

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Monday, 22nd July, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor K Dye in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, E Bromley,
P Carlill, R Downes, N Harrington, A Rae,
M Rafique, A Rontree, M Shahzad and
P Stables

12 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the inspection of documents.

13 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The agenda contained no exempt information.

14 Late Items

No late items of business were added to the agenda, however, supplementary information was circulated to Members prior to the start of the meeting. This was the report and appendix for Agenda item 8 – Leeds Food Strategy Update – report on progress.

15 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

16 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O Newton.

17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th of June 2024, be approved as a true and correct record.

18 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The following matters arising were raised:

Minute 7

The information regarding social worker electric vehicle trials and schools and other relevant sites climate adaptability plans, referenced in the Directors Update of Children's and Families that was presented to the Committee on the 18th of March 2024, had still not been received and was to be followed up again.

Minute 9

The figure for the customers on the waiting list for the Leeds PIPES rollout, referenced on page 10 of the agenda pack, was agreed to be provided back to Members. This had not yet been received and was agreed to be pursued.

Minute 10

An update from the Deputy Chair of the West Yorkshire Transport Committee, West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) was provided in relation to the WYCA local

transport plan scoping consultation, referenced on page 12 of the agenda pack. It was outlined that the consultation had been delayed due to the General Election and the sensitive nature of pre-election periods. The consultation had opened on the 15th of July 2024 and local residents and interested parties were encouraged to have their say on the initial proposals.

(Councillor M Rafique and Councillor A Rae joined the meeting during consideration of this item)

19 Open Forum

No matters were raised under the Open Forum item.

The Chair encouraged suggestions from Members for future submissions to showcase climate action work. It was noted that Horsforth Climate Action had been contacted and intended to provide a future submission to the Open Forum.

20 Leeds Food Strategy Update

This report provided the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee with an update on the progress of the Leeds Food Strategy. The Senior Project Manager, Climate, Energy & Green Spaces team, attended the meeting to provide a presentation to Members on the Strategy and the work undertaken since the Committee last considered the Food Strategy on 27th November 2023.

The Chair introduced the item, noting a previous update had been provided to the Committee on the 27th of November 2023. The Leeds Food Strategy covered a vast scope of topics and issues and Mission 3 – Sustainability and Resilience was most relevant to the Committee's remit.

Andrew White, Senior Project Manager, presented the report and highlighted the following information:

- The was the third update provided to the Committee as Officers had also attended a Working Group. The presentation was to particularly focus and follow up on discussions from the 27th of November 2023 meeting.
- A report for the strategy was due for submission and consideration by the Executive Board in September 2024. The contents of the presentation the Committee were to focus on key areas of progress and challenges that required consideration, as well as providing an overview of the three missions; 1. Health and Wellbeing, 2. Food Security and Economy, 3. Sustainability and Resilience, which linked to the Council's three pillars.
- The background was outlined as, from 2006 to 2010 a Food Strategy was in place, at a Council meeting in September 2014 Feed Leeds had made a deputisation and Public Health had been tasked with building partnerships, the Leeds Food Partnership was established in 2017, a National Food Strategy was launched in 2020, following a consultation, the Leeds Food Strategy had been approved by the Executive Board in 2023 and this report was the draft annual update.
- The aim was for the strategy to run long term, in line with the Climate Emergency Declaration and the carbon neutrality by 2030 ambition. The associated targets were also long term and still in development; the revised document was to be published following submission to Executive Board.

- The strategy was in partnership with Food Wise Leeds and there were seven internal Officers working on the strategy from Public Health, Financial Inclusion and Climate, Energy and Green Spaces, and also a steering group managed the implementation of the three missions.
- Since November 2023 wording revisions had been made to aid clarity for the strategy's purpose and the original 15 objectives had been reduced to 12. There were 16 key performance indicators (KPI) which were still in development and linked in with other Council services.
- There were four objectives, with related actions to support the work on health and wellbeing, as part of mission 1.
- There were four objectives, with related actions to support the work on food security and economy, as part of mission 2.
- There were four objectives, with related actions to support the work on sustainability and resilience, as part of mission 3, this mission was the most specific to the work of the Committee.
- Areas of progress for mission 3 were noted as, raising the profile of nutritious, climate friendly food options and support for community growing initiatives, including work alongside Incredible Edible. Work for the 'right to grow' initiative was ongoing to understand implementation options.
- Limiting food waste, including a hierarchy of waste model, was integral to the strategy; utilising food waste linked to a number of partners. Work on the waste strategy was ongoing, with issues of brown bin provision and capacity around the city and quality standard requirements noted. A Council catering mark award was in development with a public consultation having been conducted.
- Challenges to the strategy's implementation were limited influence on supply chains, decreased funding for Food Wise, limited engagement methods, staffing issues and accuracy of carbon calculations.

