Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) when their existing heating system required replacement, however it was recognised that there were issues which slowed the process, including;
 - the need to obtain agreement from the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) before making the switch.
 - the approach to planning was not consistent across local Planning Authorities. Some ASHPs require planning permission (due to noise, size and location) and it can take up to 8 weeks to process a planning application.
- The establishment of a Local Development Order (LDO) could help address some planning barriers, but this would need to be carefully considered and could only go ahead following public consultation, which would incur officer time and some expense.

During discussions the following matters were considered:

- The need to ensure homes are properly insulated.
- Education was key to highlight to residents the advantages of low carbon alternatives for warm homes which would encourage changes to lifestyle choices and on the proper use of the pumps to maximise the benefits.
- Design, size and specification of ASHPs to meet the need of individual homes.
- The need for a suitably skilled workforce in the supply chain and future maintenance of the equipment.
- The benefit of sharing experience with neighbouring authorities
- In response to some Members concerns that implementation of ASHPs now would mean that they would be obsolete in just a few years time because the technology would advance quickly, the Committee

received assurance that Leeds was in a strong position to remove the barriers to ASHP uptake as some ASHPs are made by gas boiler makers who are already familiar to the domestic heating market, there is a national move towards heat pumps and importantly, European countries have been using ASHP for some time so ASHP are past the first iteration of equipment.

- Support for the LDO and the opportunity for Leeds to take the lead on this approach.
- The impact of the size of domestic units and associated noise in both rural and urban settings and consideration of these issues in the Council's own planning policies through the Development Plan Panel.
- In terms of expanding green jobs, skills and supply chains to meet demand, the suggestion that the WYCA Skills Sub Committee be involved in this work was noted.
- That Octopus or WYCA be approached to see if funding can help support the development of the LDO.

In response to the questions posed the Committee gave the following responses:

- The Committee agreed that ASHP were an issue in Leeds City Council,
- The Committee supported the introduction of an LDO,
- The Committee agreed that the LDO should cover the issues of distance/boundaries; size and noise regarding domestic installation, and
- The Committee agreed that an LDO should cover the whole of the city,

RECOMMENDED –

- a) That the contents of the presentation and discussions be noted.
- b) That the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee support the development of a new Local Development Order to remove planning barriers to the deployment of heat pumps, subject to resource availability.

17 Update on Tree Planting Initiatives

The Committee received a report and presentation providing an update on tree planting initiatives undertaken by the Woodland Creation Team in response to the 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration which set a target of achieving net zero emissions for the city by 2030 which woodland creation and tree planting will contribute towards.

Tony Stringwell, Parks Operations Manager provided the Committee with a presentation on the following key issues:

- In February 2020 funding and commitment made to the creation of 50 hectares of woodland tree canopy over 25 years, which equates to 5.8 million trees.
- Trees are grown in the Arium, the LCC Horticultural Glasshouse, which provides opportunity for officers to upskill to deliver the initiative and for trainees to test and acquire skills. The team is also considering how the Arium could be used to support tree growth and self sufficiency.

- Public engagement and volunteer involvement was key to achieving the target, with 800 volunteers registered to support the tree planting initiatives.
- In 2020 a commitment was made to the White Rose Forest as a strategic partnership to provide tree canopy right across the city region.
- 74 sites had been planted in Year 1 of the initiative, 82 in Year 2, 73 in Year 3. For the 2023/24 tree planting season, 27 whip planting sites and 54 standard tree sites had been identified.
- The team revisits and reviews sites previously delivered to ensure the trees are thriving and to learn lessons from sites which have been successful and those which have failed.
- The team also works with the Trees 4 Streets charity and 49 expressions of interest have been received.

During discussions the following issues were considered:

- The need to ensure consultation with Ward and Parish/Town Councillors – One Member reported that Rawdon Littlemoor had been presented as a suitable site, however this site had Village Green status. Members noted that consultation with them was key in identifying sites and their support for identified sites was sought, particularly in assisting with providing information to residents and getting to the position where residents were comfortable with the proposals in their area.
- The need to be aware of other works which may impact on the tree initiative – One Member reported that decarbonisation works at a Leisure Centre had resulted in whips being removed.
- The preference for developing smaller sites in some areas. The challenge of identifying suitable sites to create urban woodland areas was acknowledged. The team was working with LCC Asset Management to identify sites and review the LCC agricultural portfolio as well.
- Consideration of the safety of women and girls in greenspaces and parks and whether the team could link with the work undertaken by the Combined Authority women's safety. The Committee received assurance that those concerns were being factored in to the parks and greenspace strategy. Collaboration work between the LCC teams working on that agenda will aim to mitigate the feelings of claustrophobia and vulnerability from tree canopy in greenspaces and parks and to also maintain sightlines.
- The importance of acknowledging that some sites had failed and developing plans to address that, learning from successful and failing sites, and the failure rate across the city. The Committee heard that the team are committed to ensuring that the woodlands do establish, and continually revisit sites to learn from successes and failures but it was

acknowledged that some sites will experience higher levels of failure than others for a variety of reasons.

- Whips and standard trees are planted across the city; using whips to establish woodlands is industry best practice and one Member requested information be provided on an area of successful planting so the Committee could see an area of best practice.
- The Committee received assurance that the 25 year target for woodland creation would be met – woodland takes three years to establish, the key is identifying land and reviewing planting undertaken.
- Risks to delivering sites – as the initiative continues, it will become more difficult to identify suitable sites. The initial round of sites focussed on sites owned or in the control of LCC, including land not vested in Parks & Greenspace and assets rented out for grazing, or land under control of Housing Services, with a request for private landowners to come forward with any sites they may be willing to utilise for woodland creation. The Committee noted that the White Rose Forest included 36 Ha of tree planting on non-LCC land. The Committee also noted that work with Asset Management was ongoing and would take into consideration land used for or earmarked for agriculture land/tenancies and solar farms. The team would also look to improve marginal gains, such as hedgerow planting and extending existing hedgerows and link with large scale works such as the East Leeds Orbital Road where extensive tree planting had been achieved.
- Working with local groups – One Member suggested liaising with local groups, such as the Chevin Running Club, who were keen to support/fund tree planting rather than provide participants with running vests. Additionally, linking into the Climate Action Leeds Hubs was suggested to establish additional volunteers for the initiative.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Tony for his presentation and reiterated the request for Members support in identifying tree planting sites in their wards and ways to engage with residents in the localities in a way that constituents find useful.

RECOMMENDED - To note the update and associated presentation on the Woodland Creation Initiative.

18 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RECOMMENDED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Monday 16th October 2023 at 2.00pm