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Meeting	Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	12 October 2021
Present	Councillors Vassie (Chair), Wann, Pearson (Substitute), Perrett and Melly
Apologies	Councillors Baker and S Barnes

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## **19. 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 discloseable pecuniary interests, which they might have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

## **20. Minutes**

Members raised concerns about the update on the Climate Commission requested at multiple previous meetings. Officers noted that the requested update had been included in the City of York Council monthly Climate Change e-newsletter, which was subsequently distributed to members. Members of the public can sign up to the e-newsletter at: <https://www.york.gov.uk/form/EmailUpdates>.

Officers also agreed to circulate a list of organisations approached to be on the Climate Change Commission.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

## **21. Public Participation**

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

Debby Cobbett spoke on the success of York Environment Week, particularly on the work linking Climate Change with health issues; Ms Cobbett urged more collaboration between the Council's Public Health and Climate Change teams and stated the Climate Change Strategy should be

more focused on building resilience for issues such as flooding, heatwaves and diseases. Ms Cobbett raised concerns about the lack of mention of the Climate Change Commission in the reports presented to the Committee, and felt that its membership was too narrow, advocating for the inclusion of trade unions which in her opinion would help to avoid an unjust transition to a green economy and decrease public resistance to this transition.

Gwen Swinburn spoke on the general remit of the committee, stating that several senior officers of the council live a significant distance away from the city. She argued that staff who lived in other counties were not fully committed to the city and were contributing to climate change through regular long journeys. She requested that an anonymised document listing the distances of staff's home addresses from York be drawn up, detailing which mode of transport was used by long distance staff to commute. Ms Swinburn also requested an audit to check on staff parking and petrol privileges. She also requested further information on the feasibility of the Council only employing people who live locally. Ms Swinburn also spoke on how paper waste could be reduced by reformatting reports, why she believed the committee should have an item to discuss the new constitution and her opposition to informal scrutiny forums.

## **22. Climate Change Strategy Update**

The Committee considered an update on the Council's Climate Change Strategy. The Assistant Director for Policy and Strategy and the Head of Carbon Reduction were in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- Several key steps had been undertaken in the development of the strategy, with an officer review of the feasibility and deliverability of the strategy underway.
- A public consultation and stage 3 engagement was planned for the end of October/beginning of November and due to be published in early 2022.

The Chair requested that a list of key stakeholders mentioned in the report be circulated:

- City of York Council
- University of York
- York & North Yorkshire LEP
- Make It York
- York Civic Trust
- Federation of Small Businesses

- Constructive Individuals
- St Nicks
- Yorwaste
- York BID
- York Community Energy
- York St John University
- White Rose Forest
- York Hospital
- Enterprise
- Karbon/York Housing Association
- Yorkshire Housing Group
- Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
- Home Group
- Helmsley Group
- York Science Park
- JLL
- Pavers
- Savills
- Nestle
- McArthur Glen
- First Group
- York Cycle Campaign
- TIER
- Sustrans
- York Taxi Action Group
- Walk York
- York Bike Belles
- York Chamber of Commerce
- Rollits

Questions and comments raised by members, with responses from officers included:

- That the strategy had been delayed by about six weeks, due to the effects of Covid-19 on staff and delays in the engagement process.
- Stage 3 engagement was due to be undertaken by a roving engagement team that would travel the city to speak to different residents, likely in libraries. Topics of discussion were likely to be immediate possible actions to combat climate change in York, what is possible elsewhere and what residents believe the ambition of the strategy should be.
- The vast majority of residents accepted there was a problem with climate change, although fewer felt that meant they needed to change their lifestyle or behaviours.

