

PRESENT: Andrew Lewis (Chairman), Councillor Matt Bryan, Will Pearson, Mike Gardner, Charlie Seward, Laurence Ainsworth, Ged Barlow, Phil McCabe, Mark Thompson, Colin Watson, Steve Hughes, Dave Brown, Charlie Steer, Paul Nolan, Simon Dowell

Apologies: Sarah McClelland
Rosslyn Colderley
Hannah Brooks
Jane Gaston

1 WELCOME AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Advisory Panel. The Chairman provided an overview of progress to date and set out that the Climate Advisory Panel was a body founded to support the Climate Taskforce, in bringing together experts from a range of sectors to provide guidance and recommend lines of enquiry to the Taskforce. The Chairman noted the Terms of Reference. These were agreed with one amendment; that the meetings would be open to the public to attend. It was noted that the minutes would also be published. Will Pearson provided an overview of the research commissioned by Anthesis. It was noted that the research presented some sobering messages about the scale of the challenge faced. It was requested that the group provide constructive challenge and feedback to inform and strengthen the research and wider work undertaken by the Council, and it was noted by the Chairman that this was a key role of the group.

2 ENERGY

Ged Barlow delivered a presentation regarding Cheshire West and Chester's energy systems, with a particular focus on the work of the Cheshire Energy Hub and the energy innovation district. It was discussed the Ellesmere Port consumes about five per cent of the UK's energy and that this project could reduce the area's carbon emissions by 34% in five years. The key objective of this project is to provide secure, low carbon and lower cost energy, via an innovative smart grid and energy trading solution.

Furthermore, the HyNet (hydrogen network) project was referenced, and it was discussed that this project could provide significant carbon reductions in the region, of approximately 1m tonnes per annum. The process of hydrogen production, Steam Methane Reformation, was discussed, and it was noted that Cheshire West has unique natural geographic assets such as the depleted oil and gas fields in the Mersey bay and the gas storage caverns which made the area uniquely well-suited to hydrogen production.

This is because the carbon dioxide captured in the production process could be stored in the Mersey bay oil and gas fields, while the storage caverns could be used to store hydrogen and act as a balancing mechanism for supply and demand in the grid.

3 WASTE

The Advisory Panel received a presentation from Mike Gardner, from WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme). It was noted that there should be an aim to move away from landfill, and that Cheshire West had made significant progress in this agenda. It was discussed that one of the key objectives for government in order to improve recycling rates was greater consistency between local authority areas. Additionally, Mike discussed that on Eunomia's local authority league table, Cheshire West was second in England in terms of waste and recycling performance.

Mike went on to discuss the implications of the new Environment bill on the waste landscape. The introduction of an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme was discussed as a potential opportunity for additional funding for local authorities. Additionally, the new powers for a deposit return scheme for packaging were referenced.

There were discussions regarding the importance of the waste and recycling hierarchy, with a need to focus on reduction, rather than solely reuse and recycling. This was followed by a discussion regarding the potential of per-capita waste targets, with a focus on behaviour change interventions, by ensuring that residents are required to think when disposing of their waste, e.g. by moving away from sorting after the waste is disposed of, to ensuring that residents sort waste at the point of disposal.

It was discussed that any decisions taken in relation to waste should be understood in the context of their carbon impact and that the most carbon efficient option may not be obvious, e.g. in that relating to the collection of garden waste, incineration can be more carbon-efficient than other options.

4 AOB

It was noted that the Advisory Panel would be consulted on the report to Council. It was discussed that small business would be one of the focuses of the next advisory panel, and that land use could also be considered as a topic.