

Executive

29 August 2019

Report of the Corporate Director of Economy and Place
Portfolio of the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change

Responding to the Council's Climate Change Motion

Summary

1. This paper provides an update to Executive on the Council's response to the declaration of a Climate Emergency, highlighting work underway and recommending approval of a set of activities to move this work forward.
2. The Council's resolution in March 2019 to declare a Climate Emergency and to set a target to become Net Carbon Neutral by 2030 was agreed almost unanimously. The motion was based on the evidence presented by the International Panel on Climate Change in (IPCC) in October 2018 that we need to be well on the way to net zero emissions by 2030 in order to avoid the disastrous consequences of exceeding 1.5°C of warming. Worldwide recognition of this had prompted declarations of a Climate Emergency by cities and organisations around the globe. These have included Leeds City Region targeting 2038, the UK targeting 2050 and Germany targeting 2054.
3. The resolution requested that an Action Plan be developed and brought back to Executive within 6 months, which this paper seeks to address.
4. This paper summarises some of the actions and steps towards environmental sustainability that have already been taken in York over recent years; suggests some of the steps that will be needed to create and implement a Carbon Reduction Plan; recognises the level of ambition and breadth of scope that will be needed to make this successful; and emphasises that learning from others, sharing our own experiences and building city wide partnerships with stakeholders and residents will be key.

Recommendations

5. The Executive is asked to:

- 1) Note the significant activities and commitments already made in respect of this agenda.

Reason: To ensure Executive are aware of work against this commitment of the council.

- 2) Approve the listed activities in Option 1 at paragraph 35.

Reason: To allow the work in response to the Climate Emergency declaration to be progressed.

Background

6. On 21 March 2019, Council approved a motion which requested Executive to:

- a. Declare a 'Climate Emergency'.
- b. Commit to a target of making York carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol).
- c. Request a report within six months setting out the immediate actions the Council will take to address this emergency and a plan to measure annual citywide progress towards meeting the 2030 target.
- d. Work with partners across the city and across the region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans and drawing on local and global best practice.
- e. Actively lobby the Government to provide the additional powers and resources needed to meet the 2030 target.

7. The challenge of becoming a net-zero carbon city should not be underestimated. Contributory changes will be required across all aspects of the council's work and will have impacts on the ways that we live, work and travel within the city. Ultimately, it will be the collective efforts of the council, residents, communities and businesses which will determine our level of success.

8. To fully understand the challenge, the first stage will be to baseline and fully understand the existing position with regards greenhouse gas

(GHG) emissions related to our city. Beyond that, we would envisage workstreams which consider:

- a. Ongoing reporting of emissions including a review of the Council's Carbon Reduction investments to date.
- b. Behavioural change to reduce consumption
- c. Infrastructure change to facilitate low- or zero-carbon living
- d. Adaptation to climate change and the resilience of our city to extreme climate events
- e. Developing the understanding of what has already been done, what has worked well here and elsewhere and the lessons we can learn.

Building on existing work

9. York has some history of taking the lead on improving environmental sustainability in certain areas including the introduction of the foot-streets and our successful Park and Ride network.
10. The Council established its own Carbon Management Programme in 2007 with plans to progressively reduce the Council's own carbon emissions. The move to the refurbished West Offices made a significant contribution to this through the use of solar panels on the roof, energy efficient heating and grey water recycling.
11. Other measures have included:
 - a. £2m programme of LED street lighting;
 - b. Solar PV installed on 541 Council houses;
 - c. Air source heat pumps installed in 57 Council houses;
 - d. A programme of cavity wall and loft insulation across the Council's housing stock;
 - e. Work with private tenants and homeowners to draw down funding from Government and regional programmes for improved energy efficiency and delivered through Better Homes Yorkshire;
 - f. Plans to use of an innovative water-source heat pump for heating in the development of the Guildhall complex;
 - g. Council support for the Treemendous initiative to plant 50,000 trees in York;
 - h. Investment in improvements to cycling infrastructure including the recent opening of the Scarborough Bridge cycle route and promotion of cycling including Cycling City status;
 - i. The i-Travel programme which includes active promotion of walking, cycling and sustainable travel options to groups and individuals.

