

CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP
Tuesday, 21 November 2023 at 3.00pm in Meeting Room Level D

Present	
Cllr David Birtwhistle (DB) (Chair)	Marshal Scott (MS)
Cllr Stephen Atkinson (SA)	Adam Allen (AA)
Cllr Stewart Fletcher (SF)	Jaqui Houlker (JH) (Note taker)
Cllr Louise Edge (LE)	
Cllr Jan Alcock (JA)	
Cllr Gaye McCrum (GM)	
Cllr Aaron Wilkins-Odudu (AWO)	

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Background Presentation

AA presented the attached presentation to the group. The group discussed the following:

2.1 Responsibilities

Who is responsible for what including the UK Government, the Environment Agency (EA), Lancashire County Council (LCC) and Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC).

2.2 It was noted that the EA is responsible for industry regulation and enforcement e.g. Hanson UK. RVBC is duty bound to assist the EA with investigations but does not have any enforcement powers for large industry.

2.3 The Hanson Cement Liaison Group was discussed. Representatives on the Councils Outside Bodies list are Councillors S Fletcher, M Graveston and K Horkin, with officers A Dent, Head of Environmental Health and R Tait as Minute taker. Permission has been sought to attach a copy of the presentation made to the Liaison Group by Gary Young (Hanson Cement) on 13 April 23.

2.4 RVBC monitors and manages Local Air Quality reporting to Defra.

2.5 It was agreed by the group that they had limited influence regarding the cement works, over and above what is in place. The group agreed to focus on areas where they can have most influence.

2.6 RVBC is responsible for all Council buildings, vehicles, parks and open spaces. MS requested that Planning is also included.

2.7 A summary of national government grants and support was provided such as the EC04 housing efficiency scheme and the Decarbonisation Fund. Discussion followed with regard to the types of housing in the borough, and the difficulties in renovating some buildings e.g. Grade I and II Listed buildings.

3. Purpose of the Group (Terms of Reference agreed by Economic Development Committee)

3.1 SF said he had been a member of the Climate Change Working Group for a number of years. He recognised that the majority of the members of the 2023 group were new, and that he would like to make a proposal to change the name of the group to

'Climate Emergency Working Group' or 'Climate Crisis Working Group'. Discussion followed.

3.2 It was agreed that it is the responsibility of the Economic Development Committee to determine the name of the group and terms of reference and DB advised any changes should be put forward to the committee and not the working group. SA emphasised that as a Council our priority is to provide good Council Services and that climate change should be embedded across the Council in all it does but should not be to the detriment of providing our statutory responsibilities.

3.3 A discussion took place regarding the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council. SA suggested this could be supported on the condition that the delivery of services take precedence, and it does not require the Council to take actions that may negatively impact services or the economy of Ribble Valley.

3.4 It was agreed that AA and JH would research what is required and develop a form of words that can be discussed and considered.

Action 1 – AA and JH to research what is currently expected in declaring a Climate Emergency and propose a form of words that will support our Carbon reduction commitment whilst still ensuring that the delivery of council services and a strong local economy take precedence.

4. Position statement

4.1 Schemes in progress

As well as the listed schemes in progress on the presentation, other climate change projects were also discussed:

4.2 AA informed the group about the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in refuse vehicles. A pilot project to test the feasibility of HVO had been completed and a report is to be taken to Community Committee with the findings. The cost of HVO is considerably more than diesel and is likely to cost up to an additional £100k per annum, however, carbon emissions from vehicles would be reduced by approximately 80%.

4.3 Given the current pressures on Council budgets, it will be necessary to take a report to Policy and Finance Committee to request additional funding. As HVO is easily interchangeable with diesel it would be possible to set an agreed affordable threshold at which point we switch back temporarily. AA offered to share a report with the group that is being taken to the next Community Services Committee in early January on the HVO feasibility study.

Action 2 – Community Services Committee Report about the HVO feasibility study to be shared with the group for information when Committee papers are published prior to the Community Services Committee meeting on 9 January 24.

