

**Minutes of the Climate Emergency Taskforce
(virtual teleconference)
4 November 2020 (6pm – 8pm)**

Present: Councillors Matt Bryan (Chairman), Bob Cernik, Simon Eardley, Jill Houlbrook, Gina Lewis, Paul Bowers, Gill Edwards. Climate Advisory panel members: Charlie Seward, Paul Nolan, Ashley Rogers, Mark Thompson, Charlotte Harris, Niall MacFayden, Steve Hughes, Myles Kitcher, Simon Dowell, Andy Hulme, Clare Olver, Rebecca Collins, Nick Brelsford, Ged Barlow.

Officers: George Ablett, Mark Brazil, Morgan Jones, Georgina Patel (Qwest), Will Pearson, Sean Traynor, Catherine Walker, Alison Amesbury, David Butler

Apologies: Cllr Christine Warner, Andrew Lewis, Laurence Ainsworth, David Brown, Phil McCabe

1 Welcome and introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the teleconference meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christine Warner and Andrew Lewis, Laurence Ainsworth, David Brown and Phil McCabe.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 MINUTES

DECIDED: That

(1) the minutes of the Climate Emergency Taskforce held on 15 July 2020 be approved. Cllr Gina Lewis proposed the minutes, and Cllr Jill Houlbrook seconded the minutes.

5 Public Questions

The Chairman had been notified of one question from members of the public as follows:

Caroline Gerrard:

Following the implementation of the bus lanes on the A5116 the community in Upton, Bache & Moston have been discussing what impact this will have on their residential roads. We have seen an increase in non-local traffic since the bus lanes were implemented and we would like to know what the process would be for nominating Upton to pilot the Residential Design Guide which is mentioned in Section 4.5 action point 1 of the draft Climate Emergency Response Plan. We believe Upton is perfectly suited to piloting such a scheme, as it is only 2 miles from Storyhouse which is within the guidelines set out in the Gear Change document for active travel. We are also just 4 miles from Cheshire Oaks.

Upton already has infrastructure nearby such as the Greenway and the Canal, which would hopefully require minimal effort to integrate and provide that joined up solution we all want. In addition we have the added benefit of a train station giving access directly into Liverpool and beyond, and in the other direction into the

mainline train station at Chester. With the support of the council we have a real chance to create an environment that promotes walking and cycling and also promotes our historic city. Once we've got the scheme working in Upton, then hopefully we can replicate into Newton, Hoole and over to Boughton and the South East side of the city. We have residents willing to make this work and we would love to talk to the council about what we need to do to make this happen.

It was discussed that a response would be arranged to Caroline on this question.

6 Draft Climate Emergency Response Plan and Carbon Management Plan

Will Pearson and Georgina Patel updated on the process to develop the draft Climate Emergency Response Plan and draft Carbon Management Plan. It was discussed that this session was to present the draft Plans and seek the Taskforce and Advisory Panel's views on these, and invite comments on how they could best be shared with the public, partners and staff. It was noted that the Plans both sat within the context of the Council's strategic plan, Play your Part to Thrive, 2020-24. These plans were a result of Council's unanimous decision in May 2019 to declare a climate emergency, and set the borough an ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2045. It was described that this was reinforced in January 2020 when the Council's target was reaffirmed and a further target for the Council as an organisation to be carbon neutral by 2030 was set. Georgina Patel discussed the Council's carbon footprint within the context of the borough as a whole, which totals 26778 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, within the borough's total emissions of around 4.1 million tonnes per year. The Council's carbon emissions were described, with 42% coming from electricity, 40% from gas, 14% from waste, 3% from business miles, and 1% from water.

Will Pearson described the Climate Emergency response plan, noting that it was a "Consistent process set-up to monitor the organisation's performance in achieving its stated goals to support the borough to achieve carbon neutrality", that would enable resources to be prioritised and allocated effectively, and enable Councillors and the public to hold the Council to account for its performance on this key agenda. The timeline for the production of the Climate Emergency response plan was discussed, and that plan development began in August 2019 with the start of evidence gathering. This first phase also included public engagement, via the public evidence session of the Climate Emergency Taskforce, and West Cheshire Action on Climate Change, the borough's climate conference. The second phase of the plan's development process ran from February 2020 to November 2020, and included a series of thematic meetings covering key issues such as Energy, Transport, Waste, Housing and Offsetting. The discussion at these sessions is reflected in the Plan. The next and final phase of the Plan's development process runs from this Taskforce meeting to January 2021, and will involve public engagement on the draft plan, prior to their presentation to Cabinet in February 2021.

The importance of the actions and performance indicators within the plans was discussed. The Climate Emergency Response plan currently contains 61 indicators and 20 performance indicators. These enable progress against the plan to be monitored, via an annual report to Council, where the Plan will also be refreshed to take into account new developments, areas for improvement, partner priorities and Council priorities.

Will Pearson set out the format of the workshop session that would take place from 18:30 – 19:30. This involved seven workshops, on the following topics:

- Transport
- Energy and Industry
- Land Use, Climate Repair and Adaptation
- Housing
- Business Premises
- Waste and Recycling
- Carbon Management Plan

Considerations for the workshops included:

- Have we proposed a **consistent and co-produced approach** to tackling the Climate Emergency?
- Have **lessons been learned** from engagement with residents and from organisations that have robust approaches to responding to the Climate Emergency?
- Are the proposed actions **stretching and realistic**?
- How can the framework support **continuous service improvement**?
- How can the **public be able to access and engage** with the Climate Emergency Response Plan in order to hold the Council to account?
- How can **elected Members be supported** to use Climate Emergency Response Plan to carry out their roles?