12. The Council's Flood Risk Management Team continue to work with the Environment Agency to manage the use of the £45m Government funding programme for flood defence and mitigation measures – alongside further longer term mitigation programmes to 'slow the flow' upstream and improve land management.
13. The Council has recently been named 'Council of the Year' at this year's Yorkshire and Humberside Energy Efficiency Awards, in recognition of the council's work to insulate the walls and lofts of 74 flats around Navigation Road. The construction of the flats, together with the homes location in a Conservation Area, made it a particularly difficult project.
14. The work was carried out through Better Homes Yorkshire, the council's partnership for domestic energy efficiency work, and contractors JNR, and was funded by the council together with grants from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the national ECO fund.
15. The previous administration had also included a capital budget of £1m over 4 years for energy efficiency work and over £250k for solar panels on Council buildings. Some of this has been earmarked for the Older Persons Accommodation Programme.
16. York is also well positioned in terms of adaptation to the potential impacts of climate change. As a city which has experienced significant flooding, York has secured investment in infrastructure to prevent damage to property during extreme weather events and to put in place the mechanisms to respond to ensure continuity of business in York. It is essential that in considering the response to climate change there is appreciation of the need for adaptation as well as mitigation. This recognises that climate change is inevitable despite our carbon reduction activities and we must adapt to become more resilient to extreme weather events.

Change and Opportunity

17. In July, Executive received an update paper on York Central, reporting on progress. This highlighted the focus on achieving the best possible social, environmental and economic benefits through planning conditions and a comprehensive S106. Additional opportunities to amplify the positive impacts of the development included (those relevant to climate change):

- a. Explore the early delivery of a Bus Lane as an integral part of ph1 Infrastructure ahead of timescale required by S106/ conditions. This could be built out at the same time as the spine road is constructed which will improve bus journey times from day 1.
 - b. Explore potential with YCP to up the ambition for sustainable build for the residential elements to contribute to the zero carbon city wide commitment
 - c. Explore potential with YCP for onsite sustainable energy generation for all developments, e.g. EV charging points supplied by solar power/battery solutions to smooth out peak demand/sell to market in spikes elsewhere, with widespread use of ground source or air source heat pumps.
 - d. Consider options for contractor innovation to reduce environmental impact e.g. through the potential establishment of a rail head to bring construction traffic by rail rather than road for the duration of the development
 - e. Extend the Bus Clean Air Zone to include York Central
 - f. Explore the increased provision of EV charging points in Car Parks and on street parking
 - g. As part of the review of the Local Transport Plan, explore opportunities to increase Park and Ride facilities
 - h. Explore how YCP development partners might explore ways of reducing car journeys by further limiting parking places.
18. In response to this paper, Executive requested, additionally that the current Occupier Strategy be reviewed to ensure that commercial spaces encourage clean growth and help contribute to carbon reduction in the city.
19. The new administration has agreed to create a new cross-party Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee. The remit for the Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee has now been established and the first meeting of the committee will be in September (and monthly after that).
20. In the Supplementary Budget approved by Council on 17 July, some significant areas of investment were identified to allow the development of the climate change strategy as well as taking available opportunities to reduce our carbon dependence in the short term. The relevant investment areas are as follows:

Proposal	Note	2019/20 Cost (£)	Full Year/Ongoing Cost (£)
Carbon Reduction and Sustainability Officer	To create a lead Carbon Reduction role to promote carbon zero by 2030 (54k). *	36,000	54,000
Carbon Reduction and Sustainability Capacity Building Budget	To create a budget to support the work of the Carbon Reduction and Sustainability Officer. For example, building partnerships, engaging expert advice and learning from other zero-carbon initiatives.	30,000	
Investment in the Northern Forest	To create additional capacity to allow for further tree planting and better tree maintenance across the city - as part of the Council's new commitment to the Northern Forest (50k). *	33,000	50,000
Waste investment	To invest in a review of new sustainable vehicles, increase collection rates, and improve customer service. This will include a review of waste collection, including plastics and food waste. (100k) *	65,000	100,000
Subsidised bus routes	To ensure the continuation of and improvements for subsidised bus services routes across the city.	30,000	55,000
Public Transport Study and Local Transport Plan	To begin a high-level study to analyse city-wide public transport options, identifying opportunities for improvements in rail, buses and rapid transit, which will lay the groundwork for the new Local Transport Plan.	25,000	
Additional capacity to speed up production of Supplementary Planning Documents to support the Local Plan.	To support zero carbon through the planning system, prioritising Supplementary Guidance on Zero Carbon Building and Renewable Power, alongside existing work on Green and Blue Infrastructure.	25,000	
Electric Charging Points	To increase revenue budget to better improve maintenance.	25,000	25,000

Housing Revenue Account - Capital (funded from HRA reserves)			
Investment in the Major Repairs Scheme and Housing Modernisation Programme	To speed up progress towards achieving the Decent Homes standard for all our Council homes	1,000,000	
Investment in the 'Building Insulation Programme'	To begin a programme of increasing the energy efficiency of our Council housing stock, including the potential inclusion of renewable (solar PV, air source heat pumps etc) and integrating this with the modernisation and decent homes standard work.	1,000,000	

21. It is recommended that further reports to Executive and Executive Member will be brought in reflecting these investments.
22. Part of the funding above facilitates recruitment of a Carbon Reduction and Sustainability Officer. This post will complement the already approved Major Projects Sustainability Officer (which will work to deliver upon the investments approved in the supplementary budget to promote energy efficiency in major developments) and contribute to the production and implementation of the Carbon Reduction Plan.
23. Despite the significant work underway, it must be recognised that the 2030 target will require further investment and change across all aspects of the Council's work and how we live, work and move around our city. This will offer significant opportunities for 'win-win' initiatives such as:
 - a. improved energy efficiency reducing energy bills, providing warmer homes and tackling fuel poverty
 - b. improved sustainable transport delivering better air quality and more liveable neighbourhoods
 - c. the protection and enhancement of green space and tree planting helping to store carbon whilst improving quality of life for local residents.