- Engagement must help residents to understand what they can feasibly do themselves, what they need to think differently about and how everyone's life may change in order to deliver the target of net-zero by 2030.
- Members felt there ought to be more consideration of climate friendly options for energy other than carbon capture and storage, e.g. green hydrogen.
  - Officer responded that carbon capture and storage was not a priority for York, with increasing local renewable generation and reducing total energy demand having primacy.
- A local area energy plan for the city was discussed. This work was planned, with a funding application underway. Officers indicated that should the bid be unsuccessful, other funding sources would be sought.
- The importance of fostering an atmosphere of collaboration and co-operation across the city on climate change was emphasised.
- It was hoped that the public consultation would help fill in the gaps of any opportunities that were missed in the stakeholder engagement.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the update be noted.

Reason: To ensure the Committee is informed on the progress of the Climate Change Strategy.

### **23. Engagement Update**

The Committee considered an update on resident engagement results. The Assistant Director for Policy and Strategy and the Head of Carbon Reduction were in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- Females were less likely than males to cycle, but they did want better access to sustainable travel and public transport infrastructure.
- Males were less likely to have undertaken work-related training in the last 5 years, which had implications for the upskilling needed to create green jobs.
- For young people, cost was a significant barrier to action on climate change, however they did use cars for less than 1/5 of their journeys.
- Older people largely cited a lack of information as a barrier to action, but did report that they had attempted to reduce personal vehicle usage in the last 12 months.

Comments/questions from members and responses from officers included:

- 25% of under 40s likely reported that they were planning on driving more in future because they had not yet passed their test or did not currently own a car and were planning to acquire one.
- There were 1,200 responses in a city of 200,000 people, of which 47% of respondents were over 60 compared to roughly 1/3 in the overall population, which highlighted the need to develop new ways of reaching people in order to collect more representative data.
- Members felt that the contributions of younger people showed a larger engagement with and understanding of climate change, and so felt it was very important to further engage with this demographic in order to hear to understand their thoughts.
  - Officers responded that the survey was intended as a base layer to understand broad opinions in the city, which was to be used to refine questioning and demographic targeting during the stage 3 engagement. It was noted that broad participation in consultations and public engagement was an ongoing challenge for all areas of council work, not just climate change.
- Members noted with concern the statistics on optimism for career prospects, especially in younger sections of the population: 49% of people under 40 disagreed that they felt optimistic, arguing that to ensure a just transition to a green economy, more education around upskilling and opportunities for green jobs was needed.
  - Officers responded that the events of the past two years including the Covid-19 pandemic, furlough and job losses was likely having a negative effect on people's optimism. Officers hoped that members' concerns would be partly addressed through the devolution deal and Economic Strategy, and suggested that the Head of Economic Growth attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the Economic Strategy.
- Members spoke on bus services in the city, noting positive work done to reduce their emissions through use of electric vehicles etc., however they emphasised that it was most important for buses to reduce overall vehicle numbers in the city as the only alternative to private vehicles for residents.
- It was noted that although York performed well regionally in terms of public transport usage, it did not compare to places such as Stockholm and Vienna, and members spoke on the opportunity that stage 3 of the consultation provided to move the conversation past damage limitation and towards more radical solutions to the problem of public transport, e.g. a light rail transit system.
- Members requested clarification on the membership of the Climate Change Commission, to which officers responded that public, private and third sector organisations from across the city were represented, including the three largest single source emitters in the city and large

employers such as Nestle, the hospital, University of York, the Chamber of Commerce and others. Officers confirmed that there was no trade union representation, and noted that should it be decided that trade unions ought to have a seat on the Commission, it would be best for a single representative to speak on behalf of all trade unions, likely from the Trades Union Congress.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the update be noted.

Reason: To enable the Committee to remain updated on resident engagement.

### Chairs Remarks

At this point in the meeting an additional agenda item was introduced. The committee considered an update on the council's draft Bus Service Implement Plan (BSIP) from the Director of Transport, Environment and Planning and the Sustainable Transport Manager, who were in attendance to provide a verbal update and answer questions.

