

# Report to Economic Development and Transport Policy and Scrutiny Committee from the Executive Member for Environment

15<sup>th</sup> September 2015

## 1. Environment Strategy

York has strong reasons to appreciate the effects of Climate Change through the impact of flooding. The Council has a responsibility to lead in the progression towards a sustainable use of resources based on the principle of 'one planet living' recognising the finite resources of the planet and the limited ability for absorption of waste. I am working with officers to bring forward proposals for how this will work, and to ensure that as far as possible there is a joined-up approach towards working by the different teams within council. I am meeting with businesses and other partners to understand how they are responding to a move towards a more sustainable economy and hope that this can be through joint work with this committee to spread good practice in the city.

There are savings which can be made in terms of energy and water use to ensure the utilisation of resources for frontline services, which also in this case make a significant impact in reducing carbon emissions, and the use of limited resources. All councillors and officers are part of this approach and my intention is to develop plans which will fully engage these groups and the wider public.



## **2. New Carbon Management Programme**

The council needs to take a lead with support for renewable power and energy conservation. The success of the Carbon Management Programme begun in September 2007 (which had a target for 25% reduction of the 2006/07 baseline by 2013) was based on annual targets based on specific projects. I have asked for a review of the current baseline and for a programme of projects which can be reviewed for 'stretch' targets. This should be complete by the winter and will enable a long-term council Carbon Management Programme to be developed. The council had benefited from advice from the Carbon Trust, having been selected for the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in April 2007, and therefore I would be seeking to ensure the utilisation of external advice to assist with the development of carbon management strategies and for water use to be included in the programme. The council needs to act in a joined up way on this objective. Development of the council's fleet will be included in this programme and linked in with the delivery of Air Quality targets.

## **3. Generation of renewable power and energy efficiency**

We need to look at how the council can make most use of its land and property portfolio for the generation of renewable power which will reduce future power bills, and thus protect finances for frontline services as a consequence. There is significant survey work that needs to be done first, but I have asked officers to look at which buildings are suitable for further investigation. Many of the council buildings are schools, and as a school governor I am aware of the way in which delegated funding of budgets makes the return of savings on investment more complicated.

Nevertheless, I will be working with the Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People to encourage schools to come forward as many governing bodies are looking at how they can reduce their energy cost.

There are opportunities for the council to encourage the local generation of renewable energy appropriate to the location. This can be either on council land/property or through new developments. I have asked that a report comes to the Executive this autumn to progress this work and includes feasibility studies. Partnership working in this field needs to be enhanced to share best practice, and to assist promoting the city as an innovative location to encourage technology, businesses and for the benefits to be taken up by the public.



***Example of progress: Energy Performance Certificate ratings at Energise Sports Centre***

The figures below show a continued improvement with the application of energy conservation and recent onsite renewables (PV) panels – linked to the Solar Schools Initiative of which York High School was the first school in Yorkshire to be involved. On site electricity is being generated by PV cells on the roof of the building.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Rating</b>
2012	C63
2013	C53
2014	B47
2015	B44

**4. Transport – Air Quality Work**

The council developed the Low Emission Strategy in tandem with the LTP3 Local Transport Plan and this has seen progress in increasing the number of electric vehicles in the city centre. The revised Air Quality Action Plan 3 will come back through the new decision making process in November and will be an important step towards meeting our targets. Having seen the progression of the air quality service from a rudimentary set of equipment in De Grey House in the early 1990s, I am keen to see progress in the scientific data produced by the current equipment which is being supported by the University of York and Perkin Elmer.



## 5. Business Improvement District (BID)

I have been supporting the proposals for the Business Improvement District (BID) and have met with the team who have been progressing this scheme to the ballot stage.

The appearance of the city centre environment has been a key concern of businesses. I have been working with officers to set out the baseline that the council has the resources to deliver (and to be held against service level). I have asked that a separate review being undertaken on services includes assessment of equipment and vehicles being used to fully enable council staff to work most effectively. Enhanced provision would be available to be tendered above this level by the BID Board.



Should the vote for the BID be successful then I would like to progress the harmonisation of the waste collection times and points so that waste is 'presented' for the minimum possible periods and at times which prevent the risk of it being spilled into the street at night.

