

CLIMATE EMERGENCY POLICY AND SCRUTINY

4 October 2022

Report of the Assistant Director Policy and Strategy

Climate Change Strategy – feedback

Summary

1. The 10-year Climate Change Strategy is designed to articulate the principles and ambitions that steer direction for the decade ahead. It is not intended to provide a detailed list of actions. Instead, the council will update and refine an annual action plan to help the city step ever closer to net zero.
2. The Climate Change Strategy is one of three interdependent “core” or “principle” strategies that will steer council action and engage the city over the next ten years. In addition to mitigating the impact of climate change, the council is also setting out how to strengthen the economy post Covid in the draft Economic Strategy and how to improve resident health and wellbeing in the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
3. The three 10 year strategies are in the final stages of development with Climate Change and Economic Strategies due to be endorsed by Executive in November and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy due to be approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in November. Executive will also be invited to recommend Council approve all three strategies.
4. The 10 year strategies have been developed through extensive resident and stakeholder engagement and informed by an evidence base published in the technical annex and the development of the Equalities Impact Assessment.
5. To reduce complexity and help residents understand the interdependencies between the Economic Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and Health and Wellbeing strategies the consultation for all three took place simultaneously. This is

because it was anticipated that many comments would relate to all three.

6. This report summarises resident and stakeholder feedback and shares how the council propose responding to it.
7. One of the key areas of feedback was a recognition of the challenge of delivering net zero and a request for more information about the actions the council would take. The council has responded to this feedback by drafting an Action Plan setting out the steps it would take, the city could take, and the areas it would explore with additional funding to progress the ambition of net zero. The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually and is provided for Scrutiny to review.

Recommendations

8. Scrutiny is invited to:
 - Note the evidence and analysis published in Annex A (the technical annex).
 - Consider the resident and stakeholder feedback, and suitability of the council response to progress the Climate Change Strategy.
 - Consider the feedback and in particular the development of the draft Action Plan in response to the feedback received

Background

9. The council is following a sustainable approach to developing the city's ambitions for the decade ahead. The goal of sustainability is to, "*create and maintain conditions, under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations.*" or put simply - 'Enough, for all, forever' – a concept first developed by Charles Hopkins¹
10. This means that sustainable approaches need to consider the interdependencies between actions that might affect the environment, society, and the economy. To this end, the council has developed three strategies to inform city-wide direction over the

¹ ERIC - EJ868704 - Enough, for All, Forever: The Quest for a More Sustainable Future, Education Canada, 2009.

next decade. These strategies cover health and wellbeing, economic growth and climate change.

11. The process to develop the strategies has been comprehensive and is designed to ultimately provide a mandate to steer direction over the decade ahead.

Strategy development

12. The strategic development of the Climate Change Strategy has been based on three independent processes.
 - a. Evidence collation and analysis – building on the work done by independent experts, Antithesis, the Tyndall Institute and Leeds University, who developed a Zero Carbon roadmap for York, to present the scale of the challenge, our net zero ambition and the objectives that need to be achieved to meet our targets. The technical annex (**Annex A**) has been shared with Scrutiny, in part, in different meetings. The technical annex brings the full evidence set together and provides a baseline for the Climate Change Action Plan going forward.
 - b. Resident, business, partner and stakeholder insight and intelligence which has been gathered in line with the Resident Engagement Strategy (approved by Executive in April 2021) over the last 18 months. This insight and intelligence was set out to understand what is important to citizens, what changes they would like to see and ultimately whether they support the strategy sufficiently to provide the administration with a mandate to proceed.
 - c. Equalities impacting to better understand the positive and potentially detrimental impacts of climate, economic or health ambitions on different groups of residents. Equalities impacting both informed the strategies and identified requirements for action plans.
13. Scrutiny are invited to review the citizen feedback, listed below and attached as annex:
 - a. Focus group report (**Annex B**)
 - b. OBC 10 year Strategies consultation summary (**Annex C**)

- c. OBC 10 year Strategies consultation detailed feedback (**Annex D**)

Citizen (resident, business, stakeholder and partner) Consultation and engagement process