## **24. Emissions Update**

The Committee considered a report which presented the Emissions Inventory for York. This data was to be used to monitor progress against the City of York Council ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions for the city by 2030. The Assistant Director for Policy and Strategy, Director of Environment, Transport and Planning and the Head of Carbon reduction were in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- That there were two reports attached, one for the emissions generated by the City of York Council specifically, and another for the general emissions of York as a whole, which was to be used to monitor progress towards achieving the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- That the City of York Council was responsible for around 4% of York's total emissions.
- There was also information on carbon emissions resulting from home-working and how changing patterns of work will affect carbon emissions going forward.
- A paper on creating a sustainable procurement model was also included.

Comments/questions from members on City of York Council emissions and responses from officers included:

- Members noted the positive change the council had made in switching to 100% renewable energy, however commented there were still challenges on how energy is used by the Council, especially with regard to billing.
  - Officers noted that the Council purchased 100% renewable energy, but there was no way to guarantee that all energy used was generated from renewable sources because it came from the national grid.
- The cost of street lighting was discussed, electricity for which was costing the Council £800,000 per year, up from £600,000 per year in c.2008 despite improvements in energy efficiency.
  - Officers noted that street lighting was not metered, with the cost estimated from the number of lamps and time of use through an asset register. Although overall energy costs had increased, there had been reductions in cost through the introduction of more efficient LED light bulbs.
  - It was much easier to control the amount of energy to street lights e.g. to dim them in the middle of the night when there was less need for light, once they were 100% converted to LED compared to the current mixed market. 12,00 out of 19,000 bulbs were LEDs. The primary focus of the Council was currently replacing columns that were close to collapse, however whenever that was done, an LED bulb would be used in the replacement.
  - However, members also emphasised the role street lighting played in keeping people safe, especially women, and noted that reducing lighting at night could cause significant worry.
  - Officers assured members that any changes to street lighting would be tested and discussed with residents and women's charities before implementation.
- The Council possessed a biomass boiler and local generation in some buildings, however overall consumption was much larger than this generation capacity. A study had shown that opportunities for renewable generation had been exhausted within City of York Council buildings, however options for renewable generations of electricity in other locations in York which was to be explored in detail in local area energy planning. It was also noted that there were solar canopies in two of the park and ride sites in York. Other examples included Allerton Waste Recovery Park.
- Concerns were raised over only scope 1 and 2 emissions being calculated, with some members feeling that the majority of the Council's emissions would come under scope 3.
  - Officers responded that scope 3 emissions were very difficult to calculate, and that there were plans to work with York and North

Yorkshire LEP to create a methodology to measure scope 3 emissions is as much detail as was currently possible with scope 2.

- Over the next 4 years all City of York Council vehicles under 3.5 tons were to be replaced with electric vehicles.

Comments/questions from members on city wide emissions and responses from officers included:

- That 31.8% of scope 1 and 2 emissions in York came from the city's domestic buildings, 30.1% from non-domestic buildings and 27.9% from transport.
- More education was needed for residents to fill gaps in knowledge about where the majority of the city's emissions are produced.
- The city-wide emissions report was to form the basis of the Council's submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project and the Global Covenant of Mayors.
- Corporate emissions were from 2020/21, however data for city-wide emissions was always subject to a time lag, therefore the most up to date emissions related to 2018.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the update be noted.
- ii. That options for drafting a letter to HM Government, in conjunction with the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change and other local authorities to lobby for more up to date city-wide emissions statistics.

Reason: To enable to committee to remain updated on emissions within York.

## **25. Work Plan**

Members considered the Committee's draft work plan for the 2021/22 municipal year.

Members discussed attending the York Net Zero Building Solutions event on 10 November 2021, which was organised by the City of York Council in partnership with York Climate Commission, the details for which could be found at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/york-net-zero-building-solutions-event-2021-tickets-186823442947>.

Following discussion it was:

Resolved:

- i. That a presentation on the new Transport Live Model be brought to the informal forum meeting of 30 November 2021.
- ii. That an item on the Economic Strategy be brought to the informal forum meeting of 30 November 2021.
- iii. That representatives of York hospital be invited to the meeting of the 12 January 2021.

Reason: To keep the work plan updated.

Cllr C Vassie, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.37 pm and finished at 7.57 pm].