

Meeting	Climate Emergency Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	4 October 2022
Present	Councillors Vassie (Chair), Baker (Vice-Chair), D Myers, Cullwick, Wann, Perrett and Melly (Substitute)  Officers Claire Foale - Assistant Director Policy and Strategy Shaun Gibbons - Head of Carbon Reduction
Apologies	Councillor Barnes

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## **8. Declarations of Interest (17:34)**

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. None were declared.

## **9. Minutes (17:35)**

Resolved: That the Committees minutes for the meetings on the 8 March 2022 and 20 July 2022 be approved and signed as a accurate record by the Chair.

## **10. Public Participation (17:35)**

It was reported that there were seven registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. However, one speaker was unable to attend the meeting.

Debby Cobbett asked that the Council seek to present a more positive picture and feeling about what can be achieved in the process of achieving net zero. She highlighted the positive responses from residents in the Councils Big Conversation to tackle climate change and asked that the Council show more ambition and widen its approach to achieving a happier fairer York.

Flick Williams raised concerns about the reduced timetables for bus services and the danger of the loss of routes all together. She questioned whether the Council considered bus travel as an essential service in the city, noting that single decker buses had replaced some double deckers on park and ride routes reducing capacity. She questioned whether the Council was neglecting bus travel in favour of active travel routes in the city.

Kate Ravilious stated that for the Council to have an effective Climate Change strategy then it should be supported by bottom-up local data instead of top down statistics. They noted their concern that the Council was not counting Scope 3 carbon emissions within its strategy and noted their concern that the draft action plan was too vague and lacks detail on how actions would be achieved and raised concerns about the political leadership for its delivery.

James Pitt raised concerns about the effects of air pollution in the city. He questioned whether the Council was treating the climate emergency like it might emergencies of a different nature and requested that the Council inject some urgency into its actions.

Adam Myers noted that he felt the current draft of the Climate Change Strategy lacked strategic vision. He noted that groups such as Extinction Rebellion and the school pupil climate strikes had raised the awareness of action being required to tackle the climate emergency and that the Council could do more than lobby central government and encouraged the Council to seek collaborative action with other local authorities and institutions.

Chris Brace raised concerns that the impact of the duelling of the outer ring road and its impact on York's scope 3 emissions would not be addressed as part of the Climate Change Strategy. He noted the need for decisive political leadership as the time to start delivering on the action plan and the strategy was 'yesterday'. He also raised concerns that the Council was working with organisations such as Bio Yorkshire who he stated partnered with the power station Drax a large carbon emitter in the UK.

## **11. Presentation from York Civic Trust: A Transport Vision for York (17:59)**

The Committee were joined by Antony May of the York Civic Trust and Johan Kuylenstierna from the University of York and Stockholm Environment Institute, who gave a presentation on their observations to the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, with a particular focus on Transport in the city.

Members first discussed the impact from major projects and scope 3 emissions. Officers confirmed that the outer ring road planning application would have a carbon impact assessment, covering both embedded and operational emissions, and provided assurance to the Committee that the requirement for carbon impact assessments were increasing for all major projects. Members noted the importance of linking carbon reduction plans and transport planning in the city so that the expansion of the outer ring road could be used to effectively reduce emissions rather than increase them. Officers confirmed that planning of several key strategies had been done in collaboration with one another to achieve desirable outcomes and that the Local Transport Strategy was expected to go to consultation in the new year.

The shortfall between the projected emission reduction and the net zero pathway for York was discussed. It was confirmed that sequestration of carbon would be required to potentially address a shortfall once all mitigation measures had been exhausted. It was noted that the Council was securing funding, such as £6.5 million from DEFRA for projects such as storing flood water.

How the Council had collected data was discussed, it was noted that data had played a crucial role in developing the Councils draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. However, it was noted that no data set is able to provide a complete picture of local emissions and tools used had given a broader scope of York's current emissions breakdown. Officers confirmed they were working with groups such as the York Civic Trust and Stockholm Environment Institute to develop more bottom up data which they hoped would give an even clearer picture of York which could better inform specific interventions.