14. The Climate Change Strategy was developed over a period of 18 months by speaking to residents, businesses, community groups and partners. It also took into account feedback gathered during delivery of the Covid Recovery and Renewal Strategy delivered in the aftermath of the pandemic and feedback from MyCityCentre consultation.
15. The resident engagement plan for the 10 year strategies was approved at Executive on Thursday, 22 April 2021 (item 123) - the engagement process was phased to gather information with multiple ways to engage. Feedback informs development of the three strategies (and is now informing development of the Local Transport Strategy):
 - a. The Our Big Conversation attitudinal survey helped us understand what's important for the people who live, work and study in our city. Over 2,000 participants, including residents and businesses, took part to tell us about different aspects of living in the city, which helped inform our 10 Year Strategies. The survey was available online and via *Our City*, the resident newsletter.
 - b. We helped shape the strategies and covered different aspects of climate change through a mixture of technical and industry roundtable meetings, focused stakeholder and partner discussions and through business groups, and health and wellbeing workshops.
 - c. The York Big Question took place during winter 2021 to 2022, engaging residents and third sector groups in what good health and wellbeing looks like to them.
 - d. Through the summer of 2021, we held a series of stakeholder roundtable workshops covering the main themes of the Climate Change Strategy. These workshops, attended by experts from academia and industry, explored the local barriers and opportunities to delivering change at the pace and scale required to meet our ambition. A summary of the response is

presented in the Stakeholder Perspective of the Technical Annex.

- e. More targeted independently facilitated focus groups to explore strategic themes with target demographics took place throughout May and June 2022 (**Annex B**). These targeted groups invited participation from residents who did not engage in Our Big Conversation to make sure we had a blend of perspectives shaping the strategies. The groups were:
 - Students in York
 - 16-24-year-olds in York
 - Members of York's LGBTQIA+ community
 - Blue-collar workers in York
 - Parents of children aged 0-10 in York
 - People with disabilities in York
 - Members of York's BAME community
 - People in York who are currently not in education, employment or training
- f. We then invited residents, businesses, community groups, city partners, regional policy leads and city stakeholders to review the draft 10 Year Strategies and tell us what they think about what it will be like to live in the city in 2032 through the Our Big Conversation: 10 Year Strategies Consultation, held throughout the summer 2022. The survey was available online or in print in libraries. There were approximately 500 participants of which only c100 completed responses. These included individual residents, stakeholder and partner groups and organisations. A summary report showing how people felt about the principles and priorities (**Annex C**) clearly shows what's important to this group of participants.
- g. We held four discussion days at York Explore. The Climate Corners were attended by officers from the carbon reduction team to answer resident questions about the strategies through the prism of climate change. Over 150 residents engaged through the climate corner and were invited to complete printed surveys or respond online.
- h. To understand the business communities' perspectives, 20 stakeholders were invited to provide feedback about economic growth. Their views and insights have informed development

of both the Economic Strategy and the Climate Change Strategy.

- i. During the above consultation process, members, stakeholders, community groups and partners were invited to provide feedback and this has been collated together with the rich feedback gathered through the consultation. The feedback has been analysed, with similar comments grouped together (**Annex D**).
 - j. Throughout the last 18 months, thematic cross-party scrutiny committees have explored different aspects of the 10 year strategies. The list of scrutiny meetings is at the end of this report. Scrutiny discussions influenced each of the strategies, for example the Climate Change Scrutiny influenced the development of the Economic Strategy.
16. CSCM scrutiny meetings scheduled for July have been postponed.
 17. Feedback gathered throughout the above process is now informing the development of the Local Transport Strategy, which is also drawing on multiple sources of insight including from York Civic Trust.
 18. Finally, feedback gathered through the 10 year strategy resident consultation is the start of the budget consultation process and has provided early sight of aspects of York residents are most concerned about.

Summary of feedback

19. A summary of the feedback from Our Big Conversation 10 year strategies and the independent targeted focus groups is below. Although there are some notable differences, broadly the feedback is very similar for each strategy.
20. Throughout the feedback, participants have recognised that Executive will continue to need to balance the needs of individual groups with the wider population.
21. There are five common themes that have been articulated throughout:
 - a. Cost – what financial burden does the Climate Change Strategy place on residents and businesses?

- b. Ambitions – are we ambitious enough? there is an inherent tension between the pace of change, scale of ambition and cost
 - c. Interdependencies – there are significant co-benefits between delivering the strategies together that has been identified through the comments – specifically climate action comments that have been provided in response to the Economic and Health and Wellbeing Strategies, including the health impact of climate action and the health benefits of an inclusive economy.
 - d. Individual perspectives – the focus groups (and demographic differences in the attitudinal study, **Annex D**) show the differing requirements and recommendations of different groups of people. Executive will need to balance these differences throughout decision making.
 - e. Targets – understanding the Climate Change targets has created some confusion. This will be resolved through the revised strategy and draft Action Plan, with more work to follow to understand anticipated impact of the actions.
22. Ultimately the inherent tension between pace and cost of change, , ambition and interdependency will rest with the Executive to resolve. Ongoing resident engagement will help inform the Executive.
23. The consultation process took place over 18 months, starting in the aftermath of the pandemic and concluding as fuel prices rocketed and during the highest heat wave since records began, with many of the Climate Change Strategy priorities recognised as the most important of all strategic priorities.