During discussions the Committee discussed the following:

- The wording for KPI 5, which related to food environment, was queried as the measure may not be quantifiable and may be better as a percentile measurement. In response, this KPI had been developed alongside local planning policy to address obesity and food related ill health, particularly to reduce the availability of unhealthy takeaway foods around schools but the KPI was to be refined prior to its use.
- The material consideration that planning decision makers would use to restrict hot food takeaways on a class usage basis and a map identifying takeaways was available to scope levels on concentration in a given area. Further information was agreed to be provided back to Members to expand on this matter. There was an aspiration for this guidance to be applied to all areas, and not just focus on secondary schools and inner city areas.
- Ward Members could work with planning and licensing to understand concentration and provision of hot food takeaways in their area and could attempt to utilise Cumulative Impact Area (CIA) policy where necessary.
- As other Local Authorities had similar planning policies in place, outcome data was noted to be of interest to Committee Members, however data was not yet available.

- KPI15 related to internal procurement where the Council held strong influence whereas KPI9 related more to business advice and support, where there was less strength of influence. It was noted that KPI15 was currently guideline for Council procurement processes, covering a vast scope of contracts and commissions, with monitoring framework in place. KPI9 was for businesses supported by development services in order to encourage better sustainability practises and stringent performance monitoring.
- For KPI7, referring to the percentage of children eligible for free school meals, it was clarified that this indicator was specific to mission 1, Health and Wellbeing. Data indicated that eligibility and take up were fairly low, but further breakdown of data was anticipated when the report was submitted to the Executive Board.
- It was noted that the KPIs lacked baseline data that can be measured against, which was required for sound progress monitoring and accountability. In order to track the three missions of the strategy, there was existing data, but the methodology required further scrutiny.
- A sensible approach to limiting takeaways was required as it was dependent on the type of food and there was also the option to use a delivery apps to order unhealthy food from outside of the immediate locality. The economic implications, given this rise in the gig economy over recent years was discussed. These issues were considered to be more within the planning system's sphere of influence.
- WYCA were outlined to be working on a similar agenda, and although work was somewhat linked, the strategy focused on the Council's remit.
- The focus on internal procurement processes was supported, however, the ability to influence sustainability measures for commercial businesses and alternative providers was queried. This was done through providing information and signposting to climate friendly options, reducing waste and understanding the carbon footprint of food, as well as the work towards Leeds being a sustainable destination.
- Work to connect local farmers to local businesses had been explored but contact had been limited and economic interests and the dynamic nature of procurement raised challenges. Members suggestions were encouraged to connect the service with local growers and farmers.
- To promote the right to grow initiative, more information had been added to the Council's website, supported by Incredible Edible.
- As creating community gardens and local food networks required time, effort and training, the availability of support packages was limited due to Council's financial constraints but links to relevant organisations and charities were made.
- Incredible Edible was considered an umbrella organisation that could support community growing initiatives and provide advice and support to then allow new organisations to become sustainable. There was an issue regarding future funding plans to support these models as previously secured lottery funding had come to an end. Community Committee funding was noted to be a potential option for funding support.
- Community growing initiatives could be linked to community events and food banks to support social connections. The Council and University of Leeds had help discussions on this topic which fed into a food aid network map. The

allotment development plan and WYCA climate grants were considered appropriate vehicles for improving project links.

- There were stark social, education, health and wellbeing opportunities within community growing initiatives and existing networks were to be celebrated, which may encourage more projects to come to fruition.
- Using brown bins for food waste was problematic as there were associated service supply, infrequent collection and financial issues; expectations needed to be managed. It was noted that the domestic food waste plans had been set by the previous Government and funding was available and further information and developments were anticipated.
- A waste strategy report was due for submission to the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board where information on the logistics of waste collection, in support of new plans, were anticipated.
- To reduce food waste, freeze drying or fermenting seasonal foods was suggested as a potential option, which was agreed to be explored. Discussions had been held with the University of Leeds to identify where food waste could be utilised to create other products such as juice or bodywash.
- Methods to encourage composting were funding dependent but Food Wise were running a community composting project. It was noted that this would be particularly beneficial in outer areas.

The Chair summarised discussions, noting, that some discussion points would be interesting to bring forward for consideration at Working Group meetings, such as procurement, waste strategy and the KPIs relating to sustainability. All Director's updates scheduled for the 2024/25 municipal year had been requested to focus on procurement models.

