

## Low Carbon Working Group

Venue: Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby,  
YO8 9FT

Date: Thursday, 27 February 2020

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillor T Grogan in the Chair

Councillors T Grogan, M Jordan, J Shaw-Wright and S  
Shaw-Wright

Officers Present: Dave Caulfield, Director of Economic Regeneration and  
Place, Michelle Dinsdale, Senior Policy and Performance  
Officer, Ruth Hardingham, Planning Development Manager,  
Ben Jewell, Senior Economic Development Officer and  
Victoria Foreman, Democratic Services Officer

Others Present: N/A

### **4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors K Arthur, J  
Cattanach, M McCartney and R Packham.

Councillor S Shaw-Wright was in attendance as a representative for Councillor  
R Packham.

### **5 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **6 MINUTES**

The Low Carbon Working Group considered the minutes of the meeting held  
on 16 January 2020.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**To approve the minutes of the Working Group meeting held  
on 16 January 2020.**

## 7 PRESENTATION

Officers gave a presentation to Members which covered actions from the previous meeting of the working group, carbon baselining, other Council activity in the district, partner activity, planning and possible actions. The presentation would be made available for Members to view on the Council's intranet.

Members noted that at the previous meeting Members had requested several actions which had been undertaken by Officers. These included arranging the next meeting, clarifying working group reporting arrangements, investigating consultant support, identifying an outline carbon footprint for the Council, looking into the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Climate Change Action Plan, establishing a timescale for reporting the work of the working group and creating a resource library on the Council's intranet. The section on the intranet was titled Low Carbon Working Group; a link to the page would be sent to Members.

The working group acknowledged that they would have to report to the Executive through the Policy Review Committee; project timescales had been provided in the presentation.

In terms of commissioned work on carbon baselining, APSE (the Association for Public Service Excellence) would be undertaking this, and further information to complement this work had been shared by NYCC by way of its Climate Change Action Plan.

The Group suggested that in relation to monitoring of air quality, Environmental Health information be investigated, which fed into the Council's Air Quality Action Plan.

Officers gave an overview of the work on the carbon footprint of the Council so far; the bar chart in the presentation gave an indication of the footprint, and included leisure centres, the assets fleet, contact centre, civic centre (including the hospital) and the grey fleet (staff). Omissions from the chart included the community centres, waste fleet (which was expected to be quite high), waste itself (i.e. to landfill), Member travel and council housing. Some data was still outstanding.

Officers explained that the Council occupied less than half of the entire Civic Centre building, with the hospital taking up more space. The police presence in the building would also account for some of the footprint. It was important the all building users were included in the work regarding carbon footprint, i.e. via a building user group. It was noted that the Council had significant power to influence beyond its own carbon footprint, especially with regard to its own housing stock and the waste operation.

Members suggested the installation and use of solar panels on Council buildings, and looking into how staff commuted to work, i.e. how many drove or used public transport. Officers explained that through the work of APSE a

methodology would be developed to advise the Council on things such as solar panels, and that staff work-based travel and commuting hadn't been considered as a part of the baselining but could potentially be. Some Councils encouraged work-based travel by cycle and paid a cycling allowance, similar to the car use allowance. Wakefield Council's new offices were given as an example of reducing staff carbon footprint as they had no parking spaces for staff, as were York City Council who had increased parking charges to discourage staff from driving to work. A workplace sustainable travel plan for the Council was an option to consider.

Across the county and the region there was a great deal of activity on low carbon issues, and multiple examples of best practice that could be referenced. Members noted that due to the volume of work going on, Selby District Council would need to be focused on what projects it wanted to take forward, otherwise the scope could be too broad.

Leeds City Council had been holding citizen engagement events on tackling climate change, replacing its fleet of vehicles for electric ones (including an option for hire of the vehicles by other businesses) and looking at employee travel. The Leeds City region were well resourced and were mapping a pathway to be carbon neutral by 2038, with a focus of big advances having been made by 2030.

Warrington Council were acquiring land for solar farms for large scale local authority led energy production, whilst also exploring the commercial investment element.

Members discussed a carbon neutral housing estate in Airedale that had been delivered by Wakefield and District Housing. There were a number of developers across the county that were focusing on low or carbon neutral housing, such as Legal and General in Selby and Kingspan in Sherburn in Elmet.

The modular housing used by Legal and General was more expensive to build than traditionally constructed housing but was more energy efficient; Officers suggested that Members of the working group may be interested in receiving a presentation on this from L&G in the future, perhaps at a special meeting focused on housing and the low carbon agenda.

Officers emphasised that it was for the working group to decide what aspects of low carbon in the district it wished to focus on in its work, and suggested that matters that the Council itself could deliver or directly influence with partners would be the most useful. This reflected the view of Members at the first Low Carbon Working Group meeting.

Officers explained to Members that there were significant opportunities with regards to Drax Power, which would be stopping coal use from 2021 and focusing on renewable energy and carbon capture and storage.