Our Big Conversation - 10 year strategies – summary

24. The Climate Change Strategy was simultaneously the most and least supported, with two thirds in favour and nearly a third not supporting. The main issue raised was the perceived lack of an action plan, and a draft has been developed in response (**Annex F**)
25. Over 75% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that all five of the principles in the strategies were correct with the most important being the commitment to *build inclusive, healthy and fair communities* followed by our commitment to *adapt to change*.

26. Key strategic priorities were mostly supported (recognised as either a priority or a high priority) with *reducing carbon, reforming local transport* (the two highest priorities), *improving the Natural Environment, Energy Supply, making good health more equal, preventing poor health now and starting good health and wellbeing young* all noted as more of a priority. It's interesting to note how climate change ambition dominates the priorities.
27. Residents and businesses highlighted several areas where they could contribute to delivering the strategies, and also where they would like the council to focus. Their feedback has helped inform the Climate Change Action Plan (**Annex E**) and will be fed into subsequent action plans.

Our Big Conversation – stakeholder feedback

28. During the consultation process, members, stakeholders, community groups and partners were invited to provide feedback and this has been collated together with the rich feedback gathered through the consultation. The feedback has been anonymised, categorised, with similar comments grouped together (**Annex D**).
29. The council has provided a response to the main themes of this feedback – which helps residents and stakeholders see the difference their feedback has made.
30. The council would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who provided this rich and valuable source of insight and intelligence. Together, their feedback has made a material and positive difference to the final strategy and Action Plan.

Our Big Conversation – focus groups – summary feedback

31. Cost was seen as the largest barrier to change, although all participants are keen to change what they can with carbon offsetting distrusted. Education and maintaining the momentum of any changes were felt to be key to driving then delivering enduring change.
32. Participants feel both central and local government and large organisations bore the highest burden of responsibility for driving change.
33. Any change should be equitable and beneficial to all.

34. Participants are strongly in favour of the council taking climate action through leading by example but there were mixed views about the achievability of the Action Plan (**Annex F**) responds to this challenge.
35. Affordability of housing as a driver for economic growth was a great concern for residents, as was the cost of living in York and there was a reoccurring recommendation that York sets a “York Living Wage”. A lack of industrial diversity was highlighted as an issue with Leeds perceived to have better diversity of job opportunities and a lower cost of living than York.
36. There is a perceived tension between economic growth and sustainability goals with York’s transport infrastructure considered inadequate with high congestion and poor alternatives to car use, and a perception that the council do not understand car use is essential for some groups. Although participants were keen car usage should be discouraged, a majority felt significant improvements to alternatives are needed to tempt them away from the “easy option” of car use.
37. There is a perceived tension between residents and tourists and whether a reliance on the tourism sector would harm York’s ability to diversify economically in the future.
38. Respondents did not trust generic consultations and called for strategies to be co-produced along with residents. This highlights the need for ongoing engagement which was not seen as a priority compared to the other areas in the consultation.

Climate Change Strategy

39. The Climate Change Strategy has been updated following Scrutiny’s discussion in April, and subsequent Scrutiny discussions, together with resident, stakeholder, business and partner feedback collated during the summer as a result of Our Big Conversation 10 year Strategies consultation.
40. The draft strategy (**Annex E**) is included for Scrutiny to note the impact they, and others, have had on the development of the strategy.

Draft Action Plan

41. The Draft Action Plan (**Annex F**) contains a list of 161 potential actions that support our net zero ambition by 2030. The actions identified cover the eight priority themes of the draft Climate Change Strategy and are based on the previous work done by Leeds University (Net Zero Roadmap for York), pathway modelling by Anthesis, best practice guidance from the Local Government Association, recommended actions for Local Authorities by Friends of the Earth, stakeholder workshops, consultation feedback and officer engagement.
42. The Action Plan provides high level estimates covering carbon impacts, cost implications, timescales, co-benefits, constraints, level of council influence and current stage of implementation.
43. Ongoing work is taking place to add more comprehensive and quantified implementation information to consider all of the actions and levers required to achieve net zero.
44. The Action Plan will be a live document and reviewed annually. It will change over time in response to the reporting and feedback mechanisms that track progress against our ambition.
45. The Action Plan is itself contributing to the objectives within the strategy to track action, monitor progress, report annually and assign responsibility.