The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change research, which stated York would require a cut of emissions of 13% year on year to reach net zero, was raised. Members discussed whether setting a 13% a year target would be appropriate for the Climate Change Strategy and assist the Council in achieving a reduction for the City. Guests and officers recommended that while early emissions reductions are important, our pathway is not likely to be linear – with greater reductions coming later in the decade as technology, finance and capacity improve. It was agreed that monitoring progress against the pathway, rather than a 13% annual target was a more appropriate measure of success.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee ask the Executive and Council to undertake all necessary investigations leading to the adoption of the transport actions set out in the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan, that sets out clear targets for each sub group, eg: public transport, electric vehicles, active travel etc;
- ii. That the Committee ask the Executive and Council to adopt an analytical approach to the implementation of the adopted Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan which demonstrates the amount of carbon reduction which will be achieved year by year;
- iii. That the Committee ask the Executive and Council to develop a longer list of interventions to consider in relation to the implementation of the adopted Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan so that if any one strand of action becomes less feasible, other actions can be identified which can achieve the same pace of reduction, noting that successive administrations would take the necessary political decisions.

Reason: To support the Council to reach net zero by 2030.

## **12. Climate Change Strategy (19:42)**

The Committee welcomed the results of the Council's Big Conversation and thanked everyone who responded. They noted that the consultation had reached across communities and age groups in the city and acknowledged the strong level of support for action in York to address Climate Change. Members discussed how the Council could continue to engage with residents and partners across the city and discussed the role of the York Climate Commission. The Committee considered whether to ask large emitters in York to provide annual update reports on their emissions and actions to address them against measurable indicators.

Members discussed the cost of interventions as the cost of living continued to rise. Officers noted that there was a huge challenge to reach net zero by 2030, however, there were interventions that would either generate or save money especially in energy usage as the cost of energy rose. Other interventions were expected to be cost neutral and those that would cost money were stretch targets that the Council would explore as part of its action plan for potential funding and support to deliver.

A vision for how York will look in 10 years was discussed as the Committee welcomed the points made by public speakers that the Council could do more in their minds to set out a positive vision for the City. The objective of the 10 Year Plan was discussed which sort to link a series of strategies to

create a vision for the city. Members discussed how the Council could support the building of a positive vision of how York could look in the future while taking interventions to reduce emissions. It was proposed that the Council look to ask residents in consultations on climate change how they would like to see York.

The Executive Summary and Five Core Principles within the Climate Change Strategy were debated as Members discussed potential amendments. The Committee asked that reference to the strategy aiming to deliver fairness and social justice and additional explanation be given to how York has reduced its emissions since 2005.

The Committee discussed encouraging cross party support for the Climate Change Strategy noting that it would go before Council for a decision and recommended that Councillors be invited to sign the strategy should it be adopted.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee ask that the Executive to invite large organisations operating in the city to provide an annual update on their climate impact using measurable indicators;
- ii. The Committee asked that in future consultations on Climate Change with residents that the Council ask respondents for how they would like to see York in the future;
- iii. That the Executive be asked to consider amends to the Climate Change Strategy as outlined below:
  - a) That the Executive Summary to be amended to remove 'in York, we lead the way' with 'York is committed to address this' (The Climate Emergency);
  - b) That the Executive Summary provide greater detail on 39% emissions reduction from 2005 with a range of reasons for this;
  - c) That the five core principles within the Climate Change Strategy note the importance to delivering a strategy that delivers fairness and social justice and that a focus be noted on working with local and regional partners.
- iv. That the Committee ask that Executive request that all Councillors sign the Climate Change Strategy if it is approved by Council.

Reason: To support the Council to reach net zero by 2030.

**13. Work Plan 2022/23 (21:00)**

The Committee discussed its work plan for 2022-23.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Committee work plan.

Reason: To ensure the Committee has a program of work.

Councillor Vassie, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.34 pm and finished at 9.01 pm].