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

21 Update on work to implement and update the Leeds Flood Risk Management Strategy

The report of the Executive Manager, Flood Risk and Climate Resilience, City Development provided an update on the implementation of the Leeds Flood Risk Management Strategy. This update examined the implementation of the Strategy over the last 12 months and provided a summary of the measures that are set out for the years ahead.

Jonathon Moxon, the Executive Manager, Flood Risk and Climate Resilience, City Development, outlined the following information to Members:

- The strategy was developed and covered by the Highways and Transportation department within City Development but was governed by the Food and Water Management Act, which required a Flood Risk Management Strategy.
- The strategy had been considered at the Scrutiny Board for Investment and Inclusive Growth on the 28th of February 2024, as a statutory update and was brought to the Committee annually with the increasing role to address climate resilience. Flood risk was the most significant climate change risk posed in Leeds.

- Globally and within the UK, extreme weather events were becoming more prevalent. Floods and droughts as well as the unpredictable nature of storms had increased. In 2023 global temperatures were 1°C higher than average temperatures measured from 1850-1900.
- Data for weather events in Leeds over 2023 was outlined, with a stark increase in the number of storms and heavy rainfall. Rainfall data was available at a street level but was generally presented at a catchment level. The West and Northwest of Leeds had experienced the highest levels of rain over the last year.
- There was a dedicated team working on incidents and impacts, some, including contractors, were on call on a 24/7 basis. Around 190 hotspots were managed around the city to protect vital infrastructure and communities.
- Unprecedented high levels of rain fall impacted farmers and growers and sports and recreation facilities. The West Yorkshire Flood Programme worked with sports clubs to advice of methods, such as soil health and drainage measures, to alleviate the pressure of floods and high rainfall.
- A map was displayed that was used to track locations where incidents had occurred, with ten categories for incidents informing monitoring framework.
- Severe rainfall on the 6th of May 2024 had begun in Northwest Leeds, with the average rainfall for the month occurring in one hour. This had serious implications at Horsforth Railway Station and Low Lane, with the road being closed by Yorkshire Water to repair surfaces and drainage systems. The impact was largely due to capacity issues of complex, integrated sewer and drainage pipes.
- Different drainage and sewer systems were the responsibility of a range of Authorities, with better integration models required to limit future impacts. Impact on highways was a major consideration for flood management and response.
- A statutory role of the service was consultation responses for planning applications which was a strong tool for adaptability and surface water management, however, resource limitations were noted for technical appraisals. Not all Local Authorities followed this model and the number of planning applications in Leeds was significant.
- Leeds Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS) were developed under delegated powers from the Environment Agency and focused on main river schemes and were considered a good, consistent delivery model.
- Leeds had delivered FAS1, with notable alleviation and flood defence projects completed or in development at Otley, Farnley Beck, Wortley and Meanwood, Potternewton and Wharfedale.
- The Farnley Beck scheme cost was approximately a £1.5million investment and focused on de-culverting.
- The Sheepscar Beck scheme was due to be completed in Autumn 2024, with funding provided by a range of parties which had been complicated as there were over 1,000 owners of the beck who owned adjacent land; repairs were also complex as the original brickwork was bespoke and some of the beck was in a conservation area.
- The cost for the first stage of the Wortley Beck scheme was to be approximately £20million, with substantial work required. A number of options were under consideration, including a large storage reservoir.

- The goal of the strategy was to target the areas of greatest risk. Funding challenges were noted with reliance on partner and external funding acquisition which required business cases and monitoring of changes in grant funding rules.
- A video link was shared to Members to watch outside the meeting, which detailed the experience of flood victims in Otley and the difference a flood defence scheme made for a community.
- An asset management team monitored completed flood defence infrastructure, this included technical contracted workers and innovative kit.
- An operational base was located at Stourton, including an incident room to monitor flood incidents as well as storing critical equipment and spares.
- Communication and engagement work was through campaigns, community events and there was an information board to provide clarity on the scheme in Otley.
- Leeds FAS was done in a phased approach, with FAS2 nearing completion which was to provide a defence against a 1:200 year flood event, which would be comparable to the Boxing Day 2015 flood. A lot of the infrastructure were considered active structures which required intense monitoring.
- Calverley Flood Storage, and other nearby works, were developed in partnership with Bradford Council and protected the railway line near Kirkstall Forge.
- An animation was shown to Members to display how Calverley Flood Storage operated, holding back up to 1million meters² of water from housing and infrastructure and flooding into areas closer to the city centre. The work included tree planting, a large embankment and automated gates. Stringent carbon targets had been set against the scheme as carbon mitigation saved money in the long term and also the effects of responding to severe flood events had high carbon output.
- Nature based solutions, including, soil aeration, hedge and tree planting, glass conversion, buffer strips and earth bunds, complemented engineering works by reducing water flow. By 2027, 750,000 trees were to be planted, in partnership with the Forest Association.
- Long term flood risk protection measures were the development of the Aire Resilience Company, in partnership with the Rivers Trust, aspiring to become a legal entity, leveraging private business investment.