The Chairman then directed attendees to attend their preferred workshops.

7 Workshop Sessions and Plenary

1. Transport, Energy and Industry

Sean Traynor described the following elements of key feedback in his sessions, relating to Transport, Energy and Industry:

- That the communications element of changing hearts and minds on moving to active or public transport, and that this should be appropriately funded.
- That there was feedback on indicators, relating to further splitting some performance indicators by mode/purpose to provide more detailed information on issues such as recreational vs commuting cycling, and that the level of ambition on these indicators should be reviewed.
- That energy and industry were inextricably linked, and that we should look at the decarbonising potential of industry via opportunities such as blue hydrogen, and support the roll-out of this to low carbon transport.
- That we should go beyond encouraging industry to considering co-investment in solutions.
- That we should be prudent in welcoming new businesses, noting that we do not want to see a range of high-emission new businesses entering the borough, as this would undermine existing efforts within the business community to de-carbonise, and it was discussed that businesses which off-shore emissions (whose emissions are displaced to other countries) are also part of the problem that needs to be addressed.

- It was discussed that council owned developments would benefit from having a minimum checklist of what these developments should do – the Council have to lead from the front on this issue.
- It was discussed that some of the contents of the existing plan would benefit from being re-balanced to emphasise the positive role that industry can take to decarbonise.
- It was discussed that Sean Traynor would discuss the COVID impacts on local mobility with Rebecca Collins.
- It was discussed that Electric buses are a mature technology that is being rolled out in London, and that the business case for these vehicles is rapidly improving.

2. Land use, climate repair, adaptation and Housing

Paul Nolan described the following elements of key feedback in his session, relating to Land Use, adaptation and climate repair:

- It was discussed that we were experiencing a biodiversity emergency as well as a climate emergency, and that the chapter could weave the biodiversity work in further. It was discussed that the use of native species in wildflower planting should be prioritised.
- That the Council would need to review moving away from using Peat in any of its services.
- That Council land has significant carbon emissions and it was suggested that the target should be reviewed to consider if it could be made more stretching.
- It was discussed that Biomass with carbon storage may be net negative and should be considered for inclusion in the plan.
- The chairman commented that we could expand the section on wetland potential in the report.

Alison Amesbury described the following elements of key feedback in her session, relating to Housing:

- The importance of working with Government – especially on planning policy in light of the national review that is underway.
- That there is potential to link to poverty emergency given the links to affordable warmth and fuel poverty.
- That there was an aspiration for new build homes to be carbon neutral – and that we need to understand if this is more expensive. Reviewing how willing developers are, and how we can we persuade those who aren't – and that there was a skills gap on delivering carbon neutral homes, and that increasing the level of skills would decrease the cost.
- It was discussed that a range of retrofit trials have been done in the UK, and that this was a key priority for government.
- That given the disruptive reputation of retrofit, that developing exemplar homes with real residents would be helpful.
- It was discussed that new build standards could also include rainwater and grey water saving, recycling storage and bicycle storage.
- The chairman discussed that there was a strong desire for Council to lead from the front on construction.

3. Business Premises, Waste and Recycling

Catherine Walker described the following elements of key feedback in her session, relating to Business premises:

- It was discussed that the fundamentals of how business is engaging with the climate emergency haven't changed but post-covid behavioural changes are beginning to emerge;
- That we needed to engage with both large and smaller businesses;
- That we need to quantify the impact/contribution businesses can make along with the benefits to the business;
- That we need to incentivise early adoption and change – for example, there is the potential to pilot with 20-30 businesses with specific support packages.
- That the Council should lead by example using its procurement framework.

Mark Brazil described the following elements of key feedback in his session, relating to waste and recycling:

- The session fed back on the importance of recycling on the go, the benefits of benchmarking with other local authorities, and an ask to include more details on the KPIs and milestones.
- The importance of waste education was highlighted, and that we need to promote how waste is recycled.
- The importance of making sure engagement includes parish and town councils, these organisations are passionate about making a difference, and we need to understand how to put this into practice.
- That food waste and nappies were very specific areas of resident feedback, and that this work is about the whole waste package.

4. Carbon Management Plan

Georgina Patel described the following elements of key feedback in her sessions, relating to the carbon management plan:

- It is not enough for the council to remove poorly performing properties from its asset list. There should be further consideration of how the assets are disposed of i.e. potentially with conditions attached such as the new owner improving the energy rating of the building. The council should also insist on the highest energy efficiency standards for all newly built or procured assets that are added to the list.
- That it should be made clear within the CMP or CE Response Plan how the emission attributed to council owned land; open spaces and farms, are accounted for.
- That the Council should make greater progress on improving and increasing the data capture for Scope 3 factors that are not being monitored. This will give a better indication of the Council's real carbon footprint.

Cllr Eardley raised a question about the work programme for the Taskforce. It was discussed that officers would review the options for the future work programme of the Taskforce and share this with Members.

9 Next Steps:

The chair set out that the feedback from this session will be reviewed, and a draft version of the Climate Emergency Response Plan and Carbon Management Plan

will be uploaded to the Council website on 18 November. The public will be invited to provide views and comments on this document until 6 January. The final Plans will be presented to Cabinet in February. Engagement and refinement of the plan will continue with stakeholders during the period in which the draft plan is presented for comment.