
Meeting	Climate Emergency Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	28 February 2023
Present	Councillors Vassie (Chair), Baker (Vice-Chair), S Barnes, Cullwick, D Myers and Wann
Apologies	

21. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have had in respect of business on the agenda.

Cllr Barnes highlighted his register of interest in relation to item 4 BioYorkshire. He noted that he worked for ORE (Offshore Renewable Energy) Catapult and that he worked on innovation technology which could cross over with BioYorkshire projects.

22. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 be approved and signed as a accurate record by the Chair.

23. Public Participation

It was reported that there was two registration to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Debby Cobbett suggested that the York Climate Commissions membership was to narrow and highlighted the benefit that trade union representation could bring to the commission.

Geoff Beacon suggested that BioYorkshire should place greater focus on going beyond greening existing business practices of those organisations it works with. He encouraged work to be undertaken reviewing current regulations to ensure that they were not impeding green innovation.

24. BioYorkshire

The Committee were joined by Charlie Jeffery Vice Chancellor of the University of York who introduced the report on BioYorkshire. He introduced the work of BioYorkshire to the Committee and the way it aligned with the Council's objectives in relation to economic growth and its climate ambitions.

Members enquired about the master plan being developed by BioYorkshire and timescales for the delivery of local jobs. It was confirmed that the program would aim to be delivered over 10 years. How the Council works with and supports BioYorkshire, Mr Jeffery noted that they worked closely with City of York and North Yorkshire County Council and were developing procedures on how to bring partners and investors together to develop new technologies.

Resolved:

- i. The update on BioYorkshire was noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the work of BioYorkshire.

25. Tree Canopy Target Update and York Green Streets

The Committee were updated on the progress towards York's tree canopy expansion target. Updates were provided on the work to delivery York Community Woodland (YCW) and York Green Streets (YGS) and it was noted the additional work that would be required from outside the Council to meet its targets.

The Council's policy and strategies relating to tree planting were discussed. The uneven distribution of tree planting opportunities identified through Green Streets were noted, with an explanation of the challenges such as buried utilities and surface materials being provided as a reason for this. It was noted by officers that the initial Green Streets mapping exercise was not exhaustive but constrained by time and budget. The next phase of Green Streets will focus on delivery of the 4,000 identified planting opportunities; however, additional mapping exercises may be possible in the future if funding is available.

Resolved:

- i. To recommend that a scrutiny review be considered in the Council's current Tree Policy.

Reason: To review the Council's current Tree Policy to ensure it is delivering to the aims of the Council's York's tree canopy expansion target.

26. Climate Change Strategy: Strengthening York's Resilience to Climate Change

Strengthening York's Resilience to Climate Change was noted as a key aspect of the Council's Climate Change Strategy. Officers outlined the adaptations such as flood prevention work which had secured DEFRA funding. Challenges to deliver adaptations were discussed and it was noted that current projects were not seeing major challenges to deliver, but that work with agricultural areas would be required to build consensus regarding flood elevation adaptations. The cost of delivering major projects to strengthen resilience to Climate Change were discussed and it was suggested that the Council could work on having projects ready should funding become available. The committee recognise that it is currently difficult to value the benefits from natural flood risk management interventions but the CYC project aims to develop future policy and best practice in this area'.

Resolved:

- i. To recommend that a scrutiny review be considered in relation to how the Council is developing natural adaption projects to Strengthening York's Resilience to Climate Change.

Reason: To support the city becoming more Climate resilient.

27. Highway Verge Wild Flowering

The Committee were updated regarding work undertaken by the Council in the last two years to develop highway verges and grassland for pollinators. Members welcomed the bottom up community lead approach and welcomed the partnership working with conservation trusts which they noted would be vital in maintaining pollinator areas.

Resolved:

- i. Noted that the policy context is set by highway safety considerations and then by the pollinator strategy;
- ii. Noted the wards and communities develop and lead projects;

- iii. Noted that funding is likely to be through ward funding or external funding so the decision to instigate lies with the Ward Councillors;
- iv. Noted the ongoing maintenance needs to be considered both in terms of a plan and funding.

Reason: To support the Pollinator Strategy.

28. LED Lighting Update Solar Lighting

The Committee were joined by Alen Howard from Williams Sale Partnership (WSP) to discuss street lighting in York. Members discussed the use of solar power for street lighting. It was noted that in winter months maintaining the required level of light was a challenge. It was confirmed that technology continued to improve but currently batteries and panels were unable to deliver to the Council's requirements without larger lamp post designs, but this could change in time. It was noted that the Council was trialing solar powered lighting at Hull Road park to see how effective solar powered lighting could be for Council use.

Light levels were discussed with existing LED lighting. It was confirmed that the aim of lighting was to light the highway where needed and if there was issues relating to light pollution these should be raised with the Council. The level of light put out by street lighting was discussed and it was confirmed that the Council lowered the level of lighting in evenings and over night once peak use was passed.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the ongoing work to assess the suitability of solar lighting for street lighting.

Reason: To support the Council's climate change targets.

Cllr Vassie, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.33 pm and finished at 8.11 pm].