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Meeting	Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	15 October 2019
Present	Councillors Vassie (Chair), Baker (Vice-Chair), S Barnes, Fisher, Hook, D Myers and Wann

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## **8. Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited 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 in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

## **9. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019 be approved, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **10. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been five registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, all in relation to matters within the committee's remit.

June Tranmer expressed support for a full cross-party membership of the committee, noted there was now an opportunity to take real action, and urged against the council's use of chemical herbicides for weed-killing.

Michael Hammill queried the council's commitment to a zero carbon target in the light of the planning department's refusal of his application for solar panels.

Mike Childs, on behalf of Friends of the Earth, referred to recent research on local authorities' insulation of homes and generation of renewable energy and offered FoE's help and advice to improve York's performance in these areas.

Debby Cobbett supported the comments of the previous speaker and suggested the council also focus on increasing tree cover and improving public transport and cycling.

Leah Bennett highlighted a lack of vegetarian and vegan restaurants in York and offered assistance with putting together a working group to encourage 'greener' food in the city,

## **11. Attendance of the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change**

Cllr Widdowson, the Executive Member for Environment & Climate Change, presented a report which summarised the current position on a range of functions covered by her portfolio area. These included: waste disposal and collection; public realm; flood protection; air quality and environmental health; bio diversity and open spaces. Members were referred to the 4-page insert in 'Your City' and the report to Executive to be published on 16 October for further guidance and information on recycling and waste disposal activities.

During the presentation, and in response to Members' questions, the Executive Member and the Corporate Director of Economy & Place confirmed that:

- 94% of waste sent to Allerton Waste Park (AWP) including food waste, was already recycled via anaerobic digestion.
- The benefits of additional collections must be weighed against this, and the viability of recycling certain plastics.
- Opportunities were being sought for a co-located industrial use for waste heat from AWP; to transport it further for domestic heating would be costly, and was a matter for North Yorkshire and district councils to discuss.
- The new 2019-23 Council Plan would include targets for a greener and cleaner city, including recycling and tree planting. York had also signed up to the White Rose Forest and the Northern Forest.
- The key was to embed sustainability within every plan rather than treat it as a separate activity.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member and commented that it would be helpful to receive benchmarking information at some stage on cities that used waste heat for domestic heating. He re-iterated the committee's view that carbon budgeting was essential to moving forward towards catalysing change in the city over the next 12 months.

Resolved: That the report, and the additional information provided at the meeting, be noted.

Reason: To confirm that the committee is aware of current work within this portfolio area.

## 12. Baseline Data and Funding Opportunities

Members received a report which outlined the committee's remit, the decision taken at its first meeting in September with regard to inviting experts to the next meeting to assist in understanding baseline data and available funding, and action taken in response.

The Chair had subsequently decided to invite to the meeting a representative from the Stockholm Institute in York and the Head of Energy and Sustainability at West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). He reported that the former was unable to attend; however the latter, Jacqui Warren, was in attendance to give a presentation and answer questions. A dataset estimating City of York Council's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 2005 to 2016 was also circulated at the meeting for discussion.\*

The presentation outlined WYCA's plans and activities in pursuance of their ambition to become a net zero carbon city region by 2038. This would require emissions to reduce by 14.5% every year. The focus was on 5 priority areas, namely: resource-efficient businesses & industry; new energy generation; energy efficiency & empowering consumers; smart grid systems integration; efficient & integrated transport. Activities included exploring joint collaborative opportunities with other local authorities, making resources available from the Business Rates Pool and providing practical support for low carbon projects. Work had also been carried out with the Tyndall Centre in Manchester to explore a carbon budget for the city region. In response to questions on the presentation, Members were advised that:

- The document circulated was an extract from the only comprehensive emissions dataset readily available.
- Carbon reduction strategies needed 'quick wins', an acknowledgement of the good work already in progress, and an understanding of the carbon impacts of future projects.
- Local authorities needed to understand their own areas; there was no 'one size fits all' solution.
- Regarding funding, it was helpful to maximise the value of existing projects and to prepare projects in readiness for funding opportunities.
- It would be beneficial to invite subject specialists, including council officers, to attend the committee and explain the challenges in their work areas.

The Chair thanked the presenter and it was

Resolved: That the information provided be noted and taken into account when considering the committee's work plan.

Reason: So that the committee can agree on the specific issues to be taken forward.

*\*Note: this document has since been published online as a supplement to Item 5 on the agenda for this meeting.*

### **13. Work Plan 2019-20**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year, in the light of the additional information received at the meeting.

With reference to co-opting members to the committee, the Chair indicated that he would discuss this with the Scrutiny Officer and liaise with Members by email before the report to the next meeting. He would also be discussing with the Vice Chair and Scrutiny Officer any potential training opportunities with external partners.

Resolved: That the following items be added to the work plan for future meetings:

#### Meeting on 12 November 2019

- Report on co-opted members.
- Invite a representative from the Tyndall Centre, and officers from Finance, to explain carbon budgeting and the implications of its use in York.
- Specialist perspectives on the challenges / benefits of the zero carbon target: invite an officer from Transport.

#### Meeting on 16 December 2019

- Specialist perspectives on the challenges / benefits of the zero carbon target: invite officers from Housing and Planning.

#### Meeting on 14 January 2019

- Specialist perspectives on the challenges / benefits of the zero carbon target: invite officers from Procurement.

Reason: So that the committee has an agreed schedule of work in place in order to move forward with its remit.

Cllr C Vassie, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.58 pm].