## 6. Flood Defence

The Environment Agency is undertaking modelling work on the projections of Climate Change on Ouse river flooding, and this work will be reporting soon. It will have a significant impact on the assessment for the hard defences in the city centre (such as the walls along North Street) and what enhancements will be needed to maintain the current level of defence for forthcoming decades. So that York can benefit from the projected allocations in future years (Year 7 onwards) of the current capital programme there will need to be pressure to enable planning work to take place (it was the lack of scheme planning which meant that the Leeman Road defences lost out to the project for Ripon in 2007) and the securing of external funding. The current regime for Environment Agency funding means that Government grants need to be matched in part by additional funding in order to qualify for Flood Grant in Aid. The Leeman Road Flood Defences was one of the first to come under the new scheme, and was retained in the regional programme due to the £1 million allocated in the February 2011 council budget.

I have attended my first Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) since 2011, and I have joined the Programming and Investment Sub Group which reviews the financial performance of the RFCC.



*Leeman Road Flood Defences at handover on November 2014*

Besides interest in river flooding there is increased interest in rain flooding/surface water drainage. There will be a report on the work which is to be undertaken to get to the bottom of some recurring issues in the city, and I have asked that a comprehensive table of locations for work based on modelling and also historic experience are included in the report so that the councillors and the public can ensure that we have a thorough understanding of the problems that we face across the city.

## **7. Green Jobs Task Group**

The Joint Administration agreement identified the re-establishment of the Green Jobs taskforce (which existed prior to 2011) as one of the ways the Council will seek to deliver a prosperous, sustainable city for all.

Whilst there is not a single definition for green jobs the United Nations Environment Programme uses the definition of:

*"work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development (R&D), administrative, and service activities that contribute(s) substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. Specifically, but not exclusively, this includes jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high efficiency strategies; de-carbonize the economy; and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution."*

This does not necessary cover the 'greening' of jobs which also forms a key element of delivering the economic and environmental benefits which are central to the green jobs agenda.

There are 3 main elements to the green jobs agenda:

- 1) Creating new green job opportunities - training and job creation
- 2) Focusing on resource efficiency, greening existing businesses and up – skilling staff
- 3) Extracting new green businesses and inward investment.

Around these different elements, the task group will be developed in a way where it can add greatest value to what is already happening; maximizing impact and avoiding duplication.



### Green Job opportunities

Overall, York has a slightly lower proportion than the national average of jobs within environmental industries (e.g. location quotients for relevant SIC codes), therefore a more targeted approach is needed to deliver green jobs growth:

Table 1 (below) outlines the initial opportunities to explore

<u>Opportunity to explore</u>	<u>Additional information</u>
Continue to support and grow the BioVale initiative	World leading research base and industry engagement around the ‘valorization’ (creating value) of waste, and developing greener bio-based products to replace crude-oil based counterparts.
<b>Leeds City Region (LCR)</b>	
LCR Green Economy Panel	City of York to be better represented on this panel to maximise opportunities.
Energy Accelerator	CYC to develop a pipeline of renewable energy projects.

Better Homes Yorkshire	Deliver energy efficiency measures to households across York (e.g. the recent exemplar house at Carnot Street for hard to treat pre 1919 terrace housing).
European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) – T4 Low carbon stream	Maximise opportunities for funding energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in housing and across the public estate.
ESIF – T3 SME Resource Efficiency Programme	Programme to offer Small Medium sized Enterprises resource efficiency advice and support. This is to be embedded into Make it York's offer to businesses. This work would fall within their existing Service Level Agreement,
Strategic Heat Programme	Exploring potential for district heat opportunities in the city.
<b>Council / City</b>	
CYC	Exercise powerful leadership by developing a low carbon, resource efficient council through the new Carbon Management Programme, procurement, planning and waste schemes.
Ultra low emission City, LES, and Office for Low Emissions (OLEV) City Bid, itravel	Accelerating the deployment of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) and sustainable transport across the city.

All of the above could help deliver

- i. new green job opportunities / training,
- ii. resource efficient businesses and staff training
- iii. help attract green businesses /new inward investment, and
- iv. reduce environmental impacts and Green House Gas (GHG) emissions
- v. help create a leading one planet, sustainable city.

## **8. General Note**

As there is some overlap with the work of the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee I have given some of the comments above in my report to them in my report in July, however, I have noted the specific responsibilities of this Scrutiny Committee and tailored this report to meet them.

**Andrew Waller**

**Executive Member for Environment**