Council Plan

46. The council plan is at the heart of the strategies which responds to the priorities *Well paid Jobs and an inclusive economy and a cleaner and greener city and Good health and wellbeing*.

Implications

- **Financial** The Action Plan notes where funding has been provided, or where the action is a “statement of intent” pending funding from alternative sources. It is not possible for the council to deliver all the actions without successfully securing additional funding.
- **Human Resources (HR)** (*none*)
- **Equalities** an Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the Strategy.

- **Legal** Any issues requiring legal support will be addressed as and when they arise.
- **Crime and Disorder** *none*
- **Information Technology (IT)** *none*
- **Property** *none*
- **Other** Communications and engagement remains a core element of the development of the strategies.

Risk Management

Under-representation: There was a risk that seldom heard voices were not given the opportunity to contribute. To mitigate this risk, community groups were invited to take part and focus groups have been held with individuals with protected characteristics or those who did not engage in the original survey. Engagement is an ongoing process with more discussions to follow. Feedback is published in full on the Open Data platform and shared across the council.

Complexity: Climate change is complex. There are multiple variables compounded by myths and misunderstandings. People know change is needed but are at a loss of where to start, especially with rising costs. In addition, developing three different strategies in tandem introduces complexity and could result in a confusing and disjointed narrative. By explaining the interdependency of climate change with other aspects such as health and wellbeing, the economy and transport and how they will be delivered through Policy and Plans in the strategy and policy framework, it will appear simpler for audiences to both engage and contribute. A summary of the Strategies will also be published and website updated.

Conflicting feedback: there are multiple opportunities for residents, experts and Executive members to feedback about the strategies. This feedback has help refine the strategies, although in some cases feedback conflicts and cannot be incorporated. A summary of the feedback has been collated with the recommended responses discussed with the relevant Executive member.

Contact Details

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Approved: X
Date: 21/09/22

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *List information for all*

Shaun Gibbons, Head of Carbon Reduction
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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

Yes

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annex A: Climate Change Technical Annex

Annex B: OBC Focus Groups – summary

Annex C: OBC summary

Annex D: OBC 10 year strategies – detailed feedback

Annex E: Climate Change draft Strategy

Annex F: Climate Change draft Action Plan

Annex G: Climate Change EIA

Background papers

Engagement strategy

[Agenda for Executive on Thursday, 22 April 2021, 5.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 123

Climate Change

[Agenda for Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 12 April 2022, 5.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) – item 4

[Agenda for Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 8 March 2022, 5.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) – item 5

[\(Public Pack\) Agenda Document for Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee, 10/02/2022 17:30 \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 4

[Agenda for Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 12 January 2022, 5.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) – item 30

[Agenda for Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 12 October 2021, 5.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) – item 22 and 23

[Scrutiny Report - Climate Change Engagement Plan - July 2021.pdf \(york.gov.uk\)](#)

[Agenda for Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change on Wednesday, 16 December 2020, 11.00 am \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 13

Health and Wellbeing

[Agenda for Health and Wellbeing Board on Wednesday, 20 July 2022, 4.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) – item 100

[Agenda for Health and Wellbeing Board on Wednesday, 19 January 2022, 4.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) - Item 75

Economy

[Agenda for Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning on Tuesday, 28 June 2022, 10.00 am \(york.gov.uk\)](#) – item 5

[Inclusive Growth Update report EMDS April 2022.pdf \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 59

[January 2022 Quarterly Economic Update.pdf \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 46

[Agenda for Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning on Wednesday, 20 October 2021, 3.00 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) – item 20

[Report to Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning Decision Session - 27th April 2021](#)

[Report to Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning Decision Session - 26th Jan 2021](#)

[Scrutiny report - Economy & Place Scrutiny - 24th November 2020](#)

[Report to Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning Decision Session - 21st October 2020](#)

[Report to Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning Decision Session - 16th March 2020](#)

[Scrutiny report - Economy & Place Scrutiny - 12th Feb 2020](#)

Scrutiny committees that were cancelled

[Agenda for Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee & Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee - Commissioned Joint Committee on Tuesday, 12 July 2022, 1.00 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#)

[Agenda for Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee & Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee - Commissioned Joint Committee meeting on Wednesday, 13 July 2022, 1.00 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#)