Learning from others

24. Cities around the world are similarly seeking to address the challenge of a climate emergency and moving to a net Zero Carbon economy. It would

make most sense to learn from those places which are more advanced in their thinking or are addressing similar challenges. We propose to do this in a number of ways.

25. The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy formally brings together the European Union's Covenant of Mayors and the Compact of Mayors – the world's two primary initiatives of cities and local governments – to advance city-level transition to a low emission and climate resilient economy, and to demonstrate the global impact of local action.
26. York had previously engaged the Covenant of Mayors, so the new scrutiny committee could be tasked with considering whether it would add value to more actively become a part of this group.
27. Similar, it would seem sensible to investigate the potential for York's participation in the developing network of UK Climate Emergency cities, and to engage with the newly established Local Government Association Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group which will make recommendations on how the Government can support councils in achieving climate emergency targets.
28. More locally, Leeds Climate Commission has been a leader in the development of a citywide climate action plan. Their work has produced a road map to carbon neutrality which provides a very useful steer on the potential options for other cities.
29. North Yorkshire County Council has established a scrutiny sub-committee which is similarly considering the development of an action plan.
30. Both Leeds City Region and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEPs have developed energy strategies which York has been engaged with, but there is further opportunities to align the development of our carbon reduction plan with the existing work.
31. Other organisations and groups have also developed proposals for activities which local authorities can take. These include a 'Mandate for Change' received from Extinction Rebellion and Greenpeace's 33 actions for local authorities. These will be considered in the development of the carbon reduction plan.

Working in Partnership

32. Building cross-city partnerships will be crucial to effectively developing and implementing the carbon reduction plan. We will use existing networks to initiate these conversations and will consider how best to promote additional partnership working in relation to the plan.
33. The One Planet York network established and supported by the Council some years ago has been an effective networking organisation, sharing information and ideas and promoting specific projects between partners. Conversations are underway with the One Planet York leadership group to consider how the group can become self-sustaining with the council as one of many partners equally supporting.

Consultation

34. The approach to consultation during the development of the carbon reduction plan will be considered as part of the initiation of this piece of work.

Options

35. Option 1 is to request a set of actions as follows:
 - a. to ask the Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee to consider York refreshing its engagement with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy;
 - b. to ask officers to investigate the potential for York's participation in the developing network of UK Climate Emergency cities;
 - c. to ask officers to investigate how to engage with the newly established Local Government Association Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group which will make recommendations on how the Government can support councils in achieving climate emergency targets.
 - d. That a further report regarding the emerging Carbon Reduction plan be developed, the timing of which will be determined by the Leader and to request the following papers in relation to the investments made in the Emergency Budget:
 - i. To Executive:
 1. Investment in the Building Insulation Programme
 2. Investment in the Northern Forest
 3. Electric Charging Points

- ii. To the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning:
 1. Additional capacity to speed up the production of Supplementary Planning Documents to support the Local Plan

36. Option 2 is that Executive suggests alternative or additional activities.

Analysis

37. Option 1 represents a set of activities which will allow us to progress work to develop the carbon reduction plan towards carbon neutrality.

38. Executive may wish to suggest alternative or additional activities, which is Option 2.

Council Plan

39. The new council plan under consultation will have outcomes which reflect a good quality of life. The climate change agenda will impact on all of these, but most specifically in support of the Cleaner and Greener City.

Implications

- **Financial** – no new financial commitments. Previous commitments within the body of the report.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – no implications
- **One Planet Council / Equalities** – Addressing the climate change challenge is directly related to being a One Planet Council. The recommended activities are in support of this.
- **Legal** – no implications
- **Crime and Disorder** – no implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications
- **Property** – no implications

Risk Management

40. There are no specific risks identified in respect of the recommendations.

Contact Details

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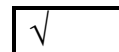
Report
Approved



Date 19/08/19

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Council Motion to declare a Climate Emergency
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=50283>

York Central Partnership Update
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s133184/York%20Central%20Exec%20-%20July%2019%20v10.pdf>

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

EV – Electric Vehicle(s)
GHG – Greenhouse Gas
IPCC - International Panel on Climate Change
LED – Light emitting diode
PV – Photo-voltaic
YCP – York Central Partnership