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Meeting	Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	10 March 2020
Present	Councillors Vassie (Chair), Baker (Vice-Chair), Hook, D Myers, Wann and Norman (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillors Barnes and Fisher

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### **33. Declarations of Interest**

At this point, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, prejudicial interest or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

### **34. Minutes**

Resolved: That the chair would discuss with the Scrutiny and Democracy Officers regarding amending the minutes from the 14 January 2020 meeting of the Committee. The Minutes will then be brought back to the Committee's next meeting.

### **35. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been eight registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Geoff Beacon raised the discussion of land value from the 14 January 2020 meeting of the committee. He noted that he believed the difference stated between building land and agricultural land value at the meeting was low and asked if work could be carried out to assess the figures?

Caroline Jones discussed her concerns regarding the City of York Council's current recycling policy in comparison to what she had seen in other cities. She asked whether the Council's new recycling fleet would improve plastic waste recycling and food waste collection in York and whether One Planet York would have a part in improving recycling?

Adam Myers noted that he believed the Council needed to divest from fossil Fuels. He noted that if the Council didn't wish to divest for environmental reasons, then it should divest as he believed that Fossil Fuel companies were going to devalue. He suggested that procurement could be structured to favour small local companies which have less of an environmental impact.

Eddy Adams discussed the scope the Council had to talk to other cities about how they were tackling the Climate Emergence. He noted the Preston Model for procurement and how it was being transferred to cities in Europe and highlighted the co-benefits to local procurement.

Deborah Cobbett noted her support for One Planet York's proposal to introduce Carbon Literacy in schools as well as work Sustrans was doing with schools. She highlighted the need for good alternative transport to cars to be available ahead of a ban on cars in the city centre and noted that world government's response to COVID-19 should be a template to tackling climate change.

Claire Duddington requested that the Council cut all ties with the Fossil Fuel industry and noted the impact the divestment campaign had on multiple cities and universities.

Beth Carter noted the potential dangers of divestment, but that the potential drop in value of Fossil Fuel companies highlighted the need to divest to protect investments. She requested that the Council focus investment in Low Carbon producing companies.

Jacob Horn highlighted that the University of York had targeted total divestment from Fossil Fuels by 2030 while still meeting the requirements of its pension fund. He suggested that the Council would need do the same in order to meet even the most modest of central government targets. He asked that the Council look at best practice from Local Authorities and cities around Europe on how to effectively divest.

## **36. One Planet York Update**

The Committee were joined by June Tranmer and Peter Watkins from One Planet York (OPY). They outlined OPY's progress since the Committee last received an update covering OPY's governance, membership, and potential funding. They highlighted potential projects for OPY including the setting up of a mentoring program and in line with the Carbon Disclosure Project creating a questionnaire for small and medium business in the city to participate in. This would allow OPY to assess what business' were

already doing in the city and facilitate conversations about what is coming up. They also noted that OPY needed to be clearer with its messaging and improve its social media presence, they noted the need for work to be carried out to improve their website, and that the organisation needed to improve on how it engages with business and residents around the city.

Members highlighted their support for the work OPY were undertaking. They noted the importance of promoting Carbon Literacy within the city and discussed whether City of York Council could be more active in supporting OPY and whether this should include funding as well as assistance to build partnerships within the city. The importance of COP 26 was emphasised and the planning of events around the event were suggested, OPY noted that they were going to be taking part in events during COP 26 week with the York Environment Forum.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee recommended to the Executive that it explore One Planet York's involvement in any Climate Change Commission that could be set up.
- ii. That the Committee Recommended to the Executive that it explore options to support OPY in organising an event to coincide with COP 26.

Reason: To support City of York Council's ambition for the city to be at Net Zero by 2030.

### **37. Renewing City of York Council's Pledge to Covenant of Mayors**

The Committee considered the next steps for renewing City of York Council's commitment to the Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate Change, as agreed by full council motion. Officers noted that if the recommendations were agreed then they would discuss with the Executive to agree a date for an announcement that the Council will sign and re-submit to the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) pledge and agree a timescale for the Council to disclose the cities greenhouse gas emissions. It was noted that while the Council does not need to re-submit in order to begin re-engaging with the GCoM, re-submitting would provide renewed opportunity for City of York Council to highlight its commitment to climate action and its intention to take an evidence based and planned approach to carbon reduction that is regularly monitored and publicly reported.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee support the recommendation to the Executive that, In line with the agreed Council motion, that the council formally signs and re-submits the GCoM pledge in full knowledge of the commitments set out in the official Commitment Document.
- ii. That the Committee support the recommendation to the Executive that, the council commences the process of regular 'disclosure' (progress reporting), by registering with CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project) and to take part in the 'Cities 2020' Questionnaire during April-July this year.