During the discussions the following matters were considered:

- Partnership working models and funding allocation to bring forward schemes was queried, in response it was outlined that the service held responsibility and led the Leeds FAS, with powers granted by the Environment Agency. The programme board involved the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and Network Rail who all contribute towards funding, with staff secondment arrangements between agencies.
- Funding arrangements were mixed, through Environment Agency grants, CIL allocation and WYCA business growth. Projects over £100million required approval from the Treasury.
- The river Wharfe catchment began near Tadcaster, determined by the Environment Agency, and the Council had tied into this model, with developments at Harewood Bridge and in Otley and also participated in the

Wharfedale Flooded Communities programme to determine where further infrastructure was required, as well as involvement with the Wharfe Flood Partnership.

- Beaver introduction projects were in discussion, with an event planned in September 2024 to discuss options with relevant partners. Introduction was being considered in the Aire valley at Broughton Hall in Skipton.
- Difficulties contacting Yorkshire Water to resolve issues were noted and whether Elected Members could have a direct contact for senior officers was queried. In response it was outlined that a phone call was required for Yorkshire Water to log issues and Members were welcome to email the Flood Risk Management team to pass on information. Improving lines of communication were raised at partnership meetings.
- Following the flooding in Horsforth on the 6th of May 2024, proposals for improving drainage, gullies and grates to limit future impacts were complicated as surface water fed into combined sewers and may cause issues elsewhere. A solution was suggested as consideration of where excess water will travel to in order to manage the separation of systems. This issue was agreed to be discussed outside of the meeting.
- Although it was expected for the West and Northwest of Leeds to experience higher rainfall, given its geography and topography, the level of rainfall had been unprecedented in comparison to previous data. The reason for this was unclear but it was suspected to be changing weather patterns caused by climate change.
- The 1:200 year flood incident measure was explained as the likelihood of an incident occurring based against recent data and the measures needed to be in place to limit impact. It was noted that standards and measures were changing due to the cascading effect of climate change and a more dynamic approach was needed. The Boxing Day 2015 flood was considered a 1:200 year flood incident.
- Funding for the Aire Resilience Company and maintaining future nature based solution provision was not yet secured and would have to be sought through private and public funding streams. Funding for this mitigation work was hoped to become independent and long term but there were no set mechanisms for accessing funding. This topic was to be examined further by the Committee through a future item or at a Working Group.
- The services input into the planning process for new developments in areas considered high risk, was providing technical appraisals for flood risk assessments, also considering any impact of proposed tree removal.
- Under the Land Drainage Act, removing trees within 9 meters of watercourse required permission from the relevant authority, which in Leeds would be the Council. Any unconsented removal of trees was enforced by the Environment Act, overseen by Environmental Enforcement.
- It was confirmed that the Otley scheme was based against a 1:25 flood event model, the overall cost and the works required for added protection was to have a large impact on resident amenity as high walls were needed. There was the ability to revisit plans at this location, and also measures that could be implemented upstream, as there were wide implications if severe flooding occurred in the future.

- Existing flood defence infrastructure was thought to have reduced the impact of high rain fall and the occurrence of severe flooding. The city centre scheme had been used nine times since its completion. A communication had been sent to Elected Members in January 2024 that a serious flood could be expected which did not come to fruition likely due to both existing infrastructure and luck.
- As the Council had received blame for the flood in Horsforth in May 2024, the ongoing work of the service and the multitude of factors that lead to a flood was to be communicated back to residents, along with the fact that defences and drainage involved a wide scope of agencies.
- Some Members had visited the site at Calverley Flood Storage and it was welcome to see the bat houses that had been included in the scheme to promote wildlife.
- Better links with partners was required to provide suitable defences for businesses and communities along the river Wharfe as there was some concern raised for the lack of plans and upstream prevention measures in place. This was agreed to be reported to the Wharfe Flood Partnership.
- Members thanked the service or their significant, highly important work.

RESOLVED – That the report, along with Members comments, be noted, to help inform implementation of the Strategy and its further development to be considered at the next strategy update due to take place in 2025.

22 Date and Time of Next Meeting

As the Chair had requested to seek holding physical meetings where possible, the Governance Officer agreed to look into suitable meeting dates to be held in the Civic Hall, in consultation with Members.

A visit to the Arium was scheduled for Members, with a diary invite to be sent out in due course.

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Monday 23rd September 2024 at 9.30am.