

PRESENT:	Councillor Matt Bryan (Chairman)	
	Councillors Paul Bowers, Robert Cernik, Simon Eardley, Gillian Edwards, Jill Houlbrook, Gina Lewis and Christine Warner	
Visiting Members:	Councillor Karen Shore (as Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Strategic Transport)	
Officers in attendance:	Charlie Seward Laurence Ainsworth Amy Ord	Deputy Chief Executive (Place) Director of Public Services Reform Head of Communication and Engagement
	Will Pearson Lyn Brown	Strategy and Innovation Officer Democracy and Elections Officer
Invited Speakers:	Matt Rooney Brad Blundell Matt Babic	Anthesis Anthesis Anthesis

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this first meeting of the Taskforce.

2 CLIMATE CHANGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Charlie Seward, Deputy Chief Executive (Places), presented an overview of the Council's position in relation to Climate Change and the wider context of local government's response locally, nationally and internationally. This included the borough's current position in relation to Greenhouse gas emissions and the response to the Council's climate emergency declaration.

There were three areas identified where the Council could make an impact:-

- those areas under the direct control of the Council;
- to enable or influence e.g. partners, large public sector agencies, voluntary and community sector; and
- as leaders, having the ability to influence locally and nationally by lobbying government.

The following was highlighted as part of early thinking:

- our baseline position in terms of current activity, action and carbon emissions needed to be fully understood;
- a programme of action rather than plans/strategies was needed;
- the need to look beyond our boundaries both for best practice and in delivering interventions;
- a range of stakeholders and experts needed to be involved;

- this was a long term programme which required a clear destination but with measurable milestones and short term actions;
- the need to embed this into the long-term future of the organisation / borough.

Issues raised by Members:-

- The Council would need to play a variety of roles, as it only contributed 0.6% of the borough's emissions, but had an influence through policy, funding or national lobbying on a significant proportion of the remaining 99.4%.
- In relation to the schedule of the Taskforce, Members noted that Industry should be higher up the schedule given the high proportion of industrial emissions in the borough.
- The Taskforce was encouraged to make links with the Cambridge Centre for Climate Repair. It was discussed that net zero was not enough – if we were to achieve UK net zero some areas would have to begin repairing the climate. It was agreed to add this to the Taskforce's schedule.
- Members noted the potential of tidal power on the Mersey as a renewable opportunity. It was discussed that Cheshire West and Chester had a significant opportunity in terms of renewables, being well-placed for a number of different methods including geothermal, district heating, etc.
- The Taskforce discussed the importance of afforestation in relation to responding to climate change. There was an example discussed of the Mersey Forest working with large landowners to reforest parts of their land, and it was noted that Ethiopia had recently planted 350 million trees in one day.
- Members discussed an example from Lincolnshire, where the grass from verge cutting was used to produce electricity via biodigesters. Link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-36390785>
- The Taskforce asked that consideration be given to representing smaller farmers on the Taskforce, via an NFU representative. Members discussed the importance of agriculture as a local issue given the rurality of the borough and the presence of large farms with high methane production.

3 CLIMATE ADVISORY PANEL UPDATE

Charlie Seward, Deputy Chief Executive (Places), presented an update regarding the proposal to form an Advisory Panel, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive, to support the Taskforce. Panel representation, frequency of meetings and ways of working were discussed and it was noted the Panel would provide advice and representations from expert perspectives in relation to housing, energy, transport, waste, sustainable development, planning and industry.

In the ensuing discussion, the Taskforce reaffirmed that gender balance be prioritised in relation to the Advisory Panel. Members discussed the importance of agriculture as a local issue given the rurality of the borough and the presence of large farms with high methane production.

4 DEVELOPING OUR THINKING ON INTERVENTIONS

The Taskforce received a presentation from Matt Rooney and Brad Blundell from Anthesis, global sustainability Consultants, on the intervention modelling work they have been commissioned to carry out on behalf of the Council. This included emissions measurement and modelling around domestic and commercial property, transportation, energy supply and industry and waste interventions.

As part of this modelling, the SCATTER tool was outlined – Setting, City, Area, Targets and Trajectories for Emissions Reduction – which would be used to provide quantitative future pathways insight.

The importance of the following was highlighted:

- Selling’ the benefits of low or no-carbon interventions through their wider benefits to relevant stakeholders, e.g. insulation, improving health or wellbeing, rather than solely being focused on reduced energy use;
- Moving from strategy to action – an emergency needs to be responded to as an emergency.
- Filling the “gaps” – the role of innovation
 - Behaviour change and attitudes to ownership
 - Business models
 - Finance and funding
- Consumption based accounting
- Communication, awareness raising and education – the importance of working with school children
- Private sector/corporate motivation

A workshop session with Anthesis representatives and Taskforce members was planned in relation to the SCATTER tool to better understand the interventions required to achieve carbon neutrality in Cheshire West and Chester. A date and venue for a workshop in early October would be sought.

5 AN APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Amy Ord, Head of Communication and Engagement, gave a presentation on the potential approach to communication and engagement in relation to the climate emergency. This included initial engagement ideas, approaches to community campaigns, communication phases, a focus on behaviour change and the immediate communication activity currently underway.

Issues raised by Members:-

- Behaviour change was a significant challenge in order to influence attitudes and win over hearts and minds.
- The importance of how objectives would be framed as people would engage with different agendas.
- The importance of engaging with children and young people who would in turn cascade messages back to their parents and wider families.
- Recommended that consideration be given to adding a Schools representative to the Advisory Panel.
- Interactive games with children would demonstrate the consequences of choices and actions regarding climate change.

- Interactive methods of engagement, e.g. Vox Pop booth, could encourage different people to get involved.
- Members reinforced the need for a conference/summit (provisionally 22nd November 2019) supported by a call for evidence to enable residents, partners and other stakeholders to submit their views.

6 TERMS OF REFERENCE, GOVERNANCE, FUTURE WORK PLAN AND NEXT STEPS

The Terms of Reference for the Taskforce had been approved by Cabinet in May 2019 and these were noted by Members. This included the production of a report to Council by the Chief Executive within six months to determine the earliest date before 2045 that the Council and the borough as a whole could be carbon neutral, and revise its targets to meet that date (ideally 2030 to demonstrate leadership in the borough). These targets were to be managed through the Cheshire West and Chester Annual Monitoring Report, business Carbon Management Plans, the Green House Gas Emissions Directive of 2019 and whatever other appropriate means become available.

In terms of a future work plan, it was agreed that a suggested list in priority order be circulated for consideration. In addition to supporting the development of the report to Council outlined above, the taskforce would support the development of an evidence-based Climate Emergency Strategy for the borough over the next 18 months.

Members discussed that in order to make a significant impact on the climate emergency, there would be a need to quantify the cost and benefits of interventions.

The Chairman thanked Members, officers and the invited speakers for attending and for their contributions. Future meeting dates would be canvassed and circulated as soon as possible, with the next Taskforce taking place in mid-October.

Chairman

Date