



**Councillor Chris Pearson, Chair of the Policy Review Committee**

**Update to Council on 13 December 2022**

The Policy Review Committee has met twice since the last update to Council on 27 September 2022. The meetings took place on 18 October and 6 December 2022.

**Policy Review Committee Meeting – 18 October 2022**

Members considered the following matters:

**Monk Fryston and Hillam Community Buildings Sustainability Project**

The Committee welcomed Mr Ray Newton from the Monk Fryston and Hillam Community Buildings Sustainability Project to the meeting who gave an overview of the project, which aimed to make five community buildings (the Community Centre, the Primary School, St Wilfred's Church and Church Hall and the Cricket Club) across the two villages of Monk Fryston and Hillam carbon neutral.

It was explained that the project had come about through a small group of people who wished to reduce the communities carbon emissions, and who joined forces with other like-minded people and organisations within the two villages to effect change.

Members noted that external advice had been provided by the Chief Officer at Selby District Association of Voluntary Services (AVS), and the Yorkshire Energy Doctor, Kate Urwin. It was commented that their contribution had been invaluable in terms of signposting the group towards organisations who could potentially offer grant funding and in establishing baseline electricity usage data, suggesting ways in which to make the buildings more energy efficient, and investing in a thermal imaging camera.

Members heard a timeline of events for the project which had been conceived in 2019. A Steering Group had been formed and following a community survey which established that there was strong support for the project, the group applied for a grant from the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) to undertake a feasibility study to assess if the aim of making the buildings carbon neutral was realistic; the application was successful.

The feasibility study clearly showed that given the dispersal of the buildings round the two villages that they could not benefit from a shared power or heating system, therefore each building was surveyed on its individual requirements with a customised solution developed for each one.

Members heard some of the actions which had already been implemented, such as mounted solar panels, EcoWall insulation, electricity storage battery, replacing lights and windows and installation of a new heating control system.

Mr Newton informed the Committee they had been encouraged by the Council's Low Carbon Project Officer to share their knowledge and write a press release that would

publicise what the group were achieving, this had prompted pod casts and the group being featured on a Radio York broadcast.

Members asked questions to include, were any local businesses involved with the project, where were the simplest savings to be made, who was responsible for the governance and any grant funding monies received; and how many electricity storage batteries were in use at the Community Centre. It was confirmed that as the project had started at the beginning of the pandemic, all the local businesses had been closed, and therefore none were involved with the project, and the simplest savings were made through a reduction in energy consumption. In terms of governance, a Steering Group met twice yearly, with any advice being passed to the individual organisations. Any individual funding received sat within the organisation that had applied and been granted the funds. With regard to the Community Centre, the Committee were advised that the building had one electricity storage battery, as the electricity supply cable limited the number of batteries which could be installed. In the five months from May to September 2022 it was noted that the building had taken only 4% of electricity from the national electricity grid.

Mr Newton stated that the group did not offer advice, as they were not suitably qualified to do so, however they did share their experience and learning with other village groups in the hope that they would not make the same mistakes made by the group in the early days of the project.

Finally, in relation to what it was felt the Council could do to enable sustainability, Mr Newton listed a number of suggested initiatives to include developing an exemplar building, supporting local community groups, and signposting groups to public works loans via Parish Councils.

### **Update on the Low Carbon Working Group (LCWG)**

The Committee had received a short update note on the work of the Low Carbon Working Group (LCWG) prior to the meeting. Members had a number of queries regarding the information contained within the note in relation to the role that the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Y&NYLEP) would be taking in co-ordinating on the low carbon agenda in the future, the total number of trees which had been planted in the district by Selby District Council, were solar farms included within the Climate Change Strategy; and did fuel poor homes refer to poor insulation, and if so was there a target to be met.

The Committee had noted that NYCC had secured £2m of funding through the local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme to deliver electric vehicle charge points across deeply rural parts of the county. Members queried why the funding was being used for this purpose when local bus service routes were being discontinued. The Solicitor to the Council was unable to provide an answer to the queries but stated that she would speak with the officers concerned and circulate the information to the Committee.

Members agreed that they would like an additional Committee meeting adding into the calendar to discuss the low carbon agenda within the district and also to receive a presentation on the Y&NY LEP's Routemap to Carbon Negative.

## **Universal Credit Update**

The Committee heard that the number of recipients of Universal Credit within the Selby area, taken from the latest figures available from May 2022, stood at 3921 recipients.

Members queried why the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) managed migration of legacy benefit recipients onto Universal Credit had stopped. The Solicitor to the Council was unable to provide an answer to the query but stated that she would speak with the officers concerned and circulate the information to the Committee

## **Work Programme**

The Committee considered the work programme for 2022-23. At the last meeting of Policy Review Members had requested that once the Selby Local Plan consultation period had closed, that the Committee review the documentation arising from the Local Plan work. It was confirmed that the item had been added to the Policy Review work programme for January 2023.

Members were reminded that the next date in the Committee Calendar for Policy Review Committee was Tuesday 6 December 2022 however this was being held provisionally and it was queried if the date should be removed from the calendar. The Committee agreed that they wished to confirm the 6 December 2022 date and requested that, as had been discussed at agenda item number 5, the Chief Officer of the AVS along with officers from Selby District Council and North Yorkshire County Council be invited to attend the meeting, to discuss the low carbon agenda within the district, and receive a presentation on the Y&NY LEP's Routemap to Carbon Negative.

## **Policy Review Committee Meeting – 6 December 2022**

Members are due to consider the following matters:

Selby Sustainability Partnership and Our Zero Selby Project  
York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Routemap to Carbon Negative  
Emerging North Yorkshire Council (NYC) Climate Change Strategy  
Policy Review Work Programme 2022-23

As the meeting took place after the deadline for the Council agenda papers, a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

The Policy Review Committee will be meeting next in January 2023.

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