4.4 SA talked with the group about the use of Hydrogen production and its use in vehicles. St Helen's are running a pilot using a Hydrogen refuse vehicle, but the cost and operational limitations are still prohibitive as are electric refuse vehicles. It was agreed that regular reviews of alternative vehicles was required over the life of the Strategy.

4.5 Chipping Community Energy project (boreholes and heat pumps) was also discussed, and overtime could be rolled out to other villages.

4.6 AA discussed with the group the UK government's plans to increase recycling. The key change being a requirement for the Council to provide free weekly food collections. This can be done in separate caddies or combined with garden waste.

4.7 There is also an option to combine all recyclables in one bin (paper, tins, bottles). There is strong evidence that by reducing the number of bins, recycling increases and also less vehicles are required. The group supported as few types of bins being used as possible.

4.8 A key factor in the types of bins is the ability of Lancashire County Council as the disposal authority to separate waste at their recycling facility. Lobbying is taking place to try and achieve the best outcome for all Lancashire and limit the number of bins required.

4.9 A recycling campaign took place during National Recycling week in late October and further promotion will take place in coming months. It was agreed that AA and SA to continue discussions with LCC as to how we can minimise the number of waste streams.

Action 3 – AA and SA to continue discussions with LCC as to how we can collectively minimise waste streams.

4.10 The group then discussed the installation of solar panels to the Council offices. SF was disappointed that this project had been approved and had been ongoing for some time and that the panels still hadn't been installed.

4.11 AA informed the group that feasibility studies had been completed and that the project was linked to the LED lighting project which did cause some delays. Some further work is therefore required to take this project forward. The group asked AA to bring back more detail and certainty at the next meeting of the group.

Action 4 – AA to bring a more detailed update regarding solar panels to the next meeting.

4.12 Schemes completed

AA talked about the schemes that had been completed, such as installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points, two new electric vans, refuse vehicles fitted with exhaust breaks, tree planting, rewilding schemes, the upgrade and installation of LED lighting in council buildings and car parks, and upgrading controls at Ribblesdale pool.

5. Climate Emergency UK - Council Climate Action Scorecards

5.1 AWO informed the group that Climate Emergency UK has produced Climate Action Scorecards for each local authority (LA). The scorecards are ranked by how well each LA scores against certain criteria, each covering actions towards reaching net zero.

5.2 Discussion followed with regard to the rankings of the Lancashire-12. SA requested that the information relating to the Lancashire-12 is investigated further to see where

districts are performing well and not so well in each section.

Action 5 – JH to investigate and compare the Climate Action Scorecards for the Lancashire-12 district councils.

6. Develop an action plan for the coming 12 months

The action plan was discussed, and it was agreed that the initial focus could be on stage 1 as agreed by the Committee. However it was also considered important for the group to start discussing what stage 2 will look like and to include this as part of the action plan.

Action 6: AA and JH to develop a draft action plan for the coming 12 months for discussion and agreement at the next working group meeting.

7. Key partners we want to engage with

This will be incorporated into the draft action plan for discussion at a future meeting.

8. AOB

None

9. Actions arising from the meeting

Action 1 – AA and JH to research what is currently expected in declaring a Climate Emergency and propose a form of words that will support our Carbon reduction commitment whilst still ensuring that the delivery of council services and a strong local economy take precedence.

Action 2 – Community Services Committee Report about the HVO feasibility study to be shared with the group for information when Committee papers are published prior to the Community Services Committee meeting on 9 January 24

Action 3 – AA and SA to continue discussions with LCC as to how we can collectively minimise waste streams.

Action 4: AA and JH to develop a draft action plan for the coming 12 months based on the discussions of the group. This to be discussed and agreed at the next working group meeting in early January.

Action 5 – JH to investigate and compare the Climate Action Scorecards for the Lancashire-12 district councils.

Action 6: AA and JH to develop a draft action plan for the coming 12 months for discussion and agreement at the next working group meeting.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday, 11 January 2024 at 3:00 – 4:30pm in Meeting Room Level D.

The meeting closed at 16:40pm

Attachments

- Climate Change working Group PowerPoint presentation, Tuesday, 21 November 23
- Hanson Liaison meeting PowerPoint presentation 13-04-23