The North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had stepped up their

focus on low carbon, with the whole area having the potential to be a carbon sink due to schemes such as upland peat restoration, tree planting, encouraging local businesses to capture carbon and requesting government funding to invest in low carbon projects as part of its new Local Industrial Strategy and work on the emerging Devolution Deal. The bio and bio renewable economy could be a unique selling point for the region, as there were a number of big businesses that could make a huge difference if they changed how they worked, e.g. food and drink manufacturers.

NYCC were working on the low carbon agenda and had recently included in their decision-making processes the need to assess the environmental impact of a decision. A draft action plan had been developed which included information on potential projects relating to a solar farm, vehicle fleet, home to school transport, conversion of buildings to high efficiency gas boilers or alternative heat methods, tree planting, peat restoration, renewable electricity supplies and supporting schools and other organisations to improve energy efficiency. The action plan was available for Members to view on the intranet.

Members noted the development of the White Rose Forest Partnership, which had a 25-year plan to implement the Northern Forest and was a Leeds City Region wide initiative. Sites were being sought across local authority areas to significantly increase tree planting, which could help to tackle flooding and aid in carbon capture. The Woodland Trust would be working closely on the project and had funding available. Two programmes within the partnership were 'Green Streets' to improve green corridors, and 'Landscapes for Water' to alleviate flood risk. There were significant benefits to the scheme, including carbon capture, flood management, health and biodiversity. The aim of the partnership was for district-wide plans by the end of 2020.

The working group agreed that the Forest Partnership was a project that the Council could certainly engage with and emphasised the importance of choosing the right sort of trees that would make the district both cleaner and greener. Links with farm diversification, key private estates and local authority land were also discussed. Members suggested approaching local landowners, such as Sam Smiths Brewery, who may want to be involved in the tree planting initiative. Residents with large gardens may also want to contribute to the work of the scheme; engagement with local people was key. Another suggested avenue for planting space was to look at the Council's assets register and the land registry to identify available land. Wildflower planting and re-wilding could also be incorporated into the work.

Officers went on to give Members an overview of the role of planning in relation to the low carbon agenda. Members discussed the existing frameworks (the NPPF and Core Strategy) for planning and noted that both already had strong aspects for decision making in how the Council implemented carbon reduction measures through development. Key themes included improving resource efficiency, promoting low carbon and renewable energy, water efficiency, landscaping and sustainable travel.

The new Local Plan being developed by the Council would have a low carbon

'golden thread' running through it; it would be included in every aspect of the new plans, such as where developments were placed, how to limit impact on climate change, transport links and locating development away from areas with a high risk of flooding. Councillors and the public would be involved in the development of the plans, with an Issues and Options document currently out to public consultation and the Preferred Options document due for public consultation in early 2021.

Neighbourhood Plans were key to tackling climate change by looking at sustainable travel and green infrastructure. Members emphasised the importance of working with local communities on such matters, as they needed the support of local people if they were to be a success.

The working group discussed the timescales set out in the presentation, which were as follows:

- An update report to Policy Review at its meeting in April;
- An update report to the Executive at its meeting in June;
- A final report with recommendations to Policy Review Committee in July;
- A final report with recommendations to the Executive in September.

Members confirmed that they were happy with the proposed timescales.

In terms of engagement and consultation on low carbon proposals, the group agreed that the Council had an opportunity to really influence behaviours and make a difference across the district and the region, and that local people, businesses and stakeholders should be involved.

Officers asked Members to send over suggestions for tree planting sites and agreed that local parish and town councils and schools should also be included this work.

Members were made aware that they would need to also consider the criteria for deciding which potential projects should be carried forward, and as such, should give some thought to an assessment framework, perhaps be linked to the Council's Corporate Plan. Officers stated that they would develop a list of potential projects and ideas and try to structure them by showing what was deliverable now and in the future, as well as things that were possible but unlikely (on a 'wish list').

The first draft of a list of potential projects would be presented to Members at the next meeting of the working group, as well as updated carbon footprint baseline data.

Members suggested using the 'Programme for People' as a way to accelerate the work on climate change.

Lastly, Officers were asked to note an issue raised regarding the idling of vehicles at taxi ranks and outside schools and the effect this would have on climate change.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the presentation.**
- ii. To note that the recommendations of the working group would need to be reported through the Policy Review Committee.**
- iii. To suggest that Officers explore the Environmental Health Team's air quality monitoring and data.**
- iv. That the working group receive a presentation from Legal and General on low carbon housing.**
- v. To note the proposed project/report timescales as set out in the presentation.**
- vi. That Members send to Officers suggested sites for tree planting that they were aware of in the district.**
- vii. To ask Officers to arrange the next meeting of the working group, at which potential projects and updated carbon footprint baseline data would be presented to Members.**
- viii. To ask Officers to note an issue raised regarding the idling of vehicles at taxi ranks and outside schools and the affect this would have on climate change.**

The meeting closed at 6.12 pm.