Reason: To support the City of York Council re-engaging with the Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate Change.

### **38. Responsible Investment**

The Committee were joined by Council Officers and Cllr Victoria Mills Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Brexit and Alex Moylan Finance Manager for Pension Funds both of Southwark Council.

Officers outlined that City of York Council did not directly invest in Fossil Fuels and that the Executive had recently agreed that a 4<sup>th</sup> criterion was added to cover ethical, social and governance issues. Officers outlines that surplus cash was invested in money market funds and these could inadvertently see investment in fossil fuels and that as part of the North Yorkshire Pension Fund (NYPF) 1.26% of the fund was invested in oil and gas companies. They noted that expert opinions identified the benefit of socially responsible investment and that active engagement with companies were considered effective to create industry change. They also suggested that divestment alone would not close fossil fuel companies down and highlighted that a lot of investment in renewable energy was undertaken by those same companies.

Cllr Victoria Mills and Alex Moylen outlined the work undertaken at Southwark Council to divest while seeking not to damage assets. They noted that this was undertaken by assigning officers at their council the task of divesting when it was financially right to do so and not be left with an asset that they considered could collapse. It was noted that Southwark had more control over being able to choose where they invested their pension fund than City of York Council due to being part of the NYPF.

Members discussed the possibility a carbon foot print review of the NYPF. They also considered whether City of York Council could include ethical policies in the Council's investment policies, Members also recommended promoting these values within NYPF. While Climate Change would form part of an ethical policy Members suggested that this should also include policies such as those that seek to end poverty and modern slavery. Officers noted that this was being looked into and noted a workshop being held by Boarders of the Coast Pension Fund around a Responsible Policy. Cllr Victoria Mills noted that Southwark Council had taken the opportunity when discussing investment with companies to promote other values of the Council such as diversity on company boards.

Resolved:

- i. That NYPF be asked about undertaking comprehensive Carbon Foot Print review of the pension fund if not already being undertaken.
- ii. That an update on Responsible Investment be brought back to Committee.

Reason: To support City of York Council practices an ethical investment strategy.

### **39. Sustainable Procurement**

Members considered a report outlining the current Procurement Strategy and the process for updating this strategy over the coming months, with the view to optimise the opportunities for delivering social value and ensuring long term sustainability.

Members discussed the use of targets in procurement and it was confirmed that the council aimed to improve its contract monitoring. The idea of best value in procurement was raised as the council considered a variety of variables when procuring, Members confirmed support for procurement placing further focus on social impact that included climate impact and agreed with Officers the need for this to be included in any contract monitoring system that could be implemented.

Members raised the possibility or setting targets for local procurement in order to maintain both the economic benefits in the city, as well as, the potential benefits this could have on the climate. It was noted that setting percentages could be effected by major capital projects that require larger procurement from national companies or from companies involved in

industries which do not operate in York and may not be industries the city would be seeking to operate locally. Membered highlighted the importance of Climate Change awareness in companies that the Council procures from, citing the possibility of assessing Carbon Literacy, as well as, discussing including carbon impact in value engineering in good project management.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee recommended that the Executive consider including Carbon Literacy criteria in the next Procurement Strategy that companies much meet.
- ii. That the Committee recommended that the Executive consider the creation of performance indicators to monitor the performance of contracts.
- iii. That the Committee recommended that the Executive consider incorporating Carbon Impact as part of value engineering undertaken as part of good project management.

Reason: To improve and increase the sustainability of City of York Council's procurement.

#### **40. Work Plan 2019/20**

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year. Members agreed that they would put the Feasibility Report - Corporate Review into Poverty on hold due to the ongoing work by over Scrutiny Committees crossing over with the remit this committee identified. The Committee requested that a update report on pensions and procurement be added to the 12 May 2020 meeting of the Committee and that the End of Year Report scheduled for that meeting be postponed to the 7 July 2020 meeting.

Resolved:

- i. That the draft work plan was approved, as submitted, subject to the above clarification.

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Chair Cllr C Vassie

[The meeting started at 5.32 pm and finished at 8.01 pm].